THE MEANING OF THE QURĀN

Vol.I

[Sūrah Al-Pātihah to Al-An'ām]

(ARABIC TEXT WITH TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY)

By

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Islamic Publications (Pvt.) Limited

13-E, SHAHALAM MARKET, LAHORE-8 (Pakistan)

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PRONUNCIATION KEY
TO
ARABIC NAMES AND WORDS

Vowels

Symbols

(ـَ)	as in	أ	a	sounds	as	a	in	a-bet
		آ	ā	"	"	a	"	art
(ـَيْ)	as in	أي	aj	"	"	a	"	bat
(ـِي)	"	أي	ī	"	"	ee	"	bee
(ـِ)	"	إ	i	"	"	i	"	it
(ـُ)	"	أُ	u	"	"	u	"	put
(و)	"	أُو	ū	"	"	u	"	rule
(وْ)	"	أَوْ	au	sounds between the a in art and o in over but closer to the latter.				
	ع	'		at the top before a vowel indicates a semi- vowel made by articulating the same in the glottis.				
		'		at the top before a vowel indicates a semi-vowel.				

Consonants

د	d	indicates a consonant that sound as th in then.
غ	gh	indicates a consonant made by articulating g in give in the glottis.
ه	h	
ح	h	indicates a consonant between voiced h and kh
خ	kh	indicates a consonant made by articulating voiced h in the glottis.
ج	j	as in jug.
ت	t	indicates a soft consonant (French t) made with the tongue tip touching the upper front teeth.
ط	t	may be pronounced as t.
س	s	

ش	sh	
ص	s	may be pronounced as s.
ث		th indicates a consonant made by articulating th in think.
ك	k	
ق	q	indicates a consonant made by articulating k in the glottis.
ي	y	indicates a consonant that sounds as y in yes.
ض	d	may be pronounced as z in zebra.
ز	z	" " " " "
ذ	z	" " " " "
ظ	dh	" " " " "
ب	b	
ر	r	
ل	l	
م	m	
ن	n	
ف	f	
و	w	

Note: 1. The double use of the same consonant indicates stress (ـّـ)

2. Caution: The above key is by no means a master key to Arabic names and words. There are very delicate differences in the apparently like sounds of some consonants but it is very difficult to distinguish these by means of any key. This key merely gives nearly correct pronunciation.

3. Words of frequent occurrence:
Qur'ān, Sūrah, Makkah, Al-Madīnah, Ka'abah.

N.B.

1. Figures on the margin of the Text denote the number of verse in the paragraphs, and figures at the end of and above words in the translation of the Text denote the number of the Explanatory Notes.

2. E.N. stands for Explanatory Note.

GLOSSARY

عصر — 'Asr prayer is one of the five prescribed prayers and is offered in the late afternoon.

ظہر — *Dhuhr* is the early afternoon prayer.

حضرت — *Hadrat* is a title of respect and reverence.

حج — Haj is the obligatory pilgrimage to the Ka'abah (Makkah) in the prescribed days of Zul-Haj. It is obligatory on every Muslim, at least once in one's life-time, if one can afford expenses for it and is otherwise fit and free to make a journey to it.

احرام — *Ihrām* is the seamless garment worn by the pilgrims to Makkah.

امام — Imām is the one who leads the congregational prescribed prayers. It is also used as a title for a leader of anything.

عشاء — *'Ishā'* is the prescribed night prayer.

کعبہ — Ka'abah is a cube-shaped room in the centre of Masjid-i-Harām. It was built by Prophet Abraham and has always been the centre of God-worship.

کافر — *Kāfir* is one who is guilty of *kufr*.

کفر — *Kufr* has been used in the Qurān in different senses in different places. In some places it stands for total disbelief and in others for ingratitude or hypocrisy or for discarding of Islam fromm practical life etc.etc.

مسجد حرام — *Masjid-i-Harām* is the sacred mosque (the inviolable place of worship) at Makkah which has the Ka'abah in its centre.

مشرک — *Mushrik* is one who practises *shirk* in any form (please see *shirk*).

قبلہ — Qiblah is the point (Masjid-i-Harām) towards which the Muslims turn their faces at Salāt from every corner of the Earth.

صلوٰۃ — *Salāt* is the obligatory prayer in the prescribed form which must be offered five times a day.

شرک — *Shirk* has no equivalent in English and is idolatry, heathenism, polytheism, paganism etc., and more than these. One ay be guilty of *Shirk* even if one is not an idolater and even if one professed to believe in Allah. *Shirk* is to ascribe any of the exclusive characteristics or powers or rights of Allah to any other or to associate any other with Him in any way whatsoever.

سورہ — *Sūrah* is a chapter of the Qurān.

توحید *Tauhīd* is the opposite of *shirk*. It is the doctrine that Allah is One Being in the sense that He is Unique in His Person, in His Attributes, in His Powers and in His Rights, and has no offspring, no compeer, no partner and no associate in any way and capacity whatsoever. He alone is the Creator, the Sustainer, the Sovereign, the Ruler and the sole Deity.

عُمرہ *'Umrah* is the voluntary pilgrimage to Ka'abah (Makkah). It is performed at any other time than during the days of Haj.

زکوٰۃ *Zakāt* is the obligatory due from those Muslims whose annual savings, agricultural products etc., go beyond the limits presrcibed by Islām. Its rate varies with different kinds of produce, different forms of wealth etc. Islām has laid down specific heads in which it should be spent.

FOREWORD

The English version of the renowned exegesis of the Holy Qur'an by *Syed Abul A'ala Maududi* was initially published in sixteen Volumes. Later after the completion of the English translation we got it recomposed on computer in six Volumes according to the original Urdu work to facilitate the readers. By the grace of Allah, we are now presenting this set in a much attractive way with new get up.

No doubt it was a Herculian task to get the whole work recomposed but by the grace of Allah and under the intellectual patronage of *Prof. Muhammad Amin Javaid* Managing Director and with the help of *Mr. Abdul Waheed Khan* who minutely went through all the six volumes, checked the proofs twice and thrice to ensure a most correct and beautiful edition and *Mr. Rasheed Ahmed Chaudhry* owner of Maktaba Jadeed Press who assisted us in bringing out this renowned exegesis in a most attractive form. We also intend to add a detailed index of the whole set as the seventh volume as soon as possible. We hope the Meaning of the Qur'an in its new form would be duly appreciated and welcomed all over the globe.

Muhammad Munir Afzal
(General Manager)

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful. Page (i)

PREFACE

(Adapted)

"The Meaning of the Qur'ān" follows the interpretation of Maulana Abul A'lā Maudūdī as contained in the *"Tafhīmul Qur'ān."* This work has been before the reading public for a decade or so and has elicited unqualified and universal praise because of the freshness of its approach and its clairity and force. It can be safely asserted that this work has contributed more towards understanding the Qur'ān than any other such work in our time. For it has applied the Qur'ānic principles to the solution of the problems of the modern age, and demonstrated in a wonderful way how up-to-date the Qur'ān is and how surely it marches with the times.

It has, however, been felt that the people, who do not know Urdu or are not well-versed in it, cannot derive any benefit from the *"Tafhimul-Qur'ān."* I have, therefore, with a deep sense of responsibility, undertaken the delicate and difficult task of rendering this work into English under the guidance of the Maulana himself. I am fully conscious of my limitations and pray to Allah to help me in this work.

"The Meaning of the Qur'ān" aims to fulfil the growing desire of the educated people to grasp the true spirit of the Qur'ān and understand the real object of its revelation. It is hoped that this work will meet the demand that has been increasing day by day in spite of the praiseworthy efforts of the translators and commentators.

The main object of this work is to enable the English reader to understand clearly the meaning and the aim of the Qur'ān and to impress on his mind, as far as possible, the same effect that it intends to produce. In order to achieve this, (a) an interpretation has been

attempted instead of a literal translation and (b) Explanatory Notes have been added wherever necessary.

A free explanatory translation has been adopted for two reasons: (1) A word for word translation of the Qur'ān has already been done by several worthy persons and that suffices to serve its purpose. (2) It cannot fulfil the object for which this work has been undertaken. As a matter of fact, literal translation often becomes a hindrance to the full understanding of the Qur'ān.

A literal translation of the Qur'ān suffers from many drawbacks. It is incapable of transferring the linguistic charm and sublime theme of the original Arabic Text into any other language: nor can it retain the continuity of the theme so as to induce one to read it as a coherent whole and derive the same benefit from it as from a closely connected book. That is why the reader who studies its literal transferring fails to appreciate the fluency and the dynamic force of the Qur'ān, and a sceptic begins to doubt whether it is the same Book which challenged the world to produce the like of it.

A literal translation suffers from another defect; it does not and cannot take into consideration the fact that the Qur'ān was at first not a book but a living voice. Every student of the Qur'ān knows that in the first instance it was addressed to hearers and delivered by public recitals and was not published for readers in the form of pamphlets, tracts and booklets. And it is obvious that a literal translation cannot transfer the informal style of an oral address into the conventional style of a written work.

A few instances will illustrate this point. In an address an objection is often answered even without any reference to it, but in a written work, an objection is first cited and then answered. Moreover, in a written work, the background has to be explained in words: otherwise there appears to be a gap in it and it may even become unintelligible. Then in a written work, a parenthesis has sometimes to be used by way of explanation, but in an address such things are often left to the manner and suggestive action of the speaker, without showing any gap or incoherence in it. That is why even if an excellent speech is written down on paper, there appear to the casual reader many irrelevancies in it. This defect can only be removed by the adoption of free translation,

by changing the informal style of an oral address into the conventional style of a written work.

There is still another handicap in a literal translation. An English word is not always the exact equivalent of an Arabic word; it is, therefore, difficult to transfer accurately into English every shade of meaning that is contained in the Arabic word of the Qur'ān. A free translation, however, can convey in English the meaning of an Arabic sentence as a whole.

Almost all the existing English translations of the Qur'ān suffer from the drawbacks of a literal translation. Besides these, they have two more defects: (a) Generally they follow the archaic English of the Bible, which makes the meaning of the Qur'ān unintelligible. (b) They isolate every verse, number it and show it as an independent whole and thus take away life and dynamic force out of it. It is obvious that even if an excellent discourse is dissected and written in separate enumerated sentences, it fails to produce the effect which would have been produced by keeping it as a continuous whole.

That is why a general impression has been created that the Qur'ān lacks continuity of subject and deals with miscellaneous topics in a haphazard manner without any interconnection between the verses. No existing English translation claims or attempts to show that there is unity of purpose in the whole of the Qur'ān; that all its topics revolve around the central theme and never deviate from that, its each Sūrah is a complete whole and all its verses are interconnected.

Naturally the non-Muslim translators cannot be expected to do full justice to the Holy Qur'ān, for they are generally inspired by hostile intentions or at best by tolerance because they regard the Qur'ān to be 'the product of (Prophet) Muhammad's (Allah's peace be upon him) own imagination or an inspired literature'; there are others whose chief aim is to reflect "rhythm, music and the exalted tone of the original." Doubtless the thrilling rhythms of the Qur'ān touch the very core of the heart. But that is not the real object of the Qur'ān, it is only a means to it. Though the Muslim translators approach the Book with reverence, they do not try to remove the difficulties which are a real hindrance to its right and full understanding. The westernised Muslim translators wittingly or un-wittingly try to explain away those things which they

consider to be irreconcilable with modern thought. There are others who approach the Qur'ān with the poet's or mystic's approach and help make the Qur'ān a mystery and enigma.

Now let us turn to the Explanatory Notes. Sometimes it is asked, "Why should any notes be added to a translation? Why not let the Qur'ān speak for itself ?" Indeed the Qur'ān does eloquently speak for itself ?" it did not require any notes at the time of its revelation. The Holy Prophet was its living commentary: and the addressees were well acquainted with its style and the backgrounds of its discourses. But with the passage of time, it was felt that many things needed explanation for their fuller comprehension, and the scholars of the Qur'ān rose to the occasion in every age and fulfilled the need. That is why Explanatory Notes have been added to this interpretation. They explain the difficult passages and show the continuity of the theme and the interconnection between the verses and indicate the background wherever necessary. They also contain relevant quotations from the Traditions of the Holy Prophet, the Bible, the Talmud and books on Fiqh etc. etc. They also discuss the problems relating to the Islamic way of life but avoid unnecessary controversies. In short, these Notes help understand the Qur'ān by removing those difficulties which a modern reader encounters.

In order to avoid the common defects of the existing English translations, the following devices have been adopted in *"The meaning of the Qur'ān"*:

1. An attempt has been made to express the meaning of the Qur'ān in simple, clear and effective modern English. An explanatory translation into intelligible English has been adopted and appropriate words have been placed within brackets to fill up the gaps which necessarily occur in every translation. Full care, however, has been taken to remain faithful to the original.

2. Anticipated difficulties have been removed and likely objections answered in the Introduction to each Sūrah.

3. The background of every Sūrah has been given in its introduction and the periods the circumstances and the occasion of its revelation have been specified, for every discourse has its own

background and is so intimately connected with it that if it is isolated from it, its contents are liable to become unintelligible.

4. The meanings of the Text have been divided into coherent paragraphs.

5. Wherever there is no equivalent of an Arabic word in English, it has either been explained by a phrase or retained in the original.

6. A glossary of un-translated Arabic words and a key to the correct pronunciation of Arabic names and words have been added.

In this connection it is necessary to add a word of caution. There is a general tendency to regard the English translation of the Holy Qur'ān as The Qur'ān. It is obviously a misnomer. No translation, however good it may be, can ever take the place of the original Qur'ān, which is its Arabic Text; for it is impossible to reproduce its matchless, enchanting and grand style, its highly emotive and fiery language and its forceful rhetoric. Therefore one must turn to the original Arabic Text for fuller appreciation and understanding. Only then will the reader himself experience how irresistibly he is being moved to ecstasy and his heart melted and stirred to noble action

"The Meaning Of the Qur'ān" merely attempts to help the reader to understand and appreciate the Arabic Text of the original Qur'ān and is not an substitute for it. I pray to Allah to help and guide me in the achievement of this object.

N.B.---It is intended to publish *"The Meaning Of the Qur'ān"* in suitable instalments. The present work is the first of the series.

Suggestions for improvement will be welcomed.

Muhammad Akbar
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West Pakistan

Second Edition

In this Edition some changes have been made in the light of the suggestions received since the publication of the first Edition. It is expected that these will help improve the Translation.

Muhammad Akbar Muradpuri

Acknowledgement

Acknowledge with gratitude my obligation to Mr. P.H. Harwood, M.A. (Oxon) who has very kindly examined thoroughly the manuscript and made valuable suggestions.

I am also very thankful to Mr. A.A. Kamal M.A., who has been very closely associated with this work for many years and has been ungrudgingly giving his precious time and knowledge to the improvement of *"The Meaning Of the Qur'ān"*.

I am very glad to say that two more scholars (who prefer to remain anonymous) have joined the Board of Translators. I am confident that their co-operation will prove very helpful in the performance of this onerous duty.

Muhammad Akbar Muradpuri

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

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

INTRODUCTION

I have two objects in view in writing this Introduction to the study of the Qur'ān.

First, I want to acquaint the reader with those things which will help him to understand the meaning of the Qur'ān. If he does not become conversant with them in the very beginning, they keep coming back into his mind over and over again, and often become a hindrance to his going deep into its meaning and spirit.

Second, I want to answer beforehand some of the questions which usually arise during the study of the Qur'ān. I have confined myself to those questions which arose in my own mind when I began my critical study of it or the ones which I came across afterwards. If there be any other questions besides these, God willing, I will answer them in the next edition.

Unique Book

Before the reader begins the study of the Qur'ān, he must bear in mind the fact that it is a unique Book, quite different from the books one usually reads. Unlike conventional books, the Qur'ān does not contain information, ideas and arguments about specific themes arranged in a literary order. That is why a stranger to the Qur'ān, on his first approach to it, is baffled when he does not find the enunciation of its theme or its division into chapters and sections or separate treatment of different topics and separate instructions for different aspects of life arranged in a serial order. On the contrary there is something with which he has not been familiar before and which does not conform to his conception of a book. He finds that it deals with creeds, gives moral instructions, lays down laws, invites people to Islam, admonishes the disbelievers, draws lessons from historical events, administers warnings, gives good tidings, all blended together in a beautiful manner. The same

subject is repeated in different ways and one topic follows the other without any apparent connection. Sometimes a new topic crops up in the middle of another without any apparent reason. The speaker and the addressees, and the direction of the address change without any notice. There is no sign of chapters and divisions anywhere. Historical events are presented but not as in history books. The problems of Philosophy and Metaphysics are treated in a manner different from that of the textbooks on the subjects. Man and the Universe are mentioned in a language different from that of the natural sciences. Likewise it follows its own method of solving cultural, political, social and economic problems and deals with the principles and injunctions of law in a manner quite different from that of the sociologists, lawyers and jurists. Morality is taught in a way that has no parallel in the whole literature on the subject.

That is why the unwary reader is baffled and puzzled when he finds all these things contrary to his pre-conceived conception of a book. He begins to feel that the Qur'ān is a book without any order or interconnection between its verses or continuity of its subject, or that it deals with miscellaneous topics in an incoherent manner, or that it had been given the form of a continuous book though it was not a book in the commonly accepted sense of the word. As a result of this, its opponents raise strange objections against the Qur'ān and its modern followers adopt strange devices to ward off doubts and objections. They either resort to escapism or put forward strange interpretations to ease their minds. Sometimes they try to create artificial connections between the verses to explain away the apparent incoherencies and as a last resort, they even accept the theory that the Qur'ān deals with miscellaneous topics without any order or coherence. Consequently verses are isolated from their context and confusion is produced in the meanings.

This happens when the reader does not take into consideration the fact that the Qur'ān is a unique book. It does not, like other books, enunciate at the very beginning the subject it deals with and the object it intends to achieve. Its style and method of explaining things are also quite different from those of other books one commonly reads and it does not follow any bookish order. Above all it is not a book on religion in the sense this word is generally understood. That is why when a

reader approaches the Qur'ān with the common notions of a book, he is rather puzzled by its style and manner of presentation. He finds that at many places the background has not been mentioned and the circumstances under which a particular passage was revealed have not been stated. As a result of these things, the ordinary reader is unable to benefit fully from the most precious treasures contained in the Qur'ān, though occasionally he may succeed in discovering a few gems here and there. Only those people become victims of such doubts who are not acquainted with these distinctive features of the Qur'ān. They seem to find miscellaneous topics scattered all over its pages and feel difficulties about its meanings. Nay, even those verses, which are absolutely clear, appear to them to be quite irrelevant in the contexts they occur.

The reader may be saved from all these difficulties, if he is warned beforehand that *the Book he is going to study is the only book of its kind in the whole world: that its literary style is quite different from that of all other books: that its theme is unique and that his preconceived notions of a book cannot help him understand the Qur'ān.* Nay these may even become a hindrance. He should, therefore, first of all free his mind from preconceived notions and get acquainted with the distinctive features of this Book. Then and then alone can he understand it.

In order to understand the Qur'ān thoroughly it is essential to know the nature of this Book, its central idea and its aim and object. The reader should also be well acquainted with its style, the terms it uses and the method it adopts to explain things. He should also keep in view the background and circumstances under which a certain passage was revealed.

Divine Guidance

First of all the reader should understand the real nature of the Qur'ān. Whether one believes it to be a revealed book or not, one will have to consider. as a starting point, the claim that is put forward by itself and its bearer, Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him), that this is the Divine Guidance.

The Lord of the Universe, its Creator, Master and Sovereign created Man and bestowed upon him the faculties of learning, speaking, understanding and discerning right from wrong and good from evil. He granted him freedom of choice, freedom of will, freedom of action and

gave him authority to acquire and make use of the things around him. In short, He granted him a kind of autonomy and appointed him as His Vicegerent on the Earth and instructed him to live in accordance with His Guidance.

At the time, when the Lord of the Universe appointed Man as His Vicegerent, He warned him very clearly and precisely, leaving no doubt in his mind as to the kind of relations he should have with Him, as if to say I am your Master and Sovereign and that of the whole universe; therefore you should worship Me and none else. You are neither independent in My kingdom nor the subject of anyone else, to whom you might owe obedience or worship. You are being sent to the Earth with certain powers for a fixed term of time for your test. After that you will have to return to Me. Then I will judge the deeds you did in the world and decide whether you have come out successful or failed in the test. Therefore the right course for you is to accept Me voluntarily as Sovereign and worship Me alone and act in the world according to the Guidance I shall send you, and live on the Earth with the conviction and understanding that it is merely the place of your Trial. Your real object in earthly life should be to come out successful in the final judgement. Therefore any other course different from and opposed to the Divine Guidance, will be wrong. If you adopt the first course, (and you have full liberty and freedom to adopt it), you will achieve peace and tranquillity in this world and win the home of eternal bliss and joy (Paradise) in the next world, to which you shall have to return. And if you follow any other course (and you are quite free to do, if you so choose), you shall incur (My disfavour in this) world and eternal sorrow and affliction in the Hereafter, where you shall be thrown into the abyss of Hell.

After such a warning, the Owner of the Universe sent Adam and Eve (Allah's peace be upon them) the first human beings, to the Earth and gave them the guidance according to which they and their descendants were to live in this world. Thus the first two human beings were not created in ignorance and darkness but were given very clear and bright Light and the Law they were to follow. This was Islam (submission to Allah). Before they left this world, they themselves practised and taught the same way to their children and children's children and exhorted them to live as Muslims (obedient servants of

Allah). But in the succeeding centuries, by and by, people swerved from this straight way of life (Islam) and adopted different crooked ways. They not only lost the Guidance owing to their negligence but also tampered with it because of their wickedness. They attributed to others. The qualities and powers of Allah and associated others to rank with Him as gods and ascribed His rights to others. They invented different kinds of religions (ways of life) by mixing up all sorts of superstitions, wrong theories and false philosophies with the Guidance that was given by Allah. They discarded the right, just and moral principles taught by Allah or corrupted them and made such laws of life as suited their prejudices and lusts, and filled Allah's earth with chaos and iniquity.

Though this was a sad state of affairs, Allah did not will to force these corrupt people to follow the Right way because this would have been against the limited freedom of action which had been granted to man by Him; nor did He will to destroy them forthwith as soon as rebellion broke out against Him, because this would not have been in keeping with the rules of life laid down for trial in this world. Instead of this, Allah took upon Himself, from the very beginning of man's life on the Earth, to send His Guidance to him during his term of life, leaving him free to follow or not to follow it. Accordingly he made arrangements for the Guidance of mankind and appointed His Messengers from among the people themselves and bestowed upon them the knowledge of the Truth and the Right Way of life. They were charged with the mission to invite people to the Right Way from which they had strayed. The Messengers themselves believed in Allah and acted in accordance with the Guidance they received from him. They were raised from different nations in different countries and thousands of them were sent during thousands of years. They all had one and the same religion which was based on the Unity of God and accountability in the Hereafter. They all taught the same way of life that was taught to the first Man at the very start of his life in this world. They all followed the same Guidance, that is, those fundamental and eternal principles of morality and culture which were prescribed for the first Man from the very first day of his life. They all had the one and the same mission, that is, to invite all human beings to the same Guidance, and to organise them into one community. All those people who accepted their invitation became one community, which was duty bound to follow the Divine

Guidance and to do its best and utmost to establish it and to guard against any transgressions.

During their respective terms, these Messengers fulfilled their mission admirably well. But it is a pity that the majority of the people were not inclined to accept their invitation and even those who joined their community gradually became corrupt. So much so that some of these communities totally lost that Guidance and others tampered with the Commandments of Allah and mixed them up with false things.

Then the Lord of the Universe sent Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) as His last Messenger to fulfil the same mission for which Messengers had been sent before him. He extended his invitation to all human beings, including the corrupt followers of the previous Messengers and asked them to follow the Right Way. He organised all those who accepted the Divine Guidance in to one community which in its turn, was required to re-establish its collective way of life based on the Guidance and to exert its utmost to reform the world which had gone astray. *The Qur'ān which was revealed to Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) is the Book which contains that Invitation and that Divine Guidance.*

Central Theme

Now that we have come to know the nature of the Qur'ān, it has become easier to determine the subject it deals with, its central theme and its aim and object.

The *Subject* it deals with is *Man:* it discusses those aspects of his life that lead either to his real success or failure.

The *Central Theme* that runs throughout the Qur'ān is the exposition of the Reality and the invitation to the Right Way based on it. It declares that Reality is the same that was revealed by Allah Himself to Adam at the time of his appointment as vicegerent, and to all the Messengers after him, and the Right Way is the same that was taught by all the Messengers. It also points out that all theories contradictory to this Reality invented by people about God, the Universe, Man and his relations with God and the rest of His creation, are all wrong and that all the ways of life based on them are erroneous and lead to ruinous consequences.

The *Aim* and *Object* of the revelations is to invite Man to that Right Way and to present clearly the Guidance which he has lost because of his negligence or has perverted by his wickedness.

If the reader keeps these three basic things in mind, he will find that in this Book there is no incongruity in the style, no gap in the continuity of the subject and no lack of interconnection between its various topics. As a matter of fact, this Book is not irrelevant anywhere with regard to its Subject, its Central Theme and its aim. From its very beginning to its end, the different topics it deals with are so intimately connected with its Central Theme that they may be likened to the beautiful gems of the same necklace, despite their different colours and sizes. The Qur'ān keeps the same object in view, whether it is relating the story of the creation of the Earth or of the Heavens or of Man or is referring to the manifestations in the Universe or stating events from human history. As the aim of the Qur'ān is to guide Man and not to teach Nature Study or History or Philosophy or any other science or art, it does not concern itself with these latter subjects. The only thing with which it is concerned is to expound the reality, to remove misunderstandings and misconceptions about it, to impress the Truth upon the minds, to warn them of the consequences of wrong attitudes and to invite humanity to the Right Way.

The same is true of the criticism of the creeds of the moral systems, of the deeds of men and communities and of its discussions of the problems of Metaphysics etc. That is why it states or discusses or cites a thing only to the extent relevant to its aims and object and leaves out unnecessary and irrelevant details and turns over and over again to its Central Theme and to its invitation round which every other topic revolves. When the Qur'ān is studied in this light, no doubt is left that the whole of it is a closely reasoned argument and there is continuity of subject throughout the Book .

Background

One cannot understand fully many of the topics discussed in the Qur'ān unless one is acquainted with the background of their revelation. One should know the social, historical or other antecedents or conditions which help explain any particular topic. For, the Qur'ān was not revealed as a complete book at one and the same time; nor did Allah

hand over a written copy of it to Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) at the very beginning of his mission and command him to publish it and invite people to adopt a particular way of life. Moreover, it is not a literary work of the common conventional type that develops its central theme in a logical order; nor does it conform to the style of such a work. The Qur'ān adopts its own style to suit the guidance of the Islamic Movement that was started by Allah's Messenger under His direct command. Accordingly, Allah revealed the Qur'ān piecemeal to meet the requirements of the Movement in its different stages.

Makki Surahs

When the Holy Prophet was commanded to start his mission at Makkah, Allah sent down such instructions as the Messenger needed for his own training for the great work that was entrusted to him. The Qur'ān imparted also the basic knowledge of the Reality and gave brief answer to the common misunderstandings that misled people to adopt wrong ways of life and invited them to accept the basic principles of morality and adopt the right attitude that alone leads to the success and welfare of humanity.

These early messages consisted of short and concise sentences and were couched in a very fluent and effective language to suit the taste of the people to whom they were first addressed. Their excellent literary style was so appealing that it touched the co re of their hearts. They were so charming that they attracted the attention of the hearers who began to repeat them because of their beauty and elegance. Though universal truths were enunciated in these messages, they were given a local colour and were supported by arguments, examples and illustrations from the environment with which its first addressees were quite familiar. In order to impress the addressees effectively, these early addresses were confined to their own history, their traditions, their monuments beliefs, their morality and their evil ways.

This early stage of the Movement lasted for four years or so with the result that a few good people accepted its message and formed the nucleus of the future Muslim community. But the large majority of the Quraish began to oppose it because, in their ignorance, they thought that it hit hard at their vested interests and lusts and the old traditions of their

forefathers. The message of the Qur'ān, however, went on spreading beyond the boundaries of Makkah and reached other clans.

Then the Movement entered its second stage which continued for nine years or so and a fierce struggle began with the old order. Not only the Quraish but also the majority of its upholders also rose up to kill this Movement employing all sorts of weapons or at least to suppress it. They made false propaganda and levelled accusations and raised frivolous objections against it. They spread suspicions and doubts in order to alienate the common people from it. They hindered strangers from listening to the Holy Prophet and inflicted all sorts of cruelties on those who accepted Islam. They boycotted the Muslims socially and economically in order to intimidate and coerce them. Their persecution became so unbearable that some of them had to leave their homes twice for Abyssinia, and at last all of them had to migrate to Al-Madīnah. But in spite of persecution and hindrances, the Movement went on spreading. There was hardly a family or a household left in Makkah from which one person or the other had not accepted Islam. Naturally this produced bitterness in the hearts of the opponents of Islam. The persecution became all the more bitter when they saw that their own brothers, nephews, sons, daughters, sisters etc., had accepted Islam and become its faithful and strong supporters and were ready to defend it even with their lives.

The Movement also got impetus from the fact that it was drawing into its fold the best from among their people who became the embodiments of virtue after accepting Islam. The world, therefore, could not help feeling the moral superiority of the Movement that was so thoroughly transforming the characters of its followers.

All through this long and bitter struggle, Allah continued to reveal, according to the requirements of the occasion, inspiring addresses which highly influenced the thoughts and conduct of the hearers. On the one hand, these addresses instructed the Muslims in their primary duties, infused into them the spirit of loyalty and devotion to bind them together as members of the Muslim community and taught the ways of piety, high morality and purity of character and trained them to be true missionaries of Islam. On the other hand, these messages consoled, comforted and encouraged the Muslims with promises of success in this world and of eternal bliss in the hereafter. They urged

them also to exert their utmost in the way of Allah with fortitude, endurance and courage. The Muslims were so imbued with the spirit of sacrifice for this noble cause that they were ready to bear every kind of affliction and fight against the bitterest opposition. At the same time, these addresses administered warnings to those people who were opposing the Movement and those who were indifferent to it. Examples were cited from the history of the neighbouring peoples as proofs thereof. Their attention was also drawn to the ruins of the habitations by which they used to pass during their journeys: these were held out as object lessons. They were asked to observe the phenomena of Nature they saw day and night on the earth and in the heavens as a proof of the Unity of God and of the inevitable Hereafter.

The early addresses exposed the blasphemy of the idolaters and their association of partners with Allah and their worship of the old traditions so vividly as to convince all fair-minded persons of their error. They refuted their misconception that they were independent of God and not accountable to Him in the Hereafter with such clear reasoning as to leave no doubt in their hearts and minds. Every doubt was dispelled and every objection answered and every intricacy and complication, in which they were entangled and in which they were involving others, was unfolded and unravelled. In short, these addresses proved clearly and conclusively that the old ways were based on ignorance and were utterly void of sense. Side by side with this, the disbelievers were admonished for their immorality, their wrong ways of life and customs of ignorance and their opposition to the Truth and their persecution of the Believers. These early addresses also put forward those basic principles of culture and morality which have always been universally accepted and which have always formed the basis of the enlightened Divine civilization.

Several changes took place during the Makki stage of the Movement. It spread wider and wider, day by day, and the opposition to it became stronger and stronger in the same proportion. By and by, it came into contact with the people of different creeds and different ways of life and this gave rise to new problems. The discourses, therefore, began to deal with various new topics as well. This explains the difference of their style from those of the earlier ones.

This is the background of the Surahs which were revealed during the thirteen years of Makki life.

Madani Surahs

After facing opposition for thirteen years in Makkah, the Islamic Movement found a new centre in Al-Madinah where it became possible to collect all its followers from the various parts of Arabia and to unify and strengthen them. Accordingly, the Holy Prophet and the majority of the Muslims migrated to Al-Madinah.

Then the Movement entered its third stage under totally changed conditions. Now that the Muslim community had succeeded in founding a regular state, an armed encounter ensued with the exponents of the old order of ignorance. Besides this, the Jews and the Christians came into conflict with it even though they also professed to be the followers of Prophets. It had also to deal with different kinds of hypocrite 'Muslims' who had somehow or other entered its fold. But in spite of all those obstacles, the Movement succeeded in subduing the whole of Arabia after a hard struggle of ten years and was in a position to extend its universal message of reform to the outer world.

As, by and by, several changes took place in this stage also, and every changed condition had its own special problems, so Allah revealed to the Holy Prophet the kind of discourses required for any particular occasion. That is why some of these were couched in the fiery rhetoric of a warner and the others in the form of the royal edicts of the law giver. Some adopted the methods of a teacher, trainer and reformer and taught the principles and the methods of organising a community, of building up a state and of constructing a good civilisation for the conduct of different affairs of life. Others gave instructions for dealing with the hypocrites or the unbelievers, who had come under the protection of this Islamic State. Then in some of these discourses, the Muslims were taught the kind of relations they should have with the people of the Book and with the belligerent powers and with their own allies. In others they were taught, trained and organised to carry out their obligations as vicegerents of the Lord of the Universe. Some gave instruction for their guidance, and warned them of their weaknesses and exhorted them to sacrifice their lives and properties in the way of Allah. Others taught the moral lessons they needed in defeat and victory, adversity and prosperity, war and peace. In short, these trained them to carry on the missionary work for the propagation of Islam as the successors of the Holy Prophet. Then some discourses invited to Islam the people of the

Book, the hypocrites, the unbelievers and the blasphemers or rebuked them for their hard-heartedness or warned them of the doom in store for them or admonished them for neglecting lessons from the stories and events of the past, so as to leave no excuse for their sticking to the wrong ways of life.

This is the background of the Sūrahs that were revealed during the ten years at Al-Madīnah. It is obvious that their style had to be different from that of the Makki Sūrahs.

Style

It must have become clear from the above that the revelation of the Qur'ān began simultaneously with the beginning of the Islamic Movement and continued for twenty-three years. The different portions of the Qur'ān were revealed according to the requirements of the various phases of the Movement. It is thus obvious that a book like this cannot have the kind of uniformity of style which is followed in formal books on religion and the like. It should also be kept in mind that the various portions of the Qur'ān, both long and short, were not meant to be published in the form of pamphlets at the time of their revelation but were to be delivered as addresses and promulgated as such. Hence they could not be in the style of a written work. Moreover, these addresses were necessarily of a different nature from that of the lectures of a professor; therefore their style would naturally be different from them also. The Holy Prophet was entrusted with a special mission and had to appeal both to the emotions and to the intellect; he had to deal with people of different mentalities and cope with different situations and various kinds of experiences during the course of his mission. Such a person has to do all that is required for extending a message and for leading a movement. He has to impress the different aspects of his message on people's minds in order to change the established world of ideas, and to appeal to the feelings and emotions in order to counteract the forces of his opponents. He has also to train and reform his followers and to imbue them with spirit and courage, and to refute the arguments of opponents and to expose their moral weaknesses and so on. That is why the style of the discourses that Allah sent down to His Messenger had to be what suited the requirements of a Movement. It is, therefore, wrong to seek the style of a formal book or that of college lectures in the discourses of the Qur'ān.

That also explains why the same things are repeated over and over again in the Qur'ān. A mission and a movement naturally demand that only those things should be presented which are required at a particular stage and that nothing should be said about the requirements of the next stage. That is why the same things are repeated over and over again as long as the movement remains in the same stage, no matter whether it remains there for months or for years. Of course, these things have been differently worded and styled to avoid monotony, and couched in a beautiful and dignified language to make them effective and impressive. Moreover, it repeats at suitable places its basic good and principles in order to keep the Movement strong at every stage. That is why those Sūrahs which were revealed at a particular stage of the Movement generally deal with the same topics, though, of course, in different words and in various forms. Moreover, all the Sūrahs of the Qur'ān contain references to the basic creed, *i.e.*, the unity of Allah, His attributes, the Hereafter and accountability, punishment and reward, Prophethood, beliefin the Book etc.... They all teach piety, fortitude, endurance, faith and trust in Allah and the like, just because these virtues could not be neglected at any stage of the Movement. If any of these bases had been weakened at any stage even in the least, the Islamic Movement could not have made any progress in its true spirit.

Order

A little thinking in the light of the difference between the Makkī and the Madanī Sūrahs will also answer the question why the sūrahs of the Qur'ān were not arranged in the sequence in which they were revealed. This question is also important because it has been used by the enemies of Islam to create misunderstandings about the Qur'ān and make ridiculous conjectures about the present arrangement of the Sūrahs. They are of the opinion that "Muhammad's (Allah's peace be upon him) followers published it, without any discernible order as to chronology or otherwise; merely trying, as would seem, to put the longest chapters first ....."

Such conjectures as this are based on ignorance of the wisdom underlying the order of the Qur'ān. Though it was to be the Book for all times, it had to be revealed piecemeal in twenty-three years according to needs and requirements of the different stages through which the Islamic Movement was passing. It is obvious that the sequence of the revelations

that suited the gradual evolution of the Movement could not in any way be suitable after the completion of the Qur'ān. Allen another order, suited to the changed conditions, was needed. In the early stages of the Movement the Qur'ān addressed those people who were totally ignorant of Islam and, therefore, naturally it had first of all to teach them the basic articles of Faith. But after its completion the Qur'ān was primarily concerned with those who had accepted Islam and formed a community for carrying on the work entrusted to it by the Holy Prophet. Obviously, the order of the complete Book had to be different from its chronological order to suit the requirements of the Muslim Community for all times. Then the Qur'ān had, first of all, to acquaint the Muslims thoroughly with their duties concerning the regulation of their lives. It had also to prepare them for carrying its message to the world which was ignorant of Islam. It had also to warn them of the mischiefs and evils that appeared among the followers of the former Prophets so that they should be on their guard against them. Hence Al-Baqarah and similar Madanī Sūrahs, and not Al-'Alaq and similar Makkī Sūrahs, had to be placed in the beginning of the Qur'ān.

In this connection, another thing should also be kept in view. It does not suit the purpose of the Qur'ān that all the Sūrahs dealing with similar topics should be grouped together. In order to avoid one-sidedness at any stage of its study, it is essential that the Makkī sūrahs should intervene between the Madanī Sūrahs and that the Madanī sūrahs should follow the Makkī Sūrahs, and that the Sūrahs revealed at the earliest stages of the Movement should come between those revealed in the later stages so that the entire picture of the complete Islam should always remain before the reader. That is the wisdom of the present order.

It should also be noted that the sūrahs of the Qur'ān' were not arranged in the present order by his successors but by the Holy Prophet himself under the guidance of Allah. Whenever a Surah was revealed, he would send for one of his amanuenses and dictate it word for word and direct him to place it after such and such and before such and such a Surah. Likewise in this case of a discourse or passage or verse that was not meant to be an independent Surah by itself, he would direct him to the exact place where it was to be put in the Surah of which it was to form a part, then he used to recite the Qur'ān during the Salāt

(prescribed prayer) and on other occasions in the same order and direct his Companions to remember and recite it in the same order. Thus it is an established fact that the Sūrahs of the Qur'ān were arranged in the present order on the same day the Qur'ān was completed by the one to whom it was revealed under the guidance of the One who revealed it.

Compilation

Allah Who revealed the Qur'ān Himself made arrangements for its safety and security for ever.

No sooner was a passage of the Qur'ân revealed than it was recorded on leaves of date-palm, barks of trees, bones etc., at the dictation of the Holy Prophet and all these pieces were put in a bag. Besides this, some of his Companions themselves wrote these pieces for their own use. At the same time, the Muslims committed these passages to memory as they had to recite them during, Salāt which was obligatory from the very beginning of Islam.

Though many Companions had committed the whole of the Qur'ān to memory during the life-time of the Holy Prophet, it had not been compiled in book form. But immediately after his death, an event occurred that necessitated this work. A furious storm of apostasy broke out and many of the Companions, who went to war to. Suppress it, were killed. Among these martyrs were some of those who had committed the whole of the Qur'ān to memory. Then it occurred to Hadrat 'Umar that necessary steps should be taken to preserve the Qur'ān intact in its original form against any and every kind of danger and that it was not wise to depend exclusively upon those who had learnt it by heart. He, therefore, urged that it was essential to put the whole of it in black and white in the form of an authenticated book. He tried to impress the necessity of this step on Hadrat Abū Bakr, who at first showed hesitation to do what the Holy Prophet had not done. But after some discussion, he agreed to it. Accordingly he entrusted this work to Hadrat Zaid bin Thābit who also showed hesitation at first like Hadrat Abū Bakr and for the same reason. But at last he was convinced and he undertook this historic work.

And he was best qualified for this work. He had frequently acted as an amanuensis to the Holy Prophet and was one of those Companions who had learnt the Qur'ān directly from him. Moreover he also was

present on the occasion when the Holy Prophet recited the whole of the completed Qur'ān to angel Gabriel. Arrangements were, therefore, made to collect and gather all the written pieces of the Qur'ān left by the Holy Prophet, and those in the possession of his Companions.* Then with the co-operation of those Companions who had committed the whole or any part of the Qur'ān to memory word for word, all the written pieces were compared with each other for verification. Hadrat Zaid would not take down anything in his manuscript unless all the three sources tallied with one another. Thus was compiled one correct, authenticated and complete copy. This authenticated copy of the whole Qur'ān was kept in the house of Hadrat Hafsah Hadrat 'Umar's daughter, and one of the wives of the Holy prophet and it was proclaimed that anyone, who desired, might make a copy of it or compare with it the copy he already possessed.

As regards the sequence of the Sūrahs, Zaid followed the same order that was followed by the Holy Prophet himself because he could not and would not have followed any other. He was so particular about following the Holy Prophet in everything he did, that, at first, he hesitated to undertake the work of the compilation, just because this had not been done during the life-time of the Holy Prophet. It is, therefore wrong to suppose that the Sūrahs were arranged in the existing order after the death of the Holy Prophet. The very fact, that the Holy Prophet recited the whole of the Qur'ān twice before Gabriel during the last Ramadān** of his life, is a clear proof of the fact that he must have followed some order. And we have already cited a Tradition to the effect that Hadrat Zaid attended the second of these two last recitals. Likewise those Companions, who had committed the whole of the Qur'ān to

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*. We learn from authentic traditions that some Companions of the Holy Prophet had put the Qur'ān or some pieces of the Qur'ān in black and white during his life-time and the names of 'Uthman, Ali, 'Abdullah-bin-Masūd, 'Abdullah-bin 'Amr-bin-'Ās, Sālim, the freed slave of Huzaifah, Mu'az-bin-Jabal, Zaid-bin Thābit, Ubayy-bin-Ka'ab, Abu Zaid, Qais-bin-As-Sakn (Allah be pleased with them all) have been specifically mentioned.

**. Traditions say that the Holy Prophet used to recite the Qur'ān before angel Gabriel once during every Ramadān but he recited the whole of the complete Qur'ān twice during the Ramadān occurring in the year of his death. Zaid attended the second recitation.

memory, must have done it in some order and that, too, could not have been any other but the one followed and taught by the Holy Prophet.

Imām Mālik says, The Qur'ān was compiled in the way the Companions heard it from the Holy Prophet. Moreover, at several places, the Qur'ān speaks of itself as a Book. For example, in Sūrah Muzzammil, an early Makī revelation, Allah says to the Holy Prophet, ".....recite the Qur'ān in order....." LXXIII: 4. This also shows that the Qur'ān was meant to be a book from the beginning of the revelation and a book must follow some order.

Difference of Dialects

Though Arabic was the common language of the whole of Arabia, there existed some variations in the dialects of different parts and tribes.

For obvious reasons the Qur'ān was revealed in the dialect of the Quraish of Makkah. However, the Arabs living in different parts of the country were, at first allowed, for the sake of facility, to recite it according to the dialect of their own clan or district but this did not produce any difference in its meanings. But when Islam spread beyond the boundaries of Arabia and the Arabs came into contact with the non-Arab Muslims, the Arabic language gradually began to be influenced by its new environments. Then it was feared that the different dialects of the Qur'ān might give rise to various kinds of mischief and might cause disputes among persons having different dialects. They might even begin to accuse one another of tampering with the Qur'ān. Moreover, there was the danger that the pure and beautiful Arabic of the Qur'ān might be altered or changed by those Arabs who came in contact with non-Arabs. Therefore, Caliph 'Uthmān, in consultation with other Companions of the Holy Prophet, decided that the authenticated copies of the Qur'ān compiled by the order of Hadrat Abū Bakr, should alone be used in the whole of the Muslim world, and the use of all other copies in any other dialect or idiom should be prohibited. As a precautionary measure, he had all the other existing copies burnt to ward off any possibility of future confusion and misunderstanding. For instance, some of the companions had noted down explanatory words and comments on the margins of their copies and it was feared, that these might get mixed up with the original text of the Qur'ān. Though such a possibility did not

exist at that time, it was an act of most prudent foresight to make the Qur'ān safe and secure against any possible alteration in the future by burning all other copies.

The Qur'ān, which is now in use all over the world, is the exact copy of the Qur'ān which was compiled by the order of Hadrat Abū Bakr and copies of which were officially sent by Hadrat 'Uthmān to different places. Even today many very old copies are found in big libraries in different parts of the world and if anyone has any doubt as to whether the Qur'ān has remained absolutely safe and secure against every kind of change and alteration, he can compare any copy of the Qur'ān with any of these copies and reassure himself. Moreover, if one gets a copy of the Qur'ān from a bookseller, say, of Algeria in Africa in the West and compares it with a copy obtained from a bookseller, say, of Java in the East, one will find both the copies to be identical with each other and also with the copies of the Qur'ān made during the time of Hadrate 'Uthmān'. If even then anyone has any doubt left in his mind, he is advised to take any copy of the Qur'ān from anywhere in the world and ask anyone, out of the millions who know the Qur'ān by heart, to recite it word for word from the beginning to the end. He will find that the recitation conforms word for word to the written text. This is a clear and irrefutable proof of the fact that the Qur'ān which is in use today is the same Qur'ān which was presented to the world by Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him). A sceptic might entertain a doubt about its revelation from Allah, but none can have any doubt whatsoever regarding its authenticity and immunity and purity from any and every kind of addition or omission or alteration, for there is nothing so authentic in the whole human history as this fact about the Qur'ān that it is the same Qur'ān that was presented by the Holy Prophet to the world.

Now let us consider the case of the variant readings of the Qur'ān, for their existence has created the misunderstanding that it has not remained intact. The following facts will help us to understand their nature and extent:

1. The Arabic script adopted by the amanuenses of the Holy Prophet during his life-time had neither dots nor vowel points. The same was the case with the copy of the Qur'ān compiled by Hadrat Zaid

during the time of Hadrat Abu Bakr and also with its copies circulated by Hadrat 'Uthmān.

2. Though the correctness of the Qur'ānic text was ensured in the written forms, the work of its propagation was done orally because of the general illiteracy and scarcity of paper. Little difficulty was, however, felt by the literate Arabs in deciphering this script. There were thousands of such persons who had learnt the whole of the Qur'ân by heart from the Holy Prophet himself and his Companions. They followed and taught the same reading that they had learnt from the Holy Prophet and his Companions.

3. Hadrat 'Uthmān not only sent an authenticated the Qur'ān to the different centres of Islam, but also sent a *Qārī* along with it in order to preserve that correct reading which was taught by the Holy Prophet himself.

4. With the passage of time it was felt that there should be vowel points to preserve the correct reading of the Qur'ān. Accordingly, at the instance of Zaid, the Governor of Basrah (45 to 53 A.H.) dots were assigned for vowel points. Then during the reign of Abdul-Malik (65-85 A.H.) Hajjaj-bin-Yusuf appointed scholars to assign new symbols for vowel points and dots to distinguish between the similar letters. The same practice continues to the present time.

From the above historical facts, it must have become clear that the reading of the Qur'ān (with a few minor variations) is the same as practiced and taught by the Holy Prophet. All the scholars and Qurra* of the Qur'ān have been unanimous in asserting that only that reading will be authentic which (a) conforms to the script of the copy circulated by Hadrat Uthmān and (b) complies with the lexicon of Arabic, its usages idioms and grammar, and above all, (c) is traceable by genuine and continuous links to the Holy Prophet himself. That is why there are only a few variations in its reading and those are not contradictory in their meanings but enlarge their scope and make them more comprehensive. Thus there is absolutely no doubt that the Holy Prophet himself practised

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*. Qārī is one who is well-versed in the correct reading of the Qur'ān.

*. Qurrā is the plural of Qarī.

those various readings in the instances which exist today, and they make the meanings more comprehensive.

For example, let us take the two authentic readings of (a) verse 3 of Al-Fātihah and (b) verse 6 of Al-Mā'idah. One reading of I: 3, that is, مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّيْنِ means the Master of the Day of Judgement and the other reading مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّيْنِ means, The Sovereign of the Day of Judgement. It is obvious that these two readings make the meaning of the verse all the more clear. (c) One reading of V: 6, that is, فَاغْسِلُوْا وُجُوْهَكُمْ ... وَاَرْجُلِكُمْ means ... wash your faces... and (wash) your feet as is done at the time of performing ablution with naked feet. The second reading, that is, فَاغْسِلُوْا وُجُوْهَكُمْ ... وَامْسَحُوْا بِرُءُوْسِكُمْ وَاَرْجُلِكُمْ wash your faces and wipe your heads and (wipe) your feet with wet hands. The second reading allows one to wipe one's feet with wet hands, provided that one had washed one's feet and put on thick socks after the performance of the previous ablution. This concession holds good for 24 hours at home and for 72 hours during a journey. It is obvious from the two instances that in the variant readings, there is absolutely no contradiction in essence. On the other hand, they make the meanings all the more comprehensive. And the same is true of all true other variant readings.

Universality

Everyone knows that the Qur'ān claims to provide guidance for the whole of mankind, but when he reads it, he finds that it is mainly addressed to the Arabs, who lived at the time of its revelation. Though at times it also addresses other people and mankind in general, it mainly discusses those things which appealed to the taste of the Arabs and were linked with their environment, history and customs. this naturally gives rise to the question: Why does the Qur'ān contain so many local and national elements of the period in which it was revealed, when it was meant for the guidance of the whole of mankind? Those who do not understand the wisdom of this, begin to argue like this: the Qur'ān was really meant for the reform of the Arabs of that period but later on, somehow or other, the claim was made that it was a guidance for the whole of mankind and for all ages.

If one does not raise this objection merely for the sake of objection but really wants to understand the matter, I would advise him

to read the Qur'ān and mark the parts which give rise to this doubt. He should then point out any tenet, idea or principle therein that might have been meant particularly for the Arabs of that period only. He should lay his finger on any moral principle, practical rule or regulation that is not of universal application and was meant only for the Arabs of that period, time and place. The mere fact, that the Qur'ān refutes the blasphemous creeds and condemns the evil customs of a particular people, living at a particular time and place and bases arguments for the unity of God on the material gathered from their environment, is not a sufficient proof to establish the allegation that its invitation and appeal was local and temporary. We should examine the question closely and decide whether what it says regarding the blasphemous people of Arabia is or is not equally true of every period and every place, and whether we can or cannot apply the same arguments with equal force to refute the blasphemy of every time and every place, and whether we can or cannot use everywhere, with minor changes, the same arguments that the Qur'ān puts forward for the Unity of God. If the answer to these questions is in the affirmative, then there is no reason why such a universal revelation should be dubbed as local or temporary, simply because it was addressed to a particular community and during a particular period. There is no philosophy, no way of life and no religion in the world which expounds, from the beginning to the end, everything in the abstract without making any reference to particular cases or concrete examples, for it is simply impossible to build a pattern of life merely in the abstract. Even if we suppose, for the sake of argument, that it were possible to do so, most surely such a system will always remain merely a theory on paper and will never take a practical shape.

Moreover, it is neither necessary nor useful to start from the very outset on international lines any ideological movement that is meant to be ultimately international. The only right method of beginning this will be to start the movement in the country of its origin and present with full force its theories and fundamental principles which are to form the basis of the required system of life. Then its exponents should impress these things on the minds of their own people who have a common language, common habits and common customs. They should first of all put these principles into practice in their own country and prove their worth by evolving a happy and successful system of life. This will naturally attract other nations, and their intelligent people will themselves come forward

to understand the movement and start it in their own countries. Thus a certain ideological system does not become national simply because it was at first presented to a particular nation and its arguments were addressed to a particular people. As a matter of fact, what distinguishes a national from an international and a temporary from a permanent system is this: a national system aims either to establish its own superiority or its special claim over other nations or presents principles and theories which, by their very nature, cannot be applied to other nations. On the other hand, an international system grants equal status and equal rights to all human beings and puts forward principles of universal application. Moreover, the principles of a temporary system become impracticable with the passage of time while the principle of a permanent system are applicable to all times. If ne studies the Qur'ān in the light of the above, one will come to the conelusion that its teachings are of universal application.

Complete Code

Another thing that causes mental confusion is the oftre peated assertion that the Qur'ān is a complete code of life. But when one reads it, one does not find detailed rules and regulations regarding social, cultural, political and economic problems etc... One is therefore, baffled to see that it does not contain any detailed regulations even about Salāt and Zakāt which are such important obligatory duties that the Qur'ān itself lays great emphasis on them over and ovcr again. That is why a casual reader cannot understand how this Book can be called a complete code. This confusion is caused because the objector loses sight of the fact that Allah did not only send down the Book but also appointed His Messenger to demonstrate its teachings by putting them into actual practice. To illustrate this, we may take the case of the construction of a building. If only a plan of the proposed building is laid down and no engineer is appointed to supervise and direct its construction, then every detail must be supplied. But if an engineer is also appointed along with the plan to construct the building on the spot, obviously there is no need for a detailed plan. In that case only a sketch with its essential features will be quite enough. It would, therefore, be wrong to find fault with such a plan as being incomplete. As Allah sent His Messenger along with the Qur'ān, only general principles and absolutely essential instructions were needed and not their details. Hence the main function

of the Qur'ān is to present clearly the intellectual and moral bases of the Islamic Way and reinforce them with arguments and appeals to the heart. As far as the practical side of the building of the Islamic Way of life is concerned, it only defines the limits and bounds of every aspect of life without giving detailed rules and regulation. Moreover it fixes sign-posts for guidance at certain important places to show how those parts are to be constructed in accordance with Allah's will. The actual work of building the Islamic Way of life in accordance with the instructions contained in the Book was entrusted the Holy Prophet, who was specially sent to set up the pattern of life for the individual for the society and for the Islamic State to be constructed practically according to the principles of the Qur'ān. Thus the Qur'ān is a complete code in the sense that it is to be taken along with the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet.

Another question which troubles the minds is that of divergence's in the interpretation of the Qur'ān. People say that 'on the one hand, Qur'ān condemns very severely those people who create differences in the Book of Allah and cause division in their religion; on the other hand, so many different interpretations of the injunctions of the Qur'ān have been made that there is hardly to be found any command with an agreed interpretation. And it is not the people of the later periods alone who differ with one another but even the great scholars of the early period, including the companions of the Holy Prophet and their followers, did not all agree in every detail in regard to Commands and Prohibitions. Do all these people then deserve the condemnation pronounced in the Qur'ān for making different interpretations? If this is not so, then what kind of differences of opinion have been condemned in the Qur'ān?

The problem is very vast and extensive and this is not the place for its detailed discussion. Suffice it to say here that *the Qur'ān is not against healthy difference of opinion in the interpretation of its injunctions provided that (a) there is agreement on the basic principles of Islam among those who differ and (b) they remain united within the fold of the Muslim Community. The Qur'ān deprecates that kind of divergence which starts with self-worship and crookedness ,and leads to disputes and sectarianism.* As the two kinds of divergence are neither alike in their nature nor in their results, they should not be placed in one and the same category. The first kind of divergence is essential for

progress and is the very soul of life and every community of intelligent and thinking people must encourage it. Its existence is a sign of life and only that community can afford to repress it which desires to have only blockheads in it. The second kind of divergence as everyone knows, disintegrates the community which nourishes it: therefore its appearance in a community is not a sign of health but a symptom of disease and it can never produce good results.

These two kinds of divergencies of opinion may further be illustrated by the following:

Supposing there are two scholars or two judges, who agree, on principle, that Allah and His Messenger alone are entitled to obedience and that the Qur'ān and the Sunnah are the final authority to determine all laws and regulations. They may then differ in the details or in the decision of a case, provided that neither of them makes his opinion as the criterion of Islam or un-Islam nor declares the other to be outside its fold on account of such a difference of opinion. They may put forward their own arguments in support of their opinions and leave the decision to the public or to the highest court, if it is some judicial matter, or to the legislative body of the community, if it concerns them. Then either one of the two different opinions will prevail or both will be accepted. But it should be noted particularly that no difference can be allowed in the basic principles of Islam nor in such matters as may lead to the formation of a new community. For instance, it would be wrong that a scholar or a jurist or a saint or a leader should form an opinion about some matter (which Allah and His Messenger do not consider to be basic) and declare it to be a basic principle of Islam and then denounce all those who differ from him to be outside its fold, and then on this basis, proceed to form a community of his own followers saying, "This is the real Muslim Community and all outside it are doomed to Hell. Therefore, if you are a Muslim, come and join it, otherwise you are not one." It is this kind of difference of opinion which the Qur'ān condemns. As regards the first kind of difference, several instances of it occurred during the time of the Holy Prophet himself. He not only permitted it but also spoke well of it, for it was a healthy sign, which showed that intelligent people of the Community were busy thinking and making research. This also showed that the intelligent people of the Community were taking interest in Islam and its teachings and were

trying to find solutions for the problems of life within Islam and not outside it. It also provided a proof of the golden rule that while the Community should remain united on principles, it should, at the same time, grant freedom of research to its thinkers within due limits so that the doors of progress should remain open.

Suggestions for Study

Finally, here are a few suggestions for the study of the Qur'ān:

As different people turn to the Qur'ān with different aims and objects, it is not possible to offer any general advice about the method of its study so as to fulfil the requirements of all. I am, however, interested only in those people who want to understand it and seek guidance from it for the solution of human problems. I will, therefore, offer some suggestions which may help satisfy their needs and remove their difficulties.

The one pre-requisite for understanding the Qur'ān is to study it with an open and detached mind. Whether one believes it to be a revealed book or not, one should, as far as possible, free one's mind of bias in favour of or against it and get rid of all pre-conceived opinions and then approach it with the sole desire of understanding it. Those people who study it with preconceived notions of their own, read only their own ideas between its lines and cannot, therefore, grasp what the Qur'ān wants to convey. It is obvious that this method of study can never be fruitful even with other books but it is utterly fruitless when applied to the study of the Qur'ān.

There is another thing which must be kept in view. If one wants to have merely a cursory acquaintance with the contents of the Qur'ān, then perhaps it might suffice for him to read it once. But, if one wishes to have a deep knowledge of it, one will have to go through it several times and each time from a different point of view. Those, who desire to make a thorough study of the Qur'ān should read it at least twice with the sole purpose of understanding, as a whole, the system of life it presents. One should also try to find out its fundamentals and the way of life it aims to build on them. During this preliminary study, if some questions occur in his mind, the reader should note them down and patiently continue his study, for he is likely to find their answers somewhere in the Qur'ān itself. If he finds answers to his questions, he

should note them down along with the questions. But if he does not find an answer to any question in his first reading, he should patiently make the second reading. I can say it in the light of my own experience that in the second reading hardly any question remains un-answered.

After getting a general insight into the Qur'ān in this way, one should begin its detailed study and take down notes of the different aspects of its teachings. For instance, one should note down what pattern of life it approves and what it disapproves. One should note down the qualities of a good man and those of a bad man, side by side, in order to bring both the patterns clearly before his mind simultaneously. Similarly, one should note down, side by side, those things which lead to the success and salvation of man and those which lead to his failure and ruin. In the same way, he should put down, under different headings, the teachings and instruction of the Qur'ān about creed, morality, duties, obligations, civilization, culture, economics, politics, law, social system, peace, war and other human problems. These notes should be consolidated to form a complete sketch of each aspect of the teachings and then fitted together to form a complete system of life.

Then, if one desires to know the Qur'ānic solution of a certain human problem he should first make study of the relevant literature, both ancient and modern, and note down the basic issues. He should also make use of the research so far made into the problem and note down the points at issue. He should then study the Qur'ān with a view to finding out the answers to those issues. I can say from my own personal experience that when one studies the Qur'ān with a view to making research into any problem, one will find an answer to it even in those verses which one had skipped over without ever imagining that it lay hidden therein.

It is suggested that each paragraph of "*The Meaning of the Qur'ān*" may be made the unit of study. At first it should be studied from the original Arabic Text with the help of some literal translation and then with the help of *The Meaning of the Qur'ān*. It is expected that the meanings of the Qur'ān will surely become clear by the grace of God.

But in spite of all these devices, one cannot grasp the inspiring spirit of the Qur'ān unless one begins to put its message into practice,

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But in spite of all these devices, one cannot grasp the inspiring spirit of the Qur'ān unless one begins to put its message into practice, for the Qur'ān is neither a book of abstract ideas and theories which may be studied in an easy chair nor is it a book of religious enigmas which may be unravelled in monasteries and universities. It is a Book that has been sent down to invite people to start a movement and to lead its followers and direct their activities towards the achievement of its mission. One has, therefore, to go to the battlefield of life to understand its real meaning. That was why a quiet and amiable person like Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) had to come out of his seclusion and start the Islamic Movement and fight against the rebellious world. It was the Qur'ān that urged him to declare war against every kind of falsehood and engage in confict with the leaders of disbelief without any consideration of the consequences. Then it attracted good souls from every home and gathered them under the banner of its leader in order to fight against the upholders of the old order who organised themselves into a gang to oppose them. During this long and bitter struggle between right and wrong, truth and falsehood, which continued for twenty three years or so, the Qur'ān went on guiding the Movement in every phase and at every stage, until it succeeded in establishing the Islamic Way of life in its perfection

It is thus obvious that one cannot possibly grasp the truths contained in the Qur'ān by the mere recitation of its words. For this purpose one must take active part in the conflict between belief and un-belief, Islam and un-Islam, truth and falsehood. One can understand it only if one takes up its Message, invites the world to accept it and moves on and on in accordance with its Guidance. Thus alone will one experience and understand all that which happened during the revelation of the Qur'ān. One will meet with the same conditions that were experienced at Makkah, Tā'if and Habash and pass through the same

kind of fire that had to be passed through at Badr, Uhd, Hunain, Tabūk etc. One will meet with Abu Jahls and Abu Lahabs and come across hypocrites, the double-faced, the Jews, in short, every type of people mentioned in the Qur'ān. Incidentally, this is a wonderful experience of its own kind and worth the trial.

While passing through any one of these stages of this experience, one will find some verses and some Sūrahs of the Qur'ān, which will themselves tell that they were revealed at such and such a stage and brought such and such instructions for the guidance of the Movement. In this way the Qur'ān will lay bare its spirit even though one might not be able to understand all the lexical meanings of its words and solve all the intricacies of grammar and rhetoric. The same formula applies to its Commandments, its moral teachings, its instructions about economics and culture and its laws regarding different aspects of human life. These things can never be understood unless they are put into practice. It is thus obvious that those individuals and communities who discard it from practical life, cannot understand its meaning and imbibe its spirit by mere lip-service to it.

This is from me and true knowledge is with Allah; I have full trust in Him and turn to Him for true guidance.

As I do not intend to discuss in the Introduction all the problems which might arise during the study of the Qur'ān, I have purposely left untouched those questions that might arise during the study of some verses or Sūrahs, for I want to deal with them in *The Meaning of the Qur'ān* at their proper places. I have taken up only those questions and problems which pertain to the general study of the Qur'ān as a whole. The reader is, therefore, requested to defer giving his final judgement on such questions till he has read the whole of *The Meaning*. Then, if he finds that some questions have not been answered at all or have not been dealt with fully, he should let me know about it for future consideration.

Abul A'alā Maudūdī


II
AL-BAQARAH
الْبَقَرَة

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الْبَقَرَة

INTRODUCTION

Name:

This Sūrah has been named "Al-Baqarah" from the story of the Cow occurring in it in (vv. 67-73). Each Sūrah of the Qur'ān discusses such numerous and vast themes that no comprehensive titles can be proposed for them corresponding to the themes. In spite of its richness in vocabulary, Arabic after all is a human language. The languages spoken by man suffer from such limitations that they cannot provide the words or phrases which may become suitable and comprehensive titles for these vast themes. Therefore, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) under Divine guidance proposed names instead of titles for most of the Qur'ānic Sūrahs, which serve only as symbols. This Sūrah has been called Al-Baqarah not because it discusses the subject of the cow, but it implies that it is a Sūrah in which the cow has been mentioned.

Sequence:

Though it is a Madani Surah, it follows naturally a Makki Surah *Al-Fatihah,* which ends with the prayer: "Show us the straight way". It begins with the answer to that prayer, "This is the Book (that) ...is guidance.."

Period of Revelation:

The greater part of this Sūrah was revealed after the *Hijrah* during the earliest stage of the Holy Prophet's life at Madinah. The smaller part which was revealed later was included in it because of the relevance of the contents; so much so that the verses prohibiting interest were also included in it although they were sent down during the very last period of the Holy Prophet's life. For the same reason, the concluding verses (vv. 284-286) which had been revealed at Makkah before the *Hijrah* were also included in it.

Historical Background:

In order to understand the meaning of this Sūrah, we should first understand its historical background well.

1. Before the *Hijrah* at Makkah the message of Islam was mostly addressed to the polytheistic Arabs for whom it was a new and unfamiliar thing, but after the *Hijrah* it was also concerned with the Jews, whose settlements adjoined Madinah. They believed in the creed of the Unity of Allah, Prophethood, Revelation, the Hereafter and angels and also in the law which was revealed by Allah to their Prophet Moses (peace be on him), and in principle, their religion was the same Islām that was being taught by the Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). But they had strayed away from it during centuries of continuous degeneration, their creed had been corrupted by many un-Islāmic elements which had no basis in the Torah, and they had adopted many un-Islāmic creeds, rites and customs which did not belong to the original Islām and for which there was no sanction in the Torah. Not only this: they had tampered with the Torah by inserting their own explanations and interpretations into its text. They had distorted even that part of the Word of God, which had remained intact in their scriptures and taken out of it the real spirit of true faith and were now clinging to a lifeless frame of rituals. Consequently, the beliefs, morals and conduct of their rabbis, religious guides, chiefs and common people had gone to the lowest depths of degeneration. The pity is that they were not only satisfied with their condition but loved to cling to it. Besides, they had no intention or inclination to accept any kind of reform. So they became bitter enemies of those who came to teach them the Right Way and did whatever they could to defeat every such effort. Though they were Muslims originally, they had swerved from the real Islām and made innovations and alterations in it and had fallen victims to hair-splitting and sectarianism. They had forgotten and forsaken Allah and begun to serve mammon. So much so that they had even given up their original name "Muslim" and adopted the name "Jew" instead, and had made religion the sole monopoly and heritage of the children of Israel.

So, when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) arrived in Madinah, he was instructed by Allah to invite them to the original, true faith. That is why more than one-third of this Sūrah has been addressed to the children of Israel. A critical review of their history, their moral

degeneration and their religious perversions has been made; side by side with this the high standard of morality and the fundamental principles of the true religion have been put forward in order to bring out clearly the nature of the degeneration of the community of a Prophet when it goes astray and to draw clear lines of demarcation between real piety and formalism, and the essentials and the non-essentials of the true religion.

2. At Makkah Islām was mainly concerned with the propagation of its fundamental principles and the moral training of its followers. But after the migration of the Holy Prophet to Madinah, where Muslims had come to settle from all over Arabia and where a tiny Islāmic State had been set up with the help of the Ansar (local Muslims), naturally the Qur'ān had to turn its attention to the social, cultural, economic, political and legal problems as well. This accounts for the difference between the themes of the Sūrahs revealed at Makkah and those at Madinah. Accordingly about half of this Sūrah deals with those principles and regulations which are essential for the integration and solidarity of a community and for the solution of its problems.

3. After the migration to Madinah, the struggle between Islām and un-Islām had also entered a new phase. Before this the believers, who propagated Islām among their own clans and tribes, had to face its opponents at their own risk. But the conditions had changed at Madinah, where Muslims from all parts of Arabia had come and settled as one community, and had established an independent city state. Here it became an struggle for the survival of the community itself, for the whole of non-Muslim Arabia was bent upon and united in crushing it totally. Hence the following instructions, upon which depended not only its success but also its very survival, were revealed in this Surah :-

(a) The Community should work with the utmost zeal to propagate its ideology and win over to its side the greatest possible number of people.

(b) It should so expose its opponents as to leave no room for doubt in the mind of any sensible person that they were adhering to an absolutely wrong position.

(c) It should infuse in its members (the majority of whom were homeless and indigent and surrounded on all sides by enemies) courage and fortitude so indispensable to their very existence in the

adverse circumstances in which they were struggling and prepare them to face these boldly.

(d) It should also keep them ready and prepared to meet any armed menace, which might come from any side to suppress and crush their ideology, and to oppose it tooth and nail without minding the overwhelming numerical strength and the material resources of its enemies.

(e) It should also create in them the courage which is needed for the eradication of the corrupt ways of ignorance by force if the Arabs do not accept by education the new system which Islām aims to establish.

That is why Allah in this Sūrah has revealed such initial instructions as may help achieve all the above mentioned objects.

4. During this period, a new type of "Muslims," *munafiqin* (hypocrites), had begun to appear. Though signs of duplicity had been noticed during the last days at Makkah, they took a different shape at Madinah. At Makkah there were some people who professed Islām to be true but were not prepared to abide by the consequences of this profession and to sacrifice their worldly interests and relations and bear the afflictions which inevitably follow the acceptance of this creed. But at Madinah, besides these some other kinds of *munafiqin* also began to appear. There were some who denied Islām, but had entered the Islāmic fold merely to harm it from within. There were others who were surrounded by Muslims and, therefore, had become "Muslims" to safeguard their worldly interests. They, therefore, continued to have relations with the enemies so that if the latter became successful, their interests should remain secure. There were still others who had no strong conviction of the truth of Islām but had embraced it along with the people of their families and clans. Lastly, there were those who were intellectually convinced of the truth of Islām but did not have enough moral courage to give up their former traditions, superstitions and customs of ignorance, and live up to the Islāmic moral standards, bear responsibilities and make sacrifices in its way.

At the time of the revelation of Al-Baqarah, all sorts of the hypocrites had begun to appear. Allah has, therefore, briefly pointed out their characteristics here. Afterwards when their evil characteristics and

mischievous deeds became manifest, Allah sent down detailed instructions to deal with them separately.

SUMMARY

Theme: Guidance

This Sūrah is an invitation to the Divine Guidance and all the stories, incidents etc., revolve round this central theme. As this Surah has particularly been addressed to the Jews, many historical events have been cited from their own traditions to admonish and advise them that their own good lies in accepting the Guidance revealed to the Holy Prophet. They should, therefore, be the first to accept it because it was basically the same that was revealed to Prophet Moses (Allah's peace be upon him).

Topics and their Interconnections

1-20 These introductory verses declare the Qur'ān to be the Book of Guidance: enunciate the articles of the Faith--- belief in Allah, Prophethood and Life-after-death; divide mankind into three main groups with regard to its acceptance or rejection-Believers, disbelievers and hypocrites.

21-29 Allah invites mankind to accept the Guidance voluntarily and to submit to Him, the Lord and the Creator of the Universe and to believe in the Qur'ān, His Guidance, and in the Life-after-death.

30-39 The story of the appointment of Adam as Allah's Vicegerent on Earth, of his life in the Garden, of his falling a prey to the temptations of Satan, of his repentance and its acceptance, has been related to show to mankind (Adam's offspring), that the only right thing for them is to accept and follow the Guidance, This story also shows that the Guidance of Islam is the same that was given to Adam and that it is the original religion of mankind.

40-120 In this portion invitation to the Guidance has particularly been extended to the children of Israel and their past and present attitude has been criticised to show that the cause of their degradation was their deviation from the Guidance.

121-141 The Jews have been exhorted to follow Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be Upon him) who had come with the same Guidance and who was a descendant and follower of Prophet Abraham whom

they highly honoured as their ancestor, and professed to follow as a prophet. The story of the building of the Ka'abah by him has been mentioned because it was going to be made the *qiblah* of the Muslim Community.

In this portion, the declaration of the change of *qiblah* from the Temple (Jerusalem) to the Ka'abah (Makkah) has been made as a symbol of the change of leadership from the children of Israel to the Muslim Community, which has also been fore-warned to guard against those transgressions against the Guidance that had led to the deposition of the Jews. 142-152

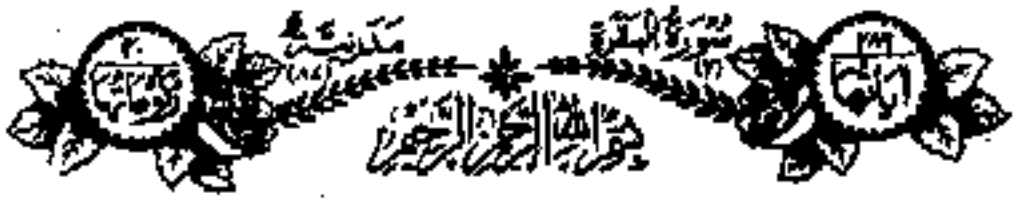
In this portion practical measures have been prescribed to enable the Muslims to discharge the heavy responsibilities of the leadership that had been entrusted to them for the promulgation of the Guidance. Salāt, Fast, Zakāt, Haj and Jihād have been prescribed for the moral training of the *Ummah!* The Believers have been exhorted to obey authority, to be just, to fulfil pledges, to observe treaties, to spend wealth etc., in the way of Allah. Laws rules and regulations have been laid down for their organisation, cohesion and conduct of day-to-day life and for the solution of social, economic, political and international problems; on the other hand, drinking, gambling, lending money on interest etc., have been prohibited to keep the *Ummah* safe from disintegration. In between these, the basic articles of the Faith have been reiterated at suitable places, for these alone can enable and support one to stick to the Guidance. 153-251

These verses serve as an introduction to the prohibition of lending money on interest. The true conception of Allah, Revelation and Life-after-death has been emphasised to keep alive the sense of accountability. The stories of Prophet Abraham (Allah's peace be upon him) and of the one who woke up after a sleep of hundred years have been related to show that Allah is All-Powerful and is able to raise the dead and call them to account. The Believers, therefore, should keep this fact in view and refrain from taking interest on money. 252-260

The theme of 153-251 has been resumed and the Believers have been exhorted to spend in the way of Allah in order to please Him alone. In contrast to this, they have been warned against the evils of lending money on interest. Instructions have also been given for the 261-283

honest conduct of day-to-day business transactions.

284-286 The basic articles of the Faith have been recapitulated here at the end of the Surah, just as they were enunciated at its beginning. Then the Surah ends with a prayer which the Muslim Community needed very much at that time when they were encountering untold hardships in the propagation of the Guidance.



الجزء ١

معانقة ١ الٓمّٓ ۝١ ذٰلِكَ الْكِتٰبُ لَا رَيْبَ ۛ فِيْهِ ۛ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِيْنَ ۝٢ الَّذِيْنَ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ
بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيْمُوْنَ الصَّلٰوةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنٰهُمْ يُنْفِقُوْنَ ۝٣ وَالَّذِيْنَ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ
بِمَآ اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْكَ وَمَآ اُنْزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ ۚ وَبِالْاٰخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوْقِنُوْنَ ۝٤

II

AL - BAQARAH

اَلْبَقَرَة

Verses: 286 *Revealed at Al-Madinah*

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

Alif. Lām. Mim.[1] This is the Book of Allah: there is no doubt[2] about it. It is guidance to Godfearing people,[3] who believe in the unseen,[4] establish the Salāt[5] and expend (in Our way) out of what We have bestowed on them;[6] who believe in the Book We have sent down to you (*i.e.* the Qur'ān) and in the Books sent down before you,[7] and firmly believe in the Hereafter.[8] 1-4

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1. Letters of the Arabic alphabet like Alif, Lam, Mim, called the *muqatta'at*, which are pre-fixed to a number of the Sūrahs of the Qur'ān, were in common use in the Arabic literature of the period when the Qur'ān was revealed. The poets and rhetoricians made use of this style, and instances of this can even be found in the pre-Islāmic prose and poetry which has survived. As their significance was appreciated by all concerned, none objected to or questioned their use, because it was no enigma to them. Even the bitterest opponents of the Qur'ān, who never missed an opportunity, did not raise any objection against their use. But as their use was abandoned with the passage of time, it became difficult for the commentators to determine their exact meaning and significance. An ordinary

reader, however, need not worry about their meanings because they make no difference as far as the Guidance of the Qur'ān is concerned.

2. Its simple meaning is: "No doubt, this is the Book of Allah", but it may also imply that this is the Book which contains nothing doubtful. It is not like the common books on metaphysics and religion which are based on mere speculation and guess-work. Therefore even their authors cannot be free from doubts concerning their own theories, in spite of their assertion that they are convinced of them. In contrast to them, this Book is based on the Truth: its Author is He Who possesses full knowledge of the Reality. Therefore, there is indeed no room for doubt about its contents.

3. That is, though there is nothing but guidance in this Book, there are a few pre-requisites for benefiting from it. The first pre-requisite is that one should be inclined to avoid vice, and should seek and practise virtue. But there is no guidance in the Qur'ān for the people who do not bother to consider whether what they are doing is right or wrong, who follow the ways of the world or their own whims and lusts or move aimlessly in the ways of life.

4. The second condition for obtaining guidance from the Qur'ān is that one must believe in the "unseen" -- those realities which cannot be perceived by the senses and which do not come within human experience and observation, *e.g.* the essence and attributes of Allah, Angels, Revelation, Heaven, Hell, etc. These things must be taken on trust from the experts (Prophets) just as we do in many cases in the physical world. Therefore, only such a person, who believes in the "unseen", can benefit from the Guidance of the Qur'ān. As for the one who believes only in those things which can be seen, tasted and smelt, or can be measured and weighed, cannot get any guidance from this Book.

5. The third condition to benefit from the Qur'ān is that one should be willing and ready to put into practice the teachings of the Qur'ān. As the *Salāt* (Prayer) is the first and foremost obligatory duty enjoined by the Qur'ān, it is the practical proof and permanent test of the sincerity of one's Faith. Therefore, after a person's profession of Islām, the moment he hears the call to the Prayer (which sounds regularly five times a day from every mosque in the Muslim world), he should join the congregation for the *Salāt*, because this determines whether he is sincere in his profession or not. If he does not attend to the call and join the congregation, it is an indication that he is not sincere in his profession.

It must also be noted that *"iqama-tus-Salāt"* (the establishment of Prayer) is the comprehensive term. It means that *Salāt* should be performed in congregation and that permanent arrangements should be made for it in every

habitation; otherwise *Salāt* will not be considered to have been established, even if every inhabitant of a place offers the *Salāt* individually.

6. The fourth condition to benefit from the Qur'ān is that one should be willing to part with one's money according to the instructions of the Book in order to render the rights of Allah and Man and should make monetary sacrifices for the cause of Islām which he has accepted.

7. The fifth condition is that one should believe in the truth of all those Books which Allah sent down by Revelation to the Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be His peace and blessings) and the Prophets before him at different times in different countries. Those who do not believe in any kind of guidance from Allah, cannot at all benefit from the guidance of the Qur'ān. Likewise those who profess to believe in the necessity of guidance from Allah but do not turn to Revelation and the Prophets for it, or who dub their own theories as "divine light", cannot obtain any guidance from it. Moreover, guidance is also denied to those who believe only in that revealed Book or Books in which their forefathers believed and reject all other guidance received from the same Source. Apart from all such people, the Qur'ān guides only those who believe that they stand in need of Divine Guidance as well as admit that it does not come to every man individually but reaches humanity only through the Prophets and revealed Books. Then those who want guidance should not be slaves to any racial or national prejudices but should be seekers after truth and should submit to it wherever and in whatever form they find it.

8. This is the sixth and last condition. "Hereafter" is a comprehensive word which applies to the collection of many beliefs, which are as follows:

(a) Man has not been created irresponsible in the world but he is answerable to Allah for all his deeds here.

(b) The present world order is not everlasting, but has to come to an end at a time only known to Allah.

(c) After the present order has been brought to an end, Allah will create a new world, when He will bring back to life all human beings, born from the beginning of creation till Resurrection, simultaneously and will call them to account for their deeds, and then will reward them justly accordingly to what they had done in the world.

(d) Those, who will be judged as good by Allah, will go to Paradise, and those who will be judged as bad will be cast into Hell.

(e) The criterion of success or failure is not the prosperity or adversity of this worldly life, but successful in actual fact will be he who comes out successful in Allah's final judgement, and failure he who is a failure there.

[Contd. on p.56

أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَىٰ هُدًى مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ ۖ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٥﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَأَنذَرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٦﴾ خَتَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ
قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَىٰ سَمْعِهِمْ ۖ وَعَلَىٰ أَبْصَارِهِمْ غِشَاوَةٌ ۖ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٧﴾
وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَقُولُ آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَبِالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَمَا هُم بِمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٨﴾
يُخَادِعُونَ اللَّهَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ۚ وَمَا يَخْدَعُونَ إِلَّا أَنفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٩﴾
فِي قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٌ ۙ فَزَادَهُمُ اللَّهُ مَرَضًا ۚ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ۢ بِمَا كَانُوا
يَكْذِبُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ لَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۙ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ
مُصْلِحُونَ ﴿١١﴾ أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْمُفْسِدُونَ وَلَٰكِن لَّا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٢﴾ وَإِذَا
قِيلَ لَهُمْ آمِنُوا كَمَا آمَنَ النَّاسُ قَالُوا أَنُؤْمِنُ كَمَا آمَنَ السُّفَهَاءُ ۗ أَلَا
إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ السُّفَهَاءُ وَلَٰكِن لَّا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٣﴾ وَإِذَا لَقُوا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَالُوا
آمَنَّا ۖ وَإِذَا خَلَوْا إِلَىٰ شَيَاطِينِهِمْ ۙ قَالُوا إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُسْتَهْزِئُونَ ﴿١٤﴾
اللَّهُ يَسْتَهْزِئُ بِهِمْ وَيَمُدُّهُمْ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ﴿١٥﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ
اشْتَرَوُا الضَّلَالَةَ بِالْهُدَىٰ فَمَا رَبِحَت تِّجَارَتُهُمْ وَمَا كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١٦﴾
مَثَلُهُمْ كَمَثَلِ الَّذِي اسْتَوْقَدَ نَارًا ۖ فَلَمَّا أَضَاءَتْ مَا حَوْلَهُ ذَهَبَ اللَّهُ
بِنُورِهِمْ وَتَرَكَهُمْ فِي ظُلُمَاتٍ لَّا يُبْصِرُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ صُمٌّ بُكْمٌ عُمْيٌ فَهُمْ لَا
يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ أَوْ كَصَيِّبٍ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ فِيهِ ظُلُمَاتٌ وَرَعْدٌ وَبَرْقٌ ۚ يَجْعَلُونَ
أَصَابِعَهُمْ فِي آذَانِهِم مِّنَ الصَّوَاعِقِ حَذَرَ الْمَوْتِ ۚ وَاللَّهُ مُحِيطٌ
بِالْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٩﴾ يَكَادُ الْبَرْقُ يَخْطَفُ أَبْصَارَهُمْ ۖ كُلَّمَا أَضَاءَ لَهُم مَّشَوْا
فِيهِ ۖ وَإِذَا أَظْلَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ قَامُوا ۚ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَذَهَبَ بِسَمْعِهِمْ

Such people are on the right way from their Lord and such are truly successful. 5

As for those who have rejected[9] (these things), it is all the same to them whether you warn them or do not warn them: they are not going to believe. Allah has sealed up their hearts and ears and a covering has fallen over their eyes,[10] and they have incurred the severest punishment. 6-7

Then there are some who say, "We believe in Allah and the Last Day", whereas they do not believe at all. They thus try to deceive Allah and the Believers, but they succeed in deceiving none except themselves and they realize it not.[11] In their hearts is a disease which Allah has increased all the more[12] and a painful doom is in store for them for the lie they utter. Whenever it is said to them, "Spread not disorder on the earth", their reply is, "We only seek to put things aright". - Beware! they do spread disorder but they realize it not. And when it is said to them, "Believe sincerely as the other people have believed",[13] they reply, "Should we believe as fools have believed?"[14] Beware! they themselves are the fools, but they know it not. When they meet those who believe, they say, "We, too, are believers", but when they privily meet their evil geniuses,[15] they say, "Indeed we are with you: we are only mocking at these people". -- (Little do they realize that) Allah is mocking at them. He gives them rope enough, and they wander on and on blindly in their mischief and rebellion. These are the people who have bartered away Guidance for error, but this is a profitless bargain that they have made, and they are not at all on the right way. 8-16

Their condition may be described in a parable: a man kindled a fire and when it illuminated all around him, Allah took away the light from their eyes and left them in utter darkness, where they could not see anything.[16] They are deaf; they are dumb; they are blind[17] so they will not return (to the right way). Or (still another parable may be cited to depict their condition): heavy rain is falling from the sky, accompanied by pitch darkness, thunder and lightning. When they hear the thunderclap, they thrust their fingers into their ears for fear of death, but Allah is encircling the disbelievers on all sides.[18] The lightning terrifies them as if it were going to snatch away their eye-sight from them. When they see light, they move on a little further and 17-20

when it becomes dark for them, they stand still.[19] Had Allah so willed, He could have deprived them totally of their hearing[20] and their sight. Most surely Allah has power over everything.'

Contd. from p.53]

Those who do not believe in the life-after-death with the above implications, cannot benefit from the Qur'ān because the one who entertains even the slightest doubt about these, not to speak of rejecting them, can never follow the way of life which the Qur'ān prescribes.

9. That is, they refused to believe and fulfil all or any of the above-mentioned six conditions.

10. It does not mean that Allah had sealed up their hearts, so they refused to believe. But it means that when they rejected the above-mentioned pre-requisites of belief and chose and adopted for themselves a way contrary to the one presented by the Qur'ān, Allah sealed up their hearts and ears. The Qur'ān simply states a law of Nature: if one takes a biased view of something and deliberately nourishes prejudices against it in his mind, he can neither see any virtue in it nor hear anything in its favour nor open his heart to consider it dispassionately. This is the law of Nature and, as it is Allah's law, the act of sealing up of the hearts and the ears and the covering of the eyes has been attributed to Him.

11. They deceive themselves by imagining that their duplicity will safeguard their interests but obviously their policy will prove harmful in this world as well as in the next. A hypocrite might succeed in deceiving some people for some time but he cannot deceive all people for all times. When such a person is exposed, he loses all honour once and for all. As to the Hereafter, mere lip-service will carry no weight there because it is deeds alone that matter there.

12. "A disease": the disease of hypocrisy; and "Allah is increasing their disease all the more" means that He does not punish the hypocrites for their hypocrisy immediately, but gives them respite so that when their duplicity appears to succeed apparently they become more and more convinced of its efficiency and they go on becoming more and more hypocritical in their attitude and conduct.

13. That is, "Just as the other people of your nation have accepted Islām truly and sincerely, so should you also accept it truly and honestly, if you profess to accept it."

14. They regarded as fools the people who had accepted Islām sincerely and exposed themselves to troubles, hardships and dangers. In their opinion it was nothing but folly to earn the hostility of the whole country merely for the sake of

truth and righteousness. They considered it wisdom not to bother about the right and the wrong at all but to look only after one's own interests.

15. *Shayatin* plural of *Shaitān*, is an insurgent, haughty and devilish person, or an evil genius. This word is used both for the men and the jinn. Though it has mostly been used in the Qur'ān for the jinn devils, in some places it has also been applied to human devils, and from the context it can easily be judged where it refers to human and where to jinn devils. Here it refers to the Arab chiefs who were in the fore-front in their opposition to Islām.

16. The parable means that when a person, Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him), spread the light of Truth that discriminated right from wrong and virtue from vice, those who used their faculties properly began to distinguish between these things. But the hypocrites, who were blinded by self-interest, could not see the right path even with the help of this light.

"Allah took away the light from their eyes" should not cause one the misunderstanding that the responsibility of not seeing the truth did not lie on them. Allah deprives of the sight only him who is not himself a seeker after truth, who chooses error for himself instead of guidance, who shuts his eyes to the truth. When they themselves turned away from the light of truth and chose to wander only in the darkness of falsehood, Allah also let them go astray.

17. "Deaf" to hear the Truth, "dumb" to speak the Truth and "blind" to see the Truth.

18. By thrusting their fingers into their ears, they delude themselves for a while that they have escaped destruction. But they cannot, in fact, save themselves because Allah, with all His powers, is encircling them on all sides.

19. The first parable depicts those hypocrites who in their inmost hearts did not believe in Islām at all, but had become 'Muslims' for the sake of self-interest or expediency. The second parable gives a description of those hypocrites who were suffering from doubt, suspicion and lack of faith. Though they were not wholly unbelievers, they practised Islām only to the extent which might not involve them in trouble. In this parable rainfall stands for Islām which came as a blessing to humanity; pitch darkness, thunder and lightning stand for the impending obstacles, the threatening dangers and the glaring difficulties which were being experienced on account of the strong resistance from the opponents of Islām. When the situation eased a little, they began to move onward on the path of Islām, but when the clouds of difficulties began to appear, or when they were given such commands as were against their self-interest or their superstitious beliefs and prejudices, they again stood still in sheer perplexity.

[Contd. on p. 60

وَ اَبْصَارِهِمْ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَیْءٍ قَدِیْرٌ ﴿۲۰﴾ یٰۤاَیُّهَا النَّاسُ اعْبُدُوْا رَبَّكُمُ
الَّذِیْ خَلَقَكُمْ وَ الَّذِیْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿۲۱﴾ الَّذِیْ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ
الْاَرْضَ فِرَاشًا وَّ السَّمَآءَ بِنَآءً ۪ وَّ اَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَاَخْرَجَ بِهٖ مِنَ
الثَّمَرٰتِ رِزْقًا لَّكُمْ ۚ فَلَا تَجْعَلُوْا لِلّٰهِ اَنْدَادًا وَّ اَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿۲۲﴾ وَ اِنْ
كُنْتُمْ فِیْ رَیْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلٰى عَبْدِنَا فَاْتُوْا بِسُوْرَةٍ مِّنْ مِّثْلِهٖ ۪ وَ ادْعُوْا
شُهَدَآءَكُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِیْنَ ﴿۲۳﴾ فَاِنْ لَّمْ تَفْعَلُوْا وَ لَنْ
تَفْعَلُوْا فَاتَّقُوا النَّارَ الَّتِیْ وَقُوْدُهَا النَّاسُ وَ الْحِجَارَةُ ۚ اُعِدَّتْ لِلْكٰفِرِیْنَ ﴿۲۴﴾
وَ بَشِّرِ الَّذِیْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَ عَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ اَنَّ لَهُمْ جَنّٰتٍ تَجْرِیْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا
الْاَنْهٰرُ ؕ كُلَّمَا رُزِقُوْا مِنْهَا مِنْ ثَمَرَةٍ رِّزْقًا ۙ قَالُوْا هٰذَا الَّذِیْ رُزِقْنَا
مِنْ قَبْلُ ۙ وَ اُتُوْا بِهٖ مُتَشَابِهًا ؕ وَ لَهُمْ فِیْهَاۤ اَزْوَاجٌ مُّطَهَّرَةٌ ۙ وَّ هُمْ
فِیْهَا خٰلِدُوْنَ ﴿۲۵﴾ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا یَسْتَحْیٖۤ اَنْ یَّضْرِبَ مَثَلًا مَّا بَعُوْضَةً
فَمَا فَوْقَهَا ؕ فَاَمَّا الَّذِیْنَ اٰمَنُوْا فَیَعْلَمُوْنَ اَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَّبِّهِمْ ۚ وَ
اَمَّا الَّذِیْنَ كَفَرُوْا فَیَقُوْلُوْنَ مَا ذَاۤ اَرَادَ اللّٰهُ بِهٰذَا مَثَلًا ۘ یُضِلُّ بِهٖ
كَثِیْرًا ۙ وَّ یَهْدِیْ بِهٖ كَثِیْرًا ؕ وَ مَا یُضِلُّ بِهٖۤ اِلَّا الْفٰسِقِیْنَ ﴿۲۶﴾ الَّذِیْنَ
یَنْقُضُوْنَ عَهْدَ اللّٰهِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مِیْثَاقِهٖ ۪ وَ یَقْطَعُوْنَ مَاۤ اَمَرَ اللّٰهُ بِهٖۤ اَنْ
یُّوْصَلَ وَ یُفْسِدُوْنَ فِی الْاَرْضِ ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْخٰسِرُوْنَ ﴿۲۷﴾ كَیْفَ تَكْفُرُوْنَ
بِاللّٰهِ وَ كُنْتُمْ اَمْوَاتًا فَاَحْیَاكُمْ ۚ ثُمَّ یُمِیْتُكُمْ ثُمَّ یُحْیِیْكُمْ ثُمَّ اِلَیْهِ
تُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿۲۸﴾ هُوَ الَّذِیْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مَّا فِی الْاَرْضِ جَمِیْعًا ۚ ثُمَّ اسْتَوٰۤى
اِلَى السَّمَآءِ فَسَوّٰىهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمٰوٰتٍ ؕ وَ هُوَ بِكُلِّ شَیْءٍ عَلِیْمٌ ﴿۲۹﴾ وَ اِذْ

O Mankind,[21] submit to your Lord Who created you and those 21-22
who were before you; in this way only you may expect to save yourselves.[22] It is He Who has made the earth a bed for you and the sky a canopy; and it is He Who sends down rain from above for the growth of every kind of food products for your sustenance. So, when you know this, you should not set up equals to rank with Allah.[23]

And if you be in doubt whether the Book We have sent down to 23-24
Our Servant is from Us or not, then produce, at least, one Sūrah like this.[24] You may call all your associates to assist you and avail yourselves of the help of any one other than Allah. If you are genuine in your doubt, do this. But if you do not do this, and you can never do this, then fear the Fire which has been prepared for the disbelievers and which shall have men and stones for fuel.[25]

And give good news (O Muhammad), to those who believe in 25
this Book and do good deeds (in accordance with its teachings). For them there will be gardens underneath which canals flow. Their fruits will so resemble the fruits on the Earth that every time they will be provided with fruits, they will say, "Such fruits were provided to us before on the Earth."[26] And there will be pure spouses[27] for them and therein they will live for ever.

Well, Allah is not ashamed to cite the similitude of a gnat or of 26-27
something even more insignificant than this.[28] As for those who believe, they come to know from the same similitude that it is the Revelation from their Lord; but those who disbelieve, say, "What does Allah mean by such similitudes?"[29] Allah leads astray many and guides many to the right way by the same thing.[30] And He leads astray only those who disobey Allah; who break Allah's covenant after ratifying it;[31] who cut asunder what Allah has ordered to be joined,[32] and who produce chaos on the Earth.[33] These are the people who are indeed the losers.

How is it that you adopt the attitude of disbelief towards Allah 28-29
when the fact is that you were lifeless and He gave you life, and He will take away life from you and will again restore you to life: then you shall ultimately return to Him. He it is Who created for you all that there is on the Earth; He then turned to the sky and ordered it into

seven heavens.[34] And He has full knowledge of everything.[35]

Contd. from p.57

20. That is, Allah could, if He so willed, totally deprive these hypocrites also of the power to see the Truth just as He deprived the hypocrites described in the first parable. But Allah does not do so because it is His will to give them respite to see the Truth and hear the Truth to the extent they want to see and hear it. That is why He left them with only as much power as they made use of in seeing and hearing the Truth.

21. Though the Qur'ān invites all human beings to its message, to benefit or not to benefit from it depends on whether the people are really willing and inclined to benefit from it and on Allah's grace accordingly. Therefore, in the preceding verses distinction has been made between the people to show as to which of them can benefit from the guidance of this Book and which cannot. Now, the actual message for which the Qur'ān was revealed is presented before all mankind.

22. From errors of judgement and action in the world and from the punishment of God in the Hereafter.

23. That is, "When you yourselves admit and acknowledge that all this has been done only by Allah, then you should serve and worship Him alone." "To set up others to equal in rank with Allah" means to hold others besides Allah as worthy of some kind of service and worship. As will be explained by the Qur'ān below, there are certain kinds of worship which should exclusively be performed for the sake of Allah; associating others with these is the *shirk* for the eradication of which the Qur'ān was sent down.

24. This challenge had been given several times in the Qur'ān at Makkah. It was meant to convince the opponents that the Qur'ān is Divine Word and could not be produced by human mind. Now it was reiterated at Madinah. (See Yunus, X: 38-39, Hud XI: 13-14).Bani Israel XVII: 88, At Tur LII: 33-34).

25. The allusion means: "You alone will not become fuel for Hell, but the idols of stone which you worship as deities in the world, will also be there with you to show that they had no share whatever in Godhead."

26. It will be a pleasant surprise for the dwellers of Paradise to have fruits just like the ones with which they were familiar on the earth. Of course, they will be much more delicious. For instance, they will be like mangoes, pomegranates, oranges, etc., in shape and colour and the dwellers of Paradise will at once recognize them as such but they will be infinitely more delicious than the mangoes, pomegranates and oranges of the world.

27. The word *azwaj* (sing. *zauj*) as used in the original is used both for the husband and for the wife: the wife is *zauj* for the husband, and the husband *zauj* for the wife. In Paradise the spouses will be joined on the basis of piety. For instance, if a certain man lived a pious life in this world, but his wife did not, their marriage will be dissolved in the Hereafter, and the pious man will be united with another pious woman whose marriage had similarly been dissolved and so on. But if both the husband and the wife led pious lives here, they will continue to live as husband and wife for ever in Paradise.

28. Here an objection has been answered without making mention of it. The objection was that if the Qur'ān had been the Book of Allah, it would not have adduced illustrations from such insignificant things as gnats, spiders, ants, bees, etc.

29. Those people who do not want to understand the Reality and do not seek the Truth, get entangled in the words of such similitudes, draw wrong conclusions and go astray from the Truth on account of their own perversion. On the contrary, the seekers-after-truth, who are possessed of insight, ponder over the wisdom contained in them and are convinced that these sublime things can only be from Allah.

30. *"Fasiq"*: disobedient, the one who transgresses the bounds set by Allah.

31. The edicts or instructions issued by a sovereign to his subjects are called *'ahd* according to the Arabic idiom, because they are obligatory on them. In this verse the word *'ahd* has been used in the same sense. Allah's *'ahd* is His standing command to mankind to submit to Him, to obey Him and worship Him alone. The ratification of the same refers to the covenant to which the whole of mankind agreed at the creation of Adam: it was that they would submit to Allah. (For further details, please refer to Al-A'raf; VII: 172).

32. That is, these people break off the relations which Allah has enjoined to be established and upon the estblishment and strength of which depends man's individual and collective well-being. This concise sentence is so vast in meaning that it covers the whole of the moral world, ranging from relations between two persons to international relations.

"Breaking off relations" not only implies violation of human relations but it also implies abuse of relations in any way, because the result will be the same if and when these relations are not observed rightly and properly. The Qur'ān, therefore, abhors not only their violation but also their abuse as it causes chaos, conflict and disorder in the world.

[Contd. on p.64

قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اِنِّیْ جَاعِلٌ فِی الْاَرْضِ خَلِیْفَةً ؕ قَالُوْٓا اَتَجْعَلُ فِیْهَا
مَنْ یُّفْسِدُ فِیْهَا وَیَسْفِكُ الدِّمَآءَ ۚ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ
لَكَ ؕ قَالَ اِنِّیْٓ اَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿30﴾ وَعَلَّمَ اٰدَمَ الْاَسْمَآءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ
عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ ۙ فَقَالَ اَنْۢبِـُٔوْنِیْ بِاَسْمَآءِ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِیْنَ ﴿31﴾
قَالُوْا سُبْحٰنَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَآ اِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا ؕ اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ الْعَلِیْمُ الْحَكِیْمُ ﴿32﴾ قَالَ
یٰٓاٰدَمُ اَنْۢبِئْهُمْ بِاَسْمَآئِهِمْ ۚ فَلَمَّآ اَنْۢبَاَهُمْ بِاَسْمَآئِهِمْ ۙ قَالَ اَلَمْ اَقُلْ لَّكُمْ
اِنِّیْٓ اَعْلَمُ غَیْبَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۙ وَاَعْلَمُ مَا تُبْدُوْنَ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ
تَكْتُمُوْنَ ﴿33﴾ وَاِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اسْجُدُوْا لِاٰدَمَ فَسَجَدُوْٓا اِلَّآ اِبْلِیْسَ ؕ
اَبٰی وَاسْتَكْبَرَ ۫ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكٰفِرِیْنَ ﴿34﴾ وَقُلْنَا یٰٓاٰدَمُ اسْكُنْ اَنْتَ وَ
زَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَكُلَا مِنْهَا رَغَدًا حَیْثُ شِئْتُمَا ۪ وَلَا تَقْرَبَا هٰذِهِ
الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُوْنَا مِنَ الظّٰلِمِیْنَ ﴿35﴾ فَاَزَلَّهُمَا الشَّیْطٰنُ عَنْهَا فَاَخْرَجَهُمَا مِمَّا
كَانَا فِیْهِ ۪ وَقُلْنَا اهْبِطُوْا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ ۚ وَلَكُمْ فِی الْاَرْضِ
مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَّمَتَاعٌ اِلٰی حِیْنٍ ﴿36﴾ فَتَلَقّٰٓی اٰدَمُ مِنْ رَّبِّهٖ كَلِمٰتٍ فَتَابَ عَلَیْهِ ؕ
اِنَّهٗ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِیْمُ ﴿37﴾ قُلْنَا اهْبِطُوْا مِنْهَا جَمِیْعًا ۚ فَاِمَّا یَاْتِیَنَّكُمْ
مِّنِّیْ هُدًی فَمَنْ تَبِعَ هُدَایَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَیْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ یَحْزَنُوْنَ ﴿38﴾
وَالَّذِیْنَ كَفَرُوْا وَكَذَّبُوْا بِاٰیٰتِنَآ اُولٰٓئِكَ اَصْحٰبُ النَّارِ ۚ هُمْ فِیْهَا خٰلِدُوْنَ ﴿39﴾
یٰبَنِیْٓ اِسْرَآءِیْلَ اذْكُرُوْا نِعْمَتِیَ الَّتِیْٓ اَنْعَمْتُ عَلَیْكُمْ وَاَوْفُوْا بِعَهْدِیْٓ
اُوْفِ بِعَهْدِكُمْ ۚ وَاِیَّایَ فَارْهَبُوْنِ ﴿40﴾ وَاٰمِنُوْا بِمَآ اَنْزَلْتُ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا مَعَكُمْ
وَلَا تَكُوْنُوْٓا اَوَّلَ كَافِرٍ بِهٖ ۪ وَلَا تَشْتَرُوْا بِاٰیٰتِیْ ثَمَنًا قَلِیْلًا ۫ وَّاِیَّایَ

Just[36] recall the time when your Lord said to the angels,[37] "I am going to appoint a vicegerent[38] on the Earth." They humbly enquired, "Are you going to appoint such a one as will cause disorder and shed blood on the Earth?[39] We are already engaged in hymning Your praise, and hallowing Your name."[40] Allah replied, "I know what you do not know."[41] After this he taught Adam the names of all things.[42] Then He set these before the angels and asked, "Tell Me the names of these things, if you are right (in thinking that the appointment of a vicegerent will cause disorder)". They replied, "Glory be to You. You alone are free from defect. We possess only that much knowledge which You have given us.[43] Indeed You alone are All-Knowing and All-Wise." Then Allah said to Adam, "Tell them the names of these things." When Adam told them the names of all those things,[44] Allah declared, "Did I not tell you that I know those truths about the Earth and the Heavens which are hidden from you? I know what you disclose and what you hide." 30-33

Then We commanded the angels, "Bow yourselves to Adam." All bowed[45] but *Iblis*[46] refused to do so; he waxed proud and joined the defiers.[47] 34

Then We said, "O Adam, you and your wife, both dwell in the Garden and eat to your hearts' content where from you will, but do not go near this tree;[48] otherwise you shall become transgressors"[49] After a time Satan tempted them with that tree to disobey Our Command and brought them out of the state they were in, and We decreed, "Now, go down all of you from here; you are enemies of one another.[50] Henceforth you shall dwell and provide for yourselves on the Earth for a specified period." At that time Adam learnt appropriate words from his Lord and repented,[51] and his Lord accepted his repentance, for He is very Relenting and very Merciful.[52] 35-37

We said, "Now go down, all of you from here.[53] Henceforth there shall come to you Guidance from Me now and again: whoever will follow it shall have neither fear nor sorrow, and whoever will refuse to accept it and defy Our Revelation,[54] they shall be doomed to the Fire wherein they shall remain for ever.[55] 38-39

O children of Israel![56] Just recall to mind My favour wherewith I blessed you:fulfil your covenant with Me and I shall fulfil My 40

covenant with you, and fear Me alone.

Contd. from p. 61]

33. In these sentences the full definition of *fāsiq* has been given: he is one who breaks off or vitiates relations between man and Allah or between man and man, and thus produces chaos on the earth.

34. It is not easy to determine the significance of "seven heavens". In every age man has been formulating different theories about the heaven and the expanse of space surrounding the earth and beyond it according to his observations and speculations, which have been always changing. Hence it will not be correct to link anyone of these with the "seven heavens" referred to in the Qur'ān. It may either mean that God has divided the whole Universe beyond the earth into seven permanent spheres, or that the part of the Universe in which the earth lies consists of seven spheres.

35. Here, the people have been warned of two things: first, that they cannot, and should not, adopt an attitude of disbelief and rebellion against Allah, Who knows everything and from Whom nothing that one does remains hidden. Second, that the God Who knows everything is, in fact, the Source of true knowledge. Any one who turns away from Him, will surely go astray into the darknesses of ignorance. When none beside Him is the source of knowledge, and none beside Him can provide the light by which one may walk one's way of life, what is then the good of turning away from Him?

36. In the foregoing verses, Man has been asked to submit to Allah because He is his Creator and Sustainer and has power over his life and death, and because He is the Master and Ruler of the Universe in which he lives. In these verses, he has been exhorted to submit to Him because he is His vicegerent on the earth. As such, he is not only bound to serve Him but also to obey and act according to the Guidance sent down by Him. For if he did not do so and yielded to the temptations of Satan, his eternal enemy, he would be guilty of the worst crime of rebellion against Allah and meet with evil consequences.

Incidentally, the Qur'ān here throws light on the truth about man and his correct position in the Universe and presents the chapter of human history, which man could not have ascertained in any other way. The important results that this chapter yields, are far more precious than the results which man tries to obtain by excavating miscellaneous bones from the earth and joining them together by speculation and conjecture.

37. *"Malak"* literally means a "messenger", which is translated *farishta* (angel). Angels are not mere abstract powers without personality; they are beings

with personalities and are so to speak the agents of Allah, Who employs them for the administration of His Kingdom. Ignorant people mistook them for associates in Godhead; others thought they were related to God and started to worship them as deities.

38. *Khalifah*: one who exercises the delegated powers on behalf of another as his vicegerent. *Khalifah* thus is not the master, but deputy of the Master; his powers are not his own but delegated to him by the real Master. He has, therefore, no right to have his own will but he is there to fulfil the will of the delegating Authority. It would be dishonesty and treason, if he assumed sovereign powers, or used them according to his own whim, or if he acknowledged another as his sovereign and submitted to his will.

39. This was not an objection but a query raised by the angels, for the angels dare not object to any scheme of Allah. From the word *Khalifah* they had understood that the one, who was about to be created, was going to be entrusted with some powers, but they could not understand how an autonomous creature could fit in this totalitarian system of the universe. They also could not understand how that part of the universe, in which someone was entrusted with autonomy, could be free from disorder.

40. By this, the angels did not mean to say that they should be entrusted with the vicegerency because they deserved it. They simply meant to say, "We are carrying out orders obediently, faithfully and earnestly and are keeping the whole universe clean and in order, and sing hymns of Your praise and sanctify You as Your humble servants. Therefore, we are unable to understand what need then is there for a vicegerent."

The word *tasbih* has a double meaning: it means "to sanctify" as well as "to work earnestly and do one's utmost." Similarly *taqdis* also means both to sanctify and to purify.

41. This was the reply to the second doubt of the angels: "You can not understand the need and wisdom of the appointment of a vicegerent as I do. Your services do not suffice for the purpose that I have in view; I want something more than the services you have mentioned. That is why I am going to create a being on the Earth and endow him with some powers."

42. Nomenclature is the means by which human mind grasps the knowledge of things. Hence, the whole information of man, in fact, consists of assigning names for things. Thus, teaching Adam the names of all things was meant to impart their knowledge to him.

43. It appears that the knowledge of each angel and of each species of angels is confined only to his or its own special sphere. For example, the angels

who deal with the air, know everything about the air but nothing about water. The same is true about the angels who are responsible for other spheres. In contrast to them, man has been granted comprehensive knowledge. He may not know as much about these things as the angels in charge of a special sphere do but the comprehensiveness of knowledge that man has been granted has not been granted to the angels.

44. This demonstration was the answer to the first doubt of the angels. Thus, Allah, so to say, informed them: "I am not giving Adam only authority but also knowledge. The chaos that you apprehended from his appointment is only one aspect of the matter. It has its good aspect also, which is more weighty and valuable than the evil aspect, and a wise man does not give up a greater good because of a lesser evil."

45. This was symbolic of the submission and subjugation to Man of all the angels appointed to manage the Earth and that part of the Universe which is connected with it in any way. As Man was being appointed vicegerent in this part by Allah's command, it was ordained that all the angels, who worked in it must, as far and as long as Allah willed, cooperate with him in their respective spheres whether he wanted to use the powers given to him rightly or wrongly. This implied: "You must help him in whatever he wants to do, irrespective of whether it is right or wrong. If he wants to commit theft or offer the Prayer, or intends to do another good or evil, you must cooperate with him in both cases as long as We allow him to act according to his will and choice." This may be illustrated by the example of a government officer. He is obeyed within his jurisdiction by every official but no sooner is he deposed by the government than those very officials, who carried out his orders promptly cease to obey him. They even handcuff him and take him to prison, if the government so orders. The command given to the angels to bow down before Adam was in the same nature. Possibly the word *sajdah* (bowing down) here is symbolic of only submission, but this also is possible that the angels were ordered to perform some such act actually to signify their subordination, and this seems to be more correct.

46. *Iblis*: dejected and desperate. As a term it is the name of the Jinn who disobeyed Allah and refused to bow down to Adam as a symbol of subordination to him and his offspring and asked Allah to grant him the opportunity of tempting mankind up to the Last Day. He is also called "*ash-Shaitan*" (Satan). He is not merely an abstract power of evil but is a being with his own personality like that of man. He was not an angel as is commonly understood but was one of the jinn who form a distinct species of their own separate from the angels. (Refer to Al-Kahf, XVIII: 50).

47. From the words of the Text it so appears that probably *Iblis* was not alone in refusing to bow down before Adam, but a group of the jinn also was bent upon disobedience. *Iblis* has been particularly mentioned because he was their chief who led the rebellion. But this verse can also be translated as: "He was of the disbelievers." In this case, it would mean that there already existed a group of rebellious and disobedient jinn and *Iblis* belonged to it. The word "*shayatin*" in the Qur'ân has generally been used for these jinn and their species, and wherever there is no basis for taking *shayatin* to imply men, this same jinn satans are implied.

48. This shows that Adam and Eve were first kept in the "Garden" for a trial of their inclinations before they were to be sent to the Earth, the place where they were appointed as vicegerent. A tree was chosen for this purpose and they were forbidden even to go near it. They were duly warned that if they violated the command, they would be considered guilty of iniquity in the sight of Allah. The discussion as to what tree it was and why they were forbidden to go near it, is unnecessary. They were not forbidden because there was something intrinsically evil in the tree itself by which Adam and Eve could be harmed. It was chosen for the purpose of trial to see how far they remained constant on obedience to Allah's command as against the temptations of Satan. For this purpose it was enough to select a tree. That is why Allah has not mentioned the name and any characteristics of the tree.

The Garden was a very suitable place for this trial because it was meant to show to Man that Paradise alone was the fit place for Allah's vicegerent, but if he yielded to satanic temptations, he would deprive himself of it. The only way to regain it was to oppose the enemy successfully who was always on the look-out to mislead him

The tree has not been named or pointedd out specifically in the Quran because there was nothing intrinsically evil in the tree itself. It was merely chosen for the purpose of trial..

49. The Arabic word *zalim* is very comprehensive in its meaning. *Zulm* is "violation of a right or duty" and *zalim* is one who violates a right or duty. Anyone who disobeys Allah really violates three basic rights. First, he violates the rights of Allah Who is worthy of obedience. Second, he violates the rights of all those things and beings whom he employs in this disobedience, *e.g.*, his own limbs and faculties, his fellow beings and those angels who contribute to the fulfilment of his will and all those things which he uses for the performance of the work of iniquity, for they have a right to be used only in accordance with the will of the real Master. But it is an act of iniquity, if he abuses the powers he has over them. Lastly, he violates his own rights on himself, for his own self has a right that he

should do his best to save it from destruction. He is also guilty of iniquity against himself when he brings the wrath of Allah on himself by his disobedience. That is why the Qur'ān, in many places has used the term *zulm* for sin and *zalim* for the sinner.

50. That is, "Satan shall be the adversary of man and man the adversary of Satan". The fact, that Satan tries his utmost to beguile man from the path of Allah to the path of destruction, is a clear proof that he is the arch-enemy of man. On the other side, man's humanity demands that he should fight Satan as his enemy. But it is a pity that man is so beguiled by the temptations of Satan that he begins to take him as his friend. This, however, does not mean that their mutual enmity has really been changed into friendship. It only means that man has been beguiled by his opponent and caught in the snare which has been laid for him.

51. When Adam felt sorry for his guilt and wanted to repent and return to Allah, he could not find appropriate words for asking Allah's pardon. Then Allah took pity upon him on account of his grief and helplessness and taught him the appropriate words.

The Arabic word "*taubah*", means both "to turn back" and "to turn to". When applied to man, it means that he has turned back from rebellion to submission, and, when it is ascribed to Allah, it means that He has again turned with compassion to the penitent person.

52. Here the Qur'ān rejects the theory that the consequences of sin are inevitable and every man shall bear these anyhow. This is one of those self-invented, misleading theories which have done great harm to humanity. As a result of this, one loses for ever all hope of reform, when once one is involved in sin. Even if he feels sorry for a past sin and wants to make amends for it and changes his life for the better, this theory confronts him with despair: there is no hope for you because you are doomed for ever: you must bear the consequences of what you have done in the past. In contrast to this, the Qur'ān says, "It lies absolutely in Allah's power to reward a virtue or to punish a sin. If you are rewarded for a virtue, it is not on account of the natural result of your virtue, but it is through Allah's grace. He has full power to reward it or not. In the same way, if you are punished for a sin, it is not because of the inevitable consequences of the sin but because Allah has full power to punish or pardon it. Of course, being All-Wise, He does not use these powers indiscriminately, but takes into consideration the intention of the doer. If He rewards a virtue, He does so when He sees that His servant performed the good deeds to please Him. And if He rejects an apparent virtue, He does so because He knows that it lacked sincerity. In the same way, He punishes the crime which is committed in a spirit of rebellion and is not followed by self-reproach but by an evil desire to commit more crimes. He, however,

exercises His grace, and forgives the sins for which His servant feels sorry and makes up his mind to change for the better. It is thus clear that the rejection of the theory of the inevitability of punishment for sin holds out new hopes of reform for sinners. Even the worst criminals and the staunchest unbelievers need not despair of forgiveness from Allah, provided that they confess their sins (of course, before their Lord and not before a priest), feel ashamed of their disobedience, give up their attitude of rebellion and adopt the attitude of submission instead.

53. The repetition of this command after forgiveness is very significant. In the preceding verse, it has been said that Adam repented and Allah accepted his repentance. Thus Adam was not only absolved from the sin of disobedience, but his future descendants also were made immune from its effect. There was, therefore, no need for Allah to crucify "His only son" for the atonement of the sin of Adam and of his offspring. On the contrary, Allah not only accepted his repentance but also appointed him as His Messenger to show Guidance to his children.

The repetition of the command, "Go down from here", shows that the real purpose of Adam's creation was to make him vicegerent on the Earth. He was kept in the Garden merely for trial and training, (please see E.N. 48). That is why he was not kept in the Garden after the acceptance of his repentance. He was sent to the Earth not by way of punishment but as a matter of course.

54. *Āyāt* is plural of *āyāt*, which literally means a "sign" or "symbol" that points to something. The Qur'ān has used this word in four different senses. At some places, it means merely a sign or symbol. At other places, the different phenomena of Nature have been termed as *āyāt* of Allah, because each phenomenon points to the Reality which is hidden behind such curtains. Then the miracles which were given to the Messengers have also been called *āyāt* (signs) because these showed that they were the representatives of the Ruler of the universe. At some places the verses of the Book have been called *"āyāt"* because they point not only to the Truth and the Right but also to the Great Author of the Book. It is not only the subject matter of the Book but also its words and mode of expression and its style that point to its Author. The meaning of the word *āyat* in a particular place becomes clear from the context in which it occurs.

55. The law of Allah, contained in vv. 38-39 about the Guidance, has been in force ever since the creation of man and will remain so up to the Last Day. It has been called Allah's "covenant" in verse 27. It is meant to warn man not to invent a way of life for himself but to follow the Guidance of his Lord, for he is His servant as well as vicegerent. And there are only two means of knowing this:

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فَاتَّقُوْنِ ﴿41﴾ وَلَا تَلْبِسُوا الْحَقَّ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتَكْتُمُوا الْحَقَّ وَاَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿42﴾
وَاَقِيْمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَاٰتُوا الزَّكٰوةَ وَارْكَعُوْا مَعَ الرّٰكِعِيْنَ ﴿43﴾ اَتَاْمُرُوْنَ النَّاسَ
بِالْبِرِّ وَتَنْسَوْنَ اَنْفُسَكُمْ وَاَنْتُمْ تَتْلُوْنَ الْكِتٰبَ ؕ اَفَلَا تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿44﴾ وَ
اسْتَعِيْنُوْا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلٰوةِ ؕ وَاِنَّهَا لَكَبِيْرَةٌ اِلَّا عَلَى الْخٰشِعِيْنَ ﴿45﴾ الَّذِيْنَ ع ۵ ۴ ۵
يَظُنُّوْنَ اَنَّهُمْ مُّلٰقُوْا رَبِّهِمْ وَاَنَّهُمْ اِلَيْهِ رٰجِعُوْنَ ﴿46﴾ يٰبَنِيْٓ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ اذْكُرُوْا
نِعْمَتِيَ الَّتِيْٓ اَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَاَنِّيْ فَضَّلْتُكُمْ عَلَى الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿47﴾ وَاتَّقُوْا يَوْمًا
لَّا تَجْزِيْ نَفْسٌ عَنْ نَّفْسٍ شَيْـًٔا وَّلَا يُقْبَلُ مِنْهَا شَفَاعَةٌ وَّلَا يُؤْخَذُ
مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ وَّلَا هُمْ يُنْصَرُوْنَ ﴿48﴾ وَاِذْ نَجَّيْنٰكُمْ مِّنْ اٰلِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَسُوْمُوْنَكُمْ
سُوْٓءَ الْعَذَابِ يُذَبِّحُوْنَ اَبْنَآءَكُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيُوْنَ نِسَآءَكُمْ ؕ وَفِيْ ذٰلِكُمْ بَلَآءٌ
مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ عَظِيْمٌ ﴿49﴾ وَاِذْ فَرَقْنَا بِكُمُ الْبَحْرَ فَاَنْجَيْنٰكُمْ وَاَغْرَقْنَآ اٰلَ
فِرْعَوْنَ وَاَنْتُمْ تَنْظُرُوْنَ ﴿50﴾ وَاِذْ وٰعَدْنَا مُوْسٰٓى اَرْبَعِيْنَ لَيْلَةً ثُمَّ
اتَّخَذْتُمُ الْعِجْلَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهٖ وَاَنْتُمْ ظٰلِمُوْنَ ﴿51﴾ ثُمَّ عَفَوْنَا عَنْكُمْ مِّنْۢ
بَعْدِ ذٰلِكَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿52﴾ وَاِذْ اٰتَيْنَا مُوْسَى الْكِتٰبَ وَالْفُرْقَانَ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تَهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿53﴾ وَاِذْ قَالَ مُوْسٰى لِقَوْمِهٖ يٰقَوْمِ اِنَّكُمْ ظَلَمْتُمْ اَنْفُسَكُمْ
بِاتِّخَاذِكُمُ الْعِجْلَ فَتُوْبُوْٓا اِلٰى بَارِئِكُمْ فَاقْتُلُوْٓا اَنْفُسَكُمْ ؕ ذٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ
عِنْدَ بَارِئِكُمْ ؕ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ ؕ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿54﴾ وَاِذْ قُلْتُمْ يٰمُوْسٰى
لَنْ نُّؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتّٰى نَرَى اللّٰهَ جَهْرَةً فَاَخَذَتْكُمُ الصّٰعِقَةُ وَاَنْتُمْ
تَنْظُرُوْنَ ﴿55﴾ ثُمَّ بَعَثْنٰكُمْ مِّنْۢ بَعْدِ مَوْتِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿56﴾ وَظَلَّلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ
الْغَمَامَ وَاَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَنَّ وَالسَّلْوٰى ؕ كُلُوْا مِنْ طَيِّبٰتِ مَا رَزَقْنٰكُمْ ؕ وَ

And believe in the Book I have now sent down; as it confirms the Scriptures you already possess, be not the first to reject it; barter not away My Revelations for paltry worldly gain,[57] and guard yourselves against My wrath.Confound not the Truth with falschood nor conceal it knowingly.[58] Establish the *Salāt*, pay the *Zakat*[59] and bow down before Me along with those who bow down. How is it that you enjoin others to follow the Right Way, but forget it yourselves, though you read the Scriptures? Have you no sense at all? Seek help with the *Salāt* and fortitude:[60] no doubt, Salāt is a hard task but not for those obedient servants, who realize that ultimately they shall meet their Lord and shall return to Him.[61] 41-46

O Children of Israel! Just recall to mind My favour that I bestowed upon you, and remember that I exalted you above all the peoples of the world.[62] And guard yourselves against the Day when no one shall avail anyone anything; nor shall intercession be accepted from anyone; nor shall anyone be acquitted for any (amount of) ransom; nor shall the guilty ones be helped from any quarter.[63] 47-48

Recall[64] the time when We delivered you from the slavery of Pharaoh's people.[65] They had inflicted a dreadful torment on you: they killed your sons and let your daughters live. And in this there was a hard trial for you from your Lord.[66] 49

Remember the time when We parted the sea to make way for you and let you pass safely through it and then drowned Pharaoh's people before your very eyes. 50

Call to mind that when We invited Moses for a fixed term of forty nights and days,[67] you took to calf worship in his absence.[68] Though you had committed a wicked transgression, yet We pardoned you even after that so that you might become grateful. 51-53

Remember that (at that very time, when you were committing this gross iniquity) We gave Moses the Book and the criterion of right and wrong[69] so that you might be guided aright. 53

Remember that when Moses (returned with the Divine Gift, he) said to his people, "O my people, you have wronged yourselves grievously by taking the calf for worship. Therefore, turn to your Creator in penitence and slay the guilty ones among you.[70] This is best 54

for you in the sight of your Creator." At that time your Creator accepted your repentance because He is Relenting 'and Merciful.

55-56 Remember when you said, "O Moses, we are not going to believe you until we see with our own eyes Allah (talking to you)". At that very time a thunderbolt struck you while you were looking on and you fell lifeless. Then We raised you to life so that you might become grateful for this favour.[71]

Contd. from p. 69]

either a man should receive direct revelation from Allah, or follow the one who has received Revelation from Him. There is no third way of knowing Allah's Will. Therefore, every other way than these two is not only wrong but also rebellion which will lead ultimately to Hell.

The story of the creation of man and the advent of mankind has been described in six other places in the Qur'ān: Al-A'rāf, VII: 11-25; Al-Hijr, XV: 26-48; Banī Isra'īl, XVII :60-65; Al-Kahf, XVIII 50 : Tā Hā, XX : 116-123, Ṣād, XXXVIII 71 - 85.

It will be useful to read the same story in the Old Testament (Genesis, Chapters 1 to 3). The comparison of the Qur'ânic version with the Biblical one, will conclusively show that the Qur'ān has remained intact in its pure, original and unadulterated form just as it was revealed by Allah, while the Bible has been tampered with.

It will also be interesting to contrast the conversation between Allah and the angels as has been given here in the Qur'ān with that cited in the Talmud. The latter is not only void of spiritual values but is also ridiculous. According to it when the angels asked Allah why He was going to create Man, He answered that He was doing that so that good people should be born on the Earth. He did not mention the birth of bad people lest the angels should withhold their permission for the creation of Man.

56. 'Israel' means the servant of Allah. This was the title that Allah had bestowed upon Jacob, who was a son of Isaac, and a grandson of Abraham (Allah's peace be upon them all). His descendents are called children of Israel. Up to verse 39, it was an introductory discourse meant for all mankind. From verse 40 to verse 121 is a new discourse in which the children of Israel have been especially and particularly addressed. In some places it has also been directed towards the Christians and the *mushriks* of Arabia and in between towards the people who believed in the Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings).

In order to understand the full significance of this address, the following should be kept in view.

First, it aims to appeal to those few followers of the former Prophets, who were still capable of reforming themselves to believe in the Truth which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had brought and to cooperate with the mission which he had been appointed to perform. They are, therefore, told that the message of the Qur'ān is the same as of the Scriptures of the former Prophets, and the mission of the Holy Prophet also was the same as theirs. It means to say: "At first this mission was entrusted to you so that you may put the Message into practice and then invite the world to accept it. But, not to speak of carrying out the mission, you discarded the Guidance and went on degenerating. The past history of your community and its present moral and religious degeneration are a standing witness against you. Now Allah has sent another Servant of His with the same Message and mission and there is nothing new or strange in this for you. You should not, therefore, oppose the Truth knowingly. The best thing for you is to accept it and cooperate with those who are doing the same work that was once entrusted to you."

Secondly, it aims to argue the Jews out of their wrong position and to expose their moral and religious degeneration thoroughly. Therefore, it proves conclusively that their attitude towards Islām was absolutely wrong; for they were opposing it, whereas they knew that its fundamentals were exactly the same as of their religion and that there was nothing in the teachings of the Qur'ān that was different from or opposed to the teachings of the Torah in principle. It also shows that they had utterly failed to follow the Guidance which was given to them and fulfil the obligations of the leadership entrusted to them. As a proof thereof, such incidents have been cited as they could not deny. Moreover, this address unravelled the plots they were hatching, the doubts they were arousing, the crooked arguments they were advancing and the evil machinations they were contriving to defeat the mission of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), though they knew it to be from Allah. This also exposed their "piety", for it lacked sincerity and righteousness and was motivated by obduracy, prejudice and self-worship. It also proved beyond any shadow of doubt that they did not really want virtue to thrive. This produced the desired effect: it opened the eyes of the righteous element among the Jews and put an end to the spiritual and moral superiority they enjoyed against the common and polytheistic Arabs of Madinah. Besides, when they themselves were once exposed, they were so dismayed that they dared not oppose Islām openly with the courage of conviction.

Thirdly, in the preceding verses, mankind had been invited to accept the Guidance of Allah. Now the example of the Israelites is being cited to show the consequences of discarding that Guidance. The reason why the Israelites have been held out as an example is that they are the only community whose history during the last four thousand years has been a living object lesson for all the nations of the world. In its history one can see all the ups and downs which result from following the Divine Guidance or from discarding it.

Fourthly, though the appeal is addressed to the Jews, it is also meant to forewarn the Muslims against the pitfalls of degeneration into which the followers of the former Prophets had fallen. That is why, on the one hand, the moral weaknesses of the Jews, their wrong notions about religion, their wrong ways of thinking and living, have been pointed out, one by one, while, on the other, the demands of the true faith have been stated so that the Muslims are able to see the Right Way clearly and avoid wrong ways

The Holy Prophet knew by Divine inspiration that, by and by, the Muslims also would follow the same ways that had been pointed out in this discourse. Therefore, according to a Tradition, he forewarned that they would discard the Guidance and follow, step by step, the communities of the former Prophets, that is, the Jews and the Christians, in their wrong ways. It is a pity that they have not paid any heed to this warning and adopted the same ways of degeneration.

57. "Paltry gains": worldly gains for the sake of which these people discarded the commandments and precepts of Allah. As a matter of fact, even the whole wealth of the world put together is worthless, if it is gained in exchange for Allah's Guidance.

58. In order to understand this verse, it should be kept in mind that the Arabs were generally illiterate and uneducated people. As against them, education was common among the Jews, who had among them great scholars renowned even beyond Arabia. That is why the Arabs were overawed by the scholarship of the Jews, more so because their scholars and rabbis made a great show of their learning and piety. and reinforced it with the practice of charms and amulets. The people of Madinah in particular were overawed by the learning of the Jews, for they were surrounded by big Jewish tribes and came in contact with them day and night. As a result, they were immensely influenced by them just as illiterate people usually are influenced by the neighbours who are more educated, more civilized and more religious in character.

Such were the conditions when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) presented himself as a Prophet and began to invite the people to Islām; naturally

the illiterate Arabs turned to the Jews for guidance in this matter, and said: "You are the followers of a Prophet and possess a Book, so tell us what you think of this man and his teachings, who claims to be a Prophet." This question was repeatedly asked of the Jews by the people of Makkah, and when the Holy Prophet came to Madinah, here also many people visited the Jewish scholars again and again to ask them the same question. But their scholars never gave them the right answer. For they could not say that the doctrine of *Tauhid* that Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) was preaching was wrong, nor that the knowledge which he imparted about the Prophets, scriptures, angels, and the Hereafter was wrong, nor that there was something wrong about the moral principles that he taught. They were neither ready to admit in plain words the righteousness of the teachings of the Holy Prophet; nor had they the courage to refute it openly; nor were they willing to profess the Truth candidly. Instead, they devised a subtle strategy to oppose it: they created one suspicion or the other about the Holy Prophet, his followers and his mission; they would concoct allegations against him and his followers and make false propaganda against them or raise frivolous objections so as to involve them in useless discussions. That is why they have been warned not to conceal the truth by covering it with falsehood, nor suppress it by spreading suspicions and by raising silly objections, nor mix it up with falsehood.

59. The *Salāt* and the *Zakat* have always formed the essential elements of the revealed religion (Islām). Like all other Prophets, the Israelite Prophets also had strictly enjoined these, but by and by the Jews became wholly neglectful of them. They gave up the performance of *Salāt* in congregation and the majority of the people did not even offer it individually. Instead of paying *Zakat*, they started charging interest on money.

60. That is, "If you face some difficulties in following the righteous way, *sabr* and *Salāt* will help remove the difficulties and strengthen you to walk the way easily." Lexically, *sabr* means to check and tie, but in usage it stands for patience, perseverance, endurance and fortitude. The Qur'ān uses this word to express that fortitude, that moral strength, that firmness of purpose and decision, that determination, moral discipline and self-control which enable a person to proceed with patience and courage in the face of afflictions, privations and temptations on the way he chooses in accordance with the dictates of his conscience. What the Qur'ān means to stress is that the Muslims should develop this moral quality in themselves and should observe the *Salāt* regularly to reinforce it from without.

61. "*Salāt* is a hard task" only for the one who is disobedient to Allah and does not believe in the Hereafter. But it is a joyful duty for the one who is willingly and happily obedient to Allah and who believes that one day he will have

[Contd. on p. 78

مَا ظَلَمُوْنَا وَ لٰكِنْ كَانُوْٓا اَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُوْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَ اِذْ قُلْنَا ادْخُلُوْا هٰذِهِ
الْقَرْيَةَ فَكُلُوْا مِنْهَا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمْ رَغَدًا وَّ ادْخُلُوا الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا وَّ قُوْلُوْا
حِطَّةٌ نَّغْفِرْ لَكُمْ خَطٰيٰكُمْ ؕ وَ سَنَزِيْدُ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿٥٨﴾ فَبَدَّلَ الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا
قَوْلًا غَيْرَ الَّذِيْ قِيْلَ لَهُمْ فَاَنْزَلْنَا عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا رِجْزًا مِّنَ
السَّمَآءِ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَفْسُقُوْنَ ﴿٥٩﴾ وَ اِذِ اسْتَسْقٰى مُوْسٰى لِقَوْمِهٖ فَقُلْنَا اضْرِبْ
بِّعَصَاكَ الْحَجَرَ ؕ فَانْۢبَجَسَتْ مِنْهُ اثْنَتَا عَشْرَةَ عَيْنًا ؕ قَدْ عَلِمَ كُلُّ اُنَاسٍ
مَّشْرَبَهُمْ ؕ كُلُوْا وَ اشْرَبُوْا مِنْ رِّزْقِ اللّٰهِ وَ لَا تَعْثَوْا فِى الْاَرْضِ مُفْسِدِيْنَ ﴿٦٠﴾
وَ اِذْ قُلْتُمْ يٰمُوْسٰى لَنْ نَّصْبِرَ عَلٰى طَعَامٍ وَّاحِدٍ فَادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُخْرِجْ لَنَا
مِمَّا تُنْۢبِتُ الْاَرْضُ مِنْۢ بَقْلِهَا وَ قِثَّآئِهَا وَ فُوْمِهَا وَ عَدَسِهَا وَ بَصَلِهَا ؕ
قَالَ اَتَسْتَبْدِلُوْنَ الَّذِيْ هُوَ اَدْنٰى بِالَّذِيْ هُوَ خَيْرٌ ؕ اِهْبِطُوْا مِصْرًا فَاِنَّ
لَكُمْ مَّا سَاَلْتُمْ ؕ وَ ضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الذِّلَّةُ وَ الْمَسْكَنَةُ ۗ وَ بَآءُوْ بِغَضَبٍ
مِّنَ اللّٰهِ ؕ ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا يَكْفُرُوْنَ بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ وَ يَقْتُلُوْنَ النَّبِيّٖنَ
بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ ؕ ذٰلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوْا وَّ كَانُوْا يَعْتَدُوْنَ ﴿٦١﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَ
الَّذِيْنَ هَادُوْا وَ النَّصٰرٰى وَ الصّٰبِـِٕيْنَ مَنْ اٰمَنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَ الْيَوْمِ الْاٰخِرِ
وَ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَهُمْ اَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ۚ وَ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَ لَا هُمْ
يَحْزَنُوْنَ ﴿٦٢﴾ وَ اِذْ اَخَذْنَا مِيْثَاقَكُمْ وَ رَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمُ الطُّوْرَ ؕ خُذُوْا مَآ
اٰتَيْنٰكُمْ بِقُوَّةٍ وَّ اذْكُرُوْا مَا فِيْهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿٦٣﴾ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ مِّنْۢ بَعْدِ
ذٰلِكَ ۚ فَلَوْ لَا فَضْلُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَ رَحْمَتُهٗ لَكُنْتُمْ مِّنَ الْخٰسِرِيْنَ ﴿٦٤﴾ وَ لَقَدْ
عَلِمْتُمُ الَّذِيْنَ اعْتَدَوْا مِنْكُمْ فِى السَّبْتِ فَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ كُوْنُوْا قِرَدَةً

(Remember that) We caused the cloud to overshadow you and provided you with[72] *manna* and *salva*[73] for your food, saying, "Eat of the clean and pure things We have bestowed upon you". (In spite of this, your forefathers violated Our commands:) however, they did not harm Us but harmed only themselves. 57

Then call to mind the time when We said, "Go into the town[74] before you and eat to your hearts' content therein, wherefrom you will, but enter the gate bowing down with humility, repeating '*hittatun*';[75] We will forgive your sins and increase the reward of the righteous". But the transgressors perverted the words said to them entirely into a different thing. So We sent down upon the transgressors a severe torment from the sky : that was the punishment for the disobedience they were showing. 58-59

Remember that when Moses prayed for water for his people, We answered, "Strike the rock with your staff": whereupon twelve springs gushed forth from it;[76] the people of every clan came to know their drinking place. (Then they were enjoined:) "Eat and drink of what Allah has provided and do not spread disorder on the earth." 60

Remember: You grumbled: "O Moses, we cannot endure one and the same sort of food. Pray your Lord to bring for us the products of the earth -- green herbs, vegetables, corn, garlic, onions, pulses and the like." Moses replied: "What! would you exchange that which is meaner for that which is nobler?"[77] Well, go and live in a town and you will get there what you demand." By and by, they became so degraded that disgrace and humiliation, misery and wretchedness were stamped upon them and they incurred Allah's wrath. That was because they began to reject the Revelations of Allah[78] and kill His Messengers without any just cause;[79] that was the consequence of their disobedience and their persistent transgression against the Law. 61

Rest assured that whosoever from among the Muslims or the Jews or the Christians or the Sabaeans believes in Allah and the Last Day, and performs good deeds, he will have his reward with his Lord and he will have no cause for fear and grief.[80] 62

Call to mind the time when We raised above you the Ṭūr and made a covenant with you,[81] saying, "Hold fast to the Book which We are giving you and bear in mind the commands and precepts contained 63-64

therein. It is expected that this will lead you on to the paths of virtue and piety." But even after that you forsook the Covenant: nevertheless Allah did not withhold His grace and mercy from you; otherwise you would have been utterly ruined long before this.

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to appear before Allah; nay, it rather becomes hard for him to leave his prescribed Prayer.

62. It refers to the period when the Israelites were the only people in the world who possessed the knowledge of the Truth from Allah and were, therefore, made leaders of the people of the world and were required to invite all other nations to His submission and to guide them on the Right Way.

63. In this verse the Israelites have been warned to guard against their wrong notion about the Hereafter, for this was the main cause of their degeneration. They were under the delusion that they would win salvation just because they were the descendants of great Prophets and had relations with great saints and pious and righteous people. That is why they neglected true religion and involved themselves in sin. Here they are being disillusioned and warned that they will not escape the consequences of their evil deeds by virtue of their relation with some holy person or his intercession in their behalf. That is why immediately after reminding them of the favour (v. 47) they have been warned that they shall be punished like the guilty people who lived in this world without belief in the Hereafter.

64. The events recalled here were well known to all and sundry among the Jews. Therefore, only brief references have been made to these historical events to show that they had remained ungrateful and had persisted in evil deeds in spite of the continuous favours showered upon them by Allah.

65. "Āl-i-Fir'aun" includes both the people of Pharaoh's own family and the people belonging to the ruling class of Egypt.

66. It was a trial of their character. They were made to pass through the fire of the test to see whether they were pure gold or a base metal. Moreover, they were put to the test to see whether they would be grateful to Allah after their miraculous escape.

67. When after their escape from Egypt the Israelites entered the Sinai Peninsula, Allah invited the Prophet Moses to Mount Ṭūr for forty days and forty nights to give him Laws, Instructions and Commands for the guidance of the people who had recently been liberated from slavery. (For details, please see

Exodus, chaps. 24 to 31). It should, however, be noted that the Ṭūr, referred to here, is not the modern port of Ṭūr on the eastern shore of the Gulf of Suez.

68. Cow-worship was very common in Can'an, Egypt and the neighbouring countries. When the Israelites degenerated and became slaves of the Copts after the death of the Prophet Joseph, they learnt this evil practice too from their rulers along with other evils. (The incident of the calf-worship is given in detail in Exodus, 32).

69. "*Furqan*": a criterion for distinguishing truth from falsehood. Here it stands for the knowledge and understanding of religion which enables a person to discern between right and wrong, truth and falsehood.

70. That is, those who made the calf a deity and worshipped it.

71. When Moses went up to Mount Ṭūr for forty days and forty nights, he was also told to bring with him seventy of the chiefs of Israel. Then Allah bestowed upon him the Book and Criterion and gave him the stone tablets with Instructions and Commandments inscribed on them for the guidance of the people, and he presented these to the chiefs. The Qur'ān says that at that time some wicked people from among them began to say: "How can we believe, on a mere statement of yours, that Allah has had a talk with you?" At this Allah became angry with them and punished them. But the Bible says, "And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink". (Exodus, 24: 10-11). Strange though it may appear, the same Bible also tells us that Moses said," "I beseech thee, shew me thy glory. And He said, "Thou canst not see my face, for there shall no man see me, and live." (For further details please see Exodus, 33:18-23).

72. That is, "We sheltered you with clouds when you entered the Sinai Peninsula and had no place of shelter from the heat of the sun." One should remember that the Israelites had emigrated in large numbers from Egypt and had no place in the Sinai Peninsula to hide their heads, not to speak of houses and tents. Had Allah not kept the sky cloudy for a long time, they would have perished by the scorching heat of the desert sun.

73. *Manna* and *salva* were the natural relief provisions supplied by Allah to feed the Israelites in the wilderness. *Manna* fell on the ground like dew-drops and *salvā* flew in thousands like quails. There was such a plenty of these provisions that a whole nation lived on them for forty years and was never confronted with starvation or famine. In modern times even a well developed and resourceful country finds it extremely difficult to make adequate food

arrangements for a few hundred thousand emigrants if they happen to enter it suddenly and unexpectedly. (For details refer to Exodus, 16; Numbers, 11:7-9, 31-32; Joshua, 5:12).

74. The identity of the town has not so far been determined. As this incident took place when the Israelites were still wandering in the Sinai Peninsula, most probably it was situated somewhere there. But it is also possible that it might have been Shittim which was situated on the eastern bank of the Jordan, opposite to Jericho. According to the Bible, the Israelites conquered this city during the last years of Moses and committed debaucheries. Consequently, Allah inflicted a terrible punishment on them in the form of an epidemic which killed twenty-four thousand of them. (Numbers, 25: 1-9).

75. They were told not to enter the town like cruel and ruthless tyrants but to go in meekly and with humility like God-fearing people, just as the Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) did at the conquest of Makkah.

"*Hittatun*" can have two meanings: "You should enter the town, (1) begging Allah's forgiveness for sins, and (2) granting general amnesty and refraining from plundering and murdering the inhabitants."

76. That rock can still be seen in the Sinai Peninsula with the twelve holes of the springs. Twelve springs were caused to flow for the Israelites in order to avoid water disputes among their twelve clans.

77. It does not mean: "You are asking, instead of *manna* and *salva* which you get gratis, things for which you will have to till and cultivate the land." But it means: "You are neglecting that grand purpose -- the purification of your hearts and the preparation for the leadership of the world -- for which you are being made to travel in the desert: instead of this, you are after the gratification of your taste and palate and cannot forego those things even for some time." (For comparison, see Numbers, 11: 4-9).

78. They rejected the Revelations in different ways: (*a*) They refused to accept anything as revealed, if it went against their own ideas or desires; (*b*) they brazen-facedly violated the clear injunctions of Allah, knowing full well that they were discarding His Commandments; and (*c*) they distorted and twisted the meaning of Revelations in order to suit their desires and lusts.

79. The history of the Israelites abounds in instances of the persecution of their own Prophets. We cite here a few from the Bible:

(1) After the death of the Prophet Solomon, the kingdom of the Israelites was split into two states -- the kingdom of Judah with its capital at Jerusalem, and the kingdom of Israel with its capital at Samaria. As the two were often at

war with each other, the things came to such a pass that the kingdom of Judah asked for help from the Aramaic kingdom of Damascus against their own brethren. At this the Prophet Hanani by God's command severely rebuked Asa king of Judah for relying on the king of Syria instead of relying on "the Eternal your God." But Asa instead of heeding the warning sent the Prophet of God to the prison house. (2 Chronicles, 16: 1-10).

(2) When the Prophet Elijah rebuked the Israelites for serving and worshipping Baal, and asked them to serve and worship One God alone, they became his mortal enemies. King Ahab of Samaria threatened to kill him because his idolatrous wife incited him against the Prophet Elijah. In terror he ran for his life to the mountains in the Sinai Peninsula. During the period of affliction, he said, "I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thy altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away". (1 Kings, 19: 1-10).

(3) King Ahab sent another Prophet, Micaiah, to prison for speaking out the truth. "And the king of Israel said, Take Micaiah, and carry him back unto Amon the governor of the city, and to Joash the king's son; and say, "Thus saith the king, Put this fellow in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I come in peace." (1 Kings, 22: 26-27).

(4) When the people of Judah began to worship idols openly and to do what was evil in the sight of Allah, the Prophet Zecharia raised his voice against these evils, saying: "Why transgress ye the commandments of the Lord, that ye cannot prosper? because ye have forsaken the Lord, he hath also forsaken you. And they conspired against him, and stoned him at the commandment of the king in the court of the house of the Lord." (2 Chronicles, 24: 20-21)

(5) When the Israelite state of Samaria was destroyed by the Assyrians, and the Jewish state at Jerusalem was threatened with imminent danger, the Prophet Jeremiah began to bewail and warn his people of their degeneration and its evil consequences. He lamented and cried, "Mend your ways otherwise you will meet with a far worse doom than Samaria." In answer to this the Jews cursed him, beat him and imprisoned him. They accused him of treachery against the nation and shouted, "You are deserting to the Chaldeans." He was arrested and flogged and confined in the dungeon cells. Then they put him into an underground cistern, lowering him down with ropes so that he should sink in the mud and die on the spot from starvation. (For details please refer to Jeremiah, 15: 10, 18: 20-23; 20:1-18 and Chapters 36 to 40.)

(6) About the Prophet Amos, it is written that when he rebuked the Israelite state of Samaria for its evil and immoral doings and warned them of their evil

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خٰسِـِٔيْنَ ﴿٦٥﴾ فَجَعَلْنٰهَا نَكَالًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهَا وَمَا خَلْفَهَا وَمَوْعِظَةً
لِّلْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾ وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوْسٰى لِقَوْمِهٖٓ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَذْبَحُوْا بَقَرَةً
قَالُوْٓا أَتَتَّخِذُنَا هُزُوًا ۖ قَالَ أَعُوْذُ بِاللّٰهِ أَنْ أَكُوْنَ مِنَ الْجٰهِلِيْنَ ﴿٦٧﴾ قَالُوا
ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّنْ لَّنَا مَا هِيَ ۖ قَالَ إِنَّهٗ يَقُوْلُ إِنَّهَا بَقَرَةٌ لَّا فَارِضٌ
وَّلَا بِكْرٌ ۖ عَوَانٌ بَيْنَ ذٰلِكَ ۖ فَافْعَلُوْا مَا تُؤْمَرُوْنَ ﴿٦٨﴾ قَالُوا ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ
يُبَيِّنْ لَّنَا مَا لَوْنُهَا ۖ قَالَ إِنَّهٗ يَقُوْلُ إِنَّهَا بَقَرَةٌ صَفْرَآءُ ۙ فَاقِعٌ لَّوْنُهَا
تَسُرُّ النّٰظِرِيْنَ ﴿٦٩﴾ قَالُوا ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّنْ لَّنَا مَا هِيَ ۙ إِنَّ الْبَقَرَ تَشٰبَهَ
عَلَيْنَا ۖ وَإِنَّآ إِنْ شَآءَ اللّٰهُ لَمُهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿٧٠﴾ قَالَ إِنَّهٗ يَقُوْلُ إِنَّهَا بَقَرَةٌ
لَّا ذَلُوْلٌ تُثِيْرُ الْأَرْضَ وَلَا تَسْقِي الْحَرْثَ ۚ مُسَلَّمَةٌ لَّا شِيَةَ فِيْهَا ۚ قَالُوا
الْـٰٔنَ جِئْتَ بِالْحَقِّ ۚ فَذَبَحُوْهَا وَمَا كَادُوْا يَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿٧١﴾ وَإِذْ قَتَلْتُمْ
نَفْسًا فَادّٰرَءْتُمْ فِيْهَا ۖ وَاللّٰهُ مُخْرِجٌ مَّا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُوْنَ ﴿٧٢﴾ فَقُلْنَا اضْرِبُوْهُ
بِبَعْضِهَا ۚ كَذٰلِكَ يُحْيِ اللّٰهُ الْمَوْتٰى ۙ وَيُرِيْكُمْ اٰيٰتِهٖ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٧٣﴾ ثُمَّ
قَسَتْ قُلُوْبُكُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ ذٰلِكَ فَهِيَ كَالْحِجَارَةِ أَوْ أَشَدُّ قَسْوَةً ۚ وَإِنَّ
مِنَ الْحِجَارَةِ لَمَا يَتَفَجَّرُ مِنْهُ الْأَنْهٰرُ ۚ وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَشَّقَّقُ فَيَخْرُجُ مِنْهُ
الْمَآءُ ۚ وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَهْبِطُ مِنْ خَشْيَةِ اللّٰهِ ۚ وَمَا اللّٰهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا
تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٧٤﴾ أَفَتَطْمَعُوْنَ أَنْ يُّؤْمِنُوْا لَكُمْ وَقَدْ كَانَ فَرِيْقٌ مِّنْهُمْ يَسْمَعُوْنَ
كَلٰمَ اللّٰهِ ثُمَّ يُحَرِّفُوْنَهٗ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا عَقَلُوْهُ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٧٥﴾ وَإِذَا
لَقُوا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا قَالُوْٓا اٰمَنَّا ۚ وَإِذَا خَلَا بَعْضُهُمْ إِلٰى بَعْضٍ قَالُوْٓا
أَتُحَدِّثُوْنَهُمْ بِمَا فَتَحَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لِيُحَآجُّوْكُمْ بِهٖ عِنْدَ رَبِّكُمْ ۚ أَفَلَا

And you know well the story of those among you who broke Sabbath.[82] We said to them, "Be apes -- despised and hated by all. Thus We made their end a warning to the people of their time and succeeding generations, and an admonition for God-fearing people. 65-66

Then call to mind the other event: when Moses said to his people, "Allah commands you to sacrifice a cow," they replied, "Do you mean to have a jest with us?" He answered, "I crave Allah's protection from behaving like ignorant people." Then they said, "Please make a request to your Lord to give us some details of the cow." Moses answered, "Allah says that the cow should neither be old nor immature but of middle age. Do, therefore, as you are bidden." But they further asked, "Please request your Lord to make it clear to us of what colour she should be." Moses answered, "He says that she should be of yellow colour, so deep and bright as to delight the beholders." Again they said, "Pray your Lord to specify for us the kind of cow that is required; for cows (of this type) look alike to us. We shall then find her, if God so wills." Moses answered, "Allah says that she should be a cow which has not been yoked nor has ploughed the land nor watered the fields; which is sound and whole, without blemish." Then they cried out, "Now you have given an accurate description." Then they sacrificed her but they did not appear to be doing this willingly.[84] 67-71

You should also recall to mind another incident: You slew a man and began to dispute about the murder and accuse one another of it, but Allah had decreed that what you were trying to hide should be disclosed. So We commanded, "Strike the corpse of the murdered man with a part of the sacrificed cow. See how Allah brings the dead to life and shows you His Signs, so that you may understand."[85] -- But even after seeing these Signs your hearts hardened and became as hard as rocks; nay, even harder than rocks. For there are some rocks out of which springs gush forth, and others which split open, and water issues out of them; then there are some which tumble down for fear of Allah. And Allah is not unaware of what you are doing. 72-74

O Muslims, do you then expect that these people will accept your invitation and become believers?[86] whereas there have always been among them some who have been hearing the Word of God, understanding it well and then perverting and tampering with it 75-82

تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٧٦﴾ اَوَ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا يُسِرُّوْنَ وَ مَا يُعْلِنُوْنَ ﴿٧٧﴾
وَ مِنْهُمْ اُمِّيُّوْنَ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ الْكِتٰبَ اِلَّاۤ اَمَانِيَّ وَ اِنْ هُمْ اِلَّا يَظُنُّوْنَ ﴿٧٨﴾
فَوَيْلٌ لِّلَّذِيْنَ يَكْتُبُوْنَ الْكِتٰبَ بِاَيْدِيْهِمْ ۗ ثُمَّ يَقُوْلُوْنَ هٰذَا مِنْ عِنْدِ
اللّٰهِ لِيَشْتَرُوْا بِهٖ ثَمَنًا قَلِيْلًا ؕ فَوَيْلٌ لَّهُمْ مِّمَّا كَتَبَتْ اَيْدِيْهِمْ وَ وَيْلٌ
لَّهُمْ مِّمَّا يَكْسِبُوْنَ ﴿٧٩﴾ وَ قَالُوْا لَنْ تَمَسَّنَا النَّارُ اِلَّاۤ اَيَّامًا مَّعْدُوْدَةً ؕ قُلْ
اَتَّخَذْتُمْ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ عَهْدًا فَلَنْ يُّخْلِفَ اللّٰهُ عَهْدَهٗۤ اَمْ تَقُوْلُوْنَ عَلَى
اللّٰهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٨٠﴾ بَلٰى مَنْ كَسَبَ سَيِّئَةً وَّ اَحَاطَتْ بِهٖ خَطِيْٓـَٔتُهٗ
فَاُولٰٓئِكَ اَصْحٰبُ النَّارِ ۚ هُمْ فِيْهَا خٰلِدُوْنَ ﴿٨١﴾ وَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَ عَمِلُوا
الصّٰلِحٰتِ اُولٰٓئِكَ اَصْحٰبُ الْجَنَّةِ ۚ هُمْ فِيْهَا خٰلِدُوْنَ ﴿٨٢﴾ وَ اِذْ اَخَذْنَا مِيْثَاقَ
بَنِيْۤ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ لَا تَعْبُدُوْنَ اِلَّا اللّٰهَ ۫ وَ بِالْوَالِدَيْنِ اِحْسَانًا وَّ ذِي الْقُرْبٰى
وَ الْيَتٰمٰى وَ الْمَسٰكِيْنِ وَ قُوْلُوْا لِلنَّاسِ حُسْنًا وَّ اَقِيْمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَ اٰتُوا
الزَّكٰوةَ ؕ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا مِّنْكُمْ وَ اَنْتُمْ مُّعْرِضُوْنَ ﴿٨٣﴾ وَ اِذْ اَخَذْنَا
مِيْثَاقَكُمْ لَا تَسْفِكُوْنَ دِمَآءَكُمْ وَ لَا تُخْرِجُوْنَ اَنْفُسَكُمْ مِّنْ دِيَارِكُمْ ثُمَّ
اَقْرَرْتُمْ وَ اَنْتُمْ تَشْهَدُوْنَ ﴿٨٤﴾ ثُمَّ اَنْتُمْ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ تَقْتُلُوْنَ اَنْفُسَكُمْ وَ تُخْرِجُوْنَ
فَرِيْقًا مِّنْكُمْ مِّنْ دِيَارِهِمْ تَظٰهَرُوْنَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِالْاِثْمِ وَ الْعُدْوَانِ ؕ وَ اِنْ
يَّاْتُوْكُمْ اُسٰرٰى تُفٰدُوْهُمْ وَ هُوَ مُحَرَّمٌ عَلَيْكُمْ اِخْرَاجُهُمْ ؕ اَفَتُؤْمِنُوْنَ
بِبَعْضِ الْكِتٰبِ وَ تَكْفُرُوْنَ بِبَعْضٍ ۚ فَمَا جَزَآءُ مَنْ يَّفْعَلُ ذٰلِكَ مِنْكُمْ
اِلَّا خِزْيٌ فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا ۚ وَ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ يُرَدُّوْنَ اِلٰٓى اَشَدِّ الْعَذَابِ ؕ
وَ مَا اللّٰهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٨٥﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ اشْتَرَوُا الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا

knowingly.[87] When they meet those who believe in Muhammad, they say, "We also believe in him." But when they meet one another in private, they say, "Have you got no sense that you disclose to them those things which Allah has revealed to you so that they might bring them as a proof against you before your Lord?[88] Do they really not know that Allah is fully aware of what they hide and what they disclose? -- Then there are among them some un-lettered people who have no knowledge of the Book but depend upon empty hopes and are guided by mere conjecture and guess-work.[89] So woe to their learned people, who write the law with their own hands and then say to the people, "This is from Allah," so that they might gain some paltry worldly end.[90] (They do not see that) this writing of their hands will bring woe to them and what they gain thereby will lead to their ruin. They also say, "The fire of Hell is not going to touch us, and even if it does at all, it will be only for a few days."[91] Say, "Have you obtained a promise from Allah which He would not break? Or, do you attribute to Allah things you do not know? Why will not the fire of Hell touch you? Whoever earns evil and becomes engrossed in sin shall be doomed to Hell and abide therein for ever. Only those people who believe and do good deeds, will be the dwellers of the Garden and live there for ever.

Remember that We made a solemn covenant with the children of Israel to this effect: **worship none save Allah; be good to your parents, to your relatives, to the orphans and to the helpless; speak aright with the people: establish the *Salât* and pay the *Zakat*. But with the exception of a few, you all slid back from it and are paying no heed to it even now.** 83

Remember also that We made another solemn covenant with you: **you shall not shed blood among yourselves nor expel one another from your homes. And you confirmed it and you are a witness to it. But inspite of this, you are killing your brethren and driving them out from their homes and making unjust and aggressive alliances against one another. And when they come to you as captives, you trade on their ransoms whereas their expulsion itself was unlawful for you. Do you then believe in one part of the Scriptures and disbelieve in the other?**[92] What other punishment do such people from among you deserve except an ignominious life in this world and the most grievous doom on the Day of Resurrection? Allah is not unaware of what you 84-86

are doing. These are the people who have preferred the worldly life to the life in the Hereafter. Therefore their torment shall not be lightened nor shall help be given to them (from any quarter).

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consequences, he was served with the notice: "O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of Judah ... and prophesy there." (Amos, 7: 10-13).

(7) When John the Baptist raised his voice against the immoralities which were being openly practised in the court of Herod, king of Judah, he was arrested and bound in prison. Then at the request of Herodias, his wife, who had a grudge against him, he sent one of the guards to bring his head. The man went and beheaded him in the prison and brought his head on a dish to be presented to her. Thus, the Prophet of God was killed without any cause. (ark, 6: 17-29.)

(8) The last victim of the evil designs of the high priests and the elders of the jews was Jesus Christ, who took them to task for their sins and hypocrisies and advised them to lead a righteous life. For this "crime" of his, they plotted against him: bought Judas, one of his twelve disciples, and sent a large mob with swords and cudgels to seize him and take him away to the house of the high priest. After binding him, they led him off, and handed him over to Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor. They tried to procure false evidence against him in order to have him put to death. They had become so hard-hearted that they asked Pilate to release Barabbas, a murderer, as a boon at the festival but to "crucify him".

In this verse, the Qur'ān briefly refers to this most shameful chapter of the history of the Israelites and declares that they fully deserved the curses and condemnation of Allah. They chose their worst offenders against law and morality and made them their chiefs and leaders, and sent their most pious and righteous men to the gaol or the gallows.

80. The context in which this verse occurs shows that the Qur'ān is not laying down here the details of the creed and righteous deeds, which one should believe and practise in order to earn salvation. These things have been described in their proper places. Here, the object is to refute the self-delusion of the Jews that salvation was their sole monopoly. They were suffering from the delusion that they had some special relationship with God; therefore whoever belonged to their race, would go straight to Heaven, irrespective of his creed and deeds, and all other people were born to become fuel of Hell. To remove this misunderstanding of theirs Allah declares that salvation does not depend upon one's connection with any group but on one's right beliefs and good deeds. Whoever goes before Allah

with these provisions will find his reward with Him, for Allah's judgement will be based on one's real worth and not on the census registers.

81. The way this incident has been described at different places in the Qur'ān, shows that it was at that time a well known incident among the Israelites, but now it is difficult to understand and know what actually happened. One may, however, understand that at the time of making the covenant at the foot of the mountain a dreadful situation was created and it so appeared that the mountain was going to fall upon them. A similar scene has been depicted in Sūrah Al-A'raf, VII: 171. (Please see E.N. 132 of VII, Al-A'raf)

Although its description in the Bible is a little different from that of the Talmud, it depicts the scene very vividly: "And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly." (Exodus, 19: 18.) "And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking : and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear : but let not God speak with us, lest we die." (Exodus, 20 :18-19).

82. *Sabbath*: Saturday. The Israelites were enjoined to keep the Sabbath as "a sign between me and you throughout your generations" for a perpetual covenant. "Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord: whosoever doeth any work in the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death." (Exodus, 31: 12-17) But when the Israelites became corrupt morally and religiously, they began to desecrate it openly and began to do business without hesitation on the Sabbath.

83. This incident has been described in detail in Al-A'raf, VII: 163-166. There is a difference of opinion as to what actually happened. Some are of the opinion that they were physically transformed into apes, while others hold the view that from that time onward they began to behave like apes. The words of the Qur'ān, however, indicate that it was not a moral but a physical metamorphosis. In my opinion their bodies were transformed into those of apes, but their human minds were left intact in order to subject them to extreme torture.

84. The Israelites were commanded to sacrifice a cow in order to rid them of the sanctity and worship of cow which they had adopted from the pagan nations around them. It was a test of their faith: if they really believed in Allah as their only Deity and did not make anyone or anything else the object of their worship, they should break the idol of their former worship with their own hands. But this proved to be a very hard test. They tried to evade and avoid the sacrifice because

their belief in One God had not become firm as yet. They went on asking one detail after the other in order to put it off, but the more questions they asked the more they were driven into a tight corner. So much so that at last they were specifically told to sacrifice that very golden-coloured cow, which was being specially chosen for worship at that time. The Bible also mentions this incident, but does not tell how the Israelites tried to put it off by asking a number of unnecessary questions. (Please refer to Numbers, 19: 1-10).

85. The wording of the Qur'ān clearly shows that the murdered man came to life for a little while and told the name of his murderer. However, there is some ambiguity concerning the method applied for discovering the murderer, that is, the striking of the dead body of the murdered man with a piece of "the sacrificed cow". A method similar to this described in Deut. 21: 1-9, confirms the interpretation put forward by the ancient scholars, that is, the dead body was struck with a piece of the flesh of the sacrificed cow and it came to life. In this way, a Sign of Allah was shown and at the same time it was demonstrated that the object of their worship was so powerless that its slaughter did not cause any harm. On the contrary, its slaughter proved useful.

86. Here the addressees are the new converts of Madinah, who had embraced Islām only recently. They had become interested in the Holy Prophet because they had often heard from the neighbouring Jews about Prophethood, Revelation, Angels, Divine Law, etc. They had also heard from them that they were expecting a new Prophet whose followers would prevail over the whole world. That is why the people of Madinah turned to the Holy Prophet when they heard of him and entered into the fold of Islām in large numbers. Naturally, they expected that the Jews, who possessed revealed Scriptures and who themselves had foretold the coming of a Prophet, would be the first to welcome Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) as a Prophet and would be in the forefront of his supporters. When, contrary to their expectations, the Jews did not come forward, the new Muslims themselves went to them and invited them to accept Islām, but they failed to persuade them. The hypocrites and the opponents of Islām used this rejection as an argument against Islām itself. They argued like this: there must be something suspicious about it: had Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) really been a Prophet, these pious and learned followes of the earlier scriptures, would not have rejected him knowingly, and ruined their Hereafter. In order to counteract the mischief caused by this fallacy, the past history of the Jews has been related to show that nothing better could be expected of them. This also cautioned the simple Muslims against cherishing any hope that the Jews of their city would in a body welcome Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) as the Prophet about whom prophecies has been made in their own Books. They have been warned that they should not entertain such expectations from the people whose history has been

so and so. This was necessary because they were liable to become disheartened because of the rejection of Islām by them. As to the Jews, they had become so degenerate and hard-hearted that they were not moved even by those verses which melted the hearts of the pagans who formerly used to kill their own daughters. Not only this, these hard-hearted Jews made fun of those very verses also. Therefore, the zealous Muslims were warned that they should understand the real condition of the Jews, who had corrupted the Truth to suit their own desires and then had the audacity to have their hopes centred on the religion which they had themselves perverted. it was wrong to entertain any vain hopes that such people would accept the Truth as soon as it was presented before them.

87. "Some among them": their rabbis and jurists. "Word of God": the Torah, Psalms and other Books which they had received through their Prophets. The Jewish scholars not only twisted, distorted and misinterpreted the revealed scriptures, and read into them the meaning they wanted to read, but they also tampered with the actual words of the text.

88. When they met secretly, they warned each other not to disclose to the Muslims those passages of the Torah and other Scriptures which contained prophecies about the Holy Prophet. They also warned each other not to inform the Muslims about those verses and teachings of their holy books which, they feared, would expose to objection their own present condition and attitude for they were afraid that the Muslims would present these as arguments against them on the Day of Judgement. This is an instance of the kind of belief they held about Allah's knowledge. They were under the delusion that if they succeeded in hiding the Truth and their corruption of the Scriptures in this world, there would be no possibility of bringing a case against them in the Next World. That is why in the parenthetical clause that follows they have been asked whether they really believed Allah to be unaware of the affairs of the people.

89. This refers to the common people of the Jews, who were totally ignorant of the teachings of their own Scriptures. They had neither any knowledge of the fundamentals of religion, nor of the regulations concerning morality and rules of everyday life, nor of the principles leading to ultimate success or failure. And the pity is that they had formed their own notions about religion without this knowledge and were living on false hopes.

90. This refers to what their learned people did. They not only perverted their Scriptures to suit their desires and vanities, but also blended with the Text of the Bible their own interpretations, their national history, their superstitions, their self-made theories, philosophies and laws. Then they presented all this mixture before the people as if it were actually from God. Every historical fiction, every

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بِالْاٰخِرَةِ فَلَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمُ الْعَذَابُ وَلَا هُمْ يُنْصَرُوْنَ ﴿٨٦﴾ وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا
مُوْسَى الْكِتٰبَ وَقَفَّيْنَا مِنْۢ بَعْدِهٖ بِالرُّسُلِ ۖ وَاٰتَيْنَا عِيْسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ
الْبَيِّنٰتِ وَاَيَّدْنٰهُ بِرُوْحِ الْقُدُسِ ۭ اَفَكُلَّمَا جَاۗءَكُمْ رَسُوْلٌۢ بِمَا لَا تَهْوٰٓى
اَنْفُسُكُمُ اسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ ۚ فَفَرِيْقًا كَذَّبْتُمْ ۤ وَفَرِيْقًا تَقْتُلُوْنَ ﴿٨٧﴾ وَقَالُوْا قُلُوْبُنَا
غُلْفٌ ۭ بَلْ لَّعَنَهُمُ اللّٰهُ بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَقَلِيْلًا مَّا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٨٨﴾ وَلَمَّا جَاۗءَهُمْ كِتٰبٌ
مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللّٰهِ مُصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا مَعَهُمْ ۙ وَكَانُوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ يَسْتَفْتِحُوْنَ عَلَى
الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا ۚ فَلَمَّا جَاۗءَهُمْ مَّا عَرَفُوْا كَفَرُوْا بِهٖ ۚ فَلَعْنَةُ اللّٰهِ عَلَى
الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿٨٩﴾ بِئْسَمَا اشْتَرَوْا بِهٖٓ اَنْفُسَهُمْ اَنْ يَّكْفُرُوْا بِمَآ اَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ بَغْيًا
اَنْ يُّنَزِّلَ اللّٰهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ عَلٰي مَنْ يَّشَاۗءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهٖ ۚ فَبَاۗءُوْ بِغَضَبٍ
عَلٰي غَضَبٍ ۭ وَلِلْكٰفِرِيْنَ عَذَابٌ مُّهِيْنٌ ﴿٩٠﴾ وَاِذَا قِيْلَ لَهُمْ اٰمِنُوْا بِمَآ
اَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ قَالُوْا نُؤْمِنُ بِمَآ اُنْزِلَ عَلَيْنَا وَيَكْفُرُوْنَ بِمَا وَرَاۗءَهٗ ۚ وَهُوَ
الْحَقُّ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا مَعَهُمْ ۭ قُلْ فَلِمَ تَقْتُلُوْنَ اَنْۢبِيَاۗءَ اللّٰهِ مِنْ قَبْلُ اِنْ
كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٩١﴾ وَلَقَدْ جَاۗءَكُمْ مُّوْسٰى بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ ثُمَّ اتَّخَذْتُمُ الْعِجْلَ
مِنْۢ بَعْدِهٖ وَاَنْتُمْ ظٰلِمُوْنَ ﴿٩٢﴾ وَاِذْ اَخَذْنَا مِيْثَاقَكُمْ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمُ
الطُّوْرَ ۭ خُذُوْا مَآ اٰتَيْنٰكُمْ بِقُوَّةٍ وَّاسْمَعُوْا ۭ قَالُوْا سَمِعْنَا وَعَصَيْنَا ۚ وَاُشْرِبُوْا
فِيْ قُلُوْبِهِمُ الْعِجْلَ بِكُفْرِهِمْ ۭ قُلْ بِئْسَمَا يَاْمُرُكُمْ بِهٖٓ اِيْمَانُكُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ
مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٩٣﴾ قُلْ اِنْ كَانَتْ لَكُمُ الدَّارُ الْاٰخِرَةُ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ خَالِصَةً مِّنْ
دُوْنِ النَّاسِ فَتَمَنَّوُا الْمَوْتَ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٩٤﴾ وَلَنْ يَّتَمَنَّوْهُ اَبَدًۢا
بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ اَيْدِيْهِمْ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ عَلِيْمٌۢ بِالظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٩٥﴾ وَلَتَجِدَنَّهُمْ اَحْرَصَ النَّاسِ

And We gave Moses the Book and sent after him a train of Messengers in succession. Then We sent Jesus, son of Mary, with clear Signs and supported him with the Holy Spirit.[93] Then how is it that whenever a Messenger came to you with that which did not suit your lusts, you grew rebellious against him, and repudiated some and slew others. -- They say, "Our hearts are secure."[94] Nay, the fact is that Allah has cursed them for their disbelief; so they are little disposed to believe. -- And how are they behaving now towards a Book which has come to them from Allah? Inspite of the fact that it confirms the Scriptures which they already possessed, and, inspite of the fact that, before it came, they used to pray for a signal victory over the disbelievers, they rejected it when it came, although they recognized it.[95] May Allah's curse be upon such disbelievers! What a mean thing it is with which they delude their minds.[96] They reject the Guidance which Allah has sent down merely because of their grudge why Allah has in His bounty sent it to whom He chose from amongst His servants.[97] They have thus incurred wrath after wrath, and for such disbelievers there is a disgraceful doom. 87-90

When it is said to them, "Believe in that which Allah has sent down," they say, "We believe only in that which has been sent to us", and reject everything else, though it is the Truth and confirms what is with them. Well, ask them, "If you sincerely believed in what was sent down to you, why did you kill the Messengers of Allah (who were sent to you from amongst yourselves)? (More than that:) Moses came to you with clear Signs, yet no sooner was he away from you than you transgressed and took the calf for worship. Recall also to mind the Covenant We made with you while We raised the Ṭūr over you: 'Follow strictly the precepts We are giving you and give ear to Our Commandments.' Your forefathers replied, "We have heard but we will not obey." They were so prone to unbelief that they cherished the calf in their hearts. Tell them (O Muhammad), "If indeed you are believers, yours is a strange Faith that enjoins you to do such evil things." 91-93

Say to them, "If the abode of the Hereafter with Allah is exclusively reserved for you and not for the rest of mankind, then you should long for death, if you are sincere in your claim."[98] Believe it that they will never wish for it, for (they are fully aware of the consequences 94-96

معلقة ١١ ع ١٠ ١١

عَلٰى حَيٰوةٍ ۚ وَمِنَ الَّذِيْنَ اَشْرَكُوْا ۚ يَوَدُّ اَحَدُهُمْ لَوْ يُعَمَّرُ اَلْفَ سَنَةٍ ۚ وَ
مَا هُوَ بِمُزَحْزِحِهٖ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ اَنْ يُّعَمَّرَ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ بَصِيْرٌۢ بِمَا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٩٦﴾
قُلْ مَنْ كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِّجِبْرِيْلَ فَاِنَّهٗ نَزَّلَهٗ عَلٰى قَلْبِكَ بِاِذْنِ اللّٰهِ مُصَدِّقًا
لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَهُدًى وَّبُشْرٰى لِلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٩٧﴾ مَنْ كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِّلّٰهِ وَ
مَلٰٓئِكَتِهٖ وَرُسُلِهٖ وَجِبْرِيْلَ وَمِيْكٰلَ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَدُوٌّ لِّلْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿٩٨﴾ وَلَقَدْ
اَنْزَلْنَآ اِلَيْكَ اٰيٰتٍۢ بَيِّنٰتٍ ۚ وَمَا يَكْفُرُ بِهَآ اِلَّا الْفٰسِقُوْنَ ﴿٩٩﴾ اَوَكُلَّمَا عٰهَدُوْا
عَهْدًا نَّبَذَهٗ فَرِيْقٌ مِّنْهُمْ ۭ بَلْ اَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿١٠٠﴾ وَلَمَّا جَآءَهُمْ
رَسُوْلٌ مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللّٰهِ مُصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا مَعَهُمْ نَبَذَ فَرِيْقٌ مِّنَ الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا
الْكِتٰبَ ۙ كِتٰبَ اللّٰهِ وَرَاۗءَ ظُهُوْرِهِمْ كَاَنَّهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿١٠١﴾ وَاتَّبَعُوْا مَا تَتْلُوا
الشَّيٰطِيْنُ عَلٰي مُلْكِ سُلَيْمٰنَ ۚ وَمَا كَفَرَ سُلَيْمٰنُ وَلٰكِنَّ الشَّيٰطِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا
يُعَلِّمُوْنَ النَّاسَ السِّحْرَ ۚ وَمَآ اُنْزِلَ عَلَي الْمَلَكَيْنِ بِبَابِلَ هَارُوْتَ وَمَارُوْتَ ۭ
وَمَا يُعَلِّمٰنِ مِنْ اَحَدٍ حَتّٰى يَقُوْلَآ اِنَّمَا نَحْنُ فِتْنَةٌ فَلَا تَكْفُرْ ۭ فَيَتَعَلَّمُوْنَ
مِنْهُمَا مَا يُفَرِّقُوْنَ بِهٖ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَزَوْجِهٖ ۭ وَمَا هُمْ بِضَاۗرِّيْنَ بِهٖ مِنْ
اَحَدٍ اِلَّا بِاِذْنِ اللّٰهِ ۭ وَيَتَعَلَّمُوْنَ مَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ ۭ وَلَقَدْ عَلِمُوْا
لَمَنِ اشْتَرٰىهُ مَا لَهٗ فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ مِنْ خَلَاقٍ ۭ وَلَبِئْسَ مَا شَرَوْا بِهٖٓ اَنْفُسَهُمْ ۭ
لَوْ كَانُوْا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿١٠٢﴾ وَلَوْ اَنَّهُمْ اٰمَنُوْا وَاتَّقَوْا لَمَثُوْبَةٌ مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللّٰهِ خَيْرٌ ۭ
لَوْ كَانُوْا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿١٠٣﴾ ۭ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تَقُوْلُوْا رَاعِنَا وَقُوْلُوا انْظُرْنَا ١٢ ع ١٢
وَاسْمَعُوْا ۭ وَلِلْكٰفِرِيْنَ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿١٠٤﴾ مَا يَوَدُّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مِنْ اَهْلِ
الْكِتٰبِ وَلَا الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ اَنْ يُّنَزَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِّنْ خَيْرٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ

of) what they have sent before them for the Hereafter. And Allah knows well the mentality of the transgressors. You will find that, of all mankind, they are the greediest for life,[99] nay, they are even greedier than the *mushriks*. Each one of them longs to have a life of a thousand years, but a long life can, by no means, remove them away from the scourge, for Allah is watching whatever they are doing.

Say to them, "Whoever is enemy to Gabriel,[100] should understand that he has, by Allah's command, revealed to your heart the Qur'ān[101] which confirms what was revealed before it,[102] and brings Guidance and glad tidings[103] to the Believers. (If their enmity to Gabriel is due to this, let them understand that) whoever is enemy to Allah, His Angels, His Messengers, Gabriel and Michael, Allah is enemy to such disbelievers." 97-98

We have sent down to you Revelations that clearly expound the Truth, and none but the disobedient reject them. Has it not always been so that every time they made a covenant, some of them set it aside? Nay, most of them never believe in it sincerely. And whenever a Messenger came to them from Allah, confirming that Scripture which they already possessed, some from among the people of the Book threw the Book of Allah behind their backs as though they knew nothing about it. (Instead of this,) they began to follow that (magic) to which the devils falsely attributed (the greatness of) the kingdom of Solomon.[104] In fact Solomon was never involved in any practice of disbelief, but the satans, who taught magic to the people were themselves guilty of disbelief. They were after that thing which was sent to Hārūt and Mārūt, the two angels at Babylon. Whenever these two angels taught black art to anyone, they would always give a clear warning beforehand, saying, "We are merely a trial for you; so you should not commit blasphemy."[105] But in spite of this warning, those people used to learn from the angels the art which caused division between husband and wife.[106] Although it was obvious that they could not do any harm to anyone by means of this magic without Allah's permission, yet they learnt that art which could not be profitable even for them but was actually harmful. Moreover, they knew it full well that anyone, who purchased that art, would have no share in the Hereafter. What a vile commodity it was for which they sold off their souls, if they had but known it! Had they believed in Allah and 99103

practised piety, they would have received a far better reward from Allah, if they had but known it.

104-105 O Believers,[107] do not say, "*Ra'ina*" but say, "*Unzurna*" and listen[108] to what is said; for the disbelievers deserve a painful punishment. The people who have rejected the message of Truth, be

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Contd. from p. 89]

interpretation, every man-made creed, and every bye law that had somehow entered into the Holy Book, became the "Word of God," and it was absolutely obligatory for every Jew to believe in all these things and, if one did not, he was declared to be a renegade or a heretic.

91. There was a general belief among the common Jews and their religious leaders that they would not be sent to Hell in spite of their wrong beliefs and evil deeds just because they were Jews. They thought that even if any punishment was imposed on them, it would be for a few days only after which they would be sent to Paradise.

92. As a concrete example of this may be cited the strange conduct of the different clans of the Jews, who lived in the neighbourhood of Madinah. Before the migration of the Holy Prophet, they had entered into alliances with the neighbouring Arab clans, Aus and Khazraj. When one Arab clan went to war with the other clan, their respective Jewish allies also went to war against each other. Thus Jews waged war upon Jews, whereas this was clearly against the teachings of their Scriptures which they knowingly violated. But when the Jews of one clan fell into the hands of the other clan as prisoners of war, they would redeem them after taking ransom for them. When they were questioned about this inhuman trade of their own brethren, they tried to justify it, saying that it was allowed by the Scriptures. It is strange that they forgot the same Scriptures which they brazen-facedly violated by going to war against each other. Thus on the one hand, they accepted that part of the Scriptures which allowed ransom for prisoners and , on the other hand, rejected that part which prohibited war against their own brethren in faith.

93. "*Rūh-ul-Qudus*" (Holy Spirit) May refer to Revelation or to angel Gabriel who brought it to the Prophets or to the Holy Soul of Jesus Christ which Allah had created pure.

"Clear Signs" refer to his miracles and to his wonderful personal qualities and his miraculous birth, which were to every lover of truth a clear proof of the fact that he was a true Prophet of Allah.

94. By this they meant to say, "We are so staunch in our Faith that we are not going to be influenced by anything that you might say to the contrary." All those are slaves of irrational prejudices, delude themselves like this. They regard such an obstinate attitude as a sign of their firm Faith and, therefore, a virtue. In fact, there can be no greater vice than to stick to one's own traditional creeds and beliefs even though there are strong arguments against them.

95. Before the advent of the Holy Prophet, the Jews were looking forward with great longings to the Prophet about whom there were many prophecies in their own Scriptures. They used to pray: "May he come soon so that we should triumph over the disbelievers and regain our lost glory!". The people of Madinah themselves bore witness that the Jews lived in this expectation. It had become a bye-word with them to proclaim: "Let the pagans tyrannise over us as much as they like. When that Prophet comes, we will settle accounts with them." Accordingly, when the people of Madinah learnt that Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) had declared himself to be a Prophet, they recalled these things and thought that he might be the very Prophet about whom they had heard so much from the Jews. So they said to one another, "Let us go and accept him lest the Jews should forestall us." That was the reason why the Muslims of Madinah could not understand the attitude of the Jews who, instead of accepting him as the Prophet for whom they had been so anxiously waiting, had become his greatest opponents.

As to the fact that "they did recognize the Holy Prophet," many proofs were furnished at that very time. The most authentic evidence is that of Ḥaḍrat Safiyyah (one of the wives of the Holy Prophet), who was the daughter of one learned Jew and the niece of another. She says, "When the Holy Prophet migrated to Madinah, my father and uncle went to see him. When they returned home, I myself heard the following conversation between them:

Uncle: Is he really the same Prophet about whom there occur prophecies in our books?

Father: By God, he is the same.

U. Are you quite sure of it?

F. Yes.

U. Then what is your intention?

F. I will oppose him as long as I live and will not let his mission succeed. (*Ibn Hisham*, Vol. II, p. 165, Cairo Edition, 1936).

96. The verse may also mean: "What a miserable thing it is for which they have sold off their future life and salvation in the Hereafter!"

97. They wished that the Prophet should have been one of their own race; therefore, they refused to accept him when he was raised among a race which they considered to be inferior to theirs. This meant that Allah ought to have consulted them before appointing His Messenger, and when Allah did not do so, and in His bounty appointed one He chose by Himself, they were offended.

98. This was a retort which implied that if they really were sure and enamoured of the Hereafter, they would not dread death, but would prefer it to the life in this world. They, however, were (and are) so much given to this worldliness that they were terrified by the very thought of death and the Hereafter.

99. The literal translation of the word *'ala hayat-in"* is "any kind of life". It means that they wished to live without giving any consideration to the kind of life they led. It did not matter whether that was a life of honour and grace, or a life of dishonour and disgrace.

100. The Jews not only reviled Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) and the believers, but also spoke abusively of Gabriel, the chosen Divine Messenger. They said, "He is our enemy: He is not an angel of blessings but of affliction."

101. As Gabriel revealed the Qur'ān to Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) by Allah's Command, so by abusing Gabriel they actually abused Allah.

102. That is, "You abuse Gabriel for no other reason than that he has brought down the Qur'ān, whereas the Qur'ān confirms the teachings of the Torah; so, in a way, you abuse the Torah as well.

103. In the preceding verses, the Jews have been warned of the consequences of their attitude towards the Qur'ān and the mission of the Holy Prophet. In this part of the verse; they have been admonished to consider the matter from another point of view. As the Qur'ān shows the way to right guidance and brings good tidings to the believers, it is sheer folly to oppose it and reject it. Thus they harm none but themselves by depriving themselves of the true success which follows its acceptance.

104. *Shayatin* may refer both to the devils from among the jinn or to the devils from among human beings. Here it refers to both. When the Jews fell to the lowest depths of degeneration, morally and materially, and lost all the noble qualities because of their captivity, ignorance, poverty, homeless wanderings, etc. they turned to magic, sorcery, enchantment, witchcraft and other black arts and "occult sciences." They began to adopt methods through which they could attain all their ends without putting in any kind of labour and toil. Then the devils began to beguile them by ascribing the origin of the occult sciences to Solomon and proclaimed that Solomon owed his wonderful kingdom and his extraordinary

powers to the occult sciences which they were teaching the people. Jews at once succumbed and welcomed these as a great boon: so much so that even their rabbis began to practise magical arts. Consequently they lost all their interest in the Scriptures and would not listen to those who invited them to Allah's Guidance.

104-a. Here the Quran refutes not only the false accusation of sorcery against Solomon, but also the other charges levelled against him in the Bible (I Kings, Chapter 11). According to it "Solomon was a lover of women and his wives seduced him to follow foreign gods, and he did what was evil in the eyes of the Eternal and put up shrines and idols of their gods." The Quran refutes these charges, so as to say, "Solomon was never involved in any practices of disbelief, and only that one who was a disbeliever could be guilty of 'love of women', 'worship of gods and idols' and what was evil in the eyes of the Eternal."

105. The incident referred to in this verse has been interpreted in different ways, but what I have been able to understand is this: It appears that when the Istraelites were captives in Babylon, Allah sent two angels in human guise to test them. Just as the angels were sent to the people of the Prophet Lot as handsome boys, so they were sent to the Israelites as saints and religious guides. For this purpose, they might have set up an institution to teach magic and might also be warning everyone who came to learn these things, saying: "We are holding out these temptations merely for your trial. You should not, therefore, ruin your Hereafter by seeking this "science". But in spite of this warning, the people came to them in large numbers for talismans, charms and amulets.

There is nothing strange in the coming of angels in human guise. Being agents of Divine Kingdom they are endowed with extraordinary powers to perform their respective duties. As to the question why they taught magic to the people, we can understand this by an illustration. It is like the case of the police who sometimes arrange to hand over signed currency notes to corrupt officials as bribes in order to catch them red-handed. Just as there is nothing wrong in this, so there is nothing wrong in what the angels did for the trial of the degenerate Jews.

106. The greatest demand on this occult science was for an amulet or a device to help separate a wife from her husband in order to entice her. This shows how depraved they had become. Their greatest enjoyment was to make love with other people's wives and to separate them from their husbands. This was the worst form of depravity because it struck at the root of family life which is the very foundation of society. If the relations between husband and wife are sound, the whole society will be sound and solid. But if they are bad, the whole society will become rotten. Thus they were the worst offenders because they cut at the root of those relations on which depended their own solidarity and that of their society.

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يَخْتَصُّ بِرَحْمَتِهٖ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيْمِ ﴿١٠٥﴾ مَا نَنْسَخْ مِنْ
اٰيَةٍ اَوْ نُنْسِهَا نَاْتِ بِخَيْرٍ مِّنْهَآ اَوْ مِثْلِهَا ؕ اَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلٰى كُلِّ
شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿١٠٦﴾ اَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ لَهٗ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ وَمَا
لَكُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ مِنْ وَّلِيٍّ وَّلَا نَصِيْرٍ ﴿١٠٧﴾ اَمْ تُرِيْدُوْنَ اَنْ تَسْـَٔلُوْا رَسُوْلَكُمْ
كَمَا سُئِلَ مُوْسٰى مِنْ قَبْلُ ؕ وَمَنْ يَّتَبَدَّلِ الْكُفْرَ بِالْاِيْمَانِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ
سَوَآءَ السَّبِيْلِ ﴿١٠٨﴾ وَدَّ كَثِيْرٌ مِّنْ اَهْلِ الْكِتٰبِ لَوْ يَرُدُّوْنَكُمْ مِّنْۢ بَعْدِ اِيْمَانِكُمْ
كُفَّارًا ۚ حَسَدًا مِّنْ عِنْدِ اَنْفُسِهِمْ مِّنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الْحَقُّ ۚ فَاعْفُوْا
وَاصْفَحُوْا حَتّٰى يَاْتِيَ اللّٰهُ بِاَمْرِهٖ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿١٠٩﴾ وَ
اَقِيْمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَاٰتُوا الزَّكٰوةَ ؕ وَمَا تُقَدِّمُوْا لِاَنْفُسِكُمْ مِّنْ خَيْرٍ
تَجِدُوْهُ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ بَصِيْرٌ ﴿١١٠﴾ وَقَالُوْا لَنْ يَّدْخُلَ
الْجَنَّةَ اِلَّا مَنْ كَانَ هُوْدًا اَوْ نَصٰرٰى ؕ تِلْكَ اَمَانِيُّهُمْ ؕ قُلْ هَاتُوْا بُرْهَانَكُمْ
اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿١١١﴾ بَلٰى ۚ مَنْ اَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهٗ لِلّٰهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَلَهٗۤ اَجْرُهٗ
عِنْدَ رَبِّهٖ ۪ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُوْنَ ﴿١١٢﴾ وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُوْدُ لَيْسَتِ
النَّصٰرٰى عَلٰى شَيْءٍ ۪ وَّقَالَتِ النَّصٰرٰى لَيْسَتِ الْيَهُوْدُ عَلٰى شَيْءٍ ۙ وَّهُمْ
يَتْلُوْنَ الْكِتٰبَ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ قَالَ الَّذِيْنَ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ مِثْلَ قَوْلِهِمْ ۚ فَاللّٰهُ
يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ فِيْمَا كَانُوْا فِيْهِ يَخْتَلِفُوْنَ ﴿١١٣﴾ وَمَنْ اَظْلَمُ
مِمَّنْ مَّنَعَ مَسٰجِدَ اللّٰهِ اَنْ يُّذْكَرَ فِيْهَا اسْمُهٗ وَسَعٰى فِيْ خَرَابِهَا ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ
مَا كَانَ لَهُمْ اَنْ يَّدْخُلُوْهَآ اِلَّا خَآئِفِيْنَ ؕ لَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا خِزْيٌ وَّلَهُمْ
فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيْمٌ ﴿١١٤﴾ وَلِلّٰهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ ۚ فَاَيْنَمَا تُوَلُّوْا

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they the people of the Book or the *mushriks*, would never like that any good be sent down to you from your Lord, but Allah chooses for His mercy whom He wills, and Allah is Most Bountiful. 105

We bring a better verse or at least the like of it for whatever We abrogate or cause it to be forgotten.[109] Do you not know that Allah has full power over everything? Do you not know that the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth belongs to Allah alone and that you have neither any protector nor helper beside Him? 106-107

Would you then ask your Prophet such questions as were asked of Moses in former times?[110] In fact, anyone, who changes the way of belief for that of disbelief, has surely swerved from the Right Way. Many of the people of the Book desire to turn you anyhow back to unbelief. They wish this out of the envy of their hearts though the Truth has become quite clear to them. Yet, you should show forbearance and forgiveness to them[111] till Allah Himself enforces His judgement. (Rest assured that) Allah has full power over everything: establish the *Salāt* and pay the *Zakat*: you will find with Allah whatever good you send forward for your future; Allah is watching everything you do. 108-110

They say, "None shall enter Paradise unless he be a Jew or (according to the Christians) a Christian." These are their wishful fancies. [112]Say to them, "Bring your proof, if you are right in your claim." The fact is that no one has any special claim to Paradise; whoever surrenders himself to Allah in obedience and follows the Right Way, shall get his reward from his Lord: there shall be neither fear nor grief for such people. 111-112

The Jews say that the Christians have nothing (of the Truth) and the Christians say that the Jews have nothing of it, though both read the Scripture. And those who have no knowledge of the Scripture[113] also make similar claims. Allah will surely give His judgement on the Day of Resurrection in all the matters in which they differ. 113

And who could be a greater wrongdoer than the one who forbids the mention of Allah's name in places of worship and strives for their ruin? Such people do not deserve to enter the places of worship, and, if they enter at all, they should do so in fear;[114] for there is ignominy for 114

them in this world and an awful punishment in the Hereafter.

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A Tradition of the Holy Prophet says that Satan sends his agents to the four corners of the world. When they come back to him to report, they relate the deeds they have performed. One says that he has created such and such dispute and the other that he has spread chaos and so on, but Satan goes on commenting, "You have done nothing." Then comes another one who says; "I have caused division between a man and his wife." Satan hugs him and says, "You have indeed done a great deed." In the light of this Tradition, it becomes clear why the two angels were sent to the Israelites with the charm that caused division between man and wife; that was, in fact, the very standard which could measure accurately their moral degradation.

107. From this verse onward, the Believers have been warned to be on their guard against the different kinds of mischief which the Jews were fomenting against Islām and the Islāmic Community. Besides this, doubts and suspicions which were being disseminated by them in the minds and hearts of the Muslims have been removed and those special problems which came up for discussion between the Muslims and the Jews have been dealt with.

Here it should also be kept in view that when the Holy Prophet came to live at Madinah, and Islām began to spread in the country around it, the Jews tried to involve the Muslims in various kinds of religious disputes and theological controversies. They also tried to affect the simple and sincere Muslims with the same disease from which they themselves were suffering, that is, the malady of hair-splitting and asking frivolous and irrelevant questions. For this purpose, they attended even the meetings of the Holy Prophet and resorted to cunning and subtle talk, which showed how depraved they had become.

108. Whenever the Jews came to attend the Holy Prophet's assembly they showed every kind of outward respect to him but surreptitiously tried their worst to insult and slight him. They would use ambiguous words derisively or twist them into an insult by a slight mispronunciation. For instance, if they wanted to invite his attention to any particular thing they would say *"Ra'i-na"* which means "Just pay attention, please," but it has other meanings also. In Hebrew there was a word of similar sound which meant, "Listen, may you become deaf," and in Arabic itself it also meant, "a proud and ignorant person." Besides this, in colloquial speech it meant, "If you listen to us, we will listen to you." Then with a little twist of the tongue it could be turned into *ra-'i-ya-na* which means "Our shepherd". In order to guard against the use of such ambiguous words as sounded complimentary but might be abused by wicked people, the Believers were advised to say, *"unzur-*

na: "Kindly pay attention to us," which could serve the same purpose without having any secondary bad sense like *"ra'i-na."* They were also advised to listen attentively to the Holy Prophet so that there should be no need of inviting his attention.

109. This is the answer to an objection which the Jews raised to create doubts in the minds of the Muslims. They argued like this: The Qur'ān says that the former Scriptures had been sent down by Allah and that it also has been sent down by Him. If it is so, why does the Qur'ān then give such commands as differ from those contained in the former Books? How can the same Allah give different commands at different times? Besides, they said, "The Qur'ān asserts that the Jews and the Christians have forgotten a part of the teachings sent down to them. How is it possible that the teachings of Allah could be obliterated from memory?" They did not raise these objections for the sake of arriving at the truth but for the sake of creating mischief. Allah answers their objections thus: "I am the Sovereign and My powers are unlimited. I can repeal any order of Mine or allow it to be forgotten, but I substitute for it something that serves the same purpose better or at least equally well."

110. The Jews were addicted to hair-splitting. They put subtle and unnecessary questions to the Muslims and would incite them to inquire about the same from the Holy Prophet. As they intended merely to create mischief, Allah warned the Muslims not to follow their example. The Holy Prophet also advised the Believers not to indulge in the pastime of making fine distinctions and asking unnecessary questions because such things had ruined the communities that went before them. They should do what they were asked to do and refrain from what they were prohibited. They should not waste their powers and energies in useless pursuits but attend to important matters.

111. That is "their enmity and jealousy should not incite you to lose your balance of mind and involve you in arguments, discussions and disputes with them. You should not lose your dignity and waste your precious time in such useless pursuits but should go on doing the right and wait patiently for Allah's judgement. You should remember Allah and do good deeds because these are the things that will avail you before Allah and not those things and the like."

112. It means, "In fact these are merely their own wishes, but they assert these as if it were actually going to happen so."

113. It refers to the idolaters of Arabia, who were ignorant of the Scriptures.

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فَثَمَّ وَجْهُ اللّٰهِ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿١١٥﴾ وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللّٰهُ وَلَدًا سُبْحٰنَهٗ ؕ
بَلْ لَّهٗ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ كُلٌّ لَّهٗ قٰنِتُوْنَ ﴿١١٦﴾ بَدِيْعُ السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ وَاِذَا قَضٰٓى اَمْرًا فَاِنَّمَا يَقُوْلُ لَهٗ كُنْ فَيَكُوْنُ ﴿١١٧﴾ وَقَالَ
الَّذِيْنَ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ لَوْلَا يُكَلِّمُنَا اللّٰهُ اَوْ تَاْتِيْنَآ اٰيَةٌ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ قَالَ الَّذِيْنَ
مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِّثْلَ قَوْلِهِمْ ؕ تَشَابَهَتْ قُلُوْبُهُمْ ؕ قَدْ بَيَّنَّا الْاٰيٰتِ لِقَوْمٍ
يُّوْقِنُوْنَ ﴿١١٨﴾ اِنَّآ اَرْسَلْنٰكَ بِالْحَقِّ بَشِيْرًا وَّنَذِيْرًا ۙ وَّلَا تُسْـَٔلُ عَنْ اَصْحٰبِ
الْجَحِيْمِ ﴿١١٩﴾ وَلَنْ تَرْضٰى عَنْكَ الْيَهُوْدُ وَلَا النَّصٰرٰى حَتّٰى تَتَّبِعَ مِلَّتَهُمْ ؕ
قُلْ اِنَّ هُدَى اللّٰهِ هُوَ الْهُدٰى ؕ وَلَئِنِ اتَّبَعْتَ اَهْوَآءَهُمْ بَعْدَ الَّذِيْ
جَآءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ ۙ مَا لَكَ مِنَ اللّٰهِ مِنْ وَّلِيٍّ وَّلَا نَصِيْرٍ ﴿١٢٠﴾ اَلَّذِيْنَ
اٰتَيْنٰهُمُ الْكِتٰبَ يَتْلُوْنَهٗ حَقَّ تِلَاوَتِهٖ ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِهٖ ؕ وَمَنْ
يَّكْفُرْ بِهٖ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْخٰسِرُوْنَ ﴿١٢١﴾ يٰبَنِيْٓ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ اذْكُرُوْا نِعْمَتِيَ
الَّتِيْٓ اَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَاَنِّيْ فَضَّلْتُكُمْ عَلَى الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿١٢٢﴾ وَاتَّقُوْا يَوْمًا لَّا
تَجْزِيْ نَفْسٌ عَنْ نَّفْسٍ شَيْـًٔا وَّلَا يُقْبَلُ مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ وَّلَا تَنْفَعُهَا
شَفَاعَةٌ وَّلَا هُمْ يُنْصَرُوْنَ ﴿١٢٣﴾ وَاِذِ ابْتَلٰٓى اِبْرٰهٖمَ رَبُّهٗ بِكَلِمٰتٍ فَاَتَمَّهُنَّ ؕ
قَالَ اِنِّيْ جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ اِمَامًا ؕ قَالَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِيْ ؕ قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ
عَهْدِي الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿١٢٤﴾ وَاِذْ جَعَلْنَا الْبَيْتَ مَثَابَةً لِّلنَّاسِ وَاَمْنًا ؕ وَاتَّخِذُوْا
مِنْ مَّقَامِ اِبْرٰهٖمَ مُصَلًّى ؕ وَعَهِدْنَآ اِلٰٓى اِبْرٰهٖمَ وَاِسْمٰعِيْلَ اَنْ طَهِّرَا
بَيْتِيَ لِلطَّآئِفِيْنَ وَالْعٰكِفِيْنَ وَالرُّكَّعِ السُّجُوْدِ ﴿١٢٥﴾ وَاِذْ قَالَ اِبْرٰهٖمُ رَبِّ
اجْعَلْ هٰذَا بَلَدًا اٰمِنًا وَّارْزُقْ اَهْلَهٗ مِنَ الثَّمَرٰتِ مَنْ اٰمَنَ مِنْهُمْ

وقفة لطيفة

The East and the West, all belong to Allah: you will face Allah in whichsoever direction you turn your face:[115] Allah is All-Embracing and All-Knowing.[116] 115

They say "Allah has adopted a son." Allah is above such things. As a matter of fact, whatever is in the heavens and on the earth belongs to Him and all are obedient to Him. He is the Creator of the heavens and the earth: when He decrees a thing, He merely says, "Be," and there it is. 116-117

The ignorant people say, "Why does not Allah Himself talk to us or why does not a Sign come to us?"[117] The people before them also talked like this, for all (who swerve from the Right Path) have the same mentality.[118] We have already shown clear Signs to those who believe;[119] (what greater Sign could there be than that) We have sent you with the knowledge of the Truth and made you a bearer of good tidings and a warner?[120] Now, you are not responsible and answerable for those who are bent upon going to Hell. 118-119

The Jews and the Christians will never be satisfied with you, O Muhammad, until you follow their way.[121] Tell them plainly, "The right way is shown by Allah." And if, after all the knowledge you have received, you were to yield to their desires, you shall find neither any friend nor helper to protect you from Allah's wrath. There are those, even among the people of the Scripture, who read the Book as it should be read and believe in it sincerely;[122] as for those who reject it, they are indeed the losers. 120-121

O children of Israel,[123] remember that special favour I bestowed upon you, and that I exalted you above all the communities of the world. And dread the Day when no one shall avail anyone in any way; nor shall any ransom be accepted from anyone; nor shall intercession profit any body; nor shall the offenders be helped from any quarter. 122-123

Recall to mind that when his Lord put Abraham to test[124] in certain things and he fulfilled all of them, He said, "I am going to make you the leader of mankind." Abraham humbly asked, "Does this promise apply to my descendants also?" He replied, "My promise does not apply to the transgressors."[125] 124

And remember that We made this House (the Ka'bah) the centre 125

and sanctuary for mankind and enjoined the people to dedicate to worship the place where Abraham used to stand for prayer, and We urged Abraham and Ismāīl to keep My House pure for those who would go round it and those who would retire to it for devotion and prayer and for those who would bow down and prostrate themselves there in worhsip.[126]

Contd. on p. 101]

114. That is, the places of worship should not be in the hands of such transgressors, who become their trustees, but under the management of those who possess power and fear Allah. This arrangement will prevent the wicked people from doing any mischief there for fear of retribution. It also implied that the disbelievers of Makkah had quite unjustly prevented their own brethren (who had embraced Islām) from entering the Ka'bah which they themselves called the "House of Allah".

115. That is, "Allah is not confined to any one direction, eastern or western, but is Master of all directions and places. If a particular direction is fixed for worship, it does not mean that Allah resides in that direction only. There is, therefore, no need to enter into disputes as to why a certain direction and place has been fixed instead of the other or why faces were at first turned towards a particular direction but now are being turned towards a different direction and a different place."

116. Allah is neither limited nor narrow-minded nor short-sighted nor indigent, as they suppose He is. On the contrary, His Kingdom is boundless and so are His vision and generosity. He also knows which of His servants remembers Him and also where and when and with what intention.

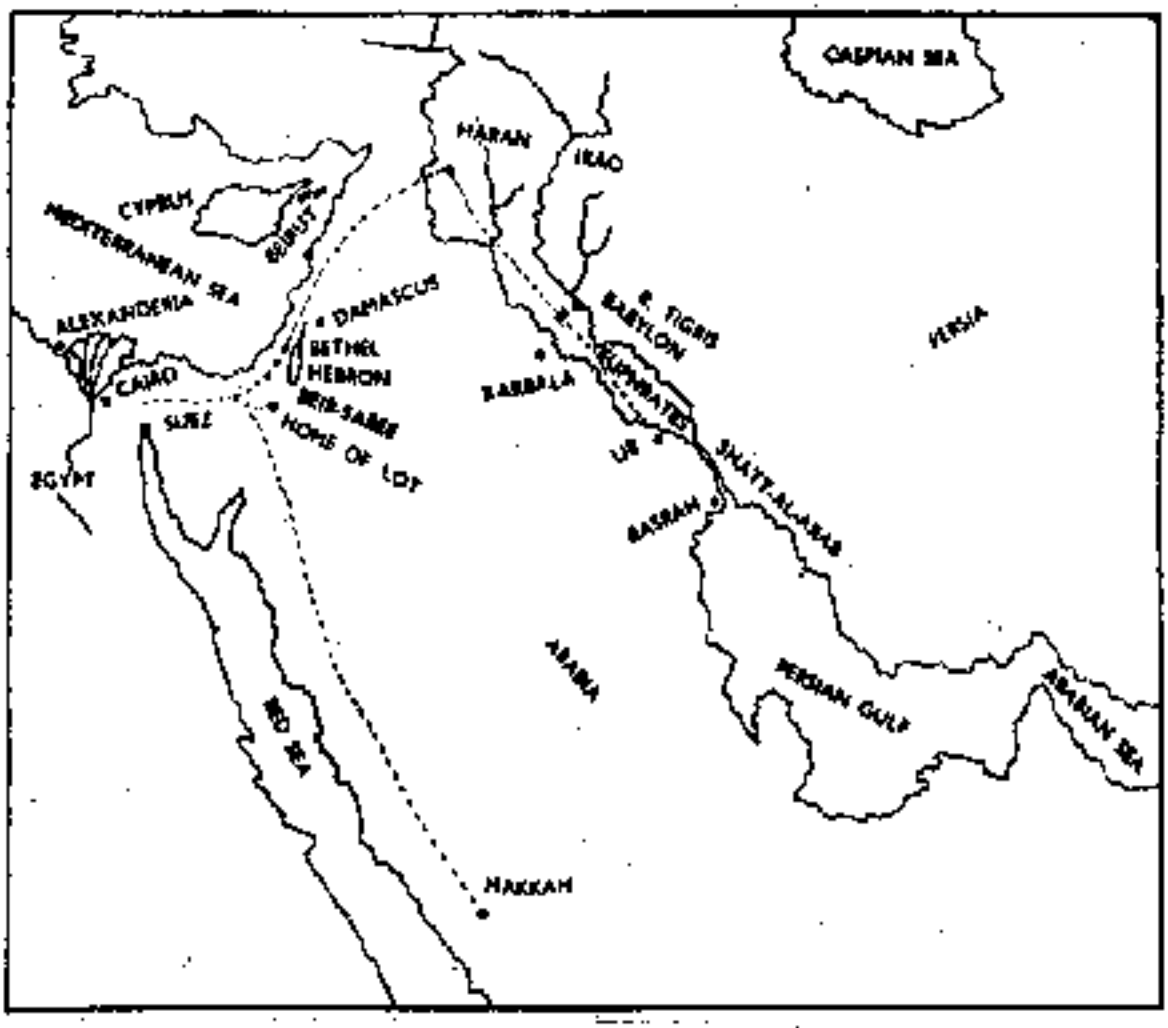
117. They demanded that either Allah Himself should come before them and say, "This is My Book and these are My Instructions for you to follow." Or, He should show such a Sign to them as would conclusively demonstrate that Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) was really a Messenger of Allah and that what he presented was revealed to him by Allah.

118. That is, "The objections and demands of those who are opposing the Truth today are not new. These are exactly the same as have always been put forward by those who go astray from the Right Way, as all the wicked people of all ages think alike and follow the same line of argument."

119. The demand that Allah Himself should speak to them was so absurd that it needed no reply. As to the other demand that Allah should show them a

MAP

Showing places visited by Prophet Abraham.



Explanation: Prophet Abraham (Allah's peace be upon him) was born in 'Iraq in the city of Ur. After his escape from the heap of fire, he migrated to Haran. Then he went to Palestine : there he established centres of his mission at Bethel, Hebron and Beir-Sheba. Then he sent his nephew Prophet Lot (Allah's peace be upon him) to the land east of Lot Sea. From Palestine he went to Egypt which was then only second to 'Iraq in civilization and culture. It has not, however, been ascertained whether any centre of his mission was established there or not. From there he went to Hijaz: there he built the "House of Allah" at Makkah and appointed his son Prophet Isma'il (Allah's peace be upon him) as its guardian. After this he made Hebron (Palestine) his permanent centre. When he died there, his second son Prophet Isaac (Allah's peace be upon him) continued his mission and after him Prophet Jacob (Allah's peace be upon him). They understood perfectly well that there was nothing in these things that could have been conducive to the great and wonderful deeds he performed as a Prophet; therefore he was really a Messenger of Allah. As a matter of fact, it was such a clear Sign that no other Sign was needed after this.

Sign, Allah answers that He has shown many clear Signs but those who are not inclined to believe cannot see them.

120. Not to speak of the other Signs, the most conspicuous Sign was the personality of Muhammad himself (Allah's peace be upon him). They knew everything about his life before Prophethood; the conditions of his country and nation and the circumstances and environment under which he was brought up and how he spent the first forty years of his life before his appointment as a Prophet;

121. That is, "The reason why these people are displeased with you is not that they are sincere seekers after Truth and that you have failed to make it as clear to them as it should have been. On the contrary, they are offended with you just because you have made the Truth so clear that no loop-hole has been left for them to make religion a paying concern for the gratification of their desires and lusts. Therefore leave them alone and do not try to reconcile them because it is not possible to please them unless you also adopt the same attitude towards religion as they have adopted. They would have been very happy with you, if you had acted hypocritically like them and made God-worship a cloak for self-worship. It is impossible to please them unless you follow their bad example in your beliefs and practices."

122. The reference is to the pious among the people of the Book, who study the Qur'ān honestly and sincerely and accept as true what is true according to the Book of Allah.

123. From here begins a new discourse. In order to understand it, the following should be kept in mind :

(1) After Noah, Abraham was the first Prophet who was appointed by Allah to spread the universal Message of Islām. He began his mission in his own country, 'Iraq, and invited the people to Islām (submission to Allah). Then he visited Syria, Palestine, Egypt and Arabia with the same mission. Afterwards he appointed his deputies in different places. He deputed Lot, his nephew, to Trans-Jordān, Isaac, his son, to Syria and Palestine, and Ismā'il, the elder son, to Arabia. Then he was commanded by Allah to build at Makkah that house of worship which is called the Ka'bah and to make it the centre of his mission.

(2) From the two sons of the Prophet Abraham sprang two nations -- Ismā'ilites and Israelites. The former were the descendants of Ishmael who settled in Arabia. The Quraish and some other Arab clans were his direct descendants but even those Arab clans which were not his descendants claimed to be Ismā'ilites because they were more or less influenced by his mission. The latter, the Israelites, were the descendants of Jacob, son of Isaac. Jospeh, Moses, David, Solomon, John, Jesus (may Allah's peace be upon them all)

and many other Prophets rose from among them. They were called Israelites after Israel, the second name of Jacob. Some other people who accepted their religion also merged into them. All the Prophets of Israel, including Jesus, preached Islām, submission to Allah, but when the Israelites became degenerate and lost their religion (Islām) they invented Judaism and later Christianity.

(3) Abraham was appointed to invite the world to surrender to Allah and to reform the people in accordance with Allah's Guidance. He himself surrendered and acted upon the knowledge he received from Allah and exerted his utmost to propagate that knowledge and to persuade all the people to submit to the Sovereign of the Universe. Therefore he was made the leader of the world. Afterwards this leadership, with all its responsibilities, was transferred to the Israelites, the descendants of Isaac and Jacob. This was the special favour which the Israelites were asked, over and over again, to remember. Accordingly, during the time of Solomon, the Holy Temple at Jerusalem became the centre and the *qiblah* (the place towards which face is to be turned for prayer) of all the worshippers of Allah, as long as the Israelites remaind the leaders of this mission.

(4) In the foregoing address (vv.40-121), Allah has charged the Israelites with their sins of omission and commission during their leadership. Therefore the Qur'ān points out their moral condition and tells them plainly, "You have proved yourselves quite unworthy of the favour shown to you. You have not only neglected to perform the obligations of leadership but have also discarded the Guidance of Allah from your own lives. Now the things have come to such a pass that you have become a community utterly unfit for leadership."

(5) Now they are being told that leadership is not the privilege of the descendants of Abraham as such, for none has any exclusive claim to it by the mere accident of birth. It was bestowed only upon those who submitted to Allah and followed His Guidance like Abraham. As they have swerved from that Way, and proved utterly unworthy of leadership, they are deposed from it.

(6) It also implied that the non-Israelite followers of the Prophet Moses and Jesus, who were proud of their relationship with Abraham had also swerved from the way of Abraham. Similarly, the idolaters of Arabia, who were also proud of their relationship with Abraham and Ismāil have been told that they too were utterly unworthy of leadership, for they, too, had swerved from the Way of Abraham and Ismāil.

(7) Now that the Israelites had been deposed from leadership, the argument proceeds to show why Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) was raised as a Prophet from among the descendants of Ismāil, in answer to the prayer of

Abraham and Ismāil. It is because he followed the same Way as was followed by Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and all the Prophets before him. He and his followers believed in all the Prophets sent by Allah, and invited the world to the same Way that was shown by the former Prophets. Therefore the followers of this Prophet alone were worthy of that leadership.

(8) With the transfer of leadership, it was essential to change its centre as well. As long as the Israelites were the leaders, the Holy Temple at Jerusalem was the centre and *qiblah* of all the followers of the Truth. That was why the Holy Prophet and his followers also used to turn their faces at first towards it at prayer. But when the Israelites were deposed from leadership, the Holy Temple automatically ceased to be the *qiblah*. It was therefore, declared that the Ka'bah at Makkah, where Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) started his mission, is to be the *qiblah* in future. As it also was the centre of Abraham's mission, neither the Israelites nor the Arabs could object to it because both acknowledged Abraham as their Prophet and ancestor. Thus there was no reason left for them to raise any objection against making the Ka'bah the centre of the Divine mission. But the fact is that obdurate people will go on arguing against the Truth even after knowing it to be the Truth.

(9) After declaring the Muslims to be the leaders, with the Ka'bah as their centre, Allah gives instructions (vv. 153-286) for their guidance to enable them to carry out their obligations as leaders of the world.

124. At different places the Qur'ān has described in detail the hard test to which Abraham was put before he was made the leader and guide of mankind. When he passed successfully through all those trials and proved himself fit and capable of performing this great responsibility, he was exalted to this high position. Ever since the Truth was revealed to him, his whole life was a series of sacrifices in its cause. He sacrificed everything which is valued in life, and encountered every kind of danger in the way of Truth.

125. That is, "This promise shall apply only to those of your descendants who will be good and capable, and not to those who will be transgressors." Thus, obviously, the misguided children of Israel and the idolatrous children of Ishmael were not entitled to this promise.

126. The purification of the House was not only to be from rubbish but also from all kinds of false worship so that the name of Allah alone should be glorified in it. The real purification of Allah's House is that no other name than His should be mentioned in it. For the worship of anyone else or the invoking of any other name for help really polluted the House. This verse charges, in a subtle manner, the Quraish with the crime of keeping idols in the Ka'bah and

[Contd. on p.110

بِاللّٰهِ وَ الْيَوْمِ الْاٰخِرِ ؕ قَالَ وَ مَنْ كَفَرَ فَاُمَتِّعُهٗ قَلِيْلًا ثُمَّ اَضْطَرُّهٗۤ اِلٰى
عَذَابِ النَّارِ ؕ وَ بِئْسَ الْمَصِيْرُ ﴿۱۲۶﴾ وَ اِذْ يَرْفَعُ اِبْرٰهٖمُ الْقَوَاعِدَ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ
وَ اِسْمٰعِيْلُ ؕ رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا ؕ اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿۱۲۷﴾ رَبَّنَا وَ
اجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمَيْنِ لَكَ وَ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِنَاۤ اُمَّةً مُّسْلِمَةً لَّكَ ۠ وَ اَرِنَا مَنَاسِكَنَا
وَ تُبْ عَلَيْنَا ۚ اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿۱۲۸﴾ رَبَّنَا وَ ابْعَثْ فِيْهِمْ رَسُوْلًا
مِّنْهُمْ يَتْلُوْا عَلَيْهِمْ اٰيٰتِكَ وَ يُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتٰبَ وَ الْحِكْمَةَ وَ يُزَكِّيْهِمْ ؕ اِنَّكَ
اَنْتَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿۱۲۹﴾ وَ مَنْ يَّرْغَبُ عَنْ مِّلَّةِ اِبْرٰهٖمَ اِلَّا مَنْ سَفِهَ
نَفْسَهٗ ؕ وَ لَقَدِ اصْطَفَيْنٰهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا ۚ وَ اِنَّهٗ فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ لَمِنَ الصّٰلِحِيْنَ ﴿۱۳۰﴾
اِذْ قَالَ لَهٗ رَبُّهٗۤ اَسْلِمْ ۙ قَالَ اَسْلَمْتُ لِرَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿۱۳۱﴾ وَ وَصّٰى بِهَاۤ
اِبْرٰهٖمُ بَنِيْهِ وَ يَعْقُوْبُ ؕ يٰبَنِيَّ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ اصْطَفٰى لَكُمُ الدِّيْنَ فَلَا
تَمُوْتُنَّ اِلَّا وَ اَنْتُمْ مُّسْلِمُوْنَ ﴿۱۳۲﴾ اَمْ كُنْتُمْ شُهَدَآءَ اِذْ حَضَرَ يَعْقُوْبَ
الْمَوْتُ ۙ اِذْ قَالَ لِبَنِيْهِ مَا تَعْبُدُوْنَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِيْ ؕ قَالُوْا نَعْبُدُ اِلٰهَكَ
وَ اِلٰهَ اٰبَآئِكَ اِبْرٰهٖمَ وَ اِسْمٰعِيْلَ وَ اِسْحٰقَ اِلٰهًا وَّاحِدًا ۚ وَ نَحْنُ
لَهٗ مُسْلِمُوْنَ ﴿۱۳۳﴾ تِلْكَ اُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ ۚ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَ لَكُمْ مَّا
كَسَبْتُمْ ۚ وَ لَا تُسْـَٔلُوْنَ عَمَّا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿۱۳۴﴾ وَ قَالُوْا كُوْنُوْا هُوْدًا
اَوْ نَصٰرٰى تَهْتَدُوْا ؕ قُلْ بَلْ مِلَّةَ اِبْرٰهٖمَ حَنِيْفًا ؕ وَ مَا كَانَ مِنَ
الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ ﴿۱۳۵﴾ قُوْلُوْۤا اٰمَنَّا بِاللّٰهِ وَ مَاۤ اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْنَا وَ مَاۤ اُنْزِلَ اِلٰۤى
اِبْرٰهٖمَ وَ اِسْمٰعِيْلَ وَ اِسْحٰقَ وَ يَعْقُوْبَ وَ الْاَسْبَاطِ وَ مَاۤ اُوْتِيَ مُوْسٰى
وَ عِيْسٰى وَ مَاۤ اُوْتِيَ النَّبِيُّوْنَ مِنْ رَّبِّهِمْ ۚ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ اَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ ۖ

And remember that Abraham prayed, "Lord, make this city a city of peace and security, and provide with every kind of fruit those of its people, who believe in Allah and the Last Day". Allah answered, "As for the disbelievers, I will also provide them with the necessities of life in this world,[127] though in the Next World I will drag them to the torment of Hell, and that is the worst abode." 126

And remember that when Abraham and Ishmael were raising the walls of the House, they prayed, "Lord, accept this service from us; You are All-Hearing and All-Knowing. Lord, make us Your Muslims (submissive servants) and also raise from our offspring a community which should be Muslim (submissive to Your Will). Show us the ways of Your worship and forbear our shortcomings: You are Forgiving and Merciful. Lord, raise up from among them a Messenger who shall recite Your Revelations to them and teach them the Book and Wisdom and purify their lives:[128] You art All-Powerful and All-Wise".[129] 127-129

Now, who else can have aversion to the way of Abraham but the one who has debased himself with folly and ignorance? Abraham was the man whom We chose for Our service in this world, and in the Next World he shall be among the righteous. When his Lord said to him, "Surrender,"[130] he promptly responded, "I have surrendered to the Lord of the Universe (and become a Muslim)." He also enjoined on his children to follow the same way. Jacob also did the same[131] and his last will to his sons was, "O my children, Allah has chosen the same way of life[132] for you. Hence remain Muslims up to your last breath." Were you present at the time when Jacob was on the point of death? He asked his chidren, "Whom will you worship after me?" They all answered, "We will worship the same One Allah Whom you, your forefathers Abraham, Ismāil and Isaac acknowledged as their Allah and to Him we all surrender as Muslims."[133] 130-133

They were a people who passed away; they shall receive the reward of what they earned and you shall have the reward of what you will earn; and you will not be questioned as to what they did.[134] 134

The Jews say, "Become Jews and you will be rightly guided"; the Christians say, "Become Christians and you will have the true guidance." Say to them, "Nay, we turn away from every other way 135-136

and accept the way of Abraham, and Abraham did not associate other gods with Allah."[135] O Muslims, say to them, "We believe in Allah and the Guidance which has been sent down to us and which was sent to Abraham, Ismāil, Isaac and Jacob and his descendants and which was given by their Lord to Moses and Jesus and to all other Prophets. We do not discriminate against any of them[136] and we have completely surrendered to Allah as Muslims."

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worshipping them instead of Allah. It implies that these idolaters who were proud of being the heirs of Abraham and Ismāil were not discharging the obligations of that heritage. Hence they, like the Israelites, have forfeited all rights to the promise of Allah made to Abraham.

127. When Abraham prayed to Allah to provide his descendants with the necessities of life, he excluded from his prayer the would-be transgressors, because Allah had excluded them from His promise of leadership. Allah, however, removed his misunderstanding immediately, saying, "There is a great difference between the two things. While the righteous leadership will be bestowed upon the true believers only, the necessities of life will be given to both the believers and the unbelievers."

It also implies that the possession of wealth is not the standard to judge whether Allah is pleased with one or not. If one is given abundance of wealth, it does not necessarily mean that Allah is pleased with him and considers him to be worthy of leadership as well.

128. "Purify their lives:" purify their beliefs, ideas, deeds, habits, customs, culture, politics, in short, every aspect of life.

129. As Allah has full powers and perfect wisdom, He granted this prayer of the Prophet Abraham and made Ḥadrat Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) His Messenger.

130. The word used in the text is "*aslim*," that is, "become a Muslim," or "adopt the attitude of Islām" (surrender to the will of Allah). Thus a Muslim is one who surrenders himself completely to Allah and obeys Him; who acknowledges Allah alone as His Lord, Master, Sovereign, Ruler, Lawgiver and God of worship; and who adopts the way of life prescribed by Him. Islām is the religious system based on this creed and attitude. This was the religion of all the Prophets who came to different countries and different nations.

131. Special mention of Jacob has been made because the Israelites were his direct descendants.

132. The Arabic word *"dīn"* has a much wider scope than the English word "religion".It covers life in its entirety, and no aspect of individual or community life is outside its realm.

133. Though Jacob's death has been described in detail in the Bible, no mention has been made of this last will of his. It, however, has been given in detail in the Talmud and its substance is more or less the same as that contained in the Qur'ān:

"At the time when Jacob quitted this world, he summoned his sons and said to them, 'Serve the Lord your God, and He will deliver ye from all trouble, even as He delivered your fathers ..... Teach your children to love God, and observe His commandments, for God will guard those who do justly and walk in righteousness through all his ways .....' And the sons of Jacob responded, 'All that you have commanded us, our father!, we will do. May God be with us.' And Jacob answered: 'The Lord will be with ye if ye shall depart not from His ways to the right hand or the left'."

The same thing about the Prophet Jacob's will has been cited by Rodwell from Midr. Rabbah, "Have ye any doubts in your hearts concerning the Holy One, blessed be He." They said, "Hear O Israel, our Father. As there is no doubt in thy heart, so neither is there in ours. For the Lord is our God, and He is One."

134. That is, "Though you are their descendants, you have no real connection with them; nor have you auy right to claim relationship with them, when you have swerved from their way. Allah will not ask you what your forefathers did but He will ask you what you yourselves did."

What we call our "actions and deeds" are, according to the Qur'ān, our earnings, because every action and every deed either produces a good result or a bad consequence. If it is good, Allah will be pleased with us and give us its due reward. If it is bad, He will inflict due punishment upon us. The Qur'ān refers to actions and deeds as earnings in order to focus attention on the serious results produced by them.

135. In order to understand the true significance of this answer, two things should be kept in mind:

(1) Judaism and Christianity were born long after the death of Abraham. Judaism, with its special rituals, peculiar regulations, etc., took its birth and name some four hundred years before Christ. As to "Christianity", it took its name and adopted its special creed and form long after the recall of Jesus. Thus it is clear that their claim that one must become a Jew or a Christian in

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وَنَحْنُ لَهٗ مُسْلِمُوْنَ ﴿136﴾ فَاِنْ اٰمَنُوْا بِمِثْلِ مَآ اٰمَنْتُمْ بِهٖ فَقَدِ اهْتَدَوْا ۚ
وَاِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَاِنَّمَا هُمْ فِيْ شِقَاقٍ ۚ فَسَيَكْفِيْكَهُمُ اللّٰهُ ۚ وَهُوَ السَّمِيْعُ
الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿137﴾ صِبْغَةَ اللّٰهِ ۚ وَمَنْ اَحْسَنُ مِنَ اللّٰهِ صِبْغَةً ۚ وَّنَحْنُ لَهٗ
عٰبِدُوْنَ ﴿138﴾ قُلْ اَتُحَآجُّوْنَنَا فِي اللّٰهِ وَهُوَ رَبُّنَا وَرَبُّكُمْ ۚ وَلَنَآ اَعْمَالُنَا وَ
لَكُمْ اَعْمَالُكُمْ ۚ وَنَحْنُ لَهٗ مُخْلِصُوْنَ ﴿139﴾ اَمْ تَقُوْلُوْنَ اِنَّ اِبْرٰهٖمَ وَ
اِسْمٰعِيْلَ وَاِسْحٰقَ وَيَعْقُوْبَ وَالْاَسْبَاطَ كَانُوْا هُوْدًا اَوْ نَصٰرٰى ۗ قُلْ
ءَاَنْتُمْ اَعْلَمُ اَمِ اللّٰهُ ۗ وَمَنْ اَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ كَتَمَ شَهَادَةً عِنْدَهٗ مِنَ
اللّٰهِ ۗ وَمَا اللّٰهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿140﴾ تِلْكَ اُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ ۚ لَهَا مَا
كَسَبَتْ وَلَكُمْ مَّا كَسَبْتُمْ ۚ وَلَا تُسْـَٔلُوْنَ عَمَّا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿141﴾

سَيَقُوْلُ السُّفَهَآءُ مِنَ النَّاسِ مَا وَلّٰىهُمْ عَنْ قِبْلَتِهِمُ الَّتِيْ كَانُوْا عَلَيْهَا

قُلْ لِّلّٰهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ ۗ يَهْدِيْ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ اِلٰى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ﴿142﴾
وَكَذٰلِكَ جَعَلْنٰكُمْ اُمَّةً وَّسَطًا لِّتَكُوْنُوْا شُهَدَآءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُوْنَ
الرَّسُوْلُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيْدًا ۗ وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِيْ كُنْتَ عَلَيْهَآ اِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ
مَنْ يَّتَّبِعُ الرَّسُوْلَ مِمَّنْ يَّنْقَلِبُ عَلٰى عَقِبَيْهِ ۗ وَاِنْ كَانَتْ لَكَبِيْرَةً اِلَّا
عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ هَدَى اللّٰهُ ۗ وَمَا كَانَ اللّٰهُ لِيُضِيْعَ اِيْمَانَكُمْ ۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ بِالنَّاسِ
لَرَءُوْفٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿143﴾ ۝ قَدْ نَرٰى تَقَلُّبَ وَجْهِكَ فِي السَّمَآءِ ۚ فَلَنُوَلِّيَنَّكَ قِبْلَةً
تَرْضٰىهَا ۪ فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ ۗ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ فَوَلُّوْا
وُجُوْهَكُمْ شَطْرَهٗ ۗ وَاِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْكِتٰبَ لَيَعْلَمُوْنَ اَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَّبِّهِمْ ۗ
وَمَا اللّٰهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿144﴾ وَلَئِنْ اَتَيْتَ الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْكِتٰبَ

Then if they believe the way you have believed, they have the right guidance, and if they turn away from this, it will become obvious that they are obdurate. Therefore, rest assured that Allah will suffice to defend you against them: He hears everything and knows everything. 137

Say, "Take Allah's colour,[137] and who can give a better colour than Allah? Therefore, we worship and submit to Him alone." 138

O Prophet, say to them, "Do you argue with us concerning Allah, whereas He is our Lord and also your Lord?[138] We shall be accountable to Him for our deeds and you for yours; so we have dedicated our worship to Him alone.[139] Or do you say that Abraham, Ismāil , Isaac, Jacob and his children were all Jews or Christians?" Ask them, "Do you know more than Allah does?[140] And who is more unjust than the one who hides the testimony which Allah has entrusted to him? Allah is not unaware of what you are doing.[141] They were a people who have passed away and they shall be repaid for what they earned and you for what you earn: you will not be questioned as to what they did." 139-141

Of course, the foolish people will say, "What has turned them abruptly away from the *qiblah* towards which they formerly used to turn their faces in prayer?"[142] Tell them, O Messenger, "East and West all belong to Allah; He shows the Right Way to anyone He wills."[143] Thus have We made you a Community of the "Golden Mean" so that you may be witnesses in regard to mankind and the Messenger may be a witness in regard to you.[144] 142

We had appointed the former *qiblah* towards which you used to turn your face merely to test who would follow the Messenger and who would turn back.[145] It was indeed a hard test but not for those who had been blessed with Guidance from Allah. Allah will not let go to waste this faith of yours; rest assured that He is full of pity and mercy for mankind. 143

We have seen you (O Muhammad), turning your face over and over again towards Heaven. Now, therefore, We turn you towards the *qiblah* that you like best: so turn your face towards the Masjid Haram. Henceforth, wheresoever you may be, turn your face at prayer towards it.[146] 44

the people who were given the Book know it well that the commandment (about the change of *qiblah*) is in fact from their Lord, and is based on the Truth, but Allah is not unaware of what they are doing (in spite of this)

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order to obtain guidance was historically untenable. For in that case, Abraham, Jesus and all the other Prophets and all the good people who had passed away long before the birth of Judaism and Christianity could not be counted among the right-guided persons for the simple reason that these "religions" did not exist at the time they lived. Thus, it was obvious that the Jews and Christians could not say that these Prophets were not right-guided, nor could they claim that they followed Judaism or Christianity. As a corollary to this, true Guidance did not, even according to them, consist of the particular features which divided them into two distinct religions, but it was that eternal universal way which has been shown by all the Messengers of Allah and which has always been followed by the good people of all ages.

(2) It also meant to warn the Jews and the Christians that both practised *shirk* and had, therefore, swerved from the way of Abraham, who did not associate any other object with Allah in his worship, his reverence, his submission and his obedience to Him. They could not deny this because their own Scriptures bore testimony to it.

136. "We do not discriminate against any of them" means that we believe in all the Prophets of Allah and reject none. It is obvious that all the Prophets who came from Allah brought the same Truth and invited the people to the same Guidance and Right Way. Hence anyone who follows the Truth must accept all the Prophets. Those who accept one Prophet and reject the other really reject even the one whom they profess to accept. Had they followed the universal Guidance taught by Moses, Jesus and other Prophets, they could not have rejected any other Prophet (i.e. Muhammad, Allah's peace be upon him). As a matter of fact, they were not following the teachings of any Prophet, but merely professing to accept their own Prophets just because their fathers did so. Thus their real religion was prejudice, race-worship and blind imitation of their forefathers.

137. It may also mean, "We took Allah's colour." Before the advent of Christianity, it was a custom among the Jews to give a bath to those who accepted Judaism. It meant to imply that all the sins of the baptised person were washed away and he had received a new colour of life. This same custom was later on adopted by the Christians and it was termed "Baptism", which is a ceremonial immersion in water or an application of water as an initiatory rite or sacrament of

the Christian Church. It is applied not only to the new converts but also to all newly-born babies.

The Qur'ān says that there is nothing substantial in this ceremonial "colouring," since it is not necessary for salvation. For this purpose one should take colour from Allah by adopting His Way and submitting to His Law.

138. That is, "What we only say is that Allah is Lord of all of us, and we should all submit to Him. Why should you then have any dispute with us concerning Allah? Is it a thing concerning which you should have any dispute with us? As a matter of fact, it is we who have a cause of dispute and not you, for it is you (and not we) who associate other objects of worship with Allah."

The original Arabic words may also mean: "Are you having a dispute with us for the sake of Allah....?" It would then mean: "If you really are having a dispute with us for the sake of Allah and not for the sake of prejudice or worldly interests, it can be settled amicably."

139. That is, "You are responsible for your deeds and we are for ours. If you have associated other partners with Allah in His Godhead and if you worship and obey them, you are free to do so but you yourselves will bear its consequences. As to the dispute between us, it can be ended if you allow us the same freedom of worship that we allow you. When we do not dispute with you about your associating other gods with Allah, you should at least concede us the right to worship the One Allah without associating any partner with Him, Whom we have chosen for exclusive worship and submission."

140. This question was adddressed to the common people of the Jews and Christians, who in their ignorance sincerely believed that all these great Prophets were Jews or Christians.

141. This question was addressed to their scholars, who were not ignorant of the fact that Judaism and Christianity with their special rituals, etc., were the products of a later age. In spite of this they were under the delusion that the Truth was confined to their own sects, and they kept their common people under the delusion that salvation depended on those beliefs, ways and regulations, which had been invented, long after the Prophets, by their own rabbis and priests, spiritual leaders and interpreters. Whenever they were confronted with the question: "To which of these sects of yours did Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and other Prophets belong?", they would never answer this directly. For they could not claim that those Prophets belonged to their particular sect as they knew that history proved that claim to be absurd. But, in spite of this established fact, they could not admit it in clear words that the Prophets were neither Jews nor Christians, because this would have automatically refuted their claims.

142. After the Hijrah the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) continued to turn his face in the Prayer towards the Temple (at Jerusalem) for about 16 or 17 months; then he was commanded to turn his face towards the Ka'bah (at Makkah). This change of the qiblah (direction of Prayer) with its implications has been described in detail in the succeeding verses.

143. Those foolish people who did not have the sense to appreciate the true significance of this change began to raise different kinds of objections in order to create doubts in the minds of the Believers. Being narrow-minded, they thought that Allah was confined to a particular point or direction and the change of qiblah meant turning away from Him. This absurd objection has been removed by the declaration that east, west and all other directions belong to Allah. The fact that the qiblah lies in a certain direction does not mean that Allah is confined to that direction only. Those people who are blessed with guidance cannot entertain such narrow ideas. (Also refer to E.N.'s 115 and 116).

144. This is the declaration of the leadership of the Muslim Community. "Thus" refers both to the Guidance of Allah which was sent through Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) and to the change of the *qiblah*. It was by following the Guidance that the Muslims achieved those excellences which led to their appointment as the "Community of the Golden Mean," and it was the change of the *qiblah* from the Temple to the Ka'bah that was an indication that the Israelites had been deposed from the leadership and the Muslims had been appointed to it. Therefore the change of the *qiblah* from the Temple to the Ka'bah was not merely a change of direction as the foolish people took it to be, but it was really the formal declaration of the change of leadership from the Israelites to the followers of Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him).

The word *"ummat wasat"* is so comprehensive in meaning that no English word can correctly convey its full sense. It is a righteous and noble community which does not go beyond proper limits, but follows the middle course and deals out justice evenly to the nations of the world as an impartial judge, and bases all its relations with other nations on truth and justice.

The meaning of "We have appointed you as *ummat wasat* so that you may be witnesses in regard to mankind and the Messenger may be a witness in regard to you" is: On the Judgement Day when all mankind will be called to account together, the Messenger, as Our authorised representative, will give evidence in regard to you to prove that he had imparted to you, by word and by deed, without any reservation, the whole teaching of sound thought, righteous deed and justice given by Us. Then you, being representatives of the Messenger, in your turn, will be required to give evidence to prove that you had done your utmost to impart, by

word and deed, to mankind whatever the Messenger had imparted to you just as you had received it from the Messenger.

Thus, a person or group's being appointed by God a witness by itself amounts to its being exalted to the office of leadership and religious guide in the world. Though it is a position of honour, it carries very onerous responsibilities with it. It requires that the Muslim Community should become a living witness of piety, truth and justice before the world just as the Holy Prophet bore witness before it, and its words and deeds should suffice to demonstrate to the world the meaning of truth, justice and piety. It also implies that it is a great responsibility for which the Muslim Community is accountable. Just as the Holy Prophet was responsible for conveying the Guidance of Allah, so the Muslims are responsible for conveying it to the people of the world. If they fail to prove in the Court of Allah that they have discharged this responsibility to the best of their ability, they will be condemned there. And they along with their evil geniuses and accomplices shall be accountable for all the evils which prevailed during their term of leadership, if they had shown any relaxation in the performance of their obligation as witnesses of the Truth. On the Day of Judgement, Allah will surely ask, "What did you do to prevent it when you saw the epidemic of sin, tyranny and impiety breaking out in the world?"

145. The change of the *qiblah* also served to separate the Believers from the slaves of prejudice and racialism. On the one side, there were the Arabs who were not ready to give up their own Ka'bah and to adopt the Temple at Jerusalem as the *qiblah*. They were tried first. It was a hard test but the sincere believers passed successfully through this and the worshippers of the idol of nationalism failed. Now when the qiblah was changed from Jerusalem to the Ka'bah, those Jews and Christians who had embraced Islām were put to the test. It was very difficult for them to accept any other *qiblah* than the one of their forefathers. Thus the worshippers of race, who turned back from Islām were separated from the worshippers of Allah and finally the worshippers of Allah only remained with the Holy Prophet.

146. This is the commandment for the change of the *qiblah*, which was enjoined in Rajab or Sha'ban, A.H. 2. When this was revealed, according to Ibn Sa'd, the Holy Prophet was leading the Zuhr (early afternoon) prayer in the house of Bishr bin Bara' bin Ma'rur where he had gone in response to an invitation. This verse was revealed when he had gone through half of the prayer. He at once turned his face towards the Ka'bah during the prayer and those who were saying their Prayer following his lead did the same. Afterwards it was announced publicly in Madinah and its suburbs that the *qiblah* had been changed. Bara' bin 'Azib says

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بِكُلِّ اٰيَةٍ مَّا تَبِعُوْا قِبْلَتَكَ ۚ وَمَآ اَنْتَ بِتَابِعٍ قِبْلَتَهُمْ ۚ وَمَا بَعْضُهُمْ بِتَابِعٍ
قِبْلَةَ بَعْضٍ ۭ وَلَىِٕنِ اتَّبَعْتَ اَهْوَاۗءَهُمْ مِّنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَاۗءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ ۙ
اِنَّكَ اِذًا لَّمِنَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿145﴾ اَلَّذِيْنَ اٰتَيْنٰهُمُ الْكِتٰبَ يَعْرِفُوْنَهٗ كَمَا يَعْرِفُوْنَ
وقف لازم
لتقدم
اَبْنَاۗءَهُمْ ۭ وَاِنَّ فَرِيْقًا مِّنْهُمْ لَيَكْتُمُوْنَ الْحَقَّ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿146﴾ اَلْحَقُّ مِنْ
رَّبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ الْمُمْتَرِيْنَ ﴿147﴾ وَلِكُلٍّ وِّجْهَةٌ هُوَ مُوَلِّيْهَا فَاسْتَبِقُوا
الْخَيْرٰتِ ۭ اَيْنَ مَا تَكُوْنُوْا يَاْتِ بِكُمُ اللّٰهُ جَمِيْعًا ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلٰي كُلِّ
وقف لازم
لتقدم
شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿148﴾ وَمِنْ حَيْثُ خَرَجْتَ فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ ۭ
وَاِنَّهٗ لَلْحَقُّ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ ۭ وَمَا اللّٰهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿149﴾ وَمِنْ حَيْثُ
خَرَجْتَ فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ ۭ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ فَوَلُّوْا
وُجُوْهَكُمْ شَطْرَهٗ ۙ لِئَلَّا يَكُوْنَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَيْكُمْ حُجَّةٌ ۣ اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا
مِنْهُمْ فَلَا تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِيْ ۣ وَلِاُتِمَّ نِعْمَتِيْ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ
تَهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿150﴾ كَمَآ اَرْسَلْنَا فِيْكُمْ رَسُوْلًا مِّنْكُمْ يَتْلُوْا عَلَيْكُمْ اٰيٰتِنَا وَيُزَكِّيْكُمْ
معانقة ٣
وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ الْكِتٰبَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمْ مَّا لَمْ تَكُوْنُوْا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿151﴾ فَاذْكُرُوْنِيْٓ
اَذْكُرْكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوْا لِيْ وَلَا تَكْفُرُوْنِ ﴿152﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اسْتَعِيْنُوْا بِالصَّبْرِ
وَالصَّلٰوةِ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ مَعَ الصّٰبِرِيْنَ ﴿153﴾ وَلَا تَقُوْلُوْا لِمَنْ يُّقْتَلُ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ
اللّٰهِ اَمْوَاتٌ ۭ بَلْ اَحْيَاۗءٌ وَّلٰكِنْ لَّا تَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿154﴾ وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ
الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوْعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْاَمْوَالِ وَالْاَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرٰتِ ۭ وَبَشِّرِ
الصّٰبِرِيْنَ ﴿155﴾ الَّذِيْنَ اِذَآ اَصَابَتْهُمْ مُّصِيْبَةٌ ۙ قَالُوْٓا اِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَاِنَّآ اِلَيْهِ
رٰجِعُوْنَ ﴿156﴾ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوٰتٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ ۟ وَاُولٰۗىِٕكَ هُمُ

Even though you may show every kind of sign to the people of the Book, they will not adopt your *qiblah*, nor are you going to adopt their *qiblah;* nor will any of them adopt the *qiblah* of the other; therefore if, after the knowledge you have received, you follow their desires, you will certainly be counted among the transgressors.[147] As for those to whom We gave the Book, they recognise the place (which has now been made *qiblah*), as clearly as they recognise their own children.[148] But some of them are knowingly concealing the truth. This is in fact a Commandment from your Lord; so you should not have any doubt concerning this. 145-147

Everyone has a direction towards which he turns in Prayer: so try to excel one another in good works.[149] Allah will find you wheresoever you be, for nothing is out of Allah's reach. 148

At whatever place you may be, turn your face towards Masjid Haram (at Prayer time) for this is, in fact, a Commandment of your Lord, and Allah is not unaware of what you do. At whatever place you may be, you must turn your face towards the Masjid Haram, and wherever you may be, you must turn your face towards the same at prayer so that people might not find an argument against you.[150] As for the unjust people, they will never stop talking; so do not fear them but fear Me -- (Do this) so that I may complete My favour[151] upon you and you may find the way to real success,[152] just as (you have found from this: that) We sent the Messenger to you from among you, who recites to you Our Revelations; who purifies your lives; who instructs you in the Book and in Wisdom and teaches you those things that you did not know. So remember Me and I will remember you, and give thanks to Me and be not ungrateful. 149-152

O Believers,[153] seek help with fortitude and *Salāt*, for Allah is with those who show fortitude.[154] And do not say of those who are slain in the way of Allah, "they are dead." In fact, they are alive but you do not perceive that life.[155] We will surely put you to trial by involving you in fear and hunger and by causing loss of property, life and earnings. And give good tidings to those who remain steadfast in these trials: when a misfortune comes to them, they say, "We are Allah's and we shall certainly return to Him."[156] Their Lord will bestow great blessings and mercy upon them; such are the people who 153-157

are rightly guided.

Contd. from p. 117]

that at one place this announcement was heard at a time when the people had bent down in the Prayer. But when they heard the commandment, they turned about in the same posture towards the Ka'bah. Anas bin Malik says that the people of Bani Salāmah heard of the change of the *qiblah* next morning at a time when they had already gone through half of the Prayer. As soon as they heard the announcement: "Beware, the *qiblah* has been changed to the Ka'bah," the whole congregation turned about towards the Ka'bah.

In this connection, it should also be kept in mind that the Holy Temple at Jerusalem is to the north of Madinah and the Ka'bah at Makkah to the south of it. The Imam (who led the Prayer) must have walked to the rear of the congregation, who had to turn about and also to move about a little in order to adjust the rows. All these things have been related in detail in the Traditions.

Moreover, it is quite clear from "We have seen you turn your face over and over again towards heaven" and "We turn you towards the *qiblah* that you like best" that the Holy Prophet used to pray for, and was expecting this change, for he himself was feeling that the term of the leadership of the Israelites had come to an end and consequently Jerusalem had also ceased to be the centre. Therefore Ka'bah which had been set up by the Prophet Abraham should be the *qiblah*.

"Masjid Haram" means the "Inviolable place of worship and reverence". It refers to that place of worship at Makkah which has the Ka'bah in its centre.

The Commandment "Turn your face towards the Ka'abah" does not mean that one should turn one's face exactly to the point of the Ka'abah from every part of the globe. Obviously it is very difficult for everyone to do so at all times from all places of the globe. That is why the Qur'an directs us to turn our faces towards the Ka'abah and not to the point of the Ka'abah ; We should do our best to find out the exact direction of the Ka'abah ; then if we are satisfied that a certain direction is most probably the correct direction, we should turn our faces towards it. But when it is not possible to ascertain the exact direction (for example, in a boat or a train, etc.) one should turn one's face to the probable right direction, and if during the prayer the correct direction is found out, one should turn one's face towards it at once.

147. That is, "You cannot convince by argument those who are disputing with you about the wisdom of the change of the *qiblah* because they are not disposed to listen to any reasoning on account of their deep prejudices and obduracy: nor can you end this dispute by adopting the *qiblah* of anyone of them,

for all of them have different *qiblahs*; and, as a Prophet of Allah, you cannot make compromises on the principle of "give and take". Therefore the only thing you have to do is to stick to Our Commandments strictly and firmly. If you turn away from these, you will be transgressing the limits of Prophethood and showing ingratitude towards the favour of leadership with which We have blessed you."

148. This Arabic idiom is employed when one knows something with certainty and has absolutely no doubt about its identity. The metaphor has been derived from the fact that none can make any mistake in recognizing one's own children. Here it has been used to show that the learned people of the Jews and Christians knew it as a fact that the Ka'bah was built by the Prophet Abraham, just as they knew their own children. They also knew that the Holy Temple at Jerusalem was built by the Prophet Solomon some 1,300 years after the Ka'bah was built by the Prophet Abraham. The Ka'bah, therefore, had priority and superiority over the "Temple" and the Jews and the Christians should have no difficulty in recognizing and acknowledging it as the *qiblah* in the light of the above historical facts.

149. There is a subtle gap between the first sentence and the second, which has been left for the reader to fill. Everyone who wants to offer his Prayer must turn his face to one or the other direction. But the real thing that matters is not the direction of the face at prayer but those virtues which are to be gained by offering the prayer. Hence the thing that really matters is the spirit and real purpose of the Prayer and not any particular direction or place.

150. That is, "We have reiterated this Commandment lest anyone of you should turn his face to any other direction in the prayer and give to opponents cause to say, 'These people of the *ummat wasat* claim that they are witnesses of the Truth but their behaviour falsifies it. While they profess that the Commandment about the change of the *qiblah* has come from their Lord, they do not act upon it'."

151. The blessing refers to the blessing of leadership which Allah had wrested from the children of Israel and invested in the Muslims. This is the greatest reward which is given to any community when it adopts and follows the righteous way and is entrusted by Allah with the work of guiding the world on the path of virtue. Here Allah tells the Muslims, "The change of *qiblah* is symbolic of the change of leadership. You should, therefore, observe this Commandment strictly, lest leadership should be wrested from you on account of your disobedience or ingratitude. This favour will be conferred on you in perfection, if you obey the Commandment".

152. That is, "You should expect this blessing if you submit to this

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الْمُهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿١٥٨﴾ اِنَّ الصَّفَا وَ الْمَرْوَةَ مِنْ شَعَآئِرِ اللّٰهِ ۚ فَمَنْ حَجَّ الْبَيْتَ
اَوِ اعْتَمَرَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِ اَنْ يَّطَّوَّفَ بِهِمَا ؕ وَ مَنْ تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا ۙ فَاِنَّ
اللّٰهَ شَاكِرٌ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿١٥٩﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يَكْتُمُوْنَ مَآ اَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْبَيِّنٰتِ وَ الْهُدٰى
مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا بَيَّنّٰهُ لِلنَّاسِ فِى الْكِتٰبِ ۙ اُولٰٓئِكَ يَلْعَنُهُمُ اللّٰهُ وَ يَلْعَنُهُمُ
اللّٰعِنُوْنَ ﴿١٦٠﴾ اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ تَابُوْا وَ اَصْلَحُوْا وَ بَيَّنُوْا فَاُولٰٓئِكَ اَتُوْبُ عَلَيْهِمْ ۚ
وَ اَنَا التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿١٦١﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا وَ مَاتُوْا وَ هُمْ كُفَّارٌ اُولٰٓئِكَ
عَلَيْهِمْ لَعْنَةُ اللّٰهِ وَ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ وَ النَّاسِ اَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿١٦٢﴾ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا ۚ لَا
يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمُ الْعَذَابُ وَ لَا هُمْ يُنْظَرُوْنَ ﴿١٦٣﴾ وَ اِلٰهُكُمْ اِلٰهٌ وَّاحِدٌ ۚ لَآ
اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ الرَّحْمٰنُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿١٦٤﴾ اِنَّ فِىْ خَلْقِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الْاَرْضِ وَ اخْتِلَافِ
الَّيْلِ وَ النَّهَارِ وَ الْفُلْكِ الَّتِىْ تَجْرِىْ فِى الْبَحْرِ بِمَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ وَ مَآ
اَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مِنْ مَّآءٍ فَاَحْيَا بِهِ الْاَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَ بَثَّ
فِيْهَا مِنْ كُلِّ دَآبَّةٍ ۖ وَّ تَصْرِيْفِ الرِّيٰحِ وَ السَّحَابِ الْمُسَخَّرِ بَيْنَ
السَّمَآءِ وَ الْاَرْضِ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿١٦٥﴾ وَ مِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَّتَّخِذُ
مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ اَنْدَادًا يُّحِبُّوْنَهُمْ كَحُبِّ اللّٰهِ ؕ وَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اَشَدُّ حُبًّا
لِّلّٰهِ ؕ وَ لَوْ يَرَى الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْٓا اِذْ يَرَوْنَ الْعَذَابَ ۙ اَنَّ الْقُوَّةَ لِلّٰهِ جَمِيْعًا ۙ
وَّ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ شَدِيْدُ الْعَذَابِ ﴿١٦٦﴾ اِذْ تَبَرَّاَ الَّذِيْنَ اتُّبِعُوْا مِنَ الَّذِيْنَ اتَّبَعُوْا
وَ رَاَوُا الْعَذَابَ وَ تَقَطَّعَتْ بِهِمُ الْاَسْبَابُ ﴿١٦٧﴾ وَ قَالَ الَّذِيْنَ اتَّبَعُوْا لَوْ
اَنَّ لَنَا كَرَّةً فَنَتَبَرَّاَ مِنْهُمْ كَمَا تَبَرَّءُوْا مِنَّا ؕ كَذٰلِكَ يُرِيْهِمُ اللّٰهُ
اَعْمَالَهُمْ حَسَرٰتٍ عَلَيْهِمْ ؕ وَ مَا هُمْ بِخٰرِجِيْنَ مِنَ النَّارِ ﴿١٦٨﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا

Indeed Safa and Marwah are among the emblems of Allah: it is, therefore, no sin for him, who performs Hajj or 'Umrah[157] to the House of Allah, to run between the two hills;[158] and Allah knows and appreciates him who does any good with a willing heart.[159] 158

Indeed Allah curses, and the cursers, too, curse those who conceal the clear teachings and guidance We have sent down, after We have made these plain in the Book for the guidance of all mankind.[160] I, however, will forgive those of them who repent of it, mend their ways and make known what they were concealing: for I am very generous in accepting repentance and showing mercy. 159-160

Those who adopted the way of disbelief[161] and died as disbelievers, are accursed of Allah and of angels and of all mankind: they shall remain accursed for ever. Their punishment shall not be lightened, nor shall they be reprieved. 161-162

Your Deity is Allah alone: there is no deity save the All-Beneficent and All-Merciful Allah. (If they want a sign for the perception of this Reality) surely there are countless signs for those who use their common sense;[162] they can see alternation of the night and day, in the ships that sail the ocean laden with cargoes beneficial to mankind, and in the rain-water which Allah sends down from the sky and thereby gives life to the earth after its death and spreads over it all kinds of animate creatures, in the blowing of the winds and in the clouds which obediently wait for orders between the sky and the earth. (In spite of such clear signs of the Oneness of Allah), there are people who set up equals and rivals with Allah[163] and adore them with the adoration due to Allah — whereas the Believers adore Allah most ardently.[164] — Would that these transgressors could realize now what they will realize, when they will see the chastisement before them — that power and authority wholly belong to Allah and that Allah is severe in punishment! When He will inflict punishment, those very leaders and guides whom they followed in the world will disown them. But punishment they shall get and all their bonds shall be cut off. Then those who followed them will say, "Would that we were given another chance to return to the world: then we will disown them just as they have disowned us today."[165] Thus will Allah bring before them the deeds they did in the world in such a manner as to make them wring 163-167

their hands in regret but they shall be unable to come out of the Fire.

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Commandment about the change of the *qiblah*." This promise is very encouraging for a servant of Allah. The assurance gives him great consolation that he should expect such a great reward from his King, if he obeys His Commandments with all his heart and soul.

153. After their appointment to leadership, the Believers from hereon are given such instructions and directions as are essential for training and enabling them to discharge the duties of that position of responsibility. They are first of all warned that leadership is not a bed of roses but a bed of thorns. They will be confronted with difficulties, hardships, and trials at the very outset and will have to undergo untold sufferings and losses. But if they went through all those ordeals with fortitude and proceeded on in the way of Allah, they would be blessed with countless blessings and rewards by Him.

154. That is, "Fortitude and Prayer will generate in you the power which is required to bear that burden of responsibility with which you have been entrusted. Fortitude will give you that patience and courage under the afflictions, privations and temptations which you are bound to encounter and that moral strength and endurance which will be sorely needed in Allah's way, which is full of dangers. The Prayer will train you in discipline and other moral qualities which are essential for the right type of leadership."

155. It is forbidden to refer to those who are martyred for Allah's sake as "dead" because the very word "death" and its thought are very discouraging, and kill the spirit of self-sacrifice and the urge to fight in the way of Allah. Instead, the Muslims are told to believe that those who fall martyrs in the way of Allah in fact enjoy eternal life. And this is a reality which revitalises and keeps alive the spirit of courage and valour.

156. These words are to be uttered merely with the tongue, but we whould believe sincerely from the core of our hearts that "We belong to Allah and to none else." Thus, if anything is sacrificed in the way of Allah, it is spent rightly because it has gone to His service to Whom it really belonged."

"We shall certainly return to Him" :"We shall not live here for ever but shall have to leave this world one day. Thus, sooner or later we must die and go to Allah. It is, therefore, far better to fight in His way and lay down our lives for His sake than to pass our lives in self-seeking and self-worship and then die of some disease or accident."

157. Hajj is pilgrimage to the Ka'bah during the fixed days of the month of Dhul-Hijjah and 'Umrah is the voluntary visit to the Ka'bah in other than the Hajj days.

Directions about Hajj and 'Umrah are being given at this place because the Ka'bah had recently been made the *qiblah* and naturally questions and problems connected with it had arisen.

158. The running between Safa and Marwah (the two hills) near the Ka'bah was one of the rituals taught by Allah to Abraham in connection with Hajj. But afterwards when the people began to associate false gods with Allah, they built temples on Safa and Marwah and dedicated these to two idols, Asāf and Nā'ilah, and went round them in reverence to them. When the Arabs embraced Islām, a question arose whether running between Safa and Marwah was one of the original rituals of Hajj or whether this had been invented by the worshippers of false gods and whether they would not be guilty of practising *shirk* by running between the two hills.

Besides this, a Tradition related by Ḥaḍrat 'A'ishah says that the people of Madinah had an old aversion to running between Safa and Marwah even before they accepted Islām for they were devotees of Manāt and did not worship Asāf and Nā'ilah. Therefore, now when the Ka'bah was made the *qiblah*, Allah removed their misunderstanding concerning the running between Safa and Marwah and told them that this ritual had really been connected with Hajj ever since the time of the Prophet Abraham and was not the invention of the ignorant people after him.

159. That is, it is far better to run between the two hills with a willing heart to please Allah than as a mere compliance with a Command from Him.

160. The greatest crime of the Jewish scholars was that they had made the teachings of their Scriptures the monopoly of their rabbis and professional scribes. Not to speak of imparting these to the Gentiles, they did not teach them even to the common Jews. As a result, the Jews began to practise irreligious things because of their ignorance. Even then their rabbis did not do anything to reform and educate them. Instead of this, they went on, directly or indiretly, certifying every irreligious practice as legal merely for the sake of winning and retaining popularity. The Muslims are being forewarned that as leaders of the world they should propagate and spread the Guidance given to them and should not keep it back from the common people as the Jewish rabbis and scribes did.

161. The literal meaning of the word *kufr* is "to conceal". By and by it came to be used for the concealment of the Truth and then for its rejection, as the antonym of *Iman*. *Iman* means to believe, to accept and to admit, and *kufr* means

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النَّاسُ كُلُوْا مِمَّا فِي الْاَرْضِ حَلٰلًا طَيِّبًا ۖ وَّ لَا تَتَّبِعُوْا خُطُوٰتِ الشَّيْطٰنِ
إِنَّهٗ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿168﴾ إِنَّمَا يَاْمُرُكُمْ بِالسُّوْٓءِ وَ الْفَحْشَآءِ وَ اَنْ تَقُوْلُوْا
عَلَى اللّٰهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿169﴾ وَ إِذَا قِيْلَ لَهُمُ اتَّبِعُوْا مَآ اَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ قَالُوْا
بَلْ نَتَّبِعُ مَآ اَلْفَيْنَا عَلَيْهِ اٰبَآءَنَا ۭ اَوَ لَوْ كَانَ اٰبَآؤُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُوْنَ
شَيْـًٔا وَّ لَا يَهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿170﴾ وَ مَثَلُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا كَمَثَلِ الَّذِيْ يَنْعِقُ بِمَا
لَا يَسْمَعُ إِلَّا دُعَآءً وَّ نِدَآءً ۭ صُمٌّۢ بُكْمٌ عُمْيٌ فَهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿171﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا
الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا كُلُوْا مِنْ طَيِّبٰتِ مَا رَزَقْنٰكُمْ وَ اشْكُرُوْا لِلّٰهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ
إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُوْنَ ﴿172﴾ إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ وَ الدَّمَ وَ لَحْمَ الْخِنْزِيْرِ وَ
مَآ اُهِلَّ بِهٖ لِغَيْرِ اللّٰهِ ۚ فَمَنِ اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَّ لَا عَادٍ فَلَآ إِثْمَ
عَلَيْهِ ۭ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿173﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يَكْتُمُوْنَ مَآ اَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ مِنَ
الْكِتٰبِ وَ يَشْتَرُوْنَ بِهٖ ثَمَنًا قَلِيْلًا ۙ اُولٰٓئِكَ مَا يَاْكُلُوْنَ فِيْ بُطُوْنِهِمْ إِلَّا
النَّارَ وَ لَا يُكَلِّمُهُمُ اللّٰهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ وَ لَا يُزَكِّيْهِمْ ۚ وَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ
اَلِيْمٌ ﴿174﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ اشْتَرَوُا الضَّلٰلَةَ بِالْهُدٰى وَ الْعَذَابَ بِالْمَغْفِرَةِ ۚ
فَمَآ اَصْبَرَهُمْ عَلَى النَّارِ ﴿175﴾ ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّ اللّٰهَ نَزَّلَ الْكِتٰبَ بِالْحَقِّ ۭ وَ إِنَّ
الَّذِيْنَ اخْتَلَفُوْا فِي الْكِتٰبِ لَفِيْ شِقَاقٍۭ بَعِيْدٍ ﴿176﴾ لَيْسَ الْبِرَّ اَنْ
تُوَلُّوْا وُجُوْهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَ الْمَغْرِبِ وَ لٰكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ اٰمَنَ
بِاللّٰهِ وَ الْيَوْمِ الْاٰخِرِ وَ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ وَ الْكِتٰبِ وَ النَّبِيّٖنَ ۚ وَ اٰتَى الْمَالَ
عَلٰى حُبِّهٖ ذَوِي الْقُرْبٰى وَ الْيَتٰمٰى وَ الْمَسٰكِيْنَ وَ ابْنَ السَّبِيْلِ ۙ وَ
السَّآئِلِيْنَ وَ فِي الرِّقَابِ ۚ وَ اَقَامَ الصَّلٰوةَ وَ اٰتَى الزَّكٰوةَ ۚ وَ الْمُوْفُوْنَ

O people, eat of what is lawful and clean in the earth and do not follow the ways of Satan,[166] for he is your avowed enemy. He enjoins you to commit vice and indecency and induces you to attribute to Allah's name things you do not know to be from Him.[167] 168-169

When it is said to them, "Follow the Commands that Allah has sent down," they reply, "We will follow only what we found our forefathers practising."[168] Well, will they go on following their forefathers even though they did not use common sense and did not find the right way? The mental condition of those who rejected the way of Allah may be likened to that of the cattle whom the shepherd calls but they hear nothing except the sound of shouts and cries.[169] They are deaf, they are dumb, they are blind; therefore they do not understand anything. 170-171

O Believers, if you are true worshippers of Allah alone, eat without hesitation of the good and clean things wherewith We have provided you and be grateful to Allah.[170] Allah has only forbidden you to eat what dies of itself, and blood and swine flesh and what has been consecrated to any other name than of Allah.[171] But one will incur no sin if, forced by absolute necessity, he eats of any of these forbidden things, provided he has no intention of transgressing the law and does not take more than what is absolutely indispensable: for Allah is very Forgiving and very Merciful.[172] 172-173

Indeed those, who conceal the Commands that Allah has sent down in His Book and barter them away for paltry worldly gains, fill their bellies with fire.[173] Allah will not speak to them on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He regard them as pure;[174] there is a painful torment for them. They are the people who have bartered away Guidance for error and Allah's pardon for His punishment. How audacious they are: they are ready even to endure the fire of Hell. This was inspite of the fact that Allah had sent down the Book with the Truth but the people who sought differences in the Book swerved far away from the Truth in their disputes. 174-176

It is no virtue that you turn your faces towards the east or the west,[175] but virtue is that one should sincerely believe in Allah and the Last Day and the Angels and the Book and the Prophets and, out of His love, spend of one's choice wealth for relatives and orphans, for the 177

needy and the wayfarer, for beggars and for the ransom of slaves, and establish the *Salāt* and pay the *Zakat*. And the virtuous are those who keep their pledges when they make them and show fortitude in hardships and adversity and in the struggle between the Truth and falsehood; such are the truthful people and such are the pious.

Contd. from p. 125]

to disbelieve, to reject and to oppose. According to the Qur'ān, one shall be guilty of *kufr*:

(1) If one does not believe in Allah at all or refuses to accept Him as the Supreme Authority or as one's Master and that of the entire Universe or as the only God of worship, or

(2) If one professes to acknowledge Allah but refuses to accept His Commandments and Guidance as the sole source of the knowledge of Truth and of Law, or

(3) If one accepts on principle the Guidance of Allah, but refuses to accept the authority of the Messengers whom Allah has sent with His Commandments and Guidance, or

(4) If one accepts a particular Messenger (or Messengers) and rejects others according to one's whim or prejudices, or

(5) If one discards the whole or any part of the Islāmic creed, or its code of life, or the teachings of the Messenger, or

(6) If one accepts all these things in theory but discards the Commandments of God deliberately in practice and persists in this conduct and leads a life of rebellion instead of submission.

All the above modes of thought and action are rebellion against Allah and are *kufr* according to the Qur'ān. Besides the above usages, the Qur'ān sometimes uses the word *kufr* in the sense of ingratitude as an antonym of *shukr*. *Shukr* means that one should be grateful only to Him Who has bestowed the blessing, should appreciate His favour, should use and spend the blessing only according to His Will, and should submit to Him completely and faithfully like a loyal servant. On the contrary, *kufr* or ingratitude is that one should either refuse to acknowledge the favour of one's benefactor, and should regard it as a result of one's own ability, or as a favour and result of the influence of another one, or should depreciate the blessing bestowed by Him and waste it, or should use the blessing against His Will, or should adopt an attitude of rebellion against Him inspite of His favours and blessings. Such an attitude of *kufr* is generally described as ingratitude, disloyalty, rebellion and treason.

162. Anyone who does not look around like an animal but makes an intelligent observation of the great system of the universe that is working day and night before his very eyes, and is not blinded by prejudice or obduracy, can see many a sign pointing to the Reality. He will certainly see that it is being ruled only by the All-Powerful, All-Wise Sovereign. He can also understand that Allah alone is the God of the whole universe and that there is absolutely no room for any kind of interference or partnership, for no one else has any quality or power or authority to entitle him to the claim of Godhead.

163. "They set up equals.....": they ascribe some of the exclusive qualities and powers of Allah to others and render all or some of His exclusive rights to false gods. For instance, though Allah alone has control over all the forces of nature and has the power to fulfil all the needs of His creatures and to hear their prayers and requests, and although He alone knows all that is open or hidden, yet they invoke others for help or attribute all or some of these powers and qualities to others than Allah and thus set up compeers to rank with Him.

Again it is the exclusive right of Allah that His subjects should acknowledge Him as the Supreme Authority, bow down their heads before Him and fear Him alone in open and secret. But as they render all or some rights to others than Allah, they set up compeers with Him. Then, Allah alone is entitled to prescribe what is lawful and what is unlawful, what is clean and what is unclean. He alone has the authority to define the rights and duties of His subjects, lay down commands and prohibitions for them, etc. Therefore those who arrogate to themselves any of these rights shall be guilty of *shirk*. Again, He alone deserves to be acknowledged as the Sovereign and, as His subjects, the people should consider His Commandments to be final and turn to Him for guidance; therefore those who ascribe any of these rights to others than Allah, set up compeers with Him; likewise those institutions or persons who claim to possess any of these qualities or rights or assume to themselves any of these qualities or rights or demand that others should accede these to them, set themselves as compeers with Allah, whether or not they put forward formal claims to Godhead.

164. Belief in Allah demands that one should prefer His Will to one's own will or to that of others, and cherish His love so dearly as to be ready to sacrifice all other affections for its sake.

165. This helpless end of the ring-leaders and misguiders and their followers has been specially mentioned here to warn the Muslims to be very careful in selecting and electing their leaders and guides. The former communities went astray because they followed wrong leaders and evil guides. The Muslims should, therefore, learn a lesson from their end and discriminate between leaders and misleaders and should not follow the latter.

166. They have been told to break all those restrictions which superstition and ignorance had imposed upon articles of food and drink.

167. That is, "Satan makes people believe that these superstitious customs and restrictions upon food and drink are a part of religion and have been enjoined by Allah, although there is no authority to show that they are from Him."

168. The only authority they have for their superstitious practices is that these have been the customs of their forefathers, and the foolish followers consider this a good authority.

169. This parable has two aspects:

(1) That these people are like those herds of cattle which merely hear the call and cry of the drovers and move about at the sound of their call without understanding the meaning of their words.

(2) That preaching before them is like preaching to the cattle which only hear the sounds but do not comprehend the meaning and the implication of the words that are spoken to them. The words used are comprehensive and cover both the aspects.

170. The Believers are enjoined to break all sorts of unnecessary, improper and unlawful restrictions imposed by the pundits, the priests, the rabbis, the clergies, the forefathers, etc.

For if they really believe in Allah, as they profess, they should abstain from eating only what Allah has forbidden and eat, without any hesitation, only what Allah has declared lawful.

According to a Tradition of the Holy Prophet, "One who offers the *Salāt* in the way we offer, turns his face towards the *qiblah* to which we turn our face, and eats what we have slaughtered, is a Muslim." Therefore if one has any scruples regarding the eating of those things which Allah has declared lawful, he has not as yet become a true Muslim, even if he offers the *Salāt*, turning his face towards the Ka'bah. He should give up the prejudices and superstitions of ignorance if he really and sincerely has become a Muslim. For the very observance of old traditions and customs is a proof that he is still imbued with the poison of ignorance.

171. This applies both to the flesh of the animal which is slaughtered in the name of any other than Allah and to the food which is offered as a vow to any other than Allah. As a matter of fact, everything whether animal, corn, or another eatable, actually belongs to Allah and is given by Him; therefore it should be offered as charity, or as vow, only in His name as a mark of gratitude to Him. If it is offered in any other name it means that one regards it also, instead of Allah, or along with Allah, as supreme, and the bestower of favours and blessings.

172. In this verse, permission for the use of an unclean thing has been given on three conditions: (1) It must be really a case of extremity. For instance, if one is dying of hunger or thirst or if one's life is in danger because of some disease and there is nothing available except an unclean thing, one is permitted to take it. (2) One should not cherish any desire in one's heart to break the law of Allah. (3) One should not take even a bit more than what is absolutely necessary. For example, if in a certain case, a few bits or drops of an unclean thing can save life, then nothing more than this absolute minimum should be taken.

173. These were their learned people, who, in spite of possessing the knowledge of the Divine Book, kept it back from the common people, and were responsible for all the superstitions, false customs and unnecessary restrictions which were prevalent among them and which gave birth to new codes of law. Besides this, they were also guilty of another crime. They did not utter a word against the evil practices which began to spread as a result of that ignorance which had been deliberately created among them. Not only this: the majority of them considered this sorry condition to be advantageous to themselves and so let the Commandments of Allah remain hidden from the people.

174. Here the false claims and misrepresentations of the so-called "spiritual leaders" and "saints." have been refuted. By every possible device they try to impress upon the common people that they are very pious and holy, and the common people also believe them to be so. They presume and their followers believe that they will secure pardon for them by their intercession with Allah on their behalf. Allah warns that He will neither speak to these "spiritual leaders" nor consider them pious and holy, not to speak of granting them the authority of intercession.

175. In order to show the futility of excessive emphasis on external religious forms, it has been pointed out, as an instance, that there is no real virtue in the mere act of turning faces to the east or to the west in prayer. For the mere performance of some religious rites or formalities or show of piety is not real virtue which may have any importance or value with Allah.

بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عٰهَدُوْا ۚ وَ الصّٰبِرِيْنَ فِي الْبَأْسَآءِ وَ الضَّرَّآءِ وَ حِيْنَ
الْبَأْسِ ۗ أُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ صَدَقُوْا ۗ وَ أُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُوْنَ ﴿177﴾ يٰٓأَيُّهَا
الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِصَاصُ فِي الْقَتْلَى ۗ اَلْحُرُّ بِالْحُرِّ وَ الْعَبْدُ
بِالْعَبْدِ وَ الْأُنْثٰى بِالْأُنْثٰى ۚ فَمَنْ عُفِيَ لَهٗ مِنْ أَخِيْهِ شَيْءٌ فَاتِّبَاعٌ
بِالْمَعْرُوْفِ وَ أَدَآءٌ إِلَيْهِ بِإِحْسَانٍ ۗ ذٰلِكَ تَخْفِيْفٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ وَ رَحْمَةٌ ۗ
فَمَنِ اعْتَدٰى بَعْدَ ذٰلِكَ فَلَهٗ عَذَابٌ أَلِيْمٌ ﴿178﴾ وَ لَكُمْ فِي الْقِصَاصِ
حَيٰوةٌ يّٰٓأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿179﴾ كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَكُمُ
الْمَوْتُ إِنْ تَرَكَ خَيْرَا ۖ الْوَصِيَّةُ لِلْوَالِدَيْنِ وَ الْأَقْرَبِيْنَ بِالْمَعْرُوْفِ ۚ حَقًّا
عَلَى الْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿180﴾ فَمَنْ بَدَّلَهٗ بَعْدَ مَا سَمِعَهٗ فَإِنَّمَآ إِثْمُهٗ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ
يُبَدِّلُوْنَهٗ ۗ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ سَمِيْعٌ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿181﴾ فَمَنْ خَافَ مِنْ مُّوْصٍ جَنَفًا أَوْ
إِثْمًا فَأَصْلَحَ بَيْنَهُمْ فَلَآ إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿182﴾ يٰٓأَيُّهَا
الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿183﴾ أَيَّامًا مَّعْدُوْدٰتٍ ۚ فَمَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مَّرِيْضًا أَوْ عَلٰى سَفَرٍ
فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ ۗ وَ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ يُطِيْقُوْنَهٗ فِدْيَةٌ طَعَامُ مِسْكِيْنٍ ۗ
فَمَنْ تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّهٗ ۗ وَ أَنْ تَصُوْمُوْا خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ
تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿184﴾ شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِيْٓ أُنْزِلَ فِيْهِ الْقُرْاٰنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ
وَ بَيِّنٰتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدٰى وَ الْفُرْقَانِ ۚ فَمَنْ شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ ۗ
وَ مَنْ كَانَ مَرِيْضًا أَوْ عَلٰى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ ۗ يُرِيْدُ اللّٰهُ بِكُمُ
الْيُسْرَ وَ لَا يُرِيْدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ ۚ وَ لِتُكْمِلُوا الْعِدَّةَ وَ لِتُكَبِّرُوا اللّٰهَ عَلٰى مَا

O Believers, the law[176] of retribution has been prescribed for you in cases of murder; if a free man commits a murder, the free man shall be punished for it and a slave for a slave : likewise if a woman is guilty of murder the same shall be accountable for it.[177] But in case the injured brother[178] is willing to show leniency to the murderer, the blood money should be decided in accordance with the common law[179] and the murderer should pay it in a genuine way. This is an allowance and mercy from your Lord. Now there shall be a painful torment for anyone who transgresses the limits after this.[180] O men of understanding, there is security of life for you in the law of retribution.[181] It is expected that you will refrain from breaking this law. 178-179

It has been prescribed for you that when death approaches one of you and he is leaving some property behind him, he should bequeath it equitably for his parents and relatives : it is an obligation on those who fear Allah.[182] Then if those, who heard the will, change it, they themselves shall bear the sin of this. Allah hears everything and knows everything. If, however, one apprehends genuinely that the testator had (intentionally or unintentionally) done some injustice, and then alters the will to set things right between the parties concerned, in that case he does not incur any sin. Allah is Forgiving and Merciful. 180-182

O Believers, the Fast has been made obligatory on you just as it was prescribed for the followers of the Prophets before you. It is expected that this will produce piety in you.[183] The Fast is to be observed for a fixed number of days. If, however, anyone of you be sick or on a journey, he should fast the same number of other days. As for those who can fast (but do not), the expiation of this shall be the feeding of one needy person for one fast day, and whoso does more than this[184] with a willing heart does it for his own good. But if you understand the thing, it is better for you to observe the Fast.[185] 183-184

Ramadan is the month in which the Qur'ān was sent down : this Book is a perfect guidance for mankind and consists of clear teachings which show the right way and are a criterion of Truth and falsehood. Therefore from now on whoever witnesses it, it is obligatory on him to fast the whole month, but if one be ill or on a journey, he should make up for the same number by fasting on other days.[186] Allah desires to show leniency to you and does not desire to show any hardship. Therefore this method is being shown to you so that you may complete 185

the number of Fast days and glorify Allah for the Guidance He has shown to you and be grateful to Him.[187]

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176. The Arabic word "*qisas*" stands for the return of life for life in cases of murder. It does not, however, mean that the murderer should be killed in the same manner in which he committed the murder. It only means that his life should be taken as he took the life of the other.

177. The principle of the equality of the value of human life has been prescribed here in order to meet the strictest claims of justice. The value of blood and consequently retribution for it are not to be determined by the rank of the slain or that of the murderer. It has, therefore, been clearly laid down that the murderer himself shall be made to pay for the blood.

Before the advent of Islām, they put a higher value on the blood of a member of their own clan and demanded the life of a man of the same rank from the clan of the murderer or the lives of scores or even hundreds from the tribe of the murderer according to the value put on the blood of the slain. On the other hand, if the murderer happened to belong to a higher rank than that of the slain, their "judgement" was that the life of the murderer should not be taken for the life of the slain. And this inequality in the evaluation of blood was not confined only to that age of ignorance. Even today the "civilised" nations are not ashamed of declaring openly that if one person of their nation is killed, they will take the lives of fifty men from the nation of the murderer. And they put these challenges into practice. We often hear that so many people belonging to the subject nation have been put to death to avenge the murder of one person belonging to the ruling nation. But if the murderer belonged to a "civilised" ruling nation and the slain to an "uncivilised" subject nation, their judges would not pass the sentence of death on him. In order to guard against these unjust rules, Allah has ordained that the life of the murderer and the murderer alone should be taken for the life of the slain, irrespective of the rank or race of the murderer or that of the slain.

178. The use of the word "brother" here contains a kind of recommendation. That is, "Though the murderer has injured you very grievously, he is after all your brother by the human relation. Therefore, if you restrain your rage against your erring brother and refrain from retaliation and remit the penalty of death, you will raise your standard of humanity."

This verse also shows that, according to the Islāmic Penal Code, even murder is a compoundable offence. The heirs of the murdered person have the right to pardon the murderer, if they deem it proper. In that case the court cannot insist on taking his life. Of course, the murderer will have to pay the blood money if the rightful claimants demand it.

179. The word "*ma'ruf*" has been used in many places in the Qur'ān. It refers to those just and rational rules of conduct which are generally known and accepted by all fair-minded people. They are so clear and well known that everyone who is not blinded by self-interest and prejudice will acknowledge them as right and just, and the Islāmic law recognizes them in all those matters for which it has not laid down any regulations. Such common laws and general usages are termed "*ma'ruf*".

180. For instance, it will be transgression if the heirs of the slain try to retaliate even after accepting the ransom, or if the murderer does not mean to pay the ransom gracefully, or otherwise reacts in an ungrateful manner.

181. This verse refutes the opinion of those people who go to the other extreme and advocate total abolition of capital punishment. If it is inhuman to insist on retaliation, it is equally inhuman to encourage murder by totally abolishing capital punishment, as has been done in some "civilised" countries. That is why Allah declares that there is life for society in the law of retribution. If a society does not pay due regard to the sanctity of life and tries to protect a murderer, it sets a premium on crime and puts in danger the lives of many innocent people.

182. This commandment about making a will for the distribution of property was given at a time when the law of inheritance had not yet been prescribed. Its object was to safeguard the rights of the lawful heirs against injustice. Afterwards when Allah Himself prescribed a law for the distribution of inheritance (as laid down in Sūrah An-Nisa below), the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) enjoined the following two rules in explanation of the commandments concerning the making of will and distribution of inheritance:

183. Islām proceeded step by step and by degrees in the imposition of its obligatory duties. The same was done in the case of the Fast. At first the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) advised the Muslims to observe fasts only for three days in a month but this was not obligatory. Then in the second year of the Hijrah, this Command (v. 183) about fasting in the month of Ramadan was revealed. This, however, left an option for those who were able to fast but did not. They were required to feed one poor man as an expiation of one day's fast (v. 184). Then, later, the final commandment contained in the next verse (185) modified this, and the concession for able-bodied people was withdrawn, but retained for a sick person or wayfarer and by analogy for a pregnant or a suckling woman and for those old people who were not able to fast.

In a lengthy statement quoted by Imām Ahmad bin Hanbal, Hadrat Mu'āz bin Jabal says: "The Salāt and the Fast took their present form gradually. At first

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هَدٰىكُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿١٨٥﴾ وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِيْ عَنِّيْ فَإِنِّيْ قَرِيْبٌ ۖ
أُجِيْبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ ۙ فَلْيَسْتَجِيْبُوْا لِيْ وَلْيُؤْمِنُوْا بِيْ لَعَلَّهُمْ
يَرْشُدُوْنَ ﴿١٨٦﴾ أُحِلَّ لَكُمْ لَيْلَةَ الصِّيَامِ الرَّفَثُ إِلٰى نِسَآئِكُمْ ۖ هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ
لَّكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لَّهُنَّ ۖ عَلِمَ اللّٰهُ أَنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ تَخْتَانُوْنَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ فَتَابَ
عَلَيْكُمْ وَعَفَا عَنْكُمْ ۖ فَالْئٰنَ بَاشِرُوْهُنَّ وَابْتَغُوْا مَا كَتَبَ اللّٰهُ لَكُمْ ۚ وَ
كُلُوْا وَاشْرَبُوْا حَتّٰى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَكُمُ الْخَيْطُ الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الْخَيْطِ الْأَسْوَدِ
مِنَ الْفَجْرِ ۖ ثُمَّ أَتِمُّوا الصِّيَامَ إِلَى الَّيْلِ ۚ وَلَا تُبَاشِرُوْهُنَّ وَأَنْتُمْ
عٰكِفُوْنَ ۙ فِي الْمَسٰجِدِ ۗ تِلْكَ حُدُوْدُ اللّٰهِ فَلَا تَقْرَبُوْهَا ۗ كَذٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللّٰهُ
اٰيٰتِهٖ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿١٨٧﴾ وَلَا تَأْكُلُوْٓا أَمْوَالَكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ بِالْبَاطِلِ
وَتُدْلُوْا بِهَآ إِلَى الْحُكَّامِ لِتَأْكُلُوْا فَرِيْقًا مِّنْ أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ بِالْإِثْمِ وَ
أَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿١٨٨﴾ يَسْئَلُوْنَكَ عَنِ الْأَهِلَّةِ ۖ قُلْ هِيَ مَوَاقِيْتُ لِلنَّاسِ وَ
الْحَجِّ ۗ وَلَيْسَ الْبِرُّ بِأَنْ تَأْتُوا الْبُيُوْتَ مِنْ ظُهُوْرِهَا وَلٰكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنِ
اتَّقٰى ۚ وَأْتُوا الْبُيُوْتَ مِنْ أَبْوَابِهَا ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿١٨٩﴾
وَقَاتِلُوْا فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ الَّذِيْنَ يُقَاتِلُوْنَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوْا ۗ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا
يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِيْنَ ﴿١٩٠﴾ وَاقْتُلُوْهُمْ حَيْثُ ثَقِفْتُمُوْهُمْ وَأَخْرِجُوْهُمْ مِّنْ
حَيْثُ أَخْرَجُوْكُمْ وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَشَدُّ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ ۚ وَلَا تُقٰتِلُوْهُمْ عِنْدَ الْمَسْجِدِ
الْحَرَامِ حَتّٰى يُقٰتِلُوْكُمْ فِيْهِ ۚ فَإِنْ قٰتَلُوْكُمْ فَاقْتُلُوْهُمْ ۗ كَذٰلِكَ جَزَآءُ
الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿١٩١﴾ فَإِنِ انْتَهَوْا فَإِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿١٩٢﴾ وَقٰتِلُوْهُمْ حَتّٰى
لَا تَكُوْنَ فِتْنَةٌ وَّيَكُوْنَ الدِّيْنُ لِلّٰهِ ۚ فَإِنِ انْتَهَوْا فَلَا عُدْوَانَ إِلَّا عَلَى

And if My servants ask you, O Prophet, concerning Me, tell them that I am quite near to them. I hear and answer the prayer of the suppliant, when he calls to Me. So let them respond to My call and believe in Me.[188] Convey this to them, O Prophet; perhaps they may be guided aright.[189] 186

It has been made lawful for you to go to your wives during the nights of the fast days. They are as a garment to you and you are as a garment to them.[190] Though Allah knew that you were secretly dishonest to yourselves, He has pardoned your guilt and forgiven you. Now you are permitted to have intercourse with your wives and enjoy what Allah has made lawful for you.[191] You are also permitted to eat and drink during the nights of the Fast months,[192] until you can discern the white streak of dawn from the blackness of night.[193] Then (abstain from all these things and) complete your Fast till night-fall.[194] But you should not have intercourse with your wives while you confine yourselves to mosques.[195] These are the bounds set by Allah; so do not go near them.[196] In this way Allah makes His Commands clear to mankind. It is expected that they will guard themselves against wrong ways. 187

Do not usurp one another's property by unjust means nor offer it to the judges so that you may devour knowingly and unjustly a portion of the goods of others.[197] 188

They ask you about the phases of the moon. Say, "These are signs for the people to reckon dates and fix the periods for Hajj."[198] Also tell them, "It is no virtue to enter your houses from their backs (during the Hajj days); real virtue is that one should refrain from incurring the displeasure of Allah; so enter your houses by their proper doors, and fear Allah so that you may gain (true) success."[199] 189

And fight in the way of Allah with those who fight against you[200] but do not commit aggression because Allah does not like aggressors.[201] Fight against them wherever they confront you in combat and drive them out from where they drove you out. Though killing is bad, persecution is worse than killing.[202] Do not fight against them near the Masjid Haram unless they attack you there. And if they attack you first (even in that sacred area), strike them (without any hesitation); this is the due punishment for such disbelievers. If, however, they desist 190-192

from fighting (you should also do likewise), and know that Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.[203]

Contd. from p.135]

the Muslims faced Jerusalem during the Salāt but after some years they were commanded to turn their faces towards the Ka'abah, Makkah. Besides this, at first they used to inform one another about the time of each Salāt but afterwards the same was proclaimed by means of Azān (the call for prayer). (As to the Fast), when the Holy Prophet migrated to Al-Madinah, he observed fasts for three days in a month and also on the tenth of Muharram. Then Allah made it obligatory to fast during the whole month of Ramadān but allowed the feeding of one person as an expiation for one who did not observe fasts, though he could. Afterwards this concession of feeding one person for one day of fast was cancelled in the case of healthy persons and the one not on a journey (*Ibn Kathir*, p.214).

Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd and other scholars have also quoted Traditions from Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, and 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud to the same effect. In support of the same, Ibn Jarir Tabarī, a famous commentator of the Qur'ān, has quoted Traditions citing the authority in full from several Companions and their followers. In one of these Traditions, he quotes the following explanation of Ḥaḍrat Mu'āz bin Jabal: "As the Arabs were not used to fasting, it was hard for them at first to observe fasts. They were, therefore, given the option to feed one poor person on the day they did not observe fast during the month of Ramadān. Afterwards a Commandment was revealed, cancelling this concession except in the case of a sick person or one on a journey". He quotes another tradition from Ibn 'Abbās to this effect. In the first Commandment (v.184), Allah had allowed expiation for fasts even for an able-bodied person who could fast but did not. In verse 185 which was revealed next year, the concession for an able-bodied person was cancelled but was retained for a sick person or a wayfarer.

184. More than this": to feed more than one person for each fasting day, or to feed one as well as observe the fast..

185. The first commandment about fasting contained in vv. 183-84 was revealed in the second year of Hijrah before the battle of Badr. The subsequent verses were revealed a year later but were inserted here because they dealt with the same matter.

186. It has been left to the option of the individual to observe or not to observe fasts during a journey. Some of the Comapanions of the Holy Prophet observed fasts and some did not when they were on a journey with him and neither raised any objection against the other. The Holy Prophet himself sometimes

observed fasts on a journey and sometimes did not. Once he saw people gathered round a man who had fallen to the ground and asked what was the matter with him. He was told that he had become too weak to stand on account of observing fasts; he remarked that it was no virtue to observe fasts in such a condition.

During war time, he used to issue orders for postponing the fasts. Hadrat 'Umar has related that they did not observe fasts twice during the month of Ramadan when they went to war under the command of the Holy Prophet: on the occasion of the battle of Badr and at the conquest of Makkah. Ibn 'Umar says that on the eve of the conquest of Makkah, the Holy Prophet declared, "As we are going to fight our enemy you should postpone your fasts so that you may conserve your strength to fight."

There is no clear injunction from the Holy Prophet for the prescription of a minimum standard of distance for postponing the fasts. His Companions also differed in practice with regard to the standard. But it is obvious that the fast may be postponed for that distance which is commonly understood to be a journey and in which one begins to feel being on a journey.

There is a difference of opinion as to whether the people of a city, which is attacked by an enemy, can postpone the fast for the sake of Jihad, inspite of being the residents. Some scholars do not allow this. But Imam Ibn Taimiyyah has maintained with strong arguments that postponement of the fast under such circumstances is permissible.

187. Allah is so bountiful that He does not want to deprive His servants of the blessings of fasting. Therefore He has not confined it to the month of Ramadan but has opened another way for its completion for those who fail to complete it during this month for genuine reasons. They should make up the deficiency by observing fast on other days in order to show their gratitude for the revelation of the Qur'ān during the month of Ramadan.

It is clear from this verse that fasting in Ramadan has been prescribed not only as a form of worship and a training for piety, but also to show gratitude for the great blessing of the Revelation of the Qur'ān during the month of Ramadan. And the best way to show gratitude for a favour is to fulfil the object for which it was bestowed and to prepare oneself for its completion as best as one can. The object for which Allah has bestowed the Qur'ān upon us is to reveal His Will so that we may fulfil it ourselves and persuade others to do the same. Fasting provides the best training for the fulfilment of this object and is both a devotion and a sign of gratitude for the favour shown in the form of the Qur'ān.

188. That is, "Although you cannot see Me nor perceive Me with your senses, yet you must never imagine that I am far from you. Nay, I am so near to

every servant of Mine that he can invoke Me and place his request before Me wherever he is. So much so that I hear and answer even those requests which are not expressed in words but are made only in the innermost heart. As to the false and impotent gods you have created in your ignorance and folly, you have to travel to them, and even then they do not hear and answer you. But here am I, the Sovereign, the absolute Ruler of the boundless universe and Possessor of all powers and authority, so near to hear and answer you that you need no recommendation of intercession for making any request anywhere at any time you like. Therefore you should free yourselves from the folly of running from door to door after false gods, and accept My invitation and turn to Me and trust in Me and submit to Me and become My servants."

189. That is, "They may learn this truth from you and adopt the right attitude, in which lies their own good."

190. That is, just as nothing can intervene between the clothes and the body and each fits into the other naturally, so is the relation between the husband and the wife: each is a means of comfort, protection and happiness for the other.

191. Although at first there was no clear injunction forbidding intercourse between husband and wife during the nights of Ramadan, yet the Muslims had a vague notion that it was not lawful to do so and it was with a guilty conscience that sometimes some of them went to bed with their wives. There was thus a danger of developing a criminal and sinful mental attitude. Therefore, Allah first warned them of their dishonest behaviour towards their conscience and then made it lawful so that they might do it with a clear conscience.

192. There was also a misunderstanding about the timings of eating and drinking during Ramadan. Some people were of the opinion that eating and drinking was prohibited after the 'Isha' (night) Prayer up to sunset of the next day. Others thought that one was permitted to eat and drink as long as one kept awake after the 'Isha' Prayer, but could not do so after one had fallen asleep; they were often put to great inconvenience on account of these notions of their own creation. In this verse their misunderstandings were removed and the duration of the period of fasting was fixed from the dawn of the morning to the sunset, and eating and drinking and intercourse with wives were permitted from sunset to dawn. Besides, the Holy Prophet instructed that a meal should be taken before the dawn (of morning) as a preparation for fasting.

193. Islām has set a standard of time for its practices which can be applied universally by people at every stage of civilization and in every part of the globe. That is why it does not fix the boundary lines of its religious practices by watches and clocks but by clear signs in the sky. This is a standard which can suit the

people of every age and country, and can be set by watches between these prescribed bounds to suit their circumstances and convenience. But those people who do not understand its philosophy raise foolish objections. For example, they say that this standard cannot work near the Poles, because there the duration of the day and the night is of many months. They forget that even in the polar regions, the signs of morning and evening and mid-night appear as regularly as in other places and the inhabitants regulate the timings of work, play, sleep, etc., in accordance with the appearance of these signs. When there were no watches and clocks, the inhabitants of the Arctic Circle fixed their timings by these signs. Thus when these signs can help them to fix the timings in other matters of life, they can also serve them to fix the timings of the Prayer and of the commencement and end of the Fast.

194. "Complete your fast till nightfall" means: "Your fast ends where the boundary of the night begins." It is obvious that the boundary line of the night begins at sunset: therefore the fast should be broken at the time of sunset for which we should look at the eastern horizon. If we see the darkness of the night rising up there, it is a signal for the breaking of the fast. In the same way, the rising of the white streak of the morning in the eastern horizon is a signal for the beginning of the fast.

It must be clearly understood that in the Islāmic Code of Law there are no hard and fast limits, exact to the second or minute, for the duration of the fast. There is great latitude in both the limits. Differences of a minute or a second either way do not make the fast defective. The fast becomes complete as soon as the darkness of night begins to rise in the east. It should, therefore, be broken at sunset. In the same way, when the dawn of the morning appears in the eastern horizon, the boundary line begins for observing the fast and eating and drinking, should be stopped. But here, too, there is an allowance for one to finish ones meal even though the dawn of the morning might have appeared, if one could not wake up in time for it. There is a Tradition of the Holy Prophet to this effect: "If one, while taking his meals, hears the call for the morning Prayer (or the sound of the siren as in our age) for beginning the fast, one should not withdraw one's hand immediately from food, but should finish the meal." Likewise, one is enjoined to break the fast without delay as soon as the dark line of the night appears in the east.

195. *I'tikaf* is a special voluntary practice of devotion during the last ten days of the month of Ramadan. One confines oneself to a mosque and devotes one's whole time to prayer and meditation in addition to the prescribed obligatory religious duties. One is required to abstain from all worldly pursuits, desires, lusts, etc., and is not to leave the mosque except to attend to the call of nature etc.

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الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿١٩٣﴾ اَلشَّهْرُ الْحَرَامُ بِالشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ وَالْحُرُمٰتُ قِصَاصٌ ؕ فَمَنِ
اعْتَدٰى عَلَيْكُمْ فَاعْتَدُوْا عَلَيْهِ بِمِثْلِ مَا اعْتَدٰى عَلَيْكُمْ ۪ وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ
وَاعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿١٩٤﴾ وَاَنْفِقُوْا فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ وَلَا تُلْقُوْا
بِاَيْدِيْكُمْ اِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ ۛ وَاَحْسِنُوْا ۛ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿١٩٥﴾ وَ ع
اَتِمُّوا الْحَجَّ وَالْعُمْرَةَ لِلّٰهِ ؕ فَاِنْ اُحْصِرْتُمْ فَمَا اسْتَيْسَرَ مِنَ الْهَدْيِ ۚ وَ
لَا تَحْلِقُوْا رُءُوْسَكُمْ حَتّٰى يَبْلُغَ الْهَدْيُ مَحِلَّهٗ ؕ فَمَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مَّرِيْضًا
اَوْ بِهٖٓ اَذًى مِّنْ رَّاْسِهٖ فَفِدْيَةٌ مِّنْ صِيَامٍ اَوْ صَدَقَةٍ اَوْ نُسُكٍ ۚ فَاِذَآ
اَمِنْتُمْ ۪ فَمَنْ تَمَتَّعَ بِالْعُمْرَةِ اِلَى الْحَجِّ فَمَا اسْتَيْسَرَ مِنَ الْهَدْيِ ۚ فَمَنْ
لَّمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ ثَلٰثَةِ اَيَّامٍ فِي الْحَجِّ وَسَبْعَةٍ اِذَا رَجَعْتُمْ ؕ تِلْكَ عَشَرَةٌ
كَامِلَةٌ ؕ ذٰلِكَ لِمَنْ لَّمْ يَكُنْ اَهْلُهٗ حَاضِرِي الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ ؕ وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ
وَاعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ شَدِيْدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿١٩٦﴾ اَلْحَجُّ اَشْهُرٌ مَّعْلُوْمٰتٌ ۚ فَمَنْ فَرَضَ
فِيْهِنَّ الْحَجَّ فَلَا رَفَثَ وَلَا فُسُوْقَ ۙ وَلَا جِدَالَ فِي الْحَجِّ ؕ وَمَا تَفْعَلُوْا
مِنْ خَيْرٍ يَّعْلَمْهُ اللّٰهُ ؕ وَتَزَوَّدُوْا فَاِنَّ خَيْرَ الزَّادِ التَّقْوٰى ۫ وَاتَّقُوْنِ
يٰٓاُولِي الْاَلْبَابِ ﴿١٩٧﴾ لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ اَنْ تَبْتَغُوْا فَضْلًا مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ ؕ فَاِذَآ
اَفَضْتُمْ مِّنْ عَرَفٰتٍ فَاذْكُرُوا اللّٰهَ عِنْدَ الْمَشْعَرِ الْحَرَامِ ۪ وَاذْكُرُوْهُ كَمَا
هَدٰىكُمْ ۚ وَاِنْ كُنْتُمْ مِّنْ قَبْلِهٖ لَمِنَ الضَّآلِّيْنَ ﴿١٩٨﴾ ثُمَّ اَفِيْضُوْا مِنْ حَيْثُ
اَفَاضَ النَّاسُ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا اللّٰهَ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿١٩٩﴾ فَاِذَا قَضَيْتُمْ
مَّنَاسِكَكُمْ فَاذْكُرُوا اللّٰهَ كَذِكْرِكُمْ اٰبَآءَكُمْ اَوْ اَشَدَّ ذِكْرًا ؕ فَمِنَ النَّاسِ
مَنْ يَّقُوْلُ رَبَّنَآ اٰتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَمَا لَهٗ فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ مِنْ خَلَاقٍ ﴿٢٠٠﴾ وَ

Go on fighting with them till there is no more a state of tribulation and Allah's way is established instead.[204] Then if they desist from it, there should be no more hostility except against those who had been guilty of cruelty and brutality.[205] 193

A prohibited month is to be respected, if the same is respected (by the enemy),[206] and likewise there is the law of just retribution for the violation of all prohibited things. Therefore, if anyone transgresses a prohibition by attacking you, you may do likewise, but always fear Allah and bear in mind that Allah is with those who desist from breaking Allah's bounds. 194

Spend your wealth in the Way of Allah and do not cast yourselves into ruin with your own hands.[207] Do all things gracefully, for Allah loves those who do all things with excellence.[208] 195

When you make up your mind to perform Hajj and 'Umrah, accomplish these to please Allah. But if you are hemmed in somewhere, then offer to Allah whatever sacrifice you can afford.[209] And do not shave your heads until the sacrifice reaches its place.[210] But whoever among you is sick or has an ailment of the head and has his head shaved shall atone for this either by fasting or by alms-giving or by offering a sacrifice.[211] However, when you are secure[212] (and you reach Makkah before the Hajj season begins), whoever takes advantage of this opportunity to perform 'Umrah shall offer the sacrifice that he can afford. But if he cannot afford a sacrifice, he shall fast three days during the Hajj season and seven days after reaching home, that is, ten days in all. This concession is only for those whose homes are not near the Masjid Haram,[213] refrain from transgressing these Commandments of Allah and know it well that Allah is very severe in punishment. 196

The months for Hajj are well known to all; whoever makes up his mind to perform Hajj during these fixed months, let him totally abstain from all sorts of sexual indulgence,[214] wickedness[215] and wrangling[216] during the Hajj and remember that Allah knows whatever good you do. Take necessary provisions for Hajj, and piety is the best of all provisions: so refrain from disobeying Me, O men of understanding![217] And there is nothing wrong if you also seek the bounty of your Lord during the pilgrimage.[218] Moreover, when you return from 'Arafat, stay at Mash'aril-Haram (Muzdalifah) and remember Allah. 197-200

And remember Him just as He has enjoined you, for you had gone astray before this.[219] Then return from where others return and ask Allah's forgiveness.[220] Most surely He is Forgiving and Merciful. And when you have performed your Hajj rites, remember Allah as you had been remembering your own forefathers, or even with greater zeal.[221] (Even those who remember Allah do it in different ways). Some say, "Our Lord, give us all the good things here in this world." Such people shall have no share in the Hereafter.

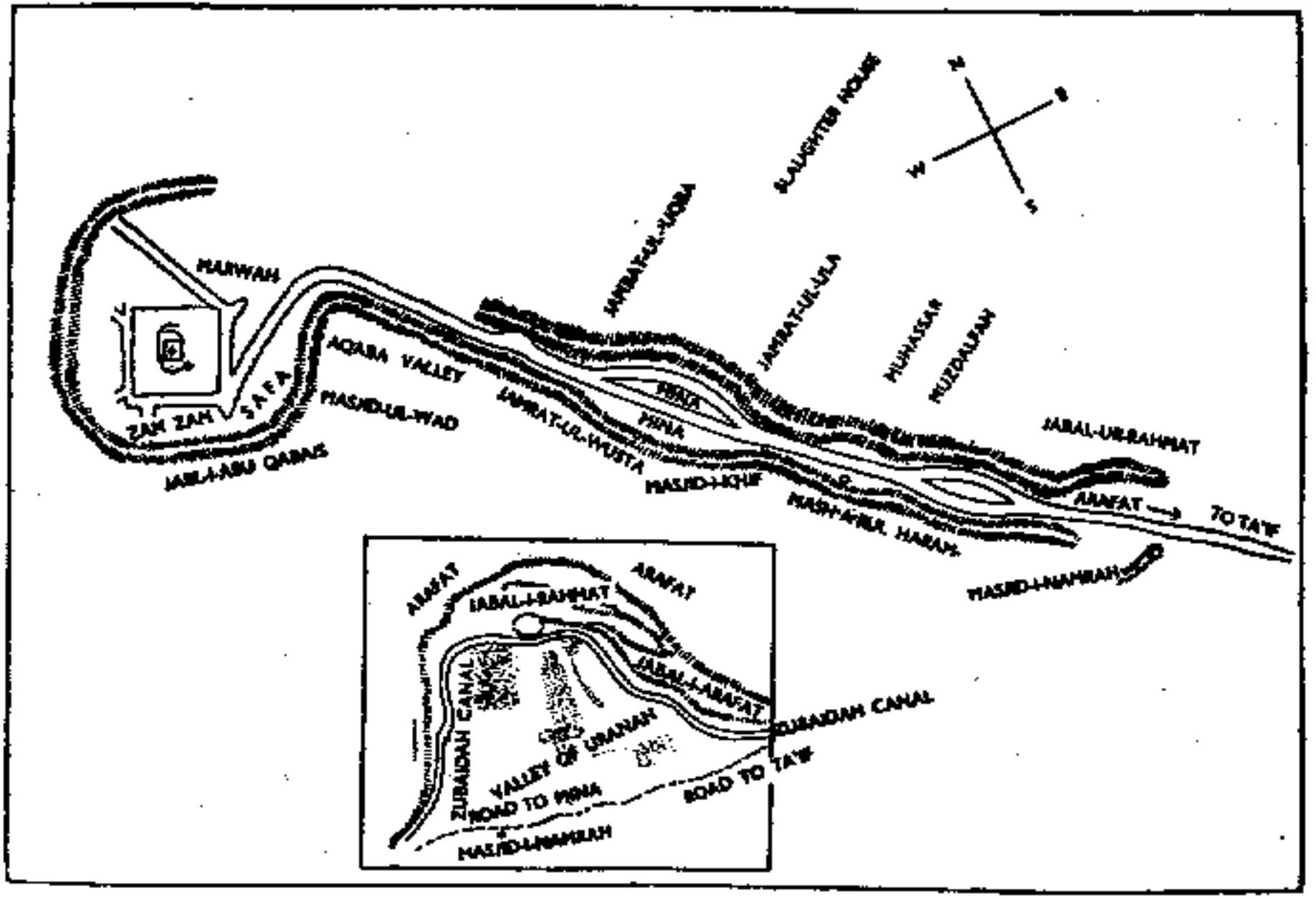
Contd. from p. 141]

196. The wording of the Commandment about the extreme limits is very significant. It not only prohibits one from transgressing them but also warns one not even to go near them. It is very dangerous to roam about on the boundary lines of the forbidden territory for one is liable to enter into it by mistake. Going near them has, therefore, been prohibited. The Holy Prophet emphasized the same point, saying, "Every king has some reserved land and Allah's 'reserved' land is bounded by those limits which prescribe the lawful and the unlawful, the right and the wrong. The animal which grazes near the last bounds of the reserved land might one day enter into it." It is a pity that, inspite of this clear warning, many people, who are ignorant of the spirit of Islāmic law, persist in going to the extreme limits and many "learned" people try to find excuses for them from the same Islāmic Code of Law that warns the Muslims not to go near the boundary line. That is why many people get involved in vice and stray from the straight path. Obviously, it is not an easy thing to demarcate these fine boundary lines and to control oneself from transgressing them, when one is roaming near them.

197. This verse has two aspects: One should not try to seize the property of another by bribing the judges, and one should not go to the court of law to seize the property of another through specious arguments. It is just possible that the judge might decide, on the basis of available evidence, in favour of the transgressor, but it does not mean that the property has thereby really become lawful for him. The Holy Prophet warned such people, saying, "After all I am a human being. It is just possible that in a case brought before me, one better versed in the art of talking than his opponent might persuade me to decide the case in his favour. But let it be understood that anything gained in this way from a brother will, in fact, mean the acquiring of a piece of Hell for himself in spite of my decree in his favour."

198. The phases of the moon have attracted the attention of mankind in every age, and different kinds of rites and superstitions have been connected with these in every country. The Arabs also had some superstitions connected with

Map II (Showing the places to be visited in connection with Hajj)
The Meaning of the Quran, facing page 146.



these. They took omens from them for journeys, marriage ceremonies, business, etc., and performed some superstitious practices, for they believed that the phases and the eclipse of the moon affected their fortunes. Therefore they questioned the Holy Prophet concerning this. Allah answered their question and informed them that the phases of the moon were nothing but natural calendar in the sky to indicate dates of the month to the people simultaneously throughout the world. Hajj has been specially mentioned in this connection because of its religious, cultural and economic importance to the Arabs. Four months of the year were fixed for Hajj and 'Umrah during which war was suspended and the routes were made safe, and business flourished on account of peace.

199. This was one of their superstitious customs. As soon as they put on the *Ihram*, the ceremonial dress for Hajj, they would not enter their houses by the front doors, but would enter them by jumping over the walls or through windows in the rear of their houses. In this verse, Allah has not only refuted this superstitious custom but also warned that virtue has nothing to do with the superstitious rites and customs which were being practised merely in blind imitation of their forefathers, for they did not affect the fortune of man in any way.

200. That is, "Fight with those people who hinder you from the way of Allah; who have become your enemies because you are trying to reform the way of life in accordance with the Guidance of Allah; who are preventing you from the work of reform by force and persecution."

Before this, when the Muslims were yet weak and scattered, they were commanded to propagate Islām and bear all tyrannies with fortitude. But when they had established a tiny state at Madinah they were, for the first time, allowed to go to war against those who were opposing this reformative movement with force. The battle of Badr took place after this and a series of battles started with it.

201. The Muslims were warned that the aim of their war should not be self-interest nor material gain nor retaliation. They should not, therefore, go to war against those who were neither opposing them nor hindering them from their work. Besides this, the Holy Prophet gave detailed instructions for keeping the war humane. He asked the Muslims to refrain from barbaric methods in warfare and from doing any kind of harm or injury to children, women, old people and the wounded. He also prohibited the dishonouring of the dead bodies of the slain, the wanton destruction of harvests, trees, animals, etc., and all other forms of cruelty, barbarism and vandalism. The Muslims were allowed to use force only where it was absolutely indispensable and to the extent it was absolutely necessary.

202. "Persecution and suppression of opinion by violence, force or threat," is the exact translation of the Arabic word "*fitnah*," as used in this verse.

The verse implies that it is a heinous offence to persecute a person or party by harassing and oppressive treatment for holding ideas and theories opposed to those in vogue at the time, and it is abominable to inflict on people injury and punishment for adhering to and propagating those ideas and theories with a view to reforming the ways of society. Though bloodshed is an evil thing, to oppress and harass others for adhering to their own faith and principles and to force them to give these up and adopt those of the oppressors is far worse. Therefore it is lawful and justifiable to use force against such people as a resort to brute force instead of argument.

203. That is, "You should create in yourselves those qualities which are the attributes of Allah in Whom you believe. He forgives even the worst offenders and criminals and shows mercy to them. You also should try to mould yourselves after this model. Your war should not be to quench your thirst for revenge but for the cause of Allah. As long as they oppose the way of Allah and continue their fight against you, you also should fight against them, but no sooner do they stop fighting and give up their hostile attitude than you also should stop fighting."

204. Here the word "*fitnah*" has been used in a different sense from that in verse 191. The context clearly shows that here it denotes that condition of society which is not safe and free for adoption of the Way of Allah. That is why the Muslims have been exhorted to continue the fight to change this state of affairs and to restore peace and freedom for the way of Allah. It should also be noted that the Arabic word '*dīn*' which has been translated here into "Way" originally means "submission" and is technically used for the way of life which is built on the sovereignty of someone whose commands and regulations are to be followed. Therefore that condition of society in which there is the rule and sovereignty of man over man and in which it is not possible for anyone to follow the Way of Allah is *fitnah*. The aim of war in Islām is to abolish *fitnah* and establish Allah's Way so as to enable people to live as servants of Allah in accordance with the Divine Law.

205. It does not mean that Islām incites the believers to go to war to force unbelievers at the point of sword to give up disbelief and polytheism and adopt the Way of Allah instead. War is to be waged only to make them give up *fitnah*. As a matter of fact, Islām allows freedom of belief to all non-Muslims. One may adopt any way of life that one chooses and may or may not worship anyone or anything. It exhorts the believers to preach and to persuade the unbelievers and the wrong-doers by argument to give up their false faith and evil ways, but it does not allow the unbelievers the right to enforce on God's earth any ungodly law and make the servants of Allah the servants of some one else. In order to remove such an unjust condition, Islām allows both preaching and fighting according to the requirements

of the occasion. The believers, therefore, cannot rest content unless this *fitnah*, political domination and legal sovereignty of unbelievers, is eradicated and freedom for the Way of Allah is secured.

From the words, "Then if they desist from it, there should be no more hostility except against those who had been guilty of cruelty and brutality," it has been deduced that when the Islāmic rule replaces ungodly rule, there should be a general amnesty save for those who had been extremely cruel and tyrannous in opposing the Truth when in power. Although in this case also it behoves the believers to show forgiveness at the time of victory, yet they would be perfectly justified in punishing those who broke all limits in their blind opposition and persecution. The Holy Prophet, who was an embodiment of mercy and clemency, himself availed of this permission and sentenced to death 'Uqbah bin Abī Mu'ait and Nadr bin Harith, two prisoners of war taken in the battle of Badr. Moreover, although a general amnesty was proclaimed after the conquest of Makkah, seventeen persons who were the worst offenders against Islām were made an exception and four of these were sentenced to death.

206. This verse answered the question that arose about fighting during the four sacred months of the lunar year, that is, Dhul-Qa'dah, Dhul-Hijjah and Muharram dedicated to Hajj and Rajab to 'Umrah. These were called the prohibited months because ever since the time of the Prophet Abraham, war, murder, robbery and every sort of violation and infringement of law were forbidden during these months so that pilgrims might go to and return from the Ka'bah in peace and security.

But by and by the Arabs began to violate their sanctity by a crooked device. They used to alter the usual order of the months to suit their convenience. If they wanted to attack for robbery, revenge, etc., they would violate a sacred month and then consecrate another month instead. The Muslims were, therefore, at a loss to know what to do if the unbelievers committed a breach of the sanctity of a sacred month by resorting to this vicious practice and attack them in that sacred month.

This verse removed their difficulty by allowing them to fight with them in a sacred month, if the disbelievers began hostilities in it but they, on their part, should not transgress the limits in any case: and if the unbelievers observed the sanctity of the sacred months and desisted from war, the Muslims also should do the same, but if they violated the same and attacked the Muslims, they should also retaliate in the same prohibited month.

207. "To spend in the Way of Allah" is to make monetary sacrifices for the establishment of the way of life prescribed by Allah. The verse implies, "If

you behave selfishly and do not spend your wealth to establish the Way of Allah, you will bring yourselves to ruin in this world and to damnation in the Hereafter. In the world, Allah will set the unbelievers to dominate over you, and, in the Hereafter, He will condemn you and hold you accountable for not spending the wealth by Him in His Way."

208. The word *ihsan* as used in the original is from *husn* which means to do a thing well. One kind of action is that a person should rest content with the mere performance of duty: this is obedience, which requires nothing more than the fear of Allah. The superior kind of deed, however, is that he should do it well: should put all his abilities and resources into it; should exert his utmost to complete it with all his heart and mind and body. This is *ihsan* which is motivated by a deep love for and dedication to Allah.

209. That is, "In case you are prevented in the way from proceeding on to the Ka'bah and are obliged to break your journey, you should make offering of whatever animal is available — camel, cow, goat — to Allah."

210. There is a difference of opinion as to what is meant here by "the sacrifice reaching its place". According to the Hanafi school of thought, it refers to the bounds of the Masjid Haram. If a person is prevented on the way, he should send the animal or the money to buy one to be sacrificed there on his behalf. According to Imam Malik and Imam Shafe'i, the sacrifice should be made at the very place where one has been prevented. One should not have one's head shaved or the hair cut until one has offered the animal sacrifice.

211. According to a Tradition, the Holy Prophet directed that in such a case, one should observe fast for three days or feed six indigent persons or sacrifice at least a goat.

212. "Security" here refers to the removal of the cause, whatever that might have been, including the hostility of an enemy, and whatever was mainly responsible for the prevention from Hajj at that time. Just as "prevention" includes all the causes which prevent one from performing Hajj, so security includes the removal of all the causes of prevention.

213. Before the advent of Islām, the Arabs thought it was a great sin to perform both Hajj and 'Umrah during one and the same journey. According to their self-made law, different journeys had to be undertaken for each. In this verse Allah removed the self-imposed restriction save for those who lived within the appointed bounds of the "Sanctuary," because it was not difficult for them to undertake different journeys for Hajj and 'Umrah. They had merely to put off the pilgrim's garment (*ihram*) and release themselves from the prescribed restrictions

and ceremonials after the performance of 'Umrah and then renew the same during the Hajj days.

In order to understand the references to the Hajj rites in the succeeding verses, it will be worthwhile to state these briefly. The pilgrims should put on the pilgrims' garment (*ihram*) as soon as they reach a *miqat*, one of the fixed points on all the roads to Makkah. After this they should abide by the code prescribed for Hajj. If on reaching Makkah, a pilgrim wished to perform 'Umrah, he might then put off *ihram* and release himself from restrictions imposed by it up to the 7th of Dhul-Hijjah. On the 8th, he should again put on *ihram* at Makkah and go to Mina, a valley, about six miles from there. On the 9th he should proceed to the valley of 'Arafat, which is about five miles further from Mina and stay there up to the evening. Then he should return to Mash'aril-Haram (Muzdalifah) which is midway between 'Arafat and Mina, and pass the night between the 9th and the 10th there in prayer, meditation and devotion. On the morning of the 10th, he should come back to Mina and offer sacrifice there. After this he should get his head shaved, put off the *ihram* and return to Makkah and perform *Tawwaf-i-Ziarat* (going round the Ka'bah). Then he should go to Mina and stay there for two or three days. The three days (from the 11th to the 13th of Dhul-Hijjah) are called the days of "*Tashriq.*"

214. While in the state of *ihram*, not only intercourse between husband and wife is prohibited but that sort of conversation too, which might excite sexual passions.

215. Though all sorts of evil deeds are unlawful at all times, they become all the more grave when committed during the course of Hajj.

216. One cannot even rebuke a servant.

217. Before the advent of Islām, taking of provisions for the pilgrimage journey was considered to be a worldly act and it was expected that a pious man would go to the House of Allāh without any worldly goods. Here it is declared that it is no virtue to go without provisions on pilgrimage to Makkah. Real virtue is that one should fear God, obey Him and keep one's life pure. If a pilgrim does not take any provisions with him, but commits evil deeds without any fear of Allah, he makes a profitless show of piety. In the sight of Allah and men, such a man will dishonour both himself and the pilgrimage he is performing. On the other hand, if a pilgrim has fear of Allah embedded in his heart and keeps his morals pure, he will gain honour with Allah and men, though he may have provided himself fully with provisions.

218. The Arabs had another wrong notion about Hajj. They considered it

[Contd. on p. 152

مِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَّقُوْلُ رَبَّنَآ اٰتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَّفِي الْاٰخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَّقِنَا
عَذَابَ النَّارِ ﴿٢٠١﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ نَصِيْبٌ مِّمَّا كَسَبُوْا ۭ وَاللّٰهُ سَرِيْعُ الْحِسَابِ ﴿٢٠٢﴾
وَاذْكُرُوا اللّٰهَ فِيْٓ اَيَّامٍ مَّعْدُوْدٰتٍ ۭ فَمَنْ تَعَجَّلَ فِيْ يَوْمَيْنِ فَلَآ اِثْمَ
عَلَيْهِ ۚ وَمَنْ تَاَخَّرَ فَلَآ اِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ ۙ لِمَنِ اتَّقٰى ۭ وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَاعْلَمُوْٓا
اَنَّكُمْ اِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُوْنَ ﴿٢٠٣﴾ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يُّعْجِبُكَ قَوْلُهٗ فِي الْحَيٰوةِ
الدُّنْيَا وَيُشْهِدُ اللّٰهَ عَلٰي مَا فِيْ قَلْبِهٖ ۙ وَهُوَ اَلَدُّ الْخِصَامِ ﴿٢٠٤﴾ وَاِذَا تَوَلّٰى
سَعٰى فِي الْاَرْضِ لِيُفْسِدَ فِيْهَا وَيُهْلِكَ الْحَرْثَ وَالنَّسْلَ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ لَا يُحِبُّ
الْفَسَادَ ﴿٢٠٥﴾ وَاِذَا قِيْلَ لَهُ اتَّقِ اللّٰهَ اَخَذَتْهُ الْعِزَّةُ بِالْاِثْمِ فَحَسْبُهٗ
جَهَنَّمُ ۭ وَلَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ ﴿٢٠٦﴾ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَّشْرِيْ نَفْسَهُ ابْتِغَاۗءَ
مَرْضَاتِ اللّٰهِ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ رَءُوْفٌۢ بِالْعِبَادِ ﴿٢٠٧﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا ادْخُلُوْا
فِي السِّلْمِ كَاۗفَّةً ۠ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوْا خُطُوٰتِ الشَّيْطٰنِ ۭ اِنَّهٗ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿٢٠٨﴾
فَاِنْ زَلَلْتُمْ مِّنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَاۗءَتْكُمُ الْبَيِّنٰتُ فَاعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ عَزِيْزٌ حَكِيْمٌ ﴿٢٠٩﴾
هَلْ يَنْظُرُوْنَ اِلَّآ اَنْ يَّاْتِيَهُمُ اللّٰهُ فِيْ ظُلَلٍ مِّنَ الْغَمَامِ وَالْمَلٰۗىِٕكَةُ وَ
قُضِيَ الْاَمْرُ ۭ وَاِلَى اللّٰهِ تُرْجَعُ الْاُمُوْرُ ﴿٢١٠﴾ سَلْ بَنِيْٓ اِسْرَاۗءِيْلَ كَمْ اٰتَيْنٰهُمْ
مِّنْ اٰيَةٍۢ بَيِّنَةٍ ۭ وَمَنْ يُّبَدِّلْ نِعْمَةَ اللّٰهِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَاۗءَتْهُ فَاِنَّ
اللّٰهَ شَدِيْدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٢١١﴾ زُيِّنَ لِلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوا الْحَيٰوةُ الدُّنْيَا وَيَسْخَرُوْنَ
مِنَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا ۘ وَالَّذِيْنَ اتَّقَوْا فَوْقَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ يَرْزُقُ
مَنْ يَّشَاۗءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿٢١٢﴾ كَانَ النَّاسُ اُمَّةً وَّاحِدَةً ۟ فَبَعَثَ اللّٰهُ
النَّبِيّٖنَ مُبَشِّرِيْنَ وَمُنْذِرِيْنَ ۠ وَاَنْزَلَ مَعَهُمُ الْكِتٰبَ بِالْحَقِّ لِيَحْكُمَ

Then there are others who say, "Our Lord, give us what is good in this world and also what is good in the Hereafter and save us from the torment of Fire." Such people shall have their due share (in both the worlds) according to what they earn. And Allah is swift at settling accounts. So pass these few appointed days in remembering Allah; then there is nothing wrong if one hastens on (from Mina) after two days or stays there (a day) longer,[222] provided that he spends these days in piety. Do not disobey Him and remember that One Day you shall be mustered before Him. 201-203

There is a certain type of man who charms you in this worldly life with his glib talk. He calls Allah to witness again and again that he cherishes good intentions in his heart,[223] whereas, in fact, he is the deadliest opponent[224] of the Truth. When he gets power[225] he directs all his efforts towards spreading mischief in the land, destroying harvests and killing the human race — whereas Allah (Whom he makes his witness) does not like mischief. And when it is said to him, "Fear Allah," vanity seizes him and makes him adhere to the sin. Hell is the proper place for such a person and it is a very bad dwelling indeed. On the other side, there is another type of man who devotes his whole life to please Allah, and Allah is gracious to such of His servants. O Believers, enter completely into Islām[226] and do not follow in the footsteps of Satan, for he is your avowed enemy. If you lapse back after receiving the clear teachings that have come to you, know it well that Allah is All-Powerful, All-Wise.[227] (If people do not follow the right way even after receiving such clear admonitions), do they await that Allah Himself should come down to them in the canopies of clouds with a retinue of angels, and seal their doom?[228] Ultimately every thing shall be presented before Allah (for judgement). 204-210

Ask the children of Israel how many a clear sign We have shown to them: (also ask them) what a severe chastisement Allah inflicts on the community that, after receiving Allah's favour exchanges it (for wretchdness).[229] 211

This worldly life has been made very charming and alluring for those who have adopted the way of disbelief. So they mock at those who have adopted the way of belief,but (they forget that) the pious people will rank above them on the Day of Resurrection. As to the wordly provisions, Allah has full authority and power to bestow these without 212

measure on anyone He wills.

Contd from . P 149.]

a worldly thing to do any kind of business during the Hajj season. The Qur'ān removes this misconception also and declares that if a pious man observes the Law of Allah and then does some business to earn his livelihood, he really seeks the bounty of Allah. And there is nothing wrong in seeking the bounty of Allah along with seeking His pleasure.

219. That is, "You should give up all those ungodly customs of ignorance which you used to practise in pre-Islāmic days along with the worship of Allah. Now worship Allah exclusively in accordance with the Guidance He has revealed."

220. Ever since the time of the Prophet Abraham and Ishmael (may Allah's peace be upon them), the pilgrims used to go to 'Arafat from Makkah on the 9th of Dhul-Hijjah for the performance of Hajj and then returned from there to Muzdalifah on the morning of the 10th. But later when the Quraish established their own priesthood, they arrogantly asserted: "It is below our dignity to go to 'Arafat along with the common Arabs because we live in the Sanctuary." Accordingly, they reserved this mark of distincion for themselves and would halt at Muzdalifah and let others proceed on to 'Arafat. Then this distinction was extended to Banī Khuza'ah and Banī Kinanah and the other tribes with whom the Quraish had marriage relations. Later, even the allies of the Quraish adopted this privilege of distinction and they too would stop short of 'Arafat. In this verse the same privilege of distinction and pride has been abolished. Addressing the Quraish, their relatives and allies in particular and the common Arabs in general it has been enjoined that they should accompany others to perform the essential ceremonials at 'Arafat, halt there and return along with them to Makkah, and should ask Allah's forgiveness for their breach of the Prophet Abraham's way, which they committed in the past on account of tribal pride and distinction.

221. After performing their Hajj, the Arabs used to hold meetings in Mina and brag about their own achievements and those of their forefathers. Here they were told to give up these customs of ignorance, and pass their time in remembering and glorifying Allah instead of singing praises of their ancestors.

222. That is, "It does not matter whether you return from Mina to Makkah on the 12th or the 13th of Dhul-Hijjah during the *Tashriq* days. The real thing that matters is not the number of days you stayed at Mina but whether you spent those days in establishing your relation with Allah during those days or in merry making."

223. This typical man of the world pretends to show that he is a sincere well-wisher of the people. Time and again he assures the people, saying, "Allah is my witness that I intend nothing but good. I am not working for self-interest but for the sake of truth and right and for the welfare of the people." But all glib talk of this worldly-wise man is hypocritical.

224. He is "the deadliest opponent of the truth." because in his enmity, he does not hesitate to employ any kind of falsehood, dishonesty, treachery or any other crooked method, in spite of his smooth tongue, plausible talk and solemn oaths in the name of Allah.

225. It may also mean, "When he returns to everyday life after this glib talk."

226. That is, "Come into the fold of Islām completely without any reservation. Your thoughts, your theories, your culture, your sciences, your manners, your dealings, your efforts etc., should in every aspect of life, be subordinated to Islām. You should not divide your life into different compartments so as to follow Islām in one and discard it in the other."

227. That is, He is All-Powerful and also knows how to punish the criminals.

228. Particular attention should be paid to these words for they enunciate a great universal truth. Allah has sent man to this world to undergo a test. He has revealed the Truth through His Messengers and given man the freedom to believe or not to believe in it, and after believing in it to submit or not to submit to it. He keeps the Reality hidden from man and leaves it to him to judge it rationally in the light of the teachings of his Messengers, His Books and the Signs shown by His Messengers. He never makes the Reality so naked as to leave no alternative but to acknowledge it, for after that no question of a trial is left and success or failure in the test becomes meaningless. That is why Allah gives warning, as if to say, "Do not wait for that time when Allah with His angels will come before you in His glory. At that time your doom shall be sealed and no more chance left for any test. Then belief and submission will have no value. Belief has a value only as long as the Reality remains hidden from your senses and you recognize and acknowledge it by means of your own reasoning and then prove your moral courage by submitting to it without any coercion. When you see with your own eyes Allah on the throne of His glory and angels functioning on the earth and in the heavens and find yourself completely in His power, then belief and submission will have no value. At that time even confirmed sinners and obdurate unbelievers will not dare to disbelieve or disobey. But then it will be useless because the time for test will be

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بَيْنَ النَّاسِ فِيمَا اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ ۚ وَمَا اخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ أُوتُوهُ
مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ ۖ فَهَدَى اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
لِمَا اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ مِنَ الْحَقِّ بِإِذْنِهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ
مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٢١٣﴾ أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُمْ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا
مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ ۖ مَسَّتْهُمُ الْبَأْسَاءُ وَالضَّرَّاءُ وَزُلْزِلُوا حَتَّىٰ يَقُولَ الرَّسُولُ
وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ مَتَىٰ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ ۗ أَلَا إِنَّ نَصْرَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ ﴿٢١٤﴾
يَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ ۖ قُلْ مَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلِلْوَالِدَيْنِ وَ
الْأَقْرَبِينَ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ ۗ وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ
فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢١٥﴾ كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ وَهُوَ كُرْهٌ لَكُمْ ۖ وَعَسَىٰ أَنْ
تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ ۖ وَعَسَىٰ أَنْ تُحِبُّوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَكُمْ ۗ
وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢١٦﴾ يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ قِتَالٍ
فِيهِ ۖ قُلْ قِتَالٌ فِيهِ كَبِيرٌ ۖ وَصَدٌّ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَكُفْرٌ بِهِ وَالْمَسْجِدِ
الْحَرَامِ ۖ وَإِخْرَاجُ أَهْلِهِ مِنْهُ أَكْبَرُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ ۚ وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَكْبَرُ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ ۗ
وَلَا يَزَالُونَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَرُدُّوكُمْ عَنْ دِينِكُمْ إِنِ اسْتَطَاعُوا ۚ وَمَنْ
يَرْتَدِدْ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ فَيَمُتْ وَهُوَ كَافِرٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ
فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ ۖ وَأُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ ۖ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٢١٧﴾ إِنَّ
الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۙ أُولَٰئِكَ يَرْجُونَ
رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٢١٨﴾ يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ ۖ قُلْ
فِيهِمَا إِثْمٌ كَبِيرٌ وَمَنَافِعُ لِلنَّاسِ ۖ وَإِثْمُهُمَا أَكْبَرُ مِنْ نَفْعِهِمَا ۗ وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ

In the beginning all the people followed the same way. 213
(Afterwards there came a change and differences arose). Then Allah sent Prophets to give good tidings to those who followed the Right Way and warnings to those who swerved from it. And He sent down with them the Book based on the Truth so that it should judge between the people concerning their differences. — (Differences arose not because people were not given the knowledge of the Truth in the beginning, nay), differences arose between those very people who had been given clear teachings, and (for no other reasons than that) they wanted to tyrannize over one another.[230] So Allah, by His leave, guided those who believed in the Prophets to the Truth about which they had differed; Allah guides whomever He pleases to the Right Way.

Do[231] you think that you will enter Paradise without undergoing 214
such trials as were experienced by the believers before you? They met with adversity and affliction and were so shaken by trials that the Prophet of the time and his followers cried out: "When will Allah's help come"? — (Then they were comforted with the good tidings): "Yes, Allah's help is near."

The people ask, "What should we spend?" Tell them, "Whatever 215
you spend, spend for your parents, your relatives, orphans, the needy and the wayfarer; and whatever good you do, Allah has knowledge of it."

You have been enjoined to go to war, and you dislike it; it may 16
be that you dislike a thing and the same is good for you, and you love a thing and the same is bad for you: Allah knows but you do not.

They ask you (O Muhammad) concerning warfare in the 217-218
prohibited month. Say, "Fighting is a heinous offence in this month, but in the sight of Allah it is far worse to hinder people from the Way of Allah and to deny Him and to prevent His worshippers from visiting the Masjidal-Haram, and to expel the dwellers of the sacred place from it; and persecution is far worse than bloodshed."[232] As for them, they will go on fighting with you till they succeed in turning you away from your Faith, if they can. But (note it well that) whosoever renounces his Faith and dies a renegade, all his works shall be fruitless both in this world and in the Hereafter. All such people deserve the Fire and shall abide in Hell for ever.[233] In contrast to them, those, who have believed

and left their homes in the way of Allah and exerted their utmost in His cause,[234] rightly look forward to His mercy: and Allah is Forgiving and full of mercy.

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over. When the curtain is raised and the 'Reality' is seen by everyone, then no more chance shall be given nor shall there be any more test because that will be the time of the Judgement.

229. The Muslims have been told to enquire about it especially from the children of Israel because the latter were a living object lesson for the former who were now replacing them as leaders of the world. The children of Israel had been favoured with Prophethood and Divine Book and had been entrusted with leadership for the guidance of the world but they had deprived themselves of this blessing (leadership) for involving themselves in wretchedness — in the lusts of this worldliness, duplicity and in the evil deeds of pseudo-knowledge. Therefore the Muslims who were replacing them were forewarned to be on their guard against these evils and learn a lesson from their history.

230. Here the theory of evolution in religion has been refuted. The so-called scholars say that man began his religious life in the darkness of polytheism; then by and by he began to worship God, but associated other gods with Him. This went on for a long time; at last he recognized and accepted the Oneness of God. But the Qur'ān contradicts this and says that human life began in full Divine light. When Allah created the first Man, Adam, He revealed the Truth to him and showed him the Right Way. Adam's descendants followed his way for a long time and all of them were members of one and the same community. Then they began to follow new ways and invented new religions. And they did so inspite of the fact that the Truth had been shown to them just because they wanted to misappropriate to themselves more than their own due share and rights sanctioned by it. In order to prevent the misguided people, from this evil, Allah sent His Messengers to invite them to the original Divine Way. They were not sent to found new religious communities after their own names, but to bring those who had swerved from the Right path to the original religion of mankind and to the same one community which was formed in accordance with the Guidance of Allah, at the time when Man began his life on the earth.

231. A whole story has been left out between this verse and the preceding one, for this verse itself points to it and because it had already been related in detail in the Sūrahs which were revealed before this at Makkah. In the preceding verse it was stated that the Messengers were sent to remove those differences which had arisen in religion, but the story of their hardships and long persecutions

was omitted because it had already been described in detail in the Makki Revelations. Hence the believers are warned that the Messengers and their followers have always had to struggle hard with the rebels against Allah in order to establish His Way, and that the true Faith of Islām has never been a bed of roses. One has to exert one's utmost to establish it and to fight against all those evil forces that oppose its establishment, even at the sacrifice of one's life, if need be.

232. The objection, which was raised in the form of a question about warfare in the sacred month, refers to an incident which took place in the month of Rajab in the second year of Hijra.

The Holy Prophet sent a detachment of eight men to Nakhlah, a place midway between Makkah and Ta'if. He told them to watch the movements of the Quraish and find out their future plans. Though he had not given them permission to fight, they attacked a small trading caravan of the Quraish, killed one man and took the rest prisoners and brought them to Madinah along with their goods.

As this incident took place at a time when it could not be said with certainty whether the month of Rajab had come to an end and the month of Sha'ban had commenced, it was doubtful whether the attack was made in Rajab, a prohibited month, or in Sha'ban. Nevertheless, the Quraish and their secret allies, the Jews, and the doublefaced "Muslims" of Madinah, took it as a God-given opportunity to make strong propaganda and raise serious objections against the Believers. They ironically remarked, "What a pious people they are! They do not hesitate to shed blood even in a prohibited month." Such objections have been answered in this verse which implies, "No doubt, bloodshed is a very bad thing but their objection is not reasonable, coming as it does from the mouths of those people who themselves had carried on for thirteen years the most cruel form of persecution against hundreds of their own brethren for no other reason than that they believed in one Allah. They not only forced these brethren of their own to leave their beloved homes but also prevented them from paying a visit to the Ka'bah, although this sacred place was not the property of anyone. Their crime was all the more heinous because such a wicked antagonism had never existed during the previous two thousand years or so. Therefore those workers of iniquity, the list of whose crimes was so black, had no right to raise objections on the basis of a trivial border incident." Moreover, this incident took place without the permission of the Holy Prophet, and was, therefore, nothing more than an irresponsible act on the part of a few members of the Islāmic party.

It should also be kept in view that when this detachment came to the Holy Prophet with the prisoners and the spoils, he said, "I never gave you permission to

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مَاذَا يُنْفِقُوْنَ ۙ قُلِ الْعَفْوَ ۭ كَذٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللّٰهُ لَكُمُ الْاٰيٰتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تَتَفَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٢١٩﴾ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْاٰخِرَةِ ۭ وَيَسْـَٔلُوْنَكَ عَنِ الْيَتٰمٰى ۭ قُلْ اِصْلَاحٌ
لَّهُمْ خَيْرٌ ۭ وَاِنْ تُخَالِطُوْهُمْ فَاِخْوَانُكُمْ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُ الْمُفْسِدَ مِنَ الْمُصْلِحِ ۭ
وَلَوْ شَاۗءَ اللّٰهُ لَاَعْنَتَكُمْ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَزِيْزٌ حَكِيْمٌ ﴿٢٢٠﴾ وَلَا تَنْكِحُوا الْمُشْرِكٰتِ حَتّٰى
يُؤْمِنَّ ۭ وَلَاَمَةٌ مُّؤْمِنَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ مُّشْرِكَةٍ وَّلَوْ اَعْجَبَتْكُمْ ۚ وَلَا تُنْكِحُوا
الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ حَتّٰى يُؤْمِنُوْا ۭ وَلَعَبْدٌ مُّؤْمِنٌ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ مُّشْرِكٍ وَّلَوْ اَعْجَبَكُمْ ۭ
اُولٰۗىِٕكَ يَدْعُوْنَ اِلَى النَّارِ ۚ وَاللّٰهُ يَدْعُوْٓا اِلَى الْجَنَّةِ وَالْمَغْفِرَةِ بِاِذْنِهٖ ۚ
وَيُبَيِّنُ اٰيٰتِهٖ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٢٢١﴾ وَيَسْـَٔلُوْنَكَ عَنِ الْمَحِيْضِ ۭ قُلْ
هُوَ اَذًى ۙ فَاعْتَزِلُوا النِّسَاۗءَ فِي الْمَحِيْضِ ۙ وَلَا تَقْرَبُوْهُنَّ حَتّٰى يَطْهُرْنَ ۚ فَاِذَا
تَطَهَّرْنَ فَاْتُوْهُنَّ مِنْ حَيْثُ اَمَرَكُمُ اللّٰهُ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِيْنَ وَيُحِبُّ
الْمُتَطَهِّرِيْنَ ﴿٢٢٢﴾ نِسَاۗؤُكُمْ حَرْثٌ لَّكُمْ ۠ فَاْتُوْا حَرْثَكُمْ اَنّٰى شِئْتُمْ ۡ وَقَدِّمُوْا
لِاَنْفُسِكُمْ ۭ وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَاعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّكُمْ مُّلٰقُوْهُ ۭ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٢٢٣﴾ وَلَا تَجْعَلُوا
اللّٰهَ عُرْضَةً لِّاَيْمَانِكُمْ اَنْ تَبَرُّوْا وَتَتَّقُوْا وَتُصْلِحُوْا بَيْنَ النَّاسِ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ
سَمِيْعٌ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿٢٢٤﴾ لَا يُؤَاخِذُكُمُ اللّٰهُ بِاللَّغْوِ فِيْٓ اَيْمَانِكُمْ وَلٰكِنْ يُّؤَاخِذُكُمْ بِمَا
كَسَبَتْ قُلُوْبُكُمْ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ غَفُوْرٌ حَلِيْمٌ ﴿٢٢٥﴾ لِلَّذِيْنَ يُؤْلُوْنَ مِنْ نِّسَاۗىِٕهِمْ تَرَبُّصُ
اَرْبَعَةِ اَشْهُرٍ ۚ فَاِنْ فَاۗءُوْ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿٢٢٦﴾ وَاِنْ عَزَمُوا الطَّلَاقَ
فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ سَمِيْعٌ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿٢٢٧﴾ وَالْمُطَلَّقٰتُ يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِاَنْفُسِهِنَّ ثَلٰثَةَ قُرُوْۗءٍ ۭ وَ
لَا يَحِلُّ لَهُنَّ اَنْ يَّكْتُمْنَ مَا خَلَقَ اللّٰهُ فِيْٓ اَرْحَامِهِنَّ اِنْ كُنَّ يُؤْمِنَّ بِاللّٰهِ
وَالْيَوْمِ الْاٰخِرِ ۭ وَبُعُوْلَتُهُنَّ اَحَقُّ بِرَدِّهِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ اِنْ اَرَادُوْٓا اِصْلَاحًا ۭ

They ask you about drinking and gambling. Say, "There is great harm in both, though there is some benefit also for the people. But the harm of the sin thereof is far greater than their benefit."[235] 219

And they ask"What ought we to spend (in the way of Allah)"? Say"Spend whatever you can spare." Thus Allah makes His commands clear to you so that you may think about the good of both this world and the Hereafter. 220

They ask you about the right way of dealing with orphans. Say "The right way is that which is for their good."[236] Then there is no harm if you live a common life with them for they are after all your own brethren. Allah knows well the one who means harm and also the one who means good. If Allah had willed He would have been hard upon you in this matter for He is All-Powerful but He is at the same time All-Wise.

Do not marry *mushrik* women unless they believe; a slave woman who believes is better than a free woman who does not believe, even though the latter may appear very attractive to you. (Likewise) do not wed your women to *mushrik* men unless they believe; a slave man who believes is better than a free man who does not, even though he may be very pleasing to you. These *mushrik* people invite you to the Fire[237] while Allah by His grace invites you to the Garden and His pardon, and He makes His revelations plain to the people so that they should learn a lesson and follow the admonition.

They ask about the monthly course. Say, "It is a state of impurity;[238] so keep apart from women during their monthly course and do not go near them until they are clean.[239] When they have cleansed themselves, then you may go to them in the manner Allah has enjoined you."[240] Most surely Allah loves those people who refrain from evil and keep themselves pure and clean. Your wives are your tilth : so you may go to your tilth as you please,[241] but you should take care of your future[242] and refrain from the displeasure of Allah. Know it well that One Day you shall meet Him. (O Prophet !) bear good tidings to the Believers. 222-223

Do not use Allah's name for such oaths which are taken to keep back from virtue, piety and the welfare of mankind:[243] Allah hears everything you utter and knows everything. Allah does not call you to 224-225

account for unintentional and meaningless oaths,[244] but will surely take you to task for oaths taken deliberately and in earnest : Allah is Forgiving and Forbearing.

226-227 Those who take an oath to keep apart from their wives are given four months (for a final decision).[245] Then if they resume their relations, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.[246] And if they resolve on divorce, [247] (let them remember that) Allah hears everything and knows everything.

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fight." He also refused to accept the share due to the public treasury from the spoils. This clearly showed that it was an unlawful and unauthorised act. The common Muslims also took their men to task for this incident and there was not a single Muslim in the whole of Madinah who approved of this act of theirs.

233. Some simple-minded Muslims regarded as genuine the above-mentioned objection raised by the disbelievers and the Jews. They were under the wrong impression that this and the like were honest objections, and if they were removed, the objectors would be satisfied and there would be peace with them. In this verse, these Muslims have been warned not to cherish any such expectations about them because they did not raise these objections for clarification but to make propaganda against the Muslims. Their real objection against the Muslims was that they had accepted Islām and were inviting the world to it. There could, therefore, be no peace between them and the objectors as long as they stuck to their belief in Allah. Therefore the Muslims were told not to under-rate the enemies of their Faith. They should remember that the one who tries to turn them away from their Faith is a worse enemy than the one who tries to rob them of their wealth, for the latter tries to ruin only their life in this world, which is after all transitory, while the former tries to ruin their life in the Hereafter, which is eternal.

234. The word "*jihad*" means to exert one's utmost for the achievement of an object. It is not a synonym for "holy war" but has a far wider meaning than this and covers every kind of effort. And the *mujahid* is one who is always after the achievement of his ideal, plans for it, propagates it with his tongue and pen and struggles for it with all his heart and body. In short, he spends all his efforts and resources for its achievement and fights against all those forces that oppose it; so much so that he does not hesitate to put even his very life in danger for his ideal. The struggle and fight to such a person will be technically *Jihad*. A Muslim, however, is required to do all this in the way of Allah alone under certain moral restrictions for establishing the Way prescribed by Him and for elevating His

Muslim in performing *Jihad*. It has thus become clear that the *Jihad* of a Muslim is not "general war of extermination against infidels"

235. This was the first instruction about alcoholic and intoxicating drinks and games of chance for stakes. At first a mere disapproval of these things was pronounced to serve as a preliminary to their final prohibition. The next step in this direction was that the Muslims were prohibited from offering the Prayers when they were drunk. Finally drinking, gambling and the like were made absolutely unlawful. (Please refer to An-Nisa', IV: 43 and Al-Ma'idah, V: 90).

236. Before the revelation of this verse, very strict warnings had been administered for the preservation of the rights of orphans. Warnings like "those who misappropriate the property of orphans fill their bellies with fire," had made the Muslims so fearful that the guardians of the orphans had made separate arrangements for their meals etc. But, inspite of all this, they feared lest any part of the property of the orphans should get mixed up with their property and they should incur the wrath of Allah. That is why they asked the Holy Prophet to define for them the limits of their relations with orphans. They have been told to do sincerely what is best in their interest and at the same time warned that Allah knows everything.

237. The reason why the believers have been prohibited from marrying *mushrik* spouses is that 'they invite you to the Fire'. This means that such marriage might mislead the Muslim spouses to the ways of *shirk*, for the relations between husband and wife are not merely sexual but spiritual and cultural as well. It is possible that the Muslim spouse may influence the *mushrik* spouse and his or her family and their offspring in favour of the Islāmic way of life. But it is equally possible that the *mushrik* spouse may imbue the Muslim spouse, his (or her) family or their offspring, with the spirit and ways of *shirk*. Most probably as a result of such a marriage, a mixture of Islām and un-Islām will be bred in such a family. A non-Muslim might approve of this, but a Muslim cannot. One who sincerely believes in Islām can never take such a risk merely for the sake of the gratification of his lust. He would rather suppress his passions than do anything that might mislead him to disbelief, blasphemy and *shirk* or, at least mislead his progeny.

238. The Arabic word "*adhā*" stands both for illness and for uncleanliness. Menses are not only a state of impurity but also of disease. During the monthly period, women are medically nearer a state of illness than of health.

239. The Qur'ān uses indirect and covert hints and suggestions for the expression of such delicate matters. The instructions, "They should be separated" and "Do not go near them", do not mean that the women should be made untouchables during their monthly periods, as they are made by the Jews, the

Hindus and some other communities. The Holy Prophet explained that this commandment meant only to prohibit intercourse with them during the menses. All other relations with them may be continued as before.

240. The Arabic word *amr* does not refer to any legal injunction but to the natural instinct that has been embedded in the nature of every human being and animal and is known to every one.

241. Allah has not created women merely for the enjoyment and entertainment of men. The relation between the two is as serious an affair as that of a farmer and his field. The farmer does not go to his field merely for recreation and enjoyment but for cultivation to get produce from it. In the same way, a man should go to his wife to produce children. Allah's law, however, is not concerned with the method of cultivation but with the demand that man should go to the field and not elsewhere and to his own field and for production.

242. The Arabic words are comprehensive. They may imply : "You should try to produce children for the continuation of your race", or that "You must take special pains to bring up and train them morally to be good men." Here both the aspects are implied. That is why they have been warned, in the next sentence, that they shall be called to account by Allah for any deliberate disregard of these obligations.

243. We learn from authentic Traditions that if anyone takes a thoughtless oath to do or not to do a thing and afterwards realizes that fairness demands its abrogation, he should abrogate it and expiate for it. The expiation for breaking an oath is the feeding of ten needy persons or clothing them or the liberation of a slave. If one cannot afford this, he must observe fast for three days. (Please see Al-Ma'idah, V : 89).

244. There is neither expiation nor any punishment for those oaths that one utters unawares as a byword.

245. Although it is true that relations between husband and wife do not always remain cordial, yet Allah's law does not allow that the strained relations should continue indefinitely. Therefore it lays down the maximum period of four months for a separation in which they legally remain husband and wife but practically live separate lives without any conjugal relations between them. Such a separation is termed "*Ila*" in the Islāmic code of Law. During this period they must either make a reconciliation between themselves or part for good so that they may be free to marry a suitable person of their liking.

From the words "Those who take an oath" the jurists belonging to the Hanafi and Shafi'i schools of thought conclude that this period of four months applies only to those cases of separation which are made on oath; if they remain

separate for any length of time without an oath, this law would not apply to them. On the other hand, the jurists belonging to the Maliki school of thought are of the opinion that the maximum period of four months applies to all cases of separation. A saying of Imam Ahmad also supports this opinion.

Hadrat 'Ali, Ibn 'Abbas and Hasan Basri are of the opinion that this law applies only to that case of separation which is the result of strained relations, and does not apply to the case in which the husband and the wife agree to discontinue conjugal relations with mutual consent for some common good and at the same time keep cordial relations. There are other jurists who are of the opinion that the law of '*ila*' would apply to every case of separation made on oath irrespective of the fact whether their relations remain good or bad; hence it should not go beyond the prescribed term of four months.

246. Some jurists interpret this to mean that if they break their oaths within four months and re-establish conjugal relations, there would be no expiation for this; Allah will forgive the breach of their oath without expiation. But the majority of jurists are of the opinion that expiation must be made in any case. "Allah will forgive and show mercy" does not mean that the expiation will be remitted. It merely means that Allah will accept the expiation and forgive wrong done by each against the other during their separation.

247. According to the verdict of Caliph 'Uthman, Ibn Mas'ud, Zaid bin Thabit and some other jurists, they can reunite only within four months. The expiry of this term itself is a proof that the husband has decided upon divorce. Hence after its expiry, divorce will automatically take place and the husband will forfeit the right of reunion during the waiting term. If, however, both of them agree, they can remarry. There is a verdict to the same effect from Hadrat 'Umar, 'Ali, Ibn 'Abbas and Ibn 'Umar and the jurists of the Hanafi school have accepted the same.

Hadrat Sa'id bin Musayyib, Makh-ūl, Zuhri and some others are of the opinion that after the expiry of four months, there shall be an automatic divorce but this will be a single revocable divorce and the husband will have the right to reunite within the term (*'iddat*) and if he does not reunite within the term, they may remarry if they so desire.

As against this, Hadrat 'A'ishah, Abud-Darda' and many other jurists of Madinah are of the opinion that after the expiry of four months the case should be

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وَلَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۖ وَلِلرِّجَالِ عَلَيْهِنَّ دَرَجَةٌ ۗ وَ
اللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٢٨﴾ الطَّلَاقُ مَرَّتَانِ ۖ فَإِمْسَاكٌ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ تَسْرِيحٌ
بِإِحْسَانٍ ۗ وَلَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَأْخُذُوا مِمَّا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ شَيْئًا إِلَّا أَنْ يَخَافَا
أَلَّا يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ اللَّهِ ۖ فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ اللَّهِ ۙ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا
فِيمَا افْتَدَتْ بِهِ ۗ تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَعْتَدُوهَا ۚ وَمَنْ يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ
اللَّهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٢٢٩﴾ فَإِنْ طَلَّقَهَا فَلَا تَحِلُّ لَهُ مِنْ بَعْدُ حَتَّىٰ
تَنْكِحَ زَوْجًا غَيْرَهُ ۗ فَإِنْ طَلَّقَهَا فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا أَنْ يَتَرَاجَعَا إِنْ ظَنَّا
أَنْ يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ يُبَيِّنُهَا لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٣٠﴾ وَإِذَا
طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَبَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ سَرِّحُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ ۖ
وَلَا تُمْسِكُوهُنَّ ضِرَارًا لِتَعْتَدُوا ۚ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَٰلِكَ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ ۗ وَ
لَا تَتَّخِذُوا آيَاتِ اللَّهِ هُزُوًا ۚ وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ
عَلَيْكُمْ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَالْحِكْمَةِ يَعِظُكُمْ بِهِ ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ
بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٣١﴾ وَإِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَبَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَلَا تَعْضُلُوهُنَّ
أَنْ يَنْكِحْنَ أَزْوَاجَهُنَّ إِذَا تَرَاضَوْا بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ يُوعَظُ بِهِ
مَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ۗ ذَٰلِكُمْ أَزْكَىٰ لَكُمْ وَأَطْهَرُ ۗ
وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٣٢﴾ وَالْوَالِدَاتُ يُرْضِعْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ حَوْلَيْنِ
كَامِلَيْنِ ۖ لِمَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يُتِمَّ الرَّضَاعَةَ ۚ وَعَلَى الْمَوْلُودِ لَهُ رِزْقُهُنَّ وَ
كِسْوَتُهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۗ لَا تُكَلَّفُ نَفْسٌ إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا ۚ لَا تُضَارَّ وَالِدَةٌ
بِوَلَدِهَا وَلَا مَوْلُودٌ لَهُ بِوَلَدِهِ ۚ وَعَلَى الْوَارِثِ مِثْلُ ذَٰلِكَ ۗ فَإِنْ أَرَادَا

Divorced women must wait for three monthly courses. And it is 228
not lawful for them to hide what Allah has created in their wombs, if they sincerely believe in Allah and the Last Day. Their husbands are best entitled to take[248] them back as their wives during this waiting period, if they desire reconciliation.[249]

Wives have the same rights as the husbands have on them in accordance with the generally known principles. Of course, men are a degree above them in status, and above all is Allah, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.

Divorce may be pronounced twice; then either the wife be kept 229
honourably or parted with gracefully.[250] And it is not lawful for you to take back anything out of what you have given them.[251] There is, however, an exception to this; if you fear that they might not be able to keep within the limits imposed by Allah, there is no harm if both agree mutually that the wife should obtain divorce by giving something as compensation to the husband.[252] These are the bounds set by Allah; therefore do not violate them, for those who violate the bounds of Allah are the tansgressors.

And if the husband divorces his wife (for the third time), she 230
shall not remain his lawful wife after this (absolute) divorce, unless she marries another husband and the second husband divorces her.[253] (In that case) there is no harm if they re-marry, provided that the woman and her first husband are convinced that they will be able to keep within the bounds fixed by Allah. And these are Allah's bounds, which He makes clear for the guidance of those who know (the consequences of transgression).

And when you have divorced your wives and they are about to 231
complete their prescribed term, then either retain them gracefully or release them generously. It is transgression to retain them merely for harassment; and whoever does that indeed wrongs his own self.[254] Do not play with Allah's Commandments, and remember that Allah has blessed you with a great favour. He admonishes you to show due respect to the Book and the Wisdom He has sent to you.[255] Fear Allah and know that He is fully aware of everything.

When you have divorced your wives absolutely and they have 232
completed their prescribed term, then you should not prevent them

from marrying their prospective husbands, if they mutually agree to marry each other in a lawful way.[256] You are enjoined not to commit such an offence, if you sincerely believe in Allah and the Last Day. It is most decent and pure for you to desist from this; Allah knows and you do not know.

233 The (divorced) mothers shall suckle their children for two whole years, if the fathers desire the suckling to be completed.[257] In that case the father of the child shall, in the fair known way, be responsible for their food and clothing. But none should be burdened with more than one can bear: neither the mother should be pressed unjustly (to accept unfair terms) just because she is the mother nor should the father be burdened just because he is the father. — And the same responsibility for the maintenance of the mother devolves upon the father of the child and his heir.[258] There is no harm if they wean the child by mutual consent and consultation. Moreover, there is no harm if you choose to give your children a suckle by a wet nurse, provided that you pay her fairly. Fear Allah and know it well that whatever you do is in the sight of Allah.

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taken to a court so that the judge may order the husband either to reunite with his wife or divorce her. There is also a verdict of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, Ḥaḍrat 'Ali and Ibn 'Umar to this effect and the same has been accepted by Imam Malik and Imam Shāfi'i also.

248. That is, "Fear Allah and do not divorce your wives for frivolous and unjustifiable reasons, for He knows everything."

249. Jurists differ in the interpretation of this verse. According to one section of them, divorce does not take place and the husband retains the right of reunion up to the time of the purification of the wife by a bath after the third monthly course. This is the opinion of Ḥaḍrat Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Ali, Ibn 'Abbas, Abu Musa Ash-'ari, Ibn Mas'ud and some other Companions of the first rank, and the Hanafi jurists have accepted the same. On the contrary, the other section says that the husband forfeits the right of reunion as soon as the wife has a discharge of the third monthly course. This opinion is held by Ḥaḍrat 'A'ishah, Ibn 'Umar and Zaid bin Thabit, and the Shāfe'i and the Māliki jurists have adopted the same. It must, however, be clearly understood that the husband retains the right of reunion only in the case when he has pronounced one divorce or two divorces, but he forfeits the right of reunion when he has pronounced three divorces.

250. This brief verse was meant to reform a serious social evil common in Arabia before the advent of Islām. A husband was allowed to pronounce divorce as often as he pleased. Whenever his relations were strained with his wife, he would pronounce a divorce and then reunite as and when it suited him. As there was no limit to this, it was repeated over and over again. Thus the wife could neither have conjugal relations with him nor was free to marry anyone else. This verse of the Qur'ān shuts this door of cruelty. During his whole married life, a husband may use the right of divorce and reunion with one wife only twice. After that whenever he pronounces divorce for the third time, wife shall be separated from him permanently.

In order to check hasty action and leave the door open for reconciliation at many stages, the right method of pronouncing divorce as taught in the Qur'ān and the Traditions is that if and when it becomes inevitable, it should be pronounced only when she is not in her menses and even if a dispute arises during the monthly period, it is not right to pronounce divorce during that condition, but he should wait for her to cleanse herself and then may pronounce a single divorce, if he so likes. Then he should wait for the next monthly course and pronounce the second divorce if he so wishes after she is cleansed. Then he should wait for the next monthly course to pronounce the third and final divorce after she is cleansed. It is, however, better to wait and reconsider the matter after the first and second pronouncements, for in the case of one or two divorces, the husband retains the right to take her back as his wife before the expiry of the term, and even if the term has expired, the couple has a chance to remarry by mutual consent. But if divorce is pronounced for the third time in the third period of purity, the husband forfeits the right to take her back nor can the couple remarry.

As for those ignorant people who pronounce all the three divorces in one and the same sitting, they commit a heinous sin against the Law. The Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has very severely denounced this practice and Ḥaḍrat 'Umar used to whip the husband who pronounced three divorces at one and the same sitting.

251. The husband has no right to demand anything of the dower given to the wife in consideration for the marriage or ornaments, clothes etc., given to her as gifts. It is utterly against the moral principles of Islām to ask for the return of anything given to another as a present or gift. The Holy Prophet has likened this disgraceful behaviour to the licking up of his own vomit by the dog. It is indeed very shameful on the part of a husband to keep back or demand, after the divorce, what he himself gave to his wife. As a matter of fact Islam exhorts the husband who divorces his wife to give her something at her departure. (Please see Al-Baqarah, II : 241).

252. When divorce is obtained by the wife from her husband by compensation, it is called *khulʿ* in the Islāmic Law. If the husband and the wife agree between themselves on some terms regarding this, the same shall be enforced. But if the case goes to the court, it will first of all try to ascertain whether the wife really dislikes her husband so much that she cannot live with him any longer. Then if the court is satisfied that they cannot live together happily, it shall fix as compensation anything that it considers proper, and the husband shall have to accept that and divorce his wife. The jurists are generally of the opinion that the compensation should not exceed the dower given by the husband.

In such a case, the husband forfeits the right of reunion after the divorce because it has been bought, so to speak, by the wife. Of course, it is lawful for them to remarry with mutual consent.

According to the majority of Muslims, the term for the wife in the case of *khulʿ* is the same as that of divorce. But Abu Da'ud, Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah and others have related Traditions to the effect that the Holy Prophet prescribed only one monthly course as the term for the wife after the divorce, and Caliph 'Uthman decided a case in accordance with this. (*Ibn Kathir*, Vol. 1, p. 276)

253. Authentic Traditions warn against any pre-arranged scheme that a certain man should marry a certain divorced woman with the understanding that he would divorce her again to enable the former husband to remarry his divorced wife. This shall be an unlawful act and such a marriage shall be no marriage at all but adultery and the woman shall not become the lawful wife of the first husband by such a prearranged scheme. Ḥaḍrat 'Ali, Ibn Mas'ud Abu Hurairah and 'Uqbah bin-'Amir, all relate the Tradition to the effect that the Holy Prophet cursed all the persons who indulge in such devices.

254. It is not right for a person to divorce his wife and then reunite with her before the expiry of the term simply to get another opportunity to torment and harass her. Therefore Allah has warned that if the husband sincerely intends to take his wife back, he should re-unite with the intention of treating her well; otherwise the best thing would be to release her in a noble way. (Please also refer to E.N. 250).

255. It means, "Do not forget the fact that Allah has appointed you to a position of the highest responsibility. He has given you the Book and taught you wisdom and entrusted you with the duty of guiding the world. You have been made the "Community of the Golden Mean" and the witnesses of virtue and truth. It does not, therefore, behove you to play with the Revelations by means of sophistry and take undue advantage of the letter of the Law and lead wicked and

unjust lives in your homes, when you are expected to show the Right Way to the world."

256. That is, "If both agree to re-marry after the expiry of the term, the relatives of the divorced woman should not prevent her from remarrying her former husband, who had divorced her once or twice but had not become re-united with her during the prescribed term. It may also mean that the husband who had divorced his wife thrice should not prevent her from marrying another person after the expiry of the prescribed term. There is nothing meaner that one should prevent his divocred wife from marrying another man just because he himself has divorced her."

257. This applies to all the cases in which the husband and the wife have separated in any manner divorce, *khula'* or judicial separation) and the child is still a suckling.

258. If the father dies, the responsibility of remunerating the mother or the wet nurse who suckles the infant lies on the guaradian just as it lay on the father.

فِصَالًا عَنْ تَرَاضٍ مِّنْهُمَا وَ تَشَاوُرٍ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا ۗ وَ اِنْ اَرَدْتُّمْ اَنْ
تَسْتَرْضِعُوْٓا اَوْلَادَكُمْ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ اِذَا سَلَّمْتُمْ مَّآ اٰتَيْتُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوْفِ ۗ وَ اتَّقُوا
اللّٰهَ وَ اعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ بَصِيْرٌ ﴿٢٣٣﴾ وَ الَّذِيْنَ يُتَوَفَّوْنَ مِنْكُمْ وَ
يَذَرُوْنَ اَزْوَاجًا يَّتَرَبَّصْنَ بِاَنْفُسِهِنَّ اَرْبَعَةَ اَشْهُرٍ وَّ عَشْرًا ۚ فَاِذَا بَلَغْنَ
اَجَلَهُنَّ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِيْمَا فَعَلْنَ فِيْٓ اَنْفُسِهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوْفِ ۗ وَ اللّٰهُ بِمَا
تَعْمَلُوْنَ خَبِيْرٌ ﴿٢٣٤﴾ وَ لَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِيْمَا عَرَّضْتُمْ بِهٖ مِنْ خِطْبَةِ النِّسَآءِ
اَوْ اَكْنَنْتُمْ فِيْٓ اَنْفُسِكُمْ ۗ عَلِمَ اللّٰهُ اَنَّكُمْ سَتَذْكُرُوْنَهُنَّ وَ لٰكِنْ لَّا تُوَاعِدُوْهُنَّ
سِرًّا اِلَّآ اَنْ تَقُوْلُوْا قَوْلًا مَّعْرُوْفًا ۗ وَ لَا تَعْزِمُوْا عُقْدَةَ النِّكَاحِ حَتّٰى يَبْلُغَ
الْكِتٰبُ اَجَلَهٗ ۗ وَ اعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِيْٓ اَنْفُسِكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوْهُ ۚ وَ اعْلَمُوْٓا
اَنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ حَلِيْمٌ ﴿٢٣٥﴾ لَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ اِنْ طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَآءَ مَا لَمْ تَمَسُّوْهُنَّ
اَوْ تَفْرِضُوْا لَهُنَّ فَرِيْضَةً ۖ وَّ مَتِّعُوْهُنَّ ۚ عَلَى الْمُوْسِعِ قَدَرُهٗ وَ عَلَى الْمُقْتِرِ
قَدَرُهٗ ۚ مَتَاعًۢا بِالْمَعْرُوْفِ ۚ حَقًّا عَلَى الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿٢٣٦﴾ وَ اِنْ طَلَّقْتُمُوْهُنَّ مِنْ
قَبْلِ اَنْ تَمَسُّوْهُنَّ وَ قَدْ فَرَضْتُمْ لَهُنَّ فَرِيْضَةً فَنِصْفُ مَا فَرَضْتُمْ اِلَّآ اَنْ
يَّعْفُوْنَ اَوْ يَعْفُوَا الَّذِيْ بِيَدِهٖ عُقْدَةُ النِّكَاحِ ۗ وَ اَنْ تَعْفُوْٓا اَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوٰى ۗ
وَ لَا تَنْسَوُا الْفَضْلَ بَيْنَكُمْ ۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ بَصِيْرٌ ﴿٢٣٧﴾ حٰفِظُوْا عَلَى
الصَّلَوٰتِ وَ الصَّلٰوةِ الْوُسْطٰى ۗ وَ قُوْمُوْا لِلّٰهِ قٰنِتِيْنَ ﴿٢٣٨﴾ فَاِنْ خِفْتُمْ فَرِجَالًا
اَوْ رُكْبَانًا ۚ فَاِذَآ اَمِنْتُمْ فَاذْكُرُوا اللّٰهَ كَمَا عَلَّمَكُمْ مَّا لَمْ تَكُوْنُوْا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٢٣٩﴾
وَ الَّذِيْنَ يُتَوَفَّوْنَ مِنْكُمْ وَ يَذَرُوْنَ اَزْوَاجًا ۖ وَّصِيَّةً لِّاَزْوَاجِهِمْ مَّتَاعًا
اِلَى الْحَوْلِ غَيْرَ اِخْرَاجٍ ۚ فَاِنْ خَرَجْنَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِيْ مَا فَعَلْنَ فِيْٓ

If those of you, who die, leave wives behind, they should abstain (from marriage) for four months and ten days.[259] Then when their waiting term expires, they are free to do whatever they choose for themselves, provided that it is decent; you shall not be answerable for this; Allah is fully aware of what you do. It is no offence if you make indirect proposal of marriage to widows during their waiting term or keep it concealed in your hearts: for Allah knows that you will naturally think of them. But be careful not to make any secret engagement. If you have to do anything, do it in an honourable way. And you should not settle anything finally about the marriage until the waiting term expires. Understand it well that Allah even knows what is hidden in your hearts; so fear Him. Also know that Allah is Lenient and Forgiving. 234-235

It is no sin if you divorce your wives while you have not yet touched them or fixed any dower for them. In such a case, pay them something anyhow.[260] A rich man should pay fairly according to his means and a poor man according to his resources, for this is an obligation on the righteous people. In case you fixed a dower for them and then divorced them before you touched them, you should pay half of the fixed dower. But there is no harm if the woman agrees to forego it or the man, in whose hands is the marriage tie, is generous enough (to pay the dower in full). And if you (men) act generously, it is akin to piety. Do not forget to show generosity in your dealings[261] with one another for Allah sees what you do. 236-237

Take great care of your Prayers,[262] especially of a Prayer that has excellent qualities of *Salāt*[263] and stand before Allah like devoted servants. Even if you are in danger, you must offer your Prayers anyhow — on foot or on horseback. And when you have peace again, remember Allah in the manner He has taught you, which you did not know before. 238-239

Those[264] of you, who shall die and leave wives behind them, should make a will to the effect that they should be provided with a year's maintenance and should not be turned out of their homes. But if they leave their homes of their own accord, you shall not be answerable for whatever they choose for themselves in a fair way; Allah is All-Powerful, All-Wise. Likewise, the divorced women should also be given something in accordance with the known fair standard. This is an obligation upon the God-fearing people. 240-241

اَنْفُسِهِنَّ مِنْ مَّعْرُوْفٍ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ عَزِيْزٌ حَكِيْمٌ ﴿٢٤٠﴾ وَلِلْمُطَلَّقٰتِ مَتَاعٌۢ بِالْمَعْرُوْفِ
حَقًّا عَلَى الْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿٢٤١﴾ كَذٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللّٰهُ لَكُمْ اٰيٰتِهٖ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٢٤٢﴾ اَلَمْ
تَرَ اِلَى الَّذِيْنَ خَرَجُوْا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ وَهُمْ اُلُوْفٌ حَذَرَ الْمَوْتِ فَقَالَ لَهُمُ
اللّٰهُ مُوْتُوْا ۣ ثُمَّ اَحْيَاهُمْ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَذُوْ فَضْلٍ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ
النَّاسِ لَا يَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿٢٤٣﴾ وَقَاتِلُوْا فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ وَاعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ سَمِيْعٌ
عَلِيْمٌ ﴿٢٤٤﴾ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِيْ يُقْرِضُ اللّٰهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا فَيُضٰعِفَهٗ لَهٗٓ اَضْعَافًا كَثِيْرَةً ۭ
وَاللّٰهُ يَقْبِضُ وَيَبْصُۜطُ ۠ وَاِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿٢٤٥﴾ اَلَمْ تَرَ اِلَى الْمَلَاِ مِنْۢ بَنِيْٓ
اِسْرَاۗءِيْلَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مُوْسٰى ۘ اِذْ قَالُوْا لِنَبِيٍّ لَّهُمُ ابْعَثْ لَنَا مَلِكًا نُّقَاتِلْ
فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ ۭ قَالَ هَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ اِنْ كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ اَلَّا تُقَاتِلُوْا ۭ
قَالُوْا وَمَا لَنَآ اَلَّا نُقَاتِلَ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ وَقَدْ اُخْرِجْنَا مِنْ دِيَارِنَا
وَاَبْنَاۗىِٕنَا ۭ فَلَمَّا كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقِتَالُ تَوَلَّوْا اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا مِّنْهُمْ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ عَلِيْمٌۢ
بِالظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٢٤٦﴾ وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ قَدْ بَعَثَ لَكُمْ طَالُوْتَ مَلِكًا ۭ
قَالُوْٓا اَنّٰى يَكُوْنُ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ عَلَيْنَا وَنَحْنُ اَحَقُّ بِالْمُلْكِ مِنْهُ وَلَمْ
يُؤْتَ سَعَةً مِّنَ الْمَالِ ۭ قَالَ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ اصْطَفٰىهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَزَادَهٗ
بَسْطَةً فِي الْعِلْمِ وَالْجِسْمِ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ يُؤْتِيْ مُلْكَهٗ مَنْ يَّشَاۗءُ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ وَاسِعٌ
عَلِيْمٌ ﴿٢٤٧﴾ وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ اِنَّ اٰيَةَ مُلْكِهٖٓ اَنْ يَّاْتِيَكُمُ التَّابُوْتُ فِيْهِ
سَكِيْنَةٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ وَبَقِيَّةٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ اٰلُ مُوْسٰى وَاٰلُ هٰرُوْنَ تَحْمِلُهُ
الْمَلٰۗىِٕكَةُ ۭ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً لَّكُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٢٤٨﴾ فَلَمَّا فَصَلَ
طَالُوْتُ بِالْجُنُوْدِ ۙ قَالَ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ مُبْتَلِيْكُمْ بِنَهَرٍ ۚ فَمَنْ شَرِبَ مِنْهُ فَلَيْسَ

Thus Allah makes clear His commandments for you: it is expected that you will use your common sense. 242

Have[265] you ever reflected upon the case of those who fled their homes for fear of death, and they were thousands in number? So Allah said to them, "Die"; then He again gave them life.[266] Indeed Allah is bountiful to mankind, but most of the people are ungrateful. — O Muslims, fight in the way of Allah and know that Allah hears everything and knows everything. Who is there among you who will lend to Allah a good loan[267] that He may return it after multiplying it manifold? Allah alone can decrease and increase (wealth) and to Him you shall all return. 243-245

Have you also reflected upon the matter concerning the chiefs of the Israelites after (the death of) Moses? They said to their Prophet, "Appoint a king for us so that we may fight in the way of Allah."[268] The Prophet asked them, "Might it be that you will not fight, if fighting is prescribed for you?" They replied, "How can it be that we would refuse to fight in the way of Allah when we have been turned out of our homes and separated from our children?" But (in spite of this assurance) when they were enjoined to fight, they all, except a few of them, turned their backs. And Allah knows each and everyone of these transgressors. 246

Their Prophet said to them, "Allah has appointed Saul[269] to be king over you." Hearing this, they replied, "How has he been entitled to become king over us? We have a better right to kingship than he, for he does not even possess enough riches." The Prophet replied, "Allah has preferred him to you and blessed him with abundant powers of mind and body. And Allah has the power to give His kingdom to whomever He wills: Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing." Their Prophet further informed them, "The sign of his appointment as king from Allah is that during his reign you will get back the Ark, wherein are the means of your peace of mind from your Lord, and which contains the sacred relics of the family of Moses and Aaron, and which is being borne at this time by the angels.[270] Herein is a great Sign for you, if you are true believers." 247-248

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259. This prescribed term for waiting also applies to those widows who might not have had any intercourse with their husbands. The pregnant widow is,

however, an exception. Her prescribed term is her delivery whether it takes place just after the death of the husband or several months after it.

"They must abstain" implies that they must not remarry during the term, nor adorn themselves in any manner during this period. Traditions give clear instructions that widows should not wear ornaments and coloured and showy dresses, nor adorn themselves with any kind of make-up during the term. There is, however, a difference of opinion as to whether a widow should pass the term in the house of the deceased husband or not. Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, 'Uthman Ibn 'Umar, Zaid bin Thabit, Ibn Mas'ud, Umm Salāmah, Sa'id bin al-Musayyib, Ibrahim Nakha'i, Muhammad bin Sirin, and the four Imams (may Allah show mercy to all of them) are of the opinion that she should reside in the house of the deceased husband. On the contrary, Ḥaḍrat 'A'ishah, Ibn 'Abbas, Ḥaḍrat 'Ali, Jabir bin 'Abdullah, 'Ata', Ta'us, Hasan Basri, 'Umar bin 'Abdul 'Aziz, and all the Zahiris are of the opinion that she is free to pass the period wherever she likes, and can also go on a journey.

260. After all some harm is done to the woman when the marital relation is broken even under such a condition. Therefore some compensation, according to one's means, must be paid.

261. That is mutual generosity in dealings is essential for the harmony and betterment of human relations. Social life can never be happy if each and every person insists on his own legal rights.

262. After enunciating rules and regulations for ensuring social welfare and for leading a civilized life, Allah has impressed the importance of the *Salāt* as a finishing touch because it alone can produce fear of Allah and feelings of virtue and piety and create the attitude of obedience to the Divine Law and keep one on the right path. None can remain firm in one's obedience to the Law of Allah without *Salāt*, for one is liable to swerve into one kind of disobedience or the other like the Jews.

263. Interpreters differ in regard to the meaning of "*Salāt-al-wusta*" but the majority of them are of the opinion that it refers to one of the five Prayers, and most of them have opined that it is the "Asr Prayer." There is, however, no definite saying of the Holy Prophet in support of any of these interpretations. Those who are in favour of the " 'Asr Prayer" infer their opinion from this Tradition: In the "Battle of the Clans," the Holy Prophet was so engaged in repelling the invasion of the enemies that he got no time to offer the " 'Asr Prayer" till sunset. Then he said, "May Allah fill their graves with fire for depriving us of our '*Salāt al-wusta*'." From this they infer that by "*Salāt al-wusta*" is meant the " 'Asr Prayer." But in my opinion what the Holy Prophet meant by

this was that they were responsible for the spiritual loss the Muslims had suffered by their inability to offer their " 'Asr Prayer" in time and with peace of mind. As the Prayer whose loss the Holy Prophet regretted happened to be the " 'Asr Prayer," the interpreters were led to conclude that the "'Asr Prayer" itself was the *Salāt al-wusta*.

The Arabic word "*wusta*" means both middle and excellent. Thus, *Salāt al-wusta* implies both the middle Prayer and also an excellent Prayer which is said in time and with full attention to Allah, that is, a Prayer which has all the excellent qualities of *Salāt*. The subsequent sentence, "Stand before Allah like obedient servants", itself supports the interpretation that it meant an excellent Prayer offered to Allah, having all the excellent qualities of *Salāt*, and not any one particular Prayer out of the five prescribed Prayers.

264. At the end of the discourse, this has been added as an appendix and supplement.

265. From here begins a new address. In it the Muslims have been exhorted to do *"Jihad," i.e.*, to exert their utmost in the Way of Allah and make monetary sacrifices for the cause. At the same time they have been warned to guard against those weaknesses that had led to the degeneration and downfall of the children of Israel. It will help understand this address, if we keep in mind the occasion of its revelation. At that time the Muslims, who had been expelled from Makkah a year or so earlier and were living as refugees at Madinah, were asking over and over again for permission to fight with the disbelievers who had been persecuting them relentlessly for years. But, when the permission they themselves had asked was given, some of them began to lose heart (Please refer to Al-Baqarah, II : 216). That is why two important events from the history of the Israelites are being related to serve as a fore-warning to the Muslims and to stimulate their zeal and courage.

266. This refers to the exodus of the children of Israel (for details please see Al-Ma'idah, V: 20-26), when they had left Egypt in large numbers and were wandering homeless in the deserts and wildernesses and were very anxious to find a home for themselves. But when inspired by Allah, the Prophet Moses ordered them to fight against the Canaanites and expel them from Palestine and conquer that territory, they showed cowardice and refused to march forward. Consequently Allah left them to wander in the land for forty years so that that generation should come to an end and a new one be brought up in the hardships of the desert. Then Allah gave them victory over the Canaanites. Probably "death and second life" refer to these two aspects of the exodus.

267. "Good loan" is that which is lent without any idea of personal gain or interest but is given with the sole intention to please Allah. Allah in His bounty credits the wealth thus spent in His Way as a loan on Himself. He promises that He will not only return the actual debt but increase it manifold, provided that it is a good loan in the real sense and is lent merely to please Him and for the sake of the objects He approves.

268. This incident has been mentioned here to fore-warn the Muslims about the hardship and trials of Jihad.

About 1000 B.C., the Amalikites tyrannized over the Israelites and usurped many parts of Palestine from them. At that time the Prophet Samuel, who was at the helm of the affairs of Israel, had grown very old. So the elders of Israel went to Samuel and said, "You are old. Now appoint a king for us to rule us and march in front of us and fight in the way of God." They asked for a king to rule them like all other nations. They made this demand because under the evil influence of the irreligious foreign rulers, they had forgotten the very distinction between "Divine Rule" and "kingship." That is why 'the thing displeased Samuel' and incurred the wrath of the Lord. Here are given some details from Chapters 7, 8, 12 of I Samuel.

"And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life ..... And it came to pass when Samuel was old, then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, and said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways; now make us a king to judge us like all the nations .... But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, "Give us a king to judge us". And Samuel prayed unto the Lord. And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them ..... And Samuel told all the words of the Lord unto the people that asked of him of a king. And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots. And he will appoint them captains over thousands and captains over fifties; and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots. And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers. And he will take your fields and your vineyards, and give them to his servants ..... And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vine-yard, and give to his officers and to his servants. And he will take your men-servants, and your maid-servants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants. And ye shall cry out in that day

because of your king which ye shall have chosen yourselves; and the Lord will not hear you in that day. Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us; That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us and fight our battles. And the Lord said to Samuel, Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king..... (7:15, 8:4-22).

"And Samuel said unto all Israel, Behold, I have hearkened unto your voice ..... and have made a king over you ..... And when ye saw that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon came against you, ye said unto me, Nay; but a king shall reign over us: when the Lord your God was your king. Now therefore behold the king whom ye have chosen, and whom ye have desired! and, behold, the Lord hath set a king over you. If ye will fear the Lord and serve Him, and obey His voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the Lord then shall both ye and also the king that reigneth over you continue following the Lord your God: but if ye will not obey the voice of the Lord, but rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then shall the hand of the Lord be against you, as it was against your fathers.....Moreover as for me God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way...But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king." (12:12-23)

From the above quotations, it is quite clear that God and His Prophet did not approve of their demand for a king. As to the question, "Why has not God condemned in the Qur'ān this demand of the elders of Israel for a king?", the answer is obvious. The story has been related here only for the benefit of the Muslims so that they may learn a lesson from this. Therefore there was no occasion for the condemnation or approval of the institution of kingship, and it would have been irrelevant to discuss whether this demand was right or wrong. Here the only object in view is to state the cause of the downfall of the Israelites, their cowardice, self-worship and lack of discipline so that these might serve as a fore-warning to the Muslims and they should avoid the nourishment of such weaknesses amongst themselves.

269. The Bible says, "Now there was a man of Benjamin, whose name was Kish .....And he had a son whose name was Saul, a choice young man and a goodly person: and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people. And the asses of Kish, Saul's father, were lost. And Kish said to Saul his son, Take now one of the servants with thee, and arise, go seek the asses ..... And when they were come into the city, behold, Samuel came out against them.....And when Samuel saw Saul, the Lord said unto him, behold the man whom I spake to thee

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مِنِّیْٓ وَمَنْ لَّمْ یَطْعَمْهُ فَاِنَّهٗ مِنِّیْٓ اِلَّا مَنِ اغْتَرَفَ غُرْفَةًۢ بِیَدِهٖ ۚ
فَشَرِبُوْا مِنْهُ اِلَّا قَلِیْلًا مِّنْهُمْ ؕ فَلَمَّا جَاوَزَهٗ هُوَ وَالَّذِیْنَ اٰمَنُوْا مَعَهٗ ۙ
قَالُوْا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا الْیَوْمَ بِجَالُوْتَ وَجُنُوْدِهٖ ؕ قَالَ الَّذِیْنَ یَظُنُّوْنَ اَنَّهُمْ
مُّلٰقُوا اللّٰهِ ۙ كَمْ مِّنْ فِئَةٍ قَلِیْلَةٍ غَلَبَتْ فِئَةً كَثِیْرَةًۢ بِاِذْنِ اللّٰهِ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ
مَعَ الصّٰبِرِیْنَ ﴿۲۴۹﴾ وَلَمَّا بَرَزُوْا لِجَالُوْتَ وَجُنُوْدِهٖ قَالُوْا رَبَّنَآ اَفْرِغْ عَلَیْنَا
صَبْرًا وَّثَبِّتْ اَقْدَامَنَا وَانْصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكٰفِرِیْنَ ﴿۲۵۰﴾ فَهَزَمُوْهُمْ بِاِذْنِ
اللّٰهِ ۙ وَقَتَلَ دَاوٗدُ جَالُوْتَ وَاٰتٰىهُ اللّٰهُ الْمُلْكَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَهٗ
مِمَّا یَشَآءُ ؕ وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللّٰهِ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ ۙ لَّفَسَدَتِ
الْاَرْضُ وَلٰكِنَّ اللّٰهَ ذُوْ فَضْلٍ عَلَى الْعٰلَمِیْنَ ﴿۲۵۱﴾ تِلْكَ اٰیٰتُ اللّٰهِ نَتْلُوْهَا
عَلَیْكَ بِالْحَقِّ ؕ وَاِنَّكَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِیْنَ ﴿۲۵۲﴾

تِلْكَ الرُّسُلُ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلٰى بَعْضٍ ۘ مِنْهُمْ مَّنْ كَلَّمَ اللّٰهُ وَرَفَعَ

بَعْضَهُمْ دَرَجٰتٍ ؕ وَاٰتَیْنَا عِیْسَى ابْنَ مَرْیَمَ الْبَیِّنٰتِ وَاَیَّدْنٰهُ بِرُوْحِ
الْقُدُسِ ؕ وَلَوْ شَآءَ اللّٰهُ مَا اقْتَتَلَ الَّذِیْنَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهِمْ مِّنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا
جَآءَتْهُمُ الْبَیِّنٰتُ وَلٰكِنِ اخْتَلَفُوْا فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ اٰمَنَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ كَفَرَ ؕ وَ
لَوْ شَآءَ اللّٰهُ مَا اقْتَتَلُوْا ۫ وَلٰكِنَّ اللّٰهَ یَفْعَلُ مَا یُرِیْدُ ﴿۲۵۳﴾ یٰۤاَیُّهَا الَّذِیْنَ
اٰمَنُوْۤا اَنْفِقُوْا مِمَّا رَزَقْنٰكُمْ مِّنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ یَّاْتِیَ یَوْمٌ لَّا بَیْعٌ فِیْهِ وَلَا خُلَّةٌ
وَّلَا شَفَاعَةٌ ؕ وَالْكٰفِرُوْنَ هُمُ الظّٰلِمُوْنَ ﴿۲۵۴﴾ اَللّٰهُ لَاۤ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۚ اَلْحَیُّ الْقَیُّوْمُ ۚ
لَا تَاْخُذُهٗ سِنَةٌ وَّلَا نَوْمٌ ؕ لَهٗ مَا فِی السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِی الْاَرْضِ ؕ مَنْ
ذَا الَّذِیْ یَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهٗۤ اِلَّا بِاِذْنِهٖ ؕ یَعْلَمُ مَا بَیْنَ اَیْدِیْهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ ۚ

And when Saul marched out with his army, he warned: "Allah 249-251
is going to put you to a test by the side of a river: whoso drinks of its water shall cease to be my companion: he alone shall be my companion who does not quench his thirst with its water: one may, however, take a sip or so out of his hand." But inspite of this warning, they all, except a few, drank their fill of it.[271] Afterwards when Saul, and those who had believed with him, crossed the river and advanced forward, the former said to Saul, "We have no power left this day to fight against Goliath and his hosts."[272] But those who believed that one Day they shall meet Allah, declared, "It has often been that a small host has, by Allah's grace, overcome a big host: for Allah is with those who show fortitude." Accordingly, when they marched forward to fight with Goliath and his hosts, they prayed, "Our Lord, bless us with fortitude, make firm our foothold and give us victory over the unbelieving host." Consequently, by Allah's grace, they routed the unbelievers, and David killed Goliath; and Allah gave him kingship and wisdom and taught him whatever other things He willed. ... And if Allah had not been repelling one set of people by means of another, the earth[273] would have been filled with chaos.[274] But Allah is bountiful to the world (and so repels chaos in this way).

These are Allah's revelations, which We are conveying to you 252-253
accurately. And O Muhammad, most surely you are of those who have been sent as Messengers. Of these Messengers (whom We sent for the guidance of mankind), We raised some above the others in rank. Among them was one with whom Allah Himself had direct talks. There were others whom He raised high in rank in other ways. Likewise We gave clear signs to Jesus, son of Mary, and supported him with the Holy Spirit. Had Allah so willed the people who had seen clear signs would not have fought against one another after the Prophets. But (it was not Allah's will to prevent people forcibly from differences: so) they disagreed; then some of them accepted the Truth and others rejected it. If Allah had so willed they would have never fought against one another, but Allah does whatever He pleases (to fulfil His designs.)[275]

O Believers, spend of the wealth We have bestowed upon you[276] 254
(in Our way) before the Day comes when there shall be no buying and no selling: when neither friendship nor intercession will be of any

avail. Those, who adopt the way of disbelief are indeed the wrongdoers.[277]

255 Allah: the Everlasting, the Sustainer of the whole Universe; there is no god but He.[278] He does neither slumber nor sleep.[279] Whatsoever is in the heavens and in the earth is His.[280] Who is there that can intercede with Him except by His own permission.?[281] He knows what is before the people and also what is hidden from them. And they cannot comprehend anything of His knowledge save whatever He Himself pleases to reveal.[282] His Kingdom[283] spreads over the heavens and the earth and the guarding of these does not weary Him. He alone is the Supreme and the Exalted.[284]

Contd. from p.177]

off this same shall reign over my people ..... And Samuel took Saul and his servant, and brought them into the parlour and made them sit in the chiefest place among them that were bidden which were about thirty persons ..... Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head.....and said, the Lord hath appointed thee to be captain over his inheritance ..... And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen ..... (I Samuel, chapters 9, 10).

Saul was appointed to be leader of Israel at the command of God like Aaron, David and Christ (God's peace be upon them all), but the Qur'ān or the Traditions do not say explicitly whether he was appointed as a Prophet as well. His appointment as king by God does not necessarily mean that he was also made a Prophet.

270. Though the Bible differs a little from the Qur'ān about the details of the Ark, yet we learn much from it.

The Israelites considered the Ark to be very sacred, that is the Ark of the Covenant. They believed that by means of it "God may come among us and rescue us from the power of enemies." That is why its return gave them (*shechinah*) peace of mind and courage.

The Ark contained the sacred relics of the house of Moses and Aaron. These were the fragments of the tablets given to Moses on the Mount Sinai. Besides, there was the original copy of the Torah which was written under the guidance of Moses and given to the Levites. It also contained a bottle of manna so that the future generations of Israel should be grateful to Allah for the blessing which He had bestowed upon their forefathers in the desert. Probably it also contained the staff of Moses, which was a great sign of Allah.

270a. Probably the Qur'ān refers to the incident mentioned in chapters 4, 5, 6, of I Samuel.

The Ark of the Lord was captured by the Philistines in a battle in which the Israelites were routed. The Israelites were so disheartened that they cried, "The glory is gone from Israel on account of the capture of the Ark of God." The Ark remained in the land of the Philistines for seven months but there was deadly panic in every town to which it was driven, for "God laid a heavy hand upon them there." So much so that they began to cry, "The Ark of the God of Israel must not remain amongst us any longer for His hand is severer on us." Then they decided to send it back to Israel. "They took two milch kine, and tied them to the cart. And the kine took the straight way to the way of Bethshemesh".

As the cart was driven without any driver, obviously it was being driven by the angels towards the children of Israel under the direction of God.

271. The river might have been the Jordan or some other stream or rivulet, which Saul had to cross with the army of Israel. As he knew there was very little discipline in his community, he applied this test to sift the competent from the incompetent, and the brave from the cowardly. It is obvious that those, who could not control their thirst for a little while, could not be trusted to keep discipline in the face of that enemy by whom they had previously been defeated.

As the same test was applied by Gideon before Saul, Palmer and Rodwell have come to the strange conclusion that Gideon and Saul are here (v. 249) confused. Of course, by this they wanted to show that the Qur'ān was not a revealed Book but was the invention of Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him). This objection is absurd on the face of it. If two similar events had happened and only one of these is mentioned in the Bible, it does not prove that the other did not happen just because it was not mentioned in it. Moreover, it has never been claimed that the Bible contains the complete history of the Israelites with its full details. The very fact that the Talmud contains many incidens which are not mentioned in the Bible is a proof thereof.

272. Probably these were the people who had shown lack of endurance by the riverside.

273. According to the Bible, David was a raw youth at that time. By chance he reached the army of Saul at the time when Goliath, the champion of the Philistines, was uttering his challenge: "I defy the force of Israel. Give me a man and let us have a fight." Hearing these words the Israelites were dismayed and daunted, but David said to Saul, "Let not my Lord's courage fail him: Your servant will go and fight the Philistines." Saul would not agree but David persisted

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وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهٖٓ اِلَّا بِمَا شَآءَ ۚ وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَالْاَرْضَ ۚ وَلَا يَـُٔوْدُهٗ حِفْظُهُمَا ۚ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيْمُ ﴿255﴾ لَآ اِكْرَاهَ فِى الدِّيْنِ ۙ
قَدْ تَّبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ ۚ فَمَنْ يَّكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوْتِ وَيُؤْمِنْۢ بِاللّٰهِ فَقَدِ
اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقٰى ۗ لَا انْفِصَامَ لَهَا ۗ وَاللّٰهُ سَمِيْعٌ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿256﴾ اَللّٰهُ وَلِىُّ
الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا ۙ يُخْرِجُهُمْ مِّنَ الظُّلُمٰتِ اِلَى النُّوْرِ ۭ وَالَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْٓا اَوْلِيٰٓـُٔهُمُ
الطَّاغُوْتُ ۙ يُخْرِجُوْنَهُمْ مِّنَ النُّوْرِ اِلَى الظُّلُمٰتِ ۭ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ اَصْحٰبُ النَّارِ ۚ هُمْ
فِيْهَا خٰلِدُوْنَ ﴿257﴾ اَلَمْ تَرَ اِلَى الَّذِيْ حَاۗجَّ اِبْرٰهٖمَ فِيْ رَبِّهٖٓ اَنْ اٰتٰىهُ اللّٰهُ
الْمُلْكَ ۘ اِذْ قَالَ اِبْرٰهٖمُ رَبِّيَ الَّذِيْ يُحْيٖ وَيُمِيْتُ ۙ قَالَ اَنَا اُحْيٖ وَاُمِيْتُ ۭ
قَالَ اِبْرٰهٖمُ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَاْتِيْ بِالشَّمْسِ مِنَ الْمَشْرِقِ فَاْتِ بِهَا مِنَ الْمَغْرِبِ
فَبُهِتَ الَّذِيْ كَفَرَ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿258﴾ اَوْ كَالَّذِيْ مَرَّ
عَلٰي قَرْيَةٍ وَّهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلٰي عُرُوْشِهَا ۚ قَالَ اَنّٰى يُحْيٖ هٰذِهِ اللّٰهُ بَعْدَ
مَوْتِهَا ۚ فَاَمَاتَهُ اللّٰهُ مِائَةَ عَامٍ ثُمَّ بَعَثَهٗ ۭ قَالَ كَمْ لَبِثْتَ ۭ قَالَ لَبِثْتُ
يَوْمًا اَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ ۭ قَالَ بَلْ لَّبِثْتَ مِائَةَ عَامٍ فَانْظُرْ اِلٰى طَعَامِكَ وَ
شَرَابِكَ لَمْ يَتَسَنَّهْ ۚ وَانْظُرْ اِلٰى حِمَارِكَ وَلِنَجْعَلَكَ اٰيَةً لِّلنَّاسِ وَانْظُرْ
اِلَى الْعِظَامِ كَيْفَ نُنْشِزُهَا ثُمَّ نَكْسُوْهَا لَحْمًا ۭ فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهٗ ۙ قَالَ اَعْلَمُ اَنَّ
اللّٰهَ عَلٰي كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿259﴾ وَاِذْ قَالَ اِبْرٰهٖمُ رَبِّ اَرِنِيْ كَيْفَ تُحْيِ الْمَوْتٰى ۭ
قَالَ اَوَلَمْ تُؤْمِنْ ۭ قَالَ بَلٰى وَلٰكِنْ لِّيَطْمَىِٕنَّ قَلْبِيْ ۭ قَالَ فَخُذْ اَرْبَعَةً مِّنَ
الطَّيْرِ فَصُرْهُنَّ اِلَيْكَ ثُمَّ اجْعَلْ عَلٰي كُلِّ جَبَلٍ مِّنْهُنَّ جُزْءًا ثُمَّ ادْعُهُنَّ
يَاْتِيْنَكَ سَعْيًا ۭ وَاعْلَمْ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ عَزِيْزٌ حَكِيْمٌ ﴿260﴾ مَثَلُ الَّذِيْنَ يُنْفِقُوْنَ

There is no compulsion and coercion in regard to religion.[285] 256-257
The right thing has been made distinct from the wrong thing: now whoever rejects *taghut*[286] and believes in Allah has taken a firm support that never gives way. And Allah (Whose support he takes) hears everything and knows everything. Allah is the Helper and Protector of those who believe in Him: He brings them out of the depths of darkness[287] into the light. As for the disbelievers, they have *taghut*[288] as their patron, who drives them out of light into the depths of darkness. These are the people who are doomed to the Fire, wherein they shall live for ever.

Have[289] you not considered the case of the person who had an 258
argument with Abraham[290] as to Whom Abraham acknowledged as his Lord?' The dispute arose because Allah had given him the kingship,[291] (which had made him arrogant). When Abraham said, "My Lord is He Who gives life and causes death," he answered, "I give life and cause death." Then Abraham said, "Well, Allah brings the sun from the east: just bring it from the west." At this the disbeliever was confounded:[292] (yet he did not believe), for Allah does not show guidance to unjust people.

Or take the case of the one who passed by a township that had 259
fallen down upon its roofs.[293] He exclaimed, "How shall Allah bring back to life this township that has become dead?"[294] At this Allah caused him to die and he lay dead for a hundred years. Then Allah brought him back to life and asked him, "How long have you lain here?" He answered, "I might have lain here for a day or a few hours." Allah said, "Nay, you have been lying here in this state for a hundred years: now, just have a look at your food and your drink; they have not become spoiled in the least. Then have a look at your ass, (and see that his very bones have become rotten) and We have done this in order to make you a Sign for the people.[295] Look, how We raise up the skeleton and set the bones (of the ass) and cover them with flesh and (put breath of life into them)." And when the Reality became manifest to him, he said, "I know that Allah has power over everything."

Call to mind the other event also, when Abraham said, "My 260
Lord, show me how Thou bringest the dead back to life?" He said, "Have you no faith in this?" Abraham humbly replied, "I do believe but I ask this to reassure my heart."[296] Allah said, "Well, take four

birds and tame them with yourself and then (cut them into pieces) and place a piece of each of them on each hill. Then call them and they will come running to you; know this for certain that Allah is All-Powerful, All-Wise."[297]

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and was allowed to fight him. When Goliath saw him, he despised him for his youth and said, "Come here and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field." Then David answered, "The Eternal will deliver you into my hands so that all the world may learn that Israel has a God, till all here present, learn that the Eternal does not save by sword and spear ..... the fight is in the Eternal's hands, and He will put you in our power.' Then David slew him and became very popular among the Israelites. Saul gave his own daughter to him in marriage and after him he became the king of Israel. (For further details please refer to I Samuel, Chapters 17, 18).

274. In order to keep peace and order on the Earth, Allah allows different groups, different nations and different parties to gain and retain power to a certain limit but when they transgress that limit, He replaces them by others and breaks their power. If Allah had allowed any one party or nation to continue in power for ever, Allah's Earth would have been filled with utter confusion and disorder.

275. Naturally a question arises: Why does not then Allah will it? Why does He allow differences that sometimes result in wranglings, even fights? Is He helpless to stop these? Of course, He is All-Powerful and could have stopped these and none would have dared to swerve even the least from the Guidance He sent through His Messengers. But it is not His will to force people to follow a particular, defined fixed way, because He has sent man on the Earth for a trial. If He had taken away freedom of action from man the trial would have become meaningless. He sent His Messengers to invite the people to the Right Way and convince them by arguments and signs. The Messengers were not sent to force people to believe and submit to Allah. Differences and fights took place because the people abused the limited freedom of will and freedom of action which was given to them by Allah and then invented ways of life different from that Way which was sent down by Allah. Thus it is quite obvious that differences did not arise because Allah failed (though He willed) to force the people to choose the Right Way. Of course, Allah is able to do anything He wills.

276. Believers have been exhorted to make monetary sacrifices for the achievement of the cause they believe in.

277. "Those who adopt the way of disbelief" may either refer to those who refuse to obey the commands of Allah and consider the hoarding of wealth to

be dearer than the winning of His approval, or to those who do not believe in the Day about which warning has been given, salvation in the Hereafter through somebody's friendship or intercession.

278. Though ignorant people might make several gods and set up objects of worship, the fact remains that the whole of creation belongs to the Eternal, Who has no partner whatsoever. He is the living Allah Who sustains the whole universe. He alone is the Master of His kingdom. None else is a partner in His attributes, characteristics, powers and rights. Hence a lie is invented whenever any false god is set up beside Allah on the earth or in the heavens and a war is waged against the Truth.

279. This refutes the conception of Allah which is based on the assumption that He has weaknesses and limitations like imperfect human beings. For instance the Bible says, "And on the seventh day God ended His work which he had made: and He rested on the seventh day from all the work which He had made" (Genesis 2 : 2), and "Then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine." (Psalms 78 : 65). Of course, Allah is absolutely free from such weaknesses.

280. He is the Master and Owner of the earth and the heavens and each and everything contained in them, and none else has any part or share in His Ownership, His Authority, His Kingdom, His Sovereignty and His Rule. Anyone or anything that can be conceived as god will surely be a part of the universe and every part of this universe is Allah's property and cannot, therefore, be His partner or rival.

281. This refutes the wrong notion of those who are under the delusion that saints, angels, etc., wield great influence with Allah, and they will intercede with Him and force Him to pardon them. They are being warned that no creature of His can stand before Him and intercede for others, not to speak of forcing Allah to pardon them. No prophet, no angel, and no saint will dare utter a word without the permission of the Sovereign of the universe.

282. According to the Qur'ān, it is an unpardonable sin to associate any partner or set up any rival to rank with Allah or to assume for oneself His rights or characteristics in any way whatsoever. This is called *shirk*. In the preceding verse, the Quran strikes at the very root of *shirk* by declaring that Allah's Sovereignty is unlimited and His Power is absolute. In this verse the same thing is presented from another point of view, by posing the question: How can anyone interfere in the management of the universe when none possesses that knowledge which is a pre-requisite for this? The knowledge of the angels and human beings is so imperfect that none of them can understand the system of the universe and, therefore, any

interference in its management would invariably result in chaos. Not to speak of the management of the universe, people cannot even know in what lies their own good. It is thus obvious that they should have full confidence in the Guidance of Allah Who is the real source of all knowledge and Who knows in what lies their own good.

283. The word "*kursī*" (chair) has been used here figuratively as a symbol of power and authority. Even in English the word chair is used for the seat of authority, and government.

284. This verse is known as *Āyat al-Kursī*. It gives such a perfect knowledge of Allah that has no parallel elsewhere. That is why a Tradition has declared it to be the best verse of the Qur'ān.

Here a question arises: In what connection has Allah and His attributes been mentioned in this place? In order to answer this question, we should survey the address which begins from verse 243. First of all the believers have been exhorted to exert their utmost in the Way of Allah and make sacrifice of life and property for its establishment. They have also been warned to ward off those weaknesses in which the Israelites were involved. Then it has been impressed upon them that success does not depend merely upon numbers, provisions and armaments, but upon faith, fortitude, discipline and firm determination. Then the wisdom of war as a weapon with which Allah repels one group by another has been stated; that is, if only one group or one party had been allowed to continue in power, it would have made life difficult for its rivals and opponents. Then it has been shown that Allah is not powerless to remove differences from among the people but it is not His Will to remove these forcibly. Therefore He sends His Messengers with the Truth for this purpose, but leaves the people free to accept or reject it. Again as in the beginning of this discourse, the Muslims have been enjoined to spend their wealth in the Way of Allah. Then in this verse it has been declared that inspite of the differences in the creeds and the religions of the people, the fact is that Allah sustains and controls the whole universe. Of course, it is not His Will to force the people to believe in Him, but He only warns them through His Messengers that those, who will believe in Him and sacrifice their lives and properties in His Way in order to please Him, will be gainers and those, who will disbelieve, shall be losers.

285. The word "*dīn*" implies the concept about Allah as stated in the *Āyat al-kursī* above as well as the entire way of life built on it. The verse means that the creed of Islam and its way of life cannot be thrust upon anyone forcibly. As a matter of fact, this cannot be forced upon anyone.

286. The word *taghut* literally applies to everyone who transgresses the limits. The Qur'an uses this word for one who rebels against Allah and claims himself to be the master and sovereign of His servants and forces them to become his servants.

Man's rebellion against Allah has three degrees of criminality: (1) One is *fasiq* (disobedient) if one professes to be His subject but practically acts against His commandments; (2) One is *kafir* (disbeliever) if one becomes independent of Him or owes allegiance to someone else; (3) One is *taghut* if one rebels against Allah and exerts to make His subjects subservient to himself. Such a one may be Satan or a priest or a religious or a political leader or a king or a state. Therefore no one can be a true believer of Allah unless he disowns *taghut*.

287. "Darkness" stands for the darkness of ignorance that causes one to go astray from the Right Way, and to spend all one's efforts and energies in wrong way. In contrast to this, "light" stands for the light of the Truth which enables one to see clearly the Reality and perceive the real aim of life and follow consciously and deliberately the Right Way.

288. Though *taghut* is singular in form, here it is plural in meaning, for the one who rejects Allah becomes a slave not of one but of several forms of *taghut*. One of these is Satan who goes on tempting him with many false and alluring temptations. Another is his own self that makes him a slave of passions and lusts and misleads him into crooked ways. Then there are others, his wife and children, his kith and kin, his clan and family, his friends and nation, his political and religious leaders and his government. All these are *taghut* for him and desire to make him a slave of their wishes and ambitions. And this slave of all these masters wastes his whole life in trying to accomplish the impossible feat of pleasing each and every one of them.

289. In the foregoing verse it was declared that Allah is the Helper and Protector of a believer and brings him out of darkness, and *taghut* is the helper of the unbelievers and misleads them into darkness. Now three events are cited as a proof thereof. The first is the instance of a person to whom the Truth was presented with so clear arguments that he could not find any answer against them. But in spite of this, he did not accept it because he was misled by *taghut* and so he went on wandering in the darkness. The other two instances are of those who had full confidence in Allah, so Allah not only took them out of darkness into light but also made them eye-witnesses of the unseen Reality to enable them to give testimony concerning it.

290. The person referred to is Nimrod who was the king of 'Iraq, the land of the birth of Abraham. The Bible does not mention this dispute but the Talmud

relates it in detail and its version is substantially the same as that of the Qur'ān. It says that Abraham's father was the chief officer of king Nimrod and a great favourite with his royal master. His son Abraham was a lover of the Lord from his earliest childhood. When he grew up he began to preach openly the "Oneness" of God and condemn the association of any partner or rival with Him. In order to demonstrate this, he broke the idols and his father hastened before king Nimrod and denounced Abraham, saying, "He has acted so and so; let him be brought before thee for judgement." Abraham was summoned before the king and the dispute mentioned here took place between them.

291. The point at issue in the dispute was as to whom Abraham acknowledged as his Lord — Allah or Nimrod. The dispute arose because of the arrogance of Nimrod whom Allah had given kingdom. In order to understand the true nature of the dispute the following should be kept in view :

(1) It has always been a common characteristic of all the *mushrik* societies to accept Allah as the God of gods and the Lord of lords but, at the same time, to associate other gods and lords with Him, so as not to acknowledge Him exclusively as the Lord and God and worship Him as the Deity.

(2) They have always divided Godhead into two parts — the supernatural Godhead and the sovereign Godhead. They assign to God the supernatural Godhead which controls every kind of cause that produces an effect: so they turn to Him for help in their needs and difficulties but in their ignorance they set up spirits, angels, jinns, stars and many others as partners with the Supreme God, and pray to them, worship them and present offerings to them at temples dedicated to them. As to the sovereign Godhead, which really belongs to God and entitles Him alone to prescribe the way of life and to demand obedience to His commandments and to have absolute authority over all the affairs of the world, the *mushrikin* have in every age either totally usurped this rank of Godhead from God and handed it over to royal families, priests, guides, elders of society, etc., or divided it between these gods and God. That is why the royal families have often claimed the rank of Godhead in the second sense, and in order to strengthen their claim, have declared themselves to be descendants of gods in the first sense, and the priests have always strengthened and supported them, in their evil designs of becoming gods.

(3) Nimrod claimed to be a god possessing the rank of sovereign godhead. He did not deny the existence of God nor did he claim to be the creator of the heavens and the earth nor the sustainer and ruler of the universe. He only claimed to be the absolute lord and sovereign of 'Iraq and its inhabitants. His claim was that whatever he said was law and there was none over him to

whom he might be held accountable: therefore any inhabitant of 'Iraq who did not acknowledge him exclusively as his lord was a rebel.

(4) The dispute referred to arose when Abraham declared, "I acknowledge the Lord of the universe exclusively as my Lord and God of worship and I disown categorically the lordship and godhead of everyone else." Obviously, the declaration of this creed not only struck at the root of the national religion and religious gods but at the national state and its central power, king Nimrod, who claimed to be the absolute lord of 'Iraq. That is why it was not tolerated and the Prophet Abraham was brought before Nimrod for trial as a rebel.

292. Although Abraham had made it quite clear in his very first sentence that there can be no other lord than Allah, yet Nimrod impudently tried to refute his argument. But after the second argument, Nimrod was so non-plussed that he could not find any further argument to continue the dispute, as he himself knew and acknowledged that the sun and the moon were under the command of that God Whom Abraham acknowledged as Lord. He, however, would not accept this Truth which had become quite clear even to him because to accept it meant the giving up of his claim to despotism. As the rebel within him was not ready for this, he would not come out from the darkness of self - worship into the light of the Truth, even though he was dumbfounded. If he had made Allah his patron instead of his own "self," he would have found the right guidance from Abraham's preaching.

The Talmud says that after this dispute the king sent him to prison, where he remained for ten days. Then the king and his council sentenced him to be burnt alive and cast him into the flaming furnace. This incident has been mentioned in the Qur'ān in Sūrah Al-Anbiya (XXI:51-74).

293. It is useless to form conjectures as to 'who the person and which the township was, for it is not only irrelevant but also impossible to know this. There is no mention of these things in the Qur'ān or the authentic Traditions either, and we have no other reliable source. The purpose for which the incident has been related here is that "Allah brings into light those who make Him their patron." It is, however, clear from his subsequent words that he must have been a Prophet.

294. This question did not mean that he disbelieved in Resurrection or he had any doubt about it. It simply meant that he, like other Prophets, wanted to see the Reality with his own eyes.

295. The resurrection of a person who had been dead for a hundred years was itself a living Sign for the people of his age.

296. That is, "I want that peace of mind which is gained by actual experience."

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أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنْبَتَتْ سَبْعَ سَنَابِلَ فِي كُلِّ سُنْبُلَةٍ
مِائَةُ حَبَّةٍ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يُضَاعِفُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ ۚ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٦١﴾ الَّذِينَ
يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ لَا يُتْبِعُونَ مَا أَنْفَقُوا مَنًّا وَلَا أَذًى
لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ۚ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٢٦٢﴾ قَوْلٌ
مَعْرُوفٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ يَتْبَعُهَا أَذًى ۗ وَاللَّهُ غَنِيٌّ حَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٦٣﴾
يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تُبْطِلُوا صَدَقَاتِكُمْ بِالْمَنِّ وَالْأَذَىٰ كَالَّذِي يُنْفِقُ
مَالَهُ رِئَاءَ النَّاسِ وَلَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ۖ فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ صَفْوَانٍ
عَلَيْهِ تُرَابٌ فَأَصَابَهُ وَابِلٌ فَتَرَكَهُ صَلْدًا ۖ لَا يَقْدِرُونَ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ مِمَّا
كَسَبُوا ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٢٦٤﴾ وَمَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ
أَمْوَالَهُمُ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ وَتَثْبِيتًا مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ كَمَثَلِ جَنَّةٍ بِرَبْوَةٍ
أَصَابَهَا وَابِلٌ فَآتَتْ أُكُلَهَا ضِعْفَيْنِ ۖ فَإِنْ لَمْ يُصِبْهَا وَابِلٌ فَطَلٌّ ۗ وَاللَّهُ
بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٢٦٥﴾ أَيَوَدُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ تَكُونَ لَهُ جَنَّةٌ مِنْ نَخِيلٍ وَ
أَعْنَابٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ لَهُ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ ۙ وَأَصَابَهُ
الْكِبَرُ وَلَهُ ذُرِّيَّةٌ ضُعَفَاءُ ۖ فَأَصَابَهَا إِعْصَارٌ فِيهِ نَارٌ فَاحْتَرَقَتْ ۗ كَذَٰلِكَ
يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمُ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٦٦﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْفِقُوا مِنْ
طَيِّبَاتِ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَمِمَّا أَخْرَجْنَا لَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ ۖ وَلَا تَيَمَّمُوا الْخَبِيثَ
مِنْهُ تُنْفِقُونَ وَلَسْتُمْ بِآخِذِيهِ إِلَّا أَنْ تُغْمِضُوا فِيهِ ۚ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ
غَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ ﴿٢٦٧﴾ الشَّيْطَانُ يَعِدُكُمُ الْفَقْرَ وَيَأْمُرُكُمْ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ ۖ
وَاللَّهُ يَعِدُكُمْ مَغْفِرَةً مِنْهُ وَفَضْلًا ۗ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٦٨﴾

The charity[298] of those who expend their wealth in the way of Allah[299] may be likened to a grain of corn, which produces seven ears and each ear yields a hundred grains. Likewise Allah develops manifold the charity of anyone He pleases, for He is All-Embracing, All-Wise.[300] Those people who expend their wealth in the way of Allah, and then do not follow up their charity with reminders of their generosity nor injure the feelings of the recipient, shall get their reward from their Lord; they will have no fear and no sorrow of any kind.[301] A kind word and forbearance is better than that charity which is followed up by insult or injury. Allah is Self-Sufficient and Forbearing.[302] O Believers, do not spoil your charity by taunts and injury to the recipients like the one who practises charity to be seen by men, while he neither believes in Allah nor in the Last Day.[303] His charity may be likened to the rainfall on a rock which had only a thin layer of soil upon it. When heavy rain fell on it, the whole of the soil washed away and the rock was left bare.[304] Such people do not gain the reward they imagine they have earned by their seeming charity: Allah does not show the Right Way to the ungrateful.[305] 261-264

In contrast to them, the charity of those, who expend their wealth sincerely with the sole desire of pleasing Allah, may be likened to a garden on a plateau. If heavy rain falls, it yields its produce two-fold: and even if there is no heavy rain but only a light shower, that too, is sufficient[306] for it: whatever you do is in the sight of Allah. 265

Would anyone of you wish that he should have a green garden of palm trees and vines, watered by canals and laden with all sorts of fruit and then it should be consumed by a fiery whirlwind at the very time when he himself has grown very old and his small children are too feeble to earn anything?[307] Thus Allah makes His revelations clear and plain to you that you may ponder over them. 266

O Believers, expend in Allah's Way the best portion of the wealth you have earned and of that We have produced for you from the earth, and do not pick out for charity those worthless things which you yourselves would only accept in disdain by connivance, if they were offered to you. Understand it well that Allah does not stand in need of anything whatsoever and has all the praise-worthy attributes.[308] Satan holds out to you the threat of poverty and prompts you to adopt a shameless niggardly conduct, but Allah holds out from Himself the 267-268

promise of pardon and bounty: Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing.

Contd. from p.189]

297. Some people have offered strange interpretations for the two above-mentioned extraordinary events. But there is no need to make far-fetched interpretations, for Allah is able to do everything He wills, as the person referred to in the first event declared. Moreover, Allah's dealings with His Prophets are of an extraordinary nature; for an ordinary believer does not need to see actually the Reality with his own eyes for the performance of his duties but it is essential for the mission of a Prophet that he should see with his own eyes those realities towards which he has to invite the people. The Prophets have to tell the people with full and firm conviction: "We have seen with our own eyes those realities about which your knowledge is based on mere guess-work. You are ignorant; but We possess knowledge; you are blind, but We possess sight." That is why the angels came to them in person so that they should see them with their own eyes. They were also shown the actual working of the system of the heavens and the earth, and Paradise and Hell and Resurrection after death. Though the Prophets believed in all these things even before their appointment as Messengers, they were made witnesses of the realities after their appointment as a special favour and distinction of prophethood. (For further reference, please see E.N.'s 17, 18, 19, 34 of Sūrah Hud, XI).

298. In the address which began with verse 243, the believers were exhorted to make sacrifices of life and property for the success of the great and noble cause they believed in. After strengthening their faith in Allah, for whose cause they were required to make sacrifices, the same theme has been resumed from this verse, and instructions have been given for the development of that attitude which is essential for making such sacrifices. It is obvious that people cannot make monetary sacrifices for a moral cause unless their economic point of view is totally changed. The materialists, who live and die in order to amass wealth and weigh everything in the scales of profit and loss, can never be expected to spend anything for higher ends. Even when they seem to be spending for some noble cause, they do so after calculating how far it would benefit their tribe, their own person or their nation. Obviously with such a mental attitude, one cannot move even a step forward in the Way of Allah. In order to uplift the Word of Allah, one has to spend one's life, energy and wealth, irrespective of any worldly gain or loss. This way requires a broad view, great courage, a big heart and, above all, a sincere desire to win Allah's approval. Moreover, it requires radical changes in the social system in order to eradicate the materialistic morality and create spiritual values instead. That is why from here on up to verse 281, instructions have been given for the creation of that kind of moral attitude.

299. All that wealth which is spent in accordance with the Divine Law and only for the achievement of Allah's approval is spent in the Way of Allah, even though it might have been spent for one's own needs or those of one's relatives or for the indigent or for public works or for the propagation of Islām or for *Jihad*.

300. As Allah has limitless resources and knows everything, one must rest assured that the more sincere one is and the deeper feelings of devotion one has in spending one's wealth in the Way of Allah, the greater will be the reward one will get from Him. One must have a firm conviction that Allah, Who produces seven hundred grains from one grain, has most surely the power of developing the charity seven hundredfold.

After stating this fact, two attributes of Allah have been specially mentioned in this connection to show that the resources of Allah are boundless and He is able to reward deeds to the extent they deserve, and to show that He knows everything and is not unaware of what is spent and with what intention. Therefore there is absolutely no risk of losing one's due reward.

301. There is neither any fear of losing their due reward nor shall there ever come a time when they will regret what they have spent.

302. This implies two things. First, Allah does not stand in need of anybody's charity, for He is Self-Sufficient. Secondly, He likes those people who are generous and large-hearted, but does not like frivolous and narrow-minded people, for He Himself is Generous, Clement and Forbearing. How, then Allah, Who bestows on the people the necessities of life without stint, and forgives and pardons them over and over again in spite of their errors, would like those who mar the self-respect of a person by sending repeated reminders of their charity and making pointed references to it even though they might have given only a farthing.

A Tradition of the Holy Prophet says that on the Day of Resurrection, Allah will neither speak a word nor even so much as look at a person who makes pointed references to the gift he gave to some one.

303. His hypocrisy itself clearly shows that he does not believe in Allah and the Hereafter. The very fact that he practises charity so as to be seen by men, shows that they are his gods (and not Allah), from whom he expects to get his reward. A hypocrite does neither expect any reward from God nor he believes that one Day all deeds will be judged and rewarded.

304. In this parable the rain is the charity. The hard barren rock on which the rain falls is the evil intention with which that charity is practised.

The thin layer of the earth is the seeming virtue which hides the evil

[Contd. on p. 196

يُؤْتِي الْحِكْمَةَ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ۚ وَمَنْ يُّؤْتَ الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ اُوْتِيَ خَيْرًا
كَثِيْرًا ۗ وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ اِلَّآ اُولُوا الْاَلْبَابِ ﴿269﴾ وَمَآ اَنْفَقْتُمْ مِّنْ نَّفَقَةٍ اَوْ نَذَرْتُمْ
مِّنْ نَّذْرٍ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَعْلَمُهٗ ۗ وَمَا لِلظّٰلِمِيْنَ مِنْ اَنْصَارٍ ﴿270﴾ اِنْ تُبْدُوا
الصَّدَقٰتِ فَنِعِمَّا هِيَ ۚ وَاِنْ تُخْفُوْهَا وَتُؤْتُوْهَا الْفُقَرَآءَ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ ۗ وَ
يُكَفِّرُ عَنْكُمْ مِّنْ سَيِّاٰتِكُمْ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ خَبِيْرٌ ﴿271﴾ لَيْسَ عَلَيْكَ هُدٰىهُمْ
وَلٰكِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَهْدِيْ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ۗ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوْا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلِاَنْفُسِكُمْ ۗ وَمَا
تُنْفِقُوْنَ اِلَّا ابْتِغَآءَ وَجْهِ اللّٰهِ ۗ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوْا مِنْ خَيْرٍ يُّوَفَّ اِلَيْكُمْ وَاَنْتُمْ
لَا تُظْلَمُوْنَ ﴿272﴾ لِلْفُقَرَآءِ الَّذِيْنَ اُحْصِرُوْا فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ لَا يَسْتَطِيْعُوْنَ ضَرْبًا
فِي الْاَرْضِ ۫ يَحْسَبُهُمُ الْجَاهِلُ اَغْنِيَآءَ مِنَ التَّعَفُّفِ ۚ تَعْرِفُهُمْ بِسِيْمٰهُمْ ۚ لَا
يَسْـَٔلُوْنَ النَّاسَ اِلْحَافًا ۗ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوْا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ بِهٖ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿273﴾
اَلَّذِيْنَ يُنْفِقُوْنَ اَمْوَالَهُمْ بِالَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ سِرًّا وَّعَلَانِيَةً فَلَهُمْ اَجْرُهُمْ
عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ۚ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُوْنَ ﴿274﴾ اَلَّذِيْنَ يَاْكُلُوْنَ الرِّبٰوا
لَا يَقُوْمُوْنَ اِلَّا كَمَا يَقُوْمُ الَّذِيْ يَتَخَبَّطُهُ الشَّيْطٰنُ مِنَ الْمَسِّ ۗ ذٰلِكَ
بِاَنَّهُمْ قَالُوْٓا اِنَّمَا الْبَيْعُ مِثْلُ الرِّبٰوا ۘ وَاَحَلَّ اللّٰهُ الْبَيْعَ وَحَرَّمَ الرِّبٰوا ۗ
فَمَنْ جَآءَهٗ مَوْعِظَةٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّهٖ فَانْتَهٰى فَلَهٗ مَا سَلَفَ ۗ وَاَمْرُهٗٓ اِلَى اللّٰهِ ۗ وَ
مَنْ عَادَ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ اَصْحٰبُ النَّارِ ۚ هُمْ فِيْهَا خٰلِدُوْنَ ﴿275﴾ يَمْحَقُ اللّٰهُ الرِّبٰوا وَ
يُرْبِي الصَّدَقٰتِ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ كَفَّارٍ اَثِيْمٍ ﴿276﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا
الصّٰلِحٰتِ وَاَقَامُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَاٰتَوُا الزَّكٰوةَ لَهُمْ اَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ۚ وَلَا
خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُوْنَ ﴿277﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَذَرُوْا

الربع ٥ ٢٤ ٢٥

وقف منزل وقف لازم

He bestows wisdom upon anyone He wills, and he who is given wisdom is in fact given great wealth,[309] but only those who have common sense learn lessons from these things. 269

Surely Allah knows whatever you may have spent and whatever vow you may have made, and the wrong-doers (who spend in the way of Satan) shall have no helpers.[310] If you practise charity publicly, it is good; but if you give charity secretly to the needy, it is much better for you,[311] for this will expiate many of your sins.[312] Anyhow, Allah is well aware of whatever you do. 270-271

O Prophet, you are not responsible for their guidance; Allah Himself shows guidance to anyone He pleases. And whatever wealth you spend in charity, it is for your own good. As you spend of your wealth to win Allah's pleasure, you will be given full reward for whatever you spend and you will not be deprived in the least of your rightful due.[313] 272

Those who are engaged so much in the cause of Allah that they cannot move about in the land to earn their livelihood and are, therefore, in straitened circumstances, specially deserve help. An ignorant person would suppose them to be well off because of their self-respect; you can know their real condition from their faces, for they are not the ones who would beg of people with importunity. And Allah will surely know whatever you will spend on them.[314] 273

Those who spend their wealth secretly and openly by day and night, will have their reward with their Lord, and they have nothing to fear nor grieve. But those who devour interest[315] become like the one whom Satan has bewitched and maddened by his touch.[316] They have been condemned to this condition because they say, "Trade is just like interest",[317] whereas Allah has made trade lawful and interest unlawful.[318] Henceforth, if one abstains from taking interest after receiving this admonition from his Lord, no legal action will be taken against him regarding the interest he had devoured before; his case shall ultimately go to Allah.[319] But if one repeats the same crime after this, he shall go to Hell, where he shall abide for ever. Allah deprives interest of all blessing and develops charity;[320] and Allah does not like an ungrateful, sinful person.[321] As to those who believe and do good deeds, establish the *Salāt* and pay the *Zakat*, they will most surely have 274-277

their reward with their Lord and they will have nothing to fear nor to grieve.[322]

Contd. from p. 193]

intention. Though rainfall makes the crop grow, it does actual harm, if it falls on a rock which has only a thin layer of soil on it, by washing away even that thin soil and leaving the rock bare. In the same way, though charity has the power of developing virtue, it fails to do so, if it is not practised with good intentions. Without these things the wealth spent in charity is nothing more than so much wealth wasted like the rainfall on the rock with a thin layer of soil.

305. The word "*kafir*" here stands for the ungrateful person. Anyone who does not spend the wealth given to him by Allah in His Way and for His Pleasure but spends it to gain approbation from people, is an ungrateful wretch because he forgets the favour of Allah. It is equally true of him who spends something in the Way of Allah but at the same time does harm to the recipient. When such a person himself does not want His approval, it is not Allah's Will to show him the way of His approval.

306. "Heavy rainfall" is that charity which is practised with the best intentions and the deepest feelings of devotion, and the light shower of that charity which, though sincere, has not so much depth and intensity of feelings behind it as in the former case.

307. That is, "It is quite obvious that you do not like the earnings of your whole life to be consumed at that critical period of your old age when you need them very badly and when there is no more chance for you to earn anything afresh. Exactly the same shall be your condition when you enter into the Life-after-death without any provision for it. You shall then realize all of a sudden, like the old man of the parable, that the earnings of your whole life were left behind in the world and were as useless for you in the other world as the consumed garden to the old man. Besides this, you shall find yourself as helpless as the old man of the parable because in the Life-after-death there would be no more chance for you to earn anything for the Next World. If you do not practise charity etc., in this world in the way it has been enjoined, but spend your whole life and its energies for the interest of this world only, you will meet, at your death, with the same critical and helpless situation as the old man of the parable met. He lost his only garden, the earnings of his whole life and the support of his old age at that period of his life when he himself was unable to plant a new garden, and his children were unable to do anything because of their tender age."

308. It implies that Allah Who does not stand in need of anything or anyone enjoins the people to spend the best things in His Way not for Himself but

for their own good. As He Himself has all the praiseworthy attributes and all the excellent qualities, He does not approve of anyone who has a low character. He Himself is so generous that He is always showering His blessings on His creatures; therefore He does not love the narrow-minded, mean people who pick out worthless things for charity.

309. "*Hiknuat*" which has been translated "wisdom," stands for the knowledge with the power of discerning what is true and right. Hence anyone who has wisdom will not adopt the narrow ways of Satan but will follow the broad Way of Allah. According to the narrow-minded disciples of Satan, it is wisdom and cleverness to be parsimonious with their wealth and to be always on the look-out for acquiring more and more of it. On the contrary, those, who have been given true wisdom, consider this course to be very foolish. According to them wisdom is to spend one's wealth generously in good works after fulfilling one's own necessities of a moderate standard. It is just possible that the former may enjoy a more prosperous life here in this world but this is not the whole life. It is only a very small portion of the real life which continues after death. He, therefore, must be a big fool who gets enjoyment in this short life at the expense of happiness in the eternal life. The wise one is he who makes the best use of this short life and makes provision for the prosperity of the eternal life, even if he has been given small wealth here.

310. Allah is fully aware of the intentions and actions of everyone and knows whether one spends in the way of Allah or in the way of Satan and whether one makes a vow to Allah or to someone else. Therefore those, who spend for His cause and make vows to Him, will most surely get their rewards from Him. And those evildoers, who spend for the cause of Satan and make vows to others, shall have no helper to protect them from His punishment.

310. Allah is fully aware of the intentions and actions of everyone and knows whether one spends in the way of Allah or in the way of Satan and whether one makes a vow to Allah or to someone else. Therefore those, who spend for His cause and make vows to Him, will most surely get their rewards from Him. And those evildoers, who spend for the cause of Satan and make vows to others, shall have no helper to protect them from His punishment.

Nadhar (a vow) is a solemn promise made by a person to perform some act, or make some offering or gift etc., not binding on him, in case some wish of his should be fulfilled. If that wish is lawful and is asked of Allah and the vow is made to Allah alone, such a vow must be fulfilled as a religious duty, for it is in obedience to Allah. But if the wish is unlawful or the vow is made to someone other than Allah, then the making of the vow is sinful and its fulfilment would merit condemnation.

311. It is better to practise the obligatory charity (*Zakat*) openly and every other kind of charity secretly. The same principle applies to all other religious practices. It is better to perform the obligatory duties openly and the voluntary ones secretly.

312. It helps reform the character of a man if he performs good deeds secretly. It develops virtues in him and eradicates vices. As a result, one becomes such a favourite of Allah, that Allah in view of one's virtue and sincerity, forgives any minor sins of commission or omission He wills.

313. In this verse a misunderstanding of the Muslims has been removed. At first they hesitated to give monetary help to their non-Muslim relatives and other non-Muslims. They thought that monetary help to Muslims alone was in the Way of Allah. Here they have been told that they have not been made responsible for thrusting Guidance upon the unbelievers: their responsibility ends when they have conveyed the Truth to them. It lies with Allah to bestow (or not to bestow) the light of perception. The Muslims, therefore, should not hesitate to fulfil the needs of the non-Muslims just because they have not accepted the Guidance. If they fulfil the need of anyone to please Allah, He will give them their reward.

314. This refers to the people who devote themselves wholly to the service of Islam and are, therefore, unable to earn their livelihood. There was a regular band of such volunteers of Islām known as *Ashāb as-suffah*. They numbered about 400 and were always at the beck and call of the Holy Prophet, who had imparted to them the knowledge of Islām and trained them for its service. They imparted their acquired knowledge to others and went on different missions and expeditions under the instruction of the Holy Prophet. Obviously, such people specially deserve help because they are whole-time workers of Islām and have no spare time to earn their livelihood.

315. The Arabic word *riba'* literally means "increase in" or "addition to" anything. Technically it was applied to that additional sum which the creditor charged from the debtor at a fixed rate on the principal he lent, that is, interest. At the time of the revelation of the Qur'ān, interest was charged in several ways. For instance, a person sold something and fixed a time-limit for the payment of its price, and if the buyer failed to pay it within the fixed period, he was allowed more time but had to pay an additional sum. Or a person lent a sum of money and asked the debtor to pay it back together with an agreed additional sum of money within a fixed period. Or a rate of interest was fixed for a specific period and if the principal along with the interest was not paid within that period, the rate of interest was enhanced for the extended period, and so on.

316. The Qur'ân likens the money-lender to a madman. Just as a madman loses his sense on account of his disordered intellect, so the money-lender is so mad for money-making that he divorces himself from common sense. He is so senselessly foolish and impudent that he does not mind how his selfishness and greed are cutting at the very root of human love, brotherhood and fellow-feeling, and destroying the common good of mankind. He does not care at all that he is gaining prosperity at the expense of many. That is how he behaves like a madman in this world. In the next world he will rise like a madman at the time of Resurrection, for, in the Hereafter a person will rise in the same condition in which he dies here.

317. They based their vice on a wrong theory and did not see the fundamental difference between profit and interest. They argued like this: When profit on capital is lawful in trade, why should the interest on money invested in loans be unlawful? And the Arab money-lenders were not alone in arguing like this; the bankers and money-lenders of today also put forward similar arguments for charging interest. They argue that a person, who lends a sum of money to another, could himself make profit from it and that the debtor actually does invest it in a profitable business. Why should not the creditor then get a portion of that profit from the debtor for his productive credit? However, what they forget is that *there is no business in the whole world where there is a fixed and guaranteed profit without any risk.* In trade, commerce, industry, agriculture etc., one has to spend both labour and capital and at the same time one has to face risks, without any guarantee of a fixed profit. Let us for the present leave aside the case of the debtor who borrows money for consumption and not for production, and also the issue of the rate of interest. Let us compare the case of the money-lender who lends money at a moderate rate of interest for profitable business with the case of those engaged in other kinds of business. They devote their whole time, labour, talent and invest their own capital, etc., and work day and night so that their business may become profitable by virtue of their own efforts. But even then they are not guaranteed any fixed profit, and have to bear all the risks. On the contrary, the money-lender, who lends only his capital, goes on receiving a fixed amount of profit without any risk whatsoever. By what reasoning and on what principles of logic, justice and economics is it right for him to receive a fixed amount of profit? How can one be justified in lending on a fixed rate of interest to a factory a sum of money today for twenty years, when none can say what rise or fall in price may take place during these twenty years? And how is the subscriber to a war loan justified in charging interest at a fixed rate for a full century, and that too, from his own nation, whereas the whole nation has to face risks, bear losses and make sacrifices?

318. The fundamental difference between profit and interest that produces different moral and economic results is this :

(1) The settlement of profit in trade between the buyer and the seller is made on equal terms. The buyer purchases the article he needs and the seller gets profit for the time, labour and brains he employs in providing that article to the buyer. In contrast, in the case of interest, the debtor cannot settle the transaction on equal terms with the creditor because of his weaker position. As far as the money lender is concerned, he gets that fixed sum of interest which he considers his profit. If the debtor spends the borrowed money in fulfilling his personal needs, the time factor definitely does not bring any profit at all. And if he invests that money in trade, commerce, industry, agriculture, etc., then there are equal chances of profit or loss. Thus lending money at interest might bring a guaranteed and fixed profit to one party and loss to the other, or a guaranteed and fixed profit to one party and an uncertain and indefinite profit to the other.

(2) The trader charges his profit, however high it may be, once for all but the money-lender goes on charging interest over and over again and it goes on increasing with the passage of time. The profit which the debtor makes on the money of the creditor, however large it may be, has after all its own limits, but there is no limit to the interest the creditor may charge on his money. He may, as sometimes it actually happens, receive all the earnings of the debtor, nay, may even deprive him of all the means of livelihood or of the articles of his personal use and still might have the same amount of debt against him that was at the time of borrowing.

(3) The transaction in trade comes to an end as soon as the article and its price change hands. After this the buyer is not required to return anything to the seller. As regards the rent of furniture, house, land, etc. the lent thing is not itself spent up but is returned to the owner after the term. But in the case of the principal the debtor has to spend it first and then to reproduce it and return it to the creditor along with its interest. Thus the debtor runs a double risk; he has to reproduce the principal and also to produce its interest.

(4) One engaged in trade, industry, agriculture, etc., earns profit by spending time, labour and intelligence but the money-lender becomes the stronger partner in the earnings of the debtor without any risk or labour on his part simply because he invests the money which is over and above his need. He is a partner only to the extent that he is entitled to a fixed guaranteed interest, irrespective of whether there is any profit at all or how much, or whether there is even a loss.

From the above it becomes clear that even from the economic point of view, trade helps construct society but interest leads to ruin. As for the moral point of view, interest, by its very nature, creates parsimony, selfishness, cruelty, hard-heartedness, money-worship, etc., and kills the spirit of fellow-feeling and co-

operation. It is, therefore, ruinous for society both morally and economically. As to the question what should one do with the money for which one has no use, the answer is that one may invest it in commerce, industry, etc., on the basis of partnership and share profits and losses alike.

319. This allowance applies only to the legal aspect of the interest which had been taken before the revelation of this verse about prohibition and does not mean that the income from that interest had also been made lawful. From the very wording of the verse, it is clear that the case will go to Allah for decision and that it has not been pardoned outright by Allah. In order to avoid endless litigation on this account, it has been declared that no legal demand for its return should be made. But from the moral point of view, it remains unclean and one who has taken it must do his best to cleanse himself of it. He should abstain from spending it on himself and try his best to find out the people from whom he received it and return it to them. In case he is unable to locate or find out anyone of those people, he should spend the unclean and unlawful wealth on social welfare. This is the only way in which he can save himself from the punishment of Allah Who will decide his case on the Day of Judgement. As to the person who goes on enjoying this unlawful wealth, he may be liable to punishment even for his money-lending in the past.

320. This is true from the social, economic, moral and spiritual points of view. Though apparently interest enriches and charity impoverishes, it is really just the opposite of it. According to the law of Allah, interest is, in its very nature, a hindrance to the social, economic, moral and spiritual progress and charity (including a loan without interest) helps their development.

If we look at interest from the moral and spiritual points of view, we see clearly that it is based on greed, selfishness, parsimony, narrow-mindedness, hard-heartedness and the like and nurtures the same evils in the money-lender. On the other hand, charity is based on generosity, sympathy, broad-mindedness, large-heartedness and the like and develops the same high qualities. Can anyone deny that these qualities are far better than the former?

From the social point of view, even a little thinking will show that a society can never become strong and stable if its individual members base their mutual dealings on selfishness and if one is not willing to help the other without self-interest. If the rich people believe that the poor people exist merely to afford them an opportunity for exploitation, there will be a clash of interest which will result in the disintegration of society. If other factors also help this evil state of affairs, these will surely produce class struggle. On the other hand, if the individual members of a society base their dealings on mutual sympathy and treat each other with generosity, they will most surely strengthen it. If everyone tries to

help the other in need, and if the "haves" treat the "havenots" with sympathy or at least with justice, mutual love and fellow-feeling will develop in society and it will become strong and stable. Obviously, its progress will be accelerated by mutual co-operation and fellow-feeling.

Now let us consider interest from the economic point of view. Loans are of two kinds. The consumptive loan is borrowed by the helpless needy persons for their personal needs and the economic loan is taken by businessmen for trade, commerce, industry, agriculture, etc. As to the first kind of loan, everyone knows that interest on it produces ruinous results. In every country the money-lenders and bankers are sucking the blood of the labourers, peasants and the common poor, and making their condition miserable. The interest charges render the payment of debt almost impossible for such people and they have to borrow one loan after the other to get out of this mess. Even after paying interest equal to many times the original principal, the principal still remains as it was before. The major portion of the income of the debtor is taken away by the money-lender and the poor debtor finds himself unable to make both ends meet. Naturally this kills the interest of the labourers in their work. When the fruit of their labour is taken away by others, they cannot put their whole heart into their work. More than that: when worry, anxiety, poor food, etc., spoil their health, they cannot afford even to buy the necessary medicine for want of money. Thus money-lending leads to the fattening and battening of a few at the expenses of the blood-sucking of the majority and results in the general deterioration of the nation. The inefficiency caused in their way lowers the quality and standard of national production. In the end the blood-suckers themselves fall a prey to their own iniquity. When the suppressed anger and hatred of the depressed people engendered by the selfishness of the cruel money-lenders, bursts out into a bloody revolution, it sweeps away their honour and lives along with their ill-gotten wealth.

As to the fixed interest on economic loans, three out of the many evils are given below :

(1) Those concerns that cannot pay an interest higher than or equal to the market rate cannot draw in capital howsoever useful they may be for the nation. All the available money flows into those channels of commerce and industry which can bring interest equal to or greater than the market rate of interest, howsoever harmful or ruinous they might be from the national point of view.

(2) There is no business — commercial, industrial, agricultural — that can guarantee a fixed and uniform rate of profit, say five, six or ten per cent or more under all circumstances. Not to speak of such a guarantee, there cannot be any guarantee against loss in any business. Therefore, the business which borrows capital at a fixed rate of interest can never be free from risk or loss.

(3) As the money-lender himself is not directly a partner in the profit or the loss of the business but keeps in view only his guaranteed fixed interest, he is not interested in its welfare. His only concern is his own interest; therefore he very selfishly tries to withdraw and withhold his money whenever he has even the slightest fear of a slump in the market. In this way he creates panic by his selfishness and paves the way for a further crisis and when there is already a crisis, he accelerates it into a disaster.

The above mentioned three evils of interest are so obvious that they are well known to everyone who knows even the ABC of economics. Can then anyone deny the truth of the natural law enunciated by Allah that interest does not increase but decreases the national economic wealth?

Now let us consider charity from the economic point of view. If the well-to-do people of a society spend money liberally in buying their own necessities of life and those of their dependents and distribute a part of their wealth among the needy to enable them to buy their necessities of life, or if they lend it to businessmen without interest, or invest it in business on the basis of partnership, or lend it without interest to their government for national service, then obviously, commerce, industry, agriculture, etc., will thrive to a very high standard. The standard of national prosperity will rise higher and higher and the production of its wealth will become larger as compared with the country where interest is lawful. Thus it is clear that interest hinders the progress of a nation and charity helps its development.

321. The money-lender is no doubt an ungrateful wretch. As a grateful servant of Allah, Who gives him spare money, the least he ought to do is to lend it to his other servants without interest. And if, instead of this, he uses the bounty of Allah to exploit His other servants who are getting less than he, he becomes not only ungrateful but also cruel and wicked.

322. In this passage Allah has presented two characters for contrast. One is the selfish worshipper of wealth, the Shylock, who, unmindful of Allah and His creatures, is engaged day and night in amassing and hoarding wealth. The other is the worshipper of Allah, the generous and sympathetic person who observes the rights of Allah and His creatures; who earns wealth and spends it on his ownself and on others and in doing good works. Allah disapproves of the first type of people because they cannot build any good and stable society : nay, they even make themselves and others miserable in this world, and they shall meet with grief, sorrow and affliction in the Hereafter. In contrast to this, Allah approves of the second type of people for they help build a good and stable society and achieve real success. They have also peace of mind in this world and will be blessed with all kinds of heavenly pleasures in the Hereafter. *[Contd. on p.206*

مَا بَقِيَ مِنَ الرِّبٰوٓا اِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿278﴾ فَاِنْ لَّمْ تَفْعَلُوْا فَاْذَنُوْا بِحَرْبٍ
مِّنَ اللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهٖ ۚ وَاِنْ تُبْتُمْ فَلَكُمْ رُءُوْسُ اَمْوَالِكُمْ ۚ لَا تَظْلِمُوْنَ وَلَا
تُظْلَمُوْنَ ﴿279﴾ وَاِنْ كَانَ ذُوْ عُسْرَةٍ فَنَظِرَةٌ اِلٰى مَيْسَرَةٍ ۭ وَاَنْ تَصَدَّقُوْا خَيْرٌ
لَّكُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿280﴾ وَاتَّقُوْا يَوْمًا تُرْجَعُوْنَ فِيْهِ اِلَى اللّٰهِ ۣ ثُمَّ تُوَفّٰى
كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُوْنَ ﴿281﴾ ۩ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اِذَا تَدَايَنْتُمْ
بِدَيْنٍ اِلٰٓى اَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى فَاكْتُبُوْهُ ۭ وَلْيَكْتُبْ بَّيْنَكُمْ كَاتِبٌۢ بِالْعَدْلِ ۠ وَلَا
يَاْبَ كَاتِبٌ اَنْ يَّكْتُبَ كَمَا عَلَّمَهُ اللّٰهُ فَلْيَكْتُبْ ۚ وَلْيُمْلِلِ الَّذِيْ عَلَيْهِ الْحَقُّ
وَلْيَتَّقِ اللّٰهَ رَبَّهٗ وَلَا يَبْخَسْ مِنْهُ شَيْـــًٔا ۭ فَاِنْ كَانَ الَّذِيْ عَلَيْهِ الْحَقُّ
سَفِيْهًا اَوْ ضَعِيْفًا اَوْ لَا يَسْتَطِيْعُ اَنْ يُّمِلَّ هُوَ فَلْيُمْلِلْ وَلِيُّهٗ بِالْعَدْلِ ۭ وَ
اسْتَشْهِدُوْا شَهِيْدَيْنِ مِنْ رِّجَالِكُمْ ۚ فَاِنْ لَّمْ يَكُوْنَا رَجُلَيْنِ فَرَجُلٌ وَّامْرَاَتٰنِ
مِمَّنْ تَرْضَوْنَ مِنَ الشُّهَدَاۗءِ اَنْ تَضِلَّ اِحْدٰىهُمَا فَتُذَكِّرَ اِحْدٰىهُمَا الْاُخْرٰى ۭ
وَلَا يَاْبَ الشُّهَدَاۗءُ اِذَا مَا دُعُوْا ۭ وَلَا تَسْـَٔـــُٔوْٓا اَنْ تَكْتُبُوْهُ صَغِيْرًا اَوْ كَبِيْرًا
اِلٰٓى اَجَلِهٖ ۭ ذٰلِكُمْ اَقْسَطُ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ وَاَقْوَمُ لِلشَّهَادَةِ وَاَدْنٰٓى اَلَّا تَرْتَابُوْٓا اِلَّآ
اَنْ تَكُوْنَ تِجَارَةً حَاضِرَةً تُدِيْرُوْنَهَا بَيْنَكُمْ فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ اَلَّا تَكْتُبُوْهَا ۭ
وَاَشْهِدُوْٓا اِذَا تَبَايَعْتُمْ ۠ وَلَا يُضَاۗرَّ كَاتِبٌ وَّلَا شَهِيْدٌ ۭ وَاِنْ تَفْعَلُوْا
فَاِنَّهٗ فُسُوْقٌۢ بِكُمْ ۭ وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ ۭ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ اللّٰهُ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿282﴾ ۩
وَاِنْ كُنْتُمْ عَلٰي سَفَرٍ وَّلَمْ تَجِدُوْا كَاتِبًا فَرِهٰنٌ مَّقْبُوْضَةٌ ۭ فَاِنْ اَمِنَ
بَعْضُكُمْ بَعْضًا فَلْيُؤَدِّ الَّذِي اؤْتُمِنَ اَمَانَتَهٗ وَلْيَتَّقِ اللّٰهَ رَبَّهٗ ۭ وَلَا تَكْتُمُوا
الشَّهَادَةَ ۭ وَمَنْ يَّكْتُمْهَا فَاِنَّهٗٓ اٰثِمٌ قَلْبُهٗ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿283﴾ ۩

O Believers, fear Allah and give up that interest which is still due to you, if you are true Believers; but if you do not do so, then you are warned of the declaration of war against you by Allah and His Messenger.[323] If, however, you repent even now (and forego interest), you are entitled to your principal; do no wrong, and no wrong will be done to you. If your debtor be in straitened circumstances, give him time till his monetary condition becomes better. But if you remit the debt by way of charity, it would be better for you, if you only knew it.[324] Guard against the disgrace and misery of the Day when you shall return to Allah: there everyone shall be paid in full for the good or evil one has earned and none shall be wronged. 278-281

O Believers, when you contract a debt for a fixed[325] term, you should put it in writing.[326] Let a scribe write with equity the document for the parties. The scribe whom Allah has given the gift of literacy should not refuse to write. Let him write and let the one under obligation (the debtor) dictate, and he should fear Allah, his Lord, and should not diminish from or add anything to the terms which have been settled. But if the borrower be of low understanding or weak or unable to dictate (for any reason), then let the guardian of his interests dictate it with equity. And let two men from among you[327] bear witness to all such documents. But if two men be not available, there should be one man and two women to bear witness so that if one of the women forgets (anything), the other may remind her. The witnesses should be from among such people whom you approve of as witnesses.[328] When the witnesses are asked to testify, they should not refuse to do so. Do not neglect to reduce to writing your transaction for a specified term, whether it be big or small. Allah considers this more just for you, for it facilitates the establishment of evidence and lessens doubts and suspicions. Of course, there is no harm if you do not put in writing the common transactions you conclude daily on the spot,[329] but in case of commercial transactions you should have witnesses. The scribe and the witnesses should not be harassed:[330] if you do so, you shall be guilty of sin. You should guard against the wrath of Allah; He gives you the knowledge of the right way for Allah has the knowledge of everything. 282

If you are on a journey and cannot find a scribe to write the document, then transact your business on the security of a pledge in hand.[331] And, if any one transacts a piece of business with another 283

merely on trust, then the one who is trusted should fulfil his trust and fear Allah, his Lord. And never conceal evidence[332] for he who conceals it, has a sinful heart: Allah knows everything that you do.

Contd. from p. 203]

323. This verse was revealed after the conquest of Makkah, but was inserted here because it also deals with interest. Even before its revelation, interest was regarded as a hateful thing though it had not yet been legally forbidden. But after its revelation, money-lending on interest became a criminal offence in the Islāmic State. Those clans who carried on this business in Arabia, were duly warned to give it up for otherwise a war would be declared against them. When the Christians of Najran were granted autonomy within the Islāmic State, it was specified in the treaty that if they continued their money-lending business, the treaty would come to an end and there would be a state of war between the parties.

From the concluding portion of this verse, Ibn 'Abbas, Hasan Basri, Ibn Sirin and Rubai'-bin-Anas have concluded that the one who takes interest in the Islāmic State should be warned to repent of it, and if he does not give it up, he should be put to death. But the other jurists are of the opinion that he should be put in prison and kept there until he undertakes to give up this business.

324. This verse empowers an Islāmic court of law to compel the creditors to give more time to the debtors for the payment of debts, if they are in such straitened circumstances that they cannot pay back their debts. Under certain circumstances, the court is entitled to write off the debt altogether or a part of it. A Tradition says that a man suffered loss in his business and came heavily under debt. When his case was taken to the Holy Prophet, he made an appeal to the people to help him out of it. Accordingly, the people made monetary contributions, but even then he could not clear all his debts. Then the Holy Prophet addressed the creditors and told them that they would have to be satisfied with whatever was collected for the payment of their debts. The jurists have explained that the house in which a man lives, his utensils, clothes and tools of trade can in no case be confiscated.

325. From this it is deduced that the term for a debt must be specified.

326. This warns against a common practice: friends and relatives do not put debt agreements into formal writing, for such a thing, according to them, shows lack of trust. Allah admonishes that agreements concerning debt and business should be recorded and testified by witnesses in order to keep the affairs of the people clean. A Tradition of the Holy Prophet says that three kinds of the people cry out to Allah for help but are not answered: first, those who have ill tempered wives but do not divorce them; second, those who are entrusted with the

property of orphans but return it to them before they attain maturity; third, those who lend money to others without any document or evidence.

327. "From among you": from among the Muslims. Imam Abu Hanifah, holds the opinion that the non-Muslims also can be made the witnesses.

328. As the establishment of the truth of a case depends to a great degree on the reliability of witnesses, a very high standard of qualification is demanded of them. Only those persons who are known to lead respectable lives and bear good moral character and are honest should be made the witnesses.

329. Even in the case of those transactions which are carried out on the spot in everyday business, it is better to record them; nevertheless there is no harm if commercial transactions carried on daily between neighbouring traders are not recorded.

330. It implies two things. No one should be forced to become a scribe or a witness against his will, and no one should harass the scribe or the witness just because he gives true evidence against the interests of a party.

331. It does not mean that a pledge may be held on security only while on a journey. It has been specially mentioned in this connection because such a condition generally occurs on a journey. Moreover, inability to get a scribe is not an essential condition for holding something as a pledge. If a needy person cannot obtain a debt unless he delivers something as security for it, he is allowed to do so. The Qur'ān deliberately omits the mention of this latter condition, because it intends to teach generosity to the Believers. It is obviously below the dignity of a man of high character not to lend money to a needy person without having a pledge in hand. It is, however, understood that if the pledge is productive, the creditor should keep a regular account of the produce and deduct it from the debt; otherwise any profit drawn from the pledged property would be interest. In this connection, one should also know that the only object in view of holding a pledge is the security of the repayment of the debt and it does not entitle the creditor in any way to make profit out of it. For instance, if a creditor himself lives in the house which he holds as a pledge for his debt or if he lets it to someone else, he in fact is guilty of taking interest, if he does not credit the rent of the house to the debtor, for there is no difference between taking direct interest on a debt or earning money from it or making use of the property delivered as a pledge. The creditor, however, may benefit from the milk of a pledged head of cattle, or may ride or carry burden on a horse, camel, etc., because that would be the compensation for the fodder given to them.

[Contd. on page .. 209

لِلّٰهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ ۭ وَاِنْ تُبْدُوْا مَا فِيْٓ اَنْفُسِكُمْ اَوْ تُخْفُوْهُ
يُحَاسِبْكُمْ بِهِ اللّٰهُ ۭ فَيَغْفِرُ لِمَنْ يَّشَاۗءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَّشَاۗءُ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ عَلٰي كُلِّ
شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ۝ اٰمَنَ الرَّسُوْلُ بِمَآ اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَّبِّهٖ وَالْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ ۭ كُلٌّ
اٰمَنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَمَلٰۗىِٕكَتِهٖ وَكُتُبِهٖ وَرُسُلِهٖ ۣ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ اَحَدٍ مِّنْ رُّسُلِهٖ ۣ
وَقَالُوْا سَمِعْنَا وَاَطَعْنَا ۡ غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَاِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيْرُ ۝ لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللّٰهُ
نَفْسًا اِلَّا وُسْعَهَا ۭ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ ۭ رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَآ
اِنْ نَّسِيْنَآ اَوْ اَخْطَاْنَا ۚ رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَآ اِصْرًا كَمَا حَمَلْتَهٗ عَلَي الَّذِيْنَ
مِنْ قَبْلِنَا ۚ رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحَمِّلْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهٖ ۚ وَاعْفُ عَنَّا ۡ
وَاغْفِرْ لَنَا ۡ وَارْحَمْنَا ۡ اَنْتَ مَوْلٰىنَا فَانْصُرْنَا عَلَي الْقَوْمِ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ۝



To Allah belongs whatever[333] is in the heavens and the earth.[334] 284
Allah will call you to account for what is in your minds whether you disclose it or hide[335] it. He, however, had full authority to pardon or punish anyone He pleases, for Allah has complete power over everything.[336]

The Messenger has believed in the Guidance which has been 285
sent down to him from his Lord, and those who believe in the Messenger have also sincerely accepted the same. They all believe in Allah, His Angels, His Books and Messengers. And they say, "We do not discriminate against any of His Messengers. We have heard the Message and submitted to it. Our Lord, we look up to You for forgiveness, for to You we shall all return."[337]

Allah does not burden any human being with a responsibility 286
heavier than he can bear.[338] Everyone will enjoy the fruit of the good that one has earned and shall suffer for the evil that one has committed.[339] (O Believers, pray like this to Allah:) "Our Lord, take us not to task if we forget and lapse into error inadvertently. Lord! lay not on us the kind of burdens that You had lain on the people before us.[340] Lord, lay not on us the kind of burden that we have not the strength to bear.[341] Be kind to us, forgive us and show mercy to us. You are our Protector : help us against the disbelievers."[342]

Contd. from p. 207]

332. "Concealing of evidence" applies both to the evasion of evidence and to the concealment of the true facts while giving evidence.

333. In the concluding portion of the *Sūrah*, the basic creeds of Islām have been stated just as they were stated at its beginning. Therefore it will be useful to compare verses 284-285 with vv. 1-4.

334. This is the first article of Faith. The acceptance of the fact that Allah is the Master of the heavens and the earth and all that is in them, leaves no alternative for man but to submit to Him.

335. In this sentence two more articles of Faith have been stated. First, every person is individually responsible and accountable to Allah for his actions. Second, the Sovereign, to whom man is accountable for his actions, has full knowledge of what is hidden and what is open; He even knows those intentions and thoughts that are hidden in the heart.

336. It means that Allah is the absolute Sovereign and not a constitutional ruler. His powers are not bound by any law so as to force Him to act in accordance with it. He is the sole Master and has full authority to punish anyone or to forgive anyone He wills.

337. In this verse, the basic articles of Faith have been restated briefly. Belief in Allah, His Angels, His Books and in all of His Messengers without exception and discrimination against any and in the accountability to Him at the end of this life are the five basic articles of Faith. After the acceptance of these, the attitude for a Muslim is to submit obediently to each and every commandment of Allah. At the same time, he should not become vain on account of his good acts but should pray to Allah to forgive and show forbearance to him.

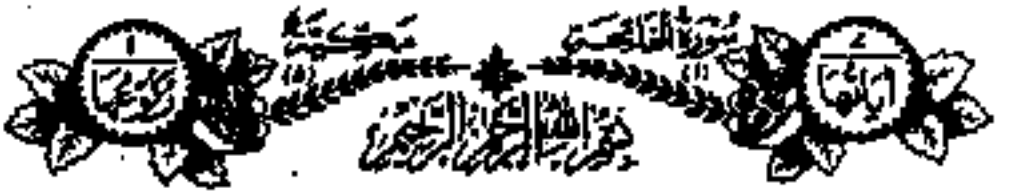
338. That is, "Allah will not call to account anyone for not doing something which he could not possibly do: nor will He punish him because he did not abstain from a thing, when he could not possibly abstain from it." It must, however, be clearly understood that an individual himself is not his own judge to decide what he can do and what he cannot do. It is Allah, Who will decide what a certain person could do and what he could not do.

339. This is the other general principle of the law. Both the rewards and the punishments are really the results and consequences of the acts and deeds of every individual. One will get a reward only for the good deed one has himself done and not for the good acts of someone else. It must, however, be noted that if someone has done some good act which goes on producing good results long after his death, all those acts will also be put to his credit in his balance sheet as long as they last. In the same way, if someone has done some evil, which goes on producing evil results long after one's death, all those also will be put against one's account as long as they last. But all these results, both good and bad, will be the consequences of one's own deeds. In short, a person shall be rewarded or punished only for that thing to which he himself contributed intentionally and actually. There is no transfer of accounts in the Divine Law of Retribution.

340. That is, "O Lord, save and protect us from such trials, persecutions and obstacles as were encountered by those who went Your way before us." Although it is the law of Allah that those, who make up their minds to follow the way of Truth, must undergo hard trials and suffer from cruel persecutions, a Believer should pray to Allah to make the way easy for him and should face them with courage when he actually meets with them.

341. That is, "Lay on us only that much burden of troubles and tribulations that we can bear and put us only to those trials that we can endure, lest we should fail to bear them and swerve from the Right Path."

342. In order to understand the true spirit of this prayer, it should be kept in view that these verses were revealed on the occasion of the Mi'raj (Ascension to Heaven) of the Holy Prophet about a year before his migration to Madinah. At that time the struggle between Islām and *kufr* had reached its climax and the persecution of the Believers was at its worst. And this was not confined to Makkah alone: there was no place in the whole of Arabia where a Muslim was allowed to live in peace. It was to cope with these circumstances that the Muslims were taught to offer this prayer to Allah. It is self-evident that when the Master Himself teaches the servant the way of begging from Him, the servant gets the conviction that his request will be granted. That is why this prayer filled the Muslims with extraordinary courage and brought peace of mind to them in the hour of their worst persecution. Moreover, this prayer taught them to keep their passions under control and within the limits contained in this prayer and not to allow them to turn into wrong channels. That is why it is free from any kind of bitterness against their enemies, and there is not any tinge in it of revenge or of worldliness. This was urgently needed at that time because the Muslims were undergoing greater hardships and monetary losses and suffering untold cruelties and were pressed hard both physically and economically. Incidentally, the contrast between the high ideals contained in their prayer and the persecution which the Believers were suffering at that time brings out clearly the high standard of the spiritual and moral training they were receiving even at that critical time. And that is the high standard of morality that has been laid down for every true believer to attain.



اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ۙ﴿۱﴾ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ ۙ﴿۲﴾ مٰلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّيْنِ ؕ﴿۳﴾
اِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَ اِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِيْنُ ؕ﴿۴﴾ اِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيْمَ ۙ﴿۵﴾ صِرَاطَ
الَّذِيْنَ اَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ ۙ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوْبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَ لَا الضَّآلِّيْنَ ﴿۷﴾ ع

I

AL-FĀTIHAH

اَلْفَاتِحَة

Verses: 7 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.[1]

1-3 Praise is only for Allah,[2] the Lord of the Universe,[3] the All-Compassionate, the All-Merciful,[4] the Master of the Day of Judgement.[5]

4-7 Thee alone we worship[6] and to Thee alone we pray for help.[7] Show us the straight way,[8] the way of those whom Thou hast blessed[9]; who have not incurred Thy wrath, nor gone astray.

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1. Islamic culture requires a man to commence everything with the name of Allah. If this is done consciously and sincerely, it will surely produce three good results. First, it will keep him away from evil, because the very name of Allah will impel him to consider whether he is justified in associating His name with a wrong deed or an evil intention. Secondly, the very mention of the name of Allah will create in him the right attitude of mind and direct him to the right direction. Thirdly, he will receive Allah's help and blessing and will be protected from the temptations of Satan, for Allah turns to a man when he turns to Him.

2. It has been stated in the Introduction to this Sūrah that *Al-Fātihah* is a prayer. It begins with the praise of Allah to Whom it is addressed in order to teach us the right way of making a supplication. We should not put forward our request bluntly and abruptly without an appropriate introduction. The right way is to acknowledge the excellences and the favours and the high position of the One to Whom we address our prayer. That is why we begin our prayer with the praise of Allah, for He is the perfection of all excellences and is also our Benefactor. We pay homage to Allah to show that we sincerely acknowledge His excellences and also are grateful to Him for His countless favours.

It should also be noted that not only Praise is for Allah but also Praise is only for Allah. This distinction is very important because it cuts at the root of the worship of any of His creation. As none of them is worthy of praise, none is worthy of worship. No man, no angel, no prophet, no so-called god, no star, no idol, in short, none of His creation inherently possesses any good quality. If one has any, it is given by Allah. Hence the Creator of these qualities alone deserves devotion, worship, gratitude, and none of His creation.

3. The word *Rab* which has been translated into 'Lord' stands for (a) Master and Owner, (b) Sustainer, Provider and Guardian, (c) Sovereign, Ruler, Administrator and Organiser. Allah is the Lord of the Universe in all these senses.

4. Although the Arabic word *Rahmān* itself is in the superlative form and denotes the attributes of beneficence and mercy in the highest degree, even this word fails to express the boundless extent of these attributes of Allah. Hence another word *Rahim of* the same root has been added to make up for the deficiency.

5. After saying that Allah is Beneficent and Merciful, it has immediately been added that He is the Master of the Day of Judgement, so that the qualities of mercy and kindness might not mislead anyone into forgetting that on that Day He will gather together all human beings from the first to the last and require each and every one to give an account of all of one's acts to Him. A Muslim should, therefore, always keep in view the fact that Allah is not only Merciful, but He is also Just. He has, however, full authority to pardon or punish anyone He pleases, for He has complete power over everything. Therefore we should have full conviction that it lies absolutely in His power to make our end happy or sorrowful.

6. The Arabic word *ibādāt* is used in three senses: (a)worship and devotion, (b) submission and obedience, (c) subjection and servitude. Here it implies all the three, that is, We are Thy worshippers, Thy subjects and Thy slaves and We keep these relations with Thee and Thee alone and "We make none else the object of our worship in all the three senses."

7. It means, We ask for Thy help because we know that Thou art the Lord of the whole Universe and Thou hast all powers and Thou art the Master of every thing. Therefore we turn to Thee for help for the fulfilment of our needs and requirements.

8. That is, "Show us that way which may lead us aright in every walk of life and keep us absolutely free from errors and evil consequences and bring us success in the end."

This is the request which the servant of Allah makes to Him when he begins the study of the Qur'ān. He prays to Him to guide him in every walk of life and save him from the labyrinths of doubt and uncertainty, which result from the lack of true knowledge. The servant also requests the Master to show him the right and the straight way of life from among the many by-paths and crooked ways.

9. The straight way for which we are praying is the way which has always been followed by the people favoured by Thee and which has always brought Thy favours and blessings.

10. This is to show that the favoured people are not those who go astray and incur the wrath of Allah, though apparently they might be enjoying the transitory good things of life. The really favoured people are those who receive blessings on account of their righteous living. From this it also becomes clear that by favours are meant those real and permanent rewards, which result from righteous living and from winning the pleasure of Allah, and not those transitory good things of life which have been enjoyed even by the tyrants and worshippers of mammon and which are being enjoyed even today by all sorts of evildoers who have gone astray from the straight way.



III

ĀL-I-'IMRĀN

آلِ عِمرٰن

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

III
ĀL-I-'IMRĀN

آلِ عِمران

INTRODUCTION

This Sūrah takes its name from v. 33. 'Āl-i-'Imrān', like the names of many other sūrahs, is merely a name to distinguish it from other sūrahs and does not imply that the family of 'Imrān has been discussed in it.

The Period of Revelation.

This Sūrah consists of four discourses:

The first discourse (vv.1-32) was probably revealed soon after the Battle of Badr.

The second discourse (vv.33-63) was revealed in 9 A.H. on the occasion of the visit of the deputation from the Christians of Najrān.

The third discourse (vv. 64-120) appears to have been revealed immediately after the first one.

The fourth discourse (vv. 121-200) was revealed after the Battle of Uhd.

Subject.

Though these discourses were revealed at different periods and on different occasions, they are so inter-linked and so inter-connected in regard to their aim, object and central theme that they make together one continuous whole. This Sūrah has been especially addressed to two groups—the people of the Book (the Jews and the Christians) and the followers of Muḥammad (Allah's peace be upon him).

The message has been extended to the Jews and the Christians in continuation of the invitation in Al-Baqarah, in which they have been

admonished for their erroneous beliefs and evil morals and advised to accept, as a remedy, the Truth of the Qur'ān. They have been told here that Muḥammad (Allah's peace be upon him) taught the same right way of life that had been preached by their own Prophets; that it alone was the Right Way, the way of Allah; hence any deviation from it will be wrong even according to their own Scriptures.

The second group, the Muslims, who had been declared to be the best Community in Al-Baqarah and appointed torch-bearers of the Truth and entrusted with the responsibility of reforming the world, have been given additional instructions in continuation of those given in the preceding Sūrah. The Muslims have been warned to learn a lesson from the religious and moral degeneration of the former communities and to refrain from treading in their footsteps. Instructions have also been given about the reformative work they had to perform. Besides this, they have been taught how to deal with the people of the Book and the hypocrites who were putting different kinds of hindrances in the way of Allah. Above all, they have been warned to guard against those weaknesses which had come to the surface in the Battle of Uḥd.

Background

The following is the background of the Sūrah:

(1) The Believers had met with all sorts of trials and hardships about which they had been forewarned in Al-Baqarah. Though they had come out victorious in the Battle of Badr, they were not out of danger yet. Their victory had aroused the enmity of all those powers in Arabia which were opposed to the Islamic Movement. Signs of threatening storms had begun to appear on all sides and the Muslims were in a perpetual state of fear and anxiety. It looked as if the whole Arabian world around the tiny state of Al-Madīnah—which was no more than a village state at that time—was bent upon blotting out its very existence. This state of war was also adversely affecting its economy, which had already been badly disturbed by the influx of the Muslim refugees from Makkah.

(2) Then there was the disturbing problem of the Jewish clans who lived in the suburbs of Al-Madīnah. They were discarding the treaties of alliance they had made with the Holy Prophet after his

migration from Makkah. So much so that on the occasion of the Battle of Badr, these people of the Book sympathised with the evil aims of the idolaters, inspite of the fact that their fundamental articles of the Faith—Oneness of Allah, Prophethood, Life-after-death---were the same as those of the Muslims. After the Battle of Badr, they openly began to incite the Quraish and other Arab clans to wreak their vengeance on the Muslims. Thus those Jewish clans set aside their centuries-old friendly and neighbourly relations with the people of Al-Madinah. At last when their mischievous actions and breaches of treaties became unbearable, the Holy Prophet attacked the Bani-Qainuqā'a, the most mischievous of all the other Jewish clans who had conspired with the hypocrites of Al-Madinah and the idolatrous Arab clans to encircle the Believers on all sides. The magnitude of the peril might be judged from the fact that even the life of the Holy Prophet himself was always in danger. Therefore his Companions slept in their armours during that period and kept watch at night to guard against any sudden attack, and whenever the Holy Prophet happened to be out of sight even for a short while, they would at once set out in search of him.

(3) This incitement by the Jews added fuel to the fire which was burning in the hearts of the Quraish and they began to make preparations to avenge the defeat they had suffered at Badr. A year after this an army of 3,000 strong marched out of Makkah to invade Al-Madinah and a battle took place at the foot of Mount Uḥd. The Holy Prophet came out of Al-Madinah with one thousand men to meet the enemy. While they were marching to the battle-field, three hundred hypocrites deserted the army and returned to Al-Madinah, but there still remained a small band of hypocrites among the seven hundred who accompanied the Holy Prophet. They played their part and did their worst to create mischief and chaos in the ranks of the Believers during the Battle. This was the first clear indication of the fact that within the fold of the Muslim Community there was quite a large number of saboteurs who were always ready to conspire with the external enemies to harm their own brethren.

(4) Though the devices of the hypocrites had played a great part in the set-back at Uḥd, the weaknesses of the Muslims themselves contributed no less to it. And it was but natural that the Muslims should show signs of moral weakness for they were a new community which had only recently been formed on a new ideology and had not as yet got a thorough moral training. Naturally in this second hard test of their physical and moral strength, some weaknesses came to the surface. That is why a detailed review of the Battle of Uḥd was needed to warn the Muslims of their short-comings and to issue instructions for their reform. It should also be noted that this review of the Battle is quite different from the reviews that are usually made by generals on similar occasions.

SUMMARY

SUBJECT: GUIDANCE

This Sūrah is the sequel to Al-Baqarah and the invitation therein is continued to the people of the Book. In Al-Baqarah the Jews were pointedly invited to accept the Guidance and in this Sūrah the Christians have particularly been admonished to give up their erroneous beliefs and accept the Guidance of the Qur'ān. At the same time, the Muslims have been instructed to nourish the virtues that may enable them to carry out their obligations and spread the Divine Guidance.

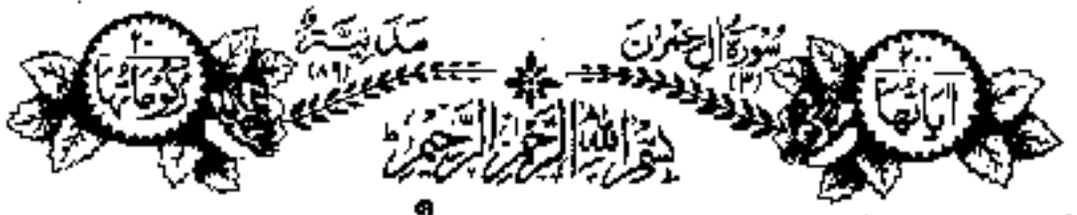
Topics and their Interconnection:

In these introductory verses, the fundamental truths about Allah, Revelation and Life-after-death have been reiterated to serve as fitting preliminaries, leading to the main topics discussed in the Sūrah.	1-32
This discourse is particularly addressed to the Christians and invites them to accept Islam. It clears Jesus and his mother not only from the stigma maliciously set upon them by the Jews, but also refutes the erroneous Christian creed of the Divinity of Jesus which had been formulated because of his miraculous birth. For this purpose the instances of the miraculous birth of John the Baptist to a barren woman and an extremely aged man and that of Adam without father and mother have been cited to show that there is nothing in the birth of Jesus without a father to entitle him to Divinity.	33-65
In these verses the people of the Book, the Jews, have been invited to give up their sinister ways and accept the divine Guidance. At the same time the Muslims have been warned to be on their guard against their malicious intentions, erroneous ways and absurd objections.	66-101
The Muslims have been instructed to learn lessons from the history of the people of the Book and also to guard themselves against their machinations, and to prepare and train themselves to establish virtue and eradicate evil.	102-120
In this portion, a review of the Battle of Uḥd has been made to teach and reassure the Muslims that the machinations of their enemies could do them no harm, if they would practise restraint and fortitude and have fear of Allah. It has been pointed out that the set-back they	121-175

had suffered was due to the lack of some moral qualities and the existence of some evils. Since the main cause of the defeat was the greed of the archers, guarding the pass, the taking of interest has been prohibited to eradicate this evil.

176-189 The main theme of the verses 109-120 has been resumed to reassure and encourage the Muslims against the dangerous plots of their enemies.

190-200 This is the conclusion of the Sūrah and is not directly connected with the verses immediately preceding it but with the theme of the Sūrah as a whole.



الٓمّٓ ﴿١﴾ اللّٰهُ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۙ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّوْمُ ﴿٢﴾ نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتٰبَ بِالْحَقِّ
مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَ اَنْزَلَ التَّوْرٰىةَ وَ الْاِنْجِيْلَ ﴿٣﴾ مِنْ قَبْلُ هُدًى
لِّلنَّاسِ وَ اَنْزَلَ الْفُرْقَانَ ؕ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ
شَدِيْدٌ ؕ وَ اللّٰهُ عَزِيْزٌ ذُو انْتِقَامٍ ﴿٤﴾ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَخْفٰى عَلَيْهِ شَيْءٌ فِي
الْاَرْضِ وَ لَا فِي السَّمَآءِ ﴿٥﴾ هُوَ الَّذِيْ يُصَوِّرُكُمْ فِي الْاَرْحَامِ كَيْفَ يَشَآءُ ؕ
لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿٦﴾ هُوَ الَّذِيْٓ اَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتٰبَ مِنْهُ
اٰيٰتٌ مُّحْكَمٰتٌ هُنَّ اُمُّ الْكِتٰبِ وَ اُخَرُ مُتَشٰبِهٰتٌ ؕ فَاَمَّا الَّذِيْنَ فِيْ قُلُوْبِهِمْ
زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُوْنَ مَا تَشَابَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَآءَ الْفِتْنَةِ وَ ابْتِغَآءَ تَاْوِيْلِهٖ ۚ وَ مَا يَعْلَمُ

III
ĀL-I-'IMRĀN
آلِ عمران

Verses: 200 *Revealed at Al-Madīnah*

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

Alif. Lām. Mīm. Allah! He is the Ever-living, the Sustainer of the Universe: in reality there is no god but He.[1] 1-2

He has sent down to you the Book, which has brought the Truth and confirms the Scriptures which preceded it. Before this, He sent down the Torah and the Gospel for the guidance of mankind,[2] and He has sent down the Criterion (of right and wrong). Now there shall be a severe punishment for those who reject the Commandments of Allah: for Allah is Almighty, Avenger of wickedness. 3-4

1. Please see E.N. 278, Al-Baqarah.

[Contd. on p. 224

تَاْوِيْلَهٗۤ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ ۘ وَالرّٰسِخُوْنَ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُوْلُوْنَ اٰمَنَّا بِهٖ ۙ كُلٌّ مِّنْ عِنْدِ
رَبِّنَا ۚ وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ اِلَّاۤ اُولُوا الْاَلْبَابِ ۝٧ رَبَّنَا لَا تُزِغْ قُلُوْبَنَا بَعْدَ اِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا
وَهَبْ لَنَا مِنْ لَّدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً ۚ اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ ۝٨ رَبَّنَاۤ اِنَّكَ جَامِعُ
النَّاسِ لِيَوْمٍ لَّا رَيْبَ فِيْهِ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يُخْلِفُ الْمِيْعَادَ ۝٩ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ
كَفَرُوْا لَنْ تُغْنِيَ عَنْهُمْ اَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَآ اَوْلَادُهُمْ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ شَيْـًٔا ۭ وَاُولٰۗىِٕكَ
هُمْ وَقُوْدُ النَّارِ ۝١٠ كَدَاْبِ اٰلِ فِرْعَوْنَ ۙ وَالَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۭ كَذَّبُوْا
بِاٰيٰتِنَا ۚ فَاَخَذَهُمُ اللّٰهُ بِذُنُوْبِهِمْ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ شَدِيْدُ الْعِقَابِ ۝١١ قُلْ لِّلَّذِيْنَ
كَفَرُوْا سَتُغْلَبُوْنَ وَتُحْشَرُوْنَ اِلٰى جَهَنَّمَ ۭ وَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ ۝١٢ قَدْ كَانَ
لَكُمْ اٰيَةٌ فِيْ فِئَتَيْنِ الْتَقَتَا ۭ فِئَةٌ تُقَاتِلُ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ وَاُخْرٰى كَافِرَةٌ
يَّرَوْنَهُمْ مِّثْلَيْهِمْ رَاْيَ الْعَيْنِ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ يُؤَيِّدُ بِنَصْرِهٖ مَنْ يَّشَاۗءُ ۭ اِنَّ فِيْ
ذٰلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لِّاُولِي الْاَبْصَارِ ۝١٣ زُيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ حُبُّ الشَّهَوٰتِ مِنَ النِّسَاۗءِ
وَالْبَنِيْنَ وَالْقَنَاطِيْرِ الْمُقَنْطَرَةِ مِنَ الذَّهَبِ وَالْفِضَّةِ وَالْخَيْلِ الْمُسَوَّمَةِ
وَالْاَنْعَامِ وَالْحَرْثِ ۭ ذٰلِكَ مَتَاعُ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا ۚ وَاللّٰهُ عِنْدَهٗ حُسْنُ
الْمَاٰبِ ۝١٤ قُلْ اَؤُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِخَيْرٍ مِّنْ ذٰلِكُمْ ۭ لِلَّذِيْنَ اتَّقَوْا عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنّٰتٌ
تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا وَاَزْوَاجٌ مُّطَهَّرَةٌ وَّرِضْوَانٌ
مِّنَ اللّٰهِ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ بَصِيْرٌۢ بِالْعِبَادِ ۝١٥ الَّذِيْنَ يَقُوْلُوْنَ رَبَّنَآ اِنَّنَآ اٰمَنَّا
فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوْبَنَا وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ۝١٦ الصّٰبِرِيْنَ وَالصّٰدِقِيْنَ وَالْقٰنِتِيْنَ
وَالْمُنْفِقِيْنَ وَالْمُسْتَغْفِرِيْنَ بِالْاَسْحَارِ ۝١٧ شَهِدَ اللّٰهُ اَنَّهٗ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۙ
وَالْمَلٰۗىِٕكَةُ وَاُولُوا الْعِلْمِ قَاۗىِٕمًۢا بِالْقِسْطِ ۭ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ۝١٨

Nothing in the Earth or in the heavens is hidden from Allah.[3] It is He Who shapes you in the wombs of your mothers as He wills.[4] There is no deity but He, the Al-Mighty, the All-Wise. It is He Who has sent down this Book to you. There are two kinds of verses in this Book: *muḥkamāt* (which are precise in meaning:) they are the essence of the Book,[5] and the other kind is *mutashābihāt* (which are ambiguous.) Those, who are perverse of heart always go after the *mutashābihāt* in pursuit of mischief and try to interpret them arbitrarily, whereas in fact, none save Allah knows their real meanings[6]! In contrast to them, those, who possess sound knowledge, say, "We believe in them because all of them are from our Lord."[7] And the fact is that only the people of insight can learn lessons from such things. They pray to Allah, "Our Lord, let not our hearts become perverse after Thou hast once guided us aright, bestow upon us mercy from Thyself for Thou art the real Benefactor! Lord! Thou wilt surely gather all mankind together on a Day which is inevitable, for Thou never failest to fulfil Thy promise." 5-9

As for those, who have adopted the attitude of disbelief,[8] neither their riches nor their children shall avail them against Allah: they shall become fuel for Hell. Their end shall be the same as that of the people of Pharaoh and other disbelievers who went before them; they treated the Divine Revelations as falsehoods and Allah seized them because of their sins; for Allah is very stern in retribution. Therefore, O Muḥammad, say to those who have rejected your Message, "The time is approaching fast when you shall be overpowered and driven to Hell: and Hell is a horrible abode. You have already had a Sign in the two hosts which met on the battle-field (at Badr). One of these hosts was fighting for the cause of Allah and the other was of the disbelievers: the lookers-on saw with their own eyes that the host of the disbelievers,[9] was twice as big as that of the believers, but (the result of the Battle proved conclusively that) Allah strengthens with His succour whom He wills: there is truly a great lesson hidden in it for those who have eyes to discern."[10] 10-13

Love of lusts for women and children. hoarded Heaps of gold and silver, choicest horses, cattle and corn fields, has been made very tempting for people, but these are mere provisions for the transitory life of this world; the ever-lasting and the best abode, however, is 14-17

with Allah. Say, "Should I tell you a thing better than these? There will be Gardens underneath which canals flow for those, who adopt the attitude of piety; there they will dwell for ever and will have pure spouses[11] and they will enjoy Allah's favour. And Allah watches very closely the conduct of His servants."[12] These are the people, who say, "Lord, we have believed sincerely; forgive us our sins and save us from the fire of Hell." They show fortitude,[13] are truthful, obedient and charitable, and implore Allah's forgiveness in the early hours of the morning.

18 Allah Himself has testified to the fact that there is no deity save Him:[14] the angels and all those endowed with knowledge testify the fact with truth and justice[15] that there is no deity save the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.

Contd. from p.221]

2. There exists a common misconception about the Torah (Taurāt) and the Gospel (Injīl) for the people generally take the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament) for the Torah, and the Gospels (the first four books of the New Testament) for the Injīl. The misconception creates doubts about Revelation itself and a question arises, "Are these books really the Word of God? And does the Holy Qur'ān really confirm all their contents"? As a matter of fact, the Torah, which the Qur'ān confirms, is not the Pentateuch but is contained in it, and the Injīl is not "the four Gospels" but is within these books.

The Taurāt consists of those commandments and injunctions which were given to Prophet Moses (Allah's peace be upon him) during his Prophethood, which lasted for about forty years. Of these were the Ten commandments which were inscribed on stone tablets and delivered to Moses on Mount Ṭūr; as regards the remaining Commandments and injunctions he himself had put down in writing. Then he handed one copy of the Torah to each of the twelve tribes of Israel for guidance. One copy was entrusted to the Levites for safe custody, which along with the stone tablets, was deposited in the Ark.

That Taurāt remained quite safe and sound as an entire book up to the first destruction of Jerusalem. But, by and by, the Israelites grew so indifferent to and negligent and unmindful of it that when the Temple of Solomon was under repair during the reign of Joshiah, Hilkiah the high Priest came across it by chance but did not know that it was the Torah; he thought it was only a Law book and passed it on to the Royal Scribe as a curio. The latter presented it to king Joshiah who tore his clothes and ordered Hilkiah and others to consult the Eternal about the

terms of the book. (2 Kings, 22: 8-13). Such was the condition of the Israelites when Nebuchadnezzar sacked Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple, and they lost for ever even the very few copies of the Torah which had long lain neglected in some forgotten niches.

The Old Testament was compiled by Ezra, when the Israelites returned home to Jerusalem after their captivity in Babylon and built the Temple anew. Ezra gathered together some prominent men of his community, and with their help compiled the whole history of Israel which now comprises the first 17 books of the Bible. Of these Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy tell the life history of Prophet Moses and include those verses of the real Taurāt which became available to Ezra and his assistants, who incorporated them in those books at appropriate places in the chronological order of their revelation. Thus it is obvious that the Pentateuch as a whole is not the Taurāt but includes it. The real Taurāt comprises those verses which are scattered all over the life story of Prophet Moses, and it is not difficult even today to locate and recognize them. Such portions where the author says, "God said to Moses," or Moses said, The Lord your God says," the Taurāt begins, and where the narrative of the life story is resumed, there that part of the Taurāt ends. At those places the author of the Bible has inserted certain things by way of explanation or commentary, and it is here that the ordinary reader fails to distinguish the real Taurāt from the commentary. However, those who have an insight into the nature of Divine Scriptures, can distinguish, to some degree of exactness, the explanatory notes from the revealed verses.

According to the Qur'ān, only such scattered portions in the Pentateuch are the Taurāt and it confirms them alone. And this can be testified by putting together these verses and comparing them with the Qur'ān. Here and there one might come across a minor difference in their details, but one cannot find even the slightest difference between the fundamental teachings of the two. Even today one can see clearly that both the Scriptures have come from the same source.

Likewise, the Injīl is the name of those inspired discourses and sayings which Jesus (Allah's peace be upon him) uttered as a prophet during the last couple of years of his life. We have no means now of ascertaining whether these pious utterances were recorded and compiled during the lifetime of Jesus. In the introduction to his translation of the Bible, Moffat says, "Jesus wrote nothing and for a time his immediate disciples felt no impulse to write any account of him. The data of the historical Jesus, therefore is based on the vivid recollections and traditions of the primitive Palestinian disciples. How soon their materials took written shape we cannot tell, but at least one written record of them was probably in existence by about A.D.50." Anyhow, when, long after his recall, the stories of

Jesus were compiled in the shape of four Gospels, (the period of the composition of Mārk, the first to be composed was 65—75 A.D.), some of his written or inspired sayings were also inserted at appropriate places in the historical sketches. Thus it is obvious that the first four Gospels are not the Injīl, the discourses and sayings of Jesus, but they contain it. We have no means of recognizing them from the works of the authors except this: Wherever the authors say "Jesus said so or taught so and so," there the Injīl begins and where they resume the narration, there it ends. According to the Qur'ān, only such portions are the Injīl and these alone are confirmed by it. If these portions are compiled together and compared with the Qur'ān, one will find no serious difference between the two, and, if somewhere a trivial difference appears, it can be removed very easily with unbiased thinking.

3. That is, "He has full, perfect and exact knowledge of the whole universe. Hence the Book revealed by Him will contain nothing but the Truth. As a matter of fact, one can learn pure Truth from that Book alone which has been sent down by the All-Knowing and All-Wise."

4. This implies two important things here:

(1) Allah knows your nature better than yourself or anybody else: therefore, there is no other alternative for you but to trust in the Guidance sent down by Him.

(2) The Benevolent Allah Who has been providing for all your needs, great and small, throughout all the stages of your life, ever since your mothers conceived you, could not possibly have neglected to provide for your guidance, which is after all the greatest need of your life.

5. "*Muḥkam*" is that which is precise, exact, clear and decisive. *Muḥkamāt* are those verses of the Qur'ān which have been so couched as to make their meaning quite plain without any shade of ambiguity. They have been purposely so worded as to make their meaning definite and precise leaving little room for misinterpretation. These verses constitute the fundamental principles of the Book, *i.e.*, they and they alone determine the aim and object for which the Qur'ān has been sent down. They invite the world to Islam, teach morals and give warnings. They refute wrong beliefs and practices, and lay down the way of right living. They expound the fundamentals of religion and state beliefs and practices, morals and duties, commandments and prohibitions. Therefore a seeker after Truth should turn to these verses as these alone can satisfy his needs. Naturally such a person will concentrate on these verses and endeavour to derive the greatest benefit from them.

6. *Mutashābihāt* are those verses in which there is a possibility of more than one meaning. Their object is to give a certain minimum knowledge about the

universe, its beginning and end, the position of man therein, and such other basic things, for these things are essential for the formulation of any system of life. It is obvious that no human language possesses words, expressions, idioms etc., to depict clearly those supernatural things, which have never yet been grasped by human senses, nor seen nor heard nor smelt nor touched nor tasted by human beings. That is why such supernatural things have to be described in terms of human life. That is why the Qur'ān uses ambiguous verses in human language which are liable to give rise to more than one meaning. Thus it is clear that the main benefit of such verses is that they help one approach the Reality and form a conception of it. Hence the more one tries to determine their precise meanings, the more one gets involved in doubts and ambiguities. As a result of this, one will not be able to find the Reality but will be led further away from it and cause mischief. Therefore those, who seek after the Truth and do not hanker after superfluities, rest content with the simple idea of Reality they get from the ambiguous verses, which suffices them for an understanding of the Qur'ān; they concentrate their whole attention on a fuller comprehension of the verses which are precise in meaning. On the other hand, those who love superfluities or seek after mischief, spend their time and energies in giving arbitrary interpretations to the ambiguous verses.

7. This might give rise to a question: how can one believe in the truth of the ambiguous verses, if one does not know their precise meaning? The answer is that a study of the precise verses, and not of the different interpretations of the ambiguous verses, confirms a sensible man in his belief that the Qur'ān is the Word of Allah. When the study of the precise verses once convinces him that the Book is really from Allah, then the ambiguous verses do not create any doubt in his mind and he accepts the simple meanings which are within his comprehension and leaves alone any complicacies if and when they appear. Instead of hair splitting and probing into them, he believes in the Word of Allah as a whole and turns his attention to more useful things.

8. Please see F.N. 161, Al-Baqarah.

9. Although the actual ratio was three to one, yet even a casual observer could not have failed to notice that the number of the unbelievers was at least twice as great as that of the Muslims.

10. A brief review of the Battle of Badr, which had recently taken place, is being made with a view to imparting lessons by making a reference to its events and its results. This Battle taught three important lessons:

(1) It taught that even on the battlefield the Believers, who fight in the way of Allah, behave in quite a different manner from the disbelievers. The latter,

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إِنَّ الدِّيْنَ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ الْإِسْلَامُ ۗ وَمَا اخْتَلَفَ الَّذِيْنَ أُوْتُوا الْكِتٰبَ إِلَّا مِنْۢ
بَعْدِ مَا جَآءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ بَغْيًۢا بَيْنَهُمْ ۗ وَمَنْ يَّكْفُرْ بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ فَإِنَّ اللّٰهَ
سَرِيْعُ الْحِسَابِ ﴿١٩﴾ فَإِنْ حَآجُّوْكَ فَقُلْ أَسْلَمْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلّٰهِ وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِ ۗ
وَقُلْ لِّلَّذِيْنَ أُوْتُوا الْكِتٰبَ وَالْأُمِّيّٖنَ ءَأَسْلَمْتُمْ ۗ فَإِنْ أَسْلَمُوْا فَقَدِ اهْتَدَوْا ۚ
وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا عَلَيْكَ الْبَلٰغُ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ بَصِيْرٌۢ بِالْعِبَادِ ﴿٢٠﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ
يَكْفُرُوْنَ بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ وَيَقْتُلُوْنَ النَّبِيّٖنَ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ ۙ وَّيَقْتُلُوْنَ الَّذِيْنَ
يَأْمُرُوْنَ بِالْقِسْطِ مِنَ النَّاسِ ۙ فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيْمٍ ﴿٢١﴾ أُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ
حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ ۖ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِّنْ نّٰصِرِيْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾ أَلَمْ تَرَ
إِلَى الَّذِيْنَ أُوْتُوْا نَصِيْبًا مِّنَ الْكِتٰبِ يُدْعَوْنَ إِلٰى كِتٰبِ اللّٰهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ
ثُمَّ يَتَوَلّٰى فَرِيْقٌ مِّنْهُمْ وَهُمْ مُّعْرِضُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ ذٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوْا لَنْ تَمَسَّنَا
النَّارُ إِلَّآ أَيَّامًا مَّعْدُوْدٰتٍ ۖ وَغَرَّهُمْ فِيْ دِيْنِهِمْ مَّا كَانُوْا يَفْتَرُوْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾
فَكَيْفَ إِذَا جَمَعْنٰهُمْ لِيَوْمٍ لَّا رَيْبَ فِيْهِ ۖ وَوُفِّيَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ
وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٢٥﴾ قُلِ اللّٰهُمَّ مٰلِكَ الْمُلْكِ تُؤْتِي الْمُلْكَ مَنْ تَشَآءُ وَ
تَنْزِعُ الْمُلْكَ مِمَّنْ تَشَآءُ ۖ وَتُعِزُّ مَنْ تَشَآءُ وَتُذِلُّ مَنْ تَشَآءُ ۗ بِيَدِكَ
الْخَيْرُ ۗ إِنَّكَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿٢٦﴾ تُوْلِجُ الَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَتُوْلِجُ النَّهَارَ
فِي الَّيْلِ ۖ وَتُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَتُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ ۖ وَتَرْزُقُ
مَنْ تَشَآءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿٢٧﴾ لَا يَتَّخِذِ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ أَوْلِيَآءَ مِنْ دُوْنِ
الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ۚ وَمَنْ يَّفْعَلْ ذٰلِكَ فَلَيْسَ مِنَ اللّٰهِ فِيْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّآ أَنْ تَتَّقُوْا
مِنْهُمْ تُقٰىةً ۗ وَيُحَذِّرُكُمُ اللّٰهُ نَفْسَهٗ ۗ وَإِلَى اللّٰهِ الْمَصِيْرُ ﴿٢٨﴾ قُلْ إِنْ

Indeed, Islam is the only right way of life in the sight of Allah.[16] Those who were given the Book, had adopted ways different from this Way for no other reason than to enable themselves to behave unjustly towards one another, after knowledge had come to them;[17] they should know that Allah is very prompt at reckoning with those who deny and reject His Commandments and Guidance. Now, if they dispute with you, tell them, "As for me and my followers, we have surrendered to Allah." Then ask those, who possess the Book and those who do not, "Have you also surrendered to Him"?[18] If they have surrendered, they are rightly guided. But if they turn away (you need not worry), for your sole responsibility was to convey the Message. As to the consequence, Allah Himself watches closely what His servants do. 19-20

Give the good tidings of a painful chastisement [19] to those who reject Allah's Revelations and slay His Prophets unjustly and are deadly against those who rise up from among the people to enjoin right and justice. They are the ones whose works have come to nought in this world and in the Next,[20] and they have no helpers.[21] 21-22

Have you not marked the behaviour of those who have received a share of the knowledge of the Book? When they are invited to the Book of Allah so that it may judge between them, some of them evade it and turn away from its judgement.[22] They do this because they say, "The fire of Hell is not going to touch us and even if it does at all, it will be only for a few days."[23] Such self invented beliefs have involved them in various kinds of misunderstandings about their religion. But what will they do when We will gather them together on the Day which is sure to come? On that day, everyone will be paid in full for what one has earned, and none shall be wronged. 23-25

Say, "O Allah, Sovereign of the Kingdom, Thou bestowest kingdom on whomever Thou wilt and Thou takest it away from whomever Thou wilt. Thou exaltest whomever Thou wilt and Thou abasest whomever Thou wilt. All that is good is in Thy power: indeed Thou hast full power over all things. Thou causest the night to pass into the day and Thou causest the day to pass into the night; Thou bringest forth the living out of the dead and Thou bringest forth the dead out of the living and Thou givest sustenance to whom Thou wilt without stint."[24] 26-27

28 Let not the Believers make the disbelievers their friends and take them into their confidence in preference to the Believers. Whoever will do this shall have no relation left with Allah; however your show of friendship towards them will be pardonable, if you do so to guard against their tyranny.[25] Anyhow Allah warns you to fear Him because to Him you shall return.[26]

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like the Quraish, indulge in merry making and enjoying wine, women, music, dance etc., while the former, like the Muslims, practise piety, and fear Allah and absorb themselves in prayer.

(2) The victory of the Muslims, in spite of their smaller number and less equipment, over the disbelievers who had a larger number and better weapons was a clear proof that they had Allah's succour with them.

(3) The defeat was a shocking lesson for the disbelievers, who were neglectful of Allah's power and proud of their equipment and the large number of their helpers. By this, Allah taught that He can bestow power on a small number of poor migrants from Makkah and the farmers of Al-Madinah, to inflict crushing defeat on the Quraish, the most influential and powerful clan of Arabia.

11. Please see E.N. 27, Al-Baqarah.

12. That is, "Allah does not shower His favours erroneously nor whimsically nor does He make cursory and superficial decisions. He is fully aware of the actions, deeds and intentions of His servants, and evaluates them correctly and knows full well who should deserve His favour and who should incur His displeasure."

13. It means, "They stand steadfast for the sake of truth, are not daunted by losses or hardships, are not disheartened by failures, and are not turned aside from the right path by temptations. They stick to the Truth even when there appears to be no chance of success." (Please see E.N. 60, Al-Baqarah also.)

14. That is: This is the testimony of Allah Himself that He alone in the whole universe possesses the attributes of God-head and the authority and the rights of God-head. This is His testimony, and who could be a more reliable Testifier than He Who has direct knowledge of all the realities of the universe? He sees His whole creation spread before Him, and from Him nothing is hidden in the heavens or in the earth.

15. Next to Allah, the most trustworthy witnesses are angels, who are the managing agents of the affairs of His Kingdom of the Universe. Their evidence is based on their personal knowledge, that is,

"None but Allah wields command in this kingdom and none but He gives orders for the administration of the affairs of the earth and the heavens." Then all those people, who have been bestowed with the knowledge of the realities, have been unanimously bearing witness, since the beginning of the world to the present day, that Allah alone is the Master and the Designer of the whole universe.

16. It implies that in the sight of Allah there is only one correct system and one right way of life for man. It is this: Man should worship Allah, acknowledge Him as his Master and surrender himself completely to Him in His worship and service. He should not invent his own way of worship but should faithfully follow that Guidance alone which Allah has revealed through His Messengers, without adding anything to or taking away anything from it. This way of thinking and behaving is called "Islam." And it is the absolute right of the Creator and the Master of the Universe that He should not accept as lawful from His subjects, His own creation, any way other than Islam. One might ignorantly think it to be one's right to follow any system, atheism, idolatry, etc., but the Ruler of the Universe will regard this behaviour as rebellious.

17. It means that originally Islam and Islam alone was professed and preached by every Messenger who was sent by Allah at any time in any corner of the world. Hence any Scripture sent down to any community in any language taught the same Islam. Afterwards, the people distorted this original religion and added to it something to suit their interests or to gratify their lusts, and omitted those things from it which went against their interests. They invented new religions just because they wanted to transgress the prescribed limits and run after undue privileges and gains and distinctions. Thus they made changes in the beliefs, principles and injunctions of the true Faith to make it subservient to their own desires and lusts.

18. The same thing may be expressed thus: "My followers and I have been convinced of this same pure Islam and have accepted the true religion of Allah; now tell us whether you also will give up the innovations which you and your elders have introduced into it and turn to the original true religion."

19. This is an ironical way of bringing home to the disbelievers the consequences of those mischievous deeds in which they rejoice today, regarding them as "nice things."

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تُخْفُوْا مَا فِيْ صُدُوْرِكُمْ اَوْ تُبْدُوْهُ يَعْلَمْهُ اللّٰهُ ؕ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ
مَا فِي الْاَرْضِ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿29﴾ يَوْمَ تَجِدُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا
عَمِلَتْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ مُّحْضَرًا ۚ وَّمَا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ سُوْٓءٍ ۚ تَوَدُّ لَوْ اَنَّ بَيْنَهَا وَ معانقة ٣
بَيْنَهٗٓ اَمَدًا بَعِيْدًا ؕ وَيُحَذِّرُكُمُ اللّٰهُ نَفْسَهٗ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ رَءُوْفٌۢ بِالْعِبَادِ ﴿30﴾
قُلْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّوْنَ اللّٰهَ فَاتَّبِعُوْنِيْ يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللّٰهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوْبَكُمْ ؕ
وَاللّٰهُ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿31﴾ قُلْ اَطِيْعُوا اللّٰهَ وَالرَّسُوْلَ ۚ فَاِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَاِنَّ
اللّٰهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿32﴾ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ اصْطَفٰٓى اٰدَمَ وَنُوْحًا وَّاٰلَ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ
وَاٰلَ عِمْرٰنَ عَلَى الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿33﴾ ذُرِّيَّةًۢ بَعْضُهَا مِنْۢ بَعْضٍ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ سَمِيْعٌ
عَلِيْمٌ ﴿34﴾ اِذْ قَالَتِ امْرَاَتُ عِمْرٰنَ رَبِّ اِنِّيْ نَذَرْتُ لَكَ مَا فِيْ بَطْنِيْ مُحَرَّرًا
فَتَقَبَّلْ مِنِّيْ ۚ اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿35﴾ فَلَمَّا وَضَعَتْهَا قَالَتْ رَبِّ اِنِّيْ
وَضَعْتُهَآ اُنْثٰى ؕ وَاللّٰهُ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا وَضَعَتْ ؕ وَلَيْسَ الذَّكَرُ كَالْاُنْثٰى ۚ وَاِنِّيْ
سَمَّيْتُهَا مَرْيَمَ وَاِنِّيْٓ اُعِيْذُهَا بِكَ وَذُرِّيَّتَهَا مِنَ الشَّيْطٰنِ الرَّجِيْمِ ﴿36﴾
فَتَقَبَّلَهَا رَبُّهَا بِقَبُوْلٍ حَسَنٍ وَّاَنْۢبَتَهَا نَبَاتًا حَسَنًا ۙ وَّكَفَّلَهَا زَكَرِيَّا ؕ كُلَّمَا
دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا زَكَرِيَّا الْمِحْرَابَ ۙ وَجَدَ عِنْدَهَا رِزْقًا ۚ قَالَ يٰمَرْيَمُ اَنّٰى لَكِ
هٰذَا ؕ قَالَتْ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللّٰهِ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿37﴾
هُنَالِكَ دَعَا زَكَرِيَّا رَبَّهٗ ۚ قَالَ رَبِّ هَبْ لِيْ مِنْ لَّدُنْكَ ذُرِّيَّةً طَيِّبَةً ۚ
اِنَّكَ سَمِيْعُ الدُّعَآءِ ﴿38﴾ فَنَادَتْهُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ وَهُوَ قَآئِمٌ يُّصَلِّيْ فِي الْمِحْرَابِ ۙ
اَنَّ اللّٰهَ يُبَشِّرُكَ بِيَحْيٰى مُصَدِّقًۢا بِكَلِمَةٍ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ وَسَيِّدًا وَّحَصُوْرًا وَّ
نَبِيًّا مِّنَ الصّٰلِحِيْنَ ﴿39﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ اَنّٰى يَكُوْنُ لِيْ غُلٰمٌ وَّقَدْ بَلَغَنِيَ الْكِبَرُ

O Prophet, warn the people to note it well that Allah knows whatever is in your hearts whether you hide it or reveal it, for He knows everything that is in the heavens and in the earth and He has full power over all things. That Day is approaching when everyone shall find before him whatever he has done, be it good or evil. On that Day one would wish that there were a long span of time between himself and that Day. Allah warns you to fear Him for He is very Compassionate towards His servants.[27] 29-30

O Prophet, tell the people, "If you sincerely love Allah follow me; then will Allah love you and forgive your sins, for He is Forgiving and Merciful." Also say to them, "Obey Allah and His Messenger." And if, in spite of this, they do not accept your invitation, (warn them that) Allah does not love those who refuse to obey Him and His Messenger.[28] 31-32

Allah [29] had chosen (for His Message) Adam, and Noah and the family of Abraham and the family of 'Imrān [30] in preference to all the people of the world. They all belonged to the same chain and were the offspring of one another. Allah knows everything and hears everything.[31] (He was hearing,) when the woman of 'Imrān [32] was saying, "My Lord, I vow to Thee what is in my womb for Thy special service: so accept this offering of mine for Thou hearest and knowest everything."[33] Afterwards when she delivered her child, she said, "Lord, I have delivered a girl" --- and Allah knew very well what she had delivered --- "and the male is not (handicapped) like the female.[34] As it is, I have named her Mary, and I implore Thy protection for her and for her future offspring from the mischief of Satan, the Accursed." So, her Lord very graciously accepted the girl and made her grow up as a good girl and entrusted her to the care of Zacharias. 33-37

Whenever Zacharias[35] entered the sanctuary [36] to see her, he found some eatables with her; he would ask, "O Mary, whence have these come to you?" She would answer, "It is from Allah: Allah provides without stint for whom He wills." Thereupon Zacharias invoked his Lord and said, "Lord, bestow upon me from Thyself righteous offspring for Thou alone hearest prayers."[37] As he stood praying in the sanctuary, the angels called him and said, "Allah gives you the good news of a son to be named John;[38] he will come to confirm a Command from Allah;[39] he will be a great leader: he will be 37-39

highly disciplined: he will be appointed a Prophet, and will be among the righteous."

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20. That is, "As they have spent all their energies and powers in evil ways, their works will bring them to ruin both in this world and in the Next World".

21. That is, "There is no such power which can bring out good results from their wrongly directed efforts or at least make them harmless. All the various agencies, which they believe will help them in this world or in the Next World or in both, shall be absolutely of no avail to them anywhere."

22. That is, "They are asked to acknowledge the Book of Allah as the final authority and bow before its decrees and accept as true whatever is proved to be true by it, and reject whatever is proved to be false by it. "It should be noted that here by the Book of God is meant the Torah or the Gospel and by "the people who have received a share of the knowledge of the Book" are meant the learned people of the Jews and the Christians.

23. As such people regard themselves to be the favourites of God, they delude themselves that they are going to enter into Paradise anyhow, irrespective of the quality of their deeds. They foolishly believe that the fire of Hell dare not touch them because they are "true" believers and the children of such pious ancestors, and the followers of such and such prophets and the disciples of such and such saints, etc., etc. And if at all they are cast into Hell, they argue, they will be kept there only for a few days and that, too, to be cleansed of the impurity of sins and then will go into Paradise permanently. Such misleading ideas and conceptions have made them so bold that they commit the gravest crimes and the most heinous sins fearlessly: so much so that they openly disown the Truth without the least fear of Allah.

24. Verses 26 and 27 fit in beautifully between the preceding and the subsequent verses. From verse 19 begins a warning and challenge to the opponents of Islam, and in verse 25, the Muslims have been consoled with the assurance that their enemies shall be paid in full on the Day of Judgment. But in order to reassure them, Allah has in these verses, answered an unasked question which arises when one sees that the disbelievers and the disobedient to Allah are prospering in the world, while the believers and the obedient servants of Allah are starving and suffering from hardships. The question is: What wisdom underlies this disparity in the prosperity and adversity of the two groups? At the time (A.H. 3) of the revelation of this discourse the Holy Prophet and his Companions were so hard pressed on all sides that the same question was arising in the people's minds. Its

answer is contained in these verses: Allah to Whom belongs all authority, power, wealth, prosperity etc., etc., gives a portion of these to whomsoever He wills, and they should not feel uneasy and anxious about this disparity because He is All-Wise and All-Knowing. Moreover Allah gives wealth to whomsoever He wills; therefore it is not to be made the criterion of honour and friendship. Hence in the subsequent verses, the Muslims have been prohibited from making the prosperous disbelievers,their friends.

25. That is, "If a believer falls into the hands of the enemies of Islam and is afraid of maltreatment and high-handedness, he may conceal his Faith, and live among them as if he were one of them. Or, if they come to know of his Faith, he may make a show of his friendship towards them to save his life. In case of extreme fear, he is permitted even to disown his Faith, if he feels that he is not strong enough to endure their oppression."

26. This is the admonition: Let not the fear of the people dominate over you so much as to drive out the fear of Allah from your hearts. The greatest harm the people can do to you is confined to the worldly life only, but Allah has the power to inflict an everlasting torment on you. Therefore, if you are forced in a case of extremity to hide your Faith due to any danger to your life, you may save your own life and property, provided that you do not in any way harm the interests of the Islamic mission and the Islamic community or the life or property of any Muslim. At the same time you must remain on your guard against becoming the instrument in the hands of disbelievers so as to strengthen the evil forces against Islam and render any service to the disbelievers that might enable them to overpower the Muslims. Remember that, if to save your life you do any kind of harm to the religion of Allah or to the community of the faithful or even to the person of a single believer, or if you render any real service to the rebels against Allah, you will never be able to save yourselves on the Day of Reckoning, when you shall have at last to return to Allah

27. That is, "It is simply out of His extreme compassion for you that Allah warns you beforehand of those things that might lead you to ruin."

28. Here the first discourse ends. If We consider its theme, and especially its reference to the Battle of Badr, we come to the conclusion that the probable period of the revelation of this was some time after the Battle of Badr and before the Battle of Uḥd, that is 3 A.H. A tradition of Muhammad bin Ishāq has generally misled people to fix the period of the revelation of the first 80 verses to 9 A.H., for according to that tradition it was sent down on the occasion of the deputation from Najrān. But obviously, that is wrong for two reasons: first, the subject of this introductory discourse shows clearly that it was revealed much earlier. Second, the tradition of Muqātil-bin-Sulaimān is explicit on the point that on the occasion of the

said deputation only those verses (33-63) were revealed which give an account of John the Baptist and Jesus (God's peace be upon them).

29. From here begins the second discourse. It was sent down in 9 A.H. on the occasion of the visit of the deputation from the Christian State of Najrān, which lay between Hijāz and Yemen. It is said that it comprised 73 villages and towns and was capable of raising an army of more than one hundred thousand strong. The population was wholly Christian and was governed by the "Āqib," who was the head of the community, and the "Sayyid," who was in charge of the social and political affairs and the Bishop, who looked after the religious affairs of the people. The above-mentioned deputation was one of the many who visited the Holy Prophet after the conquest of Makkah, when the whole of Arabia came to realize that the future of the country was now in his hands. This deputation from Najrān to Al-Madīnah consisted of 60 men and the three heads of the government. As they had no mind to go to war, the question before them was either to embrace Islam or to live as (ذمّی) *zimmī* (proteges). On this occasion Allah sent down this discourse to the Holy Prophet to invite the members of the deputation to Islam.

30. 'Imrān was the name of the father of Moses and Aaron and has been mentioned as "Amram" in the Bible.

31. The main cause of the misguidance of the Christians is that they consider Jesus to be the son of God and a partner in God-head, instead of His Servant and Messenger. Therefore this basic error is being corrected with a view to making them understand the true and real Islam. That is why the introduction to the discourse begins with the assertion that Adam and Noah and the Prophets from the family of Abraham and from the family of 'Imrān, were all human beings and none of them was "God." Their only distinction was that Allah had chosen them for the preaching of His religion and reforming the World.

32. If by the "woman of 'Imrān" is meant the "wife of 'Imrān", then this must be a different 'Imran from the one mentioned above in v. 33. In that case one comes to the conclusion that the father of Mary was named 'Imran after that ancestor. But if by the "woman of 'Imrān" is meant a woman from the family of 'Imran, then it merely shows that Mary's mother was a descendant of 'Imrān. We possess no authentic knowledge of the basis on which one opinion may be preferred to the other. Though according to some Christian traditions the name of Mary's father was Iaachim, history does not say who the father of Mary was and to which family her mother belonged. But if the tradition that the mothers of Mary and Elisabeth, the mother of John, were cousins be taken as true, (Luke 1: 36), then the "woman of 'Imrān" will mean a woman from the family of 'Imrān.

The Gospel of Luke (1: 5) says that Elisabeth, the wife of Zacharias. "was of the daughters of Aaron", that is, 'Imrān daughter or woman of 'Imrān; therefore it is clear that there is no anachronism of confounding Miriam, the sister of Aaron, with the virgin Mary. It is a common practice to call children by the names of their ancestors; so both the explanations are equally acceptable. Moreover, it does not make any difference whatsoever, in the line of argument adopted here to explain the miraculous birth of Jesus, whether 'Imrān was really the name of Mary's father or has been called so in the ancestral sense.

33. That is, "Thou hearest the prayers of Thy servants and art aware of their intentions."

34. By this she meant, "Had it been a male, it would have been better because the female is handicapped by many natural frailties and social restrictions and cannot become a priest. A male child would, therefore, have served the purpose better for which I have dedicated my child in Thy way."

35. This happened when Mary had reached the age of discretion and had been admitted into the sanctuary of the Temple (Jerusalem), where she was busy, day and night, in the worship of Allah. Zacharias who had been made her guardian was probably the husband of her maternal aunt and was one of the keepers of the Temple. He was not the Prophet Zachariah, who was killed according to the Old Testament.

36. The Arabic word *"miḥrāb"* usually reminds one of the arch (prayer niche) meant for the *imām* in the mosques. But here this word has been used for those cells which are built on comparatively raised ground adjoining the monasteries and churches. They are meant for the keepers and guardians of the places of worship, and for those who retire for worship in seclusion. In such a cell Mary had retired for worship in seclusion.

37. Zacharias was childless till that time. Seeing this pious young girl, he longed for a good child. Seeing how she was growing under the special protection of Allah, Who supplied her in her seclusion, with provisions from His vast sources, he began to cherish the hope that Allah should bestow upon him a child even in his old age, if He so willed.

38. The Bible mentions him as John the Baptist. (Matthew: Chaps. 3, 11,14; Mark 1, 6; Luke 1, 3).

39. "Command from Allah" here refers to Jesus Christ. The Holy Qur'ān calls him a "Command from Allah" because the birth was brought about miraculously by an extraordinary Command from Allah.

وَامْرَاَتِیْ عَاقِرٌ ؕ قَالَ كَذٰلِكَ اللّٰهُ یَفْعَلُ مَا یَشَآءُ ۝40 قَالَ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ لِّیْۤ
اٰیَةً ؕ قَالَ اٰیَتُكَ اَلَّا تُكَلِّمَ النَّاسَ ثَلٰثَةَ اَیَّامٍ اِلَّا رَمْزًا ؕ وَاذْكُرْ رَّبَّكَ
كَثِیْرًا وَّسَبِّحْ بِالْعَشِیِّ وَالْاِبْكَارِ ۝41 وَاِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ یٰمَرْیَمُ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ
اصْطَفٰىكِ وَطَهَّرَكِ وَاصْطَفٰىكِ عَلٰی نِسَآءِ الْعٰلَمِیْنَ ۝42 یٰمَرْیَمُ اقْنُتِیْ
لِرَبِّكِ وَاسْجُدِیْ وَارْكَعِیْ مَعَ الرّٰكِعِیْنَ ۝43 ذٰلِكَ مِنْ اَنْۢبَآءِ الْغَیْبِ نُوْحِیْهِ
اِلَیْكَ ؕ وَمَا كُنْتَ لَدَیْهِمْ اِذْ یُلْقُوْنَ اَقْلَامَهُمْ اَیُّهُمْ یَكْفُلُ مَرْیَمَ ۪ وَمَا
كُنْتَ لَدَیْهِمْ اِذْ یَخْتَصِمُوْنَ ۝44 اِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ یٰمَرْیَمُ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ
یُبَشِّرُكِ بِكَلِمَةٍ مِّنْهُ ۖ اسْمُهُ الْمَسِیْحُ عِیْسَی ابْنُ مَرْیَمَ وَجِیْهًا فِی الدُّنْیَا
وَالْاٰخِرَةِ وَمِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِیْنَ ۝45 وَیُكَلِّمُ النَّاسَ فِی الْمَهْدِ وَكَهْلًا وَّمِنَ
الصّٰلِحِیْنَ ۝46 قَالَتْ رَبِّ اَنّٰی یَكُوْنُ لِیْ وَلَدٌ وَّلَمْ یَمْسَسْنِیْ بَشَرٌ ؕ قَالَ
كَذٰلِكِ اللّٰهُ یَخْلُقُ مَا یَشَآءُ ؕ اِذَا قَضٰۤی اَمْرًا فَاِنَّمَا یَقُوْلُ لَهٗ كُنْ
فَیَكُوْنُ ۝47 وَیُعَلِّمُهُ الْكِتٰبَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَالتَّوْرٰىةَ وَالْاِنْجِیْلَ ۝48 وَرَسُوْلًا
اِلٰی بَنِیْۤ اِسْرَآءِیْلَ ۙ اَنِّیْ قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِاٰیَةٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ ۙ اَنِّیْۤ اَخْلُقُ لَكُمْ
مِّنَ الطِّیْنِ كَهَیْـَٔةِ الطَّیْرِ فَاَنْفُخُ فِیْهِ فَیَكُوْنُ طَیْرًۢا بِاِذْنِ اللّٰهِ ۚ وَاُبْرِئُ
الْاَكْمَهَ وَالْاَبْرَصَ وَاُحْیِ الْمَوْتٰی بِاِذْنِ اللّٰهِ ۚ وَاُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا تَاْكُلُوْنَ وَ
مَا تَدَّخِرُوْنَ ۙ فِیْ بُیُوْتِكُمْ ؕ اِنَّ فِیْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰیَةً لَّكُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِیْنَ ۝49
وَمُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَیْنَ یَدَیَّ مِنَ التَّوْرٰىةِ وَلِاُحِلَّ لَكُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِیْ حُرِّمَ
عَلَیْكُمْ وَجِئْتُكُمْ بِاٰیَةٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ ۖ فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَاَطِیْعُوْنِ ۝50 اِنَّ اللّٰهَ رَبِّیْ
وَرَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوْهُ ؕ هٰذَا صِرَاطٌ مُّسْتَقِیْمٌ ۝51 فَلَمَّاۤ اَحَسَّ عِیْسٰی مِنْهُمُ الْكُفْرَ

Zacharias said, "Lord, how shall I beget a son now that I have grown very old and my wife is barren?" "Thus will it be,"[40] was the answer. "Allah does whatever He wills." He said, "Lord, give me a Sign."[41] "Your Sign is that you shall not (be able to) speak to anyone for three days but by gestures. During this period you should remember your Lord much and glorify His Name in the morning and in the evening."[42] 40-41

Then came the time, when the angels said to Mary, "O Mary, Allah has exalted you and purified you and chosen you for His service in preference to all the women of the world. O Mary, be obedient to your Lord, prostrate yourself before Him and bow down with those who bow down in worship." 42-43

O Muhammad, these are the "unseen" things, We are revealing to you: you were not present there when the priests of the Temple were casting lots by throwing their quills to decide which of them should be the guardian of Mary:[43] nor were you with them when they were arguing about it. 44

And remember when the angels said, "O Mary, Allah sends you the good news of a Command of His: his name shall be Messiah, Jesus son of Mary. He will be highly honoured in this world and in the Next World and he will be among those favoured by Allah. He will speak to the people alike when in the cradle and when grown up, and he will be among the righteous." Hearing this, Mary said, "How, O Lord, shall I have a son, when no man has ever touched me?" "Thus shall it be,"[44] was the answer. Allah creates whatever He wills. When He decrees a thing, He only says, "Be" and it is. (Continuing their message, the angels added,) "And Allah will teach him the Book and wisdom, and give him the knowledge of the Torah and the Gospel, and appoint him as His Messenger to the children of Israel." 45-49

(And when he came as a Messenger to the children of Israel, he said,) "I have come to you with a clear Sign from your Lord: in your very presence, I make the likeness of a bird out of clay and breathe into it and it becomes, by Allah's Command, a bird. I heal those born blind and the lepers and I bring to life the dead by Allah's Command: I inform you of what you eat and what you store up in your houses. Surely there is a great Sign for you in all this, if you have a mind to 49-51

believe.[45] And I have come to confirm those teachings of the Guidance of the Torah which are intact in my time.[46] Lo! I have come with a clear Sign from your Lord;[47] so fear Allah and obey me. Indeed Allah is my Lord, and also your Lord; therefore worship Him alone: that is the straight way."[48]

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40. That is, "Despite your old age and the sterility of your wife, Allah will bestow upon you a son."

41. That is, "Give me a token to assure me beforehand of the birth of a son to an old man and a barren woman."

42. The main object of this discourse is to make the Christians realize the error of their belief in taking Jesus for the son of God, and making him an object of worship. The extraordinary birth of John has been mentioned in the Qur'ān to serve as introduction to the subsequent argument against their wrong belief. The miraculous birth of Jesus could no more entitle him to Divinity than the extraordinary birth of John, brought about in the same family in a different and unusual way could entitle the latter to Divinity.

43. As Mary was a girl who had been dedicated by her mother to the Temple in the way of Allah, the question of her guardianship had become a problem for the keepers because of her sex. They were therefore casting lots to decide the delicate problem.

44. That is, "Although no man has touched you, yet a son shall be born to you." It should be noted that the same word *"kazālika,"* meaning "so shall it be," had been used in response to Zacharias' prayer. It, therefore, carries the same sense here. Moreover, the whole context here corroborates the story that Mary was given the glad tidings of the birth of a son without any sexual intercourse, and the birth of Christ, in actual fact, took place in that unusual way. If a son was to be born to her in the normal known way, and if the event of the birth of Jesus had taken place in a natural way, then the whole discourse starting from verse 33 and ending with verse 63 would become absolutely pointless. Not only that but all other references to the unusual birth of Jesus in the Qur'ān would lose their significance and meaning. The Christians had made Jesus the Son of God and worthy of worship simply because of his unusual birth without a father and the Jews had accused Mary because they had witnessed that she had given birth to a child, though she was not married. Had it been otherwise, then the two groups could have been told plainly that the girl was married to such and such a man and that Jesus was from his seed. In that case, one fails to see the reason why such a long introduction and a series of arguments should have been necessary to remove all doubts about his miraculous birth. Then Jesus could have been called the son of

a particular man, instead of being called "the son of Mary". The position of those people who, on the one hand, profess to believe the Holy Qur'ān to be the Word of Allah and on the other hand try to prove that Jesus was born after the natural coming together of a husband and wife, really try to show that Allah is not able to express Himself as clearly as these people. (May God protect us from blasphemy!)

45. That is, "These Signs are clear enough to convince you that I have been sent by that Allah Who is the Creator and Absolute Ruler of this universe, provided that you are not obdurate but are willing to accept the Truth."

46. That is, "This is yet another proof of the fact that I have been sent by Allah. If I had been a false prophet I would have invented my own religion and by virtue of these miracles striven to divert you from your previous Faith to the New creed. But I profess the same original religion to be true and confirm the same teachings which were brought by the Prophets before me."

The fact that Jesus taught the same religion that had been presented by Moses and the other Prophets is supported even by the existing Gospels. For example, according to the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus declared in the Sermon on the Mount: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the Prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." (5: 17).

One of the Pharisees, who was a lawyer, asked Jesus, "Which is the great commandment in the law?" He replied:

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and the great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and Prophets." (Matthew 22: 37-40).

On another occasion Jesus said to his disciples:

"The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not." (Matthew 23: 2-3).

47. That is, "I have come to efface and abolish the superstitions of your ignorant people, the hairsplitting of your jurists, the religious austerities of your ascetics and the restrictive additions made in the Law of Allah under the non-Muslim domination; I will make lawful or unlawful for you only those things which Allah has made lawful or unlawful."

48. This shows that like all other Prophets, Jesus also based his teachings on the following three fundamentals:

[Contd. on p.244

قَالَ مَنْ اَنْصَارِیْۤ اِلَى اللّٰهِ ؕ قَالَ الْحَوَارِیُّوْنَ نَحْنُ اَنْصَارُ اللّٰهِ ۚ اٰمَنَّا بِاللّٰهِ ۚ
وَاشْهَدْ بِاَنَّا مُسْلِمُوْنَ ﴿۵۲﴾ رَبَّنَاۤ اٰمَنَّا بِمَاۤ اَنْزَلْتَ وَاتَّبَعْنَا الرَّسُوْلَ فَاكْتُبْنَا
مَعَ الشّٰهِدِیْنَ ﴿۵۳﴾ وَمَكَرُوْا وَمَكَرَ اللّٰهُ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ خَیْرُ الْمٰكِرِیْنَ ﴿۵۴﴾ اِذْ قَالَ
اللّٰهُ یٰعِیْسٰۤى اِنِّیْ مُتَوَفِّیْكَ وَرَافِعُكَ اِلَیَّ وَمُطَهِّرُكَ مِنَ الَّذِیْنَ كَفَرُوْا
وَجَاعِلُ الَّذِیْنَ اتَّبَعُوْكَ فَوْقَ الَّذِیْنَ كَفَرُوْۤا اِلٰى یَوْمِ الْقِیٰمَةِ ۚ ثُمَّ اِلَیَّ
مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَاَحْكُمُ بَیْنَكُمْ فِیْمَا كُنْتُمْ فِیْهِ تَخْتَلِفُوْنَ ﴿۵۵﴾ فَاَمَّا الَّذِیْنَ كَفَرُوْا
فَاُعَذِّبُهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِیْدًا فِی الدُّنْیَا وَالْاٰخِرَةِ ۫ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِّنْ نّٰصِرِیْنَ ﴿۵۶﴾
وَاَمَّا الَّذِیْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ فَیُوَفِّیْهِمْ اُجُوْرَهُمْ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ لَا یُحِبُّ
الظّٰلِمِیْنَ ﴿۵۷﴾ ذٰلِكَ نَتْلُوْهُ عَلَیْكَ مِنَ الْاٰیٰتِ وَالذِّكْرِ الْحَكِیْمِ ﴿۵۸﴾ اِنَّ
مَثَلَ عِیْسٰى عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ كَمَثَلِ اٰدَمَ ؕ خَلَقَهٗ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ قَالَ لَهٗ كُنْ
فَیَكُوْنُ ﴿۵۹﴾ اَلْحَقُّ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُنْ مِّنَ الْمُمْتَرِیْنَ ﴿۶۰﴾ فَمَنْ حَآجَّكَ
فِیْهِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَآءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ فَقُلْ تَعَالَوْا نَدْعُ اَبْنَآءَنَا وَاَبْنَآءَكُمْ
وَنِسَآءَنَا وَنِسَآءَكُمْ وَاَنْفُسَنَا وَاَنْفُسَكُمْ ۟ ثُمَّ نَبْتَهِلْ فَنَجْعَلْ لَّعْنَتَ اللّٰهِ
عَلَى الْكٰذِبِیْنَ ﴿۶۱﴾ اِنَّ هٰذَا لَهُوَ الْقَصَصُ الْحَقُّ ۚ وَمَا مِنْ اِلٰهٍ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ ؕ
وَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِیْزُ الْحَكِیْمُ ﴿۶۲﴾ فَاِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلِیْمٌۢ بِالْمُفْسِدِیْنَ ﴿۶۳﴾
قُلْ یٰۤاَهْلَ الْكِتٰبِ تَعَالَوْا اِلٰى كَلِمَةٍ سَوَآءٍۢ بَیْنَنَا وَبَیْنَكُمْ اَلَّا نَعْبُدَ اِلَّا
اللّٰهَ وَلَا نُشْرِكَ بِهٖ شَیْـًٔا وَّلَا یَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا اَرْبَابًا مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ ؕ
فَاِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُوْلُوا اشْهَدُوْا بِاَنَّا مُسْلِمُوْنَ ﴿۶۴﴾ یٰۤاَهْلَ الْكِتٰبِ لِمَ تُحَآجُّوْنَ
فِیْۤ اِبْرٰهِیْمَ وَمَاۤ اُنْزِلَتِ التَّوْرٰىةُ وَالْاِنْجِیْلُ اِلَّا مِنْۢ بَعْدِهٖ ؕ اَفَلَا تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿۶۵﴾

When Jesus perceived that the children of Israel were bent upon disbelief, he said, "Who will be my helper in the cause of Allah?" The disciples[49] (promptly responded and) said, "We are Allah's helpers:[50] we have believed in Allah; so do bear witness that we are Muslims (who surrender to Allah). Lord! we have believed in that which Thou hast sent down and followed Thy Messenger; so enrol us among those who bear witness. 52-53

Then the children of Israel began to plot (against Jesus) and Allah also devised His secret plan, and Allah is the best of devisers. (It was to carry out His secret plan that) He said, "O Jesus, now I will recall[51] you and raise you up to Myself and cleanse you of (the uncongenial company and the filthy environment of) those who have rejected you and will set up those who follow you above those who have rejected you[52] till the Day of Resurrection. And ultimately all of you shall return to Me: then I will judge between you in what you differ, and punish with a grievous punishment, both in this world and in the Hereafter, those who have adopted the attitude of disbelief and rejection and they shall have none to help them. And those, who have believed and done good deeds, shall be given their rewards in full. And note it well that Allah does not like the transgressors." 54-57

The stories which We are relating to you are full of signs and wisdom. In the sight of Allah, the case of the birth of Jesus is like that of Adam, whom He created out of dust and said, "Be", and he was.[53] This is the fact of the matter your lord is imparting, and you should not be of those who doubt it.[54] 58-60

After the coming of this knowledge to you, if anyone argues with you about this matter, say, O Muhammad, "Come, let us both gather together and also bring our children and your children, our women and your women, and then pray to Allah and invoke Him to lay the liars under His curse."[55] These narratives are absolutely true and the fact is that there is no deity save Allah; indeed Allah is All-Mighty and All-Wise. Then if they turn away (from accepting the challenge) it will be a clear proof of their mischief and Allah has full knowledge of the mischief-makers. 6163

Say,[56] "O people of the Book! Come to what is common between us and you,[57] that we worship none but Allah; that we 64

associate nothing with Him and that none of us shall make as our Lord any other than Allah." If they reject your invitation, then tell them plainly, "Bear witness that we are Muslims (who worship and surrender to Allah alone)."

65 O people of the Book, why do you argue with us about Abraham (as to whether he was a Jew or a Christian? You know that) the Torah and the Gospel were sent down long after him. Why do you not, then, understand even this?[58] You have had enough arguments

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Contd. from p.241]

(1) The Supreme Authority to which mankind should submit and surrender exclusively belongs to Allah and all the social and moral systems should be built entirely on it.

(2) Being a representative of the same Paramount Power, a prophet must be obeyed unconditionally.

(3) Allah alone is entitled to prescribe laws and regulations for making things lawful or unlawful, pure and impure; consequently all laws imposed by others must be abolished.

Thus it is clear that Jesus, Moses, Muhammad and all other Prophets (Allah's peace be upon them all) had one and the same mission. Those people who aver that different Prophets were sent with different missions and to fulfil different aims, are gravely mistaken. Anyone, who is delegated by the Absolute Master of the Universe to His subjects, cannot have any other mission than to prevent the people, from becoming disobedient to and independent of Him, and to forbid them to set others to rank with Allah as partners in His Authority in any way. For, they are sent to invite the people to surrender and submit and be loyal to the Almighty God and worship Him alone.

It is a pity that the existing Gospels do not present the mission of Jesus so precisely and clearly as it has been presented above in the Holy Qur'ān. Nevertheless all the three basic things mentioned above are found scattered over in these Books. For instance, the fact that Jesus believed exclusively in the worship of Allah is clear from the following:

(1) "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." (Matthew 4: 10).

(2) Not only did he believe in this, but also made it the ultimate aim of all his activities and strove to make the people of the earth to submit to the revealed Law of Allah just as the whole universe submits to His physical Law.

"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." (Matthew 6 :10).

Then the fact that Jesus always presented himself as a prophet and as a representative of the Kingdom of Heaven, and always invited the people to follow him in that capacity alone, is supported by a number of his sayings. When he started his mission in his native place, Nazareth, the people of his own town and his own kinsfolk rose against him and according to an agreed tradition of Matthew, Mark and Luke, he said: "No prophet is accepted in his own country". And when his enemies were conspiring at Jerusalem to kill him and the people advised him to go to somewhere else, he replied: "It cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem." (Luke 13: 33).

When he was entering Jerusalem for the last time, his disciples began to utter in a loud voice: "Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord." At this the Pharisees felt offended and asked him to silence his disciples. He replied:

"I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out." (Luke 19: 38-40).

On another occasion he said:

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me for I am meek and lowly in heart ..... my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matthew 11: 28-30). Moreover the fact that Jesus wanted the people to obey the Divine Law rather than man-made laws becomes clear from that tradition of Matthew and Mark which says that when the Pharisees asked, why his disciples transgressed the tradition of the elders and took food without washing their hands, he replied and said, "Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandments of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups; and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye." (Mark 7: 6-13).

49. The Arabic word حواری *(ḥavārī)* is almost the equivalent of "helper". In the Bible, they have been called "disciples" and at some places "apostles" because Jesus used to send them to the people to deliver his message, and not because God had appointed them as His apostles.

50. Those people who help establish Islam have been called Allah's helpers. In order to understand its significance, it should be kept in view that Allah has taken upon Himself to persuade human beings to adopt Islam of their free will, for He does not force His will on man in those spheres of his life in which He has granted him freedom of action but likes to convince him by reason and admonition. As it is the work of Allah to bring the people to the right way by admonition and advice, He calls those people who exert their utmost to establish Islam "His helpers and companions." This is indeed the highest position that a servant of Allah can aspire to achieve. For man's position is merely that of a servant when he is engaged in praying, fasting and other kinds of worship, but he is elevated to the high and unique position of God's companion and assistant when he is exerting for the establishment of the way of Allah. And this is indeed the loftiest position of spiritual attainment, to which a man can aspire in this world.

51. The word (مُتَوَفِّي) *(mutawaffī)* in the Arabic text is from (تَوَفّٰى) *(tawaffā)* which literally means "to take and to receive" and "to seize the soul" is not its lexical but metaphorical meaning. Here it means "to recall from mission." Allah recalled Jesus because the Israelites had rejected him in spite of the clear Signs he had brought. They had been disobeying God for centuries and, in spite of many a warning and admonition served to them, their national character was rapidly deteriorating. They had killed several Prophets, one after the other, and had grown so audacious as to demand the blood of any good man who ventured to invite them to the Right Way. In order to give them the last chance for turning to the Truth, God appointed among them two great Prophets, Jesus and John (God's peace be upon them), at one and the same time. These Prophets came with such clear signs of their appointment from Allah that only such people dared reject them as were utterly perverted and prejudiced against the Truth and were averse to following the Right Way. Nevertheless the Israelites lost their last chance also as they not only rejected their invitation but also had the head of a great Prophet like John cut off openly at the request of a dancing girl. And their Pharisees and Jurists conspired and sought to get Jesus punished with the death sentence by the Roman Government. Thus they had proved themselves to be so obdurate that it was useless to give the Israelites any further chance. So Allah recalled His Prophet Jesus and inflicted on them a life of disgrace up to the Day of Resurrection.

It will be useful here to bear in mind the fact that this whole discourse is meant to refute and correct the Christian belief in the God-head of Jesus. Three

main things were responsible for the prevalence of this belief among the Christians:

(1) The miraculous birth of Jesus.

(2) His concrete and tangible miracles.

(3) His ascension to heaven about which their Scriptures were explicit.

The Qur'ān confirmed the first thing and made it plain that the birth of Jesus without a father was only a manifestation of the infinite powers of Allah. He can create anybody in whatever manner He wills. His miraculous birth, therefore, is no reason why he should be made a god or a partner in Godhead.

The Qur'ān also confirms the second thing and even recounts the miracles performed by Jesus, but makes it clear that all those miracles were performed by him, as a servant of Allah, by His leave and not as an independent authority. It is, therefore, wrong to infer that Jesus was a partner in Godhead.

Now let us consider the third thing. If the Christian belief in "Ascension" had been wholly baseless, it could have been refuted by pointing out that the object of their worship, the so-called "Son of God", expired long ago and had become one with dust, and that they could see, for their full satisfaction, his grave at such and such a place. But the Qur'ān does not declare this explicitly. On the other hand, it not only uses such words as give at least a vague suggestion of his "Ascension", but also denies that Jesus was crucified at all. According to it the one who gave a loud cry at his last hour, saying, "Eli,, Eli, lama sabachthani?" and the one whose picture they carry on the cross, was not Messiah at all, because God had recalled to Himself the real Messiah before the crucifixion took place.

It is thus clear that those people who try to prove the death of Jesus from these verses, really try to show that God is not able to express Himself clearly and unambiguously. (May God protect us from such a blasphemy!)

52. "Those who rejected" him were the Jews who were invited by Jesus to accept the Truth.

"Those who follow" him are really the Muslims only but if it may be taken to imply all those who believe in him, then the sincere Christians may also be included.

53. That is, "If one's miraculous birth entitles one to become God or the Son of God, then Adam was better entitled to it because he was created without either a human father or a mother, while Jesus was born without a father only.

54. The main points in the discourse presented before the Christians up to here are:

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هَاَنْتُمْ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ حَاجَجْتُمْ فِيْمَا لَكُمْ بِهٖ عِلْمٌ فَلِمَ تُحَآجُّوْنَ فِيْمَا لَيْسَ
لَكُمْ بِهٖ عِلْمٌ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُ وَاَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝ مَا كَانَ اِبْرٰهِيْمُ يَهُوْدِيًّا
وَّلَا نَصْرَانِيًّا وَّلٰكِنْ كَانَ حَنِيْفًا مُّسْلِمًا ۭ وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ ۝
اِنَّ اَوْلَى النَّاسِ بِاِبْرٰهِيْمَ لَلَّذِيْنَ اتَّبَعُوْهُ وَهٰذَا النَّبِيُّ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا ۭ
وَاللّٰهُ وَلِيُّ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ۝ وَدَّتْ طَّاۗىِٕفَةٌ مِّنْ اَهْلِ الْكِتٰبِ لَوْ يُضِلُّوْنَكُمْ ۭ
وَمَا يُضِلُّوْنَ اِلَّآ اَنْفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ۝ يٰٓاَهْلَ الْكِتٰبِ لِمَ تَكْفُرُوْنَ
بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ وَاَنْتُمْ تَشْهَدُوْنَ ۝ يٰٓاَهْلَ الْكِتٰبِ لِمَ تَلْبِسُوْنَ الْحَقَّ
بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتَكْتُمُوْنَ الْحَقَّ وَاَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝ وَقَالَتْ طَّاۗىِٕفَةٌ مِّنْ
اَهْلِ الْكِتٰبِ اٰمِنُوْا بِالَّذِيْٓ اُنْزِلَ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَجْهَ النَّهَارِ وَ
اكْفُرُوْٓا اٰخِرَهٗ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُوْنَ ۝ وَلَا تُؤْمِنُوْٓا اِلَّا لِمَنْ تَبِعَ دِيْنَكُمْ ۭ قُلْ
اِنَّ الْهُدٰى هُدَى اللّٰهِ ۙ اَنْ يُّؤْتٰٓى اَحَدٌ مِّثْلَ مَآ اُوْتِيْتُمْ اَوْ يُحَاۗجُّوْكُمْ
عِنْدَ رَبِّكُمْ ۭ قُلْ اِنَّ الْفَضْلَ بِيَدِ اللّٰهِ ۚ يُؤْتِيْهِ مَنْ يَّشَاۗءُ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ وَاسِعٌ
عَلِيْمٌ ۝ يَّخْتَصُّ بِرَحْمَتِهٖ مَنْ يَّشَاۗءُ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيْمِ ۝ وَ
مِنْ اَهْلِ الْكِتٰبِ مَنْ اِنْ تَاْمَنْهُ بِقِنْطَارٍ يُّؤَدِّهٖٓ اِلَيْكَ ۚ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ
اِنْ تَاْمَنْهُ بِدِيْنَارٍ لَّا يُؤَدِّهٖٓ اِلَيْكَ اِلَّا مَا دُمْتَ عَلَيْهِ قَاۗىِٕمًا ۭ ذٰلِكَ
بِاَنَّهُمْ قَالُوْا لَيْسَ عَلَيْنَا فِي الْاُمِّيّٖنَ سَبِيْلٌ ۚ وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ الْكَذِبَ
وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝ بَلٰى مَنْ اَوْفٰى بِعَهْدِهٖ وَاتَّقٰى فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُحِبُّ
الْمُتَّقِيْنَ ۝ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يَشْتَرُوْنَ بِعَهْدِ اللّٰهِ وَاَيْمَانِهِمْ ثَمَنًا قَلِيْلًا
اُولٰۗىِٕكَ لَا خَلَاقَ لَهُمْ فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ وَلَا يُكَلِّمُهُمُ اللّٰهُ وَلَا يَنْظُرُ اِلَيْهِمْ يَوْمَ

66-68 You have had enough arguments about things of which you had some knowledge: why should you now argue about that also of which you know nothing at all? Allah knows, but you know nothing. Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he was a Muslim, sound in the Faith,[59] and he was not of those who set up partners with Allah. Surely only those people who follow Abraham are entitled to claim a relationship with Him. Now this Prophet and the Believers are better entitled to this relationship: Allah is the Protector of only those who are Believers.

69-71 (O Believers,) a party of the people of the Book longs to lead you astray, somehow or other; whereas they mislead none except themselves, but they do not perceive it. O people of the Book, why do you deny Allah's Signs, which you yourselves are witnessing?[60] O people of the Book, why do you confound the Truth with falsehood and conceal the Truth knowingly?

72-74 Another party of the people of the Book says to one another, "Profess in the morning what has been sent down to the Believers and reject it in the evening: it may be that, by this device, they will turn back from their Faith."[61] They also say, "Do not follow any except the one who follows your own religion." O Prophet, say to them, "In fact the real guidance is the guidance of Allah: (It is His Will) that He may bless one with the same that He once bestowed upon you, or He may provide others with a strong argument against you to put it before your Lord." O Prophet, say to them, "Bounty and Grace belong to Allah and He may bestow these upon any one He wills,[61a] for He is All-Embracing,[62] All-Knowing:[63] He chooses for His favour whom He wills and His grace is boundless."

75-77 There is among the people of the Book such a person who will return to you intact a heap of gold entrusted to him by you. But there is among them also such a one who will not return even a single *dīnār* entrusted to him by you unless you demand it with importunity. They justify their immoral behaviour, saying, "We are not to be called to account for our behaviour towards the unlettered (gentiles)."[64] Obviously, this is a falsehood of their own which they deliberately ascribe to Allah, knowing well that He has never permitted such a thing. Well, will they not be called to account? Nay, Allah loves only such pious people who fulfil their Covenant and abstain from evil. As for those who barter away their Covenant with Allah and their own

oaths for a paltry profit, they shall have no share in the Hereafter; Allah will not speak to them nor even look at them nor cleanse them of sins on the Day of Resurrection.[65] There is, on the other hand, a painful punishment in store for them.

Contd. from p.247]

First, they have been admonished to realize that their belief in the Godhead of Jesus is gravely ill-founded. He was only a man who was born in a miraculous way by the will of Allah and given the power to perform certain miracles as a cleat proof of his Prophethood. As regards his "Ascension", Allah had arranged to recall him to Himself before the disbelievers could crucify him. In fact, the Master of the Universe has full powers to treat any of His servants in any special way He pleases. It is, therefore, wrong to infer from the exceptional treatment accorded to Jesus that he himself was the Master or the Master's Son or a partner in the authority of the Master.

Secondly, their attention has been drawn to the fact that Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) invites them to the same Truth that had been preached by Prophet Jesus (God's peace be upon him) in his own time and that the teachings of the two Prophets were basically identical.

Thirdly, the disciples of Jesus believed in and followed the same religion of Islam that is being presented in the Qur'ān. However the Christians of the later age discarded the message of Jesus and digressed from the Faith of his disciples.

55. This method of settling the dispute was proposed to show conclusively that the members of the deputation of Najrān were behaving obdurately. As a matter of fact, they had no answer to the things pointed out in the above discourse and could not bring any authority even from their own Scriptures to justify and support their beliefs under discussion. They could not, therefore, assert with full conviction that their beliefs conformed to the fact and were not false. Besides this, when they observed closely the character and the teachings and the works of the Holy Prophet, the majority of the members of the deputation were so impressed that they became convinced in their hearts of his Prophethood; or at least, they could not reject it boldly. That is why they did not accept the challenge: "If you really believe in the truth of your creed, you should pray with us to Allah and invoke His curse on those who say false things about Christ." The fact that they declined to accept the challenge showed plainly to the whole of Arabia that the religious leaders and priests of the Christians of Najrān who were known far and wide for their piety, professed beliefs about which they themselves were not sure.

56. From here begins the third discourse. Its subject-matter clearly shows that it was revealed in the period intervening the battles of Badr and Uḥd. The

contents of the three discourses are so closely interlinked that there is no incoherence anywhere between them. That is why some commentators have been misled to believe that this also formed part of the discourse addressed to the Najrān deputation. But the tone of the discourse commencing from here clearly shows that it was addressed to the Jews.

57. That is, "Join us in the creed which we have accepted and which you also cannot reject as false, for it is confirmed and supported by the teachings of your own Scriptures."

58. That is, "Your Judaism and Christianity came into existence long after the revelation of the Torah and the Gospel, whereas Abraham (God's peace be upon him) had passed away long before those Books were sent down. Now, even a man of ordinary common sense can easily understand that the religion of Abraham could in no sense be Judaism or Christianity. Thus, if Abraham was on the right way and had obtained salvation, as you also believe, then it becomes abundantly clear that one need not follow Judaism or Christianity to be on the Right Way and to obtain salvation." (Also see E.N. 135 and 141, Al-Baqarah.)

59. The Arabic word حنيف *(hanīf)* stands for a person who chooses to follow one particular way after rejecting all other ways. We have conveyed this meaning by "a Muslim, sound in the Faith."

60. There may be another rendering of this sentence: "You yourselves testify these." But in neither case is the sense of the passage affected. The fact is that the pious life of the Holy Prophet and the marvellous effects which his precepts and example were producing on the lives of his Companions, and the high and sublime teachings of the Qur'ān, were all such clear Signs of God that no one, who was familiar with the lives of the Prophets and with the nature of the heavenly Scriptures, could possibly doubt or deny his Prophethood. Thus, in fact, many a people of the Book (especially the learned among them) had realized that Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) was the same Prophet whose coming had been foretold by the former Prophets. So much so, that they were at times completely overpowered by the force of the plain Truth, and would unwittingly admit and confirm that the teachings of the Holy Prophet were true. That is why, the Qur'ān accuses them time and again of obduracy and deliberate rejection of the Truth after seeing clear Signs of God and being fully convinced of it in their hearts.

61. This was one of those tricks which the leaders and the rabbis of the Jews, living in the suburbs of Al-Madīnah used to play in order to weaken the force of the Islamic Movement. They feigned an interest in Islam only to detach some of the Muslims by some subtle arrangements. Their object was to dishearten

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الْقِيٰمَةِ وَلَا يُزَكِّيْهِمْ ۚ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿٧٧﴾ وَاِنَّ مِنْهُمْ لَفَرِيْقًا يَّلْوٗنَ
اَلْسِنَتَهُمْ بِالْكِتٰبِ لِتَحْسَبُوْهُ مِنَ الْكِتٰبِ وَمَا هُوَ مِنَ الْكِتٰبِ ۚ وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ
هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللّٰهِ وَمَا هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللّٰهِ ۚ وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ الْكَذِبَ
وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٧٨﴾ مَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ اَنْ يُّؤْتِيَهُ اللّٰهُ الْكِتٰبَ وَالْحُكْمَ وَالنُّبُوَّةَ
ثُمَّ يَقُوْلَ لِلنَّاسِ كُوْنُوْا عِبَادًا لِّيْ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ وَلٰكِنْ كُوْنُوْا رَبّٰنِيّٖنَ
بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تُعَلِّمُوْنَ الْكِتٰبَ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَدْرُسُوْنَ ﴿٧٩﴾ وَلَا يَاْمُرَكُمْ اَنْ
تَتَّخِذُوا الْمَلٰٓئِكَةَ وَالنَّبِيّٖنَ اَرْبَابًا ۚ اَيَاْمُرُكُمْ بِالْكُفْرِ بَعْدَ اِذْ اَنْتُمْ مُّسْلِمُوْنَ ﴿٨٠﴾ ع ٨ ٩ ١٦
وَاِذْ اَخَذَ اللّٰهُ مِيْثَاقَ النَّبِيّٖنَ لَمَآ اٰتَيْتُكُمْ مِّنْ كِتٰبٍ وَّحِكْمَةٍ ثُمَّ
جَآءَكُمْ رَسُوْلٌ مُّصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا مَعَكُمْ لَتُؤْمِنُنَّ بِهٖ وَلَتَنْصُرُنَّهٗ ۚ قَالَ ءَاَقْرَرْتُمْ
وَاَخَذْتُمْ عَلٰى ذٰلِكُمْ اِصْرِيْ ۚ قَالُوْٓا اَقْرَرْنَا ۚ قَالَ فَاشْهَدُوْا وَاَنَا مَعَكُمْ
مِّنَ الشّٰهِدِيْنَ ﴿٨١﴾ فَمَنْ تَوَلّٰى بَعْدَ ذٰلِكَ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْفٰسِقُوْنَ ﴿٨٢﴾
اَفَغَيْرَ دِيْنِ اللّٰهِ يَبْغُوْنَ وَلَهٗٓ اَسْلَمَ مَنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ طَوْعًا
وَّكَرْهًا وَّاِلَيْهِ يُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿٨٣﴾ قُلْ اٰمَنَّا بِاللّٰهِ وَمَآ اُنْزِلَ عَلَيْنَا وَمَآ
اُنْزِلَ عَلٰٓى اِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَاِسْمٰعِيْلَ وَاِسْحٰقَ وَيَعْقُوْبَ وَالْاَسْبَاطِ وَمَآ
اُوْتِيَ مُوْسٰى وَعِيْسٰى وَالنَّبِيُّوْنَ مِنْ رَّبِّهِمْ ۚ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ اَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ
وَنَحْنُ لَهٗ مُسْلِمُوْنَ ﴿٨٤﴾ وَمَنْ يَّبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الْاِسْلَامِ دِيْنًا فَلَنْ يُّقْبَلَ مِنْهُ
وَهُوَ فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخٰسِرِيْنَ ﴿٨٥﴾ كَيْفَ يَهْدِي اللّٰهُ قَوْمًا كَفَرُوْا بَعْدَ
اِيْمَانِهِمْ وَشَهِدُوْٓا اَنَّ الرَّسُوْلَ حَقٌّ وَّجَآءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنٰتُ ۚ وَاللّٰهُ لَا يَهْدِي
الْقَوْمَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٨٦﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ جَزَآؤُهُمْ اَنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ لَعْنَةَ اللّٰهِ وَالْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ

There are among them some people, who, in reading the Book, twist their tongues in a way to make you think that what they read is a part of the Book, whereas, in fact it is not a part of the Book.[66] They also assert, "What we are reading is from Allah," when in fact it is not from Allah. They knowingly ascribe the lie to Allah. 78

No man, to whom Allah gives the Book and sound judgment and Prophethood, would say thereafter to the people, "Be worshippers of me instead of Allah." He will surely say, "Be true Rabbānis[67] in accordance with the teachings of the Book you read and teach. He will never enjoin you to make the angels or the Prophets your lords; is it conceivable that a Prophet should enjoin you to adopt disbelief, after you have surrendered to Allah?"[68] 79-80

Remember, Allah made this Covenant with His Messengers: "Now that We have given you the Book and Wisdom, you are hereby bound to believe in and help a Messenger,[69] who comes to you afterwards, confirming the teachings you already possess." After this, He asked, "Do you confirm this and take up the heavy responsibility of your Covenant with Me?" They said, "Yes, we confirm." Then Allah said, "Very well, bear witness to this and I also bear witness with you. Now whosoever breaks the Covenant after this, he shall be a transgressor."[70] 81-82

Now do these people desire to give up the way of Allah's submission (Islam) and adopt a different way (knowing well), that all things in heavens and the earth, willingly or unwillingly, submit to Allah,[71] and to Him shall all return? O Prophet, say, "We believe in Allah and in the teachings which have been sent down to us, and also in those teachings sent down to Abraham, Ismā'īl, Isaac, Jacob and his descendants, and in the guidance that was given by Allah to Moses, Jesus and other Messengers. We do not discriminate against anyone of them[72] and we submit and surrender to Him." And whoso adopts any other than this way of submission (Islam), that way shall not be accepted from him and in the Hereafter he shall be among the losers. 83-85

How can it be that Allah would guide the people who adopted disbelief after they had acknowledged the Faith and after they themselves had borne witness that he was a true Prophet and after clear Signs had come to them?[73] For Allah does not guide the unjust 86-87

people. The fitting recompense for their iniquity is that they are under the curse of Allah and of the angels and of all mankind.

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the Muslims and create doubts among the masses about teachings of the Holy Prophet. For this purpose they began to send people to Al-Madīnah to profess Islam openly and then become apostates and proclaim everywhere that they had come out of Islam because they had witnessed such and such evils among the Muslims and their Prophet.

61a. They were stirred to play this wicked game by their envy of Islam and bias in favour of the religion of their fore-fathers. They have been rebuked, as if to say, "God is not bound by your prejudices, but He bestows His Guidance on anyone He wills, and He has by His grace blessed the Muslims with the same Guidance that was once bestowed upon you. You must understand it well that your wily tricks will not succeed in snatching away that Guidance from them nor in changing it into misguidance but only in providing a strong argument against you before your Lord." By this, Allah willed to see whether they would give up their prejudice and accept the Guidance which had been given to another (Muḥammad) or whether they would persist in their envy and reject it and provide the Muslims with a strong argument against themselves before their Lord that they rejected the Truth merely because of their prejudice and obduracy.

62. The Arabic word (واسع) *"wāse"* (All-embracing) generally occurs on three occasions in the Qur'ān:

(1) When a community of people is warned of their narrow-mindedness and told that Allah is not narrow-minded like them;

(2) When one is rebuked for miserliness and stinginess and is told that Allah is generous and not miserly like him;

(3) When people believe Allah to be finite because of the limitations of their own imagination, they are told that Allah is Infinite and Limitless. (Also see E.N. 116, Al-Baqarah.)

63. That is, "Allah knows full well Who deserves honour and excellence."

64. That is, "They were required to be fair only in their dealings with the Jews, and there was no harm in usurping the property of a non-Jew." This belief was not confined to the ignorant Jewish masses, but their whole religious system was so moulded as to allow differentiation between Israelites and non-Israelites in their dealings. Their moral code disallowed a certain treatment towards the Israelites but allowed the same towards a non-Israelite; one and the same thing was

right for an Israelite but the same thing was wrong for a non-Israelite. For instance, the Bible says: "At the end of every seven years...every creditor that lendeth ought unto his neighbour shall release it...", but "Of a foreigner thou mayest exact it again." (Deut. 15: 1-3). At another place the law about usury has been laid down like this: "Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury." (Deut. 23: 20). "If a man be found stealing any of his brethren of the children of Israel, and maketh merchandise of him, or selleth him; then that thief shall die." (Deut. 24: 7).

65. Although they were guilty of the blackest sins, yet they had taken it for granted that they would rise as the favourites of God on the Day of Resurrection and they alone would receive His blessings and favours, for they would be rescued from the consequences of the sins they committed in this world by the intercession of their saints in the Next World, but the fact is that they will be dealt with on that Day in quite a different manner.

66. Taken figuratively the Arabic Text may also imply that they turn away from the right meaning of the Book or twist the words out of Context and pervert the meaning. But the real meaning of the Text is this: while reading the Book, they twist with their tongues certain words or sentences that are against their self-interest or self-invented religious beliefs or theories. Thus they change the meanings so as to mislead people into mental errors or false judgments or wrong religious beliefs. It is an irony that some people sometimes treat the Qur'ān itself in the same way. For instance, those people who believe in the Holy Prophet to be superhuman twist verse 110 of chapter XVIII (قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ) with their tongues and read it (قُلْ إِنِّي مَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ) The first and correct reading means, "Say, (O Prophet), I also am a man like yourselves," while the second reading perverts the meaning thus: "Say, (O prophet), indeed I am not a man like yourselves."

67. (رَبَّانِي) *Rabbānī* (rabbi) was the title of a religious functionary who guided the religious affairs of the Jews, established worship and expounded law.

68. These two verses are a comprehensive refutation of all the wrong things that different people have ascribed to their Prophets and entered into their Books in order to make an angel or a Prophet a god and an object of worship. Here a fundamental formula has been laid down: anything that teaches the worship of anyone other than Allah and raises a servant of God to the high pedestal of God-head can never be the teaching of any Messenger of God: therefore the very existence of such a thing in any book should be taken as a clear proof of its being a

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وَالنَّاسِ اَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿87﴾ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا ۚ لَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمُ الْعَذَابُ وَلَا
هُمْ يُنْظَرُوْنَ ﴿88﴾ اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ تَابُوْا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ ذٰلِكَ وَاَصْلَحُوْا فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ
غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿89﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا بَعْدَ اِيْمَانِهِمْ ثُمَّ ازْدَادُوْا كُفْرًا لَّنْ
تُقْبَلَ تَوْبَتُهُمْ ۚ وَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الضَّآلُّوْنَ ﴿90﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا وَمَاتُوْا
وَهُمْ كُفَّارٌ فَلَنْ يُّقْبَلَ مِنْ اَحَدِهِمْ مِّلْءُ الْاَرْضِ ذَهَبًا وَّلَوِ افْتَدٰى
بِهٖ ۚ اُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ وَّمَا لَهُمْ مِّنْ نّٰصِرِيْنَ ﴿91﴾

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الجزء ٣

لَنْ تَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتّٰى تُنْفِقُوْا مِمَّا تُحِبُّوْنَ ۚ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوْا مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَاِنَّ

اللّٰهَ بِهٖ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿92﴾ كُلُّ الطَّعَامِ كَانَ حِلًّا لِّبَنِيْٓ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ اِلَّا مَا حَرَّمَ
اِسْرَآءِيْلُ عَلٰى نَفْسِهٖ مِنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ تُنَزَّلَ التَّوْرٰىةُ ۚ قُلْ فَاْتُوْا بِالتَّوْرٰىةِ
فَاتْلُوْهَآ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿93﴾ فَمَنِ افْتَرٰى عَلَى اللّٰهِ الْكَذِبَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ
ذٰلِكَ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الظّٰلِمُوْنَ ﴿94﴾ قُلْ صَدَقَ اللّٰهُ ۗ فَاتَّبِعُوْا مِلَّةَ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ
حَنِيْفًا ۚ وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ ﴿95﴾ اِنَّ اَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُّضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ لَلَّذِيْ
بِبَكَّةَ مُبٰرَكًا وَّهُدًى لِّلْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿96﴾ فِيْهِ اٰيٰتٌۢ بَيِّنٰتٌ مَّقَامُ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ ۚ
وَمَنْ دَخَلَهٗ كَانَ اٰمِنًا ۗ وَلِلّٰهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حِجُّ الْبَيْتِ مَنِ اسْتَطَاعَ
اِلَيْهِ سَبِيْلًا ۚ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿97﴾ قُلْ يٰٓاَهْلَ
الْكِتٰبِ لِمَ تَكْفُرُوْنَ بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ ۖ وَاللّٰهُ شَهِيْدٌ عَلٰى مَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿98﴾ قُلْ
يٰٓاَهْلَ الْكِتٰبِ لِمَ تَصُدُّوْنَ عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ مَنْ اٰمَنَ تَبْغُوْنَهَا عِوَجًا
وَّاَنْتُمْ شُهَدَآءُ ۗ وَمَا اللّٰهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿99﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا
اِنْ تُطِيْعُوْا فَرِيْقًا مِّنَ الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْكِتٰبَ يَرُدُّوْكُمْ بَعْدَ اِيْمَانِكُمْ

They shall remain under it for ever; neither will their punishment be lightened nor shall they be reprieved. However, those who repent after this and mend their ways will be redeemed; Allah is Forgiving and Compassionate. As for those who believed and then disbelieved and persisted in their disbelief,[74] even their repentance shall not be accepted because they are obdurate transgressors. Believe it that if anyone of those who adopted disbelief and died as a disbeliever were to fill the whole earth with gold and offer it as ransom for redemption, that will not be accepted. There is a painful punishment in store for such people and they will not find any helpers. 88-91

You can never attain piety unless you spend (in the way of Allah) of what you love;[75] surely Allah will have full knowledge of what you spend. 92

All these articles of food (which are lawful in the Muhammadan Law), were also lawful to the children of Israel[76] except those which Israel[77] had forbidden for himself before the Torah had been sent down. Say to them, "Bring the Torah and read out any passage from it (in support of your objection), if what you say be true." -If even after this, some people persist in attributing to Allah false things of their own fabrication, they are, indeed, unjust people.— Say, "What Allah has said is the very Truth; so follow exclusively the way of Abraham, and Abraham was not of those who associated other gods with Allah."[78] 93-95

Undoubtedly the first house of worship ever to be built for mankind is the one which is at Makkah: it was blessed and made the centre of Guidance for all peoples.[79] In it are clear Signs:[80] there is the spot where Abraham used to worship: then it is the sanctuary, and whoso enters it becomes safe and secure.[81] Allah has, therefore, a right on the people that the one, who can afford to reach the house, should perform Ḥaj there: and the one who disobeys (this Commandment should know that) Allah is All-Sufficient and does not stand in need of any creature of the worlds. 96-97

Say, "O people of the Book, why do you disbelieve in the Revelations of Allah? Surely Allah is watching what you are doing" Say, "O people of Book, why do you stand in the way of him who believes in the Revelations of Allah and desire that he should follow a 98-99

crooked way when you yourselves are a witness to it (that he is on the Right Way)?" Allah is not unaware of what you are doing.

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later insertion by some misguided people. Hence the claim "to be the son of God and equal with God," could never have been made by Jesus himself, but by some misguided followers of his.

69. It implies this: "You people of the Book are bound by the Covenant of your own Prophets to believe in and help Muḥammad (Allah's peace be upon him) for we entered into a compact with every Prophet to the effect that they (and their followers by implication) must help every Prophet sent by Us for the preaching and the establishment of the way of life for which they had been appointed. Therefore you should not have any prejudice against him, nor consider religion as your own monopoly; you should not oppose the Truth but come under the banner of anyone who raises it for this purpose.

It is interesting to note that according to Palmer (The Koran), "the Talmudic sources confirm that God assembled all past, present, and future Prophets on Mount Sinā'ī and entered into the compact mentioned in the text."

In this connection it should also be clearly understood that this compact was taken from every Prophet before the advent of Hadrat Muḥammad (Allah's peace be upon him); therefore every Prophet informed his followers about the Prophet coming after him and told them to follow him. But there is no mention in the Qur'ān or in the Traditions that any such compact was taken from the Holy Prophet: nor did he inform his followers about the coming of any Prophet after him and believing in him. On the contrary, he categorically declared that he was the last in the line of Prophets.

70. This implies that the people of the Book were breaking their covenant with Allah by rejecting Prophet Muḥammad (God's peace be upon him) and opposing his mission; they were disregarding that covenant which their Prophets had made with Allah. Hence they were perverted transgressors who had gone beyond the limits imposed by Allah.

71. That is, "When the whole universe and everything in it follow 'Islam' and submit to Allah, what other way of life than Islam do these rejectors, who live in the same universe, seek to follow?"

72. That is, "We do not have different ways of treatment for different Prophets: we accept each and everyone of them and do not reject any one of them and we treat all of them as truthful Prophets and none as a liar. We are free from

prejudice and zeal for ignorance; we bear witness to the fact that each and every servant of Allah, who brought the Truth from Him to any place whatever in the world, was in the right.

73. It has been reiterated here that the Jewish scholars, who lived in Arabia at the time of the Holy Prophet, had understood clearly and borne witness to it that he was a true Prophet of God and that his teachings were the same as those of the former Prophets. But in spite of this, they not only rejected but also opposed him because of their centuries-old prejudices, obduracy and antagonism to the Truth.

74. "They persisted in their disbelief": they did not stop at the rejection of the Faith but went on further and further in their opposition and antagonism to it: they did their very worst to hinder people from the way of Allah by creating doubts and suspicions in their minds and by devising secret plans and plots to make the mission a failure.

75. It is meant to remove the misconception of the Jews about virtue. Their highest ideal of virtue was to put on that outward appearance which had been enjoined by the traditional and centuries-old heritage of their ancestors. Besides this they measured virtue by the standard of that elaborate legal system which had been evolved by their hair-splitting scholars. But in spite of their outward religiosity, even their 'pious' people were narrow-minded, greedy and parsimonious. Moreover they did not hesitate to conceal the Truth or to sell it, and yet the common people took them for virtuous people. This is why they are being told here that they can attain to real virtue not by the mere outward observance of some rituals of their own invention but by loving God and by keeping His will above every worldly thing. As the door of virtue is shut against anyone who loves any worldly thing more than Allah, the one, who is not ready to sacrifice the beloved thing for the sake of God's love, cannot attain to real virtue.

The observance of rituals without this spirit of love is like the paint on worm-eaten wood. It is possible that a human being might be deceived by such outward paint, but it is impossible to deceive God by such devices.

76. Verse 93 answers an objection. When the Jews could not find fault with the basic teachings of the Qur'ān and of the Holy Prophet (Allah's peace be upon him), for there was absolutely no difference between these and the teachings of the previous Prophets, they began to raise legal objections. One of their objections was that the Holy Prophet had made lawful certain things which had been unlawful during the time of the previous Prophets.

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كٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿١٠٠﴾ وَكَيْفَ تَكْفُرُوْنَ وَاَنْتُمْ تُتْلٰى عَلَيْكُمْ اٰيٰتُ اللّٰهِ وَفِيْكُمْ رَسُوْلُهٗ
وَمَنْ يَّعْتَصِمْ بِاللّٰهِ فَقَدْ هُدِيَ اِلٰى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ﴿١٠١﴾ يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ
اٰمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ حَقَّ تُقٰتِهٖ وَلَا تَمُوْتُنَّ اِلَّا وَاَنْتُمْ مُّسْلِمُوْنَ ﴿١٠٢﴾ وَاعْتَصِمُوْا
بِحَبْلِ اللّٰهِ جَمِيْعًا وَّلَا تَفَرَّقُوْا ۠ وَاذْكُرُوْا نِعْمَتَ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْكُمْ اِذْ كُنْتُمْ
اَعْدَآءً فَاَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوْبِكُمْ فَاَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهٖۤ اِخْوَانًا ۚ وَكُنْتُمْ عَلٰى
شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِّنَ النَّارِ فَاَنْقَذَكُمْ مِّنْهَا ۭ كَذٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللّٰهُ لَكُمْ اٰيٰتِهٖ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿١٠٣﴾ وَلْتَكُنْ مِّنْكُمْ اُمَّةٌ يَّدْعُوْنَ اِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَاْمُرُوْنَ
بِالْمَعْرُوْفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ ۭ وَاُولٰۗىِٕكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿١٠٤﴾ وَلَا تَكُوْنُوْا
كَالَّذِيْنَ تَفَرَّقُوْا وَاخْتَلَفُوْا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَاۗءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنٰتُ ۭ وَاُولٰۗىِٕكَ لَهُمْ
عَذَابٌ عَظِيْمٌ ﴿١٠٥﴾ يَّوْمَ تَبْيَضُّ وُجُوْهٌ وَّتَسْوَدُّ وُجُوْهٌ ۚ فَاَمَّا الَّذِيْنَ اسْوَدَّتْ
وُجُوْهُهُمْ ۣ اَكَفَرْتُمْ بَعْدَ اِيْمَانِكُمْ فَذُوْقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُوْنَ ﴿١٠٦﴾
وَاَمَّا الَّذِيْنَ ابْيَضَّتْ وُجُوْهُهُمْ فَفِيْ رَحْمَةِ اللّٰهِ ۭ هُمْ فِيْهَا خٰلِدُوْنَ ﴿١٠٧﴾
تِلْكَ اٰيٰتُ اللّٰهِ نَتْلُوْهَا عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ ۭ وَمَا اللّٰهُ يُرِيْدُ ظُلْمًا لِّلْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿١٠٨﴾
وَلِلّٰهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ ۭ وَاِلَى اللّٰهِ تُرْجَعُ الْاُمُوْرُ ﴿١٠٩﴾ كُنْتُمْ
خَيْرَ اُمَّةٍ اُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَاْمُرُوْنَ بِالْمَعْرُوْفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ
وَتُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِاللّٰهِ ۭ وَلَوْ اٰمَنَ اَهْلُ الْكِتٰبِ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ ۭ مِنْهُمُ
الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ وَاَكْثَرُهُمُ الْفٰسِقُوْنَ ﴿١١٠﴾ لَنْ يَّضُرُّوْكُمْ اِلَّآ اَذًى ۭ وَاِنْ يُّقَاتِلُوْكُمْ
يُوَلُّوْكُمُ الْاَدْبَارَ ۣ ثُمَّ لَا يُنْصَرُوْنَ ﴿١١١﴾ ضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الذِّلَّةُ اَيْنَ مَا ثُقِفُوْٓا
اِلَّا بِحَبْلٍ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ وَحَبْلٍ مِّنَ النَّاسِ وَبَاۗءُوْ بِغَضَبٍ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ وَ

O Believers, if you follow some of the people of the Book they will again turn you away from belief into unbelief. There is no reason why you should now turn to unbelief, when Allah's Revelations are being recited to you and His Messenger is among you; whoso holds fast to Allah, surely he will be guided to the Right Way. 100-101

O Believers, fear Allah as He should be feared and see that you do not die save as true Muslims.[82] Hold fast together to Allah's cord[83] and let nothing divide you. Remember the favour of Allah upon you, when you were enemies to one another, then He united your hearts, and by His grace, you became like brothers, and you were on the brink of the abyss of Fire and He rescued you from it.[84] Thus does Allah make His signs clear to you so that you may find the right path to true success by these.[85] 102-103

There should always be among you some people who invite to what is good and enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong: They alone will attain true success. And do not be like those, who became divided into sects and got involved in differences of opinion even after receiving clear teachings.[86] Those (who have caused divisions), shall suffer a terrible punishment on the Day, when the faces (of some) will be brightened with joy and those of others shall be blackened with gloom. (It will be said to those,) whose faces shall be blackened, "Did you adopt the way of disbelief after receiving Faith? Well, then taste the torment for showing gross ingratitude towards it." As regards those, whose faces will be brightened, they will enjoy Allah's mercy and abide therein for ever. These are Allah's Revelations, which We are reciting to you in all Truth, for Allah does not will to be unjust[87] to the people of the world. All that is in the heavens and the earth belongs to Allah, and to Allah are all the matters presented. 104-109

Now you are the best community which has been raised up for the guidance of mankind;[88] you enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah. Had these people of the Book[89] also believed, it would have surely been better for them. Though there are among them some believers, yet most of them are transgressors. Anyhow they can do no harm to you: the worst they can do is to inflict a trifling hurt on you. If they fight with you, they will turn their backs on you, and shall not get any help from anywhere. Disgrace and humiliation have been stamped upon them wherever they may be 110-112

except in the case when they get refuge under the favour of Allah or under the patronage of other people.[90] They have incurred the wrath of Allah; therefore misery and humiliation have been stamped upon them. This is because they rejected the Revelations of Allah and killed His Prophets without any just cause; this is the consequence of their disobedience and their transgression.

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77. If Israel refers to the children of Israel, then it would mean that before the revelation of the Torah, they themselves had made certain things unlawful because these had been unlawful by custom. But if it refers to Jacob (and that is more probable), then it means that he did not eat certain things because he did not like them or abstained from them on account of some illness, but his children began to believe these to be unlawful. The subsequent verse shows that the law in the Bible which declared the camel and the hare etc., to be unlawful was not in the Torah, but was later on inserted in it by the Jewish scholars. (For details please refer to E. N. 122 of Al-An'ām).

78. It is meant to bring home to them this lesson: obedience to God alone is the root of the real Faith, which was taught by Abraham, but you have discarded that and associated other gods with Him. Besides this, you have entangled yourselves in minor legal issues which had been raised by your scholars after you had deviated from the way of Abraham during the centuries of your degradation.

79. Their objection was about the change of *qiblah* to the Ka'abah (Makkah) from the Temple (Jerusalem), which had been the *qiblah* of the previous Prophets. This objection had already been answered in Al-Baqarah, but as the Jews persisted in their criticism, it has again been answered here. It has been asserted that the Ka'abah was built by Abraham long before the Temple and therefore it had priority of time for being the *qiblah*. The Bible itself bears testimony to the fact that the Temple was built by Solomon some 450 years after Moses (I Kings, 6: 1) and made *qiblah* during his reign. (I Kings, 8: 29-30.) On the other hand, all the traditions of Arabia unanimously agree that the Ka'abah was built by Abraham some 900 years before the advent of Moses. The fact that the Ka'abah has priority of time over the Temple is so obvious that none can deny it.

80. There are such clear Signs in "the House:" to show that Allah has accepted it and approved it as "His House." Though it has been built in a barren place, Allah has provided the people of the neighbourhood with the best of provisions. Besides this, though there was chaos and disorder in the whole of Arabia for about 2500 years before the advent of Islam, yet there reigned peace and security in the Ka'abah and in its surroundings. Not only this: there was

because of it, peace for four months every year in the whole of Arabia. Another Sign was the miraculous destruction of Abrahah and his army, when he attacked Makkah in order to destroy the Ka'abah. At the time of the Revelation of the Qur'ān, every Arab knew well even the details of this incident and there were even those who had actually beheld the occurrence.

81. The inviolable sanctity of the Ka'abah was so much respected even in the dark days of ignorance that blood thirsty enemies dared not touch each other in it.

In v. 97, the word (كَفَرَ) *kafara* does not mean that the one, who disobeys this Commandment of Allah and does not perform Ḥaj even if one can afford it, becomes a disbeliever in the technical sense. It means that the person has adopted the attitude of a disbeliever even after his profession of belief in Allah and His Prophet. This is obvious because the Commandment to perform Ḥaj has not been addressed to the disbelievers but to those who profess to be Muslims. A Muslim judge, therefore, will not declare him to be a disbeliever and apostate for this reason, as if he had gone out of the pale of Islam.

"Allah does not stand .... world :" Allah does not stand in need of any help from the people, whether they be believers or dis-believers. It is for their own good if they become sincere believers. On the other hand, those people, who reject the Commandments of Allah by word or deed, will not be considered to be Believers by Allah, even if they professed to be Believers.

82. That is, "Be loyal and obedient to Allah up to your last breath."

83. "Allah's cord" is the way of life prescribed by Him. It is a "cord" because it keeps intact the relations of the Believers with Allah and also binds and unites them into a community. "Hold fast together to Allah's cord" implies that the Muslims should give the greatest importance to Allah's Way, and should make it the centre of all their interests, and exert their utmost to establish it and co-operate with one another for its service. When and if they let loose this cord and deviate from its basic principles, they would inevitably suffer from disunity and would be divided into sections and sub-sections, like the communities of the former Prophets. As a consequence of this, they would meet with disgrace both in this world and in the Next.

84. This refers to that horrible state of the Arabs from which they were rescued by Islam. Before Islam, their clans were divided into hostile camps, who went to war for frivolous reasons. Human life had lost its sanctity and people were killed without any pangs of conscience. The fire of enmity would have burnt to

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ضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَسْكَنَةُ ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا يَكْفُرُوْنَ بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ وَيَقْتُلُوْنَ
الْاَنْۢبِيَآءَ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ ذٰلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوْا وَّكَانُوْا يَعْتَدُوْنَ ﴿١١٢﴾ لَيْسُوْا سَوَآءً
مِنْ اَهْلِ الْكِتٰبِ اُمَّةٌ قَآئِمَةٌ يَّتْلُوْنَ اٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ اٰنَآءَ الَّيْلِ وَهُمْ
يَسْجُدُوْنَ ﴿١١٣﴾ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْاٰخِرِ وَيَاْمُرُوْنَ بِالْمَعْرُوْفِ وَ
يَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُسَارِعُوْنَ فِى الْخَيْرٰتِ وَاُولٰٓئِكَ مِنَ الصّٰلِحِيْنَ ﴿١١٤﴾
وَمَا يَفْعَلُوْا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلَنْ يُّكْفَرُوْهُ وَاللّٰهُ عَلِيْمٌۢ بِالْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿١١٥﴾ اِنَّ
الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لَنْ تُغْنِىَ عَنْهُمْ اَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَآ اَوْلَادُهُمْ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ شَيْـًٔا
وَاُولٰٓئِكَ اَصْحٰبُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيْهَا خٰلِدُوْنَ ﴿١١٦﴾ مَثَلُ مَا يُنْفِقُوْنَ فِىْ هٰذِهِ
الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَثَلِ رِيْحٍ فِيْهَا صِرٌّ اَصَابَتْ حَرْثَ قَوْمٍ ظَلَمُوْٓا اَنْفُسَهُمْ
فَاَهْلَكَتْهُ وَمَا ظَلَمَهُمُ اللّٰهُ وَلٰكِنْ اَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُوْنَ ﴿١١٧﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ
اٰمَنُوْا لَا تَتَّخِذُوْا بِطَانَةً مِّنْ دُوْنِكُمْ لَا يَاْلُوْنَكُمْ خَبَالًا وَدُّوْا مَا عَنِتُّمْ
قَدْ بَدَتِ الْبَغْضَآءُ مِنْ اَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَمَا تُخْفِىْ صُدُوْرُهُمْ اَكْبَرُ قَدْ بَيَّنَّا
لَكُمُ الْاٰيٰتِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿١١٨﴾ هَآاَنْتُمْ اُولَآءِ تُحِبُّوْنَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِبُّوْنَكُمْ وَ
تُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْكِتٰبِ كُلِّهٖ وَاِذَا لَقُوْكُمْ قَالُوْٓا اٰمَنَّا وَاِذَا خَلَوْا عَضُّوْا عَلَيْكُمُ
الْاَنَامِلَ مِنَ الْغَيْظِ قُلْ مُوْتُوْا بِغَيْظِكُمْ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلِيْمٌۢ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُوْرِ ﴿١١٩﴾
اِنْ تَمْسَسْكُمْ حَسَنَةٌ تَسُؤْهُمْ وَاِنْ تُصِبْكُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ يَّفْرَحُوْا بِهَا وَاِنْ
تَصْبِرُوْا وَتَتَّقُوْا لَا يَضُرُّكُمْ كَيْدُهُمْ شَيْـًٔا اِنَّ اللّٰهَ بِمَا يَعْمَلُوْنَ مُحِيْطٌ ﴿١٢٠﴾
وَاِذْ غَدَوْتَ مِنْ اَهْلِكَ تُبَوِّئُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ مَقَاعِدَ لِلْقِتَالِ وَاللّٰهُ سَمِيْعٌ
عَلِيْمٌ ﴿١٢١﴾ اِذْ هَمَّتْ طَّآئِفَتٰنِ مِنْكُمْ اَنْ تَفْشَلَا وَاللّٰهُ وَلِيُّهُمَا وَعَلَى اللّٰهِ

Yet all the people of the Book are not alike: there are among them some who are steadfastly on the right path; who recite the Revelations of Allah at night and fall prostrate before Him; who believe in Allah and the Last Day; who enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and remain earnestly engaged in good works; these are the righteous people, and whatever good they do, they will not be denied the just reward for it, for Allah knows full well the pious people. As for those who have adopted the way of disbelief, neither their wealth nor their children shall avail them against Allah; they deserve Hell, and there they shall abide for ever. Whatever they are spending in this worldly life may be likened to the wind that brings frost in it and smites and destroys totally the tillage of those who have been unjust to themselves;[91] Allah has not done any injustice to them but in fact they themselves are doing injustice to themselves. 113-117

O Believers, do not take into your confidence any other than the people of your own community for they never miss any opportunity of exploiting any weakness of yours.[92] They desire that which is harmful to you; their malice has become apparent from what they say, but what they conceal in their hearts is yet far worse. We have made clear to you the signs thereof, and if you are wise, (you will be very cautious in your relations with them.) As for you, you love them but they do not love you, even though you believe in all the revealed Books.[93] When they meet you, they say, "We also believe (in your Prophet and in your Book"), but when they go aside, they bite their finger-tips in their rage against you.— Say to them, "Perish in your rage: Allah knows even that which is hidden in the hearts." They grieve if you are blessed with some good and rejoice if an evil befalls you. But their crafty schemes cannot harm you at all, if you show fortitude and fear Allah in whatever you do. Allah encircles whatever they are doing. 118-120

O Messenger,[94] mention that occasion to the Muslims when you set out from your house-hold early in the morning and began to assign to the Muslims their positions on the battlefield (of Uḥd). Allah hears everything and knows everything. 121

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ashes all the Arabs, if blessed Islam had not rescued them from it. This blessing had appeared in a tangible form at Al-Madīnah at the time of the revelation of

these verses. The two clans—Aus and Khazraj—who had been enemies for years and had been involved in bitter feuds and bloody battles, became brethren after they embraced Islam. Not only this: they also showed that spirit of sacrifice for the rehabilitation of the refugees from Makkah that has no parallel in history.

85. That is to say, "If you have eyes to see, you can yourselves judge whether your welfare lies in holding fast to Allah's way or in discarding it and reverting to the old ways of ignorance, and whether your well-wishers are Allah and His Messenger or the Jews and the hypocrites and the polytheists who are trying to revert you to your former condition."

86. This refers to those communities which received the Guidance and clear teachings from the Messengers of Allah but after some time discarded the basic principles of the Guidance and divided themselves into different sects on the basis of irrelevant and minor side-issues and were involved in useless and meaningless squabbles. They became so engrossed in these things that they totally forgot the mission which Allah had entrusted to them and lost interest even in the basic principles on which, in fact, depends the real success of humanity.

87. As Allah, does not will to be unjust to the people of the world, He is showing them Guidance and warning them before-hand of those things of which they shall have ultimately to render an account. Thus, those who follow the crooked ways even after this and do not return to the Right Way are doing injustice to themselves.

88. This is the same declaration that has been made in Al-Baqarah (v. 143). The followers of the Holy Prophet are being reminded that they have been appointed to the leadership of the world from which the children of Israel had been deposed on account of their incompetence. The Muslims have been appointed to that office because they possess those moral qualities which are essential for just leadership. These are to establish virtue and to eradicate evil practically and believe that there is no god other than Allah to put into practice the implication of this belief. They should, therefore, understand the responsibilities of the work which had been entrusted to them and avoid the errors into which their predecessors had fallen. (Please refer also to E. N. 123-144 of Al-Baqarah).

89. Here the Jews are "The people of the Book."

90. That is, "The little security that they enjoy anywhere in the world has not been won by themselves but has been the result of the help and kindness of others. They have been getting this either from some Muslim states in the name of Allah or from some non-Muslim states for other reasons." And if sometimes they have succeeded in gaining even some political power, they have not accomplished this through their own efforts but have owed it to others.

91. In this similitude, "tillage" stands for human life, for one sows in it deeds or misdeeds which one shall have to harvest in the Next World. The "wind" refers to the superficial and hypocritical show of charity that impels the unbelievers to spend their wealth in charity and public works. And "frost" refers to the lack of faith and willingness to obey the Divine Law in its right spirit, which makes void the acts and deeds of one's life. By this similitude, Allah teaches this lesson; just as air is very useful for the growth of crops but it also destroys these if there is frost in it: in the same way charity helps nourish the harvest that is to be reaped in the Next World but it destroys the same, if it is poisoned with unbelief. It is obvious that Allah is the Master of man as well as of the wealth that he possesses and of the kingdom in which he is acting. Now, if this slave of Allah does not acknowledge the Sovereignty of his Master or unlawfully sets up other objects of worship and does not obey His Law in his exploitation of His wealth and kingdom, he shall be guilty of a crime. Therefore, he will not be entitled to any reward for his charity, but shall be prosecuted for his unlawful exploitation. The charity of such a man maybe likened to the charity of a servant who steals a sum of money from the treasure of his master and spends it as he likes.

92. Here Allah warns the Muslims to guard against the hypocritical attitude of the Jews who lived in the suburbs of Al-Madīnah. The two clans, Aus and Khazraj, had been on friendly terms with them from very ancient times and kept sincere relations with them even after embracing Islam. In contrast to this, the Jews, who had turned into the enemies of the Holy Prophet and his mission, could not be friendly with anyone who had joined the new Movement. Accordingly, they kept up an outward show of friendship with the *Anṣār* but in their heart of hearts they had become their bitter enemies. They, however, exploited this outward friendship and tried to sow seeds of dissension and create chaos in the Muslim Community. They also tried to draw out secrets from the Muslims and pass them on to their enemies. That is why Allah has warned the Muslims that they should not take such people into their confidence.

93. That is, "It is strange that the Jews, who themselves are guilty of rejecting your Book, whereas you believe in their Book, the Torah, along with your Book, the Qur'ān, should have a grievance against you. There is no reason why they should complain against you: on the other hand, you have a cogent grievance against them for their disbelief in your Book."

94. From here begins the fourth discourse, which was revealed after the battle of Uḥd. It has been beautifully connected with the previous discourse which ended with the admonition that the machinations of their enemies could do them no harm, if they would show restraint, and fear Allah. This discourse is an apt

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فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿١٢٢﴾ وَلَقَدْ نَصَرَكُمُ اللّٰهُ بِبَدْرٍ وَّاَنْتُمْ اَذِلَّةٌ ۚ فَاتَّقُوا
اللّٰهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿١٢٣﴾ اِذْ تَقُوْلُ لِلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ اَلَنْ يَّكْفِيَكُمْ اَنْ يُّمِدَّكُمْ
رَبُّكُمْ بِثَلٰثَةِ اٰلٰفٍ مِّنَ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ مُنْزَلِيْنَ ﴿١٢٤﴾ بَلٰٓى ۙ اِنْ تَصْبِرُوْا وَتَتَّقُوْا وَ
يَاْتُوْكُمْ مِّنْ فَوْرِهِمْ هٰذَا يُمْدِدْكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ بِخَمْسَةِ اٰلٰفٍ مِّنَ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ
مُسَوِّمِيْنَ ﴿١٢٥﴾ وَمَا جَعَلَهُ اللّٰهُ اِلَّا بُشْرٰى لَكُمْ وَلِتَطْمَئِنَّ قُلُوْبُكُمْ بِهٖ ۚ وَ
مَا النَّصْرُ اِلَّا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللّٰهِ الْعَزِيْزِ الْحَكِيْمِ ﴿١٢٦﴾ لِيَقْطَعَ طَرَفًا مِّنَ الَّذِيْنَ
كَفَرُوْٓا اَوْ يَكْبِتَهُمْ فَيَنْقَلِبُوْا خَآئِبِيْنَ ﴿١٢٧﴾ لَيْسَ لَكَ مِنَ الْاَمْرِ شَيْءٌ اَوْ
يَتُوْبَ عَلَيْهِمْ اَوْ يُعَذِّبَهُمْ فَاِنَّهُمْ ظٰلِمُوْنَ ﴿١٢٨﴾ وَلِلّٰهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ
مَا فِي الْاَرْضِ ۭ يَغْفِرُ لِمَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ غَفُوْرٌ
رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿١٢٩﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تَاْكُلُوا الرِّبٰوٓا اَضْعَافًا مُّضٰعَفَةً ۠ وَاتَّقُوا
اللّٰهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿١٣٠﴾ وَاتَّقُوا النَّارَ الَّتِيْٓ اُعِدَّتْ لِلْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿١٣١﴾ وَاَطِيْعُوا
اللّٰهَ وَالرَّسُوْلَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُوْنَ ﴿١٣٢﴾ وَسَارِعُوْٓا اِلٰى مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ وَ
جَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا السَّمٰوٰتُ وَالْاَرْضُ ۙ اُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿١٣٣﴾ الَّذِيْنَ يُنْفِقُوْنَ
فِي السَّرَّآءِ وَالضَّرَّآءِ وَالْكٰظِمِيْنَ الْغَيْظَ وَالْعَافِيْنَ عَنِ النَّاسِ ۭ وَ
اللّٰهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿١٣٤﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ اِذَا فَعَلُوْا فَاحِشَةً اَوْ ظَلَمُوْٓا اَنْفُسَهُمْ
ذَكَرُوا اللّٰهَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوْا لِذُنُوْبِهِمْ ۠ وَمَنْ يَّغْفِرُ الذُّنُوْبَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ ۡ وَ
لَمْ يُصِرُّوْا عَلٰي مَا فَعَلُوْا وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿١٣٥﴾ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ جَزَاۗؤُهُمْ مَّغْفِرَةٌ مِّنْ
رَّبِّهِمْ وَجَنّٰتٌ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا ۭ وَنِعْمَ اَجْرُ
الْعٰمِلِيْنَ ﴿١٣٦﴾ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ سُنَنٌ ۙ فَسِيْرُوْا فِي الْاَرْضِ فَانْظُرُوْا

Remember that two groups from among you were about to show cowardice,[95] though Allah was there to succour them, and the Believers should trust in Allah alone. Indeed Allah had already succoured you in the battle of Badr when you were in a much weaker position, therefore you should refrain from showing ingratitude towards Allah: it is expected that you will be grateful now. 122-123

Remember when you said to the Believers, "Does it not suffice you that Allah should help you by sending down three thousand angels?"[96]—Yes, if you show fortitude and fear Allah in whatever you do, Allah will help you with (not three thousand but) five thousand angels, known by certain marks, in case of a sudden attack from the enemy. Allah has told you this so that you may rejoice and your hearts be filled with peace: victory and succour come from Allah alone, Who is All-Powerful, All-Wise. (He will succour you) so that He may cut off a flank of the disbelievers or put them to rout with dishonour. 124-127

(O Prophet,) you have no authority to decide the affair: Allah alone has the authority to pardon them or punish them for they are workers of iniquity. Allah is the Owner of whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth: He may forgive whomever He pleases and punish whomever He wills; Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.[97] 128-129

O Believers, give up the devouring of interest by doubling and redoubling it,[98] and fear Allah: it is expected that you will achieve (true) success. And guard yourselves against that Fire which has been prepared for the disbelievers, and obey Allah and His Messenger; it is expected that you will be shown mercy. Hasten to follow the path that leads to forgiveness from your Lord and to the Garden, which is as vast as the heavens and the earth and has been prepared for those pious people who spend their wealth freely in the way of Allah alike in prosperity and in adversity; who control their rage and forgive other people,—Allah likes such good people very much,[99]—who, if ever they commit a base deed or wrong their own soul by the commission of a sin, remember Allah instantly and ask for forgiveness from Him for their shortcomings—for who, but Allah, can forgive sins?—who do not knowingly persist in the wrongs they did. These will be rewarded with forgiveness from Allah and with Gardens beneath which canals flow and they will reside therein for ever: and how excellent is the 130-136

reward of those who do good deeds.

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continuation of the same theme, because the setback in the battle of Uḥd was due to lack of restraint and lack of fear of Allah.

As a review has been made of all the important events of the battle in order to bring home the lessons, it will be very useful to keep in view their background, because in the discourse only passing references have been made to them without any details.

In the beginning of *Shawwāl* (A.H. 3), the Quraish attacked Al-Madīnah with an army of 3,000 men. They not only out-numbered the Muslims but were also much better equipped. Besides this, they were filled with passion to avenge their defeat at Badr. The Holy Prophet and his experienced Companions were of the opinion that they should defend Al-Madīnah from within the walls, but some young men, who had not taken part in the battle of Badr, were so imbued with the spirit of martyrdom that they insisted on going out to meet the enemy. At last on their persistence, the Holy Prophet decided to go out to fight. So he led out an army of 1,000 men but at Shaut, 'Abdullah bin Ubayy, the ring leader of the hypocrites, deserted him with his 300 men. Naturally this treacherous act produced much confusion in the Muslim army. So much so that two parties, Banū Salmah and Banū Hārithah, were so disheartened that they began to waver in their minds and were about to turn back, but were dissuaded from this by those Companions who had remained firm and constant.

Then the Holy Prophet marched to Mount Uḥd with the 700 men left with him after the desertion of 'Abdullah bin Ubayy. He arrayed his men at the foot of the Mount so that the army of the Quraish was in their front and Mount Uḥd at their back. Thus the only vulnerable point was a pass on one side, where he posted 50 archers under the command of 'Abdullah bin Jubair, saying, " to let not any enemy come near us and do not leave your posts in any case whatsoever. Even if you see birds peck at our flesh, you should not abandon your posts at all."

In the initial stage of the battle, the Muslim army had the upper hand and succeeded in creating great confusion in the army of the enemy. But instead of pursuing this initial success to the final victory, they were so lured by their greed for booty that they began to loot the spoils. When the archers, who were guarding the pass, saw their comrades plundering the fleeing enemy, they also deserted their posts in order to join the looters. In vain did Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Jubair remind them of the strict command of the Holy Prophet to dissuade them from this, but only a few of them listened to him. Khalid bin Walīd, who was commanding the cavalry of the enemy, made full use of this opportune moment. He rode round the

Mount and attacked the Muslims from behind through the pass. Ḥadrat 'Abdullah bin Jubair did his best to defend it with the few men left with him, but in vain, and Khalid fell upon the Muslims who were engaged in the plunder of spoils. They were so overwhelmed by this sudden attack from behind that they took to their heels in confusion. To add to their misery, the Quraish who were in flight before them also turned back to attack them from the front. This turned the scale of the battle against the Muslims who were put to rout by this unexpected situation. Still there were some brave Muslims who stood firmly in the battle-field. But then a rumour started that the Holy Prophet had been martyred, and his Companions were so stunned by this rumour that even those who were standing firm in the battle-field lost heart and only a dozen or so of the devoted ones were left with him. Thus it was about to turn into an utter rout, when his Companions heard that, though he was wounded, he was alive. Then they again rallied round him and took him to a safe side of the Mount.

In this connection it is very important to note the strange thing that happened: the Quraish did not make full use of this opportunity but marched back to Makkah instead. This is an enigma, for, if they had pursued their success to complete victory, nothing would have checked them, because the Muslims had been so utterly routed that they could not have given them a battle.

95. The two groups were Banū Salmah and Banū Ḥārithah who had wavered in their minds at the desertion of 'Abdullah bin Ubayy, the hypocrite, and his 300 followers.

96. The Holy Prophet heartened the Muslims with this promise when they were disheartened to confront an army of 3,000 men with a small army of 1,000 which was further reduced to 700 men by the desertion of 300 hypocrites.

97. These verses were an answer to the curse which the Holy Prophet called on his enemies: when he was wounded in the battle, he involuntarily invoked evil upon his enemies and said, "How can that community prosper which wounds the Prophet?"

98. The main cause of the setback at Uḥd was the greed for wealth shown by the Muslims. They were so overpowered by the lust for booty, that, instead of pursuing their initial success to victory, they got engaged in looting the spoils. This is why the All-Wise Allah has struck at interest, the root cause of the evils and prohibited it. For it is a common experience that those who lend money on interest become so absorbed in it, that day and night they think of nothing but increasing their un-earned profits and this naturally increases their greed for money.

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كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ ﴿137﴾ هٰذَا بَيَانٌ لِّلنَّاسِ وَهُدًى وَّمَوْعِظَةٌ
لِّلْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿138﴾ وَلَا تَهِنُوْا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوْا وَاَنْتُمُ الْاَعْلَوْنَ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿139﴾
اِنْ يَّمْسَسْكُمْ قَرْحٌ فَقَدْ مَسَّ الْقَوْمَ قَرْحٌ مِّثْلُهٗ ؕ وَتِلْكَ الْاَيَّامُ نُدَاوِلُهَا
بَيْنَ النَّاسِ ۚ وَلِيَعْلَمَ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَيَتَّخِذَ مِنْكُمْ شُهَدَآءَ ؕ وَ
اللّٰهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿140﴾ وَلِيُمَحِّصَ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَيَمْحَقَ
الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿141﴾ اَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ اَنْ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَعْلَمِ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ
جٰهَدُوْا مِنْكُمْ وَيَعْلَمَ الصّٰبِرِيْنَ ﴿142﴾ وَلَقَدْ كُنْتُمْ تَمَنَّوْنَ الْمَوْتَ مِنْ
قَبْلِ اَنْ تَلْقَوْهُ ۖ فَقَدْ رَاَيْتُمُوْهُ وَاَنْتُمْ تَنْظُرُوْنَ ﴿143﴾ وَمَا مُحَمَّدٌ اِلَّا
رَسُوْلٌ ۚ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ ؕ اَفَاۡئِنْ مَّاتَ اَوْ قُتِلَ انْقَلَبْتُمْ
عَلٰٓى اَعْقَابِكُمْ ؕ وَمَنْ يَّنْقَلِبْ عَلٰى عَقِبَيْهِ فَلَنْ يَّضُرَّ اللّٰهَ شَيْـًٔا ؕ وَ
سَيَجْزِى اللّٰهُ الشّٰكِرِيْنَ ﴿144﴾ وَمَا كَانَ لِنَفْسٍ اَنْ تَمُوْتَ اِلَّا بِاِذْنِ اللّٰهِ
كِتٰبًا مُّؤَجَّلًا ؕ وَمَنْ يُّرِدْ ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا نُؤْتِهٖ مِنْهَا ۚ وَمَنْ يُّرِدْ ثَوَابَ
الْاٰخِرَةِ نُؤْتِهٖ مِنْهَا ؕ وَسَنَجْزِى الشّٰكِرِيْنَ ﴿145﴾ وَكَاَيِّنْ مِّنْ نَّبِيٍّ قٰتَلَ ۙ
مَعَهٗ رِبِّيُّوْنَ كَثِيْرٌ ۚ فَمَا وَهَنُوْا لِمَآ اَصَابَهُمْ فِىْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ وَمَا
ضَعُفُوْا وَمَا اسْتَكَانُوْا ؕ وَاللّٰهُ يُحِبُّ الصّٰبِرِيْنَ ﴿146﴾ وَمَا كَانَ قَوْلَهُمْ
اِلَّآ اَنْ قَالُوْا رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوْبَنَا وَاِسْرَافَنَا فِىْٓ اَمْرِنَا وَثَبِّتْ
اَقْدَامَنَا وَانْصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿147﴾ فَاٰتٰىهُمُ اللّٰهُ ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا وَ
حُسْنَ ثَوَابِ الْاٰخِرَةِ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿148﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اِنْ
تُطِيْعُوا الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا يَرُدُّوْكُمْ عَلٰٓى اَعْقَابِكُمْ فَتَنْقَلِبُوْا خٰسِرِيْنَ ﴿149﴾ بَلِ

As for those who treated (the Divine Revelations) as false, traverse the land and see for yourselves the wretched end of such people, who lived during the eras before your time. This is a clear warning for the people and guidance and admonition for those who fear Allah. 137-138

Be not faint hearted and be not sorrowful, you will surely gain the upper hand, if you be true believers. If you have received a blow now, your enemy also received a similar blow.[100] These are the vicissitudes of time that We alternate among the people; this has been done so that Allah may test from among you who were believers and choose the righteous witnesses of the Truth;[101] for Allah does not like the workers of iniquity—and by this test He willed to sort out true believers and to crush down the disbelievers. Do you think that you will enter Paradise without undergoing any trial? Allah has not yet tried you to see who among you are ready to lay down your lives in His way and who will show fortitude for His sake. You used to long for death but that was before you confronted it. Well, now it has come before you, and you have seen it with your own eyes.[102] 139-143

Muḥammad is no more than a Messenger: other Messengers have already passed before him: if, then, he also dies or is slain, will you then turn about on your heels?[103] Remember, he, who turns about on his heels, will do no harm at all to Allah; of course Allah will duly reward those who live as His grateful servants. 144

No human being can ever die save by Allah's leave, and the time of death has been pre-ordained.[104] Whoso makes efforts with the intention of the reward of this world, We will reward him in this world, and whoso makes efforts with the intention of the reward of the Hereafter will get it[105] and We will certainly reward the grateful servants.[106] Before this have passed many such Prophets in whose company large bands of worshippers of Allah have fought (in His way); they never lost heart during the adversities that befell them in the way of Allah; nor did they show any weakness; nor did they submit (to falsehood:[107]) Allah likes the people who show fortitude. Their only prayer was: "Our Lord, forgive our errors and shortcomings; pardon us the excesses we have committed in our affairs; make our footings secure and hold us firm against the disbelievers." Whereupon Allah gave them the rewards of this world 145-148

and also the better rewards of the Next World: Allah likes only those people who do good deeds.

149 O Believers, if you follow the counsel of those who have adopted the way of disbelief, they will cause you to turn back to unbelief[108] and you will be the losers.

Contd. from p.271]

99. The devouring of interest had created greed, avarice, parsimony and selfishness in those who took interest; hatred, anger, enmity and jealousy in those who had to pay it, and these moral evils contributed to some extent to the setback in the Battle of Uḥd. Therefore Allah has condemned and prohibited interest and prescribed charity as an antidote to it. It is obvious that Paradise has been reserved for those who practise charity and spend money generously, and not for those greedy persons who practise money-lending on interest. (Please refer also to E. N. 320, Al-Baqarah.)

100. God is encouraging the Muslims by mentioning the victory in the battle of Badr, saying, "When the disbelievers did not lose heart by the blow at Badr, why should you, the believers, lose heart by the blow at Uḥd?"

101. The original Arabic text may imply either of the two things: "Allah desired to give some of you the honour of martyrdom." Or it may mean, "He willed to winnow the Believers from the hypocrites so that the true witnesses of the Truth, who may really be worthy of performing the mission that has been assigned to the Muslim Community, may be distinguished from the false ones."

102. This alludes to those who were so desirous of martyrdom that they had persuaded the Holy Prophet against his wish to go out of Al-Madīnah to fight with the enemy.

103. This is the answer to the mischievous talk of those hypocrites who had accompanied the Muslims in the battle of Uḥd. When the rumour spread that the Holy Prophet had been slain, naturally the true Muslims lost heart, but the hypocrites began to say, "Let us go to 'Abdullah bin Ubayy and request him to obtain amnesty for us from Abu Sufyān." Others who were more impudent, went even so far as to say, "If Muḥammad (Allah's peace be upon him) had been a true Prophet of Allah, he could not have been slain. Let us now turn to our ancestral Faith." Allah rebukes them as if to say, "Muḥammad (Allah's peace be upon him) is a Prophet, and is mortal like other Prophets who came before him: therefore, if your attachment to Islam is because of the person of Muḥammad (Allah's peace be upon him), and if it stands on such flimsy ground that with his death you will again return to disbelief, then Allah's religion does not stand in need of you."

This verse was also meant to impress that Muḥammad (Allah's peace be upon him) was mortal like all other Prophets. According to a tradition, on the morning when the Prophet died, Abu Bakr came into the mosque at Al-Madinah and found the people all distracted, and 'Umar telling them that it was a sin to say that he was dead. Abu Bakr went and ascertained the truth, and coming back into the mosque, cried, "Lo! as for him who worshipped Muḥammad, Muḥammad (Allah's peace be upon him) is dead, but as for him who worships Allah, Allah is alive and does not die." Then he recited this verse "and it was as if the people had not known till then that such a verse had been revealed."

104. This is meant to teach the Muslims that fleeing from fear of death will be of no avail, because none shall die a moment before the time ordained for death by Allah, nor can one live a moment after it. Therefore, what one should care for, is not how to escape from death but how best to spend the time that has been given in this world. The important question is this: Is it to be spent for the sake of this worldly life or for the Life-after-death?

105. As the consequences of all actions follow them inevitably, the most important question from the Islamic point of view is whether one's struggle in life is to be directed towards the transitory interests and enjoyments of this world or towards the ever-lasting joys of the Next World. The answer to this will determine one's moral attitude in regard to good and evil.

106. "Grateful servants" are those people who appreciate fully the blessings of Allah, which He has bestowed upon them by giving them the correct answer to the question posed in E. N. 105. He has informed them that there is a limitless life beyond the limited life of this world and that the consequences of the actions of this life are not confined to this life alone, but follow inevitably in the Life-after-death. Hence he is really a grateful servant who trusts in God's promise of sure reward of good deeds in the Next World, and then goes on performing those deeds, disregarding whether his deeds flourish in this life or produce the reverse results. On the other hand, those people are ungrateful who are not ready and willing to spend their time or money or energy on anything that is not expected to produce immediate "good" results in this world. They are ungrateful because they do not appreciate the correct knowledge which has been bestowed by God about the consequences which inevitably follow in the everlasting life in the Next World.

107. That is, "They did not surrender to the worshippers of falsehood, even though they were less in number and worse off in equipment than their enemies."

[Contd. on p. 282

اللّٰهُ مَوْلٰىكُمْ ۚ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ النّٰصِرِيْنَ ﴿١٥٠﴾ سَنُلْقِيْ فِيْ قُلُوْبِ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوا
الرُّعْبَ بِمَآ اَشْرَكُوْا بِاللّٰهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزِّلْ بِهٖ سُلْطٰنًا ۚ وَمَاْوٰىهُمُ النَّارُ ۭ
وَبِئْسَ مَثْوَى الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿١٥١﴾ وَلَقَدْ صَدَقَكُمُ اللّٰهُ وَعْدَهٗٓ اِذْ تَحُسُّوْنَهُمْ
بِاِذْنِهٖ ۚ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا فَشِلْتُمْ وَتَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي الْاَمْرِ وَعَصَيْتُمْ مِّنْۢ بَعْدِ مَآ
اَرٰىكُمْ مَّا تُحِبُّوْنَ ۭ مِنْكُمْ مَّنْ يُّرِيْدُ الدُّنْيَا وَمِنْكُمْ مَّنْ يُّرِيْدُ الْاٰخِرَةَ ۚ ثُمَّ
صَرَفَكُمْ عَنْهُمْ لِيَبْتَلِيَكُمْ ۚ وَلَقَدْ عَفَا عَنْكُمْ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ ذُوْ فَضْلٍ عَلَى
الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٥٢﴾ اِذْ تُصْعِدُوْنَ وَلَا تَلْوٗنَ عَلٰٓى اَحَدٍ وَّالرَّسُوْلُ يَدْعُوْكُمْ
فِيْٓ اُخْرٰىكُمْ فَاَثَابَكُمْ غَمًّۢا بِغَمٍّ لِّكَيْلَا تَحْزَنُوْا عَلٰي مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلَا مَآ
اَصَابَكُمْ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ خَبِيْرٌۢ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿١٥٣﴾ ثُمَّ اَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِّنْۢ بَعْدِ الْغَمِّ
اَمَنَةً نُّعَاسًا يَّغْشٰى طَاۗىِٕفَةً مِّنْكُمْ ۙ وَطَاۗىِٕفَةٌ قَدْ اَهَمَّتْهُمْ اَنْفُسُهُمْ يَظُنُّوْنَ
بِاللّٰهِ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ ظَنَّ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ ۭ يَقُوْلُوْنَ هَلْ لَّنَا مِنَ الْاَمْرِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ۭ
قُلْ اِنَّ الْاَمْرَ كُلَّهٗ لِلّٰهِ ۭ يُخْفُوْنَ فِيْٓ اَنْفُسِهِمْ مَّا لَا يُبْدُوْنَ لَكَ ۭ يَقُوْلُوْنَ
لَوْ كَانَ لَنَا مِنَ الْاَمْرِ شَيْءٌ مَّا قُتِلْنَا هٰهُنَا ۭ قُلْ لَّوْ كُنْتُمْ فِيْ بُيُوْتِكُمْ
لَبَرَزَ الَّذِيْنَ كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَتْلُ اِلٰى مَضَاجِعِهِمْ ۚ وَلِيَبْتَلِيَ اللّٰهُ مَا فِيْ
صُدُوْرِكُمْ وَلِيُمَحِّصَ مَا فِيْ قُلُوْبِكُمْ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ عَلِيْمٌۢ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُوْرِ ﴿١٥٤﴾
اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ تَوَلَّوْا مِنْكُمْ يَوْمَ الْتَقَى الْجَمْعٰنِ ۙ اِنَّمَا اسْتَزَلَّهُمُ الشَّيْطٰنُ
بِبَعْضِ مَا كَسَبُوْا ۚ وَلَقَدْ عَفَا اللّٰهُ عَنْهُمْ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ حَلِيْمٌ ﴿١٥٥﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا
الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تَكُوْنُوْا كَالَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا وَقَالُوْا لِاِخْوَانِهِمْ اِذَا ضَرَبُوْا فِي
الْاَرْضِ اَوْ كَانُوْا غُزًّى لَّوْ كَانُوْا عِنْدَنَا مَا مَاتُوْا وَمَا قُتِلُوْا ۚ لِيَجْعَلَ

(What they are saying is quite wrong :) the fact is that Allah is your Protector and Helper and He is the best of all Helpers. The time is coming when We will cast awe into the hearts of the rejecters of the Truth: this is because they have set up with Allah partners, for whom He has sent no authority. Hell shall be their final abode and wretched indeed is the dwelling place of the workers of iniquity. 150-151

Allah did fulfil His promise (of help) to you: in the initial stage of the battle, it was you who were killing them by Allah's leave until you lost heart and disputed about your duty and disobeyed your leader, when Allah showed you what (the spoils) you coveted,[108a]—for there were among you some who hankered after the life of this world, and others, who cherished the Life-after-death. Then Allah caused your retreat before the disbelievers in order to test you, but the fact is that even then Allah pardoned[109] you, for Allah is very gracious to the believers. 152

Recall how you were fleeing in such a panic that you did not even look back at one another, and the Messenger in your rear was calling out to you.[110] Consequently, Allah inflicted upon you one sorrow after the other[111] so that you may learn this lesson for the future that you should not grieve for what you have lost and for any misfortune that might befall you: Allah is fully aware of all that you are doing. 153

Then after this grief, Allah sent down upon some of you such a sense of peace and security that they began to drowse,[112] but the others, who attached importance only to their own worldly interests, began to cherish about Allah thoughts of ignorance which were void of truth. Now they ask, "Have we also a say in the conduct of affairs?" Say, ("No one has share in this.) The authority over the affairs rests wholly with Allah." In fact they are not disclosing to you what they are concealing in their hearts: what they really mean is this: "If we had a say (in the conduct of) the affairs, none of us would have been slain here." Tell them, "Even though you had remained in your houses, those, who were destined to be slain, would have gone forth of their own accord to the places where they were destined to be slain." And all this happened so that Allah may test that which was hidden in your hearts, and sort out the base thing from your hearts. Allah is fully aware of what is in the hearts. 154

اللّٰهُ ذٰلِكَ حَسْرَةً فِيْ قُلُوْبِهِمْ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ يُحْيٖ وَيُمِيْتُ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ
بَصِيْرٌ ﴿١٥٦﴾ وَلَئِنْ قُتِلْتُمْ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ اَوْ مُتُّمْ لَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ وَرَحْمَةٌ
خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا يَجْمَعُوْنَ ﴿١٥٧﴾ وَلَئِنْ مُّتُّمْ اَوْ قُتِلْتُمْ لَاِ اِلَى اللّٰهِ تُحْشَرُوْنَ ﴿١٥٨﴾ فَبِمَا
رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ ۚ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيْظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانْفَضُّوْا مِنْ
حَوْلِكَ ۪ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْاَمْرِ ۚ فَاِذَا عَزَمْتَ
فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللّٰهِ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِيْنَ ﴿١٥٩﴾ اِنْ يَّنْصُرْكُمُ اللّٰهُ فَلَا غَالِبَ
لَكُمْ ۚ وَاِنْ يَّخْذُلْكُمْ فَمَنْ ذَا الَّذِيْ يَنْصُرُكُمْ مِّنْۢ بَعْدِهٖ ؕ وَعَلَى اللّٰهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ
الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿١٦٠﴾ وَمَا كَانَ لِنَبِيٍّ اَنْ يَّغُلَّ ؕ وَمَنْ يَّغْلُلْ يَاْتِ بِمَا غَلَّ
يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ ۚ ثُمَّ تُوَفّٰى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُوْنَ ﴿١٦١﴾ اَفَمَنِ
اتَّبَعَ رِضْوَانَ اللّٰهِ كَمَنْۢ بَآءَ بِسَخَطٍ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ وَمَاْوٰىهُ جَهَنَّمُ ؕ وَبِئْسَ
الْمَصِيْرُ ﴿١٦٢﴾ هُمْ دَرَجٰتٌ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ بَصِيْرٌۢ بِمَا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿١٦٣﴾ لَقَدْ
مَنَّ اللّٰهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ اِذْ بَعَثَ فِيْهِمْ رَسُوْلًا مِّنْ اَنْفُسِهِمْ
يَتْلُوْا عَلَيْهِمْ اٰيٰتِهٖ وَيُزَكِّيْهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتٰبَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ ۚ وَاِنْ كَانُوْا
مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِيْ ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿١٦٤﴾ اَوَلَمَّاۤ اَصَابَتْكُمْ مُّصِيْبَةٌ قَدْ اَصَبْتُمْ
مِّثْلَيْهَا ۙ قُلْتُمْ اَنّٰى هٰذَا ؕ قُلْ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اَنْفُسِكُمْ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلٰى كُلِّ
شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿١٦٥﴾ وَمَاۤ اَصَابَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْتَقَى الْجَمْعٰنِ فَبِاِذْنِ اللّٰهِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ
الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٦٦﴾ وَلِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِيْنَ نَافَقُوْا ۚ وَقِيْلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا قَاتِلُوْا فِيْ
سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ اَوِ ادْفَعُوْا ؕ قَالُوْا لَوْ نَعْلَمُ قِتَالًا لَّا اتَّبَعْنٰكُمْ ؕ هُمْ لِلْكُفْرِ
يَوْمَئِذٍ اَقْرَبُ مِنْهُمْ لِلْاِيْمَانِ ۚ يَقُوْلُوْنَ بِاَفْوَاهِهِمْ مَّا لَيْسَ فِيْ قُلُوْبِهِمْ ؕ

الصف

As for those of you who turned their backs on the day the two hosts met, they failed in their duty because Satan had exploited some of their weaknesses and made their footing insecure. Nevertheless Allah pardoned them, for Allah is indeed Forgiving and Forbearing. 155

O Believers, do not behave like disbelievers: when their brethren are on a journey or take part in a battle, (and ever meet with some accident) they say, "Had they stayed with us they would not have died nor would have been slain." Allah makes such things[113] a cause of grief and anguish in their hearts: for in fact, it is Allah who ordains both life and death; Allah is watching all that you do. If you are slain or die in the way of Allah, you will get Allah's forgiveness and mercy which are far better than all the things they amass. Anyhow, you shall be gathered together before Allah whether you die or are slain. 156-158

(O Messenger,) it is a great mercy of Allah that you are very gentle and lenient towards them: for, had you been harsh and hard-hearted, they all would have broken away from you: so pardon them and implore Allah to forgive them, and take counsel with them in the conduct of the affairs; then, when once you make up your mind (to do a thing), trust in Allah (and do it). Allah likes those who trust in Him in whatever they do. If Allah helps you, no power can overcome you, and if He forsakes you, who is there, then, after Him to help you? Therefore, true believers should trust in Allah alone. 159-160

It is not conceivable that a Prophet should ever commit breach of trust,[114] for whoso breaks His trust shall bring forth with him on the Day of Resurrection that which he had misappropriated. Then everyone shall be recompensed in full for what one earned, and none shall be dealt with unjustly. How can then it be conceivable that the one, who always follows Allah's will, should behave like the one who incurs Allah's wrath and is ultimately doomed to Hell, which is the most abominable abode? These two types of people have, in the sight of Allah, ranks of far different grades, for Allah is watching what they are doing. As a matter of fact, it is the great favour of Allah to the Believers that He has raised up in their midst from among themselves a Messenger who recites to them His Revelations, purifies their lives and teaches them the Book and Wisdom, though before this these very people had been in manifest error. 161-164

وَاللّٰهُ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَكْتُمُوْنَ ﴿167﴾ اَلَّذِيْنَ قَالُوْا لِاِخْوَانِهِمْ وَقَعَدُوْا لَوْ اَطَاعُوْنَا
مَا قُتِلُوْا ۭ قُلْ فَادْرَءُوْا عَنْ اَنْفُسِكُمُ الْمَوْتَ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿168﴾ وَلَا
تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِيْنَ قُتِلُوْا فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ اَمْوَاتًا ۭ بَلْ اَحْيَاۗءٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ
يُرْزَقُوْنَ ﴿169﴾ فَرِحِيْنَ بِمَآ اٰتٰىهُمُ اللّٰهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ ۙ وَيَسْتَبْشِرُوْنَ بِالَّذِيْنَ
لَمْ يَلْحَقُوْا بِهِمْ مِّنْ خَلْفِهِمْ ۙ اَلَّا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُوْنَ ﴿170﴾
يَسْتَبْشِرُوْنَ بِنِعْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ وَفَضْلٍ ۙ وَّاَنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يُضِيْعُ اَجْرَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿171﴾
اَلَّذِيْنَ اسْتَجَابُوْا لِلّٰهِ وَالرَّسُوْلِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَآ اَصَابَهُمُ الْقَرْحُ ۚ لِلَّذِيْنَ
اَحْسَنُوْا مِنْهُمْ وَاتَّقَوْا اَجْرٌ عَظِيْمٌ ﴿172﴾ اَلَّذِيْنَ قَالَ لَهُمُ النَّاسُ اِنَّ النَّاسَ
قَدْ جَمَعُوْا لَكُمْ فَاخْشَوْهُمْ فَزَادَهُمْ اِيْمَانًا ۖ وَّقَالُوْا حَسْبُنَا اللّٰهُ وَنِعْمَ
الْوَكِيْلُ ﴿173﴾ فَانْقَلَبُوْا بِنِعْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ وَفَضْلٍ لَّمْ يَمْسَسْهُمْ سُوْۗءٌ ۙ وَّ
اتَّبَعُوْا رِضْوَانَ اللّٰهِ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ ذُوْ فَضْلٍ عَظِيْمٍ ﴿174﴾ اِنَّمَا ذٰلِكُمُ الشَّيْطٰنُ
يُخَوِّفُ اَوْلِيَاۗءَهٗ ۠ فَلَا تَخَافُوْهُمْ وَخَافُوْنِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿175﴾ وَلَا يَحْزُنْكَ
الَّذِيْنَ يُسَارِعُوْنَ فِي الْكُفْرِ ۚ اِنَّهُمْ لَنْ يَّضُرُّوا اللّٰهَ شَيْـــًٔا ۭ يُرِيْدُ اللّٰهُ اَلَّا
يَجْعَلَ لَهُمْ حَظًّا فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ ۚ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيْمٌ ﴿176﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اشْتَرَوُا
الْكُفْرَ بِالْاِيْمَانِ لَنْ يَّضُرُّوا اللّٰهَ شَيْـــًٔا ۚ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿177﴾ وَلَا
يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْٓا اَنَّمَا نُمْلِيْ لَهُمْ خَيْرٌ لِّاَنْفُسِهِمْ ۭ اِنَّمَا نُمْلِيْ لَهُمْ
لِيَزْدَادُوْٓا اِثْمًا ۚ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِيْنٌ ﴿178﴾ مَا كَانَ اللّٰهُ لِيَذَرَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ
عَلٰي مَآ اَنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ حَتّٰى يَمِيْزَ الْخَبِيْثَ مِنَ الطَّيِّبِ ۭ وَمَا كَانَ اللّٰهُ
لِيُطْلِعَكُمْ عَلَي الْغَيْبِ وَلٰكِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَجْتَبِيْ مِنْ رُّسُلِهٖ مَنْ يَّشَاۗءُ ۠ فَاٰمِنُوْا

And how is it that, when a disaster befell you, you exclaimed, 165-168
"Whence is this?"[115] You yourselves had (in the battle of Badr) inflicted twice as great a disaster (on your enemy).[116] O Prophet, say to them, "You yourselves have brought about this disaster upon yourselves."[117] Allah has, indeed, power over everything.[118] It was by Allah's leave that you suffered the loss on the day the two armies met so that Allah might test the true believers and also the hypocrites. When these hypocrites were told to come and fight in the way of Allah or at least in the defence (of their city), they said, "Had we known that the fighting would take place today, we would have certainly gone out with you."[119] At the time they were uttering these words, they were nearer to unbelief than to faith, for they utter with their tongues what is not in their hearts; but Allah knows well what they conceal in their hearts. These are the very people who, while they themselves stayed at home, said of their brethren, who had gone to the battle and had been slain, "If they had obeyed us, they would not have been slain." Tell them, "If you really believe in what you say, you should turn away your own death, when it comes to you."

Do not regard as dead those who have been slain in the way of 169-171
Allah; nay, they are really alive[120] and are well provided for by their Lord. They rejoice in what Allah with His bounty has given them,[121] and they are happy to think that there is nothing to fear or to grieve also for those believers whom they have left behind and who have not yet joined them. They feel happy to have received the reward and the bounty of Allah and they have come to know that most surely Allah does not let go to waste the reward of the Believers.

As for those, who responded to the call of Allah and His 172-175
Messenger even after receiving the injury[122] there will be a great reward for such of those who do righteous works and refrain from evil and who,[123] when the people said to them, "Big armies have gathered against you: so fear them," became more firm in their Faith, and answered, "Allah is all sufficient for us, for He is the best Protector." Ultimately they returned home with the blessing and grace of Allah; they did not suffer any harm at all. Besides this, they had the honour of following what pleased Allah, and Allah's bounty is infinite. (Now you must have realized that) it was Satan who was frightening the people with the fear of his friends; therefore in future do not fear men but fear

Me, if you are true believers.[124]

176-178 (O Messenger,) let not the mischievous activities of those, who are striving today in the way of unbelief, grieve you; they can do absolutely no harm to Allah: thus Allah intends that they should not have any share in the Hereafter, and there is a very severe punishment in store for them. Those, who are bartering away faith for unbelief, are surely doing no harm to Allah: a grievous torment awaits them. Let not the disbelievers think that the respite We are giving them is good for themselves; as a matter of fact, We are giving them respite so that they might gather a heavy burden of sins for themselves; then there shall be disgraceful punishment for them.

Contd. from p.275]

108. That is, "They will take you back to the state of un-belief from which you had come out." This warning was timely because after the reverse at Uḥd, the hypocrites and the Jews tried to seduce the Muslims from their Faith. Their fallacious reasoning was like this: "Had Muḥammad been a Prophet, he would never have suffered a defeat. It is obvious from this that he is an ordinary man who gets victory one day and suffers defeat another day. It is sheer propaganda that Allah had given him any promise of help and success."

108a. This refers to the conduct of the archers. When they were commanded to abstain from taking spoils, they argued with and disobeyed their leader and deserted their positions with the result that the scales of victory were turned against the Muslims.

109. That is, "Your desertion was an act which would have resulted in your total destruction, if Allah had not pardoned you. It was God's grace and succour that saved you from its grave consequences, and the Quraish, in spite of their victory, retreated of their own accord without any apparent reason."

110. It was the courage and firmness of the Holy Prophet that saved the situation from utter ruin in the confusion caused by the sudden attack of the enemy who was charging from the front and from the rear. When some of the Muslims were fleeing towards Al-Madinah and the others were climbing up the Uḥd, the Holy Prophet stood firm and resolute at his post with a dozen or so of his Companions who had stood the test. He was rallying those who were taking to flight, calling out, "O servants of Allah, come to me."

111. Sorrow was caused by the reverse and by the rumour that the Holy Prophet had been martyred and by the loss of their companions and by the misery of their wounded and by the insecurity of their homes and by the fear that the

116. In the battle of Uḥd, 70 Muslims were martyred whereas in the battle of Badr, 70 disbelievers were killed and 70 taken as prisoners.

117. That is, "It is the result of your own weakness and wrong acts; you did not show patience; you did things which were against piety; you disobeyed the order of your leader; you became victims of greed and you got engaged in disputes among yourselves; still you ask, "Where has this disaster come from?"

118. That is, "Allah is able to give victory and is also able to bring about defeat."

119. This was the pretext with which 'Abdullah bin Ubayy returned to Al-Madīnah with his 300 men from his way to the battlefield. When the Muslims perceived that he was about to desert the Muslim army, they tried to persuade him to accompany them but he replied, "We are quite certain that there will be no battle today. That is why we are returning home; we would have most surely accompanied you, if we had expected any battle today."

120. Please refer to E. N. 155, Al-Baqarah.

121. It has been explained by the Holy Prophet in the Tradition cited in *Musnad-i-Ahmad:* "One, who enters the Next World with good deeds, is blessed by Allah with such a cheerful and joyful life that he never wishes to return to this world, but the case of a martyr is different. He does wish that he should again be sent to this world so that he may again enjoy the pleasure, joy and exultation that he felt at the time of laying down his life in the way of Allah."

122. This verse alludes to those devoted servants of Islam who willingly accompanied the Holy Prophet in his pursuit of the Quraish at that critical juncture.

After the Battle of Uḥd, the Quraish marched back towards Makkah. When they had covered a good deal of distance from Al-Madīnah, they realized that they had not utilised the golden opportunity of crushing the power of Muḥammad (Allah's peace be upon him) and they began to regret: what a folly have we committed by losing that excellent chance! Accordingly, they halted and held a council of war: Though they were in favour of returning to Al-Madīnah and making a sudden attack, yet they could not muster up courage and continued their march towards Makkah. At the same time, the Holy Prophet surmised an attack from the enemy; so he assembled the Muslims on the next day after the battle of Uḥd and said, "Let us go in pursuit of the Quraish." Although that was a very critical situation, yet the believers and the devoted servants of Allah responded to the call and willingly marched with the Holy Prophet to Hamra-ul-Asad, a place at a distance of 8 miles from Al-Madīnah.

123. VV. 173-175 were sent down a year after the Battle of Uhd, but have been included in this discourse because they deal with the events which are connected with the same.

124. This refers to the terrifying rumours which were being spread in Al-Madīnah. On the occasion of his return from Uḥd, Abū Sufyan had challenged the Muslims to a fight the following year at Badr. But when the time approached, he could not find courage on account of the famine that was raging in Makkah. So in order to save face, he tried to shift on to the Muslims the responsibility for the postponement. Accordingly, he sent a special spy to Al-Madīnah to terrify them by spreading rumours that the Quraish were making great preparations for war and collecting such a large army as could defeat any army in Arabia. This device of Abū Sufyan succeeded in producing the desired panic. When the Holy Prophet made an appeal to the Muslims to meet the Quraish in combat at Badr, it failed to produce any encouraging response. So much so that the Messenger of Allah had to declare before the gathered assembly, "I will go to the combat all alone, if none else is willing to go." It was then that 1,500 devotees volunteered to accompany him, and he reached Badr with them. From the other side, Abū Sufyan left Makkah with an army of 2,000 men. But after two days' journey, he told his men that it did not appear to suit them to have a fight that year, and that they would come next year for it. Accordingly, he returned to Makkah with his men. The Holy Prophet, however, waited for him at Badr for eight days. During these days, his Companions did profitable business with a trading party. Then he came to know that the disbelievers had gone back to Makkah, and he returned to Al-Madīnah.

[Contd.on p. 290

بِاللّٰهِ وَرُسُلِهٖ ۚ وَاِنْ تُؤْمِنُوْا وَتَتَّقُوْا فَلَكُمْ اَجْرٌ عَظِيْمٌ ﴿179﴾ وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَّ
الَّذِيْنَ يَبْخَلُوْنَ بِمَآ اٰتٰىهُمُ اللّٰهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ هُوَ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ ۭ بَلْ هُوَ شَرٌّ
لَّهُمْ ۭ سَيُطَوَّقُوْنَ مَا بَخِلُوْا بِهٖ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ ۭ وَلِلّٰهِ مِيْرَاثُ السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَالْاَرْضِ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ خَبِيْرٌ ﴿180﴾ لَقَدْ سَمِعَ اللّٰهُ قَوْلَ الَّذِيْنَ
قَالُوْٓا اِنَّ اللّٰهَ فَقِيْرٌ وَّنَحْنُ اَغْنِيَاۗءُ ۘ سَنَكْتُبُ مَا قَالُوْا وَقَتْلَهُمُ
الْاَنْۢبِيَاۗءَ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ ۙ وَّنَقُوْلُ ذُوْقُوْا عَذَابَ الْحَرِيْقِ ﴿181﴾ ذٰلِكَ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ
اَيْدِيْكُمْ وَاَنَّ اللّٰهَ لَيْسَ بِظَلَّامٍ لِّلْعَبِيْدِ ﴿182﴾ الَّذِيْنَ قَالُوْٓا اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَهِدَ
اِلَيْنَآ اَلَّا نُؤْمِنَ لِرَسُوْلٍ حَتّٰى يَاْتِيَنَا بِقُرْبَانٍ تَاْكُلُهُ النَّارُ ۭ قُلْ قَدْ
جَاۗءَكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِّنْ قَبْلِيْ بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ وَبِالَّذِيْ قُلْتُمْ فَلِمَ قَتَلْتُمُوْهُمْ اِنْ
كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿183﴾ فَاِنْ كَذَّبُوْكَ فَقَدْ كُذِّبَ رُسُلٌ مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ جَاۗءُوْ
بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ وَالزُّبُرِ وَالْكِتٰبِ الْمُنِيْرِ ﴿184﴾ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَاۗىِٕقَةُ الْمَوْتِ ۭ وَاِنَّمَا
تُوَفَّوْنَ اُجُوْرَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ ۭ فَمَنْ زُحْزِحَ عَنِ النَّارِ وَاُدْخِلَ الْجَنَّةَ
فَقَدْ فَازَ ۭ وَمَا الْحَيٰوةُ الدُّنْيَآ اِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُوْرِ ﴿185﴾ لَتُبْلَوُنَّ فِيْٓ اَمْوَالِكُمْ
وَاَنْفُسِكُمْ ۣ وَلَتَسْمَعُنَّ مِنَ الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْكِتٰبَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَمِنَ
الَّذِيْنَ اَشْرَكُوْٓا اَذًى كَثِيْرًا ۭ وَاِنْ تَصْبِرُوْا وَتَتَّقُوْا فَاِنَّ ذٰلِكَ مِنْ
عَزْمِ الْاُمُوْرِ ﴿186﴾ وَاِذْ اَخَذَ اللّٰهُ مِيْثَاقَ الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْكِتٰبَ لَتُبَيِّنُنَّهٗ
لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَكْتُمُوْنَهٗ ۡ فَنَبَذُوْهُ وَرَاۗءَ ظُهُوْرِهِمْ وَاشْتَرَوْا بِهٖ ثَمَنًا
قَلِيْلًا ۭ فَبِئْسَ مَا يَشْتَرُوْنَ ﴿187﴾ لَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يَفْرَحُوْنَ بِمَآ اَتَوْا وَّ
يُحِبُّوْنَ اَنْ يُّحْمَدُوْا بِمَا لَمْ يَفْعَلُوْا فَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّهُمْ بِمَفَازَةٍ مِّنَ

ع ۱۹ ۲ ۱۰ وقف لازم

Allah will not leave the Believers in the state in which you happened to be at present;[125] He will surely separate the pure from the impure people but Allah will not do this by disclosing the unseen to you.[126] As for disclosing the unseen, He chooses those of His Messengers He pleases; therefore put your faith in Allah and His Messenger (regarding the unseen) for there shall be a big reward for you, if you follow the way of faith in Allah and fear Him. 179

Let not those whom Allah has blessed with His bounty and are behaving in a niggardly manner think it to be good for themselves; nay, it is very bad for them. Whatever they are hoarding parsimoniously shall be hung round their necks like a collar on the Day of Resurrection; for Allah alone will inherit all that is in the heaven and the earth[127] and He is fully aware of what you are doing. 180

Allah has heard the saying of those who said; "Allah is poor and we are rich."[128] We will record this (in their Conduct Book) along with their previous record of unjust killing of their Prophets. And (on the Day of Judgment), We will say to them, "Now taste the torment of the burning Fire. This is for what you earned with your own hands. Allah is not unjust to His servants." 181-182

There are those who say "Allah has enjoined us that we should not accept anyone as a Messenger unless he offers, in our presence, a sacrifice which fire from heaven should devour." Say to them, "Many Messengers came to you before me with clear Signs, and they brought also the Sign you speak of: if you are sincere (in your demand), why did you kill those Messengers?"[129] If they now charge you with imposture, O Muhammad, before you they treated as impostors many a Messenger who came with clear Signs, and with Scriptures and light-giving Books. Since every being shall taste death, all of you shall get your full recompense on the Day of Resurrection. Then only that one will be truly successful, who escapes from the Hell-fire and is admitted to the Garden. As regards the life of this world, it is (as it appears); merely a thing that deceives.[130] 183-185

O Muslims, you shall surely be tried in your possessions and in your selves; you shall hear many hurtful things from those who were given the Book before you and from those who associate other gods with Allah. But if you show fortitude, and fear Allah under all

الْعَذَابِ ۝ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ۝188 وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ وَ
(19) (5) (10)
اللّٰهُ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ۝189 إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ
اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَآيٰتٍ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ۝190 الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللّٰهَ قِيٰمًا
وَّقُعُودًا وَّعَلٰى جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۚ رَبَّنَا
مَا خَلَقْتَ هٰذَا بَاطِلًا ۚ سُبْحٰنَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ۝191 رَبَّنَآ إِنَّكَ مَنْ
تُدْخِلِ النَّارَ فَقَدْ أَخْزَيْتَهُ ۗ وَمَا لِلظّٰلِمِينَ مِنْ أَنْصَارٍ ۝192 رَبَّنَآ إِنَّنَا
سَمِعْنَا مُنَادِيًا يُنَادِي لِلْإِيمَانِ أَنْ آمِنُوا بِرَبِّكُمْ فَآمَنَّا ۚ رَبَّنَا فَاغْفِرْ
لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَكَفِّرْ عَنَّا سَيِّاٰتِنَا وَتَوَفَّنَا مَعَ الْأَبْرَارِ ۝193 رَبَّنَا وَاٰتِنَا مَا
وَعَدْتَّنَا عَلٰى رُسُلِكَ وَلَا تُخْزِنَا يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ ۗ إِنَّكَ لَا تُخْلِفُ الْمِيعَادَ ۝194
فَاسْتَجَابَ لَهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ أَنِّي لَآ أُضِيعُ عَمَلَ عَامِلٍ مِّنْكُمْ مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ
أُنْثٰى ۚ بَعْضُكُمْ مِّنْ بَعْضٍ ۚ فَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا وَأُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ وَ
أُوذُوا فِي سَبِيلِي وَقٰتَلُوا وَقُتِلُوا لَأُكَفِّرَنَّ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّاٰتِهِمْ وَلَأُدْخِلَنَّهُمْ
جَنّٰتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهٰرُ ثَوَابًا مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللّٰهِ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ عِنْدَهُ
حُسْنُ الثَّوَابِ ۝195 لَا يَغُرَّنَّكَ تَقَلُّبُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي الْبِلَادِ ۝196 مَتَاعٌ قَلِيلٌ ۖ
ثُمَّ مَأْوٰىهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ ۚ وَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ ۝197 لٰكِنِ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ لَهُمْ
جَنّٰتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهٰرُ خٰلِدِينَ فِيهَا نُزُلًا مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللّٰهِ ۗ وَمَا
عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ خَيْرٌ لِّلْأَبْرَارِ ۝198 وَإِنَّ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتٰبِ لَمَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللّٰهِ وَمَآ
أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ وَمَآ أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ خٰشِعِينَ لِلّٰهِ ۙ لَا يَشْتَرُونَ بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ
ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا ۗ أُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ۝199

circumstances,[131] this will be (a proof of) constancy of purpose. Remind the people of the Book that Allah made the Covenant with them and enjoined: "You shall spread the teachings of the Book among the peoples and shall not keep these concealed."[132] But they flung the Book behind their backs and bartered it away for paltry worldly gains. What a bad business they are carrying on! Do not think that those, who exult in their misdeeds and who love to be praised even for deeds they have not actually performed,[133] shall escape chastisement; the fact is that a grievous chastisement awaits them; for to Allah belong the earth and the heavens and He has power over each and everything.

In[134] the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of night and day, there are many signs for the people of good sense, who standing and sitting and lying down remember Allah and reflect upon the (wonders) of the structure of the earth and the heavens.[135] (Then they cry out spontaneously,) "Our Lord, Thou, hast not created all this in vain, for Thou art free from doing such a thing. So save us from the torment of the Hell-fire;[136] for, O Lord, surely Thou wilt have abased him, whom Thou wilt cast into Hell-fire; then such workers of iniquity shall have no helper. O Lord, we heard a caller, who invited to the Faith, saying, "Believe in your Lord," and we accepted his invitation;[137] so, our Lord, forgive us our sins and remit our evil deeds and let our end be with the righteous people. Lord, fulfil the promises Thou hast made to us through Thy Messengers and do not put us to shame on the Day of Resurrection, for Thou never goest against Thy promise."[138] 190-194

Their Lord answered their prayer, saying, "I do not let go to waste the labour of any worker from among you whether male or female, for all of you (human beings) are the offspring of one another.[139] I will, therefore, forgive all the shortcomings of those who left their homes or were expelled from them for My sake or were persecuted, and of those who fought for My cause and were slain, and admit them to the Gardens underneath which canals flow." This is their reward from Allah and with Allah alone is the richest reward.[140] 195

Let not the activities of the disbelievers in the countries deceive you, for this is merely a brief enjoyment of this transitory life; then all of them shall go to Hell which is the worst abode. On the other hand, pious people, who fear Allah, will be given Gardens underneath which 196-199

canals flow: therein they will live for ever. This is their hospitality from Allah, and that, which is with Allah is the best for the righteous people. And there are some even among the people of the Book, who believe in Allah and in the Book which has been sent down to you and in the Scripture which was sent down to themselves before this; they humble themselves before Allah and do not barter away Allah's Revelation for paltry worldly gains; they will have their reward from their Lord; for Allah is very swift in settling accounts.

Contd. on p.254]

125. That is, "Allah does not like to see the Believers remaining mixed up with the hypocrites in one and the same Muslim Community."

126. That is, "Allah does not separate the believers from the hypocrites by informing the Muslims that, in their heart of hearts, such and such are hypocrites." He distinguishes true believers from hypocrites by creating such occasions as practically separate the two groups from each other.

127. Everything shall ultimately return to God as His inheritance because it really belongs to God. Whatever is in the possession of any of His creatures is a temporary trust. Everyone in every case shall be dis-possessed of the property and wealth that he calls his own during the short life here and that shall ultimately return to God, the real Owner. Therefore the wise one is he who generously spends Allah's property in Allah's way and the foolish one is he who tries to hoard it.

128. The Jews uttered these words on the occasion of the revelation of verse 245 of Al-Baqarah, "Who is there among you, who will lend to Allah a goodly loan..." They ridiculed this appeal, saying, "Oh, yes! God has been reduced to poverty, and now He is begging His servants for a loan."

129. This was a lie invented and attributed to God by the Jews, for Allah never enjoined such a thing. Though burnt sacrifices have been mentioned in the Bible, these have not been held out as essential signs of true Prophethood. They were merely symbols of the acceptance of sacrifices by God. (Please refer to Judges, 6: 20-21, 13: 19-20, Leviticus, 9: 24, II Chronicles, 7: 1-2).

It is obvious that this demand was merely a pretext for rejecting the Prophethood of Muḥammad (Allah's peace be upon him). As a further proof of their insincerity, it may be recalled that these enemies of the Truth did not hesitate to slay even some of their own Prophets who showed to them this same Sign of the burnt sacrifice. The case of Elijah may be cited as an instance: "When Ahab did more to vex the Eternal than all the kings of Israel before him, Elijah went to him

and remonstrated that He had ruined Israel by forsaking the Eternal. So Ahab gathered all Israel. Then Elijah told the people to have a couple of bullocks for the test of the burnt sacrifice. Of course, the "Prophets" of Baal failed in the test. Then God's lightning burnt the sacrifice and all Israel witnessed it but even after this they turned against Elijah who had to flee for his life." (For details please refer to I Kings, 18 and 19).

130. The life of this world (as it appears) is a thing that deceives because it helps create false impressions which deceive one about the ultimate results of deeds and misdeeds. One may thus be misled to take apparent prosperity or adversity as the criterion of Truth or falsehood. If one is apparently prosperous in this life, it is wrong to conclude that the one is on the right side and high in God's favour. On the other hand, if another is suffering from misfortunes and is a victim of adversity, it does not necessarily mean that the one is on the wrong side and incurs the disfavour of God. For often the results in this world are just the opposite of those which are to be met with in the Next World. The latter are, however, real and therefore deserve one's greatest consideration.

131. That is, "You should prove the strength of your high character even in the face of provocation by keeping your temper under control. Endure with patience their taunts, derision, accusations and improper words and false propaganda. Do not get exasperated even in the most trying circumstances so as to say or do false, unjust, uncivlized and immoral things."

132. That is, "Remind them of the Covenant that God made with them and of the great mission that was entrusted to them because they had forgotten it, though they did remember the sign of the burnt sacrifices given to some of their Prophets."

The Covenant referred to in this verse has been mentioned many times in the Bible, especially it has been repeated over and over again in Deuteronomy. Prophet Moses exhorted them not to "add unto the word" nor to "diminish aught from it" and to "keep the commandments of the Lord." (4: 2); and to "teach them diligently unto thy children", and to talk of them when thou sittest in their house and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up, write them upon the posts of thy house, and on the gates." (6: 7, 9) In his last will, he urged the elders of Israel to "set up great stones in mount Ebal after crossing the boundary line of Palestine". (27: 2-4).

Here is an instance of their negligence of the Book. Prophet Moses entrusted one copy of the Torah to the Levites and instructed them to recite it word by word every seventh year on the occasion of the Pass-over Festival before a gathering of all Israel-men, women and children. But owing to their gross

negligence of their duty, within seven hundred years of the death of Moses, they had even forgotten that there was such a Book as Torah. So much so that even the high priest of the Temple and the Jewish king of Jerusalem were ignorant of its existence. (II Kings, 22: 8-13)

133. For instance, such people wish to hear people praise them for being very pious, religious, God-fearing servants of the Faith and defenders of the law, when, in fact, they possess none of the characteristics, or they desire that propaganda should be made in their favour that such and such is an embodiment of self-sacrifice, sincerity and honesty and has rendered meritorious services to the community, when in fact, he is quite the opposite of it.

134. From here begins the concluding part of the Sūrah and it has no direct connection with the preceding verses, but with the Sūrah as a whole. Therefore it is worth while to turn to the introduction to this Sūrah to understand this portion.

135. That is, "These Signs can help one understand the Reality, provided that one is not unmindful of God and observes the phenomena of Nature like a thinking person and not like an animal."

136. A close observation of the system of the Universe leads them to the right conclusion that most surely there is a life in the Hereafter with its rewards and punishments. The system itself speaks eloquently of the great wisdom that underlies it, so it follows that the All-Wise Creator must have a definite purpose in the creation of Man. Moreover, the very fact, that He placed everything at man's disposal and has endowed him with a moral sense to discriminate between good and bad, clearly shows that he must be accountable to Him as to whether he had fulfilled that purpose. Consequently he should be rewarded for the good he does in this world and punished for the evil. This thinking leads one to the conclusion that there must be a life-after-death, where one will be accountable for his deeds. This realization fills man's heart with fear of punishment in the Hereafter, and he spontaneously prays to Him to save him from the Hell-fire.

137. In the same way, this observation also convinces right thinking men that the point of view of the Messengers about the beginning and the end of the Universe and the purpose of its creation is the correct one; hence the way of life preached and prescribed by them is the only right way.

138. It does not mean that they have any doubts about the promises of Allah, but this merely shows that they are anxious to know whether they themselves are entitled to the blessings that have been promised. That is why they pray to God, "Our Lord, forgive us—You do not break your promises," for they fear lest they should be ridiculed in the Hereafter by the disbelievers as they were

200 يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اصْبِرُوْا وَ صَابِرُوْا وَ رَابِطُوْا ۟ وَ اتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُوْنَ ۝

O Believers, Practice fortitude and show valour in fighting against worshippers of falsehood;[141] be ever prepared for the service of Truth, and always fear Allah: it is expected that you will achieve true success.

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here in this world by such taunts at these; "Look at these people--even their Faith in the Messengers has not saved them from disgrace."

139. That is, "In My sight all of you are alike as human beings and I have the same standards of justice and judgment for all, and men should not forget that women are of the same "human status as they themselves have. I do not discriminate between man and woman, master and slave, the black and the white, the high and the low."

140. There is a Tradition that VV. 190-195 were recited by the Holy Prophet before some non-Muslims who came to him and said, "All the Prophets brought one Sign or the other with them. For instance, Moses had the miraculous staff and his bright hand to show, and Jesus healed the blind and the lepers. Please tell us what sign have you brought us as a proof of your Prophethood." The Holy Prophet recited these verses and said, "I have brought this."

141. The word *ṣābirū* in the original Arabic Text implies two things: Show more valour in fighting for the right cause than that which the disbelievers are showing for a wrong cause." (2) "Vie with one another in showing valour in your fight with the disbelievers."



IV

AN-NISĀ

النِّسَاء

IV

AN-NISĀ

اَلنِّسَاء

INTRODUCTION

Period of Revelation:

This Sūrah comprises several discourses which were revealed on different occasions during the period ranging probably between the end of A.H. 3 and the end of A.H. 4 or the beginning of A.H. 5. Although it is difficult to determine the exact dates of their revelations, yet it is possible to assign to them a fairly correct period with the help of the commandments and the events mentioned therein and the Traditions concerning them. A few instances are given below by way of illustration:

(1) We know that the instructions about the division of inheritance of the martyrs and for the safeguard of the rights of the orphans were sent down after the battle of Uhd in which 70 Muslims were killed. Then naturally the question of the division of the martyrs inheritance and the safeguard of the rights of their orphan children arose in many families at Al-Madīnah. From this we may conclude that vv. 1-28 were revealed on that occasion.

(2) We learn from Traditions that the Commandment about the *Ṣalat* of fear during actual fighting was given on the occasion of the expedition of Dhaṭ ar-Riqā', which took place in A.H. 4. From this we may conclude that the discourse containing verse 102 in which the method of performing this Prayer was prescribed was revealed on that occasion.

(3) The last warning (v. 47) to the Jews was given before the Banī an-Nadīr were exiled from Al-Madīnah in Rabī' al-Awwal, A.H. 4. From this it may safely be concluded that the discourse containing verse 47 must have been revealed some time before that date.

(4) The permission about *tayammum* (performance of ablutions with pure dust, in case no water be available) was given during the expedition against the Banī al-Muṣṭaliq, which took place in A.H. 5. Therefore, the probable date of the revelation of the discourse containing verse 43 was A.H. 5.

Topics and Their Background:

Let us now consider the social and historical considerations of the period in order to understand the Sūrah. All the discourses in this Sūrah deal with three main problems which confronted the Holy Prophet at the time. First of all, he was engaged in bringing about an all round development of the Islamic Community that had been formed at the time of his migration to Al-Madīnah. For this purpose he was introducing new moral, cultural, social, economic and political ways in place of the old ones of the pre-Islamic period. The second thing that occupied his attention and efforts was the bitter struggle that was going on with the *mushrik* Arabs, the Jewish clans and the hypocrites who were opposing tooth and nail his mission of reform. Above all, he had to propagate Islam in the face of the bitter opposition of these powers of evil with a view to capturing more and more minds and hearts.

Accordingly, detailed instructions have been given for the consolidation and strengthening of the Islamic Community in continuation of those given in Al-Baqarah. Principles for the smooth running of family life have been laid down and ways of settling family disputes have been taught. Rules have been prescribed for marriage and rights of wife and husband have been apportioned fairly and equitably. The status of women in the society has been determined and the declaration of the rights of orphans has been made; laws and regulations have been laid down for the division of inheritance, and instructions have been given to reform economic affairs. The foundation of the penal code has been laid down; drinking has been prohibited; and instructions have been given for cleanliness and purity. The Muslims have been taught the kind of relations good men should have with their Allah and fellow men. Instructions have been given for the maintenance of discipline in the Muslim Community.

The moral and religious condition of the people of the Book has been reviewed to teach lessons to the Muslims and to forewarn them to

refrain from following in their footsteps. The conduct of the hypocrites has been criticized and the distinctive features of hypocrisy and true faith have been clearly marked off to enable the Muslims to distinguish between the two.

In order to cope with the aftermath of the battle of Uḥd inspiring discourses were sent down to urge the Muslims to face the enemy bravely, for the defeat in the battle had so emboldened the *mushrik* Arab clans and the neighbouring Jews and the hypocrites at home that they were threatening the Muslims on all sides. At this critical juncture, Allah filled the Muslims with courage and gave them such instructions as were needed during that period of war clouds. In order to counteract the fearful rumours that were being spread by the hypocrites and the Muslims of weak faith, they were asked to make a thorough enquiry into them and to inform the responsible people about them. Then they were experiencing some difficulties in offering their *Ṣalat* during the expeditions to some places where no water was available for performing their ablutions, etc. In such cases they were allowed to cleanse themselves with pure earth and to shorten the *Ṣalat* or to offer the "*Ṣalat* of Fear", when they were faced with danger. Instructions were also given for the solution of the puzzling problem of those Muslims who were scattered among the unbelieving Arab clans and were often involved in war. They were asked to emigrate to Al-Madīnah, the abode of Islam.

This Sūrah also deals with the case of Banī Nadīr, who were showing a hostile and menacing attitude, in spite of the peace treaties they had made with the Muslims. They were openly siding with the enemies of Islam and hatching plots against the Holy Prophet and the Muslim Community even at Al-Madīnah itself. They were taken to task for their inimical behaviour and given a final warning to change their attitude, and were at last exiled from Al-Madīnah on account of their misconduct.

The problem of the hypocrites, who had become very troublesome at that time, was involving the Believers in difficulties. Therefore, they were divided into different categories to enable the Muslims to deal with them appropriately.

Clear instructions were also given regarding the attitude they should adopt towards the non-belligerent clans. The most important thing needed at that time was to prepare the Muslims for the bitter struggle with the opponents of Islam. For this purpose greatest importance was attached to their character building, for it was obvious that the small Muslim Community could only come out successful, nay, survive, if the Muslims possessed high moral character. They were, therefore, enjoined to adopt the highest moral qualities and were severely criticized whenever any moral weakness was detected in them.

Though this Sūrah mainly deals with the moral and social reforms, yet due attention has been paid to propagation of Islam. On the one hand, the superiority of the Islamic morality and culture has been established over that of the Jews, Christians and *mushriks*; on the other hand, their wrong religious conceptions, their wrong morality and their evil acts have been criticized to prepare the ground for inviting them to the way of the Truth.

SUMMARY

SUBJECT: CONSOLIDATION OF THE ISLAMIC COMMUNITY.

The main object of this Sūrah is to teach the Muslims the ways that unite a people and make them firm and strong. Introductions for the stability of family, which is the nucleus of community have been given. Then they have been urged to prepare themselves for defence. Side by side with these, they have been taught the importance of the propagation of Islam. Above all, the importance of the highest moral character in the scheme of consolidation of the Community has been impressed.

Topics and Their Interconnection.

Just, fair and equitable laws and regulations for the smooth running of family life have been laid down for the husband and wife. Detailed instructions have been given for the division of inheritance and due regard has been paid to the rights of orphans. 1-35

In order to inculcate the right spirit for the observance of rules and regulations, the Muslims have been enjoined to show generosity to all around them and to be free from meanness, selfishness, stinginess of mind, because this is essential for the consolidation of the Communities and helpful for the propagation of Islam. 36-42

The ways of the purification of mind and body for the offering of Ṣalāt have been taught because it plays the most important part in every scheme of moral and social reform. 43

After moral preparation, instructions for defence have been given. First of all, the Muslims have been warned to be on their guard against the cunning machinations and vile practices of the local Jews who were hostile to the New Movement. This caution was necessary for removing some possible misunderstanding that might have arisen on account of the pre-Islamic alliance between the people of Al-Madīnah and the Jews. 44-57

58-72 Then they have been enjoined to place their trusts and offices of trust in the custody of honest and qualified persons, and to do what is just and right, and to obey Allah and His Messenger and those among themselves entrusted with the conduct of their affairs and to turn to Allah and His Messenger for the settlement of their disputes. As such an attitude and behaviour alone can ensure consolation, they have been strongly warned that any deviation from this path will lead to their disintegration.

73-100 After this pre-requisite, they have been exhorted to make preparation for defence and to fight bravely for the cause of Islam, without showing any kind of cowardice or weakness. They have also been warned to be on their guard against hypocrites. A line of demarcation has been drawn to distinguish the intentional shirkers from the helpless devotees.

101-103 Here again instructions have been given for the offering of Ṣalāt during military campaigns and actual fighting. This is to impress the importance of Ṣalāt even at the time of fear and danger.

104 Before proceeding on to the next topic, the Muslims have been exhorted to persevere in their fight without showing any kind of weakness.

105-135 In order to make the Islamic Community firm and strong for defence, the Muslims have been enjoined to observe the highest standard of Justice. The Muslims are required to deal out strict Justice even in case of the enemy, with whom they might be involved in war. They should also settle disputes between husband and wife with justice. In order to ensure this, they should keep their beliefs and deeds absolutely free from every kind of impurity and should become the standard bearers of justice.

136-175 Resuming the theme of defence, the Muslims have been warned to be on their guard against their enemies. They have been admonished to take necessary precautions against the machinations of the hypocrites and the unbelievers and the people of the Book. As belief in Allah, and Revelation and Life-after-death is the only safeguard against every kind of enemy, they should sincerely believe

in and follow His Messenger, Muḥammad (Allah's peace be upon him).

Though this verse also deals with the family laws contained in verses 1-35, it has been added as a supplement at the end of this Sūrah because it was revealed long after An-Nisā was being recited as a complete Sūrah. 176



يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوْا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَكُمْ مِّنْ نَّفْسٍ وَّاحِدَةٍ وَّخَلَقَ مِنْهَا
زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيْرًا وَّنِسَآءً ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ الَّذِيْ تَسَآءَلُوْنَ
بِهٖ وَالْاَرْحَامَ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيْبًا ۝ وَاٰتُوا الْيَتٰمٰٓى اَمْوَالَهُمْ
وَلَا تَتَبَدَّلُوا الْخَبِيْثَ بِالطَّيِّبِ ۠ وَلَا تَاْكُلُوْٓا اَمْوَالَهُمْ اِلٰٓى اَمْوَالِكُمْ ۭ اِنَّهٗ
كَانَ حُوْبًا كَبِيْرًا ۝ وَاِنْ خِفْتُمْ اَلَّا تُقْسِطُوْا فِي الْيَتٰمٰى فَانْكِحُوْا مَا
طَابَ لَكُمْ مِّنَ النِّسَآءِ مَثْنٰى وَثُلٰثَ وَرُبٰعَ ۚ فَاِنْ خِفْتُمْ اَلَّا تَعْدِلُوْا
فَوَاحِدَةً اَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ اَيْمَانُكُمْ ۭ ذٰلِكَ اَدْنٰٓى اَلَّا تَعُوْلُوْا ۝ وَاٰتُوا النِّسَآءَ
صَدُقٰتِهِنَّ نِحْلَةً ۭ فَاِنْ طِبْنَ لَكُمْ عَنْ شَيْءٍ مِّنْهُ نَفْسًا فَكُلُوْهُ هَنِيْۗـًٔا
مَّرِيْۗـًٔا ۝ وَلَا تُؤْتُوا السُّفَهَاۗءَ اَمْوَالَكُمُ الَّتِيْ جَعَلَ اللّٰهُ لَكُمْ قِيٰمًا وَّارْزُقُوْهُمْ
فِيْهَا وَاكْسُوْهُمْ وَقُوْلُوْا لَهُمْ قَوْلًا مَّعْرُوْفًا ۝ وَابْتَلُوا الْيَتٰمٰى حَتّٰٓى اِذَا
بَلَغُوا النِّكَاحَ ۚ فَاِنْ اٰنَسْتُمْ مِّنْهُمْ رُشْدًا فَادْفَعُوْٓا اِلَيْهِمْ اَمْوَالَهُمْ ۚ وَلَا
تَاْكُلُوْهَآ اِسْرَافًا وَّبِدَارًا اَنْ يَّكْبَرُوْا ۭ وَمَنْ كَانَ غَنِيًّا فَلْيَسْتَعْفِفْ ۚ وَمَنْ
كَانَ فَقِيْرًا فَلْيَاْكُلْ بِالْمَعْرُوْفِ ۭ فَاِذَا دَفَعْتُمْ اِلَيْهِمْ اَمْوَالَهُمْ فَاَشْهِدُوْا
عَلَيْهِمْ ۭ وَكَفٰى بِاللّٰهِ حَسِيْبًا ۝ لِلرِّجَالِ نَصِيْبٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدٰنِ وَ
الْاَقْرَبُوْنَ ۠ وَلِلنِّسَآءِ نَصِيْبٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدٰنِ وَالْاَقْرَبُوْنَ مِمَّا قَلَّ
مِنْهُ اَوْ كَثُرَ ۭ نَصِيْبًا مَّفْرُوْضًا ۝ وَاِذَا حَضَرَ الْقِسْمَةَ اُولُوا الْقُرْبٰى وَالْيَتٰمٰى

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

IV
ĀN-NISĀ
اَلنِّسَاء

Verses: 176 *Revealed at al-Madīnah*

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

O mankind, fear your Lord, Who created you of a single soul, 1
and of the same created his mate, and from that pair spread countless men and women over the earth;[1] fear that Allah in Whose name you demand your rights from one another, and abstain from violating relations between kinsfolk; note it well that Allah is watching you very closely.

Restore to the orphans their property,[2] and do not exchange 2
your worthless things for their valuable things,[3] and do not devour their property by mixing it up with your own, for it is a great sin.

And if you be apprehensive that you will not be able to do 3
justice to the orphans, you may marry two or three or four women whom you choose.[4] But if you apprehend that you might not be able to do justice to them, then marry only one wife,[5] or marry those women who have fallen in your possession.[6] This will be the better course to avoid injustice.

And give their dowries willingly to women (as an obligation), 4
but if they, of their own accord, remit a portion of the dowry, you may enjoy it with pleasure.[7]

Do not give to the feeble-minded people that property which 5
Allah has made the means of your maintenance: you should however,

provide them with food and clothing and give them good advice.[8]

6 And go on observing and testing the orphans until they reach the marriageable age:[9] then if you perceive that they have become capable, deliver to them their property[10]. Be on your guard against devouring their property unjustly and wastefully and hastily lest they should grow up to demand it. If the guardian of an orphan is rich, let him abstain from the orphan's property, and if poor, let him eat of it fairly.[11] When you hand over to them their property, then have some people to witness it, and Allah suffices as Reckoner.

7 There is a share for men in what has been left by parents and near relatives, and there is a share also for women in what has been left by parents and near relatives, whether it be little or much;[12] for this share has been prescribed (by Allah).

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1. This introduction beautifully suits the subsequent laws and regulations about human rights, specially about the smooth running of the family life. On the one hand, the people have been urged to fear Allah so as to escape His displeasure; on the other, they have been reminded that all human beings have sprung from one and the same parents and are thus closely related to one another. "....He created you of a single soul". At first one human being was created and then from him the human race spread over the earth. Therefore they should strictly observe the ties and obligations of kin-ship. We learn from another part of the Qur'ān that Adam was that "single soul." He was the first Man from whom the whole of mankind sprang up and spread over the earth. "....and of the same created his mate:" We have no definite detailed knowledge of how his mate was created of him. The commentators generally say that Eve was created from the rib of Adam and the Bible also contains the same story. The Talmud adds to it that she was created from the thirteenth rib of Adam. But the Qur'ān is silent about it, and the Tradition of the Holy Prophet that is cited in support of this has a different meaning from what has been understood. The best thing, therefore, is to leave it undefined as it has been left in the Qur'ān, and not to waste time in determining its details.

2. That is, as long "As the orphans are under age, spend their property only in their interest; and when they come of age, return their rightful property to them."

3. This is a comprehensive sentence, which may mean, "Do not make your income unclean in any unlawful way." It may also mean, "Do not exchange your worthless things for the valuable things of the orphans."

4. The commentators ascribe three meanings to this:

(a) Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah says that this was revealed to remedy an evil that was prevalent in the days of "Ignorance." The guardians of the orphan girls used to marry them for their wealth and beauty, with the intention of keeping them under their power because they had no one to defend their cause; then they treated them unjustly without any fear. Therefore when they became Muslims, they had misgivings about marrying orphan girls. Accordingly, the Qur'ān advised them to marry women of their choice other than orphan girls in their charge, if they feared that they would not be able to do justice to them. Verse 127 of this Sūrah also supports this comment.

(b) In commenting on this, Ḥaḍrat Ibn-i-'Abbas and his disciple 'Ikrimah assert that this Commandment was given to eradicate an injustice that was prevalent at that time. In pre-Islamic days, there was no limit to the number of wives and some people would marry even a dozen of them but when they could not meet the increasing expenses, they were forced to grab the property of their orphan nephews and other helpless relatives. Therefore, Allah restricted the maximum number of wives to four, and enjoined that this too, was subject to the condition that one should do justice to all of them.

(c) Sa'id bin Jubair, Qatādah and some other commentators declare that this Command was given to safeguard the interests of wives. They say that even before the advent of Islam, injustice to the orphans was looked upon with disfavour, but in regard to wives, it was different; they would marry as many as they liked and would treat them cruelly and unjustly without any fear of the society or pangs of conscience. Therefore Allah warned them that they should refrain from doing injustice to their wives as they did in the case of the orphans. Therefore they should not marry more than four wives and that too, only if they would do justice to them.

The words of the verse bear all the three meanings and probably all three are meant. Another meaning also can be: "If you cannot treat the orphans justly as they normally should be, you may marry the women who have orphan children."

The consensus of opinion of all the scholars of the Muslim law is that this verse limits the number of wives and prohibits the keeping of more than four at one and the same time. Traditions also support this. It is related that at the time when Ghailan, the chief of Tā'if, became a Muslim, he had nine wives. The Holy Prophet asked him to keep only four of them and divorce all the others. There is another instance of Naufal bin Mu'aviyah, who was ordered by the Holy Prophet to divorce one of his five wives.

It should also be noted that this verse restricts polygamy with the provision of justice to all the wives; therefore whoever abuses this permission without

fulfilling the condition of justice and marries more wives than one tries to deceive Allah. The courts of an Islamic State are, therefore, empowered to enforce justice in order to rectify the wrong done to a wife or wives. At the same time it is absolutely wrong to conclude from the proviso of justice, attached to this Commandment, that this verse was really meant to abolish polygamy. This is not the view of the Qur'ān, but of those Muslims who have been overawed by the Christians of the West. They say that the Qur'ān is also against polygamy but it did not abolish it directly because it did not consider it expedient at the time for the custom had become very common. Instead of this, it allows polygamy provided that justice is done to all the wives. As this condition is most difficult to fulfil, the recommendation is towards monogamy. Obviously, this way of thinking is the result of mental slavery, because polygamy in itself is not an evil for in some cases it becomes a real cultural and moral necessity. There are some people, who, even if they wished, cannot remain content with one wife. Polygamy comes to their rescue and saves them and the society in general from the harms of unlicensed sexual indulgences. That is why the Qur'ān allows polygamy to such people with the explicit condition of doing justice to all the wives.

As regards those who consider polygamy to be an evil, they are free to oppose the Qur'ān and condemn polygamy, but they have no right to ascribe their own perverted views to the Qur'ān, for it makes this lawful in very clear language without employing any words that might be stretched in any way to imply that the Qur'ān means to abolish it. (For further explanation, please consult my book *Sunnat ki A'ini Haithiyyat*, pp. 307-316).

6. "Those women": slavegirls captured in war and distributed among the people by the government. It may either mean: "If you cannot bear the expenses of a free woman, you may marry a slave girl as permitted in v. 25," or it may mean: "If you need more wives than one but are afraid that you might not be able to do justice to your wives from among the free people, you may turn to slave girls because in that case you will be burdened with less responsibilities." (For details please refer to E.N. 44 below).

7. Ḥadrat 'Umar and Qaḍi Shuraih have ruled that if a wife remits the whole of her dowry or a part of it but later on demands it, the husband shall be compelled to pay it because the very fact that she demands it is a clear proof that she did not remit it of her own free will. (For further details, consult my book *Ḥuqūq-uz-Zaujain*, under the caption Dowry).

8. This verse is very comprehensive in meaning. It teaches the Muslim Community the lesson that in no case should wealth, which is so important for the maintenance of life, be entrusted to such people as are feeble-minded and incapable of using or managing it properly, for they might, by its wrong use, spoil its

cultural and economic system and, in the long run, its moral system as well. It is true that the rights of private ownership must be honoured, but at the same time they are not to be so unlimited as to allow one to use them in any way one likes and create social chaos. As far as one's necessities of life are concerned, they must be fulfilled but none should be allowed to use these rights to the extent that is harmful to the collective moral, cultural and economic good of the Community. According to this verse, every owner of wealth should consider seriously before entrusting his wealth to anyone whether that person is capable of using it properly. On the larger scale, the Islamic State should take into its own custody the property of those who are found incapable of using it properly, or of those who may be using it in wrong ways but should arrange for the provision of their necessities of life.

9. That is, "When they are about to attain their puberty, keep an eye upon them and go on testing their intelligence in order to see how far they have become capable of looking after their own affairs."

10. Two conditions of puberty and capability have been laid down for the return of their property to the orphans. As to the application of the first condition, there is consensus among the scholars of law, but in regard to the second condition there is some difference of opinion. Imām Abū Hanīfah is of the opinion that if the orphan lacks capability when he reaches the age of puberty, his guardian may wait for a maximum period of seven years, and then he must return this property to him whether he shows signs of capability or not. But Imam Abu Yusuf, Imām Muḥammad and Imam Shafi'ī are of the opinion that capability is a pre-requisite for the return of his property to the orphan. Probably these latter scholars were inclined to the opinion that the case of such a person should be referred to a Muslim judge, who would himself arrange for the management of the property of the one who has not acquired capability of management.

11. That is, "He should charge for his services only that much as may be considered fair by every unbiased person and that he should charge openly and keep an account of it."

12. This verse contains five legal regulations about inheritance. First, that not only men but the women also have a share in the inheritance. Second, that it must be divided among all heirs, however little or insignificant it is; so much so that even if the deceased has left one yard of cloth and there are ten heirs, it must also be cut into ten parts. However, an heir may buy the shares of others by mutual consent. Third, that the verse also implies that this law applies to all sorts of property, transferable or non-transferable, agricultural or industrial, or of any other type. Fourth, that the right of inheritance becomes valid only when the deceased leaves some property behind him. Fifth, that when the nearest relatives are alive the distant relatives have no right in the inheritance.

وَالْمَسٰكِيْنُ فَارْزُقُوْهُمْ مِّنْهُ وَقُوْلُوْا لَهُمْ قَوْلًا مَّعْرُوْفًا ۝٨ وَلْيَخْشَ الَّذِيْنَ
لَوْ تَرَكُوْا مِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّةً ضِعٰفًا خَافُوْا عَلَيْهِمْ ۠ فَلْيَتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَلْيَقُوْلُوْا
قَوْلًا سَدِيْدًا ۝٩ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يَاْكُلُوْنَ اَمْوَالَ الْيَتٰمٰى ظُلْمًا اِنَّمَا يَاْكُلُوْنَ فِيْ
بُطُوْنِهِمْ نَارًا ۭ وَسَيَصْلَوْنَ سَعِيْرًا ۝١٠ يُوْصِيْكُمُ اللّٰهُ فِيْٓ اَوْلَادِكُمْ ۤ لِلذَّكَرِ
مِثْلُ حَظِّ الْاُنْثَيَيْنِ ۚ فَاِنْ كُنَّ نِسَاۗءً فَوْقَ اثْنَتَيْنِ فَلَهُنَّ ثُلُثَا مَا تَرَكَ ۚ
وَاِنْ كَانَتْ وَاحِدَةً فَلَهَا النِّصْفُ ۭ وَلِاَبَوَيْهِ لِكُلِّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا السُّدُسُ
مِمَّا تَرَكَ اِنْ كَانَ لَهٗ وَلَدٌ ۚ فَاِنْ لَّمْ يَكُنْ لَّهٗ وَلَدٌ وَّوَرِثَهٗٓ اَبَوٰهُ فَلِاُمِّهِ
الثُّلُثُ ۚ فَاِنْ كَانَ لَهٗٓ اِخْوَةٌ فَلِاُمِّهِ السُّدُسُ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ يُّوْصِيْ بِهَآ
اَوْ دَيْنٍ ۭ اٰبَاۗؤُكُمْ وَاَبْنَاۗؤُكُمْ لَا تَدْرُوْنَ اَيُّهُمْ اَقْرَبُ لَكُمْ نَفْعًا ۭ فَرِيْضَةً مِّنَ
اللّٰهِ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ عَلِيْمًا حَكِيْمًا ۝١١ وَلَكُمْ نِصْفُ مَا تَرَكَ اَزْوَاجُكُمْ اِنْ
لَّمْ يَكُنْ لَّهُنَّ وَلَدٌ ۚ فَاِنْ كَانَ لَهُنَّ وَلَدٌ فَلَكُمُ الرُّبُعُ مِمَّا تَرَكْنَ مِنْۢ
بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ يُّوْصِيْنَ بِهَآ اَوْ دَيْنٍ ۭ وَلَهُنَّ الرُّبُعُ مِمَّا تَرَكْتُمْ اِنْ لَّمْ
يَكُنْ لَّكُمْ وَلَدٌ ۚ فَاِنْ كَانَ لَكُمْ وَلَدٌ فَلَهُنَّ الثُّمُنُ مِمَّا تَرَكْتُمْ مِّنْۢ بَعْدِ
وَصِيَّةٍ تُوْصُوْنَ بِهَآ اَوْ دَيْنٍ ۭ وَاِنْ كَانَ رَجُلٌ يُّوْرَثُ كَلٰلَةً اَوِ امْرَاَةٌ
وَّلَهٗٓ اَخٌ اَوْ اُخْتٌ فَلِكُلِّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا السُّدُسُ ۚ فَاِنْ كَانُوْٓا اَكْثَرَ مِنْ
ذٰلِكَ فَهُمْ شُرَكَاۗءُ فِي الثُّلُثِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ يُّوْصٰى بِهَآ اَوْ دَيْنٍ ۙ غَيْرَ
مُضَاۗرٍّ ۚ وَصِيَّةً مِّنَ اللّٰهِ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ عَلِيْمٌ حَلِيْمٌ ۝١٢ تِلْكَ حُدُوْدُ اللّٰهِ ۭ وَمَنْ
يُّطِعِ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ يُدْخِلْهُ جَنّٰتٍ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ خٰلِدِيْنَ
فِيْهَا ۭ وَذٰلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيْمُ ۝١٣ وَمَنْ يَّعْصِ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ وَيَتَعَدَّ

And if the people of the family, orphans and the poor be present at the division of the inheritance, give them also something out of it and speak to them kind words.[13] 8

Let the people apprehend and be afraid of this: how solicitous they would have been on the eve of their death about the helpless children they would be leaving behind. They should, therefore, fear Allah and say the just and right thing. In fact, those who grab unjustly the property of the orphans, fill their bellies with fire, and most surely they shall be thrown into the burning fire of Hell.[14] 9-10

As regards inheritance, Allah enjoins you concerning your children that: 11

The share of the male shall be twice that of the female.[15] In case the heirs be more than two females, their total share shall be two-thirds[16] of the whole and if there be only one daughter, her share shall be half of the whole. If the deceased has children, each of his parents shall get one-sixth of the whole,[17] but if he be childless and his parents alone are his heirs, the mother shall have one-third of the whole.[18] If the deceased has brothers and sisters also, the mother shall be entitled to one-sixth of the whole.[19] The division of all these shares shall take place only after fulfilling the terms of the will and after the payment of the debt[20] (if any). As regards your parents and your children, you do not know who is more beneficial to you. Allah has apportioned these shares and most surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.[21]

And you will get half of what your wives leave behind, if they be childless; but if they leave children, then your share will be one-fourth of what they have left, after the fulfilment of their will and the payment of their debt (if any). As for them, they will be entitled to one-fourth of the inheritance left by you, if you are childless; but in case you leave behind children, their share will be one-eighth[22] of the whole after the fulfilment of your will and payment of your debt (if any). 12

And if the deceased whether man or woman (whose property is to be divided as inheritance) leaves no children and no parents behind but has one brother or one sister alive each of the two will be entitled to one-sixth of the whole but in case the brothers and the sisters are more than one then the total share of all of them will be one-third[23] of

the whole after the fulfilment of the will and the payment of the debt (if any) provided that it is not injurious[24] (to the heirs). This is the Commandment of Allah and Allah is All-Knowing and Lenient.[25]

13 These are the limits prescribed by Allah: whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, He will admit him into the Gardens underneath which canals flow, wherein he will abide for ever; this is the great success.

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13. Here the heirs of the deceased have been enjoined to be generous towards distant and near relatives and the indigent members of the family and orphans who happen to be present on the occasion of the division of inheritance, though they might have no share in it. They should give them also something and speak gently to them and avoid using harsh and unkind words as the narrow-minded people generally use on such occasions.

14. According to a Tradition this verses were revealed in response to the request of the widow of Ḥadrat Sa'd bin Rubai'. She came to the Holy Prophet with her two daughters and said, "O Messenger of Allah, here are the daughters of Sa'd who has been martyred in the battle of Uhd. Their uncle has taken possession of the whole of his property and has not left a single penny for them. Now who is going to marry them after this?"

15. The first guiding principle about the division of inheritance is that the share of the male shall be double that of the female, and this is very sound and just. As the Muslim law lays the major burden of the economic responsibility of the family on the male and keeps the female almost free from it, justice demands that her share of inheritance should be less than that of the male.

16. The same applies to the case of two daughters as well. It means that if the deceased leaves no son but only daughters, whether they are two or more, they shall be entitled to two-thirds of the whole inheritance and the remaining one-third shall be divided among the other heirs. As a corollary of this, if the deceased leaves only one son, there is a consensus of opinion that he shall be entitled to the whole of the inheritance in the absence of other heirs and if there are other heirs too, he shall receive the whole of the remaining inheritance after the allotment of their shares.

17. Each of the parents of the deceased shall be entitled to one-sixth of the inheritance, if he leaves behind a child or children whether they are only daughters or only sons or both sons and daughters, or only one son or only one daughter. As regards the remaining two-thirds, it shall be divided among the other heirs.

18. The remaining two-thirds shall be given to the father, if there be no other heir; otherwise the father shall share two-thirds with the other heirs.

19. If the deceased has brothers and sisters, the share of the mother has been reduced from one-third to one-sixth. This reduced one-sixth will be added to the father's share, for in that case the father's responsibilities are increased. It should be noted that the brothers and sisters of the deceased are not entitled to any share if the parents are alive.

20. The mention of the fulfilment of the will precedes the payment of the debt, for every deceased person may not owe a debt, but he must make his will. As regards the enforcement of the law, the consensus of opinion of the whole Muslim Community is that the payment of debt must have priority over the fulfilment of the will. That is, the debt, if any, must be paid first and then the terms of the will should be enforced and after this the inheritance should be divided. In E.N. 182 of Al-Baqarah, it has been stated that one has the right to bequeath by will one-third of the whole property. This has been permitted to enable a person to leave for a deserving relative or relatives, who are not entitled to inheritance, a part of the property. For instance, if there is an orphan grandson or a grand-daughter, or the widow of a son or an indigent brother or sister, or a brother's widow, or a nephew, or some other relative, who needs help, he may leave a part of the inheritance for such a one by means of his will. One is even allowed to leave by will a share for any deserving person or for public service. In short, the law regulates the distribution of two-thirds (or a little more) of one's inheritance and gives option for the disposal of the remaining (about one-third) by will to suit the special circumstances of one's own family, (which obviously vary in the case of each individual). At the same time provision has been made to redress any wrong done by a will to the heirs in any way. The members of the family may rectify that wrong by mutual consent or take the case to the Muslim judge for redress. For further explanation, see my book: *Yatim Potay Ki Warāsat.*

21. This is the answer to all those foolish people who do not understand the wisdom of the Divine Law of inheritance, and in their folly propose amendments to it in order to make up for "the deficiency" in the Law.

22. In case the deceased leaves behind children, his wife or wives will be entitled to only one-eighth of the inheritance, and if he dies childless, she or they will be entitled to one-fourth of the whole and this one-fourth or one-eighth will be divided equally among all of them.

23. If there be any other heir, he shall get share out of the remaining 5/6 or 2/3, as the case may be; otherwise the deceased will have the right to make his will about the whole of the remaining 5/6 or 2/3.

[Contd. on p. 316

حُدُوْدَهٗ يُدْخِلْهُ نَارًا خَالِدًا فِيْهَا ۪ وَ لَهٗ عَذَابٌ مُّهِيْنٌ ﴿14﴾ وَ الّٰتِيْ يَاْتِيْنَ
الْفَاحِشَةَ مِنْ نِّسَآئِكُمْ فَاسْتَشْهِدُوْا عَلَيْهِنَّ اَرْبَعَةً مِّنْكُمْ ۚ فَاِنْ شَهِدُوْا
فَاَمْسِكُوْهُنَّ فِي الْبُيُوْتِ حَتّٰى يَتَوَفّٰىهُنَّ الْمَوْتُ اَوْ يَجْعَلَ اللّٰهُ لَهُنَّ
سَبِيْلًا ﴿15﴾ وَ الَّذٰنِ يَاْتِيٰنِهَا مِنْكُمْ فَاٰذُوْهُمَا ۚ فَاِنْ تَابَا وَ اَصْلَحَا فَاَعْرِضُوْا
عَنْهُمَا ۚ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ تَوَّابًا رَّحِيْمًا ﴿16﴾ اِنَّمَا التَّوْبَةُ عَلَى اللّٰهِ لِلَّذِيْنَ يَعْمَلُوْنَ
السُّوْٓءَ بِجَهَالَةٍ ثُمَّ يَتُوْبُوْنَ مِنْ قَرِيْبٍ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ يَتُوْبُ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِمْ ۗ وَ
كَانَ اللّٰهُ عَلِيْمًا حَكِيْمًا ﴿17﴾ وَ لَيْسَتِ التَّوْبَةُ لِلَّذِيْنَ يَعْمَلُوْنَ السَّيِّاٰتِ ۚ حَتّٰٓى
اِذَا حَضَرَ اَحَدَهُمُ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ اِنِّيْ تُبْتُ الْـٰٔنَ وَ لَا الَّذِيْنَ يَمُوْتُوْنَ وَ
هُمْ كُفَّارٌ ۗ اُولٰٓئِكَ اَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابًا اَلِيْمًا ﴿18﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا يَحِلُّ
لَكُمْ اَنْ تَرِثُوا النِّسَآءَ كَرْهًا ۗ وَ لَا تَعْضُلُوْهُنَّ لِتَذْهَبُوْا بِبَعْضِ مَآ اٰتَيْتُمُوْهُنَّ
اِلَّآ اَنْ يَّاْتِيْنَ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُّبَيِّنَةٍ ۚ وَ عَاشِرُوْهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوْفِ ۚ فَاِنْ كَرِهْتُمُوْهُنَّ
فَعَسٰٓى اَنْ تَكْرَهُوْا شَيْـًٔا وَّ يَجْعَلَ اللّٰهُ فِيْهِ خَيْرًا كَثِيْرًا ﴿19﴾ وَ اِنْ اَرَدْتُّمُ
اسْتِبْدَالَ زَوْجٍ مَّكَانَ زَوْجٍ ۙ وَّ اٰتَيْتُمْ اِحْدٰىهُنَّ قِنْطَارًا فَلَا تَاْخُذُوْا
مِنْهُ شَيْـًٔا ۗ اَتَاْخُذُوْنَهٗ بُهْتَانًا وَّ اِثْمًا مُّبِيْنًا ﴿20﴾ وَ كَيْفَ تَاْخُذُوْنَهٗ وَ قَدْ
اَفْضٰى بَعْضُكُمْ اِلٰى بَعْضٍ وَّ اَخَذْنَ مِنْكُمْ مِّيْثَاقًا غَلِيْظًا ﴿21﴾ وَ لَا تَنْكِحُوْا
مَا نَكَحَ اٰبَآؤُكُمْ مِّنَ النِّسَآءِ اِلَّا مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ ۗ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ فَاحِشَةً وَّ مَقْتًا
وَ سَآءَ سَبِيْلًا ﴿22﴾ حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ اُمَّهٰتُكُمْ وَ بَنٰتُكُمْ وَ اَخَوٰتُكُمْ وَ عَمّٰتُكُمْ
وَ خٰلٰتُكُمْ وَ بَنٰتُ الْاَخِ وَ بَنٰتُ الْاُخْتِ وَ اُمَّهٰتُكُمُ الّٰتِيْٓ اَرْضَعْنَكُمْ وَ
اَخَوٰتُكُمْ مِّنَ الرَّضَاعَةِ وَ اُمَّهٰتُ نِسَآئِكُمْ وَ رَبَآئِبُكُمُ الّٰتِيْ فِيْ حُجُوْرِكُمْ

And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger and transgresses the limits prescribed by Him, Allah will cast him into the Fire wherein he shall abide for ever, and shall have a disgraceful chastisement.[25a] 14

If any of your women be guilty of indecency, call for four witnesses from among yourselves to testify against them. If they give evidence and prove the guilt, then confine them to their houses until death comes to them or Allah opens some other way out for them. And punish the two of you who commit this crime; then if they both repent and reform themselves, leave them alone, for Allah is generous in accepting repentance, and merciful in forgiving sins.[26] 15-16

However, note it well that Allah's acceptance of repentance is for those people only, who commit an evil in ignorance, and then repent of it soon after this. Allah again turns kindly to such people, for Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. But there is no repentance for those people who persist in their evil deeds until the dying hour comes to anyone of them; then he says, "Now I repent." Nor is repentance for them who die as unbelievers; for such people, We have prepared a painful torment.[27] 17-18

O Believers, it is not lawful for you to become the heirs of widows by force;[28] nor is it lawful that you should treat your wives harshly in order to deprive them of a part of the dowry you have given them. However (you have the right to treat them harshly), if they are guilty of adultery.[29] You should live with them in an honourable manner, even if you dislike them; it is possible that Allah may bring much good to you through that very thing you dislike.[30] And if you make up your mind to marry another wife in place of the one you already have, do not take back anything out of what you have given her, even though it may have been a heap of wealth. Will you take it back by slander and gross injustice? And how is it proper for you to take it, when both of you have enjoyed conjugal happiness and she received from you a solemn pledge of union?[31] 19-21

And do not marry at all those women whom your father had married though what has happened in the past is excepted.[32] This is an indecent and abominable thing and an evil practice.[33] 22

Contd. from p. 313]

All the commentators are agreed that in this verse brothers and sisters refer to half-brothers and half-sisters from the side of the mother alone. The rule of inheritance about real brothers and real sisters and half-brothers and half-sisters from the side of the father is given at the end of the Sūrah.

24. The will shall be considered as injurious if it affects adversely the rights of the lawful heirs and the debt will be injurious if the testator acknowledges a debt which he has not actually taken or plays some trick to deprive the rightful heirs of their due shares. Such a thing has been declared as one of the most heinous sins according to a Tradition. Another Tradition of the Holy Prophet says, "There may be a person, who, throughout his whole life, does deeds that deserve Paradise, but who on the eve of his death makes an injurious will and thus in the end he does an act that deserves Hell." Though such an injury is a heinous sin in any case, the warning has specially been given about it in connection with a person who has neither children nor parents to inherit his property. This is because such a one is more prone to squander his property in order to deprive comparatively distant relatives.

25. The attribute of Allah that He is All-Knowing, has been mentioned here for two reasons. First, it is to warn the people that none can escape the consequences of a breach of His Law, for, He has knowledge of everything. Second, it is to convince people that the shares of inheritance appointed by Allah are absolutely right, for Allah knows better than they in what lies their good. The other attribute that He is Lenient has been mentioned to show that the Laws of Allah are not harsh but are so lenient that they do not put the people to hardship.

25*a*. This stern warning has been given to save people from the eternal torture of Hell, which they will suffer if they change the law of inheritance or break other legal limits prescribed by Allah in His Book. It is a pity that in spite of this stern warning the Muslims changed and broke the Law of Allah with the same impudence as shown by the Jews. The transgressions against this law of inheritance are an open rebellion against Allah. They deprive women of their share of inheritance; they discard the Law of Allah and adopt the Law of primo-geniture or of joint family system instead: whenever it suits their whims and interests they make the share of the male and the female equal in order to rectify the Law of Allah. The latest rebellion against the Law is that some Muslim States have followed the West and imposed "Death Duties" which implies that the State is also an heir whom Allah had forgotten to mention. As a matter of fact, the state is entitled to an inheritance only if the deceased leaves behind an unclaimed property or himself allots a portion of it to the state by his will.

26. In both these verses (15-16), punishment for fornication was prescribed for the first time in Islam. According to verse 15, the guilty women were to be kept in confinement till further order, and according to verse 16 both the male and the female guilty of fornication were to be punished, that is rebuked, disgraced, beaten, etc. Afterwards this punishment was altered by verse 2 of Sūrah An-Nūr (XXIV). Now both the male and the female are to be scourged with one hundred stripes each.

This gradual enforcement of the criminal law was based on sound practical wisdom. At that time the Arabs were not accustomed to live under a settled government with a regular system of law and judiciary. Therefore it might have unwise and too much for them, if the Islamic State had imposed on them its complete system of criminal laws all at once. That is why at first the sort of punishment contained in these two verses was enforced and then gradually stricter punishments were prescribed for fornication, theft, slander, etc., and finally that complete system of law was evolved which was in force during the time of the Holy Prophet and his rightly guided successors.

The seeming difference in these two verses has misled commentator Suddī to the conclusion that verse 15 prescribed the punishment for married women and verse 16 for unmarried men and women. Obviously, this flimsy commentary is not supported by any sound argument. Likewise, the commentary of Abū Muslim Isfahānī that verse 15 is about the un-natural crime between two females and verse 16 about the un-natural crime between two males is also wrong. The Qur'ān is concerned only with the fundamental principles of law and morality; therefore it only discusses those problems which are confronted in normal life and does not concern itself with the ones that are met with under abnormal circumstances. These latter problems, as they arise, are left for the people to decide according to their insight. That is why, when after the death of the Holy Prophet the case of un-natural crime between two males was brought before the Companions, none of them turned to these verses for its decision.

27. The word *taubah* means 'to turn back' and 'to turn to'. When a person feels sorry for his sin and turns back from it, he may be likened to a runaway slave who comes back to his master. This is his *taubah*. When the master accepts his repentance, he turns to him kindly and forgives him. In Arabic this is his *taubah* to his servant. In this verse Allah has stated these two aspects of *taubah*. He says, "I turn only to those servants of Mine, who, if they commit some un-intentional sin through ignorance, turn to Me for forgiveness as soon as they realize their folly. For such repentance, the door of My forgiveness is ever open. It is, however, not so for those who persist in sin throughout their lives without the least fear of Allah

(Contd. on p. 320

مِّنْ نِّسَآئِكُمُ الّٰتِیْ دَخَلْتُمْ بِهِنَّ ۫ فَاِنْ لَّمْ تَكُوْنُوْا دَخَلْتُمْ بِهِنَّ فَلَا جُنَاحَ
عَلَیْكُمْ ۫ وَحَلَآئِلُ اَبْنَآئِكُمُ الَّذِیْنَ مِنْ اَصْلَابِكُمْ ۙ وَاَنْ تَجْمَعُوْا بَیْنَ
الْاُخْتَیْنِ اِلَّا مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ غَفُوْرًا رَّحِیْمًا ﴿۲۳﴾

الجزء ۵ وَّالْمُحْصَنٰتُ مِنَ النِّسَآءِ اِلَّا مَا مَلَكَتْ اَیْمَانُكُمْ ۚ كِتٰبَ اللّٰهِ عَلَیْكُمْ ۚ

وَاُحِلَّ لَكُمْ مَّا وَرَآءَ ذٰلِكُمْ اَنْ تَبْتَغُوْا بِاَمْوَالِكُمْ مُّحْصِنِیْنَ غَیْرَ مُسٰفِحِیْنَ ؕ فَمَا
اسْتَمْتَعْتُمْ بِهٖ مِنْهُنَّ فَاٰتُوْهُنَّ اُجُوْرَهُنَّ فَرِیْضَةً ؕ وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَیْكُمْ فِیْمَا
تَرٰضَیْتُمْ بِهٖ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ الْفَرِیْضَةِ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ عَلِیْمًا حَكِیْمًا ﴿۲۴﴾ وَمَنْ لَّمْ
یَسْتَطِعْ مِنْكُمْ طَوْلًا اَنْ یَّنْكِحَ الْمُحْصَنٰتِ الْمُؤْمِنٰتِ فَمِنْ مَّا مَلَكَتْ اَیْمَانُكُمْ
مِّنْ فَتَیٰتِكُمُ الْمُؤْمِنٰتِ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ اَعْلَمُ بِاِیْمَانِكُمْ ؕ بَعْضُكُمْ مِّنْۢ بَعْضٍ ۚ فَانْكِحُوْهُنَّ
بِاِذْنِ اَهْلِهِنَّ وَاٰتُوْهُنَّ اُجُوْرَهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوْفِ مُحْصَنٰتٍ غَیْرَ مُسٰفِحٰتٍ وَّ
لَا مُتَّخِذٰتِ اَخْدَانٍ ۚ فَاِذَاۤ اُحْصِنَّ فَاِنْ اَتَیْنَ بِفَاحِشَةٍ فَعَلَیْهِنَّ نِصْفُ
مَا عَلَى الْمُحْصَنٰتِ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ ؕ ذٰلِكَ لِمَنْ خَشِیَ الْعَنَتَ مِنْكُمْ ؕ وَاَنْ
تَصْبِرُوْا خَیْرٌ لَّكُمْ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِیْمٌ ﴿۲۵﴾ یُرِیْدُ اللّٰهُ لِیُبَیِّنَ لَكُمْ وَیَهْدِیَكُمْ
سُنَنَ الَّذِیْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَیَتُوْبَ عَلَیْكُمْ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ عَلِیْمٌ حَكِیْمٌ ﴿۲۶﴾ وَاللّٰهُ
یُرِیْدُ اَنْ یَّتُوْبَ عَلَیْكُمْ ۟ وَیُرِیْدُ الَّذِیْنَ یَتَّبِعُوْنَ الشَّهَوٰتِ اَنْ تَمِیْلُوْا
مَیْلًا عَظِیْمًا ﴿۲۷﴾ یُرِیْدُ اللّٰهُ اَنْ یُّخَفِّفَ عَنْكُمْ ۚ وَخُلِقَ الْاِنْسَانُ ضَعِیْفًا ﴿۲۸﴾
یٰۤاَیُّهَا الَّذِیْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تَاْكُلُوْۤا اَمْوَالَكُمْ بَیْنَكُمْ بِالْبَاطِلِ اِلَّاۤ اَنْ تَكُوْنَ
تِجَارَةً عَنْ تَرَاضٍ مِّنْكُمْ ۟ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوْۤا اَنْفُسَكُمْ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ بِكُمْ رَحِیْمًا ﴿۲۹﴾
وَمَنْ یَّفْعَلْ ذٰلِكَ عُدْوَانًا وَّظُلْمًا فَسَوْفَ نُصْلِیْهِ نَارًا ؕ وَكَانَ ذٰلِكَ

Forbidden to you are your mothers,[34] daughters,[35] sisters,[36] paternal aunts, maternal aunts, brother's daughters, sister's daughters,[37] your foster mothers who have given a suckle to you, your foster sisters,[38] who have taken suckle with you, the mothers of your wives,[39] the daughters of your wives whom you have brought up,[40] the daughters of those wives with whom you have had conjugal relations, but not of those wives with whom you have had no conjugal relations, and it is not sinful for you to marry their daughters (after having divorced them); — and also forbidden to you are the wives of your sons who are from your loins,[41] and it is unlawful for you to keep two real sisters as wives at one and the same time,[42] though what happened in the past is excepted, for Allah is indeed Forgiving, Merciful.[43] And forbidden to you are the wedded wives of other people except those who have fallen in your hands (as prisoners of war[44]): this is the Law of Allah that has been prescribed for you. With the exception of the above, it has been made lawful for you to seek in marriage with your wealth any other women provided that you keep them in wedlock and not in licentiousness. Then you should pay them their dowries as an obligation for the enjoyment of conjugal relations with them. However, there is no harm if a compromise is made in the dower by mutual consent after an agreement about it; Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. 23-24

Whoever cannot afford to marry free Muslim women, should marry one of the Muslim slave-girls in your possession; Allah has full knowledge of your Faith. You all belong to one and the same community;[45] therefore, you may marry them with the permission of their guardians and give them their fair dowries so that they may live a decent life in wedlock and not in licentiousness nor may have secret illicit relations. Then if they are guilty of indecency, after they have been fortified by wedlock, they shall be given half the punishment prescribed for free women.[46] This concession[47] has been made for those of you who might apprehend a moral lapse without marriage, but it is better for you to practise self-restraint, and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. 24-25

Allah desires to make clear to you and guide you to the ways that were followed by the righteous people before you, and to turn to you mercifully; for He is All-Knowing, All-Wise.[48] Yes, Allah desires 26-28

to turn to you mercifully, but those who follow their lusts, want that you should swerve far away from the right path.[49] Allah wills to make your restrictions light, for Man has been created weak by nature.

29-30 O Believers, do not devour one another's property by unlawful ways; (instead of this) do business with mutual consent.[50] And do not kill yourselves;[51] believe it that Allah is Compassionate to you.[52] We shall throw into the Fire the one who commits such acts of aggression and injustice; and this is very easy for Allah.

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and offer repentance only when death confronts them". The Holy Prophet says that Allah accepts the repentance of a person only up to the time, when there appears no sign of death. It is obvious that after the time of test has expired, no chance is left for him to turn back from sin. Likewise, if a person is dying as a disbeliever and seeing with his own eyes the other world, contrary to his expectations, the question of his repentance does not arise at all.

28. This means that the widow of the deceased should not be regarded as a part of his inheritance. After the death of the husband, his widow is quite free to live wherever she likes and to marry whomever she chooses after the expiry of her term.

29. That is, "You may hurt them for immoral conduct but not for grabbing their wealth."

30. If the wife is not beautiful or has some other defect that might not be to the husband's liking, it is not right that he should make up his mind to get rid of her at once without any further consideration. He should behave coolly and patiently. She may have some other redeeming qualities that may be more conducive to a happy married life than beautiful looks. It is just possible that the discovery of those qualities might change his repulsion at first sight into attraction. In the same way, sometimes it so happens that in the beginning of married life, the husband takes a dislike to something in the wife and feels a repulsion towards her but if he is patient with her and lets her show her better side fully, he himself realizes that her good qualities more than compensate for her shortcomings. Therefore it is not right for the husband to cut off his relations with his wife without a good deal of thinking. Divorce is the very last thing to which one may resort as a necessary social surgery and that, too, only when it becomes absolutely inevitable. The Holy Prophet says that of all the lawful things, divorce is the most reprehensible thing in the sight of Allah. In another Tradition, he admonishes,

"Enter into marriage and divorce not, for Allah does not approve of such men and women as divorce and marry for mere sexual enjoyment."

31. "Solemn pledge" is the marriage bond on the guarantee of which a woman gives herself up to a man. Therefore, if the man breaks that pledge of his own accord, he has no right to get back what he gave her as dower at the time of making that pledge. (Please see E.N. 251, Al-Baqarah, also).

32. While forbidding the wrong ways of 'ignorance', the Holy Qur'ān usually ends the instruction with such words as: "though what has happened in the past is excepted." It has two meanings in view. First, that no action will be taken in regard to those wrong things that one did in ignorance, provided that one mended one's ways and gave them up after the receipt of a particular Commandment. Second, that those words meant to give reassurance that the new instructions had no retrospective effect. For instance, if a person had married his step-mother before it was declared to be unlawful, according to these words, the offspring of all such previous marriages did not automatically become illegitimate by this newly declared prohibition so as to deprive them of their share of inheritance. Likewise if some form of trade had been made unlawful, it did not mean that all the previous transactions in that form had become null and void, and that one would have to return all the wealth earned in that way or that it had become completely unlawful.

33. According to the Islamic Law, it is a criminal offence and is within the jurisdiction of the police. Some Traditions related in Abū-Da'ūd, Nasā'ī and Musnad Aḥmad are to the effect that the Holy Prophet confiscated their properties and sentenced to death those who married their step-mothers. According to another Tradition, related by Ibn Mājah from Ibn 'Abbās, the Holy Prophet enunciated this fundamental law: "Anyone who commits fornication with any of the forbidden relations should be put to death." The experts on Muslim Law, however, differ in regard to this matter. While Imām Aḥmad is of the opinion that such a criminal should be put to death and his property confiscated, Imam Abu Ḥanīfah, Imām Mālik and Imām Shafi'ī are of the opinion that if a person commits fornication with anyone of the prohibited relations, he should be punished for the offence of fornication and if he marries such a one, he should be given an exemplary punishment for this heinous sin.

34. This prohibition applies both to the real mother and to the step-mother and both are unlawful. It also applies to the mother of the father and to the mother of the mother.

Experts have differed as to whether the woman with whom the father has had illicit relations is also unlawful for the son or not. Some of the earlier jurists

do not consider her unlawful, but some others not only consider her unlawful for the son but also the woman whom the father has touched lustfully with the hand. There has also been a difference of opinion as to whether the woman with whom the son has had an illicit relation is unlawful for the father and whether the man with whom the mother or the daughter has had illicit relation becomes unlawful for both the mother and the daughter. There have been lengthy controversies concerning the legal niceties of this matter, but a little thinking will show that the existence of a wife who is also coveted by the husband's father or his son, or whose mother or daughter is also coveted by the husband himself, cannot bode well for a righteous society. Divine Law in this matter does not tolerate the legal hair splitting on the basis of which fine distinctions are made between marriage and after marriage, touching with the hand and casting of looks, etc. The simple thing is that in family life existence of sexual relations of the father and the son with one and the same woman, or of the mother and the daughter with one and the same man, is bound to corrupt the family, and the Divine Law cannot tolerate it. This is supported by the following two Traditions of the Holy Prophet:

(1) "The mother and the daughter of the woman become unlawful for the man who cast a look at her sexual organs."

(2) "God does not like even to look at a man who casts a gaze at the sexual organs of the mother and of her daughter."

35. The prohibition about daughter also applies to the daughter of the son and the daughter of the daughter. There is, however, a difference of opinion in regard to a girl born of an illicit relationship. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Imām Mālik and Imām Aḥmad-bin-Ḥanbal (may Allah bless them all) are of the opinion that she too is unlawful like the lawful daughter, but Imām Shafi'ī does not consider an illegitimate daughter unlawful. But the very idea is repugnant that one should marry a girl about whom one has the knowledge that she is of one's own seed.

36. This applies to the real sister as well as to the foster sisters from the father's and the mother's side.

37. All these relations are prohibited, irrespective of whether they are real or step from the father's side or from the mother's side. The sister of the father or mother, whether real or step, is unlawful for the son. Similarly the daughters of the brothers and sisters whether they are real or step are unlawful for a person like his own real daughter.

38. The consensus of opinion is that the woman who suckled a boy or a girl should be treated as the real mother and her husband as the real father with regard to this prohibition. All those relations that have been made unlawful in respect of the real mother and real father are also prohibited in respect of the foster

mother who has suckled and in respect of her husband. This is based on a Tradition of the Holy Prophet which is to this effect: "Suckling makes unlawful what blood makes unlawful." There is, however, a difference of opinion as to the minimum quantity of milk that is suckled. According to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and Imam Mālik, if the child suckles milk equal to that minimum quantity that breaks the fast, the woman shall be treated as its real mother for marriage relations. But Imām Ahmad is of the opinion that the prohibition shall take place if the child suckles the woman at least three times and accordng to Imam Shāfi'ī at least five times. There is also a difference of opinion as to the age of the child at the time of suckling that brings prohibition. Below are given the opinions of the jurists:

(1) Hadrat Umm Salamah, Ibu 'Abbas, Zuhri, Ḥasan Basri, Qatadah, 'Ikrimah, and Auza'i are of the opinion that if the child is suckled during the period when it has not yet been weaned and it lives only on suckling, the prohibition shall be effective; but if it is suckled after it has been weaned, it will not apply; for this is like drinking water. There is also a saying of Ḥadrat 'Ali to the same effect.

(2) Hadrat 'Umar, Ibn Mas'ud, Abū Hurairah and Ibn 'Umar (Allah be pleased with them) are of the opinion that the prohibition will be effective if the child is suckled at any time up to the age of two. Imām Shaāfi'i, Imām Ahmad, Imām Abū Yūsuf, Imām Muḥammad and Sufyān Thauri from among the jurists also agree to this. There is also a saying of Imam Abu Hanifah to the same effect. Imam Malik also agrees to this, but he says that the prohibition shall apply even if a month or two exceeds the time limit of two years.

(3) According to a well-known saying of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and Imām Zufar, the prohibition shall apply if the child is suckled during the suckling period, which extends 'up to the age of two years and a half'

(4) Ḥadrat 'Ā'ishah is of the opinion that the prohibition shall apply, if one is suckled at any time whatsoever, irrespective of age. An authentic saying of Ḥadrat 'Ali also supports the same and 'Urwah bin Zubair, 'Atā', Laith bin Sa'd and Ibn Hazm from among the jurists have adopted the same opinion.

39. There is a difference of opinion as to whether the mere event of *nikāh* (marriage ceremony) with a woman makes her mother unlawful or not. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Mālik, Aḥmad and Shafi'ī are of the opinion that this alone makes her mother unlawful but Ḥadrat 'Ali is of the opinion that unless one has had any conjugal relation with her, her mother shall not become unlawful for him.

40. The wife's daughter is unlawful in any case, whether she has been brought up in the house of the step-father or not. Allah has used these words only to show the great delicacy of the relation. There is almost a consensus of opinion

among the jurists that the step-daughter is unlawful in any case whether one has brought her up or not.

41. The significance of "who are from your loins" is that the widows or the divorced wives of those whom one has adopted as sons are not unlawful. The prohibition applies only to the wives of the sons who are of one's own seed. Likewise, the wives of the grandsons are also unlawful.

42. Likewise it is unlawful to keep the aunt and her real niece as wives at one and the same time. The principle is that no two women who would have been unlawful for each other if one of them had been a man should be kept as wives at one and the same time.

43. That is, "No action will be taken for the transgression committed during the days of 'ignorance', by keeping two sisters as wives at one and the same time." (Please also see E.N. 32 above). However, one shall have to divorce one of the two sisters thus married during the time of un-belief after one has become a Muslim.

44. That is, those women who become prisoners of war, while their unbelieving husbands are left behind in the War Zone, are not unlawful because their marriage ties are broken by the fact that they have come from the War Zone into the Islamic Zone. It is lawful to marry such women, and it is also lawful for those, in whose possession they are, to have sexual relations with them. There is, however, a difference of opinion as to whether such a woman is lawful, if her husband is also taken a prisoner along with her. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and those of his way of thinking are of the opinion that the marriage tie of such a pair would remain intact but Imam Malik and Shāfi'i, are of the opinion that it would also break.

As there exist many misunderstandings in the minds of the people concerning the slave-girls taken as prisoners of war, the following should be carefully studied:

(1) It is not lawful for a soldier to have conjugal relations with a prisoner of war as soon as she falls into his hands. The Islamic Law requires that all such women should be handed over to the government, which has the right to set them free or to ransom them, or to exchange them with the Muslim prisoners in the hands of the enemy, or distribute them among the soldiers. A soldier can cohabit only with that woman who has been formally given to him by the government.

(2) Even then, he shall have to wait for one monthly course before he can cohabit with her in order to ensure whether she is pregnant or not; otherwise it shall be unlawful to cohabit with her before delivery.

(3) It does not matter whether the female prisoner of war belongs to the people of the Book or not. Whatever her religion, she becomes lawful for the man to whom she is formally given.

(4) None but the one to whom the slave-girl is given has the right to "touch her." The offspring of such a woman from his seed shall be his lawful children and shall have the same legal rights as are given by the Divine Law to the children from one's loins. After the birth of a child she cannot be sold as a slave-girl and shall automatically become free after her master's death.

(5) If the master marries his slave-girl with another man, he forfeits his conjugal rights over her, but retains other rights such as service from her.

(6) The maximum limit of four has not been prescribed for slave-girls as in the case of wives for the simple reason that the number of female prisoners of war is unpredictable. The lack of limit does by no means provide a license for the well-to-do people to buy any number of slave-girls for licentious purposes.

(7) The proprietary rights over a slave, male or female, as given to a person by the government are transferable like all other legal proprietary rights.

(8) The handing over of the proprietary rights over a slave-girl to a man formally by the government makes her as much lawful for him as the giving of the hand of a free woman to a man by her parents or guardian through *nikāh* (marriage ceremony). Therefore, there is no reason why a man who does not hold marriage in detestation should hold sexual intercourse with a slave-girl in detestation.

(9) When once the government hands over the female prisoner of war to someone, it has no right whatever to take her back from him, just as the parent or guardian has no right to take back a woman after she is handed over to a man through *nikāh*.

(10) It should also be noted well that if a military commander temporarily distributes female prisoners of war among the soldiers for sexual purposes, or permits them to have sexual relations for the time being, such an act shall be unlawful and there is absolutely no difference between this and fornication, and fornication is a crime according to the Islamic code. (For detailed discussion please refer to my books, *Tafhīmāt II* and *Rasā'il-o-Masā'il I*).

45. That is, "The social differences among the people are merely relative; otherwise all Muslims are equal. As a matter of fact, the thing that distinguishes one Muslim from another is the quality of his Faith, and that is not the monopoly of the higher ranks of society. It is just possible that a Muslim slave-girl is higher in rank in regard to belief and morality than a free woman of a high family.

46. It should be kept in view that in this section (vv. 24-25) the Arabic word *muḥṣanāt* has been used in two different senses: (1) "wedded wives", enjoying the protection of their husbands; and (2) "free Muslim women" enjoying the protection of their families, even though they might not be married. This is important, because the lack of differentiation between these two meanings has given rise to a superficial complication. The Kharijites and those others who do not believe in the stoning of an adulterous woman have misconstrued this verse (25) to prove their own point of view. They argue that in this verse, the punishment prescribed for an adulterous married slave-girl is half of the punishment prescribed for a free "married" Muslim woman. If the punishment for an adulterous free married woman had been stoning to death, there could be no half of this punishment for a guilty slave-girl. Hence, this verse is, according to them, a conclusive proof that the punishment of stoning does not exist in Islam.

The fallacy of the above argument becomes obvious, if one uses common sense in the application of the appropriate meaning of *muḥṣanat*. In the case of the guilty slave-girl, it has been used in the sense of "married woman", enjoying the protection of the husband, as is plain from the subsequent clause; "after they have been fortified in wedlock". But in the case of the guilty Muslim woman, half of whose punishment is to be given, it means "free Muslim woman" enjoying the protection of her family, and does not mean a "free married Muslim woman", as has been misconstrued by the opponents of the punishment of stoning.

As regards the lighter punishment for an adulterous slave-girl than for a free Muslim woman, it is based on the fact that the latter enjoys double protection as compared with the former — the protection of the family (even though she be unmarried) and the protection of the husband, which reinforces the protection of the family she already enjoys. In contrast to a free woman, a slave-girl does not enjoy any protection at all, if she is unmarried, and even after marriage her position does not become equal to that of an un-married free Muslim woman, for the latter enjoys the protection of her status, her family, her clan, etc. On the other hand, a slave-girl still remains, to some extent, under the bondage of slavery and has no protection of the family, clan, etc. Therefore, her punishment should be half of an un-married free woman and *not half of a free married woman.*

Furthermore this also shows that the punishment of one hundred stripes as prescribed in An-Nūr, XXIV : 2, is for an un-married free Muslim woman guilty of fornication half of which has been prescribed here for a slave married girl. As for an adulterous married free woman she deserves capital punishment for this heinous crime because she enjoys the double protection of the family and of the husband, and that punishment is "stoning her to death." Though the Qur'ān does not explicitly mention the punishment of stoning to death, it does indicate it in a

subtle manner, which the Holy Prophet understood and enforced. And who else could understand the Qur'ān better?

47. The "concession" is to marry one of the slave-girls with the consent of her master if one cannot afford to marry a free Muslim woman.

48. The "way" refer to all those instructions that have been given from the beginning of the Sūrah to this point, and to those already given in Al-Baqarah about cultural and social problems. Allah is telling the believers that it is His bounty that He is taking them out of the ways of "ignorance" and guiding them to the moral ways of good people, that have always been followed by the Prophets of every age and their pious followers.

49. Those who intended to turn the believers back from the Right Way to the ways of error were the hypocrites, the ignorant people of the old ways, and the Jews living in the suburbs of Madinah. The first two groups strongly disliked the changes that were being made to reform their centuries old prejudices, rites and customs. They were opposed to : *(a)* the share of the daughters in inheritance, *(b)* the freedom of the widow from the restrictions placed on her by her husband's people, and to marry the husband of her liking after the expiry of the term, *(c)* the prohibition of marriage with step-mother, and with two real sisters simultaneously. They were averse to the reform of the institution of adoption which abolished the share of the adopted sons in inheritance and removed the restriction on the marriage of their divorced wives or their widows with their adopted fathers. These and such other reforms so upset the worshippers of the old traditions and customs that they cried themselves hoarse with protests against them. The mischief-mongers criticized bitterly the Holy Prophet and incited the people against his person and his invitation. For instance, if there was a person who was born as a result of a marriage which had become unlawful by the application of the reformed laws, they would incite him by saying that he had been declared illegitimate by the Holy Prophet. Thus the foolish people were opposing the work of reform which was being carried out under Divine Guidance.

Then there were the Jews who were engaged in vicious propaganda against this reformative work which went against their self-made laws. They demanded that the Qur'ān should declare these laws to be the Divine Laws, even though they had changed their very character and substance, by making fine and unnecessary distinctions, by introducing into it their own superstitious customs as laws, by imposing their own restrictions and hard conditions and making many lawful things unlawful. They, therefore, could not appreciate the simple rules and regulations that were being presented by the Qur'ān. That is why their rabbis,

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عَلَى اللّٰهِ يَسِيْرًا ﴿30﴾ اِنْ تَجْتَنِبُوْا كَبَآئِرَ مَا تُنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ نُكَفِّرْ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّاٰتِكُمْ
وَنُدْخِلْكُمْ مُّدْخَلًا كَرِيْمًا ﴿31﴾ وَلَا تَتَمَنَّوْا مَا فَضَّلَ اللّٰهُ بِهٖ بَعْضَكُمْ
عَلٰى بَعْضٍ ؕ لِلرِّجَالِ نَصِيْبٌ مِّمَّا اكْتَسَبُوْا ؕ وَلِلنِّسَآءِ نَصِيْبٌ مِّمَّا اكْتَسَبْنَ ؕ
وَسْـَٔلُوا اللّٰهَ مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيْمًا ﴿32﴾ وَلِكُلٍّ جَعَلْنَا
مَوَالِيَ مِمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدٰنِ وَالْاَقْرَبُوْنَ ؕ وَالَّذِيْنَ عَقَدَتْ اَيْمَانُكُمْ فَاٰتُوْهُمْ
نَصِيْبَهُمْ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيْدًا ﴿33﴾ اَلرِّجَالُ قَوّٰمُوْنَ عَلَى
النِّسَآءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللّٰهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلٰى بَعْضٍ وَّبِمَآ اَنْفَقُوْا مِنْ اَمْوَالِهِمْ ؕ
فَالصّٰلِحٰتُ قٰنِتٰتٌ حٰفِظٰتٌ لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللّٰهُ ؕ وَالّٰتِيْ تَخَافُوْنَ نُشُوْزَهُنَّ
فَعِظُوْهُنَّ وَاهْجُرُوْهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ وَاضْرِبُوْهُنَّ ۚ فَاِنْ اَطَعْنَكُمْ فَلَا
تَبْغُوْا عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيْلًا ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ عَلِيًّا كَبِيْرًا ﴿34﴾ وَاِنْ خِفْتُمْ شِقَاقَ
بَيْنِهِمَا فَابْعَثُوْا حَكَمًا مِّنْ اَهْلِهٖ وَحَكَمًا مِّنْ اَهْلِهَا ۚ اِنْ يُّرِيْدَآ اِصْلَاحًا
يُّوَفِّقِ اللّٰهُ بَيْنَهُمَا ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ عَلِيْمًا خَبِيْرًا ﴿35﴾ وَاعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ وَلَا
تُشْرِكُوْا بِهٖ شَيْئًا وَّبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ اِحْسَانًا وَّبِذِي الْقُرْبٰى وَالْيَتٰمٰى وَالْمَسٰكِيْنِ
وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبٰى وَالْجَارِ الْجُنُبِ وَالصَّاحِبِ بِالْجَنْۢبِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيْلِ ۙ
وَمَا مَلَكَتْ اَيْمَانُكُمْ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَنْ كَانَ مُخْتَالًا فَخُوْرًا ﴿36﴾ اَلَّذِيْنَ
يَبْخَلُوْنَ وَيَاْمُرُوْنَ النَّاسَ بِالْبُخْلِ وَيَكْتُمُوْنَ مَآ اٰتٰىهُمُ اللّٰهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ ؕ
وَاَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكٰفِرِيْنَ عَذَابًا مُّهِيْنًا ﴿37﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ يُنْفِقُوْنَ اَمْوَالَهُمْ رِئَآءَ
النَّاسِ وَلَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَلَا بِالْيَوْمِ الْاٰخِرِ ؕ وَمَنْ يَّكُنِ الشَّيْطٰنُ
لَهٗ قَرِيْنًا فَسَآءَ قَرِيْنًا ﴿38﴾ وَمَاذَا عَلَيْهِمْ لَوْ اٰمَنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْاٰخِرِ وَ

If you abstain from the heinous sins from which you are being forbidden, We will remit your trivial offences[53] and admit you to a place of honour. 31

And do not covet what Allah has given some of you more than others: the men shall have their due share according to what they have earned and the women shall have their share according to what they have earned. So pray to Allah for His bounty; most surely Allah has perfect knowledge of everything.[54] 32

We have appointed rightful heirs to the inheritance which is left by parents and relatives. As for those with whom you have made a pledge, do give them their share: most surely Allah is watching over everything.[55] 33

Men are the managers[56] of the affairs of women because Allah has made the one superior to the other[57] and because men spend of their wealth on women. Virtuous women are, therefore, obedient; they guard their rights carefully in their absence[58] under the care and watch of Allah. As for those women whose defiance you have cause to fear, admonish them and keep them apart from your beds and beat them.[59] Then, if they submit to you, do not look for excuses to punish them: note it well that there is Allah above you, Who is Supreme and Great. And if you fear a breach between spouses, appoint one arbiter from the relatives of the husband and one from the relatives of the wife. If the two[60] sides sincerely desire to set things right, Allah will create a way of reconciliation between them, for surely Allah knows everything and is aware of everything.[61] 34-35

And all of you should serve God and associate none with Him; and show kindness and affection to your parents, and be kind to near relatives, and to orphans, and to the needy; and be considerate to your neighbours — kinsmen and strangers and to the companions at your side[62] and to the wayfarer and to the slaves in your possession. Believe it that Allah does not like such persons as are self-conceited and are niggardly and bid others to be niggardly, and conceal the bounty of Allah that He has bestowed upon them;[63] We have prepared a disgraceful chastisement for such ungrateful wretches. And Allah does not like those who expend their wealth to be seen of people, for they do not believe sincerely in Allah and the Last Day. The fact is that 36-38

whoever has Satan for a comrade, has a very evil company.

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scribes and common people did not accept the Qur'ān as the Book of Allah. They were so upset by its reformative laws that they made each and every Commandment of the Qur'ān the target of their criticism and opposed and rejected it.

For instance, the Jews considered the women utterly unclean during the menses. They would not take the meals cooked by them nor drink water touched by their hands nor even sit on the same carpet with them. In short, the women were practically made untouchables in their homes. As the Anṣar had also adopted the same customs when the Holy Prophet migrated to Madīnah, they asked him about the monthly course. In answer to this question, v. 222 of Al-Baqarah was sent down; accordingly the Holy Prophet instructed that during the monthly course only cohabitation was prohibited and all other relations with the women would remain the same as before. At this, the Jews raised a great hue and cry, saying, "This man is bent upon opposing us in everything and making lawful what is unlawful with us and unlawful what is lawful with us."

50. "Unlawful ways" include all the ways that are against the Islamic law and principles and are false and immoral.

"Business" comprises all those transactions that are carried out for profit, benefit, etc., as in trade, commerce, industry, etc., by which one satisfies the needs of another who pays for the service rendered.

"Mutual consent" implies that those transactions should be carried out by mutual agreement and not by coercion or fraud. For instance, although apparently there is a mutual agreement in interest and bribery, yet it is obvious that the needy party is compelled by circumstances to agree to such transactions. In gambling also each participant is deluded by the false hope of "winning". Neither would agree to gamble if he knew that he would lose. The same is true of every case of transaction which involves fraud. The defrauded one agrees under the misunderstanding that there is no fraud in it. If he knew that he was being deceived, he would never agree to this.

51. "Do not kill yourselves" may be complementary to the preceding sentence or may, in itself, be an independent sentence. In the first case, it would mean that the one who devours unlawfully the property of others; does in fact lead himself to his own destruction, for such an evil deed ruins the social order to such an extent that ultimately he himself cannot escape its evil consequences, and in the Hereafter most surely he incurs severe punishment.

In the second case, it would mean, "Do not kill each other", or "Do not commit suicide". Allah has used such comprehensive words that in the context they occur, they imply all the three senses, and all these are correct.

52. That is, "Allah is your well-wisher and wishes you well: it is only His compassion that He forbids you such deeds as cause your ruin."

53. That is, "We are not narrow-minded and prejudiced that We should take Our servants to task for each and every trivial offence. But if you commit wicked and heinous sins, then you shall have to render an account of the trivial offences as well."

Here it will be worthwhile to understand the basic differences between the "heinous sins" and the "trivial offences". As far as I have understood from a critical study of the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* (and the correct and right knowledge is only with Allah), I have come to the conclusion that the following three things make a sin heinous:

(1) The violation of the rights of Allah, or of parents, or of other human beings, or one's own rights. The wickedness of the sin increases in proportion to the sanctity of the right that is violated. That is why the Qur'ān calls a sin *Zulm* (iniquity) and declares *shirk* to be a gross inlquity.

(2) A sin becomes heinous, if it is committed to defy the Divine Laws. This is because the offender deliberately, boldly and shamelessly discards the Commandements and Prohibitions of Allah and intentionally does that which He prohibits, merely for the sake of disobedience, and impudently does not do that which He has commanded. The gravity of this sin increases in proportion to the impudence that is shown towards Allah in disobeying and discarding His Law. That is why the Qur'ān calls sin *fisq* (disobedience) and *ma'ṣiyat* (arrogance).

(3) The violation of those relations and the cutting off of those connections on the unification and integrity of which depends the peace of human life, makes a sin heinous whether these relations are between man and Allah or between man and man. The gravity of the sin of violation or the cutting off of a connection increases in proportion to the importance of the relation, and to the security contained in it. For instance, fornication in its different forms is in itself a heinous sin, for it corrupts human society. But in some forms it becomes far more heinous than in others. The sin of adultery committed by a married man is far more heinous than that committed by an unmarried man. Likewise, adultery with a married woman is a far greater sin than fornication with an unmarried woman. In the same way, sexual intercourse with the womenfolk of a neighbour is far more heinous than with others and incest with mother, sister or daughter become the most heinous sin conceivable

because of the security and sanctity the relation provides. For the same reason the sin committed in the mosque is far more wicked than elsewhere. In the above instances, the difference in the gravity of the same sin is due to the difference in the nature of the sanctity of the relations and the security contained in them. This is why, sin is also called *fujur* (violation of relations).

54. In this verse Allah has given a very important moral instruction, which, if observed, would bring great peace in the troubled social life of today. Allah has taught people not to be covetous for and be envious of the possessions of others, for He has not, in His wisdom, created all men alike. But for this disparity life would have become dull.

As Allah has perfect knowledge of everything, He has created one beautiful and another ugly. He has given to one a melodious voice and to another a harsh voice. He has made one of strong physique and another of weak constitution. He has endowed one with some good qualities of mind and body and another with other qualities. He has created one in straitened and another in opulent circumstances. He has provided one with ample resources and another with scanty ones. A little thinking will convince a person that the variety in human culture is due only to those very differences and distinctions which are based on wisdom and perfect knowledge. That is why chaos of one sort or the other results whenever people artificially try either to aggravate these differences and distinctions or to eliminate them totally. The human tendency to envy others because of their superiority in anything generates jealousy, cut-throat competition, enmity, class struggle and the like with the resulting consequences. One who suffers from such a mentality tries to grab unlawfully that which Allah has not given him through His bounty. In this verse Allah has advised the Muslims to avoid such a mentality and keep themselves free from envying others. One should, however, pray to Allah for His bounty, for He will bestow upon him whatever He considers proper for him, because He has perfect knowledge of everything.

As regards "The men shall have their due share according to what they have earned, and the women shall have their share according to what they have earned," in my opinion it means that women should not envy men and men should not envy women because of any superiority the one has over the other because of Allah's bounty. They should make full use of whatever Allah has given them and rest assured that each one will get one's due share according to what good or evil one earns and of the same quality that one deserves.

55. The Arabs would enter into agreements of friendship and brotherhood with each other and on that score were entitled to the inheritance of each other. Thus, a god-son became heir of his god-father. Here this custom of "ignorance" has been abolished, and it has been enjoined that the inheritance should be divided

among the heirs according to the law prescribed by Allah. They are, however, allowed to give to such people, whatever they like during their lifetime.

56. The Arabic word *qavvām* or *qayyam* stands for a person who is responsible for the right conduct, safeguard and maintenance of the affairs of an individual, an institution or an organization. Thus, man is governor, director, protector and manager of the affairs of women.

57. Men are superior to women in the sense that they have been endowed with certain natural qualities and powers that have not been given to women or have been given in a less degree, and not in the sense that they are above them in honour and excellence. Man has been made *qavvām* (governor) of the family because of his natural qualities and woman has been made his dependent for her own safety and protection because of her natural drawbacks.

58. A tradition of the Holy Prophet is the best commentary on this. He said, "The best wife is the one who pleases you when you see her; who obeys your orders and who guards your property and her own honour when you are not at home."

In this connection, it is necessary to give a warning. Obedience to Allah is of far greater importance than obedience to the husband and has precedence over it. Therefore, it is the duty of the wife to refuse to obey her husband, if and when he orders her to do a thing which amounts to Allah's disobedience. In that case it shall be a sin to obey him. On the contrary, if the husband orders her not to observe a certain voluntary religious devotion, she must obey him, otherwise her devotion will not be accepted.

59. If the wife is defiant and does not obey her husband or does not guard his rights, three measures have been mentioned, but it does not mean that all the three are to be taken at one and the same time. Though these have been permitted, they are to be administered with a sense of proportion according to the nature and extent of the offence. If a mere light admonition proves effective, there is no need to resort to a severer step. As to a beating, the Holy Prophet allowed it very reluctantly and even then did not like it. But the fact is that there are certain women who do not mend their ways without a beating. In such a case, the Holy Prophet has instructed that she would not be beaten on the face, or cruelly, or with anything which might leave a mark on the body.

60. "The two sides" refers both to the arbiters and to the spouses. Reconciliation can be effected in every quarred, if the parties concerned desire it and if the arbiters try to effect it sincerely and justly.

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اَنْفَقُوْا مِمَّا رَزَقَهُمُ اللّٰهُ ؕ وَ كَانَ اللّٰهُ بِهِمْ عَلِيْمًا ﴿39﴾ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ
مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ ۚ وَ اِنْ تَكُ حَسَنَةً يُّضٰعِفْهَا وَ يُؤْتِ مِنْ لَّدُنْهُ اَجْرًا عَظِيْمًا ﴿40﴾
فَكَيْفَ اِذَا جِئْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ اُمَّةٍۭ بِشَهِيْدٍ وَّ جِئْنَا بِكَ عَلٰى هٰٓؤُلَآءِ شَهِيْدًا ﴿41﴾
يَوْمَئِذٍ يَّوَدُّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا وَ عَصَوُا الرَّسُوْلَ لَوْ تُسَوّٰى بِهِمُ الْاَرْضُ ؕ وَ
لَا يَكْتُمُوْنَ اللّٰهَ حَدِيْثًا ﴿42﴾ يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تَقْرَبُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَ اَنْتُمْ
سُكٰرٰى حَتّٰى تَعْلَمُوْا مَا تَقُوْلُوْنَ وَ لَا جُنُبًا اِلَّا عَابِرِيْ سَبِيْلٍ حَتّٰى
تَغْتَسِلُوْا ؕ وَ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَّرْضٰۤى اَوْ عَلٰى سَفَرٍ اَوْ جَآءَ اَحَدٌ مِّنْكُمْ مِّنَ
الْغَآئِطِ اَوْ لٰمَسْتُمُ النِّسَآءَ فَلَمْ تَجِدُوْا مَآءً فَتَيَمَّمُوْا صَعِيْدًا طَيِّبًا
فَامْسَحُوْا بِوُجُوْهِكُمْ وَ اَيْدِيْكُمْ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ عَفُوًّا غَفُوْرًا ﴿43﴾ اَلَمْ تَرَ
اِلَى الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوْا نَصِيْبًا مِّنَ الْكِتٰبِ يَشْتَرُوْنَ الضَّلٰلَةَ وَ يُرِيْدُوْنَ
اَنْ تَضِلُّوا السَّبِيْلَ ﴿44﴾ وَ اللّٰهُ اَعْلَمُ بِاَعْدَآئِكُمْ ؕ وَ كَفٰى بِاللّٰهِ وَلِيًّا ۙ وَّ
كَفٰى بِاللّٰهِ نَصِيْرًا ﴿45﴾ مِنَ الَّذِيْنَ هَادُوْا يُحَرِّفُوْنَ الْكَلِمَ عَنْ مَّوَاضِعِهٖ
وَ يَقُوْلُوْنَ سَمِعْنَا وَ عَصَيْنَا وَ اسْمَعْ غَيْرَ مُسْمَعٍ وَّ رَاعِنَا لَيًّۢا بِاَلْسِنَتِهِمْ
وَ طَعْنًا فِى الدِّيْنِ ؕ وَ لَوْ اَنَّهُمْ قَالُوْا سَمِعْنَا وَ اَطَعْنَا وَ اسْمَعْ وَ انْظُرْنَا
لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ وَ اَقْوَمَ ۙ وَ لٰكِنْ لَّعَنَهُمُ اللّٰهُ بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَلَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ اِلَّا
قَلِيْلًا ﴿46﴾ يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْكِتٰبَ اٰمِنُوْا بِمَا نَزَّلْنَا مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا مَعَكُمْ مِّنْ
قَبْلِ اَنْ نَّطْمِسَ وُجُوْهًا فَنَرُدَّهَا عَلٰۤى اَدْبَارِهَاۤ اَوْ نَلْعَنَهُمْ كَمَا لَعَنَّاۤ
اَصْحٰبَ السَّبْتِ ؕ وَ كَانَ اَمْرُ اللّٰهِ مَفْعُوْلًا ﴿47﴾ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ اَنْ يُّشْرَكَ
بِهٖ وَ يَغْفِرُ مَا دُوْنَ ذٰلِكَ لِمَنْ يَّشَآءُ ؕ وَ مَنْ يُّشْرِكْ بِاللّٰهِ فَقَدِ افْتَرٰۤى

Well, what harm would have come upon them, if they had 39-42
believed in Allah and the Last Day and spent out of what Allah had given them? Had they done so, Allah would surely have had knowledge of their good deeds. Indeed Allah does not wrong anyone even by a jot: if one does a good deed, He doubles it, and then from Himself bestows a rich reward. Just imagine how they will fare, when We shall bring forward a witness from every community and raise you (O Muḥammad) as a witness in regard to these people[64]. At that time, all those, who rejected the Messenger and disobeyed him, would wish the earth to split open and swallow them; for there they will not be able to hide anything from Allah.

O Believers, do not offer the Prayer while you are 43
intoxicated,[65] for Prayer should be offered only when you know what you are saying.[66] Likewise, do not offer the Prayer if you are "unclean"[67] until you take your bath, except when passing on the way;[68] and if you are sick or on a journey or if any one of you has relieved himself or you have touched[69] women and can find no water, then cleanse yourselves with pure dust by rubbing it on your face and hands;[70] no doubt Allah is Lenient and Forgiving.

Have you ever considered the case of those who have been 44-46
given a portion of the scriptures?[71] They themselves purchase deviation and wish you, too, to go astray from the Right Way: Allah knows your enemies well and Allah suffices you for protection and for help. Some of those, who have become Jews,[72] pervert[73] words out of their context and twist their tongues in order to malign the true Faith and say "*sami'ina*[74] *wa 'asaina*" and "*Isma' ghaira musma'in*"[75] and "*Ra'ina*"[76]. But, if they had said instead, "*sami'ina wa ata'ana,*" "*Isma'*" and "*Unzurna,*" it would have been better for themselves and a more upright way. As Allah has cursed them for their disbelief, they are little disposed to believe.

O you to whom the Book had been given! Believe in the Book 47-48
We have sent down now, confirming the Book you already have with you;[77] believe in it before We distort faces and set them backwards, or lay Our curse on them as We laid Our curse on the Sabbath breakers:[78] and remember that Allah's Command is surely carried into effect. *Shirk* is the only sin that Allah does not forgive,[79] and He forgives whomsoever He pleases, other sins than this,[80] for whosoever

associates any other partner with Allah, does indeed forge a big lie and commit the most heinous sin.

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61. In this verse, a plan has been put forward for settling disputes between husband and wife within the family. An effort should be made to effect a reconciliation before resorting to a court of law or making the final breach. The plan is to appoint one arbiter from the family of each spouse for this purpose. The two should probe into the real cause or causes of the dispute and then try to find a way out of it. Of course, the relatives are best qualified for it, knowing as they do the true conditions of the spouses.

Allah has left it unanswered as to who should appoint the arbiters so that each spouse may appoint one arbiter from his or her relatives, if they desire to patch up their differences, or the leaders of the two families may take the initiative and entrust the work of reconciliation to two arbiters, or if the case goes to the court, it may appoint two arbiters before taking any action.

There is a difference of opinion regarding the powers of the arbiters. According to the Ḥanafi and the Shāfi'ī schools of thought, the arbiters are not authorized to pass any final decree but may recommend measures for reconciliation, which may be accepted or rejected by the spouses. Of course, if the spouses themselves authorize them to effect divorce or *khula'* or take any other measure, then they shall be bound to accept their decision. Ḥasan Baṣri, Qatādah and some other jurists are of the opinion that the arbiters are authorized to enforce reconciliation but not separation. Ibn 'Abbas, Said bin Jubair, Ibrahīm Nakha'i, Sha'bī, Muḥammad bin Sīrīn and some other jurists are of the opinion that the arbiters have full authority to enforce their decision about reconciliation or separation whichever they consider to be proper.

Caliph 'Uthmān and Caliph 'Alī used to authorize the arbiters appointed by them with full powers to effect reconciliation or separation as required by the circumstances. For instance, when the case of 'Aqīl, son of Abu Tālib, and his wife Fātimah, daughter of 'Utbah bin Rabī'ah, was brought in the court of Caliph 'Uthmān, he appointed as arbiter Ibn 'Abbās from the family of the husband and Mu'āviyah bin Abī Sufyān from the family of the wife and told them that they were authorised to cause separation between them, if required by circumstances. Likewise, Caliph 'Alī appointed arbiters in a similar case and authorised them to effect reconciliation between the spouses or separate them. This shows that the arbiters as such do not possess judicial powers, but if at the time of their appointment, the authority concerned empowers them with judicial powers, their decision shall be binding and enforced like other judicial decisions.

62. "*Assāhib-i-bil-janb*" as used in the Text may imply an intimate friend and also a person who accompanies one at any time. For instance, he may happen to accompany one in the street, or be a fellow customer at a shop, or be a fellow passenger in the bus or in the railway train, etc. Even such a temporary neighbourhood requires a civilized and noble person to treat the companion as far as possible kindly, and scrupulously avoid giving him any sort of trouble.

63. "To conceal the bounty of Allah" is to live in a way as if Allah has not bestowed His bounty upon him. For instance, a rich person conceals Allah's bounty, if he lives below his standard: neither spends money on his own person nor on the members of his family nor on the needy nor for any other good work. In short, his appearance would show him to be in very straitened circumstances. Obviously that is gross ingratitude to Allah.

A Tradition of the Holy Prophet says, "When Allah bestows His bounty on anyone, He likes that he should show it". That is, he should live the life of a well-to-do person who spends money on food, dress, house, furniture, etc., according to his means, and also in the way of Allah in order to show the blessing on him.

64. That is, the Prophet of every age will give evidence in the Court of Allah, saying: "Lord, I duly delivered Your message to my people and taught them the right way of life and the right mode of thought and practice which You taught me." Last of all, the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) will give this same evidence regarding the people of his term and his term, according to the Qur'ān extends from the time of his appointment as Prophet till Resurrection. (E.N. 69, Āl-'Imrān)

65. This is the second Commandment about drinking. The first Commandment (Al-Baqarah: 219) was that drinking is an evil thing and Allah does not approve of it. Accordingly some of the Muslims began to refrain from it from that time. The majority of them, however, did not give it up and often offered the Prayer in a state of intoxication and made blunders in their recitations. Probably, this second Commandment came in the beginning of A.H. 4 and prohibited the offering of the Prayer while one was drunk. As a result they changed the timings of their drinking so as not to clash with the timings of the Prayers. Some time after this, the Commandment about total prohibition as contained in Al-Mā'idah: 90-91 was sent down.

Incidentally, the word *sukr* (state of intoxication) as used in the Text also implies that this Commandment prohibits not only drinkig but every kind of intoxicant. Moreover, though every intoxicating thing is in itself unlawful, the

offence of intoxication is doubled and becomes more heinous, when the Prayer is offered in such a state.

66. For the same reason, the Holy Prophet has instructed that when one feels sleepy, and doses again and again during the Prayer, one should give up his Prayer and go to sleep.

Some people from this verse argue that the Prayer of the one who does not know the meaning of its Arabic Text, is no Prayer at all. But apart from the fact that it is an unnecessary hardship, the Arabic words of the Qur'ān do not support this version. The Qur'ān does not say, "unless you understand its meaning" or "unless you understand what you are saying" but it says "unless you know what you are saying". That is, one should be in his senses to know what he is uttering with his tongue lest he should recite, say, a poem, instead of the text of the Prayer.

67. The Arabic word *janābat* literally means being far off and stranger, and the word *ajnabi* (stranger) is derived from the same root. As an Islamic term it refers to that state of uncleanliness and impurity that is caused by the emission of seed by sexual intercourse or in sleep because this makes a person stranger to cleanliness.

68. A section of the jurists and commentators, such as 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud, Anas bin Mālik, Ḥasan Baṣri and Ibrāhīm Nakha'ī and others deduce from the words, "when passing on the way," that one shoud not enter a mosque in a state of "uncleanliness" except when one has to pass through it for some urgent piece of business. Another section of them, such as Ḥaḍrat 'Ali, Ibn 'Abbās, Sa'id bin Jubair and some others conclude from this that if one becomes "unclean" when on a journey, one may cleanse oneself by wiping one's face and hands with pure dust, if water is not available. As regards entering a mosque in such a state of "uncleanliness", the latter section is of the opinion that one may sit in the mosque after performing his ablutions (*wudū*). But there is almost a consensus of opinion that if one becomes "unclean" on a journey and water is not available for a bath, one may cleanse oneself with pure dust and offer the Prayer. However, the former section derives this opinion from the Traditions and the latter bases this concession on this part of verse 43.

69. There is a difference of opinion as to implication of "if you have touched women." Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, Ibn 'Abbās, Abū Mūsa Ash'arī, Ubaiyy Ibn Ka'b, Sa'id bin Jubair, Ḥasan Baṣrī and several other jurists are of the opinion that here "have touched" means "have had sexual intercourse". Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and those of his way of thinking and Imām Sufyān Thauri have adopted the same interpretation. On the contrary, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud and 'Abdullah bin 'Umar and (according to some traditions) Ḥaḍrat 'Umar also are of the opinion

that the word "touched" actually means "touching with the hand" and Imām Shāfi'ī has adopted this version. Some jurists, such as Imām Mālik, have adopted a middle course and expressed the opinion that if the touch between a man and a woman is of sexual nature, they shall have to make fresh ablutions for the Prayer but if their bodies touch each others without any feeling of sensuality, there is nothing wrong in this.

70. If one has to perform ablutions or take a bath before offering one's *Ṣalat* and water is not available, one is allowed to resort to *tayammum*; or, if one is sick and there is a danger that the disease would worsen if one performs ablutions or takes a bath, one is allowed to resort to *tayammum* even if water is available.

Literally *tayammum* means "to turn to"; that is, one should turn to pure dust when water is not available, or if its use is harmful. There is a difference of opinion concerning the method of performing *tayammum*. The majority of the jurists, such as Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Imām Shafi'ī and Imām Mālik, prescribe that one should strike one's hands on pure dust and wipe one's face with them; then one should again strike one's hands and wipe one's hands up to the elbows with them. This method has been prescribed by some Companions of the Holy Prophet and their followers such as Ḥaḍrat 'Ali, 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, Ḥasan Baṣrī, Sha'bi and Salim bin 'Abdullah and others. But some jurists such as 'Aṭa', Mak-hūl, Auza'ī and Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal consider it enough to strike one's hands only once on pure dust and wipe the face and the hands up to the wrists and not up to the elbows. The Ahl-i-Ḥadith, in general, follow this method.

For the performance of *tayammum*, it is not essential only to strike one's hands on pure earth: any dusty thing or dry piece of earth suffices for this purpose.

Some people object to this method of cleansing; they say, "How can one be cleansed by striking one's hands on dust and wiping the face and hands up to the elbows with these? Let them look upon this method from the psychological point of view. *Tayammum* helps keep alive the feelings of cleansing oneself and of the sanctity of the Prayer, even if one is not able to use water for a long time. Thus, a Muslim will always keep in view the rules of purity and cleanliness prescribed by the Islamic Code and will scrupulously be mindful of his state of cleanliness and purity for the observance of the Prayer.

71. About the scholars of the people of the Book the Qur'an at many places has used words to the effect: "They have been given a part of the knowledge of the Scripture". These words have been used because the scholars had actually lost a portion of their Scriptures and had become strangers to the spirit

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إِثْمًا عَظِيمًا ﴿48﴾ أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ يُزَكُّونَ أَنفُسَهُم ۚ بَلِ اللَّهُ يُزَكِّي مَن
يَشَاءُ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ فَتِيلًا ﴿49﴾ انظُرْ كَيْفَ يَفْتَرُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ ۖ وَكَفَىٰ
بِهِ إِثْمًا مُّبِينًا ﴿50﴾ أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا نَصِيبًا مِّنَ الْكِتَابِ يُؤْمِنُونَ
بِالْجِبْتِ وَالطَّاغُوتِ وَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هَٰؤُلَاءِ أَهْدَىٰ مِنَ الَّذِينَ
آمَنُوا سَبِيلًا ﴿51﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ ۖ وَمَن يَلْعَنِ اللَّهُ فَلَن تَجِدَ
لَهُ نَصِيرًا ﴿52﴾ أَمْ لَهُمْ نَصِيبٌ مِّنَ الْمُلْكِ فَإِذًا لَّا يُؤْتُونَ النَّاسَ نَقِيرًا ﴿53﴾
أَمْ يَحْسُدُونَ النَّاسَ عَلَىٰ مَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِن فَضْلِهِ ۖ فَقَدْ آتَيْنَا آلَ
إِبْرَاهِيمَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَآتَيْنَاهُم مُّلْكًا عَظِيمًا ﴿54﴾ فَمِنْهُم مَّنْ آمَنَ
بِهِ وَمِنْهُم مَّن صَدَّ عَنْهُ ۚ وَكَفَىٰ بِجَهَنَّمَ سَعِيرًا ﴿55﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
بِآيَاتِنَا سَوْفَ نُصْلِيهِمْ نَارًا ۖ كُلَّمَا نَضِجَتْ جُلُودُهُم بَدَّلْنَاهُمْ جُلُودًا
غَيْرَهَا لِيَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا ﴿56﴾ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَنُدْخِلُهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ۖ لَّهُمْ فِيهَا أَزْوَاجٌ مُّطَهَّرَةٌ ۖ وَنُدْخِلُهُمْ ظِلًّا
ظَلِيلًا ﴿57﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَن تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَاتِ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا ۙ وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُم
بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَن تَحْكُمُوا بِالْعَدْلِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ نِعِمَّا يَعِظُكُم بِهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
كَانَ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا ﴿58﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ
وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنكُمْ ۖ فَإِن تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ
إِن كُنتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا ﴿59﴾
أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ يَزْعُمُونَ أَنَّهُمْ آمَنُوا بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِن

Have you also marked those, who speak very highly of their own purity? However, Allah alone purifies whomever He pleases (and if they are not being purified), no injustice is being done to them in the least. Just behold! they do not hesitate to invent lies about Allah, and this sin alone suffices to show that they are manifest sinners. 49-50

Have you not observed those who have been given a portion of the Book? They believe in *jibt* [81] and *tāghūt* [82] and say of the disbelievers, "Even they are more rightly guided on the way[83] than the Believers." Such are the people whom Allah has cursed and you will find no helper to the one whom Allah curses. Have they any share in the Kingdom? If they had any, they would never have given even a farthing to anyone.[84] Or, are they jealous of others, because Allah has blessed them with His bounty?[85] If so, let them know that We did bestow the Book and the Wisdom upon the descendants of Abraham and blessed them with the great kingdom.[86] But some of them believed in it and others turned away from it,[87] and the burning fire of Hell suffices for those who have turned away from it. Surely We will throw into the Fire those who have rejected Our Revelations; as often as their skins shall be consumed, We will replace them by other skins so that they may taste the torment in full, for Allah is All-Powerful and All-Wise to enforce His decrees. As for those, who have believed in Our Revelations and have done righteous deeds, We will admit them to Gardens underneath which canals flow, wherein they will abide for ever, wherein they will have pure spouses, and We will admit them into thick shades. 51-57

(O Muslims), Allah enjoins you to give the trusts into the care of those persons who are worthy of trust and to judge with justice,[88] when you judge between the people. Excellent is the counsel that Allah gives you, for Allah hears everything and sees everything. 58

O Believers, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those entrusted with authority from among you. Then if there arises any dispute about anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger,[89] if you truly believe in Allah and the Last Day. This is the only right way and will be best in regard to the end.[90] 59

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and the real aim and object of the portion left with them. The only interest they took in these was confined to polemical controversies, minor details of

Commandments and philosophical subtleties of creed. That is why they were ignorant of the true nature of religion and were void of its essence, though they were called "Divines" and "Rabbis" and were the acknowledged leaders of their community.

72. The words used are: "who have become Jews" and not "who are Jews," for originally they were "Muslims" just as the community of every Prophet is Muslim. Then afterwards they degenerated and became merely "Jews".

73. They were guilty of perversion in three ways: (1) They effected changes in the words of the Scriptures; (2) they distorted the meanings of the text with false interpretaions, and (3) they would sit in the assemblies of the Holy Prophet and his Companions and afterwards make false reports of what they heard there in order to create mischief against them by distortion. They would thus spread misunderstandings about Islam and pervert people from joining the Islamic Community.

74. That is, when the Commandments of Allah are recited to them, they say *sami'na* (we have heard) aloud and *'aṣainā* (we have rejected) in a low voice, or they pronounce the word *ata'nā* (we have obeyed) with such a twist of the tongue that it sounds as *'asainā*.

75. During their talk with the Holy Prophet, they would invite his attention, saying, *Isma'ā* (please listen to us), and would add *ghaira musma' in*, which has several meanings. It may mean : "You are such a respectable man that one cannot utter any word before you against your will", but it may also imply : "You are not worthy that one may speak to you." Another meaning is : "May Allah make you deaf!"

76. For this please refer to E.N. 105, Al-Baqarah.

77. Please refer to E.N. 2, Āl -i-'Imrān.

78. Please refer to E.N.'s 82 and 83, Al-Baqarah.

79. The people of the Book have been admonished for being guilty of *shirk*, though they professed to believe in the Prophets and the revealed Books.

80. This does not mean that if one refrains from *shirk*, then one may freely indulge in other sins. This is merely to bring home to them the gravity of this heinous sin, which they regarded as a trivial thing. That is why the warning has been given that *shirk* is the most heinous of all sins; so much so that this is the only sin for which forgiveness is not possible.

The Jewish Rabbis were very particular in the observance of minor laws; nay, they spent most of their time in measuring and weighing those regulations

which were not explicitly mentioned in their Scriptures but were derived from them. On the contrary, they regarded *shirk* as a trivial matter: they not only themselves were involved in it but they did not try to save their community from *shirk* and acts of *shirk*. Accordingly, they did not consider that there was anything wrong in entering into alliance with *mushrik* communities and helping them.

81. Literally, *jibt* means an unreal, baseless and useless thing. In the Islamic terminology, sorcery, magic, divination, omen-taking and the like superstitious practices are called *jibt*. A Tradition of the Holy Prophet says, "Taking omens from the sounds of the birds and the footmarks of the animals and all other methods of divination are *jibt*." Thus *jibt* is the equivalent of supersitition.

82. Please refer to E.N.'s 286 and 288, Al-Baqarah.

83. The Jewish Rabbis had gone so low in their opposition to Islam that they regarded the followers of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) as more misguided than even the Arab *Mushriks*, and declared the latter to be more rightly-guided though it was quite obvious to them that on one side there was the worship of One God without any tinge of *shirk*, and on the other, idolatry which had been thoroughly condemned in the Bible.

84. That is, "Do they possess any portion of Divine Authority that they are sitting in judgement on the case to decide who is rightly guided and who is not?" "Had they any part in it, they would never have given a farthing to anyone else because they are so narrowminded that they are not even ready to acknowledge the Truth"

It may also imply: Do they possess the kingdom of a country from which others are demanding a share, and they are finding it hard to part with it? What is being demanded of them is merely the acknowledgement of the Truth, and this they are refusing on account of jealousy.

85. Here they are being rebuked for showing jealousy against the Holy Prophet and his followers because they were blessed with Allah's Bounty (Prophethood) for which they themselves were looking forward in spite of being unworthy of it. Instead of showing regret for their own unworthiness which caused the loss of the Bounty, they were showing resentment against the Holy Prophet who had by His Bounty brought about the greatest spiritual, moral and intellectual revolution in Arabia with its resulting leadership and greatness. It was their jealousy that was urging them to side with the *mushriks*, and to criticise the Muslims.

86. .... *"Mulk-i-azim"* refers to the leadership and guidance of the world and to the superiority over other nations that is gained by putting into practice the knowledge and wisdom of the Divine Book.

87. It must be kept in mind that this is the answer to the jealous talk of the children of Israel. It implies this: "Why do you feel jealous of the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be peace) and his followers? You are the descendants of the Prophet Abraham (upon whom be peace) and so are the children of Ishmael his descendants. We promised the Prophet Abraham that We would bestow leadership of the world upon those of his descendants who would follow the Book and the Wisdom sent down by Us. At first We sent down the Book and the Wisdom to you, who belong to one line of his descendants, but you proved incapable of this. Now We have sent down the same to the children of Ishmael the second line of Abraham's descendants. They have accepted it, believed in it and followad it practically. Now answer for yourselves whether you have any ground of jealousy and resentment against the childern of Ishmael."

88. Here the Muslims have been fore-warned that they should avoid those evils in which the children of Israel were involved. Their basic error was that during their degeneration they entrusted the positions of trust to incompetent people. They began to entrust positions of responsibility and religious and political leadership to inefficient, narrow-minded, immoral, dishonest and wicked people. As a result, the whole community became corrupt. The Muslims are being cautioned against this evil and enjoined to entrust positions of responsibility to qualified and competent people of good moral character.

Another evil that was prevalent among the Jews was injustice. They had lost the very sense and spirit of justice and become utterly unjust, openly dishonest, and sinfully obdurate and would commit acts of gross injustice without any pangs of conscience. The Muslims were personally having a bitter experience of this. The Jews were siding with the idolatrous Quraish against the Believers in one God though the lives of the two clearly showed "who was more rightly guided." On the one side, they saw the pure lives of the Holy Prophet and his followers; on the other, they witnessed the immoral lives of their enemies, who buried their daughters alive, married their step mothers and went round the Ka'bah in naked state. Still these "people of the Book" preferred the idolatrous people to the Believers and brazen-facedly declared that the former were more rightly guided than the latter. Allah warns the Believers against this sort of injustice and enjoins them always to say what is just and right and judge between the people with justice whether they be friends or foes.

89. This verse is the basis of the whole religious, cultural and political system of Islam and is the first and foremost article of the constitution of an Islamic State. It lays down permanently the following fundamental principles:

(1) In the Islamic system, Allah is the real Authority who must be obeyed. A Muslim is first of all the servant of Allah; all his other capacities come after

this. Therefore, a Muslim as an individual and the Muslims as a community owe their first loyalty to Allah and they must subordinate all other loyalites to this. Allegiance and obedience to anyone else shall be acknowledged only if these are not opposed to the allegiance and obedience to Allah but are subordinate to it. All other allegiances that are opposed to this basic allegiance shall be broken asunder. The Holy Prophet has explained the same thing in a Tradition: "There is no obedience to any of His creatures in what involves disobedience to the Creator."

(2) The second fundamental principle of the Islamic system is allegiance and obedience to the Holy Prophet. This obedience is not inherent in Prophethood but is only practical shape of obedience to Allah. A Messenger is to be obeyed because he is the authentic means through which we can receive Commandments and instructions from Allah. Hence, we can obey Allah only by obeying His Messenger, for no other way of obedience is genuine. As a corollary of this, the breach of allegiance to the Messenger shall be a rebellion against the Sovereign, Whom he represents. A Tradition explains the same thing thus: "Whoever obeys me, obeys Allah and whoever disobeys me, disobeys Allah." The same thing has also been explicitly stated in v. 80 of this Sūrah.

(3) After the first and the second allegiance, and subordinate to these, the Muslims owe allegiance to those invested with authority from among themselves. The Arabic word *ulil-amr* is very comprehensive, which comprises all those persons who are in any way at the helm of the affairs of the Muslims-religious scholars, thinkers, political leaders, administrators, judges of law courts, tribal chiefs and the like. In short, all those, who are in any way invested with authority from among the Muslims, are to be obeyed, and it is not right to disturb the peace of the community life of the Muslims by entering into conflict with them, provided that *(a)* they are from among the Muslims, and *(b)* they are obedient to Allah and His Messenger. These two conditions are a pre-requisite for obedience to them, and these have been explicitly laid down in the verse and have also been fully explained by the Holy Prophet. In support of this some Traditions are cited below:

(a) "It is obligatory on a Muslim to listen to and obey orders of those invested with authority, whether he likes it or dislikes it, provided that it is not sinful. However, if he is ordered to do a sinful thing, he should neither listen to the rulers nor obey their orders." (Bukhārī, Muslim).

(b) "Obedience to anyone in a sinful thing is forbidden. Obedience is obligatory only in what is right." (Bukhāri, Muslim).

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قَبْلِكَ يُرِيْدُوْنَ اَنْ يَّتَحَاكَمُوْٓا اِلَى الطَّاغُوْتِ وَقَدْ اُمِرُوْٓا اَنْ يَّكْفُرُوْا بِهٖ ؕ
وَيُرِيْدُ الشَّيْطٰنُ اَنْ يُّضِلَّهُمْ ضَلٰلًۢا بَعِيْدًا ﴿60﴾ وَاِذَا قِيْلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا اِلٰى
مَآ اَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ وَاِلَى الرَّسُوْلِ رَاَيْتَ الْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ يَصُدُّوْنَ عَنْكَ صُدُوْدًا ﴿61﴾
فَكَيْفَ اِذَآ اَصَابَتْهُمْ مُّصِيْبَةٌۢ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ اَيْدِيْهِمْ ثُمَّ جَآءُوْكَ يَحْلِفُوْنَ ۖ
بِاللّٰهِ اِنْ اَرَدْنَآ اِلَّآ اِحْسَانًا وَّتَوْفِيْقًا ﴿62﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ يَعْلَمُ اللّٰهُ مَا
فِيْ قُلُوْبِهِمْ ۗ فَاَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ وَعِظْهُمْ وَقُلْ لَّهُمْ فِيْٓ اَنْفُسِهِمْ قَوْلًا
بَلِيْغًا ﴿63﴾ وَمَآ اَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَّسُوْلٍ اِلَّا لِيُطَاعَ بِاِذْنِ اللّٰهِ ؕ وَلَوْ اَنَّهُمْ
اِذْ ظَّلَمُوْٓا اَنْفُسَهُمْ جَآءُوْكَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا اللّٰهَ وَاسْتَغْفَرَ لَهُمُ الرَّسُوْلُ
لَوَجَدُوا اللّٰهَ تَوَّابًا رَّحِيْمًا ﴿64﴾ فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ حَتّٰى يُحَكِّمُوْكَ
فِيْمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوْا فِيْٓ اَنْفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِّمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَ
يُسَلِّمُوْا تَسْلِيْمًا ﴿65﴾ وَلَوْ اَنَّا كَتَبْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ اَنِ اقْتُلُوْٓا اَنْفُسَكُمْ اَوِ اخْرُجُوْا
مِنْ دِيَارِكُمْ مَّا فَعَلُوْهُ اِلَّا قَلِيْلٌ مِّنْهُمْ ؕ وَلَوْ اَنَّهُمْ فَعَلُوْا مَا يُوْعَظُوْنَ
بِهٖ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ وَاَشَدَّ تَثْبِيْتًا ﴿66﴾ وَّاِذًا لَّاٰتَيْنٰهُمْ مِّنْ لَّدُنَّآ اَجْرًا
عَظِيْمًا ﴿67﴾ وَّلَهَدَيْنٰهُمْ صِرَاطًا مُّسْتَقِيْمًا ﴿68﴾ وَمَنْ يُّطِعِ اللّٰهَ وَالرَّسُوْلَ
فَاُولٰٓئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِيْنَ اَنْعَمَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنَ النَّبِيّٖنَ وَالصِّدِّيْقِيْنَ وَ
الشُّهَدَآءِ وَالصّٰلِحِيْنَ ۚ وَحَسُنَ اُولٰٓئِكَ رَفِيْقًا ﴿69﴾ ذٰلِكَ الْفَضْلُ مِنَ
اللّٰهِ ؕ وَكَفٰى بِاللّٰهِ عَلِيْمًا ﴿70﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا خُذُوْا حِذْرَكُمْ فَانْفِرُوْا
ثُبَاتٍ اَوِ انْفِرُوْا جَمِيْعًا ﴿71﴾ وَاِنَّ مِنْكُمْ لَمَنْ لَّيُبَطِّئَنَّ ۚ فَاِنْ اَصَابَتْكُمْ
مُّصِيْبَةٌ قَالَ قَدْ اَنْعَمَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيَّ اِذْ لَمْ اَكُنْ مَّعَهُمْ شَهِيْدًا ﴿72﴾ وَلَئِنْ

O Prophet, have you not marked those who profess to believe 60-65
in the Book that have been sent down to you and in the Books that had been sent down before you, and yet want to turn to *ṭāghūt* for the judgement of their cases though they have been bidden to reject *ṭāghūt*?[91] Satan intends to lead them far astray from the right path. And when it is said to them, "Come to that thing which Allah has sent down and to the Messenger," you see that the hypocrites show hesitation in coming to you.[92] But how do they behave when a disaster befalls them as a consequence of their own doings? They come to you with oath,[93] saying, "We swear by God that we only meant to promote the good and bring about a reconciliation between the parties." Allah knows what really is in their hearts: therefore show forbearance towards them and admonish them and give them a piece of advice that may go deep into their hearts. (Tell them) "Every Messenger whom We have sent must be obeyed because Allah has enjoined this."[94] When they had wronged themselves, the best thing for them would have been to come to you and implore Allah's pardon, and if the Messenger had also asked Allah's forgiveness for them, most surely they would have found Allah Forgiving and Merciful. Nay, O Muḥammad, by your Lord, they can never become Believers until they accept you as judge for the decision of the disputes between them, and then surrender to your decision with entire submission without feeling the least resentment in their hearts.[95]

(As for them), only a few of them would have acted upon it, if 66-70
We had enjoined them, "Kill yourselves," or "Leave your homes"[96]. It would have been better for them and it would have made them firm[97]. (in their Faith), if they had done what they were commanded to do, for We would have given them a great reward from Ourselves and shown them the straight path.[98] And who-so-ever obeys Allah and the Messenger, shall be with those whom Allah has blessed-the Prophets, the truthful and the martyrs and the righteous:[99] what excellent companions these are that one may get![100] This is the real bounty which comes from Allah and Allah's knowledge suffices to know the Reality.

O Believers, be always prepared for encounter,[101] and advance 71-72
in detachments or march in a body, as the occasion may require. Well, there are among you such as shirk fight;[102] if a disaster befalls you,

they say, "Allah has been very gracious to us that we did not accompany these people."

Contd. from p.345]

(c) The Holy Prophet said, "There will be rulers over you who will practise right things as well as wrong things. (In such a case) whoever protests against the wrong things, shall be absolved from the responsibility and whoever dislikes the wrong things, also shall escape (punishment). But whoever approves of and follows them, shall incur punishment." The Companions asked, "Should we not then fight against such rulers?" The Holy Prophet answered, "No, as long as they offer the *Ṣalat.*" (Muslim)

That is, if they discard the *Ṣalat*, it will be a clear proof of their disobedience to Allah and His Messenger. Then it will be right to rise against them.

(d) The Holy Prophet said, "Your worst rulers are those whom you hate and who hate you, whom you curse and who curse you." The Companions asked, "O Messenger of God, should we not rise against such rulers?" The Holy Prophet answered, "No, as long as they establish the *Ṣalat* among you." (Muslim)

In this Tradition, the condition about the *Ṣalat* laid down in the preceding one, has been made more explicit. One might have inferred from *(c)* that if they offered the *Ṣalat* in their individual capacities, no rising should be organised against them. But Tradition *(d)* explicitly lays down that the condition for obedience to those in authority is the establishment of the system of *Ṣalat* by them in the Muslim Community. The rulers should not only themselves offer the *Ṣalat* regularly, but they should also establish the *Ṣalat* in the system of government run by them. This is the minimum condition that makes a government Islamic in principle. If a government lacks this, it will mean that such a government has discarded Islam, and the Muslims will be justified in overthrowing it. This same thing has also been stated in another Tradition thus: "The Holy Prophet took a covenant from us regarding certain things. One of these was that we would not engage in a dispute with those invested with authority unless we saw in them clear signs of disbelief, which may provide us with a cogent reason to present before Allah." (Bukhāri, Muslim)

(4) The fourth thing that has been laid down as an absolute and permanent principle is that the Commandments of Allah and the *Sunnah* of His Messenger are the fundamentals of law and final authority in the Islamic system. Hence, if a dispute arises about any matter between the Muslims or between the rulers and the ruled, they should turn to the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* for a decision and they should all submit to the decision. Thus, the

essential element in the Islamic system that distinguishes it from un-Islamic systems is to acknowledge the Book of Allah and the *Sunnah* of His Messenger as the final authority and to turn to these and to submit to their decisions in all problems of life. Any system void of this is most surely an un-Islamic system.

Some people doubt the soundness of this principle. They say that it fails in practical life for the simple reason that there are many aspects of life (*e.g.*, Local Self department. Railway department, Postal department, etc. etc.,) for which there are no rules and regulations at all in the Book of Allah and the *Sunnah* of His Messenger. How then can they find the solution of the problems they meet with in such aspects of life as concern such departments? This doubt arises because they do not understand the fundamental principles of Islam. *Islam allows freedom of action in all those things about which the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger are silent.* What distinguishes a Muslim from a non-Muslim is that the latter claims absolute freedom but the former considers himself to be the servant of Allah and uses only that amount of freedom which Islam allows him. The non-Muslim judges all matters in accordance with the rules and regulations made by himself and does not believe that he stands in need of Divine Guidance. In contrast to him, the Muslim, first of all, turns to Allah and His Messenger for guidance about everything and abides by their decision. But if he does not find any commandment therein about a certain thing, only then he is free to act in a manner he considers to be right. The very fact that the Law is silent about a certain thing, is a proof that it allows freedom of action in that particular matter.

90. In the first part of this verse, the Qur'ān enunciates the four fundamental principles of the Islamic Constitution, and in the second part teaches the wisdom that underlies them. The Muslims have been enjoined to follow the four fundamental principles if they are true believers; otherwise their profession of Islam will become doubtful. Then they have been taught to build their system of life on these because therein also lies their well-being; for this alone can keep them on the right path in this world and lead them to a happy life in the Hereafter.

It should also be noted that this piece of advice follows the critical review of the moral and religious condition of the Jews and warns the Muslims in a subtle manner to learn a lesson from their deplorable condition. It says that whenever a community flings the Book of Allah and the guidance of His Messenger behind its back and follows such leaders as are disobedient to Allah and His Messenger, and blindly obeys its rulers and religious leaders without demanding from them the authority of the Book and the *Sunnah*, it can never escape those evils in which the children of Israel were involved.

91. In this verse, *ṭāghūt* clearly stands for the authority that makes decisions in accordance with laws other than Divine and the system of judiciary which acknowledges neither Allah as the Supreme Sovereign nor His Book as the final authority. Hence, this verse is explained that it is contrary to Faith to take one's case for decision to a law court which by its nature is that of *ṭāghūt*. Belief in Allah and His Book makes it obligatory on the Believer that he should refuse to acknowledge such a court as lawful. According to the Qur'ān, belief in Allah and disbelief in *ṭāghūt* are correlatives; therefore to acknowledge both at one and the same time is nothing but hypocrisy itself.

92. This shows that the hypocrites used to bring only such cases before the Holy Prophet as were likely to be decided in their favour, but would refrain from bringing such cases, which they feared, would be decided against them. The same is true of many hypocrites of today: they are ever ready to submit to the decisions of the Islamic Law if and whenever it goes in their favour; otherwise they resort to any law, any custom, and any law court which, they expect, will ensure their interests.

93. Probably it means that when their hypocritical deeds are exposed and they fear that action will be taken against them; they take oaths to assure the Believers of their innocence.

94. It clearly defines the position of the Messenger: the Messenger does not come from Allah so that the people should simply acknowledge him as a Messenger and then continue to obey anyone they like. The Messenger is sent with the sole object that the code of life brought by him only should be followed instead of all other codes, and the commandments brought by him from Allah only should be obeyed instead of all other commandments. If anyone does not acknowledge the Messenger in this sense, his acknowledging him merely as a Messenger would be meaningless.

95. The commandment contained in verse 65 was not meant to be confined to the lifetime of the Holy Prophet, but it was to hold good up to the Last Day. Whatever the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) brought from Allah and whatever way of life he followed and practised under His guidance and inspiration, shall remain the final authority among Muslims for ever and the acknowledgement of that authority alone determines whether one is a true Muslim or not. According to a Tradition, the Holy Prophet said: "None of you can claim to be a believer unless he subordinates his desires and lusts to the way that I have brought."

96. In verse 65, they have been admonished to submit gracefully and sincerely to the way of life brought by the Holy Prophet and to subordinate their desires and interests to his decision. In this verse they have been warned that if

they cannot sacrifice even their small interests in following the Islamic Law, they can never be expected to make any bigger sacrifice. If they were asked to sacrifice their lives or leave their homes in the way of God, they would then discard totally the way of Faith and obedience and follow the ways of disbelief and disobedience instead.

97. That is, "If they had given up doubt, hesitation and indecision and obeyed and followed the Messenger without any mental reservation, their position would have become firm and stable and their thoughts, their morals and their affairs would have secured a strong and permanent foundation. In short, they would have enjoyed all those blessings that are obtained by following steadfastly a straight royal road. On the contrary, the one who wavers in indecision and irresolution, and sometimes takes one road and then another, without faith in either, his whole life passes without any achievement and becomes an object lesson of failure."

98. That is, if they had resolved to obey the Holy Messenger sincerely without harbouring any doubts in their minds, the right way of life would have become very clear to them by the grace of Allah, and they would have clearly seen as to how they should employ their energy and effort so as to get further and further close to their real goal in life."

99. *Ṣiddīq* is one who is upright and just; who is always actuated by truth and righteousness; who is fair and equitable in all his dealings; who always sides with truth and justice from the core of his heart; who opposes tooth and nail all that is unfair, without showing the least weakness; who is so pure and so unselfish that both friends and foes expect nothing but impartiality from him.

The literal meaning of *shahīd* is "a witness". It implies the one who bears witness to the truth of his Faith by following it in all aspects of his life. A martyr also is a *shahīd* because he willingly suffers death by fighting in the cause of Allah. By sacrificing his life for the cause he believes to be true, he gives a practical demonstration of the sincerity of his Faith. Those righteous people who are so trustworthy that their mere evidence for anything to be true is a sufficient proof of its genuineness are also *shahīd*.

Ṣalīḥ is one who is upright in his beliefs, intentions, words and actions and adopts the right attitude in every aspect of life.

100. That is, "Undoubtedly the person who enjoys the company of such people in this world and rises with them in the Hereafter is really very fortunate." Unless one's feelings are totally deadened, one is bound to feel that the company of evil and immoral people is a painful torment even in this world and it would be

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اَصَابَكُمْ فَضْلٌ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ لَيَقُوْلَنَّ كَاَنْ لَّمْ تَكُنْۢ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهٗ مَوَدَّةٌ
يّٰلَيْتَنِيْ كُنْتُ مَعَهُمْ فَاَفُوْزَ فَوْزًا عَظِيْمًا ﴿73﴾ فَلْيُقَاتِلْ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ
الَّذِيْنَ يَشْرُوْنَ الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا بِالْاٰخِرَةِ ۭ وَمَنْ يُّقَاتِلْ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ
فَيُقْتَلْ اَوْ يَغْلِبْ فَسَوْفَ نُؤْتِيْهِ اَجْرًا عَظِيْمًا ﴿74﴾ وَمَا لَكُمْ لَا تُقَاتِلُوْنَ
فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ وَالْمُسْتَضْعَفِيْنَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاۗءِ وَالْوِلْدَانِ الَّذِيْنَ
يَقُوْلُوْنَ رَبَّنَآ اَخْرِجْنَا مِنْ هٰذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ الظَّالِمِ اَهْلُهَا ۚ وَاجْعَلْ لَّنَا
مِنْ لَّدُنْكَ وَلِيًّا ۚ وَّاجْعَلْ لَّنَا مِنْ لَّدُنْكَ نَصِيْرًا ﴿75﴾ اَلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا
يُقَاتِلُوْنَ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ ۚ وَالَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا يُقَاتِلُوْنَ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ الطَّاغُوْتِ
فَقَاتِلُوْٓا اَوْلِيَاۗءَ الشَّيْطٰنِ ۚ اِنَّ كَيْدَ الشَّيْطٰنِ كَانَ ضَعِيْفًا ﴿76﴾ اَلَمْ تَرَ اِلَى
الَّذِيْنَ قِيْلَ لَهُمْ كُفُّوْٓا اَيْدِيَكُمْ وَاَقِيْمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَاٰتُوا الزَّكٰوةَ ۚ فَلَمَّا
كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقِتَالُ اِذَا فَرِيْقٌ مِّنْهُمْ يَخْشَوْنَ النَّاسَ كَخَشْيَةِ اللّٰهِ
اَوْ اَشَدَّ خَشْيَةً ۚ وَقَالُوْا رَبَّنَا لِمَ كَتَبْتَ عَلَيْنَا الْقِتَالَ ۚ لَوْلَآ اَخَّرْتَنَآ
اِلٰٓى اَجَلٍ قَرِيْبٍ ۭ قُلْ مَتَاعُ الدُّنْيَا قَلِيْلٌ ۚ وَالْاٰخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لِّمَنِ اتَّقٰى ۣ
وَلَا تُظْلَمُوْنَ فَتِيْلًا ﴿77﴾ اَيْنَ مَا تَكُوْنُوْا يُدْرِكْكُّمُ الْمَوْتُ وَلَوْ كُنْتُمْ فِيْ
بُرُوْجٍ مُّشَيَّدَةٍ ۭ وَاِنْ تُصِبْهُمْ حَسَنَةٌ يَّقُوْلُوْا هٰذِهٖ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللّٰهِ ۚ وَ
اِنْ تُصِبْهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ يَّقُوْلُوْا هٰذِهٖ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ ۭ قُلْ كُلٌّ مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللّٰهِ ۭ
فَمَالِ هٰٓؤُلَاۗءِ الْقَوْمِ لَا يَكَادُوْنَ يَفْقَهُوْنَ حَدِيْثًا ﴿78﴾ مَآ اَصَابَكَ مِنْ
حَسَنَةٍ فَمِنَ اللّٰهِ ۡ وَمَآ اَصَابَكَ مِنْ سَيِّئَةٍ فَمِنْ نَّفْسِكَ ۭ وَاَرْسَلْنٰكَ
لِلنَّاسِ رَسُوْلًا ۭ وَكَفٰى بِاللّٰهِ شَهِيْدًا ﴿79﴾ مَنْ يُّطِعِ الرَّسُوْلَ فَقَدْ اَطَاعَ

And if you are blessed with grace from Allah, they say, — as 73-76
though there never had been any friendly relations between you and them "We wish we had also accompanied them and thus would have gained our end." (Let such people understand that) those alone, who barter away this worldly life for that of the Hereafter,[103] should fight in the way of Allah; then We will bestow a great reward upon him who fights in the way of Allah whether he be slain or be victorious. Why should you, then, not fight in the way of Allah for the sake of those helpless men, women and children who, being weak, have been oppressed, and are crying out, "Our Lord, deliver us from this habitation whose inhabitants are unjust oppressors, and raise a protector for us by Thy grace and a helper from Thyself."[104] Those, who follow the way of Faith, fight in the way of Allah, and those who follow the way of disbelief fight in the way of *ṭāghūt*.[105] So fight against the helpers of Satan with this conviction that Satan's crafty schemes are in fact very weak.[106]

Have you also marked those to whom it was said, "Withhold 77-78
your hands (a while from war) and establish the *Ṣalāt* and pay the *Zakāt*? Now that they have been commanded to fight, some of them fear the people as they should fear Allah, or even more than that;[107] they say, 'Our Lord, why have You prescribed fighting for us? Why have You not given us further respite?" Say to them, "The pleasures of this worldly life are trifling and the life of the Hereafter is much better for a man who fears Allah, and you shall not be wronged in the least.[108] As to death, it will overtake you wherever you may be, even though you be in fortified towers" If they have good fortune, they say, "This is from Allah," and if they suffer a loss, they say, "This is because of you."[109] Say, "Everything is from Allah." What then has gone wrong with these people that they do not understand anything? Whatever good comes to you, O man, it is by Allah's grace, and whatever evil befalls you, it is the result of your own doings.

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101. It should be noted that this address was revealed at the time when the neighbouring tribes had been emboldened by the defeat of the Muslims at Uhd. They were surrounded by danger on all sides and were hearing persistent rumours about the active hostilities of, and imminent attacks from, different quarters. There were cases of treachery also. The Muslim missionaries were invited cunningly to

preach Islam, and then killed. There was no security of life and property beyond the outskirts of Madinah. These circumstances urgently required that the Muslims should struggle hard to save the Islamic Movement from failure and destruction in the face of such overwhelming threats.

102. The other meanings are that not only he himself shows lack of courage to face danger but also discourages and dissuades others from *Jihād*

103. That is, "Let them clearly understand that those people, who hanker after worldly benefits only, are not fit to fight in the way of Allah. On the countrary, only those people are worthy of fighting in the way of Allah who have no other desire or object than to please Him and who have perfect belief in Allah and the Hereafter and are, therefore, ready to sacrifice all interests and all chances of prosperity and enjoyment in this world for the sake of pleasing their Lord. They sincerely believe that their sacrifices will not go in vain in the Hereafter, even if they might not have been "successful" in this life. Thus it is obvious that those who attach real importance only to their worldly interests cannot tread the path of Allah."

104. This was the cry of the poor and helpless children, men and women who had accepted Islam at Makkah and at other places but had no means of migrating to Madinah, or defending themselves from persecution. They were being persecuted and oppressed in all sorts of manners and were invoking the help of Allah to deliver them from that horrible state.

105. In the sight of Allah, there are two distinct parties of fighters. One party is that of the Believers who fight for the cause of Allah in order to establish his way on His earth, and every sincere Believer is bound to perform this duty. The other party is that of unbelievers who fight in the way of *ṭāghūt* so as to establish the rule of the rebels against Allah on His earth and no Believer would side with them in this evil work.

106. The Believers have been assured that they should not be cowed and terrified by the apparent grand preparations and evil designs of Satan and his companions: because ultimately they are bound to fail.

107. This verse has three meanings, and all three are equally correct.

First, it means that those very people who were then showing cowardice were very impatient to fight before permission was given for this. They would repeat the tales of their persecution and oppression and say, "Give us permission to fight, for we have no more patience left to bear these wrongs." At that time when they were advised to be patient for the time being and to purify themselves by means of *Ṣalāt* and *Zakāt*, they would resent such pieces of advice. But when

the Command to fight was given, some of those very people began to show cowardice when they confronted the enemy armies and the dangers of war.

The second meaning is that those people were very 'religious' as long as such harmless demands as the offering of *Ṣalāt* and the payment of *Zakāt* were made; but no sooner was the demand to fight in the way of Allah made on them than they were filled with terror and fear for their lives, and they forgot all about their religiosity.

The third meaning is that during the pre-Islamic period, they were ready to fight for the sake of the spoils or for the gratification of their whims, and were engaged day and night in war. That is why, after embracing Islam, they were enjoined to desist a while from fighting and to reform their souls by means of the *Ṣalāt* and *Zakāt*. But when they were enjoined to fight in the way of Allah, the same people who showed reckless bravery in fighting for the sake of false pride, were showing timidity, and those who were dare-devils turned into milksops and shirked fight.

The above mentioned three meanings apply to the three different categories of people and the words of the Arabic text are so comprehensive that they fit equally into all the three cases.

108. That is, "You need not worry about your reward from Allah for the service you render to His cause. If you exert your utmost in His way, Allah will not let your work go waste."

109. They have been admonished for their attitude towards the Holy Prophet. When there was success and victory, they would attribute it to Allah's grace and forgot that Allah had blessed them with grace through him. But when they suffered a defeat or had a set-back because of their own errors and weaknesses, they would lay the whole blame on the Holy Prophet, and would absolve themselves from all responsibility.

اللّٰهَ ۚ وَمَنْ تَوَلّٰى فَمَآ اَرْسَلْنٰكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيْظًا ﴿٨٠﴾ وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ طَاعَةٌ ۡ فَاِذَا
بَرَزُوْا مِنْ عِنْدِكَ بَيَّتَ طَآئِفَةٌ مِّنْهُمْ غَيْرَ الَّذِىْ تَقُوْلُ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ يَكْتُبُ
مَا يُبَيِّتُوْنَ ۚ فَاَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللّٰهِ ۭ وَكَفٰى بِاللّٰهِ وَكِيْلًا ﴿٨١﴾
اَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُوْنَ الْقُرْاٰنَ ۭ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللّٰهِ لَوَجَدُوْا فِيْهِ
اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيْرًا ﴿٨٢﴾ وَاِذَا جَآءَهُمْ اَمْرٌ مِّنَ الْاَمْنِ اَوِ الْخَوْفِ اَذَاعُوْا
بِهٖ ۭ وَلَوْ رَدُّوْهُ اِلَى الرَّسُوْلِ وَاِلٰٓى اُولِي الْاَمْرِ مِنْهُمْ لَعَلِمَهُ الَّذِيْنَ
يَسْتَنْۢبِطُوْنَهٗ مِنْهُمْ ۭ وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهٗ لَاتَّبَعْتُمُ الشَّيْطٰنَ
اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا ﴿٨٣﴾ فَقَاتِلْ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ ۚ لَا تُكَلَّفُ اِلَّا نَفْسَكَ وَحَرِّضِ
الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ۚ عَسَى اللّٰهُ اَنْ يَّكُفَّ بَاْسَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا ۭ وَاللّٰهُ اَشَدُّ بَاْسًا
وَّاَشَدُّ تَنْكِيْلًا ﴿٨٤﴾ مَنْ يَّشْفَعْ شَفَاعَةً حَسَنَةً يَّكُنْ لَّهٗ نَصِيْبٌ مِّنْهَا ۚ وَ
مَنْ يَّشْفَعْ شَفَاعَةً سَيِّئَةً يَّكُنْ لَّهٗ كِفْلٌ مِّنْهَا ۭ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰي كُلِّ
شَيْءٍ مُّقِيْتًا ﴿٨٥﴾ وَاِذَا حُيِّيْتُمْ بِتَحِيَّةٍ فَحَيُّوْا بِاَحْسَنَ مِنْهَآ اَوْ رُدُّوْهَا ۭ
اِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ عَلٰي كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَسِيْبًا ﴿٨٦﴾ اَللّٰهُ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۭ لَيَجْمَعَنَّكُمْ اِلٰى
يَوْمِ الْقِيٰمَةِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيْهِ ۭ وَمَنْ اَصْدَقُ مِنَ اللّٰهِ حَدِيْثًا ﴿٨٧﴾ فَمَا لَكُمْ
فِي الْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ فِئَتَيْنِ وَاللّٰهُ اَرْكَسَهُمْ بِمَا كَسَبُوْا ۭ اَتُرِيْدُوْنَ اَنْ تَهْدُوْا
مَنْ اَضَلَّ اللّٰهُ ۭ وَمَنْ يُّضْلِلِ اللّٰهُ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهٗ سَبِيْلًا ﴿٨٨﴾ وَدُّوْا لَوْ
تَكْفُرُوْنَ كَمَا كَفَرُوْا فَتَكُوْنُوْنَ سَوَاۗءً فَلَا تَتَّخِذُوْا مِنْهُمْ اَوْلِيَاۗءَ حَتّٰى
يُهَاجِرُوْا فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ ۭ فَاِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَخُذُوْهُمْ وَاقْتُلُوْهُمْ حَيْثُ
وَجَدْتُّمُوْهُمْ ۠ وَلَا تَتَّخِذُوْا مِنْهُمْ وَلِيًّا وَّلَا نَصِيْرًا ﴿٨٩﴾ اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ يَصِلُوْنَ

النصف

We have sent you, O Muḥammad, as a Messenger to mankind, and Allah's witness suffices for this. Whoever obeys the Messenger, in fact, obeys Allah and whoever turns away from him (is accountable for his deeds); anyhow We have not sent you to be keeper over them.[110] 79-80

In your presence, they say, "We are obedient to you," but when they leave you, some of them meet together secretly at night to plot against what you say; Allah writes down all their secret talks; so leave them alone and trust in Allah; Allah alone suffices for trust. Do they not ponder over the Qur'ān? Had it been from any other than Allah, surely there would have been many contradictions in it.[111] 81-82

Whenever these people hear any news concerning peace or danger, they make it known to all and sundry; instead of this, if they should convey it to the Messenger and to the responsible people of the Community, it would come to the knowledge of such people who among them are capable of sifting it and drawing right conclusions from it.[112] (Your weaknesses were such that) had it not been for Allah's grace and mercy towards you, all of you except a few, would have followed Satan. 83

O Prophet, fight in the way of Allah: you are accountable for none but your own person; you should, however, urge on the Believers to fight: it may be that Allah will soon break the strength of the disbelievers, for Allah is the strongest in might and His punishment is most severe. Whoever pleads a good cause, will get a share from it, and whoever pleads an evil cause also shall get a share from it;[113] for Allah keeps strict watch over everything. 84-85

And when anyone greets you in a respectful manner, greet him with a better salutation than his or at least return the same;[114] indeed Allah takes count of everything. Allah: there is no city but He. He will gather you all together on the Day of Resurrection, the coming of which is beyond all doubt: and whose word can be truer than Allah's?[115] 86-87

إِلَىٰ قَوْمٍ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ مِّيثَاقٌ أَوْ جَاءُوكُمْ حَصِرَتْ صُدُورُهُمْ أَنْ
يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ أَوْ يُقَاتِلُوا قَوْمَهُمْ ۚ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَسَلَّطَهُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ فَلَقَاتَلُوكُمْ ۚ
فَإِنِ اعْتَزَلُوكُمْ فَلَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ وَأَلْقَوْا إِلَيْكُمُ السَّلَمَ ۙ فَمَا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ
عَلَيْهِمْ سَبِيلًا ﴿90﴾ سَتَجِدُونَ آخَرِينَ يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يَأْمَنُوكُمْ وَيَأْمَنُوا
قَوْمَهُمْ ۖ كُلَّمَا رُدُّوا إِلَى الْفِتْنَةِ أُرْكِسُوا فِيهَا ۚ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَعْتَزِلُوكُمْ وَيُلْقُوا
إِلَيْكُمُ السَّلَمَ وَيَكُفُّوا أَيْدِيَهُمْ فَخُذُوهُمْ وَاقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ ثَقِفْتُمُوهُمْ ۚ
وَأُولَٰئِكُمْ جَعَلْنَا لَكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانًا مُّبِينًا ﴿91﴾ وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ أَنْ
يَقْتُلَ مُؤْمِنًا إِلَّا خَطَأً ۚ وَمَنْ قَتَلَ مُؤْمِنًا خَطَأً فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُّؤْمِنَةٍ
وَدِيَةٌ مُّسَلَّمَةٌ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ يَصَّدَّقُوا ۚ فَإِنْ كَانَ مِنْ قَوْمٍ عَدُوٍّ
لَّكُمْ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُّؤْمِنَةٍ ۖ وَإِنْ كَانَ مِنْ قَوْمٍ بَيْنَكُمْ
وَبَيْنَهُمْ مِّيثَاقٌ فَدِيَةٌ مُّسَلَّمَةٌ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ وَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُّؤْمِنَةٍ ۖ
فَمَنْ لَّمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ شَهْرَيْنِ مُتَتَابِعَيْنِ ۖ تَوْبَةً مِّنَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ
عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿92﴾ وَمَنْ يَقْتُلْ مُؤْمِنًا مُّتَعَمِّدًا فَجَزَاؤُهُ جَهَنَّمُ خَالِدًا فِيهَا
وَغَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَلَعَنَهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُ عَذَابًا عَظِيمًا ﴿93﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ
آمَنُوا إِذَا ضَرَبْتُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَتَبَيَّنُوا وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ أَلْقَىٰ إِلَيْكُمُ
السَّلَمَ لَسْتَ مُؤْمِنًا ۚ تَبْتَغُونَ عَرَضَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ۖ فَعِنْدَ اللَّهِ مَغَانِمُ
كَثِيرَةٌ ۚ كَذَٰلِكَ كُنْتُمْ مِّنْ قَبْلُ فَمَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ فَتَبَيَّنُوا ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ
بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا ﴿94﴾ لَا يَسْتَوِي الْقَاعِدُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ غَيْرُ أُولِي
الضَّرَرِ وَالْمُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ ۚ فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ

How is it with you that there are two opinions among you concerning the hypocrites,[116] whereas Allah has turned them back (to their former state) because of the evils they have earned?[117] Do you desire to show guidance to him whom Allah has let go astray? You cannot find a path for him whom Allah has turned away from the right path. They really wish that you should also become disbelievers, as they themselves are so that both may become alike. So you should not take friends from among them unless they migrate in the way of Allah; and if they do not migrate, then seize them wherever you find them and slay[118] them and do not take any of them as friends and helpers. However, those hypocrites are excepted who join a people who are allied to you by a treaty.[119] Likewise, those hypocrites are excepted who come to you and are averse to fighting either against you or against their own people. Had Allah willed, He would have given them power over you and they also would have fought against you; therefore if they leave you alone and desist from fighting against you and make overtures for peace to you, in that case Allah has left you no cause for aggression against them. You will also find another kind of hypocrites, who wish to be at peace with you and also at peace with their own people but who would plunge into mischief, whenever they got an opportunity for it. If such people do not desist from your enmity nor make overtures for peace nor desist from fighting against you, then seize them and slay them wherever you find them, for We have given you a clear authority to fight against them. 88-91

It does not behove a Believer to slay another Believer except by error,[120] and if one slays a Believer by error, he must set free one believing slave as expiation[121] and pay blood-money to the heirs[122] of the slain person unless they charitably forego it. But if the murdered Muslim belonged to a people who are at enmity with you, then the expiation shall be the freeing of one believing slave; and if the slain person belonged to a non-Muslim ally of yours, then the blood-money must be paid to his heirs[123] and a believing slave has to be set free. But if one could not afford a slave, then he must fast two consecutive months.[124] This is the way enjoined by Allah for repentance;[125] Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. As regards the one who kills a Believer wilfully, his recompense is Hell, wherein he shall live for ever. He has incurred Allah's wrath and His curse is 92-93

on him, and Allah has prepared a woeful torment for him.

94 O Believers, when you go to *Jihād* in the way of Allah, discern between friend and foe; and if one greets you with a salutation of peace, do not say to him abruptly, "You are not a believer."[126] If you seek worldly gain by this, Allah has abundant spoils for you. (Remember that) you yourselves were before this in the same condition; then Allah showed His grace on you;[127] therefore you should discern well, for Allah is fully aware of what you do.

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110. That is, "They themselves are responsible for their deeds and you will not be answerable for them. What you have been entrusted with, is to convey to them the commandments and instructions from God. And you have done that admirably well. Now it is not your obligation to force them to adopt the right way, and if they do not follow the Guidance they are receiving through you, you shall not be held responsible for their disobedience."

111. The main cause of the wrong attitude of the hypocrites and the people of weak faith, who had been warned in the foregoing verses, was that they had doubts that the Qur'ān was from Allah. They could not believe that it was being sent down by Allah to the Holy Prophet and that the Commandments contained in it were directly coming from Him. That is why they are being admonished to consider the Qur'ān by giving close attention to it, and to verify whether their doubts are genuine and whether it is from Allah or not. The Qur'ān itself bears witness to the truth that it is from none other than Allah, for none else, however wise and intelligent he might be, could have gone on delivering addresses under different circumstances about variant topics so as to form a connected, balanced and coherent Book at the end of twenty-three years and that too, without showing any contradiction whatever from the beginning to the end, and without there arising any need to revise or make any change in it.

112. During the period of excitement, rumours were on the air from many quarters. Sometimes baseless and exaggerated reports were received that caused alarm in Madīnah and its outskirts. Then some cunning enemy would send news that all was quiet in the enemy camp, merely to conceal some impending danger and to keep the Muslims off their guard. Only those people who loved excitement, took keen interest in such rumours; who did not take the conflict between Islam and un-Islam to be a serious matter; and who did not realize the grave consequences of indulging in such baseless rumours. Whenever they heard any rumour, they would spread it from place to place, without considering the great harm their pastime was causing.

In this verse, such people have been warned of the gravity of their offence and strictly admonished to refrain from spreading rumours. They have been told to report any news they heard to the responsible people and then keep silent about it.

113. Different people behave differently and with different results. Some urge on others to exert themselves for the cause of Allah and to exalt His Word and they get its reward. There are others who spread misunderstandings among the people about Allah's cause, discourage the Muslims and try to dissuade them from exalting the Word of Allah and thus incur punishment.

114. The Muslims were specially exhorted to be very civil and polite to the non-Muslims because at that time their relations were strained on account of the conflict between them. In that state of tension, they were forewarned to be on their guard against incivility and impoliteness. They were, therefore, taught to be equally civil and polite to them when they greeted them respectfully. Nay, they should be even more civil and polite than their opponents.

Harsh behaviour and harsh words do no good to anyone but they are specially unsuited to the work of those missionaries of Allah's Message, who have dedicated themselves to one day invite the world to the Truth and exerted themselves to reform the ways of the people. Such ill behaviour may satisfy one's vanity, but it does great harm to one's mission.

115. That is, "The misbehaviour of the unbelievers, atheists, polytheists and the like can do no damage to the Godhead of Allah, for they cannot alter the fact that He is the One and All-Powerful Sovereign, and that, one day He will assemble together all human beings and deal with them in accordance with their deeds and none will be able to escape from His retribution. Therefore, Allah does not stand in need of anyone to defend Him against His rebels by showing incivility and impoliteness to them.

That is the bearing of this verse on the preceding verse. But this verse also serves as an appendix to the passage that began from verse 60. In that case it means: Let any body follow any way he chooses and work in any way he likes in this world but he should not forget that one Day everyone shall have to go in the presence of Allah Who is the sole Sovereign. Then everyone shall see the result of his actions and deeds.

116. This passage deals with the problem of those hypocritical Muslims who had accepted Islam in Makkah and other parts of Arabia but had not emigrated to Madinah. They lived as before with their people, and took more or less a practical part in all their hostile activities against Islam and the Muslims. They had become a very difficult problem for the Muslims who did not know how to deal with them. Some Muslims were of the opinion that they were after all

"Muslims" because they recited the *kalimah* (the article of the Muslims' Faith), offered the *Ṣalāt*, observed the Fast and recited the Qur'ān. Then how could they be dealt with like the disbelievers? Allah in this passage has removed that difference of opinion from among the Muslims and told them how to deal with them.

At this place one should clearly understand why those Muslims who did not emigrate to Madīnah were declared to be hypocrites; otherwise one might not be able to interpret correctly this passage and the like passages of the Qur'ān. The fact of the matter is that when the Holy Prophet migrated to Madīnah and conditions were created there for the fulfilment of the requirements of Islam, a general order was given that all those Muslims who were oppressed in any place and in any tribe or clan and could not freely carry out their Islamic obligations, should migrate to Madīnah, "the Abode of Islam." As a result, all those who could emigrate but did not do so because they loved their homes, their relatives and their interests more than Islam, were declared to be hypocrites. Only such of those as were really being prevented by impediments were declared to be helpless in verse 97 of this Sūrah.

It is obvious that the Muslims living in the "abode of unbelief" may be declared hypocrites for not migrating only if a general invitation is extended to them by the people living in "the Abode of Islam", or at least the doors of" the Abode of Islam" are kept open for them. In such a case all those Muslims who may be doing nothing to change "the abode of unbelief" into "the Abode of Islam", nor emigrate to "the Abode of Islam", even if they could, would be declared hypocrites.

117. Allah turned the hypocrites back to their former unbelief because they followed a double-faced policy and were time-servers. As they preferred the life of this world to that of the Hereafter, they had entered the fold of Islam with some mental reservations. They were not prepared to sacrifice those interests which came into conflict with the requirements of the Faith and they did not have that firm belief in the Hereafter which makes one sacrifice with perfect peace of mind this world for the sake of the Next World. It has thus become obvious that the line of demarcation was so clearcut that there ought not to have been two opinions about hypocrisy.

118. Here the Muslims have been asked to catch hold of those hypocrites who belonged to the belligerent disbelievers and were actually engaged in hostile activities against the Islamic State.

119. The exception is only concerning the first part of the Command. Though the blood of such a hypocrite is lawful, he is not to be pursued and killed,

if he has sought asylum in the territory of a non-Muslim State, which is an ally to the Islamic State. This is not because of the sanctity of the blood of the hypocrite but because of the sanctity of the treaty.

120. This does not refer to the category of the above-mentioned hypocrites whose blood has been made lawful, but to the sincere Muslims who lived either in "the Abode of Islam", or in "the war zone" or "the abode of unbelief", against whom there was no proof that they had taken part in the hostile activities of the enemies of Islam: such a warning was necessary because there were many people who had accepted Islam sincerely but were still forced by circumstances to live among the foes of Islam; and there had been cases when some of them were accidentally killed by their Muslim brethren during an attack on an enemy clan. Therefore, Allah has enjoined what a Muslim, who kills a Muslim by mis-chance, must do to expiate such an accidental sin.

121. As the slain person was a Believer, a believing slave is to be set free as expiation for his accidental murder.

122. The Holy Prophet prescribed one hundred camels or two hundred cows or two thousand goats as blood-money to be paid to the survivors of the slain man. If one desired to pay it in any other form, he would have to calculate it in terms of the market price of these animals. For instance, the blood-money paid in cash during the time of the Holy Prophet was eight hundred gold *dināṙs* or eight thousand silver *dirhams*. During his Caliphate, Ḥaḍrat 'Umar declared, "Now that the price of a camel has gone up, one thousand *dināṙs* or twelve thousand *dirhams* should be paid as blood-money." It should, however, be noted that the blood-money prescribed here is not for a wilful murder but for an accidental one.

123. In brief, the following are the Commandments contained in v. 92:

If the slain person is an inhabitant of "the Abode of Islam," his murderer shall have to pay blood-money as compensation and also to set free a slave to earn his forgiveness from God.

And if he is an inhabitant of a "war zone", the murderer shall have only to set free a slave and not to pay any blood-money.

And if he belongs to an "abode of unbelief" which is an ally of the Islamic State, the murderer shall have to set free a slave and also have to pay blood-money equal to the amount of the blood-money of a non-Muslim victim as contained in the treaty.

124. These fasts must be consecutive without a single day's break; if there is a single break, except if it be in accordance with the Law, one shall have to

[Contd on p. 366

الْمُجٰهِدِيْنَ بِاَمْوَالِهِمْ وَ اَنْفُسِهِمْ عَلَى الْقٰعِدِيْنَ دَرَجَةً ؕ وَ كُلًّا وَّعَدَ اللّٰهُ
الْحُسْنٰى ؕ وَ فَضَّلَ اللّٰهُ الْمُجٰهِدِيْنَ عَلَى الْقٰعِدِيْنَ اَجْرًا عَظِيْمًا ﴿95﴾ دَرَجٰتٍ
مِّنْهُ وَ مَغْفِرَةً وَّ رَحْمَةً ؕ وَ كَانَ اللّٰهُ غَفُوْرًا رَّحِيْمًا ﴿96﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ تَوَفّٰىهُمُ
الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ ظَالِمِيْٓ اَنْفُسِهِمْ قَالُوْا فِيْمَ كُنْتُمْ ؕ قَالُوْا كُنَّا مُسْتَضْعَفِيْنَ فِي
الْاَرْضِ ؕ قَالُوْٓا اَلَمْ تَكُنْ اَرْضُ اللّٰهِ وَاسِعَةً فَتُهَاجِرُوْا فِيْهَا ؕ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ مَاْوٰىهُمْ
جَهَنَّمُ ؕ وَ سَآءَتْ مَصِيْرًا ﴿97﴾ اِلَّا الْمُسْتَضْعَفِيْنَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَ النِّسَآءِ وَ الْوِلْدَانِ
لَا يَسْتَطِيْعُوْنَ حِيْلَةً وَّ لَا يَهْتَدُوْنَ سَبِيْلًا ﴿98﴾ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ عَسَى اللّٰهُ اَنْ
يَّعْفُوَ عَنْهُمْ ؕ وَ كَانَ اللّٰهُ عَفُوًّا غَفُوْرًا ﴿99﴾ وَ مَنْ يُّهَاجِرْ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ
يَجِدْ فِي الْاَرْضِ مُرٰغَمًا كَثِيْرًا وَّ سَعَةً ؕ وَ مَنْ يَّخْرُجْ مِنْۢ بَيْتِهٖ مُهَاجِرًا
اِلَى اللّٰهِ وَ رَسُوْلِهٖ ثُمَّ يُدْرِكْهُ الْمَوْتُ فَقَدْ وَقَعَ اَجْرُهٗ عَلَى اللّٰهِ ؕ وَ
كَانَ اللّٰهُ غَفُوْرًا رَّحِيْمًا ﴿100﴾ وَ اِذَا ضَرَبْتُمْ فِي الْاَرْضِ فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ
جُنَاحٌ اَنْ تَقْصُرُوْا مِنَ الصَّلٰوةِ ۖ اِنْ خِفْتُمْ اَنْ يَّفْتِنَكُمُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا ؕ اِنَّ
الْكٰفِرِيْنَ كَانُوْا لَكُمْ عَدُوًّا مُّبِيْنًا ﴿101﴾ وَ اِذَا كُنْتَ فِيْهِمْ فَاَقَمْتَ لَهُمُ الصَّلٰوةَ
فَلْتَقُمْ طَآئِفَةٌ مِّنْهُمْ مَّعَكَ وَلْيَاْخُذُوْٓا اَسْلِحَتَهُمْ ۫ فَاِذَا سَجَدُوْا فَلْيَكُوْنُوْا
مِنْ وَّرَآئِكُمْ ۪ وَلْتَاْتِ طَآئِفَةٌ اُخْرٰى لَمْ يُصَلُّوْا فَلْيُصَلُّوْا مَعَكَ وَلْيَاْخُذُوْا
حِذْرَهُمْ وَ اَسْلِحَتَهُمْ ؕ وَدَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لَوْ تَغْفُلُوْنَ عَنْ اَسْلِحَتِكُمْ وَ
اَمْتِعَتِكُمْ فَيَمِيْلُوْنَ عَلَيْكُمْ مَّيْلَةً وَّاحِدَةً ؕ وَ لَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ اِنْ كَانَ
بِكُمْ اَذًى مِّنْ مَّطَرٍ اَوْ كُنْتُمْ مَّرْضٰٓى اَنْ تَضَعُوْٓا اَسْلِحَتَكُمْ ۚ وَ خُذُوْا حِذْرَكُمْ ؕ
اِنَّ اللّٰهَ اَعَدَّ لِلْكٰفِرِيْنَ عَذَابًا مُّهِيْنًا ﴿102﴾ فَاِذَا قَضَيْتُمُ الصَّلٰوةَ فَاذْكُرُوا اللّٰهَ

Those people from among the Muslims who stay at home without any genuine excuse are not equal in rank with those who exert their utmost with their lives and wealth for the cause of Allah. For Allah has assigned a higher rank to those who exert their utmost with their lives and wealth than those who stay at home. Though Allah has promised a good reward for all, he has a far richer reward for those who fight for Him than for those who stay at home:[128] they have high ranks, forgiveness and mercy from Allah, for Allah is Forgiving and Merciful. 95-96

When the angels seized the souls of those who were doing wrong to their own souls[129] they asked them, "What was the matter with you?" They answered, "We were oppressed in the land." The angels replied, "Was not Allah's earth spacious for you to emigrate in it?"[130] Hell is the abode of such people and it is a very evil abode indeed. As regards those men, women and children who are really helpless and lack the means of migration and find no way out, Allah may pardon them, for Allah is Forgiving and Forbearing. The one who emigrates in the way of Allah, will find in the land enough room for refuge and abundant resources for livelihood. As regards the one, who leaves his home to migrate towards Allah and His Messenger and death overtakes him on the way, Allah has taken upon Himself to give him his due reward, for Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.[131] 97-100

When you go on a journey, there is no harm, if you shorten your *Ṣalāt*,[132] (especially) when you fear that the disbelievers might harass you,[133] for the disbelievers are openly bent upon enmity against you. 101

And when you, O Prophet, are among the Muslims and are going to lead them in *Ṣalāt*[134] (in a state of war), let a party of them stand behind you,[135] carrying their weapons with them. When they have made their prostrations, they should fall back and let another party of them, who have not yet offered the *Ṣalāt*, say it with you and they, too, should be on their guard and keep their weapons with them.[136] For the disbelievers are always on the look-out for a chance to find you neglectful of your weapons and your baggage so that they may swoop down upon you with a surprise attack. If, however, you feel some inconvenience on account of rain, or if you are ill, there is no harm if you put aside your weapons, but you should still be on 102

your guard. Rest assured that Allah has prepared a disgraceful torment for the disbelievers.[137]

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begin the prescribed fasting anew for two full months.

125. That is, "The freeing of a slave or the payment of blood-money or the fasting for two consecutive months is not a penalty but is repentance and *kaffārah* (cover) for the offence. The difference between the two is that in the case of penalty, there is no feeling of self-reproach, compunction, contrition and self-reform, but there is a feeling of disgust and aversion, and it leaves disgust and bitterness behind it. That is why Allah enjoins *kaffārah* and repentance so that the offender may be able to purify his soul by means of good deeds, devotion and fulfilment of the rights, and turn to Allah through self-reproach and compunction. In this way the sinner will not only atone for his present sin but will also refrain in future from such errors.

Kaffārah literally means a cover; a good deed that is performed as *kaffārah* for a sin, so to say, covers it just as a white-wash covers a blot on a wall.

126. In the early days of Islam, *Assalâm-u-'alaikum* (peace be upon you) was a symbol of recognition for Muslims. When a Muslim met another Muslim, he greeted him with this salutation, as if to say, "I belong to your own community; I am your friend and well-wisher. I have nothing but peace and security for you; so you should not show enmity towards me nor fear enmity and harm from me." It was like a "pass-word" used in the army while passing through a line of guards at night so as to discern between friends and foes.

The importance of the salutation of peace as a symbol of recognition was specially great at that time because there was no apparent mark of distinction between a Muslim Arab and a non-Muslim Arab, as they wore the same kind of dress and spoke the same language. Still a difficulty arose when the Muslims attacked some clan and a local Muslim also became the target of attack. Then he would cry out, *Assalām-u-'alaikum* or *Lā Ilāha Illallah* (there is no god but Allah). But the attacking Muslims would suspect him to be a disbeliever who was using the password as a trick merely to save his life. They would, therefore, often kill him and take possession of his belongings as spoils. Although the Holy Prophet would severely admonish the offenders on such occasions, yet there was a recurrence of such incidents. Then Allah solved the difficulty in this verse, which means, "You have no right to judge cursorily that the man, who is declaring himself to be a Muslim, is telling a lie merely to save his life. It is equally possible that he may be speaking the truth, or telling a lie, and one cannot know the reality without making a thorough investigation. Thus, while there is a chance of letting

off a disbeliever by accepting his salutations of peace as genuine, there is also the more horrible chance of killing an innocent Believer. In any case, it is far better to let off a disbeliever by mistake than to kill a Believer by error."

127. That is, "There was a time when you yourselves were scattered as individuals among different clans of disbelievers. You were then hiding your Islam for fear of oppression and persecution and you could offer no other proof of your Faith except by an oral expression. Now it is the bounty of Allah that you are enjoying community life and are able to raise the banner of Islam against the disbelievers. The right way of showing gratitude to Allah for this bounty is to show kindness and leniency to those Muslims who are still in the same state in which you were before this."

128. In this passage, the relative status of true Muslims has been assigned according as they behave when they are asked to go to *Jihād* on a voluntary basis, when the leader of the Islamic forces does not require the whole Muslim force. Those who offer themselves and their wealth and go to *Jihād* have been assigned a higher rank than those who stay at home, even though the latter might have been engaged in other good works; moreover, there is, for the former a 'promise of a good reward.' As regards those who stay at home, when they are ordered to go to *Jihād*, by making excuses or even those who shirk *Jihād*, when a general order is given for *Jihād* and *Jihād* becomes an obligatory duty — in these two cases those who are engaged in other works and do not go to *Jihād* are hypocrites and are not entitled to the benefit of the 'promise of a good reward' except that they stay behind for any genuine excuse.

129. "Those who were doing wrong to their own souls" were the people who had accepted Islam but were still living among their own clans, which had not yet embraced Islam, without any genuine excuse or compulsion. They were doing wrong to their own selves by living in a state of semi-Islam, although "the Abode of Islam" had come into existence where they could migrate and live the full life of a Muslim. They were quite content to live such a wretched life of semi-unbelief, according to their faith because they preferred their comforts, their families, their properties and their interests to their Faith. That is why their excuse, "We were weak and helpless in the land", has not been accepted. (Please also see E.N. 116).

130. That is, "Why did you continue to live in a place which was oppressed by the rebels against Allah and where it was not possible to live in accordance with the Law of Allah? And why did you not migrate to a place where you could follow the Divine Law without any hindrance?"

131. As regards "migration in the way of Allah", it is an obligation with two exceptions: one may remain there to struggle for the establishment of Islam

and to change the system of life based on unbelief into the system of Islam, just as the Prophets and their immediate followers did in the initial stages of their mission; or one may remain there in a state of great disgust and repugnance as long as one is unable to find any way out of it. With the exception of the above two cases, it will be a life of continuous sin to live in an "abode of unbelief". The excuse that "We could not find any 'Abode of Islam' for migration" shall not be accepted and will be met with the rebuff: "If there was no 'Abode of Islam', was there no forest or mountain where you could live on the leaves of trees and the milk of goats in order to escape from submission to the laws of unbelief?"

In this connection, a misunderstanding about the Tradition, "No migration after the conquest of Makkah", may also be removed. This was not a permanent command concerning migration but only a temporary instruction that suited the changed conditions of Arabia after the conquest of Makkah. As long as the major portion of Arabia was the "abode of unbelief", the Muslims were enjoined to migrate to Madīnah, which was the only "Abode of Islam" at the time. But when almost all the parts of Arabia came under Islam, the Holy Prophet so to say, merely cancelled the first command under which migration was compulsory, saying, "There is no more (compulsory) migration (to Madinah) after the conquest of Makkah." The Tradition was never meant to be a prohibitory command for all the Muslims of the world for all times to come up to the Last Day.

132. The shortening of the obligatory part of the *Ṣalat* during a journey in peace time is, 'to reduce four *rak'ats* to two *rak'ats*" but there is no prescribed limit to the reduction during actual fighting. The *Ṣalāt* must be offered any-how in any form as the circumstances on the occasion permit. If it is possible to offer the *Ṣalāt* in congregation, it should be offered in congregation; otherwise the soldiers should say it individually. If it is not possible to turn the face to the *qiblah*, it may be offered facing any other direction. If it is not possible to remain stationary for the *Ṣalāt*, it may be offered while riding or walking. If it is not possible to bend down or prostrate, one should do so symbolically. If, during the *Ṣalāt*, it becomes necessary to move from that place, one may continue the Prayer even during the movement. There is no harm in offering the *Ṣalāt*, even if one's clothes become stained with blood. And even if in spite of all these concessions, it is not possible to offer it at all, it may then be reluctantly postponed, as was done during the course of the "Battle of the Trench."

There is a difference of opinion as to whether the obligatory parts (*fara'id*) only are to be offered in a journey or those parts (*sunnats*) also that were practised by the Holy Prophet in addition to the former. When on a journey the Holy Prophet used to offer without fail two *rak'ats* in addition to the obligatory *rak'ats* of *Ṣalat-ul-Fajr* (Morning Prayers) and three *rak'ats* of *witr* with *Ṣalāt-ul-'Isha'*

(Night Prayer). At other times he only offered the obligatory parts; there is no proof of his offering the *sunnat* parts. He, however, used to offer "additional prayers" (*nawāfil*), whenever he got time for these even while he was riding. That is why Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar prohibited the people from offering the *sunnats* during a journey except with the Morning Prayer. But the majority of the scholars leave it to the individual's option to offer or not to offer the *sunnats* on a journey. The Ḥanafīs are of the opinion that it is better to leave them during the actual journey but one must offer them at a halting place, if one can get the necessary peace of mind.

As regards the nature of the journey in which the *Ṣalat* may be shortened, some scholars (Ibn 'Umar, Ibn Mas'ud and 'Atā) have imposed the condition that it should be in the way of Allah, *e.g.*, for *Jihād, Ḥajj, 'Umrah*, or in quest of knowledge, etc. Imām Shāfi'ī and Imām Aḥmad are of the opinion that the journey should be for some lawful purpose; otherwise one has no right of enjoying the concession of reduction in *Ṣalāt*. The Ḥanafīs are of the opinion that the *Ṣalāt* may be shortened during any kind of journey, irrespective of the purpose for which it is undertaken. As regards the nature of the journey, it may merit reward or punishment by itself, but it does not affect the concession of reduction in *Ṣalāt*.

Some of the Imāms have interpreted words "there is no harm" to mean that "reduction in the Prayer" is not obligatory but merely optional. One may make use of the permission and shorten his *Ṣalāt* or may not. Imam Shafi'ī holds the same view, though he considers it better to shorten it. He is of the opinion that one who does not make use of the "reduction", gives up the higher thing and adopts a lower thing. Imām Aḥmad is of the opinion that although "reduction" is not obligatory, yet it is improper not to make use of the concession. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah considers "reduction" obligatory and there is also a tradition from Imām Mālik to the same effect. All the traditions from the Holy Prophet show that in his journeys he always shortened his *Ṣalāt* and there is no authentic Tradition to show that he ever offered four *rak'ats* on a journey. Ibn 'Umar says, "During the journeys I accompanied the Holy Prophet, Abū Bakr, 'Umar or '*Uthmān* (may Allah be pleased with them all), and I witnessed that they always shortened their *Ṣalāt* and never offered four *rak'ats*." The same view is also supported by authentic traditions from Ibn 'Abbas and several other Companions.

Once during *Ḥajj*, Ḥaḍrat 'Uthman performed four *rak'ats* while he was leading the *Ṣalat* at Mīnā and the Companions objected to it. He satisfied them, saying, "I have taken a wife from Makkah and I have heard from the Holy Prophet that whoever marries at a place becomes a citizen of that place. Therefore I have not shortened my prayer."

There are, however, two traditions against this from Ḥaḍrat 'A'ishah which show that it is equally right to make a "reduction" in the *Ṣalāt* or to say it in full. But these traditions are weak in authenticity and contrary to her own practice, for she herself practised "reduction".

In this connection, it may also be noted that sometimes one feels oneself to be "on a journey" as well as "at home" when one may shorten the *Ṣalāt* or offer it in full at one and the same halting place according to the circumstances. Most probably Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah referred to such a state, saying: "When on a journey, the Holy Prophet sometimes shortened his *Ṣalāt* and sometimes offered it in full."

As regards the words, "There is no harm if you shorten your Prayer", it is not correct to conclude that the "Command" is optional. The same words have been used in connection with running between Safā and Marwā on the occasion of *Ḥajj*, in verse 158 of Al-Baqarah, although this is an essential part of *Ḥajj*. As a matter of fact, these words have been used in both the places to allay the fear that shortening of the Prayer or running between Safā and Marwā might entail a sin or lessen one's rewards.

As regards the length of the journey, the Zahirites are of the opinion that "reduction" may be made in any journey irrespective of the distance. According to Imām Mālik, the minimum distance of the journey should be 48 miles, or its duration should be at least one day and one night. Ḥaḍrat Ibn 'Abbās and Imām Aḥmad are also of the same opinion and a saying of Imām Shafi'ī also supports the same. But the minimum distance for "reduction" according to Ḥaḍrat Anas is 15 miles, while Imām Auzā'ī and Imām Zuhri follow the opinion of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar that one day's journey suffices for "reduction". According to Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣri and Imām Abū Yūsuf, the minimum journey of two days entitles one to shorten one's *Ṣalāt*. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah is of the opinion that "reduction" may be made in a journey of a minimum distance of 54 miles. The same is the opinion of Ibn 'Umar, Ibn Mas'ūd and Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān (may Allah be pleased with them all).

Opinions differ regarding the "reduction" in a halt during the course of a journey. Imām Aḥmad is of the opinion that if one intends to halt at a place for four days, one will have to offer the Prayer in full. According to Imām Mālik and Imām Shafe'i, "reduction" is not lawful at a place where one intends to halt for more than four days. Imām Auzā'ī extends it to 13 days and Imām Abū Ḥanīfah to 15 days or more and enjoins offering of the full Prayer during such a halt. But there is no explicit command of the Holy Prophet about this. However, there is a consensus of opinion that if one is forced by circumstances to halt at a place but intends to leave it for home at any time, one may go on practising "reduction" for an indefinite period of time. There are instances when some Companions practised "reduction" continuously even for two years for the same reason. Imam Aḥmad

bin Ḥanbal allows a prisoner to make "reduction" during the whole term of his imprisonment.

133. The Zāhirites and the Khārijites interpret this sentence to mean that reduction in the *Ṣalat* may be made only during state of war and that reduction in a journey during peace time is against the Qur'ān. But we learn from an authentic Tradition that once when Ḥaḍrat 'Umar presented the same objection before the Holy Prophet, he answered, "The concession of 'reduction' is a bounty from Allah; therefore, enjoy it". This is a well known fact that the Holy Prophet availed of the concession in every journey both during war time and during peace time.

Another tradition from Ibn 'Abbās makes the position clear, saying, "The Holy Prophet went to Makkah from Madinah and there was no fear of anyone except of God but he reduced four *rak'ats* of the *Salat* to two *rak'ats*". That is the reason why the word "especially" has been added in brackets in the translation.

134. From the words, "And when you, O Prophet, are among the Muslims", Imām Abū Yūsuf and Ḥasan bin Ziyād have concluded that the commandment about the "*Ṣalāt* of Fear" was meant to be in force only during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet. But there are many instances in the Qur'ān that a commandment has been addressed to the Holy Prophet and the same also holds good for his successors after him. Therefore, there is no reason why the commandment about the "*Ṣalat* of Fear" be restricted to the lifetime of the Holy Prophet. Then there are instances that many of the great Companions offered the "*Ṣalat* of Fear" after his death and no difference of opinion in this regard has been reported from any Companion.

135. This Commandment about the "*Ṣalāt* of Fear" applies to that state when there is a threat of imminent attack from the enemy but no actual fighting is going on. As regards the state of actual fighting, according to the Ḥanafīs the *Ṣalāt* will be postponed to a later time, and according to Imām Mālik and Imām Thauri, if it is not possible to bow and to prostrate, it should be performed by symbolic gestures. According to Imām Shāfi'ī, one may even during the "*Ṣalāt* of Fear", remain engaged a little in the conflict, if need be.

We learn from authentic Traditions that the Holy Prophet postponed four consecutive *Ṣalāts* during the Battle of the Trench, and afterwards when he got respite, he performed these in the respective order although the Commandment about the "*Ṣalat* of Fear" had been sent down before this.

136. The form of the "*Ṣalat* of Fear" mainly depends upon the conditions of war. As the Holy Prophet led it in various ways, according to the different conditions, the Muslim leader of the time has the option of adopting any of those ways, according as it suits a certain occasion.

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قِيٰمًا وَّ قُعُوْدًا وَّ عَلٰى جُنُوْبِكُمْ ۚ فَاِذَا اطْمَاْنَنْتُمْ فَاَقِيْمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ ۚ اِنَّ
الصَّلٰوةَ كَانَتْ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ كِتٰبًا مَّوْقُوْتًا ﴿103﴾ وَلَا تَهِنُوْا فِى ابْتِغَآءِ الْقَوْمِ ؕ
اِنْ تَكُوْنُوْا تَاْلَمُوْنَ فَاِنَّهُمْ يَاْلَمُوْنَ كَمَا تَاْلَمُوْنَ ۚ وَتَرْجُوْنَ مِنَ اللّٰهِ مَا
لَا يَرْجُوْنَ ؕ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ عَلِيْمًا حَكِيْمًا ﴿104﴾ اِنَّاۤ اَنْزَلْنَاۤ اِلَيْكَ الْكِتٰبَ بِالْحَقِّ
لِتَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِمَاۤ اَرٰىكَ اللّٰهُ ؕ وَلَا تَكُنْ لِّلْخَآئِنِيْنَ خَصِيْمًا ﴿105﴾ وَّاسْتَغْفِرِ
اللّٰهَ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ غَفُوْرًا رَّحِيْمًا ﴿106﴾ وَلَا تُجَادِلْ عَنِ الَّذِيْنَ يَخْتَانُوْنَ
اَنْفُسَهُمْ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَنْ كَانَ خَوَّانًا اَثِيْمًا ﴿107﴾ يَّسْتَخْفُوْنَ مِنَ
النَّاسِ وَلَا يَسْتَخْفُوْنَ مِنَ اللّٰهِ وَهُوَ مَعَهُمْ اِذْ يُبَيِّتُوْنَ مَا لَا يَرْضٰى
مِنَ الْقَوْلِ ؕ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ بِمَا يَعْمَلُوْنَ مُحِيْطًا ﴿108﴾ هٰۤاَنْتُمْ هٰۤؤُلَآءِ جٰدَلْتُمْ
عَنْهُمْ فِى الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا ۫ فَمَنْ يُّجَادِلُ اللّٰهَ عَنْهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ اَمْ
مَّنْ يَّكُوْنُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَكِيْلًا ﴿109﴾ وَمَنْ يَّعْمَلْ سُوْٓءًا اَوْ يَظْلِمْ نَفْسَهٗ ثُمَّ
يَسْتَغْفِرِ اللّٰهَ يَجِدِ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرًا رَّحِيْمًا ﴿110﴾ وَمَنْ يَّكْسِبْ اِثْمًا فَاِنَّمَا يَكْسِبُهٗ
عَلٰى نَفْسِهٖ ؕ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ عَلِيْمًا حَكِيْمًا ﴿111﴾ وَمَنْ يَّكْسِبْ خَطِيْٓئَةً اَوْ اِثْمًا ثُمَّ
يَرْمِ بِهٖ بَرِيْٓـًٔا فَقَدِ احْتَمَلَ بُهْتَانًا وَّاِثْمًا مُّبِيْنًا ﴿112﴾ وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللّٰهِ
عَلَيْكَ وَرَحْمَتُهٗ لَهَمَّتْ طَّآئِفَةٌ مِّنْهُمْ اَنْ يُّضِلُّوْكَ ؕ وَمَا يُضِلُّوْنَ اِلَّاۤ
اَنْفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَضُرُّوْنَكَ مِنْ شَىْءٍ ؕ وَاَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتٰبَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ
وَعَلَّمَكَ مَا لَمْ تَكُنْ تَعْلَمُ ؕ وَكَانَ فَضْلُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْكَ عَظِيْمًا ﴿113﴾ لَا خَيْرَ
فِىْ كَثِيْرٍ مِّنْ نَّجْوٰىهُمْ اِلَّا مَنْ اَمَرَ بِصَدَقَةٍ اَوْ مَعْرُوْفٍ اَوْ اِصْلَاحٍ
بَيْنَ النَّاسِ ؕ وَمَنْ يَّفْعَلْ ذٰلِكَ ابْتِغَآءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللّٰهِ فَسَوْفَ نُؤْتِيْهِ

When you have finished your Prayer, you should remember Allah, whether you are standing or sitting or reclining: then, as soon as you are secure, say your Ṣalāt in full. Indeed, the Ṣalāt is a prescribed duty that should be performed at appointed times by the Believers. 103

Show no weakness in pursuing these people:[138] if you are suffering hardship, they, too, are suffering hardship as you are suffering. Moreover, you are expecting to receive from Allah that which they are not expecting.[139] Allah knows everything and is All-Wise. 104

O Prophet,[140] We have sent this Book to you with the Truth so that you may judge between people in accordance with the right way which Allah has shown you. So do not plead for the dishonest people; implore Allah's forgiveness: for Allah is Forgiving and Compassionate. You should not plead for those who are dishonest to themselves:[141] Allah does not like the one who is persistently dishonest and sinful. They might hide their evil deeds from the people but they cannot hide these from Allah: He is with them even when they hold at night such secret consultations as do not please Him; Allah encompasses all that they are doing. Well, you have argued on their behalf in this worldly life but who will argue their case with Allah on the Day of Resurrection? Or who will be their defender there? If one does a sinful thing or wrongs himself in any way and afterwards implores Allah's forgiveness, he will find Allah Forgiving and Compassionate. But if one earns some evil (and does not repent), this earning of his will bring due punishment on him, for Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. But he who commits an error or a sin, and then lays the blame for it on an innocent person, surely burdens himself with the guilt of calumny and a heinous sin. 105-112

O Prophet, had not Allah's grace been with you, and had not His mercy safeguarded you from their mischief, a party from among them had decided to involve you in misunderstanding though they were involving no one but themselves in misunderstanding and could have done you no harm.[142] Allah has sent down the Book and the Wisdom to you and taught what you did not know; great indeed is His 113

bounty to you.

Contd. from p. 371]

One way is that one section of the army should offer the *Ṣalāt* with the leader and the other should remain engaged in fighting against the enemy. After the performance of one *rak'at* and after bringing the prayer to an end formally that section should fall back to the fighting line and the second section should perform the second *rak'at* with the *Imām*. Thus, the leader will perform two *rak 'ats* while the sections will perform one *rak'at* each.

The second way is that one section should perform one *rak'at* with the Imam and fall back; then the second section should offer one *rak'at* with the Imām and fall back; then each section should come back, turn by turn, and complete the second (*i.e.* the missed) *rak'at* individually. In this way each section will perform the first *rak'at* behind the Imām and the second individually.

The third way is that one section of the army should perform two *rak'ats* with the Imām and after salutation should fall back to the fighting line. Then the second section should join in the third *rak'at* and complete the Prayer with the Imam. Thus, the Imām will perform four *rak'ats* and each section of the army two *rak'ats* each.

The fourth way is that one section should perform one *rak'at* behind the Imām and when the Imām stands up for the second *rak'at* the followers should complete the second *rak'at* by themselves and then join the ranks. As regards the Imām, he should prolong his second *rak'at* so that the other section may join him and perform their first *rak'at* behind him and complete their second *rak'at* by themselves.

The first way has been related by Ibn 'Abbas, Jabir bin 'Abdullah and Mujahid, and the second by 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud and the Hanafis give preference to this. The third way has been related by Ḥasan Baṣrī from Abu Bakrah and the fourth by Sahl bin Abī Hathmah and accepted by Imām Shafi'ī and Imām Mālik with a little modification.

There are other ways of offering the "*Ṣalāt* of Fear" details of which may be had from any of the numerous books of the Islamic Law and Regulations.

137. The Muslims have been reassured that Allah Himself will deal severely with the disbelievers who are opposing the Truth with their false machinations and will bring ignominy to them. The precautionary measures that are being enjoined are merely from the practical point of view to teach them that they should, in their turn, exert their utmost and leave the result to Allah, in Whose hands really lies victory or defeat.

138. "These people": the disbelievers who were opposing the Islamic mission and doing their utmost to prevent the establishment of the Islamic system of life.

139. That is, "It is really strange that the believers should not bear bravely as many hardships for the sake of Truth as the disbelievers were bearing for falsehood, though the latter have no other object than this world and its transitory benefits, whereas the believers have the highest object of pleasing the Lord of the heavens and the earth and expect to get everlasting rewards from Him."

140. In vv. 105-115, very important issues concerning an event that occurred at that time have been discussed.

There was in the Banī Zafar clan of the Ansar, a man known as Ta'mah or Bashir bin-Ubairiq. He stole the armour of another Ansari and hid it in the house of a Jew. When an investigation started into the theft, the owner of the armour placed the matter before the Holy Prophet and told him that he suspected Ta'mah of the theft. But the accused and his relatives and many other people of the Bani Zafar clan conspired and laid the guilt at the door of the Jew, who asserted that he was innocent of the thing. But Ta'mah's people went on pleading his case vehemently. They argued: "The statement of the Jew who is an enemy of the Truth and who disbelieves in Allah and His Messenger cannot be trusted; whereas we are Muslims, and, therefore, should be trusted." The Holy Prophet was naturally influenced by the seeming correctness of the argument and was about to acquit Ta'mah and give a warning to the plaintiff for bringing a false charge against a Muslim, and decide the case against the Jew, when this Revelation came and disclosed the reality of the matter.

It is true that even if the Holy Prophet had, as a judge, decided the case in the light of the evidence produced before him, he would not have incurred any blame, for judges have to give their decision according to the evidence that is presented before them and sometimes people do succeed in getting wrong judgements in their favour by misrepresentation. But the matter had another side: if the Holy Prophet had decided the case against the Jew at that time, when a bitter conflict was raging between Islam and *kufr*, the enemies of Islam would have got a strong moral weapon against him, nay, against the Islamic Community and the Islamic Mission. They would have carried on a bitter propaganda against Islam, saying, "There is no justice among the Muslims; they practise prejudices and partisanship inspite of the fact that they preach against them as has been shown by this decision against the Jew". That is why, Allah directly intervened in the case to save them from this danger.

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أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿١١٤﴾ وَمَنْ يُّشَاقِقِ الرَّسُوْلَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ الْهُدٰى وَ
يَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ سَبِيْلِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ نُوَلِّهٖ مَا تَوَلّٰى وَنُصْلِهٖ جَهَنَّمَ ؕ وَ سَآءَتْ
مَصِيْرًا ﴿١١٥﴾ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ اَنْ يُّشْرَكَ بِهٖ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُوْنَ ذٰلِكَ لِمَنْ
يَّشَآءُ ؕ وَمَنْ يُّشْرِكْ بِاللّٰهِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلٰلًۢا بَعِيْدًا ﴿١١٦﴾ اِنْ يَّدْعُوْنَ مِنْ
دُوْنِهٖۤ اِلَّاۤ اِنٰثًا ۚ وَاِنْ يَّدْعُوْنَ اِلَّا شَيْطٰنًا مَّرِيْدًا ﴿١١٧﴾ لَّعَنَهُ اللّٰهُ ؘ وَقَالَ
لَاَتَّخِذَنَّ مِنْ عِبَادِكَ نَصِيْبًا مَّفْرُوْضًا ﴿١١٨﴾ وَّلَاُضِلَّنَّهُمْ وَلَاُمَنِّيَنَّهُمْ وَلَاٰمُرَنَّهُمْ
فَلَيُبَتِّكُنَّ اٰذَانَ الْاَنْعَامِ وَلَاٰمُرَنَّهُمْ فَلَيُغَيِّرُنَّ خَلْقَ اللّٰهِ ؕ وَمَنْ يَّتَّخِذِ
الشَّيْطٰنَ وَلِيًّا مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ فَقَدْ خَسِرَ خُسْرَانًا مُّبِيْنًا ﴿١١٩﴾ يَعِدُهُمْ وَ
يُمَنِّيْهِمْ ؕ وَمَا يَعِدُهُمُ الشَّيْطٰنُ اِلَّا غُرُوْرًا ﴿١٢٠﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ مَاْوٰىهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ ۫ وَلَا
يَجِدُوْنَ عَنْهَا مَحِيْصًا ﴿١٢١﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ سَنُدْخِلُهُمْ
جَنّٰتٍ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَاۤ اَبَدًا ؕ وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ حَقًّا ؕ وَ
مَنْ اَصْدَقُ مِنَ اللّٰهِ قِيْلًا ﴿١٢٢﴾ لَيْسَ بِاَمَانِيِّكُمْ وَلَاۤ اَمَانِيِّ اَهْلِ الْكِتٰبِ ؕ
مَنْ يَّعْمَلْ سُوْٓءًا يُّجْزَ بِهٖ ۙ وَلَا يَجِدْ لَهٗ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ وَلِيًّا وَّلَا نَصِيْرًا ﴿١٢٣﴾
وَمَنْ يَّعْمَلْ مِنَ الصّٰلِحٰتِ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ اَوْ اُنْثٰى وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ
يَدْخُلُوْنَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُظْلَمُوْنَ نَقِيْرًا ﴿١٢٤﴾ وَمَنْ اَحْسَنُ دِيْنًا مِّمَّنْ اَسْلَمَ
وَجْهَهٗ لِلّٰهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ وَّاتَّبَعَ مِلَّةَ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ حَنِيْفًا ؕ وَاتَّخَذَ اللّٰهُ
اِبْرٰهِيْمَ خَلِيْلًا ﴿١٢٥﴾ وَلِلّٰهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ ؕ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ
بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّحِيْطًا ﴿١٢٦﴾ وَيَسْتَفْتُوْنَكَ فِي النِّسَآءِ ؕ قُلِ اللّٰهُ يُفْتِيْكُمْ فِيْهِنَّ ۙ
وَمَا يُتْلٰى عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الْكِتٰبِ فِيْ يَتٰمَى النِّسَآءِ الّٰتِيْ لَا تُؤْتُوْنَهُنَّ مَا كُتِبَ

There is nothing good in most of the secret counsels of the people: it is, however, a good thing if one secretly enjoins charity or righteousness or says something in order to set aright the affairs of the people; We will give a great reward to him who does so to please Allah. But as regards him who is bent on opposing the Messenger and is following a way other than that of the Believers after Guidance has become clear to him, We will turn such a one on the way to which he himself has turned,[143] and cast him into Hell which is the most wretched abode. 114-115

Shirk[144] is the only sin that Allah does not forgive. He may forgive whomever He will, other than this sin, for whoever associates partners with Allah does, in fact, go far astray into deviation. The *mushriks* invoke to goddesses instead of Allah: they invoke that rebellious Satan,[145] on whom Allah has laid His curse; (they obey that Satan) who said to Allah, "I will most surely take due share from your servants[146] and will mislead them; I will entice them by vain desires; I will command them and they will slit[147] the ears of the cattle by my order, and I will command them and they will make alterations and corrupt Allah's creation."[148] Therefore whoever makes this same Satan his patron, instead of God, becomes a manifest loser. Though he makes (false) promises with people and entices them by vain hopes,[149] all his promises are nothing but deception. The abode of such people is Hell from where they will find no way of escape. As regards those, who believe and do good deeds, We will admit them into Gardens underneath which canals flow, wherein they will abide for ever. This promise of Allah is true and who can be truer in his word than Allah? 116-122

The final result shall not be in accordance with your wishes nor in accordance with the wishes of the people of the Book. He who does evil shall be recompensed for it and he shall find no protector and no helper for himself against Allah. And the one who does good deeds, whether man or woman, provided that the one is a believer, will enter Paradise and they will not be wronged in the least of their rightful reward. 123-124

Who can have a better way of life than the one who surrenders himself to Allah and does what is good and follows whole heartedly the way of Abraham whom Allah chose to be His friend? All that there is in the heavens and the earth belongs to Allah,[150] and Allah 125-126

encircles everything.[151]

127 They ask your verdict concerning women.[152] Say, "Allah gives His verdict concerning them, and along with it reminds you of those Commandments which have already been told you in this Book,[153] that is, the Commandments concerning those orphan girls whom you do not give their lawful rights[154] and whom you do not wish to marry (or, whom you yourselves desire to marry for greed).[155] He also reminds you of the Commandments concerning those children who are weak and helpless.[156] Allah enjoins you to deal justly with orphans: Allah has full knowledge of whatever good you do."

Contd. from p. 375]

In this passage (vv. 105 - 115) on the one hand, those Muslims who tried to shield the guilty one of their own clan, have been strongly rebuked for their partisanship, and, on the other, the Muslims in general have been taught that they should not allow partisanship to stand in the way of justice. It is sheer dishonesty that one should plead the cause of one's own party man, even though he may be in the wrong, and oppose the man of the opposite party, even though he may be right.

141. He who is dishonest to others is in reality dishonest to himself because he forces all his faculties of head and heart, which have been given to him as a trust, to help him in his dishonesty. Moreover, he suppresses his conscience, which Allah has given him to safeguard his morality, so as to disable it from functioning rightly and preventing him from being dishonest. Thus a man is dishonest to others only when at first he becomes unjust to himself.

142. That is, "''Even if they had succeeded in deceiving you by making a false report in regard to the case, and in getting your decision in their own favour, they would not have done any harm to you but to themselves, for even in that case they themselves would have been guilty in the sight of Allah, and not you". This is obvious because the real offender is the one who deceives the judge and gets a wrong judgment in his own favour, and not the judge who has to decide the case on the basis of the evidence presented before him. Moreover, such a one might delude himself that he has got "the right" on his side by his cunning devices, but in reality the "real right" remains the 'right' in the record of Allah. (See also E.N. 197, Al-Baqarah).

143. That is, "The dishonest 'Muslim' turned on the way of anti-Islam: so Allah also turned him on that way". It happened like this: when the facts of the case of theft were revealed by Allah and the innocent Jew was acquitted and

Ta'amah was found guilty, this hypocrite left Madinah in anger and joined the enemies of the Holy Prophet at Makkah and began to oppose him openly.

144. In continuation of the foregoing theme, it has been stated that the hypocrite, who had in his anger gone to the side of the *mushriks*, did not fully realize the consequences of his foolish action. For this purpose, evils of the way he adopted and the nature of the fellows he accompanied have been pointed out.

145. Though none worships Satan by performing devotional ceremonies before him, the one who surrenders oneself entirely to him and follows him wherever he misleads, does act like a devotee of Satan. This also makes it plain that one who obeys any other blindly, in fact, worships him.

146. That is, "I will mark off for myself a portion of their time, their labour and their efforts, their energies and their abilities, their wealth and their offspring, and will entice them by deception so that they will devote the major portion of these in my way."

147. This alludes to one of the superstitious customs of the pagan Arabs. After a she-camel had given birth to five or ten young ones, they would slit her ears and dedicate her to their god and consider it unlawful to get any work from her. Likewise, if a camel had been a partner in the birth of ten young ones, his ears were also slit to mark that he had been dedicated to a god.

148. This does not condemn the alterations that man makes in the creation of God for their right and proper use, for in that case the whole of human civilization will stand condemned as a seduction of Satan. It is obvious that the civilization is nothing but the right and proper use of the things created by God. What the Qur'an describes as devilish alterations is to make wrong and improper use of things against human nature and against their natural functions. Hence, all those forms that are adopted as an escape from the designs of Nature are the results of the enticement of Satan *e.g.* sodomy, birth control, asceticism, etc. It is equally devilish that females should be made to give up their proper functions and to perform those duties which nature has assigned to males. Instances can be multiplied to show that the disciples of Satan consider the laws of the Creator of the Universe wrong and, therefore, are tyring to "reform" them.

149. The success of Satan depends entirely upon false promises and deceit. In order to mislead individuals and communities, he presents very rosy pictures of his wrong ways to re-assure his victims. He tempts one by holding out the promise of pleasure and success. He allures some by giving the surety of national power and prosperity, while he deludes others by the prospect of the welfare of humanity, and deceives still others by telling them that his is the right

[Contd. on p.381

لَهُنَّ وَ تَرْغَبُوْنَ اَنْ تَنْكِحُوْهُنَّ وَ الْمُسْتَضْعَفِيْنَ مِنَ الْوِلْدَانِ ۙ وَ اَنْ
تَقُوْمُوْا لِلْيَتٰمٰى بِالْقِسْطِ ؕ وَ مَا تَفْعَلُوْا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ بِهٖ عَلِيْمًا ﴿127﴾
وَ اِنِ امْرَاَةٌ خَافَتْ مِنْۢ بَعْلِهَا نُشُوْزًا اَوْ اِعْرَاضًا فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَاۤ اَنْ
يُّصْلِحَا بَيْنَهُمَا صُلْحًا ؕ وَ الصُّلْحُ خَيْرٌ ؕ وَ اُحْضِرَتِ الْاَنْفُسُ الشُّحَّ ؕ وَ اِنْ
تُحْسِنُوْا وَ تَتَّقُوْا فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ خَبِيْرًا ﴿128﴾ وَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيْعُوْۤا اَنْ
تَعْدِلُوْا بَيْنَ النِّسَآءِ وَ لَوْ حَرَصْتُمْ فَلَا تَمِيْلُوْا كُلَّ الْمَيْلِ فَتَذَرُوْهَا
كَالْمُعَلَّقَةِ ؕ وَ اِنْ تُصْلِحُوْا وَ تَتَّقُوْا فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ غَفُوْرًا رَّحِيْمًا ﴿129﴾ وَ
اِنْ يَّتَفَرَّقَا يُغْنِ اللّٰهُ كُلًّا مِّنْ سَعَتِهٖ ؕ وَ كَانَ اللّٰهُ وَاسِعًا حَكِيْمًا ﴿130﴾ وَ لِلّٰهِ
مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ مَا فِي الْاَرْضِ ؕ وَ لَقَدْ وَصَّيْنَا الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْكِتٰبَ
مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَ اِيَّاكُمْ اَنِ اتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ ؕ وَ اِنْ تَكْفُرُوْا فَاِنَّ لِلّٰهِ مَا فِي
السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ مَا فِي الْاَرْضِ ؕ وَ كَانَ اللّٰهُ غَنِيًّا حَمِيْدًا ﴿131﴾ وَ لِلّٰهِ مَا فِي
السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ مَا فِي الْاَرْضِ ؕ وَ كَفٰى بِاللّٰهِ وَكِيْلًا ﴿132﴾ اِنْ يَّشَاْ يُذْهِبْكُمْ
اَيُّهَا النَّاسُ وَ يَاْتِ بِاٰخَرِيْنَ ؕ وَ كَانَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى ذٰلِكَ قَدِيْرًا ﴿133﴾ مَنْ
كَانَ يُرِيْدُ ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا فَعِنْدَ اللّٰهِ ثَوَابُ الدُّنْيَا وَ الْاٰخِرَةِ ؕ وَ كَانَ
اللّٰهُ سَمِيْعًا بَصِيْرًا ﴿134﴾ يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا كُوْنُوْا قَوّٰمِيْنَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَآءَ
لِلّٰهِ وَ لَوْ عَلٰۤى اَنْفُسِكُمْ اَوِ الْوَالِدَيْنِ وَ الْاَقْرَبِيْنَ ۚ اِنْ يَّكُنْ غَنِيًّا اَوْ
فَقِيْرًا فَاللّٰهُ اَوْلٰى بِهِمَا ۫ فَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا الْهَوٰۤى اَنْ تَعْدِلُوْا ۚ وَ اِنْ تَلْوٗۤا
اَوْ تُعْرِضُوْا فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ خَبِيْرًا ﴿135﴾ يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْۤا
اٰمِنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ وَ رَسُوْلِهٖ وَ الْكِتٰبِ الَّذِيْ نَزَّلَ عَلٰى رَسُوْلِهٖ وَ الْكِتٰبِ الَّذِيْۤ

When[157] a woman fears ill-treatment or aversion from her husband, there is no harm if the two make peace between themselves (by means of a compromise); after all peace is the best thing.[158] Human souls are prone to narrow-mindedness,[159] but if you show generosity and fear Allah in your dealings, you may rest assured that Allah will be fully aware of all that you do.[160] It is not within your power to be perfectly equitable in your treatment with all your wives, even if you wish to be so; therefore, (in order to satisfy the dictates of Divine Law) do not lean wholly towards one wife so as to leave the other in a state of suspense.[161] If you behave righteously and fear Allah, you will find Allah Forgiving and Compassionate.[162] 128-129

But if the spouses do separate, Allah will make each one of them independent of the other by His vast powers, for His resources are limitless and He is All-Wise and All-Knowing. And everything in the heavens and the earth belongs to Him. We enjoined those whom We gave the Book before you and now enjoin you also, to fear Allah in all your dealings. But if you reject this, (you will do so at your own peril, for) Allah is the owner of everything in the heavens and the earth: He does not stand in need of anyone and is worthy of all praise. 130-131

Yes, Allah is the Owner of all that is in the heavens and the earth, and He suffices for help and protection. If He will, He may put you away, O people, and replace you by others and He is All Powerful to do this. Whoso desires the reward of this world should know that Allah possesses the rewards of both this world and the Hereafter: He hears everything and sees everything.[163] 132-134

O Believers, be you the standard-bearers of justice and witnesses for the sake of Allah,[164] even[165] though your justice and your evidence might be harmful to yourselves, or to your parents, or to your relatives. It does not matter whether the party concerned is rich or poor: Allah is their greater well-wisher than you; therefore, do not follow your own desire lest you should deviate from doing justice. If you distort your evidence or refrain from the truth, know it well that Allah is fully aware of what you do. 135

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way of arriving at the Truth. He also entices some by assuring them that there is no God and Hereafter and that life ends with death and others by giving them a

guarantee that they would escape the consequences in the Hereafter, if there is Hereafter by the intercession of this or that saint.

150. Since everything in the heavens and the earth belongs to Allah, the best thing for man is to surrender his independence completely to Him, and to submit to Him unreservedly. He will come nearer to Nature, if he willingly becomes His servant and obeys Him without showing any kind of rebellion against Him.

151. That is, if man does not submit and surrender to Allah, he cannot escape His punishment, for Allah encircles him on all sides.

152. It has not been stated here what the people were asking concerning women, but the answer given to it in verse 128 points out the nature of the question.

153. This is not the answer to the question but a sort of reminder of the commandments that have already been enjoined in vv. 1-14 of this Surah about orphan girls in particular and the orphans in general in order to stress the importance of this matter in any scheme of social reform. It is because of its importance in the solution of social problems that before giving a verdict concerning marriage problems which were raised, Allah has again laid emphasis on the rights of orphans.

154. The allusion is to v. 3 of this Surah: "If you are afraid of doing injustice to the orphans...."

155. The words of the Text may also mean, ".....whom you desire to marry." We learn from a Tradition of Ḥaḍrat 'A'ishah that the Text implies both the meanings. She says, "Those people who had the charge of the orphan girls who inherited wealth, employed different methods of doing injustice to them. If an orphan girl was wealthy and also beautiful, they would desire to marry her so that they might exploit her wealth and enjoy her beauty without incurring any financial liability. If she was wealthy but ugly, they would neither themselves marry her nor let anyone else marry her, so that she might not get a protector who might claim for her right from the guardian."

156. The allusion is to the Commandments concerning the rights of orphans, given in vv. 1-14 of the Sūrah.

157. This verdict mentioned in v.127 has been given in this paragraph (vv.128-134). In order to understand it, one should grasp the nature of the problems to which this is the answer.

Several questions arose as a result of the restrictions placed on marriage in vv. 3-5 of this Sūrah. In pre-Islamic days, one was free to marry as many wives as

one liked without conceding any rights to them. But these verses limited the maximum number of wives to four and conceded the rights of dower to them and laid down the conditions of justice and equitable treatment for marrying more than one wife. As it appeared impossible to fulfil these conditions in certain cases, *e.g.*, if one's wife was barren or invalid or had lost attraction for him or was not fit for conjugal relationship, some problems arose when one married the second wife: was it a compulsory condition that one should show equal inclination towards both the wives or love them equally or show equality in the conjugal relations with them? Or, if this was not possible, did justice require that one should divorce the first wife before marrying the second? Or, if the first wife did not wish to part with her husband, would it be against the requirement of justice if she gave up some of her own rights to prevent her husband from divorcing her? This para answers such questions.

158. That is, it is better for a woman to make a settlement with him by yielding some of her rights and live with the husband with whom she had lived a part of her life than to get a divorce and separate from him.

159. Narrow-mindedness on the part of the wife is that even when she knows that she has lost those qualities that make a wife attractive to her husband, she should expect and demand the same kind of treatment that is shown only to a beloved wife. On the other hand, the husband shall be narrow-minded if he suppresses too much the rights of the wife who has lost attraction for him but who still wants to live with him, and reduces her rights to an unbearable point.

160. Allah has again appealed to the husband as He generally does in such matters, to show generosity to the wife. He has urged him to be generous to her, for she has been his companion for years even though she might have lost charm for him. He should fear God and imagine how he would fare if God withheld His favours from him on account of some defects in him.

161. Allah has made it clear that the husband cannot literally keep equality between two or more wives because they themselves cannot be equal in all respects. It is too much to demand from a husband that he should mete out equal treatment to a beautiful wife and to an ugly wife, to a young wife and to an old wife, to a healthy wife and to an invalid wife and to a good natured wife and to an ill-natured wife. These and like things naturally make a husband more inclined towards one wife than towards the other. In such cases, the Islamic Law does not demand equal treatment between them in affection and love. What it does demand is that a wife should not be so neglected as to be practically reduced to the position of the woman who has no husband at all. If the husband does not divorce her for any reason or at her own request, she should at least be treated as a wife. It is true that under such circumstances the husband is naturally more inclined towards a

favourite wife, but he should not, so to say, keep the other in such a state of suspense as if she were not his wife.

From this verse some people wrongly conclude that though the Qur'an allows more than one wife, it practically cancels this permission by asserting, "……it is not possible for you to be perfectly equitable in your treatment with all your wives…." They forget that this is only a part of the whole instruction and the Qur'an does not stop at this but adds, "….do not lean towards one wife…." As this Commandment takes into consideration the existence of more than one wife allowed by the Qur'an, it leaves no loophole of escape for the followers of Christian Europe from the fact that Islam does allow polygamy under certain conditions.

162. As Allah is Forgiving and Compassionate, He will forgive any of the shortcomings that are unaviodable because of natural factors, provided that one is not guilty of deliberate injustice, and tries his best to be just as far as it is humanly possible.

163. In order to urge the Muslims to observe strictly the Commandments concerning justice to women and orphans, Allah has, as usual, in the conclusion (vv. 130-134) given a brief but effective address by way of admonition, and has impressed upon the Believers the following things:

(1) You should never be under the delusion that you can make or mar the fate of any one, and that if you withdraw or withhold your help and support from anyone, that person will become utterly helpless. As a matter of fact, your own fate and the fate of those whom you support, is entirely in the hands of Allah and you alone are not the only means by which He supports His servants or maid servants. The resources of the Owner of the earth and the heavens are vast and limitless and He is also All-Wise and has full power to adopt means for helping anyone He wills.

(2) Allah has enjoined you, as He always enjoined the communities of the former Prophets, to conduct your affairs with fear of God in your hearts. In this lies your own good and not of God. If you do not carry out these instructions, you can do no harm to Allah but you yourselves will go the way of the former disobedient communities. The Sovereign of the Universe has never stood in need of the people. If you will not behave properly, He will remove you from leadership and appoint another community in your place. And your removal will not in the least diminish anything from the greatness of His Kingdom.

(3) Allah has in His possession all the benefits and rewards of this world and of the Next World, benefits which are temporary and transitory or permanent and ever-lasting. It is for you to make your choice from among these according to your own capacity and courage. If you are enamoured of the

temporary good things of this world and are even prepared to sacrifice the permanent blessings of the Hereafter, Allah will bestow upon you the same here and now, but in that case, you will have no portion in the permanent blessings of the Hereafter. You should not forget that owing to your own lack of capability and lack of courage, you have chosen to acquire only a drop out of the ocean of the blessings of God. Therefore it is better for you to adopt that way of obedience and submission which may enable you to acquire the vast benefits of this world and of the Hereafter.

The concluding words of this piece of admonition, "He hears everything and sees everything", have a very deep significance. As Allah is neither deaf nor blind, He makes a fine distinction between the good and the bad in the distribution of His blessings. He is fully aware of what is happening in the universe over which He is ruling and of the capabilities, efforts and intentions of everyone. Therefore, one who is disobedient to Him, should not expect those blessings which He has reserved for those who are obedient to Him.

164. The words, ".....be you the standard-bearers of justice", are very significant. They imply, "You not only have to do justice but have also to bear the standard of justice in order to eradicate injustice and establish right and justice in its place. As Believers, you have to gird up your loins to support justice, whenever your support is needed."

165. That is, "The sole aim of your testimony should be to please Allah, without any tinge of partiality, self-interest, fear or favour in it."

أَنْزَلَ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۚ وَمَنْ يَّكْفُرْ بِاللّٰهِ وَمَلٰٓئِكَتِهٖ وَكُتُبِهٖ وَرُسُلِهٖ وَالْيَوْمِ
الْاٰخِرِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلٰلًا بَعِيْدًا ﴿136﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا ثُمَّ كَفَرُوْا ثُمَّ
اٰمَنُوْا ثُمَّ كَفَرُوْا ثُمَّ ازْدَادُوْا كُفْرًا لَّمْ يَكُنِ اللّٰهُ لِيَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ وَلَا لِيَهْدِيَهُمْ
سَبِيْلًا ﴿137﴾ بَشِّرِ الْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ بِاَنَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا اَلِيْمًا ﴿138﴾ الَّذِيْنَ يَتَّخِذُوْنَ
الْكٰفِرِيْنَ اَوْلِيَآءَ مِنْ دُوْنِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ۭ اَيَبْتَغُوْنَ عِنْدَهُمُ الْعِزَّةَ فَاِنَّ
الْعِزَّةَ لِلّٰهِ جَمِيْعًا ﴿139﴾ وَقَدْ نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الْكِتٰبِ اَنْ اِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ اٰيٰتِ
اللّٰهِ يُكْفَرُ بِهَا وَيُسْتَهْزَاُ بِهَا فَلَا تَقْعُدُوْا مَعَهُمْ حَتّٰى يَخُوْضُوْا فِيْ
حَدِيْثٍ غَيْرِهٖٓ ۡ اِنَّكُمْ اِذًا مِّثْلُهُمْ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ جَامِعُ الْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ وَالْكٰفِرِيْنَ
فِيْ جَهَنَّمَ جَمِيْعَۨا ﴿140﴾ الَّذِيْنَ يَتَرَبَّصُوْنَ بِكُمْ ۚ فَاِنْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فَتْحٌ مِّنَ
اللّٰهِ قَالُوْٓا اَلَمْ نَكُنْ مَّعَكُمْ ۡ وَاِنْ كَانَ لِلْكٰفِرِيْنَ نَصِيْبٌ ۙ قَالُوْٓا اَلَمْ
نَسْتَحْوِذْ عَلَيْكُمْ وَنَمْنَعْكُمْ مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ۭ فَاللّٰهُ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ يَوْمَ
الْقِيٰمَةِ ۭ وَلَنْ يَّجْعَلَ اللّٰهُ لِلْكٰفِرِيْنَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ سَبِيْلًا ﴿141﴾ اِنَّ
الْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ يُخٰدِعُوْنَ اللّٰهَ وَهُوَ خَادِعُهُمْ ۚ وَاِذَا قَامُوْٓا اِلَى الصَّلٰوةِ
قَامُوْا كُسَالٰى ۙ يُرَاۗءُوْنَ النَّاسَ وَلَا يَذْكُرُوْنَ اللّٰهَ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا ﴿142﴾
مُّذَبْذَبِيْنَ بَيْنَ ذٰلِكَ ۡ لَآ اِلٰى هٰٓؤُلَاۗءِ وَلَآ اِلٰى هٰٓؤُلَاۗءِ ۭ وَمَنْ يُّضْلِلِ
اللّٰهُ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهٗ سَبِيْلًا ﴿143﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْكٰفِرِيْنَ
اَوْلِيَاۗءَ مِنْ دُوْنِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ۭ اَتُرِيْدُوْنَ اَنْ تَجْعَلُوْا لِلّٰهِ عَلَيْكُمْ
سُلْطٰنًا مُّبِيْنًا ﴿144﴾ اِنَّ الْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ فِي الدَّرْكِ الْاَسْفَلِ مِنَ النَّارِ ۚ وَلَنْ
تَجِدَ لَهُمْ نَصِيْرًا ﴿145﴾ اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ تَابُوْا وَاَصْلَحُوْا وَاعْتَصَمُوْا بِاللّٰهِ وَ

O you, who profess to have believed, believe sincerely in 136-141
Allah[166] and His Messenger and the Book which He has sent down to His Messenger and in every Book that He sent down before this: for whoever disbelieves in Allah and His Angels and His Books and His Messengers and the Last Day,[167] most surely strays far away into deviation. As for those, who profess belief, then disbelieve, again profess belief and then disbelieve and then grow stubborn in their disbelief,[168] Allah will never forgive them and never show them the right way. And give the good tidings of a painful torment to the hypocrites who make the disbelievers their friends instead of the Believers. Do they go to the disbelievers to seek honour?[169] Whereas, in fact, all honour belongs to Allah alone. Allah has already sent down to you in this Book the Commandment: you should not sit in a company wherein you hear things of unbelief concerning the Revelations of Allah, and wherein these are being ridiculed, until those people are engaged in some other talk. Now if you remain here you shall be guilty like them.[170] Rest assured that Allah is going to gather the hypocrites and the disbelievers all together in Hell. The hypocrites are watching you closely to see how the wind blows. If victory comes to you from Allah, they will say to you, "Were we not with you?" And if the disbelievers gain the upper hand, they will say to them, "Were we not strong enough to fight against you? Yet we defended you from the Muslims."[171] Indeed, on the Day of Resurrection, Allah will judge between you and them, and (in this judgement) Allah has left no way for the disbelievers to overcome the Believers.

The hypocrites seek to deceive Allah, whereas, in fact, Allah 142-143
has involved them in deception. When they rise up for the *Ṣalāt*, they go reluctantly to it, merely to be seen by people and they remember Allah but little.[172] They are wavering between belief and disbelief: they are neither wholly on this side nor wholly on that side. You cannot guide to the Way the one whom Allah lets go astray.[173]

O Believers, do not take the disbelievers as your friends 144-145
instead of the Believers: do you want to furnish Allah with a clear proof against yourselves? Note it well that the hypocrites shall go to the lowest abyss of Hell, and you will not find any helper for them.

166. Here all those, who profess to believe, have been told to believe sincerely in the fundamental articles of the Muslim Faith with all their implications. This is because profession of Faith merely brings one into the fold of Islam but does not satisfy the real demands required of a true Muslim. Therefore one who professes to embrace Islam has been asked to believe sincerely and seriously in Islam and mould one's thoughts, tastes, likes, attitudes and conduct in accordance with one's belief and establish friendship and enmity accordingly, and put in all one's efforts in accordance with one's belief.

167. Here *kufr* implies two things :

(1) a person may reject Islam outright;

(2) one may pay lipservice to Islam but may not (sincerely) believe in it or may show by one's conduct that one does not, in fact, believe in Islam, in spite of one's profession.

Here *kufr* implies both these things, and the verse warns that neither kind of *kufr* can go side by side with the fundamental articles of Islamic Faith and will mislead the one who adopts it, away from the Truth into the paths of deviation.

168. These are the people who do not consider Faith a serious matter but play with it like a toy to gratify their whims and lusts. They adopt Islam, if and when they are swayed to it by some fanciful notion, and become disbelievers, if another notion moves them away to the opposite side. Or, they become Muslims when their interests demand it and become disbelievers, without the least hesitation, if their interests lie in disbelief. Obviously, for such people there is neither forgiveness nor guidance from Allah. They do not stop at their own disbelief but go much further in it. They strive to turn other Muslims also away from Islam, conspire against it and make open designs to harm it so as to raise the standard of *kufr* high up and to pull down the standard of Islam. As this is an addition to the sin of one's personal disbelief, it deserves much severe punishment than the offence of the one who disbelieves in Islam but is not antagonistic to it.

169. The Arabic word *'Izzat* is more comprehensive than the English word honour, "the regard in which one is held by one's followers". *'Izzat* refers to such a high regard and secure position as is inviolable.

170. The Command to the Believers to quit the company of the disbelievers, as soon as they get engaged in ridiculing Islam, is contained in v. 68 of Al-An'am which was revealed earlier than An-Nisā'. If a Believer sits in the company of disbelievers and coolly listens to the ridicule of Divine Revelations he becomes a partner in that blasphemy, and there remains little difference between him and the disbelievers.

171. The hypocrites of every age have always enjoyed all the benefits conferred by Islam, by professing it with their tongue, and nominally joining the Muslim Community. At the same time they enjoy all the benefits they can derive from the disbelievers, by mixing with them and assuring them, "We are not bigoted Muslims though we are nominally connected with them. We are akin to you in culture, in thoughts and in the way of life and our interests and loyalties are the same as yours. Therefore, you should rest assured that we will side with you in the conflict between Islam and *kufr*."

172. The offering of the *Ṣalāt* in congregation has been held out as a test of one's being a sincere Believer or a hypocrite because during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet one could not be considered a member of the Islamic Community unless one offered the *Ṣalāt* regularly and punctually. Just as every association or organisation considers the absence of a member without genuine excuse from its meetings a sign of his lack of interest, and expels him from it for continuous absence, so if a Muslim absented himself from the *Ṣalāt* in congregation, it was considered a clear sign of his lack of interest in Islam. And if he continuously absented himself from it, this was taken as a proof of his desertion from Islam. That is why even the confirmed hypocrites of that time had to join the *Ṣalāt* in congregation five times a day; otherwise they could not be counted as members of the Islamic Community. But what distinguished them from the true Believers was that the true Believers went to the mosques with great enthusiasm before time and stayed there even after the Prayer was over which was a clear proof of their genuine interest in it. On the other hand, the very call to the Prayer sounded like a death knell to a hypocrite. He would rise up reluctantly to join the congregation, but his whole demeanour clearly showed that he was offering his *Ṣalāt* unwillingly. Then after the Prayer he would leave the mosque in haste as if he had been released from prison. Thus, all his movements showed that he had no interest in the remembrance of Allah.

173. It declares that no human being has the power to guide to the right way the one who himself does not intend to get guidance from the Book of Allah and the excellent pattern of His Messenger; whom Allah turns to the wrong way to which he himself is inclined and shuts all the doors of guidance against him because of his own quest for deviation. And this happens in accordance with the Divine Law that man gets what he seeks and strives for. For instance, if one seeks to make one's provisions by lawful means and strives for the same, God provides lawful means for him and shuts unlawful doors against him, in proportion to the intensity of the sincerity of his intention. On the contrary, if one has the intention of making one's provisions by unlawful means and strives for the same, Allah

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اَخْلَصُوْا دِيْنَهُمْ لِلّٰهِ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ مَعَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ؕ وَسَوْفَ يُؤْتِ اللّٰهُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ
اَجْرًا عَظِيْمًا ﴿۱۴۶﴾ مَا يَفْعَلُ اللّٰهُ بِعَذَابِكُمْ اِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ وَاٰمَنْتُمْ ؕ
وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ شَاكِرًا عَلِيْمًا ﴿۱۴۷﴾

لَا يُحِبُّ اللّٰهُ الْجَهْرَ بِالسُّوْٓءِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ اِلَّا مَنْ ظُلِمَ ؕ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ

سَمِيْعًا عَلِيْمًا ﴿۱۴۸﴾ اِنْ تُبْدُوْا خَيْرًا اَوْ تُخْفُوْهُ اَوْ تَعْفُوْا عَنْ سُوْٓءٍ فَاِنَّ
اللّٰهَ كَانَ عَفُوًّا قَدِيْرًا ﴿۱۴۹﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يَكْفُرُوْنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَرُسُلِهٖ وَيُرِيْدُوْنَ
اَنْ يُّفَرِّقُوْا بَيْنَ اللّٰهِ وَرُسُلِهٖ وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ نُؤْمِنُ بِبَعْضٍ وَّنَكْفُرُ
بِبَعْضٍ ۙ وَّيُرِيْدُوْنَ اَنْ يَّتَّخِذُوْا بَيْنَ ذٰلِكَ سَبِيْلًا ﴿۱۵۰﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ
الْكٰفِرُوْنَ حَقًّا ۚ وَاَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكٰفِرِيْنَ عَذَابًا مُّهِيْنًا ﴿۱۵۱﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا
بِاللّٰهِ وَرُسُلِهٖ وَلَمْ يُفَرِّقُوْا بَيْنَ اَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ اُولٰٓئِكَ سَوْفَ يُؤْتِيْهِمْ
اُجُوْرَهُمْ ؕ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ غَفُوْرًا رَّحِيْمًا ﴿۱۵۲﴾ يَسْـَٔلُكَ اَهْلُ الْكِتٰبِ اَنْ تُنَزِّلَ
عَلَيْهِمْ كِتٰبًا مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ فَقَدْ سَاَلُوْا مُوْسٰٓى اَكْبَرَ مِنْ ذٰلِكَ فَقَالُوْٓا
اَرِنَا اللّٰهَ جَهْرَةً فَاَخَذَتْهُمُ الصّٰعِقَةُ بِظُلْمِهِمْ ۚ ثُمَّ اتَّخَذُوا الْعِجْلَ
مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَآءَتْهُمُ الْبَيِّنٰتُ فَعَفَوْنَا عَنْ ذٰلِكَ ۚ وَاٰتَيْنَا مُوْسٰى
سُلْطٰنًا مُّبِيْنًا ﴿۱۵۳﴾ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَهُمُ الطُّوْرَ بِمِيْثَاقِهِمْ وَقُلْنَا لَهُمُ ادْخُلُوا
الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا وَّقُلْنَا لَهُمْ لَا تَعْدُوْا فِى السَّبْتِ وَاَخَذْنَا مِنْهُمْ
مِّيْثَاقًا غَلِيْظًا ﴿۱۵۴﴾ فَبِمَا نَقْضِهِمْ مِّيْثَاقَهُمْ وَكُفْرِهِمْ بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ وَ
قَتْلِهِمُ الْاَنْۢبِيَآءَ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ وَّقَوْلِهِمْ قُلُوْبُنَا غُلْفٌ ؕ بَلْ طَبَعَ اللّٰهُ
عَلَيْهَا بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَلَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا ﴿۱۵۵﴾ وَّبِكُفْرِهِمْ وَقَوْلِهِمْ عَلٰى

As regards those of them, who repent and mend their ways and then hold fast to Allah and dedicate their religion sincerely to Allah,[174] such people are with the Believers, and Allah will most surely bestow a great reward on the Believers. And why should Allah punish you, if you are grateful[175] and behave like true Believers? For Allah fully appreciates worth[176] and knows everything about everyone. 146-147

Allah does not like that a person should utter evil words except when one has been wronged: Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. (Though you are allowed to give expression to evil words, if you have been wronged,) yet if you go on doing good openly and secretly or at least refrain from evil, you should know that Allah is Forgiving, whereas He is All-Powerful to punish.[177] 148-149

Those, who deny Allah and His Messengers and desire to draw a line between Allah and His Messengers, and say, "We will acknowledge some and deny others," they seek a midway between belief and disbelief. All those are confirmed disbelievers,[178] and We have prepared an ignominious punishment for such disbelievers. In contrast to them, We will most surely give their due reward[179] to those who believe in Allah and all His Messengers and do not discriminate against any of them; for Allah is very Forgiving and very Compassionate.[180] 150-152

If the people of the Book are today asking you to cause a Book to come down upon them from heaven,[181] they have already made even more monstrous demands from Moses. They said to him, "Make us see Allah with our own eyes." As a result of their wickedness a thunder-bolt smote them all of a sudden.[182] Then they took the calf as the object of their worhsip, after they had seen clear signs:[183] but even after this, We forgave them. We bestowed upon Moses a clear Commandment and raised Mount Tūr over them and took a Covenant from them (to obey it).[184] We enjoined them to enter the gate bowing down humbly.[185] We said to them, "Do not break the Sabbath," and took a solemn Covenant[186] from them to observe this law strictly. But they broke the Covenant, rejected the clear signs of Allah and slew some Prophets of Allah unjustly and declared, "Our hearts are quite secure under cover."[187] — Nay,[188] Allah has sealed their hearts because of their worship of falsehood and this is why they believe but 153-155

little.

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provides him with the same through unlawful means. Allah alone has the power to guide any individual on any way whatsoever, and no one can take any course, right or wrong, without His permission and without His help, but He allows and helps every one to proceed on the way he chooses for himself. If one loves Allah and is a seeker after Truth and sincerely strives to follow His way,He allows him and helps him to think and act on the right lines leading to the right way and provides means for him to proceed on the same way. But if one chooses to follow wrong ways and strives to proceed on wrong ways, Allah shuts the way of guidance against him and opens before him evil ways which he chooses for himself. No one has the power to prevent such a one from evil thoughts and evil deeds and from spending his energies in evil ways. It is thus obvious that none can guide to the right way the wretched one who deliberately loses it and whom Allah leads astray in consequence of his intentional deviation.

174. That person, who dedicates his Faith to Allah, devotes his whole life earnestly and faithfully for Him and reserves all his loyalties, interests, and affections for Him alone. In short, his attachment to Allah becomes so intense that he is ready to sacrifice anything for Him.

175. That is, "If you show your sincere gratitude to Allah and do not adopt an attitude of ingratitude and treachery towards Him in regard to the benefits and blessings you have received from Him, there is no reason why He should punish you for nothing."

The right attitude of gratitude is that one should sincerely appreciate the kindness of the benefactor, acknowledge it with his tongue and show his gratitude by his conduct. This implies three things: First, the grateful person should attribute the kindness to the real benefactor and should not associate anyone else with him in gratitude and acknowledgement. Second, he should be full of the feelings of love and loyalty for his benefactor and should not cherish any such feelings for the opponents of the benefactor. Third, he should be obedient to his benefactor, and should not in any way use or employ the benefits conferred on him against the will of the benefactor.

176. The word *shākir*, when applied to Allah, means that He appreciates the worth of the services of His servant; and when applied to the servant, it means that he expresses his gratitude to his Lord for His blessings. Allah appreciates fully the quantity and the quality of the services that are rendered by His servants for His cause and deprives none of them of the due rewards: nay, He rewards their services most generously and gives much more than they deserve. Of course, His

treatment of His servants is quite different from their own treatment of their fellow-men. They under-estimate the worth of the services rendered by a fellow-man and take him to task severely for an omission. Allah in His bounty rewards much more generously than His servant deserves for any service rendered by him in His cause, but is very lenient and forgiving for any omission or neglect of duty shown by His servants.

177. The moral instructions contained in this verse are of the highest standard. The Muslims have been taught to practise virtue or at least to show forbearance even in the face of provocation. At the time of its revelation, the hypocrites, the Jews and the idolaters were all engaged in opposing Islam by all possible means and were maltreating its followers in every conceivable way. Therefore it was but natural that the Muslims should be filled with feelings of anger and hatred. When Allah noticed the storm of emotion rising in their hearts, he warned them that He did not like that they give vent to their feelings, though they were wronged and therefore justified, if in retaliation they gave expression to their bitter feelings. They were taught that they, as Muslims, were expected to go on doing good openly and secretly or at least refrain from doing evil for evil. They were instructed, "You should try to mould your character after that of your Allah, Who is so Forbearing that He does not withhold His provisions even from the most wicked culprits and shows forbearance to the most sinful offenders. You should, therefore, have a big heart and show forbearance even in the most critical and provocative situations."

178. That is, there is absolutely no doubt that all those people are equally disbelievers, who deny Allah all His Messengers: who acknowledge Allah but deny His Messengers: who accept some of the Messengers and reject others: each and everyone of such people is a confirmed disbeliever.

179. Full assurance has been given to those who acknowledge Allah as their sole Sovereign and Deity, and submit to and follow all His Messengers, that they deserve to be rewarded according to the quality of their good deeds. In contrast to them, there is ignominious punishment for those who do not acknowledge Allah as the sole Sovereign and Sustainer, or for those who adopted the rebellious way by accepting some of His representatives and rejecting others. Allah does not accept any of the apparently good deeds of such people because it has no legal status in His sight.

180. As Allah is Forgiving and Compassionate, He will be very lenient in judging the deeds of those who believe in Him and His Messengers and will not be hard on them.

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مَرْيَمَ بُهْتَانًا عَظِيمًا ﴿١٥٦﴾ وَقَوْلِهِمْ إِنَّا قَتَلْنَا الْمَسِيحَ عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ
رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ۖ وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ وَمَا صَلَبُوهُ وَلَٰكِن شُبِّهَ لَهُمْ ۚ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ
اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ لَفِي شَكٍّ مِّنْهُ ۚ مَا لَهُم بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِلَّا اتِّبَاعَ الظَّنِّ ۚ
وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ يَقِينًا ﴿١٥٧﴾ بَل رَّفَعَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَيْهِ ۚ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١٥٨﴾
وَإِن مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ إِلَّا لَيُؤْمِنَنَّ بِهِ قَبْلَ مَوْتِهِ ۖ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
يَكُونُ عَلَيْهِمْ شَهِيدًا ﴿١٥٩﴾ فَبِظُلْمٍ مِّنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُوا حَرَّمْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ
طَيِّبَاتٍ أُحِلَّتْ لَهُمْ وَبِصَدِّهِمْ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا ﴿١٦٠﴾ وَأَخْذِهِمُ
الرِّبَا وَقَدْ نُهُوا عَنْهُ وَأَكْلِهِمْ أَمْوَالَ النَّاسِ بِالْبَاطِلِ ۚ وَأَعْتَدْنَا
لِلْكَافِرِينَ مِنْهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿١٦١﴾ لَّٰكِنِ الرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ مِنْهُمْ وَ
الْمُؤْمِنُونَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِن قَبْلِكَ وَالْمُقِيمِينَ
الصَّلَاةَ وَالْمُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ
سَنُؤْتِيهِمْ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿١٦٢﴾ إِنَّا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ كَمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ نُوحٍ وَّ
النَّبِيِّينَ مِن بَعْدِهِ ۚ وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ
وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَعِيسَىٰ وَأَيُّوبَ وَيُونُسَ وَهَارُونَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ ۚ
وَآتَيْنَا دَاوُودَ زَبُورًا ﴿١٦٣﴾ وَرُسُلًا قَدْ قَصَصْنَاهُمْ عَلَيْكَ مِن قَبْلُ وَ
رُسُلًا لَّمْ نَقْصُصْهُمْ عَلَيْكَ ۚ وَكَلَّمَ اللَّهُ مُوسَىٰ تَكْلِيمًا ﴿١٦٤﴾ رُّسُلًا مُّبَشِّرِينَ
وَمُنذِرِينَ لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى اللَّهِ حُجَّةٌ بَعْدَ الرُّسُلِ ۚ وَكَانَ
اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١٦٥﴾ لَّٰكِنِ اللَّهُ يَشْهَدُ بِمَا أَنزَلَ إِلَيْكَ أَنزَلَهُ بِعِلْمِهِ ۖ
وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ يَشْهَدُونَ ۚ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا ﴿١٦٦﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَ

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.....Then[189] they went so far in their unbelief that they uttered 156-162
a monstrous calumny against Mary:[190] they themselves bragged, "We have slain Jesus, son of Mary, a Messenger of Allah."[191] Whereas[192] in fact, they did not slay him nor did they crucify him but the matter was made dubious for them.[193] And those who have differed about this matter are also in doubt concerning it. They have no knowledge of it but they follow mere conjectures,[194] for it is certain that they did not kill Jesus. Nay, the fact is that Allah had raised him to Himself,[195] for Allah is All-Powerful, All-Wise. There shall be none among the people of the Book but will believe in him before his death,[196] and he will be a witness against them on the Day of Resurrection.[197] — In short,[198] it is because of these unjust things of those who became Jews and because they often stand in the way of Allah,[199] and because they take interest, which had been prohibited,[200] and because they devour unlawfully the property of others — it is because of all these transgressions that We made unlawful many clean and pure things which were formerly lawful for them.[201] We have prepared a painful torment for those among them who disbelieve,[202] but most surely We will reward richly all those among them who have profound learning and who are honest and who believe in what has been sent down to you, and what was sent down before you,[203] and who establish the *Ṣalāt*, pay the *Zakāt* dues and believe sincerely in Allah and the Last Day.

O Muhammad, We have sent Revelation to you just as We sent 163-166
it to Noah and other Prophets after him.[204] We also sent Revelation to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob, and the descendants of Jacob, and Jesus and Job and Jonah and Aaron and Solomon, and We gave the Psalms to David.[205] We also sent Revelation to those Messengers whom We have already mentioned to you and to those Messengers whom We have not mentioned to you; and We spoke directly to Moses as in conversation.[206] All these Messengers were sent as bearers of good news and warners,[207] so that, after their coming, people should have no excuse left to plead before Allah;[208] Allah is, in any case All-Powerful, All-Wise. (People may or may not believe it) but Allah bears witness that what He has sent down to you, He has sent that down with His knowledge and the angels also bear witness to it, though Allah's being a witness alone suffices.

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181. This was one of the strange demands of the Jews of Madinah. They said to the Holy Prophet, "We will not accept you as a Prophet unless you cause a written Book to come down to us from heaven before our very eyes or cause a written message to come down to each one of us to this effect: 'Muhammad (peace be upon him) is Our Messenger; so believe in him'."

182. A mere mention of this incident has been made in the short list of the crimes of the Israelites to which reference has been made here to show how impertinent they had become. This incident has already been mentioned in v. 55 of Al-Baqarah (For details, please see E.N. 17, Al-Baqarah).

183. "Clear signs": the signs which the children of Israel had seen, one after the other, since the time of the Prophet Moses appointment as a Messenger. They had also witnessed the drowning of Pharaoh and his army and many other signs during their exodus from Egypt. Therefore, they knew full well that it was Allah, Lord of the Universe, and not a calf, Who had rescued them from the tyranny of a powerful ruler like Pharaoh. Yet they were so enamoured of false gods that they forsook God, their real Benefactor, and made the calf of gold the object of their worship.

184. "Clear Commandment": the Commandments inscribed on the tablets which were given to the Prophet Moses. (See also Al-Baqarah II:63 and Al-A'raf VII:171).

The "Covenant" was the pledge taken from the chiefs of Israel at the foot of Mount Tur. This has already been mentioned in Al-Baqarah, II: 63 and is also referred to in Al-A'rāf VII:171.

185. Please refer to vv. 58-89 and E.N. 75 of Al-Baqarah.

186. Please see v. 65 and E.N.'s 82 and 83 of Al-Baqarah.

187. Reference has already been made to such a saying of the Jews in Al-Baqarah II:88. Just as all the worshippers of falsehood are proud of their obduracy against the truth, so were the Jews proud of their beliefs, prejudices, rituals and customs that they had inherited from their forefathers and could not be persuaded to give them up. That is why they always turned a deaf ear to the Message of the Prophets of Allah with the answer: "We are determined to reject your invitation, even though you bring strong arguments in support thereof. We will adhere strongly and faithfully to what we believe and practise." (Also see E.N. 94 of Al-Baqarah).

188. This is a parenthesis.

189. This is in continuation of the theme under discussion.

190. The calumny against Mary concerning the birth of Jesus has been declared here as "disbelief" because it was not directed against the person of innocent Mary or her son but against Jesus Christ, the Messenger of God. The Jews had absolutely no ground for suspicion about his miraculous birth without father, because God had caused the whole Community to stand as witness to the miracle. When Virgin Mary, who belonged to the noble and well-known religious family of the Israelites, came home with the new-born child, a large crowd gathered there and demanded an explanation from her. But she simply pointed to the child. The crowd could not understand how a child in the cradle could speak, but to their utter astonishment, the child began to speak clearly and fluently and addressing the crowd, he declared, "I am Allah's servant: Allah has given me the Book and made me a Prophet." (Maryam, XIX : 30) Thus Allah cut at the very root of the slander about his birth. That is why none ever accused Mary of fornication nor taunted Jesus with being an illegitimate son until he attained his maturity. But when at the age of thirty, he started his mission to invite the people to the way of God and rebuked the Jews for their evil deeds and exposed the hypocrisies of their scholars and jurists and warned the whole community of the consequences of moral degradation, they turned against him. Instead of accepting his message and making sacrifices for the cause of God, and reforming their evil ways, these impudent and unscrupulous criminals resorted to all sorts of dirty tricks and devilish designs to suppress the voice of Truth. It was then that they made that monstrous calumny which they had never uttered before during the previous thirty years of his life, because they knew it for certain that Mary and her son were absolutely free from this taint. Thus their calumny, in fact, was not due to any real suspicion, which they might be harbouring in their hearts, but it was a pure calumny, which they deliberately invented for opposing the Truth. That is why Allah declared it to be disbelief instead of wickedness and falsehood, for their real aim by this accusation was to hinder the people from the Way of God and not merely to slander an innocent lady.

191. The fact that they bragged of slaying Jesus, knowing him to be a Messenger of God, shows how bold they had become in their crimes. We have shown in the previous Note that the miracle of his speech in the cradle had let no doubt whatsoever to remain in the minds of the Jews about his Prophethood. Then the clear signs that they witnessed from him (III : 49) were a conclusive proof that he was really a Prophet of God. Therefore their wicked behaviour towards him was not the result of any misunderstanding about his Prophethood, but was an intentional crime against the one who had been appointed by Allah as Messenger.

Though it appears very strange that a community should slay a person whom they know to be and acknowledge a Prophet of Allah, yet it is so, for the ways of wicked communities are strange. They cannot and do not tolerate a person who criticises them for their evil ways and prohibits unlawful things. Such people, even though they be the Prophets of Allah, have always been persecuted, imprisoned and slain by their own wicked people.

As a proof thereof, the following is quoted from the Talmud: "When the city (Jerusalem) had been captured, Nebuchadnezzar marched with the princes and officers of the Temple..... On one of the walls he found the mark of an arrow's head as though somebody had been killed or hit nearby, and he asked who was killed there.

"Zachariah, the son of Yehoyadah, the high priest", answered the people. "He rebuked us incessantly on account of our transgressions and we were tired of his words and put him to death."

Even according to the Bible, when the Prophet Jeremiah rebuked the Jews on account of their transgressions, they accused him of being in conspiracy with the Chaldeans and traitor against his people and sent him to prison. Likewise had the Jews treated John the Baptist a couple of years before the crucifixion of the Prophet Jesus. They counted John as a Prophet and acknowledged him as one of the most righteous men of their community, but when he criticised Herod (the ruler of Judea) for his evil ways, he was not tolerated. He was first sent to prison, then beheaded on the demand of Herod's beloved, the dancing girl.

It is, therefore, obvious from their record that when they presumed that they had crucified Jesus Christ, they bragged: "We have slain a Messenger of Allah."

192. This is another parenthesis.

193. This verse is explicit on the point that the Prophet Jesus Christ was rescued from crucifixion and that the Christians and the Jews are both wrong in believing that he died on the cross. A comparative study of the Qur'an and the Bible shows that most probably it was Jesus himself who stood his trial in the court of Pilate, who sentenced him to death, but they could not kill or crucify him, for Allah raised him to Himself.

This is what happened, Pilate knew fully well that Christ was innocent and had been brought in his court out of jealousy. So he asked the crowd whether Jesus Christ should be released on the occasion of the Festival or Barabbas, a notorious robber. But the high priests and elders persuaded the crowd to ask for the release of Barabbas and for the crucifixion of Jesus. After this, God, Who can do any and everything He wills, raised Jesus to Himself and rescued him from crucifixion and

the one who was crucified afterwards was somehow or other taken for Christ. Nevertheless, his miraculous escape does not lessen the wicked crime of the Jews, because they knew it well that the one, whom they crowned with a crown of thorns, and on whose face they spat and whom they crucified with disgrace was Christ, the son of Mary. As regards the matter how "it was made doubtful for them" that they had crucified Jesus, we have no means of ascertaining. Therefore it is not right to base on mere guess-work and rumours an answer to the question how the Jews were made to believe that they had crucified him, whereas in fact, Jesus, the son of Mary, had escaped from them.

194. "Those who have differed": the Christians. They do not agree in their versions of crucifixion. The very fact that they offer so many different accounts of the matter is by itself a proof that they possess no definite knowledge of it and are, therefore, in doubt about it. One version is that the person who was crucified was not Jesus but someone who bore his likeness, whom the Jews and the Romans had disgracefully put on the cross, while Jesus was standing nearby and laughing at their folly. Another version is that the one who was nailed to the cross was Jesus, but he did not die on the cross and was alive when he was taken down from it. Some others say that he died on the cross but came to life afterwards and met his disciples more than ten times and talked to them. Still others say that death due to crucifixion occurred on the physical body of Jesus and he was buried but the Divine Spirit within him was raised. There are still others who say that after his death Jesus came to life with his body and was raised with his body. Obviously, if the Christians had any knowledge of the truth, they would not have given so many different versions of it.

195. Here Allah has told the fact of the matter. The Qur'ān explicitly states that the Jews did not succeed in putting Jesus to death and that Allah raised him to Himself, but it is silent about the nature and details of the matter and does neither say explicitly whether Allah raised him body and soul together from the earth to some place in heaven, nor that he died like other mortals and only his soul was raised to heaven. Therefore, on the basis of the Qur'ān neither aspect can be definitely denied or affirmed. But a study of the style clearly shows that whatever be the nature of being raised in any case Allah certainly treated the Prophet Jesus in an extraordinary way. The following considerations lead to the conclusion that the incident was extraordinary :

First, the belief in the ascension of the Prophet Jesus, body and soul together, was already prevalent among the Christians, and was one of the causes which misled a large section of them to believe in his divinity. But, inspite of it, the Qur'ān not only has not clearly refuted it but has used the same word "ascension" for the incident that the Christians use for it. Had it not been an

extraordinary incident factually the Qur''ān would not have used such ambiguous words as help support a doctrine of the divinity of Jesus.

Second, had Allah meant by the words used in verse 158 that "Allah caused his death", or that "Allah raised him in rank", more explicit words would have been used. In the first case, more appropriate words would be: "No doubt they did not slay him nor crucified him but Allah rescued him alive from them and then gave him natural death", and in the second: "The Jews intended to dishonour him by crucifixion, but Allah raised him very high in rank", as have been used in the case of the Prophet Idris: "And We raised him to a high position". (Maryam, XIX : 57).

Third, if the incident related here meant merely the natural death of Christ, the words, "And Allah is All-Powerful and All-Wise", after it would be meaningless. These words can be appropriately used only in connection with some extraordinary manifestation of the power and wisdom of Allah.

The only argument that can be cited in support of the interpretation of verse 158 that Jesus died a natural death is the use of the word *mutawaffika* in verse 55 of Āl-'Imran, in connection with the incident. But as we have explained in the corresponding E.N. 51, the word is not explicit in the meaning of natural death but can be applied both to take the soul and to take the body and soul together. As there is scope for both the interpretations in this word, its use cannot refute the above mentioned arguments against the meaning: "Allah caused his death". Those who insist on this interpretation argue that there is no other instance in which *tawaffā* might have been used for the seizure of both body and soul together. This is meaningless, for this is the only incident of its kind in the whole human history. The only thing to be considered is whether this word may lexically be used in this sense or not. If it can be used, we have to face the question: Why does the Qur'ān not use a direct word for death instead of a word which is liable to support the doctrine of Ascension, which in turn, has given rise to the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus? The use of this word is a clear proof that there was something extraordinary about the incident. Above all, the doctrine of Ascension is further strengthened by the Traditions according to which the Prophet Jesus, son of Mary, will come again to the earth before the Resurrection and fight the Dajjāl. (These Traditions have been cited in the Appendix to the commentary of Surah Al-Ahzāb). These categorically prove the second coming of Jesus. Therefore, it would be more rational to believe that he is living somewhere in the universe before this second coming than that he lies dead and buried somewhere before his advent.

196. This has been interpreted in two ways and both are likely. (Here by the people of the Book are meant the Jews and may also be the Christians). According to the first interpretation, as adopted in the Translation, it means: "All

the people of the Book, alive at the time of the natural death of Christ, will have believed in him, that is, in his Prophethood." The second interpretation of "There shall be none among the people of the Book but will believe in him before his death" is that all the people of the Book before their death do realize and believe that Christ is really a Messenger of God, though that belief will be of no avail at the time. Both these interpretations have been put forward by several Companions and their followers and renowned commentators, but its real meaning is only known to Allah.

197. That is, "In the court of God, Christ will give testimony against the Jews and the Christians that they rejected, neglected and distorted the Message brought by him." Some details of this testimony are given in vv. 116-117 of Al-Ma'idah.

198. The main theme that was broken by the parenthesis, which ends here, has been resumed.

199. It is an irony that the Jews, who possessed a Divine Book and the heritage of the Prophets, should not only have themselves discarded the way of God but also frequently stood in the way of God. It is a fact that they have always been opposing and placing obstacles in the way of those movements that have ever been started for the promulgation of the Truth and have been starting or helping start movements against the way of God. Their latest crime in this connection is Communism which has for the first time in history based a system of life and a system of government on the deliberate and explicit denial of God in open oponition to His Law for the eradication God-worship as its declared aims. The author of another perverted doctrine of the modern age, Freudianism, which has helped mislead the people from the way of Allah, is also a Jew.

200. Here is the Biblical law that clearly prohibits interest: "If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him as an usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury."

"If thou at all take thy neighbour's raiment to pledge, thou shalt deliver it unto him by that time the sun goeth down:

For that is his covering only, it is his raiment for his skin wherein shall he sleep? and it shall come to pass, when he crieth unto me, that I will hear; for I am gracious." (Exodus 22 : 25-27).

Besides this, interest has also been prohibited at several other places in the Torah, but in spite of these prohibitive decrees, the Jews, who profess to believe in the same Torah, are the biggest usurers in the world and have become proverbially notorious for their narrow-mindedness and hard-heartedness.

201. Probably this refers to the same thing that occurs in Al-An'am, VI:146, that is, all animals with claws, and the fat of sheep and oxen were forbidden to the Jews. Besides this, possibly it may also refer to the restrictions and hardships which are contained in the law books composed by their own Jurists. Indeed, it is a great punishment that the bounds of life should be narrowed for any community. (For details please see E.N. 122, Al-An'ām).

202. History bears witness to the exemplary punishment that Allah has prepared for those Jews who have discarded the Divine Faith and given up obedience to Allah and adopted the attitude of disbelief and rebellion. For the last two thousand years, they have never possessed a place where they could live with honour. They have been scattered all over the world and are treated like foreigners and disgracefully, cruelly and oppressively in one country or the other, and there is no palce in the world, where they are sincerely respected, inspite of their great wealth. Above all, this community has remained a living object lesson for the other nations, for it has been kept in existence inspite of its degradation, whereas other nations are exterminated when they become worthless. Thus Allah is causing them to taste in this very world a bit of the torment of Hell where the evil-doers "will neither be in a state of death nor in a state of life." This is because they have been showing the audacity of rebelling against Allah while they were at the same time carrying the Book of Allah with them. As regards punishment in the Hereafter, it may safely be predicted that it shall be much more painful than this. In order to remove any misunderstanding that might arise regarding the existence of the State of Israel, it will be worthwhile to refer to v. 112 of Āl-'Imrān, and the corresponding E.N. 90.

203. The reference is to those learned Jews who are fully acquainted with the real nature of the Divine Books, who are just, fair and free from every kind of prejudice, obduracy and self-worship, who do not blindly follow their fore-fathers but readily accept the Truth that they learn from the revealed Books. Therefore they are able to recognize easily that the teachings of the Qur'ān are the same as were taught by the former Prophets, and then sincerely believe in both.

204. This is to emphasize the fact that the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be peace) has not come with a new thing and that he does not claim to present something for the first time, but he has, in fact, received Guidance from the same source of knowledge from which all the Prophets before him had received, and that he too is presenting the same Truth and Reality that has always been presented by the Prophets, who were raised from different corners of the Earth.

The literal meaning of *wahī* is: (1) to give hint of, (2) to communicate to the mind, (3) to convey by covert suggestion, and (4) to send a message.

205. Only a part of the Book of Psalms in the existing Bible consists of the Psalms of the Prophet David, and they bear his name. Its remaining constituent parts are the psalms of other people, and have been attributed to their authors. It should also be noted that the study of the real Zabūr, the Psalms of David, shows that it is a Revelation of God. Likewise, additions have been made in the Book of the Proverbs of Solomon and the last two chapters were obviously added afterwards. But, in spite of this, the major portion of the Proverbs contains gems of Truth and Wisdom. The same is true of the Book of Job. A study of this reveals that, though it contains gems of wisdom, it is wrong to attribute the whole of it to the Prophet Job. Whereas the Qur'ān and the introductory chapters of this very Book bear witness to the great fortitude shown by the Prophet Job, its subsequent chapters show that he was an embodiment of grievance against God, and that, in vain, did his companions try their best to convince him that God was not unjust.

Besides these, the major portions of the seventeen Books of the Israelite Prophets in the Old Testament are evidently genuine Revelations; especially the Books of Joshua, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos and some others contain many such passages that show the grandeur of Divine Revelation and move one to ecstasy. Their high moral teachings, their campaign against idolatry and their sound arguments prove the Oneness of God, and their strong criticism of the degeneration of Israel clearly shows that these and the sermons of Jesus Christ in the New Testament and the Qur'ān came from one and the same source.

206. The way Revelation was communicated to the Prophet Moses was different from that of the other Prophets. They heard either a voice or a Message from an angel, but the Prophet Moses had this privilege that Allah Himself had a direct talk with him as in a dialogue, *e.g.*, the dialogue cited in Ṭa Ha, XX :11-48 in the Qur'ān. This privilege has also been mentioned in the Bible: "……And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend." (Exodus 33:11).

207. That is, all the Prophets had one and the same mission. They gave good news to those who believed in the Divine Message and mended their ways in accordance with it and warning to those who adopted wrong ways of thought and action that they would meet with serious sequences in the end.

208. The Prophets were sent with the sole object that they should set forth before mankind the Right Way, both theoretically and practically, so that on the Day of Judgement no evil-doer should be in a position to offer the excuse that he was ignorant of the Truth. That is why Allah appointed Messengers in different parts of the world and sent down Books. These Messengers imparted the

[Contd. on p. 406

صَدُّوْا عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ قَدْ ضَلُّوْا ضَلٰلًا بَعِيْدًا ﴿١٦٧﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا
وَظَلَمُوْا لَمْ يَكُنِ اللّٰهُ لِيَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ وَلَا لِيَهْدِيَهُمْ طَرِيْقًا ﴿١٦٨﴾ إِلَّا طَرِيْقَ
جَهَنَّمَ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَآ اَبَدًا ۭ وَكَانَ ذٰلِكَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ يَسِيْرًا ﴿١٦٩﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ
قَدْ جَاۗءَكُمُ الرَّسُوْلُ بِالْحَقِّ مِنْ رَّبِّكُمْ فَاٰمِنُوْا خَيْرًا لَّكُمْ ۭ وَاِنْ تَكْفُرُوْا ﴿١٧٠﴾
فَاِنَّ لِلّٰهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۭ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ عَلِيْمًا حَكِيْمًا ﴿١٧٠﴾
يٰٓاَهْلَ الْكِتٰبِ لَا تَغْلُوْا فِيْ دِيْنِكُمْ وَلَا تَقُوْلُوْا عَلَى اللّٰهِ اِلَّا الْحَقَّ ۭ
اِنَّمَا الْمَسِيْحُ عِيْسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ وَكَلِمَتُهٗ ۚ اَلْقٰىهَآ اِلٰى
مَرْيَمَ وَرُوْحٌ مِّنْهُ ۡ فَاٰمِنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ وَرُسُلِهٖ ۚ وَلَا تَقُوْلُوْا ثَلٰثَةٌ ۭ اِنْتَهُوْا
خَيْرًا لَّكُمْ ۭ اِنَّمَا اللّٰهُ اِلٰهٌ وَّاحِدٌ ۭ سُبْحٰنَهٗٓ اَنْ يَّكُوْنَ لَهٗ وَلَدٌ ۘ لَهٗ مَا ع ٣ ٩ ٣
فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ ۭ وَكَفٰى بِاللّٰهِ وَكِيْلًا ﴿١٧١﴾ لَنْ يَّسْتَنْكِفَ الْمَسِيْحُ اَنْ
يَّكُوْنَ عَبْدًا لِّلّٰهِ وَلَا الْمَلٰۗىِٕكَةُ الْمُقَرَّبُوْنَ ۭ وَمَنْ يَّسْتَنْكِفْ عَنْ عِبَادَتِهٖ
وَيَسْتَكْبِرْ فَسَيَحْشُرُهُمْ اِلَيْهِ جَمِيْعًا ﴿١٧٢﴾ فَاَمَّا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا
الصّٰلِحٰتِ فَيُوَفِّيْهِمْ اُجُوْرَهُمْ وَيَزِيْدُهُمْ مِّنْ فَضْلِهٖ ۚ وَاَمَّا الَّذِيْنَ
اسْتَنْكَفُوْا وَاسْتَكْبَرُوْا فَيُعَذِّبُهُمْ عَذَابًا اَلِيْمًا ۙ وَّلَا يَجِدُوْنَ لَهُمْ
مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ وَلِيًّا وَّلَا نَصِيْرًا ﴿١٧٣﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاۗءَكُمْ بُرْهَانٌ
مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ وَاَنْزَلْنَآ اِلَيْكُمْ نُوْرًا مُّبِيْنًا ﴿١٧٤﴾ فَاَمَّا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ
وَاعْتَصَمُوْا بِهٖ فَسَيُدْخِلُهُمْ فِيْ رَحْمَةٍ مِّنْهُ وَفَضْلٍ ۙ وَّيَهْدِيْهِمْ
اِلَيْهِ صِرَاطًا مُّسْتَقِيْمًا ﴿١٧٥﴾ يَسْتَفْتُوْنَكَ ۭ قُلِ اللّٰهُ يُفْتِيْكُمْ فِي الْكَلٰلَةِ ۭ اِنِ
امْرُؤٌا هَلَكَ لَيْسَ لَهٗ وَلَدٌ وَّلَهٗٓ اُخْتٌ فَلَهَا نِصْفُ مَا تَرَكَ ۚ وَهُوَ

يَرِثُهَآ إِن لَّمْ يَكُن لَّهَا وَلَدٌ ۚ فَإِن كَانَتَا اثْنَتَيْنِ فَلَهُمَا الثُّلُثَانِ مِمَّا
تَرَكَ ۚ وَإِن كَانُوٓا إِخْوَةً رِّجَالًا وَنِسَآءً فَلِلذَّكَرِ مِثْلُ حَظِّ الْأُنثَيَيْنِ ۗ
يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ أَن تَضِلُّوا ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٧٦﴾



Those, who disbelieve in it and hinder others from the way of Allah, have strayed far awayinto deviation from the Truth. Allah will never forgive those who have thus adopted the way of disbelief and rebellion and committed gross injustice and iniquity, and He will not show them any other way than that of Hell, wherein they shall abide for ever: this is not difficult for Allah. 167-169

O people, this Messenger has come to you with the Truth from your Lord, so believe in him, for it will be better for yourselves; but if you disbelieve, you should know that all that is in the heavens and the earth belongs to Allah,[209] and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.[210] 170

O people of the Book, do not transgress the bounds in your religion,[211] and attribute nothing but the Truth to Allah. The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was no more than a Messenger of Allah and His Command[212] that was sent to Mary and a spirit[213] from Allah (that took the shape of a child in the womb of Mary). So believe in Allah and His Messengers,[214] and do not say, "There are 'Three'."[215] Forbear from this: this will be better for you. Allah is only One Deity; He is far above this that He should have a son:[216] all the things in the heavens and in the earth belong to Him,[217] and He alone suffices for their sustenance and protection.[218] 171

The Messiah never disdained to be a servant of Allah nor do the angels who are nearest to Him disdain it. Whoever disdains the service of Allah and prides himself on it, (should know that) He will muster all of them before Him. Then He will give full reward to those who believed and did good deeds and out of His bounty bestow upon them even more than their dues; but He will inflict a painful 172-173

chastisement on those who have disdained His service and prided themselves on it. And there they will find none of those on whom they rely to be their protectors and helpers beside Allah.

174-175 O mankind, a clear proof of the Truth has come to you from your Lord, and We have sent down to you the Light that shows the Way clearly to you. Now those who will accept Allah's Message and seek His protection, Allah will cover them with His mercy and grace and will show them the Right Way to Himself.

176 People[219] seek your verdict on (the inheritance left by) a childless person.[220] Say, "Allah gives His verdict: if a person dies childless and leaves behind a sister,[221] she shall get half of his inheritance: and if the sister dies childless, her brother[222] shall inherit her property: and if the deceased leaves behind two sisters, they shall inherit two thirds of the inheritance:[223] and if the number of the brothers and sisters is more than two, the share of each brother shall be double that of each sister." Allah makes His Commandments plain to you lest you should go astray; Allah has perfect knowledge of everything.

Contd. from p. 403]

knowledge of the truth to a large number of people and left behind them Books of which one or the other has always existed for the guidance of mankind. Now if one goes astray in spite of this arrangement, one cannot throw the blame on Allah and His Messengers. He himself is responsible for this because he did not accept the Truth when it came to him, or the responsibility is of those who had the knowledge of it but did not impart it to others who had gone astray.

209. That is, "You will harm none but yourselves by your disbelief and disobedience, for you can do no harm to the Master of the heavens and the earth."

210. That is, "Your Allah is fully aware of everything: you cannot do mischief with impunity in His Kingdom; He is also Wise: He knows how to deal with those who disobey His Commands."

211. Here "The people of the Book" refers to the Christians who went beyond the bounds in their religion and regarded Jesus as God in their exaggerated reverence and love of him. This was a contrast to the Jews (the other people of the Book) who had gone to the other extreme in their denial of an enmity against Jesus.

212. The Prophet Jesus has specially been called God's "Command" (*Kalimah*) because he was born without the usual agency of a father. God sent a Command that Mary should become pregnant without the semen of a man and she conceived. Although in the very beginning, the Christians were told that Christ had been born without a father by the Command of God, yet they were so misled by the Alexandrian Philosophy of Philo that they first mistook *Kalimah* (Command) for the "Divine Word"; then changed the "Divine Word" into the "Logos"; then they built on the Logos Doctrine which misguided them to the false belief in the divine nature of Jesus Christ. That is how they came to believe that God had revealed Himself or His eternal attribute of speech in the person of Jesus. (See John I : 1, 14).

213. Here Jesus has been called "A spirit from God" and in Al-Baqarah, II : 253, it is stated that God supported him (Jesus) with the "Holy Spirit". In both cases, it means that Allah had bestowed upon the Prophet Jesus a Holy Spirit that was imbued with high moral values and was a perfection of truth and righteousnes without any tinge of evil. The Christians were taught this very thing, but they exaggerated the notion: they took "a spirit from God" for "the Spirit of God" and perverted the meaning of the Holy Ghost into "the Spirit of God Himself" which had entered into Jesus Christ. Thus, a third god, "the Holy Ghost", was created along with God and Christ. This was their second transgression which led the Christians astray.

The perversion of "a spirit from God" into "the Spirit of God" (Holy Ghost) has been made inspite of the fact that according to the Gospel of Matthew, "The angel of the Lord appeared unto him (Joseph) in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary, thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost," and not the Holy Ghost (1 : 20).

214. That is, "As Jesus is only a spirit from God and has no part of Godhead in him, do not go beyond the bounds but believe in Allah as One God and accept all His Messengers including the Messiah." This was what the Prophet Jesus himself really taught and this is the truth which a true Christian should believe.

215. The Christians have been rebuked for their wrong belief in the doctrine of the Trinity and advised to refrain from transgression. Strange though it may appear, the fact is that the Christians believe both in the Oneness of God and in the Trinity at one and the same time; for no Christian can deny that according to the clear sayings of Jesus in the Gospels, God is One Being and there is no other god than He. They cannot but admit that Unity of God is the real basis of religion. But the introduction of the doctrine of the Logos at an early stage of Christianity misled them into believing in the Godhead of Christ in union with God and the

Holy Ghost. Since then it has always remained an enigma for them to reconcile these two contradictory doctrines and for the last eighteen hundred years or so the Christian scholars have been vainly engaged in solving this self-created baffling puzzle. Not only this, many Christian denominations have been founded upon different interpretations of this doctrine and it has given rise to many religious disputes in which one denomination accuses the other of blasphemy. In short, their scholars and interpreters have been spending all their efforts and energies in solving this enigma which was neither created by God nor by Christ. It is also obvious that there is no solution to it, because no one can prove that three persons share Godhead and also that God is One Being and has no partners in His Godhead. As this enigma is the result of their own transgression beyond the Divine limits, it can only be solved if they refrain from going beyond the limits and give up the belief of the Godhead of the Messiah and of the Holy Ghost, and acknowledge Allah as the sole object of worship, adoration and devotion and believe in the Messiah as a Messenger of God and not as a partner in the Godhead of Allah.

216. This refutes the fourth transgression of the Christians who believed that Christ was the Son of God. In this belief they had gone beyond the limits of their own religion. According to the first three Books of The New Testament (even if the traditions therein be accepted as authentic), the Prophet Jesus merely likened the relationship between Man and Allah to the relationship between father and son, and used the word father for God metaphorically, just as it was in vogue among the Israelites. There are many instances of this in the Old Testament the Prophet Jesus also used the word "father" in the sense it was used by his people. He called God not only his father but the father of all human beings. But, the Christians again went beyond the limits and declared Jesus to be the only Son of God. They based this strange belief on the assumption that Messiah was the manifestation of God and the incarnation of His Word and His Holy Ghost. They also transgressed in believing that God had sent His only Son to the earth so that he might take the burden of the sins of mankind on his own shoulders and go to his crucifixion and atone for the sins of Man with his own blood. Obviously, this belief is the creation of their own imagination, for there is no saying of Christ to support this.

Here, Allah has not refuted the doctrine of the "Atonement" because it is not a fundamental article of the Christian religion, but is a mere bye-product of (*a*) the belief that Christ is the Son of God and (*b*) a philosophical and mystical explanation of the objection that if Christ was the Son of God, why did he die a cursed death of crucifixion? It is thus obvious that this doctrine is refuted automatically, if it is shown that Christ was not the Son of God and that he did not die on the cross.

217. As all things in the heavens and the earth belong to Allah, none of them has any such relation with Him as of father and son, but only that of Master and slave.

218. Allah suffices for the management of His Kingdom and does not stand in need of the help of a son for this purpose.

219. Verse 176 was sent down long after the revelation of this Surah; so much so that according to some traditions this was the last verse of the Qur'ān. Anyhow, according to most authentic traditions, it was revealed in A.H. 9 when An-Nisā' was already being recited as a complete Sūrah. That is why this verse was not included in the verses about inheritance contained in the first portion of the Sūrah, but was added to it as an appendix.

220. There is a difference of opinion about the meaning of *kalālah*. According to some scholars, *kalālah* is the person who dies childless and whose father and grandfather also are dead. But according to others, *kalālah* is one who dies childless irrespective of whether his father and grandfather are alive or dead. Ḥaḍrat 'Umar also could not come to any definite decision about its meaning till the last. The majority of the jurists, however, have accepted the opinion of Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr that *kalālah* is the person who dies childless and whose father and grandfather had died before his death. This opinion is also supported by the Qur'ān which awards half of the inheritance of the *kalālah* to the sister who cannot be entitled to any share at all if the father is alive.

221. There is a consensus of opinion that this refers to the inheritance of sisters and brothers who have the relation of common parents or only common father with the deceased. Once Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr gave this explanation and none of the Companions differed from it.

222. The brother will inherit the whole inheritance in case there is no other heir to it. For instance, if the husband of the childless woman is alive her brother will be entitled to the whole of the remaining inheritance after the payment of the share of the husband.

223. The same also applies to the case of more than two sisters.



V
AL-MĀ'I DAH
اَلْمَائِدَه

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

V
AL-MĀ'IDAH

اَلمَائِدَہ

INTRODUCTION

Name

This Sūrah takes its name from verse 112 in which the word *mā'idah* occurs. Like the names of many other Sūrahs, this name also has no special relation to the subject of the Sūrah, but has been used merely as a symbol to distinguish it from other Sūrahs.

Period of Revelation.

The contents of the Sūrah indicate, and the traditions support it, that it was revealed after the treaty of Ḥudaibiyah at the end of A. H. 6 or in the beginning of A.H. 7. That is why it deals with the problems that arose from this treaty.

In Dhī-Qa'dah A.H. 6 the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) with 1400 Muslims went to Makkah to perform '*Umrah*, but the Quraish spurred by their enmity, prevented him from its performance, though it was utterly against all the ancient religious traditions of Arabia. After a good deal of hard and harsh negotiations, a treaty was concluded at Ḥudaibiyah according to which it was agreed that he could perform '*Umrah*, the following year. That was a very appropriate occasion for teaching the Muslims the right way of performing a pilgrimage to Makkah with the true Islamic dignity, and enjoining that they should not prevent the disbelievers from performing pilgrimage to Makkah as a retaliation for their misbehaviour. That was not difficult at all as many disbelievers had to pass through Muslim territory on their way to

Makkah. This is why the introductory verses deal with the things connected with pilgrimage to Makkah and the same theme has been resumed in vv. 101-104. The other topics of this Sūrah also appear to belong to the same period.

The continuity of the subject shows that most probably the whole of the Sūrah was revealed as a single discourse at one and the same time. It is also possible that some of its verses were revealed at a later period and inserted in this Sūrah at different places where they fitted in. But there appears to be not the least gap anywhere in the Sūrah to show that it might have comprised two or more discourses.

Occasion of Revelation.

This Sūrah was revealed to suit the requirements of the changed conditions which were now different from those prevailing at the time of the revelation of Sūrahs Āl-'Imrān and An-Nisā'. Then the shock of the set-back at Uḥud had made the very surroundings of Madīnah dangerous for the Muslims, but now Islam had become an invulnerable power and the Islamic State had extended to Najd in the east, to the Red Sea in the west, to Syria in the north and to Makkah in the south. The set-back which the Muslims had suffered at Uḥud had not broken their determination. It had rather spurred them to action. As a result of their continuous struggle and unparalleled sacrifices, the power of the surrounding clans, within a radius of 200 miles or so, had been broken. The Jewish menace which was always threatening Madīnah had been totally removed and the Jews in the other parts of Hijāz had become tributaries of the State of Madīnah. The last effort of the Quraish to suppress Islam had been thwarted in the battle of the Trench. After this, it had become quite obvious to the Arabs that no power could suppress the Islamic Movement. Now Islam was not merely a creed which ruled over the minds and hearts of the people but had also become a State which dominated over every aspect of the life of the people who lived within its boundaries. This had enabled the Muslims to live their lives without let or hindrance, in accordance with their beliefs.

Another development had also taken place during this period. The Muslim civilization had developed in accordance with the principles of Islam and the Islamic viewpoint. This civilization was quite distinct from all other civilizations in all its details, and distinguished the Muslims clearly from the non-Muslims in their moral, social and

cultural behaviour. Mosques had been built in all territories of the Islamic State. The regular system of collective Prayer had been established and Imāms (leaders) for every habitation and clan had been appointed. The Islamic civil and criminal laws had been formulated in detail and were being enforced through the Islamic courts. New and reformed ways of trade and commerce had taken the place of the old ones. The Islamic laws of inheritance, marriage and divorce, of the segregation of the sexes, of the punishment for adultery and calumny and the like had cast the social life of the Muslims into a special mould. Their social behaviour, their conversation, their dress, their very mode of living, their culture etc., had taken a definite shape of its own. As a result of all these changes, the non-Muslims could not expect that the Muslims would ever return to their former fold.

Before the treaty of Ḥudaibiyah, the Muslims were so engaged in their struggle with the non-Muslim Quraish that they got no time to propagate their message. This hindrance was removed by what was apparently a defeat but in reality a victory at Ḥudaibiyah. This gave the Muslims not only peace in their own territory but also respite to spread their message in the surrounding territories. Accordingly, the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) addressed letters to the rulers of Iran, Egypt and the Roman Empire and the chiefs of Arabia, inviting them to Islam. At the same time the missionaries of Islam spread among the clans and tribes and invited them to accept the Divine Way of Allah.

These were the circumstances at the time when Al-Mā'idah was revealed.

Topics.

It deals with the following three main topics:

(1) Additional commandments and instructions about the religious, cultural and political life of Muslims.

In this connection, a code of ceremonial rules concerning the journey for Hajj was prescribed; the observance of strict respect for the emblems of Allah was enjoined; and any kind of obstruction or interference with the pilgrims to the Ka'abah was prohibited. Definite rules and regulations were laid down for what is lawful and unlawful in the matter of food, and self-imposed foolish restrictions of the pre-Islamic age were abolished. Permission was given to take food with the

people of the Book and to marry their women. Rules and regulations for the performance of *Wudū* (ablutions), bath and purification and *tayammum* (ablutions with dust) were prescribed. Punishment for rebellion, disturbance of peace and theft were specified. Drinking and gambling were forbidden. Expiation for the breaking of oath was laid down and a few more things were added to the law of evidence.

(2) Admonition to Muslims.

Now that the Muslims had become a ruling body, it was feared that power might corrupt them. At this period of great trial, Allah has admonished them over and over again to stick to justice and to guard against the wrong behaviour of their predecessors, the people of the Book. They have been enjoined to remain steadfast to the Covenant of obedience to Allah and His Messenger, and to observe strictly their commands and prohibitions in order to save themselves from the evil consequences which befell the Jews and the Christians who had violated them. They have been instructed to observe the dictates of the Holy Qur'ān in the conduct of all their affairs and warned against the attitude of hypocrisy.

(3) Admonition to Jews and Christians.

As the power of the Jews had been totally weakened and almost all their settlements in north Arabia had come under the rule of the Muslims, they have been again warned about their wrong attitude and invited to follow the Right Way. At the same time a detailed invitation has also been extended to the Christians. The errors of their creeds have been clearly pointed out and they have been admonished to accept the guidance of the Holy Prophet. Incidentally, it may be noted that no direct invitation has been extended to the Magians and idolaters living in the adjoining countries, because there was no need for a separate address for them as their condition had already been covered by the addresses to the *mushrik* Arabs.

SUMMARY

Subject:

Consolidation of the Islamic Community.

In continuation of the instructions about the consolidation of the Islamic Community given in Surah *An-Nisā,* the Muslims have been directed to observe and fulfil all their obligations: further regulations have been prescribed to train the Muslims for that purpose.

They have also been particularly warned as rulers to guard against the corruption of power and directed to observe the Covenant of the Qur'ān. They have also been exhorted to learn lessons from the failings of their predecessors, the Jews and the Christians, who in their turn have been admonished to give up their wrong attitudes towards the Right Way and accept the guidance taught by Prophet Muḥammad (God's peace be upon him).

Topics and their Interconnection.

The Believers have been exhorted to fulfil scrupulously all of their obligations and follow the regulations prescribed by the Divine Law about food, Sex, Ṣalat, justice, etc. 1-10

The Muslims have been warned to guard against the errors of their predecessors; they should follow the Right Path and avoid the bad example of the Jews and the Christians, who broke their Covenants and went astray into evil ways. They, in their turn, have been admonished to give up their wrong ways and accept Islam. 11-26

The story of the two sons of Adam has been related to reproach the Jews for their plot to kill the Holy Prophet and his Companions. (v.11 & E.N. 30). The story has also been used to emphasize the 27-32

sanctity of human life.

33-40 To achieve this object, punishments have been prescribed for those who create chaos in the Islamic State, and the Believers have been urged to exert their utmost to establish the Right way : the sanctity of property has also been emphasized.

41-50 The Holy Prophet (and through him the Muslims) has been reassured that he should not mind the enmity, the evil designs and the machinations of the Jews, but continue exerting his utmost to establish the Right Way in accordance with the Guidance of the Qur'ān; for nothing better could be expected from these who had forsaken their own Torah. He should deal with the Christians likewise, for they, too, had forsaken their Gospel.

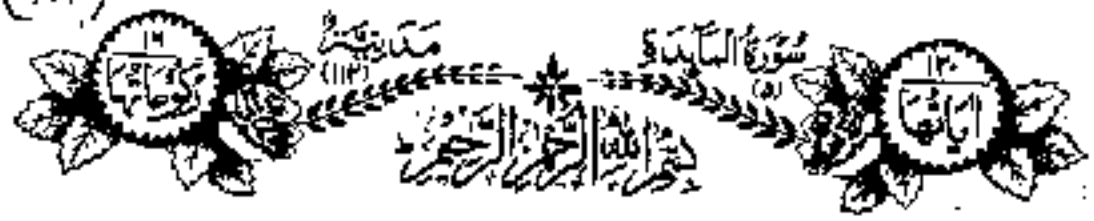
51-69 In view of the degenerate moral condition of the Jews and the Christians, the Believers have been warned not to make them their friends and confidants. Likewise they should be on their guard against the evil designs of the hypocrites, the disbelievers and the like and should rely on the true Believers alone. The people of the Book have, in their turn, been exhorted to give up their enmity and adopt the right attitude, for they cannot get salvation without this.

70-86 The theme of the corruptions of the Jews and Christians has been resumed. The Christians especially have been reproved for their errors in regard to the doctrine of *Tauḥid*. At the same time they have been preferred to the hard-hearted Jews, for there are among them some who are more inclined towards the Truth.

87-108 In this portion of the Sūrah, further regulations about the lawful and the un-lawful, in addition to those contained in vv.1-10, have been given.

109-119 At the end of the Sūrah, the mention of the conversation that will take place between Allah and His Prophets on the Day of Judgement, has been made for the benefit of the erring people to serve as a corrective to their creeds. The conversation with Prophet Christ has been cited as a specimen to warn particularly the Christians, who profess to believe in him, and generally all those people who put false hopes in their Prophets, etc.

Conclusion: "O mankind! The Sovereignty of the heavens and 120
the earth belongs to Allah: therefore you should become His true servants and fear Him, for He has full powers over everything."



يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اَوْفُوْا بِالْعُقُوْدِ ۭ اُحِلَّتْ لَكُمْ بَهِيْمَةُ الْاَنْعَامِ
اِلَّا مَا يُتْلٰى عَلَيْكُمْ غَيْرَ مُحِلِّي الصَّيْدِ وَاَنْتُمْ حُرُمٌ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَحْكُمُ
مَا يُرِيْدُ ۝ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تُحِلُّوْا شَعَاۗىِٕرَ اللّٰهِ وَلَا الشَّهْرَ الْحَرَامَ
وَلَا الْهَدْيَ وَلَا الْقَلَاۗىِٕدَ وَلَآ اٰۗمِّيْنَ الْبَيْتَ الْحَرَامَ يَبْتَغُوْنَ فَضْلًا
مِّنْ رَّبِّهِمْ وَرِضْوَانًا ۭ وَاِذَا حَلَلْتُمْ فَاصْطَادُوْا ۭ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ
قَوْمٍ اَنْ صَدُّوْكُمْ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ اَنْ تَعْتَدُوْا ۘ وَتَعَاوَنُوْا عَلَى
الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوٰى ۠ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوْا عَلَى الْاِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ ۠ وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ ۭ اِنَّ
اللّٰهَ شَدِيْدُ الْعِقَابِ ۝ حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةُ وَالدَّمُ وَلَحْمُ الْخِنْزِيْرِ
وَمَآ اُهِلَّ لِغَيْرِ اللّٰهِ بِهٖ وَالْمُنْخَنِقَةُ وَالْمَوْقُوْذَةُ وَالْمُتَرَدِّيَةُ وَ
النَّطِيْحَةُ وَمَآ اَكَلَ السَّبُعُ اِلَّا مَا ذَكَّيْتُمْ ۣ وَمَا ذُبِحَ عَلَى النُّصُبِ
وَاَنْ تَسْتَقْسِمُوْا بِالْاَزْلَامِ ۭ ذٰلِكُمْ فِسْقٌ ۭ اَلْيَوْمَ يَىِٕسَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا
مِنْ دِيْنِكُمْ فَلَا تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِ ۭ اَلْيَوْمَ اَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِيْنَكُمْ وَ
اَتْمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِيْ وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمُ الْاِسْلَامَ دِيْنًا ۭ فَمَنِ اضْطُرَّ فِيْ
مَخْمَصَةٍ غَيْرَ مُتَجَانِفٍ لِّاِثْمٍ ۙ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ۝ يَسْـَٔلُوْنَكَ

V
AL - MĀ'IDAH
اَلْمَآئِدَہ

Verses: 120

Revealed at Madīnah

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

O Believers, observe strictly the prescribed limits.[1] All kinds of cattle-like animals have been made lawful for you[2] except the ones which will be told you here-in-after, but you should not make hunting lawful for yourselves during the state of *iḥrām*[3]: indeed Allah ordains whatever He pleases.[4] 1

O Believers, do not violate the emblems[5] of God-worship. — Do not make lawful for yourselves any of the forbidden months nor catch hold of the animals dedicated to sacrifice nor lay hands on those animals which are collared as a mark of their dedication to God, nor molest the people repairing to the Inviolable Mosque (the Ka'abah), seeking their Lord's bounty and pleasure.[6] You are, however, allowed to hunt after you have put off *iḥrām*.[7] —And be on your guard : let not your resentment against those, who have barred you from visiting the Ka'abah, incite you so much as to transgress the prescribed limits.[8] Nay, cooperate with all in what is good and pious but do not cooperate in what is sinful and wicked. Fear Allah: for Allah is severe in retribution. 2

You are forbidden carrion[9] and blood, the flesh of swine and of that animal which has been slaughtered in any other name than that of Allah,[10] and of the strangled animal, and of that beaten to death or killed by a fall or gored to death or mangled by a beast of prey—save of that you duly slaughtered while it was still alive[11] —and of that which is slaughtered at (un-godly) shrines.[12-13] It is also unlawful for you to try to find your fortune by means of divining devices,[14] for all these things are sinful acts, Today the disbelievers have despaired of (vanquishing) your religion; therefore do not fear them but fear Me.[15] Today I have perfected your religion for you and completed My 3

blessing on you and approved Islam as the way of life for you ,[16] (Therefore observe the limits prescribed by the Law); if, however, one, dying of hunger, eats of any of these forbidden things, provided that he is not inclined towards sin, he will find Allah Forgiving and Compassionate.[17]

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1. The prescribed limit; the limits which are being prescribed for you in this Sūrah and which in general have always been laid down in the Divine Law" After this brief introductory sentence begins the statement of those limits that are to be observed strictly.

2. The Arabic word *an'ām* applies to camel, cow (ox), sheep and goat and *bahīmah* to all kinds of grazing quadrupeds. The combination of the two words has made the meaning more comprehensive by including all the grazing quadrupeds that resemble those four contained in the word *an'ām*. It also implies that the carnivora that kill other animals for food are unlawful. The Holy Prophet made this explicit in a Tradition declaring the carnivora unlawful. Likewise he also declared unlawful those birds that have claws and kill other animals for food or eat dead bodies. According to Ibn 'Abbās, the Holy Prophet prohibited the eating of the flesh of the carnivora and of the birds with claws. Other Traditions from several Companions also support the same.

3. *Ihrām* is the pilgrim's robe which has to be put on at fixed boundaries at the known distances from the Ka'abah. It is not lawful for any pilgrim to proceed to the Ka'abah until he puts off his usual dress and puts on the pilgrim's garb. This consists of two pieces of cloth without seam or ornament, one of which is wrapped round the loins and the other thrown over the shoulders. The instep, heel and head must be bare. This is called the state of *Ihrām* because it makes unlawful even some of the things that are ordinarily lawful. For instance, one should not have a shave or a hair-cut and should not wear other clothes or ornaments nor use perfumes nor indulge in sensual desires and the like. Another restriction is the prohibition against killing any animate object or against hunting or against directing any one else to help hunt an animal. (Please refer also to E.N. 213, Al-Baqarah).

4. This means that Allah has absolute authority to issue any decree He wills, and that the servants have no right at all to question it. Though all His Decrees and Commands are based on wisdom and are full of excellence, yet a Muslim, His servant, does not obey these just because they are proper and conducive to his good, but obeys them because they are commandments from his Sovereign. If He declares anything to be un-lawful, it becomes un-lawful for no other reason than that it has been made unlawful by Him. Likewise if He makes

anything lawful, it becomes lawful for no other reason than that its Owner and the Owner of everything permits His servants to use it. That is why the Qur'ān establishes with full force the fundamental principle that the only basis which makes a thing lawful or unlawful is whether there is the permission of the Owner for its use or not. Likewise there is no other basis for the servant to consider a thing to be lawful or un-lawful except that it is lawful if Allah makes it lawful and un-lawful if He prohibits it.

5. *Sha'ā-ir* is the plural of *shi-'ār* (emblem). Every object or a representation of it, that symbolises a way or a creed or a mode of thought or action or a system is called its *shi'-ār* because it serves as an emblem of it. Official flags,police and army uniforms, coins, currency notes, stamps etc., are the *sha'ā-ir* of governments which demand due respect for these from all under them, and, as far as possible, from others as well. For instance, Temple, Altar, Cross etc., are the *sha'ā-ir* of Christianity. the Hammer and Sickle is the *shi-'ār* of the Communist Party, and the Swastika of the Nazi Party. All of them demand reverence and respect for their emblems from their followers. If anyone shows disrespect for any of the emblems of any system, it is an indication that he has enmity with that system and if the offender belongs to the same system, this act will be tantamount to apostasy and rebellion against it.

The *Sha'ā-ir-Allah* (Emblems of Allah) are those signs and symbols that represent the pure way of God-worship as against the ways of idolatry, unbelief, paganism and atheism. The Muslims are required to show respect to the emblems of Allah wherever they find them in any way or system, provided that their psychological background is purely attributed to God-worship and has not in any way been polluted by any association with idolatry or unbelief. Therefore, if a Muslim comes across anything in the creed and deed of a non-Muslim which has an element of God-worship in it, he will show due respect to that element and to the emblems connected with God-worship. There will be no dispute with the non-Muslims on that account: a dispute arises only when he pollutes God-worship with the worship of others.

In this connection, it should be noted that the command to show due respect to the emblems of Allah was given at a time when the Muslims were at war with the pagan Arabs who were in possession of Makkah. This was necessitated because some of the pagan Arabs had to pass on their way to the Ka'abah through places where the Muslims could strike at them easily. Therefore the Muslims were enjoined not to molest them when they were proceeding to the House of Allah, even though they were idolaters and at war with them. Likewise, the Muslims should not attack them during the months of Ḥajj nor snatch from them those animals, which they were taking to the House of Allah as offering. This is to

ensure that the element of God-worship, which had remained intact in their corrupt religion, should be respected and not violated.

6. Immediately after this Command, a few emblems of Allah have been specially mentioned because there was an imminent danger of their violation by the Muslims owing to the state of war. This does not, however, mean that these emblems alone are to be respected.

7. Incidentally the command about *iḥrām* has been given here because this is also one of the emblems of Allah. Hunting during the state of *iḥrām* is prohibited, because it is the violation of one of the emblems of Allah. But when the restrictions of *iḥrām* come to an end according to the law, one is permitted to hunt, if one desires to do so.

8. This prohibition was laid down to check the Muslims from preventing the pagan Arabs from proceeding to Ḥajj and attacking them when they were passing through their territories. The Muslims had been so enraged when their enemies had prevented them from visiting the Ka'abah and from the performance of Ḥajj in contravention of their old custom that they were prone to retaliate, but Allah warned them not to transgress the bounds.

9. That is, the flesh of the animal that dies a natural death.

10. That is, the flesh of the animal which has been slaughtered in the name of another than Allah or has been slaughtered with the intention of dedicating it to a saint or a god or a goddess etc. (Please also see E.N. 171 of Al-Baqarah).

11. That is, "If an animal falls a victim to any of these accidents but is still alive and is duly slaughtered, it is lawful to eat its flesh". This also implies that the flesh of a clean animal becomes lawful only when it is slaughtered in the prescribed way and that there is no other way of making it lawful. In the prescribed way only that much of the throat is cut that enables the blood to flow out freely. This cannot happen if the whole of the neck is cut off or if the animal is strangled or killed in any other way because in that case most of the blood remains in the body and congeals at different places and sticks to the flesh. But when it is slaughtered in the prescribed way, the whole of the body remains connected with the brain for a sufficiently long time to allow the blood to flow totally out of the body and the flesh is cleansed of the blood which in itself is unlawful. Therefore it is essential that the flesh should be cleansed of blood in order to become lawful.

12. The Arabic word *nusub* applies to all those places which have been specifically dedicated to any saint or god, etc., for making offerings to them or for any other kind of ungodly worship whether there is or is not any sort of stone or wooden idol therein.

13. In this connection, it should be understood well that the limits prescribed by the Law for making eatables lawful or unlawful are not laid down from the point of view of physical health but from the moral and spiritual points of view. As regards the matters concerning physical health, these have been left to man's own judgement and discretion, It is his own business to find out what things are useful or harmful for his physical health and nourishment and the Law does not take any responsibility for his guidance in this respect. Had it done so, poison would have been the first thing to be made unlawful, but there is absolutely no mention of this or other deadly things in the Qur'ān or the Traditions. The Law is only concerned about what is morally or spiritually harmful or beneficial and also about the right or wrong means for obtaining lawful things. It is obvious that man has no means of finding out these things by himself and is consequently liable to commit errors in this matter without the guidance of the law. For whatever has been prohibited, has been prohibited because it is harmful from the point of view of cleanliness or morality or belief. On the contrary, whatever has been made lawful, has been made so because it is free from all these evils.

One might ask why Allah has not explained the philosophy underlying the prohibition of certain things for the clear understanding of the people. This is because it is not possible for mankind to comprehend this. For instance, it is not possible for us to make a research into the nature of moral evils that are produced by eating carrion, blood or the flesh of swine, nor is it easy to find out how they are produced and to what extent, because we have no means of measuring or weighing morality. It is, therefore, obvious that, even if their evil effects had been explained, the position of the sceptic would have remained the same as before for the lack of means of testing their veracity.

This is why Allah has declared the observance of the limits prescribed for the lawful and the unlawful as a matter of belief. One, who believes in the Qur'ān as the book of God and in the Holy Prophet as His Messenger and in Allah as All-Knowing and All-Wise, will observe the prescribed limits whether one understands their philosophy or not. On the other hand, if one does not believe in this basic creed, one will avoid only those things which are harmful according to human knowledge and will go on suffering from the consequences of those which man has not learnt to be harmful.

14. This verse comprises three categories of prohibitions:

(1) It prohibits the pagan ways of taking omens from a god or a goddess and the like, about one's fortune or getting indications as to the future or deciding disputes. For instance, the pagan Quraish of Makkah had specified the idol of Hubal at the Ka'abh for this purpose and kept near it seven divining arrows. They would, after presenting the offering to the priest and performing certain ceremonies, pull out an arrow and regard the words engraved on it as the verdict of Hubal. *[Contd. on p. 427*

مَاذَآ اُحِلَّ لَهُمْ ؕ قُلْ اُحِلَّ لَكُمُ الطَّيِّبٰتُ ۙ وَمَا عَلَّمْتُمْ مِّنَ الْجَوَارِحِ
مُكَلِّبِيْنَ تُعَلِّمُوْنَهُنَّ مِمَّا عَلَّمَكُمُ اللّٰهُ ۫ فَكُلُوْا مِمَّآ اَمْسَكْنَ عَلَيْكُمْ
وَاذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْهِ ۠ وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ سَرِيْعُ الْحِسَابِ ۝
اَلْيَوْمَ اُحِلَّ لَكُمُ الطَّيِّبٰتُ ؕ وَطَعَامُ الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْكِتٰبَ حِلٌّ لَّكُمْ ۖ وَ
طَعَامُكُمْ حِلٌّ لَّهُمْ ۫ وَالْمُحْصَنٰتُ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنٰتِ وَالْمُحْصَنٰتُ مِنَ
الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْكِتٰبَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ اِذَآ اٰتَيْتُمُوْهُنَّ اُجُوْرَهُنَّ مُحْصِنِيْنَ
غَيْرَ مُسٰفِحِيْنَ وَلَا مُتَّخِذِيْٓ اَخْدَانٍ ؕ وَمَنْ يَّكْفُرْ بِالْاِيْمَانِ فَقَدْ
حَبِطَ عَمَلُهٗ ۫ وَهُوَ فِى الْاٰخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخٰسِرِيْنَ ۝ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا
اِذَا قُمْتُمْ اِلَى الصَّلٰوةِ فَاغْسِلُوْا وُجُوْهَكُمْ وَاَيْدِيَكُمْ اِلَى الْمَرَافِقِ
وَامْسَحُوْا بِرُءُوْسِكُمْ وَاَرْجُلَكُمْ اِلَى الْكَعْبَيْنِ ؕ وَاِنْ كُنْتُمْ جُنُبًا فَاطَّهَّرُوْا ؕ
وَاِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَّرْضٰٓى اَوْ عَلٰى سَفَرٍ اَوْ جَآءَ اَحَدٌ مِّنْكُمْ مِّنَ الْغَآئِطِ اَوْ
لٰمَسْتُمُ النِّسَآءَ فَلَمْ تَجِدُوْا مَآءً فَتَيَمَّمُوْا صَعِيْدًا طَيِّبًا فَامْسَحُوْا
بِوُجُوْهِكُمْ وَاَيْدِيْكُمْ مِّنْهُ ؕ مَا يُرِيْدُ اللّٰهُ لِيَجْعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِّنْ حَرَجٍ
وَّلٰكِنْ يُّرِيْدُ لِيُطَهِّرَكُمْ وَلِيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهٗ عَلَيْكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُوْنَ ۝
وَاذْكُرُوْا نِعْمَةَ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَمِيْثَاقَهُ الَّذِىْ وَاثَقَكُمْ بِهٖٓ ۙ اِذْ قُلْتُمْ
سَمِعْنَا وَاَطَعْنَا ۫ وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلِيْمٌۢ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُوْرِ ۝ يٰٓاَيُّهَا
الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا كُوْنُوْا قَوّٰمِيْنَ لِلّٰهِ شُهَدَآءَ بِالْقِسْطِ ۫ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ
قَوْمٍ عَلٰٓى اَلَّا تَعْدِلُوْا ؕ اِعْدِلُوْا ۟ هُوَ اَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوٰى ۫ وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ
خَبِيْرٌۢ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ ۝ وَعَدَ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ ۙ لَهُمْ

They ask you what has been made lawful for them. Say, "All 4
the good and pure things have been made lawful for you.[18] You may
also eat of what the hunting animals, which you have trained to hunt
in accordance with the knowledge Allah has given you, catch and hold
for you;[19] you should, however, mention Allah's name over it,[20] and
fear to violate the Law of Allah. for Allah is swift at reckoning."

All the good and pure things have today been made lawful for 5
you; the food of the people of the Book is lawful for you, and your
food for them,[21] Likewise you are permitted to marry chaste believing
women or chaste women from among the people who were given the
Scripture before you,[22] provided that you give them their dowries and
become their protectors in wedlock; this permission is not for sensual
license or secret illicit relations; whoever rejects the way of Faith, all
the deeds of his life shall become vain and he shall be a bankrupt in
the Hereafter.[23]

O Believers, when you rise to offer the *Ṣalāt,* you must wash 6
your faces and hands and arms up to the elbows and wipe your heads
with wet hands and wash your feet up to the ankles;[24] and if you have
become unclean, cleanse yourselves with a full bath;[25] if, however,
you are sick or are on a journey, or if any of you has relieved himself
or if you have "touched" women and you can find no water, then
cleanse yourselves with pure dust: strike your palms on it and wipe
your hands and faces with it.[26] Allah does not will to make life hard
for you, but He wills to purify you and complete His blessing upon
you[27] so that you may show gratitude.

Keep in mind the blessing Allah has bestowed upon you and do 7-8
not forget the solemn covenant which He made with you (and which
you confirmed), when you said, "We have heard and submitted," Fear
Allah for Allah knows the very secrets of the hearts. O Believers, be
steadfast in righteousness and just in giving witnesses for the sake of
Allah;[29] the enmity of any people should not so provoke you as to turn
you away from justice. Do justice for it is akin to piety. Fear Allah (in
your affairs): indeed He is fully aware of what you do.

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(2) The second category consists of the superstitious ways and irrational methods of taking decisions about the daily problems of life for anything

regarded as portending good or evil regardless of reason or knowledge, or of finding out future events blindly by the ominous significance of particular things, circumstances, occurrences or proceedings or the like. In short, it included all the so-called arts of prediction and prophetic significance.

(3) The third category includes all kinds of gambling in which the distribution of things etc., is based on mere chance and not on merit, right, service or other rational considerations. For instance, all the schemes of lottery which entitle a certain holder of a ticket to a prize merely on chance, and at the expense of a large number of other holders of such tickets, or the award of prizes for cross-word puzzles in which a certain answer out of a large number of correct ones corresponds, by mere chance, to the answer that has been ear-marked as correct for the purpose — all these things are unlawful.

However, one simple form of casting lots is lawful in Islam, when there are two equally lawful things or rights and there is no rational method of deciding between them. Supposing two persons have equal rights, in every respect, to something and the judge finds no rational justification to give preference to either of the disputants, neither of whom is willing to forgo his rights. In such a case, if they mutually agree, the matter may be decided by casting lots, or if one has to choose one of the two lawful things and is in difficulty in regard to the choice, one is allowed to cast lots for it. The Holy Prophet adopted this method on such occasions as required a choice to be made between two persons with equal rights, whenever he thought that if he himself decided in favour of one, the other might be grieved.

15. "Today" does not mean a particular day or date but the time when this verse was revealed.

"The disbelievers have despaired of your religion" means: "After a long systematic resistance and opposition, they have lost hope of defeating your religion. Now they do not expect that you will ever return to the former way of "ignorance" because your religion has become a permanent way of life and has been established on a firm footing. Therefore, "Do not fear them but fear *Me*." That is, there is no longer any danger of interference from the disbelievers that they will prevent you from the performance of your religious obligations. You should, therefore, fear God and observe His commands and instructions because no ground for fear has been left for you. Now your disobedience of the Law will mean that you do not intend to obey Allah."

16. "I have perfected your religion" means: "I have provided it with all the essential elements of a permanent way of life which comprises a complete

system of thought and practice and civilization and have laid down principles and given detailed instructions for the solution of all human problems. Hence there is no need for you to seek guidance and instructions from any other source."

The completion of "the blessing" is the completion of the blessing of guidance.

"I have approved Islam as the way of life for you" because you have practically proved by your obedience and devotion to it that you sincerely believe in Islam which you have accepted. As I have practically set you free from every kind of subjection and servitude there is no compulsion for you to submit to any other than Me in your practical life." It also implies, "As a gratitude for these blessings of Mine, you should show no negligence in the observance of the prescribed limits."

Authentic traditions show that this declaration was revealed on the occasion of the last Ḥajj performed by the Holy Prophet in A.H. 10. I am however of the opinion that it was at first revealed in A.H. 6 close after the treaty of Ḥudaibiyah as a part of this discourse, but was again sent down to the Holy Prophet for its declaration on that suitable occasion. This is because this verse is so well knit in this context that it would be incomplete without it, Therefore it cannot be imagined that it was inserted here afterwards when it was revealed in A.H. 10. I believe (and the real knowledge is with Allah) that at the time of its revelation in this context its real significance was not realized, therefore in A.H. 10, when the whole of Arabia was subdued and the power of Islam reached its zenith, Allah again sent down these sentences to His Prophet for their declaration on the occasion of his last Ḥajj.

17. Please refer to E.N. 172 of Al-Baqarah.

18. A subtle point is hidden in this answer. It is meant to set right the doubting attitude of some "religious persons," who regard everything as unlawful unless it is explicitly declared to be lawful. There was a need to remove this doubt because it makes people very fastidious. So much so that such people begin to demand a complete list of lawful things in every sphere of life and look at everything with a doubting attitude. Those who asked the question did so with the intention of obtaining a detailed list of the lawful things so that they might consider all other things as unlawful. However, the Qur'ān did the opposite of it and gave a detailed list of the forbidden things and made all other good things lawful. This was a great reform, for it set human life free from many bondages and opened wide the doors of the vast world for mankind. Before its revelation only a limited number of things were lawful and the remaining vast world was unlawful, but this verse declared a limited number of things unlawful and made the remaining vast world lawful.

"Lawful" has been qualified with "pure" so that impure things might not be made lawful just because they have not been included in the list of prohibition. As regards the criterion for judging whether a thing is pure or not, it should be noted that all those things are pure which are not unclean according to any principle of the Islamic Law, or which are not offensive to good taste or have not universally been regarded as repugnant by cultured people.

19. Hunting animals are dogs, leopards, falcons, hawks and other beasts and birds of prey which are trained to chase wild animals and catch them for their masters, without mangling them. The game of the trained hunting animals is lawful because they do not mangle it and that of the untrained beasts and birds of prey is unlawful because they mangle it.

There is, however, a difference of opinion among the jurists about this matter. Imām Shāfi'ī and those of his school of thought are of the opinion that if the hunting beast or bird eats a part of what it catches, it becomes unlawful, for this means that the animal had caught the game for itself and not for its master. Imām Mālik and those of his school of thought are of the opinion that if the hunting bird or beast eats less than one-third of the game, the remaining two-thirds or so is lawful for the master. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and those of his school of thought are of the opinion that if the hunting beast eats a part of what it catches, the remaining game will become unlawful, but if the hunting bird eats a part of it the remaining game will not become unlawful because the hunting beast can be trained to catch and hold the game for its master without eating anything of it, but the hunting bird cannot be so trained. In contrast to these views, Ḥaḍrat 'Alī is of the opinion that the game of the hunting bird is absolutely unlawful, because it cannot be trained to catch and hold the game for its master without eating something of it.

20. That is one should recite *bismillah* ("In the name of Allah,"), when letting loose the hunting animal for game. According to a Tradition, 'Adī-bin-Ḥātim asked the Holy Prophet whether he could hunt a game with a hunting dog. The Holy Prophet replied, "You may eat of the game if you recited the name of Allah at the time of letting loose the hunting dog, provided that he did not eat of it. In the other case you should not eat it because that would mean that the dog had actually caught it for himself." Then 'Adī-bin-Ḥātim further asked, "If I let loose my own dog, on the game but afterwards find another dog there, what should I do in that case?" The Holy Prophet replied, "Do not eat it because you mentioned the name of Allah in relation to your own dog and not the other dog."

The verse enjoins that the name of Allah must be mentioned at the time of letting loose the hunting animal in order to make the game lawful. If, however, the hunted animal is found alive, it should be duly slaughtered in the name of Allah,

But in case it is not found alive, it will be lawful if the name of Allah was mentioned at the time of letting loose the hunting animal. The same also applies to hunting with arrows.

21. "The food of the People of the Book" also includes what has been slaughtered by them.

"The food of the People of the Book is lawful for you and your food for them" means that there are no restrictions either on us or on them to take food together. The Muslims are permitted to take meals with the People of the Book and they with the Muslims. But the repetition of the sentence "all good and pure things have been made lawful for you" is very significant. It shows that the Muslims should not partake of their food, if the people of the Book do not observe those rules which are essential from the point of view of the Islamic Law, or if they include unlawful things in their food and drink. For instance, if they do not mention the name of Allah over the animal they slaughter or mention any other name than that of Allah over it, the flesh would be forbidden for the Muslims. Likewise if liquor or pork or any other forbidden things is served, the Muslims are not permitted to sit at the same table with them.

The same rule also applies to the food and drink of other non-Muslims except that the Muslims are not permitted at all to eat the flesh of the animals slaughtered by non-Muslims. They are permitted to eat the flesh of the clean animals, slaughtered by the People of the Book only, if they duly pronounced the name of Allah over it.

22. This refers to the Jews and the Christians. Permission to marry only their women has been given, and that, too, with the provision that they should be chaste (*muḥṣanāt*). There is a difference of opinion in the details of the application of this permission. According to Ibn 'Abbās, a Muslim may marry from among the women of the People of the Book who are the subjects of the Islamic State, but is not permitted to marry from among the women of the People of the Book living in the regions which are at war with the Islamic State or are living in a territory of the unbelievers. The Ḥanafīs differ a little from this and consider it undesirable, though not unlawful, to marry women from among the People of the Book living in a foreign territory. On the contrary, Sa'īd bin Musayyib and Ḥasan Baṣrī are of the opinion that the Command is of a general nature; therefore there is no need to make any kind of distinction between the People of the Book whether they are subjects of an Islamic State or living in a foreign territory.

Besides this there also is a difference in the interpretations of the word *muḥṣanāt*. According to Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, it refers to virtuous and chaste women.

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مَّغْفِرَةٌ وَّ اَجْرٌ عَظِيْمٌ ۝9 وَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا وَ كَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَآ اُولٰٓئِكَ اَصْحٰبُ
الْجَحِيْمِ ۝10 يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اذْكُرُوْا نِعْمَتَ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْكُمْ اِذْ هَمَّ قَوْمٌ
اَنْ يَّبْسُطُوْٓا اِلَيْكُمْ اَيْدِيَهُمْ فَكَفَّ اَيْدِيَهُمْ عَنْكُمْ ۚ وَ اتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ ۭ وَ عَلَى
اللّٰهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ ۝11 وَ لَقَدْ اَخَذَ اللّٰهُ مِيْثَاقَ بَنِيْٓ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ ۚ
وَ بَعَثْنَا مِنْهُمُ اثْنَيْ عَشَرَ نَقِيْبًا ۭ وَ قَالَ اللّٰهُ اِنِّيْ مَعَكُمْ ۭ لَئِنْ اَقَمْتُمُ
الصَّلٰوةَ وَ اٰتَيْتُمُ الزَّكٰوةَ وَ اٰمَنْتُمْ بِرُسُلِيْ وَ عَزَّرْتُمُوْهُمْ وَ اَقْرَضْتُمُ
اللّٰهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا لَّاُكَفِّرَنَّ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّاٰتِكُمْ وَ لَاُدْخِلَنَّكُمْ جَنّٰتٍ تَجْرِيْ
مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ ۚ فَمَنْ كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذٰلِكَ مِنْكُمْ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَآءَ
السَّبِيْلِ ۝12 فَبِمَا نَقْضِهِمْ مِّيْثَاقَهُمْ لَعَنّٰهُمْ وَ جَعَلْنَا قُلُوْبَهُمْ قٰسِيَةً ۚ
يُحَرِّفُوْنَ الْكَلِمَ عَنْ مَّوَاضِعِهٖ ۙ وَ نَسُوْا حَظًّا مِّمَّا ذُكِّرُوْا بِهٖ ۚ وَ لَا تَزَالُ
تَطَّلِعُ عَلٰى خَآئِنَةٍ مِّنْهُمْ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا مِّنْهُمْ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَ اصْفَحْ ۭ اِنَّ
اللّٰهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ۝13 وَ مِنَ الَّذِيْنَ قَالُوْٓا اِنَّا نَصٰرٰٓى اَخَذْنَا مِيْثَاقَهُمْ
فَنَسُوْا حَظًّا مِّمَّا ذُكِّرُوْا بِهٖ ۠ فَاَغْرَيْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَ الْبَغْضَآءَ اِلٰى
يَوْمِ الْقِيٰمَةِ ۭ وَ سَوْفَ يُنَبِّئُهُمُ اللّٰهُ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَصْنَعُوْنَ ۝14 يٰٓاَهْلَ
الْكِتٰبِ قَدْ جَآءَكُمْ رَسُوْلُنَا يُبَيِّنُ لَكُمْ كَثِيْرًا مِّمَّا كُنْتُمْ تُخْفُوْنَ مِنَ
الْكِتٰبِ وَ يَعْفُوْا عَنْ كَثِيْرٍ ۭ قَدْ جَآءَكُمْ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ نُوْرٌ وَّ كِتٰبٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ۝15
يَّهْدِيْ بِهِ اللّٰهُ مَنِ اتَّبَعَ رِضْوَانَهٗ سُبُلَ السَّلٰمِ وَ يُخْرِجُهُمْ مِّنَ
الظُّلُمٰتِ اِلَى النُّوْرِ بِاِذْنِهٖ وَ يَهْدِيْهِمْ اِلٰى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ۝16 لَقَدْ كَفَرَ
الَّذِيْنَ قَالُوْٓا اِنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَ الْمَسِيْحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ ۭ قُلْ فَمَنْ يَّمْلِكُ مِنَ اللّٰهِ

Allah has promised that He will pardon the errors of those who believe and do good deeds, and will give them a rich reward. As for those who disbelieve and treat the Revelations of Allah as false, they shall go to Hell. 9-10

O Believers, recall to mind the favour which Allah has (recently) shown to you: when some people intended to do harm to you, Allah restrained their hands from you.[30] Fear Allah in whatever you do for the Believers should put their trust in Allah alone. 11

Allah had bound the Israelites by a solemn covenant, and appointed twelve supervisors[31] from among them and said, "I am with you; if you establish the *Ṣalat*, pay the *Zakāt* and believe in My Messengers, and support them and give a generous loan to Allah,[33] I shall surely wipe out your evils from you,[34] and admit you into gardens under which canals flow, But after this whoever from among you adopted the way of disbelief, has indeed gone astray from the Right Way."[35] Then they broke their covenant and because of this We deprived them of Our mercy and hardened their hearts. Now they have become so degenerate that they distort the words of the Scriptures so as to change their meanings completely: moreover, they have forgotten the major portion of the teachings given to them and every now and then you find out one act or the other of their dishonesty. There are only a few of them who are free from this vice: (so whatever mischief they do is to be expected of them). Yet pardon them and connive at what they are doing: Allah likes those who show generosity in their dealings. 12-13

Likewise We bound by a covenant those people, who said, "We are *Naṣāra*."[36] But they too, forgot much of what had been taught to them. So We sowed among them seeds of discord, enmity and hatred that shall last up to the Day of Resurrection, and surely the time will come when Allah will tell them of what they had been contriving in the world. 14

O People of the Book, Our Messenger has come to you; he makes manifest to you many things of the Book which you were concealing, and passes over many others.[37] Light has come to you from Allah and the Book which guides to the Truth, whereby Allah leads to the paths of peace[38] those who seek His pleasure and brings 15-16

them out of the depths of darkness into the Light by His grace and guides them towards the Right Way.

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That is why he excludes characterless women of the People of the Book from this permission. Ḥasan, Shā'bī and Ibrahīm Nakha'ī are of the same opinion and the Ḥanafīs also approve of this. On the other side, Imām Shāfi'i takes it to mean free women of the people of the Book as opposed to the slave-girls from among them.

23. The warning that immediately follows the permission given to marry women from among the People of the Book is very significant. The Muslim who makes use of this permission has been warned to guard his faith and morality very cautiously against the influence of his unbelieving wife. There is a genuine danger that his deep love might render him a prey to wrong creeds and acts of his unbelieving wife and he might lose both his Faith and morality, or he might adopt a wrong moral and social attitude which might be against the spirit of his faith.

24. According to the practice and instructions of the Holy Prophet, washing of the face includes the inside washing and cleaning of the mouth, throat and nose. It is also essential to wipe the ears from outside and inside as they form part of the head. The hands should be cleansed first because the other parts are to be cleansed with them.

25. A full bath is essential in case one becomes "unclean" by cohabitation or by a discharge of semen during sleep etc. It is forbidden to touch the Qur'ān or to offer the Prayer while one is "unclean". (For further details please refer to E.N.'s 67, 68, 69 of An-Nisā).

26. Please refer to E.N.'s 69 and 70 of An-Nisā.

27. Cleanliness of the body is a blessing like the purity of the soul. The blessing of Allah becomes complete only when one gets full guidance for the purity of both the body and the soul.

28. The blessing is that Allah has made the right way of life clear for the Muslims and appointed them to the high position of the leadership of the world to guide it on the straight path.

29. Please refer to E.N.'s 164 and 165 of An-Nisā.

30. This refers to the incident that has been related by Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās. Some Jews plotted to kill the Holy Prophet and some of his eminent Companions in order to give a crushing blow to Islam. Accordingly, they invited him to a dinner. But right in time the Holy Prophet by the grace of God came to know of the plot and did not go to the dinner. This incident has been mentioned

here by way of introduction, as the address onward is directed towards the Israelites.

The address, which begins from here, has two objects. First, it is meant to warn the Muslims to guard against the attitude which the Jews and the Christians had adopted towards the covenant they had made with God: they had broken the covenant and swerved into wrong and evil ways. Second, it warns the Jews and the Christians of their error and invites them to the Right Way.

31. The Arabic word *naqīb* means one who guards and keeps a protecting and restraining watch. Allah commanded Moses to appoint twelve supervisors one each from the twelve tribes of Israel to keep watch over their affairs in order to protect them from irreligious and immoral ways. The Bible mentions twelve "princes of the tribes of their fathers" (Numbers, 1:16) as "heads of thousands in Israel" but not as supervisors of religion and morality as is implied in the word *naqīb*.

32. That is, "If you accept the invitation of the Messengers who come from Me and help them in their mission....."

33. "..... a good loan to God" is the money spent in His Way. Such money has been called a good loan in the Qur'ān at several places and Allah has very graciously promised to return every farthing of the loan after increasing it manifold, provided that it is a "good loan" which has been lawfully earned and spent in accordance with the Divine Law with good intentions.

34. Allah "wipes out" evils in two ways: (1) When a person adopts the Right Way and follows the Divine Guidance in thought and action, his soul begins to purify itself and his life begins to be clean of many evils. (2) But if, inspite of this, he does not attain to the high rank of perfection as a whole, and still has some evils left in him, Allah, by the exercise of His grace, will not take him to task and will "wipe out" these from his account. This is because Allah is not hard and strict in taking account of minor evils, provided that the person sincerely accepts the fundamental Guidance and begins to reform himself accordingly.

35. The significance of "..... he has indeed gone astray from the Right Way" is that at first he found the Right Way and then lost it and strayed into paths of ruin.

"The Right Way" does not fully express the meaning of *"sawā-'as-sabīl"*. It is that way of life which enables a man to develop harmoniously all his powers, faculties, and abilities: which satisfies all his cravings, urges and feelings and the demands of his body and soul in a congenial manner: which guides him rightly to keep balanced the multifold complex relations with other human beings: which leads him individually and collectively to exploit and use equitably the natural

resources for his own good and that of humanity. In short, it is that way of life which enables the individual and the society to solve spiritual, moral, social, physical, economic, political and international problems in a straight, smooth, even and just manner.

It is obvious that man with his limited powers and intellect cannot by himself solve these problems, as he is simply incapable of comprehending at one and the same time all the aspects of human problems so as to weigh and estimate their relative importance and judge between the different courses before him. That is why, whenever he has tried to plan a way of life for himself, he has utterly failed to do justice to his own self or his society, and made a mess of all his affairs and problems, and created a state of chaos everywhere. This is because with his narrow vision he becomes so absorbed in one basic need out of many and one problem out of many that he loses sight of all others and neglects them intentionally or un-intentionally. As a result of this, life loses its balance and begins to rush towards one extreme. When this state of affairs becomes unbearable, one of the neglected needs or problems takes hold of man and life begins to rush towards another extreme with the same destructive result. In this way, life goes on running from one extreme to the other and man never finds the balanced middle way which is "The Right Way", because all the ways planned by him keep him running in wrong directions from one extreme to the other.

As has been pointed out, man cannot plan that right way which may lead him clear of the pitfalls of the myriad wrong and crooked ways; so Allah has very graciously made arrangements for showing the Right Way to mankind. He sent His Messengers with Guidance to lead mankind to the Right Way to real success in this world and in the Hereafter; and the one who loses this way will go wrong here and act wrongly, and inevitably go to Hell in the next world, for all the wrong ways lead to Hell.

In this connection it will be pertinent to point out the blunder that has been committed by some so-called philosophers. When they noticed that human life was continually running between two extremes, they came to the wrong conclusion that the Dialectical process was the natural way of the evolution of human progress. According to them, internal contradictions are inherent in all things and the struggle between these opposites and their synthesis constitutes the contents of the process of development. They apply the Dialectical methods to the study of social life and come to the wrong conclusion that the same is the right way of evolution. Accordingly they start with a thesis of an extreme nature for the solution of a problem and go on rushing away from the Right Way towards one extreme till they discover, to their dismay, that in this process gross injustice has been done to some other equally important problems. Then they turn back with the antithesis of the

first theory and presume that the synthesis of the two will help evolve its right solution. Though it is true that the struggle between the two opposite theories helps them approach the Right Way, yet they cross it rapidly towards the other extreme because they do not believe in Divine Guidance which alone can make one firmly adhere to it. Then they do gross justice to some other problems and the same process is repeated over and over again. If such short-sighted philosophers had not rejected God and religion and made an impartial study of the Qur'ān, they would have discovered to their joy that the Right Way is the straight path, leading to the human evolution, and not the myriad crooked and curved paths. Thus they would have saved mankind from continually rushing aimlessly between extremes. (Adapted).

36. It is wrong to presume that the title *Nasārā* pertains to Nazareth, the home of Jesus. In fact, its root is *nusrat* (help). The Christians have been called *Naṣārā* (helpers) for the reason that when Jesus asked, "Who will be my *anṣār* (helpers) in the cause of Allah?" his disciples answered, "We are *anṣār* in the cause of Allah." (LXI : 14). The Christian writers got the wrong impression that the Qur'ān contemptuously calls the Christians *Nasārā* because of the apparent similarity between *Naṣārā* and Nazarenes, a sect of early Christians who were contemptuously called Nazarites. But the Qur'ān makes it clear here that the Christians themselves said, "We are *Naṣārā*." It is obvious that the Christians never called themselves Nazarites.

In this connection, it may be noted that Jesus Christ never called his disciples "Christians" or "Messiahites," for he had not come to found a new religion after his own name but to revive the same religion that Moses and the other Prophets before and after him had brought. Therefore he did not form any new community other than that of the Israelites; nor they lived like a new one; nor adopted a distinctive name or symbol for themselves. They used to go to the Temple (Jerusalem) for prayer along with the other Jews and considered themselves to be bound by the Mosaic Law. (Please refer to the Acts, 3: 1, 10: 14,15: 1 & 5, 21: 22).

Later on the process of separation began from two sides. On the one side St. Paul, a follower of the Prophet Jesus, put an end to the observance of the law and declared that the only thing needed for salvation was belief in Messiah. On the other side, the Jewish rabbis cut off the followers of Christ by declaring them to be a misguided sect. But inspite of this separatedness, at first the sect bore no distinctive name. The followers of Christ called themselves by different names, such as disciples, brethren, believers, saints etc. (Please refer to the Acts, 2 : 44, 4: 32, 9 : 26, 11 : 29, 13 : 52, 15 : 1 & 23; Romans, 15 : 45, and Corinthians, 1:

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شَيْءٍ إِنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يُهْلِكَ الْمَسِيحَ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَأُمَّهُ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ
جَمِيعًا ۗ وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا ۚ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ ۚ
وَاللَّهُ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٧﴾ وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ وَالنَّصٰرٰى نَحْنُ أَبْنٰٓؤُا
اللَّهِ وَأَحِبَّٰٓؤُهُ ۚ قُلْ فَلِمَ يُعَذِّبُكُمْ بِذُنُوبِكُمْ ۚ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ بَشَرٌ مِّمَّنْ خَلَقَ ۚ
يَغْفِرُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۚ وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا ۖ وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٨﴾ يَٰٓأَهْلَ الْكِتٰبِ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولُنَا يُبَيِّنُ
لَكُمْ عَلٰى فَتْرَةٍ مِّنَ الرُّسُلِ أَنْ تَقُولُوا مَا جَاءَنَا مِنْ بَشِيرٍ وَلَا نَذِيرٍ ۖ
فَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بَشِيرٌ وَنَذِيرٌ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٩﴾ وَإِذْ قَالَ
مُوسٰى لِقَوْمِهِ يٰقَوْمِ اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ جَعَلَ فِيكُمْ أَنْبِيَاءَ
وَجَعَلَكُمْ مُّلُوكًا ۖ وَآتٰىكُمْ مَّا لَمْ يُؤْتِ أَحَدًا مِّنَ الْعٰلَمِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾ يٰقَوْمِ
ادْخُلُوا الْأَرْضَ الْمُقَدَّسَةَ الَّتِي كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَلَا تَرْتَدُّوا عَلٰٓى أَدْبَارِكُمْ
فَتَنْقَلِبُوا خٰسِرِينَ ﴿٢١﴾ قَالُوا يٰمُوسٰٓى إِنَّ فِيهَا قَوْمًا جَبَّارِينَ ۖ وَإِنَّا لَنْ
نَّدْخُلَهَا حَتّٰى يَخْرُجُوا مِنْهَا ۖ فَإِنْ يَخْرُجُوا مِنْهَا فَإِنَّا دٰخِلُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾ قَالَ
رَجُلَانِ مِنَ الَّذِينَ يَخَافُونَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمَا ادْخُلُوا عَلَيْهِمُ الْبَابَ ۚ
فَإِذَا دَخَلْتُمُوهُ فَإِنَّكُمْ غٰلِبُونَ ۚ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَتَوَكَّلُوٓا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾
قَالُوا يٰمُوسٰٓى إِنَّا لَنْ نَّدْخُلَهَآ أَبَدًا مَّا دَامُوا فِيهَا فَاذْهَبْ أَنْتَ وَرَبُّكَ
فَقٰتِلَآ إِنَّا هٰهُنَا قٰعِدُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي لَآ أَمْلِكُ إِلَّا نَفْسِي وَ
أَخِي فَافْرُقْ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ الْقَوْمِ الْفٰسِقِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾ قَالَ فَإِنَّهَا مُحَرَّمَةٌ
عَلَيْهِمْ أَرْبَعِينَ سَنَةً ۚ يَتِيهُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ فَلَا تَأْسَ عَلَى الْقَوْمِ

Indeed they committed blasphemy, who said, "The Messiah, son of Mary, is verily God."[39] O Muhammad, say to them, "If Allah chose to destroy the Messiah, Mary's son, and his mother, and all the dwellers of the earth, who has the power to prevent Him from this? For, to Allah belongs the Kingdom of the earth and the heavens and all that is between them: He creates whatever He wills[40] and has power over everything." 17

The Jews and the Christians say, "We are the sons of Allah and His beloved ones." Ask them, "Why then does He punish you for your sins? In fact, you are also human beings like the other human beings He has created. He forgives whomever He wills and punishes whomever He wills. To Allah belongs the Kingdom of the earth and the heavens, and all that is in it and all shall return to Him." 18

O People of the Book, this Messenger of Ours has come to you and is making clear to you the teachings of the Right Way after a long interval during which there had come no Messengers, lest you should say, "No bearer of good news nor warner came to us. Lo, now the bearer of the good news and warner has come.— And Allah has power over everything."[41] 19

Call to mind the time when Moses said to his people, "O my people, remember the favour which Allah bestowed upon you. He raised up Prophets from among you and made you rulers and gave you that which had not been given to anyone in the world.[42] O my people, enter the Holy Land that Allah has destined for you,[43] and, do not turn your backs or you will turn about losers,"[44] They replied, "O Moses, in that land dwell mighty people; therefore we are never going to enter it till they leave it; if, however, they leave it we are ready to enter it." Among those, who were filled with fear, there were two persons[45] whom Allah had blessed with His favour: they said, "Make your way into the gate against those mighty people; when you enter it, you will surely be victorious. Trust in Allah, if you are true believers." But even then they replied, "O Moses, we are never going to enter it so long as they remain therein. Therefore, go, both you and your Lord, and fight: we will stay here," At this Moses cried. "My Lord, I have no power over anyone but myself and my brother: so set us apart from these disobedient people." Allah replied, "Very well, they are forbidden this land for forty years, during which period they shall 20-26

wander homeless on the earth[46]: so do not grieve at all for these disobedient people.[47]

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12). But the Jews called them Galileans or the sect of the Nazarenes contemptuously and tauntingly (Luke, 13 : 2, The Acts, 24 : 5) because of the Roman Province of Galilee in which Nazareth, the birth place of Jesus, was situated. These satirical names, however, did not become current as the permanent names of the followers of Christ.

As a matter of fact, the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch, when Barnabas and Paul went there in 43-44 A.D. to preach the Gospels. (The Acts, 11: 26). Though this name was also given to them contemptuously by their enemies, yet, by and by, their leaders accepted this, saying, "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye,.....if any man suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed." (I Peter, 4: 16). At long last, they lost the feelings that the name "Christian" was a bad title that had been given to them by their enemies.

Thus it is clear that the Qur'ān has not called them Christians because of the contempt associated with it, but has called them *Anṣār* (helpers) in order to remind them that they were the name-sake of those disciples of Jesus who had responded to his invitation and said, "We are helpers of Allah." Is it not an irony that instead of being grateful to the Qur'ān for giving them their name, the Christian missionaries of today should bear a grievance against it for not calling them "Christians"?

37. That is, "He makes known many things which you were dishonestly keeping back from the Scripture, for these are essential for the establishment of the true Faith, but disregards many other such things for there is no real need to disclose them."

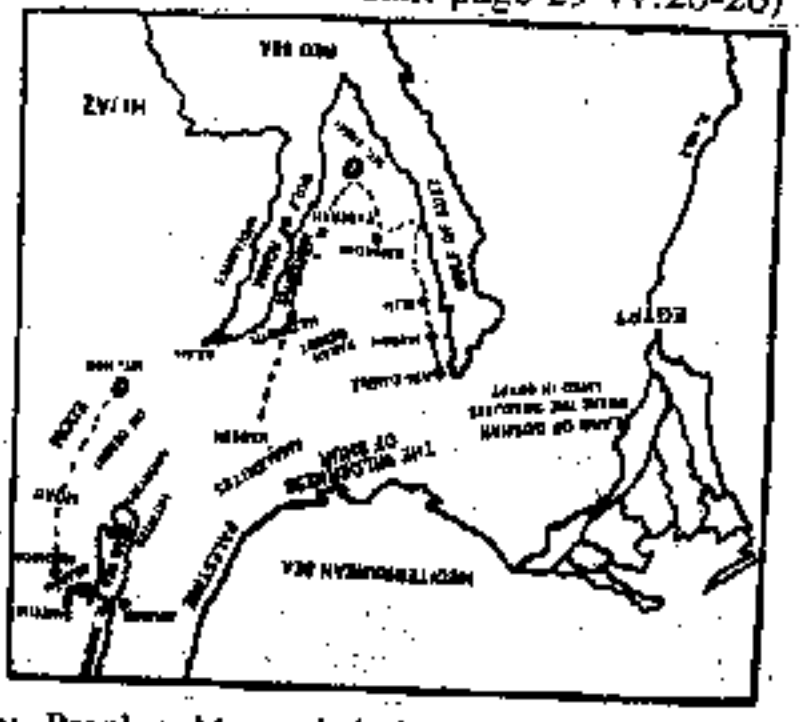
38. "Allah leads to the paths of peace" those who intend to walk in the Light of the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet. They remain safe from wrong notions, wrong thoughts and wrong acts and their consequences, because at every cross-road they come to know the safe way with the help of that light.

39. The Christians were guilty of blasphemy in regarding Jesus as God and worshipping him as such. This was the result of the error they committed in regarding Jesus as the union of man and God, for it made his personality an enigma, which their scholars have not been able to solve inspite of their verbosity and argumentations. The more they tried to solve it the more complicated it became. Those who were impressed by the human aspect of this complex

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Map showing the places that the Israelites visited during their homeless wanderings in the Sinai Peninsula after their Exodus from Egypt:

(Sūrah Al-Mā'idah, page 29-vv.20-26)



Explanation: Prophet Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt and brought them to Mount Sinai by the way of Marah, Elim and Rephidim in the Sinai Peninsula. Here he stayed for a little over a year and received most of the Commandments of the Torah. then he was commanded to lead the Israelites towards Palestine and conquer it, for that land was to be given to them as an inheritance. So, he led them through Taberah and Hazeroth and came to the desert of Paran from where he despatched a deputation of the prominent Israelites to spy out Palestine. The deputation returned after forty days and made their report at Kadesh. Except for the encouraging picture presented by Joshua and Caleb, the report made by the other members was so disappointing that the Israelites cried out in disgust and refused to march on to Palestine. Thereupon Allah decreed that they would wander about for forty years in the wilderness and none of their older generation except Joshua and Caleb would see Palestine. Thus, the Israelites wandered homeless in the wilderness of Paran, Shur and Zin, fighting and struggling against the Amalekites, the Amorites, the Edomites, the Midianites and the Moabites. When the period of forty years was coming to an end, Prophet Aaron died in Mount Hor, near the border of Edom. At about this time, Prophet Moses entered Moab at the head of the Israelites and conquering the whole area, reached Heshbon and Shittim. Here he also died in the mountains of Abarim. After him Joshua, his first successor, crossed river Jordan from the east and captured Jericho, the first Palestinian city to fall to the Israelites. Later the whole of Palestine was conquered by them within a short period.

Ailah (Aqaba of the present day) in this map is the place where probably the well-known incident of the Sabbath-breakers, as mentioned in II:65 and VII:166, took place.

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personality made him the son of God and one of the Trinity, while others, who were impressed by the Divine aspect of his personality, declared him to be the incarnation of God and worshipped him as such. There were still others who tried to adopt the middle course between the two extremes and spent all their abilities to prove the impossibility that Jesus was both man and God at one and the same time and that God and the Messiah were two separate beings, but at the same time a single being. (Please refer to E.N.'s 212,213,215 of An-Nisā).

40. "He creates whatever He wills" implies that the miraculous birth of Jesus was merely one of God's countless wonderful manifestations, and that this and his moral excellences and his perceptible miracles should not mislead the Christians to regard the Messiah as God. It was their shortsightedness that they did not consider the other creations of God which were even more wonderful than the creation of Jesus and foolishly made him God. They forgot that His power has no bounds and seeing the miracles performed by a wonderful creation of the Creator they began to regard him as a creator; whereas wise men see the All-Powerful Creator in the wonders of His Creation and get the light of Faith from them.

41. In this context, this sentence is very comprehensive and significant and has double meanings. One meaning is that God Who had the power of sending bearers of good news and warners before, has now appointed the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) for the same mission and He has the power to do so. The other meaning is that if they do not obey the bearer of good news and warner they should bear in mind that Allah is All-Powerful and is able to inflict on them any punishment He likes without any hindrance.

42. This refers to the past glory of the Israelites that they enjoyed at a much earlier period before the advent of Moses. On the one hand, Prophets of the high rank of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph were raised among them; on the other, they won great political power in Egypt during the time of the Prophet Joseph and after him. For a long time they remained the greatest rulers of their time in the then civilized world, and their currency was in circulation not only in Egypt but also in the countries around it.

In contrast to the general belief that the glory of the Israelites begins with the advent of the Prophet Moses, the Qur'ān makes it clear here that the period of their real glory and greatness had passed long before him and he himself was holding that period before his people as an instance of their glorious past.

43. By the Holy Land is meant Palestine, which had been the home of the Prophets Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. When the Israelites left Egypt for good, God allotted this land to them and commanded them to conquer it.

44. This speech was made by the Prophet Moses when two years after their exodus from Egypt, the Israelites were encamping in the desert of Paran which lies in the Sinai Peninsula contiguous to the northern boundary of Arabia and the southern boundary of Palestine.

45. It may mean that the two persons were from among those who were filled with the fear of the mighty people, or they were from among those who were God-fearing people.

46. The details of their homeless wandering can be had from the books, Numbers, Deuteronomy and Joshua, of the Bible. In brief, it is this: The Prophet Moses despatched twelve chiefs of Israel from the desert of Paran to spy out the Holy Land. Accordingly, they spied it out and returned after forty days and made a report before all the congregation of Israel. They said, "Surely it floweth with milk and honey .....Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land: (and) We be not able to go up against (them) .....and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants; and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers and so we were in their sight." At this, all the community wailed aloud and said, "Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt; or would God we had died in this wilderness! And wherefore hath the Lord brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword that our wives and our children should be a prey? Were it not better for us to return into Egypt? But Joshua and Caleb, who had been among the twelve spies, rebuked the community for its cowardice. Caleb said, "Let us go up at once and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it." Then both declared, "If the Lord delight in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it us.....Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land.....and the Lord is with us: fear them not. But all the congregation stoned them with stones." At last God became wrathful at their continuous misbehaviour and decreed, "Doubtless ye shall now wander in the wilderness forty years until all that were numbered of you.....from twenty years old and upward shall fall as carcasses in this wilderness, (and) your little ones (grow young).....then will I bring in and they shall know the land...." According to this Divine decree, they took 38 years to reach Jordan from the desert of Paran. During this period all those who were young at the time of the exodus from Egypt died and after the conquest of Jordan the Prophet Moses also died. After this, during the time of Joshua, son of Nun, the Israelites were able to conquer Palestine.

47. The incident contained in vv. 20-26 has been cited here with the special object to warn the Israelites. They have been reminded that they disobeyed Moses and swerved from the right path and showed cowardice and were

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الْفٰسِقِيْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَاتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَاَ ابْنَيْ اٰدَمَ بِالْحَقِّ ۘ اِذْ قَرَّبَا قُرْبَانًا
فَتُقُبِّلَ مِنْ اَحَدِهِمَا وَلَمْ يُتَقَبَّلْ مِنَ الْاٰخَرِ ۭ قَالَ لَاَقْتُلَنَّكَ ۭ قَالَ
اِنَّمَا يَتَقَبَّلُ اللّٰهُ مِنَ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾ لَىِٕنْۢ بَسَطْتَّ اِلَيَّ يَدَكَ لِتَقْتُلَنِيْ مَآ اَنَا
بِبَاسِطٍ يَّدِيَ اِلَيْكَ لِاَقْتُلَكَ ۚ اِنِّىْٓ اَخَافُ اللّٰهَ رَبَّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ اِنِّىْٓ اُرِيْدُ
اَنْ تَبُوْٓاَ بِاِثْمِيْ وَاِثْمِكَ فَتَكُوْنَ مِنْ اَصْحٰبِ النَّارِ ۚ وَذٰلِكَ جَزٰۗؤُا
الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾ فَطَوَّعَتْ لَهٗ نَفْسُهٗ قَتْلَ اَخِيْهِ فَقَتَلَهٗ فَاَصْبَحَ مِنَ الْخٰسِرِيْنَ ﴿٣٠﴾
فَبَعَثَ اللّٰهُ غُرَابًا يَّبْحَثُ فِي الْاَرْضِ لِيُرِيَهٗ كَيْفَ يُوَارِيْ سَوْءَةَ اَخِيْهِ ۭ
قَالَ يٰوَيْلَتٰٓى اَعَجَزْتُ اَنْ اَكُوْنَ مِثْلَ هٰذَا الْغُرَابِ فَاُوَارِيَ سَوْءَةَ اَخِيْ ۚ
فَاَصْبَحَ مِنَ النّٰدِمِيْنَ ﴿٣١﴾ مِنْ اَجْلِ ذٰلِكَ ۚ كَتَبْنَا عَلٰي بَنِيْٓ اِسْرَاۗءِيْلَ اَنَّهٗ
مَنْ قَتَلَ نَفْسًۢا بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ اَوْ فَسَادٍ فِي الْاَرْضِ فَكَاَنَّمَا قَتَلَ النَّاسَ
جَمِيْعًا ۭ وَمَنْ اَحْيَاهَا فَكَاَنَّمَآ اَحْيَا النَّاسَ جَمِيْعًا ۭ وَلَقَدْ جَاۗءَتْهُمْ
رُسُلُنَا بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ ۡ ثُمَّ اِنَّ كَثِيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ بَعْدَ ذٰلِكَ فِي الْاَرْضِ لَمُسْرِفُوْنَ ﴿٣٢﴾
اِنَّمَا جَزٰۗؤُا الَّذِيْنَ يُحَارِبُوْنَ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ وَيَسْعَوْنَ فِي الْاَرْضِ فَسَادًا
اَنْ يُّقَتَّلُوْٓا اَوْ يُصَلَّبُوْٓا اَوْ تُقَطَّعَ اَيْدِيْهِمْ وَاَرْجُلُهُمْ مِّنْ خِلَافٍ اَوْ
يُنْفَوْا مِنَ الْاَرْضِ ۭ ذٰلِكَ لَهُمْ خِزْيٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَلَهُمْ فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ
عَظِيْمٌ ﴿٣٣﴾ اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ تَابُوْا مِنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ تَقْدِرُوْا عَلَيْهِمْ ۚ فَاعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّ
اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿٣٤﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَابْتَغُوْٓا اِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيْلَةَ
وَجَاهِدُوْا فِيْ سَبِيْلِهٖ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لَوْ اَنَّ لَهُمْ
مَّا فِي الْاَرْضِ جَمِيْعًا وَّمِثْلَهٗ مَعَهٗ لِيَفْتَدُوْا بِهٖ مِنْ عَذَابِ يَوْمِ

And tell them accurately the story of the two sons of Adam. 27-31
When the two offered their sacrifices, the offering of the one was accepted but that of the other was not accepted. The latter said, "I will kill you." The other answered, "Allah accepts the offerings of the pious people only.[48] Even if you stretch your hand to kill me, I shall not lift my hand to kill you,[49] for I fear Allah, the Lord of the Universe; I would rather prefer that you should bear the burden of my sin as well as of your own sin,[50] and become a dweller of hell; this is the just retribution of the iniquity of the aggressors." Even after this his evil soul prompted him to slay his brother without the slightest compunction; so he killed him and became one of the losers. Then Allah sent a raven which began to scratch the ground to show him how he might hide the corpse of his brother. Seeing this, he cried, "Woe be to me! I have not been able to do even as this raven has done and so devise a plan of hiding the corpse of my brother."[51] After this he became very remorseful of what he had done.[52]

That was why We prescribed this for the children of Israel:[53] 32
"He who killed any person, unless it be a person guilty of manslaughter, or of spreading chaos in the land, should be looked upon as though he had slain all mankind, and he who saved one life should be regarded as though he had saved the lives of all mankind."[54] But the majority of them went on committing excesses in the land even after Our Messengers came to them one after the other with clear directions.

The punishment of those who wage war against Allah and His 33-34
Messenger and run about to spread mischief in the land [55] is this; they should be put to death or crucified or their alternate hands and feet should be cut off, or they should be banished from the land.[56] This is the disgrace and ignominy for them in this world and there is in store for them a harsher torment in the Hereafter, except those, who repent before you have power over them for you should know that Allah is Forgiving and Compassionate.[57]

O Believers, fear Allah and seek the means of winning His 35-36
pleasure [58] and exert your utmost in His way[59] so that you may attain true success. Note it well that those, who have adopted the way of disbelief, shall not escape retribution, for even if they possessed all the wealth of the earth and the like of it with it and offered it as ransom to

redeem themselves from the torment of the Day of Resurrection, that will not be accepted from them and they shall receive a painful punishment.

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consequently condemned to wander homeless for forty years but if they persisted in their attitude of rebellion against the mission of the Prophet Muḥammad (Allah's peace be upon him), the chastisement would be much more severe than that..

48. That is, "It is no fault of mine if your sacrifice has not been accepted; it is because you lack piety. You should, therefore, try to foster piety in yourself instead of making an attempt at slaying me.",

49. It does not mean: "If you attempt to kill me, I will sit with folded hands before you, ready to be killed without any resistance." What it means is: "You may cherish evil intentions of murdering me, but I will not; you may make schemes for my murder but I will do nothing to forestall you, even after knowing that you are making preparation for my murder." In this connection, it should be understood clearly that it is not virtue to offer oneself for murder, nor is it a virtue to refrain from resisting an aggressive attack. True virtue is that one should not plan the murder of an enemy though he might be in search of an opportunity to kill the one. A virtuous man would rather prefer, like the noble son of Adam, that the enemy might be the aggressor and not he.

50. That is, "I would rather prefer that you alone should be guilty of the sin of cherishing evil intentions of slaying me than that I should also be guilty of the same. Thus you shall bear the burden of your own sin of aggression as well as of the injury that I might inflict on you in self-defence."

51. Thus Allah warned the erring son of Adam of his ignorance and folly through a raven. And when once he became aware of the fact that the raven was better equipped for hiding the dead body, he was not only filled with remorse on this account but also began to feel that he had done an evil deed by slaying his brother. This is implied in: "After this he became very remorseful of what he had done."

52. The story of the two sons of Adam has been related here to reproach the Jews in a subtle manner for their plot to kill the Holy Prophet and some of his eminent Companions. (Please refer to E.N.30 of this Sūrah).

The similarity between the two incidents is quite obvious. The Jews plotted against the Holy Prophet and his Companions for the same reason for which the erring son of Adam had slain his pious brother. The Jews became jealous of the Holy Prophet and his Companions because God withdrew His

Favour from them and bestowed it upon the un-lettered Arabs just because the former lacked piety and the latter were God-fearing. Instead of considering the matter coolly and considering why they had been condemned and making up for their error which had brought God's wrath on them, they plotted to kill those whom God had blessed with His favours. And they did so inspite of the fact that they knew it well that their evil reaction could not win the favour of Allah but would make them even more condemnable than before.

53. That is, "Allah enjoined the Israelites to refrain from murder because they were showing the same murderous symptoms as had been shown by the cruel son of Adam. That is why such strict checks on murder were applied." But the pity is that these precious instructions are not found in the present Bible. The Talmud, however, says, "To him who kills a single individual of Israel, it shall be reckoned as if he had slain the whole race and he who preserves a single individual of Israel, according to the Book of Allah, he preserves the whole world." It also says that a judge of the Israelites in a case of murder would warn the witness saying, "To him who kills a single individual of Israel, it shall be reckoned as if he has slain the whole race."

54. This is to emphasize the sanctity of human life: it is essential for the preservation of human life that everyone should regard the life of the other as sacred and help to protect it. The one who takes the life of another without right, does not commit injustice to that one alone, but also proves that he has no feeling for the sanctity of human life and of mercy for others. Hence he is most surely the enemy of the whole human race, for if every individual suffered from the same kind of hard-heartedness, the whole human race would come to an end. On the contrary, if one helps to preserve a single human life, he is indeed a helper of all mankind for he possesses those qualities upon which depends the survival of the whole human race.

55. Here "the land" refers to that country or territory in which the maintenance of law and order is the responsibility of the Islamic State and "to wage war against Allah and His Messenger" is to wage war against the righteous system of government established by the Islamic State. As Allah likes that such a system of government should be established, He sent His Messenger to establish an equitable system of government, which should guarantee peace and justice to human beings, animals, trees, vegetation and everything in the earth, which may enable human beings to develop to the fullest their natural capabilities; which should exploit natural resources of the earth for the true progress and improvement of humanity and not for its destruction. It is obvious that any attempt, big or small, to undermine or overthrow such an established system, is in reality a war against

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الْقِيٰمَةِ مَا تُقُبِّلَ مِنْهُمْ ۚ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿36﴾ يُرِيْدُوْنَ اَنْ يَّخْرُجُوْا مِنَ
النَّارِ وَمَا هُمْ بِخٰرِجِيْنَ مِنْهَا ۡ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّقِيْمٌ ﴿37﴾ وَالسَّارِقُ وَ
السَّارِقَةُ فَاقْطَعُوْٓا اَيْدِيَهُمَا جَزَآءًۢ بِمَا كَسَبَا نَكَالًا مِّنَ اللّٰهِ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ
عَزِيْزٌ حَكِيْمٌ ﴿38﴾ فَمَنْ تَابَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ ظُلْمِهٖ وَاَصْلَحَ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَتُوْبُ
عَلَيْهِ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿39﴾ اَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ لَهٗ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَالْاَرْضِ ۭ يُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَّشَاۗءُ وَيَغْفِرُ لِمَنْ يَّشَاۗءُ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ عَلٰي كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
قَدِيْرٌ ﴿40﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الرَّسُوْلُ لَا يَحْزُنْكَ الَّذِيْنَ يُسَارِعُوْنَ فِي الْكُفْرِ مِنَ
الَّذِيْنَ قَالُوْٓا اٰمَنَّا بِاَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَلَمْ تُؤْمِنْ قُلُوْبُهُمْ ۛ وَمِنَ الَّذِيْنَ هَادُوْا ۛ
سَمّٰعُوْنَ لِلْكَذِبِ سَمّٰعُوْنَ لِقَوْمٍ اٰخَرِيْنَ ۙ لَمْ يَاْتُوْكَ ۭ يُحَرِّفُوْنَ الْكَلِمَ
مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَوَاضِعِهٖ ۚ يَقُوْلُوْنَ اِنْ اُوْتِيْتُمْ هٰذَا فَخُذُوْهُ وَاِنْ لَّمْ
تُؤْتَوْهُ فَاحْذَرُوْا ۭ وَمَنْ يُّرِدِ اللّٰهُ فِتْنَتَهٗ فَلَنْ تَمْلِكَ لَهٗ مِنَ اللّٰهِ شَيْـــًٔا ۭ
اُولٰۗىِٕكَ الَّذِيْنَ لَمْ يُرِدِ اللّٰهُ اَنْ يُّطَهِّرَ قُلُوْبَهُمْ ۭ لَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا خِزْيٌ ۚ وَ
لَهُمْ فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيْمٌ ﴿41﴾ سَمّٰعُوْنَ لِلْكَذِبِ اَكّٰلُوْنَ لِلسُّحْتِ ۭ فَاِنْ
جَاۗءُوْكَ فَاحْكُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ اَوْ اَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ ۚ وَاِنْ تُعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ فَلَنْ
يَّضُرُّوْكَ شَيْـــًٔا ۭ وَاِنْ حَكَمْتَ فَاحْكُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْقِسْطِ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُحِبُّ
الْمُقْسِطِيْنَ ﴿42﴾ وَكَيْفَ يُحَكِّمُوْنَكَ وَعِنْدَهُمُ التَّوْرٰىةُ فِيْهَا حُكْمُ اللّٰهِ
ثُمَّ يَتَوَلَّوْنَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ ذٰلِكَ ۭ وَمَآ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿43﴾ اِنَّآ اَنْزَلْنَا
التَّوْرٰىةَ فِيْهَا هُدًى وَّنُوْرٌ ۚ يَحْكُمُ بِهَا النَّبِيُّوْنَ الَّذِيْنَ اَسْلَمُوْا لِلَّذِيْنَ
هَادُوْا وَالرَّبّٰنِيُّوْنَ وَالْاَحْبَارُ بِمَا اسْتُحْفِظُوْا مِنْ كِتٰبِ اللّٰهِ وَكَانُوْا

الوقف على الواو لبيان الوجه

They will wish to get out of the fire of Hell but shall not be able to come forth from it and theirs shall be an everlasting torment. 37

As for the thief, whether man or woman, cut off the hand[60] of either of them: it is the recompense for what they have earned, and an exemplary punishment from Allah; Allah is All-Powerful, All-Wise. But whoever repents after his iniquity and reforms himself, Allah will surely turn towards him with His favour;[61] Allah is Forgiving and Compassionate. Do you not know that Allah is the Sovereign of the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth? He may punish whom He wills and may pardon whom He wills; He has power over everything. 38-40

O Messenger, let not those who are striving hard in the way of disbelief,[62] grieve you, whether they be from among those who say with their mouths, "We believe," but their hearts do not believe, or from among those who have become Jews; for the latter eagerly listen to lies.[63] They spy for other people who have never had any chance of coming to you[64] : they twist the words of Allah's Book out of their context in order to distort their proper meaning[65]: they say to the people, "If you are enjoined to observe such and such teaching, accept it; if it is other than this, reject it."[66] You can do nothing to save from Allah's punishment a man whom Allah wills to put to trial.[67] They are those, whose hearts Allah does not will to purify[68]; there is ignominy for them in this world and a grievous punishment in the Hereafter. 41

They are listeners to falsehood and greedy devourers of the forbidden.[69] If, therefore, they come to you (with their cases), you may judge between them or refuse to do so: for even if you refuse, they will not be able to do any harm to you; but if you judge between them, then judge with justice, for Allah loves those who act justly.[70] 42-43

Yet, how is it that they make you their judge, when they themselves possess the Torah, in which there is Allah's judgement, and even then they are turning away from it?[71] In fact, these people have no faith.

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Allah and His Messenger. It does not make any difference whether that mischief is created by criminals and murderers who cause disorder in the settled and peaceful society, or by armed forces who attempt to overthrow the Islamic State and establish some corrupt un-Islamic system instead. And every sovereign treats such

a violation directed against his authority or against any of his officials as war against himself.

56. An abstract of these alternative punishments has been given so that the judge or the ruler may exercise his discretion and award punishment according to the nature and extent of the crime. The real object is to show that any attempt by any person residing in the Islamic State, to overthrow its government is high treason and a most heinous crime, and that the offender is liable to be awarded any of these capital punishments according to the circumstance.

57. This implies that if they have refrained from creating mischief and from making any attempt at overthrowing the righteous system, and have shown by their conduct that they are peace-loving and law-abiding good citizens, none of the above mentioned punishments will be inflicted upon them, even if they might have committed any of the crimes before their repentance. They would, however, be liable to be called to account in a court of law for any offence against any individual, such as murder, theft, etc., but they will not be tried for any previous offence of treason or rebellion or war against Allah and His Messenger.

58. That is, You should seek all those means that help obtain Allah's nearness and His pleasure."

59. "Exert your utmost" does not fully convey the meaning of *Jāhidū*. It implies that the Believers should struggle against all the forces that stand in the way of Allah, as if to say, "You can please Allah and win His favour only if you exert your utmost in the way of Allah: struggle hard against all the persons, parties and forces which stand in Allah's way, which hinder you from Allah's way to turn you away from it, which do not let you follow Allah's way as His servants and force you to become their servants or servants of others. Such exertion and struggle will lead you to true success and become the means of obtaining your nearness to Allah."

Thus, this verse exhorts the Believer to fight his enemies on all fronts. On one side, he confronts Satan and a host of his followers, and on the second, his own self and its alluring temptations. On the third side, he has to fight many people who have swerved from the way of God, and with whom he is bound by close social, cultural and economic relations. On the fourth side, he is required to oppose all those religious, cultural and political systems that are founded on rebellion against God and force people to submit to falsehood instead of the Truth. Though these enemies employ different weapons, they all have one and the same object in view, that is, to subdue their victims and bring them under their own subjection. It is obvious that true success can only be achieved if one becomes wholly and solely a servant of God and obeys Him openly and also secretly, to the

exclusion of obedience to all others. Thus there is bound to be a conflict with all the four enemies: Therefore the Believer cannot achieve his object unless he engages himself with all these hostile and opposing forces at one and the same time and at all events, and removing all these hindrances marches onwards on the way of Allah.

60. One hand of the thief (and not both hands) is to be cut off, and the consensus of opinion is that the right hand should be cut off for the first theft.

The Holy Prophet has excluded an act of breach of trust from theft and decreed that the hand of the one guilty of this is not to be cut off. An act of theft is committed only when a person wrongfully takes away goods from the custody of another and brings them into his own possession.

The Holy Prophet has also decreed that a hand is not to be cut off for the theft of a thing whose value is less than that of a shield. At that time the price of a shield according to (a) 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās was ten *dirhams*, (b) Ibn 'Umar three *dirhams*, (c) Anas bin Mālik five *dirhams*, and (d) Ḥaḍrat 'Āishah one-fourth of a *dinār*. That is why there has been a difference of opinion among the Jurists in regard to the minimum limit for theft for the cutting off of a hand. According to Imām Abū Hanīfah, it is ten *dirhams* and according to Imāms Mālik, Shāfi'ī and Ahmad it is one-fourth of a *dinār*. (At that time a *dirham* was equal to the value of three *mashas* and one anda half *rattīs* of silver, and one-fourth of a *dinār* was equal to three *dirhams*).

Moreover, there are many things for the theft of which the hand is not to be cut off. For instance, the Holy Prophet directed that hand should not be cut off for the theft of fruits and vegetables, and that there should be no cutting off of hand for the theft of eatables. According to a Tradition from Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, "Hands were not cut off for the theft of paltry things during the time of the Holy Prophet (Allah's peace be upon him)." Caliphs 'Uthmān and 'Alī decreed, and no Companion disagreed, that a hand is not to be cut off for the theft of a bird. Moreover, Caliphs 'Umar and 'Alī did not cut off a hand for a theft from the Public Treasury and there is no mention of any kind of disagreement among the Companions about this also.

That is why the Jurists have not included certain things in the list of those for the theft of which hands should be cut off. According to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, hands should not be cut off for the theft of vegetables, fruits, flesh, cooked food, grain which has not yet been gathered together, articles used for sports and music. Besides these, he is of the opinion that the hand should not be cut off for the theft of animals grazing in forests and for theft from the Public Treasury. Likewise the other Imāms also have excluded the theft of certain things from this punishment,

but this does not mean that there is no punishment at all for those thefts. These crimes should be punished in other ways than this.

61. This does not mean that if the thief repents, his hand should not be cut off. It only means that if a person repents after his hand has been cut off and reforms himself and becomes a true servant of God, he will save himself from the wrath of Allah, Who will cleanse him of his sin. On the contrary, if a person does not repent and reform himself even after his hand has been cut off, but goes on nurturing evil thoughts, this clearly shows that he has not cleansed his heart even after this severe punishment. Therefore he shall deserve the wrath of Allah as he did before his hand was cut off. That is why the Qur'ān exhorts such a person to beg for the forgiveness of Allah and reform himself. The hand is cut off for the preservation of society. The punishment does not necessarily purify the soul. This can only be achieved by repentance and turning to God. It is reported in the Traditions that once the hand of a thief was cut off by the order of the Holy Prophet. After this he sent for him and asked him to say, "I beg for Allah's forgiveness and turn to Him." Accordingly, the thief uttered these words. Then the Holy Prophet invoked Allah's forgiveness for him.

62. This refers to the people who were using all their intellectual powers and energies to preserve the previous state of ignorance against the reformative efforts of Islam. They were planning all sorts of shameless schemes against the Holy Prophet; they were distorting the Truth knowingly and doing their worst to defeat his holy mission by lies, deceit, cunning and the like, though he was selflessly working for the good of humanity and their own good. Naturally it grieved him to see that those mean and ignoble people were employing mean tactics to defeat his noble mission. Of course Allah does not mean to ask the Holy Prophet to suppress that grief which is felt over such a state but consoles him not to be disheartened by their evil machinations and advises him to go on working patiently for the reform of the people who cannot be expected to behave otherwise.

63. It implies two things: (1) These people are the slaves of their lusts and are not interested at all in the Truth but in falsehood only. They eagerly listen to lies because that alone can gratify their lust for falsehood. (2) They attend the meetings of the Holy Prophet and his followers so that they might spread false reports about them in order to malign them.

64. This also implies two things: (1) They come as spies to the meetings of the Holy Prophet and his followers in order to obtain some secret information for the benefit of the enemies of Islam. (2) They come with hostile intent to gather material for bringing false accusations and slander against the Holy Prophet and his followers so that they may cause misunderstandings among those who had no opportunity of making direct contacts with him and the Muslims.

65. Allah consoles the Holy Prophet that he should not be disheartened by the behaviour of those people who do not hesitate to twist the words of the Torah out of their context and change their meanings to suit their lusts.

66. That is, "The Jewish scholars tell their illiterate people to accept any teaching of the Holy Prophet only if it agrees with theirs; if it does not, they should reject it."

67. Allah puts to trial a man who cherishes evil inclinations by putting temptations before him to test whether he has any good left in him or not. If he has no goodness left in him, he takes each temptation as an "opportunity," and the evil in him overcomes him and renders him an easy prey to further temptations. In a degenerate case like this, it is not in the power of any well-wisher to save such a person from falling into temptation. Allah puts to trial not only individuals but communities as well.

68. Allah did not will to purify such a person because he himself did not wish to purify himself. It is not the way of Allah to deprive a man of purification, if he desires it and tries for it. He does not will to purify only that person who does not intend to purify himself.

69. This particularly refers to their jurists and judges who accepted false evidence and unjustly decided cases in favour of those from whom they took bribes or from whom they expected unlawful gains.

70. At that time the Jews had freedom in their internal affairs and their cases were decided by their own judges according to their own law, for they had not as yet become subjects of the Islamic State, but had only entered into treaties with it. Therefore they were not bound to bring their cases to the Holy Prophet or to the judges appointed by him. Nevertheless, sometimes, when their own law did not suit them, they would take their cases to the Holy Prophet in the hope that they might obtain a more favourable decree from him than they could from their own law.

Here it refers to a case of illicit relationship between a man and a woman who belonged to respectable families of the Jews of Khaibar. According to the Torah (Deut. 22 : 23-24), their punishment was that both of them should be stoned to death. As the Jews did not want to inflict this punishment, they decided that the case should be taken to the Holy Prophet and that they would accept his decision only if it was other than stoning to death. When the Holy Prophet had heard the case he decreed that they should be stoned to death, but the Jews rejected it. Then the Holy Prophet asked them what the punishment was according to the Torah. They replied that it was to flog the culprits and to blacken their faces and to mount

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عَلَيْهِ شُهَدَآءَ فَلَا تَخْشَوُا النَّاسَ وَاخْشَوْنِ وَلَا تَشْتَرُوْا بِاٰيٰتِيْ ثَمَنًا
قَلِيْلًا ۭ وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَحْكُمْ بِمَآ اَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ فَاُولٰۗىِٕكَ هُمُ الْكٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿44﴾ وَكَتَبْنَا
عَلَيْهِمْ فِيْهَآ اَنَّ النَّفْسَ بِالنَّفْسِ ۙ وَالْعَيْنَ بِالْعَيْنِ وَالْاَنْفَ بِالْاَنْفِ
وَالْاُذُنَ بِالْاُذُنِ وَالسِّنَّ بِالسِّنِّ ۙ وَالْجُرُوْحَ قِصَاصٌ ۭ فَمَنْ تَصَدَّقَ
بِهٖ فَهُوَ كَفَّارَةٌ لَّهٗ ۭ وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَحْكُمْ بِمَآ اَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ فَاُولٰۗىِٕكَ هُمُ
الظّٰلِمُوْنَ ﴿45﴾ وَقَفَّيْنَا عَلٰٓي اٰثَارِهِمْ بِعِيْسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ
يَدَيْهِ مِنَ التَّوْرٰىةِ ۠ وَاٰتَيْنٰهُ الْاِنْجِيْلَ فِيْهِ هُدًى وَّنُوْرٌ ۙ وَّمُصَدِّقًا
لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ التَّوْرٰىةِ وَهُدًى وَّمَوْعِظَةً لِّلْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿46﴾ وَلْيَحْكُمْ
اَهْلُ الْاِنْجِيْلِ بِمَآ اَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ فِيْهِ ۭ وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَحْكُمْ بِمَآ اَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ
فَاُولٰۗىِٕكَ هُمُ الْفٰسِقُوْنَ ﴿47﴾ وَاَنْزَلْنَآ اِلَيْكَ الْكِتٰبَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا
بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ الْكِتٰبِ وَمُهَيْمِنًا عَلَيْهِ فَاحْكُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ بِمَآ اَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ
وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ اَهْوَاۗءَهُمْ عَمَّا جَاۗءَكَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ ۭ لِكُلٍّ جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ شِرْعَةً
وَّمِنْهَاجًا ۭ وَلَوْ شَاۗءَ اللّٰهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ اُمَّةً وَّاحِدَةً وَّلٰكِنْ لِّيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِيْ
مَآ اٰتٰىكُمْ فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرٰتِ ۭ اِلَى اللّٰهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيْعًا فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا
كُنْتُمْ فِيْهِ تَخْتَلِفُوْنَ ﴿48﴾ وَاَنِ احْكُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ بِمَآ اَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ
اَهْوَاۗءَهُمْ وَاحْذَرْهُمْ اَنْ يَّفْتِنُوْكَ عَنْۢ بَعْضِ مَآ اَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ اِلَيْكَ ۭ
فَاِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَاعْلَمْ اَنَّمَا يُرِيْدُ اللّٰهُ اَنْ يُّصِيْبَهُمْ بِبَعْضِ ذُنُوْبِهِمْ ۭ وَاِنَّ
كَثِيْرًا مِّنَ النَّاسِ لَفٰسِقُوْنَ ﴿49﴾ اَفَحُكْمَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ يَبْغُوْنَ ۭ وَمَنْ اَحْسَنُ
مِنَ اللّٰهِ حُكْمًا لِّقَوْمٍ يُّوْقِنُوْنَ ﴿50﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْيَهُوْدَ

Indeed, We sent down the Torah wherein was Guidance and Light: thereby all the Prophets, who were Muslims, judged the cases of those who had become Jews.[72] Likewise the *Rabbānis* and the *Aḥbār*[73] (based their judgement on it), for they were made the guardians of the Book of Allah and witnesses to it. So, (O Jews), do not fear the people but fear Me and do not sell My revelations for paltry worldly gains: those, who do not judge by the Law which Allah has sent down, are indeed the disbelievers. 44

We had prescribed this decree in the Torah for the Jews: "Life for life, eye for eye, nose for nose, ear for ear, tooth for tooth, and for all wounds equal retaliation."[74] However, whoever forgoes retaliation as charity, it shall be expiation for him[75]: those, who do not judge by the Law which Allah has sent down, are indeed the unjust people. 45

Then after those Prophets, We sent Jesus, son of Mary; he confirmed whatever had still remained intact of the Torah in his time. And We gave him the Gospel wherein was Guidance and Light; that, too, confirmed what was intact of the Torah[76] at the time; moreover, it was guidance and admonition for the God-fearing people. We had enjoined that those who were given the Gospel should judge by the Law which Allah has sent down in it: those, who do not judge by the Law which Allah has sent down, are the transgressors.[77] 46-47

Then, O Muḥammad, We sent this Book to you which has brought the Truth: it confirms whatever has remained intact from the Book[78] at the time of its revelation and safeguards[79] and protects it. Therefore you should judge between the people by the Law sent down by Allah and do not follow their desires by turning aside from the Truth that has come to you.[80]—We prescribed a law and a way of life for each of you, though your Lord could have made all of you a single community, if He had so willed. But (He willed otherwise) in order to test you in what He has bestowed upon each of you: therefore try to excel one another in good deeds. Ultimately, you shall all return to Him; then He will let you know the truth about that in which you have been differing.[81] So,[82] O Muḥammad, judge between these people by the Law that has been sent down to you and do not follow their wishes: be on your guard lest these people should tempt you away, even in the least, from the Guidance that has been sent down to you by 4850

Allah. If they turn away from it, then know that Allah wills to involve them in trouble in consequence of some of their sins. And the fact is that the majority of these people are transgressors. (If they turn away from the Divine Law, then) do they desire to be judged by the laws of ignorance?[83] Yet there is no better judge than Allah for those who believe in Him.

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them on a donkey. The Holy Prophet asked their rabbis to declare on oath whether that was the punishment for adultery committed by a married couple. They all but one answered that it was so. The one who had kept quiet was Ibn Ṣuryā, who was considered to be the greatest scholar of the Torah by the Jews themselves. The Holy Prophet pointedly addressed him and asked, "I want you to swear by that God Who saved your people from the Pharaoh and gave you the Law on the Tūr and answer whether it is this same punishment for adultery in the Torah that these people tell." He said, "I would never have confessed that the punishment for adultery is stoning the culprits to death, if you had not laid upon me such a heavy oath. The fact is that when adultery became common among us, the judges would let the offenders go, if they happened to be big people. But as this differentiation caused a great discontent among the common people, we made a change in the Law that instead of stoning the culprits to death they should be flogged and mounted on a donkey with blackened faces." After this, no other course was left for the Jews and the culprits were stoned to death by the order of the Holy Prophet.

71. In this verse Allah has fully exposed the dishonesty of these "religious people" who had established their authority for piety and knowledge of the Book throughout Arabia. The very fact that they had discarded the Book they themselves believed to be the Book of Allah and brought their case to the Holy Prophet whom they did not believe to be a Prophet, showed that their claim of belief in the Book was hollow. This also showed that they did not sincerely believe in anything but their lusts. They discarded the Book which they believed to be the Book of God, just because its decree was against their lusts and they went to the one whom they considered to be a false prophet in the hope that they might get a decree that might suit their lusts.

72. Here the fact that all the Prophets were Muslims and that the Jews had given up "Islam" and turned "Jews", has also incidentally been stressed.

73. The *Rabbānīs* were the doctors and the *Aḥbār* the jurists of the Law.

74. Compare this with Exodus, 21 : 23-27.

75. It implies that if one forgoes retaliation with the intention of doing a good turn, this good act will atone for many of his sins. The Holy Prophet explained this, saying, "If one receives a wound in one's body and forgoes its retaliation, then one's sins will be forgiven in proportion to the degree of forgiveness."

76. This means that Jesus did not bring any new religion but followed the same way that was followed by all the Prophets before him and invited the people to the same. He believed in what was intact in his time from among the original teachings of the Torah, and the Gospel also testified to the same.(Matthew, 5: 17-18). The Qur'ān reiterates the fact that each and every prophet, who was sent by Allah to any part of the world, confirmed the Message of all the Prophets who had gone before him and exerted his utmost to complete the work which they had left as a holy heritage, for he did not come to refute them or efface their religion and establish his own religion instead. Likewise Allah did not send down any of His Books to refute any of His own previous Books, but to support and confirm them.

77. In this passage (vv. 44-47) Allah has shown that those who do not judge by the Law sent down by Him are: (1) disbelievers, (2) unjust people and (3) transgressors. As a corollary to this, the person who discards the Law of Allah and judges by the law formulated by himself or by others is guilty of three crimes. First, he practises disbelief by his rejection of the Law of Allah. Secondly, he becomes guilty of injustice because he violates the Law of Allah which is perfectly just and equitable. Thirdly, he became a transgressor *(fāsiq)* against Allah, because, in spite of being Allah's servant, he transgressed against his Master's Law and adopted his own law or that of another. Thus practically he broke away from the allegiance and subjection of his Master and denied His Authority: this is *fisq*.

This disbelief, injustice and transgression are inherently part and parcel of the violation of Divine Law. It is, therefore, not possible to avoid these three crimes where there is such a violation. They, however, vary in their relative guilt in accordance with the nature and extent of the rejection of the Law. If one gives judgement against the Divine Law on the basis that he considers that Law to be wrong and his own or someone else's law to be right, such a person shall be a disbeliever, an unjust person and transgressor, in the fullest sense of the words. However, if one holds the belief that the Law of Allah is right, but in practice gives judgement against it, such a one shall not be outside the Muslim community, but shall be considered to be mixing his belief with disbelief, injustice and transgression. Likewise, if one rejects the Law of Allah in all affairs of life, he shall be considered to be a disbeliever, unjust person and transgressor in every aspect of life and if one accepts the Law in certain matters and rejects it in others,

one shall have a mixture of belief and Islam, disbelief, injustice and transgression, all mixed together in one's life, exactly in the proportion one obeys the Law or violates it.

Some commentators are of the opinion that the above-mentioned verses apply only to the People of the Book, but the words of the Qur'ān do not support this at all. Ḥadrat Ḥudhaifah refuted this version very aptly. Someone said to him that these verses applied to the children of Israel only, that is, if one of the Jews judged against the Law sent down by Allah, he would be a disbeliever, transgressor and rebel but not a Muslim. Hadrat Hudhaifah replied. "What good brethren the children of Israel are to you: all that is bitter is for them and all that is sweet is for you! By God, you will follow their way step by step (and shall be dealt with like them)."

78. The use of the word *Al-Kitāb* (the Book) here is very significant. Instead of saying, "The Qur'ān confirms whatever has remained intact from the former Books," it says, "from the Book." This is to show that the Qur'ān and all the Books that were sent down by Allah in different languages and in different ages are in reality one and the same Book which has one and the same Author and one and the same object and aim: they impart one and the same knowledge and teaching to mankind with the only difference that they are couched in different languages and employ different methods to suit the various addresses. Therefore the fact that these Books support and do not refute, confirm and do not contradict, one another, shows that they are all different versions of one and the same Book (*Al-Kitāb*).

79. The Arabic word *Muhaimin* is very comprehensive in meaning. It means one who safeguards, watches over, stands witness, preserves, and upholds. The Qur'ān safeguards "the Book," for it has preserved within it the teachings of all the former Books. It watches over them in the sense that it will not let go waste their true teachings. It supports and upholds these Books in the sense that it corroborates the Word of God which has remained intact in them. It stands a witness because it bears testimony to the Word of God contained in those Books and helps to sort it out from the interpretations and commentaries of the people which were mixed with it; what is confirmed by the Qur'ān is the Word of God and what is against it is that of the people.

80. "We prescribed..... to differ" is a parenthesis, which answer a perplexing question that might arise from the preceding passage. The question is: Why are there differences in the details of their Laws, if all the Prophets and all the Books taught the same way of life and all of them confirmed and supported one another ? For instance , how is it that there are some differences in the details of

the form of worship, in the limits of the lawful and the unlawful and in cultural and social regulations taught by different Prophets and Books?

81. Here is the answer to the above-mentioned question:

(1) It is wrong to infer from the above-mentioned differences in the details of the different Laws that they have been derived from different sources and have different origins. As a matter of fact, they all have come from Allah, Who prescribed different regulations to suit different communities and different ages.

(2) No doubt Allah could have prescribed one and the same Law for all human beings from the very beginning and made them a single community but He did not do so for many good reasons. One of these reasons is to test people whether they obey or not what is given to them by Allah. Those people, who understand the real nature and spirit of the Divine Way and the position of the regulations in it and are not prejudiced, will recognize and accept the Truth in whatever form it comes. Such people will never hesitate to submit to the new regulations sent by Allah to replace the former ones. On the contrary, those, who do not understand the true spirit of the Way, but consider the regulations and their details alone to be the Way and who have become static and prejudiced because of their own additions to it, will reject every new thing that comes from Allah to replace what they already possess. And such a test was essential to distinguish the two above-mentioned kinds of people; therefore different laws and regulations were prescribed.

(3) As the real object of all the laws is the cultivation of virtues, Allah has commanded the people to excel one another in virtues, without paying heed to the apparent differences in different Laws. This is why those people, who keep in view the real aim of the Law, should advance towards it on the lines indicated by the Divine Laws and regulations.

(4) As regards the differences, which have been produced by the prejudices, obduracies and wrong mental attitudes, these can neither be resolved in polemical symposiums nor on the battlefield, but will be decided by Allah Himself in His Final Judgement. Then the Reality will be revealed and the people will come to know the amount of truth or falsehood that lay hidden in the arguments in which they were engaged throughout their lives.

82. From here the same subject has been resumed that was interrupted by the parenthesis.

[Contd. on p. 462

وَقف لازم
وقف منزل حسن لمن وصل
وقف معانقہ

وَالنَّصٰرٰٓى اَوْلِيَآءَ ۘ بَعْضُهُمْ اَوْلِيَآءُ بَعْضٍ ؕ وَمَنْ يَّتَوَلَّهُمْ مِّنْكُمْ فَاِنَّهٗ
مِنْهُمْ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَهْدِى الْقَوْمَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿51﴾ فَتَرَى الَّذِيْنَ فِىْ قُلُوْبِهِمْ
مَّرَضٌ يُّسَارِعُوْنَ فِيْهِمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ نَخْشٰٓى اَنْ تُصِيْبَنَا دَآئِرَةٌ ؕ فَعَسَى اللّٰهُ
اَنْ يَّاْتِىَ بِالْفَتْحِ اَوْ اَمْرٍ مِّنْ عِنْدِهٖ فَيُصْبِحُوْا عَلٰى مَآ اَسَرُّوْا فِىْٓ اَنْفُسِهِمْ
نٰدِمِيْنَ ﴿52﴾ وَيَقُوْلُ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اَهٰٓؤُلَآءِ الَّذِيْنَ اَقْسَمُوْا بِاللّٰهِ جَهْدَ
اَيْمَانِهِمْ ۙ اِنَّهُمْ لَمَعَكُمْ ؕ حَبِطَتْ اَعْمَالُهُمْ فَاَصْبَحُوْا خٰسِرِيْنَ ﴿53﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا
الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا مَنْ يَّرْتَدَّ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِيْنِهٖ فَسَوْفَ يَاْتِى اللّٰهُ بِقَوْمٍ
يُّحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّوْنَهٗٓ ۙ اَذِلَّةٍ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ اَعِزَّةٍ عَلَى الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ۡ
يُجَاهِدُوْنَ فِىْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ وَلَا يَخَافُوْنَ لَوْمَةَ لَآئِمٍ ؕ ذٰلِكَ فَضْلُ
اللّٰهِ يُؤْتِيْهِ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿54﴾ اِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللّٰهُ وَرَسُوْلُهٗ
وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا الَّذِيْنَ يُقِيْمُوْنَ الصَّلٰوةَ وَيُؤْتُوْنَ الزَّكٰوةَ وَهُمْ
رٰكِعُوْنَ ﴿55﴾ وَمَنْ يَّتَوَلَّ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا فَاِنَّ حِزْبَ
اللّٰهِ هُمُ الْغٰلِبُوْنَ ﴿56﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الَّذِيْنَ اتَّخَذُوْا
دِيْنَكُمْ هُزُوًا وَّلَعِبًا مِّنَ الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْكِتٰبَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَالْكُفَّارَ
اَوْلِيَآءَ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿57﴾ وَاِذَا نَادَيْتُمْ اِلَى الصَّلٰوةِ
اتَّخَذُوْهَا هُزُوًا وَّلَعِبًا ؕ ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَّا يَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿58﴾ قُلْ يٰٓاَهْلَ
الْكِتٰبِ هَلْ تَنْقِمُوْنَ مِنَّآ اِلَّآ اَنْ اٰمَنَّا بِاللّٰهِ وَمَآ اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْنَا وَمَآ
اُنْزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۙ وَاَنَّ اَكْثَرَكُمْ فٰسِقُوْنَ ﴿59﴾ قُلْ هَلْ اُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِشَرٍّ مِّنْ
ذٰلِكَ مَثُوْبَةً عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ ؕ مَنْ لَّعَنَهُ اللّٰهُ وَغَضِبَ عَلَيْهِ وَجَعَلَ

الثلاثة

٥ ع ١٢

O Believers, do not take the Jews nor the Christians as your friends: they are one another's friends only. If anyone of you takes them as friends, surely he shall be counted among them; indeed Allah deprives the wrong-doers of His Guidance. 51

You see that those, who have the disease of hypocrisy in their hearts, are always moving among them. They say, "We fear lest we should get involved in some disaster."[84] But it may be that these people will feel ashamed of the hypocrisy they are hiding in their hearts, when Allah will give you a decisive victory or show something else from Himself.[85] At that time the Believers will say, "Are these the same people who stated upon solemn oaths by Allah that they were with you?" — All their deeds became vain and they ended in utter failure.[86] 52-53

O Believers, whoever turns away from Islam, (let him); Allah will raise many such people whom He will love and who will love Him; who will be lenient towards the Believers but stern towards the disbelievers[87]; who will exert their utmost in the way of Allah and will not fear the censure of anyone who censures them.[88] This is Allah's bounty: He bestows it on whomever He wills, for Allah's resources are boundless and He is All-Knowing. 54

Your friends, indeed, are Allah and His Messenger and the Believers who establish the Ṣalāt, pay the Zakāt and bow down before Allah. And whoever makes Allah and His Messenger and the Believers his friends, let him know that Allah's party will surely come out victorious. 55-56

O Believers, do not take your friends from among the people, who were given the Book before you and such as make a jest and pastime of your Faith; and (likewise do not take for your friends) the other disbelievers; fear Allah, if you are true Believers. When you make a call for the Prayer, they make it an object of jest and sport[89]; this is because they are devoid of understanding.[90] Say to them, "O people of the Book, what is there that gives you offence against us other than that we believe in Allah and what has been sent down to us and what was sent down before us? And the fact is that most of you are transgressors." Then say, "Should I inform you of those, who will 57-60

have even worse recompense from Allah than the transgressors?" They are those whom Allah has cursed; who have been under His wrath; some of whom were turned into apes and swine; who worshipped *tāghūt;* those are the people who are in a far worse plight and who have turned farthest away from the Right Way."[91]

Contd. from p. 459]

83. The word *Jāhiliyyat* (ignorance) is the antonym of Islam. The way of Islam is entirely based on the knowledge imparted by Allah Who possesses the knowledge of all realities. On the contrary, every way different from and opposed to the way of Islam is the way of ignorance. The pre-Islamic period of Arabia is called the period of ignorance in the sense that the people had invented their own ways of life that were based on mere guess-work or lusts. Therefore whenever any of these ways will be adopted, that period will be called the period of "ignorance". Likewise the knowledge which is imparted in Schools and Universities today is only a partial knowledge and cannot in any way suffice for the right guidance of mankind. That is why all the systems of life that are based on fancies and conjectures and lusts with the help of such partial knowledge, in utter disregard of the Divine knowledge, shall likewise be the ways of "ignorance" like the ways of the pre-Islamic period.

84. This refers to the condition of the hypocrites during the period when the conflict between Islam and *kufr* had not yet come to any decisive conclusion. Although Islam had become a power by dint of the sacrifices of its followers, the opposing forces were also very powerful and there were equal chances of the victory of either side. The hypocrites, while living among the Muslims, wanted to keep good relations with the Jews and the Christians so that if the conflict ended in the defeat of the Muslims, they might safely take refuge with their enemies. Then there was also the economic factor; at that time the Jews and the Christians were economically the most powerful people in Arabia. The money-lending business was almost entirely in their hands and they had a strong economic hold upon the people. Moreover, the most fertile regions of Arabia were in their possession. This also led the hypocrites to preserve their old relations with them. In short, they considered it very dangerous to break relations with these people because of the conflict between Islam and *kufr*, for they feared that it might ruin them economically and politically.

85. That is, something short of a decisive victory that might convince the people that it was Islam that was ultimately going to win in the conflict.

86. All the good acts that they did as Muslims were lost because they lacked sincerity. The Prayers they offered, the Fast they observed, the *Zakāt* dues they paid, and other things they did in obedience to the Islamic Law became null and void because there was no sincerity in them. They did not dedicate themselves wholly to Allah but had divided their loyalties equally between Allah and His rebels for the sake of their worldly interests.

87. "Who will be lenient towards the Believers" means that they will never use force against the Believers and will never employ their intelligence, ability, influence, wealth, power or anything else to suppress or oppress them or inflict loss on them. The Muslims will always find such persons to be mild, kindly, amiable and sympathetic.

".....but stern towards the disbelievers" means that a Believer will be firm, strict, uncompromising and militant towards the opponents of Islam by virtue of his firm faith, sincere religious sense, strict principles, strong character and God-given intelligence. Whenever the disbelievers will come in conflict with him, they will find that a Believer can neither be bought nor coerced because he is so uncompromising in his Islamic principles that he would rather die than yield.

88. That is, they will fearlessly follow the Way of Allah and act upon His commandments, and declare to be right what is right, and wrong what is wrong, according to it, and will not mind in the least the opposition, the censure, the criticism, the objections, the derision and ridicules of their opponents. They will boldly follow the Way of Islam which they sincerely believe to be right, even if the popular opinion is against Islam and they are exposed to the ridicule, derision and taunts of the world.

89. They make the call to the Prayer an object of ridicule by mimicking and deriding it and by perverting its words.

90. This very fact of their making the call to the Prayer an object of ridicule is a clear proof of their lack of understanding. Had they not been involved in folly and ignorance, they would never have indulged in such frivolous things inspite of their religious difference with the Muslims, because no sensible person would ever think of ridiculing the call to the worship of Allah made by any people whatsoever.

91. Verse 60 contains a subtle reference to the shamefaced impudence of the Jews in opposing the Muslims in spite of the fact that they had often been under the curse and wrath of Allah for their evil deeds. According to their own history they broke the Sabbath and many of them were turned into apes and swine.

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مِنْهُمُ الْقِرَدَةَ وَالْخَنَازِيْرَ وَعَبَدَ الطَّاغُوْتَ ۭ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ شَرٌّ مَّكَانًا وَّ
اَضَلُّ عَنْ سَوَاۗءِ السَّبِيْلِ ۝ وَاِذَا جَاۗءُوْكُمْ قَالُوْٓا اٰمَنَّا وَقَدْ دَّخَلُوْا
بِالْكُفْرِ وَهُمْ قَدْ خَرَجُوْا بِهٖ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَكْتُمُوْنَ ۝ وَتَرٰى
كَثِيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ يُسَارِعُوْنَ فِي الْاِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَاَكْلِهِمُ السُّحْتَ ۭ
لَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ۝ لَوْلَا يَنْهٰىهُمُ الرَّبّٰنِيُّوْنَ وَالْاَحْبَارُ عَنْ
قَوْلِهِمُ الْاِثْمَ وَاَكْلِهِمُ السُّحْتَ ۭ لَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُوْا يَصْنَعُوْنَ ۝ وَقَالَتِ
الْيَهُوْدُ يَدُ اللّٰهِ مَغْلُوْلَةٌ ۭ غُلَّتْ اَيْدِيْهِمْ وَلُعِنُوْا بِمَا قَالُوْا ۘ بَلْ يَدٰهُ
مَبْسُوْطَتٰنِ ۙ يُنْفِقُ كَيْفَ يَشَاۗءُ ۭ وَلَيَزِيْدَنَّ كَثِيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ مَّآ اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْكَ
مِنْ رَّبِّكَ طُغْيَانًا وَّكُفْرًا ۭ وَاَلْقَيْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاۗءَ اِلٰى
يَوْمِ الْقِيٰمَةِ ۭ كُلَّمَآ اَوْقَدُوْا نَارًا لِّلْحَرْبِ اَطْفَاَهَا اللّٰهُ ۙ وَيَسْعَوْنَ فِي
الْاَرْضِ فَسَادًا ۭ وَاللّٰهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُفْسِدِيْنَ ۝ وَلَوْ اَنَّ اَهْلَ الْكِتٰبِ
اٰمَنُوْا وَاتَّقَوْا لَكَفَّرْنَا عَنْهُمْ سَيِّاٰتِهِمْ وَلَاَدْخَلْنٰهُمْ جَنّٰتِ النَّعِيْمِ ۝
وَلَوْ اَنَّهُمْ اَقَامُوا التَّوْرٰىةَ وَالْاِنْجِيْلَ وَمَآ اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ رَّبِّهِمْ
لَاَكَلُوْا مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ وَمِنْ تَحْتِ اَرْجُلِهِمْ ۭ مِنْهُمْ اُمَّةٌ مُّقْتَصِدَةٌ ۭ
وَكَثِيْرٌ مِّنْهُمْ سَاۗءَ مَا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ۝ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الرَّسُوْلُ بَلِّغْ مَآ اُنْزِلَ
اِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ ۭ وَاِنْ لَّمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهٗ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ يَعْصِمُكَ
مِنَ النَّاسِ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ۝ قُلْ يٰٓاَهْلَ
الْكِتٰبِ لَسْتُمْ عَلٰى شَيْءٍ حَتّٰى تُقِيْمُوا التَّوْرٰىةَ وَالْاِنْجِيْلَ وَمَآ
اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْكُمْ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ ۭ وَلَيَزِيْدَنَّ كَثِيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ مَّآ اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْكَ

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When they come to you, they say, "We have believed," but in fact they had come in a state of un-belief and departed with disbelief; Allah knows full well what they were concealing in their hearts. You see most of them are striving for sinful and wicked deeds and eating what is unlawful: evil indeed are the things they have been doing. Why do their rabbis and divines not forbid them to say sinful words and to eat unlawful things? It is indeed an evil record of their life-work which they are preparing! 61-63

The Jews say that the hands of Allah are chained[92] — Nay chained indeed are their own hands[93] and accursed they have become because of the blasphemy they utter[94] Allah's hands are free and He expends in whatever way He wills. 64

The fact is that the Message which has been sent down to you from your Lord has rather increased the rebellion and disbelief of many of them[95] : (as a consequence of this) We have cast between them enmity and hatred till the Day of Resurrection. Whenever they kindle the fire of war, Allah extinguishes it; now they are striving to spread mischief in the world but Allah does not like the mischief-makers.

If (instead of this rebellion), the people of the Book had believed and adopted the way of God-fearing, We would have removed their evils from them, and admitted them into the gardens of bliss. Had they observed the Torah and the Gospel and the other Books which had been sent down to them by their Lord, abundance would have been given to them from above and from beneath.[96] Though there are some among them who are righteous, most of them are evil-doers. 65-66

O Messenger, convey to the people whatever has been sent down to you from your Lord; for, if you do not do this, you will not be doing justice to His Message. Allah will protect you from the mischievous deeds of the people. Rest assured that He will not show the disbelievers the way to success (against you). Tell them plainly, "O people of the Book, you have no valid ground to stand on unless you observe the Torah and the Gospel and the other Books which have been sent down to you from your Lord."[97] It is certain that the foregoing decree which has been sent down to you from your Lord, 67-68

will increase all the more the rebellion and disbelief of many of them,[98] but you should not grieve for the disbelievers.

Contd. from p. 463]

They had become so degraded that they began to worship *ṭāghūt*. Therefore they were warned to desist from their opposition to the Muslims who sincerely believed in Allah and followed the Right Way, whereas they themselves were involved in disobedience and indecency and other moral sins of the worst type.

92. According to the Arabic idiom, one whose hands are 'chained' is an excessively parsimonious person. What the Jews meant by this was that Allah had ceased to be bounteous. When they had fallen into the lowest state of degradation for centuries and lost all hope of their national recovery, they used to lament their lost glory and blame Allah for showing niggardliness towards them. The foolish people from among them went so far as to say, "God has become so stingy that He has shut the doors of His treasures against us. He has now nothing left with Him for us except calamities and misfortunes."

This attitude is not peculiar to the Jews alone. The foolish people of other communities also instead of turning to Allah, utter insolent words like these when a calamity befalls them.

93. That is, they themselves have become so niggardly as to become a proverb for parsimony and narrow-mindedness.

94. If they meant to provoke Allah to bounty by their taunts, they miserably failed in their object. On the contrary, they became subject to the curse of Allah in consequence of their insolent and impudent words and were deprived of His blessing and clemency.

95. Instead of producing the desired effect on the Jews, the Word of God fell on deaf ears. So they did not learn any lesson from it but in their obduracy began to oppose the Truth. Instead of redressing their wrong doings and evil deeds and mending their ways, they strove hard to suppress that Voice so that no one else might listen to it. Thus the Word of God that was sent down to Muḥammad (Allah's peace be upon him) for their own good and the good of humanity produced no good effect upon them but increased the rebellion and disbelief of many of them.

96. This concise sentence refers to a speech of the Prophet Moses contained in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28. In this he warned the Israelites in detail: "If you will carefully carry out all His Commands....., then your God will lift you high above all the nations of the earth and all His blessings shall come

upon you", but "If you do not listen to the voice of God and are not mindful of all His commands and rules, ... then shall all sorts of curses, calamities and plagues come upon you.....The Eternal will have you routed in front of your foes."

97. "To observe the Torah and the Gospel" means to follow their teachings sincerely and to follow the code of life laid down in them.

In this connection, one must keep in mind that the Bible contains two kinds of writings. Some portions in it have been interpolated by the Jewish and the Christian scholars. It is obvious that the Qur'ān does not demand the observance of these parts. But there are other portions that have been put down as the Commandments of God or as the sayings of Moses, Jesus and other Prophets (Allah's peace be upon them all). The Qur'ān demands the observance of the latter parts only, for there is no marked difference between the teachings contained in them and those of the Qur'ān. Though even these parts of the Bible have not remained wholly intact and have been tampered with by the translators, the commentators etc., nevertheless, one does feel that they teach the same fundamental principle of *Tauḥīd* that the Qur'ān teaches, present the same creed which the Qur'ān presents, and guides man to the same way of life that has been laid down in the Qur'ān. Thus it is clear that if the Jews and the Christians had been following those teachings which have been attributed to God and their Prophets in the Bible, most surely they would have been a community of righteous people at the time when Muḥammad (Allah's peace be upon him) was sent as a Messenger and would have readily recognized that the Qur'ān contained the same Message that was contained in the former Books. In that case they would have felt no difficulty in following the Holy Prophet, for, then, there would have been no question of changing their religion: this would have been a continuation of the same way that they were following before.

98. The foregoing decree enjoined by Allah will increase their rebellion and disbelief because they will not consider it with a cool mind but in their obduracy oppose it more vigorously.

مِنْ رَّبِّكَ طُغْيَانًا وَّكُفْرًا ۚ فَلَا تَاْسَ عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿٦٨﴾ اِنَّ
الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَالَّذِيْنَ هَادُوْا وَالصّٰبِـُٔوْنَ وَالنَّصٰرٰى مَنْ اٰمَنَ بِاللّٰهِ
وَالْيَوْمِ الْاٰخِرِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُوْنَ ﴿٦٩﴾
لَقَدْ اَخَذْنَا مِيْثَاقَ بَنِيْٓ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ وَاَرْسَلْنَآ اِلَيْهِمْ رُسُلًا ۭ كُلَّمَا
جَآءَهُمْ رَسُوْلٌۢ بِمَا لَا تَهْوٰٓى اَنْفُسُهُمْ ۙ فَرِيْقًا كَذَّبُوْا وَفَرِيْقًا يَّقْتُلُوْنَ ﴿٧٠﴾
وَحَسِبُوْٓا اَلَّا تَكُوْنَ فِتْنَةٌ فَعَمُوْا وَصَمُّوْا ثُمَّ تَابَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِمْ ثُمَّ
عَمُوْا وَصَمُّوْا كَثِيْرٌ مِّنْهُمْ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ بَصِيْرٌۢ بِمَا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٧١﴾ لَقَدْ كَفَرَ
الَّذِيْنَ قَالُوْٓا اِنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَ الْمَسِيْحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ ۭ وَقَالَ الْمَسِيْحُ يٰبَنِيْٓ
اِسْرَآءِيْلَ اعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ رَبِّيْ وَرَبَّكُمْ ۭ اِنَّهٗ مَنْ يُّشْرِكْ بِاللّٰهِ فَقَدْ حَرَّمَ
اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ الْجَنَّةَ وَمَاْوٰىهُ النَّارُ ۭ وَمَا لِلظّٰلِمِيْنَ مِنْ اَنْصَارٍ ﴿٧٢﴾ لَقَدْ
كَفَرَ الَّذِيْنَ قَالُوْٓا اِنَّ اللّٰهَ ثَالِثُ ثَلٰثَةٍ ۘ وَمَا مِنْ اِلٰهٍ اِلَّآ اِلٰهٌ وَّاحِدٌ ۭ
وَاِنْ لَّمْ يَنْتَهُوْا عَمَّا يَقُوْلُوْنَ لَيَمَسَّنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مِنْهُمْ عَذَابٌ
اَلِيْمٌ ﴿٧٣﴾ اَفَلَا يَتُوْبُوْنَ اِلَى اللّٰهِ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُوْنَهٗ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿٧٤﴾
مَا الْمَسِيْحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ اِلَّا رَسُوْلٌ ۚ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ ۭ وَ
اُمُّهٗ صِدِّيْقَةٌ ۭ كَانَا يَاْكُلٰنِ الطَّعَامَ ۭ اُنْظُرْ كَيْفَ نُبَيِّنُ لَهُمُ الْاٰيٰتِ
ثُمَّ انْظُرْ اَنّٰى يُؤْفَكُوْنَ ﴿٧٥﴾ قُلْ اَتَعْبُدُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ مَا لَا يَمْلِكُ
لَكُمْ ضَرًّا وَّلَا نَفْعًا ۭ وَاللّٰهُ هُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿٧٦﴾ قُلْ يٰٓاَهْلَ الْكِتٰبِ
لَا تَغْلُوْا فِيْ دِيْنِكُمْ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوْٓا اَهْوَاۗءَ قَوْمٍ قَدْ ضَلُّوْا
مِنْ قَبْلُ وَاَضَلُّوْا كَثِيْرًا وَّضَلُّوْا عَنْ سَوَاۗءِ السَّبِيْلِ ﴿٧٧﴾ لُعِنَ الَّذِيْنَ

(Believe it that none enjoys any privilege): whoever from among the Muslims or the Jews or the Sabaeans or the Christians believes in Allah and the Last Day and does good deeds will have no cause of fear or grief or sorrow.[99] 69

We made a solemn covenant with the children of Israel and sent many Messengers to them; but whenever any Messenger came to them with a thing which was against their desires, they either treated him as a liar or slew him: yet they presumed that no mischief would come of it: they, therefore, became blind and deaf: after this Allah forgave them but again most of them went on behaving even more like the blind and the deaf; Allah has been watching all the evil things they have been doing. 70-71

Most certainly they committed blasphemy, who said, "Allah, He is indeed the Messiah, Mary's son"; whereas the Messiah had said, "O children of Israel, 'worship Allah alone, Who is my Lord and your Lord as well"[99a] Whoever joins a partner with Allah, Allah shall forbid him the Garden, and Hell shall be his abode: and such workers of iniquity shall have no helpers. 72

Most certainly they committed blasphemy, who said, "God is one of the three": whereas there is no deity other than the One Deity. And if these people do not desist from uttering such words, a painful chastisement shall be inflicted on all those from among them who have been guilty of blasphemy. Will they not, then, turn to Allah and ask His pardon? Allah is very Forgiving and Compassionate. 73-74

The Messiah, son of Mary, was no more than a Messenger: many Messengers had already passed away before him. His mother was a righteous woman and they both ate food. Behold! how We make clear to them the signs leading to the Reality, and, again behold, how they are perverted.[100] 75

Say to them, "Do you worship instead of Allah that which has no power to harm nor benefit you? In fact, it is Allah alone Who hears everyone and knows everything." Say, "O people of the Book, do not transgress the bounds of truth in your religion, and do not follow the fancies of those who themselves went astray before you and led astray many others and strayed away from the Right Way."[101] 76-77

99. Please refer to verse 62 and E.N. 80 of Al-Baqarah.

99a. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." (Matthew 4 : 10).

100. This verse repudiates very clearly the Christian doctrine of the divinity of Jesus. If one sincerely wishes to know what he really was, one can judge very easily with the help of the signs given herein that he was no more than a man. The Gospel itself bears witness that he was a human being, and subject to the usual wants and necessities of ordinary persons: he was born of a woman (Mary): he had a genealogical tree like all other human beings: he had a human body which had all the characteristics and limitations of other human bodies: he slept, he ate food and he felt heat and cold: he was even tempted by the devil. These things clearly show that he could not be God nor could he have been a partner with God in His Godhead.

But it is a strange feat of mental perversion that the Christians insist on ascribing Godhead to Jesus inspite of the fact that their own Gospels depict him purely as a human being. This is a clear proof of the fact that they do not believe in the Gospels but in an imaginary Christ whom they themselves have invented and raised to Godhead.

101. This refers to the mis-guided nations from whom the Christians picked up wrong creeds and false ways. The reference is especially to the Greek philosophers whose fancies misled the Christians from the Right Way which had been shown to them at the start. The beliefs of the first followers of the Messiah conformed to a great extent to the reality they themselves had witnessed and to what had been taught to them by their Prophet. But later on the Christians went so much beyond the limits in showing reverence and veneration to the Messiah and were so influenced by the fancies and philosophical interpretations of their beliefs that they invented a new religion that had nothing in common with the real teachings of the Messiah. In this connection, the following extracts from Jesus Christ, by the Rev. Charles Anderson Scott *(Encyclopaedia Britannica,* Fourteenth Edition) are worth reading :--

"Apart from the Birth stories at the opening of Matthew, Mark and Luke (the exact significance of which in this respect is ambiguous) there is nothing in these three Gospels to suggest that their writers thought of Jesus as other than human, a human being specially endued with the spirit of God and standing in an unbroken relation to God which justified His being spoken of as the "Son of God". Even Matthew refers to him as a carpenter's son and records that after Peter had acknowledged Him as Messiah he "took him and began to rebuke Him" (Matt. XVI. 22). And in Luke the two disciples on the way to Emmaus can still speak of

Him as "a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people" (Luke, XXIV. 19). It is very singular that inspite of the fact that before Mark was composed, "the Lord" had become the description of Jesus common among Christians; he is never so described in the second Gospel (nor yet in the first, though the word is freely used to refer to God). All three relate the Passion of Jesus with a fulness and emphasis of its great significance, but except the "ransom" passage (Mark, X. 45) and certain words at the Last Supper, there is no indication of the meaning which was afterwards attached to it. It is not even suggested that the death of Jesus had any relation to sin or forgiveness. Had the "ransom" saying been suggested by Paul, it would not stand as it does in its isolated vagueness."

The same author says, "That He ranked Himself as a Prophet appears from a few passages such as 'I have to go on my way today, tomorrow or day after tomorrow, because it cannot be that a Prophet perish out of Jerusalem." (Luke, 13 : 33) He frequently referred to himself as "the Son of Man."..... "Jesus never refers to Himself as the "Son of God", and the title when bestowed upon Him by others probably involves no more than the acknowledgement that He was the Messiah. But He does describe himself "as the Son" absolutely.....Moreover, he uses the word "Father" in the same absolute way to define His relationship to God. It is conceivable that He did not always realise the uniqueness of this relationship, that in early life He thought of the privilege as one which He shared with other men, but that experience of life and deeper knowledge of human nature forced upon Him the discovery that in this He stood alone."

"Certain words of Peter spoken at the time of Pentecost, 'A man approved of God,' describe Jesus as He was known and regarded by His contemporaries.....The Gospels leave no room for doubt as to the completeness with which these statements are to be accepted. From them we learn that Jesus passed through the natural stages of development, physical and mental, that He hungered, thirsted, was weary and slept, that He could be surprised and require information, that He suffered pain and died. He not only made no claim to omniscience, He distinctly waived it. Indeed any claim to omniscience would be not only inconsistent with the whole impression created by the Gospels, it could not be reconciled with the cardinal experiences of the Temptation, of Gethsemane and of Calvary. Unless such experiences were to be utterly unreal, Jesus must have entered into them and passed through them under the ordinary limitations of human knowledge, subject only to such modifications of human knowledge as might be due to prophetic insight or the sure vision of God. There is still less reason to predicate omnipotence of Jesus. There is no indication that He ever acted independently of God, or as an independent God. Rather does He acknowledge dependence upon God, by His habit of prayer and in such words as "this kind

goeth not forth save by prayer". He even repudiates the ascription to Himself of goodness in the absolute sense in which it belongs to God alone. It is a remarkable testimony to the truly historical character of these Gospels that though they were not finally set down until the Christian Church had begun to look up to the risen Christ as to a Divine Being, the records on the one hand preserve all the evidence of His true humanity and on the other nowhere suggest that He thought of Himself as God....."

"It may not be possible to decide whether it was the primitive community or Paul himself who first put fully religious content into the title "Lord" as used of Christ. Probably it was the former. But the Apostle undoubtedly adopted the title in its full meaning and did much to make that meaning clear by transferring to "the Lord Jesus Christ" many of the ideas and phrases which in the Old Testament had been specifically assigned to the Lord Jehovah. He gave unto him that name that is above every name — the name of "Lord." At the same time by equating Christ with the Wisdom of God and with Glory of God, as well as ascribing to Him Sonship in an absolute sense, Paul claimed for Jesus Christ a relation to God which was inherent and unique, ethical and personal, eternal. While, however, Paul in many ways and in many aspects, equated Christ with God, he definitely stopped short of speaking of him as God....." (Pages 22-25, *Enc. Brit.*, Vol. 13, 1946).

The moulds of thought (of Trinity) are those of Greek philosophy and into these were run the Jewish teachings. We have thus a peculiar combination — the religious doctrines of the Bible, as culminating in the person of Jesus, run through the forms of alien philosophy....."

For the Doctrine of Trinity, "The Jewish source furnished the terms Father, Son and Spirit. Jesus seldom employed the last term and Paul's use of it is not altogether clear. Already in Jewish literature it has been all but personified. Thus the material is Jewish, though already doubtless modified by Greek influence: but the problem is Greek; it is not primarily ethical nor even religious but it is metaphysical. What is the ontological relationship between these three factors? The answer of the Church is given in the Nicene formula, which is characteristically Greek....."

(*Enc. Britannica*, Vol. 5, page 633 last line, Article "Christianity")

In the same connection, the following passage from "Church History" (*Enc. Britannica*, Vol 5, Copy Right 1946) is also worth reading:

"The recognition of Christ as the incarnation of the "logos" was practically universal before the close of the 3rd century, but His deity was still widely denied and the Arian controversy which distracted the Church of the 4th

century concerned the latter question. At the council of Nicaea in 325 the deity of Christ received official sanction and was given formulation in the original Nicene creed. Controversy continued for some time, but finally the Nicene decision was recognised both in East and West as the only orthodox faith. The deity of the Son was believed to carry with it that of the Spirit, who was associated with Father and Son in the baptismal formula and in the current symbols and so the victory of the Nicene Christology meant the recognition of the doctrine of the Trinity as a part of orthodox faith.

"The assertion of the deity of the Son incarnate in Christ raised another problem which constituted the subject of dispute in the Christological controversies of the 4th and following centuries. What is the relation of the divine and human natures in Christ? At the council of Chalcedon in 451 it was declared that in the person of Christ are united two complete natures, divine and human, which retain after the union all their properties unchanged. This was supplemented at the third council of Constantinople in 680 by the statement that each of the natures contains a will, so that Christ possesses two wills. The Western Church accepted the decisions of Nicaea, Chalcedon and Constantinople and so the doctrines of the Trinity and of the two natures in Christ were handed down as orthodox dogma in West as well as East.....

"Meanwhile in the Western Church the subject of sin and grace and the relation of divine and human activity in salvation, received special attention and finally, at the 2nd Council of Orange in 529, after both Pelagianism and semi-Pelagianism had been repudiated, a moderate form of Augustinianism was adopted, involving the theory that every man as a result of the Fall is in such a condition that he can take no steps in the direction of salvation until he has been renewed by the divine grace given in baptism, and that he cannot continue in the good thus begun except by the constant assistance of that grace which is mediated only by the Catholic Church". (Page 677-678).

It has become very clear from the above quotations from Christian Scholars that the first thing which misled the Christians was their exaggerated credulity. Accordingly, they went beyond the limits in their reverence and love of Christ. That is why they began to apply epithets like "Lord" and "Son of God" to Jesus Christ (Allah's peace be upon him) and to ascribe Divine Attributes to him and to invent the Doctrine of Atonement, when, in fact, there was absolutely no room, for such things in his teachings. Afterwards when they came under the influence of philosophy, they began to put forward interpretations to justify the errors of their former religious leaders and went on inventing new creeds, one after the other, in utter disregard of the real teachings of Jesus Christ, merely on

[Contd. on p. 475

كَفَرُوْا مِنْۢ بَنِيْٓ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ عَلٰى لِسَانِ دَاوٗدَ وَعِيْسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ ۭ ذٰلِكَ
بِمَا عَصَوْا وَّكَانُوْا يَعْتَدُوْنَ ۝ كَانُوْا لَا يَتَنَاهَوْنَ عَنْ مُّنْكَرٍ فَعَلُوْهُ ۭ
لَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُوْا يَفْعَلُوْنَ ۝ تَرٰى كَثِيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ يَتَوَلَّوْنَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا ۭ
لَبِئْسَ مَا قَدَّمَتْ لَهُمْ اَنْفُسُهُمْ اَنْ سَخِطَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَفِي الْعَذَابِ
هُمْ خٰلِدُوْنَ ۝ وَلَوْ كَانُوْا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَالنَّبِيِّ وَمَآ اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْهِ مَا
اتَّخَذُوْهُمْ اَوْلِيَاۗءَ وَلٰكِنَّ كَثِيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ فٰسِقُوْنَ ۝ لَتَجِدَنَّ اَشَدَّ
النَّاسِ عَدَاوَةً لِّلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا الْيَهُوْدَ وَالَّذِيْنَ اَشْرَكُوْا ۚ وَلَتَجِدَنَّ
اَقْرَبَهُمْ مَّوَدَّةً لِّلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا الَّذِيْنَ قَالُوْٓا اِنَّا نَصٰرٰى ۭ ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّ
مِنْهُمْ قِسِّيْسِيْنَ وَرُهْبَانًا وَّاَنَّهُمْ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُوْنَ ۝

الجزء ٧

وَاِذَا سَمِعُوْا مَآ اُنْزِلَ اِلَى الرَّسُوْلِ تَرٰٓى اَعْيُنَهُمْ تَفِيْضُ مِنَ الدَّمْعِ

مِمَّا عَرَفُوْا مِنَ الْحَقِّ ۚ يَقُوْلُوْنَ رَبَّنَآ اٰمَنَّا فَاكْتُبْنَا مَعَ الشّٰهِدِيْنَ ۝
وَمَا لَنَا لَا نُؤْمِنُ بِاللّٰهِ وَمَا جَاۗءَنَا مِنَ الْحَقِّ ۙ وَنَطْمَعُ اَنْ يُّدْخِلَنَا
رَبُّنَا مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الصّٰلِحِيْنَ ۝ فَاَثَابَهُمُ اللّٰهُ بِمَا قَالُوْا جَنّٰتٍ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ
تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا ۭ وَذٰلِكَ جَزَاۗءُ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ۝ وَالَّذِيْنَ
كَفَرُوْا وَكَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَآ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ اَصْحٰبُ الْجَحِيْمِ ۝ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا
لَا تُحَرِّمُوْا طَيِّبٰتِ مَآ اَحَلَّ اللّٰهُ لَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوْا ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يُحِبُّ
الْمُعْتَدِيْنَ ۝ وَكُلُوْا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللّٰهُ حَلٰلًا طَيِّبًا ۠ وَّاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ الَّذِيْٓ
اَنْتُمْ بِهٖ مُؤْمِنُوْنَ ۝ لَا يُؤَاخِذُكُمُ اللّٰهُ بِاللَّغْوِ فِيْٓ اَيْمَانِكُمْ وَلٰكِنْ
يُّؤَاخِذُكُمْ بِمَا عَقَّدْتُّمُ الْاَيْمَانَ ۚ فَكَفَّارَتُهٗٓ اِطْعَامُ عَشَرَةِ مَسٰكِيْنَ

78-81 Those who adopted the way of disbelief from among the children of Israel were cursed by the tongue of David and of Jesus, Mary's son, because they had grown rebellious and become transgressors: they would not forbid one another to do the wrong deeds they committed;[102] evil was the way they had adopted. Today you see many of them who take the side of the disbelievers (against the Believers). Indeed it is an evil end to which their souls have prompted them: for they have incurred the wrath of Allah and they are going to suffer eternal torment. Had they believed in Allah and the Prophet and in what was revealed to him, they would never have made friends with the disbelievers[103] (against the Believers), but many of them have become disobedient to Allah.

82-86 You will find that the most hostile of all people in their enmity to the Believers are the Jews and the *mushriks;* and you will find that the nearest in friendliness to the Believers are those, who say, "We are Christians." This is because there are among them some pious scholars and monks and because they are free from pride. When they listen to that which has been sent down to the Messenger, you see their eyes overflow with tears because of the Truth they recognize therein. They spontaneously say, "Our Lord, we have believed; therefore, write down our names with those who bear witness to it." And they say, "Why should we not believe in Allah and accept the Truth that has come to us, when we are eager that our Lord may count us with the righteous people?" And, for these words of theirs, Allah rewarded them with the Gardens underneath which canals flow, wherein they will live for ever. This is the reward of the righteous people. As for those who rejected Our Revelations and treated them as false, they deserve Hell.

87-88 O Believers, do not make unlawful those pure things which Allah has made lawful for you,[104] and do not go beyond the limit;[105] indeed Allah does not like the transgressors. Eat easefully of the lawful and pure things which Allah has provided you, and refrain from disobeying Allah in Whom you have believed.

Contd. from p. 473]

the strength of Philosophy and Logic, whereas the right thing for them would have been to turn to the real teachings of Christ.

It is against such wrong beliefs that the Qur'ān warns in vv. 72-77.

102. The corruption of the children of Israel took place according to the universal process. At first some individuals of a community become corrupt, and if the collective conscience of the community is alive, the public opinion keeps them suppressed, and the community, as a whole, is saved from corruption. But, on the other hand, if the community connives at their evil ways, and leaves them free to do as they like, by and by, that corruption which was at first confined only to some individuals, spreads in the whole community. The same thing happened in the case of the children of Israel.

As to the curse by the tongue of the Prophets David and Jesus, please refer to Psalms 10 and 50 and Matthew 23.

103. If the Jews had been sincere believers in God, Prophethood and Revelation, they would naturally have taken the side of the Muslims, who were believers in these teachings. But the Jews were a strange sort of believers in the Book: they sided with the *mushriks* against the Believers in the battle between the Unity of God and *shirk*. Moreover, they professed to believe in Prophethood, but took the side of those who did not believe in it. Still they shame-facedly declared that they were believers in God, Prophets and the Books.

104. This Divine Commandment implies two things. First, "You have no authority to make certain things lawful and others unlawful. Lawful is only that which Allah has made lawful and unlawful is that which Allah has made unlawful. Therefore if you make a lawful thing unlawful, and *vice versa*, you will be following your own law and not the Divine Law." Secondly, "You should not adopt the way of asceticism like the Christian monks or the Hindu friars or the Buddhist mendicants and the like." This was meant to warn the Muslims against the general tendency, which has always existed among the religious-minded people, to consider even the normal satiation of the desires of the body and mind to be against spiritual progress. They imagine that self-torture, self-denial and abstinence are virtues in themselves and that one could not approach God without these austerities. As a matter of fact, there were some Companions, who had developed such tendencies. When the Holy Prophet came to know that some of his Companions had taken vows that they would always observe fast during the day and would not go to bed for sleep but keep awake and worship God the whole night, and would abstain from flesh, fat and women, he forbade them from such practices. He said, "I have not ordained such things; your own self has rights on you; therefore observe fast and also eat easefully. Stand in worship at night and also go to sleep. I myself sometimes observe fast and at others I do not. I eat flesh and butter. (This is my way) and the one who does not like my way, is not of me."

According to another Tradition, he emphasised the same and said, "How is it that some people have made unlawful for themselves women, good food, scents and perfumes, sleep and other good things of the world? As for me I have not taught you to become monks and hermits. The way of life taught by me does neither allow abstention from women nor from eating flesh nor retirement and seclusion from the world. The Law has prescribed Fasting for self-discipline, and *Jihād* for the same benefits that might be obtained from asceticism. Worship Allah and associate none with Him as partner, perform Ḥajj and 'Umrah, establish the *Ṣalāt* and pay *Zakāt* and observe the Fasts during the month of Ramadān. The people who were doomed before you, were doomed because they practised austerity of their own accord, and when they did so, Allah also prescribed the same for them. Those are of them whom you now see in the Monasteries.

In the same connection, we learn from some Traditions that when the Holy Prophet came to know that a certain Companion had been abstaining from having conjugal relations with his wife for a long time and had been devoting himself to worship, he immediately sent for him and ordered, "Go to your wife instantly." The Companion replied, "I am with fast" The Prophet again said, "Break the fast and go to your wife."

There is another instance of the same kind. A woman came to Caliph 'Umar and complained, "My husband observes fast during the day and passes the night in worship and does not have conjugal relations with me." Ḥaḍrat 'Umar ordered Ka'b bin Saur al-Azdi to hear the case. He decreed that the husband was permitted to pass three nights in worship but he must go to his wife on the fourth night.

105. "To go beyond the limits" has very extensive meanings. One goes beyond the limits, if one makes lawful things unlawful or abstains from things which Allah has declared to be pure as if they were impure or if one is extravagant in the use of pure things, or if one makes use of unlawful things as if they were lawful. Allah does not like such acts of transgression.

مِنْ اَوْسَطِ مَا تُطْعِمُوْنَ اَهْلِيْكُمْ اَوْ كِسْوَتُهُمْ اَوْ تَحْرِيْرُ رَقَبَةٍ ؕ فَمَنْ
لَّمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ ثَلٰثَةِ اَيَّامٍ ؕ ذٰلِكَ كَفَّارَةُ اَيْمَانِكُمْ اِذَا حَلَفْتُمْ ؕ وَ
احْفَظُوْٓا اَيْمَانَكُمْ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللّٰهُ لَكُمْ اٰيٰتِهٖ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿٨٩﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا
الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اِنَّمَا الْخَمْرُ وَ الْمَيْسِرُ وَ الْاَنْصَابُ وَ الْاَزْلَامُ رِجْسٌ مِّنْ
عَمَلِ الشَّيْطٰنِ فَاجْتَنِبُوْهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿٩٠﴾ اِنَّمَا يُرِيْدُ الشَّيْطٰنُ اَنْ
يُّوْقِعَ بَيْنَكُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَ الْبَغْضَآءَ فِى الْخَمْرِ وَ الْمَيْسِرِ وَ يَصُدَّكُمْ عَنْ
ذِكْرِ اللّٰهِ وَ عَنِ الصَّلٰوةِ ۚ فَهَلْ اَنْتُمْ مُّنْتَهُوْنَ ﴿٩١﴾ وَ اَطِيْعُوا اللّٰهَ وَ اَطِيْعُوا
الرَّسُوْلَ وَ احْذَرُوْا ۚ فَاِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَاعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّمَا عَلٰى رَسُوْلِنَا الْبَلٰغُ
الْمُبِيْنُ ﴿٩٢﴾ لَيْسَ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَ عَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ جُنَاحٌ فِيْمَا طَعِمُوْٓا
اِذَا مَا اتَّقَوْا وَّ اٰمَنُوْا وَ عَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ ثُمَّ اتَّقَوْا وَّ اٰمَنُوْا ثُمَّ اتَّقَوْا
وَّ اَحْسَنُوْا ؕ وَ اللّٰهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿٩٣﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَيَبْلُوَنَّكُمُ
اللّٰهُ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الصَّيْدِ تَنَالُهٗٓ اَيْدِيْكُمْ وَ رِمَاحُكُمْ لِيَعْلَمَ اللّٰهُ مَنْ
يَّخَافُهٗ بِالْغَيْبِ ۚ فَمَنِ اعْتَدٰى بَعْدَ ذٰلِكَ فَلَهٗ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿٩٤﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا
الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تَقْتُلُوا الصَّيْدَ وَ اَنْتُمْ حُرُمٌ ؕ وَ مَنْ قَتَلَهٗ مِنْكُمْ مُّتَعَمِّدًا
فَجَزَآءٌ مِّثْلُ مَا قَتَلَ مِنَ النَّعَمِ يَحْكُمُ بِهٖ ذَوَا عَدْلٍ مِّنْكُمْ هَدْيًۢا
بٰلِغَ الْكَعْبَةِ اَوْ كَفَّارَةٌ طَعَامُ مَسٰكِيْنَ اَوْ عَدْلُ ذٰلِكَ صِيَامًا لِّيَذُوْقَ
وَبَالَ اَمْرِهٖ ؕ عَفَا اللّٰهُ عَمَّا سَلَفَ ؕ وَ مَنْ عَادَ فَيَنْتَقِمُ اللّٰهُ مِنْهُ ؕ وَ
اللّٰهُ عَزِيْزٌ ذُو انْتِقَامٍ ﴿٩٥﴾ اُحِلَّ لَكُمْ صَيْدُ الْبَحْرِ وَ طَعَامُهٗ مَتَاعًا لَّكُمْ
وَ لِلسَّيَّارَةِ ۚ وَ حُرِّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ صَيْدُ الْبَرِّ مَا دُمْتُمْ حُرُمًا ؕ وَ اتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ

Allah does not take you to task for the inadvertent oaths you swear, but He will surely call you to account for the intentional and deliberate oaths you make. The expiation (of breaking such an oath) is to feed ten indigent persons with the normal food you serve in your own family, or to give them clothes, or to free one slave, and the one who cannot afford any of these let him fast three days. This is the expiation of breaking the solemn oaths you have taken;[106] be mindful of your oaths.[107] Thus Allah makes His Commandments plain to you so that you may show gratitude. 89

O Believers, wine, gambling, (ungodly) shrines and divining devices are all abominable works of Satan:[108] therefore refrain from these so that you may attain to true success.[109] Indeed Satan intends to sow enmity and hatred among you by means of wine and gambling, and to prevent you from the remembrance of Allah and from *Ṣalāt*. Will you not, therefore, abstain from these things? Obey Allah and His Messenger and abstain from these things; but if you disobeyed, note it well that Our Messenger's only responsibility was to convey the Message clearly. 90-92

Those, who have believed and done good deeds, shall not be called to account for whatever they might have eaten in the past, provided that they abstain in future from those things that have been made unlawful, and remain steadfast in their Faith, and do good works: then restrain themselves from whatever they are forbidden and believe in the Divine Law: then fear Allah and adopt the righteous attitude, for Allah likes those who do righteous deeds. 93

O Believers, Allah will put you to a hard trial by that game which will come within the very reach of your hands or lances, in order to see who fears Him even though He is invisible: there shall, therefore, be a painful punishment for those who transgress the limits after this warning. O Believers, do not kill game while you are in the state of *iḥrām*.[110] And, whoever of you kills an animal intentionally, he shall have to make an offering of a head of cattle equivalent to it, which will be decided by two just men from among you. This offering shall have to be sent to the Ka'bah or, failing this, he shall have to feed indigent people by way of expiation or compensate for it by equivalent fasting,[111] so that he may taste the evil consequence of what he did. Allah has forgiven what has gone before, but if anyone repeats 94-95

the same, Allah will inflict retribution on him; Allah is All-Mighty and All-Powerful to inflict retribution.

96 Game of the sea and its use as food has been made lawful for you;[112] you may eat it at your halting place and also use it as a provision for the caravan, but the game of the land has been prohibited so long as you are in the state of *iḥrām*. So refrain from the disobedience of that Allah before Whom you shall all be mustered together.

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106. The Commandment about oaths has been laid down here in connection with instructions about food, because some people had taken oaths of making some lawful things unlawful for themselves. The Commandment is that if one uttered a word of oath without any intention behind it, one shall not be bound to observe it; for there is no punishment or expiation for this. But if one has deliberately taken such an oath, one must break it and expiate the violation because one must abrogate such a sinful oath. (Please also refer to E.N.'s 243 and 244 of Al-Baqarah and E.N. 125 of An-Nisā).

107. "Being mindful of an oath" implies three things. First, one should make the right use of an oath and should not take it for useless and sinful things. Secondly, when one takes an oath for anything, one should remember it lest one should forget it and violate it. Thirdly, if one takes a deliberate oath to do a right thing, one must fulfil it, and if one violates it, one should expiate the sin.

108. Please refer to E.N.'s 12 and 14 of this Sūrah for the meaning of *ansāb* (ungodly shrines), *azlām* (methods of divination) and *maisar* (gambling). Though *azlām*, divination, is in its very nature a form of gambling, there is a slight difference between it and *maisar*. *Azlām* applies to those forms of divination and casting of lots, which are tinged with *shirk* and superstition and *maisar* applies to all those forms by which wealth is acquired or divided by devices of chance.

109. In this verse four things have been made absolutely unlawful. They are wine, gambling, ungodly shrines (which are dedicated to the worship of others than Allah and in which sacrifices are made and offerings given in the name of others than Allah) and divining devices. The nature of the last three has already been explained. Here are the details of the Commandment about wine.

Before making wine absolutely unlawful in this verse, two other Commandments concerning its prohibition had already been given in Al-Baqarah, II: 219 and An-Nisā, IV: 43. Before this last Commandment was given, the Holy Prophet addressed the people in order to prepare them for its absolute prohibition. He warned and said, "Allah does not like at all that people should drink wine.

Probably absolute prohibition will soon be prescribed: therefore those who possess wine are advised to sell it." Some time after this, when verse 90 was sent down he declared, "Now those who possess wine, can neither drink it nor sell it; they should, therefore, throw it away." Accordingly it was spilt in the streets of Madinah to run wastefully. Some people, however, asked the Holy Prophet, "May we give it as a present to the Jews?" He replied, "The One Who has made it unlawful has also forbidden to give it as a present." Others asked, "May we convert it into vinegar?" He replied, "No, you must spill it." Another asked again and again, "Is one permitted to use wine as medicine?" The Holy Prophet emphatically rejected this also and said, "No, it is not a medicine but a disease." Yet another asked, "Sir, we live in a place, which is very cold, and we have to do tiresome labour. So we drink wine to refresh ourselves from fatigue and to keep warm in the cold." He asked, "Is what you drink intoxicant?" The man replied, "Yes." The Holy Prophet replied, "Then refrain from it." At this the man said, "The people of our part of the country will not submit to this." He replied, "If they do not submit to this, then go to war with them."

According to a Tradition related by Ibn 'Umar, the Holy Prophet declared, "Allah has cursed wine and the one who drinks it and the one who serves it and the one who sells it and the one who buys it and the one who extracts it and the one who has it extracted and the one who carried it and the one for whom it is carried."

According to another Tradition the Holy Prophet prohibited the Muslims from eating the food which is served alongwith wine. In the initial stage of the prohibition, he forbade even the use of those utensils which were employed for extracting wine or for drinking it. Afterwards when the prohibition had become thoroughly effective, the use of such utensils was permitted.

Though originally the Arabic word *khamr* meant only wine made from grapes, and it was also applied to the liquors made from wheat, barley, dried grapes, dates and honey, the Holy Prophet applied the prohibition to all the intoxicants, and there are Traditions that clearly support this. For instance, "Every intoxicant is *khamr* and is unlawful." "Every drink that intoxicates is unlawful." "I prohibit every intoxicant." In one of his Friday sermons, the Caliph 'Umar defined *khamr* as everything that dulls the faculty of thinking.

In this connection, the Holy Prophet laid down the general principle : if a large dose of something is intoxicant, then its smallest dose also is unlawful, and if a cup of anything is intoxicant, then a drop of it also is unlawful.

During the time of the Holy Prophet, there was no fixed punishment for a

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الَّذِیْٓ اِلَیْهِ تُحْشَرُوْنَ ﴿96﴾ جَعَلَ اللّٰهُ الْكَعْبَةَ الْبَیْتَ الْحَرَامَ قِیٰمًا لِّلنَّاسِ
وَالشَّهْرَ الْحَرَامَ وَالْهَدْیَ وَالْقَلَآىِٕدَ ؕ ذٰلِكَ لِتَعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ یَعْلَمُ مَا
فِی السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِی الْاَرْضِ وَاَنَّ اللّٰهَ بِكُلِّ شَیْءٍ عَلِیْمٌ ﴿97﴾ اِعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّ
اللّٰهَ شَدِیْدُ الْعِقَابِ ۙ وَاَنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِیْمٌ ﴿98﴾ مَا عَلَی الرَّسُوْلِ اِلَّا الْبَلٰغُ ؕ
وَاللّٰهُ یَعْلَمُ مَا تُبْدُوْنَ وَمَا تَكْتُمُوْنَ ﴿99﴾ قُلْ لَّا یَسْتَوِی الْخَبِیْثُ وَالطَّیِّبُ
وَلَوْ اَعْجَبَكَ كَثْرَةُ الْخَبِیْثِ ۚ فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ یٰۤاُولِی الْاَلْبَابِ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿100﴾ یٰۤاَیُّهَا الَّذِیْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تَسْـَٔلُوْا عَنْ اَشْیَآءَ اِنْ تُبْدَ لَكُمْ تَسُؤْكُمْ ۚ
وَاِنْ تَسْـَٔلُوْا عَنْهَا حِیْنَ یُنَزَّلُ الْقُرْاٰنُ تُبْدَ لَكُمْ ؕ عَفَا اللّٰهُ عَنْهَا ؕ
وَاللّٰهُ غَفُوْرٌ حَلِیْمٌ ﴿101﴾ قَدْ سَاَلَهَا قَوْمٌ مِّنْ قَبْلِكُمْ ثُمَّ اَصْبَحُوْا بِهَا
كٰفِرِیْنَ ﴿102﴾ مَا جَعَلَ اللّٰهُ مِنْۢ بَحِیْرَةٍ وَّلَا سَآىِٕبَةٍ وَّلَا وَصِیْلَةٍ وَّلَا
حَامٍ ۙ وَّلٰكِنَّ الَّذِیْنَ كَفَرُوْا یَفْتَرُوْنَ عَلَی اللّٰهِ الْكَذِبَ ؕ وَاَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا
یَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿103﴾ وَاِذَا قِیْلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا اِلٰی مَاۤ اَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ وَاِلَی الرَّسُوْلِ
قَالُوْا حَسْبُنَا مَا وَجَدْنَا عَلَیْهِ اٰبَآءَنَا ؕ اَوَلَوْ كَانَ اٰبَآؤُهُمْ لَا یَعْلَمُوْنَ
شَیْـًٔا وَّلَا یَهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿104﴾ یٰۤاَیُّهَا الَّذِیْنَ اٰمَنُوْا عَلَیْكُمْ اَنْفُسَكُمْ ۚ لَا یَضُرُّكُمْ
مَّنْ ضَلَّ اِذَا اهْتَدَیْتُمْ ؕ اِلَی اللّٰهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِیْعًا فَیُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ
تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿105﴾ یٰۤاَیُّهَا الَّذِیْنَ اٰمَنُوْا شَهَادَةُ بَیْنِكُمْ اِذَا حَضَرَ اَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ
حِیْنَ الْوَصِیَّةِ اثْنٰنِ ذَوَا عَدْلٍ مِّنْكُمْ اَوْ اٰخَرٰنِ مِنْ غَیْرِكُمْ اِنْ اَنْتُمْ
ضَرَبْتُمْ فِی الْاَرْضِ فَاَصَابَتْكُمْ مُّصِیْبَةُ الْمَوْتِ ؕ تَحْبِسُوْنَهُمَا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ
الصَّلٰوةِ فَیُقْسِمٰنِ بِاللّٰهِ اِنِ ارْتَبْتُمْ لَا نَشْتَرِیْ بِهٖ ثَمَنًا وَّلَوْ كَانَ

Allah has made the sacred House of the Ka'bah a means of stabilising the (community) life of the people ; the sacred month and the animal offerings and the animals which are collared as a mark of dedication (have also been made conducive to the same object)[113] so that you may know that Allah is fully aware of all that is in the heavens and the earth and that He has perfect knowledge of everything. [114] Note it well that Allah is very severe in punishing, and at the same time He is very Forbearing and Merciful. The only duty of the Messenger is to convey the Message ; Allah knows whatever you disclose and whatever you hide. Tell them, O Messenger, that the pure and the impure cannot be alike anyhow, although the abundance of the impure may allure you much.[115] So, O people of understanding, refrain from the disobedience of Allah : it is expected that you will attain to true success. 97-100

O Believers, do not ask questions concerning such things, which, if made known to you, would only vex you ;[116] but, if you will ask such questions at the time when the Qur'ān is being sent down, they will be made known to you. Allah has forgiven what you have done so far : for He is Forgiving and Forbearing. Some people before you asked such questions : then they were involved in disbelief because of those very things.[117] 101-102

Allah has ordained neither *Baḥīrah* nor *Sāi'bah* nor *Waṣīlah* nor *Ḥāmī*[118] but the unbelievers have invented a falsehood against Allah, and most of them lack understanding (so they believe in such superstitions). And when it is said to them, "Come to the Law which Allah has sent down and to the Messenger," they reply, "Sufficient for us is the way on which we found our forefathers." What! will they go on following their forefathers, even if they knew nothing, and were quite ignorant of the Right Way ? 103-104

O Believers, look after your own souls ; it can do no harm to you, if anyone else goes astray, provided that you yourselves are on the right path.[119] To Allah shall you all return : then He will let you know what you have been doing. 105

O Believers, when the time of death approaches anyone of you, and he is going to make his will, the principle of evidence is that two just men[120] from among you should act as witnesses. Or, if you are on 106

a journey and the calamity of death befalls you there, the two witnesses may be taken from among the non Muslims.[121] Then, if you have any doubt, both the witnesses should be detained (in the mosque) after the Prayer, and they should testify upon oath by Allah, "We are not going to sell our evidence for any personal benefit, and even though he be our own relative, (we will not be partial to him) ; we are not going to hide evidence which we are giving for the sake of Allah : for we shall be sinners if we do so."

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drunkard. The culprit, who was arrested and brought for trial, was beaten with shoes, kicked, given blows and thrashed with sticks and ropes. Forty stripes were the maximum punishment given for this crime. The same was the punishment during the time of Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr and the early days of Caliph 'Umar. But when the latter saw that the crime was on the increase, he in consultation with the other Companions laid down eighty stripes for this.

Imām Mālik and Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and, according to a Tradition, Imām Shāfi'ī also, were of the same opinion. But Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal and, according to another Tradition, Imām Shāfi'ī also, were of the opinion that forty stripes should be inflicted for the crime of drinking. Hadrat 'Alī also considered forty stripes to be the punishment for it.

According to the *Sharī'at,* it is the duty of the Islamic State to enforce prohibition. That is why during the time of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, the shop of a man, named Ruvaishid, who belonged to the clan of Banī-Thaqīf, was burnt by his order, because wine was secretly sold there. On another occasion a whole village was burnt down on the orders of Ḥadrat 'Umar, for the crime that wine was secretly extracted and sold there.

110. It is forbidden to hunt game or to help another to hunt it in any way whatsoever, while one is in the pilgrim's garments or in the sacred precincts. It is also unlawful for one in this state to eat of the game that has been specifically killed for him. If, however, someone else, not in this state, kills a game for himself and then gives a part of it to a pilgrim as a present, there is no harm for the latter to eat it. Of course, the harmful animals are an exception to this prohibition. One is permitted to kill a snake, scorpion, mad dog or any other harmful animal, even when one is under the restrictions imposed on a pilgrim.

111. Those two just men will also decide how many indigent persons are to be fed, or how many fasts are to be observed, for killing a certain animal.

112. Game from the sea has been made lawful because sometimes when provisions run short on a sea journey, there is nothing else close at hand to eat.

113. For Arabia, the Ka'bah was not merely a sacred place of worship, but it occupied a central position in the country and because of this and of its sanctity, it was the means of stabilising its economy and culture. The people from all over the country came there to perform Hajj and 'Umrah and the huge gathering helped to create the feeling of unity among the Arabs who were otherwise torn by clannish strifes. The pilgrims who came from different clans and places met together and established cultural relations. Poetic contests helped to make their language and literature rich. Trade and commerce which were transacted on the occasion helped to satisfy the economic needs of the people. The sacred months provided peace to the Arabs for four months and this was the only period during which their caravans could travel in security from one part of the country to the other. The animals dedicated to sacrifice and the collars round their necks proved very helpful to the movements of the caravans, for the Arabs showed so much reverence for them that none dared touch them with the intention of robbery.

114. That is, "If you just think deeply about the wisdom contained in the sanctity of the Ka'bah and the restrictions laid down for the pilgrimage to it and the benefits accruing from it, you yourselves would be convinced that Allah, Who has prescribed these, has deep and perfect knowledge of the welfare and needs of His creatures. You will realize that each one of His Commandments is very beneficial for different aspects of human life. Even during the centuries of chaos before the advent of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), Allah had made the Ka'bah a means of security and stability for your national life though you yourselves were senselessly bent upon destroying it. In the same way, Commandments of Allah guaranteed your own security and welfare; therefore you should, for your own good observe these, for there are hidden benefits in them that you can neither foresee nor obtain by your own devices."

115. This verse sets up a new standard of values, which is quite different from the standard of those who look only at the outward aspect of things. Such people usually judge things by their quantity and not by their quality. For instance, one hundred rupees are always considered greater in value than five rupees by one who does not attach any value to the means by which these might have been obtained. But contrary to this evaluation, this verse declares that if these one hundred rupees have been obtained by unfair means and those five rupees earned by fair means, then the former are less in worth because of their impurity than the latter because of their purity. According to this standard, it is not the number or the quantity of a thing that increases or decreases its true worth but the question

whether it has been obtained by fair means or foul. Obviously, a drop of rose scent has greater value than a heap of filth and a cup of pure water is far greater in worth than a cistern full of impure urine. Therefore one who is really wise will always remain content with the lawful, though it may appear to be very insignificant and worthless, and will never try to grab the unlawful, though it might appear to be very alluring and grand.

116. This verse forbids people to ask useless and unnecessary questions because some people used to put such questions to the Holy Prophet as were of no practical good for mundane affairs nor for spiritual up-lift. For example, once a certain person while sitting in a gathering asked him, "Who is my real father?" Likewise, sometimes, some people put unnecessary questions concerning legal matters so as to get these defined, whereas they had been purposely kept undefined for the good of the people. For example, when Ḥajj was made obligatory by a commandment in the Qur'ān a certain person heard it, and instantly asked, "Has it been made obligatory to perform Ḥajj every year?" The Holy Prophet did not make any reply. The man repeated the question, but he again kept quiet. When the man put the question for the third time, he replied, "Woe to you! If I had said: 'Yes', the performance of Ḥajj every year would have become obligatory and people like you would have been unable to perform it and been guilty of disobedience."

The Holy Prophet himself forbade people to ask questions for the sake of it and to probe into things aimlessly. In a Tradition he warned, "The worst offender against the Muslims is the person who asked a question about something that had not been made unlawful but was made so because of his question." In another Tradition he said, "Allah has prescribed some obligatory duties for you; let not these go unfulfilled, and He has made certain things unlawful, so do not go near them. He has prescribed certain limits, do not transgress them. He has been silent concerning certain things, but not because He has forgotten them; so do not try to probe into such things."

In these two Traditions a warning has been served against a very serious matter. There are certain things and commandments which have been left vague and without details. This is not because the Law-giver had forgotten to give details or to make them specific but because He did not intend to limit these in order to leave a wide scope for the people. Therefore if a person goes on creating one issue after the other, by putting unnecessary and useless questions and thus creates limitations and specifications, he puts the people to unnecessary trouble. Likewise if he tries to deduce the details by the force of his "reasoning", and does not rest content till he has made the vague things specific and the indefinite definite, he in reality puts the Muslims in a very awkward position. This is because the more

details we offer for the Unseen and the Next World, the more will be the chances for creating doubts about them and, likewise, the more limitations are imposed concerning the Commandments, the greater will be the chance for their violation.

117. The people, who were involved in disbelief because they asked useless and unnecessary questions, were the Jews. At first they were involved in hairsplitting, which led them to put unnecessary questions about the details of the Faith and the Commandments. Consequently, they helped to impose upon themselves such restrictions as they could not observe and so became guilty of disobedience and disbelief. What a pity that the Muslims are following the Jews, step by step, in spite of these warnings by the Qur'ān and the Holy Prophet!

118. In this verse the superstitious practice of dedicating animals to idols, graves, gods or saints, and leaving them to roam about and graze at liberty has been condemned. In the pre-Islamic Arabia, they gave different names to such animals and marked them off, and considered it unlawful to take any service from them or slaughter them for food or derive any benefit from them in any way.

Baḥīrah was the name given to a she-camel which had five young ones, the last of which was a he-camel. Her ear was then split and she was turned loose to roam at liberty. After this, none would ride her nor drink her milk nor slaughter her nor shear her hair. She was allowed to graze in any field and pasture and drink from any watering place.

Sā'ibah was the name given to that he-camel or she-camel which was let loose as a mark of gratitude in fulfilment of a vow taken for recovery from some illness or safety from some danger. *Sā'ibah* was also the name given to the she-camel which had ten young ones, each of which was a she-camel.

Waṣīlah was the name given to a special he-goat which was one of the first born twins, the other of which was a she-goat. The practice about the first born young ones was that they used to sacrifice, in the name of their deities, the first born young one if it happened to be a he-goat. But if they happened to be twins they would not sacrifice the he-goat and would call it *Waṣīlah* and set it at liberty in the name of deities.

Ḥām was the name given to a he-camel as soon as his "grandson" became grown up and fit for riding: it was then set at liberty. The same name also was given to a he-camel which begot ten young ones and was set at liberty.

119. This is a warning against a common human weakness. Some people are always on the look-out to find out and criticise errors in others. Here such people have been admonished against this evil and asked to concentrate their

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ذَا قُرْبٰى ۙ وَ لَا نَكْتُمُ شَهَادَةَ اللّٰهِ اِنَّاۤ اِذًا لَّمِنَ الْاٰثِمِيْنَ ﴿106﴾ فَاِنْ عُثِرَ
عَلٰۤى اَنَّهُمَا اسْتَحَقَّاۤ اِثْمًا فَاٰخَرٰنِ يَقُوْمٰنِ مَقَامَهُمَا مِنَ الَّذِيْنَ اسْتَحَقَّ
عَلَيْهِمُ الْاَوْلَيٰنِ فَيُقْسِمٰنِ بِاللّٰهِ لَشَهَادَتُنَاۤ اَحَقُّ مِنْ شَهَادَتِهِمَا وَ مَا
اعْتَدَيْنَاۤ ۖ اِنَّاۤ اِذًا لَّمِنَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿107﴾ ذٰلِكَ اَدْنٰۤى اَنْ يَّاْتُوْا بِالشَّهَادَةِ عَلٰى
وَجْهِهَاۤ اَوْ يَخَافُوْۤا اَنْ تُرَدَّ اَيْمَانٌۢ بَعْدَ اَيْمَانِهِمْ ؕ وَ اتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَ اسْمَعُوْا ؕ
وَ اللّٰهُ لَا يَهْدِى الْقَوْمَ الْفٰسِقِيْنَ ﴿108﴾ يَوْمَ يَجْمَعُ اللّٰهُ الرُّسُلَ فَيَقُوْلُ
مَا ذَاۤ اُجِبْتُمْ ؕ قَالُوْا لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا ؕ اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوْبِ ﴿109﴾ اِذْ قَالَ
اللّٰهُ يٰعِيْسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ اذْكُرْ نِعْمَتِىْ عَلَيْكَ وَ عَلٰى وَالِدَتِكَ ۘ اِذْ اَيَّدْتُّكَ
بِرُوْحِ الْقُدُسِ ؕ تُكَلِّمُ النَّاسَ فِى الْمَهْدِ وَ كَهْلًا ۚ وَ اِذْ عَلَّمْتُكَ الْكِتٰبَ
وَ الْحِكْمَةَ وَ التَّوْرٰىةَ وَ الْاِنْجِيْلَ ۚ وَ اِذْ تَخْلُقُ مِنَ الطِّيْنِ كَهَيْـَٔةِ الطَّيْرِ
بِاِذْنِىْ فَتَنْفُخُ فِيْهَا فَتَكُوْنُ طَيْرًا بِاِذْنِىْ وَ تُبْرِئُ الْاَكْمَهَ وَ الْاَبْرَصَ
بِاِذْنِىْ ۚ وَ اِذْ تُخْرِجُ الْمَوْتٰى بِاِذْنِىْ ۚ وَ اِذْ كَفَفْتُ بَنِىْۤ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ عَنْكَ
اِذْ جِئْتَهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ فَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مِنْهُمْ اِنْ هٰذَاۤ اِلَّا سِحْرٌ
مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿110﴾ وَ اِذْ اَوْحَيْتُ اِلَى الْحَوَارِيّٖنَ اَنْ اٰمِنُوْا بِىْ وَ بِرَسُوْلِىْ ۚ قَالُوْۤا اٰمَنَّا
وَ اشْهَدْ بِاَنَّنَا مُسْلِمُوْنَ ﴿111﴾ اِذْ قَالَ الْحَوَارِيُّوْنَ يٰعِيْسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ هَلْ
يَسْتَطِيْعُ رَبُّكَ اَنْ يُّنَزِّلَ عَلَيْنَا مَآئِدَةً مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ ؕ قَالَ اتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ
اِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿112﴾ قَالُوْا نُرِيْدُ اَنْ نَّاْكُلَ مِنْهَا وَ تَطْمَئِنَّ قُلُوْبُنَا وَ نَعْلَمَ
اَنْ قَدْ صَدَقْتَنَا وَ نَكُوْنَ عَلَيْهَا مِنَ الشّٰهِدِيْنَ ﴿113﴾ قَالَ عِيْسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ
اللّٰهُمَّ رَبَّنَاۤ اَنْزِلْ عَلَيْنَا مَآئِدَةً مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ تَكُوْنُ لَنَا عِيْدًا لِّاَوَّلِنَا

But if it is discovered that the two had been guilty of the same sin, then two other better qualified witnesses than the former, from among those who were deprived of their right, should come forward and testify upon oath, by Allah, "Our testimony is truer than their testimony, and we have not made any transgression in our testimony: we shall be among the unjust, if we do so." It is expected that in this way the people will give only true evidence: or, at least, they will fear lest their oaths should be contradicted by subsequent oaths. Fear Allah and listen: Allah does not show His Guidance to those who are disobedient. 107-108

On the Day,[122] when Allah will assemble all the Messengers, He will ask, "What was the response you received?"[123] They will answer, "We have no knowledge:[124] You alone have the full knowledge of all that is hidden." Just imagine the occasion, when Allah will say[125] "O Jesus, son of Mary, recall to mind My favour I bestowed upon you and upon your mother: I strengthened you with the Holy Spirit; you talked to the people even in the cradle as you talked when you were grown up; I taught you the Book and the Wisdom and the Torah and the Gospel: by My leave you made from clay the likeness of a bird, and breathed into it, and by My leave it became a living bird; by My leave you healed the born-blind and the lepers; by My leave you brought forth the dead.[126] Also remember that I protected you from the Israelites, when you came to them with clear signs, and the disbelievers among them said, 'These signs are nothing but obvious sorcery" and remember also that I inspired the Disciples to believe in Me and My Messenger; then they said, 'We have believed and bear witness that we are Muslims."[127] ——(In regard to the disciples),[128] this incident may also be kept in mind: They said, "O Jesus, son of Mary, can your Lord send down to us from heaven a tray of food?" Jesus said, "Fear Allah, if you are true Believers." They replied, "We only wish to eat of this tray so that our hearts may be re-assured and we may know it for certain that what you have said to us is true, and that we may bear witness to it." At this, Jesus, son of Mary, prayed, "O Allah, our Lord, send to us from heaven a tray of food that it may become a recurring festival to us, to the first of us and to the last of us, and that it may be a Sign from You. Provide for us and You are the best of providers." 119-114

وَاٰخِرِنَا وَاٰيَةً مِّنْكَ ۚ وَارْزُقْنَا وَاَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرّٰزِقِيْنَ ﴿١١٤﴾ قَالَ اللّٰهُ اِنِّيْ
مُنَزِّلُهَا عَلَيْكُمْ ۚ فَمَنْ يَّكْفُرْ بَعْدُ مِنْكُمْ فَاِنِّيْٓ اُعَذِّبُهٗ عَذَابًا لَّآ اُعَذِّبُهٗٓ اَحَدًا
مِّنَ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿١١٥﴾ وَاِذْ قَالَ اللّٰهُ يٰعِيْسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ ءَاَنْتَ قُلْتَ لِلنَّاسِ
اتَّخِذُوْنِيْ وَاُمِّيَ اِلٰهَيْنِ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ ؕ قَالَ سُبْحٰنَكَ مَا يَكُوْنُ لِيْٓ اَنْ
اَقُوْلَ مَا لَيْسَ لِيْ ۗ بِحَقٍّ ؕ اِنْ كُنْتُ قُلْتُهٗ فَقَدْ عَلِمْتَهٗ ؕ تَعْلَمُ مَا فِيْ نَفْسِيْ
وَلَآ اَعْلَمُ مَا فِيْ نَفْسِكَ ؕ اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوْبِ ﴿١١٦﴾ مَا قُلْتُ لَهُمْ اِلَّا مَآ
اَمَرْتَنِيْ بِهٖٓ اَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ رَبِّيْ وَرَبَّكُمْ ۚ وَكُنْتُ عَلَيْهِمْ شَهِيْدًا مَّا دُمْتُ
فِيْهِمْ ۚ فَلَمَّا تَوَفَّيْتَنِيْ كُنْتَ اَنْتَ الرَّقِيْبَ عَلَيْهِمْ ؕ وَاَنْتَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
شَهِيْدٌ ﴿١١٧﴾ اِنْ تُعَذِّبْهُمْ فَاِنَّهُمْ عِبَادُكَ ۚ وَاِنْ تَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ فَاِنَّكَ اَنْتَ الْعَزِيْزُ
الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿١١٨﴾ قَالَ اللّٰهُ هٰذَا يَوْمُ يَنْفَعُ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ صِدْقُهُمْ ؕ لَهُمْ جَنّٰتٌ تَجْرِيْ
مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَآ اَبَدًا ؕ رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوْا عَنْهُ ؕ
ذٰلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيْمُ ﴿١١٩﴾ لِلّٰهِ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَمَا فِيْهِنَّ ؕ وَهُوَ
عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿١٢٠﴾

Allah answered, "I am going to send it down to you,[129] but whoever among you shall disbelieve after that, I will surely give him such a chastisement wherewith I will not have chastised any other creature in the world."— (After reminding him of these favours), Allah will say, "O Jesus, son of Mary, did you ever say to the people, 'Make me and my mother deities besides Allah'?"[130] He will say, "Glory be to You! It did not behove me to say that which I had no right to say. Had I ever said such a thing, You would most surely have known it, for You know all that is in my mind, but I do not know what is in Your mind: indeed You have full knowledge of all the hidden things. I never told them anything other than what You bade me. I said, 'Worship Allah, Who is my Lord as well as your Lord.' I was a witness to their conduct as long as I remained among them but when You recalled me, You watched over them; for You keep watch over everything. Now, if You punish them, they are your own servants, and if You forgive them, You are All-powerful and All-Wise." Then Allah will declare, "This is the Day when the truthfulness of the truthful benefits them; there are such Gardens for them underneath which canals flow; they will dwell therein for ever. Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him; this is the greatest success." 115-119

The Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth and whatever is therein belongs to Allah and He has power over everything. 120

Contd. from p. 487]

attention on their own acts, deeds, morals and beliefs instead of probing into and criticising the conduct and beliefs of others. If a man himself is obedient to Allah and fulfils his obligations to Him and man, and treads the path of truth and righteousness, which also includes the establishment of virtue and the eradication of vice, then most surely the crookedness and deviation of any other can do him no harm.

This verse however, does not mean that a person should think only of his own salvation and leave alone the reform of others. Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr Ṣiddiq refuted this misconception in an address, saying, "O people, you recite this verse and put on it a wrong interpretation. I myself heard the Holy Prophet say, 'When the people become so indifferent that they see evil and do not try to eradicate it and see an unjust person doing an injustice and do not prevent him from it, Allah may punish all of them.' I swear by Allah that it is obligatory on you to enjoin virtue

and forbid evil; (if you neglect this) Allah will place you under the worst people who will inflict hardships on you. Then your good people will offer prayers but He will not accept these."

120. That is, pious, righteous and trustworthy Muslims.

121. This shows that the Muslims are permitted to make the non-Muslims their witnesses only in case the Muslim witnesses are not available.

122. The Day of Resurrection.

123. That is, "What was the response of the world to the invitation that you gave towards Islam?"

124. That is, "We know only of that outward response which was made to our invitation during our lifetime. As regards the real practical response, we have no correct knowledge of it for that is known to You alone."

125. At first this question will be put collectively to all the Messengers. Then each of the Messengers will stand as a witness individually. Here that question, which will be put to Jesus Christ (Allah's peace be upon him), has been specially mentioned because it fits into the context.

126. That is, "You brought them back to life after death."

127. That is, "It was a favour upon you that the Disciples believed in you, by Our Grace; otherwise you had no power by yourself to convert even a single person out of the disbelievers."

Incidentally, the use of the word Muslims for the Disciples is meant to show that their religion was Islam and not Christianity.

128. This incident has been inserted here as a parenthesis to show that even his Disciples, who had received his teachings from him directly, considered Jesus a man and servant of God. Therefore, they could never conceive to make their master a god or a partner of God or son of God. This also shows that Jesus also presented himself as a servant without having any authority of his own.

It may be asked, "What was the occasion of inserting this parenthesis here to interrupt the conversation that was being cited?" The answer is that the conversation that would take place on the Day of Resurrection has been quoted here for the benefit of the Christians so that they may learn the lesson and adopt the right way. It is, therefore, quite pertinent to insert the incident mentioned in the parenthesis to impress the same lesson.

129. The Qur'ān is silent as to whether the 'tray' was sent down or not and there is no other authentic source of information. Possibly it was sent down,

but it is equally possible that the Disciples themselves might have taken back their request after the warning in verse 115.

130. This refers to another error of the Christians. They had made Mary an object of worship along with Christ and the Holy Ghost, though there is not a word or hint in the Bible about this doctrine. During the first three centuries after Christ, the Christian world was totally unaware of this creed. Towards the end of the 3rd century, the words "Mother of God" were used for the first time by some theologians of Alexandria. Though the response which these words found in the popular heart was great, yet the Church was not at first inclined to accept the doctrine and declared that the worship of Mary was a wrong creed. Then at the Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D., the words 'Mother of God' were officially used by the Church. As a result 'Mariolatry' began to spread by leaps and bounds both inside and outside the Church. So much so that by the time the Qur'ān was revealed, the exaltation of the 'Mother of God' had eclipsed the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Her statues were set up in Churches and she was worshipped, implored and invoked in prayers. In short, the greatest source of reliance of a Christian was that he should obtain the help and protection of the 'Mother of God.' Emperor Justinian in the preamble to one of his laws bespeaks her advocacy for the empire and his general, Narses, looks to her directions on the battlefield. Emperor Heraclius, a contemporary of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad, bore her image on his banner and believed that because of its auspicious nature it will never be lowered. Though the Protestants after the Reformation did their best to fight against Mariolatry, yet the Roman Catholic Church still adheres to it passionately.



VI
AL-AN'ĀM
اَلْاَنْعَام

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

VI
AL-AN'ĀM

سورة الأنعام

INTRODUCTION

Name:

This Sūrah takes its name from vv. 136, 138 and 139 in which some superstitious beliefs of the idolatrous Arabs concerning the lawfulness of some cattle (*an'ām*) and the unlawfulness of some others have been refuted.

Period of Revelation.

According to a tradition of Ibn 'Abbās, the whole of the Sūrah was revealed at one sitting at Makkah. Asmā' bint Yazīd, a first cousin of Ḥaḍrat Mu'ādh-bin-Jabal, says, "During the revelation of this Sūrah, the Holy Prophet was riding on a she-camel and I was holding her nose-string. The she-camel began to feel the weight so heavily that it seemed as if her bones would break under it." We also learn from other traditions that the Holy Prophet dictated the whole of this Sūrah the same night that it was revealed.

Its subject-matter clearly shows that it must have been revealed during the last stage of the Holy Prophet's life at Makkah. The tradition of Asmā' bint Yazīd, also confirms the same. As she belonged to the *Ansār* and embraced Islam after the emigration of the Holy Prophet to Yathrīb, her visit to the Holy Prophet at Makkah must have taken place during the last year of his life there. For, before this, his relations with

the people of Yathrib were not so intimate that a woman might have come from there to visit him at Makkah.

Occasion of Revelation.

After determining the period of its revelation, it is easier to visualise the background of the Sūrah. Twelve years had passed since the Holy Prophet had been inviting the people to Islam. The antagonism and persecution by the Quraish had become most savage and brutal, and the majority of the Muslims had to leave their homes and emigrate to Ḥabash (Abyssinia) Above all, the two great supporters of the Holy Prophet, Abū Ṭālib and Ḥadrat Khadījah, were no more to help and give strength to him. Thus he was deprived of all the worldly support. But, in spite of this, he carried on his mission in the teeth of opposition. As a result of this, on the one hand, all the good people of Makkah and the surrounding clans gradually began to accept Islam; on the other, the community as a whole, was bent upon obduracy and rejection. Therefore, if anyone showed any inclination towards Islam, he was subjected to taunts and derision, physical violence and social boycott. It was in these dark circumstances that a ray of hope gleamed from Yathrib, where Islam began to spread freely by the efforts of some influential people of Aus and Khazraj, who had embraced Islam at Makkah. This was a humble beginning in the march of Islam towards success and none could foresee at that time the great potentialities that lay hidden in it. For, to a casual observer, it appeared as if Islam was merely a weak movement: it had no material backing except the meagre support of the Prophet's own family and of the few poor adherents of the Movement. Obviously, the latter could not give much help because they themselves had been cast out by their own people who had become their enemies and were persecuting them.

Topics.

These were the conditions, when this discourse was revealed. The main topics dealt with in this discourse may be divided under seven headings:

(1) Refutation of *shirk* and invitation to the creed of *Tauhīd*.

(2) Enunciation of the doctrine of "Life-after death" and refutation of the wrong notion that there was nothing beyond this worldly life.

(3) Refutation of the prevalent superstitions.

(4) Enunciation of the fundamental moral principles for the building up of the Islamic Society.

(5) Answers to the objections raised against the person of the Holy Prophet and his mission.

(6) Comfort and encouragement to the Holy Prophet and his followers who were in a state of anxiety and despondency because of the apparent failure of the mission.

(7) Admonition, warning and threats to the disbelievers and opponents to give up their apathy and haughtiness.

It must, however, be noted that the above topics have not been dealt with one by one under separate headings, but the discourse goes on as a continuous whole and these topics come under discussion over and over again in new and different ways.

Background of Makkī Sūrahs.

As this is the first long Makkī Sūrah in the order of the compilation of the Qur'ān, it will be useful to explain the historical background of the Makkī Sūrahs in general, so that the reader may easily understand the Makkī Sūrahs and our references to its different stages in connection with our commentary on them.

First of all, it should be noted that comparatively very little material is available in regard to the background of the revelation of the Makkī Sūrahs whereas the period of the revelation of almost all the Madanī Sūrahs is known or can be determined with a little effort. There are authentic traditions even in regard to the occasions of the revelation of the majority of the verses. On the other hand, we do not have such detailed information regarding the Makkī Sūrahs. There are only a few Sūrahs and verses which have authentic traditions concerning the time and occasion of their revelation. This is because the history of the Makkī period had not been compiled in such detail as that of the Madanī period. Therefore we have to depend on the internal evidence of these Sūrahs for determining the period of their revelation: for example, the topics they discuss, their subject-matter, their style and the direct or indirect references to the events and the occasions of their revelation. Thus it is obvious that with the help of such evidence, we cannot say

with precision that a particular Sūrah or verse was revealed on such and such an occasion. The most we can do is to compare the internal evidence of a Sūrah with the events of the life of the Holy Prophet at Makkah, and then come to a more or less correct conclusion as to what particular stage a certain Sūrah belongs.

If we keep the above things in view, the history of the mission of the Holy Prophet at Makkah can be divided into four stages:

The first stage began with his appointment as a Messenger and ended with the proclamation of Prophethood three years Later. During this period the Message was given secretly to some selected persons only, but the common people of Makkah were not aware of it.

The second stage lasted for about two years after the proclamation of his Prophethood. It began with opposition by individuals: then by and by, it took the shape of antagonism, ridicule, derision, accusation, abuse, and false propaganda: then gangs were formed to persecute those Muslims who were comparatively poor, weak and helpless.

The third stage lasted for about six years from the beginning of the persecution to the death of Abū Ṭālib and Ḥaḍrat Khadījah in the tenth year of Prophethood. During this period, the persecution of the Muslims became so savage and brutal that many of them were forced to migrate to Ḥabash. Social and economic boycott was applied against the Holy Prophet, members of his family, and the Muslims who continued to stay in Makkah and he was besieged in Shi'b Abi Ṭālib along with his followers and supporters.

The fourth stage lasted for about three years, from the tenth to the thirteenth year of Prophethood. This was a period of hard trials and grievous sufferings for the Holy Prophet and his followers. Life became unendurable at Makkah and there appeared to be no place of refuge even outside it. So much so that when he went to Ṭa'if, it offered no shelter or protection. Besides this, on the occasion of Ḥajj, he would appeal to each and every Arab clan to accept his invitation to Islam but met with blank refusal from every quarter. At the same time, the people of Makkah were holding counsels to get rid of him by killing, imprisoning or banishing him from their city. It was at that critical time that Allah

opened for Islam the hearts of the *Anṣār* of Yathrīb, where he migrated on their invitation.

Now that we have divided the life of the Holy Prophet at Makkah into four stages, it has become easier for us to tell, as far as possible, the particular stage in which a certain Makkī Sūrah was revealed. This is because the Sūrahs belonging to a particular stage can be distinguished from those of the other stages with the help of their subject-matter and style. Besides this, they also contain such references as throw light on the circumstances and events that form the background of their revelation. In the succeeding Makkī Sūrahs, we will determine, on the basis of the distinctive features of each stage, and point out in the introduction, the particular stage in which a certain Makkī Sūrah was revealed.

SUMMARY

Subject:

Islamic Creed.

This Sūrah mainly discusses the different aspecs of the major articles of the Islamic Creed: *Tauhid*, Life-after-death, Prophethood and their practical application to human life. Side by side with this, it refutes the erroneous beliefs of the opponents and answers their objections, warns and admonishes them and comforts the Holy Prophet and his followers, who were then suffering from persecution.

Of course, these themes have not been dealt with under separate heads but have been blended in an excellent manner.

Topics and their Interconnection

1-12 These verses are of introductory and admonitory nature. The disbelievers have been warned that if they do not accept the Islamic Creed and follow the 'Light' shown by the Revelation from the All Knowing and All-Powerful Allah, they would go to the same doom as the former disbelievers did. Their arguments for rejecting the Prophet and the Revelation sent down to him have been refuted and a warning has been given to them that they should not be deluded by the respite that is being granted to them.

13-24 These verses inculcate *Tauhid*, and refute *shirk* which is the greatest obstacle in the way of its acceptance.

25-32 In these verses, a graphic scene of the life in the Hereafter has been depicted in order to warn the disbelievers of the consequences of the rejection of the Articles of Faith.

33-73 Prophethood is the main theme which has been discussed from the point of view of the Holy Prophet, his Mission, the limitations of his powers, the attitude towards his followers and also from the point

of view of the disbelievers.

In continuation of the same theme, the story of Prophet Abraham has been related to bring home to the pagan Arabs that the Mission of Prophet Muhammad, which they were opposing, was the same as that of Prophet Abraham (Allah's peace be upon them). This line of argument was adopted because they considered themselves to be his followers, especially the Quraish who were proud of being his descendants as well. 7490

Another proof of his Prophethood is the Book, which has been sent down to him by Allah, for its teachings show the right guidance in regard to creed and practice. 91-108

Divine restrictions have been contrasted with the superstitious restrictions of the pagan Arabs in order to show the striking differences between the two and thus prove the Qur'ān to be a Revealed Book. 109-154

The Jews, who were criticised in vv.144:147 along with the pagan Arabs, have been urged to compare the teachings of the Qur'ān with those of the Torah so that they might recognize their similarity and give up their lame excuses against it, and adopt its Guidance to escape the retribution on the Day of Resurrection. 155-160

This is the conclusion of the discourse: the Holy Prophet has been instructed in a beautiful and forceful manner to proclaim fearlessly the articles of the Islamic Creed and their implications. 161-165



اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِیْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الْاَرْضَ وَ جَعَلَ الظُّلُمٰتِ وَ النُّوْرَ ۟
ثُمَّ الَّذِیْنَ كَفَرُوْا بِرَبِّهِمْ یَعْدِلُوْنَ ۝ هُوَ الَّذِیْ خَلَقَكُمْ مِّنْ طِیْنٍ ثُمَّ
قَضٰۤى اَجَلًا ؕ وَ اَجَلٌ مُّسَمًّى عِنْدَهٗ ثُمَّ اَنْتُمْ تَمْتَرُوْنَ ۝ وَ هُوَ اللّٰهُ فِیْ

VI
AL-AN'ĀM

الانعام

Verses: 165 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Praise is only for Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth 1-3
and ordained light and many kinds of darkness; inspite of this, those who have rejected the Message of their Lord have set up equal partners with Him.[1] It is He Who has created you from earth[2] and decreed a fixed term of life for you, and with Him there is another settled[3] term also — yet you have doubts thereof. He is the same One Allah in the heavens as well as on the earth: He knows all that you make known and all that you keep secret and is fully aware of the good or evil that you earn.

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1. It should be noted that the addressees were the *mushrik* Arabs, who acknowledged that the Creator of the earth and heavens and of the sun and the moon is Allah, Who brought about the day and night. None of them believed that

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السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ فِی الْاَرْضِ ؕ یَعْلَمُ سِرَّكُمْ وَ جَهْرَكُمْ وَ یَعْلَمُ مَا تَكْسِبُوْنَ ﴿۳﴾ وَ
مَا تَاْتِیْهِمْ مِّنْ اٰیَةٍ مِّنْ اٰیٰتِ رَبِّهِمْ اِلَّا كَانُوْا عَنْهَا مُعْرِضِیْنَ ﴿۴﴾ فَقَدْ
كَذَّبُوْا بِالْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَآءَهُمْ ؕ فَسَوْفَ یَاْتِیْهِمْ اَنْۢبٰٓؤُا مَا كَانُوْا بِهٖ یَسْتَهْزِءُوْنَ ﴿۵﴾
اَلَمْ یَرَوْا كَمْ اَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِّنْ قَرْنٍ مَّكَّنّٰهُمْ فِی الْاَرْضِ مَا لَمْ
نُمَكِّنْ لَّكُمْ وَ اَرْسَلْنَا السَّمَآءَ عَلَیْهِمْ مِّدْرَارًا ۪ وَّ جَعَلْنَا الْاَنْهٰرَ تَجْرِیْ
مِنْ تَحْتِهِمْ فَاَهْلَكْنٰهُمْ بِذُنُوْبِهِمْ وَ اَنْشَاْنَا مِنْۢ بَعْدِهِمْ قَرْنًا اٰخَرِیْنَ ﴿۶﴾
وَ لَوْ نَزَّلْنَا عَلَیْكَ كِتٰبًا فِیْ قِرْطَاسٍ فَلَمَسُوْهُ بِاَیْدِیْهِمْ لَقَالَ الَّذِیْنَ
كَفَرُوْۤا اِنْ هٰذَاۤ اِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُّبِیْنٌ ﴿۷﴾ وَ قَالُوْا لَوْ لَاۤ اُنْزِلَ عَلَیْهِ مَلَكٌ ؕ وَ لَوْ
اَنْزَلْنَا مَلَكًا لَّقُضِیَ الْاَمْرُ ثُمَّ لَا یُنْظَرُوْنَ ﴿۸﴾ وَ لَوْ جَعَلْنٰهُ مَلَكًا لَّجَعَلْنٰهُ
رَجُلًا وَّ لَلَبَسْنَا عَلَیْهِمْ مَّا یَلْبِسُوْنَ ﴿۹﴾ وَ لَقَدِ اسْتُهْزِئَ بِرُسُلٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ
فَحَاقَ بِالَّذِیْنَ سَخِرُوْا مِنْهُمْ مَّا كَانُوْا بِهٖ یَسْتَهْزِءُوْنَ ﴿۱۰﴾ قُلْ سِیْرُوْا
فِی الْاَرْضِ ثُمَّ انْظُرُوْا كَیْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكَذِّبِیْنَ ﴿۱۱﴾ قُلْ لِّمَنْ مَّا فِی
السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الْاَرْضِ ؕ قُلْ لِّلّٰهِ ؕ كَتَبَ عَلٰی نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ ؕ لَیَجْمَعَنَّكُمْ اِلٰی
یَوْمِ الْقِیٰمَةِ لَا رَیْبَ فِیْهِ ؕ اَلَّذِیْنَ خَسِرُوْۤا اَنْفُسَهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا یُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿۱۲﴾
وَ لَهٗ مَا سَكَنَ فِی الَّیْلِ وَ النَّهَارِ ؕ وَ هُوَ السَّمِیْعُ الْعَلِیْمُ ﴿۱۳﴾ قُلْ اَغَیْرَ اللّٰهِ
اَتَّخِذُ وَلِیًّا فَاطِرِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الْاَرْضِ وَ هُوَ یُطْعِمُ وَ لَا یُطْعَمُ ؕ قُلْ اِنِّیْۤ
اُمِرْتُ اَنْ اَكُوْنَ اَوَّلَ مَنْ اَسْلَمَ ۫ وَ لَا تَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِیْنَ ﴿۱۴﴾ قُلْ اِنِّیْۤ
اَخَافُ اِنْ عَصَیْتُ رَبِّیْ عَذَابَ یَوْمٍ عَظِیْمٍ ﴿۱۵﴾ مَنْ یُّصْرَفْ عَنْهُ یَوْمَىٕذٍ
فَقَدْ رَحِمَهٗ ؕ وَ ذٰلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْمُبِیْنُ ﴿۱۶﴾ وَ اِنْ یَّمْسَسْكَ اللّٰهُ بِضُرٍّ فَلَا كَاشِفَ

Yet the reaction of the people has been that whenever a Sign from the Signs of their Lord has come to them, they have turned away from it: accordingly, they have rejected as false the Truth that has come to them now. Well, they will receive some news[4] about what they have been ridiculing so far. Do they not see that We destroyed before them many a people who were dominant in the world during their time? We had given them such power in the land as We have not given you. We sent down for them abundant rains from heavens and made canals flow beneath them. But (when they showed ingratitude), We destroyed them because of their sins and raised up other people in their place. 4-6

O Messenger, even if We had sent down to you a Book written on paper, and even if they had touched it with their own hands, the disbelievers would have said, "This is nothing but manifest sorcery." And they say, "Why has no angel been sent down to him?"[5] If We had sent down an angel, their fate would have been decided long before this and they would have been given no respite after this;[6] for if We had sent an angel, We would have sent him in human form and thus involved them in the same doubt in which they are involved now.[7] 7-9

O Muhammad, many Messengers before you have also been ridiculed, but in the long run those who mocked were overpowered by the very thing they had mocked. Say to them, "Just travel in the land and see the end of those who treated the Truth as false."[8] 10-11

Ask them, "To Whom belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth?" — Say, "To Allah,[9] Who has prescribed mercy and generosity for Himself: (that is why He does not catch hold of you immediately at your first disobedience). He will, however, certainly muster all of you on the Day of Resurrection. There is no doubt about this; yet those who have made themselves liable to ruin, do not believe in this." 12

All that lies in the darkness of the night and in the light of the day belongs to Allah, and He hears and knows everything. Say, "Should I take as my guardian any other than Allah? Should I forsake that Allah Who is the Creator of the earth and the heavens and Who nourishes all and does not stand in need of nourishment from anyone?"[10] Say, "I have been enjoined to be the first of those who surrender to Him, (and I have been urged) not to be of those who 13-16

commit *shirk*." Say, "I do fear the torment of a (dreadful) Day, if I should disobey my Lord." He, who will be delivered from the torment of that Day, will have received Allah's mercy, and this is a great success.

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these were the works of *Lāt* or *Hubal* or *'Uzza* or of any other god or goddess. Therefore Allah admonished them, saying (so to speak), "O foolish people, when you yourselves admit that the Creator of the heavens and earth and of the night and day, is Allah, why do you, then, make others your gods, and prostrate before them, make offerings to them, present your needs before them and invoke them for help?" (Refer to E.N.2 of Al-Fatihah and E.N. 163, Al-Baqarah).

It may be noted that *Zulumāt* (plural of *Zulmat*) has been used in contrast to *nūr* (light, singular form). It is because darkness is merely the absence of light and may be of many kinds.

2. Allah says that He has created man from "earth" because each and every particle of the human body comes from the earth and from nowhere else.

3. "The other settled term" is the "Day of Resurrection", when all human beings will be brought back to life and presented before Allah for rendering the account of their life on the earth.

4. The reference is to the "news" of the successes that were to follow the emigration of the Holy Prophet to Madīnah. At the time of this revelation, neither the disbelievers nor the Believers could ever imagine the nature of the "news" they were going to receive. So much so that even the Holy Prophet himself was unaware of the kind of successes the Muslims were going to achieve in the near future.

5. The ignorant objectors argued that if Muḥammad (Allah's peace be upon him) was really a Messenger from Allah, an angel ought to have come down from heaven to declare to the people: "This is the Messenger of Allah, so obey him; otherwise you shall be punished".

The ignorant objectors did not understand how the Creator of the heavens and earth could leave His Messenger in such a plight as to be maligned and stoned by his enemies. They argued that the Messenger of such a Supreme Sovereign ought to have come with a large retinue or at least an angel in attendance on him, to protect him from his enemies and to fill the people with awe and to convince them of his Prophethood and to carry out his orders in some supernatural ways.

6. The first answer to their objection is that in case Allah had sent down an angel, no respite would have been given them for reforming themselves and mending their ways. They have been given a chance because no angel has been sent to make the Reality so naked as to leave no alternative for them but to believe. It is obvious that this would have defeated the very purpose of their life in the world to undergo their test. That is why no angel has been sent. Man should undergo his test and discover the unseen Reality without actually seeing it, merely by the right use of his reasoning and thinking powers, and then bring under control his own self and its lusts in accordance with the dictates of that Reality. It is thus obvious that the "Unseen" must remain unseen for the sake of that test.

The worldly life, the period of that test, will remain so only as long as the "Unseen" remains unseen. No sooner will the "Unseen" become evident than that "Period" will automatically come to an end, and instead of test, it will be the time of the result of the test. Therefore Allah is not granting your demand for an angel to appear before you because Allah does not like to end the term of your test before the expiry of the period of the test. (Refer also to E.N. 228, Al-Baqarah).

7. The only other alternative was to send an angel in human form. Allah says that if He had sent an angel in human form, they would have felt the same difficulty in recognizing him as they were feeling in recognizing Muḥammad (Allah's peace be upon him). This, too, would have involved them in doubts. Therefore it was for their own good that Allah had not sent an angel in attendance on His Messenger.

8. That is, those, who ridicule the Message, should travel through the land and see the remains, and study the history of the former peoples. These will bear witness to the horrible end of those who behaved in the way they are behaving towards Muḥammad (Allah's peace be upon him).

9. It is a nice way of cornering the *mushrikīn*. At first Allah tells His Messenger to ask them, "Whose is all that is in the heavens and the earth?" The questioner put the question and waited for an answer. But they kept silent because their answer could neither be in the negative nor in the affirmative. They could not deny this because they themselves believed that 'all belongs to Allah.' But they could not affirm this because in that case, they themselves would have supplied the adversary with an argument against their own creed of *shirk*. After putting them in this critical position, Allah enjoined His Messenger to say, "All belongs to Allah."

10. This contains a subtle argument: all those, whom the *mushrikīn* have made their gods besides Allah, stand in need of nourishment from their devotees, not to speak of giving nourishment to them. No Pharaoh can set up his grandeur

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لَهٓ اِلَّا هُوَ ۚ وَ اِنْ يَّمْسَسْكَ بِخَيْرٍ فَهُوَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿١٧﴾ وَهُوَ الْقَاهِرُ
فَوْقَ عِبَادِهٖ ۚ وَ هُوَ الْحَكِيْمُ الْخَبِيْرُ ﴿١٨﴾ قُلْ اَىُّ شَىْءٍ اَكْبَرُ شَهَادَةً ۭ قُلِ
اللّٰهُ ۙ شَهِيْدٌۢ بَيْنِىْ وَ بَيْنَكُمْ ۣ وَ اُوْحِىَ اِلَىَّ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنُ لِاُنْذِرَكُمْ بِهٖ وَ
مَنْۢ بَلَغَ ۭ اَئِنَّكُمْ لَتَشْهَدُوْنَ اَنَّ مَعَ اللّٰهِ اٰلِهَةً اُخْرٰى ۭ قُلْ لَّآ اَشْهَدُ ۚ قُلْ
اِنَّمَا هُوَ اِلٰهٌ وَّاحِدٌ وَّ اِنَّنِىْ بَرِىْٓءٌ مِّمَّا تُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ اَلَّذِيْنَ اٰتَيْنٰهُمُ الْكِتٰبَ
يَعْرِفُوْنَهٗ كَمَا يَعْرِفُوْنَ اَبْنَآءَهُمْ ۘ اَلَّذِيْنَ خَسِرُوْٓا اَنْفُسَهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا
يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَ مَنْ اَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرٰى عَلَى اللّٰهِ كَذِبًا اَوْ كَذَّبَ بِاٰيٰتِهٖ ۭ
اِنَّهٗ لَا يُفْلِحُ الظّٰلِمُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَ يَوْمَ نَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيْعًا ثُمَّ نَقُوْلُ لِلَّذِيْنَ
اَشْرَكُوْٓا اَيْنَ شُرَكَآؤُكُمُ الَّذِيْنَ كُنْتُمْ تَزْعُمُوْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾ ثُمَّ لَمْ تَكُنْ فِتْنَتُهُمْ
اِلَّآ اَنْ قَالُوْا وَ اللّٰهِ رَبِّنَا مَا كُنَّا مُشْرِكِيْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ اُنْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَذَبُوْا عَلٰٓى
اَنْفُسِهِمْ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَّا كَانُوْا يَفْتَرُوْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَ مِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَّسْتَمِعُ اِلَيْكَ ۚ
وَ جَعَلْنَا عَلٰى قُلُوْبِهِمْ اَكِنَّةً اَنْ يَّفْقَهُوْهُ وَ فِىْٓ اٰذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا ۭ وَ اِنْ يَّرَوْا كُلَّ
اٰيَةٍ لَّا يُؤْمِنُوْا بِهَا ۭ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا جَآءُوْكَ يُجَادِلُوْنَكَ يَقُوْلُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْٓا
اِنْ هٰذَآ اِلَّآ اَسَاطِيْرُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَهُمْ يَنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ وَ يَنْـَٔوْنَ عَنْهُ ۚ وَ
اِنْ يُّهْلِكُوْنَ اِلَّآ اَنْفُسَهُمْ وَ مَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَ لَوْ تَرٰٓى اِذْ وُقِفُوْا عَلَى النَّارِ
فَقَالُوْا يٰلَيْتَنَا نُرَدُّ وَ لَا نُكَذِّبَ بِاٰيٰتِ رَبِّنَا وَ نَكُوْنَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾
بَلْ بَدَا لَهُمْ مَّا كَانُوْا يُخْفُوْنَ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۭ وَ لَوْ رُدُّوْا لَعَادُوْا لِمَا نُهُوْا عَنْهُ
وَ اِنَّهُمْ لَكٰذِبُوْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ وَ قَالُوْٓا اِنْ هِىَ اِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا وَ مَا نَحْنُ بِمَبْعُوْثِيْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾
وَ لَوْ تَرٰٓى اِذْ وُقِفُوْا عَلٰى رَبِّهِمْ ۭ قَالَ اَلَيْسَ هٰذَا بِالْحَقِّ ۭ قَالُوْا بَلٰى وَ رَبِّنَا ۭ

If Allah afflicts you with an evil, there is none other than Him to relieve you from this, and if He bestows some good on you, (know that) He has power over everything. He has supreme authority over His servants and He is All-Wise, All-Aware. 17-18

Ask them, "Whose testimony is the most reliable?" Say, "Allah is witness[11] between me and you (that I am His Messenger), and this Qur'ān has been revealed to me so that I should thereby warn you and all whom it may reach. What, will you really testify that there are other deities besides Allah?"[12] Say, "As for me, I will never testify such a thing."[13] Say, "Indeed, He alone is the Deity and I feel disgusted with the *shirk* you practise." Those, to whom We have given the Book, recognize this with as much certainty as they recognize their own sons.[14] But those, who have made themselves liable to perdition, do not believe in this. And, who can be more unjust than the one who brings false allegations against Allah[15] or denies Allah's Signs?[16] Indeed, such unjust people can never attain to true success. 19-21

On the Day, when We muster them all together, We shall ask the *mushrikīn*, "Where are now your associates whom you had taken for your deities?" Then they shall not be able to play any other trick (than make this false statement): "We swear by You, our Lord, we were not at all *mushrikīn*." Behold, how they will invent a lie against themselves and how all the false gods, they had forged, will forsake them! 22-24

There are some among them, who (pretend to) listen to what you say, but they do not undestand it, as We have cast veils over their hearts; We have made them hard of hearing (so they are deaf[17] to what they hear). Even if they see any Sign, they will not believe in it; so much so that when they come and contend with you, those, who have already made up their minds not to believe (after hearing all), say, "This is nothing but the same old story."[18] They forbid other people to believe in this Truth, and themselves turn away from it. (They imagine that in this way they are doing you some harm), whereas they are preparing their own perdition, though they do not perceive it. Would that you could see their condition at the time, when they will be made to stand before Hell! They will say, "Would that we could somehow return to the earthly life again: then we would not deny the 25-30

Signs of our Lord, and would join the Believers." As a matter of fact, they will say this because the Reality which they had concealed before this, will have appeared manifest before them.[19] But the fact is that even if they were sent back to the earthly life, they would do all that they had been forbidden to do. They are liars (that is why they will give vent to such a false wish). Today they say, "There is no other life than this our worldly life, and we shall never be raised back to life after our death." Would that you could witness the scene, when they will be brought before their Lord: then their Lord will ask them, "Is this not the Reality?" They will say, "Yes, our Lord, this is the Reality." Then He will declare, "Well, taste the torment for denying this Reality."

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unless his subjects pay taxes and make offerings to him; no saint becomes worthy of worship, unless his worshippers build a grand mausoleum for him; no god becomes a god unless his devotees make his idol and set it up in a grand temple and decorate it with ornamentation. Thus, all the artificial gods stand in need of their servants. It is the Lord of the universe alone, Who does not stand in need of anyone's help but all others stand in need of Him, and it is His Godhead alone that does not stand in need of any prop from anyone whatsoever, but supports itself.

11. That is. "Allah is a witness that I have been appointed a Messenger by Him and whatever I say is from Him."

12. Mere guess-work or speculation does not suffice for testifying to anything: none can testify to a thing with certainty without the necessary knowledge about it. The question implies: "Do you really have the knowledge that there is any other Sovereign with authority than Allah, Who is worthy of service and worship?"

13. That is, "You may, if you so like, give false testimony without any knowledge, but, as for me, I cannot give such a testimony."

14. It means that those, who possess the knowledge of revealed Books, know it for certain that there is only One God, Who has no partner in His Godhead. Therefore they can discern the right creed about Allah from among many different kinds of other creeds and theories about Godhead, just as any person can identify his own child from among many thousands of other children.

15. "False allegation" is the claim that there are many other partners with Allah in His Godhead who have divine attributes and powers and are thus worthy of worship. It is also false to allege that Allah Himself has made such and such His

special courtiers and has enjoined (or at least approved) that Divine attributes should be ascribed to them and that they should be treated with reverence, like Allah.

16. "Allah's Signs" are all those signs that point to the fact that there is only One God in the universe and that all others are His servants. These signs are spread all over the universe. They are found in the person of man himself and in the character and the great achievements of the Prophets and in the revealed Books. That is why the one, who, in the presence of all these "Signs," ascribes Divine attributes to others and considers them worthy of Divine rights, is in fact guilty of gross iniquity. It is indeed a great injustice that one should ascribe such Divine attributes to others without any evidence, knowledge, observation and experience merely on the basis of guess-work or the traditions of the forefathers. As a result of this false creed, he does injustice to Truth, to Reality, to his own self and to everything and everyone he deals with in this universe.

17. Here Allah has ascribed to Himself the cause of the defects produced in their faculties of understanding, hearing and seeing, for everything that takes place in the world under the Natural Law does, in fact, take place by the command of Allah because He is the Author of that Law. Therefore the resultant effects of the working of that Law, in fact, take place by the will and order of Allah. The obdurate disbelievers do not understand, do not hear and do not see the Truth, even though they seem to listen to the Message of the Messenger, because their obduracy, their prejudice and their unwillingness have, according to the law of Nature, dulled their faculties. The law is that if one is bent upon obduracy and does not adopt the attitude of a righteous person, all the doors of his heart automatically get locked against every kind of truth that goes against his lusts. When this natural process is described in the human language, it will be said, "The doors of the heart of such and such a person are locked." But God, without Whose Command and Leave nothing whatsoever can happen, will describe the same like this, "We have locked the doors of the heart of such and such a person." This is because a human being will describe the thing as it seems to happen, whereas Allah states the true nature of the happening.

18. This is the excuse that the foolish people put forward for rejecting the Message. They say, "There is nothing new in the Message towards which the Messenger is inviting us. This is the same old Message that we have been hearing before." According to these foolish people, in order to be true, a Message must also be new because according to them that which is old cannot be true. Whereas the fact is that the Message has always been one and the same and will ever remain so. The Messengers of Allah, who had been coming from the earliest times for the

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قَالَ فَذُوْقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُوْنَ ﴿30﴾ قَدْ خَسِرَ الَّذِيْنَ كَذَّبُوْا بِلِقَآءِ
اللّٰهِ ؕ حَتّٰۤى اِذَا جَآءَتْهُمُ السَّاعَةُ بَغْتَةً قَالُوْا يٰحَسْرَتَنَا عَلٰى مَا فَرَّطْنَا فِيْهَا ۙ
وَهُمْ يَحْمِلُوْنَ اَوْزَارَهُمْ عَلٰى ظُهُوْرِهِمْ ؕ اَلَا سَآءَ مَا يَزِرُوْنَ ﴿31﴾ وَمَا الْحَيٰوةُ
الدُّنْيَاۤ اِلَّا لَعِبٌ وَّلَهْوٌ ؕ وَلَلدَّارُ الْاٰخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لِّلَّذِيْنَ يَتَّقُوْنَ ؕ اَفَلَا
تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿32﴾ قَدْ نَعْلَمُ اِنَّهٗ لَيَحْزُنُكَ الَّذِيْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ فَاِنَّهُمْ لَا يُكَذِّبُوْنَكَ
وَلٰكِنَّ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ يَجْحَدُوْنَ ﴿33﴾ وَلَقَدْ كُذِّبَتْ رُسُلٌ مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ
فَصَبَرُوْا عَلٰى مَا كُذِّبُوْا وَاُوْذُوْا حَتّٰۤى اَتٰىهُمْ نَصْرُنَا ۚ وَلَا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمٰتِ
اللّٰهِ ۚ وَلَقَدْ جَآءَكَ مِنْ نَّبَاِى الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿34﴾ وَاِنْ كَانَ كَبُرَ عَلَيْكَ اِعْرَاضُهُمْ
فَاِنِ اسْتَطَعْتَ اَنْ تَبْتَغِىَ نَفَقًا فِى الْاَرْضِ اَوْ سُلَّمًا فِى السَّمَآءِ فَتَاْتِيَهُمْ
بِاٰيَةٍ ؕ وَلَوْ شَآءَ اللّٰهُ لَجَمَعَهُمْ عَلَى الْهُدٰى فَلَا تَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ الْجٰهِلِيْنَ ﴿35﴾
اِنَّمَا يَسْتَجِيْبُ الَّذِيْنَ يَسْمَعُوْنَ ؕ وَالْمَوْتٰى يَبْعَثُهُمُ اللّٰهُ ثُمَّ اِلَيْهِ يُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿36﴾
وَقَالُوْا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ اٰيَةٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّهٖ ؕ قُلْ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ قَادِرٌ عَلٰۤى اَنْ
يُّنَزِّلَ اٰيَةً وَّلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿37﴾ وَمَا مِنْ دَآبَّةٍ فِى الْاَرْضِ وَ
لَا طٰٓئِرٍ يَّطِيْرُ بِجَنَاحَيْهِ اِلَّاۤ اُمَمٌ اَمْثَالُكُمْ ؕ مَا فَرَّطْنَا فِى الْكِتٰبِ مِنْ شَىْءٍ
ثُمَّ اِلٰى رَبِّهِمْ يُحْشَرُوْنَ ﴿38﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ كَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا صُمٌّ وَّبُكْمٌ فِى
الظُّلُمٰتِ ؕ مَنْ يَّشَاِ اللّٰهُ يُضْلِلْهُ ؕ وَمَنْ يَّشَاْ يَجْعَلْهُ عَلٰى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ﴿39﴾
قُلْ اَرَءَيْتَكُمْ اِنْ اَتٰىكُمْ عَذَابُ اللّٰهِ اَوْ اَتَتْكُمُ السَّاعَةُ اَغَيْرَ اللّٰهِ تَدْعُوْنَ ۚ
اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿40﴾ بَلْ اِيَّاهُ تَدْعُوْنَ فَيَكْشِفُ مَا تَدْعُوْنَ اِلَيْهِ اِنْ
شَآءَ وَتَنْسَوْنَ مَا تُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿41﴾ وَلَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَاۤ اِلٰۤى اُمَمٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ فَاَخَذْنٰهُمْ

وقف لازم وقف مطلق عند البعض على يشعرون

Losers indeed are those who consider it a lie that they will ever have a meeting with Allah. When the Hour overtakes them unawares, they will exclaim, "Alas! how negligent we have been of this matter!" and they will be carrying the burdens of their sins on their backs: behold, how heavy is the burden they are carrying! This worldly life is but a sport and pastime.[20] In fact, the abode of the Hereafter is better for those who desire to be safe from harm. Will you not, then, use your commonsense? 31-32

O Muḥammad, We know that what they say, grieves you, but it is not you whom they charge with falsehood; these wicked people are, in fact, denying the Revelātions of Allah.[21] Many Messengers before you have also been treated as impostors, but they bore with fortitude the charge of imposture and persecution (by the disbelievers), till Our help came down to them. None has the power to change the Law of Allah,[22] and you have already received the news of what happened to the Messengers before you. However, if you find it hard to bear their aversion, then seek out, if you can, an opening into the earth, or set up a ladder to the sky so that you may bring them a Sign.[23] Had Allah willed, He would have gathered them all on guidance; so do not behave like the ignorant people.[24] Only those, who listen to it, accept the Message; as for the dead,[25] Allah will raise them from the graves only and they shall be brought back (to be produced in His Court). 33-36

These people ask, "Why has no Sign been sent down to this Prophet from his Lord?" Say, "Allah is able to send down a Sign, but most of these people do not understand the wisdom underlying it."[26] As regards Signs, just have a look at any of the beasts that move upon the earth and at any of the birds that fly in the air: they too are species like you. We have left out nothing in pre-determining the courses of their lives: then ultimately they are all gathered to their Lord. But those, who deny Our Signs, are deaf and dumb, dwellings in many sorts of darkness[27]; Allah lets go astray whom He wills and guides to the Right Way whom He pleases.[28] Ask them to consider deeply and answer, "When some great misfortune befalls you, or the last hour approaches you, do you invoke any other than Allah? Answer, if you be in the right." At that time tyou invoke Allah alone: then, if He pleases, He averts the affliction from you, and on such occasions, you 37-41

forget those whom you had set up as His partners.[29]

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guidance of mankind, have always been communicating the same Message; likewise, the Holy Prophet was also presenting the same old Message. Of course, only those, who being devoid of Divine Light, cannot see the aforesaid eternal reality, might invent something new and by forging some theories present them as truth, saying, "We have a new Message, which has never been given by anyone before us."

19. Their desire, that, if they could return to this world again, they would believe in the Message, will not be the outcome of any right thinking and reasoning or any real change of their hearts and minds, but will be the result of witnessing the Reality after which even the most obdurate disbeliever dare not deny it.

20. This does not mean that the life in this world is not real and earnest and has been created merely for sport and pastime without any serious purpose. What it means is that compared with the everlasting life in the Hereafter, the short transitory life in this world is like sport and pastime, which are diversions from serious work, to which one has to return after recreation. Moreover, this worldly life has been likened to sport and pastime, because here are many things of deceptive appearances that are liable to involve in misunderstanding those people, who lack common-sense and vision, and help them assume false positions so as to make life mere sport and pastime. For instance, the role of a ruler in this worldy life is, in fact, not any different from that of an actor who plays the role of a king on the stage, wears a crown and gives commands which are obeyed like those of a real king; whereas, in fact, he has no powers of a real king and is deposed, imprisoned and killed by the order of the director; likewise many other such dramas are being performed on the stage of this world day and night all around us. There is 'the court' of a 'saint' or a goddess, where the needs are being "fulfilled", whereas, in fact, that 'court' has no such power. Then there is another actor who performs the feats of divining the unseen and the future; whereas, in fact, none possesses such knowledge. Still another poses to be the nourisher of others, when in fact, he himself stands in need of obtaining provisions from others. There is still another who poses as if he has the power of bestowing honour and benefit or of inflicting disgrace and loss and behaves arrogantly as if he were the absolute master of all around him. In fact, he himself is utterly powerless and helpless, for a little turn of fortune can dethrone him from the high pedestal of greatness to the lowest depths of disgrace. So much so that he might even be at the feet of those very people, over whom he was ruling as a despot. All these dramas that are being played on the stage of life are abruptly brought to an end by death.

Then everyone will cross over to the other world and see for himself everything in its true colour; then all the misunderstandings of the life of this world shall be removed and everyone will be shown the real worth of what he had earned for the Life-after-death.

21. The fact is that all the people of his tribe regarded the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be peace) truthful and honest up to the time he had not begun to recite the Revelations of Allah before them. They falsified him only when he began to deliver to them the Message of Allah. Even then, there was none who dared charge Muḥammad, the Man, with falsehood; nay, even his bitterest enemies never accused him of having ever told a lie concerning any worldly matter. It was Muḥammad, the Prophet, whom they charged with falsehood. So much so that even Abū Jahl, who was the bitterest of all his enemies never accused him of falsehood. According to a tradition related by Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, Abū Jahl himself declared during a conversation with the Holy Prophet, "We do not call you a liar; but regard as false what you are presenting." On the occasion of the Battle of Badr, Akhnas bin Sharīq asked Abū Jahl in private, "There is no third person here besides us two. Tell me the truth whether you regard Muḥammad as a truthful man or as a liar." He answered, "By God, Muḥammad is a truthful person and has never told a lie in his life, but if Banī Qusayy, who have already the privilege of being the bearers of the national flag and the providers of water to the pilgrims and the keepers of the keys of the Ka`bah, should also be acknowledged as the recipients of Prophethood, what would then be left for the rest of the Quraish?" For this very reason Allah is comforting His Prophet, saying, "It is not you whom they are rejecting as an impostor but it is Our Message which they are rejecting; when We are forbearing everything and giving them respite after respite, why should you show any kind of anxiety?"

22. The "Law" referred to here is the Law of Allah concerning the conflict between the right and the wrong. According to this Law, it is essential that the righteous should be tried for a long period to stand their test in order to prove their fortitude, their righteousness, their spirit of sacrifice and their fidelity, their firm belief in their Faith and their complete trust in Allah. For this they must pass through afflictions and hardships in order to develop those high moral qualities which can be learnt only by going through this hard and tough course, for with these weapons alone, they are required to win the battle against falsehood. When, according to this Law, they prove their competence, then will Allah's help come at the right moment to support them and this help cannot be brought about before its time by anyone.

23. Whenever the Holy Prophet felt that his people did not accept the Message inspite of his continuous preaching, he cherished the desire that Allah

might send such a clear Sign that they should have no alternative left but to accept his Message. In this verse Allah has admonished His Messenger against cherishing any such desire, so as to say, "Do not show impatience at their obduracy, but go on performing your mission persistently in the way and order We are laying down for it. If this mission had to be performed by means of miracles, could We not Ourselves have done so? But We know that this method is not suitable for bringing about that intellectual and moral revolution and for the establishment of that righteous society for which you have been appointed a Messenger. If, however, you cannot endure the heart-burning caused by their indifference and rejection and if you imagine that a tangible Sign, that might appeal to them, is required to break this inert state of their minds, then you should yourself try to bring about such a Sign: you may, if you can, go deep down into the bowels of the earth or ascend up to the heavens for this purpose, but you should not expect from Us that We would fulfil this desire of yours, for there is no room for it in Our scheme."

24. This is to impress that it is not the purpose of Allah that all human beings should be forced to accept the Guidance somehow or other. Had it been so, He would have created them in such a way that they would have been righteous by birth like angels. Then there would have been no need of sending the Prophets and the Books and of making the Believers enter into a conflict with the disbelievers for the gradual establishment of the Way of Allah. But Allah does not desire this. On the contrary, He intends that the Truth should be presented to the people in a rational way so that those, who are convinced of it, may adopt it without any coercion, and then mould their characters in accordance with it to prove their moral superiority over the disbelievers. In this way they would go on attracting the best among the people towards it till they succeeded in establishing the Way by virtue of their high ideals, best principles of life, pure characters and strong arguments and with resolute struggle with the disbelievers. Then Allah assures them of the guidance and help they need and deserve at any stage. But if one wishes that, instead of this natural process, Allah should adopt some supernatural method and eradicate false ideas from the minds of the people and bring in pure ones instead and establish the righteous civilization in place of the evil ones, he should know that Allah will not do this for this will be against the wisdom of the scheme of His creation of Man. He has created Man as a responsible being granted him powers to exploit the things of the world and given him the freedom of action both good and evil and granted him a definite term for the preparation of the test and fixed the time for the declaration of the result of the test — to punish or reward him according to his efforts.

25. "Those, who listen to it..." are the people whose conscience is alive, who try to judge rationally between right and wrong, and who do not deliberately and obdurately lock the doors of their hearts.

"Those who are dead..." are the people who blindly follow a way and are not ready to leave it and follow any other way even though that may manifestly be the Right Way.

26. "Sign" means a tangible miracle. Allah says that the reason why he is not showing a Sign is not that He is unable to do so but for another reason whose wisdom they do not understand. (See E.N. 6).

27. That is, "If you are really serious in your demand of seeing a Sign in order to judge whether the Message of this Prophet is true or false, you should see and ponder over the innumerable Signs that are found in abundance all around you. For instance, if you consider animal life, you will see that the structure of the bodies of each species of birds and beasts suits its functions immensely well; the qualities and characteristics that have been ingrained in its nature help to fulfil all its needs; the provision of its nourishment has been arranged in a wonderful way; and the course of its life has been so predetermined that it cannot transgress its limits in any way whatever. Allah also sees that each and every animal, nay, even the smallest insect, is being looked after, protected and guided, wherever it be, for the performance of the functions pre-destined for it. In short, you will find that its structure suits it well; it has been given inherent powers that help provide its needs: excellent provisions have been made for its food. The process of its birth, procreation and death has been going on according to a regulated fixed scheme. If you give a careful consideration to this Sign alone, you will realize that the teachings of this Prophet about the Oneness of God and His attributes and the way of life based on these to which he invites you are absolutely true. Yet you neither try to see with open eyes these Signs nor listen to the Message this Prophet is conveying to you. As a result, you have been involved in ignorance and, therefore, desire to see some wonderful miracle for mere pastime."

28. This is how Allah lets them go astray: (1) He holds back the opportunity for observing His Signs from the one who chooses to remain in ignorance; (2) He keeps hidden the pointers to the Reality from the one who is a victim of prejudices, even though he should see His Signs, and lets him remain involved in misunderstandings and move farther and farther away from the Reality. On the contrary, He guides the seeker after truth to the Right Way by affording him the opportunity to make use of his knowledge for the purpose of discovering the Reality, and showing him the signs guiding towards it.

We daily notice instances of these types. There are millions of people before whose eyes countless Signs are spread in their own persons and in the universe, but they see them like animals and do not learn any lessons from them. Then there are the physicists, chemists, zoologists, botanists, biologists, geologists,

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بِالْبَاْسَآءِ وَالضَّرَّآءِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَضَرَّعُوْنَ ﴿42﴾ فَلَوْلَآ اِذْ جَآءَهُمْ بَاْسُنَا تَضَرَّعُوْا
وَلٰكِنْ قَسَتْ قُلُوْبُهُمْ وَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطٰنُ مَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿43﴾ فَلَمَّا
نَسُوْا مَا ذُكِّرُوْا بِهٖ فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ اَبْوَابَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ ؕ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا فَرِحُوْا
بِمَآ اُوْتُوْٓا اَخَذْنٰهُمْ بَغْتَةً فَاِذَا هُمْ مُّبْلِسُوْنَ ﴿44﴾ فَقُطِعَ دَابِرُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِيْنَ
ظَلَمُوْا ؕ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿45﴾ قُلْ اَرَءَيْتُمْ اِنْ اَخَذَ اللّٰهُ سَمْعَكُمْ
وَاَبْصَارَكُمْ وَخَتَمَ عَلٰى قُلُوْبِكُمْ مَّنْ اِلٰهٌ غَيْرُ اللّٰهِ يَاْتِيْكُمْ بِهٖ ؕ اُنْظُرْ
كَيْفَ نُصَرِّفُ الْاٰيٰتِ ثُمَّ هُمْ يَصْدِفُوْنَ ﴿46﴾ قُلْ اَرَءَيْتَكُمْ اِنْ اَتٰىكُمْ
عَذَابُ اللّٰهِ بَغْتَةً اَوْ جَهْرَةً هَلْ يُهْلَكُ اِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الظّٰلِمُوْنَ ﴿47﴾ وَمَا
نُرْسِلُ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ اِلَّا مُبَشِّرِيْنَ وَمُنْذِرِيْنَ ۚ فَمَنْ اٰمَنَ وَاَصْلَحَ فَلَا
خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُوْنَ ﴿48﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ كَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا يَمَسُّهُمُ
الْعَذَابُ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَفْسُقُوْنَ ﴿49﴾ قُلْ لَّآ اَقُوْلُ لَكُمْ عِنْدِيْ خَزَآئِنُ اللّٰهِ
وَلَآ اَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ وَلَآ اَقُوْلُ لَكُمْ اِنِّيْ مَلَكٌ ۚ اِنْ اَتَّبِعُ اِلَّا مَا يُوْحٰٓى اِلَيَّ ؕ
قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الْاَعْمٰى وَالْبَصِيْرُ ؕ اَفَلَا تَتَفَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿50﴾ وَاَنْذِرْ بِهِ الَّذِيْنَ
يَخَافُوْنَ اَنْ يُّحْشَرُوْٓا اِلٰى رَبِّهِمْ لَيْسَ لَهُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِهٖ وَلِيٌّ وَّلَا شَفِيْعٌ
لَّعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿51﴾ وَلَا تَطْرُدِ الَّذِيْنَ يَدْعُوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدٰوةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ
يُرِيْدُوْنَ وَجْهَهٗ ؕ مَا عَلَيْكَ مِنْ حِسَابِهِمْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ وَّمَا مِنْ حِسَابِكَ
عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ فَتَطْرُدَهُمْ فَتَكُوْنَ مِنَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿52﴾ وَكَذٰلِكَ فَتَنَّا
بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ لِّيَقُوْلُوْٓا اَهٰٓؤُلَآءِ مَنَّ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْۢ بَيْنِنَا ؕ اَلَيْسَ اللّٰهُ
بِاَعْلَمَ بِالشّٰكِرِيْنَ ﴿53﴾ وَاِذَا جَآءَكَ الَّذِيْنَ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِاٰيٰتِنَا فَقُلْ سَلٰمٌ

We sent Messengers before you to many peoples and afflicted them with calamities and misfortunes so that they might bow down before Us with humility. Why did they not then humble themselves when Our scourge overtook them? Instead of this, their hearts were hardened all the more and Satan made, what they were doing, seem fair to them. After this when they forgot the Admonition that was given them, We opened the gates of every kind of prosperity for them; so much so that they were deeply absorbed in enjoying what was given to them. Then We seized them all of a sudden, and they were in a state of utter despair. Thus the transgressors were totally uprooted, and Allah, the Lord of the universe, be praised (that He uprooted them). 42-45

O Muhammad, ask them, "Have you ever considered this: If Allah were to take away your hearing and your sight and set a seal upon your hearts,[30] is there a deity other than Allah to restore them to you?" Behold! how We present Our Signs before them over and over again, and how they turn away from them in disdain. Say, "Have you also ever considered this: If the scourge of Allah comes upon you suddenly or openly, shall any but the transgressors be destroyed? For We send Our Messengers only to give good news to the righteous people and to warn the evil-doers: then those, who accept their Message and reform their own conduct, will have no cause for fear and sorrow and those who treat Our Revelātions as false, shall have to suffer punishment in consequence of their evil deeds. 46-49

Tell them, O Muhammad, "I do not claim that I possess the treasures of Allah nor that I know the "unseen", nor do I claim that I am an angel. I only follow the Revelātion that is sent down to me."[31] Then ask them, "Can the blind man and the seeing man be alike[32]? Do you not consider this thing?" 50

And, O Muhammad, admonish with this (knowledge based on Revelation) those, who fear that one Day they shall be brought before their Lord in such a state that they will find none other than Allah (with competent powers) as protector or intercessor: it may be that (by this admonition) they adopt the God-fearing attitude.[33] And do not drive away those who invoke their Lord morning and evening and are engaged in seeking His favour.[34] You are not in any way accountable for them, nor are they in any way accountable for you: so, if you should drive them away, you shall be counted among the unjust[35] As 51-53

a matter of fact, in this way We have made some of them a means for testing the others,[36] so that, seeing them, they should say, "Are these the people from among us upon whom Allah has showered His blessings?" — Yes: does not Allah know His grateful servants better than they?

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astronomers, physiologist, anatomists, historians, archaeologists, social scientists, etc., who observe such Signs as may enlighten the minds and the hearts with Faith, but they seem to see no "Sign" to lead them to the Reality, just because they begin their study with prejudiced minds, merely for the sake of material gains. Not only this, but every Sign leads them to atheism, disbelief, materialism and nature-worship. In contrast to them, there are those, who observe the wonders of the universe and the phenomena of Nature with open eyes and open hearts, and find the Signs of God all round them: SO much so that they can see His Sign in each and every green leaf.

29. In answer to the demand of the disbelievers for a Sign, they were told that there was not one Sign, but innumerable Signs scattered all around them and their attention has been drawn in v. 38 to study the mystery of the life of any bird or beast and they would find Sign of God. Now in v. 40-42, they have been directed to another Sign that they can find in their own selves. When some affliction befalls a man or death confronts him with all its dreads, then he sees no refuge in any other than Allah. On such occasions even the most confirmed polytheists forget their gods and invoke Allah's help. Likewise the most obdurate atheists, in their utter helplessness, involuntary pray to Allah for rescue, this Sign--man's own state of mind —is being presented here as a pointer to the Reality, for this is a clear proof of the existence of One God, and of the urge of God-worship that has been embedded deep in the heart of every human being. Though it might have been kept suppressed by negligence and ignorance, sometimes it comes to the surface under the stimulus of some misfortune.

'Ikrimah, son of Abū Jahl, who was an arch enemy of Islam, was led towards Islam by witnessing such a Sign. When the Holy Prophet conquered Makkah, 'Ikrimah fled to Jaddah and sailed for Abyssinia. During the voyage, there came a furious storm which threatened to sink the boat. At first the passengers began to invoke their gods and goddesses for help. But when the storm became so violent that they feared that the boat was going to sink, they all cried out, "This is not the time to call any open except Allah, because He alone can save us." This opened the eyes of 'Ikrimah and the locked doors of his heart: "If there is none here except Allah to help us, how can there be any to help us in any other

place? This is what Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) has been teaching us for the last twenty years any we have been fighting it out with him". That as the most decisive moment in the life of 'Ikrimah. He made a solemn pledge with Allah to this effect: "If I escape from this storm, I will directly go to Prophet Muhammad Allah's peace be upon him) to become a follower of his." Allah rescued him from that storm and he fulfilled his pledge. He not only became a Muslim, but spent the rest of his life in the service of Islam by performing Jihād.

30. "... and set a seal upon your hearts" means"" ...deprive you of the powers of thinking and understanding."

31. This verse removes the silly notions about Prophethood and answers the absured objections raised against the claim of Prophethood by Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him). The foolish people have always had the silly notion that a Prophet of Allah must be supernatural and capable of performing wonderful miracles. For instance, they expected that a whole mountain should turn into a mass of gold at his bidding: that the earth should throw out treasures by his orders: that he should be able to tell the people all about their past and future: that he should be able to locate a lost thing and foretell whether a sick person will get well or die and whether a pregnant woman will give birth to a male or a female. They also believed that such a person should be above the common human limitations. They could not conceive anyone to be a prophet, if he suffered from hunger or thirst and needed sleep, or, if he had wife and children and went to the bazar to buy and sell the necessities of life, or, if he was sometimes forced to borrow money or was involved in poverty and indigence.

When Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) put forward the claim that he was a Messenger of Allah, his contemporaries wanted to test his claim with the touch-stone of such silly notions. They would ask him questions about the unseen things and demand supernatural miracles from him. They would also raise the objection that he was merely a common man, who needed food and drank water like them: who had wife and children and who moved about in the bazars. In answer to these things, Allah told His Prophet to inform them that he never claimed to be supernatural; his only claim was that he was following the Revelations he received from Allah and that he should be judged by that standard only.

32. The question is meant to bring home to them this fact: "I have seen with my own eyes and experienced directly the realities I am presenting to you, and I have gained their accurate knowledge through Revelation; therefore my

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عَلَيْكُمْ كَتَبَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلٰى نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ ۙ اَنَّهٗ مَنْ عَمِلَ مِنْكُمْ سُوْٓءًا
بِجَهَالَةٍ ثُمَّ تَابَ مِنْ بَعْدِهٖ وَاَصْلَحَ فَاَنَّهٗ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿٥٤﴾ وَكَذٰلِكَ
نُفَصِّلُ الْاٰيٰتِ وَلِتَسْتَبِيْنَ سَبِيْلُ الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾ قُلْ اِنِّيْ نُهِيْتُ اَنْ
اَعْبُدَ الَّذِيْنَ تَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ ؕ قُلْ لَّآ اَتَّبِعُ اَهْوَآءَكُمْ ۙ قَدْ
ضَلَلْتُ اِذًا وَّمَآ اَنَا مِنَ الْمُهْتَدِيْنَ ﴿٥٦﴾ قُلْ اِنِّيْ عَلٰى بَيِّنَةٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّيْ وَ
كَذَّبْتُمْ بِهٖ ؕ مَا عِنْدِيْ مَا تَسْتَعْجِلُوْنَ بِهٖ ؕ اِنِ الْحُكْمُ اِلَّا لِلّٰهِ ؕ يَقُصُّ
الْحَقَّ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْفٰصِلِيْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾ قُلْ لَّوْ اَنَّ عِنْدِيْ مَا تَسْتَعْجِلُوْنَ بِهٖ
لَقُضِيَ الْاَمْرُ بَيْنِيْ وَبَيْنَكُمْ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ اَعْلَمُ بِالظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٥٨﴾ وَعِنْدَهٗ مَفَاتِحُ
الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَآ اِلَّا هُوَ ؕ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ ؕ وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِنْ
وَّرَقَةٍ اِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَلَا حَبَّةٍ فِيْ ظُلُمٰتِ الْاَرْضِ وَلَا رَطْبٍ وَّلَا يَابِسٍ
اِلَّا فِيْ كِتٰبٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿٥٩﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِيْ يَتَوَفّٰىكُمْ بِالَّيْلِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا جَرَحْتُمْ
بِالنَّهَارِ ثُمَّ يَبْعَثُكُمْ فِيْهِ لِيُقْضٰٓى اَجَلٌ مُّسَمًّى ۚ ثُمَّ اِلَيْهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ
ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَهُوَ الْقَاهِرُ فَوْقَ عِبَادِهٖ وَيُرْسِلُ
عَلَيْكُمْ حَفَظَةً ؕ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا جَآءَ اَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ تَوَفَّتْهُ رُسُلُنَا وَهُمْ
لَا يُفَرِّطُوْنَ ﴿٦١﴾ ثُمَّ رُدُّوْٓا اِلَى اللّٰهِ مَوْلٰىهُمُ الْحَقِّ ؕ اَلَا لَهُ الْحُكْمُ ۫ وَهُوَ
اَسْرَعُ الْحٰسِبِيْنَ ﴿٦٢﴾ قُلْ مَنْ يُّنَجِّيْكُمْ مِّنْ ظُلُمٰتِ الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ تَدْعُوْنَهٗ
تَضَرُّعًا وَّخُفْيَةً ۚ لَئِنْ اَنْجٰىنَا مِنْ هٰذِهٖ لَنَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ الشّٰكِرِيْنَ ﴿٦٣﴾ قُلِ
اللّٰهُ يُنَجِّيْكُمْ مِّنْهَا وَمِنْ كُلِّ كَرْبٍ ثُمَّ اَنْتُمْ تُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿٦٤﴾ قُلْ هُوَ الْقَادِرُ
عَلٰٓى اَنْ يَّبْعَثَ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابًا مِّنْ فَوْقِكُمْ اَوْ مِنْ تَحْتِ اَرْجُلِكُمْ اَوْ

When those, who have believed in Our Revelātions, come to you, say to them, "Peace be upon you: your Lord has prescribed for Himself mercy and compassion. (It is His compassion that) He forgives and treats with leniency anyone who commits an evil through ignorance and then repents and mends his ways."[37] In this way, We make Our Signs clear and plain so as to expose the way of the guilty ones.[38] 54-55

O Muhammad, say, "I have been forbidden to worship those, whom you invoke beside Allah." Say, "I will not follow your wishes for if I did that I should have gone astray, and would not be of the right guided." Say, "I take my stand on a clear proof from my Lord, and you have rejected it. Now, that which you demand to be hastened is not in my power,[39] for Allah alone has the sole authority of passing judgement: He declares the Truth and He is the best of arbiters". Say, "Had I the power to hasten that which you are demanding, the dispute between you and me would have been settled long before this, but Allah knows best how to deal with evil-doers. He alone has the keys of the "unseen", of which none has the knowledge but He. He knows all that is in the land and in the sea; there is not a leaf that falls from a tree but He knows about it; there is not a grain in the darkest bowels of the earth of which He is not aware; everything fresh and dry has been recorded in an open Book. It is He Who recalls your souls at night and knows what you do during the day; then next day He returns you to your usual work to complete the fixed term of your life. At long last, you shall all return to Him and He will let you know what you had been doing. He reigns supreme over His servants and appoints those, who keep watch over you[40] till the time the death of anyone of you approaches; then the angels sent by Him take away his soul and do not show the least negligence in the performance of their duty. Then all are brought back to Allah, their real Master. Beware of it that the sole authority of passing judgement rests with Him alone and He is the swiftest at reckoning." 56-62

O Muhammad, ask them, "Who rescues you from perils in the darkness of the land and sea? Who is He Whom you implore humbly and invoke secretly (at the time of affliction)? To whom do you make this promise: 'We will be grateful if you rescue us from this affliction'." — Say, "Allah delivers you from that and every other affliction; yet you associate other partners with Him."[41] 63-64

يَلْبِسَكُمْ شِيَعًا وَّ يُذِيْقَ بَعْضَكُمْ بَاْسَ بَعْضٍ ؕ اُنْظُرْ كَيْفَ نُصَرِّفُ الْاٰيٰتِ
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَفْقَهُوْنَ ﴿65﴾ وَ كَذَّبَ بِهٖ قَوْمُكَ وَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ ؕ قُلْ لَّسْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ
بِوَكِيْلٍ ﴿66﴾ لِكُلِّ نَبَاٍ مُّسْتَقَرٌّ ۫ وَّ سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿67﴾ وَ اِذَا رَاَيْتَ الَّذِيْنَ
يَخُوْضُوْنَ فِيْۤ اٰيٰتِنَا فَاَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ حَتّٰى يَخُوْضُوْا فِيْ حَدِيْثٍ غَيْرِهٖ ؕ
وَ اِمَّا يُنْسِيَنَّكَ الشَّيْطٰنُ فَلَا تَقْعُدْ بَعْدَ الذِّكْرٰى مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿68﴾
وَ مَا عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ يَتَّقُوْنَ مِنْ حِسَابِهِمْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ وَّ لٰكِنْ ذِكْرٰى لَعَلَّهُمْ
يَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿69﴾ وَ ذَرِ الَّذِيْنَ اتَّخَذُوْا دِيْنَهُمْ لَعِبًا وَّ لَهْوًا وَّ غَرَّتْهُمُ الْحَيٰوةُ
الدُّنْيَا وَ ذَكِّرْ بِهٖۤ اَنْ تُبْسَلَ نَفْسٌۢ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ ۚ لَيْسَ لَهَا مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ
وَلِيٌّ وَّ لَا شَفِيْعٌ ۚ وَ اِنْ تَعْدِلْ كُلَّ عَدْلٍ لَّا يُؤْخَذْ مِنْهَا ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ
اُبْسِلُوْا بِمَا كَسَبُوْا ۚ لَهُمْ شَرَابٌ مِّنْ حَمِيْمٍ وَّ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌۢ بِمَا كَانُوْا
يَكْفُرُوْنَ ﴿70﴾ قُلْ اَنَدْعُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ مَا لَا يَنْفَعُنَا وَ لَا يَضُرُّنَا وَ نُرَدُّ
عَلٰۤى اَعْقَابِنَا بَعْدَ اِذْ هَدٰىنَا اللّٰهُ كَالَّذِى اسْتَهْوَتْهُ الشَّيٰطِيْنُ فِى الْاَرْضِ
حَيْرَانَ ۖ لَهٗۤ اَصْحٰبٌ يَّدْعُوْنَهٗۤ اِلَى الْهُدَى ائْتِنَا ؕ قُلْ اِنَّ هُدَى
اللّٰهِ هُوَ الْهُدٰى ؕ وَ اُمِرْنَا لِنُسْلِمَ لِرَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿71﴾ وَ اَنْ اَقِيْمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ
وَ اتَّقُوْهُ ؕ وَ هُوَ الَّذِيْۤ اِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُوْنَ ﴿72﴾ وَ هُوَ الَّذِىْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ
الْاَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ ؕ وَ يَوْمَ يَقُوْلُ كُنْ فَيَكُوْنُ ۘ قَوْلُهُ الْحَقُّ ؕ وَ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ
يَوْمَ يُنْفَخُ فِى الصُّوْرِ ؕ عٰلِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَ الشَّهَادَةِ ؕ وَ هُوَ الْحَكِيْمُ الْخَبِيْرُ ﴿73﴾
وَ اِذْ قَالَ اِبْرٰهِيْمُ لِاَبِيْهِ اٰزَرَ اَتَتَّخِذُ اَصْنَامًا اٰلِهَةً ۚ اِنِّيْۤ اَرٰىكَ وَ
قَوْمَكَ فِيْ ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿74﴾ وَ كَذٰلِكَ نُرِيْۤ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ مَلَكُوْتَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ

الانعام ٨ ع ١٣

Say, "He has the power to bring a scourge on you from above you or from beneath your feet or to split you into discordant factions to make you taste the violence of one another." Behold! how We present Our Signs over and over again in different ways before them so that they should understand the Reality.[42] Your people are rejecting it (the Qur'ān), although it is the Truth. Say, "I have not been made a supervisor over you.[43] Every event takes its prescribed time to appear; and, by and by, you yourselves shall see the consequences." 65-67

And, O Muḥammad, when you see that people are finding fault with Our Revelations, withdraw from them till they get engaged in some other talk; and, if ever Satan causes you to forget this,[44] quit the company of such unjust people when you realize your mistake. Though the pious people are not in any way accountable for them, yet it is their duty to admonish them; perhaps they may refrain from their evil ways.[45] And leave alone those who have taken their faith as a sport and pastime and have been deluded by the life of this world; nevertheless, go on admonishing them by reciting the Qur'ān to them lest any person should be seized because of his own deeds, and that too at the time, when there would be no protector, no helper and no intercessor to rescue him from Allah, and when no conceivable amount of ransom would be accepted from him; this is because such people shall be seized in consequence of what they themselves had earned; they shall get boiling water to drink and a painful torment to suffer for their rejection of the Truth. 68-70

O Muḥammad, ask them, "Should we invoke, instead of Allah, those, who can neither benefit us nor harm us? And should we turn upon our heels after Allah has shown us the Guidance? Should we put ourselves in the sad plight of the man, whom the satans have misled to wander over the desert in a bewildered state of mind, while his companions are calling aloud, 'Come to us: here is the right way'?" Say, "In fact, the right guidance is the Guidance of Allah and He has enjoined us to surrender to the Lord of the universe and establish the *Ṣalāt* and refrain from His disobedience; you shall all be gathered unto Him. It is He Who created the heavens and the earth in all truth,[46] and there shall be Resurrection the day He says, "Be." His word is the very truth and on the Day, when the Trumpet[47] is blown, His shall be the sole Sovereignty.[48] He has full knowledge of the visible and the 71-73

invisible[49] and He is All-Wise, All-Knowing."

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evidence is that of an eye witness. On the contrary, you are blind with regard to those realities: all your notions concerning them are based on guess-work and speculation or on the blind following of others. Therefore the difference between you and me is the same as of the man who is able to see and the one who is blind. That is what gives me superiority over you and not that I possess the treasures of God or have the knowledge of the unseen or that I am free from the common human limitations."

33. That is, "You should pay special attention only to those who believe that One Day they shall have to go before Allah to render an account of their deeds and who do not cherish any such false hopes that somebody's intercession and help will save them. It is because this "Admonition" can produce good effect only on such people and not on those who are so absorbed in the enjoyment of the pleasures of this world that they never think of their death or of going before Allah. Likewise, this "Admonition" will fall flat on those who are making merry in this world, deluding themselves into believing that no harm will come to them in the Hereafter because of their 'spiritual' relation with such and such a saint or because such and such a holy person will intercede with Allah in their behalf or because such a one has already made atonement for them. Obviously, no admonition can be beneficial to such people."

34. In this passage Allah has answered one of the objections that the big chiefs of the Quraish used to raise in regard to the followers of the Holy Prophet. They would say that none but the lowest stratum of society, consisting of slaves, menials and the like, had accepted Islam: they would taunt him of having such companions as Bilāl, 'Ammār, Suhaib, Khabbāb, etc., and ask in a jeering way, "Are these the only (honourable) people from amongst us, upon whom Allah has showered His blessings?" They did not rest content with making fun of their poor condition, but also passed stinging remarks about their past shortcomings, saying. "Just have a look at the past history of such and such people, who are today forming the "pious" group of the believers." Allah has advised His Prophet not to be disheartened by their unkind remarks.

35. That is, "If they had done something wrong in the past, they themselves shall be accountable for it and not you, for everyone shall get the reward of the good or evil one has done. Therefore, no good deed of yours will be put to their credit, nor will you be burdened with any evil deed of theirs. They come to you merely as seekers after truth and it will be injustice to look down upon them and drive them away."

36. That is, "By bestowing the blessing of Islam at the outset on the poor and indigent and those who held a low position in society, We have involved the upper rich and proud class in trial."

37. Allah has told his Messenger to console those of His followers who had committed heinous sins during the days of "ignorance" by inspiring them with the assurance that He forgives and treats leniently those who repent and mend their ways and, therefore, the taunts of the enemies of Islam need not worry them about what they had done in the past.

38. In order to understand the significance of v. 55, we should keep in view v. 37 in which the disbelievers asked, "Why has no Sign been sent down to this Prophet from his Lord?" In the subsequent passage (vv. 38-54) several manifest Signs have been cited to show that there is no lack of Signs but the disbelievers do not want to see them. Then in v. 55 such people have been warned, as if to say, "In this way We make Our Signs clear, plain and manifest so that those, who persist in their disbelief inspite of those Signs, should prove themselves to be guilty ones. For they choose the way of deviation deliberately, not because there is a lack of Signs to show the Right Way but because they do not want to see the Signs."

39. This alludes to the demand of the opponents for the scourge of Allah with which they were being threatened. They said, "Why does a scourge not come down upon us, when we are openly denying and defying you? If you have been really sent by Allah, then anyone, who denied and insulted you, would have been swallowed by the earth or stricken dead by lightning. How is it that the Messenger of Allah and his followers are undergoing untold afflictions and sufferings, while their tormentors are enjoying their lives merrily?"

40. Angels who keep strict watch over each and everything a man does or thinks of and maintain a complete record of all this.

41. That is, "You yourselves are a witness that Allah alone is All-Powerful: He alone has the sole authority and your prosperity and adversity wholly lie in His power and He alone is the maker of your destinies. That is why you turn to Him in your affliction, when you find that no other means of rescue has been left for you. In the face of this clear Sign, you have set up, without any reason or rhyme, others as partners in His Godhead. You live on His provisions but treat others as your providers: you get help from Him in your need, but set up others as your helpers and protectors: He rescues you from your distress, yet you regard others (besides Him) as your rescuers: it is He Whom you humbly invoke in your affliction, yet you take your offerings to others when he removes it. In short, you

witness the proofs of His Godhead, day and night, yet you serve and bow down before others."

42. It is a warning to those who had become very bold in their enmity with the Truth because no scourge from Allah was in sight. They are being warned that the scourge of Allah does not take long to come. A gust of wind can destroy them all at once. A sudden shake of an earthquake can sink their habitations under ground. A spark can set on fire the magazines of enmity and involve clans, nations and countries in endless blood feuds. Therefore, "If no scourge is coming on you, this should not make you so bold and neglectful as to go on treading blindly the way you are following without discerning whether it is right or wrong. Instead you should take advantage of the respite that is being given and of the Signs that are being presented to you and recognize the Reality and follow the Right Way."

43. That is, "It is no part of my duty to make you see what you would not see and to make you understand what you would not understand; nor am I responsible for bringing down a scourge on you, if you would not see or understand it. The only duty that has been assigned to me is to make plain to you the distinction between Truth and falsehood. Now that I have done my duty and you have rejected the Truth, the evil consequences of which I have been warning you will appear in due course."

44. That is, "If you ever forget this instruction and keep sitting in the company of such people."

45. Here very important practical instructions have been given to the pious people. Their first and foremost duty is to save themselves from any disobedience of Allah; they should not worry unnecessarily about the disobedient people, for they are not responsible for their disobedience. They should not, therefore, impose it upon themselves as an obligation that they have to convince them anyhow by argument and to refute their absurd objections. Their only duty is to present the Truth before them. Then, if they do not accept it, the pious people should not waste their time and energy by entering into useless polemical disputes, discussions and argumentations with the disbelievers. Instead, they should spend their time and energy in educating and training and reforming those who are sincere seekers after the Truth.

46. It occurs at several places in the Qur'ān that Allah has created the heavens and the earth "in all truth." It has very comprehensive meanings:

(1) It means that the earth and the heavens have not been created merely for fun. It is not the creation of the fancy of some god, or the toy of a child to be played with for amusement and broken after satiety. In fact, this world is a very serious affair and its creation has great wisdom and a

grand purpose behind it. It must, therefore, come to an end at the appointed time and then be resurrected so that the Creator may take account of all that has been done in it and ultimately build the Next World on the results of that reckoning.

That this world has been created for a purpose has also been mentioned at other places in the Qur'an in different ways:

(*a*) "Lord, You have not created all this in vain....." (Āl-'Imran, III: 91).

(*b*) "We have not created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them for mere fun." (Al-Anbiyā', XXI: 16).

(*c*) "Do you think that We have created you without any purpose and that you will never be brought back to Us?" (Āl-Mu'minūn, XXIII: 115).

(2) The whole universe has been built on the solid foundations of the Truth. Everything in it is based on just, wise and right laws and there is no room for injustice and folly and falsehood to take root and bear fruit in it. One should not, however, be misled by the partial and temporary successes of falsehood. At times Allah may allow the worshippers of falsehood opportunity to try their worst for the success of falsehood and injustice and wrong ways in order to show that all their efforts shall ultimately fail and every worshipper of falsehood will see at the Last Reckoning that all the efforts made for the success of this unholy cause had gone utterly waste.

(3) Allah has created the universe in truth and is ruling over it by His own personal right. He wields authority here because of His personal right as its Creator; one should not, therefore, be misled by seeing others holding authority over the affairs of the world. In fact, no one has, nor can have, any right to rule here, for no one has any right whatever over anything in the universe.

47. It is beyond our comprehension to understand the real nature of the blowing of the Trumpet. What we learn from the Qur'ān is that on the Day of Resurrection when the first Trumpet shall be blown by the Command of Allah, everyone and everything shall perish. Then after this (Allah alone knows how long after this) the second Trumpet shall be blown; then everyone from the beginning of the creation to its end, shall be brought back to life and mustered in the Plain of Resurrection. In short, on the first blowing of the Trumpet, the present system of the universe shall be destroyed and on its second blowing the new system, different in form and with different laws, shall be created.

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الْاَرْضِ وَلِيَكُوْنَ مِنَ الْمُوْقِنِيْنَ ﴿٧٥﴾ فَلَمَّا جَنَّ عَلَيْهِ الَّيْلُ رَاٰ كَوْكَبًا ۚ
قَالَ هٰذَا رَبِّيْ ۚ فَلَمَّآ اَفَلَ قَالَ لَآ اُحِبُّ الْاٰفِلِيْنَ ﴿٧٦﴾ فَلَمَّا رَاَ الْقَمَرَ
بَازِغًا قَالَ هٰذَا رَبِّيْ ۚ فَلَمَّآ اَفَلَ قَالَ لَئِنْ لَّمْ يَهْدِنِيْ رَبِّيْ لَاَكُوْنَنَّ
مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الضَّآلِّيْنَ ﴿٧٧﴾ فَلَمَّا رَاَ الشَّمْسَ بَازِغَةً قَالَ هٰذَا رَبِّيْ هٰذَآ
اَكْبَرُ ۚ فَلَمَّآ اَفَلَتْ قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اِنِّيْ بَرِيْٓءٌ مِّمَّا تُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿٧٨﴾ اِنِّيْ وَجَّهْتُ
وَجْهِيَ لِلَّذِيْ فَطَرَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ حَنِيْفًا وَّمَآ اَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ ﴿٧٩﴾
وَحَآجَّهٗ قَوْمُهٗ ۚ قَالَ اَتُحَآجُّوْٓنِّيْ فِي اللّٰهِ وَقَدْ هَدٰىنِ ۚ وَلَآ اَخَافُ مَا
تُشْرِكُوْنَ بِهٖٓ اِلَّآ اَنْ يَّشَآءَ رَبِّيْ شَيْئًا ۚ وَسِعَ رَبِّيْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا ۚ اَفَلَا
تَتَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٨٠﴾ وَكَيْفَ اَخَافُ مَآ اَشْرَكْتُمْ وَلَا تَخَافُوْنَ اَنَّكُمْ اَشْرَكْتُمْ
بِاللّٰهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزِّلْ بِهٖ عَلَيْكُمْ سُلْطٰنًا ۚ فَاَيُّ الْفَرِيْقَيْنِ اَحَقُّ بِالْاَمْنِ ۚ
اِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٨١﴾ اَلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوْٓا اِيْمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ اُولٰٓئِكَ
لَهُمُ الْاَمْنُ وَهُمْ مُّهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿٨٢﴾ وَتِلْكَ حُجَّتُنَآ اٰتَيْنٰهَآ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ عَلٰى قَوْمِهٖ ۚ
نَرْفَعُ دَرَجٰتٍ مَّنْ نَّشَآءُ ۚ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ حَكِيْمٌ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿٨٣﴾ وَوَهَبْنَا لَهٗٓ اِسْحٰقَ وَ
يَعْقُوْبَ ۚ كُلًّا هَدَيْنَا ۚ وَنُوْحًا هَدَيْنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِهٖ دَاوٗدَ وَ
سُلَيْمٰنَ وَاَيُّوْبَ وَيُوْسُفَ وَمُوْسٰى وَهٰرُوْنَ ۚ وَكَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿٨٤﴾
وَزَكَرِيَّا وَيَحْيٰى وَعِيْسٰى وَاِلْيَاسَ ۚ كُلٌّ مِّنَ الصّٰلِحِيْنَ ﴿٨٥﴾ وَاِسْمٰعِيْلَ وَ
الْيَسَعَ وَيُوْنُسَ وَلُوْطًا ۚ وَكُلًّا فَضَّلْنَا عَلَى الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٨٦﴾ وَمِنْ اٰبَآئِهِمْ وَ
ذُرِّيّٰتِهِمْ وَاِخْوَانِهِمْ ۚ وَاجْتَبَيْنٰهُمْ وَهَدَيْنٰهُمْ اِلٰى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ﴿٨٧﴾ ذٰلِكَ
هُدَى اللّٰهِ يَهْدِيْ بِهٖ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهٖ ۚ وَلَوْ اَشْرَكُوْا لَحَبِطَ عَنْهُمْ

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And remember the incident when Abraham said to his father, Azar, "Do you take idols for deities?[50] I see that you and your people are in manifest deviation." And We showed[51] to Abraham the phenomena of the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth in the manner (that follows) so that he may become one of the firm believers.[52] Accordingly when the night outspread over him, he saw a star and said, "This is my Lord." But when it set, he declared, "I cannot love those that set." Afterwards when he saw the moon shining, he said, "This is my Lord." But when it also set, he cried, "If my Lord had not guided me, I, too would have been of those who had gone astray." Then, when he saw the sun shining brightly, he said, "This is my Lord. This is the largest of all." But when this also set, he exclaimed. "O my people, I have nothing to do with those whom you set up as partners with God.[53] As regards me, I have turned my face in exclusive loyalty and worship towards that Being Who has created the earth and the heavens and I am not at all of those who associate partners with Allah." And when his people began to argue with him, he said to them, "Do you argue with me in regard to Allah, whereas He has shown Guidance to me? And I do not fear those whom you have taken for gods: except that it be my Lord's will, for if my Lord wills anything it must happen. The knowledge of my Lord embraces everything. Will you not, then, remember this and come to your senses?[54] And there is no reason why I should fear those whom you have made partners with Allah, when you are not afraid of setting up those things as partners in Godhead for which He has sent no authority to you. Then tell me, if you have any knowledge: which of the two parties merits peace and freedom from fear? As a matter of fact, they alone, who have believed and not polluted their Faith with *shirk*,[55] have peace and are rightly guided." 74-82

This was Our argument which We bestowed upon Abraham against his people. We raise whom We will to exalted ranks; indeed your Lord is All-Wise, All-Knowing. 83

Then We bestowed upon Abraham descendants like Isaac and Jacob, and showed each of them the Right Way, (the same Right Way that) We had shown to Noah before them; and (We bestowed Guidance upon) David, Solomon, Job, Joseph, Moses and Aaron from among his descendants. Thus, We reward the righteous people 84-87

for their good deeds. And (from among his descendants, We showed Guidance) to Zachariah, John, Jesus, and Elias, each of whom was an upright man. And (We showed the Right Way) to Ishmael, Elisha, Jonah and Lot (who were his offspring). And We exalted everyone of them over all the people of the world and showed favours to many of their forefathers and their descendants and their brethren and chose them for Our service and guided them aright.

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48. It does not mean that today Sovereignty is not His. What it means is this: "On that Day the curtain, that is covering the Reality today, will be lifted and it will become apparent that all those who seemed to wield authority or were supposed to wield it, had absolutely no authority, and that Sovereignty wholly belongs to Allah alone, Who is the Creator of the universe."

49. *Ghaib* is all that is hidden from the naked eye and cannot be seen and *Shahādat* is all that is visible to it.

50. This event of the life of the Prophet Abraham has been related here in support of and as a testimony to this argument: "Just as the Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) and his followers have rejected *shirk* today under the Guidance of Allah and, turning away from artificial gods, have surrendered only to the One Owner of the universe, likewise the Prophet Abraham (Allah's peace be upon him) did that before him. And just as the ignorant people are disputing with the Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him), so the people of Abraham (Allah's peace be upon him) had a dispute with him before this and that the followers of Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) are today giving the same answer to their people that was given by the Prophet Abraham (Allah's peace be upon him) to his people. Besides this, Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) is following the same Way that was followed by the Prophet Noah, and Abraham and all other Prophets from among Abraham's descendants (Allah's peace be upon them): therefore, those people, who are denying him, should know that they are deviating from the Way of the Prophets and are following wrong ways."

In this connection, it should also be noted that the mention of the creed of the Prophet Abraham (Allah's peace be upon him) was very significant, for almost all the people of Arabia accepted him as their guide and leader. Especially the Quraish were very proud of being his descendants and keepers of the Ka'bah that was built by him. Therefore, the reference to his creed of *Tauhīd* and his refutation of *shirk* and his dispute with his people were very meaningful. This exposed the hollowness of the claim of their relationship with the Prophet Abraham (Allah's

peace be upon him) and deprived them of the satisfaction they had with the creed of *shirk*. This meant to show that the Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) and his followers were in the position of Prophet Abraham and their opponents were in that of the ignorant people who had a dispute with him. The argument was so subtle that it took, so to speak, the wind out of their sails and put them in such an awkward position that they did not know what to answer. This showed beyond all doubt that they were following a way opposed to that of Abraham (Allah's peace be upon him) whom they held in great reverence and regarded as their ancestor and Prophet. Thus they were placed in the awkward position of his opponents.

51. That is, "Just as the phenomena of Nature are daily before your eyes and the Signs of God are being shown to you, so were these before Abraham (Allah's peace be upon him). But you, like blind men, do not see anything inspite of looking at them. The same stars, the samemoon and the same sun rise and set before your eyes, but they leave you as far away from the Reality at the time they set as you were at the time they rose. But when Abraham saw with his mind's eyes these very phenomena of Nature, he reflected upon them and came to know of the Reality.

52. In order to undestand the true nature of the dispute between the Prophet Abraham and his people mentioned in this passage and others in the Qur'ān, one should keep in view the religious and social conditions of his time. Now that Ur, the brith place of the Prophet Abraham, has been unearthed by modern archaeologists, it has helped reveal the real conditions prevailing in that land during that age. Sir Leonard Woolley has published the results of this research in this regard in his book, "*Abraham*", London, 1935. A resume of the same, (which has been translated into English from the *Tafhīm-ul-Qur'ān*, is given below:

It has been estimated that round about the year 2100 B.C. which is now generally regarded by scholars as the period of Prophet Abraham, the population of Ur was nearly 2,50,000; it might even have been 5,00,000. It was a flourishing industrial and business centre. On the one side, it attracted trade goods from as far off places as Pamir and Nilgiri, and on the other, it had trade relations with Anatolia. The State, whose capital it was, extended a little less to the north and a little more to the west of modern 'Iraq. The people were mostly craftsmen and merchants by profession. The inscriptions of the age that thave been deciphered from the archaeological remains show that they had a materialist outlook on life; their main object of life was to amass wealth and make merry. They practised usury and were wholly absorbed in business. They regarded one another with suspicion and resorted to litigation on minor grounds. Their prayers to their gods

generally consisted of supplications for long life, prosperity and flourishing business. The population was divided into three classes:

(1) The *Amelu* : This was the highest class which consisted of the priests, state officials and military officers, etc.

(2) The *Mushkenu* : These were the merchants, craftsmen, and farmers.

(3) The *Ardu* : The slaves.

The Amelu class enjoyed special distinctions and privileges: they had greater rights both in the criminal and in the civil law than those of other people and their life and property were held sacred and precious.

Such was the city and the society in which the Prophet Abraham opened his eyes. According to the Talmud, he was a member of the Amelu class, and his father was the chief official of the state (Please see also Al-Baqarah: E.N. 290).

The tablets excavated at Ur mention the names of about 5,000 gods. Each city had its own god and also a special deity, who was regarded as the chief god or the city god and was entitled to greater reverence than the others. The city god of Ur was "Nannār" (the moon god) and scholars of the later ages have also called this city "Qamrinah" after that god. The other big city was "Larsah" which afterwards became the seat of government instead of Ur; its chief god was "Shamāsh" (the sun god). Under these chief gods there were many minor gods also, most of whom had been adopted from among the stars and planets and a few from among the earthly objects. People thought that their prayers for less important things were granted by these minor gods. The symbols of all these heavenly and earthly gods and goddesses had been formed in the shape of idols and all rites of worship were performed before them.

The idol of "Nannār" had been kept in a grand shrine built on the highest peak at Ur and near it the sanctuary of his wife "Ningil" had been built. The shrine of "Nannār" was just like a royal palace where every night a different female worshipper would go and become his bride. Thus there lived a large number of women in the shrine who had been dedicated to the god and their position was no better than religious prostitutes. The woman who would sacrifice her virginity in the name of the "god" was regarded very respectable. The common belief was that a women must surrender herself at least once in her lifetime to another man "in the way of god" in order to attain salvation. It is obvious that the people to benefit most from this religious prostitution were the male priests themselves.

"Nannār" was not merely a god; he was the biggest landlord of the country, the biggest merchant, the biggest craftsman and the chief executive of the

country's political life, for a very large number of gardens, houses and fields had been dedicated to his shrine. Besides the income from these sources, farmers, landlords and merchants also brought their offerings of corn, milk, gold, cloth, etc., to the shrine. Naturally there was a big staff to look after these offerings.

Many factories were run and business on a large scale was done on behalf of the Temple. The highest court of justice had been established in the shrine and the priests acted as judges and their judgements were regarded as from "God". The royal dynasty also derived its sovereignty from "Nannār", who was the real sovereign. The king ruled over the country on his behalf and was, therefore, himself raised to the rank of a deity and worshipped like the other gods.

The dynasty which was ruling over Ur in the time of the Prophet Abraham had been founded by Ur-Nammu who in 2300 B.C. had established a vast empire, which extended to Susa in the east and to Lebanon in the west. It was from him that the dynasty received the title of Nammu which became Namrūd in Arabic. After the emigration of the Prophet Abraham this dynasty and this nation were visited by continuous disasters. Their downfall was hastened by the destruction of Ur and the capture of Namrūd along with the idol of Nannār by the people of Elam. Then the Elamis established their rule at Larsah which dominated over the land of Ur also. The last blow was dealt by Babylon, which had grown powerful under an Arab dynasty and brought both Larsah and Ur under its control. As a result of this downfall, the people of Ur lost their faith in Nannār who had failed to protect them from humiliation, shame and ruin.

Nothing can be said with certainty about the response the people of this land made to the teachings of the Prophet Abraham after his emigration, but the law promulgated in 1910 B.C. by Hamurabi (Amraphel of Gen. xiv), king of Babylon, bears evidence that it had been influenced directly or indirectly by the Guidance of Prophethood. A pillar inscribed with this complete Code was discovered by a French archaeologist in 1902 A.D. and its English version was published in 1903 A.D. by C. H. W. John under the title, "The Oldest Code of Law." Most of the principles and details of this Law and the Law of the Prophet Moses, are, in general, alike.

If the results of the archaeological research, which has been carried out so far, are correct, one thing that clearly stands out is that *shirk* was not merely a religious belief and basis of polytheistic rituals with the people of Abraham but it was indeed the very basis of their economic, cultural, political and social system of life. In contrast to this, the Message of the Prophet Abraham not only clearly struck at the root of idol-worship, but also hit hard upon the sovereignty and worship of the royal dynasty and the social, economic and political status of the priests and nobles and the collective life of the whole country. Therefore, the

acceptance of his invitation had far-reaching implications. It called for a complete metamorphosis of the prevailing social pattern and demanded its re-construction on the basis of *Tauhīd*. That is why, as soon as the Prophet Abraham (Allah's peace be upon him) began to deliver the Message, the common people and the nobles, the priest class and Nimrod, all stood up together to suppress his voice which gave rise to the bitter dispute, mentioned in the Qur'ān.

53. In vv. 76 - 78, the way of thinking which led the Prophet Abraham (Allah's peace be upon him) to the Reality before his appointment as a Messenger of Allah has been stated. It teaches that if a person uses his brain and eyes rightly, he can reach the Reality, even if he is born and bred, like Prophet Abraham, in surroundings surcharged with *shirk* in which one might have had no chance of learning anything about the Oneness of God. The only condition is that one makes the right sort of observation of the phenomena of Nature and reflects upon them carefully and exercises one's reasoning to reach the truth by a connected, logical train of thought. It appears from the preceding verse that the Prophet Abraham, from the beginning of his conscious life, was surrounded by the people, who worshiped the stars, the moon and the sun. It was, therefore, natural that the starting point of his search for the truth should be the question: Can any of these objects really be the Lord and Sustainer? That is why his thinking centered round this question and when he discovered that all the gods of his people were bound tightly by an un-alterable law and were revolving in accordance with it, he came to the inevitable conclusion that none of these gods possessed, in the least, any quality that might entitle it to be the Lord. The Lord and Sustainer is only that One, Who has created them and bound them to His own obedience.

The wording in which the event has been couched, has generally given rise to an objection: "When the night outspread over him, he saw a star and said.... I am not one of those who set up partners with God." The question arises in the mind of the common reader: Did the night not outspread over Prophet Abraham every day of his life ever since he was a child and did he not see the stars, the moon and the sun rise and set before this particular occasion? Though he saw them every night, it is obvious that he began to deliberate like this only when he had attained his maturity. Why has then the event been described in such a way ("..... When the night outspread over him) as to give rise to the doubt as if he had never seen the stars and the moon and the sun ever before this? As such an assumption cannot hold good in ordinary circumstances, some people have had to invent an extraordinary story to remove this seeming anachronism. They say that the Prophet Abraham was born and brought up in a cave, where it was arranged that he should not see the stars, the moon and the sun before he attained his maturity. The matter, however, is so simple that it does not need the invention of a fantastic story to explain it. It can be easily understood by a well-known incident in

the life of Newton. One day when he saw an apple fall down from the tree to the ground, his mind suddenly turned to the problem: Why do things fall down to the ground? At last his deliberation led him to formulate and prove the law of gravity. Here, too, the question might arise: Had not Newton ever seen anything falling to the ground before this incident? It is obvious that he must have ssen many things fall to the ground many times before this. How is it then, that the fall of that particular apple on that particular day stirred up that particular mental activity which the daily fall of hundreds of things to the ground had not roused before this? The simple answer is that the minds are not always excited in the same way by the same kind of observations. Many a time, it so happens that one sees a thing over and over again but that does not stir up one's mind to any mental activity; then there comes a moment when the sight of that very thing diverts the mental activity towards a particular poblem. Or, if one's mind is engaged in the solution of a problem and one suddenly catches sight of a particular thing which had always been before one's eyes, it excites the mind to a mental activity that helps solve the problem. The same thing happened in the case of the Prophet Abraham. Nights came and passed away, the stars, the moon and the sun rose and set for years, but on one particular night the observation of one particulr star excited that mental activity which led him to the central Reality of the One-ness of God. It may be that ever since he attained maturity, he might have been thinking over the problem of the worship of the stars, the moon and the sun, because this was the religion of his people and on this was based the whole system of the life of that community. Then one night the observation of the star suddenly excited the mental activity that helped him solve the problem. It is also possible that the observation of the star was the starting point of that mental activity.

In this connection, there is another possible doubt that must also be removed. Was the Prophet Abraham guilty of *shirk* (even though temporarily), when seeing the star and the moon and the sun severally, he said, "This is my Lord." A little thinking will convince one that he was not at all guilty of *shirk* for in his search for Reality, a seeker-after-truth has, inevitably, to pass through several stages of deliberations about *shirk*. Therefore, what determines his creed is not the temporary deliberation but the direction of one's research and the ultimate destination where he stops. These intervening stages of deliberation have to be made by every seeker-after-truth in his search for Reality. These are made for the sake of research and should not be taken as the final decision. The deliberation about any form of *shirk* is in a questioning manner and is not its practice. When a seeker-after-truth stops to deliberate about anything and says, "It is so," it is not his final judgement. What he means to say is, "Is it so?" That is why he proceeds further in his research as soon as he gets a negative answer at any of these stages.

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مَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٨٨﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰتَيْنٰهُمُ الْكِتٰبَ وَالْحُكْمَ وَالنُّبُوَّةَ ۚ فَاِنْ
يَّكْفُرْ بِهَا هٰٓؤُلَآءِ فَقَدْ وَكَّلْنَا بِهَا قَوْمًا لَّيْسُوْا بِهَا بِكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿٨٩﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ
هَدَى اللّٰهُ فَبِهُدٰىهُمُ اقْتَدِهْ ۗ قُلْ لَّآ اَسْـَٔلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ اَجْرًا ۗ اِنْ هُوَ اِلَّا
ذِكْرٰى لِلْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٩٠﴾ وَمَا قَدَرُوا اللّٰهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهٖٓ اِذْ قَالُوْا مَآ اَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى
بَشَرٍ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ ۗ قُلْ مَنْ اَنْزَلَ الْكِتٰبَ الَّذِيْ جَآءَ بِهٖ مُوْسٰى نُوْرًا وَّهُدًى
لِّلنَّاسِ تَجْعَلُوْنَهٗ قَرَاطِيْسَ تُبْدُوْنَهَا وَتُخْفُوْنَ كَثِيْرًا ۚ وَعُلِّمْتُمْ مَّا لَمْ
تَعْلَمُوْٓا اَنْتُمْ وَلَآ اٰبَآؤُكُمْ ۗ قُلِ اللّٰهُ ۙ ثُمَّ ذَرْهُمْ فِيْ خَوْضِهِمْ يَلْعَبُوْنَ ﴿٩١﴾
وَهٰذَا كِتٰبٌ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ مُبٰرَكٌ مُّصَدِّقُ الَّذِيْ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَلِتُنْذِرَ اُمَّ
الْقُرٰى وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا ۗ وَالَّذِيْنَ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْاٰخِرَةِ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِهٖ وَهُمْ عَلٰى
صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُوْنَ ﴿٩٢﴾ وَمَنْ اَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرٰى عَلَى اللّٰهِ كَذِبًا اَوْ قَالَ
اُوْحِيَ اِلَيَّ وَلَمْ يُوْحَ اِلَيْهِ شَيْءٌ وَّمَنْ قَالَ سَاُنْزِلُ مِثْلَ مَآ اَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ ۗ
وَلَوْ تَرٰٓى اِذِ الظّٰلِمُوْنَ فِيْ غَمَرٰتِ الْمَوْتِ وَالْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ بَاسِطُوْٓا اَيْدِيْهِمْ ۚ
اَخْرِجُوْٓا اَنْفُسَكُمْ ۗ اَلْيَوْمَ تُجْزَوْنَ عَذَابَ الْهُوْنِ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَقُوْلُوْنَ عَلَى
اللّٰهِ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ وَكُنْتُمْ عَنْ اٰيٰتِهٖ تَسْتَكْبِرُوْنَ ﴿٩٣﴾ وَلَقَدْ جِئْتُمُوْنَا فُرَادٰى كَمَا
خَلَقْنٰكُمْ اَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَّتَرَكْتُمْ مَّا خَوَّلْنٰكُمْ وَرَآءَ ظُهُوْرِكُمْ ۚ وَمَا نَرٰى مَعَكُمْ
شُفَعَآءَكُمُ الَّذِيْنَ زَعَمْتُمْ اَنَّهُمْ فِيْكُمْ شُرَكٰٓؤُا ۗ لَقَدْ تَّقَطَّعَ بَيْنَكُمْ وَضَلَّ
عَنْكُمْ مَّا كُنْتُمْ تَزْعُمُوْنَ ﴿٩٤﴾ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ فَالِقُ الْحَبِّ وَالنَّوٰى ۗ يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ
مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَمُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتِ مِنَ الْحَيِّ ۗ ذٰلِكُمُ اللّٰهُ فَاَنّٰى تُؤْفَكُوْنَ ﴿٩٥﴾ فَالِقُ
الْاِصْبَاحِ ۚ وَجَعَلَ الَّيْلَ سَكَنًا وَّالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ حُسْبَانًا ۗ ذٰلِكَ تَقْدِيْرُ

This is Allah's Guidance by which He guides anyone of His servants He pleases: but if any of His people had ever practised *shirk*, all the good deeds they had done would have been rendered vain.[56] Such were the people on whom We bestowed the Book, the Judgement and the Prophethood.[57] Now, if these people do not believe in it (it does not matter); We have bestowed this favour upon others who are not ungrateful to it.[58] O Muḥammad, those were the people who were rightly guided by Allah; so you should also follow their way and say, "I ask no recompense from you for showing this (Guidance); this is an admonition to all the people of the world". 88-90

Those people formed quite a wrong estimate of Allah, when they said, "Allah has not sent down anything to any man." Ask them: "Then who sent down the Book, which Moses brought: which was Light and Guidance for mankind: which you have divided into fragments, a part of which you show to the people and most of it you hide from them: by which you were given that knowledge which neither you nor your forefathers possessed?"[60] – Just say, "Allah", and then leave them alone to play with their useless arguments. (Like that Book) this is a Book which We have sent down; it is a blessed Book, it confirms that which was sent down before it, and this has been sent down so that you should warn the people of this central place (Makkah) and those who dwell around it. Those, who believe in the Hereafter, believe in this Book, and observe their prescribed Prayers punctually.[61] And who could be more wicked than the one who invents a falsehood about Allah or says, "A Revelation has come to me," whereas no Revelation has come to him, or says, "I will also send down the like of what God has sent down?" Would that you could see these wicked people, when they are in the agonies of death, and the angels are out-stretching their hands and saying, "Come, yield up your soul; today you shall be awarded a disgraceful torment for the false things you attributed to Allah and for the rebellion you showed against His Revelations." (And Allah will add,) "So, you have come before Us all alone, as We created you at first. Now, you have left behind all that We gave to you in the world; and now We do not see with you those intercessors who, you believed, had a share in moulding your destinies: all the relations between you have been cut off, and all those, in whom you trusted, have left you in the lurch." 91-94

95-96 Allah is the splitter of the seed — grain and the fruit stone;[62] it is He Who brings forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living.[63] It is Allah Who does all these things: where, then, are you being misled? He causes the dawn to appear out of the curtain of the night; it is He Who has ordained the night for rest and determined the time of the rising and the setting of the moon and the sun: all these things have been determined by the same All Powerful and the All Wise One.

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54. The Prophet Abraham asked the *mushrikīn* to remember the fact that his Lord, whom they also acknowledged as their Lord, had the knowledge of everything and was fully aware of what they were doing. Then he posed the question in order to rouse them from their heedlessness towards the Message and use their common-sense to consider the reality.

The Arabic word *tadhakkur* contains this sense.

55. Some commentators are of the opinion that the people of Prophet Abraham did not believe in Allah or were ignorant of His existence and regarded their gods as the sole masters of the universe. Accordingly, they have based their comments of this passage and others about Prophet Abraham on this assumption. Obviously, they are wrong because the whole passage clearly shows that those people did not deny Allah as the Creator of the earth and heavens, but were guilty of associating others with Allah in His Godhead and Sovereignty. This is clear from these and other words of the Prophet Abraham:

"..... there is no reason why I should fear those whom you have made partners with Allah." Moreover, the manner, in which he mentions Allah, while addressing his people, shows that they also believed in Allah but associated other partners with Him as well.

The word *zulm* that occurs in v. 82 stands for *shirk* as translated. When some Companions mistook it for sinfulness, the Holy Prophet himself removed their misunderstanding saying, "Here it means *shirk*."

In this connection, it will also be interesting to note that this most important event of the life of Prophet Abraham which has been described in this para and which was the starting point of his great Mission, has not been mentioned at all in the Bible. The Talmud, however, mentions it, but it differs from the Qur'ān in two things:

(1) In it the order is "from the sun to the stars and to God" but it is the other way round in the Qur'ān.

(2) It states that, when he said about the sun, "This is my Lord," he worshipped it also at the same time and did the same with the moon.

56. That is, "Even if the above-mentioned people had been guilty of *shirk* like you, they would never have been exalted to such high ranks. This is because *shirk* is such a heinous sin that it destroys good works. It is just possible that any such person might have won fame as a great conqueror by ruthless destruction, or might have amassed fabulous wealth by foul means and become a notorious wealthy man like Korah or done some infamous thing and won name for himself but he could never have won the exalted position of being the leader of the pious and the right guided. They won the unique distinction of being the source of virtue and guidance for the whole world because they scrupulously avoided *shirk* and steadfastly followed the way of God-worship.

57. Here it has been stated that three things had been bestowed on the Prophet: (1) The Book, Divine Guidance. (2) The Judgement the good sense to understand that Guidance and the capability to apply its principles to the affairs of life and the God-given ability to form correct opinions about the problems of life. (3) The Prophethood the office of guiding the people in accordance with the Divine Guidance.

58. That is,it does not matter at all, if these disbelievers and *mushrikīn* have rejected the Guidance of Allah. We have raised a Community of the Believers, who appreciate fully the worth of this blessing.

59. The context in which the words, "Allah has not sent down anything to any man," occur and their refutation clearly show that these were the words of the Jews. They uttered these words when the disbelievers and the *mushrikīn* of Arabia asked them, "Tell us whether the Word of Allah has really been sent down to this man, Muḥammad." This question had arisen because the Holy Prophet claimed, " I am a Prophet and the Book is being sent down to me." The Quraish and the *mushrik* Arabs turned to the Jews because they possessed the Book and believed in the Prophets and could speak with authority. Therefore, their answer provided the opponents with a strong weapon against Islam and they repeated the answer as an argument to dissuade the people from it. That is why their answer has been cited here and refuted.

Here a possible doubt should also be removed: How can a Jew, who believes that the Torah had been sent down by God, say, "Allah has not sent down anything to any man?" A little thinking will show that a person in his obduracy

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الْعَزِيْزِ الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿٩٧﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِيْ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ النُّجُوْمَ لِتَهْتَدُوْا بِهَا فِيْ ظُلُمٰتِ
الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ ۭ قَدْ فَصَّلْنَا الْاٰيٰتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَّعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٩٧﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِيْٓ اَنْشَاَكُمْ
مِّنْ نَّفْسٍ وَّاحِدَةٍ فَمُسْتَقَرٌّ وَّمُسْتَوْدَعٌ ۭ قَدْ فَصَّلْنَا الْاٰيٰتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَّفْقَهُوْنَ ﴿٩٨﴾
وَهُوَ الَّذِيْٓ اَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاۗءِ مَاۗءً ۚ فَاَخْرَجْنَا بِهٖ نَبَاتَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَاَخْرَجْنَا
مِنْهُ خَضِرًا نُّخْرِجُ مِنْهُ حَبًّا مُّتَرَاكِبًا ۚ وَمِنَ النَّخْلِ مِنْ طَلْعِهَا قِنْوَانٌ
دَانِيَةٌ وَّجَنّٰتٍ مِّنْ اَعْنَابٍ وَّالزَّيْتُوْنَ وَالرُّمَّانَ مُشْتَبِهًا وَّغَيْرَ مُتَشَابِهٍ ۭ
اُنْظُرُوْٓا اِلٰى ثَمَرِهٖٓ اِذَآ اَثْمَرَ وَيَنْعِهٖ ۭ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكُمْ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يُّؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٩٩﴾
وَجَعَلُوْا لِلّٰهِ شُرَكَاۗءَ الْجِنَّ وَخَلَقَهُمْ وَخَرَقُوْا لَهٗ بَنِيْنَ وَبَنٰتٍۢ بِغَيْرِ
عِلْمٍ ۭ سُبْحٰنَهٗ وَتَعٰلٰى عَمَّا يَصِفُوْنَ ﴿١٠٠﴾ بَدِيْعُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۭ اَنّٰى يَكُوْنُ
لَهٗ وَلَدٌ وَّلَمْ تَكُنْ لَّهٗ صَاحِبَةٌ ۭ وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ ۚ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ
عَلِيْمٌ ﴿١٠١﴾ ذٰلِكُمُ اللّٰهُ رَبُّكُمْ ۚ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۚ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَاعْبُدُوْهُ ۚ وَ
هُوَ عَلٰي كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَّكِيْلٌ ﴿١٠٢﴾ لَا تُدْرِكُهُ الْاَبْصَارُ ۡ وَهُوَ يُدْرِكُ الْاَبْصَارَ ۚ وَ
هُوَ اللَّطِيْفُ الْخَبِيْرُ ﴿١٠٣﴾ قَدْ جَاۗءَكُمْ بَصَاۗىِٕرُ مِنْ رَّبِّكُمْ ۚ فَمَنْ اَبْصَرَ فَلِنَفْسِهٖ ۚ
وَمَنْ عَمِيَ فَعَلَيْهَا ۭ وَمَآ اَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِحَفِيْظٍ ﴿١٠٤﴾ وَكَذٰلِكَ نُصَرِّفُ الْاٰيٰتِ
وَلِيَقُوْلُوْا دَرَسْتَ وَلِنُبَيِّنَهٗ لِقَوْمٍ يَّعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿١٠٥﴾ اِتَّبِعْ مَآ اُوْحِيَ اِلَيْكَ مِنْ
رَّبِّكَ ۚ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۚ وَاَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ ﴿١٠٦﴾ وَلَوْ شَاۗءَ اللّٰهُ مَآ اَشْرَكُوْا ۭ
وَمَا جَعَلْنٰكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيْظًا ۚ وَمَآ اَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِوَكِيْلٍ ﴿١٠٧﴾ وَلَا تَسُبُّوا
الَّذِيْنَ يَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ فَيَسُبُّوا اللّٰهَ عَدْوًۢا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ ۭ كَذٰلِكَ
زَيَّنَّا لِكُلِّ اُمَّةٍ عَمَلَهُمْ ۠ ثُمَّ اِلٰى رَبِّهِمْ مَّرْجِعُهُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوْا

(١٢) ع (١٨)

And it is He Who has set up the stars for you so that you may find your way in the deep darkness of the land and sea. Behold! We have made Our Signs clear for those who possess knowledge.[64] And it is He Who created you from one single soul[65] and provided for each of you a dwelling place and a repository. We have made these Signs clear for those who are men of understanding.[66] And it is He Who sent down rain-water from the sky and thereby caused every kind of vegetation to grow, and then with it produced green fields and trees and from them brought forth close growing grain and from the blossoms of palm-trees brought forth laden sheaths of clustering dates and vineyards and olivegroves and gardens of pomegranates : though their fruits resemble each other yet each has its distinctive quality. Behold ! how they bring forth fruit and how their fruits ripen. for there are indeed Signs in these things for those who believe. Yet they set up the Jinn as partners with Allah,[67] whereas He is their Creator; they have also invented for Him sons and daughters without having any knowledge[68] whereas He is absolutely free from and exalted far above the things they say. He is the Originator of the heavens and the earth: how should He have a son, when He has no consort? He has created everything and He has the Knowledge of verything. This then is, Allah, your Lord; there is no deity but He is the Creator of everything : so worship Him alone, for He is the Guardian of all things, No sight can comprehend Him but He comprehends all sorts of sight, for He is All-Comprehensive and All-Aware. 97-103

Behold: Lights of discernment have come to you from your Lord: now, whoever makes use of his sight, will do so to his own good, and whoever behaves like a blind person will do so to his own harm; I am not a keeper over you.[69] 104

Thus do We state Our Revelations over and over again indifferent ways so that the disbelievers might say, "You have learnt these (not from Allah but) from someone else;" and so that We may make the Reality plain to those who have knowledge.[70] Therefore, O Muhammad, go on following what has been sent down to you from your Lord, for there is no god besides that One Lord, and leave these *mushrikin* alone. Had Allah willed (He Himself could have so arranged that), they would not have committed *shirk*. And We have not appointed you a keeper over them, nor have you been made their 105-108

guardian.[71] And (O Believers), do not revile those whom they invoke besides Allah lest they should, in their ignorance, revile Allah[72] (besides committing *shirk*). We have thus made the deeds of every people seem fair to them.[73] Ultimately, they shall have to return to their Lord; then He will let them know what they have been doing.

Contd. from p.543]

often utters such things as are against his fundamental principles merely to refute his opponent. As the Jews were bent upon refuting his claim to Prophethood, they had been so blinded by their opposition to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be peace), that in denying his Prophethood they even denied the very office of Prophethood.

"Those people formed quite a wrong estimate of Allah ... "means that they committed a grave error in evaluating His powers and wisdom. For the person who says: "Allah has not sent down the knowledge of the Truth and Guidance for life," makes either of the two wrong estimates: (1) He believes that Allah has not power to send down Revelation to any man, and this is a wrong estimate of the powers of Allah; (2) He thinks that though Allah has given man intelligence and authority to exploit the resources of nature, He has made no arrangement for his right guidance, but has left him to act indiscriminately in the world, and this is a wrong estimate of the wisdom of Allah.

60. This answer is meant for the Jews,who had furnished the disbelievers and the *mushrikīn* with the arguments that "Allah has not sent down anything to any man..." To refute their objection it has particularly been pointed out that the Torah was sent down to Moses by Allah, for they themselves believed and could not deny that the Torah had been sent down to Moses by Allah . Thus, it was by itself a refutation of their assertion that "Allah has not sent down anything to any man.." It also proved at least that the Word of God can be sent down to a man, as it had been sent down to Moses.

61. After showing in the preceding verse (91) that the Word of God can be sent down to a man and that it had actually been sent down to Moses, a man, the Qur'ān in this verse proceeds to prove that the Word, which has been sent down to Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him), is actually the Word of God. Four things have been put forward as a proof thereof:

(1). It is a blessed Book: it presents the best principles for the welfare and true success of man; it teaches the right creeds and inculcates all kinds of virtues and exhorts the people of follow a high standard of morality for leading a pure life. At the same time, it does not teach in any way whatsoever any vice — selfishness, narrow-mindedness, cruelty,

obscenity and the like, which you have interpolated in abundance in your sacred Books.

(2). It does not present anything different form the Guidance contained in the former Scriptures: nay, it testifies to the same teaching that had been presented in them.

(3). This Book aims to fulfil the very object for which the former Books had been sent, that is, to shake up and rouse those people who had become forgetful of the noble object for which they had been created, and to warn them of the evil consequences of their wicked ways.

(4). The Message of this Book has not attracted those from among mankind who are the worshippers of this world and slaves of their lusts, but only such people as are able to see the higher things of life beyond the narrow bounds of their worldly life. Then the most obvious characteristic of the revolution that this Book has brought about in their lives is that they stand out conspicuously among the people around them for their piety and God-worship. Is it possible for any book invented by an impostor, who has the audacity to say that it is from Allah, to produce such excellent results?

62. That is, it is Allah Who splits open the seed and the fruitstone under ground and causes those to grow into plants or trees.

63. It means that Allah creates living creatures out of lifeless matter and discharges lifeless matter out of living creatures.

64. That is, "We have made clear the Signs which show conclusively that there is only One Allah and that none else has the Divine attributes or powers and none else is entitled to any of the Divine rights. However, those who lack knowledge cannot reach the Reality by means of these Signs; only those who observe the phenomena of Nature in a rational way can attain this precious wealth."

65. That is, Allah has created the whole human race from one single being, Adam, who was the first man.

66. That is "Only Men of understanding can find clear Signs of the Reality in the creation of human race and in the different functions allotted to man and woman for its reproduction at the different stages of human life from birth to death. But those, who live like animals and hanker after the fulfilment of the lusts of the flesh, can see nothing worthwhile even in these Signs."

67. That is, in spite of these clear Signs, some people have set up as His partners some hidden beings that are merely the creations of their own imagination

and whims. They have gone so far in their ignorance as to allot different powers and duties to them in the management of the universe and in determining the destiny of man. For instance, one has been made the good of rain and another of regetation; one is the goddess of wealth and another of disease, etc. Such absurd beliefs have been prevalent among all polytheistic peoples about spirits, devils, monks, gods and goddesses.

68 The pagan Arabs called the angels "daughters" of God. Likewise some *mushrik* communities have invented even a genealogical tree of gods and goddesses descending from God.

69. In the sentence, "I am not a keeper over you," Allah is speaking in the first person on His Prophet's behalf. Just as the second person in the Qur'ān denotes different people at different places, so the first person also denotes different beings at different places. As is well known, in some places, the second person is the Holy Prophet or the Believers or the people of the Book, and at other places it is the disbelievers or the *mushrikīn* or the Quraish or the Arabs or the human beings in general, though the Qur'ān is meant to be the guidance for all mankind. Likewise at some places, the first person is Allah Himself and at others it is the angel, the bearer of the Revelation, or a group of angels, or the Prophets or the Believers, though, in every case, the Words are of Allah. However, one can determine the real "person" with the help of the context.

The meaning of the sentence. "I am not a keeper over you," is : "My only duty is to present the guidance before you. Then it is for you to open your eyes to see it or to keep your eyes shut like a blind man. It is not my duty to force open the eyes of those, who deliberately keep them shut and to make them see what they do not see."

70. The different ways of expression, in which the Revelation has been couched, are a test for the people, because they help to discriminate the counterfeit from the genuine. The same thing has already been stated in Al-Baqarah, II: 26, in connection with the mention of insignificant things like flies, gnats, etc. in the parables of the Qur'ān. Just as the mention of these insignificant things helps the seekers in finding the Truth, in the same way the different ways of expression help those, who have knowledge and make use of it, to think deeply about their aims and objects and learn lessons for their own good. On the contrary, those people, who are bigoted, pay no attention to the subject-matter, but begin to think on other lines. For instance, they begin to conjecture how this illiterate man can compose such excellent discourses. Thus, instead of judging the Qur'ān from its excellent themes to be the Revelation from Allah, they turn to every other possible source and say, "You have learnt this from such and such a one." Then in the "light" of

this so-called successful "Research" into the source of the Qur'ān, they conclude that it could not be the Book of God.

71. It means: "You have been appointed to invite the people to the Message and not to keep watch over them like a police inspector. Therefore your only duty is to present the Message to the people and try your best to convince them of the Truth. After that, if someone does not accept the Truth, leave him alone. You have not been appointed to force the people to accept it so as to leave no worshipper of falsehood within the range of your Prophethood. Therefore you should not worry yourself and try to make them open their eyes which they have deliberately shut. If Allah had, in His Wisdom, willed that there should remain no worshipper of falsehood, He would not have entrusted you with this task. He could have made each and every human being a follower of the Truth, merely by a single word of His Command. But this is not the object of the creation of man. The real object is that man be given the freedom of choice between the Truth and falsehood. And then by presenting the light of the Truth before him, he be tested which one of the two he chooses. Now the right course for you is to follow the Right Way yourself and to invite others to follow it. Then you should make those, who accept it, your friends and not to forsake them in any case, even though they are very insignificant in the eyes of the worldly people. On the other hand, you should leave those alone who do not accept it and let them go to the evil end to which they themselves want to go and persist in doing so."

72. The followers of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) have been advised not to lose their balance in zeal for preaching but to remain within proper limits when engaged in discussions and polemics with the non-Muslims and to refrain from offending against their creeds and from vilifying their leaders and objects of worship, for this will repel and alienate them all the more from the Truth.

73. Allah has ascribed their deeds to Himself, for everything that takes place in accordance with the Laws of Nature does, in fact, happens by the command of Allah. (Please refer to E.N. 17 above). As Allah is the Author of all the Laws of Nature, everything happens by His Command: therefore, Allah says, "We have made the deeds of every people seem fair to them." The human beings would, however, express the same thing, saying, "This has happened according to the Law of Nature."

يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿١٠٨﴾ وَاَقْسَمُوْا بِاللّٰهِ جَهْدَ اَيْمَانِهِمْ لَئِنْ جَآءَتْهُمْ اٰيَةٌ لَّيُؤْمِنُنَّ
بِهَا ؕ قُلْ اِنَّمَا الْاٰيٰتُ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ وَمَا يُشْعِرُكُمْ ۙ اَنَّهَآ اِذَا جَآءَتْ لَا
يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿١٠٩﴾ وَنُقَلِّبُ اَفْـِٕدَتَهُمْ وَاَبْصَارَهُمْ كَمَا لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوْا بِهٖٓ اَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ
وَّنَذَرُهُمْ فِيْ طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُوْنَ ﴿١١٠﴾ ع

(١٢ ع ١٠ ١٩ الجزء ٨)

وَلَوْ اَنَّنَا نَزَّلْنَآ اِلَيْهِمُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةَ وَكَلَّمَهُمُ الْمَوْتٰى وَحَشَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ كُلَّ
شَيْءٍ قُبُلًا مَّا كَانُوْا لِيُؤْمِنُوْٓا اِلَّآ اَنْ يَّشَآءَ اللّٰهُ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَهُمْ
يَجْهَلُوْنَ ﴿١١١﴾ وَكَذٰلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ عَدُوًّا شَيٰطِيْنَ الْاِنْسِ وَالْجِنِّ
يُوْحِيْ بَعْضُهُمْ اِلٰى بَعْضٍ زُخْرُفَ الْقَوْلِ غُرُوْرًا ؕ وَلَوْ شَآءَ رَبُّكَ مَا
فَعَلُوْهُ فَذَرْهُمْ وَمَا يَفْتَرُوْنَ ﴿١١٢﴾ وَلِتَصْغٰٓى اِلَيْهِ اَفْـِٕدَةُ الَّذِيْنَ لَا
يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْاٰخِرَةِ وَلِيَرْضَوْهُ وَلِيَقْتَرِفُوْا مَا هُمْ مُّقْتَرِفُوْنَ ﴿١١٣﴾ اَفَغَيْرَ اللّٰهِ
اَبْتَغِيْ حَكَمًا وَّهُوَ الَّذِيْٓ اَنْزَلَ اِلَيْكُمُ الْكِتٰبَ مُفَصَّلًا ؕ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰتَيْنٰهُمُ
الْكِتٰبَ يَعْلَمُوْنَ اَنَّهٗ مُنَزَّلٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّكَ بِالْحَقِّ فَلَا تَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ الْمُمْتَرِيْنَ ﴿١١٤﴾
وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ صِدْقًا وَّعَدْلًا ؕ لَا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمٰتِهٖ ۚ وَهُوَ السَّمِيْعُ
الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿١١٥﴾ وَاِنْ تُطِعْ اَكْثَرَ مَنْ فِي الْاَرْضِ يُضِلُّوْكَ عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ ؕ اِنْ
يَّتَّبِعُوْنَ اِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَاِنْ هُمْ اِلَّا يَخْرُصُوْنَ ﴿١١٦﴾ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ اَعْلَمُ مَنْ
يَّضِلُّ عَنْ سَبِيْلِهٖ ۚ وَهُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِيْنَ ﴿١١٧﴾ فَكُلُوْا مِمَّا ذُكِرَ اسْمُ اللّٰهِ
عَلَيْهِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ بِاٰيٰتِهٖ مُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١١٨﴾ وَمَا لَكُمْ اَلَّا تَاْكُلُوْا مِمَّا ذُكِرَ اسْمُ اللّٰهِ
عَلَيْهِ وَقَدْ فَصَّلَ لَكُمْ مَّا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ اِلَّا مَا اضْطُرِرْتُمْ اِلَيْهِ ؕ وَاِنَّ
كَثِيْرًا لَّيُضِلُّوْنَ بِاَهْوَآئِهِمْ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ ؕ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِالْمُعْتَدِيْنَ ﴿١١٩﴾

They declare with solemn oaths by Allah that if a Sign[74] (i.r. a miracle) comes before them, they will believe in it (your Prophethood). O Muḥammad, tell them, "Allah alone can show Signs."[75] And what will make you (O Muḥammad) realize that, even if the Signs come, they would not believe?[76] And We are turning away their hearts and eyes from the Truth because of that attitude of theirs which prompted them to disbelieve in the first instance, [77] so We leave them to wander about in their rebellion. Even if We had sent down angels to them and made the dead to speak with them and ranged all the things of the world before them (as a proof thereof), they would still not have believed unless it were Allah's will that they should believe, [78] but most of them talk nonsense. And so have we always set against every Prophet enemies from among satans of men and satans of jinns who have been inspiring one another with charming things in order to delude the minds.[79] But, had your Lord willed, they would never have done so.[80] So leave them alone to continue their false allegations. (We have been allowing them to do all this) so that the hearts of those who do not believe in the Hereafter might be allured (by this charming delusion) and they be well pleased with it, and that they might earn the evils they wish to earn. 109-113

This being so, should I seek a judge other than Allah, whereas He has sent down to you the Book with full details?[81] And the people whom We gave the Book (before you) know that this Book has been sent down to you with the Truth from your Lord; so you should not be of those who have doubts.[82] The Word of your Lord is perfect in regard to Truth and justice; there is none who can make any change in His decrees for He hears everything and knows everything. 114-115

And O Muhammad if you obey most of the dwellers of the earth, they will lead you astray from Allah's Way, for they follow nothing but guess-work and indulge in mere conjectures.[83] In fact, your Lord knows best those who have gone astray from His Way and also He knows those who are on the Right Path. 116-117

Then you should eat the flesh of the animal over which Allah's name has been mentioned, if you sincerely believe in His Revelations.[84] And why should you not eat that thing over which Allah's name has been mentioned when He has already given you explicit knowledge of those things which He has forbidden for you, 118-119

except in a case of extreme helplessness?[85] As regards the majority of the people, they, following their caprices, say misleading things without any knowledge. Your Lord best knows these transgressors.

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74. Here "Sign" stands for such a tangible miracle seeing which they should have no alternative left but to acknowledge that Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) was a true Prophet appointed by Allah.

75. That is, "I have no power to bring about and present Signs, for these are entirely in the power of Allah and He may or may not show them."

76. These words are addressed to those Muslims, who ardently wished (and sometimes even expressed their wish) that their misguided brethren should be shown such a Sign as might bring them to the Right Way. To this Allah has answered, 'You should realize that they would not believe even if a Sign were shown to them, for this demand is merely a pretext for their disbelief."

77. That is, there has been no change in their mentality since the first time they heard and rejected the Message of the Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him). They are still following the same crooked and perverted way of looking at the Message and, therefore, are unable to see and understand it rightly.

78. That is, "As they are not going to reject falsehood and accept the Truth by making a free and deliberate choice, the only alternative left for making them follow it is that Allah should force it upon them: He should change their nature so as to deprive them of the freedom of thought and action like other species which have not been made responsible for what they do. But this is against the wisdom of the object for which Allah has created man. You should not, therefore, expect that Allah would make them believers by His supernatural intervention."

79. Allah is consoling His Messenger, so as to say, "You should not worry at all about the united and active antagonism of the satans from among men and jinn against your Mission. This is not a new thing only happening to you for it has always been happening like this to the Messengers. Whenever a Messenger came to show the Right Way, all the satanic powers girded up their loins to make his Mission a failure."

"Charming things" are all those devices, schemes, suspicions, objections, etc., that are employed by the satans to excite and incite the common people against the Message and the Messenger who invites them to the Truth. Then all these things have been called the means of deceit and delusion as a whole, for all the weapons that the opponent use against the Truth are, in fact, deceptions not only for others but also for the deceivers themselves, though they appear to be very useful and effective weapons.

80. We have already explained in E.N. 73 above the fact of this matter, but the fine distinction between Allah's "will" (*mashiyat*) and His approval (*rada*) should also be kept in mind, otherwise there might arise very serious misunderstandings. It must be clearly understood that nothing whatsoever can happen without the "will" and permission of Allah, for no incident can happen, unless Allah makes room for it in His vast scheme and provides means for its happening. But it does not necessarily mean that Allah also approves of and is pleased with that incident. For instance, no thief can commit theft, no murderer can kill, no tyrant can be tyrannical, no breaker of peace can cause disorder, no unbeliever can disbelieve and no *mushrik* can commit *shirk*, etc., etc., without the "Will" of Allah. Likewise, no believer can have Faith and no pious person can be pious unless it be the "Will" of Allah; yet He is not pleased with the first kind of bad deeds, whereas He is pleased with and approves of and likes the second kind of good deeds. It is true that the "Will" of Allah is working for an ultimate great good, but that can only come about by means of a conflict between light and darkness, good and bad, peace and disorder. Therefore, He allows, for the sake of His great good designs, the necessary freedom both to the powers of obedience and to those of disobeidence, of piety and sin, of Prophethood and the forces of evil, so that both might be allowed to perform the deeds of their own choice and to those of His creatures (men and jinn) who have been delegated with a limited authority and the consequent responsibility. Everyone is free to make a choice of good deeds or of bad deeds for himself in this world. Both the good and the bad people are allowed to have the necessary means, as far as it suits and fits into the Divine Design, but only those who make a choice of good works merit His pleasure and approval, for Allah likes that His servants should make the right use of their freedom of choice and adopt good instead of evil.

In this connection, it will be worthwhile to understand why Allah mentions over and over again that it is by His "Will" that the enemies of Truth have been allowed to carry on their nefarious activities. This is to impress upon the Holy Prophet, and through him on his followers, that the nature of their work is different from that of the angels, who carry out the Commands of Allah without meeting with any resistance. Their Mission, requires that in their conflict with the wicked and rebellious people, they should exert their utmost to make the Way of Allah dominant over their ways. That is why it is the "Will" of Allah to allow such people as have deliberately chosen the way of rebellion against Allah to exert their worst in pursuance of their choice. Likewise, He allows the Believers also full opportunity to exert their utmost in the service and obedience of Allah that they have deliberately chosen. Though He is pleased with and gives His help and succour to the Believers and guides them to the Right Way because they do the deeds He likes them to do, yet they should not expect that Allah will force, by His

supernatural intervention, the unbelievers to believe, if they do not want to believe by their free choice; or that He will remove by force from their way those satans amongst men and jinn who have deliberately chosen to use all the powers of their hearts and minds and bodies against the Truth in order to block its way. They should note it well that, if they sincerely intend to work for the cause of truth, virtue and righteousness, they will have to prove this by putting up hard struggle and exerting their utmost in their conflict with the worshippers of falsehood. If Allah had willed to demolish falsehood and make the Truth dominate by miracles, there was no need to entrust this work to the Believers for in that case He Himself could have arranged the things so as to leave no satan in the world and no room for *shirk* and disbelief to make their appearance.

81. The 'speaker' in this sentence is the Holy Prophet and the addressees are his followers, who desired that a Sign should be shown for the conversion of the disbelievers. They have been told that no Sign will be shown, for Allah had made all the realities plain in the Qur'an. As regards their conflict with falsehood, He has decreed that the followers of the Truth will have to exert for its domination in the natural way without expecting any supernatural intervention from Him. The Holy Prophet has, therefore, been asked to declare, "Should I, then, seek some authority higher than Allah to revise His decree and to send down such a miracle as should force them to believe?" (Please refer also to E.N. 76).

82. That is, "These principles, that have been laid down for the domination of the Truth, are not new ones which might have been invented today to explain away the difficulties and obstacles of the Way. All those people, who possess the knowledge of the Divine Books and are acquainted with the Mission of the Prophets, will bear testimony that whatever is being stated in the Qur'ān is the very Truth, which is eternal and has never changed."

83. The right thing for a seeker-after-truth is not to consider what way the majority of the people are following because that is based on guess-work instead of knowledge. Their beliefs, theories, philosophies, principles of life and laws are the result of guess-work and are, therefore, sure to mislead. In contrast to that, the way of life with which Allah is pleased, can only be the Way which Allah Himself has taught. Therefore, the seeker-after-truth should adopt that way and steadfastly follow it, even though he is left alone on it.

84. Among the many wrong things which the people have adopted as religious laws without any Divine sanction are also the restrictions they have imposed on the articles of food. That is why some people have made certain things lawful whereas they are unlawful in the sight of God, and certain other things unlawful, though Allah has declared them to be lawful. In this connection, the most absurd thing on which some of the former people insisted and on which some

of the modern people also insist, is that if Allah's name is pronounced at the slaughter of an animal, it is unlawful and if it is slaughtered without mentioning Allah's name over it, it is quite lawful. In this verse Allah has refuted such ideas and commanded the Muslims to discard all such whims and superstitions which have been invented by the unbelievers and the *mushrikīn* and break all such restrictions which the people have imposed on themselves against the Guidance of Allah, if they sincerely believe in it. They should, therefore, make unlawful only that which Allah has made unlawful and *vice versa*.

85. Please see vv. 114-116, *An-Nahl*. Incidentally, this reference also shows that Sūrah *An-Nahl* was revealed before *Al-An'ām*.

وَذَرُوْا ظَاهِرَ الْاِثْمِ وَ بَاطِنَهٗ ؕ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يَكْسِبُوْنَ الْاِثْمَ سَيُجْزَوْنَ
بِمَا كَانُوْا يَقْتَرِفُوْنَ ﴿۱۲۰﴾ وَلَا تَاْكُلُوْا مِمَّا لَمْ يُذْكَرِ اسْمُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْهِ وَاِنَّهٗ
لَفِسْقٌ ؕ وَاِنَّ الشَّيٰطِيْنَ لَيُوْحُوْنَ اِلٰٓى اَوْلِيٰٓـئِهِمْ لِيُجَادِلُوْكُمْ ۚ وَاِنْ اَطَعْتُمُوْهُمْ
اِنَّكُمْ لَمُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿۱۲۱﴾ اَوَ مَنْ كَانَ مَيْتًا فَاَحْيَيْنٰهُ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهٗ نُوْرًا يَّمْشِيْ بِهٖ
فِى النَّاسِ كَمَنْ مَّثَلُهٗ فِى الظُّلُمٰتِ لَيْسَ بِخَارِجٍ مِّنْهَا ؕ كَذٰلِكَ زُيِّنَ
لِلْكٰفِرِيْنَ مَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿۱۲۲﴾ وَكَذٰلِكَ جَعَلْنَا فِىْ كُلِّ قَرْيَةٍ اَكٰبِرَ مُجْرِمِيْهَا
لِيَمْكُرُوْا فِيْهَا ؕ وَمَا يَمْكُرُوْنَ اِلَّا بِاَنْفُسِهِمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿۱۲۳﴾ وَاِذَا جَآءَتْهُمْ
اٰيَةٌ قَالُوْا لَنْ نُّؤْمِنَ حَتّٰى نُؤْتٰى مِثْلَ مَآ اُوْتِىَ رُسُلُ اللّٰهِ ؔۘ اَللّٰهُ اَعْلَمُ
حَيْثُ يَجْعَلُ رِسَالَتَهٗ ؕ سَيُصِيْبُ الَّذِيْنَ اَجْرَمُوْا صَغَارٌ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ وَ
عَذَابٌ شَدِيْدٌ ۢ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَمْكُرُوْنَ ﴿۱۲۴﴾ فَمَنْ يُّرِدِ اللّٰهُ اَنْ يَّهْدِيَهٗ يَشْرَحْ
صَدْرَهٗ لِلْاِسْلَامِ ۚ وَمَنْ يُّرِدْ اَنْ يُّضِلَّهٗ يَجْعَلْ صَدْرَهٗ ضَيِّقًا حَرَجًا كَاَنَّمَا
يَصَّعَّدُ فِى السَّمَآءِ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ يَجْعَلُ اللّٰهُ الرِّجْسَ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿۱۲۵﴾
وَهٰذَا صِرَاطُ رَبِّكَ مُسْتَقِيْمًا ؕ قَدْ فَصَّلْنَا الْاٰيٰتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَّذَّكَّرُوْنَ ﴿۱۲۶﴾
لَهُمْ دَارُ السَّلٰمِ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَهُوَ وَلِيُّهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿۱۲۷﴾ وَيَوْمَ
يَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيْعًا ۚ يٰمَعْشَرَ الْجِنِّ قَدِ اسْتَكْثَرْتُمْ مِّنَ الْاِنْسِ ۚ وَقَالَ
اَوْلِيٰٓـؤُهُمْ مِّنَ الْاِنْسِ رَبَّنَا اسْتَمْتَعَ بَعْضُنَا بِبَعْضٍ وَّبَلَغْنَآ اَجَلَنَا الَّذِىْٓ
اَجَّلْتَ لَنَا ؕ قَالَ النَّارُ مَثْوٰىكُمْ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَآ اِلَّا مَا شَآءَ اللّٰهُ ؕ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ
حَكِيْمٌ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿۱۲۸﴾ وَكَذٰلِكَ نُوَلِّىْ بَعْضَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ بَعْضًا بِمَا كَانُوْا يَكْسِبُوْنَ ﴿۱۲۹﴾
يٰمَعْشَرَ الْجِنِّ وَالْاِنْسِ اَلَمْ يَاْتِكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِّنْكُمْ يَقُصُّوْنَ عَلَيْكُمْ اٰيٰتِىْ وَ

And refrain from open sins as well as secret sins: surely those who earn sin shall get the recompense of what they have earned. And do not eat the flesh of the animal over which Allah's name has not been mentioned at the time of slaughter; this indeed is sinful. The satans put doubts and objections into the minds of their friends, so that they should dispute with you,[86] but if you obey them, you are surely *mushrikīn*.[87] 120-121

Can that person, who was first dead, then We gave him life[88] and bestowed upon him the light by which he is able to walk on the right way among the people, be regarded like the one who is blundering about in deep darkness[89] and will not come out of it? Thus have been made seem fair[90] to the disbelievers their deeds and thus have We placed in every habitation the ringleaders of the wicked people to spread the snare of their vile schemes; in fact, they themselves get entangled in the snare of their vile devices but they do not perceive it. 122-123

When a Revelation comes before them, they say, "We will not believe in it unless we are given the like of what has been given to the Messengers of Allah."[91] Allah knows best whom to entrust with His Mission and how to get it conducted. Near is the time when these criminals shall meet with disgrace and a grievous torment from Allah for the evil schemes they were devising. 124

So (the fact is that) whomsoever Allah wills to guide aright, He makes his breast wide open to Islam,[92] and whomsoever He wills to let go astray, He makes his breast narrow and squeezes it so tight that (at the very idea of Islam) he begins to feel as if his soul were climbing up towards the sky. Thus Allah sets the impurity (caused by their deviation from the Way of Islam) over those who do not believe, whereas this Way is the Straight Way of your Lord, and We have made its signs quite clear for those who are amenable to advice. There is an abode of peace[93] for them with their Lord, and He is their Protector because of the good works they are doing. 125-127

On the Day when He will encircle and muster them all together, addressing the jinn,[94] He will say, "O race of jinn, you have exploited fully the human race." And their associates from among the human race will answer, "Our Lord, we both have exploited each 128-129

other fully,[95] and now we have reached the end of our term which You had fixed for us." Then Allah will say, "Well! now the Fire is your abode wherein you shall abide for ever." Only those, whom Allah will deliver, shall escape from it. No doubt your Lord is All-Wise, All-Knowing.[96] Behold, in this way We will make (in the Hereafter) the wrongdoers the comrades of one another because of what they earned (in the world with mutual co-operation).[97]

86. This is with reference to the different kinds of doubts and objections with which the Jewish scholars used to poison the minds of ignorant Arabs against Islam. According to a tradition of Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, one of the objections taught by the Jews against the Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) was: "How is it that the one killed by Allah (by natural death) should be unlawful, while the other which is killed by us (by mentioning the name of Allah) should be lawful?" This is an instance of the crooked attitude of those so-called people of the Book. They would invent and pose questions like this before the common people so as to poison their minds with doubts and to arm them with weapons to fight with the Truth.

87. It is also *shirk* to acknowledge the Godhead of Allah and at the same time follow the decrees and ways of those who have turned away from Allah. The acknowledgement of the Oneness of Allah demands that one should obey Allah in all aspects of one's life. So much so that if a person believes that someone else also should be obeyed along with Allah, he would be guilty of committing *shirk* in his creed. And if a person obeys such people as arrogate to themselves the authority of making things lawful and unlawful, in utter disregard of the Guidance of Allah, he would be guilty of practical *shirk*.

88. Here ".... who was first dead" means, "..... who was first in a state of ignorance and lacked understanding;" likewise, ".... then (he) was given life" means "then he was given knowledge and understanding and was restored to that mental state which can recognize the Truth." And the fact is that one who cannot distinguish between right and wrong and does not know the Right Way, might be regarded as alive from the physical point of view, but he does not enjoy that life which makes him a real human being. He is no doubt a living animal, but he is not a living man. A living man is only he who can distinguish between right and wrong, good and bad, righteous and unrighteous.

89. That is, "How can you expect that a man, who has got real understanding of life and recognizes clearly, by the light of Knowledge, the Straight Way from among the countless crooked ways, would live a life like those

who lack understanding and blunder blindly into the darkness of ignorance and folly?"

90. It is the Law of Allah that He makes their deeds seem fair to those who refuse to be guided by the Light which is offered to them and who prefer to tread the crooked paths, even though they are invited to the Right Way. Then they begin to love darkness and like groping their way through it like the blind and to be knocked about throughout their lives. Accordingly, every vice appears to them worth enjoying and every piece of folly a gem of wisdom. After the failure of such an experiment that produces mischief, they get ready for another in the hope that the first failure was due to some "accidental" mistake that will be avoided in future experiments.

91. What they meant was: "We are not going to believe in the claim of the Messengers that an angel came to them with a Message from God, unless the angel comes directly to us to deliver the Message of Allah."

92. "He makes his breast wide open to Islam" means: "Allah makes him fully convinced of the truth of Islam by removing from his mind and heart every kind of doubt, suspicion, hesitation and indecision about Islam."

93. "Abode of peace": Heaven, the place of perfect peace and happiness, where the dwellers will be immune from every kind of calamity and misery.

94. Here by the "jinn" are meant the "satans of jinn."

95. That is, "Every one of us made an unfair use of the other and cheated him for selfish ends."

96. As Allah is All-Wise and All-Knowing, both punishment and forgiveness will be based on wisdom and knowledge and, therefore, will be reasonable and just. He will forgive only that wrongdoer, whom He knows not to be personally responsible for his crime and liable to punishment.

97. That is, just as they were accomplices in their sins and crimes in the world, so they shall also share the punishment in the Hereafter.

يُنْذِرُوْنَكُمْ لِقَآءَ يَوْمِكُمْ هٰذَا ؕ قَالُوْا شَهِدْنَا عَلٰٓى اَنْفُسِنَا وَ غَرَّتْهُمُ الْحَيٰوةُ
الدُّنْيَا وَ شَهِدُوْا عَلٰٓى اَنْفُسِهِمْ اَنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا كٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿۱۳۰﴾ ذٰلِكَ اَنْ لَّمْ يَكُنْ
رَّبُّكَ مُهْلِكَ الْقُرٰى بِظُلْمٍ وَّ اَهْلُهَا غٰفِلُوْنَ ﴿۱۳۱﴾ وَ لِكُلٍّ دَرَجٰتٌ مِّمَّا عَمِلُوْا ؕ
وَ مَا رَبُّكَ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿۱۳۲﴾ وَ رَبُّكَ الْغَنِيُّ ذُو الرَّحْمَةِ ؕ اِنْ يَّشَاْ
يُذْهِبْكُمْ وَ يَسْتَخْلِفْ مِنْۢ بَعْدِكُمْ مَّا يَشَآءُ كَمَآ اَنْشَاَكُمْ مِّنْ ذُرِّيَّةِ
قَوْمٍ اٰخَرِيْنَ ﴿۱۳۳﴾ اِنَّ مَا تُوْعَدُوْنَ لَاٰتٍ ۙ وَّ مَآ اَنْتُمْ بِمُعْجِزِيْنَ ﴿۱۳۴﴾ قُلْ
يٰقَوْمِ اعْمَلُوْا عَلٰى مَكَانَتِكُمْ اِنِّيْ عَامِلٌ ۚ فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ۙ مَنْ تَكُوْنُ
لَهٗ عَاقِبَةُ الدَّارِ ؕ اِنَّهٗ لَا يُفْلِحُ الظّٰلِمُوْنَ ﴿۱۳۵﴾ وَ جَعَلُوْا لِلّٰهِ مِمَّا ذَرَاَ مِنَ
الْحَرْثِ وَ الْاَنْعَامِ نَصِيْبًا فَقَالُوْا هٰذَا لِلّٰهِ بِزَعْمِهِمْ وَ هٰذَا لِشُرَكَآئِنَا ۚ
فَمَا كَانَ لِشُرَكَآئِهِمْ فَلَا يَصِلُ اِلَى اللّٰهِ ۚ وَ مَا كَانَ لِلّٰهِ فَهُوَ يَصِلُ اِلٰى
شُرَكَآئِهِمْ ؕ سَآءَ مَا يَحْكُمُوْنَ ﴿۱۳۶﴾ وَ كَذٰلِكَ زَيَّنَ لِكَثِيْرٍ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ
قَتْلَ اَوْلَادِهِمْ شُرَكَآؤُهُمْ لِيُرْدُوْهُمْ وَ لِيَلْبِسُوْا عَلَيْهِمْ دِيْنَهُمْ ؕ وَ لَوْ
شَآءَ اللّٰهُ مَا فَعَلُوْهُ فَذَرْهُمْ وَ مَا يَفْتَرُوْنَ ﴿۱۳۷﴾ وَ قَالُوْا هٰذِهٖۤ اَنْعَامٌ
وَّ حَرْثٌ حِجْرٌ ۖ لَّا يَطْعَمُهَاۤ اِلَّا مَنْ نَّشَآءُ بِزَعْمِهِمْ وَ اَنْعَامٌ حُرِّمَتْ
ظُهُوْرُهَا وَ اَنْعَامٌ لَّا يَذْكُرُوْنَ اسْمَ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْهَا افْتِرَآءً عَلَيْهِ ؕ سَيَجْزِيْهِمْ
بِمَا كَانُوْا يَفْتَرُوْنَ ﴿۱۳۸﴾ وَ قَالُوْا مَا فِيْ بُطُوْنِ هٰذِهِ الْاَنْعَامِ خَالِصَةٌ
لِّذُكُوْرِنَا وَ مُحَرَّمٌ عَلٰٓى اَزْوَاجِنَا ۚ وَ اِنْ يَّكُنْ مَّيْتَةً فَهُمْ فِيْهِ شُرَكَآءُ ؕ
سَيَجْزِيْهِمْ وَصْفَهُمْ ؕ اِنَّهٗ حَكِيْمٌ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿۱۳۹﴾ قَدْ خَسِرَ الَّذِيْنَ قَتَلُوْۤا اَوْلَادَهُمْ
سَفَهًا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَّ حَرَّمُوْا مَا رَزَقَهُمُ اللّٰهُ افْتِرَآءً عَلَى اللّٰهِ ؕ قَدْ ضَلُّوْا

(On that occasion Allah will ask them this question also:) "O race of jinn and men, did not the Messengers come to you from among yourselves, who recited My Revelations to you and warned you of the consequences you shall meet with on this Day?" They will reply, "Yes, they did. We bear witness against ourselves."[98] Today this worldly life has deluded them, but at that time, they will themselves bear witness against their selves that they were disbelievers.[99] (This testimony will be taken from them in order to prove that) your Lord would not destroy the habitations unjustly, while their dwellers were ignorant of the Reality.[100] 130-131

The grade of everyone (for recompense) is determined in accordance with his deeds: and your Lord is not unaware of the deeds of the people. Your Lord is All-Sufficient and is full of compassion.[101] If He wills, He may remove you and replace you by whomever He wills, just as He raised you from the offspring of other people. Indeed, the thing which you are being promised shall most surely come;[102] and you have no power to frustrate Allah. O Muhammad, say, "O people, you may do whatever you like in your own way and I am doing whatever I deem right;[103] but you shall soon know who comes out successful in the end; anyhow the fact is that the workers of iniquity can never attain true success." 132-135

These people[104] have assigned a portion to Allah out of the tillage and the cattle He Himslef has created, and say, "This is for Allah," __ so presume they __ "and this is for the partners[105] we have set up with Him." Then the portion assigned to the partners of their own making does not reach Allah, but that assigned to Allah reaches the partners set up by them.[106] What evil decisions they make! 136

And likewise, those whom the *mushrikīn* believe to have a share in Allah's Godhead have made the killing of their own children seem fair to them[107] in order to lead them to ruin[108] and confuse them in their religion.[109] Had Allah willed, they would not have done so; therefore, leave them busy in their false accusations.[110] 137

They say, these cattle and crops are reserved; only those people can eat them, whom we allow. In fact, this is a restriction they themselves have imposed.[111] Then there are some animals which have been forbidden for riding and carrying loads, and there are other 138

animals over which they do not pronounce the name of Allah.[112] They have falsely attributed all this to Allah;[113] before long Allah will recompense them for all that they have falsely attributed to Him.

139 And they say, "Whatever is within the bellies of these cattle is reserved for our males and forbidden to our females, but if it is dead, both may partake of it.[114] Allah will surely recompense them for the things they have fabricated; indeed, He is All Wise, All Knowing.

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98. That is, "We confess that one Messenger after the other came from You and informed us of the Truth but it was our own fault that we did not believe in what they said."

99. They themselves would confess that they were not ignorant of the Truth: it did reach them but they deliberately rejected it.

100. It means that Allah does not desire to allow the guilty ones the opporunity to protest and say, "You did not inform us of the Truth, nor did You send anyone to show us the Right Way. But now when, in our ignorance we have adopted the wrong way, You are going to punish us for it." In order to refute this argument, Allah sent His Messengers and Books to fore-warn mankind and jinn, prior to the execution of His Judgements. If, inspite of this, the people choose wrong ways and are punished for this, they themselves are to belamed and not Allah.

101. "Your Lord is All-Sufficient": "He does not stand in need of any kind of help from you, nor does He need anyone to look after His interests. Therefore, you can do him no harm by your disobedience, nor can you do Him any good by your obedience. Even if all of you rebel against Him, you cannot detract an iota from His Kingdom; nor can you add an iota to it, if all of you decide to obey and worship Him. He needs neither your obedience nor your offering. As a matter of fact, he is showering His countless blessings on you without desiring anything in return from you."

In the context in which the sentence, "He is All-Compassionate", occurs, it implies two things. First, "It is only out of compassion for you that Allah is showing you the Right Way and not for His own interest. It will not serve any interest of His if you follow the Right Way and keep away from the wrong ways: nor will it do Him any harm if you swerve from it. As a matter of fact, you will be serving your own interest and avoiding harm to yourselves by following it. Therefore, it is His kindness that He teaches you the right conduct to enable you to attain higher ranks and restrains you from wrong behaviour that will throw you to the lowest depths of degeneration." Second, "Your Lord is not ruthless: He does

not enjoy punishing you for trifling offences and errors. As a matter of fact, He is very kind and sympathetic to all His creatures and rules over them with great compassion. That is why He forgives and forbears your shortcomings over and over again and shows compassion and leniency to you even though you become guilty of disobedience, sins and crimes. You impudently discard His Commandments, knowing well that He is your Providence; yet He forgives and forbears and gives you respite after respite, so that you may understand the Reality and mend your ways. Had He been ruthless He could have destroyed you instantly and raised up another people to replace you, or destroyed the whole human race and created another species."

102. That is, "Resurrection," when all human beings, from the first to the last, shall be brought back to life and presented before their Lord for final judgement.

103. That is, "If you do not take the warning from Me and do not give up your wrong ways, then you may go on following the ways of your choice, and let me follow my way. Ultimately, both you and I will see the consequences."

104. The preceding discourse (v. 135) ended with these words: "If these people are not willing to accept your Admonition and insist on their ignorance, tell them to act in their own way and that you will act according to your own way. The Day of Judgement will surely come one day when they will know the consequences of their conduct. Anyhow, this is certain that the workers of iniquity will not be successful there." Now from here (vv. 136-146), instances of their ignorance are being cited to tell them what their "iniquity" was in which they persisted and from which they could not expect any success.

105. They assigned a portion of the agricultural produce to Allah as a mark of their gratitude because they believed that all land belonged to Allah Who caused the crops to grow; likewise they set apart for Allah a portion of the animals which were of great use to them because He was their Creator as well. But at the same time, they also assigned a portion as offerings to the patron gods of their family or clan, for they believed that Allah showed His kindness to them, because their gods, goddesses, angels, jinn, stars and the souls of their dead ancestors interceded with Him in their behalf. They also expected that in this way they would continue their kindness to them. That is why Allah is first of all taking them to task for the iniquity they were committing, so as to say, "It is sheer ingratitude that you are making offerings to others of the things that I have created and given you with My own mercy and grace. How is it, then, that you are making others partners in the offerings of your gratitude to Me? Do you think that I give these things to you because of the intercession of others?" Then, by implication, Allah has rebuked them for dividing the shares between Him and the partners set up by

them with Him in accordance with their own presumptions. This is because they have become their own law-makers and assign to Allah and to others whatever share they deem proper, when, in fact, Allah is the real giver of everything. Therefore, the portion to be assigned to Him in gratitude should be determined by His Law, which should also decide the shares of the other rightful claimants to it. It is thus clear that even that share, which they arbitrarily set apart for Allah and distribute in the poor and indigent, does not merit any worth and there is no reason why it should be accepted by Allah.

106. This implies a fine sarcasm. They have been rebuked for the evil practices to which they resorted in order to reduce even that portion which they themselves ear-marked for Allah, so as to increase the portion set apart for their gods. This showed that they were far more interested in their self-made gods than God. For instance, they would not mind if any fruit or grain out of the share assigned to Allah happened to go to the other side, but would return it, if anything happened to go to the share of Allah from the share of their gods. In case of drought, if they were forced to make use of the consecrated grain, they would use the share ear-marked for Allah but would not touch the share of their gods for fear lest any misfortune should befall them on account of its desecration. If there happened to be a deficiency in the share of their gods, they would make it up from that of Allah's share, but in the reverse case, they would not take even the smallest thing from the share of their gods to make up for the deficiency in Allah's share. Obviously they would invent very plausible excuses for this. For instance, they would say, "God is rich and can afford to forgo any decrease in His share, but the case of gods is different because they are not rich like Allah: therefore they inflict punishment even at the slightest decrease in their share."

The root cause of these superstitious practices was the different uses to which the two consecrated shares were put. Allah's share was given to the beggars, the indigent, the way-farers, the orphans, etc., but the share consecrated to the gods went to the priests directly or indirectly when it was offered to the gods in their temples. That is why their selfish religious leaders had been, for centuries, impressing on their ignorant followers that there was no harm, if any decrease occurred in the share of Allah, but on no account should there be any decrease in the share of their gods, "the beloved of God." On the contrary, it was rather commendable that their share should continue to swell.

107. Here the word *shurakā* (associates) has been used in a different sense from the one employed in verse 136. There the "associates" meant the deities whose intercession they regarded as a means of attaining to the blessings and made them partners with Allah in offerings. But, on the contrary, in this verse "associates" implies the men and devils, who had made the killing of their own

children lawful and praiseworthy for them. In the preceding verse they were guilty of *shirk* because they associated others with Allah in His worship and devotion. Here they were guilty of *shirk* because they accepted others besides Allah as law-givers and made them judges for deciding the lawful and the unlawful. According to Islam, a person who accepts any law made by another than Allah as authoritative and follows it and considers himself subject to the limits prescribed by it, is guilty of making that being partner with Allah. Both these are acts of *shirk*: one is guilty of *shirk* whether or not one gives the title of lord or god to those to whom one consecrates offerings or accepts and obeys the laws made by them.

As regards the killing of their children, the Arabs committed this sin with three objects in view and the Qur'ān has condemned all the three:

(1) They killed their daughters in order to avoid the disgrace of having a son-in-law, or lest they should fall into the hands of the enemy during the clannish wars, or they should become a cause of disgrace for them in any other way.

(2) They killed their children for economic reasons. They feared lest the burden of their nourishment should become unbearable for them.

(3) They sacrificed their children at the altar of their gods to please them.

108. The word "ruin" here is very meaningful. On the one hand, it implies moral ruin, for the man who becomes so hard-hearted and cruel as starts killing his own children, loses not only the tender qualities of humanity but also those of animality; on the other, it also implies destruction of the human race and one's own nation, for the inevitable result of the killing of children is reduction of the population of one's own nation and consequently of the world as a whole. Obviously, the nation which prevents the birth of its future supporters and builders of its civilization and heirs of its heritage, or kills them as soon as they are born, most surely falls into the abyss of destruction. Above all, this inhuman cruelty to innocent children destroys all the chances of success in the life-after-death because such a one who kills his own humanity, nay, even his own animal instinct of love for offspring, and shows such enmity with the human race and with one's own nation, most surely incurs the most painful torture from Allah.

109. Their religious leaders, their chiefs and the elders of the clans and others who exercised any influence on them and who claimed to be the followers of the Prophets Abraham and Ishmael, had been adding different creeds, rites and practices to the pure religion taught by the Prophets and causing confusion in the minds of the people about it. Yet the common Arabs of the pre-Islamic period

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وَمَا كَانُوْا مُهْتَدِيْنَ ﴿١٤٠﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِيْٓ اَنْشَاَ جَنّٰتٍ مَّعْرُوْشٰتٍ وَّغَيْرَ
مَعْرُوْشٰتٍ وَّالنَّخْلَ وَالزَّرْعَ مُخْتَلِفًا اُكُلُهٗ وَالزَّيْتُوْنَ وَالرُّمَّانَ
مُتَشَابِهًا وَّغَيْرَ مُتَشَابِهٍ ؕ كُلُوْا مِنْ ثَمَرِهٖٓ اِذَآ اَثْمَرَ وَاٰتُوْا حَقَّهٗ
يَوْمَ حَصَادِهٖ ۖ وَلَا تُسْرِفُوْا ؕ اِنَّهٗ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِيْنَ ﴿١٤١﴾ وَمِنَ الْاَنْعَامِ
حَمُوْلَةً وَّفَرْشًا ؕ كُلُوْا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللّٰهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوْا خُطُوٰتِ الشَّيْطٰنِ ؕ
اِنَّهٗ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿١٤٢﴾ ثَمٰنِيَةَ اَزْوَاجٍ ۚ مِنَ الضَّاْنِ اثْنَيْنِ وَمِنَ
الْمَعْزِ اثْنَيْنِ ؕ قُلْ ءٰٓالذَّكَرَيْنِ حَرَّمَ اَمِ الْاُنْثَيَيْنِ اَمَّا اشْتَمَلَتْ عَلَيْهِ
اَرْحَامُ الْاُنْثَيَيْنِ ؕ نَبِّئُوْنِيْ بِعِلْمٍ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿١٤٣﴾ وَمِنَ الْاِبِلِ
اثْنَيْنِ وَمِنَ الْبَقَرِ اثْنَيْنِ ؕ قُلْ ءٰٓالذَّكَرَيْنِ حَرَّمَ اَمِ الْاُنْثَيَيْنِ اَمَّا
اشْتَمَلَتْ عَلَيْهِ اَرْحَامُ الْاُنْثَيَيْنِ ؕ اَمْ كُنْتُمْ شُهَدَآءَ اِذْ وَصّٰىكُمُ اللّٰهُ
بِهٰذَا ۚ فَمَنْ اَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرٰى عَلَى اللّٰهِ كَذِبًا لِّيُضِلَّ النَّاسَ بِغَيْرِ
عِلْمٍ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿١٤٤﴾ قُلْ لَّآ اَجِدُ فِيْ مَآ اُوْحِيَ اِلَيَّ
مُحَرَّمًا عَلٰى طَاعِمٍ يَّطْعَمُهٗٓ اِلَّآ اَنْ يَّكُوْنَ مَيْتَةً اَوْ دَمًا مَّسْفُوْحًا
اَوْ لَحْمَ خِنْزِيْرٍ فَاِنَّهٗ رِجْسٌ اَوْ فِسْقًا اُهِلَّ لِغَيْرِ اللّٰهِ بِهٖ ۚ فَمَنِ اضْطُرَّ
غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَّلَا عَادٍ فَاِنَّ رَبَّكَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿١٤٥﴾ وَعَلَى الَّذِيْنَ هَادُوْا
حَرَّمْنَا كُلَّ ذِيْ ظُفُرٍ ۚ وَمِنَ الْبَقَرِ وَالْغَنَمِ حَرَّمْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ شُحُوْمَهُمَآ
اِلَّا مَا حَمَلَتْ ظُهُوْرُهُمَآ اَوِ الْحَوَايَآ اَوْ مَا اخْتَلَطَ بِعَظْمٍ ؕ ذٰلِكَ جَزَيْنٰهُمْ
بِبَغْيِهِمْ ۖ وَاِنَّا لَصٰدِقُوْنَ ﴿١٤٦﴾ فَاِنْ كَذَّبُوْكَ فَقُلْ رَّبُّكُمْ ذُوْ رَحْمَةٍ وَّاسِعَةٍ
وَلَا يُرَدُّ بَاْسُهٗ عَنِ الْقَوْمِ الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿١٤٧﴾ سَيَقُوْلُ الَّذِيْنَ اَشْرَكُوْا لَوْ

Most surely they became losers, who, in their folly and ignorance killed their own children, and made unlawful what Allah had provided them as sustenance falsely ascribing prohibitions to Allah. Surely they went astray and were not at all rightly guided.[115] 140

It is Allah, Who has produced gardens of upright trees and vineyards[116] and date-palm trees; Who has made the crops to grow, which yield different kinds of edibles; Who has produced olive and pomegranate trees, whose fruits are similar in shape yet differing in taste. Eat of their fruits, when they bear fruit, and give away Allah's due at the harvest time, but do not transgress the limits, for Allah does not like the transgressors. And it is He Who has created from among the cattle, beasts of burden and beasts for riding, and also those whose flesh you eat and whose skins you use for making beds;[117] therefore eat of those provisions that Allah has given you and do not follow in the footsteps of Satan for he is your open enemy.[118] Here are eight kinds of cattle — males and females. Take first a pair of the sheep family and a pair of the goat family, and O Muhammad, ask them, "Has He of these forbidden you (to partake of) the males or the females or the young ones that are in the wombs of the sheep and the goats? Tell me with knowledge, if you are men of truth."[119] Likewise, take a pair of the camel family and a pair of the cow family, and ask them, "Has He of these forbidden the males or the females or the young ones that are in the wombs of the she-camel and the cow?"[120] Were you present at the time when Allah prescribed these prohibitory laws? (If not), who can then be more wicked than the one, who invents a falsehood and ascribes it to Allah so that he should, without knowledge, mislead the people? Indeed, Allah does not show guidance to such transgresors. 141-144

O Muhammad, say to them, "I do not find in what has been revealed to me anything forbidden to an eater to eat except that it be carrion or the blood that has been shed or the flesh of swine, for it is unclean, or flesh of an animal that has become profane because of having been slaughtered in any other name than that of Allah.[121] But if one is forced in a case of certain helplessness (to eat any of these) without any intention of disobedience, and without transgressing the limit of absolute necessity, (he will find that) your Lord is Forgiving and Merciful." And We prohibited to those people, who had adopted 145-147

Judaism, all animals with claws and the fat of oxen and goats except what is on their backs or their entrails or what sticks to their bones; this was the punishment We had inflicted on them for their rebellion.[122] And We are telling the truth. Now if they belie you, say to them, "Your Lord has limitless mercy: but His punishment cannot be warded off from the criminals."[123]

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believed that they were following the religion of their Prophets, which was the chosen religion of Allah, though it had been utterly polluted. This was because no record of the real religion of the Prophets had been preserved in their traditions or history or in any other book and none could sift it from the additions and changes that had been made in it afterwards.

110. That is, "O Messenger, you need not worry about them, if, in spite of your admonitions, they insist on following the false ways they have invented. All this has come to pass because it is the will of God that they should be allowed to follow the way of their choice; otherwise they would not have been able to do what they are doing."

111. Here another self-made religious regulation of the *mushrik* Arabs has been refuted. They used to make vows to reserve certain cattle or the products of certain fields for some particular temple or saint or deity and had made set rules for their use. Accordingly, the right of the use of different kinds of offerings was reserved for a particular kind of people. Allah has declared these to be acts of *shirk* and warned them against these self-made laws, as if to say, "We will punish you for making vows concerning offerings to others from provisions provided by Us, because We have neither commanded you to make such vows nor prescribed restrictions for their use. All these things have been invented by the rebellious and arrogant people who shall be dealt with severely."

112. We learn from traditions that in certain forms of vows and offerings, it was not considered right to pronounce the name of Allah over cattle. It was also forbidden to ride on them during the Hajj journey, because one has to pronounce: *Labbaik, Allahumma labbaik:* "I am present, O my Allah, I am present," during it. Likewise, they insisted that Allah's name should not be mentioned while milching them or riding them or slaughtering them or eating them.

113. That is, "These regulations were not prescribed by Allah, but they were following these with the conviction that they had been prescribed by Allah, though they had no authority from Allah for this thing. The only authority, they had, was that it had been the practice of their forefathers."

114. According to another article of the self-made law of the Arabs about the cattle, consecrated by vows and offerings, the males alone were allowed to eat of the flesh of the young ones born from their wombs and the females were forbidden to eat of it. However, if the young one was born dead or it died immediately after its birth, both the males and the females could partake of it.

115. That is, "Although those people, who invented these rituals and customs, were your forefathers, your religious leaders and your chiefs, yet the fact is that they were wrong and had gone astray. Also it is a fact that those ways were wrong and they cannot become right and sacred simply because these were invented by your forefathers and your religious leaders, who permitted the inhuman slaughter of one's own children, who made unlawful, without rhyme or reason, the pure provisions given by Allah and who introduced innovations in religion and ascribed them to Allah. They cannot be regarded as rightly guided by any stretch of imagination even though they be your forefathers and leaders; they were certainly misguided and shall bear the consequences of their evil ways."

116. The original Arabic words *Jannat-im-ma'rushat-in* literally mean gardens of creepers, trellised, and has been translated into vineyards; *wa ghaira ma'rishat-in* literally mean gardens of plants that are un-trellised and has been translated into gardens of up-right trees.

117. The original Arabic word *farsh* refers to animals (like sheep etc.,) in the sense that they are of small size and almost touch the ground while they are moving about, or in the sense that they are laid on the ground at the time of slaughter, or in the sense that beds are made of their skins and hair.

118. From the context in which this verse (142) occurs, it is obvious that Allah wills to impress three things: (1) "The gardens, the fields and the animals you possess, have all been bestowed by Allah, and none else has any share in this favour and, therefore, none else is entitled to any gratitude for this." (2) "As none else has any share in this favour, these should be used in accordance with the Law of Allah, and none else has any right to prescribe limits for their use; therefore the one who observes the rituals prescribed by any one other than Allah, transgresses the limits prescribed by Allah and follows the ways of Satan." (3) "All these things have been created by Allah for food and other uses for mankind and none has any right to make these unlawful without "knowledge." Therefore Allah does not approve of the restrictions that have been imposed on these things, as a result of superstitions and presumptions."

119. That is, "Your answer should be based on knowledge and not on mere presumptions, superstitions or the traditions of your forefathers."

120. The question whether some animals of the same family are lawful and others unlawful, has been posed with such a detail so that the absurdity of their superstitions may become obvious even to them. It is absurd on the face of it that the male of the same family should be lawful and the female unlawful, or conversely, the female should be lawful and the male unlawful, or the animal should be lawful, but the young one of the same be unlawful. This is such a nonsensical thing that no right thinking person, nay, no man in his senses, can imagine that Allah could ever impose such unreasonable restrictions. It should be noted that the method applied by the Qur'ān to show the absurdity of the superstitious practices of the Arabs can also be applied with equal force to expose the folly of the superstitious practices of the other nations of the world, which have imposed unreasnable restrictions on food and adopted inhuman indiscriminations against other human beings.

121. This subject has already been dealt with in v. 173, Al-Baqarah, and in v. 3, Al-Ma'idah, and will be further discussed in v. 115, An-Nahl below.

There appears to be a little difference in the wording of this verse and that of v. 173, Al-Baqarah. In the latter verse it is simply 'blood' that is forbidden, but in this verse it is the 'blood' that has been shed, when an animal is wounded or slaughtered. The addition of the word *masfūh* (that has been shed) merely explains the nature of the 'blood' and does not make any difference in the "Commandment" itself. Likewise in v. 3 of Al-Mā'idah, some other things besides these four have also been mentioned—the animals that have been strangled or beaten to death, or killed by a fall, or mangled by a beast of prey. This, too, does not make any difference in the "Commandment" in the two verses, because this is an explanation which shows that the animals which are killed in that way should also be considered as "carrion."

Now let us consider the various opinions of the Jurists. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās and Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah were of the opinion that, out of the animal food, only these four were unlawful and all others were lawful. But there are several Traditions to the effect that the Holy Prophet prohibited other animals besides these four or held them in detestation, e.g., domestic donkeys and fanged beasts of prey and birds with claws. Therefore most jurists do not consider the prohibition to be confined to these four things only, but extend it to others; then there is also a difference of opinion among the jurists about the prohibition or otherwise of certain animals. For instance, Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Imām Mālik and Imām Shāfi'ī declare the domestic donkey to be unlawful, but there are others who assert that the domestic donkey, is not unlawful and say that it was prohibited by the Holy Prophet on one occasion only for some special reason. The Ḥanafis consider the carnivorous beasts and birds of prey and the animals that live on dead flesh to be

absolutely unlawful, but according to Imām Mālik and Auzā'ī, the birds of prey are lawful and Laith considers the cat to be lawful. According to Imām Shafi`i, only those carnivorous beasts are unlawful that (like the lion, wolf, tiger) attack man. According to `Ikrimah, the crow and the badger are both lawful. Then according to the Hanafīs, all crawling creatures are unlawful, whereas Ibn Abi-Laila, Imām Mālik and Auzā`i consider the snake to be lawful.

A careful and critical study of the above makes it quite clear that, in reality, only these four things mentioned in the Qur'ān are unlawful and that there are certain other animal foods that are detestable in various degrees. Therefore those things, which according to authentic Traditions were held in detestation by the Holy Prophet, are almost unlawful, but those things about which there is a difference of opinion among the jurists, their detestation is doubtful. As far as personal detestation of certain things by some people is concerned, the Islamic Law does not compel anyone to eat what one dislikes. The same applies to the detestation of certain things by some groups or nations. Conversely, the Law does not allow any person or community or nation to force others to consider as unlawful anything that they detest, or to prohibit its use to those who consider them unlawful.

122. That certain things were made unlawful for them as punishment for their rebellion has been mentioned in the Qur'ān at three places:

(1) "All the articles of food, which are lawful in the Muhammadan Law, were also lawful for the children of Israel, except those which Israel had forbidden for himself before the Torah was sent down. Say to them, `Bring the Torah and read out any passage from it (in support of your objection), if you are in the right." (*Al-'Imrān*. 111):

(2) "It is because of the criminal attitude of those who became Jews..... that We had made unlawful many pure things which were formerly lawful for them". (An-Nisā' IV:160)

(3) Here in this Sūrah, in verse 146.

From the above three verses, we conclude that the difference between the Muhammadan and the Jewish Laws in regard to the legality or otherwise of animal food is based on two things. First, centuries before the revelation of the Torah, the Prophet Jacob (Israil) had given up the use of several things, and after him, his offspring also did the same. This went on for such a long time that the jurists of the Jewish Law began to believe that those things were unlawful in their religion. Accordingly, they inserted in the Torah the prohibition of those things, the three of which were the camel, the hare and the coney. That is why the Torah, as contained

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شَآءَ اللّٰهُ مَآ اَشْرَكْنَا وَلَآ اٰبَآؤُنَا وَلَا حَرَّمْنَا مِنْ شَیْءٍ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ كَذَّبَ
الَّذِیْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ حَتّٰى ذَاقُوْا بَاْسَنَا ؕ قُلْ هَلْ عِنْدَكُمْ مِّنْ عِلْمٍ
فَتُخْرِجُوْهُ لَنَا ؕ اِنْ تَتَّبِعُوْنَ اِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَاِنْ اَنْتُمْ اِلَّا تَخْرُصُوْنَ ﴿148﴾ قُلْ
فَلِلّٰهِ الْحُجَّةُ الْبَالِغَةُ ۚ فَلَوْ شَآءَ لَهَدٰىكُمْ اَجْمَعِیْنَ ﴿149﴾ قُلْ هَلُمَّ
شُهَدَآءَكُمُ الَّذِیْنَ یَشْهَدُوْنَ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ حَرَّمَ هٰذَا ۚ فَاِنْ شَهِدُوْا فَلَا
تَشْهَدْ مَعَهُمْ ۚ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ اَهْوَآءَ الَّذِیْنَ كَذَّبُوْا بِاٰیٰتِنَا وَالَّذِیْنَ لَا
یُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْاٰخِرَةِ وَهُمْ بِرَبِّهِمْ یَعْدِلُوْنَ ﴿150﴾ قُلْ تَعَالَوْا اَتْلُ مَا حَرَّمَ
رَبُّكُمْ عَلَیْكُمْ اَلَّا تُشْرِكُوْا بِهٖ شَیْـًٔا وَّبِالْوَالِدَیْنِ اِحْسَانًا ۚ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوْٓا
اَوْلَادَكُمْ مِّنْ اِمْلَاقٍ ؕ نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُكُمْ وَاِیَّاهُمْ ۚ وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الْفَوَاحِشَ
مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ ۚ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِیْ حَرَّمَ اللّٰهُ اِلَّا
بِالْحَقِّ ؕ ذٰلِكُمْ وَصّٰىكُمْ بِهٖ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿151﴾ وَلَا تَقْرَبُوْا مَالَ الْیَتِیْمِ
اِلَّا بِالَّتِیْ هِیَ اَحْسَنُ حَتّٰى یَبْلُغَ اَشُدَّهٗ ۚ وَاَوْفُوا الْكَیْلَ وَالْمِیْزَانَ
بِالْقِسْطِ ۚ لَا نُكَلِّفُ نَفْسًا اِلَّا وُسْعَهَا ۚ وَاِذَا قُلْتُمْ فَاعْدِلُوْا وَلَوْ كَانَ
ذَا قُرْبٰى ۚ وَبِعَهْدِ اللّٰهِ اَوْفُوْا ؕ ذٰلِكُمْ وَصّٰىكُمْ بِهٖ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿152﴾
وَاَنَّ هٰذَا صِرَاطِیْ مُسْتَقِیْمًا فَاتَّبِعُوْهُ ۚ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا السُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ
عَنْ سَبِیْلِهٖ ؕ ذٰلِكُمْ وَصّٰىكُمْ بِهٖ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿153﴾ ثُمَّ اٰتَیْنَا مُوْسَى الْكِتٰبَ
تَمَامًا عَلَى الَّذِیْٓ اَحْسَنَ وَتَفْصِیْلًا لِّكُلِّ شَیْءٍ وَّهُدًى وَّرَحْمَةً
لَّعَلَّهُمْ بِلِقَآءِ رَبِّهِمْ یُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿154﴾ وَهٰذَا كِتٰبٌ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ مُبٰرَكٌ فَاتَّبِعُوْهُ
وَاتَّقُوْا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُوْنَ ﴿155﴾ اَنْ تَقُوْلُوْٓا اِنَّمَآ اُنْزِلَ الْكِتٰبُ عَلٰى طَآئِفَتَیْنِ

(In reply to these things of yours) the *mushrikīn* will surely say. 148-149
"Had Allah willed, neither we nor our forefathers would have committed *shirk*, nor would have we made anything unlawful."[124] Likewise the people before them had treated the truth as falsehood by such (absurd) excuses until they tasted Our scourge. Say to them, "Have you any knowledge that you can produce before Us in support thereof? You are following nothing but conjecture and making false presumptions." Then say, ("In contrast to your lame excuse,) Allah's argument is conclusive; had Allah so willed, He would surely have shown guidance to all of you."[125]

Say to them, "Produce your witness who can testify that Allah 150
has forbidden all this." But, even if they testify, you should not bear witness with them.[126] And you should never follow the desires of those, who have treated Our Revelations as false and who do not believe in the Hereafter and who set up others as equals with their Lord.

O Muhammad, say to them, "Come, I will recite what limits 151-153
your Lord has set for you."[127] (He has enjoined:) (1) That you should not set up anything as a partner with Him,[128] (2) and you should treat your parents kindly,[129] (3) and you should not kill your children for fear of poverty, for We provide sustenance for you and will provide sustenance for them also, (4) and you should not go near indecent things[130] whether they be open or hidden, (5) and you should not kill any living being whom Allah has forbidden to kill except by right.[131] These are the things which He has enjoined on you: it may be that you use your common sense. And He has enjoined:(6) that you should not go near the property of an orphan except in the best way,[132] until he reaches his maturity.(7) and you should use a full measure and a just balance. We charge one only with that much responsibility that one can bear,[133] (8) and whatever you say should be just, even if it is concerning your own relatives,(9) and you should fulfil your covenant with Allah.[134] Allah has enjoined these things on you so that you may follow the admonition.(10) And Allah also enjoins: "This way alone is My Right Way; therefore you should follow this Way and should not follow other ways lest they should lead you astray from His Way.[135] This is what Allah has enjoined on you so that you may avoid crooked ways."

154-155 Then,[135a] We had given to Moses the Book to complete the blessing for those who adopted the righteous attitude; it contained details about all important things, and was a perfect guidance and mercy. (And it had been given to the children of Israel so that) the people might believe in the (ultimate) meeting with their Lord.[136] And likewise have We sent down this Book, which is a perfect blessing; so follow this and adopt the God fearing attitude so that mercy may be shown to you.

Contd. from p. 571]

in the existing Bible prohibits their eating. (Levit. 11: 4-6 and Deut. 14:7). But, the open challenge of the Qur'ān to them to bring the Torah in proof thereof shows that the commandments referred to above did not exist in the Torah at that time and were inserted afterwards; otherwise the Jews would have at once accepted the challenge of the Qur'ān and presented the commandments thereof.

The second difference between the two laws was caused by the rebellious attitude of the Jews against the Divine Law. They became their own law-makers and made many things unlawful by their hair-splitting and Allah let them remain involved in that misunderstanding as a punishment. These things comprise two categories : (1) Animals with claws such as the ostrich, the cuckoo, the swan, etc., and (2) the fat of the cow and the goat, etc. Afterwards both kinds of "prohibitions" were incorporated in the existing Torah. (Levit. 11 : 16-18, Deut. 14 : 14-17, Levit. 3 : 17, 7 : 22-23). But it is obvious from An - Nisā, IV : 160 that at first these things were not unlawful in the Torah, but were made so after the Prophet Jesus Christ. History also bears evidence that the existing Jewish Law was formulated by Rabbi Judas at the end of the second century of the Christian Era.

Now let us consider the objection that might arise regarding the above explanation. If these things were made unlawful in the manner explained above, why has, then, Allah used the word *harramna* ("We prohibited") here in verse 130 and in verse 160 of An-Nisā? In considering the objection, we should keep in mind the two ways in which things are made unlawful by Allah. (1) He prohibits a thing through a Messenger and a Book, and this is the blessing from Him. (2) He sets false religious law-givers and counterfeit law-makers over His rebellious servants and they declare pure things as unlawful. As such a 'prohibition' is the curse of God and a punishment from Him, it has been attributed to Him.

123. That is, "Your Lord has limitless Mercy and if even now you repent of your disobedience and adopt the right way of obedience, He will forgive you. But if you persist in your criminal and rebellious attitude, you should note it well that none will be able to ward off His wrath and punishment from you."

124. That is "The *mushrikīn* will put forward the same old excuses to justify their crime and wrong conduct which have always been put forward by the criminals and wrong-doers of every age: they will say, 'It is the will of Allah that we should commit *shirk* and make some lawful things unlawful; for, if Allah had not so willed, it would not have been possible for us to commit such acts. As we are doing these things in accordance with the will of Allah, we are doing the right thing. And if what we are doing is not right, Allah is to blame for it and not we. We are bound by the will of Allah to do what we are doing because anything other than this is beyond our power."

125. In order to understand the significance of this decisive answer to their lame excuse, let us analyse it: (1) It warns: "The 'will of God' has always been made an excuse by the criminals of all ages to justify their wicked acts and erroneous conduct. This misled them so much that they rejected the Truth and consequently met with ruin that overtakes those who fight against the Truth." (2) "The excuse which you are putting forward is not based on knowledge but on conjecture and guess-work. The whole of your argument is based on hearsay about the will of Allah. You do not understand the meaning of 'the will of Allah' in regard to man. Therefore you wrongly believe that if a thief commits theft he is not to be regarded as a thief, because he had done this under 'the will of Allah.' — Its real meaning is that Allah will open for a man whatever way he would choose for himself — the way of gratitude or ingratitude, guidance or deviation, obedience or disobedience. Then Allah will let the man do anything, good or bad, he chooses, and will provide for its fulfilment the means that fit in His vast universal designs. Therefore if you and your forefathers were allowed to commit *shirk* and declare lawful things unlawful under the will of Allah, they had to bear its consequences, for it does not mean that Allah approved of these things. Likewise you shall be responsible and accountable for your wrong choice and for your evil intentions and wicked deeds."

The last sentence, "..... had Allah so willed, He would have shown guidance to all of you," settles the issue decisively. It implies: "Your argument, 'had Allah willed, we would not have committed *shirk*,' is incomplete. The complete thing will be this: 'Had Allah willed, He would have shown guidance to all of us." In other words, "You yourselves do not intend to choose the right way, but you desire that Allah should make you inherently righteous like angels. You should, however, note it well, that Allah could have done so if He had so willed. But this is not His will. Therefore He will let you go astray on the wrong way that you yourselves have chosen to follow."

126. That is, "If they understand the grave responsibility of bearing witness and realize that one should bear witness only to that thing of which one has

knowledge, they will never testify that all their self-imposed restrictions on food, that are current among them and according to which such and such a one should not eat such and such a thing, have been prescribed by Allah. But if these people do not realize the responsibility of bearing witness and impudently give false evidence in the name of Allah, you should not associate yourself with their falsehood. As a matter of fact, the real object of challenging them to bear witness is to sort out the righteous people, if any, from among them, and not that you should accept their false testimony. It is expected that in response to the challenge to bear witness, those, who have any righteousness left in them, will consider very seriously whether the rituals they were following were really prescribed by Allah and if they find no proof that these were sent down by Allah, they will give them up."

127. That is, "The limits set by your Lord are not those which you have imposed on yourselves, but they are the following which Allah has set for the regulation of human life and which have always been the fundamental basis of all Divine Laws." (Please compare these precepts with those contained in Exodus chapter 20).

128. One is guilty of *shirk* if: (*a*) one sets up another besides Allah as god, or (*b*) one attributes to another any of those attributes that naturally and exclusively belong to Allah, or (*c*) one sets up a partner with Allah in His powers, or (*d*) in His rights.

According to (*a*), all those creeds which set up partners with Allah in the essence of His Godhead shall be *shirk*, e.g., the creed of Trinity of the Christians, the creed of *mushrik* Arabs to believe in the angels to be daughters of God and to attribute "Godhead" to their gods and goddesses and the members of the royal families.

According to (*b*), all those, who believe that someone other than Allah also possesses one or some or all of the attributes which exclusively belong to Allah, shall be guilty of *shirk*. For instance, it will be *shirk* if one believes that someone knows all about everything including the "unseen" or hears everything or is completely free from each and every defect and weakness, and is infallible like Allah.

According to (*c*), one shall be guilty of *shirk*, if one believes that someone else besides Allah is able to wield any one or all of those powers that exclusively belong to Him. For instance, one shall be committing *shirk*, if one believes that someone else besides Allah can, in a supernatural way, benefit or harm or fulfil needs or help or protect or defend, or hear prayers, or make or mar destinies, or set the limits of lawful or unlawful, proper or improper, or prescribe laws (*shar'a*)

for human life. These shall be *shirk*, for all these things are the exclusive characteristics of Godhead.

It shall be *shirk* under (*d*) if one surrenders to another any or all of those rights to which Allah alone is entitled. For instance, Allah alone has the right that man should stand with bound hands, bow and prostrate before Him, or he should make vows and give offerings in His name alone or make sacrifices as a mark of gratitude in acknowledgement of His greatness; He alone has the right that He should be invoked to ward off troubles etc. Likewise, Allah alone is entitled to all forms of worship, devotion and glory and He alone has the right to be loved more than anyone or anything else and all other affections should be sacrificed for His love. He alone should be feared so that one would not dare displease or disobey Him openly and secretly. He alone has the right to be obeyed unconditionally and unreservedly; and His Guidance alone should be made the sole standard of judging right from wrong and none else should be obeyed except in accordance with the obedience to Allah. If ever one of these rights is surrendered to someone other than Allah, it will be setting that one as a partner with Him, whether that one is given the title of god or not.

129. "Kind treatment" includes respect and honour, obedience and desire to please and serve parents etc., This right of the parents has been stated in the Qur'ān at several places immediately after the rights of Allah. This is a clear proof that this right of the parents is only next to the right of Allah and has priority over all human rights.

130. The Arabic word *fawāhish* applies to all kinds of impure acts, whose obscenity is absolutely obvious. The Qur'ān declares adultery, sodomy, nudism, calumny, marriage with father's wife as "indecencies." Besides these, theft, drinking and beggary have also been included in the list of indecencies in the Traditions. Likewise, all other obscene acts are also indecencies and the Divine Commandment demands that such acts should neither be committed openly nor secretly.

131. This is the declaration of the sanctity of human life by Allah Who has made it inviolable as a basic principle. As regards its destruction "by right", the Qur'ān allows this in three cases and the Holy Prophet added two more to these. The Qur'ān makes it lawful to take the life of the one:

(1) who is proved guilty of the intentional murder of another person.

(2) who opposes Islam and obstructs its establishment so as to leave no other alternative than to fight with him,

[Contd. on p. 580

مِنْ قَبْلِنَا ۪ وَ اِنْ كُنَّا عَنْ دِرَاسَتِهِمْ لَغٰفِلِيْنَ ﴿۱۵۶﴾ اَوْ تَقُوْلُوْا لَوْ اَنَّاۤ اُنْزِلَ
عَلَيْنَا الْكِتٰبُ لَكُنَّاۤ اَهْدٰى مِنْهُمْ ۚ فَقَدْ جَآءَكُمْ بَيِّنَةٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ وَ
هُدًى وَّ رَحْمَةٌ ۚ فَمَنْ اَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ كَذَّبَ بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ وَ صَدَفَ عَنْهَا ؕ
سَنَجْزِي الَّذِيْنَ يَصْدِفُوْنَ عَنْ اٰيٰتِنَا سُوْٓءَ الْعَذَابِ بِمَا كَانُوْا
يَصْدِفُوْنَ ﴿۱۵۷﴾ هَلْ يَنْظُرُوْنَ اِلَّاۤ اَنْ تَاْتِيَهُمُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ اَوْ يَاْتِيَ رَبُّكَ اَوْ
يَاْتِيَ بَعْضُ اٰيٰتِ رَبِّكَ ؕ يَوْمَ يَاْتِيْ بَعْضُ اٰيٰتِ رَبِّكَ لَا يَنْفَعُ نَفْسًا
اِيْمَانُهَا لَمْ تَكُنْ اٰمَنَتْ مِنْ قَبْلُ اَوْ كَسَبَتْ فِيْۤ اِيْمَانِهَا خَيْرًا ؕ قُلِ
انْتَظِرُوْۤا اِنَّا مُنْتَظِرُوْنَ ﴿۱۵۸﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ فَرَّقُوْا دِيْنَهُمْ وَ كَانُوْا شِيَعًا
لَّسْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِيْ شَيْءٍ ؕ اِنَّمَاۤ اَمْرُهُمْ اِلَى اللّٰهِ ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوْا
يَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿۱۵۹﴾ مَنْ جَآءَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهٗ عَشْرُ اَمْثَالِهَا ۚ وَ مَنْ جَآءَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ
فَلَا يُجْزٰۤى اِلَّا مِثْلَهَا وَ هُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُوْنَ ﴿۱۶۰﴾ قُلْ اِنَّنِيْ هَدٰىنِيْ رَبِّيْۤ اِلٰى
صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ۚ دِيْنًا قِيَمًا مِّلَّةَ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ حَنِيْفًا ۚ وَ مَا كَانَ مِنَ
الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ ﴿۱۶۱﴾ قُلْ اِنَّ صَلَاتِيْ وَ نُسُكِيْ وَ مَحْيَايَ وَ مَمَاتِيْ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ
الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿۱۶۲﴾ لَا شَرِيْكَ لَهٗ ۚ وَ بِذٰلِكَ اُمِرْتُ وَ اَنَا اَوَّلُ الْمُسْلِمِيْنَ ﴿۱۶۳﴾
قُلْ اَغَيْرَ اللّٰهِ اَبْغِيْ رَبًّا وَّ هُوَ رَبُّ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ ؕ وَ لَا تَكْسِبُ كُلُّ
نَفْسٍ اِلَّا عَلَيْهَا ۚ وَ لَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِّزْرَ اُخْرٰى ۚ ثُمَّ اِلٰى رَبِّكُمْ مَّرْجِعُكُمْ
فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيْهِ تَخْتَلِفُوْنَ ﴿۱۶۴﴾ وَ هُوَ الَّذِيْ جَعَلَكُمْ خَلٰٓئِفَ
الْاَرْضِ وَ رَفَعَ بَعْضَكُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجٰتٍ لِّيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِيْ مَاۤ اٰتٰىكُمْ ؕ
اِنَّ رَبَّكَ سَرِيْعُ الْعِقَابِ ۖۚ وَ اِنَّهٗ لَغَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿۱۶۵﴾

Now you cannot say, "The Book was sent down to the two communities before us,[137] and we were unaware of what they studied and taught." And now you cannot put forward even this excuse: "If the Book had been sent down to us, we would have proved ourselves more righteous than they." Now that a clear proof and Guidance and Blessing, has come to you from your Lord, who can be more unjust than the one who treats Our Revelations as false and turns away from them?[138] We will inflict the severest torment on those who turn away from Our Signs because of their aversion. Do the people now wait that the angels should come down before them, or that your Lord may Himself come down, or that manifest Signs[139] of your Lord should appear? On the Day when some clear Signs of your Lord will appear, his faith shall not profit the man who did not believe before or who, while professing to believe, did not do good deeds.[140] O Muhammad, say to them, "Well, you may wait if you will: We, too, will wait." 156-158

You have nothing to do with those who have split up their religion and become sects.[141] Their case rests with Allah, and He Himself will let them know what they have done. He, who will bring a good deed before Allah, will receive a tenfold reward for it, and he, who will bring an evil deed, shall receive only that much punishment which he deserves, and no one will be treated unjustly. 159-160

O Muhammad, say, "As for me, my Lord has most certainly guided me on the Straight Way, the ever True Faith, Abraham's Way,[142] which he had adopted exclusively and whole-heartedly and he was not of *mushrikīn*." And declare, "My *Salāt* and my rites of worship[143] and my life and my death, all are for Allah, the Lord of the universe, Who has no partner with Him. This is what I have been enjoined, and I am the first to surrender to Him." Say, "Should I seek another Lord beside Allah when He is the Lord of everything?[144] Every person is himself accountable for what he earns, for no bearer of burden bears the burden of another.[145] Ultimately, you shall all have to return to your Lord: then He will tell you the reality of that about which you differ. It is He, Who has made you the vicegerents on the earth, and raised some of you above others in ranks so that He may test you in what He has given you.[146] Indeed your Lord is swift in inflicting punishment: yet He is also very Forgiving and Merciful." 161-165

Contd. from p. 577]

(3) who spreads disorder within the Islamic territory or exerts to overthrow the established Islamic government.

Besides these, the Holy Prophet has made it lawful to take the life of the one:

(4) who, in spite of being married, is proved guilty of adultery,

(5) who becomes an apostate and deserts the Islamic Community.

These five are the only cases in which it becomes lawful to take human life and there is no other case in which it becomes lawful to take human life and there is no other case besides these in which human life may be taken, be it that of a Muslim, or of a *dhimmi*, or of an unbeliever.

132. "The best way" will be the one which is based on selflessness, good intentions and the welfare of the concerned orphan, and which is not objectionable in the sight of God or man.

133. "You shall use full measure and a just balance," is a fundamental principle of the Divine Law: Allah has added, "We charge one.....one can bear," to assure people that whoever tries his very best to be just and right in measuring, weighing and carrying out other trade transactions, will be absolved from his responsibility and will not be taken to account, if in spite of his best efforts, there happens to be an unintentional error.

134. "Covenant with Allah" is: (i) The solemn agreement which man makes with Allah, (*ii*) the solemn pledge which he makes with another man in the name of Allah, and (*iii*) the natural compact that comes into force as soon as one is born in the human society on Allah's earth.

The first two kinds of covenants are intentional and optional, but the third one is a moral and natural obligation. Though man has no option in the choice of the third compact, yet it is as binding as the first two and should be honoured as much. This is because Allah has given him life with extraordinary physical and mental faculties and furnished the earth for his habitation and provided nourishment, and limitless resources etc., for him. Naturally all this entails some rights of Allah on him. Likewise it entails some rights of the mother who gives birth to and nourishes him and of the father who brings him up and of the society that affords him many kinds of facilities and opportunities. All these rights become, by their very nature, obligatory on him in varying degrees. It is true that this "Covenant" of man with God and society has not been written in any statute book, nevertheless it has been ingrained by Nature in each and every particle of his body, which itself owes its very existence to this Covenant. A reference to this has

been made in Al-Baqarah, II: 27: "....who break Allah's Covenant after ratifying it: who cut asunder what Allah has ordered to be joined and who produce chaos on the earth." It has again been mentioned in Al-A'raf, VII: 172 to this effect: At the time of the creation of Adam, Allah brought forth all his would-be descendants up to the Last Day, from the loins of mankind, and made them stand witnesses to the Covenant that He is their Lord.

135. "..... you should follow this way because this is the Right Way." This "Natural Covenant" demands that man should follow the Way shown by Allah, because any deviation from it into the paths of rebellion or independence or in the worship of another than Allah will be the first violation against that Covenant, and will mislead one into other violations one after the other. Besides, no man can fulfil the obligations of this most delicate, vast and intricate Covenant unless one accepts Divine Guidance and follows it in every aspect of life. "..... you should not follow other ways" because they will turn you away from His Right Way which is the only Way which leads to His nearness, pleasure and approval. Moreover, when the people deviate from His High Way, each man has to make his own choice out of the hundreds of other ways. Thus the people are scattered in all directions and there is bewilderment, confusion and disorder among all mankind and this becomes a hindrance in the way of its real progress and development (Please see also E.N. 35, Al-Mā'idah).

136. "..... to believe in meeting with one's Lord" means that one should believe that one shall have to render an account of one's deeds to one's Lord; therefore one should live a life of responsibility. Here it may imply that the Torah was sent (1) to produce a sense of responsibility among the Israelites themselves and (2) to induce the other people to make a study of its high moral system of life, and to observe the noble effects of its guidance and blessing on those who adopted its teachings so that they may be convinced that a life of responsibility based on the belief in the life of the Hereafter is far better than an irresponsible life based on its rejection and this observation may convince them to believe in the Hereafter.

137. That is, to the Jews and the Christians.

138. Here "*Ayat*" are Allah's Revelations presented in the Holy Qur'ān as well as His Messenger's noble character and the pure lives of the Believers which clearly distinguished them from the unbelievers, and also those wonderful phenomena of Nature which the Qur'ān was putting forward as proofs of the truth of its Message.

139. "Manifest Signs" are the signs of the Day of Resurrection or some imminent scourge or some other Sign that may unveil the Reality in such a way as

to leave no doubt about it and after which no more chance for test and trial might be left.

140. That is, if after seeing these "Manifest Signs" a disbeliever repents of his disbelief and professes faith, such a conversion shall be meaningless; likewise the one who professes to believe but adopts the way of disobedience, shall be deemed to have no faith at all, because Faith and Obedience can have any value only up to the time that the reality remains hidden behind the curtain, and the prospect of a long life is ahead and the world with all its allurements is deluding one into believing that there is no Allah and no Hereafter; therefore, one should "Eat, drink and be merry."

141. Though the address is directed to the Holy Prophet, yet all the followers of the True Religion are, through him, included in it. It means that the righteous people should not follow the ways of those who became sects by causing divisions in the True Religion, which has always been the same and is the same today. Its basic principles are that Allah alone is the Deity and Lord of the whole Universe, that none should be set up as His equal or partner in His attributes, powers or rights, that there shall be the next world, in which all human beings shall have to render the account of what they do in this world, and that they should mould their lives in accordance with those broad fundamental principles that have been taught by Allah through His Messengers and Books. This is the True Religion that had been given to mankind from the very first day of its creation. As regards the different religions and sects that came into existence afterwards, they were the result of the changes that were made in the True Religion by different people at different times. Some of them introduced new things into it, others made changes in it to suit their lusts; still others mixed things in it because of their exaggerated reverence. Then they tampered with its creed by mixing with it their whims, their speculations and their philosophies. They changed it also by adding to its commandments their innovations and their self-made laws and by corrupting its regulations by hair-splitting and exaggerating the differences in its details and by rendering important things unimportant and *vice versa*. They went to two extremes: they adored some Prophets too much and opposed and rejected others. In this way numerous new religions and sects came into existence and divided humanity into fighting groups. Therefore it is essential for a follower of the True Religion to have nothing to do with any of these sects and to keep his own path clear of them.

142. "Abraham's Way": This is another distinctive characteristic of "the ever-True Faith." This has been given preference to "Moses' Way" or "Christ's Way" because the followers of Moses and Christ had applied the misnomers of "Judaism" and "Christianity" to that "Way." Moreover, the term "Abraham's

Way" has been used because both the Jews and the Christians acknowledged Abraham as a true Prophet. They also knew it well that he died long before the births of Judaism and Christianity. The Arab *mushrikīn* also could not deny that his "Way" was the Right Way, for they believed that he was a righteous man and in spite of their ignorance, they had to acknowledge that the founder of the Ka'bah was a pious worshipper of Allah and not an idolater.

143. The Arabic word *nusuk* ("rites of worship") may mean animal sacrifice as well as all other forms of prayer and worship.

144. That is, "When, in fact, Allah is the Lord of everything in the universe, how can any other be my Lord? When I see that the whole of the universe submits to His Law and I, too, being a part of the universe, have to submit to Him in my physical life, how can then it be rational that I should seek another Lord for the guidance of that part of my life for the conduct of which I have been given common sense and option?"

145. It means that everyone is responsible and accountable for his own deeds and this responsibility can, on no account, be shifted from one to the other.

146. In this verse three realities have been stated;

(1) That each and every thing in the universe belongs to Allah and all human beings are His vicegerents on the earth in the sense that He has entrusted many of His things to them and delegated powers to exploit them.

(2) That Allah has ascribed different ranks to His vicegerents in regard to the trusts. He has entrusted some with a large number of His things, while others with a small number and endowed some with a greater capacity for work than others. Likewise there is a difference in the powers He has delegated to them: nay, he has even given powers to some human beings over other human beings.

(3) That this worldly life is merely a test and all the things and powers that have been given as trusts are the means of the test. An accurate record is being kept of how each man is making use of his trust and how far he is exploiting these things in accordance with the terms of the trust and how he is using or abusing his abilities, capabilities, etc. in this regard. The result of his test will determine man's rank in the Next World.



VII

AL-A'ARĀF

الاعراف

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

VII

AL-A'ARĀF

الاعراف

INTRODUCTION

This Sūrah takes its name from vv. 46-47 in which mention of *A'arāf* occurs.

Period of Revelation

A study of its contents clearly shows that the period of its revelation is about the same as that of *Al-An'ām*, i.e., the last year of the Holy Prophet's life at Makkah, but it cannot be asserted with certainty which of these two was sent down earlier. Anyhow the manner of its admonition clearly indicates that it belongs to the same period. As both have the same historical background, the reader should keep in view the preface to *Al-An'ām*.

Topics of Discussion

The principal subject of this Sūrah is "invitation to the Divine Message sent down to Muhammad" (Allah's peace be upon him), which is couched in a warning. This is because the Messenger had spent a long time in admonishing the people of Makkah without any tangible effect on them. Nay, they had turned a deaf ear to his message and become so obdurate and antagonistic that, in accordance with the Divine Design, the Messenger was going to be commanded to leave them and turn to other people. That is why they are being admonished to accept the Message but, at the same time, they are being warned in strong terms of the consequences that followed the wrong attitude of the former people

towards their Messengers. (Now that the Holy Prophet was going to migrate from Makkah) the concluding portion of the address has been directed towards the people of the Book with whom he was going to come into contact. This meant that the time of migration was coming near and the "invitation" was going to be extended to mankind in general and was not to be confined to his own people in particular as before.

During the course of the address to the Jews, the consequences of their hypocritical conduct towards Prophethood have also been pointed out clearly, for they professed to believe in Prophet Moses but in practice opposed his teachings, disobeyed him and worshipped falsehood and consequently were afflicted with ignominy and disgrace.

At the end of the Sūrah, some instructions have been given to the Holy Prophet and his followers for carrying out the work of the propagation of Islam with wisdom. The most important of these is that they should show patience and exercise restraint in answer to the provocations of their opponents. Above all, they have been advised that under stress of the excitement of feeling, they should not take any wrong step that might harm their cause.

SUMMARY

SUBJECT: INVITATION TO THE DIVINE MESSAGE

Topics and their Interconnection

1-10 In this passage, the people have been invited to follow the Message sent down to them through Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) and warned of the consequences of its rejection.

11-25 The story of Adam has been related with a view to warning his descendants against the evil devices of Satan who is ever ready to mislead them as he did in the case of Adam and Eve.

26-53 This passage contains some Divine instructions, and contrasts these with Satan's instructions, and depicts a graphic picture of the results and the consequences of the two.

54-58 As the Message has been sent down by Allah (Who is the Creator of the heavens and the earth and everything in them), it should be followed, for it is like the rain He sends down to give life to the dead earth.

59-171 Events from the lives of some well known Prophets —Noah, Hūd, Sālih, Lot, Shu'aib, Moses (Allah's peace be upon them all)— have been related to show the consequences of the rejection of the Message, and the addressees of Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) have been admonished to accept and follow the Message in order to escape perdition.

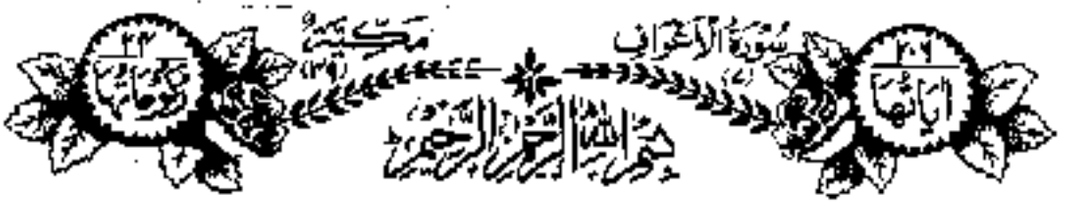
172-174 As the Covenant with the Israelites was mentioned at the end of the preceding passage, the whole mankind has been reminded very appropriately of the Covenant that was made at the time of the appointment of Adam as the Vicegerent of Allah so that all of his descendants should remember it and accept and follow the Message that was delivered by the Holy Prophet.

175-179 The example of the one who had the knowledge of the Message but discarded it, has been cited as a warning to those who were treating the Message as false; they have been exhorted to use their faculties to recognise the Message; otherwise Hell would be

their abode.

In this concluding portion of the Sūrah, some deviations of those who do not use their faculties properly to understand the Message have been dealt with and they have been admonished, reproved and warned of the serious consequences of their antagonistic attitude towards the Message of the Holy Prophet. 180-198

In conclusion, instructions have been given to the Holy Prophet, and through him to his followers, about the attitude they should adopt towards those who reject the Message and deviate from it. 199-206



الٓمّٓصٓ ﴿١﴾ كِتٰبٌ اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْكَ فَلَا يَكُنْ فِيْ صَدْرِكَ حَرَجٌ مِّنْهُ لِتُنْذِرَ بِهٖ
وَ ذِكْرٰى لِلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٢﴾ اِتَّبِعُوْا مَآ اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْكُمْ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوْا مِنْ
دُوْنِهٖٓ اَوْلِيَآءَ ؕ قَلِيْلًا مَّا تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٣﴾ وَكَمْ مِّنْ قَرْيَةٍ اَهْلَكْنٰهَا فَجَآءَهَا بَاْسُنَا
بَيَاتًا اَوْ هُمْ قَآئِلُوْنَ ﴿٤﴾ فَمَا كَانَ دَعْوٰىهُمْ اِذْ جَآءَهُمْ بَاْسُنَآ اِلَّآ اَنْ قَالُوْٓا
اِنَّا كُنَّا ظٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٥﴾ فَلَنَسْـَٔلَنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اُرْسِلَ اِلَيْهِمْ وَلَنَسْـَٔلَنَّ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿٦﴾
فَلَنَقُصَّنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ بِعِلْمٍ وَّمَا كُنَّا غَآئِبِيْنَ ﴿٧﴾ وَالْوَزْنُ يَوْمَئِذِ ِالْحَقُّ ۚ فَمَنْ
ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِيْنُهٗ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿٨﴾ وَمَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِيْنُهٗ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ
الَّذِيْنَ خَسِرُوْٓا اَنْفُسَهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا يَظْلِمُوْنَ ﴿٩﴾ وَلَقَدْ مَكَّنّٰكُمْ فِي الْاَرْضِ
وَجَعَلْنَا لَكُمْ فِيْهَا مَعَايِشَ ؕ قَلِيْلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿١٠﴾ وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنٰكُمْ ثُمَّ
صَوَّرْنٰكُمْ ثُمَّ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اسْجُدُوْا لِاٰدَمَ ۖ فَسَجَدُوْٓا اِلَّآ اِبْلِيْسَ ؕ لَمْ يَكُنْ
مِّنَ السّٰجِدِيْنَ ﴿١١﴾ قَالَ مَا مَنَعَكَ اَلَّا تَسْجُدَ اِذْ اَمَرْتُكَ ؕ قَالَ اَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْهُ ؕ
خَلَقْتَنِيْ مِنْ نَّارٍ وَّخَلَقْتَهٗ مِنْ طِيْنٍ ﴿١٢﴾ قَالَ فَاهْبِطْ مِنْهَا فَمَا يَكُوْنُ لَكَ
اَنْ تَتَكَبَّرَ فِيْهَا فَاخْرُجْ اِنَّكَ مِنَ الصّٰغِرِيْنَ ﴿١٣﴾ قَالَ اَنْظِرْنِيْٓ اِلٰى يَوْمِ
يُبْعَثُوْنَ ﴿١٤﴾ قَالَ اِنَّكَ مِنَ الْمُنْظَرِيْنَ ﴿١٥﴾ قَالَ فَبِمَآ اَغْوَيْتَنِيْ لَاَقْعُدَنَّ لَهُمْ
صِرَاطَكَ الْمُسْتَقِيْمَ ﴿١٦﴾ ثُمَّ لَاٰتِيَنَّهُمْ مِّنْۢ بَيْنِ اَيْدِيْهِمْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ وَ
عَنْ اَيْمَانِهِمْ وَعَنْ شَمَآئِلِهِمْ ؕ وَلَا تَجِدُ اَكْثَرَهُمْ شٰكِرِيْنَ ﴿١٧﴾ قَالَ اخْرُجْ
مِنْهَا مَذْءُوْمًا مَّدْحُوْرًا ؕ لَمَنْ تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ لَاَمْلَـَٔنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنْكُمْ

VII

AL-A'RĀF

Verses: 206 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

Alif. Lām. Mīm. Sād. This is a book which has been sent down to you[1] : so, O Muhammad, let there be no hesitation[2] in your mind about it; this has been sent down that you may thereby warn (the disbelievers) and that it may be an admonition to the Believer.[3] 1-2

O people, follow what has been sent down to you from your Lord and do not follow other patrons beside Him.[4] But you seldom take admonition. 3

There have been many habitations which We destroyed. Our scourge came upon them all of a sudden at night or at a time during the day when they were taking rest. When Our scourge overtook them, the only cry they could utter was "Indeed we were transgressors!" [5] 4-5

Thus (on the day of Judgment) We will most certainly call to account[6] all those to whom We sent Our Messengers, and We will also ask the Messengers (how far they conveyed the Message and how the pepole responded to it[7]). Then We Ourself will recount to them with Knowledge (all their doings); for We were not absent from them. On that Day the weight will be identical with the Truth:[8] accordingly those whose scales will be heavy will alone come out successful. And those whose scales will be light will be the ones who will have incurred loss [9] upon themselves because they had been unjust to Our Revelations. 6-9

We established you on the earth entrusting you with power and providing you with sustenance, but you are seldom grateful. 10

Indeed We planned your creation, then We shaped you, and then We said to the angels, "Bow yourselves before Adam."[10] Accordingly all bowed save *Iblīs* who did not join those who bowed themselves. Allah said, "What prevented you from bowing down, when I commanded you?"He replied, "I am better than he; Thou created me of fire and created him of clay." 11-17

Allah said, "Well, get down from here. You have no right to brag here of your greatness. Get out; indeed you are of those who wish

themselves ignominy."[11]

Satan requested, "Give me respite till the Day when they shall all be raised from the dead."

Allah replied, "You are granted respite."

He said, "Well for that Thou hast led me into deviation, now I will also lie in ambush for mankind on Thy Right Way. I will come upon them from all sides—from the front and from the rear, and from their right and from their left: then Thou wilt not find most of them to be grateful"[12]

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1. Here by 'book' is meant this Sūrah, Al-A'arāff.

2. That is, "Convey this to the people without any fear and hesitation and without minding in the least how the opponents react to it. Let them be offended, let them ridicule, let them talk derisively and let them show more and more enmity, if they like, but you should deliver the Message and propagate it without any fear and hesitation."

Literally, the Arabic word *"harajun"* حَرَج (translated into hesitation) means a thick bush, through which it is hard to pass. Figuratively the Text will mean, "There should be no indecision, doubt or unwillingness in your mind in the face of opposition and obstacles about proceeding further on the way of your Mission". The same thing has been expressed in XV: 97: "O Muhammad, We know that you feel depressed in your heart by what they say (against your Mission)", and in XI: 12 " .... lest you should leave out a part of what is being revealed to you and be depressed in your heart by the fear that they should say, in answer to your invitation, 'Why has no treasure been sent down to him and why has no angel come along with him'?"

3. It means that the main object of this Sūrah is to warn people of the consequences of the rejection of the Message of the Prophet and to rouse the neglectful. Incidentally it also reminds the Believers of the implications of the Message while administering a warning to the disbelievers.

4. This is the main theme of this Sūrah. It invites the people to accept the Guidance that has been sent down by Allah through His Messengers, for this alone can impart the true knowledge to man about himself and the universe, and tell him the aim and object of his life and teach him the principles on which to build his morality, social life, culture and civilization. Man should acknowledge Allah alone as his Guide and follow only His Guidance that has been sent down through His Messengers. The discourse warns that it is basically wrong to turn to anyone other

than Allah for guidance, for this has always resulted in utter ruin, and will inevitably lead to ruin.

Here the word "patrons" has been used for all those beings whom a man follows instead of Allah, whether he praises them as saints or curses them as satans. (For further explanation see E.N. 6 of XLII).

5. That is, "You can learn a lesson from those communities that discarded the Guidance of Allah and followed the guidance of others, and consequently became so degenerate as to be a curse for the earth, which was cleansed of their filth by a scourge of Allah."

The words "Indeed we were transgressors" have been cited here to serve as a warning about two things. First, "It is absolutely useless to be sorry for and to confess one's error after the expiry of the term of respite given for its recompense." It is obvious that the individual and the community show utter lack of sense, if they waste the period of respite in negligence and turn a deaf ear to the warning and admonition of those who invite them to the Truth, and realise the horror of their conduct only when the scourge of Allah overtakes them. Secondly, "You yourselves have seen so many instances of individuals and communities, who were suddenly overtaken by the scourge of Allah, when they transgressed the bounds and reached the end of the term of their respite. You have also seen that after the scourge came upon them, there was no way of escape from it. When this has been the repeated verdict of history, why should a man repeat the same error over and over again, and wait for the ultimate end to offer repentance, when it cannot benefit in the least and can produce only grief and regret?"

6. The repeated occurrence of scourge in v. 3 is a conclusive proof of the fact that people will be called to account in the Hereafter, because in this life full punishment is not possible for the crimes committed by wicked individuals and communities. Here it comes merely to put a stop to their further crimes, just as a criminal at large is arrested and deprived of the opportunity for committing further iniquities. The real punishment will be in the Hereafter. The numerous instances of scourge in human history are a clear proof of the fact that man has not been left free to do what he likes. There is the Sovereign above him Who allows him to transgress only up to a certain limit and before he reaches that limit, administers warnings one after the other so that he may give up his wicked ways. But if he does not pay heed, then he is all of a sudden overpowered by a scourge that puts an end to his nefarious activities. If we consider the matter seriously in the light of these inevitable occurrences, we will come to the conclusion that the Sovereign of the universe has most surely appointed a time for calling to account those criminals and doing full justice to them. As the warning in this verse (6) is based

on the preceding verses (4-5), it begins with "so" to show that this is a sequel to vv. 4-5.

7. This shows that Prophethood will be the sole criterion of judgment in the Hereafter. On the one hand, the Messengers will be asked about what they did in conveying the Message to mankind; on the other, those to whom the Message was sent, shall be questioned regarding their response to it. As regards the individuals or communities to whom the Message did not reach, the Qur'ān is silent as to the criterion by which they will be judged and there is no need for us to probe into this because Allah Himself has not deemed it necessary. But in regard to those indidividuals and communities who have received the Message, the Qur'ān is quite explicit that they shall be unable to put forward any excuse whatsoever for their disbelief and rejection, their evil deeds and disobedience, and they will be wringing their hands when they shall be driven to Hell with ignominy.

8. "On that Day weight will be identical with the Truth". On the Day of Judgment in the just scales of Allah, nothing but Truth will have any weight and vice versa; all that will have weight will be nothing but Truth. The weight of one will increase or decrease in proportion to the Truth one will have with oneself and that one will be judged solely by the measure of that weight and by nothing else. The life of falsehood, irrespective of its longevity and apparent grand deeds, will have absolutely no weight in those scales of justice. When the deeds of the worshippers of falsehood will be weighed in these scales, they will see with their own eyes that the 'grand' deeds of their lives have no weight at all. This thing has also been stated in vv. 103-105 in Sūrah *Al-Kahf*: "Those who spent all their endeavors in wrong ways during their life in the world with the presumption that what they were doing was all right, are the losers. These are the people who disbelieved in the Revelations of their Lord and their meeting with Him. Therefore all their deeds have got lost; so We will cause these to lose weight on the Day of Resurrection."

9. In other words, all human deeds will be divided into two categories, the positive and the negative. To know the Truth, to acknowledge it, to follow it and to exert in its cause, will be on the positive side; for in the Hereafter these alone will have any weight and value. On the contrary, to neglect the truth or to reject it or to follow one's lusts or other human beings or satans or to exert in the way of falsehood, will be on the negative side. The deeds on this side will not only be valueless in themselves but will also decrease the weight of the positive deeds.

From the above it is quite obvious that success in the Hereafter will depend entirely on this that a man's good deeds should outweigh his evil deeds. The case of the one whose evil deeds far outweigh the good deeds, will be like that of a bankrupt who gives away all his possessions to pay off his debts but still has some outstanding liabilities.

10. Please see also vv. 30-36, *Al-Baqarah,* for comparison.

The wording of v. 34, *Al-Baqarah,* might have given rise to the doubt that the command given to the angels to bow before Adam was meant for the person of Adam, but the wording of this verse clears that doubt. Here the words preceding the Command show that the angels were to bow before Adam as representative of the whole of mankind.

As regards the creation of mankind, first of all, Allah made a plan for it; then He got ready the necessary material for this purpose; then He gave it the human shape, and when Adam came into being in the shape of a living man, then the angels were commanded to bow before him, who was the representative of the whole human race.

The above explanation of the verse is based on some other passages of the Qur'ān. For instance, let us examine vv. 71-72 of Sūrah *sād:*

"Just recall the time when your Lord said to the angels, 'I am going to create a man of clay: when I perfect it in every way, and blow into it of My Spirit, all of you should bow down before him'."

Here, too, the same three stages, the creation, the perfection and bringing to life, have been mentioned in a different way. First of all, a man of clay was created, then he was given a shape and proportionate limbs and faculties and then he was brought to life as Adam by the blowing of His Spirit into it.

Let us also examine vv. 28-29 of *Al-Hijr;*

"Just recall the time when your Lord said to the angels, 'I am going to create a man out of clay of moulded mud. When I perfect it in every way and blow into it of My Spirit, then all of you should bow down before him'."

* It is very difficult for us to understand the exact nature of the creation of the first man, for we cannot comprehend fully how man was made from the material of the earth, how he was shaped and perfected and how the Spirit was blown into him. However, it is quite clear that the story of man's creation as stated in the Qur'ān is quite different from Darwinism. According to this doctrine, the evolution of man has taken place from a non-human and semi-human state by a continuous process of elimination, selection and adaptation, and in this there is no line of demarcation to denote the end of the non-human state and the beginning of the species of 'man' as such. On the contrary, the Qur'ān says that man started his life as man; that in the entire history he has absolutely no connection whatsoever with any non-human state, Allah created him as man from the very first day of his life on the earth and endowed him with wisdom and enlightenment from the very start of his life.

[Contd. on p. 14

أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَيَا آدَمُ اسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ فَكُلَا مِنْ حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا
وَلَا تَقْرَبَا هَٰذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونَا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٩﴾ فَوَسْوَسَ لَهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ
لِيُبْدِيَ لَهُمَا مَا وُورِيَ عَنْهُمَا مِنْ سَوْآتِهِمَا وَقَالَ مَا نَهَاكُمَا رَبُّكُمَا عَنْ
هَٰذِهِ الشَّجَرَةِ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَا مَلَكَيْنِ أَوْ تَكُونَا مِنَ الْخَالِدِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَقَاسَمَهُمَا
إِنِّي لَكُمَا لَمِنَ النَّاصِحِينَ ﴿٢١﴾ فَدَلَّاهُمَا بِغُرُورٍ فَلَمَّا ذَاقَا الشَّجَرَةَ بَدَتْ لَهُمَا
سَوْآتُهُمَا وَطَفِقَا يَخْصِفَانِ عَلَيْهِمَا مِنْ وَرَقِ الْجَنَّةِ وَنَادَاهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا
أَلَمْ أَنْهَكُمَا عَنْ تِلْكُمَا الشَّجَرَةِ وَأَقُلْ لَكُمَا إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمَا عَدُوٌّ
مُبِينٌ ﴿٢٢﴾ قَالَا رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنْفُسَنَا وَإِنْ لَمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ
مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾ قَالَ اهْبِطُوا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ وَلَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ
مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمَتَاعٌ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٢٤﴾ قَالَ فِيهَا تَحْيَوْنَ وَفِيهَا تَمُوتُونَ وَمِنْهَا
تُخْرَجُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾ يَا بَنِي آدَمَ قَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ لِبَاسًا يُوَارِي سَوْآتِكُمْ وَرِيشًا
وَلِبَاسُ التَّقْوَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَذَّكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾ يَا بَنِي
آدَمَ لَا يَفْتِنَنَّكُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ كَمَا أَخْرَجَ أَبَوَيْكُمْ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ يَنْزِعُ عَنْهُمَا
لِبَاسَهُمَا لِيُرِيَهُمَا سَوْآتِهِمَا إِنَّهُ يَرَاكُمْ هُوَ وَقَبِيلُهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا تَرَوْنَهُمْ إِنَّا
جَعَلْنَا الشَّيَاطِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَإِذَا فَعَلُوا فَاحِشَةً قَالُوا
وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهَا آبَاءَنَا وَاللَّهُ أَمَرَنَا بِهَا قُلْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَأْمُرُ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ
أَتَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾ قُلْ أَمَرَ رَبِّي بِالْقِسْطِ وَأَقِيمُوا
وُجُوهَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَادْعُوهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ كَمَا بَدَأَكُمْ
تَعُودُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾ فَرِيقًا هَدَىٰ وَفَرِيقًا حَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الضَّلَالَةُ إِنَّهُمُ اتَّخَذُوا

Allah said, "Get out from here -despised and disowned. Note it well that I will fill the Hell with you and with all those who will follow you. As for you, O Adam, you and your wife should dwell in this Paradise; you may eat of anything from anywhere, but do not even go near this tree or you shall become transgressors." 18-19

Then Satan tempted them so that he might reveal to them their shameful parts which had been hidden from each other. He said to them, "Your Lord has forbidden you to go near this tree only lest you should become angels or become immortals." He swore an oath and assured them, "I am your true well-wisher." Thus he beguiled them and gradually moulded them to his design. So, when they tasted (the fruit) of the tree, their shameful parts became visible to each other and they began to cover themselves with the leaves of the Garden. 20-25

Then their Lord called out to them, saying, "Did I not forbid you to go near this tree and warn you that Satan was your open enemy?"

Both of them at once replied, "O Lord, we have wronged ourselves gravely; if You do not forgive us and have mercy upon us, we shall be totally ruined."[13]

Allah commanded, "Go down;[14] you are enemies to each other: the earth shall be a dwelling place for you for a fixed term and there you will get your livelihood". He added, "There you shall live and there you shall die and from there you shall be brought forth at last."

O children of Adam,[15] We have sent down to you clothing in order to cover the shameful parts of your body, and to serve as protection and decoration; and the best garment is the garment of piety. This is one of the signs of Allah; it may be the people learn a lesson from this. O children of Adam, let not Satan seduce you in the same way that he caused your first parents to be driven out of the Garden and stripped them of their garments in order to expose their shameful parts before each other. He and his party see you from where you cannot see them. We have made these satans the guardians of those who do not believe.[16] 26-27

Whenever these people commit a shameful deed, they say, "We found our forefathers doing this, and Allah Himself has enjoined us to 28-30

do this."[17] Say to them, "Allah never enjoins a shameful thing.[18] Do you attribute to Allah's name and say things which you know not to be from Him?" O Muhammad, say to them, "My Lord has enjoined justice and righteousness; (He has also enjoined that) you should keep aright your direction during every act of worship and invoke Him alone, dedicating your faith sincerely and exclusively to Him; you shall be created again just as He has created you now.[19] He has shown the Right Way to some but has justly left others to go astray. This is because, instead of Allah, they have made satans their guardians, and yet think that they are on the Right Way."

Contd. from p. 11]

The above two points of view of the story of man lead to two opposite conceptions in regard to man. The adoption of the Darwinian conception reduces man to one of the species of animals: therefore all the principles of human life (including the moral principles) will be based on the principles governing animal life and any animal-like behaviour of his will be regarded as natural. Then the only difference between human beings and animals will be the ability of the former to make use of instruments for the provision of their necessities and luxuries. On the contrary, the adoption of the Divine conception raises him from the low position of animal to the high position of man, His noblest creation. Then he is no longer a mere talking animal or a social animal but the vicegerent of Allah on this earth. Then what will distinguish him from all other creatures will not be his faculty of speech and his social life, but his moral responsibilities and the trust of the power delegated to him by Allah and his accountability for these to Him. This will change man's entire outlook about his life on this earth and will demand a different philosophy of life and system of morality, law and civilization. Then man will, of his own accord, look upwards in search of the principles of life and not downwards.

Now let us consider an objection to the Divine conception of man howsoever high sounding this may be from the moral and psychological points of view: how can we reject the scientific Darwinian conception merely on this account? In answer to this, we put a counter question: has the Darwinian theory of the 'Origin of Species' been scientifically proved? Only those people who have a cursory knowledge of science may be suffering from this misunderstanding that the theory of evolution has been scientifically proved to be true, but the majority of the scientists know that it is merely a theory in spite of its high-sounding technical terms, and that the arguments in favour of this are not conclusive, but merely hypothetical. The most that can be said in this connection is that both the theories of the creation of the species may be equally possible. Their creation

might have taken place according to the Darwinian theory of evolution, or each of the species might have been brought into existence individually.

11. That is, "It is obvious that you invite your own disgrace because you have formed too high an opinion of yourself, though you are merely a creation and a servant of your Lord. You have arrogantly disobeyed the Command of your Creator, thinking it to be below your dignity. The mere fact that you have shown pride, conceit and haughtiness without any personal claim or title to any excellence of your own, cannot make you great and respectable. It will make you mean, low and disgraceful and you yourself will be responsible for this ignominy."

12. This (vv. 16-17) is the challenge that was given by Satan to Allah. It means, "During the respite Thou hast granted me till the Day of Resurrection, I will exert my utmost to show that man does not deserve the superiority Thou hast bestowed upon him over me. I will show how ungrateful, thankless and disloyal he is!"

The respite that was asked by Satan and granted by Allah was not merely for time but also for opportunity to do what he intended (to do). What he meant was that he should be given the opportunity for exploiting man's weaknesses to prove that he was unfit for the vicegereney. Allah granted his request and this has been elaborated in XVII: 61-65. According to this Allah granted leave to Satan to do whatever he liked to mislead Adam and his offspring from the Right Way. He was allowed to practise whatever devices he thought to misguide man. In short, all the ways would remain open for him to mislead men with this proviso: "Indeed you shall have no power over My servants." (XVII: 65). This means, "You will be allowed to make attempts to involve them in misunderstandings and allure them by false hopes, and by making evil look fair to them, and to invite them to evil ways by the allurements of lusts and vain hopes. But you shall have neither any power to force them to your ways nor to prevent them from following the Right Way, if they intend to follow it." The same thing has also been stated in XIV: 22: "When on (the Day of) Resurrection, Allah will pass His judgment on His followers, Satan will say to them, 'I had no power to force you to follow me. The only thing I did was to invite you to my way; therefore do not blame me now, but blame yourselves ....'."

Now let us consider the charge of Satan against Allah: "Thou hast involved me in deviation." What he meant was this: "You are responsible for my deviation for You commanded me to bow down before Adam, who is inferior to me in position. As this has injured my self-respect, I have disobeyed You." It is obvious that Satan desired that Allah ought not to have exposed the feelings of pride and rebellion he was nurturing in his heart but ought to have let him go

unchecked on the way he was going. As his charge was absurd, Allah did not take any notice of it.

13. In this story the Qur'ān has brought to light the following important facts:

(1) The feelings of shyness and modesty are natural and instinctive. Their first expression is the natural shyness one feels in exposing one's shameful parts before anyone else. The Qur'ān tells us that this shyness has not been artificially created in man by the evolution of civilization nor has it been acquired by him as has been asserted by some disciples of Satan. This is an instinct that has been inherent in man from the first day of his creation.

(2) The sex instinct is the greatest weakness of the human race. That is why Satan selected this weak spot for his attack on the adversary and devised the scheme to strike at their modesty. Therefore, the first step he took in this direction was to expose their nakedness to them so as to open the door of indecency before them and beguile them into sexuality. Even to this day, Satan and his disciples are adopting the same scheme of depriving the woman of the feelings of modesty and shyness, and they cannot think of any scheme of 'progress' unless they expose and exhibit the woman to all and sundry.

(3) It is human nature not to accept easily an open invitation to wickedness. That is why every Satan has to pose as a sincere well-wisher of man in order to entangle him in his snare.

(4) Man has a great natural yearning for a higher position than the existing one, or for obtaining immortality. That is why Satan succeeded in beguiling them by offering to make them angels or immortals. Even now he first tempts man by the allurements of a higher position and a better condition, and then leads him to follow the way that throws him into the abyss of degeneration.

(5) The Qur'ān refutes the commonly known version that Satan first beguiled Eve and then used her to mislead Adam. It says that Satan beguiled both of them and both of them were deceived. Though the difference between the two versions appears to be trivial, yet a careful appraisal of the two will show that they have far-reaching implications. The first version played a great part in degrading woman morally, legally and socially, whereas the Quranic version has helped raise the status of woman to a high level.

(6) This story makes it quite clear that whenever man disobeys Allah, he is exposed sooner or later. The nakedness of Adam and Eve became visible because they disobeyed the command of Allah, and not because of any inherent quality of the forbidden tree. At first Allah had made His own special arrangement to cover their nakedness, but when they disobeyed Him by eating the forbidden fruit, He undid that arrangement and they were left to

themselves to cover themselves in their own way, if they so desired. And if they had no intention of covering themselves, or if they did not do anything in this connection, Allah did not care at all about the condition in which they moved about. This meant to show that Allah would help them only if they remained obedient to Him. As soon as they would transgress the bounds of His obedience, He would withdraw His protection and leave them to do whatever they liked. The Holy Prophet also stated the same thing in several Traditions. He used to pray, "O my Allah, I expect Mercy from Thee: so do not leave me to myself even for a moment".

(7) In his conflict with man, Satan wanted to prove that man was not superior to him in any way. So he beguiled him to eat the forbidden fruit. Though Satan was successful in beguiling him into disobeying his Lord, yet on the whole man proved his moral superiority over Satan. (a) Satan exhibited pride by claiming to be superior to man, but man did not put up such a claim. (b) Satan disobeyed Allah solely because of his pride without any external temptation. On the contrary, man did not commit disobedience because he intended it, but he was beguiled into it by Satan, who approached in the guise of a well-wisher. Even then, he was misled because he imagined that he was going towards a higher position. (c) When Satan was warned of his sin, he did not confess it nor return to the way of obedience, but became all the more obdurate. On the contrary, when man was warned of his sin, he did not show obduracy, nor arrogance, but felt ashamed and sorry; he confessed it, turned to the way of obedience to his Lord and begged His forgiveness in order to seek His blessing.

(8) This story has been related here mainly to teach the lesson that the right course for the offspring of Adam is to follow His way and not that of Satan. The Satan's way has been clearly made distinct from Adam's way. It is to turn away from Allah's obedience and to adopt the way of rebellion against Him and to persist in it with pride in spite of warning, and to beguile into disobedience those who are treading the path of obedience. Therefore the Right Way for man is to fight against satanic deceptions and to understand and counteract his cunning devices and to be ever on the guard to protect himself from his evil designs, and to repent, if, in spite of all his precautions, he sometimes falls a victim to Satan and disobeys his Allah. He should, then, confess it, feel sorry for it and be ashamed of it and turn to Allah and make amends for it.

It also meant to warn the people who were opposing the Holy Prophet, as if to say, "The way you are following is the way of Satan, who has made you swerve from the Right Way. The very fact that you have made the satans from among the jinns and mankind your patrons and that you are persisting in your error, in spite of repeated warnings, shows that you have fallen a victim to your

open and permanent enemy. As you are going to be utterly ruined by him and meeting with the same consequences that are in store for Satan, if you are not your own enemies, and if you have any common-sense left in you, you should take a warning and turn to the way of your first parents, Adam and Eve, and repent."

14. The words "Go down" should not give rise to the misunderstanding that they were exiled from Paradise as a punishment for their disobedience. The Qur'ān has at several places declared clearly that Allah accepted their repentance and forgave them their sin. And there is nothing in this command that might be regarded as punishment. They were sent to the earth as His vicegerents and this was the very purpose of the creation of man. (Refer to E.N.'s 48 and 53 of *Al-Baqarah*.)

15. In this passage, the Qur'ān has used the story of Adam and Eve for the eradication of the evil of nakedness. Satan had seduced the Arabs of the pre-Islamic period into believing that clothing was meant merely for the purpose of decorating and protecting the body from the hardships of weather. Accordingly they totally disregarded its real purpose and paid no heed to cover their shameful parts and did not hesitate to uncover them before others in the open. Above all, they would go round the Ka'abah in perfect nudity during the Haj season; and their women were even more shameless than their men. That was because they considered it a religious act and did this as if it were a virtuous deed.

The whole human race has been addressed because this evil was not confined to the Arabs alone but many people of the world had been (and even today are) guilty of this. Therefore the whole human race has been warned, as if to say, "O children of Adam! Nudity is a clear manifestation of the fact that you have been seduced by Satan. As you have discarded the Guidance of your Lord, and rejected the Message of His Prophets, you have given yourselves up to Satan who has misled you from the way of natural modesty into that shameful state, in which he intended to mislead your first parents. If you consider it seriously, you will come to the inevitable conclusion that you can neither understand rightly the demands of your nature nor fulfil them without the Guidance of the Messengers."

16. This passage brings out clearly the following facts about clothing:

(1) The need of clothing has not been artificially created in man, but it is an important urge of human nature. That is why Allah has not created a natural covering for the human body, as He has done in the case of all other animals. Instead, He has instilled inherently the feelings of modesty and shyness in human nature. Besides this, He has not made his sex organs as merely sex organs, but has also made them shameful organs, which, by his very nature, he does not like to expose before others. Moreover, He has not given man any ready-made covering for hiding the shameful parts, but has ingrained in

the human nature that man should hide them with a clothing. This is what v. 26 implies. Allah has inspired man with the urge to hide the shameful parts of the body. Therefore man should understand the nature of this inspired urge and make clothing for himself from the material provided by Him.

(2) The fact that in v. 26 the covering of the shameful parts precedes the protecting and decorating of the body, is a clear proof that more importance has been attached to the moral than the physical function of clothing. Thus it is obvious that the human nature is quite different from the animal nature. That is why Nature has made provision for the protection and decoration of the body of the animals, but has ingrained no urge in them for the covering of their shameful parts. But when the human beings discarded the Guidance of Allah and began to follow the guidance of Satan, they reversed the above order as if to say, "Your clothing is merely to protect and decorate your bodies just as the skins cover the bodies of the animals. As regards the covering of the shameful parts, garments have absolutely no importance, for these are merely sex organs and not shameful organs."

(3) The garments should not only be the means of covering the shameful parts and of protection and decoration but should also enable man to attain piety. The dress should, therefore, be such as to conceal those parts of the body that should be hidden from others; it should neither be too expensive nor too poor with regard to the position of the wearers; it should not smack of haughtiness nor arrogance nor hypocrisy. Moreover, the garment of piety demands that the male should not wear the female dress and *vice versa*, and that the Muslims should not imitate blindly the non-Muslims in dress. It is obvious that only those who believe in the Guidance of Allah and follow it, can attain the desired standard of the garment of piety. But those who discard the Guidance of God and make satans their guides, are misled by them into one error or the other in regard to clothing.

(4) Clothing is one of Allah's many Signs which are spread all over the world and which lead men to the recognition of the Reality, provided that one sincerely seeks it. If one seriously considers the above-mentioned three facts about clothing, one can easily understand how clothing is an important Sign of Allah.

17. This refers to the custom of the Arabs of going round the Ka'abah in perfect nudity (E.N. 15), considering it to be a religious act, enjoined by Allah.

18. This brief sentence ("Allah never enjoins a shameful thing") contains a very forceful argument against their beliefs and customs of ignorance. In order to understand the force of the argument, it is necessary to understand two basic things:

[Contd. on p.22

الشَّيٰطِيْنَ اَوْلِيَآءَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ وَيَحْسَبُوْنَ اَنَّهُمْ مُّهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿30﴾ يٰبَنِيْٓ اٰدَمَ
خُذُوْا زِيْنَتَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَّكُلُوْا وَاشْرَبُوْا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوْا ۚ اِنَّهٗ لَا
يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِيْنَ ﴿31﴾ قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِيْنَةَ اللّٰهِ الَّتِيْٓ اَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهٖ وَ
الطَّيِّبٰتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ ۭ قُلْ هِيَ لِلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا خَالِصَةً يَّوْمَ
الْقِيٰمَةِ ۭ كَذٰلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ الْاٰيٰتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَّعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿32﴾ قُلْ اِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ رَبِّيَ
الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ وَالْاِثْمَ وَالْبَغْيَ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَاَنْ
تُشْرِكُوْا بِاللّٰهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزِّلْ بِهٖ سُلْطٰنًا وَّاَنْ تَقُوْلُوْا عَلَى اللّٰهِ مَا لَا
تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿33﴾ وَلِكُلِّ اُمَّةٍ اَجَلٌ ۚ فَاِذَا جَآءَ اَجَلُهُمْ لَا يَسْتَاْخِرُوْنَ سَاعَةً
وَّلَا يَسْتَقْدِمُوْنَ ﴿34﴾ يٰبَنِيْٓ اٰدَمَ اِمَّا يَاْتِيَنَّكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِّنْكُمْ يَقُصُّوْنَ عَلَيْكُمْ
اٰيٰتِيْ ۙ فَمَنِ اتَّقٰى وَاَصْلَحَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُوْنَ ﴿35﴾ وَ
الَّذِيْنَ كَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا وَاسْتَكْبَرُوْا عَنْهَآ اُولٰٓئِكَ اَصْحٰبُ النَّارِ ۚ هُمْ فِيْهَا
خٰلِدُوْنَ ﴿36﴾ فَمَنْ اَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرٰى عَلَى اللّٰهِ كَذِبًا اَوْ كَذَّبَ بِاٰيٰتِهٖ ۭ اُولٰٓئِكَ
يَنَالُهُمْ نَصِيْبُهُمْ مِّنَ الْكِتٰبِ ۭ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا جَآءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُنَا يَتَوَفَّوْنَهُمْ ۙ قَالُوْٓا
اَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ ۭ قَالُوْا ضَلُّوْا عَنَّا وَشَهِدُوْا عَلٰٓى
اَنْفُسِهِمْ اَنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا كٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿37﴾ قَالَ ادْخُلُوْا فِيْٓ اُمَمٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ
قَبْلِكُمْ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْاِنْسِ فِي النَّارِ ۭ كُلَّمَا دَخَلَتْ اُمَّةٌ لَّعَنَتْ اُخْتَهَا ۭ حَتّٰٓى
اِذَا ادَّارَكُوْا فِيْهَا جَمِيْعًا ۙ قَالَتْ اُخْرٰىهُمْ لِاُوْلٰىهُمْ رَبَّنَا هٰٓؤُلَآءِ اَضَلُّوْنَا
فَاٰتِهِمْ عَذَابًا ضِعْفًا مِّنَ النَّارِ ۭ قَالَ لِكُلٍّ ضِعْفٌ وَّلٰكِنْ لَّا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿38﴾
وَقَالَتْ اُوْلٰىهُمْ لِاُخْرٰىهُمْ فَمَا كَانَ لَكُمْ عَلَيْنَا مِنْ فَضْلٍ فَذُوْقُوا الْعَذَابَ

O children of Adam, dress yourselves fully, properly and decently at the time of every worship;[20] eat and drink, but do not transgress, for Allah does not like the transgressors.[21] 31

O Muhammad, ask them, "Who has forbidden[22] the decent garments that Allah brought forth for His servants and (Who has forbidden) the good and pure things of life bestowed by Him?" Say, "All these things are for the Believers in this world but on the Day of Resurrection, these shall be exclusively for them."[23] Thus We make quite plain Our Revelations to those who possess knowledge. 32

O Muhammad, say to them, "The things which my Lord has forbidden are: shameful deeds whether open or secret,[24] sinful[25] things and transgression against the Truth;[26] He has also forbidden to associate partners with Allah since He has sent down no authority therefor; (He has also forbidden) to attribute to Allah's name the thing which you know not He has said." 33

Every community has been given a fixed term; when the term expires, it can neither be put back nor put forward by a single hour.[27] (Allah declared it clearly at the very beginning of human life,) "O children of Adam! If Messengers from among you should come to you and recite to you My Revelations, whoever will refrain from disobedience and mend his ways, will have no cause of fear nor of sorrow; as for those who will treat Our Revelation as false and show pride in regard to them, shall be the dwellers of Hell, wherein they shall remain for ever".[28] Then who can be more wicked than the one who invents falsehoods about Allah and then attributes these to Him or than the one who treats the true Revelations of Allah as false? Such people will go on receiving their destined shares[29] till that hour comes when the angels, appointed by Us, will arrive to capture their souls. Then the angels will ask them, "Where are those now whom you worshipped instead of Allah ?" They will answer "All of them have forsaken us." And they will give evidence against themselves that they had indeed denied the truth. Allah will say, "Go into Hell, where those who went before you from among jinns and men have gone." As each generation will be entering Hell it will curse its preceding generation till all generations shall be gathered there: then each succeeding generation will say regarding the preceding one, "O Lord, these were the people who 34-39

led us astray; therefore give them double chastisement of the Fire." Allah will reply, "There is a double chastisement for every one but you know it not."[30] And the preceding generation will say to the succeeding, "(If we were to blame) you, too, were no better than we. Now taste the torture for what you earned."[31]

Contd. from p. 19]

(1) Though the Arabs practised nudism in the performance of certain religious rituals, they considered nakedness itself a shameful thing. That is why, in spite of this custom, no respectable Arab ever chose to practise nudism in a civilised gathering, in the bazar or before one's kith and kin.

(2) Even though they considered nudism to be a shameful thing, they said that they practised it because this custom had been enjoined by Allah. This claim was based on the wrong notion that their religion was from Allah. But the Qur'ān refutes their claim by arguing like this: "You yourselves consider nudism to be an indecent thing. Therefore your claim that Allah has enjoined the practice of nudism is absolutely false. As a corollary to this, if this indecent custom is approved by your religion, it is a clear proof of the fact that your religion is not from Allah."

19. In v. 29, Allah showed, by contrast, that the religion prescribed by Him had no connection whatsoever with their senseless customs, which were contradictory to the following fundamental principles of His religion:

(1) A man should conduct his life in accordance with justice and righteousness;

(2) He should keep his direction right during worship. That is, "It should be exclusively directed towards Allah and there should be absolutely nothing of *shirk* in it and he should not show any sort of obedience or obeisance or servility to any other than Allah.

(3) He should invoke Allah and none else, for guidance, succour, help and protection. He should, however, dedicate his entire life exclusively to Allah before invoking His help, for it is absurd to lead a life of *shirk*, disbelief, disobedience, and slavery of others, and then invoke Allah, as if to say, "O God, help us in carrying out successfully our rebellion against Thyself."

(4) Above all, he should sincerely and firmly believe that he shall be resurrected in the Next World, just as he has been given birth in this world, and then shall be called upon to render an account of all his deeds in this world.

20. Here the word *"Zīnat"* means full and proper dress. The verse exhorts the people to be fully clothed, when they are engaged in worship. For this purpose, it does not suffice to cover merely those parts of the body which the Law

requires to be hidden in public in addition to the shameful parts. Therefore one should dress properly and decently so as to serve both the purposes, in accordance with one's means.

This command is meant to refute the wrong attitude which the ignorant people at that time had adopted, and have been adopting since then. They thought that one should worship Allah in perfect or semi-nudity and should put on a dishevelled appearance before Him. In utter contrast to this, Allah not only prohibits nudity but also commands that one should be dressed fully, properly and decently at the time of worship and should put on an appearance that might not have even a tinge of untidiness and indecency.

21. That is, "Allah does not like those people who transgress the limits imposed by Him by making the lawful as unlawful. That is why He does not approve of those who put on a dishevelled appearance or starve themselves or deprive themselves of the lawful and pure things under the foolish belief that they are pleasing their Allah thereby. He does not demand this as essential for His worship; nay, He is pleased if one wears a decent dress and makes use of the pure things provided by Him. According to His Law, the only thing that is sinful is to transgress His limits by making the lawful unlawful or the unlawful lawful."

22. It should be noted that this question is a typical way which the Qur'ān employs to refute false ways and religions. The argument implied in the question is this: As Allah Himself has created all the pure, good and nice things for His servants, it cannot be His will to make these as unlawful for His servants. Therefore, if a religious, moral or social system makes these things unlawful or detestable or considers these as impediments in the spiritual evolution and progress, this very thing is a clear proof of the fact that it is not from Allah.

23. That is, "As a matter of fact all the good things of life are meant for the believers because they are the faithful servants of their real Owner and deserve the reward of faithfulness. But in this world, these are given to the unfaithful also because this world is for the trial of mankind. That is why, sometimes, the unfaithful receive even a greater share than the faithful. But in the Hereafter, where these good things will be distributed on the basis of merit alone, all the good and pure things shall be reserved for the faithful only. On the other hand, the unfaithful, who adopted the attitude of rebellion against Allah, in spite of the fact that they lived on His provisions in this world, shall not get any share in the Hereafter.

24. Please refer to E.N. 128 and E.N. 131 of *Al-An'ām*.

25. The literal meaning of *"ithm"* (اثم) is negligence. The sense of sin has entered into this word from *"āthimah"* which means a she-camel that can run fast

but wilfully does not do so. Likewise that man who neglects to obey the Commandments of his Lord, in spite of his ability to do so, shall be sinful for he has no intention of pleasing Him.

26. It will be rebellion against the Truth, if one transgresses the prescribed limits and enters into the bounds where he has no right. Likewise all such people as transgress the bounds prescribed for the servants of Allah and follow their own will, behave as masters in His Kingdom and encroach on the rights that belong to Allah alone, are really rebels against Allah.

27. "Every community has been given a fixed term": it does not mean a fixed period of time in terms of years, months and days, after the expiry of which that community is exterminated without fail. This means that a moral limit has been set to the opportunity that is allowed to every community for showing its performance as a respectable community. This is determined by the ratio between its good works and its evil works. Allah tolerates a community as long as the ratio of its good works to its evil works does not fall below the normal limits. When it transgresses those limits that wicked community is given no more respite. In order to grasp this see v. 4, v.10 and v. 12 of LXXI.

28. The Qur'ān has stated the thing contained in v. 36 in every place where the mention of the sending down of Adam and Eve from Paradise has been made. (Please see II: 38-39 and XX: 123-124). Therefore, here too, the same thing will be taken concerning the same occasion *i.e.*, at the time of the beginning of the life of man, this thing was clearly explained to him. (See E.N. 69 of III).

29. That is, "They shall live here in this world for the term that has been set for them and get their destined share, good or bad, to pass this life."

30. There is a double chastisement for every generation for the sins it committed as successor, and for the sins it left for others as predecessor, because it followed the heritage of evil left by its predecessors and then left the heritage of evil for its successors. Therefore if its predecessor shares a part of the burden of responsibility for its sins, it also shares a part of the burden of the responsibility for the legacy of the sins left by it for its successors.

There is a Tradition to this effect: "The one who initiates an innovation, that is disapproved of by Allah and His Messenger, shall be held responsible for the sins of all those people, who followed his innovation, without lessening in the least .the burden of the responsibility for the sin committed by the inventor." Here is another Tradition: "Whenver a man is killed unjustly anywhere in the world, a part of the guilt of this murder is debited against the account of that son of Adam who was the first to murder his own brother, because he was the first to open the way of murder."

It is clear from the above that the person or the group or the community that starts the wrong idea or a wrong attitude, is not only responsible for his or its own error, but is also partly responsible for the sins of all those who are influenced by the error, and as long as the effects of that error continue to influence others, they are credited to his or its account. This also shows that an individual is not only personally accountable for his own good or bad actions but also for its effects on the lives of others.

As an illustration, let us take the case of an adulterer. All those persons whose bad example, or bad company or evil inducement misled him to adultery, share the responsibility for his becoming an adulterer and this responsibility extends above to all other persons from whom those persons received this evil heritage. Thus it will go further and further upwards till it reaches the first person who initiated this evil way of sexuality.

Then the adulterer himself shall have to bear the responsibility of his guilt, because he committed this in utter disregard of many deterrents. He did not discriminate between good and bad: he did not pay attention to the voice of his conscience: he did not resort to the power of self-control within him: he did not make use of the knowledge of good and bad he had received from virtuous people and of their noble examples, and he did not take warning from the evil consequences of sexual immorality. In the face of all the above factors, that could have restrained him from adultery, he gave himself up to the blind sex urge that wanted its satisfaction in any available way.

Now let us consider the case of the adulterer from the point of view of its evil influences and heritage in relation to his contemporaries and successors. The responsibility of his guilt does not remain confined to his own acts of adultery but extends to all those evil acts that were prompted and influenced by these. At first he himself catches the infection of a venereal disease and then communicates it to his own generation and to countless successive generations: he causes illegitimate births and then throws the burden of nourishment on others and makes them unlawful inheritors at the expense of the lawful inheritors, and the evil results of this injustice may continue to influence countless generations. Moreover, he seduces some innocent girl and induces her to surrender herself to sexual immorality, and then she, in her turn, spreads the evil to others and causes the ruin of countless families. Then he sets a bad example for his own children, his relatives and his friends and for the other people of his society and becomes a cause of the moral ruin of many persons, who, in their turn, leave the evil heritage, with all its evil influences on the countless succeeding generations. Therefore justice demands that a part of the responsibility for all these evil results should be laid on him as long as the effects last.

[Contd. on p. 28

بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْسِبُوْنَ ﴿39﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا وَاسْتَكْبَرُوْا عَنْهَا لَا تُفَتَّحُ
لَهُمْ اَبْوَابُ السَّمَآءِ وَلَا يَدْخُلُوْنَ الْجَنَّةَ حَتّٰى يَلِجَ الْجَمَلُ فِيْ سَمِّ
الْخِيَاطِ ؕ وَكَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿40﴾ لَهُمْ مِّنْ جَهَنَّمَ مِهَادٌ وَّمِنْ
فَوْقِهِمْ غَوَاشٍ ؕ وَكَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿41﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ
لَا نُكَلِّفُ نَفْسًا اِلَّا وُسْعَهَآ ۫ اُولٰٓئِكَ اَصْحٰبُ الْجَنَّةِ ۚ هُمْ فِيْهَا خٰلِدُوْنَ ﴿42﴾ وَ
نَزَعْنَا مَا فِيْ صُدُوْرِهِمْ مِّنْ غِلٍّ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ الْاَنْهٰرُ ۚ وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ
لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ هَدٰىنَا لِهٰذَا ۫ وَمَا كُنَّا لِنَهْتَدِيَ لَوْلَآ اَنْ هَدٰىنَا اللّٰهُ ۚ لَقَدْ
جَآءَتْ رُسُلُ رَبِّنَا بِالْحَقِّ ؕ وَنُوْدُوْٓا اَنْ تِلْكُمُ الْجَنَّةُ اُوْرِثْتُمُوْهَا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ
تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿43﴾ وَنَادٰٓى اَصْحٰبُ الْجَنَّةِ اَصْحٰبَ النَّارِ اَنْ قَدْ وَجَدْنَا مَا وَعَدَنَا
رَبُّنَا حَقًّا فَهَلْ وَجَدْتُّمْ مَّا وَعَدَ رَبُّكُمْ حَقًّا ؕ قَالُوْا نَعَمْ ۚ فَاَذَّنَ مُؤَذِّنٌۢ بَيْنَهُمْ
اَنْ لَّعْنَةُ اللّٰهِ عَلَى الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿44﴾ الَّذِيْنَ يَصُدُّوْنَ عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ وَيَبْغُوْنَهَا
عِوَجًا ۚ وَهُمْ بِالْاٰخِرَةِ كٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿45﴾ وَبَيْنَهُمَا حِجَابٌ ۚ وَعَلَى الْاَعْرَافِ رِجَالٌ
يَّعْرِفُوْنَ كُلًّا بِسِيْمٰهُمْ ۚ وَنَادَوْٓا اَصْحٰبَ الْجَنَّةِ اَنْ سَلٰمٌ عَلَيْكُمْ ۫ لَمْ
يَدْخُلُوْهَا وَهُمْ يَطْمَعُوْنَ ﴿46﴾ وَاِذَا صُرِفَتْ اَبْصَارُهُمْ تِلْقَآءَ اَصْحٰبِ النَّارِ ۙ
قَالُوْا رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿47﴾ وَنَادٰٓى اَصْحٰبُ الْاَعْرَافِ
رِجَالًا يَّعْرِفُوْنَهُمْ بِسِيْمٰهُمْ قَالُوْا مَآ اَغْنٰى عَنْكُمْ جَمْعُكُمْ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ
تَسْتَكْبِرُوْنَ ﴿48﴾ اَهٰٓؤُلَآءِ الَّذِيْنَ اَقْسَمْتُمْ لَا يَنَالُهُمُ اللّٰهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ ؕ اُدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ
لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَآ اَنْتُمْ تَحْزَنُوْنَ ﴿49﴾ وَنَادٰٓى اَصْحٰبُ النَّارِ اَصْحٰبَ الْجَنَّةِ
اَنْ اَفِيْضُوْا عَلَيْنَا مِنَ الْمَآءِ اَوْ مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللّٰهُ ؕ قَالُوْٓا اِنَّ اللّٰهَ حَرَّمَهُمَا عَلَى

Believe it that the doors of heaven will not be opened for those who have treated Our Revelations as false and have shown pride in regard to them: their admission into Paradise is as impossible as the passing of the camel through the eye of the needle, so do We recompense the guilty ones. Hell shall be their bed and Hell shall be their covering: this is the chastisement We award to the workers of iniquity. But as to those who have believed in Our Revelations and done good deeds,— and in this way We lay not on anyone a burden beyond one's capacity—they are worthy of Paradise, wherein they will abide for ever. And We will remove whatever ill-feeling would have been in their hearts against one another;[32] canals will be flowing underneath them and they will say, "Praise be to Allah, Who has guided us to this Way: by ourselves we would not have been able to find the Way, if Allah had not guided us. The Messengers sent by our Lord had really come with the Truth." At that time a voice will be heard saying, "This is the Paradise, of which you have been made heirs; it has been given to you for the good works you did."[33] 40-43

Then the inmates of Paradise will call out to the inmates of Hell, "We have found all the promises made to us by our Lord to be true: have you, too, found the promises made to you by your Lord to be true?" They will say, "Yes". Then a herald in their midst will announce: "The curse of Allah be upon those evil-doers who debarred others from the Way of Allah and sought to make it crooked, and did not believe in the Hereafter." 44-45

Between these two groups, there shall be a barrier, on 'the Heights,' on which will be some other people, who will recognize everyone of them by his countenance. They will call out to the inmates of Paradise, "Peace be upon you!"—They will not have yet entered Paradise, though they will be expecting to do so.[34]—And when their eyes will be turned towards the inmates of Hell, they will say, "O our Lord, do not include us in these wicked people." Then these people on 'the Heights' will recognise by their characteristics some 'big' personalities from among the inmates of Hell and will call out to them, "You have seen that today neither your followers have availed you anything nor your wealth and property, of which you were very proud. And, are not these inmates of Paradise the same people about whom you 46-49

swore that Allah would not give them any portion of His blessings? Today the same have been welcome with the words 'Go into Paradise where you will have neither fear nor grief'."

Contd. from p.25]

The case of the heritage of virtue may also be considered in the same way. All those persons, up to the first man, who left the heritage of virtue for us are entitled to a share of its reward. Then we shall also be entitled to a share of its reward, if we exert to preserve and increase it. Then we shall also be entitled to a share of its reward, if we leave behind us the legacy of virtue for others to follow, as long as its good effects go on influencing mankind and they benefit from it.

Every sensible man will admit that the manner of retribution presented by the Qur'ān is the only right and perfect way of doing full justice: The right understanding of this fact will help remove the misunderstandings of those who regard this worldly life to be quite sufficient for retribution, and also of those who believe that this purpose is achieved by the process of the transmigration of souls. As a matter of fact, neither of the groups has fully grasped the extent, the effects and the consequences of human acts, nor the full requirements of just retribution. Obviously it is not possible today to punish here the countless generations, which contributed to the good or bad acts of a person during his life in this world. Moreover the effects of his good or bad acts do not cease with his death, but will continue through the countless centuries and will go on influencing the lives of countless people after him. Justice requires that these should be credited to his account as long as the effects last. Therefore the requital of justice is impossible in this worldly life, when even the smallest part of the effects of his acts has not yet appeared. Then there are not enough means for awarding fully the rewards or the punishments for the acts of a man in the limited life of this world and its limited means. Just imagine the extent of the guilt of a man who kindles the fire of a World War and destroys and ruins the lives of millions of people and leaves a legacy of evil that will continue to influence the lives of billions of people for centuries. Can any punishment in this world, physical or moral, or spiritual, however severe that may be, fully meet the requirements of justice? Or can any reward in this world, however great, fully recompense a man for his lifelong work for the good of humanity, which goes on benefiting millions of people for thousands of years?

Anyone, who will consider the problem of retribution from this point of view, will come to the inevitable conclusion that for the requital of full justice, there should be another world, where all the generations should be mustered together with their accounts: then there should be an all-knowing and all-aware judge to administer justice and there should also be human beings with eternal

lives to receive the reward or punishment, as the case may be, and all kinds of means for the dispensation of justice as well.

This way of thinking also helps expose the basic error of the doctrine of transmigration, which has led its advocates to believe in the passage of souls after death into other bodies according to their merits or demerits. This is because they have not been able to grasp the fact that for the retribution of the acts of this short worldly life, a thousand times longer life is required. It is thus obvious that another reborn life of the same length in this world will not help solve the problem of retribution because it is quite insufficient for the purpose. On the contrary, this will make it all the more complex, for the circle of transmigration will go on multiplying such acts—good or bad—and increasing their effects more and more in an endless chain. Thus, according to the doctrine of transmigration, the account of a person will remain unsettled for ever.

31. The Qur'ān has described at several places this sort of altercation between the dwellers of Hell. For instance, in XXXIV:31-33, it says, "I wish you could see these unjust people when they will be standing before their Lord and accusing one another. The people, who were made weak, will say to those who posed as mighty ones, 'But for you, we would have been believers'. But the so-called mighty ones will reply, 'What, did we keep you back from the Guidance when it came to you? No, you yourselves were the guilty ones'." In simple words, it means, "You yourselves are to blame for discarding the Guidance. You fell an easy prey to the greed with which we tempted you, to become our slaves, because you yourselves were greedy for wealth. When we wanted to buy your conscience, you sold it because you yourselves were eager to sell it: when we invited you to the worship of materialism, worldliness, nationalism and the like, you accepted our invitation, because you had an aversion to God-worship and a liking for this-worldliness. That is why you rejected the invitation of the worshippers of Allah, and accepted ours. When we deluded you with false religious things, you at once accepted these, because you yourselves were cherishing the same in your hearts. For instance, you were in search of such gods as might fulfil your desires without demanding any moral obligations from you, and we supplied such ones, and you accepted them. You were in search of such intercessors as might take the responsibility for your entry into Paradise, allowing you to do whatever pleased you in the world, without minding the Guidance of Allah. So we invented such ones and you followed us: you were in search of such religions as might guarantee short-cuts to salvation, freeing you from the hardships, restrictions and sacrifices for the cause of Allah, and permitting you to enjoy all sorts of indulgences, and we invented such easy and pleasant religions for you, and you followed them. In

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الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿٥٠﴾ الَّذِيْنَ اتَّخَذُوْا دِيْنَهُمْ لَهْوًا وَّلَعِبًا وَّغَرَّتْهُمُ الْحَيٰوةُ الدُّنْيَا ۚ
فَالْيَوْمَ نَنْسٰىهُمْ كَمَا نَسُوْا لِقَآءَ يَوْمِهِمْ هٰذَا ۙ وَمَا كَانُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا يَجْحَدُوْنَ ﴿٥١﴾
وَلَقَدْ جِئْنٰهُمْ بِكِتٰبٍ فَصَّلْنٰهُ عَلٰى عِلْمٍ هُدًى وَّرَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يُّؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٥٢﴾
هَلْ يَنْظُرُوْنَ اِلَّا تَاْوِيْلَهٗ ۘ يَوْمَ يَاْتِيْ تَاْوِيْلُهٗ يَقُوْلُ الَّذِيْنَ نَسُوْهُ مِنْ
قَبْلُ قَدْ جَآءَتْ رُسُلُ رَبِّنَا بِالْحَقِّ ۚ فَهَلْ لَّنَا مِنْ شُفَعَآءَ فَيَشْفَعُوْا لَنَآ اَوْ
نُرَدُّ فَنَعْمَلَ غَيْرَ الَّذِيْ كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ ۚ قَدْ خَسِرُوْٓا اَنْفُسَهُمْ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَّا
كَانُوْا يَفْتَرُوْنَ ﴿٥٣﴾ اِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ فِيْ سِتَّةِ
اَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوٰى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ ۘ يُغْشِي الَّيْلَ النَّهَارَ يَطْلُبُهٗ حَثِيْثًا ۙ وَّالشَّمْسَ
وَالْقَمَرَ وَالنُّجُوْمَ مُسَخَّرٰتٍ بِاَمْرِهٖ ۗ اَلَا لَهُ الْخَلْقُ وَالْاَمْرُ ۗ تَبٰرَكَ اللّٰهُ رَبُّ
الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٥٤﴾ اُدْعُوْا رَبَّكُمْ تَضَرُّعًا وَّخُفْيَةً ۚ اِنَّهٗ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِيْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَلَا
تُفْسِدُوْا فِي الْاَرْضِ بَعْدَ اِصْلَاحِهَا وَادْعُوْهُ خَوْفًا وَّطَمَعًا ۚ اِنَّ رَحْمَتَ
اللّٰهِ قَرِيْبٌ مِّنَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿٥٦﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِيْ يُرْسِلُ الرِّيٰحَ بُشْرًا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ
رَحْمَتِهٖ ۚ حَتّٰٓى اِذَآ اَقَلَّتْ سَحَابًا ثِقَالًا سُقْنٰهُ لِبَلَدٍ مَّيِّتٍ فَاَنْزَلْنَا بِهِ الْمَآءَ
فَاَخْرَجْنَا بِهٖ مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرٰتِ ۚ كَذٰلِكَ نُخْرِجُ الْمَوْتٰى لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾
وَالْبَلَدُ الطَّيِّبُ يَخْرُجُ نَبَاتُهٗ بِاِذْنِ رَبِّهٖ ۚ وَالَّذِيْ خَبُثَ لَا يَخْرُجُ اِلَّا
نَكِدًا ۚ كَذٰلِكَ نُصَرِّفُ الْاٰيٰتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَّشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿٥٨﴾ لَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا نُوْحًا اِلٰى قَوْمِهٖ
فَقَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ اِلٰهٍ غَيْرُهٗ ۗ اِنِّيْٓ اَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ
يَوْمٍ عَظِيْمٍ ﴿٥٩﴾ قَالَ الْمَلَاُ مِنْ قَوْمِهٖٓ اِنَّا لَنَرٰىكَ فِيْ ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿٦٠﴾
قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ لَيْسَ بِيْ ضَلٰلَةٌ وَّلٰكِنِّيْ رَسُوْلٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٦١﴾ اُبَلِّغُكُمْ

And the inmates of Hell will cry out to the inmates of Paradise: "Pour upon us a little water or throw down a bit of the provisions Allah has bestowed upon you." They will reply, "Allah has forbidden both the things to the disbelievers, who had made their religion a pastime, sport and enjoyment, and who had been deluded by the worldly life. Allah says, 'Today We will forget them just as they forgot the meeting of this Day and rejected Our Revelations'."[35] 50-51

We have brought to these people a Book which gives details based on knowledge[36] and which is a guidance and blessing for those who believe.[37] Now, are these people waiting for anything other than the consequence (of which they have been) warned in this Book?[38] When the consequence will come before them, those very people who aforetime had disregarded it, will say, "Indeed, the Messengers of our Lord had come with the Truth. Shall we have, then, any intercessors who will intercede for us? Or could we be sent back that we might do deeds different from those we did before?"[39] They have, indeed, incurred heavy loss upon themselves and all the false things they had invented have forsaken them today. 52-53

In fact, your Lord is Allah alone, Who created the heavens and the earth in six days,[40] and then sat upon the Throne of His Kingdom;[41] Who makes the night cover the day and then the day follows the night swiftly; Who created the sun, the moon and the stars, all of which are under His Command. Note it well: His is the creation and His the Sovereignty.[42] Full of blessings is Allah, the Lord of the worlds.[43] Invoke your Lord with humility and in secret; indeed He does not like the transgressors. Do not spread chaos on the earth after it has been set in order,[44] and call your Lord with fear and with hope.[45] Surely, the mercy of Allah is near to the righteous people. 54-56

And it is Allah, Who sends winds as harbingers of the good tidings of His mercy; when they gather up heavy clouds He drives them on to some dead land, and makes the rain fall upon it and brings forth many kinds of fruit (from the same dead land). Look! This is how We bring forth the dead from the state of death; it may be that you learn a lesson from this observation. The soil which is rich, yields rich produce by Allah's permission and the soil which is poor yields nothing but poor 57-58

produce.[46] Thus We present Our Signs over and over again for those people who intend to be grateful.

59-61 We sent Noah to his people;[47] he said, "O my people, worship Allah; you have no deity other than He.[48] I fear lest the chastisement befall you on a dreadful day." The chiefs of his people answered, "We clearly see that you are in obvious deviation." Noah replied, "O my people, I am not in any kind of deviation; on the contrary, I am a messenger from the Lord of the worlds."

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short, we alone are not responsible for your misguidance but you, too, share it equally with us: if we supplied misguidance, you bought it of your own accord".

32. It means that if there had been any hostile or unfriendly feelings or misunderstandings between good people in this world, they would all be removed in the Hereafter. Their hearts will be quite free from enmity, and they will enter Paradise like sincere friends. So much so that they will not be displeased to see their opponents, rivals, critics, etc., sharing the joys of Paradise along with themselves. Once when Caliph 'Ali recited this verse, he exclaimed, "I do expect that Allah will remove the misunderstandings between me and 'Uthmān and Talhah and Zubair."

If we consider this verse in its wider meaning, we come to the conclusion that Allah will not like to take His good people to Paradise with any blot on their characters but He will cleanse them by His grace before their entrance into Paradise. Thus they will enter it in a perfectly pure condition.

33. This refers to a fine happening that will take place on the occasion of the entry of the faithful into Paradise. On the one hand, they will not be boastful that they have gained Paradise by their good works, but will be grateful and thankful and will praise Allah, saying, "All this is due to Allah's grace, for we did not deserve this." On the other, Allah will not even hint that it was due to His favour, but will say, "You have gained this by your services and in return for your own earnings. This is not a piece of charity but a reward of your own efforts, a fruit of your own labour; it is a respectable living that you have earned". To add to His grace, Allah does not say, "We will reply" but "they will hear a voice."

In fact the servants of Allah behave like this in this world also. Unlike the workers of iniquity, they do not become proud of any worldly success and say, "This is the result of our own ability, work and effort," and then grow even more rebellious, and spread disorder in the world. In contrast to these rebels, the true servants of Allah consider every worldly success as His favour and are thankful

and grateful to Him. The more they are favoured by Him, the more humble, generous and merciful they become. They do not rely on their good works and say, "We are quite sure that we shall get salvation". Instead of this, they beg Allah's pardon for their shortcomings and rely on His grace and mercy, and they are always filled with the fear lest their accounts should turn out to be unfavourable against them.

A Tradition of the Holy Prophet related both by Bukhārī and Muslim, confirms the above-mentioned thing. Once he warned his Companions, saying, "You should know that you will not get entry into Paradise merely by virtue of your works". They asked, "Is it true of you also?" He replied, "Yes, I, too, shall enter Paradise merely by Allah's grace and mercy."

34. The people on 'the Heights' will be those with pending cases. While their positive sides will not be so strong as to merit admission into Paradise, their negative sides will not be so weak as to condemn them to Hell. Therefore they will wait for the decisions of their cases on 'the Height' between Paradise and Hell.

35. From this dialogue between the inmates of Paradise and the inmates of Hell and the people on 'the Heights,' we can form some idea of how strong the faculties of men will become in the Next World. The faculty of sight will become so strong that the people of Paradise and those of Hell and on 'the Heights' will be able to see one another whenever they will desire to do so. Likewise their faculties of speech and hearing will grow so strong that the people of the three different worlds will be able to carry on their dialogues without any hindrance. From this and the like descriptions of the Next World in the Qur'ān, we learn that the laws of life in the Hereafter will be quite different from the physical laws of this world, though there will be no change in our personalities. It is a pity that such descriptions in the Qur'ān and Hadīth have made certain people sceptical because they cannot imagine that there can be another world with greater potentialities than the limited physical world they live in. As they judge everything by the standards of this world, they make fun of such things they come across in the Qur'ān and Hadīth. But the fact is that the potentialities of life are not limited as their narrow minds are.

36. That is, "The Qur'ān gives details of the reality and of the correct attitude man should adopt in the life of this world and of the basic principles of the Right Way of life. Then it may also be noted that these details are not based on guess-work or conjecture or whim but on pure and accurate knowledge."

37. The Qur'ān is 'Guidance' because its teachings are so clear that they show the right way to anyone who ponders over them. Moreover, the practical effects of that guidance can be seen in the lives of those who believe in it and

follow its teachings. And it is really a great 'blessing' because it brings a blessed change in the mental attitude, the moral out-look and the character of the one who accepts it. The truth of this was being proved by the wonderful changes that were taking place in the lives of the Companions of the Holy Prophet.

38. In other words, it means: The distinction between right and wrong has been made clear in the most rational manner, but there are people who do not see it; they have the examples of those who have been totally changed for the better by following the Right Way, though they were just like them before this, yet they do not learn any lesson from this. Such people will admit their error only when they will suffer the consequences of their wrong ways.

Their case is similar to the case of a patient, who does not follow the advice of the physician, nor does he learn a lesson from the other patients, who regained their health by following the instructions of the physician, when they were suffering from the same disease. Such a patient will admit that the ways of life he was following were fatal but only on his death-bed.

39. When they will see, with their own eyes, the consequences of the rejection of the Message of the Prophets, they will say, "Now that we have witnessed that reality, which we denied at the time, when the Messengers informed us about it, we will behave in a different way if we are sent back to the same world". For response to such a request, see VI: 27, 28; XIV: 44, 45; XXXII: 12, 13; XXXV: 37; XXXIX: 56-59;XL: 11, 12.

40. Here the word *"day"* has been used in the sense of period. This word has been used in the same sense in XXII:47: "The fact is that with your Lord a day is equal to one thousand years as you reckon", and also in LXX: 4: "Angels and Gabriel ascend to Him in a day which is equal to fifty thousand years". Allah alone Knows its real significance. (for further explanation see E.N.'s 11-15 of XLI).

41. It is very difficult for us to comprehend the nature of "He sat upon the Throne". It is just possible that after the creation of the universe, He fixed some place as the center of His limitless Kingdom, which may have been called "The Throne," from where He is showering His blessings on the whole universe and it is also possible that the Arabic word *"Al-'Arsh"* may have been used figuratively to express His Sovereignty and "seating Himself on the Throne" may mean "the taking of the reins of His Kingdom in His hands". Anywise, whatever be the details of the Text, the Qur'ān mentions this to impress the fact that Allah is not only the Creator of the universe but also its Sovereign as well as Ruler, that after its creation He has not cut off all connections with it and has not become disinterested in its affairs, but is practically governing each and every minute part of it; all the powers of Sovereignty are, in fact, in His hands; that everything is

under His Command and is obedient to Him, and the destinies of everyone and everything are permanently in His hands. In this way the Qur'ān cuts across the basic misunderstanding that gives rise to the errors like *shirk* and rebellion against Him. The creed that God has nothing to do with the affairs of the universe, inevitably leads to the belief that someone else is the maker or destroyer of one's destiny, and, therefore, one should bow down before that one or one should consider one's own self to be its maker and become independent of Him.

In this connection, it is worth while to consider the use of words akin to "kingdom" and "kingship", which the Qur'ān usually employs to express the relation between Allah and man. Though it is quite obvious that the Qur'ān has employed such words, technical terms, figures of speech and a style as may be within the comprehension of human beings, yet some critics with perverted minds have inferred from this use the strange conclusion that this Book is the invention of Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him). The line of their argument is this: "The frequent use of the words like 'king' shows that the 'author' of the Qur'ān was irresistibly influenced by the system of kingship that was prevalent all around him during the period when this Book was composed; therefore its author cannot be Allah, Who knows that there can be no comparison between Him and a king, etc., etc." Obviously, this argument is very flimsy. The conception of the Sovereign of the earth and the heavens put forward in the Qur'ān clearly shows that in contrast to the mortal weak kings of this world, having only a limited authority for a limited period, the King, Allah, is Eternal, All-Powerful, having the supreme Authority, above all others and for all times. This conception of the Sovereignty of 'King' Allah falsifies the very basis of the theory of the critics, for no human king can fit in the conception of the 'King' laid down in the Qur'ān. For in this conception there is no scope for anyone to claim or assume powers of sovereignty like the King, because it requires that man should acknowledge Allah alone as the sole object of worship in the religious sense and the sole sovereign in the civil and political sense.

42. This is a further explanation of the meanings of 'seating Himself on the Throne': "Allah is not only the Creator but is also the Sovereign and Ruler of the universe. After its creation, He has neither relinquished its rule in favour of others nor has He made the whole of His creation or any part of it independent, but He has kept in His own hands the functioning of the whole universe. Day and night are not following each other by themselves but by the Command of Allah, Who has the power to stop or change the present system totally. Likewise, the sun, the moon and the stars possess no inherent power of their own but are entirely under His Command, and are functioning perforce like slaves under His orders."

43. The original meaning of *barkat* ("blessing") is growth, increase and development along with greatness, exaltation, permanence and stability. Besides all these meanings, the word carries with it the idea of goodness and welfare. Thus the Text means, "His good qualities and excellences are boundless; His beneficence spreads everywhere; He is the possessor of the highest position that has no limits. Above all, all His excellences are absolutely permanent and stable, without decay or decline." For further explanation see E.N.'s 1-19 of XXV.

44. According to the Qur'ān, the root cause of disorder in the world is that man breaks away from the service of God and, giving himself up to the service of his own self or of others and discarding His Guidance, adopts the guidance of others instead for the building up of his morality, society and culture. As this creates disorder and gives birth to many other kinds of disorder, the Qur'ān aims at its eradication. At the same time it warns that disorder is not inherent in the system of the world so that it may be replaced by order. But it so happens that disorder over-whelms the order that was set in it, as a result of man's ignorance and rebellion. In other words, man did not start his life on the earth in ignorance, barbarism, *shirk*, rebellion and moral disorder, and then reforms were introduced afterwards to remove them by degrees. The fact is that he started life in peace and order, which was corrupted afterwards by the follies and mischiefs of the evil-doers. Then Allah sent His Messengers to eradicate that disorder and to set right the system of life again to bring it back to the original state. That is why they always invited the people to adopt the same old system of peace and order, and to refrain from spreading disorder.

It should also be noted that the point of view of the Qur'ān in this matter is quite different from that of the evolutionists who assert that man has gradually come out of darkness into light and his life is being reformed by degrees. In contrast to this, the Qur'ān declares that Allah settled man on the earth in full light and started his life with a system based on peace and order. Then afterwards man himself repeatedly followed the guidance of Satan and went into darkness and corrupted the original right and orderly system. Then Allah sent His Messengers over and over again to invite the people to come out of darkness into light and to refrain from disorder. (Please refer also to E.N. 230, AL-BAQARAH).

45. It has become clear from this sentence that the 'chaos' referred to above is that man should adopt someone else as his guardian, protector and helper and invoke that one for help. The order can, therefore, be restored by acknowledging Allah as the sole Guardian and Protector and Helper and by invoking Him alone.

46. It should be noted here that the allegorical use of rain and its blessings etc. does not only aim to describe the powers of Allah and to give a proof of the

life-after-death (though that has been mentioned incidentally). Its main object is to present Prophethood and its blessings, as also how it helps to distinguish good from bad, pure from impure. The coming of the Messenger and the sending down of the Guidance and the teachings have been likened to the winds laden with clouds and the life-giving rainfall. Just as the rainfall brings back to life the dead soil, which begins to bring forth the treasures of life, so the teachings of the Prophet and his guidance bring back to life the dead humanity, which begins to pour out the treasures of goodness. Further on, the allegory points out that all these blessings profit only that soil which is intrinsically rich and fertile, and is only waiting for rainfall to bring forth its treasures. In the same way, only those people can benefit from the blessings of the guidance and teachings of the Messengers, who had the required capability but could not develop their latent qualities for lack of right guidance. As regards the mischievous and impure people, they are incapable of benefiting from the blessings of Prophethood for they are just like the bad soil, which brings forth only useless thorny bushes, if rain falls on it. That is why all their hidden mischiefs come into full play at the coming of the Messenger. The lesson derived from this allegory has been illustrated by citing a series of historical events in the succeeding passages, and it has been shown that on the coming of every Messenger in every age, mankind divided itself into two groups. One group consisted of pure and capable people, who benefited from the guidance of the Messengers, developed their capabilities to the fullest and brought forth the fruit of goodness. The second group, that consisted of impure people, displayed all their impurities in their encounter with the Messengers, and was sorted out, just as alloy is separated from gold, as a useless and worthless metal.

47. The first of the historical events referred to in E.N. 46, is being related here. According to the Qur'ān, Prophet Noah was sent to his people, who were the first to corrupt the Right Way of life followed by Adam (Allah's peace be upon him) and taught by him to his descendants. We learn from the brief hints in the Qur'ān and the details in the Bible that the people of Noah lived in the country which is now called Iraq. The same is confirmed by the tablets found in the archaeological remains of Babel which are older than the Bible. They tell a story similar to the one related in the Bible and the Qur'ān, and fix the place of its occurrence near Mosul. Moreover, the traditions that have come down from the most ancient times from Kurdistan and Armenia say that the ark of Noah anchored at some place in the same region. They also point out to some relics connected with the story of Noah near Mt. Ararat and the inhabitants of Nakhchiwan claim even today that the town was founded by Prophet Noah.

Traditions, similar to the story of Noah, are found in the ancient

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رِسٰلٰتِ رَبِّیْ وَ اَنْصَحُ لَكُمْ وَ اَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللّٰهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿62﴾ اَوَ عَجِبْتُمْ
اَنْ جَآءَكُمْ ذِكْرٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ عَلٰى رَجُلٍ مِّنْكُمْ لِيُنْذِرَكُمْ وَ لِتَتَّقُوْا وَ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تُرْحَمُوْنَ ﴿63﴾ فَكَذَّبُوْهُ فَاَنْجَيْنٰهُ وَ الَّذِيْنَ مَعَهٗ فِي الْفُلْكِ وَ اَغْرَقْنَا الَّذِيْنَ
كَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا ؕ اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا قَوْمًا عَمِيْنَ ﴿64﴾ وَ اِلٰى عَادٍ اَخَاهُمْ هُوْدًا ؕ قَالَ
يٰقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ اِلٰهٍ غَيْرُهٗ ؕ اَفَلَا تَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿65﴾ قَالَ الْمَلَاُ
الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مِنْ قَوْمِهٖۤ اِنَّا لَنَرٰىكَ فِيْ سَفَاهَةٍ وَّ اِنَّا لَنَظُنُّكَ مِنَ
الْكٰذِبِيْنَ ﴿66﴾ قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ لَيْسَ بِيْ سَفَاهَةٌ وَّ لٰكِنِّيْ رَسُوْلٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّ
الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿67﴾ اُبَلِّغُكُمْ رِسٰلٰتِ رَبِّيْ وَ اَنَا لَكُمْ نَاصِحٌ اَمِيْنٌ ﴿68﴾ اَوَ عَجِبْتُمْ اَنْ
جَآءَكُمْ ذِكْرٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ عَلٰى رَجُلٍ مِّنْكُمْ لِيُنْذِرَكُمْ ؕ وَ اذْكُرُوْۤا اِذْ جَعَلَكُمْ
خُلَفَآءَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ قَوْمِ نُوْحٍ وَّ زَادَكُمْ فِي الْخَلْقِ بَصْۜطَةً ۚ فَاذْكُرُوْۤا اٰلَآءَ
اللّٰهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿69﴾ قَالُوْۤا اَجِئْتَنَا لِنَعْبُدَ اللّٰهَ وَحْدَهٗ وَ نَذَرَ مَا كَانَ
يَعْبُدُ اٰبَآؤُنَا ۚ فَاْتِنَا بِمَا تَعِدُنَاۤ اِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿70﴾ قَالَ قَدْ وَقَعَ
عَلَيْكُمْ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ رِجْسٌ وَّ غَضَبٌ ؕ اَتُجَادِلُوْنَنِيْ فِيْۤ اَسْمَآءٍ سَمَّيْتُمُوْهَاۤ اَنْتُمْ
وَ اٰبَآؤُكُمْ مَّا نَزَّلَ اللّٰهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطٰنٍ ؕ فَانْتَظِرُوْۤا اِنِّيْ مَعَكُمْ مِّنَ الْمُنْتَظِرِيْنَ ﴿71﴾
فَاَنْجَيْنٰهُ وَ الَّذِيْنَ مَعَهٗ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِّنَّا وَ قَطَعْنَا دَابِرَ الَّذِيْنَ كَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا
وَ مَا كَانُوْا مُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿72﴾ وَ اِلٰى ثَمُوْدَ اَخَاهُمْ صٰلِحًا ؕ قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا
اللّٰهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ اِلٰهٍ غَيْرُهٗ ؕ قَدْ جَآءَتْكُمْ بَيِّنَةٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ ؕ هٰذِهٖ نَاقَةُ اللّٰهِ
لَكُمْ اٰيَةً فَذَرُوْهَا تَاْكُلْ فِيْۤ اَرْضِ اللّٰهِ وَ لَا تَمَسُّوْهَا بِسُوْٓءٍ فَيَاْخُذَكُمْ
عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿73﴾ وَ اذْكُرُوْۤا اِذْ جَعَلَكُمْ خُلَفَآءَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ عَادٍ وَّ بَوَّاَكُمْ فِي

"I convey to you the Messages of my Lord and am your well- 62-64
wisher for I know from Allah what you do not know. Do you think it strange that admonition from your Lord should come to you through a man from among your own people so that he may warn you and you may guard against error and be graced with mercy?"[49] But they treated him as an impostor. Ultimately, We rescued Noah and those with him in the Ark and drowned those who rejected Our Revelations as false.[50] Indeed they were a blind people!

And to 'Ād[51] We sent their brother Hūd: he said, "O my 65-72
people, worship Allah: you have no deity other than He. Will you not, then, refrain from wrong ways?" The chiefs of his people who rejected his Message, answered, "We clearly see that you are of unsound mind and we think that you are a liar." He replied, "O my pepole, I am not of unsound mind, but in fact, I am a Messenger from the Lord of the world. I convey the Message of my Lord to you and I am a trustworthy well-wisher of yours. Do you think it strange that admonition from your Lord should come to you through a man among your own people so that he may warn you? Do not forget that after Noah's people your Lord made you his successors and made you very robust. So remember the wonderful manifestations of Allah's power :[52] it is expected that you will attain success." They replied, "Have you come to us (with the demand) that we should worship Allah alone and discard those whom our forefathers have been worshipping?[53] Well, bring on us the scourge with which you have been threatening us, if you are truthful." To this, he replied, "You have already incurred the curse of Allah and His wrath. Do you dispute with me about mere names which you and your forefathers have invented,[54] and for which Allah has sent down no authority?[55] Well, you may wait and I, too, will wait with you." Ultimately, We saved Hūd and his companions with Our Mercy, and We cut off the roots of those who treated Our Revelations as lies, and did not intend to believe.[56]

Contd. from p. 37]

literatures of Greece, Egypt, India and China. Besides these, the traditions that have come down from the most ancient times from Burma, Malaya, East Indies, Australia, New Guinea and from different parts of Europe and America are also similar to it. All this shows that this story is connected with the period when all the

descendants of Adam lived in the same region from where they dispersed all over the earth. That is why references to the "Flood" are found in the ancient history of every nation, though they forgot its real facts and mixed it with the fictions of their own imagination.

48. This verse and others, in which the story of Noah has been related, show that his people did neither deny the existence of Allah nor were they ignorant of it, nor did they deny His worship. But the root cause of their deviation was that they were involved in *shirk* and had set up other partners with Allah in His Godhead and regarded them worthy of worship along with Him. This basic deviation led them to numerous other evils. For instance, this gave birth to a special class to represent the false gods they had set up. By and by, this class took possession of all the religious, political and economic powers of the community and created artificial barriers of high and low among people. Consequently, chaos, tyranny and immorality were rampant everywhere and humanity sank to the lowest depths of degradation. Prophet Noah was sent to reform this state of affairs. Accordingly, he exerted his utmost with great wisdom and fortitude for a very long time to bring about the desired reform, but that corrupt class had cunningly deluded the common people so much that all his efforts proved fruitless. When no more hope of their reform was left, Prophet Noah prayed to Allah and said, "My Lord, do not leave upon the earth even one of these disbelievers for, if Thou leave anyone of them alive, he will lead astray Thy servants and will give birth only to wicked and ungrateful descendants." (For details please refer to XI: 25-48, XXVI: 105-119 and the whole of Sūrah LXXI).

49. The incident has been related here because what had happened between Noah (Allah's peace be upon him) and his people was exactly taking place at that time between Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) and his people. His Message was the same as that of Noah and the response of the chiefs to it was also the same. The chiefs of the Quraish were raising the same doubts against his Message that were raised by the chiefs of the people of Noah thousands of years before the Holy Prophet, and the same things were said in reply as were said by Noah. Further on, it has been shown in the stories of the Messengers that the attitude of their people towards their Message was the same that was being shown by the chiefs of Makkah. Thus, the Qur'ān impresses on its addressees the fact that in every age, the basic deviation of each people had always been the same, and that the invitation of the Messenger of Allah had also been the same in every age, and the ultimate end of all those who denied and rejected that invitation, has always been the same and will always be the same.

50. The brief descriptions of certain events from the mission of Prophets at certain places in the Qur'ān have given rise to the conjecture that the whole thing was finished in a couple of meetings. They think that a prophet presented his

claim before his pepole and they raised some objections against it. Then the Prophet answered them, but they rejected him, and declared the Message to be false. This was repeated a couple of times; then God sent down His scourge. This is a wrong conjecture made by those who are ignorant of the style of the Qur'ān. These things are only parts of the long struggle, for the Qur'ān does not give all the details of a story at one and the same place. In relating some historical event, it confines itself only to that part of the story which is directly connected with the theme under discussion and leaves out all other details. As an illustration, let us cite instances of this from the story of Prophet Noah. Here the aim is to warn the people of the consequences of the denial and rejection of the Message of the Prophet. So it was not necessary to mention the long period during which the Prophet continued preaching the Message to his people. But at places where the story is related to teach fortitude to Prophet Muhammad and his Companions, a special mention has been made of the long period during which Prophet Noah went on preaching the Message. This is to encourage them that they should not lose heart by seeing no great and immediate result of their efforts of a few years but should learn a lesson from the story of Prophet Noah, who went on performing his mission with fortitude for centuries in very adverse circumstances, without losing heart. (See XXIX: 14).

Likewise, some people become sceptical when they read, over and over again, such a thing as this: "We drowned (destroyed) those who denied the Message and treated it as false": they ask, "Why do such things not happen now-a-days?" They admit that though the rise and fall of nations is always taking place in the world, this change is of a different nature from the one described in the Qur'ān, *e.g.*, instant destruction of a nation by an earthquake or flood or storm or lightning after due notice by a Prophet. In order to remove this doubt, one should understand the difference between the case of that community in which a Prophet is born and raised from among themselves, and the one where a Prophet is not present in person. He conveys Allah's Message directly to them in their own language and presents a perfect and excellent model of it in his own person in such a convincing way as to leave no excuse whatever for them to reject it. Therefore such a community deserves the severest punishment on the spot for rejecting the Messenger of Allah after such clear Signs. Obviously the case of such a community is basically different from the case of that community which does not receive the Message directly from the Prophet but received it through indirect means. So there is no wonder if such chastisements are not inflicted on the spot now, as they were during the times of the Prophets. This is because after the Prophethood of Muhammad, the last in the line of prophets (Allah's peace be upon them all), no prophet has been sent, nor shall any be sent up to the Last Day.

This does not, however, mean that Allah has now totally given up the infliction of chastisements. The fact is that even now He sends disasters by way of warning or punishment on those communities which rebel against Him and deviate into error. But it is a pity that people do not turn their attention towards the real cause. Instead of looking at these as the consequences of their own evil ways, their scientists, their historians and their philosophers, who cannot go beyond physical causes, mislead them by ascribing these to some physical and historical laws. These so-called scholars do not let them turn their attention to the fact that there is Allah above them, Who first warns them of their evil ways by inflicting minor disasters, and then, if they persist in the wrong ways, He throws them into the abyss of destruction.

51. 'Ād was one of the most ancient tribes of Arabia. Their stories were well known and were related all over the country. The stories of their power and wealth had become proverbial and their utter annihilation also was cited as an example. Their notoriety helped to produce some new words akin to their name. Every ancient thing is called عادی ('ādī) and archaeological remains are called عادیات ('ādiyyāt) The land, which has no owner left and thus becomes fallow, is called عادی الارض ('ādi-ul-ard).

This tribe is often mentioned in the ancient Arabic poetry. The experts in the art of genealogy of the Arab tribes mention 'Ād as the first of the extinct tribes of Arabia. There is a tradition that once a man of Bani Zahl-bin-Shaibān, who was a resident of the territory where the 'Ād tribe lived, came to the Holy Prophet and related stories about 'Ād, that had come down from ancient times.

According to the Qur'ān, the tribe of 'Ād lived in Ahqāf, surrounded by Hijāz, Yamān and Yamāmah. From here they had established their authority over a vast territory ,that extended from the western coast of Yamān and 'Ummān and Hadar Maut to 'Iraq. Though their remains have become quite extinct from the historical point of view, yet there are some remnants in Southern Arabia that are ascribed to 'Ād. At one place in Hadar Maut, there is a tomb which is said to be of Prophet Hūd. In 1837, James R. Wellested, an officer in the British Navy, discovered near Hisn-i-Ghurāb a tablet which contained a mention of Prophet Hūd. Moreover, the writing on the tablet showed that they were the followers of the Law of Prophet Hūd. (For further explanation see E.N. 25 of XLVI).

52. The Arabic word *ālā* means (1) "blessings" (2) Demonstrations of nature and (3) Praiseworthy qualities. Thus the verse can be elaborated to mean, "Remember the blessings and favours of Allah and do not forget that He also has the power to take away these from you".

53. Verse 70 also shows that the people of Hūd were neither ignorant of the existence of Allah nor did they deny Him nor did they refuse to worship Him. What they refused to accept was the invitation of Prophet Hūd to worship Allah alone, without associating anyone else with Him.

54. That is "You call one 'the lord of rain', the other 'the lord of air' or 'lord of wealth' or 'lord of disease', when, in fact, none of these is lord of anything. These are mere names that you have invented". In our own time they call one 'the remover of difficulties' and the other 'the bestower of treasures', whereas he has no treasure to bestow on anyone. They have made one "the giver", when he owns nothing to give, and so on. In fact, such titles are empty words without any corresponding possessor of such qualities, entitling anyone to these titles. Therefore, if one argues to justify these titles, he, in fact, raises disputes over mere names that have no reality behind them.

55. That is, "Allah, Whom you yourselves acknowledge to be the Overlord, has not delegated to any of these gods the powers of a lord or god. He has never said that He has delegated a part of His Godhead to such and such a one, nor has He sent command authorising anyone with the powers of 'giver' or 'remover of difficulties'. You yourselves have, of your own accord, bestowed such titles on the ones you pleased.

56. "We cut off the roots of . . ." means, "We destroyed them so completely that no sign of theirs was left in the world". This is a fact that has been established by the traditions of Arabia. The archaeological remains also bear testimony that the people of the "First 'Ād" were so completely annihilated that even their monuments were effaced from the world. The Arab historians count the 'Ād tribe among the extinct tribes. They, however, assert it as a fact that the followers of Hūd were saved and were known as the "Second 'Ād" and the tablet of Hisn-i-Ghurab mentioned in E.N. 51, is one of their monuments. Here are some extracts of the inscriptions which were inscribed on it some 1800 years before Christ:—

"We have lived for a long period in this fort in great prosperity. Our canals were always full of water ..... and our rulers were noble kings who were free from evil. They were, however, hard on those who disturbed the peace. They ruled over us in accordance with the Law of Hūd and used to enter all important decisions in a book. We believe in miracles and life-after-death."

The above extracts bear witness to the fact stated in the Qur'ān that the followers of Hūd became the inheritors of the ancient glory and prosperity of the 'Ād tribe.

الْاَرْضِ تَتَّخِذُوْنَ مِنْ سُهُوْلِهَا قُصُوْرًا وَّ تَنْحِتُوْنَ الْجِبَالَ بُيُوْتًا ۚ فَاذْكُرُوْٓا
اٰلَآءَ اللّٰهِ وَلَا تَعْثَوْا فِى الْاَرْضِ مُفْسِدِيْنَ ﴿74﴾ قَالَ الْمَلَاُ الَّذِيْنَ اسْتَكْبَرُوْا
مِنْ قَوْمِهٖ لِلَّذِيْنَ اسْتُضْعِفُوْا لِمَنْ اٰمَنَ مِنْهُمْ اَتَعْلَمُوْنَ اَنَّ صٰلِحًا
مُّرْسَلٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّهٖ ۚ قَالُوْٓا اِنَّا بِمَآ اُرْسِلَ بِهٖ مُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿75﴾ قَالَ الَّذِيْنَ اسْتَكْبَرُوْٓا
اِنَّا بِالَّذِيْٓ اٰمَنْتُمْ بِهٖ كٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿76﴾ فَعَقَرُوا النَّاقَةَ وَ عَتَوْا عَنْ اَمْرِ رَبِّهِمْ وَ
قَالُوْا يٰصٰلِحُ ائْتِنَا بِمَا تَعِدُنَآ اِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿77﴾ فَاَخَذَتْهُمُ الرَّجْفَةُ
فَاَصْبَحُوْا فِىْ دَارِهِمْ جٰثِمِيْنَ ﴿78﴾ فَتَوَلّٰى عَنْهُمْ وَ قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ لَقَدْ اَبْلَغْتُكُمْ
رِسَالَةَ رَبِّىْ وَ نَصَحْتُ لَكُمْ وَ لٰكِنْ لَّا تُحِبُّوْنَ النّٰصِحِيْنَ ﴿79﴾ وَ لُوْطًا اِذْ قَالَ
لِقَوْمِهٖٓ اَتَاْتُوْنَ الْفَاحِشَةَ مَا سَبَقَكُمْ بِهَا مِنْ اَحَدٍ مِّنَ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿80﴾ اِنَّكُمْ
لَتَاْتُوْنَ الرِّجَالَ شَهْوَةً مِّنْ دُوْنِ النِّسَآءِ ۚ بَلْ اَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ مُّسْرِفُوْنَ ﴿81﴾
وَ مَا كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهٖٓ اِلَّآ اَنْ قَالُوْٓا اَخْرِجُوْهُمْ مِّنْ قَرْيَتِكُمْ ۚ اِنَّهُمْ
اُنَاسٌ يَّتَطَهَّرُوْنَ ﴿82﴾ فَاَنْجَيْنٰهُ وَ اَهْلَهٗٓ اِلَّا امْرَاَتَهٗ ۖ كَانَتْ مِنَ
الْغٰبِرِيْنَ ﴿83﴾ وَ اَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ مَّطَرًا ۚ فَانْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿84﴾
وَ اِلٰى مَدْيَنَ اَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا ۚ قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ
اِلٰهٍ غَيْرُهٗ ۚ قَدْ جَآءَتْكُمْ بَيِّنَةٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ فَاَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ وَ الْمِيْزَانَ
وَ لَا تَبْخَسُوا النَّاسَ اَشْيَآءَهُمْ وَ لَا تُفْسِدُوْا فِى الْاَرْضِ بَعْدَ اِصْلَاحِهَا ۚ
ذٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿85﴾ وَ لَا تَقْعُدُوْا بِكُلِّ صِرَاطٍ تُوْعِدُوْنَ
وَ تَصُدُّوْنَ عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ مَنْ اٰمَنَ بِهٖ وَ تَبْغُوْنَهَا عِوَجًا ۚ وَ اذْكُرُوْٓا
اِذْ كُنْتُمْ قَلِيْلًا فَكَثَّرَكُمْ ۖ وَ انْظُرُوْا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُفْسِدِيْنَ ﴿86﴾ وَ

And to Thamūd,[57] We sent their brother Sālih. He said, "O my people, worship Allah for you have no other deity save Him. A clear proof has come to you from your Lord: here is Allah's she-camel, a sign[58] for you, so let her graze at will in Allah's land; do not touch her with any evil intention, lest a woeful scourge from your Lord seize you. And remember the time when Allah made you successors of 'Ād and established you in the land with dignity and enabled you to make castles on the plains and hew out houses in the hills.[59] So do not be neglectful of the manifestations of Allah's powers, and do not spread disorder on the earth."[60] 73-74

The chiefs of his tribe, who were full of pride, said to those who had believed from among the oppressed people, "Do you know it for certain that Sālih is a Messenger from his Lord?" They replied, "Indeed we believe in the Message with which he has been sent." But those who had arrogant assumption of superiority said, "We deny that thing which you believe." 75-76

Then they killed the she-camel,[61] and very insolently defied their Lord's command, and challenged Sālih, "Bring that scourge with which you threaten us, if you really are one of the Messengers." Consequently a shocking catastrophe[62] overtook them and they lay lifeless on their faces in their dwellings. So, Sālih left their habitations, saying, "O my people! I conveyed the Message of my Lord to you and I did my very best for your good, but I am helpless because you do not like your well-wishers." 77-79

And We sent Lot as a Messenger: Remember that he said to his people,[63] "Have you become so shameless that you commit such indecent acts as no one committed before you in the world? You gratify your lust with men instead of women :[64] indeed you are a people who are transgressors of all limits!"[7] But the only answer of his people was no other than to say, "Turn out these people of your habitations for they pose to be very pious."[65] At last We delivered Lot and the members of his household—except his wife, who was of those who stayed behind[66]—and We rained a rain upon his people;[67] then behold what happened in the end to the guilty ones![68] 80-84

And to Madyan[69] We sent their brother Shu'aib: he said, "O my people, worship Allah: you have no other deity than He. A clear 85-86

guidance has come to you from your lord: you should, therefore, give full measure and weight, and do not defraud the people of their goods,[70] nor spread disorder on the earth after it has been set aright :[71] this is better for you, if you are true Believers.[72] And do not lie in ambush by every path (of life) as robbers, in order to frighten the people nor debar from Allah's Way those who believe in it, nor seek to make the Right Way crooked. Remember the time, when you were a few in number; then Allah multiplied you: and behold with open eyes what happened to the spreaders of corruption!

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57. After 'Ād, Thamūd is the second most widely known ancient tribe of Arabia. Before the revelation of the Qur'ān, their stories were very common among the Arabs. Their mention occurs in the poetry and the addresses of pre-Islamic Arabia, and on the tablets found in Assyria. The ancient historians and geographers of Greece, Alexandria and Rome also mention this tribe. Some of their remains existed till some years before the birth of Prophet Christ. According to the Roman historians, the people of this tribe joined the Roman army and fought against the Nabataeans, their enemies.

The tribe of Thamūd inherited the territory in the north-western part of Arabia and is even today known by the name of Al-Hijr. Its capital was Madāin-i-Sālih, which is now-a-days a railway station on the Hijāz Railway between Al-Madīnah and Tabūk. Its old name is Hijr. There are even now spread over thousands of acres of land, those stony buildings that they had hewn out of hills. Even a cursory glance at this dead city leads one to the conclusion that its population must have been about five hundred thousand people.

At the time of the revelation of the Qur'ān, the trading caravans from Hijāz used to pass through the archaeological remains of Thamūd. When the Holy Prophet was leading his followers towards Tabūk, he passed by and pointed out towards the remains and asked them to bear in mind the lesson which such things hold out for every close observer. He pointed to a well from which the she-camel of Prophet Sālih drank water, and told them to drink water only from that well. Then he showed them a pass over a hill and said that the she-camel used to come through it to the well for drinking water. That pass is still called Fajj-un-Nāqah (the pass of the she-camel.) Then he assembled together those Muslims who were enjoying a walk through the remains and said, "This is the territory of the tribe on which Allah inflicted His scourge. Therefore pass through this with as much haste as you can, because this is not a place of enjoyment but a place of lamentation.

58. The wording of the Text clearly shows that Allah's she-camel was the clear proof", which has been called "a Sign" in the next sentence. We learn

from XXVI: 154-158 that the people of his tribe had themselves demanded from Prophet Sālih to bring a clear Sign of his appointment as Messenger of Allah. In response to this, the Prophet presented the she-camel as a Sign. This is a positive proof of the fact that the birth of the she-camel had taken place in some miraculous manner and her appearance was a miracle of the same kind as presented by other Prophets to the disbelievers at their demand of a proof of their Prophethood. Another proof of her miraculous birth is the fact that Prophet Sālih presented the she-camel to the disbelievers with a warning to this effect: "Your lives are directly connected with the life of this she-camel. She shall graze freely in your fields and she shall be privileged to drink water at the well one day all alone by herself, and all your cattle shall drink water the following day, turn by turn; and if you touch her with an evil intention, Allah's scourge will overtake you all of a sudden". It is obvious from this that the she-camel could have been presented in such a forcible manner only if the people had seen with their own eyes that she was an extraordinary animal. That is why they let her graze freely in their fields and let her drink water throughout the day all by herself, though in their heart of hearts they were not willing to accede to this. They were so much afraid of her that in order to kill her they had to hold long consultations and hatch secret plots, though Prophet Sālih had no worldly power to prevent them from this. This shows that they knew there was some hidden power behind her that made her so bold as to roam about wherever she liked.

The Qur'ān does not say anything about its physique as to how it came into being. Moreover, there is no mention of its miraculous existence in any authentic Tradition. Therefore one is not bound to accept the stories the commentators have related concerning her birth, etc. However, it is quite evident from the Qur'ān that she was a miracle in one way or the other.

59. The people of Thamūd used to carve out grand houses in the hills as has already been mentioned in E.N. 57. Some of them are still intact at Madāin-i-Sālih and bear witness to the wonderful skill they had achieved in engineering.

60. That is, "You should take a warning from the woeful end of 'Ād. The same Allah, Who destroyed that mischievous tribe and made you its successor, has the power to destroy you and make someone else your successor, if you become mischievous like 'Ād."

61. Though only one man had killed the she-camel *(vide* IV: 27-29 and XCI: 12-14), the whole tribe has been declared to be guilty of the crime because it was backing him as a whole, and he was, in fact, merely its tool, for every crime which represents the will of a nation or is approved by it, is a national crime, even though it is committed by one individual. According to the Qur'ān, even that

crime, which is committed openly by an individual, and is tolerated by the community, is a national crime.

62. The catastrophe that overtook Thamūd has been called الرَّجْفَة "the terrifying shocker", but in other places it has been called الصَّيْحَة (a cry) and الصَّاعِقَة (a thunderbolt) and الطَّاغِيَة (a roaring noise).

63. Those people lived in the territory now called Trans-Jordan and is situated between 'Irāq and Palestine. According to the Bible its head quarters was Sodom which was situated somewhere near the Dead Sea or has been submerged in it. The Talmud says that they had four more big cities besides Sodom, and the land between these cities looked like one big garden for miles, and charmed the onlookers. But now those cities cannot be located with accuracy because the whole land is covered with the Dead Sea, which is also called Lot's Sea.

Prophet Lot was the nephew of Prophet Abraham. He left 'Irāq along with his uncle and travelled with him over Syria, Palestine and Egypt in order to gain experience for the propagation of the Message. Then he was appointed as a Messenger by Allah and sent to reform the wicked tribe, which has been called 'his people' because he might have had some blood relation with it.

It is a pity that in the existing Bible, which has been tampered with by the Jews, the character of Prophet Lot has been blemished. Besides other things, even his mission to the plains of Jordan has been described as a migration to a fertile land after "a strife between the herdsmen of Abraham's cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle". (Genesis 5: 12, 13). But the Qur'ān refutes this allegation and says that Lot was appointed a Messenger and was sent there in order to reform those people.

64. At other places, the Qur'ān mentions some other crimes of these people, but here it mentions only their most heinous crime that brought about the scourge of Allah on them.

Although wicked people have always been committing this most heinous sin that has given the people of Sodom an everlasting notoriety, yet it has always been considered a filthy and detestable act. But the only people who have ever tried to raise it to a moral excellence, were the Greek philosophers in the ancient world, and the Europeans in the modern world. The latter are doing their utmost to make up the deficiency by making an open propaganda for it, and have succeeded in giving this filthy act a legal sanction. So much so that the legislatures of some countries have legalized it. It does not require elaborate argument to show that homo-sexuality is a horrible social crime and a heinous sin. For the Creator has made the male and the female of each and every living species different from

and complementary to each other for their reproduction. Then this difference in the human species has been created to serve another purpose. This is to urge the two to live together in order to form a family along with their offspring. For this is the foundation of a civilized life for which man has been created. That is why their bodies have been made complementary to attract each other for the satisfaction of sex urges and for the service of the natural function of reproduction of the species. Therefore the one who satisfies this sex urge in an unnatural way becomes guilty of many crimes at one and the same time. (1) Such a one, so to speak, wages a war against the natural and physical functionings of his own organs and those of the victims of his lust. This inevitably produces very harmful effects on their physiques, their minds and their morality. (2) He becomes guilty of treachery and dishonesty against Nature for he enjoys sexual pleasure, without performing the necessary service of his species and civilization and without fulfilling the rights and obligations attached to it. (3) He commits a breach of trust against the society in general for he enjoys all the benefits of the civilized society, but in his turn does not take on himself the responsibilities of the married life and wastes all his powers in the unnatural gratification of his sexual desires. This selfish and unworthy attitude is not only useless but also positively harmful to the collective morality. Thus he makes himself unfit for the service of the family and of the human race and produces unnatural feminine characteristics in, at least, one other male, and opens the way to adultery and moral degradation for at least two women.

65. The very fact that they could not tolerate even the presence of pious people among them, shows that they had gone to the lowest depths of moral degradation. They were not only shameless, wicked and immoral but also had lost every feeling of goodness and virtue. That is why they wanted to turn out Prophet Lot and his followers so that none should be left among them to invite them to virtue. When they, as a community, reached this extreme limit of wickedness and no vestige of goodness was left in them, Allah decreed that they should be totally exterminated because there was then no justification for their existence on the earth. Their case may be likened to a basket of apples, most of which are rotten, and only a few are good. When the good apples are taken out of it, then the remaining fruit becomes utterly useless and should, therefore, be thrown away into a heap of garbage.

66. In other places it has been made clear that Lot's wife, who probably was one of their daughters, supported her disbelieving relatives in their conflict with the Prophet, and did not leave them up to the end. That is why Allah ordained that Lot should not take her away with his followers.

[Contd. on p. 52

إِنْ كَانَ طَآئِفَةٌ مِّنكُمْ اٰمَنُوْا بِالَّذِيْٓ اُرْسِلْتُ بِهٖ وَطَآئِفَةٌ لَّمْ يُؤْمِنُوْا
فَاصْبِرُوْا حَتّٰى يَحْكُمَ اللّٰهُ بَيْنَنَا ۚ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْحٰكِمِيْنَ ﴿٨٧﴾

الجزء ٩

اٰمَنُوْا مَعَكَ مِنْ قَرْيَتِنَآ اَوْ لَتَعُوْدُنَّ فِيْ مِلَّتِنَا ۚ قَالَ اَوَلَوْ كُنَّا كٰرِهِيْنَ ﴿٨٨﴾
قَدِ افْتَرَيْنَا عَلَى اللّٰهِ كَذِبًا اِنْ عُدْنَا فِيْ مِلَّتِكُمْ بَعْدَ اِذْ نَجّٰىنَا اللّٰهُ مِنْهَا ۚ
وَمَا يَكُوْنُ لَنَآ اَنْ نَّعُوْدَ فِيْهَآ اِلَّآ اَنْ يَّشَآءَ اللّٰهُ رَبُّنَا ۚ وَسِعَ رَبُّنَا كُلَّ
شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا ۚ عَلَى اللّٰهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا ۚ رَبَّنَا افْتَحْ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ قَوْمِنَا بِالْحَقِّ وَ
اَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْفٰتِحِيْنَ ﴿٨٩﴾ وَقَالَ الْمَلَاُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مِنْ قَوْمِهٖ لَئِنِ اتَّبَعْتُمْ
شُعَيْبًا اِنَّكُمْ اِذًا لَّخٰسِرُوْنَ ﴿٩٠﴾ فَاَخَذَتْهُمُ الرَّجْفَةُ فَاَصْبَحُوْا فِيْ دَارِهِمْ
جٰثِمِيْنَ ﴿٩١﴾ اَلَّذِيْنَ كَذَّبُوْا شُعَيْبًا كَاَنْ لَّمْ يَغْنَوْا فِيْهَا ۚ اَلَّذِيْنَ كَذَّبُوْا
شُعَيْبًا كَانُوْا هُمُ الْخٰسِرِيْنَ ﴿٩٢﴾ فَتَوَلّٰى عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يٰقَوْمِ لَقَدْ
اَبْلَغْتُكُمْ رِسٰلٰتِ رَبِّيْ وَنَصَحْتُ لَكُمْ ۚ فَكَيْفَ اٰسٰى عَلٰى قَوْمٍ كٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿٩٣﴾ وَ
مَآ اَرْسَلْنَا فِيْ قَرْيَةٍ مِّنْ نَّبِيٍّ اِلَّآ اَخَذْنَآ اَهْلَهَا بِالْبَاْسَآءِ وَالضَّرَّآءِ لَعَلَّهُمْ
يَضَّرَّعُوْنَ ﴿٩٤﴾ ثُمَّ بَدَّلْنَا مَكَانَ السَّيِّئَةِ الْحَسَنَةَ حَتّٰى عَفَوْا وَّقَالُوْا قَدْ
مَسَّ اٰبَآءَنَا الضَّرَّآءُ وَالسَّرَّآءُ فَاَخَذْنٰهُمْ بَغْتَةً وَّهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿٩٥﴾ وَلَوْ
اَنَّ اَهْلَ الْقُرٰٓى اٰمَنُوْا وَاتَّقَوْا لَفَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ بَرَكٰتٍ مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ وَالْاَرْضِ
وَلٰكِنْ كَذَّبُوْا فَاَخَذْنٰهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَكْسِبُوْنَ ﴿٩٦﴾ اَفَاَمِنَ اَهْلُ الْقُرٰٓى اَنْ
يَّاْتِيَهُمْ بَاْسُنَا بَيَاتًا وَّهُمْ نَآئِمُوْنَ ﴿٩٧﴾ اَوَاَمِنَ اَهْلُ الْقُرٰٓى اَنْ يَّاْتِيَهُمْ
بَاْسُنَا ضُحًى وَّهُمْ يَلْعَبُوْنَ ﴿٩٨﴾ اَفَاَمِنُوْا مَكْرَ اللّٰهِ ۚ فَلَا يَاْمَنُ مَكْرَ اللّٰهِ اِلَّا الْقَوْمُ

If there are among you some who believe in the teachings with which I have been sent and there are others who believe not, wait and see till Allah judges between us, for He is the best of all judges. 87

The chiefs of his tribe, who were puffed up with pride, said to him, "O Shu'aib, we will banish you and those who have believed with you from our city, or you shall have to return to our fold." Shu'aib replied, "What! will you turn us back forcibly to it, even if we abhor it? We shall be guilty of attributing a lie to Allah, if we return to your creed, after Allah has delivered us from it; nor can we now return to your creed, except that Allah, our Lord, wills it ;[73] the knowledge of our Lord embraces everything; in Allah we put our trust, 'Our Lord, judge with truth between us and our people, and Thou art the best of judges'." 88-89

The chiefs of his tribe, who had rejected his Message, said to one another, "If you follow Shu'aib, you will be utterly ruined."[74] It, however, so happened that a shocking catastrophe overtook them and they remained lying prostrate in their dwellings. Those who treated Shu'aib as an impostor were so wiped out as if they had never lived in those dwellings. Ultimately the very people, who treated Shu'aib as an impostor, were utterly ruined.[75] Then Shu'aib left the place, saying, "O my people! I conveyed the Messages of my Lord to you and I did my best for you as your well-wisher. Now, how should I be grieved for the people who reject the Truth !"[76] 90-93

Whenever We sent a Prophet to a habitation, We first afflicted its people with adversity and calamity so that they should humble themselves. Then We changed their adversity for good fortune till they became very prosperous and said, "Our forefathers also had their adversity and prosperity". At last We seized them all of a sudden when they were quite unaware.[77] Had the people of the habitations believed and adopted the way of piety, We would have opened the doors of blessings from the heavens and the earth, but they denied the Truth; so We seized them for the evil they had earned. Do the people of the habitations now feel secure that Our punishment will not come to them all of a sudden at night, while they might be fast asleep? Or, do they feel secure that Our punishment will not smite them all of a sudden during the day while they might be engaged in pastime? Are these people not 94-99

afraid of Allah's secret plan?[78] In fact, only those people are doomed to destruction, who are not afraid of Allah's secret plan.

Contd. from p.49]

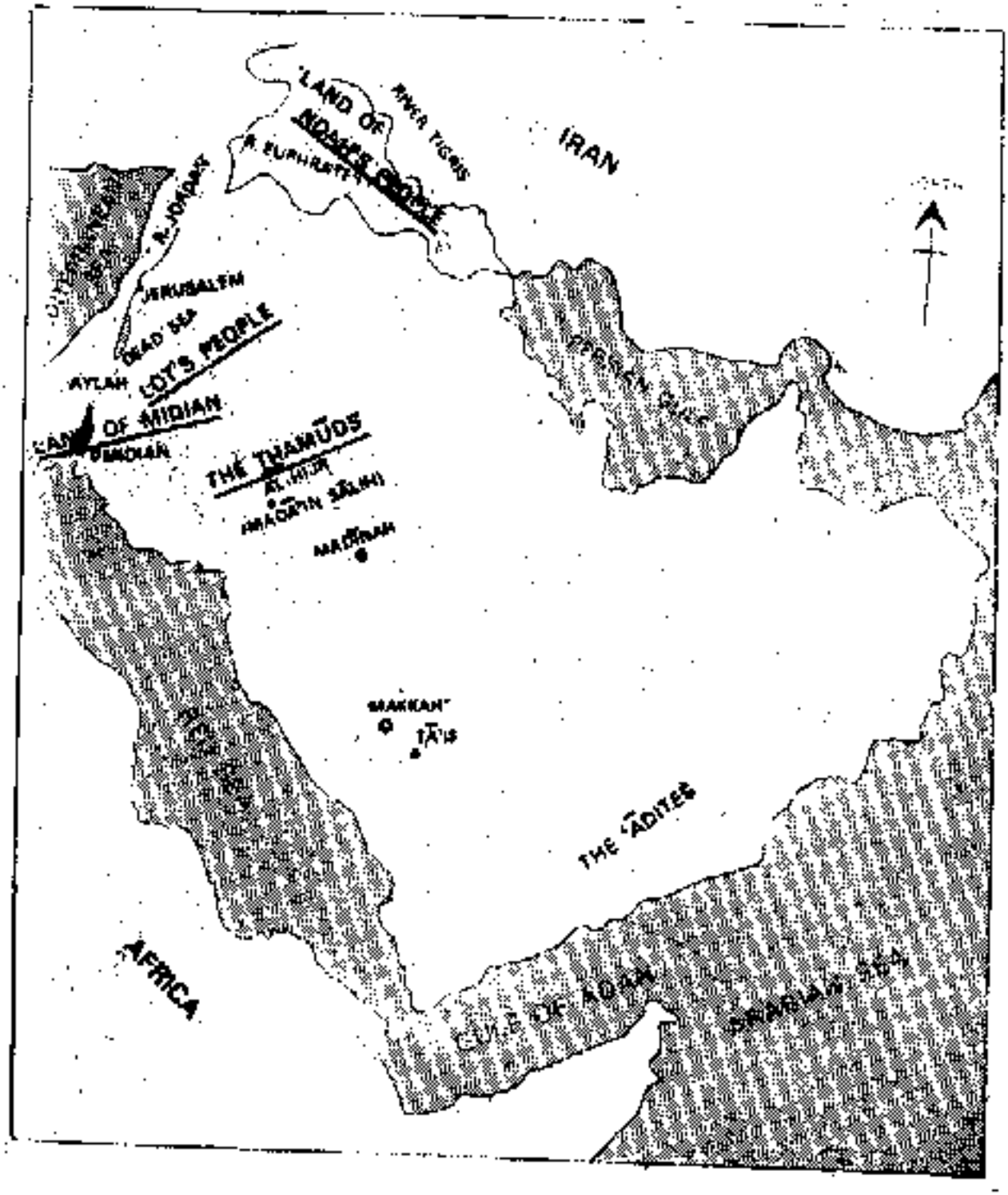
67. The "rain" was not a rain of water but a rain of stones as has been explicitly stated at some other places in the Qur'ān. Their habitations were turned upside down and sunk into the earth.

68. Here and at other places the Qur'ān merely declares that sodomy is such a heinous sin that it brought the wrath of Allah on a people. Then we learn from the guidance of the Holy Prophet that it is the duty of the Islamic State to eradicate this crime and should punish those who are guilty of it. In regard to this there are traditions with wording to this effect: (a) "kill the sodomite and the object of sodomy", (b) " .....whether they are married or unmarried", (c) "Stone to death the upper one and the lower one". But no definite and specific punishment was prescribed for the criminals because during his time, no case of sodomy was ever brought before the Holy Prophet.

There are, however, some traditions from his successors regarding this. Hadrat 'Alī is of the opinion that the criminals should be killed with sword and the dead bodies should not be buried but burnt to ashes. Hadrat Abu Bakr also agrees with it. Hadrat 'Umar and Hadrat 'Uthmān are of the opinion that they should be taken under the roof of a dilapidated building, which should be pulled down on them. Ibn 'Abbās has decreed that they should be thrown down headlong from the top of the highest building of the habitation and then stoned to death. Imām Shāfi'ī says that both the criminals involved in sodomy should be killed, whether married or unmarried. According to Shi'ibī,, Zuhrī, Mālik and Ahmad they should be stoned to death. Sa'īd bin Musayyib, 'Atā, Hasan Basri, Ibrahim Nakh'i, Sufyān Thauri and Auzā'i are of the opinion that the punishment is the same as for adultery, that is, one hundred stripes and exile for the unmarried, and stoning to death for the married. Imām Abū Hanīfah is of the opinion that the culprit should be punished in accordance with the circumstances of the crime with an exemplary punishment. There is also a saying of Imam Shāfi'i to this effect.

It should also be noted that it is unlawful for the husband to commit sodomy with his own wife. The Holy Prophet has declared, "The man who commits such an act with a woman is accursed" and "Allah will not even look at a person who commits this offence with a woman". In another Tradition, he has warned, "The one who cohabits with a woman in her menses or commits sodomy with her or goes to a soothsayer and believes him to be true, is a disbeliever in what has been sent down to Muhammad."

MAP SHOWING THE LANDS OF THE ANCIENT TRIBES
MENTIONED IN SŪRAH AL-A'ARĀF



69. The territory of (Midian) lay to the north-west of Hijāz and to the south of Palestine in the eastern side of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aqabah and extended to a part of the Sinai Peninsula. The Midianites were great traders. Their habitations lay at the crossroads of the trade routes from Yaman-Makkah to Syria along the side of the Red Sea and from 'Iraq to Egypt. Therefore they were well known among the Arabs and were remembered even after their extermination for their trade caravans to Syria and Egypt had to pass through their archaeological remains.

In order to grasp the significance of their story in the Qur'ān, it should be noted that the Midianites claimed to be the descendants of Midian, a son of Prophet Abraham from his third wife, Qatūrah. Though all of them had not directly descended from him, they claimed to be so. For, according to an ancient custom, all those people who became attached to some great man, began, by and by, to be counted among his descendants. That is why all Arabs were called Bani Ismā'il, though the majority of them were not his descendants. The same was the case with Bani Isrā'il. Likewise all the inhabitants of the territory, who came under the influence of Midian, a son of Prophet Abraham came to be known as Bani Madyan and the territory itself was called Madyan (Midian).

In the light of the above historical fact, there is no reason to suppose that they heard for the first time the voice of the Truth from Prophet Shu'aib. In fact, they were originally Muslims like the Israelites, but had become corrupt at the time when Prophet Shu'aib was sent to them, just as the Israelites were at the time when Prophet Moses was sent to them. Though they had become involved in *shirk* and immoralities by mixing with the *mushrik* and immoral people during the six centuries or so after Prophet Abraham, yet they professed to be "believers" and were proud of that.

70. This shows that Prophet Shu'aib was sent to reform them of their two main evils—*shirk* and dishonesty in trade.

71. For a detailed commentary on this, please refer to E.N.'s 44 and 45 of this Sūrah. Here Prophet Shu'aib wanted to draw their attention particularly to this: "You should not corrupt by your wrong beliefs and immoral ways the Right Way of life that had been established by the former Prophets."

72. The fact that the Prophet appeals to their Faith shows that they themselves professed to be Believers, as has been pointed out in E.N. 69. They were corrupt Muslims, who, though involved in wrong beliefs and misconduct, not only professed to be "believers" but also were proud of this. That is why the Prophet appealed to them, "If you are true believers, you should judge good and evil by the standard of the righteous and honest people, and not by the standards of those worldly people who do not believe in Allah and the Hereafter."

73. Prophet Shu'aib hastened to add these words to show that he could not claim with certainty even this much that they would not return to the creed of the disbelievers. A believer who rightly and fully comprehends the significance of the power of Allah, knows that it is His Will that prevails over everything. Therefore he cannot claim with certainty, "I will do this or I will not do this, for the fulfilment of this or that depends entirely on the will of my Lord. If He will, I shall become successful, otherwise I shall fail in it."

Allah has taught the same thing in XVIII: 23-24:

"Never say about anything, 'I will do this tomorrow, for you cannot do anything, but say, If it be Allah's Will'."

74. We should not pass cursorily over this sentence, but should think deeply about its implications. The chiefs and the leaders of Midian meant and wanted to convince the people of this thing: "We shall be utterly ruined if we accept and practise the fundamental principles of honesty, righteousness, uprightness and morality. It is obvious that our trade and commerce can never flourish if we apply the principle of truth to it and carry out our bargains with honesty. Besides this, if we do not exploit our geographical position on the crossroads of the most important trade routes, and let the caravans pass on without molestation and become peaceful citizens, all its political and commercial advantages will come to an end. This will also bring to an end the awe and influence we wield over our neighbouring countries." This fear of "ruin" was not peculiar to the people of Shu'aib alone. In every age the corrupt people have felt the same fear concerning the way of truth, righteousness and honesty. This has always been the considered opinion of all the corrupt people that it is not possible to carry out commercial, political and other worldly activities without resort to lies, dishonesty and immorality. That is why the greatest argument against the Message of Truth has always been that the community would be ruined, if it gave up the known worldly wrong ways and adopted the Right Way.

75. This total destruction of Midian had become a byword among the neighbouring nations. In Psalms (83: 5-9) Prophet David invokes the help of Allah against the oppressors, "who have taken crafty counsel against thy people," saying, "Do unto them as unto the Midianites." And Prophet Isaiah consoles the Israel, saying, "..... be not afraid of Assyrian....he shall lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt....the Lord of the hosts shall stir up a scourge for him according to the slaughter of Midian...." (*Isaiah*: 10: 21-26.)

76. A deep significance underlies all the stories which have been related here. Every story applied appropriately and exactly to the case of Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) and his people, the Quraish. In every story there are two parties — the Prophet and his people. In every story the

Message of the Prophet, his teachings, his admonition and all other things were exactly the same as those of Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him). On the other side, in every case his people, who were sunk deep in wrong creeds, immoralities and obduracies, and the chiefs who were puffed up with pride, rejected the Message contemptuously. As the Quraish were behaving exactly in the same way towards Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) and his Message, they have been warned indirectly that their doom would be similar to those people, if they did not accept his Message, and did not avail of the opportunity that Allah had afforded them: if they persisted blindly in their obduracy they would meet with the same destruction which had always been the doom of those peoples who persisted in their deviation.

77. After citing the individual case of every Prophet and his people, now the general and comprehensive procedure has been enunciated, that Allah adopted at the appointment of each one of His Messengers. Whenever a Messenger was sent, Allah afflicted his people with adversities and calamities so that they should become meek and humble, and be conditioned for the acceptance of the Message. Accordingly, He sent famines and epidemics to them and made them suffer economic losses, defeats in wars, and the like, in order to humble their pride and haughtiness and to frustrate their over-confidence in their powers, riches, resources, capabilities etc. This was to make them realize that there is a Higher Power above them that controls their destinies so that their hearts should be inclined to admonition and they should bow down humbly before their Lord. But, if this failed to incline their hearts to the acceptance of the Truth, they were tempted with prosperity. And this was the beginning of their end. As a rule, when such people, as are afflicted with adversity and calamities, begin to flourish and are enriched with blessings, they do not show any gratitude to their Master, and even forget the days of adversity. Then their intellectuals delude them by arguing like this: "There is nothing unusual in this. History tells us that the vicissitudes of fortune have always been taking place independent of moral values and these are not taking place under the control of Allah or in accordance with moral laws but blind nature is always working and bringing about adversity or prosperity. That is why our forefathers also had had their adversities and prosperities. It is, therefore, a sign of mental weakness to draw any moral lesson from these and to bow down and humble oneself before Allah.

The Holy Prophet had described the same thing in a Tradition: "Affliction goes on helping a Believer to reform himself till he comes out of this furnace cleansed of all impurities. But the case of a hypocrite in afflicition is that of an ass, who does not realise why his master tied him and why he untied him." This

[Contd. on p.58

الْخٰسِرُوْنَ ﴿٩٩﴾ اَوَلَمْ يَهْدِ لِلَّذِيْنَ يَرِثُوْنَ الْاَرْضَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ اَهْلِهَآ اَنْ لَّوْ
نَشَآءُ اَصَبْنٰهُمْ بِذُنُوْبِهِمْ ۚ وَنَطْبَعُ عَلٰى قُلُوْبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُوْنَ ﴿١٠٠﴾ تِلْكَ
الْقُرٰى نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ اَنْۢبَآئِهَا ۚ وَلَقَدْ جَآءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ ۚ فَمَا
كَانُوْا لِيُؤْمِنُوْا بِمَا كَذَّبُوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ ۚ كَذٰلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى قُلُوْبِ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿١٠١﴾
وَمَا وَجَدْنَا لِاَكْثَرِهِمْ مِّنْ عَهْدٍ ۚ وَاِنْ وَّجَدْنَآ اَكْثَرَهُمْ لَفٰسِقِيْنَ ﴿١٠٢﴾ ثُمَّ
بَعَثْنَا مِنْۢ بَعْدِهِمْ مُّوْسٰى بِاٰيٰتِنَآ اِلٰى فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَا۟ئِهٖ فَظَلَمُوْا بِهَا ۚ فَانْظُرْ
كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُفْسِدِيْنَ ﴿١٠٣﴾ وَقَالَ مُوْسٰى يٰفِرْعَوْنُ اِنِّيْ رَسُوْلٌ مِّنْ
رَّبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿١٠٤﴾ حَقِيْقٌ عَلٰٓى اَنْ لَّآ اَقُوْلَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ اِلَّا الْحَقَّ ۚ قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ
بِبَيِّنَةٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ فَاَرْسِلْ مَعِيَ بَنِيْٓ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ ﴿١٠٥﴾ قَالَ اِنْ كُنْتَ جِئْتَ
بِاٰيَةٍ فَاْتِ بِهَآ اِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿١٠٦﴾ فَاَلْقٰى عَصَاهُ فَاِذَا هِيَ
ثُعْبَانٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿١٠٧﴾ وَّنَزَعَ يَدَهٗ فَاِذَا هِيَ بَيْضَآءُ لِلنّٰظِرِيْنَ ﴿١٠٨﴾ قَالَ الْمَلَاُ
مِنْ قَوْمِ فِرْعَوْنَ اِنَّ هٰذَا لَسٰحِرٌ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿١٠٩﴾ يُّرِيْدُ اَنْ يُّخْرِجَكُمْ مِّنْ
اَرْضِكُمْ ۖ فَمَاذَا تَاْمُرُوْنَ ﴿١١٠﴾ قَالُوْٓا اَرْجِهْ وَاَخَاهُ وَاَرْسِلْ فِي الْمَدَآئِنِ
حٰشِرِيْنَ ﴿١١١﴾ يَاْتُوْكَ بِكُلِّ سَحَّارٍ عَلِيْمٍ ﴿١١٢﴾ وَجَآءَ السَّحَرَةُ فِرْعَوْنَ قَالُوْٓا
اِنَّ لَنَا لَاَجْرًا اِنْ كُنَّا نَحْنُ الْغٰلِبِيْنَ ﴿١١٣﴾ قَالَ نَعَمْ وَاِنَّكُمْ لَمِنَ
الْمُقَرَّبِيْنَ ﴿١١٤﴾ قَالُوْا يٰمُوْسٰٓى اِمَّآ اَنْ تُلْقِيَ وَاِمَّآ اَنْ نَّكُوْنَ نَحْنُ الْمُلْقِيْنَ ﴿١١٥﴾
قَالَ اَلْقُوْا ۚ فَلَمَّآ اَلْقَوْا سَحَرُوْٓا اَعْيُنَ النَّاسِ وَاسْتَرْهَبُوْهُمْ وَجَآءُوْ بِسِحْرٍ
عَظِيْمٍ ﴿١١٦﴾ وَاَوْحَيْنَآ اِلٰى مُوْسٰٓى اَنْ اَلْقِ عَصَاكَ ۚ فَاِذَا هِيَ تَلْقَفُ مَا
يَاْفِكُوْنَ ﴿١١٧﴾ فَوَقَعَ الْحَقُّ وَبَطَلَ مَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿١١٨﴾ فَغُلِبُوْا هُنَالِكَ

And, have not those people, who inherit the earth after its former occupants, learnt a lesson from the fact that, if We please, We can seize them for their sins?[79] (But they neglect the realities that teach a lesson) and We seal their hearts: then they do not listen to anything.[80] These people whose stories We recount to you (can serve as examples to you). Their Messengers came to them with clear Signs, but they would not believe in what they had once denied. Behold, this is how We seal the hearts of the disbelievers.[81] And We found in most of them no respect for any Covenant; nay, We found that most of them were transgressors.[82] 100-102

Then after the (above mentioned) communities, We sent Moses with Our Signs to Pharaoh and the chiefs of his nation,[83] but they also treated Our Signs unjustly.[84] Then behold, what happened in the end to the mischief-makers. 103

Moses said, "O Pharaoh![85] I am a Messenger from the Lord of the universe. It behoves me to say in the name of Allah nothing but the truth. I have come to you from your Lord with clear Signs of my appointment: so send the children of Israel with me."[86] 104-105

Pharaoh answered, "If you have brought a Sign, and, if what you say is true, produce it" 106

Thereupon, Moses threw down his staff, and behold, it became a real serpent all of a sudden. Then he drew his hand out of his pocket, and lo, it was shining before the beholders![87] 107-108

At this the chiefs of Pharaoh's people said to one another, "Indeed this man is an expert magician. He intends to drive you out of your land;[88] now what do you propose to do?" Then they all advised Pharaoh: "Put him and his brother off for a while, and send heralds to all the cities so that they should bring to you every expert magician".[89] Accordingly, the magicians came to Pharaoh and said, "Shall we surely get our reward, if we win ?" Pharaoh answered, "Yes, indeed, and you shall get a position close to me". 109-116

Then they said to Moses, "Wilt you throw down first, or should we throw down?" Moses answered, "You should throw down first".

When they threw down their devices, they bewitched the eyes of the people and terrified their hearts: for they had, indeed, produced a

great magic.

117 Then We inspired Moses to throw down his staff. No sooner did he throw it down than it began to swallow their false magic.[90]

Contd. from p. 55]

implies that if a community does not turn to Allah, even when adversities and calamities are inflicted on it or does not remember Allah in gratitude, when He showers His blessings upon it and is not inclined at all to reform itself in any way whatsoever, it is doomed and its destruction is imminent.

In this connection it should also be noted that the Divine procedure mentioned in vv. 94-95 was at work at Makkah at the time when this Sūrah was revealed. The Quraish were showing the same antagonistic attitude and were consequently suffering from a severe famine. We learn from a Tradition, related by Ibn Mas'ūd and Ibn 'Abbās, that when the Quraish began to oppose the mission of the Holy Prophet, he prayed, "O Lord, help me against these people by a seven-year famine, like the one that visited Egypt during the time of Joseph". Accordingly, Allah sent a very severe famine to Makkah and things came to such a pass that they began to eat dead animals, skins, bones and even wool. Then the people of Makkah, under the leadership of Abu Sufyān, went to the Holy Prophet, and beseeched him to pray to Allah to remove the famine. But when Allah removed the famine and they began to flourish, they became all the more arrogant and their evil geniuses began to hinder even those from it whose hearts were somewhat inclined towards the Faith, saying, "The famine was due to the vicissitudes of time, and was not different from the ones that visited us even before the advent of Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him). Therefore you should not fall into his trap by its visitation." Such things as "Our forefathers also had their adversity and prosperity" were being repeated at the time when this Sūrah was sent down. As these verses applied very appropriately to the condition of the Quraish at the time, this background should be kept in view in order to understand their full significance.

78. The Arabic word *makr* implies such a secret plan as remains hidden from the person against whom it is directed, and keeps him deluded that all is well, till it suddenly strikes him a decisive blow.

79. It is a pity that the succeeding nation does not learn any lesson from the mistakes of the fallen nation it replaces. There would be a great guidance for the people if they considered seriously the question why those people, who were ruling over the land before them and were prosperous and flourishing, were utterly ruined and totally destroyed. The answer would show them the erroneous thoughts and deeds which resulted in their ruin. Then they can also realize that the

Sovereign Ruler Who seized them for their mistakes and deposed them is All-Powerful even now, is still ruling over the universe and is able to punish them and depose them, if they commit the same kind of errors that their predecessors committed.

80. According to the Divine Law, the fall of a nation takes place when it neglects to take a lesson from the history of the former people and from the ruins of their monuments, but tries to delude itself. Then Allah does not let them think rightly or accept the admonition of any well wisher. As regards the individuals, the Divine Law is that if a person himself closes his eyes deliberately, the light of the sun does not help him; likewise if he does not want to hear, none else can make him hear.

81. In v. 101, Allah Himself has explained the meanings of the previous verse, "We seal their hearts: then they do not hear anything". From this it is clear that by the 'sealing of the hearts' is meant that state of mind which is caused as a result of the working of the Divine Law. When one deliberately refuses to accept the Truth because of one's ignorance, prejudice, selfishness, lust etc., then such a person becomes so obdurate that he persists in error without paying any attention to his own observations or to the arguments of his true well-wishers.

82. The disbelieves showed no respect for any of the three covenants that should be binding on every man. They respected neither the natural covenant that makes man by his very birth the servant of Allah, his Sustainer, nor that collective covenant that binds every individual to the observance of the known social code of the community of which he is a member, nor that personal covenant which every man undertakes with his Allah at the time of distress and helplessness.

Here Allah has called them "*fāsiq*" (transgressors) because they broke the above mentioned three covenants.

83. The preceding stories were related to bring home to the people of Makkah the fact that the community which receives the Message of Allah and then rejects it, is inevitably doomed to destruction. After these, the story of Moses, Pharaoh and the Israelites is being related with the same object, though there are other important lessons also for the disbelievers of the Quraish, the Believers and the Jews.

In this story the disbelievers of the Quraish have been admonished that they should not be deluded by their apparent favourable balance of power in the initial stages of the conflict between the Truth and falsehood. The whole history of the conflict bears evidence to the fact that a single man starts the Movement to establish the Truth in his nation, nay, in the whole world, and wages war, without the help of any material provisions, against falsehood which had the backing of

great nations and powerful kingdoms. But in spite of this, ultimately it comes out triumphant in the conflict. The Quraish have also been warned to note how all the devices of the disbelievers directed against the Messenger of the Truth in order to suppress his Message turn against themselves: that Allah gives a long respite to the disbelievers so that they might mend their ways before He makes the final decision to destroy them: that He gives exemplary punishment to those who do not take any lesson from a warning or a clear sign or an event that serves for a lesson.

There were two lessons for the Believers who had become the target of the persecution by the enemies. First, they should not be discouraged because they were smaller in number and weaker in power than their opponents, and they should not lose heart because Allah's succour was late in coming. Secondly, they were warned to guard against the attitude that was adopted by the Jews after they had professed to believe in the Truth: otherwise they would become accursed like the Jews.

The past history of the Israelites was related for their own benefit also. They were warned to consider the consequences of the worship of falsehood, and admonished to follow the Holy Prophet who was representing the true religion of the former Prophets after cleansing it of all the impurities that had been mixed up with it.

84. "They, too, treated Our Signs unjustly" by rejecting them and treating them as pieces of sorcery. It was injustice in the sense that they were not behaving fairly towards the signs and were treating them as pieces of sorcery and scoffing at them. There could be no greater injustice than to reject such Signs as were clear proofs of their being from Allah and about which no reasonable man could say that they could be produced by sorcery. Besides this, when the sorcerers themselves bore witness to the fact that it was beyond the power of sorcery to produce such Signs, it was nothing but injustice to reject these as pieces of sorcery. Thus they really showed that they were void of wisdom and truth as well.

85. The word *Fir'aun* (Pharaoh) literally means "the offspring of the sun-god". The ancient Egyptians called the sun *Ra'a*, which they worshipped as their supreme lord, and *Fir'aun* was named after it. According to the creed of the ancient Egyptians, every ruler based his authority on his relation to *Ra'a* and claimed to be its incarnation and representative on the earth. Therefore every royal dynasty that came into power in Egypt presented itself to be the descendant of the sun-god and every ruler adopted the title of *Fir'aun* in order to show to the people that he was the Supreme Lord.

In this connection, it should also be noted that two different Pharaohs have been mentioned in the story of Moses as related in the Qur'ān. The one was that Pharaoh who was ruling over Egypt when Moses was born, and who brought

him up in his own house, and the second was the one whom Moses invited to accept the Divine Message of God and deliver the children of Israel, and who was drowned.

The research scholars of today are inclined to believe that the first of the two Pharaohs who oppressed the Israelites was Rameses II, who ruled from 1292 to 1225 B.C. And the second Pharaoh who has been mentioned in these verses was Mineptah, who assisted his father Rameses II in the affairs of the government, and succeeded as ruler after his death. But these dates appear to be doubtful because, according to the calendar of the Israelites, the year of the death of Moses was 1272 B.C. These are, however, mere historical guesses for it is difficult to reconcile the dates of the Israelite, the Egyptian and the Christian calendars.

86. Prophet Moses was sent to Pharaoh with two missions. First, he should invite Pharaoh to surrender to Allah by accepting Islam. Second, he should demand from him to set the Israelites free from his slavery and tyranny. The Qur'ān mentions both the missions at one and the same place or separately, as required by the occasion.

87. These two Signs were given to Prophet Moses as a proof that he was a representative of Allah, the Creator and Sovereign of the whole universe. We have already stated that whenever the Messengers presented themselves before the people as the representatives of Allah, the people always demanded: "If you are really a representative of Allah, let such and such an event take place through you as may not be capable of being explained by the ordinary laws of nature, and which may clearly show that it has happened by the direct intervention of Allah to prove that you are really a representative of Allah". In answer to this demand, the Prophets showed those Signs that are called *'āyāt'* by the Qur'ān and miracles by the common people.

It is a pity that some learned Muslims try to explain away these Signs or miracles as ordinary events that took place according to the known physical laws of nature. They do not realise that in this way they are adopting a sceptical attitude towards the Book of Allah, for, in the context, the Qur'ān cites a supernatural event, and it presents the same as a Sign of Allah as a proof of his Prophethood. Therefore to explain it away as an ordinary event is, in fact, to disbelieve the Book. Thus such people make their own position ridiculous. On the one hand, they do not sincerely believe in the Qur'ān as a Book of Allah just because it upholds miracles; on the other, they do not have the courage to declare openly their disbelief in the Book which upholds supernatural events, because it would deprive them of the benefit of the religion they profess, as it would adversely affect their worldly interests.

The decisive question about miracles is whether Allah suspended His activities after starting the system of the universe according to certain laws, and now cannot interfere in any way whatever with the working of that system. Or, whether He keeps the reins of His kingdom in His own hands and enforces His commands every moment in this kingdom and He has full powers to make any change, partial or complete, in shaping things and the course of events, as and when He wills. Those who believe in the first alternative cannot believe in the miracles for it goes against their conception of Allah and His universe, but the most proper course for such people is to deny the Divine Revelation of the Qur'ān instead of writing any commentary on it so as to refute the Quranic conception of Allah and prove their own. On the other hand, if one is convinced by the arguments of the Qur'ān and accepts the second alternative he would readily understand and believe in the miracles. It is quite obvious that if one believes that a serpent can come into being only through a biological process and it is not possible for Allah to create it in any other way, then such a one should consider it false that a staff was changed into a serpent and again into the staff. On the contrary, if one believes that lifeless matter can come to life by the command of Allah, Who has the power to give any kind of life to anything He wills, he will readily believe that the staff was changed into a serpent just as he believes that a live chicken comes out of a lifeless egg. To such a person, there will be nothing extraordinary, just because the staff was changed into a serpent only thrice and a chicken comes out of an egg over and over again.

88. Naturally some questions arise here: How was Prophet Moses a danger to Pharaoh and his kingdom? How could a destitute person of a slave community like him be a menace to a powerful and rich king like Pharaoh, who was the object of worship of his subjects as well? How was the turning of the staff into a serpent menace to his great kingdom which extended from Syria to Libya and from the Mediterranean Sea to Abyssinia? Why did they then raise the alarm that Prophet Moses intended to deprive the great Pharaoh and the members of the royal dynasty and the big chiefs of their kingdom, and drive them out of Egypt? Above all, why was there a danger at all of a revolution, when he had put forward no other claim than that he was a Prophet of Allah, and demanded the freedom of the Israelites? These questions are specially important because so far no political talk had taken place between them.

The answer is that the claim to Prophethood in itself implied that Prophet Moses meant to bring about a complete revolution in the existing system of life, including the political system as well. The very fact that a person claims to be a Delegate of the Lord of the universe, contains in itself the demand for total submission of human beings to himself. This is because the Delegate of the Lord of the universe does not come to live as a subject of and subordinate to anyone

else but as the ruler and the guardian. For, it is the negation of his claim to Prophethood to acknowledge the sovereignty of an unbeliever. That is why Pharaoh and his courtiers felt the menace of a political, social and cultural revolution when Moses made a claim to Prophethood.

Let us consider the question: Why did the court of the great Pharaoh of Egypt attach so much importance to the claim of Moses, who had no other helper than his own brother, and no other emblem of his appointment from Allah than his miraculous staff and his shining hand? In my opinion there were two main reasons: First, Pharaoh and his courtiers were fully acquainted with the great personality of Prophet Moses. They knew that he possessed a pure and strong character and an extraordinary ability, and was a born leader and commander. Besides this, if we rely on the stories of the Talmud and Josephus, Prophet Moses had acquired education in all the sciences of the age, and was fully trained in the art of war and administration, because these things were considered essential for the members of the royal family in which he was brought up, and had proved himself to be an excellent general in the campaign against Abyssinia. Above all, the hard desert life of eight years or so in Midian had helped to remove the effects of a life of ease in the royal palace. Therefore, when this grand, serene and pious man stood in the court of Pharaoh with the claim of Prophethood, they could not brush aside his claim as hollow. Secondly, when they saw the miracles of the staff and the shining hand, they were all filled with awe and were inclined to admit that there was, indeed, some supernatural force at his back. Thus there was an apparent contradiction in their calling him a magician and, at the same time, expressing a fear that he would drive them out of the country. This also showed that they had been nonplussed by the very first appearance of the Signs of Prophethood. If they had really considered Prophet Moses to be a magician, they would have never felt and expressed the danger of a revolution from him, for magic has never brought about any revolution in the world.

89. These words of the courtiers of Pharaoh show that they had a clear conception of the distinction between the change produced by a Divine miracle and the effect of magic. They knew that the change brought about by a Divine miracle was real, whereas the effect produced by magic was merely an illusion. That is why they tried to refute the claim of Prophet Moses, saying, "This man is an expert magician". They meant to say that the staff had not actually turned into a serpent but had only appeared so to them to be a serpent because of his magic and they would not acknowledge it as a Divine miracle. Therefore they counselled Pharaoh to gather together all the expert magicians so that they may show that they could also turn ropes and sticks into serpents and remove to some extent from the hearts of the people the awful effect that had been produced in their minds by

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وَانْقَلَبُوْا صٰغِرِيْنَ ﴿١١٩﴾ وَاُلْقِيَ السَّحَرَةُ سٰجِدِيْنَ ﴿١٢٠﴾ قَالُوْٓا اٰمَنَّا بِرَبِّ
الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿١٢١﴾ رَبِّ مُوْسٰى وَهٰرُوْنَ ﴿١٢٢﴾ قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ اٰمَنْتُمْ بِهٖ قَبْلَ اَنْ
اٰذَنَ لَكُمْ ۭ اِنَّ هٰذَا لَمَكْرٌ مَّكَرْتُمُوْهُ فِي الْمَدِيْنَةِ لِتُخْرِجُوْا مِنْهَآ اَهْلَهَا ۚ
فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿١٢٣﴾ لَاُقَطِّعَنَّ اَيْدِيَكُمْ وَاَرْجُلَكُمْ مِّنْ خِلَافٍ ثُمَّ لَاُصَلِّبَنَّكُمْ
اَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿١٢٤﴾ قَالُوْٓا اِنَّآ اِلٰى رَبِّنَا مُنْقَلِبُوْنَ ﴿١٢٥﴾ وَمَا تَنْقِمُ مِنَّآ اِلَّآ اَنْ اٰمَنَّا
بِاٰيٰتِ رَبِّنَا لَمَّا جَاۗءَتْنَا ۭ رَبَّنَآ اَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا وَّتَوَفَّنَا مُسْلِمِيْنَ ﴿١٢٦﴾ وَ
قَالَ الْمَلَاُ مِنْ قَوْمِ فِرْعَوْنَ اَتَذَرُ مُوْسٰى وَقَوْمَهٗ لِيُفْسِدُوْا فِي الْاَرْضِ وَ
يَذَرَكَ وَاٰلِهَتَكَ ۭ قَالَ سَنُقَتِّلُ اَبْنَاۗءَهُمْ وَنَسْتَحْيٖ نِسَاۗءَهُمْ ۚ وَاِنَّا فَوْقَهُمْ
قٰهِرُوْنَ ﴿١٢٧﴾ قَالَ مُوْسٰى لِقَوْمِهِ اسْتَعِيْنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ وَاصْبِرُوْا ۚ اِنَّ الْاَرْضَ
لِلّٰهِ ۙ يُوْرِثُهَا مَنْ يَّشَاۗءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهٖ ۭ وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿١٢٨﴾ قَالُوْٓا اُوْذِيْنَا
مِنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ تَاْتِيَنَا وَمِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا جِئْتَنَا ۭ قَالَ عَسٰى رَبُّكُمْ اَنْ يُّهْلِكَ
عَدُوَّكُمْ وَيَسْتَخْلِفَكُمْ فِي الْاَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرَ كَيْفَ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿١٢٩﴾ وَلَقَدْ اَخَذْنَآ
اٰلَ فِرْعَوْنَ بِالسِّنِيْنَ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الثَّمَرٰتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَذَّكَّرُوْنَ ﴿١٣٠﴾ فَاِذَا
جَاۗءَتْهُمُ الْحَسَنَةُ قَالُوْا لَنَا هٰذِهٖ ۚ وَاِنْ تُصِبْهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ يَّطَّيَّرُوْا بِمُوْسٰى
وَمَنْ مَّعَهٗ ۭ اَلَآ اِنَّمَا طٰۗىِٕرُهُمْ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿١٣١﴾ وَ
قَالُوْا مَهْمَا تَاْتِنَا بِهٖ مِنْ اٰيَةٍ لِّتَسْحَرَنَا بِهَا ۙ فَمَا نَحْنُ لَكَ بِمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٣٢﴾
فَاَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الطُّوْفَانَ وَالْجَرَادَ وَالْقُمَّلَ وَالضَّفَادِعَ وَالدَّمَ اٰيٰتٍ
مُّفَصَّلٰتٍ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوْا وَكَانُوْا قَوْمًا مُّجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿١٣٣﴾ وَلَمَّا وَقَعَ عَلَيْهِمُ الرِّجْزُ
قَالُوْا يٰمُوْسَى ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ بِمَا عَهِدَ عِنْدَكَ ۚ لَىِٕنْ كَشَفْتَ عَنَّا الرِّجْزَ

Thus the Truth was established, and the falsehood which they had wrought proved vain. Pharaoh and his people were vanquished in the combat and (instead of being triumphant) they became humiliated. As regards the magicians, they were compelled to fall prostrate by something from within. They said, "We have acknowledged the Lord of the worlds,– the Lord whom Moses and Aaron acknowledge."[91] 118-122

Pharaoh said, "Do you dare believe in Him before I permit you? Indeed, it was a plot you conspired in the capital to deprive the rightful owners of their power. Well, you shall soon know its consequences. I will have your hands and feet cut off on opposite sides and then will I have you all crucified." 123-124

They answered, "At any rate, we have to return to our Lord; (as for you,) you want to take vengeance upon us only because we believed in the Signs of our Lord, when they came before us. O our Lord, bestow fortitude upon us, causing us to die as those who have surrendered to Thee".[92] 125-126

Then the chiefs of Pharaoh's nation said to him, "Will you leave Moses and his people free to spread disorder in the land, and let them discard your service and that of your deities?" Pharaoh answered, "Well, I will have their sons slain and let their women live[93]: we have a strong hold over them." 127

Moses said to his people, "Invoke Allah's help, and show fortitude. The land belongs to Allah. He gives it as a heritage to those of His servants whom He pleases: and the final success is for those who fear Him in all their doings." His people answered, "We were oppressed before you came to us and now also we are being oppressed since you have come to us." He said, "In the near future, your Lord will destroy your enemies, and make you vicegerents in this land; then He will see how you conduct yourselves." 128-129

Indeed We afflicted Pharoah's people with several years of famine and scarcity of food so that they should come to their senses. But they responded like this: whenever a good time came, they would say, "This is but our due" and when there was a hard time, they would ascribe their calamities to Moses and those with him. Whereas, in fact, their misfortune was in the hand of Allah; but most of them did not 130-134

know this. They said to Moses, "We are not going to believe in you, whatever Sign you may bring to enchant us."[94] At last We let loose upon them the storm,[95] the locusts, the lice,[96] and the frogs, and rained blood upon them. Though We showed these Signs, one by one, they persisted in their rebellion; for they were steeped in crime. Whenever a plague befell them, they would say, "O Moses! Pray for us to Allah in the name of the office you hold from Him. If you help remove the plague from us this time, we will believe in you, and send the Israelites with you."

Contd. from p. 63]

the miracle of the staff of Moses.

90. There is no ground to believe that the staff of Moses swallowed up the sticks and ropes that had been cast by the magicians and had appeared to be serpents. What the Qur'ān says is that the staff swallowed up the false magic produced by them as soon as it turned into a real serpent. In plain words it means that wherever the serpent of the staff went, it nullified the effects of the magic which had made their ropes and sticks appear as moving serpents and as a result of one round made by the staff they began to look like their real selves as ropes and sticks. (For further explanation, see E.N. 42 of XX).

91. This defeat and acknowledgement turned the tables on the people of Pharaoh. They had mustered all the expert magicians of the land to demonstrate publicly that Prophet Moses was a magician or, at least, to create doubts in the minds of the public about his Prophethood. But after the defeat, their own experts in the art admitted unanimously that what Prophet Moses was presenting was not magic at all, but most surely it was the work of the power of the Lord of the worlds, and that every kind of magic was powerless against it.

Obviously their considered opinion could not be brushed aside in an offhand way, for none could judge magic better than the magicians. That is why when the magicians testified, after practical demonstration and trial, that it was not magic, it became impossible for Pharaoh and his courtiers to assert that Moses was a magician.

92. When Pharaoh saw the tables turning on himself, he thought out another device. He declared that the whole show was the outcome of the plot that Moses and the magicians had devised. Then he threatened the magicians with a severe chastisement and death so that they should confess that his accusation was true. But this move also turned against him. As the magicians remained firm in their new Faith, and were prepared to undergo any torture for its sake, it became

evident that their belief in the Truth presented by Moses was a genuine confession of faith and not the pretence of any plot. That is why he had to give up the pretence of truth and justice and resort to open tyranny.

In this connection it should also be noted that in a few moments, their Faith had brought about a wonderful change in the character of the magicians. The same people who had left their homes for the sake of helping the religion of their forefathers and had, a few minutes before, very humbly requested Pharaoh to give them rewards if they came out successful in the conflict with Moses, were now filled with the courage of conviction of the true Faith. They had become so bold and brave that they were now defying the same king, before whom they were meekly bowing, and begging a reward for their encounter. But now they had become so convinced of the truth of their Faith that they were not ready to give it up for the fear of the worst torture with which they were being threatened.

93. It should be noted that there were two periods of oppression. At first the Israelites were oppressed during the reign of Rameses II, before the birth of Prophet Moses. The second period of oppression mentioned in this verse started during the reign of Mineptah, after the appointment of Moses as a Messenger of Allah. However, there was one thing common. The sons of Israelites were killed and the lives of their daughters were spared so that their race should gradually come to an end and the survivors get merged into other races. A tablet that was dug up during the archaeological excavations in 1896; probably refers to this period, when it mentions the exploits and victories of Mineptah, saying, "The Israelites have been exterminated and no seed has been left for their reproduction." (For further explanation see v. 25 of XL).

94. This was the height of bigotry and obduracy that the courtiers of Pharaoh were dubbing as magic that thing which they knew could never be magic. Even a fool would not believe that magic can bring about famine and scarcity in the whole country. In connection with the same story the Qur'ān says in XXVII: 13-14, "When Our Signs came openly before their eyes, they said, "This is an obvious magic. Though their hearts were convinced (of their truth), they denied these unjustly and rebelliously."

95. Probably it was a rain-storm that was accompanied by hailstones, though it could have been any other kind of storm. As the Bible does not mention a rain-storm but only a heavy fall of hailstones, the common word storm has been preferred.

96. The Arabic word قُمَّل *(qummal)* in the original stands for any of the small insects like louse, small fly, mosquito, small locusts, weevil and the like.

[Contd. on p. 72

لَنُؤْمِنَنَّ لَكَ وَلَنُرْسِلَنَّ مَعَكَ بَنِيٓ إِسْرَآءِيلَ ﴿١٣٤﴾ فَلَمَّا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمُ الرِّجْزَ
إِلَىٰٓ أَجَلٍ هُم بَٰلِغُوهُ إِذَا هُمْ يَنكُثُونَ ﴿١٣٥﴾ فَٱنتَقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ فَأَغْرَقْنَٰهُمْ فِى
ٱلْيَمِّ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَذَّبُوا۟ بِـَٔايَٰتِنَا وَكَانُوا۟ عَنْهَا غَٰفِلِينَ ﴿١٣٦﴾ وَأَوْرَثْنَا ٱلْقَوْمَ ٱلَّذِينَ
كَانُوا۟ يُسْتَضْعَفُونَ مَشَٰرِقَ ٱلْأَرْضِ وَمَغَٰرِبَهَا ٱلَّتِى بَٰرَكْنَا فِيهَا ۖ وَتَمَّتْ
كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ ٱلْحُسْنَىٰ عَلَىٰ بَنِىٓ إِسْرَٰٓءِيلَ ۛ بِمَا صَبَرُوا۟ ۖ وَدَمَّرْنَا مَا كَانَ
يَصْنَعُ فِرْعَوْنُ وَقَوْمُهُۥ وَمَا كَانُوا۟ يَعْرِشُونَ ﴿١٣٧﴾ وَجَٰوَزْنَا بِبَنِىٓ إِسْرَٰٓءِيلَ
ٱلْبَحْرَ فَأَتَوْا۟ عَلَىٰ قَوْمٍ يَعْكُفُونَ عَلَىٰٓ أَصْنَامٍ لَّهُمْ ۚ قَالُوا۟ يَٰمُوسَى ٱجْعَل
لَّنَآ إِلَٰهًا كَمَا لَهُمْ ءَالِهَةٌ ۚ قَالَ إِنَّكُمْ قَوْمٌ تَجْهَلُونَ ﴿١٣٨﴾ إِنَّ هَٰٓؤُلَآءِ مُتَبَّرٌ
مَّا هُمْ فِيهِ وَبَٰطِلٌ مَّا كَانُوا۟ يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٣٩﴾ قَالَ أَغَيْرَ ٱللَّهِ أَبْغِيكُمْ
إِلَٰهًا وَهُوَ فَضَّلَكُمْ عَلَى ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ ﴿١٤٠﴾ وَإِذْ أَنجَيْنَٰكُم مِّنْ ءَالِ فِرْعَوْنَ
يَسُومُونَكُمْ سُوٓءَ ٱلْعَذَابِ ۖ يُقَتِّلُونَ أَبْنَآءَكُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيُونَ نِسَآءَكُمْ ۚ وَفِى
ذَٰلِكُم بَلَآءٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٤١﴾ وَوَٰعَدْنَا مُوسَىٰ ثَلَٰثِينَ لَيْلَةً وَأَتْمَمْنَٰهَا
بِعَشْرٍ فَتَمَّ مِيقَٰتُ رَبِّهِۦٓ أَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً ۚ وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِأَخِيهِ هَٰرُونَ
ٱخْلُفْنِى فِى قَوْمِى وَأَصْلِحْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ ٱلْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿١٤٢﴾ وَلَمَّا جَآءَ
مُوسَىٰ لِمِيقَٰتِنَا وَكَلَّمَهُۥ رَبُّهُۥ ۙ قَالَ رَبِّ أَرِنِىٓ أَنظُرْ إِلَيْكَ ۚ قَالَ لَن
تَرَىٰنِى وَلَٰكِنِ ٱنظُرْ إِلَى ٱلْجَبَلِ فَإِنِ ٱسْتَقَرَّ مَكَانَهُۥ فَسَوْفَ تَرَىٰنِى ۚ فَلَمَّا
تَجَلَّىٰ رَبُّهُۥ لِلْجَبَلِ جَعَلَهُۥ دَكًّا وَخَرَّ مُوسَىٰ صَعِقًا ۚ فَلَمَّآ أَفَاقَ قَالَ
سُبْحَٰنَكَ تُبْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَأَنَا۠ أَوَّلُ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٤٣﴾ قَالَ يَٰمُوسَىٰٓ إِنِّى ٱصْطَفَيْتُكَ
عَلَى ٱلنَّاسِ بِرِسَٰلَٰتِى وَبِكَلَٰمِى ۖ فَخُذْ مَآ ءَاتَيْتُكَ وَكُن مِّنَ ٱلشَّٰكِرِينَ ﴿١٤٤﴾

But as soon as We removed the plague from them after the expiry of the term that had been fixed for them, they would at once break their promise. Then We took Our vengeance on them and drowned them in the sea because they had treated Our Signs as false and had grown heedless of them. And after them We gave as heritage to those who had been abased and kept low, the eastern and western parts of that land, which had been blessed bountifully by Us.[97] Thus the promise of prosperity that your Lord had made with the Israelites was fulfilled, because they had shown fortitude. And We destroyed all that Pharaoh and his people had constructed and raised up. 135-137

We led the Israelites across the sea; then they started on their journey, and came upon a people who were zealously devoted to their idols. They said, "O Moses, make a god also for us like the gods these people have."[98] Moses replied "Indeed, you are a people who are behaving very foolishly. The way these people are following is doomed to destruction and the works they are performing are absolutely vain." Then he further said, "What! should I seek a god for you other than Allah: when it is He Who has exalted you above all the nations of the world? And (Allah says), "Recall the time when We rescued you from the people of Pharaoh, who afflicted you with a dreadful torment; they slew your sons and let your women live and in this was a great trial for you from your Lord!" 138-141

We summoned Moses to Mount Sinai for thirty nights and days, and We added to them ten, thus the term appointed by his Lord became full forty nights and days.[99] Before leaving, Moses said to his brother Aaron, "After me take my place among my people and do the right, and do not follow the way of the mischief-makers."[100] When Moses arrived there at the appointed time and his Lord spoke with him, he beseeched, "Lord, give me power of sight so that I may look upon Thee." He answered, "You cannot see Me. Well, you may just look towards the yonder Mountain; if it remains firm in its place, then you shall behold Me." Accordingly, when his Lord manifested His glory on the Mountain; that turned it into fine dust, and Moses fell in a swoon. when he came to himself, he said, "Glory be to thee! I repent before Thee, and I am the first of those who believe." He said, "O Moses! I have chosen you from among all the people to deliver My Message and to 142-144

وَكَتَبْنَا لَهٗ فِي الْاَلْوَاحِ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مَّوْعِظَةً وَّتَفْصِيْلًا لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ ۚ
فَخُذْهَا بِقُوَّةٍ وَّاْمُرْ قَوْمَكَ يَاْخُذُوْا بِاَحْسَنِهَا ۚ سَاُورِيْكُمْ دَارَ الْفٰسِقِيْنَ ﴿145﴾
سَاَصْرِفُ عَنْ اٰيٰتِيَ الَّذِيْنَ يَتَكَبَّرُوْنَ فِي الْاَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ ۭ وَاِنْ يَّرَوْا
كُلَّ اٰيَةٍ لَّا يُؤْمِنُوْا بِهَا ۚ وَاِنْ يَّرَوْا سَبِيْلَ الرُّشْدِ لَا يَتَّخِذُوْهُ سَبِيْلًا ۚ
وَاِنْ يَّرَوْا سَبِيْلَ الْغَيِّ يَتَّخِذُوْهُ سَبِيْلًا ۭ ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّهُمْ كَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا وَ
كَانُوْا عَنْهَا غٰفِلِيْنَ ﴿146﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ كَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا وَلِقَاۗءِ الْاٰخِرَةِ حَبِطَتْ
اَعْمَالُهُمْ ۭ هَلْ يُجْزَوْنَ اِلَّا مَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿147﴾ وَاتَّخَذَ قَوْمُ مُوْسٰى
مِنْۢ بَعْدِهٖ مِنْ حُلِيِّهِمْ عِجْلًا جَسَدًا لَّهٗ خُوَارٌ ۭ اَلَمْ يَرَوْا اَنَّهٗ لَا يُكَلِّمُهُمْ
وَلَا يَهْدِيْهِمْ سَبِيْلًا ۘ اِتَّخَذُوْهُ وَكَانُوْا ظٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿148﴾ وَلَمَّا سُقِطَ فِيْٓ
اَيْدِيْهِمْ وَرَاَوْا اَنَّهُمْ قَدْ ضَلُّوْا ۙ قَالُوْا لَىِٕنْ لَّمْ يَرْحَمْنَا رَبُّنَا وَيَغْفِرْ لَنَا
لَنَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ الْخٰسِرِيْنَ ﴿149﴾ وَلَمَّا رَجَعَ مُوْسٰٓى اِلٰى قَوْمِهٖ غَضْبَانَ اَسِفًا ۙ
قَالَ بِئْسَمَا خَلَفْتُمُوْنِيْ مِنْۢ بَعْدِيْ ۚ اَعَجِلْتُمْ اَمْرَ رَبِّكُمْ ۚ وَاَلْقَى الْاَلْوَاحَ
وَاَخَذَ بِرَاْسِ اَخِيْهِ يَجُرُّهٗٓ اِلَيْهِ ۭ قَالَ ابْنَ اُمَّ اِنَّ الْقَوْمَ اسْتَضْعَفُوْنِيْ
وَكَادُوْا يَقْتُلُوْنَنِيْ ۠ فَلَا تُشْمِتْ بِيَ الْاَعْدَاۗءَ وَلَا تَجْعَلْنِيْ مَعَ الْقَوْمِ
الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿150﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِيْ وَلِاَخِيْ وَاَدْخِلْنَا فِيْ رَحْمَتِكَ ۠ وَاَنْتَ
اَرْحَمُ الرّٰحِمِيْنَ ﴿151﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اتَّخَذُوا الْعِجْلَ سَيَنَالُهُمْ غَضَبٌ مِّنْ
رَّبِّهِمْ وَذِلَّةٌ فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا ۭ وَكَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُفْتَرِيْنَ ﴿152﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ
عَمِلُوا السَّيِّاٰتِ ثُمَّ تَابُوْا مِنْۢ بَعْدِهَا وَاٰمَنُوْٓا ۙ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهَا
لَغَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿153﴾ وَلَمَّا سَكَتَ عَنْ مُّوْسَى الْغَضَبُ اَخَذَ الْاَلْوَاحَ ۚ وَفِيْ

have conversation with Me: so take whatever I give you and be grateful."

After this, We inscribed upon the tablets[101] admonitions concerning every branch of life and clear instructions about all its aspects and gave these to Moses and said to him, "Hold fast to the precepts steadfastly, and enjoin your people to follow them according to their best sense.[102] In the near future, I shall show you the abode of the wicked people.[103] I will turn away from My Signs the eyes of those who without any sight behave haughtily on the earth.[104] Whatsoever Sign they might see they will never believe in it. If they see the Right Way before them, they will not follow it; but if they see a crooked way, they will follow it. That is because they treated Our Signs as false and were heedless of them. Whoever treated Our Signs as false and denied the meeting in the Hereafter their deeds became vain.[105] Can the people get any recompense except according to what they have wrought?" 145-147

In his absence[106] the people of Moses made from their ornaments the image of a calf which made sound like lowing. Did they not see that it could neither speak to them nor guide them in any matter? Yet they took it for a god, for they were wrong-doers.[107] But when the enchantment of self delusion was broken and they realised that they had, in fact, gone astray, they said, "If our Lord does not have mercy on us and does not forgive us we shall be losers." In the meanwhile when Moses full of anger and sorrow returned to his people, he said, "Very evil is it that you have done in my place after me! Could you not patiently wait for the Commandment of Allah?" And he threw down the tablets, and, seizing his brother by the hair of his head, dragged him. Aaron said, "Son of my mother, these people overpowered me and were going to kill me: so, let not the enemies gloat over me: do not count me among the people who have done wrong."[108] Then Moses said, "O Lord, forgive me and my brother, and admit us to Thy mercy; Thou art the Most Merciful of all." (In response to this Allah said,) "Allah's wrath shall surely overtake those who made the calf a god, and they shall be abased in the life of this world, that is how We punish those who invent falsehood. But those who do evil deeds, then repent after this and believe, will after this repentance and belief most surely find your Lord Forgiving and Merciful." 148-153

Contd. from p.67]

Probably this comprehensive word has been used for the reason that lice and mosquitoes had inflicted human beings and seed-weevils had attacked granaries at one and the same time. (For comparison, see Chapters 7-12 of Exodus, and E.N. 43 of LXIII).

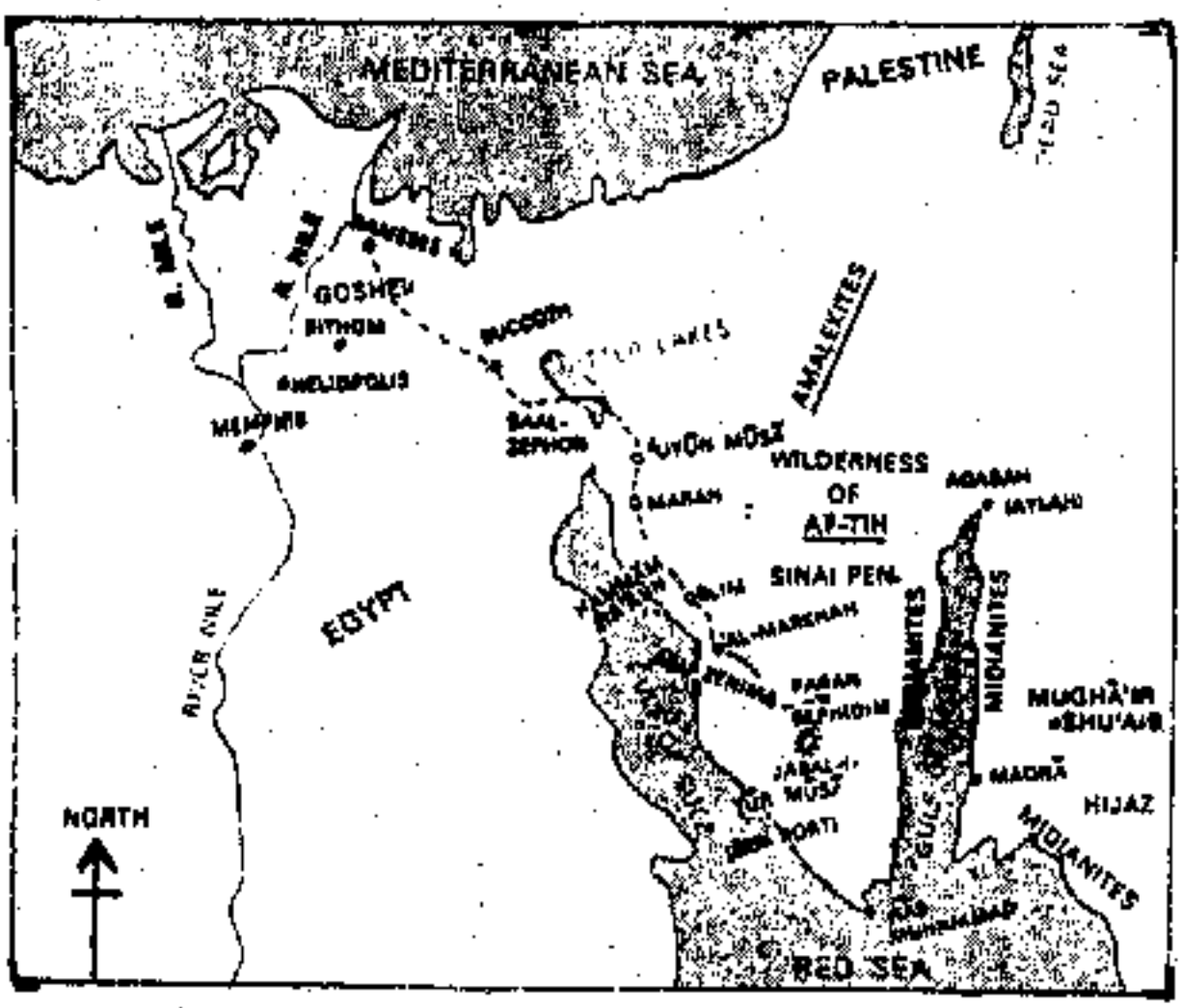
97. That is, "The Israelites were made the inheritors of Palestine". Some commentators infer from this that the Israelites were made the masters of Egypt. But we hesitate to accept this version for there is neither any direct reference to it in the Qur'ān nor is there any historical evidence to support it. (See E.N. 57 of XVIII and E.N. 45 of XXVI).

98. "These people" were the Egyptians, who lived at Mafqah, a cantonment in the Sinai Peninsula. The Israelites crossed the Red Sea probably at a place somewhere between the present Suez and Ismā'īlīyah, and started on their journey along the coast towards the southern part of the Peninsula, which was at that time under Egypt. In its lower part, there were copper and emerald mines, and for their protection the Egyptians had built cantonments at some places. One of these was at Mafqah, where the Egyptians had set up a big idol temple whose remnants are found even today in the south-western part of the Peninsula. At another place near it, there was another idol-temple, which was dedicated to the Moon-god. Probably the Israelites were passing by one of these idol-temples, when they made their demand for an artificial god. This shows that slavery under the Egyptians had left a deep mark of their culture on the Israelites.

It can be easily judged from the following remarks made by Joshua, son of Nun, Moses' first successor, in his last address to the Israelites, seventy years after their exodus from Egypt:

"Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve Him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (Joshua, 24: 14-15).

This shows that even after forty years of training and guidance under Prophet Moses, and 28 years under Prophet Joshua, the Israelites could not cleanse themselves of the evil effects that had been stamped upon their lives during their long slavery under the Pharaohs of Egypt. That is why these corrupted Muslims were so eager to bow down before those gods, whom their Egyptian masters served, no sooner did they see an idol-temple after their exodus.



Explanation:

1. Goshen is the land which Prophet Joseph gave to the Israelites to live in Egypt.

2. Memphis was the capital of Egypt in the time of Prophet Moses.

3. Bitter Lakes are found quite at a distance now from the Gulf of Suez but in the ancient times they were connected with the sea.

4. Prophet Moses set out from Rameses with the Israelites and they joined and followed him on the way from all sides. He probably wanted to bring them safely through the wilderness to Sinai, but the fear of the Egyptian military camps on the one hand and the hot pursuit by Pharaoh on the other, took them on to Baal-Zephon, where from some point they crossed the Bitter Lakes, and it was here that Pharaoh and all his hosts were drowned.

5. Prophet Moses and the Israelites travelled through Marah, Elim, Al-Markhah and Paran Rephidim and came to the place now called Jabal-i Musa (Sinai of the Old Testament) and also Ṭūr. The valley around here has been mentioned as the Holy Valley of *Tuwā* in the Qurān (XX : 12).

6. Hammām-i-Fir'aun is the place where according to the local tradition in the Sinai Peninsula, the body of Pharaoh was found floating in the water.

7. Ṭūr in this map shows the present sea-port of Ṭūr and not Mount Ṭūr.

8. Al-Markhah is situated at the edge of the Wilderness of Sin of the Old Testament, where *mannā* and *salvā* began to be sent down.

9. Near Rephidim is found the famous rock in Mount Horeb, which was smitten by Prophet Moses causing twelve springs of water to gush out.

10. At-Tih is the wilderness in which the Israelites remained wandering homeless for forty years. *Tih* is derived from *yatīhūn* (V : 26) and means "wandering homelessly".

11. Aqabah or Aylah which was Ezion-geber in the ancient times, is the place where according to the common tradition, the well-known incident of the Sabbath-breakers took place.

99. After their departure from Egypt, when the Israelites became free from the shackles of slavery, and won the position of an independent nation, Prophet Moses was summoned to Mount Sinai by the Divine Command so that the Law should be given to him for them. This was the first summons of the series that is being mentioned here. Forty days were appointed so that he should prepare himself by fast, devotion, worship, prayer, deep thought, meditation and reflection for the heavy task that was about to be entrusted to him. On this occasion prophet Moses left the Israelites at a place now called Wādiy-u-Shaikh, between Nabī Sālih and Mt. Sinai. That part of the valley where the Israelites then encamped is now called Maidān-ur-Rāhat. At one end of the valley is situated the hillock, where, according to the local tradition Prophet Sālih migrated from the territory of Thamūd. The mosque, which was built in his memory, stands there even today. On the other side, there is another hillock, called Jabl-i-Hārūn, where, it is said, Prophet Aaron had gone in protest against the cow-worship of the Israelites. On its third side is Mt. Sinai, which is 7359 feet above the sea level and is usually covered with clouds. On the top of this is the cave in which Moses spent forty days and nights and which has become a holy place of pilgrimage. There is a mosque of the Muslims and a church of the Christians near the cave and at the foot, a monastery built during the reign of Justinian, Byzantine Emperor. (For details, see E.N.'s 9, 10 of XXVIII).

100. Though Prophet Aaron was the elder of the two by three years, he was under Prophet Moses in the mission of Prophethood. In fact, Prophet Aaron was appointed as a Prophet to work as an assistant to Moses in response to his prayer. The fact that he was appointed by Allah as assistant to Prophet Moses has been stated in XXV: 35.

101. The Bible says that these two tablets were slabs of stone, Both the Qur'ān and the Bible ascribe the writing upon them to Allah. We have, however, no specific source to say how that was done. Therefore we cannot say with certainty whether the writing was inscribed on the tablets directly by Allah or through the agency of an angel or by Prophet Moses. (Please compare this with Exodus 31: 18, 32: 15-16, Deut. 5: 6-22).

102. That is, "The Divine precepts and instructions should be followed in their direct and plain meanings, that can be grasped by a man of average intelligence, who has a pure heart and pure intentions." This condition has been attached lest one should confuse them with the hair-splitting of those who, by their legal quibblings, are able to devise ways of crookedness, deceit and mischief out of the plain words of the Divine Commandments.

103. That is, "In your onward march, you will pass through the ruins of

[Contd. on p. 76

نُسْخَتِهَا هُدًى وَّ رَحْمَةٌ لِّلَّذِيْنَ هُمْ لِرَبِّهِمْ يَرْهَبُوْنَ ﴿154﴾ وَ اخْتَارَ مُوْسٰى
قَوْمَهٗ سَبْعِيْنَ رَجُلًا لِّمِيْقَاتِنَا ۚ فَلَمَّاۤ اَخَذَتْهُمُ الرَّجْفَةُ قَالَ رَبِّ لَوْ شِئْتَ
اَهْلَكْتَهُمْ مِّنْ قَبْلُ وَ اِيَّايَ ؕ اَتُهْلِكُنَا بِمَا فَعَلَ السُّفَهَآءُ مِنَّا ۚ اِنْ هِيَ اِلَّا
فِتْنَتُكَ ؕ تُضِلُّ بِهَا مَنْ تَشَآءُ وَ تَهْدِيْ مَنْ تَشَآءُ ؕ اَنْتَ وَلِيُّنَا فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا
وَ ارْحَمْنَا وَ اَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْغٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿155﴾ وَ اكْتُبْ لَنَا فِيْ هٰذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَّ
فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ اِنَّا هُدْنَاۤ اِلَيْكَ ؕ قَالَ عَذَابِيْۤ اُصِيْبُ بِهٖ مَنْ اَشَآءُ ۚ وَ رَحْمَتِيْ
وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ ؕ فَسَاَكْتُبُهَا لِلَّذِيْنَ يَتَّقُوْنَ وَ يُؤْتُوْنَ الزَّكٰوةَ وَ الَّذِيْنَ
هُمْ بِاٰيٰتِنَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿156﴾ الَّذِيْنَ يَتَّبِعُوْنَ الرَّسُوْلَ النَّبِيَّ الْاُمِّيَّ الَّذِيْ
يَجِدُوْنَهٗ مَكْتُوْبًا عِنْدَهُمْ فِي التَّوْرٰىةِ وَ الْاِنْجِيْلِ ۫ يَاْمُرُهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوْفِ
وَ يَنْهٰىهُمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَ يُحِلُّ لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبٰتِ وَ يُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْخَبٰٓئِثَ وَ
يَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ اِصْرَهُمْ وَ الْاَغْلٰلَ الَّتِيْ كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ ؕ فَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا بِهٖ وَ
عَزَّرُوْهُ وَ نَصَرُوْهُ وَ اتَّبَعُوا النُّوْرَ الَّذِيْۤ اُنْزِلَ مَعَهٗ ۙ اُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿157﴾
قُلْ يٰۤاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اِنِّيْ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ اِلَيْكُمْ جَمِيْعًا الَّذِيْ لَهٗ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَ الْاَرْضِ ۚ لَاۤ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ يُحْيٖ وَ يُمِيْتُ ۫ فَاٰمِنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ وَ رَسُوْلِهِ النَّبِيِّ الْاُمِّيِّ
الَّذِيْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللّٰهِ وَ كَلِمٰتِهٖ وَ اتَّبِعُوْهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿158﴾ وَ مِنْ قَوْمِ مُوْسٰۤى
اُمَّةٌ يَّهْدُوْنَ بِالْحَقِّ وَ بِهٖ يَعْدِلُوْنَ ﴿159﴾ وَ قَطَّعْنٰهُمُ اثْنَتَيْ عَشْرَةَ اَسْبَاطًا
اُمَمًا ؕ وَ اَوْحَيْنَاۤ اِلٰى مُوْسٰۤى اِذِ اسْتَسْقٰىهُ قَوْمُهٗۤ اَنِ اضْرِبْ بِّعَصَاكَ الْحَجَرَ ؕ
فَانْۢبَجَسَتْ مِنْهُ اثْنَتَا عَشْرَةَ عَيْنًا ؕ قَدْ عَلِمَ كُلُّ اُنَاسٍ مَّشْرَبَهُمْ ؕ وَ ظَلَّلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ
الْغَمَامَ وَ اَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَنَّ وَ السَّلْوٰى ؕ كُلُوْا مِنْ طَيِّبٰتِ مَا رَزَقْنٰكُمْ ؕ وَ مَا

When Moses' anger was allayed, he took up the tablets in whose writing was guidance and mercy for those who fear their Lord. And Moses chose from among his people seventy men (to accompany him) to attend a meeting appointed by Us.[109] When a severe earthquake seized them, Moses prayed, "My Lord, if Thou hadst willed, Thou couldst have destroyed them and me before this: wouldst Thou destroy all of us for the offence committed by some foolish people from among us? This was a trial set by Thee, whereby Thou leadst astray whom Thou wilt and guidest whom Thou wilt.[110] Thou alone art our Protector; so forgive us and have mercy on us for Thou art the best of all forgivers! And ordain for us what is good in this world as well as in the world to come; we have turned to Thee". He replied, "As to punishment, I inflict it on anyone I will, but My mercy embraces everything.[111] So I will prescribe it for those who will refrain from disobedience, pay the *Zakāt*, and believe in My Revelations." 154-156

(So, now mercy has been assigned to those) who follow this Messenger, the *Ummī* Prophet,[112] whose mention they shall find in the Torah and the Gospel with them.[113] He enjoins them to follow virtue and forbids them from evil: he makes pure things lawful for them and impure things unlawful.[114] He relieves them of their burdens and frees them from the shackles that bound them.[115] For this reason those alone who believe in him and support him and succor him and follow the light that has been sent down with him, shall attain "success". O Muhammad, say, "O mankind, I am a Messenger to all of you from Allah to Whom belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. There is no deity but He. He bestows life and ordains death. So believe in Allah and His Messenger, the *Ummī* Prophet, who believes in Allah and His Commandments. Follow him: it is expected that you will be guided aright." 157-158

Among[116] the people of Moses there were some who guided (others) with the Truth and judged the affairs with the Truth.[117] And We had divided them into twelve clans and made them distinct Communities.[118] When his people asked him for water, We inspired Moses to strike a certain rock with his staff. Consequently, twelve springs gushed forth from it and each community specified its drinking place; We caused the cloud to cast shadow over them, and We sent down *mannā* and *salva* for their food,[119]—— saying, "Eat of the clean 159-160

and pure things We have provided for you." However, by doing what they did afterwards, they did no wrong to Us but they wronged themselves.

Contd. from p 73]

the homes of those who disobeyed the Divine Law and discarded the way of Allah's worship and obedience and persisted in the paths of error. When you see these things you will yourselves know the end of the people who adopt such ways."

104. That is, "This is My law: such people as behave haughtily cannot take any warning from any exemplary sign and cannot learn any lesson from anything that may teach a lesson."

According to the Qur'ān, a person behaves haughtily who considers himself above submission to Allah and becomes heedless of His Commandments and behaves in a way as if he was not a servant of Allah and Allah was not his Lord. Obviously such an arrogance is not based on any rightful claim, for no servant has any right to behave as if he were not His servant, when he lives on Allah's earth. That is why Allah says, who without any right behave haughtily."

105. ".... his deeds became vain," and produced no good result and were useless and worthless, because these did not satisfy the two elementary conditions that make human deeds worthwhile. First, these should be performed in accordance with the Divine Law. Secondly, the object of these acts and deeds should be success in the Hereafter and not mere success in this world. If these two conditions are not fulfilled in the performance of any deed, it shall become vain. Obviously anything done without giving heed to or in defiance of the Divine Guidance does not deserve any reward from Him, for his case is the same as that of a usurper of land, who exploits it against the owner's will. He does not deserve anything but severe punishment for this wrongful possession. Though he may benefit from it as long as the real owner connives at his audacity, he knows that he will be deprived of it when he is dispossessed of it. And there is no reason why (and he himself does not expect that) any portion of its produce should go to him, after the real owner takes possession of his land from the usurper.

106. They made the image in his absence of forty days, when Moses went to Mt. Sinai on the summons of Allah, while his people were encamping in the plain of Ar-Rāhah.

107. Their calf-worship was the second manifestation of the change that had taken place in the Israelites during their stay in Egypt. They were so charmed by the cow-worship of the Egyptians that the Qur'ān says, ".....They were so

prone to disbelief that they cherished the calf in their hearts". It is really strange that hardly three months after their miraculous escape from Egypt, they began to make demands on their Prophet to make an artificial god for them, and, as soon as he left them for the Sinai, they themselves devised a false god. It appears as if they had forgotten their recent deliverance from slavery, and their safe passage through the sea and the drowning of Pharaoh and his army in it. Though they knew that all those wonderful events had happened wholly and solely through the supernatural power of the Eternal, yet they shame-facedly forgot their Allah. It was this faithless conduct of the Israelites that prompted some of their Prophets to liken the Community to that wicked woman who shows love to all men other than her husband and does not hesitate to be faithless even in the very first night of her marriage.

108. By citing his words ".....do not include me among the workers of iniquity", the Qur'ān has absolved Prophet Aaron from the wicked blemish that the Jews had stamped upon him. According to the Bible, Prophet Aaron was guilty of making the golden calf as god for them:

"And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wont not what is become of him. And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. And all the people brake off the golden earrings, which were in their ears and brought them unto Aaron. And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, Tomorrow is a feast to the Lord. And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play. (Exodus, 32: 1-6). The Qur'ān has refuted this allegation and related the fact about the matter that the man responsible for this heinous sin was not Allah's Prophet Aaron but his rebel Sāmirī. (For details, see XX: 90-94).

Though it may appear very strange that the Jews should accuse their own Prophets of the most heinous sins, yet a deep and critical study of their history will show that this was done to justify their own moral degradation. When the whole community in general, and the religious scholars and priests in particular, became involved in deviations and immoralities, their guilty consciences impelled them to invent excuses for justifying their own bad conduct. As they committed heinous sins like *shirk*, sorcery, adultery, treachery, falsehood and the like, they

blemished the pure character of their own Prophets by ascribing such sins to them as were most shameful even for an ordinary good man, not to speak of a prophet so that they could justify their own wicked deeds. They argued like this: "When even the Prophets could not save themselves from such sins, how could ordinary people like us be immune from weaknesses?"

The Hindus also did the same during their moral degeneration and the literature of that period depicts gods, rishis and the like, in the blackest colours so that they could say, "When such highly placed beings were involved in immoralities, how could the common people escape from them? And why should such things be shameful for them, when they were not shameful for their gods and rishis?"

109. The seventy delegates were summoned to Mt. Sinai so that they should present themselves before their Lord, and on behalf of the community beg forgiveness for the sin of calf-worship that was committed by the Israelites, and to renew the covenant of obedience to Him. The Bible and the Talmud do not mention this, though the Bible says that Moses was summoned to Mt. Sinai so that he should be given new tablets for those that were broken, when he had thrown them down. (Exodus chapter 34).

110. That is, every occasion of trial is very decisive for the people: it separates like a winnow useful from the useless out of a mixed mass. On such decisive occasions, the one who comes out successful in the trial does so only by Divine guidance and help, and the one who fails in the test becomes unsuccessful because he is deprived of Divine guidance and help. Though one gets Allah's guidance and help in accordance with certain Divine Laws, which are based on absolute wisdom and justice, anyway the fact is that one's success or failure in the trial depends entirely on Divine guidance and help.

111. That is, "The way, whereby Allah is ruling His Kingdom is based on mercy and not on wrath. He always shows mercy to His creatures and manifests His wrath only when the rebellion and arrogance of His servants transgress the limits".

112. After replying to the prayer of Moses in the previous verse, the Qur'ān utilizes the opportunity to invite the Israelites to follow Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him). It means: "The conditions that were laid down for Allah's mercy upon you during the time of Prophet Moses, still stand, and require you to believe in this Messenger. It was said to you that Allah's mercy is sent to those people who refrain from disobedience. Now, there is no greater disobedience than to reject the Guidance of the Messengers appointed by Allah. If you, therefore, do not refrain from this disobedience, you will have no other basis of virtue left in spite of your show of piety in the observance of minor and trifling

religious rituals. You were enjoined to pay the *Zakāt* so that you may be blessed with mercy, but today the only right way of expending the *Zakāt* is to make contributions towards the success of the campaign that is being carried on for the establishment of the Divine Way under the leadership of this Messenger, for the basic requirements of *Zakāt* can only be fulfilled in this way. You were told that Allah has prescribed His Mercy for those who believe in His Revelations; therefore if you reject the Revelations that Allah is sending down to His Messenger, you will have failed to fulfil this last condition, even though you might go on asserting that you believe in the Revelations of the Torah."

Here the use of the word امی (*ummī*) for the Holy Prophet is very significant. This title was used to break the national pride and arrogance of the Jews, who called the non-Jews *ummīs* (gentiles). In this respect, they were so arrogant that, as a nation, not to speak of acknowledging an *ummī* as their leader, they were not ready even to concede basic human rights to the gentiles. They asserted, "..... We are not to be called to account for our behaviour towards the gentiles ...." (III: 75). That is why Allah has used the word *ummī* before "Prophet", as if to say, "Now your salvation solely depends on following this *Ummī* Prophet. If you follow him, you will receive a portion of My mercy, otherwise you are doomed to the same wrath to which you have been subjected during the centuries of your deviation."

113. There are clear references in the Bible to the coming of Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him). For instance, see Deut. 18: 15-19, Matthew 21: 33-46, John I: 19-21, 14: 15-17, 25-30, 15: 25-26, 16: 7-15.

114. That is, "He makes lawful those pure things which they have made unlawful, and makes unlawful those impure things which they have made lawful."

115. That is, "He relieves them of the burdens that had been laid on them by the legal hair-splittings of their jurists and by the exaggerated piety of their spiritual leaders, and by the superstitious restrictions and regulations imposed by their common people. Likewise this Messenger makes their lives free from the fetters with which they themselves had bound their lives".

116. The theme of the address that was interrupted by the parenthesis (vv. 157-158) is again being resumed.

117. The majority of the translators render v. 159 like this: "Among the people of Moses there is a group that guides and decides in accordance with the Truth". They mean to say that there existed such a group among the Jews at the time of the Revelation of the Qur'ān. But from the context in which this occurs, we conclude that there was such a group of good people among the Israelites

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ظَلَمُوْنَا وَلٰكِنْ كَانُوْٓا اَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُوْنَ ﴿١٦٠﴾ وَاِذْ قِيْلَ لَهُمُ اسْكُنُوْا هٰذِهِ الْقَرْيَةَ
وَكُلُوْا مِنْهَا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمْ وَقُوْلُوْا حِطَّةٌ وَّادْخُلُوا الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا نَّغْفِرْ لَكُمْ خَطِيْٓـٰتِكُمْ
سَنَزِيْدُ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿١٦١﴾ فَبَدَّلَ الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا مِنْهُمْ قَوْلًا غَيْرَ الَّذِيْ قِيْلَ
لَهُمْ فَاَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِجْزًا مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَظْلِمُوْنَ ﴿١٦٢﴾ وَسْـَٔلْهُمْ
عَنِ الْقَرْيَةِ الَّتِيْ كَانَتْ حَاضِرَةَ الْبَحْرِ ۘ اِذْ يَعْدُوْنَ فِي السَّبْتِ اِذْ تَاْتِيْهِمْ
حِيْتَانُهُمْ يَوْمَ سَبْتِهِمْ شُرَّعًا وَّيَوْمَ لَا يَسْبِتُوْنَ ۙ لَا تَاْتِيْهِمْ ۛ كَذٰلِكَ ۛ
نَبْلُوْهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَفْسُقُوْنَ ﴿١٦٣﴾ وَاِذْ قَالَتْ اُمَّةٌ مِّنْهُمْ لِمَ تَعِظُوْنَ قَوْمًا ۙ
اللّٰهُ مُهْلِكُهُمْ اَوْ مُعَذِّبُهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيْدًا ۭ قَالُوْا مَعْذِرَةً اِلٰى رَبِّكُمْ وَ
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿١٦٤﴾ فَلَمَّا نَسُوْا مَا ذُكِّرُوْا بِهٖٓ اَنْجَيْنَا الَّذِيْنَ يَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ
السُّوْٓءِ وَاَخَذْنَا الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا بِعَذَابٍۢ بَـِٔيْسٍۢ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَفْسُقُوْنَ ﴿١٦٥﴾ فَلَمَّا
عَتَوْا عَنْ مَّا نُهُوْا عَنْهُ قُلْنَا لَهُمْ كُوْنُوْا قِرَدَةً خٰسِـِٕيْنَ ﴿١٦٦﴾ وَاِذْ تَاَذَّنَ
رَبُّكَ لَيَبْعَثَنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ اِلٰى يَوْمِ الْقِيٰمَةِ مَنْ يَّسُوْمُهُمْ سُوْٓءَ الْعَذَابِ ۭ
اِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَسَرِيْعُ الْعِقَابِ ۚ وَاِنَّهٗ لَغَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿١٦٧﴾ وَقَطَّعْنٰهُمْ فِي الْاَرْضِ
اُمَمًا ۚ مِنْهُمُ الصّٰلِحُوْنَ وَمِنْهُمْ دُوْنَ ذٰلِكَ ۡ وَبَلَوْنٰهُمْ بِالْحَسَنٰتِ وَالسَّيِّاٰتِ
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُوْنَ ﴿١٦٨﴾ فَخَلَفَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ وَّرِثُوا الْكِتٰبَ يَاْخُذُوْنَ
عَرَضَ هٰذَا الْاَدْنٰى وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ سَيُغْفَرُ لَنَا ۚ وَاِنْ يَّاْتِهِمْ عَرَضٌ مِّثْلُهٗ
يَاْخُذُوْهُ ۭ اَلَمْ يُؤْخَذْ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّيْثَاقُ الْكِتٰبِ اَنْ لَّا يَقُوْلُوْا عَلَى اللّٰهِ اِلَّا الْحَقَّ
وَدَرَسُوْا مَا فِيْهِ ۭ وَالدَّارُ الْاٰخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لِّلَّذِيْنَ يَتَّقُوْنَ ۭ اَفَلَا تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿١٦٩﴾ وَ
الَّذِيْنَ يُمَسِّكُوْنَ بِالْكِتٰبِ وَاَقَامُوا الصَّلٰوةَ ۭ اِنَّا لَا نُضِيْعُ اَجْرَ الْمُصْلِحِيْنَ ﴿١٧٠﴾

And[120] call to mind the time when it was said to them, "Go and dwell in this town, and get therefrom provision for yourselves out of its produce, according to your liking, and say *"hittatun"*, *"hittatun"*, and enter the gate of the town, bowing down with humility. We shall pardon your sins and increase all the more the rewards of the doers of good". But those from among them who were bent on wrongdoing changed that word which had been said to them. Consequently, We sent down scourge upon them[121] from heaven because of the wrongs they were doing. 161-162

And ask them about the township which was situated on the sea shore.[122] Remind them of what befell its people who used to break the Sabbath (Saturday). Each Sabbath-day the fish appeared in abundance before them on the surface of the water[123] but did not appear at all on other days than Sabbath. This was because We were putting them to test on account of the acts of disobedience they did.[124] Also remind them that when some people from among them asked the others the answer that was given by some of them, "Why do you admonish those people whom Allah is about to destroy or punish severely?" they replied, "We admonish them in order to be able to offer an excuse before your Lord and we also hope that they might refrain from disobedience to Him." However, when they totally forgot the teachings they were reminded of, We saved those who used to forbid evil, and seized with a severe scourge all others who were transgressors, because of the acts of disobedience they did.[125] But when even after this they disdainfully persisted in that from which they were forbidden, We said to them, "Become apes—— despised and disgraced!"[126] 163-166

And recall the time when your Lord declared,[127] "I will set over the Israelites over and over again up to the Day of Resurrection, people who should inflict upon them the severest torment."[128] Your Lord, indeed, is swift in retribution, and He is indeed also Forgiving and Merciful. 167

And We divided them into many separate communities all over the earth: some of these people were righteous and some of them were different from this: We tested them with prosperity and with adversity so that they might turn back. Then after the following generations, unworthy people succeeded them: they inherited the Book, but in spite 168-170

of this they grab the fleeting good things of this low world, and say, "We expect to be forgiven." Yet if similar worldly things again come before them, they again grab them.[129] Has not the Covenant of the Book been taken from them that they should ascribe to Allah nothing but the truth? And they themselves have studied well that which is written in the Book.[130] And the abode of the Hereafter is better for those who fear Allah.[131] Do you not understand even this thing? As for those who strictly observe the Book and establish *Salāt*, surely We will not let go waste the reward of such righteous people.

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during the time of Prophet Moses. This has been mentioned here to show that there were some good people even at that time, when the Israelites had gone to the lowest level of moral and spiritual degradation and adopted the worship of the golden calf, and were punished by Allah.

118. This refers to the organization of the Israelites that has been stated in v.12 of AL-MĀ'IDAH and given in detail in NUMBERS, the fourth Book of the Bible. According to this, Prophet Moses was bidden in the desert of Sinai by the Eternal to count up the total members of the community of Israel. Accordingly they were numbered and divided into twelve clans, comprising the descendants of the ten sons of Prophet Jacob and two sons of Prophet Joseph. The twelve men, who were at the head of each clan, were made the leaders of their ancestral clans so that they should look after the moral, religious, social, cultural and military condition of each clan and enforce the Commandments. However, the ancestral clan of Prophets Moses and Aaron, the clan of the Levites, the twelfth son of Prophet Jacob, was left out. It was not counted among the other twelve clans of Israel, but was organised as a separate community and was entrusted with the general duty of looking after the religious and spiritual welfare of all the clans of Israel.

119. The above-mentioned organization was one of the great favours that had been conferred by Allah on the Israelites. In continuation of the same, three more favours have been mentioned here: (1) The miraculous supply of water during their stay in the Sinai Peninsula. (2) The sky was covered with clouds to protect them from the scorching heat of the desert. (3) *Mannā* and *Salvā* were sent down in a supernatural manner to feed them there. It is obvious that if adequate arrangements had not been made for the supply of these three most important necessities of life, this big community that consisted of about two million people would have perished with heat, hunger and thirst.

A visit to the Peninsula makes one realize that it is not possible even today to arrange for the supply of water and food and for shelter from the sun, if such a large number of people should happen to visit that place without previous arrangements. It is so thinly populated that its total population is not more than a few thousands. It would be a headache even for a modern government, if it wanted to send an army of, say, only 500,000 soldiers there in this twentieth century of inventions. That is why many research scholars who believe neither in Revealed Books nor in miracles have rejected the historical fact that the Israelites ever passed through and stayed in that part of the Peninsula for years, as mentioned in the Qur'ān and the Bible. They opine that they might have passed through a region somewhere to the south of Palestine and to the north of Arabia. They consider that it is inconceivable for such a large number of people to encamp so long, under the hard geographical and economical conditions of the Peninsula, when in addition to these the means of supplies from Egypt were also cut off, and there was a constant threat of attack from the Amelikites who lived in the eastern and northern parts of the Peninsula.

If we keep in view these things, we can appreciate the true value of the favours that have been mentioned here. At the same time, it also becomes obvious that this community showed ingratitude by committing acts of disobedience and infidelity, which abound in its history. (Compare this with E.N.'s 72, 73 and 76 of *Al-Baqarah*).

120. Now some incidents from the history of the Israelites are being related to show that their response to the above-mentioned favours of Allah was very wicked and rebellious, which gradually threw them into the lowest abyss of destruction.

121. Please refer to E.N.'s 74 and 75 of AL-BAQARAH.

122. The research scholars are of the opinion that the place refers to Ailah or Elat or Elote where the modern Jewish state of Israel has constructed a seaport of the same name and near which is situated Jordan's famous seaport of Aqabah. It is at the end of that long inlet of the Red Sea which is between the eastern part of the Sinai Peninsula and the western side of Arabia. It was a very important trade center in the heyday of the Israelites. Prophet Solomon had made this city the chief port of his fleet in the Red Sea.

The incident referred to here has neither been mentioned in the religious books of the Jews nor in their history books but the way in which the Qur'ān has related it here and in *Al-Baqarah* clearly shows that at the time of its Revelation, it was well known among the Israelites. That is why the Jews of Al-Madīnah did not challenge its validity, although they never missed a chance of raising an objection against the Holy Prophet.

123. Sabbath (Saturday) is the Holy day of the week. The Lord made Saturday the Sabbath day for the Jews, saying, "Verily my sabbaths ye will keep: for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations .... every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. . . wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant." (Exodus 31: 12-16). But, in spite of this Commandment that held out the punishment of death for any worldly work—from burning fire in the houses to taking any service from animals or slaves, the Israelites had begun to practise open violation of this law. So much so that during the time of Prophet Jeremiah (628-586 B.C.), they used to carry in loads through the gates of Jerusalem on the sabbath day. Therefore the Prophet had to hold out the threat that he would 'light a fire in the city-gates that would burn up the buildings of Jerusalem and never be put out.' (*Jeremiah* 17: 21-27). Likewise Prophet Ezekiel (595-536 B.C.) also complains bitterly of the desecration of Lord's Sabbath by the Jews on a national scale (*Ezekiel* 20: 12-24). From these quotations it appears that the desecration of Sabbath mentioned here in the Qur'ān probably took place during this period.

124. Allah puts His servants to trial in many ways. When He sees that some of them are turning away from obedience to His Law, and are growing more and more prone to disobedience, He opens the doors of disobedience before them by holding out such temptations as are very alluring to those people. Thus their evil intentions openly come to the surface and they commit such crimes from which they had refrained only for the lack of necessary opportunities for them.

125. This shows that there were three kinds of people in that town. First, there were those who were openly and boldly violating the Divine rules and regulations. Then there were some who did not violate the laws themselves but silently saw others violating them: they told admonishers that it was no good to give any piece of advice to those hardened law-breakers. Lastly, there were others who were so much imbued with the sense of honour and courage that they could not tolerate such open violations of the Divine Law. They enjoined the law-breakers to practise virtue and refrain from evil in the hope that they would return to the Right Way, or at least, they themselves would be in a position to present the proof before their Lord that they, on their part, did their duty to admonish those law-breakers. Accordingly, when the scourge of Allah befell that township, the only people who were delivered from it were those who belonged to the third group. According to the Qur'ān, they were delivered because they had shown their concern for the eradication of evil. The other two groups were counted among the workers of iniquity and punished in proportion to the nature and extent of their crime.

Some commentators are of the view that it cannot be said with certainty whether the second group was among those who were delivered or among those who were punished, for the Qur'ān is not explicit about this. According to a tradition from Ibn 'Abbās (Allah be pleased with him), he was at first of the opinion that the second group was among those who were punished, but afterwards his disciple 'Ikrimah convinced him that it was among those who were delivered. But when we consider deeply the words of the Qur'ān, we feel that his first opinion was correct for it is obvious that on the occasion of a scourge, the concerned township was divided into two groups only. One group consisted of those who were visited by the scourge, and the other of those who were delivered from it. Now when the Qur'ān is explicit that the group that was delivered consisted of those who were forbidding evil, the other two groups must have been among those who were not delivered. This conclusion is supported by "in order to offer an excuse before your Lord", and also by the succeeding verse. It is quite clear from this that the whole township, wherein the law of Allah is openly violated, is seized by His wrath, with the only exception of those who forbid evil. One will not be delivered simply because one did not violate the Law but shall have to show practically that one did exert one's utmost to establish virtue and eradicate vice. This view is further supported by other passages from the Qur'ān and Hadith that this is the Law of Allah concerning collective crimes. The Qur'ān says, "Fear that trial which will not involve in scourge only those who will be guilty of transgression from among you ....." (VIII: 25). Explaining this verse, the Holy Prophet says, "Allah does not punish the common people for the sins of sinful people unless the common people connive at those glaring sins that are committed before their very eyes and show no displeasure at them, in spite of the fact that they are in a position to do so. When they degenerate to such a degree, then Allah seizes the criminals as well as the connivers".

Besides this, it appears from the verses under discussion that the scourge of Allah was sent to that township in two instalments. The first has been called عَذَابٍ بَئِيسٍ severe scourge.") The second was "Be apes". We are of the opinion that the scourge in the first case was inflicted on both the first and the second groups, but in the second case it was inflicted on the first group only. (And Allah knows best. If I am right, this is from Allah and if I am wrong, it is from me. And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.)

126. Please refer to E.N. 83, *Al-Baqarah*.

127. The Arabic word تَأَذَّنَ (*ta-azzana*) "to give notice" or ,"to make known".

128. Such a warning had been administerd over and over again to the Israelites ever since the eighth century before the Christian era and is contained in

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وَاِذْ نَتَقْنَا الْجَبَلَ فَوْقَهُمْ كَاَنَّهٗ ظُلَّةٌ وَّظَنُّوْٓا اَنَّهٗ وَاقِعٌۢ بِهِمْ ۚ خُذُوْا مَآ اٰتَيْنٰكُمْ
بِقُوَّةٍ وَّاذْكُرُوْا مَا فِيْهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿١٧١﴾ وَاِذْ اَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِنْۢ بَنِيْٓ اٰدَمَ
مِنْ ظُهُوْرِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَاَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلٰٓى اَنْفُسِهِمْ ۚ اَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ ۭ قَالُوْا بَلٰى ۚ
شَهِدْنَا ۚ اَنْ تَقُوْلُوْا يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ اِنَّا كُنَّا عَنْ هٰذَا غٰفِلِيْنَ ﴿١٧٢﴾ اَوْ تَقُوْلُوْٓا اِنَّمَآ
اَشْرَكَ اٰبَاۗؤُنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَكُنَّا ذُرِّيَّةً مِّنْۢ بَعْدِهِمْ ۚ اَفَتُهْلِكُنَا بِمَا فَعَلَ
الْمُبْطِلُوْنَ ﴿١٧٣﴾ وَكَذٰلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ الْاٰيٰتِ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُوْنَ ﴿١٧٤﴾ وَاتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ
نَبَاَ الَّذِيْٓ اٰتَيْنٰهُ اٰيٰتِنَا فَانْسَلَخَ مِنْهَا فَاَتْبَعَهُ الشَّيْطٰنُ فَكَانَ مِنَ
الْغٰوِيْنَ ﴿١٧٥﴾ وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَرَفَعْنٰهُ بِهَا وَلٰكِنَّهٗٓ اَخْلَدَ اِلَى الْاَرْضِ وَاتَّبَعَ هَوٰىهُ ۚ
فَمَثَلُهٗ كَمَثَلِ الْكَلْبِ ۚ اِنْ تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْهِ يَلْهَثْ اَوْ تَتْرُكْهُ يَلْهَثْ ۭ ذٰلِكَ مَثَلُ
الْقَوْمِ الَّذِيْنَ كَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا ۚ فَاقْصُصِ الْقَصَصَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿١٧٦﴾ سَاۗءَ
مَثَلًا ۨ الْقَوْمُ الَّذِيْنَ كَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا وَاَنْفُسَهُمْ كَانُوْا يَظْلِمُوْنَ ﴿١٧٧﴾ مَنْ يَّهْدِ
اللّٰهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِيْ ۚ وَمَنْ يُّضْلِلْ فَاُولٰۗىِٕكَ هُمُ الْخٰسِرُوْنَ ﴿١٧٨﴾ وَلَقَدْ ذَرَاْنَا
لِجَهَنَّمَ كَثِيْرًا مِّنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْاِنْسِ ۡ لَهُمْ قُلُوْبٌ لَّا يَفْقَهُوْنَ بِهَا ۡ وَلَهُمْ
اَعْيُنٌ لَّا يُبْصِرُوْنَ بِهَا ۡ وَلَهُمْ اٰذَانٌ لَّا يَسْمَعُوْنَ بِهَا ۭ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ كَالْاَنْعَامِ بَلْ
هُمْ اَضَلُّ ۭ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ هُمُ الْغٰفِلُوْنَ ﴿١٧٩﴾ وَلِلّٰهِ الْاَسْمَاۗءُ الْحُسْنٰى فَادْعُوْهُ بِهَا ۠
وَذَرُوا الَّذِيْنَ يُلْحِدُوْنَ فِيْٓ اَسْمَاۗىِٕهٖ ۭ سَيُجْزَوْنَ مَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿١٨٠﴾ وَ
مِمَّنْ خَلَقْنَآ اُمَّةٌ يَّهْدُوْنَ بِالْحَقِّ وَبِهٖ يَعْدِلُوْنَ ﴿١٨١﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ كَذَّبُوْا
بِاٰيٰتِنَا سَنَسْتَدْرِجُهُمْ مِّنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿١٨٢﴾ وَاُمْلِيْ لَهُمْ ۭ اِنَّ كَيْدِيْ
مَتِيْنٌ ﴿١٨٣﴾ اَوَلَمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوْا ۭ مَا بِصَاحِبِهِمْ مِّنْ جِنَّةٍ ۭ اِنْ هُوَ اِلَّا نَذِيْرٌ

Do they also remember the time when We shook the Mountain and spread over them as though it were an umbrella, and they thought that it was going to fall upon them; (then We said to them), "Hold fast the Book We are giving you, and keep in mind what it contains: it is expected that you will refrain from wrong ways."[132] 171

And, O Prophet,[133] remind the people of the time, when your Lord brought forth from the loins of the Children of Adam, their descendants and made them bear witness about themselves. He asked them, "Am I not your Lord?" They replied, "Most certainly, Thou alone art our Lord; we bear witness to this."[134] This We did lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, "We were unaware of this thing," or lest you should say, "Our forefathers started the practice of *shirk* before us and we were born after them to their descendants: dost Thou, then, punish us for the sin that was committed by the wrong-doers?"[135] Behold, this is how We make Our Signs clear[136] so that these people return to the right way.[137] 172-174

And, O Muhammad, relate to them the story of the person whom We had given the knowledge of Our Revelations,[138] but he turned away from their observance. Then Satan pursued him until he became one of those who had gone astray. If We had willed We would have exalted him by means of those revelations, but he clung on to the earth and followed his own lusts. Therefore he began to behave like a dog: it lolls out its tongue if you chase it away and it lolls out its tongue if you leave it alone.[139] Such is the likeness of those who treat Our Revelations as false. 175-176

You should go on relating these stories to them: it may be that they consider them seriously. Very bad is the example of those who treated Our Revelations as false and they have been doing wrong to their own selves. Only he whom Allah guides is rightly guided, and they whom Allah deprives of His guidance become losers. And this is a fact that there are many jinns and human beings whom We have created (as if) for Hell :[140] they have hearts but they do not think with them; they have eyes but they do not see with them; they have ears but they do not hear with them. They are like animals; nay, even worse, for they are the people who have become utterly heedless. 177-179

Allah is entitled to most excellent names:[141] so call Him by 180-183

excellent names only and leave alone those who deviate from the Truth in giving names to Him; they shall be recompensed for what they have been doing.[142] From among those We have created, there are some who guide with the truth and do justice therewith. As regards those who have treated Our Revelations as false, We will gradually lead them on to ruin in a way they will not know. Though I am giving them a respite, My plan is infallible.

Contd. from p. 85]

the Books of *Isaiah, Jeremiah* and of the Prophets after them. Then Prophet Christ also administered the same in several of his addresses in the Gospels. Last of all, the Qur'ān also gave the same warning. The fact that since then the Jewish people have always been abased and degraded at one place or the other is a clear proof that the Qur'ān and those Books are really the Books of Allah.

129. In other words, "They commit a sin, like illegal possession, knowing well that it is a sin, in the expectation of forgiveness. They rely on the presumption that they are the favourites of Allah; therefore, they will be pardoned somehow or other, in spite of what they did. That is why they neither feel ashamed of a sin nor repent of it. Moreover they would again commit a similar sin, as soon as there is another opportunity for it. What a wretched people they are! They inherited the Book that was to make them the leaders of the world; yet they aspired to nothing higher than to grab the transitory things of this world. Thus they became the wretched worshippers of this world, instead of being the bearers of the banner of justice and righteousness and the leaders of virtue and reform."

130. They themselves have studied the Book, and know that there is absolutely no mention in the Torah of an unconditional salvation of the Israelites. When neither Allah guaranteed to them nor did their Prophets ever give them the assurance that they would obtain salvation anyhow, what right have they to ascribe to Allah what He never told them? Besides this, their guilt becomes more heinous because they were breaking the Covenant they had made with Allah that they would say nothing but the truth in the name of Allah.

131. This verse may be translated in two ways. The one that has been adopted in the Text means this: "The abode of the Hereafter is worthy of good people and will be given only to those who are Godfearing for it is not the monopoly of any person or family as such. How can it be possible that one should commit such deeds as deserve punishment yet get a good place in the Hereafter, just because one is a Jew or an Israelite"? The second rendering will be this: The abode of the Hereafter is better for Godfearing people who prefer the good life in the Hereafter to a life of pleasure in this world, for only those people who have no

fear of Allah can prefer the pleasures of this life to the joys and peace of the Next World."

132. This is a reference to the event that occurred at the foot of Mt. Sinai on the occasion when the Stone Tablets containing the Covenant were given to Moses. The Bible says, "And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly". (Exodus 19: 17-18).

Allah caused such conditions before taking a Covenant from the children of Israel in the above environment so that they might realize the greatness, the exaltation and the glory of Allah with Whom they were making the Covenant, and the importance of the Covenant itself. It does not, however, mean that they were not willing to enter into the Compact with Allah and were coerced to do so in this terrifying way. The fact is that they all were sincere believers and had gone to the foot of the mountain for the very object of making a Covenant with Allah. But, instead of making the Covenant in an ordinary way, these awe-inspiring conditions were created in order to impress on them its great importance so that they should keep in mind the power of the Almighty God, with Whom they were making it and the fear of grave consequences of breaking it.

Here the address to the Israelites comes to an end. In the succeeding passages, it is directed to mankind in general, and to the people of the Holy Prophet in particular.

133. The previous theme ended with this that God took a Covenant from the children of Israel to the effect that they should surrender to and obey their Lord. From here the address is being directed to the whole of mankind, which is being reminded that all the people, and not the Israelites alone, are bound by a Covenant. Therefore they shall be called upon to render individually an account as to how far they had observed it.

134. We learn from several traditions that this thing happened on the occasion of the creation of Adam. At that time the angels were gathered together and commanded to bow down before him and man's appointment as Allah's vicegerent was proclaimed; likewise the whole of mankind that was to be born up to the Day of Resurrection was brought into existence at one and the same time and imbued with common-sense and brought forth in His presence and asked to testify that Allah is their Lord.

A tradition of Hadrat Ubayy-bin-Ka'ab which is most probably based on the knowledge he received from the Holy Prophet, is the best commentary or this verse. He says:

"Allah gathered the whole of mankind and arranged it into separate groups according to their kinds or periods and gave them human shape and power of speech. Then He took a Covenant from them and made them witnesses concerning themselves and asked, 'Am I not your Lord?' They answered, 'Most certainly, You alone are our Lord.' Then Allah said, 'I ask the earth and the heavens and your father Adam to bear witness to this effect lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection that you had no knowledge of this. So note it well that none other than I is worthy of worship and that there is no other Lord than I. You should not set up any partner with Me. I will send to you My Messengers, who will remind you of this Covenant that you are making with Me; I will also send My Book to you . At this the whole of mankind replied, "We bear witness to this: You alone are our Lord and our Deity: we have no other lord or deity than You."

Some people take vv. 172-173 as a symbolic narration: They are of the opinion that in this way the Qur'ān intends merely to impress the fact that Allah's Divinity is implanted in the human nature and relates it in a way as if it had happened as a tangible event. But we do not consider this interpretation as correct because the Qur'ān and the Hadith describe it as an event which actually took place. More than that it has been asserted that on the Day of Judgement the event of the Covenant will be brought forward as an authentic proof against mankind. Therefore there is no reason why we should regard this event as a symbolic narration. We believe that this event actually took place in the physical world. The All-Powerful Allah did actually bring into existence and gave understanding and power of speech to each and every individual in the posterity of Adam whom He intended to create up to the Day of Resurrection and assembled before Himself at one and the same time and took the Covenant from all of them to the effect that they had no other lord or god than Himself and that they had no other right way of life than Islam (surrender and submission to Allah).

Those who consider such an assemblage as impossible are in fact sceptical of the limitless powers of Allah; otherwise they would not have entertained any doubts about it because this is as easy for Allah as the gradual birth of mankind. The All-Powerful Allah, Who is bringing human beings into existence in the way he is doing now, has also the power to assemble all mankind before its birth and after its death. It appeals to reason that Allah let all mankind know that He was going to make His vicegerents after giving them wisdom and understanding and authority and the right to exploit the resources of the earth, and that He also took the oath of allegiance from them. Thus it is obvious and clear that there is nothing

impossible or strange in this assemblage of the whole of mankind on the occasion of Adam's creation.

135. In this verse the object, for which the Covenant was taken from the whole of mankind has been stated: it was to make each and every individual fully and consciously responsible for his deeds so that those who would rebel against their Lord should be held accountable for their guilt. It has been made plain that after this Covenant they could not justify any sin on the ground that they had committed it in ignorance nor could they shift the responsibility for deviation on to their predecessors. Allah warns that by taking this Covenant He has imbued in the heart of every individual that He alone is his Allah and Lord. Therefore none can absolve himself from the responsibility for a deviation, saying, "I was quite unaware of this", or "I was led astray by my wrong environment."

In this connection, let us now consider a few questions that might arise. Supposing that this Covenant did take place, do we have any remembrance of this? Is anyone of us conscious that he was brought before his Allah on the occasion of the Creation and that the said dialogue did actually take place? If the answer is in the negative, then how can it be justified to bring such a Covenant as evidence against us, when we do not remember it nor are conscious of this Covenant?

The answer is that this will be brought against us as an evidence because, though its remembrance and consciousness has been removed from the memory and the conscious mind, it has been retained in the subconscious mind.

As to why it has been removed from the memory and the conscious mind the answer is obvious. If the impression of the Covenant had remained fresh in the memory and the conscious mind, then everyone would have automatically observed it, and the trial and test would have become meaningless. Thus the very object for which man has been created would have been rendered meaningless. It has, however, been retained in the subconscious mind as a potentiality, and can be brought into consciousness by intuition and internal factors as in the case of all other branches of subconscious knowledge. The fact is that whatever man has achieved in culture, civilization, morality, sciences and all other aspects of human activities, lay hidden as potentialities and was brought out by external factors and intuition. But it is also a fact that no education, no training, no environment, no external factor, no intuition is capable of creating any other thing than the one that already lies potentially in the subconscious mind. Likewise none of these factors is in any way capable of totally effacing the things that lie hidden potentially in the subconscious mind. The most that these factors can do is to pervert its nature, but in spite of all efforts to pervert it, it will still remain latent in the subconcious mind and will try to come to the surface in response to external factors. The following is true of all the branches of potential knowledge:

All these exist as potentialities in our subconscious minds and prove their existence when they appear as actual actions.

All potentialities require external stimuli, teaching and training to take practical shapes which, in fact, are a response of our potentialities to the external stimuli.

All these things can be suppressed and made dormant by wrong desires and environment and perversions but can never be effaced totally from the subconscious mind. Therefore these can be reformed and converted by the help of inner feelings and external efforts.

Exactly the same is true of the intuitional knowledge we have regarding our own position in the universe and our relationship to the Creator of the universe.

That this knowledge does really exist is proved by the fact that it has been appearing every now and then in every period of human life in every part of the earth, in every habitation, in every posterity and in every generation and that no earthly power has been successful in effacing it.

That this conforms to the reality is shown by the fact that whenever this knowledge has actually been applied to practical life, it has always produced good and useful results.

There has always been need of some external appeal to cause them to appear and take practical shapes. Accordingly the Prophets, the Books, and inviters to the Truth from among the followers of the Prophets have been performing this service. That is why the Qur'ān calls them remembrancers: for the Prophets, the Books and the inviters to the Truth do not create anything new in the minds of the people but refresh and bring to the surface by reminders what was already latent in them.

Another proof of the existence of this hidden knowledge in the human mind is that in every age, it has made a positive response to the call of the inviter and has come out as soon as it recognized his voice.

Above all, the greatest proof of the existence of this knowledge is that it has survived in the human heart in spite of the strenuous and continuous efforts to suppress, conceal and pervert it. Though the powers of ignorance and folly, lusts and prejudices, misguidance and temptations, have succeeded in producing *shirk*, atheism, irreligiousness, deviation, they have failed to efface the impress of this inherent knowledge from the human heart. That is why it comes to the surface whenever efforts are made to revive it.

As regards the evidence of this inherent knowledge on the Day of Judgement, Allah will refresh and revive the memory of this Covenant, whereby they all acknowledged Allah alone as their Lord and Deity. Then He will show that this remained embedded in their hearts, in spite of its persistent denial in this world and will provide from their own selves the proof of the fact that the impress of this Covenant was always present in their minds and will show from the records of their lives how and when they suppressed the voice of this inherent knowledge: how and when their intuitional knowledge rebelled against their deviations, and how often it urged them to respond to the invitation of the inviters to the Truth and how they silenced their inner voice by means of different pretexts. At that time, when all the secrets will be exposed, none will be able to put forward any excuses. Everyone shall have to confess one's guilt in plain and clear words. That is why the Qur'ān says that they shall not say, "We had no knowledge of this Covenant," but will have to confess, "We were disbelievers and knowingly denied the Truth". They will stand witness against themselves to the effect that they were disbelievers.

136. "Our Signs" are the impresses of the knowledge of the Truth that have been embedded in the human heart and point clearly to Allah's existence.

137. That is, "So that these people should (turn away from the paths of deviation and rebellion and) come back (to the paths of obedience and service)".

138. The wording of the Text shows that he was not an imaginary person invented for the sake of a parable but did really exist. Allah and His Messenger did not mention him by name because the purpose for which the event had been narrated was served without this. Therefore his name was kept secret so as to avoid giving him unnecessary notoriety; and this generous way has generally been followed both in the Qur'ān and the Traditions. That is why they have not mentioned the name of the person who has been cited as a bad example. Some commentators have, however, mentioned some specific names belonging to the ancient history or to the time of the Holy Prophet. For instance, some mention the name of Ba'alam, the son of Ba'ūrā, others that of Umayyah-bin-Abī-Assalt and Saifī-ibn Ar-Rāhib. But the fact is that the identity of that person has not been established by the Qur'ān or the Hadīth. Therefore it is still a secret, but the parable applies to everyone who bears such a conduct.

139. As this passage deals with a very important subject, it requires detailed comments.

The person, who has been held out as a bad type, possessed the knowledge of the Revelations of Allah and was acquainted with the Reality.

[Contd. on p.96

مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿184﴾ أَوَلَمْ يَنْظُرُوْا فِيْ مَلَكُوْتِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا خَلَقَ اللّٰهُ مِنْ
شَيْءٍ ۙ وَّأَنْ عَسٰى أَنْ يَّكُوْنَ قَدِ اقْتَرَبَ أَجَلُهُمْ ۚ فَبِأَيِّ حَدِيْثٍ بَعْدَهٗ
يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿185﴾ مَنْ يُّضْلِلِ اللّٰهُ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهٗ ۚ وَيَذَرُهُمْ فِيْ طُغْيَانِهِمْ
يَعْمَهُوْنَ ﴿186﴾ يَسْـَٔلُوْنَكَ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ أَيَّانَ مُرْسٰهَا ۚ قُلْ إِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ
رَبِّيْ ۚ لَا يُجَلِّيْهَا لِوَقْتِهَآ إِلَّا هُوَ ۚ ثَقُلَتْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۚ لَا تَأْتِيْكُمْ
إِلَّا بَغْتَةً ۚ يَسْـَٔلُوْنَكَ كَأَنَّكَ حَفِيٌّ عَنْهَا ۚ قُلْ إِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ وَلٰكِنَّ
أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿187﴾ قُلْ لَّآ أَمْلِكُ لِنَفْسِيْ نَفْعًا وَّلَا ضَرًّا إِلَّا مَا شَآءَ
اللّٰهُ ۚ وَلَوْ كُنْتُ أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ لَاسْتَكْثَرْتُ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ ۚ وَمَا مَسَّنِيَ السُّوْٓءُ ۚ
إِنْ أَنَا إِلَّا نَذِيْرٌ وَّبَشِيْرٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يُّؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿188﴾ هُوَ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَكُمْ مِّنْ نَّفْسٍ
وَّاحِدَةٍ وَّجَعَلَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا لِيَسْكُنَ إِلَيْهَا ۚ فَلَمَّا تَغَشّٰهَا حَمَلَتْ حَمْلًا
خَفِيْفًا فَمَرَّتْ بِهٖ ۚ فَلَمَّآ أَثْقَلَتْ دَّعَوَا اللّٰهَ رَبَّهُمَا لَئِنْ اٰتَيْتَنَا صَالِحًا
لَّنَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ الشّٰكِرِيْنَ ﴿189﴾ فَلَمَّآ اٰتٰهُمَا صَالِحًا جَعَلَا لَهٗ شُرَكَآءَ فِيْمَآ اٰتٰهُمَا ۚ
فَتَعٰلَى اللّٰهُ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿190﴾ أَيُشْرِكُوْنَ مَا لَا يَخْلُقُ شَيْئًا وَّهُمْ يُخْلَقُوْنَ ﴿191﴾
وَلَا يَسْتَطِيْعُوْنَ لَهُمْ نَصْرًا وَّلَآ أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَنْصُرُوْنَ ﴿192﴾ وَإِنْ تَدْعُوْهُمْ إِلَى
الْهُدٰى لَا يَتَّبِعُوْكُمْ ۚ سَوَآءٌ عَلَيْكُمْ أَدَعَوْتُمُوْهُمْ أَمْ أَنْتُمْ صَامِتُوْنَ ﴿193﴾
إِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ تَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ عِبَادٌ أَمْثَالُكُمْ فَادْعُوْهُمْ فَلْيَسْتَجِيْبُوْا
لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿194﴾ أَلَهُمْ أَرْجُلٌ يَّمْشُوْنَ بِهَآ أَمْ لَهُمْ أَيْدٍ يَّبْطِشُوْنَ
بِهَآ أَمْ لَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ يُّبْصِرُوْنَ بِهَآ أَمْ لَهُمْ اٰذَانٌ يَّسْمَعُوْنَ بِهَا ۗ قُلِ
ادْعُوْا شُرَكَآءَكُمْ ثُمَّ كِيْدُوْنِ فَلَا تُنْظِرُوْنِ ﴿195﴾ إِنَّ وَلِيِّيَ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْ نَزَّلَ

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And have they never reflected on this matter? There is no tinge of unsoundness of mind in their companion; he is a Warner, who is warning plainly (beforehand of the evil consequence). Have they never considered the functioning of the heavens and the earth, and have they never observed closely anything that Allah has created?[143] And has it never occurred to them that their life might have come near to its end?[144] Then what else can there be in which they will believe after this warning of the Messenger? Whomever Allah deprives of guidance has no guide, for Allah leaves such people wandering about blindly in their contumacy. 184-186

These people ask you: "Well, when is the Hour of Resurrection coming?" Say, "Its knowledge is with my Lord alone: He Himself will disclose it at the proper time: that Hour will weigh heavily on the heavens and the earth. It will come on you all of a sudden." They ask you about it as though you have been in search for it. Say; "Its knowledge is with Allah alone, but most of the people do not know this." Tell them, O Muhammad, "I have not the power to bring any good to or avert any harm from myself: only that happens which Allah wills. Had I the knowledge of the unseen, I would have acquired many benefits for myself and would never have suffered any harm.[145] I am merely a Warner, and a bearer of good news to those who believe in what I say." 187-188

It is Allah Who created you from one being, and of the same species He made his mate, so that he may have a tranquil life with her. Then when a man covered a woman, she bore a light burden with which she moved about. But when she became heavy with it, both of them prayed together to Allah, their Lord: "If Thou givest us a sound child, we will be grateful to Thee." But when Allah gave them a child of sound body and sound mind, they both began to associate partners with Allah in His favour, but Allah is exalted far above what they associate with Him.[146] How foolish are these people! They associate with Him partners who do not create anything but are themselves created, who cannot help them nor have power to help themselves. If you invite them to follow the Right Way, they will not follow you; it will be all the same for you whether you call them or keep silent.[147] Those whom you invoke besides Allah are mere servants of Allah like you: just invoke them, and, if what you say of them be true, they will answer your prayers. Have they feet 189-195

that they should walk with them? Or have they hands that they should hold with them? Or have they eyes that they should see with them? Or have they ears that they should hear with them?[148] Tell them, O Muhammad, "Call up the partners you have set up; then all of you sit down together and plot against me and give me no respite".

Contd. from p. 93]

Therefore it was reasonably expected that his knowledge ought to have guarded him against the way he knew to be wrong, and guided him to the way he knew to be right. Then Allah would have exalted him to the high rank of humanity because of his practice in accordance with the knowledge of the Revelation. But he became inclined towards the benefits, lusts and comforts of the world and succumbed to temptations. He was so overpowered by avarice of these lower desires that he discarded all the higher things and let go waste all the rational and moral potentialities of progress. Thus he transgressed all the limits that he ought to have observed in accordance with the demand of his knowledge. When Satan, who was lying in ambush nearby, saw him turning away deliberately and wilfully from the Truth because of his moral weaknesses, he chased him down and down from one abyss to the other, till he fell into the company of those who had utterly lost their reason under his misguidance.

Allah has likened such a person to a dog because of his similarity to it in avarice and lust. The dog is proverbial for these characteristics: its ever hanging tongue and watering mouth point to its insatiable greed; it goes on smelling the earth even when it is hit with a piece of stone; it picks it up in its teeth, hoping that it might be a piece of bone. Its intense greed for exclusive ownership becomes manifest when it comes across a big carcass, sufficient to feed a number of dogs; but it does not let any other dog share it. The second characteristic of the dog is its being very sexy. It is because of these things that the worldly man, who transgresses all bounds imposed by Faith and knowledge, has been likened to a dog. Then he, like the dog, looks for nothing but the means of filling up his belly and gratifying his lust.

140. It does not mean that.... "There are many Jinns and human beings whom We have created for the sole purpose of sending them to Hell and with the intention of making them fuel for it." But what it means is this: "We created them and gave them hearts, brains, eyes and ears but these wicked people did not make use of these faculties to discern the Truth from falsehood and made themselves fuel for Hell by their evil deeds."

The way that has been adopted to express the above thing is that of showing intense regret in human language. For example, when the young sons of

a mother are killed in the battle she says to the people, "I brought them up to become fodder for the cannon". But she does not mean that she really brought them up for this purpose. She wants to show her intense regret and sorrow and blame those who were responsible for the battle.

141. Now that the discourse is coming to an end, the people are being admonished and reproved to guard against some well known deviations. At the same time they have been warned of the serious consequences of the attitude of ridicule and denial they were adopting towards the Message of the Holy Prophet.

142. This admonition about giving names to Allah is of great importance, for different names reflect different concepts which people form of Him in their minds. It is obvious that people give such names to things as express their conception of them. The defects in the conceptions of things are reflected by the defects in the names and defects in the names show the defects in the conceptions. Besides this, man's relationships and his dealings depend on that particular conception which he forms about some one or some thing. The defect in the conception of things shows itself in the defect of one's relationship to it. On the other hand, if one's conception of a thing is correct and right, one's relationship to it will also be of the correct and right sort. The same is true in the case of one's relationship with Allah. The error one commits in giving wrong names to Allah (whether for distinction with reference to His attributes) is the result of one's error in the creed and in the conception of Allah and His attributes. A man commits the same kind of error and to the same extent in the formation of his moral attitude towards life that he commits in his creed and his conception of Allah. In fact a man's moral attitude towards life is wholly governed by his conception of Allah and his relationship to Him and the universe. That is why Allah has commanded the people to give most excellent names to Him and to refrain from giving wrong names to Him, for He is worthy of excellent names only. Therefore the best thing is to give Him excellent names because the results of the perversion of His names are most serious "Excellent names" are those names that point to the greatness, the supremacy, the sanctity, the purity and the perfection of His attributes. It shall be deemed perversion of His names to give Him such names as are below His dignity; which are against the reverence due to Him; which ascribe defects and shortcomings to Him or mislead one to form wrong creeds about Him. Again it shall also be a perversion to give such names to any of His creation as are worthy of Allah alone.

As regards the Command ".....leave alone those who pervert His names," it means, ".....you need not involve yourself in useless discussions with them, if they do not listen to your admonition and do not try to understand what you say, but use crooked arguments to confuse the issue They themselves shall see the consequences of their deviation".

143. These questions have been posed to refute the charge that their comrade, Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him), was suffering from a disorder of the mind, for otherwise he would not have given the Message he was conveying. They have been asked to reflect upon the fact that he was born and bred among them and had been their comrade before he claimed that he was appointed a Messenger by Allah. During all those years they had known him to be of a sound mind and of a good nature. Thus it is obvious that they charged him of having a distracted mind not because of what he said before his Prophethood but because of what he proclaimed as a Prophet. That is why they have been asked to reflect upon and point out anything from his Message which they regarded as meaningless, unreal and irrational. If they had ever reflected upon the wisdom of the wonderful administration of the heavens and the earth or observed closely any creation of Allah, they would have come to the inevitable conclusion that the whole system of the universe, nay, each and every particle of His creation is a clear evidence of the Truth of His Message. For all these things refute *shirk* and prove the Oneness of Allah and invite people to His worship and arouse in them the sense of responsibility and accountability. And that was what their brother was preaching.

144. That is to say, "They do not realise even this much that none knows the exact time of one's death, and that they should, therefore, make the best use of the respite that has been given them and repent and reform themselves; otherwise they will meet with serious consequences."

145. That is, "I cannot tell you the exact time of Resurrection because I myself do not know anything about the unseen. Had I possessed any knowledge of the future, I would not have suffered any harm because I would have avoided it and achieved many benefits because of my fore knowledge. Therefore it is very foolish on your part to ask me about it merely to test my Prophethood."

146. In order to understand this passage, it should be kept in mind that it criticizes the pagan Arabs for associating partners with Allah in the matter of the birth of children. They have been told to remember that the first man and his mate were brought into being by Allah; and they could not deny this. Then they also knew that it is He Who has arranged the birth of human beings after the first pair; that it is He by Whose will a woman becomes pregnant and who nourishes the child in her womb in a wonderful manner, and that it is He Who imbues it with a sound body and sound mind with various powers and capabilities and lets it come out as a healthy human being. They could not deny that all this is in the power of Allah alone. If Allah willed, He could have created a monkey, a serpent or any other animal in her womb or made the child deformed or physically or mentally defective. They knew that no one had the power to make any change in Allah's creation. That is why all their hopes were centred in Allah during the period of

pregnancy and prayers were invoked for the birth of a perfect child. But it is an irony that the pagans as well as the Believers change their whole attitude after the birth of a child, and, instead of being grateful to Allah, they make their grateful offerings to some god or goddess or saint or the like and give such names as smack of *shirk*—Pir Bakhsh, "Favour of the Saint," or Abdur-Rasul, "Servant of the Prophet" etc.

Though the passage is quite clear, yet a misunderstanding has arisen about it, which has been supported by weak traditions. The mention of the first man and woman (Adam and Eve) in the beginning, and immediately after it of a man and a woman, has led to the confusion that both the pairs were one and the same. Therefore some commentators were of the opinion that the man was Adam and the woman who became pregnant was Eve and that they prayed to Allah for their child in the womb, but when it was born, they associated others with Allah in this favour. Then, with the help of weak traditions they concocted a complete story about it: When several children of Eve died soon after their birth, Satan came to her at the birth of one, and seduced her saying, "If you give him the name of 'Abdul Hārith, the servant of Satan, he will survive." It is all the more regrettable that some of these traditions have been linked up to the Holy Prophet. But the fact is that all these traditions are unauthentic and are not supported by the wording of the Qur'ān and by the context in which they occur. The Qur'ān criticises the pagans for associating others with Allah in the matter of birth, when they themselves acknowledge that it is He Who is the Creator of the children which are born as a result of the cohabitation of a man and a woman. That is why they also invoke Allah for the safe delivery of the child; when they are not sure of the perfection of the child. But after the safe delivery of a sound child, they turn to others with gratitude and offerings. It is thus clear that it is not any particular man and woman who have been admonished for their behaviour, but every man and every woman, (including pagan men and women) who behave like that.

In this connection it should also be noted that the condition of the present-day Muslims is even worse than that of the pagan Arabs whom the Qur'ān has condemned in this passage. They committed *shirk* after the delivery of the child, though before this they prayed to Allah for the child. But the Muslims of today, who claim to be the bearers of the creed of *Tauhīd*, go far beyond this. These wretched people pray to others even for the birth of a child and make vows to others during the period of pregnancy, and after the delivery of the child make offerings to the associates they set up with Allah. Yet they consider those Arabs as pagans who deserved Hell, and themselves as Believers in One Allah, for whom Paradise has been guaranteed!

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الْكِتٰبَ ۚ وَهُوَ يَتَوَلَّى الصّٰلِحِيْنَ ﴿١٩٦﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ تَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ لَا
يَسْتَطِيْعُوْنَ نَصْرَكُمْ وَلَآ اَنْفُسَهُمْ يَنْصُرُوْنَ ﴿١٩٧﴾ وَاِنْ تَدْعُوْهُمْ اِلَى الْهُدٰى
لَا يَسْمَعُوْا ۭ وَتَرٰىهُمْ يَنْظُرُوْنَ اِلَيْكَ وَهُمْ لَا يُبْصِرُوْنَ ﴿١٩٨﴾ خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَ
اْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَاَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجٰهِلِيْنَ ﴿١٩٩﴾ وَاِمَّا يَنْزَغَنَّكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطٰنِ
نَزْغٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللّٰهِ ۭ اِنَّهٗ سَمِيْعٌ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿٢٠٠﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اتَّقَوْا اِذَا مَسَّهُمْ
طٰۗىِٕفٌ مِّنَ الشَّيْطٰنِ تَذَكَّرُوْا فَاِذَا هُمْ مُّبْصِرُوْنَ ﴿٢٠١﴾ وَاِخْوَانُهُمْ يَمُدُّوْنَهُمْ
فِي الْغَيِّ ثُمَّ لَا يُقْصِرُوْنَ ﴿٢٠٢﴾ وَاِذَا لَمْ تَاْتِهِمْ بِاٰيَةٍ قَالُوْا لَوْلَا اجْتَبَيْتَهَا ۭ
قُلْ اِنَّمَآ اَتَّبِعُ مَا يُوْحٰٓى اِلَيَّ مِنْ رَّبِّيْ ۚ هٰذَا بَصَاۗىِٕرُ مِنْ رَّبِّكُمْ وَهُدًى
وَّرَحْمَةٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يُّؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٢٠٣﴾ وَاِذَا قُرِئَ الْقُرْاٰنُ فَاسْتَمِعُوْا لَهٗ وَاَنْصِتُوْا
لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُوْنَ ﴿٢٠٤﴾ وَاذْكُرْ رَّبَّكَ فِيْ نَفْسِكَ تَضَرُّعًا وَّخِيْفَةً وَّدُوْنَ
الْجَهْرِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْاٰصَالِ وَلَا تَكُنْ مِّنَ الْغٰفِلِيْنَ ﴿٢٠٥﴾ اِنَّ
الَّذِيْنَ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُوْنَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِهٖ وَيُسَبِّحُوْنَهٗ وَلَهٗ يَسْجُدُوْنَ ﴿٢٠٦﴾

196-198 My Protector and Helper is Allah who has sent down this Book, and Who protects the righteous people.[149] On the contrary, those whom you call beside Allah, cannot help you nor can they help themsleves. Nay, if you call them to the Right Way, they cannot even hear what you say; though it would appear to you that they are looking at you, in fact, they do not see anything."

199-202 O Prophet, adopt the way of leniency and forbearance; enjoin what is good and avoid useless discussions with the ignorant people. If Satan ever excites you to anger, seek refuge in Allah: He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. The fact is that if ever an evil suggestion from Satan so much as touches those, who are Godfearing people, they

immediately get alerted and clearly see the right course they should adopt. As regards their (that is, Satan's) brethren,[149a] they drag them on and on in their crooked ways and leave nothing undone to seduce them.[150]

O Prophet, when you do not show them a Sign (miracle), they say, "Why have you not chosen a sign for yourself?"[151] Tell them "I follow only the Revelation, which my Lord has sent down to me: this contains lights of insight from your Lord, and is guidance and mercy for those who believe in this.[152] When the Qur'ān is recited to you, listen to it with attention and keep silence: it may be that you also are blessed with mercy."[153] 203-204

O Prophet, remember your Lord morning and evening, deep in your heart with humility and with fear, and also in a low voice with your tongue: do not be of those who are heedless.[154] Indeed the angels, who are near to your Lord in rank, do not turn away in pride from His service :[155] they glorify Him[156] and bow down before Him.[157] 205-206

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147. This is to show the helplessness of the deities of the pagans. Not to speak of guiding their worshippers to the Right Way, they themselves are unable to follow the guidance of others. So much so that they cannot give any answer to the call of any one.

148. It is obvious that here they are being criticised for one of the three kinds of *shirk* they practised. First, they worshipped idols, images or some other symbols of the objects of their worship. The second kind of *shirk* was the worship of some persons or spirits which were represented by idols, pictures, etc. The third kind of *shirk* consisted of the wrong creeds that were the basis of these practices of *shirk*. All the three kinds of practices have been criticised severely in the Qur'ān at different places. Here it condemns the idols before which the pagan Arabs performed their religious rituals and presented their supplications and made their offerings.

149. This is the answer to the threats which the pagan Arabs held out to the Holy Prophet to this effect, "If you do not refrain from opposing our deities and from preaching against them they will inflict their wrath on you and destroy you."

149a. That is, "Those who are under the influence of Satans".

150. In this passage Allah has taught His Messenger some very important things about the methods of inviting people to promulgating the Message of Islam, and of guiding and reforming people. The object is to instruct the Holy Prophet and, through him, his successors to enable them to carry on his mission after him. Some salient points are given below and should be considered in the order they are given:

(1) The most important thing is that the inviter to the Truth should have a large and tender heart, and should be forgiving and forbearing. He should be friendly to his companions, kind to the common people, and should show forbearance to his opponents. He should tolerate the weaknesses of his comrades and endure patiently the persecution of his enemies. He should keep cool even under the greatest provocation and connive at the most unpleasant things. He should bear patiently the bitterest words, the most wicked slanders and the most cruel persecutions. Harsh treatment, hard-heartedness, bitter talk, and vindictive retaliations are as harmful as poison for this work: this spoils the work and does not mend it.

There is a tradition of the Holy Prophet to the same effect: "My Lord has enjoined me to utter what is just whether I am in a state of anger or happiness: to try my best to have cordial relations even with those who are inimical to me: to render their rights even to those who deprive me of my rights: to forgive even those who are cruel to me." He advised those whom he sent on this Mission: "Wherever you go, your visit should be a harbinger of happiness and not of hatred: you should become the source of comfort to the people and not of bringing hardships on them". Allah has also praised this characteristic of the Holy Prophet: ("O Messenger,) it is a great blessing of Allah that you are very lenient towards and gentle with them. If you had been harsh and hard-hearted, they would have scattered away from you..." (III: 159).

(2) The second formula for the success of this Mission is to avoid philosophising and to enjoin those simple and well-known virtues that are universally accepted to be virtues, and are easily recognized by common sense which an ordinary person possesses. Thus the appeal of the inviter to the Truth convinces every one. Its greatest advantage is that it helps win over the common people to the side of promulgators of the Truth, against its antagonists. When the common people, in spite of their prejudices, see on one side a gentle and kind person inviting them towards simple virtues, which they themselves understand well, and on the other, his antagonists opposing his noble mission with immoral and inhuman devices, they turn away by and by from those degraded opponents and come to the inviter of the Truth. As a result of this, in the end, only those remain in the field to oppose the Truth, whose own interests are closely

linked with falsehood or those who are slaves of the traditions of their forefathers and of the customs of ignorance. The Holy Prophet owed his great success in Arabia to this wise policy. Then his successors achieved the same in the adjoining countries, where Islam spread by leaps and bounds and was accepted by the overwhelming majority of the people.

(3) The other important instruction that has been given for the promulgation of Islam is to avoid useless discussions with the ignorant people. The inviter to the Truth should always be strictly on the guard against involvement in useless talk and discussion with mischievous and quarrelsome people. He should take the utmost care to approach and converse with those people only who adopt a reasonable and rational attitude towards his Message. As soon as he feels that his addressees are adopting the attitude of ignorance and are resorting to argumentations, wranglings and taunts, he should make an honourable retreat from them. This is because it is not only useless to be involved in such things but it is harmful to the mission, as valuable time and energy, that could have been usefully employed for the promulgation of the Message, go to waste.

(4) In case the inviter to the Truth feels that the provocations from the mischievous people are becoming too much for him to bear and he cannot withstand their tyrannies, mischiefs, foolish objections and accusations, he should at once realise that it is Satan who is tempting him to retaliate. Then the best thing is to seek refuge in Allah, and invoke His help to protect His servant from doing in anger anything that might be harmful to his Mission. This is possible only if one remains cool-headed even under the greatest provocations, for one can never think or act wisely if one is easily excited by anger, insult, injustice or cruelty etc. But Satan who does not like this Mission to succeed and is always devising schemes to defeat it, first incites own disciples to attack the inviter to the Truth and then incites him to make counter-attacks on them. As Satan's appeal is couched in very alluring words and pious terms, it is not an easy thing to withstand it. That is why pious people have been fore-warned, in vv. 201-202, of this serious danger and instructed that if they intend to refrain from evil, they should immediately get alarmed as soon as they feel the evil effects of the temptation of Satan and its incitement in their hearts and stand on their guard. Then they will clearly see the right course that they should adopt on such occasions and under such circumstances for the sake of their Mission.

As for "the brethren of Satan", they become self-seekers under their influence, and cannot withstand their temptation. So they follow satans, who tempt them to retaliate, and resort to every kind of abuse and dishonesty like their enemies.

Besides the above-mentioned particular implications of this passage, it bears a general meaning as well. It helps differentiate the way of the pious from that of the impious. Those who really fear Allah and sincerely desire to refrain from evil, are so sensitive that even if an evil thought so much as touches their hearts, it pricks their consciences and rankles in their hearts and they seek Allah's refuge from Satan. This is because they are not used to evil thoughts, evil desires and evil intentions, for these are foreign to their nature. As soon as they become conscious of their presence in their minds, their eyes are opened and their consciences recognise them. Then they seek Allah's refuge from Satan in order to cleanse their hearts of those dirty things. In contrast to them, those, who do not fear Allah nor desire to refrain from evil and those who have satans as their brethren, go on cherishing evil thoughts, evil intentions and evil designs in their hearts without feeling anything strange in them. So much so that no sense of cleanliness is left in their minds: and in due course, these dirty things take practical shapes and expose them before the world.

151. This question of the disbelievers implied a taunt. They meant to say, "Well sir, as you are posing to be a Prophet, you ought to have faked up a miracle in proof thereof". The grandeur that is contained in the answer that follows is worthy of the Book of Allah.

152. This is the answer to the question: "I am not in a position to invent miracles or compose or patch up verses on your demand or when I feel their need. I am only a Messenger and my duty is to follow the Guidance of the One Who has sent me. Therefore instead of demanding miracles from me, you should consider seriously the contents of the Qur'ān that has been sent down to me, as it contains spiritual lights. Those who accept this, see the straight path of life, and their good moral qualities begin to show the signs of "Divine Mercy".

153. *It means*, "In your bigotry and obduracy you turn a deaf ear to the Qur'an when it is being recited, and make a loud noise so that no one should be able to listen to it. Leave this wrong attitude towards it and listen to it with attention and consider the teachings contained in it. It is just possible that your acquaintance with it may enlighten your hearts and make you co-sharers with the Believers in the mercy of your Lord."

Incidentally, it should be noted that the above answer to the taunts of the opponents is so nice and sweet and appealing to the hearts that words cannot describe its excellence. There is also a lesson of wisdom for those who are engaged in the missionary work.

Though the real object af this verse is the same that has been stated above, incidentally it also enjoins the hearers to remain silent and listen to it as a mark of respect which is due to the Book of Allah. It is also deduced from this that when

the *Imām* recites the Qur'ān during the *Salāt*, the followers in the congregation should listen to it in silence, and they should not recite anything. There is, however, difference of opinion among the Imāms in regard to its interpretation. According to Imām Abū Hanīfah and his companions, the followers in the congregation should not recite anything whether the Imām is reciting the Qur'ān aloud or silently in his mind. However, Imām Mālik and Imām Ahmad are of the opinion that only in that case when the Imām is reciting the Qur'ān aloud, the followers should not recite anything, but in the other case they should recite Sūrah *Al-Fātihah*. But according to Imām Shafi'ī, the followers must recite Sūrah *Al-Fātihah*, whether the Imām is reciting loudly or silently in his mind. He bases his opinion on the Traditions according to which one's *Salāt* is not complete without the recital of Surah *Al-Fātihah*.

154. "Remember your Lord" means "offer *Salāt*" as well as "keep Allah in mind whether by utterance or without it."

And "morning and evening" means both the times as well as "always". Therefore "Remember your Lord morning and evening" means "Offer *Salāt* in the morning and in the evening", and also "always keep Allah in mind."

The Sūrah concludes with the above admonition, which is meant to warn the Muslims against their negligence in the remembrance of Allah, for this alone is responsible for all the chaos and the evils in the world. Whenever man forgets that Allah is his Lord, and that he is the servant of Allah Who has sent him to this world for a trial and that he shall have to render his account to Him immediately after his death, he deviates from the Right Way and commits acts of wickedness and immorality. Therefore the man who intends to follow the Right Way and guides others to the same Way, should strictly guard against such a negligence. That is why the Qur'ān has emphasized, over and over again, the importance of the observance of *Salāt* and of the remembrance of Allah and of turning to Him on each and every occasion.

155. In contrast to the ways of pride and vanity of satans that mislead into disobedience to Allah, and consequently to the depths of degradation, the example of the angels has been cited to teach the lesson of humility. They bow down before Allah and are always engaged in His service. Therefore if one desires to achieve high ranks in the sight of Allah, one should follow the angels and refrain from the paths of satans.

156. The Arabic word يُسَبِّحُونَهُ *(yusabb-i-hūna-hū)* means, "They acknowledge and declare that Allah is flawless, and is absolutely free from every sort of defect, error or weakness, and has neither any partners nor compeers nor the like of Him, and that they are always engaged in this".

157. Everyone, who recites this verse or hears its recital, is required to perform a سجدہ (*sajdah*—prostration) so that one's physical state may be in agreement with the angels near to Allah to give a practical proof of one's humility, servitude and obedience to Allah simultaneously with His angels.

This is the first of the fourteen verses of the Qur'ān, the recital of which requires the performance of a *sajdah* (prostration). Though all the Jurists agree that a prostration should be performed at these *places*, there is a difference in regard to its obligatory status. According to Imām Abū Hanīfah, it is *wājib* (compulsory) but the other scholars are of the opinion that it is *sunnat* (optional). It may also be noted that a thing which is *sunnat is* not as binding as *wājib* but its intentional omission, though not sinful, is considered bad for a true Muslim and its permanent omission is sinful.

As regards the manner of the performance of *sajdah*, we learn from Traditions that it was different in form on different occasions. Sometimes while the Holy Prophet was reciting a verse that required the performance of *sajdah*, he himself would prostrate then and there, and everyone in the gathering did the same, so much so that if one did not find room for it on the ground, he would perform it by laying his head on the back of the man in front of him. We also learn from Traditions that on the occasion of the Conquest of Makkah, when the Holy Prophet was reciting the Qur'ān, a verse requiring the performance of *sajdah* occurred. Then those who were standing on the ground performed it on the ground, while those who were riding their horses or camels performed it on the backs of animals they were riding. Sometimes when he recited a verse requiring *sajdah* during his address, he came down from the pulpit, and performed it on the ground and then climbed the pulpit and resumed his address.

The majority of the Muslims are of the opinion that the conditions for the performance of *sajdah* are the same as for the performance of *Salāt*. But there is no proof for these conditions in the Traditions concerning *sajdah*. We find from them that when a person hears a verse requiring *sajdah*, he should bend down his head wherever and in whatever position he may be irrespective of these conditions. He should not mind whether he is in a state of ablutions or not; whether he can turn his face towards the *qiblah* or not; whether it is possible for him to prostrate his head on the ground or not. We find examples of the learned and pious people in the past following the same practice. According to Imām Bukhārī, Hadrat 'Abdullāh bin 'Umar would perform *sajdah* whether he was in a state of ablutions or not. It is cited in *Fatehulbārī* that Abū 'Abdur-Rehmān Sulami would recite the Qur'ān while he was walking and would merely bend down his head when he read a verse requiring *sajdah*, whether he was in a state of ablutions or not and whether he was facing *qiblah* or not. From these we have come to the

conclusion that, though the method followed by the majority is more prudent, if a person follows a practice different from that of the majority, he should not be reproved for this because there is no proof in Sunnah for the method followed by the majority, while there are examples of learned personages for this practice.



VIII

AL-ANFĀL

الانفال

VIII

AL-ANFĀL

الانفال

Name

The Sūrah takes its name *Al-Anfāl* (The Bounties) from the first verse.

The Period of Revelation

It was revealed in 2 A.H. after the Battle of Badr, the first battle between Islam and *kufr*. As it contains a detailed and comprehensive review of the Battle, it appears that most probably it was revealed at one and the same time. But it is also possible that some of the verses concerning the problems arising as a result of this Battle might have been revealed later and incorporated at the proper places to make it a continuous whole. At any rate, in the whole Sūrah there is nothing that might show that it is a collection of a couple of discourses, that have been patched up together.

Historical Background

Before reviewing the Sūrah, it is worthwhile to consider the events that led to the Battle of Badr.

During the first decade or so of the Prophethood at Makkah, the Message had proved its firmness and stability. This was the result of two things. First, the Messenger, who possessed the highest qualities of character, was performing his Mission with wisdom, foresight and

magnanimity. He had shown by his conduct that he had made up his mind to carry the movement to a successful end and, therefore, was ready to face all sorts of dangers and obstacles in the way. Secondly, the Message was so charming that it attracted the minds and hearts of the people irresistibly towards itself. So much so that all obstacles of ignorance, superstition and petty prejudices failed to check its advance. That is why the Arab upholders of the ways of "ignorance" who looked down upon it in its initial stages, had begun to reckon it as a serious menace during the last period of the stay of the Holy Prophet at Makkah, and were bent on crushing it with all the force at their command. But in spite of the above-mentioned strength, the Movement still lackes certain things to lead it to victory:

First, it had not yet been fully proved that it had gathered round it a sufficient number of such followers who not only believed in its truth but also had such an intense devotion to its principles that they were ready to expend all their energies and all that they possessed in the struggle for its success and establishment. So much so that they were ready to sacrifice their lives in the fight against the whole world itself even though they should be their own nearest relatives. It is true that the followers of Islam had endured the severest persecutions at the hands of the Quraish of Makkah and had given a good proof of the firmness of their faith and their strong relation with Islam, yet further trials were required to show that Islam had succeeded in acquiring such a band of followers which considered nothing dearer than its ideal and was ready to sacrifice life for it.

Secondly, though the voice of Islam had reached every part of the country, its effects were yet scattered and its acquired strength was spread here and there; it had not yet gathered sufficient force essential for a decisive conflict with the old established order of "ignorance".

Thirdly, Islam had yet no home of its own and had not established itself firmly anywhere in the land where it could consolidate its power and make it a base for further action. For the Muslims were scattered all over the country and were living among the unbelievers as

aliens whom their bloodthirsty enemies wanted to uproot from their own homes.

Fourthly, the Muslims had not yet had an opportunity to demonstrate practically the blessings of the system of life based on Islam. There was neither any Islamic culture, nor any social, economic or political system; nor were there any established principles of war and peace for their guidance. Therefore the Muslims had no opportunity for demonstrating those moral principles on which they intended to build their entire system of life; nor had it been proved on the touchstone of trial that the Muslims as a community were sincere in the proclamation of the Message.

Allah created opportunities for making up these deficiencies.

During the last four years or so of the Prophet's stay at Makkah, the voice of Islam had been proving effective at Yathrab and the people for various reasons had been accepting the message more readily than other clans of Arabia. So much so that in the twelfth year of Prophethood on the occasion of *Hajj* a deputation of 75 people met the Holy Prophet in the darkness of night. These people not only accepted Islam, but also offered to give him and his followers a home. As this was a most epoch making opportunity provided by Allah, the Holy Prophet took advantage of it.

The significance of this offer was quite clear to the people of Yathrab, and they fully realized that this was not an invitation to a mere fugitive, but to the Messenger of Allah so that he should become their leader and ruler. Likewise they knew that they were not inviting the Muslim refugees to give them shelter from persecution but to assemble them from all over the country for their integration with themselves to form an organised community. Thus the offer of the people of Yathrab was to make Yathrab the "City of Islam." Accordingly the Holy Prophet accepted their invitation and made it the first "City of Islam" in Arabia.

And the people of Yathrab were fully aware of the implications of this offer. It was indeed a declaration of war against the whole of

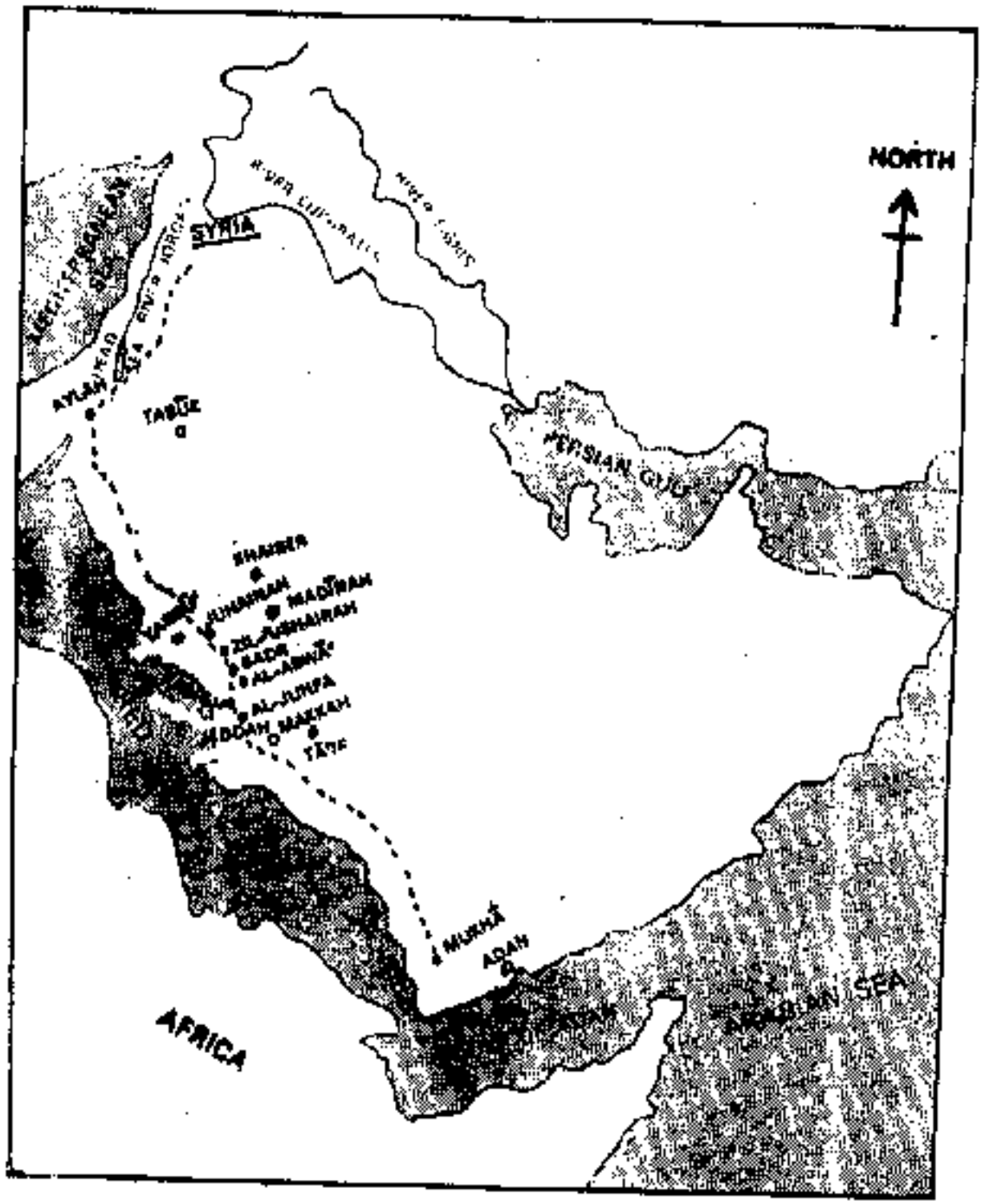
Arabia, and an invitation to their own social and economic boycott as well. And when the *Anṣār* from Yathrab declared their allegiance to the Holy Prophet at 'Aqabah, they knew fully well its consequences. During the course of the formal declaration of allegiance, Asad-bin-Zurārah, the youngest of all the delegates from Yathrab, stood up and said, "O people of Yathrab! just listen to me and consider the matter carefully in all its aspects. Though we have come to him, regarding him only as a Messenger of Allah, we should know that we shall be inviting the enmity of the whole of Arabia. For when we take him away to Yathrab, we shall be attacked and our children may be put to the sword. Therefore if you have the courage in your hearts to face it, then and then only, you should declare your allegiance to him and Allah will give you its reward. But if you love your lives more than him and his Message, then leave this matter and frankly excuse yourselves, for at this time Allah may accept your excuses."

'Abbās bin 'Ubādah bin Nadlah, another member of the delegation, reiterated the same thing, saying,

"Do you understand the implication of the declaration of your allegiance to this person?" (Voices, "Yes, we know it.") "you are challenging the whole world to war by your declaration of allegiance to him. There is every likelihood of a serious menace to your lives and properties. Therefore consider it well. If you have any idea lurking in your minds that you will then hand him over to his enemies, it is much better to leave him alone now, because that conduct shall bring shame and disgrace to you in this world and the next. On the other hand, if you have sincerely resolved that you will endure all kinds of consequences that will follow as a result of this invitation, then it would be the best thing to take the oath of allegiance to him because, by God, this will surely bring good to you in this world as well as in the next world."

At this all the members of the delegation cried with one voice, "We are ready and prepared to risk all our wealth and our noble kith and kin for his sake."

MAP SHOWING THE TRADE ROUTES OF THE QURAISH



It was then that the famous oath of allegiance, which is known as the "Second Oath of Allegiance at 'Aqabah," was taken.

On the other side, the people of Makkah also understood fully well the implications of this matter from their own point of view. They realised that Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him), who, they knew well, had a great personality and possessed extraordinary abilities, was going to gain a strong footing, by this allegiance. For this would help integrate his followers, whose constancy, determination, and unwavering fidelity to the Messenger had been tried, into a disciplined community under his wise leadership and guidance. And they knew that this would spell death for their old ways of life. They also realised the strategic importance of Al-Madīnah to their trade, wich was their chief means of livelihood.

Its geographical position was such that the Muslims could strike with advantage at the caravans travelling on the trade route between Yaman and Syria, and thus strike at the root of their economy and that of other pagan clans very effectively. The value of the trade done by the people of Makkah alone on this route, not to count that of Tāif and other places, amounted to about two hundred thousand *dināirs* annually.

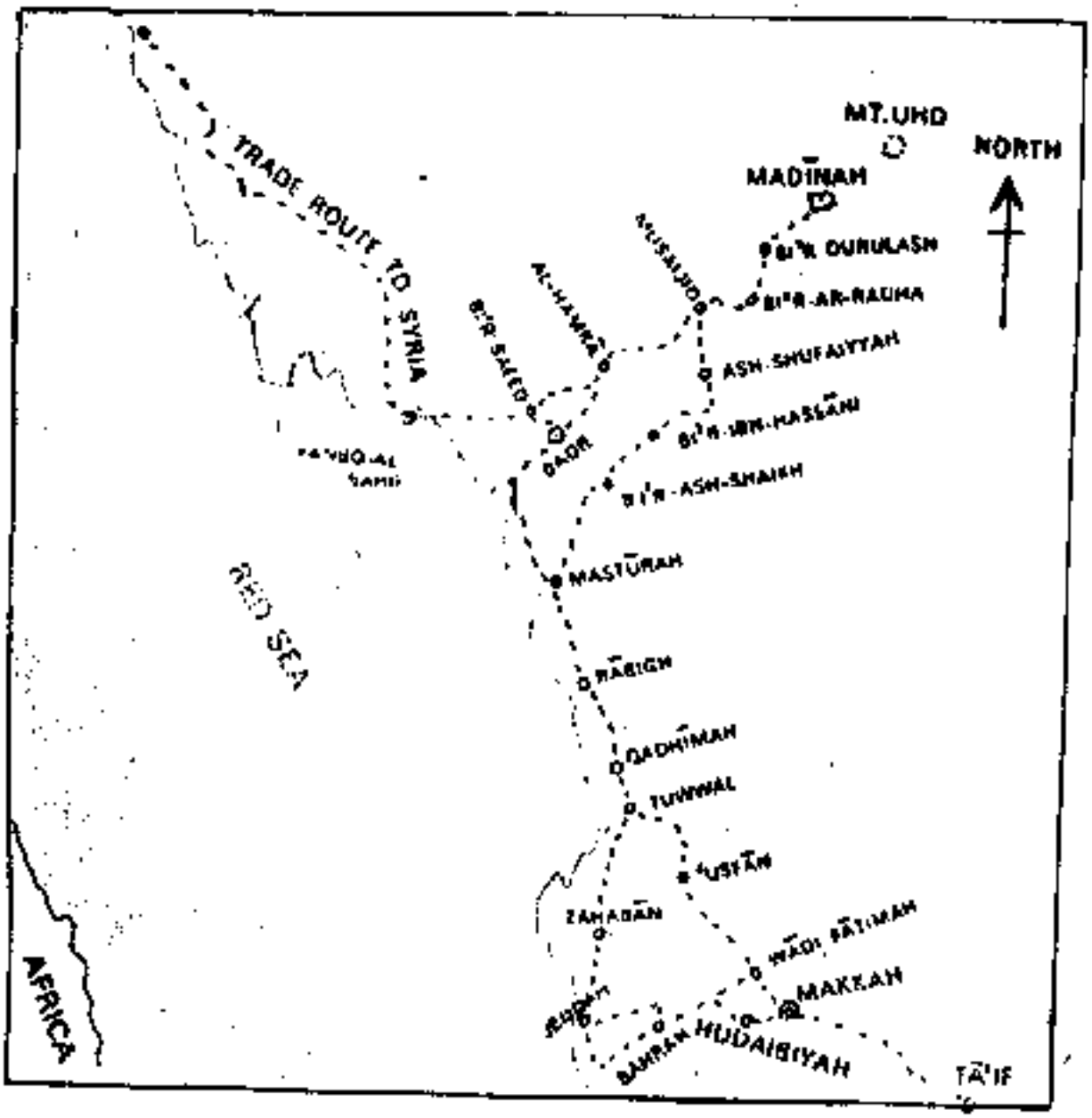
As the Quraish were fully aware of the implications of the oath of allegiance at 'Aqabah, they were greatly perturbed when they got wind of it the same night. At first they tried to win over the people of Al-Madīnah to their side. But when they saw that the Muslims were migrating to Al-Madīnah in small groups, they realised that the Holy Prophet was also going to emigrate soon from there. Then they decided to adopt an extreme measure to prevent this danger.

A few days before his migration, the Quraish held a council to consider the matter. After a good deal of argument, they decided that one person should be taken from each of the families of Quraish other than that of Banī Hāshim to put an end to the life of the Holy Prophet. This was to make it difficult for the family of the Holy Prophet to fight alone with all the other families of the Quraish and thus to force them to

accept blood-money for his murder instead of taking revenge from them. but by the grace of Allah their plot against the life of the Holy Prophet failed because of his admirable foresight and full trust in Allah, and he reached Al-Madīnah safe and sound. When they could not prevent his emigration, it occurred to them to exploit 'Abdullah bin Ubayy who had begun to cherish a grievance against the Holy Prophet since his arrival at Al-Madīnah. He was an influential chief of Al-Madīnah and the people had agreed to make him their king. But when the majority of Aus and Khazraj clans became Muslims and acknowledged the Holy Prophet as their leader, guide and ruler, all his hopes of becoming a king came to an end. Therefore the Quraish wrote to him, 'As you have given shelter to our enemy, we tell you plainly that you should either fight with him yourself or exile him from your City: otherwise we swear by God that we will invade your city, kill your males and make your females our slave girls." This letter added fuel to the flames of his jealousy and he was inclined to do some mischief, but the Holy Prophet took timely precautions and defeated his evil designs.

The Quraish got another opportunity to hold out a threat. When Sa'ad bin Mu'āz, another chief of Al-Madīnah went to Makkah to perform *'Umrah*, Abu Jahl interrupted him at the very door of the Ka'abah, saying, "Do you think we will let you perform *'Umrah* in peace when you give shelter and help to renegades from us? Had you not been a guest of Umumayyah bin Khalf, you would not have gone alive from here." Sa'ad replied, "By Allah, if you prevent me from this, I will retaliate in a worse manner and block your route near Al-Madīnah." This incident virtually led to a declaration from the people of Makkah that they would prevent the Muslims from a pilgrimage to the Ka'abah, and from the people of Al-Madīnah that as a retaliation they would block their trade route to Syria against the opponents of Islam. As a matter of fact there was no other alternative for the Muslims than to keep a strong hold on this route so as to force the Quraish, and the other clans, whose interests were vitally bound with this route, to reconsider their inimical and antagonistic attitude towards them. That is why the Holy Prophet attached the greatest importance to this problem. As soon as he was free from making the preliminary arrangements for organizing the newly

MAP SHOWING THE CARAVAN ROUTES TO SYRIA FROM MAKKAH VIA BADR AND ALSO THE WAY FROM MADINAH TO BADR



formed Muslim Community and settling peace terms with the neighbouring Jewish habitations, he adopted two measures in this connection:

First, he entered into negotiations with those clans who lived between the Red Sea and this route so as to make alliances with them or at least to persuade them to make treaties of neutrality with the Muslims. He was successful in this, and he entered into a treaty of non-alignment with Juhainah, which was a very important clan of the hilly tract near the sea coast. Then, at the end of the first year of Hijrah, he made a treaty of defensive alliance with Bani Damrah, who lived near Yanbū' and Zawal 'Ushairah. In 2 A.H. Bani Mudlij also joined the alliance, as they were the neighbours and allies of Bani Damrah. Then it so happened that quite a large number of these people were converted to Islam as a result of the missionary work done by the Muslims.

Secondly, he successively sent small bands of his men on this route to serve as a warning to the Quraish, and himself accompanied some of them. In the first year of Hijrah, four expeditions were sent there, that is, the expedition under Hamzah, the expedition under 'Ubaidah bin Hārith, the expedition under Sa'ad bin Abī Waqqas and the Al-Abwā' expedition under the Holy Prophet himself. In the first month of the second year two more incursions were made on the same route. These are known as Buwāt Expedition and Zawal 'Ushairah Expedition. Two things about all these expeditions are noteworthy. First, no blood was shed and no caravans were plundered in any of these expeditions. This proves that the real object of these expeditions was to show to the Quraish which way the wind was blowing. Secondly, not a single man from the people of Al-Madīnah was sent by the Holy Prophet on any of these incursions. All the bands consisted purely of the immigrants from Makkah so that the conflict should remain between the people of the Quraish themselves and should not further spread by the involvement of other clans. On the other side, the Quraish of Makkah tried to involve others also in the conflict. When they sent bands towards Al-Madīnah, they did not hesitate to plunder the people. For instance, an expedition under the leadership of Kurz bin Jābir al-Fihrī plundered the cattle of the

people of Al-Madīnah from the very vicinity of the city to show what their real intentions were.

This was the state of affairs when, in Sha'aban, 2 A.H. (February or March, 623 A.D.) a big trade caravan of the Quraish, carrying goods worth £50,000 or so, with only a guard of thirty to forty men, on its way back from Syria to Makkah, reached the territory from where it could be easily attacked from Al-Madīnah. As the caravan was carrying trade goods worth thousands of pounds, and was scantily guarded, naturally Abū Sufyān, who was in charge of it, from his past experience feared an attack from the Muslims. Accordingly, as soon as he entered the dangerous territory, he despatched a camel rider to Makkah with a frantic appeal for help.

When the rider reached Makkah, he, following an old custom of Arabia, tore open the ears of his camel, cut open his nose and overturned the saddle. Then rending his shirt from front and behind, he began to cry aloud at the top of his voice, "O people of Quraish! despatch help to protect your caravan from Syria under the charge of Abu Sufyān, for Muhammad with his followers is in pursuit of it; otherwise I don't think you will ever get your goods. Run, run for help." This caused great excitement and anger in the whole of Makkah and all the big chiefs of the Quraish got ready for war. An army, consisting of 600 armoured soldiers and cavalry of 100 riders with great pomp and show marched out for a fight. They intended not only to rescue the caravan but also to put to an end, once for all, the new menace from the Muslims who had consolidated themselves at Al-Madīnah. They wanted to crush that rising power and overawe the clans surrounding the route so as to make it absolutely secure for future trade.

Now the Holy Prophet, who always kept himself well informed of the state of affairs, felt that the decisive hour had come and that was the right time when he must take a bold step; otherwise the Islamic Movement would become lifeless for ever and no chance would be left for it to rise again. For, if the Qurasih invaded Al-Madīnah, the odds would be against the Muslims. The condition of the Muslim Community

was still very shaky because the immigrants *(Muhājirīn)* had not been able to stabilise their economy during the short period (less than two years) of their stay at Al-Madinah; their helpers (the *Ansār)* had not yet been tried; and the neighbouring Jewish clans were antagonistic. Then there was a strong group of hypocrites and *mushriks* in Al-Madīnah itself; above all, the surrounding clans lived in awe of the Quraish and had all their religious sympathies with them. The Holy Prophet, therefore, felt that the consequences of this possible invasion would not be favourable to the Muslims.

The second possibility was that they would not invade Al-Madinah but try only to escort their caravan safely and securely by a mere show of force. In that case, too, if the Muslims remained inactive, it would affect their reputation adversely. Obviously, this weak stand in the conflict would embolden the other Arabs also and make the position of the Muslims very insecure in the country and the surrounding clans would, at the instance of the Quraish, start hostilities against them, and the Jews, the hypocrites and the *mushriks* of Al-Madīnah would openly rise against them and not only endanger their security of life, property and honour but make it difficult for them even to live there.

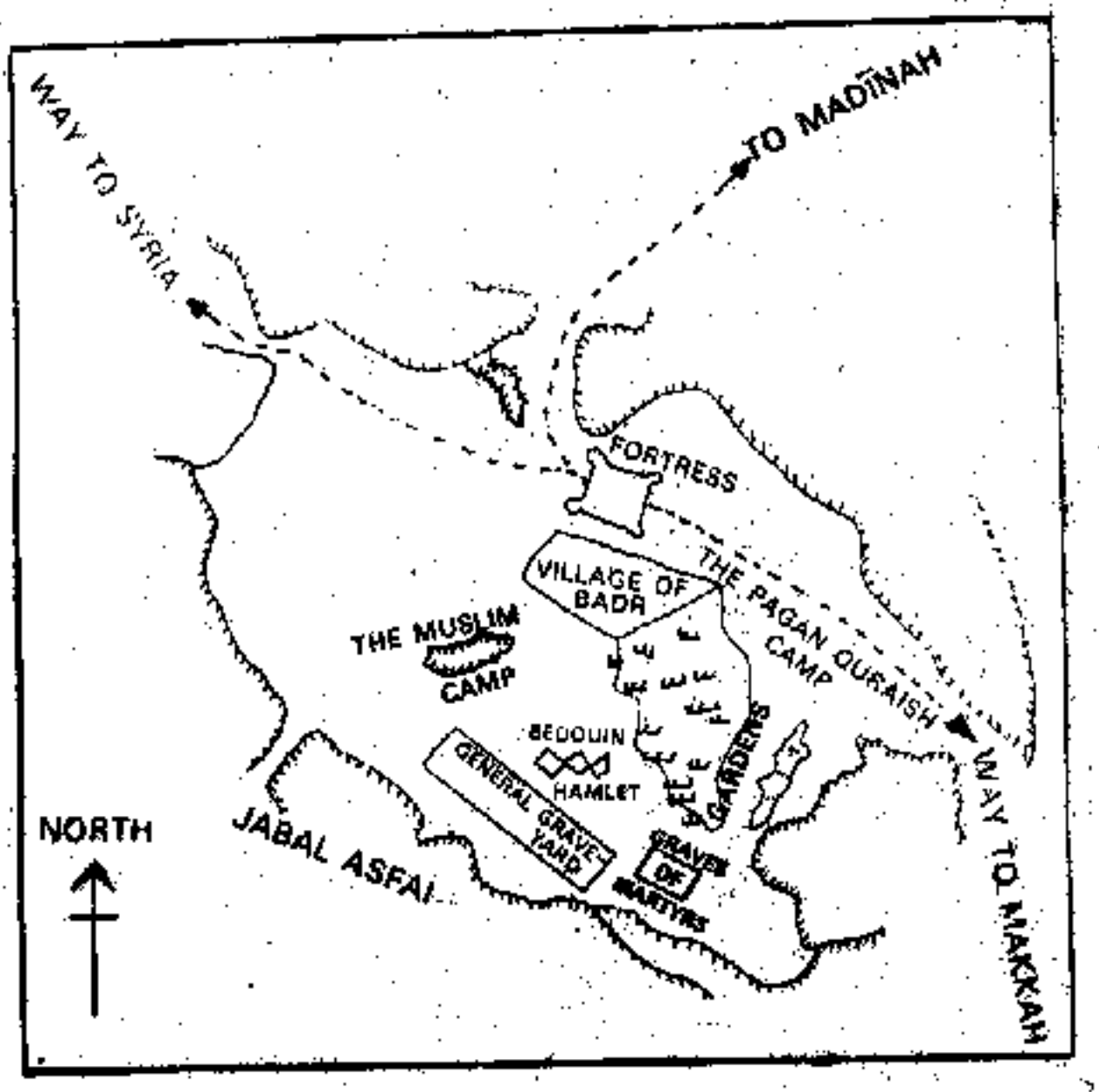
The Muslims would not be able to inspire the enemy with awe so as to keep safe from them their life, property and honour. A careful study of the situation led the Holy Prophet to make up his mind to take a decisive step and go into the battle with whatever little strength he could muster, for thus and thus only could he show whether the Muslim Community had the right to survive or was doomed to perish.

When he arrived at this momentous decision, he called the *Muhājirīn* and the *Ansār* together and placed the whole position before them, without any reservation. He said, "Allah has promised that you will confront one of the two; the trade caravan coming from the north or the army of the Quraish marching from the south. Now tell me which of the two you want to attack!" A large majority of the people replied that they wanted to attack the caravan. But the Holy Prophet who had something else before him, repeated the same question. At this Miqdād

bin 'Amr, a *Muhājir*, stood up and said, "O Messenger of Allah! Please march to the side to which your Lord commands you; we will accompany you wherever you go. We will not say like the Israelites, 'Go and let you and your Lord fight; we will wait here.' In contrast to them we say, 'Let you and your Lord fight; we will fight by your side to our last breath'." Even then he did not announce any decision but waited for a reply from the *Ansār* who had not yet taken any part in any battle of Islam. As this was the first opportunity for them to prove that they were ready to fulfil their promise of fighting for the cause of Islam, he repeated the question without directly addressing them. At this, Sa'ad bin Mu'āz, an *Ansār*, stood up and said, "Sir, it appears that you are putting the question to us." When the Holy Prophet said, "Yes", the *Ansār* replied, "We have believed in you and confirmed that what you have brought is the Truth, and have made a solemn pledge with you that we will listen to you and obey you. Therefore, O Messenger of Allah, do whatever you intend to do. We swear by Allah Who has sent you with the Truth that we are ready to accompany you to the sea shore and if you enter it, we will plunge into it. We assure you that not a single one of us will remain behind or forsake you, for we will not hesitate at all to go to fight, even if you should lead us to the battlefield tomorrow. We will remain steadfast in the battle and sacrifice our lives in the fight. We do hope that by the grace of Allah our behaviour will gladden your heart. So, trusting in Allah's blessing, take us to the battlefield."

After these speeches it was decided that they should march towards the army of the Quraish and not towards the trade caravan. But it should be noted that the decision was of an ordinary nature. For the number of people, who came forward to go to the battlefield, was only a little more than three hundred (86 *Muhājirs*, 61 from Aus and 170 from Khazraj). Then the little army was ill-armed and hardly equipped for battle. Only a couple of them had horses to ride and the others had to take their turn in threes and fours on the back of a camel, out of the 70 they had in all. Above all, they had not got enough weapons for the battle; only 60 of them had armours. It is, therefore, no wonder that with the exception of those who were prepared to sacrifice their lives for the cause of Islam, the majority of those who had joined the expedition,

THE BATTLEFIELD OF BADR



were so filled with fear that they felt as if they were knowingly going into the jaws of death. Then there were people who always looked at things from a selfish point of view. Though they had embraced Islam, they did not realize that their faith would demand the sacrifice of their lives and properties from them; they were of the opinion that it was a mad expedition prompted by irrational enthusiasm for religion. But the Holy Prophet and the true Believers had realized the urgency of that critical hour which required the risk of life: therefore they marched straight to the south-west, wherefrom the army of the Quraish was coming. This is a clear proof of the fact that from the very beginning they had gone out to fight with the army and not to plunder the caravan. For if they had aimed at plundering the caravan they would have taken the northwesterly direction and not the south-westerly one.*

The two parties met in combat at Badr on the seventeenth of Ramadān. When the two armies confronted each other and the Holy Prophet noticed that the Quraish army outnumbered the Muslims by three to one and was much better equipped, he raised his hands up in supplication and made this earnest prayer with great humility: "O Allah! Here are the Quraish proud of their war material: they have come to prove that Thy Messenger is false. O Allah! now send that succour that Thou hast promised to give me. O Allah! If this little army of Thy servants is destroyed, then there will be left none in the land to worship Thee." In this combat the emigrants from Makkah were put to the hardest test for they had to fight against their own near and dear relatives and put to the sword their fathers, their sons, their paternal and

* In this connection it is noteworthy that historians and writers of the biography of the Holy Prophet have mostly relied on the books of traditions and wars, though the greater part of the traditions about the Battle of Badr is against the facts related in the Qur'ān and, therefore, unreliable. It is not mere credulity that we believe that the facts contained in the Qur'ān about the Battle are absolutely reliable, but from the historical point of view also there cannot be any doubt about them. For Sūrah *Al-Anfāl* was revealed immediately after the Battle and those who had taken part in it had heard and read it. Had there been anything in it against the facts, it would have been refuted then and there.

maternal uncles and their brothers. It is obvious that only such people could have come out successful in this hardest of tests as had accepted the Truth sincerely and cut off all relations with falsehood. And in another way the test to which the *Ansār* were put was not less hard. So far they had only alienated the powerful Quraish and their allies by giving shelter to the Muslims against their wishes but now, for the first time, they were going to give fight to them and to sow the seeds of a long and bitter war with them. This was indeed a very hard test for it meant that a small town with a population of a few thousand inhabitants was going to wage a war with the whole of Arabia. It is obvious that only such people could take this bold step who believed in the Truth of Islam so firmly that they were ready to sacrifice every personal interest for its sake.

So Allah accepted the self-sacrifices of the *Muhājirīn* and the *Ansar* because of their true faith, and rewarded them with His succour. The proud, well-armed Quraish were routed by these ill-equipped devotees of Islam. Seventy men of their army were killed and seventy captured as prisoners and their arms and equipment came into the hands of the Muslims as spoils of war. All their big chiefs, who were their best soldiers and who had led the opposition to Islam, were killed in this Battle. No wonder that this decisive victory made Islam a power to be reckoned with. A Western research scholar says that before the Battle of Badr, Islam was merely a religion and not a state but after the Battle it became the state religion, nay, the state itself.

Topics of Discussion

It is this great Battle that has been reviewed in this Sūrah. But let it be noted that in some respects this review is quite different from the reviews that are usually made by the worldly commanders after a great victory:

1. Instead of gloating over the victory, the moral weaknesses that had come to the surface in that expedition have been pointed out so that the Muslims should try their best to reform themselves.

2. It has been impressed upon them that the victory was due to the succour of Allah rather than to their own valour and bravery so that the Muslims should learn to rely on Him and obey Allah and His Messenger alone.

3. The moral lesson of the conflict between the Truth and falsehood has been enunciated and the qualities which lead to success in a conflict have been explained.

4. Then the Sūrah addresses the *mushriks*, the hypocrites, the Jews and the prisoners of this war in a very impressive manner that should teach them a good lesson.

5. It also gives instructions in regard to the spoils of war. The Muslims have been told not to regard these as their right but as a bounty from Allah. Therefore they should accept with gratitude the share that is granted to them out of it and willingly accede to the share which Allah sets apart for His cause and for the help of the needy.

6. Then it also gives normal instructions concerning the laws of peace and war for these were urgently needed to be explained at the stage which the Islamic Movement had entered. It enjoined that the Muslims should refrain from ways of "ignorance" in peace and war and thus should establish their moral superiority in the world. It also meant to demonstrate to the world in actual practical life the morality which it had been preaching to the world from the very beginning of Islam and had been enjoining that practical life should be based on the same.

7. It also states some articles of the Islamic Constitution which help differentiate the status of the Muslims living within the limits of *Dar-ul-Islam* (the Abode of Islam) from that of the Muslims living beyond its limits.

SUMMARY

SUBJECT: PROBLEMS OF *JIHĀD*

This Sūrah enunciates general principles of war (one aspect of *Jihād)* and peace while reviewing the Battle of Badr and uses them for the moral training of the Muslims.

Topics and their Interconnection

1-41 This portion deals with the problems of the "Spoils of War". The Qur'ān says that these are not the spoils of war but the "Bounties of Allah" and proves this by showing that the victory at Badr (and in all other battles, too,) was won by His succour and not by the efforts of the Muslims. It also declares (in v. 40) that the war aim of the Muslims should be to eliminate all unfavourable conditions for the establishment of Islam and not to gain spoils. Moreover, the spoils, being the bounties of God, belong to Allah and His Messenger and they alone are entitled to allocate them. Then after conditioning the Muslims to accept these things, the different shares have been allocated in v. 41.

42-54 The Battle of Badr was ordained by Allah so that Islam should triumph over "ignorance." The lesson from this is that the Muslims should trust in God and prepare themselves for war and should not be beguiled by Satan as the disbelievers were.

55-59 Sanctity of treaties has been enjoined and the Muslims commanded to observe them as long as the other party does not break them.

60-66 The Muslims should always be prepared for war on every front, but should be ready to make peace if the other party is inclined towards it.

67-71 In these verses, instructions about prisoners of war have been given.

72-75 In order to keep the Muslims joined together against their enemies, they have been taught to have cordial relations with one another.



يَسْـَٔلُوْنَكَ عَنِ الْاَنْفَالِ ۭ قُلِ الْاَنْفَالُ لِلّٰهِ وَالرَّسُوْلِ ۚ فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَ
اَصْلِحُوْا ذَاتَ بَيْنِكُمْ ۠ وَاَطِيْعُوا اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗٓ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ۝١
اِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ الَّذِيْنَ اِذَا ذُكِرَ اللّٰهُ وَجِلَتْ قُلُوْبُهُمْ وَاِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ
اٰيٰتُهٗ زَادَتْهُمْ اِيْمَانًا وَّعَلٰي رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُوْنَ ۝٢ الَّذِيْنَ يُقِيْمُوْنَ الصَّلٰوةَ
وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنٰهُمْ يُنْفِقُوْنَ ۝٣ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ هُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ حَقًّا ۭ لَهُمْ دَرَجٰتٌ عِنْدَ

VIII

الانفال

AL-ANFĀL (BOUNTIES)

Verses; 75 *Revealed at Al-Madinah*

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

They ask you concerning the bounties? Say, "The bounties belong to Allah and the Messenger. So fear Allah and set things aright among youreselves; obey Allah and His Messenger, if you are true believers."[1] True believers are only those whose hearts tremble with awe, whenever Allah is mentioned to them; whose faith increases[2] when the revelations of Allah are recited to them; who put their trust in their Lord, who establish *Salāt* and spend in Our way out of what we have given them. 1-3

1. A dispute arose among the Muslims concerning the division of the spoils of victroy after the Battle of Badr. Allah used this opprtunity for the benefit of the Muslims and gave instructions for the solution of the problems of peace and war.

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رَبِّهِمْ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ وَّرِزْقٌ كَرِيْمٌ ۝٤ كَمَآ اَخْرَجَكَ رَبُّكَ مِنْۢ بَيْتِكَ بِالْحَقِّ ۖ
وَاِنَّ فَرِيْقًا مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ لَكٰرِهُوْنَ ۝٥ يُجَادِلُوْنَكَ فِي الْحَقِّ بَعْدَ مَا
تَبَيَّنَ كَاَنَّمَا يُسَاقُوْنَ اِلَى الْمَوْتِ وَهُمْ يَنْظُرُوْنَ ۝٦ وَاِذْ يَعِدُكُمُ اللّٰهُ
اِحْدَى الطَّآئِفَتَيْنِ اَنَّهَا لَكُمْ وَتَوَدُّوْنَ اَنَّ غَيْرَ ذَاتِ الشَّوْكَةِ تَكُوْنُ
لَكُمْ وَيُرِيْدُ اللّٰهُ اَنْ يُّحِقَّ الْحَقَّ بِكَلِمٰتِهٖ وَيَقْطَعَ دَابِرَ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ۝٧
لِيُحِقَّ الْحَقَّ وَيُبْطِلَ الْبَاطِلَ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُجْرِمُوْنَ ۝٨ اِذْ تَسْتَغِيْثُوْنَ
رَبَّكُمْ فَاسْتَجَابَ لَكُمْ اَنِّيْ مُمِدُّكُمْ بِاَلْفٍ مِّنَ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ مُرْدِفِيْنَ ۝٩ وَ
مَا جَعَلَهُ اللّٰهُ اِلَّا بُشْرٰى وَلِتَطْمَئِنَّ بِهٖ قُلُوْبُكُمْ ۚ وَمَا النَّصْرُ اِلَّا مِنْ
عِنْدِ اللّٰهِ ۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَزِيْزٌ حَكِيْمٌ ۝١٠ اِذْ يُغَشِّيْكُمُ النُّعَاسَ اَمَنَةً مِّنْهُ وَ
يُنَزِّلُ عَلَيْكُمْ مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً لِّيُطَهِّرَكُمْ بِهٖ وَيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمْ رِجْزَ
الشَّيْطٰنِ وَلِيَرْبِطَ عَلٰى قُلُوْبِكُمْ وَيُثَبِّتَ بِهِ الْاَقْدَامَ ۝١١ اِذْ يُوْحِيْ رَبُّكَ
اِلَى الْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اَنِّيْ مَعَكُمْ فَثَبِّتُوا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا ۗ سَاُلْقِيْ فِيْ قُلُوْبِ الَّذِيْنَ
كَفَرُوا الرُّعْبَ فَاضْرِبُوْا فَوْقَ الْاَعْنَاقِ وَاضْرِبُوْا مِنْهُمْ كُلَّ بَنَانٍ ۝١٢
ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّهُمْ شَآقُّوا اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ ۚ وَمَنْ يُّشَاقِقِ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ فَاِنَّ
اللّٰهَ شَدِيْدُ الْعِقَابِ ۝١٣ ذٰلِكُمْ فَذُوْقُوْهُ وَاَنَّ لِلْكٰفِرِيْنَ عَذَابَ النَّارِ ۝١٤
يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اِذَا لَقِيْتُمُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا زَحْفًا فَلَا تُوَلُّوْهُمُ الْاَدْبَارَ ۝١٥
وَمَنْ يُّوَلِّهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ دُبُرَهٗٓ اِلَّا مُتَحَرِّفًا لِّقِتَالٍ اَوْ مُتَحَيِّزًا اِلٰى فِئَةٍ
فَقَدْ بَآءَ بِغَضَبٍ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ وَمَاْوٰىهُ جَهَنَّمُ ۭ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيْرُ ۝١٦ فَلَمْ
تَقْتُلُوْهُمْ وَلٰكِنَّ اللّٰهَ قَتَلَهُمْ ۠ وَمَا رَمَيْتَ اِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَلٰكِنَّ اللّٰهَ رَمٰى ۚ

Such people are indeed true believers; they have high ranks 4-6
with their Lord and forgiveness for their sins[3] and most generous provisions. (Now in regard to the spoils the same thing is happening again which happened when) your Lord had brought you forth from your home with the Truth, for some of the Believers were very much averse to it: they were arguing with you concerning the truth, though it had become quite evident; they were filled with awe as if they were being driven towards death with their eyes wide open.[4]

Remember the occasion when Allah was holding out to you the 7-8
promise that one of the two hosts[5] would fall to you: you wished the weaker host should fall to you[6]: but Allah willed to prove by His words the Truth to be truth and to cut across the roots of the disbelievers so that the Truth should come out as truth and falsehood should be proved to be falsehood, even though the evil-doers did not like it.[7]

And when you were praying to Allah for succour, He 9-10
answered, "I am sending for your succour one thousand angels, one after another". Allah told you this thing only as a good news for you, and to comfort your hearts: although succour is always from Allah: indeed Allah is All-Powerful, All-Wise.

And remember the time when Allah was giving you peace and 11
security from Himself in the form of drowsiness,[8] and was sending down on you water from heaven in order to cleanse you and to remove from you the defilement caused by Satan, and to strengthen your hearts and to steady your footsteps.[9]

And remember when your Lord was inspiring the angels with 12-14
this: "I am with you: so keep the Believers steadfast. I am now going to fill the hearts of the disbelievers with awe: so smite their necks and beat every joint of their bodies.[10] This is because they have opposed Allah and His Messenger; whoso opposes Allah and His Messenger, surely Allah is very severe for him in retribution."[11] This[12] is the punishment for you: so taste it now: you should also know that there is the torture of Hell for those who deny the Truth.

O Believers! when you encounter, as an army, the disbelievers 15-16
in a battle, do not turn your backs on them. Whoso turns his back on

such an occasion, except it be as a strategy, or to join another troop of the Believers, shall incur the wrath of Allah: Hell shall be his abode: most wretched is that place of retreat ![13]

Contd. from p. 125]

As Badr was the first battle fought under the flag of Islam, naturally the Muslims were unaware of the Islamic laws about war and the problems created by it. Some preliminary instructions had already been given in Sūrahs *Al-Baqarah* and *Muhammad*, but more instructions were needed for the "humanization of war", because their notions were still the same that they had during the pre-Islamic days. That is why according to the old usage each Muslim claimed to be the rightful owner of the spoils which came in his hand after the victory. But there were others, who had gone in pursuit of the enemy instead of plundering the spoils. They claimed that they, too, were entitled to a share of the spoils, for, they said, "If we had not pursued the enemies to a long distance, they would have come back and by a surprise attack turned the victory into a defeat". There were still others, who were standing guard for the Holy Prophet: they also claimed a share, saying that they had rendered the greatest service in the Battle by protecting the person of the Holy Prophet, for, without this, there could have been no victory at all. But the people of the first group who possessed the spoils, were adamant and were not amenable to any reason whatever; for them, possession was the strongest of all arguments. By and by, the dispute began to take a very serious turn.

It was at this psychological moment that Allah sent down Sūrah *Al-Anfāl* and chose the same thorny problem for the introduction of the review of the Battle of Badr. And it is a miracle of the Divine Book that it solved the thorny problem in a few words. The very first sentence-- "They ask you concerning the bounties?"--that introduced the problem contained its solution. The use of the Arabic word انفال *(anfāl)*, 'bounties', instead of غنائم (*ghanā'im*), 'spoils of victory', provided the answer to the problem. The word انفال *(anfāl) is* the plural of نفل *(nafl)*. It means something which is in addition to the thing to which one is entitled by right. When that something is from the servant, it denotes the additional service to what is obligatory on the servant, but when it is from the master it denotes the additional reward which is bestowed on the servant as a bounty over and above to what the servant is entitled. The verse, therefore, implies: "Are you having a dispute concerning the bounties of Allah? If these are not the spoils of victory, but the bounties of Allah, who are you to decide about their division? It is for the Giver of the bounties to decide whom to give and how much."

This conception of the spoils of victory helped to bring about a great moral reform in the attitude towards war. Muslims do not go to war for the sake of material gains but for the sake of reforming the moral and social evils in the world in accordance with the principles of the Truth; and that they wage war only when the opposing forces make it impossible for them to carry out the reform work by means of preaching and teaching. Therefore the reformers must keep in view only that aim and object and not the material gains that may be bestowed on them by Allah as His bounties. That is why the Muslims were warned after the very first battle for the cause of Islam to guard themselves against the material gains of the battle lest these should become the sole aim and object of the fight.

This also brought about a great reform in connection with the division of the spoils of war. Formerly these spoils became the property of anyone who got possession of them, or of the commander or of the king who became the owner of the whole of them. In the first case, the selfishness of the soldiers of the victorious army led to a bitter competition for the grabbing of spoils and sometimes even brought about a civil war with all its horrible consequences. In the second case, the soldiers would resort to pilfering, which would degrade them to the low level of thieves. The Qur'ān reformed these evils by declaring the spoils of war to be the property of Allah and His Messenger, and then further on in v. 41 by laying down equitable shares for its fair division. The first reform demanded that all these spoils, be they worth much or little, should be brought at one place before the chief commander. Then by the second reform, one-fifth of this should be kept for the Islamic State for the cause of Allah and for the help of the poor, and the remaining part should be divided among all those who had taken part in the battle. In this way the evils of the age of "ignorance" were reformed to the satisfaction of all.

Here this subtle point should also be kept in view: the Qur'an leaves the problem of the division after declaring that these bounties belong to Allah and the Messenger, and does not even touch it so that the minds should first be prepared for obedience and its acceptance. Then in v. 41 it gives the Command for the division of the spoils. That is why these have been called the 'bounties' here and the 'spoils' of war in v. 41.

2. This implies that a man's Faith increases on every occasion he acknowledges the Revelations of Allah to be true, and submits to them. Most surely his Faith increases and grows, whenever he surrenders himself to the Book of Allah and to the teachings of the Holy Prophet though they may be against his own desires, his opinions, his conceptions, his theories, his habits, his interests, his lusts, his comforts, his affections and his friendships. For, instead of changing the teachings, he changes himself in accordance with the Commands of Allah and the instructions of the Holy Prophet, and accepts them for his guidance. In

contrast to this, if a believer hesitates to accept these, his Faith begins to decrease and fade away.

This also shows that Faith is not something that is incapable of growth and increase and which always remains in one and the same state, but it is capable of both improvement and decay. Every denial of the Truth corrupts its quality, and likewise every acknowledgement and acceptance improves it. But as far as the grading of the rights and ranks of the people, according to the acceptance or denial of the Truth, is concerned, all the Muslims shall be placed in one and the same position, and likewise the non-Muslims. In the Islamic society, the legal rights and obligations of all the Muslims shall be the same, irrespective of the differences in the quality of the Faith. In the same way, the non-Muslims shall be *Żimmīs* or belligerents or allies of the same rank, irrespective of the quality of their denial of the Islamic Faith.

3. The promise, that the shortcomings of the believers shall be forgiven, gives great solace to them, for everyone, however great and good he may be, is liable to commit offences and it is not at all possible that a human being will always do such deeds as conform in every case to the highest standard and are absolutely free from defect, deficiency and fault. Allah, however, shows one of His greatest blessings to those who perform obligatory duties, and forgives their shortcomings by His grace, and rewards His servants with a far greater recompense than the one they deserve. Otherwise, if His rule had been to reward and punish each and every virtue and vice separately, then even the most righteous people could not have escaped punishment.

4. The verse may mean either of the two things: as translated it means at that time the Truth required that they should go to the fight but they were afraid of this; and now the Truth required that they should not argue concerning the spoils of war and wait for the Command, but they did not seem to submit to this for the sake of the Truth. The second meaning will be this: "In the Battle of Badr, you have seen with your own eyes the good results of following the Truth. Although you were afraid of going to the fight as if you were being driven towards death, yet by obeying Allah and His Messenger, you won a great victory: likewise, if you now abide by the Truth in regard to the division of the spoils and submit to the Command of Allah and obey the decision of the Holy Prophet instead of yielding to the desires of your hearts, you will see good results with your own eyes".

Incidentally, verses 5-6 refute all those traditions about the Battle of Badr that are related in the books on the life of the Holy Prophet and his wars. They say that the real plan of the Holy Prophet and his followers was to plunder the caravan and accordingly they had marched out of Al-Madīnah for the same purpose. But when they had travelled some distance, they learnt that an army of the Quraish

was coming for the protection of the caravan, and they held a council to decide whether to attack the caravan or the army. The Qur'ān, however, contradicts this. It says that Allah brought forth the Holy Prophet from his home with the Truth at the very beginning and he had this Truth before him that they should meet the army of the Quraish in a decisive battle. For these consultations were held before they had started from Al-Madīnah and not after. It was then that some Muslims were arguing with the Holy Prophet concerning the Truth that they should go to meet the army of the Quraish, though it had become quite evident to them. That was why these people felt as though they were being driven towards death, when they were commanded to march out of Al-Madīnah at the very start of the expedition.

5. That is, the trade caravan, or the army of the Quraish.

6. That is, the trade caravan, that was accompanied by a guard band numbering between thirty and forty.

7. This makes it clear that the march of the army of the Quraish towards Al-Madīnah amounted to a challenge from the system of 'ignorance' to the system of Islam, as stated in the Introduction to this Sūrah. Allah willed that the Muslims should accept that challenge and fight a decisive battle for the survival of Islam in Arabia. If the Muslims had not marched out boldly on that occasion, they would have lost all chances of their survival. Their bold march and victory at Badr in the very first battle crushed the power of the Quraish and created such favourable conditions for Islam that after this it went on defeating the system of "ignorance".

8. The Muslims experienced the same thing during the Battle of Uhd. (III: 154). On both these critical occasions, Allah filled the hearts of the Muslims with such peace and security that they were overpowered by drowsiness.

9. On the eve of the Battle of Badr, there was a rainfall, which helped the Muslims in three ways. First, they got an opportunity of storing water in reservoirs. Secondly, it made the sandy ground hard in the upper part of the valley where the Muslims were camping and they could move about with steady footsteps. Thirdly, it created difficulties for the army of the disbelievers who were camping in the lower part of the valley for the rain-water gathered there and made the ground marshy and their feet sank into the mud.

"The defilement caused by Satan" was the fear and confusion he had imbued in their minds because of the coming battle. The God-sent rainfall and slumber at that critical occasion helped to remove that fear and confusion.

10. From what we have learnt about the basic principles from the Qur'ān, we are of the opinion that the angels were not employed directly to take part in

[Contd. on p. 133

وَلِيُبْلِيَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ مِنْهُ بَلَآءً حَسَنًا ۚ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ سَمِيْعٌ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿١٧﴾ ذٰلِكُمْ وَأَنَّ
اللّٰهَ مُوْهِنُ كَيْدِ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿١٨﴾ إِنْ تَسْتَفْتِحُوْا فَقَدْ جَآءَكُمُ الْفَتْحُ ۚ وَإِنْ
تَنْتَهُوْا فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ ۚ وَإِنْ تَعُوْدُوْا نَعُدْ ۚ وَلَنْ تُغْنِيَ عَنْكُمْ فِئَتُكُمْ
شَيْئًا وَّلَوْ كَثُرَتْ ۙ وَأَنَّ اللّٰهَ مَعَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ يٰٓأَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا أَطِيْعُوا
اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ وَلَا تَوَلَّوْا عَنْهُ وَأَنْتُمْ تَسْمَعُوْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَلَا تَكُوْنُوْا كَالَّذِيْنَ
قَالُوْا سَمِعْنَا وَهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾ إِنَّ شَرَّ الدَّوَآبِّ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ الصُّمُّ
الْبُكْمُ الَّذِيْنَ لَا يَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَلَوْ عَلِمَ اللّٰهُ فِيْهِمْ خَيْرًا لَّأَسْمَعَهُمْ ۖ وَلَوْ
أَسْمَعَهُمْ لَتَوَلَّوْا وَّهُمْ مُّعْرِضُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ يٰٓأَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اسْتَجِيْبُوْا لِلّٰهِ وَ
لِلرَّسُوْلِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيْكُمْ ۚ وَاعْلَمُوْٓا أَنَّ اللّٰهَ يَحُوْلُ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَقَلْبِهٖ
وَأَنَّهٗٓ إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُوْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَاتَّقُوْا فِتْنَةً لَّا تُصِيْبَنَّ الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا مِنْكُمْ
خَآصَّةً ۚ وَاعْلَمُوْٓا أَنَّ اللّٰهَ شَدِيْدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَاذْكُرُوْٓا إِذْ أَنْتُمْ قَلِيْلٌ
مُّسْتَضْعَفُوْنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ تَخَافُوْنَ أَنْ يَّتَخَطَّفَكُمُ النَّاسُ فَاٰوٰىكُمْ وَ
أَيَّدَكُمْ بِنَصْرِهٖ وَرَزَقَكُمْ مِّنَ الطَّيِّبٰتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿٢٦﴾ يٰٓأَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ
اٰمَنُوْا لَا تَخُوْنُوا اللّٰهَ وَالرَّسُوْلَ وَتَخُوْنُوْٓا أَمٰنٰتِكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَ
اعْلَمُوْٓا أَنَّمَآ أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَأَوْلَادُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ ۙ وَّأَنَّ اللّٰهَ عِنْدَهٗٓ أَجْرٌ عَظِيْمٌ ﴿٢٨﴾
يٰٓأَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا إِنْ تَتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ يَجْعَلْ لَّكُمْ فُرْقَانًا وَّيُكَفِّرْ عَنْكُمْ
سَيِّاٰتِكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيْمِ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَإِذْ يَمْكُرُ بِكَ
الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لِيُثْبِتُوْكَ أَوْ يَقْتُلُوْكَ أَوْ يُخْرِجُوْكَ ۚ وَيَمْكُرُوْنَ وَيَمْكُرُ
اللّٰهُ ۚ وَاللّٰهُ خَيْرُ الْمٰكِرِيْنَ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَإِذَا تُتْلٰى عَلَيْهِمْ اٰيٰتُنَا قَالُوْا قَدْ سَمِعْنَا

So the fact is that you did not slay them but Allah slew them, and you did not throw (the sand) but Allah threw it.[14](And the hands of the Believers were employed for this work) so that Allah would pass the Believers successfully through this excellent test; indeed Allah is All-Hearing and All-Knowing. This is His dealing with you: as regards the disbelievers, Allah surely thwarts their evil designs. (Say to the disbelievers:) "If you desired a decision, lo! the decision has come before you.[15] It is best for you to desist from it now: but if you repeat the same folly, We will also repeat the same punishment and your forces, howsoever large their number, shall avail you nothing, for Allah is with the Believers." 17-19

O Believers, obey Allah and His Messenger and do not turn away from the Message after hearing it. Do not be like those who said, "We have heard," but have not listened to it,[16] for the vilest beasts in Allah's sight are those deaf, dumb people[17] who do not use commonsense. Had Allah known any good in them, He would certainly have given them the power of hearing but if He had made them hear it (without perceiving any good in them), they would have turned away from it with disdain.[18] 20-23

O Believers, respond to the call of Allah and the Messenger, when the Messenger calls you to that which gives you life. And know that Allah stands between a man and his heart, and that to Him you shall be mustered.[19] And guard against that mischief which will not bring punishment in particular to the mischief-makers alone from among you;[20] and know that Allah is severe in inflicting punishment. Recall to mind that time when you were few in number and were regarded weak in the land, and were fearful lest the people should do away with you; then Allah provided you with a place of refuge, strengthened you with His succour and bestowed pure and good provisions upon you so that you may be grateful.[21] O Believers, do not betray Allah and His Messenger nor violate your trusts knowingly.[22] And know that your worldly goods and your children are, in fact, a test for you,[23] and Allah has plenty for giving you reward. O Believers, if you are Godfearing, He will provide you with a criterion,[24] and cleanse you of your evils, and forgive your shortcomings. Allah is bountiful in His favours. 24-29

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fighting and killing but probably they were used to help the Muslims in making

their strokes hard and effective. But the true knowledge is with Allah.

11. Up to this place references have been made one by one to some events in connection with the Battle of Badr: this is to show the real significance of the Arabic word *anfāl*. At the very beginning of the Sūrah, it is decreed that 'bounties belong to Allah and the Messenger and not to you because the spoils are not the fruit of your efforts.' As a proof of this, these events have been enumerated for the consideration of the Believers and they have been asked to judge for themselves how much they contributed to the spoils by their courage and bravery and how these owed to the bounty of Allah.

12. The address has been suddenly turned to the disbelievers because of the mention of the punishment they deserved.

13. The Qur'ān does not forbid an orderly retreat if necessitated by military strategy. It is lawful to retreat if there is a hard pressure of the enemy, and the fighting troops retreat to get re-inforcements or to join another part of the army in the rear. However, what has been forbidden is a rout in utter defeat, involving disorderly and cowardly flight for safety. Such a retreat is obviously a heinous sin, because it is to save one's own life and it deserves the most painful retreat in Hell. Any one, who runs away in disorder from the battlefield, does so because he loves his own life more than the cause for which he professed to fight. Accordingly the Holy Prophet condemns this emphatically, saying, "There are three sins which make virtue vain—*shirk*, violation of the rights of parents and flight from the battlefield, when fighting in the Way of Allah." Likewise in another Tradition, he mentions seven sins that are ruinous and destructive for the Life-after-death. One of these is that one should turn one's back to the disbelievers and run away from the conflict between Islam and *kufr*. Such a rout is condemned because, besides being a cowardly act, it leads to serious consequences: the flight of one soldier may cause the rout of a platoon and that in turn of a regiment or of the whole army. Then it is also possible that the rout of the army might ruin the whole country.

14. This refers to an event that happened during the Battle of Badr. After single bouts, when a general fight was going to ensue, the Holy Prophet took a handful of sand and threw it towards the army of the disbelievers, saying, "May their faces be scorched." At the same time he made a gesture and the Muslims attacked the disbelievers in a body.

15. This refers to the prayer that was offered by the Quraish at the Ka'abah before they marched for the fight. The *mushriks* held the curtains of the Ka'abah and prayed: "O Allah! grant victory to the better of the two parties." Abū Jahl particularly invoked Allah's decision, saying, "O God! grant victory to that party which is in the right, and disgrace that one which is the aggressor."

Accordingly Allah gave His decision and granted their prayer to the letter by giving a signal victory to the Muslims to show that they were the better of the two parties and were in the right.

16. This exposes the attitude of the hypocrites, who heard the Truth with their ears, yet did not accept and believe in it: they professed to believe but did not obey the Commands.

17. That is, "Those who do not listen to the Truth and do not utter it with their tongues, are deaf and dumb concerning the Truth."

18. As those hypocrites had no love for the Truth and no desire to work in its cause, they would have turned their backs from the Battle at the first critical juncture, even if Allah had helped them to obey the Command and march to the battlefield. Thus their company would have proved to be harmful rather than useful.

19. In vv. 21-23, the Believers were warned to guard against behaving like the hypocrites and here the remedy is being prescribed for it. The most effective antidote against hypocritical behaviour is the belief in Allah and the life in the Hereafter. If a person sincerely believes that he has to deal with that Allah Who knows everything—even the intentions, desires, designs, thoughts, etc., hidden in the hearts are known to Him— and that one has ultimately to return to Him, he will try his best to refrain from such a behaviour. That is why the Qur'ān mentions these two articles of Faith over and over again as a remedy to cure the evil of hypocrisy.

20. "That mischief" refers to those collective evils that are not confined to individuals but are so widespread that a large number of persons in a locality become addicted to these at the same time. In such a case, it is not the wrongdoers alone who are seized by the scourge of Allah but also those few people who are involved in those evils. This is because they put up with life in such evil surroundings.

In order to illustrate this, let us consider the case of a town from the point of view of its sanitary conditions. If filth lies scattered at a few places, its evil effects remain confined to that particular locality or localities and only those people who keep their houses or persons dirty suffer from the consequent diseases. But if filth gets scattered all over the town and there is no one to prevent it and restore sanitary conditions, then the air, the water and the soil will all be contaminated and become so poisonous as to cause the outbreak of an epidemic in the whole town. Obviously it will not discriminate between those who scattered the filth and those who refrained from it, but will affect all the people who live in

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لَوْ نَشَآءُ لَقُلْنَا مِثْلَ هٰذَآ ۙ اِنْ هٰذَآ اِلَّآ اَسَاطِيْرُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿٣١﴾ وَاِذْ قَالُوا 31
اللّٰهُمَّ اِنْ كَانَ هٰذَا هُوَ الْحَقَّ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ فَاَمْطِرْ عَلَيْنَا حِجَارَةً مِّنَ
السَّمَآءِ اَوِ ائْتِنَا بِعَذَابٍ اَلِيْمٍ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَمَا كَانَ اللّٰهُ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَاَنْتَ فِيْهِمْ 32
وَمَا كَانَ اللّٰهُ مُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُوْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَمَا لَهُمْ اَلَّا يُعَذِّبَهُمُ 33
اللّٰهُ وَهُمْ يَصُدُّوْنَ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَمَا كَانُوْٓا اَوْلِيَآءَهٗ ۭ اِنْ
اَوْلِيَآؤُهٗٓ اِلَّا الْمُتَّقُوْنَ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَمَا كَانَ صَلَاتُهُمْ 34
عِنْدَ الْبَيْتِ اِلَّا مُكَآءً وَّتَصْدِيَةً ۭ فَذُوْقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُوْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾ 35
اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا يُنْفِقُوْنَ اَمْوَالَهُمْ لِيَصُدُّوْا عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ ۭ
فَسَيُنْفِقُوْنَهَا ثُمَّ تَكُوْنُ عَلَيْهِمْ حَسْرَةً ثُمَّ يُغْلَبُوْنَ ۭ وَالَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْٓا
اِلٰى جَهَنَّمَ يُحْشَرُوْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾ لِيَمِيْزَ اللّٰهُ الْخَبِيْثَ مِنَ الطَّيِّبِ وَيَجْعَلَ الْخَبِيْثَ 36
بَعْضَهٗ عَلٰي بَعْضٍ فَيَرْكُمَهٗ جَمِيْعًا فَيَجْعَلَهٗ فِيْ جَهَنَّمَ ۭ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ هُمُ
الْخٰسِرُوْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾ قُلْ لِّلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْٓا اِنْ يَّنْتَهُوْا يُغْفَرْ لَهُمْ مَّا قَدْ سَلَفَ ۚ وَ 37
اِنْ يَّعُوْدُوْا فَقَدْ مَضَتْ سُنَّتُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَقَاتِلُوْهُمْ حَتّٰى لَا تَكُوْنَ 38
فِتْنَةٌ وَّيَكُوْنَ الدِّيْنُ كُلُّهٗ لِلّٰهِ ۚ فَاِنِ انْتَهَوْا فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ بِمَا يَعْمَلُوْنَ
بَصِيْرٌ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَاِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَاعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ مَوْلٰىكُمْ ۭ نِعْمَ الْمَوْلٰى وَنِعْمَ النَّصِيْرُ ﴿٤٠﴾ 39 40

وَالْيَتٰمٰى وَالْمَسٰكِيْنِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيْلِ ۙ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ اٰمَنْتُمْ بِاللّٰهِ وَمَآ اَنْزَلْنَا
عَلٰي عَبْدِنَا يَوْمَ الْفُرْقَانِ يَوْمَ الْتَقَى الْجَمْعٰنِ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ عَلٰي كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
قَدِيْرٌ ﴿٤١﴾ اِذْ اَنْتُمْ بِالْعُدْوَةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ بِالْعُدْوَةِ الْقُصْوٰى وَالرَّكْبُ 41

It is worth-while to remember the time when those who rejected 30-37
the Truth, were making plots against you to capture you or to slay you or to exile you.[25] They were plotting their plots and Allah was devising His schemes: and Allah's schemes are most effective of all. When Our revelations were recited to them, they said, "Well, we have heard: if we will, we also can fabricate such things: for these are the same ancient tales which have already been told again and again by the former people." And recall also to mind the thing they said, "If it is the Truth and has been sent down by Thee, rain down stones on us from the heavens or send down any other painful torment on us."[26] At that time Allah would not send down any torment on them for you dwelt in their midst: nor does Allah chastise people while they are asking His forgiveness.[27] But now there is no reason why He should not send torment on them, when they are barring the way to the Masjid-i-Harām whereas they are not its lawful guardians. Indeed the Godfearing people alone can be its lawful guardians, but most of the people do not know this thing. And what is their "prayer" near the House of Allah ?: it is nothing but whistling and clapping of hands.[28] So now take the chastisement and taste the torment in requital for your persistent denial of the Truth.[29] Those who have denied the Truth spend their wealth in blocking the way of Allah, and will go on spending still more of it. But in the end, these very efforts of theirs will become a cause of their regret; then they will be overcome, and the disbelievers shall be gathered and driven towards Hell: so that Allah may separate the filthy from the pure and gather together every sort of filth and then throw the whole heap into Hell: they are the people who have, in fact, become bankrupt.[30]

O Prophet, tell the disbelievers that if they desist (from their 38
evil ways), their past actions will be forgiven; but if they persist in their ways, all know what happened to the peoples before them.

O Believers, fight with the disbelievers till there is no more 39-40
mischief and the way of life prescribed by Allah is established in its entirety.[31] Then if they desist from mischief, surely Allah beholds what they do, but if they give no heed, know it that Allah is your Protector, and He is the best of all protectors and helpers.

And know that, whatever spoils you have got, the fifth of these 41

is for Allah and His Messenger and for the relatives and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarers;[32] if you have believed in Allah and in what We sent down on Our servant on the day of decision,[33] when the two armies met in combat, (then yield this portion willingly:) Allah has power over everything.

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those surroundings. The same is the case of moral impurity, corruption and obscenity. If these evils are found in some persons individually but the fear of the good people of the society keeps them under check, the evil effects remain confined to the wrongdoers alone. On the other hand, if the collective conscience of the society becomes so weak that it cannot keep the evil suppressed, and the wrongdoers, the indecent and the immoral people become so bold that they begin to commit their filthy acts openly, that mischief takes the form of an epidemic of immorality. Then even those good people who remain content with their own individual goodness and adopt a passive attitude towards the widespread evils, fall victims to the consequent scourge because they did nothing to prevent the spread of the epidemic.

In this way Allah impresses upon the Muslims the importance of the mission of reform and guidance for which the Messenger had risen and to which he was inviting them, as if to say, "There is life for you as individuals and as Community in this work. If you do not sincerely exert for its achievement and for the eradication of evils, an epidemic of evils will break out which will involve in its scourge all of you, even though there may be some among you who might not have been guilty of either the commission of those evils or of their spread; nay, they might have been leading good lives as individuals". The same thing has already been enunciated in VII :164. And this may be regarded as the fundamental principle of that war which has been permitted by Islam for the reform of the people in general.

21. The words "...so that you may be grateful" are very significant in the context in which they occur. They require that the Muslims should not merely acknowledge the kindness of Allah that He brought them out of their weak position in Makkah to the security of Al-Madînah and provided them with pure and good things of life. They should also show their gratitude in a practical manner and obey Allah and His Messenger and work sincerely and devotedly for the success of his mission, facing bravely, with trust in God, the dangers, hardships, obstacles and misfortunes that come in the way. They should firmly believe that if they sincerely exert in the way of Allah, He will most surely become their Guardian and Helper as before and bring them out safely from all sorts of dangers. Thus gratitude does not mean mere acknowledgement; it has to

be given a practical shape as well. It is not gratitude if one acknowledges the kindness of a benefactor but does nothing to please him or serve him sincerely or entertains doubts about the kindness of the benefactor in future; it is ingratitude.

22. "Your trusts" is a very comprehensive term and includes all those things that are entrusted to anyone for fulfilment, whether they concern individuals or communities. For instance; one should not violate treaties and agreements or betray secrets of community or misappropriate property and office entrusted to one's care. (For further details, please refer to E.N. 88 of *An-Nisā*).

23. Worldly goods and children generally prove to be the greatest temptations that lead a person to the ways of hypocrisy, treachery and dishonesty. That is why Allah has warned the Believers to be on their guard against indulging in too much love of money and children, as if to say, "This world is a big Examination Hall, and Your wealth and Your children are two of its question papers. These have been given to you only to test whether you fulfil their prescribed rights and keep the prescribed limits; whether you walk straight on the Right Way while carrying the burden of responsibilities or swerve from it because of the attractions of allurements and temptations; and whether you control your "self" which is liable to become their slave in a way that it remains the slave of Allah, and at the same time renders their rights in the way He has prescribed.

24. The Believers have been assured that if they behave in a God-fearing way, Allah will provide them with the criterion (that is, the true knowledge and the right understanding of all affairs), to enable them to discern between right and wrong. Thus, if they so intend, they will be able to do the Will of God and follow the way He approves of. That criterion will serve as a signal at every turning, every crossing, every up and down and show them the Right Way, the Way of God, and warn them of the false ways, the ways of Satan.

25. This plot was made at the time when the Quraish realized that the Holy Prophet also was going to migrate to Al-Madīnah. They felt that if he succeeded in emigrating from Makkah, he would be out of their reach and become formidable. Accordingly they held an urgent meeting of their chiefs in *Dār-un-Nadvah* (Council House) to discuss the matter and come to a final decision in regard to him. Some were of the opinion that he should be chained and imprisoned for life. But this plan was not approved for it was feared that his Companions would go on working for the mission and would do their best to release him, even at the risk of their own lives, as soon as they would gain some power. The others proposed that he should be exiled from Makkah for that would at least relieve them of the 'disorder' he was creating among them. Then it would not matter for them where he lived and what he did. But the chiefs rejected this plan, saying, "This man possesses the art of a charming speech and of winning hearts. If he

leaves this place, he may go to the other Arab clans and win them over to his side, and then after gaining power, he may attack Makkah". At last Abū Jahl, putting forward his plan, said. "Let us select from each of our families one strong, stout and smart young man of high rank. They should all attack Muhammad at one and the same time and kill him. In this way, the responsibility for his blood will be divided equally among all the families of the Quraish, and it will not be possible for Banū 'Abd Manāf, the family of Muhammad, to fight with all of them and they will be forced to accept blood-money for him". They approved this plan unanimously and nominated young men to kill him at the appointed time. Accordingly the would-be murderers reached their places on the night fixed for the crime, but the Holy Prophet, throwing dust in their eyes, escaped safely from Makkah. Thus their plot ended in utter failure at the eleventh hour.

26. These words were not uttered as a prayer but as a challenge. What they really meant was this: Had this been really the Truth sent down by God, He would have rained down stones on us from heaven or sent down some other painful torment on us, in consequence of its rejection by us. But as nothing of the sort has happened, it means that it is neither the Truth nor has it been sent down by Allah.

27. This is the answer to their challenge that was implied in their seeming prayer. They have been told that a torment was not sent down during the Makkan period because of the presence of the Messenger in their midst. For Allah gives respite to the people to reform themselves as long as the Messenger continues to invite them to the Truth, as He does not deprive them of the opportunity of reforming themselves by sending down a scourge before the expiry of the term. The second reason is that Allah does not send down a scourge on an habitation as long as , there remain in it any people, who may ask His forgiveness for their past negligences and deviations and mend their ways. However, a scourge is sent down on the habitation when the Messenger considers that he has done all he could to admonish its people and emigrates from it or is expelled from it or is murdered by its people. This is because that habitation proves practically that it cannot tolerate in it even the presence of any good element.

28. They have been further warned to this effect: "Now that you have incurred a torment, you should be ready for it for nothing will save you now from it". The Quraish were under the delusion that they would not be visited by any torment because they were the guardians and keepers of the House of God. This misunderstanding has been removed by declaring, so to say, "They are not its lawful guardians for mere inheritance does not entitle them to its guardianship. The pious people alone are the rightful guardians of this Sacred Place. The people of the Quraish have forfeited that right now if they had any right to it, because they were barring the way of the really pious people to this House, which is

dedicated to the exclusive worship of Allah. The Quraish were behaving not as the guardians and keepers and servants of the House but as its masters, and prevented anyone they liked from visiting it. As regards their worship in the House, it was nothing more than making meaningless noises by whistling and clapping of hands: it was void of devotion towards Allah and of His remembrance and of all its requirements. How could they, then, expect any favour from Allah or any guarantee of immunity from His scourge?"

29. They have been told that the scourge of Allah had visited them in the shape of utter defeat in the Battle of Badr, which had given life to the Islamic Way and brought death to their way of 'ignorance'. This was necessary to remove their wrong notion that the scourge of Allah came only in the shape of rain or storm from the heavens or the like.

30. "They have become bankrupt", for all their efforts, abilities, time and wealth ultimately proved to be absolutely worthless. It not only failed to earn any interest or profit for them but has also driven them to utter ruin.

31. Here the war aim of Islam, which had previously been declared in 11: 193, has been repeated. This aim has two aspects-- the negative and the positive. On the negative side, the aim of war is to abolish فتنة *(fitnah)*, and on the positive, it is to establish Allah's Way completely and in its entirety. This is the only objective for which it is lawful, nay, obligatory for the believers to fight. There is no other object for which fighting is lawful, and it does not behove the believers to resort to fighting for any other objective. (For fuller details, please see E.N.'s 204 and 205 of *Al-Baqarah*.)

32. This verse contains the answer to the question which) was asked about the division of spoils at the very beginning of the Sūrah. There it was merely said that 'these are the bounties of Allah and belong to Him and His Messenger, and the authority to divide these belongs to them. 'In this verse, the verdict on the spoils has been given. After the battle is over, the fighters should bring all the spoils to the leader and hide nothing of these. Then one-fifth should be set apart for the requirements stated in this verse, and the remaining four-fifths divided among those who took part in the fighting. That is why the Holy Prophet used to announce after every fight, "These spoils belong to you, and I have no share in these for my own person except one-fifth only and that, too, is spent for your common good. Therefore bring here everything—even a needle and its thread. Do not hide anything, big or small, for this is a shameful thing and leads to Hell".

This one-fifth share of Allah and His Messenger has been reserved for the cause of Allah and for the establishment of His Way.

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أَسْفَلَ مِنكُمْ ۚ وَلَوْ تَوَاعَدتُّمْ لَاخْتَلَفْتُمْ فِي الْمِيعَادِ ۙ وَلَٰكِن لِّيَقْضِيَ اللَّهُ
أَمْرًا كَانَ مَفْعُولًا ۚ لِّيَهْلِكَ مَنْ هَلَكَ عَن بَيِّنَةٍ وَيَحْيَىٰ مَنْ حَيَّ
عَن بَيِّنَةٍ ۗ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَسَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٤٢﴾ إِذْ يُرِيكَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي مَنَامِكَ قَلِيلًا ۖ وَ
لَوْ أَرَاكَهُمْ كَثِيرًا لَّفَشِلْتُمْ وَلَتَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ وَلَٰكِنَّ اللَّهَ سَلَّمَ ۗ إِنَّهُ
عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَإِذْ يُرِيكُمُوهُمْ إِذِ الْتَقَيْتُمْ فِي أَعْيُنِكُمْ قَلِيلًا
وَيُقَلِّلُكُمْ فِي أَعْيُنِهِمْ لِيَقْضِيَ اللَّهُ أَمْرًا كَانَ مَفْعُولًا ۗ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ
الْأُمُورُ ﴿٤٤﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا لَقِيتُمْ فِئَةً فَاثْبُتُوا وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا
لَّعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَا تَنَازَعُوا فَتَفْشَلُوا وَتَذْهَبَ
رِيحُكُمْ ۖ وَاصْبِرُوا ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ خَرَجُوا
مِن دِيَارِهِم بَطَرًا وَرِئَاءَ النَّاسِ وَيَصُدُّونَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۚ وَاللَّهُ
بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطٌ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَإِذْ زَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ وَقَالَ لَا
غَالِبَ لَكُمُ الْيَوْمَ مِنَ النَّاسِ وَإِنِّي جَارٌ لَّكُمْ ۖ فَلَمَّا تَرَاءَتِ الْفِئَتَانِ نَكَصَ
عَلَىٰ عَقِبَيْهِ وَقَالَ إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِّنكُمْ إِنِّي أَرَىٰ مَا لَا تَرَوْنَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ
وَاللَّهُ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٤٨﴾ إِذْ يَقُولُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٌ
غَرَّ هَٰؤُلَاءِ دِينُهُمْ ۗ وَمَن يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٤٩﴾ وَ
لَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذْ يَتَوَفَّى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَضْرِبُونَ وُجُوهَهُمْ وَأَدْبَارَهُمْ
وَذُوقُوا عَذَابَ الْحَرِيقِ ﴿٥٠﴾ ذَٰلِكَ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَيْسَ
بِظَلَّامٍ لِّلْعَبِيدِ ﴿٥١﴾ كَدَأْبِ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ ۙ وَالَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ ۚ كَفَرُوا
بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ فَأَخَذَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَوِيٌّ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٥٢﴾ ذَٰلِكَ

Recall the time when you were on this side of the valley and they were encamped on the farther side and the caravan was below you (towards the coast). If you had made an engagement with them to fight, you would surely have evaded it (but there was a fight): so that Allah might accomplish what He had ordained, and that whoever had to perish should perish with a clear sign and whoever deserved to live, should live with a clear sign:[34] indeed, Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.[35] 42

And remember the time, O Messenger, when Allah made them appear in your dream as a small band.[36] Had He shown them to you as a great army, you would certainly have lost courage and begun to dispute about the matter (the fight). But Allah saved you from this: indeed He known the very secrets of the breasts. 43

And remember when you met them in the encounter. Allah made the enemies appear in your eyes as few and made you appear as few in their eyes so that Allah might accomplish the matter that was to take place: for ultimately all matters return to Allah. 44

O Believers, when you encounter a host in combat, be steadfast and remember Allah very much: it is expected that you will obtain success. And obey Allah and His Messenger and do not enter into disputes with one another, otherwise you will lose courage and you will become insignificant (in the eyes of the enemy). Practise fortitude;[37] indeed Allah is with those who practise fortitude. And do not behave like those who marched arrogantly out of their homes with great pomp and show for the people to see. They debar the people from the Way of Allah.[38] For whatever they are doing is completely within Allah's grasp. 45-47

Just think of the time when Satan made their foul deeds seem fair to them and said, "Today no one can overcome you, for I am with you." But when the two armies confronted each other, he took to his heels, saying, "I have nothing to do with you; I see that which you cannot see. Indeed I fear Allah, for Allah is very severe in inflicting chastisement" At the same time, the hypocrites and all those who had diseased hearts were saying: "Their Faith has made them crazy";[39] whereas the fact is that whoso trusts in Allah (finds that) Allah is All-Mighty and All-Wise. Would that you could see how it was when the 48-52

angels were seizing the souls of the slain disbelievers! They were striking on their faces and hips and saying, "Now taste the torment of burning; this is the recompense for what your hands had prepared beforehand; for Allah does not do injustice to His servants". This happened to them just as it had been happening to the people of Pharaoh and to the peoples before them: this was because they rejected His revelations and He seized them as a consequence of their sins, indeed Allah is All-Powerful and severe in inflicting chastisement.

Contd. from p.141]

During his life-time, by the relatives were meant the relatives of the Holy Prophet. A share from the one-fifth of the spoils was to be given to those relatives of the Holy Prophet who were dependent on him for now he had to devote the whole of his time to the cause of Allah's religion and it was not possible for him to earn for the maintenance of the members of his own family and of the relatives who were dependent on him. But there has been a difference of opinion regarding this share of the relatives after his death. Some are of the opinion that this share was abolished after the death of the Holy Prophet; others say that this share should go to the relatives of his successor. But there are still others who hold that this share should be spent for the needy persons from among his offspring. According to my research, this share was given to the needy ones of his offspring during the time of his rightly guided successors.

33. "What We sent down on Our servant" means His timely succour that brought about the victory in the Battle of Badr.

34. That is, "It should be proved that whichever (Islam or ignorance) survived in the Battle, really deserved to live, and whichever perished, ought to have perished". It should be noted that here the conflict for survival was not between different persons as such but between Islam and 'ignorance' as represented by the Believers and the disbelievers.

35. As Allah hears everything and sees everything and knows everthing, He is running His universe with wisdom and justice and will allow the right alone to survive.

36. This happened when the Holy Prophet was marching from Al-Madinah towards the battlefield and it was not then known how large the army of the disbelievers was. In this dream, he saw the army and concluded from what he saw that it was not large. He related what he saw in his dream to the Muslims, and this filled them with courage and they marched on boldly towards the enemy.

37. As the Arabic word صبر (*sabr*) which has been translated into fortitude is very comprehensive in meaning, 'practise fortitude' implies: "Keep your feelings and passions under control; avoid rashness, bewilderment, despair, and greediness: keep cool and calm and make considered decisions; remain firm and steadfast in the face of dangers and difficulties; don't take any wrong step even under the greatest provocations; don't lose your senses even when you are attacked by afflictions and are in a sad plight; don't take any hasty action in your impatience to achieve your objective without delay with the help of some seeming effective device and don't be enticed by the temptation of some worldly interest or gain or lust". Allah helps those who practise fortitude *(sabr)* in accordance with the above implications.

38. The Muslims have been forewarned never to behave like the disbelievers of Makkah, who had marched arrogantly out of their homes and who were debarring the Muslims from the Way of Allah. They had singing girls with them and they held singing, dancing and drinking parties at many halting places. Moreover, they made a great display of their power, grandeur, numerical strength and equipment before the clans and habitations which came in their way and freely bragged that none could have the courage to fight with them. This was the state of their morality but the objective for which they were marching out was even worse than this. They had not marched out to raise the standard of truth, righteousness and justice, but to prevent it from rising up. Their objective was to annihilate the only people who were exerting to raise up that standard. This bad example was held out before the Muslims so that they should guard against such behaviour for their Faith required that their conduct should be righteous and their war aim should be pure and noble.

It may also be noted that this guidance was not needed only at that time but it is equally needed even today and will be needed in future as well, for the moral condition of the armies of the modern 'civilized' nations is the same as of the disbelievers of Makkah. Prostitutes indecent recreations and wine constitute their essential parts, and they do not ask for these things secretly but openly and brazen-facedly. More than that! their soldiers openly demand from their own people that they should present their own daughters to them for the gratification of their lusts. How can, then, any other people expect from them that they would spare their women and will not make them the plaything of their passions? As regards their arrogance, suffice it to say that each and every soldier and officer of their army is an embodiment of pride and vanity. Then their politicians are never tired of bragging like this: 'None is able to defeat us today for none is more powerful than we". And their war aims are still more wicked. Whereas everyone

[Contd. on p. 148

بِاَنَّ اللّٰهَ لَمْ يَكُ مُغَيِّرًا نِّعْمَةً اَنْعَمَهَا عَلٰى قَوْمٍ حَتّٰى يُغَيِّرُوْا مَا بِاَنْفُسِهِمْ ۙ
وَاَنَّ اللّٰهَ سَمِيْعٌ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿٥٣﴾ كَدَاْبِ اٰلِ فِرْعَوْنَ ۙ وَالَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ؕ
كَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِ رَبِّهِمْ فَاَهْلَكْنٰهُمْ بِذُنُوْبِهِمْ وَاَغْرَقْنَاۤ اٰلَ فِرْعَوْنَ ۚ وَكُلٌّ
كَانُوْا ظٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٥٤﴾ اِنَّ شَرَّ الدَّوَآبِّ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا فَهُمْ لَا
يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾ الَّذِيْنَ عٰهَدْتَّ مِنْهُمْ ثُمَّ يَنْقُضُوْنَ عَهْدَهُمْ فِيْ كُلِّ
مَرَّةٍ وَّهُمْ لَا يَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿٥٦﴾ فَاِمَّا تَثْقَفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْحَرْبِ فَشَرِّدْ بِهِمْ مَّنْ
خَلْفَهُمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَذَّكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَاِمَّا تَخَافَنَّ مِنْ قَوْمٍ خِيَانَةً فَانْۢبِذْ اِلَيْهِمْ
عَلٰى سَوَآءٍ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْخَآئِنِيْنَ ﴿٥٨﴾ وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا
سَبَقُوْا ؕ اِنَّهُمْ لَا يُعْجِزُوْنَ ﴿٥٩﴾ وَاَعِدُّوْا لَهُمْ مَّا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِّنْ قُوَّةٍ وَّ
مِنْ رِّبَاطِ الْخَيْلِ تُرْهِبُوْنَ بِهٖ عَدُوَّ اللّٰهِ وَعَدُوَّكُمْ وَاٰخَرِيْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِهِمْ ۚ
لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَهُمْ ۚ اَللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُهُمْ ؕ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوْا مِنْ شَيْءٍ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ يُوَفَّ
اِلَيْكُمْ وَاَنْتُمْ لَا تُظْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَاِنْ جَنَحُوْا لِلسَّلْمِ فَاجْنَحْ لَهَا وَتَوَكَّلْ
عَلَى اللّٰهِ ؕ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿٦١﴾ وَاِنْ يُّرِيْدُوْۤا اَنْ يَّخْدَعُوْكَ فَاِنَّ حَسْبَكَ اللّٰهُ ؕ هُوَ
الَّذِيْۤ اَيَّدَكَ بِنَصْرِهٖ وَبِالْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٦٢﴾ وَاَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوْبِهِمْ ؕ لَوْ اَنْفَقْتَ مَا فِي الْاَرْضِ
جَمِيْعًا مَّاۤ اَلَّفْتَ بَيْنَ قُلُوْبِهِمْ وَلٰكِنَّ اللّٰهَ اَلَّفَ بَيْنَهُمْ ؕ اِنَّهٗ عَزِيْزٌ حَكِيْمٌ ﴿٦٣﴾ يٰۤاَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ
حَسْبُكَ اللّٰهُ وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٦٤﴾ يٰۤاَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ حَرِّضِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ عَلَى
الْقِتَالِ ؕ اِنْ يَّكُنْ مِّنْكُمْ عِشْرُوْنَ صٰبِرُوْنَ يَغْلِبُوْا مِائَتَيْنِ ۚ وَاِنْ يَّكُنْ
مِّنْكُمْ مِّائَةٌ يَّغْلِبُوْۤا اَلْفًا مِّنَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا بِاَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَّا يَفْقَهُوْنَ ﴿٦٥﴾
اَلْـٰٔنَ خَفَّفَ اللّٰهُ عَنْكُمْ وَعَلِمَ اَنَّ فِيْكُمْ ضَعْفًا ؕ فَاِنْ يَّكُنْ مِّنْكُمْ مِّائَةٌ

This happened in accordance with Allah's way that He does not withdraw the favour He bestows on any people unless they themselves change their ways;[40] Allah hears everything and knows everything. This same principle was applied to the people of Pharaoh and the other peoples before them: when they treated the revelations of Allah as false, We destroyed them in consequence of their sins, and drowned the people of Pharaoh; all these peoples were the workers of iniquity. 53-54

Indeed the vilest creatures in the sight of Allah are those people who denied the Truth, and then would not believe in it. As regards those from among them with whom you made treaties and who violate them time after time and do not fear Allah in the least,[41] if you encounter them in combat, make of them a fearsome example for others who would follow them so that they might be unnerved.[42] It is expected that they will learn a lesson from the end of the treacherous people. And if you ever fear treachery from any people, throw their treaty openly before them[43]; indeed Allah does not like the treacherous people. Let not those who deny the Truth delude themselves that they have won the game; indeed they are incapable of frustrating Us. 55-59

And to encounter them, provide whatever force and trained ever-ready horses you can afford[44] whereby you may strike terror into the enemies of Allah and your enemies as well and others besides them whom you do not know but whom Allah knows. The reward of whatever you expend in the way of Allah shall be repaid to you in full, and you shall not be wronged in any way. 60

And, O Prophet, if the enemies incline to peace, you should also incline to it and put your trust in Allah: indeed He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. And if they intend to deceive you, Allah is sufficient for you.[45] It is He Who strengthened you with His succour, and by means of the Believers. And it is He Who united the hearts of the Believers; even if you had spent all the riches of the earth, you could not have united their hearts by yourself, but it is Allah Who united their hearts;[46] indeed He is All-Powerful, All-Wise. O Prophet! Allah is sufficient for you and for the Believers who follow you. 61-64

O Prophet! stir the Believers to the fight. If there be twenty men among you, who show fortitude, they will overcome two hundred men, and if there be a hundred such men of you, they will overcome a 65-66

thousand of the deniers of the Truth, for they are a people who lack understanding.[47] Now that Allah has lightened your burden, He has noticed that you are still weak: so if there be a hundred steadfast men among you, they will overcome two hundred men and if there be a thousand such men, they will overcome two thousand by Allah's permission.[48] But Allah is with those people alone who show fortitude.

Contd. from p.145]

of their leaders most solemnly and cunningly assure the world that they have nothing but the good of humanity before them, they might have, in fact, all other aims but this. They wage war in order to capture all the resources of the earth that God has created for all mankind, and to monopolize these for the benefit of their own country and nation, and make all other people their servants and dependants. That is why the Qur'ān forbids the Muslims to follow the evil ways of those wicked people and enjoins them to refrain from expending their wealth and life for the achievement of the objective for which the wicked people fight.

39. This was the opinion of the hypocrites and the worldly-wise people of Al-Madīnah. When they saw that the small band of Muslims was going to fight with the large and superior force of the Quraish they said to one another, "Over-enthusiasm for their religion has made these people mad and they are going to meet with utter destruction. As they have been blinded by their Prophet, they cannot see that they are going into the very mouth of death".

40. That is, "Allah does not withdraw His favour from any people until they themselves prove by their conduct that they have become unworthy of it".

41. "Those ..... who violate the treaties ....." were the Jews. On his migration to Al-Madīnah, they were the first people with whom the Holy Prophet had entered into an alliance to co-operate for mutual good. He did his very best to establish good relations with them, for he considered them to be nearer to Islam than the *mushriks*, and he preferred their way to those of the *mushriks*, whenever a choice had to be made between the two. But their scholars and rabbis did not at all like the pure doctrine of *Tauhīd*, taught by him, and the high standard of morality presented by him, and the exertions put in by him for the establishment of the Right Way. Therefore, in spite of the treaties they were persistently trying to defeat the New Movement. Accordingly, they adopted several measures: they conspired with the hypocrites of Al-Madīnah against the true Muslims; they incited the clans of Aus and Khazraj against each other in order to enkindle the fire of the old enmity that existed between the two before the advent of Islam and had led to bloody feuds, and they contrived plots with the Quraish and other hostile clans to ruin the Muslims. Though the Jews had all along been violating the

written treaty the Holy Prophet had made with them, their enmity and jealousy had become even more furious than before, after the victory at Badr. For they had expected that the Movement would receive a crushing blow at the hands of the Quraish, but the result had been quite the reverse of it. Therefore they increased their inimical activities all the more in order to prevent Islam from becoming a formidable force. So much so that on hearing the news of the defeat of the Quraish, one of their leaders, Ka'ab bin Ashraf, cried out in anguish, "Today the bowels of the earth are far better for us than its surface". Accordingly, he himself went to Makkah and recited exciting elegies to incite the people of Quraish to wreak their vengeance. More than that: the people of one of their clans, *Banī Qainqā'*, setting aside the good neighbourly manners, began to tease the Muslim women who used to go to their habitations for business. When the Holy Prophet reproved them, they gave an impudent reply and said, "We are not weak like the Quraish: we are a people who know how to fight even to the death: you will have an experience of our courage when you encounter us."

42. That is, "If we have made a treaty with a certain people and they disregard its obligations and take part in a fight against us we shall also be absolved from the obligations of the treaty and fight against them. Likewise if we are fighting against any people and find any of our allies among the enemies we should not hesitate to kill them and treat them as enemies. For by discarding the obligations of the alliance as individuals, they forfeit all the rights of an ally in regard to the security of life and property."

43. This verse lays down a very clear and strict rule for the breaking of a treaty when necessary, and enjoins the Muslims to "throw their treaty openly before them". According to this verse, it is unlawful to make a unilateral decision of its termination, even if the Muslims felt that the other party with whom they had entered into an alliance was not observing the treaty strictly and properly, or if they were afraid that the other party would turn treacherous on the first opportunity. Therefore it forbids them to treat the other party in a way as if there had been no treaty with it at all. On the other hand, this verse binds the Muslims to inform the other party in clear words, before taking any step against it, that the treaty with it had been terminated. This is essential so that the other party should have no misunderstanding whatsoever that the treaty was still in force. The Holy Prophet based the international policy of Islam on this verse. He decreed, "The one that has made a treaty with another party is bound by it until the expiry of its term. Or if obliged, then one should throw it before the other party so that both may be set on equal footing". Then he extended the same principle to all other affairs, saying, "Behave not treacherously even towards those who are treacherous to you". And he had impressed the same so deeply on the minds that this principle was observed most strictly both in letter and in spirit. That is why when Amīr

Mu'āviyah assembled his army near the frontiers of the Roman Empire with the intention that he would invade their territory immediately after the expiry of the term of the treaty, Hadrat Amar bin 'Anbasah, a Companion of the Holy Prophet, strongly protested against this and recited the same Tradition before him according to which even concentration of army was a piece of treachery. The Amīr had to submit to this, and he gave up the concentration of army.

It may also be noted that the practice of unilateral abrogation of treaties and invading the enemy without any declaration of war was common during the time of 'ignorance' in the ancient times and is also in vogue in the civilised 'ignorance' of today. For example, during World War II, Germany invaded Russia, and Britain and Russia took military action against Iran without any formal declaration of war. It may be noted that the pleas put forward for such breaches and violations are very flimsy: it is argued that if a declaration of war had been made beforehand, the other party would have taken precautionary measures and given a tough fight; or that if they had not taken action, their enemy would have forestalled them. But they seem to forget that if moral responsibilities were to be set aside on such lame excuses, then there remains no crime and no sin that cannot be justified on one plea or the other, and every thief, every robber, every adulterer, every murderer and every forgerer can put forward a justification for his crime or sin. But it is strange that the modern leaders have two standards of judgment. While they justify the acts of treachery in the international sphere, they condemn the same when these are committed in their own national sphere.

There is, however, an exception to the above principle. The Islamic Law allows the Muslims to attack the other party, if it violates the treaty openly and takes some specific inimical action against them. In such a clear case, this verse does not bind them to give a due notice of the termination of the treaty, but grants them the right to take military action against such a treacherous party without giving any ultimatum. The Muslim jurists have deduced this exception from a precedent set by the Holy Prophet. When the Quraish openly broke the treaty of Hudaibiyah, in regard to Banī Khuzā'ah, he did not consider it obligatory to give them a notice that he, too, had terminated the same. He, therefore, invaded Makkah without giving them any notice. But here we must strike a note of warning. In order to take advantage of this exception, we must consider all the circumstances under which the Holy Prophet thought it right to invade Makkah. In that case, and in that alone, it is lawful for us to follow the precedent set by him; otherwise we are liable to take undue advantage of it. We learn from the books of Hadīth and *Sīrat* that the following circumstances led him to take this step:

(1) The violation of the treaty by the Quraish was so glaring that there was absolutely no doubt that there had been a breach and they themselves confessed that the treaty had come to an end. That is why they sent Abu

Sufyān to Al-Madīnah for its renewal. Though that was a proof that they also knew that the treaty had come to an end, it does not mean that this exception will be justifiable only if those who violate the treaty also know it and confess it. The exception will be only justifiable if the violation would be quite clear and beyond any doubt.

(2) After the violation of the treaty, the Holy Prophet did not indicate in any way whatever by word or by deed or by implication— that in spite of the violation of the treaty by them he regarded the treaty to be still in force; nor did he continue such relations with them as might indicate the same. All the traditions show that he rejected the offer of the renewal of the treaty made by Abū Sufyān.

(3) He openly took the military action against the Quraish and did nothing at all to show an outward display of peace while harbouring secret intentions of war.

This is the excellent precedent set by the Holy Prophet in this matter. An exception to the injunction contained in this verse can, therefore, be made under such specific circumstances that existed on the occasion, and that, too, in the same straightforward noble way.

Besides, it is lawful for the Muslims to use force for the settlement of an issue if and when they find that the other party is neither willing to solve it by mutual talk nor by international arbitration, but is bent upon using force. In such a case, this verse makes it incumbent on the Muslims to make a clear and open declaration to this effect before taking any action. Islam considers a secret military action as immoral and does not allow it, if the Muslims are not prepared to make an open declaration of war.

44. This means, "You should always keep in readiness the necessary military equipment and an organised standing army so that you may be able to take military action immediately without the least delay, should the enemy attack you suddenly. These precautionary measures should be taken so that there should be no confusion and no hurry to urge you to enlist half-trained and ill-equipped volunteers; nor would there be any fear that the enemy would take you unawares and inflict irreparable losses on you before you could get ready for the defence".

45. That is, "Your relations with other nations should be based on your trust in God for 'He is sufficient for you'. Therefore you should boldly face the enemy both in war and in peace. When the enemy desires to have a talk with you for peace, you should be willing and ready to negotiate with the other party

[Contd. on p. 153

صَابِرَةٌ يَّغْلِبُوْا مِائَتَيْنِ ۚ وَاِنْ يَّكُنْ مِّنْكُمْ اَلْفٌ يَّغْلِبُوْٓا اَلْفَيْنِ بِاِذْنِ اللّٰهِ ۗ
وَاللّٰهُ مَعَ الصّٰبِرِيْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾ مَا كَانَ لِنَبِيٍّ اَنْ يَّكُوْنَ لَهٗٓ اَسْرٰى حَتّٰى يُثْخِنَ
فِى الْاَرْضِ ۗ تُرِيْدُوْنَ عَرَضَ الدُّنْيَا ۖ وَاللّٰهُ يُرِيْدُ الْاٰخِرَةَ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ عَزِيْزٌ
حَكِيْمٌ ﴿٦٧﴾ لَوْلَا كِتٰبٌ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ سَبَقَ لَمَسَّكُمْ فِيْمَآ اَخَذْتُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيْمٌ ﴿٦٨﴾
فَكُلُوْا مِمَّا غَنِمْتُمْ حَلٰلًا طَيِّبًا ۖ وَّاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ ۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿٦٩﴾
يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِّمَنْ فِيْٓ اَيْدِيْكُمْ مِّنَ الْاَسْرٰٓى ۙ اِنْ يَّعْلَمِ اللّٰهُ فِيْ
قُلُوْبِكُمْ خَيْرًا يُّؤْتِكُمْ خَيْرًا مِّمَّآ اُخِذَ مِنْكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ غَفُوْرٌ
رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿٧٠﴾ وَاِنْ يُّرِيْدُوْا خِيَانَتَكَ فَقَدْ خَانُوا اللّٰهَ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَاَمْكَنَ
مِنْهُمْ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ عَلِيْمٌ حَكِيْمٌ ﴿٧١﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَهَاجَرُوْا وَجٰهَدُوْا
بِاَمْوَالِهِمْ وَاَنْفُسِهِمْ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰوَوْا وَّنَصَرُوْٓا اُولٰٓئِكَ
بَعْضُهُمْ اَوْلِيَآءُ بَعْضٍ ۗ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَلَمْ يُهَاجِرُوْا مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ
وَّلَايَتِهِمْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ حَتّٰى يُهَاجِرُوْا ۚ وَاِنِ اسْتَنْصَرُوْكُمْ فِى الدِّيْنِ
فَعَلَيْكُمُ النَّصْرُ اِلَّا عَلٰى قَوْمٍ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ مِّيْثَاقٌ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ
بَصِيْرٌ ﴿٧٢﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا بَعْضُهُمْ اَوْلِيَآءُ بَعْضٍ ۗ اِلَّا تَفْعَلُوْهُ تَكُنْ فِتْنَةٌ
فِى الْاَرْضِ وَفَسَادٌ كَبِيْرٌ ﴿٧٣﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَهَاجَرُوْا وَجٰهَدُوْا فِيْ سَبِيْلِ
اللّٰهِ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰوَوْا وَّنَصَرُوْٓا اُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ حَقًّا ۗ لَهُمْ مَّغْفِرَةٌ وَّ
رِزْقٌ كَرِيْمٌ ﴿٧٤﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا مِنْۢ بَعْدُ وَهَاجَرُوْا وَجٰهَدُوْا مَعَكُمْ
فَاُولٰٓئِكَ مِنْكُمْ ۗ وَاُولُوا الْاَرْحَامِ بَعْضُهُمْ اَوْلٰى بِبَعْضٍ فِيْ كِتٰبِ اللّٰهِ ۗ اِنَّ
اللّٰهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿٧٥﴾

It does not behove a prophet to keep captives until he has 67-99
crushed down the enemies in the land. You desire the gains of this world, but Allah desires (for you the good of) the Hereafter; and Allah is All-Powerful, All-Wise. Had there not been a decree that had already been given by Allah, you would have incurred a severe chastisement in consequence of what you have taken. So eat of what you have taken as spoils for it is lawful and pure. And fear Allah:[49] Surely Allah is Forgiving and Compassionate.

O Prophet, tell the captives in your custody, "If Allah finds any 70-71
good in your hearts, He will give you that which is far more and far better than what has been taken from you, and will forgive your sins: He is Forgiving and Compassionate". But if they have any treacherous designs against you, they have already shown treachery to Allah. As a consequence of this He has given you mastery over them. Allah is All-Knowing, All-wise.

Those who embraced the Faith and emigrated from their homes 72-73
and expended their possessions and their lives in the Way of Allah, and those who gave refuge to the emigrants and helped them, are indeed the guardians of one another. However, you have no relation of guardianship with those who have embraced the Faith, but have not emigrated (to *Dar-ul-Islam)* until they emigrate[50] (to it); yet it is obligatory on you to help them in the matters of Faith, if they ask for your help, except against a people with whom you have a treaty.[51] As for disbelievers, they help one another; unless you also help one another, there will be mischief and great disorder on the earth.[52]

Those who embraced the Faith, emigrated and exerted their 74-75
utmost in the Way of Allah, and those who gave refuge to the emigrants and helped them, are true believers: there is forgiveness for them and the best of provisions. And those who embraced the Faith afterwards and emigrated and joined with you in your exertions for the Faith, are also of you, but according to the Book of Allah the blood relations have greater rights on one another.[53] Indeed Allah knows everything.

Contd. from p.151]

without any hesitation. Do not reject the offer on the plea that the other party is not sincere and has treacherous intentions, for no one can have correct knowledge

of the intentions of others. If the other party is sincere in its offer, then it will be wrong to reject it and continue the bloodshed. And if the enemy has treacherous intentions, then Allah will protect you from them because of your courage and moral superiority. In that case, fight bravely with the treacherous enemy so as to teach them such a lesson as may prove a deterrent".

46. This refers to the blessing of Islam which led to the union of the hearts of the different Arab clans and integrated them into a strong community, although before this there had been permanent enmities between them for centuries. This favour of God had been very conspicuous in the case of Aus and Khazraj clans of Al-Madinah. These two clans had been mortal enemies, and the bloody war of *Bu'ath* had taken place between them only two years before this. It was really a miracle that such enmities had been changed into such a union as was witnessed by the Islamic Community during the time of the Holy Prophet. It was quite obvious that this thing could not have been accomplished through any human powers or resources, for whatever had been accomplished, it had been accomplished by His grace and whatever will be accomplished, it will be accomplished by His grace.

47. Here the word "understanding" has been used in the same sense as 'morale' is used now-a-days. Understanding is a better scientific term than morale—the moral and mental condition which enables persons to keep up courage and enthusiasm, etc. For it is obvious that the one, who understands clearly the objective for which he is fighting would realize that it is more precious than his own life which would be meaningless if that object was lost, will possess a fighting power far greater than of the one who has no clear understanding of the object for which he is fighting, even though the two may be equal in their physical powers. Above all, the one who has the right understanding of the Reality, of the existence of Allah, of his own position in the universe, of his relation with Allah, of the life and death in this world, of the life in the Next World, of the distinction between Truth and falsehood, of the consequences of the victory of falsehood over Truth, has much more power even than those who fight for their country, their nation or for the sake of a class, even if the latter had the right understanding of their cause. Thus it is clear that the power of the Believers, who have full understanding of their object, is ten times that of disbelievers of the same capability. But along with this understanding, the practice of fortitude is also essential for gaining and maintaining that power.

48. This reduction of the ratio of the power of a Muslim to that of a non-Muslim from ten to one, to two to one does not mean that this was due to some deterioration in the morale of the Muslims. It simply means that in v. 65 the general principle of the ratio of the power of the Believers and the disbelievers was enunciated and in v. 66 that principle was applied in accordance with the then

existing condition of their morale. At that time (A.H. 2) the morale of the Muslims had not attained perfection, for many of them had only recently entered the fold of Islam and were still under preliminary training. Afterwards when their morale reached the desired standard under the guidance of the Holy Prophet, the ratio of ten to one was actually established, and was demonstrated practically in the battles during his last years and during the time of his rightly-guided successors.

49. As regards the question why Allah rebuked the Muslims in v. 68 for taking ransom, the commentators have cited some traditions. According to these, after the Battle of Badr, a consultation was held in regard to the prisoners taken from the army of the Quraish. Hadrat Abū Bakr was of the opinion that they should be set at liberty after the payment of ransom but Hadrat 'Umar opined that they should be slain. The Holy Prophet agreed to the opinion of Hadrat Abū Bakr and set them at liberty after the payment of their ransom. At this, Allah sent down this verse as a rebuke. But this interpretation is open to some objections.

The first difficulty of these interpreters is that they are unable to give a satisfactory explanation that might fit into the words: "Had there not been a decree that had already been given by Allah....". They say that it refers to the decree that was predestined by Allah or it means that Allah had already decreed to make spoils of war lawful though He had not sent down this decree to the Holy Prophet. But it is obvious that a thing does not become lawful unless it is made so by an explicit Command. The second difficulty is that according to this explanation, the Holy Prophet himself and his followers become guilty of the sin of taking ransom for prisoners. Therefore one would think many times before accepting an explanation that is based on traditions emanating from a single source.

In my opinion, Allah rebuked the Muslims for not complying fully with the condition laid down in the Ordinance in XLVII: 4: "So kill the disbelievers until you crush them down; after this you may take them as prisoners; and then set them at liberty as a favour or for a ransom after the battle comes to an end. According to this previous Ordinance, there was nothing wrong in taking prisoners of war and charging ransom for them, but what was wrong was that they did not fully comply with the prior condition, that is, 'until you crush them down'. For we learn that, when after the Battle of Badr the army of the Quraish was put to rout, many Muslims began to gather spoils or to take prisoners and only a few of them went in pursuit of the enemy to crush them. Had all the Muslims gone in pursuit of them, they would have crushed down their power then and there. Therefore Allah rebuked the Muslims (and not the Holy Prophet) as if to say, "O Muslims ! you have not yet fully understood the meaning of the mission of the Prophet. He is not sent to take prisoners and charge ransoms or gather spoils. The main objective of his mission is to crush down the powers of disbelief. But you are overwhelmed

by the worldly greeds again and again. During the course of this campaign, you at first desired to attack the trade caravan instead of the army of the Quraish. Then you began to gather spoils and take prisoners, and afterwards entered into a dispute regarding the division of spoils. Had We not previously given you permission for taking ransom (XLVII :4), We would have inflicted a severe chastisement on you. Very well, now you may enjoy what you have taken, but you should, in future, fear Us and refrain from incurring Our displeasure."

Imām Jassās also is of the same opinion (as expressed in his book *Ahkām-ul-Qur'ān*), and therefore the above interpretation is worth considering. This view is also supported by a Tradition related in *Sīrat-i-Ibn Hishām*. According to this, the Holy Prophet noticed signs of disapproval on the face of Sa'ad bin M'uāz on the occasion, when the Muslims were gathering the spoils and taking prisoners. So the Holy Prophet said, "O Sa'ad, it appears that you do not approve this conduct of the Muslims". Sa'ad replied, "It is so, O Messenger of Allah. This is the first victory that Allah has given us over the *mushriks*. Therefore it would have been much better for us to crush down their power completely than to save their lives by taking them prisoners". (Volume II, pp. 280-281).

50. This verse contains a very important article of the Islamic Constitution and lays down the terms of the relationship of ولایت *(vilāyat*—guardianship) between the Muslims. According to it, "Those Muslims only shall be bound by the relationship of *vilāyat* who are either the inhabitants of *Dār-ul-Islam* or emigrate to it. As for the Muslims living outside the territorial borders of the Islamic State, there shall be the relationship of Islamic brotherhood only, but there shall be no relationship of *vilāyat* with them. Likewise there shall be no relationship of *vilāyat* with those Muslims who visit the *Dār-ul-Islam* as foreigners in the capacity of the subjects of *Dār-ul-Kufr*, without emigrating to it permanently".

The Arabic word ولایت (*vilāyat*) is very comprehensive in meaning and 'guardianship' does not convey its full significance. It denotes the relationship of help, succour, protection, support, friendship, guardianship and the like between the citizens and the State and *vice versa*, and between the citizens themselves. Thus it is clear that this verse confines the limits of the Islamic, political and constitutional citizenship to its territorial boundaries only and excludes from this particular relationship the other Muslims who live beyond its territorial boundaries.

The legal implications of this negation of guardianship are very extensive, but this is not the occasion for their statement. Here it will suffice to say that according to this, the Muslims of *Dār-ul-Kufr* cannot become the inheritors of the Muslims of *Dār-ul-Islam* and *vice versa*, nor can they be the legal guardians of

one another, nor can there be inter-marriages between them; nor can the Islamic State appoint a citizen of *Dār-ul-Kufr* on any responsible post, until that one renounces the relationship of citizenship with *Dār-ul-Kufr*. Moreover, this verse affects also the foreign policy of the Islamic State and frees it from the responsibility of the Muslims living outside its territorial borders by restricting it only to the Muslims living within its territory. The Holy Prophet also declared the same thing, saying, "I owe no responsibility for the protection of any Muslim who resides among the *mushriks*".

This foreign policy of Islam cuts at the very roots of such disputes as are generally responsible for creating international crises. For it is obvious that if states refuse to shoulder any responsibilities for the protection, etc., of the minorities living outside their territorial borders, there cannot arise such disputes concerning them as lead to wars over and over again.

51. Though the Muslims living outside the territorial borders of the Islamic State have been excluded from political protection in the preceding verse, this fact does not deprive them of the brotherly relationship of Faith. Therefore it is obligatory on the Islamic State and its inhabitants, to help their wronged and oppressed brethren if they ask for help. But even in this case, they should observe the International Law and the universally accepted moral code. If *Dār-ul-Islam* has made a treaty with the persecuting people of *Dār-ul-Kufr* the Muslims of *Dār-ul-Islam* are forbidden to give any help to the oppressed Muslims in *Dār-ul-Kufr* if that is against the moral obligations of the treaty.

In this verse the word مِيثَاق (*mīthāq*) has been used for treaty. It implies everything that gives the guarantee of peace in the known sense to the parties concerned even though there might not be any explicit mention of a no-war agreement.

Moreover, the original words of the Arabic Text— "....between you and them there is a treaty"— clearly show that a treaty of the Islamic State with a non-Islamic State is not merely a treaty between the two states but between the two nations. Therefore it is morally binding on both the Islamic State and the Muslims living in the Islamic State. The Islamic Code does not tolerate that the Muslim subjects should be left free from the obligations of the treaty which a Muslim government makes with other countries or nations. Of course, those Muslims who reside outside the territorial borders of the State that makes a treaty are free from this obligation. that is why Abū Busair, Abū Jandal and other Muslims who were not the subjects of *Dār-ul-Islam* were not bound by the terms of the Treaty of Hudaibiyah, which the Holy Prophet had made with the disbelievers of Makkah.

52. The sentence—"unless you also help one another"—has two meanings: (1) If it is considered in connection with the previous sentence, "the disbelievers help one another," it means: "If you, the Believers, will not help one another just as the disbelievers help one another, there will be mischief and great disorder on the earth". (2) But if it is considered in connection with the instructions given in v. 72, it will mean: if the people living in *Dār-ul-Islam (a)* do not become the guardians and protectors of one another, *(b)* do not consider the Muslims, who have not migrated to *Dār-ul-Islam* and live in *Dār-ul-Kufr*, outside their political protection, *(c)* do not give help to the persecuted Muslims, living outside *Dār-ul-Islam*, when they ask for it, and if at the same time, they do not observe the law that the Muslims living in *Dār-ul-Islam* would not help those Muslims living in *Dār-ul-Kufr* among the people with whom they made a treaty of peace, and *(d)* do not break all their friendly relations with the disbelievers,—then there will be mischief and great chaos in the world.

53. This is to remove a misunderstanding. After migration to Al-Madīnah, the Holy Prophet had established the relationship of brotherhood between the *Muhājirīn* and the *Ansar*, which gave rise to the misunderstanding that they had become the inheritors of one another. This verse says that inheritance shall be determined by the blood-relationship and not by the relationship of brotherhood in the Faith.

IX

AT-TAUBAH

التَّوبه

IX

AT-TAUBAH

التوبة

Name

This Sūrah is known by two names---*At-Taubah* and *Al-Barā'at*. It is called *At-Taubah* because it enunciates the nature of *taubah* (repentance) and mentions the conditions of its acceptance. (vv. 102-118) . The second name *Barā'at* (Release) is taken from the first word of the Sūrah.

Why Omission of *Bismillah*

This is the only Sūrah of the Qur'ān to which *Bismillah* is not prefixed. Though the commentators have given different reasons for this, the correct one is that which has been given by Imām Rāzī: namely, this is because the Holy Prophet himself did not dictate it at the beginning of the Sūrah. Therefore the Companions did not prefix it and their successors followed them. This is a further proof of the fact that utmost care has been taken to keep the Qur'ān intact so that it should remain in its complete and original form.

Discourses and Periods of Revelation

This Sūrah comprises three discourses:

The first discourse (vv. 1-37) was revealed in Zil-Qa'adah A.H.9 or thereabout. As the importance of the subject of the discourse required its declaration on the occasion of *Haj*, the Holy Prophet despatched Hadrat 'Alī to follow Hadrat Abū Bakr, who had already left for Makkah as leader of the pilgrims to the Ka'abah. He instructed Hadrat 'Ali to deliver the discourse before the representatives of the different clans of Arabia so as to inform them of the new policy towards the *mushriks*.

The second discourse (vv. 38-72) was sent down in Rajab A.H.9 or a little before this, when the Holy Ptophet was engaged in making preparations for the campaign of Tabūk. In this discourse, the Believers were urged to take active part in *Jihād*, and the shirkers were severely rebuked for holding back their wealth and for hesitating to sacrifice their lives in the way of Allah because of their hypocrisy, weak faith or negligence.

The third discourse (vv. 73-129) was revealed on his return from the Campaign of Tabūk. There are some pieces in this discourse that cwere sent down on different occasions during the same period and were afterwards consolidated by the Holy Prophet into the Sūrah in accordance with inspiration from Allah. But this caused no interruption in its continuity because they dealt with the same subject and formed part of the same series of events. This discourse warns the hypocrites of their evil deeds and rebukes those Believers who had stayed behind in the campaign of Tabūk. Then after taking them to task, Allah pardons those true Believers who had not taken part in the *Jihād* in the Way of Allah for one reason or the other.

Chronologically, the first discourse should have come last; but being the most important of the three in regard to its subject-matter, it was placed first in the order of compilation.

Historical Background

Now let us consider the historical background of the Sūrah. The series of events that have been discussed in this Sūrah took place after the Peace Treaty of Hudaibiyah. By that time, one-third of Arabia had come under the sway of Islam which had established itself as a powerful, well-organized and civilized Islamic State. This Treaty afforded further opportunities to Islam to spread its influence in the comparatively peaceful atmosphere created by it.[1] After this Treaty, two events took place, which led to very important results:

Conquest of Arabia

The first was the Conquest of Arabia. The Holy Prophet was able to send missions among different clans for the propagation of Islam. The

1. For details please refer to the Prefaces to Al-Mā'idah and Al-Fātihah.

result was that during the short period of two years, it became such a great power that it made the old order of 'ignorance' feel helpless before it. So much so that the zealous elements from among the Quraish were so exasperated that they broke the Treaty in order to encounter Islam in a decisive combat. But the Holy Prophet took prompt action after the breach so as not to allow them any opportunity to gather enough force for this. He made a sudden invasion on Makkah in the month of Ramadān in A.H.8 and conquered it.[1] Though this conquest broke the backbone of the order of 'ignorance', it made still another attack on Islam in the battle-field of Hunain, which proved to be its death-knell. The clans of Hawāzin, Thaqīf, Nadr, Jushm and others gathered their entire forces in the battlefield in order to crush the reformative Revolution, but they utterly failed in their evil designs. The defeat of 'ignorance' at Hunain paved the way for making the whole of Arabia the 'Abode of Islam' *(Dār-ul-Islām)*. The result was that hardly a year had passed after the Battle of Hunain, when the major portion of Arabia came within the fold of Islam and only a few upholders of the old order remained scattered over some corners of the country.

The second event that contributed towards making Islam a formidable power was the campaign of Tabūk, which was necessitated by the provocative activities of the Christians living within or near the boundaries of the Roman Empire to the north of Arabia. Accordingly, the Holy Prophet, with an army of thirty thousand marched boldly towards the Roman Empire but the Romans evaded the encounter. The result was that the power of the Holy Prophet and Islam increased manifold and deputations from all corners of Arabia began to wait upon him on his return from Tabuk in order to offer their allegiance to Islam and obedience to him.[2] The Holy Qur'ān has described this triumph in Sūrah *An-Nasr:* "When the succour of Allah came and victory was attained and you saw people entering the fold of Islam in large numbers..."

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1. Please see E.N. 43 of Sūrah Al-Anfāl.

2. We learn from the traditions that total number of the deputations, chiefs, etc., who came to Al-Madīnah, was about seventy.

Campaign to Tabūk

The Campaign to Tabūk was the result of conflict with the Roman Empire, that had started even before the conquest of Makkah. One of the missions sent after the Treaty of Hudaibiyah to different parts of Arabia visited the clans which lived in the northern areas adjacent to Syria. The majority of these people were Christians who were under the influence of the Roman Empire. Contrary to all the principles of the commonly accepted International law, they killed fifteen members of the delegation near a place known as Zāt-u-Talah (or Zāt-i-Itlāh) Only Ka'ab bin 'Umair Ghifārī the head of the delegation, succeeded in escaping and reporting the sad incident. Besides this, Shurahbīl bin 'Amr, the Christian governor of Busrā, who was directly under the Roman Caesar, had also put to death Hārith bin 'Umair, the ambassador of the Holy Prophet, who had been sent to him on a similar mission.

These events convinced the Holy Prophet that a strong action should be taken in order to make the territory adjacent to the Roman Empire safe and secure for the Muslims. Accordingly, in the month of Jamādi-ul-Ūlā A.H. 8, he sent an army of three thousand towards the Syrian border. When this army reached near Ma'ān, the Muslims learnt that Shurahbīl was marching with an army of one hundred thousand to fight with them and that the Caesar, who himself was at Hims, had sent another army consisting of one hundred thousand soldiers under his brother Theodore. But in spite of such fearful news, the brave small band of the Muslims marched on fearlessly and encountered the big army of Shurahbīl at M'utah. And the result of the encounter in which the Muslims were fighting against fearful odds (the ratio of the two armies was 1: 33), was very favourable, for the enemy utterly failed to defeat them. This proved very helpful for the propagation of Islam. As a result, those Arabs who were living in a state of semi-independence in Syria and near Syria and the clans of Najd near 'Iraq, who were under the influence of the Iranian Empire, turned towards Islam and embraced it in thousands. For example, the people of Banī Sulaim (whose chief was 'Abbās bin Mirdas Sulaimi), Ashja'a, Ghatafan, Zubyān, Fazārah, etc., came into the fold of Islam at the same time. Above all Farvah bin 'Amral-Juzāmī, who was the commander of the Arab armies of the Roman Empire, embraced Islam during that time, and underwent the trial of his Faith in a way that filled the whole territory with wonder.

ARABIA AT THE TIME OF TABŪK EXPEDITION



When the Caesar came to know that Faryah had embraced Islam, he ordered that he should be arrested and brought to his court. Then the Caesar said to him, "You will have to choose one of the two things. Either give up your Islam and win your liberty and your former rank, or remain a Muslim and face death." He calmly chose Islam and sacrificed his life in the way of the Truth.

No wonder that such events as these made the Caesar realize the nature of the danger that was threatening his Empire from Arabia. Accordingly, in A.H. 9, he began to make military preparations to avenge the insult he had suffered at M'utah. The Ghassānid and other Arab chiefs also began to muster armies under him. When the Holy Prophet, who always kept himself well-informed even of the minutest things that could affect the Islamic Movement favourably or adversely, came to know of these preparations, he at once understood their meaning. Therefore, without the least hesitation he decided to fight against the great power of the Caesar. He knew that the show of the slightest weakness would result in the utter failure of the Movement which was facing three great dangers at that time. First, the dying power of 'ignorance' that had almost been crushed in the battle-field of Hunain might revive again. Secondly, the Hypocrites of Al-Madīnah, who were always on the look-out for such an opportunity, might make full use of this to do the greatest possible harm to it. For they had already made preparations for this and had, through a monk called Abu 'Āmir, sent secret messages of their evil designs to the Christian king of Ghassān and the Caesar himself. Besides this, they had also built a mosque near Al-Madīnah for holding secret meetings for this purpose. The third danger was of an attack by the Caesar himself, who had already defeated Iran, the other great power of that period, and filled with awe the adjacent territories.

It is obvious that if all these three elements had given an opportunity of taking a concerted action against the Muslims, Islam would have lost the fight it had almost won. That is why in this case the Holy Prophet made an open declaration for making preparations for the campaign against the Roman Empire, which was one of the two greatest empires of the world of that period. The declaration was made though all the apparent circumstances were against such a decision: for there was famine in the country and the long-awaited crops were about to

ripen: the burning heat of the scorching summer season of Arabia was at its height and there was not enough money for preparations in general, and for equipment and conveyance in particular. But in spite of these handicaps, when the Messenger of Allah realized the urgency of the occasion, he took this step which was to decide whether the Mission of the Truth was going to survive or perish. The very fact that he made an open declaration for making preparations for such a campaign to Syria against the Roman Empire showed how important it was, for this was contrary to his previous practice. Usually he took every precaution not to reveal beforehand the direction to which he was going nor the name of the enemy whom he was going to attack; nay, he did not move out of Al-Madīnah even in the direction of the campaign.

All the parties in Arabia fully realized the grave consequences of this critical decision. The remnants of the lovers of the old order of 'ignorance' were anxiously waiting for the result of the campaign, for they had pinned all their hopes on the defeat of Islam by the Romans. The 'hypocrites' also considered it to be their last chance of crushing the power of Islam by internal rebellion if the Muslims suffered a defeat in Syria. They had, therefore, made full use of the 'Mosque' built by them for hatching plots and had employed all their devices to render the campaign a failure. On the other side, the true Believers also realized fully that the fate of the Movement for which they had been exerting their utmost for the last 22 years was now hanging in the balance. If they showed courage on that critical occasion, the doors of the whole outer world would be thrown open for the Movement to spread. But if they showed weakness or cowardice, then all the work they had done in Arabia would end in smoke.

That is why these lovers of Islam began to make enthusiastic preparations for the campaign. Everyone of them tried to surpass the other in making contributions for the provision of equipment for it. Hadrat 'Uthmān and Hadrat 'Abdur Rehmān bin 'Auf presented large sums of money for this purpose. Hadrat 'Umar contributed half of the earnings of his life and Hadrat Abū Bakr the entire earnings of his life. The indigent companions did not lag behind and presented whatever they could earn by the sweat of their labour and the women parted with their ornaments. Thousands of volunteers, who were filled with the desire of sacrificing their lives for Islam, came to the Holy Prophet and requested

that arrangements for weapons and conveyance be made for them so that they should join the expedition. Those who could not be provided with these shed tears of sorrow; the scene was so pathetic that it made the Holy Prophet sad because of his inability to arm them. In short, the occasion became the touchstone for discriminating a true believer from a hypocrite. For, to lag behind in the campaign meant that the very relationship of a person to Islam was doubtful. Accordingly, whenever a person lagged behind during the journey to Tabūk, the Holy Prophet, on being informed, would spontaneously say, "Leave him alone. If there be any good in him, Allah will again join him with you, and if there be no good in him, then thank Allah that He relieved you of his evil company".

In short, the Holy Prophet marched out towards Syria in Rajab A.H. 9, with thirty thousand fighters for the cause of Islam. The conditions in which the expedition was undertaken may be judged from the fact that the number of camels with them was so small that many of them were obliged to walk on foot and to wait for their turn for several had to ride at a time on each camel. To add to this, there was the burning heat of the desert and the acute shortage of water. But they were richly rewarded for their firm resolve and sincere adherence to the cause and for their perseverance in the face of those great difficulties and obstacles.

When they arrived at Tabūk, they learnt that the Caesar and his allies had withdrawn their troops from the frontier and there was no enemy to fight with. Thus they won a moral victory that increased their prestige manifold and, that too, without shedding a drop of blood.

In this connection, it is pertinent to point out that the general impression given by the historians of the campaigns of the Holy Prophet about the campaign of Tabūk is not correct. They relate the event in a way as if the news of the mustering of the Roman armies near the Arabian frontier was itself false. The fact is that the Caesar had begun to muster his armies, but the Holy Prophet forestalled him and arrived on the scene before he could make full preparations for the invasion. Therefore, believing that "discretion is the better part of valour," he withdrew his armies from the frontier, for he had not forgotten that the three thousand fighters for the cause of Islam had rendered helpless his

army one hundred thousand strong at M'utah. He could not, therefore, even with an army of two hundred thousand, dare to fight against an army of thirty thousand, and that, too, under the leadership of the Holy Prophet himself.

When the Holy Prophet found that the Caesar had withdrawn his forces from the frontier, he considered the question whether it would be worthwhile to march into the Syrian territory or to halt at Tabūk and turn his moral victory to political and strategical advantage. He decided on the latter course and made a halt for twenty days at Tabūk. During this time, he brought pressure on the small states that lay between the Roman Empire and the Islamic State and were at that time under the influence of the Romans, and subdued and made them the tributaries of the Islamic State. For instance, some Christian chiefs—Ukaidir bin 'Abdul Malik Kindī of Dūmatul Jandal, Yūhannā bin D'obah of Ailah and the chiefs of Maqnā, Jarbā' and Azruh—also submitted and agreed to pay *Jizyah* to the Islamic State of Al-Madīnah. As a result of this, the boundaries of the Islamic State were extended right up to the Roman Empire, and the majority of the Arab clans, who were being used by the Caesar against Arabia, became the allies of the Muslims against the Romans.

Above all, this moral victory of Tabūk afforded a golden opportunity to the Muslims to strengthen their hold on Arabia before entering into a long conflict with the Romans. For it broke the back of those who had still been expecting that the old order of 'ignorance' might revive in the near future, whether they were the open upholders of *shirk* or the hypocrites who were hiding their *shirk* under the garb of Islam. The majority of such people were compelled by the force of circumstances to enter into the fold of Islam and, at least, make it possible for their descendants to become true Muslims. After this a mere impotent minority of the upholders of the old order was left in the field, but it could not stand in the way of the Islamic Revolution for the perfection of which Allah had sent His Messenger.

Problems of the Period

If we keep in view the preceding background, we can easily find out the problems that were confronting the Community at that time. They were:

(1) to make the whole of Arabia a perfect *Dār-ul-Islām*,

(2) to extend the influence of Islam to the adjoining countries,

(3) to crush the mischiefs of the hypocrites, and

(4) to prepare the Muslims for *Jihād* against the non-Muslim world.

(1) Now that the administration of the whole of Arabia had come in the hands of the Believers, and all the opposing powers had become helpless, it was necessary to make a clear declaration of that policy which was to be adopted to make her a perfect *Dār-ul-Islām*. Therefore the following measures were adopted;

(a) A clear declaration was made that all the treaties with the *mushriks* were abolished and the Muslims would be released from the treaty obligations with them after a respite of four months. (vv. 1-3). This declaration was necessary for uprooting completely the system of life based on *shirk* and to make Arabia exclusively the centre of Islam so that it should not in any way interfere with the spirit of Islam nor become an internal danger for it.

(b) A decree was issued that the guardianship of the Ka'abah, which held a central position in all the affairs of Arabia, should be wrested from the *mushriks* and placed permanently in the hands of the Believers, (vv. 12-18) that all the customs and practices of the *shirk* of the era of 'ignorance' should be forcibly abolished: that the *mushriks* should not be allowed even to come near the "House" (v. 28). This was to eradicate every trace of *shirk* from the "House" that was dedicated exclusively to the worship of Allah.

(c) The evil practice of Nasi, by which they used to tamper with the sacred months in the days of 'ignorance', was forbidden as an act of *kufr (v.* 37). This was also to serve as an example to the Muslims for eradicating every vestige of the customs of ignorance from the life of Arabia (and afterwards from the lives of the Muslims everywhere).

(2) In order to enable the Muslims to extend the influence of Islam outside Arabia, they were enjoined to crush with sword the

non-Muslim powers and to force them to accept the sovereignty of the Islamic State. As the great Roman and Iranian Empires were the biggest hindrances in the way, a conflict with them was inevitable. The object of *Jihād* was not to coerce them to accept Islam—they were free to accept or not to accept it—but to prevent them from thrusting forcibly their deviations upon others and the coming generations. The Muslims were enjoined to tolerate their misguidance only to the extent that they might have the freedom to remain misguided, if they chose to be so, provided that they paid *Jizyah* (v. 29) as a sign of their subjugation to the Islamic State.

(3) The third important problem was to crush the mischief's of the hypocrites, who had hitherto been tolerated in spite of their flagrant crimes. Now that there was practically no pressure upon them from outside, the Muslims were enjoined to treat them openly as disbelievers (v. 73). Accordingly, the Holy Prophet set on fire the house of Swailim, where the hypocrites used to gather for consultations in order to dissuade the people from joining the expedition to Tabūk. Likewise on his return from Tabūk, he ordered to pull down and burn the 'Mosque' that had been built to serve as a cover for the hypocrites for hatching plots against the true Believers.

(4) In order to prepare the Muslims for *Jihād* against the whole non-Muslim world, it was necessary to cure them even of that slight weakness of faith from which they were still suffering. For there could be no greater internal danger to the Islamic Community than the weakness of faith, especially when it was going to engage itself single-handed in a conflict with the whole non-Muslim world. That is why those people who had lagged behind in the campaign to Tabūk or had shown the least negligence were severely taken to task, and were considered as hypocrites if they had no plausible excuse for not fulfilling that obligation. Moreover, a clear declaration was made that in future the sole criterion of a Muslim's faith shall be the exertions he makes for the uplift of the Word of Allah and the

role he plays in the conflict between Islam and *Kufr*. Therefore, 'if anyone will show any hesitation in sacrificing his life, money, time and energies, his faith shall not be regarded as genuine'. (vv. 81-96).

If the above-mentioned important points are kept in view during the study of this Sūrah, it will facilitate the understanding of its contents.

SUMMARY

SUBJECT: PROBLEMS OF PEACE AND WAR

In continuation of Sūrah *Al-Anfāl*, this Sūrah also deals with the problems of peace and war and bases the theme on the Tabūk expedition.

Topics and their Interconnection

1-12 This portion deals with the sanctity of treaties and lays down principles, rules and regulations which must be kept in view before breaking them, in case the other party does not observe them sincerely.

13-37 In this portion the Muslims have been urged to fight in the Way of Allah with the *mushrik* Arabs, the Jews and the Christians, who were duly warned of the consequences of their mischievous and inimical behavior.

38-72 In this discourse, the Muslims have been told clearly and explicitly that they will inherit the rewards promised by Allah only if they take active part in the conflict with *kufr*, for that is the criterion which distinguishes true Muslims from hypocrites. Therefore true Muslims should take active part in *Jihād*, without minding dangers, obstacles, difficulties, temptations and the like.

73-90 This portion deals with the problems of hypocrites and lays down rules and regulations governing the treatment that should be meted out to them and points out their distinctive marks from true Muslims.

91-110 This portion deals with the case of those who remained behind and did not accompany the Holy Prophet for *Jihād* to Tabūk. For this purpose they have been separated into different categories, that is, the disabled, the sick, the indigent, the hypocrites, the believers who realized their guilt and punished themselves before the return of the Holy Prophet from Tabūk and those who confessed their error. Their cases have been dealt with in accordance with the nature and extent of their offence.

In order to make their noble qualities look all the more conspicuous and dignified by contrast, the characteristics of the Believers have been mentioned, and they have been reassured that Allah, the Sovereign of the Universe, is their helper and guardian. Accordingly, because of their sincerity, He has forgiven the Three Believers who did not take part in the expedition. 111-118

In the concluding portion, general instructions have been given to the Believers for their guidance. 119-127

This is the conclusion: "Follow, the Messenger who is gentle and compassionate and your greatest well-wisher, and trust in Allah, the Lord of the Universe". 128-129

سُوْرَةُ التَّوْبَةِ مَدَنِيَّةٌ (9) (113)

بَرَآءَةٌ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ وَ رَسُوْلِهٖۤ اِلَى الَّذِيْنَ عٰهَدْتُّمْ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ ۝1
فَسِيْحُوْا فِي الْاَرْضِ اَرْبَعَةَ اَشْهُرٍ وَّ اعْلَمُوْۤا اَنَّكُمْ غَيْرُ مُعْجِزِي اللّٰهِ ۙ وَ
اَنَّ اللّٰهَ مُخْزِي الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ۝2 وَ اَذَانٌ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ وَ رَسُوْلِهٖۤ اِلَى النَّاسِ يَوْمَ
الْحَجِّ الْاَكْبَرِ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ بَرِيْٓءٌ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ ۙ وَ رَسُوْلُهٗ ؕ فَاِنْ تُبْتُمْ
فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ ۚ وَ اِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَاعْلَمُوْۤا اَنَّكُمْ غَيْرُ مُعْجِزِي اللّٰهِ ؕ وَ
بَشِّرِ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا بِعَذَابٍ اَلِيْمٍ ۝3 اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ عٰهَدْتُّمْ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ
ثُمَّ لَمْ يَنْقُصُوْكُمْ شَيْـًٔا وَّ لَمْ يُظَاهِرُوْا عَلَيْكُمْ اَحَدًا فَاَتِمُّوْۤا اِلَيْهِمْ عَهْدَهُمْ
اِلٰى مُدَّتِهِمْ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ ۝4 فَاِذَا انْسَلَخَ الْاَشْهُرُ الْحُرُمُ
فَاقْتُلُوا الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ حَيْثُ وَجَدْتُّمُوْهُمْ وَ خُذُوْهُمْ وَ احْصُرُوْهُمْ وَ
اقْعُدُوْا لَهُمْ كُلَّ مَرْصَدٍ ۚ فَاِنْ تَابُوْا وَ اَقَامُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَ اٰتَوُا الزَّكٰوةَ
فَخَلُّوْا سَبِيْلَهُمْ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ۝5 وَ اِنْ اَحَدٌ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ
اسْتَجَارَكَ فَاَجِرْهُ حَتّٰى يَسْمَعَ كَلٰمَ اللّٰهِ ثُمَّ اَبْلِغْهُ مَاْمَنَهٗ ؕ ذٰلِكَ
بِاَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَّا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝6 كَيْفَ يَكُوْنُ لِلْمُشْرِكِيْنَ عَهْدٌ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ وَ
عِنْدَ رَسُوْلِهٖۤ اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ عٰهَدْتُّمْ عِنْدَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ ۚ فَمَا اسْتَقَامُوْا
لَكُمْ فَاسْتَقِيْمُوْا لَهُمْ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ ۝7 كَيْفَ وَ اِنْ يَّظْهَرُوْا
عَلَيْكُمْ لَا يَرْقُبُوْا فِيْكُمْ اِلًّا وَّ لَا ذِمَّةً ؕ يُرْضُوْنَكُمْ بِاَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَ تَاْبٰى
قُلُوْبُهُمْ ۚ وَ اَكْثَرُهُمْ فٰسِقُوْنَ ۝8 اِشْتَرَوْا بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيْلًا فَصَدُّوْا

IX

AT-TAUBAH

التوبة

Verses: 129 *Revealed at Al-Madīnah*

This is a declaration[1] of immunity (from obligations) by Allah and His Messenger to those *mushriks* with whom you had made treaties:[2] "You are free to move about in the land for four months more: [3] but you should know that you cannot frustrate the Will of Allah, and that Allah will degrade the rejecters of the Truth." 1-2

This is a public proclamation from Allah and His Messenger for all the people on the Day of Great Haj:[4] Allah is free from the treaty obligations made with the *mushriks* and so is His Messenger. If, therefore, you repent now, it is better for you but if you turn away, you should know it well that you cannot frustrate (the Will of) Allah. And, O Prophet, give the good news of a painful chastisement to the rejecters excepting those *mushriks* with whom you made treaties, and who afterwards did not violate these in the least nor did they give help to anyone against you; so you also should observe the treaties with such people in accordance with their terms, for Allah loves the pious people.[5] 3-4

Then, when the months made unlawful[6] for fighting expire, kill the *mushriks* wherever you find them, and seize them, and besiege them, and lie in wait for them at every place of ambush. But if they repent, and establish *Salāt* and pay the *Zakāt* dues, then let them go their way:[7] for Allah is Forgiving and Compassionate. And if any of the *mushriks* requests you for protection so that he may come to you (to hear the Word of Allah), give him protection till he hears the Word of Allah; then convey him to the place of his safety: this should be done because these people do not know the Truth.[8] 5-6

How shall a treaty with these *mushriks* be regarded as abiding by Allah and His Messenger? —excepting those with whom you made 7-8

a treaty at the Masjid-i-Harām:[9] so long as they behave rightly with you, you also should behave rightly with them, for Allah loves the righteous people.—But how can a treaty be regarded as abiding with the other *mushriks?* Since if they get power over you, they will not respect ties of kindred with you nor honour any treaty obligations. They try to conciliate you with their tongues, while their hearts are averse to their tongues,[10] for most of them are evil-doers.[11]

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1. As has already been stated in the Preface to this Sūrah, this discourse (vv. 1-37) was revealed in A.H. 9, when Hadrat Abū Bakr had left for Makkah as leader of the pilgrims to the Ka'abah. Therefore the Companions said to the Holy Prophet, "Sir, send it to Abu Bakr so that he may proclaim it on the occasion of *Haj.*" He replied, "The importance and nature of the Declaration demands that this should be proclaimed on my behalf by some one from my own family." Accordingly, he entrusted this duty to Hadrat 'Alī and instructed him to proclaim it openly before the pilgrims, and also make these four announcements: (1) "No one who rejects Islam shall enter Paradise. (2) No *mushrik* should perform *Haj* after this. (3) It is forbidden to move round the Ka'abah in a naked state. (4) The terms of the treaties which are still in force (i.e. with those who have not broken their treaties with the Messenger of Allah up to that time) would be faithfully observed till the expiry of the term of the treaties".

In this connection, it will be worthwhile to know that the first *Haj* of the Islamic period after the conquest of Makkah was performed in A.H. 8, according to the old customs. Then in A.H. 9 the second *Haj* was performed by the Muslims in the Islamic way, and by the *mushriks* in their own way. But the third *Haj*, known as *"Hajja-tul-Widā'a"*, was performed in A.H. 10 in the purely Islamic way under the guidance of the Holy Prophet himself. He did not perform *Haj* during the two previous years because up to that time the *mushriks* had not been forbidden from it, and so there were still some traces of *shirk* associated with it.

2. This declaration of the abrogation of the treaties with the *mushriks* was made in accordance with the law enjoined in VIII: 58 regarding the treacherous people, for it is treachery from the Islamic point of view to wage war against any people with whom a treaty of peace had been made, without openly declaring that the treaty had been terminated. That is why a proclamation of the abrogation of the treaties was necessitated against those clans who were always hatching plots against Islam in spite of the treaties of peace they had made. They would break the treaties and turn hostile on the first opportunity for treachery, and the same was true of all the *mushrik* clans with the exception of Banī Kanānah, Banī Damrah and one or two other clans.

This proclamation practically reduced the *mushriks* of Arabia to the position of outlaws and no place of shelter was left for them, for the major part of the country had come under the sway of Islam. As this released the Muslims from the obligations of the treaties made with them and forestalled them, they were driven into a tight corner. For this smashed all their evil designs of creating trouble by inciting civil war at the time of a threat from the Roman and the Iranian Empires or after the death of the Holy Prophet. But Allah and His Messenger turned the tables on them before the opportune moment for which they were waiting. Now the only alternatives left with them were either to accept Islam that had become the state religion of Arabia, or to fight against it and be exterminated, or to emigrate from the country.

The wisdom of this grand plan became apparent when the mischief of apostasy broke out in different parts of Arabia a year and a half after this at the death of the Holy Prophet. This disturbance was so sudden and violent that it shook to its foundations the newly created Islamic State, and would have done a far greater harm if the organized power of *shirk* had not been broken beforehand by this abrogation. It may be asserted that but for this timely action the mischief of apostasy, that rose at the very beginning of the Caliphate of Hadrat Abū Bakr, would have done ten-fold harm by rebellion and civil war, and might have changed the whole history of Islam.

3. The respite of four months from the tenth of Zil-Haj (the date of the proclamation) to the tenth of Rabī'-uth-thānī; was granted to give time to the *mushriks* so that they should consider their position carefully and decide whether to make preparation for war or to emigrate from the country or to accept Islam.

4. *Hajj-i-akbar* refers to the 10th of Zil-Hajjah and is also known as *Yaum-un-Nahr*. This has been explained by the Holy Prophet in an authentic Tradition. On the 10th of Zil-Hajjah, during the last *Haj* of the Holy Prophet, he asked the people, "What is this day?" The people answered, "It is the day of Sacrifice."

The Holy Prophet said, "This is the day of *Hajj-i-akbar*" Here the word *Hajj-i-akbar* (Great Pilgrimage) has been used in contrast to *Hajj-i-asghar* which the Arabs used for '*Umrah*'. Thus, the *Haj* which is performed in the prescribed dates of Zil-Haj is called *Hajj-i-akbar*.

5. ".....you also should observe the treaties with such people" who do not violate them, for your violation in such cases shall be against piety. And Muslims should remain pious under all circumstances "for Allah loves the pious people" only.

[Contd. on p. 180

عَنْ سَبِيْلِهٖ ؕ اِنَّهُمْ سَآءَ مَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ۝٩ لَا يَرْقُبُوْنَ فِيْ مُؤْمِنٍ اِلًّا
وَّلَا ذِمَّةً ؕ وَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْمُعْتَدُوْنَ ۝١٠ فَاِنْ تَابُوْا وَاَقَامُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَ
اٰتَوُا الزَّكٰوةَ فَاِخْوَانُكُمْ فِي الدِّيْنِ ؕ وَنُفَصِّلُ الْاٰيٰتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَّعْلَمُوْنَ ۝١١
وَاِنْ نَّكَثُوْٓا اَيْمَانَهُمْ مِّنْۢ بَعْدِ عَهْدِهِمْ وَطَعَنُوْا فِيْ دِيْنِكُمْ
فَقَاتِلُوْٓا اَئِمَّةَ الْكُفْرِ ۙ اِنَّهُمْ لَآ اَيْمَانَ لَهُمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَنْتَهُوْنَ ۝١٢ اَلَا تُقَاتِلُوْنَ
قَوْمًا نَّكَثُوْٓا اَيْمَانَهُمْ وَهَمُّوْا بِاِخْرَاجِ الرَّسُوْلِ وَهُمْ بَدَءُوْكُمْ اَوَّلَ
مَرَّةٍ ؕ اَتَخْشَوْنَهُمْ ۚ فَاللّٰهُ اَحَقُّ اَنْ تَخْشَوْهُ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ۝١٣ قَاتِلُوْهُمْ
يُعَذِّبْهُمُ اللّٰهُ بِاَيْدِيْكُمْ وَيُخْزِهِمْ وَيَنْصُرْكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَيَشْفِ صُدُوْرَ
قَوْمٍ مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ۝١٤ وَيُذْهِبْ غَيْظَ قُلُوْبِهِمْ ؕ وَيَتُوْبُ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ؕ
وَاللّٰهُ عَلِيْمٌ حَكِيْمٌ ۝١٥ اَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ اَنْ تُتْرَكُوْا وَلَمَّا يَعْلَمِ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ
جٰهَدُوْا مِنْكُمْ وَلَمْ يَتَّخِذُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ وَلَا رَسُوْلِهٖ وَلَا الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ
وَلِيْجَةً ؕ وَاللّٰهُ خَبِيْرٌۢ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ ۝١٦ مَا كَانَ لِلْمُشْرِكِيْنَ اَنْ يَّعْمُرُوْا
مَسٰجِدَ اللّٰهِ شٰهِدِيْنَ عَلٰٓى اَنْفُسِهِمْ بِالْكُفْرِ ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ حَبِطَتْ اَعْمَالُهُمْ ۖ
وَفِي النَّارِ هُمْ خٰلِدُوْنَ ۝١٧ اِنَّمَا يَعْمُرُ مَسٰجِدَ اللّٰهِ مَنْ اٰمَنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَالْيَوْمِ
الْاٰخِرِ وَاَقَامَ الصَّلٰوةَ وَاٰتَى الزَّكٰوةَ وَلَمْ يَخْشَ اِلَّا اللّٰهَ فَعَسٰٓى اُولٰٓئِكَ
اَنْ يَّكُوْنُوْا مِنَ الْمُهْتَدِيْنَ ۝١٨ اَجَعَلْتُمْ سِقَايَةَ الْحَآجِّ وَعِمَارَةَ الْمَسْجِدِ
الْحَرَامِ كَمَنْ اٰمَنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْاٰخِرِ وَجٰهَدَ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ ؕ لَا يَسْتَوٗنَ
عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ۝١٩ اَلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَهَاجَرُوْا وَ
جٰهَدُوْا فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ بِاَمْوَالِهِمْ وَاَنْفُسِهِمْ ۙ اَعْظَمُ دَرَجَةً عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ ؕ وَ

They bartered away Allah's revelations for paltry worldly gains[12] and then debarred others from His Way:[13] indeed very evil were the deeds they did. They do not observe the ties of kindred in regard to the Believers nor observe the obligations of treaty, and it is they who have always been the transgressors: yet if they repent even now, and establish *Salāt* and pay *Zakāt* dues, then they shall be your brethren in faith. Thus We make plain Our Messages to those who try to understand.[14] But if they break their oaths after making compacts and revile your Faith you should fight with these ringleaders of disbelief because their oaths are not trustworthy: it may be that sword alone will restrain[14a] them.[15] 9-12

Will you not fight[16] such people who have been breaking their solemn pledges, who conspired to banish the Messenger and were the first to transgress against you? Are you afraid of them? If you are true Believers, surely Allah has a greater right that you should fear Him. Fight them. Allah will chastise them by your hands and will bring disgrace and degradation upon them and succour you against them and soothe the hearts of many believers. And He may remove the wrath of their hearts; and may also show guidance towards repentance[17] to whomsoever He wills; Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. Do you think that you will be left (without a trial)? Note it well that Allah has not as yet seen which of you exerted your utmost in His (Allah his way) and did not take as intimate friends any other than Allah, His Messenger and the Believers [18] Allah has full knowledge of what you do. 13-16

It does not behove the *mushriks* to become the guardians and servants of Allah's houses of worship, the while they themselves bear witness against themselves to their disbelief;[19] in fact, all their works have gone to waste[20] and they shall abide in the Fire for ever. Only those are worthy of being the guardians and servants of Allah's houses of worship, who believe in Allah and the Last Day, and establish *Salāt* and pay *Zakāt* dues, and fear none but Allah: for these alone are expected to follow the Right Way. Have you made the mere giving of water to pilgrims and the guardianship of the Masjid-i-Harām as equal to the works of the one who has believed in Allah and the Last Day, and exerted his utmost in the Way of Allah ?[21] Well, these things are not equal in the sight of Allah, and Allah does not show guidance to the workers of iniquity. Those alone who have believed, and left their 17-20

homes and exerted their utmost with their lives and possessions in the Way of Allah, shall have the highest ranks with Allah: they are truly successful.

Contd. from p. 177]

6. Here "the months made unlawful" are not those four months during which war is forbidden for the sake of *Hajj* and *'Umrah* but the four months that were made unlawful for the Muslims to make any attack on the *mushriks*, who were granted respite by v. 2.

7. That is, "Mere repentance from disbelief and *shirk* will not end the matter, but they shall have to perform the prescribed prayer and pay *Zakāt* dues. Without these it will not be considered that they had given up disbelief and embraced Islam." Hadrat Abu Bakr based his decision on this verse in the case of the apostates, after the death of the Holy Prophet, who argued that they were not the rejecters of Islam, because they offered *Salāt*, even though they had refused to pay the *Zakāt* dues. This argument roused doubts in the minds of the Companions in general that they had no right to fight with such people as these.

But Hadrat Abu Bakr removed their doubts, saying, "Verse 5 enjoins us to let those people go their way who fulfil all the three conditions— repentance from *shirk*, the establishment of *Salāt* and the payment of *Zakāt*. We cannot forbear them, because they do not fulfil one of these three conditions."

8. That is, "If during a fight, an enemy makes a request that he should be given an opportunity to understand Islam, the Muslims should give him a surety of protection and allow him to visit them. They should then present Islam before him in order to make him understand it. If, after this, he does not embrace Islam, they should convey him safely to his place". Such a person who comes to *Dār-ul-Islām* under the above mentioned protection is called *musta'min* in the Islamic Code.

9. That is: Banī Kināmah and Banī Khuzā'ah and Banī Damrah.

10. That is, "Though outwardly they negotiated for peace treaties, they cherished evil intentions in their hearts, and waited for an opportune moment to break them. And this was borne by later experiences."

11. They were evil-doers because they had no sense of moral responsibilities nor did they hesitate to break moral limits.

12. That is, "When they had to make a choice between the Divine Guidance and the transitory worldly ambitions, they chose the latter, because they did not comprehend the comparative values of the two. Whereas the Revelations of Allah were inviting them to goodness, righteousness and observance of the Divine Law, which lead to eternal bliss, they chose to follow the unbridled lusts of

their selves which gained some transitory worldly benefits for them, but consequently led them to eternal perdition."

13. Those evil-doers "blocked His Way for others", for they not only chose misguidance for themselves but also tried to prevent others from following the right way. They put every kind of obstruction in the way of the invitation to righteousness; nay, they tried their worst to gag the mouths of those who were extending that invitation and make their lives hard for them. In short, they did all they could to prevent the establishment of the righteous system of life that Allah required the people to establish.

14. Here, too, it has explicitly been stated that those who repent will not become your brethren in faith without the observance of *Salāt* and *Zakāt*.

"Yet if .....they shall be your brethren in faith": This means that "if they fulfil those conditions, then not only shall their lives and properties become unlawful for you but also they shall enjoy equal rights with you in the Islamic Community. There shall be no distinction between them and the other Muslims in regard to social, cultural, legal and political rights, and nothing will stand in their way to the progress for which they are otherwise qualified.

14a. ".....you should fight with them.....": perhaps the fear of war may force them to desist from breaking oaths and reviling Islam.

15. In the context, the words, oaths and compacts mean the compact of the acceptance of Islam. Therefore, the question of making a new compact with them does not arise. As regards the old pacts, they had already broken all of them. It is on account of this that the declaration of immunity (from obligations) by Allah and His Messenger has been clearly made. It has also been stated that such people are not worthy of any treaty and they can only be let off if they repent of their disbelief and *shirk* and establish *Salāt* and pay *Zakāt* dues. This verse states clearly how the renegades should be treated. As a matter of fact, this verse forestalled the mischief of apostasy that broke out a year and a half after its revelation and Hadrat Abū Bakr followed the guidance given in this verse to crush it. (For further explanation, see my book entitled *Murtad kī Sazā Islāmi Qānūn mein).*

16. In this passage the addressees are the Muslims. They have been urged to fight perseveringly in the Way of Allah, without paying the least heed to their ties of blood and relationship and to their worldly interests. In order to understand fully the spirit of this passage, the reader should keep in view the state of affairs at the time, when the abrogation of the treaties was declared. Though Islam was reigning supreme in the greater part of Arabia and there was no greater power to challenge its supremacy, still superficial observers saw a number of dangers in the extreme step which was being taken at that time. *[Contd. on p. 183.*

أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾ يُبَشِّرُهُمْ رَبُّهُم بِرَحْمَةٍ مِّنْهُ وَرِضْوَانٍ وَجَنَّاتٍ
لَّهُمْ فِيهَا نَعِيمٌ مُّقِيمٌ ﴿٢١﴾ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِندَهُ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٢٢﴾
يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا آبَاءَكُمْ وَإِخْوَانَكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ إِنِ اسْتَحَبُّوا
الْكُفْرَ عَلَى الْإِيمَانِ ۚ وَمَن يَتَوَلَّهُم مِّنكُمْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ قُلْ
إِن كَانَ آبَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ وَإِخْوَانُكُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ وَعَشِيرَتُكُمْ وَأَمْوَالٌ
اقْتَرَفْتُمُوهَا وَتِجَارَةٌ تَخْشَوْنَ كَسَادَهَا وَمَسَاكِنُ تَرْضَوْنَهَا أَحَبَّ إِلَيْكُم
مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَجِهَادٍ فِي سَبِيلِهِ فَتَرَبَّصُوا حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِ ۗ وَ
اللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾ لَقَدْ نَصَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ فِي مَوَاطِنَ كَثِيرَةٍ ۙ وَ
يَوْمَ حُنَيْنٍ ۙ إِذْ أَعْجَبَتْكُمْ كَثْرَتُكُمْ فَلَمْ تُغْنِ عَنكُمْ شَيْئًا وَضَاقَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ
الْأَرْضُ بِمَا رَحُبَتْ ثُمَّ وَلَّيْتُم مُّدْبِرِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾ ثُمَّ أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَىٰ
رَسُولِهِ وَعَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَأَنزَلَ جُنُودًا لَّمْ تَرَوْهَا وَعَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ۚ
وَذَٰلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٢٦﴾ ثُمَّ يَتُوبُ اللَّهُ مِن بَعْدِ ذَٰلِكَ عَلَىٰ مَن يَشَاءُ ۗ وَ
اللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٢٧﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْمُشْرِكُونَ نَجَسٌ فَلَا يَقْرَبُوا
الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ بَعْدَ عَامِهِمْ هَٰذَا ۚ وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ عَيْلَةً فَسَوْفَ يُغْنِيكُمُ
اللَّهُ مِن فَضْلِهِ إِن شَاءَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٨﴾ قَاتِلُوا الَّذِينَ لَا
يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَا بِالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَلَا يُحَرِّمُونَ مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَ
لَا يَدِينُونَ دِينَ الْحَقِّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ حَتَّىٰ يُعْطُوا الْجِزْيَةَ
عَن يَدٍ وَهُمْ صَاغِرُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ عُزَيْرٌ ابْنُ اللَّهِ وَقَالَتِ
النَّصَارَى الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ اللَّهِ ۖ ذَٰلِكَ قَوْلُهُم بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ ۖ يُضَاهِئُونَ قَوْلَ

Their Lord gives them the good news of His mercy and His pleasure and of the Gardens, wherein is everlasting bliss for them: therein they shall abide for ever, for surely Allah has abundance to give rewards for services. 21-22

O Believers, do not take your fathers and brothers as allies, if they choose disbelief in preference to Faith; for whoso of you will take them as allies shall surely be the workers of iniquity. O Prophet, tell them plainly, "If your fathers and your sons, and your brothers and your wives, and your near and dear ones and the wealth which you have acquired and the trade you fear may decline and the homes which delight you—if all these things—are dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger and the struggle in His Way, then wait till Allah passes His judgment on you;[22] for Allah does not guide the wicked people". 23-24.

Allah has helped you on many occasions before this; (recently you witnessed the glory of His help[23]) on the day of the Battle of Hunain; you were proud of your great numbers which had deluded you but it availed you nothing and the earth, with all its vastness, became too narrow for you, and turning your backs, you fled. Then Allah sent down His *sakīnat* (peace and tranquillity) upon His Messenger and the Believers and sent (to your aid) forces which you could not see and chastised those who denied the Truth: for this is the due recompense of those who deny the Truth. Then (you have also seen that) after giving chastisement like this, Allah guides to repentance whom He wills:[24] Allah is Forgiving and Merciful. 25-27

O Believers, the *mushriks* are unclean; therefore let them not come near the Masjid-i-Harām[25] after this year (of their pilgrimage); if you fear poverty Allah will enrich you, out of His bounty if He wills: for Allah is All-knowing, All-Wise. 28

Fight with those from among the people of the Book, who do not believe in Allah nor in the Last Day;[26] who do not make unlawful that which Allah and His Messenger have made unlawful,[27] and do not adopt the Right way as their way. (Fight with them) until they pay *Jizyah* with their own hands and are humbled.[28] 29

Contd. from p. 181]

First, it was feared that the abrogating of the treaties with all the *mushrik* clans at one and the same time, and debarring them from *Hāj* and changing the

guardianship of the Ka'abah and abolishing all the rituals of 'ignorance', would so incite the *mushriks* and the hypocrites and enkindle such fire of enmity that they would be ready to shed the last drop of their blood for safeguarding their interests and prejudices.

Secondly, it was feared that the *mushriks* would be greatly enraged by this declaration which granted freedom of movement to the Muslims to perform *Haj*, whereas it forbade the non-Muslims. Obviously this would also affect adversely their economic condition, for *Haj* played a very important part in the economic life of Arabia during that period of her history.

Lastly, it was feared that this would put to a hard trial those people who had embraced Islam recently after the Peace Treaty of Hudaibiyah and the Conquest of Makkah. For many of their kith and kin were still *mushriks*, some of whom had their interests closely bound up with those offices of 'ignorance' which were abolished. Now it was obvious that the total war against the *mushriks* demanded that these new Muslims should not only kill their own near and dear ones but should also themselves abolish those ancient offices and distinctions which they had enjoyed for centuries.

Though it is true that none of these dangers took any practical shape, there were good reasons for these apprehensions, for none could foresee the trends of events at the time of the abrogation of the treaties. And the dangers were averted because these Commandments had prepared them beforehand to meet them. More than that: this preparedness produced other good results. The delegates from the remnants of the *mushriks*, their chiefs and rulers began to visit Al-Madīnah and take the oath of allegiance to Islam and obedience to the Holy prophet, who let them retain their old positions and offices. These things proved that if the Muslims had not been in a state of readiness to take immediate action for enforcing the terms of the "Declaration" with the sword, the events which followed might have taken a different direction. Therefore it was the need of the hour that the Muslims should have been vehemently urged for *Jihād*, and their apprehensions removed. That is why it was being enjoined that they should not let anything hinder them from doing the Will of Allah. And this is the theme of this discourse.

17. This was a subtle reference to the possibility of what actually was going to happen afterwards. "And He may remove ..... repentance": this was to remove the misunderstandings of the Muslims who apprehended a bloody war as a result of the Declaration. They were told that it was also possible that some of the enemies might repent and embrace Islam. This was not made quite plain lest it should slacken the war preparations of the Muslims on one side and weaken the force of the warning to the *mushriks* on the other. The latter thing might have

hindered the *mushriks* from giving a serious thought to the critical position they were in that finally led them to embrace Islam.

18. The addressees in v. 16 were those Muslims who had recently embraced Islam. It means to tell them plainly: "Now that you have embraced Islam, you shall have to give a genuine proof by a trial that you have accepted it because you believe in its Truth and not because it has become supreme in the country by the exertions of the true Believers. The trial is that you shall have to sacrifice your lives, wealths and your near and dear ones for the sake of Allah and His Way. Then and only then, you will be regarded as true Believers."

19. This lays down the general principle for the guardianship of the places of worship that have been built exclusively for the worship of Allah. Obviously, those people who associate others with Allah in His essence, His rights and His powers cannot be the proper persons to be the guardians, the servants, the managers etc. of such sacred places. And when they themselves reject the invitations to *Tauhid*, and openly declare that they are not going to dedicate their worship and obedience exclusively to Allah, they automatically forfeit any right they had for the guardianship of such places of worship that had been built for the worship of Allah alone. Though the principle is of a general nature, it has been mentioned here with the particular object of removing the *mushriks* from the guardianship of the Ka'abah and Masjid-i-Harām and establishing permanently the guardianship of the worshippers of One God over them.

20. ".....all their works have gone to waste.....", including the little real service they did to the 'House of Allah' because they mixed with it *shirk* and other practices of ignorance. Their little good was destroyed by their far greater evils.

21. This question has been posed to bring home the fact that the guardianship of a shrine or attendance at it or other religious acts that are done for show, and are exploited by worldly people to establish and maintain the show of their piety, have no value whatsoever in the sight of Allah. The real worth of a person with Allah is that he should be sincere in his beliefs and make sacrifices in the Way of Allah, no matter whether he enjoys or does not enjoy such distinctions or happens to descend or not from a family of 'saints'. On the contrary, those people who lack these excellences have no value with Allah, no matter whether they be the descendants of saints or inherit the guardianship of shrines from a long line of saints, or perform some 'religious' acts for show on special occasions. And it is not lawful in any way that the guardianship, etc. of sacred places and institutions should be left in the hands of these worthless people just because they happen to inhert such rights from their forefathers.

22. That is: "The judgment will deprive them of the blessings of the true Faith, and of the honour of bearing its standard and leading the world towards its guidance, and bestow these on others".

23. This has been mentioned to allay the fears of those who were afraid of the consequences of the Declaration of the abrogation of the treaties, as if to say, "Why are you afraid of war? That Allah, Who helped you in far worse and dangerous situations on so many occasions before this, is there even now to help you. Had this Mission depended on your might, it could not have come out victorious in the hard trials at Makkah nor in the Battle of Badr when the odds were heavily against you. This is because Allah's Power has been helping you, and past experiences have shown you how effective that Power is. Rest assured that the same Power will help you to succeed in your Mission."

The Battle of Hunain had taken place in the valley of Hunain between Ta'if and Makkah in the month of Shawwāl A.H. 8, a year or so before the Revelation of this discourse. This was the first battle in which the Muslim army consisted of 12,000 fighters and this far outnumbered the army of the disbelievers. But in spite of this the archers of the Hawāzin clan wrought havoc among the Muslim army and put them to rout. The Holy Prophet and a few of his bravest Companions, however, firmly stood their ground and rallied the routed army, and ultimately won the victory. It was because of their perseverance that the army reassembled and the Muslims ultimately won the victory; otherwise they would have lost much more at Hunain than they had gained by the conquest of Makkah.

24. "... Allah enables .....to repent" refers to the large number of the disbelievers who embraced Islam after the victory at Hunain as a result of the kind and generous treatment they received from the Holy Prophet, in spite of their former antagonism. This was mentioned to allay the anxiety of those new Muslims who feared that, as a result of the Declaration, all of their *mushrik* relatives would be put to death. (E.N. 16). They have been told to expect, in the light of the previous experiences, that the *mushriks* would be obliged to accept Islam, when they realize that neither any hope of the revival of the order of 'ignorance' was left nor of any props to support it.

25. This prohibition was meant to root out all the vestiges of *shirk* and 'ignorance'. For the *mushriks* were prohibited not only from the performance of *Haj* and attendance at the Masjid-i-Harām but also from entering into its sacred precincts.

They are "unclean" in their creeds, in their morals, in their deeds, and in their ways of 'ignorance', and not in their physical bodies by themselves. That is the reason why they have been prohibited from entering the sacred precincts of the Holy Place.

This prohibition has been interpreted in different ways. Imām Abū Hanīfah is of the view that it prohibits them only from the performance of *Haj* and *Umrah*, and from the observance of the rites of 'ignorance' in the Holy Precincts. But Imām Shafi'ī is of the opinion that they have been forbidden even to enter the Masjid-i-Harām for any purpose whatsoever. Imām Mālik is of the opinion that they are forbidden not only to enter Masjid-i-Harām but any mosque at all. It is, however, obvious that the last opinion is not correct, as the Holy Prophet himself permitted *mushriks* to enter the Prophe's Mosque at Al-Madīnah.

26. Though the people of the Book professed to believe in Allah and the Hereafter, in fact they believed in neither. For only that person really believes in Allah who acknowledges Him as the only One God and the only One Lord, and does not associate with Him any other, whatsoever, in His Being, in His characteristics, in His rights and in His powers and authority. But according to this definition of *shirk* both the Christians and the Jews were guilty of *shirk* as has been made plain in the verses that follow: therefore their profession of belief in Allah was meaningless. Likewise they did not really believe in the Hereafter, in spite of the fact that they believed in Resurrection. For it is not enough: one must also believe that on that Day absolute justice will be done on the basis of one's belief and actions. One should also believe that no ransom and no expiation and no 'spiritual' relationships with any 'saint' shall be of any avail on that Day. It is absolutely meaningless to believe in the Hereafter without this. And the Jews and the Christians had polluted their faiths because they believed that such things would protect them against justice on that Day.

27. The second reason why *Jihād* should be waged against them is that they did not adopt the Law sent down by Allah through His Messenger.

28. This is the aim of *Jihād* with the Jews and the Christians and it is not to force them to become Muslims and adopt the 'Islamic Way of Life.' They should be forced to pay *Jizyah* in order to put an end to their independence and supremacy so that they should not remain rulers and sovereigns in the land. These powers should be wrested from them by the followers of the true Faith, who should assume the sovereignty and lead others towards the Right Way, while they should become their subjects and pay *jizyah*. *jizyah* is paid by those non-Muslims who live as *Zimmīs* (proteges) in an Islamic State, in exchange for the security and protection granted to them by it. This is also symbolical of the fact that they themselves agree to live in it as its subjects. This is the significance of "..... they

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الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ ۭ قٰتَلَهُمُ اللّٰهُ ۚ اَنّٰى يُؤْفَكُوْنَ ۝30 اِتَّخَذُوْٓا اَحْبَارَهُمْ وَ
رُهْبَانَهُمْ اَرْبَابًا مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ وَالْمَسِيْحَ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ ۚ وَمَآ اُمِرُوْٓا اِلَّا
لِيَعْبُدُوْٓا اِلٰهًا وَّاحِدًا ۚ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۭ سُبْحٰنَهٗ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُوْنَ ۝31
يُرِيْدُوْنَ اَنْ يُّطْفِـــُٔوْا نُوْرَ اللّٰهِ بِاَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَيَاْبَى اللّٰهُ اِلَّآ اَنْ يُّتِمَّ نُوْرَهٗ
وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكٰفِرُوْنَ ۝32 هُوَ الَّذِيْٓ اَرْسَلَ رَسُوْلَهٗ بِالْهُدٰى وَدِيْنِ الْحَقِّ
لِيُظْهِرَهٗ عَلَى الدِّيْنِ كُلِّهٖ ۙ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُوْنَ ۝33 يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اِنَّ
كَثِيْرًا مِّنَ الْاَحْبَارِ وَالرُّهْبَانِ لَيَاْكُلُوْنَ اَمْوَالَ النَّاسِ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَ
يَصُدُّوْنَ عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ ۭ وَالَّذِيْنَ يَكْنِزُوْنَ الذَّهَبَ وَالْفِضَّةَ وَلَا
يُنْفِقُوْنَهَا فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ ۙ فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ اَلِيْمٍ ۝34 يَّوْمَ يُحْمٰى عَلَيْهَا
فِيْ نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ فَتُكْوٰى بِهَا جِبَاهُهُمْ وَجُنُوْبُهُمْ وَظُهُوْرُهُمْ ۭ هٰذَا مَا
كَنَزْتُمْ لِاَنْفُسِكُمْ فَذُوْقُوْا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْنِزُوْنَ ۝35 اِنَّ عِدَّةَ الشُّهُوْرِ عِنْدَ
اللّٰهِ اثْنَا عَشَرَ شَهْرًا فِيْ كِتٰبِ اللّٰهِ يَوْمَ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ مِنْهَآ
اَرْبَعَةٌ حُرُمٌ ۭ ذٰلِكَ الدِّيْنُ الْقَيِّمُ ۙ فَلَا تَظْلِمُوْا فِيْهِنَّ اَنْفُسَكُمْ وَقَاتِلُوا
الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ كَاۗفَّةً كَمَا يُقَاتِلُوْنَكُمْ كَاۗفَّةً ۭ وَاعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ ۝36
اِنَّمَا النَّسِيْۗءُ زِيَادَةٌ فِي الْكُفْرِ ۭ يُضَلُّ بِهِ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا يُحِلُّوْنَهٗ عَامًا وَّ
يُحَرِّمُوْنَهٗ عَامًا لِّيُوَاطِـُٔوْا عِدَّةَ مَا حَرَّمَ اللّٰهُ فَيُحِلُّوْا مَا حَرَّمَ اللّٰهُ ۭ زُيِّنَ
لَهُمْ سُوْۗءُ اَعْمَالِهِمْ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ۝37 يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ
اٰمَنُوْا مَا لَكُمْ اِذَا قِيْلَ لَكُمُ انْفِرُوْا فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ اثَّاقَلْتُمْ اِلَى الْاَرْضِ ۭ
اَرَضِيْتُمْ بِالْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا مِنَ الْاٰخِرَةِ ۚ فَمَا مَتَاعُ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ

The Jews say, "Ezra ('Uzair) is the son of Allah,"[29] and the Christians say, "The Messiah is the son of God." Such are the baseless things they utter with their tongues, following in the footsteps of the former unbelievers.[30] May Allah afflict them with chastisement! Wherefrom are they being perverted? They have made their scholars and monks as their Lords beside Allah,[31] and likewise the Messiah, the son of Mary, although they were enjoined not to worship any other than the One Deity, besides Whom there is none worthy of worship. He is absolutely pure and free from what they associate with Him. These people desire to extinguish the light of Allah with puffs from their mouths and Allah refuses (His consent to their desire) but wills to perfect His light, even though the disbelievers be much averse to it. He is Allah Who has sent His Messenger with Guidance and the Right way so that He may make it prevail over all other ways,[32] even though the *mushriks* be much averse to it. O Believers, indeed most of the scholars and monks of the people of the Book devour the wealth of others by evil means, and debar them from the Way of Allah.[33] Give them the good news of a painful torment, who hoard up gold and silver and expend not these in the Way of Allah. The Day shall surely come when the same gold and silver shall be heated in the fire of Hell, and therewith their foreheads, their bodies and their backs shall be branded, (saying), "Here is that treasure you had hoarded up for yourselves: now taste the evil of your hoarded treasure" 30-35

The fact is that the number of months ordained by Allah has been twelve since the time He created the heavens and the earth,[34] and out of these four are forbidden months: this is the right code of reckoning: therefore do not wrong yourselves by violating these months.[35] And fight against the *mushriks* all together even as they fight against you all together;[36] and note it well that Allah is with the Godfearing people. *Nasī* is but one more instance of disbelief, whereby these disbelievers are led astray. In one year they make a certain month lawful and in another year they make the same a forbidden month, so as they might make up for the number of the forbidden months and, at the same time, make lawful that which is forbidden by Allah.[37] Their evil deeds have been made seeming fair to them: for Allah does not guide those who deny the Truth. 36-37

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pay *jizyah* with their own hands," that is, "with full consent so that they willingly become the subjects of the Believers, who perform the duty of the vicegerents of Allah on the earth."

At first this Command applied only to the Jews and the Christians. Then the Holy Prophet himself extended it to the Zoroastrians also. After his death, his Companions unanimously applied this rule to all the non-Muslim nations outside Arabia.

This is *"Jizyah"* of which the Muslims have been feeling apologetic during the last two centuries of their degeneration and there are still some people who continue to apologize for it. But the Way of Allah is straight and clear and does not stand in need of any apology to the rebels against Allah. Instead of offering apologies on behalf of Islam for the measure that guarantees security of life, property and faith to those who choose to live under its protection, the Muslims should feel proud of such a humane law as that of *jizyah*. For it is obvious that the maximum freedom that can be allowed to those who do not adopt the Way of Allah but choose to tread the ways of error is that they should be tolerated to lead the life they like. That is why the Islamic State offers them protection, if they agree to live as its *Zimmīs* by paying *jizyah*, but it cannot allow that they should remain supreme rulers in any place and establish wrong ways and impose them on others. As this state of things inevitably produces chaos and disorder, it is the duty of the true Muslims to exert their utmost to bring to an end their wicked rule and bring them under a righteous order.

As regards the question, "What do the non-Muslims get in return for *Jizyah*" it may suffice to say that it is the price of the freedom which the Islamic State allows them in following their erroneous ways, while living in the jurisdiction of Islam and enjoying its protection. The money thus collected is spent in maintaining the righteous administration that gives them the freedom and protects their rights. This also serves as a yearly reminder to them that they have been deprived of the honour of paying *Zakāt* in the Way of Allah, and forced to pay *jizyah* instead as a price of following the ways of error.

29. 'Uzair (Ezra) lived during the period around 450 B.C. The Jews regarded him with great reverence as the revivalist of their Scriptures which had been lost during their captivity in Babylon after the death of Prophet Solomon. So much so that they had lost all the knowledge of their Law, their traditions and of Hebrew, their national language. Then it was Ezra who re-wrote the Old Testament and revived the Law. That is why they used very exaggerated language in his reverence which misled some of the Jewish sects to make him 'the son of God'. The Qur'ān, however, does not assert that all the Jews were unanimous in

declaring Ezra as 'the son of God'. What it intends to say is that the perversion in the articles of faith of the Jews concerning Allah had degenerated to such an extent that there were some amongst them who considered Ezra as the son of God.

30. "Those who were involved in *Kufr* before them" were the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Persians, etc. The Jews and the Christians were so influenced by their philosophies, their superstitions and fancies that they also invented erroneous creeds like theirs. (For details see E.N. 101 of *Al-Mā'idah*).

31. "They have taken their scholars and monks as their Lords the Holy Prophet himself explained its true significance. According to a Tradition, when Hadrat 'Adī bin Hātim, who was formerly a Christian, came to the Holy Prophet with the intention of understanding Islam, he asked several questions in order to remove his doubts. One of these was: "This verse accuses us of taking our scholars and monks as our lords. What is its real meaning, sir? For we do not take them as our lords."

As a reply to this, the Holy Prophet put him a counter-question: "Is it not a fact that you accept as unlawful what they declare to be unlawful, and lawful what they declare to be lawful?" 'Adī confessed, "Yes, sir, it is so." The Holy Prophet replied, "This amounts to making them your lords." Incidentally, this Tradition shows that those who themselves set limits to the lawful and the unlawful without the authority of Allah's Book, assume for themselves the rank of Godhead, and those who acknowledge their right of making laws take them as their Lords.

It should be noted that they have been charged with *(a)* attributing sons to Allah, and *(b)* giving the right of making laws to others than Allah. These are to prove that their claim, that they believed in Allah, is false, even though they should believe in His existence. But such a wrong conception of Allah makes their belief in Allah meaningless.

32. The Arabic word (الدِّين) *ad-dīn* has been translated into 'ways', for the word (دِيْن) *dīn*, as has already been explained in E.N. 204, *Al-Baqarah*, is used for the 'way of life' or the 'system of life', which is followed in obedience to the supreme authority.

Now let us try to understand the significance of this verse. The object of the Mission of the Messenger is to make the Guidance and the Right Way he has brought from Allah dominant over all the other ways and systems of life. In other words, the Messenger is not sent to allow Allah's Way to remain subordinate to other ways in order to enjoy concessions from them. He is sent by the Sovereign

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إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ ﴿38﴾ إِلَّا تَنفِرُوا يُعَذِّبْكُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا وَيَسْتَبْدِلْ قَوْمًا غَيْرَكُمْ
وَلَا تَضُرُّوهُ شَيْئًا ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿39﴾ إِلَّا تَنصُرُوهُ فَقَدْ نَصَرَهُ اللَّهُ
إِذْ أَخْرَجَهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ثَانِيَ اثْنَيْنِ إِذْ هُمَا فِي الْغَارِ إِذْ يَقُولُ لِصَاحِبِهِ
لَا تَحْزَنْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَنَا ۖ فَأَنزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَيْهِ وَأَيَّدَهُ بِجُنُودٍ لَّمْ
تَرَوْهَا وَجَعَلَ كَلِمَةَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا السُّفْلَىٰ ۗ وَكَلِمَةُ اللَّهِ هِيَ الْعُلْيَا ۗ وَاللَّهُ
عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿40﴾ انفِرُوا خِفَافًا وَثِقَالًا وَجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنفُسِكُمْ فِي
سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۚ ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿41﴾ لَوْ كَانَ عَرَضًا قَرِيبًا وَ
سَفَرًا قَاصِدًا لَّاتَّبَعُوكَ وَلَٰكِن بَعُدَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الشُّقَّةُ ۚ وَسَيَحْلِفُونَ بِاللَّهِ
لَوِ اسْتَطَعْنَا لَخَرَجْنَا مَعَكُمْ ۖ يُهْلِكُونَ أَنفُسَهُمْ ۖ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ إِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ ﴿42﴾
عَفَا اللَّهُ عَنكَ ۖ لِمَ أَذِنتَ لَهُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَتَعْلَمَ
الْكَاذِبِينَ ﴿43﴾ لَا يَسْتَأْذِنُكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ أَن
يُجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنفُسِهِمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿44﴾
إِنَّمَا يَسْتَأْذِنُكَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَارْتَابَتْ
قُلُوبُهُمْ فَهُمْ فِي رَيْبِهِمْ يَتَرَدَّدُونَ ﴿45﴾ وَلَوْ أَرَادُوا الْخُرُوجَ لَأَعَدُّوا لَهُ عُدَّةً
وَلَٰكِن كَرِهَ اللَّهُ انبِعَاثَهُمْ فَثَبَّطَهُمْ وَقِيلَ اقْعُدُوا مَعَ الْقَاعِدِينَ ﴿46﴾ لَوْ
خَرَجُوا فِيكُم مَّا زَادُوكُمْ إِلَّا خَبَالًا وَلَأَوْضَعُوا خِلَالَكُمْ يَبْغُونَكُمُ الْفِتْنَةَ ۖ وَ
فِيكُمْ سَمَّاعُونَ لَهُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّالِمِينَ ﴿47﴾ لَقَدِ ابْتَغَوُا الْفِتْنَةَ مِن
قَبْلُ وَقَلَّبُوا لَكَ الْأُمُورَ حَتَّىٰ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَظَهَرَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ وَهُمْ كَارِهُونَ ﴿48﴾
وَمِنْهُم مَّن يَقُولُ ائْذَن لِّي وَلَا تَفْتِنِّي ۚ أَلَا فِي الْفِتْنَةِ سَقَطُوا ۗ وَإِنَّ

O[38] you who believed! what was amiss with you that, when you were asked to march forth on the Way of Allah, you clung to the earth? What! did you prefer the life of this world to the life of the Hereafter? If it is so, you should know that all these goods of this worldly life will prove to be but little in the Hereafter.[39] If you will not march forth, Allah will inflict on you a painful chastisement,[40] and will substitute other people for you,[41] and you will in no way harm Him, for Allah has power over everything. If you do not help your Prophet, (it does not matter): Allah did help him before when the disbelievers forced him to go away from his home, and he was but the second of two: when the two were in the cave; when he was saying to his Companion, "Be not distressed: indeed Allah is with us."[42] Then Allah sent down peace of mind to him from Himself, and helped him with the forces you did not see, and made the word of the disbelievers abased. And Allah's Word is always supreme, for Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise. March forth whether you be light or heavy,[43] and exert your utmost in Allah's Way with your possessions and your lives: this is best for you, if you but know it. 38-41

O Prophet, had there been a prospect of immediate gain and an easy journey, most certainly they would have been quite ready to follow you; but the journey seemed too hard to them.[44] Still they will swear by Allah and say, "Had we been able to go forth, we would certainly have marched along with you"; they are incurring destruction on themselves: for Allah knows well that they are liars. 42

O Prophet, may Allah forgive you: why did you give them leave to stay behind? (You yourself should not have given them leave), so that it would have become clear to you which of them spoke the truth, and you would have also known which of them were liars.[45] For, those, who believe in Allah and the Last Day, will never ask you to exempt them from doing *Jihād* with their possessions and their persons: Allah knows well those who fear Him. Those only make such requests, who do not believe in Allah and the Last Day, and whose hearts are filled with doubts, and they are wavering because of their doubts.[46] 43-45

If they had really intended to march forth, they would surely have made some preparation for it. But Allah was averse to their going forth;[47] and He caused them to hold back, and it was said to them, 46-49

"Stay behind with those who stay behind." Had they gone forth with you, they would have added nothing but mischief to you and they would have made strenuous efforts to sow discord among your ranks; yet there are among you some who listen to them but Allah knows these mischief-makers full well. Even before this, these people had striven to stir up mischief and turn by turn they practised all sorts of devices to make you unsuccessful, until the Truth prevailed and Allah's design was fulfilled, though they were averse to it.

There is such a one among them, who says, "Give me leave to stay behind and do not expose me to temptations."[48]---Note it well that such people have already succumbed to temptations[49] and Hell has encircled these disbelivers.[50]

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of the earth and the heavens to make His Way dominant over all other ways. And if a wrong way is at all allowed to remain on the earth, it should be tolerated only under its own protection by the payment of *Jizyah* under the limits conferred by the Divine System as in the case of the system of life of the *Zimmīs* who pay *Jizyah*.

33. These religious leaders are guilty of two sins. First, they devour the wealth of the common people by selling false decrees, and by taking bribes, gifts and presents on different pretexts. They invent religious regulations and rituals as tempt people to buy their salvations and fortunes in life from them and make deaths and marriages dependent on the payment of due 'price' to these "monopolists" of Paradise. To add to this another sin, they debar the people from the Way of Allah by involving them into different sorts of deviations and by obstructing the way of every Righteous Mission with the obstacles of 'learned' doubts and 'pious' suspicions.

34. This means that ever since Allah created the sun, the moon and the earth, the new moon takes place only once in a month; thus the year has always been of twelve months.

This has been mentioned to refute the practice of *nasī'* (v. 37) whereby the pagan Arabs increased the number of the months of a year to 13 or 14 to enable them to interpose in the calendar the forbidden month which had been made lawful by them. (For fuller explanation see E.N. 37).

35. "....do not wrong yourselves ....": "Do not let go waste the good things for which fighting has been made unlawful during these months by creating disorder in them that will ultimately be harmful to you also". The four forbidden

months are . . . Zil-Q'adah, Zil-Hajjah and Muharram for *Haj* and Rajab for *'Umrah*.

36. That is, "If the *mushriks* do not desist from fighting during these months, you should also fight them and present a united front against them, just as they put up a united front against you". This verse has been explained by v. 194 of *Al-Baqarah*.

37. The pagan Arabs practised نسی (*nasi'*) in two ways. Whenever it suited them, they would declare a prohibited month to be an ordinary month in which fighting, robbery and murder in retaliation were lawful for them. Then they would declare an ordinary month to be a prohibited month instead of this month in order to make up for the deficiency caused in the number of the prohibited months.

The other way of *nasi'* was the addition of a month in order to harmonize the lunar with the solar year so that the *Haj* should always fall in the same season and they should be saved from the botheration and inconveniences that are experienced by its observance according to the lunar year. In this way *Haj* was observed for 36 years on dates other than the actual dates. Then in the thirty seventh year it was again observed on the 9th and 10th of Zil-Hajjah, as they should have actually fallen according to the lunar calendar. It so happened that on the occasion when the Holy Prophet performed *Hajja-tul-Widā'a* (his Last Haj), these dates by rotation coincided with the actual dates of *Haj* according to the lunar calendar. So he declared during the course of his historic address at 'Arafāt: "This year the dates of *Haj* have again occurred exactly at their natural and proper time after a long period of circulation." Accordingly, since that 'Last *Haj*' of A.H. 9, it is being observed up to this day according to the correct dates of the lunar year.

By making *nasi'* unlawful and forbidding it, the Law declared that the two objects for which it was practised were also sinful. First, they not only made lawful what Allah had made unlawful but also tried to practise deception on Allah by the seeming observance of the Law. As regards the second object of making the season of *Haj* fixed permanently according to the solar calendar, this too, was in fact the worst kind of rebellion against the Divine Law, although it appeared to be a harmless thing done for public good. But it defeated the very object of the Divine Law which prescribed the lunar calendar instead of the solar calendar for the observance of obligatory duties. Allah did this to ensure many good things for the Muslims, one of which is that His servants should be so trained as to obey His Commandments at all times of the year and under all circumstances. For instance, the month of Ramadān circulates among all the seasons of the year and the Muslims get used to obeying His Commandments whether it be summer or winter, dry or rainy season. This gives them that excellent moral training which is the real

object of all the obligatory duties imposed by the Divine Law. Likewise, the dates of *Haj* according to the lunar calendar, fall during different seasons: therefore the servants of Allah have to travel during all the seasons, favourable and unfavourable. Thus they come out successful in the Divine test under all the circumstances and learn to be steadfast in their obedience.

It is obvious that such a training will stand them in good stead in many other fields in which one has to fight the battle of the Truth.

Now it would have become quite clear why *nasi'* was made unlawful and forbidden. It was designed to fix the season of *Haj* in order to suit their own conveniences though it defeated the Divine purpose of *Haj* and of the forbidden months. It meant that they had rebelled against Allah and become independent of Him; this is *kufr*. Besides this, Islam is a universal religion and for all human beings. It is obvious that the periods of fasting and performing *Haj* cannot satisfy all if they be fixed in accordance with the months of the solar year. For if they are performed in fixed months according to the solar year, the one and the same month will not equally suit all for the simple reason that it will fall during the same seasons in different places—summer or winter or very hot or very cold or rainy or dry or harvesting or sowing—year after year.

In this connection it may also be kept in view that the proclamation about the prohibition of *"nasi'"* was made on the occasion of *Haj* in A.H. 9 and next year, the *Haj* was performed on right dates which were in accordance with the lunar year. Since that time *Haj* is being performed according to exact dates.

38. From here begins the discourse (vv. 38-72) which was sent down at the time when the Holy Prophet was engaged in making preparations for the Campaign to Tabūk.

39. ".... you should know that the goods ... Hereafter" may imply two meanings. First: "When you will find that the life in the Hereafter is eternal and see that the good things and the provisions of enjoyment are countless, you will realize that the potential and the actual enjoyments of the temporary life of this world were nothing as compared with the blessings of that great Kingdom. At that time you will regret why you deprived yourselves of this everlasting happiness and bliss for the sake of the little—very little—sort-lived enjoyments of the mortal life of this world." Second: "The goods of this worldly life are of no value in the Hereafter, howsoever abundant they might be. You shall have to give up each and everything as soon as you breathe your last, for nothing of this world can go with you to the Next World. Of course, you will get credit for what you sacrificed for the pleasure and love of Allah, and love of Islam."

40. A general rule of the Islamic conduct has been derived from "If you .... chastisement." When the Muslims are commanded to go to *Jihād* by a public proclamation from their leader, it becomes an obligatory duty for those who are called upon to do *Jihād*, whether they belong to any particular group or region. So much so that the Faith of those who do not go for *Jihād* without a genuine excuse becomes doubtful. But even in cases where the Muslims are called upon to go forth for *Jihād* and there is no command for the compulsory enrolment of every able-bodied Muslim of a particular group or region, it is a religious duty (though not obligatory), and it shall be considered to have been performed even if only some Muslims go forth for it.

41. That is, "Allah's work does not depend on you and will be accomplished only if you do it. It is Allah's grace and bounty that He is affording you the golden opportunity of serving the cause of His Way. Therefore if you miss this opportunity because of any foolish assumption, Allah will raise another people and bestow on them the opportunity and capability of doing His work, and you will be losers".

42. This refers to the occasion when the disbelievers had decided to assassinate the Holy Prophet, and the very night fixed for his assassination he had left Makkah for Al-Madīnah. By that time most of the Muslims had migrated to Al-Madīnah in twos and threes and only a few helpless ones had remained behind in Makkah. As he was sure that he would be pursued, he took only Hadrat Abū Bakr with him and went southward instead of following the northern route to Al-Madīnah and remained hidden in the Thaur Cave for three days. In the meantime the blood thirsty enemies had begun to make a thorough search for him all around Makkah and some of them reached the very mouth of the Cave where he was hidden. On this critical occasion Hadrat Abū Bakr naturally felt alarmed lest they should peep into the Cave, and see them. But the Holy Prophet remained as calm as before and reassured his Companion, saying, "Be not distressed: indeed Allah is with us."

43. The words ".... whether you are light or heavy ..." have a very comprehensive meaning: "When it is enjoined to march forth for *Jihād*, you must go forth anyhow, whether you like it or not: whether you are in a state of prosperity or indigence: whether you are well-equipped or ill-equipped: whether the circumstances are favourable or adverse: whether you are young and healthy or old and weak."

44. They felt the journey to Tabūk to be hard because they had to fight with the army of the great and powerful Roman Empire: because they had to

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جَهَنَّمَ لَمُحِيطَةٌ بِالْكٰفِرِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾ إِنْ تُصِبْكَ حَسَنَةٌ تَسُؤْهُمْ ۚ وَإِنْ
تُصِبْكَ مُصِيبَةٌ يَقُولُوا قَدْ أَخَذْنَا أَمْرَنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَيَتَوَلَّوا وَّهُمْ
فَرِحُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾ قُلْ لَنْ يُصِيبَنَا إِلَّا مَا كَتَبَ اللّٰهُ لَنَا ۚ هُوَ مَوْلٰنَا ۚ وَعَلَى اللّٰهِ
فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٥١﴾ قُلْ هَلْ تَرَبَّصُونَ بِنَا إِلَّا إِحْدَى الْحُسْنَيَيْنِ ۖ وَ
نَحْنُ نَتَرَبَّصُ بِكُمْ أَنْ يُصِيبَكُمُ اللّٰهُ بِعَذَابٍ مِّنْ عِنْدِهٖٓ أَوْ بِأَيْدِينَا ۚ
فَتَرَبَّصُوٓا إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ مُّتَرَبِّصُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾ قُلْ أَنْفِقُوا طَوْعًا أَوْ كَرْهًا لَّنْ يُّتَقَبَّلَ
مِنْكُمْ ۖ إِنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا فٰسِقِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾ وَمَا مَنَعَهُمْ أَنْ تُقْبَلَ مِنْهُمْ نَفَقٰتُهُمْ
إِلَّآ أَنَّهُمْ كَفَرُوا بِاللّٰهِ وَبِرَسُولِهٖ وَلَا يَأْتُونَ الصَّلٰوةَ إِلَّا وَهُمْ كُسَالٰى
وَلَا يُنْفِقُونَ إِلَّا وَهُمْ كٰرِهُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾ فَلَا تُعْجِبْكَ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَآ أَوْلَادُهُمْ ۚ
إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللّٰهُ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ بِهَا فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَتَزْهَقَ أَنْفُسُهُمْ وَهُمْ
كٰفِرُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَيَحْلِفُونَ بِاللّٰهِ إِنَّهُمْ لَمِنْكُمْ ۖ وَمَا هُمْ مِّنْكُمْ وَلٰكِنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ
يَّفْرَقُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾ لَوْ يَجِدُونَ مَلْجَأً أَوْ مَغٰرٰتٍ أَوْ مُدَّخَلًا لَّوَلَّوْا إِلَيْهِ وَهُمْ
يَجْمَحُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَّلْمِزُكَ فِي الصَّدَقٰتِ ۖ فَإِنْ أُعْطُوا مِنْهَا رَضُوا
وَإِنْ لَّمْ يُعْطَوْا مِنْهَآ إِذَا هُمْ يَسْخَطُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ رَضُوا مَآ ءَاتٰىهُمُ
اللّٰهُ وَرَسُولُهٗ ۙ وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللّٰهُ سَيُؤْتِينَا اللّٰهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ وَرَسُولُهٗٓ ۙ إِنَّآ
إِلَى اللّٰهِ رٰغِبُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾ إِنَّمَا الصَّدَقٰتُ لِلْفُقَرَآءِ وَالْمَسٰكِينِ وَالْعٰمِلِينَ عَلَيْهَا
وَالْمُؤَلَّفَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَالْغٰرِمِينَ وَفِي سَبِيلِ اللّٰهِ وَابْنِ
السَّبِيلِ ۖ فَرِيضَةً مِّنَ اللّٰهِ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَمِنْهُمُ الَّذِينَ
يُؤْذُونَ النَّبِيَّ وَيَقُولُونَ هُوَ أُذُنٌ ۚ قُلْ أُذُنُ خَيْرٍ لَّكُمْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللّٰهِ وَ

If a good thing comes to you, it grieves them; but if a disaster befalls you, they turn away rejoicing and saying, "It is good that we took our precautionary measures beforehand to set our affairs aright." Say to them, "Nothing (good or bad) can befall us except that which Allah has destined for us: Allah is our Guardian and the Believers should put their trust in Him alone."[51] 50-51

Say to them, "What can be the thing you await for us other than one of the two best things?[52] But what we await for you is whether Allah Himself inflicts His chastisement on you or at our hands; well, now await, and we, too await with you". 52

Say, "You may expend your possessions willingly or unwillingly:[53] they shall not be accepted in any case, because you are a wicked people." The reason why their expendings shall not be accepted is no other than that they have not believed in Allah and His Messenger: and they come to offer their *Salāt* but reluctantly, and they expend in the Way of Allah with unwilling hearts. So let not their great wealth and the large number of their children delude you; for Allah wills to chastise them by means of these very things in this worldly life[54] and that they would die in a state of unbelief.[55] 53-55

They swear by Allah that they are Believers like you, whereas they are not at all of you. In fact, they are people who are afraid of you: if they could find a place of refuge or a cave or a hiding place to hide therein, they would run in frantic haste to take refuge in it.[56] 56-57

O Prophet, there are some among them who find fault with you concerning the distribution of *Sadaqāt (Zakāt* collections); if something is given to them thereof, they are well pleased and if they are not given anything thereof they become angry.[57] Would that they were content[58] with what Allah and His Messenger had given them and would say, "Allah suffices us: He will provide for us in abundance out of His own bounty,[59] and His Messenger will also be kindly disposed towards us. Indeed we look to Allah alone."[60] As a matter of fact, *Zakāt* collections are only for the needy[61] and the indigent,[62] and for those who are employed to collect them[63] and for those whose hearts are to be won over[64] and for the ransoming of slaves[65] and for helping the debtors[66] and for the way of Allah[67] and for the hospitality of the wayfarers.[68] 58-60

This is an obligatory duty from Allah: and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

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journey in the scorching heat of the summer season of the desert: because there was a famine in the country and the new harvest on which they had pinned their hopes, was ready for reaping.

45. Allah did not approve of the exemption which the Holy Prophet had granted to the hypocrites who had put forward lame excuses. Though he knew it well that they were inventing false excuses, he gave them leave to stay behind because of his inherent kindness. But Allah warned him that such a leniency was not well placed as he gave them an opportunity of hiding their hypocrisy. Had they remained behind without getting an exemption, the false profession of their faith would have been exposed.

46. This verse shows clearly that the conflict between Islam and *kufr* is the criterion to distinguish between a true Believer and a hypocrite. The one who supports Islam in this conflict with the whole of his heart and expends all of his energies and resources in order to make it victorious and does not hesitate in the least to make any sacrifices for this purpose, is a true Believer. On the contrary, the one who hesitates to support Islam in this conflict and refrains from making sacrifices in its Way, when he confronts the threat of the victory of *kufr*, is a hypocrite, for such an attitude is itself a proof of the fact that there is no faith in his heart.

47. Allah held them back for He did not like that they should join *Jihād* unwillingly without any sincere intention for it. As they had no mind to make sacrifices to exalt the cause of Islam, and, therefore, would have taken part in it half-heartedly to escape the taunts of the Muslims or to create mischief, this would have resulted in a greater evil, as has been stated explicitly in the next verse (48).

48. Some of the hypocrites, who were requesting the Holy Prophet to give them leave to stay behind on one pretext or the other, were so impudent that they were inventing excuses of a religious or moral nature for refraining from *Jihād* in the Way of Allah. One of these was Jad-bin-Qais, who, according to traditions came to the Holy Prophet and said, "I am a lover of beauty and my people know that I am very weak in regard to women: therefore I am afraid to go forth lest the beauty of the Roman women should beguile me into sin. Therefore "…. do not expose me to temptations."

49. Though they wanted exemption, they had already fallen a prey to the temptations of telling lies, of double dealings and hypocrisy. They deluded

themselves that they would be considered pious people, if they would put forward the fear of temptations to avoid *Jihād*, when, in fact, they had already fallen into the greatest possible temptation of refraining from *Jihād* in the conflict between Islam and *kufr*.

50. That is, "Such a show of piety has not taken them away from Hell; nay, on the other hand, the same thing has caused them to be entangled in the clutches of Hell."

51. In this passage a demarcation has been made between the attitudes of a man of the world and of a man of God. Whatever the man of the world does, he does it to please his own self. He exults if he attains some worldly ends but feels utterly dejected if he fails to attain them. Besides, he depends entirely on his material resources for his success and feels encouraged if these are favourable, but loses heart if these are unfavorable.

In contrast to the man of the world, whatever the man of God does, he does it to please Him and trusts in Him and not in his own powers nor in material resources. Therefore he is neither exultant over his success in the cause of Allah nor loses heart by failure, for he believes that it is the Will of God that is working in both the cases. Therefore he is neither disheartened by disasters nor is filled with conceit by successes. This is because he believes that both prosperity and adversity are from Allah and are nothing but a trial from Him. Therefore his only worry is to do his best to come out successful in His test. Besides, as there are no worldly ends before him, he does not measure his success or failure by the achievement or failure of his ends. On the other hand, the only object before him is to sacrifice his life and wealth in the Way of Allah, and he measures the success or failure of his efforts by the standard he achieves in the performance of this duty. Therefore if he is satisfied that he has done his best to perform this duty, he believes that he has come out successful by the grace of God, though he might not have been able to accomplish anything from the worldly point of view; for he believes that his Allah in Whose cause he has expended his life and wealth will not let go waste the reward of his efforts. As he does not depend on the material resources only, he is neither grieved if they are unfavourable, nor feels exultant when these are favourable.His entire trust is in God Who is the controller of all the resources; therefore he goes on doing his duty even under the most unfavourable circumstances with the same courage and perseverance that is shown by the worldly people infavourable circumstances alone. That is why Allah asked the Holy Prophet to say to the hypocrites, "There is a basic difference between you and us in regard to the conduct of affairs. We believe that both the good and the bad are from Allah; therefore the apparent result does not make us happy or sad. Moreover, we depend on Allah in our affairs and you depend on material resources: so we are content and happy in all circumstances."

52. This is the answer to those who, as usual, were not taking any part in the conflict between Islam and *kufr*, but were very "wisely" watching it from a distance to see whether the Holy Prophet and his Companions would return victorious from Tabūk or would be totally destroyed by the powerful Roman army. They were told that either of the two results they were awaiting, would be good for the Muslims. For it was obvious that it would be a good thing if they won victory. But even if they were killed in the Way of Allah, it would be a success from their point of view, though not in the sight of the world, as the Muslims' standard of measurement is different from that of the hypocrites and the like. A Believer considers it his success if he sacrifices his life and wealth in the Way of Allah, irrespective of whether he succeeds in conquering some country or in establishing a government or not. According to him the criterion of success or failure is whether he has extended or not all the powers of his body and soul, his head and his heart to elevate the Word of Allah, though from the worldly point of view the result of his efforts might be nothing at all.

53. V. 53 is a sharp retort to those hypocrites who desired exemption from *Jihād* but, at the same time, wanted to make some monetary contributions in order to avoid the exposure of their hypocrisy. They said, "Please grant us leave from military service because we are unable to do this, but we are ready to make monetary contributions towards it." To this Allah retorted, saying, "Whatever you may contribute, it shall not be accepted".

54. "Allah wills to chastise them by means of these things in this world", because of their great love for their children and wealth as these misled them to adopt the hypocritical attitude which, in turn, degraded them in the Muslim society. Consequently, in the Islamic System they would lose the respect, the reputation and the prestige they enjoyed in the pre-Islamic society. On the contrary, even the Muslim slaves and the sons of slaves, the farmers and the shepherds, who proved the sincerity of their Faith would win honour in the new system, and the big hereditary chiefs, who refrained from this because of their love of the world, would lose their fame, honour and prestige.

In order to illustrate the above we cite an incident that happened during the Caliphate of Hadrat 'Umar. Once some big chiefs of the Quraish including Suhail-bin-'Amr and Hārith-bin-Hishām, went to see Caliph 'Umar and took their seats near him. Soon after this some humble people from among the *Muhājirūn* and the Ansār came there. The Caliph asked those chiefs to make room for them, and seated these humble people near his own seat. This went on for some time till these chiefs reached the remotest corner in the assembly. When they came out, Hārith-bin-Hishām said to his companions, "You have noticed what a humiliating treatment has been meted out to us today!" Suhail-bin-'Amr replied, "It is no fault of 'Umar but it is our own fault. When we were invited to Islam, we turned away

from it, but these humble people accepted it and made sacrifices for it." Then both of them returned to the meeting and said "Today we have noticed your treatment and we feel that it is all due to our own shortcomings, but tell us if there is a way for us to make atonements for our past failures". The Caliph did not make any reply but merely pointed towards the Roman territory, which meant that the only way of regaining their prestige was to expend their lives and wealths in doing *Jihād* there.

55. "They would die in a state of unbelief" because of their hypocrisy, which would not let them attain sincere Faith till they die. Thus after ruining their moral and spiritual lives in this world, they would leave it in the state of unbelief, which will ruin their lives in the Hereafter in a far worse way.

56. This was the condition of the hypocrites of Al-Madīnah, the majority of whom were rich and old. We find from a list of the hypocrites, cited by Ibn Kathīr in *Al-Badāyah-wan-Nihāyah*, that only one of them was young and none was poor. These people had large properties and flourishing businesses in Al-Madīnah. They were worldly-wise and their wide experience had taught them expediency, but their sense of self-interest had put them into a dilemma. When Islam reached Al-Madīnah and a large majority of the population embraced it sincerely and enthusiastically, they found themselves in a very perplexing situation. They could not reject it outright for the majority of their own people, nay, their own sons and daughters, were filled with enthusiasm for Islam. If they had remained unbelievers, they would have lost their high position, their prestige and reputation and run the risk of a rebellion by the Muslims of their own household. On the other hand, if they sincerely embraced Islam, they would incur the danger of war, not only with the whole of Arabia but also with the adjoining nations and empires. Above all, self-interest had so blinded them that, in resolving the dilemma, they would not consider the problem from the point of view of truth and righteousness which by themselves are worthy of every sacrifice. Therefore they decided that the best thing for them was to profess Islam outwardly in order to make their positions, properties and businesses secure, but to adopt a hypocritical attitude towards it so that they might be able to avoid the losses and perils inherent in the sincere acceptance of Islam.

This verse (57) depicts the dilemma of the hypocrites, as if to say, "In reality these people are not Muslims, though they swear that they are Muslims like you; they profess Islam simply because they are afraid of losses they might incur, if they reject it outright. Then they dare not stay at Al-Madīnah as non-Muslims for they would lose the high positions they enjoyed and might even have to cut off their connection with their wives and children; and if they decided to emigrate from Al-Madīnah, they would have to abandon their properties and business. But they are not prepared for these sacrifices for they have no sincere attachment even

to *kufr*. Therefore they are compelled against their beliefs by the force of circumstances to remain in Al-Madinah: they offer their *Salāt* but regard this as forced labour: they pay the *Zakāt* dues but as a penalty, for they are in their heart of hearts averse to these things. To add to their 'calamities' they are asked every now and then to make sacrifices of their lives and their wealth and to go forth for *Jihād* and to fight with one enemy or the other. They are so much afraid of these 'calamities' that, in order to escape from them, they would run in frantic haste to take refuge in any hole, if they hoped that it would provide immunity against these 'calamities'."

57. The people referred to were the hypocrites, who felt depressed on every occasion of the distribution of the *Zakāt* collections, for they thought that they were not being given their due share. Then they would taunt the Holy Prophet with making unfair distributions. This happened when the payment of *Zakāt* was made an obligatory duty on all those Muslims whose possessions exceeded the prescribed limits. They were required to contribute from their agricultural products, animals, commercial commodities, minerals dug out of mines and the gold and silver they possessed, at different rates, varying from 2 ½% to 20%, and all these were collected and spent in a systematic way from a central place.

As a result of this so much wealth flowed into the hands of a single person, the Holy Prophet, that it had no parallel in the whole territory of Arabia. Naturally the materialists looked at these things with greedy eyes and wanted to grab as much as possible out of this wealth. But their greed could not be satisfied, for the Holy Prophet, who had made the use of *Zakāt* Fund unlawful for his own person and for his own relatives, could not be expected to give anything out of it to anyone who did not deserve it. It is thus obvious that they found fault with the Holy Prophet not because he was unfair in the distribution of the *Zakāt* collections but because he did not allow the hypocrites to grab anything from these without any right to them. They, however, very cunningly hid their real grievance, and accused the Holy Prophet of showing partiality and injustice in the distribution of the *Zakāt* collections.

58. That is, it would have been much better for them if they had been content with their share of the spoils which the Holy Prophet gave them and what they earned by the grace of Allah and with the prosperity Allah had bestowed on them.

59. It would have been good for them to adopt this attitude: "Allah suffices us.... bounty," for they ought to have known that they would receive their due shares besides the *Zakāt* collections out of the wealth that would come to the State treasury, just as they were receiving their shares previously.

60. "We look to Allah alone" means "We give our attention to Allah and His grace and not to the world and its worthless riches and we desire to do His Will: we direct our expectations and hopes to Him and we are content with what He bestows on us."

61. According to the Arabic usage فقراء (*fuqarā:* the needy) are all those people who depend on others for the necessities of life. The Arabic word *fuqarā'*, is a general word for all those who are needy because of some physical defects, or old age, or temporarily, and can become self-supporting if they are helped. *e.g.* orphans, widows, the unemployed, etc., etc.

62. According to the Arabic usage مساكين *(masākin)* are those indigent people who are in greater distress than the needy people usually are. The Holy Prophet especially enjoined the Muslims to help such people as are unable to find the necessary means to satisfy their wants and are in very straitened circumstances, but are so self-respecting that they would not beg for anything nor would others judge from their outward appearance that they were deserving people. According to a Tradition *"Miskīn* is one who cannot make both ends meet, though his appearance does not show that he needs help nor does he beg for help." In short, he is a self-respecting man who has become needy.

63. "....who are employed to collect them...." are those who collect *Zakāt* dues, supervise the collections and keep accounts, and help in their distribution, irrespective of the fact whether or not they are needy or indigent; their remunerations shall be paid out of the *Zakāt* Funds. In this connection it should be noted well that the Holy Prophet had declared the *Zakāt* Funds to be unlawful for himself and for the members of his own family (Banī Hāshim). Accordingly, he never received any remuneration for collecting or distributing *Zakāt* Funds. As regards the other members of Banī Hāshim, they were allowed to do this service without receiving any remuneration, but otherwise it is unlawful for them. On the contrary, the payment of the *Zakāt* dues was obligatory on Banī Hāshim if their possessions warranted this under the prescribed limits, but under no circumstances whatsoever were they allowed to accept anything out of *zakāt* collected from others.

There is, however, a difference of opinion as to whether they should accept anything out of the collections made from their own family or not. Imām Abū Yusuf opines that they are allowed to accept these when they are needy or poor or wayfarers, but the majority of the Jurists regard this also unlawful.

[Contd. on p.208

يُؤْمِنُ لِلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا مِنْكُمْ ۚ وَالَّذِيْنَ يُؤْذُوْنَ
رَسُوْلَ اللّٰهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿٦١﴾ يَحْلِفُوْنَ بِاللّٰهِ لَكُمْ لِيُرْضُوْكُمْ ۚ وَاللّٰهُ وَ
رَسُوْلُهٗۤ اَحَقُّ اَنْ يُّرْضُوْهُ اِنْ كَانُوْا مُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٦٢﴾ اَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوْۤا اَنَّهٗ مَنْ
يُّحَادِدِ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ فَاَنَّ لَهٗ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدًا فِيْهَا ۚ ذٰلِكَ الْخِزْيُ
الْعَظِيْمُ ﴿٦٣﴾ يَحْذَرُ الْمُنٰفِقُوْنَ اَنْ تُنَزَّلَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُوْرَةٌ تُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا فِيْ
قُلُوْبِهِمْ ۚ قُلِ اسْتَهْزِءُوْا ۚ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ مُخْرِجٌ مَّا تَحْذَرُوْنَ ﴿٦٤﴾ وَلَئِنْ سَاَلْتَهُمْ
لَيَقُوْلُنَّ اِنَّمَا كُنَّا نَخُوْضُ وَنَلْعَبُ ۚ قُلْ اَبِاللّٰهِ وَاٰيٰتِهٖ وَرَسُوْلِهٖ كُنْتُمْ
تَسْتَهْزِءُوْنَ ﴿٦٥﴾ لَا تَعْتَذِرُوْا قَدْ كَفَرْتُمْ بَعْدَ اِيْمَانِكُمْ ۚ اِنْ نَّعْفُ عَنْ
طَآئِفَةٍ مِّنْكُمْ نُعَذِّبْ طَآئِفَةً ۢ بِاَنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا مُجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾ اَلْمُنٰفِقُوْنَ وَ
الْمُنٰفِقٰتُ بَعْضُهُمْ مِّنْۢ بَعْضٍ ۘ يَاْمُرُوْنَ بِالْمُنْكَرِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمَعْرُوْفِ
وَيَقْبِضُوْنَ اَيْدِيَهُمْ ۚ نَسُوا اللّٰهَ فَنَسِيَهُمْ ۚ اِنَّ الْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ هُمُ الْفٰسِقُوْنَ ﴿٦٧﴾
وَعَدَ اللّٰهُ الْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ وَالْمُنٰفِقٰتِ وَالْكُفَّارَ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا ۚ هِيَ
حَسْبُهُمْ ۚ وَلَعَنَهُمُ اللّٰهُ ۚ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّقِيْمٌ ﴿٦٨﴾ كَالَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ
كَانُوْۤا اَشَدَّ مِنْكُمْ قُوَّةً وَّاَكْثَرَ اَمْوَالًا وَّاَوْلَادًا ۚ فَاسْتَمْتَعُوْا بِخَلَاقِهِمْ
فَاسْتَمْتَعْتُمْ بِخَلَاقِكُمْ كَمَا اسْتَمْتَعَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ بِخَلَاقِهِمْ وَ
خُضْتُمْ كَالَّذِيْ خَاضُوْا ۚ اُولٰٓئِكَ حَبِطَتْ اَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْاٰخِرَةِ ۚ
وَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْخٰسِرُوْنَ ﴿٦٩﴾ اَلَمْ يَاْتِهِمْ نَبَاُ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ قَوْمِ
نُوْحٍ وَّعَادٍ وَّثَمُوْدَ ۙ وَقَوْمِ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَاَصْحٰبِ مَدْيَنَ وَالْمُؤْتَفِكٰتِ ۚ
اَتَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ ۚ فَمَا كَانَ اللّٰهُ لِيَظْلِمَهُمْ وَلٰكِنْ كَانُوْۤا اَنْفُسَهُمْ

There are some among them who injure the Prophet and say, "This man readily believes whatever he hears."[69] Say, "It is good for you that he is so:[70] He believes in Allah and puts his trust in the believers[71] and is a blessing for those who are true believers among you. As regards those who injure the Messenger of Allah, there is a painful chastisement for them." 61

These people swear by Allah before you in order to please you, though Allah and His Messenger have a greater right that they should try to please them if they are true believers. Do they not know that whoso opposes Allah and His Messenger shall have the Fire of Hell for him wherein he shall abide for ever? This is a great ignominy. 62-63

The hypocrites dread lest a *sūrah* should be sent down to Muslims revealing to them what is in their hearts.[72] O Prophet, say to them, "Go on mocking, Allah will surely bring to light the very thing you are dreading." If you question them ("What were you talking about?"), they will promptly answer, "We were merely jesting and making merry."[73] Ask them, "What, then! were you mocking at Allah and His Revelations and His Messenger? Do not invent excuses now; you have indeed denied the truth after you had professed belief in it. Even if We pardon some of you, We will surely chastise others of you, for they are the guilty ones".[74] 64-66

The hypocrites, both men and women, are all of a kind: they enjoin what is evil and forbid what is good and withhold their hands from doing good.[75] They forgot Allah: then Allah also forgot them; indeed the hypocrites are the evil-doers. Allah has promised the hypocrites, both men and women, as well as the disbelievers the fire of Hell, wherein they shall abide for ever: that is the proper place for them; for the curse of Allah is upon them and theirs is the lasting torment.—You are behaving[76] just like those who went before you: they had more power than you, and possessed greater riches and had more children than you: they had enjoyed their portion of the good things of the worldly life and you, too, have enjoyed your portion of the good things like them: you are also engaged in idle discussions like the discussions they held. Consequently in the end everything they did, proved vain in this world and shall be vain in the Next World: surely they are the people who are the losers. Has not[77] the story reached 67-70

them of those who had gone before them—the people of Noah, tribes of 'Ād and Thamūd, the people of Abraham and the inhabitants of Midian and of the overturned cities[78]? Their Messengers came to them with clear signs; then it was not Allah Who would wrong them, but they wronged their own selves.[79]

Contd. from p. 205]

64. A portion of *Zakāt* Funds may also be given to win over to Islam those who might be engaged in anti-Islamic activities or to those in the camp of the unbelievers who might be brought to help the Muslims or to those newly converted Muslims, who might be inclined to revert to *kufr* if no monetary help was extended to them. It is permissible to award pensions to them or give them lump sums of money to make them helpers of Islam or submissive to it or at least to render them into harmless enemies. A portion of the spoils or other incomes may be spent on them and, if need be, also a portion of *Zakāt* Funds. In such cases, the condition of being needy or indigent or on a journey etc., is also waived; nay, they might be even rich people or chiefs who are otherwise not eligible for anything from *Zakāt* Funds.

All are agreed that during the time of the Holy Prophet pensions and gifts were given under the head of 'winning over people', but there is a difference of opinion whether this head of expenditure was abolished or not after his death. Imām Abū Hanīfah and his followers are of the opinion that it was abolished during the Caliphate of Hadrat 'Umar, and 'now it is not lawful to spend anything under this head'. Imām Shāfi'ī is of the opinion that something may be given to sinful Muslims under this head from *Zakāt* Funds but not to unbelievers, while other Jurists are of the opinion that expenses under this head are lawful even now, if a need arises for them.

The Hanafis base their opinion on an incident that happened after the death of the Holy Prophet. 'Uyainah bin Hisan and Aqra'a bin Habis came to Hadrat Abū Bakr and asked him to allot to them a certain piece of land. So he gave them a written order for this. They took it to some other highly placed Companions for further confirmation and some of them endorsed this order. But when they took it to Hadrat 'Umar, he tore the paper into pieces before their very eyes, saying, "It is true that the Holy Prophet used to give something to win over your hearts because Islam was weak at that time, but now Allah has made Islam so strong that it does not stand in need of people like you." At this they went to Hadrat Abū Bakr and complained to him about it and taunted him, saying, "Are you the Caliph or 'Umar?" But he took no notice of this nor did any of the Companions differ with Hadrat 'Umar's opinion. The Hanafis conclude from this incident that when the number and power of Muslims increased by the grace of

Allah and they no longer stood in need of any support from such people, the reason for which expenses under this head were permitted in the first instance remained no longer there. Therefore the Companions unanimously abolished expenditure under this head.

Imām Shāfi'i says that there is nothing to prove that the Holy Prophet ever spent anything out of *Zakāt* Funds under this head. All the incidents mentioned in the traditions show that whatever he spent for the purpose of winning over hearts to Islam, was spent out of the spoils of war and not out of *Zakāt* funds.

In my opinion there is nothing to show that the expenses for winning over hearts have been made unlawful for ever up to the Last Day. There is no doubt that the action taken by Hadrat 'Umar was absolutely right, for if and when the Islamic State does not consider it necessary to spend anything under this head, Islam does not make it obligatory to spend something for 'winning hearts'. On the other hand, if need for this arises at any time, it is authorized to incur expenses under this head for Allah has kept a provision for this. Hadrat 'Umar and the other Companions agreed only on this that there was no need to give anything for this purpose at that time because the circumstances did not warrant it. But there is no reason to conclude from this that the Companions disallowed for ever the expenses that were permitted by the Qur'ān under certain circumstances for the good of Islam.

As regards the opinion of Imām Shāfi'ī, it appears to be correct in so far as it is not lawful to spend anything under this head out of *Zakāt* Funds, if these expenses can be met out of other funds. But if it is necessitated that something should be spent under this head out of *Zakāt* Funds, there is no reason why a differentiation should be made in this regard between sinful Muslims and unbelievers. For the Qur'ān has not allocated the share because of the faith of the prospective recipients but because Islam required to win their hearts for its own good and because this could not be achieved except by giving them a portion of wealth. Therefore the Qur'ān allows the *Amīr* of the Believers to spend a part of the *Zakāt* Funds to achieve this end, if, when and where the required conditions exist. The fact that the Holy Prophet did not spend anything from the *Zakāt* Funds on unbelievers for this purpose does not mean that it is unlawful to do so, for he did not spend from this fund because there was enough money in other funds for this purpose. Had it been unlawful to spend anything from *Zakāt* Funds on unbelievers, he would have explicitly forbidden it.

65. A portion of *Zakāt* Funds may be spent for the ransoming of slaves in two ways. First, help may be given to a slave for the payment of the ransom money, if he enters into an agreement with his master that he will set him free, if the slave pays him a certain amount of money. The second way is that the Islamic

government may itself pay the price of his freedom and set him at liberty. There is a consensus of opinion about the first way, but there is difference of opinion about the second way. Hadrat 'Ali, Sa'id bin Jubair, Laith Thauri, Ibrahim Nakh'i, Sha'abi; and Muhammad bin Sirin, Hanafis and Shafi'is consider this as unlawful while Ibn 'Abbās, Hasan Basri, Mālik, Ahmad and Abū Thaur consider this as lawful expenditure from this Fund.

66. Help may be given out of *Zakāt* Funds to such debtors as would be reduced to a state of poverty, if they paid off all their debts out of their own possessions, irrespective of the fact whether they are earning any money or not, whether they are indigent in the general sense or well off. According to some Jurists, the only exceptions to this are those debtors who are spendthrifts or involve themselves in debts by spending money on wicked deeds. Help may be given to them only if and when they repent.

67. "The Way of Allah" is a general term which implies all those good works which please Allah. That is why some Jurists are of the opinion that *Zakāt* Funds may be spent on every kind of good work. But the fact is, and the majority of the earliest Muslim scholars have opined, that here the 'Way of Allah' stands for *Jihād* in the Way of Allah, that is, the struggle to eradicate the systems based on *kufr* and to establish the Islamic system in their stead. Therefore the *Zakāt* Fund may be utilised to meet the expenses of the journeys the people make, or for procuring means of conveyance, equipment, weapons and other articles needed for *Jihād*, irrespective of the fact whether they are so well off or not as to need any help for personal requirements. Likewise help of a temporary or permanent nature may also be given to those people who devote the whole of their time and energies, temporarily or permanently, for this work.

It should also be noted that there has arisen a misunderstanding regarding the "Way of Allah," for the early scholars usually use for *Jihād* the Arabic word as غزوہ *(ghazvah)* which is synonymous with "fight". They, therefore, are of the opinion that *Zakāt* Fund may only be used for the purpose of fighting. But *Jihād* in the Way of Allah is a much more comprehensive term than mere fighting in the Way of Allah. *Jihād* applies to all those efforts that are made to degrade the word of *kufr* and to exalt the Word of Allah and to establish the Islamic System of life, whether by propagating the Message of Allah in the initial stage or by fighting in the final stage of the struggle.

68. Help from *Zakāt* Fund may be given to a wayfarer on a journey even though he might be quite well off at home.

Some of the Jurists are of the opinion that according to this verse only that wayfarer who does not undertake a journey for a sinful purpose may be helped out

of *Zakāt* Funds. But no such condition has been laid down in the Qur'ān or the *Hadīth* to this effect. Besides this, we learn from the fundamental principles of Islam that the sins of a needy person would in no way prevent us from helping him. As a matter of fact such a help may prove very useful in reforming sinful and depraved persons. For if they get a support in the time of need, it may reasonably be expected that they would turn towards purifying their souls.

69. This was one of the charges which the hypocrites levelled against the Holy Prophet. As he used to listen to everyone and let him say freely whatever he had to say, they would find fault with him, saying, "He is a credulous person. Everyone can approach him freely and may say whatever he pleases, and he readily believes whatever he hears!" Though it was a good thing that he heard everyone, the hypocrites intentionally spread it as a vice, so that the poor and humble Muslims should be kept away from coming near the Holy Prophet. The hypocrites did not like that these true Believers should inform the Holy Prophet about their plots, mischiefs and hostile talks. They resented it very much that the Holy Prophet listened to and believed in the talk of these humble people against such "respectable" people as they.

70. The answer to this charge implies two things. First, "Though the Prophet listens to everything, he attends only to that which is good and is for the welfare of the Community, for he is not the one who would listen to or encourage mischievous things." Secondly, "It is good for yourselves that he listens patiently to everyone; otherwise he would not have allowed you to put forward lame excuses for your negligence from the struggle in the Way of Allah. Had he not been forbearing, he would not have paid attention to your false professions of faith and hypocritical expressions of good wishes for Islam, but would have taken you to task for your mischiefs and made it difficult for you to live at Al-Madīnah. It is thus obvious that it is good for you that he listens to everyone."

71. That is, "You are wrong that he listens to everyone. He puts his trust only in the true Believers. Accordingly, he believed only in those things about you that were conveyed to him by good and trustworthy people, who were neither liars nor tale-bearers. Therefore, whatever they said about you was true and should have been taken as true."

72. The hypocrites were afraid that their secret plans would be disclosed in the Qur'ān to their great discomfiture. Though they did not believe that the Holy Prophet was a Messenger of Allah, they were convinced from their experience of the last nine years or so that he possessed some supernatural powers by which he learnt their hidden secrets, and revealed these through the Qur'ān (which according to them was written by himself).

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يَظْلِمُوْنَ ﴿70﴾ وَالْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ وَالْمُؤْمِنٰتُ بَعْضُهُمْ اَوْلِيَآءُ بَعْضٍ ۘ يَاْمُرُوْنَ
بِالْمَعْرُوْفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيْمُوْنَ الصَّلٰوةَ وَيُؤْتُوْنَ الزَّكٰوةَ
وَيُطِيْعُوْنَ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ ۭ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللّٰهُ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَزِيْزٌ
حَكِيْمٌ ﴿71﴾ وَعَدَ اللّٰهُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَالْمُؤْمِنٰتِ جَنّٰتٍ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا
الْاَنْهٰرُ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا وَمَسٰكِنَ طَيِّبَةً فِيْ جَنّٰتِ عَدْنٍ ۭ وَرِضْوَانٌ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ
اَكْبَرُ ۭ ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيْمُ ﴿72﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ جَاهِدِ الْكُفَّارَ وَالْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ
وَاغْلُظْ عَلَيْهِمْ ۭ وَمَاْوٰىهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ ۭ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيْرُ ﴿73﴾ يَحْلِفُوْنَ بِاللّٰهِ مَا
قَالُوْا ۭ وَلَقَدْ قَالُوْا كَلِمَةَ الْكُفْرِ وَكَفَرُوْا بَعْدَ اِسْلَامِهِمْ وَهَمُّوْا بِمَا
لَمْ يَنَالُوْا ۚ وَمَا نَقَمُوْٓا اِلَّآ اَنْ اَغْنٰىهُمُ اللّٰهُ وَرَسُوْلُهٗ مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ ۭ فَاِنْ
يَّتُوْبُوْا يَكُ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ ۚ وَاِنْ يَّتَوَلَّوْا يُعَذِّبْهُمُ اللّٰهُ عَذَابًا اَلِيْمًا ۙ فِي
الدُّنْيَا وَالْاٰخِرَةِ ۚ وَمَا لَهُمْ فِي الْاَرْضِ مِنْ وَّلِيٍّ وَّلَا نَصِيْرٍ ﴿74﴾ وَمِنْهُمْ
مَّنْ عٰهَدَ اللّٰهَ لَىِٕنْ اٰتٰىنَا مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ لَنَصَّدَّقَنَّ وَلَنَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ
الصّٰلِحِيْنَ ﴿75﴾ فَلَمَّآ اٰتٰىهُمْ مِّنْ فَضْلِهٖ بَخِلُوْا بِهٖ وَتَوَلَّوْا وَّهُمْ
مُّعْرِضُوْنَ ﴿76﴾ فَاَعْقَبَهُمْ نِفَاقًا فِيْ قُلُوْبِهِمْ اِلٰى يَوْمِ يَلْقَوْنَهٗ بِمَآ اَخْلَفُوا
اللّٰهَ مَا وَعَدُوْهُ وَبِمَا كَانُوْا يَكْذِبُوْنَ ﴿77﴾ اَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ يَعْلَمُ سِرَّهُمْ
وَنَجْوٰىهُمْ وَاَنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوْبِ ﴿78﴾ اَلَّذِيْنَ يَلْمِزُوْنَ الْمُطَّوِّعِيْنَ
مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ فِي الصَّدَقٰتِ وَالَّذِيْنَ لَا يَجِدُوْنَ اِلَّا جُهْدَهُمْ
فَيَسْخَرُوْنَ مِنْهُمْ ۭ سَخِرَ اللّٰهُ مِنْهُمْ ۡ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿79﴾ اِسْتَغْفِرْ
لَهُمْ اَوْ لَا تَسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ ۭ اِنْ تَسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ سَبْعِيْنَ مَرَّةً فَلَنْ يَّغْفِرَ

As regards the true Believers, men and women, they are all comrades to one another: they enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil; they establish *Salāt*, pay *Zakāt* dues, and obey Allah and His Messenger.[80] It is they upon whom Allah will most surely send His blessings. Allah is All-Mighty, All Wise. Allah has promised to the Believers, both men and women, the Gardens underneath which canals flow and wherein they will abide for ever: there will be neat and clean dwelling places for them in these Gardens of perpetual bliss; and, above all, they will enjoy Allah's pleasure: this is the great success 71-72.

O Prophet,[81] strive hard against the disbelievers and the hypocrites and be adamant and stern with them.[82] In the end, their abode shall be Hell, and it is the worst of all abodes. They swear by Allah that they did not say the thing, when in fact, they did utter the word of unbelief.[83] Thus, they were guilty of unbelief after they had professed Islam: however, they could not accomplish what they had intended to do.[84] They had no reason to be spiteful except that Allah and His Messenger had enriched them by His bounty.[85] If even now they repent of their misbehaviour, it will be good for their own selves, but if they do not repent, Allah will chastise them with a painful chastisement in this world and in the Hereafter, and there will be none on the earth to protect and help them. 73-74

There are some among them, who made this covenant with Allah: "If He gives us of His bounty, we will disburse charity and lead a righteous life." But when Allah enriched them by His bounty, they grew niggardly and went back on their covenant, and paid no heed to it.[86] As a consequence of the breach of the covenant they had made with Allah and the lies they told, He set hypocrisy deep in their hearts that will follow them till the Day when they shall meet Him. Do these people not know that Allah knows fully well even their secrets and their conspiracies and that Allah knows fully well all that is hidden. (He fully knows those stingy rich people) who find fault with the monetary sacrifices of those Believers who make willing and voluntary contributions generously and scoff at those people who find nothing to contribute (to the cause of Allah) except what little they contribute sacrificing their own needs:[87] Allah scoffs at those who scoff and there is a painful punishment in store for them. 75-79

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73. This refers to the hypocrites who used to make fun of the Holy Prophet and the true Muslims in their secret meetings when they were making preparations for the expedition to Tabūk. In this way, they used to discourage those Muslims who sincerely and honestly intended to go forth for *Jihād*. We learn many things in this connection from the traditions. For instance, in one of their meetings, when the hypocrites were having a gossip, one of them remarked, "I say! Do you think that the Romans are no better than the Arabs ? You will see that in the near future these "brave" men will be bound with ropes." Another responded to this, "What a fun it would be if after this each one of them is lashed with a hundred stripes !" Still another, ridiculing the preparations by the Prophet for the expedition, remarked, "Look at this man, and his preparations ! He intends to go forth to conquer the forts in Syria and the Roman Empire."

74. That is, "Those foolish buffoons, who take interest in such conversations and mock even at serious things because there is nothing serious in the world for them, may be pardoned. But there are others who mock at these serious things deliberately with evil intentions, because they consider the Messenger and the Way taught by him as ridiculous in spite of their professions of Faith. As their real object is to discourage the believers from making preparations for *Jihād*, they are criminals and not buffoons; therefore they shall not be pardoned at all."

75. These are the common characteristics of all hypocrites. All of them are interested in evil and inimical to good. If some one undertakes to do an evil thing, they would dedicate all their sympathies, counsels encouragements contributions, good wishes, praises and their approvals to such a one. They would join hands to accomplish that evil thing and persuade others to take part in it and encourage the doer in every way. Moreover, they would show in every way their hearty pleasure if they perceived that that evil thing was progressing satisfactorily. On the other hand, if someone undertakes to do a good thing, they are shocked to hear the very news of it for it pains their hearts; nay, they do not even like that such a thing should be undertaken at all. Then if they see some one coming forward to help it, they feel very uncomfortable and try their worst to hinder him from it and if he does not give it up, they would wish that he should fail in it. Then all of them have this common characteristic that they do not spend anything at all for good ends irrespective of the fact whether they be otherwise parsimonious or generous. At any rate, their wealth is either for hoarding or for evil deeds. As a matter of fact, they would spend large sums on evil works generously but would not be willing to spend a farthing for good things.

76. In the preceding verse, they were being mentioned in the third person, but here they are being addressed directly in the second person.

77. Again they are being mentioned in the third person.

78. These were the people of Lot.

79. "They wronged themselves" for they were themselves responsible for their destruction. Allah had no enmity with them and had no desire to destroy them. As a matter of fact, they themselves adopted the way of life that led to destruction, whereas Allah had sent His Messengers to them and afforded them the opportunities of thinking, understanding and reforming. His Messengers admonished and warned them of the consequences of treading wrong paths, and presented very clearly before them the Way that leads to success, and also the ways that lead to destruction. But when they did not benefit from the opportunities that were offered to them to mend their ways, and persisted in treading the ways that led to destruction, they inevitably met with the end for which they were heading. And this horrible end was not due to Allah's will to be unjust to them but due to their own evil doings.

80. The contrast between the characteristics of the hypocrites (v. 67) and of the true Believers (v. 71) clearly shows that the two are entirely different from each other, in spite of their outwardly similar profession of faith in Islam and obedience to it. The difference lies in their morals, conducts, habits, attitudes and ways of thinking. On the one hand are the hypocrites whose tongues are never tired of professing faith in Islam, but who are void of sincere faith, and whose whole conduct belies their professions. They are, as it were, like bottles which have labels of "musk", but contain cow-dung which may easily be recognized from its appearance and unpleasant odour. On the other hand are the true Believers, who are like those bottles which contain musk which may be tested in any way—by its appearance, its smell and other characteristics—to be musk. Likewise, though the outward label of Islam apparently makes both of them one community of Muslims, the real characteristics of the hypocritical Muslims are so different from those of the true Muslims that they have, in fact, become two different communities. The hypocritical Muslims, men and women, form a separate community with those who have similar characteristics. They all are neglectful of Allah, take interest in evil things and deviate from all that is good and never co-operate with true Believers and, in short, they are allies to one another and practically dissociate themselves from true Believers and form a group of their own. In contrast to them, the true Believers, men and women, have practically become one community. All of them take interest in what is good, and abhor what is evil: they remember Allah day and night and cannot think of life

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اللّٰهُ لَهُمْ ۚ ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّهُمْ كَفَرُوْا بِاللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهٖ ۚ وَاللّٰهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ
الْفٰسِقِيْنَ ﴿٨٠﴾ فَرِحَ الْمُخَلَّفُوْنَ بِمَقْعَدِهِمْ خِلٰفَ رَسُوْلِ اللّٰهِ وَكَرِهُوْٓا
اَنْ يُّجَاهِدُوْا بِاَمْوَالِهِمْ وَاَنْفُسِهِمْ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ وَقَالُوْا لَا تَنْفِرُوْا
فِي الْحَرِّ ۭ قُلْ نَارُ جَهَنَّمَ اَشَدُّ حَرًّا ۭ لَوْ كَانُوْا يَفْقَهُوْنَ ﴿٨١﴾ فَلْيَضْحَكُوْا
قَلِيْلًا وَّلْيَبْكُوْا كَثِيْرًا ۚ جَزَاۗءًۢ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَكْسِبُوْنَ ﴿٨٢﴾ فَاِنْ رَّجَعَكَ اللّٰهُ
اِلٰى طَاۗىِٕفَةٍ مِّنْهُمْ فَاسْتَاْذَنُوْكَ لِلْخُرُوْجِ فَقُلْ لَّنْ تَخْرُجُوْا مَعِيَ اَبَدًا
وَّلَنْ تُقَاتِلُوْا مَعِيَ عَدُوًّا ۭ اِنَّكُمْ رَضِيْتُمْ بِالْقُعُوْدِ اَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ فَاقْعُدُوْا
مَعَ الْخٰلِفِيْنَ ﴿٨٣﴾ وَلَا تُصَلِّ عَلٰٓى اَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ مَّاتَ اَبَدًا وَّلَا تَقُمْ عَلٰي
قَبْرِهٖ ۭ اِنَّهُمْ كَفَرُوْا بِاللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهٖ وَمَاتُوْا وَهُمْ فٰسِقُوْنَ ﴿٨٤﴾ وَلَا تُعْجِبْكَ
اَمْوَالُهُمْ وَاَوْلَادُهُمْ ۭ اِنَّمَا يُرِيْدُ اللّٰهُ اَنْ يُّعَذِّبَهُمْ بِهَا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَ
تَزْهَقَ اَنْفُسُهُمْ وَهُمْ كٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿٨٥﴾ وَاِذَآ اُنْزِلَتْ سُوْرَةٌ اَنْ اٰمِنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ
وَجَاهِدُوْا مَعَ رَسُوْلِهِ اسْتَاْذَنَكَ اُولُوا الطَّوْلِ مِنْهُمْ وَقَالُوْا ذَرْنَا
نَكُنْ مَّعَ الْقٰعِدِيْنَ ﴿٨٦﴾ رَضُوْا بِاَنْ يَّكُوْنُوْا مَعَ الْخَوَالِفِ وَطُبِعَ عَلٰي
قُلُوْبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَفْقَهُوْنَ ﴿٨٧﴾ لٰكِنِ الرَّسُوْلُ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا مَعَهٗ جٰهَدُوْا
بِاَمْوَالِهِمْ وَاَنْفُسِهِمْ ۚ وَاُولٰۗىِٕكَ لَهُمُ الْخَيْرٰتُ ۚ وَاُولٰۗىِٕكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿٨٨﴾
اَعَدَّ اللّٰهُ لَهُمْ جَنّٰتٍ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا ۭ ذٰلِكَ الْفَوْزُ
الْعَظِيْمُ ﴿٨٩﴾ وَجَاۗءَ الْمُعَذِّرُوْنَ مِنَ الْاَعْرَابِ لِيُؤْذَنَ لَهُمْ وَقَعَدَ الَّذِيْنَ
كَذَبُوا اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ ۭ سَيُصِيْبُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مِنْهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿٩٠﴾ لَيْسَ
عَلَي الضُّعَفَاۗءِ وَلَا عَلَي الْمَرْضٰى وَلَا عَلَي الَّذِيْنَ لَا يَجِدُوْنَ مَا يُنْفِقُوْنَ

O Prophet, (it will all be the same) whether you beg forgiveness for such people or not; for Allah will not forgive them even if you beg forgiveness for them seventy times. This is because they have no belief in Allah and His Messenger: and Allah does not show guidance to the wrong-doers. 80

Those who were allowed to remain behind, were happy that they had not gone with Allah's Messenger, and had stayed at home, for they did not like to do *Jihād* in the Way of Allah with their possessions and their persons. They said to the people, "Do not go forth in this heat." Say to them, "The Fire of Hell is much hotter than this"; would that they understood this! Let them now laugh little and weep much for the recompense of what they have been earning is such (that they should weep). Henceforth, if Allah brings you among them and any of them asks your leave to go forth for *Jihād,* say to them plainly, "Now you shall never be allowed to go forth with me nor to fight an enemy in my company; as you were pleased to stay behind the first time, now you stay at home with those who stay behind". 81-83

And in future you should never say funeral prayer for anyone from among them, who dies nor stand at his grave, for they have denied Allah and His Messenger and died the while they were transgressors.[89] And let not the abundance of their possessions and children delude you; for Allah wills only to chastise them by means of their possessions and children in this world and let their souls depart while they are still disbelievers. 84-85

Whenever a Sūrah was sent down with the revelation, "Believe in Allah and go forth for *Jihād* with His Messenger", you might have perceived that even the capable people from among them began to beg you to excuse them from *Jihād,* saying, "Please leave us behind with those who are to stay at home. Those people chose to stay with those who had remained behind and a seal was set upon their hearts: therefore they do not understand anything now.[89] But the Messenger and those who shared his belief did *Jihād* with their possessions and persons: now all the good things are for them only and they alone are truly successful. Allah has prepared for them Gardens underneath which canals flow wherein they will abide for ever: this is the great success. 86-89

90 And many from among the Bedouins[90] also came with their excuses that they, too, might be allowed to remain behind: thus stayed behind those who had made a false compact of Faith with Allah and His Messenger. In the near future those from among the Bedouins who adopted the way of unbelief [91] shall meet with a painful chastisement.

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without the constant remembrance of Allah; they are very generous in spending in the Way of Allah, and obey Him and His Messenger without any mental reservations. These common characteristics have dissociated them from the hypocrites and united them in one Community and made them allies to one another.

81. From here begins the third discourse that was sent down after the expedition to Tabūk.

82. This Command enunciated the change of policy towards the hypocrites. Up to this time, leniency was being shown to them for two reasons. First, the Muslims had not as yet become so powerful as to take the risk of an internal conflict in addition to the one with the external enemies. The other reason was to give enough respite to those people who were involved in doubts and suspicions so that they could get sufficient time for attaining to faith and belief. But now the time had come for a change of policy. The whole of Arabia had been subdued and a bitter conflict with the external enemies was about to start; therefore it was required that these internal enemies should be crushed down so that they should not be able to conspire with the external enemies to stir up any internal danger to the Muslims. And now it had become possible to crush them. As regards the second reason, these hypocrites had been given respite for a period of nine years to observe, to consider and test the Right Way, and they could have availed of it, if they had any good in them. So there was no reason why any more leniency should be shown to them. Therefore, Allah enjoined the Muslims to treat the hypocrites on one and the same level with the disbelievers and start *Jihād* against them, and to give up the policy of leniency they had adopted towards them and adopt a firm and stern policy instead.

In this connection, it should also be noted that this verse does not enjoin the Muslims to fight with the hypocrites. It merely meant to end the policy of leniency that had hitherto been adopted towards them. This verse enjoined that they were no more to be considered a part and parcel of the Muslim community nor were they to be allowed to take part in the management of its affairs nor consulted about any matter, so that they might not be able to spread the poison of hypocrisy. This changed policy required that the true Believers should expose all

those, who adopted a hypocritical attitude and conduct and showed in any way that they were not sincere allies to Allah, His Messenger and the true Muslims. Each and every one of such hypocrites should be openly criticized and reproved so that there should remain for them no more place of honour and trust in the Muslim society: they should be socially boycotted and kept away from the consultations of the Community: their evidence in the courts of law should be regarded as untrustworthy: the doors of offices and positions of trust should be closed against them and they should be held in contempt in the social meetings. In short; every Muslim should show by his behaviour to such a one that there was no place of honour or respect or trust for a hypocrite in the Muslim society. Besides this, if any one of them was found to be guilty of treachery, there should be no connivance at his crime, nor should he be pardoned but openly tried in a court of law and should be duly punished.

This Command was urgently needed at the time it came. It was obvious that in order to save the Muslim ,Community from fall and degradation, it was essential to purge it of all the internal dangers to its solidarity, because a Community, which nourishes hypocrites and traitors and allows the internal enemies to flourish with honour and security, shall inevitably be doomed to moral degradation and ultimate destruction. Hypocrisy is a plague and a hypocrite is the rat that carries and spreads its germs. Therefore to allow him the freedom of movement in the society is to expose the whole population to the danger of hypocrisy. Likewise, to give a place of honour and prestige to a hypocrite is to encourage many others in hypocrisy and treachery, for this shows that it is not sincerity, true faith and its welfare that count in it. One may flourish and prosper in it even if one verbally professes to be a Muslim and at the same time indulges in dishonesty and treachery. The Holy Prophet has expressed the same thing in a pithy saying. He said, "Whoso honours and respects the inventor of new practices which are un-Islamic, indeed helps to demolish the very structure of Islam."

83. We cannot say with certainty what that "word of unbelief" was which they had uttered. There are, however, traditions that mention several things of unbelief which were uttered by the hypocrites during that time. For instance, it is related that a hypocrite, while he was talking to a young Muslim, a near relative of his, said, "If all that this man (referring to the Holy Prophet) is saying be true, then we are worse than donkeys." Another tradition relates that when, during the expedition to Tabūk, one of the she-camels of the Holy Prophet went astray and the Muslims were moving about in search of it, a party of the hypocrites made a good deal of fun of this, saying to one another, "(Just consider the Prophethood of this man!) He tells news of heavens but cannot tell where his she-camel is!"

[Contd. on p. 222

حَرَجٌ إِذَا نَصَحُوا لِلّٰهِ وَرَسُولِهٖ ؕ مَا عَلَى الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ مِنْ سَبِيْلٍ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ
غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿٩١﴾ وَّلَا عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ إِذَا مَآ أَتَوْكَ لِتَحْمِلَهُمْ قُلْتَ لَآ أَجِدُ مَآ
أَحْمِلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ ۖ تَوَلَّوْا وَّأَعْيُنُهُمْ تَفِيْضُ مِنَ الدَّمْعِ حَزَنًا أَلَّا يَجِدُوْا مَا
يُنْفِقُوْنَ ﴿٩٢﴾ إِنَّمَا السَّبِيْلُ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ يَسْتَأْذِنُوْنَكَ وَهُمْ أَغْنِيَآءُ ۚ رَضُوْا
بِأَنْ يَّكُوْنُوْا مَعَ الْخَوَالِفِ ۙ وَطَبَعَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى قُلُوْبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٩٣﴾

يَعْتَذِرُوْنَ إِلَيْكُمْ إِذَا رَجَعْتُمْ إِلَيْهِمْ ۚ قُلْ لَّا تَعْتَذِرُوْا لَنْ نُّؤْمِنَ لَكُمْ

قَدْ نَبَّأَنَا اللّٰهُ مِنْ أَخْبَارِكُمْ ۚ وَسَيَرَى اللّٰهُ عَمَلَكُمْ وَرَسُوْلُهٗ ثُمَّ تُرَدُّوْنَ
إِلٰى عٰلِمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٩٤﴾ سَيَحْلِفُوْنَ
بِاللّٰهِ لَكُمْ إِذَا انْقَلَبْتُمْ إِلَيْهِمْ لِتُعْرِضُوْا عَنْهُمْ ۖ فَأَعْرِضُوْا عَنْهُمْ ۖ إِنَّهُمْ
رِجْسٌ ۖ وَّمَأْوٰهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ ۚ جَزَآءً بِمَا كَانُوْا يَكْسِبُوْنَ ﴿٩٥﴾ يَحْلِفُوْنَ لَكُمْ
لِتَرْضَوْا عَنْهُمْ ۚ فَإِنْ تَرْضَوْا عَنْهُمْ فَإِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَرْضٰى عَنِ الْقَوْمِ
الْفٰسِقِيْنَ ﴿٩٦﴾ اَلْأَعْرَابُ أَشَدُّ كُفْرًا وَّنِفَاقًا وَّأَجْدَرُ أَلَّا يَعْلَمُوْا حُدُوْدَ مَآ
أَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى رَسُوْلِهٖ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ عَلِيْمٌ حَكِيْمٌ ﴿٩٧﴾ وَمِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ مَنْ يَّتَّخِذُ
مَا يُنْفِقُ مَغْرَمًا وَّيَتَرَبَّصُ بِكُمُ الدَّوَآئِرَ ۚ عَلَيْهِمْ دَآئِرَةُ السَّوْءِ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ
سَمِيْعٌ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿٩٨﴾ وَمِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ مَنْ يُّؤْمِنُ بِاللّٰهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَيَتَّخِذُ
مَا يُنْفِقُ قُرُبٰتٍ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ وَصَلَوٰتِ الرَّسُوْلِ ۗ أَلَآ إِنَّهَا قُرْبَةٌ لَّهُمْ ۗ
سَيُدْخِلُهُمُ اللّٰهُ فِيْ رَحْمَتِهٖ ۗ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿٩٩﴾ وَالسّٰبِقُوْنَ
الْأَوَّلُوْنَ مِنَ الْمُهٰجِرِيْنَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ وَالَّذِيْنَ اتَّبَعُوْهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ ۙ
رَّضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوْا عَنْهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَنّٰتٍ تَجْرِيْ تَحْتَهَا الْأَنْهٰرُ

There is no harm if the weak, the sick and those that have no means of providing for *Jihād* stay behind, provided they are sincerely faithful to Allah and His Messenger.[92] There is no cause of blame against such righteous people: and Allah is Forgiving and Compassionate. Likewise there can be no ground for criticising those people who came to you in person and requested you to provide them with mounts. For when you said to them, "I am unable to provide you with mounts, they returned with heavy hearts, their eyes overflowing with tears: they were filled with sorrow that they had no means of going forth for *Jihad* at their own expense.[93] However, the conduct of those who are well-to-do and still ask for exemption from *Jihād*, is indeed very objectionable. As such people chose to stay behind with women, Allah set a seal upon their hearts: therefore now they do not know anything (about the consequences they shall incur in Allah's court). 91-93

When you return to them, they will apologise to you, offering many sorts of excuses: but say to them plainly, "Make no excuses: we will not believe in anything you say for Allah has revealed to us the whole truth about you. Now Allah and His Messenger will keep a watch over your conduct: then you shall return to Him Who knows all that is visible and hidden, and He will tell you all that you have been doing." On your return they will take solemn oaths by Allah to reassure you, so that you may turn away from them. So turn away from them[94] because they are a filth and their real abode is Hell which shall be the recompense of what they have earned. They will take solemn oaths before you to satisfy you, but even if you accept their excuses, Allah will never accept the excuses of the evil-doers. 94-96

These Bedouins are most stubborn in unbelief and hypocrisy, and, in all probability, will remain ignorant of the laws of the Way which Allah has sent down to His Messenger :[95] and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. There are such among the Bedouins, who regard what they expend in the Way as a penalty[96] and await some change of fortune to turn against you (so that they should be able to overthrow the government you have imposed on them,) whereas they themselves have been encircled by a vicious circle; and Allah hears everything and knows everything. But among these Bedouins there are some, who believe in Allah and the Last Day and regard what they expend in the 97-99

Way as a means of bringing themselves nearer to Allah and of seeking the Messenger's prayers for Allah's blessing; yes, this is indeed a means of bringing them nearer to Allah, and Allah will certainly admit them to His blessing; indeed Allah is Forgiving and Compassionate.

Contd. from p. 219]

84. This is a reference to the plots which the hypocrites had made during the Tabūk expedition. On the return journey they conspired to push the Holy Prophet down into some ravine, while he would be passing over some hill at night. The Holy Prophet got wind of the plot and ordered that the army should take the longer route through the valley round the hills, while he himself along with 'Ammār-bin-Yāsir and Huzaifah-bin-Yamān would make the short-cut over the hills. While they were on the way, suddenly they discovered that a dozen of the hypocrites, with covered faces, were following them. At this Hadrat Huzaifah turned towards them so that he may drive away their camels but they were terrified when they saw him coming towards them and took to flight lest they should be recognized.

The other plot was to declare 'Abdullah bin Ubayy as king at Al-Madīnah as soon as they should hear some 'bad news' about the Muslim army, because according to their expectations, the Holy Prophet and his faithful Companions could never fare well against the armies of the Great Roman Empire.

85. This is an insinuation to put to shame by an indirect suggestion the hypocrites of Al-Madīnah. This referred to the prosperity of Al-Madīnah and its people, for Al-Madīnah was a small town before the migration of the Holy Prophet to it, and its two clans—Aus and Khazraj—did not hold any high position in regard to wealth or prestige. But within the short period of nine years or so, this small town became the capital of Arabia because of the residence of the Holy Prophet and the sacrifices of the *Ansār*, the true Muslims. As a result of this, the former peasants—Aus and Khazraj of Al-Madīnah became the 'Great Ones' of the Islamic State and wealth began to flow into this central city on account of spoils of war and increased commercial activity. The hypocrites were rebuked in this verse that, instead of being grateful to the Holy Prophet, they showed anger and spite against him for no other "sin" than that he had brought forth prosperity among them.

86. This is an instance of their ingratitude for which the hypocrites were rebuked in v. 74.

They broke their covenant with Allah which enjoined them to spend money in charity, if Allah enriched them by His bounty. This shows that they were confirmed criminals and they did not care in the least for the agreements they made, and were niggardly and had no moral code to observe.

87. This refers to the mean conduct which the hypocrites evinced on the occasion of the appeal of the Holy Prophet for contributions towards the Tabūk expedition. The well-to-do hypocrites did not themselves make any contributions, but when the sincere Muslims came forward with generous contributions according to their means, they began to deride them. If a well-to-do Muslim made a handsome contribution, they would at once accuse him to be guilty of a 'show-off'. On the other hand, if a poor Muslim contributed a paltry sum which he could hardly spare after sacrificing some of the barest necessities of his family or contributing the small earnings obtained by hard work, they would at once ridicule, saying, "Lo! Here is the farthing that will help conquer the forts of the Roman Empire!"

88. This verse was sent down to prevent the Holy Prophet from saying funeral prayers for 'Abdullah bin Ubayy, the ringleader of the hypocrites, who died a short while after the Tabūk Expedition. His son 'Abdullah who was a sincere Muslim called on the Holy Prophet and requested him to give his shirt for his father's shroud. The Holy Prophet very generously granted his request. Then he begged the Holy Prophet to lead his father's funeral prayer. The Holy Prophet agreed to this also but Hadrat 'Umar very respectfully requested him repeatedly not to do so, saying, "O Prophet of Allah! will you say funeral prayer for a person who was guilty of such and such crimes and sins"? The Holy Prophet, who was a blessing both for friends and for foes, got ready to say funeral prayer even for that man who was a deadly enemy of Islam. At last when he stood up to lead the funeral prayer, this verse was sent down to prevent him from this by a direct Command from God, in accordance with the changed policy declared in v. 73 which forbade to do anything that might encourage the hypocrites among the Muslims.

The above incident led to the formulation of the regulation that the leaders and prominent people from among the Muslims should neither lead nor offer the funeral prayers of the sinners against Islam or for those notorious for their disobedience to Islam. After this, whenever a request was made to the Holy Prophet for a funeral prayer, he would first enquire about the conduct of the deceased person. If he came to know that he was a bad person, he would say to his people, "You may perform his burial just as you like".

89. "...they do not understand anything now," for they deliberately and intentionally chose the shameful way of staying at home with women, when they were required to go forth for *Jihād*, though they were healthy, physically fit and well-to-do, and professed Islam. Therefore, according to the Divine Law of Nature, a seal was set upon their hearts and they were bereft of those noble feelings which make one feel ashamed of adopting such a disgraceful conduct.

[Contd. on p. 226

خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَآ اَبَدًا ؕ ذٰلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيْمُ ﴿١٠٠﴾ وَمِمَّنْ حَوْلَكُمْ مِّنَ الْاَعْرَابِ
مُنٰفِقُوْنَ ۛ وَمِنْ اَهْلِ الْمَدِيْنَةِ ۛ مَرَدُوْا عَلَى النِّفَاقِ ۖ لَا تَعْلَمُهُمْ ؕ نَحْنُ
نَعْلَمُهُمْ ؕ سَنُعَذِّبُهُمْ مَّرَّتَيْنِ ثُمَّ يُرَدُّوْنَ اِلٰى عَذَابٍ عَظِيْمٍ ﴿١٠١﴾ وَاٰخَرُوْنَ
اعْتَرَفُوْا بِذُنُوْبِهِمْ خَلَطُوْا عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَّاٰخَرَ سَيِّئًا ؕ عَسَى اللّٰهُ اَنْ
يَّتُوْبَ عَلَيْهِمْ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿١٠٢﴾ خُذْ مِنْ اَمْوَالِهِمْ صَدَقَةً
تُطَهِّرُهُمْ وَتُزَكِّيْهِمْ بِهَا وَصَلِّ عَلَيْهِمْ ؕ اِنَّ صَلٰوتَكَ سَكَنٌ لَّهُمْ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ
سَمِيْعٌ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿١٠٣﴾ اَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَ يَقْبَلُ التَّوْبَةَ عَنْ عِبَادِهٖ وَيَاْخُذُ
الصَّدَقٰتِ وَاَنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿١٠٤﴾ وَقُلِ اعْمَلُوْا فَسَيَرَى اللّٰهُ
عَمَلَكُمْ وَرَسُوْلُهٗ وَالْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ ؕ وَسَتُرَدُّوْنَ اِلٰى عٰلِمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ
فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿١٠٥﴾ وَاٰخَرُوْنَ مُرْجَوْنَ لِاَمْرِ اللّٰهِ اِمَّا يُعَذِّبُهُمْ
وَاِمَّا يَتُوْبُ عَلَيْهِمْ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ عَلِيْمٌ حَكِيْمٌ ﴿١٠٦﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ اتَّخَذُوْا مَسْجِدًا
ضِرَارًا وَّكُفْرًا وَّتَفْرِيْقًا بَيْنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَاِرْصَادًا لِّمَنْ حَارَبَ اللّٰهَ وَ
رَسُوْلَهٗ مِنْ قَبْلُ ؕ وَلَيَحْلِفُنَّ اِنْ اَرَدْنَآ اِلَّا الْحُسْنٰى ؕ وَاللّٰهُ يَشْهَدُ اِنَّهُمْ
لَكٰذِبُوْنَ ﴿١٠٧﴾ لَا تَقُمْ فِيْهِ اَبَدًا ؕ لَمَسْجِدٌ اُسِّسَ عَلَى التَّقْوٰى مِنْ اَوَّلِ يَوْمٍ
اَحَقُّ اَنْ تَقُوْمَ فِيْهِ ؕ فِيْهِ رِجَالٌ يُّحِبُّوْنَ اَنْ يَّتَطَهَّرُوْا ؕ وَاللّٰهُ يُحِبُّ
الْمُطَّهِّرِيْنَ ﴿١٠٨﴾ اَفَمَنْ اَسَّسَ بُنْيَانَهٗ عَلٰى تَقْوٰى مِنَ اللّٰهِ وَرِضْوَانٍ خَيْرٌ
اَمْ مَّنْ اَسَّسَ بُنْيَانَهٗ عَلٰى شَفَا جُرُفٍ هَارٍ فَانْهَارَ بِهٖ فِيْ نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ ؕ وَ
اللّٰهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿١٠٩﴾ لَا يَزَالُ بُنْيَانُهُمُ الَّذِيْ بَنَوْا رِيْبَةً فِيْ
قُلُوْبِهِمْ اِلَّآ اَنْ تَقَطَّعَ قُلُوْبُهُمْ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ عَلِيْمٌ حَكِيْمٌ ﴿١١٠﴾ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ اشْتَرٰى مِنَ

Allah was pleased with those *Muhājirs* and *Ansār* who were the first to respond to the invitation to the Faith, and with those also who followed them in their righteous conduct, and they, too, were pleased with (the reward from) Allah; He has got ready for them gardens underneath which canals flow and they will abide therein for ever; this is the greatest success. 100

There are many hypocrites among the Bedouins who dwell around you; likewise among the citizens of Al-Madīnah there are hypocrites who have become experts in hypocrisy. You do not know them, but We do know them.[97] The time is coming when We will give them double chastisement;[98] then they shall be returned to a far greater torment. 101

There are some others who have confessed their sins: they have a mixed record of deeds, good and bad. It may be that Allah will turn to them again with kindness for He is Forbearing and Compassionate. O Prophet, accept propitiatory offerings from their possessions to cleanse and purify them thereby, and help them onward (in the way of virtue); and pray for blessings for them because your prayer will bring comfort to them; and Allah hears everything and knows everything. Do these people not know that it is Allah alone Who accepts the repentance of His servants and approves of their propitiatory offerings, and that Allah is indeed Forgiving, Compassionate? And tell them, O Prophet: Do as you will: Allah and His Messenger and the Believers will now keep a watch over your conduct;[99] then you shall return to Him Who knows all that is visible and hidden and He will tell you all that you have been doing.[100] 102-105

There are some others who yet await Allah's decision: He may either punish them or turn to them again with mercy: Allah knows everything and is All-Wise.[101] 106

There are others who built a "mosque" in order to harm the Righteous Mission and to practise unbelief (instead of Allah's worship) and to cause discord among the Believers, and to make this ('place of worship') an ambush for the one who even before this had been in conflict with Allah and His Messenger. They will take solemn oaths and say, "Our intention was nothing but good." But Allah is a witness that they are absolute liars. You should never stand in that building: the 107-110

Mosque which has been founded on piety from the very first day, is the proper place for you to stand (for prayer). For there are such people in it as would like to keep themselves pure; and Allah likes those people who like to keep themselves pure.[102] Why, is he better who founded his building upon Allah's fear and for His approval or he who founded his building on the brink of an under-mined bank[103] that tumbled with him down into the fire of Hell? Allah never shows the Right Way to such workers of iniquity.[104] This building which they have built will never cease to create doubts in their hearts (from which there is no way to come out) unless it be that their hearts are cut into pieces;[105] and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

Contd. from p.223]

90. Here the word "Bedouins" refers to those Arabs who lived in the desert near Al-Madīnah.

91. The hypocritical profession of Islam has been called the way of unbelief, because that profession of faith which lacks practical proof, surrender, sincerity and obedience, is, in fact, unbelief. As such persons prefer their own interests and worldly desires to Allah and His Way, they shall be dealt with by Allah as unbelievers and rebels, even if they could not be legally treated as such in this world but were considered Muslims due to their profession of faith. This is because in the life of this world, the Islamic Law treats as unbelievers only such hypocrites as are guilty of open unbelief, rebellion, treachery or infidelity. That is why there are many cases of hypocrisy that do not come under *kufr* in the Islamic *Sharī'ah*. However, this does not mean that if one escaped the penalty according to the Islamic Code, one will escape punishment according to the Divine Judgement also.

92. This implies that even those people who are otherwise excusable because of disability, sickness or indigence will be pardoned only if they are sincerely and truly faithful to Allah and His Messenger. Without this fidelity, no one shall be pardoned merely because he was sick or indigent at the time when he was called upon to go forth for *Jihād*. For Allah does not judge merely by appearances and treat alike and forgive all those who present "medical certificates" of their disability because of sickness, old age or some other physical defect. On the Day of Judgement, He will examine minutely the heart of each and everyone, and take into account his whole conduct, open and hidden, and will consider whether his excuse was of a faithful servant or of a traitor and rebel. It is obvious that each and every case, in spite of apparent similarity, requires a separate and different judgement. For instance, let us take the case of two men

who suddenly fell ill on the eve of *Jihād*. One of them thanked his lucky stars for the timely disease, as if to say, "How lucky it is that I have fallen ill on the opportune moment! Otherwise, this calamity of *Jihād* could not have been avoided and I would have had to suffer it anyhow." On the contrary, the other man was filled with sorrow at his illness, and he cried in anguish, "Ah! what a bad luck! I have been attacked by this sudden disease at the time when I ought to have been in the battle-field instead of lying down here in bed!" One of them made his illness not only an excuse for exemption from *Jihād* but also tried to dissuade others from it. On the contrary, the other one, though lying in the sick-bed, went on urging his own dear relatives, friends and others to go forth to *Jihād;* nay, he entreated even those who were attending him, saying, "Leave me in the care of the Real Master, and go forth to *Jihād*. I am sure that the arrangements for my nursing will be made somehow or other; therefore you should not waste your precious chance for my sake but go forth and serve the Right Way." But the other, who stayed at home, spent all this time in spreading discontent and bad news and in damaging war efforts and in disrupting the affairs of the families of the fighters. The other man in similar circumstances did his very best to make the home front as strong as he could. Though these two men had similar excuses for exemption, they cannot be considered as equal in the sight of Allah: the second one only may expect Allah's pardon, and not the first man who was a traitor and rebel against Allah, though he might have had a genuine excuse for exemption.

93. Such people as felt a strong urge for *Jihād* but could not join it because of some really genuine excuse, will be counted by Allah among those who actually took part in it, even though they could not join it in person and do anything practically for it. This is because they were sincerely grieved at their absence from *Jihād* for no fault of theirs, just as a man of the world would be grieved if he were deprived of some lucrative business or of some high profit. Allah considers such a one as on duty, because his heart was serving in the Way of Allah, though he had been deprived of active service on account of some genuine excuse. The Holy Prophet, while returning from Tabūk, stated the same thing like this: "There are some people at Al-Madīnah (at this time) who have been travelling and marching all along with you through every valley. Naturally the Companions to whom he was speaking were wonder struck at this. So they asked, "While staying at Al-Madīnah?" He replied, "Yes! while staying at Al-Madīnah! This is because they were compelled by the circumstances to stay behind at Al-Madīnah; otherwise they would certainly have accompanied you."

94. The Arabic words تُعْرِضُوا and أَعْرِضُوا are of the same root but have different senses in the two sentences in which they occur. In the first sentence it means, "... so that you may turn away from them and forbear them and may not take them to task ...." In the second sentence it means, "... so turn

away from them and break off all connections with them and have nothing to do with them, as if you had broken off completely with them, and they with you".

95. As has already been stated in E.N. 90, the "Bedouins" here refers to those rustic Arabs of the desert who had settled in the suburbs of Al-Madīnah.

The background which may help one to comprehend the meanings of the verse is this. Though these people had outwardly embraced Islam, they had not done so from conviction. When they saw the rising of the organized power of Islam in Al-Madīnah, they were so overawed by it that they could not ignore it. So at first they adopted the attitude of the opportunists towards the conflict between Islam and *kufr*. But when the power of the Islamic Government spread over the major portions of Hijāz and Najd, and the power of its enemy clans began to decline, they thought it expedient to enter the fold of Islam. But there were very few among them who had sincerely accepted Islam from the conviction that it was the Right Way. That is why they did not make any sincere efforts to fulfil the implications of the true Faith, and observe the obligatory duties imposed by Islam. On the contrary, the majority of them had accepted Islam just because it was the best policy for them. They merely desired to take advantages of being "Muslims" in order to gain those benefits to which they were entitled as members of the ruling party, without performing those duties which became obligatory on them by the very acceptance of Islam. Therefore they were utterly averse to saying the prescribed Prayers, observing the Fast, paying the *Zakāt* dues from their date-palm gardens and their herds of cattle. Moreover, they smarted under the discipline of the Islamic State and resented being subdued by any power for the first time in history. Above all, it was against their very nature to make sacrifices of their lives and wealth in the Way of Allah, as was being demanded by Islam, for they were accustomed to fight only for plunder and spoils. That is why they always invented one excuse or the other for exemption from the restrictions and obligations that were being imposed on them. For they had no interest in the Truth or the welfare of humanity; their only concern was their camels and their goats, that is, the narrow world around their tents. As regards anything higher than these, the only thing which they could believe in was irrational reverence for those who would guarantee their worldly welfare and protect them from calamities and give them amulets to safeguard them against harm and evil, and say prayers for them as a recompense for their offerings to them. But they were not prepared to accept any faith or belief that would bring under its moral and legal discipline every aspect of their cultural, social and economic life, and demand from them the sacrifices of lives and wealth for the cause of a universal reform.

In this verse, the above-mentioned mental and moral condition of the Bedouins has been described like this: "These Bedouins are more hypocritical than the urban Arabs and are more stubborn and obdurate in their denial of the Truth.

This is because the urban people make use of the opportunities of meeting the learned and pious people and thus learn the laws and regulations of the Way. On the other hand, in all probability, the Bedouins will learn little about the Divine Way, because they get few opportunities for this. Moreover, they lead lives of "economic animals" rather than of human beings having moral and spiritual values; therefore they do not think of higher things than their animal urges.

It should also be noted that the main cause of the subsequent storm of rebellion and apostasy during the caliphate of Hadrat Abū Bakr two years after the revelation of these verses (97-99) was the same that has been mentioned therein.

96. This means that they regarded the payment of *Zakāt* dues as a fine and the expenditure on hospitality, an Islamic duty, a penalty. Likewise, if they had to make any contributions towards *Jihād*, they did so to show that they were loyal to the Islamic State and not because they wanted to please Allah by giving sincere monetary help for His cause.

97. They had become so expert in the art of hiding their hypocrisy that even the Holy Prophet could not recognize them, though he possessed immense sagacity and insight into human nature; so Allah informed him about them.

98. This double chastisement will be the loss of their worldly advantages and the victory of the Islamic Mission in the teeth of their opposition. Thus one chastisement shall be the loss of their worldly benefits for which they practised deceptions and adopted hypocritical attitudes, and instead of gaining wealth, honour and prestige they shall meet with disgrace and utter failure. The second chastisement will be in the shape of the victory of the Islamic Mission to defeat which they exerted their utmost by their machinations and plots. But the Islamic Mission will come out successful in the teeth of their evil wishes, desires, intentions and vicious efforts and they themselves shall witness its victory to their utter despair, regret, grief and sorrow.

99. In this passage a clear line of demarcation has been drawn between the hypocritical "Muslims" and the true Muslims, and instructions have been given regarding the treatment that should be meted out to the hypocrites. Therefore, the one who claims to be a Muslim but does not sincerely devote himself to Allah, His Way and the Islamic Community, should be severely dealt with, if there is a clear proof, from his conduct, that he lacks sincerity; or if he offers anything in the Way of Allah, it should be rejected forthwith: or when he dies the Muslims should neither join his funeral prayer nor beg God's pardon for him, even though he be one's father or brother. In contrast to this, if a believer is guilty of some sin and confesses it, he should be pardoned, and his offerings should be accepted and prayers should be said for his forgiveness.

As regards the criterion by which it will be judged whether one is or is not a hypocrite, though one might have been guilty of an act of insincerity, three things have been implied in this passage:

(1) A sincere follower will openly and clearly confess his sin without offering any lame excuses and giving false explanations and interpretations of his offence.

(2) It will be judged from his previous conduct whether he was a habitual offender or he committed the sin on the spur of the moment because of some weakness. If he had been behaving like a righteous Muslim and if his record showed sincere services, sacrifices and good deeds to his credit, it will be reasonably concluded that he was not a hypocrite.

(3) His future conduct will be watched to see whether his confession was verbal or there had really been a change of heart. If he sincerely feels sorry for his sin and is anxious to compensate for it and his whole conduct shows that he intends to eradicate the root cause of the weakness in his Faith that misled him into the sin, it will be concluded that he sincerely feels sorry for his sin and that he was not a hypocrite but a sinful believer.

The event that is connected with the occasion on which this passage was sent down, makes this subject quite clear. It is related by the scholars of Traditions that these verses were revealed in regard to Abū Lubābah bin 'Abdul Manzar and his Companions. Hadrat Abū Lubābah was one of those people who had embraced Islam on the occasion of the Oath of Allegiance at 'Aqabah before the migration of the Holy Prophet to Al-Madīnah. He had taken part in the battles of Badr, Uhd and other campaigns. But on the occasion of the Tabūk Expedition, he succumbed to some inner weakness and stayed at home without any genuine and lawful excuse. The same was the case of the other six Companions, who were sincere Muslims. When the Holy Prophet returned from Tabūk and they came to know that Allah and His Messenger had a very bad opinion of those who had stayed behind, they were filled with shame and regret. Therefore they tied themselves to a pillar even before they were called upon to explain their conduct. Then they declared, "We will neither eat anything nor sleep unless we are pardoned or die in the same condition." After some days they fell down in an unconscious condition because of hunger and sleeplessness. When at last they were informed that Allah and His Messenger had pardoned them, they went to see the Holy Prophet and said, 'Sir, we request you to accept from us as propitiatory offerings our houses and the whole of our possessions. As these were responsible for our sin of omission, we desire to give them away in the Way of Allah. "But the Holy Prophet replied, "There is no need to give the whole of your property for only one-third of it will suffice."

A deep consideration of this event clearly brings out the kind of weaknesses that are pardonable. All of these people were not habitual offenders and defaulters. Their whole past conduct showed that they were sincere Muslims: none of them invented false explanations to excuse themselves but confessed their sin. By offering the whole of their properties as propitiatory offerings, they proved that they were really sorry for their conduct and wanted to atone for their sin.

In this connection, another important lesson should also be learnt from these verses. In order to atone for one's sins, one should give a practical proof along with the verbal confession and heartfelt regret. One way of this is to give charity in the Way of Allah for this helps to cleanse the filth which was being nourished in the heart and which was responsible for the sin. This not only eradicates the hidden evil but also increases the capacity for good works. For the confession of one's sin is like the feeling of one who has fallen into a pit. He at once realizes that he is in a critical situation in a pit, where he does not like to abide, and is troubled over it. Therefore he thinks out plans for getting out of it and makes practical efforts for this. Likewise the one who confesses his sin and feels ashamed of it and takes practical steps to atone for it by making offerings and doing other good works, intends to come out of the pit of sin.

100. "... then you shall return to Allah ...." Who is the ultimate judge of everything and from Whom nothing can be concealed. Therefore even if one succeeds in hiding one's hypocrisy in this world or is judged to be up to the standard in one's Faith and sincerity, it does not mean in any way that such a one will succeed in escaping chastisement for hypocrisy in the Hereafter also.

101. The case of these people had been deferred because it could not yet be legally decided whether they were sinners or hypocrites and not because their case was doubtful in the sight of Allah. This was because the symptoms of their diseases had not as yet come to the surface to indicate clearly which of the two they were. For Islam teaches the Muslims not to pass judgement on a person or a party unless they possess definite knowledge based on conscious reasoning and not on intuition and the like to support it.

102. "..the one in conflict ...Messenger" was Abū 'Āmir who belonged to the clan of Aus of Al-Madīnah. He had become Christian monk during the period of 'ignorance' before the migration of the Holy Prophet and was well-known as a scholar of the Scriptures and was held in great reverence as a pious monk. But his scholarship and asceticism, instead of leading him to the Truth, became hindrance in the way. That was why he not only rejected Islam but also became a bitter enemy of the Holy Prophet and his Mission, for he took the Prophet for a

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الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ اَنْفُسَهُمْ وَاَمْوَالَهُمْ بِاَنَّ لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ ؕ يُقَاتِلُوْنَ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ
فَيَقْتُلُوْنَ وَيُقْتَلُوْنَ ؕ وَعْدًا عَلَيْهِ حَقًّا فِي التَّوْرٰىةِ وَالْاِنْجِيْلِ وَالْقُرْاٰنِ ؕ
وَمَنْ اَوْفٰى بِعَهْدِهٖ مِنَ اللّٰهِ فَاسْتَبْشِرُوْا بِبَيْعِكُمُ الَّذِيْ بَايَعْتُمْ بِهٖ ؕ وَ
ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيْمُ ﴿١١١﴾ اَلتَّآئِبُوْنَ الْعٰبِدُوْنَ الْحٰمِدُوْنَ السَّآئِحُوْنَ
الرّٰكِعُوْنَ السّٰجِدُوْنَ الْاٰمِرُوْنَ بِالْمَعْرُوْفِ وَالنَّاهُوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَ
الْحٰفِظُوْنَ لِحُدُوْدِ اللّٰهِ ؕ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١١٢﴾ مَا كَانَ لِلنَّبِيِّ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا
اَنْ يَّسْتَغْفِرُوْا لِلْمُشْرِكِيْنَ وَلَوْ كَانُوْٓا اُولِيْ قُرْبٰى مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ
اَنَّهُمْ اَصْحٰبُ الْجَحِيْمِ ﴿١١٣﴾ وَمَا كَانَ اسْتِغْفَارُ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ لِاَبِيْهِ اِلَّا عَنْ
مَّوْعِدَةٍ وَّعَدَهَآ اِيَّاهُ ۚ فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهٗٓ اَنَّهٗ عَدُوٌّ لِّلّٰهِ تَبَرَّاَ مِنْهُ ؕ اِنَّ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ
لَاَوَّاهٌ حَلِيْمٌ ﴿١١٤﴾ وَمَا كَانَ اللّٰهُ لِيُضِلَّ قَوْمًۢا بَعْدَ اِذْ هَدٰىهُمْ حَتّٰى يُبَيِّنَ
لَهُمْ مَّا يَتَّقُوْنَ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿١١٥﴾ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَهٗ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ يُحْيٖ وَيُمِيْتُ ؕ وَمَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ مِنْ وَّلِيٍّ وَّلَا نَصِيْرٍ ﴿١١٦﴾
لَقَدْ تَّابَ اللّٰهُ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ وَالْمُهٰجِرِيْنَ وَالْاَنْصَارِ الَّذِيْنَ اتَّبَعُوْهُ فِيْ
سَاعَةِ الْعُسْرَةِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا كَادَ يَزِيْغُ قُلُوْبُ فَرِيْقٍ مِّنْهُمْ ثُمَّ تَابَ
عَلَيْهِمْ ؕ اِنَّهٗ بِهِمْ رَءُوْفٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿١١٧﴾ وَّعَلَى الثَّلٰثَةِ الَّذِيْنَ خُلِّفُوْا ؕ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا
ضَاقَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْاَرْضُ بِمَا رَحُبَتْ وَضَاقَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ اَنْفُسُهُمْ وَظَنُّوْٓا اَنْ
لَّا مَلْجَاَ مِنَ اللّٰهِ اِلَّآ اِلَيْهِ ؕ ثُمَّ تَابَ عَلَيْهِمْ لِيَتُوْبُوْا ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ
الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿١١٨﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَكُوْنُوْا مَعَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿١١٩﴾ مَا
كَانَ لِاَهْلِ الْمَدِيْنَةِ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهُمْ مِّنَ الْاَعْرَابِ اَنْ يَّتَخَلَّفُوْا عَنْ

Indeed Allah has bought from the Believers their persons and their possessions in return for the Gardens;[106] they fight in the Way of Allah, kill and are killed. This promise (of the Gardens) is the true pledge of Allah made in the Torah, the Gospel, and the Qur'ān,[107] and who is more true in fulfilling his promise than Allah? So rejoice in the bargain you have made with Him; and this is the greatest success. Those who turn back to Allah over and over again;[108] those who worship Him, those who sing hymns in His praise, those who move about in the land for His sake,[109] those who bow down and prostrate before Him, those who enjoin virtue and forbid evil and strictly observe the limits prescribed by Allah[110] (are the Believers who make such a bargain with Allah;) and O Prophet, give good news to such Believers. 111-112

It does not behove the Prophet and those who have believed to pray for the forgiveness of the *mushriks*, even though they be near kinsmen, when it has become clear to them that they deserve Hell.[111] As regards the prayer of Abraham for his father, it was only to fulfil a promise he had made to him,[112] but when he realized that he was an enemy of Allah, he disowned him. The fact is that Abraham was a tender-hearted, Godfearing and forbearing man.[113] 113-114

It is not the way of Allah to let people go astray after He has given them guidance, until He makes plain to them all that they should avoid[114]: surely Allah has the knowledge of everything. And it is also the fact that the kingdom of the heavens and the earth belongs to Him: he ordains life and death: and you have neither any helper nor protector to rescue yourself from Him. 115-116

Allah forgave the Prophet and those *muhājirīn* and *Ansār* who stood by him in the hour of distress,[115] though the hearts of some of them had well-nigh swerved aside[116]; (But when they did not follow that crooked way, and stood by the Prophet) Allah forgave them:[117] surely Allah is Gentle and Compassionate to these people. And Allah has forgiven the Three whose case had been put off.[118] When the earth with all its vastness seemed to have become narrow for them, and their own souls were a burden on them, and they realized that there was no refuge for them except in the mercy of Allah Himself, Allah turned to them with kindness so that they should turn to Him. Surely, He is 117-118

Forgiving and Compassionate.[119]

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rival in the "holy business" of priesthood. At first he ignored the Holy Prophet and his Mission in the hope that the power of the Quraish would suffice to crush him and his Mission. But when the Quraish suffered an utter defeat in the battle of Badr, he could no longer ignore it, so he started a vigorous vicious campaign against the Islamic Movement. Accordingly he left Al-Madīnah and visited different clans, in order to incite them against Islam, and was one of those who brought about the battle of Uhd. It is said that he had got some pits dug in the battle-field of Uhd, and that the Holy Prophet fell into one of these and received injuries. Then he played an important role in organizing the armies which came to invade Al-Madīnah in the battle of Ahzāb. Likewise this Christian Monk took a very active part in giving support to the *mushriks* against Islam in all the subsequent battles up to the battle of Hunain, At last when he realized that no power in Arabia could withstand the onslaught of Islam, he left Arabia and went to the Roman Caesar in order to warn him of the rising "danger" from Al-Madīnah. It was because of his efforts that the Caesar began to make preparations for invading Arabia, to counteract which the Holy Prophet went forth on the expedition to Tabūk.

Now let us consider the background of the building of the 'mosque' that was built to harm the Righteous Mission.

A section of the hypocrites of Al-Madīnah collaborated wholeheartedly with Abū 'Āmir in all the above-mentioned hostile activities against Islam. They also fully agreed with him that he should use his "spiritual" influence to obtain military help from the Roman Caesar and the Christian states of northern Arabia. Accordingly, when he was preparing to go to the Roman Caesar to urge him to invade Arabia, they devised a plan of making a 'mosque' of their own to serve as a safe meeting place for organizing themselves into a separate party because none would suspect that they were carrying on evil activities under the garb of religion. Moreover, this 'mosque' would serve as an ambush for the agents of Abū 'Āmir who could stay in it as travellers and mendicants without raising any suspicion that they were spies of the enemy.

As there were already two mosques in Al-Madinah—one at Qubā and the other, *Masjid-i-Nabavi*, in the city obviously there was no need for a third one. The hypocrite's themselves understood this; therefore they began to invent "reasons" to show that there was really a need for a third mosque. Accordingly, they went to the Holy Prophet and said, "We need another 'mosque' because it is very difficult for the people of this area, especially the old, the sick and the

disabled, to offer the five prescribed Prayers in either of the two Mosques, during the winter season and the rainfall. Therefore we intend to build a new 'mosque' only for the convenience of those who live at a distance from the two Mosques but are desirous of saying their prayers in congregation."

With such professedly pure motives, these mischief makers built the 'mosque' and then went to the Holy Prophet with the request, "Sir, please stand in this new 'mosque' and lead the congregation in one of the prescribed prayers so as to perform its opening ceremony." But the Holy Prophet postponed the matter, saying, "At this time I am wholly engaged in making preparations for the expedition to Tabūk. I shall consider the matter on my return home." After this he went forth to Tabūk, and they started their nefarious activities. They went on organizing themselves and conspiring against Islam in the 'mosque' and decided to crown 'Abdullah-bin-Ubayy as their king, as soon as the Muslims would meet with reverses and be utterly crushed down by the Romans, as they had expected. But their expectations were all frustrated by what happened at Tabūk. Then on the revelation of these verses during the return journey at a place, Zī Avān, near Al-Madīnah, the Holy Prophet despatched some men to demolish the 'mosque' before his entry into the city.

103. In order to comprehend fully the implications of this simile, let us first consider the significance of the Arabic word جُرُف (*Juruf*). This applies to the brink of that piece of land which has been undermined by a river or a stream, leaving its surface without any support. In this meaningful simile the construction of the structure of life on the Godless foundations has been compared to that building which is built on the river brink, which has been undermined by its water. It is obvious that the ignorant man who builds a structure on the surface of such a piece of land, merely because it is a piece of land, will not only lose the building but will also lose his own life, for it will inevitably fall down into the river along with him because it has nothing to support it. Likewise, the one who lays the foundation of the structure of the system of his life on the surface of worldly things, without any regard to God's fear or His favour which are the only permanent supports of human life, is like the man who builds his structure on the surface undermined by the river. For such a man himself undermines the structure of his life by his wrong deeds which inevitably follow if there is no bed-rock of God's fear and His favour. Therefore the surface on which he had built his life would one day inevitably tumble down into the abyss of Hell along with the earnings of his whole life.

104. "The Right Way" that leads to man's real success.

105. That is, these hypocrites have deprived their hearts of the capability of receiving and accepting faith by the commission of the most heinous sin of

building a 'mosque' to do harm to that very Islam for the propagation of which mosques are built. This crime has set the desire of disbelief so deep in their hearts that it will remain there as long as they are alive and will leave them only at the time of death when their hearts will cease to beat in their breasts. Obviously, the case of such people is quite different from that of those unbelievers, who openly build idol-temples or openly make preparations for war against God. For it is possible that such a one may get Guidance just because he is honest, sincere and bold. Moreover, his open antagonism shows that he has the courage of his convictions and may, therefore, accept Islam, when he would be convinced of its Truth. But there is no hope for that cowardly lying and cunning man who builds a 'mosque' for the service of *kufr* and puts on the garb of God-worship for fighting against Allah's Way. This is because a conduct like this kills all the noble sentiments within him and renders him utterly incapable of understanding and accepting Islam.

106. In this verse that aspect of the Islamic Faith which determines the nature of the relationship between Allah and His servants has been called a transaction. This means that Faith is not merely a metaphysical conception but is, in fact, a contract by which the servant sells his life and possessions to Allah and in return for this accepts His promise that He would give him the Garden in the Life-after-death. In order to comprehend the full implications of this transaction, let us first understand its nature.

We should note it well at the outset that, in reality, this transaction is not in regard to the actual selling of the life and possessions of the servant to Allah in the literal sense, for Allah is in fact the real Owner of man's life and possessions. Allah alone has the right of ownership because He is the Creator of man and of everything he possesses and uses. Therefore there is no question at all of selling and buying in the worldly sense; for man possesses nothing of his own to sell, and Allah has no need to buy anything because everything already belongs to Him. However, there is one thing which has entirely been entrusted to man by Allah, that is, the freedom of will and the freedom of choice, and the transaction concerns that thing.

Of course, it is true that this freedom does not make any change in the real position of man with regard to the right of ownership to his own life and his possessions. They belong to Allah Who has delegated to him only the authority to use or abuse these things as he wills, without any coercion or compulsion from Him. This means that man has been given the freedom to acknowledge or not to acknowledge that Allah is the owner of his life and property. The transaction mentioned in v. 111 is concerning the voluntary surrender of this freedom to Allah's Will. In other words, Allah wills to test man whether he acknowledges the ownership of Allah over his life and property, in spite of that freedom, and

considers himself to be their trustee only, or behaves as if he were their owner and so could do whatever he liked with them.

Thus, the terms of this transaction from Allah's side are these: "If you voluntarily (and not by compulsion or coercion) agree to acknowledge that your life, your property and everything in this world, which in fact belong to Me, are Mine, and consider yourself only as their trustee, and voluntarily surrender the freedom I have given you to behave, if you so like, in a dishonest way and yourself become their master and owner, I will give you, in return, Gardens in the eternal life of the Next World". The one who makes this bargain with Allah is a Believer, for Faith is in fact the other name for making this bargain. On the other hand, the one who refuses to make this bargain, or after making it adopts the attitude of the one who has not made the bargain, is *a kāfir* for, technically, *kufr* is the term applied to the refusal to make this bargain.

The following are the implications of making this transaction:

(1) Allah has put man to two very hard tests in this matter. The first is whether he acknowledges the real Owner as owner, in spite of the freedom of choice given to him, or he refuses this and becomes ungrateful, treacherous and rebellious. The second test is whether he puts his trust in his God or not, and surrenders his freedom and sacrifices his desires and wishes in this present world in return for His promise of the Gardens and eternal bliss in the Next World, even though the world were to proclaim: "A bird in hand is worth two in the bush".

(2) This matter helps to draw a clear line of demarcation between the legal conception of the Islamic Faith and the higher and spiritual one according to which Allah will judge one in the Hereafter.

According to its legal conception, the mere verbal profession of the articles of the Faith is a sufficient proof that one is legally a Muslim and after this no Jurist is authorized to declare such a one to be a disbeliever or to expel one from the fold of the Islamic Community, unless there is a definite and clear proof that the one made a false profession of the Faith. But this is not so with Allah: Allah considers the Faith of only that person to be true, who makes this bargain with Him and sells his freedom of thought and action to Him and gives up his entire claim to ownership in His favour. That is why a man might profess the articles of the Faith and observe the prescribed obligatory duties, but if he considered himself alone to be the master and owner of his body and soul, his heart and brain and his other faculties, his property and his resources and other things in his possession, and reserved to himself the right of expending them as he willed, he shall be regarded a disbeliever in the sight of Allah, even though he should be regarded a believer in the sight of the world. This is because such a man has not made that bargain with God which

is the essence of the Faith according to the Qur'ān. The very fact that a man does not expend his life and property in the way Allah approves of, or expends these in the way He disapproves, shows that the one who claimed to profess the Faith either did not sell these to Allah or after having made the transaction still regarded himself to be their master and owner.

(3) The above conception of the Islamic Faith draws a clear line of demarcation between the attitude of a Muslim and that of a disbeliever towards life. The Muslim, who sincerely believes in Allah, surrenders himself completely to Allah's Will, and does nothing whatsoever which may show that he is independent in his attitude, except when he temporarily forgets the terms of the bargain he has made with Him. Likewise no community of the Muslims can collectively adopt an independent attitude in political, cultural, economic, social and international matters and still remain Muslim. And if sometimes it temporarily forgets its subordinate position and its voluntary surrender of its freedom, it will give up the attitude of independence and readopt the attitude of surrender, as soon as it becomes aware of its error. In contrast to this, if one adopts the attitude of independence towards Allah and makes decisions about all the affairs of life in accordance with on's own wishes, whims and caprices, one shall be regarded to have adopted the attitude of disbelief, even though one was a 'Muslim' or a non-Muslim.

(4) It should also be noted well that the Will of God to which a man is required to surrender himself is that which is specified by Allah Himself and not the one which the man himself declares to be the will of God. For in the latter case one does not follow God's Will but one's own will, which is utterly against the terms of the transaction. Only that person (or community) who adopts the attitude that conforms to the teachings of His Book and His Messenger, shall be deemed to have fulfilled the terms of the transaction.

From the above implications of this transaction, it also becomes clear why the fulfilment of the terms by Allah has been deferred to the Next World after the termination of the life of this world. It is obvious that the Garden is not the return for the mere profession that the buyer has sold his life and property to Allah "but it is the actual surrender of these things in the worldly life and their disposal by him as a trustee of Allah according to His Will." Thus, this transaction will be completed only when the life of the buyer comes to an end in this world and it is proved that after making the bargain, he went on fulfilling the terms of the agreement up to his last breath. For then and then alone, he will be entitled to the recompense in accordance with the terms of the transaction.

It will also be worthwhile to understand the context in which this matter has been placed here. In the preceding passage, there was the mention of those people who failed in the test of their Faith and did not make the sacrifice of their

time, money, life and interests for the sake of Allah and His Way, in spite of their professions, because of their negligence or lack of sincerity or absolute hypocrisy. Therefore after criticising the attitudes of different persons and sections, they have been told in clear words the implications of the Faith they had accepted: "This is not the mere verbal profession that there is God and He is One, but the acceptance of the fact that He is the Owner and the Master of your lives and possessions. Therefore, if you are not ready and willing to sacrifice these in obedience to the Command of Allah, but expend these and your energies and resources against the Will of Allah, it is a clear proof that you were false in your profession of the Faith. For the true Believers are those who have truly sold their persons and possessions to Allah, and consider Him to be their Owner and Master, and expend their energies and possessions without any reservations, where He commands them to expend, and do not expend the least of these where He forbids them to expend."

107. Some critics say that the statement "this promise is contained in the Torah and the Gospel" is not confirmed by these Books. Their objection in regard to the Gospel is obviously wrong for even in the existing Gospels there are sayings of Prophet Jesus that confirm this verse. For instance:

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (MAT. 5: 10).

"He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." (MAT. 10: 39).

"And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold and shall inherit everlasting life." (MAT. 19: 29).

It is, however, true that the matter of this transaction is not confirmed in its entirety by the existing Torah. For instance, there is a mention of the first part of the bargain at several places in one form or the other:

"... *is* not he thy father *that* hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee?" (DEUT. 32: 6).

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." (DEUT. 6: 4-5).

But as regards the other part of the bargain, that is, the promise of the Gardens, they applied it to the land of Palestine:

"Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do *it;* that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey." (DEUT. 6: 3).

This is because the Torah does not give any conception of the Life-after-death, the Day of Judgement, Rewards and Punishments in the Here-after, though this creed has always been an inseparable part of the Right Way. This does not, however, mean that the Torah did not originally contain this creed. The fact is that the Jews had become so materialistic during the period of their degeneration that they had no other idea of a reward from God than the well-being and prosperity in this world. Therefore they perverted all the promises made by God in return for man's service and obedience to Him and applied those to the land of Palestine.

In this connection, it should also be noted that the above-mentioned changes became possible because the original Torah had been tampered with in several ways. Some portions were taken away from it and others were added to it. Thus, the Torah in the existing form is not purely the Word of God but also contains the comments, etc., of the Jewish scholars mixed up with it. So much so that at some places it becomes difficult to distinguish the Word of God from the Jewish traditions, their racial prejudices, their superstitions, their ambitions and wishes, their legal interpretations, etc., all of which have got mixed with the Word of God. (For further details please see E.N. 2 of *Āl-i-'Imrān*).

108. The Arabic word التَّائِبُون (*attā-i-būn*) literally means "those who repent". But in the context it occurs it implies "those who possess repentance as their permanent characteristic", that is, they repent over and over again. Moreover, the literal meaning of توبہ *(taubah)* is "to turn to" or "to turn back". Therefore its explanatory translation will be "....those who turn back to Allah over and over again". This is the first and foremost characteristic of a true Believer because even a true Believer is liable to forget the bargain he makes with Allah by which he sells his life and property to Him. As this matter does not concern his sense organs but pertains to his mind and heart, he is liable to forget that these things are not really his property but they belong to Allah. Therefore, even the true believer occasionally forgets the bargain, and behaves in a way as if he were their owner. But as soon as he becomes conscious of this transitory lapse and realizes that he had violated the terms of his agreement, he feels sorry and ashamed of his conduct and turns to his God, begs His pardon and renews the terms of the bargain with Him, and pledges his allegiance to Him after every slip of its violation. This kind of repentance alone is the guarantee that one will always come back to one's Faith: otherwise it is not possible for man because of the inherent human weaknesses, to observe strictly and deliberately the terms of the bargain without ever falling a prey to negligence and error. That is why Allah says

in praise of the true Believer that ".....he turns back to Allah over and over again" and not that "he never slips into error after making the bargain of obedience and service to Him". And this is the greatest excellence that man can accomplish. Let us now consider the wisdom of placing this characteristics first in the list of the characteristics of the true Believers. It is to admonish those who had been guilty of crimes after the profession of their Faith, They have been told in v. III that the true Believers are those who sell their lives and property to Allah. After this they are being told that if they sincerely intend to become true Believers they should first of all create in themselves this characteristic and at once turn to Allah without showing any obduracy so that they should not deviate further into error.

109. Some commentators are of the opinion that here السَّائِحُونَ *(Assā'ihūn)* means "...those who observe fast". As this is not the lexical meaning of the word but only its figurative sense, which has been based on an unauthentic tradition attributed to the Holy Prophet, we are of the opinion that there is no need to depart from its lexical meanings, that is, ".....move about in the land (for His sake.....)". For here the Arabic word does not mean merely to "...move about in the land" but "move about in the land for the sake of noble and high aims, *e.g.* to propagate Islam, to do *Jihād*, to emigrate from those places where the unbelievers are in power, and to reform the people, to seek True Knowledge, to earn a lawful livelihood and the like". This characteristic of the Believers has been especially mentioned here to reprove those who had not gone forth to *Jihād*, in spite of their claim that they were "Believers". They have been admonished that a true Believer is the one who goes forth into the land to raise high His Word, and exerts his utmost to fulfil the implications of his Faith, and not the one who stays behind when he is called upon to move about in the land.

110. That is those who "strictly observe the limits prescribed by Allah ....." in regard to the Articles of the Faith, worship—morality, social behaviour, culture, economics, politics, judiciary, peace and war— in short, in all the aspects of their individual and collective lives. They neither transgress these limits in order to follow their lusts nor invent laws nor replace the Divine Law by other laws. They establish these limits and prevent their violations. Hence, the true Believers are those who not only strictly observe the limits prescribed by Allah, but also do their very best to establish them and safeguard them so as to prevent their violation to the best of their powers and capabilities.

111. "It does not behove . . . to pray for the *mushriks* . . ." implies two things. First, we love them and sympathise with them. Secondly, we consider their crime to be pardonable. There is no harm to cherish these things for the one who is loyal, though a sinner, but it is absolutely wrong in principle to love and

sympathise with a person who is an open rebel and to consider his case as pardonable as it renders our own loyalty doubtful. Besides, it adds to the intensity of the crime, if we pray for the forgiveness of a *mushrik*, who is our near relative. For it means that we consider our relationships to be more valuable than the fulfilment of the implications of our loyalty to Allah and that our love with Allah and His Way is not wholly unalloyed and that we desire that Allah should also be influenced by the love we have with His rebels and pardon our criminal kinsmen, even though He should throw the other criminals into the fire of Hell. Obviously, all such things are wrong and are against loyalty and sincerity and the Faith demands that our love with Allah and His Way should be absolutely unalloyed and that His friend should be our friend and His enemy our enemy. That is why Allah has not said, "Do not pray for the forgiveness of the *mushriks*", but has instead warned, "It does not behove the Prophet and those who have believed to pray for the forgiveness of the *mushriks*", which implies this: "The right thing for you is that you yourselves should regard it as improper to show sympathy with Our rebels and consider their crime as pardonable: nay, you should not wait for any Command from Us about this".

In this connection, it should also be noted well that it is forbidden to show sympathy with the *mushriks* only in matters of Faith. As regards the human relationships that demand the observance of the rights of one's own relatives, of showing love, sympathy and kindness, and cherishing fellow-feelings with them it is not forbidden at all but it is considered to be a virtue. We must fulfil the worldly rights of a relative whether he be a believer or a disbeliever: we should help him in affliction and give support to the needy ones and the orphans and show all possible sympathy with a sick or wounded person, irrespective of whether he is a Muslim or a non-Muslim.

112. The reference is to what Prophet Abraham said when he broke off all connections with his father:

(1) ".....Peace be upon you. I will pray to my Lord to forgive you: for He is very kind to me". (XIX: 47).

(2) "And forgive my father: indeed he is of those who have gone astray. And disgrace me not on the Day, when mankind shall be brought back to life; when neither riches nor children shall avail anyone, and none shall obtain salvation except the one who comes before his Lord with a sound and pure heart". (XXVI: 86-89).

(3) ".....I will pray for your forgiveness, but I have no power to rescue you from Allah ....." (LX: 4).

In the first place it should be noted that even the wording and the tone of the prayer for his father were very guarded, but when Prophet Abraham realized

that the person for whom he was praying was an open rebel against Allah and a bitter enemy of His Way, he refrained himself from saying even such a guarded prayer for him and declared in clear words that he would have nothing to do with him in future, even though the rebel was his father who had brought him up with love and care.

113. The words— أَوَّاهٌ (*avvāh*) and حَلِيمٌ (*halīm*) which the Qur'ān uses for Prophet Abraham are very comprehensive in meaning. *Avvāh* is the one who is lamenting, humble, weeping, grief-stricken and Godfearing. And *halīm* is the one who can keep control over himself under all circumstances, and is neither beside himself in anger and enmity nor transgresses the proper limits in his affections, friendships and relationships. Here both the words have been used in their comprehensive senses. Prophet Abraham prayed for his father because he was tender-hearted and lamented for him that he would become the fuel for the fire of Hell. As he had full control over himself, and was very forbearing, he prayed even for that father who had persecuted him cruelly in order to hinder him from the Way of Islam. Lastly, he was Godfearing and did not want to go beyond the limits in his love for his father; so he broke off all his relations with his father when he realized that he was an enemy of Allah.

114. "He makes plain to the people ...." beforehand that they should avoid such and such thoughts, deeds and ways. But if they take no heed, and persist in wrong thinking and wrongdoing, Allah withholds His guidance from them and lets them follow the wrong way they themselves choose to follow.

This is the general formula that helps understand those passages of the Qur'ān in which Allah ascribes to Himself the guidance and the deviation of the people. Allah's guidance is that He makes plain to them the Right Way through His Prophets and Books. Then He enables those who have the intention, to follow the Right Way. On the other hand, He does not force and compel them to follow the Right Way, if they themselves intend to persist in the wrong ways in spite of the fact that the Right Way has been made quite clear to them; He rather enables them to follow the way they themselves intend to follow.

As regards the context in which this occurs here, it is plain that it is meant to warn those people who have been mentioned in the preceding passage, and to introduce those who are going to be mentioned in the succeeding passage.

115. Allah forgave the Prophet and his Companions for those inadvertent lapses that had been made in connection with the Tabūk expedition, in view of their excellent services. The inadvertent lapse made by the Holy Prophet was that he had given leave to stay behind to those people who were able to take part in the *Jihād*. (v. 43).

116. This refers to those sincere Companions who were at first somewhat unwilling to go to war on that critical occasion, but at last overcame their weakness, for they had true Faith in their hearts and loved the Right Way.

117. That is, Allah will not take them to account for their wrong inclinations, for He does not punish a man for that weakness which he himself has overcome and corrected.

118. These Three were among those who came to the Holy Prophet to present their excuses for staying behind. More than eighty of them were hypocrites, who put forward lame excuses and the Holy Prophet accepted these and let them go. Then came the turn of these Three, who were true Believers, and they confessed their fault plainly. Therefore the Holy Prophet postponed the decision of their case and ordered the Muslims not to have any social relations with them till the decision of their case came from Allah. This verse was sent down to decide their case.

In this connection it should be kept in mind that the case of these Three was different from the case of the seven mentioned in E.N. 99. They had inflicted the punishment on themselves before they were called to account for their fault.

119. The Three whose condition has been described in this verse, were Ka'ab bin Mālik, Hilāl bin Umayyah and Murārah bin Ruba'i. They were sincere Believers, as has been stated above, and had made many sacrifices and given proofs of their sincerity before this. The last two had taken part in the battle of Badr also, and therefore their Faith was above every kind of suspicion. Though Ka'ab had not taken part in the battle of Badr, he had accompanied the Holy Prophet in every other expedition. But in spite of all these services, they were severely punished for the negligence they had shown on the critical occasion of the Tabūk Expedition, when all the able-bodied Muslims were commanded to go forth to *Jihād*.

When the Holy Prophet came back from Tabūk, he ordered the Muslims to break away completely from them; so much so that they should not even respond to their greetings. After forty days of this boycott their wives also were ordered to have nothing to do with them. In short, they were reduced at Al-Madīnah to the same sad plight which has been described in this verse. At last, after a boycott of fifty days, this verse was sent down to announce their forgiveness.

The story of the above-mentioned boycott has been described in detail by Ka'ab bin Mālik, who was one of the Three. When he became old and blind, he himself told his story to his son, 'Abdullah, who used to accompany him

everywhere. As this story is an excellent lesson for all, it is given below in Ka'ab's own words:

"When the Holy Prophet urged upon the people to get ready for *Jihād*, I made up my mind to make preparations for this. But when I went home, I became negligent, saying to myself, 'There is no hurry: when the time comes I will readily make preparations and start forthwith'. In this way I went on putting off my preparations till the time came when the army was going to start on the Expedition. As I had made no preparations for the journey, I said to myself, 'It does not matter: I will be able to join the army in a couple of days during the journey'. But again the same negligence prevented me from putting my intention into practice. At last no occasion was left for me to join the army. To add to my misery my conscience pricked me over and over again that the people with whom I had stayed behind in Al-Madīnah were either the hypocrites or those Muslims who were old or otherwise unfit for *Jihād*."

"When the Holy Prophet came back from Tabūk, he, as usual, said two *rak'ats* of prayer in the Mosque. Then he sat there to meet the people. At first, the hypocrites, whose number was a little more than eighty, came to him and offered lame excuses on solemn oaths. The Holy Prophet listened to the false story of each of them and accepted their apparent excuses and left the decision about their hearts to Allah, saying, 'May Allah forgive you'. Then it was my turn to put forward my excuse. I went forward and uttered my salutations. He smiled and said, 'Well, what kept you behind?' (I hesitated for a moment.) By God, I would have invented one excuse or the other to satisfy any man of the world, for I am well versed in the art of conversation. But here was the Holy Prophet who was demanding an explanation from me. I believed that even if I succeeded in satisfying him by making a false excuse, Allah will inform him of the truth of the case and I shall again incur his displeasure. On the other hand, if I told the truth, I expected that Allah would forgive me, even though I were to incur his displeasure for the time being. So I replied, 'Sir, I have no excuse for staying behind. I was in every way able to go forth (to Tabūk)'. At this the Holy Prophet remarked, 'This is the man who has told the truth'. Then turning to me, he said, 'Go and wait till Allah decides your case'.

"I rose from there and took my seat among the people of my own clan. They at once began to tease and reprove me because I had made no excuse. At this, I was tempted to go and make some false excuse. But when I came to know that there were also two good people (Murārah bin Rubā'i and Hilāl bin Umayyah), who had told the same thing that I had, I felt satisfied and stuck to the truth.

"After this the Holy Prophet issued a general order that no one should have any kind of talk with us. The other two confined themselves to their houses but I used to go out of my house and say my prayers in congregation and walk through the bazaars. As nobody spoke to me, it appeared to me that I was a foreigner in some strange city where I had no acquaintances. When I attended the mosque, I would utter the usual salutations and wait in vain for a response from the Holy Prophet. I would turn stealthy looks at him to read his thoughts in regard to me, but he would turn his eyes away from me, though he had been looking at me while I was engaged in prayer. As this condition became intolerable for me, one day I went to see Abū Qatādah who was a cousin of mine and a friend from childhood. I climbed over the wall of his garden and uttered my salutations, but even he did not make any response to it. Then I said, 'O Abu Qatādah ! I ask you to tell me on oath whether I love or do not love Allah and His Messenger'. But he remained silent. Again I repeated the question but he kept silent. I asked him on oath to answer my question. Then he merely replied, 'Allah and His Messenger know best'. At this my eyes were filled with tears, and I came back.

"Another incident happened during those days. Once I was passing through the bazaar, when a Syrian came to me and gave me a letter wrapped in silk. This was from the king of Ghassān and read like this: 'We have come to know that your Leader is persecuting you these days. As you are not an ignoble person, we will not leave you to rot there. Therefore come to us and we will honour you (as you deserve)'. I said to myself, 'Here is another hard trial for me'. Then I threw the letter into the burning oven.

"The boycott continued for forty days, when a man brought this message from the Holy Prophet that I should separate from my wife. I asked whether I should divorce her but was told that I should only separate from her. Accordingly I said to my wife, 'Go to your parental home and wait till a decision comes from Allah.'

"On the fiftieth day, when after the morning prayers, I was sitting in a state of utter despair on the top of my house, all of a sudden some one cried aloud, 'O Ka'ab bin Mālik! Please accept my congratulations.' Hearing this, I fell prostrate to the ground before Allah, for I understood that the Command of my forgiveness had come After this, people began to pour in, each trying to forestall the other in congratulating me on the acceptance of my repentance. I rose and went directly to the Mosque. I noticed that the face of the Holy Prophet was glowing with happiness and in response to my salutations, he said, 'I congratulate you on this: it is the best day of your life.' I said, 'Is this forgiveness from you or from Allah?' He replied, 'It is from Allah.' Then he recited these verses (117-118). I asked, 'O Messenger of Allah! Does my repentance require that I should give the whole of my property in charity?' He replied, 'Keep a part of it, for it

will be better for you.' Accordingly, I kept my property at Khaibar for myself and gave all the rest in charity. Then I solemnly pledged that I would stick to the truth throughout the rest of my life, for Allah had forgiven me in return for the truth I had told. That is why I have never uttered a word against reality intentionally up to this time and hope and expect that Allah will protect me from lies in future as well."

This story contains many lessons, and every Believer should impress these on his mind and heart.

The first and foremost lesson we learn from this story is that the matter of the conflict between Islam and *kufr* is so important and delicate that we should take the greatest possible care to be on our guard in regard to this. Not to mention the case of one who takes active part on the side of *kufr*, if a Muslim shows the least negligence even inadvertently in taking part on the side of Islam once in his life; and that, too, not with any evil intention, he is liable to lose all the lifelong services and devotions rendered by him in the cause of Islam. That was why such a severe action was taken even against those worthy people who had done great deeds of valour in the battles of Badr, Uhd, Ahzāb and Hunain, and whose sincerity and Faith were absolutely above suspicion.

The second thing, which is as important as the first, is that one should never consider lightly any negligence in the performance of a duty, for this often misleads one to commit an offence that is counted among heinous sins. The fact that one did not commit the offence with any evil intention cannot save one from punishment.

Lastly, this story presents the true spirit of the society that had been evolved out under the leadership of the Holy Prophet. On the one side there were the hypocrites whose treacherous deeds were quite well known to all. They offered lame excuses which were accepted without demur for nothing better could be expected from them. On the other side, let us take the case of Ka'ab bin Mālik, who was a tried Believer; and whose sacrifices were above every kind of suspicion. He did not invent any false story to justify himself but confessed his fault quite plainly and clearly. But in contrast to the hypocrites, a severe chastisement was inflicted on him, not because there was any suspicion about his Faith but because a sincere Believer like him had behaved in a way in which only

[Contd. on p. 250

رَّسُوْلِ اللّٰهِ وَلَا يَرْغَبُوْا بِاَنْفُسِهِمْ عَنْ نَّفْسِهٖ ؕ ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّهُمْ لَا يُصِيْبُهُمْ
ظَمَاٌ وَّلَا نَصَبٌ وَّلَا مَخْمَصَةٌ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ وَلَا يَطَـُٔوْنَ مَوْطِئًا يَّغِيْظُ
الْكُفَّارَ وَلَا يَنَالُوْنَ مِنْ عَدُوٍّ نَّيْلًا اِلَّا كُتِبَ لَهُمْ بِهٖ عَمَلٌ صَالِحٌ ؕ اِنَّ
اللّٰهَ لَا يُضِيْعُ اَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿١٢٠﴾ وَلَا يُنْفِقُوْنَ نَفَقَةً صَغِيْرَةً وَّلَا كَبِيْرَةً
وَّلَا يَقْطَعُوْنَ وَادِيًا اِلَّا كُتِبَ لَهُمْ لِيَجْزِيَهُمُ اللّٰهُ اَحْسَنَ مَا كَانُوْا
يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿١٢١﴾ وَمَا كَانَ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ لِيَنْفِرُوْا كَآفَّةً ؕ فَلَوْلَا نَفَرَ مِنْ كُلِّ
فِرْقَةٍ مِّنْهُمْ طَآئِفَةٌ لِّيَتَفَقَّهُوْا فِي الدِّيْنِ وَلِيُنْذِرُوْا قَوْمَهُمْ اِذَا رَجَعُوْٓا
اِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُوْنَ ﴿١٢٢﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا قَاتِلُوا الَّذِيْنَ يَلُوْنَكُمْ
مِّنَ الْكُفَّارِ وَلْيَجِدُوْا فِيْكُمْ غِلْظَةً ؕ وَاعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿١٢٣﴾ وَ
اِذَا مَآ اُنْزِلَتْ سُوْرَةٌ فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَّقُوْلُ اَيُّكُمْ زَادَتْهُ هٰذِهٖٓ اِيْمَانًا ؕ
فَاَمَّا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا فَزَادَتْهُمْ اِيْمَانًا وَّهُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُوْنَ ﴿١٢٤﴾ وَاَمَّا الَّذِيْنَ فِيْ
قُلُوْبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ فَزَادَتْهُمْ رِجْسًا اِلٰى رِجْسِهِمْ وَمَاتُوْا وَهُمْ كٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿١٢٥﴾
اَوَلَا يَرَوْنَ اَنَّهُمْ يُفْتَنُوْنَ فِيْ كُلِّ عَامٍ مَّرَّةً اَوْ مَرَّتَيْنِ ثُمَّ لَا يَتُوْبُوْنَ
وَلَا هُمْ يَذَّكَّرُوْنَ ﴿١٢٦﴾ وَاِذَا مَآ اُنْزِلَتْ سُوْرَةٌ نَّظَرَ بَعْضُهُمْ اِلٰى بَعْضٍ ؕ
هَلْ يَرٰىكُمْ مِّنْ اَحَدٍ ثُمَّ انْصَرَفُوْا ؕ صَرَفَ اللّٰهُ قُلُوْبَهُمْ بِاَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ
لَّا يَفْقَهُوْنَ ﴿١٢٧﴾ لَقَدْ جَآءَكُمْ رَسُوْلٌ مِّنْ اَنْفُسِكُمْ عَزِيْزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ
حَرِيْصٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ رَءُوْفٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿١٢٨﴾ فَاِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُلْ حَسْبِيَ
اللّٰهُ ۖ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ؕ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَهُوَ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيْمِ ﴿١٢٩﴾

O Believers, fear Allah and be with those who are Truthful. It did not behove the people of Al-Madīnah and the Bedouins, dwelling around, to abandon Allah's Messenger and stay at home in order to safeguard their own interests, in utter disregard of him. For, every hardship like thirst, hunger and any other physical ordeal they suffer in the Way of Allah, and every step they take on that Way which enrages the unbelievers, and every act of wreaking vengeance upon the enemies of the truth, is credited in their favour with a good deed for each: surely Allah does not let go unrewarded any deed of the righteous people. Likewise, whatever they spend (in the Way of Allah), be it little or much, and whichever valley they traverse (for *Jihād*), *is* credited to their account so that Allah may reward them for the good deeds they did. 119-121

And it was not required that all the believers should leave their homes, but why did not some people from every habitation leave their homes in order to understand the Way of Islam and to warn their people when they returned to them, so that they should refrain from un-Islamic conduct?[120] 122

O Believers, fight with these disbelievers who are near you,[121] and they should find you firm and stern:[122] and know that Allah is with the Godfearing.[123] Whenever a new Sūrah is revealed, some of them ask the Muslims (in jest), "Say, whose Faith from among you has increased?" (The answer is that) most surely (every Sūrah) increases the Faith of those who have sincerely believed and they rejoice but it has added more filth to the existing filth[124] of those whose hearts are suffering from the disease (of hypocrisy) and they shall remain disbelievers up to their death. Do these people not see that they are tried once or twice every year?[125] Yet, still they do not repent or learn a lesson from this. When a Sūrah is sent down, they cast looks at one another, asking, "Is anyone watching you?" Then they silently slip away:[126] Allah has turned away their hearts for they are a people who do not understand.[127] 123-127

Listen! A Messenger has come to you, who is from among you. He grieves at your (spiritual) loss; he is greedily anxious for your (true) success: he is gentle and compassionate for the Believers: 128-129

Now if they turn away from you, say to them, O Prophet, "Allah suffices me: there is no god but He: in Him have I put my trust: He is the Lord of the Great Throne."

Contd. from p.247]

a hypocrite could behave. Thus the chastisement was meant to remind them: "You are the salt of the earth. But if you, too, become tasteless, wherefrom will then salt be obtained?"

There is another noteworthy side of the matter. The part played by the Leader and the Follower and the Muslim Society in this incident is unique. The Leader inflicts the most severe punishment but with the feelings of affection and without any tinge of anger or hatred in it. It is like the punishment which a father gives to his son, it is always understood that the punishment is given for the good of the son, who knows that as soon as he mends his ways, he will regain the fatherly love. And the Follower sets an excellent example of obedience under very trying circumstances. He suffers hard from the severity of the chastisement but never thinks of rebelling against the Leader because of any false personal or clannish pride; nay, he does not cherish in his heart any complaint against his beloved Leader, but begins to love him even more than before. During this saddest period of his life the only thing he yearns for is a look of affection from his Leader. For he is like a famine-stricken farmer whose only hope is the piece of cloud which he sees floating in the sky.

Now let us have a glimpse of the Muslim society, which displayed the greatest discipline and the highest moral spirit that had ever been shown by any society. No sooner does the Leader order the boycott than the whole community becomes a stranger to the follower not only in public but also in private. So much so that his nearest relatives and closest friends do not even speak to him; nay, his own wife leaves him alone. He implores them on oath to tell him if they suspected his sincerity, but even his lifelong companions make a point-blank refusal, saying that he should ask Allah and His Messenger for that testimony. But in spite of the show of this strict discipline, the moral spirit of the community is so high and so pure that not a single person tries to take advantage of the position of the fallen brother by adding insult to his injury; nay, every one feels sorry for his brother in disgrace, and is impatient to embrace him as soon as he is forgiven. That is why the people run in haste to tell him the good news.

The above is the model of the Righteous community that the Qur'ān aims to build.

This background makes it plain why Allah not only forgave them but also manifested His Kindness, Gentleness and Compassion in His Forgiveness to these

people. It was because of their sincerity which they proved during the fifty days of their chastisement. Had they shown arrogance after the commission of their offence and retaliated by taking angry and hostile actions as does every self-worshipper whose pride is wounded: had they behaved during their boycott in a manner as if they would break away from the community but never bow down before it: had they passed this period in spreading dissatisfaction in the community and gathering around them all the disgruntled people in order to organize a strong "opposition" against the Leader, then they would have most certainly been expelled from the community, as if to say, "Go you now and worship the idol of your self, for henceforth you will never be given any opportunity for exerting to raise the Word of Allah". But these Three did not adopt this way though it was open to them. On the contrary, they took a different way, as has been seen, and proved that God-worship had destroyed every idol that might have remained hidden in their hearts: that they had dedicated themselves entirely to the exertion in the Way of Allah: that while joining the Islamic community they had burnt their boats to make it impossible for themselves to go back anywhere: that they would put up with every kind of treatment but would remain in the community and die as a member of it and would scornfully reject any offer of an honorable place outside it; and would rather bear disgrace in it. That was why they were again taken in the community with the same honour as before. This is the explanation of the kind words of forgiveness: "Allah turned to them with kindness so that they should turn to Him." In these concise words, the Qur'ān has depicted the true picture of the matter. The Master had at first turned away His attention from His Three servants but when He saw that they had not left His door but had remained there with broken hearts, He again turned to them in appreciation of their fidelity so as to bring them back into the fold.

120. In order to comprehend the meaning of this verse, v. 97 with which it is connected, should be kept in view:

"These Bedouins are most stubborn in unbelief and hypocrisy, and, in all probability, will remain ignorant of the laws of the Way which Allah has sent down to His Messenger."

In v. 97, the Qur'ān merely diagnosed the disease and pointed out its symptoms. The Bedouins were suffering from the disease of hypocrisy because of their ignorance of the laws of the Way of Allah. This was so because they had not had any connections with the Centre of that knowledge. Here in this concluding portion of the Sūrah, the remedy of that disease has been prescribed so that they should have an understanding of Islam and its implications. It is not necessary that for this purpose all of them should leave their homes and come to Al-Madīnah to learn that knowledge, but some of them should come from each habitation, clan and region to the Centres of the Knowledge (Al-Madīnah, Makkah and the like)

and understand Islam. Then they should go back to their own habitations and create its understanding among the common people.

This was a very important instruction that was given at the opportune moment to strengthen the Islamic Movement for, at that time, the people were entering into the fold of Islam in large numbers without its proper understanding. Obviously, this instruction was not needed in the initial stages of the Movement, for at that time everyone who embraced Islam did so with its full understanding. No one would think of becoming a Muslim without this as this was an invitation to persecution. When the Movement became successful and won power in the land, the clans and the habitations began to enter *en bloc* into the fold of Islam. Naturally very few of them understood the full implications of the Faith before accepting it, but the majority of them were being carried into the fold, as it were, by the strong current that had been generated by the Movement. Outwardly this immense increase in numbers appeared to be a source of strength to Islam, but in reality such people as had no true understanding of Islam and were, therefore, not prepared to fulfil its moral obligations, were not only useless for the Islamic System but were actually harmful to it. This side of the matter became quite apparent during the preparations for the Tabūk expedition. That is why Allah sent down the instruction that necessary steps should be taken for the integration of the Islamic Community so that it may keep pace with the immense increase in its number. Therefore some people should be brought out from every habitation and taught and trained in the requirements of Islam and these in their turn should teach and train their own people so that the whole Muslim population should understand Islam and obtain the knowledge of the limits prescribed by Allah.

In this connection, it should also be clearly understood that *the Command about mass education given in this verse is not merely about literacy but it had the definite aim of imparting the understanding of the Way of Islam among the masses and enabling them to refrain from un-Islamic Ways.* This is the real and permanent aim of education that has been set before the Muslims by Allah Himself. Therefore every system of their education shall be judged by this criterion and shall be regarded Islamic only to the extent it fulfils this aim. It does not, however, mean that Islam is against the spreading of literacy and teaching of the purely mundane subjects to the masses, but it simply means that the primary aim of the Islamic Education shoud be the achievement of the objective which has been mentioned above in italics. Without this, it does not consider any education to be education at all, even if it were to produce Einsteins and Freuds of the age.

It will be worthwhile to consider the true significance of the words (لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ) used in the context, for they created a strange misunderstanding among the people of the later period, and produced lasting poisonous effects on

the religious education of the Muslims, nay, on their whole religious life in general. It is obvious that Allah used these words in order to lay down the objective of education before the Muslims, which was this: to understand the Islamic Way of life and have an insight into its system: to be familiar with its true nature and spirit so as to be able to judge and differentiate between the Islamic and the un-Islamic ways of thought and conduct in every aspect of life. But later on when the knowledge of the Muslim Law was given the technical name of فقہ (*fiqh*), it gradually developed into the science of the details of external form (as opposed to the spiritual aspect of the Islamic Law). As the word فقہ (*fiqh*) is of the same root فقہ as لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا used in this verse, a misunderstanding was created that this Command of the Qur'ān was about acquiring the knowledge of *fiqh* in the above-mentioned sense. It is true that this knowledge is of great importance in the Islamic System of life, but it is not all that is required by the Qur'ān but only a part of the objective. It is not possible to recount here all the damages that the Muslim Community has suffered because of this misunderstanding, but suffice it to say that this is the thing, which is responsible for reducing the religious education of the Muslims to the knowledge and interpretation of the external form of Islam without paying any attention to the spirit of Islam. This inevitably resulted in making lifeless formalism the ultimate goal of the life of the Muslims.

121. From the apparent wording of this verse, it may be inferred that only those Muslims have at first been held responsible to fight with those enemies of Islam who live near their territory. But if we read this verse along with the succeeding passage, it becomes clear that here "disbelievers who are near you refers to those hypocrites who were doing great harm to te Islamic Society by mixing up with the sincere Muslims. This very thing was stated in v. 73 at the beginning of this discourse. The Command has been repeated at its end in order to impress on the Muslims the importance of the matter and to urge them to do *Jihād* and crush these internal enemies, without paying the least regard to the racial, family and social relations that had been proving a binding force with them. The only difference between the two Commands is that in v. 73, the Muslims were asked to do *Jihād* with them, while in this verse stronger words, "fight with them", have been used, which were meant to impress on them that they should crush the hypocrites thoroughly and completely. Another difference in the wordings is that in v. 73, two different words, "disbelievers and hypocrites", have been used, while in this verse only one word, "disbelievers", has been used so that the hypocrites should forfeit all their claims as Muslims, for there was room for this concession in the word "hypocrite".

122. This is meant to impress that they should not, in future, show the lenient treatment they had been meting out to them up to that time. This has already been commanded in v. 73: "be firm and stern with them".

123. This warning has two-fold meanings and both are implied here. First, "If you show any kind of leniency towards them because of your personal or family or economic connections with them, you should know that such a thing shall be against 'the fear of God', for the fear of God and friendly relations with the enemies of Allah are contradictory things. Therefore, you should give these up, if you desire to obtain Allah's help". Secondly, "You should scrupulously observe the moral and humane limits in doing *Jihād*, and in fighting with them. For you should always keep yourselves within the prescribed limits in everything. If you transgress these in any way, you should know that Allah will forsake you for He helps only those who are Godfearing.

124. As regards the increase and decrease in Faith, disbelief and hypocrisy, please refer to E.N. 2 of Sūrah *Al-Anfāl*.

125. That is, during the course of every year such circumstances are created as put to test once or twice their claim to the Faith, and these disclose that their profession of Islam was like a counterfeit coin. For instance, some time their Faith is tested by (a) a Commandment of the Qur'ān which lays some new restriction on their lust; or by (b) a demand of the Faith that hits hard at their self-interests, or by (c) an internal dispute which discloses their preference for worldly interests and for their personal, family and clannish relations to Allah, His Messenger and the Faith, or by (d) a war that requires the sacrifice of their lives, wealth, time and energies. All these tests help bring to the open that filth of hypocrisy that lay hidden in their hearts under the garb of the profession of Islam. Besides, these things increase that filth which had already gathered in their hearts because of their deviations from the implications of the Faith.

126. This happened when the hypocrites had to attend a meeting that was specially held for the recital of some new sūrah. The Holy Prophet used to recite as an address every new sūrah before the assembly. The true believers would listen to it very attentively and respectfully. But the hypocrites, who had to attend the meeting to show that they were "Muslims", would sit listlessly in the meeting for they had no interest in the recital. But when they would be assured that their "attendance" had been marked, they would look for an opportune moment to slip away without being seen and noticed.

127. "Allah has turned away their hearts from the Qur'ān, because they do not understand that it is in their own interest to listen to the Qur'ān and to act upon its teachings. These foolish people do not realize that by ignoring the Qur'ān and the Holy Prophet, they in fact, deprive themselves of a great blessing. As they

are deeply engaged in their own narrow interests, they do not see that the great knowledge of the Qur'ān and the right guidance of the Holy Prophet has the potentiality of making them the leaders of this world, and of bringing salvation to them in the Next World. As a result of their folly and neglect of the great blessing, Allah has, in accordance with His Law, deprived them of the capacity of making use of this blessing and "turned away their hearts" from it. That is why these unfortunate, people do not even feel the great loss they are suffering, while the blessed people are taking full advantage of this great fountainhead of power and strength and are preparing themsleves for achieving the greatest success that human beings could ever achieve.



X

YŪNUS
(JONAH)

يُونس

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

X

YŪNUS (JONAH)

يُونُس

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from V. 98, in which there is a reference to Prophet Yūnus (Jonah). The name, as usual, is symbolical and does not indicate that the Sūrah deals with the story of Prophet Jonah.

Place of Revelation

We learn from traditions, and this is supported by the contents of the Sūrah itself, that the whole of this Sūrah was revealed at Makkah. But there are some people who are of the opinion that some of its verses were revealed at Al-Madīnah. This is, however, a superficial view. The continuity of the theme clearly shows that this does not comprise isolated verses or discourses that were revealed at different times and on different occasions. On the contrary, it is, from the beginning to the end, a closely connected discourse which must have been revealed at one sitting. Besides this, the nature of its theme is itself a clear proof that the Sūrah belongs to the Makkan period.

Time of Revelation

We have no tradition in regard to the time of its revelation, but its subject-matter gives clear indication that it must have been revealed during the last stage of the Holy Prophet's residence at Makkah. For the mode of the discourse suggests that at the time of its revelation, the antagonism of the opponents of the Message had become so intense that

they could not tolerate even the presence of the Holy Prophet and his followers among themselves, and that things had come to such a pass as to leave no hope that they would ever understand and accept the Message of the Prophet. This indicates that the last stage of the Prophe's life among those people had come, and the final warning like the one in this Sūrah had to be given. These characteristics of the discourse are a clear proof that it was revealed during the last stage of the Movement at Makkah.

Another thing that determines more specifically the order of the Sūrahs of the last stage at Makkah is the mention (or absence) of some open or covert hint about *Hijrat* (Emigration) from Makkah. As this Sūrah does not contain any hint whatsoever about this, it is a proof that it preceded those Sūrahs which contain it.

Now that we have specified the time of its revelation, there is no need of repeating its historical background because that has already been stated in Sūrahs VI and VII.

Subject

This discourse deals with the invitation to the Message, admonition and warning. In the very introductory verses, the invitation has been extended like this:—

"The people consider it a strange thing that this Message is being conveyed by a human being and charge him with sorcery, whereas there is nothing strange in it nor has it any connection with sorcery or sooth-saying. It simply informs you of two realities. First, Allah, Who has created the universe and manages it, is, in fact, your Master and Lord, and He alone is entitled to your worship. The second reality is that after the life in this world, there will be another life in the Next World, where you shall have to render full account of the life of this world and be rewarded or punished according to whether you adopted the righteous attitude as required by Him after acknowledging Him as your Master, or acted against His will. Both of these realities, which the Messenger is presenting before you, are "realities" in themselves whether you acknowledge them as such or not. He is inviting you to accept these and regulate your lives in accordance with them; if you accept these, you will have a very blessed end; otherwise you shall meet with evil consequences."

Topics

After the introduction, the following topics have been dealt with in an appropriate order:—

(1) Proofs of the doctrines of *Taubīd*, Providence and Life-after-death have been given by such arguments as may satisfy the minds and hearts of those who listen to the Message without prejudice and bigotry with the sole intention of safeguarding themselves against deviation and its evil results and not for the sake of seeking opportunities for useless discussions.

(2) Those misunderstandings which were (and always are) hindering people from accepting the doctrines of *Tauhīd* and the Hereafter, have been removed and they have been warned to guard against those negligences that stand in their way.

(3) Those doubts have been removed and answers to those objections given which were being raised about the Prophethood of Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) and the Message brought by him.

(4) Graphic descriptions of the life in the Hereafter have been presented in order to warn the people beforehand so that they should mend their ways here and be not sorry afterwards for their conduct in this world.

(5) They have been admonished and warned that the life in this world is really a test and a trial, and that the time allowed for it is only up to the last moment of the earthly life, and that this is the only opportunity that shall be given to them for accepting the Message and achieving success in the test. Therefore, they should make the best use of the opportunity that has been provided for them by the appointment of Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) for their guidance and obtain the true knowledge of the Reality from the Qur'ān that is being sent down to him. Otherwise, they shall be remorseful for ever and ever.

(6) Their attention has been drawn to some of their acts of manifest ignorance and deviation which were the direct result of discarding Divine Guidance from their lives.

In this connection, the story of Prophet Noah has been related in brief and that of Prophet Moses in detail in order to impress four things on the minds:

First, "As your behaviour towards Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) is like that of the peoples of Prophet Noah and Prophet Moses towards them, you should know it for certain that you also shall meet with the same consequences which they met with." Secondly, "You should not be deluded into believing by the helpless and weak condition of the Prophet and his followers, you are witnessing today, that it will always remain like this. You should know that the same All-Powerful Allah Who supported Prophets Moses and Aaron, is supporting them and that He changes the circumstances in such a sudden and thorough manner that none can foresee it." Thirdly, "If you do not make use of the term that has been granted to you by Allah and mend your ways now, and postpone this to the last moment like Pharaoh, your repentance shall not be accepted." Lastly, the followers of the Holy Prophet have been reassured that they should not lose heart because of the severity of the circumstances created by their opponents, especially at the time when they themselves were in an utterly helpless condition. They have also been given instructions as to how they should carry on their Mission under those harsh conditions. Moreover, they have been warned to be on their guard against the kind of behaviour which was adopted by the Israelites, when they were rescued by Allah from the tyranny of the People of Pharaoh.

(7) At the end of the Sūrah, the Holy Prophet has been commanded to make a declaration to this effect: "This is the Creed and this is the rule of conduct that has been prescribed for me by Allah: no change can be made at all in this: whoso will accept this will do so for his own good and whoso will reject this will do so at his own peril."



الٓرٰ ۚ تِلْكَ اٰيٰتُ الْكِتٰبِ الْحَكِيْمِ ۝١ اَكَانَ لِلنَّاسِ عَجَبًا اَنْ اَوْحَيْنَآ اِلٰى
رَجُلٍ مِّنْهُمْ اَنْ اَنْذِرِ النَّاسَ وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اَنَّ لَهُمْ قَدَمَ
صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ۗ قَالَ الْكٰفِرُوْنَ اِنَّ هٰذَا لَسٰحِرٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ۝٢ اِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ
اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ فِيْ سِتَّةِ اَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوٰى عَلَى
الْعَرْشِ يُدَبِّرُ الْاَمْرَ ۭ مَا مِنْ شَفِيْعٍ اِلَّا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ اِذْنِهٖ ۭ ذٰلِكُمُ اللّٰهُ
رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوْهُ ۭ اَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ۝٣ اِلَيْهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيْعًا ۭ وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ حَقًّا ۭ
اِنَّهٗ يَبْدَؤُا الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيْدُهٗ لِيَجْزِيَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ
بِالْقِسْطِ ۭ وَالَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لَهُمْ شَرَابٌ مِّنْ حَمِيْمٍ وَّعَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌۢ بِمَا
كَانُوْا يَكْفُرُوْنَ ۝٤ هُوَ الَّذِيْ جَعَلَ الشَّمْسَ ضِيَاۗءً وَّالْقَمَرَ نُوْرًا وَّقَدَّرَهٗ
مَنَازِلَ لِتَعْلَمُوْا عَدَدَ السِّنِيْنَ وَالْحِسَابَ ۭ مَا خَلَقَ اللّٰهُ ذٰلِكَ اِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ ۚ
يُفَصِّلُ الْاٰيٰتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَّعْلَمُوْنَ ۝٥ اِنَّ فِي اخْتِلَافِ الَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَمَا
خَلَقَ اللّٰهُ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّتَّقُوْنَ ۝٦ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ لَا
يَرْجُوْنَ لِقَاۗءَنَا وَرَضُوْا بِالْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَاطْمَاَنُّوْا بِهَا وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ
عَنْ اٰيٰتِنَا غٰفِلُوْنَ ۝٧ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ مَاْوٰىهُمُ النَّارُ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَكْسِبُوْنَ ۝٨ اِنَّ
الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ يَهْدِيْهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِاِيْمَانِهِمْ ۚ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ
تَحْتِهِمُ الْاَنْهٰرُ فِيْ جَنّٰتِ النَّعِيْمِ ۝٩ دَعْوٰىهُمْ فِيْهَا سُبْحٰنَكَ اللّٰهُمَّ وَ
تَحِيَّتُهُمْ فِيْهَا سَلٰمٌ ۚ وَاٰخِرُ دَعْوٰىهُمْ اَنِ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ۝١٠

X

YŪNUS

يُونُس

Verses" 109 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

Alif Lām Rā. These are the verses of the Book, which is full of wisdom and knowledge.[1] 1

Did it seem strange to the people that We should have inspired a man from among themselves to warn the (neglectful) people, and to give the Believers the good news that they will have real honour and success with their Lord ?[2] (Is this the thing that) led the unbelievers to say, "This man is a manifest enchanter?"[3] 2

The fact is that your Lord is the same Allah Who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then sat Himself upon the Throne of His Kingdom, and is directing the affairs of the universe.[4] None can intercede with Him except after His permission.[5] That is Allah, your Lord: so worship Him.[6] Will you not then understand?[7] 3

To Him you shall all return:[8] this is the true and sure promise of Allah. Indeed He originates creation and He will bring it back to life[9] so that He may recompense with perfect justice those who believed and did righteous deeds. As for those who disbelieved, they shall drink boiling water and undergo a painful chastisement for their rejection of the Truth.[10] 4

It is He Who gave the sun his brightness and the moon her light, and ordained her phases precisely so that you may calculate years and dates from this. Allah has not created all this (for mere fun) but for a serious end. He makes His Signs manifest for those people who possess knowledge. In the alternation of the night and day and in all that Allah has created in the heavens and the earth, surely there are Signs for those who intend avoiding (deviation from the Truth[11]). 5-6

7-8 The fact is that the ultimate abode of those, who expect not to meet Us and are well pleased and satisfied with this worldly life and pay no heed to Our Signs, shall be Hell in consequence of the evils they earned (because of this erroneous creed and wrong conduct[12]).

9-10 And it is also a fact that, because of their faith, Allah will guide aright those who believe (sincerely in the Truths that have been presented in this Book) and do righteous deeds; and canals will be flowing underneath them in the Gardens of bliss.[13] Therein their prayers will be, "Glory to Thee, O Lord," and their greeting, "Peace be to you," and the burden of their hymn will be, "Praise is for Allah alone, the Lord of the universe."[14]

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1. This introductory verse contains a subtle answer to those foolish people who presumed that the discourses, which the Messenger was presenting as the Qur'ān, were nothing more than eloquent speeches, poetic lofty thoughts, and some predictions like those of the sooth-sayers. They are being warned that the Qur'ān is not what they supposed it to be but this is the Book of wisdom, and that if they did not pay due attention to it, they would deprive themselves of wisdom.

2. This question has been posed to impress on them that if they considered the matter coolly, they themselves would come to the conclusion that:

(a) there is nothing strange in appointing a man to warn his fellow men of the consequences of neglecting the Message. For it is obvious that a man, and not a *jinn* or an angel or any other being, was the proper messenger for human beings.

(b) there is nothing strange in it that the Creator and Lord of mankind should make arrangements for the guidance of erring human beings; nay, it would have been strange if He had made no such arrangements, and

(c) there is nothing strange in this that real honour and success should come to those who accept the guidance and not to those who reject it.

3. They dubbed him "enchanter" but did not consider whether the epithet appropriately applied to him or not. It is obvious that the mere fact that he was moving the hearts and influencing the minds of the believers with his eloquence, was not a sufficient proof that he was using magic to achieve this object. And it is not difficult at all to distinguish rhetoric of a Messenger from that of an enchanter for these are quite distinct from each other in their nature, in the objectives for which they are used and in the effect they produce on the lives of the believers. The irresponsible "enchanter" does not care at all whether what he utters is correct, just and righteous because his only object is to influence the hearts of the

hearers in order to achieve his own unlawful ends. That is why he does not hesitate at all to utter any false, exaggerated or unjust thing, if it serves his purpose. For his only aim is to produce an emotional effect in order to deceive the people by using an artificially ornamented and exaggerated language rather than to state things of wisdom. As a result of this, his talk is contradictory, imbalanced and unsystematic. As his sole object is self-interest, he abuses his rhetoric for exploitation, or for sowing seeds of discord or for setting one party against the other. Therefore, the "enchanter" fails to produce any high moral effects on the lives of the people or to imbue them with any righteous thoughts or to urge them to noble deeds or to bring about any healthy change in their lives; nay, as a result of his "magic" the people begin to exhibit even worse qualities than they did before.

Thus it is implied that by the application of this criterion, the charge of the unbelievers that, "This man is a manifest enchanter" is refuted, for it means to say to them, "You yourselves are witnessing that the talk of 'this person' is wise, systematic, balanced, right and just. Every word he utters is well-thought out and everything he says is most valuable and precious. His eloquence aims at nothing but reform of the people. There is not the least tinge of personal, family, national or any other worldly interest in his talk. His only intention and desire is to warn the people of the consequences of their negligence and to invite them to the way of their own good. Then consider the effects of his eloquence and you will find that they are quite different from those produced by the rhetoric of the 'enchanters'. The lives of all those who have been influenced by him have been so reformed that they have become models of high moral character and excellent conduct. Therefore, you should consider the matter and decide for yourselves whether he is an enchanter or a prophet."

4. This is to impress the fact that after creating the universe, Allah has not cut off connection with it, but has sat Himself upon His Throne and is practically directing and conducting and governing each and every part of it. The foolish people think that after creating the universe, Allah has left it to itself or to others to exploit it as they will. But the Qur'ān refutes this and says that Allah Himself is governing the whole of His creation and He has kept all the powers and the reins of government in His own hands and whatever is taking place in each and every part of the universe is happening with His command or permission. In short, He is not only the Creator but also the Ruler, Designer and Supporter of the universe, which is working in accordance with His will. (Please see also E.N.'s 40, 41 of *Al-A'arāf.*)

5. This is to emphasize the other side of the matter. He is All-Powerful and there is none who dare make even a recommendation to Him about anything not to speak of interfering with His management of affairs so as to cause any

change in His decrees or in the making or marring of anyone's fate. The most one can do is to make a supplication to Him but it all depends on His will to grant or reject it. There is none so powerful in His Kingdom as to have his own way in anything or to get his recommendations through anyhow.

6. After stating the bare fact that Allah alone is the Lord, people are being told the kind of conduct that 'fact' demands from them, that is, "When Allah alone is your Lord, you should worship Him alone." In this connection, it should also be noted that just as the Arabic word ربّ (*Rab*) implies three things—Providence, Supremacy and Sovereignty—likewise the Arabic word عبادت (*'ibādat*) also contains three corresponding implications: (1) worship, (2) servitude and (3) obedience:

(1) As Allah is his sole Providence, man should show his gratitude to Him by worshipping Him alone. He should pray and supplicate to Him and bow his head in reverence to Him and none else.

(2) As Allah is the only Supreme Being, man should behave like His servant and slave and should not adopt the attitude of independence towards Him nor should he subject himself to the mental or practical servitude of anyone else.

(3) As Allah is his sole Sovereign, man should obey His Commands, and follow His Law, and he should neither become his own sovereign nor should he acknowledge anyone else as his sovereign.

7. That is, "Will you not then understand the implications of the Reality that has been expounded? Will you not open your eyes and see the misunderstandings which have been misleading you into wrong ways opposed to Reality? Will you persist in them?"

8. This is the second basic principle of the teachings of every prophet; "You shall have to return to your Lord and render an account of all you did in this world." The first principle has been stated in the preceding verse: "Allah alone is your Lord: therefore worship Him only."

9. This sentence contains both a statement and its proof. The statement is, "Allah will again bring to life all human beings," and the proof is, "This is as easy for Allah as it was to create them first." The one who acknowledges that Allah has originated all creation (and who can deny this except those atheists who accepted the absurd theory of "Creation without a Creator" merely to get a plea for discarding the religion of the Christian clergy?) cannot consider this as impossible or irrational.

10. The reason why Allah will again bring the whole mankind to life is to reward the believers and to punish the disbelievers. After showing that this is

possible to raise the dead, it is stated that it is absolutely necessary to fulfill the demands of common sense and justice, for full justice cannot be done without this. Common-sense and justice demand that those who believe and do righteous deeds should be given their full rewards, and those who disbelieve and reject the Truth and do evil deeds, should be duly punished. As every sensible and just person knows that this demand of justice is not fulfilled in its entirety, and cannot be fulfilled in this world, it is absolutley essential that the whole of mankind should again be brought to life for this purpose. (Please see also E.N. 30, *Al-A'arāf* and E.N. 105, *Hūd*.)

11. This is the third argument in proof of the doctrine of the life in the Hereafter. It is based on Allah's manifestations in the heavens and on the earth. The greatest and most manifest of these are the sun, the moon and the alternation of the night and day, for these are ever present before each and every human being. All these clearly show that the Creator of this great and vast universe is not a child who has made all this for mere fun and will break it up when he is satiated with it. These manifestations of His are a clear proof of the fact that the Creator is All-Wise, for there is a system, a wisdom, a design and a serious object in each and every particle of His creation. These seem, as it were, to say. "When you yourselves learn from the signs and manifestations of His wisdom that He is All-Wise, how can you, then, expect that He will not call man to account after granting him common-sense, moral feelings, independent responsibility and authority to exploit His endless resources, and that He will not reward those who make the right use of these and punish those who abuse them?"

Thus, it has become obvious that in vv. 4-6, three arguments have been given in their logical order to present the doctrine of the Hereafter:

(1) The fact of the origination of life in this world is a proof that life in the Next World is also possible.

(2) There must be life in the Hereafter, because it is essential for the recompense of the deeds that one does, and of the use or abuse one makes of the moral responsibilities that have been entrusted to man. Therefore, it is the demand of common-sense and justice that there must be another world in which one should bear the consequences of one's deeds, for this is not possible in this world.

(3) When common-sense and justice demand that there must be life in the Hereafter, this need will surely be satisfied, for the Creator of man and the universe is All-Wise, and it cannot be conceived that the All-Wise will not satisfy the demands of common-sense and justice.

A deep thinking will show that these are the only possible arguments for the proof of the life in the Hereafter and these suffice, too. After this the only

thing that might be demanded in this connection is that it should be actually demonstrated before man to convince him that this thing is possible, necessary and demanded by the Wisdom of Allah. But it is obvious that this will not be done in this world for this is for the trial of man and not for recompense, and Allah wills to test whether man believes in the Hereafter without seeing it, merely by his reasoning on the right lines.

Besides this, the words, "He makes His Signs manifest for those people, who possess knowledge" and "...in all that Allah has created... there are Signs for those, who intend avoiding (deviation from the Truth)" are worthy of serious consideration. These words imply this: "Allah has in His wisdom spread such signs in each and every manifestation of His as clearly point to the realities that are hidden behind them; but only those people can reach to those realities, who (a) free themselves from the prejudices of ignorance and acquire knowledge from the sources with which Allah has provided man for this purpose, and (b) have the intention of avoiding wrong ways and following the Right Way."

12. This passage also contains both a statement and its proof. The statement is that those who reject the doctrine of the Hereafter shall inevitably go to Hell and its proof is that those who reject or pay no heed to this, commit such evil deeds as deserve nothing less than the fire of Hell. The fact which is supported by the experience of thousands of years, is that those who do not consider themselves responsible and accountable to God in the Hereafter, go astray into wrong ways for lack of any control over themselves, and commit immoralities and fill God's earth with tyranny, chaos and filth and thus merit Hell. This is inevitable. If a man leads his life on the presumption that there is no other life, he will have no fear that he shall have to render a full account of all his deeds in this world. Therefore his sole aim in this life will be to win, by hook or by crook, prosperity, happiness, fame and power in this world. Naturally these materialistic attitudes make people heedless of the Signs of Allah and mislead them into wrong ways that lead to Hell.

The above argument for the doctrine of the Hereafter is in its nature different from the previous three arguments. This is based on the knowledge gained by human experience while the former were based on rational reasoning. Though here only a hint has been given about it, the same has been stated in detail in other places in the Qur'ān. This is the argument in brief. Human beings cannot adopt individually or collectively the right attitude towards life unless the doctrine of accountability to God is deeply embedded in their hearts. The fact that human beings begin to behave erroneously, if and when their belief in this doctrine disappears or becomes weak, is borne out by a long experience. Had not the creed of the Hereafter been real, its acceptance or rejection would not have produced the results inevitably and continuously for centuries. The fact that the acceptance of a

doctrine should have continuously produced right sort of results, and its denial wrong results, is a clear proof that it is real. Though the premises of the above argument and the conclusion drawn from these are clear and closely connected, there are some people who do not agree with this proposition. They argue their point like this. There are many instances of people who deny the Hereafter and base their moral philosophy and their rule of conduct on atheism and materialism: still they possess high moral characters and abstain from every sort of evil; in short, they are virtuous in their affairs and render great services to the people. But a little thinking will show that this is a weak argument. If we probe into the materialistic philosophies and systems, we shall find that all these lack solid foundations for the moral excellence and practical virtuous deeds; therefore they cannot produce those qualities with which the atheists and the materialists are credited. Indeed no such motivating factors exist in those philosophies as may produce the qualities of righteousness, honesty, trust-worthiness, justice, compassion, generosity, sacrifice, sympathy, self-control, purity, the fulfilment of duties, obligations and pledges and the like. The only alternative to the doctrines of *Tauhīd* and the Hereafter is "utilitarianism" which might become the basis for a practical moral system, for all the other philosophies are merely hypothetical and impracticable. It is quite obvious that the motivating power of utilitarianism is very limited because it is incapable of carrying a person farther than "utility" itself. Therefore the one who believes in this doctrine will consider a virtue a "virtue" only as long as it is useful to his own person, family, society etc., and will direct all his efforts towards promoting their welfare and happiness and will adhere to moral qualities only as long as they are conducive to his own good or to that of his own people. But he will discard these "virtues", when he is convinced that these will be harmful. That is why a utilitarian does not believe in absolute morality but adopts truth or falsehood, honesty or dishonesty, faithfulness or treachery, justice or injustice, in short, any virtue or vice that may suit the occasion and be useful for his own interests. The English people are the most appropriate example of utilitarian morality. Their example will serve our purpose as they are cited by its supporters to prove their proposition that one may possess a high moral character even though one were to deny the existence of God and the Hereafter for, they say, the English people in general are more truthful, more honest, more just and more trust-worthy than others though they are materialists; whereas the fact is that the English people provide the most appropriate practical proof of the instability of utilitarian character. Is it not a fact that the representatives of the English nation make a very poor show of their morality in regard to international affairs? They tell brazen-faced lies and are guilty of treachery, tyranny, injustice and dishonesty, and the whole nation backs them up as its champions. Had their

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وَلَوْ يُعَجِّلُ اللّٰهُ لِلنَّاسِ الشَّرَّ اسْتِعْجَالَهُمْ بِالْخَيْرِ لَقُضِيَ إِلَيْهِمْ أَجَلُهُمْ ۚ
فَنَذَرُ الَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءَنَا فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ﴿١١﴾ وَإِذَا مَسَّ
الْإِنسَانَ الضُّرُّ دَعَانَا لِجَنبِهِ أَوْ قَاعِدًا أَوْ قَائِمًا ۖ فَلَمَّا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُ
ضُرَّهُ مَرَّ كَأَن لَّمْ يَدْعُنَا إِلَىٰ ضُرٍّ مَّسَّهُ ۚ كَذَٰلِكَ زُيِّنَ لِلْمُسْرِفِينَ مَا
كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٢﴾ وَلَقَدْ أَهْلَكْنَا الْقُرُونَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَمَّا ظَلَمُوا ۙ وَجَاءَتْهُمْ
رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَمَا كَانُوا لِيُؤْمِنُوا ۚ كَذَٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الْقَوْمَ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿١٣﴾
ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ خَلَائِفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ مِن بَعْدِهِمْ لِنَنظُرَ كَيْفَ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤﴾
وَإِذَا تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ ۙ قَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءَنَا ائْتِ بِقُرْآنٍ
غَيْرِ هَٰذَا أَوْ بَدِّلْهُ ۚ قُلْ مَا يَكُونُ لِي أَنْ أُبَدِّلَهُ مِن تِلْقَاءِ نَفْسِي ۖ إِنْ
أَتَّبِعُ إِلَّا مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ ۖ إِنِّي أَخَافُ إِنْ عَصَيْتُ رَبِّي عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿١٥﴾
قُل لَّوْ شَاءَ اللّٰهُ مَا تَلَوْتُهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَا أَدْرَاكُم بِهِ ۖ فَقَدْ لَبِثْتُ فِيكُمْ
عُمُرًا مِّن قَبْلِهِ ۚ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٦﴾ فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللّٰهِ
كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِآيَاتِهِ ۚ إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ
اللّٰهِ مَا لَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنفَعُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ هَٰؤُلَاءِ شُفَعَاؤُنَا عِندَ اللّٰهِ ۚ
قُلْ أَتُنَبِّئُونَ اللّٰهَ بِمَا لَا يَعْلَمُ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۚ سُبْحَانَهُ وَ
تَعَالَىٰ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَمَا كَانَ النَّاسُ إِلَّا أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً فَاخْتَلَفُوا ۚ وَ
لَوْلَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِن رَّبِّكَ لَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ فِيمَا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿١٩﴾ وَ
يَقُولُونَ لَوْلَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِ ۖ فَقُلْ إِنَّمَا الْغَيْبُ لِلّٰهِ فَانتَظِرُوا ۖ
إِنِّي مَعَكُم مِّنَ الْمُنتَظِرِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَإِذَا أَذَقْنَا النَّاسَ رَحْمَةً مِّن بَعْدِ ضَرَّاءَ

Had Allah[15] hastened in dealing out evil to people as they hastened in asking good of the world, the term allowed to them for action would have been terminated long before this. (But this is not Our Way:) We let wander in their rebellion those people who do not expect to meet Us. Strange is the behaviour of man! When he is in affliction, he calls Us, standing or sitting or lying down, but when We remove his affliction from him, he behaves as if he had never called Us at the time when affliction came upon him. Thus the evil deeds of such transgressors have been made seeming fair to them. O mankind, We destroyed before you those communities[16] (which were in power in their time,) when they adopted the attitude of transgression,[17] for their Messengers came to them with clear signs but they would not believe in them. This is how We recompense the criminals for their crimes. Now We have appointed you in their place on the earth so that We may test how you conduct yourselves.[18] 11-14

When Our clear revelations are recited to them, those who do not expect to meet Us say, "Bring another Qur'ān in its stead or make some amendment in it."[19] O Muhammad, say to them, "It is not for me to make any alteration in it of my own accord. I follow only what is revealed to me. Indeed, if I disobey my Lord, I fear the chastisement of a dreadful Day."[20] Say also, "Had Allah willed so, I would never have recited this Qur'ān to you, nor would I have told you anything (about its existence). I have already lived a lifetime among you before its revelation. Do you not use your common-sense?[21] And Who can be a greater sinner than the one who himself forges a lie and then ascribes it to Allah or falsifies[22] His real Revelations? Indeed, criminals can never attain (true) success."[23] 15-17

These people worship besides Allah those which can neither harm nor benefit them, and say, "These are our intercessors with Allah". O Muhammed, say to them, "Do you presume to inform Allah of that thing which He knows not to be either in the heavens or in the earth ?"[24] He is absolutely free from and exalted above what they associate with Him. 18

In the beginning all the people were one community, but afterwards they invented different creeds and ways.[25] And had not your Lord ordained a decree, that thing in which they differ would have been resolved.[26] 19

20 As regards their saying, "Why has not a Sign been sent down to this Prophet from his Lord?"[27] tell them, "The unseen belongs wholly and solely to Allah. Well, wait (for it): I, too shall wait with you."[28]

Contd. from p.269]

morality been founded on sound basis, it could not have been possible that as individuals they should be truthful, honest, just, righteous and observe pledges, but as a nation they would discard all these moral values. This is a clear proof that these people do not believe in moral values as such but only if these are useful for their self-interest: otherwise they could not have adopted two contradictory positions as individuals and as a nation. Morality is morality only if it is absolute, otherwise it is a policy and expediency.

Nevertheless, if there be any up-holders of absolute morality from among the disbelievers of Allah and the Hereafter, they could not have got these virtues from the doctrine of utilitarianism but from those latent religious influences that might have remained embedded in their hearts without their conscious knowledge. Such a person is, in fact, indebted to religion for his moral excellences, though he be attributing these to secularism and materialism, for he cannot point out anything, whatsoever, in them that might have motivated those virtues.

13. We should not pass cursorily over this verse and should consider it deeply in the order it has been presented:

(1) Why will they be given Gardens of bliss in the life of the Hereafter? This will be because they followed the Right Way in the life of this world and adopted the right ways in every aspect of life, both as individuals and as a community, and discarded the false and erroneous ways.

(2) How did they obtain at every step, at every turning and at every crossroad the correct criterion of judging between the right and the wrong, the true and the false, the righteous and the erroneous? Then wherefrom did they get the power to remain stead-fast on the Right Way, avoiding scrupulously wrong ways, after getting the right sort of discernment? It was their Lord Who is the real source of everything, Who gave them the guidance and the power of doing good works on every critical occasion.

(3) Why did their Lord give them that guidance and power? He gave them these things because of their Faith.

(4) What is that characteristic of the Faith which produces the above results ? The Faith which produces those results does not comprise mere profession

but it is that Faith which becomes the moving spirit of one's conduct and character and has the power of reforming one's morals and deeds.

In order to illustrate this point, let us consider, in the physical life of man, the case of food that is consumed for nourishment, health, energy and happiness. It is obvious that these results cannot be produced by the mere taking in of any food, but by that "food" which is so digested as turns into blood and circulates into every vein to provide energy to every part of the body for its proper functioning. In the same way, in the moral life, guidance, righteous attitude and pure conduct and true success, depend on those right creeds that get deeply embedded in the mind, heart and soul. Otherwise, creeds which are merely professed by the tongue or lie dormant in some corner of the mind and the heart, cannot produce such results, for they cannot influence one's conduct, character, way of thinking and attitude towards life for the better. Just as one may eat food and still not obtain those useful results which are produced only if it is digested properly according to the physical laws of God, in the same way, one who professes those right creeds merely with his tongue, but does not make them a part of his mind, heart and soul, does not deserve those rewards which are only for those whose deeds correspond to the creeds.

14. These facts about the life in Paradise have been stated in order to make conspicuous the high thinking and the noble qualities of the Believers. When they enter Paradise after coming out successful in this worldly test they will manifest the same high qualities of character that they had in this world. Instead of making urgent and immediate demands for beautiful articles of luxury, musical instruments, wine and women, they will sing hymns of praise to their Lord. This also belies that picture of the life in Paradise that some crooked people have formed of it. The fact is that the noble personalities which the Believers build in this world and the high ways of thinking and the excellent moral characters they form in this world and the great and rigid training they give to their feelings, emotions and desires, will become all the more prominent in the pure surroundings and environments of Paradise. That is why they will love it most to sing hymns of praise to Allah and glorify His name just as they did in this world. Besides this, their greatest wish and desire in Paradise will be peace for one another, as it was in their collective life in this world.

15. After the introductory verses (1-10), the Qur'ān takes up admonition which is the main subject of the Sūrah. In order to understand this fully we should keep two things in view as its background:

First, a little before its revelation, the continuous horrible famine, which had afflicted Makkah for seven long years and humbled the haughty Quraish, had come to an end. Naturally this had given a blow to idol-worship and acted as a

stimulus to God-worship: for in their utter helplessness, they had to supplicate to Allah and cry meekly for help. So much so that Abū Sufyān had to approach the Holy Prophet with this request: "Please pray to Allah to remove this affliction from us. But when the famine was over, and rains began to fall, and prosperity returned, they began to show rebellion and do evil deeds and started their hostile activities against the believers. Thus the hearts that had turned to Allah, again became neglectful of Him. (See XVI: 113, XXIII: 75-77, XLIV: 10-16).

Secondly, the Qur'ān answered the question with which they confronted the Holy Prophet whenever he warned them of the consequences of rejecting the Truth. They would say, "You are always threatening us with Allah's wrath; why doesn't the Divine torment visit us and why is it being delayed?"

Keeping the above background in view, vv. 11-12 may be expanded like this: "Allah does not hasten in punishing and seizing the people for their sins as He hastens in showing kindness and compassion to them. Do they, then, want Him to hasten His torment for their rebellions, as He hastened to remove famine in answer to their supplications? As this is not Our Way, We give them time to mend their evil ways in spite of their transgressions and rebellions. We send warning after warning and give them respite until their term comes to an end. Then the law of requital comes into force. In contrast to this, their way is the way of mean and narrow-minded people. When affliction comes, they remember Allah, begin to cry and call Him meekly, but forget it all during the time of prosperity. Such bad ways as these are leading them to Divine torment."

16. The Arabic word قَرْن (*qarn*) is commonly used for "the people living during the same period." But from the way the Qur'ān has used this word on different occasions, it is evident that by *"qarn"* is meant the community which had been invested with power and authority and appointed wholly or partially to the position of leadership of the world. One way in which such a community is destroyed is that it is totally exterminated but there are other forms of its destruction also.

17. Here the word ظُلْم (*zulm*) has not been used in its commonly known limited sense, but it covers all sorts of sins that are committed, when people transgress the boundaries of Allah's slavery. (Please refer to E.N. 49 of *Al-Baqarah*.)

18. vv. 13-14 have been pointedly addressed to the Arabs so as to say, "O Prophet of Arabia, learn a lesson from the communities that have passed before you. They were given an opportunity for doing good deeds in their time but instead of this they adopted the attitude of transgression and rebellion and rejected the teachings of the Messengers who had been sent for their guidance. As they

failed in Our test, We dismissed them from leadership. Now, O people of Arabia, your turn has come and you have replaced them and have got the opportunity for doing the same work under the guidance of Our Prophet Muhammad. You must understand that you are undergoing the same test in which your predecessors have failed. If you do not want to meet with the end they met, you should make the right use of this opportunity by learning a lesson from their end and by avoiding the errors, which became the ultimate cause of their destruction."

19. They implied two things when they said these words. First, they meant that what Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) was presenting as Divine Revelation was really the product of his own mind but he was ascribing it to Allah merely to make his claim weighty. Secondly, they implied this: "If you want to be the leader of your people, present something that may make them prosperous in the world and give up the doctrines of *Tauhīd* and the Hereafter and the moral restrictions you are prescribing in your teaching. And if it be not possible, make some amendments in the Qur'ān so that a compromise may be effected between you and us on the principle of give and take so that there should be some scope for our *shirk* in your *Tauhīd* and for our self-worship and for our salvation in the Hereafter, irrespective of what we do in this world. You should also note it well that we cannot accept your absolute morality: therefore you should make an allowance for our prejudices, our rites and customs, our personal and national interests and our lusts. We propose that with mutual agreement we should make a list of those religious demands which should be obligatory on us for the fulfilment of Allah's rights, and beyond that we should be free to conduct our worldly affairs in any way we like. This compromise is necessary because we cannot accept your demand that human life in all its aspects should entirely be led in accordance with the implications of the doctrines of *Tauhīd* and the Hereafter and the regulations of the Islamic Code of life."

20. This is the answer to the two above-mentioned demands: "I have no authority of making any alterations in this Book for I am not its author but Allah is the One Who is sending it down to me. Therefore there is no question of any compromise about it. If you want to accept its Way, you will have to accept it as it is; otherwise you are free to reject it."

21. This is a very strong argument against their accusation that Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) was himself the author of the Qur'ān but was ascribing it to Allah, and in support of the Holy Prophet's claim that it was being sent down to him by Allah, Who was its Author. The argument is this: "You yourselves have witnessed the forty years of his life before his appointment to Prophethood. He was born in your own city and passed his boyhood, youth and middle age before your very eyes. He lived among you and had all kinds of relations—social, marital, economic, etc. with you. So much so that no aspect of

his life was hidden from you. Did you notice anything in his whole life that might show that he could be the author of this Book? Do you not use your commonsense?"

The question posed in the Qur'ān implied two things which were well known to everyone in Makkah about the Holy Prophet:

First, during the forty years of his life before Prophethood, he had neither received any education nor training nor sat in any company that should have enabled him to become the author of such a Book as was full of unique things that were unknown to the people around him. No one had ever heard from him anything about the problems that had been dealt with in different Sūrahs of the Qur'ān. So much so that not even a relative or close friend of his had ever noticed anything in his talk or in anything about him that might have shown any signs of gradual development towards it, before he made his great claim to Prophethood when he reached the age of forty. This was a clear proof of the fact that the Qur'ān was not the invention of his own brain and that it must have been sent down to him from outside. For it is impossible for a human being to produce anything like this, all of a sudden and without ever manifesting any signs of its evolution and development in his earlier life. That is why when some intelligent people of Makkah felt the absurdity of this accusation, they began to say that it was some other person who taught these things to him. But this was even more absurd than the first thing because they could not point out specifically a single person in the whole of Arabia, not to say of Makkah, who had the ability of producing such unique things as were contained in the Qur'ān. They also knew that a person of his high calibre could not have remained obscure in some unknown corner for forty years.

The second thing, that had distinguished him during those forty years of his life, was his noble character both from the negative and from the positive aspects. He was never known to have told a single lie or practised any kind of deceit, forgery, cunning, craftiness and the like in any way whatsoever. On the other hand, all those people with whom he had come into contact in any capacity bore witness to the fact that he had been truthful, honest, and trustworthy without any blemish whatsoever. As an instance, a most well-known historical fact may be cited. Only five years before his Prophethood, the Ka'abah was damaged by rains. When they were re-building it, a quarrel arose among the different clans of the Quraish as to who should have the honour of setting *Hajr-i-Aswad* (the Black Stone) in its proper place. Therefore it was agreed that the one who would be the first to enter into the *Haram* next morning should arbitrate in the quarrel. Next morning the first person who entered the *Haram* was Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him). At this all the people cried out with joy, "He is an absolutely trustworthy man, and we are fully satisfied with him; he is Muhammad." This is how

Allah had made that large gathering of the Quraish bear witness to the fact that he was "The Trustworthy", before appointing him as His Messenger. Therefore there was no justification for anyone to accuse the man who had never told a lie nor ever practised forgery nor craftiness in his whole life, of ascribing falsely to Allah his own literary creation, and claiming categorically and persistently that it was of Divine Origin.

That is why Allah has asked His Messenger to refute their absurd charge by saying, as it were, only this: "O my people, use your commonsense before making this absurd accusation, for I am not a stranger or a foreigner among you. I have lived a life time of forty years among you before making a claim that I have received Revelation from Allah. How can you expect from my past that I would present the Qur'ān to you as Allah's Book, without gaining knowledge from Him and without His Command?" (For further details see Sūrah *Al-Qasas,* E.N. 109).

22. That is, "If these Revelations are not from Allah and I myself compose them and present them as Revelations from Him, there can be no greater sinner than I. On the other hand, if these Revelations are truly from Allah and you are falsifying these, then there can be no greater sinner than you."

23. Some foolish people draw wrong and misleading conclusions from this verse, by a fallacious reasoning. They confine the meanings of فلاح *(falāh)* to "long life" or "worldly prosperity" or "worldly success" and argue like this: This verse declares categorically that "criminals can never attain success." The converse of this propositon, that is, "anyone who is successful cannot be a criminal" must also be true. Hence, if a claimant should live a long life after his claim to Prophethood or prosper in the world or his claim receives a good response in the world from the people, he should be acknowledged as a true prophet. For they argue, if he had been a false prophet he could not have "prospered," but would have been killed or starved to death or rendered unsuccessful in his mission, as soon as he had claimed to be a prophet. But even a little thinking will show that this "argument" is fallacious on the face of it. Firstly, the converse of every proposition is not always true. Secondly, the Qur'ān does not use the word *falāh* in this limited sense. Thirdly, Allah deals with the criminals according to His Divine Law of respite.

Now let us consider the matter in detail. The words "Indeed the criminals cannot attain success", have not been used, in the context they occur, to prescribe a criterion for judging a true Prophet from a false one, so that if a claimant is "successful", he should be accepted, and if he is not, he should be rejected. As a

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مَسَّتْهُمْ إِذَا لَهُمْ مَّكْرٌ فِيْ اٰيَاتِنَا ۭ قُلِ اللّٰهُ اَسْرَعُ مَكْرًا ۭ اِنَّ رُسُلَنَا
يَكْتُبُوْنَ مَا تَمْكُرُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾ هُوَ الَّذِيْ يُسَيِّرُكُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ ۭ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا
كُنْتُمْ فِي الْفُلْكِ ۚ وَجَرَيْنَ بِهِمْ بِرِيْحٍ طَيِّبَةٍ وَّفَرِحُوْا بِهَا جَاۗءَتْهَا رِيْحٌ
عَاصِفٌ وَّجَاۗءَهُمُ الْمَوْجُ مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ وَّظَنُّوْٓا اَنَّهُمْ اُحِيْطَ بِهِمْ ۙ
دَعَوُا اللّٰهَ مُخْلِصِيْنَ لَهُ الدِّيْنَ ۚ لَىِٕنْ اَنْجَيْتَنَا مِنْ هٰذِهٖ لَنَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ
الشّٰكِرِيْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾ فَلَمَّآ اَنْجٰىهُمْ اِذَا هُمْ يَبْغُوْنَ فِي الْاَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ ۗ يٰٓاَيُّهَا
النَّاسُ اِنَّمَا بَغْيُكُمْ عَلٰٓى اَنْفُسِكُمْ ۙ مَّتَاعَ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا ۡ ثُمَّ اِلَيْنَا مَرْجِعُكُمْ
فَنُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ اِنَّمَا مَثَلُ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَاۗءٍ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ
مِنَ السَّمَاۗءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهٖ نَبَاتُ الْاَرْضِ مِمَّا يَاْكُلُ النَّاسُ وَالْاَنْعَامُ ۭ
حَتّٰٓى اِذَآ اَخَذَتِ الْاَرْضُ زُخْرُفَهَا وَازَّيَّنَتْ وَظَنَّ اَهْلُهَآ اَنَّهُمْ قٰدِرُوْنَ
عَلَيْهَآ ۙ اَتٰىهَآ اَمْرُنَا لَيْلًا اَوْ نَهَارًا فَجَعَلْنٰهَا حَصِيْدًا كَاَنْ لَّمْ تَغْنَ بِالْاَمْسِ ۭ
كَذٰلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ الْاٰيٰتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَّتَفَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَاللّٰهُ يَدْعُوْٓا اِلٰى دَارِ السَّلٰمِ ۭ وَ
يَهْدِيْ مَنْ يَّشَاۗءُ اِلٰى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ﴿٢٥﴾ لِلَّذِيْنَ اَحْسَنُوا الْحُسْنٰى وَزِيَادَةٌ ۭ
وَلَا يَرْهَقُ وُجُوْهَهُمْ قَتَرٌ وَّلَا ذِلَّةٌ ۭ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ اَصْحٰبُ الْجَنَّةِ ۚ هُمْ فِيْهَا
خٰلِدُوْنَ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ كَسَبُوا السَّيِّاٰتِ جَزَاۗءُ سَيِّئَةٍ بِمِثْلِهَا ۙ وَتَرْهَقُهُمْ ذِلَّةٌ ۭ
مَا لَهُمْ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ مِنْ عَاصِمٍ ۚ كَاَنَّمَآ اُغْشِيَتْ وُجُوْهُهُمْ قِطَعًا مِّنَ الَّيْلِ
مُظْلِمًا ۭ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ اَصْحٰبُ النَّارِ ۚ هُمْ فِيْهَا خٰلِدُوْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَيَوْمَ نَحْشُرُهُمْ
جَمِيْعًا ثُمَّ نَقُوْلُ لِلَّذِيْنَ اَشْرَكُوْا مَكَانَكُمْ اَنْتُمْ وَشُرَكَاۗؤُكُمْ ۚ فَزَيَّلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ
وَقَالَ شُرَكَاۗؤُهُمْ مَّا كُنْتُمْ اِيَّانَا تَعْبُدُوْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ فَكَفٰى بِاللّٰهِ شَهِيْدًۢا بَيْنَنَا وَ

This is how people behave: No sooner do We show mercy to 21-28
them after some calamity had afflicted them than they begin to practise deceptions[29] concerning Our Signs. Say to them, "Allah is more swift in His plans than you: indeed His angels are keeping a full record of your acts of deception."[30] It is Allah Who enables you to travel over land and by sea. So you set sails in ships, rejoicing over a fair breeze. Then all of a sudden a strong wind begins to rage against the passengers and billows begin to surge upon them from every side and they realize that they have been encircled by the tempest. At that time they pray to Allah with sincere faith, saying, "If Thou deliverest us from this peril, we will become Thy grateful servants."[31] But when He delivers them, the same people begin to rebel in the land against the Truth. O people, this rebellion of yours is harmful only to yourselves. (You may enjoy) the transitory pleasures of this world, then you have to return to Us: then We will let you know what you have been doing. This worldly life (which has so enamoured you that you have become neglectful of Our Signs) may be likened to the produce of the earth: We sent rain-water from the sky, and the crops of which man and animals eat, grew up luxuriantly. Then at that very time, when the land was at its best, and the crops had ripened and decked out and the owners were presuming that they would be able to benefit from them, Our Command came all of a sudden by night or by day, and We destroyed it so thoroughly as though nothing had existed there the previous day.[31a] Thus We expound Our Signs in detail for the consideration of those people who are thoughtful. (You are being deluded by this transitory life,) and Allah invites you to the Abode of Peace.[32] (Guidance is in His power,) and He guides to the Right Way whomsoever He pleases. Those who have done excellent works will get excellent rewards, and even more than their merits:[33] neither gloom nor disgrace shall cover their faces. They deserve the Garden, where they will abide for ever. And those who have earned evil deeds shall have their recompense according to the evil they earned: [34] disgrace shall set over them: there shall be none to protect them from Allah: their faces shall be covered with such gloom[35] as if the black veils of the night had fallen over them: they deserve Hell, wherein they shall abide for ever. On the Day We will muster them together (in Our Court,) We will say to those who committed *shirk*, "Stay where you are, you and those whom you set as partners

with Us." Then We will remove the state of strangeness from among them,[36] and the partners they had set up will say, "You did not worship us."

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matter of fact, these words have been put in the mouth of the Messenger to make a declaration like this: "I know it for certain that the criminals cannot attain (true) success: therefore I cannot commit the crime of making a false claim to Prophethood. But as regards you, I am absolutely sure that you cannot attain true success because you are guilty of falsifying me who is a true Prophet of Allah."

The other thing is that the *word falāh* is not used in the limited sense of "worldly success", but it has been used to denote the permanent 'success' which never suffers any loss whatsoever irrespective of the fact whether the claimant gains or does not gain any worldly success in the initial stage. Nay, it is just possible that a false "claimant" who invites people to misguidance should attain great worldly "success" and his misguidance might also prosper. This is, however, not success in the terminology of the Qur'ān, but this would be an utter failure. On the other hand, it is also possible that the inviter to the Truth should suffer untold afflictions or fall a prey to the persecutions of the transgressors, and leave this world without winning over anyone to the side of the Truth, but this will be, in the terminology of the Qur'ān, true success and not a failure.

The other thing that refutes the fallacy of these foolish people is that they do not take into consideration the "Divine Law of Respite", according to which the mere fact that a false prophet enjoyed a long "prosperous" life is not a proof that he was a true prophet. The Qur'ān has made it clear at many places that Allah does not expedite the matter of the punishment of the criminals, but gives them respite to mend their ways; nay, He also lets them loose in their deviation if they abuse that respite and become more corrupt. Sometimes He makes them even more "prosperous" so that they should fully manifest all the evils they had hidden in their hearts and incur full punishment which they really deserve for their evil deeds. The "Divine Law of Respite" takes its due course in the case of false prophets as it does in the case of other criminals. And there is no reason why they should be an exception to this. Satan, the greatest of all criminals, has been allowed to practice every kind of deception up to the Day of Judgement, and there is no mention of any exception to this effect that he will not be allowed to set up a false prophet.

As a last resort, such perverse interpreters of the Qur'ān turn to vv. 44-47 of Sūrah *Al-Hāqqah:* "If Muhammad had fabricated something himself and ascribed that to Us, We would have seized his hand and cut off his heart's vein." But these cannot serve their purpose, for what they imply is only this: "If the true

Prophet appointed by Allah were to ascribe any false thing to Allah, he would be seized forthwith". Therefore it is no more than a fallacy to argue from this to the erroneous conclusion that the impostor who is not seized is a true prophet, for this Divine principle applies only to a true Prophet and not to an impostor. In order to grasp this point, let us take the instance of the government servants. It is obvious that the rules and regulations which are prescribed for government servants apply only to those who are actually government servants and not to impostors. Those who pretend to be government servants are dealt with according to the criminal code like other criminals and villains and not according to the code of employment. Besides this, the context in which these verses occur clearly shows that these are not laying down any criterion of judging whether a claimant is a true Prophet or an impostor. For, in continuation of the preceding verse (43), the passage will, so to say, read like this: "This is the Revelation sent down from the Lord of the universe. If Muhammad had himself fabricated this and ascribed that to Us, We would have....." Moreover, a true Prophet can easily be distinguished from an impostor by his high character, his noble mission and the unique Message he presents. Hence there was no need of setting up such an irrational and unnatural standard of distinguishing a true Prophet from an impostor.

24. This is a fine way of saying that no such intercessors exist as can plead their cases with Allah. For if "something" is not in the knowledge of Allah, it implies that it does not exist at all, for everything that exists anywhere in the heavens and the earth is in His knowledge.

25. Please see E.N. 230 of *Al-Baqarah* and E.N. 24 of *Al- An'ām*.

26. The "decree" that Allah has ordained is that "the Reality" shall be kept hidden from man's senses in order to test whether he recognizes this by using his common-sense, intelligence, conscience and intuition, and if he does not, he shall be allowed to tread the wrong ways he chooses. That is why their differences about the Reality are not being resolved by uncovering it today.

This thing has been stated here to remove a common misunderstanding about the diversity of religions in the world.

At that time, there was a confusion in the minds of the people (and is even today) concerning this. They said, "Different people profess different religions, and the followers of each religion claim that their religion alone is the true one. How may then a seeker after truth judge which one of these is the true religion?" The answer is: "In the beginning all mankind had one religion only, and that was the true religion. Then people strayed away from it and invented different religions of their own with different creeds and ways. Now if you desire that Allah

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بَيْنَكُمْ إِنْ كُنَّا عَنْ عِبَادَتِكُمْ لَغٰفِلِيْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾ هُنَالِكَ تَبْلُوْا كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّآ
أَسْلَفَتْ وَرُدُّوْٓا إِلَى اللّٰهِ مَوْلٰىهُمُ الْحَقِّ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَّا كَانُوْا يَفْتَرُوْنَ ﴿٣٠﴾
قُلْ مَنْ يَّرْزُقُكُمْ مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَمَّنْ يَّمْلِكُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَ
مَنْ يُّخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَيُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَمَنْ يُّدَبِّرُ
الْأَمْرَ ۚ فَسَيَقُوْلُوْنَ اللّٰهُ ۚ فَقُلْ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿٣١﴾ فَذٰلِكُمُ اللّٰهُ رَبُّكُمُ الْحَقُّ ۚ
فَمَاذَا بَعْدَ الْحَقِّ إِلَّا الضَّلٰلُ ۖ فَأَنّٰى تُصْرَفُوْنَ ﴿٣٢﴾ كَذٰلِكَ حَقَّتْ كَلِمَتُ
رَبِّكَ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ فَسَقُوْٓا أَنَّهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾ قُلْ هَلْ مِنْ شُرَكَآئِكُمْ
مَّنْ يَّبْدَؤُا الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيْدُهٗ ۚ قُلِ اللّٰهُ يَبْدَؤُا الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيْدُهٗ فَأَنّٰى
تُؤْفَكُوْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾ قُلْ هَلْ مِنْ شُرَكَآئِكُمْ مَّنْ يَّهْدِيْٓ إِلَى الْحَقِّ ۚ قُلِ اللّٰهُ يَهْدِيْ
لِلْحَقِّ ۚ أَفَمَنْ يَّهْدِيْٓ إِلَى الْحَقِّ أَحَقُّ أَنْ يُّتَّبَعَ أَمَّنْ لَّا يَهِدِّيْٓ إِلَّآ أَنْ
يُّهْدٰى ۚ فَمَا لَكُمْ ۖ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُوْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَمَا يَتَّبِعُ أَكْثَرُهُمْ إِلَّا ظَنًّا ۚ إِنَّ الظَّنَّ
لَا يُغْنِيْ مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْئًا ۚ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلِيْمٌۢ بِمَا يَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَمَا كَانَ هٰذَا
الْقُرْاٰنُ أَنْ يُّفْتَرٰى مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ وَلٰكِنْ تَصْدِيْقَ الَّذِيْ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَ
تَفْصِيْلَ الْكِتٰبِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيْهِ مِنْ رَّبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾ أَمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ افْتَرٰىهُ ۚ قُلْ
فَأْتُوْا بِسُوْرَةٍ مِّثْلِهٖ وَادْعُوْا مَنِ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ
صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾ بَلْ كَذَّبُوْا بِمَا لَمْ يُحِيْطُوْا بِعِلْمِهٖ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِهِمْ تَأْوِيْلُهٗ ۚ كَذٰلِكَ
كَذَّبَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَانْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَمِنْهُمْ
مَّنْ يُّؤْمِنُ بِهٖ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ لَّا يُؤْمِنُ بِهٖ ۚ وَرَبُّكَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُفْسِدِيْنَ ﴿٤٠﴾
وَإِنْ كَذَّبُوْكَ فَقُلْ لِّيْ عَمَلِيْ وَلَكُمْ عَمَلُكُمْ ۚ أَنْتُمْ بَرِيْٓئُوْنَ مِمَّآ أَعْمَلُ وَ

Allah suffices as a witness between you and us and (even if you worshipped us,) we were utterly unaware of your worship."[37] At that time everyone will taste of what he did. All shall be brought back to Allah, their real Lord, and all the lies they had invented would vanish from them. 29-33

Ask them "Who provides for you from the heavens and the earth? Who has power over the faculties of hearing and sight? Who brings forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living? Who directs the system of the universe?" They will surely reply, "Allah". Say "Will you not, then, refrain from (going against the Truth)?" The same Allah is your true Lord:[38] then, what remains there after the Truth except deviation? Well, whither are you being turned away?"[39] O Prophet, behold! thus has the Word of your Lord come true in regard to the evil-doers that they would not believe.[40]

Ask them "Is there any of the partners you have set up with Allah who originates creation and then brings it back again?"[41]—Say "It is Allah Who originates creation and brings it back again. How then are you being perverted to the wrong ways of *shirk*?"[42] 34

Ask them, "Is there any of the partners you have set up with Allah, who guides to the Truth?"[43]—Say "It is Allah alone Who guides to the Truth." Very well, then tell: "Who is more worthy to be followed: He Who guides to the Truth or the one who cannot guide unless he himself be guided? What has then gone wrong with you that you make perverted judgements?" 35

The fact is that most of them are following mere conjecture,[44] whereas conjecture cannot in any way fulfil the requirements of the true knowledge. Allah has full knowledge of what they are doing. 36

And this Qur'ān is not a thing that could be composed without Allah's Revelation: nay, it is the confirmation of what was revealed before it, and full explanation of 'the Book'.[45] There is no doubt about this that it is from the Lord of the universe. 37

Do they say that the Prophet has composed it himself? Tell them, "If what you say be true, then produce one sūrah like this and you may call to your assistance anyone you can other than Allah."[46] The fact is that they have denied (on mere conjecture) what was not 38-41

within the reach of their knowledge nor had they, as yet, tasted its consequences.[47] Likewise, the people who went before them declared as false the Revelations, but behold, what was the end of those unjust people! Some of these people will believe in it and others will not, and your Lord knows these mischief-makers[48] very well indeed. If these people declare that you are an impostor say to them "I am responsible for my deeds and you are for yours: you are not accountable for what I do, and I am not for what you do."[49]

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Himself should uncover the Truth and present it to you to enable you to decide which religion is the true one, you should know that this will not be done in this life, because you are required to decide this by using your commonsense and intelligence. This worldly life is a trial to see whether or not you yourselves recognize the Truth by using your common-sense and intelligence."

27. That is, "Though they demanded a sign as a proof of the fact that he was a true Prophet and was presenting true Revelations, this was not based on a genuine desire for recognizing and accepting the Truth but was merely a pretext for rejecting it. For they had no intention of moulding their habits, their morality, their social system, in short, reforming every aspect of their life in accordance with the implications of the acceptance of the Message of the Prophet. As they did not intend to believe in it, they would say, even after seeing a Sign, that no Sign had been shown to them. Obviously, they would not give up that "freedom" which they were enjoying in following their desires and lusts, by accepting the Unseen (the creeds of *Tauhīd* and the Hereafter), which would bind them to the absolute moral principles."

28. That is, "I have presented before you what Allah has sent down to me; but what He has not sent down to me, is "unseen" both for me and for you, and it is entirely with Allah to reveal or not to reveal it. Now if you will not believe unless Allah sends down what He has not sent down, you may wait for it: I, too, shall wait and see whether your persistent demand is or is not satisfied".

29. They practised deceptions regarding "the Sign of the famine" that had been inflicted on them (vv. 11, 12). This verse alludes to the same, as if to say, "How dare you demand a Sign again, whereas recently the Sign of the famine has been shown to you ? At that time you invoked the help of your deities but in vain, though you had set them up as intercessors with Allah and believed that offerings to their shrines would prove very effective in removing the famine. But you yourselves learnt by first hand experience that those so-called gods possessed no power at all. Therefore when you were convinced that all power belongs to Allah

alone, you turned to Him and began to invoke His help. This experience ought to have convinced you of the Truth of the Message of Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) for this was the very fundamental thing which he was teaching. Instead of learning a lesson from this Sign, you began to practise deceptions to explain it away, as soon as the famine was over and there had come the blessed rainfall. You invented many explanations (deceptions) concerning the causes of the famine and its subsequent end in order to 'escape' from the doctrine of *Tauhīd* and stick to your *shirk*. The verse is meant to declare that no Sign would convince such people as those who had not benefited from the great Sign of the famine. Therefore there was no use of showing any sign to them.

30. "Allah is more swift in His plans than you....." means this: "If you practise deceptions in order to explain away the Sign of the famine so that you might find excuses to evade the implications of its acceptance, in order to continue your rebellious attitudes, Allah is more swift in carrying out His plans to out-do your deceptive methods. He will leave you free to move in your wrong ways: He will even bestow upon you the worldly prosperity, which will so delude you that you will forget that you were being closely watched and will, therefore, commit evil deeds with apparent immunity and enjoy yourselves to your heart's content. But His angels will go on keeping a full and complete record of your deeds, which will be presented for your prosecution after your death."

31. The fact that even the most obdurate *mushriks* and the most hardened atheists who forget Allah when things go well with them, begin to invoke Allah's help when they are pressed hard from all sides and despair of help from any other quarter, is a clear evidence that there is the All-Powerful Allah Who is controlling each and every thing in the universe. (Please refer to E.N. 29, *Al-An'ām.*)

31a. The parable is meant to warn those who are utterly neglectful of the Life-after death because of their apparent "success" in this worldly life. They have been likened to the owners of the land who were happy to presume that the crop was ripe and luxuriant and it was within their power to reap it and enjoy the produce of their harvest. They were so sure of this that they began to enjoy the fore-taste of the ripened crops, unaware of the Decree of Allah which destroyed their crops and all their great expectations also. Like-wise those who neglect to make preparations for the life-after-death will find to their sorrow that all they did to earn for the enjoyments of this world was, in relation to the Next World, like the ripe crop that was destroyed all of a sudden.

32. That is, "Allah invites to the Way that leads to the Abode of Peace in the Hereafter."

"The Abode of Peace" here means Paradise, where there will be no fear whatsoever of any loss, calamity, sorrow, pain and trouble.

33. That is, "Allah by His grace will give to those who did good deeds more than their due reward."

34. That is, "In contrast to the additional rewards to the good people, those who earned evil deeds, shall be punished only in proportion to their crimes." (For further explanation see E.N. 109a of XXVII).

35. It shall be that kind of gloom that overspreads the faces of the criminals when they are caught, and they despair all hope of escape.

36. Some commentators are of the opinion that the original words of the text (فَزَيَّلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ) mean this: "We will cut off every kind of connection and relation between them so that they are not able to show any concern for one another." But these meanings are opposed to the Arabic usage, according to which they mean: "We will distinguish them from one another" or "We will cause a distinction among them." That is why these have been translated into English like this: "We will remove the state of strangeness from among them." That is, the *mushriks* and their deities shall stand in front of each other and recognize their mutual and respective positions. The *mushriks* shall come to know the whole truth about those whom they worshipped and their deities will learn everything about their worshippers.

37. That is, "Their deities—the angels, the jinns, the spirits, the fore-fathers, the prophets, the saints, the martyrs and all others—whom they had set up as partners with God and rendered those rights to them which belonged to God alone, will dissociate themselves from their worshippers and declare, "We did not know at all that you worshipped us, for no reverence, no respect, no honour, no admiration, no regard, no adoration, no homage, that you paid to us; no prayer, no supplication, no request, no offering, no gift, you presented to us; and no praise, no prostration, no bowing down, no remembrance, no religious service, or ceremony or ritual you made in our name ever reached us."

38. That is, "As you yourselves admit that Allah alone is your real Providence, Owner and Master, He alone is your true Lord, and, therefore, entitled to your servitude and worship. How have you, then, made others as partners with Him?"

39. It should be kept in mind that these questions have been posed to the common people: therefore they are not being asked, "Whither are you turning away?" but "Whither are you being turned away?" The passive voice clearly shows that there must be some person (or persons) who was turning away the people from the right direction to the wrong one. That is Why this appeal is being

made to the people: "Why are you blindly following those who are misguiding you? Why don't you use your own commonsense? When you yourselves admit the Truth about Allah, why don't you consider the fact that you are being turned away from Him?"

This question has been posed at many places in the Qur'ān to bring home the Truth to the common people, but at every place the passive voice has been employed in order to keep back the names of the misguiding ones so that their followers should consider the matter coolly and objectively. This also contains a valuable piece of advice for those engaged in propagation work. By avoiding the names of the misguiding ones, the Qur'ān has taken away a very strong weapon from the hands of those, who could otherwise incite the followers that their revered leaders were being made the target of ridicule and criticism.

40. That is, "This Word of your Lord has come true that those who have made up their minds that they would not believe in any case would never believe because of their obduracy, even if the Truth were to be presented before them with very plain and clear arguments."

41. It is to be noted that the answers to the questions posed in this and the following verse have been put in the mouth of the Holy Prophet in contrast to the answers posed in the preceding verses. This is because the *mushriks* themselves believed, and therefore could not deny, that Allah originated the creation and that their gods had no share in this. But they would not admit that He could or would bring it back, for they could not in that case reject the doctrine of the Life-after-death, though it was obvious that the One Who originated the creation could also bring it back again and not any one of those who had not originated it. That is why the answer has been put in the mouth of the Holy Prophet that he should declare it openly and boldly that Allah originated the creation and could and would bring it back again.

42. This question has been posed to bring home to them the folly of the doctrine of *shirk*. The argument is this: "When Allah originates the creation and has the power to bring it back again, where do the gods you have set up come in? If you think a little, you yourselves will realize that there is no room for any one in the universe for any claim or title to your reverence or worship or servitude."

43. This is one of the series of questions that have been posed to refute the doctrine of *shirk* and to establish the doctrine of *Tauhīd*. Besides, it is also meant to focus attention on the importance of the guidance to the Truth, which is one of the greatest human necessities. For it is obvious that the human needs and requirements are not confined to food, clothes and the like necessities of the physical life nor to its protection from losses, distresses, calamities etc. But one of

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أَنَا بَرِيٓءٌ مِّمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٤١﴾ وَمِنْهُم مَّن يَسْتَمِعُونَ إِلَيْكَ ۚ أَفَأَنتَ تُسْمِعُ
الصُّمَّ وَلَوْ كَانُوا لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَمِنْهُم مَّن يَنظُرُ إِلَيْكَ ۚ أَفَأَنتَ تَهْدِي
الْعُمْيَ وَلَوْ كَانُوا لَا يُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ النَّاسَ شَيْئًا وَلَٰكِنَّ
النَّاسَ أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَيَوْمَ يَحْشُرُهُمْ كَأَن لَّمْ يَلْبَثُوٓا إِلَّا سَاعَةً
مِّنَ النَّهَارِ يَتَعَارَفُونَ بَيْنَهُمْ ۚ قَدْ خَسِرَ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِلِقَآءِ اللَّهِ وَمَا
كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَإِمَّا نُرِيَنَّكَ بَعْضَ الَّذِي نَعِدُهُمْ أَوْ نَتَوَفَّيَنَّكَ
فَإِلَيْنَا مَرْجِعُهُمْ ثُمَّ اللَّهُ شَهِيدٌ عَلَىٰ مَا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ
رَّسُولٌ ۚ فَإِذَا جَآءَ رَسُولُهُمْ قُضِيَ بَيْنَهُم بِالْقِسْطِ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَ
يَقُولُونَ مَتَىٰ هَٰذَا الْوَعْدُ إِن كُنتُمْ صَٰدِقِينَ ﴿٤٨﴾ قُل لَّآ أَمْلِكُ لِنَفْسِي
ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا إِلَّا مَا شَآءَ اللَّهُ ۚ لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ أَجَلٌ ۚ إِذَا جَآءَ أَجَلُهُمْ فَلَا
يَسْتَأْخِرُونَ سَاعَةً وَلَا يَسْتَقْدِمُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾ قُلْ أَرَءَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَتَىٰكُمْ عَذَابُهُ
بَيَٰتًا أَوْ نَهَارًا مَّاذَا يَسْتَعْجِلُ مِنْهُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾ أَثُمَّ إِذَا مَا وَقَعَ آمَنتُم
بِهِۦٓ ۚ آلْـَٰٔنَ وَقَدْ كُنتُم بِهِۦ تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ ﴿٥١﴾ ثُمَّ قِيلَ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا ذُوقُوا
عَذَابَ الْخُلْدِ ۚ هَلْ تُجْزَوْنَ إِلَّا بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَيَسْتَنۢبِـُٔونَكَ
أَحَقٌّ هُوَ ۚ قُلْ إِي وَرَبِّيٓ إِنَّهُۥ لَحَقٌّ ۚ وَمَآ أَنتُم بِمُعْجِزِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾ وَلَوْ أَنَّ
لِكُلِّ نَفْسٍ ظَلَمَتْ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ لَافْتَدَتْ بِهِۦ ۗ وَأَسَرُّوا النَّدَامَةَ لَمَّا
رَأَوُا الْعَذَابَ ۚ وَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُم بِالْقِسْطِ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾ أَلَآ إِنَّ لِلَّهِ
مَا فِي السَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ أَلَآ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا
يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾ هُوَ يُحْيِۦ وَيُمِيتُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ

There are many among them who hear what you say: but will you make the deaf listen to you even though they be incapable of understanding it?[50] Then there are many others among them who see you: but will you show the way to the blind, even though they be bereft of sight?[51] The fact is that Allah does not in any way wrong the people but they wrong themselves.[52] (Today these people are intoxicated with the life of this world but) on the Day when Allah will muster them they will feel as if they had stayed (in this world) for only an hour [53] or so in order to have acquaintance with one another. (At that time they will realize that) they who disbelieved in their meeting with Allah were losers [54] indeed and were not rightly guided. Maybe, We let you witness some of thê dire consequences with which We threaten them or raise you to Ourselves before this. Anyway they shall have to return to Us and Allah is a witness to what they are doing. 42-46

There is a Messenger for every *ummat*:[55] then, when its Messenger comes a just judgement is passed on its people and they are not wronged in the least.[56] 47

They ask "When will this threat come to pass ? Tell us if what you say be true." Say "I have no power to bring benefits or to avert evils from myself: everything depends upon Allah's will.[57] Every *ummat* has its appointed term: when that term expires it is neither delayed nor advanced for them by a single hour."[58] Ask them "Have you ever considered this? (What can you do to avert it,) if His scourge comes upon you suddenly by night or by day ? Why is it that the criminals are seeking to hasten it?" What! will you believe in it, when it actually overtakes you?—Do you want to escape from it now, when you yourselves were demanding it? Then it will be said to the transgressors, "Now taste the everlasting torment; what other recompense than this do you expect to get for what you have been earning?" 48-52

Then they ask, "Is what you say really true ?" Tell them, "Yes by my Lord, it is absolutely true, and you have no power to avert it." And every person who has transgressed would gladly give all the wealth of the earth as ransom, if he possessed it, to redeem himself from the torment. When they will see the torment they will be remorseful in their hearts.[59] And the judgement will be passed on them 53-56

with justice and no wrong will be done to them. Listen! all that is in the heavens and the earth belongs to Allah. Note it well that Allah's word is true, yet most of them know it not. It is He Who ordained life and death, and to Him you shall all return.

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man's needs (nay, his greatest need) is to have the knowledge of the right way of life so that he may, on the whole, achieve success in it. It is obvious that in order to be successful in life, man should have the correct knowledge of the use he should make of and the way he should employ his own physical, mental and spiritual powers and capabilities and natural resources. He should also know the nature and the kind of behaviour he should adopt towards other human beings (and as a whole, towards the system of the universe in which he has inevitably to live and work), with whom he comes into contact in different capacities. The Qur'ān calls that right way "The Truth" and the guidance that leads to that way, "The Guidance to the Truth".

Now let us turn to the question that has been posed in this verse. The Qur'ān asks the *mushriks* and all those people who reject the teachings of the Holy Prophet: Is there any of the partners and gods you have set up besides Allah, who guides you to the Truth or can do so? Obviously the answer to this will surely be in the negative for neither of the classes of gods is capable of this: First, let us consider this with regard to those gods and goddesses and living or dead human beings, who are worshipped as gods. Though it is true that people turn to them for the fulfilment of their needs or for their protection from calamities in some supernatural way, yet they never turn to them to seek guidance to the Truth nor have they themselves ever sent it nor do their devotees ever claim that their deities teach them the principles of morality, sociology, culture, economics, politics, law, justice and the like.

Then there is the case of those who make rules, regulations and laws which others accept and follow. It is true that such persons are accepted and followed as leaders, but the pertinent question is this: Are they the real guides to the Truth, or are they capable of becoming guides to it? Does any one of them possess the kind of knowledge that comprehends all those truths that are a pre-requisite for formulating right principles for the guidance of human life ? Can anyone of them have full vision of the vast field of activities over which the human problems spread? Is there anyone of them who is absolutely free from the weaknesses, prejudices, personal or communal interests, which become hindrances to the formulation of just laws? If the answers to these questions are in the negative (and obviously no one in his senses can answer otherwise), how can

then people with such limitations be expected to be the source of guidance to the Truth?

In the light of the above questions, we are able to grasp the signification of the question that has been posed in the Qur'ān: "Is there any of the partners you have set up with Allah who can guide you to the Truth ?"

This shows conclusively that Allah alone has the power to satisfy all the human needs and requirements, which may be divided into two categories. First, man stands in need of a providence, a protector, a being to hear and grant his prayers, in short, a permanent support to which he may turn whenever other supports should fail him. The above question inevitably leads to the conclusion that there is no god other than Allah who can fulfil these needs. The other human needs and requirements demand that there should be a guide to lay down such principles for the conduct of human life in its entirety as should be obeyed with perfect confidence and peace of mind. The question posed in v. 35 implies that that "Being" can be none other than Allah. Therefore there remains no argument in support of the point that the principles of culture, morality, and politics should be based on *shirk* or secularism except that one should persist in obduracy and obstinacy.

44. It means that neither the authors of religion, nor philosophers, nor law-makers based their opinions on knowledge but on mere guesswork and conjecture. Likewise, those who followed these religious or worldly leaders did it on the mere assumption that their authors were great people; therefore they must be right. That was why their forefathers and the common people followed them.

45. The arguments contained in v. 37 may be elaborated like this:

(1) The Qur'ān confirms that which had been revealed before ... and presents the same fundamental principles and teachings which were taught by the Prophets who came before Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him). Had he invented the Qur'ān, he would have made additions to the truths of the former books in order to make himself conspicuous.

(2) The Qur'ān explains in detail and amplifies the fundamental principles and teachings contained in "the Book", that is, the Scriptures brought by the former Prophets, and adds more evidence and explanations to it so that it may be better understood and practised.

46. There is a general misunderstanding that the challenge of the Qur'ān to produce (a book, nay,) a Sūrah like this, is in regard to its eloquent, pure and unique literary excellence. This has been the natural result of the way in which discussions have been carried on to prove the miracle of the Qur'ān. But the Qur'ān is far above this that it should claim to be a unique and matchless book because of its excellent diction. There is no doubt at all that it is unique and

matchless in this respect also, but the real basis of its claim and challenge, that no human brain is capable of producing a book like this, is its subject-matter and teachings. The Qur'ān itself has stated at different places those aspects which are a sure proof of its revelation from Allah and the refutation of the false aspersions that it was a human invention. This has already been explained at appropriate places and will be explained in the succeeding pages. (For further explanation see E.N. 26, 27 of LII).

47. They could declare the Qur'ān as forged on two grounds only but neither of these existed: First, if they had had a proof that the Book had not been revealed by Allah, but had been forged by someone; secondly, that the Truths enunciated in it and the information given in it were false. But no one could say on the basis of true knowledge that the Book had been really forged and then ascribed to God: nor could anyone say that he had peeped behind the curtains of the "unseen" and discovered that there was not One God (as taught in this Book) but many gods in the heavens: nor could anyone assert on the basis of true knowledge that there were no angels, no Revelations and no God, but these were mere fictions that had been invented by some fertile imagination: nor had anyone witnessed by actually visiting the "Hereafter" that the information about rewards and punishments was utterly wrong. But in spite of the lack of any proof to the contrary; they were challenging the genuineness of the Qur'ān with the boldness and impudence of one who had made a thorough research into the matter and proved it to the hilt.

48. Those who do not believe in the Qur'ān have been called "mischief-makers" because their rejection is not based on any sound reason but on prejudice and selfishness and because it prevents others from believing in it.—"And your Lord knows them very well" because there is nothing that is hidden from Him. They can deceive the people that they are rejecting the Qur'ān because they are convinced that it is not the Book of God, but they cannot deceive Allah that they are doing this with good intentions for he knows that it is because of their mischief. They are obdurate and obstinate and are suppressing the voice of their consciences and hearts: they deliberately shut their ears and minds against the Truth and prefer their worldly interests their fancies, their lusts and desires to it. That is why they cannot be regarded as "innocent" sinners, but they are, in fact, the "mischief-makers."

49. This is to say, "I don't want to enter into useless discussions and disputes with you on this score. If I am an impostor, I alone shall bear the consequences for it; and if you are rejecting the truth, you are not doing any harm to me but to yourselves alone."

50. Though this and the succeeding verse have been addressed to the Holy Prophet, these are meant to reprove those people who were not paying attention to the Message. For they only heard the sounds of the words he spoke to them, just as the animals hear the sound of the words, but pay no attention to understand what is said to them. This was because they were prejudiced against him and had decided before-hand that they would not acknowledge anything, however, reasonable that may be, if it went against the creeds and ways they had inherited, and against their own desires, lusts, and interests. Likewise those people who live like animals hear the sounds of his words, but pay no attention to their meaning for they are not interested in anything other than "eating, drinking and making merry." They are so engaged in and intoxicated with the gratification of their lusts that they never bother to find out whether what they are doing is right or wrong. All such people are deaf to the Message, though they might have ears for other things.

51. Here again they may be likened to animals which see with their eyes but cannot perceive anything beyond what appears on the surface. Likewise those people saw the Holy Prophet and his Companions, but did not perceive their pure life for they had not got the mind's eyes to see the wonderful change that was coming in the lives of those who had listened to and accepted the Message.

As has been pointed out in E.N. 50, though these verses were addressed to the Holy Prophet, they were really meant to reprove and admonish the disbelievers in a subtle manner so as to arouse their dormant faculties of hearing and seeing and open these for the reception and acceptance of the rational and sympathetic Message. In order to understand the wisdom of this indirect method of admonition, let us take the example of two righteous friends. One of them who lived among corrupt people did his very best to convey the righteous message both by precept and by practice. He set the model of the highest moral conduct and character before them, and urged them in a sincere and sympathetic manner to consider their own moral condition, and admonished them in a very sincere and rational manner to make them realize that they were living in a very corrupt moral state, and advised them to adopt the right way of life. But none of them would pay any attention to his admonition nor learn any lesson from his pure life. Suppose his friend came there at that time and said: "Why are you giving advice to these deaf people and showing the way to these blind ones, who have no ears for good things and no eyes for the right way ?" It is obvious that these words would not have been uttered by way of dissuading the first friend from doing his reform work but for arousing the dormant faculties of the corrupt people by this subtle indirect method.

52. "Allah does not in any way wrong the people" because He gives them ears to hear, eyes to see and hearts to feel and ponder, and everything that is

required to enable them to discriminate between right and wrong, truth and falsehood. But it is "they who wrong themselves" by refusing to make the right and proper use of their faculties and by following their lusts and enjoying the things of this world. Naturally this has made their eyes so blind and their ears so deaf and their hearts so dead that they are incapable of distinguishing between right and wrong, good and bad, for their conscience has also become dead.

53. That is, "When they will enter the Hereafter and contrast its eternal life with the transitory life they lived in this world, they will realize that their past life was nothing in comparison with the eternal future life of the Hereafter. Then they will see clearly that it was a big folly to spoil the eternal life for the sake of transitory joys and paltry gains of the world."

54. They were losers because they forgot that one Day they would have to present themselves before Allah and as a result of this disbelief committed evil deeds.

55. Here the word أُمَّت (*ummat*) does not merely mean a nation or a community but includes all those people whom the Message of a Messenger reaches after his appointment, even though he be not alive among them. More than this: as long as his teachings remain intact and within the reach of everyone to ascertain what they really are, all such people will be treated and judged as his *ummat* and their cases decided with justice in accordance with v. 47. According to this standard, all the people of the world are the *ummat* of Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him), and will remain so, as long as the Qur'ān continues to be published in its original and complete form as today. That is why it has not been said, "There is a Messenger in every *ummat*" but "There is a Messenger for every *ummat*."

56. That is, when the Message of a Messenger reaches a people, they should know that henceforth they are on trial and that no excuse would be accepted that they were ignorant of it. Then judgement is passed on them with scrupulous justice. Those, who accept the Message and mend their way in accordance with it, are declared to be worthy of Allah's blessings, and those who reject it are doomed to a torment that may be inflicted both in this world and in the next World or only in the Hereafter.

57. This is to say, "I never said that I will sit in judgement on you and inflict torment on those who do not believe in me. Therefore, I am not in a position to tell when the threat will be made good. As the threat has been held out by Allah, He will pass His judgement on you when He wills, and in whatever way He wills, for everything depends on His will."

58. That is, "Allah passes His judgement on individuals and communities after the expiry of the term that He Himself has set and He alone knows how long it lasts for a community. He is not hasty in giving rewards or punishments. When He sends His Messenger to deliver His Message, He allows sufficient time to each individual and to each community to consider it and ponder over it and mend his (or its) way, during the appointed term. The period of the term may extend to centuries in the case of a community and He knows best how long it should be.

When that term, which is based on justice, expires, and that person or community does not repent of its rebellious conduct, then Allah passes His judgement. When the time of the judgement comes it is neither advanced nor delayed even by a single hour."

59. "They will be remorseful," when all of a sudden, they face the torment on the Day, which they had denied throughout their lives, and on that presumption had gone on doing wrong deeds. Not only this: they will also feel very sorry, that they had denied the Messengers and brought baseless charges against them, who had warned them of it. Therefore when they witness it against all their expectations, they will find the ground slipping from under their feet and will feel utterly helpless and guilty in their minds because of the remembrance of their wrong doings and of the pricking of their conscience. In short, their condition will be that of a gambler, who turns a deaf ear to the counsel of his well-wishers and stakes his all on mere speculation and goes bankrupt. But such a person has to blame none but himself only for his sad plight.

60. It has been purposely avoided to translate the Arabic word رِزْق (*rizq*) into "provisions" for it is liable to create a very serious misunderstanding regarding the implications of this verse. For in this sense *rizq* will be confined to food and eatables only, whereas it is very comprehensive in its meaning and it covers everything that Allah has given to man—food, children, knowledge, law etc. etc. Instances can be cited from the Qur'ān and the Traditions in support thereof. Thus it has become, obvious that according to this verse, in Allah's sight it is wrong and sinful to adopt the attitude of independence towards every kind of *rizq*, including articles of food.

Thus it has become clear that the consequences of this misunderstanding about the meaning of *rizq* are far-reaching. As a result of this limited meaning of *rizq*, it will be sinful only to make the unlawful articles of food lawful and *vice versa* but it will not be sinful if the people become their own law-makers in regard to the social, economic, political and international matters. It is because of this misunderstanding that even some scholars of the Islamic Law do not consider it

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جَآءَتْكُمْ مَّوْعِظَةٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ وَشِفَآءٌ لِّمَا فِي الصُّدُوْرِ ۙ وَهُدًى وَّرَحْمَةٌ
لِّلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾ قُلْ بِفَضْلِ اللّٰهِ وَبِرَحْمَتِهٖ فَبِذٰلِكَ فَلْيَفْرَحُوْا ۭ هُوَ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا
يَجْمَعُوْنَ ﴿٥٨﴾ قُلْ اَرَءَيْتُمْ مَّآ اَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ لَكُمْ مِّنْ رِّزْقٍ فَجَعَلْتُمْ مِّنْهُ حَرَامًا
وَّحَلٰلًا ۭ قُلْ آٰللّٰهُ اَذِنَ لَكُمْ اَمْ عَلَى اللّٰهِ تَفْتَرُوْنَ ﴿٥٩﴾ وَمَا ظَنُّ الَّذِيْنَ
يَفْتَرُوْنَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ الْكَذِبَ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَذُوْ فَضْلٍ عَلَى النَّاسِ
وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَمَا تَكُوْنُ فِيْ شَاْنٍ وَّمَا تَتْلُوْا مِنْهُ مِنْ
قُرْاٰنٍ وَّلَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ مِنْ عَمَلٍ اِلَّا كُنَّا عَلَيْكُمْ شُهُوْدًا اِذْ تُفِيْضُوْنَ فِيْهِ ۭ وَ
مَا يَعْزُبُ عَنْ رَّبِّكَ مِنْ مِّثْقَالِ ذَرَّةٍ فِي الْاَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَآءِ وَلَآ
اَصْغَرَ مِنْ ذٰلِكَ وَلَآ اَكْبَرَ اِلَّا فِيْ كِتٰبٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿٦١﴾ اَلَآ اِنَّ اَوْلِيَآءَ اللّٰهِ لَا
خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُوْنَ ﴿٦٢﴾ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَكَانُوْا يَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿٦٣﴾
لَهُمُ الْبُشْرٰى فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْاٰخِرَةِ ۭ لَا تَبْدِيْلَ لِكَلِمٰتِ اللّٰهِ ۭ ذٰلِكَ
هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيْمُ ﴿٦٤﴾ وَلَا يَحْزُنْكَ قَوْلُهُمْ ۘ اِنَّ الْعِزَّةَ لِلّٰهِ جَمِيْعًا ۭ هُوَ
السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿٦٥﴾ اَلَآ اِنَّ لِلّٰهِ مَنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْاَرْضِ ۭ وَمَا
يَتَّبِعُ الَّذِيْنَ يَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ شُرَكَاۗءَ ۭ اِنْ يَّتَّبِعُوْنَ اِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَ
اِنْ هُمْ اِلَّا يَخْرُصُوْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾ هُوَ الَّذِيْ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الَّيْلَ لِتَسْكُنُوْا فِيْهِ وَ
النَّهَارَ مُبْصِرًا ۭ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّسْمَعُوْنَ ﴿٦٧﴾ قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللّٰهُ
وَلَدًا سُبْحٰنَهٗ ۭ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ ۭ لَهٗ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ ۭ اِنْ عِنْدَكُمْ
مِّنْ سُلْطٰنٍۢ بِهٰذَا ۭ اَتَقُوْلُوْنَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٦٨﴾ قُلْ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ
يَفْتَرُوْنَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ الْكَذِبَ لَا يُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿٦٩﴾ مَتَاعٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا ثُمَّ اِلَيْنَا

O mankind, there has come to you the Admonition from your Lord: this is the remedy for the diseases of the heart, and guidance and blessing for those who believe in it. O Prophet, say, "It is the bounty of Allah and His mercy that He has sent this thing: let the people rejoice over it for it is better than what they amass." O Prophet, ask them, "Have you ever considered that you yourselves have made something unlawful and the other lawful out of what [60] Allah has given you?"[61] Then ask them, "Has Allah allowed you this or do you ascribe a false thing to Him?"[62] What treatment do they think Allah will mete out to them who ascribe this false thing to Him on the Day of Resurrection ? Indeed Allah is bountiful to mankind, but most of them are not grateful.[63] 57-60

O Prophet, We are witnessing whatever work you may be engaged in and whatever portion you may be reciting from the Qur'ān; We are also keeping a watch, O people, over whatever you are doing: for there is not an iota of anything, small or big, in the earth and the heavens that is hidden from your Lord, and everything is on record in the clear Register.[64] Listen: those, who are Allah's friends and who believe and fear God, shall have no occasion for fear or sorrow: there is nothing but good news for them in this world and in the Hereafter: Allah's words cannot be changed—this is the greatest success. O Prophet, let not their remarks grieve you, for honour wholly rests with Allah. He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing. 61-65

Note it well that all the dwellers of the heavens and of the earth belong to Allah: and those who invoke, besides Allah, partners (they have set up with Him) follow nothing but surmises and merely indulge in guess-works. It is He Who ordained the night for you to repose in it, and gave to the day its light. Indeed there are Signs in this for those who listen[65] (to the Message). 66-67

They remarked, "Allah has taken a son to Himself."[66] Allah is All-Pure![67] He is Self-Sufficient: He is the Owner of everything that is in the heavens and the earth.[68] Have you any authority for what you say? What! do you ascribe to Allah that of which you have no knowledge? O Prophet, say to them, "Those, who ascribe false things to Allah, can never prosper." Well, they may enjoy the transitory pleasures of this life, but after this they have to return to Us and then 68-70

We will make them taste a severe torment because of this blasphemy they are committing.

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sinful if people do not take guidance from the *"Shari'at"* in regard to matters other than those of food; whereas in this verse, Allah has taken to task all those people, who arrogate to themselves the right of making lawful or unlawful not only the articles of food but anything that has been made lawful or unlawful by the *"Shari'at."*

61. The question has been posed to impress how horrible and rebellious their crime is, as if to say, "How dare you make your own regulations contrary to those which Allah has given you, when, in fact, you yourselves are His creation? What do you think about the servant, who claims that he himself has the right to prescribe the limits concerning the things which his master has entrusted to his care, and therefore, there is no need of consulting him? How will you treat your own servant if he were to claim that he had every right to use and expend as he will all that belongs to you? Leave alone the case of that servant, who does not acknowledge at all that he has any master or that he is a servant and the things that are in his possession are not his but belong to some one else; for the case under discussion does not concern such a villainous usurper. The question has been posed concerning that servant, who himself acknowledges that he is a servant of some master and that the things in his possession belong to the master and not to himself. Yet he claims that he has the right to make rules and regulations and set limits for himself regarding the use of those things, and that there is no need for him to consult his master.

62. This question has been posed to corner the transgressors who arrogate to themselves the right to make rules and regulations in regard to the use they could make of the things of their Master. It is meant to impress on them that they have placed themselves in an awkward position by arrogating that right without any lawful authority. Their claim would have been valid, if the Master had Himself authorized them to make whatever laws they liked concerning the use of the things entrusted to the servants by Him. The pertinent question is whether they possessed any such authority from the Master, or were putting forward this claim without any delegation of such rights to them. If they had any such warrant they should show it: otherwise they would be guilty of two crimes—rebellion and forgery.

63. It is a pity that most of the servants are not grateful to the Master for this great favour that He has given them full instructions about the way they should live in His 'house' and the use they should make of His things and the

conduct they should adopt, as if to say, "If you live in the world according to My instructions, you will win My approval and deserve the greatest rewards, but if you live as rebels, you would incur My wrath and merit a painful chastisement." Nay, instead of showing gratitude for this favour, many of the servants seem to think like this: "The Master ought to have left us in the world without any guidance and secretly watched us to see which of us was living in rebellion against His Law, and then punished the criminals.". They do not seem to realize that if the Master had put them to this hard test none would have escaped punishment.

64. These things have been mentioned here in order to comfort the Holy Prophet and give a warning to his enemies. These are meant to lessen his worry and to strengthen him, as if to say, "We see all that you are doing in propagating the Message of the Truth with great patience and fortitude, and exerting your utmost to reform mankind. Rest assured that We have not left you alone after entrusting you with this arduous duty. We are not unaware of whatever you are doing for the performance of your mission, and also whatever your enemies are doing to oppose you." On the other hand, a warning has also been administered to his opponents: "Don't remain under the delusion that no one is seeing what you are doing in opposing the Messenger of the Truth and the reformer of mankind? We are seeing whatever mischiefs you are doing and whatever obstacles you are placing in the way of the mission. We are keeping a detailed and accurate record of all these things. Therefore beware that you shall be called upon to render an account of all your doings".

65. This is a concise statement of a very important subject and requires a detailed explanation. The Qur'ān declares in a few words that all religions other than the Revealed one are false because they have been founded on mere philosophical research for the primary cause of the origin of the universe. The philosophical research is after all based on guess-work, and is in its very nature incapable of reaching the Truth. The right way of arriving at the Truth is to make a study of the signs (*e.g.* day and night) and of the Message of the Prophets in a dispassionate manner. For this is the only way of discovering the Truth: otherwise, if one follows wrong ways one shall always arrive at wrong conclusions. Let us now consider the several methods that different people have adopted in search of this knowledge:

The *mushriks* base their search wholly and solely on superstition.

The hermits and ascetics pretend and claim that they acquire that knowledge by means of contemplation and meditation and see the reality by peeping into the hidden. But the fact is that they do not see the reality; it is only a trick of their own imagination. They form a mental image and then concentrate their mind on it and eventually it takes the shape of the "reality."

The so-called philosophers claim to base their researches on rationalism but it is really only surmise and guess-work, even though they may give "logical" arguments and "sound" reasons in its support.

Then there are the scientists: though they follow the scientific method of research in the physical world, they abandon it completely in regard to their investigation into metaphysics and start to follow conjectures, surmises, and guess-work.

Then these groups invariably suffer from prejudices and are not inclined to understand the point of view of those who differ with them, and, therefore, obstinately stick to their own theories.

In this passage (vv. 66-67) the Qur'ān declares that this way of search after knowledge is basically wrong, as if to say, "The real cause of your deviation is that you base your search of Reality on mere surmise and guess-work, and then, because of your prejudices, refuse to listen even to reasonable things. The result is that you have not only failed to arrive at the truth but also to judge rightly the Revealed Religion, presented by the Messengers."

In contrast to the above ways of research, the Qur'ān presents its own way and asserts that it alone is the correct, rational and scientific way of arriving at the Truth. It is this: "The prerequisite for research is that you should give up your preconceived prejudices and listen to the Message of those who claim that their information about the Reality is based on "Knowledge" and not on surmises, guess-works, meditations and contemplations, abstract deductions etc. Then consider deeply the Signs in the universe to which the Qur'ān invites your attention. If these also point to the Reality they claim to reveal, then there is no reason why you should deny the Truth taught by those Messengers." This is the basis of the philosophy of Islam. What a pity that even the Muslim philosophers have forsaken this way and followed in the footsteps of Plato and Aristotle!

The Qur'ān has inculcated this method at many places and has over and again presented many a phenomenon as a proof of the Reality, and taught the people how to arrive at the right conclusion so as to perceive the Reality. Accordingly, in verse 67, the Sign of the night and the day has been presented for the deep consideration of the people. The change of day and night is a wonderful Sign and, clearly points to the Universal Designer and the All-Powerful Ruler; for it takes place by the turning of the earth on its axis and in relation to the sun with mathematical precision. This change is due to the great wisdom of the Designer and has a great purpose behind it because of its innumerable benefits for all that exists on the earth. This points out also to the Providence of the Creator for it demonstrates conclusively that He has made perfect arrangements for the existence of His creation. Moreover, this also shows that the Universal Designer is One and

also that He is not playful but Wise and purposeful. This change points also towards the great Reality that He, being the Benefactor and Lord, is worthy of worship and none else. This is because every other being is provided with its requirements by this change of day and night and none provides others; therefore none of them can be the Lord and the Master. In the light of these Signs, how can, any other religion, based on mere surmise and guess-work, be considered to be true when it is compared with the Revealed Religion which is based on such clear Signs as these?

66. In the preceding passage people were taken to task for founding false religions on mere surmise and guess-work. In this passage the Christians and others, who believe that God has begotten a son, have been taken to task for this blasphemy which has no authority other than mere presumption.

67. The Arabic phrase سُبْحَانَ اللّٰهِ *(subhān-Allah)* is used to express astonishment at something apparently inexplicable. But its literal meaning is, "Allah is All-Pure, and is absolutely free from any defect, blemish and flaw". Here it implies both these things. It expresses astonishment at their blasphemy that Allah has taken a son to Himself, and also refutes it, saying, "Allah, being perfect in every way, does not stand in need of a son."

68. Three things have been put forward to refute their blasphemy: (1) Allah is pure and without any defect, (2) Allah is Self-sufficient in every way, and (3) Allah is the Owner of everything in the heavens and the earth. Let us now briefly explain how these three things refute that blasphemy.

It is obvious that a son is either sprung from the loins or is adopted. In the first case, such a conception of Allah amounts to this: He is mortal like every other being: therefore He stands in need of a spouse in order to propagate His offspring like other beings. In the second case, it shall have to be presumed that Allah stands in need of a son to inherit His Kingdom in order to make up, to some extent, for the deficiency that is caused by His childlessness. Or that Allah also cherished paternal love like human beings, and therefore, adopted as son one of the millions of His slaves.

Whatever be the case, it is obvious that the blasphemy shall have to be based on such a creed which presumes that Allah suffers from many defects, many weaknesses, many shortcomings and many wants. The Qur'ān refutes all such blasphemous creeds, saying, "He is All-Pure" and therefore, is free from all such defects; and by "He is Self-sufficient", the Qur'ān asserts that He does not suffer from any of those weaknesses and wants which impel the mortals to have children. Lastly, it says clearly that all the beings in the heavens and the earth belong to

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مَرْجِعُهُمْ ثُمَّ نُذِيْقُهُمُ الْعَذَابَ الشَّدِيْدَ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَكْفُرُوْنَ ﴿٧٠﴾ وَاتْلُ
عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَاَ نُوْحٍ ۘ اِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهٖ يٰقَوْمِ اِنْ كَانَ كَبُرَ عَلَيْكُمْ مَّقَامِيْ وَ
تَذْكِيْرِيْ بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ فَعَلَى اللّٰهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ فَاَجْمِعُوْٓا اَمْرَكُمْ وَشُرَكَآءَكُمْ ثُمَّ
لَا يَكُنْ اَمْرُكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ غُمَّةً ثُمَّ اقْضُوْٓا اِلَيَّ وَلَا تُنْظِرُوْنِ ﴿٧١﴾ فَاِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ
فَمَا سَاَلْتُكُمْ مِّنْ اَجْرٍ ۭ اِنْ اَجْرِيَ اِلَّا عَلَى اللّٰهِ ۙ وَاُمِرْتُ اَنْ اَكُوْنَ
مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِيْنَ ﴿٧٢﴾ فَكَذَّبُوْهُ فَنَجَّيْنٰهُ وَمَنْ مَّعَهٗ فِي الْفُلْكِ وَجَعَلْنٰهُمْ
خَلٰۗىِٕفَ وَاَغْرَقْنَا الَّذِيْنَ كَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا ۚ فَانْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ
الْمُنْذَرِيْنَ ﴿٧٣﴾ ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَا مِنْۢ بَعْدِهٖ رُسُلًا اِلٰى قَوْمِهِمْ فَجَاۗءُوْهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ
فَمَا كَانُوْا لِيُؤْمِنُوْا بِمَا كَذَّبُوْا بِهٖ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۭ كَذٰلِكَ نَطْبَعُ عَلٰي قُلُوْبِ
الْمُعْتَدِيْنَ ﴿٧٤﴾ ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَا مِنْۢ بَعْدِهِمْ مُّوْسٰى وَهٰرُوْنَ اِلٰى فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَا۟ئِهٖ
بِاٰيٰتِنَا فَاسْتَكْبَرُوْا وَكَانُوْا قَوْمًا مُّجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿٧٥﴾ فَلَمَّا جَاۗءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ
عِنْدِنَا قَالُوْٓا اِنَّ هٰذَا لَسِحْرٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿٧٦﴾ قَالَ مُوْسٰٓى اَتَقُوْلُوْنَ لِلْحَقِّ لَمَّا
جَاۗءَكُمْ ۭ اَسِحْرٌ هٰذَا ۭ وَلَا يُفْلِحُ السّٰحِرُوْنَ ﴿٧٧﴾ قَالُوْٓا اَجِئْتَنَا لِتَلْفِتَنَا عَمَّا
وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهِ اٰبَاۗءَنَا وَتَكُوْنَ لَكُمَا الْكِبْرِيَاۗءُ فِي الْاَرْضِ ۭ وَمَا نَحْنُ لَكُمَا
بِمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٧٨﴾ وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ ائْتُوْنِيْ بِكُلِّ سٰحِرٍ عَلِيْمٍ ﴿٧٩﴾ فَلَمَّا جَاۗءَ السَّحَرَةُ
قَالَ لَهُمْ مُّوْسٰٓى اَلْقُوْا مَآ اَنْتُمْ مُّلْقُوْنَ ﴿٨٠﴾ فَلَمَّآ اَلْقَوْا قَالَ مُوْسٰى مَا
جِئْتُمْ بِهِ ۙ السِّحْرُ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ سَيُبْطِلُهٗ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يُصْلِحُ عَمَلَ الْمُفْسِدِيْنَ ﴿٨١﴾
وَيُحِقُّ اللّٰهُ الْحَقَّ بِكَلِمٰتِهٖ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُجْرِمُوْنَ ﴿٨٢﴾ فَمَآ اٰمَنَ لِمُوْسٰٓى اِلَّا
ذُرِّيَّةٌ مِّنْ قَوْمِهٖ عَلٰي خَوْفٍ مِّنْ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَا۟ئِهِمْ اَنْ يَّفْتِنَهُمْ ۭ وَ

Recite[69] to them Noah's story, when he said to his people, "O my brethren, if it has become intolerable for you that I should dwell in your midst and preach to you the Revelations of Allah, then (note it well that) I have put my trust in Allah. You may muster all the partners you have set up and come to a united decision about me and consider your scheme well so that no aspect of the matter should remain hidden from you. Then bring that into action against me without giving me any respite.[70] If you have turned away from my Message, (I have lost nothing) for I did not demand any reward from you: my reward is with Allah, and I have been commanded to behave like a Muslim, (whether any other does so or not.)" But they disbelieved in him and the result was that We rescued those of them, who were with him in the Ark and made them successors on the earth and drowned those who rejected Our Revelations. So consider the end of those who were warned (but did not believe). After Noah We sent different Messengers to their peoples and they came to them with manifest Signs, but they would not believe in what they had disbelieved before. This is how We set a seal on the hearts of the transgressors.[71] 71-74

Then after them We sent Moses and Aaron with Our Signs to Pharaoh and his chiefs.[72] But they showed arrogance,[73] for they were criminals. So when the Truth came to them from Us, they said, "This is clear sorcery."[74] Moses replied, "What, do you call the Truth sorcery, when it has come to you? Is this sorcery? The fact is that sorcerers can never attain true success."[75] In reply to this, they said, "Have you come to turn us away from the faith of our forefathers so that you two may dominate over the land?[76] We are not going to believe in what you say." And Pharaoh said (to his people), "Bring every expert sorcerer to me."— When the sorcerers came, Moses said to them, "Cast down whatever you have to cast." When they cast down their appliances, Moses said to them, "This is sorcery what you have cast down:[77] Allah will surely render it in vain for He does not let the plans of mischief-makers succeed. And Allah vindicates the Truth by His Commands, though the guilty ones may dislike it." 75-82

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Him and that He has no particular relation with anyone of them so as to make such a one His "son" or "only son" or heir apparent. Though it is true that Allah loves some of His slaves more than the others because of their excellences, it does not in any way mean that He raises such a one from the rank of a slave to that of a partner in His Godhead. For, the highest rank He bestows on them is that they are Allah's friends, "....who believe and fear Allah; (and therefore they) shall have no occasion for fear and sorrow. There is nothing but good news for them in this world and in the Hereafter." (*vv.* 62-63).

69. The story of Prophet Noah has been related here to serve as a warning to those who were rejecting the Message of Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him). Up to this place, arguments had been presented before them to show the errors of their creeds, thoughts and ways, and impressive appeals had been made to them to adopt the Right Way. But from here onward they are being warned of the consequences of the attitude they had adopted towards their Messenger and admonished indirectly to learn a lesson from the fate of Prophet Noah's people, who had behaved towards their Prophet like the Quraish, the addressees. The Holy Prophet had been pointing out to them in a very befitting manner their errors and deviations, and was trying to correct them. But instead of considering and re-considering these things, they had become his mortal enemies, though he had no self-interest in his Mission and was extending the Message for their good, but they responded to his arguments with rudeness, abuses and stones. So much so that his very person had become intolerable and unbearable for them. This was because of their prejudices against the Right Way, which had so blinded them that they could not tolerate even the presence of the one who was following the Right Way. At this Allah commanded His Messenger to recite to them the story of Prophet Noah so that they might get in it the answer to their misbehaviour towards him.

70. This was a challenge that amounted to this: "I am not going to give up my Mission at all, whatever you may do against me, for I have my full trust in Allah." (For contrast please See I. 55 of *Hūd*).

71. The transgressors whose hearts are sealed are those obstinate and obdurate people who are so hardened against persuasion that they firmly and perversely adhere to the opinion they have once formed erroneously. As they themselves refuse to listen to counsel and admonition, Allah's curse falls on them and they are deprived of the ability of ever coming to the Right Way.

72. Explanatory Notes (84-111) concerning the story of Prophet Moses and Pharaoh, already added to Chapter VII, should be kept in view, as the things explained therein will not be repeated here.

73. "They showed arrogance" because of their wealth, power, pomp and show, and considered themselves above subjection to the Message. Therefore they showed haughtiness instead of surrender and obedience to it.

74. The story of Prophet Moses and Pharaoh is being related also to serve as an object-lesson for the Quraish, who were behaving towards Prophet Muhammad in the same way as Pharaoh and his people had behaved towards Prophet Moses (Allah's peace be upon them); for the response to the Message by the Quraish was similar to that of Pharaoh's people. (Please refer to *v.* 2 of this Sūrah.)

In this connection, it will also be worthwhile to note that the Mission of Prophets Moses and Aaron was not merely to liberate the Israelites from the slavery of Pharaoh, as some people have opined. If we keep in view the context in which the story occurs here, it will be quite clear that they, too, were appointed to pursue the same Mission that was entrusted to all the Prophets from Noah to Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon them all). The theme of this Sūrah from its very beginning has been this: "Acknowledge Allah alone as your Lord and Deity for He is the Lord of the whole universe. Believe in the life-after-death in which you shall have to present yourselves before Allah and render the account of all you did in this world." Then the Sūrah makes it clear to those who rejected the Message that history bears witness to this that the true success of humanity has always followed the acceptance of this Message. Therefore it admonished them: "You should also accept the Message which has always been put forward by all the Messengers, and establish your life in its entirety on these Articles of Faith. For those who rejected the Message were destroyed in the end."

Thus it has become quite clear from the context in which their story occurs, that the main object of the Mission of Prophets Moses and Aaron was the same as that of all the other Prophets. It is true that one of their objects was also to liberate the Israelites (a Muslim Community) from the domination of a *kāfir* community, if it persisted in its unbelief. But this had a secondary place in their Mission, and was not its main object. The real object has been stated explicitly in LXXIX, *vv.* 17-19, wherein his Lord said to Moses: "Go to Pharaoh for he has transgressed the bounds of subjection and say to him, "Are you prepared to reform yourselves and fear your Lord, if I guide you towards Him' ?"

The part played by the two Prophets in liberating the Israelites from

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إِنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ لَعَالٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ ۖ وَإِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الْمُسْرِفِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾ وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ
يَا قَوْمِ إِن كُنتُمْ آمَنتُم بِاللَّهِ فَعَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلُوا إِن كُنتُم مُّسْلِمِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾
فَقَالُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا ۚ رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا فِتْنَةً لِّلْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾ وَنَجِّنَا
بِرَحْمَتِكَ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾ وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ وَأَخِيهِ أَن تَبَوَّآ
لِقَوْمِكُمَا بِمِصْرَ بُيُوتًا وَاجْعَلُوا بُيُوتَكُمْ قِبْلَةً وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ ۗ وَبَشِّرِ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾ وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ آتَيْتَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَأَهُ زِينَةً وَ
أَمْوَالًا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ۙ رَبَّنَا لِيُضِلُّوا عَن سَبِيلِكَ ۖ رَبَّنَا اطْمِسْ عَلَىٰ
أَمْوَالِهِمْ وَاشْدُدْ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ فَلَا يُؤْمِنُوا حَتَّىٰ يَرَوُا الْعَذَابَ الْأَلِيمَ ﴿٨٨﴾
قَالَ قَدْ أُجِيبَت دَّعْوَتُكُمَا فَاسْتَقِيمَا وَلَا تَتَّبِعَانِّ سَبِيلَ الَّذِينَ لَا
يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨٩﴾ وَجَاوَزْنَا بِبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ الْبَحْرَ فَأَتْبَعَهُمْ فِرْعَوْنُ وَجُنُودُهُ
بَغْيًا وَعَدْوًا ۖ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَدْرَكَهُ الْغَرَقُ ۙ قَالَ آمَنتُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا الَّذِي
آمَنَتْ بِهِ بَنُو إِسْرَائِيلَ وَأَنَا مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٩٠﴾ آلْآنَ وَقَدْ عَصَيْتَ قَبْلُ
وَكُنتَ مِنَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٩١﴾ فَالْيَوْمَ نُنَجِّيكَ بِبَدَنِكَ لِتَكُونَ لِمَنْ خَلْفَكَ
آيَةً ۚ وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ النَّاسِ عَنْ آيَاتِنَا لَغَافِلُونَ ﴿٩٢﴾ وَلَقَدْ بَوَّأْنَا بَنِي
إِسْرَائِيلَ مُبَوَّأَ صِدْقٍ وَرَزَقْنَاهُم مِّنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ ۖ فَمَا اخْتَلَفُوا حَتَّىٰ جَاءَهُمُ
الْعِلْمُ ۚ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَقْضِي بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٩٣﴾
فَإِن كُنتَ فِي شَكٍّ مِّمَّا أَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ فَاسْأَلِ الَّذِينَ يَقْرَءُونَ الْكِتَابَ مِن
قَبْلِكَ ۚ لَقَدْ جَاءَكَ الْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُمْتَرِينَ ﴿٩٤﴾ وَلَا
تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ فَتَكُونَ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٩٥﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ

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(Then behold that) none but a few youths[78] from his own people obeyed and followed[79] Moses because of the fear of Pharaoh and their own chiefs; for they apprehended that Pharaoh would afflict them with a torment. And the fact is that Pharaoh was mighty in the land: indeed he was one of those who do not hesitate to transgress any limit.[80] 83

Moses said to his people, "O my people, if you sincerely believe in Allah, put your trust in Him, if you are Muslims."[81] They answered,[82] "We have put our trust in Allah: 'Our Lord, do not make us a cause of trial [83] for the unjust people, and deliver us by Thy mercy from the unbelievers'." 84-86

And We inspired Moses and his brother: "Provide some houses for your people in Egypt, and make those houses of yours as *qiblah,* and establish *Salāt* [84] and fill the Believers with hope and courage."[85] 87

Moses prayed [86] and said, "Our Lord, Thou hast bestowed on Pharaoh and his chiefs splendour[87] and possessions [88] in the worldly life; our Lord, hast Thou done this that they may lead astray the people from Thy Way ? Lord, destroy their wealth and harden their hearts in a manner so that they may not believe till they see the painful torment."[89] Allah replied, "The prayer of you both has been granted; so be steadfast and follow not the way of those who have no knowledge."[90] 88-89

And We led the children of Israel across the sea. Then Pharaoh and his hosts pursued them with the intention of cruelty and oppression to them until, when he was drowning, he cried, "I have believed that there is no god but the real God in Whom the children of Israel have believed and I am of those who surrender."[91] (In answer it was said :) "Now you believe! Whereas hitherto you had been rebellious and of the mischief-makers. Now We will preserve your dead body [92] only to be a sign of warning for the succeeding generations, though there are many people who give no heed to Our Signs."[93] 90-92

We gave an excellent abode[94] to the children of Israel and provided them with the best things of life. Then they caused not dissensions among themselves until the knowledge had come to them.[95] Surely your Lord will decide between them on the Day of Resurrection concerning that in which they had been differing. 93

If you are in doubt regarding the Guidance We have sent down 94-95

to you, you may enquire about this from those people who have been reading the Scriptures before you. In fact, it is the very Truth that has come to you from your Lord; so be not of those who doubt and join not those who treat Allah's Revelations as false; otherwise you shall be of the losers.[96]

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Pharaoh's slavery became prominent in history because he and his nobles rejected the Message and the Prophets had to rescue their people from their slavery. Accordingly, the Qur'ān gave it the same prominence as in history. But if one does not commit the error of isolating the details of the Qur'ān from its fundamental principles but studies them in the light of these principles, one cannot fall a prey to the misunderstanding that the mere liberation of a community could be the main object of the mission of a Prophet and the propagation of the Message its secondary object only. (For further explanation see XX: 44-52, XLIII: 46-56, LXXIII : 15-16).

75. ".....The sorcerers can never attain true success" is meaningful for this is the answer to their charge: "This is a clear sorcery." It means this. "You have called the Signs of Moses a "sorcery" on account of its apparent likeness to it. You have not considered the clear and marked distinctions between the characteristics of the Prophets and sorcerers. Otherwise you would never have dared to make such an absurd charge. Have you ever seen a sorcerer go before a tyrant and talk boldly and fearlessly to him as Moses did, and admonish him for his deviation and invite him to adopt the way of purity and God-worship? You know that a sorcerer behaves quite differently. He starts with the flattery of the courtiers so that they may obtain for him the permission to show his tricks. After this he goes to the presence of "His Majesty" and makes obsequious bows and very humbly requests him to see his tricks. Then he prays for his long life and prosperity and begs for his reward. Now, you can judge for yourselves whether the Prophet is a sorcerer or a far greater and far higher personality than even kings and the like."

76. It is obvious that if this demand had been merely for the liberation of the Israelites, there could have been no question of any threat to Pharaoh's kingdom. The threat was because of the Message which demanded subordination to the Truth, for it threatened the system which was based on *shirk* and on which depended the domination of Pharaoh and his chiefs and priests. (For further explanation see E.N. 66 of VII and E.N. 43 of XL.)

77. That is, "What I showed was not sorcery but sorcery is that which you are showing."

78. Though literally ذُرِّيَّة (*Zur-riyyah*) means offspring, it has been translated into youths because the Qur'ān has used this word here to point out a specific aspect of the matter. It is this: during that fearful period of persecution only a few young men and women showed the moral courage of acknowledging the Messenger of the Truth as their leader and becoming his standard bearers. On the contrary, their fathers, mothers and elders had not the courage to follow him and endanger their worldly interests and even their lives. They not only followed the way of ease and expediency, but also discouraged their youth, saying, "Don't go near Moses: for you will thus invite trouble both for yourselves and your elders."

The Qur'ān has mentioned this particular aspect of the matter because the same was the case of the response to the Mission of Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him). In its initial stage, those who came forward were not the elders and the old people but some courageous youth. These first Muslims who were boldly facing persecution and enduring hardships for the sake of Islam were the young people. For instance, 'Alī-ibn-Abī Tālib, Ja'afar Tayyār, Zubair, Talhāh, Sa'ad bin Abī Waqqās, Mus'ab bin 'Umair, 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, etc., were under twenty years when they embraced Islam. 'Abdur-Rahmān bin 'Auf, Bilāl, Suhail were under thirty years, and Abū 'Ubaidah-bin-al-Jarrah, Zaid bin Hārithah, 'Uthmān bin 'Affān and 'Umar Fārūq were under thirty-five years. Abū Bakr was no more than 38 when he embraced Islam. Among the early Muslims, there is only one instance of a Companion, 'Ammār bin Yāsir, who was of the same age as the Holy Prophet and another of 'Ubaidah bin Hārith Muttalabī, who was older than the Holy Prophet.

79. Some people have misinterpreted the Arabic words "فَمَآ اٰمَنَ لِمُوسٰى" and say that all the people of Israel were unbelievers and at first only a few of them believed in the Message. But when اٰمَنَ (*Īmān*) is followed by the letter لِ (*lām*), it grenerally means obeying and following. Thus the original words of the text will mean (as translated) "----a few youth from his own people obeyed and followed Moses," that is, "Only a few young people from the whole tribe of the Israelites had the courage to accept and acknowledge Prophet Moses as their leader and guide and stand by him in his struggle with Pharaoh and his chiefs." The words that follow make it quite clear that the Israelites refrained from this not because they did not believe in Prophet Moses or his Message but because they (specially their elders) were afraid of exposing themselves to the persecution of Pharaoh. This state of fear was the result of their moral degeneration. Though all of them racially and religiously belonged to the community of Prophets Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph and, therefore, were Muslims, yet slavery of centuries had so much degraded them that they had lost that spirit of Islam which impels one to

become the standard-bearer of Islam against the domination of unbelief and deviation, or imbues one with the courage to stand by the one who had raised that banner.

The Bible has described their degraded condition at the time of the conflict with Pharaoh in *Exodus* 5: 20-21: "And they met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh: And they said unto them, the Lord look upon you, and judge; because ye have made our saviour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us." The *Talmud* (Selections by H. Polano, page 152) confirms the same:

"Yea" said the overburdened children of Israel to Moses and Aaron, "We are like a lamb which the wolf has carried from its flock, the shepherd strives to take it from him, but between the two the lamb is pulled to pieces; between ye and Pharaoh will we all be killed."

The Qur'ān also refers to this in VII: 129:

"His people answered, 'We were oppressed before you came and now again we are being oppressed after you have come."

80. The Arabic word مُسْرِفِيْن (*musrifīn*) literally means "transgressors". As this could not express the true spirit, it has been translated into "....those who are not bound by any limits". They are the people who do not hesitate to employ even the most wicked methods to achieve their object: who practise without any pangs of conscience cruelty, immorality, barbarism etc., if these serve their purpose, and who cross all limits in pursuit of their desires. In short, they are such people as know no limits to stop at.

81. The fact that Prophet Moses in his address called his people "Muslims" shows that all the people of the community of Israel were Muslims; otherwise he could not say to them, "—if you are Muslims". He meant to urge them to be brave, saying, "If you are true Muslims, as you profess to be, do not fear the might of Pharaoh but put your trust in the might of Allah."

82. Those, who responded to the appeal of Prophet Moses, were those "youth" who obeyed and followed him, and not the Israelites, as a community, as is obvious from the context.

83. The prayer, "Our Lord, do not make us a cause of trial for the unjust people," is very comprehensive in meaning. Whenever the standard-bearers of the Truth rise up to establish virtue and eradicate the prevalent evil, they come into conflict with unjust people, who, for one reason or the other, are always on the look-out to find fault with them. First, there are the champions of falsehood, who

try their level best to crush down with full force the champions of the Truth. Then there are the so-called champions of the Truth who profess to believe in it but are not prepared to enter into conflict with the powerful government of the time. Therefore they declare it to be a useless and foolish effort, and begin to invent excuses to justify the wrong stand they take in regard to the struggle with falsehood in order to silence the prick of conscience they feel for their criminal attitude of cowardice. Accordingly, they try to prove that it is these standard-bearers of the Truth who are in the wrong and not they. Lastly, there are the common people, who watch the conflict as by-standers and join forces with those who prove to be more powerful of the two, whether they are the supporters of the Truth or of falsehood.

Now let us consider how the champions of the Truth are liable to become a cause of trial for these unjust people. If they are crushed down or defeated, the first group declares, "We were in the right and not these foolish people: otherwise they could not have been defeated." The second group says, "Their defeat has proved that they did not make the correct estimate of the circumstances and caused the destruction of valuable lives by coming in conflict with the mighty powers. Moreover, the Shari'at has not made it obligatory on us to expose ourselves to risk, when we are fulfilling the most essential religious duties without any restrictions from the tyrants of the day." As regards the common people, their criterion of judging the Truth is this: "Whatever triumphs is truth. Therefore their defeat has proved that the champions of the Truth must be in the wrong." Likewise every mistake and error the champions of the Truth commit, every weakness they show in the face of overwhelming odds against them, every moral fault to which anyone of them succumbs, becomes a good excuse for those who intend to stick to falsehood. Consequently, the "invitation" to the Truth becomes dormant for years after their "defeat".

Thus it has become quite clear that this prayer of the companions of Prophet Moses was well-timed and meaningful: "Our Lord, have mercy upon us so that we might not become a cause of trial for the unjust people: protect us from errors, defects and weaknesses and make our efforts successful in this world so that we may become a source of goodness to Thy creatures and not a source of evil for the unjust people."

84. There is a difference of opinion among the Commentators in regard to the meaning of this verse. As for me, I have considered deeply its wording and the circumstances under which this was sent down, and have come to the conclusion that Prophet Moses was commanded to build or acquire some houses for the establishment of *Salāt* in congregation This was necessitated because the system

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حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِمْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٩٦﴾ وَلَوْ جَآءَتْهُمْ كُلُّ اٰيَةٍ حَتّٰى
يَرَوُا الْعَذَابَ الْاَلِيْمَ ﴿٩٧﴾ فَلَوْلَا كَانَتْ قَرْيَةٌ اٰمَنَتْ فَنَفَعَهَآ اِيْمَانُهَآ اِلَّا
قَوْمَ يُوْنُسَ ؕ لَمَّآ اٰمَنُوْا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمْ عَذَابَ الْخِزْيِ فِى الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا
وَمَتَّعْنٰهُمْ اِلٰى حِيْنٍ ﴿٩٨﴾ وَلَوْ شَآءَ رَبُّكَ لَاٰمَنَ مَنْ فِى الْاَرْضِ كُلُّهُمْ
جَمِيْعًا ؕ اَفَاَنْتَ تُكْرِهُ النَّاسَ حَتّٰى يَكُوْنُوْا مُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٩٩﴾ وَمَا كَانَ لِنَفْسٍ
اَنْ تُؤْمِنَ اِلَّا بِاِذْنِ اللّٰهِ ؕ وَيَجْعَلُ الرِّجْسَ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ لَا يَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿١٠٠﴾
قُلِ انْظُرُوْا مَاذَا فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ وَمَا تُغْنِى الْاٰيٰتُ وَالنُّذُرُ عَنْ
قَوْمٍ لَّا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿١٠١﴾ فَهَلْ يَنْتَظِرُوْنَ اِلَّا مِثْلَ اَيَّامِ الَّذِيْنَ خَلَوْا مِنْ
قَبْلِهِمْ ؕ قُلْ فَانْتَظِرُوْٓا اِنِّىْ مَعَكُمْ مِّنَ الْمُنْتَظِرِيْنَ ﴿١٠٢﴾ ثُمَّ نُنَجِّىْ رُسُلَنَا وَ
الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا كَذٰلِكَ ۚ حَقًّا عَلَيْنَا نُنْجِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٠٣﴾ قُلْ يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ
اِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِىْ شَكٍّ مِّنْ دِيْنِىْ فَلَآ اَعْبُدُ الَّذِيْنَ تَعْبُدُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ
وَلٰكِنْ اَعْبُدُ اللّٰهَ الَّذِىْ يَتَوَفّٰىكُمْ ۖ وَاُمِرْتُ اَنْ اَكُوْنَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٠٤﴾ وَاَنْ
اَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّيْنِ حَنِيْفًا ۚ وَلَا تَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ ﴿١٠٥﴾ وَلَا تَدْعُ مِنْ
دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ مَا لَا يَنْفَعُكَ وَلَا يَضُرُّكَ ۚ فَاِنْ فَعَلْتَ فَاِنَّكَ اِذًا مِّنَ
الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿١٠٦﴾ وَاِنْ يَّمْسَسْكَ اللّٰهُ بِضُرٍّ فَلَا كَاشِفَ لَهٗٓ اِلَّا هُوَ ۚ وَاِنْ يُّرِدْكَ
بِخَيْرٍ فَلَا رَآدَّ لِفَضْلِهٖ ؕ يُصِيْبُ بِهٖ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهٖ ؕ وَهُوَ الْغَفُوْرُ
الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿١٠٧﴾ قُلْ يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَآءَكُمُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَّبِّكُمْ ۚ فَمَنِ اهْتَدٰى
فَاِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِىْ لِنَفْسِهٖ ۚ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَاِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا ۚ وَمَآ اَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ
بِوَكِيْلٍ ﴿١٠٨﴾ وَاتَّبِعْ مَا يُوْحٰٓى اِلَيْكَ وَاصْبِرْ حَتّٰى يَحْكُمَ اللّٰهُ ۚ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْحٰكِمِيْنَ ﴿١٠٩﴾

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The fact is that whatsoever Signs are shown to those who have fallen under Allah's decree,[97] they will not believe till they see the painful torment. Then, is there any instance of a habitation that, seeing the torment, accepted the faith and that faith profited it? (There is no instance of this) except that of Jonah's people.[98] When they believed, We warded off the torment of ignominy from them in this worldly life[99] and allowed them to make use of the things of life for a whil.[100] 96-98

Had your Lord willed (that all the people of the world should be believers,) all the dwellers of the earth would have believed in Him.[101] Will you, then, force the people to become believers ?[102] No one can believe without Allah's permission,[103] and it is the way of Allah that He throws filth on those who do not use their commonsense.[104] 99-100

Say to them, "Make a keen observation of all that is in the heavens and the earth." And (the fact is that) the Signs and warnings are of no avail to those who would not believe.[105] Now what do they wait for but the evil days that befell the peoples before them? Say to them, "Well, wait and see, I, too, wait with you." Then, (when such a time comes,) We deliver Our Messengers and those who believed in them—This is Our Way: We have laid it on Ourselves to deliver the believers. 101-103

O Prophet say,[106] 'O mankind! if you are still in doubt concerning my Faith, know that I do not worship those whom you worship beside Allah, but I worship that Allah alone, Who has the power to cause your death.[107] 'I have been commanded that I should be of the believers. I have also been bidden: 'Dedicate yourself sincerely, and exclusively and steadfastly to this Faith'[108] and be not at all of those who associate other gods with Allah.'[109] And do not invoke beside Allah any being that can neither do you good nor harm: for if you will do so, you shall be one of the workers of iniquity. If Allah afflicts you with a calamity, there is none to remove it but He Himself. Likewise if He wills to bestow a favour on you, there is none to withhold His bounty. He bestows His bounty on anyone of His servants He wills. And He is Forgiving and Mereifu'." 104-107

O Muhammad, tell them, "O mankind ! the Truth has come to you from your Lord. Now, whosoever follows the Right way, he does so for his own good, and whosoever goes astray, he does so to bring 108-109

about his own ruin; and I am not a keeper over you." And, O Prophet, go on following the Guidance that has been revealed to you; persevere steadfastly till Allah passes His judgement, for He is the best of judges.

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of Salāt in congregation had been abandoned by the Israelites and the Egyptian Muslims as a result of their persecution by the government, and owing to the weakness of their faith. As this had brought about their disintegration and killed their religious spirit, it was essential to re-establish the system of *Salāt* in congregation, which is indeed the first and foremost thing for the revival of that spirit and the integration of a scattered Muslim community and its powers.

As regards " .... appoint your houses as *qiblah*", I am of the opinion that it means: ".... set apart these houses as common places of worship for offering *Salāt* in congregation and the central places for holding their meetings. That is why it is followed by 'and establish *Salāt*'," which means that they should offer their *Salāt* collectively in congregation instead of individually.

85. The Arabic word بَشِّرْ (*bashshir*) means: "Fill them with hope and courage by giving them the good news of success by the grace of Allah." And they needed that very badly at that time, for they were full of despair, fear and depression.

86. This prayer was offered by Prophet Moses during the last period of his stay in Egypt. There was a long interval between this and the events mentioned in the preceding verse which happened during the early days of his Mission. The details of this intervening period are available at other places in the Qur'ān.

87. The Arabic word زِينَة (*zīnat*) includes the magnificence, grandeur, glory and the apparent brilliance of their culture and civilization which attracted other people towards them with the desire of imitating them.

88. "Possessions": resources and means which help the people like Pharaoh to put into practice all their devices and plans, and the lack of which prevents the standard-bearers of the Truth from carrying out their plans.

89. As it has already been stated, Prophet Moses made this prayer during the last period of his stay in Egypt. When he had shown many Signs, one after the other, to Pharaoh and his chiefs and pointed out the Way clearly to them, but they had persisted obdurately in their antagonism to the Truth, the Prophet begged his Lord to destroy their possessions and harden their hearts. And this was in accordance with the decree of Allah. As they had merited this punishment according to the Divine Law of retribution, Allah decreed that they should not get

the light of Faith, which they themselves had extinguished with their persistent disbelief.

90. In this verse, Allah has urged Prophet Moses and his followers to guard against a common misunderstanding that is likely to arise in such cases. It so happens that those people who have no knowledge of the reality and who do not understand the wisdom of Allah's ways are liable to believe from the apparent success of His rebels that perhaps it is His will that they should dominate in the world. When they witness the failures of the upholders of the Truth in their conflict with falsehood in contrast to the splendour and vast possessions of the champions of falsehood, they begin to think that Allah does not will to help the Truth in its conflict with falsehood. Therefore some foolish people further conclude from these wrong suppositions that it is useless to exert for the establishment of the Truth. Then they consider it to be the best and most proper thing to rest content with the little religiosity that the sovereignty of falsehood and unbelief allows them. That is why Allah has urged Prophet Moses and his followers to guard against such a misunderstanding and to carry on the Mission entrusted to them with patience under the adverse circumstances.

91. The Bible does not mention this happening but the Talmud says explicitly that when he was drowning he said, "Who is like Thee, O Lord, among the gods?"

92. Even today the place, where the dead body of Pharaoh was found floating, is pointed out by the inhabitants of that region. It lies on the western coast of the Sinai Peninsula and is now known by the name of Jabl-i-Fir'aun (Pharaoh's Mount). There is also near it a hot spring called Hammām-i-Fir'aun (Pharaoh's Bath), which is situated at a distance of a few miles from Abū Zenīmah, where, they say, Pharaoh's dead body was found lying.

If the Pharaoh who was drowned was Mineptah, who ruled over Egypt when Prophet Moses was sent to him, his embalmed dead body is still lying in the Cairo Museum. When Sir Grafton E. Smith removed the bandages from his mummy, a layer of salt was found on the body, which was a clear proof that he was drowned in the sea.

93. That is, "We show Signs to the people over and over again so that these should serve as warnings and be the means of teaching them lessons, but it is a pity that they do not learn lessons even from such Signs as the dead body of Pharaoh."

94. That is, "in Palestine after their exodus from Egypt"

95. This refers to the dissensions the Israelites had caused in the Divine Way and the new religions they had invented. This verse accuses them of falling

into variances, even though they possessed the Divine Knowledge, which had provided them with the criterion of judging between the Right Way and the wrong ways. They did this because of mischiefs of their hearts in spite of the fact that the Right Way had been made clear to them, and its fundamental principles had been imparted to them and instructions had been given about its implications and demands and its boundaries had been distinctly demarcated from those of the ways of unbelief. Besides, they had been admonished to follow the path of obedience and guard against the paths of disobedience, and establish their lives entirely in accordance with the rules and regulations based on that Knowledge, for they shall have to render an account of all they did in this life. But in spite of all the instructions that were given to them, they divided one original Religion into many divergent sects and built different ways on foundations other than those laid down by Allah.

96. Though these words were addressed to the Holy Prophet, they were meant for those who expressed doubts about his Message. As regards the reference to the people of the Book, it is because they possessed the Knowledge of the Scriptures, whereas the common people of Arabia lacked this, and were, therefore, strangers to the voice of the Qurān. It was also expected that their just and pious scholars would testify that its Message was the same as that of the Scriptures of the former Prophets.

97. Allah's decree that had become applicable to them was this: Allah does not thrust the Faith on those who do not seek after the Truth: who obstinately and obdurately shut their hearts against it with prejudice: who are so lost in the love of this world that they do not care at all about the Hereafter.

98. Though Prophet Jonah (860-784 B.C.) was an Israelite Prophet, he was sent to 'Iraq for the guidance of the Assyrians, who have been called the people of Jonah for this reason. At that time, Nineveh, a very ancient and famous city, was their capital. Its vast remains are scattered on the left bank of the Tigris, opposite to the city of Mosul, and one of the mounds bears the name of 'Prophet Jonah'. In order to form an estimate of the glory of these people, suffice it to say that the circumference of their capital Nineveh was 60 miles or so.

99. As regards the question why the threatened torment was warded off from the people of Jonah as an exception to the Divine principle, "After the decision of the torment, the profession of faith by any community does not benefit it," the Qur'ān does not give any details of this, but merely refers to the story at three places. (See XXI: 87, 88; XXXII: 139-148; LXVIII: 48-50). Though the story contained in the Book of Jonah gives some details, these cannot be depended upon because it was neither composed by Prophet Jonah nor it is a Revealed Book but was written by some unknown person and then inserted in the Bible. Besides

this, it contains some apparently absurd things which cannot be accepted as true. Nevertheless if we consider this deeply in the light of the allusions made in the Qur'ān and details in the Book of Jonah, the explanation given by various commentators of the Qur'ān seems to be correct.—Prophet Jonah left the place of his Mission without Divine permission after warning the people of the torment. Therefore Allah forgave the Assyrians, when they repented after seeing some Signs of the coming torment. This was in accordance with the Divine principles as stated in the Qur'ān. For, according to one of these, Allah does not inflict any torment on any people, till He has the Message fully demonstrated to them. As the Prophet did not continue his admonition in accordance with the appointed term and left the place of his Mission of his own accord, Allah's justice did not inflict the chastisement because the legal argument against his people had not been fulfilled. (For further explanation see E.N. 85 of XXXVI).

100. When the Assyrians believed in the Message, they were given a new lease of life. But after some time, they adopted the wrong ways of thought and deed. Prophet Nahum (720-698 B.C.) warned and admonished them but without any effect. Then Prophet Zephaniah (640-609 B.C.) gave them the last warning that "he .... will destroy Assyria and will make Nineveh a desolation" but it also proved in vain. At last in about 612 B.C., Allah made the Medes dominant over them.

The Median king, with the help of the Babylonians, invaded Assyria, and their army was defeated and was besieged within the walls of Nineveh. They put up a stiff resistance for some time but then the floods in the Tigris swept away the city wall and the invaders swarmed into the city and burnt it to ashes along with the surrounding countryside. The Assyrian king set fire to his palace and was himself burnt to death. Thus the Assyrian Empire and its culture came to an end for ever. The recent archaeological excavations reveal widespread effects of the fire.

101. This refers to the freedom that Allah has granted to mankind to believe or not to believe in Him. Otherwise He could have very easily created all the people as born believers and obedient servants and there would have been no disbelief and disobedience at all on the earth. Or He could have very easily inspired them to turn towards belief and obedience. But these methods would have defeated the wisdom that underlies the creation of mankind.

102. This does not at all mean that the Holy Prophet desired to force people to become believers, and that Allah was forbidding him to do this. In fact, the Qur'ān has here adopted the same method of admonishing the people that it has adopted at many other places, that is, though the words have apparently been addressed to the person of the Holy Prophet, in fact, these have been addressed to

the people. The implication is this: "O people! Our Messenger has made the distinction between the Guidance and deviation quite clear and plain by argument and pleading. Now, therefore, it is for you to believe or not to believe in the Guidance. If you accept that some one should force you to adopt the Right Way, you should know that this 'duty' has not been assigned to Our Prophet. Had Allah willed this, He could have done it Himself: then there would have been no need of sending any Prophet to you."

103. This is to emphasize the principle that the bestowal of all these blessings is in the power of Allah alone: therefore none can acquire or bestow on anyone any blessing without the permission of Allah. As faith and guidance also are blessings, they, too, can be acquired only with Allah's permission; and no one can acquire these without His permission nor bestow these on anyone else, even though one should desire to do so. That is why, even if the Prophet had sincerely desired to make people believers forcibly, he could not have done this, for this could be done only with Allah's permission and help.

104. This points out clearly that the above principle is not applied blindly and irrationally so as to bestow the blessing of faith on or withhold it from anyone without any rhyme or reason, but it works according to a system which is based on wisdom. Allah bestows this on anyone who uses his common sense properly in search of the Truth, for Allah provides for such a one the means of attaining it in proportion to the sincerity of his intention and the extent of his exertion and grants him its correct knowledge required for faith. But He throws the filth of ignorance, deviation, wrong thinking and wrong doing on the one who is not a seeker after the Truth and does not seek the Truth and does not use his common-sense properly because of his prejudices, or does not use it at all in search of the Truth. And this is what such people deserve.

105. This is the answer to the condition that they would believe him to be a true Prophet, if a Sign would be shown to them. The Holy Prophet has been asked to say to them, "There are countless Signs in the heaven and the earth, which confirm and testify the Message I am giving you. You could have easily recognized them, had you observed and considered them with open eyes and open hearts. But if you lack this urge and desire for the Truth, you will not accept and acknowledge it, however wonderful, miraculous and supernatural the sign may be, for you will declare that it was a piece of sorcery like Pharaoh and his chiefs. The fact is that the people, who suffer from this malady, see the Truth only when the torment with all its horrors overtakes them, just as Pharaoh came to believe only when he was drowning. But you should note it well that the repentance at the time of punishment is of no avail.

106. In this concluding portion, the same thing that was stated at the beginning of the discourse, has been reiterated. Therefore it will be worthwhile to keep in view the introductory passage (*vv.* 1-10).

107. The Arabic word يَتَوَفّٰكُم literally means "gives you death", but it has been purposely translated into "who has power to cause your death" in order to convey its real spirit in the context it occurs. It implies this: "I worship only that One, who has full power over your life: He has complete authority and power to let you live as long as He wills and cause you to die at any moment He wills. That is why I am fully convinced that I should submit and surrender, worship, serve and obey Him alone."

Now let us consider why of all His characteristics, this quality of Allah was specifically cited here. This was to bring home to the *mushriks* of Makkah that the doctrine of *shirk* was absolutely false. For they also believed (and all the *mushriks* have always believed) that death is entirely in the hands of Allah, the Lord of the universe, and none else has any power over it; so much so that they confessed that even those beings, whom they believed to be partners with God in other qualities and powers of His, could not avert death even from themselves. Thus the mention of this quality of Allah along with the statement of the Doctrine of *Tauhīd* has been made to serve as a proof of that creed. That is, "I serve Him only for He alone has the full power over life and death. Why should, then, I serve others who have no power at all over their own lives and deaths, not to mention the lives and deaths of others?" The eloquence and force of the statement has been enhanced manifold by saying, ".....Who gives you life and death" instead of ".....Who gives me life and death". For this contains the statement of the Doctrine, its proof and invitation to it, all the three combined in one concise sentence. Had it been said, "...I serve that one Who gives me death," then it would have implied, "I alone should serve Him". But by saying, ".....Who gives you death" the implication is: "It is not only I, who should serve Him, but you also should serve Him. For it is absolutely wrong to serve any other than Allah, Who alone has such powers."

108. The force of the Arabic words of the text (أَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّيْنِ حَنِيفًا) "Dedicate yourself sincerely, exclusively and steadfastly to this Faith", is worth deep consideration. The purpose might have been served by the use of such words as "Adopt this Faith" or "Follow this Faith". But Allah considered such expressions as weak and incapable of serving the real purpose, which is implied in the wording of the Text. For the literal meaning of أَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ is "Set your face steadfastly", which implies, "You should steadfastly turn your face in one direction only, without turning it even slightly to right or left, or backward, and go on marching in the same direction." Though these words were in themselves quite

sufficient, the addition of the word حَنِيفًا made it all the more forceful. For حَنِيف (*Hanīf*) is one who turns away from all others and exclusively turns to one direction. Thus what Allah demands is this: "Adopt this Faith, this Way of the worship of Allah and this way of life in such a manner that your worship, subjection, submission, servitude and obedience should be dedicated exclusively to Allah, the Lord of the universe, so that you do not deviate in the least after adopting this Way, you should have nothing to do with those ways that you have discarded and that you should not even have a look at the crooked paths that erroneous people follow."

109. This negative way of forbidding *shirk* has been purposely adopted. It implies this: "You should not at all be one of those, who set up in any way whatsoever other gods as partners with Allah in His essence, His attributes, His rights and His powers, whether that god be one's ownself or another man or a group of men or some spirit or *jinn* or angel or some material or imaginary being." The demand of *Tauhīd* has been made both in the positive form, "Dedicate.... Faith", and in the negative form, "and be not....other gods with Allah." Thus it forbids *shirk* both in creed and in deed, in individual and in collective life, in places of worship and in education, in courts and in legislative assemblies in political and in economic activities. Therefore it demands from the worshipper of *Tauhīd* to adopt a different way in every aspect of life from the way of those who adulterate God-worship with ungodly worships, for the former can never be a fellow traveller with those who practise *shirk*. As such things can never be expected from him, it can never be imagined that he would follow them.

Thus it is clear that it cuts at the very root of *shirk*, both (*jalī*) open and (*khafī*) hidden. As a matter of fact, *shirk* in its latter form is even more dangerous and should therefore be avoided most scrupulously. This warning is necessary, as some foolish people consider it to be almost harmless just because it is hidden. The fact is that open *shirk* is like an avowed enemy who makes an attack in the open and hidden *shirk* is like an enemy in the guise of a friend. Or the former is like a disease of which the symptoms are quite apparent and the latter like the hidden disease that gradually undermines one's health. Thus it is obvious that when the 'open' *shirk* comes into conflict with the Faith of *Tauhīd*, it may be cured. But the one who suffers from the 'hidden' *shirk* does not realize the threat posed by it and slowly and gradually succumbs to it, while the victim remains quite unaware that his Faith is being devoured by the deadly secret enemy.



XI

HŪD

هُوْد

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XI

HŪD

هُوْد

INTRODUCTION

Name

This Sūrah has been named after Prophet Hūd whose story has been related in vv. 50-60.

Period of Revelation

If we consider its theme deeply, we come to the conclusion that it was revealed during the same period as Sūrah Yūnus and most probably followed it immediately.

Subject

The Sūrah deals with the same subject as Sūrah Yūnus, that is, invitation to the Message, admonition and warning, with this difference that the warning is sterner. This is also supported by a Tradition:

It is related that after its revelation, once Hadrat Abū Bakr said to the Holy Prophet, "Of late I have been noticing that you are growing older and older. What is the cause of it ?" The Holy Prophet replied, "Sūrāh Hūd and the like Sūrahs have made me old." This shows that it was a very hard time for the Holy Prophet and these stern warnings added greatly to his anxieties that were caused by the persecution from the Quraish, who were doing their worst to crush down the Message of Islam. For it was obvious to the Holy Prophet that the last limit of the respite given by Allah was approaching nearer and nearer, and he was afraid lest the term of the respite should expire and his people be seized by the torment.

The invitation is this: Obey the Messenger of Allah; discard *shirk*, and worship Allah and Allah alone: establish the entire system of your life on the belief that you shall be called to account in the Hereafter.

The admonition is this: Remember that those people who put their faith in the outward appearance of this worldly life and rejected the Message of the Prophets met with dire consequences. Therefore you should consider it seriously whether you should follow the same way that history has proved to be the path to ruin.

The warning is this: You should not be deluded by the delay in the coming of the punishment: it is because of the respite that Allah has granted you by His grace so that you might mend your ways: if you do not make use of this opportunity, you shall be inflicted with an inevitable punishment that will destroy you all except the Believers.

Instead of addressing the people directly, the Qur'ān has used the stories of the people of Noah, Hūd, Sālih, Lot, Shu'aib and Moses to achieve the above-mentioned objects. What is most prominent in their stories is that when Allah passes His judgement on the people, He does not spare anyone whatsoever, even if he be the nearest relative of the Prophet of the time. Only that one is rescued who had believed in the Prophet, and none else, not even his own son or wife. More than that: the Faith demands from each and every Believer that he should totally forget his relationships when that judgement comes and remember only the relationship of the Faith. For it is against the spirit of Islam to show any regard whatsoever for the relationships of blood and race. And the Muslims demonstrated these teachings practically in the Battle of Badr, four years after the revelation of this Sūrah.



الٓرٰ ۟ كِتٰبٌ اُحْكِمَتْ اٰيٰتُهٗ ثُمَّ فُصِّلَتْ مِنْ لَّدُنْ حَكِيْمٍ خَبِيْرٍ ۟ اَلَّا تَعْبُدُوْٓا
اِلَّا اللّٰهَ ؕ اِنَّنِيْ لَكُمْ مِّنْهُ نَذِيْرٌ وَّ بَشِيْرٌ ۟ وَّ اَنِ اسْتَغْفِرُوْا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوْبُوْٓا
اِلَيْهِ يُمَتِّعْكُمْ مَّتَاعًا حَسَنًا اِلٰٓى اَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى وَّ يُؤْتِ كُلَّ ذِيْ فَضْلٍ
فَضْلَهٗ ؕ وَ اِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَاِنِّيْٓ اَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ كَبِيْرٍ ۟ اِلَى اللّٰهِ
مَرْجِعُكُمْ ۚ وَ هُوَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ۟ اَلَآ اِنَّهُمْ يَثْنُوْنَ صُدُوْرَهُمْ
لِيَسْتَخْفُوْا مِنْهُ ؕ اَلَا حِيْنَ يَسْتَغْشُوْنَ ثِيَابَهُمْ ۙ يَعْلَمُ مَا يُسِرُّوْنَ وَ مَا
يُعْلِنُوْنَ ۚ اِنَّهٗ عَلِيْمٌۢ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُوْرِ ۟

وَ مَا مِنْ دَآبَّةٍ فِي الْاَرْضِ اِلَّا عَلَى اللّٰهِ رِزْقُهَا وَ يَعْلَمُ مُسْتَقَرَّهَا وَ الجزء ١٢

مُسْتَوْدَعَهَا ؕ كُلٌّ فِيْ كِتٰبٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ۟ وَ هُوَ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ
الْاَرْضَ فِيْ سِتَّةِ اَيَّامٍ وَّ كَانَ عَرْشُهٗ عَلَى الْمَآءِ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ اَيُّكُمْ اَحْسَنُ
عَمَلًا ؕ وَ لَئِنْ قُلْتَ اِنَّكُمْ مَّبْعُوْثُوْنَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ الْمَوْتِ لَيَقُوْلَنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْٓا
اِنْ هٰذَآ اِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ۟ وَ لَئِنْ اَخَّرْنَا عَنْهُمُ الْعَذَابَ اِلٰٓى اُمَّةٍ
مَّعْدُوْدَةٍ لَّيَقُوْلُنَّ مَا يَحْبِسُهٗ ؕ اَلَا يَوْمَ يَاْتِيْهِمْ لَيْسَ مَصْرُوْفًا عَنْهُمْ وَ
حَاقَ بِهِمْ مَّا كَانُوْا بِهٖ يَسْتَهْزِءُوْنَ ۟ وَ لَئِنْ اَذَقْنَا الْاِنْسَانَ مِنَّا رَحْمَةً
ثُمَّ نَزَعْنٰهَا مِنْهُ اِنَّهٗ لَيَـُٔوْسٌ كَفُوْرٌ ۟ وَ لَئِنْ اَذَقْنٰهُ نَعْمَآءَ بَعْدَ ضَرَّآءَ
مَسَّتْهُ لَيَقُوْلَنَّ ذَهَبَ السَّيِّاٰتُ عَنِّيْ ؕ اِنَّهٗ لَفَرِحٌ فَخُوْرٌ ۟ اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ
صَبَرُوْا وَ عَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ مَّغْفِرَةٌ وَّ اَجْرٌ كَبِيْرٌ ۟ فَلَعَلَّكَ تَارِكٌ

XI

HŪD

هود

Verses: 123 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

Alif Lām Rā. It is an Edict[1] whose contents have been made firm and issued in detail[2] by the All-Wise and All-Aware: (it is this): "You should worship none but Allah—I am indeed a warner and also a bearer of good news from Him to you—And you should ask forgiveness of your Lord: then return to Him and He will provide you with good provisions of life till an appointed term.[3] And He will bestow His favours on everyone who deserves His favours.[4] But if you turn away I am afraid you shall meet with the torment of a dreadful day. To Allah you shall all return and He has power over everything." 1-4

Behold! They turn aside their chests in order to hide themselves from him.' Beware! Even when they cover themselves with clothes Allah knows alike what they conceal and what they show; indeed He knows even the secrets they conceal in their breasts. There is no moving creature on the earth whose sustenance does not depend on Allah: He knows its dwelling place and its repository.[6] Everything has been recorded in an open register. 5-6

And it is He Who created the heavens and the earth in six days—whereas before this His Throne rested upon water[7] so that He may test which of you does the best deeds.[8] Now O Muhammad, if you tell them "You will, O people, be raised again after death," those who disbelieve promptly exclaim, "This is plain sorcery!"[9] And if We defer their punishment to some definite and reckoned time, they say, "Well, what is it that is delaying this?" Listen! When the day of that punishment comes, no one shall be able to avert it from them, and that very thing which they are ridiculing shall encircle them on all sides. 7-8

If We show man Our mercy and then deprive him of it, he is filled with despair and shows ingratitude. And if after the adversity that had visited him, We bestow favours upon him, he says, "All my 9-11

sorrows have gone from me," and grows over-jubilant and arrogant.[10] Only those are free from this, who are steadast[11] and do good deeds: they are the ones who will have forgiveness and a rich reward.[12]

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1. The Arabic word كِتَاب *(kitāb)* has been translated into "Edict" because of the context. For its meaning is not confined to "book" or "something written" but it includes "command" and "sovereign decree" as well and has been used in several places in the Qur'ān in the same sense.

2. The contents of this "Edict" are firm, strong, and unchangeable: they are well-balanced and measured: there is no tinge of verbosity, pedantry, volubility, poetic fancy and rhetorical exaggeration. The truth has been stated accurately, and there is nothing more and nothing less than the truth. Moreover, the contents have been given in detail and everything has been made so clear and plain that there is neither confusion nor complication nor ambiguity in it.

3. The assurance that "He will provide you with good provisions of life..." has been given to remove the misunderstanding which Satan has imbued in the heart of every foolish worshipper of the world that piety ruins one's worldly life, though it might lead to one's success in the Hereafter. Allah has re-assured the true believers that He will shower His blessings on God-fearing people and they will live happy and peaceful lives and will be honoured and respected everywhere. The same thing has been stated in a different manner in XVI: 97: "Whoso will do good deeds, whether a man or a woman, provided the one is a believer, We will surely make such a one lead a pure and clean life in this world." Allah has refuted this theory of Satan and his disciples that piety inevitably brings poverty, distress and affliction and ignominy to the person who adopts truth, righteousness and virtue. He has assured that He will make the life of the one who will believe in Him and adopt a righteous life truly successful both in this world and in the Hereafter. And it is common experience that only those people enjoy real peace of mind and are honoured and respected who are God-fearing and possess a pure character; who are fair and generous in all their affairs and dealings and who are free from evil. For they are trusted by all and none fears any wrong or wickedness from them.

According to the Qur'ān, the provisions of life are either "good provisions" (مَتَاعٌ حَسَنٌ) or "deceptive provisions" (مَتَاعُ غُرُورٌ). Here those, who return to Allah, have been assured that they will be given "good provisions" of life and not "deceptive ones". The provisions are "good" if their recipient becomes even more grateful to Allah than before and uses these for fulfilling His rights and the rights of mankind and of his own self. Such "good provisions" make his life truly successful in this world and also in the Next World. On the

contrary, the provisions are "deceptive", if they become a temptation for the recipient, and get him involved in the worship of the things of this world more than before. Though "the deceptive provisions" might appear to be a blessing and a "favour", these are, in fact, a curse and means of some future torment.

4. This verse enunciates a fundamental Divine Principle. The higher a person rises in character and conduct, the higher is the rank he obtains in the sight of Allah. That is to say that Allah does not let go waste the good deed of anyone. He does neither appreciate any evil deed, nor detracts from any good deed. Everyone will be given the honour which he deserves for his deeds.

5. They were those people of Makkah, who though not very active in their antagonism against the Message of the Holy Prophet, nevertheless were very averse to it. Therefore they did not like to hear it nor come face to face with him, and did their very best to avoid him. If, by chance, they found him sitting somewhere and talking to the people, they would at once turn back on their heels. Or if they saw him coming towards themselves they would slink away or hide their faces with cloth for fear that he might address them and convey his Message to them. As they did not have the courage to face the Truth, they would bury their heads ostrich-like and make believe that the Reality from which they were hiding had disappeared, whereas it was all along there and watching their ridiculous attempts to hide from it.

6. That is, "It is foolish on your part to deceive yourselves that you can escape punishment by hiding yourselves from Allah Who has full and perfect knowledge of everything: Who knows the nest where the tiniest sparrow lives and the hole where the smallest insect resides, and provides their sustenance to them wherever they be: Who knows the dwelling place and the final resting place of every creature and gives life and death to them at the appointed time. Do you think that by hiding yourselves from His Messenger, you can also hide yourselves from the All-Knowing Sovereign Who has sent him? Do you think that Allah does not see His Messenger doing his very best to convey His Message to you and you are trying to turn a deaf ear to it?"

7. This is a parenthetical clause that has probably been inserted in answer to a question, which has not been cited: if the heavens and the earth were created afterwards in six days, what was there before their creation? The answer is: then there was water. It is not possible for us to say what exactly was the nature of that water. It might have been the common liquid known by that name. Or perhaps, the word "water" has been used as a symbol for the fluid state of the matter before it was changed to its present form. As regards "His Throne rested on water", I am of the opinion that it means: "His Kingdom was over water."

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بَعْضَ مَا يُوْحٰٓى اِلَيْكَ وَضَآئِقٌۢ بِهٖ صَدْرُكَ اَنْ يَّقُوْلُوْا لَوْلَآ اُنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ
كَنْزٌ اَوْ جَآءَ مَعَهٗ مَلَكٌ ؕ اِنَّمَآ اَنْتَ نَذِيْرٌ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَّكِيْلٌ ﴿١٢﴾ اَمْ
يَقُوْلُوْنَ افْتَرٰىهُ ؕ قُلْ فَاْتُوْا بِعَشْرِ سُوَرٍ مِّثْلِهٖ مُفْتَرَيٰتٍ وَّادْعُوْا مَنِ
اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿١٣﴾ فَاِلَّمْ يَسْتَجِيْبُوْا لَكُمْ
فَاعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّمَآ اُنْزِلَ بِعِلْمِ اللّٰهِ وَاَنْ لَّآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۚ فَهَلْ اَنْتُمْ مُّسْلِمُوْنَ ﴿١٤﴾ مَنْ
كَانَ يُرِيْدُ الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا وَزِيْنَتَهَا نُوَفِّ اِلَيْهِمْ اَعْمَالَهُمْ فِيْهَا وَهُمْ فِيْهَا لَا
يُبْخَسُوْنَ ﴿١٥﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ لَيْسَ لَهُمْ فِى الْاٰخِرَةِ اِلَّا النَّارُ ۖ وَحَبِطَ مَا صَنَعُوْا
فِيْهَا وَبٰطِلٌ مَّا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿١٦﴾ اَفَمَنْ كَانَ عَلٰى بَيِّنَةٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّهٖ وَيَتْلُوْهُ شَاهِدٌ
مِّنْهُ وَمِنْ قَبْلِهٖ كِتٰبُ مُوْسٰٓى اِمَامًا وَّرَحْمَةً ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِهٖ ؕ وَمَنْ يَّكْفُرْ
بِهٖ مِنَ الْاَحْزَابِ فَالنَّارُ مَوْعِدُهٗ ۚ فَلَا تَكُ فِىْ مِرْيَةٍ مِّنْهُ ۚ اِنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ وَ
لٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَمَنْ اَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرٰى عَلَى اللّٰهِ كَذِبًا ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ
يُعْرَضُوْنَ عَلٰى رَبِّهِمْ وَيَقُوْلُ الْاَشْهَادُ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ الَّذِيْنَ كَذَبُوْا عَلٰى رَبِّهِمْ ۚ اَلَا لَعْنَةُ
اللّٰهِ عَلَى الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿١٨﴾ الَّذِيْنَ يَصُدُّوْنَ عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ وَيَبْغُوْنَهَا عِوَجًا ؕ وَهُمْ
بِالْاٰخِرَةِ هُمْ كٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ لَمْ يَكُوْنُوْا مُعْجِزِيْنَ فِى الْاَرْضِ وَمَا كَانَ لَهُمْ مِّنْ
دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ مِنْ اَوْلِيَآءَ ؕ يُضٰعَفُ لَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ ؕ مَا كَانُوْا يَسْتَطِيْعُوْنَ السَّمْعَ وَمَا
كَانُوْا يُبْصِرُوْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ خَسِرُوْٓا اَنْفُسَهُمْ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَّا كَانُوْا يَفْتَرُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾
لَا جَرَمَ اَنَّهُمْ فِى الْاٰخِرَةِ هُمُ الْاَخْسَرُوْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ وَ
اَخْبَتُوْٓا اِلٰى رَبِّهِمْ ۙ اُولٰٓئِكَ اَصْحٰبُ الْجَنَّةِ ۚ هُمْ فِيْهَا خٰلِدُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ مَثَلُ الْفَرِيْقَيْنِ
كَالْاَعْمٰى وَالْاَصَمِّ وَالْبَصِيْرِ وَالسَّمِيْعِ ؕ هَلْ يَسْتَوِيٰنِ مَثَلًا ؕ اَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَ

وقف لازم



So O Prophet, be on your guard lest you should omit (to recite) 12
some of the things which are being revealed to you and be not distressed at heart that they would say Why has no treasure been sent down to him?" Or "Why has no angel come with him?" You are only a warner and Allah has everything in His power and charge.[13]

Do they say, "He has invented the Book himself?" Say to them 13-14
"Very well, if it is so, bing ten fabricated Surāhs like this: and you may call to your assistance whomsoever (of your deities) you can except Allah, if you be right (in considering them your deities). Now if they (your deities) do not come to your help you should know that this Book has been revealed with Allah's knowledge and that there is no true deity other than Allah. Do you then surrender to this (which is the very Truth) ?"[14]

Those who desire this worldly life and its splendours[15] are given 15-16
the full reward of their works here and nothing is detracted from it. But there is nothing except the Fire[16] for them in the Next World. (There they shall come to know) that all that they did in this world had come to nought and whatever they did was useless and worthless.

In contrast (to the worshippers of the world) there was one who 17
had a clear evidence from his Lord;[17] then came a witness from Him (testifying that evidence [18]) and there existed before him the Book of Moses as a Guidance and a blessing: (can such a one also reject the Message? Nay,) such people will believe in it.[19] And whosoever of the peoples will reject it he shall have that promised abode which is Hell. So O Prophet have no doubt at all about this: for this is indeed the Truth from your Lord though most people do not believe in it.

And who can be more unjust than the one who ascribes false 18-24
things to Allah?[20] Such persons shall be brought before their Lord and the witnesses will say "These are the people who ascribed false things to their Lord." Beware! Allah's curse rests upon the unjust people[21]—on those unjust people[22] who debar others from Allah's Way and seek to make it crooked;[23] and who disbelieve in the Hereafter. They were unable to frustrate Allah on the earth,[24] nor had they protectors to defend them against Allah. Now they shall be given double chastisement:[25] for they would neither listen to others nor see the Truth for themselves. These are the people who brought about their own loss

and all that they had invented vanished from them.[26] No doubt they shall be the greatest losers in the Hereafter. As regards those who believed and did righteous works and dedicated themselves exclusively to their Lord most surely they shall be the dwellers of Paradise and shall abide there for ever.[27] These two groups may be likened to two men, one of whom is blind and deaf, and the other can see and hear. Can they be alike and equal ?[28] Do you not learn a lesson (from this example) ?

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8. This enunciates the purpose of the Creation: Allah created the heavens and the earth for the sake of the creation of mankind and He created mankind to test human beings by delegating to them the powers of vicegerency and making them morally responsible for using or abusing them, just as they liked. Thus it has been emphasized that the sole purpose of the Creation is the moral trial of man and his consequent accountability to the Creator for the use or abuse of the delegated powers, and the award of rewards and punishments. For without this basic purpose, the whole work of Creation would have become meaningless and useless.

9. That is, "The disbelievers very foolishly considered the purpose of the Creation to be no more than a pastime in which they themselves were mere playthings. They were so absorbed in their foolish conception that when the Holy Prophet told them what the real purpose of Creation was and what part they were required to play in it, they would scoff at him, saying, "Your Message is like a piece of sorcery and beyond our understanding."

10. This disgraceful characteristic of man has been mentioned here because the disbelievers were exhibiting it at that time. When the Holy Prophet warned them of the consequences of their disobedience to Allah, they would scoff at him as if to say, "Are you mad? Can't you see our prosperity and power? We are enjoying all the good things of life and dominating over everything and everyone all around us. How is it that you are prophesying torment for us?"

The above-mentioned arrogant behaviour was due to the disgraceful human characteristic which has been mentioned in this verse. It is this: Man is, by nature, shallow and superficial and lacks the depth of thought. Therefore, when he enjoys prosperity and power he becomes joyous, arrogant and boastful; so much so that he never even dreams of any possibility that his happy condition would ever come to an end. And if and when adversity befalls him, he becomes an embodiment of despair and begins to complain of his misfortune here, there, and everywhere; so much so that he does not hesitate even to abuse God and taunt at His Godhead. But whenever there is a change for the better in his fortune, he

again begins to brag of his foresight, wisdom and success. That is why the disbelievers were exhibiting such a shallow and superficial characteristic in answer to the warning of the Holy Prophet. They forgot that Allah was deferring their punishment because of His mercy to give them sufficient time to consider well their absurd attitude and mend their ways during the respite given to them, and not to delude themselves by imagining that their prosperity had very deep foundations and would last for ever.

11. Here صَبْر (*sabr*) (fortitude) implies another meaning also, that is, "steadfastness" the antonym of shallowness etc. etc., that has been mentioned in the preceding verse. Those "who are steadfast" remain firm and unwavering in their purpose in spite of the vicissitudes of life. They are not influenced by the changes of circumstances, but stick to the right, reasonable and correct attitudes they have adopted. They do not give themselves airs nor become intoxicated nor over-jubilant and boastful, if they win power, prosperity and name. On the contrary, they are neither subdued nor depressed if they are visited by adversity. In short, they come out successful in their trial by Allah, whether it be in the shape of favour or adversity and remain steadfast in both the cases.

12. This is the favour that Allah shows to such people; He forgives their shortcomings and gives them rich rewards for their good deeds.

13. In this verse, Allah has comforted and urged His Messenger to propagate the Message without the least hesitation and not to waver in his determination for fear of ridicule or for lack of response from his people. He should convey the Message in its entirety and leave the result to Allah for He has full power over everything. In order to grasp its full significance, we should keep in view the circumstances that necessitated it.

At the time of this Revelation, the Quraish were the most powerful and influential of all the clans. As they were the guardians of the Ka'abah (Makkah), the religious centre of the Arabs, they enjoyed religious, economic, and political superiority over the whole of Arabia. Thus it was quite natural that they should resent and oppose that Message which proclaimed, "The religion of which you are the leaders is absolutely false, and the system of life you are following is rotten to the core. As you are rejecting the Message, torment of Allah is threatening you. The only way of escape from it is that you should accept the Right Way and the righteous system of life I have brought from Allah." Obviously this Message struck a hard blow at their "superiority" and therefore they were averse to it from the very beginning.

The second reason why they did not accept it was that the Messenger possessed nothing extraordinary to convince the people of his Prophethood except

his pure character and his rational, and understandable Message. Then for the Quraish, there was nothing to warrant a torment from Allah except the rotten condition of their religion, morality and culture. On the contrary, there was "prosperity" to delude them that that was a sure sign of the favours of Allah and of their "gods" and "goddesses", which was a clear proof that the ways they were following were the "right" ways. The inevitable result was that only a small minority of those people, who had sound minds and hearts, accepted the Message and the remaining large majority became hostile to it. Then some of them tried to suppress the Message by persecutions and some did their worst to defame it by false accusations and frivolous objections and others resorted to calculated indifference to discourage it. There were still others who adopted an attitude of ridicule, derision, taunt and mockery in order to make light of it.

The above condition went on for many years and was liable to fill one with despair and discouragement. Therefore the Sovereign reassured His Messenger, as if to say, "We disapprove of these shallow, superficial and mean people, who are trying to make your mission a failure by their prejudice, indifference, ridicule, mockery and frivolous objections. You should go on following the Right Way with perseverance and courage: you should go on proclaiming the Truth that has been revealed to you without the least hesitation: you should never be afraid of propagating the Message for fear of ridicule or indifference: you should go on inculcating the Truth in its entirety whether anyone accepts it or rejects it for it is Allah Who has everything in His power and charge and He alone affords guidance to everyone He considers fit for it."

14. Here one and the same argument has been advanced to prove two things. First, the Qur'ān has been revealed by Allah. Secondly, it proves the truth of the doctrine of *Tauhid*. The argument is this:

(1) "You say that the Qur'ān has not been revealed by Allah but has been devised and invented by myself and ascribed to Him. If your claim had been genuine you would have been able to invent a book like this in answer to the challenge I have given you over and over again. As you have failed to do so even with your combined resources and forces, my claim that it has been revealed with Allah's knowledge has been proved absolutely, fully and completely."

(2) "Then there was a two-fold challenge from the Qur'ān to your deities but they utterly failed to meet it. They were challenged to come to your aid and help produce a book like the Qur'ān. As they have not helped you, it is a clear proof that they are absolutely powerless and have no share at all in Godhead. You have seen that they have not only failed in this decisive test, but have also proved to be impotent to defend themselves against the open attacks made on them in this Book, which asks the people not to

worship them for they have no share in the powers of Godhead. These things have proved that there is nothing Divine in them and you have made them your deities without rhyme or reason".

Incidentally, this verse shows that chronologically this Sūrah was revealed earlier than Sūrah Yūnus. For at first they were challenged in this Sūrah to bring ten Sūrahs like the Sūrahs of the Qur'ān, but they failed to do so. Then in Sūrah Yūnus they were challenged (*v.* 38) to bring even one Sūrah like this. (X: 38 and E.N. 46).

15. This general statement has been made in continuation of the theme of the preceding verses, to refute the false excuses of the disbelievers mentioned therein for rejecting the Message of the Qur'ān. This verse says that in general those people who rejected the Qur'ān then (and are rejecting it now) were the worshippers of this world and its pleasures. As the root cause of their rejection was (and is) this false creed that there is nothing more valuable than the pleasures of this world and its material gains, there should be no restrictions (like the ones imposed in the Qur'ān) on their acquisition. They first made this choice, and afterwards invented arguments (like the ones mentioned in the Qur'ān) to deceive their own minds and those of others.

16. This is a clear and stern warning to the worshippers of the world. They should know that they will get the full reward for the exertions (whatever they be) they put forth in order to acquire the worldly gains but they should note it well that they would get nothing in the Next World. As they confined their efforts to the benefits of this world, and did nothing to earn the benefits of the Next World, they should expect nothing for the deeds they have done for the material gains of this world. In order to illustrate this, let us take the case of a person who desires to build a palace for himself in this world and adopts all those devices, measures and means which help build such a palace. Most surely, he will succeed in building a grand palace, for no brick will refuse to stick to its place simply because he was an unbeliever. But it is equally obvious that he shall have to leave behind in this world that grand palace along with all its furnishings as soon as he breathes his last breath. For there is no reason why the palace he had built (or done anything else) for this world, should be credited to him in the Next World, if he had done nothing to provide himself with a palace in the Next World. For only those who provide for themselves with the necessary material for a palace in the Next World in accordance with the Divine Law, deserve to get a palace there.

Now a question arises in regard to the logical conclusion of this argument, according to which he should not get a palace in the Next World. It is this: "Well, he may not get a palace, but why should he be thrown into the Fire of Hell? The

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لَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا نُوْحًا اِلٰى قَوْمِهٖٓ اِنِّيْ لَكُمْ نَذِيْرٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿٢٥﴾ اَنْ لَّا تَعْبُدُوْٓا اِلَّا اللّٰهَ ۭ اِنِّيْٓ
اَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ اَلِيْمٍ ﴿٢٦﴾ فَقَالَ الْمَلَاُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مِنْ قَوْمِهٖ مَا نَرٰىكَ اِلَّا
بَشَرًا مِّثْلَنَا وَمَا نَرٰىكَ اتَّبَعَكَ اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ هُمْ اَرَاذِلُنَا بَادِيَ الرَّاْيِ ۚ وَمَا نَرٰى
لَكُمْ عَلَيْنَا مِنْ فَضْلٍۭ بَلْ نَظُنُّكُمْ كٰذِبِيْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾ قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اَرَءَيْتُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُ عَلٰي بَيِّنَةٍ
مِّنْ رَّبِّيْ وَاٰتٰىنِيْ رَحْمَةً مِّنْ عِنْدِهٖ فَعُمِّيَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ ۭ اَنُلْزِمُكُمُوْهَا وَاَنْتُمْ لَهَا
كٰرِهُوْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ وَيٰقَوْمِ لَآ اَسْـَٔـلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مَالًا ۭ اِنْ اَجْرِيَ اِلَّا عَلَي اللّٰهِ وَمَآ اَنَا بِطَارِدِ
الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا ۭ اِنَّهُمْ مُّلٰقُوْا رَبِّهِمْ وَلٰكِنِّيْٓ اَرٰىكُمْ قَوْمًا تَجْهَلُوْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَيٰقَوْمِ مَنْ
يَّنْصُرُنِيْ مِنَ اللّٰهِ اِنْ طَرَدْتُّهُمْ ۭ اَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَلَآ اَقُوْلُ لَكُمْ عِنْدِيْ
خَزَاۗىِٕنُ اللّٰهِ وَلَآ اَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ وَلَآ اَقُوْلُ اِنِّيْ مَلَكٌ وَّلَآ اَقُوْلُ لِلَّذِيْنَ تَزْدَرِيْٓ
اَعْيُنُكُمْ لَنْ يُّؤْتِيَهُمُ اللّٰهُ خَيْرًا ۭ اَللّٰهُ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا فِيْٓ اَنْفُسِهِمْ ۚ اِنِّيْٓ اِذًا لَّمِنَ
الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٣١﴾ قَالُوْا يٰنُوْحُ قَدْ جٰدَلْتَنَا فَاَكْثَرْتَ جِدَالَنَا فَاْتِنَا بِمَا تَعِدُنَآ اِنْ
كُنْتَ مِنَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٣٢﴾ قَالَ اِنَّمَا يَاْتِيْكُمْ بِهِ اللّٰهُ اِنْ شَاۗءَ وَمَآ اَنْتُمْ
بِمُعْجِزِيْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَلَا يَنْفَعُكُمْ نُصْحِيْٓ اِنْ اَرَدْتُّ اَنْ اَنْصَحَ لَكُمْ اِنْ كَانَ اللّٰهُ
يُرِيْدُ اَنْ يُّغْوِيَكُمْ ۭ هُوَ رَبُّكُمْ ۣ وَاِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾ اَمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ افْتَرٰىهُ ۭ قُلْ
اِنِ افْتَرَيْتُهٗ فَعَلَيَّ اِجْرَامِيْ وَاَنَا بَرِيْۗءٌ مِّمَّا تُجْرِمُوْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَاُوْحِيَ اِلٰى نُوْحٍ اَنَّهٗ
لَنْ يُّؤْمِنَ مِنْ قَوْمِكَ اِلَّا مَنْ قَدْ اٰمَنَ فَلَا تَبْتَىِٕسْ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾
وَاصْنَعِ الْفُلْكَ بِاَعْيُنِنَا وَوَحْيِنَا وَلَا تُخَاطِبْنِيْ فِي الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا ۚ اِنَّهُمْ
مُّغْرَقُوْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَيَصْنَعُ الْفُلْكَ ۤ وَكُلَّمَا مَرَّ عَلَيْهِ مَلَاٌ مِّنْ قَوْمِهٖ سَخِرُوْا مِنْهُ ۭ
قَالَ اِنْ تَسْخَرُوْا مِنَّا فَاِنَّا نَسْخَرُ مِنْكُمْ كَمَا تَسْخَرُوْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾ فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ۙ مَنْ

And (such was the state of affairs when) We had sent Noah to his people.[29] (He said,) "I warn you plainly not to worship anyone but Allah: otherwise I am afraid that a fearful torment shall visit you one day."[30] In answer to this, those chiefs of his people, who had rejected his Message, said, "We see that you are no more than a mere man like ourselves,[31] and we also see that only the meanest from among us have become your followers without due consideration,[32] and we find nothing in you that might give you superiority over us.[33] Nay, we consider you to be liars." He replied, "O my people, just consider it yourselves: If my Lord had sent a clear Sign to me and then bestowed His special blessing on me,[34] but you did not see it, how can we compel you to accept that, when you are averse to it ? O my people, I do not ask of you any wealth for this work:[35] for I look only to Allah for its reward. And I am not going to drive away those who have believed in me. Indeed they are going to meet their Lord,[36] (Who knows their worth). But I see that you are adopting the attitude of ignorance. And, O my people, who will help save me from Allah, if I drive them away? Don't you understand this simple thing? And I do not say to you that I possess treasures from Allah: nor do I say that I have the knowledge of the unseen: nor do I claim to be an angel:[37] nor can I say about those whom you disdain, 'Allah has not bestowed on them any good'. Allah knows best what is in their minds: for I shall be unjust, if I utter anything like this." 25-31

At last those people said, "O Noah, you have already argued with us and argued too much. Now you bring down on us that scourge with which you threaten us, if what you say be true." Noah replied, "Allah will bring down that on you if He will and you have no power to frustrate it. Now, even if I wished to do you some good it cannot profit you even if I wanted to be your well wisher, when Allah has decided that you should go astray:[38] He is your Lord and to Him you shall return." 32-34

O Muhammad! do they say, "He himself has forged all this?" Say to them, "If I have forged this myself, I shall bear all its consequences, and I am clear of the crime you are committing."[39] 35

And it was revealed to Noah: "No more of your people will believe in you now than those who have already believed. So do not 36-39

grieve at their misdeeds, but start to build an Ark under Our supervision in accordance with Our Revelation. And beware that you do not plead with Me for those who had been unjust: indeed now they shall all be drowned."[40] So he began to build the Ark. And whoso of the chiefs of his people passed by him, he jeered at him. Noah said, "Laugh at us, if you will; we, too, are laughing at you; for soon you shall come to know who is visited by the torment that will disgrace him, and who is afflicted with the inevitable and lasting calamity."[41]

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answer is this (and the Qur'ān itself has given this same answer in different places) that the one who exerts and works only for a palace in this world in utter disregard of the Hereafter, naturally and inevitably adopts such measures and means as help build a large Fire for himself in the Hell. (Please refer to E.N. 12 of YŪNUS.)

17. This was the one who believed in the open evidence he got from his own self, from the structure of the heavens and the earth, from the system of the Universe that there must be One, and only One Creator, Owner, Providence, Sovereign and Ruler of this world. Then these things which had already been confirmed by his heart, led him naturally to the belief that after this life of the world, there should be another life wherein man should render an account of this life to his Lord and be rewarded or punished according to what one did in this life.

18. That witness was the Qur'ān which testified to the natural and rational evidence one had received from one's inner self and surroundings.

19. The preceding verses (12-16) dealt with the worshippers of the world who rejected the Message of the Qur'ān on one pretext or the other. This verse contrasts them with the one who saw the clear evidence of One Allah and of the Hereafter in his own existence and in the whole system of the Universe and found that the same evidence was testified by the Qur'ān and by the Book of Moses that had been sent before him. That is why such people cannot shut their eyes and minds against the strong evidences they see all around them, and believe in the Message.

Incidentally, this verse makes it clear that before the revelation of the Holy Qur'ān, the Holy Prophet had gained the knowledge and belief of the "Unseen" like Prophet Abraham (*vi:* 75 79) by observation and deep contemplation of the phenomena of Nature. Then the Qur'ān not only confirmed and testified it, but also directly imparted the knowledge of the Reality to him.

20. The false things which unjust people ascribed to Allah were such as these: "There are other partners with Allah in His Godhead, rights and worship. Or He has nothing to do with the guidance or deviation of His servants, and has sent no Messenger, no Prophet and no Book for their guidance but has left people free to adopt any way of life they like. Or God has created mankind for mere fun and will not call them to account for what they did in this world. Or there is no reward or punishment in the Hereafter."

21. This will happen in the Next World.

22. This is a parenthetical clause that has been inserted to point out some of the characteristics of the unjust people that make them accursed.

23. That is, "They do not like to follow the Right Way and wish that it should become crooked so as to suit their desires, lusts, prejudices, superstitions and caprices." (See X: 15)

24. This declaration (vv. 20-23) will be made in the Hereafter.

25. They shall be given double chastisement, because they themselves deviated from the Way and made others deviate from it and left the heritage of deviation for the coming generations. (Please refer to E.N. 30 of *Al-A'Arāf*.)

26. The things they have invented and which proved to be baseless were their theories about God, the Universe and their own life and the confidence, reliance and trust they had imposed in their deities, guardians, intercedes and recommenders, and the conjectures they had made about the Life-after-death. All these things turned out to be absolutely false.

27. Here the declaration that began from v. 20 comes to an end.

28. The answer to this question is contained in the question itself. It is obvious that the one who does not see the way, nor listens to the one who is able to show him the way, will most surely stumble over a stone or obstacle and meet with a fearful accident. On the other hand, the one who himself sees the way and makes use of the guidance of the one who knows the way, will most surely reach his destination in perfect safety. This is exactly the difference between those who observe keenly the signs of the Reality in the Universe and listen to the Message of the Prophets appointed by Allah and those who neither observe the Signs of God nor listen to the Messengers. Obviously neither can their behaviours and conducts be alike here nor shall their ultimate ends be equal and the same.

29. E.N.'s 47-50 of *Al-A'arāf* should be kept in view.

30. This is the same thing that has been put into the mouth of Muhammad (God's peace be upon him) in vv. 2-3.

31. The same foolish objection was being raised by the people of Makkah against the Holy Prophet. They argued like this: "You are a man like ourselves: you eat and drink, walk and sleep and have a family like us, and there is nothing in you that might show that you have been sent by God." (See E.N. 11 of XXXVI).

32. The "big" people of Makkah passed the same remarks about those who followed the Holy Prophet. They taunted him with things like these: "Your followers consist of mere inexperienced boys or slaves or the lowest strata of society, in short, of such people as are credulous and lack commonsense and wisdom." (Please refer to E.N.'s 34-37 of *Al-An'ām* and E.N. 75 of *Yūnus*).

33. This is to say, "You claim that you are the favoured ones of God Whose blessings are on you, and that those who do not follow your way are under His wrath. But the reverse of this is true for it is we who have been favoured with wealth, servants and power and you possess nothing of the sort. Please point out anything in which you are superior to us."

34. This is the same thing that has been put into the mouth of the Holy Prophet in v. 17. That is, "At first I recognized the reality of *Tauhīd* by observing keenly the Signs of God in the universe, and in my own self. Then the same was confirmed by Revelation to me". This shows that all the Prophets acquired the knowledge of the "Unseen" by observation and contemplation. Then Allah blessed them with the actual knowledge of the same at the time of their appointment as Prophets.

35. This was to bring home to them the fact that he had no selfish motive in the performance of his mission, as if to say, "I am conveying the admonition to you without any demand or hope or expectation of worldly gains. Nay, I am bearing all the sufferings in the hope that you may at last realize that I have no axe to grind. And you cannot point out anything to show that I have any personal or selfish interest before me in the mission of the Message". (See. E.N. 70 of XXIII, E.N. 17 of XXXVI and E.N. 41 of XLII).

36. That is, "Their true worth will be known only when they shall meet their Lord. Therefore it is not proper for you to treat them with contempt here in this world. Maybe they are precious stones—their Lord alone knows—and you are treating them as mere worthless stones". (See VI: 52, XVIII: 28).

37. This is the answer to their objection that he was no more than a man like themselves. Prophet Noah admitted this: "In fact I am a man and I never claimed to be more than this. My only claim is that God has shown me the Right Way of knowledge and action and you are welcome to test this in any way you like. But instead of this, you are asking me questions about the "Unseen", though

I never claimed to have its knowledge. You ask me to produce such things as can be produced only by that person who possesses God's treasures and I never claimed to possess them. You object that my physical life is like that of other men, though I never claimed that I was an angel and not a man. The true test of my claim is that you should ask me about the true creeds, the principles of morality and culture and not about frivolous things about the future events for I never claimed to possess their knowledge."

38. That is, "All my efforts to do good to you cannot prove effective, if Allah has decided to withhold the right way from you because of your obduracy in evil and the lack of interest in good ways. For Allah lets people go astray on the way they choose for themselves."

39. The wording of the verse shows that during the recital of the story of Prophet Noah, the opponents of the Holy Prophet might have felt that he himself had invented that story in order to hit them hard indirectly. So they might have interrupted him, saying, "You are inventing such stories as these in order to apply these to us and hit us hard indirectly." That is why the narration of the story has been broken to answer their false accusation.

And the fact is that the mean people always behave like this: As they have no interest in goodness, they would turn to the dark side of everything. Even if one gives them wise counsel or teaches them a useful lesson or warns them of an error, they would never benefit from these nor mend their ways. Instead of this, they would search out for that aspect of the matter which will not only undo the wisdom and goodness of the counsel but also bring an accusation against the admonisher. It is obvious that in this way, even the best of counsels can be made void and ineffective, if the hearer dubs that as a "hit," and takes it ill as an affront. Moreover, their thinking is always based on suspicion and mistrust. Supposing there is a certain story which appears to be true. A wise man will take it as a fact and learn a lesson from it, even if it applies exactly to his own condition and points out his error. On the contrary, a suspicious and crooked man will at once jump to the conclusion without any proof at all that the story had been invented for the sole purpose of applying it to him in order to hit him hard.

The same was the condition of those who accused the Holy Prophet that he himself had forged the story and ascribed it to Allah to make it more effective. Allah has asked him to say to them, "If I have forged the story, I shall have to bear its consequences, but this cannot lessen the punishments of the crimes you are committing for which you alone will be held responsible."

40. This verse lays down the limits of the Divine Law of respite. When

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يَّاْتِيْهِ عَذَابٌ يُّخْزِيْهِ وَيَحِلُّ عَلَيْهِ عَذَابٌ مُّقِيْمٌ ﴿٣٩﴾ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا جَآءَ اَمْرُنَا وَ
فَارَ التَّنُّوْرُ ۙ قُلْنَا احْمِلْ فِيْهَا مِنْ كُلٍّ زَوْجَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ وَاَهْلَكَ اِلَّا مَنْ سَبَقَ
عَلَيْهِ الْقَوْلُ وَمَنْ اٰمَنَ ۭ وَمَآ اٰمَنَ مَعَهٗٓ اِلَّا قَلِيْلٌ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَقَالَ ارْكَبُوْا فِيْهَا
بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ مَجْرٖىهَا وَمُرْسٰىهَا ۭ اِنَّ رَبِّيْ لَغَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿٤١﴾ وَهِيَ تَجْرِيْ بِهِمْ فِيْ
مَوْجٍ كَالْجِبَالِ ۡ وَنَادٰى نُوْحُ ابْنَهٗ وَكَانَ فِيْ مَعْزِلٍ يّٰبُنَيَّ ارْكَبْ مَّعَنَا وَلَا
تَكُنْ مَّعَ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿٤٢﴾ قَالَ سَاٰوِيْٓ اِلٰى جَبَلٍ يَّعْصِمُنِيْ مِنَ الْمَاۗءِ ۭ قَالَ لَا عَاصِمَ
الْيَوْمَ مِنْ اَمْرِ اللّٰهِ اِلَّا مَنْ رَّحِمَ ۚ وَحَالَ بَيْنَهُمَا الْمَوْجُ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْمُغْرَقِيْنَ ﴿٤٣﴾
وَقِيْلَ يٰٓاَرْضُ ابْلَعِيْ مَاۗءَكِ وَيٰسَمَاۗءُ اَقْلِعِيْ وَغِيْضَ الْمَاۗءُ وَقُضِيَ الْاَمْرُ وَ
اسْتَوَتْ عَلَي الْجُوْدِيِّ وَقِيْلَ بُعْدًا لِّلْقَوْمِ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَنَادٰى نُوْحٌ رَّبَّهٗ فَقَالَ
رَبِّ اِنَّ ابْنِيْ مِنْ اَهْلِيْ وَاِنَّ وَعْدَكَ الْحَقُّ وَاَنْتَ اَحْكَمُ الْحٰكِمِيْنَ ﴿٤٥﴾ قَالَ
يٰنُوْحُ اِنَّهٗ لَيْسَ مِنْ اَهْلِكَ ۚ اِنَّهٗ عَمَلٌ غَيْرُ صَالِحٍ ۡ فَلَا تَسْـَٔلْنِ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ
بِهٖ عِلْمٌ ۭ اِنِّىْٓ اَعِظُكَ اَنْ تَكُوْنَ مِنَ الْجٰهِلِيْنَ ﴿٤٦﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ اِنِّىْٓ اَعُوْذُ بِكَ اَنْ
اَسْـَٔلَكَ مَا لَيْسَ لِيْ بِهٖ عِلْمٌ ۭ وَاِلَّا تَغْفِرْ لِيْ وَتَرْحَمْنِيْٓ اَكُنْ مِّنَ الْخٰسِرِيْنَ ﴿٤٧﴾
قِيْلَ يٰنُوْحُ اهْبِطْ بِسَلٰمٍ مِّنَّا وَبَرَكٰتٍ عَلَيْكَ وَعَلٰٓى اُمَمٍ مِّمَّنْ مَّعَكَ ۭ وَاُمَمٌ
سَنُمَتِّعُهُمْ ثُمَّ يَمَسُّهُمْ مِّنَّا عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿٤٨﴾ تِلْكَ مِنْ اَنْۢبَاۗءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوْحِيْهَآ اِلَيْكَ ۚ
مَا كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُهَآ اَنْتَ وَلَا قَوْمُكَ مِنْ قَبْلِ هٰذَا ۛ فَاصْبِرْ ۭ اِنَّ الْعَاقِبَةَ لِلْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿٤٩﴾
وَاِلٰى عَادٍ اَخَاهُمْ هُوْدًا ۭ قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ اِلٰهٍ غَيْرُهٗ ۭ اِنْ اَنْتُمْ
اِلَّا مُفْتَرُوْنَ ﴿٥٠﴾ يٰقَوْمِ لَآ اَسْـَٔلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ اَجْرًا ۭ اِنْ اَجْرِيَ اِلَّا عَلَي الَّذِيْ فَطَرَنِيْ ۭ
اَفَلَا تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٥١﴾ وَيٰقَوْمِ اسْتَغْفِرُوْا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوْبُوْٓا اِلَيْهِ يُرْسِلِ السَّمَاۗءَ عَلَيْكُمْ

Thus was it until Our Command came to pass and *At-Tannūr*[42] began to boil up. Then We said, "Take into the Ark a pair from every species, and embark your own people —save those who have already been specifically marked[43]— and also those who have believed;[44] and those who had believed with Noah were only a few. Noah said, "Embark in the Ark: in the name of Allah will it move and cast anchor. Surely my Lord is very Forgiving and Compassionate."[45] 40-41

As the Ark was moving on with them amid waves like mountains, Noah cried out to his son, who was at a distance, "My son! Embark with us and be not with the unbelievers." He answered, "I am going to climb up a mountain that will protect me from waters." Noah said, "Today there is nothing to protect from Allah's judgement except that He Himself should take pity on anyone." In the meantime a wave came between them and he was among the drowned. 2-43

It was commanded, "O Earth! Swallow up thy waters, and O Sky, cease thy rain!" Accordingly the waters sank into the Earth. The decree was carried out; and the Ark rested upon Mount *Jūdi*.[46] And it was proclaimed: "Gone are the workers of iniquity!" 44

Noah called out to his Lord, saying, "My Lord! My son is of my family, and Thy promise is surely true[47] and Thou art the greatest and the best of all rulers."[48] In answer it was said, "O Noah! He is not of your family; he has turned out to be a worthless act.[49] So do not ask Me anything of which you have no knowledge. I admonish you that you should not behave like ignorant people."[50] Noah meekly replied, "My Lord, I seek Thy protection lest I should ask of Thee anything of which I have no knowledge. For if Thou forgivest me not for my presumption, and hast not mercy on me, I shall be totally ruined."[51] 45-47

It was said, "O Noah, go down:[52] Peace and blessings from Us are on you and on the communities that are with you. But there are other communities, whom We shall give the provisions of life for some time: then a painful torment from Us shall visit them." 48

O Muhammad! These are some of the tidings of the "Unseen" which We are revealing to you. You did not know these before this nor did your people. So practise fortitude, for ultimately, the God-fearing people shall come out successful.[53] 49

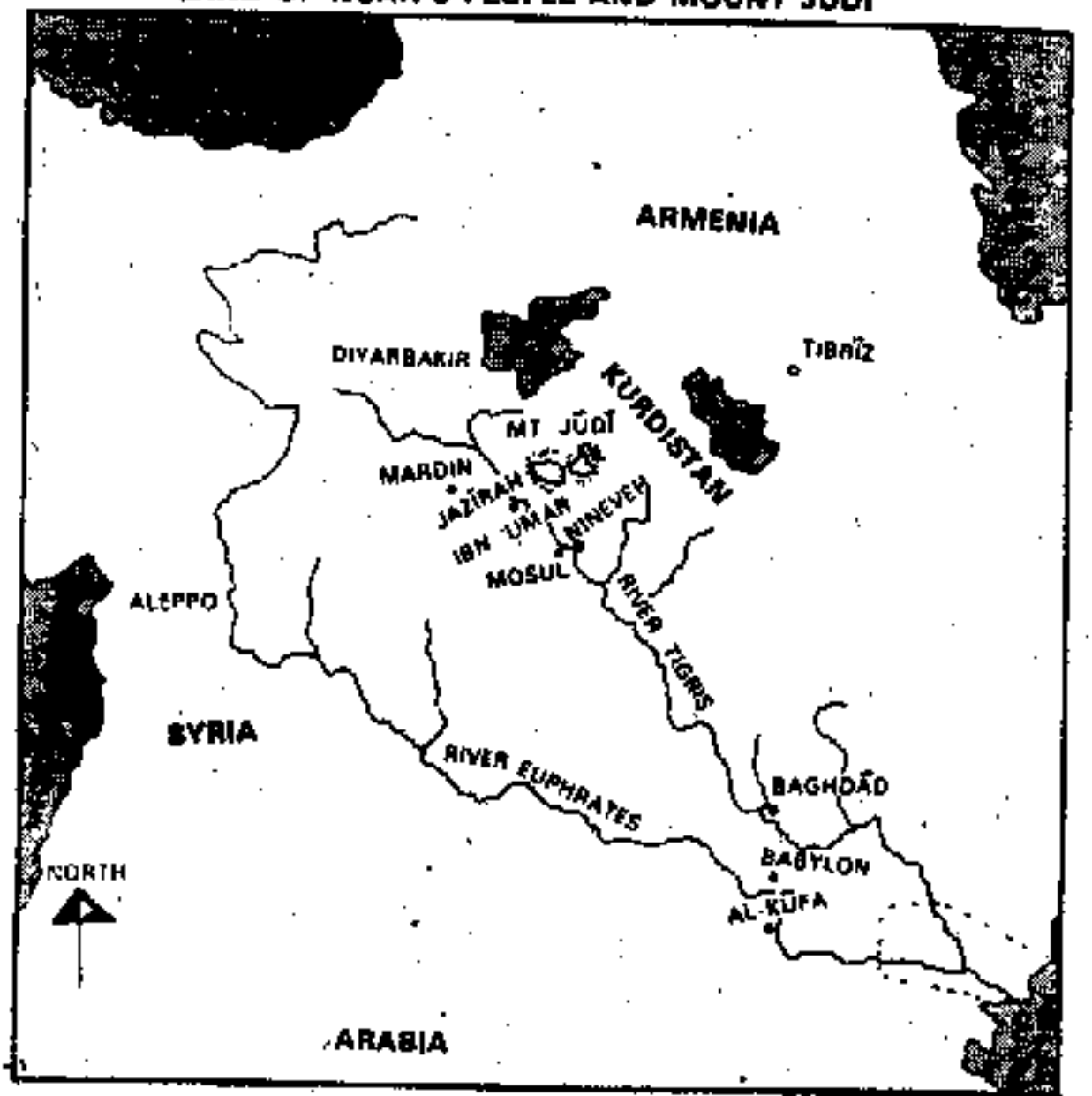
0-52 And to 'Ād We sent their brother Hūd;[54] he said, "O my people! Serve Allah: you have no god other than He: it is nothing but falsehood that you have forged.[55] O brethren! I do not ask of you any recompense for this service: my recompense is with Him who has created me. Do you not then use your common-sense?[56] And O my people, beg forgiveness of your Lord; then turn to him in repentance, and He will open the gates of the heavens for you and add more strength to your present strength.[57] Do not turn away as guilty people."

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the Message of a Prophet has been conveyed to a people and is rejected, they are granted respite from punishment only as long as there is the possibility that some of them might accept it. But when there remains no such possibility and there is left nothing but evil element among them, Allah does not grant them any further respite. And this is a manifestation of His mercy, just as for the safety of the good fruit the rotten ones should be thrown away and discarded. Conversely, it shall be an act of cruelty to the good people and the future generations, if pity is shown to those wicked people who are incorrigible.

41. This is a very appropriate example of the points of view of those who look merely at the surface of things and of others who know the reality about them. It appears that when Prophet Noah was building the Ark on the land, it looked to be a ridiculous act to those wicked people who did not believe in him. They jeered at him as if to say, "Just see the madness of the old man ! He wishes to float a ship on the land !" For they could never imagine that after a few days, a ship would actually float there. Therefore naturally they regarded that act of Prophet Noah to be a clear proof of his madness. Probably they might be pointing their fingers at him and the Ark he was constructing, saying to one another, "Have you any doubt now, if you had any before, that he is really a mad man, who is constructing a ship to float on the waterless land?" But the one, who had the knowledge of the reality and who knew that a ship would actually be needed there in the near future, was laughing at their ignorance and lack of knowledge of the real matter and their arrogant self-satisfaction, as if to say, "How foolish these people are! The catastrophe is threatening them overhead but they are not only self-satisfied but also regard me mad, who has warned them of it and who is himself making preparations to meet it." And these are exactly the two ways, in general, of judging the wisdom or folly of things. One man judges an act to be wise by looking merely at the surface, while the other goes down deep into it and knows it to be foolish. Likewise the former considers an act to be foolish and mad while the latter who has the real knowledge of the matter, knows that it is based

LAND OF NOAH'S PEOPLE AND MOUNT JŪDĪ



on wisdom and foresight, and is the very same thing that was required under the circumstances.

42. Different interpretations have been given of this, but we are of the opinion that the correct one is the one that is based on the plain words of the Text. The Deluge started from *At-Tannūr*, a particular oven from under which water began to boil up. At the same time heavy rain began to fall and springs began to gush up water from many places in the earth. This is given in detail in vv. 11-12 of Sūrah Al-Qamar: "We opened the gates of the sky from which it began to rain heavily and constantly, and We tore open the earth and springs began to gush forth water from every side: Thus the two kinds of water gathered together to fulfil the destined doom."

In this connection, it should also be noted that the prefix اَلْ *(al-)* (the) before تَنُّوْر *(tannūr)*, oven, shows that a particular oven had been specifically marked by God for the purpose of starting the Deluge. This began to boil up water as soon as it was commanded to do so, and afterwards it began to be called اَلتَّنُّوْر (The Oven). It has been explicitly stated in v. 7 of XXIII that the said *Tannūr* was specified before hand.

43. That is, "Don't embark in the Ark those who had specifically been marked as unbelievers from your household, for they do not deserve to be shown Our Compassion. Most probably they were two persons. One was his son who was drowned (v. 43), and the other was his wife: (LXVI: 10). And if there were any others, they have not been mentioned in the Qur'ān.

44. Incidentally, this refutes the theory of the historians and genealogists who trace the genealogy of the whole human race to the three sons of Prophet Noah. This wrong theory became prevalent because of the stories in the Bible that none other than Prophet Noah, his three sons and his wife were rescued from the deluge. (Genesis 6: 18, 7: 7, 9, and 9: 19). But the Qur'ān contradicts this in many places, saying that besides the people of his own household, some other people of his community, though small in number, were also rescued along with him. Moreover, the Qur'ān declares that the generations which came after Prophet Noah were his descendants and of all those people who were rescued in the Ark: "You are the descendants of those whom We bore in the Ark with Noah— (XVII: 3) "....they were from the descendants of Adam, and from the seed of those whom we carried in the Ark with Noah...." (XIX: 58).

45. This humility shown by Prophet Noah that his delivery from the Deluge was not due to his own plans, measures and efforts but to the Mercy and Compassion of his Lord, who is most Forgiving, is the true characteristic of a Believer. The Servant of God adopts all necessary measures as a man of the world

does, but he does not put his trust in those measures alone. Along with these he puts his trust in his Lord for their success, because he knows well that no measure can be adopted without His sanction, nor can it be put into practice nor can it achieve the required object unless it is helped by the Compassion and Favour of Allah.

46. According to the Qur'ān, the Ark rested upon Mount *Jūdī*, which is situated to the North-east of Jazīrah Ibn 'Umar in Kurdistan. But according to the Bible its resting place was Mount Ararat in Armenia, which is one of the ranges of mountains of the same name that extends from Armenia to southern Kurdistan. Mount *Jūdī* is one of the mountains of the Ararat range, and is known by the same name even today. The ancient histories confirm that the resting place of the Ark was Mount *Jūdī*. For instance, Berasus, a religious leader of Babylonia, who lived about 250 years before Christ, says in his history of the Chaldeans that Noah's Ark rested upon Mount *Jūdī*. Abydenus, a pupil of Aristotle, not only confirms the same but also says that many people of 'Iraq of his time possessed pieces of the Ark, which they ground in water and gave to the sick as a medicine.

Now let us consider the question: Did the Deluge mentioned here cover the whole earth or was it confined to that particular region where Prophet Noah lived? This is a question which has not been finally settled up to this day. As far as the Bible and the Israelite traditions are concerned, this was universal. (Genesis 7: 18-24). But the Qur'ān is silent about it, though it does say things which show that the whole human race after the Deluge was the descendant of Prophet Noah and of those with him in the Ark, but this does not mean that the Deluge covered all the earth. It may be explained like this: at that time of the history the only region of the earth, which was inhabited by the human race, was the region in which Noah lived, and the generations which came after the Deluge, gradually spread over other parts of the earth. This theory is supported by two things. First, there is a conclusive proof that a great flood did come over the land of the Tigris and the Euphrates. This is confirmed by historical traditions, archaeological remains and geological evidence. But there are no such proofs in the other parts of the earth as might show that the Deluge was universal. Secondly, traditions have come down to almost all the peoples of the earth living even in distant places like America and Australia, that once a great flood had come all over the earth. The only conclusion which can be drawn from the above is that at one time the forefathers of all the people of the earth lived at one place. But, when afterwards they spread over different lands in the earth, they carried the traditions of the Deluge along with them. (Please refer to E.N. 47 of *Al-A'rāf*).

47. That is, "Thou promised that Thou wilt save the members of my family from this calamity; so save my son for he is also a member of my family."

48. That is, "Thou art the greatest of all rulers: therefore Thy decision is final and there can be no appeal against it." And "Thou art the best of all rulers: therefore all Thy decisions are based on perfect knowledge and absolute justice."

49. Allah has called the wicked son of Prophet Noah "a worthless act", for children are entrusted by the Creator to the care of parents so that they may bring them up and train them to become "good persons" and fulfil the purpose for which He created man. If a father does his very best to "process" and turn the child into a righteous person, but fails in his efforts, the child, who was a sort of raw material in his hands, would be likened to a "worthless act". It is obvious that the wicked son was a "worthless act", for he was not the sort of "good work" which his father had desired him to be. So in this sense he did not belong to the family of Prophet Noah, whom the Creator had sent to mould all his people into "Good acts", especially those who were of his own flesh and blood. Thus that unrighteous son had forfeited all the rights of blood he had with the Prophet as far as the torment of "the Deluge" was concerned.

Now let us consider the other question: Why was not the request of the Prophet regarding his own flesh and blood granted? The answer is this: If any part of the body of a man becomes so rotten that the surgeon is of the definite opinion that that part must be cut off for the sake of the safety of the rest of the body, the surgeon will not comply with the request of the man not to cut that part of his body, but will say, "It is not a part of your body because it is rotten." This will not, however, mean that it was never actually a part of the body but will imply only this: "As it has ceased to function rightly as a part of the body, it is no more a part of the body in the sense and for the purpose the healthy parts of the body are its parts". Likewise, when it was said to Prophet Noah, "He is not of your family," it did not negate the fact that he was from his loins but implied, "He does not deserve to be treated as a member of your righteous family because of his spoilt morals and conduct. As the torment of the Deluge has been brought about to punish those who had sided with the unbelievers in the conflict of *kufr* and Faith, your son does not deserve to be rescued from it along with the believers. Had it been a conflict between your descendants and those of the unbelievers, the result would have been different, but this being a conflict between the righteous and the unrighteous, the former alone will be delivered from it."

The epithet, "a worthless act", has been purposely applied to the son of Noah, for it is very meaningful. It points to the two different objects that the parents have in view in bringing up their children. Those parents who look merely at the surface of things, bring up and love their children because they are from their loins or their wombs, irrespective of the fact whether they are righteous or unrighteous. But this epithet requires the believers to look upon their children as "pieces of work" entrusted to them in a natural way by their Creator, so that they

should prepare and mould them so as to fulfil the object for which Allah has created man. Therefore, if a certain parent fails in his efforts to mould his child in a way to fulfil the very object for which the child was entrusted to him and the latter becomes a servant of Satan instead of his Lord, the parent should regard all his efforts for the child to have gone utterly waste. In that case there is no reason why that parent should have any consideration for that "worthless act".

As a corollary to the above, the same rule will apply to the other relationships of a believer. As a believer is one who believes in certain creeds and behaviours, all his relationships with the other people will be determined by those creeds and behaviours. If his blood relations have the qualities of a believer, their relationship with him becomes doubly stronger. But if they are void of the qualities of a believer; the believer will confine his relationship with them only to the extent of blood relationships and will have no spiritual relationship with them. Consequently, if such a relative comes face to face with the believer in the conflict between *kufr* and the Faith, the believer should fight with him just as he would with any other unbeliever.

50. This warning from his Lord does not mean that Prophet Noah was suffering from the lack of "Faith" or that his Faith had any tinge of weakness or that he had beliefs like those of the ignorant people. His response to this is rather a proof of his high moral character. As Noah was like the other Prophets, a human being, he also suffered from the common human weakness, that is, natural parental love for children. So he begged his Lord to deliver his son from the Deluge. Allah admonished him because the high character of a Prophet demanded that he ought not to have made such a request even for his own flesh and blood. That is why no sooner was the warning administered to him than he realized that he had come down from the high position of a Prophet to the level of a mere father because of the critical psychological human weakness. Therefore immediately after the warning, he repented of his weakness, and behaved as if his own son had not been drowned in the Deluge a moment before this. This character shown by him is a clear proof that he was a true Prophet. He returned to the same height and meekly asked his Lord's forgiveness for showing any concern for his own son who had forsaken the Truth and sided with falsehood.

51. The Qur'ān has cited the story of the drowning of the son of Prophet Noah to bring home to the people that Allah's decrees are absolutely just and final.

This also served as a warning to the Quraish who considered themselves to be immune from the torment of Allah simply because they were the descendants of Prophet Abraham, and had several gods and goddesses as their interceders. Likewise it was a warning to the Jews and the Christians who cherished, and still

cherish, such beliefs, nay, even to those Muslims, who foolishly believe that their saintly ancestors and holy people will guard them against the consequences of the justice of Allah. For the tragic scene depicted here categorically refutes such false expectations and beliefs, saying, "O foolish people ! Why do you cherish such false hopes? When Our Prophet Noah could not save his son who was drowned before his very eyes, and his prayer for the son was not only rejected but he was rebuked for making such a prayer, how can you then expect that anyone much less than a Prophet can deliver you from the justice of Allah?"

52. That is, ".....go down from the Mountain on which the Ark is resting."

53. That is, "You and your companions will come out successful at the end of the conflict just as Prophet Noah and his companions did. For this is the Divine Law that those who exert for the right cause, avoiding erroneous ways for fear of Allah, should come out successful in the end, even though they should meet with failures in the beginning of the conflict at the hands of the enemies of the truth. Therefore you should patiently bear the afflictions which you are suffering and stand steadfast against the obstacles you are encountering in the way, and you should not be in the least disheartened by the painful and superficial successes of your enemies. If you practise fortitude, you will come out successful in the end like Noah and his companions."

54. Please keep in view E.N.'s 51-56 of *Al-A'rāf*.

55. That is, "You have forged falsehood about all the deities you worship beside Allah, for in fact they possess no powers and no qualities that might entitle them to Godhead. As they have absolutely nothing in them which might make them the objects of worship and service, you have put in them false hopes that they would fulfil your desires and needs."

56. This concise sentence contains a very strong argument: "The fact that you are taking a superficial view of my Message and rejecting it without paying due and deep consideration to it is a clear proof that you are not using your common-sense. Had you tried to understand the matter, you would have found much material for your consideration. You would have noticed that I have absolutely no personal interests: nay, I am suffering hardships in conveying the Message which cannot bring any benefit to me or to the members of my family. This is a conclusive proof that my Faith has very sound bases which are strong enough to enable me to forsake all the worldly joys and comforts and encounter the enmity of the whole world by waging a war against the centuries-old, established rites, customs and ways of life. Do these things not demand a deep and

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مِّدْرَارًا وَّيَزِدْكُمْ قُوَّةً إِلٰى قُوَّتِكُمْ وَلَا تَتَوَلَّوْا مُجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿٥٢﴾ قَالُوْا يٰهُوْدُ مَا
جِئْتَنَا بِبَيِّنَةٍ وَّمَا نَحْنُ بِتَارِكِيْٓ اٰلِهَتِنَا عَنْ قَوْلِكَ وَمَا نَحْنُ لَكَ بِمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٥٣﴾
إِنْ نَّقُوْلُ إِلَّا اعْتَرٰىكَ بَعْضُ اٰلِهَتِنَا بِسُوْٓءٍ ۭ قَالَ إِنِّيْٓ أُشْهِدُ اللّٰهَ وَاشْهَدُوْٓا أَنِّيْ
بَرِيْٓءٌ مِّمَّا تُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿٥٤﴾ مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ فَكِيْدُوْنِيْ جَمِيْعًا ثُمَّ لَا تُنْظِرُوْنِ ﴿٥٥﴾ إِنِّيْ
تَوَكَّلْتُ عَلَى اللّٰهِ رَبِّيْ وَرَبِّكُمْ ۭ مَا مِنْ دَآبَّةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ اٰخِذٌۢ بِنَاصِيَتِهَا ۭ إِنَّ رَبِّيْ
عَلٰى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ﴿٥٦﴾ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقَدْ أَبْلَغْتُكُمْ مَّآ أُرْسِلْتُ بِهٖٓ إِلَيْكُمْ ۭ وَ
يَسْتَخْلِفُ رَبِّيْ قَوْمًا غَيْرَكُمْ ۚ وَلَا تَضُرُّوْنَهٗ شَيْـًٔا ۭ إِنَّ رَبِّيْ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
حَفِيْظٌ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَلَمَّا جَآءَ أَمْرُنَا نَجَّيْنَا هُوْدًا وَّالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا مَعَهٗ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِّنَّا ۚ وَ
نَجَّيْنٰهُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابٍ غَلِيْظٍ ﴿٥٨﴾ وَتِلْكَ عَادٌ ۣ جَحَدُوْا بِاٰيٰتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَعَصَوْا
رُسُلَهٗ وَاتَّبَعُوْٓا أَمْرَ كُلِّ جَبَّارٍ عَنِيْدٍ ﴿٥٩﴾ وَأُتْبِعُوْا فِيْ هٰذِهِ الدُّنْيَا لَعْنَةً وَّيَوْمَ
الْقِيٰمَةِ ۭ أَلَآ إِنَّ عَادًا كَفَرُوْا رَبَّهُمْ ۭ أَلَا بُعْدًا لِّعَادٍ قَوْمِ هُوْدٍ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَإِلٰى ثَمُوْدَ
أَخَاهُمْ صٰلِحًا ۘ قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ إِلٰهٍ غَيْرُهٗ ۭ هُوَ أَنْشَأَكُمْ مِّنَ
الْأَرْضِ وَاسْتَعْمَرَكُمْ فِيْهَا فَاسْتَغْفِرُوْهُ ثُمَّ تُوْبُوْٓا إِلَيْهِ ۭ إِنَّ رَبِّيْ قَرِيْبٌ مُّجِيْبٌ ﴿٦١﴾
قَالُوْا يٰصٰلِحُ قَدْ كُنْتَ فِيْنَا مَرْجُوًّا قَبْلَ هٰذَآ أَتَنْهٰنَآ أَنْ نَّعْبُدَ مَا يَعْبُدُ اٰبَآؤُنَا
وَإِنَّنَا لَفِيْ شَكٍّ مِّمَّا تَدْعُوْنَآ إِلَيْهِ مُرِيْبٍ ﴿٦٢﴾ قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ أَرَءَيْتُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُ عَلٰى
بَيِّنَةٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّيْ وَاٰتٰىنِيْ مِنْهُ رَحْمَةً فَمَنْ يَّنْصُرُنِيْ مِنَ اللّٰهِ إِنْ عَصَيْتُهٗ ۭ فَمَا
تَزِيْدُوْنَنِيْ غَيْرَ تَخْسِيْرٍ ﴿٦٣﴾ وَيٰقَوْمِ هٰذِهٖ نَاقَةُ اللّٰهِ لَكُمْ اٰيَةً فَذَرُوْهَا تَأْكُلْ
فِيْٓ أَرْضِ اللّٰهِ وَلَا تَمَسُّوْهَا بِسُوْٓءٍ فَيَأْخُذَكُمْ عَذَابٌ قَرِيْبٌ ﴿٦٤﴾ فَعَقَرُوْهَا فَقَالَ
تَمَتَّعُوْا فِيْ دَارِكُمْ ثَلٰثَةَ أَيَّامٍ ۭ ذٰلِكَ وَعْدٌ غَيْرُ مَكْذُوْبٍ ﴿٦٥﴾ فَلَمَّا جَآءَ أَمْرُنَا نَجَّيْنَا

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They answered "O Hūd! You have not brought us any clear evidence,[58] and we are not going to give up our gods at your word, nor are we going to believe in you. We rather believe that some of our gods have smitten you with some evil."[59] Hūd replied, "I bring Allah's evidence.[60] And you should bear witness to it that I have nothing to do with the gods you have set up beside Allah in His Godhead.[61] So all of you may do whatever you can against me and give me no respite;[62] I have full trust in Allah Who is my Lord and your Lord as well. There is no living creature which He does not hold by its forelock. Indeed straight is the way of my Lord![63] You may turn away, if you will; now that I have conveyed to you the Message with which I was sent to you, my Lord will raise up some other community in your place and you shall not be able to do Him any harm whatsoever.[64] Indeed my Lord keeps watch over everything." 53-57

And when Our Command came We delivered through Our Mercy Hūd and those who had believed with him and rescued them from a woeful scourge. 58

These are 'Ād! They rejected the Revelations of their Lord and disobeyed His Messengers[65] and followed every tyrannous enemy of the Truth; so they became accursed in this world and in the Next World as well. Listen! 'Ād disbelieved in their Lord! Listen! Cast away were 'Ād the people of Hūd ! 59-60

And to Thamūd We sent their brother Sālih.[66] He said "O my people! worship Allah: you have no other Deity than He. It is He Who has created you from the earth and made it a living place for you.[67] So ask His forgiveness[68] and turn to Him in repentance. Most surely my Lord is near at hand and answers prayers.[69] 61

They replied "O Sālih, till now you were such a person among us of whom we had great expectations.[70] What! do you forbid us to worship gods whom our forefathers worshipped ?[71] Indeed we have a strong doubt about the way to which you are calling us and this has caused a feeling of distraction in us."[72] 62

Sālih said, "O my people! Just consider it yourselves: if my Lord had sent me with a clear Sign and bestowed His special blessings on me, who will help save me from Allah if, after this, I become 63-65

disobedient to Him? You cannot help me any way, but might hasten my ruin.[73] And O my people, behold: here is Allah's she-camel, a Sign for you. So let her graze at will in Allah's land, and do not touch her with evil intention, lest a scourge should seize you from your Lord in the near future."

But they killed the she-camel. At this Sālih warned them, "Well, you have only three more days to enjoy yourselves in your houses. This is a time limit that will not prove false."

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serious consideration? Why don't you then use your common-sense before rejecting the Message out-right?"

57. It is the same thing that has been put into the mouth of the Holy Prophet in v. 3. This is a clear proof that moral values count not only in the life of the Hereafter but also determine the rise and fall of nations in this world. This is because Allah rules over the world in accordance with moral principles and not on the basis of His physical laws alone. That is why Allah has declared in many places in the Qur'ān that the fate of a community hangs on the Message which He sends to it through His Prophet. If it accepts the Message, He opens the gates of His favours and blessings for it, but if it rejects the Message, then it is destroyed.

In short, this verse is an article of the moral Law in accordance with which Allah deals with man. Conversely, the other article of the same principle of the Law is that the community which, deluded by its worldly prosperity, begins to tread the paths of sin and iniquity is ultimately destroyed. But if, during its headlong race towards its doom, it realizes its erroneous behaviour and gives up its disobedience and turns in repentance towards Allah, its evil fate is changed and the impending scourge is averted and it is given a further term of respite along with blessings and favours.

58. That is, "You have not brought a clear Sign as evidence to prove conclusively to us that you have been sent by Allah and that the Message you are presenting before us is the Truth."

59. That is, "It appears that you had behaved rudely towards a god or goddess or saint: Consequently you have been smitten with madness and are being abused, dishonoured and pelted with stones in the same streets in which you were respected and honoured before this."

60. This was the refutation of their charge that he had not brought any clear evidence to them. It implied: "You say that I have brought no evidence to

prove that I have been sent by Allah Who is a standing witness everywhere in His universe and giving evidence with the phenomena of Nature to show that the truths I have stated before you are absolutely correct. These also prove conclusively that there is no sign of truth in what you falsely ascribe to your gods."

61. This is the answer of Prophet Hūd to their assertion, "We are not going to give up our gods at your word....." (V: 53). His reply implied, "Note it well that I, too, feel a strong disgust at the gods you have set up beside Allah....."

62. This is his answer to their threat: "..... some of our gods have smitten you with some evil ....." (compare this with X: 71).

63. That is, "Whatever my Lord does is always right and correct for all His ways are straight and just, and the judgements He passes are based entirely on truth and justice. Therefore you cannot come out successful in your conflict with me: for you have deviated from the Right Way and are committing wicked deeds, while I am on the Right Way."

64. This is his answer to their obdurate denial: "..... nor will we believe in you...."

65. Though only one Messenger had come to them, he had presented the same Message that had been presented by every Messenger in every age to every community. Therefore disobedience to one Messenger has been declared to be disobedience to all the Messengers.

66. Please keep in view E.N.'s 57-62 of *Al-A'Aarāf.*

67. This is the proof of the claim: " .... you have no other Deity than Allah". The argument is based on the fact which the *mushriks* themselves acknowledged that it is Allah Who is their Creator. Therefore Prophet Sālih argued like this: "You yourselves acknowledge that it is Allah Who has created your wonderful human body out of the life-less particles of the earth and that it is Allah Who has made the earth a suitable place for you to live. How can then there be any Deity other than Allah Who may be worthy of Godhead, service and worship?"

68. That is, "So ask His forgiveness for the sin you have been committing by worshipping others."

69. In this concise sentence, the Qur'ān has refuted a grave misunderstanding of the *mushriks*, which has in every age misled people into wrong creeds. They presumed that Allah lived far away from them and, therefore, was unapproachable like their own rulers on the earth. As the only way of approach to them was an intercessor who alone could receive and present their

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صٰلِحًا وَّالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا مَعَهٗ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِّنَّا وَمِنْ خِزْيِ يَوْمِئِذٍ ؕ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ
الْقَوِيُّ الْعَزِيْزُ ﴿٦٦﴾ وَاَخَذَ الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوا الصَّيْحَةُ فَاَصْبَحُوْا فِيْ دِيَارِهِمْ جٰثِمِيْنَ ﴿٦٧﴾
كَاَنْ لَّمْ يَغْنَوْا فِيْهَا ؕ اَلَا اِنَّ ثَمُوْدَا كَفَرُوْا رَبَّهُمْ ؕ اَلَا بُعْدًا لِّثَمُوْدَ ﴿٦٨﴾ وَلَقَدْ جَآءَتْ
رُسُلُنَآ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ بِالْبُشْرٰى قَالُوْا سَلٰمًا ؕ قَالَ سَلٰمٌ فَمَا لَبِثَ اَنْ جَآءَ بِعِجْلٍ حَنِيْذٍ ﴿٦٩﴾
فَلَمَّا رَاٰۤ اَيْدِيَهُمْ لَا تَصِلُ اِلَيْهِ نَكِرَهُمْ وَاَوْجَسَ مِنْهُمْ خِيْفَةً ؕ قَالُوْا لَا تَخَفْ
اِنَّاۤ اُرْسِلْنَاۤ اِلٰى قَوْمِ لُوْطٍ ﴿٧٠﴾ وَامْرَاَتُهٗ قَآئِمَةٌ فَضَحِكَتْ فَبَشَّرْنٰهَا بِاِسْحٰقَ ۙ وَ
مِنْ وَّرَآءِ اِسْحٰقَ يَعْقُوْبَ ﴿٧١﴾ قَالَتْ يٰوَيْلَتٰۤى ءَاَلِدُ وَاَنَا عَجُوْزٌ وَّهٰذَا بَعْلِيْ
شَيْخًا ؕ اِنَّ هٰذَا لَشَيْءٌ عَجِيْبٌ ﴿٧٢﴾ قَالُوْۤا اَتَعْجَبِيْنَ مِنْ اَمْرِ اللّٰهِ رَحْمَتُ اللّٰهِ وَ
بَرَكٰتُهٗ عَلَيْكُمْ اَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ ؕ اِنَّهٗ حَمِيْدٌ مَّجِيْدٌ ﴿٧٣﴾ فَلَمَّا ذَهَبَ عَنْ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ
الرَّوْعُ وَجَآءَتْهُ الْبُشْرٰى يُجَادِلُنَا فِيْ قَوْمِ لُوْطٍ ﴿٧٤﴾ اِنَّ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ لَحَلِيْمٌ اَوَّاهٌ
مُّنِيْبٌ ﴿٧٥﴾ يٰۤاِبْرٰهِيْمُ اَعْرِضْ عَنْ هٰذَا ۚ اِنَّهٗ قَدْ جَآءَ اَمْرُ رَبِّكَ ۚ وَاِنَّهُمْ اٰتِيْهِمْ
عَذَابٌ غَيْرُ مَرْدُوْدٍ ﴿٧٦﴾ وَلَمَّا جَآءَتْ رُسُلُنَا لُوْطًا سِيْٓءَ بِهِمْ وَضَاقَ بِهِمْ ذَرْعًا
وَّقَالَ هٰذَا يَوْمٌ عَصِيْبٌ ﴿٧٧﴾ وَجَآءَهٗ قَوْمُهٗ يُهْرَعُوْنَ اِلَيْهِ ؕ وَمِنْ قَبْلُ كَانُوْا
يَعْمَلُوْنَ السَّيِّاٰتِ ؕ قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ هٰۤؤُلَآءِ بَنَاتِيْ هُنَّ اَطْهَرُ لَكُمْ فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَلَا تُخْزُوْنِ
فِيْ ضَيْفِيْ ؕ اَلَيْسَ مِنْكُمْ رَجُلٌ رَّشِيْدٌ ﴿٧٨﴾ قَالُوْا لَقَدْ عَلِمْتَ مَا لَنَا فِيْ بَنٰتِكَ مِنْ
حَقٍّ ۚ وَاِنَّكَ لَتَعْلَمُ مَا نُرِيْدُ ﴿٧٩﴾ قَالَ لَوْ اَنَّ لِيْ بِكُمْ قُوَّةً اَوْ اٰوِيْۤ اِلٰى رُكْنٍ
شَدِيْدٍ ﴿٨٠﴾ قَالُوْا يٰلُوْطُ اِنَّا رُسُلُ رَبِّكَ لَنْ يَّصِلُوْۤا اِلَيْكَ فَاَسْرِ بِاَهْلِكَ بِقِطْعٍ مِّنَ
الَّيْلِ وَلَا يَلْتَفِتْ مِنْكُمْ اَحَدٌ اِلَّا امْرَاَتَكَ ؕ اِنَّهٗ مُصِيْبُهَا مَاۤ اَصَابَهُمْ ؕ اِنَّ مَوْعِدَهُمُ
الصُّبْحُ ؕ اَلَيْسَ الصُّبْحُ بِقَرِيْبٍ ﴿٨١﴾ فَلَمَّا جَآءَ اَمْرُنَا جَعَلْنَا عَالِيَهَا سَافِلَهَا وَاَمْطَرْنَا

So when Our judgement came to pass, We delivered through Our mercy Sālih and those who had believed with him, and kept them safe from the ignominy of that Day.[74] Indeed your Lord is All-Mighty and All-Powerful. As regards those who were iniquitous, a dreadful shock overtook them and they lay lifeless and prostrate in their homes, as if they had never flourished there. Listen ! Thamūd disbelieved their Lord: listen! cast away were Thamūd. 66-68

And lo, Our Messengers came to Abraham with good news. They said, "Peace be upon you." Abraham answered, "Peace be also upon you." And before long he brought a roasted calf for them.[75] But when he saw that they did not stretch out their hands towards it, he had a mistrust about them and felt a fear of them[76] in his heart. They said, "Don't have any fear: for we have been sent to the people of Lot."[77] And his wife was standing by; hearing this, she laughed.[78] Then We gave her the good news of Isaac, and after Isaac of Jacob.[79] She said, "Woe is me![80] shall I bear a child now when I have grown extremely old, and this husband of mine has also become old?[81] This is indeed a strange thing." The angels said, "What! Are you surprised at Allah's decree?[82] O people of Abraham's household ! Allah's mercy and blessings are upon you. Indeed Allah is worthy of all praise and glory." 69-73

So when Abraham's fear was allayed and his heart was filled with joy (because of the good news of a child), he began to dispute[83] with Us concerning the people of Lot, for Abraham was tender-hearted and merciful and always turned to Us. (At last Our angels said to him), "O Abraham, desist from this now that your Lord's decree has been issued and the scourge which cannot be averted by anyone shall overtake them."[84] 74-76

And when Our Messengers came to Lot,[85] he was greatly perturbed and distressed in mind because of their visit and said, "This is a day of woe!"[86] (No sooner did the visitors come to him than) his people spontaneously rushed towards his house, for they had previously been addicted to wicked deeds. Lot said to them, "O my people, here are my daughters, who are purer for you.[87] So fear God and don't degrade me by committing evil to my guests. What ! Is there not a single good man among you ?" They replied, "You know it well that we have no need of your daughters,[88] and you also know what we 77-80

want." Lot cried, "I wish I had the power to set you right or I could find some strong support for refuge."

81 Then the angels said, "O Lot, We are messengers sent by your Lord. They shall not be able to do you any harm. So depart from here with the people of your household in the last hours of the night. And look here: none of you should turn round to look behind;[89] but your wife (who will not accompany you) shall meet with the same doom as they.[90] The morning has been appointed for their destruction—the morning has almost come."

Contd. from p. 351]

requests and applications to their rulers, and convey their answers to them, they presumed that there should be some intercessor to help approach Allah and bring to them the answers to their prayers. Obviously this is a false presumption, which has been endorsed and encouraged by clever people that Allah is out of the reach of common people and it is not possible for them to reach Him and present their prayers and get their answers. So they should search for such sacred beings as may have an approach to Him. Accordingly, they tried to secure the services of those who were well-versed in the art of conveying the requests with the necessary presents and gifts to the Highest Authority. This misunderstanding created hosts of intercessors, and the establishment of the system of priesthood, which has so incapacitated the followers of *mushrik* creeds of ignorance that they cannot perform by themselves any religious ceremony from birth to death.

Now let us consider the concise answer of Prophet Sālih, by which he broke asunder the false presumption of the *mushriks*. It is this: "Allah is near at hand: so you can invoke His help directly without the help of any interceder. He answers prayers: so you can yourselves receive the answer to your prayer. Though He is the Highest, each one of you will find Him so near yourself that you will be able to convey your request even in a whisper, nay, you are permitted to convey your requests openly or secretly to Him. Therefore give up the folly of seeking intercedders and setting them up as His partners, and address your prayers to Him Who is near at hand and answers prayers." (Please refer also to E.N. 188 of *Al-Baqarah*.)

70. That is, "We had expected that by your wisdom, intelligence, foresight, serious behaviour and dignified personality, you would become a great and prosperous man. So we had looked forward to the great success you would achieve and to the manifold advantages we would gain over other clans and tribes because of you. But you have brought to nought all of our hopes by adopting the Way based on *Tauhīd* and the Hereafter which is bound to lead us to utter ruin."

It may be noted here that the people of Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) have had the same great expectations of him. They, too, had a very high opinion of his abilities and capabilities before his appointment as a Prophet. For they expected that he would become a great leader, and his foresight would bring innumerable benefits to them also. But when, contrary to their expectations, he began to invite them to the doctrines of *Tauhid* and the Hereafter, and preach the principles of high morality, they lost not only all hope in him, but began to entertain and express quite the reverse views. They said, "What a pity! this man who was quite good till now has, under the influence of some charm, not only ruined his own career but has destroyed all of our hopes as well".

71. That was their argument for the worship of their gods. They said that they would worship them because their forefathers worshipped them. Prophet Sālih, argued like this: "Worship Allah.....Who has created you from the earth, and Who made it a living place for you." In answer to this they argued, as if to say, "These deities are also worthy of worship, and we will not give them up, because our forefathers have been worshipping them since a long time." This is an apt example of the type of arguments employed by the supporters of Islam and "ignorance". The former base their arguments on sound reasoning, while the latter base them on blind imitation.

72. The Qur'ān has not specified the nature of the doubts and "feelings of distraction". This is because, though all of them had these feelings, these were different in different persons. For it is one of the characteristics of the Message that it takes away the peace of mind of all these people to whom it is addressed. Though the feelings of distraction are of various kinds, everyone gets a portion of them. This is because it becomes simply impossible for anyone to continue treading the paths of deviation with that peace of mind which one had before the coming of the Message. For it impels everyone to think whether one is following the Right Way or any of the wrong ways of "ignorance". No one can shut one's ears and eyes against the penetrating and merciless criticism of the weaknesses of the ways of "ignorance"; and the strong and rational arguments for the Right Way. Then the high moral character of the Messenger, his perseverance, his nobility, his gentle conduct, his frank and righteous attitude and his dignity cannot fail to make their impressions even on the most obdurate, and prejudiced opponents. The Message by itself attracts the best elements from that society and brings about the most revolutionary changes in the characters of its followers so as to make them models of excellence. Naturally all these things combine to produce the feelings of distraction in the minds of those who desire to uphold the ways of "ignorance" even after the coming of the Truth.

73. This is the answer to the preceding question: "If I disobey Allah by discarding the Guidance I have received from Him in order to please you, you

cannot defend me against Him. You will rather add to the intensity of my guilt of disobedience to Him. Thus I shall incur additional punishment from Him for misleading you instead of showing the Right Way for which I had been sent to you."

74. According to the traditions that are current in the Sinai Peninsula, Allah delivered them from the Torment and led them there. There is a Mount near Jabal-i-Mūsa, known by the name of Prophet Sālih where, it is said, the Prophet took refuge after the destruction of his people.

75. This shows that the angels had come to Prophet Abraham in the shape of human beings and had not disclosed their identity. Therefore he took them for strangers and brought a roasted calf for their entertainment.

76. Some commentators are of the view that Prophet Abraham was afraid of them because, from their refusal to eat his meal, he had concluded that they had come to him with some evil intention. For, according to the Arab tradition, if some strangers refused hospitality, it meant that they had not come as guests but as enemies to plunder. But this view is not supported by the succeeding verse.

77. The wording of their answer shows that Prophet Abraham had understood from their refusal to eat that they were angels. But he was afraid of their visit because he knew that the coming of the angels in the human shape did not bode well. So he was fearful that they might have come to take them to task for some offence committed by the people of his household or of his habitation or by himself. Had it been the same thing that the commentators presumed, then their answer should have been, "Don't fear us for we are angels from your Lord." But the answer they gave to remove his fear, "Don't have any fear for we have been sent to the people of Lot (and not to you)," shows that Abraham knew that they were angels but was troubled in his mind as to the reason of their visit in the human shape. This was because the angels came in human shape when some one was either to be put to a hard trial or punished severely for some offence.

78. It appears from this that the news of the visit of the angels in the human shape had made the people of the house uneasy. So Prophet Abraham's wife had also come there to know what the matter was. She laughed with joy when she learnt that the angels were sent not to punish their people but the people of Lot.

79. The angels told the good news of a son to Hadrat Sārah instead of Prophet Abraham because he already had a son, Hadrat Ismāil ,from Hadrat Hājirah but had no child from her. Therefore to remove her sorrow they told her the good news that a son, Isaac, will be born to her, who will have a son, Jacob, both of whom will be great Messengers of Allah.

80. These words were not used by her in their literal sense as an exclamation of grief and lamentation. She uttered these words merely to express surprise at the news.

81. According to the Bible, Prophet Abraham was 100 years old at the time and Hadrat Sārah was 90 years.

82. The question was posed to her to remind her, that, though people of old age, do not bear children, it is not beyond Allah's power to bring this about. Therefore a true believer like her should not show any surprise at the good news, when it is conveyed to her from Allah.

83. "....he began to dispute with Us" is the expression of affection and endearment, which manifests the nature of close relationship of Prophet Abraham with his Lord. This helps depict the picture of the argument that the Servant had with his Lord for pleading the case of the people of Lot. He pleaded persistently, "Lord avert the coming scourge from the people of Lot". The Lord replied, "These people have become so degraded that no good was left in them and their crimes have become so heinous that they deserve no leniency at all." But the Servant still persisted, "Lord, give them more respite, even if a little good yet remains in them; maybe it should bear some fruit." This dispute has been recorded in the Bible rather in detail, but the concise mention in the Qur'ān is more meaningful. (For comparison please refer to *Genesis* 18: 23-32).

84. A superficial view of this incident from the life of Prophet Abraham in the context it occurs might lead one to consider it to be irrelevant, especially as an introduction to the coming scourge on the people of Lot. But if one reviews this in the light of the object for which these historical events have been related here, one will come to the conclusion that its mention is most apt here. In order to understand its relevancy we should keep in view the following two things:

(1) These historical events have been related here to warn the Quraish that they were absolutely wrong in their self-delusion that they were quite immune from the scourge with which the Qur'ān was threatening them because of their relationship with Prophet Abraham and their guardianship of the Ka'abah and their religious, economic and political leadership of Arabia. They thought that Prophet Abraham, whose descendants they were, was a beloved servant of Allah and, would, therefore, intercede for them and defend them against any scourge from Him. That is why the graphic picture of the death of Prophet Noah's son has been drawn to show that the prayer of a great Prophet like him could not save his own son from the scourge. Not only was his prayer rejected but he was also taken to task for making a request for his wicked son. Then this second incident from the life of Prophet Abraham has been *[Contd. on p.360*

عَلَيْهَا حِجَارَةً مِّنْ سِجِّيْلٍ ۙ مَّنْضُوْدٍ ﴿٨٢﴾ مُّسَوَّمَةً عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ۭ وَمَا هِيَ مِنَ
الظّٰلِمِيْنَ بِبَعِيْدٍ ﴿٨٣﴾ وَاِلٰى مَدْيَنَ اَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا ۭ قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ مَا
لَكُمْ مِّنْ اِلٰهٍ غَيْرُهٗ ۭ وَلَا تَنْقُصُوا الْمِكْيَالَ وَالْمِيْزَانَ اِنِّىْٓ اَرٰىكُمْ بِخَيْرٍ وَّاِنِّىْٓ
اَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ مُّحِيْطٍ ﴿٨٤﴾ وَيٰقَوْمِ اَوْفُوا الْمِكْيَالَ وَالْمِيْزَانَ بِالْقِسْطِ
وَلَا تَبْخَسُوا النَّاسَ اَشْيَاۗءَهُمْ وَلَا تَعْثَوْا فِى الْاَرْضِ مُفْسِدِيْنَ ﴿٨٥﴾ بَقِيَّتُ اللّٰهِ خَيْرٌ
لَّكُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ۚ وَمَآ اَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِحَفِيْظٍ ﴿٨٦﴾ قَالُوْا يٰشُعَيْبُ اَصَلٰوتُكَ
تَاْمُرُكَ اَنْ نَّتْرُكَ مَا يَعْبُدُ اٰبَاۗؤُنَآ اَوْ اَنْ نَّفْعَلَ فِيْٓ اَمْوَالِنَا مَا نَشٰۗؤُا ۭ اِنَّكَ لَاَنْتَ
الْحَلِيْمُ الرَّشِيْدُ ﴿٨٧﴾ قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اَرَءَيْتُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُ عَلٰي بَيِّنَةٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّيْ وَرَزَقَنِيْ مِنْهُ
رِزْقًا حَسَنًا ۭ وَمَآ اُرِيْدُ اَنْ اُخَالِفَكُمْ اِلٰي مَآ اَنْهٰىكُمْ عَنْهُ ۭ اِنْ اُرِيْدُ اِلَّا الْاِصْلَاحَ
مَا اسْتَطَعْتُ ۭ وَمَا تَوْفِيْقِيْٓ اِلَّا بِاللّٰهِ ۭ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَاِلَيْهِ اُنِيْبُ ﴿٨٨﴾ وَيٰقَوْمِ لَا
يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شِقَاقِيْٓ اَنْ يُّصِيْبَكُمْ مِّثْلُ مَآ اَصَابَ قَوْمَ نُوْحٍ اَوْ قَوْمَ هُوْدٍ اَوْ
قَوْمَ صٰلِحٍ ۭ وَمَا قَوْمُ لُوْطٍ مِّنْكُمْ بِبَعِيْدٍ ﴿٨٩﴾ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوْا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوْبُوْٓا
اِلَيْهِ ۭ اِنَّ رَبِّيْ رَحِيْمٌ وَّدُوْدٌ ﴿٩٠﴾ قَالُوْا يٰشُعَيْبُ مَا نَفْقَهُ كَثِيْرًا مِّمَّا تَقُوْلُ وَ
اِنَّا لَنَرٰىكَ فِيْنَا ضَعِيْفًا ۚ وَلَوْلَا رَهْطُكَ لَرَجَمْنٰكَ ۡ وَمَآ اَنْتَ عَلَيْنَا بِعَزِيْزٍ ﴿٩١﴾
قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اَرَهْطِيْٓ اَعَزُّ عَلَيْكُمْ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ ۭ وَاتَّخَذْتُمُوْهُ وَرَاۗءَكُمْ ظِهْرِيًّا ۭ اِنَّ رَبِّيْ
بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ مُحِيْطٌ ﴿٩٢﴾ وَيٰقَوْمِ اعْمَلُوْا عَلٰي مَكَانَتِكُمْ اِنِّىْ عَامِلٌ ۭ سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ۙ
مَنْ يَّاْتِيْهِ عَذَابٌ يُّخْزِيْهِ وَمَنْ هُوَ كَاذِبٌ ۭ وَارْتَقِبُوْٓا اِنِّىْ مَعَكُمْ رَقِيْبٌ ﴿٩٣﴾ وَ
لَمَّا جَاۗءَ اَمْرُنَا نَجَّيْنَا شُعَيْبًا وَّالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا مَعَهٗ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِّنَّا وَاَخَذَتِ الَّذِيْنَ
ظَلَمُوا الصَّيْحَةُ فَاَصْبَحُوْا فِيْ دِيَارِهِمْ جٰثِمِيْنَ ﴿٩٤﴾ كَاَنْ لَّمْ يَغْنَوْا فِيْهَا ۭ اَلَا بُعْدًا

Accordingly, when the time of the execution of judgement came, We turned the habitation upside down and rained on it stones of baked clay,[91] and each one of these stones had been specifically marked[92] by your Lord. And such scourge is not far from the workers of iniquity.[93] 82-83

And to the people of Madian, We sent their brother Shu'aib.[94] He said, "O my people, serve Allah: you have no deity other than He. Do not give short measure and weight. Though I see you now in a state of prosperity, I fear for you the scourge of a day that will encircle you. And, O my people, give full measure and weight justly and do not defraud people of their goods, and do not spread mischief in the land. The residue (after giving full measure) left over by Allah is best for you, if you are believers. Anyhow I am not a guardian over you."[95] 84-86

They replied, "O Shu'aib! Does your *Salāt* teach you this[96] that we should give up all those deities whom our forefathers worshipped or that we should have no right on our goods to dispense with them as we please?[97] Indeed you are the only generous and righteous man (left in the land)!" 87

Shu'aib said, "O my people! Just consider it yourselves if I had a clear evidence from my Lord, and then had been bestowed good provisions[98] from Him, (how can I, then, be a party to your evil and unlawful practices?") And I do not want at all to commit those evil practices, which I forbid you.[99] I desire only to reform you as far as it lies in my power. And this work of mine depends entirely on Allah's help: and in Him I have put my trust and to Him I turn for everything. And O my people, let not your obduracy against me be conducive to bring upon you the doom that overtook the peoples of Noah, Hūd and Sālih. And the people of Lot are not far from you.[100] Listen ! Ask forgiveness of your Lord and turn to Him in penitence. Indeed my Lord is Merciful and loves His Creation."[101] 88-90

They answered "O Shu'aib! We do not understand much of what you say.[102] Indeed we see that you are a powerless man among us. Had it not been for your family, we would have stoned you to death long before this, for you are not strong enough to prevail over us."[103] 91

Shu'aib said, "O my people! Do you regard my family to be 92-93

more powerful for you than Allah (that you are afraid of it) but have disregarded Him totally? Note it well that whatever you are doing is within Allah's grasp. O my people, you may go on following your way and I will follow my way. You will come to know in the near future who shall be visited by an ignominous scourge and who is the liar; wait if you will and I, too, shall wait with you."

94 And when Our decree came to pass, We delivered through Our mercy Shu'aib and those who had believed with him. As regards those who were iniquitous, a dreadful shock overtook them and they lay lifeless and prostrate in their homes as if they had never flourished in them.

95 Listen! Cast away were also the people of Madian as were Thamūd cast away

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Contd. from p.357]

related to show that, though Allah was very kind to him, He rejected his appeal for the people of Lot because he had tried to intercede for the wicked people, which was against the requirements of justice.

(2) This incident from the life of Prophet Abraham has been related along with the destruction of the people of Lot for another object as well. The Quraish had forgotten that the Law of Divine Justice had always been operating continuously and regularly and there were open proofs of this all around them. On the one hand, there was the case of Prophet Abraham. He had to leave his home for the sake of the Truth and righteousness and to live in a foreign country where to all appearances, he had no outward power to support him. But Divine Justice rewarded him for his righteousness with a son like Isaac and a grandson like Jacob (Allah's peace be upon them) whose descendants, the Israelites, reigned supreme for centuries over the same Palestine where he had taken refuge as a stranger. On the other hand, there were the people of Lot who were living nearby in great prosperity, which had intoxicated them so much that they lived in open wickedness, totally forgetting that they would be overtaken by retribution from Allah. So much so that they scoffed at the admonition of Prophet Lot. But Divine Justice came into operation at the same time, when it was conveying the good news to Prophet Abraham and decreed that those wicked people should be annihilated from the face of the earth. As a result of this, no vestige of their habitations was left on the surface of the earth. This fact should serve as a lesson to the wicked people for all times.

85. Please keep in view E.N.'s 63-68 of *Al-A'rāf*.

86. From the tenor of the details of the story as given in the different parts of the Qur'ān, it becomes quite plain that the angels came to Prophet Lot in the shape of handsome boys and that he was unaware that they were angels. That is why he was troubled and distressed in his mind, for he knew how wicked and shameless were his people.

87. By "my daughters" Prophet Lot might have meant either of the two things. He might have referred to the daughters of the community as "my daughters" because the relationship of a Prophet to his people is as of a father to his children. But it is also possible that he might have meant by this his own daughters. Anyhow this could not have been an offer of adultery, for the succeeding sentence "..these are purer for you" leaves no room for such a misunderstanding. This makes it quite obvious that Prophet Lot admonished them in this way so as to turn them to the females for the lawful gratification of their sexual desires instead of seeking unnatural ways.

88. This answer of the people of Lot shows that they had gone to the lowest depth of depravity and openly and brazen-facedly declared that they did not want females but males. This was the proof that they had not only left the natural way of purity and strayed into the unnatural way of impurity but had also lost all interest in the natural way of gratification. Such a depraved condition is the worst form of moral degradation, for it shows that no good has been left at all. Supposing a person has fallen a victim to an unlawful and sinful behaviour but at the same time considers it to be a wrong behaviour which should be avoided. There is hope for the reform of such a person, and even if he does not mend his way the utmost that can be said about him is that 'he is a depraved person'. On the other hand, if a person gives himself wholly to the unlawful because he has no interest in the lawful, such a filthy person is not worthy of being considered a man at all, and therefore should be wiped out of the earth. That is why Allah decreed that the people of Lot should be completely annihilated from the face of the earth.

89. This meant to impress on them the urgency of the matter so that they should get out of the doomed place and should not even turn round to look behind to see what was happening there. They were warned lest they should be attracted by the loud noises caused by the explosions and by the wailing of the people and thus lag behind in the territory that had been marked for the scourge and was to be overtaken by it.

90. The doom of the wife of Prophet Lot is the third incident related in this Sūrah to serve as a lesson that no relationship can deliver a people from the horrible consequences of their sin.

91. Probably the scourge came in the form of a horrible earthquake which turned their habitations upside down and the explosion of a volcano which rained stones on them.

"Stones of baked clay" probably refers to the stones that are formed by the underground heat and lava in the volcanic regions. The signs of such a formation are found even today near the Lot Sea.

92. That is, "Every stone had been specified by Allah to do some particular work of destruction there, and to hit a particular offender".

93. This was meant to warn the workers of iniquity who were engaged in their evil work, as if to say, "You should not consider yourselves immune from scourge as though it were far from you. If it could visit the people of Lot, it could overpower you as well. Neither the people of Lot were able to defend themselves against Allah, nor can you frustrate Him now."

94. Please keep in view E.N.'s 69-76 of *Al-A'rāf*.

95. That is, "I have no power over you. The most I can do for you is to admonish you as a well-wisher, but it rests with you to accept my advice or reject it. As you are accountable to Allah and not to me for your deeds, therefore you should fear Him and desist from your mischievous deeds, if you sincerely believe in Him."

96. This taunting question was an expression of the feelings of hatred those un-godly people cherished against the religious observances of Prophet Shu'aib and other God-fearing, pious people. They selected *Salāt* as a target of their taunt because it is the first and foremost outwardly observance of true religion which naturally has always been strongly hated by all un-godly wicked people. This hatred may also be noticed today among those who deliberately intend to follow the wicked ways, for they consider religious observances to be the greatest threat to their evil ways. As they regard *Salāt* to be a symbol of the coming trouble, they begin to taunt the one who observes it. For they know that the victim of the "disease" of religiosity will not rest content with his own reformation but will exert his utmost to reform others as well. They fear that he will preach piety and righteous ways to them and criticise their ungodly and immoral ways. That is why *Salāt* becomes the target of the taunts of wicked people. And if the person who observes *Salāt* actually begins to preach the observance of virtues and criticise their evil ways just as they had feared, then they condemn it even more vehemently as though it were the cause of the whole trouble.

97. These two things clearly distinguish the theory of the way of "ignorance" from the theory of the way of "Islam". The way of "ignorance" is

based on the assumption that one should follow the way of one's forefathers: and for the mere reason that it has been inherited from one's forefathers. Its second assumption is that one's faith and religion are concerned only with worship, and these have nothing to do with the worldly affairs of life, in which one is absolutely free to do as one pleases. On the other hand, the basic theory of Islam is that every way that is not founded on the submission to Allah is wrong, and, therefore, should not be followed, for no other way has got any proof of its truth from reason, knowledge and revelation. Besides, Islam is not confined to the worship of Allah but it covers in its entirety all aspects of life—cultural, social, economic and political. This is because all that man possesses really belongs to Allah and, therefore, man has absolutely no right to do as he pleases with his possessions.

Incidentally, this demand of the people of Prophet Shua'ib that they had every right to do as they pleased with their goods and possessions shows that there is nothing new about the theory of the division of life into separate compartments, religious and mundane. Some three thousand years or so ago they insisted on this division just as Western and Westernised people insist on it today. And they are absolutely wrong to presume that their division is the result of the 'light' that had dawned upon humanity because of the "intellectual progress" that man has made as a result of the evolutionary process. Thus it is clear that it is not light but darkness which prevailed with the same intensity thousands of years ago as it is today and that the conflict of Islam against it is also as old as that.

98. Here رِزْق (*rizq*) implies two things: provision of the knowledge of the Truth and provision of the necessities of life from Allah. In the first sense, it refers to the same thing that has been declared in this Sūrah by Prophets Muhammad, Noah and Salih (Allah's peace be upon them all), that is, "Allah bestowed on me by revelation that knowledge of the Truth, which I already had gained by making keen observations of my own self and of the phenomena of Nature. Therefore I cannot be a party to your evil creeds and unlawful practices." In the second sense, it is the answer to this taunt of theirs: "Indeed you are the only generous and righteous person left in the land!" It meant, so to say, this: "When my Lord has bestowed on me both the knowledge of the Truth and the good and lawful provisions of life, your taunts cannot turn this favour into disfavour. Therefore I cannot be so ungrateful to Him as to declare your deviations to be the truth and your unlawful practices lawful."

99. That is, "It is a proof of the truth of my claim that I myself practise what I preach to you. For instance, if I had forbidden you to visit the shrines of gods and goddesses but had myself become the guardian of some such shrine, you would have been justified in bringing this charge against me that I was preaching the Doctrine of *Tauhid* merely for the sake of ruining the "business" of others in

order to make room for my own trade. Likewise, if I had prohibited the use of unlawful means for you but had myself applied the same in my own trade, you would have been justified in charging me with preaching honesty merely for winning good reputation for the prosperity of my own trade; But you youlselves are a witness to this that I myself abstain from those evils which I forbid you to practise and I keep myself pure from those blemishes of which I desire to cleanse you and I follow the way to which I invite you. All this is a clear proof that I believe in the truth of the Message I am conveying to you."

100. That is, "Your land is not far from the land of the people of Lot, which has been totally destroyed. It is quite near and what happened did not take place long ago."

101. Prophet Shu'aib brought the attribute of love of Allah for His creation specially to the notice of his people in order to induce them to give up despair and turn to Allah for forgiveness for their evil deeds, so as to say, "Allah is not hard-hearted and cruel, and cherishes no feelings of enmity towards His creatures. He does not desire to punish them anyhow as if He were to derive pleasure from their torture. As a matter of fact, He inflicts punishment on you only when you transgress all limits and that, too, for the good of mankind. Therefore if you feel ashamed of your sins and repent of these, you will find Him Forbearing, for He loves His creation very much."

The Holy Prophet has explained the same thing by citing a parable. He said, "Suppose one of you was travelling in a waterless desert and lost his camel on whom he had laden all his provisions for the journey. He made a thorough search for the missing camel, but in vain. Then, in despair of his life, he lay down under a tree. When, lo, the camel with all the provisions intact on it appeared all of a sudden before him. Just imagine his happiness. Allah is more pleased than that man, when a sinful servant returns to Him in penitence." There is another incident even more effective than this related by Hadrat 'Umar: "Once some prisoners of war were brought before the Holy Prophet. One of them was a mother whose infant child had been lost. This had made her so restless and uneasy that she would hold any child she came across close to her breasts and suckle it. When the Holy Prophet saw this, he put this question to the bystanders: 'Can you imagine that this mother would ever throw her own child into the fire?' We replied, 'Never'; not to speak of throwing it into the fire, she would do her utmost in every possible way to prevent it from falling into the fire'." Then the Holy Prophet said, "Allah is much more merciful to His servants than this mother is to her child."

Let us consider the same thing from another point of view. It is Allah Who has created love in the hearts of the mother and the father for their child, and

without this parental love, they would never have shown the care and the sacrifice they shower on their child; nay, they would have even become its enemies because of the trouble and inconvenience they have to bear for it. From this it is quite evident that the love of the Creator of this parental affection for His own Creation must be far greater than this parental love.

102. They did not understand what Prophet Shu'aib said to them not because he talked to them in some foreign language or because the theme was too difficult or complicated for them, for he talked to them in their own language and his theme was simple and clear. As a matter of fact, they did not understand because they would not. Their crooked thinking left neither any desire nor any aptitude for understanding his talk. And this is true of all those people who become such slaves of their prejudices and lusts as render them incapable of accepting anything against their preconceived notions. For they are neither inclined to listen to such things nor understand them as though these things were not for them nor were they for them.

103. While studying this part of the story of Prophet Shu'aib, it should be kept in view that similar conditions were prevalent at Makkah at the time of the revelation of this story. The Quraish were as blood thirsty to kill the Holy Prophet as were the people of Madian to take the life of Prophet Shu'aib. Just as the people of Prophet Shu'aib desisted from this evil design because they were afraid of his family, likewise the Quraish were afraid of Bani Hashim and refrained from executing their evil designs. So this story was being related to warn the Quraish that they should learn a lesson from the answer of Prophet Shu'aib (vv. 92-93), as if to say, "O people of Quraish ! This same is the answer to you from Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him)".

لِّمَدْيَنَ كَمَا بَعِدَتْ ثَمُوْدُ ﴿٩٥﴾ وَلَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا مُوْسٰى بِاٰيٰتِنَا وَسُلْطٰنٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿٩٦﴾
إِلٰى فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَا۟ئِهٖ فَاتَّبَعُوْۤا اَمْرَ فِرْعَوْنَ ۚ وَمَاۤ اَمْرُ فِرْعَوْنَ بِرَشِيْدٍ ﴿٩٧﴾ يَقْدُمُ
قَوْمَهٗ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ فَاَوْرَدَهُمُ النَّارَ ؕ وَبِئْسَ الْوِرْدُ الْمَوْرُوْدُ ﴿٩٨﴾ وَاُتْبِعُوْا فِيْ هٰذِهٖ
لَعْنَةً وَّيَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ ؕ بِئْسَ الرِّفْدُ الْمَرْفُوْدُ ﴿٩٩﴾ ذٰلِكَ مِنْ اَنْۢبَآءِ الْقُرٰى نَقُصُّهٗ
عَلَيْكَ مِنْهَا قَآئِمٌ وَّحَصِيْدٌ ﴿١٠٠﴾ وَمَا ظَلَمْنٰهُمْ وَلٰكِنْ ظَلَمُوْۤا اَنْفُسَهُمْ فَمَاۤ اَغْنَتْ
عَنْهُمْ اٰلِهَتُهُمُ الَّتِيْ يَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ لَّمَّا جَآءَ اَمْرُ رَبِّكَ ؕ
وَمَا زَادُوْهُمْ غَيْرَ تَتْبِيْبٍ ﴿١٠١﴾ وَكَذٰلِكَ اَخْذُ رَبِّكَ اِذَاۤ اَخَذَ الْقُرٰى وَهِيَ ظَالِمَةٌ ؕ
اِنَّ اَخْذَهٗۤ اَلِيْمٌ شَدِيْدٌ ﴿١٠٢﴾ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً لِّمَنْ خَافَ عَذَابَ الْاٰخِرَةِ ؕ ذٰلِكَ
يَوْمٌ مَّجْمُوْعٌ ۙ لَّهُ النَّاسُ وَذٰلِكَ يَوْمٌ مَّشْهُوْدٌ ﴿١٠٣﴾ وَمَا نُؤَخِّرُهٗۤ اِلَّا لِاَجَلٍ
مَّعْدُوْدٍ ﴿١٠٤﴾ يَوْمَ يَاْتِ لَا تَكَلَّمُ نَفْسٌ اِلَّا بِاِذْنِهٖ ۚ فَمِنْهُمْ شَقِيٌّ وَّسَعِيْدٌ ﴿١٠٥﴾
فَاَمَّا الَّذِيْنَ شَقُوْا فَفِي النَّارِ لَهُمْ فِيْهَا زَفِيْرٌ وَّشَهِيْقٌ ﴿١٠٦﴾ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا مَا
دَامَتِ السَّمٰوٰتُ وَالْاَرْضُ اِلَّا مَا شَآءَ رَبُّكَ ؕ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ فَعَّالٌ لِّمَا يُرِيْدُ ﴿١٠٧﴾ وَاَمَّا
الَّذِيْنَ سُعِدُوْا فَفِي الْجَنَّةِ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا مَا دَامَتِ السَّمٰوٰتُ وَالْاَرْضُ اِلَّا مَا
شَآءَ رَبُّكَ ؕ عَطَآءً غَيْرَ مَجْذُوْذٍ ﴿١٠٨﴾ فَلَا تَكُ فِيْ مِرْيَةٍ مِّمَّا يَعْبُدُ هٰۤؤُلَآءِ ؕ مَا
يَعْبُدُوْنَ اِلَّا كَمَا يَعْبُدُ اٰبَآؤُهُمْ مِّنْ قَبْلُ ؕ وَاِنَّا لَمُوَفُّوْهُمْ نَصِيْبَهُمْ غَيْرَ
مَنْقُوْصٍ ﴿١٠٩﴾ وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا مُوْسَى الْكِتٰبَ فَاخْتُلِفَ فِيْهِ ؕ وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ
مِنْ رَّبِّكَ لَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ ؕ وَاِنَّهُمْ لَفِيْ شَكٍّ مِّنْهُ مُرِيْبٍ ﴿١١٠﴾ وَاِنَّ كُلًّا لَّمَّا
لَيُوَفِّيَنَّهُمْ رَبُّكَ اَعْمَالَهُمْ ؕ اِنَّهٗ بِمَا يَعْمَلُوْنَ خَبِيْرٌ ﴿١١١﴾ فَاسْتَقِمْ كَمَاۤ اُمِرْتَ وَمَنْ
تَابَ مَعَكَ وَلَا تَطْغَوْا ؕ اِنَّهٗ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ بَصِيْرٌ ﴿١١٢﴾ وَلَا تَرْكَنُوْۤا اِلَى الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا

And We sent Moses with Our Signs and a manifest authority of appointment to Pharaoh and the chiefs of his kingdom. But they followed the command of Pharaoh and unrighteous was Pharaoh's command. On the Day of Resurrection, he will head his people and lead them to Hell.[104] What a wretched goal for one to reach! Curse has fallen on them in this world and shall also fall on them on the Day of Resurrection. What an evil reward for one to receive ! 96-99

This is the story of some of the habitations We are relating to you; some of these are still standing while the others have been mown down. We were not unjust to them but they were unjust to themselves. And when the judgement of your Lord came to pass, those deities of theirs, whom they worshipped instead of Allah, availed them not at all: they only hastened their ruin. They did them no good but caused their destruction and ruin. 100-101

And when your Lord seizes a sinful town, He seizes it like this: indeed His seizure is very terrible and painful. In fact, there is a Sign in this for everyone who dreads the Torment of the Hereafter:[105] that will be the Day when all the people shall gather together and will witness everything that will happen there. We are deferring that only for a fixed term. When that Day will come, no one shall dare speak a word except with Allah's permission.[106] Then some people shall be damned, while others blessed. Those who shall be damned shall go to Hell: here they will pant and hiss (because of thirst). Therein they shall abide for ever as long as the earth and the heavens shall last[107] unless your Lord ordains otherwise. Indeed your Lord has full powers to do as He will.[108] As for those who shall be blessed they will go to the Garden and dwell therein for ever as long as the earth and the heavens shall last, unless your Lord wills something else.[109] They will be blessed with a boon that will be imperishable. 102-108

So, O Prophet have no doubt concerning the deities they worship for they blindly imitate and worship what their forefathers worshipped before them.[110] And We will give them the full measure of their share without detracting anything from it. 109

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104. From this verse and some other narrations of the Qur'ān it appears that the leaders of a community in this world will be its leaders also on the Day of Resurrection. If they guided and led the people towards virtue, righteousness and

truth in this world, their followers will gather together under their banner on the Day of Resurrection and march to the Garden under their leadership. On the other hand, if they called people to some deviation, immorality or unrighteous ways their followers will follow them there also, and march to the fire of Hell under their leadership. The Holy Prophet explained this thing in a Tradition: "On the Day of Resurrection, the banner of the poets of "Ignorance" will be in the hands of Imra-ul-Quais, and all of them will march towards Hell under his leadership."

Now let us try to picture the march-past of these two processions. It is obvious that the first procession will march happily and joyously, praying for and praising their leaders whose guidance had led them to this happy state of marching to the blessed Paradise. On the other hand, when the followers of the leaders of errors will find themselves in the miserable plight, to which the leaders had brought them, naturally their anger against them will be beyond description. For the followers will march towards Hell, abusing and cursing their leaders, who had brought them to that horrible state of torture.

105. That is, "In these historical events there is a sign which will show conclusively to the one who considers this deeply that the torment of the Hereafter is inevitable, as warned by the Messengers. One can also judge from this how terrible it will be. This knowledge will fill one with such fear that will keep one on the Straight Way."

Now let us consider the question: How are these historical events a Sign of the Hereafter and the chastisement therein. Everyone who makes a critical study of history with this consideration that it is not merely a collection of events but also a means of drawing logical conclusions, will find that the rise and fall of communities and nations has been taking place in a regular succession. Moreover, one will find that this rise and fall takes place in accordance with some moral laws in an extraordinary way. This is a clear proof that man is subordinate to the Sovereign, Who is ruling over the universe in accordance with some rational moral laws. Accordingly, He raises up those who keep the moral limits above a certain minimum standard set for this purpose and degrades those who fall below it. Then He gives respite to the latter to mend their ways, but if they do not avail of it and continue their downward march and fall below the limit set for their complete degradation, He annihilates them in a way as to serve as a lesson for others. The fact that these events always take place in a regular cycle leaves no shadow of doubt that rewards and punishments are permanent parts of the law of His Kingdom.

A further consideration of the chastisements that were inflicted on different communities shows that, though these punishments fulfilled the demands of justice to some extent, there was still need of more to fulfil all the demands of

justice, for these criminals were punished only for those sins which they themselves committed but not for those committed by the succeeding communities, which followed the bad example left by them as their predecessors. It is obvious from the study of history that the law of retribution must take its course and justice demands that they should be punished for the evil legacy they left for others to follow after them. Commonsense and justice demand that life in this world should be reproduced in its entirety in order to fulfil all the demands of the law of retribution. The just Sovereign will, therefore, bring into existence all those people for this purpose and award them due punishments.

(Please see also E.N. 10 of *Yūnus*).

106. This is to warn these foolish people who depend on the promises of their intercessors that they would protect them from the torment of the Day. They have been warned to desist from the evil deeds they are committing in the hope that their intercessors would not rest content till they succeed in obtaining from Allah permits of forgiveness for their sinful followers. This is because they believe them to be the beloved favourites of Allah Who cannot afford to displease them at any cost. Then they have been told that, not to speak of wielding any such influence, they shall not dare utter a word except with His permission. No saint, no angel, howsoever high, is so powerful or influential as to speak a word or make any recommendation in the Court of the Highest Sovereign unless He Himself permits it. Therefore such people as make offerings to others than Allah will be utterly disillusioned and disappointed on that Day, for they will come to know that they were foolish in relying on their intercessors and committing evil deeds in the world in the hope that they would deliver them from the torment of the Day.

107. In vv. 105-106, the words "the earth and the heavens" might have been used idiomatically to denote the everlasting state of their torment or they might refer to the new earth and the heavens that will be made in the Next World. Any how these cannot be the earth and the heavens in the existing state for two reasons. First, according to the Qur'ān, they shall be changed on the Day of Resurrection. Secondly, the events that are being related in these verses will happen in the Hereafter.

108. This is to emphasize that there is no power that can deliver them from that everlasting torment. Of course, Allah has full powers to forgive anyone He wills or to make a change in the term of the torment of anyone, for He Himself devises laws for Himself and there is no law higher than His Law so as to limit His powers.

[Contd. on p. 372

فَتَمَسَّكُمُ النَّارُ ۙ وَمَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ مِنْ اَوْلِيَآءَ ثُمَّ لَا تُنْصَرُوْنَ ﴿113﴾ وَاَقِمِ
الصَّلٰوةَ طَرَفَيِ النَّهَارِ وَزُلَفًا مِّنَ الَّيْلِ ۭ اِنَّ الْحَسَنٰتِ يُذْهِبْنَ السَّيِّاٰتِ ۭ ذٰلِكَ
ذِكْرٰى لِلذّٰكِرِيْنَ ﴿114﴾ وَاصْبِرْ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يُضِيْعُ اَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿115﴾ فَلَوْلَا كَانَ
مِنَ الْقُرُوْنِ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ اُولُوْا بَقِيَّةٍ يَّنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْفَسَادِ فِي الْاَرْضِ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا
مِّمَّنْ اَنْجَيْنَا مِنْهُمْ ۚ وَاتَّبَعَ الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا مَآ اُتْرِفُوْا فِيْهِ وَكَانُوْا مُجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿116﴾
وَمَا كَانَ رَبُّكَ لِيُهْلِكَ الْقُرٰى بِظُلْمٍ وَّاَهْلُهَا مُصْلِحُوْنَ ﴿117﴾ وَلَوْ شَآءَ رَبُّكَ
لَجَعَلَ النَّاسَ اُمَّةً وَّاحِدَةً وَّلَا يَزَالُوْنَ مُخْتَلِفِيْنَ ﴿118﴾ اِلَّا مَنْ رَّحِمَ رَبُّكَ ۭ وَ
لِذٰلِكَ خَلَقَهُمْ ۭ وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَةُ رَبِّكَ لَاَمْلَــَٔنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ
اَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿119﴾ وَكُلًّا نَّقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ اَنْۢبَاۗءِ الرُّسُلِ مَا نُثَبِّتُ بِهٖ فُؤَادَكَ ۚ وَ
جَاۗءَكَ فِيْ هٰذِهِ الْحَقُّ وَمَوْعِظَةٌ وَّذِكْرٰى لِلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿120﴾ وَقُلْ لِّلَّذِيْنَ لَا
يُؤْمِنُوْنَ اعْمَلُوْا عَلٰي مَكَانَتِكُمْ ۭ اِنَّا عٰمِلُوْنَ ﴿121﴾ وَانْتَظِرُوْا ۭ اِنَّا مُنْتَظِرُوْنَ ﴿122﴾ وَ
لِلّٰهِ غَيْبُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَاِلَيْهِ يُرْجَعُ الْاَمْرُ كُلُّهٗ فَاعْبُدْهُ وَتَوَكَّلْ
عَلَيْهِ ۭ وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿123﴾

We gave the Book to Moses also before this and there arose differences regarding this (just as they are arising regarding the Book We have given to you.[111]) If a decree had not been made beforehand by your Lord, a judgement would have been passed long before this on those who have created differences.[112] It is a fact that they are in doubt and uncertainty about this, and it is also a fact that your Lord will give them full measure for their deeds, for He is fully aware of what they are doing. So, O Muhammad, you and your companions, (who have turned back from unbelief and rebellion to Faith and obedience), should stick firmly to the Right Way, as you have been enjoined, and should not transgress the bounds of submission. Allah is watching over what you are doing. Do not incline even in the least towards the workers of iniquity lest you should come within the reach of the Fire. Then you will find no protector to defend you against Allah nor will you get any help from any quarter. And listen ! Establish *Salāt* at the two ends of the day and in the early part of the night.[113] Indeed virtues remove evils. This is a reminder for those who remember Allah.[114] And practise fortitude, for Allah does not let go waste the reward of those who do good. 110-115

Then, why were there not among the communities before you such righteous persons who should have forbidden the people to make mischief in the land? If there were any, they were very few whom We saved from among those communities. The wrong-doers, however, pursued their worldly pleasures for which they had been abundantly provided, and became confirmed criminals. Your Lord is not such a One as to destroy the habitations without just cause, the while their inhabitants are doing right.[115] Your Lord could have made mankind one community had He so willed, but now they will continue to follow different ways but only those on whom Allah has His mercy (escape wrong ways). It will be so because He has created them for this (very freedom of choice and action).[116] And the word of your Lord, that He will fill the Hell with *jinns* and human beings, has been fulfilled. 116-119

And, O Muhammad, We relate the stories of the Messengers to you to strengthen your heart by these. And you have received the knowledge of the reality through these and the Believers have got an admonition and a reminder from them. 120

121-123 As regards those who do not believe, say to them, "You may go on following your way and We will follow our way. You may wait for its ultimate end, and we, too, will wait for it." Everything that is hidden in the heavens and the earth is in the power of Allah and everything shall return to Him. So, O Prophet, serve Him and put your trust in Him, for your Lord is not unaware of what you are doing.[117]

Contd. from p.369]

109. That is, "They will not be sent to the Garden nor will dwell there in accordance with any extraneous law which might have forced Allah to let them dwell therein anyhow. They shall dwell there simply because of His favour. He has full powers to make any changes, if He will, about them."

110. It does not mean at all that the Holy Prophet had any doubts concerning their deities. Though these words have been addressed to the Holy Prophet, as a matter of fact they are meant for the common people. What they mean is this: "No reasonable person should entertain any presumption that the people who worship the deities must have been convinced of their miraculous powers, otherwise they would not have worshipped them nor offered gifts to them nor invoked their help". The fact of the matter is that their worship, their offerings and their prayers are not based on any knowledge nor any experience,nor any real observation, but are the result of blind imitation of their forefathers. The proof of their falsehood is that the deities could not save them,when Allah's scourge visited their worshippers who were completely annihilated in spite of them.

111. It means this: "There is nothing new in the different opinions expressed by different people regarding the Qur'ān. They behaved in the same manner towards the Book that was given to Prophet Moses. Therefore, O Muhammad, do not be disheartened by their rejection of the Qur'ān, though its teachings are simple and plain."

112. This is to reassure the Holy Prophet and the believers that they should patiently wait for the consequences of the misbehaviour of the unbelievers towards the Qur'ān ways. But this will happen in due course as previously ordained by Allah for Allah does not make haste in passing judgement, though the people demand haste.

113. This was to urge *Salāt* at three times, that is, Morning, Evening and 'Isha. This shows that this was revealed before *Salāt* had been made obligatory for five times a day during the *Mi'rāj*. (For explanation, see E.N. 95 of XVII, E.N. 111 of XX, and E.N. 124 of XXX).

114. This is the remedy for eradicating evil from the world: "Do good deeds and defeat evil with them. The best way of making you virtuous is to establish *salāt*, which will remind you of Allah over and over again: which will produce those good characteristics in you that shall help you fight successfully against the systematic and united front of evil that has been formed against the Mission of the Truth. This will also enable you to establish practically the system of virtue and reform." (For explanation see E.N.'s 77-79 of XXIX).

115. In this passage, the real cause of the fall of the communities mentioned in vv. 25-99 has been pointed out in a very instructive manner. In reviewing their history Allah declares that the cause of the downfall of not only these but of all the former communities was this: when Allah bestowed His favours on them, they abused these favours and were so intoxicated with their own prosperity that they began to make mischief in the land. By and by their collective conscience became so corrupt that no righteous persons were left among them to forbid evil, and, if a few were left, their voice was so weak that they could not prevent them from causing mischief. As a result of this, evil became so strong and prevalent among them as to warrant the scourge of Allah. Otherwise Allah bears no enmity against His servants that He should destroy them without any just cause, while they were performing righteous works. This has been mentioned here for impressing the following three things:

First, it is imperative that there should be some persons who should invite the people to virtue and forbid evil. For Allah approves virtue only and tolerates evil for its sake so long as there is any potential good left in them. But when a community has no righteous persons left in it and contains only wicked ones, or even if there be some such righteous persons in it as are so weak that nobody pays any heed to them, and the community as a whole rushes headlong towards moral degradation, then Allah's scourge becomes its inevitable doom.

Second, a community, which tolerates everything and everyone except those few who invite it to righteous deeds seals its own doom and invites its destruction.

Third, it is clear from this passage that the destiny of a community is determined by the influence the righteous people can wield in it. If it contains such a number of good persons as may be able to eradicate evil and mischief and establish virtue and righteousness, a general scourge is withheld from it so as to afford an opportunity to them for carrying on their work of reform. On the other hand, if the number of the righteous persons in it remains too small to carry on the reform work, and the community does not tolerate them at all and does not allow them to perform their reform work, then that community incurs its own

destruction, for thus it proves itself to be a worthless community which has no justification for its existence. (For further explanation, See E.N. 34 of LI).

116. This is the answer to the objection raised in the name of تَقْدِیر *(taqdīr)* (destiny) against the principle that has been laid down in the preceding verse for the destruction of the wicked communities. It is this: Why should these communities be punished for lack of a sufficient number of righteous persons in them? Why didn't Allah Himself will to produce that sufficient number of righteous persons in it? Allah has answered this objection, so as to say: "It is not the will of Allah to bind mankind inherently to a fixed course of life as He has bound the vegetable and animal life. Had it been so, there would have been no need of sending the Messengers and the Books for inviting mankind to the Faith. For in that case all human beings would have been born-Muslims and born-Believers and there would have been no unbelief and no disobedience. But it is the will of Allah to grant freedom of choice and action to man so that he may be free to choose and follow any way of life. That is why He has left open both the way to Paradise and the way to Hell for man and given every individual and every community the opportunity to choose and follow either of the two ways with full freedom and win any of the two abodes as a result of one's own efforts and exertions. It is obvious that this scheme of Allah demands that it should be based on the freedom of choice and the option to adopt Faith or unbelief. This is why Allah does not compel a community to the right way if it itself intends to follow the wrong way, and plans and works for it. Allah's scheme does not interfere with the plans and works of such a community. When it makes deliberate arrangements to mould the wicked, unjust, and sinful people, He does not supply it with righteous persons by birth to set it right. Every community is free to produce good or bad people as it wills. And if a community wills to follow a wrong way as a community, leaving little room for the production and the development of the righteous people in order to raise up the standard of virtue, God does not will to coerce it to follow the righteous way. He will let it follow the way it chooses for itself with its inevitable consequences. On the contrary, Allah shows His mercy to that community which produces a sufficiently large number of such people as accept the invitation to virtue, and leaves room in its collective system for such people to work for its reform and purification. (For further explanation, See E.N. 24 of VI).

117. At the end of the discourse, Allah has warned the champions of *kufr*, and comforted the believers, so as to say, "Allah is closely watching the behaviours of both the parties in the conflict between *kufr* and Islam, and the Sovereign is fully aware of all that is happening in His Kingdom. He is watching and controlling everything with perfect wisdom. He will reward richly the champions of the Truth and will not let go waste their efforts and exertions. And

though He is showing tolerance to the champions of *kufr*, and giving them respite, He will take them to task because they are unjustly persecuting the standard bearers of the Truth and are spreading chaos in the land, and exerting their utmost to put obstacles in the way of the work of reform. All these things are in the knowledge of Allah and the evil-doers shall have to bear the consequences of their misdeeds, and the true believers will ultimately come out successful."



XII

YŪSUF (JOSEPH)

يُوسُف

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XII

YŪSUF (JOSEPH)

يُوسُف

INTRODUCTION

When and Why Revealed?

The subject-matter of this Sūrah indicates that it was revealed during the last stage of the Holy Prophet's residence at Makkah, when the Quraish were considering the question of killing or exiling or imprisoning him. At that time some of the unbelievers put this question (probably at the instigation of the Jews) to test him: "Why did the Israelites go to Egypt?" This question was asked because they knew that their story was not known to the Arabs for there was no mention of it whatever in their traditions and the Holy Prophet had never even referred to it before. Therefore they expected that he would not be able to give any satisfactory answer to this question or would first evade it, and afterwards try to enquire about it from some Jew, and thus he would be totally exposed. But, contrary to their expectations, the tables were turned on them, for Allah revealed the whole story of Prophet Joseph then and there, and the Holy Prophet recited it on the spot. This put the Quraish in a very awkward position because it not only foiled their scheme but also administered a warning to them by aptly applying it to their case, as if to say, "As you are behaving towards this Prophet, exactly in the same way the brothers of Prophet Joseph behaved towards him; so you shall meet with the same end."

Objects of Revelation

From the above it is clear that this Sūrah was sent down for two objects:

The first object was to give the proof of the Prophethood of Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him), and that too, the one demanded by the opponents themselves so as to prove conclusively that his knowledge was not based on mere hearsay, but was gained through Revelation. This aspect has been stated explicitly in its introductory verses and explained plainly in its concluding portion.

The second object was to apply it to the Quraish and warn them that ultimately the conflict between them and the Holy Prophet would end in his victory over them. As they were then persecuting their brother, the Holy Prophet, in the same way the brothers of Prophet Joseph had treated him. The Quraish were told indirectly that they would also fail in their evil designs just as the brothers of Prophet Joseph had failed in his case, even after casting him into the well. This is because none has the power to defeat the Divine will. And just as the brothers of Prophet Joseph had to humble themselves before him, so one day the Quraish shall have to beg forgiveness from their brother whom they were then trying to crush down. This, too, has been made quite plain in v. 7: "Indeed there are signs in this story of Joseph and his brothers for these inquirers from among the Quraish."

The fact is that by applying this story to the conflict, the Qur'ān had made a bold and clear prophecy, which was fulfilled literally by the events that happened in the succeeding ten years. Hardly two years had passed after its revelation, when the Quraish conspired to kill the Holy Prophet like the brothers of Prophet Joseph, and he had to emigrate from Makkah to Al-Madīnah, where he gained the same kind of power as Prophet Joseph had gained in Egypt. Again, in the end the Quraish had to humble themselves before him just like the brothers of Prophet Joseph, when they humbly requested, "Show mercy to us for Allah rewards richly those who show mercy" (*v.* 88), and Prophet Joseph generously forgave them, (though he had complete power to wreak vengeance on them,) saying, ". . . today no penalty shall be inflicted on you. May Allah forgive you: He is the greatest of all those who forgive" (*v.* 92). The same story of mercy was repeated, when after the conquest of Makkah, the crest-fallen Quraish stood meekly before the Holy Prophet, who had full power to wreak his vengeance on them for each and every cruelty committed by them. But instead, he merely asked them, "What treatment do you expect from me now?" They replied,

"You are a generous brother and the son of a generous brother." At this, he very generously forgave them, saying, "I will give the same answer to your request that Joseph gave to his brothers: '. . . today, no penalty shall be inflicted on you: you are forgiven'."

Topics of Discussion

Moreover, the Qur'ān does not relate this story as a mere narrative but uses it, as usual, for the propagation of the Message in the following ways:

Throughout the narrative the Qur'ān has made it clear that the faith of Prophets Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph (Allah's peace be upon them all) was the same as that of Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) and they invited the people to the same Message to which Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) was inviting them.

Then it places the characters of Prophet Jacob and Prophet Joseph side by side with the characters of the brothers of Joseph, the members of the trade caravan, the court dignitary, Al-'Azīz of Egypt and his wife, the "ladies" of Egypt and the rulers of Egypt and poses a silent question to the reader, as if to say, "Contrast the former characters moulded by Islam on the bedrock of the worship of Allah and accountability in the Hereafter with the latter moulded by *kufr* and "ignorance" on the worship of the world and disregard of Allah and the Hereafter, and decide for yourselves which of these two patterns you would choose."

The Qur'ān has used this story to bring forth another truth: whatever Allah wills, He fulfils it anyhow, and man can never defeat His plan with his counter-plans nor prevent it from happening nor change it in any way whatever. Nay, it often so happens that man adopts some measure to fulfil his own design and believes that he has done that very thing which would fulfil his design, but in the end he finds to his dismay that he had done something which was against his own and conducive to the Divine purpose. When the brothers of Prophet Joseph cast him into the well, they believed that they had once for all got rid of the obstacle in their way, but in fact, they had paved the way for the Divine purpose of making him the ruler of Egypt, before whom they would have to humble themselves in the end. Likewise, the wife of 'Azīz had sent Prophet Joseph to the prison, gloating over the thought

that she had wreaked her vengeance on him, but, in fact, she had provided for him the opportunity for becoming the ruler of Egypt and for putting herself to the shame of confessing her own sin publicly.

And these are not the solitary instances which prove the truth that even if the whole world united to bring about the down-fall of the one whom Allah willed to raise high, it could not succeed. Nay, the very "sure and effective" measures that were adopted by the brothers to degrade Joseph were used by Allah for the success of Joseph and for the humiliation and disgrace of his brothers. On the other hand, if Allah willed the fall of one, no measure, howsoever effective, could raise him high: nay, it helped to bring about his fall and the disgrace of those who adopted them.

Moreover, the story contains other lessons for those who intend to follow the way of Allah. The first lesson it teaches is that one should remain within the limits, prescribed by the Divine Law, in one's aims and objects and measures, for success and failure are entirely in the hands of Allah. Therefore if one adopts pure aims and lawful measures but fails, at least one will escape ignominy and disgrace. On the other hand, the one who adopts an impure aim and unlawful measures to achieve it, shall not only inevitably meet with ignominy and disgrace in the Hereafter, but also runs the risk of ignominy and disgrace in this world.

The second lesson it teaches is that those who exert for the cause of truth and righteousness and put their trust in Allah and entrust all their affairs to Him, get consolation and comfort from Him, for this helps them face their opponents with confidence and courage and they do not lose heart, when they encounter the apparently terrifying measures of the powerful enemies. They will persevere in their task without fear and leave the results to Allah.

But the greatest lesson this story teaches is that if the Believer possesses true Islamic character and is endowed with wisdom, he can conquer a whole country with the strength of his character alone. The marvellous example of Prophet Joseph teaches us that a man of high and pure character comes out successful even under the most adverse circumstances. When Prophet Joseph went to Egypt, he was only a lad of seventeen years, a foreigner, all alone and without any provisions;

nay, he had been sold there as a slave. And the horrible condition of the slaves during that period is known to every student of history. Then he was charged with a heinous moral crime and sent to prison for an indefinite term. But throughout this period of affliction, he evinced the highest moral qualities which raised him to the highest rank in the country.

Historical and Geographical Background

The following historical and geographical details will help understand the story:

Prophet Joseph was a son of Prophet Jacob and a grandson of Prophet Isaac and a great grandson of Prophet Abraham (Allah's peace be upon them all). The Bible says (and the allusions in the Qur'ān also confirm this) that Prophet Jacob had twelve sons from four wives. Prophet Joseph and his younger brother Benjamin were from one wife and the other ten from the other wives. Prophet Jacob had settled at Hebron (Palestine) where his father Prophet Isaac and before him Prophet Abraham lived and owned a piece of land at Shechem as well.

According to the research scholars of the Bible, Prophet Joseph was born in or about 1906 B.C. and the incident with which this story begins happened in or about 1890 B.C. He was seventeen when he saw the dream and was thrown into the well. This well was near Dothan to the north of Shechem according to Biblical and Talmudic traditions, and the caravan, which took him out of the well, was coming from Gilead (Trans-Jordan), and was on its way to Egypt.

At that time Fifteenth Dynasty ruled over Egypt, whose rulers are known in history as the Hyksos kings. They belonged to the Arab race, but had migrated from Palestine and Syria to Egypt in or about 2000 B.C. and taken possession of the country. The Arab historians and the commentators of the Qur'ān have given them the name of *'Amālīq* (the Amalekites), and this has been corroborated by the recent researches made by the Egyptologists. They were foreign invaders who had got the opportunity of establishing their kingdom because of the internal feuds in the country. That is why there was no prejudice in the way of Prophet Joseph's ascendancy to power and in the subsequent settlement of the Children of Israel in the most fertile region of Egypt.

They could gain that power and influence which they did, because they belonged to the same race as the foreign rulers of Egypt.

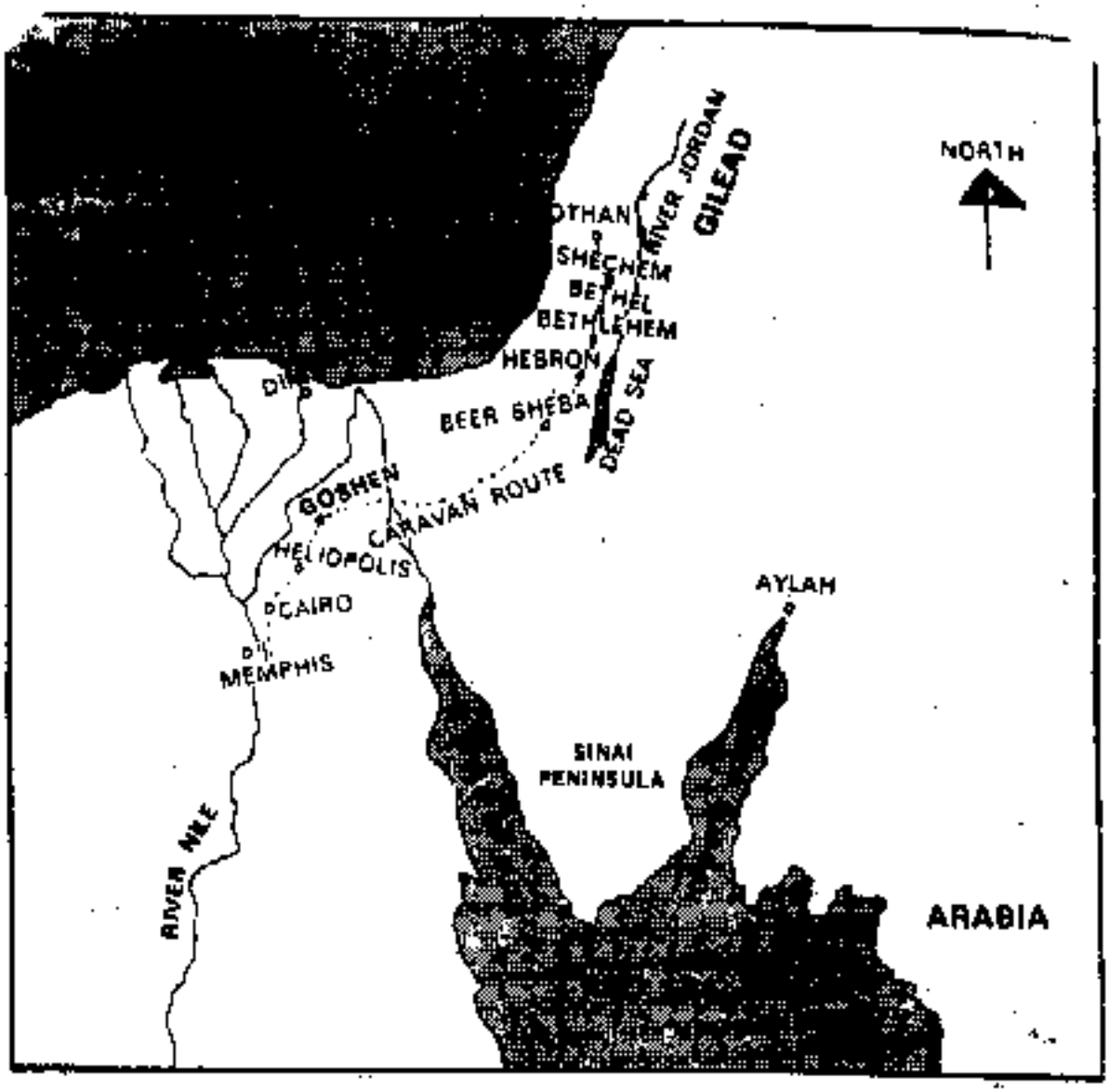
The Hyksos ruled over Egypt up to the end of the fifteenth century B.C., and practically all the powers remained in the hands of the Israelites. The Qur'ān has made a reference to this in v. 20 of *Al-Mā'idah:* "....He raised Prophets among you and made you rulers..." Then there arose a great nationalist movement which overthrew the power of this dynasty and exiled 250,000 or so of the Amalekites. As a result of this, a very bigoted dynasty of Copts came into power and uprooted everything connected with the Amalekites. Then started that persecution of the Israelites which has been mentioned in connection with the story of Prophet Moses.

We also learn from the history of Egypt that the "Hyksos kings" did not acknowledge the gods of Egypt and, therefore, had imported their own gods from Syria, with a view to spreading their own religion in Egypt. This is the reason why the Qur'ān has not called the king who was the contemporary of Prophet Joseph by the title of "Pharaoh," because this title was associated with the religion of the original people of Egypt and the Hyksos did not believe in it, but the Bible erroneously calls him "Pharaoh". It appears that the editors of the Bible had the misunderstanding that all the kings of Egypt were "Pharaohs."

The modern research scholars who have made a comparative study of the Bible and the Egyptian history are generally of the opinion that Apophis was the Hyksos king, who was the contemporary of Prophet Joseph.

At that time Memphis was the capital of Egypt, whose ruins are still found on the Nile at a distance of 4 miles south of Cairo. When Prophet Joseph was taken there, he was 17 or 18 years old. He remained in the house of 'Azīz for three years and spent nine years in prison, and then became the ruler of the land at the age of thirty and ruled over Egypt independently for eighty years. In the ninth or tenth year of his rule he sent for his father, Prophet Jacob, to come from Palestine to Egypt with all the members of his family and, according to the Bible, settled them in the land of Goshen, where they lived up to the time of Prophet Moses. The Bible says that before his death, Prophet Joseph bound his kindred by an oath: "when you return from this country to the

MAP RELATING TO THE STORY OF PROPHET JOSEPH



1. Dothan is the place where according to the Old testament, the brothers of Prophet Joseph "cast him into a pit" (Gen. 37:24)

2. Shechem: Here Prophet Jacob had his ancestral piece of land. Now it is called Nablus

3. Hebron is the place where Prophet Jacob lived is called Al-Khalil also.

4. Memphis was the capital of ancient Egypt, which is now called Minif

5. Goshen is the land where Prophet Joseph settled his father and brothers in Egypt. (Gen. 47:6,11)

house of your fore-fathers you must take my bones out of this country with you. So he died a hundred and ten years old, and they embalmed him....."

Though the story of Prophet Joseph as given in the Qur'ān differs very much in its details from that given in the Bible and the Talmud, the Three generally agree in regard to its component parts. We shall explain the differences, when and where necessary, in our Explanatory Notes.



الٓرٰ ۚ تِلْكَ اٰيٰتُ الْكِتٰبِ الْمُبِيْنِ ۙ﴿۱﴾ اِنَّاۤ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ قُرْءٰنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُوْنَ ۚ﴿۲﴾
نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ اَحْسَنَ الْقَصَصِ بِمَاۤ اَوْحَيْنَاۤ اِلَيْكَ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ ۖ وَاِنْ كُنْتَ
مِنْ قَبْلِهٖ لَمِنَ الْغٰفِلِيْنَ ۚ﴿۳﴾ اِذْ قَالَ يُوْسُفُ لِاَبِيْهِ يٰۤاَبَتِ اِنِّيْ رَاَيْتُ اَحَدَ
عَشَرَ كَوْكَبًا وَّالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ رَاَيْتُهُمْ لِيْ سٰجِدِيْنَ ۚ﴿۴﴾ قَالَ يٰبُنَيَّ لَا تَقْصُصْ

XII

YŪSUF (JOSEPH)

يوسف

Verses. 111 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

1-3 *Alif Lām Rā.* These are the verses of the Book that makes its object perfectly clear. We have sent it down as Qur'ān[1] in Arabic so that you (Arabs) may understand it well.[2] O Muhammad, by revealing this Qur'ān to you, We narrate to you events and truths in the best manner: though before this you were utterly unaware (of these things).[3]

4 This is the narrative of that time, when Joseph said to his father, "O father, I have seen in a dream eleven stars and the sun and the moon; I saw that they were prostrating themselves before me."

1. The Arabic word قُرْآن *(Qur'ān:* "to read") is originally the infinitive form of the verb قَرَأَ When the infinitive form of a verb in Arabic is used as a name, it implies that that thing (or person) possesses the characteristics in their perfection. This Book has been named "Qur'ān" to indicate that it is meant to be read by all and sundry and is to be read often and over and over again.

2. This does not mean that this Book has been sent down exclusively for the Arabs. What it means is only this: "Of all the people, O Arabs, you should understand the excellences of the Qur'ān, which are a sure proof of its being Divine Revelation, for it is in your own language and you have no excuse to put forward that it is in a foreign language which you do not understand."

Some people wrongly infer from this verse that this Book had been sent down for the Arabs and not for the non-Arabs; therefore, they assert, it cannot be claimed that it is the Guidance for the whole mankind. But obviously this is a frivolous objection raised by those who do not understand its real significance. It is obvious that a book, though meant for universal guidance, will necessarily have to be put in words in some language so that the people speaking that language should understand its teachings and then become the means of conveying its guidance to other peoples. This is the only natural way of spreading the message of a movement on a universal scale.

3. This was to impress indirectly on the unbelievers of Makkah the fact that the Messenger did not know anything about the story of the settlement of the Israelites in Egypt, but was being informed of this by Revelation from Allah. This introduction was necessary because, as has been stated in the preface to this Sūrah, the disbelievers had put an abrupt question concerning this matter in order to "expose" the Holy Prophet by this test. The answer is to this effect: "Tell them, O Muhammad, that, though you did not know anything about the settlement of the Israelites in Egypt before this, you have now received a Revelation about this from Us."

رُءْيَاكَ عَلٰٓى اِخْوَتِكَ فَيَكِيْدُوْا لَكَ كَيْدًا ۭ اِنَّ الشَّيْطٰنَ لِلْاِنْسَانِ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِيْنٌ ۝
وَكَذٰلِكَ يَجْتَبِيْكَ رَبُّكَ وَيُعَلِّمُكَ مِنْ تَاْوِيْلِ الْاَحَادِيْثِ وَيُتِمُّ نِعْمَتَهٗ
عَلَيْكَ وَعَلٰٓى اٰلِ يَعْقُوْبَ كَمَآ اَتَمَّهَا عَلٰٓى اَبَوَيْكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَاِسْحٰقَ ۭ
اِنَّ رَبَّكَ عَلِيْمٌ حَكِيْمٌ ۝ لَقَدْ كَانَ فِيْ يُوْسُفَ وَاِخْوَتِهٖٓ اٰيٰتٌ لِّلسَّاۗىِٕلِيْنَ ۝
اِذْ قَالُوْا لَيُوْسُفُ وَاَخُوْهُ اَحَبُّ اِلٰٓى اَبِيْنَا مِنَّا وَنَحْنُ عُصْبَةٌ ۭ اِنَّ اَبَانَا لَفِيْ
ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيْنِۨ ۝ اقْتُلُوْا يُوْسُفَ اَوِ اطْرَحُوْهُ اَرْضًا يَّخْلُ لَكُمْ وَجْهُ اَبِيْكُمْ وَ
تَكُوْنُوْا مِنْۢ بَعْدِهٖ قَوْمًا صٰلِحِيْنَ ۝ قَالَ قَاۗىِٕلٌ مِّنْهُمْ لَا تَقْتُلُوْا يُوْسُفَ وَاَلْقُوْهُ
فِيْ غَيٰبَتِ الْجُبِّ يَلْتَقِطْهُ بَعْضُ السَّيَّارَةِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ فٰعِلِيْنَ ۝ قَالُوْا يٰٓاَبَانَا مَا
لَكَ لَا تَاْمَنَّا عَلٰي يُوْسُفَ وَاِنَّا لَهٗ لَنٰصِحُوْنَ ۝ اَرْسِلْهُ مَعَنَا غَدًا يَّرْتَعْ وَيَلْعَبْ
وَاِنَّا لَهٗ لَحٰفِظُوْنَ ۝ قَالَ اِنِّيْ لَيَحْزُنُنِيْٓ اَنْ تَذْهَبُوْا بِهٖ وَاَخَافُ اَنْ يَّاْكُلَهُ
الذِّئْبُ وَاَنْتُمْ عَنْهُ غٰفِلُوْنَ ۝ قَالُوْا لَىِٕنْ اَكَلَهُ الذِّئْبُ وَنَحْنُ عُصْبَةٌ اِنَّآ
اِذًا لَّخٰسِرُوْنَ ۝ فَلَمَّا ذَهَبُوْا بِهٖ وَاَجْمَعُوْٓا اَنْ يَّجْعَلُوْهُ فِيْ غَيٰبَتِ الْجُبِّ ۚ وَاَوْحَيْنَآ
اِلَيْهِ لَتُنَبِّئَنَّهُمْ بِاَمْرِهِمْ هٰذَا وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ۝ وَجَاۗءُوْٓ اَبَاهُمْ عِشَاۗءً
يَّبْكُوْنَ ۝ قَالُوْا يٰٓاَبَانَآ اِنَّا ذَهَبْنَا نَسْتَبِقُ وَتَرَكْنَا يُوْسُفَ عِنْدَ مَتَاعِنَا فَاَكَلَهُ
الذِّئْبُ ۚ وَمَآ اَنْتَ بِمُؤْمِنٍ لَّنَا وَلَوْ كُنَّا صٰدِقِيْنَ ۝ وَجَاۗءُوْ عَلٰي قَمِيْصِهٖ بِدَمٍ
كَذِبٍ ۭ قَالَ بَلْ سَوَّلَتْ لَكُمْ اَنْفُسُكُمْ اَمْرًا ۭ فَصَبْرٌ جَمِيْلٌ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ الْمُسْتَعَانُ
عَلٰي مَا تَصِفُوْنَ ۝ وَجَاۗءَتْ سَيَّارَةٌ فَاَرْسَلُوْا وَارِدَهُمْ فَاَدْلٰى دَلْوَهٗ ۭ قَالَ
يٰبُشْرٰى هٰذَا غُلٰمٌ ۭ وَاَسَرُّوْهُ بِضَاعَةً ۭ وَاللّٰهُ عَلِيْمٌۢ بِمَا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ۝ وَشَرَوْهُ
بِثَمَنٍۢ بَخْسٍ دَرَاهِمَ مَعْدُوْدَةٍ ۚ وَكَانُوْا فِيْهِ مِنَ الزّٰهِدِيْنَ ۝ وَقَالَ

In response to this, his father said, "My little son, say nothing of this dream to your brothers, lest they should plot any evil scheme against you.[4] Be on your guard, for Satan is the avowed enemy of man. And it will happen so (as you have seen in your dream) that your Lord will choose you (for His work[5]) and impart you the full understanding of problems,[6] and will perfect His blessing upon you and upon the children of Jacob as He perfected it on your forefathers— Abraham and Isaac; surely your Lord is All-Knowing, All-Wise.[7] 5-6

Indeed there are Signs in this story of Joseph and his brothers for these inquirers. This is how the story begins: his brothers (held a consultation and) said to one another, "This Joseph and his brother[8] are dearer to our father than ourselves, even though we are a band. Truly our father seems to have lost his balance of mind.[9] Let us, therefore, kill Joseph or throw him somewhere so that your father's attention should be turned exclusively towards you. After this, you should again become righteous people."[10] At this one of them said, "Don't kill Joseph; but if you are bent on doing something, cast him into some dark well. Maybe some caravan passing by will take him out of it." After this consultation, they said to their father, "Father, why is it that you do not trust in us in regard to Joseph, though we are his sincere well-wishers? Send him with us tomorrow that he may freely eat and enjoy sport: we will take good care of him."[11] The father replied, "It troubles me that you should take him away with you, for I fear lest a wolf should eat him up, when you are off your guard." They replied, "If a wolf should eat him up in our company, when we are a band, we shall be worthless people indeed!" When, after persisting like this, they took him away with them, and decided to cast him into a dark well. We revealed this to Joseph: "A time will surely come when you will admonish them about this act of theirs; now they do not comprehend its consequences."[12] At nightfall they returned to their father, weeping and wailing, and said, "O father! we were absorbed in running races, and we had left Joseph with our things, when a wolf came and devoured him: but you will never believe us, even though we were truthful". And (in proof thereof) they had brought his shirt with the false blood upon it. Hearing this, the father said, "No! your evil souls have made this heinous act easy for you. I, however, will bear this patiently with a good grace."[13] And Allah alone can be asked for help regarding what 7-18

you are concocting."[14]

19-20 A caravan came there; they sent their water carrier and he let down his bucket in the well. (Seeing Joseph in it,) he cried aloud, "Good news! Here is a young lad." So they hid him as merchandise, but Allah knew well what they were doing. Then they sold him for a paltry price,[15] a few *dirhams*. And they did not expect a big price for him.

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4. As the meanings of the dream were quite obvious, Prophet Jacob had a genuine fear that Joseph's ten step-brothers would become all the more envious of him when they would hear this: So he warned his righteous son not to mention his dream to his brothers, for he knew that those sons of his did not bear the moral character worthy of the sons of a Prophet, and, therefore, they were up to any evil design against him out of mere envy. As regards the dream, the "sun" in it was Prophet Jacob, the "moon" his wife, (Prophet Joseph's step-mother) and the "eleven stars" his eleven brothers.

5. That is, "Bless him with Prophethood."

6. The Arabic words تَاوِيْلُ الْاَحَادِيْث of the Text do not mean merely "the interpretation of dreams", as has been generally understood. They are comprehensive and imply also this: "Allah will bless you with the full understanding of the problems of life and their solutions and will give you the insight to reach at the reality of every matter."

7. Here it should be noted that the response of Prophet Jacob to the dream of Prophet Joseph, according to the Bible and the Talmud, was quite different from this: "And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?" (*Gen.* 37: 10). Even a little thinking will help one to arrive at the conclusion that his reaction as narrated in the Qur'ān is worthy of the high character of Prophet Jacob and not the one found in the Bible and the Talmud. For Prophet Joseph had not expressed any personal ambition of his but merely narrated his dream. If the dream was a true one, and it is obvious that Prophet Jacob interpreted it, believing it to be true, there was no reason why he should rebuke his own son, for it meant that it was the will of God and not his own ambition that he should one day rise to a high rank. Can then one expect from any reasonable person, not to mention a Prophet, that he would take it ill and rebuke the one who dreamed such a dream? And can there ever be such a noble "father" who would say bitter and stinging things to his own son for the "sin" of telling him a true dream, prophesying his future greatness?

8. This brother was Benjamin. He was the real younger brother of Prophet Joseph, and was his junior by many years. Their mother had died at the birth of Benjamin. That is why Prophet Jacob paid special attention to these two motherless children. Besides, Joseph was the only son, in whom he had discerned signs of righteousness and capabilities. Accordingly, when Prophet Joseph narrated his dream to him, he was all the more convinced of his future greatness, and was perturbed at the idea lest his brothers conspired against him out of envy, if they came to know of his dream, which was self-explanatory. For Prophet Jacob knew that his other ten sons were not of the right type, and this was proved by the subsequent events. Therefore, naturally he was not happy with them. It is, however, strange that the Bible gives a different reason for the envy his brothers bore against Prophet Joseph. They were filled with envy against him because "Joseph gave unto his father their evil report."

9. In order to grasp the full significance of the "grievance" the ten sons had against their father for "neglecting" them, we should keep in view the conditions of the clannish life. As there was no established state, each clan led its own independent life side by side with other clans. It is obvious that the power of the head of the clan depended entirely on the number of sons and grand-sons, and brothers and nephews he had to defend the life, honour and property of the family. Therefore, the one leading the clannish life naturally paid more attention to one's own grown up sons, etc., than to children and women of the family. As Prophet Jacob was leading clannish life, these sons of his expected a preferential treatment from him, but the Prophet thought otherwise. So they remarked, "Truly our father seems to have lost his balance of mind; otherwise he could not have neglected us, and loved our two younger brothers more than us, for we are strong young men and can stand him in good stead at the time of need while these youngsters are useless as they themselves stand in need of protection."

10. This sentence depicts the true psychology of those people who give themselves up to the lusts of their hearts, and, at the same time, do not want to break away completely from faith and religion. This is how a person of this type behaves. Whenever he is tempted to do a certain evil thing, he makes up his mind to do it first and puts off the demands of his faith for the time-being. And if his conscience pricks him, he tries to soothe it, saying, "Have a little patience. Let me first do this evil thing, which is an obstacle in my way. Then I will repent and become as good as Thou desirest to see me." As the brothers of Prophet Joseph belonged to this type, they soothed their pricking consciences, saying, "After doing away with Joseph, who is the chief obstacle in our way, we will again become righteous."

[Contd. on p. 394

الَّذِي اشْتَرَاهُ مِن مِّصْرَ لِامْرَأَتِهِ أَكْرِمِي مَثْوَاهُ عَسَىٰ أَن يَنفَعَنَا أَوْ
نَتَّخِذَهُ وَلَدًا ۚ وَكَذَٰلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوسُفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلِنُعَلِّمَهُ مِن تَأْوِيلِ
الْأَحَادِيثِ ۚ وَاللَّهُ غَالِبٌ عَلَىٰ أَمْرِهِ وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَلَمَّا
بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ آتَيْنَاهُ حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا ۚ وَكَذَٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَرَاوَدَتْهُ الَّتِي
هُوَ فِي بَيْتِهَا عَن نَّفْسِهِ وَغَلَّقَتِ الْأَبْوَابَ وَقَالَتْ هَيْتَ لَكَ ۚ قَالَ مَعَاذَ
اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ رَبِّي أَحْسَنَ مَثْوَايَ ۖ إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَلَقَدْ هَمَّتْ بِهِ ۖ وَ
هَمَّ بِهَا لَوْلَا أَن رَّأَىٰ بُرْهَانَ رَبِّهِ ۚ كَذَٰلِكَ لِنَصْرِفَ عَنْهُ السُّوءَ وَالْفَحْشَاءَ ۚ
إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُخْلَصِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَاسْتَبَقَا الْبَابَ وَقَدَّتْ قَمِيصَهُ مِن دُبُرٍ
وَأَلْفَيَا سَيِّدَهَا لَدَا الْبَابِ ۚ قَالَتْ مَا جَزَاءُ مَنْ أَرَادَ بِأَهْلِكَ سُوءًا إِلَّا أَن
يُسْجَنَ أَوْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٥﴾ قَالَ هِيَ رَاوَدَتْنِي عَن نَّفْسِي وَشَهِدَ شَاهِدٌ
مِّنْ أَهْلِهَا ۖ إِن كَانَ قَمِيصُهُ قُدَّ مِن قُبُلٍ فَصَدَقَتْ وَهُوَ مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ ﴿٢٦﴾
وَإِن كَانَ قَمِيصُهُ قُدَّ مِن دُبُرٍ فَكَذَبَتْ وَهُوَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾ فَلَمَّا رَأَىٰ
قَمِيصَهُ قُدَّ مِن دُبُرٍ قَالَ إِنَّهُ مِن كَيْدِكُنَّ ۖ إِنَّ كَيْدَكُنَّ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٢٨﴾ يُوسُفُ
أَعْرِضْ عَنْ هَٰذَا ۖ وَاسْتَغْفِرِي لِذَنبِكِ ۖ إِنَّكِ كُنتِ مِنَ الْخَاطِئِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾
وَقَالَ نِسْوَةٌ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ امْرَأَتُ الْعَزِيزِ تُرَاوِدُ فَتَاهَا عَن نَّفْسِهِ ۖ قَدْ
شَغَفَهَا حُبًّا ۖ إِنَّا لَنَرَاهَا فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٣٠﴾ فَلَمَّا سَمِعَتْ بِمَكْرِهِنَّ أَرْسَلَتْ
إِلَيْهِنَّ وَأَعْتَدَتْ لَهُنَّ مُتَّكَأً وَآتَتْ كُلَّ وَاحِدَةٍ مِّنْهُنَّ سِكِّينًا وَقَالَتِ
اخْرُجْ عَلَيْهِنَّ ۚ فَلَمَّا رَأَيْنَهُ أَكْبَرْنَهُ وَقَطَّعْنَ أَيْدِيَهُنَّ وَقُلْنَ حَاشَ لِلَّهِ مَا
هَٰذَا بَشَرًا ۚ إِنْ هَٰذَا إِلَّا مَلَكٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٣١﴾ قَالَتْ فَذَٰلِكُنَّ الَّذِي لُمْتُنَّنِي فِيهِ ۖ وَ

The person[16] who bought him in Egypt said to his wife,[17] "Deal kindly with him: maybe he proves useful to us, or we may adopt him as our son."[18] Thus We made a way for establishing Joseph in the land and arranged to teach him the understanding of affairs.[19] Allah does whatever He wills but most peeople do not understand this. 21

And when he reached his full maturity, We bestowed on him judgement and knowledge.[20] This is how We reward the righteous people. 22

Now the woman in whose house he was began to tempt him, and one day she closed the doors and said, "Come here." Joseph replied, "May Allah protect me from this! My Lord has given me a good abode: (and should I, then, misbehave like this?) Such workers of iniquity never fare well."[21] She advanced towards him, and he also would have advanced towards her, had he not perceived his Lord's argument.[22] This was so that We may remove indecency and immodesty from him;[23] indeed he was one of Our chosen servants. At last Joseph and she raced towards the door one behind the other and she rent his shirt (pulling it) from behind, and they met her husband at the door. Seeing him, she cried out, "What punishment does the one deserve who shows evil intentions towards your wife? What else than this that he should be put in prison or tortured with painful torment ?" Joseph said, "It was she who solicited me." At this a member of her own family gave the circumstantial evidence,[24] saying, "If the shirt of Joseph is rent from the front, the woman speaks the truth and he is a liar. And if his shirt is rent from the back, she speaks a lie and he is truthful."[25] When the husband saw that the shirt was rent from the back, he said, "This is one of your cunning devices; your devices are very cunning indeed ! Joseph ! leave this matter. And, O woman, beg forgiveness for your sin, for you were indeed the wrong-doer."[25a] 23-29

The women of the town began to talk about this matter, saying, "The wife of Al-'Azīz has been soliciting her young slave, for she has passionately fallen in love with him. We think that she is manifestly doing the wrong thing." When she heard about their cunning talk, she invited them to a banquet at her house and got ready pillows for the party[26] and placed before each of them a knife. Then, (when they were engaged in cutting fruit) she made a sign to Joseph, as if to say, "Come 30-31

out before them." When they caught sight of him, they were so amazed that they cut their hands, and exclaimed spontaneously, "Good God! He is no man; he is a noble angel!"

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11. In this thing also the Qur'ān differs from the Bible and the Talmud, according to which it was not the brothers, who requested their father to send Joseph with them but Prophet Jacob himself sent him with an errand to Shechem, where they were feeding their father's flocks. Obviously the version of the Qur'ān is more realistic, for Prophet Jacob could never have thought of sending his beloved son with them, because he knew it full well that they were envious of him, and sending him there would have been sending Joseph deliberately into the jaws of death.

12. The Arabic words وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ("they do not understand") may very appropriately mean three things. First, "We were comforting Joseph, and his brothers were quite unaware of this that a Revelation was being sent to him." Second, "You will let them know of this evil act of theirs in such circumstances that they can never even imagine you to be there." Third, "Today they are committing an evil act, but they do not know its future consequences."

There is no mention of this in the Bible and the Talmud that Allah sent a Revelation to comfort Prophet Joseph at that time of his affliction. On the contrary, the Talmud says that when he was thrown into the well, Prophet Joseph wept and cried aloud and implored his brothers for mercy, as if he was no better than any other lad of the desert, who would weep and cry if he were to be thrown into a well. But the picture the Qur'ān depicts is that of a young man, who is destined to play the part of a great personality in history.

13. The literal meaning of صَبْرٌ جَمِيلٌ "good patience" which implies a patience that enables one to endure all kinds of troubles and afflictions in a calm, self-possessed and unrepining manner, without complaining or crying or weeping, as is worthy of great minds.

14. Prophet Jacob's reaction to the news of Joseph's death, as depicted in the Qur'ān, is also different from that given in the Bible and the Talmud. According to them he was upset by the sad news and behaved like an ordinary father. The Bible says, "And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days." (Gen: 37: 34). And the Talmud says that at the sad news Jacob gave himself up to the abandonment of grief, and lay with his face to the ground.... and refused to be comforted, and cried, 'Some wild

beast has devoured Joseph and I shall never see him more'; and he mourned for Joseph for many years. (The Talmud, H. Polano, pp. 78, 79).

When we contrast this picture with the one depicted in the Qur'ān, we clearly see that the Qur'ānic picture is that of a dignified and great personality. He is not upset in the least at hearing the sad news of his beloved son but at once gets to the bottom of the matter, and tells the envious brothers, "Your tale is false and fabricated." Then he shows "good patience" as a Prophet should and puts his trust in the help of God.

15. Though the matter of the disposal of Prophet Joseph by his brothers was simple, the Bible has made this very complicated. It is obvious that the brothers threw Joseph into the well and went away. Afterwards a caravan came there and pulled him out and carried him to Egypt where they sold him. But the Bible says that the brothers cast him into a pit; then a company of Ishmaelites came there and they agreed to sell him to them. But in the meantime the Midianite merchantmen had drawn and lifted up Joseph and sold him to the Ishmaelites who brought him into Egypt. (Gen. 37: 25-28). But the authors of the Bible forget this sale transaction and further on in v. 36 say that Prophet Joseph was sold in Egypt by the Midianites and not by the Ishmaelites as stated in v. 28. But the Talmudic version of the mauer is a little different from this. It says that the Midianites drew Joseph up from the pit and carried him along with them. As they passed by, the sons of Jacob saw Joseph with them and accused them of stealing their slave. At this a furious quarrel arose and they were ready to enter upon a bloody fray. But a bargain was concluded and the sons of Jacob sold their brother to the Midianites for twenty pieces of silver, who afterwards sold him to the Ishmaelites for the same amount. Then the Ishmaelites took him into Egypt and sold him there. Incidentally, it is this Talmudic version that has given rise to the tradition among the Muslims that the brothers of Joseph had sold him. But it should be noted that the Qur'ān does not confirm this tradition.

16. According to the Bible his name was Potiphar. But the Qur'ān mentions him merely by the title الْعَزِيز (Al-'Azīz). As the Qur'ān uses the same title for Prophet Joseph, when he rose to a high rank, it appears that the person held a high office or rank in Egypt, for the word عَزِيز ('Azīz) stands for a powerful person who cannot be opposed and disobeyed. The Bible and the Talmud say that he was an officer of Pharaoh's body guards and captain of the guard. And according to a tradition from Hadrat Ibn 'Abbās, related by Ibn Jarīr, he was the officer of the royal treasury.

17. According to the Talmud the name of his wife was Zelicha and she is known by the same name in the Muslim traditions. As regards the other tradition

among the Muslims that Prophet Joseph married her afterwards, it is neither based on the Qur'ān nor on the history of the Israelites. And the fact is that it is below the dignity of a Prophet to have married such a woman about whom he had personal knowledge that she was of a bad character. And this opinion is confirmed by this general statement of the Qur'ān: "Women of bad character are for men of bad character and men of bad character are for women of bad character. And the women of pure character are for men of pure character, and the men of pure character for the women of pure character...." (XXIV: 26.)

18. The fact that Potiphar had a very high opinion of Prophet Joseph from the very beginning is also confirmed by the Talmud and the Bible. The Talmud says that at this time Joseph was about eighteen years of age (and) Potiphar was very favourably impressed with his bearing and appearance. So he came to the conclusion that he belonged to some noble family and had been made a slave by the force of adverse circumstances. When the Midianites carried him before Potiphar, he said.... "He does not look like a slave and I fear he has been stolen from his country and his home." That is why Potiphar did not treat him like a slave, but put him incharge of his house and all his possessions. Likewise the Bible says, "And he left all that he had in Josep's hand; and he knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat." (Gen. 39: 6).

19. This verse alludes to the special training Prophet Joseph needed at that time for the performance of the duties of the high rank to which he was destined to rise. Up to that time, he had been brought up in the desert, under the environment of a semi-nomadic life of a shepherd. There was neither any settled state in Cana'ān and Northern Arabia nor had there been any appreciable progress in culture and civilization, for it was inhabited by different independent clans with no settled government. Thus it is obvious that the training that Prophet Joseph had received in Cana'an, had equipped him with the good characteristics of nomadic life coupled with the qualities of God-worship and high morality of the family of Prophet Abraham. But this was not enough to enable him to direct the affairs of Egypt, which was at that time one of the most cultured and civilized countries of the known world and required a different experience and training for the conduct of its affairs. The All-Powerful Allah made arrangements for this training and sent him to the house of an officer of a very high rank in Egypt, who entrusted him with full powers over his house and estate. This enabled him to develop all those latent abilities that were needed to fulfil his destiny, and he gained the experience that was required for the efficient conduct of the affairs of the kingdom of Egypt in the years to come.

20. By the use of such words as آتيناهُ حُكْمًا وعِلْمًا the Qur'ān usually means, "We bestowed on him Prophethood," for the Arabic word حُكْمًا *(hukmun)* stands

for both judgement and "authority" and عِلْماً *('ilman)* here stands for that Knowledge which is directly revealed to the Prophets by Allah. Thus, the Arabic words of the Text will mean: "We gave him the power and the authority and the knowledge needed for judging rightly the affairs of the people."

21. Generally the commentators and translators are of the opinion that Prophet Joseph used رَبِّي *(Rabbi:* "My Lord") for the master of the house, and what he meant to imply by way of argument was this: "My Lord has treated me very kindly and kept me well in the house. How can I, then, be so disloyal and ungrateful as to commit adultery with his wife?" I, however, strongly differ with such a translation and commentary. Though the Arabic usage of رَبّ *(rabb)* admits of such a meaning, I have two strong reasons against this here. First, it is far below the dignity of a Prophet to refrain from a sin because of the regard he had for some person other than Allah. Second, there is not a single instance in the Qur'ān that a Prophet ever called anyone other than Allah his "rabb." Prophet Joseph himself differentiates between his creed and that of the Egyptians making it plain that his رَبّ (*"rabb"*: Lord) was Allah, while they had made other human beings their "rabb". Then this verse should be considered from another point of view: when رَبِّي *("rabbi")* may also mean "My Lord", Prophet Joseph might have invoked Allah. Why should then one take the other meaning, "my master", which most surely implies something that is against the right creed?

22. "His Lord's argument" means inspiration from Allah to rouse his conscience to the fact that it was not worthy of him to yield to the temptation by the woman. As regards the question, "What was that argument", it has been stated in the preceding verse, that is, "My Lord has shown much kindness towards me. Should I, then, misbehave like this? Such workers of iniquity never fare well." This was the "Divine argument" that saved Prophet Joseph in the prime of youth from that great temptation.

The significance of "Joseph also would have advanced towards her, had he not seen his Lord's argument" is this: "Even a Prophet like Joseph (Allah's peace be upon him) could not have been able to save himself from sin, had not Allah guided him rightly with His argument. Incidentally, this verse makes plain the nature of the "Immunity" of Prophets from sin. It does not mean that a Prophet is infallible and incapable of committing any error, offence or sin or doing wrong or making a mistake. What it means is this: though a Prophet possesses passions, emotions, and carnal desires like other human beings, and is capable of committing a sin, he is so virtuous and God-fearing that he never deliberately cherishes any evil intentions, for he is endowed with such great arguments from

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لَقَدْ رَاوَدْتُّهٗ عَنْ نَّفْسِهٖ فَاسْتَعْصَمَ ؕ وَ لَئِنْ لَّمْ يَفْعَلْ مَاۤ اٰمُرُهٗ لَيُسْجَنَنَّ وَ
لَيَكُوْنًا مِّنَ الصّٰغِرِيْنَ ﴿۳۲﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ السِّجْنُ اَحَبُّ اِلَيَّ مِمَّا يَدْعُوْنَنِيْۤ اِلَيْهِ ۚ وَ
اِلَّا تَصْرِفْ عَنِّيْ كَيْدَهُنَّ اَصْبُ اِلَيْهِنَّ وَ اَكُنْ مِّنَ الْجٰهِلِيْنَ ﴿۳۳﴾ فَاسْتَجَابَ لَهٗ
رَبُّهٗ فَصَرَفَ عَنْهُ كَيْدَهُنَّ ؕ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿۳۴﴾ ثُمَّ بَدَا لَهُمْ مِّنْۢ بَعْدِ
مَا رَاَوُا الْاٰيٰتِ لَيَسْجُنُنَّهٗ حَتّٰى حِيْنٍ ﴿۳۵﴾ وَ دَخَلَ مَعَهُ السِّجْنَ فَتَيٰنِ ؕ قَالَ اَحَدُهُمَاۤ
اِنِّيْۤ اَرٰىنِيْۤ اَعْصِرُ خَمْرًا ۚ وَ قَالَ الْاٰخَرُ اِنِّيْۤ اَرٰىنِيْۤ اَحْمِلُ فَوْقَ رَاْسِيْ خُبْزًا
تَاْكُلُ الطَّيْرُ مِنْهُ ؕ نَبِّئْنَا بِتَاْوِيْلِهٖ ۚ اِنَّا نَرٰىكَ مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿۳۶﴾ قَالَ لَا يَاْتِيْكُمَا
طَعَامٌ تُرْزَقٰنِهٖۤ اِلَّا نَبَّاْتُكُمَا بِتَاْوِيْلِهٖ قَبْلَ اَنْ يَّاْتِيَكُمَا ؕ ذٰلِكُمَا مِمَّا عَلَّمَنِيْ رَبِّيْ ؕ
اِنِّيْ تَرَكْتُ مِلَّةَ قَوْمٍ لَّا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَ هُمْ بِالْاٰخِرَةِ هُمْ كٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿۳۷﴾ وَ
اتَّبَعْتُ مِلَّةَ اٰبَآءِيْۤ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَ اِسْحٰقَ وَ يَعْقُوْبَ ؕ مَا كَانَ لَنَاۤ اَنْ نُّشْرِكَ بِاللّٰهِ
مِنْ شَيْءٍ ؕ ذٰلِكَ مِنْ فَضْلِ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْنَا وَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَ لٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا
يَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿۳۸﴾ يٰصَاحِبَيِ السِّجْنِ ءَاَرْبَابٌ مُّتَفَرِّقُوْنَ خَيْرٌ اَمِ اللّٰهُ الْوَاحِدُ
الْقَهَّارُ ﴿۳۹﴾ مَا تَعْبُدُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِهٖۤ اِلَّاۤ اَسْمَآءً سَمَّيْتُمُوْهَاۤ اَنْتُمْ وَ اٰبَآؤُكُمْ مَّاۤ
اَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطٰنٍ ؕ اِنِ الْحُكْمُ اِلَّا لِلّٰهِ ؕ اَمَرَ اَلَّا تَعْبُدُوْۤا اِلَّاۤ اِيَّاهُ ؕ
ذٰلِكَ الدِّيْنُ الْقَيِّمُ وَ لٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿۴۰﴾ يٰصَاحِبَيِ السِّجْنِ اَمَّاۤ
اَحَدُكُمَا فَيَسْقِيْ رَبَّهٗ خَمْرًا ۚ وَ اَمَّا الْاٰخَرُ فَيُصْلَبُ فَتَاْكُلُ الطَّيْرُ مِنْ رَّاْسِهٖ ؕ
قُضِيَ الْاَمْرُ الَّذِيْ فِيْهِ تَسْتَفْتِيٰنِ ﴿۴۱﴾ وَ قَالَ لِلَّذِيْ ظَنَّ اَنَّهٗ نَاجٍ مِّنْهُمَا اذْكُرْنِيْ
عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ۖ فَاَنْسٰىهُ الشَّيْطٰنُ ذِكْرَ رَبِّهٖ فَلَبِثَ فِي السِّجْنِ بِضْعَ سِنِيْنَ ﴿۴۲﴾ وَ
قَالَ الْمَلِكُ اِنِّيْۤ اَرٰى سَبْعَ بَقَرٰتٍ سِمَانٍ يَّاْكُلُهُنَّ سَبْعٌ عِجَافٌ وَّ سَبْعَ سُنْۢبُلٰتٍ

She said, "Well, this is he concerning whom you blamed me. No doubt, I sought to seduce him and he escaped. Yet if he does not yield to my bidding, he shall be cast into prison, and shall be humbled and disgraced."[27] Joseph said, "My Lord! I prefer imprisonment to that to which they invite me. If Thou dost not ward off their cunning devices from me, I may be caught in their snare, and become one of the ignorant."[28] His Lord granted his prayer and warded off their guile from him.[29] Indeed, He hears everyone and knows everything. 32-34

Then it occurred to them that they should cast him into prison for a time, even though they themselves had seen manifest signs[30] (of his innocence and of the guilt of their women). 35

Two[31] other slaves also entered into the prison along with him.[32] One day one of them said, "I have dreamt that I am pressing grapes into wine," and the other said, "I have dreamt that I am carrying loaves of bread on my head, of which birds are eating." Then both of them said, "Tell us their interpretations, for we have seen that you are a righteous man."[33] Joseph replied, "I will tell you their interpretations before the food you get comes to you. This ability of making interpretations is a part of the knowledge that my Lord has bestowed on me. The fact is that I do not follow the ways of those people who do not believe in Allah, and deny the Hereafter. I follow the Way of my forefathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob: it is not for us to associate anyone with Allah as partner. This is Allah's bounty upon us and upon all mankind (that He has not made us the servants of any other than Himself), yet most people are not grateful. O my fellow prisoners, say, which is better: various gods or the One Omnipotent Allah? The gods you worship other than Him are nothing more than mere names you and your forefathers have invented, for Allah has sent down no authority for them. Sovereignty belongs to none but Allah. He has commanded that you shall not worship anyone but Him. This is the right and straight Way, but most people do not know this. My fellow prisoners, here are the interpretations of your dreams. One of you will serve wine to his lord (the king of Egypt): as for the other, he shall be crucified and birds will eat of his head. Thus has that matter been decreed whereof you enquired."[34] 36-41

Then to the one who he thought would be released, Joseph said, 42

"Mention me to your lord (the king of Egypt)". But Satan made him so neglectful that he forgot to mention him to his lord, and so Joseph remained in the prison for several years.[35]

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his Lord as do not allow the lusts of the flesh over-power the voice of his conscience. And if ever he succumbs inadvertently to any of the human weaknesses, Allah at once sends a Revelation to him to set him on the right path. For the consequences of his error do not remain confined to his own person but react on the whole mankind, for even his slightest error might mislead the world to the most horrible sins.

23. "....so that We may remove indecency and immodesty from him" implies two things. First, "It was because of Our grace that he could perceive Our argument, and save himself from sin, for We willed to remove indecency and immodesty from Our chosen servant." The second meaning is rather deeper: This incident took place in the life of Joseph because this was essential for his spiritual training: "It was Our will to pass him through this hard test so that he should become immune from indecency and immodesty, for he would have to apply all his powers of piety to withstand such a great temptation, and thus become really so strong as not to yield to such things in future as well". The importance and the need of such a hard training becomes quite obvious, if we keep in view the moral conditions of the Egyptian society of that period. We can have a glimpse of this from vv. 30-32. It appears that the women in general and the "ladies" of high society in particular, enjoyed almost the same sexual freedom as is rampant today in the "civilized" West and in the Westernized East. Allah made arrangements for the special training of Prophet Joseph in the house of his master because he had to perform his Divine Mission in a perverted society, and that too as a ruler and not as a common man. It is thus obvious from the behaviour of those "ladies" of high rank, who did not feel any shame nor modesty in openly admiring the beauty of the young slave and from that of the "lady" of the house who was not ashamed of confessing openly that she did her best to tempt him and would continue to do so, that they would have done all they could to allure the young handsome ruler. Thus Allah not only made Prophet Joseph strong enough to resist such temptations in future by passing him through the hard test, but also filled the ladies with despair of gaining any "success" in this matter.

24. It appears that when the master of the house came on the scene, he was accompanied by a person of his wife's household. When he heard the story of the incident, he made this proposal: "As each of them accuses the other and there is no eye-witness of what happened between the two, the matter should be decided by the help of the circumstancial evidence, by examining the condition of Joseph's

shirt." Obviously this was a very reasonable way of deciding the matter, and there was, therefore, no need to resort to a miracle. According to some traditions this witness was an infant, lying in the cradle, whom Allah had given the power of speech for giving this evidence. As this story is not supported by any authority, there is no reason why the obvious, plain and reasonable thing should not be accepted that the witness was a wise and experienced member of the family of the wife, instead of having resort to a miracle based on an unauthentic tradition.

25. This is what was implied in the evidence: "If Joseph's shirt is rent from the front, it means that Joseph is the aggressor and she has struggled to defend her honour. But if the shirt is rent from the back, it is obvious that he must have been running away from her and she must have been tugging from behind". The circumstancial evidence implied another thing. As the witness invited the master's attention to Prophet Joseph's shirt only, it meant that there was no sign at all of violence on the garments of the woman, for had he been the aggressor, there must have been some signs of violence on her garments.

25a. A comparative study of the story as given in the Qur'ān and in the Bible and the Talmud will be worthwhile.

The Bible says, "And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out. And it came to pass, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and was fled forth, that she called unto the men of her house, and spake unto them, saying, See, he hath brought in an Hebrew unto us to mock us; he came in unto me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice: And it came to pass, when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled, and got him out. And she laid up his garment by her, until his lord came home...And it came to pass, when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spake unto him, saying, After this manner did thy servant to me; that his wrath was kindled. And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound." (Gen. 39: 12-16, 19-20).

The clumsy manner of the above version is obvious. It appears from this that Prophet Joseph's garment was so shaped that the whole of it fell into her hands when she tugged it. Then he ran away all naked, leaving it with her, as if to supply her with a clear proof of his own guilt.

Now let us turn to the Talmud. It says '....hearing the accusation, Potiphar commanded at once that the lad should be whipped severely. Then he carried Joseph before the judges.....They ordered that the rent garment should be brought to them and upon an examination of the same, they pronounced Joseph "not guilty".' (The Talmud Selections, H. Polano, pp. 81-82). Obviously this version is also faulty, for it cannot be imagined that a person of such a high

rank would himself take the case to a court that his own slave had tried to assault his wife criminally. Incidentally, this Qur'ānic version of the story is a clear proof of the fact that it has no copied stories from the Israelite traditions as the pseudo-orientalists allege, but has, on the other hand, corrected them and told the real facts to the world.

26. The ancient Egyptians used to place pillows and cushions in such feasts for the guests to recline. And this is confirmed by the archaeological remains in Egypt.

There is no mention at all of this banquet in the Bible but it has been described in the Talmud in a way quite different from that of the Qur'ān. Needless to say that while this narrative in the Qur'ān is natural, life-like and teaches moral lessons, the one in the Talmud lacks all these things.

27. This open demonstration of her love and declaration of her immoral designs show that the moral condition of the higher class of the Egyptian society had declined to the lowest ebb. It is quite obvious that the women whom she had invited must have been ladies belonging to the upper most stratum of the society. The very fact that she presented her beloved before them without any hesitation in order to convince them of his beauty and youth that had urged her to fall in love with him, shows that there was nothing uncommon in this demonstration. Then these ladies did not reproach her but themselves practically demonstrated that, in those circumstances, they themselves would have done the same that she did. Above all, the hostess did not feel that it was immodest to declare openly, "No doubt, I sought to seduce him and he succeeded in escaping from me. Yet I am not going to give him up. If he will not do as I bid him, he shall be cast into prison and humbled and disgraced". Incidentally, this also shows that the modern Western people and their Westernised disciples in the East are not justified in claiming the credit for giving full "freedom" to the woman. For this "progress" is no new thing: it was in vogue in Egypt in its full glory thousands of years before this.

28. In order to grasp the full significance of this prayer of Prophet Joseph, we should try to form a mental picture of the circumstances in which he was placed at that time. In the light of this passage the picture will be something like this. "There is the handsome young man of twenty in the prime of his life, who has brought health and vigour of youth from the desert into Egypt, after passing through the ordeal of forced slavery and exile. Fortune has placed him in the house of one of the highest dignitaries in the capital of the most civilized country of the world at the time. There this handsome young man meets in the prime of life with a strange experience. The lady of the house in which he has to live day and night falls passionately in love with him and begins to tempt and seduce him.

Then the fame of his beauty spreads all over the capital and the other ladies of the town also become enamoured of him. Now this is the critical position. He is surrounded on all sides by hundreds of beautiful snares that have been spread to entrap and catch him unawares. All sorts of devices are employed to excite his passions and entice him: wherever he goes he encounters sin lying in ambush with all its charms and allurements and waiting for an opportune moment to make a surprise attack upon him. Such are the circumstances that are tempting him with sin, but the pious young man successfully passes through the ordeal, set for him by Satan, with the self-control that is praiseworthy indeed. But it is all the more praiseworthy that he does not feel any pride for showing such extraordinary piety in such trying and tempting circumstances. On the other hand, he very humbly invokes his Lord to protect him from those traps of sin, for he is afraid of the common human weaknesses and cries out, "My Lord, I am weak ! I fear lest these temptations should over-power me. I would rather prefer imprisonment to doing such an evil thing into which they are tempting to ensnare me."

In fact, that was the most important and critical period of Prophet Joseph's training, and this hard ordeal helped to bring forth all his latent virtues of which he himself was unaware up to that time. Then he himself realized that Allah had endowed him with the high and extraordinary qualities of honesty, fidelity, piety, charity, righteousness, self-control, balance of mind, and he made full use of these when he gained power in Egypt.

29. Allah warded off their guile from Prophet Joseph by strengthening his character in such a way as to make ineffective all their devices to ensnare him. This also implies that Allah opened the door of prison for him in order to keep him safe from their tricks and temptations.

30. It occurred to them to imprison Prophet Joseph in order "to save face" after they had seen clear proofs of his innocence and of the guilt of their own women, for no other alternative was left, in their opinion, to undo the scandal that was spreading fast in the land. But it did not occur to them that in fact his imprisonment was his moral victory and the moral defeat of the rulers and the dignitaries of Egypt. By that time, Prophet Joseph had not remained an unknown person, for all and sundry had heard stories of his beauty and piety, and of the love the "ladies" had shown towards him. Therefore when those "wise" courtiers put into practice their plausible device to imprison him in order to reverse the doings of their "ladies", the common people must have drawn their own conclusions for they knew Prophet Joseph to be a man of pure, strong and high character. So it was obvious to them that he had committed no "crime" to merit imprisonment, and that he had been imprisoned because it was an easier way of escape for the chiefs of Egypt than to keep their own ladies under control.

Incidentally, this shows that imprisonment of innocent people without trial and due procedure of law is as old as "civilization" itself. The dishonest rulers of to-day are not much different from the wicked rulers who governed Egypt some four thousand years ago. The only difference between the two is that they did not imprison people in the name and for the cause of "democracy" but they committed unlawful acts without any pretext of law. On the contrary, their modern descendants make use of the specious pretences of honesty when they are acting unjustly. They first enact the necessary unlawful laws to justify their unlawful practices and then "lawfully" imprison their victims. That is to say, the Egyptian rulers were honest in their dishonesty and did not hide the fact that they were imprisoning people to safeguard their own interests, and not those of the community. But these modern disciples of Satan cast innocent people into prison to ward off the "danger" they feel from them, but proclaim to the world that their victims are a menace to the country and the community. In short, they were mere tyrants but these are shameless liars as well.

31. At the time when Prophet Joseph was sent to prison, probably he was about twenty years old. This has been inferred from two statements in the Qur'ān and the Talmud. The Qur'ān (v. 42) says that '....he remained in the prison for a decade or so' and the Talmud says that '....Joseph was thirty years old when he was elevated to his honourable and trustworthy position'.

32. One of the two prisoners, according to the Bible, was the chief of the butlers of the king of Egypt, and the other the chief of the bakers. And according to the Talmud, they were condemned to the prison because during a feast stone grits were found in the bread and a fly in the wine.

33. The fact that two prisoners attested his righteousness shows that Prophet Joseph was held in high esteem in the prison. Otherwise there was no reason why the two should have requested him alone to interpret the dreams and paid their homage like this: "We have seen that you are a righteous man". It clearly means that the events narrated in the preceding verses had reached all and sundry and the people inside the prison and outside it, knew that he had not been guilty of any crime or sin. On the other hand, he had proved himself to be a noble soul who had come out successful in the hardest test of his piety. So much so that there was not the like of him in piety, not even among their own religious leaders in the whole country. That was why not only the prisoners but also the officers and officials of the prison looked upon him as an honourable man and had full confidence in him. The Bible confirms this: "And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it. The keeper of the prison looked not to anything that was under his hand." (Gen. 39: 22-23).

34. This discourse, which is the soul of this story, and is one of the best on the doctrine of *Tauhīd* in the Qur'ān itself, finds no place at all in the Bible and the Talmud. This is because they regard him merely as a wise and pious man and not as a Prophet. That is why Rev. Rodwell has, in regard to this passage, accused Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) of putting his own doctrine and conviction into the mouth of Joseph (Allah's peace be upon him). But the Qur'ān not only puts forward and presents these two aspects of his life in a much better and clearer way but also presents him as a Prophet, who had started propagating the Message even in the prison.

As this discourse suggests several very important things, it will be worthwhile to consider these one by one:

(1) This is the first occasion on which Prophet Joseph appears to have begun the preaching of the true Faith. For before this, the Qur'ān reveals him in the different stages of his life as a man of high morality but does not say anything to show that he conveyed the Message also. From this it is clear that those stages were of a preparatory nature and the mission of Prophethood was entrusted to him at the stage of his imprisonment and this was his first discourse as a Prophet.

(2) Moreover, this was the first occasion when he revealed his identity to others. Before this, we find him bearing patiently everything that happened to him without revealing anything about his relationships with Prophet Abraham and others. He kept silent when the caravan made him a slave and carried him to Egypt: when Al-'Azīz bought him and when he was sent to prison. As Prophet Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Allah's peace be upon them all) were quite well-known, he might have used their names to advantage. The members of the caravan, both the Ishmaelites and the Midianites, were closely related to his family, and the Egyptians were, at least, familiar with the name of Prophet Abraham. Nay, the way in which Prophet Joseph mentioned their names in this discourse, shows that the fame of his father, grandfather and great grandfather had reached Egypt. But in spite of this, Prophet Joseph did not use their names on any of the critical occasions to save himself from the plight in which he was placed. This shows that probably he himself knew that these things were inevitable for his training for the Mission for which Allah had chosen him. Now it was absolutely necessary for him, for the sake of his Mission, to reveal this fact in order to show that he was not presenting any new Faith but the same Faith that was preached by Prophets Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Allah's peace be upon them all). This was necessary because the Message demanded that it should not be presented with the claim that it was a new and novel thing but that it was the same universal and eternal

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خُضْرٍ وَّاُخَرَ يٰبِسٰتٍ ۭ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الْمَلَاُ اَفْتُوْنِيْ فِيْ رُءْيَايَ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ لِلرُّءْيَا تَعْبُرُوْنَ ﴿٤٣﴾
قَالُوْٓا اَضْغَاثُ اَحْلَامٍ ۚ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِتَاْوِيْلِ الْاَحْلَامِ بِعٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِيْ
نَجَا مِنْهُمَا وَادَّكَرَ بَعْدَ اُمَّةٍ اَنَا اُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِتَاْوِيْلِهٖ فَاَرْسِلُوْنِ ﴿٤٥﴾ يُوْسُفُ اَيُّهَا
الصِّدِّيْقُ اَفْتِنَا فِيْ سَبْعِ بَقَرٰتٍ سِمَانٍ يَّاْكُلُهُنَّ سَبْعٌ عِجَافٌ وَّسَبْعِ سُنْۢبُلٰتٍ
خُضْرٍ وَّاُخَرَ يٰبِسٰتٍ ۙ لَّعَلِّيْٓ اَرْجِعُ اِلَى النَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٤٦﴾ قَالَ تَزْرَعُوْنَ
سَبْعَ سِنِيْنَ دَاَبًا ۚ فَمَا حَصَدْتُّمْ فَذَرُوْهُ فِيْ سُنْۢبُلِهٖٓ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا مِّمَّا تَاْكُلُوْنَ ﴿٤٧﴾
ثُمَّ يَاْتِيْ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ ذٰلِكَ سَبْعٌ شِدَادٌ يَّاْكُلْنَ مَا قَدَّمْتُمْ لَهُنَّ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا مِّمَّا
تُحْصِنُوْنَ ﴿٤٨﴾ ثُمَّ يَاْتِيْ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ ذٰلِكَ عَامٌ فِيْهِ يُغَاثُ النَّاسُ وَفِيْهِ يَعْصِرُوْنَ ﴿٤٩﴾
وَقَالَ الْمَلِكُ ائْتُوْنِيْ بِهٖ ۚ فَلَمَّا جَاۗءَهُ الرَّسُوْلُ قَالَ ارْجِعْ اِلٰى رَبِّكَ فَسْـَٔـلْهُ مَا
بَالُ النِّسْوَةِ الّٰتِيْ قَطَّعْنَ اَيْدِيَهُنَّ ۭ اِنَّ رَبِّيْ بِكَيْدِهِنَّ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿٥٠﴾ قَالَ مَا خَطْبُكُنَّ
اِذْ رَاوَدْتُّنَّ يُوْسُفَ عَنْ نَّفْسِهٖ ۭ قُلْنَ حَاشَ لِلّٰهِ مَا عَلِمْنَا عَلَيْهِ مِنْ سُوْۗءٍ ۭ
قَالَتِ امْرَاَتُ الْعَزِيْزِ الْـٰٔنَ حَصْحَصَ الْحَقُّ ۡ اَنَا رَاوَدْتُّهٗ عَنْ نَّفْسِهٖ وَاِنَّهٗ لَمِنَ
الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٥١﴾ ذٰلِكَ لِيَعْلَمَ اَنِّيْ لَمْ اَخُنْهُ بِالْغَيْبِ وَاَنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَهْدِيْ كَيْدَ الْخَاۗىِٕنِيْنَ ﴿٥٢﴾

وَمَآ اُبَرِّئُ نَفْسِيْ ۚ اِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَاَمَّارَةٌۢ بِالسُّوْۗءِ اِلَّا مَا رَحِمَ رَبِّيْ ۭ اِنَّ رَبِّيْ
غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿٥٣﴾ وَقَالَ الْمَلِكُ ائْتُوْنِيْ بِهٖٓ اَسْتَخْلِصْهُ لِنَفْسِيْ ۚ فَلَمَّا كَلَّمَهٗ قَالَ
اِنَّكَ الْيَوْمَ لَدَيْنَا مَكِيْنٌ اَمِيْنٌ ﴿٥٤﴾ قَالَ اجْعَلْنِيْ عَلٰي خَزَاۗىِٕنِ الْاَرْضِ ۚ اِنِّيْ حَفِيْظٌ
عَلِيْمٌ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَكَذٰلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوْسُفَ فِي الْاَرْضِ ۚ يَتَبَوَّاُ مِنْهَا حَيْثُ يَشَاۗءُ ۭ نُصِيْبُ
بِرَحْمَتِنَا مَنْ نَّشَاۗءُ وَلَا نُضِيْعُ اَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿٥٦﴾ وَلَاَجْرُ الْاٰخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ لِّلَّذِيْنَ
اٰمَنُوْا وَكَانُوْا يَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَجَاۗءَ اِخْوَةُ يُوْسُفَ فَدَخَلُوْا عَلَيْهِ فَعَرَفَهُمْ وَهُمْ

One[36] day the king said, "I saw in a dream seven fat cows whom seven lean cows were devouring. Likewise I saw seven green ears of corn, and seven withered ones. O my courtiers, tell me the interpretation of my dream, if you understand the meanings of dreams".[37] They answered, "These are the result of confused nightmares and we do not understand their meaning." 43-44

Then one of the two prisoners who had been released remembered the thing after a long time and said, "I will tell you its interpretation: just send me (to Joseph in the prison.[38])" 45

Going to Joseph, he said, "Joseph, O man of righteousness![39] tell me the meaning of the dream of seven fat cows whom seven lean cows are devouring, and of seven green ears of corn and seven withered ones. Maybe I go back to those people and they might understand it."[40] Joseph answered, "You will cultivate land for seven consecutive years as usual. During this period thrash out of the harvest you reap only that much grain that might suffice for your food and leave the rest in the ears. Then, after this, there shall come upon you seven hard years. Then you will eat up all that corn you might have kept for that period except that you will have reserved in the store. After that will come another year in which there will be abundant rainfall in answer to the prayer of the people and they will press (juice and oil.)"[41] 46-49

The king said, "Bring him to me." But when the royal envoy came to him, Joseph said,[42] "Go back to your lord and ask him to enquire about the matter of the women who cut their hands. Indeed my Lord has full knowledge of their cunning."[43] 50

The king questioned the women,[44] saying, "What do you say about the incident when you tried to entice Joseph?" They all cried out with one voice, "God protect us! we found no tinge of evil in him." Then the wife of Al-'Azīz also confessed, "Now that the truth has come to light, it was I who tried to entice him. In fact, he is absolutley in the right."[45] 51

(Joseph said,[46]) "By this enquiry, I meant to let him (Al-'Aziz) know that I did not play him false secretly and that Allah does not lead to success the machinations of deceivers. Yet I am not holding my soul to be immune from sin, for the soul incites to evil, except of the one on 52-53

whom my Lord shows mercy. Indeed my Lord is Forgiving and Merciful."

54 The king said, "Bring him to me so that I may attach him exclusively to myself."

55 When Joseph had a talk with the king, he said, "From now you have an honourable place with us, and you will enjoy our full confidence."[47] Joseph said, "Please place all the resources of the land under my trust for I know how to guard them and also possess knowledge."[47a]

56-57 Thus did We give power to Joseph in the land: he had every right to take possession of any piece of it that he desired.[48] We bestow Our bounty upon anyone We will. We do not let go waste the reward of the righteous people; yet the reward of the life in the Hereafter is much better for those who believed and behaved in a God-fearing manner.[49]

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Truth that has always been presented by its bearers.

(3) This teaches us that one can, like Prophet Joseph, carve out a way for the propagation of the Message, if one has the intention and the required wisdom.

The two men pay their homage to him and request him to interpret their dreams. In answer to this he says, "I will tell their interpretations but let me first inform you about the source of my knowledge that enables me to understand dreams". Thus he takes advantage of their request and preaches his own Faith to them. We learn from this that if a person is imbued with the true and strong desire for propagating the Truth, he can very gracefully turn the direction of the conversation towards the Message he desires to convey. On the contrary, if a person has no strong desire for the propagation of the Message, he never "finds" any opportunity for it, even though hundred and one such opportunities might have come his way which could have been utilized for this purpose. But one must be on one's guard to discriminate between the right use of an opportunity by a wise man from the crude "propagation" of a foolish and un-cultured person, who tries to thrust the Message into the ears of unwilling hearers and succeeds only in creating aversion for it in their minds because of his crude way of presentation.

(4) This also teaches the right procedure that should be followed in presenting the Message. Prophet Joseph does not present, at the very start, the details

of the creed and regulations of the Faith but the most fundamental thing that distinguishes a Believer from a non-Believer, that is, the distinction between *Tauhīd* and *shirk*. Then he presents it in such a rational manner as cannot fail to convince any man of common sense. And his argument must have impressed deeply on the minds of the two slaves. "Which is better: various gods or One Omnipotent Allah?" They knew it from their personal experience that it was much better to serve one master than a number of them. Therefore it was far better to serve the Lord of the universe than His servants. Moreover, he does not invite them directly to accept his Faith and discard their own faith, but he very wisely draws their attention to this fact: "This is Allah's bounty upon us and upon all mankind that He has not made us the servants of any other than Himself, yet most of the people are not grateful to Him. Instead of serving Him alone, they invent gods for themselves and worship them". Then it is also noteworthy that his criterion of the faith of his addressees is based on wisdom and has no tinge of bitterness in it. He says, "The gods whom you call 'the god of wealth' or 'the god of health' or 'the god of prosperity' or 'the god of rain' etc. are mere names you have given them without any reality behind them. The real Owner of everything is the Supreme Allah Whom you also acknowledge as the Creator and the Lord of the whole universe. He has sent no authority and given no sanction to anyone for Godhead and worship, but has reserved all the powers, all the rights and all the authorities for Himself, and commanded, 'Serve and worship none but Me.'"

(5) It may also be inferred from this discourse that Prophet Joseph must have made full use of this "opportunity" of a decade for the propagation of the Message. Some people think that that was the only time when he extended the invitation to the Message. This is wrong for two reasons. First, it is absurd to imagine that a Prophet could have been neglectful of his Mission for a long period. Second, it cannot be imagined that the person who availed himself of the opportunity when two men approached him for the interpretation of their dreams, could ever have passed a decade of imprisonment without propagating the Message entrusted to him by his Lord.

35. Some commentators have interpreted it like this: "Satan made Prophet Joseph neglectful of his Lord, Allah, so he placed his confidence in a man rather than Allah and desired him to mention him to his lord, the king, for his release. So Allah punished him by letting him languish several years in the dungeon". In fact, such an interpretation is absolutely erroneous for as 'Allāmah Ibn Kathīr and some early commentators like Mujahid, Muhammad-bin-Ishāq and some others say, the pronoun "him" refers to that person who he thought would be released. Therefore

it will mean: "Satan made him (the would-be free man) so neglectful that he forgot to mention him (Prophet Joseph) to his lord (the king)." They also cite a tradition in support of their interpretation to this effect. The Holy Prophet said, "If Prophet Joseph had not said that which he said, he would not have remained in imprisonment for several years." But 'Allāmah Ibn Kathīr says, "This *Hadīth* cannot be accepted because all the ways in which it has been reported are weak. Moreover, two of the reporters, Sufyān-bin-Wakī'i and Ibrahīm-bin-Yazīd, are not trustworthy". Besides being weak on technical grounds, it is also against the dictates of common sense: if a wronged person adopted some measures for his release, he cannot be considered to be neglectful of God and guilty of the lack of trust in Allah.

36. Leaving the account of the events of the intervening years of imprisonment, the story has been resumed from the time when Prophet Joseph began to rise in worldly rank.

37. According to the Bible and the Talmud, the king was greatly disturbed troubled and confused in mind because of these dreams. So he proclaimed throughout the whole land of Egypt, and called upon all the wise men, and the sooth-sayers, and magicians of the land to interpret his dreams.

38. The Qur'ān has told in brief the essence of the request of the chief butler, but the Bible and the Talmud have given its details. According to these (and it stands to reason that it must have been so), he told the king of the life of Prophet Joseph in prison and how he interpreted their dreams rightly and prayed the king to give him leave to see Prophet Joseph in prison for that purpose.

39. The Arabic word Þöíøïãõ *(Siddīq)* is used for the one who is an embodiment of truth and righteousness. Thus it shows that the butler had been so deeply impressed with the pure character of Prophet Joseph that even years had failed to blot it from his heart. (For its fuller meaning please refer to E.N. 99 of *An-Nusā*).

40. That is, "They might understand your true worth and realize their own error in keeping you in prison without any just cause. And in a way I may get the opportunity of fulfilling the promise I made with you during my imprisonment."

41. The literal meaning of يَعْصِرُوْنَ is: "they will press." Here it has been used to denote that state of verdure which was going to prevail after the famine years because of rainfall and flood in the Nile. For, when the land will be watered, there will be abundance of seed to press oil, and abundance of fruit to press juice and abundance of fodder for cattle to press milk out of them. It should be noted that Prophet Joseph not only interpreted the king's dream but also told

them how to preserve and reserve grain during the first seven years of prosperity for the subsequent seven years of famine. Moreover he foretold the good news of prosperity after the seven years of famine, though there was no hint of this in the dream of the king.

42. There is no mention in the Bible and the Talmud of this most important part of the story that Prophet Joseph declined to quit the prison till his character was cleared. On the other hand, according to the Bible, "Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon; and he shaved himself, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh". And the Talmud depicts even a more degrading picture of the event. It says, "The king ordered that Joseph should be brought before him. But he commanded his officers to be careful not to frighten the lad, lest through fear he should be unable to interpret correctly. And the servant of the king brought Joseph forth from his dungeon, and shaved him and clothed him in new garments, and carried him before the king. The king was seated upon his throne, and the glare and glitter of the jewels which ornamented the throne dazzled and astonished the eyes of Joseph. Now the throne of the king was reached by seven steps, and it was the custom of Egypt for a prince or noble who held audience with the king, to ascend to the sixth step; but when an inferior or a private citizen of the land was called into his presence, the king descended to the third step and from there spoke with him." (The Talmud, H. Polano, pp. 87-88).

A comparison of the degrading picture in the Talmud with this self-respecting, grand, and noble picture depicted in the Qur'ān will convince every unbiased critic that the one in the Qur'ān is worthy of a Prophet of God. Moreover the picture in the Talmud is open to a grave objection: Had Prophet Joseph behaved like a frightened and cringing lad who was so dazzled by the glitter and glare of the jewels of the throne that he bowed to the ground, how was it that the king and the courtiers were so impressed by him that they declared, "..... the Hebrew has proved himself wise and skilful and through his wisdom shall our country be saved the pangs of want"? So much so that the king appointed him, without demur, as "governor" over the land, "second only to himself". All this shows that by that time he had proved his moral and mental superiority and had enhanced it by his refusal to quit the prison without proving his innocence. Otherwise, they would have never raised him to the highest rank in such a civilized and advanced country as Egypt.

43. He demanded an enquiry into the matter not because he himself had

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لَهٗ مُنْكِرُوْنَ ﴿٥٨﴾ وَلَمَّا جَهَّزَهُمْ بِجَهَازِهِمْ قَالَ ائْتُوْنِيْ بِاَخٍ لَّكُمْ مِّنْ اَبِيْكُمْ ۚ
اَلَا تَرَوْنَ اَنِّيْٓ اُوْفِي الْكَيْلَ وَاَنَا خَيْرُ الْمُنْزِلِيْنَ ﴿٥٩﴾ فَاِنْ لَّمْ تَاْتُوْنِيْ بِهٖ فَلَا
كَيْلَ لَكُمْ عِنْدِيْ وَلَا تَقْرَبُوْنِ ﴿٦٠﴾ قَالُوْا سَنُرَاوِدُ عَنْهُ اَبَاهُ وَاِنَّا لَفٰعِلُوْنَ ﴿٦١﴾
وَقَالَ لِفِتْيٰنِهِ اجْعَلُوْا بِضَاعَتَهُمْ فِيْ رِحَالِهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَعْرِفُوْنَهَآ اِذَا انْقَلَبُوْٓا
اِلٰٓى اَهْلِهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُوْنَ ﴿٦٢﴾ فَلَمَّا رَجَعُوْٓا اِلٰٓى اَبِيْهِمْ قَالُوْا يٰٓاَبَانَا مُنِعَ مِنَّا
الْكَيْلُ فَاَرْسِلْ مَعَنَآ اَخَانَا نَكْتَلْ وَاِنَّا لَهٗ لَحٰفِظُوْنَ ﴿٦٣﴾ قَالَ هَلْ اٰمَنُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ
اِلَّا كَمَآ اَمِنْتُكُمْ عَلٰٓى اَخِيْهِ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۭ فَاللّٰهُ خَيْرٌ حٰفِظًا ۠ وَّهُوَ اَرْحَمُ الرّٰحِمِيْنَ ﴿٦٤﴾
وَلَمَّا فَتَحُوْا مَتَاعَهُمْ وَجَدُوْا بِضَاعَتَهُمْ رُدَّتْ اِلَيْهِمْ ۭ قَالُوْا يٰٓاَبَانَا مَا نَبْغِيْ ۭ
هٰذِهٖ بِضَاعَتُنَا رُدَّتْ اِلَيْنَا ۚ وَنَمِيْرُ اَهْلَنَا وَنَحْفَظُ اَخَانَا وَنَزْدَادُ كَيْلَ
بَعِيْرٍ ۭ ذٰلِكَ كَيْلٌ يَّسِيْرٌ ﴿٦٥﴾ قَالَ لَنْ اُرْسِلَهٗ مَعَكُمْ حَتّٰى تُؤْتُوْنِ مَوْثِقًا مِّنَ
اللّٰهِ لَتَاْتُنَّنِيْ بِهٖٓ اِلَّآ اَنْ يُّحَاطَ بِكُمْ ۚ فَلَمَّآ اٰتَوْهُ مَوْثِقَهُمْ قَالَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰي
مَا نَقُوْلُ وَكِيْلٌ ﴿٦٦﴾ وَقَالَ يٰبَنِيَّ لَا تَدْخُلُوْا مِنْۢ بَابٍ وَّاحِدٍ وَّادْخُلُوْا
مِنْ اَبْوَابٍ مُّتَفَرِّقَةٍ ۭ وَمَآ اُغْنِيْ عَنْكُمْ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ۭ اِنِ الْحُكْمُ
اِلَّا لِلّٰهِ ۭ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ ۚ وَعَلَيْهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُتَوَكِّلُوْنَ ﴿٦٧﴾ وَلَمَّا دَخَلُوْا مِنْ حَيْثُ
اَمَرَهُمْ اَبُوْهُمْ ۭ مَا كَانَ يُغْنِيْ عَنْهُمْ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ اِلَّا حَاجَةً فِيْ نَفْسِ
يَعْقُوْبَ قَضٰىهَا ۭ وَاِنَّهٗ لَذُوْ عِلْمٍ لِّمَا عَلَّمْنٰهُ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٦٨﴾
وَلَمَّا دَخَلُوْا عَلٰي يُوْسُفَ اٰوٰٓى اِلَيْهِ اَخَاهُ قَالَ اِنِّيْٓ اَنَا اَخُوْكَ فَلَا تَبْتَىِٕسْ بِمَا
كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٦٩﴾ فَلَمَّا جَهَّزَهُمْ بِجَهَازِهِمْ جَعَلَ السِّقَايَةَ فِيْ رَحْلِ اَخِيْهِ
ثُمَّ اَذَّنَ مُؤَذِّنٌ اَيَّتُهَا الْعِيْرُ اِنَّكُمْ لَسٰرِقُوْنَ ﴿٧٠﴾ قَالُوْا وَاَقْبَلُوْا عَلَيْهِمْ مَّاذَا

Joseph's brothers came to Egypt and presented themselves before him.[50] He recognized them but they did not.[51] When he had them given the provisions due to them and they were leaving, he said, "Bring your step brother to me. Do you not see that I give full measure and am the best of hosts? But if you do not bring him to me you shall have no grain from me: nay you should not even come near me.")[52] They replied "We will try our very best to persuade his father to send him with us. This we will surely do." Joseph spoke aside to his slaves. "Place secretly in their saddle bags the goods they have bartered for corn." Joseph did this in the hope that when they would return home to their people, they would come to know of it; maybe they should come back again. 58-62

When they returned to their father, they said "Dear father now that corn has henceforth been denied to us, please send our brother with us so that we may fetch corn, and we take full responsibility for his safety." The father replied "Should I entrust him to you as I entrusted his brother to you before? Allah is the best Guardian and He is the most Merciful." When they opened their saddle-bags they found that their merchandise had also been returned to them. Seeing this, they cried with joy, "Dear father, look here! What more do we desire? Here is our merchandise returned to us. Therefore we will go back and bring provisions of food for our family; we will take good care of our brother and obtain an extra camel load of corn. Such an addition will be made easily." Their father replied, "I will never send him with you until you give me a pledge in Allah's name that you shall bring him back to me unless it be that you are rendered helpless by circumstances." When they had given him their solemn pledges he said, "Note it well that Allah is guarding and watching over this pledge of ours." Then he said "O my children, do not enter the capital of Egypt by one gate but go into it by different gates.[53] However know it well that I cannot ward off from you Allah's will for none other than He has any authority whatsoever. In Him I have put my trust and all who want to rely upon anyone should put their trust in Him alone." And it so happened that when they entered the city by different gates as their father had advised them the precautionary measure proved ineffective against Allah's will. Of course Jacob had done his best to avert the fear he had in his heart. Indeed he possessed knowledge because of what We 63-68

had taught him: but most people do not understand the reality of the matter.[54]

69 When they presented themselves before Joseph he called his brother alone to himself and said to him "I am the same brother of yours (who was lost). Now you need not grieve for what they have been doing."[55]

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any doubt of his innocence, but because he was perfectly confident of this: "My Lord has full knowledge of my innocence and of their cunning. But your lord should also make a thorough inquiry as to why I had been sent to prison, for I do not want to go before the public with any blemish or blot on my reputation. Therefore a public enquiry should be held to prove that I was an innocent victim of the injustice of the chiefs and nobles of the country, who had cast me into prison in order to cover up the guilt of their own ladies."

The words in which the demand was made clearly show that the king was already fully acquainted with the details of the incident that had happened at the banquet of the wife of Al-'Azīz. That is why a mere reference to it was enough.

Another note-worthy thing in this demand was that Prophet Joseph did not in any way hint at the part the wife of Al-'Azīz had played in the event. This is another proof of his noble character that he did not like to involve and entangle the wife of his benefactor in the matter, even though she had done him her worst.

44. As regards the way in which this enquiry was held, it is just possible that the king might have summoned the women to his presence or got their evidence through a trusted officer of his court.

45. The enquiry and the evidences must have helped to pave the way for Prophet Josep's rise in the land by concentrating the public attention on him, especially under the circumstances when the enquiry had been demanded by him. He had interpreted the dream of the king, when all the wise men, sooth-sayers and the magicians had failed. Then he had refused to quit prison even though the king himself had ordered that he should be brought before him, and, instead of this, demanded an enquiry of the matter which had been the cause of his imprisonment. Naturally this thing would have filled the people with wonder and they would have been looking eagerly for the result of the enquiry. Thus it can be imagined how the evidences and the result of the enquiry raised his prestige so high that the king and his courtiers declared that he was the only fit person to save the country from the coming calamity. It is no wonder, then, that Prophet Joseph proposed that all the resources of the land should be placed in his hands, and the king accepted this

proposal as soon as it was made. For, had it been merely the matter of the interpretation of a dream, the most he would have deserved was some reward and his release from prison. But he could not have said, "Place the resources of the land in my hands" and the king would not have readily acceded to his proposal and given him all the powers in the land, as is contained in vv. 55-56, and confirmed by the Bible and the Talmud.

46. Prophet Joseph might have said these words in the prison when he came to know the result of the enquiry. But some commentators, including great scholars like Ibn Taimiyyah and Ibn Kathīr, regard this sentence to be a continuation of the preceding speech of the wife of Al-'Azīz. They argue that this sentence has been placed contiguous to her preceding speech without any dividing word between them to indicate that her speech had ended at "he is absolutely in the right", and that the succeeding words were spoken by Prophet Joseph. They construe that if two speeches made by two different persons are placed in contiguity, they must be separated by means of some definite word, or there must be some definite clue to it. As neither of these two things exists in this case, it may rightly be construed that the words contained in v. 52 are the continuation of her preceding speech in v. 51. I, however, am surprised how a great scholar of Ibn Taimiyyah's insight has missed this point that the characteristic of a speech is in itself a clear and self-sufficient clue. Her confession in v. 51 fits in with her low character, but obviously the succeeding dignified and grand speech in v. 52 is too high for her. That fits in only with the noble character of Prophet Joseph. It is obvious that this must have been uttered by one, who was righteous, generous, humble and God-fearing. It is by itself a clear evidence that it could not have come out of the mouth of the one, who said, "Come here", and "What punishment does the one deserve, who shows evil intentions towards your wife?" and ".....if he will not yield to my bidding, he shall be cast into prison." On the other hand, such a pure speech fitted in with the one who said, "May Allah protect me! My Lord has shown so much kindness towards me. Should I, then, misbehave like this?" and " my Lord! I prefer imprisonment to that to which they invite me. If Thou dost not ward off their cunning devices from me, I might be caught in their snares." Therefore one cannot ascribe such a pure speech to the wife of Al-'Azīz unless there is a clear clue showing that by that time she had repented and believed and mended her ways, but there is no such clue. Thus it is clear that this speech must have been made by Prophet Joseph (Allah's peace be upon him).

47. It implied this: "We have such a high opinion of you that we can safely entrust you with the highest office of responsibility in the country."

47a. As this verse has given rise to some important questions, let us consider these one by one.

The first question is: "Was it an application made by Prophet Joseph to the king for some post ?" In the light of the preceding Explanatory Notes, it would have become obvious that it was neither an application nor a request made by an ambitious person who had been on the look-out for an opportune moment for its submission, and no sooner did the king express his approval of him than he presented his request before him. As a matter of fact, this was a sort of proposal, giving his assent to the great desire of the king and the courtiers that he should be appointed as governor over the land. For, according to the Talmud, "the Hebrew has proved himself wise and skilful," and " ....surely there can be none more discrete than myself to whom God has made known all these things." The king, his courtiers, his princes, officers, and men of rank, had by that time, come to know and recognize his true worth and had had experience of his moral superiority during the last decade of the vicissitudes of his life. He had proved that there was none equal to him in honesty, righteousness, forbearance, self-discipline, generosity, intelligence and understanding. They knew and believed that he was the only one who knew how to guard and utilize the resources of the land and could be safely entrusted with them. Therefore, as soon as he showed his willingness, they heartily put these in his trust. This is also confirmed by the Bible that the king had formed a very high opinion of Prophet Joseph. He said to his servants, "Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the spirit of God is?" Above all, he said to Prophet Joseph, "There is none so discreet and wise as thou art." (Gen. 41: 38-39). Accordingly, therefore, the king, of his own accord, set him over his house and land. (Gen. 41: 41).

Let us now take up the second question: "What was the nature of the powers that were entrusted to Prophet Joseph?" This is important because those who are not well versed in the Qur'ān have been misled by the words ãÆÇÔÎ ÖÑÇáÇ in this verse and by his subsequent work of the distribution of grain. They wrongly conclude from these that this post was like the present day posts of a "Treasury Officer" or a "Famine Commissioner" or a "Finance Minister" etc. etc. In fact, it was none of these, for, according to the Qur'ān and the Bible and the Talmud, Prophet Joseph had been invested with the full powers and privileges of a ruler. That is why he sat on the throne (*v.* 100) and they used the title of malik (king) for him. (*v.* 72). He himself was grateful to Allah for bestowing the kingdom on him. (*v.* 101). Above all, Allah Himself testifies to this fact: "Thus We gave power to Joseph in the land, so he had every right to take possession of any piece of it, if he so desired." (*v.* 56). As regards the Bible, it says, "And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, 'Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt.... and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt,' and called Joseph's name Zaphnath-paaneah (saviour of the world)."

(Gen. 41: 40-45). And according to the Talmud, when his brothers returned to their father, Prophet Jacob, from Egypt, they said about Prophet Joseph, "The king of Egypt is mighty potentate, over his people he is supreme; upon his word they go out and upon his word they come in; his word governs, and the voice of his master, Pharaoh, is not required."

Another pertinent question is: What was the object for which Prophet Joseph made a proposal for powers in the land? Did he offer his services for the enforcement of the laws of a non-Muslim state? Or did he intend to establish the cultural, moral and political systems of Islam by taking the powers of government in his own hands? As for its answer let us quote the comments on this verse (55) by 'Allāmah Zamakhsharī in his "Kashshāf". He says, "When Prophet Joseph proposed, 'Please place all the resources of the country under my trust', he meant to get an opportunity for enforcing the Commandments of Allah and for establishing truth and justice, and to gain that power which is essential for fulfilling the Mission for which the Messengers are sent. He did not make this demand for the love of kingdom or for worldly desires and ambitions. He did this because he knew full well that there was none else who could perform that work."

To be frank, the above question leads to very important and basic issues. These are: Was Joseph a Prophet of Allah or not ? If he was, does the Qur'ān put forward such a conception of a Prophet that he himself should (as they allege Prophet Joseph did) offer his services to a system of unbelief to carry on its work on un-Godly principles? Nay, it leads to a more delicate and important question : Was he a righteous person or not ? and, if he was, could it ever be expected that he would (according to their interpretation,) practically accept the theory that Sovereignty belongs to the king and not to Allah, whereas in the prison he preached, "Sovereignty belongs to none but Allah (*v.* 40) ?" for if, as they interpret, he submitted an application for service to the king, it meant that he did so against his own principles which he inculcated while in prison: "....which is better: various gods or the One Omnipotent Allah?" As the king of Egypt was one of the "gods" they had set up, so to offer services to carry on the work of the un-Islamic system under the existing un-Islamic law would have been tantamount to acknowledging the king as his Lord. Are they prepared to place Prophet Joseph in that position?

It is an irony that such Muslims as interpret this verse in this way, lower the character of Prophet Joseph. They have evinced the same mentality that the Jews had developed during the period of their degeneration. When they became morally and mentally depraved, they deliberately began to represent their Prophets and saints as people of low character like themselves in order to justify their own degraded characters and to make room for excuses for going still lower. Likewise, when the Muslims came under the sway of non-Muslim governments,

they wanted to serve under them, but the teachings of Islam and the patterns of their worthy forefathers stood in their way and they felt ashamed of this. So, in order to pacify their consciences, they sought refuge in this verse and by its misinterpretation thought that that great Prophet had made an application for a post to serve under a non-Muslim under un-Islamic laws. Whereas the Prophet's own life taught the lesson that even a single Muslim could all by himself bring about the Islamic revolution in a whole country by his pure Islamic character, his Faith, intelligence and wisdom and that a true Believer is able to conquer, by the proper use of his moral character, a whole country without any army, ammunition or material provisions.

48. This is to show that the whole land of Egypt was under his complete control, as if it belonged to him and he could claim any piece of it as his, and there was no piece of it that could be withheld from him. The early commentators have also made the same comment on this verse. For instance, 'Allāmah Ibn Jarīr Tabarī, on the authority of Ibn Zaid, says that this verse means: "We made Joseph the owner of all those things that were in Egypt, and in this part of the world he could do whatever he liked and wherever he liked for he had been given complete authority over this land. So much so that he could bring Pharaoh under his sway and become his master, if he so desired". He has quoted another thing from Mujāhid, who is one of the most learned commentators, to the effect that the king of Egypt had embraced Islam through Prophet Joseph.

49. This is a warning against a misunderstanding that one might have had from the preceding verse that kingdom and power were the real ultimate rewards for virtue and righteousness, for the best reward that a Believer should desire and strive for will be the one that Allah will bestow upon Believers in the Hereafter.

50. The events of several years after his coming into power have been left out for the sake of brevity, and the story has been resumed from the time when the brothers of Prophet Joseph came to Egypt, and paved the way for the eventual settlement of the Israelites in Egypt. It will, however, be worthwhile to have a glimpse of those events. During the first seven years of his reign, there was abundance of corn as he had predicted while interpreting the dream of the king. Accordingly he adopted all the measures he had put before the king concerning the years of plenty. Then the seven years of scarcity began and famine reigned not only over Egypt but all over the adjoining countries. Accordingly, Syria, Palestine, Trans-Jordan and the Northern part of Arabia began to suffer from the scarcity of food, but there was plenty of it in Egypt in spite of famine because of the wise steps Prophet Joseph had taken as a safeguard. That was why his brothers, like other neighbouring people, were forced by circumstances to go to Egypt and present themselves before him. It appears that Prophet Joseph had so arranged things that no foreigner was allowed to buy corn without a special permit

from him. Therefore when the brothers reached Egypt, they might have had to present themselves before him for obtaining the special permit for buying the fixed quantity allowed under the famine regulations.

51. It is no wonder that his brothers could not recognize Prophet Joseph, for, when they cast him into the well, he was merely a lad of seventeen and at the time of their meeting, he was a grown up man of thirty-eight years or so. Naturally, he must have changed in form during this long period. Besides, they could never have imagined that the brother whom they had cast into the well had become the ruler of Egypt

52. As the Qur'ān has omitted the details, someone might be at a loss to know as to how he brought Benjamin into the conversation with his brothers, and why he insisted on them to bring him with them, when he intended to keep his own identity secret from them. For, obviously these things might have led to the revelation of that secret. But a little thinking will show that he could have very easily and naturally led the conversation up to Benjamin without arousing their curiosity. As there were strict restrictions on the purchase of corn, everyone was permitted to buy only a fixed quantity of it. Most probably the ten brothers had applied for corn for their father and the eleventh brother as well. At this Prophet Joseph might have asked the reason why their father and brother had not personally come for it. Then he might have accepted the excuse for their father that he was old and blind but he would have expressed his doubts about their excuse for their brother that he was their step-brother and the father would not send him with them and so forth. Then he might have declared, "Well, this time we give you as much corn as you have asked for, but the next time you come here you should bring your step-brother with you; otherwise you will not get any corn at all because of this false statement of yours." Along with this threat, he tried to win them over by reminding them of his liberal and generous treatment with them, because he yearned for the sight of his younger brother, and was anxious to know how his family had fared during his absence.

The above is a simple and natural explanation of the matter. Thus this part of the story as given in the Bible (Gen. chapters 42 and 43) appears to be far-fetched, exaggerated, unreal and, therefore, un-reliable.

53. Prophet Jacob's great concern over this journey of his sons was due to the fact that his youngest son, Benjamin, was to accompany them. He was anxious about his safety because he had already had a sad experience of his son, Joseph. Naturally his heart must have been full of such misgivings that that might be his last meeting with his other beloved son. Though he had full trust in Allah and was patiently resigned to His will, he, as a human being, advised his sons to take

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تَفْقِدُوْنَ ﴿71﴾ قَالُوْا نَفْقِدُ صُوَاعَ الْمَلِكِ وَلِمَنْ جَآءَ بِهٖ حِمْلُ بَعِيْرٍ وَّاَنَا بِهٖ
زَعِيْمٌ ﴿72﴾ قَالُوْا تَاللّٰهِ لَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمْ مَّا جِئْنَا لِنُفْسِدَ فِي الْاَرْضِ وَمَا كُنَّا
سٰرِقِيْنَ ﴿73﴾ قَالُوْا فَمَا جَزَآؤُهٗٓ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ كٰذِبِيْنَ ﴿74﴾ قَالُوْا جَزَآؤُهٗ مَنْ وُّجِدَ
فِيْ رَحْلِهٖ فَهُوَ جَزَآؤُهٗ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿75﴾ فَبَدَاَ بِاَوْعِيَتِهِمْ قَبْلَ
وِعَآءِ اَخِيْهِ ثُمَّ اسْتَخْرَجَهَا مِنْ وِّعَآءِ اَخِيْهِ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ كِدْنَا لِيُوْسُفَ ؕ مَا كَانَ
لِيَاْخُذَ اَخَاهُ فِيْ دِيْنِ الْمَلِكِ اِلَّآ اَنْ يَّشَآءَ اللّٰهُ ؕ نَرْفَعُ دَرَجٰتٍ مَّنْ نَّشَآءُ ؕ وَفَوْقَ
كُلِّ ذِيْ عِلْمٍ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿76﴾ قَالُوْٓا اِنْ يَّسْرِقْ فَقَدْ سَرَقَ اَخٌ لَّهٗ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۚ فَاَسَرَّهَا
يُوْسُفُ فِيْ نَفْسِهٖ وَلَمْ يُبْدِهَا لَهُمْ ۚ قَالَ اَنْتُمْ شَرٌّ مَّكَانًا ۚ وَاللّٰهُ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا
تَصِفُوْنَ ﴿77﴾ قَالُوْا يٰٓاَيُّهَا الْعَزِيْزُ اِنَّ لَهٗٓ اَبًا شَيْخًا كَبِيْرًا فَخُذْ اَحَدَنَا مَكَانَهٗ ۚ
اِنَّا نَرٰىكَ مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿78﴾ قَالَ مَعَاذَ اللّٰهِ اَنْ نَّاْخُذَ اِلَّا مَنْ وَّجَدْنَا مَتَاعَنَا
عِنْدَهٗٓ ۙ اِنَّآ اِذًا لَّظٰلِمُوْنَ ﴿79﴾ فَلَمَّا اسْتَيْـَٔسُوْا مِنْهُ خَلَصُوْا نَجِيًّا ؕ قَالَ كَبِيْرُهُمْ
اَلَمْ تَعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّ اَبَاكُمْ قَدْ اَخَذَ عَلَيْكُمْ مَّوْثِقًا مِّنَ اللّٰهِ وَمِنْ قَبْلُ مَا
فَرَّطْتُّمْ فِيْ يُوْسُفَ ۚ فَلَنْ اَبْرَحَ الْاَرْضَ حَتّٰى يَاْذَنَ لِيْٓ اَبِيْٓ اَوْ يَحْكُمَ اللّٰهُ
لِيْ ۚ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْحٰكِمِيْنَ ﴿80﴾ اِرْجِعُوْٓا اِلٰٓى اَبِيْكُمْ فَقُوْلُوْا يٰٓاَبَانَآ اِنَّ ابْنَكَ سَرَقَ ۚ
وَمَا شَهِدْنَآ اِلَّا بِمَا عَلِمْنَا وَمَا كُنَّا لِلْغَيْبِ حٰفِظِيْنَ ﴿81﴾ وَسْـَٔلِ الْقَرْيَةَ الَّتِيْ
كُنَّا فِيْهَا وَالْعِيْرَ الَّتِيْٓ اَقْبَلْنَا فِيْهَا ؕ وَاِنَّا لَصٰدِقُوْنَ ﴿82﴾ قَالَ بَلْ سَوَّلَتْ لَكُمْ
اَنْفُسُكُمْ اَمْرًا ؕ فَصَبْرٌ جَمِيْلٌ ؕ عَسَى اللّٰهُ اَنْ يَّاْتِيَنِيْ بِهِمْ جَمِيْعًا ؕ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ
الْعَلِيْمُ الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿83﴾ وَتَوَلّٰى عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يٰٓاَسَفٰى عَلٰى يُوْسُفَ وَابْيَضَّتْ عَيْنٰهُ
مِنَ الْحُزْنِ فَهُوَ كَظِيْمٌ ﴿84﴾ قَالُوْا تَاللّٰهِ تَفْتَؤُا تَذْكُرُ يُوْسُفَ حَتّٰى تَكُوْنَ

While Joseph was arranging for the loading of the packs of his brothers, he put his cup in the pack of his own brother.[56] Afterwards a herald shouted, "Ho, caneleers ! you are thieves."[57] Turning back, they asked, "What is it that you are missing?" The royal servants replied, "We do not find the cup of the king." (And their headman added,) "The one, who would restore it, will be awarded a camel load of corn. I guarantee this." The brothers replied, "By God, you know it well that we have not come for spreading disorder in this country, and we are no thieves." At this, they said, "Very well, what shall be the punishment of the thief, if you are found to be liars?" They replied, "His punishment should be that he himself be made a bondsman, if the thing is found in his pack. At home we punish such offenders like this."[58] Then Joseph first began to search the packs of his step-brothers before searching the pack of his own brother. At last he took it out from the pack of his brother. Thus We supported Joseph with Our plan:[59] for it did not behove Joseph to seize his brother (by the king's law) except that Allah willed it so.[60] We raise high the ranks of those We will, and there is the One Whose knowledge is far greater than the knowledge of all others. 70-76

At this discovery the brothers remarked, "There is nothing strange in it that he has committed a theft, for his brother (Joseph) also committed a theft before this."[61] Hearing this, Joseph suppressed his feelings and did not reveal the secret to them, but said only this in an under tone, "What a bad people you are! you are accusing me (to my face) of the thing the truth of which Allah knows best." 77

Then they said, "O exalted sir,[62] he has a very aged father: therefore take one of us in his stead. We see that you are a very generous man." Joseph replied, "God forbid that we should seize any other than the one with whom we have found our property[63]: for, if we do this, we shall be unjust." 78-79

When they despaired of moving Joseph, they went to a corner and conferred together. The eldest of them said, "You know that your father has taken a solemn pledge from you in the name of Allah, and you also know that you had wronged Joseph before this. I will not, therefore, leave this land until my father gives me permission or Allah decides in my favour, for Allah is the best of all those who decide. Go 80-82

back to your father and say, 'Dear father, your son committed a theft. We did not see him stealing: we are simply stating what we have come to know and we could not guard against the unforeseen. You may enquire from the people of that town and from the caravan in which we travelled back home. We are surely telling the truth'."

Contd. from p. 419]

certain precautionary measures. In order to understand the significance of this precautionary measure of entering the capital by different gates, we should have a glimpse of the political conditions of that period. As the Israelites lived on the Eastern frontier of Egypt as independent clans, they were looked at with suspicion like all frontier people. Therefore Prophet Jacob feared that if they entered the city in a group, they might be taken for a gang of suspects, especially during that time of famine. Thus there was an apprehension of some severe action being taken against them as if they had come there for organized robbery. That was why he gave them this allowance that if under such adverse circumstances there was any trouble, he would not accuse them of breach of the pledge for the safety of Benjamin.

54. "Most people do not understand...." how Prophet Jacob was able to hold the balance between "trust in Allah" and adoption of precautionary measures. This was because Allah had favoured him with the real knowledge. That was why he took all those measures which were dictated by common sense, deep thinking and experience. He admonished them for their ill treatment with their brother Joseph so that they should not dare repeat it in the case of Benjamin. He took a solemn pledge from them in the name of Allah that they would take good care of the safety of their step-brother. Then he advised them to be on their guard against the dangerous political situation and to enter the capital by different gates so as not to give cause for alarm and suspicion. In short, as far as it was humanly possible, he took all the precautionary measures to avoid every possible risk. On the other hand, he always kept this thing in view (and expressed it) that no human precautionary measure could avert the enforcement of Allah's will, and that the real protection was Allah's protection: and that one should not rely on the precautionary measures but on the favour of Allah. Obviously only that person who has the real knowledge can keep such a balance in his words and deeds, who knows what kind of efforts are demanded of his human faculties bestowed by Allah for the solution of worldly problems, who also realizes that it is Allah alone Who has the power to make them a success or a failure. This is "what most people do not understand". Some of them rely merely on their efforts and measures and discard trust in Allah; while there are others who rely merely on "trust in Allah" and do not adopt any practical measure to solve their problem.

55. The whole story of their reunion after a separation of twenty years or so has been summed up in this brief sentence. In all probability Prophet Joseph might have told him the story of the vicissitudes that ultimately had led to his high rank, and Benjamin in his turn might have related the story of the ill-treatment of the heartless step-brothers. Then Prophet Joseph might have reassured him that he would not be allowed to go back with them but remain with him. It is also possible that the plan to retain him there, without disclosing the secret of Prophet Joseph's identity, would have then been thought out and decided upon.

56. In all probability, Prophet Joseph put the cup in his brother's pack with his knowledge and consent, as may be inferred from the preceding verse. Obviously, Prophet Joseph desired to free his brother from the oppression of the cruel step-brothers and he himself was reluctant to go back with them. But this could not be done directly and openly without disclosing his own identity, which was not then expedient under the circumstances. Therefore both the brothers might have thought out this plan, though this would have put the younger brother in an embarrassing situation for the time being because of his involvement in a case of theft. But they had adopted this plan because afterwards both the brothers could clear it easily by disclosing the real matter.

57. There is nothing in this verse nor in the succeeding verses to show that Prophet Joseph took his servants in his confidence in regard to this matter, and instructed them to bring a false accusation against the travellers. The simple explanation of the incident may be this. The cup might have been quietly and secretly put in the pack. Afterwards when the servants did not find it, they might have come to the inevitable conclusion that it must have been stolen by the travellers who were staying there.

58. It should be kept in mind that these people were the descendants of Prophet Abraham. Therefore they put forward his law regarding a thief, that is, the thief should be made the bondsman of the one whose goods he had stolen.

59. Now let us consider the question: How did Allah directly support Prophet Joseph with His plan? It is obvious that the plan of placing the cup in Benjamin's pack was thought out and executed by Joseph himself. And it is also obvious that the royal servants checked their packs as a matter of routine for such is the procedure that is generally followed on such occasions. There is nothing in this passage that might be called supernatural support by Allah except that the servants asked the brothers to prescribe the punishment for the thief, and they answered that he should be made a bondsman. The sentence that follows also confirms this interpretation.

60. Had Allah willed it, He would not have removed the flaw in the plan of Prophet Joseph. It was this: he could seize his brother according to his plan

only by the help of the king's law, but it was not worthy of a Prophet of Allah to apply that un Islamic law to his own personal case. For he had taken political power in his hands in order to establish gradually the Islamic law and not to enforce and keep the king's law in vogue. Had Allah willed it, He would have left no other course for His Prophet except to have resort to the un-Islamic law. But He did not will it so because He did not like to tarnish the fair name of His Prophet. Therefore he made the servants enquire from the brothers (an unusual thing) about the punishment of a thief and they stated the Law of Prophet Abraham. Thus not only was the flaw removed, but also no room was left for the brothers to raise any objection against this on the plea that they were not Egyptians, and therefore the law of the land could not be applied against them. As has already been pointed out, this was the support of Allah to which He has referred in the two subsequent verses as a token of His favour and a sign of the perfection of His knowledge.

The favour of Allah was that He saved Prophet Joseph from applying the un-Islamic law of the king of Egypt to his personal case, for he was liable to do so under the stress of human weakness. And there can be no greater favour for one than this that Allah Himself should arrange to guard his high moral position. It should, however, be noted that such a high rank is awarded only to those who prove themselves to be "righteous" in very hard trials.

By removing the flaw in his plan, Allah showed that His knowledge was far superior to the knowledge of those, whom (like Prophet Joseph) He had endowed with knowledge.

In this connection, there are some other points worthy of consideration and we will deal with them briefly:

(1) Generally the words ßáäáÇ äfÎ ìÝ ÐÎÇíá óäÇóßÇóã are translated like this: "Joseph could not seize his brother by the law of the king", or "Joseph was not authorized to seize his brother according to the law of the king." In other words, it means, "He could not do this, as there was no provision for it in the king's law." Whereas it means this: "He ought not to have seized him by the king's law, as it did not behove him to do so." This version is open to two objections. Firstly, this is against the Qur'anic usage of âá äÇß Çã which usually means, "It did not behove him", "It was not right for him" and "He ought not to have done this." For instance, this is what it means in the following verses

"Indeed, Islam alone is the Right Way in the sight of Allah." (III: 18). "Whosoever will adopt any other way than the way of Islam, it shall not be accepted...." (III: 85).

Secondly, such a version is meaningless, for there could have been no reason why he had not the power to seize him for theft according to the law of the king. Can there be any kingdom without having a law for taking action against a thief?

(2) As the Qur'an uses the word ßáãáÇ äÍ which connotes "the king's way of life" in addition to "the king's law", it helps to understand the meaning of the sentence under discussion. For it is obvious that the Prophet was sent to establish the way of Allah and not the un-Islamic way of the king. Though by that time he had only partially succeeded in this Mission, it was not proper and worthy of a Prophet to adopt "the way of the king" for his own personal case. Though there was no legal hindrance in his way to seize his brother according to the king's law, nevertheless, it was inappropriate for him, as a Prophet, to adopt the king's way which he had hitherto scrupulously avoided as far as his own person was concerned. Thus it is clear that its appropriate interpretation will be this: "It did not behove Joseph to seize his brother by the king's law."

(3) Besides this, by using the word دين الملك for the "law of the land", Allah has denoted the vast comprehension of the word äÍ (*dīn*) and this cuts at the root of the conception of *dīn* of those people who confine the scope of the Message of the Prophets to mere worship of One Allah and believe that it has nothing to do with the cultural, political, social, judicial, legal and other mundane affairs of life. Or, they opine that, if at all it has any concern with those matters, it is merely to give some instructions of an optional nature in regard to these, and leave it to the believers to adopt these or their own man-made laws, because, they think, there is no harm even in adopting the latter course. This erroneous conception of *dīn*, which has been in vogue among the Muslims for a long time, has been responsible for rendering them neglectful of making exertions for the establishment of the Islamic Way of life. As a result of this misconception of *dīn*, they became reconciled to un-Islamic ways of unbelief and ignorance. Nay, they considered this misconception of theirs to be the pattern set by Prophet Joseph and became willing helpers and servants of these un-Islamic systems. Whereas this verse categorically refutes this misconception by declaring that the "law of the land" is as much a part of the *dīn* of Allah as *Salāt*, Haj, Fast, and *Zakat* are. Therefore, the demand of the acceptance of äÍáÇ (*ad-Dīn*) made in v. 19 and v. 85 of *Āl-i-'Imrān*, that is, "Indeed, Islam alone is äÍáÇ the Right Way, in the sight of Allah" and "Whosoever will adopt any other way (äÍ), than the Way of Islam, it shall not be accepted", includes laws as well as Salāt and other obligatory duties prescribed by Allah. Therefore the exclusion of this part of *dīn* from any system would incur the displeasure of Allah.

duties prescribed by Allah. Therefore the exclusion of this part of *dīn* from any system would incur the displeasure of Allah.

(4) The above interpretation, however, is open to one objection. It does, at least, imply that an un-Islamic way was in vogue in Egypt at the time, when Prophet Joseph was, even according to the present commentator, the supreme head of the country. It is, therefore, a proof that that Prophet himself was enforcing the un-Islamic law of the king. What difference, then, could it have made, if Prophet Joseph had followed, in his personal case too, the system of law of the king which he himself was enforcing instead of the system of law of Prophet Abraham? Most certainly this would have made a vast difference because it would have compromised his position as a Prophet, because he was trying to establish the Islamic Way of life, which naturally could have been accomplished gradually in course of time, during which the king's law would have inevitably remained in vogue. The same thing happened in Arabia during the Mission of the Holy Prophet in Madinah, which took nine years to establish the Islamic System in its entirety. During that period, several un-Islamic laws remained in vogue. For instance, drinking, interest, the un-Islamic laws of inheritance and marriage and some wrong ways of trade, etc., had to continue for some time. Likewise the civil and penal codes of Islam took some time for their complete introduction. So there is nothing strange in this that the king's law continued to be in vogue during the first nine years or so of Prophet Joseph's reign. But the continuance of the un-Islamic law of the king during the period of transition is no argument to prove that Allah's Prophet was sent to follow the way of the king and not to establish the Way of Allah.

As regards the question why it was not worthy of Prophet Joseph to apply the king's law to his personal case, its best answer is again found in the practice of the Holy Prophet. During the interim period, when the laws of ignorance had not yet been replaced by Islamic Laws, other Muslims went on drinking wine and taking interest as before, but the Holy Prophet never practiced any of these things. Likewise some un-Islamic laws of marriage, such as taking in marriage of real sisters at one and the same time, were practised, but the Holy Prophet never practised any such thing. Thus it is clear, that there was a difference between leaving in vogue some un-Islamic laws during the period of the evolution of the Islamic Law and practising the same. Had Prophet Joseph applied the king's law to his own case, it would have meant that he had lent his seeming sanction to that law. But it is obvious that a Prophet, who is sent to eliminate the ways of ignorance, cannot follow these even under the temporary leave that is given to others.

their position and dissociated themselves from Benjamin, declaring that he was a thief like his brother Joseph. It is obvious that this was a false accusation the clever brothers had invented on the spot. But it is an instance of the malice these brothers bore to their two step-brothers, and is also the answer to the question why Prophet Joseph desired to keep his brother with him.

62. The use of the title ÒíÒÚáÇ ("The exalted one") with which they addressed Prophet Joseph has given rise to the confusion that he held the same office as the husband of Zelicha held before him. Then this misunderstanding let the commentators to the invention of further comments, such as, Al-'Azīz had died and Prophet Joseph was appointed in his place, and Zelicha was rejuvenated by a miracle and married to him by the king. They have not stopped at this: they have, somehow or other, discovered even the conversation that took place between Prophet Joseph and Zelicha in the first night of their marriage. In fact, all this is mere fiction, for, as has already been pointed out, the word عزيز was the Arabic translation or equivalent of some Egyptian title, and was not the designation of any particular office. It was merely a title used for the high ones in Egypt like "His Excellenay" or "Your Excellency", etc. As regards the said marriage, this fiction has been built on the story of Prophet Joseph's marriage in the Bible and the Talmud. According to these, he was married with Asenath, the daughter of Poti-pherah. As the name of the husband of Zelicha was Potiphar, the two names got confused together. Accordingly, when the story was handed down from the traditions of the Israelites from one commentator to the other, the name Potiphar got interchanged with Poti-pherah because the two were so like each other in sound. Consequently, the daughter in the story was replaced by "wife". Then Potiphar was "killed" in order to facilitate the marriage. Then the only remaining difficulty, that is, the disparity of their ages, was got over with the help of a miracle. She was rejuvenated so completely as to enable her to become the worthy wife of the "ruler" of the land.

63. The use of the words "with whom we have found our property" instead of the word "thief" is very significant. Prophet Joseph avoided the use of the word "thief" for his brother because he was not really a thief. This is called åíÑæÊ (*touriyah*), that is, to put a cover over a reality or "to hide a reality." Such a practice is allowed by the Muslim Law under certain conditions and with certain limitations. It may be practised not to gain any selfish end, but to ward off some evil or to protect and save an oppressed person from some oppressor, provided

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حَرَضًا اَوْ تَكُوْنَ مِنَ الْهٰلِكِيْنَ ﴿85﴾ قَالَ اِنَّمَآ اَشْكُوْا بَثِّيْ وَحُزْنِيْٓ اِلَى اللّٰهِ وَ
اَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللّٰهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿86﴾ يٰبَنِيَّ اذْهَبُوْا فَتَحَسَّسُوْا مِنْ يُّوْسُفَ وَ
اَخِيْهِ وَلَا تَايْـَٔسُوْا مِنْ رَّوْحِ اللّٰهِ ۭ اِنَّهٗ لَا يَايْـَٔسُ مِنْ رَّوْحِ اللّٰهِ اِلَّا الْقَوْمُ
الْكٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿87﴾ فَلَمَّا دَخَلُوْا عَلَيْهِ قَالُوْا يٰٓاَيُّهَا الْعَزِيْزُ مَسَّنَا وَاَهْلَنَا الضُّرُّ وَ
جِئْنَا بِبِضَاعَةٍ مُّزْجٰىةٍ فَاَوْفِ لَنَا الْكَيْلَ وَتَصَدَّقْ عَلَيْنَا ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَجْزِي
الْمُتَصَدِّقِيْنَ ﴿88﴾ قَالَ هَلْ عَلِمْتُمْ مَّا فَعَلْتُمْ بِيُوْسُفَ وَاَخِيْهِ اِذْ اَنْتُمْ جٰهِلُوْنَ ﴿89﴾
قَالُوْٓا ءَاِنَّكَ لَاَنْتَ يُوْسُفُ ۭ قَالَ اَنَا يُوْسُفُ وَهٰذَآ اَخِيْ ۡ قَدْ مَنَّ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْنَا ۭ
اِنَّهٗ مَنْ يَّتَّقِ وَيَصْبِرْ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يُضِيْعُ اَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿90﴾ قَالُوْا تَاللّٰهِ لَقَدْ
اٰثَرَكَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْنَا وَاِنْ كُنَّا لَخٰطِـِٕيْنَ ﴿91﴾ قَالَ لَا تَثْرِيْبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْيَوْمَ ۭ يَغْفِرُ
اللّٰهُ لَكُمْ ۡ وَهُوَ اَرْحَمُ الرّٰحِمِيْنَ ﴿92﴾ اِذْهَبُوْا بِقَمِيْصِيْ هٰذَا فَاَلْقُوْهُ عَلٰي وَجْهِ
اَبِيْ يَاْتِ بَصِيْرًا ۚ وَاْتُوْنِيْ بِاَهْلِكُمْ اَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿93﴾ وَلَمَّا فَصَلَتِ الْعِيْرُ قَالَ
اَبُوْهُمْ اِنِّيْ لَاَجِدُ رِيْحَ يُوْسُفَ لَوْلَآ اَنْ تُفَنِّدُوْنِ ﴿94﴾ قَالُوْا تَاللّٰهِ اِنَّكَ لَفِيْ
ضَلٰلِكَ الْقَدِيْمِ ﴿95﴾ فَلَمَّآ اَنْ جَاۗءَ الْبَشِيْرُ اَلْقٰىهُ عَلٰي وَجْهِهٖ فَارْتَدَّ بَصِيْرًا ۚ
قَالَ اَلَمْ اَقُلْ لَّكُمْ ۚ اِنِّيْٓ اَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللّٰهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿96﴾ قَالُوْا يٰٓاَبَانَا اسْتَغْفِرْ
لَنَا ذُنُوْبَنَآ اِنَّا كُنَّا خٰطِـِٕيْنَ ﴿97﴾ قَالَ سَوْفَ اَسْتَغْفِرُ لَكُمْ رَبِّيْ ۭ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ الْغَفُوْرُ
الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿98﴾ فَلَمَّا دَخَلُوْا عَلٰي يُوْسُفَ اٰوٰٓى اِلَيْهِ اَبَوَيْهِ وَقَالَ ادْخُلُوْا مِصْرَ
اِنْ شَاۗءَ اللّٰهُ اٰمِنِيْنَ ﴿99﴾ وَرَفَعَ اَبَوَيْهِ عَلَي الْعَرْشِ وَخَرُّوْا لَهٗ سُجَّدًا ۚ وَ
قَالَ يٰٓاَبَتِ هٰذَا تَاْوِيْلُ رُءْيَايَ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۡ قَدْ جَعَلَهَا رَبِّيْ حَقًّا ۭ وَقَدْ اَحْسَنَ
بِيْٓ اِذْ اَخْرَجَنِيْ مِنَ السِّجْنِ وَجَاۗءَ بِكُمْ مِّنَ الْبَدْوِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ اَنْ نَّزَغَ

Hearing this story, the father said, "Your souls have made another thing easy for you.[64] Well, I will bear this, too, patiently with a good grace. Maybe Allah will bring them all to me, for He knows everything and all His works are based on wisdom." Then he turned his face from them and cried, "Alas for Joseph!"—He was sorely oppressed with suppressed sorrow and his eyes had become white with grief.— The sons exclaimed, 'By Allah ! You have not ceased to think of Joseph and now things have come to such a pass that you will ruin your health or kill yourself with grief for him." He replied, "I complain to Allah alone of my sorrow and grief. And I know from Allah what you do not know. My children, go and make a search for Joseph and his brother. Don't despair of Allah's mercy, for it is the unbelievers alone who despair of His mercy." 83-87

When they went back to Egypt and presented themselves before Joseph, they humbly said, "Exalted sir ! we and our family are in great distress: though we have been able to bring only goods of scant worth for barter, we request you to give us full measure of grain, and be charitable to us:[65] for Allah rewards richly those who are charitable." At this Joseph, who could contain himself no longer, exclaimed, "Do you know what you did with Joseph and his brother, when you were ignorant?" This took them by surprise and they cried, "Why ! are you indeed Joseph"? He replied, "Yes, I am Joseph, and here is my brother. Allah has been very gracious to us. The fact is that Allah does not let go waste the recompense of such righteous people as practise piety and fortitude." They said, "By God ! Allah has exalted you above us, and we have indeed been sinful." He replied, "Today no penalty shall be inflicted on you. May Allah forgive you ! He is the most Merciful of all. Go, take this shirt of mine, and cast this over the face of my father and he shall recover his sight. Then bring all the members of your family to me." 88-93

When this caravan departed (from Egypt), their father said (in Cana'ān), "I am surely perceiving the smell[66] of Joseph, though you might think me to be in the dotage." The people of the house answered, "By God, you are still suffering from your old illusion."[67] 94-95

But when the bearer of the good tidings arrived there, he cast Joseph's shirt on Jacob's face, and his sight came back to him. Then he

said, "Didn't I say to you that I know from Allah what you do not know?" They exclaimed all together" Dear father, pray for the pardon of our sins, for we have indeed been sinful." He replied, "I will implore my Lord to forgive you, for He is Forgiving and Merciful."

99 And when they came to Joseph,[68] he seated his parents along with himself and said (to the people of his family), "Now proceed to the city. God willing, you will live in peace."

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that no other course might have been left except saying something against the truth or of having a resort to a deceitful device. It is obvious that in such a case, a righteous person will not tell a blunt lie or resort to an open deceit. Instead, he will say something or do something that might not be strictly truthful or strictly right, yet at the same time is not a blunt lie, so that he might hide the reality to ward off the evil. Such a practice is lawful, legally and morally, provided that it is not practised to gain some personal or selfish ends but to ward off a greater evil with a lesser evil. Accordingly, Prophet Joseph scrupulously fulfilled all the conditions in this case. He placed the cup in the pack of his brother with his consent, but he did not ask his servants to make a search of his pack and accuse him of theft. After this, when the servants brought the brothers before him as suspects, he quietly rose from his seat and began to make a search of their packs. Then afterwards, when the brothers requested that one of them should be taken instead of Benjamin, he answered them back in their own words that he would detain only that person in whose possession the cup was found and none else.

Instances of such a practice during his campaigns are found in the life history of the Holy Prophet. And this cannot be regarded as morally objectionable according to any moral or legal standard.

64. That is, "You readily believed that my son, whom I know to be of a noble character, had committed the theft of a cup: you have behaved in his case just as you behaved in the case of his elder brother. You made away with him and then pretended, without any pangs of conscience, that a wolf had devoured him and now, with the same ease, you tell me that the other brother has committed a theft".

65. That is, "It will be charitable of you if you give us that much grain as we require to fulfil our needs, because the goods we have brought for its barter are of less value than of the grain we require."

66. This is an instance of the extraordinary powers the Prophets possess. Prophet Jacob perceive in Çana'ān the smell of Prophet Joseph's shirt from such a

distant place as Egypt as soon as the caravan started on the journey. At the same time it also shows, by contrast, that these powers of the Prophets are not inherent or personal characteristics but are bestowed on them by Allah as and when He wills. That is why Prophet Jacob could not perceive the smell of the clothes of Prophet Joseph as long as Allah did not will it, when he had been living in Egypt.

In this connection, it should also be noted that in contrast to the Qur'ān which represents Prophet Jacob as a great Prophet who was able to perceive the smell of Prophet Joseph from such a long distance, the Bible represents him as an ordinary uncultured father. According to *Genesis* 45: 26-27, when they told him, saying, "Joseph is yet alive and he is governor over all the land of Egypt—Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not .... and only when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived."

67. This remark shows that no member of his family except Prophet Joseph appreciated the true worth of Prophet Jacob. He himself was aware of the low state of their mental and moral condition. And it is one of the ironies of fate that the majority of the great personalities who made history got very little appreciation at home.

68. It is worthwhile to take notice of the total number of Prophet Jacob's family members that migrated to Egypt with him, for it is closely connected with the problem that is raised concerning the total number of the Israelites who emigrated from there some five hundred years after this. According to the Bible, the total number of the family members was 70, including Prophet Joseph and his two sons, and excluding those daughters-in-law who did not belong to the family of Prophet Jacob. But according to the census figures given in *Numbers*, their number was about two million when they were counted in the wilderness of Sinai in the second year, "after they were come out of the land of Egypt". The problem is this: how is it possible that "these three score and ten souls of his house" had multiplied into two million souls during five hundred years or so?

It is obvious that no family can multiply to such a large number in five hundred years merely by the generative process. Thus the only other way in which their number could have been increased was proselytism. And there are sound reasons to believe that this must have been so. The Israelites were the descendants of Prophets. They had migrated to Egypt because of the power Prophet Joseph enjoyed there. And we have seen that he made full use of every opportunity he got for carrying out the work of the Mission of Prophethood. Therefore it may reasonably be expected that the Israelites would have done their very best to convert the Egyptians to their faith of Islam during the five centuries of their

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الشَّيْطٰنُ بَيْنِيْ وَبَيْنَ اِخْوَتِيْ ؕ اِنَّ رَبِّيْ لَطِيْفٌ لِّمَا يَشَآءُ ؕ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ الْعَلِيْمُ
الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿١٠٠﴾ رَبِّ قَدْ اٰتَيْتَنِيْ مِنَ الْمُلْكِ وَعَلَّمْتَنِيْ مِنْ تَاْوِيْلِ الْاَحَادِيْثِ ۚ
فَاطِرَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۚ اَنْتَ وَلِيّٖ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْاٰخِرَةِ ۚ تَوَفَّنِيْ مُسْلِمًا وَّ
اَلْحِقْنِيْ بِالصّٰلِحِيْنَ ﴿١٠١﴾ ذٰلِكَ مِنْ اَنْۢبَآءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوْحِيْهِ اِلَيْكَ ۚ وَمَا كُنْتَ
لَدَيْهِمْ اِذْ اَجْمَعُوْٓا اَمْرَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَمْكُرُوْنَ ﴿١٠٢﴾ وَمَآ اَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ وَلَوْ حَرَصْتَ
بِمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٠٣﴾ وَمَا تَسْـَٔلُهُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ اَجْرٍ ؕ اِنْ هُوَ اِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِّلْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿١٠٤﴾ وَكَاَيِّنْ
مِّنْ اٰيَةٍ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ يَمُرُّوْنَ عَلَيْهَا وَهُمْ عَنْهَا مُعْرِضُوْنَ ﴿١٠٥﴾ وَمَا
يُؤْمِنُ اَكْثَرُهُمْ بِاللّٰهِ اِلَّا وَهُمْ مُّشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿١٠٦﴾ اَفَاَمِنُوْٓا اَنْ تَاْتِيَهُمْ غَاشِيَةٌ مِّنْ
عَذَابِ اللّٰهِ اَوْ تَاْتِيَهُمُ السَّاعَةُ بَغْتَةً وَّهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿١٠٧﴾ قُلْ هٰذِهٖ سَبِيْلِيْٓ
اَدْعُوْٓا اِلَى اللّٰهِ ۣ عَلٰى بَصِيْرَةٍ اَنَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِيْ ؕ وَسُبْحٰنَ اللّٰهِ وَمَآ اَنَا مِنَ
الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ ﴿١٠٨﴾ وَمَآ اَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ اِلَّا رِجَالًا نُّوْحِيْٓ اِلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ اَهْلِ
الْقُرٰى ؕ اَفَلَمْ يَسِيْرُوْا فِي الْاَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوْا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ
قَبْلِهِمْ ؕ وَلَدَارُ الْاٰخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ لِّلَّذِيْنَ اتَّقَوْا ؕ اَفَلَا تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿١٠٩﴾ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا
اسْتَيْـَٔسَ الرُّسُلُ وَظَنُّوْٓا اَنَّهُمْ قَدْ كُذِبُوْا جَآءَهُمْ نَصْرُنَا ۙ فَنُجِّيَ مَنْ
نَّشَآءُ ؕ وَلَا يُرَدُّ بَاْسُنَا عَنِ الْقَوْمِ الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿١١٠﴾ لَقَدْ كَانَ فِيْ قَصَصِهِمْ عِبْرَةٌ
لِّاُولِي الْاَلْبَابِ ؕ مَا كَانَ حَدِيْثًا يُّفْتَرٰى وَلٰكِنْ تَصْدِيْقَ الَّذِيْ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَ
تَفْصِيْلَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَّهُدًى وَّرَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يُّؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿١١١﴾

(After entering the town,) he raised his parents to the throne,[69] and seated them along with himself and all of them spontaneously bowed down before him.[70] Joseph said, "Dear father, This is the interpretation of the dream I dreamt long before: my Lord has now turned that into reality. It is His grace that He took me out of the prison and brought you to me from the desert after Satan had stirred up strife between me and my brothers. It is a fact that my Lord fulfils His designs in mysterious ways, for He is All-Knowing, All-Wise. Lord, Thou hast given me kingdom and taught me how to probe into problems. Creator of the earth and the heavens ! Thou art my Guardian in this world and the Hereafter: Let me die as a Muslim, and join me with the righteous in the end."[71] 100-101

O Muhammad! this story which We are revealing to you is of those things that were not known to you: for you were not with the brothers when they had conspired together a plot against Joseph. Yet most of the people are not going to believe it, howsoever eager[72] you may be, and may even demand no recompense for this Message: it is simply an instruction for all the people of the world.[73] 102-104

And[74] many are the Signs in the heavens and the earth; yet they pass by and pay no heed to them.[75] So, most of them who believe in Allah join other deities also with Him.[76] Do they feel secure that Allah's scourge shall not overwhelm them, or that the hour of Doom will not come upon them suddenly when they are unaware?[77] 105-107

Tell them plainly, "This is my way. I invite you to Allah. I myself see my Way in full light and my followers see it, too. And Allah is free from any defect,[78] and I have nothing to do with those who practice *shirk*". 108

O Muhammad ! all the Messengers, whom We sent before you, were also human beings, and lived in the same habitations, and to them We sent Our Revelations. Have these people, then, not travelled in the land and seen what has been the end of those who have passed away before them ? Surely, the abode of the Hereafter is far better for those who (believed in the Messengers and) adopted the attitude of piety. What! will you not understand it even now ?[79] (It also happened like this with the former Messengers: they went on conveying the Message for a long time but the people did not listen to them,) till the 109-110

Messengers despaired of the people and the people also thought that a falsehood had been presented to them: then suddenly Our succour reached the Messengers. And when such an occasion comes, We deliver whomsoever We will, but Our scourge cannot be averted from the criminals.

111 There is an object lesson in these stories of the former people for those, who possess common sense. That thing which is being sent down in the Qur'ān is not a forgery, but (is absolutely genuine and) it confirms the previous Scriptures, gives details[80] of everything, and is a guidance and blessing for the Believers.

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power in Egypt. As a result of this the Egyptian converts to Islam would not only have changed their religion but also their culture so as to make them look quite different from the other Egyptians and look like the Israelites. Naturally the non-Muslim Egyptians would have declared them to be foreigners just as the Hindus treat the Indian Muslims of today. By and by they themselves would have accepted this position and become members of the Israelite nationality. Afterwards, when the Egyptian nationalists began to persecute the alien Israelites, the Muslim Egyptians were also made a target of their tyranny. So when the Israelites migrated from Egypt, they, too, left their country along with them and began to be counted among them.

The above mentioned explanation is confirmed by the Bible also. For instance, it says that when they left Egypt, "the children of Israel journeyed from Remases to Succoth....and a mixed multitude went up also with them...." (*Exodus* 12: 37-38) and "the mix multitude that was among them fell a lusting". (*Numbers* 11: 4). Then by and by these non-Israelite converts to Islam began to be called "the stranger". "One ordinance *shall be both* for you of the congregation, and also for the stranger that sojourneth *with you*, an ordinance for ever in your generations: as *ye are*, so shall the stranger be before the Lord. One law and the one manner shall be for you, and for the stranger that sojourneth with you." (NUMBERS 15: 15-16). "And I charged your judges at that time, saying, Hear *the causes* between your brethren, and judge righteously between every man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him." (DEUT. 1: 16).

Now it is not an easy thing to find out the exact term which was applied in the original Scriptures to the Egyptian converts to Islam, and which was afterwards changed into the "stranger" by the translators.

69. According to the Talmud, "When Joseph learned that his father was upon the way, he gathered together his friends and officers, and soldiers of the realm, attired in rich garments,....and formed a great company to meet Prophet Jacob on the way and escort him to Egypt. Music and gladness filled the land, and all the people, the women and the children, assembled on the house-tops to view the magnificent display." (H. Polano, p. 111).

70. The interpretation of this verse has given rise to some serious misunderstandings, which are against the very fundamentals of the Divine Guidance. So much so that some people have gone to the extreme of making it lawful to prostrate before kings and saints as a mark of respect. Others more strict on this point have explained it away, saying, "In the former Divine Laws, it was unlawful only to prostrate in worship before others than Allah, though it was permissible to prostrate before others if it was done without the intention of worship, but now in the Divine Law given to Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) it has been made absolutely unlawful".

Such misunderstandings as these have resulted from taking the words وخرّوا له سجّدا in this verse to mean "to perform *sajadah*" in the technical sense in which it is now used in the Islamic code, that is, "lying flat in such a way that the hands, the knees and the forehead touch the ground," whereas the word سجّدا (*sujjadan*) has been used here in its literal meaning of *sajūd* "to bow down". The parents and brothers of Prophet Joseph bowed down before him in accordance with the ancient custom among the people of the age, (and the custom is still in vogue among some people), who used to bow down before others to show their gratitude, or welcome them, or merely to salute them by placing their hand on the breast. There are many instances of this in the Bible. "....and when he (Abraham) saw them (the three men) coming towards him, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself towards the ground." (Please refer to Arabic translation: Gen. 18: 32). Further on it says that when the children of Heth gave a field and a cave as a burying place for Sarah, Prophet Abraham was so grateful to them that "he stood up and bowed himself to the people of the land, even to the children of Heth," (Gen. 23: 7) and "Abraham bowed down himself before the people of the land." (Gen. 23: 12). In both cases the words 'bowed down' have been translated into سجد (*Sajada*).

These and other like instances in the Bible are a conclusive proof of the fact that in this verse (100), the Qur'ān has not used the word سجدہ in its technical Islamic sense but in its literal sense.

Besides, those commentators are absolutely wrong who suppose that in the former laws, *sajadah* in the present Islamic sense was allowed as a mark of respect

laws. For instance; during the Babylonian captivity of the Children of Israel, king Ahasuerus promoted Haman above all the princes and commanded all his servants to bow and reverence him, but Mordecai, who was a holy and righteous man among the Jews, bowed not, nor did him reverence. (*Esther* 3: 1-2). The Talmud has elaborated this point in a way that is worth reading:

The servants of the king said to Mordecai: "Why wilt thou refuse to bow before Haman, transgressing thus the wishes of the king? Do we not bow before him?" "Yea are foolish," answered Mordecai, "aye, wanting in reason. Listen to me. Shall a mortal, who must return to dust be glorified? Shall I bow down before one born of woman, whose days are short? When he is small he cries and weeps as a child; when he grows older sorrow and sighing are his portion; his days are full of wrath and anger, and at the end he returns to dust. Shall I bow to one like to him? No. I prostrate myself before the Eternal God, who lives for ever. To Him the great Creator and Ruler of the Universe, and to no other will I bow." (The Talmud Selections by H. Polano, p. 172).

This speech which was made by a Believer from among the Israelites a thousand years before the Revelation of the Qur'ān, is conclusive on the point. Thus there is absolutely no room for the performance of "sajadah" before any other than Allah.

71. The few sentences that were uttered by Prophet Joseph (Allah's peace be upon him) at the happiest occasion of his life help depict the most graceful pattern of the virtues of a true Believer. There is the man from the desert, whom his own brothers had, out of jealousy, attempted to kill, now sitting on the throne after passing through many vicissitudes of life. All the members of his family have been forced by famine to come before him for help. The same jealous brothers, who had made an attempt on his life, are now standing before him with down-cast heads. Had there been a "successful man of the world" in his place, he would have used this opportunity for boasting of his greatness and bragging of his successes, and giving vent to his grievances and hurling malicious taunts at his defeated enemies. In utter contrast to this, the true man of God behaves in a quite different way. Instead of boasting and bragging of his own greatness, he is grateful to his God Who had shown grace to him by raising him to such a high position of power, and for arranging his meeting with his people after such a long period of separation. Instead of giving vent to his grievances against his brothers, making taunts at them for their ill-treatment, he does not make even a mention of such things but puts up a defense for them, saying that it was all due to Satan, who had stirred up strife between them: nay, he even puts it forward as a blessing in disguise, being one of the mysterious ways of Allah by which He had fulfilled His design of raising him to the throne. After saying these things in a few concise sentences, he at once turns to his Lord in gratitude for bestowing on him kingdom

and wisdom, instead of letting him rot in the prison, and prays to Him to keep him as His faithful and obedient servant as long as he was alive, and to join him with the righteous people after his death. What a pure and high pattern of character!

It is strange that this speech of Prophet Joseph has neither found a place in the Bible nor in the Talmud, though these books are full of irrelevant and unimportant details of this story and others. It is an irony that these Books are void of those things that teach moral values and throw light on the real characters and the Mission of the Prophets.

Now that this story has come to an end, the readers are again reminded that this story of Prophet Joseph as given in the Qur'ān is not a copy of the story given in the Bible and the Talmud for there are striking differences between them. A comparative study of these Books will show that the story in the Qur'ān differs from that given in the other two Books in several very important parts. The Qur'ān contains additional facts in some cases and omits certain facts in other cases or even refutes some parts as contained in the Bible and the Talmud. Therefore there is absolutely no room for anyone to allege that Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) related this story merely in the form he heard it from the Israelites.

72. In order to grasp the full significance of the underlying admonition implied in it, we must keep in view the background of the Revelation of this story given in the introduction to this Sūrah. The Quraish themselves had invited the Holy Prophet to a meeting that had been arranged for putting him to a test which was to show whether he was a true Prophet or not. When he arrived there, they put him this question without any previous notice or intimation: why did the Israelites go to Egypt? In answer to this, the Holy Prophet recited this Sūrah then and there. As they themselves knew that this was an abrupt question and there had been no preparation for its answer beforehand, it was expected that they would believe in his Prophethood: But they were so obdurate that they did not believe in him even then. As Allah was aware of their intentions, he informed His Messenger beforehand, as if to say, "Though you have come out successful in the test, to which they themselves put you, yet most of them are not going to believe it because they are not sincere in their quest for the truth. That is why they will not believe even now when the revelation of this Sūrah has proved conclusively that the Qur'ān is not being forged by you but is being sent down by Allah Himself. As their real aim and intention is to reject your Message anyhow, they will now invent another excuse for their denial."

This is not meant to remove any misunderstanding the Holy Prophet might have cherished, but is merely an indirect warning to the questioners that Allah knew their intentions well. This was meant to warn them like this: "O obdurate

people ! this Sūrah has been placed before you to serve as a mirror for you. You demanded a proof from Our Messenger that he was not forging the Qur'ān: had you been reasonable and sincere people, you would have accepted the truth that has been established according to your own test, but you are obdurate people and are still denying it."

73. This is another admonition more subtle than the one given above. Though this, too, has been addressed to the Holy Prophet, it is meant for the unbelievers, as if to say, "O people ! consider your attitude towards the Message from another point of view. Had you noticed anything in the Mission and the Message of Our Prophet that might have smelt of any self-interest whatever, you would have been justified in rejecting it as the work of a selfish person. But you yourselves have experienced it that he has absolutely no self-interest in his work and demands no recompense for the Message, which is nothing but instruction for all the people of the world. Therefore you should listen to it and consider it without prejudice and make your decisions about it on merit and merit alone."

74. Now that the story of Prophet Joseph (Allah's peace be upon him) has come to an end, the Qur'ān has made use of the opportunity for conveying its basic Message, for it does not tell stories merely for the sake of story-telling. As they themselves had invited the Prophet and were attentively listening to the story, the essence of the Message was presented in a few concise sentences (*vv.* 105-111).

75. This is to arouse people from their apathy towards the Signs of Allah that lie scattered all over the earth and the heavens and to urge them to make a search for the Reality by making right observations. As each and everything is not merely a "thing" but also a Sign which points to the Reality, a seeker after it should look at these with a look different from that of animals. This is because even an animal sees a tree, a mountain and water and takes it as a mere tree, a mountain or water, and with the help of his senses makes use of these according to his needs. But Allah has endowed man with a mind that is able to consider things in other than their physical and material aspects so that he may think deeply and make a search for the Reality by means of these Signs of Allah. The reason why people fail to discover the Reality and go astray is that they do not consider things as "Signs" and pay no heed to this aspect. Had they not deliberately shut their minds against the Message of the Prophets, it would not have been difficult for them at all to understand it and get guidance from it.

76. They associate other deities with Allah because they do not pay heed to His Signs, which serve as pointers to the Right Way. So they go astray from it and get lost in thorny bushes. Nevertheless, many of them do not lose sight of the Reality entirely, and do not disbelieve in Allah as their Creator and Sustainer, but

they get involved in *shirk*. That is, they do not deny the existence of God, but they believe that there are other deities who are also partners in His Being, His Attributes, His Powers, and His Rights. They should never have been involved in *shirk*, had they considered these Signs in the heavens and the earth from this point of view, for in that case they would have discovered everywhere, in each and every one of them, the proofs of the Oneness of Allah.

77. This question has been posed to rouse the people from their care-free attitude towards life produced by temporary security from dangers, and by a feeling that there is a long life to enjoy: so the problems can be postponed safely to a distant "future". This is obviously a wrong attitude, for no man has any guarantee that he will live up to a certain age: for no one knows when, where and how one would die. Therefore the questions meant to ask, "Does not your daily experience tell you that you knew nothing even a minute beforehand what your future was hiding for you ? Therefore, wisdom demands that you should make preparations for it now, and consider seriously whether the path you are treading is the right path. Have you any real proof to show that it is right? Do you find any sound argument in the heavens and the earth to support your decision? Did the people who trod such a path before you reach their destinations safely and securely? Finally, do the results of following such a path, which are appearing in your own time and culture, confirm that you are treading the right path?"

78. That is "Allah is absolutely free from such things that are ascribed to Him: He is free from the weaknesses and shortcomings which every believer in *shirk* ascribes to Him; He is free from all defects, evils and errors that must necessarily be ascribed to Him as a logical result of the conception of God held by *mushriks*."

79. A very comprehensive subject has been condensed here into a couple of sentences, which may be expanded like this: "O Muhammad ! these people do not listen to you because it is not an easy thing for them to believe you to be a Messenger of Allah just because you are a mere human being who was born in their own city among themselves and brought up like other people. But there is nothing strange in this, for this is not the first instance of its kind. All the Prophets, whom We sent before you, were also human beings and lived in the same habitations to which they were sent. It never happened that a stranger came to a town and declared, "I have been sent as a Messenger to you. On the other hand, all the Prophets—Jesus, Moses, Abraham and Noah (Allah's peace be upon them all)—who were raised for the reform of the people, were human beings who were born and brought up in their own habitations". Then it addresses the disbelievers directly, as if to say, "Now it is for you to judge and decide whether you should accept the Messenger or reject him on such flimsy grounds as these. You have travelled abroad and seen the end of those people who rejected the

Message of their Prophets and followed their own lusts. You have seen, on your journeys, the ruined habitations of the people of 'Ād, Thamūd, Midian, Lot, and others. Have you not observed these as object lessons, for these warn you that they would meet with far worse consequences in the Hereafter, and that conversely, those who are pious and God-fearing will have a very happy life?"

80. That is, "It gives details of everything that is required for the guidance of man." Some people take "details of everything" to mean the details of everything in the world. So, when they do not find in it the details of mathematics, physics, medicine etc. etc. they become skeptical. Whereas the Qur'ān claims to give the details of only one 'subject', "Guidance", for which it has been sent down, and it does give the details of everything that is essential for it.



XIII

AR-RA'AD

الرعد

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XIII

AR-RA'AD

الرعد

INTRODUCTION

Name

This Sūrah takes its name from the word الرعد (*ar-Ra'ad*) (thunder) that occurs in v. 13. It is merely the symbolic name of the Sūrah and does not in any way mean that the Sūrah deals with the scientific problems connected with thunder.

Period of Revelation

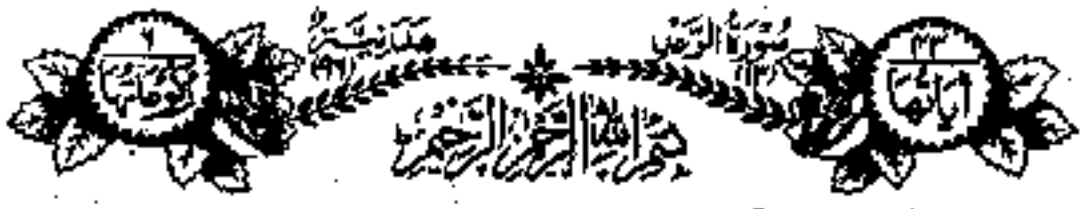
The internal evidence (vv. 27-31 and vv. 34-48) shows that this Sūrah was revealed in the last stage of the Mission of the Holy Prophet at Makkah and during the same period in which Sūrahs *Yūnus*, *Hūd* and *Al-A'arāf* were sent down. The manner of speech indicates that a long time had passed since the Holy Prophet had been conveying the Message. On the one hand, his opponents had been contriving different devices to defeat him and his Mission, and, on the other, his followers had been expressing a desire that by showing a miracle the disbelievers might be brought to the Right Way. In answer, Allah impressed on the Believers that it is not His way to convert people by this method and that they should not lose heart, if He is giving the enemies of the Truth a rope long enough to hang themselves. Otherwise, He is able to show such signs as may bring the dead out of their graves and make them speak (v. 31), but even then these obdurate people will invent an excuse to explain this away. All this decisive evidence clearly proves that this

Sūrah was revealed during the last stage of the Prophet's Mission at Makkah.

Central Theme

The first verse enunciates the main theme of this Sūrah, that is, "The Message of Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) is the very Truth, but it is the fault of the people that they are rejecting it." This is the pivot on which the whole Sūrah turns. This is why it has been shown over and over again in different ways that the basic components of the Message—*Tauhīd*, Resurrection and Prophethood—are a reality: therefore they should believe sincerely in these for their own moral and spiritual good. They have been warned that they shall incur their own ruin if they reject them, for *kufr* by itself is sheer folly and ignorance. Moreover, the aim of the Sūrah is not merely to satisfy the minds but also to appeal to the hearts to accept the Faith. Therefore it does not merely put forward logical arguments in support of the truth of the Message and against the people's wrong notions, but at appropriate intervals it makes frequent use of sympathetic and earnest appeals to win over their hearts by warning them of the consequences of *kufr* and by holding out the happy rewards of Faith so that the foolish people should give up their obduracy.

Besides this, the objections of the opponents have been answered without any mention of them, and those doubts which are proving a hindrance in the way of the Message or were being created by the opponents have been removed. At the same time, the Believers who had been passing through a long and hard ordeal and were feeling tired, and waiting anxiously for Allah's succour, have been comforted and filled with hope and courage.



الٓمّٓرٰ ۚ تِلْكَ اٰيٰتُ الْكِتٰبِ ؕ وَ الَّذِيْۤ اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ الْحَقُّ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ

XIII

AR-RA'AD

الرعد

Verses: 43 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

Alif. Lām. Mīm. Rā. These are the verses of the Divine Book, and that which has been sent down to you from your Lord is the very truth, but most (of your) people do not believe in this.[1] 1

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1. This is the introduction to this Sūrah, in which its aim and object has been enunciated in a few words. Allah has addressed the Holy Prophet to this effect: "O Prophet ! most of your people are rejecting the teachings of the Qur'ān for one reason or the other, but the fact is that what We are sending down to you is the Truth whether people believe it or not."

After this brief introduction, the discourse deals with the main subject of the Sūrah, which consists of three basic things. First, "The whole of the universe belongs to Allah alone, and none besides Him has any right to service and worship". Second, "There is another life after this life, in which you shall have to render an account of all your actions." Third, "I am a Messenger of Allah: whatever I am presenting before you is not from myself but from Allah." As the people were rejecting these three things, these have been reiterated over and over again in various forms to remove doubts and objections from the minds of the disbelievers.

النَّاسِ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ۝١ اَللّٰهُ الَّذِيْ رَفَعَ السَّمٰوٰتِ بِغَيْرِ عَمَدٍ تَرَوْنَهَا ثُمَّ
اسْتَوٰى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ ۭ كُلٌّ يَّجْرِيْ لِاَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۭ
يُدَبِّرُ الْاَمْرَ يُفَصِّلُ الْاٰيٰتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ بِلِقَاۗءِ رَبِّكُمْ تُوْقِنُوْنَ ۝٢ وَهُوَ الَّذِيْ مَدَّ
الْاَرْضَ وَجَعَلَ فِيْهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَاَنْهٰرًا ۭ وَمِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرٰتِ جَعَلَ فِيْهَا زَوْجَيْنِ
اثْنَيْنِ يُغْشِي الَّيْلَ النَّهَارَ ۭ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّتَفَكَّرُوْنَ ۝٣ وَفِي
الْاَرْضِ قِطَعٌ مُّتَجٰوِرٰتٌ وَّجَنّٰتٌ مِّنْ اَعْنَابٍ وَّزَرْعٌ وَّنَخِيْلٌ صِنْوَانٌ وَّغَيْرُ
صِنْوَانٍ يُّسْقٰى بِمَاۗءٍ وَّاحِدٍ ۣ وَنُفَضِّلُ بَعْضَهَا عَلٰي بَعْضٍ فِي الْاُكُلِ ۭ اِنَّ فِيْ
ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّعْقِلُوْنَ ۝٤ وَاِنْ تَعْجَبْ فَعَجَبٌ قَوْلُهُمْ ءَاِذَا كُنَّا تُرٰبًا
ءَاِنَّا لَفِيْ خَلْقٍ جَدِيْدٍ ۭ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا بِرَبِّهِمْ ۚ وَاُولٰۗىِٕكَ الْاَغْلٰلُ فِيْٓ
اَعْنَاقِهِمْ ۚ وَاُولٰۗىِٕكَ اَصْحٰبُ النَّارِ ۚ هُمْ فِيْهَا خٰلِدُوْنَ ۝٥ وَيَسْتَعْجِلُوْنَكَ
بِالسَّيِّئَةِ قَبْلَ الْحَسَنَةِ وَقَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمُ الْمَثُلٰتُ ۭ وَاِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَذُوْ
مَغْفِرَةٍ لِّلنَّاسِ عَلٰي ظُلْمِهِمْ ۚ وَاِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَشَدِيْدُ الْعِقَابِ ۝٦ وَيَقُوْلُ الَّذِيْنَ
كَفَرُوْا لَوْلَآ اُنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ اٰيَةٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّهٖ ۭ اِنَّمَآ اَنْتَ مُنْذِرٌ وَّلِكُلِّ قَوْمٍ هَادٍ ۝٧
اَللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَحْمِلُ كُلُّ اُنْثٰى وَمَا تَغِيْضُ الْاَرْحَامُ وَمَا تَزْدَادُ ۭ وَكُلُّ
شَيْءٍ عِنْدَهٗ بِمِقْدَارٍ ۝٨ عٰلِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ الْكَبِيْرُ الْمُتَعَالِ ۝٩ سَوَاۗءٌ
مِّنْكُمْ مَّنْ اَسَرَّ الْقَوْلَ وَمَنْ جَهَرَ بِهٖ وَمَنْ هُوَ مُسْتَخْفٍۢ بِالَّيْلِ وَسَارِبٌۢ
بِالنَّهَارِ ۝١٠ لَهٗ مُعَقِّبٰتٌ مِّنْۢ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهٖ يَحْفَظُوْنَهٗ مِنْ اَمْرِ اللّٰهِ ۭ
اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتّٰى يُغَيِّرُوْا مَا بِاَنْفُسِهِمْ ۭ وَاِذَآ اَرَادَ اللّٰهُ بِقَوْمٍ
سُوْۗءًا فَلَا مَرَدَّ لَهٗ ۚ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِهٖ مِنْ وَّالٍ ۝١١ هُوَ الَّذِيْ يُرِيْكُمُ

It is Allah Who raised up the heavens without such pillars as you could see:[2] then He sat Himself upon the Throne of His Kingdom:[3] He subjected the sun and the moon to a law.[4] Everything in the universe is running its course to its fixed term.[5] And Allah alone is directing the whole affair. He makes His signs plain:[6] perhaps you may be convinced of meeting your Lord.[7] 2

And it is He Who has spread out the earth, and fixed the immovable mountains in it, and made the rivers flow on it. He has created in pairs every kind of fruit, and He covers the day with the veil of night.[8] Surely there are great Signs in these for those who reflect upon them. 3

And behold! there are different regions on the earth close to one another;[9] there are vineyards, corn fields and groves of date-palm with single or double trunk.[10] All are irrigated with the same water, but We make some more tasteful than others. Most surely there are many Signs in all these things for those who use their common sense.[11] 4

Now, if there is anything for you to marvel at, you should marvel at their saying: "What! when we have become dust, shall we then be raised to a new life again?" These are the people who have denied their Lord:[12] they are those who shall have collars around their necks:[13] they shall be the dwellers of Hell and therein they shall dwell for ever. 5

They demand from you the hastening of evil rather than good,[14] though indeed there have been instances of exemplary punishments before them (of the wrath of God on the people who adopted the same attitude.) The fact is that your Lord shows forbearance to the people despite their transgressions, and it is also the fact that your Lord is stern in retribution. 6

These people who have rejected your Message, say, "Why has no Sign been sent down to this person from His Lord ?"[15] —You are a warner only and every people has its guide.[16] 7

Allah knows what every female bears in her womb: He is fully aware of what is taking shape in the womb and also what decrease or increase occurs therein.[17] Everything has its fixed measure with Him. He has perfect knowledge both of the visible and the invisible. He is 8-11

the Great and the Supreme Being. Alike to Him are all of you, whether one of you whispers or speaks aloud or one hides oneself under the cover of the darkness of night or walks about in the broad day light. For each person has guardians before him and behind him, who watch over him by Allah's command.[18] The fact is that Allah does not change a people's lot unless they themselves change their own characteristics: and when Allah decides to bring about retribution to a people, none can ward it off, nor can they find any defender or helper against Allah.[19]

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2. In other words, "Allah keeps the myriad's of heavenly bodies in space without any visible and perceptible support." Though there is nothing apparent and visible that is supporting these bodies, yet there is an invariable and imperceptible Power which is not only holding and keeping each and everyone of these huge bodies including the earth we inhabit in their proper places and orbits but also does not let any collision take place between them.

3. For the fuller details of "He sat Himself on the Throne of His Kingdom," please refer to E.N. 41 of *Al-A'rāf*. Here the purpose will be served if it is understood that this thing has been mentioned in the Qur'ān at many places in order to bring out clearly the fact that Allah has not only created the earth, but also rules over His Kingdom, and that His universe is a factory that is not working automatically as some ignorant people seem to think nor is it being ruled by many gods as other ignorant people seem to believe. But it is a regular system that is being run and ruled over by its Creator.

4. It should be noted here that the addressees themselves accepted the truth of all the claims that have been made in this verse. Therefore no proofs were required of the facts that it is Allah Who raised up the heavens without any visible support and subjected the sun and the moon to a fixed order. These things have been mentioned here only as arguments to prove that Allah is the sole Sovereign and ruler of the whole universe.

Now let us consider this question: How can such an argument as this convince those who do not believe at all in the existence of God nor acknowledge that He is the Creator of the universe and the Director of all its affairs ? The answer is that the arguments in support of the Doctrine of *Tauhīd* advanced in the Qur'ān to convince the *mushrikūn* equally apply against the atheists to prove the existence of God. It is like this: The whole of the universe—the earth, the moon, the sun and the countless heavenly bodies—constitute a perfect system which is working under the same all-powerful Law. This is a proof that such a system must have been designed by some All-Powerful Sovereign, Who possesses wisdom and unerring knowledge. This proves conclusively the existence of that Allah Who has

no other equal nor associate nor partner. For there can be no system without an administrator, no law without a ruler, no wisdom without a sage, and no knowledge without the possessor of that knowledge. Above all, no one can ever conceive that there can be any creation without a Creator except the one who is obdurate or has no sense left in him at all.

5. This system is not only a standing proof of the fact that an All-Powerful Sovereign is ruling over it, but is also an evidence of the great wisdom underlying it; it also bears witness that there is nothing ever-lasting in it. Everything in it remains for a fixed term after which it comes to an end. This is equally true for each and every component part of it as well as for the whole system. It is quite evident from its physical structure that there is nothing ever-lasting and immortal. There must be some fixed term for the system as a whole, after the expiry of which it shall come to an end. Then there shall be another world: therefore it is most likely that there shall be Resurrection as predicted in the Qur'ān: nay, its inevitability is beyond any doubt.

6. Allah makes plain those Signs which help prove the truth of what the Holy Prophet was informing them. These Signs are spread all over the universe and everyone who observes these with open eyes can perceive that the realities towards which the Qur'ān invites the people are testified by these Signs.

7. The preceding Signs have been cited to prove two things. First, the universe has only one Creator and Administrator. Second, there shall be life in the Hereafter in which everyone shall be judged in the Divine Court and awarded rewards and punishments on merit. As the first thing was quite obvious, it has not been mentioned in the conclusion drawn from the Signs. But the second thing, life in the Hereafter, has been mentioned because that was rather hidden from perception. Therefore it has specifically been stated that these Signs have been made plain in order "to convince you that you shall meet your Lord in the Hereafter and render an account of all your actions in this world."

Now let us consider how these Signs help prove life in the Hereafter. These make it evident in two ways:

(1) When we consider how big heavenly bodies as the sun and the moon are completely subject to the will of Allah, our hearts feel convinced that Allah Who has created these things and regulated their movements so orderly around their orbits, has undoubtedly the power to bring to life the whole human race after its death.

(2) The terrestrial system also proves that its Creator is All-Wise. Therefore it can never be imagined that the All-Wise Creator could have created man and endowed him with wisdom and intelligence and invested him with power and authority, and then left him free to do what he liked with these, without being

responsible and accountable for their use or abuse. For His Wisdom demands that He should take full account of all the acts and deeds of man in this world. It requires that He should take to task those who committed aggressions and compensate their victims and He should give rewards to those who practised virtue and punishments to those who did wicked deeds. In short, His Wisdom requires that He should call to account every human being and demand: "How did you carry out the trust that was placed in your hands in the shape of your wonderful body with its wonderful faculties and the numerous resources of the earth?" It may be that a foolish and unjust ruler of this world might entrust the affairs of his kingdom in the hands of his agents and then forget to call them to account, but such a thing can never be expected from the All-Wise and All-Knowing Allah.

It is this way of observing and considering the heavenly bodies that can convince us that life in the Hereafter is both possible and inevitable.

8. After citing some heavenly Signs in support of the doctrines of *Tauhīd* and the Hereafter, a few Signs are being cited from the earth for the same purpose. Briefly the following are the arguments for *Tauhīd*, Resurrection and Accountability:

(1) *Tauhīd*: The fact that the earth is closely connected with the heavenly bodies (which help create life on it), and the fact that the mountains and the rivers are so inter-related with that life are clear proofs that all these things have not been created by separate and different gods nor are being governed by gods with independent powers and authorities. Had it been so, there could not have been so much harmony, congruity, accord and unity of purpose among them; nor could these relationships have continued for such a long time. For it is quite obvious that if there had not been One All-Powerful and All-Wise Allah, it could not have been possible and practicable for different gods to sit together and evolve out such a harmonious system of the universe without any discord or conflict between its myriad's of bodies.

(2) *Resurrection*: This wonderful planet, the earth, is itself a great proof that its Creator is All-Powerful and can, therefore, raise the dead whenever He will. For it is floating in space round the sun and it has high mountains fixed in it and has large rivers flowing on its surface: it produces countless fruit-bearing trees and it brings about the cycles of the day and the night with precise regularity.

All these things bear witness to the boundless power of its Creator. It would, therefore, be sheer folly to doubt that such All-Powerful Creator is incapable of raising mankind to life after death.

(3) *Accountability*: The earth, with all its wonderful and purposeful signs, is a clear evidence of the fact that its Creator is All-Wise. Therefore it cannot even be imagined that He has created man, His noblest creation, without any purpose. Just as His wisdom is apparent from the structure of the earth, its mountains, its rivers, the pairs of its trees and fruits, its night and day, so it is quite obvious that it has not been made the habitation of man without any purpose, nor will it be brought to nought without the fulfilment of that purpose. Clearly mankind shall be accountable to its Creator for the fulfilment of that Divine purpose.

9. That is, "If you observe carefully, you will find Divine wisdom, design and purpose in the diversity of the structure of the earth. Though it has countless regions adjoining one another, they are different from one another in their shapes, colours, component parts, characteristics, potentialities, productive capacity and source of minerals. This diversity has countless points of wisdom and advantage. Let alone other creatures, if we consider the diversity of regions from the point of the good it has done to mankind, we shall have to acknowledge that this is the result of the well-thought and well-planned design of the All-Wise Creator. For this diversity has helped the growth of human civilization so much that only an unreasonable person can assign this to mere accident.

10. Some of the date-palm trees have only a single trunk from the root while others have two or more stems from the same root.

11. The things mentioned in this verse contain many other Signs besides the proofs of *Tauhid* and the boundless powers and All-Comprehensive Wisdom of Allah. Let us consider one of these, that is the diversity in the universe, including mankind. There is the one and the same earth but all its regions are quite different from one another. Then there is one and the same water but it helps to produce different kinds of corn and fruits. Then one and the same tree bears fruits which, in spite of likeness, differ from one another in shapes, sizes, and other features. Then there is one and the same root from which sometimes one and at others two trunks sprout up, with their own different characteristics. If one considers these aspects of diversity, one shall come to the conclusion that the Divine wisdom demands the same kind of diversity in the natures, temperaments and inclinations of human beings, and, therefore, in their conducts. So, one need not worry about the existence of this diversity. As it has been stated in v. 31, if Allah had willed, He could have created all human beings alike and virtuous by birth. But the wisdom that underlies the creation of the universe, including mankind, requires diversity and not uniformity. Otherwise, all this creation would have become meaningless.

[Contd. on p.456

الْبَرْقَ خَوْفًا وَّطَمَعًا وَّيُنْشِئُ السَّحَابَ الثِّقَالَ ﴿١٢﴾ وَيُسَبِّحُ الرَّعْدُ بِحَمْدِهٖ وَ
الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ مِنْ خِيْفَتِهٖ ۚ وَيُرْسِلُ الصَّوَاعِقَ فَيُصِيْبُ بِهَا مَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَهُمْ يُجَادِلُوْنَ
فِي اللّٰهِ ۚ وَهُوَ شَدِيْدُ الْمِحَالِ ﴿١٣﴾ لَهٗ دَعْوَةُ الْحَقِّ ۭ وَالَّذِيْنَ يَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ
دُوْنِهٖ لَا يَسْتَجِيْبُوْنَ لَهُمْ بِشَيْءٍ اِلَّا كَبَاسِطِ كَفَّيْهِ اِلَى الْمَاۗءِ لِيَبْلُغَ فَاهُ وَمَا
هُوَ بِبَالِغِهٖ ۭ وَمَا دُعَاۗءُ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ اِلَّا فِيْ ضَلٰلٍ ﴿١٤﴾ وَلِلّٰهِ يَسْجُدُ مَنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَالْاَرْضِ طَوْعًا وَّكَرْهًا وَّظِلٰلُهُمْ بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْاٰصَالِ ﴿١٥﴾ قُلْ مَنْ رَّبُّ السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَالْاَرْضِ ۭ قُلِ اللّٰهُ ۭ قُلْ اَفَاتَّخَذْتُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِهٖٓ اَوْلِيَاۗءَ لَا يَمْلِكُوْنَ لِاَنْفُسِهِمْ
نَفْعًا وَّلَا ضَرًّا ۭ قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الْاَعْمٰى وَالْبَصِيْرُ ۙ اَمْ هَلْ تَسْتَوِي الظُّلُمٰتُ
وَالنُّوْرُ ۚ اَمْ جَعَلُوْا لِلّٰهِ شُرَكَاۗءَ خَلَقُوْا كَخَلْقِهٖ فَتَشَابَهَ الْخَلْقُ عَلَيْهِمْ ۭ قُلِ اللّٰهُ
خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَّهُوَ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ ﴿١٦﴾ اَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاۗءِ مَاۗءً فَسَالَتْ اَوْدِيَةٌۢ
بِقَدَرِهَا فَاحْتَمَلَ السَّيْلُ زَبَدًا رَّابِيًا ۭ وَمِمَّا يُوْقِدُوْنَ عَلَيْهِ فِي النَّارِ ابْتِغَاۗءَ
حِلْيَةٍ اَوْ مَتَاعٍ زَبَدٌ مِّثْلُهٗ ۭ كَذٰلِكَ يَضْرِبُ اللّٰهُ الْحَقَّ وَالْبَاطِلَ ۭ فَاَمَّا الزَّبَدُ
فَيَذْهَبُ جُفَاۗءً ۚ وَاَمَّا مَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ فَيَمْكُثُ فِي الْاَرْضِ ۭ كَذٰلِكَ يَضْرِبُ اللّٰهُ
الْاَمْثَالَ ﴿١٧﴾ لِلَّذِيْنَ اسْتَجَابُوْا لِرَبِّهِمُ الْحُسْنٰى ۚ وَالَّذِيْنَ لَمْ يَسْتَجِيْبُوْا لَهٗ لَوْ اَنَّ
لَهُمْ مَّا فِي الْاَرْضِ جَمِيْعًا وَّمِثْلَهٗ مَعَهٗ لَافْتَدَوْا بِهٖ ۭ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ لَهُمْ سُوْۗءُ الْحِسَابِ ۙ
وَمَاْوٰىهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ ۭ وَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ ﴿١٨﴾ اَفَمَنْ يَّعْلَمُ اَنَّمَآ اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ
الْحَقُّ كَمَنْ هُوَ اَعْمٰى ۭ اِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ اُولُوا الْاَلْبَابِ ﴿١٩﴾ الَّذِيْنَ يُوْفُوْنَ بِعَهْدِ اللّٰهِ
وَلَا يَنْقُضُوْنَ الْمِيْثَاقَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ يَصِلُوْنَ مَآ اَمَرَ اللّٰهُ بِهٖٓ اَنْ يُّوْصَلَ وَ
يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ وَيَخَافُوْنَ سُوْۗءَ الْحِسَابِ ﴿٢١﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ صَبَرُوا ابْتِغَاۗءَ وَجْهِ

It is He Who makes the lightning flash before you to fill you both with fear and with hope: it is He Who produces clouds laden with water. The thunder glorifies Him with His praise[20] and the angels, too, glorify Him in awe of Him.[21] He lets loose thunderbolts and (often) smites with them whomsoever He wills, while they are wrangling about Allah. The fact is that His plan is very effective.[22] 12-13

To invoke Him alone is the right thing.[23] As regards the other deities whom they invoke apart from Him, they cannot give any answer to their prayers. It is as if a man were to stretch his hands towards water and ask it to come to his mouth, when it cannot reach his mouth in this way; likewise the prayers of the disbelievers are nothing but aimless efforts. For it is Allah alone before Whom everything in the heavens and the earth bows down willingly or un-willingly,[24] and the shadows of all things bow down before Him in the morning and the evening.[25] 14-15

Ask them, "Who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth ?" Say, "Allah".[26] Then say to them, "When this is the fact, have you then made beside Him such deities your protectors as can do neither good nor harm even to themselves ?" Say, "Are the blind man and the seeing man alike ?[27] Are light and darkness alike ?"[28] And if it is not so, have the partners, they have set up with Allah, created anything like His creation so as to make the matter of creation doubtful for them?[29] Say, Allah alone is the Creator of everything; and He is the Unique, the Almighty.[30] 16

Allah sent down water from the sky and every system carried it along according to its capacity: then there was flood and a swelling foam[31] came to the surface. Likewise there arises a scum out of the metals which are melted in the furnace for making ornaments and utensils.[32] By such similitudes, Allah makes the truth distinct from falsehood. That which is the foam vanishes and that which is beneficial for the people remains on the earth. In this way Allah cites similes to make His Message clear. 17

There is an excellent reward for those who responded to the call of their Lord. As for those who rejected His call, they would willingly give for their ransom all the wealth the earth contained, if they possessed it, and as much more besides (in order to escape 18

retribution).[33] Those are the people who shall have the heavy reckoning;[34] their abode shall be Hell—a wretched resting place.

19-21 Well, how can the one who believes that this Book which has been sent down to you from your Lord, is the Truth, be like the one who is blind to this fact ?[35] It is the wise people alone who take advice from this:[36] they fulfil their Covenant with Allah, and break it not after confirming it.[37] They join together what Allah has bidden to join:[38] they fear their Lord and dread lest they should be called upon to render a heavy reckoning.

Contd. from p. 453]

12. They "have denied their Lord": their denial of the Hereafter is, in fact, the denial of the Power and Wisdom of Allah. As they say that it is impossible to bring them again to life after their death, it implies that, God forbid, their Allah Who has created them lacks not only power but wisdom, too.

13. As a collar around the neck is a symbol of imprisonment, the words "collars around their necks" have been used here idiomatically to show that they are slaves of ignorance, obduracy, lust and are blind followers of their forefathers. As their thinking is influenced by their prejudices, they cannot believe in the Hereafter and would deny this, though there is every reason to believe that it is inevitable.

14. This refers to the demand of the Quraish from the Holy Prophet "If you are a true Prophet of God, why don't you hasten to bring that scourge of God on us of which you have been threatening us, when we are flouting and denying you ?" They did this in different ways. Sometimes they would invoke God mockingly and say, "O Lord, settle our accounts now and do not postpone these to the Day of Resurrection". At another time, they would say, "Our Lord, if what Muhammad says be true, and be from Thee, then stone us from the sky or send down some other scourge upon us from the sky or send down some other painful torment upon us." In this verse an answer has been given to such impudent demands of the disbelievers. They have been admonished to refrain from such foolish demands and avail of the respite that was being given to them and mend their ways, for they were incurring the wrath of God by adopting the attitude of rebellion.

15. This showed their mentality. The only criterion of judging whether Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) was a true Prophet or not according to these disbelievers, was whether he would perform a miracle to order. This was because they would not judge his Message by rational arguments; they would not

learn a lesson from his high character nor from the moral revolution that was being brought about among his Companions by his Message and noble example: nor would they carefully consider the rational arguments given in the Qur'ān to prove the errors of their religion of *shirk* and superstitions of ignorance. They would ignore these rational things and demand a miracle to decide the issue.

16. This is the concise answer to their demand, though it has not been directly addressed to the disbelievers but to the Messenger. It is this: "O Prophet, you should not worry at all about some miracle which you might show to these people in order to convince them, for it is not a part of your Mission. Your duty is only to warn the people of their negligence and of the evil consequences of their wrong ways. And for this purpose, We have always sent a guide to every people. Now you, too, are performing this duty, and it is for them to open their eyes and judge the truth of your Message." After giving this concise answer, Allah overlooks their demand but warns them, in the succeeding verses, that they have to deal with the All-Knowing Allah Who has full knowledge about everyone of them from the time they were in the wombs of their mothers, and Who keeps a keen watch over everything they do. Therefore their fates shall be decided strictly with justice in accordance with their merits and that there is no power on the earth and in the heavens that can influence in the least His decisions and judgements.

17. When amplified the verse will mean : Allah remains fully aware of all the developments that take place in the child while in its mother's womb, and He watches over the decrease or increase in each of its limbs, and its potentialities, capabilities and powers.

18. That is, "Allah not only directly watches over whatever each person does, and is fully aware of everything he does, but He has also appointed such Guardians as accompany him everywhere and keep a full record of all his deeds." This has been stated here to warn those people who live their lives under the delusion that they have been left absolutely free to do whatever they like and shall not be required to render an account of what they did in this worldly life. The warning is that such people invite their own retribution.

19. This is to warn them further that they should not remain under any delusion that some holy person or saint or angel has the power to rescue them from Divine Retribution, for there is none who could defend them against Allah, even though they might have been paying homages and making offerings to their so-called patrons and protectors in the hope that they would rescue them from punishment from Allah on the Day of Judgement.

20. The thunder is a proclamation of *Tauhīd* for those who have ears to hear the real meaning of its loud noise which follows the flash of lightning, though it is merely a kind of noise for those who hear it like animals. For it proclaims that

Allah Who raises clouds from the oceans and carries them wherever He wills, and makes the lightning flash from the clouds and then turns them into rain so as to supply water to the dwellers of the earth, is perfect and worthy of all praise, is All-Wise and All-Powerful and is flawless in every respect and has no partner whatsoever.

21. The mention of the fact that the angels are filled with awe of their Lord, and they proclaim His praise has a special significance here. This is to refute the *shirk* of the ignorant people who have always worshipped the angels as gods and deities and believed them to be partners with God in His Godhead. It has been stated that they are not partners with Allah but His most obedient servants; so much so that they praise Him and are filled with awe of Him.

22. He has countless plans and measures which are so effective and sudden that He can smite any one with any one of them from any side He will. So much so that the intended victim is absolutely unaware of it. This is a proof that those people, who say absurd things about such All-Powerful Being, are absolutely void of sense.

23. "To invoke Him alone is the right thing," for Allah alone has the power and the authority to give help and remove difficulties.

24. " . . . everything in the heavens and the earth bows down before Allah" in the same sense that every creation of His has to obey and submit to His Physical Law in every detail. The only difference between the submission of a Believer and an unbeliever is that the former submits to it with a willing heart while the latter is forced to do so against his will, for it is absolutely beyond his power to oppose it.

25. "The shadows bow down" in the sense that they fall to the west in the morning and to the east in the evening and so on. This shows that they, too, have to submit to some Law.

26. It will be worth while to note that though the question, "Who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth?" was put to the disbelievers, Allah told the Holy Prophet to answer it himself and say, "Allah". This was because the disbelievers hesitated to answer it one way or the other. They could not say that it was not Allah for they themselves believed that Allah was the Creator of everything. On the other hand, they could not acknowledge this fact in so many words in answer to such question, for, they would, then, have to acknowledge the doctrine of *Tauhīd* for no basis could have been left in favour of *shirk*. As they realised their weak position, they would not give any answer to such questions. That is why Allah asks His Messenger to put such questions to the disbelievers: "Who is the Creator of the heavens and the earth? Who is the Lord of the

Universe? Who sustains you with provisions of life?" When they do not give any answer to such questions, Allah asks His Messenger to say "Allah" in answer. He then proceeds on with this argument: "When Allah does all these things, how do the deities you worship come in?"

27. The blind man is the person who cannot see any of the countless signs of the Oneness of Allah, though these lie spread over before him in the universe. On the other hand, the seeing man is the person who can see in every particle of the universe and in every leaf of grass and tree Signs pointing to their Creator. Thus the question that has been posed means: "O disbelievers ! if you are blind to the Signs, why should the one who can see the Signs should behave like a blind man and stumble along like you?"

28. Here "light" means the light of the knowledge of the Truth which the Holy Prophet and his followers possessed. In contrast to this, there was the "darkness" of ignorance in which the disbelievers were wandering about. The question that has been posed means to ask this: "Why should those, who have got the 'light', extinguish it and wander about in the darkness like you? Well, if you do not know the worth of the 'light', you may choose to wander in the darkness, but how can you expect the one who has got the 'light', who appreciates the difference between the light and the darkness, and who is seeing the right way as if in broad daylight, to leave the light and wander about in the darkness?"

29. The question is intended to impress on the disbelievers that there is absolutely no reason why they should practice *shirk*. When they themselves admit that their gods did not create even an iota in the universe and that they have not even the smallest and most insignificant share in the creation, there remains no ground for them to cherish any doubts about it. Why should, then, their false gods and deities share the rights and powers of the Real Creator?

30. The Arabic word القهار (*Qah-hār*) literally means "the one who rules over all by virtue of one's own power, and keeps all under one's complete control."

This fact that "He is the Unique, the Almighty" follows naturally from the preceding fact that "Allah alone is the Creator of everything," for this fact was also acknowledged by the *mushriks* and was never denied by them. This is so because the Creator of everything should logically be Unique, and every other thing or being must necessarily be His creation. Therefore nothing could be the equal of the Creator or partner in His Being, attributes, powers and rights. Likewise, the Creator must have complete power and control over His Creation.

[Contd. on p. 462

رَبِّهِمْ وَاَقَامُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَاَنْفَقُوْا مِمَّا رَزَقْنٰهُمْ سِرًّا وَّعَلَانِيَةً وَّيَدْرَءُوْنَ
بِالْحَسَنَةِ السَّيِّئَةَ اُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ عُقْبَى الدَّارِ ﴿22﴾ جَنّٰتُ عَدْنٍ يَّدْخُلُوْنَهَا وَمَنْ
صَلَحَ مِنْ اٰبَآئِهِمْ وَاَزْوَاجِهِمْ وَذُرِّيّٰتِهِمْ وَالْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ يَدْخُلُوْنَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ
كُلِّ بَابٍ ﴿23﴾ سَلٰمٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِمَا صَبَرْتُمْ فَنِعْمَ عُقْبَى الدَّارِ ﴿24﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ
يَنْقُضُوْنَ عَهْدَ اللّٰهِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مِيْثَاقِهٖ وَيَقْطَعُوْنَ مَآ اَمَرَ اللّٰهُ بِهٖٓ اَنْ
يُّوْصَلَ وَيُفْسِدُوْنَ فِى الْاَرْضِ ۙ اُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمُ اللَّعْنَةُ وَلَهُمْ سُوْٓءُ الدَّارِ ﴿25﴾
اَللّٰهُ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَيَقْدِرُ ۚ وَفَرِحُوْا بِالْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا ۗ وَمَا الْحَيٰوةُ
الدُّنْيَا فِى الْاٰخِرَةِ اِلَّا مَتَاعٌ ﴿26﴾ وَيَقُوْلُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لَوْلَآ اُنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ اٰيَةٌ
مِّنْ رَّبِّهٖ ۚ قُلْ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَيَهْدِىْٓ اِلَيْهِ مَنْ اَنَابَ ﴿27﴾ اَلَّذِيْنَ
اٰمَنُوْا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوْبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللّٰهِ ۗ اَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللّٰهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوْبُ ﴿28﴾ اَلَّذِيْنَ
اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ طُوْبٰى لَهُمْ وَحُسْنُ مَاٰبٍ ﴿29﴾ كَذٰلِكَ اَرْسَلْنٰكَ فِىْٓ
اُمَّةٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهَآ اُمَمٌ لِّتَتْلُوَا عَلَيْهِمُ الَّذِىْٓ اَوْحَيْنَآ اِلَيْكَ وَهُمْ
يَكْفُرُوْنَ بِالرَّحْمٰنِ ۗ قُلْ هُوَ رَبِّىْ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۗ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَاِلَيْهِ
مَتَابِ ﴿30﴾ وَلَوْ اَنَّ قُرْاٰنًا سُيِّرَتْ بِهِ الْجِبَالُ اَوْ قُطِّعَتْ بِهِ الْاَرْضُ اَوْ كُلِّمَ
بِهِ الْمَوْتٰى ۗ بَلْ لِّلّٰهِ الْاَمْرُ جَمِيْعًا ۗ اَفَلَمْ يَايْئَسِ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اَنْ لَّوْ يَشَآءُ
اللّٰهُ لَهَدَى النَّاسَ جَمِيْعًا ۗ وَلَا يَزَالُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا تُصِيْبُهُمْ بِمَا صَنَعُوْا
قَارِعَةٌ اَوْ تَحُلُّ قَرِيْبًا مِّنْ دَارِهِمْ حَتّٰى يَاْتِيَ وَعْدُ اللّٰهِ ۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا
يُخْلِفُ الْمِيْعَادَ ﴿31﴾ وَلَقَدِ اسْتُهْزِئَ بِرُسُلٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ فَاَمْلَيْتُ لِلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا
ثُمَّ اَخَذْتُهُمْ ۖ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عِقَابِ ﴿32﴾ اَفَمَنْ هُوَ قَآئِمٌ عَلٰى كُلِّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا

They show fortitude to win the approval of their Lord.[39] They establish Salāt and expend openly and secretly out of what We have bestowed upon them and ward off evil with good.[40] Their's shall be the abode of the Hereafter: Gardens wherein they will live for ever. They will enter into them along with the righteous from among their forefathers, wives and descendants. The angels will come to welcome them from every side, saying, "Peace be upon you.[41] You have won this blessing because of what you steadfastly endured in the world." How blessed is this abode of the Hereafter! As for those who break their Covenant with Allah after confirming it, who cut asunder what Allah has bidden to be joined, and spread chaos on the earth, their's shall be the curse, and they shall have a wretched abode in the Hereafter. 22-25

Allah gives abundantly His provisions to whom He will and sparingly to whom He pleases.[42] These people are wholly absorbed in the joys of this life, whereas the life of this world is but a paltry thing as compared with the life of the Hereafter. 26

Those people who have rejected (Muhammad as a Prophet) say, "Why has no Sign been sent down to him from his Lord?"[43]—Say, "Allah leads astray whom He will; and He leads to Himself only those who turn to Him."[44] Such are the people who have accepted (the Message of this Prophet,) and their hearts find comfort in the remembrance of Allah. Note it well that it is Allah's remembrance alone that brings comfort to hearts. Blessed are those who have accepted the Message and done righteous deeds: they have a good end. 27-29

O Muhammad! We have sent you as a Messenger in this way[45] among a people before whom many peoples have passed away so that you should recite to them the Message which We have sent down to you; yet they are rejecting the most Compassionate Lord.[46] Say to them, "My Lord is He: there is no deity but He: I have placed my full trust in Him and He is my sole Resort." 30

And what (do you think) would have been the result, if We had sent a Qur'ān that would have caused the mountains to move or cleft the earth asunder or made the dead speak?[47] (It is not difficult at all to show such Signs) for Allah has full power over everything.[48] Have the Believers (still any expectations of a Sign in answer to the demand of 31-32

the disbelievers and) not given up all hope, (knowing) that Allah could have guided all mankind aright,[49] if He had so desired? As for the disbelievers, because of their misdeeds, one affliction or the other does not cease to visit them every now and then, or come near their home. It will go on like this untill Allah's threat come to pass. Indeed, Allah does not fail to bring about His threat. Other Messengers have also been mocked before you, but I have always given respite to the disbelievers and then seized upon them at its end. Just see how terrible had been My Scourge!

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For it can never be imagined that the Creator would create anything over which He has not full control. Therefore, the one who acknowledges Allah to be the Creator must also acknowledge Him to be the Unique and the All-Powerful. After this, there remains no reason why one should worship any one other than the Creator or invoke some one else for help in resolving one's difficulties and fulfilling one's needs.

31. In this simile the Knowledge which had been sent down by Allah to the Holy Prophet has been likened to the rain from the sky, and the Believers to the streams, rivulets and rivers. Just as the streams etc., fill themselves with rain-water, each according to its capacity, so his followers gained knowledge from him, each according to his ability. On the other hand, the hue and cry that was raised by the opponents of the Islamic Movement has been likened to the swelling foam etc., that begins to dance about on the surface of flood water, but soon vanishes away.

32. As it is but natural that scum should appear on the surface when metals are melted in the furnace for purification, likewise bad people would come to the surface and take prominent part in persecuting the good people who are passed through the furnace of persecution for their purification.

33. This shows that the disbelievers would be in such a sad plight that they would not hesitate to give their all for their redemption.

34. "... they shall have the heavy reckoning": they shall have to bear the full consequences of their evil deeds. No sin, no shortcoming, in short, nothing will be forgiven and no evil shall go un-punished.

We learn from the Qur'ān that the rebels of Allah shall have to render a heavy reckoning, whereas there shall be a "light" reckoning from those who have been faithful and obedient to their Lord. In consideration of their loyal services,

their cases will be dealt with leniently, and taking their general goodness into account many of their shortcomings will be forgiven.

This is further amplified by a Tradition of the Holy Prophet. Hadrat 'Ā'ishah relates, "I said, O Messenger of Allah ! the most dreadful verse of the Qur'ān is this: Whoso shall commit an evil, he shall be punished for it'. (IV :123). The Holy Prophet answered, 'O 'Ā'ishah! don't you know how Allah clears the accounts of His faithful and obedient servant? Whatever harm or trouble he receives in this world—even so much as the pricking of a thorn—is taken by Allah as atonement for one or the other of his sins. As regards the Hereafter, everyone, who shall be called upon to render an account of any sin, shall be punished for it'. At this Hadrat 'Ā'ishah asked, 'Then what is meant by light reckoning in this verse: 'Whoso shall be given his 'Conduct Register' in his right hand, he will render a light reckoning?' (LXXXIV:7-8). The Holy Prophet answered, 'This means merely the presentation of his whole conduct, that is, all his deeds—good and bad—shall be presented before Allah but he shall not be called upon to clear the account of all his deeds; for the one who shall be called upon to clear the whole of his account, shall be totally ruined'."

The same thing is happening even in this world. A master deals very leniently with his faithful and obedient servant and connives at his minor faults and even forgives his major faults in consideration of his meritorious services. On the other hand, if a servant is proved to be treacherous and dishonest, no consideration is given even to his services, and he is punished both for his minor and for major faults.

35. That is, "As the attitude of the two in this world will be different from each other, so shall be their ultimate end in the Hereafter."

36. That is, "Those who listen to the Message that has been sent down by Allah, and accept His Messenger, are really very wise people. This is why their conduct in this world is quite different from those foolish people who are blind to its merits: and so is their ultimate end in the Hereafter, as stated in the subsequent verses".

37. This Covenant is the same that was made by Allah with the whole of mankind at the beginning of the creation that they would worship Him alone. (Please refer to E.N.'s 134 and 135 of *Al-A'rāf*). As this Covenant has been made with every human being, it has been imbued firmly in human nature. When a human being is born in this world, he, so to say, confirms the same Covenant because he owes his creation to the same Allah with Whom he had made that Covenant: then he is brought up by His Providence and fed and nourished with His Provisions, and uses the powers and faculties endowed by Him. All these things bind him by themselves into a covenant of bondage with his Lord. It is

obvious that wise, loyal and faithful people fulfil their Covenant and dare not break it except that they might break it unconsciously and unwillingly.

38. That is, "All those social and civil relations that are conducive to the correct and right conduct of collective human life."

39. "They show fortitude": they remain self-possessed and keep under control all their desires and lusts and do not transgress the bounds, and they do not yield to temptations to disobey their Lord in order to gain advantages and gratify their desires: nay, they bear with calm courage and endurance losses and afflictions that are inevitable in the obedience of Allah. If we consider the life of a believer from this point of view, we shall find that the whole of his life is the life of endurance and fortitude, for he keeps himself under control in very trying circumstances in this world in the hope of winning the approval of his Lord and in the expectation of gaining permanent benefits in the Hereafter: so he fights with fortitude every temptation to sin.

40. That is, "If others do evil to them, they do not do evil in return but do good instead: they do not fight mischief with mischief but with virtue. Howsoever unjust one may be to them, they do justice in every case. Likewise, they remain truthful and honest even in the case of those who tell lies against them and show dishonesty towards them."

There is a Tradition of the Holy Prophet to the same effect: "You should not imitate others in your conduct towards other people, for it is wrong to say, 'We will do goodness to others, if they do goodness to us and we will do injustice to them if they are unjust to us.' (On the other hand,) you should follow this principle: if others do goodness to you, you should do goodness to them, but if they do evil to you, you should not be unjust to them'."

There is another Tradition, which begins with the words: "My Lord has bidden me to do nine things. Four of these things are, 'I should behave justly towards everyone whether I am pleased or offended with him. I should render the right even of the one who violates my rights. I should pay the dues even of the one who deprives me of my due. I should forgive the one who has been unjust to me'." There is yet another Tradition to the same effect: "Don't be faithless even to the one who has been faithless to you." There is also a saying of Hadrat 'Umar that amounts to the same thing. "The best way of punishing the one, who does not fear God in his dealings with you, is that you should fear God in your dealings with him."

41. This implies two things. The angels will come in large numbers from every side and give them this good news: "Now you have come to a place where there is peace for you. Here you are immune from every affliction, every trouble,

every hardship, and every danger and worry." (For details please see E.N. 29 of *Al-Hijr*).

42. This verse refutes the wrong criterion by which the disbelievers of Makkah (and all other foolish people of the world) judged whether one was or was not a favorite of God. They judged a man's worth by his wealth and worldly prosperity and not by his faith and righteous conduct. They thought that the one who was enjoying all the good things of life was a favorite of God, even if he had erroneous beliefs and did wicked deeds. On the other hand, they considered the one who was poor and indigent to be under the wrath of God, even though he was righteous. That is why in their judgement the chiefs of the Quraish were far superior to the followers of the Holy Prophet. They would say, "You can see for yourselves that God is with the chiefs of the Quraish."

In this verse, Allah has warned them that they are absolutely wrong in drawing such a conclusion from the worldly conditions of the people. Allah gives His provision to the people abundantly or sparingly for reasons different from those which they presumed and richness or poverty is no criterion by which to judge the worth of people. The real criterion of judging the worth of people is their beliefs and deeds. The one, who has righteous beliefs and does good deeds, shall be higher in rank than the one who has wrong beliefs and does evil deeds. Thus the real criterion is the quality of one's deeds and not the possession or the lack of wealth.

43. Please also keep in view the answer that has been given to this question in v.7.

44. This is the answer to their question. It is not due to the lack of signs that they were going astray, but it is the lack of any desire in them to seek right guidance. For Allah does not force one to follow the Right Way, if he deliberately turns away from it. He lets such persons wander on the wrong ways they choose to wander. Nay, even all those things that should serve as a means to guidance for a seeker of truth, become the means of deviation for the one who seeks deviation. So much so that that very torch which helps show the way to the former, dazzles the eyes of the latter. This is how Allah leads astray a person.

This answer to the demand of a Sign is matchless in its eloquence. It says to them, "O foolish people! it is not due to the lack of Signs that you are not finding the right path, but it is due to the lack of any desire in you for it. You do not see any of the countless Signs that lie scattered all around you because you have no desire to go to the Right Way. How can then any Sign be helpful to you ? For you would not see any of those Signs. However, those who seek the Right Way to Allah, see these Signs and find the Right Way with their help."

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كَسَبَتْ وَجَعَلُوْا لِلّٰهِ شُرَكَآءَ ۭ قُلْ سَمُّوْهُمْ ۭ اَمْ تُنَبِّـُٔوْنَهٗ بِمَا لَا يَعْلَمُ فِي
الْاَرْضِ اَمْ بِظَاهِرٍ مِّنَ الْقَوْلِ ۭ بَلْ زُيِّنَ لِلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مَكْرُهُمْ وَصُدُّوْا
عَنِ السَّبِيْلِ ۭ وَمَنْ يُّضْلِلِ اللّٰهُ فَمَا لَهٗ مِنْ هَادٍ ۝ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ فِي الْحَيٰوةِ
الدُّنْيَا وَلَعَذَابُ الْاٰخِرَةِ اَشَقُّ ۚ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ مِنْ وَّاقٍ ۝ مَثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ
الَّتِيْ وُعِدَ الْمُتَّقُوْنَ ۭ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ ۭ اُكُلُهَا دَاۗىِٕمٌ وَّظِلُّهَا ۭ
تِلْكَ عُقْبَى الَّذِيْنَ اتَّقَوْا ۠ وَّعُقْبَى الْكٰفِرِيْنَ النَّارُ ۝ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰتَيْنٰهُمُ
الْكِتٰبَ يَفْرَحُوْنَ بِمَآ اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْكَ وَمِنَ الْاَحْزَابِ مَنْ يُّنْكِرُ بَعْضَهٗ ۭ قُلْ
اِنَّمَآ اُمِرْتُ اَنْ اَعْبُدَ اللّٰهَ وَلَآ اُشْرِكَ بِهٖ ۭ اِلَيْهِ اَدْعُوْا وَاِلَيْهِ مَاٰبِ ۝
وَكَذٰلِكَ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ حُكْمًا عَرَبِيًّا ۭ وَلَىِٕنِ اتَّبَعْتَ اَهْوَاۗءَهُمْ بَعْدَ مَا جَاۗءَكَ
مِنَ الْعِلْمِ ۙ مَا لَكَ مِنَ اللّٰهِ مِنْ وَّلِيٍّ وَّلَا وَاقٍ ۝ وَلَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلًا مِّنْ
قَبْلِكَ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ اَزْوَاجًا وَّذُرِّيَّةً ۭ وَمَا كَانَ لِرَسُوْلٍ اَنْ يَّاْتِيَ بِاٰيَةٍ اِلَّا
بِاِذْنِ اللّٰهِ ۭ لِكُلِّ اَجَلٍ كِتَابٌ ۝ يَمْحُوا اللّٰهُ مَا يَشَاۗءُ وَيُثْبِتُ ۚ وَعِنْدَهٗٓ اُمُّ
الْكِتٰبِ ۝ وَاِنْ مَّا نُرِيَنَّكَ بَعْضَ الَّذِيْ نَعِدُهُمْ اَوْ نَتَوَفَّيَنَّكَ فَاِنَّمَا عَلَيْكَ
الْبَلٰغُ وَعَلَيْنَا الْحِسَابُ ۝ اَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا اَنَّا نَاْتِي الْاَرْضَ نَنْقُصُهَا مِنْ اَطْرَافِهَا ۭ
وَاللّٰهُ يَحْكُمُ لَا مُعَقِّبَ لِحُكْمِهٖ ۭ وَهُوَ سَرِيْعُ الْحِسَابِ ۝ وَقَدْ مَكَرَ الَّذِيْنَ
مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَلِلّٰهِ الْمَكْرُ جَمِيْعًا ۭ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَكْسِبُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ۭ وَسَيَعْلَمُ الْكُفّٰرُ
لِمَنْ عُقْبَى الدَّارِ ۝ وَيَقُوْلُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لَسْتَ مُرْسَلًا ۭ قُلْ كَفٰى بِاللّٰهِ
شَهِيْدًۢا بَيْنِيْ وَبَيْنَكُمْ ۙ وَمَنْ عِنْدَهٗ عِلْمُ الْكِتٰبِ ۝

What! are they (so audacious that they are) setting up partners with Him Who is watching minutely over the actions of each and every soul?[50,51] O Prophet say to them. "(If God has Himself set them up as His partners) just tell me their names. Do you mean to inform Him of something new that He Himself is unaware of on His earth? Or do you merely utter empty words?[52] Indeed for those who rejected the Message their fraud[53] has been made to appear fair to them and they have been debarred from the Right Way;[54] and there is none to show the Right Way to those whom Allah lets go astray. There is a torment for them in the life of this world but the torment in the Hereafter is still more painful; and there is none to protect them from Allah. As regards the Paradise which the God fearing have been promised it is like this: canals flow beneath it, its fruits are eternal and its shade is perpetual. Such is the reward of the righteous but the reward of the disbelievers is the fire of Hell. 33-35

O Prophet ! some of those people whom We gave the Book before you rejoice in the Book We have sent down to you while there are others among the different sections who reject some of the things contained in this. Tell them plainly "I have been commanded to worship Allah alone and prohibited from setting up a partner with him. Therefore I invite you to Him and myself turn to Him."[55] It is with this instruction that We have sent this Command in Arabic to you. Now if you follow the desires and lusts of the people in spite of the knowledge you have received there shall be none to defend you nor to protect you against Allah. 36-37

We have sent many Messengers before you and We assigned to them also wives and children:[56] and no Messenger had the power to show any Sign without the sanction of Allah.[57] Every age had its Book: Allah abrogates whatever He pleases and keeps intact whatever He wills and He has the Original Book[58] with Him. 38-39

And O Prophet! rest assured that We will carry out the threat We are holding out to them whether a part of it should happen during your lifetime or We should cause you to die before its fulfilment. Anyhow your duty is only to convey the Message and it is for Us to do the reckoning.[59] Do these people not see how We are advancing in the land and shrinking its boundaries (for them) on all sides ?[60] Allah rules 40-42

and there is none to revise His decrees and He is swift at His reckoning. Indeed those who went before them also devised schemes, [61] but the decisive plan is wholly in the hand of Allah. He knows what every soul earns and the disbelievers will soon come to know who will have a good end.

43 These disbelievers say, 'You are not a Messenger of Allah." Say, "Allah suffices for a witness between me and you, and every such person who has the knowledge of the Book."[62]

Contd. from p.465]

45. That is, "In this way that We have not given you a Sign they demanded.

46. That is, "Instead of serving that most Compassionate Lord, they are discarding His service and setting up other partners in His attributes, powers, rights and giving thanks to others for His blessings."

47. This verse has been addressed to the Believers who were feeling uneasy that no such Sign was being sent as was demanded by the disbelievers. They thought that such a Sign would convince the disbelievers and they would accept Islam. Therefore when no such Sign was sent, they became all the more uneasy for the lack of the fulfilment of the demand that gave rise to doubts about the Prophethood of the Messenger. The question posed in this verse is meant to remove that uneasiness of the Muslims. It is like this: "Do you think that they would have embraced Islam if such and such Signs had been shown to them all of a sudden along with a Sūrah of the Qur'ān ? Are you under the delusion that they are quite ready to accept Islam and are waiting only for such a Sign ? Do you think that those people who have failed to see the light of the Truth in the teachings of the Qur'ān, in the phenomena of the universe, in the pure and spotless life of the Holy Prophet and in the wonderful change in the lives of his Companions, would see the light of the Truth in the moving of the mountains, in the cleavage of the earth and in the coming out of the dead from the graves?"

48. "Allah has full power over everything" and can show any Sign if He so desires. He is not showing any Sign for it does not fit in the scheme laid down for the guidance of Man. As the real object is to show Guidance to mankind through the Prophet and not to compel them to believe in the Prophethood of a Prophet; He desires that the people should gain guidance by thinking and observing wisely and not by seeing Signs.

49. That is, "If the object had been to make human beings Believers even without consciously understanding it, Allah could have created them Believers by birth."

50. That is, "They are so audacious that they set up partners with Allah Whose knowledge is All-Comprehensive and Who is aware of even the minutest details of the good and bad actions of each individual..."

51. These are the audacious things they do. They ascribe partners and equals to Him: they believe that some of His creatures are a part and parcel of His Being, and have attributes and rights like Him: they presume that they shall not be called to account for whatever they do, even though they live in His Kingdom.

52. That is, "You give empty names to the partners you ascribe to Him for you have no real knowledge about them". For you could get this knowledge only in one of the three following ways:

First, You might have received some authentic information that Allah had made such and such people as His partners in His attributes, powers and rights. If it is so, please let us also know their names and the source of your information.

The second possibility is that Allah might have remained ignorant that some beings have become His partners. Therefore you are going to inform Him about this. If it is so, please say it clearly in so many words so that it may be decided whether there are some foolish people who can believe in such a nonsensical claim.

Obviously the above two suppositions are absurd. Therefore the only alternative is that, "You are ascribing partners to Him without any rhyme or reason, and you without any knowledge make one the relative of God, another the hearer of supplications, and still another the helper and fulfiller of certain needs and the ruler of a certain region etc. etc."

53. *Shirk* has been called "fraud" because none of the angels, spirits, saints, heavenly bodies, to whom they ascribe Divine attributes and powers or render Divine rights, ever claimed to possess these attributes or powers, nor did they ever demand these rights from the people nor told the people that they would fulfil their desires and wants, if they would perform some rituals of worship before them. As a matter of fact, some clever people invented these gods in order to practice wilful deception and dishonesty so that they might wield powerful influence over the common people and exploit them and deprive them of a part of their hard earned possessions. Accordingly, they made the common people credulous followers of the gods of their inventions and set themselves up as their representatives to get money, etc., from them by this fraud.

The second reason why *shirk* has been called "fraud" is that a worldly man pretends to believe in it not because he wants to believe in it but in order to free himself from all moral restraints to enable him to lead an irresponsible life of greed and lust.

The third reason is given below in E.N. 54.

54. *Shirk* is also 'fraud' in the sense that it has been made to appear fair for them and so leads them into deviation and prevents them from coming back to the Right Way. It is like this: When *mushriks* adopt wrong ways of deviation that suit the kind of lives they wish to lead, they have to invent arguments to pacify their consciences and convince other people that they are on the right way. Naturally this fraud confirms them on the way of deviation and they are debarred from the Right Way.

55. This is in reply to a specific objection which was then raised by the disbelievers. They would say, "If he has brought the same Message that was brought by the Messengers before him (as he claims), why don't the Jews and the Christians who are the followers of the former Prophets come forward and welcome it?" The verse answers the objection and says that the true followers of the former Prophets really rejoice in the Message of the Qur'ān, but the false ones have been offended at it. Then it asks the Holy Prophet not to worry at all about this, saying, "O Prophet, you should not mind at all whether they are pleased or offended at it. Tell them plainly that this is the Guidance I have received from my Lord and I will follow it at all costs."

56. This is the answer to another objection. The disbelievers said that he could not be a Prophet of Allah because he had wives and children, for they argued that Prophets had nothing to do with carnal desires.

57. This is the answer to yet another objection: "Had he been a true Prophet, he would have shown a Sign like the shining hand and the miraculous staff of Prophet Moses or he would have restored sight to the blind or cured lepers like Prophet Jesus, or brought a Sign like the she-camel of Prophet Salih". The answer is this: "None of the former Messengers had any power to show any Sign nor has this Prophet: Allah showed a Sign whenever and through whomsoever He considered it to be necessary and will show any Sign whenever He will consider it necessary, and that I have not claimed to possess any such power that such a demand might be made from me."

58. This is the answer to another objection raised against the Revelation of the Qur'ān. The disbelievers said, "What was the need of this new Book, when there already existed the former revealed Books? You say that this need has arisen because the former Books have been tampered with; therefore Allah has abrogated

them and commanded that this new Book should be followed. This position you have taken is wrong for how can any one tamper with the Book of Allah and how is it possible that any Book of Allah might be tampered with? Why did not Allah protect these Books from such things as these? You say that this Book has been revealed by the same Allah Who revealed the Torah and the Gospel. How is it then that your way is different from that of the Torah? You consider certain things lawful while they are unlawful according to the Torah, etc. etc." Detailed answers to these objections have been given in other Sūrahs but here only a brief and comprehensive answer has been given to them.

The Arabic word ام الكتاب (*Umm-ul Kitāb*) literally means "the Mother Book", that is, the Original Book which is the Source and Origin of all the revealed Books.

59. This is to console the Holy Prophet, as if to say, "O Prophet, you need not concern yourself as to the end of these disbelievers who have rejected the Truth. You should go on performing with peace of mind the Mission that has been entrusted to you and leave it to Us to give them suitable punishment." Though this has been addressed to the Holy Prophet, it is obvious that it is really meant to warn the opponents of the Truth, who were demanding definitely from the Holy Prophet by way of a challenge to bring about the scourge about which threats were being held out to them.

60. " .....We are advancing in the land .....": this is a very subtle way of warning the opponents of the Truth: "The fact that Our Message is spreading fast in Arabia does, in fact, mean that We Ourselves are advancing very fast in the country against you for We are with those who are carrying Our Message."

".....We are shrinking its boundaries for them.....": "We are causing the influence of Islam to spread fast in the land and are thus reducing the boundaries of the influence of its opponents. Are not these things the portents of their coming disaster?"

61. That is, "These people, who are now devising schemes to defeat the Message of the Truth, do not take a lesson from the sad end of the people who devised similar schemes before them to suppress the voice of the Truth by falsehood, fraud and persecution."

62. That is, "Everyone who has the knowledge of the Divinely revealed Books will bear witness to the fact that my teachings are the same that were imparted by the former prophets."


IBRĀHĪM
(ABRAHAM)
ابراهيم

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XIV
IBRĀHĪM (ABRAHAM)

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from v. 35 in which mention has been made of Prophet *Ibrāhīm* (Abraham). But it does not mean that it contains the life story of Prophet Abraham. The name is merely a symbol like the names of many other Sūrah , i.e., the Sūrah in which Abraham's mention has been made.

Period of Revelation

It appears from the tone of the Sūrah that it belongs to that group of the Sūrahs which were revealed during the last stage of the Makkan period. For instance, v. 13 ("The disbelievers warned their Messengers, 'you shall have to return to our community or we will assuredly expel you from our land' ") clearly indicates that the persecution of the Muslims was at its worst at the time of the revelation of this Sūrah, and the people of Makkah were bent on expelling the Believers from there like the disbelievers of the former Prophets. That is why in v. 14 they have been warned, "We will destroy these evil-doers," and the Believers have been comforted as were the believers before them, "and after them settle you in the land." Likewise the stern warning contained in the concluding portion (vv. 43-52) also confirms that the Sūrah relates to the last-stage of the Makkan Period.

Central Theme and Purpose

This Sūrah is an admonition and a warning to the disbelievers who were rejecting the Message of the Holy Prophet and devising cunning schemes to defeat his Mission. But warning, reproof, censure and reproach dominate admonition. This is because a good deal of admonition had already been made in the preceding Sūrahs, but in spite of this their obduracy, enmity, antagonism, mischief, persecution, etc. had rather increased.

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سُوْرَةُ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ مَكِّيَّةٌ

اٰيَاتُهَا ١٢ رُكُوْعَاتُهَا ٧

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

الٓرٰ ۟ كِتٰبٌ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ اِلَيْكَ لِتُخْرِجَ النَّاسَ مِنَ الظُّلُمٰتِ اِلَى النُّوْرِ ۙ بِاِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ
اِلٰى صِرَاطِ الْعَزِيْزِ الْحَمِيْدِ ۙ﴿١﴾ اللّٰهِ الَّذِيْ لَهٗ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ ؕ
وَوَيْلٌ لِّلْكٰفِرِيْنَ مِنْ عَذَابٍ شَدِيْدِ ۙ﴿٢﴾ الَّذِيْنَ يَسْتَحِبُّوْنَ الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا
عَلَى الْاٰخِرَةِ وَيَصُدُّوْنَ عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ وَيَبْغُوْنَهَا عِوَجًا ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ فِيْ ضَلٰلٍ
بَعِيْدٍ ﴿٣﴾ وَمَآ اَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَّسُوْلٍ اِلَّا بِلِسَانِ قَوْمِهٖ لِيُبَيِّنَ لَهُمْ ؕ فَيُضِلُّ
اللّٰهُ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَيَهْدِيْ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ؕ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿٤﴾ وَلَقَدْ
اَرْسَلْنَا مُوْسٰى بِاٰيٰتِنَآ اَنْ اَخْرِجْ قَوْمَكَ مِنَ الظُّلُمٰتِ اِلَى النُّوْرِ ۙ وَذَكِّرْهُمْ
بِاَيّٰىمِ اللّٰهِ ؕ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُوْرٍ ﴿٥﴾ وَاِذْ قَالَ مُوْسٰى
لِقَوْمِهِ اذْكُرُوْا نِعْمَةَ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْكُمْ اِذْ اَنْجٰىكُمْ مِّنْ اٰلِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَسُوْمُوْنَكُمْ
سُوْٓءَ الْعَذَابِ وَيُذَبِّحُوْنَ اَبْنَآءَكُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيُوْنَ نِسَآءَكُمْ ؕ وَفِيْ ذٰلِكُمْ بَلَآءٌ مِّنْ
رَّبِّكُمْ عَظِيْمٌ ﴿٦﴾ وَاِذْ تَاَذَّنَ رَبُّكُمْ لَئِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ لَاَزِيْدَنَّكُمْ وَلَئِنْ كَفَرْتُمْ
اِنَّ عَذَابِيْ لَشَدِيْدٌ ﴿٧﴾ وَقَالَ مُوْسٰٓى اِنْ تَكْفُرُوْٓا اَنْتُمْ وَمَنْ فِي الْاَرْضِ
جَمِيْعًا ۙ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَغَنِيٌّ حَمِيْدٌ ﴿٨﴾ اَلَمْ يَاْتِكُمْ نَبَؤُا الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ
قَوْمِ نُوْحٍ وَّعَادٍ وَّثَمُوْدَ ۛ وَالَّذِيْنَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ ۛ لَا يَعْلَمُهُمْ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ ؕ
جَآءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ فَرَدُّوْٓا اَيْدِيَهُمْ فِيْٓ اَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَقَالُوْٓا اِنَّا كَفَرْنَا
بِمَآ اُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهٖ وَاِنَّا لَفِيْ شَكٍّ مِّمَّا تَدْعُوْنَنَآ اِلَيْهِ مُرِيْبٍ ﴿٩﴾ قَالَتْ رُسُلُهُمْ
اَفِي اللّٰهِ شَكٌّ فَاطِرِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ يَدْعُوْكُمْ لِيَغْفِرَ لَكُمْ مِّنْ ذُنُوْبِكُمْ

XIV

IBRĀHĪM (ABRAHAM)

ابراهيم

verses: 52 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

Alif Lām Rā. O Muhammad ! this is a Book which We have sent down to you so that you may bring mankind by the help of their Lord out of the dark ways (of ignorance) into the Light (of knowledge) to the Way of that God,[1] Who is All-Powerful and inherently worthy of All Praise[2] and the Owner of whatever is in the heavens and the earth. 1-2

And there is a painful torment for those who reject the Truth: 3
who love the life of this world more than the life of the Hereafter;[3] who debar people from Allah's Way and want to make this Way crooked[4] (to suit their wishes). They have gone far astray from the Way of Allah.

Whenever We sent a Messenger to convey Our Message, he 4
delivered it in the language of his people so that he may make it plain to them.[5] Then Allah lets go astray whomsoever He wills and shows Guidance to whomsoever He desires:[6] 'He is All-Powerful, All-Wise.[7]

We sent Moses also before this with Our Signs: and We 5
commanded him, "Bring your people out of all kinds of darkness into Light and admonish them to learn lessons from the Divine History."[8] There are great Signs[9] in this for every steadfast and grateful person.[10]

Recall (the time) when Moses said to his people, "Remember 6-8
Allah's favour on you: He delivered you from Pharaoh's people who oppressed you with cruel afflictions: they slaughtered your sons and let your females live. In this there was a hard trial for you from your Lord. And remember also that your Lord forewarned, 'If you be grateful[11] I will increase My favours on you, and if you be ungrateful (you should know that) My chastisement is severe indeed'!"[12] And

Moses said, "If you prove thankless, you and all the dwellers of the earth know that Allah does not stand in need of any of you, for He is All Sufficient and worthy of all praise by Himself."[13]

9 Has[14] not the story reached you of those who have gone before you of the people of Noah and 'Ad and Thamūd, and of those who came after them? Allah alone knows their number. When their Messengers came to them with plain teachings and manifest Signs, they thrust their hands into their mouths,[15] saying, "We reject the Message with which you have been sent and we have a disquieting doubt about that thing[16] to which you are inviting us."

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1. This is the purpose for which the Holy Prophet had been sent. He was entrusted with the mission that he should bring mankind back from the ways of darkness (ways of wickedness) into the Way of God by the help of the Light of the Qur'ān. For everyone, who is not on the Way of God, is, in fact, wandering about in the ways of the darkness (of ignorance), even though he might consider himself to be very enlightened and full of knowledge. On the other hand, the one who finds the Way of Allah, comes into the Light of Knowledge, even though he might be an illiterate person.

As regards "by the help of their Lord", this implies that the most a missionary of Islam (even though he be a Messenger of Allah) can do is to present the Right Way. It is not in his power to bring anyone forcibly to the Way, for this can only happen by the help and permission of Allah. That is why only that person whom Allah helps and permits gets guidance: otherwise even a perfect Missionary like a Messenger fails to bring a person to the Way. As regards the Divine Law, according to which Allah helps and permits a person to gain guidance, we learn from different passages of the Qur'ān that Allah gives help only to that person who himself has a desire to get guidance: who frees himself from obduracy, obstinacy and prejudice: who is not a follower of his lust, nor a slave of his desires: who is inclined to see with open eyes) and hear with open ears and think with a clear mind, and is ready to accede to any reasonable thing.

2. The word حمید *(Hamīd)* is more comprehensive than *(Mahmūd)*. A person will be entitled to be *Mahmūd* only when he is praised. But the Being Who is *Hamīd*, is naturally and permanently worthy of praise, whether anyone praises Him or not, because the element of praise is inherent in Him and is inseparable from Him.

3. Those who reject the Truth are the people whose interests are entirely bound with the life of this world, and who do not care at all for the interests of the

life of the Hereafter: who are prepared to undergo any punishment in the Next World for the sake of the interests, pleasures and comforts of this world: who, on the other hand, cannot bear the sacrifice of even the smallest pleasure in this world, nor are ready to bear any loss or encounter danger or trouble in this world for the sake of the joys of the Next World. In short, such are the people who have coolly considered and weighed the pleasures of this world against the joys of the Next World, and decided in favour of this world: therefore, they readily sacrifice the interest of the Next World whenever there is a clash between the two.

4. That is, "They do not want to follow the Way of Allah, but endeavour that Allah's Way should follow their desires: it should adjust itself in such a way as to include all their conjectures, theories and whims as its part and parcel, and exclude every creed that does not suit their way of life: it should provide sanction for all their habits, customs and manners: it should not demand from them anything which they do not like: in short, the Way of Allah should be their obedient slave and turn in the direction their devilish lusts want it to turn: nay, it should neither criticize them nor ask them to follow Allah's injunctions. This is their condition for accepting the Guidance of Allah".

5. This implies two things: First, Allah sent down His Message in the language of the people from among whom a Prophet was raised so that they might not have any excuse left that they could not understand the language of the Message. Secondly, this ruled out the presumption that a Messenger was ever given the Message in a different language merely for the sake of a miracle. For Allah considered it more important to make the people understand the Message and guide them rightly than to satisfy their curiosity. Obviously the purpose could best be served only if the Message was sent down to them in their own language by their Prophet and not in any other.

6. That is, "Although the Messenger conveys the Message in the mother tongue of the people, which is understood by everyone of them, yet all of them are not guided aright. This happens because of the fact that all of those who understand a Message do not necessarily accept it. For it is entirely with Allah to show guidance by means of His Message to anyone He wills and to let go astray anyone inspite of it."

7. As Allah is All-Powerful, no one is able by oneself to get guidance or to go astray, for none is completely independent but is under the power of Allah. But as He is All-Wise, He does not use His power blindly so as to show guidance to anyone He wills and to let go astray anyone He desires without rhyme or reason. In fact, the one who gets guidance from Him gets it on merit and the one who is let go astray is deprived of guidance because he himself deliberately chooses deviation.

8. The Arabic word (*ayyām*) technically means memorable historical events. Therefore *(Ayyām-u-Allah)* (Divine History) implies all those eventful chapters of human history which mention the rewards and punishments that were meted out to the great personalities and nations according to their deeds in the past ages.

9. Those historical events are Signs in this sense that their proper and intelligent study provides proofs of the fact that there is only one God: and that the Law of Retribution is universal and is based absolutely on the differentiation between the knowledge and moral practice of the Truth and falsehood: that this Law also requires another world (the Hereafter) for its due fulfilment. Moreover, these events contain Signs that serve as warnings against the evil consequences of building up systems of life on false creeds and theories, and help one to learn lessons from them.

10. Though these Signs are always there, only those persons learn lessons from them who remain steadfast in trials and appreciate the blessings of Allah rightly and are grateful to Him. Obviously, frivolous and ungrateful persons cannot learn any lesson from these Signs, even though they might grasp their significance.

11. That is, "If you are grateful, you will appreciate Our favours and make right use of them, and will not rebel against Our Commandments, but will surrender and submit to Us to show your gratitude to Us."

12. *Deuteronomy* (Bible) contains a long and detailed discourse to this effect. According to it, Prophet Moses, on the eve of his death, reminded the Israelites of all important events from their history, and reiterated all the Divine Commandments of the Torah which Allah had sent to them through him. Then he told them in a long speech that if they obeyed their Lord, they would be given great rewards. But if they adopted the attitude of disobedience, they would get a terrible punishment. This discourse spreads over chapters 4, 6, 8, 10, 11 and 28-30. Some of these passages are so impressive and instructive that it will be worthwhile to quote a few of them:

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up...." (*Deut.* 6: 4-7)

"And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord

thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good ? Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is thy Lord's thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is." (*Deut.* 10: 12-14)

"And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God. Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. The Lord shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face....The Lord shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto....The Lord shall establish thee an holy people unto himself....And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord; and they shall be afraid of thee....and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow. And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath...." (28: 1-13).

"But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all those curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee: Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field.... The Lord shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do....The Lord shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee,....And thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron....The Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them :....Thou shalt betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her: thou shalt build an house and thou shalt not dwell therein: thou shalt plant a vineyard, and shalt not gather the grapes thereof. Thine ox shall be slain before thine eyes....Therefore, shalt thou serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee....And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other :...." (*Deut:* 28: 15-64).

13. It should be noted that a reference to Prophet Moses and his people has been made here to warn the people of Makkah of the consequences of their ingratitude towards this favour of Allah that He had raised Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) from among them. This was a timely warning, for at

[Contd. on p. 484

وَ يُؤَخِّرَكُمْ إِلٰٓى أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۭ قَالُوْٓا إِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُنَا ۭ تُرِيْدُوْنَ أَنْ
تَصُدُّوْنَا عَمَّا كَانَ يَعْبُدُ اٰبَآؤُنَا فَأْتُوْنَا بِسُلْطٰنٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ۝١٠ قَالَتْ لَهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ
إِنْ نَّحْنُ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ وَ لٰكِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَمُنُّ عَلٰى مَنْ يَّشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهٖ ۭ
وَ مَا كَانَ لَنَآ أَنْ نَّأْتِيَكُمْ بِسُلْطٰنٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللّٰهِ ۭ وَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ
الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ ۝١١ وَ مَا لَنَآ أَلَّا نَتَوَكَّلَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ وَ قَدْ هَدٰىنَا سُبُلَنَا ۭ وَ لَنَصْبِرَنَّ
عَلٰى مَآ اٰذَيْتُمُوْنَا ۭ وَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُتَوَكِّلُوْنَ ۝١٢ وَ قَالَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا
لِرُسُلِهِمْ لَنُخْرِجَنَّكُمْ مِّنْ أَرْضِنَآ أَوْ لَتَعُوْدُنَّ فِيْ مِلَّتِنَا ۭ فَأَوْحٰٓى إِلَيْهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ
لَنُهْلِكَنَّ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ۝١٣ وَ لَنُسْكِنَنَّكُمُ الْأَرْضَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهِمْ ۭ ذٰلِكَ لِمَنْ خَافَ
مَقَامِيْ وَ خَافَ وَعِيْدِ ۝١٤ وَ اسْتَفْتَحُوْا وَ خَابَ كُلُّ جَبَّارٍ عَنِيْدٍ ۝١٥ مِّنْ
وَّرَآئِهٖ جَهَنَّمُ وَ يُسْقٰى مِنْ مَّآءٍ صَدِيْدٍ ۝١٦ يَّتَجَرَّعُهٗ وَ لَا يَكَادُ يُسِيْغُهٗ وَ
يَأْتِيْهِ الْمَوْتُ مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ وَّ مَا هُوَ بِمَيِّتٍ ۭ وَ مِنْ وَّرَآئِهٖ عَذَابٌ
غَلِيْظٌ ۝١٧ مَثَلُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا بِرَبِّهِمْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ كَرَمَادِ نِ اشْتَدَّتْ بِهِ الرِّيْحُ
فِيْ يَوْمٍ عَاصِفٍ ۭ لَا يَقْدِرُوْنَ مِمَّا كَسَبُوْا عَلٰى شَيْءٍ ۭ ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الضَّلٰلُ
الْبَعِيْدُ ۝١٨ أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللّٰهَ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ ۭ إِنْ يَّشَأْ
يُذْهِبْكُمْ وَ يَأْتِ بِخَلْقٍ جَدِيْدٍ ۝١٩ وَّ مَا ذٰلِكَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ بِعَزِيْزٍ ۝٢٠ وَ بَرَزُوْا لِلّٰهِ
جَمِيْعًا فَقَالَ الضُّعَفٰٓؤُا لِلَّذِيْنَ اسْتَكْبَرُوْٓا إِنَّا كُنَّا لَكُمْ تَبَعًا فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُّغْنُوْنَ
عَنَّا مِنْ عَذَابِ اللّٰهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ۭ قَالُوْا لَوْ هَدٰىنَا اللّٰهُ لَهَدَيْنٰكُمْ ۭ سَوَآءٌ
عَلَيْنَآ أَجَزِعْنَآ أَمْ صَبَرْنَا مَا لَنَا مِنْ مَّحِيْصٍ ۝٢١ وَ قَالَ الشَّيْطٰنُ لَمَّا قُضِيَ
الْأَمْرُ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ وَعَدَكُمْ وَعْدَ الْحَقِّ وَ وَعَدْتُّكُمْ فَأَخْلَفْتُكُمْ ۭ وَ مَا كَانَ لِيَ

The Messengers said, "Do you have doubt about the existence of Allah, Who is the Creator of the heavens and the earth?[17] He calls you that He may forgive you your sins and give you respite till your appointed term."[18] They answered, "You are no more than human beings like ourselves.[19] You intend to debar us from the worship of the deities whom our forefathers have been worshipping. Well, bring a clear Sign."[20] The Messengers replied, "It is true that we are no more than human beings like you, but Allah shows His favour to anyone of His servants He pleases.[21] And it is not in our power to bring any Sign for you. A Sign can come only by Allah's permission. And in Allah alone should the believers put their trust. And why should we not put our trust in Allah when He has guided us in the ways of our lives? We will bear with fortitude your persecutions of us and the trustful should have trust in Allah alone." 10-12

At last the disbelievers said to their Messengers, "You shall either return to our religion[22] or we will banish you from our land." Then their Lord revealed to them, "We will destroy these evil-doers and after them settle you in the land.[23] This is the reward of the one who dreads that he is accountable to Me and is afraid of the threat of My punishment." They had sought a judgment (and the judgment was passed on them) and every tyrant, the enemy of the Truth, suffered ignominy.[24] Then after this Hell lies before him where he shall get tainted water to drink, which he shall try to gulp down, but will scarcely swallow it. Death shall surround him on all sides, yet he shall not die; and before him there shall be a grievous torment. 13-17

The works of those who disbelieved may be likened to the ashes which the wind scatters on a stormy day. They shall not be able to gain anything from what they did.[25] This is the extreme deviation. Do you not see that Allah has based the creation of the heavens and the earth on truth ?[26] If He will, He can put you away and bring in a new creation in your place. And that is not at all a difficult thing for Allah.[27] 18-20

And when those people shall all be exposed together before Allah,[28] then those who were weak in this world will say to those who had posed as big ones, "As we followed you in the world, can you now do anything to relieve us from the torment of Allah?" They will reply, "Had Allah guided us to the way of salvation, we would have certainly 21

guided you to it. Now it is all the same whether we bewail it or bear it with patience: there is for us no way of escape."[29]

22 And when Our judgment has been passed, Satan will say, "The fact is that the promises Allah had made with you were all true. I, too, made some promises with you but I failed to keep any of them.[30]

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that time they were showing ingratitude by rejecting that Message. They were, therefore, warned to learn a lesson from the miserable condition of the Israelites, which was the result of their ingratitude to and rebellion against Allah's favours.

As the Quraish themselves could see the consequences of that rebellious attitude of the Israelites, they were, so to say, asked this question: "Do you also desire to meet with the same consequences by showing ingratitude towards the Message, which is a great favour to you?"

Obviously, the great favour which was shown to the Quraish was that Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) was raised from among them with that Message about which he assured them over and over again: "Accept this Message of mine: all the Arabs and the non-Arabs will surrender and submit to you".

14. The speech of Prophet Moses ended with v. 8. From here begins a direct address to the disbelievers of Makkah.

15. There has been a great deal of difference of opinion in regard to the meaning of the Arabic words of the Text and different commentators have assigned different meanings to them. But we are of the opinion that these express merely the intolerance and perplexity and a bit of anger that was being shown by the disbelievers towards the Message and this is confirmed by the subsequent sentence.

16. They had a "disquieting doubt" about the Message because it had taken away their peace of mind. This was because invitation to the Message always makes the minds uneasy, for it becomes hard even for its opponents to reject it out-right or oppose it with peace of mind. Howsoever they might give vent to their doubts about it and oppose it tooth and nail the force of its truth and its sound arguments, its frankness and candour and its winning manners of exposition produce a great agitation in the minds of its bitterest opponents: then the pure and spotless character of the Messenger and the marked change for the better brought about in his followers produce such an accumulative effect on their minds that even their most bitter antagonists begin to feel uneasy about their own stand. Thus, those who try to disturb the peace of mind of the upholders of the Truth are themselves deprived of their own peace of mind.

17. The Messengers posed this question to those who rejected the Message in order to bring home to them the absurdity of their stand with regard to God. For though the *mushriks* of every age believed in the existence of God and acknowledged that He was the Creator of the heavens and the earth, they did not accept the Message, its logical result, that He alone was entitled to their worship. That is why the Messengers asked them, "Do you have any doubt about the existence of Allah?"

18. In the case of individuals, the 'appointed term' may be either the time of one's death or the Doomsday. As regards the 'appointed term' for the rise and fall of communities, it is determined by their collective behaviour. For instance, if a capable community degenerates before the expiry of its term, the assigned period is shortened and it is deposed. On the other hand, if a degenerate community changes its ways for the better, its term is extended, So much so that it may extend even to the Doomsday. This same thing is implied in v. 11 of Ar-R'ad: "...The fact is that Allah does not change a people's lot unless they themselves change their own characteristics ...."

19. The disbelievers meant to imply: "You are a human being like us in every respect: you eat, drink and sleep like us and have wife and children like us. You feel hungry and thirsty, and suffer from heat and cold, disease and calamities like us. In short, you have every human limitation like us, and we see nothing unusual and extraordinary in you to induce us to accept you as a Prophet and believe that God communicates with you and sends His angels to you."

20. That is, "If you still insist that you are a Prophet, bring a tangible proof of your appointment so as to convince us that you have really been sent by God and your Message is from Him."

21. That is, "No doubt we are human beings like you but it is Allah's will that He has chosen us from among you and blessed us with the knowledge of the Truth and keen discernment. And this is Allah's will and He has full powers to bestow anything on anyone He wills. We are not in a position to ask Him to send that blessing to you or to anyone else: nor can we deny the realities which have been shown to us."

22. It will be wrong to conclude from this demand of theirs that the Prophets professed the religion of their people before their appointment to the Divine Office. This only meant that their people thought so because before their appointment they led a quiet life and did not propagate a new religion nor refuted the religion in vogue at that time. That is why their people were under the wrong impression that the Prophets also professed the religion of their forefathers, and, therefore, accused them of apostasy. The fact, however, is that they had never followed the religion of their *mushrik* forefathers and were not guilty of apostasy.

23. This was to reassure the Prophets that they should not worry at all about the threat that the disbelievers would banish them from their country, as if to say, "We will uproot them from their land, and establish you and your followers firmly in their place."

24. In order to grasp the real significance of these historical events, it should be kept in view that these are being related here as answers to those objections which the disbelievers of Makkah raised before the Holy Prophet. As the conditions there at the time of the revelation of this Sūrah were exactly like those of the peoples of the former Prophets, they have been cited here to warn the Quraish along with the other *mushriks* of Arabia of the consequences,' as if to say, "The former disbelievers challenged their Messengers and were destroyed and the Believers were established in the land. Likewise your future also entirely depends on the attitude you adopt towards the Message of your Prophet. If you accept this, you will be allowed to remain in the land of Arabia, and if you reject it you shall be utterly uprooted from here." The subsequent events proved that this prophecy was literally fulfilled within fifteen years after this, for there remained not a single *mushrik* in the whole of Arabia.

25. That is, "Those who were perfidious, faithless, and disobedient to the Divine Message, and refused to adopt that Way to which the Messengers invited, will find in the end that all the deeds and earnings of their lives were as worthless as a heap of ashes. Just as each and every particle of a high mound of ashes formed during a long course of years is scattered by the wind on a stormy day, likewise all their grand works will prove on the stormy Doomsday to be no more than a mound of ashes. Their dazzling culture; their grand civilization, their wonderful kingdoms and states, their magnificent universities, their sciences and their literatures, nay, even their hypocritical worship, and so-called virtuous deeds, their charitable and reformative works of which they were very proud in the worldly life, shall prove to be as worthless as a heap of ashes, and will be scattered by the "Storm" of the Day of Resurrection. So much so that there shall not remain a single particle of their works worthy of being placed in the Divine scale on that Day in their favour.

26. This is the proof of the preceding statement that the works of the disbelievers are worthless like ashes. The question implies: "Why are you sceptical of this ? Do you not see that the grand system of the earth and the heavens is based on the survival of Truth and not on the survival of falsehood. Everything bears witness to the fact that anything which is not based on truth and reality but rests on unreal speculation and guess-work cannot continue to live long. Therefore anyone who builds his works on the latter will most surely fail in his designs. For it is obvious that such a person builds his works on sand and should not, therefore, expect that they can last long. Likewise those who discard the truth

and reality and build their works on false theories and presumptions should not expect at all that they can have any lasting value for they are bound to be scattered like worthless ashes. If this is obvious as it is, why should you cherish any doubts about the fact that anyone who builds the system of his life on the basis that he is independent of Allah or on the god-head of someone else (whereas there is no other God) shall inevitably find all his works to be worthless? When the fact is that man is not absolutely independent in this world nor is he the servant of anyone else than Allah, why should you not expect that anyone who builds his works on this falsehood, shall find that all his works were worthless like the heap of ashes that was scattered all over by the wind?"

27. This is by way of admonition that follows immediately the proof of the statement in the preceding verse. This removes also any doubt that might arise concerning that decisive statement. One might question it like this: "If the creation is really based on the survival of truth, why is it that every follower of falsehood and every wrong-doer is not destroyed forthwith?" This is the answer: "O foolish man! Do you think that it is difficult for Allah to destroy such a person? Or, do you think that Allah does not destroy him because he has some close relationship with Him? If this is not so, and you yourself know that it is not so, you should understand it well that any community that follows falsehood and commits wicked deeds is always in danger of being removed to make room for a better community to work in its stead. If respite is given and the threat does not take a practical shape it does not mean that there is no danger at all. Instead of being neglectful, you should make use of every moment of this respite and realize that the false system which you are following is not stable and durable. You should, therefore, build it on stable and durable foundations."

28. The word (barūz) means 'to emerge' and also implies 'to become known'. That is why it has been translated into "shall be exposed before Allah", for it implies both these meanings. As a matter of fact, all the people are fully exposed all the time before Allah but they do not realize it. They will, however, realize it on the Day of Judgment when they shall be presented before the "Greatest of all Judges" that they were fully exposed before Him all along. So much so that every deed they did and each and everything they thought and desired is known to Him.

29. This is to serve as a warning to all those people who follow others blindly or obey and submit to tyrants because they say, "We are weak." They are warned, as if to say "You should note it well that those leaders, saints, officers and rulers whom you are following blindly today, will not be able to protect you at all from the chastisement of Allah. Therefore, you should consider it well today

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عَلَيْكُمْ مِّنْ سُلْطٰنٍ اِلَّآ اَنْ دَعَوْتُكُمْ فَاسْتَجَبْتُمْ لِيْ ۚ فَلَا تَلُوْمُوْنِيْ وَلُوْمُوْٓا
اَنْفُسَكُمْ ۭ مَآ اَنَا بِمُصْرِخِكُمْ وَمَآ اَنْتُمْ بِمُصْرِخِيَّ ۭ اِنِّيْ كَفَرْتُ بِمَآ اَشْرَكْتُمُوْنِ
مِنْ قَبْلُ ۭ اِنَّ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿22﴾ وَاُدْخِلَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا
الصّٰلِحٰتِ جَنّٰتٍ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا بِاِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ ۭ تَحِيَّتُهُمْ
فِيْهَا سَلٰمٌ ﴿23﴾ اَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ ضَرَبَ اللّٰهُ مَثَلًا كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ
اَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ وَّفَرْعُهَا فِي السَّمَاۗءِ ﴿24﴾ تُؤْتِيْٓ اُكُلَهَا كُلَّ حِيْنٍۢ بِاِذْنِ رَبِّهَا ۭ
وَيَضْرِبُ اللّٰهُ الْاَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿25﴾ وَمَثَلُ كَلِمَةٍ خَبِيْثَةٍ
كَشَجَرَةٍ خَبِيْثَةِ ۣ اجْتُثَّتْ مِنْ فَوْقِ الْاَرْضِ مَا لَهَا مِنْ قَرَارٍ ﴿26﴾ يُثَبِّتُ اللّٰهُ
الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا بِالْقَوْلِ الثَّابِتِ فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْاٰخِرَةِ ۚ وَيُضِلُّ اللّٰهُ
الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ۙ وَيَفْعَلُ اللّٰهُ مَا يَشَاۗءُ ﴿27﴾ اَلَمْ تَرَ اِلَى الَّذِيْنَ بَدَّلُوْا نِعْمَتَ اللّٰهِ كُفْرًا
وَّاَحَلُّوْا قَوْمَهُمْ دَارَ الْبَوَارِ ﴿28﴾ جَهَنَّمَ ۚ يَصْلَوْنَهَا ۭ وَبِئْسَ الْقَرَارُ ﴿29﴾ وَجَعَلُوْا
لِلّٰهِ اَنْدَادًا لِّيُضِلُّوْا عَنْ سَبِيْلِهٖ ۭ قُلْ تَمَتَّعُوْا فَاِنَّ مَصِيْرَكُمْ اِلَى النَّارِ ﴿30﴾ قُلْ
لِّعِبَادِيَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا يُقِيْمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَيُنْفِقُوْا مِمَّا رَزَقْنٰهُمْ سِرًّا وَّعَلَانِيَةً
مِّنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ يَّاْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَّا بَيْعٌ فِيْهِ وَلَا خِلٰلٌ ﴿31﴾ اَللّٰهُ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَالْاَرْضَ وَاَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاۗءِ مَاۗءً فَاَخْرَجَ بِهٖ مِنَ الثَّمَرٰتِ رِزْقًا لَّكُمْ ۚ وَ
سَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الْفُلْكَ لِتَجْرِيَ فِي الْبَحْرِ بِاَمْرِهٖ ۚ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الْاَنْهٰرَ ﴿32﴾ وَسَخَّرَ
لَكُمُ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ دَاۗىِٕبَيْنِ ۚ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ ﴿33﴾ وَاٰتٰىكُمْ مِّنْ كُلِّ
مَا سَاَلْتُمُوْهُ ۭ وَاِنْ تَعُدُّوْا نِعْمَتَ اللّٰهِ لَا تُحْصُوْهَا ۭ اِنَّ الْاِنْسَانَ لَظَلُوْمٌ
كَفَّارٌ ﴿34﴾ وَاِذْ قَالَ اِبْرٰهِيْمُ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هٰذَا الْبَلَدَ اٰمِنًا وَّاجْنُبْنِيْ وَبَنِيَّ

Yet I had no power over you; I did nothing but to invite you to my way and you accepted my invitation.[31] So do not now blame me, but blame yourselves. I cannot help you here, nor can you help me. I dissociate myself from your making me a partner with God before this.[32] Such wrong-doers are sure to receive a grievous torment." 22

And (in contrast to the transgressors), those who have believed and done righteous deeds, 'shall be admitted to Gardens underneath which canals flow. They shall abide there for ever by the permission of their Lord, and they shall be welcomed there by "peace be on you."[33] Do you not see to what Allah' has likened the 'Pure Word'[34] ? It is like a good tree which has got deep roots into the earth and whose branches have spread high up into heaven.[35] It bears good fruit every moment by the permission of its Lord.[36] Allah cites these parables for the benefit of people so that they learn a lesson from them. And an 'evil word'[37] may be likened to an evil tree, which is torn out from the earth and has no stability.[38] Allah makes the believers steadfast in the life of this world and of the Hereafter with the firm Word[39] but lets the transgressors go astray.[40] Allah has full power to do as He will. 23-27

You have seen those people who repaid the bounty of Allah with ingratitude and hurled their people (along with themselves) into the abode of perdition—Hell, wherein they shall enter and it is the most wretched abode to live! And they set up equals with Allah so that they should lead them astray from the way of Allah. Tell them, "Well, you may enjoy yourselves for a while for ultimately you shall have to return to the Fire of Hell." 28-30

O Prophet! tell My servants who have believed, to establish Salāt, and expend openly and secretly (on good works) out of what We have given them[41] before that Day comes when there shall be no buying and selling and no friendly help.[42] 31

Allah is He[43] Who has created the heavens and the earth, and He sent down rain water from the sky where with He produced different kinds of fruits to provide you with food. It is He Who subdued the ship for you that it may sail in the seas by His order and likewise He subdued the rivers for you. It is He Who subdued the sun and the moon so that they should steadfastly pursue their courses and He subdued day and night for you.[44] It is He Who fulfilled all your 32-34

requirements ;[45] so much so that you cannot count His bounties, if you tried to number them. The fact is that man is very unjust and ungrateful.

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where such people, whom you are following or obeying, are themselves going and where they are leading you."

30. When the criminals will charge Satan with leading them astray, he will plead guilty, as if to say, "You yourselves see now that all the promises and warnings made by Allah have come out true and all the promises which I made have proved to be false. I also confess that it was all deception that I gave you false assurances of prosperity, beguiled you by greed and enticed you in the snare of great expectations. I assured you that in the first instance there will be no life in the Hereafter, and that, if there be any you will go scot-free by the intercession of such and such a saint. The only thing you have to do is to make offerings before him: then you may do whatever you please, for he will deliver you from all the consequences. I repeat that I said all these things and asked my agents to say the same."

31. That is, "You cannot say and prove that it was I who forced you to follow the wrong way, whereas you wanted to follow the Right Way. You will yourselves admit that it is not so. I did no more than this that I invited you to falsehood in opposition to the invitation to the Truth and tempted you to vice instead of virtue. But I had no power to force you to the wrong way, if you desired to follow the Right Way. when you had the power and the option to follow either of the ways. Now I am ready to bear the burden of the wicked invitation I extended to you, but you are not justified in any way to throw on me the burden of accepting my invitation for you did it on your own responsibility. You should, therefore, yourselves bear all its consequences."

32. This is a clear proof of *shirk* in practice, as apart from *shirk* in creed. As Satan will charge his followers with making him a partner with God, it is obvious that as far as creed is concerned there is no one who makes Satan a partner with God in His Godhead or His worship: nay, every one curses him for his evil ways. Nevertheless, people obey and submit to him and follow him blindly, as if he were their "god" and that is what has been termed *shirk*.

Let us now consider this thesis from the opposite point of view. Some one might say that this does not hold good, for this is based on a mere saying of Satan which has been cited here. First, this objection is not sound because Allah Himself would have refuted it, had it been baseless. Secondly, this is not the only instance of *shirk* in practice in the Qur'ān. Here are a few more instances of this:

(a) It charges the Jews and Christians with *shirk* because they set up their priests and monks as their "Lords" besides Allah. (IX: 31).

(b) Those who follow the superstitious customs have been called *mushriks*. (VI: 136-139).

(c) Those who follow their lusts have been charged with making their "selves" their "god". (XXV: 43).

(d) Those who are disobedient to Allah have been accused of worshipping "Satan". (XXXVI: 60).

(e) Those who follow man-made laws without Allah's sanction have been reproved for setting up the makers of the laws without Allah's sanction as partners with God. (XLI: 21).

All the above instances are clear proofs of the fact that *shirk* is not confined to this creed alone that one might set up a partner with Allah in His Godhead as an article of faith. But it is also *shirk* that one should follow and surrender to some one other than Allah without any Divine sanction or in spite of a Divine prohibition. Such a one shall be guilty of *shirk* even though the follower might be at the same time cursing the one whom he follows and obeys. The only difference between the two kinds of shirk may be the extent of the crime and not its nature.

33. The Arabic word تحيّة *(tahiyyah)* is literally a "prayer for long life," but in usage it is a greeting at meeting. Therefore, the expression may mean: "they will welcome one another with 'peace be on you' or will be welcomed with these words". It may also be noted that the word (*salām*) implies both a prayer for "peace" and a congratulation on it.

34. Though the expression كلمة طيبة literally means "Pure Word," here it stands for "Truthful Saying and Righteous Creed". According to the Qur'ān, this 'Saying' and 'Creed" are the acceptance of the doctrine of *Tauhid*, belief in Prophethood and Revelation, and in the life of the Hereafter, for it declares these things to be the fundamental truths.

35. This is to show the strength and extent of the "Pure Word". As the entire system of the universe hangs upon the Reality contained in this "Pure Word" which the believer professes, the earth and its entire system co-operates with him and the heaven with its entire system welcomes him. There is, therefore, no conflict between him and the Law of nature, and everything in its very nature extends its help to him.

36. That is, the "Pure Word" is so fruitful that every person (or community) who bases his system of life on it, gets benefit from it every moment.

For it helps to produce clearness in thought, balance in temperament, strength in character, purity in morals, firmness in conduct, righteousness in talk, straightforwardness in conversation, good temperament in social behaviour, nobility in culture, justice and equity in economy, honesty in politics, nobility in war, sincerity in peace; confidence in promises and pledges. In short, it is the elixir that changes everything into gold if one makes the proper use of it.

37. "Evil word" is the opposite of "Pure Word" It may be applied to everything that is unreal and wrong but here it stands for any false creed that one might adopt as a basis of one's system of life, irrespective of whether it be atheism or heresy or disbelief or *shirk* or idol-worship or any other "ism" that has not been brought by a Messenger.

38. And "evil word" (false creed) has no stability because it is against the Law of nature. Therefore, everything in the universe opposes it and refutes it, as if the earth hates it and is ready to spit out its seeds every time they are sown in it, and if some need succeeds in growing an evil tree, heaven suppresses down its branches. In fact, false creed could never have been allowed to develop, if man had not been given the freedom of choice and respite for work for the sake of his trial. That is why when some foolish people exert to establish a system of life on it, it is allowed to grow to a certain extent, but it produces nothing but harmful results as long as it lasts. And no sooner does it encounter with adverse circumstances than it is thoroughly uprooted from the earth.

The distinction between the "Pure Word" and the "evil word" is so apparent that anyone who makes a critical study of the religious, moral, intellectual and cultural history of the world can perceive it easily. For the "Pure Word" has always been the one and same during the whole history of mankind and has never been uprooted. On the contrary, there have been innumerable "evil words" but each and every one has been so uprooted that there has remained hardly anything of it except its name in the pages of history. Nay, some of these had proved to be so absurd that if these are mentioned today one wonders how one could have followed such nonsensical things.

There has been another noteworthy difference between the two "words". Whenever and wherever the "Pure Word" has been adopted by an individual or a community, its blessings had not been confined to that individual and community but had benefited all around them. On the contrary, whenever and wherever an evil word has been adopted by an individual or a community, its evils had spread chaos and disorder all around them.

In this connection, it should also be noted that the parable of the "Pure Word" and the "evil word" explains the same theme that had been explained by the similitudes of the mound of ashes that is blown away by the "wind" of the

stormy day (v. 18) and of the "foam of flood", and the "scum of the melted metals." (XIII: 17)

39. That is, "The believers remain steadfast during the life of this world because of their stable system of life based on this "Pure Word". For this gives them a straight point of view, a sound system of thought and a comprehensive theory of life, and it serves as a master key to the unravelling of all knots and the solving of all problems. With its help, they acquire that strength of character and that firmness of conduct which keep them steady in the face of every vicissitude of life. This provides them also with such solid principles of life which give them peace of mind and heart, and prevent them from deviation and caprice. Above all, when, after the life of this world, they will enter into the life of the Hereafter, they will remain perfectly calm without any tinge of fear or anxiety, for they will find everything therein to be in accordance with their expectations, as if they were fully acquainted with every aspect of it before they entered into it. For they had been fully informed of, and therefore fully prepared for every stage and phase of this life. That is why they will pass through every stage with perfect calmness and firmness in contrast to the disbelievers who built their worldly lives on an "evil word" and will, therefore, be taken aback to find everything against their expectations.

40. That is, "Allah lets the transgressors, who discard the "Pure Word" and follow an "evil word", go astray by creating confusion in their minds and misdirecting their efforts because of this deviation. That is why they cannot find the right way of thought and action and so fail miserably.

41. That is, "The believers should adopt an attitude of gratitude in contrast to the disbelievers (v. 29). The practical form their gratitude should take is that they should establish *Salāt* and expend their wealth in the Way of Allah".

42. That is, "On that Day none shall be able to rescue himself either by ransom or by intercession".

43. That is, "It is the same Allah Whose bounties they are repaying with ingratitude and disobedience and with Whom they are setting up equals, though He has been so bountiful as to"....

44. The words of the Text سَخَّرَ لَكُمْ in vv. 32-33 have misled those people, who have translated these into "subjected to you". So much so that some of them interpret these verses to mean that the chief aim of the life of man is to bring the earth and heavens under his subjection, whereas their real meaning is "subjected to (laws) for you". As a matter of fact Allah has subjected all these things to such laws as are beneficial for man. Had not a ship been subjected to certain physical

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أَنْ نَّعْبُدَ الْأَصْنَامَ ﴿35﴾ رَبِّ إِنَّهُنَّ أَضْلَلْنَ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ النَّاسِ ۖ فَمَن تَبِعَنِي
فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي ۖ وَمَنْ عَصَانِي فَإِنَّكَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿36﴾ رَبَّنَا إِنِّي أَسْكَنتُ مِن ذُرِّيَّتِي
بِوَادٍ غَيْرِ ذِي زَرْعٍ عِندَ بَيْتِكَ الْمُحَرَّمِ ۙ رَبَّنَا لِيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ فَاجْعَلْ
أَفْئِدَةً مِّنَ النَّاسِ تَهْوِي إِلَيْهِمْ وَارْزُقْهُم مِّنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿37﴾
رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ تَعْلَمُ مَا نُخْفِي وَمَا نُعْلِنُ ۗ وَمَا يَخْفَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ مِن شَيْءٍ فِي
الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ ﴿38﴾ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي وَهَبَ لِي عَلَى الْكِبَرِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ
وَإِسْحَاقَ ۚ إِنَّ رَبِّي لَسَمِيعُ الدُّعَاءِ ﴿39﴾ رَبِّ اجْعَلْنِي مُقِيمَ الصَّلَاةِ وَمِن
ذُرِّيَّتِي ۚ رَبَّنَا وَتَقَبَّلْ دُعَاءِ ﴿40﴾ رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَّ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَوْمَ
يَقُومُ الْحِسَابُ ﴿41﴾ وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ اللَّهَ غَافِلًا عَمَّا يَعْمَلُ الظَّالِمُونَ ۚ إِنَّمَا
يُؤَخِّرُهُمْ لِيَوْمٍ تَشْخَصُ فِيهِ الْأَبْصَارُ ﴿42﴾ مُهْطِعِينَ مُقْنِعِي رُءُوسِهِمْ لَا
يَرْتَدُّ إِلَيْهِمْ طَرْفُهُمْ ۖ وَأَفْئِدَتُهُمْ هَوَاءٌ ﴿43﴾ وَأَنذِرِ النَّاسَ يَوْمَ يَأْتِيهِمُ
الْعَذَابُ فَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا رَبَّنَا أَخِّرْنَا إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ قَرِيبٍ نُّجِبْ دَعْوَتَكَ
وَنَتَّبِعِ الرُّسُلَ ۗ أَوَلَمْ تَكُونُوا أَقْسَمْتُم مِّن قَبْلُ مَا لَكُم مِّن زَوَالٍ ﴿44﴾ وَسَكَنتُمْ
فِي مَسَاكِنِ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ وَتَبَيَّنَ لَكُمْ كَيْفَ فَعَلْنَا بِهِمْ وَضَرَبْنَا لَكُمُ
الْأَمْثَالَ ﴿45﴾ وَقَدْ مَكَرُوا مَكْرَهُمْ وَعِندَ اللَّهِ مَكْرُهُمْ ۚ وَإِن كَانَ مَكْرُهُمْ
لِتَزُولَ مِنْهُ الْجِبَالُ ﴿46﴾ فَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ اللَّهَ مُخْلِفَ وَعْدِهِ رُسُلَهُ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ
ذُو انتِقَامٍ ﴿47﴾ يَوْمَ تُبَدَّلُ الْأَرْضُ غَيْرَ الْأَرْضِ وَالسَّمَاوَاتُ وَبَرَزُوا لِلَّهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ ﴿48﴾
وَتَرَى الْمُجْرِمِينَ يَوْمَئِذٍ مُّقَرَّنِينَ فِي الْأَصْفَادِ ﴿49﴾ سَرَابِيلُهُم مِّن قَطِرَانٍ وَتَغْشَىٰ
وُجُوهَهُمُ النَّارُ ﴿50﴾ لِيَجْزِيَ اللَّهُ كُلَّ نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ﴿51﴾

Recall the time, when Abraham prayed,[46] saying, "Lord ! make 35-41
this city[47] a city of peace, and protect me and my descendants from the worship of idols. Lord! these have turned away[48] many people from the Right Way (and they might turn away my descendants as well. Therefore, only those of them) who follow my way, belong to me, but (I leave to Thee) those who follow a different way from mine, for Thou art very Forgiving and Merciful.[49] Lord! I have settled some of my descendants in a barren valley near Thy Sacred House. Lord! I have done this in the hope that they would establish *Salāt* there. So turn the hearts of the people towards them, and provide fruits for their food[50]; it is expected that they will become grateful. Lord! Thou hast full knowledge of all that we hide and disclose."[51] And[52] the fact is that nothing in the earth and heavens is hidden from Allah. "All praise be to Allah Who has given me sons like Ismā'il and Isaac in my old age. Indeed, my Lord hears all prayers. Lord! help make me establish *Salāt* and from among my descendants (raise those who should do this work). Lord! grant my prayer. Lord! forgive me and my parents and the believers on the Day when reckoning will take place."[53]

Do not think that Allah is unaware of what these unjust people 42-46
are doing; He is only deferring their case to the Day when all eyes shall stare with consternation. They shall be running in terror with heads uplifted and eyes fixed upwards[54] and hearts becoming void. O Muhammad, fore-warn them of the Day when Our scourge will overtake them: then these wrong-doers will say, "Our Lord! give us a little more respite: we will respond to Thy Message and follow the Messengers." (But it will be said to them decisively,) "Are you not the same people who swore before this that you will never meet with a decline, whereas you had lived in the habitations of those who had wronged their souls and seen how We had dealt with them; and We held them up to you as examples? They had tried all their cunning devices to outwit Us but Allah had the remedy to counteract their devices, even though these were so powerful as to move mountains."[55]

So, O Prophet, never imagine that Allah will ever go against the 47-51
promises made to His Messengers.[56] Allah is All Powerful and capable of revenge. Warn them of the Day when the Earth and the Heavens shall be totally transformed,[57] and all of them shall stand exposed before Allah, the One, the Almighty. On that Day you will see the criminals

with their hands and feet in fetters. They shall be in garments of tar[58] and the flames of fire shall be covering their faces. This will happen so that Allah may recompense everyone for what one earned: Allah is prompt at reckoning.

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laws, there could have been no navigation at all: had not a river been subjected to certain laws, it could not have been possible to take out canals from them; likewise if the heavenly bodies (the sun and the moon, etc.) and the earth and day and night had not been subjected to certain fixed laws, life could not have been possible, not to speak of civilized life!

45. "He fulfilled all your requirements": He has provided for everything that is required for your life, its development and evolution.

46. In the preceding verses (32—35), an appeal was made to the Quraish to be grateful to that Allah Who has bestowed so many bounties on mankind in general. But in this passage the same appeal is being made on the plea that Allah had bestowed His special bounties on the Quraish in particular. They have been asked to remember that Prophet Abraham had settled their forefathers near the Ka'abah and made their city, Makkah, a "City of Peace" and Allah showered His blessings on the Quraish in answer to the prayer of Prophet Abraham. They have been admonished to remember those "bounties" and mend their ways.

47. Makkah.

48. This is a figurative way of saying that idols have been the means of turning many people away from Allah's Way into the ways of deviation.

49. This forbearance shown towards those who followed a different way from the Right Way is an instance of Prophet Abraham's leniency to mankind. He left their case to the Forgiveness and Mercy of Allah for he could not bear to see them under Divine scourge. Another instance of this has been cited in Sūrah Hūd. When the angels were on their way to destroy the wicked people of Lot, Prophet Abraham began to plead for them: " .... Abraham began to dispute with Us concerning the people of Lot for he was tender-hearted and merciful...."(XI: 74-75) Likewise Prophet Jesus was so tender-hearted that even when Allah will show to him that his followers had deviated from the Right Way, he will plead their case: "Now if you punish them, they are your own servants, and if you forgive them, you are All- Mighty and All-Wise" (v: 118).

50. Allah granted this prayer of Prophet Abraham. That was why people from the whole of Arabia used to come there for *Hajj* and *'Umrah* at the time of the revelation of this Sūrah, and now people gather there from all over the world.

Besides this, there is plenty of food and fruit in all-seasons of the year, though the valley is absolutey barren and no vegetation grows in it even for animals.

51. That is, "Lord: Thou hearest what I utter with my tongue and also hast full knowledge of my thoughts and feelings."

52. This parenthetical clause has been inserted to confirm the statement of Prophet Abraham.

53. Prophet Abraham included his *mushrik* father in his prayer because he had made promise that the would pray to his Lord for his forgiveness. (XIX: 48). But afterwards when he realized that he should not pray for his forgiveness because he was an enemy of Allah, he absolved himself of that promise. (IX: 114).

54. This graphic picture depicts the horrible plight of the wrongdoers on the Day of Reckoning. When they will realize the situation, they will be so taken aback that they will have their looks fixed straight in front of them without seeing anything.

55. That is, "You have seen that the former people who violated the Divine Law, and who opposed the Message, devised very effective and cunning schemes to avert the consequences of their iniquity, but Allah defeated them with His single counter-device. You did not give up your crafty schemes against the Message of Truth in the vain hope that your "strong" measures would succeed where the schemes of your predecessors had failed.

56. Though this has been addressed to the Holy Prophet, it is really meant for his opponents. They are being warned that they should not delude themselves because of the delay in their punishment, they should note it well that Allah fulfilled the promises He made to the former Messengers and defeated their opponents. Likewise He will surely fulfil the promises He had made to Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him).

57. It is obvious from this verse and some hints in the Qur'ān that on the occasion of Resurrection, the Earth and the Heavens will not be totally destroyed but at the blowing of the "First Trumpet", the existing physical system shall be disarranged. After this, between the blowing of the "First" and the "Last Trumpet" (Allah alone knows how long this interval will last), the present form and aspect of the earth and the heavens shall be transformed and a new physical system with new physical laws will come into existence. That will be the world of the Hereafter. When the "Last Trumpet" will be blown, all human beings from Adam to those born before the "First Trumpet", shall be brought to life and

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هٰذَا بَلٰغٌ لِّلنَّاسِ وَلِيُنْذَرُوْا بِهٖ وَلِيَعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّمَا هُوَ اِلٰهٌ وَّاحِدٌ وَّلِيَذَّكَّرَ اُولُوا الْاَلْبَابِ ﴿٥٢﴾

52 This is a Message for mankind so that they may be warned by it and realize that in fact there is but One God, and that men of understanding may learn a lesson from it.

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appear before Allah. The Qur'ān calls this حشر *(Hashr)* which literally means "to muster and gather together". It appears from the wording of the Qur'ān and some clear statements in the Traditions that this will take place on this Earth. The "Seat of Judgment" and the "Scales" will be established on the Earth and the decisions will be passed here. This is also clear from the Qur'ān and the Traditions that the life in the Hereafter will not merely be a spiritual life but the very physical and spiritual life which we are living now on this earth; and every individual shall receive his reward or punishment exactly in that "personality" in which he or she is living in the life of this world.

58. Some commentators and translators are of the opinion that stands for "sulphur" or "molten copper" but actually it stands for "tar" and the like.

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XV

AL-ḤIJR

الحِجر

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XV

AL-ḤIJR

الحِجر

INTRODUCTION

Name

This Sūrah takes its name from v 80.

Period of Revelation

It is clear from its topics and style that the period of its revelation is about the same as that of Sūrah *Ibrāhīm*, for two things are quite prominent in its background. First, it appears from the repeated warnings in the Sūrah that in spite of the fact that the Holy Prophet had been propagating the Message for many years, his people in general had not shown any inclination towards its acceptance; nay, they had become more and more obdurate and stubborn in their antagonism, enmity and ridicule with the passage of time. Secondly, by that time the Holy Prophet had begun to feel a little tired of making strenuous efforts to eradicate disbelief and opposition of his people. That is why Allah has consoled and comforted him over and over again by way of encouragement.

Topics and the Central Theme

Though the main topics of the Sūrah are: (a) warning to those who rejected his Message, opposed it tooth and nail, and ridiculed him, and (b) comfort and encouragement to the Holy Prophet, it does not mean that this Sūrah does not contain admonition and instructions. As a matter of fact, the Qur'ān never confines itself to mere warning, rebuke

and censure, but resorts to precept in every suitable place. Accordingly, this Sūrah contains brief arguments for *Tauhid* on the one hand; and admonition in the story of Adam and Satan on the other.



الٓرٰ ۚ تِلْكَ اٰيٰتُ الْكِتٰبِ وَقُرْاٰنٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ۝١

رُبَمَا يَوَدُّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لَوْ كَانُوْا مُسْلِمِيْنَ ۝٢ ذَرْهُمْ يَاْكُلُوْا وَيَتَمَتَّعُوْا

وَيُلْهِهِمُ الْاَمَلُ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝٣ وَمَآ اَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ اِلَّا وَلَهَا كِتَابٌ
مَّعْلُوْمٌ ۝٤ مَا تَسْبِقُ مِنْ اُمَّةٍ اَجَلَهَا وَمَا يَسْتَاْخِرُوْنَ ۝٥ وَقَالُوْا يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْ
نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ الذِّكْرُ اِنَّكَ لَمَجْنُوْنٌ ۝٦ لَوْ مَا تَاْتِيْنَا بِالْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ
الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ۝٧ مَا نُنَزِّلُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةَ اِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَمَا كَانُوْٓا اِذًا مُّنْظَرِيْنَ ۝٨ اِنَّا
نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَاِنَّا لَهٗ لَحٰفِظُوْنَ ۝٩ وَلَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ فِيْ شِيَعِ
الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ۝١٠ وَمَا يَاْتِيْهِمْ مِّنْ رَّسُوْلٍ اِلَّا كَانُوْا بِهٖ يَسْتَهْزِءُوْنَ ۝١١ كَذٰلِكَ
نَسْلُكُهٗ فِيْ قُلُوْبِ الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ ۝١٢ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِهٖ وَقَدْ خَلَتْ سُنَّةُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ۝١٣ وَ
لَوْ فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ بَابًا مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ فَظَلُّوْا فِيْهِ يَعْرُجُوْنَ ۝١٤ لَقَالُوْٓا اِنَّمَا سُكِّرَتْ
اَبْصَارُنَا بَلْ نَحْنُ قَوْمٌ مَّسْحُوْرُوْنَ ۝١٥ وَلَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا فِي السَّمَآءِ بُرُوْجًا وَّ
زَيَّنّٰهَا لِلنّٰظِرِيْنَ ۝١٦ وَحَفِظْنٰهَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْطٰنٍ رَّجِيْمٍ ۝١٧ اِلَّا مَنِ اسْتَرَقَ السَّمْعَ
فَاَتْبَعَهٗ شِهَابٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ۝١٨ وَالْاَرْضَ مَدَدْنٰهَا وَاَلْقَيْنَا فِيْهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَاَنْۢبَتْنَا
فِيْهَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مَّوْزُوْنٍ ۝١٩ وَجَعَلْنَا لَكُمْ فِيْهَا مَعَايِشَ وَمَنْ لَّسْتُمْ لَهٗ
بِرٰزِقِيْنَ ۝٢٠ وَاِنْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ اِلَّا عِنْدَنَا خَزَآئِنُهٗ ۖ وَمَا نُنَزِّلُهٗٓ اِلَّا بِقَدَرٍ مَّعْلُوْمٍ ۝٢١
وَاَرْسَلْنَا الرِّيٰحَ لَوَاقِحَ فَاَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَاَسْقَيْنٰكُمُوْهُ ۚ وَمَآ اَنْتُمْ لَهٗ

XV

AL-ḤIJR

الحِجر

Verses: 99 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

Alif Lām Rā. These are the verses of the Divine Book and the lucid Qurān.[1] 1

The time is not far when the same people who have today refused to accept (the Message of Islam) will regret and say, "we wish we had surrendered to it!" Leave them alone to eat, drink and be merry and to be deluded by false hopes. They will soon realize it. We had prescribed a respite for every habitation that we destroyed before this.[2] No community is destroyed before the expiry of its respite nor it is allowed to survive it. 2-5

They say, "You, upon whom the Divine word[3] has been sent down, are surely insane. Why do you not bring angels before us, if what you say be true?" We do not send down angels in this way. When they come down,[4] they come down with truth, and then the people are not given respite.[5] As regards this Admonition, it is We Who have sent it down, and We Ourself will preserve it.[6] 6-9

O Muhammad!, already We have sent Messengers before you among many of the ancient peoples. But they mocked at each of the Messengers who came to them. Though We cause it (Admonition) to enter into their hearts (like a rod), they would not believe in it.[7] And the same has been the way of such people since ancient times. Even if We had opened a gate for them in heaven, and they had begun to ascend through it higher during day time, they would have said, "Our eyes have been dazzled; nay, we have been bewitched." 10-15

16-18 It is We Who have divided the heavens into many fortified spheres[8] for the sake of administration and adorned and decked them out fair to the beholders,[9] and guarded them from every accursed Satan.[10] No Satan can pass through them except that an eaves-dropper might hear something[11], but a fiery flame pursues that eaves-dropper.[12]

19-20 We stretched forth the Earth, and set mountains firmly upon it, and caused to grow therein every kind of vegetable in balanced measure.[13] And We provided therein means of sustenance for you and for many other creatures for whom you do not provide.

21 There is not a thing whose treasures are not with Us, and We send down each thing in appropriate measure.[14]

22 It is We Who send the fertilising winds: then We send down water from heaven, and then We give it to you to drink; and it is not you who hold the store of this wealth.

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1. This verse is the brief introduction to the Sūrah, and immediately after this begins its theme. "These are the verses of the lucid Qur'ān": These are the verses of that Qur'ān which makes its meaning lucid and understandable.

2. This is to refute the fallacious argument of the disbelievers that Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) was not a true Prophet because they had received no prompt punishment for their disbelief. It is like this: "We have never seized a community at the first commital of *kufr*.

We prescribe a limit for every community to hear and understand the message and reform its ways. Then We tolerate its mischief and evil deeds up to that limit and allow it full freedom to do as it likes, and give it respite till the term expires. That is why We are tolerating their attitude of ridicule and denial. (For the full meaning of respite, please refer to E.N. 18 of Sūrah *Ibrāhīm*).

3. The word *(Zikr)* literally means "to cause to remember, "to caution" and "to give advice". But the Qur'ān has used it as a technical term for "Admonition", which comes as a precept. Thus all the Books that had been sent down to the Messengers were *Zikr*, and the Qur'ān is also *Zikr*.

4. This was a sarcastic remark that was made by the opponents, for they did not acknowledge that the "Admonition" had been sent down to the Holy Prophet: otherwise they could not say that he was "insane". What they really meant by this remark was: "You, who claim that the "Admonition" has been sent down to you, are insane". A similar remark was also made by Pharaoh concerning

Prophet Moses. Addressing his courtiers, he said, "The Messenger who has been sent to you is insane". (XXVI: 27)

5. "We do not send down the angels in this way": We do not send down the angels for the mere fun of it in response to the request of the people: nor are they sent to unveil the Reality before them in order to show to them all the "unseen" things to which the Messengers invite them to believe. As a matter of fact, angels are sent down on that occasion when it is decreed to pass judgment on some wicked people. At that time the judgment comes into operation without extending any invitation to the condemned people to accept the Message, for their period of respite ends as soon as the "Reality" is unveiled before them.

".....they come down with truth": ".....they bring down truth with them". That is they come down to eradicate falsehood and to establish truth in its stead. Or, in other words, it means, ".....they come down to put into force the judgment of Allah".

6. That is, "You should note it well that it is We Who have sent this 'Word'. Thus it is not Our Messenger whom you are calling 'insane' but in fact this abusive remark applies to Us. Moreover, you should know that it is Our 'Word' and We are preserving it; therefore, you can do no harm to it; nor can you discredit it by your ridicules, taunts and objections: nor can you hamper its progress, whatever you may do against it: nor will anyone be ever able to change or tamper with it."

7. The majority of the translators and commentators are of the opinion that the pronoun 'it' in ".... cause it" in v. 12, refers to their "mockery", occurring in v. 11, and in .... would not believe in it" in v. 13, refers to the "Admonition" occurring in v. 9. Then vv. 12-13 will be rendered like this: "Thus we cause mockery enter into the hearts of the criminals and they do not believe in the Admonition .... " Though grammatically there is nothing wrong with this version, yet our version of "it" will be better even grammatically. According to this v. 12 will mean, "When the Admonition enters into the hearts of the believers it gives them peace of mind and comfort of heart. But when the same enters into the hearts of the criminals it becomes a hot rod, and burns their minds and hearts".

8. In the preceding verses (14-15) it was stated that the disbelievers had become so hardened against the Qur'ān that they would not have believed in it even if they had ascended the Heaven and seen with their own eyes the Signs mentioned in it. Now in vv. 16-22, some of the Signs are being cited in order to convince them of its truth.

"Fortified spheres" *(burūj)* are Signs of Allah for it is not possible to pass through one sphere of the Heaven into another, as each sphere of the space has been fortified by invisible boundaries. In this connection, it may be noted that literally the Arabic word *burj* means "a fortified place" but as a technical term of ancient astronomy this stood for each of the twelve Signs of the Zodiac, which marked the sun's path through the heavens. This has led some of the commentators to form the opinion that in this verse the word *burūj* refers to the same. But there are some others who think that it means "planets". However, if we consider this word in the context of v. 19, we are led to the conclusion that probably it stands for "spheres".

9. "We have adorned and decked the "fortified spheres"; "We have placed a shining star or planet in each of these spheres and made them look beautiful". In other words, it means: "We have not made the boundless universe dismal, desolate and frightful, but so beautiful that one finds marvellous order and harmony in it everywhere, and sights therein are so attractive that each one of these charms hearts and minds. This wonderful structure of the universe is a clear proof of the fact that its Creator is not only Great and All-Wise but is also a perfect Artist". The Qur'ān has also stated this aspect of the Creator in XXXII: 7: "(Allah is) that God Who has created in perfect beauty everything He has created".

10. That is, "These spheres are so fortified that they are beyond the reach of every Satan, for all Satans including those of jinns, have been confined to that sphere in which the Earth has been placed and they enjoy no more access to visit other spheres than the other dwellers of this sphere. This has been mentioned in order to remove a common misunderstanding. The common people believed, and still believe, that Satan and his descendants have a free access to every place in the universe. On the contrary, the Qur'ān says that Satans cannot go beyond a certain limit and they have no unlimited power of ascension.

11. This is the answer to the false claim of the soothsayers, diviners, hermits, conjurers and the like who pretended to receive communications from the Heaven. The Qur'ān says that in fact they do not possess any means of obtaining information about unseen things. Satans, however, try to eaves-drop because they are by nature more like angels than human beings, but in reality, they succeed in obtaining very little information about it.

12. In Arabic the word *shihāb-i-mubin* literally means "fiery flame". In XXXVII: 10, the same thing has been called *shihāb-i-thāqib* ("flame that pierces through darkness"). This may or may not necessarily be a "meteor" for it is just possible that it may be some type of rays such as "Cosmic Rays" or even a stronger type which we have not been able to discover as yet. Anyhow if the

"fiery flame" that pursues Satans may be taken to be a meteor, a countless number of these can form a fortification around our sphere of the universe. Scientific observations made with the help of the telescope have shown that billions of these meteors are rushing from space in mass of "rainfall" towards the earth's atmosphere. Such a scene was witnessed in an eastern part of North America on November 13, 1833. This is so strong a fortification that it can prevent Satans from passing through any fortified sphere.

With the help of the above, one can form a mental picture of the "fortified spheres". Though there is no visible "wall" to keep distinct and separate one sphere from the others, Allah has securely guarded each of these spheres by invisible "walls" against each other. That is why our "planet" has remained safe in spite of the occasional "rainfall" of countless meteors. For as soon as they cross the protective wall of our sphere, they are burnt to ashes. But sometimes a meteorite reaches the earth from outer space as if to warn the dwellers of this planet of the existence of the "power" of the Creator. For instance, the biggest of these weighs 645 pounds and it is obvious from this that if the earth had not been made safe and secure by means of "fortified spheres" the rain of the shooting stars would have utterly annihilated it long long ago. It is these "fortified spheres" which the Qur'ān calls *"burūj"*.

13. The growth of every kind of plant in a limited extent is another Sign of the wisdom and power of Allah. For the generative power of every vegetable plant is so great that if free growth had been allowed to even one kind of plant, it would have covered the whole surface of the Earth. But it is by the design of the All-Wise and All-Powerful Creator that every kind of vegetable is produced in a balanced measure. There is another aspect of the vegetable life. Each and every kind of it is allowed to grow only to a fixed size, height, and thickness, which is a proof of the fact that the Creator himself prescribed the structure, the shape, the size, the height, the leaves and branches, and the number of each and every plant, and no plant is allowed to go beyond any of these fixed limits.

14. This is to bring home the fact that it is not vegetable life alone that has a fixed limit to its growth, etc; The same is true of everything that exists, whether it be air, water, light, heat, cold, mineral, vegetable, animal or power or energy, in short, each and every thing exists in the prescribed quantity, number, etc., which neither decreases nor increases. It is this "determined course", in each and every thing, which has produced appropriate balance and proportion in the entire system of the universe to such a perfection that one is led to the inevitable conclusion that the whole thing has been designed by its All-Wise Creator. For, had the universe come into existence by mere accident or had it been created by

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بِخٰزِنِيْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَاِنَّا لَنَحْنُ نُحْيٖ وَنُمِيْتُ وَنَحْنُ الْوٰرِثُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْنَا
الْمُسْتَقْدِمِيْنَ مِنْكُمْ وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْنَا الْمُسْتَاْخِرِيْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَاِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ يَحْشُرُهُمْ ؕ
اِنَّهٗ حَكِيْمٌ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْاِنْسَانَ مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ مِّنْ حَمَاٍ مَّسْنُوْنٍ ﴿٢٦﴾
وَالْجَآنَّ خَلَقْنٰهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ مِنْ نَّارِ السَّمُوْمِ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَاِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اِنِّيْ
خَالِقٌۢ بَشَرًا مِّنْ صَلْصَالٍ مِّنْ حَمَاٍ مَّسْنُوْنٍ ﴿٢٨﴾ فَاِذَا سَوَّيْتُهٗ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيْهِ مِنْ
رُّوْحِيْ فَقَعُوْا لَهٗ سٰجِدِيْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾ فَسَجَدَ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ كُلُّهُمْ اَجْمَعُوْنَ ﴿٣٠﴾ اِلَّآ اِبْلِيْسَ ؕ اَبٰٓى
اَنْ يَّكُوْنَ مَعَ السّٰجِدِيْنَ ﴿٣١﴾ قَالَ يٰٓاِبْلِيْسُ مَا لَكَ اَلَّا تَكُوْنَ مَعَ السّٰجِدِيْنَ ﴿٣٢﴾
قَالَ لَمْ اَكُنْ لِّاَسْجُدَ لِبَشَرٍ خَلَقْتَهٗ مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ مِّنْ حَمَاٍ مَّسْنُوْنٍ ﴿٣٣﴾ قَالَ
فَاخْرُجْ مِنْهَا فَاِنَّكَ رَجِيْمٌ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَّاِنَّ عَلَيْكَ اللَّعْنَةَ اِلٰى يَوْمِ الدِّيْنِ ﴿٣٥﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ
فَاَنْظِرْنِيْٓ اِلٰى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُوْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾ قَالَ فَاِنَّكَ مِنَ الْمُنْظَرِيْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾ اِلٰى يَوْمِ الْوَقْتِ
الْمَعْلُوْمِ ﴿٣٨﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ بِمَآ اَغْوَيْتَنِيْ لَاُزَيِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ فِي الْاَرْضِ وَلَاُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ
اَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾ اِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمُ الْمُخْلَصِيْنَ ﴿٤٠﴾ قَالَ هٰذَا صِرَاطٌ عَلَيَّ مُسْتَقِيْمٌ ﴿٤١﴾
اِنَّ عِبَادِيْ لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطٰنٌ اِلَّا مَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الْغٰوِيْنَ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَاِنَّ
جَهَنَّمَ لَمَوْعِدُهُمْ اَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿٤٣﴾ لَهَا سَبْعَةُ اَبْوَابٍ ؕ لِكُلِّ بَابٍ مِّنْهُمْ جُزْءٌ
مَّقْسُوْمٌ ﴿٤٤﴾ اِنَّ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ فِيْ جَنّٰتٍ وَّعُيُوْنٍ ﴿٤٥﴾ اُدْخُلُوْهَا بِسَلٰمٍ اٰمِنِيْنَ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَ
نَزَعْنَا مَا فِيْ صُدُوْرِهِمْ مِّنْ غِلٍّ اِخْوَانًا عَلٰى سُرُرٍ مُّتَقٰبِلِيْنَ ﴿٤٧﴾ لَا يَمَسُّهُمْ
فِيْهَا نَصَبٌ وَّمَا هُمْ مِّنْهَا بِمُخْرَجِيْنَ ﴿٤٨﴾ نَبِّئْ عِبَادِيْٓ اَنِّيْٓ اَنَا الْغَفُوْرُ
الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿٤٩﴾ وَاَنَّ عَذَابِيْ هُوَ الْعَذَابُ الْاَلِيْمُ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَنَبِّئْهُمْ عَنْ ضَيْفِ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ ﴿٥١﴾
اِذْ دَخَلُوْا عَلَيْهِ فَقَالُوْا سَلٰمًا ؕ قَالَ اِنَّا مِنْكُمْ وَجِلُوْنَ ﴿٥٢﴾ قَالُوْا لَا تَوْجَلْ

It is We Who give life and death and We will be the inheritors of all.[15] We have full knowledge about those who lived before you, and We are keeping watch over their successors. Most surely your Lord will gather them together for He is All-Wise, All-Knowing.[16] 23-25

We created Man from dried clay of rotten earth:[17] and before him We had created *jinn* from the flame of heat.[18] Then recall to mind the time when your Lord said to the angels, "I am going to create a man from dried clay of rotten earth. When I have brought him to perfection and breathed of My spirit[19] into him, you should bow down before him all together." Accordingly all the angels bowed down except Iblis: he refused to join those who bowed down.[20] The Lord said, "O Iblis! What is the matter with you that you have not joined those who have bowed down ?" He replied, "It does not behove me to bow down before this man whom you have created from dried clay of rotten earth." The Lord said, "Get away from here, for you have become accursed: the curse shall rest upon you till the Day of Retribution."[21] At this he requested, "My Lord! then give me respite till that Day when mankind shall be resurrected." Allah said, "Well! you are given respite till the Day of predestined time." Iblis replied, "Lord, because Thou hast beguiled me, I will create allurements for them[22] and seduce them except those of Thy servants whom Thou hast chosen for Thyself from amongst them." Allah replied, "This is the straight way that reaches Me.[23] Indeed, thou shalt have no power over My sincere servants. Thou wilt succeed only in beguiling those who shall follow thee,[24] and they shall all be destined for Hell."[25] 26-43

This Hell (with which the followers of Iblis have been threatened) has seven gates, and each gate has been specified for a separate group of them.[26] In contrast to them the pious people[27] shall go to the gardens and fountains. (It will be said to them), "Enter into these in peace and security." We will remove from their hearts even the little bit of spite that will be therein,[28] and they will become like brethren, and sit face to face on couches. They will have no toil to weary them nor will they be cast out from there.[29] 44-48

O Prophet! tell My servants, "I am Forgiving and Merciful, but at the same time My chastisement is also a severe chatisement." 49-50

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many gods, it was impossible to have such a perfect balance and appropriate proportion with perpetual consistence in so many different things and powers.

15. It is to impress this: "your worldly life and all you possess are transitory and temporary, and Allah alone is Eternal. Your end shall come sooner or later, and you shall leave everything behind in this world, which will again become a part of Our treasure."

16. "He is All-Wise", therefore His Wisdom demands that He should gather the whole of mankind and reward or punish each individual in accordance with his deeds. And "He is All-Knowing": therefore no individual, whosoever he be, can escape from Him. As each and every particle of each and every individual is in His knowledge, He is able to bring the whole of mankind to life in the Hereafter. Thus anyone who denies "Life-in-the-Hereafter" is really ignorant of the Wisdom of Allah; and anyone who considers it impossible that those particles of the human body, which were all scattered about, could again be brought together in the form of the body that was alive, is ignorant of the All-Comprehensive knowledge and power of Allah.

17. The Arabic word "salsāl" means the dried clay which produces a sound like pottery."

"Hamā" is "the black mud which has become so rotten as to be in a fermented state."

"Masnūn" has a double meaning: (a) "rotten clay which has become greasy" (b) clay which has been moulded into a shape." It is clear from the wording of the text that at first the image of man was made of clay from rotten earth and when it dried up, soul was breathed into it. Thus the Qur'ān positively refutes the Darwinian theory of Evolution that man came into existence after passing through continuous genetic adaptations. It will, therefore, be a futile attempt, as some modernised commentators have done, to prove that theory from the Qur'ān.

18. As *'samūm'* is not wind, *"nār-i-samūm"* will mean "flame of heat" ("intense heat") and not of "fire." This is the explanation of those passages in which it has been stated that *jinns* have been created from fire.

19. "....(when I have) breathed of My spirit into him....": "....(when I have) cast a reflection of My Divine characteristics on him...." This shows that the soul of man implies "life, knowledge, power, will, discretion and other human characteristics in the aggregate. These are in reality a slight reflection of Divine characteristics that has been cast on the human body, which was originally created

from dried clay. And it is this Divine reflection on the human body which has raised him to the position of the Vicegerent of Allah and made him that worthy being before whom angels and every earthly thing should bow down.

As a matter of fact, the source of each characteristic of everything is one Divine characteristic or the other, as is borne by a Tradition: 'Allah divided Mercy into one hundred parts: then He reserved ninety-nine parts for Himself and sent down the remaining one part to the Earth. It is because of that one part that the creatures show mercy to one another. So much so that it is due to this that an animal refrains from placing the hoof on its young ones."

In this connection one has to be on strict guard against the notion that the possession of a part of any Divine characteristic amounts to the possession of a part of Godhead. This is because Godhead is absolutely beyond the reach of each and every creation.

20. Please compare this passage (vv. 30-43) with II: 30-39, IV: 117-120 and VII: 11-25 and also refer to E.N.'s appended to these.

21. That is, "You shall remain accused up to the Resurrection. Then you shall be punished for your disobedience on the Day of Judgment."

22. That is, "Thou hast beguiled me by commanding me to bow down before a creature who is inferior to me: for it is obvious that I could not obey such an order. Therefore, I will now beguile them and disobey Thee." In other words, Iblis meant to say, "I will make the worldly life, its enjoyments and its transitory benefits so alluring for man that he will forget the responsibilities of the Vicegerent of Allah, and that he shall have to render his account in the Hereafter. They will also forget Thee or will disobey Thee, even though they would profess to remember Thee."

23. This verse (41) may have another meaning: "This is the right thing: I also will stick to this."

24. This verse (42) also may have another meaning: "You will have no power over My servants (common people) to force them to disobey Me. However, We will give freedom of action to those who will willingly or deliberately follow you, and we will not forcibly prevent them from your way, if they intended to follow you."

According to the first rendering, these verses will mean this: "The way followed by My sincere servants is the only straight way to reach Me. Satan will have no power over those people who follow it, for I will choose them to be My own servants." Satan himself admitted that he will not be able to entice them. On

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إِنَّا نُبَشِّرُكَ بِغُلٰمٍ عَلِيْمٍ ﴿٥٣﴾ قَالَ أَبَشَّرْتُمُوْنِيْ عَلٰٓى أَنْ مَّسَّنِيَ الْكِبَرُ فَبِمَ تُبَشِّرُوْنَ ﴿٥٤﴾
قَالُوْا بَشَّرْنٰكَ بِالْحَقِّ فَلَا تَكُنْ مِّنَ الْقٰنِطِيْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾ قَالَ وَمَنْ يَّقْنَطُ مِنْ رَّحْمَةِ
رَبِّهٖٓ إِلَّا الضَّآلُّوْنَ ﴿٥٦﴾ قَالَ فَمَا خَطْبُكُمْ أَيُّهَا الْمُرْسَلُوْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾ قَالُوْٓا إِنَّآ أُرْسِلْنَآ
إِلٰى قَوْمٍ مُّجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿٥٨﴾ إِلَّآ اٰلَ لُوْطٍ ۭ إِنَّا لَمُنَجُّوْهُمْ أَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿٥٩﴾ إِلَّا امْرَأَتَهٗ
قَدَّرْنَآ ۙ إِنَّهَا لَمِنَ الْغٰبِرِيْنَ ﴿٦٠﴾ فَلَمَّا جَآءَ اٰلَ لُوْطِ ۨ الْمُرْسَلُوْنَ ﴿٦١﴾ قَالَ إِنَّكُمْ
قَوْمٌ مُّنْكَرُوْنَ ﴿٦٢﴾ قَالُوْا بَلْ جِئْنٰكَ بِمَا كَانُوْا فِيْهِ يَمْتَرُوْنَ ﴿٦٣﴾ وَأَتَيْنٰكَ بِالْحَقِّ
وَإِنَّا لَصٰدِقُوْنَ ﴿٦٤﴾ فَأَسْرِ بِأَهْلِكَ بِقِطْعٍ مِّنَ الَّيْلِ وَاتَّبِعْ أَدْبَارَهُمْ وَلَا
يَلْتَفِتْ مِنْكُمْ أَحَدٌ وَّامْضُوْا حَيْثُ تُؤْمَرُوْنَ ﴿٦٥﴾ وَقَضَيْنَآ إِلَيْهِ ذٰلِكَ الْأَمْرَ
أَنَّ دَابِرَ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ مَقْطُوْعٌ مُّصْبِحِيْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾ وَجَآءَ أَهْلُ الْمَدِيْنَةِ يَسْتَبْشِرُوْنَ ﴿٦٧﴾
قَالَ إِنَّ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ ضَيْفِيْ فَلَا تَفْضَحُوْنِ ﴿٦٨﴾ وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَلَا تُخْزُوْنِ ﴿٦٩﴾ قَالُوْٓا
أَوَلَمْ نَنْهَكَ عَنِ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٧٠﴾ قَالَ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ بَنٰتِيْٓ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ فٰعِلِيْنَ ﴿٧١﴾ لَعَمْرُكَ
إِنَّهُمْ لَفِيْ سَكْرَتِهِمْ يَعْمَهُوْنَ ﴿٧٢﴾ فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الصَّيْحَةُ مُشْرِقِيْنَ ﴿٧٣﴾ فَجَعَلْنَا
عَالِيَهَا سَافِلَهَا وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ حِجَارَةً مِّنْ سِجِّيْلٍ ﴿٧٤﴾ إِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ
لِّلْمُتَوَسِّمِيْنَ ﴿٧٥﴾ وَإِنَّهَا لَبِسَبِيْلٍ مُّقِيْمٍ ﴿٧٦﴾ إِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً لِّلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٧٧﴾ وَإِنْ
كَانَ أَصْحٰبُ الْأَيْكَةِ لَظٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٧٨﴾ فَانْتَقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ ۘ وَإِنَّهُمَا لَبِإِمَامٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿٧٩﴾ وَ
لَقَدْ كَذَّبَ أَصْحٰبُ الْحِجْرِ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿٨٠﴾ وَاٰتَيْنٰهُمْ اٰيٰتِنَا فَكَانُوْا عَنْهَا مُعْرِضِيْنَ ﴿٨١﴾
وَكَانُوْا يَنْحِتُوْنَ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوْتًا اٰمِنِيْنَ ﴿٨٢﴾ فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الصَّيْحَةُ مُصْبِحِيْنَ ﴿٨٣﴾
فَمَآ أَغْنٰى عَنْهُمْ مَّا كَانُوْا يَكْسِبُوْنَ ﴿٨٤﴾ وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَ
مَا بَيْنَهُمَآ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ ۭ وَإِنَّ السَّاعَةَ لَاٰتِيَةٌ ۭ فَاصْفَحِ الصَّفْحَ الْجَمِيْلَ ﴿٨٥﴾ إِنَّ

And tell them the story of the guests of Abraham.[30] When they came to him, they said, "Peace be to you". But he replied, "We are afraid of you."[31] They said, "Do not be afraid of us. We give you the good news of a sagacious son."[32] Abraham said, "What! do you give me the good news of a son in my old age? Just consider what kind of good news you are giving me." They replied, "We are giving you a true good news; you should not be of those who despair". Abraham replied, only those who go astray, despair of their Lord's Mercy?' Then he asked them, "O Messengers of Allah ! What is the expedition for which you have been sent?"[33] They said, "We have been sent to (punish) a criminal people[34] with the exception of Lot's family; we will rescue all of them except his wife, who (Allah says) has been destined to remain with those who will stay behind." 51-60

Afterwards when these envoys came to the house of Lot,[35] he said, "You appear to be strangers."[36] They answered, "Nay, but we have come to you with that concerning which these people had doubts. We tell you the truth that we have come to you with the truth. You should, therefore, depart with your people in the last hours of the night and you yourself should follow them in their rear";[37] let none of you turn round to look behind;[38] go straight where you are being bidden." And We informed him of Our decree that they shall be utterly destroyed by the next morning. 61-66

And the people of the town rushed rejoicing to the house of Lot.[39] He said, "Brethren! These are my guests: therefore do not dishonour me. Fear God and do not put me to shame." They replied, "Have we not forbidden you to plead for all and sundry?" At last Lot pleaded, "Here are my daughters,[40] if you are bent on it." 67-71

By your life, O Prophet, they were at that time so intoxicated with lust as to be quite beside themselves with passion. 72

At last a severe blast overtook them at dawn. Then We turned their habitations up-side-down and We rained stones of baked clay upon them.[41] 73-74

There are big Signs in these events for men of understanding. And the smitten territory still lies on the high way.[42] Indeed there is an admonition in it for true believers. 75-77

78-79 As the people of Al Aikah[43] were unjust, We took vengeance on them. And the ruined habitations of these two Communities lie upon the open highway.[44]

80-84 The people of Al Hijr[45] also treated the Messengers as impostors and We sent Our Revelations and showed Our Signs to them, but they went on ignoring all these things. They hewed their dwellings into the mountains and apparently lived in full security. But at last a violent blast over took them with the approach of the morning, and all that they had achieved proved of no avail to them.[46]

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the contrary, he will succeed in beguiling those people, who themselves will deviate from the way of obedience. They will then wander farther and farther away following his temptations and allurements.

According to the second meaning, the passage will mean this: "When Satan challenged that he would beguile people from the Way of Allah by making this worldly life very tempting to them, Allah accepted his challenge but made it clear to him that he was being allowed only to beguile people with temptation, but was not being given any power to force them to deviate from the Right Way. At this, Satan clarified that his challenge did not apply to those people whom Allah will choose for Himself. As this exception might have led to a misunderstanding that Allah may choose any people for Himself to keep them safe and secure from the reach of Satan, Allah clarified it, saying "Only that person will follow you, who himself will deviate from the Right Way." As a corollary to this, "That person, who will not deviate from the Right Way will not follow you, and will, thus become Our servant, whom We will choose for Our-self."

25. In order to comprehend the purpose for which the story of Prophet Adam and Satan has been related here, we should keep in mind the context in which this has occurred. In the preceding verses (1-25), it has been stated that the disbelievers were following the ways of deviation that would lead them to perdition. This story has been related to warn them that the ways they were following were the ways of Satan, their eternal enemy, so as to say, "You should realize the consequences of following Satan, who has enticed you in this snare, and is leading you to the lowest depths of degradation because of this enmity and envy. In contrast to this, Our Prophet is doing his utmost to free you from his snare and lead you to the height of success, which as a man you should desire to achieve. But it is a pity that you are regarding your enemy (Satan) as your friend, and your friend (Our Prophet) as your enemy."

Secondly, the story also makes quite clear to them this thing:

"There is only one way of salvation and that is the Way of obedience to Allah. If you discard this Way, every other way will be a way of Satan which will take you directly to Hell."

Than this story is meant to bring home to them this fact: You yourselves are responsible for your wrong deeds and not Satan; for, the most he can do is to beguile you from the obedience of Allah and hold temptations before you. It is therefore, your own concern and responsibility to be beguiled or not to be beguiled by Satan."

26. Sinners will be divided into different groups in accordance with their different sins for their entry into Hell from seven different gates specified for each different sin. For instance, the group of atheists shall enter into Hell by one of the seven gates specified for their group. Likewise, mushriks, hypocrites, self-seekers, sensualists, tyrants, propagandists and leaders of disbelief, etc., etc., shall each enter into Hell through the gates specified for their group.

27. The pious people are those who did not follow Satan but feared Allah and lived lives of obedience to Him.

28. That is, "If any spite might have been caused in their hearts in this world because of misunderstandings between the pious people, it shall be removed at the time of their entry into Paradise and they will bear no ill-feelings there against each other." (Please refer also to E.N. 320 of *Al-A'ráf*.)

29. This verse is explained by the following Tradition: "It will be announced to the dwellers of the Gardens, 'Now you will remain hale and hearty for ever and shall never fall ill: now you will enjoy eternal life and shall never die: now you will remain young for ever and never grow old, and now you will remain for ever in Paradise and shall never have to move away from it'." There are other Traditions that further elucidate life in Paradise to this effect: "The dwellers shall have no toil to perform for their livelihood and necessities of life. They will get everything without any labour whatsoever."

30. The story of Prophets Abraham and Lot has been related to tell the disbelievers of Makkah how angels come down with truth. This was in response to their demand. "Why do you not bring angels before us, if what you say be true?" (v. 7). There, only this brief answer was given: "We do not send down angels in this way. When they come down, they come down with truth" (v. 8). Now these two events are cited as two concrete forms of "truth" with which the angels came, as if to ask the disbelievers, "Now decide for yourselves which of these two forms of truth you want angels to bring to you. It is obvious that you do not deserve that

"truth" which was sent to Prophet Abraham. Do you then desire that 'truth" which the angels brought to the people of Prophet Lot?"

31. Please compare this story of Prophet Abraham with that contained in XI: 69-76.

32. "..a sagacious son":Prophet Isaac. His name has been mentioned in connection with this good news in XI: 71.

33. It appears from the question of Prophet Abraham that angels are sent down in human shape only on extraordinary occasions and on some important expedition.

34. The fact that the angels did not name the people of Lot but merely referred to them as "the wicked people", shows that these people had become so notorious for their wicked deeds that there was no need to mention them by name before Prophet Abraham, who was well acquainted with the moral condition of all the people around him.

35. Please compare this with VII: 80-84 and XI: 77-83.

36. Here the story has been related in brief. But we learn from XI: 77-83 that Prophet Lot was greatly perturbed and distressed at the visit of the angels. He said to himself, "This is a day of woe." The reason why he was distressed, as implied in the Qur'ān and explicitly expressed in the Traditions, was that the angels had come to Prophet Lot in the shape of beautiful boys, and he knew how perverse and wicked his people were. He was distressed for he could not send them away because they were his guests, and because he did not know how to protect them from those villains.

37. That is, "You should walk behind your people lest anyone of them should stay behind".

38. It did not mean: "look not behind thee....lest thou be consumed..."as stated in the Bible. But it merely meant to warn them: "None of you should turn round to see what was happening behind them lest you should stop to see the fun, when you heard the cries of the smitten people. For it is neither the time of enjoying "fun", nor of shedding tears of regret. If you stop even for a minute in the territory of the smitten people you also might get hurt from the rain of stones."

39. This shows that those People had gone to the lowest depths of immorality. No sooner did they hear the news of the arrival of handsome strangers in their town than they rushed rejoicing to the house of Prophet Lot and impudently demanded that he should hand over his guests to them for the gratification of their lust. The pity is that there had remained not a single person among them to make a protest against such a heinous sin. Moreover, this shows

that all of them, as a community, had totally lost every sense of decency, and they felt no shame at all to make such a wicked demand on him openly. The very fact, that they felt no hesitation in making such a wicked demand brazen- facedly from a pious and holy man like Prophet Lot, shows that the heinous crime was so common among them that they would not spare anyone.

The Talmud records many instances of the all-round moral degradation of the people of Lot. Once a stranger was passing through their territory. He was forced by coming darkness to pass the night near Sodom. As he had his own provisions with him, he did not stand in any need of help from the towns-folk; so he lay under a tree to pass the night. But a Sodomite entreated him to accompany him to his house. During the night he did away with the ass and merchandise of the stranger. When he began to cry for help in the morning, the towns-folk came there not to help him but to rob him of what had been left with him.

On one occasion Hadrat Sārah sent her slave to Sodom to inquire after Prophet Lot's household. When the slave entered the town, he saw that a Sodomite was beating a stranger. Naturally the slave of Hadrat Sārah tried to rouse his sense of decency, saying, "why do you ill-treat helpless strangers like this?" In answer to this appeal, his head was broken in public.

On another occasion a poor man happened to come to Sodom but no one gave him anything to eat. When he was half dead with starvation, he fell to the ground in a helpless plight. A daughter of Prophet Lot saw him and sent some food for him. At this the Sodomites reproached Prophet Lot and his daughter and threatened to expel them from there, if they would not refrain from such "deeds"!

After citing several similar incidents, the Talmud says that those people had become so cruel, so deceitful and so dishonest in their dealings that no traveller could pass safe through their territory nor could a poor person expect any food or help from them. Many a time it so happened that a poor stranger came there, and died from hunger. Then they would strip the clothes from his body and bury him naked! If a foreigner committed the blunder of visiting their territory, they would publicly rob him of everything, and make fool of him if he appealed to them to redress the wrong. Then they would openly commit shameless deeds in the gardens which they had grown in their valley because there was none to rebuke them except Prophet Lot. The Qurān has summed up the whole of their wicked story in two concise sentences:(1) "...They had already been committing very wicked deeds" XI: 78, and (2) "You gratify your lust with males: you rob travellers, and you commit wicked deeds publicy in your assemblies."

40. In E.N. 87 of Sūrah Hūd, it has been explained what Prophet Lot meant by this. It may also be added that such words as these were uttered by an

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رَبَّكَ هُوَ الْخَلّٰقُ الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿٨٦﴾ وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنٰكَ سَبْعًا مِّنَ الْمَثَانِيْ وَالْقُرْاٰنَ
الْعَظِيْمَ ﴿٨٧﴾ لَا تَمُدَّنَّ عَيْنَيْكَ اِلٰى مَا مَتَّعْنَا بِهٖۤ اَزْوَاجًا مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا تَحْزَنْ
عَلَيْهِمْ وَاخْفِضْ جَنَاحَكَ لِلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٨٨﴾ وَقُلْ اِنِّيْۤ اَنَا النَّذِيْرُ الْمُبِيْنُ ﴿٨٩﴾
كَمَاۤ اَنْزَلْنَا عَلَى الْمُقْتَسِمِيْنَ ﴿٩٠﴾ الَّذِيْنَ جَعَلُوا الْقُرْاٰنَ عِضِيْنَ ﴿٩١﴾ فَوَرَبِّكَ
لَنَسْـَٔلَنَّهُمْ اَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿٩٢﴾ عَمَّا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٩٣﴾ فَاصْدَعْ بِمَا تُؤْمَرُ وَاَعْرِضْ
عَنِ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ ﴿٩٤﴾ اِنَّا كَفَيْنٰكَ الْمُسْتَهْزِءِيْنَ ﴿٩٥﴾ الَّذِيْنَ يَجْعَلُوْنَ مَعَ اللّٰهِ اِلٰهًا
اٰخَرَ ۚ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٩٦﴾ وَلَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ اَنَّكَ يَضِيْقُ صَدْرُكَ بِمَا يَقُوْلُوْنَ ﴿٩٧﴾
فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَكُنْ مِّنَ السّٰجِدِيْنَ ﴿٩٨﴾ وَاعْبُدْ رَبَّكَ حَتّٰى يَاْتِيَكَ الْيَقِيْنُ ﴿٩٩﴾

85-93 We have not based the creation of the Earth and the Heavens and everything but truth, [47] and our judgment is sure to come. So O Muhammad, overlook (their misbehaviour) in a gracious manner. Indeed your Lord is the Creator of all and is All-Knowing.[48] We have given you seven verses that are worthy of recitation over and over again,[49] and We have also bestowed on you the glorious Qur'ān.[50] Do not even look at the worldly wealth We have given to different people from among them nor grieve at their condition.[51] Leave them alone and attend to the Believers. Tell (the disbelievers), "I am a plain warner only. This warning is like the warning We sent to the schismatics, who have caused divisions in their Qur'ān"[52] So by your Lord, We will surely take account from them concering what they had been doing.

94-96 So, O Prophet, proclaim publicly what you are being bidden, and never mind those who practise *shirk*. We suffice on your behalf to take to task those who have set up other gods along with Allah: they will come to know shortly (their folly).

97-99 We know that your heart is distressed at the things they say

against you. (This is the remedy:) you should glorify your Lord with His praise, and fall in prostration before Him, and serve your Lord till that last hour which is sure to come.[53]

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honourable man like him in the last resort, when all his entreaties and earnest requests had failed to prevent those people from their evil designs towards his guests.

Here it will be worthwhile to clear the significance of the words which were uttered by Prophet Lot as they occur in Sūrah Hūd (v. 78). When he entreated those wicked people not to molest his guests, saying, "Here are my daughters....", he was unaware that his guests were angels in the disguise of handsome boys. The angels revealed their identity only when the wicked crowd gathered at the residence of his guests and began to threaten them with their wicked designs, and Prophet Lot began to lament, "I wish I had the power to set you right or I could find some strong support for refuge." It was then that the angels revealed themselves, saying, "We are envoys sent by your Lord.... " This sequence of events shows that Prophet Lot had made that "offer" only when he had felt to be utterly helpless.

It is very important to keep this in view because the sequences of events in this Sūrah is different from that in Sūrah Hūd. One is liable to have a misunderstanding as to why Prophet Lot wailed and lamented when he knew all the while that his guests were angels and could defend themselves against those wicked people.

As regards the apparent difference between the two sequences, it may be pointed out that here the important thing to be stated is that the angels come with the truth. Therefore that part of the story (vv. 61—66) has been related first in order to make the point more prominent.

41. These "stones of baked clay" might have been meteoric showers or volcanic eruptions that flew and rained upon them, or these might have been blown by a strong wind.

42. That is, "That smitten territory lies on the high road from Hijāz (Arabia) to Syria and Egypt". Travellers come across these Signs of destruction which are very prominent in the territory that lies to the south-east of the Dead Sea. The geographers are of the opinion that there is no other land on the surface of the Earth which looks desolate as this territory, especially its southern part.

43. The people of Al-Aikah were the community of Prophet Shu'aib and were called Midianites after the name of their capital city and their territory. As

regards Al-Aikah, it was the ancient name of Tabūk and literally means a "thick forest".

44. Midian lay on the route from Hijāz to Palestine and Syria.

45. Al-Hijr was the capital city of the people of Thamūd, and its ruins are found near the modern city of Al-'Ulā' which is to the north west of Al-Madinah, and lies on the route from Al-Madinah to Tabūk. Though the caravans had to pass through the valley of Al-Hijr, the Holy Prophet had fobidden the Muslims to stay in the valley on their journey.

When Ibn Batūtah reached there in the eighth century of Hijrah on his way to Makkah, he wrote: "I have seen the buildings of Thamūd hewed into red mountains; the paintings look so bright as if they have been put on only recently....and rotten bones of human beings are found in them even today." (See E.N. 57 of VII.)

46. That is, "Their strong and secure buildings, which they had hewed into the mountains, could not protect them from the blast."

47. This was to reassure the Holy Prophet that ultimately he would come out successful because he was propagating the Truth, and the whole of the universe was based on truth. Such an assurance was urgently needed because at that time falsehood appeared to be triumphant over the Truth. This implies, "O Prophet, do not worry at all at the apparent "success" of falsehood for this is temporary. Likewise the difficulties, the obstacles and the troubles in the way of truth are not permanent. Take courage, and have confidence in the cause of the Truth and you will triumph over falsehood because the whole system of the universe is akin to truth and averse to falsehood. Therefore, truth is permanent and falsehood is perishable" (Please refer to E.N.'s 25–26,35-39 of Sūrah Ibrāhim).

48. These attributes of Allah have been mentioned to reassure the Holy Prophet as if to say, "As Allah is the Creator, He has complete power over all his creatures, and no one is able to escape His punishment. Moreover, He is All-Knowing: He is fully aware that you are exerting your utmost for their reform, and He knows also their evil machinations against your efforts for reform. Therefore, you need not worry on this account, but you should wait patiently and with confidence that at the appropriate time they will be dealt with justly."

49. These seven verses which are recited over and over again in every prescribed *salāt* are the verses of *Al-Fātihah*. Though some of the commentators are of the view that this *"Al-Mathāni,"* refers to the seven Sūrahs which contain two hundred or more verses, that is, II-VII and (VIII-IX) or X. But the majority

of the early commentators opine that it refers to *Al-Fātihah*. Imam Bukhari has cited two authentic Traditions in support of the view that it refers to *Al-Fātihah*.

50. The mention of the precious gift of the Glorious Qur'ān has been made also to console the Holy Prophet and his followers that they should not even look at the worldly wealth of their opponents because that was nothing as compared with this precious wealth. In order to grasp the full significance of this, one should keep in view the fact that at that time the Holy Prophet and his Companions were suffering badly from poverty. The trading activities of the Holy Prophet had almost come to an end during the period in which he had been engaged in his Mission. Besides this, he had almost used up the whole wealth of Hadrat Khaĭjah. As regards his Companions, some of the young men had been turned out of their homes and reduced to poverty. The economic boycott had ruined the business of those who were engaged in trade. There were others who were mere slaves or proteges of the Quraish and had no economic position whatever. In addition to their sad economic plight, all the Muslims, along with the Holy Prophet, were suffering persecution from the people of Makkah and its surroundings. In short, they were so much persecuted, ridiculed and insulted that no one of them was safe from physical and mental torture. On the other side, the Quraish, their opponents and persecutors, enjoyed all the good things of this world, and lived lives of happiness and luxury. This is the background of the reassurance given to the Believers, as if to say, "Why should you feel disheartened at this? We have given you "wealth" which surpasses all kinds of worldly riches. Therefore, your opponents should envy your knowledge and high morals; you need not envy their ill-earned wealth and their wicked enjoyments, for when they will go before their Lord, they themselves will find that they had not brought such wealth as carries any value there."

51. That is, "Do not grieve that they consider you as their enemy, though you are their sincere well-wisher; that they regard their vices as their virtues; that they are not only themselves following but leading their followers on that way which inevitably leads to destruction: nay, they are doing their worst to oppose the reformative efforts of the one who is showing them the way of peace."

52. The schismatics were the Jews for they had split their religion into many parts and caused division in it. They believed in certain parts and rejected the other parts, and detracted some things from it and added others to it. Thus they had been divided into many sectarian groups, which were opposed to one another.

"They have cut their Qur'ān (Torah) into pieces": "They believe in certain parts of it and reject other parts." The same thing has been stated in II: 85 like this: ".... Do you then believe in one part of the Scriptures and disbelieve in the other parts ...."

"....this warning is like the warning We sent to the schismatics (Jews)". This is meant to warn the disbelievers that they should learn a lesson from the plight of the Jews who neglected the warning that was given to them by God, and persisted in their wrong ways, as if to say, "You are beholding the degradation of the Jews. Do you like to meet with the same end by neglecting this warning?"

53. That is *Salāt* and worship of your Lord are the only means which can generate in you that power of sustenance which is required to stand resolutley against the troubles and afflictions you will inevitably encounter in the propagation of the Message of the Truth and reform of humanity. This will comfort you, fill you with courage and enable you to perform that Divine Mission on which you have been sent in the face of abuse, derision and obstacles."



XVI

AN-NAHL

النّحل

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XVI

AN-NAHL

النحل

INTRODUCTION

Name

The name, An-Nahl, of this Sūrah has been taken from v. 68. This is merely to distinguish it from other Sūrahs.

Period of Revelation

The following internal evidence shows that this Sūrah was revealed during the last Makkan stage of Prophethood:

1. V. 41 clearly shows that persecution had forced some Muslims to emigrate to Habash before the revelation of this Sūrah.

2. It is evident from v. 106 that at that time the persecution of the Muslims was at its height. Therefore, a problem had arisen in regard to the utterance of a blasphemous word, without actual disbelief, under unbearable conditions. The problem was that if one did so how he should be treated.

3. Vv. 112-114 clearly refer to the end of seven-year famine that had struck Makkah some years after the appointment of the Holy Prophet as Allah's Messenger.

4. There is a reference to v. 116 of this Sūrah in VI: 145, and v. 118 of this Sūrah contains a reference to VI: 146. This is a proof that both these Sūrahs (VI and XVI) were sent down in the same period.

The general style of the Sūrah also supports the view that this was revealed during the last stage at Makkah.

Central Theme

All the topics of the Sūrah revolve round different aspects of the

Message, *i.e.*, refutation of *shirk*, proofs of *Tauhid*, and warning of the consequences of the rejection of and opposition and antagonism to the Message.

Topics of Discussion

The very first verse gives direct and strict warning to those who were rejecting the Message outright, as if to say, "Allah's decision has already been made concerning your rejection of the Message. Why are you then clamouring for hastening it ? Why don't you make use of the respite that is being given to you ?" And this was exactly what the disbelievers of Makkah needed at the time of the revelation of this Sūrah. For they challenged the Holy Prophet over and over again: "Why don't you bring that scourge with which you have been threatening us ? For we have not only rejected your Message but have been openly opposing it for a long time." Such a challenge had become a by-word with them; which they frequently repeated as a clear proof that Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) was not a true Prophet.

Immediately after this warning they have been admonished to give up *shirk*, for this false creed was the main obstacle in the way of the Message. Then the following topics come over and over again, one after the other:

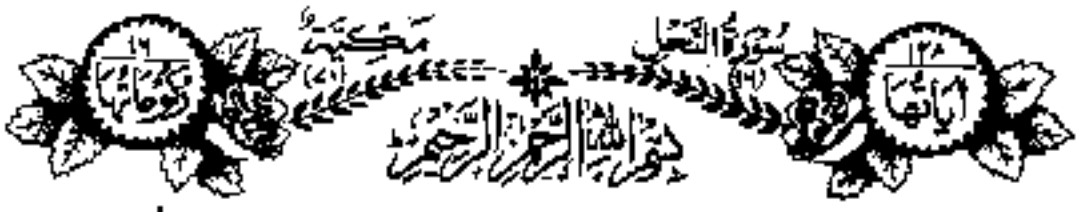
1. Very convincing proofs of *Tauhid* and refutation of *shirk* have been based on the plain signs in the universe and in man's own self.

2. The objections of the disbelievers have been answered, their arguments refuted, their doubts removed and their false pretexts exposed.

3. Warnings have been given of the consequences of persistence in false ways and antagonism to the Message.

4. The moral changes which the Message of the Holy Prophet aims to bring practically in human life have been presented briefly in an appealing manner. The *mushriks* have been told that belief in Allah, which they also professed, demanded that it should not be confined merely to lip-service, but this creed should take a definite shape in moral and practical life.

5. The Holy Prophet and his companions have been comforted and told about the attitude they should adopt in the face of antagonism and persecution by the disbelievers.



أَتَىٰ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلُوهُ ۚ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿١﴾ يُنَزِّلُ الْمَلَائِكَةَ
بِالرُّوحِ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ عَلَىٰ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ أَنْ أَنْذِرُوا أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا
أَنَا فَاتَّقُونِ ﴿٢﴾ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ ۚ تَعَالَىٰ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٣﴾
خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ فَإِذَا هُوَ خَصِيمٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿٤﴾ وَالْأَنْعَامَ خَلَقَهَا ۗ لَكُمْ
فِيهَا دِفْءٌ وَمَنَافِعُ وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٥﴾ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا جَمَالٌ حِينَ تُرِيحُونَ
وَحِينَ تَسْرَحُونَ ﴿٦﴾ وَتَحْمِلُ أَثْقَالَكُمْ إِلَىٰ بَلَدٍ لَمْ تَكُونُوا بَالِغِيهِ إِلَّا بِشِقِّ
الْأَنْفُسِ ۚ إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ لَرَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٧﴾ وَالْخَيْلَ وَالْبِغَالَ وَالْحَمِيرَ لِتَرْكَبُوهَا
وَزِينَةً ۚ وَيَخْلُقُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨﴾ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ قَصْدُ السَّبِيلِ وَمِنْهَا جَائِرٌ ۚ
وَلَوْ شَاءَ لَهَدَاكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٩﴾ هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً لَكُمْ مِنْهُ

XVI

AN-NAHAL

النحل

Verses: 128 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

Allah's "Judgment" has come:[1] so do not clamour for hastening it; He is free from every defect, and exalted high above the *shirk* that they are practising.[2] He sends down by His command through His angels the Spirit[3] on that one of His servants whom He chooses,[4] (bidding), "warn the people that there is no other deity than I: therefore, fear Me."[5] 1-2

3 He has based the creation of the heavens and the Earth on truth; He is exalted high above that *shirk* which they are practising.[6]

4-9 He created Man from an insignificant sperm-drop, and behold, by and by he became a manifest disputant[7]. He has created cattle, which provide you with clothing and food, and there are other benefits also for you in them; they look pleasant when you drive them to the pasture in the morning and bring them home in the evening. They carry your burdens to far-off lands, which you could not reach without painful toil. Indeed your Lord is All-Compassionate and All-Merciful. He has created horses, mules and donkeys so that you may ride them, and they may add splendour to your life. He creates for you many other things, of which you have no knowledge at all.[8] Allah has taken upon Himself to show the Right Way, when there exist crooked ways, too.[9] He would have guided all of you aright, if He had so willed.[10]

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1. That is, "The time for final 'Judgment' has come near." As regards the use of the past tense in the original, this may be to show certainty of its occurrence in the near future or to emphasize the fact that the rebellion and the wrong deeds of the Quraish had become so unbearable that they warranted that the time for decisive action had come.

Here question arises as to what that "Judgment" was and how it came. We are of the opinion (and true knowledge is with Allah alone) that that "Judgment" was Hijrat (the Migration) of the Holy Prophet from Makkah. For a short time after this Revelation he was bidden to emigrate from there. And according to the Qur'ān, a Prophet is bidden to leave his place only at that time when the rebellion and antagonism of his people reaches the extreme limit. Then their doom is sealed, for after this Allah's punishment comes on them either as a direct scourge from Him, or they are destroyed by the Prophet and his followers. And this did take place actually. At the occasion of the Migration, the people of Makkah regarded it as a victory for themselves, but in fact it turned out to be a defeat for *shirk* and disbelief which were totally uprooted within a decade or so after the Migration not only from Makkah but from the rest of Arabia as well.

2. In order to understand the interconnection between the first and the second sentences, one should keep in view the background. The challenge of the disbelievers to the Prophet, 'to hasten Divine Judgment', was really based on their assumption that their own religion of *shirk* was true and the religion of *Tauhid* presented by Muhammad (Allah's peace be on him) was false; otherwise, they argued, the Divine scourge with which he threatened them would have come upon them long before because of their disbelief and rebellion, if there had been the

authority of Allah behind it. That is why after the declaration of the "Judgment," their misunderstanding about the cause of delay in the punishment was removed, as if to say, "You are absolutely wrong to assume that punishment has not been inflicted on you because your creed of *shirk* is true, for Allah is free from and far above *shirk* and has no partner".

3. This means "the Spirit of Prophethood with which a Prophet is imbued in order to fulfil his Mission by word and deed. The Qur'ān has called this 'the Spirit' in several places, for this has the same relation to the Mission of a Prophet and his moral life, which the soul has to the physical human life."

4. As one of the things, which prompted the disbelievers to challenge the Holy Prophet for scourge, was their presumption that he was not a true Prophet, Allah told them categorically that he was a true Prophet, who had been imbued with the "Spirit" which We Ourself had sent down on him.

"Allah sends down the Spirit on..... He chooses." This is the answer to the objections which the chiefs of the Quraish used to raise against the Holy Prophet: Had Allah wanted to send a Messenger to them, was there no one better than Muhammad (Allah's peace be on him), son of 'Abdullah, for this mission ? Why did He not choose one of the big chiefs of Makkah or Tā'if for the purpose? Such absurd objections needed no other answer than this that is why such an answer has been given in several places of the Qur'ān as if to say "Allah knows best how to do His work, and does not stand in need of any advice from you. He chooses for His mission anyone whom He considers fit for it.

5. This verse declares the essence of the "Spirit" of Prophethood, which is this: Godhead belongs to one Allah alone: so only He is worthy of fear. Therefore, there is no other anchor that might make fast and hold together human moral system than His fear. For it is the fear of His displeasure and His punishment, and the fear of the consequences of His disobedience which alone can act as a strong deterrent to restrain one from deviation. That is why mankind has been admonished: "Fear Me."

6. That is to say, "The whole system of the Earth and the heavens is a witness to the truth of the doctrine of *Tauhid* and to the negation of *shirk*. You may look at anything in the universe and consider the system from any point of view you like, you will find proof of this fact that it is being run by one God and not by many gods. Then how is it that you believe in *shirk* when there is no proof whatsoever of this in the universe?

As a fitting sequence of this, proofs of *Tauhid* and refutation of *shirk* have been given from Man himself and from other signs in the universe, and it has also been shown that Prophethood is based on Truth. *[Contd. on p. 532*

شَرَابٌ وَّمِنْهُ شَجَرٌ فِيْهِ تُسِيْمُوْنَ ﴿١٠﴾ يُنْۢبِتُ لَكُمْ بِهِ الزَّرْعَ وَالزَّيْتُوْنَ وَ
النَّخِيْلَ وَالْاَعْنَابَ وَمِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرٰتِ ؕ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَّتَفَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿١١﴾
وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ ۙ وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ ؕ وَالنُّجُوْمُ مُسَخَّرٰتٌۢ بِاَمْرِهٖ ؕ
اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿١٢﴾ وَمَا ذَرَاَ لَكُمْ فِي الْاَرْضِ مُخْتَلِفًا
اَلْوَانُهٗ ؕ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَّذَّكَّرُوْنَ ﴿١٣﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِيْ سَخَّرَ الْبَحْرَ
لِتَاْكُلُوْا مِنْهُ لَحْمًا طَرِيًّا وَّتَسْتَخْرِجُوْا مِنْهُ حِلْيَةً تَلْبَسُوْنَهَا ۚ وَتَرَى الْفُلْكَ
مَوَاخِرَ فِيْهِ وَلِتَبْتَغُوْا مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿١٤﴾ وَاَلْقٰى فِي الْاَرْضِ
رَوَاسِيَ اَنْ تَمِيْدَ بِكُمْ وَاَنْهٰرًا وَّسُبُلًا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿١٥﴾ وَعَلٰمٰتٍ ؕ وَ
بِالنَّجْمِ هُمْ يَهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿١٦﴾ اَفَمَنْ يَّخْلُقُ كَمَنْ لَّا يَخْلُقُ ؕ اَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَ
اِنْ تَعُدُّوْا نِعْمَةَ اللّٰهِ لَا تُحْصُوْهَا ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَغَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿١٨﴾ وَاللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُ
مَا تُسِرُّوْنَ وَمَا تُعْلِنُوْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ يَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ لَا يَخْلُقُوْنَ
شَيْـًٔا وَّهُمْ يُخْلَقُوْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾ اَمْوَاتٌ غَيْرُ اَحْيَآءٍ ۚ وَمَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ۙ اَيَّانَ يُبْعَثُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾
اِلٰهُكُمْ اِلٰهٌ وَّاحِدٌ ۚ فَالَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْاٰخِرَةِ قُلُوْبُهُمْ مُّنْكِرَةٌ وَّهُمْ
مُّسْتَكْبِرُوْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾ لَا جَرَمَ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا يُسِرُّوْنَ وَمَا يُعْلِنُوْنَ ؕ اِنَّهٗ لَا يُحِبُّ
الْمُسْتَكْبِرِيْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَاِذَا قِيْلَ لَهُمْ مَّاذَآ اَنْزَلَ رَبُّكُمْ ۙ قَالُوْٓا اَسَاطِيْرُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾
لِيَحْمِلُوْٓا اَوْزَارَهُمْ كَامِلَةً يَّوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ ۙ وَمِنْ اَوْزَارِ الَّذِيْنَ يُضِلُّوْنَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ
عِلْمٍ ؕ اَلَا سَآءَ مَا يَزِرُوْنَ ﴿٢٥﴾ قَدْ مَكَرَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَاَتَى اللّٰهُ بُنْيَانَهُمْ
مِّنَ الْقَوَاعِدِ فَخَرَّ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّقْفُ مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ وَاَتٰىهُمُ الْعَذَابُ مِنْ حَيْثُ
لَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿٢٦﴾ ثُمَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ يُخْزِيْهِمْ وَيَقُوْلُ اَيْنَ شُرَكَآءِيَ الَّذِيْنَ

It is He, Who sends down for you water from the sky, which provides drinking water for you and brings forth fodder for your cattle. And thereby He grows for you crops and olives and date-palms and vines and different kinds of many other fruits. Surely there is a great Sign in this for those people who ponder. 10-11

He has subjected to your service the day and the night and the sun and the moon; likewise all the stars are subjected by His Command. In this there are many Signs for those who make use of their common sense. And in the things of different colours He has created for you in the Earth, there is indeed a Sign for those who learn lessons from them. 12-13

It is He Who has subjected the sea to your service so that you may get fresh flesh from it to eat and bring out of it articles of ornament, which you wear, and you see that the ship ploughs her course through it. He has done all this so that you may seek of His bounty[11] and show gratitude to Him. 14

He has driven mountains firmly into the earth lest it should turn away from its usual course along with you;[12] He has caused rivers to flow and made natural ways[13] so that you may be directed aright. He has placed landmarks[14] to direct people, and by stars, too, they are directed aright.[15] 15-16

Is, then, He, Who creates, like those who create nothing?[16] Do you not understand even this much? If you try to reckon up Allah's blessings, you cannot count them. Indeed, He is Forgiving and Compassionate,[17] though He knows all that you conceal and all that you reveal.[18] 17-19

And the other beings, whom the people invoke, create nothing; nay, they are themselves created. They are dead, not living, and they do not know at all when they shall again be raised to life.[19] 20-21

Your Deity is One Allah, but the hearts of those, who do not believe in the Hereafter, are given to denial, and they are puffed up with pride.[20] Surely Allah has full knowledge of all their deeds, both secret and open. He does not like those people, who are puffed up with pride. 22-23

24-26 And[21] when they are asked, "What is it that your Lord has sent down"?, they say these are mere fairy tales of the ancients.[22] They say such things so that they should bear the full brunt of their own burdens on the Day of Resurrection together with some of the burdens of those whom they are leading astray in their ignorance. Behold! what a heavy responsibility they are taking on themselves! Many of those who have gone before them also contrived such cunning devices to defeat the Truth, but behold! Allah smote the edifice of their evil designs at its foundations and its roof fell down upon their heads from above them, and the scourge overtook them from the direction they little dreamed that it would come.

Contd. from p. 529]

7. This has two meanings and both are meant here.

(1) Though Allah created man from an insignificant sperm-drop, he is capable of arguing and giving reasons in support of his claim.

(2) Man who has such an insignificant origin, has become so vain that he does not hesitate to dispute even with his Creator.

If considered in its first sense, it is a chain in the series of arguments given in many succeeding verses to prove the truth of the Message of the Holy Prophet. (Please refer to E.N. 15). If taken in the second sense, it is meant to warn man that he should not forget the insignificant origin of his existence while engaged in his rebellious arguments against his Creator. If he remembered the different stages of his humiliating birth and growth, he would consider many times before he assumed a haughty and rebellious attitude towards his Creator.

8. That is, "There are many agencies which are working for the good of man but he is quite unaware of such servants and the services rendered by them".

9. This contains an argument for Prophethood along with a proof of *Tauhīd* and of Allah's Compassion and Providence. The argument is this:

There are many divergent ways of thought and action open for man to choose from. Obviously all these divergent ways cannot be straight ways, because there can be only one straight way; therefore, there can be only one right theory of life which is based on that way, and only one right way of life which is based on that right theory. Thus it is clear that the choice of the right way of life is man's most important and basic need, for its wrong choice would inevitably lead to his ruin. This is because all other things fulfil his animal needs only, but this is

the greatest necessity of his life as a human being and without its fulfilment his life would be an utter failure.

Now, it cannot be expected that Allah Who made so many provisions, and on such a large scale, for the fulfilment of the animal life of man, did not make any arrangement for the fulfilment of this real and greatest necessity of man. Just as He has provided for all the necessities of his life, so He has also provided for this greatest need of his through Prophethood. If Prophethood is denied then it should be pointed out in what way Allah has fulfilled this basic need of man. Experience of centuries has shown that mankind has always blundered whenever it has chosen a way of life by itself. This is because Man's wisdom and intelligence are limited, and he cannot depend on these for the choice of the right way of life. Above all, one cannot say that Allah has made no arrangement for this basic need of man, for this will be the greatest misconception of Allah that He may make most elaborate arrangements for man's animal life but should leave him in the lurch to search out a way for himself for the fulfilment of this most important and basic need.

10. Here a question arises: "Why didn't Allah will to guide all the people aright inherently when He had taken upon Himself to show the Right Way ?" It is true that Allah could have imbued Man, like other creatures, with the inborn instinct and enabled him to choose the Right Way without conscious thought, experience or teaching. But this would have been against His will which was to create a being, having will and power and freedom to follow the Right Way or the wrong way, whichever he chose for himself. This is why he has been endowed with different means of knowledge and powers of conscious thought, deliberation and will, and has been empowered with the authority to make use of all powers in him and all things around him. Moreover, He has placed in him and all around him such factors as might lead him to guidance or deviation. All these things would have become meaningless, had he been created righteous by birth, and he could never have attained the heights of progress, which can be achieved only by the right use of freedom. That is why Allah has chosen Prophethood for Man's guidance, and left him free to follow or reject a Prophet. This is a test by means of which Allah judges whether Man accepts the guidance that is presented to him in a rational way.

11. That is, "try to get your sustenance in lawful ways".

12. This shows that the real function of mountains is to regulate the motion and speed of the Earth. We have come to this conclusion, for the Qur'ān has made this benefit of mountains very prominent in many places. Therefore, their other benefits should be regarded as incidental.

13. Natural ways are those routes which are formed along the banks of streams, ravines and rivers. Though the importance of these ways is great even in the plains, one feels their sore need, especially in the mountainous regions.

14. This is a Sign of Allah that He has broken the monotony of land by placing conspicuous landmarks on it to distinguish different regions from one another. These have many benefits and one of these is to help guide travellers and navigators to their destinations. One also realizes the importance and value of these landmarks, when one is travelling through a sandy desert where there are hardly any objects to guide on the way, and one is liable to lose the way any time. One feels the lack of landmarks much more in the sea voyage. It is in the deserts and the seas that people realize the true significance of ".....by stars, too, they are directed aright to their destinations."

This verse contains arguments for *Tauhid*, Providence, and Compassion of Allah, and also a proof of Prophethood. For the mind is instinctively turned towards this question: "Can it be possible that Allah who has made so elaborate arrangements for man's guidance to fulfil his physical needs has neglected to provide for his moral and spiritual needs?" It cannot be so, for it is obvious that even the greatest loss of some physical necessity due to the adoption of a wrong way is nothing as compared with the loss of spiritual and moral values due to deviation from the Right Way. It would be nothing less than having doubt in Allah's Compassion and Providence to think that He, Who had made so elaborate provision for man's guidance on land and sea by creating mountains, rivers, stars and other objects, would have neglected to make provision for his moral and spiritual guidance; any, it stands to reason, that He must have provided prominent beacons of light to guide Man to that Right Way of life which is indispensable to his true success.

15. In vv. 4-16, some Signs have been mentioned in succession in order to focus people's attention on the Creation of man himself and of the Earth and the heavens. They will thus find that everything supports the truth of the doctrines taught by the Holy Prophet. A critical study of all these Signs shows that these must have been designed and created by an All-Wise Being, and One Being alone, and there could not have been any partner or associate to help Him. Let us consider this theme from the point of view of Man, the central figure in the Creation. This wonderful being who is able to speak with his tongue and is capable of arguing his case with it, has been created from an insignificant sperm-drop. Then many animals have been created to satisfy the necessities of his life. They provide food, clothing and conveyance for him and help satisfy his aesthetic taste as well. Then there is a remarkable system of rain water from the sky to produce corn crops, fruits and verdure, etc., on the earth to fulfil man's needs. Then there is the creation of regular days and nights and seasons, which are

closely connected with all kinds of production of the earth, and also with Man's general well being. Then there are oceans, which help fulfil many of his physical and aesthetic demands and provide water ways for traffic. Likewise mountains have been created to provide man with many benefits. Then there are landmarks on the earth and stars in the heavens to guide travellers and navigators to the destinations. In short, there are innumerable Signs in the Earth and the heavens which are closely interconnected and are also indispensable to man's welfare, nay, to his very existence. All these are clear proofs that only One Being has designed the whole universe and created it in accordance with that design. It is He Who is all the time creating new things to fit in that scheme, and working this wonderful universe that spreads from the Earth to boundless heavens. Who can then claim, except a foolish or obdurate person, that all this has come into existence by a mere accident? Or, who can say that these different aspects, which are working under a perfect system and are intimately connected with one another and are well-balanced, have been created by different gods and are under the control of different guardians?

16. That is, "If you, people of Makkah, acknowledge (and they acknowledged this just as other *mushriks* did) that Allah alone is the Creator of all of you and everything, and no one of the partners, you have set up with Him, has created anything in the universe, how is it, then, that you ascribe to the created, a status equal to or like that of the Creator in the system of universe created by Him? How can it be possible that the powers and the rights of the created should be equal to the powers and the rights of the Creator in the universe created by Himself? How can it be believed that the Creator and the created possess the same qualities and characteristics, or can have such relationship as of father and son?"

17. Here the connection of Allah's attributes, "Forgiving and Compassionate", with the preceding verse is so obvious that it has been left unmentioned. It is this: "Though Allah goes on showering countless blessings upon people, they behave in an ungrateful, faithless and rebellious manner towards Him. He does not punish them immediately, but gives them respite, for He is Forgiving and Compassionate". This is true of both individuals and communities. There are people, who deny even the existence of God, yet He goes on bestowing His favours on them for years on end. There are others who set up partners with Him in his attributes, powers and rights, and show their gratitude to others than Him for His blessings, yet He does not withhold His favours from them; there are still others who profess to acknowledge Him as their Creator and Benefactor, yet rebel against Him and are disobedient to Him and consider freedom from Him to be their birth right, but in spite of all this He continues to shower His countless blessings on them as long as they live.

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كُنْتُمْ تُشَاقُّوْنَ فِيْهِمْ ۭ قَالَ الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْعِلْمَ اِنَّ الْخِزْيَ الْيَوْمَ وَالسُّوْۗءَ
عَلَي الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ۙ۲۷ الَّذِيْنَ تَتَوَفّٰىهُمُ الْمَلٰۗىِٕكَةُ ظَالِمِيْٓ اَنْفُسِهِمْ ۠ فَاَلْقَوُا السَّلَمَ مَا
كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ مِنْ سُوْۗءٍ ۭ بَلٰٓى اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلِيْمٌۢ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ۲۸ فَادْخُلُوْٓا اَبْوَابَ
جَهَنَّمَ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا ۭ فَلَبِئْسَ مَثْوَى الْمُتَكَبِّرِيْنَ ۲۹ وَقِيْلَ لِلَّذِيْنَ اتَّقَوْا مَاذَآ
اَنْزَلَ رَبُّكُمْ ۭ قَالُوْا خَيْرًا ۭ لِلَّذِيْنَ اَحْسَنُوْا فِيْ هٰذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةٌ ۭ وَلَدَارُ
الْاٰخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ ۭ وَلَنِعْمَ دَارُ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ ۳۰ جَنّٰتُ عَدْنٍ يَّدْخُلُوْنَهَا تَجْرِيْ مِنْ
تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ لَهُمْ فِيْهَا مَا يَشَاۗءُوْنَ ۭ كَذٰلِكَ يَجْزِي اللّٰهُ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ ۳۱
الَّذِيْنَ تَتَوَفّٰىهُمُ الْمَلٰۗىِٕكَةُ طَيِّبِيْنَ ۙ يَقُوْلُوْنَ سَلٰمٌ عَلَيْكُمُ ۙ ادْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ بِمَا
كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ۳۲ هَلْ يَنْظُرُوْنَ اِلَّآ اَنْ تَاْتِيَهُمُ الْمَلٰۗىِٕكَةُ اَوْ يَاْتِيَ اَمْرُ رَبِّكَ ۭ
كَذٰلِكَ فَعَلَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۭ وَمَا ظَلَمَهُمُ اللّٰهُ وَلٰكِنْ كَانُوْٓا اَنْفُسَهُمْ
يَظْلِمُوْنَ ۳۳ فَاَصَابَهُمْ سَيِّاٰتُ مَا عَمِلُوْا وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَّا كَانُوْا بِهٖ يَسْتَهْزِءُوْنَ ۳۴
وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ اَشْرَكُوْا لَوْ شَاۗءَ اللّٰهُ مَا عَبَدْنَا مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ مِنْ شَيْءٍ نَّحْنُ وَ
لَآ اٰبَاۗؤُنَا وَلَا حَرَّمْنَا مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ۭ كَذٰلِكَ فَعَلَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۚ
فَهَلْ عَلَي الرُّسُلِ اِلَّا الْبَلٰغُ الْمُبِيْنُ ۳۵ وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِيْ كُلِّ اُمَّةٍ رَّسُوْلًا اَنِ
اعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوْتَ ۚ فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ هَدَى اللّٰهُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ حَقَّتْ
عَلَيْهِ الضَّلٰلَةُ ۭ فَسِيْرُوْا فِي الْاَرْضِ فَانْظُرُوْا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ ۳۶
اِنْ تَحْرِصْ عَلٰي هُدٰىهُمْ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَهْدِيْ مَنْ يُّضِلُّ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِّنْ
نّٰصِرِيْنَ ۳۷ وَاَقْسَمُوْا بِاللّٰهِ جَهْدَ اَيْمَانِهِمْ ۙ لَا يَبْعَثُ اللّٰهُ مَنْ يَّمُوْتُ ۭ بَلٰى
وَعْدًا عَلَيْهِ حَقًّا وَّلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ۳۸ لِيُبَيِّنَ لَهُمُ الَّذِي يَخْتَلِفُوْنَ

Then on the Day of Resurrection Allah will disgrace and degrade them. He will say to them: "Now where are My partners concerning whom you used to dispute (with the truthful)?"—Those,[23] to whom Knowledge had been given in the world, will say, "Today there is ignominy and misery for the disbelievers." Yes[24], this is for those disbelievers, who, while they are still engaged in wronging themselves, shall surrender themselves when seized by the angels,[25] saying, "We were doing nothing wrong at all." The angels will retort, "What, dare you deny this! Allah is fully aware of what you were doing. Now, go and enter the gates of Hell, where you shall abide for ever."[26] The fact is that a very miserable abode it is for the haughty ones. 27-29

On the other hand, when the God-fearing people are asked, "What is it that has been sent by your Lord?" they say, "It is the best thing that has been sent down."[27] There is good for those righteous people who do good works in this world, and far better is their abode in the Hereafter." Blessed indeed is the dwelling place for the pious people. There will be gardens for their permanent residence into which they will enter: canals will be flowing underneath them: above all, they will find there everything as they would desire:[28] this is the reward for those pious people whose souls are received in a pure state, by the angels, who welcome them, saying, "Peace be on you: enter into Paradise as the reward of your good deeds". 30-32

O Muhammad! are these people still waiting, though now nothing has been left but that angels should come or your Lord's judgment be passed on them?[29] Many people before them behaved audaciously like them, and had to take the consequence: it was not Allah Who was unjust to them but they were unjust to themselves. In the end their evil deeds brought upon them the consequences and that very thing, they used to scoff at, overwhelmed them. 33-34

The *mushriks* say, "Had Allah willed, neither we nor our forefathers would have worshipped any other than Allah nor made anything unlawful without His will.".[30] Such excuses were put forward also by those who went before them.[31] Have the Messengers any more responsibility than to convey the Message clearly? Accordingly, we sent to every community a Messenger, saying, "Worship Allah and 35-37

keep away from the *tāghūt*."[32] After that Allah showed guidance to some of them, while deviation took hold of others.[33] So, roam about in the earth and behold what has been the end of the rejectors of the Messengers.[34] O Muhammad! howsoever desirous you may be of their guidance, (know) that Allah does not show guidance to those whom He lets go astray, and such people have no helpers.

38 They solemnly swear by God with their most sacred oaths that "Allah will never raise him who once is dead". Why will He not raise? It is a promise He has made binding on Himself, but most people do not know it.

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18. A grave misunderstanding might arise as to why Allah's blessings should continue to be showered even on those who deny Him and set up partners with Him and are disobedient to Him. The foolish people are liable to conclude from this that He does not withhold His favours from such people because He has no knowledge of their wicked deeds, The Qur'ān declares: ".....Even though He has full knowledge of all the deeds of the people, whether these are done secretly or openly, He does not discontinue His blessings on the sinners, for He is Forgiving, Compassionate and Merciful. Therefore, O foolish people!, get rid of this misunderstanding, and reform yourselves."

19. The words employed here to refute man-made deities clearly indicate that these deities were deceased prophets, saints, martyrs and pious and other extraordinary beings buried in their graves and not angels, *jinns,* devils or idols. For the angels and devils are alive: therefore, the words, "They are dead, not living" cannot apply to them, and it is out of the question to say about idols of stone or wood that "They do not know at all when they shall again be raised to life" in the Hereafter. As regards the objection to this version that there were no such deities in Arabia, this is based on the lack of knowledge of the history of the pre-Islamic period. It is well known that there was a large number of Jews and Christians living among many clans of Arabia, who used to invoke and worship their Prophets, saints, etc. It is also a fact that many gods of the *mushriks* of Arabia were human beings, whose idols they had set up for worship after their death. According to a Tradition cited in *Bukhārī* on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās, "Wadd, Suā', Yaghūth, Ya'ūq, and Nasr were pious human beings, whom the succeeding generations had made gods." In another Tradition, related by Hadrat 'Ā'ishah, Asaf and Nā'ilah were human beings. There are also traditions to the same effect about Lāt, Munāt and 'Uzzā. So much so that according to some traditions of the *mushriks*, Lāt and 'Uzzā were the beloved ones of Allah who

used to pass His winter with Lāt and summer with 'Uzzā. But "Allah is absolutely free from such (absurd) things they attribute to Him."

20. That is, "Those who do not believe in the life in the Hereafter, have become so irresponsible, care-free and intoxicated with the life of this world, that they feel no hesitation or pang in denying any reality, and they put no value on or attach no worth to truth. That is why, they are not prepared to impose any moral restraint on themselves and feel no need to investigate as to whether the way, they are following, is right or wrong.

21. In the preceding verse (23) those puffed up people, who were rejecting the Message were warned that Allah had full knowledge of all their "deeds." Now from v. 24 the Qur'ān takes up those "deeds" one by one and deals with the arguments they presented against the Messenger, the objections they raised and the lame excuses they invented for their rejection, and reproaches and admonishes them.

22. One of their cunning devices was to create doubts about the Qur'ān. Whenever outsiders came to visit Makkah, they would naturally make enquiries about the Qur'ān, which the Holy Prophet declared, was being sent down to him by Allah. The disbelievers would answer that it contained merely fairy-tales of the ancients. They would say such things in order to create doubts in the minds of the inquirers so that they should not take any interest in the Message of the Holy Prophet.

23. There is a gap between this answer and the preceding question which has been left for the reader to fill. When Allah will ask, "Now where are My partners .... ," there will be dead silence in the Plain where the whole of mankind shall have to gather on the occasion of Resurrection. The disbelievers and the *mushriks* will be dumb-founded for they will be at a loss to find an answer to this. Then those who had been given knowledge will make the assertion, "Today, there is ....."

24. This is Allah's addition to the previous assertion, and not its continuation. Those commentators who have wrongly considered this as continuation of the preceding sentence, are unable to offer any satisfactory explanation for their opinion.

25. That is, "When the angels take possession of their souls at the time of death....."

26. This verse (28) and verse 32, and several other verses in the Qur'ān, clearly and definitely assert that immediately after death, souls suffer torment or enjoy peace in the world of Barzakh. The Traditions use the word "*qabar*" (grave) metaphorically for this existence of the souls. This is the world in which souls

enter immediately after death and will remain therein up to the Day of Resurrection. Yet the disbelievers of the Traditions declare that after death souls will remain in a dormant state up to the time of Resurrection, and will neither feel any pain nor joy, nor will be conscious of anything at all. Obviously, this is a wrong opinion, for according to v. 28, just after death when the disbelievers will be conscious of the fact that they had been leading an evil life, they will try to make the angels believe that they had not done any evil deed. The angels will rebuke them at this "boldness" and will tell them that they shall have to go into Hell. On the other hand, according to verse 32, just after their death, the pious believers are welcomed by the angels and given the good news that they will enter into Paradise. Besides these verses, there is the mention of a dialogue between the angels and those Muslims, who did not migrate to Al-Madīnah, after their souls were seized by the angels in IV: 97. Above all, according to XL: 45-46, the people of Pharaoh have been encircled by a torment and are exposed before the Fire of Hell every morning and every evening. This will go on up to the Day of Resurrection when they shall be sentenced to eternal torment.

In fact, both the Qur'ān and the Traditions present the same kind of picture of the condition of the soul after death up to Resurrection. Death causes merely the separation of the soul from the body but does not annihilate it. The soul lives with the same personality that was formed by the different experiences and the mental exercises and moral activities it had in its worldly life in co-operation with the body. This nature of the consciousness, feelings, observations and experiences of the soul, during the waiting period, is similar to that, in a dream. Just as a criminal sentenced to death suffers from mental torture on the eve of his crucifixion, in the same way the angels take to task the guilty as in a dream, torture it and take it to the horrible Hell in order to make it fore-taste the impending torture. In contrast to this, the pure soul is welcomed by the angels and is given the good news of entry into paradise and is made to enjoy its pleasant breeze and smell, and to feel happy like the faithful servant who is invited to the headquarters to receive his reward. But this "life" in the world of *Barzakh* will suddenly come to an end on the second blowing of the Trumpet of Resurrection. When the guilty souls will again enter into their former bodies and muster in the Plain, they will cry in horror, "Oh ! woe to us! who has roused us from our sleeping places ?" But the true Believers will say with perfect peace of mind, "This is exactly what the Beneficent had predicted, and the Messengers had told the truth." (XXXVI: 52).

This has been further elucidated in Chapter XXX.

As the guilty ones will be under the delusion that they had been lying in their death-bed for an hour or so and had been roused from given Knowledge and Faith, will say, "According to the Record of Allah, you have remained after death

till this Day of Resurrection and this is the same Day of Resurrection, but you did not know this." (XXX: 55-56).

27. In contrast to the disbelievers (v. 24), the righteous people spoke highly of the Holy Prophet and of the teachings of the Qur'ān to the people coming from the suburbs of Makkah. Unlike the former they did not delude the people nor created misunderstandings in the minds. They were full of praise for them and told the truth about the Holy Prophet.

28. This is the best blessing of Paradise. The dweller will get there whatever he will desire and wish and there will be nothing at all to offend him. This is the blessing that has never been attained even by the richest and the most powerful people in this world. On the contrary, every dweller of Paradise will enjoy this blessing to his fill because he will always have everything to his desire and liking, and will have each and every wish and desire fulfilled.

29. This is to admonish the unbelievers to this effect: "Why are they still hesitating to accept the Message which is very simple and clear ? We have tried every method to present each aspect of the Truth clearly with arguments and brought witnesses thereof from the whole system of the universe, and have left no room for any man of understanding to stick to *shirk*. Now what they are waiting for is nothing more than this that the angel of death should come before them: and then they will accept the Message at the last moment of their lives. Or, do they wait for the scourge of God to overtake them and make them accept the Message?"

30. In order to understand the significance of this argument the reader should keep in view vv. 148-150 and E.N.'s 124-126 of Chapter VI, for this has been cited and answered there.

31. That is, "Your argument" is not a new one but the same old one which had always been offered by erroneous people who went before you. Today you are, like them, excusing yourselves for your deviation and evil conduct, saying that it is the will of God. You know that this is a lame excuse that has been invented to delude yourselves, and to escape from admonition."

This answer also contains a subtle retort to the objection of the disbelievers that the Qur'ān consisted merely of old stories of the ancients (v. 24). They meant to imply that the Prophet had nothing new to offer. So he was repeating the same old stories that had been repeated over and over again since the time of Prophet Noah. The retort is this: "If the Holy Prophet was not presenting anything new but was reciting the old stories of the ancients, you yourselves are not putting forward any new excuse in defence of your evil deeds, but the same old excuse that was put forward by the people who went before you."

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فِيْهِ وَ لِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْٓا اَنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا كٰذِبِيْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾ اِنَّمَا قَوْلُنَا لِشَيْءٍ اِذَآ
اَرَدْنٰهُ اَنْ نَّقُوْلَ لَهٗ كُنْ فَيَكُوْنُ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَ الَّذِيْنَ هَاجَرُوْا فِي اللّٰهِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا
ظُلِمُوْا لَنُبَوِّئَنَّهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً ؕ وَ لَاَجْرُ الْاٰخِرَةِ اَكْبَرُ ۘ لَوْ كَانُوْا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٤١﴾
الَّذِيْنَ صَبَرُوْا وَ عَلٰى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُوْنَ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَ مَآ اَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ اِلَّا رِجَالًا
نُّوْحِيْٓ اِلَيْهِمْ فَسْـَٔلُوْٓا اَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٤٣﴾ بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ وَ الزُّبُرِ ؕ
وَ اَنْزَلْنَآ اِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ اِلَيْهِمْ وَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٤٤﴾
اَفَاَمِنَ الَّذِيْنَ مَكَرُوا السَّيِّاٰتِ اَنْ يَّخْسِفَ اللّٰهُ بِهِمُ الْاَرْضَ اَوْ يَاْتِيَهُمُ
الْعَذَابُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿٤٥﴾ اَوْ يَاْخُذَهُمْ فِيْ تَقَلُّبِهِمْ فَمَا هُمْ
بِمُعْجِزِيْنَ ﴿٤٦﴾ اَوْ يَاْخُذَهُمْ عَلٰى تَخَوُّفٍ ؕ فَاِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ لَرَءُوْفٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿٤٧﴾ اَوَ لَمْ
يَرَوْا اِلٰى مَا خَلَقَ اللّٰهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ يَّتَفَيَّؤُا ظِلٰلُهٗ عَنِ الْيَمِيْنِ وَ الشَّمَآئِلِ سُجَّدًا
لِّلّٰهِ وَ هُمْ دٰخِرُوْنَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَ لِلّٰهِ يَسْجُدُ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ مَا فِي الْاَرْضِ مِنْ
دَآبَّةٍ وَّ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ وَ هُمْ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُوْنَ ﴿٤٩﴾ يَخَافُوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ مِّنْ فَوْقِهِمْ وَ
يَفْعَلُوْنَ مَا يُؤْمَرُوْنَ ﴿٥٠﴾ ۩ وَ قَالَ اللّٰهُ لَا تَتَّخِذُوْٓا اِلٰهَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ ۚ اِنَّمَا هُوَ
اِلٰهٌ وَّاحِدٌ ۚ فَاِيَّايَ فَارْهَبُوْنِ ﴿٥١﴾ وَ لَهٗ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الْاَرْضِ وَ لَهُ الدِّيْنُ
وَاصِبًا ؕ اَفَغَيْرَ اللّٰهِ تَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَ مَا بِكُمْ مِّنْ نِّعْمَةٍ فَمِنَ اللّٰهِ ثُمَّ اِذَا مَسَّكُمُ
الضُّرُّ فَاِلَيْهِ تَجْـَٔرُوْنَ ﴿٥٣﴾ ثُمَّ اِذَا كَشَفَ الضُّرَّ عَنْكُمْ اِذَا فَرِيْقٌ مِّنْكُمْ بِرَبِّهِمْ
يُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿٥٤﴾ لِيَكْفُرُوْا بِمَآ اٰتَيْنٰهُمْ ؕ فَتَمَتَّعُوْا ۫ فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَ يَجْعَلُوْنَ
لِمَا لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ نَصِيْبًا مِّمَّا رَزَقْنٰهُمْ ؕ تَاللّٰهِ لَتُسْـَٔلُنَّ عَمَّا كُنْتُمْ تَفْتَرُوْنَ ﴿٥٦﴾
وَ يَجْعَلُوْنَ لِلّٰهِ الْبَنٰتِ سُبْحٰنَهٗ ۙ وَ لَهُمْ مَّا يَشْتَهُوْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَ اِذَا بُشِّرَ اَحَدُهُمْ

And it must be fulfilled so that He may reveal to them that thing about which thay are differing, and that the disbelievers might know that they were liars.[35] (As regards its possibility,) when We desire to bring a thing into existence, We need only say, "Be", and it is there.[36] 39-40

As for those, who after persecution, left their homes for the sake of Allah, We will give them a good abode in this world, but the reward in the Next World is far better.[37] Would that those who have borne oppression with fortitude, and are performing their mission with full trust in their Lord, knew (what a happy end awaits them!) 41-42

O Muhammad! whenever We sent before you Messengers to whom We revealed Our Messages, they were but human beings.[38] You (people of Makkah) may inquire from the people who possess Admonition[39] if you do not know this yourselves. We sent the former Messengers with clear Signs and Books, and now We have sent the Admonition to you (O Muhammad!), so that you should make plain and explain to the people the teachings of the 'Book which has been sent for them ;[40] and so that they (themselves) should ponder over it. 43-44

What! Do those people, who are practising evil devices (to oppose the Message), feel fully secure from the danger that Allah will cause them to sink into 'the earth? Or that He will bring scourge upon them from whence they little suspect that it will come, or that He will seize them all of a sudden while they are roaming about fearlessly, or that He will seize them when they themselves are on the alert about the impending danger? These people have no power to frustrate His plans. The fact is that your Lord is very Lenient and Compassionate. 45-47

And don't they observe anything created by Allah how it casts its shadow right and left, prostrating itself before Allah?[41] Thus all things express their humility. All the animate creation in the heavens and the earth and all the angels prostrate themselves in adoration before Allah;[42] they do not show any arrogance at all; they fear their Lord Who is above them, and do whatever they are bidden. 48-50

Allah has enjoined; "You shall not take to yourselves two 51-52

gods;[43] for He is the only One God: so fear Me." To Allah belongs everything in the heavens and the earth: His way is being followed in the universe.[44] Will you, then, fear any other than Allah?[45]

53-55 Whatever blessing you enjoy is from Allah alone; then, when you have a hard time, you with your supplications, run to Him for help.[46] But no sooner does He relieve you of your distress than some of you begin to associate others with Him (in gratitude[47] for this favour), to show ingratitude for Allah's favour. Well! you may enjoy yourselves for a while for you shall soon come to know (its consequences.)

6 These people assign shares from Our provisions to those, of whom they know nothing.[48],[49] By God, you shall most surely be called to account about the falsehood you had forged.

57 They assign daughters to Allah;[50] praise be to God! as for themselves, they would like to have what they desire.[51]

Contd. from p.541]

32. That is, "You are not justified in excusing yourselves for these sins, saying that it is the will of God for We sent Messengers to every *ummat*, who told the people in plain words that they should worship Us and none else, and should not follow and obey *tāghūt*. Besides this, We have already warned you that We do not approve of your deviations. Why should you then put forward this excuse for your deviations ? Do you mean to say that We ought to have sent such Messengers as would have forced you to follow the Right Way instead of bringing you to it by preaching?" (Please refer to E.N. 80 of *Al-A'ām* VI for the distinction between God's "will" and God's "approval.")

33. That is, "Whenever a Messenger came to a people, they were divided into two groups:

(1) Those who accepted the Message (and that, too, could not have been possible except with the will of Allah.)

(2) Those who rejected it and stuck to their deviation". (For fuller explanation, please consult E.N. 28 of *Al-An'ām* VI.

34. That is, "You can see for yourselves the lesson of human history. It is this that the people, who rejected the Message, incurred the scourge of Allah like Pharaoh and the people of Pharaoh, while Prophet Moses received the blessings of Allah".

35. In v. 39 those two things have been stated which rationally and morally require that there must be Resurrection and Life-after-death, that is: (1) to reveal what the reality was, and (2) to reward or punish people in accordance with the right or wrong stand they took about it in this world. It is common knowledge that since the creation of Man on the Earth there have been many differences regarding the Reality which have been sowing dissension between families, nations and races. These have also led to the formation of many different societies, cultures and creeds on different theories. In every age millions of the torch-bearers of each of these theories have been putting at stake their all—life, property, honour—to propagate and defend their favourite theory. Nay, there has always been such a bitter conflict between them that each group tried to annihilate the other, who, in his turn, stuck to it to the last. This being the case, common sense demands that such far-reaching and serious differences should be cleared some time or other, so as to decide with certainty what was right and what was wrong, who was in the right and who was in the wrong. Obviously, it is not possible to lift the curtain from the Reality in this world so as to reveal things in their true perspective. This is because the system on which this world has been created does not allow this. Therefore, there should be another world to fulfil this demand of common sense.

This is not the demand of common sense alone but also of the moral sense, which requires that the partners in this conflict should be rewarded or punished according to right or wrong, just or unjust part they played in it. For, some of these committed cruelties on the others, who had to make sacrifices for their cause. Then each one should also bear the responsibility for formulating and practising a moral or immoral philosophy which influenced millions and billions of others for better or worse. Moral sense demands that there should be a time for the moral consequences to take their due course. As this is not possible in this world there should be another world for the purpose.

36. This is the answer to those who imagined that it was the most difficult thing to raise the dead, and that, too, to raise together at once all the people who had died at any time. They have been told that it is an easy thing for Allah, Who has the power to bring into existence anything He desires, merely by His command, "Be", for He does not stand in need of any provisions, any means and any favourable environment for this. His mere Command produces necessary provisions, means and environment. This world was brought into existence by His mere Command, "Be", and likewise the Next world will at once come into existence by His single Command.

37. This is to comfort the Muslim emigrants from Makkah to Habash, who were forced to leave their homes because of the unbearable persecution they suffered at the hands of the disbelievers. The change of the scene from the

disbelievers to the emigrants to Habash contains a subtle warning to the disbelievers that they should not remain under any delusion that they would get off scot-free from punishment for their cruel behaviour towards those Muslims, so as to say, "O cruel people! there shall be Resurrection to reward the oppressed Believers and to punish you for your persecution of them."

38. This is the answer to the objection of the *mushriks* of Makkah (which has not been cited here) that they could not believe that Muhammad (may Allah's peace be upon him), was a Prophet of God, because he was a human being like them. They have been told that the same objection had been raised against all the Prophets who came before him.

39. "....people who possess Admonition" are the scholars of the people of the Books and others, who, though not scholars in the strict sense had sufficient knowledge of the teachings of the revealed Books and were acquainted with the stories of the former Prophets.

40. In this connection, it is worthwhile to note that this duty of 'making plain and explaining the teachings of the Book' was to be performed by Prophet not only by word of mouth but also practically. It was required that he should organize, under his own guidance, a Muslim Community and establish it in accordance with the principles of the Book. This duty of the Holy Prophet has been stated here especially to show the wisdom of sending a man as a Messenger, for, otherwise the Book could have been sent through the angels or could have been printed and sent directly to each man. But in this way, that purpose for which Allah in His Wisdom and Bounty and Providence designed to send the Book could not have been served. For, that purpose demanded that the Book should be brought by a perfect man, who should present it piece by piece, explain its meaning, remove the difficulties and doubts, answer objections, etc., and above all, he should show towards those who rejected and opposed it that kind of attitude which is worthy of the bearer of this Book. On the other hand, he should guide those who believed in it in every aspect of life and set before them his own excellent pattern of life. Then he should train them individually and collectively on the principles of the Book; so as to make them a model society for the rest of mankind.

Let us now consider this verse (43) from another point of view. Just as it cuts at the root of the argumentation of those who rejected the Creed that a human Prophet could bring the Book, in the same way, it repudiates the view of those who plead that the Book should be accepted without any exposition of it from the Prophet. This latter view is contradictory to this verse, whatever be the position taken by its exponents. They might either be of the opinion that (a) the Prophet did not give any explanation of the Book he presented or that (b) the only acceptable

thing is the Book and not any "Exposition" thereof by the Prophet, or that (c) now the Book alone suffices us, for its "Exposition" by the Prophet has lost its utility or that (d) now the Book alone is authentic for the "Exposition" by the Prophet has ceased to exist, or if it does exists, it cannot be relied upon.

If they take the position (a), it will mean that the Prophet did not fulfil the purpose for which he was chosen to be the bearer of the Book: otherwise Allah could send it through an angel or directly to each person.

If they take the position (b) or (c), (God forbid) they will be accusing Allah of doing a useless thing by sending His Book through a Prophet, when He could have printed copies of the Qur'ān and sent those directly to the people.

In case, they take the position (d), they, in fact, repudiate both the Qur'ān and its "Exposition by the Holy Prophet. Then the only rational course left for them would be to accept the view of those who believe in the necessity of a new Prophet and a new revelation; whereas Allah Himself considers the "Exposition" of the Book by the Prophet as an essential thing, and puts it forward as an argument for the necessity of a Prophet. Now if the view of the rejectors of Tradition that the Explanation of the Holy Prophet has disappeared from the world is to be accepted, then two conclusions are inevitable; First, the Prophethood of Muhammad (May Allah's peace be upon him) as a pattern for us has ceased to exist, and the only relation we have with him is the same that we have with the other former Prophets, e.g. Hūd, Sālih, Shu'aib, etc. (May Allah's peace be upon them). That is, we have only to testify that they were Prophets but we have no obligation to follow their patterns, for we have none with us. This position obviously leads to the need of a new Prophet, for it automatically refutes the doctrine of the Finality of Prophethood. The second inevitable conclusion will be that a new Book is needed because in that case the Qur'ān alone could not, according to its author, suffice. Thus in the face of this verse, there is no argument left to prove that the Qur'ān is self-sufficient to explain itself, for it itself says that there is no need of a Prophet to explain it. Thus it is absolutely necessary that a new Book must be sent down. May Allah destroy such people ! In their enthusiasm to repudiate Tradition, they are really cutting at the very root of Islam itself.

41. The argument is this: The fact that everything—a man, an animal, a tree or a mountain—casts its shadow, is a clear proof of its material nature, and everything which is made of matter, is a creation of Allah and is subject to a universal law. In this case the law is that every material thing casts its shadow, which is symbolical of its servitude, and it cannot have any share whatsoever in Godhead.

[Contd. on p.550

بِالْاُنْثٰى ظَلَّ وَجْهُهٗ مُسْوَدًّا وَّهُوَ كَظِيْمٌ ﴿٥٨﴾ يَتَوَارٰى مِنَ الْقَوْمِ مِنْ سُوْٓءِ
مَا بُشِّرَ بِهٖ ؕ اَيُمْسِكُهٗ عَلٰى هُوْنٍ اَمْ يَدُسُّهٗ فِى التُّرَابِ ؕ اَلَا سَآءَ مَا يَحْكُمُوْنَ ﴿٥٩﴾
لِلَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْاٰخِرَةِ مَثَلُ السَّوْءِ ۖ وَلِلّٰهِ الْمَثَلُ الْاَعْلٰى ؕ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ
الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَلَوْ يُؤَاخِذُ اللّٰهُ النَّاسَ بِظُلْمِهِمْ مَّا تَرَكَ عَلَيْهَا مِنْ دَآبَّةٍ وَّلٰكِنْ
يُّؤَخِّرُهُمْ اِلٰٓى اَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۚ فَاِذَا جَآءَ اَجَلُهُمْ لَا يَسْتَاْخِرُوْنَ سَاعَةً وَّلَا
يَسْتَقْدِمُوْنَ ﴿٦١﴾ وَيَجْعَلُوْنَ لِلّٰهِ مَا يَكْرَهُوْنَ وَتَصِفُ اَلْسِنَتُهُمُ الْكَذِبَ اَنَّ
لَهُمُ الْحُسْنٰى ؕ لَا جَرَمَ اَنَّ لَهُمُ النَّارَ وَاَنَّهُمْ مُّفْرَطُوْنَ ﴿٦٢﴾ تَاللّٰهِ لَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَآ
اِلٰٓى اُمَمٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ فَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطٰنُ اَعْمَالَهُمْ فَهُوَ وَلِيُّهُمُ الْيَوْمَ وَ
لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿٦٣﴾ وَمَآ اَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتٰبَ اِلَّا لِتُبَيِّنَ لَهُمُ الَّذِى اخْتَلَفُوْا
فِيْهِ ۙ وَهُدًى وَّرَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يُّؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٦٤﴾ وَاللّٰهُ اَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَاَحْيَا
بِهِ الْاَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا ؕ اِنَّ فِىْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَّسْمَعُوْنَ ﴿٦٥﴾ وَاِنَّ لَكُمْ فِى
الْاَنْعَامِ لَعِبْرَةً ؕ نُسْقِيْكُمْ مِّمَّا فِىْ بُطُوْنِهٖ مِنْۢ بَيْنِ فَرْثٍ وَّدَمٍ لَّبَنًا خَالِصًا
سَآئِغًا لِّلشّٰرِبِيْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾ وَمِنْ ثَمَرٰتِ النَّخِيْلِ وَالْاَعْنَابِ تَتَّخِذُوْنَ مِنْهُ سَكَرًا
وَّرِزْقًا حَسَنًا ؕ اِنَّ فِىْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَّعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٦٧﴾ وَاَوْحٰى رَبُّكَ اِلَى النَّحْلِ
اَنِ اتَّخِذِىْ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوْتًا وَّمِنَ الشَّجَرِ وَمِمَّا يَعْرِشُوْنَ ﴿٦٨﴾ ثُمَّ كُلِىْ مِنْ
كُلِّ الثَّمَرٰتِ فَاسْلُكِىْ سُبُلَ رَبِّكِ ذُلُلًا ؕ يَخْرُجُ مِنْۢ بُطُوْنِهَا شَرَابٌ مُّخْتَلِفٌ
اَلْوَانُهٗ فِيْهِ شِفَآءٌ لِّلنَّاسِ ؕ اِنَّ فِىْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَّتَفَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٦٩﴾ وَاللّٰهُ خَلَقَكُمْ
ثُمَّ يَتَوَفّٰىكُمْ ؕ وَمِنْكُمْ مَّنْ يُّرَدُّ اِلٰٓى اَرْذَلِ الْعُمُرِ لِكَيْ لَا يَعْلَمَ بَعْدَ عِلْمٍ
شَيْـًٔا ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلِيْمٌ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿٧٠﴾ وَاللّٰهُ فَضَّلَ بَعْضَكُمْ عَلٰى بَعْضٍ فِى الرِّزْقِ ۚ

When anyone of them is given the good news of a daughter, his face grows dark after this news and he chokes with inward gloom: he hides himself from people because of this disgrace, asking himself whether he should suffer his daughter with disgrace or bury her alive. What an evil judgment they have about Allah ![52] Bad attributes should be ascribed to those who do not believe in the Hereafter. As regards Allah, all excellences are for Him; for He is the All-Powerful, the All-Wise: 58-60

Had Allah seized people on the spot for their transgression, He would not have left alive any living creature on the Earth: but He respites all for an appointed term. When their appointed time comes, they shall not be able to put it back or forward by a single moment. Yet they assign to Allah what they themselves dislike, and their tongues utter the lie that their lot shall be a fair one anyhow. Nay, only one thing awaits them, and that is the fire of Hell, wherein most certainly they shall be hastened. 61-62

By God, O Muhammad, We sent Messengers before you to many communities (and it has always been so that) Satan made their evil deeds seem fair to them, (and so they did not believe in the Message). The same Satan has this day become their patron also and they are incurring the most painful punishment. We have sent down this Book to you so that you may reveal to them the reality of the differences in which they are involved. Moreover, this Book has been sent down as guidance for and blessing to those who believe in it.[53] 63-64

(In every rainy season you see that) Allah sent down water from heaven, and by it gave life to the earth after it had been dead: indeed there is a Sign in this for those who listen (to the Message).[53] 65

And surely there is a lesson for you in the cattle: We give you to drink of that which is in their bellies between filth and blood, that is, pure milk,[54] which is very pleasant to those who drink it. 66

(Likewise) We give you from date-palms and vines a drink from which you derive intoxicants and also pure food:[55] indeed there is a Sign in this for those who make use of their common sense. 67

And behold ! .Your Lord has inspired the bee[56] with this "Build thy hive in the mountains, trees and in the creepers over trellises: then 68-69

drink nectar from every kind of fruit, and follow the ways made smooth by the Lord."[57] From its belly comes out a fluid of varying hues wherein is healing for mankind.[58] Here is indeed a Sign for those people who ponder over it.[59]

70 And consider this: Allah created you: then He causes your death;[60] and some one from among you is carried on to abject old age so that after knowing all he could, he may no longer have any knowledge of it.[61] The fact is that Allah alone is All-Knowing, All-Powerful.

Contd. from p.547]

42. That is, "Not only all things on the earth alone but also all things in the heavens, including all those whom people have been regarding as gods and goddesses, and considering to be closely related to Allah are subservient to God, and have no share whatsoever in His Godhead."

Incidentally, it implies the existence of living creatures not only on the earth but in the planets, too.

43. Negation of two gods by itself negates the existence of more than two gods.

44. In other words it means that the whole system of the universe exists on its obedience to Him.

45. That is, "When it is so, will you then make the fear of any other than God the basis of the system of your life?"

46. That is, "The fact, that you run to Allah for help in your distress and not to anyone else, is a clear proof of the Oneness of Allah, which has been embedded in your own hearts. At the time of your affliction, your true nature, which had been suppressed by the gods you had forged, involuntarily comes to the surface and invokes Allah, for it knows no other god or lord or master, having any real power. (For further details please refer to E.N.'s 29 and 41 of Chapter VI).

47. That is, "At the time of showing gratitude to Allah for removing his affliction, he begins to make offerings also to some god, goddess or saint to show that Allah's kindness to him was due to the intercession of his patron, for he imagines that otherwise Allah would not have removed his distress."

48. They assign shares to those patrons about whom they have no authentic knowledge that God has made them His partners and allotted some duties of Godhead to them and made them governors of some territories in His Kingdom.

49. That is, "They set apart a portion of their incomes and land products to make offerings of this to their patron."

50. This refers to a tradition of the ancient Arabs. They regarded their goddesses and angels as daughters of God.

51. That is, "sons".

52. This attitude of contempt towards daughters has been mentioned to bring home to them the height of their folly, ignorance and impudence in regard to God. This is why they did not hesitate to assign daughters to Allah, though they themselves felt that to have daughters was a matter of disgrace for them. Besides this, it shows that they had a very low estimation of Allah, which had resulted from their ways of *shirk*. So they felt nothing wrong in ascribing such foolish and absurd things to Allah Who is above such things.

53. That is, "This Book has afforded them an excellent opportunity to resolve their differences which have been caused by the superstitious creeds of their forefathers, and which have divided them into warring factions. They can then unite on the permanent basis of the Truth presented by the Qur'ân, but those foolish people preferring their former condition even after the coming of this blessing, shall meet with disgrace and torment. On the other hand, only those, who believe in this Book, will find the Right Way and blessed with mercy and favours from Allah".

53a. That is, " Had you listened to the Message of the Prophet, and observed those Signs carefully, you would have cried from the core of your heart, 'These Signs support his Message'. Year after year you witness these Signs. There is the land, all barren before you, without any sign of life—no blade of grass, no bud or flower, and no insect. Then comes rain. All of a sudden, the same land is covered with life. There crop upon numerous kinds of insects of which no vestige had been left. You witness this process of life and death, and death and life, repeated year after year. Yet you doubt this when the Prophet tells you that Allah will again bring to life all human beings after their death. This is because you see these Signs as animals do, who do not see the wisdom of the Creator underlying this phenomenon; otherwise you would have discovered that these signs support the Message of the Prophet".

54. "....between filth and blood.....":This refers to the most wonderful process of the formation of pure milk in the bellies of the she-cattle, for, the fodder they eat turns into blood, filth and pure milk, which is altogether different from the first two in its nature, colour and usefulness. Some she-cattle produce milk in such abundance that after suckling their young-ones a large quantity of it is left to make excellent human food.

55. Incidentally it implies that the juice of the fruits of date-palms and vines contains two things. One is that which is pure and wholesome food for man and the other is that which turns into alcohol after it becomes rotten. But it has been left to the choice of man to obtain pure healthy food from this providence or to drink it as intoxicant wine to excite him and make him lose his self-control. This also contains a hint as to the prohibition of wine.

56. The lexical meaning of the Arabic word وحی (*'wahī'*) is secret inspiration which is felt only by the one who inspires and the other who is inspired with. The Qur'ān has used this word both for the instinctive inspiration by Allah to His creation in general and for the Revelation towards His Prophets in particular. Allah sends His "*wahī*" to the heavens with His Command and they begin functioning in accordance with it (XL: 12). He will send this to the Earth with His Command and it will relate the story of all that had happened on and in it. (XCIX: 4-5). He sends *wahi* to the bee and inspires it with faculties to perform the whole of its wonderful work instinctively (v. 68). The same is true of the bird that learns to fly, the fish that learns to swim, the newly born child that learns to suck milk, etc., etc. Then, it is also *wahi* with which Allah inspires a human being with a spontaneous idea (XXVIII: 7). The same is the case with all the great discoveries, inventions, works of literature and art, etc., which would not have been possible without the benefit of *wahi*. As a matter of fact, every human being at one time or the other feels its mental or spiritual influence in the form of an idea or thought or plan or dream, which is confirmed by a subsequent experience to be the right guidance from the unseen *wahi*.

Then there is the *wahī* (Revelation) which is the privilege of the Prophets. This form of *wahi* has its own special features and is quite distinct from all its other forms. The Prophet, who is inspired with it, is fully conscious and has his firm conviction that it is being sent down from Allah. Such a Revelation contains doctrines of creed, commandments, laws, regulations and instructions for the guidance of mankind.

57. ". ...follow the ways made smooth by thy Lord": ".....work in accordance with the methods which have been taught to thee by Allah's *wahi* for the smooth running of hive life". It is Allah's *wahi* (instinctive inspiration) that has taught the bees how to build their wonderful factory with separate combs to rear brood, combs to turn nectar into honey, combs to store food, in short, separate combs to fulfil every aspect of hive life. It is wahi that has taught the bees how to organize themselves into a co-operative society for collective effort to run the "factory" with the queen and thousands of workers to perform a variety of specific tasks. All these things have been made so smooth for them by *wahi* that the bees never feel the necessity of ever thinking about it. They have been running

smoothly their factory with their collective effort for thousands of years with perfect accuracy.

58. Though honey is a wholesome food with a sweet taste and has medicinal power as well, its latter quality has been mentioned only because the former is too obvious. It is used as a medicine to cure several diseases because it contains the juice and glucose of flowers and fruits in the best form. Besides this, it is also used in preparing and preserving other medicines because it does not rot. It also preserves other things from decay. That is why it has been used for centuries as a substitute for alcohol. And if the bee-hive is built at a place, which abounds in certain medicinal herbs, its honey does not remain mere honey, but becomes also the essence of that herb. It is expected that if bees are used methodically for extracting essence from herbs, etc., that essence will prove to be much better than the one obtained in the laboratories.

59. This passage (vv. 48-69) contains proofs of *Tauhīd* and Life-after-death. These were necessitated, for the disbelievers and the *mushriks* were bitterly opposed to the Holy Prophet mainly because of these two doctrines. The acceptance of the first doctrine demolished the whole system of life based on *shirk* or atheism because to acknowledge Allah to be the sole Providence, the Helper and the Protector left no room for the worship of any god or goddess. The proof of *Tauhīd* is based on the observance of the structure of the cattle, the bees, the date-palms and vine-yards and their usefulness to mankind. Naturally the question arises: Who has designed these in the manner and for the purpose they have been created? The only obvious answer is that it is the All-Wise and All-Beneficent Allah Who has designed all these things for the benefit of mankind to produce such varieties of food that are so wholesome and so tasty. The Prophet, therefore, rightly demanded, "When you yourselves admit, and you cannot but admit, that it is Allah alone Who has provided milk, honey, dates, grapes and the like, He and none but He is worthy of your worship, praise, gratitude and allegiance. Why do you then insist on making offerings to your self-made gods and goddesses?"

The second doctrine to which the disbelievers took strong objection was that there is surely the Life-after-death. They were against this doctrine for its acceptance changed the whole moral system and they were not prepared to change their immoral ways. Their objection was based on the presumption that it was impossible to bring to life anyone after death.

They have been asked to observe that the barren land, which once had been covered with vegetable life, was again covered with it after rainfall and they have been watching such repetition of life year after year. That Allah, Who could so easily bring to life the dead vegetable, could do the same and bring to life all the dead without any difficulty at all.

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فَمَا الَّذِيْنَ فُضِّلُوْا بِرَآدِّيْ رِزْقِهِمْ عَلٰى مَا مَلَكَتْ اَيْمَانُهُمْ فَهُمْ فِيْهِ سَوَآءٌ ۭ
اَفَبِنِعْمَةِ اللّٰهِ يَجْحَدُوْنَ ۝ وَاللّٰهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِّنْ اَنْفُسِكُمْ اَزْوَاجًا وَّجَعَلَ
لَكُمْ مِّنْ اَزْوَاجِكُمْ بَنِيْنَ وَحَفَدَةً وَّرَزَقَكُمْ مِّنَ الطَّيِّبٰتِ ۭ اَفَبِالْبَاطِلِ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ
وَبِنِعْمَتِ اللّٰهِ هُمْ يَكْفُرُوْنَ ۝ وَيَعْبُدُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ مَا لَا يَمْلِكُ لَهُمْ
رِزْقًا مِّنَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ شَيْـــًٔا وَّلَا يَسْتَطِيْعُوْنَ ۝ فَلَا تَضْرِبُوْا لِلّٰهِ
الْاَمْثَالَ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَعْلَمُ وَاَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝ ضَرَبَ اللّٰهُ مَثَلًا عَبْدًا مَّمْلُوْكًا
لَّا يَقْدِرُ عَلٰى شَيْءٍ وَّمَنْ رَّزَقْنٰهُ مِنَّا رِزْقًا حَسَنًا فَهُوَ يُنْفِقُ مِنْهُ سِرًّا
وَّجَهْرًا ۭ هَلْ يَسْتَوٗنَ ۭ اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ ۭ بَلْ اَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝ وَضَرَبَ اللّٰهُ
مَثَلًا رَّجُلَيْنِ اَحَدُهُمَآ اَبْكَمُ لَا يَقْدِرُ عَلٰى شَيْءٍ وَّهُوَ كَلٌّ عَلٰي مَوْلٰىهُ ۙ اَيْنَمَا
يُوَجِّهْهُّ لَا يَاْتِ بِخَيْرٍ ۭ هَلْ يَسْتَوِيْ هُوَ ۙ وَمَنْ يَّاْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ ۙ وَهُوَ عَلٰي
صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ۝ وَلِلّٰهِ غَيْبُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۭ وَمَآ اَمْرُ السَّاعَةِ اِلَّا
كَلَمْحِ الْبَصَرِ اَوْ هُوَ اَقْرَبُ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلٰي كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ۝ وَاللّٰهُ اَخْرَجَكُمْ
مِّنْۢ بُطُوْنِ اُمَّهٰتِكُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ شَيْـــًٔا ۙ وَّجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْاَبْصَارَ وَالْاَفْـِٕدَةَ ۙ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُوْنَ ۝ اَلَمْ يَرَوْا اِلَى الطَّيْرِ مُسَخَّرٰتٍ فِيْ جَوِّ السَّمَاۗءِ ۭ مَا يُمْسِكُهُنَّ
اِلَّا اللّٰهُ ۭ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يُّؤْمِنُوْنَ ۝ وَاللّٰهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِّنْۢ بُيُوْتِكُمْ
سَكَنًا وَّجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِّنْ جُلُوْدِ الْاَنْعَامِ بُيُوْتًا تَسْتَخِفُّوْنَهَا يَوْمَ ظَعْنِكُمْ وَيَوْمَ
اِقَامَتِكُمْ ۙ وَمِنْ اَصْوَافِهَا وَاَوْبَارِهَا وَاَشْعَارِهَآ اَثَاثًا وَّمَتَاعًا اِلٰى حِيْنٍ ۝
وَاللّٰهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِّمَّا خَلَقَ ظِلٰلًا وَّجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِّنَ الْجِبَالِ اَكْنَانًا وَّجَعَلَ
لَكُمْ سَرَابِيْلَ تَقِيْكُمُ الْحَرَّ وَسَرَابِيْلَ تَقِيْكُمْ بَاْسَكُمْ ۭ كَذٰلِكَ يُتِمُّ نِعْمَتَهٗ

Consider also this: Allah has favoured some of you above others with provisions, but those who have been favoured with this, do not give away their provisions to their slaves so that both may become equal in the provision. What! do they then deny to acknowledge Allah's favour?[62] 71

It is Allah alone, Who has made wives for you from your own species and He alone bestowed upon you sons and grandsons from those wives, and provided you with good things to eat. What, do they then (even after seeing and knowing all this,) believe in falsehood,[63] and deny Allah's favours[64] and, instead of Allah, worship those who do not provide them with anything from the heavens or the earth, nor have any power to do so? Make no comparisons, therefore, with Allah.[65] Allah knows but you do not know. 72-74

Allah cites a similitude[66] (of two men): one of them is a slave, who is owned by another and has no power over anything. There is the other man whom We Ourselves have provided with a fair provision from which he freely spends openly and secretly. (Ask them): "Are these two men equal?"—May God be praised![67] But most people do not understand (this simple thing).[68] 75

Allah cites another similitude of two men. One of them is dumb and deaf and cannot do any work, and has become a burden upon his master; wherever he despatches him, he does nothing useful. There is the other one, who enjoins justice and follows the Right Way. (Ask them): "Are these two men equal?"[69] 76

Allah alone has the knowledge of all the "unknown" things of the heavens and the earth.[70] As regards the coming of the Resurrection, it will not take more time than is taken in the twinkling of an eye rather less than this;[71] the fact is that Allah has power over all things. 77

Allah brought you out of your mothers' wombs in this state that you knew nothing: He gave you ears and eyes and thinking minds[72] so that you may be grateful.[73] 78

Have they never observed how the birds are poised in the vault of heaven? Who holds them up but Allah ? There are many Signs in this for those people who believe.

80 Allah has made your homes places of rest and peace for you: and from the skins of cattle He has made for you houses[74] which you find light during your journey and at the time of your halt.[75] And from their soft fur and wool and hair, He has furnished you with many things for clothing and domestic service which are very useful to you during your prescribed term of life.

Contd. from p.553]

60. It is to emphasize this: Allah not only provides you with the necessities and good things of life (as stated in the preceding verses), but also has full power over your life and death. None else has any power to give life or cause death.

61. This fact has been mentioned to bring home to the disbelievers and the *mushriks* that knowledge, which gives superiority to man over all creatures on this Earth, has been given by Allah, as if to say, "You yourselves have seen that when a man, who once possessed much knowledge, becomes very old, he is reduced to a mere lump of flesh. Then that man who once taught knowledge to others loses all his senses and cannot look even after his own self".

62. It will be worthwhile to give deep thought to the meanings of this verse, for some modern commentators of the Qur'ān have founded strange economic theories and systems on it. Their interpretation is an instance of perverting the meaning of the Qur'ān by isolating verses from their context and treating it as a separate whole in order to formulate a new philosophy and law of Islamic Economics. In their opinion the verse implies this: Those people to whom Allah has given more provisions than others, should share these equally with their servants and slaves: otherwise they shall be guilty of ingratitude to Allah in regard to the wealth with which He had blessed them. This commentary on the verse is obviously wrong and far-fetched because in the context it occurs there is no mention at all of any law of economics. The whole passage in which this verse occurs deals with the refutation of *shirk* and proof of *Tauhid*. The same themes are continued in the subsequent verses. There seems to be no reason why an economic law should have been inserted here, which would have been absolutely irrelevant, to say the least. On the contrary, when the verse is considered in its context, it becomes quite obvious that it is no more than the statement of a fact to prove the same theme that is contained in this passage. It argues like this: "When you yourselves do not make your servants and slaves equal partners in your wealth—which in fact is given to you by Allah—how is it that you join other gods with God in your gratitude to Him for the favours with which He has blessed you. You know that these gods have no powers to bestow anything on anyone, and,

therefore, have no right in your worship of Allah, for they are after all His slaves and servants."

This interpretation of the verse under discussion is corroborated by XXX: 28: "Allah sets forth to you an instance from your own selves: Do your slaves share with you the wealth We have bestowed on you so that you and they become equals in this? And do you fear them as you fear one another? Thus We make clear Our Signs to those who use their common sense." A comparison of the two verses makes it quite clear that these have been cited to bring home to the *mushriks* that they themselves do not associate their slaves with themselves in their wealth and status, but they have the impudence and folly to set up His own creature as partner with God.

It appears that the erroneous interpretation has been strengthened by the succeeding sentence: "What! do they then deny to acknowledge Allah's favour? As this sentence immediately follows the similitude of the rich people and their slaves, they conclude that it will be ingratitude on the part of those, who possess more wealth not to share it equally with those who have less. As a matter of fact, everyone who has studied the Qur'ān critically knows that ingratitude to Allah is to show gratitude to others than Allah for His blessings. This interpretation is so patently wrong that those who are well-versed in the teachings of the Qur'ān can have no misconception about it. And such verses as these can mislead only those who have a cursory knowledge of the Qur'ān.

Now that the significance of the ingratitude towards Allah's blessing has become plain, the meaning of the verse will be quite clear, and it is this: "When the *Mushriks* understand the implication of the difference between the master and his slave and observe this distinction in their own lives, why do they then persist in ignoring the immense difference between the Creator and His creatures and set up the latter as His partners and pay homage of gratitude to them for the blessings bestowed on them by Allah."

63. " .... they believe in falsehood .....": they have this false and baseless belief that there are certain gods and goddesses, jinns and saints, dead and alive, who possess the power to make or mar their fates, fulfil their desires and answer their prayers, give them children, cure their diseases and help them win law suits.

64. " .... they deny Allah's favours" by associating others with Allah in offering gratitude to Him for His favours, though they did not have any proof or authority that their false gods had played any part in regard to those favours. The Qur'ān considers such an association to be the denial of Allah's favours. It puts forward the fundamental principle: It is the denial of the favour of the real benefactor to offer gratitude for his favour to anyone who has not done that

favour, or to presume without any proof or reason that the real benefactor has not granted that favour of his own accord but because of the mediation or regard or recommendation or intercession of this or that person.

Even a little thinking will show that both of the above-mentioned fundamental things are absolutely just and rational. Let us suppose, for the sake of illustration, that A, out of sympathy, helps B, a needy person, but at that very moment B stands up in A's presence, and offers gratitude for that kind act to another person who had no share at all in it. A being a generous person may not take any notice of B's absurd response, and may even continue to help him as before, but he cannot help having a very low opinion of B character and considering him to be an ungrateful wretch. Then on inquiry B reveals that he was grateful to the other person for A had done that kindness to B because of him. Naturally A will take it ill, for he knows that B's assumption is absolutely wrong: nay, he will take this as an insult to himself because it means that B has a very low opinion of him that he is not a generous and kind-hearted man but merely does such deeds to please his friends. It means that A helps a needy person only if he brings recommendation of his friends: otherwise none can expect any goodness from him.

65. "Make no comparisons with Allah": You should not compare Allah with others nor consider Him to be unapproachable like worldly kings and rulers, to whom none can have access without the mediation and intercession of their courtiers and servants. As Allah is not surrounded by angels, saints, favourites, etc., everyone can have direct access to Him without mediation by anyone.

66. In the preceding verse, the *mushriks* were told not to make comparisons between Allah and His creatures, for there is nothing like Him. As the bases of their comparison were wrong, their conclusions were also misleading. In this verse appropriate similitudes have been cited and right comparisons have been made to lead them to Reality.

67. Between the last question and "May God be praised!" there is a gap which is to be filled with the help of the latter. When the question was posed, obviously the *mushriks* could not say that the two men were equal. So some of them would have admitted that they were not equal, while the others would have kept quiet for fear that in case of admission, they would have to abide by its logical conclusion, that is, the admission of refutation of the doctrine of *shirk*. Therefore, the words, "May God be praised!" have been put in the mouth of the Prophet in answer to both kinds of the response to the question. In the first case, it would mean: "May God be praised! you have admitted at least so much". In the second case, it would mean: "May God be praised! you have kept quiet in spite of all your obduracy and have not had the audacity to say that both were equal".

68. "....most people do not understand (this simple thing)" that while they feel and carefully observe the distinction between those who have powers and those who are powerless, they neither feel nor observe the clear distinction between the Creator and His creation. That is why they associate the creatures with the Creator in His Attributes and Powers and show the kind of allegiance to them as is the exclusive right of the Creator. The pity is that in their everyday life, they would beg for some thing from the master of the house and not from the servants but in contrast to this, they would beg for their needs from the servants of Allah and not from Him.

69. In the first similitude, distinction between Allah and false gods has been made clear in regard to the possession of powers and the lack of these. In the second one, the emphasis is on the use of those powers. Allah is not only All-Powerful, but also hears all the prayers and fulfils all the needs, while the slave is utterly powerless. He does not and cannot hear prayers, nor can make a response to them nor has the power to do anything at all. He is totally dependent on the Master and quite incapable of doing anything by himself. On the other hand, the Master is All-Powerful and All-Wise. He enjoins justice on the world: whatever He does is right and accurate. Ask them, "Is it then a point of wisdom to regard such Master and such a slave as equal?"

70. The subsequent sentence shows that this is the answer to a question which was frequently put to the Holy Prophet by the disbelievers of Makkah. The question which has not been cited was this: If the Resurrection you so often talk of is really coming, let us know the date of its coming.

71. That is, "Don't be under the delusion that the Resurrection will come gradually and take a long time: you will neither be able to see it coming at a distance nor guard against it and make preparations to meet it. For it will come suddenly without any previous notice, in the twinkling of an eye or even take less time than this. Therefore, now is the time to consider this matter seriously and to decide about your attitude towards it. You should not depend upon this false hope that there is still a long time in the coming of the Resurrection and you will set matters right with Allah when you will see it coming".

It may be pointed out that the Resurrection has been mentioned here during the discussion on *Tauhid* in order to warn the people that the choice between the doctrines of *Tauhid* and *shirk* is not merely a theoretical question. For that choice determines different courses of life for which they will be called to account on the Day of Resurrection. They have also been warned that it will come all of a sudden at some unknown time. Therefore, they should be very careful to make that choice which will determine their success or failure on that Day.

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عَلَيْكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُسْلِمُوْنَ ﴿٨١﴾ فَاِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَاِنَّمَا عَلَيْكَ الْبَلٰغُ الْمُبِيْنُ ﴿٨٢﴾ يَعْرِفُوْنَ
نِعْمَتَ اللّٰهِ ثُمَّ يُنْكِرُوْنَهَا وَ اَكْثَرُهُمُ الْكٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿٨٣﴾ وَ يَوْمَ نَبْعَثُ مِنْ كُلِّ اُمَّةٍ
شَهِيْدًا ثُمَّ لَا يُؤْذَنُ لِلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا وَ لَا هُمْ يُسْتَعْتَبُوْنَ ﴿٨٤﴾ وَ اِذَا رَاَ الَّذِيْنَ
ظَلَمُوا الْعَذَابَ فَلَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمْ وَ لَا هُمْ يُنْظَرُوْنَ ﴿٨٥﴾ وَ اِذَا رَاَ الَّذِيْنَ اَشْرَكُوْا
شُرَكَآءَهُمْ قَالُوْا رَبَّنَا هٰٓؤُلَآءِ شُرَكَآؤُنَا الَّذِيْنَ كُنَّا نَدْعُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِكَ ۚ فَاَلْقَوْا
اِلَيْهِمُ الْقَوْلَ اِنَّكُمْ لَكٰذِبُوْنَ ﴿٨٦﴾ وَ اَلْقَوْا اِلَى اللّٰهِ يَوْمَئِذِ ِۨ السَّلَمَ وَ ضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ
مَّا كَانُوْا يَفْتَرُوْنَ ﴿٨٧﴾ اَلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا وَ صَدُّوْا عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ زِدْنٰهُمْ عَذَابًا
فَوْقَ الْعَذَابِ بِمَا كَانُوْا يُفْسِدُوْنَ ﴿٨٨﴾ وَ يَوْمَ نَبْعَثُ فِيْ كُلِّ اُمَّةٍ شَهِيْدًا
عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ اَنْفُسِهِمْ وَ جِئْنَا بِكَ شَهِيْدًا عَلٰى هٰٓؤُلَآءِ ۭ وَ نَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتٰبَ تِبْيَانًا
لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَّ هُدًى وَّ رَحْمَةً وَّ بُشْرٰى لِلْمُسْلِمِيْنَ ﴿٨٩﴾ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَاْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ
وَ الْاِحْسَانِ وَ اِيْتَآئِ ذِي الْقُرْبٰى وَ يَنْهٰى عَنِ الْفَحْشَآءِ وَ الْمُنْكَرِ وَ الْبَغْيِ ۚ
يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٩٠﴾ وَ اَوْفُوْا بِعَهْدِ اللّٰهِ اِذَا عٰهَدْتُّمْ وَ لَا تَنْقُضُوا
الْاَيْمَانَ بَعْدَ تَوْكِيْدِهَا وَ قَدْ جَعَلْتُمُ اللّٰهَ عَلَيْكُمْ كَفِيْلًا ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا
تَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿٩١﴾ وَ لَا تَكُوْنُوْا كَالَّتِيْ نَقَضَتْ غَزْلَهَا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ قُوَّةٍ اَنْكَاثًا ۭ تَتَّخِذُوْنَ
اَيْمَانَكُمْ دَخَلًۢا بَيْنَكُمْ اَنْ تَكُوْنَ اُمَّةٌ هِيَ اَرْبٰى مِنْ اُمَّةٍ ۭ اِنَّمَا يَبْلُوْكُمُ اللّٰهُ
بِهٖ ۭ وَ لَيُبَيِّنَنَّ لَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ مَا كُنْتُمْ فِيْهِ تَخْتَلِفُوْنَ ﴿٩٢﴾ وَ لَوْ شَآءَ اللّٰهُ
لَجَعَلَكُمْ اُمَّةً وَّاحِدَةً وَّ لٰكِنْ يُّضِلُّ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَ يَهْدِيْ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ۭ وَ لَتُسْـَٔلُنَّ
عَمَّا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٩٣﴾ وَ لَا تَتَّخِذُوْٓا اَيْمَانَكُمْ دَخَلًۢا بَيْنَكُمْ فَتَزِلَّ قَدَمٌۢ بَعْدَ
ثُبُوْتِهَا وَ تَذُوْقُوا السُّوْٓءَ بِمَا صَدَدْتُّمْ عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ ۚ وَ لَكُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيْمٌ ﴿٩٤﴾

Allah has made for you from the many things He has created shelter from the sun. He has created for you places of refuge in the mountains and blessed you with such garments as protect you from heat[76] and garments which shield you in your fights.[77] Thus He perfects His blessings on you,[78] so that you should submit to Him. But if they give no heed to you, O Muhammad!, (you need not worry) for, your only responsibility is to convey the plain Message of truth. They recognise the blessing of Allah, yet they deny it,[79] for the majority of them are not inclined to accept the Truth. 81-83

(Do they realize what will happen) on the Day when We shall raise up a witness[80] from every community? Then the disbelievers shall not be given any opportunity to put forward any excuses[81] nor shall they be asked to show penitence.[82] When once the transgressors will see the torment, their punishment shall neither be lightened for them after this nor shall any respite be given to them. When the people, who had committed *shirk* in this world, will see those whom they had made associates with Allah, they will say, "Our Lord! here are those associate-deities whom we used to invoke beside Thee". At this their deities will retort, "You are liars."[83] At that time all of them will proffer submission before Allah and all they used to forge in this world shall vanish from them.[84] We will inflict double torment[85] on those who followed the way of disbelief and hindered others from the Way of Allah on account of the chaos they spread in this world. 84-88

(O Muhammad, warn them of) the Day when We shall call a witness from among every community to testify against it. And We shall call you to testify against these people; (that is why) We have sent down to you this Book which makes plain everything[86] and is guidance, blessing and good news to those who have surrendered themselves entirely.[87] 89

Allah enjoins justice, generosity and kind treatment with kindred,[88] and forbids indecency, wickedness and oppression.[89] He admonishes you so that you may learn a lesson. Fulfil your covenant with Allah when you have made a Covenant with Him, and do not break your oaths after they have been confirmed and you have made Allah your witness. Allah is fully aware of all your actions. Do not behave like that woman who had spun yarn laboriously and then had herself 90-93

broken it into pieces.[90] You make your mutual oaths a means of mutual deceit in your affairs so that one people might take undue advantage over the other whereas Allah puts you to trial by these pledges.[91] Allah will certainly reveal to you the truth about all your differences on the Day of Resurrection.[92] Had Allah so willed (that you may not have any differences,) He would have made you all a single community,[93] but He leads astray whom He will and shows guidance to whom He will.[94] And be sure that He will take you to account for all your doings.

94 And (O Muslims,) do not make your oaths the means of deceiving one another lest (someone's) foot should slip after being firmly fixed[95] and you may suffer the consequences of debarring other people from the Way of Allah, and undergo a severe torment.

Contd. from p.559]

72. This is to remind them that when they were born they were more helpless and ignorant than the young-one of an animal, but Allah gave them ears to hear, eyes to see and minds to think and reflect. These have enabled them to acquire every kind of information and knowledge to carry on their worldly affairs efficiently. So much so that these sensory faculties are the only means which help man attain so much progress as to rule over everything on the earth.

73. That is, "You should be grateful to that Allah Who has bestowed upon you such blessings as these. It will be ingratitude on your part if you hear everything with your ears except the Word of God, and see everything with your eyes except the Signs of Allah and consider seriously about all the matters except your Benefactor Who has blessed you with these favours.

74. Houses: tents of skin which are in common use in Arabia.

75. That is, "When you want to start on a journey, you can easily fold your tents and carry them, and when you want to make a short halt, you can easily unfold them and pitch them for shelter and rest."

76. The Qur'ān has not mentioned protection from cold for either of the two reasons: (1) Because the use of garments in the summer season is a symbol of cultural perfection and obviously there is no need to mention the lower stages of culture. Or (2) the use of garments in hot countries has specially been mentioned because the main use of garments there is for protection from the hot pestilential furious wind. Therefore, one has to cover one's head, neck, ears, and the whole of one's body to protect it from the hot wind which would otherwise scorch one to death.

77. That is, "Armour".

78. "He perfects His blessings on you": Allah makes provision for the minutest needs and necessities of every aspect of human life. For example, let us take the instance of the protection of the human body from external influences. We find that Allah has made such elaborate arrangements as require a complete book to relate them. These arrangements reach their perfection in the case of clothing and housing arrangement. Or, if we consider the food requirements we realize that it is of many varieties which fulfil every need. More than this: the means Allah has provided for food requirements of man are so numerous that the list of the varieties and the names of different kinds of food require a big volume. This is the perfection of the blessing of food. Likewise, one would see perfection of the blessings of Allah in the fulfilment of each and every human need and necessity.

79. Here the denial of the blessings of Allah refers to practical denial by the disbelievers of Makkah. For they did not deny that all these blessings were from Allah but along with this they believed that their saints and gods also had contributed towards them. This is why they associated their intercessors in their gratitude to Allah for these blessings. Nay, they were even more grateful to them than to Allah. Allah regards this association as denial of His blessings, ingratitude and forgetfulness of His favours.

80. The witness will be the Prophet of that community or his follower who invited that community to *Tauhid* and God-worship and warned it of the consequences of *shirk* and superstitious rites and customs and cautioned it against the accountability on the Day of Resurrection. He will bear witness of the fact that he had conveyed the true Message to those people, and that they committed evils deliberately and not in ignorance.

81. This does not mean that the criminals will not be given any opportunity to clear themselves but it means that their crimes will be proved to the hilt by means of irrefutable evidence which will leave no room for excuses.

82. That is, "They will not be given the opportunity to beg pardon of their Lord for their crimes. For that will be the time of judgment as the time of begging pardon would have ended long before this." The Qur'ān and the Traditions are explicit on this point that the place for penitence is this world and not the Next World. Even in this world the opportunity is lost as soon as signs of death begin to appear, for the penitence at that time will be of no avail when a person knows that the time of his death has come. Respite for deeds expires as soon as one enters into the boundary of death, and the only thing that remains after that is the award of reward and punishment.

83. It does not mean that they would deny the fact that the *mushriks* used to invoke their help. They will call them liars in the sense that they had made them deities without their knowledge, information and permission, as if to say, "We never told you to leave Allah aside and pray to us for help. As a matter of fact, we never approved of this, nay, we were utterly unaware of this that you were invoking us. It was an utter lie that you considered us to be able to hear your prayers, answer them and help you out of your difficulties. As you yourselves were responsible for this *shirk*, why are you involving us in its consequences ?"

84. That is, "All those things on which they had relied will prove to be false, for they will not find anyone to hear their supplication nor anyone to remove their hardships. Nay, there will be none who will come forward and say, "These are my dependents: so no action should be taken against them".

85. Double torment: one for their own disbelief and the other for hindering others from the Way of Allah.

86. The Qur'ān makes manifest everything on which depends guidance or deviation, success or failure: whose knowledge is essential for following the Right Way: which clearly distinguishes Truth from false hood.

In this connection one should guard against that meaning of this sentence and the like in the Qur'ān according to which some people interpret "everything" to mean "the knowledge of all sciences, arts, etc.," and in order to prove the correctness of their interpretation, they have to pervert the real meaning of the Qur'ān.

87. This Book is a guidance for those who surrender to it as a Divine Book and follow it in every aspect of life. Then it will bring Allah's blessings upon them, and will give them the good news that they will come out successful in the Court of Allah on the Day of Judgment. On the contrary, those people who reject it shall not only be deprived of guidance and blessing but will also find it as a testimony against themselves on the Day of Resurrection when Allah's Messenger will stand up to testify against them. This Book will prove to be a strong argument against them, for Allah's Messenger will say that he had conveyed its Message which made manifest the distinction between Truth and falsehood.

88. In this brief sentence Allah has enjoined three most important things on which alone depends the establishment of a sound and healthy society:

The first of these is justice which has two aspects.

To make such arrangements as may enable everyone to get one's due rights without stint. Justice does not, however, mean equal distribution of rights,

for that would be absolutely unnatural. In fact, justice means equitable dispensation of rights which in certain cases may mean equality. For example, all citizens should have equal rights of citizenship but in other cases equality in rights would be injustice. For instance, equality in social status and rights between parents and their children will obviously be wrong. Likewise those who render services of superior and inferior types cannot be equal in regard to wages and salaries. What Allah enjoins is that the full rights of everyone should be honestly rendered whether those be moral, social, economic legal or political in accordance with what one justly deserves.

The second thing enjoined is *"ihsān"* which has no equivalent in English. This means to be good, generous, sympathetic, tolerant, forgiving, polite, co-operative, selfless, etc. In collective life this is even more important than justice; for justice is the foundation of a sound society but *ihsān* is its perfection. On the one hand, justice protects society from bitterness and violation of rights; on the other, *ihsān* makes it sweet and joyful and worth living. It is obvious that no society can flourish if every individual insists on exacting his pound of flesh. At best such a society might be free from conflict but there cannot be love, gratitude, generosity, sacrifice, sincerity, sympathy and such humane qualities as produce sweetness in life and develop high values.

The third thing which has been enjoined is good treatment towards one's relatives which in fact is a specific form of *ihsān*. It means that one should not only treat one's relatives well, share their sorrows and pleasures and help them within lawful limits but should also share one's wealth with them according to one's means and the need of each relative. This enjoins on everyone who possesses ample means to acknowledge the share of one's deserving relatives along with the rights of one's own person and family. The Divine Law holds every well-to-do person in a family to be responsible for fulfilling the needs of all his needy kith and kin. The Law considers it a great evil that one person should enjoy the pleasures of life while his own kith and kin are starving. As it considers the family to be an important part of society, it lays down that the first right of needy individuals is on its well-to-do members and then on the others. Likewise it is the first duty of the well-to-do members of the family to fulfil the needs of their own near relatives and then those of others. The Holy Prophet has emphasized this fact in many Traditions, according to which a person owes rights to his parents, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters, other relatives, etc., in accordance with the nearness of their relationships. On the basis of this fundamental principle, Caliph 'Umar made it obligatory on the first cousins of an orphan to support him. In the case of another orphan he declared that if he had no first cousins he would have made it obligatory on distant cousins to support him. Just imagine the happy

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وَلَا تَشْتَرُوْا بِعَهْدِ اللّٰهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيْلًا ۭ اِنَّمَا عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ
تَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝ مَا عِنْدَكُمْ يَنْفَدُ ۚ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ بَاقٍ ۭ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّ الَّذِيْنَ صَبَرُوْٓا
اَجْرَهُمْ بِاَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ۝ مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ اَوْ اُنْثٰى وَ
هُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً ۚ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ اَجْرَهُمْ بِاَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوْا
يَعْمَلُوْنَ ۝ فَاِذَا قَرَاْتَ الْقُرْاٰنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللّٰهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطٰنِ الرَّجِيْمِ ۝ اِنَّهٗ
لَيْسَ لَهٗ سُلْطٰنٌ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَلٰى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُوْنَ ۝ اِنَّمَا سُلْطٰنُهٗ
عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ يَتَوَلَّوْنَهٗ وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ بِهٖ مُشْرِكُوْنَ ۝ وَاِذَا بَدَّلْنَآ اٰيَةً مَّكَانَ
اٰيَةٍ ۙ وَّاللّٰهُ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا يُنَزِّلُ قَالُوْٓا اِنَّمَآ اَنْتَ مُفْتَرٍ ۭ بَلْ اَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝
قُلْ نَزَّلَهٗ رُوْحُ الْقُدُسِ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ بِالْحَقِّ لِيُثَبِّتَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَهُدًى وَّ
بُشْرٰى لِلْمُسْلِمِيْنَ ۝ وَلَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ اَنَّهُمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ اِنَّمَا يُعَلِّمُهٗ بَشَرٌ ۭ لِسَانُ
الَّذِيْ يُلْحِدُوْنَ اِلَيْهِ اَعْجَمِيٌّ وَّهٰذَا لِسَانٌ عَرَبِيٌّ مُّبِيْنٌ ۝ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ لَا
يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ ۙ لَا يَهْدِيْهِمُ اللّٰهُ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ۝ اِنَّمَا يَفْتَرِي الْكَذِبَ
الَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ ۚ وَاُولٰۗىِٕكَ هُمُ الْكٰذِبُوْنَ ۝ مَنْ كَفَرَ بِاللّٰهِ
مِنْۢ بَعْدِ اِيْمَانِهٖٓ اِلَّا مَنْ اُكْرِهَ وَقَلْبُهٗ مُطْمَىِٕنٌّۢ بِالْاِيْمَانِ وَلٰكِنْ مَّنْ
شَرَحَ بِالْكُفْرِ صَدْرًا فَعَلَيْهِمْ غَضَبٌ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ ۚ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيْمٌ ۝ ذٰلِكَ
بِاَنَّهُمُ اسْتَحَبُّوا الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا عَلَى الْاٰخِرَةِ ۙ وَاَنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ
الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ۝ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ الَّذِيْنَ طَبَعَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰي قُلُوْبِهِمْ وَسَمْعِهِمْ وَاَبْصَارِهِمْ ۚ وَ
اُولٰۗىِٕكَ هُمُ الْغٰفِلُوْنَ ۝ لَا جَرَمَ اَنَّهُمْ فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ هُمُ الْخٰسِرُوْنَ ۝ ثُمَّ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ
لِلَّذِيْنَ هَاجَرُوْا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا فُتِنُوْا ثُمَّ جٰهَدُوْا وَصَبَرُوْٓا ۙ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهَا

Do not barter away the Covenant[96] of Allah for paltry gains;[97] 95-97
Indeed what is with Allah is far better for you if you knew it. Whatever is with you is transitory and whatever is with Allah is ever-lasting. And We will reward those, who practise fortitude[98] according to their best deeds. Whosoever does righteous deeds, whether male or female, provided he is a Believer, We will surely grant him live a pure life in this world.[99] And We will reward such people (in the Hereafter) according to their best deeds.[100]

Then, when you begin to recite the Qur'ān, seek Allah's refuge 98-100
against the accursed Satan,[101] for no power has he over those who believe and put their trust in their Lord; he has power only over those who make him their patron and practise *shirk* by his temptation.

And when We send down one verse to elaborate upon the 101-102
other—and Allah knows best what to send down—they say, "You forge this Qur'ān yourself."[102] The fact is that most of them do not know the reality. Tell them, "The Holy Spirit has brought it down piecemeal[103] intact from my Lord so that He may make firm the faith of those who have believed,[104] and to show the Right Way,[105] and to give good news to those who surrender themselves to Allah."[106]

We know very well what they say about you: "Surely a certain 103-105
person teaches him."[107] But the person to whom they allude speaks a foreign tongue, and this (Qur'ān) is in plain Arabic. It is a fact that Allah does not show guidance to those who do not believe in His Revelations, and there is a painful torment for them. (The Prophet is not forging any false thing but) those, who do not believe in the Revelations of Allah, are inventing falsehoods[108] they are indeed the liars.

Whoso is forced to disbelieve after believing, while his heart is 106-109
convinced of the Faith, (he shall be absolved) but whosoever accepts disbelief willingly, he incurs Allah's wrath, and there is severe torment for all such people.[109] This is because they preferred the life of this world to the life in the Hereafter, and Allah does not show the Way of salvation to those people who are ungrateful! Allah has sealed the hearts, the ears and the eyes of such people and they have become neglectful: therefore, it is inevitable that they should be losers in the Hereafter.[110]

Contd. on p.565]

condition of the society every unit of which supports its every needy individual in this way—most surely that society will become high and pure economically, socially, and morally.

89. In contrast to the above-mentioned three virtues, Allah prohibits three vices which ruin individuals and the society as a whole:

(1) The Arabic word *fahshā* applies to all those things that are immodest, immoral or obscene or nasty or dirty or vulgar, not fit to be seen or heard, because they offend against recognized standards of propriety or good taste, *e.g.*, adultery, fornication, homo-sexuality, nakedness, nudity, theft, robbery, drinking, gambling, begging, abusive language and the like. Likewise it is indecent to indulge in giving publicity to any of these evils and to spread them, *e.g.*, false propaganda, calumny, publicity of crimes, indecent stories, dramas, films, naked pictures, public appearance of women-folk with indecent make-ups, free mixing of sexes, dancing and the like.

(2) *Munkar* applies to all those evils which have always been universally regarded as evils and have been forbidden by all divine systems of law.

(3) *Baghy* applies to those vices that transgress the proper limits of decency and violate the rights of others, whether those of the Creator or His Creation.

90. In this verse, Allah has enjoined three kinds of Covenants which have been mentioned in the order of their importance. The first of these Covenants is the one between man and his Allah which is the most important of all. The second in importance is the Covenant between one man or one group of men and another man or another group of men, which is taken with Allah as a witness or in which the name of God has been used. The third Covenant is that which has been made without using Allah's name. Though this is third in importance, its fulfilment is as important as that of the first two and the violation of any of these has been prohibited.

91. In this connection it should be noted that Allah has rebuked the people for the worst form of violation of treaties which has been creating the greatest disorder in the world. It is a pity that even "big" people consider it to be a virtue to violate treaties in order to gain advantages for their people in political, economic and religious conflicts. At one time the leader of one nation enters into a treaty with another nation for the interest of his own people but at another time the same leader publicly breaks the very same treaty for the interest of his people, or secretly violates it. It is an irony that such violations are made even by those people who are honest in their private lives. Moreover, it is regretable that their own people do not protest against them; nay, they eulogize them for such

shameful feats of diplomacy. Therefore, Allah warns that every such treaty is a test of the character of those who enter into it, and of their nations. They might gain some apparent advantage for their people in this way, but they will not escape their consequences on the Day of Judgment.

92. This is to warn that decision about differences and disputes that lead to conflict, will be made on the Day of Judgment. Therefore, these should not be made an excuse to break agreements and treaties. Even if one is wholly in the right and the opponent is wholly in the wrong, it is not right for the former to break treaties or make false propaganda or employ other deceitful methods to defeat the other. If one does so, it will go against him on that Day because righteousness demands that one should not only be right in one's theories and aims but should also use right methods and employ right means. This warning has especially been given to those religious groups and sects who always suffer from this misunderstanding that they have a right to defeat their opponents because they are on the side of God and their opponents are rebels against Allah: therefore, there is no obligation on them to stick to their treaties with their opponents. This was what the Arab Jews practiced, declaring, "There is no moral obligation on us in regard to the pagan Arabs, and we are rightly entitled to practise dishonesty and deceit that might be of advantage to us and harmful to the disbelievers".

93. This further supports the previous warning. It means that it would be wrong for any champion of Allah's religion to arrogate to himself the use of every sort of method and means irrespective of whether they are right or wrong to propagate his own religion (considering it to be Allah's Religion) and try to destroy opposite religions. For this would be utterly against the will of Allah: if Allah had willed that there should be no religious differences, He could have deprived mankind of the freedom of choice. In that case, there would have been no need for Allah to get help of any such up-holder of His Religion, who uses disgraceful means for this purpose. Allah could have created all mankind to be inherent believers and obedient servants by depriving them of the power and option of disbelief and sin. Then there would have been none who could have dared to deviate from belief and obedience.

94. This is to show that Allah Himself has given man the power and freedom to follow any out of the many ways. That is why Allah makes arrangements for the guidance of the one who intends to follow the right way, and lets go astray the one who desires to deviate.

95. That is, "Someone, who might have been convinced of Islam, seeing your dishonest conduct should become disgusted and hold back from joining the Believers". For he might argue like this: "As these Muslims are not much

different from the disbelievers in their morals and dealings, there is no reason why I should join them."

96. That is, "The Covenant that you may make in the name of Allah as a representative of His religion."

97. It does not mean that they should barter away Allah's Covenant for some big gain. What it implies is that any worldly gain howsoever great, is insignificant as compared with the worth of Allah's Covenant. Therefore, it will be a losing bargain to barter that away for any worldly gain, which is after all paltry.

98. Those who practise fortitude are the people who will always stand firm in the struggle between right and truth on one side and greed and lust on the other. They bear every loss for the sake of righteousness and spurn away every gain that they might obtain by adopting unlawful means. They patiently wait for the rewards of their good deeds in the Hereafter.

99. This verse removes the wrong notions of both the Muslims and the disbelievers who are of the opinion that those who adopt a just honest and pious attitude, are most surely losers in this world, though they might be gainers in the Hereafter. Allah removes this misunderstanding, as if to say, "This presumption of yours is wrong. The righteous attitude not only leads to a happy life in the Hereafter, but it also guarantees, by Allah's grace, a pure and happy life even in this world." And this is a fact: those people who are sincerely righteous, honest, pure and fair in their dealings, enjoy a much better life in this world, for they enjoy that confidence and real honour and respect because of their spotless character, which is not enjoyed by those who lack these virtues. They obtain such pure and outstanding successes as are denied to those who employ dirty and disgusting ways to win success. Above all, they enjoy, even though they might be living in huts, that peace of mind and satisfaction of conscience which is denied to the wicked dwellers of mansions and palaces.

100. That is, "Their rank in the Hereafter shall be determined according to their best deeds". In other words, "If a person has done both small and great virtues," he will be awarded that high rank which he would merit according to his greatest virtues.

101. This does not mean that one should merely repeat the Arabic words: اعوذ باللہ من الشیطن الرجیم (I seek Allah's refuge against the accursed Satan). It means that one should have a sincere desire and do one's utmost to guard against Satan's evil suggestions when one is reciting the Holy Qur'ān and should not allow wrong and irrelevant doubts and suspicions to enter one's heart. One should try to see everything contained in the Qur'ān in its true light, and refrain from mixing it

up with one's self-invented theories or ideas foreign to the Qur'ān so as to construe its meaning against the will of Allah. Moreover, one should feel that the most sinister and avowed design of Satan is that the reader should not obtain any guidance from the Qurān. This is why Satan tries his utmost to delude the reader and pervert him from getting guidance from it, and mislead him into wrong ways of thinking. Therefore, the reader should be fully on his guard against Satan and seek Allah's refuge for help so that Satan should not be able to deprive him of the benefits from this source of guidance, for one who fails to get guidance from this source, will never be able to get guidance from any where else. Above all, the one who seeks to obtain deviation from this Book, is so entangled in deviation that he can never get out of this vicious circle.

The context in which this verse occurs here is to serve as an introduction to the answers to the questions which the *mushriks* of Makkah were raising against the Qur'ān. They have been warned that they could appreciate the blessing of the Qur'ān only if they would try to see it in its true light by seeking Allah's protection against Satan's misleading suggestions, and not by raising objections against it. Otherwise Satan does not let a man understand the Qur'ān and its teachings.

102. This may also mean, "To send down one Commandment to elaborate upon the other, for the Commandments were sent down piecemeal in the Qur'ān". For instance, the Commandments about "prohibition" and fornication were sent down gradually one after the other during several years. But We hesitate to accept this interpretation because *An-Nahl* is a Makki Sūrah and to the best of our information there is no instance to show that Commandments were sent down piecemeal at Makkah. Therefore, we prefer the other interpretation. The Qur'ān has added details of one theme and explained the same with different kinds of illustrations at different places. Likewise it has related a story in different words at different places and presented its different aspects and details at other places. It has put forward one argument at one place to prove a theme and another at another place to prove the same theme. It has related one theme concisely at one place and in detail at the other. That is what the disbelievers of Makkah put forward as proof that Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) forged the Qur'ān himself. They argued like this: "Had the Qur'ān been the Word of Allah it would have related in full one thing at one place, for Allah's knowledge is not defective that He should have to think out gradually the details of a theme and to give different versions to explain the same thing. In contrast to this, the knowledge of a human being is defective. A man has to think out gradually as has been done in the case of the Qur'ān which is a clear proof that you have forged it yourself".

[Contd. on p. 574

لَغَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿١١٥﴾ يَوْمَ تَاْتِيْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ تُجَادِلُ عَنْ نَّفْسِهَا وَتُوَفّٰى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا
عَمِلَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُوْنَ ﴿١١١﴾ وَضَرَبَ اللّٰهُ مَثَلًا قَرْيَةً كَانَتْ اٰمِنَةً مُّطْمَئِنَّةً
يَّاْتِيْهَا رِزْقُهَا رَغَدًا مِّنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ فَكَفَرَتْ بِاَنْعُمِ اللّٰهِ فَاَذَاقَهَا اللّٰهُ لِبَاسَ
الْجُوْعِ وَالْخَوْفِ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَصْنَعُوْنَ ﴿١١٢﴾ وَلَقَدْ جَآءَهُمْ رَسُوْلٌ مِّنْهُمْ فَكَذَّبُوْهُ
فَاَخَذَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ وَهُمْ ظٰلِمُوْنَ ﴿١١٣﴾ فَكُلُوْا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللّٰهُ حَلٰلًا طَيِّبًا ۖ وَّ
اشْكُرُوْا نِعْمَتَ اللّٰهِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ اِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُوْنَ ﴿١١٤﴾ اِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ وَ
الدَّمَ وَلَحْمَ الْخِنْزِيْرِ وَمَآ اُهِلَّ لِغَيْرِ اللّٰهِ بِهٖ ۚ فَمَنِ اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَّلَا عَادٍ
فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿١١٥﴾ وَلَا تَقُوْلُوْا لِمَا تَصِفُ اَلْسِنَتُكُمُ الْكَذِبَ هٰذَا حَلٰلٌ
وَّهٰذَا حَرَامٌ لِّتَفْتَرُوْا عَلَى اللّٰهِ الْكَذِبَ ۭ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يَفْتَرُوْنَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ الْكَذِبَ
لَا يُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿١١٦﴾ مَتَاعٌ قَلِيْلٌ ۠ وَّلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿١١٧﴾ وَعَلَى الَّذِيْنَ هَادُوْا حَرَّمْنَا
مَا قَصَصْنَا عَلَيْكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۚ وَمَا ظَلَمْنٰهُمْ وَلٰكِنْ كَانُوْٓا اَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُوْنَ ﴿١١٨﴾
ثُمَّ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ لِلَّذِيْنَ عَمِلُوا السُّوْٓءَ بِجَهَالَةٍ ثُمَّ تَابُوْا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ ذٰلِكَ وَ
اَصْلَحُوْٓا ۙ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهَا لَغَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿١١٩﴾ اِنَّ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ كَانَ اُمَّةً قَانِتًا
لِّلّٰهِ حَنِيْفًا ۭ وَلَمْ يَكُ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ ﴿١٢٠﴾ شَاكِرًا لِّاَنْعُمِهِ ۭ اِجْتَبٰىهُ وَهَدٰىهُ اِلٰى
صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ﴿١٢١﴾ وَاٰتَيْنٰهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً ۭ وَاِنَّهٗ فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ لَمِنَ
الصّٰلِحِيْنَ ﴿١٢٢﴾ ثُمَّ اَوْحَيْنَآ اِلَيْكَ اَنِ اتَّبِعْ مِلَّةَ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ حَنِيْفًا ۭ وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ
الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ ﴿١٢٣﴾ اِنَّمَا جُعِلَ السَّبْتُ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ اخْتَلَفُوْا فِيْهِ ۭ وَاِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَيَحْكُمُ
بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ فِيْمَا كَانُوْا فِيْهِ يَخْتَلِفُوْنَ ﴿١٢٤﴾ اُدْعُ اِلٰى سَبِيْلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحِكْمَةِ
وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِيْ هِيَ اَحْسَنُ ۭ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ

On the other hand, Allah is most surely Forgiving and Compassionate towards those people who, when they were persecuted (because of their Faith), left their homes and migrated and struggled hard in the Way of Alllah and practised fortitude.[111] (All these will be judged) on the Day when everyone will be pleading for himself only and everyone will be recompensed fully for one's deeds and none shall be unjustly dealt with in the least. 110-111

Allah cites the instance of a habitation: it was enjoying a life of peace and security and was receiving its provisions in abundance from every quarter. But when it began to show ingratitude towards the favours of Allah, He made its inhabitants taste the consequences of their doings, and inflicted misfortunes of hunger and fear on them. A Messenger came to them from among themselves but they treated him as an impostor. At last a torment overtook them while they had become guilty of iniquity.[112] 112-113

So, O people, eat of the lawful and pure provisions with which Allah has blessed you and show gratitude[113] to Allah for His favours, if you are sincerely obedient to Him.[114] Allah has forbidden only these things: do not eat what dies of itself nor blood nor swine flesh nor what has been slaughtered in any name other than Allah. But if forced by hunger one eats of any of these forbidden things, provided he has no intention of breaking the Divine Law or of transgressing the limits by taking more than what is absolutely indispensable, one may expect mercy, for Allah is very Forgiving and very Compassionate.[115] Do not ascribe lies to Allah by decreeing with your tongues, "This is lawful and that is unlawful,"[116] for those people who ascribe lies to Allah can never come to any good. (They should remember that) the pleasures of this world are transitory and in the end there is a painful torment for them. 114-117

To the Jews We had especially forbidden the things[117] We have already related to you,[118] and it was not We who imposed this hardship on them, but they imposed the hardship themselves. Nevertheless, your Lord is Forgiving and Compassionate towards those who have repented and mended their ways after they had committed evil in ignorance. The fact is that Abraham was a community in himself :[119] he was obedient to Allah and had turned to Him exclusively. He was never a *mushrik*: he 118-124

was always grateful for Allah's favours. Accordingly Allah chose him and showed him the Right Way. Allah blessed him with goodness in this world and most surely he will be among the righteous in the Hereafter. Then We sent down this Revelation to you: "Follow the way of Abraham exclusively" and he was not one of the *mushriks.*[120] As regards the Sabbath, We imposed this on those who differed about its observance.[121] Surely your Lord will decide between them on the Day of Resurrection about all those things in which they have been differing.

Contd. from p. 571]

103. 'The Holy Spirit': *'Jibril'*. Instead of using the name of the Angel who brought Revelation, his title has been deliberately mentioned to warn the disbelievers that the 'Holy Spirit' who brought Revelation, is free from human frailties; He is neither dishonest that he should add something to or take away something from the Message he brought, nor is he a liar and forger that he should invent and state something in the name of Allah. Nor does he suffer from any human lust that he should practise a deceit. He is wholly pure and holy and conveys the Word of Allah intact.

104. That is, "The fact that Allah sends down His Message piecemeal does not mean that Allah's knowledge and wisdom are defective as you consider because of your folly. Allah sends His Revelations gradually because human intelligence and capacity to grasp are limited and defective which do not let him understand the whole theme at one and the same time and make it firm in his mind. Therefore, Allah in His wisdom conveyed His Revelation piecemeal through the Holy Spirit. He sends a theme gradually and gives its details by and by and uses different methods and ways to make it plain to human beings so that they might grasp it according to their abilities and capabilities and become firm in their faith and knowledge.

105. The second practical wisdom of sending down the Qur'ān piecemeal was that those Believers, who obediently followed it, should get necessary instructions for the propagation of Islam and the solution of other problems of life at the time when they were actually needed. It is obvious that if those instructions had been sent down before time and at one and the same time they would not have been useful.

106. The third practical wisdom of not sending down the Qur'ān as a whole at one and the same time was to give good tidings and encouragement to the obedient servants who were suffering from persecution and encountering great obstacles because they needed it over and over again. That is why they were

assured of ultimate success time and again to fill them with hope to carry on their mission.

107. In this connection, traditions mention the names of several persons, one of whom *(Jabar)*, according to the disbelievers of Makkah taught the Holy Prophet; however, one thing particularly noteworthy about all these persons is that they were non-Arab slaves. Whosoever he might be, the fact that he used to recite the Torah and the Gospel and had an acquaintance with the Holy Prophet, gave an opportunity to the disbelievers for spreading this false report that it was the particular slave who was the real author of the Holy Qur'ān, but Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) presented it as the Word of God. This not only shows that his opponents were very impudent in spreading false accusations against the Holy Prophet but also that, in general, people are not just in judging the worth of their contemporaries. They were ill-treating like this that great personality who has had no parallel in history. Nevertheless, these people who had become blind in their opposition, preferred to attribute the authorship of the matchless Arabic Qur'ān to a non-Arab slave who had a smattering of the Torah and the Gospel. Instead of accepting the claim of the Holy Prophet, who was an embodiment of truth, they attributed its authorship to an insignificant foreign slave.

108. This verse can also be rendered like this: "A Prophet does not forge any false thing but those, who do not believe in the Revelations of Allah, invent falsehoods."

109. This verse deals with the case of those Muslims who were being persecuted with cruelty and were being-subjected to unbearable torments to force them to give up their Faith. They are being told that if at any time they are forced to utter words of disbelief to save their lives, when in fact in their hearts they are secure against disbelief, they will be pardoned. On the other hand, if they accepted unbelief from the core of their hearts, they shall not escape the torment of Allah even if they succeed in saving their lives.

It does not, however, mean that one should utter words of disbelief to save one's life. This is merely a permission but not the ideal thing for a Believer. According to this permission if one utters such a thing, he shall not be taken to account. In fact, the ideal for a Believer is to utter words of truth in any case whether his body is cut into pieces. There are instances which show that during the period of the Holy Prophet some acted upon the ideal while others took advantage of the permission. There was Khabbāb bin Art (May Allah be pleased with him) who was made to lie on embers of fire until the fire was extinguished by the melting of his fat, but he remained firm in his Faith. Then there was Bilāl Habashi (May Allah be pleased with him) who was made to put on an armour and stand in the scorching heat. Then he was dragged on the burning sand but he went

on saying, "Allah is one." There was another Believer, Habib bin Zaid bin 'Āsim, whose limbs were cut one by one by the order of Musailimah, the Liar. Each time his limb was severed it was demanded of him that he should acknowledge the Liar as a prophet but each time he refused to bear witness to his claim of prophethood until he breathed his last. On the other hand, there was the instance of 'Ammār bin Yāsir (May Allah be pleased with him) whose parents were mercilessly butchered before his eyes. After this he himself was put to such unbearable torture that, in order to save his life, he had to utter the same words of unbelief that were demanded of him. Afterwards when he came crying to the Holy Prophet, he said, "O Messenger of Allah, they did not let me go until I spoke evil of you and praised their deities". The Holy Prophet asked him, "How do you feel about this in your heart?" He replied humbly, "My heart is fully convinced of the Faith." At this the Holy Prophet replied, "If they put you to the same torture again, you may utter the same words".

110. These words apply to those people who gave up their Faith, when they felt that they could not bear hardships of the Right Way and so they again joined their unbelieving, *mushrik* people.

111. They were those Believers who migrated to Habashah.

112. That habitation has not been specified here nor have the commentators definitely pointed out which that habitation was. However, there is a saying of Ibn 'Abbās (which seems to be correct) that the place referred to is Makkah itself. In that case, "hunger and fear" will mean the famine which prevailed over the people of Makkah for several years during the Prophethood of Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him).

113. This shows that the above mentioned famine had come to an end at the time of the revelation of this Sūrah.

114. Here the observation of the lawful and the unlawful has been made the test of worship of Allah. Those who claim to be the servants of Allah will eat what is lawful and pure and show gratitude to Him and will scrupulously refrain from what is forbidden and impure.

115. Please refer also to II: 173, V: 3 and VI: 145.

116. This verse clearly shows that none but Allah has the right to declare a thing to be lawful or unlawful. Or, in other words, the right of making laws exclusively rests with Allah. Therefore, any person, who will dare to decide about the lawful and the unlawful, will transgress his powers. Of course, a person, who acknowledges the Divine law as the final authority, may deduce from it whether a certain thing or action is lawful or unlawful.

ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيْلِهٖ وَهُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِيْنَ ﴿١٢٥﴾ وَاِنْ عَاقَبْتُمْ فَعَاقِبُوْا بِمِثْلِ
مَا عُوْقِبْتُمْ بِهٖ ؕ وَلَئِنْ صَبَرْتُمْ لَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لِّلصّٰبِرِيْنَ ﴿١٢٦﴾ وَاصْبِرْ وَمَا صَبْرُكَ
اِلَّا بِاللّٰهِ وَلَا تَحْزَنْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا تَكُ فِيْ ضَيْقٍ مِّمَّا يَمْكُرُوْنَ ﴿١٢٧﴾ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ
مَعَ الَّذِيْنَ اتَّقَوْا وَّالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ مُّحْسِنُوْنَ ﴿١٢٨﴾

O Prophet invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and excellent admonition[122] and discuss things with people in the best manner.[123] Your Lord knows best who has gone astray from His Way and He knows best who is rightly guided. And if you retaliate, let your retaliation be to the extent that you were wronged, but if you endure it with patience, it is indeed best for those who endure with patience. O Muhammad, go on performing your mission with fortitude—and you can practise fortitude only with the help of Allah—do not be grieved at their doings and do not distress yourself at their intrigues, for Allah is with those people who fear Him and adopt the righteous attitude.[124] 125-128

The arrogation of the right of determining the lawful and the unlawful has been declared to be a falsehood on Allah for two reasons: (1) Such a person, so to say, claims that what he declares to be lawful or unlawful disregarding the authority of the Divine Book, has been made lawful or unlawful by God or (2) he means to claim that Allah has given up the authority of making lawful and unlawful and has thus left man free to make his own laws for the conduct of life. It is obvious that each of these claims will be a "falsehood" and a false imputation to Allah.

117. In this paragraph (vv. 118-124), answers to the objections raised by the disbelievers of Makkah concerning the Commandments contained in vv. 114-117 have been given. Their first objection was: "Besides the above-mentioned unlawful things, there are other unlawful things in the Jewish Law which have been made lawful by you. If that law was from Allah and yours is also from Allah why do they then contradict each other?" Their second objection was: "You have abrogated the sanctity of the Sabbath of the Israelites. Have you done this of your own accord or by Allah's Command? In the latter case then will be an obvious contradiction in the two laws. Or has Allah Himself given two contradictory Commandments?"

118. This refers to: "And We prohibited all animals with claws to those people who had adopted Judaism...." (VI: 146). In this verse (117) Allah has stated that certain things were made unlawful because of the disobedience of the Jews.

Here a question arises: Which of the two Sūrahs, Al-An'ām or An-Nahl, was first revealed? This is because in verse 118, a reference has been made to verse 146 of Al-An'ām and in verse 119 of Al-An'ām, "And why should you not eat that thing over which Allah's name has been mentioned, when He has already given you a detail of those things that have been declared to be unlawful for you except in case of extremity....?", a reference has been made to verse 115 of An-Nahl. This is because these are the only two Makkī Sūrahs in which details of unlawful things have been given. As regards the question, we are of the opinion that An-Nahl was revealed earlier than Al-An'ām, for verse 119 of the latter contains a reference to verse 115 of the former. It appears that after the revelation of Sūrah Al-An'ām, the disbelievers raised objections in regard to these verses of An-Nahl. So they were referred to verse 146 of Al-An'ām in which a few things were made unlawful, especially for the Jews. As this answer concerned An-Nahl, so verse 118, though it was revealed after the revelation of Al-An'ām, was inserted as a parenthetical clause in An-Nahl.

119. "Abraham was a community in himself" for at that time he was the only Muslim in the whole world who was upholding the banner of Islam, while the rest of the world was upholding the banner of unbelief. As that servant of Allah performed the Mission which is ordinarily carried out by a whole community, he was not one person but an institution in himself.

120. This is the complete answer to the first objection (E.N. 117) raised by the disbelievers. This has two parts:

(1) There is no contradiction in the Divine Law as you seem to presume on the apparent variance in the Jewish and the Islamic Law. As a matter of fact a few things had been made unlawful especially for the Jews as punishment to them because of their disobedience; therefore, there was no reason why others should be deprived of those good things.

(2) Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) was commanded to follow the way of Abraham and not the way of the Jews, and they themselves knew than these things were not unlawful in the law of Abraham. For instance, the Jews did not eat the flesh of camel but this was lawful according to Abraham. Likewise, ostrich, hare, duck, etc., were unlawful in the Jewish law, but they were lawful according to Abraham. Incidentally the disbelievers of Makkah have been warned that neither they nor the Jews had any relationship with Prophet Abraham for

he was not a *mushrik* while both of them were practising *shirk*. Prophet Muhammad and his followers were the only true followers of Prophet Abraham (Allah's peace be upon them) for there was no tinge of *shirk* in their creed or in their practice.

121. This is the answer to their second objection. Obviously, there was no need to state that the restrictions about the Sabbath applied only to the Jews and had nothing to do with the law of Prophet Abraham, because they themselves knew it. The restrictions were imposed upon the Jews because of their mischiefs and violations of the law. In order to understand fully the significance of this reference one is requested to read those passages of the Bible in which Commandments about the Sabbath have been stated, *e.g.*, Exodus 20: 8-11, 23: 12-13, 31: 1-17, 35: 23, and Numbers 15: 32-36. Besides this, one should also be acquainted with the impudent violations of the Sabbath. See Jeremiah: 17: 21-27 and Ezekiel. 10: 18-24.

122. This instruction is very important for those who are engaged in the propagation of Islam. They should always keep in view two things— "wisdom" and "excellent admonition". "Wisdom" implies that one should use discretion in the work of propagation and should not do this blindly like foolish people. Wisdom demands that one should keep in view the intelligence, capability and circumstances of the addressees and convey the Message in accordance with the requirements of the occasion. Moreover, one should refrain from applying one and the same method to each and every person or group but should first diagnose the real disease of the addressee and then cure it by appealing to his head and heart.

"Excellent admonition" implies two things: (1) One should not be content with convincing the addressee with arguments alone but should also appeal to his feelings. Likewise one should not confine oneself merely to arguments in condemning evils and deviations but should try to convince the other of their repugnance that lies embedded in the human nature. One should also warn of the worst consequences of those evils. Besides, one should not only try to convince the addressee rationally of the soundness and excellence of guidance and righteous deeds but should also create in him interest and love for them. (2) Admonition should be admmistered in such a manner as to show sincere concern for and the welfare of the addressee. Nothing should be said or done to create the impression that the admonisher is looking down upon him and taking pleasure in his own feeling of superiority. On the contrary, he should feel that the admonisher is filled with the strong desire for his reform and welfare.

123. "Best manner" implies that one should have a sweet tongue, show noble character and give reasonable and appealing arguments, and refrain from

indulging in polemics, argumentation and controversies. The one who discusses things with people in the best manner, does not resort to accusations, crooked arguments, taunts, nor makes fun of the opponent in order to defeat him and to win applause for his own superiority in argument. For these things will produce obduracy and obstinacy. In contrast to this, he will try to convince the other in a simple and humble way, and when he feels that the other person has come down to crooked arguments, he will leave him alone lest the other should go further and further astray in his deviation.

124. "Allah is with those who fear Him" because they scrupulously refrain from evil ways and always adopt the righteous attitude, for they know that their actions and deeds are not determined by the evils others do to them but by their own sense of righteousness; so they return good for evil.



XVII

BAĪ ISRĀ'ĪL

بنی اسرائیل

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XVII

BANĪ ISR'ĪL

بنی اسرائیل

INTRODUCTION

Name

This Sūrah takes its name (Banī Isrā'il) from v. 4. But this name is merely a distinctive appellation like the names of many other Sūrahs and not a descriptive title, and does not mean that "Bani Isrā'īl" is the theme of this Sūrah.

Period of Revelation

The very first verse indicates that this Sūrah was revealed on the occasion of *Mi'rāj* (Ascension). According to the Traditions and books on the life of the Holy Prophet, this event happened one year before Hijrah. Thus, this Sūrah is one of those which were revealed in the last stage of Prophethood at Makkah.

Background

The Holy Prophet had been propagating *Tauhid* for the previous twelve years and his opponents had been doing all they could to make his Mission a failure, but in spite of all their opposition, Islam had spread to every corner of Arabia and there was hardly any clan which had not been influenced by his invitation. In Makkah itself the true Believers had formed themselves into a small community and were ready and willing to face every danger to make Islam a success Besides them, a very large number of the people of Aus and Khazraj (two influential clans of Al-Madīnah) had accepted Islam. Thus the time had come for the Holy Prophet to emigrate from Makkah to Al-Madinah and there

gather together the scattered Muslims and establish a state based on the principles of Islam.

These were the conditions when *Mi'rāj* took place and on his return the Holy Prophet brought down the Message contained in this Sūrah.

Theme and Topics

This Sūrah is a wonderful combination of warning, admonition and instruction, which have been blended together in a balanced proportion.

The disbelievers of Makkah had been admonished to take a lesson from the miserable end of the Israelites and other communities and mend their ways within the period of respite given by Allah, which was about to expire. They should, therefore, accept the invitation that was being extended by Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) and the Qur'ān; otherwise they shall be annihilated and replaced by other people. Incidentally, the Israelites, with whom Islam was going to come in direct contact in the near future at Al-Madīnah have also been warned that they should learn a lesson from the chastisements that have already been inflicted on them. They were warned, "Take advantage of the Prophethood of Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) because that is the last opportunity which is being given to you: If even now you behave as you have been behaving, you shall meet with a painful torment."

As regards the education of mankind, it has been impressed that human success or failure, gain or loss, depends upon the right understanding of *Tauhīd*, life-after-death and Prophethood. Accordingly, convincing arguments have been put forward to prove that the Qur'ān is the Book of Allah and its teachings are true and genuine; the doubts of the disbelievers about these basic realities have been removed and on suitable occasions they have been admonished and rebuked in regard to their ways of ignorance.

In this connection, those fundamental principles of morality and civilization on which the Islamic System of life is meant to be established have been put forward. Thus this was a sort of the Manifesto of the intended Islamic State which had been proclaimed a year before its actual establishment. It has been explicitly stated that that was the

sketch of the system on which Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) intended to build human life first in his own country and then in the world outside.

Besides these, the Holy Prophet has been instructed to stick firmly to his stand without minding the opposition and difficulties which he was encountering and should never think of making a compromise with unbelief. The Muslims who sometimes showed signs of impatience, when they met with persecution, calumny, and crooked arguments, have also been instructed to face adverse circumstances with patience and fortitude and keep full control over their feelings and passions. Moreover, *Salat* was prescribed in order to reform and purify their souls, as if to say, "This is the thing which will produce in you those high qualities of character which are essential for everyone who intends to struggle in the righteous way". Incidentally, we learn from Traditions that Mi'rāj was the first occasion on which the five daily Prayers were prescribed to be offered at fixed times.



الْاَقْصَا الَّذِیْ بٰرَكْنَا حَوْلَهٗ لِنُرِیَهٗ مِنْ اٰیٰتِنَا ؕ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ السَّمِیْعُ الْبَصِیْرُ ۝ وَ
اٰتَیْنَا مُوْسَی الْكِتٰبَ وَ جَعَلْنٰهُ هُدًی لِّبَنِیْۤ اِسْرَآءِیْلَ اَلَّا تَتَّخِذُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِیْ
وَكِیْلًا ۝ ذُرِّیَّةَ مَنْ حَمَلْنَا مَعَ نُوْحٍ ؕ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ عَبْدًا شَكُوْرًا ۝ وَ قَضَیْنَاۤ
اِلٰی بَنِیْۤ اِسْرَآءِیْلَ فِی الْكِتٰبِ لَتُفْسِدُنَّ فِی الْاَرْضِ مَرَّتَیْنِ وَ لَتَعْلُنَّ عُلُوًّا
كَبِیْرًا ۝ فَاِذَا جَآءَ وَعْدُ اُوْلٰىهُمَا بَعَثْنَا عَلَیْكُمْ عِبَادًا لَّنَاۤ اُولِیْ بَاْسٍ شَدِیْدٍ
فَجَاسُوْا خِلٰلَ الدِّیَارِ ؕ وَ كَانَ وَعْدًا مَّفْعُوْلًا ۝ ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَا لَكُمُ الْكَرَّةَ
عَلَیْهِمْ وَ اَمْدَدْنٰكُمْ بِاَمْوَالٍ وَّ بَنِیْنَ وَ جَعَلْنٰكُمْ اَكْثَرَ نَفِیْرًا ۝ اِنْ اَحْسَنْتُمْ
اَحْسَنْتُمْ لِاَنْفُسِكُمْ ۟ وَ اِنْ اَسَاْتُمْ فَلَهَا ؕ فَاِذَا جَآءَ وَعْدُ الْاٰخِرَةِ لِیَسُوْٓءٗا
وُجُوْهَكُمْ وَ لِیَدْخُلُوا الْمَسْجِدَ كَمَا دَخَلُوْهُ اَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَّ لِیُتَبِّرُوْا مَا عَلَوْا
تَتْبِیْرًا ۝ عَسٰی رَبُّكُمْ اَنْ یَّرْحَمَكُمْ ۚ وَ اِنْ عُدْتُّمْ عُدْنَا ۘ وَ جَعَلْنَا جَهَنَّمَ
لِلْكٰفِرِیْنَ حَصِیْرًا ۝ اِنَّ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ یَهْدِیْ لِلَّتِیْ هِیَ اَقْوَمُ وَ یُبَشِّرُ
الْمُؤْمِنِیْنَ الَّذِیْنَ یَعْمَلُوْنَ الصّٰلِحٰتِ اَنَّ لَهُمْ اَجْرًا كَبِیْرًا ۝ وَّ اَنَّ الَّذِیْنَ

XVII
BANĪ ISRĀ 'ĪL
بنی اسرائیل

Verses:111 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

Glory be to Him, Who transported His Servant one night from 1
the Masjid-i-Harām to the distant Temple, whose surroundings We have

blessed, so that we might show him some of Our Sings;[1] the fact is that He alone is All-Hearing and All-Seeing.

2-8 Before this We had given the Book to Moses and made it a means of guidance for the Israelites[2] with this Command: "Do not make any other guardian than Myself.[3] You are the descendants of those whom We bore in the Ark with Noah,[4] and .he was truly a grateful servant". Besides this, We forewarned the Israelites in the Scriptures :[5] You will work great mischief twice in the land and will become overbearingly arrogant.[6] When the occasion of the first of the two mischiefs came, O Israelites, We raised against you such of Our servants who were very mighty and formidable; so they penetrated through all parts of your country. This was a warning that was bound to be fulfilled.[7] Then after this We afforded you an opportunity to over-power them and helped you with abundance of riches and children and increased you far more in numbers than before.[8] Behold! If you did good it proved to be good for yourselves and if you committed evil it proved to be bad for your own selves. Then, when the time came for the fulfilment of the second warning, We set other enemies on you so that they might disfigure your faces and enter into the Temple just as the former enemies had entered and destroyed whatever they could lay their hands on[9] .....Now again your Lord may show compassion on you, but if you again repeat your former behaviour; We will again visit you with. Our punishment, for We have prepared Hell to serve as a prison-house for the ungrateful people.[10]

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1. The event referred to in this verse is known "Mi'rāj" and "Isrā'". According to authentic traditions, this took place a year before Hijrah. In the traditional and biographical literature, its details have been related by a large number (25) of the Companions. Anas bin Mālik, Mālik bin Sa'asa'ah, Abūzar Ghifārī, and Abū Huraīrāh (Allah be pleased with them all) have related details of the event. Besides them, 'Umar, 'Ali, 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd.....(Allah be pleased with them) have also related some parts of this event.

In this verse, the Qur'ān mentions only a part of the Journey, i.e., from Masjid-i-Harām to the Temple at Jerusalem. The object of this journey as stated here was that Allah willed to show His aervant some of His signs. The Qur'ān does not give any details other than this but we find further details in the traditions, which are to this effect:

One night the Angel Jibrīl transported the Holy Prophet on al-Burāq from Masjid-i-Harām to Masjid-i-Aqsā (the Temple). There the Holy Prophet offered his prayers along with the other Prophets. Then he took him towards the higher spheres, where he met some of the great Prophets in different spheres. At last he

reached the Highest Place in the Heavens, and was received in audience by Allah. It was there that besides other important instructions five daily Prayers were prescribed. Then he returned to the Temple and from there came back to Masjid-i-Harām. During this Journey, according to many traditions, Paradise and Hell were shown to him. We also learn from authentic traditions that on the following day when he mentioned this event, the disbelievers of Makkah scoffed at him, and some of the Muslims also were sceptical about this.

The above additional details based on the traditions cannot be said to be against the Qur'ān, for these are additions to the details given in the Qur'ān; therefore, the details related in the traditions cannot be rejected on the plea that they are against the Qur'ān. Nevertheless, if one rejects any part of those details which are given in the traditions, one cannot be declared a renegade. On the other hand, if one rejects the details given in the Qur'ān, one does become a renegade.

There are different versions of this Journey. Some say that this happened in a dream, while others are of the opinion that the Holy Prophet was fully awake and went on the Journey with his own physical body; some others say that it was merely a mystic vision which was shown to him. The opening words of this verse: "Glory be to Him, who transported His Servant....." however, clearly show that it was a super-natural event which was brought about by the unlimited power of Allah. It is quite obvious that if the event had been merely a mystic vision, it would not have been introduced by the words سُبْحَانَ الَّذِيْ which imply that the Being Who brought about this event is free from each and every kind of weakness and defect. Again the words "transported His servant one night" also show that this was not a dream or a vision but a physical journey in which Allah arranged that the Holy Prophet should make observation of His Signs with his physical eyes. Therefore, one is bound to admit that this was not a mere spiritual experience but a physical journey and visual observation which Allah arranged for His Prophet.

It is strange that some people are of the opinion that this extraordinary journey could not be possible, but now when man with his limited—very limited—power has been able to reach the moon, it is absurd to deny that Allah with His limitless powers could enable His Messenger to make this journey in the extraordinary short time it took.

Above all, the question whether a thing is possible or not, can arise only in the case of human beings whose powers are after all limited, but such questions cannot be raised where the All-Powerful Allah is concerned. Only such a person who does not believe that Allah is able to do everything can raise objections against this wonderful Journey about which Allah Himself says that He transported His Servant one night from Masjid-i-Harām to Masjid-i-Aqsā.

Likewise all the objections raised against the various details which are given in the traditions are frivolous, except two, which are plausible:

First, if we accept these details, then we shall have to admit that Allah is confined to a certain place; otherwise there was no need that His Servant should be transported for this purpose to a certain place. Secondly, according to traditions, the Holy Prophet was enabled to observe Paradise and Hell where he saw some people suffering from torment. The objection is: why should some people be awarded punishments or rewards before the Final Judgement after Resurrection?

As regards the first objection, it is true that Allah is Infinite by Himself, but in dealing with His creation, He employs those means which suit His imperfect creation not because of any limitation of His, but because of the limitations of His creation. For instance, when He speaks to any of His creature, He adopts the same limited mode of conversation as the addressee can understand, though He has limitless modes of speech. Likewise, when He desires to show some of the wonderful Signs of His Kingdom to a servant. He transports him to the place where the Signs are to be shown. It is obvious that the servant cannot see at one and the same time the whole of the universe as Allah does, for Allah has no need to go to any place at all for this purpose but the servant has. The same applies to the appearance of the servant before the Creator. Though Allah is not confined to any locality, it is necessary for the servant to go to the place where His manifestations have been concentrated for his observation because it is not possible for the servant with his limited powers to go in His Presence in His Infinite Capacity.

As regards the second objection, it is based on the lack of understanding the thing: many of the Signs which were shown to the Holy Prophet were symbolical. For instance, a small hole from which a fat ox came out but could not go back into it, represented mischief personified. In the same way the adulterers were shown as if they had fresh meat before them but instead of that they were eating rotten flesh. Similarly punishments for evil deeds shown to him were only symbolic observations of the punishments in the Hereafter so that he might see in advance the things which would take place in the Hereafter.

In regard to the *Mi'rāj* it should be kept in view that all the Prophets were enabled by Allah to see His Signs in the heavens and the earth according to their ranks. And for this purpose all the material curtains were lifted so that they could see with their naked eyes the unseen realities, to which they were required to invite the people.

This was done so that the Prophets could say with full conviction what they had seen with their own eyes. For this experience would distinguish them from a philosopher who bases all his theories on guess-work and cannot say that

he bears witness to what he claims. In contrast to philosophers, Prophets could say that they bore witness to the things which they presented because they had seen them with their own eyes

2. As this verse has no apparent connection with the event of *Mi'rāj*, it may appear to a cursory reader that either of the two verses has been misplaced here. But if we try to understand the matter in the context of the theme of the whole Sūrah, we can easily understand the connection between the two. .The main object of this Sūrah is to give a warning to the disbelievers of Makkah. That is why the mention of Mi'rāj has been made in the very first verse, as if to say, "The person whom you dub as an impostor and reject the Book sent down to him, has just now seen with his naked eyes great Signs of Allah. So you should learn a lesson from the history of the Israelites who discarded the Book of Allah and therefore, were given painful punishment."

3. The Arabic word *"vakīl"* (guardian) denotes a person who is trustworthy and can be depended upon in regard to one's affairs and may be turned to for guidance and help.

4. That is, "You are the descendants of Noah and his companions;" therefore ,you should behave in a manner as behoves such people. You should make Allah alone your Guardian, for your ancestors escaped death from the Flood only because they had made Allah their Guardian."

5. The original Arabic word *"Al-kitāb"* does not stand here for the Torah but for all the Divine Books.

6. Such warnings have been given in different Books of the Bible. As regards their first mischief and its evil consequences, the Israelites were warned in the Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel and the warnings about their second mischief and its severe punishments are found in Matthew and Luke. Below are given extracts to confirm this statement of the Qur'ān.

Prophet David was the first to warn the Israelites in his Psalms of their first mischief:

"They did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the Lord commanded them: But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works. And they served their idols which were a snare unto them. Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters ....Therefore, was the wrath of the Lord kindled against his people, insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance. And he gave them into the hand of the heathen ;" Psalms: Chapter 106, vv. 34-38, 40, 41.

The above events have been described in the past tense as if they had already actually happened. The Scriptures employ this mode of expression to emphasize the importance of the prophesies.

When this mischief actually came to pass, Prophet Isaiah warned them of its ruinous consequences: "Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers. Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves: everyone loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them. Therefore, saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts, the mighty One of Israel. Ah I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies: they be replenished from the east, and are soothsayers like the Philistines, and they please themselves in the children of strangers. Their land also is full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made: Moreover the Lord saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet: Therefore, the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the Lord will discover their secret parts. Thy men shall fall by the sword,. and thy mighty in the war. And her gates shall lament and mourn: and she being desolate shall sit upon the ground. Now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks: That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord: Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits: Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel, Because ye despise this word, and trust in oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon: Therefore, this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall,....And he shall break it as the breaking of the potters' vessel that is broken in pieces; he shall not spare: so that there shall not be found in the bursting of it a shred to take fire from the hearth, or to take water withal out of the pit." (Isaiah, Chapter 1:verses 4-5; 21-24,Chapter 2:verses 6,8; Chapter 3: verses 16-17, 25-26; Chapter 8: verse 7; Chapter 30: verses 9-10, 12-14.)

After this Prophet Ieremiah raised his voice when the flood of corruption swept away everything before it.

"Thus saith the Lord, What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity and are become vain?

And I brought you into a plentiful country to eat the fruit thereof and the goodness thereof; but when ye entered, ye defiled my land, and made my heritage an abomination. For of old time I have broken thy yoke, and burst thy bands; and thou saidst, I will not transgress; when upon every high hill and under every green tree thou wanderest, playing the harlot. As the thief is ashamed when he is found, so is the house of Israel ashamed: they, their kings, their princes, and their priests, and their prophets, Saying to a stock, Thou art my father; and to a stone, Thou hast brought me forth: for they have turned *their* back unto me, and not *their* face: but in the time of their trouble they will say, Arise, and save us. But where *are* thy gods that thou hast made thee? let them arise, if they can save thee in the time of thy trouble; for according to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah. The Lord said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done? She is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also. And it came to pass through the lightness of her whoredom, that she defiled the land, and committed adultery with stones and with sticks. Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if can find a man, if there be *any* that executeth judgments that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it. How shall I pardon thee for this? thy children have forsaken me, and sworn by them that are no gods: when I had fed them to the full, they then committed adultery, and assembled themselves by troops in the harlots' houses. They were as fed horses in the morning: every one neighed after his neighbour's wife. Shall I not visit for these *things*? Saith the Lord: and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this? Lo, I will bring a nation upon you from far, O house of Israel, saith the Lord: it *is* a mighty nation, it is an ancient nation, a nation whose language thou knowest not, neither understand what they say. Their quiver is an open sepulchre, they *are* all mighty men. And they shall eat up thine harvest, and thy bread, *which* thy sons and thy daughters should eat: they shall eat up thy flocks and thine herds; they shall eat up thy vines and thy fig trees: they shall impoverish thy fenced cities, wherein thou trustedst, with the sword. And the carcases of this people shall be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth; and none shall fray *them* away. Then will I cause to cease from the cities of Judah, and from the streets of Jerusalem, the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride: for the land shall be desolate.

And it shall come to pass, if they say unto thee, Whither shall we go forth? then thou shalt tell them, Thus saith the Lord; Such as are for death, to

death; and such as are for the sword, to the sword; and such as are for the famine, to the famine; and such as are for the captivity, to the captivity. And I will appoint over them four kinds, saith the Lord: the sword to slay, and the dogs to tear, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the earth, to devour and destroy." (Jeremiah, Chapter 2: verses 5-7, 20, 26-28; Chapter 3: verses 6-9; Chapter 5: verses 1,7-9 15-17; Chapter 7: verses 33, 34; Chapter 15: verses 2, 3.)

Then Prophet Ezekiel was raised to warn them in time. Addressing Jerusalem he said:

The city sheddeth blood in the midst of it, that her time may come, and maketh idols against herself to defile herself. Behold, the princes of Israel, every one were in thee to their power to shed blood. In thee they have set light by father and mother: in the midst of thee have they dealt by oppression with the stranger: in thee have they vexed the fatherless and the widow. Thou hast despised mine holy things, and hast profaned my sabbaths. In thee are men that carry tales to shed blood: and in thee they eat upon the mountains: in the midst of thee they commit lewdness. In thee have they discovered their fathers' nakedness: in thee have they humbled her that was set apart for pollution. And one hath committed abomination with his neighbour's wife; and another hath lewdly defiled his daughter-in-law; and another in thee hath humbled his sister, his father's daughter. In thee have they taken gifts to shed blood; thou hast taken usury and increase, and thou hast greedily gained of thy neighbours by extortion and hast forgotten me, can thine hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with thee? And I will scatter thee among the heathen, and disperse thee in the countries, and will consume thy filthiness out of thee. And thou shalt take thine inheritance in thyself in the sight of the heathen, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord." (Ezekiel, Chapter 22: verses 3, 6-12, 14-16.)

Besides the above mentioned warnings which were given to Israelites at the time of their first mischief, Prophet Jesus Christ warned them of the consequences of their second great mischief. In a forceful address he criticized their moral degeneration like this:

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." (Matthew, Chapter 23: verses 37, 38; Chapter 24: verse 2.)

Then, when the Roman officials were taking Prophet Jesus out for crucifixion, and a great company of people including women were following him bewailing and lamenting, he addressed them and gave his final warnings:

But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in which they shall say; Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. (Luke, Chapter 23: verses 28-30.)

7. This refers to the terrible destruction that the Israelites suffered at the hands of the Assyrians and Babylonians. One cannot fully appreciate the historical background of this merely from the extracts that have been reproduced above from the Books of the Prophets. A brief history of the Israelites is also needed so that a student may become acquainted with all the causes and circumstances on account of which Allah removed this nation, that professed to believe in a revealed Book, from the leadership of mankind and turned it into a humiliated, condemned and backward community.

When, after the death of Prophet Moses, the Israelites entered Palestine it was inhabited by the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzittes, Hivites, Jebusites, the Philistines, etc. These communities had adopted the worst kind of idolatry, their supreme deity being Ayl whom they regarded as the father of gods and who was usually represented by the bull-images. His consort was called Asherah from whom had descended a whole line of gods and goddesses, about 70 in number. The most powerful god among them was Baal who was regarded as the god of rain and growth and the lord of the earth and heavens. In the northern regions his consort was called Anathoth and in Palestine Ashtaroth. These two were the goddesses of love and procreation. Besides them, there was a god of death, a god of disease and famine, and a goddess of health, and thus all the worldly powers and agencies stood divided among a large number of deities. The people had ascribed such dirty and base qualities and acts to these deities that even a worst offender against morality would shun being known by them. Obviously the people who have adopted such mean deities for worship and devotion cannot remain secure from the worst kind of moral degeneration and the modern excavations have shown this conclusively.

Child sacrifice was a common thing among them. Their places of worship had turned into brothels, where women were kept as religious prostitutes and illicit relations with them were regarded as a part of worship and devotion.

The Israelites had clearly been told in the instructions given in the Torah that they should destroy those communities and wrest the land of Palestine from them, and that they should avoid mixing up with those people and ward off their moral and ideological weaknesses:

But when the Israelites entered Palestine they set this guidance aside. They not only did not establish a united kingdom of their own but fell a prey to tribal parochialism. Each of their tribes was content to take a part of the captured land and become a separate and independent state. This disunity among them did not leave any of the tribes strong enough to purge its territory completely of the idolaters, and therefore they had to allow them to live side by side with them in the same land. Not only this, but there had remained in the conquered territories a number of small city states of these idolatrous communities which the Israelites had not been able to subjugate. It is this very thing which has been complained against in the extract of the Psalms reproduced above in the beginning of E.N. 6.

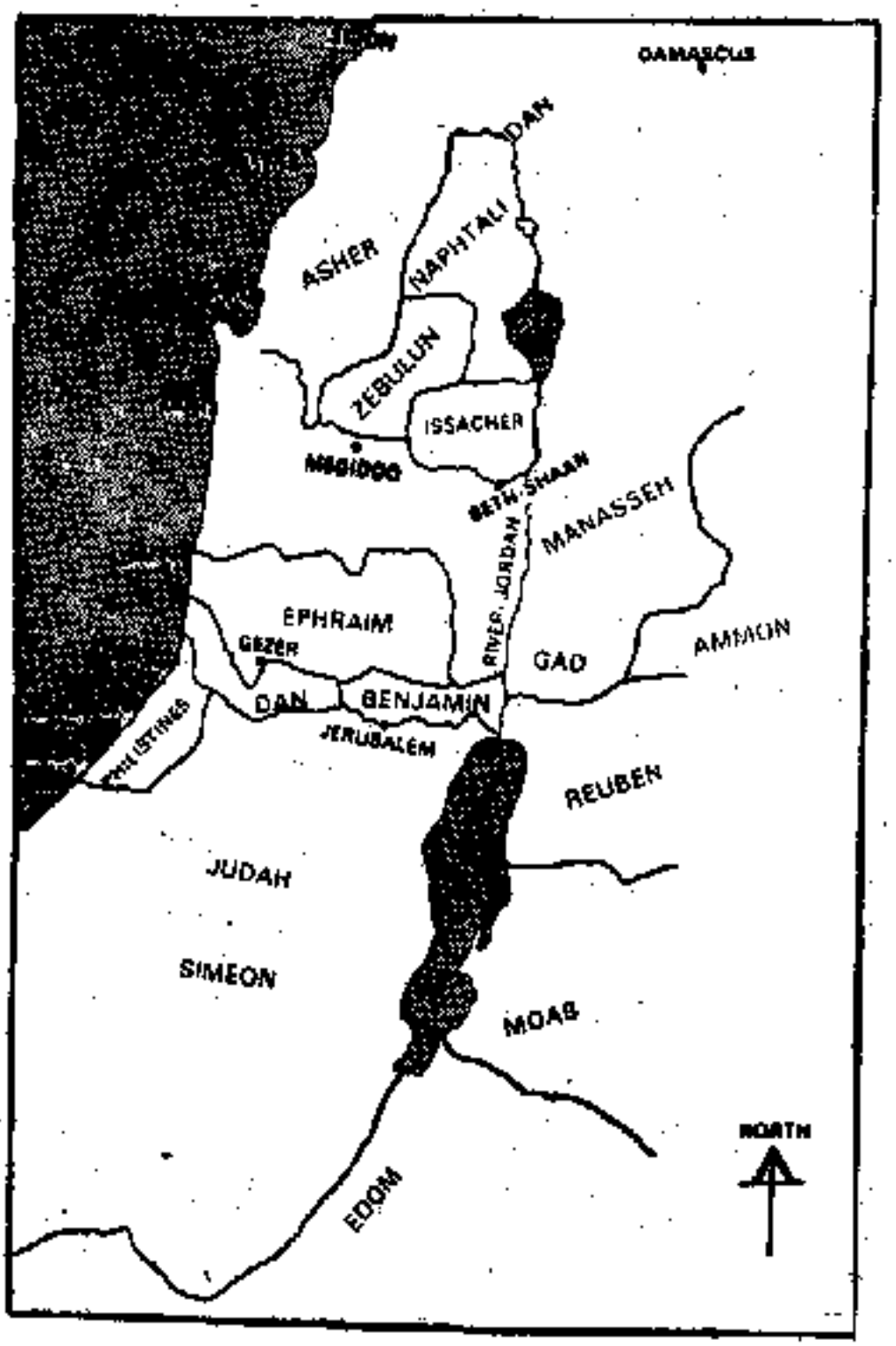
The first consequence of intermixing with those communities, was that the Israelites also became idolatrous, and gradually began to adopt other moral evils also. This has been complained about in the Book of Judges as below: "And the children of Israel did evil, in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim: And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger. And they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth". (Judges, 2: 11-13.)

The second consequence suffered by the Israelites was that the communities whose city-states they had left unconquered and the Philistines whose land they had not at all touched set up a united front against them and drove them out of a major part of Palestine by incessant attacks, so much so that they deprived them of the Holy Ark of their Lord. At last, the Israelites felt the need of establishing a united kingdom of their own under one ruler, and on their request Prophet Samuel appointed Saul as their king in 1020 B.C. (For details see vv. 246-48 and E.N.'s. 268-270 of Al-Baqarah.)

This united kingdom was ruled by three kings: Saul (1020 B.C. to 1004 B.C.), Prophet David (1004 to 965 B.C.) and Prophet Solomon (365 to 926 B.C.). These kings brought to completion the mission that had been left incomplete by the Israelites after the death of Prophet Moses. They annexed all the territories except the Phoenician state on the northern and the Philistine state on the southern coast, which, of course, became tributaries.

After the death of Prophet Solomon the Israelites again adopted the ways of the world and fought among themselves and split into two independent kingdoms, the kingdom of Israel in the northern Palestine and Jordan with Samaria as its capital, and the kingdom of Judah in the southern Palestine and Edom with Jerusalem as its capital. These kingdoms were strife-ridden from the very beginning and this state of affairs persisted till the end.

PALESTINE AFTER PROPHET MOSES



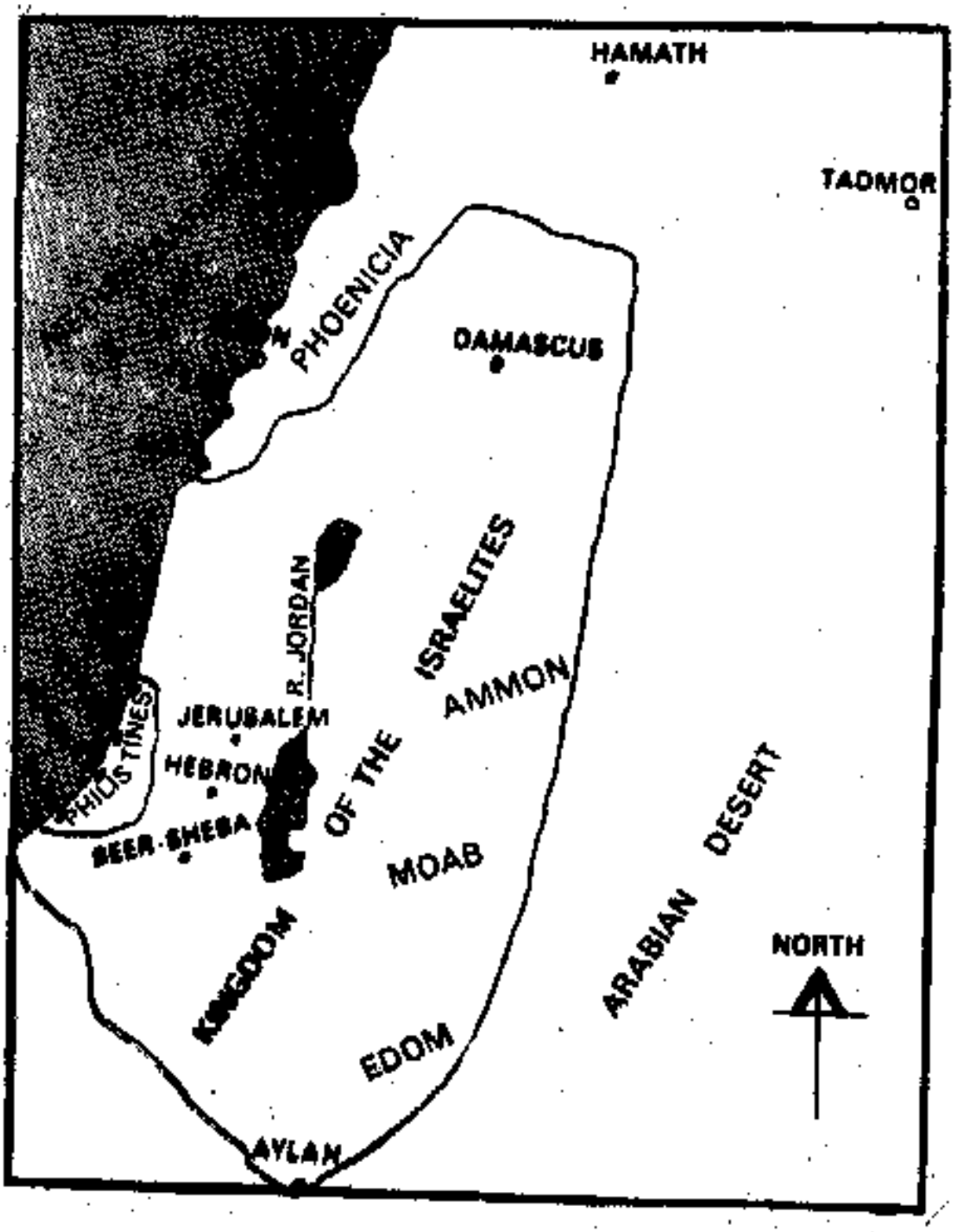
Explanation.—After the death of Prophet Moses, the Children of Israel conquered the whole of Palestine under Joshua, but instead of establishing a united kingdom they divided the land among themselves as inheritance.

This map shows how the land of Palestine was divided into lots and taken over by the 12 tribes of the Israelites, who were : the Children of Judah, Simeon, Dan, Benjamin, Ephraim, Reuben, Gad, Manasseh, Issachar, Zebulun, Naphtali and Asher.

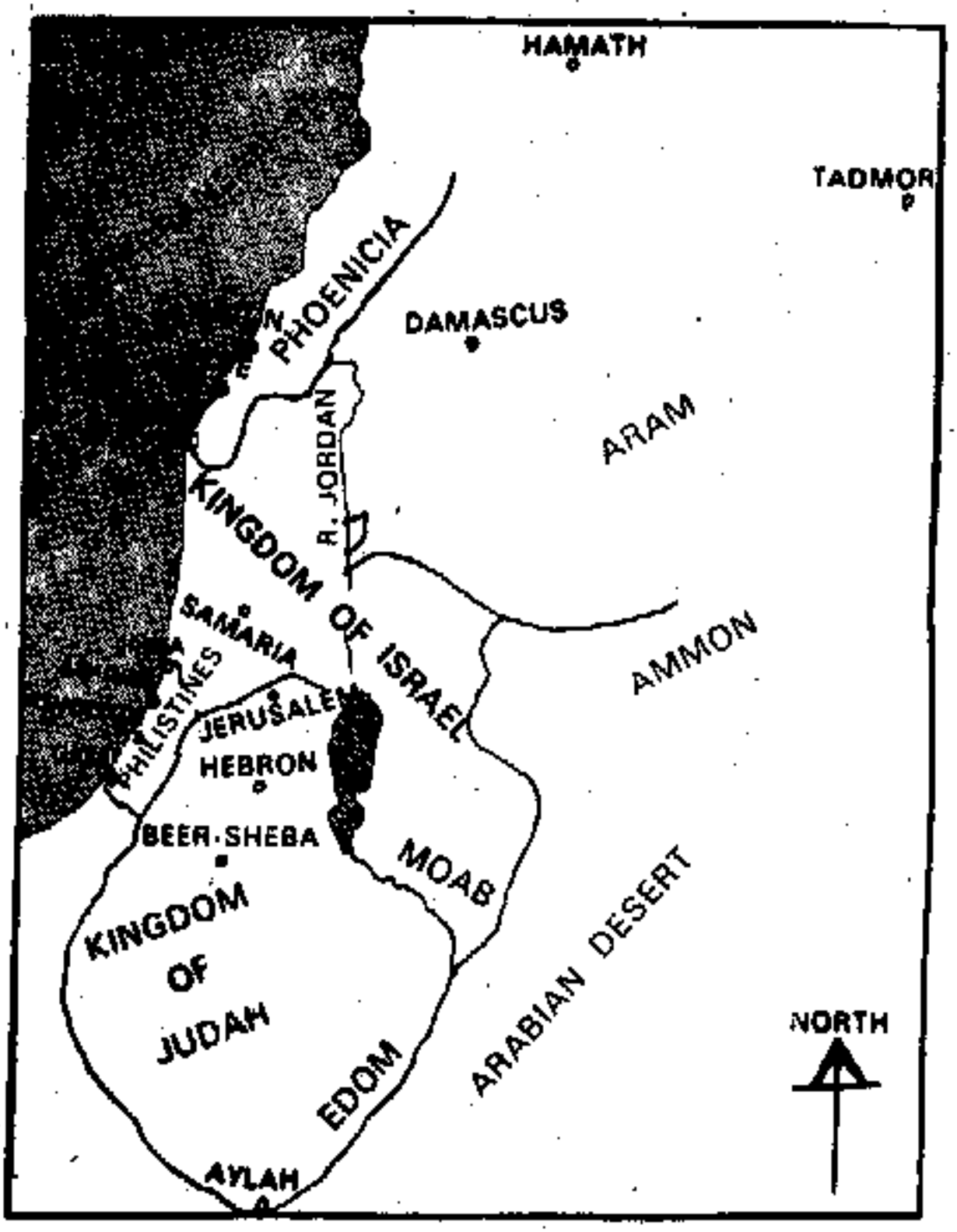
Being weak and divided, they could not fulfil the mission of the Torah, which was to drive out the idolatrous Canaanites from Palestine. The Canaanites still dwelt among them and retained strong-holds in the shape of city states. According to the Bible, up to the time of Saul, the cities of Sidon, Tyre, Dor, Megiddo, Beth-Shaan, Gezer, Jerusalem, etc. were still in the hands of the Canaanites and their idolatrous culture was influencing the Israelites.

Furthermore, on the borders of the Israelite territories, there still existed powerful states of the Philistines, the Edomites, the Moabites, and the Ammonites, who subjected them later to incessant attacks and annexed large chunks of their lands. The Israelites might even have been driven out of Palestine had they not been shown grace by God and united in time under Saul.

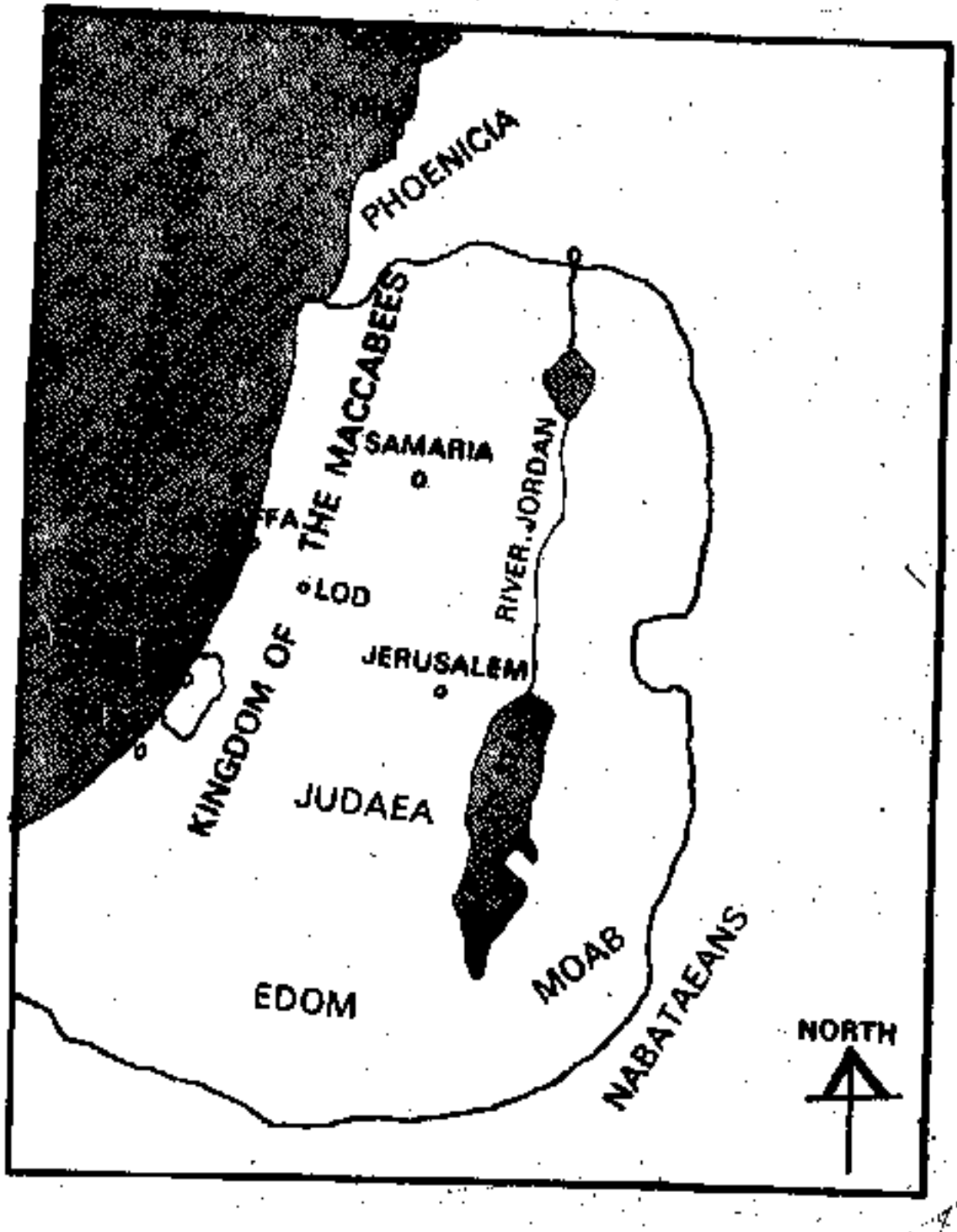
THE KINGDOM OF PROPHETS DAVID
AND SOLOMON (1000.930 B.C



ISRAELITE KINGDOMS OF JUDAH
AND ISRAEL (869 B.C)



PALESTINE UNDER THE MACCABEES
(168-63 B.C)



The rulers and people of the kingdom of Israel were the first to be affected grievously by the ideological and moral weaknesses of the neighbouring communities. Specially after the marriage of its ruler, Ahab, with the idolatrous princess Jezebel of Zidon, idolatry and other evils began to spread unchecked among the Israelites under the official patronage. Prophets Elias and Elisha tried their very best to check this deluge but the Israelites who were rapidly degenerating, did not heed their warning. At last the wrath of Allah overtook the kingdom of Israel in the shape of the Assyrians who started subjecting Palestine to incessant attacks from 900 B.C. downward. During this period, Prophet Amos (787-747 B.C.) and them Prophet Hosea(747-735 B.C.) rose and warned the Israelites again and again but the wretched, depraved people did not heed their warnings at all, and transgresssed all limits. Prophet Amos was banished by the king of Israel from the realm of Samaria and warned not to preach his mission in the country Not very long after this the wrath of Allah burst upon the kingdom of Israel and its people. The Assyrian king Sargon took Samaria in 721 B.C.and put an end to this northern kingdom.Thousands of Israelites were put to the sword and 27 thousand of their leading men were driven out of their homeland and scattered in the eastern districts of the Assyrian empire and replaced by settlers from other parts of the empire. When the retnaining Israelites intermixed with the settlers they also lost gradually their national and cultural identity.

The other kingdom of the Israelites, called the kingdom of Judah, which was set up in southern Palestine also began to adopt godless ways soon after the death of Prophet Solomon, though its moral degeneration took place at a slower pace than that of Israel. Therefore, it was allowed to exist for a longer period. Then, like the kingdom of Israel, it also began to be subjected to continual attacks, its cities ruined and its capital besieged, but this kingdom could not be wholly destroyed by the Assyrians; it only became a tributary. Afterwards, when inspite of the best reformatory effforts of Prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah the people of Judah did not give up idol-worship and other moral evils, king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon attacked and captured the whole of Judah in 598 B.C.including Jerusalem and took the king of Judah as prisoner. Even then the Israelites did not mend their ways and paid no heed to the warnings and guidance of Prophet Jeremiah. Instead of reforming their ways, they started making plans to change their fate by revolting against Babylon. At last in 587 B.C.Nebuchadnezzar punished them heavily by invading Judah and destroyed all its important cities. He razed Jerusalem and Solomon's Temple to the ground and did not leave a wall of it standing in place. He drove a large part of the Israelite population out of their land and scattered them into the adjoining countries. The people who were left behind were cursed and subjected to all kinds of humiliations by the neighbouring communities.

This was the first calamity that came as a warning to the Israelites and the first chastisement that they suffered as a result therof.

8. This refers to the lease of time that the Israelites (That is the people of Judah) got after their release from the captivity of Babylon. As for the people of Israel and Samaria, they did not rise again after their moral and spiritual degeneration. But among the people of Judah there still were some people who practised the truth and invited others also to follow it. They carried on their work of invitation to the truth among the remaining Israelites in Judah and exhorted those also to repent and follow the truth who had been driven out into Babylon and other lands. At last the mercy of Allah came to their help. The downfall of Babylon started. The Persian king, Cyrus, took Babylon in 539 B.C.and in the following year issued a decree allowing the Israelites to return to and re-settle in their homeland. The Israelites began to return home in caravan after caravan, and this continued for a long time. Cyrus also allowed the Israelites to rebuild the Temple of Solomon but the neighbouring communities who had settled in this land resisted it. At last Darius I appointed Zerubbabel, a grandson of the last king of Judah, governor of Judah in 522 B.C.who got the Temple rebuilt under the care of Prophet Haggai, Prophet Zechariah and Joshua. In 458 B.C. Ezra arrived in Judah along with an exiled group and the persian king Artaxerxes made the following decree.

"And thou, Ezra, after the wisdom of thy God that is in thine hand, set magistrates and judges, which may judge all the people that are beyond the river, all such as know the laws of thy God; and teach ye them that know them not.

And whosoever will not do the law of thy God and the law of the king let judgment be executed speedily upon him whether it be unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment."(Ezra, 7:25-26).

Taking advantage of this decree, Ezra carried out the revival of the religion of Prophet Moses. He gathered together all the righteous and good people from the Israelites and set up a strong organisation. He compiled and spread the Pentateuch which contained the Torah, made arrangements for the religious education of the Israelites, enforced the law and started purging the people of moral and ideological weaknesses which the had adopted by intermixing with the other communities. He compelled they Jews to divorce the idolatrous wives they had married, and took a covenant from them that they would worship God alone and follow His Law only.

In 455 B.C.an exiled group came back to Judah under Nehemiah whom the Persian king appointed as the ruler of Jerusalem and ordered him to build the wall round the city.Thus, after 150 years the Holy city was fully restored and became the centre of Jewish religion and culture. But the Israelites of northern

Palestine, and Samaria did not benefit by the work of revival done by Ezra. They built a rival sanctuary on Mount Gerizim, and tried to make it the religious centre for the people of the Book. This caused a further, and perhaps the final, split between the Jews and the Samaritans.

The Jews suffered a set-back for a while with the fall of the Persian Empire and the conquests of Alexander the Great and the rise of the Greeks. After the death of Alexander, his kingdom was subdivided into three empires. Syria fell to the lot of the Seleucide empire, with Antioch as its capital, whose ruler Antiochus III incorporated Palestine into his dominions in 198 B.C. These Greek conquerors who were idolatrous by precept and freelance morally felt greatly ill at ease with the Jewish religion and culture. So, they began to propagate the rival Greek way of life and culture by political and economic pressure, and were able to win over a strong section of the Israelites who became their helpers. This external interference caused a split in the Jewish nation. One group among them readily adopted the Greek dress, the Greek language, the Greek way of life and the Greek sports, while the other persistently stuck to their own culture and way of life.

In 175 B.C. when Antiochus IV (who was called Epiphanes, that is, the manifestation of God) came to the throne, he used all his power and authority to stamp out the Jewish religion and culture. He got idols installed in the Holy Temple at Jerusalem and forced the Jews to prostrate themselves before them. He strictly forbade the rite of offering the sacrifices at the altar, and commanded the Jews to offer sacrifices to idolatrous deities instead. He proposed death penalty for those who would keep the Torah in their houses, or observe the Sabbath or perform circumcision of their children. But the Jews did not yield to this coercion, and started a powerful resistance movement, known in history as the revolt of the Maccabees. Though in this struggle the sympathies of the Greece-oriented Jews were with the Greeks, and they fully cooperated with the despots of Antioch to crush the Maccabean revolt, the common Jews who still retained the religious fervour of the days of Ezra sided with the Maccabees, who were ultimately able to drive out the Greeks and establish a free religious state which remained in power till 67 B.C. This state prospered and in time extended to all those territories which had once been under the control the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. It was able to annex a part of the land of the Philistines which had remained unconquered even in the days of Prophets David and Solomon (Peace be upon them).

This is the historical background of the verse of the Qur'ān under commentary.

9. The historical background of the second degeneration and its chastisement is as follows:

[Contd. on p. 602

لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْاٰخِرَةِ اَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابًا اَلِيْمًا ﴿١٠﴾ وَيَدْعُ الْاِنْسَانُ بِالشَّرِّ
دُعَآءَهٗ بِالْخَيْرِ ؕ وَكَانَ الْاِنْسَانُ عَجُوْلًا ﴿١١﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا الَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ اٰيَتَيْنِ
فَمَحَوْنَآ اٰيَةَ الَّيْلِ وَجَعَلْنَآ اٰيَةَ النَّهَارِ مُبْصِرَةً لِّتَبْتَغُوْا فَضْلًا مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ
وَلِتَعْلَمُوْا عَدَدَ السِّنِيْنَ وَالْحِسَابَ ؕ وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَصَّلْنٰهُ تَفْصِيْلًا ﴿١٢﴾ وَكُلَّ
اِنْسَانٍ اَلْزَمْنٰهُ طٰٓئِرَهٗ فِيْ عُنُقِهٖ ؕ وَنُخْرِجُ لَهٗ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ كِتٰبًا يَّلْقٰىهُ
مَنْشُوْرًا ﴿١٣﴾ اِقْرَاْ كِتٰبَكَ ؕ كَفٰى بِنَفْسِكَ الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكَ حَسِيْبًا ﴿١٤﴾ مَنِ اهْتَدٰى فَاِنَّمَا
يَهْتَدِيْ لِنَفْسِهٖ ۚ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَاِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا ؕ وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِّزْرَ
اُخْرٰى ؕ وَمَا كُنَّا مُعَذِّبِيْنَ حَتّٰى نَبْعَثَ رَسُوْلًا ﴿١٥﴾ وَاِذَآ اَرَدْنَآ اَنْ نُّهْلِكَ
قَرْيَةً اَمَرْنَا مُتْرَفِيْهَا فَفَسَقُوْا فِيْهَا فَحَقَّ عَلَيْهَا الْقَوْلُ فَدَمَّرْنٰهَا تَدْمِيْرًا ﴿١٦﴾ وَ
كَمْ اَهْلَكْنَا مِنَ الْقُرُوْنِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ نُوْحٍ ؕ وَكَفٰى بِرَبِّكَ بِذُنُوْبِ عِبَادِهٖ خَبِيْرًۢا
بَصِيْرًا ﴿١٧﴾ مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيْدُ الْعَاجِلَةَ عَجَّلْنَا لَهٗ فِيْهَا مَا نَشَآءُ لِمَنْ نُّرِيْدُ
ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَا لَهٗ جَهَنَّمَ ۚ يَصْلٰىهَا مَذْمُوْمًا مَّدْحُوْرًا ﴿١٨﴾ وَمَنْ اَرَادَ الْاٰخِرَةَ وَ
سَعٰى لَهَا سَعْيَهَا وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ كَانَ سَعْيُهُمْ مَّشْكُوْرًا ﴿١٩﴾ كُلًّا نُّمِدُّ
هٰٓؤُلَآءِ وَهٰٓؤُلَآءِ مِنْ عَطَآءِ رَبِّكَ ؕ وَمَا كَانَ عَطَآءُ رَبِّكَ مَحْظُوْرًا ﴿٢٠﴾ اُنْظُرْ
كَيْفَ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلٰى بَعْضٍ ؕ وَلَلْاٰخِرَةُ اَكْبَرُ دَرَجٰتٍ وَّاَكْبَرُ تَفْضِيْلًا ﴿٢١﴾
لَا تَجْعَلْ مَعَ اللّٰهِ اِلٰهًا اٰخَرَ فَتَقْعُدَ مَذْمُوْمًا مَّخْذُوْلًا ﴿٢٢﴾ وَقَضٰى رَبُّكَ اَلَّا
تَعْبُدُوْٓا اِلَّآ اِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ اِحْسَانًا ؕ اِمَّا يَبْلُغَنَّ عِنْدَكَ الْكِبَرَ اَحَدُهُمَآ اَوْ
كِلٰهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَّهُمَآ اُفٍّ وَّلَا تَنْهَرْهُمَا وَقُلْ لَّهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيْمًا ﴿٢٣﴾ وَ
اخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَّبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيٰنِيْ

Indeed the Qur'ān shows that way which is perfectly straight: To those who believe in it and do good deeds, it gives the good news that there is a great reward for them and to those who do not believe in the Hereafter, it gives the warning that a painful torment has been made ready for them.[11] 9-10

Man invokes evil instead of goodness for he is very hasty and impatient.[12] 11

Behold! We have created day and night as two signs: We have deprived the sign of night of light and made the sign of day bright to enable you to seek bounty of your Lord and to reckon months and years. Thus We have made everything manifestly distinct.[13] 12

We have fastened the augury of every man to his own neck,[14] and on the Day of Resurrection We will bring forth a writing which he will find like an open book. (It will be said to him,) "Here is your record: read it. Today you yourself suffice as reckoner against yourself." 13-14

Whosoever adopts the righteous way, his righteous conduct will be for his own good, and whosoever goes astray, his deviation shall bring its consequences on him.[15] No bearer will bear the burden of another.[16] And We do not inflict punishment until We have sent a Messenger[17] (to make Truth distinct from falsehood.) 15

When We decree that a habitation should be destroyed, We give Commands to its well-to-do people and they show disobedience; then that habitation incurs just torment and We totally exterminate it.[18] Just see how many generations have been destroyed by Our Command after Noah. Your Lord is fully aware of the sins of his servants and is seeing everything. 16-17

If a person hankers after the immediate good things of this worldly life,[19] We give him whatever We will; then We condemn such a one to Hell, wherein he will burn, accursed and deprived of mercy.[20] On the other hand, whoso desires the life of the Hereafter and strives for it as best as one should strive, and is a believer, the endeavour of every such person will be appreciated.[21] As regards the provisions of this worldly life, We bestow them on these and on those; this is a gift of your Lord and there is none to withhold the gift of your Lord.[22] But in 18-21

spite of this you can see that We have exalted one people above the others and in the Hereafter these grades will be far greater, and their superiority will be far higher.[23]

22 Do not associate another deity with Allah,[24] otherwise you shall be reduced to a state of ignominy and helplessness.

23-24 Your Lord has enjoined the following:[25]

1. You should not worship anyone but Him.[26]

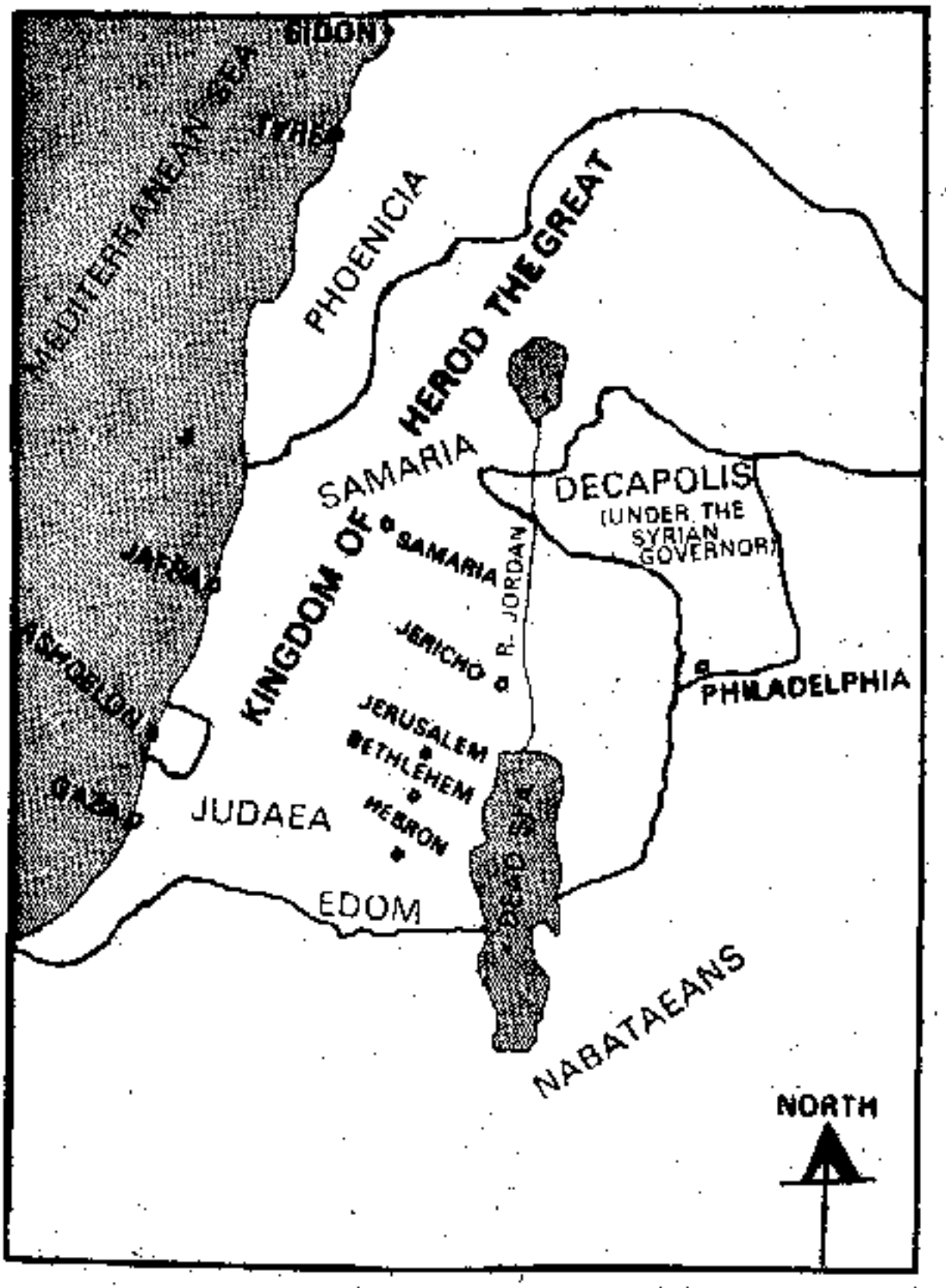
2. Treat your parents with great consideration; if either or both of them live with you in their old age, do not say even "fie" to them; nor rebuke them, but speak kind words to them; treat them with humility and tenderness and pray: "Lord, be merciful to them just as they brought me up with kindness and affection."

Contd. from p.599]

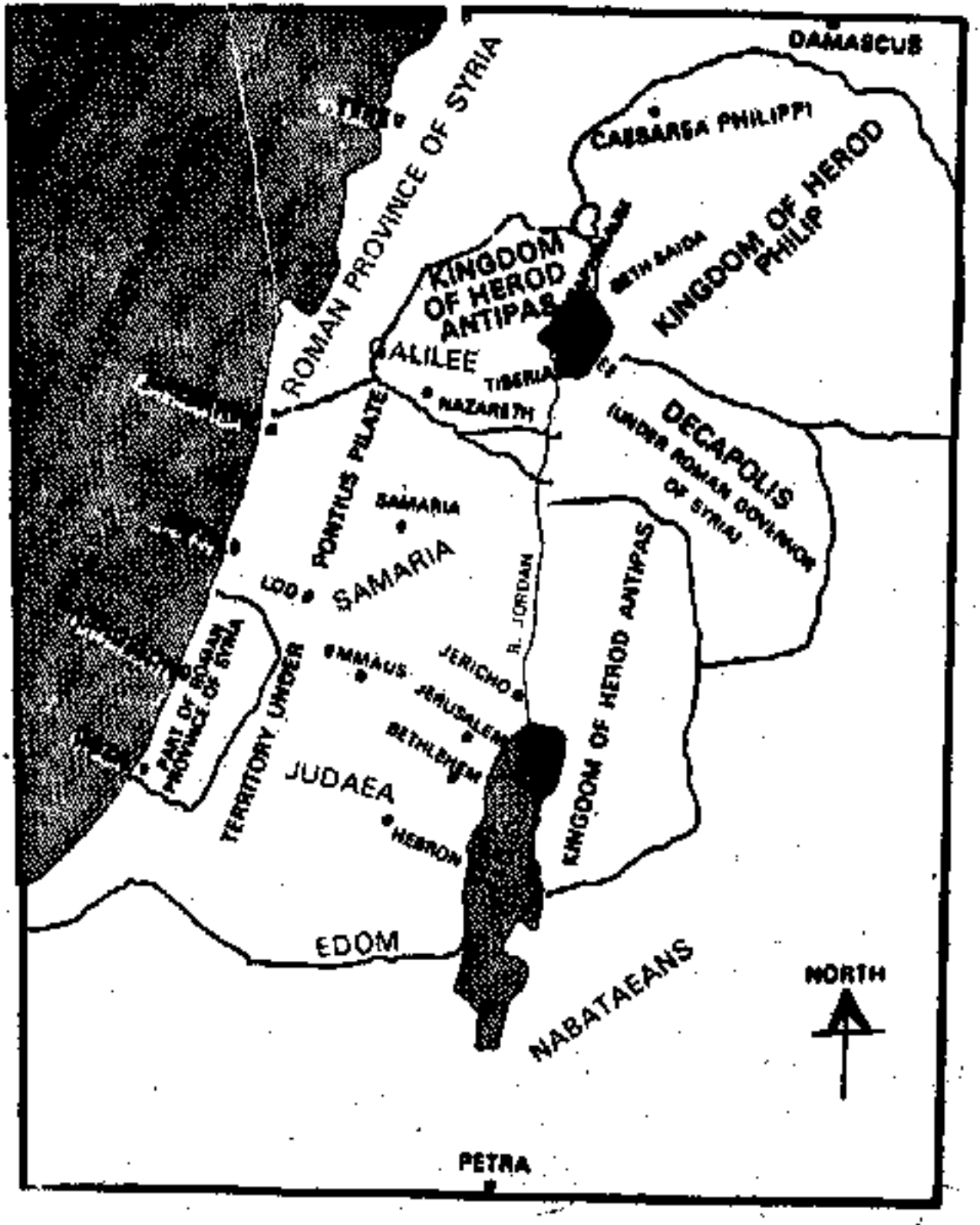
The moral and religious fervour with which the Maccabees had started their movement gradually cooled down and was replaced by love of the world and empty external form. A split appeared among them and they themselves invited the Roman General, Pompey, to come to Palestine. Pompey turned his attention to this land in 63 B.C. and, taking Jerusalem, put an end to the political freedom of the Jews. But the Roman conquerors preferred to rule their dominions through the agency of the local chiefs rather than by direct control. Therefore, a local government was set up in Palestine which eventually passed into the hand of Herod, a clever Jew, in 40 B.C. This ruler is well known as Herod the Great. He ruled over the whole of Palestine and Jordan from 40 to 4 B.C. On the one hand Herod patronised the religious leaders to please the Jews, and on the other, he propagated the Roman culture and won the goodwill of Caesar by showing his loyalty and faithfulness to the Roman Empire. During, his reign, the Jews degenerated and fell to the lowest ebb of moral and religious life.

On the death of Herod his kingdom, was subdivided into three parts. His son, Archelaus, became the ruler of Samaria, Judaea and northern Edom. In A.D. 6. however, Caesar Augustus deprived him of his authority and put the state under his Roman governor, and this arrangement continued up till A.D. 41. This was precisely the time when Prophet Jesus (Peace be upon him) appeared to reform the Israelites whose religious leaders opposed him tooth and nail and even tried to get him the death sentence by the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate.

KINGDOM OF HEROD THE GREAT (40-0 B.C)



PALESTINE IN THE TIME OF PROPHET JESUS CHRIST
(168-63 B.C)



The second son of Herod, Herod Antipas, became the ruler of Galilee and Jordan in northern Palestine, and he was the person who got Prophet John (Peace be upon him) beheaded at the request and desire of a dancing girl.

Herod's third son, Philip, succeeded to the territories bounded on one side by river Yermuk and on the other by Mount Hermon. Philip had been much more deeply influenced by the Roman and Greek cultures than his father and brothers. Therefore the preaching of the truth could not have even so much effect in his land as it had in the other parts of Palestine.

In A.D. 41, the Romans appointed Herod Agrippa, the grandson of Herod the Great, ruler of the territories that had once been under Herod himself. Coming into power this man did whatever he could to persecute the followers of Prophet Jesus (Peace be upon him) and used all the forces at his disposal to crush the movement that was functioning under the guidance of the Disciples to inculcate fear of God in the people and reform their morals.

In order to have a correct estimate of the condition of the common Jews and their religious leaders, one should study the criticisms levelled by Prophet Jesus on them in his sermons contained in the four Gospels. Even a religious man like Prophet John was beheaded before their eyes and not a voice was raised in protest against this barbarity. Then all the religious leaders of the community unanimously demanded death sentence for Prophet Jesus, and none but a few righteous men were there to mourn this depravity. Above all, when Pontius Pilate asked these depraved people, 'which condemned prisoner he should release, according to the custom, at Passover, Jesus or Barabbas the robber', they all cried with one voice 'Barabbas'. This was indeed the last chance Allah gave to the Jews, and then their fate was sealed.

Not long after this, a serious conflict started between the Jews and the Romans, which developed into an open revolt by the former between A.D. 64 and 66. Both Herod Agrippa II and the Roman procurator Floris failed to put down the rebellion. At last, the Romans crushed it by a strong military action and in A.D. 70 Titus took Jerusalem by force. About 1,33,000 people were put to the sword, 67 thousand made slaves, and thousands sent to work in the Egyptian mines and to other cities so that they could be used in amphitheatres for being torn by wild beasts or become the "practice-target" for the sword fighters. All the tall and beautiful girls were picked out for the army of conquest and the Holy City of Jerusalem and the Temple were pulled down to the ground. After this the Jewish influence so disappeared from Palestine that the Jews could not regain power for two thousand years, and the Holy Temple could never be rebuilt. Afterwards the Roman Emperor, Hadrian, restored Jerusalem but renamed it Aelia. The Jews,

however, were not allowed to enter it for centuries. This was the calamity that the Jews suffered on account of their degeneration for the second time.

10. Though this admonition has been given as a parenthesis at the end of the address to the children of Israel, it does not mean that this and the address itself are solely meant for them. As a matter of fact, the whole address is really directed towards the disbelievers of Makkah but, instead of addressing them directly, some important historical events from the history of the children of Israel have been cited in order to serve as admonition for them.

11. This means to warn those persons or people or nations who do not take a lesson from the admonitions of the Qur'ān to be ready to undergo that chastisement which Israelites had to suffer.

12. This is in answer to the foolish demands of the disbelievers of Makkah who repeatedly demanded from the Holy Prophet to bring about that torment with which he threatened them. It is closely connected with the preceding verse, as if to say, "O foolish people instead of asking goodness you demand the torment: can't you realise the sufferings of the community which is visited by God's torment?"

It also contains a subtle warning to those Muslims who prayed for punishment for those disbelievers who persecuted them and rejected the Message obdurately; there were still among those disbelievers many such people who afterwards embraced Islam and became its standard bearers in the world. That is why Allah says, "Man does so because he is very hasty and impatient; " He prays to Allah for all such things as are the immediate need of the time, though often subsequent experience shows that if Allah had granted his prayer, it would have been very harmful to him.

13. Allah invites man to study the wisdom that underlies variety in the world and not get confused and long for monotonous uniformity. In fact, the whole system is based on variety, distinctiveness and diversity in things. For the sake of illustration let us take the case of the signs of day and night: "You see these underlying opposite things daily in your life. If you just consider the underlying wisdom, you will find that without this variety there would have been hardly any activity in the world. Likewise great wisdom lies in the creation of the people with different temperaments, thoughts and inclinations. If Allah had made all men righteous by birth or annihilated disbelievers and wicked people and left only believers and submissive people in the world, the purpose of men's creation could not have been realized. Therefore,. it is wrong to desire that there should only be day and no night. The righteous thing is that these people, who have got the light of guidance, should exert their utmost to remove the darkness of deviation. It is their duty that if they find darkness like that of night, they should pursue it like the sun so that the light of guidance should re-appear".

14. "We have fastened the augury of every man to his own neck": therefore one does not need to take omens from a bird.: This is to remove the superstition of the disbelievers who used to take omens from birds etc., as if to say, "The causes and consequences of good fortune or bad fate exist in man's own person. He merits good fortune because of his own good conduct and good judgment, and likewise, suffers the consequences of evil fate by the lack of these". This was necessitated because foolish people always try to attribute their misfortunes to external causes, when in fact our fate depends on our own deeds, good or bad. If they probe into the causes, they will find that their fate was decided by their own good or bad qualities and judgments.

15. This is to impress that if a person adopts the right way, he does not do any favour to God or His Messenger or a reformer but he himself gets its benefits. On the other hand, if a person deviates from the right way, he can do no harm to God or His Messenger or a reformer, for they desire only to protect men from wrong ways and guide him on to the Right Way, and not for any selfish ends. Therefore, the right course for a wise man is to adopt the righteous way, when it becomes distinct to him what is truth and what is falsehood. On the other hand, if he rejects Truth because of his prejudices and self-interest, he will be his own enemy and not a well-wisher.

16. The Qur'ān has laid great stress on the doctrine of personal responsibility at several places, for one cannot follow the Right Way scrupulously without understanding fully its implication. It means that, everyone is solely responsible for one's moral conduct and is accountable to God as an individual in one's own person and no other person can share the burden of responsibility with him. As an instance, we may take the case of a particular action or a particular way of conduct in which a generation or a community or a large number of people had collaborated. When the people will assemble before Allah on the Day of Judgment their collective action will be analysed so as to lay the burden of its responsibility on each and every person who had been conducive to it, and rewarded or punished in accordance with it. Neither will a person be punished for the part another had played in its performance nor shall the burden of the sin of one individual laid on the shoulders of another. This doctrine has been emphasized over and over again so that a wise man should not act in imitation of another or justify his own conduct by similar deeds of others. If a particular person feels the sense of his own responsibility, he will act in such a way as to come out successful on the Day of Judgment, regardless of what the others do.

17. This is another doctrine which has been impressed on the minds by the Qurān in different ways. This is to emphasize the basic importance that a Messenger has in the dispensation of Divine justice because this is determined in the light of the Message brought by him. This will be employed as an argument in

favour of or against the concerned people. Otherwise the infliction of punishment on the people would be unjust for in that case they could argue that they should not be punished as the knowledge of the righteous way had not been conveyed to them. But after the Message had been conveyed to a particular people, and they had rejected it, there would be left no excuse for them.

It is an irony that instead of accepting the Message some foolish people are misled by reading verses like these and they ask such absurd questions: "What will be the position of those, who might not have received the message of any Prophet?" The wise course for such persons would have been to ask themselves what their own position will be on the Day of Judgment, because they themselves had received the Message. As regards other people, Allah knows best who has received the Message, and when, how and to what extent and what attitude a certain person adopted towards it. In short, Allah alone is aware of whether a particular person received the Message in such a way as to fulfil the required condition for punishment.

18. Here a definite form of Divine procedure for the destruction of a people has been stated. When the well-to-do people of a habitation become disobedient, it is a portent that it is doomed to destruction. After their persistent and continuous transgression, the well-to-do people become so obdurate in their disobedience that they begin to discard the instinctive dictates of their conscience. The same thing has been stated in v. 16: "When We decree that a habitation should be destroyed We give Commands to its well-to-do people and they show disobedience." This is because Allah has created conscience for the guidance of man. Therefore, the dictates of conscience are really the commands of Allah. Thus it has become quite obvious that by "When We decree that a habitation should be destroyed ...." is not meant that Allah intends to destroy it without any reason. It is destroyed because after their disobedience "that habitation incurs Our just wrath and We totally exterminate it." The habitation deserves such a punishment because its common people follow the well-to-do people who are the factual leaders of a community and are mainly responsible for the corruption of the community. At first the well-to-do people commit acts of disobedience, wickedness, mischief, cruelty and tyranny and then the common people follow them and incur the torment of Allah. Incidentally, this is a warning for every community that it should be very discreet and prudent in choosing and electing its leaders and rulers, for if the latter are mean and wicked, they will inevitably lead the community to destruction.

19. The Arabic word *'Ājilah* literally means something which can be had immediately, but the Qur'ān employs it as a term for "This World" which yields its advantages and results in this worldly life. Its antonym is *'Ākhirat* (Hereafter)

which will yield its advantages and results after death in the life of the Next World.

20. The person who does not believe in the life of the Hereafter deserves Hell, because he strives only for the successes and good things of this world and his endeavours are confined to material objects. Consequently, such a person becomes a mere worshipper of this world and adopts wrong conduct, for he has no sense of personal responsibility and accountability to God and ultimately deserves the torment of Hell.

21. "His endeavours will be appreciated": he will be rewarded for the efforts he had made for success in the Hereafter.

22. Allah gives the provisions of this world both to those who strive for this world and to those who strive for the Hereafter, but it is the gift of Allah alone and not of anyone else. It does not lie in the power of the worshippers of the world to deprive the seekers after the Hereafter of these provisions: nor have the seekers after the Hereafter any power to withhold these provisions from the worshippers of the world.

23. This is to show that the seekers after the Hereafter have been exalted over the worshippers of the world even in this worldly life. However, this exaltation is not in regard to the good things of this world —rich food and dress, palatial dwellings, limousines, helicopters and other grand things, but it is from another point of view. They enjoy that true honour, love and good-will which is denied to the tyrants and the rich people in spite of the fact that they may be indigent. This is because whatever the seekers after the Hereafter get in this world, it is earned in righteous and honest ways, while the worshippers of the world amass wealth by employing dishonest and cruel ways. Then the former spend what they get with prudence and righteousness. They fulfil the obligations they owe to others. They spend their money in the Way of Allah and to please Allah on the needy and the indigent. In contrast to them, the worshippers of this world spend their money in the enjoyment of luxuries, wicked works, corruption and spreading other evil things. This makes the former models of God-worship and purity in every respect and distinguishes them so clearly from the worshippers of the world that they shine in exaltation over the latter. These things clearly indicate that in the next world the grades of the seekers after the Hereafter will be far greater and their superiority far higher than those of the worshippers of the world.

24. Or it can be rendered like this: "Do not invent another deity besides Allah", or "Do not set up another as a deity beside Allah."

[Contd. on p.610

صَغِيْرًا ﴿٢٤﴾ رَبُّكُمْ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا فِيْ نُفُوْسِكُمْ ؕ اِنْ تَكُوْنُوْا صٰلِحِيْنَ فَاِنَّهٗ كَانَ
لِلْاَوَّابِيْنَ غَفُوْرًا ﴿٢٥﴾ وَاٰتِ ذَا الْقُرْبٰى حَقَّهٗ وَالْمِسْكِيْنَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيْلِ وَ
لَا تُبَذِّرْ تَبْذِيْرًا ﴿٢٦﴾ اِنَّ الْمُبَذِّرِيْنَ كَانُوْٓا اِخْوَانَ الشَّيٰطِيْنِ ؕ وَكَانَ الشَّيْطٰنُ
لِرَبِّهٖ كَفُوْرًا ﴿٢٧﴾ وَاِمَّا تُعْرِضَنَّ عَنْهُمُ ابْتِغَآءَ رَحْمَةٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّكَ تَرْجُوْهَا
فَقُلْ لَّهُمْ قَوْلًا مَّيْسُوْرًا ﴿٢٨﴾ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ يَدَكَ مَغْلُوْلَةً اِلٰى عُنُقِكَ وَلَا
تَبْسُطْهَا كُلَّ الْبَسْطِ فَتَقْعُدَ مَلُوْمًا مَّحْسُوْرًا ﴿٢٩﴾ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ
يَّشَآءُ وَيَقْدِرُ ؕ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ بِعِبَادِهٖ خَبِيْرًا بَصِيْرًا ﴿٣٠﴾ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوْٓا اَوْلَادَكُمْ خَشْيَةَ
اِمْلَاقٍ ؕ نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُهُمْ وَاِيَّاكُمْ ؕ اِنَّ قَتْلَهُمْ كَانَ خِطْاً كَبِيْرًا ﴿٣١﴾ وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا
الزِّنٰٓى اِنَّهٗ كَانَ فَاحِشَةً ؕ وَسَآءَ سَبِيْلًا ﴿٣٢﴾ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِيْ حَرَّمَ اللّٰهُ
اِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ ؕ وَمَنْ قُتِلَ مَظْلُوْمًا فَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا لِوَلِيِّهٖ سُلْطٰنًا فَلَا يُسْرِفْ
فِّي الْقَتْلِ ؕ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ مَنْصُوْرًا ﴿٣٣﴾ وَلَا تَقْرَبُوْا مَالَ الْيَتِيْمِ اِلَّا بِالَّتِيْ هِيَ
اَحْسَنُ حَتّٰى يَبْلُغَ اَشُدَّهٗ ۪ وَاَوْفُوْا بِالْعَهْدِ ۚ اِنَّ الْعَهْدَ كَانَ مَسْئُوْلًا ﴿٣٤﴾
وَاَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ اِذَا كِلْتُمْ وَزِنُوْا بِالْقِسْطَاسِ الْمُسْتَقِيْمِ ؕ ذٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَّ
اَحْسَنُ تَاْوِيْلًا ﴿٣٥﴾ وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهٖ عِلْمٌ ؕ اِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ
وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ اُولٰٓئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُوْلًا ﴿٣٦﴾ وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْاَرْضِ مَرَحًا ۚ
اِنَّكَ لَنْ تَخْرِقَ الْاَرْضَ وَلَنْ تَبْلُغَ الْجِبَالَ طُوْلًا ﴿٣٧﴾ كُلُّ ذٰلِكَ كَانَ
سَيِّئُهٗ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ مَكْرُوْهًا ﴿٣٨﴾ ذٰلِكَ مِمَّآ اَوْحٰٓى اِلَيْكَ رَبُّكَ مِنَ الْحِكْمَةِ ؕ
وَلَا تَجْعَلْ مَعَ اللّٰهِ اِلٰهًا اٰخَرَ فَتُلْقٰى فِيْ جَهَنَّمَ مَلُوْمًا مَّدْحُوْرًا ﴿٣٩﴾
اَفَاَصْفٰىكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ بِالْبَنِيْنَ وَاتَّخَذَ مِنَ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اِنَاثًا ؕ اِنَّكُمْ لَتَقُوْلُوْنَ

Your Lord best knows what is in your minds. If you live righteously, He surely forgives and turns towards all such people as are penitent and obedient.[27] 25-27

3. Fulfil your obligations towards your relatives and the indigent and the wayfarer.

4. Do not be a spendthrift because the spendthrifts are the brethren of Satan and Satan has been ungrateful to his Lord.

5. If you have to put them (the needy persons) off because you are still waiting for Allah's favour that you are expecting, put them off with tenderness.[28] 28

6. Do not tie your hand to your neck nor stretch without any restraint lest you should become blameworthy and left destitute.[29] Your Lord provides plentifully to whom He wills and withholds His provisions from anyone He pleases, for He is fully aware of the condition of His servants and observes them closely.[30] 29-30

7. Do not kill your offsprings for fear of want: for it is We Who provide them and you as well. Indeed their killing is a heinous crime.[31] 31

8. Do not even go near fornication for it is a very indecent thing and a very evil way.[32] 32

9. Do not kill any soul whose killing has been forbidden by Allah[33] except by right[34]: and if one is killed unjustly We have granted the right of retribution to his guardian.[35] So he should not transgress the limits in retaliation,[36] for he shall be helped.[37] 33

10. Do not go near the property of an orphan except in the best manner until he reaches the age of maturity.[38] 34-35

11. Keep your pledges, for you shall be accountable for your pledges.[39]

12. Give full measure when you measure and weigh with even scales[40] when you weigh. This is the best way and will prove to be the best in the end.[41]

13. Do not follow that of which you have no knowledge for you shall be questioned for (the use) of your eyes, ears and minds.[42] 36

37 14. Do not strut about in the land for you can neither cleave the earth nor attain the height of the mountains.[43]

38-40 The evil aspect of each of these Commandments is odious in the sight of your Lord.[44] These are the things of wisdom which your Lord has revealed to you.

And behold! do not associate any other deity with Allah lest you should be cast into Hell reproached and deprived of every good[45]— What! has your Lord favoured you with sons and adopted angels as daughters for Himself?[46] Indeed it is a big lie that you are uttering.

Contd. from p.607]

25. In the succeeding verses, those main basic principles have been put forward on which Islam desires to build the whole structure of human life. These form, so to say, the Manifesto of the Invitation of the Holy Prophet declared by him at the end of the Makki stage of his mission, on the eve of the new stage at Al-Madinah so that it should be known to all that the new Islamic Society and State were going to be built on such and such ideological, moral, cultural economic and legal principles. (Please also refer to vv. 151-153 and E.N.'s thereof of Chapter VI).

26. This commandment is very comprehensive. It prohibits not only the worship of anyone except Allah but also implies that one should obey and serve and submit to Allah alone without question: one should accept His Commandments and Law alone to be worthy of obedience and His authority to be supreme above all. This was not merely an instruction confined to a religious creed and individual practice but it served as the foundation of the moral, cultural, and political system which was practically established in Al-Madinah by the Holy Prophet. Its first and foremost principle was that Allah alone is the Master, Sovereign and Law-giver.

27. This verse enjoins that after Allah's right, the greatest of all the human rights is the right of parents: therefore, the children should obey and serve and respect their parents. The collective morality of society should make it incumbent on children to be grateful and respectful to their parents, they should serve them as they nursed and brought them up in their childhood. Above all, this verse is not merely a moral recommendation but is the basis of the rights and powers of parents the details of which we find in the Books of *Hadith* and *Fiqh*. Moreover, respectful behaviour and obedience to and observance of the rights of parents comprise the most important element of the material education and moral training in the Islamic Society and civilization. Incidentally, all these things have determined for ever the principle that the Islamic State shall make the family life

sound and secure by laws, administrative regulations and educational policy and prevent its disintegration.

28. These three articles (3-5) are meant to impress that a man should not reserve his earnings and his wealth exclusively for his own person. He should do his utmost to fulfil his own necessities of life in a moderate way and render the rights of his relatives, neighbours and other needy persons as well. This attitude will help create the spirit of cooperation, sympathy and justice in the collective Islamic life. Thus every relative will cooperate with the other and every well-to-do person will help the needy in his neighbourhood and a wayfarer would find himself an honourable guest among generous hosts. The conception of rights should be so extensive that every person should consider that all other human beings have rights on his person and his property so that he should serve them with the idea that he is rendering their rights and is not doing any favour to them. In that case one would beg pardon of the other if one was unable to serve him and would pray to God to send his blessings upon him to enable him to serve His servants.

These articles of the Islamic Manifesto were not merely confined to moral teachings but these formed the basis of the Commandments of *Zakāt* and voluntary charity. The laws of inheritance and of making will and endowments were based on these articles. The rights of the orphans were determined by these and it was made obligatory on every habitation to entertain a wayfarer gratis for at least three days. Subsequently the whole moral system was formed so as to create the feelings of generosity, sympathy and cooperation. So much so that the people began to realize the importance of and observe voluntarily the moral rights which could neither be demanded legally nor enforced by law.

29. "Do not tie your hand to your neck" is the literal translation of the Text which means: "Do not be parsimonious" ; "nor stretch it without any restraint" means, "Do not be extravagant". If verses 27 and 29 are read together, it becomes obvious that the Qur'ān desires the people to follow the golden mean, i.e., they should neither be so parsimonious as to prevent the circulation of wealth nor so extravagant as to destroy their own economy. On the contrary, they should learn to behave in a balanced manner so that they should spend money wherever it should be spent and refrain from becoming spendthrifts so as to involve themselves into trouble. As a matter of fact, it is ingratitude towards Allah's favour to spend money for the sake of show, luxury and sinful acts and similar things which are neither man's real necessities nor useful. Therefore, those people who spend money lavishly on such things as these are the brethren of Satan.

These clauses too, are not merely meant to be moral instructions for individuals. They are intended to safeguard the Islamic Society against

extravagance by moral instruction, collective pressure and legal restrictions. Accordingly, in the Islamic State of Al-Madinah practical steps were taken to safeguard the community against extravagance. First, many forms of extravagance and luxury were forbidden by law. Secondly, legal measures were taken against it. Thirdly, social reforms were introduced to put an end to those customs which involved extravagance. The Government was empowered to prevent people from the obvious forms of extravagance. Above all, *Zakāt* and voluntary charity helped to break parsimony and the lust of hoarding money. Besides these measures, a public opinion was created that enabled the people to discriminate between generosity and extravagance and thrift and parsimony: so much so that parsimonious people were looked down upon as ignominious and the thrifty people were regarded as honourable. This moral and mental attitude became a part and parcel of the Muslim society, and even today the parsimonious people and hoarders are looked down upon in the Muslim society, while the generous people are respected everywhere.

30. That is, "Man cannot realize the wisdom of the disparity of wealth among the people": therefore, man should not try to interfere by artificial means with the natural distribution of wealth. It is wrong to level down natural inequality or to aggravate it by artificial means so as to make it unjust. Both the extremes are wrong. The best economic system is that which is established on the Divine Way of the division of wealth.

As a result of the realization of the wisdom of economic disparity, no such problems arose which might have made that disparity an evil in itself so as to demand the creation of a classless society. On the contrary, in the righteous society established at Al-Madinah on these Divine principles which are akin to human nature, the economic differences were not artificially disturbed. But by means of moral and legal reforms these became the means of many moral, spiritual and cultural blessings and benefits instead of becoming the means of injustice. Thus, the wisdom of the disparity created by the Creator of the Universe was practically demonstrated at Al-Madinah.

31. This verse cuts at the very root of the movement of birth control, which has been going on from ancient times to our present age. It was the fear of want that induced people to kill their children or resort to abortion. In our age another plan has been added to these, i.e., contraception. This article of the Islamic Manifesto prohibits the people from reducing the number of mouths by artificial means but exhorts them to increase the means of production according to the natural methods enjoined by .Allah. According to this article, it is one of the biggest mistakes of man to check birth rate as a solution to the want and scarcity of provisions: therefore, it warns him, as if to say, "O man, it is not you who make arrangement for food, but Allah, Who settled you in the land and has been

providing for you and will provide for those who will come after you". History tells us that the food resources have always expanded in proportion to the number of inhabitants of a country; nay, often they have exceeded far more than the needs of the inhabitants. Thus it is a folly on the part of man to interfere with the arrangements of Allah.

It is very significant that as a result of this teaching no movement has ever been started to control birth nor has there been any inclination to infanticide among the Muslims ever since the revelation of the Qur'ān.

32. "Do not even go near fornication." This commandment is meant both for individuals and society as a whole. It warns each individual not only to guard against adultery or fornication itself but against all those things that lead to or stimulate it. As regards society as a whole the commandment enjoins it to make such arrangements as prevent adultery and eradicate the means and stimulants that lead to adultery. Therefore, the society should employ all those legal and educative means that help develop such an environment as prevents and eradicates indecency.

Finally, this article formed the basis of laws and regulations of the Islamic system of life. In order to fulfil its implications adultery and false accusation of adultery were made criminal offences: regulations about "Purdah" were promulgated: the publication of indecent things was banned and drinking of intoxicants was made unlawful: restrictions on music, dancing and pictures which are conducive to adultery were imposed. Then such laws were enacted as made marriage easy; and cut at the root of adultery.

33. "Do not kill any soul" includes not only the prohibition of the killing of other souls but also one's own soul as well for it is also included in the prohibition that immediately follows this command. Thus suicide is regarded as heinous a sin as murder. Some foolish people object to the prohibition of suicide saying that they themselves are the masters of their souls. Therefore, there is nothing wrong in killing one's own self or in destroying one's own property. They forget that every soul belongs to Allah, and none has any right to destroy it, nay, even to abuse it, for this world is a place of trial, where we should undergo the test up to the end of our lives in accordance with the will of Allah. It does not matter whether our circumstances are favourable or adverse for trial. Therefore, it would be wrong to run away from the place of test, not to speak of committing such a heinous crime as suicide (which Allah has prohibited) to escape it, for it means that the one who commits suicide tries to run away from small troubles and ignominies towards greater affliction and eternal torment and ignominy.

[Contd. on p. 616

قَوْلًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٤٦﴾ وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا فِي هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنِ لِيَذَّكَّرُوْا ؕ وَمَا يَزِيْدُهُمْ
اِلَّا نُفُوْرًا ﴿٤١﴾ قُلْ لَّوْ كَانَ مَعَهٗۤ اٰلِهَةٌ كَمَا يَقُوْلُوْنَ اِذًا لَّابْتَغَوْا اِلٰى ذِي
الْعَرْشِ سَبِيْلًا ﴿٤٢﴾ سُبْحٰنَهٗ وَتَعٰلٰى عَمَّا يَقُوْلُوْنَ عُلُوًّا كَبِيْرًا ﴿٤٣﴾ تُسَبِّحُ
لَهُ السَّمٰوٰتُ السَّبْعُ وَالْاَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيْهِنَّ ؕ وَاِنْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ اِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ
بِحَمْدِهٖ وَلٰكِنْ لَّا تَفْقَهُوْنَ تَسْبِيْحَهُمْ ؕ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ حَلِيْمًا غَفُوْرًا ﴿٤٤﴾ وَاِذَا قَرَاْتَ
الْقُرْاٰنَ جَعَلْنَا بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَ الَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْاٰخِرَةِ حِجَابًا مَّسْتُوْرًا ﴿٤٥﴾ وَ
جَعَلْنَا عَلٰى قُلُوْبِهِمْ اَكِنَّةً اَنْ يَّفْقَهُوْهُ وَفِيْۤ اٰذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا ؕ وَاِذَا ذَكَرْتَ رَبَّكَ
فِي الْقُرْاٰنِ وَحْدَهٗ وَلَّوْا عَلٰۤى اَدْبَارِهِمْ نُفُوْرًا ﴿٤٦﴾ نَحْنُ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَسْتَمِعُوْنَ بِهٖۤ
اِذْ يَسْتَمِعُوْنَ اِلَيْكَ وَاِذْ هُمْ نَجْوٰۤى اِذْ يَقُوْلُ الظّٰلِمُوْنَ اِنْ تَتَّبِعُوْنَ اِلَّا رَجُلًا
مَّسْحُوْرًا ﴿٤٧﴾ اُنْظُرْ كَيْفَ ضَرَبُوْا لَكَ الْاَمْثَالَ فَضَلُّوْا فَلَا يَسْتَطِيْعُوْنَ سَبِيْلًا ﴿٤٨﴾ وَ
قَالُوْۤا ءَاِذَا كُنَّا عِظَامًا وَّرُفَاتًا ءَاِنَّا لَمَبْعُوْثُوْنَ خَلْقًا جَدِيْدًا ﴿٤٩﴾ قُلْ كُوْنُوْا
حِجَارَةً اَوْ حَدِيْدًا ﴿٥٠﴾ اَوْ خَلْقًا مِّمَّا يَكْبُرُ فِيْ صُدُوْرِكُمْ ؕ فَسَيَقُوْلُوْنَ مَنْ يُّعِيْدُنَا ؕ
قُلِ الَّذِيْ فَطَرَكُمْ اَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ ؕ فَسَيُنْغِضُوْنَ اِلَيْكَ رُءُوْسَهُمْ وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ مَتٰى
هُوَ ؕ قُلْ عَسٰۤى اَنْ يَّكُوْنَ قَرِيْبًا ﴿٥١﴾ يَوْمَ يَدْعُوْكُمْ فَتَسْتَجِيْبُوْنَ بِحَمْدِهٖ وَ
تَظُنُّوْنَ اِنْ لَّبِثْتُمْ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا ﴿٥٢﴾ وَقُلْ لِّعِبَادِيْ يَقُوْلُوا الَّتِيْ هِيَ اَحْسَنُ ؕ
اِنَّ الشَّيْطٰنَ يَنْزَغُ بَيْنَهُمْ ؕ اِنَّ الشَّيْطٰنَ كَانَ لِلْاِنْسَانِ عَدُوًّا مُّبِيْنًا ﴿٥٣﴾ رَبُّكُمْ
اَعْلَمُ بِكُمْ ؕ اِنْ يَّشَاْ يَرْحَمْكُمْ اَوْ اِنْ يَّشَاْ يُعَذِّبْكُمْ ؕ وَمَاۤ اَرْسَلْنٰكَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَكِيْلًا ﴿٥٤﴾
وَرَبُّكَ اَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ وَلَقَدْ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَ النَّبِيّٖنَ
عَلٰى بَعْضٍ وَّاٰتَيْنَا دَاوٗدَ زَبُوْرًا ﴿٥٥﴾ قُلِ ادْعُوا الَّذِيْنَ زَعَمْتُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِهٖ فَلَا

We have admonished the people in different ways in the Qur'ān so that they may take warning, yet they are running further and further away from the Truth. O Muhammad, tell them that if there had been other deities beside Allah, as they assert, they would surely have tried to find a way to (dethrone) the Master of the Throne.[47] He is free from and far above the things they say about Him. The seven heavens and the Earth and all the things therein[48] are chanting hymns of His glory[49] along with His praise but you do not understand their hymns. The fact is that He is very Forbearing and Forgiving.[50] 41-44

When you recite the Qur'ān, we place an invisible curtain between you and those who do not believe in the Hereafter and we cover their hearts with a covering so that they understand nothing and we make their ears hard of hearing.[51] And when in the Qur'ān you mention your one Lord only, they turn their faces away in aversion.[52] We know best what they really wish to hear, when they listen to you, and also what they say, when they sit together in secret conversation. These wrongdoers say to one another, "The man you are following is really bewitched"[53]—Behold! what epithets they apply to you! They have gone astray, so they cannot find the Right Way.[54] 45-48

They say, "What ! shall we really be raised up again into a new creation, when we are reduced to bones and dust?" Say to them, ("yes, most certainly you shall be brought back to life,) even if you be stone or iron or even something harder than this which you consider in your minds impossible to be brought to life." At this they will ask, "Who is he who will bring us back to life?" Say to them, "The same Being Who brought you to life in the first instance." Then they will shake their heads at you and ask,[55] "Well, when will this happen?" Say, "That time may be near at hand. On the Day when He will call you, you will rise up in response to it, praising Him, and you will think, "We have remained in this state only for a little while."[56] 49-52

And O Muhammad!, say to My servants,[57] "They should utter only that which is the best of all.[58] In reality, it is Satan who tries to sow discord between human beings. The fact is that Satan is the avowed enemy of man.[59] Your Lord is fully aware of everything concerning you. If He will, He may show mercy to you, and if He will, He may 53-54

give you severe chastisement."[60] And, O Prophet, We have not sent you to be the guardian over people[61];

55 Your Lord is fully aware of all the creatures in the heavens and the earth. We have exalted some Prophets above the others in ranks,[62] and We gave the Psalms to David.[63]

Contd. from p.613]

34. When the Islamic State was established, "killing by right" was confined to five cases only: To punish (1) a wilful murderer for retribution, (2) opponents of the true religion during war, (3) those who attempt to overthrow the Islamic system of government, (4) a man or woman guilty of adultery and (5) an apostate.

35. We have translated the Arabic word *"sultān"* into "the right of retribution". Here it stands for "a ground for legal action". This also lays down the legal principle that in a case of murder, the real plaintiff is not the government but the guardian or the guardians of the murdered person who are authorized to pardon the murderer or receive blood-money instead of taking his life.

36. Transgression in killing would be to kill more persons than the murderer or to kill the criminal by degrees with torment or to disfigure his dead body or to kill him after receiving blood-money, etc., etc. All these things have been forbidden.

37. It has not been defined how succour will be given because at the time of its revelation the Islamic State had not yet been established. After its establishment it was made clear that a guardian was not authorised to enforce retribution by murdering the criminal. The Islamic Government alone is legally authorized to take retribution; therefore, succour for justice should be demanded only from it.

38. This too, was not merely a moral instruction. When the Islamic State was established, legal and administrative methods were adopted to safeguard the rights of orphans, the details of which are found in the literature of *Hadith* and *Fiqh*. Then this principle was extended to cover the cases of all those citizens who were unable to safeguard their own rights. The Holy Prophet himself declared, "I am the guardian of the one who has no guardian". And this is the basis of many rules and regulations of the Islamic Law.

39. "Fulfilment of pledges" was not meant to be merely a moral instruction for individuals but afterwards when the Islamic State was established, this became the guiding principle for the conduct of all internal; and external affairs by the Muslim Community and the Islamic Government.

40. This instruction was not confined to individuals only but it has been made a part of the duties of an Islamic Government to supervise transactions in the markets and streets to see that exact measures and weights are being observed, and prevent their breach and violation by the force of law. Afterwards it was made one of the duties of the government to eradicate dishonesty in all commercial dealings and economic transactions.

41. That is, "Its end will be best in this world and it will be best in the Hereafter." It is best in this world because it produces mutual rust between sellers and buyers. As a result of this, commerce prospers and there is a general prosperity. As regards the Hereafter, there the end depends wholly on honesty, piety and fear of God.

42 The meanings of "Do not follow that of which you have no knowledge" are very comprehensive. It demands that both in individual and collective life, one should not follow mere guess work and presumption instead of "knowledge". This instruction covers all aspects of Islamic life, moral, legal, political, administrative and applies to science, arts and education. It has thus saved the society from numerous evils which are produced in human life by following guesswork instead of knowledge. The Islamic moral code demands: Guard against suspicion and do not accuse any individual or group without proper investigation. In law, it has been made a permanent principle that no action should be taken against anyone without proper investigation. It has been made unlawful to arrest, beat or imprison anyone on mere suspicion during investigation. In regard to foreign relations, the definite policy has been laid down that no action should be taken without investigation, nor should rumours be set afloat. Likewise in education the so-called sciences based on mere guess-work, presumptions and irrational theories have been disapproved. Above all, it cuts at the very root of superstitions, for this instruction teaches the Believers to accept only that which is based on the knowledge imparted by Allah and His Messenger.

43. This instruction warns against the ways of tyrants and vain people and is not merely meant for the individual but also for the collective conduct of the Muslim Community. It was because of this guidance that the rulers, governors and commanders of the Islamic State which was established on the basis of this Manifesto, were free from every tinge of tyranny, arrogance, haughtiness, pride and vanity, so much so that even in the battlefield they never uttered a word which had the slightest indication of any of these vain things. Their gait, dress, dwelling and conveyance showed humility. In short, their ways of conduct were not those of "big ones" but those of humble persons. That is why they never tried to overawe the people of a conquered city by show of pomp and pride.

44. That is, "Allah disapproves of the commission of anything that has been prohibited" or, in other words, "He disapproves of disobedience to any of these Commadments."

45. Though this has been addressed to the Holy Prophet, the real addressee is every human being as in the case of many such verses.

46. Please refer to verses 57-59 and their E.N's.

47. That is, "They would have themselves tried their best to become masters of the Throne". This is because if there had been more than one partners in Godhead, it would produce one of the two results: (1) If they were all independent gods, it was not conceivable that they would agree and co-operate with one another in the management of the boundless universe and there could never have been unanimity, uniformity and balanced proportion in its functioning. There would have been conflict at every step and everyone would have tried to dominate others in order to become its sole master. or (2) if one of them had been the supreme god and the others his obedient servants whom he had delegated some of his powers, then, according to the maxim "power corrupts", they would never have been content with remaining obedient servants of the supreme god and would have conspired to become the supreme god themselves.

Whereas the fact is that in this universe not even a grain of wheat or a blade of grass can grow unless and until everything in the earth and the heavens cooperate with one another for its production. Therefore, only an utterly ignorant and blockheaded person can conceive that there are more than one independent or semi-independent rulers, who carry on the management of this universe. Anyone who has tried to understand the nature and functioning of the universe will most surely arrive at the conclusion that there is One and only One Sovereign ruling over this universe, and there is absolutely no likelihood of any one else to be a co-partner in this at any stage.

48. That is, "The whole of the universe and everything in it bear witness to the fact that their Creator and Guardian is free from each and every fault, defect and weakness, and that He is far above this that there should be any partner or associate in His Godhead."

49. Everything is not only singing hymns of the glory of its Creator but is affording the proof that He is perfect in every respect and worthy of all praise. Everything is an embodiment of the proof that its Creator and Administrator is the one in whom there is perfection of every quality. Therefore, He alone is worthy of praise.

50. That is, "It is due to His forbearance and forgiveness that though you are persistently insolent to Him and go on inventing one false thing or the other

against Him, He forbears and forgives you,. He neither withholds provisions from you nor deprives you of His favours nor strikes an insolent person instantly dead with a thunderbolt. Above all, He is so forbearing and forgiving that He gives long enough respite to the individuals and communities to mend their ways, sends His prophets and reformers for their admonition and guidance and forgives all the past mistakes and errors, if one sincerely repents and adopts the Right way.

51.This refers to the Divine law according to which those people, who do not believe in the Hereafter, cannot benefit from the Qur'ān. Allah has attributed this law to Himself, as if to say, "The natural result of disbelief in the Hereafter is that the heart of such a man becomes dull and his ears become deaf to the Message of the Qur'ān, for Qur'ān bases its invitation on the belief in the Hereafter. So it warns the people that they should not be deluded by this apparent aspect of the worldly life if there appears to be none to call them to account here; for it does not mean they are not at all accountable and answerable to anyone. Likewise if Allah allows freedom of belief to practise *shirk*, atheism, disbelief or *Tauhid* with impunity in this world, and their practice does not appear to make any practical difference in this world, it does not mean that these things do not produce any results at all. For, in fact, everyone shall be accountable and answerable but after death in the Next World. Then every one will realize that the doctrine of Tauhid alone is true and all other doctrines are false. For, if at present the consequences of deeds do not appear after death they shall inevitably appear, but now the Reality has been hidden behind an invisible curtain. There is an inevitable moral law according to which submission to it will bear its fruit and disobedience shall incur its losses. As decisions according to this moral law will be made in the Hereafter, you should not be enticed by the charms of this transitory life. You should, therefore, keep in view that ultimately you shall have to render an account of all your deeds in this world before your Lord, and adopt that true creed and moral attitude which may be conducive to your success in the Hereafter".

From this it must have become obvious that if a man does not believe in the Hereafter, he will never consider the message of the Qur'ān worth his while but will hanker after this world and its joys which he can feel and experience. Naturally his ears will not listen to the Message and it will never reach the depths of his heart. Allah has stated this psychological fact in this verse.

In this connection, it should be remembered that the words contained in this verse were uttered by the disbelievers of Makkah as quoted in verse 5 of Sūrah 41: "They say, O Muhammad, a covering has fallen over our hearts, and our ears are deaf for the Message you give and there is a curtain between you and us. You may go on with your work and we will do whatever we desire." Here the same words have been cited, as if to say, "You consider this state of yours to be a

virtue, whereas this is a curse which has fallen on you according to the Divine Law because of your disbelief of the Hereafter."

52. That is, "They do not like it at all that you should consider Allah alone as your Lord and not mention the Lords they have set up." They seem to think it strange that one should go on praising Allah and never mention the "miracles" of their elders and saints nor praise them for their favours. For, according to them, Allah has delegated the powers of His Godhead to their great ones. Therefore, they say, "What a strange fellow he is! He believes that the knowledge of the unknown, and all the power and authority belong to One Allah alone. Why does he not pay tribute to those who give us children, cure us of diseases and help make our commerce flourish, in short, fulfil all our wishes and desires?"

53. This refers to those devices which they conspired against the Message of the Holy Prophet. They would secretly listen to him, and then hold consultations in order to counteract this. Sometimes it so happened that they suspected that someone had been influenced by the Qur'ān. Then they would sit together and try to dissuade him, saying, "How is it that you have been influenced by a person who himself is bewitched by some enemy and talks like this?"

54. This is to say that they expressed different opinions at different times which contradicted each other. Sometimes they said, "You are a sorcerer" and at other times, "You have been bewitched by someone, or you are a poet or you are possessed of some evil spirit." These contradictory things were a proof that they did not know the reality. Otherwise, they would not have invented a different name to suit each occasion. This also shows that they themselves were not sure of the 'charge' they levelled against him. If they called him by one epithet one day, they themselves felt afterwards that it did not fit in. Then they would invent the second epithet and then the third and so on. Thus every new epithet contradicted the previous ones and showed that there was no truth in them, but in their enmity they were inventing one falsehood after the other.

55. "They will shake their heads at you" in astonishment or to express doubt or disapproval or to scoff at you.

56. That is; "You will feel as if the intervening period between death and coming again to life on the Day of Resurrection was only a few hours or so, for you will think that you had just woken up after a short sleep by the sudden noise produced on the Day."

As regards ".....you will rise up praising Him," it is a subtle hint towards a great reality: at the time of rising up from death both the believer and the unbeliever will be uttering the praise of Allah. The believer will do so because

in the worldly life also he believed in this creed and practised it. As regards the unbeliever, he will have the urge to do so because of the inherent and ingrained tendency in him which he had been suppressing by his folly. In the new life all those deliberate suppressions will vanish away and he will involuntarily utter the praise of Allah.

57. "The believers."

58. The believers have been enjoined to say only the best things even in their discussion with the disbelievers and other opponents of their Faith. They should neither use harsh words nor make exaggerated statements. They should be cool in their conversation and say only what is true and dignified inspite of the provoking behaviour of the opponents.

59. The believers have been forewarned to guard against the provocations of Satan, as if to say, "While answering your opponents, if you feel that you are being aroused to anger, you should at once understand that it is Satan who is exciting you in order to do harm to your dispute, in which he wants to engage human beings for sowing discord between them."

60. This is to warn the believers to refrain from making claims of piety so as to assign Paradise to themselves and Hell to their opponents. It is Allah alone Who has the power to decide these things because He is fully aware of the known and secret and the present and future things about all human beings. It is He Who will decide whether to show mercy to anyone or give chastisement. However, a man may say in the light of the Divine Book that a certain kind of human beings deserve mercy and another kind of people incur chastisement but none has any right to say specifically that a particular man will be given chastisement and another will get salvation.

61. This is to declare that a Prophet is sent to convey the Message and not to decide whether a person will receive mercy or get chastisement. It does not, however, mean that, God forbid, the Holy Prophet himself did such a thing and Allah had to warn him. In fact, this is to warn the Muslims that when the Prophet himself is not in a position as to decide the fates of the people, they should never think of such a thing as to assign Paradise and Hell to anyone.

62. Though this has apparently been addressed to the Holy Prophet, in fact the real addressees are the disbelievers of Makkah. This is to rebuke them for the low opinion they held in regard to the Holy Prophet. As it commonly happens contemporaries, in general, and opponents, in particular, do not see anything great and noble in a person of their own time. The same was the case with the contemporaries of the Holy Prophet who could not see anything extraordinary or

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يَمْلِكُوْنَ كَشْفَ الضُّرِّ عَنْكُمْ وَلَا تَحْوِيْلًا ﴿٥٦﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ يَدْعُوْنَ يَبْتَغُوْنَ اِلٰى
رَبِّهِمُ الْوَسِيْلَةَ اَيُّهُمْ اَقْرَبُ وَيَرْجُوْنَ رَحْمَتَهٗ وَيَخَافُوْنَ عَذَابَهٗ ؕ اِنَّ عَذَابَ
رَبِّكَ كَانَ مَحْذُوْرًا ﴿٥٧﴾ وَاِنْ مِّنْ قَرْيَةٍ اِلَّا نَحْنُ مُهْلِكُوْهَا قَبْلَ يَوْمِ الْقِيٰمَةِ
اَوْ مُعَذِّبُوْهَا عَذَابًا شَدِيْدًا ؕ كَانَ ذٰلِكَ فِى الْكِتٰبِ مَسْطُوْرًا ﴿٥٨﴾ وَمَا مَنَعَنَآ اَنْ
نُّرْسِلَ بِالْاٰيٰتِ اِلَّآ اَنْ كَذَّبَ بِهَا الْاَوَّلُوْنَ ؕ وَاٰتَيْنَا ثَمُوْدَ النَّاقَةَ مُبْصِرَةً فَظَلَمُوْا
بِهَا ؕ وَمَا نُرْسِلُ بِالْاٰيٰتِ اِلَّا تَخْوِيْفًا ﴿٥٩﴾ وَاِذْ قُلْنَا لَكَ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ اَحَاطَ بِالنَّاسِ ؕ
وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الرُّءْيَا الَّتِىْٓ اَرَيْنٰكَ اِلَّا فِتْنَةً لِّلنَّاسِ وَالشَّجَرَةَ الْمَلْعُوْنَةَ فِى
الْقُرْاٰنِ ؕ وَنُخَوِّفُهُمْ ۙ فَمَا يَزِيْدُهُمْ اِلَّا طُغْيَانًا كَبِيْرًا ﴿٦٠﴾ وَاِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ
اسْجُدُوْا لِاٰدَمَ فَسَجَدُوْٓا اِلَّآ اِبْلِيْسَ ؕ قَالَ ءَاَسْجُدُ لِمَنْ خَلَقْتَ طِيْنًا ﴿٦١﴾ قَالَ
اَرَءَيْتَكَ هٰذَا الَّذِىْ كَرَّمْتَ عَلَىَّ ۖ لَئِنْ اَخَّرْتَنِ اِلٰى يَوْمِ الْقِيٰمَةِ لَاَحْتَنِكَنَّ
ذُرِّيَّتَهٗٓ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا ﴿٦٢﴾ قَالَ اذْهَبْ فَمَنْ تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ فَاِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ جَزَآؤُكُمْ
جَزَآءً مَّوْفُوْرًا ﴿٦٣﴾ وَاسْتَفْزِزْ مَنِ اسْتَطَعْتَ مِنْهُمْ بِصَوْتِكَ وَاَجْلِبْ عَلَيْهِمْ
بِخَيْلِكَ وَرَجِلِكَ وَشَارِكْهُمْ فِى الْاَمْوَالِ وَالْاَوْلَادِ وَعِدْهُمْ ؕ وَمَا يَعِدُهُمُ
الشَّيْطٰنُ اِلَّا غُرُوْرًا ﴿٦٤﴾ اِنَّ عِبَادِىْ لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطٰنٌ ؕ وَكَفٰى بِرَبِّكَ
وَكِيْلًا ﴿٦٥﴾ رَبُّكُمُ الَّذِىْ يُزْجِىْ لَكُمُ الْفُلْكَ فِى الْبَحْرِ لِتَبْتَغُوْا مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ ؕ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ
بِكُمْ رَحِيْمًا ﴿٦٦﴾ وَاِذَا مَسَّكُمُ الضُّرُّ فِى الْبَحْرِ ضَلَّ مَنْ تَدْعُوْنَ اِلَّآ اِيَّاهُ ۚ فَلَمَّا
نَجّٰىكُمْ اِلَى الْبَرِّ اَعْرَضْتُمْ ؕ وَكَانَ الْاِنْسَانُ كَفُوْرًا ﴿٦٧﴾ اَفَاَمِنْتُمْ اَنْ يَّخْسِفَ بِكُمْ
جَانِبَ الْبَرِّ اَوْ يُرْسِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ حَاصِبًا ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُوْا لَكُمْ وَكِيْلًا ﴿٦٨﴾ اَمْ اَمِنْتُمْ
اَنْ يُّعِيْدَكُمْ فِيْهِ تَارَةً اُخْرٰى فَيُرْسِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ قَاصِفًا مِّنَ الرِّيْحِ فَيُغْرِقَكُمْ

Say to them, "You may invoke for help those deities whom you consider to be (your helpers) beside Allah: They will not be able to relieve you of any trouble nor change it."[64] In fact those whom these people invoke for help themselves seek means of approach to their Lord and vie with one another to be nearer to Him and hope for His mercy and fear His chastisement.[65] The fact is that the chastisement of your Lord is a thing to be dreaded. 56-57

There is no habitation which We shall not destroy before the Day of Resurrection or punish with a severe chastisement.[66] This has been ordained in the Eternal Record. 58

And nothing has hindered Us from sending Signs[67] except that the former people refused to acknowledge them as such. (For example,) We sent the She-camel as an open Sign to Thamūd but they treated her with cruelty;[68] whereas We send Signs only by way of warning.[69] Call to mind, O Muhammad! We told you at the very beginning that your Lord is encircling these people.[70] And We made what We have shown you now[71] and also the Tree which has been cursed in the Qur'ān[72] as a trial for these people." We are giving them warning after warning but each warning helps only to increase their insurrection. 59-60

And remember: when We commanded the angels, "Bow yourselves before Adam," all bowed down but Iblis.[74] He replied, "Should I bow before the one whom you have created of clay?" Then he added, "Just consider this: Was he worthy of this that you have exalted him over me ? If you give me respite up to the Day of Resurrection, I will uproot the whole of his progeny;[75] there shall be only a few of them who will be able to save themselves from me." Allah replied, "Well, get away. Hell is your ample reward and the reward of those who follow you. You may try to allure with your invitation whomsoever you can.[76] Rally against them your horsemen and your footmen;[77] set a partner with them in their wealth and children[78] and entice them with your false promises And Star's promises are nothing but deception—. Indeed you will have no power over my servants."[80] And your Lord suffices for you as a guardian.[81] 61-65

Your (real) Lord is the One, Who drives your ship across the sea[82] so that you may seek His bounty.[83] The fact is that He is very 66-68

merciful towards you. When a misfortune befalls you on the sea, all of those whom you invoke for help fail you but He (is there to help you[K4]): yet when He brings you safe to land, you turn away from Him. Indeed man is very ungrateful. What, do you feel quite secure that sometimes Allah would not cause you to sink underground even on land, or send a deadly whirlwind charged with stones toward you, and you may not find anyone to protect you from it ?

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great in him. He appeared to be merely a common man of their habitation. On the other hand, they were full of praise in regard to the famous personalities who had lived in the past few centuries and imagined them to be the perfection of greatness. That is why, they raised frivolous objections against his claim to Prophethood, as if to say, "Look at this man who considers himself to be a Prophet whereas he cannot stand in comparison with the former great Prophets who are held in high esteem by all." Allah has answered their objection, as if to say, "We are fully aware of all Our creatures in the heavens and the earth, and We know their ranks but you do not know. We know whom to favour with Prophethood, as We have been favouring the former Prophets and exalting some Prophets above others in rank."

63. It appears that Prophet David has been particularly mentioned to show that Prophethood does not mean that one should have nothing to do with the life of this world. This was the answer to the objection they were raising against the claim to Prophethood by Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him), that he was a man of the world. It means to say, "Though David was a king who had to engage himself in worldly affairs more than a common man, he was favoured by Allah with Prophethood, and given the Book, the Psalms. Likewise Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) could be favoured with Prophethood inspite of the fact that he had wife and children and passed his life like other common people and was engaged in buying and selling in the market, in short, in performing all those duties that a man of the world has to perform to meet his necessities of life. This was necessitated because according to the disbelievers of Makkah, such a man of the world could not be considered to be even a pious man, much less a Prophet, for pious people should have nothing to do with the worldly affairs but should sit in seclusion and remember God whereas the Holy Prophet had to work to fulfil the necessities of life.

64. This warning helps to elaborate the Doctrine of *Tauhid* and negate *shirk*. According to this, *shirk* is not confined merely to falling prostrate before any other than Allah but it is also *shirk* to pray to or invoke the help of any other

than Allah; for praying to or calling for help any other than Allah is in reality a kind of worship. Therefore, the one who invokes for help any other than Allah is as much guilty of *shirk* as the worshipper of an idol. This verse also shows clearly that none other than Allah has any power to attend to prayers and relieve any one of trouble or alter any one's bad condition. Hence, if one believes that some one other than Allah has any power, he shall be guilty of *shirk*.

65. The words of the text are a clear proof that the deities and the helpers referred to in this verse were not idols of stone but were either angels or dead saints. It is clearly implied in this that no prophet, no saint and no angel, whom the people invoke for help, has the power to hear prayers and help anyone. They themselves hope for mercy from Allah and dread His punishment and vie with one another in seeking means for nearness to Him.

66. This is to remove the delusion of the disbelievers that their habitations were immune from danger or chastisement. This verse warns that every habitation will be destroyed as a matter of course or by Allah's chastisement.

67. Here "Signs" mean those visible miracles which are presented as a proof of Prophethood. The disbelievers from among the Quraish were demanding such Signs over and over again.

68. This is to warn the disbelievers, as if to say, "It is the mercy of Allah that He is not showing such a Sign so that you might mend your ways but in your folly you presume that such a Sign cannot be presented. You should know that a Sign is not being sent because its denial inevitably brings chastisement and the community is annihilated. You can learn from the past History that those communities which disbelieved in the open Signs were utterly destroyed, such as the people of Thamūd.

69. That is, "Miracles are not shown for fun. These are meant to warn the people that the Prophet is being helped by the Almighty and that they should realize the terrible consequences of disobedience."

70. That is, "At the very beginning of your Prophethood, when the disbelievers of the Quraish had started opposition to your message, We declared that We are encircling them. They might try their worst to obstruct your Message, but they will inevitably fail in this and your Mission will succeed in the teeth of opposition. Can't they see that this declaration has come out true as a miracle, for their opposition has failed to hinder your Message, and they have not been able to do any harm to you at all ? This was a clear Sign of the fact that the Mission of the Holy Prophet was being supported by the Almighty God."

As regards the declaration that Allah is encircling the disbelievers and

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بِمَا كَفَرْتُمْ ۚ ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُوْا لَكُمْ عَلَيْنَا بِهٖ تَبِيْعًا ﴿٦٩﴾ وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِيْٓ اٰدَمَ وَ
حَمَلْنٰهُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَرَزَقْنٰهُمْ مِّنَ الطَّيِّبٰتِ وَفَضَّلْنٰهُمْ عَلٰى كَثِيْرٍ مِّمَّنْ
خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِيْلًا ﴿٧٠﴾ يَوْمَ نَدْعُوْا كُلَّ اُنَاسٍۢ بِاِمَامِهِمْ ۚ فَمَنْ اُوْتِيَ كِتٰبَهٗ بِيَمِيْنِهٖ
فَاُولٰٓئِكَ يَقْرَءُوْنَ كِتٰبَهُمْ وَلَا يُظْلَمُوْنَ فَتِيْلًا ﴿٧١﴾ وَمَنْ كَانَ فِيْ هٰذِهٖٓ اَعْمٰى
فَهُوَ فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ اَعْمٰى وَاَضَلُّ سَبِيْلًا ﴿٧٢﴾ وَاِنْ كَادُوْا لَيَفْتِنُوْنَكَ عَنِ الَّذِيْٓ
اَوْحَيْنَآ اِلَيْكَ لِتَفْتَرِيَ عَلَيْنَا غَيْرَهٗ ۖ وَاِذًا لَّاتَّخَذُوْكَ خَلِيْلًا ﴿٧٣﴾ وَلَوْلَآ اَنْ
ثَبَّتْنٰكَ لَقَدْ كِدْتَّ تَرْكَنُ اِلَيْهِمْ شَيْـًٔا قَلِيْلًا ﴿٧٤﴾ اِذًا لَّاَذَقْنٰكَ ضِعْفَ الْحَيٰوةِ وَ
ضِعْفَ الْمَمَاتِ ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُ لَكَ عَلَيْنَا نَصِيْرًا ﴿٧٥﴾ وَاِنْ كَادُوْا لَيَسْتَفِزُّوْنَكَ
مِنَ الْاَرْضِ لِيُخْرِجُوْكَ مِنْهَا وَاِذًا لَّا يَلْبَثُوْنَ خِلٰفَكَ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا ﴿٧٦﴾ سُنَّةَ مَنْ
قَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا قَبْلَكَ مِنْ رُّسُلِنَا وَلَا تَجِدُ لِسُنَّتِنَا تَحْوِيْلًا ﴿٧٧﴾ اَقِمِ الصَّلٰوةَ لِدُلُوْكِ
الشَّمْسِ اِلٰى غَسَقِ الَّيْلِ وَقُرْاٰنَ الْفَجْرِ ۭ اِنَّ قُرْاٰنَ الْفَجْرِ كَانَ مَشْهُوْدًا ﴿٧٨﴾ وَ
مِنَ الَّيْلِ فَتَهَجَّدْ بِهٖ نَافِلَةً لَّكَ ۖ عَسٰٓى اَنْ يَّبْعَثَكَ رَبُّكَ مَقَامًا مَّحْمُوْدًا ﴿٧٩﴾
وَقُلْ رَّبِّ اَدْخِلْنِيْ مُدْخَلَ صِدْقٍ وَّاَخْرِجْنِيْ مُخْرَجَ صِدْقٍ وَّاجْعَلْ
لِّيْ مِنْ لَّدُنْكَ سُلْطٰنًا نَّصِيْرًا ﴿٨٠﴾ وَقُلْ جَاۗءَ الْحَقُّ وَزَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ ۭ اِنَّ
الْبَاطِلَ كَانَ زَهُوْقًا ﴿٨١﴾ وَنُنَزِّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْاٰنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاۗءٌ وَّرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ۙ
وَلَا يَزِيْدُ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ اِلَّا خَسَارًا ﴿٨٢﴾ وَاِذَآ اَنْعَمْنَا عَلَى الْاِنْسَانِ اَعْرَضَ وَنَاٰ
بِجَانِبِهٖ ۚ وَاِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ كَانَ يَـُٔوْسًا ﴿٨٣﴾ قُلْ كُلٌّ يَّعْمَلُ عَلٰي شَاكِلَتِهٖ ۭ
فَرَبُّكُمْ اَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ هُوَ اَهْدٰى سَبِيْلًا ﴿٨٤﴾ وَيَسْـَٔلُوْنَكَ عَنِ الرُّوْحِ ۭ قُلِ الرُّوْحُ
مِنْ اَمْرِ رَبِّيْ وَمَآ اُوْتِيْتُمْ مِّنَ الْعِلْمِ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا ﴿٨٥﴾ وَلَىِٕنْ شِئْنَا لَنَذْهَبَنَّ

Or, are you not afraid that God may again send you to the sea 69-72
and smite you with a violent tempest and drown you for your ingratitude, and you may not find any one to question Us in regard to this end of yours?—— It is a favour that We have honoured the sons of Adam and blessed them with conveyances on land and sea and provided them with good and pure things and exalted them above many of Our other creatures.[85] Just imagine the scene on the Day, when We will summon every community with its leader: then those, who will be given their records in their right hands, will read their records[86] and will not be wronged in the least; on the other hand, the one, who leads his life in this world as if he were blind shall be blind in the Hereafter, nay, he shall fare even worse than a blind person in finding the way.

O Muhammad these people have left no stone unturned to tempt 73-75
you away from that which We have revealed to you so that you might fabricate something in Our name.[87] Had you done that, they would have made you their friend. It was just possible that you might have inclined a little towards them, if We had not given you strength. But if you had done so, We would have made you taste double chastisement in this world as well as in the Hereafter: then you would have found no helper against Us.[88]

And these people have persistently been trying to uproot you 76
from this land and exile you from it, but if they do so, they will not be able to stay here much longer.[89]

This has always been our Way with the Messengers whom We 77
sent before you,[90] and you will find no change in Our way.

Establish *Salāt*[91] from the declining of the sun[92] to the darkness 78-79
of the night,[93] and be particular about the recital of the Qur'ān[94] at the dawn of the morning, for the recital of the Qur'ān at the dawn is witnessed.[95] Besides this, offer *Tahajjud* Prayer[96] at night: this is an additional prayer for you.[97] That time is not far when your Lord may exalt you to a laudable position.[98]

And pray, "Lord, whereto Thou takest me, take me with truth, 80
and wherefrom Thou takest me out cause me to go out with truth;[99] and grant me a power from Thee to help me."[100]

And declare, "The Truth has come and falsehood has vanished: 81

for falsehood is a thing that must by its nature vanish."[101]

82-84 We are sending down to you through the revelation of the Qur'ān what is a healing and mercy to the Believers, though it adds nothing but loss to the workers of iniquity.[102] Man is a (strange) creature: when We bestow favour on him, he behaves arrogantly and turns his back, but when misfortune befalls him, he begins to despair. O Prophet, say to them, "Everyone is following his own way but your Lord alone knows best who is on the right way."

85 They ask you about "The Spirit."[103] Say, "This Spirit comes by the Command of my Lord, but you have been given only a little of the 'Knowledge'."

Contd. from p.625]

helping the mission of the Prophet, it occurs in several Sūrahs of the first stage of Prophethood at Makkah. For instance, in vv. 17-20 of LXXV, Allah says, "These disbelievers do not learn a lesson from the stories of the people of the Pharaoh and Thamūd but are rejecting the Message whereas Allah is encircling them on all sides."

71. This refers to *Mi'rāj* (Ascension) for here word *"ru'yā"* does not mean "seeing things in a dream" but seeing things actually with physical eyes. It is quite obvious that if it had been a mere "dream" and the Holy Prophet had presented it as a dream to the disbelievers, there was no reason why it should have become a trial for them. Everyday people see strange dreams and relate them to the people but these dreams never become such a curious thing as to make people scoff at the dreamer and accuse him of making a false claim or of being a mad person.

72. This cursed tree, *"Az-Zaqqūm"* which has been mentioned in vv 43-44 of Sūrah XLIV, grows at the bottom of Hell and its dwellers shall have to eat it. This has been called a cursed tree because it is not given to people to eat as a mercy from Allah but as a symbol of His curse so that the accursed people should eat it and get more sore, for this will, so to speak, burn in their bellies like the boiling water.

73. That is, "We showed you such things during the *Mi'rāj* so that they should have the first hand knowledge of the Reality from a truthful and honest man like you and be warned by it to the Right Way. They, however, began to make fun of you, though We had already warned them through you that their evil ways would force them to eat of the *Az-Zaqqūm*. Instead of this they began to scoff at you, saying, 'Just consider the logic of this man: on the one hand, he says

that there is an awful fire burning in Hell and, on the other, he says that trees are growing in it'."

74. Please also refer to II: 30-39, IV: 117-122, VII: 11-25, XIV: 22, XV: 26-43.

This story has been cited here to impress upon the disbelievers that their attitude of arrogance and indifference towards Allah is exactly the same as was adopted by Satan; As a matter of fact, they were following Satan who is the avowed enemy of man, and were being entangled in the snare spread by him who had challenged the progeny of Adam at the very beginning of human history that he would allure and ruin them.

75. That is, "I will uproot them from the high position of Divine Vicegerency which demands steadfastness in obedience. Their removal from that high position is just like the tearing of a tree from its roots."

76. The literal meaning of the Arabic Text is, "You may sweep away those whom you find superficial and weak-minded."

77. Here, Satan has been likened to that robber who assaults a habitation with horsemen and footmen, and orders one to rob this thing and the other to plunder that thing and so on—The horsemen and the footmen of Satan are those jinns and human beings who are engaged in numerous forms and positions in carrying out his mission.

78. This is a very meaningful sentence which depicts a true and perfect picture of the relationship between Satan and his followers. On the one hand, Satan becomes a partner with the one who follows him in the earning and spending of his money without putting in any labour in it; on the other, he does not become a partner in bearing the consequences of his error, crime and sin. But his foolish dupe follows his instructions as if he were a partner, nay, a stronger party. Again in regard to the children of such a man, the father himself bears the whole burden of bringing them up, but under the misguidance of Satan he trains them in wrong and immoral ways as if he alone was not their father but Satan as well was a partner in it.

79. Satan entices them with false promises of success and entangles them in the snare of false expectations.

80. It has two meanings: (1) "You will have no power over human beings to force them to follow your way. What you are allowed to do is that you may delude them by false counsel and entice them by false promises, but they will have the option to follow or not to follow your counsel. You will not have the power over them to force them to follow your way against their will." (2) "You will not

succeed in 'alluring My righteous people. Though the weak-minded will be enticed by you, My righteous people who are steadfast in My obedience will not succumb to you."

81. That is, "Those who will trust in Allah and believe in His guidance and help, will not stand in need of any other support in their trial by Satan for Allah will guide them, protect them and help them to be safe from his allurements. On the other hand, those people, who will place their trust in their own power or that of any other than Allah, will not come out successful in their trial by Satan."

82. This passage (vv. 66-72) is closely connected with the previous one. It tells man that if he wants to protect himself from the allurements, temptations and false promises of Satan who has been his avowed enemy from the day of his creation, he should recognize his real Lord and be steadfast in His obedience. Satan intends to prove that man is not worthy of the honour with which Allah has blessed him. Therefore if he follows any other way he cannot escape the snares of Satan.

In this passage, arguments of *Tauhid* have been put forward in order to make man steadfast in his Faith and refrain from *shirk*.

83. That is, "Try to avail of the economic, social, educational and intellectual benefits which are provided by the sea voyages."

84. That is, "This is a proof of the fact that your real nature knows no other Lord than Allah, and you feel in the depths of your hearts that He alone possesses the real power of every gain or loss. Had it not been so, man would never have invoked Allah at the time when he realized that no other helper could remove his misfortune."

85. That is, "It is an obvious fact that the superiority man enjoys over all other beings on the Earth and all that is in it, has not been bestowed upon him by a jinn or an angel or a prophet. Most surely that is Allah's blessing and favour. Is it not then the height of folly and ignorance that after having achieved such a high rank, man should bow down before any creature of Allah instead of Him?"

86. We learn from the Qur'ān that on the Day of Resurrection, the righteous people will be given their records in their right hands and they will be overjoyed to have a look at it and will show it to others. As regards the wicked people, they will get their records in their left hands and in their shame will try to hide it behind their backs. (Please refer to LXIX: 19-28, LXXXIV: 7-13).

87. In order to understand the significance of this verse, we should keep in view the circumstances through which the Holy Prophet had been passing at Makkah during the preceding decade or so. The disbelievers of Makkah were

exerting their utmost to turn the Holy Prophet away, somehow or other, from his Message of *Tauhid*, which he was presenting, and to force him to make a compromise with shirk and the customs of ignorance. In order to achieve this end, they tempted him in several ways. They practised deception upon him, and tempted him with greed, held out threats, and raised a storm of false propaganda against him, and persecuted him and applied economic pressure and social boycott against him. In short, they did all that could be done to defeat his resolve.

88. This review implies two things: (1) "If you had compromised with falsehood after recognizing the Truth, you might have pleased your degenerate people but would have incurred the wrath of Allah and would have received double chastisement both in this world and in the Hereafter." (2) "No man, not even a Messenger of Allah, can fight single-handed against the deceitful methods of falsehood, unless he receives the succour of Allah." It was the fortitude which Allah had bestowed upon the Holy Prophet, which helped him to remain steadfast on the right position he had taken, so that no persecution, howsoever great, could turn him away in the least from that position.

89. This was a clear prophecy which was made at the time when it appeared to be no more than a mere threat, but it was fulfilled literally in a decade or so. A year after the revelation of this Sūrah, the disbelievers of Makkah compelled the Holy Prophet to leave his home. Then within eight years he entered Makkah as a conqueror, and within two years after this, the whole of Arabia was totally freed from *mushriks*. Then whosoever stayed in that country, he remained there as a Muslim and not as a *mushrik*.

90. That is, "This is how Allah has always dealt with the people who killed or exiled His Messengers. They never survived in the land after this. They were either annihilated by the scourge of Allah or were brought under the sway of an enemy or were subdued by the followers of the Messenger."

91. The Muslims have been commanded to establish *Salāt* immediately after the mention of obstacles and adversities. This implies that the perseverance required to face adverse circumstances is obtained by the establishment of *Salāt*.

92. We have translated the words of the Arabic Text into "the declining of the sun." Though some of the Companions and their followers are of the opinion that it means "the sunset", the majority of them are of the opinion that it means "the declining of the sun from its zenith." Caliph 'Umar, Ibn 'Umar, Anas bin Mālik, Abu Barza-tal-Aslami, Hasan Basri, Sha'abi, Atā', Mujāhid and, according to a Tradition, Ibn 'Abbās (Allah be pleased with them all) are of this opinion and Imam Muhammad Bāqir and Imām Ja'afar Sādiq also are of the same opinion. Besides this, there are some Traditions from the Holy Prophet to the same effect, though they are not so authentic.

93. According to some, the original words of the Arabic text mean "complete darkness of the night", while others take it to mean "midnight" If the first opinion is accepted, it will imply the beginning of the time of the 'Ishā' Prayer and according to the other it will mean "the last limit of the time of "Ishā'."

94. The literal meaning of the word fajr is "dawn", that is, "the beginning of the morning after the darkness of night."

Here the "recital of the Qur'ān in the morning" stands for the Morning Prayer. At some places the Qurān has used the word *Salāt* for 'Prayer' and at other places a particular part of Salāt for Prayer as a whole, e.g., *tasbīh, hamd, zikr, qayām, rukū', sujūd* etc. Likewise, here "recital of the Qur'ān at dawn" does not mean the mere recital of the Qur'ān but its recital during the Prayer. Thus, the Qur'ān has also incidentally referred to the different parts of which *Salāt* is composed and these guided the Holy Prophet to prescribe the definite form of *Salāt* in which it is performed by the Muslims to-day.

95. The recital of the Qur'ān at dawn is witnessed by the angels of Allah to testify it, as has been explained in the Traditions. Though the angels witness each prayer and each good deed the special mention of their being witnesses at the time of the recital of the Qur'ān during the Morning Prayer gives it a particular Importance. That is why the Holy Prophet used to recite long passages from the Qur'ān during the Morning Prayer. His example was followed by the Companions, and the succeeding Muslim scholars held it to be a desirable thing.

In this verse, it has been briefly stated how to establish *Salāt* which was made obligatory on the occasion of *Mi'rāj* at the prescribed timings. It has been ordained that the first Prayer is to be offered before the sunrise and the remaining four after the declining of the sun till the darkness of the night. Afterwards Angel Jibril was sent to the Holy Prophet to define the limits of the timings of each Prayer. According to a Tradition of Abu Da'ūd and Tirmizi related by Ibn 'Abbās, the Holy Prophet said, "Jibril led me in the five Prayers twice near the Ka'abah. On the first day, he offered the *Dhuhr* Prayer just after the declining of the sun, when the shadow of everything was the shortest. Then he offered the 'Asr Prayer when the shadow of each thing was equal to its own length; then the Maghrib Prayer at the time when one breaks one's fast, and the *'Ishā'* Prayer was offered just at the time when twilight had disappeared, and *Fajr* Prayer at the time when it becomes unlawful to eat and drink anything for the one who intends to observe a Fast. The next day he offered the *Dhuhr* Prayer at the time when the shadow of each thing became equal to its own length and the *'Asr* Prayer when the shadow had doubled. The *Maghrib* Prayer was offered as on the previous day and the *'Ishā'* Prayer when one-third of the night had passed away, and the Morning

Prayer when light had spread all over. After this Jibril turned towards me and said, 'O Muhammad, these are the timings of *Salāt* of the Prophets and the right timings are between these two extreme limits."

The Qur'ān has also pointed to these five times of Salāt on different occasions:

(1) "And listen; establish *Salāt* at the two ends of the day and in the early parts of the night..." (IX: 114).

(2) "...And glorify your Lord with His praise before the sunrise *(Fajr)* and before sunset *('Asr)* and then glorify Him during the night *('Ishā')* and then at the ends of the day *(Fajr, Dhuhr and Maghrib)...*" (XX: 130).

(3) "So glorify Allah when it is evening for you *(Maghrib),* and when it is morning *(Fajr).* Praise is only for Him in the heavens and the earth and glorify him in the later part of the afternoon (*'Asr)* and in the afternoon *(Dhuhr).* " *(XXX:* 17-18).

There is great wisdom in this system of the timings of *Salāt.* One of these is to avoid the timings of the worship of the sun-worshippers. This is because the sun has always been in every age one of the greatest deities of the *mushriks,* who worshipped it especially at the time of sunrise and sunset. Therefore, these two times have totally been forbidden for *Salāt.* Besides this, they worshipped the sun at the time of its zenith. That is why Islam has ordained that the Muslims should offer their two Prayers during the day-time after the sun has declined and the *Fajr* Prayer before the sunrise. The Holy Prophet himself has stated this wisdom of the timings of Prayer in several Traditions. For instance, in the Tradition related by 'Amar bin 'Abasah, the Holy Prophet is reported to have replied to a question to this effect: "Offer your Morning Prayer, but refrain from it when the sun is about to rise until it has risen high. For the sun rises between the horns of Satan and the unbelievers fall prostrate before it at that time.

Then after mentioning the *'Asr* Prayer, he said:

"After *'Asr* Prayer, refrain from any Prayer until the sunset, for during that time the sun sets between the horns of Satan and the unbelievers fall prostrate before it."

The rising and the setting of the sun between the horns of Satan is a symbolic expression that has been used in this Tradition. This implies that both these times are used by Satan as temptations for the people. This is, as if to say, that Satan is so pleased with the worship of the unbelievers at the time of sunrise and sunset that he appears to carry the sun on his head as a mark of approval. This interpretation of the Tradition is based on this remark of the Holy Prophet: "The unbelievers fall prostrate before it."

[Contd. on p. 636

بِالَّذِیْٓ اَوْحَیْنَآ اِلَیْكَ ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُ لَكَ بِهٖ عَلَیْنَا وَكِیْلًا ﴿86﴾ اِلَّا رَحْمَةً مِّنْ
رَّبِّكَ ؕ اِنَّ فَضْلَهٗ كَانَ عَلَیْكَ كَبِیْرًا ﴿87﴾ قُلْ لَّىِٕنِ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْاِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ
عَلٰٓى اَنْ یَّاْتُوْا بِمِثْلِ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنِ لَا یَاْتُوْنَ بِمِثْلِهٖ وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ
ظَهِیْرًا ﴿88﴾ وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِیْ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ ۫ فَاَبٰٓى اَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ
اِلَّا كُفُوْرًا ﴿89﴾ وَقَالُوْا لَنْ نُّؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتّٰى تَفْجُرَ لَنَا مِنَ الْاَرْضِ یَنْۢبُوْعًا ﴿90﴾
اَوْ تَكُوْنَ لَكَ جَنَّةٌ مِّنْ نَّخِیْلٍ وَّعِنَبٍ فَتُفَجِّرَ الْاَنْهٰرَ خِلٰلَهَا تَفْجِیْرًا ﴿91﴾ اَوْ
تُسْقِطَ السَّمَآءَ كَمَا زَعَمْتَ عَلَیْنَا كِسَفًا اَوْ تَاْتِیَ بِاللّٰهِ وَالْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ قَبِیْلًا ﴿92﴾ اَوْ
یَكُوْنَ لَكَ بَیْتٌ مِّنْ زُخْرُفٍ اَوْ تَرْقٰى فِی السَّمَآءِ ؕ وَلَنْ نُّؤْمِنَ لِرُقِیِّكَ حَتّٰى
تُنَزِّلَ عَلَیْنَا كِتٰبًا نَّقْرَؤُهٗ ؕ قُلْ سُبْحَانَ رَبِّیْ هَلْ كُنْتُ اِلَّا بَشَرًا رَّسُوْلًا ﴿93﴾ وَ
مَا مَنَعَ النَّاسَ اَنْ یُّؤْمِنُوْٓا اِذْ جَآءَهُمُ الْهُدٰٓى اِلَّآ اَنْ قَالُوْٓا اَبَعَثَ اللّٰهُ بَشَرًا
رَّسُوْلًا ﴿94﴾ قُلْ لَّوْ كَانَ فِی الْاَرْضِ مَلٰٓئِكَةٌ یَّمْشُوْنَ مُطْمَىِٕنِّیْنَ لَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَیْهِمْ مِّنَ
السَّمَآءِ مَلَكًا رَّسُوْلًا ﴿95﴾ قُلْ كَفٰى بِاللّٰهِ شَهِیْدًۢا بَیْنِیْ وَبَیْنَكُمْ ؕ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ بِعِبَادِهٖ
خَبِیْرًۢا بَصِیْرًا ﴿96﴾ وَمَنْ یَّهْدِ اللّٰهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِ ۚ وَمَنْ یُّضْلِلْ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُمْ
اَوْلِیَآءَ مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ ؕ وَنَحْشُرُهُمْ یَوْمَ الْقِیٰمَةِ عَلٰى وُجُوْهِهِمْ عُمْیًا وَّبُكْمًا وَّ
صُمًّا ؕ مَاْوٰىهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ ؕ كُلَّمَا خَبَتْ زِدْنٰهُمْ سَعِیْرًا ﴿97﴾ ذٰلِكَ جَزَآؤُهُمْ بِاَنَّهُمْ
كَفَرُوْا بِاٰیٰتِنَا وَقَالُوْٓا ءَاِذَا كُنَّا عِظَامًا وَّرُفَاتًا ءَاِنَّا لَمَبْعُوْثُوْنَ خَلْقًا جَدِیْدًا ﴿98﴾
اَوَلَمْ یَرَوْا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ الَّذِیْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ قَادِرٌ عَلٰٓى اَنْ یَّخْلُقَ مِثْلَهُمْ
وَجَعَلَ لَهُمْ اَجَلًا لَّا رَیْبَ فِیْهِ ؕ فَاَبَى الظّٰلِمُوْنَ اِلَّا كُفُوْرًا ﴿99﴾ قُلْ لَّوْ اَنْتُمْ
تَمْلِكُوْنَ خَزَآىِٕنَ رَحْمَةِ رَبِّیْٓ اِذًا لَّاَمْسَكْتُمْ خَشْیَةَ الْاِنْفَاقِ ؕ وَكَانَ الْاِنْسَانُ

O Muhammad, We may, if We so will, take back from you all 86-88
of what We have revealed to you: then you will find none to help you
in getting it back from Us. All that you have received is by the favour
of your Lord. Indeed His favour to you is very great.[104] Declare this,
"Even if human beings and jinns should cooperate with one another to
bring forth a book like the Qur'ān, they will never be able to bring
anything like it, even though all of them help one another."[105]

In this Qur'ān, We employed different ways to make the people 89-93
understand the Message, but the majority of them persisted in unbelief,
and they said, "We will not believe in what you say until you cause a
spring to gush forth from the earth for us, or a garden of date-palms
and vines be created for you, and you cause canals to flow in it; or until
you cause the sky to fall on us in fragments, as you threaten us; or you
bring Allah and the angels face to face before us or a house of gold
comes into being for you or you ascend the sky, and we are not going
to believe in your ascension until you bring down to us a writing that
we may read"—O Muhammad, Say to them, "My Lord be glorified!
have I ever claimed to be anything more than a human Messenger?"[106]

Whenever Guidance came before the people nothing prevented 94-95
them from believing in it except this (excuse): they said: "Did Allah
send a human being as His Messenger?"[107] Say to them, "Had angels
settled on the Earth and moved about in peace, We would certainly
have sent an angel as a Messenger to them."[108]

O Muhammad, say to them, "Allah suffices for a witness to 96
judge between you and me: for He is fully aware of and is observing
what His servants are doing."[109]

Whomsoever Allah guides, he alone is rightly guided and 97-99
whomsoever He lets go astray, you will find for such people no other
protector and helper besides Him.[110] On the Day of Resurrection, We
will muster them prostrate upon their faces, blind, dumb and deaf.[111]
Their abode will be Hell: whenever its fire abates, We will rekindle it
for them. This is their recompense, for they rejected Our Signs and said,
"What! shall we really be raised up anew, when we have been reduced
to bones and dust?" Could they not perceive that the same Allah, Who
created the Earth and the Heavens, has the power to create the like of

them? He has ordained a time for resurrecting them which shall inevitably come, but these workers of iniquity persist in their disbelief.

100 O Muhammad, say to them, "Had the treasures of your Lord's blessings been in your possession, you would have held them back lest they should be spent up. Indeed man is very narrow minded."[112]

Contd. from p.633]

96. The literal meaning of *"Tahajjud"* is to rise up by breaking sleep. Therefore, the sentence has been translated into "Offer *Tahajjud* Prayer", which means "Rise up from sleep after the passing of a part of night and then offer your Prayer."

97. *"Nafl"* literally means "something done in addition to an obligatory duty". This shows that the *Tahajjud* Prayer is in addition to the five prescribed Prayers.

98. "..... may exalt you to a laudable position": "You may attain such a high position in this world and in the next world that people from everywhere may be full of praise for you, and you may become a praiseworthy personality." This is, as if to say, "Now your opponents are engaged in calling you names and are trying to defame you throughout the country, and have raised a storm of false accusations against you but that time is not far when the world will ring with the echoes of your praise and in the Hereafter you will become worthy of praise by all creatures." The exaltation of the Holy Prophet to the high position of intercession on the Day of Resurrection is also a part of that "laudable position."

99. This prayer clearly shows that the time of *Hijrah* (Migration) had come near. That is why Allah has instructed the Holy Prophet to this effect: You should follow the truth wherever and in whatever condition you be. If you migrate from a place, you should migrate for the sake of the truth, and wherever you go, you should go for the sake of the truth.

100. That is, "Either grant me power and authority or make some government my helper so that I may use its power to reform the corrupt world." This is because power is required to check indecency and sin and to enforce the law of justice.

Hasan Basri and Qatādah have made the same interpretation of this verse, and the great commentators like Ibn Jarir and Ibn Kathir have adopted the same. This is supported by a Tradition of the Holy Prophet: "Allah eradicates by the power of government those evils, which are not eradicated by the teachings of the Qur'ān." This is a clear proof that according to Islam, political power is also required to introduce reform, for admonition alone is not enough for this. Besides

this, when Allah Himself has taught this prayer to His Prophet for the establishment of His Way and enforcement of His Law, it is not only lawful but desirable to acquire power and those, who consider this to be a worldly thing, are obviously in the wrong. What is really "worldliness" is that one should desire and acquire power for one's own interest. On the contrary, the desire of power for the sake of Allah's Way is not the worship of the world but the worship of God.

101. At the time of this declaration, the persecution of the Muslims was at its height. A large number of them had emigrated to Habash, and those who had remained behind were suffering from untold hardships at Makkah and its suburbs: so much so that the life of the Holy Prophet himself was always in danger. Therefore, to all appearances, falsehood was prevailing everywhere and there was no sign to show that the truth would ever overpower falsehood. That is why the disbelievers took it for a boastful talk and scoffed at it when this declaration was made. But this prophecy of victory did come out true in less than a decade when the Holy Prophet entered the same city of Makkah as a conqueror, and entered the Ka'abah where he made the same declaration while he was breaking the three hundred and sixty idols. According to a Tradition of Bukhārī, related by Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, "On the day of the conquest of Makkah the Holy Prophet went on striking idols and uttering these words: 'The Truth has come and falsehood has vanished; for falsehood is a thing that must by its nature vanish. The Truth has come and falsehood will never reappear nor return'."

102. That is, "Those people who make the Qur'ān their guide and their book of law, are favoured with the blessing of Allah and are cured of all their mental, psychological, moral and cultural diseases. On the other hand, those wicked people who reject this and turn their back on its guidance, in fact, are unjust to themselves. Therefore, the Qur'ān does not allow them to remain even in that bad condition in which they were before its revelation or its knowledge but involves them in a greater loss than before. This is because before the revelation of the Qur'ān or their acquaintance with it, they suffered from ignorance alone but when the Qur'ān came before them and made distinct the difference between Truth and falsehood, no excuse was left with them to remain in their previous condition of ignorance. After this, if they reject its guidance and persist in their deviation, it is a clear proof that they are not ignorant but workers of iniquity and worshippers of falsehood, which are averse to the Truth. For then their position is of the one who, when presented both poison and elixir, makes a choice of poison. Therefore, they themselves are in that case fully responsible for their deviation and whatever crimes they commit after that, shall incur their full punishment. It is obvious that the consequent loss of wickedness must be far greater than the loss of ignorance. The Holy Prophet has summed this up in this concise and

comprehensive sentence: "The Qur'ān is either an argument in your favour or against you."

103. It is generally understood that the Arabic word *"Rūh"* stands here for "soul" as if the people asked the Holy Prophet about the soul of man in regard to its nature, and the answer was that it came by the Command of Allah. But we have great hesitation in accepting this meaning for it could be taken only if the verse be isolated from its context; otherwise these words would become quite incoherent for there is no reason why the question about "soul" should have intervened between the preceding three verses and following verses which deal with the theme of the Qur'ān.

If we read the verse in its context, it becomes quite obvious that here the word *"Rūh"* (The Spirit) stands for the angel who brings Revelation. This was in answer to the question of the *mushriks*, "Where from do you bring the Qur'ān?" as if to say, "O Muhammad, these people ask you about "The Spirit', that is, the source of the Qur'ān or the means of acquiring it", so tell them, "This Spirit comes to me by the Command of my Lord but your knowledge is so little that you cannot distinguish between the nature of human words and the Divinely revealed words. That is why you suspect that this has been fabricated by some man."

The above interpretation is to be preferred, because it fits in excellently between the preceding and the succeeding verses. This is also supported by the Qur'ān itself: " ...He sends down by His Command "The Spirit" to any of His servants He wills so that they should warn the people of the Day, when they shall be assembled together." (XL: 15) "And likewise We have sent down "The Spirit' to you by Our Command: you did not know what the Book was and what the Faith ..." (XLII: 52).

Besides this, Ibn 'Abbās, Qatādah and Hasan Basri (may Allah bestow His mercy upon them all) have also adopted the same interpretation. Ibn Jarir has attributed the same thing to Ibn 'Abbās on the authority of Qatādah, but at the same time he tells a strange thing that Ibn 'Abbās stated this thing only in secret. Again the author of *Rūh-ul-Ma'ānī* cites these words of Hasan and Qatādah: "By rūh is meant Jibril: the question was about the nature of his coming down and inspiring the heart of the Holy Prophet with Revelation."

104. Though these words are apparently addressed by the Holy Prophet, they are in fact meant for the disbelievers who considered the Holy Qur'ān to be either the invention of the Holy Prophet himself or of some other man, who secretly taught him the Qur'ān. They are being told that this is the Word of Allah, as if to say, "Our Prophet has not fabricated the Qur'ān but We have bestowed this on him, and if We take it back from him, the Prophet has no power to invent

such a thing nor has any other man the power to help the Prophet to present such a miraculous Book."

105. This challenge occurs at several other places in the Qur'ān: (II: 23, X: 38-39, XL: 13-14, LII: 33-34). At all these places, this has been cited as an answer to the charge of the disbelievers that Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) has himself invented the Qur'ān but is presenting it as Allah's Word. Besides this, the same has also been refuted in X: 16: "Say also, 'Had not Allah willed that I should recite the Qur'ān to you, I could not have recited it to you, nor could I have been able to give you any information about it: already have I lived a lifetime among you before its revelation. Do you not use your common sense?'"

Now let us turn to the three arguments contained in these verses as a proof that the Qur'ān is the Word of Allah.

(1) The Qur'ān is such a miracle in regard to its language, style, arguments, themes, topics, teachings and prophecies that it is beyond any human power to produce the like of it, as if to say, "You say that a man has invented this but We challenge that even the whole of mankind combined cannot produce a Book like this: nay, even if the *jinns*, whom the *mushriks* worship as deities and whom this Book openly attacks, should come to the help of the disbelievers, they cannot produce a Book like this to refute this challenge."

(2) As regards the charge that Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) has himself invented this Book, the Qur'ān refutes their claim, as if to say, "Muhammad is one of you and not a foreigner. He has lived among you for forty years before the revelation of the Qur'ān. Did you ever hear words like those of the Qur'ān from him even a day before his claim of Prophethood, or did you ever hear him discussing themes and problems contained in the Qur'ān? If you consider the matter from this point of view, it will become obvious to you that the sudden change which has come about in the language, ideas, information, style and the way of thinking of Muhammad, could not take place without Divine Guidance."

(3) "Can you not see that after the recital of the Qur'ān he does not disappear but lives among you? You hear other things than the Qur'ān from him. Do you not notice that the distinction between the two different styles of expression is so obvious that no man can successfully adopt the two styles at one and the same time?" The distinction can also be noticed, even today, between the language of the Qur'ān and that of the Traditions of the Holy Prophet. Anyone well-versed in the Arabic language and literature notices the difference which is so marked that one can

[Contd. on p.641

ع ١١ ١١

١٠٥ قَتُوْرًا ﴿١٠٠﴾ وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا مُوْسٰى تِسْعَ اٰيٰتٍۭ بَيِّنٰتٍ فَسْـَٔلْ بَنِيْٓ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ اِذْ جَآءَهُمْ
فَقَالَ لَهٗ فِرْعَوْنُ اِنِّيْ لَاَظُنُّكَ يٰمُوْسٰى مَسْحُوْرًا ﴿١٠١﴾ قَالَ لَقَدْ عَلِمْتَ مَآ اَنْزَلَ
هٰٓؤُلَآءِ اِلَّا رَبُّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ بَصَآئِرَ ۚ وَاِنِّيْ لَاَظُنُّكَ يٰفِرْعَوْنُ مَثْبُوْرًا ﴿١٠٢﴾
فَاَرَادَ اَنْ يَّسْتَفِزَّهُمْ مِّنَ الْاَرْضِ فَاَغْرَقْنٰهُ وَمَنْ مَّعَهٗ جَمِيْعًا ﴿١٠٣﴾ وَّقُلْنَا
مِنْۢ بَعْدِهٖ لِبَنِيْٓ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ اسْكُنُوا الْاَرْضَ فَاِذَا جَآءَ وَعْدُ الْاٰخِرَةِ جِئْنَا
بِكُمْ لَفِيْفًا ﴿١٠٤﴾ وَبِالْحَقِّ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ وَبِالْحَقِّ نَزَلَ ۗ وَمَآ اَرْسَلْنٰكَ اِلَّا مُبَشِّرًا وَّ
نَذِيْرًا ﴿١٠٥﴾ وَقُرْاٰنًا فَرَقْنٰهُ لِتَقْرَاَهٗ عَلَى النَّاسِ عَلٰى مُكْثٍ وَّنَزَّلْنٰهُ تَنْزِيْلًا ﴿١٠٦﴾
قُلْ اٰمِنُوْا بِهٖٓ اَوْ لَا تُؤْمِنُوْا ۗ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْعِلْمَ مِنْ قَبْلِهٖٓ اِذَا يُتْلٰى عَلَيْهِمْ
يَخِرُّوْنَ لِلْاَذْقَانِ سُجَّدًا ﴿١٠٧﴾ وَّيَقُوْلُوْنَ سُبْحٰنَ رَبِّنَآ اِنْ كَانَ وَعْدُ رَبِّنَا
لَمَفْعُوْلًا ﴿١٠٨﴾ وَيَخِرُّوْنَ لِلْاَذْقَانِ يَبْكُوْنَ وَيَزِيْدُهُمْ خُشُوْعًا ﴿١٠٩﴾ قُلِ ادْعُوا اللّٰهَ
اَوِ ادْعُوا الرَّحْمٰنَ ۭ اَيًّا مَّا تَدْعُوْا فَلَهُ الْاَسْمَآءُ الْحُسْنٰى ۚ وَلَا تَجْهَرْ بِصَلَاتِكَ
وَلَا تُخَافِتْ بِهَا وَابْتَغِ بَيْنَ ذٰلِكَ سَبِيْلًا ﴿١١٠﴾ وَقُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ لَمْ
يَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا وَّلَمْ يَكُنْ لَّهٗ شَرِيْكٌ فِي الْمُلْكِ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَّهٗ وَلِيٌّ مِّنَ
الذُّلِّ وَكَبِّرْهُ تَكْبِيْرًا ﴿١١١﴾

ع ١٢ ١١ ١٢

And We gave to Moses nine Signs which were quite manifest.[113] 101-104
Now you yourself may inquire from the children of Israel about it: when those Signs came before Pharaoh, he uttered these very words: "O Moses, I consider you to be a bewitched man."[114] Moses replied, "You know it full well that none but the lord of the Heavens and the earth had sent down these signs as eye-openers, [115] and O Pharaoh, I consider you indeed to be a doomed person."[116] At last Pharaoh resolved to uproot Moses and the Israelites from the land but We drowned him and his followers all together. Then we said to the Israelites, "Now you should settle down in the land[117] and when the prescribed time of Resurrection comes about, We will gather all of you together."

We have sent down the Qur'ān with the truth and with the truth 105-109
it has come down; and O Muhammad, We have sent you only to give good news (to the Believers) and warning (to the disbelievers).[118] And we have sent down this Qur'ān piecemeal so that you may recite it to the people gradually piece by piece, and We have sent it down by gradual Revelations[119] (to suit particular occasions). O Muhammad, say to these people, "Whether you believe in it or not, those who were given the knowledge before this,[120] fall prostrate on their faces when it is recited to them and cry out, 'Our lord is glorious and His promise was surely to be fulfiilled'. "And they fall down on their faces, weeping when they listen to it, and this increases their Humility[121] all the more,[122]

O Prophet, say to them, "You may call Him by any name, Allah 110-111
or Rahmān, for it is all the same by whichsoever name you call Him because all His names are most excellent.[123] And do not raise your voice high in your Prayer nor make it very low but adopt the middle way[124] between these two and say, "Praise is for that Allah who has begotten no son nor has any partner in His Kingdom nor is helpless to need any supporter,"[125] And glorify Him in the most glorious way.

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categorically say that these modes of expression cannot belong to one and the same person. (For further reference please also see E.N. 21 of X : 16).

106. This is the second answer to the demand of the disbelievers for a miracle. The first answer is contained in V. 59. The eloquence of this concise answer is above praise: "You demand from me that I should cause a spring to gush forth, or in the twinkling of an eye should bring into being a garden in full bloom with canals flowing in it: or I should cause the heaven to fall into pieces on those of you who are rejecting the message: or I should cause to build a furnished palace of gold: or I should call Allah and the angels to stand before you and testify to this effect: 'We Ourselves have sent down Muhammad as Our Messenger': or I should go up to the sky in your presence and bring down, addressed to you, the letter of authority of my appointment duly signed by Allah so that you may touch it with your hands and read it with your own eyes." The concise answer to these big demands was this, "My Lord be glorified! Have I ever claimed to be anything more than a human Messenger?" It may be expanded like this: "O foolish people! have I claimed to be God that you are demanding such things from me? Did I ever say that I am all-powerful and am ruling over the Earth and the Heavens? From the very first day my claim has been that I am a human being who is bringing the Message from God. Therefore, if you want to judge the authenticity of my claim, you may judge it from my Message. If you are convinced that it is based on the Truth and is absolutely rational, then you should believe in it without making foolish demands. On the other hand, if you find any defect in it, you may reject it. If you want to test whether my claim is based on truth, you should judge it by the standard of my conduct and morals as a human being and my mission. Is it not a folly that, instead of this, you are demanding from me to cleave the earth and cause the sky to fall? Is there any connection whatsoever of Prophethood with things like these?"

107. It implies that this misunderstanding has always been common among the ignorant people of every age that a human being could not be a Messenger of Allah: They rejected a Messenger just because he was a human being and took his meals and had wife and children like themselves. In contrast to this, after the passage of the time the credulous followers of a Messenger began to claim that he was not a human being at all because he was a Messenger. That is why some people made their Messenger their God, others the son of God and still others the incarnation of God. In short, the ignorant people had never been able to understand that a human being could be a Messenger of Allah.

108. This is to say that Messenger does not merely convey the Message but is sent to reform human life in accordance with it. He has to apply the principles of the Message to the circumstances of human beings and has himself to demonstrate practically those principles. Moreover, he has to remove the misunderstandings of those people who try to listen to and understand his Message. Besides this, he has to organize and train the Believers to create a

society based on the teachings of his Message. He has to struggle against those who reject and oppose his Message in order to subdue those powers that are bent upon corruption, and bring about that reformation for which Allah has sent His Messenger. As all these things have to be done in a society of human beings only a human Messenger can perform the mission. If an angel had been sent as a Messenger, the most he could have done was to convey the message, for he could not live among human beings and share their life and problems in order to reform them. It is thus clear that a human Messenger only could be suitable for this purpose.

109. That is, "Allah is fully aware of all my efforts which I am expending in order to reform you, and He is fully aware of the efforts you are making against my mission. His witness is sufficient because He will pass the final judgement."

110. In this verse, the Qur'ān has enunciated a Divine principle. Allah guides to the Right Way only that person who intends to follow His Guidance, and lets go astray that person who intends to go astray. Thereafter none is able to bring back to the Right Way the one against whom Allah has closed the door of guidance because of his own persistent deviation and obduracy. It is obvious that if a man turns his back against the truth and rests content with falsehoods there is no power in the world to make him turn away from falsehood and come to the truth.

This is because after this depravity Allah provides for that wicked person such means as increase his aversion to truth and his love for falsehood.

111. On the Day of Resurrection, they will be raised up blind, dumb and deaf because they behaved like such people in this world and would not see the Truth nor listen to the Truth nor speak the Truth.

112. This verse also suggests the same thing that has already been mentioned in V. 55. This hints at the real psychological reason why the disbelievers of Makkah were not inclined to accept Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him), their contemporary, as a Prophet. For thus they would have to acknowledge his superiority and one does not easily acknowledge the superiority of one's contemporary. This verse may be expanded like this: "Those people who are so narrow-minded that they are unwilling even to acknowledge the real superiority of another, cannot be expected to be generous in spending on others, if they possessed the keys of the treasures of Allah's blessings."

113. It should be noted that this is the third answer to the demand of the disbelievers of Makkah for Signs. They said, "We will not believe in you until you do this and do that before our eyes." In answer to this demand, they are being warned: "Nine clear Signs, like the ones you are demanding, were shown one

after the other to Pharaoh before you and you also know full well what he said, simply because he did not want to believe in Moses; you also know that when he rejected the Prophet, even after seeing the Signs, We drowned him."

The nine Signs mentioned here have also been mentioned in VII: 133. These were: (1) The staff which turned into a monster snake. (2) Moses' bright hand which shone like the sun. (3) The public defeat of the sorcery of the magicians. (4) Universal famine. (5) Storm. (6) Locusts. (7) Lice. (8) Frogs. (9) Rain of blood.

114. This has been particularly mentioned here because the *mushriks* of Makkah attributed the same epithet to the Holy Prophet as contained in V. 47. "These wrong-doers say to each other, 'The man, you are following, is a bewitched person'. "Here they are being warned that in this they were following Pharaoh, who gave the same epithet to Prophet Moses.

In this connection, we want to make a brief reference to an objection which has been raised by the modernists against a Tradition according to which the Holy Prophet once came under the influence of sorcery. They say that this Tradition confirms that the epithet "bewitched" applied to the Holy Prophet by the Quraish was correct, whereas the Qur'ān refutes this as false. They forget that the same argument could be applied to the case of Prophet Moses whom Pharaoh accused of being bewitched, for the Qur'ān says, in XX: 66-67: "When the magicians threw down their cords and rods (instruments of their sorcery), it seemed to Moses as if they were running, as a result of which Moses conceived in his mind a sort of fear." If the words of the Tradition were to be considered against the Qur'ān, do not these words of the Qur'ān contradict its own words that the charge of Moses being bewitched was false? Do these modernists consider this verse to confirm Pharaoh's charge?"

As a matter of fact, these objectors do not know the sense in which the disbelievers of Makkah and Pharaoh called the Holy Prophet and Prophet Moses (Allah's peace be upon them) bewitched. What they meant was that some enemy had so bewitched them that they had lost their senses and so in their insanity claimed to be prophets and delivered a curious message. The Qur'ān refutes this charge as false. As regards the temporary influence of magic on some person or a part of him has not been denied, for the influence of magic is like the effect produced on a person who is hit with a stone. The fact that some prophet was temporarily influenced by magic, does not in any way affect his prophethood adversely. Just as poison produced its effect on a prophet, or a prophet was wounded, so a prophet could also temporarily come under the influence of magic. Such a temporary magic could not cause any defect in his prophethood. God forbid, had magic produced any adverse effect on his reasoning and thinking.

faculties, one might have been sceptical about the authenticity of the Message. And when Pharaoh and the disbelievers of Makkah said that Prophet Moses and the Holy Prophet were bewitched, they meant that they had lost their senses under the influence of magic. The Qur'ān refutes this charge brought against the Prophets.

115. Moses could say these words categorically that the Signs were from the Lord of the Universe because the calamities which visited Egypt could not be brought about by magic or by any human device. For it is not possible for any human power to bring about frogs over vast areas or to cause all granaries in the land to be eaten up by weevils. Then it should also be kept in view that Prophet Moses warned beforehand of an impending Sign, warning Pharaoh to give up his obduracy, and the calamity did come exactly as he had predicted. In these circumstances only a mad or obdurate person could say that those calamities were sent by any other than the Lord of the Heavens and the Earth.

116. That is, "I am not a bewitched man but you are indeed a doomed person. As you have been persistent in your disbelief even after seeing such obvious Divine Signs, you are surely doomed to destruction."

117. This part of the story of Pharaoh has been related here because it applied exactly to the *mushriks* of Makkah who were doing their worst to uproot the Holy Prophet and the Believers from the land of Arabia. This story, so to say, tells them, "Pharaoh resolved to uproot Moses and the Israelites but was himself completely annihilated along with his followers and Moses and his followers settled down in the land. Likewise, if you persist on the same way, you will surely meet with the same end."

118. That is, "It is not your responsibility to cause, in a supernatural manner, springs to gush forth or gardens to grow or pieces of the sky to fall down in order to convince those people who do not judge the Qur'ān by its teachings nor decide between the Truth and falsehood on merit. As the Qur'ān has been sent down with truth, you should present it before the people and tell them plainly that the one, who believes, does so for his own good and the one who rejects it, does it at his own peril."

119. This is an answer to this objection: "Why has not Allah sent down His Message as a whole? Why is He sending it piecemeal? Has Allah any need to think deliberately what to send down?" As the answer to this objection has been given in XVI: 101-102 and in the Explanatory Notes 104-106 added to them, there is no need to repeat the same here.

120. This refers to those people of the Book who were well-versed in the Scriptures and could judge them from their themes and wording.

121. That is, "When they listen to the Qur'ān, they at once recognize that its bearer is the promised Prophet mentioned in the Books of the former Prophets."

122. This attitude of the righteous people of the Book has been mentioned at several places in the Qur'ān, *e.g.*, III: 113-114, 199, V: 83-84.

123. This is the answer to another objection of the disbelievers. They said, "We have heard the name Allah for the Creator but where from have you brought the name *Rahmān*?" This was because the name "*Rahmān*" was not used for Allah and they did not like it.

124. This instruction was given at Makkah. Ibn 'Abbās relates that when the Holy Prophet or his Companions offered their Prayers, they recited the Qur'ān in a loud voice. At this the disbelievers would raise a hue and cry and often called them names. Therefore, they were enjoined that they should neither say their Prayers in such a loud voice as might incite the disbelievers nor should they say it in such a low voice that their own Companions might not hear it. This instruction was discontinued under the changed conditions at Al-Madinah. However, if the Muslims may have to face the same conditions, at any place or at any time, they should observe the same instruction.

125. A subtle sarcasm is implied in the sentence. The *mushriks* believed that Allah had appointed assistants and deputies for the administration of His Kingdom. Obviously this meant that Allah was helpless and powerless to carry out the administration of His Kingdom: therefore, He needed supporters to help Him in the work of His Godhead. This sentence negates their false creeds, saying, "He does not stand in need of any gods and saints in order to delegate to them the different departments of His Godhead or make them governors in different parts of His Kingdom."


XVIII
AL-KAHF
الكهف

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XVIII
AL-KAHF

الكهف

INTRODUCTION

Name.

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

Period of Revelation.

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

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

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

Subject and Topics.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

XVIII
AL-KAHF

الكهف

Verses: 110 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

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

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

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

[Contd. on p. 10

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Contd. from p. 7]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[Contd. on p. 18

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

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

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

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

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

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

Contd. from p. 15.]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[Contd. on p.24

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

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

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

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

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

Contd. from p.21

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[Contd. on p. 30

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Contd. from p. 27]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[Contd. on p.34

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Contd. from p.31]

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

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

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

53. This verse has two meanings:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

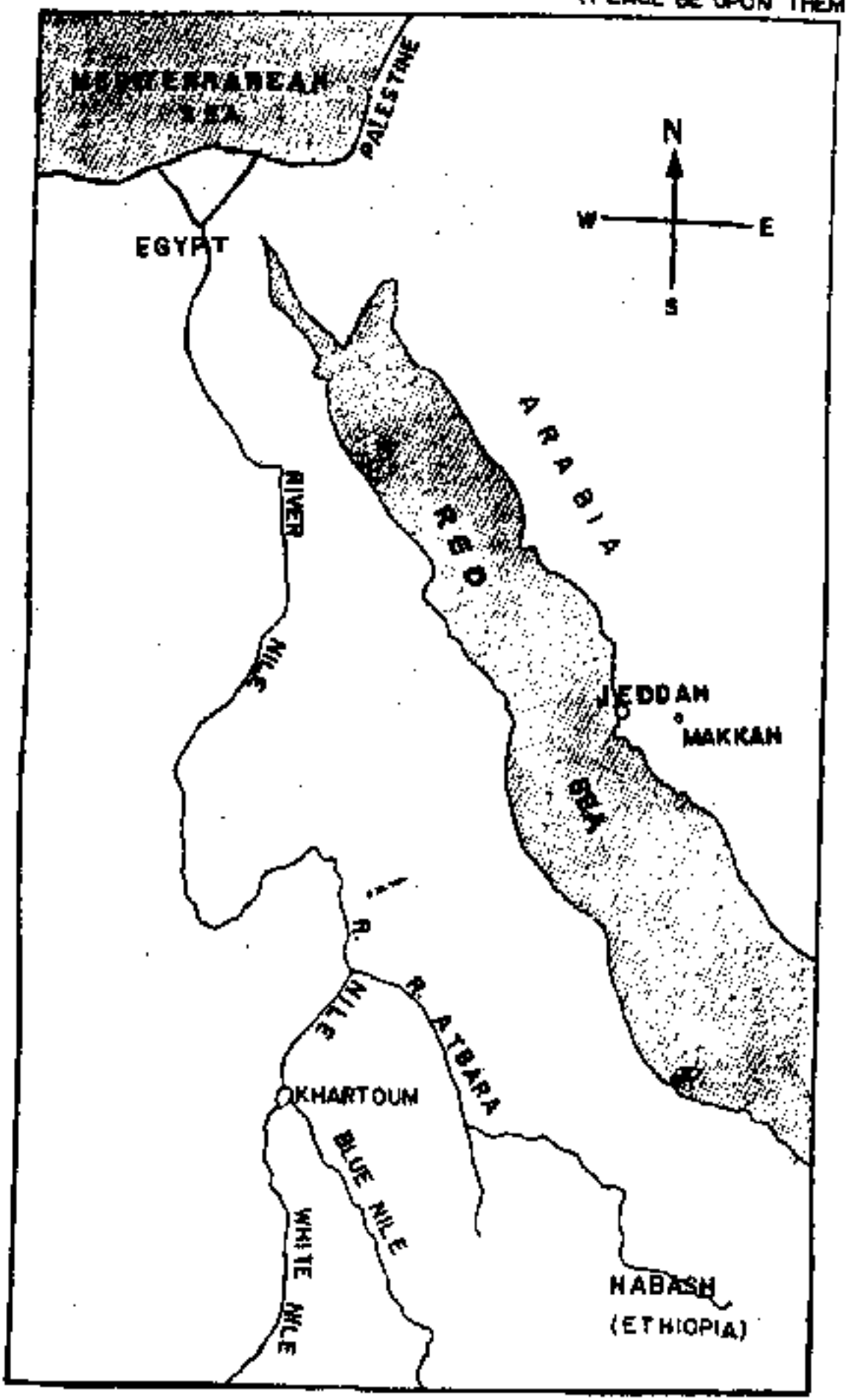
If our conjecture is correct, then it may be concluded that probably this event took place during Prophet Moses' journey to Sudan, and by the confluence of the rivers is meant the site of the present city of Khartum where the Blue Nile and the White Nile meet together.

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

MAP No.1

MAP RELATING OF THE STORY OF KHIDR AND MOSES

(PEACE BE UPON THEM



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

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

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

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

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

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

[Contd. on p.40

لَقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْـًٔا نُّكْرًا ﴿74﴾

الجزء ١٦

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

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

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

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

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

السَّفِيْنَةُ فَكَانَتْ لِمَسٰكِيْنَ يَعْمَلُوْنَ فِي الْبَحْرِ فَاَرَدْتُّ اَنْ اَعِيْبَهَا وَكَانَ

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

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

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

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

وَيَسْتَخْرِجَا كَنْزَهُمَا ۖ رَحْمَةً مِّنْ رَّبِّكَ ۚ وَمَا فَعَلْتُهٗ عَنْ اَمْرِيْ ۭ ذٰلِكَ تَاْوِيْلُ

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We will prescribe for him easy tasks."

Contd. from p.37]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

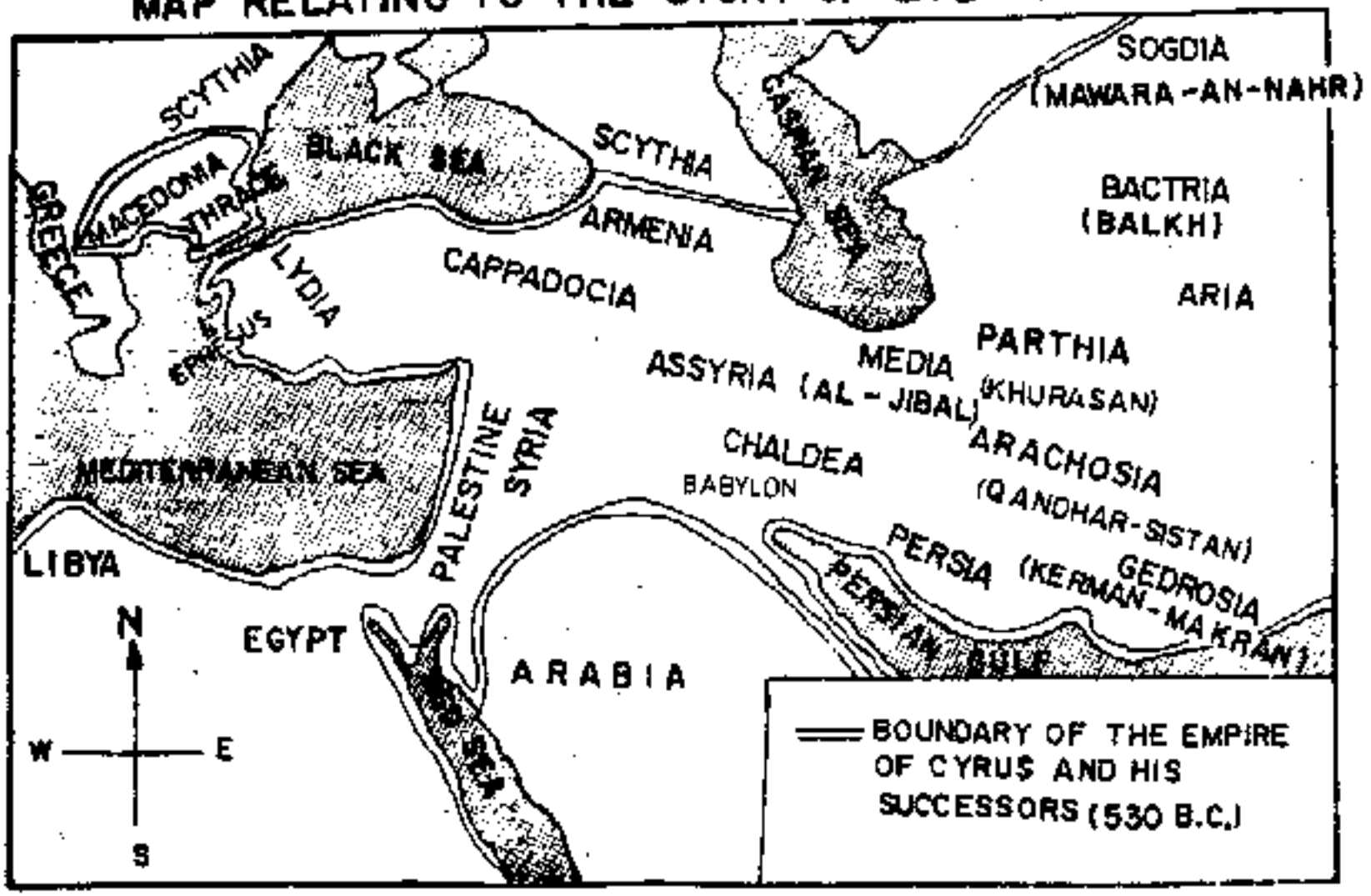
human beings, for such commands as have no legal aspect, can be addressed to angels only. This is because the question of the lawful or the unlawful cannot arise about them: they obey the Commands of Allah without having any personal power. In contrast to them, a man shall be guilty of a sin whether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

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

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

MAP. No. 2

MAP RELATING TO THE STORY OF ZUL-QARNAIN



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[Contd. on p.46

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Contd. from p.43]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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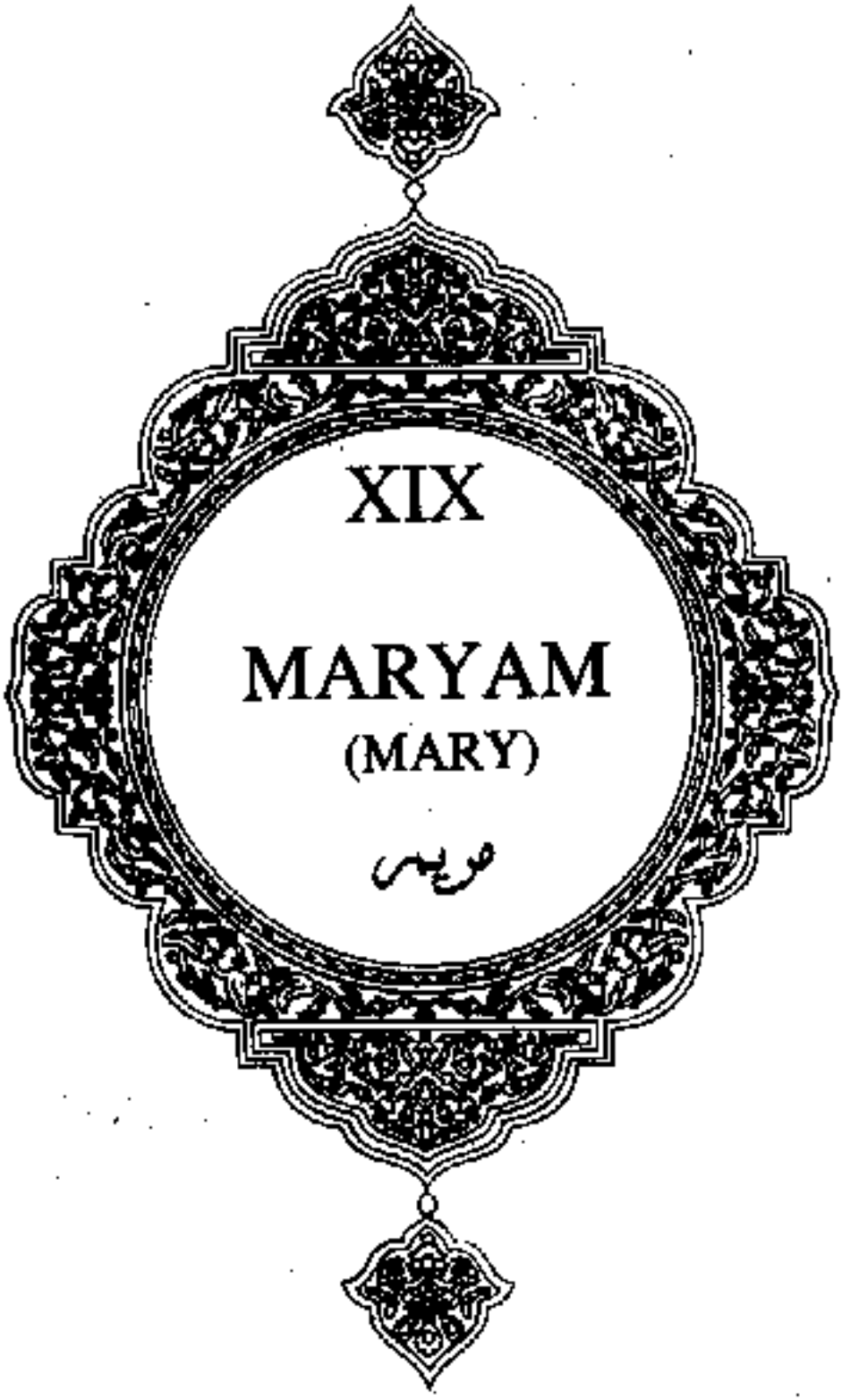
إِلَٰهٌ وَاحِدٌ ۖ فَمَن كَانَ يَرْجُو لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا ﴿١١٠﴾

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

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

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

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



XIX

MARYAM
(MARY)

مريم

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XIX

MARYAM (MARY)

مریم

INTRODUCTION

Name.

It takes its name from v. 16.

Period of Revelation.

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

Historical Background.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Theme and Subject

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

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

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

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

سُوْرَةُ مَرْيَمَ مَكِّيَّةٌ — آيَاتُهَا ٩٨ — رُكُوعَاتُهَا ٦

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

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

XIX

MARYAM (MARY)

مریم

Verses: 98 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[Contd. on p.68

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

السجدة ۱۵

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Contd. from p.69]

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

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

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

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

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

24. That is, the sects of the Christians.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Contd. from p. 73]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

have received permission from the Merciful.[52]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

43. The leader of every rebel band.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



XX

Ṭā Hā

طٰهٰ

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XX
Ṭā Hā

طٰهٰ

INTRODUCTION

Name

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

Period of Revelation

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

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

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

Theme and Topics of Discussion

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

XX

ṬĀ HĀ

طٰہٰ

Verses: 135 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Contd. from p.107]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In Numbers, the following details have been given:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

71. See VII: 150.

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

[Contd. on p. 118

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

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

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

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

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

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

of knowledge.''[91]

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

Contd. from p.115]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

109. "These people" of Makkah.

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

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

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

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

112. The original Arabic Text admits of two meanings:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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


XXI
AL-ANBIYĀĀ'
الأنبياء

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XXI
AL-ANBIYĀĀ'

الانبياء

INTRODUCTION

Name

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

Period of Revelation

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

Subject and Topics

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

Main Themes

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

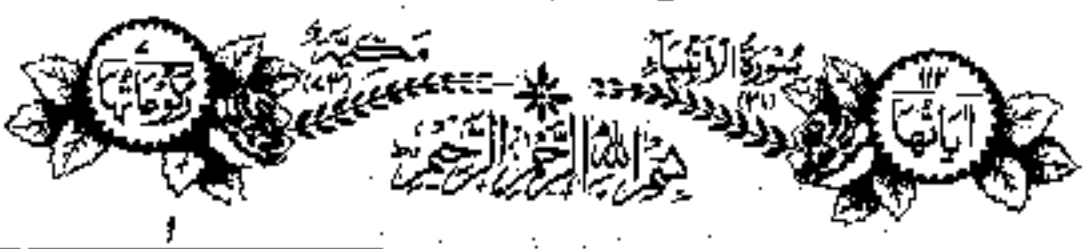
Along with these two other things have also been mentioned:

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

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

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

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



الجزء ١٧

اِقْتَرَبَ لِلنَّاسِ حِسَابُهُمْ وَهُمْ فِيْ غَفْلَةٍ مُّعْرِضُوْنَ ۝١ مَا يَاْتِيْهِمْ

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

XXI
AL-ANBIYĀĀ

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Verses: 112 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

22. This concise sentence contains two arguments:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

46. It means: "When they know that all the resources and provisions of life are in Our hands and that We can increase or decrease them as We will, have they the power and strength to defend themselves against Our punishment? Can they not see from these "Signs" that their power, prosperity and luxury are not everlasting and that there is an All-Powerful Allah to seize and punish them?"

47. That is, "The same scourge which they are demanding to be hastened and of which they are making fun."

48. See also vv. 8-9 and E.N.'s 8-9 of Al-A'arāf (VII). It is difficult for us to understand the exact nature of the "Balance". Anyhow it is clear that the "Balance" will weigh accurately all the human moral deeds instead of material things, and will help judge whether a man is virtuous or wicked and how much. The Qur'ān has used this word to make mankind understand that every deed, good or bad, will be weighed and judged according to merit.

49. From here begin the stories of the Prophets. If we consider these stories in the context in which they occur, it becomes plain that these have been related to impress the following themes:

(1) All the former Prophets were human beings: therefore there is nothing strange or unusual that a human being like Muḥammad has been sent as a Messenger (Allah's peace be upon him).

(2) The Mission and teachings of this Prophet are the same as of those who were sent before him.

(3) All the Prophets had been granted a privileged position by Allah, Who blessed them with special favours. For instance, though they were made to suffer from hardships and persecutions for years, ultimately Allah heard their prayers and helped them in miraculous ways against their enemies and persecutors.

(4) In spite of Allah's special favours on them they were no more than His humble servants and human beings and had no share whatever in Godhead; so much so that sometimes they committed errors of judgment, fell ill, were put to trials and even committed faults, for which they were called to account by Allah.

50. All the three words have been used in praise of the Torah: (l) A Criterion which distinguished the Truth from falsehood. (2) A Light which showed the Right Way of life, and (3) An Admonition, which reminded the erring descendants of Adam to remember the lesson they had forgotten.

51. Though it was sent for the good of all human beings, only the pious people, having these characteristics, could benefit from it.

52. The Hour of "Resurrection".

53. The Arabic word رُشْد *(rushd)* is very comprehensive and means righteousness as well.

"We had blessed Abraham with discretion;" "The discretion he showed in discriminating between the right and the wrong etc. was not of his own acquirement but had been bestowed on him by Us."

"We knew him well": "We knew that he was worthy of Prophethood; therefore We appointed him as such". According to VI:124: " .... Allah knows best whom to entrust with His Mission ...." It contains a subtle answer to the objection raised by the chiefs of the Quraish: "Why has Allah appointed this man (the Holy Prophet) to the office of Prophethood, when he is in no way superior to us?" This objection has been answered, as if to say, "The same objection might even have been raised against Prophet Abraham by his people, but We knew his capabilities. Therefore We selected him for Prophethood."

In this connection, please also see II: 124-141, 258-260; VI: 74-84; IX: 114; XI: 69-76; XIV: 35-41; XV: 51-58 and XVI: 120-122 and the E.N's thereof.

54. Before proceeding further it should be kept in mind that the incident from the history of Prophet Abraham has been cited here to refute the erroneous creeds of the Quraish. This was meant to hit them hard for they were the descendants of Prophet Abraham and were proud of their relationship with him. It was he who had built the Ka'abah which had become the centre of the whole of Arabia and they, being its keepers, were its most important clan. Therefore, they could not remain indifferent to this answer.

55. The literal translation will be: "Are you presenting the Truth before us, or just playing with us?" They were so sure of the truth of their creed that they could never imagine that anyone could be serious in declaring it to be false.

56. That is, "If you do not understand this by argument, I will present a practical proof that these idols are helpless and have no powers. Therefore, it is wrong to make them your deities".

57. This was that practical proof. In the absence of the priests and attendants, Prophet Abraham entered their central Temple and broke all the idols to pieces.

58. The pronoun in the original Text may be translated into "it" or "him". In the former case, it will refer to the chief idol and in the latter to Prophet Abraham. In the first case, it will imply a subtle sarcasm in order to make them realize that their creed of idol-worship was foolish, for obviously the chief idol could not break the minor idols. In the second case, it will refer to Prophet Abraham, who thought that they might turn to him about the "incident" and he might get an opportunity to have a frank talk with them about their absurd creed.

59. This was exactly what Prophet Abraham expected to happen. He wished that the matter should not remain confined to the priests and the attendants but the common people also should be present there to witness that their deities were helpless and their priests were deluding them about their powers. The priests committed the same folly as was later committed by Pharaoh when he arranged an encounter between Prophet Moses and the magicians in the open in front of the multitudes of the common people, and the former got an opportunity to show publicly the miracle of the staff which shattered the illusory, magical tricks of the magicians.

60. The very sentence, "You may ask them, if they can speak", is a clear proof that it was not a lie when Prophet Abraham said, "All this has been done by their chief." What he intended by this was to make them realize and confess that their idols were helpless because they could do nothing to protect themselves, and could not even speak. It is clear that when a person poses an unreal question for the sake of argument in order to bring home the fact that the position taken by the other party is untenable, it cannot be considered as a lie; firstly, because the speaker himself never intended it to be a lie, and secondly, because the addressees also knew that it was not a lie.

The foregoing remarks have been necessitated because of a "tradition" that Prophet Abraham told three "lies" in his life, of which one is the above-mentioned event. The second "lie" is contained in XXXVII: 89: "I am indisposed", and the third "lie" is not contained in the Qur'ān but in the Bible that he declared his wife to be his sister. (Gen. 12:12,13, 18,19). It is a pity that this "tradition" has given rise to two divergent opinions. The orthodox traditionalists actually believe that Prophet Abraham told these lies just because an "authentic

tradition" says so. They do not consider that it is far better to discard the "tradition" according to which a Prophet is accused of being a "liar". On the other hand, those who are against the Traditions, discard all of them just because this solitary tradition, which has been reported as authentic by *Bukhārī* and *Muslim*, is unreliable on the very face of it. Obviously it needs no elaborate arguments to prove that all the traditions cannot be discarded just because one or a few of them are unreliable. As regards the upholders of the first opinion, they have gone to the other extreme and think that a tradition can be discarded in spite of the authenticity of its reporters for cogent reasons. They do this without reference to the contents of the tradition itself. But if the text of the tradition itself clearly shows that such a thing could not have been said by the Holy Prophet, there is no reason to insist that it should be accepted as authentic merely because its reporters are authentic.

This tradition is unreliable for other reasons also. As has already been shown, the first "lie" is no lie at all. As regards the second "lie", ("I am indisposed"), it cannot be considered as a lie unless it is proved beyond doubt that Prophet Abraham was perfectly healthy at that time, and the text does not testify this. As regards the third "lie", the event stated in the Bible in chapter 12 of Genesis is absurd on the face of it. When Prophet Abraham went to Egypt with his wife Sārah, he was, according to the Bible itself, 75 years old and his wife was 65. Therefore the very age of Sārah is a clear proof that she could not be a "fair woman to look upon" to force Prophet Abraham to pose that she was his sister in order to save his life. The tradition under discussion, which accuses Prophet Abraham to be guilty of telling a lie, has accordingly no basis at all and cannot be taken as reliable in spite of its authentic reporters.

61. Literally the original Text means: "They were turned down upon their heads." Some commentators have interpreted it to mean: "They hung down their heads with shame". But this does not fit in the context and the wording of the Text. The right interpretation would be: "When they considered the answer of Prophet Abraham, they realized that they themselves were in the wrong, because they had set up helpless idols as deities, which could not even speak a word as to who had broken them. But soon after this, they were overpowered by obduracy and ignorance which perverted their minds and they again relapsed into crookedness."

62. Though this is one of those miracles which have been clearly stated in the Qur'ān, there are people who try to "prove" that there was no such miracle at all. According to this passage (vv. 68-70), Prophet Abraham was actually threatened to be burnt alive and he was accordingly thrown into the burning fire; but Allah ordered the fire to become cool and harmless for him. In the face of the clear words of the Qur'ān, these people deny this miracle because according to

them it is impossible even for Allah to go beyond the routine of the physical laws. They say that miracles cannot appeal to the rationalists of the modern age, and therefore these should be interpreted in accordance with physical laws. They forget that according to the Qur'ān, Allah is able to do everything, and He does extraordinary and unusual things which cannot be explained by "science". Therefore they should accept the Qur'ān as it is or discard it, but they should not twist it to suit their so-called rationalism.

63. According to the Bible, Prophet Abraham had two brothers, Nahor and Ḥarān; Prophet Lot was the son of Ḥarān (Gen. 11:26), and he was the only person to believe in Prophet Abraham. (XXIX: 26).

64. The "blessed land" refers to Syria and Palestine, which contains both material and spiritual blessings. It is one of the most fertile regions in the world; moreover, it was blessed for two thousand years with more Prophets than any other region of the world.

65. That is, "We made his son a Prophet and his grandson too".

66. This important event of the life of Prophet Abraham has found no mention whatever in the Bible. In fact nothing about his life in 'Irāq —his conflict with Nimrod, his father and the community at large, his efforts to eradicate idolatry, the incident of his being cast into the fire, which ultimately led to his forced exile from the country—is mentioned anywhere in the Bible. The Bible merely mentions his migration, and that too, in a manner as if a family was migrating from one country to another in search of livelihood. There is another interesting difference between the Qur'ān and the Bible. According to the Qur'ān, the father of Abraham, who was a *mushrik*, was foremost in tyrannizing over his son, but the Bible gives a different account, which is as follows:

"Now these are the generations of Terah: Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begat Lot. And Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees. And Abram and Nahor took them wives: the name of Abram's wife *was* Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah. But Sarai was barren; she had no child. And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and settled there. And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran." (Gen. 11:27-32).

"Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name

great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 12: 1-3).

The Talmud, however, gives quite a few details about the life of Prophet Abraham about the period of his stay in 'Irāq, which are generally the same as given in the Qur'ān, but there is a glaring discrepancy in some of the important events. In fact, one can clearly feel that the account given in the Talmud is full of heterogeneous and hypothetical things while the one given in the Qur'ān is most clear and contains nothing unworthy of Prophet Abraham. We reproduce below the account as given in the Talmud so that the reader may know the difference between the Qurānic and Jewish versions. This will also remove the misunderstanding of those who think that the Qur'ān has borrowed stories from the Bible or Jewish literature.

According to the Talmud, "The wise men saw a large star in the sky on the night Abram was born and they advised Nimrod to kill the child born in the house of Terah. The King decided to kill the child but Terah hid his child and had a servant's son killed in exchange. Terah thereupon hid his wife and child in a cave where they lived for ten years. In the 11th year Abram was taken by Terah to Noah, where he lived under the guidance of Noah and his son Shem for 39 years. During the same period Abram married his niece Sarai, who was 42 years his junior. (The Bible does not mention that Sarai was the niece of Abram; moreover, the difference in their ages is mentioned as ten years). (Gen. 11: 29, 17: 17).

The Talmud then says, "Abram left Noah at the age of 50 and came back to his father. Here he found that his father was an idolator and had twelve idols in the house according to the twelve months of the year. He tried to preach to his father against idolatry but when the latter did not listen to him, Abram one day broke all the idols in the house. Seeing this Terah went straight to Nimrod and complained that the son who was born in his house 50 years ago had misbehaved and broken the idols. He wanted the King's verdict on this. Nimrod summoned Abram for interrogation, but the replies given by Abram were straight, terse and clear. Nimrod sent him to jail and then referred the matter to the Council for a decision. The Council decided that Abram should be burnt to death. A fire was accordingly prepared and Abram was cast into it. His brother and father-in-law Haran was also similarly cast into the fire. Haran was punished because Nimrod enquired of Terah as to why he had another child killed in place of Abram when he wanted to kill Abram on the day of his birth. Terah replied that this was done at the instigation of Haran. Nimrod accordingly let off Terah but threw Haran into the fire along with Abram. Haran was burnt to death instantly but people saw that

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كَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا ؕ اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا قَوْمَ سَوْءٍ فَاَغْرَقْنٰهُمْ اَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿77﴾ وَدَاوٗدَ وَ
سُلَيْمٰنَ اِذْ يَحْكُمٰنِ فِي الْحَرْثِ اِذْ نَفَشَتْ فِيْهِ غَنَمُ الْقَوْمِ ۚ وَكُنَّا
لِحُكْمِهِمْ شٰهِدِيْنَ ﴿78﴾ فَفَهَّمْنٰهَا سُلَيْمٰنَ ۚ وَكُلًّا اٰتَيْنَا حُكْمًا وَّعِلْمًا ۫ وَّسَخَّرْنَا
مَعَ دَاوٗدَ الْجِبَالَ يُسَبِّحْنَ وَالطَّيْرَ ؕ وَكُنَّا فٰعِلِيْنَ ﴿79﴾ وَعَلَّمْنٰهُ صَنْعَةَ لَبُوْسٍ
لَّكُمْ لِتُحْصِنَكُمْ مِّنْۢ بَاْسِكُمْ ۚ فَهَلْ اَنْتُمْ شٰكِرُوْنَ ﴿80﴾ وَلِسُلَيْمٰنَ الرِّيْحَ
عَاصِفَةً تَجْرِيْ بِاَمْرِهٖۤ اِلَى الْاَرْضِ الَّتِيْ بٰرَكْنَا فِيْهَا ؕ وَكُنَّا بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ
عٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿81﴾ وَمِنَ الشَّيٰطِيْنِ مَنْ يَّغُوْصُوْنَ لَهٗ وَيَعْمَلُوْنَ عَمَلًا دُوْنَ ذٰلِكَ ۚ
وَكُنَّا لَهُمْ حٰفِظِيْنَ ﴿82﴾ وَاَيُّوْبَ اِذْ نَادٰى رَبَّهٗۤ اَنِّيْ مَسَّنِيَ الضُّرُّ وَاَنْتَ
اَرْحَمُ الرّٰحِمِيْنَ ﴿83﴾ فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهٗ فَكَشَفْنَا مَا بِهٖ مِنْ ضُرٍّ ۫ وَاٰتَيْنٰهُ اَهْلَهٗ
وَمِثْلَهُمْ مَّعَهُمْ رَحْمَةً مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا وَذِكْرٰى لِلْعٰبِدِيْنَ ﴿84﴾ وَاِسْمٰعِيْلَ
وَاِدْرِيْسَ وَذَا الْكِفْلِ ؕ كُلٌّ مِّنَ الصّٰبِرِيْنَ ﴿85﴾ وَاَدْخَلْنٰهُمْ فِيْ رَحْمَتِنَا ؕ اِنَّهُمْ
مِّنَ الصّٰلِحِيْنَ ﴿86﴾ وَذَا النُّوْنِ اِذْ ذَّهَبَ مُغَاضِبًا فَظَنَّ اَنْ لَّنْ نَّقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ
فَنَادٰى فِي الظُّلُمٰتِ اَنْ لَّاۤ اِلٰهَ اِلَّاۤ اَنْتَ سُبْحٰنَكَ ۖ اِنِّيْ كُنْتُ مِنَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿87﴾
فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهٗ ۙ وَنَجَّيْنٰهُ مِنَ الْغَمِّ ؕ وَكَذٰلِكَ نُنْجِي الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿88﴾ وَزَكَرِيَّاۤ
اِذْ نَادٰى رَبَّهٗ رَبِّ لَا تَذَرْنِيْ فَرْدًا وَّاَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْوٰرِثِيْنَ ﴿89﴾ فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهٗ ۫
وَوَهَبْنَا لَهٗ يَحْيٰى وَاَصْلَحْنَا لَهٗ زَوْجَهٗ ؕ اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا يُسٰرِعُوْنَ فِي الْخَيْرٰتِ
وَيَدْعُوْنَنَا رَغَبًا وَّرَهَبًا ؕ وَكَانُوْا لَنَا خٰشِعِيْنَ ﴿90﴾ وَالَّتِيْۤ اَحْصَنَتْ فَرْجَهَا
فَنَفَخْنَا فِيْهَا مِنْ رُّوْحِنَا وَجَعَلْنٰهَا وَابْنَهَاۤ اٰيَةً لِّلْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿91﴾ اِنَّ هٰذِهٖۤ اُمَّتُكُمْ
اُمَّةً وَّاحِدَةً ۖ وَّاَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوْنِ ﴿92﴾ وَتَقَطَّعُوْۤا اَمْرَهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ ؕ كُلٌّ اِلَيْنَا

And We bestowed the same favour upon David and Solomon: 78-79
Remember the occasion when the two were judging a case regarding a field into which the goats of other people had strayed at night, and We Ourself were watching their conduct of the case. At that time We guided Solomon to the right decision, though We had bestowed wisdom and knowledge upon both of them.[70]

We had subdued to David the mountains and the birds which 79-82
joined with him in Our praise:[71] It was We Who had done all this. And We taught him for your benefit the armourer's craft so that you might protect yourselves from each other's violence.[72] Are you, then, grateful?[73] And We had subdued to Solomon the strongly blowing wind which sped at his bidding to the land wherein We had placed Our blessings,[74] for We had the knowledge of everything. And We had subjected to him many of the satans who dived into the sea for him, and performed other works besides this: and We kept watch over all of them.[75]

And We had given Job[76] the same (blessing of wisdom and 83-84
knowledge). Remember when he invoked his Lord, saying, "I have been afflicted with the disease, and Thou art most Merciful."[77] We heard his prayer and relieved him of his affliction[78] and gave him back not only those of his family but also as many more with them as a favour from Us so that it may serve as a reminder to Our worshippers.[79]

And the same blessing was bestowed upon Ismael and Idrīs[80] 85-86
and Zul-Kifl,[81] because they all practised fortitude. We admitted them to Our mercy because they were of the righteous people.

And We showed a favour to Zun-nūn :[82] Remember when he 87-88
went away in anger[83] for he thought that We would not take him to task for this.[84] But afterwards he invoked Us from the depths of darkness,[85] saying, "There is no God but Thou: glory be to Thee: I had indeed committed a wrong". So We heard his prayer, and delivered him from the affliction: Thus do We deliver the believers.

And (We showed a favour) to Zacharias, when he invoked his 89-90
Lord, saying, "O Lord, do not leave me childless though Thou alone art the best Inheritor". So We heard his prayer, and bestowed on him Yahyā (John) and made his wife fit. (to bear a child) for him.[86] These

people exerted their utmost in righteous deeds and called upon Us with love and fear and they remained humble before Us.[87]

91 And (We blessed) that woman who had kept her chastity.[88] We breathed into her of Our Spirit[89] and made her and her son a Sign to the whole world.[90]

92-93 Indeed this community of yours is one community, and I am your Lord: so worship Me alone. But the people (of their own accord) cut asunder their (one) Creed into many religions;[91]— they have all to return to Us.

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Abram was walking unhurt through the flames. When Nimrod was informed of it, he witnessed it with his own eyes and cried out: 'O man of the God of Heaven, come out of the fire and stand before me'. Thereupon, Abram came out and Nimrod became one of his believers and gave him many costly presents. After this, according to the Talmud, Abram stayed in 'Irāq for two more years when Nimrod saw a dreadful dream and the astrologers told him that the destruction of his empire would come through Abram and that he should, therefore, put him to death. Nimrod sent people to kill Abram but Abram came to know of the plot before-hand through Eleazar, a slave presented to him by Nimrod himself. Abram accordingly fled and took refuge with Noah where Terah also met him off and on secretly. The father and the son at last decided to leave the country and Noah and his son Shem also approved of their plan. Accordingly, Terah along with his son Abram and his grandson Lot and his grand-daughter and son's wife Sarai, left Ur and went to Ḥarah." (H. Polano: The Talmud Selections, London, pp. 30-42).

Can a reasonable person after reading this account of the Talmud ever imagine that this could be a source book for the story as given in the Qur'ān ?

67. The original Arabic word *ḥukm* is very comprehensive. It means judgment, wisdom and discretion, and authority from Allah. *'Ilm* stands for the revealed knowledge of the Truth. Thus, "We bestowed *ḥukm* and *'ilm* on Lot": "We appointed Lot as a Prophet". (For the story of Lot, see VII: 80-84; XI: 70-83; XV: 57-74 and the E.N.'s thereof).

68. This refers to Prophet Noah's prayer which he at last made after having tried his utmost to reform his people: "Lord, help me for I have been overpowered". (LIV: 10), and "Lord, do not leave even a single disbeliever on the earth." (LXXI: 26).

69. "Great calamity" may either refer to living a miserable life among the wicked people, or to the Flood. (For the story of Prophet Noah, see VII: 59-64; X: 72-74; XI: 25-48, and XVII: 3 and the E.N.'s thereof).

70. There is no mention of this event in the Bible nor in the Jewish literature. According to the Muslim commentators, it happend like this: The goats of one person entered into the field of another person at night. The latter brought his complaint to Prophet David who decided that the strayed goats should be given to the owner of the field. Prophet Solomon, however, differed with this and opined that the goats should remain with the owner of the field up to the time that the former tilled and prepared the field as before. In regard to this Allah says, "We led Solomon to the right decision". As regards the legal aspect of the matter we cannot say with certainty what is the Islamic law in such a case nor is there any Tradition of the Holy Prophet to explain or support it. That is why the jurists have differed about it.

It should, however, be noted that in this context, the incident has been cited to show that the Prophets were after all human beings in spite of their God-given powers and abilities. In this case, Prophet David committed an error of judgment because he was not guided by Allah as was Prophet Solomon, though both of them were Prophets. In the succeeding passage the wonderful powers of both have been mentioned to show that they were God-given and did not make anyone a god.

Incidentally, we learn from this verse that if two judges give different decisions about one and the same case, both of them will be regarded as righteous, though the decision of only one of them will be correct, provided that both are duly qualified for sitting in judgement on the case. The Holy Prophet has stated the same principle more elaborately. In a Tradition of *Bukhārī*, he is reported by 'Amar bin 'Āṣ to have said, "If a judge does his very best to arrive at the right decision, he will get a double reward in case of a right judgment and a single reward if his judgment is wrong." According to another Tradition, cited by Abu Da'ūd and Ibn Mājah, on the authority of Buraidah, he is reported to have said, "Judges are of three kinds and only one of them will go to Paradise: the one who recognizes the Truth and decides according to it. On the other hand, the one who recognizes the Truth but gives his decision against it, will go to Hell, and he too, who sits in judgment on a case without the necessary knowledge (and competence)."

71. From the wording of the Text, it is clear that "the mountains and the birds" were not subjected to Prophet David but were joined with him in glorifying Allah. This is also supported by XXXVIII:19: "We had subdued the mountains by Our Command so that they praised Us with him (David) in the morning and

evening, and the birds too, which gathered together and repeated Our praise with him". And, according to XXXIV: 10; "We commanded the mountains to repeat Our praise with him and also the birds to do the same." We are of the opinion that it means this: "When Prophet David sang hymns of Allah's praise and glory, in his rich and sweet voice, the mountains echoed back his melodies and the birds gathered round him and the whole scene became charming." Our interpretation is supported by this Tradition:

"Once when Ḥaḍrat Abū Mūsā Ash'arī, who had an extremely sweet voice, was reciting the Holy Qur'ān, the Holy Prophet, who was passing by, stood and listened to him for a long time. When he finished the recital, the Holy Prophet remarked: 'This man has been granted a portion of the melody of David'."

72. According to XXXIV: 10-11, it was like this: "....And We made the iron soft for him (and commanded him): 'Make coats of mail complete in every way, and arrange the plates properly....'". This shows that Allah had made Prophet David an expert in the use of iron, and had especially taught him the art of an armourer for defence purposes. This fact is confirmed by archaeological and historical researches, for according to these the iron-age in the world started between 1200 and 1000 BC and this was precisely the period of Prophet David. At first the Hittites in Syria and Asia Minor, who flourished between 2000 and 1200 BC, discovered a method of melting and moulding iron, but they guarded it as a close secret from the world, and it could not be put to common use. Later on, the Philistines came to know of it, but they too guarded it as a secret. The incessant defeats suffered by the Israelites at the hands of the Hittites and the Philistines before King Saul, were due mainly to the use of chariots of iron in their wars by the latter. (Joshua, 17:16; Judges, 1: 19, 4: 2-3). In 1020 BC when Saul became ruler over the Israelites by Allah's Command, he subdued the Canaanites and recaptured most of Palestine. After him Prophet David (1004-965 BC) not only annexed the whole of Palestine and Jordan to the Israeli kingdom but a major portion of Syria as well. This was the time when the secret of armour making, so closely guarded by the Hittites and the Philistines, became well known and even cheaper articles of daily use began to be made. The recent archaeological excavations conducted in Edom, to the south of Palestine, which is rich in iron ore, have brought to light furnaces for melting and moulding iron. The furnace-excavated near Ezion-geber, a port on the Gulf of 'Aqabah, in the time of Prophet Solomon, seems to have been built on the principles which are used in the modern blast furnaces. It is therefore natural that Prophet David must have first of all utilized this discovery for war purposes, because a little earlier the hostile Canaanites around his kingdom had made life really difficult for his people. The Bible also says that Prophet David was an expert in the art of melting and using iron for war purposes. (See Joshua, 17: 16; Judges, 1:19 and 4: 2-3).

73. For further details about Prophet David, please see II:251 and XVII: 55 and the E.N.'s thereof.

74. This is also explained in XXXIV: 12: "And for Solomon We had subjected the wind which covered a month's journey in the morning and a month's journey in the evening", and in XXXVIII: 36: "So We subjected the wind to him. It blew softly at his bidding whither-soever he wanted it to blow." Thus it is clear that the wind was so subjected to Prophet Solomon that the voyages to places at one month's sea journey could be performed conveniently, because a favourable wind was always blowing for his ships to and from those places.

It is confirmed by the Bible that Prophet Solomon had developedsea trade on a large scale. (I Kings, 10: 22). On the one side, his trade ships sailed from Ezion-geber, through the Red Sea, towards Yaman and other southern and eastern lands, and on the other, his naval fleet called Thar-shish, sailed on the Mediterranean to the western countries. The great furnace which he had built at Ezion-geber for melting and moulding ores extracted from the copper and iron mines in the 'Arabah in Edom, has been confirmed by modern archaeological researches as well. This molten iron and copper was used in building ships besides being put to other uses. The Qur'ân refers to this when it says: "....and We made a fountain of molten copper to flow for him (Solomon)...." (XXXIV:12).

As regards the subjection of the wind, it may mean that Allah, by His special favour, had so arranged that the wind—and sea voyages in those days depended entirely on wind—was always favourable for Prophet Solomon's fleet. But if we take the literal meaning of v. 81: "it sped at his bidding", there will be no harm, for Allah is able to give such powers to any of His servants He pleases.

75. The subjection of "satans" has been explained in XXXIV:12-13. Incidentally, these verses of the Qur'ān clearly show that the satans and jinns who worked for Prophet Solomon belonged to quite a different genus from human beings. Therefore, it is wrong to pervert the Qur'ān to prove that "they were human beings" as some modernist commentators have tried to do. It is obvious from the wording of the Qur'ān and the context in which the story of the jinns has been related, that they were not human beings. Had they been so this would have been no special favour to Solomon, because human beings had already built the gigantic monuments like the pyramids of Egypt.

76. There is a wide divergence of opinion concerning the personality, period and nationality of Prophet Job. Some commentators opine that he was an Israelite, while others think that he was an Egyptian or an Arab who lived before Prophet Moses, or during the time of Prophets David and Solomon. As all these conjectures are based on the Book of Job, which is self-contradictory and against

the Qur'ān, nothing can be said about him with certainty, but in the light of the Book of Isaiah (8th century BC) and the Book of Ezekiel (6th century BC), which are more trustworthy works, he lived in the 9th century BC or even earlier. As regards his nationality, the context in which his name occurs in IV: 163 and VI: 84, it may be assumed that he was an Israelite. According to a saying of Ḥadrat Wahb bin Munabbih, he might have been from the offspring of Esau, a son of Prophet Isaac.

77. The words of the prayer are note-worthy. Prophet Job mentions his distress but does not say anything more to his Lord except: "Thou art most Merciful" This is a great proof of his fortitude, noble and contented nature.

78. How his disease was cured has been explained in XXXVIII: 42: "Stamp the ground with your foot: here is cool water for you to wash with and to drink." From this it appears that no sooner did he stamp the ground than a spring gushed forth. He took bath and drank the water and was cured of his disease. The nature of the treatment hints that he was suffering from a skin disease. This is confirmed by the Bible as well. "Satan smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown."- (Job, 2:7).

79. It will be worth-while to compare the high character of Prophet Job as given in the Qur'ān with that in the Book of Job in the Bible. The Qur'ān presents him as a veritable picture of patience and fortitude and an excellent model for the worshippers of Allah, but his general picture presented in the Book of Job is that of a man who is full of grievance against God: "Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in *which* it was said, There is a man child conceived .... Let them curse (the night) that curse the day, ...Because it shut not the doors of my *mother's* womb, nor did sorrow from mine eyes. Why died I not from the womb?" (Chapter 3)..... "Oh that my grief were thoroughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the balance together.....the arrows of the Almighty *are* within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me." (Chapter 6).... "I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men? Why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself? And why dost thou not pardon my transgressions, and take away my iniquity? (Chapter 7: 20-21).

His three friends try to console him and counsel patience, but in vain. He says, "My soul is weary of my life....I will speak in the bitterness of my soul" (10:1).... "I have heard many such things: miserable comforters are ye all." (16: 2) .... "So these three men ceased to answer Job ..... Then was kindled the wrath of *Elihu*.... against Job.... because he justified himself rather than God." (32:1-3), but he also failed to console him....Then the Lord himself came down and condemned the three friends and Elihu and rebuked Job and then forgave him, accepted him and blessed him." (Chapters 41, 42).

It should be noted that in the first two chapters of this Book, Prophet Job is presented as a perfect and upright man who feared God, but in the following chapters he becomes an embodiment of grievance against God, as though the estimate of Satan about him was correct and that of God incorrect. Thus this Book itself is a clear evidence that it is neither the Word of God nor of Prophet Job but had been written afterwards by some literary man and incorporated in the Bible as a scripture.

80. For explanation, see Sūrah Maryam (XIX): E. N. 33.

81. Zul-Kifl is not the name but the title of a righteous man, which literally means 'a man of luck'. Here it does not refer to worldly prosperity but to his high character and ranks in the Hereafter. He has also been mentioned by this title in XXXVIII: 48. There are different opinions about his identity and nationality: some have regarded him as Zacharias (but this is not correct because Zacharias has been mentioned separately in v. 89); others say he was Elias, or Joshua, son of Nun, or Elisha, but this again is incorrect, because in Sūrah Ṣād (XXXVIII: '49) Elisha and Zul-Kifl have been mentioned as separate personalities; some others say that he was Prophet Job's son, named Bishr, who succeeded him as Prophet.

'Allāmah Ālūsī says, "The Jews claim that he was Ezekiel who was appointed to Prophethood during the captivity (597 BC) of the Israelites and he performed his mission in a habitation by the side of the Chebar canal."

These conflicting opinions indeed confirm nothing. The modern commentators, however, are inclined to believe that he was Ezekiel, though there is no convincing argument about it. This opinion is sound because his description in this verse "that he was a patient and righteous man and was blessed by God" is fully confirmed by the Book of Ezekiel. He was one of those people who had been taken prisoner by Nebuchadnezzer at the downfall of Jerusalem, who settled the Israeli exiles at Tel-abib by the river Chebar in Irāq. Here, in 594 BC, Ezekiel was raised to Prophethood when he was hardly 30, and he continued preaching the message of God to the exiled Israelites as well as to the iniquitous people and rulers of Jerusalem for full 22 years. In the 9th year of his mission, his wife whom he called "the desire of his eyes" died, but when the people came to mourn her death, he warned them of the wrath of God and the impending disaster. (Chapter 24:15-21). The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel in the Bible is one of those scriptures which appear to be genuine and divinely' inspired.

82. That is, Jonah. Literally *Zun-Nūn* means "the man of the fish". He was called so because he was devoured by a fish by the Command of Allah. (Also See XXXVII:142 and X:98 and its E.N.'s 98-100).

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رٰجِعُوْنَ ﴿93﴾ فَمَنْ يَّعْمَلْ مِنَ الصّٰلِحٰتِ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَا كُفْرَانَ لِسَعْيِهٖ ۚ وَ
إِنَّا لَهٗ كٰتِبُوْنَ ﴿94﴾ وَحَرٰمٌ عَلٰى قَرْيَةٍ اَهْلَكْنٰهَآ اَنَّهُمْ لَا يَرْجِعُوْنَ ﴿95﴾ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا
فُتِحَتْ يَاْجُوْجُ وَمَاْجُوْجُ وَهُمْ مِّنْ كُلِّ حَدَبٍ يَّنْسِلُوْنَ ﴿96﴾ وَاقْتَرَبَ الْوَعْدُ
الْحَقُّ فَاِذَا هِىَ شَاخِصَةٌ اَبْصَارُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا ۭ يٰوَيْلَنَا قَدْ كُنَّا فِيْ غَفْلَةٍ
مِّنْ هٰذَا بَلْ كُنَّا ظٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿97﴾ اِنَّكُمْ وَمَا تَعْبُدُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ حَصَبُ
جَهَنَّمَ ۭ اَنْتُمْ لَهَا وٰرِدُوْنَ ﴿98﴾ لَوْ كَانَ هٰٓؤُلَاۗءِ اٰلِهَةً مَّا وَرَدُوْهَا ۭ وَكُلٌّ فِيْهَا
خٰلِدُوْنَ ﴿99﴾ لَهُمْ فِيْهَا زَفِيْرٌ وَّهُمْ فِيْهَا لَا يَسْمَعُوْنَ ﴿100﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ سَبَقَتْ
لَهُمْ مِّنَّا الْحُسْنٰٓى ۙ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ عَنْهَا مُبْعَدُوْنَ ﴿101﴾ لَا يَسْمَعُوْنَ حَيْسَهَا ۚ وَهُمْ
فِيْ مَا اشْتَهَتْ اَنْفُسُهُمْ خٰلِدُوْنَ ﴿102﴾ لَا يَحْزُنُهُمُ الْفَزَعُ الْاَكْبَرُ وَتَتَلَقّٰىهُمُ
الْمَلٰۗىِٕكَةُ ۭ هٰذَا يَوْمُكُمُ الَّذِيْ كُنْتُمْ تُوْعَدُوْنَ ﴿103﴾ يَوْمَ نَطْوِي السَّمَاۗءَ كَطَيِّ
السِّجِلِّ لِلْكُتُبِ ۭ كَمَا بَدَاْنَآ اَوَّلَ خَلْقٍ نُّعِيْدُهٗ ۭ وَعْدًا عَلَيْنَا ۭ اِنَّا كُنَّا فٰعِلِيْنَ ﴿104﴾
وَلَقَدْ كَتَبْنَا فِي الزَّبُوْرِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ الذِّكْرِ اَنَّ الْاَرْضَ يَرِثُهَا عِبَادِيَ الصّٰلِحُوْنَ ﴿105﴾
اِنَّ فِيْ هٰذَا لَبَلٰغًا لِّقَوْمٍ عٰبِدِيْنَ ﴿106﴾ وَمَآ اَرْسَلْنٰكَ اِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿107﴾
قُلْ اِنَّمَا يُوْحٰٓى اِلَيَّ اَنَّمَآ اِلٰهُكُمْ اِلٰهٌ وَّاحِدٌ ۚ فَهَلْ اَنْتُمْ مُّسْلِمُوْنَ ﴿108﴾ فَاِنْ
تَوَلَّوْا فَقُلْ اٰذَنْتُكُمْ عَلٰى سَوَاۗءٍ ۭ وَاِنْ اَدْرِيْٓ اَقَرِيْبٌ اَمْ بَعِيْدٌ مَّا
تُوْعَدُوْنَ ﴿109﴾ اِنَّهٗ يَعْلَمُ الْجَهْرَ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تَكْتُمُوْنَ ﴿110﴾ وَاِنْ
اَدْرِيْ لَعَلَّهٗ فِتْنَةٌ لَّكُمْ وَمَتَاعٌ اِلٰى حِيْنٍ ﴿111﴾ قٰلَ رَبِّ احْكُمْ بِالْحَقِّ ۭ وَ
رَبُّنَا الرَّحْمٰنُ الْمُسْتَعَانُ عَلٰي مَا تَصِفُوْنَ ﴿112﴾

Then whosoever does good deeds, and he is a believer as well, his work will not be treated slightingly: We are recording it all. And it is not possible that the habitation We have once destroyed gets another lease of life[92] until Gog and Magog are let loose: they will swoop down from every height, and the time of the fulfilment of the True Promise will draw near,[93] whereupon the eyes of those who had disbelieved will be struck with amazement: they will say, "Woe to us: we were heedless of this: nay, we were wrong-doers."[94] As a matter of fact, you and your deities, whom you worship beside Allah, are fuel of Hell, wherein you have to enter;[95] had they really been God, they would not have gone there; now therein they will dwell for ever. There they will groan,[96] but they shall hear nothing (in response due to the roaring noise). As for those for whom We will already have ordained good (rewards), they will be kept far away from it[97] they will not hear even its faintest sound — and they shall dwell for ever in the midst of those things which they will desire and cherish most; the time of the great fright will not trouble them at all;[98] the angels will rush forth to receive them, saying: "This is the very Day which you were promised!" 94-103

On that Day, We will roll up the sky as the leaves of paper are rolled up in a written scroll. We will bring forth the creation once again as We had originated it before. This is a promise We have made to Ourself, and We have to fulfil it. And We have written in the Psalms after the Admonition: "Our righteous servants shall inherit the land". Surely in this is a great news for those people who worship Us.[99] 104-106

O Muhammad! We have sent you to be a real blessing for the people of the world.[100] Say to them, "That which is revealed to me is this: Your Deity is One Deity only. Will you, then, surrender to Him?" If even then, they turn away from it, tell them plainly, "I have warned you openly; now I do not know whether that thing with which you are being threatened[101] is near at hand or far off. (You should, however, note it well that) Allah has the knowledge of what is uttered aloud and also of what you talk about secretly.[102] I think that this (delay) may be a trial for you,[103] and you are being given respite to enjoy yourselves for an appointed term". 107-111

(At long last) the Messenger said, "O my Lord, pass Thy Judgment with the truth. And, O people, we trust in our Lord, the 112

Merciful, to help us against the things you say".

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83. Prophet Jonah left his people before he received Allah's Command for migration.

84. He presumed that he should leave the place which was going to be visited by the scourge of Allah. This was not by itself an offence but it was an offence for a Prophet to leave the place of his Mission without the permission of Allah.

85. "....darkness": the darkness in the belly of the fish and the darkness of the sea over and above it.

86. "Made his wife fit": "We cured his wife of sterility." As "Thou alone art the best Inheritor", I shall have no grief even if Thou dost not give me any child. (For further details, please see III: 37-41 and XIX: 2-14 and the E.N.'s thereof).

87. It will be worth while to reiterate the reasons why the stories of the Prophets have been cited in this sūrah.

(1) The story of Prophet Zacharias has been cited to impress on the minds that all the Prophets were human beings and servants of Allah and had no tinge of Godhead in them. They had no power to bestow children upon others because they themselves had to pray to Allah for children for themselves.

(2) The story of Prophet Jonah has been cited to show that even a great Prophet like him did not go unnoticed when he committed an error in regard to Allah's Message. But when he repented, Allah, by His grace, delivered him alive from the belly of the fish.

(3) The mention of Prophet Job has been made to show that even Prophets were put to hard trials and afflictions and even they had to beg Allah to restore them to health, not to speak of curing others of diseases.

Along with these, the other important thing which is meant to be impressed is that all the Prophets believed in the doctrine of *Tauḥīd*. That is why they begged and prayed to One Allah alone to fulfil their needs and requirements. Though they met with trials, Allah helped them and granted their prayers in supernatural and miraculous ways.

88. That is, "Mary (Allah's peace be upon her)".

89. It should be noted that the incident of the birth of Prophet Jesus was not different from that of Prophet Adam, because the wording of the Arabic Text

in the two cases is almost identical: (See XXXVIII: 71-72). Besides this in verse 91, almost similar words have been used in regard to the birth of Jesus Christ. (See also IV:171 and LXVI:12). Allah Himself has stated that the birth of Prophet Jesus was just like the birth of Prophet Adam: "In the sight of Allah, the case of the birth of Jesus is like that of Adam, whom He created out of dust and said, 'Be', and he was." (III: 59). In the light of these verses, we may conclude that Allah uses words like: "We breathed into him or her of Our spirit" for miraculous births. (For fuller details please see IV: E.N's 212-213).

90. That is, "The mother and the son were not partners of God nor had any share whatever in Godhead, but were a Sign from among the Signs of God." (See XIX: E.N. 21 also).

91. In this verse, the addressees are the whole of mankind. It means: "O mankind, in reality all of you belonged to one community and had one and the same religion and all the Prophets brought one and the same Creed which was this: 'Allah alone is the Lord of all mankind: therefore they should worship Him alone.'" But afterwards the people corrupted this Creed and invented and adopted the things they liked and mixed their own theories, whims and practices in it. This brought into being countless communities and religions. Thus it is absolutely wrong to say that a particular Prophet was the founder of a particular religion and another of another, and so on. The very fact that different religions came into being at different periods of time, does not prove that the Prophets created these differences. It is obvious that the Prophets of God could not found different religions nor could they teach their followers to worship any beings other than Allah.

92. The Arabic Text of v. 95 may be interpreted in three ways:

(1) The community which is once destroyed by the scourge of Allah can never have a second or new life.

(2) After its destruction, its people are not given a second chance for their test: then they shall be presented in the Court of Allah for final judgment.

(3) When a community transgresses the last limits in its wickedness, injustices and disobedience, and Allah ordains to destroy it, no other chance of repentance is given to it because it becomes incapable of turning back to right guidance.

93. For the details about Gog and Magog, see E.N.'s 62 and 69 of Sūrah Al-Kahf (XVIII). They will be let loose in the sense that they will swoop down on the regions of the earth like a beast of prey which is set free from its cage suddenly.

"The time of the fulfilment of the true promise" will come on the eve of Resurrection and the appearance of Gog and Magog will be a sign of it. In a Tradition related in Muslim, by Huzaifah bin Asid Ghifārī, the Holy Prophet said, "Resurrection will not take place until ten signs appear:

(1) The smoke. (2) Dajjāl. (3) Dābbat-ul-Arḍ. (4) rising of the sun from the west. (5) coming down of Jesus, son of Mary. (6) sudden attack of Gog and Magog. (7-9) three land slides—one in the east, the second in the west and the third in Arabia. (10) the flare up of a great fire from Yaman which will drive the people to the Plain of Resurrection. In another Tradition the Holy Prophet stated that after the swoop of Gog and Magog, Resurrection will be so near that it may take place at any moment just as a pregnant woman might deliver the child at any moment, in the day or night, after her term has expired. But the reference to the appearance of Gog and Magog in the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth does not indicate that they will swoop on mankind jointly; it may be that they will clash against each other near the time of Resurrection and their mutual conflict might result in a universal catastrophe and destruction.

94. "We were heedless of this" contains a kind of excuse in it, as if to say, "The Prophets warned us of the Day of Resurrection but we were wrong-doers and paid no heed to their warning".

95. We learn from ttaditions that 'Abdullah bin Azza'arā raised an objection in this connection, saying, "According to this not only our deities but Prophets Jesus and 'Uzair and the Angels also will become fuel for Hell because they are also worshipped." The Holy Prophet replied, "Yes, everyone who would approve of his own worship instead of Allah's will go to Hell along with those who worshipped him." He meant to say, "There is no reason why Prophets Jesus and 'Uzair and the Angels should go to Hell because they never approved that they should be worshipped instead of Allah, and were not responsible for this, on the other hand, they taught people to worship Allah alone". Of course, those who tried to become deities and became partners in the *shirk* of others will certainly go to Hell along with their worshippers. Likewise those, who induced others to take deities other than Allah, will go to Hell. Satan comes under this category for he induces others to make deities. Thus it is Satan who is made the real deity whom they obey and commit *shirk*. Besides this, idols of stone and wood and other accessories of *shirk* will also be thrown into Hell along with the *mushriks so* that the latter should see that their deities were becoming a cause of the intensity of their torture of fire instead of becoming their intercessors.

96. The Arabic word زفير (*zafīr*) means 'hard breathing' because of excessive heat, hard work and weariness.

97. These will be the people who practised virtue and righteousness in this world. Allah has already promised that they will be kept safe from the torture and will be granted salvation.

98. That is, "The time of mustering and going before Allah will be very dreadful for the common people but the righteous people will have full peace of mind because everything will be happening according to their expectations. Their faith and the righteous deeds they did in the world, will help console them by the grace of Allah and, instead of grief and sorrow, they will be filled with the hope that they are going to get their promised rewards."

99. The interpretation of this verse has given rise to a great misunderstanding. Some people have tried to interpret it in a way, which is entirely opposed to the ideology of the Qur'ān. They interpret it to mean: "The inheritance of the kingdom and the resources of the earth are given to the righteous people alone in this worldly life, and upon them alone Allah showers His favours and blessings." Then they apply this formula conversely and conclude that the gift of this inheritance of the earth is the sole criterion between the "righteous" and the "unrighteous" men. The righteous is the one who inherits the sovereignty of the earth and the unrighteous the one who is deprived of this inheritance. But when they apply their formula in the historical perspective, they find that most of those nations which have inherited the earth in the past and are inheriting it today, have been and are mostly disbelieving, *mushriks*, atheists and immoral, and that these are not the characteristics of the righteous people when judged by the criterion put forward by the Qur'ān. From Nimrod and Pharaoh to the present day communist despots, who have been inheriting the earth, were and are unbelievers and the enemies of God and therefore could not be considered righteous, according to the Qurānic formula. Faced with this situation, they start arguing that there must be some error in the conception of the "righteous" which should be such as would fit all the inheritors of the earth whether they were Caliphs like Abū Bakr Siddīq and 'Umar Farūq or Chingez and Halākū. This research leads them to the Darwinian theory of the survival of the fittest and they assume fitness to be a synonym of "righteousness".

According to this new conception or definition of "righteousness", the proposition would plainly mean: "Any person, or a group of persons, who is capable of conquering and subduing countries by military force and has the ability to exploit the resources of the earth successfully is a 'righteous servant of Allah' and his achievement is a criterion and message of righteousness and worship for other human beings to follow. Consequently, if they fail to achieve the inheritance of the earth, they will neither be regarded among the righteous nor among the servants of Allah".

As a result of this interpretation of the verse, and this conception of "righteousness" and "service", they were confronted with the interpretation of some basic and fundamental articles of the Islamic Faith. For instance, according to the Qur'ān, no deed, howsoever good, could be regarded as righteous without belief in Allah, the Hereafter, the Prophets and the Books. Moreover, the invitation of the Prophet to accept the moral and legal systems of Islam would become meaningless. Then these people could not reconcile their interpretation with the teachings of the Qur'ān that obedience to the Holy Prophet and the Commandments of Allah was absolutely essential for a righteous man and that the lack of this would make a person a disbeliever and a transgressor who deserved the wrath of Allah. If they had faced this problem boldly and honestly, they would have realized that their interpretation was wrong, but instead of this, they very impudently changed the universally accepted conception of Faith, Islam, *Tauḥīd*, Prophethood and the Hereafter in order to make these basic articles of the Faith fit in with their interpretation of this verse. Thus, they turned all the teachings of the Qur'ān upside down and tampered with its meaning without the least hesitation.

Now let us consider their interpretation and point out its errors:

(1) Their interpretation contradicts the teachings of the Qur'ān as a whole, for according to these virtue, piety and goodness do not comprise material progress and ability to rule over the land. Moreover, if the Qurānic word "Sālih" (virtuous, good) is regarded as synonymous with "Ṣāhib Ṣalāḥiyyat" *(i.e.* possessor of fitness and competence), this one verse will clash with the whole of the Qur'ān.

(2) They isolate this verse from its context and ascribe to it whatever meaning they like; otherwise, they would have seen that the "inheritance" referred to in the context is the promise to the Believers which is to be fulfilled in the Hereafter, and thus has nothing to do with inheritance in this world.

If this verse is interpreted in the context in which it occurs, it becomes very plain from the preceding verses that this promise to the righteous people holds good for the life in the Hereafter. This thing has been made more explicit in XXXIX: 73-74. According to this passage (which is definitely about life in the Hereafter), when the pious people will enter into Paradise, they will say: "God be praised, Who has fulfilled His promise and made us heirs to the land."

Now let us consider this matter in the light of the Psalms (whether the Book of Psalms in the Bible is genuine or tampered with, because the real Psalms of Prophet David are nowhere available) to which this verse refers. According to 37:9-29: "....evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked *shall* not *be:* yea, thou

shalt diligently consider his place, and it *shall* not *be*. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace....and their inheritance shall be for ever....The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever." Thus the Psalms also confirm word for word verse 105. It is obvious that "(They shall) dwell therein for ever" refers to the life in the Hereafter.

As regards the inheritance of the earth in this worldly life, Allah gives it as a heritage to those of His servants whom He pleases (VII:128), irrespective of whether they are believers or disbelievers, righteous or wicked, not as a reward but for their trial. "....Your Lord will make you rulers on the earth, and then He will see how you conduct yourselves." (VII:129). The heritage of the earth in this worldly life is neither permanent nor everlasting. It is merely bestowed as a trial for different communities. On the other hand, the heritage of the "land" referred to in v. 105 is permanent and for ever and, according to the Qur'ān, it will be bestowed on the basis of this formula: "The land belongs to Allah and He will make only His righteous servants heirs to it not for their test but as a permanent reward for the righteous attitude they adopted in this worldly life."

100. This verse (107) can also be translated as: "We have sent you only as a blessing for the people of the world". In both cases it will mean that the appointment of the Holy Prophet is indeed a blessing and mercy of Allah to the whole world. This is because he aroused the neglectful world from its heedlessness and gave it the knowledge of the criterion between truth and falsehood, and warned it very clearly of both the ways of salvation and ruin. This fact has been stated here to tell the disbelievers of Makkah that they were quite wrong in their estimate of the Holy Prophet that he was an affliction and distress for them because they said, "This man has sown seeds of discard among our clans and separated near relatives from each other." They have been told here, "O foolish people, you are wrong to presume that he is an affliction for you; but he is in reality a blessing and mercy of Allah for you."

101. That is, "I do not know the time and the form of the punishment of Allah for your rejection of the Message. It may come at any time in any shape."

102. This refers to their secret schemes, plots and their whispering campaign which have been mentioned in v. 3. There, too, the Prophet had said, "My Lord has the knowledge of everything that is said in the heavens or the earth for He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing". (v. 4). This was to warn them that they would be taken to task for these things, too.

103. This was a "trial" because the delay in the "punishment" was deluding them into believing "All the things put forward by the Prophet are false: had he been a true Prophet of Allah we would have been punished long before this for our disbelief." They did not realize that the reason for the delay was that Allah willed to give them respite for mending their ways.



XXII

AL-ḤAJJ

الحج

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

In the name of Allāh, the Merciful, the Compassionate

INTRODUCTION

Name

This Sūrah takes its name from v. 27.

Period of Revelation

As this Sūrah contains the characteristics of both the Makkī and the Madanī Sūrahs, the commentators have differed as to its period of revelation, but in the light of its style and themes we are of the opinion that a part of it (vv 1-24) was sent down in the last stage of the Makkī life of the Holy Prophet a little before migration and the rest (vv. 25-78) during the first stage of his Madanī life. That is why this Sūrah combines the characteristics of both the Makkī and the Madanī Sūrahs.

The sudden change of the style from v. 25 shows that probably vv. 25-78 were sent down in the month of Ẓul-Ḥijjah in the very first year after *Hijrah*. This is indicated by vv. 25-41 and confirmed by the occasion of the revelation of vv. 39-40. It appears that the month of Ẓul-Ḥijjah must have brought to the immigrants nostalgic memories of their homes in Makkah and naturally they must have thought of their Sacred City and of their Ḥajj congregation there, and grieved to think that the *mushrik* Quraish had debarred them from visiting the Sacred Mosque. Therefore, they might even have been praying for and expecting Divine permission to wage war against those tyrants who had expelled them from their homes and deprived them of visiting the House of Allah and made it difficult for them to follow the way of Islam. It was at this psychological occasion that these verses were sent down. That is why the purpose for which *Masjid-al-Ḥarām* was built has been specifically mentioned. It has been made plain that Ḥajj (pilgrimage) had been enjoined for the worship of One Allah. But it is an irony that afterwards it had been dedicated to the rituals of *shirk* and the worshippers of One

Allah had been debarred from visiting it. Therefore, permission for waging war against those tyrants has been given to oust them from there and to establish the righteous way of life for establishing virtue and eradicating evil. According to Ibn 'Abbās, Mujāhid, 'Urwah bin Zubair, Zaid bin Aslam, Muqātil bin Ḥayyān, Qatādah and other great commentators, v. 39 is the first verse that grants the Muslims permission to wage war. Collections of Ḥadīth and books on the life of the Holy Prophet confirm that after this permission actual preparations for war were started and the first expedition was sent to the coast of the Red Sea in Ṣafar A.H. 2, which is known as the Expedition of Waddān or Al-Abwā'.

Subject Matter and Theme

This Sūrah is addressed to: (1) The *mushriks* of Makkah, (2) the wavering Muslims, and (3) the True Believers. The *mushriks* have been warned in a forceful manner to this effect: "You have obdurately and impudently persisted in your ideas of ignorance and trusted in your deities instead of Allah, though they possess no power at all and you have repudiated the Divine Messenger. Now you will meet the same end as has been the doom of those like you before. You have only harmed yourselves by rejecting Our Prophet and by persecuting the best element of your own community; now your false deities shall not be able to save you from the wrath of God". At the same time, they have been admonished time and again for their creed of *shirk* and sound arguments have been given in favour of *Tauḥīd* and the Hereafter.

The wavering Muslims, who had embraced Islam but were not prepared to endure any hardship in its way, have been admonished to this effect: "What is this faith of yours? On the one hand, you are ready to believe in Allah and become His servants provided you are given peace and prosperity but, on the other, if you meet with afflictions and hardships in His Way, you discard your Allah and cease to remain His servants. You should bear in mind that this wavering attitude of yours cannot avert those misfortunes and losses which Allah has ordained for you."

As regards the true Believers, they have been addressed in two ways: (1) in a general way so as to include the common people of Arabia also, and (2) in an exclusive way:

(1) The Believers have been told that the *mushriks* of Makkah had no right to debar them from visiting the Holy Mosque. They had no right to prevent anyone from performing Ḥajj because the Holy Mosque was not their private property. This objection was not only justified but it also acted as an effective political weapon against the Quraish. For it posed this question to the other clans of Arabia: Were the Quraish mere attendants of the Holy Mosque or its owners? It implied that if they succeeded in debarring the Muslims from Ḥajj without any protest from others, they would feel encouraged in future to debar from Ḥajj and 'Umrah the people of any other clan, who happened to have strained relations with the Quraish. In order to emphasize this point, the history of the construction of the Holy Mosque has been cited to show that it was built by Prophet Abraham by the Command of Allah and he had invited all the peoples to perform Ḥajj there. That is why those coming from outside had enjoyed equal rights with the local people from the very beginning. It has also been made clear that that House had not been built for the rituals of *shirk* but for the worship of One Allah. Thus it was sheer tyranny that the worship of Allah was being forbidden there while the worship of idols enjoyed full license.

(2) In order to counteract the tyranny of the Quraish, the Muslims were allowed to fight with them. They were also given instructions to adopt the right and just attitude as and when they acquired power to rule in the land. Moreover, the Believers have been officially given the name of "Muslims", saying, "You are the real heirs to Abraham and you have been chosen to become witnesses of the Truth before mankind. Therefore you should establish Ṣalāt and pay the Zakāt dues in order to become the best models of righteous life and perform Jihād for propagating the Word of Allah." (vv. 41, 77, 78.)

It will be worth while to keep in view the introductions to Chapters II (Al-Baqarah) and VIII (Al-Anfāl).

سُوْرَةُ الْحَجِّ (٢٢) مَدَنِيَّةٌ (١٠٣) رُكُوْعَاتُهَا ١٠ اٰيَاتُهَا ٧٨

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوْا رَبَّكُمْ ۚ اِنَّ زَلْزَلَةَ السَّاعَةِ شَيْءٌ عَظِيْمٌ ۝١ يَوْمَ تَرَوْنَهَا
تَذْهَلُ كُلُّ مُرْضِعَةٍ عَمَّآ اَرْضَعَتْ وَتَضَعُ كُلُّ ذَاتِ حَمْلٍ حَمْلَهَا وَ
تَرَى النَّاسَ سُكٰرٰى وَمَا هُمْ بِسُكٰرٰى وَلٰكِنَّ عَذَابَ اللّٰهِ شَدِيْدٌ ۝٢ وَمِنَ
النَّاسِ مَنْ يُّجَادِلُ فِى اللّٰهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَّيَتَّبِعُ كُلَّ شَيْطٰنٍ مَّرِيْدٍ ۝٣ كُتِبَ
عَلَيْهِ اَنَّهٗ مَنْ تَوَلَّاهُ فَاَنَّهٗ يُضِلُّهٗ وَيَهْدِيْهِ اِلٰى عَذَابِ السَّعِيْرِ ۝٤ يٰٓاَيُّهَا
النَّاسُ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِىْ رَيْبٍ مِّنَ الْبَعْثِ فَاِنَّا خَلَقْنٰكُمْ مِّنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ
نُّطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ عَلَقَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ مُّضْغَةٍ مُّخَلَّقَةٍ وَّغَيْرِ مُخَلَّقَةٍ لِّنُبَيِّنَ
لَكُمْ ۭ وَنُقِرُّ فِى الْاَرْحَامِ مَا نَشَآءُ اِلٰٓى اَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ثُمَّ نُخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلًا
ثُمَّ لِتَبْلُغُوْٓا اَشُدَّكُمْ ۚ وَمِنْكُمْ مَّنْ يُّتَوَفّٰى وَمِنْكُمْ مَّنْ يُّرَدُّ اِلٰٓى اَرْذَلِ الْعُمُرِ
لِكَيْلَا يَعْلَمَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ عِلْمٍ شَيْـًٔا ۭ وَتَرَى الْاَرْضَ هَامِدَةً فَاِذَآ اَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْهَا
الْمَاۗءَ اهْتَزَّتْ وَرَبَتْ وَاَنْۢبَتَتْ مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجٍۢ بَهِيْجٍ ۝٥ ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَ
الْحَقُّ وَاَنَّهٗ يُحْيِ الْمَوْتٰى وَاَنَّهٗ عَلٰي كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ۝٦ وَّاَنَّ السَّاعَةَ
اٰتِيَةٌ لَّا رَيْبَ فِيْهَا ۙ وَاَنَّ اللّٰهَ يَبْعَثُ مَنْ فِى الْقُبُوْرِ ۝٧ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ
مَنْ يُّجَادِلُ فِى اللّٰهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَّلَا هُدًى وَّلَا كِتٰبٍ مُّنِيْرٍ ۝٨ ثَانِيَ
عِطْفِهٖ لِيُضِلَّ عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ ۭ لَهٗ فِى الدُّنْيَا خِزْيٌ وَّنُذِيْقُهٗ يَوْمَ
الْقِيٰمَةِ عَذَابَ الْحَرِيْقِ ۝٩ ذٰلِكَ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدٰكَ وَاَنَّ اللّٰهَ لَيْسَ بِظَلَّامٍ
لِّلْعَبِيْدِ ۝١٠ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَّعْبُدُ اللّٰهَ عَلٰي حَرْفٍ ۚ فَاِنْ اَصَابَهٗ خَيْرُ

XXII

AL-ḤAJJ

الحج

Verses: 78 *Revealed at Al-Madīnah*

In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate

O people, save yourselves from the wrath of your Lord: the fact 1-2
is that the earthquake of the Resurrection is a terrible thing.[1] On the Day you behold it, you will see that every suckling woman will forsake her suckling,[2] and every pregnant female will cast her burden, and the people will appear to you to be intoxicated, though they will not be drunk, but the dreadful torment from Allah will be such (as to make them reel like drunkards[3]).

There are some among the people, who indulge in discussions 3-7
about Allah without any knowledge[4] and follow every rebellious Satan, concerning whom it has been decreed that he will mislead whoever takes him for a friend and will show him the way to the torment of Hell. O people, if you have any doubt about Life after death, you should know that We first created you of clay, then of a sperm-drop[5], then of a clot of blood, then of a lump of flesh, shaped or shapeless.[6] (We are telling you this) so that We may make the reality plain to you. And We make those (sperm drops), which We will, remain in the wombs for a fixed period, then We bring you forth as a child; then (We nourish you) so that you may attain to your full youth. And there may be among you one who is recalled earlier and one who is returned to the most abject age so that he should know nothing even after knowing all he could.[7] And you see the land lying dry and barren, but as soon as We send down rain water upon it, it stirs (to life), and swells and brings forth every kind of luxuriant vegetation. This is so because Allah is the Truth.[8] He brings the dead to life and He has power over everything and (this is a proof that) the Hour of Resurrection is sure to come and there is absolutely no doubt about it, and most surely He will raise up those who are lying in the graves.[9]

8-10 There are still others who arrogantly[10] dispute about Allah without any knowledge[11] and guidance[12] and illuminating Book,[13] so that they may lead people astray from Allah's Way.[14] Such a one shall incur disgrace in this world, and on the Day of Resurrection, We will make him taste the torment of the Fire, saying, "This is the future you have prepared for yourself with your own hands". In fact, Allah is not unjust to His servants.

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1. According to the early commentators, this earthquake will be a prelude to Resurrection. This will probably take place when the earth will begin to rotate in the reverse order, and the sun will rise in the west. In a lengthy Tradition reported by Ibn Jarīr, Ṭabarānī and Ibn Abī Ḥātim from Abū Hurairah, the Holy Prophet has stated that when the first Trumpet will be blown, there will be a general confusion; at the second all people will die and at the third they will be brought back to life and presented before Allah. At the first blowing of the Trumpet, the earth will begin to rock like a boat which is beaten about by huge waves, or like a hanging lamp which is moved from side to side by a strong wind.

This condition has been depicted in the Qur'ān at several other places. For instance LVI: 6; LXIX: 13-14; LXXIII: 14, 17-18; LXXIX : 6-9 and XCIX: 1-3.

According to other commentators, this earthquake will occur when the dead will be brought back to life and presented before their Lord. Though this is supported by some Traditions, we prefer the first interpretation (in spite of the fact that the Tradition reported by Abū Hurairah is "weak") because that is supported by clear verses of the Qur'ān.

2. This is to show the intensity and horror of the earthquake. At that time there will be so much confusion and terror that mothers will forsake their dear children at the very time they will be suckling them.

3. It should be noted that it is not meant to depict here the condition of the Resurrection but to impress upon the people the dreadful torment of the Hour in order to admonish them to mend their ways. This is supported by the subsequent passage.

4. They do not indulge in discussions or disputes about the Being or existence of Allah but about His rights and powers and His Revelations, as is evident from the succeeding passage. When the Holy Prophet tried to convince them of *Tauhīd* and Resurrection, inevitably the dispute arose whether there is One Allah, the sole Sovereign or there were other partners as well in His Godhead and whether He has the power to bring about Resurrection, etc.

5. "..... created you .....sperm-drop": The first man Adam was created directly from clay and after him the process of procreation started by means of sperm-drop. This has been stated in XXXII: 7-8 as well. It may also mean that man is created from sperm-drop but his body is made of those elements which are all available in the earth.

6. This refers to the different stages of development of the child in the womb of its mother. This description is based on observation and not on scientific research, and there was no need for it for the purpose for which reference to this has been made here.

7. That is, "In old age man is again reverted to the same condition in which he was in childhood. He loses his senses and knows little or nothing like a child".

8. The Arabic Text may mean three things:

(1) Allah is telling the Truth and you are wrong in presuming that there is no possibility of life-after-death.

(2) Allah's existence is not merely a supposition but it is a Reality. He is not only the First Cause but has supreme authority, and is conducting every affair in the universe according to His Will, Knowledge and Wisdom.

(3) All His designs and works are based on Truth and are, therefore, serious, meaningful and full of wisdom.

9. In this passage, different stages of the life of man, the effects of rain on the earth and the growth of vegetation have been cited as pointers to five realities:

(1) "Allah alone is the Truth".

(2) "He brings the dead to life".

(3) "He has power over everything".

(4) "The Day of Resurrection and the end of the world is inevitable".

(5) Most surely Allah will bring back to life all the people who have died".

Let us now consider how these signs point to the above five realities:

(1) "Allah is the Truth": In order to prove this, let us first take the case of man. All the stages of his development are a clear proof that Allah has designed them with wisdom. He takes his birth from a sperm-drop which itself is produced in a wonderful manner. The food, which a man takes, turns into hair, flesh, bones and a part of it is turned into semen, which is potentially

[Contd. on p. 190

اطْمَاَنَّ بِهٖ ۚ وَاِنْ اَصَابَتْهُ فِتْنَةُ ۨ انْقَلَبَ عَلٰى وَجْهِهٖ ۚ خَسِرَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْاٰخِرَةَ ۚ
ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْخُسْرَانُ الْمُبِيْنُ ﴿١١﴾ يَدْعُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ مَا لَا يَضُرُّهٗ وَمَا لَا
يَنْفَعُهٗ ۚ ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الضَّلٰلُ الْبَعِيْدُ ﴿١٢﴾ يَدْعُوْا لَمَنْ ضَرُّهٗۤ اَقْرَبُ مِنْ نَّفْعِهٖ ۚ
لَبِئْسَ الْمَوْلٰى وَلَبِئْسَ الْعَشِيْرُ ﴿١٣﴾ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُدْخِلُ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ
جَنّٰتٍ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ ۚ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَفْعَلُ مَا يُرِيْدُ ﴿١٤﴾ مَنْ كَانَ يَظُنُّ
اَنْ لَّنْ يَّنْصُرَهُ اللّٰهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْاٰخِرَةِ فَلْيَمْدُدْ بِسَبَبٍ اِلَى السَّمَآءِ ثُمَّ
لْيَقْطَعْ فَلْيَنْظُرْ هَلْ يُذْهِبَنَّ كَيْدُهٗ مَا يَغِيْظُ ﴿١٥﴾ وَكَذٰلِكَ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ اٰيٰتٍۭ بَيِّنٰتٍ ۙ
وَّاَنَّ اللّٰهَ يَهْدِيْ مَنْ يُّرِيْدُ ﴿١٦﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَالَّذِيْنَ هَادُوْا وَالصّٰبِـُٔوْنَ
وَالنَّصٰرٰى وَالْمَجُوْسَ وَالَّذِيْنَ اَشْرَكُوْۤا ۖ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَفْصِلُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ ۚ
اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيْدٌ ﴿١٧﴾ اَلَمْ تَرَ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ يَسْجُدُ لَهٗ مَنْ فِي
السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْاَرْضِ وَالشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ وَالنُّجُوْمُ وَالْجِبَالُ وَ
الشَّجَرُ وَالدَّوَآبُّ وَكَثِيْرٌ مِّنَ النَّاسِ ۭ وَكَثِيْرٌ حَقَّ عَلَيْهِ الْعَذَابُ ۭ وَمَنْ
يُّهِنِ اللّٰهُ فَمَا لَهٗ مِنْ مُّكْرِمٍ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَفْعَلُ مَا يَشَآءُ ﴿١٨﴾ هٰذٰنِ خَصْمٰنِ ع ١٥
اخْتَصَمُوْا فِيْ رَبِّهِمْ ۡ فَالَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا قُطِّعَتْ لَهُمْ ثِيَابٌ مِّنْ نَّارٍ يُّصَبُّ مِنْ
فَوْقِ رُءُوْسِهِمُ الْحَمِيْمُ ﴿١٩﴾ يُصْهَرُ بِهٖ مَا فِيْ بُطُوْنِهِمْ وَالْجُلُوْدُ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَلَهُمْ
مَّقَامِعُ مِنْ حَدِيْدٍ ﴿٢١﴾ كُلَّمَاۤ اَرَادُوْۤا اَنْ يَّخْرُجُوْا مِنْهَا مِنْ غَمٍّ اُعِيْدُوْا فِيْهَا ۠ ٢
وَذُوْقُوْا عَذَابَ الْحَرِيْقِ ﴿٢٢﴾ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُدْخِلُ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ ٤٢
جَنّٰتٍ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ يُحَلَّوْنَ فِيْهَا مِنْ اَسَاوِرَ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ وَّ ١٩
لُؤْلُؤًا ۭ وَلِبَاسُهُمْ فِيْهَا حَرِيْرٌ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَهُدُوْۤا اِلَى الطَّيِّبِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ ۚ وَهُدُوْۤا

And there is a type of man who serves Allah standing on the borders (of the Faith);[15] if some good comes to him, he is satisfied (with his Faith), but if he encounters a trial, he turns his back (upon it).[16] Thus he loses both this world and the Hereafter: this is the manifest loss.[17] Then, instead of Allah, he invokes those who can do him neither harm nor good: this is the last extremity of deviation. He invokes those who are more likely to do him harm than good.[18] What an evil guardian he chooses and what an evil companion![19] As for those who believed and did righteous deeds,[20] Allah will admit them to Gardens underneath which canals will be flowing. Allah does whatever He wills.[21] As for the one who presumes that Allah will neither help him in this world nor in the Hereafter, he should (if he can) ascend the sky by a rope and cut a hole into it and then peep through it and see for himself whether any device of his can avert his doom, which he abhors[22] —And We have sent down this Qur'ān with clear teachings such as these, but Allah alone guides whomsoever He wills. 11-16

As regards those who believed[23] and those who became Jews[24] and the Sabaeans[25] and the Christians[26] and the Magians[27] and those who committed *shirk*,[28] Allah will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection,[29] for everything is in the sight of Allah. Do you not see that everything in the heavens and the earth bows down before Allah?[30-31] and so do the sun, and the moon and the stars, and the trees and the beasts and a large number of the people[32] and even a large number of those who have deserved the torment.[33] And the one whom Allah degrades and disgraces has none to make him worthy of honour;[34] Allah does whatever He wills.[35] 17-18

These are the two parties who have disputed about their Lord.[36] As regards those who have disbelieved, garments of fire have already been cut out for them ;[37] over their heads shall be poured boiling water, which will melt not only their skins but also the inner parts of their bellies and there shall be maces of iron to lash them. Whenever in their anguish they will try to come out of Hell, they shall be driven back into it (with the rebuke): "Taste now the torment of burning." As regards those, who believed and did righteous works, Allah will admit them into Gardens underneath which canals will be flowing: there they will be decorated with golden bracelets and pearls,[38] and their garments will be of silk: (This is because) they were guided to accept the pure 19-24

Word,[39] and shown the Way of the All Praiseworthy.[40]

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capable of producing millions of human beings. It is the Wise and True God Who decides which of these millions of seeds from the semen should be utilized to make a woman pregnant by mixing the seed with the egg-cell. This insignificant thing turns into a living child in nine months in the womb of the mother. If we consider the different stages of the child's birth we come to the inevitable conclusion that all these have been designed by the True, Ever-Living Designer. For it is He Who decides whether it should be a male or a female, seeing or blind, etc. Then it is He Who decides how long a child is destined to live. All these things are a clear proof that Allah alone is the Truth.

(2) "He brings the dead to life": Even a little thinking on the right lines will convince every sensible and honest man that this process of bringing the dead to life is continuously going on before our eyes. Every human being has been created from a "dead" sperm-drop. Then he gets life from "dead things" like food containing dead matter like coal, iron, lime, salts, gases, which help make him a living human being. Then let us consider our surroundings. Seeds of different things which had been scattered here and there by the wind and birds, and the roots of different kinds of vegetation which lay rotten and dead in the soil, spring up to life as soon as there occurs a sprinkling of rain water. This process of the dead coming to life is observed during every rainy season year after year.

(3) "Allah has power over everything": There are people who believe that no doubt Allah created everything and is governing the universe, but He cannot do anything in the future in addition to or apart from this. This is because they do not observe the phenomena of His powers which have been and are appearing every moment. They do not realize that if man—His creation —can perform wonderful feats of science which could not even be dreamt of in the former ages, why should Allah alone be held as having only limited powers ?

(4) "The Day of Resurrection is inevitable" and "Most surely Allah will bring back to life all the people who have died": These two are the rational corollaries of the preceding three premises. Allah is All-Powerful and therefore can bring about Resurrection at any moment He wills. He can also bring back to life all the dead people just as He brought to life human beings out of nothing in the first instance. As He is All-Wise, He has not created human beings without any object and purpose. He will judge their worldly lives in accordance with the object and purpose for which He created them. He will call them to account for everything He entrusted to them. This is very simple: even human beings ask one another to render an account of the

property etc. they entrust to others. Likewise, Allah's wisdom requires to call every human being to account for the things entrusted to him. Then human nature also demands that there should be a differentiation between good and bad, and it expects the reward of good works and dreads the punishment of bad deeds. That is why the people have set up judicial courts. Thus man cannot imagine that the Creator will not call him to account for the things, powers and faculties, etc. which He has entrusted to him. Therefore common sense confirms that Allah will hold the Last Judgment so that every one should get his due reward and his due punishment.

10. That is, they are so stiff-necked, proud, arrogant, obdurate and obstinate that they do not pay any heed to "Admonition".

11. "Knowledge": that personal information which is gained directly through observation and experience.

12. "Guidance": that information which is gained by reasoning or through another person who has knowledge.

13. "Illuminating Book": Source of information gained from Divine Revelation.

14. V. 3 mentioned those people who have themselves gone astray, but v. 9 mentions those who have not only deviated from the Right Way themselves but are also bent upon misleading others from it.

15. This type of man is a time server, who stands on the boundary line between Islam and *kufr so* that he may join the winning side whether it be Islam or *kufr*.

16. As this type of man has a weak character and wavers between *kufr* and Islam he becomes the slave of his "self". He accepts Islam for the sake of self-interest: he is faithful to it if all his wishes are fulfilled and he has a life of ease and comfort; he is well-pleased with his Allah and is "firm" in his faith. On the contrary, if his "faith" demands some sacrifice from him, or he is visited by some affliction, or encounters some hardship and loss in the way of Allah, or he does not have his way, he begins to waver about the Godhead of Allah and the Prophethood of the Messenger and becomes sceptical about everything of the "Faith". Then he is ready to bow down before any power from which he expects some benefit and security from loss.

17. This is a great moral proposition that has been stated concisely. The fact is that the wavering man remains a loser in this world as well as in the Next World, and fares worse even than an unbeliever. The unbeliever applies himself exclusively to the benefits of this world and becomes more or less successful in his

object because he is not handicapped by the fear of Allah, accountability of the Hereafter and restrictions of Divine Law. Likewise a true believer follows the way of Allah with fortitude and perseverance and may as well become successful in this world, but even if he loses it altogether, he is assured of success in the Next World. But the "wavering Muslim" becomes a loser both in this world and in the Next World because he is handicapped by doubt and indecision and cannot make his choice between the two worlds. As he cannot decide whether there is Allah and the Hereafter, he cannot apply himself exclusively to the worldly affairs with that single-mindedness which the unbeliever enjoys. And when he thinks of Allah and the Hereafter, the allurements of this world and the fear of the disadvantages here and the abhorrence of observing the Divine restrictions do not let him apply himself exclusively to the demands of the Hereafter. This conflict between "God-worship" and "World-worship" makes him a loser in this world as well as in the next.

18. Vv. 12-13 clarify two things about the deities whom the *mushriks* invoke. Firstly, they can do a person neither any good nor any harm; nay, it is more probable that they do harm rather than good. For when the *mushrik* invokes other deities than Allah, he loses his faith forthwith. Secondly, the *mushrik* himself knows that there is no guarantee or probability of any good from his 'god' who is utterly helpless and powerless. As regards the occasional grant of his request through his god, this is done by Allah merely to test his faith.

19. That is, the one, who leads a person to the way of *shirk*, is the worst guardian and the worst comrade, whether he be a human being or a satan.

20. "Those who believed and did righteous deeds" are quite different from the wavering Muslims, for they have a firm belief in Allah, His Prophet and the Hereafter. Therefore they follow the way of Truth both in prosperity and in adversity.

21. That is, "Allah's powers are unlimited: He may bestow anything on anyone He wills in this world or in the Hereafter or in both, and bar anything from anyone. None has the power to interfere with what He wills and does".

22. There is a great divergence of opinion about the exact meaning of this verse. Some of the interpretations are:

(1) One who presumes that Allah will not help him (Muḥammad: Allah's peace be upon him), he should hang himself by a rope from the ceiling.

(2) One who presumes that Allah will not help him (Muḥammad: Allah's peace be upon him), he should ascend the sky by a rope and try to stop Allah's help.

(3) One who presumes that Allah will not help him (Muḥammad: Allah's peace be upon him), he should ascend the sky and stop the process of Revelations.

(4) One who presumes that Allah will not help him (Muḥammad: Allah's peace be upon him), he should ascend the sky and stop his provisions.

(5) The one who presumes that Allah will not help him (the presumer himself), he should hang himself by a rope from the ceiling of his house.

(6) The one who presumes that Allah will not help him (the presumer himself), he should try to ascend the sky to seek help.

The first four interpretations are obviously irrelevant to the context, and the last two, though they might fit in with the context, do not explain the real meaning of the verse. If we consider this in the context, it becomes obvious that the one who presumes is "the one who serves Allah standing on the border". This is to rebuke him, as if to say, "You may do whatever you can to change the decrees of Allah, but you will see that no device of yours can succeed, whether these decrees are favourable to your designs or unfavourable to them."

Obviously, "he should ascend the sky ..... cut a hole into it" has not been used in the literal but in the figurative sense.

23. This means the "Muslims" of every age who believed in the Prophets of Allah and His Books upto the time of Prophet Muḥammad (Allah's peace be upon him): they included both the sincere Muslims and the wavering Muslims.

24. See E.N. 72 of Chapter IV (An-Nisā').

25. "Sabaeans": In ancient times two sects were known by this title:

(1) The followers of Prophet John, who were found in upper Irāq in large numbers and practised baptism.

(2) The worshippers of stars, who ascribed their creed to Prophets Shiṯ and Idrīs (peace be upon them) and believed that the elements were governed by the planets and the planets by the angels. Their centre was at Harrān with branches spread all over Irāq. These people have been well known for their knowledge of philosophy and science and their achievements in medicine.

Probably here the first sect is referred to, because the second sect was not known by this name at the time the Qur'ān was revealed.

26. See E. N. 36 of Chapter V (Al-Mā'idah).

27. That is, the fire-worshippers of Iran, who believed in two gods —one of light and the other of darknesses—and regarded themselves as the followers of Zoroaster. Their creed and morals were so corrupted by Mazdak that a brother could easily enter into matrimony with his sister.

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إِلَىٰ صِرَاطِ الْحَمِيدِ ﴿٢٤﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَيَصُدُّونَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَ
الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ الَّذِي جَعَلْنَاهُ لِلنَّاسِ سَوَاءً الْعَاكِفُ فِيهِ وَالْبَادِ ۚ وَمَن
يُرِدْ فِيهِ بِإِلْحَادٍ بِظُلْمٍ نُّذِقْهُ مِنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَإِذْ بَوَّأْنَا لِإِبْرَاهِيمَ مَكَانَ
الْبَيْتِ أَن لَّا تُشْرِكْ بِي شَيْئًا وَطَهِّرْ بَيْتِيَ لِلطَّائِفِينَ وَالْقَائِمِينَ وَالرُّكَّعِ
السُّجُودِ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَأَذِّن فِي النَّاسِ بِالْحَجِّ يَأْتُوكَ رِجَالًا وَعَلَىٰ كُلِّ ضَامِرٍ يَأْتِينَ
مِن كُلِّ فَجٍّ عَمِيقٍ ﴿٢٧﴾ لِّيَشْهَدُوا مَنَافِعَ لَهُمْ وَيَذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ فِي أَيَّامٍ
مَّعْلُومَاتٍ عَلَىٰ مَا رَزَقَهُم مِّن بَهِيمَةِ الْأَنْعَامِ ۖ فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا وَأَطْعِمُوا الْبَائِسَ
الْفَقِيرَ ﴿٢٨﴾ ثُمَّ لْيَقْضُوا تَفَثَهُمْ وَلْيُوفُوا نُذُورَهُمْ وَلْيَطَّوَّفُوا بِالْبَيْتِ الْعَتِيقِ ﴿٢٩﴾
ذَٰلِكَ ۖ وَمَن يُعَظِّمْ حُرُمَاتِ اللَّهِ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّهُ عِندَ رَبِّهِ ۗ وَأُحِلَّتْ لَكُمُ
الْأَنْعَامُ إِلَّا مَا يُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ فَاجْتَنِبُوا الرِّجْسَ مِنَ الْأَوْثَانِ وَاجْتَنِبُوا قَوْلَ
الزُّورِ ﴿٣٠﴾ حُنَفَاءَ لِلَّهِ غَيْرَ مُشْرِكِينَ بِهِ ۚ وَمَن يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَكَأَنَّمَا خَرَّ مِنَ
السَّمَاءِ فَتَخْطَفُهُ الطَّيْرُ أَوْ تَهْوِي بِهِ الرِّيحُ فِي مَكَانٍ سَحِيقٍ ﴿٣١﴾ ذَٰلِكَ ۖ وَ
مَن يُعَظِّمْ شَعَائِرَ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّهَا مِن تَقْوَى الْقُلُوبِ ﴿٣٢﴾ لَكُمْ فِيهَا مَنَافِعُ إِلَىٰ
أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ثُمَّ مَحِلُّهَا إِلَىٰ الْبَيْتِ الْعَتِيقِ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ جَعَلْنَا مَنسَكًا
لِّيَذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ عَلَىٰ مَا رَزَقَهُم مِّن بَهِيمَةِ الْأَنْعَامِ ۗ فَإِلَٰهُكُمْ إِلَٰهٌ وَاحِدٌ
فَلَهُ أَسْلِمُوا ۗ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُخْبِتِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾ الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَ
الصَّابِرِينَ عَلَىٰ مَا أَصَابَهُمْ وَالْمُقِيمِي الصَّلَاةِ ۙ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾
وَالْبُدْنَ جَعَلْنَاهَا لَكُم مِّن شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ لَكُمْ فِيهَا خَيْرٌ ۖ فَاذْكُرُوا اسْمَ
اللَّهِ عَلَيْهَا صَوَافَّ ۖ فَإِذَا وَجَبَتْ جُنُوبُهَا فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا وَأَطْعِمُوا الْقَانِعَ وَ

Those who disbelieved,[41] and are (now) debarring others from the Way of Allah and from visiting that Sacred Mosque,[42] which We have assigned to all mankind with equal rights for its dwellers and the out-siders,[43] (surely deserve punishment); whosoever shall deviate from righteousness, and adopt in this (Sacred Mosque) the way of iniquity,[44] We will make him taste a painful chastisement. 25

Recall to mind the time when We assigned the site of this House (the Ka'bah) to Abraham, saying, "Do not associate anything as a partner with Me; keep My House clean and pure[45] for those who go round it and for those who stand and bow down and prostrate (in worship), and make a proclamation to the people to come to you for Hajj from far and near, on foot and on lean[46] camels[47] so that they may witness the benefits that have been made available here for them ;[48] and during the known appointed days, they should mention the name of Allah over the cattle He has provided them :[49] then they may eat their flesh and also give of it to the indigent and needy.[50] Then they should clean off their *"dirt"*[51] fulfil their vows[52] and go round the "Ancient House".[53] 26-29

This was (the object for which the Ka'bah was built,) and whoso observes the sanctity of the things ordained by Allah, it will be best for him in the sight of his Lord.[54] 30

And the cattle have been made lawful for you[55] except what has already been mentioned to you[56]: therefore guard yourselves against the filth of idols,[57] and refrain from all false things.[58] Become Allah's sincere servants, turning away from everything and without associating any partner with Him. for the one who associates a partner with Allah, becomes like him who has fallen from heaven. Then either the birds will snatch him away or the wind will blow him off to a place where he will be shattered into pieces.[59] 30-31

This is the fact of the matter: (so understand it well.) And whoso observe the sanctity of what have been ordained as Symbols[60] of Allah, do so because of the piety of the hearts.[61] 32

You are permitted to derive benefits from the cattle dedicated for sacrifice) up to an appointed time.[62] Thereafter the (lawful) place (of their sacrifice) is near the Ancient House.[63] 33

34-35 For every community We have prescribed a way of sacrifice so that the people (of that community) should pronounce the name of Allah over the cattle which He has provided for them,[64] (but one and the same object underlies all the different ways). So your Deity is One Deity: surrender to Him alone. And, O Prophet, give good news to those who adopt a humble way,[65] whose hearts are filled with awe when Allah is mentioned before them: who endure with fortitude any affliction that befalls them: and who establish *Salāt* and, expend of what We have given them.[66]

36 And We have included the camels[67] (dedicated for sacrifice) among the Symbols of Allah, for there is much good for you in them.[68] Therefore make them stand[69] and mention the name of Allah over them,[70] and when (after the sacrifice,) their backs lie still on the ground,[71] you may eat of their flesh and give of it to the contented ones and to those who ask for it. Thus have We subjected these animals to you so that you may be grateful.[72]

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28. That is, "The *mushriks* of Arabia and of other countries, who had no special name like those mentioned above."

29. That is, "Allah will pass His judgment on the Day of Resurrection in regard to all the differences and disputes which take place between different people and different religions and will decide which of them was right and which was wrong."

30. See E.N. 25 Chapter XIII (Ar-Ra'd) and E.N. 41 of Chapter XVI (An-Naḥl).

31. That is, "Angels, stars, planets, etc. and all the creation that exists in other parts of the universe, whether it is rational and possesses freedom of will and choice like man, or irrational like animals, vegetation, solid matter, air and light."

32. That is, "A large number of the people bow down before Allah not by compulsion but willingly. On the other hand, there are many other people who bow down before Him under compulsion along with everything else in the universe, but they deserve punishment because they refuse to obey Allah in those spheres of life in which they have the choice to obey or not to obey."

33. That is, though the Final Judgment will be passed on the Day of Resurrection, a discerning eye can see even today those "who have already deserved the torment." For instance, the man who rejects the Message of the open

book of Nature and the Message of the Prophets and adopts self-made false creeds and then disputes about them with the Believers, proves himself to be in manifest error in this world as well.

34. In this verse "honour" and "disgrace" mean the acceptance of the Truth and its rejection. It is obvious that the one who does not see manifest realities is doomed to disgrace: for Allah lets him attain what he desires and works for; and when Allah does not bestow on anyone the honour of following the Truth, there is none else who can bestow it on him

35. Here it is obligatory to perform a *sajdah* (prostration), which is agreed upon by all Jurists. For further details please See E.N. 157 of Chapter VII (Al-A'rāf).

36. Here all the disputants about Allah have been divided into two main categories in spite of their large numbers:

(1) Those who believe in the Message of the Prophets and adopt the righteous way of life.

(2) Those who reject their Message and follow different ways of disbelief, though they may have countless differences and disputes among themselves.

37. See v. 50 and E.N. 58 of Chapter XIV (Ibrāhīm) for explanation.

38. This is to show that they will be honoured like the kings and chiefs who used to wear ornaments of gold and jewelry in the period the Qur'ān was revealed.

39. "Pure Word": though it may imply every pure thing, here it refers to the basic articles of the Faith.

40. As already stated in the Introduction, the portion of the Sūrah, which was sent down at Makkah, comes to an end here. Though its style is clearly that of the Makkī Sūrahs and there is nothing to indicate that any part (or the whole) of it was revealed at al-Madīnah, yet the words, "these are the two parties", have given rise to the misunderstanding that this verse was revealed at al-Madīnah. Some commentators are of the opinion that the two parties referred to were the parties who met in the Battle of Badr, but there is nothing in the context to support this opinion. On the other hand, from the context in which these words occur, it becomes obvious that the two parties referred to were the "Believers and the disbelievers." For the conflict between Belief and disbelief has always been going on ever since the creation of man and will go on upto the Day of Resurrection.

Incidentally, this latter view helps prove that the Qur'ān is a continuous whole and every part of it is closely connected with the other: whereas the

comments mentioned earlier would imply that there is no continuous theme in the Qur'ān but different parts of it have been put together without rhyme or reason.

41. "Those who disbelieved" were the people who rejected the Message of the Holy Prophet. The subsequent theme clearly shows that they were the disbelievers of Makkah.

42. That is, "They debarred the Holy Prophet and his followers from performing Ḥajj and 'Umrah".

43. That is, "This is not exclusively the property of any person or family or clan but is meant for all mankind alike. Therefore none has any right to debar others from it."

In this connection, two questions have arisen among the Jurists of Islam:

(1) What is meant by the "Sacred Mosque" ? Does it mean the mosque itself or includes the whole "Inviolable Place" of Makkah?.

(2) What is meant by "equal rights" of its dwellers and the outsiders ?

According to some jurists it means the "Sacred Mosque" itself and not the whole of Inviolable Makkah. They base this opinion on the apparent wording of the Qur'ān, and say that by "equal rights" is meant equal rights only in regard to worship in it. They cite a Tradition of the Holy Prophet to support their opinion. He said: "O children of 'Abd Manāf, those of you who will have authority over the affairs of the people, should not stop anybody from moving round the Ka'bah or from offering prayers in it at any time of the day or night."

Imām Shāfi'ī and others who support this view are of the opinion that it is wrong to conclude from this verse that the rights of the dwellers and the outsiders are equal in every respect, but they are equal only in regard to the right of worship and in nothing else, for the people of Makkah owned the lands and the houses of Makkah before Islam and also after it. So much so that during the time of Caliph 'Umar, the house of Safwān bin Umayyah was actually purchased from him for the purpose of making a prison in Makkah.

The others who hold that the "Sacred Mosque" refers to the whole of the "Inviolable Place" of Makkah derive their authority from verses 196 and 217 of Chapter II (Al-Baqarah). They argue that Ḥajj is not performed only in the Ka'bah (the Sacred Mosque), but the pilgrim has to visit Minā, Muzdalifah, 'Arafat, etc. for the performance of Ḥajj rites. Thus, they hold that equality is not merely in regard to worship in the "Sacred Mosque", but in regard to all other rights in Makkah. As this place has been appointed for Ḥajj by Allah for all alike, none has any right of ownership in it. Anyone can stay anywhere he likes and none can prohibit him from doing so. They cite many Traditions in support of their opinion:

(1) 'Abdullah bin 'Umar reports that the Holy Prophet said: "Makkah is the place where travellers have to stay: therefore its lands cannot be sold nor can anyone charge rent for its houses."

(2) According to Ibrāhīm Nakha'ī, the Holy Prophet said: "Makkah has been made an "Inviolable Place" by Allah: therefore selling its land and charging of rent for its houses is unlawful". Mujāhid has also reported a tradition almost in similar words.

(3) 'Alqamah says, "During the time of the Holy Prophet, and of the first three Caliphs, the lands of Makkah were regarded as common property and one could live there or allow others to live therein."

(4) 'Abdullah bin 'Umar says, "Caliph 'Umar had ordered that no resident of Makkah should close the door of his house during the Ḥajj season." According to Mujāhid; Caliph 'Umar had ordered that the people of Makkah should not put doors to enclose their courtyards but keep them open so that anyone who liked might come in and stay there. The same has been related by 'Atā' with the addition that Suhail bin 'Amr was the only exception to this rule, who was allowed to put a door in his courtyard in order to safeguard his camels in connection with his trade.

(5) 'Abdullah bin 'Umar also says that the one who receives rent for his house in Makkah fills his belly with fire.

(6) 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās says that Allah has made the whole of Makkah the "Sacred Mosque" where all have equal rights, Therefore the people of Makkah have no right to charge rent.

(7) 'Umar bin 'Abdul 'Aziz sent an order to the governor of Makkah to this effect: "No rent should be charged for the houses of Makkah because it is unlawful".

On the basis of the above traditions, quite a few of the followers of the Companions and also, Imāms Malik, Abū Ḥanīfah, Sufyān Thaurī, Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal and Isḥāq bin Rāhawayah from among the Jurists, are of the opinion that it is unlawful to sell a piece of land and to charge rent, at least during the Ḥajj season, in Makkah. However, the majority of the Jurists are of the opinion that people can own houses in Makkah and can sell them as buildings but not as land.

In my opinion, this last view seems to be the right one because it conforms with the Qur'ān and the Sunnah and the practice of the rightly-guided Caliphs. It is obvious that Allah has not made Ḥajj obligatory for the Muslims of the whole world in order to provide a means of income for the people of Makkah. As Allah has set apart the "Inviolable Place" for the benefit of all the Believers, that land is

not the property of anyone and every pilgrim has the right to stay anywhere he can find room for himself.

44. It does not imply any specific act, but means every act that deviates from righteousness and falls under the definition of iniquity. Though all such acts are sins at all times and places, their commission in the "Inviolable Place" makes them all the more heinous; so much so that the commentators are of the opinion that even taking of an unnecessary oath brings it under the same category.

Besides common sins, there are certain other things whose commission in the " Inviolable Place" brings them under the same category. For instance:

(1) It is prohibited to take legal action even against a murderer, etc. who takes shelter within the "Inviolable Place": so much so that he cannot be arrested as long as he remains therein. This sanctity of the "Inviolable Place" is being observed since the time of Prophet Abraham. The Qur'ān says, "Whoso even enters it, he becomes safe and secure . . ." (III: 97).

(2) The consensus of opinion is that there can be no retribution within the "Inviolable Place" for the crimes committed outside it. Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, 'Abdullah bin 'Umar and 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās declared, "We will not take any action in it even against the murderer of our fathers."

(3) It is unlawful to wage war or shed blood within it. On the second day of the conquest of Makkah, the Holy Prophet declared, "O people, Allah has made Makkah a Sanctuary since the very creation of this world, and it will remain so by Allah's ordinance up to the Day of Resurrection; therefore, it is not lawful for any man, who believes in Allah and the Day of Resurrection, to shed blood here". Then he added, "Suppose a man legalizes bloodshed here on the basis of the precedent that I waged war here, tell him, 'Allah made it lawful for His Messenger and not for you'. It was made lawful for me for a short interval of the day. Then it was again made "Inviolable" as before".

(4) It is unlawful to cut naturally growing trees or uproot the grass which has grown there. It is also prohibited to hunt birds and animals within the boundary or to drive them out from the "Inviolable Place" for hunting. It is, however, lawful to kill a serpent, a scorpion and other harmful animals and to uproot dry grass and "Izkhir" which is a kind of grass.

(5) It is prohibited to pick up anything that has fallen to the ground. In a Tradition, reported by Abū Dāwūd, the Holy Prophet prohibited people to pick up anything belonging to a pilgrim that had fallen to the ground.

(6) It is unlawful for a pilgrim who comes with the intention of performing Ḥajj or 'Umrah' to enter therein without *Iḥrām*. However, there is a divergence of opinion in regard to the entry of others than the pilgrims without *Iḥrām*.

According to 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās no one is allowed to enter therein without *Iḥrām* in any case, and this has been supported by a saying each of Imām Aḥmad and Imām Shāfi'ī. According to other sayings of Imāms Aḥmad and Shafi'ī, those people who have to visit the "Inviolable Place" frequently in connection with trade and business, are excepted. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, however, holds the view that the person who lives within the limits of the appointed *"Mīqāts"* can visit Makkah without *Iḥrām* but the outsiders cannot enter it without *Iḥrām*.

45. Some commentators opine that the address to Prophet Abraham ends with v. 26 and say that the Command contained in v. 27 was addressed to the Holy Prophet; but this opinion does not fit in with the context. For it is obvious that this Command also was addressed to Prophet Abraham when he had built the Ka'bah. Moreover, the command implies that the House of Allah had been built for the worship of One Allah and there was general permission from the very first day for all worshippers to visit it for performing Ḥajj.

46. The expression "lean camels" has been deliberately used to depict the picture of the camels of pilgrims coming from far-off places to perform Ḥajj.

47. In my opinion the address to Prophet Abraham comes to an end with v. 27 and vv. 28-29 have been added to emphasize and give further instructions for the performance of Ḥajj. We have based this opinion on the use of the epithet "Ancient House of the Ka'bah". It could not have been used at the time when Prophet Abraham built it. (For further details about the construction of the Ka'bah see II: 125-129, III: 96, 97 and XIV: 35-41).

48. "The benefits" include both religious and worldly benefits. It was due mainly to the Ka'bah that during the period of 2500 years between the times of Prophet Abraham and the Holy Prophet, the Arabs, in spite of their tribal life, remained attached to one central place and continued to visit it from all parts of Arabia for performing Ḥajj year after year. This in turn preserved their language, their culture and their Arab identity. Then during the course of the year they were afforded at least four months of perfect peace when anybody and everybody could safely travel alone or in trade caravans; thus the ritual of Ḥajj was directly beneficial to economic life of the country as well. For details see III: 97 and E.N's 80, 81 thereof, and V: 97 and E.N. 113 thereof.

49. "The cattle" here imply the camel, cow, sheep and goat as has been clearly mentioned in VI: 142-144. "... they should mention the name of Allah over the cattle" implies that they should slaughter the cattle for Allah's sake and in His name, as is clear from the subsequent sentences. Allah's name should be recited at the time the cattle are slaughtered to show that the Muslims are to slaughter and sacrifice animals in Allah's name alone so as to distinguish them

from the disbelievers who slaughtered animals without mentioning Allah's name or by mentioning other names than that of Allah.

As regards "the known appointed days", there is a difference of opinion as to their exact identity. Some of the opinions as to what the "appointed days" mean are:

(1) The first ten days of Zil-Ḥajj. This view is supported by Ibn 'Abbās, Ḥasan Baṣri, Ibrāhīm Nakha'ī, Qatādah and several other Companions and their followers. Imāms Abu Ḥanīfah, Shāfi'ī and Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal have also favoured this view.

(2) The tenth of Zil-Ḥajj and the three days following it. This view is supported by Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn 'Umar, Ibrāhīm Nakha'ī, Ḥasan and 'Aṭā'. Imāms Shāfi'ī and Aḥmad are also reported to have favoured this in a saying each.

(3) The tenth day of Zil-Hajj and the two following days. This view has been supported by Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, 'Alī, Ibn 'Umar, Ibn 'Abbās, Anas bin Mālik, Abū Hurairah, Sa'īd bin Musayyab and Sa'īd bin Jubair. Ṣufyān Thaurī, Imām Mālik, Imām Abū Yūsuf and Imām Muḥammad from among the Jurists have also adopted it, and the Ḥanafites and the Malikites are also generally agreed on this.

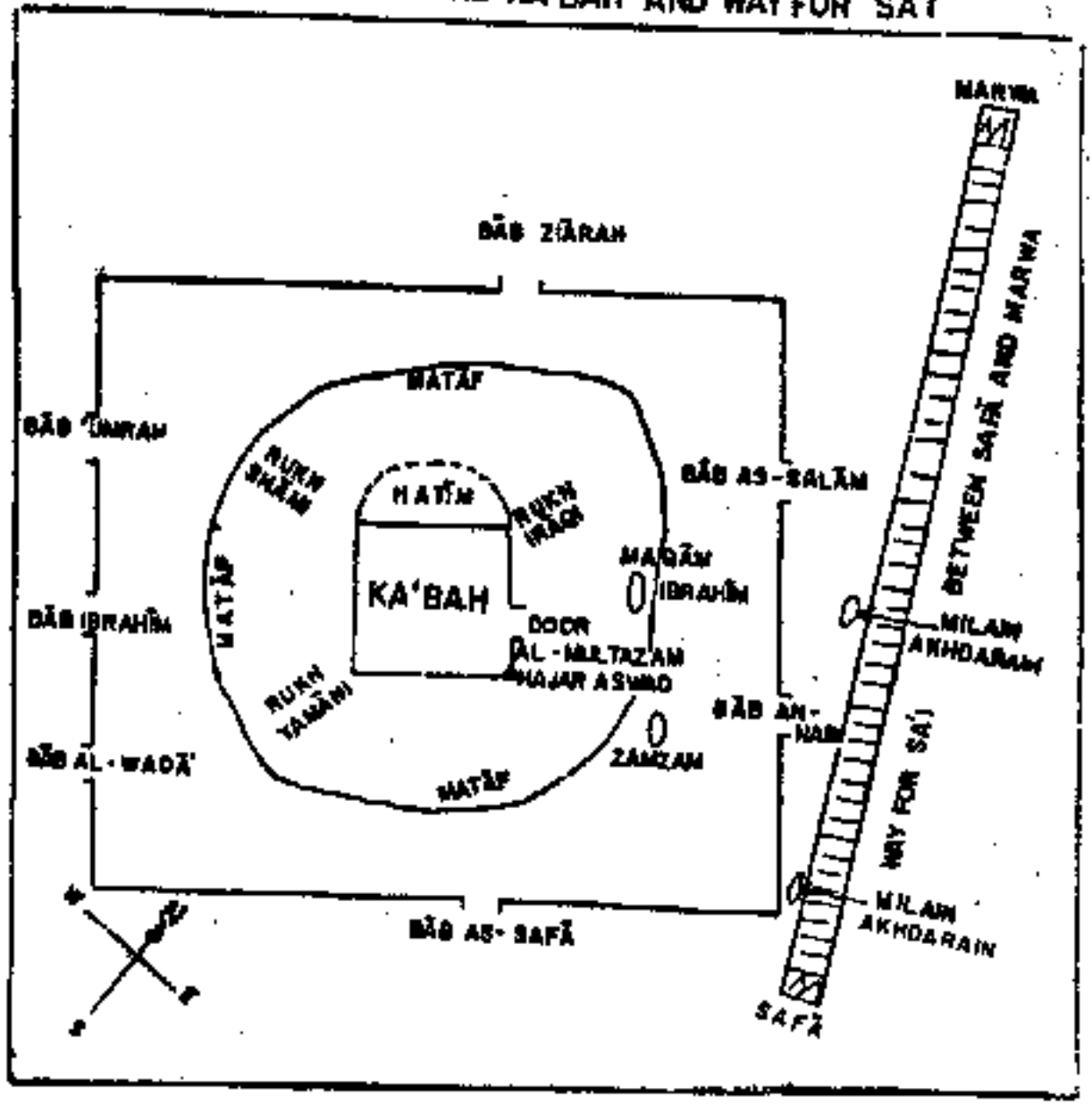
50. The imperative mood of the verb has given rise to the misunderstanding that it is obligatory to eat their flesh and also to give of it to the needy people, Imāms Shāfi'ī and Mālik opine that it is good to eat of it and it is obligatory to give of it to others. According to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, both these things are permitted but are not obligatory. It is good to eat of it, for the people in the days of ignorance considered it unlawful to eat sacrificial meat of their own animals, and it is good to give of it to the poor by way of help. Ibn Jarīr has cited instances from Ḥasan Baṣrī, 'Aṭā', Mujāhid and Ibrāhīm Nakha'ī to prove that the imperative mood does not always imply a command, as for example in V: 2 and LXII: 10. Thus, ".... give of it to the indigent" does not mean that the flesh cannot be given to a rich person for the Companions of the Holy Prophet used to give of it to their friends, neighbours, relatives whether they were rich or poor. According to Ibn 'Umar, one-third of the flesh may be consumed at home, one-third may be given to the neighbours and the remaining one-third distributed among the needy.

51. It means that after performing the essential Ḥajj rites, one should put off *Iḥrām*, have a shave, bath, etc. for one is free from the restrictions of *Iḥrām* after Ḥajj. However, one is not allowed to have sexual relations with his wife till one has performed the *Ṭawāf* of *Ziyārah* or *Ifāḍah*.

52. That is, the vow one has made for that occasion.

MAP No-3

OUTLINE MAP OF THE KA'BAH AND WAY FOR SA'I



53. The Arabic word *'Atīq*, which has been used for the Ka'bah, is very meaningful for it implies:

(1) ancient,

(2) free from the sovereignty and ownership of anyone,

(3) honoured and revered.

I am of the opinion that here the word *Ṭawāf* refers to the circumambulation performed on the tenth day of Ẓil-Ḥajj after setting aside *Iḥrām*, as the last ritual of Ḥajj, and is called *Ṭawāf* of *Ifādāh* or *Ziyārah* (Visit).

54. Though the "command" is of a general nature, here it refers particularly to the prohibitions which are connected with the "Sacred Mosque", Ḥajj, 'Umrah and Makkah. Incidentally, there is a subtle hint in it to the Quraish; who had driven out the Muslims from Makkah and debarred them from Ḥajj and violated the sanctity of the "Ancient House" by associating indecent, filthy, and ungodly rites with Ḥajj and the House in contradiction to the ways of Abraham.

55. "And the cattle have been made lawful for you ...." has been cited here for two objects:

(1) It is to refute the custom of the Quraish under which certain cattle—*baḥīrah, sāibah, waṣilah and ḥām*—were considered unlawful. They are being told that these are also lawful like other cattle.

(2) It is not unlawful as was held by the Quraish to eat the flesh of the cattle even in the state of "*Iḥrām*".

56. This refers to VI: 145 and XVI: 115 in which Allah has forbidden the Muslims to eat what dies of itself, blood, flesh of swine or what has been slaughtered in any name other than Allah's.

57. That is, "Refrain from and guard against the worship of idols just as you avoid filthy and dirty things".

58. Though the expression "false things" is general and implies lies, false evidence, calumny, etc., here it particularly refers to those false creeds, rites, and rituals and superstitious things on which *kufr* and *shirk* have been founded. It is obvious that there is no greater lie than associating others with Allah in His Being, Attributes, Powers and Rights. It was a falsehood to make *baḥīrah*, etc. unlawful. See also XVI :116.

To take a false oath and give a false evidence also come under this Commandment. A Tradition from the Holy Prophet says:

"A false evidence is equal to *shirk* with Allah."

That is why according to the Islamic Law, a false witness should be punished and disgraced. Imāms Abū Yūsuf and Muhammad have expressed the opinion that a person who brings a false witness in the court should be publicly exposed and sentenced to a long imprisonment. This was the actual practice in the time of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar. According to Makhūl, he said:

"Such a person should be whipped, his head shaved and face blackened and he should be sentenced to a long imprisonment."

'Abdullah bin 'Āmir has reported from his father that a person's false evidence was established in Ḥaḍrat 'Umar's court, whereupon the Caliph kept him exposed to public for a day, saying that he was so and so and a false witness so that people might recognize him, and then he imprisoned him. These days this can be done by publishing the culprit's name in the newspapers, etc.

59. In this parable "heaven" means the original human nature. Man by nature is the servant of none else but Allah and inherently accepts the Doctrine of *Tauḥīd*. That is why the one who follows the guidance of the Prophets becomes firm in these dictates of his nature and soars higher and higher. On the other hand, the one who rejects Allah or associates a partner with Him falls down from the "heaven" of his nature. Then he either becomes a victim of satans and evil leaders like the birds of the parable, which snatch away the fallen man, or he becomes a slave of his lusts, passions, whims, etc., which have been likened to the wind in the parable. They lower him down from one wrong position to the other till he falls into the deepest abyss of degradation.

60. "Symbols of God worship": the performance of Ṣalāt, Ḥajj, Fasting, etc., or things like a Mosque or sacrificial offerings, etc. (See V: 2 and E.N.'s 5-7 thereof).

61. That is, the observance of the sanctity of the "Symbols" by a man is a proof that there is piety in his heart. On the other hand, the man who violates their sanctity proves himself to be void of piety and fear of God. It shows that he either does not believe at all in Allah or adopts a rebellious attitude against Him.

62. This is to remove the misunderstanding about getting any benefit from the animals dedicated for sacrifice as they were also included in the "Symbols of Allah. This was necessitated because the Arabs believed that it was unlawful to get any benefit from them. One could neither ride on them nor carry any load on them nor consume their milk, after they had been dedicated for sacrifice during Ḥajj. In this verse that misunderstanding has been removed. Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah and Anas have reported that the Holy Prophet saw a man walking in a miserable condition on foot leading his camel by the nose-string. When the Holy Prophet

asked him to ride on it, he replied that it was his sacrificial offering. The Holy Prophet again urged him to ride on his camel.

There is a divergence of opinion in regard to the interpretation of "an appointed time". Some commentators, particularly Ibn 'Abbās, Qatādah, Mujāhid, Ḍaḥḥāk and 'Aṭā' are of the view that it refers to the time of the dedication of the animals for sacrifice. Obviously this is not the correct view, because in that case the permission to get benefit from them becomes meaningless. There are other commentators including 'Urwah bin Zubair and 'Aṭā' bin Abī Rabāḥ, who are of the view that "appointed time" means the time of sacrifice and one can get benefit from them up till then. One may ride on them, drink their milk, take their young ones for use and shear their hair, wool, etc. Imām Shāf'i has adopted this view. The Ḥanafites are of the opinion that one can get benefit from them, if need be, though it is preferable not to do so.

63. It does not mean that the sacrifice is to be made in the precincts of the "Ancient House" of the Ka'ah. The Qur'ān uses the "House of Allah" or Masjid-i-Ḥarām for the whole of the "Inviolable Place" of Makkah and not for that particular building. (V: 95).

64. This verse implies two things:

(1) Sacrifice has been an essential part of the worship of One Allah in all the revealed religions. In order to inculcate *Tauḥīd*, Allah prohibited sacrifice for anyone other than Himself. This was in keeping with the other prohibitions which were made for others than Allah. For instance, "prostration" before anyone other than Allah, making vows for others than Allah, visiting holy places others than those prescribed by Allah, fasting in the name of others than of Alla, etc., were all prohibited.

(2) The other thing which has been common in all the revealed religions was the object of the sacrifice in the name of Allah though its details have been different in different religions, times and countries.

65. The Arabic word *'mukhbitin'* has no equivalent in English; It includes those who (1) give up pride, arrogance and adopt humility before Allah, (2) surrender themselves to His service and slavery, and (3) accept His decrees sincerely.

66. It means that righteous people spend their lawful provisions in the Way of Allah to meet their own and their dependents' lawful needs, to help their relatives, neighbours and other needy people, on public works and propagation of the Word of Allah. It does not include expenditure in unlawful ways for unlawful

[Contd. on p.208

الْمُعْتَرَّ ۚ كَذٰلِكَ سَخَّرْنٰهَا لَكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿36﴾ لَنْ يَّنَالَ اللّٰهَ لُحُوْمُهَا وَ
لَا دِمَآؤُهَا وَلٰكِنْ يَّنَالُهُ التَّقْوٰى مِنْكُمْ ۚ كَذٰلِكَ سَخَّرَهَا لَكُمْ لِتُكَبِّرُوا اللّٰهَ عَلٰى
مَا هَدٰىكُمْ ۚ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿37﴾ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُدٰفِعُ عَنِ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا ۚ اِنَّ
اللّٰهَ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ خَوَّانٍ كَفُوْرٍ ﴿38﴾ اُذِنَ لِلَّذِيْنَ يُقٰتَلُوْنَ بِاَنَّهُمْ ظُلِمُوْا ۚ وَاِنَّ
اللّٰهَ عَلٰى نَصْرِهِمْ لَقَدِيْرُ ﴿39﴾ الَّذِيْنَ اُخْرِجُوْا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ اِلَّآ اَنْ
يَّقُوْلُوْا رَبُّنَا اللّٰهُ ۚ وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللّٰهِ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ لَّهُدِّمَتْ صَوَامِعُ
وَبِيَعٌ وَّصَلَوٰتٌ وَّمَسٰجِدُ يُذْكَرُ فِيْهَا اسْمُ اللّٰهِ كَثِيْرًا ۚ وَلَيَنْصُرَنَّ اللّٰهُ
مَنْ يَّنْصُرُهٗ ۚ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَقَوِيٌّ عَزِيْزٌ ﴿40﴾ اَلَّذِيْنَ اِنْ مَّكَّنّٰهُمْ فِى الْاَرْضِ اَقَامُوا
الصَّلٰوةَ وَاٰتَوُا الزَّكٰوةَ وَاَمَرُوْا بِالْمَعْرُوْفِ وَنَهَوْا عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ ۗ وَلِلّٰهِ عَاقِبَةُ
الْاُمُوْرِ ﴿41﴾ وَاِنْ يُّكَذِّبُوْكَ فَقَدْ كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوْحٍ وَّعَادٌ وَّثَمُوْدُ ﴿42﴾
وَقَوْمُ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَقَوْمُ لُوْطٍ ﴿43﴾ وَّاَصْحٰبُ مَدْيَنَ ۚ وَكُذِّبَ مُوْسٰى فَاَمْلَيْتُ
لِلْكٰفِرِيْنَ ثُمَّ اَخَذْتُهُمْ ۚ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيْرِ ﴿44﴾ فَكَاَيِّنْ مِّنْ قَرْيَةٍ اَهْلَكْنٰهَا
وَهِيَ ظَالِمَةٌ فَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلٰى عُرُوْشِهَا وَبِئْرٍ مُّعَطَّلَةٍ وَّقَصْرٍ مَّشِيْدٍ ﴿45﴾
اَفَلَمْ يَسِيْرُوْا فِى الْاَرْضِ فَتَكُوْنَ لَهُمْ قُلُوْبٌ يَّعْقِلُوْنَ بِهَآ اَوْ اٰذَانٌ
يَّسْمَعُوْنَ بِهَا ۚ فَاِنَّهَا لَا تَعْمَى الْاَبْصَارُ وَلٰكِنْ تَعْمَى الْقُلُوْبُ الَّتِيْ فِى
الصُّدُوْرِ ﴿46﴾ وَيَسْتَعْجِلُوْنَكَ بِالْعَذَابِ وَلَنْ يُّخْلِفَ اللّٰهُ وَعْدَهٗ ۚ وَاِنَّ يَوْمًا
عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ كَاَلْفِ سَنَةٍ مِّمَّا تَعُدُّوْنَ ﴿47﴾ وَكَاَيِّنْ مِّنْ قَرْيَةٍ اَمْلَيْتُ لَهَا
وَهِيَ ظَالِمَةٌ ثُمَّ اَخَذْتُهَا ۚ وَاِلَيَّ الْمَصِيْرُ ﴿48﴾ قُلْ يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اِنَّمَآ اَنَا
لَكُمْ نَذِيْرٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿49﴾ فَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ لَهُمْ مَّغْفِرَةٌ وَّرِزْقٌ

(Note it well that) neither their flesh reaches Allah nor their blood, but it is your piety that reaches Him.[73] Thus has Allah subjected these animals to you so that you should glorify Him for the guidance He has given you.[74] And, O Prophet, give good news to those who do righteous works. 37

Assuredly[75] Allah defends those who have believed[76] for He does not like any treacherous, ungrateful wretch[77] at all. Permission (to fight) has been granted to those against whom war has been waged because they have been treated unjustly,[78] and Allah is certainly able to help them.[79] These are the people who have been expelled unjustly from their homes[80] only for the reason that they said, "Our Lord is Allah."[81] Had Allah not repelled one people by means of another people, monasteries, churches, synagogues[82] and mosques, wherein the name of Allah is often mentioned, would have been demolished.[83] Allah will surely help those people who help Him:[84] Allah is indeed All-Powerful, All-Mighty. These are the people who, if We give them power in the land, will establish Ṣalāt, pay the *Zakāt* dues, enjoin what is right and forbid what is evil,[85] and the final decision of all affairs is in the hand of Allah.[86] 38-41

O Prophet, if they[87] treat you as false, (you should remember that) before them the people of Noah, and the tribes of 'Ād and Thamūd, and the peoples of Abraham and Lot and the dwellers of Midian had treated their Prophets as false and likewise Moses was also rejected. At first I gave respite to all these disbelievers and then seized them.[88] Now you can see for yourselves how terrible was My chastisement![89] There are (the ruins of) many a wicked habitation which We destroyed: today they are lying upside down upon their roofs. How many a well has been rendered useless,[90] and how many a lofty castle is lying in ruins! Have they not gone about in the land so as to make their hearts think and ears hear? The fact, however, is that it is the hearts in the breasts and not the eyes that become blind.[91] 42-46

These people are demanding of you to hasten the chastisement.[92] Allah will never fail to fulfil His threat, but a day with your Lord is equal to a thousand years as you reckon.[93] There has been many a wicked habitation, whom at first I gave respite and then seized it, and all shall have to return to Me. 47-48

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purposes. The Qur'ānic term *Infāq* implies neither over-spending nor being miserly and stingy, but spending one's wealth on oneself and others according to one's means and status in society.

67. Seven persons can become partners in the sacrifice of one camel and likewise in the sacrifice of one cow and the like, as enjoined by the Holy Prophet in a Tradition reported by Jābir bin 'Abdullah in the Collection of Ḥadīth by Muslim.

68. That is, "You should sacrifice animals because you get many benefits from them to show your gratitude to Allāh, the Giver, and also to acknowledge His Supremacy and Sovereignty".

69. It should be noted that a camel is sacrificed while it is standing. This was enjoined by the Holy Prophet and is supported by Ibn 'Abbās, Mujāhid, Ḍaḥḥāk, etc. Muslim and Bukhārī have reported a Tradition from Ḥaḍrat Ibn 'Umar, who saw a man slaughtering his camel in the sitting position. He said to him, "Tie one foot of your camel and make it stand, because that is the way of Abul Qāsim (peace be upon him)". According to a tradition reported by Ḥaḍrat Jabīr bin 'Abdullah, in Abū Dāwūd, the Holy Prophet and his Companions would tie a left foot of the camel and would make it stand on three feet; then they would slaughter it. The same is implied by the subsequent sentence: " ...and after their backs lie still on the ground .....", i.e. when they fall down to the ground after enough of their blood has run out.

70. "Mention the name of Allah over them" implies that animals should be slaughtered by pronouncing the name of Allah over them, because without that their flesh would be unlawful to eat. This shows that in the Islamic Law there is no conception of slaughtering an animal without pronouncing the name of Allah over it. According to Traditions, there are different wordings for pronouncing the name of Allah over the animals at the time of their slaughter. Some of these are:

(1) *Bismillahi Allahu Akbar; Allahumma minka wa laka:* "In the name of Allah, Allah is most Great! O Allah, this is Thine and is presented to Thee".

(2) *Allāhu Akbar; Lā ilāha ill-Allāhu; Allahumma minka wa laka:* "Allah is most Great: There is no god but Allah: O Allah, this is Thine and is presented to Thee".

(3) *Innī wajjahtu wajhiya lillazī faṭar-as-samāwati wal-arḍa, ḥanīf-an-wa mā anā min-al-mushrikīn. Inna Ṣalātī wa nusukī wa maḥyāya wa mamātī lillāhi Rabb-il-'ālamīn. Lā sharika lahū wa bi-zālika umirtu wa anā min-al-Muslimīn. Allahumma minka wa laka.*

"I have turned my face sincerely towards the Being Who created the heavens and the earth, and I am not from among the idolatrous people. My Ṣalât and my rites of worship and my life and my death are all for Allah, the Lord of the universe, Who has no partner with Him. This is what I have been enjoined and I am the first to surrender to Him. O Allah! This is Thine, and is presented to Thee".

71. ".....lie still on the ground....." means till they die completely, for the Holy Prophet prohibited to cut off a piece of flesh, if there is still any sign of life in the slaughtered animal; if this is done, the piece of flesh would be unlawful.

72. This is another reason why animals should be sacrificed: "They should be sacrificed as a mark of gratitude to Allah Who has subjected them to you".

73. 'This prescribes a very important condition for the sacrifice made in the worship of Allah. A sacrifice is acceptable to Allah only if it is accompanied by piety and sincerity. Though sacrifice is a Symbol of Allah, yet it has been made plain that it is accepted only if it is accompanied by piety, saying, "Neither their flesh reaches Allah nor their blood, but it is your piety ...." This was also meant to condemn the ritual of the days of ignorance, when the Arabs took the flesh to the Ka'bah and smeard its walls with the blood of the sacrificed animal.

74. ".... you should glorify Allah" at the time of sacrifice verbally also in order to acknowledge that the animals really belong to Allah and to no one else. One of the sentences uttered at the time of sacrifice is *Allahumma minka wa laka* (O Allah, this animal is Thine and is presented to Thee).

It should be noted well that the command of sacrifice as contained in verses 36 and 37 is not for the pilgrims alone and that the performance of sacrifice is not confined to Makkah on the occasion of Ḥajj. It is a general command for all those Muslims who are well off. They have been enjoined to be grateful to Allah because He has subjected these animals for the good of all human beings. Therefore they are required to sacrifice the animals during these days so that they may spiritually join those who go to Makkah to perform Ḥajj.

There are many authentic Traditions to the effect that the Holy Prophet made sacrifice on this occasion, while he was personally at al-Madinah:

(1) "The one who does not perform sacrifice even though he can should not join us in the 'Id Prayer". (Musnad Aḥmad, Ibn Mājah).

(2) According to a Tradition reported by Ibn 'Umar, the Holy Prophet dwelt at al-Madinah for ten years and performed sacrifice every year. (Tirmizi).

(3) According to Ḥadrat Anas, the Holy Prophet said:

"The one who sacrificed an animal before the 'Id Prayer, should offer another sacrifice; but the one who sacrificed his animal after the 'Id Prayer, did the right thing and followed the way of the Muslims". (Bukhārī)

In this connection, it is note-worthy that no 'Id Prayer is held on the tenth of Ẓil-Ḥajj in Makkah: therefore the injunction was meant for all Muslims and not only for those performing Ḥajj at Makkah.

Thus, it is clear that the sacrifice on the occasion of 'Id which is observed in the whole Muslim world is a Sunnah of the Holy Prophet and has been enjoined by him. The only dispute is whether it is obligatory in nature or only a Sunnah. Ibrāhim Nakha'ī, Imāms Abu Ḥanīfah, Mālik, Muḥammad and, according to a Tradition, Imām Abu Yūsuf too, are of the opinion that it is Obligatory in nature. On the other hand, Imāms Shāfi'ī and Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal regard it only as a Sunnah of the Muslims, and Sufyān Thaurī has also agreed with them, saying that there will be no harm if a person does not offer a sacrifice. It is, however, an irony that some of the "learned" Muslims of our time, who follow neither the Qur'ān nor the Sunnah, and are only guided by personal whims, have declared that if there is a consensus of opinion of the Muslims, they can give up the practice of sacrifice on the occasion of 'Id.

75. From here the address for the first time prepares the Muslims for *Jihād*. In order to understand this, we should keep in view the preceding portion (vv. 19-24) in which the ideological conflict between the two parties (Believers and disbelievers) and the result thereof have been described. This naturally serves as a prelude to the armed conflict between the two parties. That is why in vv. 26-37 the immediate causes which necessitated war have been stated to serve as an introduction and justification for war with the disbelievers of Makkah.

After the migration to al-Madīnah, when the first Ḥajj season approached, it naturally brought along with it anguish and anger both for the *Muhājirs* and the *Anṣār*, who had been debarred from visiting Makkah and performing Ḥajj, That is why, in this passage (vv. 26-37) the rituals and the objects of Ḥajj have been described to bring home to the disbelievers that they had no right to debar anyone from Ḥajj. On the other hand, the Muslims are being prepared to fight not with the intention of wreaking vengeance but for the sake of reform. At the same time sacrifice on the occasion of Ḥajj has been prescribed as a permanent rite to enable them (and the Muslims of the whole world) to commemorate Ḥajj and the rites connected with it, so that they might refrain from wreaking vengeance on the people of Makkah for the persecution to which they had been subjected. They have, therefore, been enjoined to fight to bring about better conditions and not to take revenge on their persecutors.

76. The Arabic word *mudāfi'at* implies two things:

(1) to fight with the enemy to ward off his aggressive attack;

(2) to fight with the enemy not just once but whenever the need arises. Allah has assured the Believers that He will defend them against the enemy every time there is a conflict between Islam and *kufr*. This is to encourage the Believers that they will not be left alone in their defence, but Allah Himself will be a party with them and will help them to frustrate the cunning designs of the enemy and to ward off their attacks. Indeed this verse is a great encouragement for the Believers, for it imbues their hearts with spirit and strength which nothing else can.

77. Allah becomes a party with the Believers because they are justified in waging war against the disbelievers who are treacherous and ungrateful to Allah in spite of His many blessings and favours to them.

78. This (v. 39) is the first verse of the Qur'ān in which permission to fight was given in the month of Ẓil-Ḥajj in the first year after Hijrah according to our research. Then the command to fight was given in vv. 190, 191, 193, 216 and 244 of Chapter II (Al-Baqarah) in Rajab or Sha'ban of A.H. 2.

79. ".....and Allah is certainly able to help them": this assurance was urgently needed by the persecuted Muslims whose fighting strength at that time was very meagre—not even a thousand including all the migrants and the Muslims of al-Madinah. On the other hand, the fighting strength of the Quraish by themselves was much greater. Besides, they had all the other *mushrik* clans of Arabia at their back and were joined later by the Jews as well. Therefore, this assurance was most opportune and the challenge to the disbelievers was very significant, for it meant to say that they were not fighting against a small number of the Muslims but against Allah. Therefore, "You are welcome to fight if you dare".

80. The mention of their expulsion from their homes in v. 40 is a clear proof that this portion of Sūrah al-Ḥajj was revealed at al-Madinah.

81. In order to have an idea of the severe persecution of the Muslims, a few instances of this are cited.

(1) Ḥaḍrat Ṣuhaib Rūmī was deprived of everything, when he was about to migrate to al-Madinah. When he reached there, he had nothing with him except the clothes he was wearing. Though he had earned all that through his own labours he was deprived of everything by the disbelievers of Makkah.

(2) When Ḥaḍrat Abu Salmāh was about to leave Makkah with his wife and a suckling child, his in-laws forcibly separated his wife from him, and then the

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كَرِيْمٌ ﴿٥١﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ سَعَوْا فِيْٓ اٰيٰتِنَا مُعٰجِزِيْنَ اُولٰٓئِكَ اَصْحٰبُ الْجَحِيْمِ ﴿٥١﴾
وَمَآ اَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَّسُوْلٍ وَّلَا نَبِيٍّ اِلَّآ اِذَا تَمَنّٰٓى اَلْقَى الشَّيْطٰنُ
فِيْٓ اُمْنِيَّتِهٖ ۚ فَيَنْسَخُ اللّٰهُ مَا يُلْقِي الشَّيْطٰنُ ثُمَّ يُحْكِمُ اللّٰهُ اٰيٰتِهٖ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ
عَلِيْمٌ حَكِيْمٌ ﴿٥٢﴾ لِّيَجْعَلَ مَا يُلْقِي الشَّيْطٰنُ فِتْنَةً لِّلَّذِيْنَ فِيْ قُلُوْبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ
وَّالْقَاسِيَةِ قُلُوْبُهُمْ ۗ وَاِنَّ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ لَفِيْ شِقَاقٍ بَعِيْدٍ ﴿٥٣﴾ وَّلِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِيْنَ
اُوْتُوا الْعِلْمَ اَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ فَيُؤْمِنُوْا بِهٖ فَتُخْبِتَ لَهٗ قُلُوْبُهُمْ ۗ وَاِنَّ
اللّٰهَ لَهَادِ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اِلٰى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ﴿٥٤﴾ وَلَا يَزَالُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا
فِيْ مِرْيَةٍ مِّنْهُ حَتّٰى تَاْتِيَهُمُ السَّاعَةُ بَغْتَةً اَوْ يَاْتِيَهُمْ عَذَابُ يَوْمٍ
عَقِيْمٍ ﴿٥٥﴾ اَلْمُلْكُ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِّلّٰهِ ۚ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ ۗ فَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ
فِيْ جَنّٰتِ النَّعِيْمِ ﴿٥٦﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا وَكَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا فَاُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ
مُّهِيْنٌ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ هَاجَرُوْا فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ ثُمَّ قُتِلُوْٓا اَوْ مَاتُوْا لَيَرْزُقَنَّهُمُ
اللّٰهُ رِزْقًا حَسَنًا ۗ وَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَهُوَ خَيْرُ الرّٰزِقِيْنَ ﴿٥٨﴾ لَيُدْخِلَنَّهُمْ مُّدْخَلًا
يَّرْضَوْنَهٗ ۗ وَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَعَلِيْمٌ حَلِيْمٌ ﴿٥٩﴾ ذٰلِكَ ۚ وَمَنْ عَاقَبَ بِمِثْلِ مَا عُوْقِبَ
بِهٖ ثُمَّ بُغِيَ عَلَيْهِ لَيَنْصُرَنَّهُ اللّٰهُ ۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَعَفُوٌّ غَفُوْرٌ ﴿٦٠﴾ ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّ
اللّٰهَ يُوْلِجُ الَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَيُوْلِجُ النَّهَارَ فِي الَّيْلِ وَاَنَّ اللّٰهَ سَمِيْعٌۢ
بَصِيْرٌ ﴿٦١﴾ ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ وَاَنَّ مَا يَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ هُوَ
الْبَاطِلُ وَاَنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْكَبِيْرُ ﴿٦٢﴾ اَلَمْ تَرَ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ اَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ
مَآءً ۖ فَتُصْبِحُ الْاَرْضُ مُخْضَرَّةً ۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَطِيْفٌ خَبِيْرٌ ﴿٦٣﴾ لَهٗ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ
مَا فِي الْاَرْضِ ۗ وَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَهُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيْدُ ﴿٦٤﴾ اَلَمْ تَرَ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ سَخَّرَ لَكُمْ

O Muḥammad, say to them: "O people, I am merely a warner[94] who informs you plainly (of the coming evil time)." So those who believe and do righteous deeds shall have forgiveness and honourable provision,[95] and those, who will strive to discredit Our Revelations, shall become the dwellers of Hell. 49-51

And, O Muḥammad, (it has always been so with) every Messenger and Prophet[96] We sent before you that whenever he had a desire,[97] Satan tried to interfere with his desire.[98] But Allah eradicates the mischiefs worked by Satan and confirms His Revelations,[99] for Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise,[100] (He allows this) so that He may make Satan's obstacles a trial for those, whose hearts suffer from the disease (of hypocrisy) and whose hearts are false——the fact is that these unjust people have gone far away in their enmity—and so that those who have knowledge may realize that this (Message) is the Truth from Allah and may believe in it, and their hearts may submit humbly to it. Most surely Allah always guides the Believers to the Straight Way.[101] 52-54

Yet the disbelievers will always remain in doubt about it until the Hour of Resurrection overtakes them suddenly or the scourge of a "barren" day[102] descends upon them. On that Day Allah will reign supreme, and He will judge between them; then those who will have believed and done righteous works, will go to the Gardens of Bliss, but those who will have disbelieved and treated Our Revelations as false, shall receive an ignominious punishment. As for those, who left their homes for the sake of Allah and then were killed or died, Allah will make for them a generous provision) and Allah is the best of Providers. He will admit them to a place with which they will be well pleased; indeed Allah is All-Knowing and Clement.[103] This is about them. As regards the one, who takes vengeance equal to the wrong that had been done to him, and has again been oppressed, Allah will surely help him[104]; Allah is Forgiving and Forbearing.[105] 55-60

So it is[106] because it is Allah Who brings forth the day from the night and the night from the day[107] and He hears everything and sees everything.[108] This is so because it is Allah alone Who is the Truth and all others, whom they invoke besides Him, are falsehood,[109] and Allah is the Supreme and the Exalted One. Do you not see that Allah sends down rain water from the sky and the land becomes green because of it?[110] 61-64

The fact is that Allah works in imperceptible ways and is fully aware of everything.[111] To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth and undoubtedly Allah is All-Sufficient and All-Praiseworthy.[112]

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people of his own family tore away the child from them. Thus the poor woman had to pass one whole year in sorrow and grief. After a year, she secured the child somehow and journeyed from Makkah to al-Madīnah with it all alone on a dangerous route.

(3) 'Ayyāsh bin Rabī'ah was a half brother of Abū Jahl. When he migrated to al-Madīnah, he was followed by Abu Jahl and another brother of his, and they told him the lie: "Your mother has taken the oath that she will not move from the sun to the shade nor comb her hair until she should see you ('Ayyāsh) You should therefore go back with us to Makkah, show her your face and then come back". He was taken in by this trick. When they were journeying back the two brothers made him a prisoner, took him to Makkah with his hands and feet tied, and proclaimed, "O people of Makkah, this is how these lads should be treated and set right". He remained in that state for a long time and was at last rescued by a brave Muslim.

82. *Ṣaumah* (pl. *Ṣawāmi*), *Biy'ah* and *Ṣalawāt* in the original Text are the places of worship of the monks who have left the world, the Christians and the Jews respectively. *Ṣalawāt* was *Ṣalautā* in Aramaic, which might be the origin of the English words salute and salutation.

83. In this sentence, a Divine principle has been stated:

"Allah does not let a group of people or a community have authority for ever. Every now and then He repels one group by means of another".

If this had not been the case, the permanent dominator would have created chaos not only in the political and economic spheres, but would have encroached upon the places of worship as well. This "principle" has also been stated in v. 251 of Chapter II (Al-Baqarah).

84. Those "who help Allah" are the people who invite mankind to *Tauhīd* and exert their utmost to establish the "True Faith" and righteousness. For further explanation see E.N. 50 of Chapter III (Āl-i-'Imrān).

85. ".....if We give them power ..... evil": In this one sentence, the real aim of the Islamic State and the characteristics of those who conduct its affairs have been stated concisely but comprehensively. Those who help Allah and deserve His succour behave righteously, establish Ṣalāt, make arrangements for the

collection of Zakāt and use their power and authority to propagate good and eradicate evil.

86. That is, "It is Allah Who decides whom to give power in the land and when". This is meant to remove the misunderstanding of the proud and arrogant people who think that the destiny of the land and its dwellers is in their hands, and there is none to depose them from power. But Allah dethrones the most haughty ruler in supernatural ways and gives power to the most humble in order to show that He is All-Powerful, All-Mighty.

87. "The disbelievers of Makkah".

88. The instances of some peoples who rejected their Prophets have been cited to impress that they were given respite to reform themselves before they were punished. Therefore, "O people of Makkah, you should not be deluded by the delay in your punishment. When the term of respite comes to an end, you shall also be punished like the former people, if you do not mend your ways in the meantime".

89. The Arabic word *Nakir* is very comprehensive and implies two meanings:

(1) Displeasure at the evil conduct of the other, and

(2) a terrible punishment which disfigures the culprit so badly that he cannot even be recognized. The sentence therefore will mean: "Just see when I seized them for this evil conduct, how terrible was My chastisement".

90. In Arabic a "well" is synonymous with a "habitation". Thus "many a well .... useless" means "many a habitation has been destroyed".

91. The words ".... the hearts .... blind" have been used in the metaphorical and not in the literal sense. Since the heart is regarded as the centre of emotions, feelings and of mental and moral qualities, these words have been used to imply that their obduracy has inhibited them from feeling and acting rationally.

92. This refers to the oft-repeated challenge by the disbelievers: "Well, if you are a true prophet, why does not that chastisement come with which you have been threatening us, for we have been rejecting your claim of being a true Prophet of Allah ?"

93. That is, "The decisions of Allah do not follow your time and calendar, nor do the consequences of your wrong attitudes appear immediately after the deeds". Therefore it will be very foolish on the part of a people to argue that the

threat of punishment was empty just because a decade or a century had passed since they had adopted a wicked attitude and conduct with impunity.

94. That is, "I am merely a warner and not the maker of your destinies. It is Allah Who passes judgement and decides about the punishment."

95. "The Believers shall have forgiveness" means that Allah will overlook their faults, weaknesses, and acts of omission and commission. They will have "honourable provisions" means that they will have excellent supplies which will be given to them in an honourable way.

96. For the distinction between *Nabī* and *Rasūl*, refer to E. N. 30 of Chapter XIX (Maryam).

97. The Arabic word *tamannā* has two meanings: "desire" and "to recite" something.

98. If the first meaning is taken, it will imply: "Satan tried to prevent the fulfilment of his desire." If the second meaning is taken, it will imply: "When the Prophet recited the Revelations, Satan created different sorts of doubts about its truth and meanings in the minds of the people."

99. If the first meaning is adopted, it will imply: "Allah fulfils the Prophet's desire and makes his Mission successful in spite of the obstacles of Satan and confirms the truth of His Revelations by fulfilling His promises to the Prophet". In case of the second meaning, it will imply: "Allah eradicates all the doubts and objections inspired by Satan in the hearts of the people and clarifies the confusion created about any verse of the Qur'ān in subsequent Revelations".

100. "Allah is All-Knowing" and has full knowledge of the mischief worked by Satan and of its effects, and being "All-Wise", He counteracts every mischief of Satan.

101. That is, "Allah lets Satan work such mischiefs to put to the test both the righteous and the wicked people". The people with a perverted mentality deduce wrong conclusions from these and deviate from the Right Way, while those, who think on the right lines, realize that all these things are the mischiefs of Satan and that the Message of the Prophet is based on the Truth. They conclude that the very fact that Satan has been so much agitated and become active against it is a clear proof of its being the Truth. It is very important to understand the real significance of this passage (vv. 52-54) for this has given rise to a grave misunderstanding.

If we consider it in the context in which it occurs, it becomes obvious that it was sent down to refute the wrong appraisal of the casual observers that the Holy Prophet had "failed" to achieve his desired object. This was because he had

striven for thirteen long years to persuade his people to accept his Message but the apparent result was that he had not only failed in this, but he and the small band of his followers had been forced to leave their homes. As this "exile" contradicted his claim that he was a Prophet of Allah and had His approval and succour with him, some people became sceptical about it. Moreover, they became doubtful about the truth of the Qur'ān, because they were not being visited by the scourge, which was inflicted on those who treated the Prophet as false. His antagonists scoffed at him, saying, "Where is that succour of Allah and the scourge with which we were threatened?" The answer to these doubts of the disbelievers was given in the preceding passage, and in this passage the addressees were those who were influenced by this propaganda. Briefly the whole answer was to this effect:

"It is not a new thing that the people of a Messenger have treated him as an impostor for it has always been happening like this: You can see from the remnants of those peoples who treated their Messengers as impostors how they were punished for their mischief. You can learn a lesson from them, if you will. As regards the delay in the coming of scourge, the Qur'ān never threatened the disbelievers with immediate punishment, nor is it the job of the Messenger to inflict punishments. The scourge is sent by Allāh, but He is not hasty in sending His torment. He gives respite to the people to mend their ways as He is giving you now. Therefore, you should not be under any delusion that the threats of scourge are empty threats.

"It is also not a new thing that the desires and wishes of a Prophet meet with obstacles or that false propaganda is made against his Message for the same has already happened with regard to the Messages of the former Prophets. But ultimately Allah eradicated the mischief worked by Satan and made the Message successful. Therefore you should take a warning from the past history of Satan's mischiefs and their ultimate failure. You should note it well that the obstacles and the mischiefs of Satan are a trial and means that help attract the righteous people towards Islam and winnow the dishonest people away from it".

It is a pity that in spite of the above clear and simple meaning of the passage which fits in well with the context, a grave misunderstanding has arisen because of a tradition which has not only changed its meaning entirely and rendered it irrelevant in the context but has helped make doubtful the very basic Articles of the Faith. Therefore we are making a critical appraisal of the tradition in order to show how to make the right use of traditions for the correct interpretation of the Qur'ān.

According to this tradition, the Holy Prophet had a strong longing and desire to this effect: "I wish some Revelations were sent down to tone down the abhorrence of the *mushrik* Quraish against Islam so as to bring them nearer to it,

or at least the criticism against their creed may not be so severe as to arouse their enmity".

While he was cherishing this desire, it so happened that one day when he was sitting in a big gathering of the Quraish, Sūrah An-Najm (LIII) was sent down and he began to recite it. When he came to vv. 19, 20: "Have you ever considered about this *Lāt* and this *'Uzzā*, and a third (goddess) *Manāt*," all of a sudden he recited, "These are exalted goddesses; indeed their intercession may be expected". After this he continued to recite Sūrah An-Najm up to the last verse and then fell down in prostration and all the Muslims and the *mushriks* of the Quraish also did the same, for the latter said, "Now we have no difference with Muhammad; we also profess that Allah is the Creator and the Provider and that these deities of ours are merely our intercessors with Him". After this, when in the evening Angel Gabriel came, he said, "What have you done? I did not bring these two sentences". At this the Holy Prophet became very sad and Allah sent down vv. 73 75 of Sūrah Banī Isrā'il (XVII): "O Muhammad! these people have left no stone unturned to tempt you away from that which We have revealed to you so that you might fabricate something in Our name. Had you done that, they would have made you their friend. It was just possible that you might have inclined a little towards them, if We had not given you strength. But if you had done so, We would have made you taste double chastisement in this world as well as in the Hereafter: then you would have found no helper against Us".

But in spite of this, he continued to be grieved till Allah sent down v. 52 of this Sūrah (Al-Ḥajj) in which Allah consoled him, saying that the same had been happening to the former Prophets.

Another thing that happened in the meantime was that the story reached the migrants to Ḥabash that there had been a reconciliation between the Holy Prophet and the disbelievers of Makkah. Accordingly, many of them returned to Makkah only to learn that the news of reconciliation was wrong and the conflict between Islam and *kufr* was raging as furiously as before.

Now let us make a critical study of this story which has been cited by Ibn Jarīr and many other commentators and is even contained in many collections of Traditions.

(1) None of its reporters, except Ibn 'Abbās, is a Companion.

(2) There are many major discrepancies and variations in its details.

(3) The wording ascribed to the Holy Prophet in praise of the idols in each Tradition is different from that of others.

Moreover, these words have been attributed to different sources according to different Traditions: (a) These words were put in by Satan during the Revelation and the Holy Prophet imagined that they were revealed by Gabriel. (b) He himself uttered these words inadvertently, being urged by his own desire. (c) He was dozing when he uttered these words. (d) He intentionally uttered these words but in a manner as to question their veracity. (e) Satan interpolated these words into the Revelation, giving an impression that the Holy Prophet himself had recited them. (f) It was one of the *mushriks* who had recited these words.

Yet scholars of Tradition like Ḥāfiz Ibn Ḥajar and jurists like Abu Bakr al-Jaṣṣāṣ and rationalists like Zamakhshari and commentators like Ibn Jarīr accept this story as true and consider it as a commentary on verse 52 of this Sūrah. Ibn Ḥajar argues like this:

"Even though the links by which this Tradition has been related are either weak or "broken", except in one case, the very fact that it has been related through so many "links" is a proof that there is some truth about it. The one which has strong links is by Sa'īd bin Jubair who has related it from Ibn 'Abbās and the reporters of two more Traditions (which have been cited by Ṭabari) have been declared authentic by Bukhārī and Muslim".

On the other side, there are other eminent scholars who declare this story to be utterly baseless. Ibn Kathīr says, "All the links of this Tradition are unauthentic and I have found no correct version of this with continuous links". Baihaqi says, "This story has not been proved to be correct by the rules of reporting". When Ibn Khuzaimah was asked about it, he said, "This story has been invented by heretics". Qāzi 'Ayāḍ says, "The very fact that this Tradition is neither contained in any of the six authentic collections of Ḥadīth nor has it been related in an authentic way by authentic reporters shows its weakness". Besides them, Imām Rāzī, Qāzī Abū Bakr Ibn al-'Arabī, Ālūsi etc. have rejected it altogether.

It is a pity that even those who reject this story have not done full justice to their cases. There are some who reject it because its "links" are weak. In other words, they would have accepted it, if its links were strong. Then there are others who reject it because its acceptance makes the whole Faith doubtful. This kind of reasoning may satisfy the believers but it cannot satisfy those who are already sceptical or intend to make a research into it with a view to making a correct appraisal of Islam. They will rather say, "When a story is related by an eminent Companion and is contained in the collections of Traditions, there is no reason why we should reject it just because it makes your Faith doubtful".

Now let us consider the story critically and rationally to prove that it is unacceptable.

(1) Its internal evidence proves it to be wrong: (a) According to the story the incident happened after the first migration to Ḥabash, for according to it some of the migrants returned to Makkah after hearing the story. Now the fact is that the migration took place in the month of Rajab of the fifth year of Prophethood and some of the migrants returned to Makkah three months later, *i.e.* in Shawwāl of the same year. (b) Verses 73-75 of Chapter XVII in which the Holy Prophet was "reproved" for this incident were revealed in the eleventh or twelfth year of Prophethood. In other words, he was "reproved" by Allah five or six years after the incident. (c) This verse (52) in which the interpolation by Satan was abrogated was sent down in the first year of Hijrah, *i.e.* about two years after the reproof. Can a person in his senses believe that the Holy Prophet was reproved for the interpolation after six years, and it was abrogated after nine years ?

(2) According to the story, this interpolation was made in Sūrah An-Najm. When the Holy Prophet was reciting the words, "And a third (goddess) *Manāt*", he also recited the interpolated sentence, and then continued the recital up to the end of the Sūrah. It is said that the disbelievers of Makkah were so pleased with the interpolation that they declared, "The differences between us and Muḥammad (Allah's peace be upon him) have now come to an end".

Let us now read vv. 19-23 of An-Najm along with the alleged interpolation (in italics): "Have you ever considered about the reality of this *Lāt* and *'Uzzā* and a third (goddess) *Manāt? These are exalted goddesses; indeed their intercession may be expected.* What, do you have sons for yourselves and daughters for Him (Allāh) ? This is indeed an unfair division. They are nothing but mere names which you and your forefathers have invented. Allah has sent down no authority in regard to them. They follow only conjectures and the whims of their own minds, although right guidance has come from their Lord".

Even a casual reader will detect an obvious contradiction in the passage. Immediately after "praising" the goddesses there is a hard hit on their worshippers, as if to say: "O foolish people! How is it that you have ascribed daughters to Allah and sons to yourselves? All this is your own invention which has no authority from Allah". On the face of it, the interpolation makes the passage absurd which cannot be assigned even to a rational person not to speak of Allah. Then the story presumes that all the Quraish who were listening to it must have lost their senses; otherwise they could not have declared that their differences with Muḥammad (Allah's peace be upon him) had been made up from thence.

From this internal evidence it has become clear that this story is absurd and meaningless.

(3) Now let us consider whether the occasions ascribed by the commentators to the revelation of the verses under discussion, fit in with the chronological

order of the Qur'ān. According to the story, the interpolation in Sūrah An-Najm (LIII) was made in the fifth year of Prophethood; the reproof was made in vv. 73-75 of Banī Isrā'īl (XVII) and then the interpolation was annulled and the incident explained in vv. 52-54 of Sūrah Al-Ḥajj (XXII). Now there could be only two possibilities about the time of their revelation: either the verses containing the reproof and the abrogation were sent down in the period in which the interpolation took place, or the verse containing the reproof was sent down along with Sūrah Al-Ḥajj (XXII). In the first case, the question arises: Why were these verses (XVII: 73-75) not inserted in An-Najm (LIII)? Why were they held in abeyance for six long years and then inserted in Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl (XVII), when it was revealed, and vv. 52-54 (containing the abrogation) inserted in Sūrah Al-Ḥajj (XXII) after a further delay of more than two years? Does it mean that the verses were sent down on one occasion and inserted years later haphazardly in one Sūrah or the other? In the second case, the question would arise: Does it stand to reason that the verses containing the reproof (XVII: 73-75) were sent down six years after the interpolation, and the verse of abrogation (XXII: 52) nine years after the incident? Still another question arises: What was the occasion of the revelation of the verses of reproof and abrogation in Chapters XVII and XXII in the context in which they occur?

(4) Now let us turn to the third principle of correct appraisal of the Qur'ān.

For a correct appreciation of the Qur'ān it is essential to consider whether a particular commentary fits in with the relevant context of the Qur'ān or not. If we make even a cursory study of XVII: 71-73, (Banī Isrā'īl), it will become obvious that there was no occasion for the alleged reproof in v. 73 and that there is no tinge of reproof in it, for the words of the verse refute the allegation that the Prophet was taken in by the mischief of the disbelivers. Then in Sūrah Al-Ḥajj (XXII), if we make a critical study of the verses that precede vv. 52-54 and follow them, it will become obvious that there was no occasion to console the Prophet for the "interpolation" and to annul it after nine years.

(5) We reiterate that no Tradition, however strong links it might have, can be accepted when the Text itself is a clear evidence against it, and when it does not fit in with the wording, the context, the order etc. of the Qur'ān. When the incident is considered in this background, even a sceptical research scholar would be convinced that the Tradition is absolutely wrong. As regards a believer, he can never accept it, when he knows that it contradicts not only one verse but a large number of other verses of the Qur'ān. He would rather believe, that the reporters of the Tradition might have been deluded by Satan and not the Holy Prophet. He would never believe that the Holy Prophet could interpolate even a single word in the Qur'ān under the influence of a desire of his own: or that there could ever occur such a desire in his mind that

he should make a compromise with the disbelievers by associating *shirk* with *Tauḥīd:* or that he could ever wish that Allah might not say anything to displease the disbelievers: or that the Revelation was made in such an unsafe and doubtful manner as to enable Satan to mix with it even a word in a manner as if it was also brought by Gabriel. Each of these things is contradictory to the clear Revelation of the Qur'ān and the basic Articles of the Faith which we have learnt from the Qur'ān and the Holy Prophet. God forbid that we should accept any such Tradition that might lead to the above-mentioned presumptions just because the Tradition seems to be "authentic" in every way.

It will be worth-while to consider the question: How is it that so many reporters of Traditions have related this story? Does it not show that there must have been some reality about it? Otherwise, so many reporters, who included many authentic and eminent scholars, could not have made such an heinous slander against the Qur'ān and the Holy Prophet. Its answer is contained in the authentic collections of Traditions by Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, Nasā'ī and Musnad Ahmad. The reality of the incident is this:

The Holy Prophet recited Sūrah An-Najm and performed prostration at the end of it. At this, all the hearers, both the Muslims and the *mushriks*, fell down in prostration. This was what really happened and there is nothing strange about it. Let us depict the occasion: The Holy Prophet was reciting a forceful piece of the eloquent Qur'ān in a very impressive manner. Naturally the occasion produced an emotional effect and all the listeners instinctively fell down in prostration along with him. It was because of such ecstasies produced by the Holy Prophet's recital of the Qur'ān as this that the disbelievers dubbed him a "sorcerer". As regards the story that the Holy Prophet praised the deities of the disbelievers, it appears that the Quraish concocted the story to hide their "defeat". Probably someone or other of them explained away their defeat, saying, "We ourselves heard Muḥammad praising our deities. Therefore we also fell down in prostration along with him". As regards the migrants to Ḥabash, they returned to Makkah when they heard the concocted story that there had been a compromise between the Holy Prophet and the Quraish. It appears that some of those people who had seen the Muslims and the *mushriks* falling down together in prostration, presumed that peace had been made between them, so the story travelled to the migrants in Ḥabash who had no means to verify it and thus thirty-three of them returned to Makkah.

Naturally these three things—prostration by the Quraish, their explanation of it, and the return of the migrants from Ḥabash—combined to evolve that story. So much so that some authentic people were also deluded by it, for to err is human, and the pious and intelligent people are no exception to it. However, the error of the latter proves to be more harmful, because their credulous followers

accept with closed eyes their misconceptions along with their right conclusions. On the other hand, mischief mongers collect all such errors of the righteous people and exploit them to prove that all the collections of Traditions are false and should be rejected forthwith.

102. The epithet "barren" has been applied to the "day" in its metaphorical and not literal sense. A "day" is barren if all the plans, hopes and devices remain unproductive in it, or it does not bring forth its night. For instance, the days on which the people of Prophet Noah, the tribes of 'Ād and Thamūd, the people of Lot and of Midian met with their destruction by scourge from Allah, were barren days in this sense, because those days did not bring forth any "tomorrow" for them, and no device of theirs could avert their doom.

103. As Allah is All-Knowing, He knows well those who left their homes for His sakĕ and what reward they deserve. He is Clement, and forgives minor errors and weaknesses of the people; therefore these things will not hinder Him from rewarding the Believers for their services and sacrifices.

104. The preceding verses referred to those persecuted people who could not retaliate and here the reference is to those victims of persecution who could fight back.

From this verse, Imām Shāfi'ī has concluded that "retaliation" will be effected in the way as life was taken in the original act. If a person is killed by immersion in water, the killer also should be put to death by immersion in water; or if a person is burnt to death, the killer also will be burnt to death. The Hanafites dispute this. According to them, retaliation against a murderer will be incurred in one and the same established way no matter how life was taken by the culprit in the originat act.

105. This verse (60) may imply two things:

(1) Allah forgives that "killing" which is done in self-defence, though killing of people is not a good thing in itself.

(2) As Allah, Whose slaves the Believers are, is Forgiving and Forbearing, they should also forgive and forbear as far as possible. Though they have the right of retaliation, they should not resort to carnage and massacre.

106. "So it is" (as stated in the preceding paragraph) because Allah is the Ruler of the universe and has the power to give punishments and rewards to those who deserve them.

107. The fact that "Allah brings forth .....day" is a proof that He is the Master, Sovereign and Ruler of the universe. But the deeper meaning of the verse is that Allah, Who is able to bring forth the light of the day out of the

[Contd. on p. 226

مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَالْفُلْكَ تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِأَمْرِهِ ۚ وَيُمْسِكُ السَّمَاءَ أَنْ تَقَعَ عَلَى
الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ لَرَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٦٥﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَحْيَاكُمْ ثُمَّ
يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَكَفُورٌ ﴿٦٦﴾ لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ جَعَلْنَا مَنْسَكًا هُمْ نَاسِكُوهُ
فَلَا يُنَازِعُنَّكَ فِي الْأَمْرِ وَادْعُ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ ۖ إِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ هُدًى مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٦٧﴾ وَإِنْ
جَادَلُوكَ فَقُلِ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾ اللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فِيمَا
كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾ أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ إِنَّ
ذَٰلِكَ فِي كِتَابٍ ۚ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ ﴿٧٠﴾ وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَمْ
يُنَزِّلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا وَمَا لَيْسَ لَهُمْ بِهِ عِلْمٌ ۗ وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ نَصِيرٍ ﴿٧١﴾ وَإِذَا تُتْلَىٰ
عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ تَعْرِفُ فِي وُجُوهِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الْمُنْكَرَ ۖ يَكَادُونَ يَسْطُونَ
بِالَّذِينَ يَتْلُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِنَا ۗ قُلْ أَفَأُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِشَرٍّ مِنْ ذَٰلِكُمُ ۗ النَّارُ ۖ وَعَدَهَا اللَّهُ
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ۖ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٧٢﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ ضُرِبَ مَثَلٌ فَاسْتَمِعُوا لَهُ ۚ إِنَّ
الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَنْ يَخْلُقُوا ذُبَابًا وَلَوِ اجْتَمَعُوا لَهُ ۖ وَإِنْ
يَسْلُبْهُمُ الذُّبَابُ شَيْئًا لَا يَسْتَنْقِذُوهُ مِنْهُ ۚ ضَعُفَ الطَّالِبُ وَالْمَطْلُوبُ ﴿٧٣﴾ مَا
قَدَرُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَقَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ ﴿٧٤﴾ اللَّهُ يَصْطَفِي مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ
رُسُلًا وَمِنَ النَّاسِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٧٥﴾ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ ۗ وَ
إِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ ﴿٧٦﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ارْكَعُوا وَاسْجُدُوا وَاعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمْ وَ
افْعَلُوا الْخَيْرَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٧٧﴾ وَجَاهِدُوا فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ ۚ هُوَ اجْتَبَاكُمْ
وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ ۚ مِلَّةَ أَبِيكُمْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ۚ هُوَ سَمَّاكُمُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ۙ
مِنْ قَبْلُ وَفِي هَٰذَا لِيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ

السجدة

Do you not see that He has subdued to you all that is in the earth and that He has subjected the boat to the law that she floats over the sea at His bidding, and He is supporting the sky in a way that it cannot fall down without His permission ?[113] The fact of the matter is that Allah is very Kind and Merciful to the people. He it is Who has given you life and causes your death, and He will again bring you to life; yet Man denies the Truth.[114] 65-66

For every community[115] We have prescribed a way of worship,[116] which it follows; therefore, O Muhammad, let them not dispute with you concerning this matter.[117] And invite the people to the Way of your Lord, for you are on the Straight Way.[118] And if they dispute with you, say to them, "Allah knows full well what you are doing: on the Day of Resurrection, Allah will judge between you concerning that about which you differ". Do you not know that Allah has full knowledge of everything in the heavens and the earth ? Every thing has been recorded in a Book; this is an easy thing for Allah.[119] 67-70

They worship, besides Allah, those for whom He has sent down no authority nor they themselves have any knowledge about them.[120] Such transgressors have no helper.[121] And when Our clear Revelations are recited to them, you perceive signs of disdain in the faces of the disbelievers as though they were going to assault those who recite Our Revelations to them. Say to them, "May I inform you of a thing worse than this?[122] It is the Fire which Allah has promised for those who reject the Truth; and what an evil abode it is !" 71-72

O mankind! A parable is related to you: so listen to it. The deities, whom you invoke instead of Allah, cannot create a fly even though they may all combine together for this purpose. Nay ! if a fly snatches away something from them, they cannot get it back from it. How weak are the suppliants and how weak those whom they supplicate.[123] They do not recognize the true worth of Allah as they should: the fact is that Allah alone is All-Mighty, All-Powerful. 73-74

Allah chooses His Messengers from among the angels and also from among the human beings (to convey His decrees).[124] He hears everything and knows everything. He knows whatever is open before them as well as that which is hidden from them,[125] and all matters are presented before Him.[126] 75-76

77-78 O people, who have believed, bow down and prostrate yourselves before Allah, worship your Lord and do righteous deeds: it may be that you attain true success.[127] Exert your utmost for the cause of Allah as one should.[128] He has chosen you for His service[129] and has not laid on you any hardship in your religion.[130] Therefore, be steadfast in the religion of your father Abraham.[131] Allah had called you "Muslims" before this and has called you[132] (by the same name) in this (Qur'ān) also so that the Messenger may be a witness in regard to you and you may be witnesses in regard to the rest of mankind.[133]

Contd. from p.223]

darkness of the night, has the power to bring out the light of the Truth out of the darkness of disbelief and ignorance, and the light of justice out of the darkness of tyranny.

108. He hears everything and sees everything and is not unaware of anything.

109. As Allah is in fact the Sovereign of the universe, His worshippers will surely attain true success and the worshippers of false gods will meet with utter failure.

110. This verse has a deeper meaning also, though apparently it merely declares that Allah alone has the power to send down rain which makes the land green. The deeper meaning is that the rainfall of the blessed Revelation will, in the near future, turn the barren land of Arabia into a garden of knowledge, morality and bring forth a high and righteous civilization.

111. The original word *Latīf* in the Text has no equivalent in English. The word "subtle" has not been used because of its bad associations. *Latīf* implies that Allah fulfils His designs in such fine ways that it is difficult to understand them till they become real and apparent.

As He is fully aware of everything, He knows how to conduct the affairs of His Kingdom.

112. He alone is "All-Sufficient" and does not stand in need of anyone in any way. He is "All-praiseworthy" because all praise belongs to Him alone whether anyone praises Him or not.

113. Here "the sky" implies the whole of the universe above and below the earth where everything is held in its own place and sphere.

114. That is, "Though man sees every reality presented by the Prophets, yet he denies it".

115. That is, "The Community of every Prophet".

116. Here the Arabic word *mansak* has been used in its most comprehensive sense which also includes "sacrifice" (v. 34). It means service, worship, in short, "the whole way of life". The same theme has been expressed in V: 48: "We prescribed a law and a way of life for each of you".

117. That is, "Now you have brought a way of life just as the former Prophets brought "ways of life" for their people. Therefore the people have no right to dispute with you concerning the "Law" you have brought".

118. This confirms the explanation given in E.N. 117 above.

119. In order to understand the significance of this paragraph, we should keep in view vv. 55-57 with which this is connected.

120. That is, "Neither there is any mention of their deities in any revealed Book nor have they any other source of knowledge about them nor any authority to worship them. Therefore, it is sheer ignorance that they have associated their self-invented deities with Allah and worship them, make vows and offer sacrifices to them and supplicate them for their needs etc. This is to warn the foolish people that they are absolutely wrong in expecting that their deities would help them in this world and in the Hereafter? because they have no power to help them. Thus, they will find no helper, for Allah alone could help them and they have already displeased Him by their rebellious behaviour.

122. That is, "You will meet with a far worse state of anguish than that which you display against those who recite Divine Revelations to you.

123. This parable has been cited to impress upon the idol-worshippers that their deities are absolutely powerless, for even if they all collaborated to create an insignificant thing like a fly, they could not; nay, even if a fly snatched away anything from them they could not prevent it. This shows how weak they themselves are and how powerless are the idols they supplicate.

124. In continuation of the refutation of *shirk*, Allah has taken two kinds of the most revered of "deities" to show their real status, as if to say, "The angels and the Prophets whom you have set up as deities are mere Messengers of Allah. Allah has chosen them to convey His Messages to human beings and this does not make them God or partners in His Godhead."

125. The Qur'ān employs this sentence to refute the creed of the *mushriks* in regard to intercession, as if to say, "You imagine that angels, prophets, saints,

and the like can intercede with Allah on your behalf and therefore you worship them. You are absolutely wrong, for none of your deities knows what is good for you and what is not: Allah alone hears everything, sees everything and knows everything. Therefore He has not given the right of intercession and recommendation to anyone except when He Himself is pleased to give such permission."

126. This is to impress upon them that every affair and every matter, big or small, is presented before Allah for a decision. Therefore you should not invoke anyone else than Allah, for all others are utterly helpless and powerless and cannot even fulfil their own desires and needs.

127. This is the right way of attaining true success, but even after adopting these ways of worship and performing good deeds one should not rest content or be proud that he would surely attain success because he is worshipping Allah and is doing good deeds. He should only expect that Allah will by His grace accept his services and bless him with true success.

Imām Shāfi'ī, Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal, 'Abdullāh bin Mubārak and Isḥāq bin Rāhawayah hold the view that this verse of Sūrah Al-Ḥajj requires a 'prostration'. But Imām 'Abū Ḥanīfah, Imām Mālik, Ḥasan Baṣrī, Sa'īd bin al-Musayyab, Sa'īd bin Jubair, Ibrāhīm Nakha'ī and Sufyān Thaurī dispute this. The arguments of the two sides are briefly as follows:

The former group of commentators base their opinion on the following:

(1) The verb in the verse is in the imperative mood.

(2) The Tradition of 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir, which has been reported by Imām Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd, Tirmizī, Ibn Mardūyah and Baihaqi, says, "I asked, 'O Messenger of Allah ! Does the merit of Sūrah Al-Ḥajj consist in the fact that it contains two verses requiring prostration?' He replied, 'Yes, the one who does not prostrate on these two verses, should not recite them.' "

(3) The Tradition of Abū Dāwūd and Ibn Mājah in which 'Amr bin 'Āṣ says that he was told by the Holy Prophet that there were two verses requiring prostration in Sūrah Al-Ḥajj.

(4) Sayings of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, 'Alī, 'Uthmān, Ibn 'Umar, Ibn 'Abbās, Abul Dardā, Abū Mūsā Ash'arī and 'Ammār bin Yāsir to the effect that Sūrah Al-Ḥajj contains two prostrations.

The latter group of commentators argue as follows;

(1) The verse contains a command both for *Sajdah* (prostration) and for *Rukū'* (bowing in prayer), which implies the whole Islamic Prayer according to the Qur'ānic usage, and not 'prostration' alone.

(2) The tradition reported by 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir is unauthentic as it has weak links.

(3) The Tradition of 'Amr bin 'Āṣ is also unreliable, because its reporters are not well known.

(4) As for the sayings of the Companions, Ibn 'Abbās has clearly explained that prostration in respect of the first verse (in Sūrah Al-Ḥajj) is obligatory, whereas in regard to the second, it is only suggestive.

128. The Arabic word *Jihād* is very comprehensive. It includes every kind of effort, exertion, conflict and war. *Jihād* for the cause of Allah means that it should be performed for His service and for His approval against those who prevent others from following His Way. The performance of *Jihād* also requires that one should first of all fight against one's own self in order to subdue it. For there can be no true *Jihād* unless one fights against one's evil self and subdues one's desires and lusts to the obedience of Allah. The Holy Prophet himself has emphasized the need for this *Jihād*. Once when the warriors for the cause of Allah returned from *Jihād*, he said: "You have returned from the lesser *Jihād* to the greater *Jihād*." They asked, "What is that greater *Jihād*?" The Holy Prophet replied, "It is the *Jihād* against one's own desires and lusts."

Moreover, the battlefield for *Jihād* is, in fact, the whole world, and Islam demands that one should exert one's utmost against all the rebels of Allah and the wicked powers with all of one's heart and mind and body and wealth.

129. The direct addressees of this were the Companions of the Holy Prophet, for they were the first who had the honour to be chosen for this service; others have been addressed only indirectly being their followers. This thing has been mentioned in the Qur'an in other ways as well. For reference, see II: 143 and III: 110.

130. ".....(Allah) has not laid on you any hardship in your religion." That is, "The creed you have been given is very simple and straightforward and the laws and regulations you have to obey are practicable. You are free within its bounds to make as much progress as you can." This was to impress that the lives of the Muslims were free from all those useless and unnatural restrictions which had been imposed upon the former communities by their priests and law-givers. The negative aspect of the same thing has been mentioned in VII: 157: "... He enjoins them to follow virtue and forbids them from evil: He makes pure things lawful for them and impure things unlawful. He relieves them of their burdens and frees them from the shackles that bound them."

131. Though Islam may be called the religion of Prophets Noah, Moses, Jesus, etc., yet the Qur'ān emphasizes over and over again that it is the religion of

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فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَاٰتُوا الزَّكٰوةَ وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِاللّٰهِ هُوَ مَوْلٰىكُمْ فَنِعْمَ الْمَوْلٰى وَنِعْمَ النَّصِيرُ ﴿٧٨﴾

78 Therefore, establish Ṣalāt and pay the Zakāt dues, and hold fast to Allah,[134] for He is your Guardian: What an excellent Guardian and what an excellent Helper!

Prophet Abraham. Therefore, "You should follow it." This is for three reasons:

(1) The first addressees of the Qur'ān were the Arabs who were more familiar with Prophet Abraham than with any other Prophet and acknowledged him to be a holy personage and their leader.

(2) Prophet Abraham alone was the person whom the Jews, the Christians, the Muslims and the *mushriks* of Arabia and of the adjoining countries unanimously acknowledged as a great Prophet.

(3) When the Qur'ān invites all these communities to follow the way of Abraham, it in fact, admonishes them that all their religions had been invented long after Prophet Abraham and, therefore, were not trustworthy because they contradicted many things taught by him. As for the *mushriks* of Arabia, they also acknowledged that idol-worship among them had been started by 'Amr bin Luhayy, who was a leader of Banī Khuzā'ah, and had brought an idol, called Hubal, from Moab in about 600 B.C. So the religion to which Prophet Muḥammad (Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) invited them was the same pure, un-adulterated religion which was taught by Prophet Abraham (Allah's peace be upon him).

For further details, see E.N.'s 134, 135 of Chapter II (Al-Baqarah) and E.N.'s 58, 79 of Chapter III (Āl-'Imrān) and E.N.'s 119, 120 of Chapter XVI (An-Naḥl)

132. Here the word "you" has not been addressed exclusively to those Believers who lived at the time of the revelation of this verse, or those who believed after its revelation. It includes all those human beings, who, from the beginning of human history, believed in *Tauḥīd*, the Hereafter, Prophethood and the Divine Books. They were not "Jews", "Christians", etc., but "Muslims" in the sense that they had surrendered themselves to Allah. Likewise the followers of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) are not Muḥammadens but "Muslims".

133. For Explanation, see E. N. 144 of Chapter II (Al-Baqarah).

134. ".... hold fast to Allah": Follow exclusively the Guidance and the law of Allah: obey Him alone: fear Him and have all your hopes and expectations in Him: invoke Him alone for help: trust in Him and pray to Him for all your needs.



XXIII

AL-MU'MINŪN

المؤمنون

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XXIII
AL-MU'MINŪN

المؤمنون

INTRODUCTION

Name.

The Sūrah takes its name, Al-Mu'minūn, from the first verse.

Period of Revelation.

Both its style and theme indicate that it was revealed during the middle stage of Prophethood at Makkah. Reading between the lines, one feels that a bitter conflict had begun between the Holy Prophet and the disbelievers of Makkah, though the persecution by them had not yet become tyrannical. It appears that the Sūrah was sent down during the climax of the "Famine" in Makkah (vv. 75-76), which according to authentic traditions occurred during the middle stage of Prophethood. Moreover, according to a tradition related by 'Urwah bin Zubair, Ḥaḍrat 'Umar who had embraced Islam by that time, said, "This Sūrah was revealed in my presence and I myself observed the state of the Holy Prophet during its revelation. When the revelation ended, the Holy Prophet remarked, 'On this occasion ten such verses have been sent down to me that the one who measures up to them, will most surely go to Paradise'. Then he recited the initial verses of the Sūrah." (Aḥmad, Tirmizi, Nasā'ī, Ḥākim).

Theme and Topics.

The central theme of the Sūrah is to invite the people to accept and follow the Message of the Holy Prophet and the whole Sūrah revolves round this theme.

SUMMARY

1-11 The fact that the people who have accepted the Message of the Holy Prophet have started acquiring such and such noble qualities of character is a practical proof of the truth of the Message.

12-22 In this passage, attention has been drawn to the creation of man and the universe to impress that the whole universe including man's own self, is a clear proof of the truth of the Holy Prophet's Message, which invites the people to accept *Tauhid* and life in the Hereafter.

23-54 Then the stories of the former Prophets and their communities have been cited as historical evidences of the truth of the Message. They prove the following things:

(a) The objections and the doubts that the antagonists are raising against the Message of Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) are not new. These were raised against the former Prophets also whom they themselves acknowledged as Messengers of Allah. Therefore they should learn a lesson from their history and judge for themselves whether the Prophets were in the right or their objectors.

(b) The Message of *Tauhid* and the Hereafter that Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) is conveying is the same as was brought by the former Prophets; therefore they should accept it.

(c) They should take a warning from the consequences met by those communities who rejected the Message of their Prophets.

(d) All the Prophets brought one and the same religion from Allah and they all belonged to one and the same community. All other religions were invented by the people themselves and none of them is from Allah.

55-67 After relating the stories of the Prophets, a fundamental principle has been enunciated: Success and prosperity in the worldly life is not a criterion of success in the sight of Allah. If some persons (or a person) are enjoying prosperity, wealth, power and the like in this world, it does not mean that they are the favourites of Allah. Likewise, the poverty and adversity of other people is not a proof that Allah is displeased with them. The real criterion is Faith (or lack of it) and piety

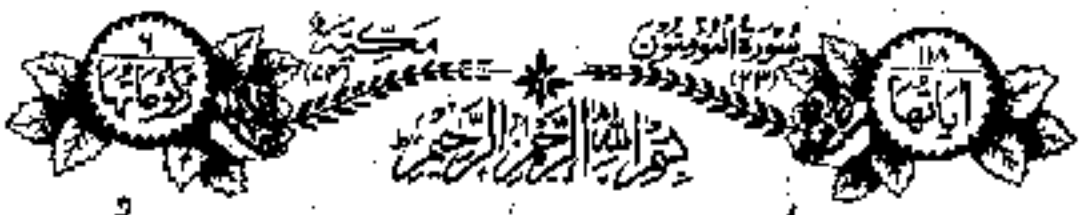
(or lack of it). This declaration was needed because the antagonists of the Holy Prophet were the great chiefs of Makkah, who (and their followers) were deluded by their own prosperity that God and their deities were well pleased with them. On the other hand, they argued, the fact that Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) and his followers were indigent and in a state of helplessness, was a clear proof that Allah was not pleased with them, and they were under the curse of their deities.

In this passage different arguments have been used to convince them that Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) was a true Prophet of Allah. Then they have been told that the Famine (vv. 75-76) was merely a warning and therefore "it is better for you to mend your ways; otherwise you will be visited by a terrible scourge". 68-77

Again they have been invited to observe the Signs in the universe and in their own selves because these are clear proofs of the truth of the Message of the Holy Prophet. 78-95

The Holy Prophet has been told not to adopt any wrong way in retaliation to counteract the evil ways of the enemies, and to guard against the incitement of Satan. 96-97

In this concluding passage, the enemies of the truth have been warned that they shall have to render an account in the Hereafter and bear the consequences of their persecution of the Believers: therefore they should mend their ways. 98-118



المؤمنون ١٨

هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُوْنَ ۝٣ وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ لِلزَّكٰوةِ فٰعِلُوْنَ ۝٤ وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ
لِفُرُوْجِهِمْ حٰفِظُوْنَ ۝٥ اِلَّا عَلٰٓى اَزْوَاجِهِمْ اَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ اَيْمَانُهُمْ فَاِنَّهُمْ
غَيْرُ مَلُوْمِيْنَ ۝٦ فَمَنِ ابْتَغٰى وَرَآءَ ذٰلِكَ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْعٰدُوْنَ ۝٧ وَالَّذِيْنَ
هُمْ لِاَمٰنٰتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رٰعُوْنَ ۝٨ وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ عَلٰى صَلَوٰتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُوْنَ ۝٩
اُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْوٰرِثُوْنَ ۝١٠ الَّذِيْنَ يَرِثُوْنَ الْفِرْدَوْسَ ؕ هُمْ فِيْهَا خٰلِدُوْنَ ۝١١ وَ
لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْاِنْسَانَ مِنْ سُلٰلَةٍ مِّنْ طِيْنٍ ۝١٢ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنٰهُ نُطْفَةً فِيْ قَرَارٍ
مَّكِيْنٍ ۝١٣ ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النُّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُضْغَةَ
عِظٰمًا فَكَسَوْنَا الْعِظٰمَ لَحْمًا ۗ ثُمَّ اَنْشَاْنٰهُ خَلْقًا اٰخَرَ ؕ فَتَبٰرَكَ اللّٰهُ اَحْسَنُ
الْخٰلِقِيْنَ ۝١٤ ثُمَّ اِنَّكُمْ بَعْدَ ذٰلِكَ لَمَيِّتُوْنَ ۝١٥ ثُمَّ اِنَّكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ تُبْعَثُوْنَ ۝١٦
وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعَ طَرَآئِقَ ۖ وَمَا كُنَّا عَنِ الْخَلْقِ غٰفِلِيْنَ ۝١٧
وَاَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءًۢ بِقَدَرٍ فَاَسْكَنّٰهُ فِي الْاَرْضِ ۖ وَاِنَّا عَلٰى ذَهَابٍ
بِهٖ لَقٰدِرُوْنَ ۝١٨ فَاَنْشَاْنَا لَكُمْ بِهٖ جَنّٰتٍ مِّنْ نَّخِيْلٍ وَّاَعْنَابٍ لَّكُمْ
فِيْهَا فَوَاكِهُ كَثِيْرَةٌ وَّمِنْهَا تَاْكُلُوْنَ ۝١٩ وَشَجَرَةً تَخْرُجُ مِنْ طُوْرِ سَيْنَآءَ
تَنْۢبُتُ بِالدُّهْنِ وَصِبْغٍ لِّلْاٰكِلِيْنَ ۝٢٠ وَاِنَّ لَكُمْ فِي الْاَنْعَامِ لَعِبْرَةً ؕ
نُسْقِيْكُمْ مِّمَّا فِيْ بُطُوْنِهَا وَلَكُمْ فِيْهَا مَنَافِعُ كَثِيْرَةٌ وَّمِنْهَا تَاْكُلُوْنَ ۝٢١

وقف لازم
وقف لازم

XXIII
AL-MU'MINŪN
المؤمنون

Verses: 118

Revealed at Makkah

In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

Most certainly those Believers have attained true success,[1] who[2] perform their Ṣalāt with humility:[3] who refrain from vain things:[4] who spend their Zakāt dues in appropriate ways:[5] who guard their private parts scrupulously,[6] except with regard to their wives and those women who are legally in their possession, for in that case they shall not be blame-worthy, but those, who go beyond this (in lust for sexual desires), shall be transgressors:[7] who are true to their trusts and their promises:[8] and who strictly guard their Prayers.[9] These are the heirs who will inherit Paradise[10] and dwell therein for ever.[11] 1-11

We created man from an essence of clay: then turned him into a sperm-drop in a safe place: then changed the sperm drop into a clot of blood and the clot into a piece of flesh: then turned the piece of flesh into bones: then clothed the bones with flesh:[12] and then brought him forth as quite a different creation (from the embryo).[13] So blessed is Allah, the best of all creators.[14] Then after this you shall all die: then most surely you shall be raised up on the Day of Resurrection. 12-16

And We have made seven paths above you :[15] We were not novice in the art of creation.[16] And We sent down rain from the sky in due measure and lodged it in the earth :[17] and We are able to take it away as We will.[18] Then with that rain We caused vine-yards and palm-groves to spring up. In those gardens there are delicious fruits[19] from which you obtain sustenance.[20] And We created the tree which grows on Mount Sinai:[21] it gives oil and is used as food also by those who like to eat it. 17-20

In fact, there is a lesson for you in the cattle: We give you as a 21-22

drink of that which is in their bellies,[22] and besides this you get other benefits from them: you eat their flesh and are carried from place to place on them and on ships.[23]

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1. "Believers", who have attained true success, are those who have accepted the Message of Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him), and have acknowledged him as their guide and followed the way of life taught by him.

This assertion cannot be fully appreciated unless one keeps in view the background in which it was made. On the one hand, there were the well-to-do and prosperous chiefs of Makkah, the opponents of Islam, whose business was thriving and who were enjoying every good thing of life, and on the other hand, there were the followers of Islam majority of whom were either poor from the beginning, or had been reduced to poverty by ruthless antagonism to Islam. Therefore, the assertion, "Most certainly the Believers have attained true success", with which the discourse begins, was meant to tell the disbelievers that the criterion of success and failure that they had in mind was not correct. It was based on misconceptions besides being transitory and limited in nature: it led to failure and not true success. On the contrary, the followers of Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him), whom they regarded as failures, were truly successful, because by accepting the invitation to the Right Guidance given by the Messenger of Allah, they had struck a bargain which would lead them to true success and everlasting bliss in this world as well as in the Hereafter, whereas by rejecting the Message the opponents had incurred loss and would meet with the evil consequences both in this world and in the next.

This is the main theme of the Sūrah and the whole discourse, from the beginning to the end, is meant to impress the same.

2. The noble characteristics of the Believers pointed out in vv. 2-9 are the arguments to prove the above assertion. In other words, it has been stated that people with such and such traits and qualities only can attain true success in this world and in the Hereafter.

3. *Khāshi'ūn* in the Text is from *khushū'* (to bow down, to express humility) which is a condition of the heart as well as of the body. *Khushū'* of the heart is to fear and stand in awe of a powerful person, and *khushū'* of the body is to bow one's head and lower one's gaze and voice in his presence. In *Ṣalāt* one is required to show *khushū'* both of the heart and of the body, and this is the essence of the Prayer. It has been reported that when the Holy Prophet once saw a person offering his Prayer as well as playing with his beard, he remarked: "Had he *khushū'* in his heart, his body would have manifested it."

Though *khushū'* is actually a condition of the heart, as stated by the above tradition, it is manifested by the body as a matter of course. The *Shari'ah* has

enjoined certain etiquette which, on the one hand, helps produce *khushū'* in the heart, and on the other, helps sustain the physical act of the Prayer in spite of the fluctuating condition of the heart. According to this etiquette, one should neither turn to the right or left, nor raise one's head to look up: one may, however, look around from the corner of the eye, but as far as possible, one must fix the gaze on the place where the forehead would rest in prostration; one is also forbidden to shift about, incline side ways, fold the garments or shake off dust from them. It is also forbidden that while going down for prostration, one should clean the place where one would sit or perform prostration. Similarly it is disrespectful that one should stand stuffy erect, recite the verses of the Qur'ān in a loud resounding voice, or sing them, or belch or yawn repeatedly and noisily. It has also not been approved that one should offer the Prayer in a hurry. The injunction is that each article of the Prayer should be performed in perfect peace and tranquillity, and unless one article has been completely performed, the next should not be begun. If one feels hurt by something during the Prayer, one may cast it aside by one hand, but moving the hand repeatedly or using both the hands for the purpose is prohibited.

Along with this etiquette of the body, it is also important that one should avoid thinking irrelevant things during the Prayer. If thoughts come to the mind without one's intention, it is a natural human weakness, but one should try one's utmost that the mind and heart are wholly turned towards Allah, and the mind is in full harmony and tune with the tongue, and as soon as one becomes conscious of irrelevant thoughts one should immediately turn the attention to the Prayer.

4. Literally, *laghv* is anything nonsensical, meaningless and vain, which is in no way conducive to achieving one's goal and purpose in life. The Believers pay no heed to such useless things and they show no inclination or interest for them. If by chance they see such things being indulged in, they keep away and avoid them scrupulously, or treat them with utmost indifference. This attitude has been described in Al-Furqān (XXV): 72, thus: " ... if they have to pass by what is vain, they pass by like dignified people."

This is indeed one of the outstanding characteristics of the Believer. He is a person who feels the burden of responsibility at all times; he regards the world as a place of test, and the life as the limited time allowed for the test. This feeling makes him behave seriously and responsibly throughout life just like the student who is taking an examination paper with his whole mind and body and soul absorbed in it. Just as the student knows and feels that each moment of the limited time at his disposal is important and decisive for his future life, and is not inclined to waste it, so the Believer also spends each moment of his life on works which are useful and productive in their ultimate results. So much so that even in matters of

recreation and sport, he makes a choice of only those things which prepare him for higher ends in life and do not result in mere wastage of time. For him time is not something to be killed but used profitably and productively.

Besides this, the Believer is a person who possesses a right thinking mind, pure nature and fine taste: he has no inclination to indecent things: he can talk useful and healthy things but cannot indulge in idle talk: he has a fine taste of humour, but is not given to jesting, joking, ridicule, etc. nor can he endure dirty jokes and fun. For him a society in which the ears are never immune from abusive language, back-biting, slander, lying, dirty songs and indecent talk is a source of torture and agony. A characteristic of the promised Paradise is: " . . therein you will not hear anything vain or useless."

5. The word *Zakāt* literally means purification and development—to help something grow up smoothly and develop without obstruction. As an Islamic term, it implies both the portion of wealth taken out for the purpose of purifying the rest of wealth and the act of purification itself. The words of the original Text mean that the Believer constantly practises purification. Thus the meaning is not confined to the paying off of *Zakāt* dues only but it is extended to self-purification which includes purification of morals as well as wealth, property and life in general. Then it does not mean purification of one's own self, but includes the purification of the lives of other people as well. So the verse means: "The Believers are the people who purify themselves as well as others." This thing has been stated at other places in the Qur'ān also, for instance: "Successful is he who practised purification and remembered his Lord and prayed." (LXXXVII: 14-15), and: "Successful is he who purified himself and failure is he who corrupted it." (XCI: 9-10). But this verse is more comprehensive in meaning because it stresses the purification of both society and one's own person.

6. They are modest in every sense of the word. They are free from sex abuse and sex perversion. They are so modest that they even conceal those parts of their bodies which the Law forbids to expose before others. For explanation, see E.N.'s 30 and 32 of An-Nūr (XXIV).

7. This is a parenthesis which is meant to remove the common misunderstanding that sex desire is an evil thing in itself and satisfying it even in lawful ways is not desirable, particularly for the righteous and godly people. This misunderstanding would have been strengthened had it been only said that the Believers guard their private parts scrupulously, because it would have implied that they live unmarried lives, away from the world, like monks and hermits. Therefore a parenthesis has been added to say that there is nothing wrong in satisfying the sex desire in lawful ways. What is evil is that one should transgress the prescribed limits for satisfying the sex desire.

Here are briefly a few injunctions which are based on this parenthetical clause:

(1) Two categories of women have been excluded from the general command of guarding the private parts: (a) wives, (b) women who are legally in one's possession, *i.e.* slave-girls. Thus the verse clearly lays down the law that one is allowed to have sexual relations with one's slave-girl as with one's wife, the basis being possession and not marriage. If marriage had been the condition, the slave-girl also would have been included among the wives, and there was no need to mention them separately. Some modern commentators, who dispute the permissibility of having sexual relations with the slave-girl, argue from An-Nisā' (IV) : 25 to prove that one can have sexual relations with a slave-girl only after entering wedlock with her, because that verse enjoins that if a person cannot afford to marry a free Muslim woman, he may marry a Muslim slave-girl. But these commentators have a strange characteristic: they accept a part of a verse if it suits them, but conveniently ignore another part of the same verse if it goes against their wish and whim. The law about marrying the slave-girls as enunciated in IV :25 reads: "....you may marry them with the permission of their guardians and give them their fair dowries." Obviously the person under reference here is not the master of the slave girl himself but the person who cannot afford to marry a free Muslim woman, and therefore wants to marry a slave-girl, who is in the possession of another person. For if the question had been of marrying one's own slave-girl, who would then be the "guardian" whose permission would have to be sought? Then, the interpretation they give of this verse contradicts other verses dealing with the same subject in the Qur'ān. A sincere person, who wants to understand the Qur'ānic law in this regard should study An-Nisā' (IV): 3, 25; Al-Aḥzāb (XXXIII): 50, 52, and Al-Ma'ārij (LXX): 30 together with this verse of Al-Mu'minūn. (For further explanation, see E.N. 44 of An-Nisā).

(2) The law prescribed in the parenthesis is only applicable to men as is clear from the Text. A woman in the time of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar did not understand this fine point of the language and indulged in sexual gratification with her slave. When her case was brought before the consultative body of the Companions, they gave the unanimous decision: "She misinterpreted the Book of Allah" Nobody should entertain the doubt that if this exception is meant for the men only, how could then the husbands become lawful for the wives? This doubt is unjustified because when the husbands are exempted from the command of guarding their private parts in regard to their wives, the wives automatically stand exempted from the command with regard to their husbands, and there is no need to grant them exemption separately. Thus the command of exemption remains applicable and effective only in respect of the man and the woman

legally in his possession, and the slave becomes unlawful for the woman possessing him. The wisdom of why the slave has been forbidden to the woman is that he can only statisfy her sexual desire but cannot become guardian and governor of herself and her household, which leaves a serious flaw in the family life.

(3) The sentence ".... but those who go beyond this (in lust for sexual desire), shall be transgressors" has made satisfaction of sex desire in other ways unlawful, whether it be through fornication, homosexuality, sex gratification with animals, or some other means. The jurists differ only with regard to masturbation. Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal regards it as lawful, but Imāms Mālik and Shāfi'ī regard it as absolutely unlawful: and though the Ḥanafites also regard it as unlawful, they give the opinion that if a person indulges sometimes in masturbation under the fit of passion, it is expected that he will be forgiven the error.

(4) Some commentators have proved the prohibition of *Mut'ah* (temporary marriage) from this verse. They argue that the "woman with whom one has entered into wedlock temporarily, can neither be regarded as a wife nor a slave-girl. A slave-girl obviously she is not, and she is also not a wife, because the legal injunctions normally applicable to the wife are not applicable to her. She neither inherits the man nor the man her; she is neither governed by the law pertaining to *'Iddah* (waiting period after divorce or death of husband), divorce, subsistence, nor by that pertaining to the vow by man that he will not have conjugal relations with her, false accusation, etc. She is also excluded from the prescribed limit of four wives. Thus, when she is neither a "wife" nor a "slave-girl" in any sense, she will naturally be included among those "beyond this", whose seeker has been declared a "transgressor" by the Qur'ān.

This is a strong argument but due to a weakness in it, it is difficult to say that this verse is decisive with regard to the prohibition of *Mut'ah*. The fact is that the Holy Prophet enjoined the final and absolute prohibition of *Mut'ah* in the year of the conquest of Makkah, but before it *Mut'ah* was allowed according to several authentic traditions. If *Mut'ah* had been prohibited in this verse, which was admittedly revealed at Makkah, several years before the migration, how can it be imagined that the Holy Prophet kept the prohibition in abeyance till the conquest of Makkah? The correct position therefore is that prohibition of *Mut'ah* is not based on any express law of the Qur'ān but is based on the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet. Had it not been prohibited by the *Sunnah*, it would have been difficult to declare it as prohibited only on the authority of this verse.

It would be worth-while to clarify two other points in connection with *Mut'ah*:

(a) Its prohibition is based on the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet and therefore it is wrong to say that it was prohibited by Ḥaḍrat 'Umar. As a matter of fact, Ḥaḍrat 'Umar only enforced it as a law of Islam and publicised it among the people. This had not been done earlier because the Holy Prophet had forbidden *Mut'ah* only during the latter part of his worldly life.

(b) The Shi'ite view that *Mut'ah* is absolutely lawful and permissible has no sanction and support in the Qur'ān or *Sunnah*. The fact is that a few of the Companions, their followers and jurists who regarded it permissible in the early days of Islam, did so only in case of extreme necessity and need. None of them held the view that it was absolutely lawful like marriage and could be practised in normal circumstances. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, who is generally cited as a prominent supporter of the view of permissibility, has himself explained his position thus: "It is just like carrion which is lawful for a person only in extreme necessity." Even Ḥaḍrat Ibn 'Abbās had to revise his opinion when he saw that people were abusing permissibility and had started practising *Mut'ah* freely regardless of genuine need and necessity. Again, even if the question, whether Ḥaḍrat Ibn 'Abbās and the few like-minded jurists had revised their opinion or not, is ignored, the fact is that the supporters of *Mut'ah* allow it only in case of extreme necessity. Holding *Mut'ah* as absolutely permissible, practising it without any real necessity, or resorting to it even when one has a legally wedded wife or wives is a kind of licence which is abhorred by good taste, much less it be attributed to the *Sharī'ah* of Muḥammad (Allah's peace be upon him) and imputed to the learned jurists of his family. I think that among the Shi'ite Muslims themselves no respectable person would like that somebody should ask for the hand of his daughter or sister not in marriage but for the purpose of *Mut'ah*. For if *Mut'ah* is held as absolutely permissible, it would imply that there should exist in society a low class of women, like the prostitutes, who should be available for the purpose as and when required, or if not that, *Mut'ah* be restricted to the daughters and sisters of the poor stratum of society and the well-to-do be given the freedom and right to exploit them as and when they like. Can such an injustice and discrimination be expected of the Divine Law? And will Allah and His Messenger permit an act which every respectable woman would regard not only disgraceful for herself but shameful, too?

8. The Believers fulfil the terms of the trusts which are placed in their charge. In this connection it should be noted that the Arabic word *amānāt* is very comprehensive and includes all those trusts which are placed in their charge by Allah or society or individuals. Likewise *'ahd* includes all those compacts, pledges, and promises which are made between Allah and man, and man and man. The Holy Prophet himself used to impress the importance of the fulfilment of pledges in his addresses: "The one, who does not fulfil the terms of his trust, has

no Faith, and the one, who does not keep promises and pledges has no Islam." (Baihaqī) According to a Tradition reported both by Bukhārī and Muslim, he said: Four characteristics are such that if a person has all the four in him, he is beyond any doubt a hypocrite, and the one who has one of these, is a hypocrite to that extent till he gives it up:

(a) When something is placed in his trust, he commits breach of the trust, (b) when he speaks, he tells a lie, (c) when he makes a promise, he breaks it, and, (d) when he has a quarrel with somebody, he exceeds all limits (of decency and morality)"

9. *Ṣalawāt* is plural of *Ṣalāt*. In verse 2 the act of *Ṣalāt* itself was implied, but here the plural number implies the individual Prayers offered in their own times. "They strictly guard their Prayers": they strictly adhere to the prescribed times of the Prayers: they perform them with due regard for their pre-requisites, conditions and articles with clean body and dress and necessary ablutions: they do not regard their Prayers as an unnecessary burden, which has to be cast off somehow: they do not recite mechanically but understand what they recite and are conscious that they are supplicating their Lord like humble servants.

10. *Firdaus* (Paradise) is a common word found in almost all human languages in very nearly similar forms. It means a vast garden adjoining the dwelling of a person and enclosed by defence walls and containing all kinds of fruit trees, especially vines. In some languages, the word has the sense of containing pet birds and animals, too. *Firdaus* was in common use in pre-Islamic Arabic literature. The Qur'ān, however, has used it for a plurality of gardens as in Al-Kahf (XVIII) :107. This gives the idea that *Firdaus* is a vast place containing a great number of gardens, vineyards, etc.

The inheritance of Paradise by Believers has been explained in detail in E.N. 83 of Sūrah Ṭā Hā (XX) and E.N. 99 of Sūrah Al-Anbiyā' (XXI).

11. The substance of this passage may be summed up in four parts for the further understanding of the Sūrah:

(1) The above-mentioned excellent qualities of the Believers are not confined to any race, nation or country.

(2) These excellences can be attained only by sincere Faith and excellent moral qualities, and by the observance of prescribed laws in all the aspects of life.

(3) True success is not confined to transitory worldly and material prosperity but it comprises both success in this life and in the life after death in the Hereafter, and is attained by sincere Faith and righteous deeds. This is a fundamental principle which cannot be falsified either by the worldly

"success" of the evil-doers or by the temporary "failure" of the righteous people.

(4) Let us reiterate that these excellent characteristics of the Believers have been presented as a practical proof of the truth of the Message of the Holy Prophet, for these were the result of its acceptance. This should be kept in mind in the study of the succeeding passages, wherein the same subject has been pursued from different angles. This will also help to show the connection between this and the succeeding passages.

12. For explanation see E.N.'s 5, 6 and 9 of Sūrah Ḥajj (XXII).

13. Now let the disbelievers consider the Message of the Holy Prophet by observing their own creation, for this will convince them of its truth by proving its doctrine of *Tauḥīd*. The origin of man is from a mere inanimate sperm-drop, which undergoes several changes in the womb of the mother. But after this, when it sees the light of the day, it is quite a different creation from the embryo in the womb. Now it can hear, it can see, and in due course of time it can talk and think. Then, when he reaches adulthood and maturity, he is capable of performing wonderful deeds. It is obvious that Allah alone could create all these characteristics in an inanimate sperm-drop.

14. The various stages of the creation of man have been cited to prove that Allah is All-Blessed and there is no human language which can describe the praise of which He is worthy, as if to say, "That Allah Who is able to develop an essence of clay into a perfect man, does not have any partner in His Godhead. Moreover, He has the power to raise him up again after his death, and is capable of working even greater wonders."

15. The original Arabic word *ṭarā'iq* has more than one meaning. It may refer to the paths of the seven planets, with which the man of the time of the revelation of the Qur'ān was familiar, or to the seven heavens. It should be noted that this word has not been used as a modern scientific term, but as a common word according to the Arabic usage of the period in order to invite the people's attention to the wonders of the heavens, whose creation is certainly a greater thing than the creation of men. (XL: 57).

16. This may also be translated as: "We were not nor are heedless of Our creation." According to the first translation, it will mean that the whole of the creation has been brought about in a perfect manner with a definite design and purpose, for Allah—their Creator—is perfect in every respect. The creation itself

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وَعَلَيْهَا وَعَلَى الْفُلْكِ تُحْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَلَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا نُوْحًا اِلٰى قَوْمِهٖ فَقَالَ
يٰقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ اِلٰهٍ غَيْرُهٗ ؕ اَفَلَا تَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ فَقَالَ الْمَلَؤُا
الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مِنْ قَوْمِهٖ مَا هٰذَاۤ اِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ ۙ يُرِيْدُ اَنْ يَّتَفَضَّلَ
عَلَيْكُمْ ؕ وَلَوْ شَآءَ اللّٰهُ لَاَنْزَلَ مَلٰٓئِكَةً ۚ مَّا سَمِعْنَا بِهٰذَا فِيْۤ اٰبَآئِنَا الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾
اِنْ هُوَ اِلَّا رَجُلٌۢ بِهٖ جِنَّةٌ فَتَرَبَّصُوْا بِهٖ حَتّٰى حِيْنٍ ﴿٢٥﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ
انْصُرْنِيْ بِمَا كَذَّبُوْنِ ﴿٢٦﴾ فَاَوْحَيْنَاۤ اِلَيْهِ اَنِ اصْنَعِ الْفُلْكَ بِاَعْيُنِنَا وَ
وَحْيِنَا فَاِذَا جَآءَ اَمْرُنَا وَفَارَ التَّنُّوْرُ ۙ فَاسْلُكْ فِيْهَا مِنْ كُلٍّ زَوْجَيْنِ
اثْنَيْنِ وَاَهْلَكَ اِلَّا مَنْ سَبَقَ عَلَيْهِ الْقَوْلُ مِنْهُمْ ۚ وَلَا تُخَاطِبْنِيْ فِي
الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا ۚ اِنَّهُمْ مُّغْرَقُوْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾ فَاِذَا اسْتَوَيْتَ اَنْتَ وَمَنْ مَّعَكَ عَلَى
الْفُلْكِ فَقُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ نَجّٰىنَا مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ وَقُلْ رَّبِّ
اَنْزِلْنِيْ مُنْزَلًا مُّبٰرَكًا وَّاَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْمُنْزِلِيْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ ؕ وَّاِنْ
كُنَّا لَمُبْتَلِيْنَ ﴿٣٠﴾ ثُمَّ اَنْشَاْنَا مِنْۢ بَعْدِهِمْ قَرْنًا اٰخَرِيْنَ ﴿٣١﴾ فَاَرْسَلْنَا
فِيْهِمْ رَسُوْلًا مِّنْهُمْ اَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ اِلٰهٍ غَيْرُهٗ ؕ اَفَلَا
تَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَقَالَ الْمَلَاُ مِنْ قَوْمِهِ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا وَكَذَّبُوْا بِلِقَآءِ الْاٰخِرَةِ
وَاَتْرَفْنٰهُمْ فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا ۙ مَا هٰذَاۤ اِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ ۙ يَاْكُلُ مِمَّا تَاْكُلُوْنَ
مِنْهُ وَيَشْرَبُ مِمَّا تَشْرَبُوْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَلَئِنْ اَطَعْتُمْ بَشَرًا مِّثْلَكُمْ اِنَّكُمْ اِذًا
لَّخٰسِرُوْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾ اَيَعِدُكُمْ اَنَّكُمْ اِذَا مِتُّمْ وَكُنْتُمْ تُرَابًا وَّعِظَامًا اَنَّكُمْ مُّخْرَجُوْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾
هَيْهَاتَ هَيْهَاتَ لِمَا تُوْعَدُوْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾ اِنْ هِيَ اِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا نَمُوْتُ وَنَحْيَا
وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَبْعُوْثِيْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾ اِنْ هُوَ اِلَّا رَجُلٌ افْتَرٰى عَلَى اللّٰهِ كَذِبًا وَّمَا

We sent Noah to his people:[24] he said, "O my people, worship Allah alone; you have no other deity than Him. Are you not afraid (of *shirk*)"?[25] Those of the chiefs of his people, who had rejected his Message, said, "This person is no more than a human being like yourselves.[26] By this, he merely intends to obtain superiority over you.[27] Had Allah willed, He would have sent down angels.[27-a] Since the time of our forefathers we have never heard (that a human being came as a Messenger). Obviously this man is possessed: wait a little more: (may be he is cured)". Noah prayed, "Lord, help me against these people for they have treated me as an impostor".[28] At this, We revealed to him: Build an ark under Our supervision, according to Our instructions. Then, when Our Command comes and "*at-Tannūr*"[29] begins to boil up, take aboard a pair of every species of animals, and also the members of your own family except those against whom the judgement has already been passed; and do not plead with Me for the workers of iniquity, for they are doomed to be drowned. Then, when you have boarded the ark along with your companions, say, "Praise be to Allah Who has delivered us from the wicked people",[30] and pray, "Lord, let my landing from this ark be at a blessed place, for Thou art the best of harbourers".[31] 23-29

There are many Signs in this story,[32] and We always put people to the test.[33] 30

After them We raised a people of another generation.[34] Then We sent to them a Messenger from among themselves, (who said,) "Worship Allah alone: you have no other deity than Him. Are you not afraid (of disbelief) ?" Those of the chiefs of his people, who had rejected the Message and denied the life in the Hereafter and whom We had given prosperity in this worldly life,[35] said, "This person is no more than a human being like yourselves, for he eats of what you eat and drinks of what you drink. Now if you submit to a human being like yourselves, you shall indeed be losers.[36] What! does he tell you that after you are dead and turned into dust and become mere bones, you shall be brought out alive (from graves)? Impossible! Just impossible is that which you are being threatened with. There is no other life than this worldly life. We will live here and die here and will not be raised up again. This man is merely an impostor, who is inventing lies in the name of Allah,[36-a] and we are not going to believe in what he says". 31-38

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a proof that it is not the work of a novice or an inexpert. All the physical laws of the entire system of the universe are so closely interconnected as to prove that it is the creation of the All-Wise Allah. If we take the second translation, it will mean that Allah has not been heedless in making provisions for every thing according to its nature from the most insignificant to the greatest of all.

17. The "rain" may refer to the rainfall, which comes down every now and then. It may also refer to the great store of water which Allah sent down at the time of the creation of the earth to fulfil its various needs till the Last Day, and which still exists in the shape of seas, lakes, sub-soil water, etc. It is the same water which evaporates in summer and freezes in winter and is carried by winds from place to place and spread over the earth by rivers, springs and wells to cause the growth of multitudes of things, and then is again restored to the seas, lakes, etc. Neither has this store of water been decreased by a drop nor was there any need to increase it by a drop since its creation. Today it is too well known how water comes about by the combination of oxygen and hydrogen in a certain ratio. The question is why can't more water be produced when oxygen and hydrogen still exist in abundance in the world? Who caused them to combine in the proper ratio in the beginning to produce oceans of water and who now stops them from coming together to produce an extra drop? Then when water evaporates, who causes oxygen and hydrogen to remain combined in water vapours even in the gaseous state. Have the atheists and polytheists, who believe in independent deities for water, air, summer and winter, any answer to this question?

18. This is to warn that Allah is able to take away the water if He so wills, and deprive the world of its most important means of life. Thus, this verse is more comprehensive in meaning than verse 30 of Sūrah Al-Mulk (LXVII):

"Ask them: Have you ever considered that if the water of your wells should sink down into the earth, who would then restore to you running springs of water?"

19. That is, other kinds of fruits than dates and grapes.

20. That is, you sustain yourselves by the produce that you get from these gardens in the shape of fruit, corn, wood, etc.

21. That is, the olive-tree, which is the most important product of the lands around the Mediterranean Sea. The olive-tree can last for 2,000 years or so, so much so that some trees in Palestine are said to be existing since the time of Prophet Jesus. It has been attributed to Mount Sinai probably for the reason that the area whose well known and prominent place is Mount Sinai is its original habitat.

22. That is, milk. Refer to An-Naḥl (XVI): 66 and E.N. 54 thereof.

23. The benefits of cattle as means of conveyance have been mentioned here along with the ships, because in Arabia, camel was used mainly for this purpose, and has been called "the ship of the desert" for the same reason.

24. See also Al-A'arāf (VII): 59-64, Yūnus (X): 71-73, Hūd (XI): 25-48, Banī Isrā'īl (XVII): 3 and Al-Anbiyā' (XXI): 76-77.

25. That is, "Are you not afraid that if you set up partners and associates with Allah, Who is the real Sovereign, and worship and submit to them, you shall incur His wrath and punishment ?"

26. There has been a common deviation that "a human being cannot be a Prophet, and a Prophet cannot be a human being." That is why the Qur'ān has refuted this wrong conception over and over again, and has stated forcefully that all the Prophets were human beings and that a human being only could be sent as a Prophet to human beings. For details, see Al-A'arāf (VII,): 63, 69, Yūnus (X): 2, Hūd (XI): 27-31, Yūsuf (XII): 109, Ar-Ra'd (XIII): 38, Ibrahīm (XIV): 10-11, An-Naḥl (XVI): 43, Banī Isrā'īl (XVII): 94-95, Al-Kahf (XVIII): 110, Al-Anbiyā' (XXI): 3, 34, Al-Mu'minūn (XXIII): 33-34, 47, Al-Furqān (XXV): 7, 20, Ash-Shu'arā' (XXVI): 154, 186, Yā Sīn (XXXVI): 15, Ḥā Mīm Sajdah (XLI): 6 along with the relevant E.N.'s.

27. This accusation is another old objection, which has always been raised against those who tried to reform their people. Their opponents always accused them of exploiting "religion" to gain domination in the land. Prophets Moses, Aaron and Jesus were accused of the same and so was Muḥammad (Allah's peace be upon him). So much so that the disbelievers of Makkah offered to make the Holy Prophet their king, if he gave up his Message.

As a matter of fact, the people who exhaust themselves in pursuit of worldly benefits and gains, cannot believe that somebody in this world could also exert himself sincerely and selflessly for the sake of human welfare. They regard deceptive slogans, which they raise to capture power, and false promises, which they make day and night to bring about reforms as natural. They think that sincerity and selflessness can be employed only to deceive people and these cannot be put to any better use. That is why the epithet of "power hungry" for the reformers in all ages has been used by those already in power as if their own power and domination in the land was their birth-right, and they were in no way blame-worthy for struggling for it and achieving it. (For further explanation, see E.N. 36 below)

In this connection, it should also be noted that all those, who try to reform the prevalent corrupt system of life, have inevitably to fight against those in power

in order to establish the righteous system. That is why the powers that be, have always been against the Prophets and their followers, who had to dislodge the corrupt rulers. It is, however, obvious that there is a vast difference between those who want power to gain their own selfish ends and those who want it to reform their people.

27a. This is a clear proof of the fact that Noah's people were not disbelievers in the existence of God nor did they reject Him as Lord of the universe and the angels as His obedient servants. They were only guilty of *shirk*: they had set up other deities as partners in God's attributes and powers and rights.

28. "Help me against these people": 'Take Thy vengeance on these people for they have denied me." Verse 10 of Al-Qamar (LIV) says: "Then cried Noah to his Lord, 'I am overcome, so take Thy vengeance on these people" and verses 26-27 of Noah (LXXI) say: "And Noah said, 'O my Lord, do not leave of these disbelievers any dweller upon the earth, for if Thou sparest them, they will mislead Thy servants and will beget none but sinners and disbelievers'."

29. Some commentators think that *tannūr* means the earth; others take it for the highest part of the earth; and still others think that the words *fār-at-tannūr* in the Text have been used for the break of Dawn. There are some who express the opinion that the words have been used metaphorically for the creation of turmoil. But in view of the context, we see no reason why one should take a far-fetched figurative meaning of a clear word of the Qur'ān. It appears that a particular oven *(tannūr)* had been ear-marked for the deluge to start from, which was to all appearances an unexpected origin of the doom of the wretched people.

30. The fact that Allah should be praised and thanked for the annihilation of those people, is a clear proof that they were the most wicked and villainous people in the world.

31. "Landing" here does not simply mean touching and resting on the land, but it also implies the sense of "hospitality", as if to say: "O God, now we are Thy guests and Thou alone art our Host."

32. At the conclusion of the story of Prophet Noah, particular attention has been drawn to the many Signs in the story from which one can learn many lessons. For instance, the Prophet who invited the people to *Tauhīd* was in the right and those who practised and insisted on *shirk* and disbelief were in the wrong and were destroyed: that the same kind of conflict, which took place between Prophet Noah and his people, was going on in Makkah. Therefore, ultimately the Holy Prophet will come out victorious over his antagonists just like Prophet Noah.

33. This can also be translated as: "We had to or have to put people to the test." In each case the purpose is to warn the people that they will not be left alone

after they have been granted power in the land and over good things of life, but Allah will put them to the test to see how they used their power. Whatever happened with the people of Noah was in accordance with this law, and the same will happen in future with any community which is raised to power.

34. The people of 'Ād, who were raised to power after the people of Noah. (Refer to Al-A'arāf: 69).

35. It should be noted that all those people who opposed the Messengers had three common characteristics: (1) They were the chiefs of their people. (2) They denied life in the "Hereafter". (3) They were prosperous in the worldly life. Obviously, they loved the life of this world and could never conceive that their way of life, which had made them chiefs and brought prosperity, could ever be wrong. Therefore they opposed their Messengers, who took away their peace of mind by preaching that there was a life-after-death and they shall have to render an account to Allah of what they did in this world. And this was exactly what was happening at Makkah.

36. Some commentators have wrongly opined that the chiefs exchanged these remarks against the Messenger between themselves. These remarks in fact were addressed to the common people. When the chiefs felt that the Message was spreading among the common people and there was a real danger that they would be influenced by the pure character of the Messenger and that their superiority then would automatically come to an end, they began to delude them by raising such objections against him. It is worth while to note that both the chiefs of the people of Noah and the chiefs of the people of 'Ād accused their Messengers of the "lust for power" but as regards themselves, they thought that power and prosperity were their inherent rights and they were in every respect entitled to be the chiefs of their people.

36a. These words show that the people of 'Ād too, were not disbelievers in the existence of God. They too were involved in the sin of *shirk*. Refer to Al-A'arāf (VII): 70, Hūd (XI): 53-54, Ḥā Mīm Sajdah (XLI): 14, and Al-Aḥqāf (XLVI): 21-22.

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نَحْنُ لَهٗ بِمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿38﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ انْصُرْنِيْ بِمَا كَذَّبُوْنِ ﴿39﴾ قَالَ عَمَّا قَلِيْلٍ
لَّيُصْبِحُنَّ نٰدِمِيْنَ ﴿40﴾ فَاَخَذَتْهُمُ الصَّيْحَةُ بِالْحَقِّ فَجَعَلْنٰهُمْ غُثَآءً ۚ فَبُعْدًا
لِّلْقَوْمِ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿41﴾ ثُمَّ اَنْشَاْنَا مِنْۢ بَعْدِهِمْ قُرُوْنًا اٰخَرِيْنَ ﴿42﴾ مَا تَسْبِقُ مِنْ
اُمَّةٍ اَجَلَهَا وَمَا يَسْتَاْخِرُوْنَ ﴿43﴾ ثُمَّ اَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا تَتْرَا ۭ كُلَّمَا جَآءَ اُمَّةً
رَّسُوْلُهَا كَذَّبُوْهُ فَاَتْبَعْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ بَعْضًا وَّجَعَلْنٰهُمْ اَحَادِيْثَ ۚ فَبُعْدًا لِّقَوْمٍ
لَّا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿44﴾ ثُمَّ اَرْسَلْنَا مُوْسٰى وَاَخَاهُ هٰرُوْنَ ۙ بِاٰيٰتِنَا وَسُلْطٰنٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿45﴾
اِلٰى فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَا۟ئِهٖ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوْا وَكَانُوْا قَوْمًا عَالِيْنَ ﴿46﴾ فَقَالُوْٓا اَنُؤْمِنُ لِبَشَرَيْنِ
مِثْلِنَا وَقَوْمُهُمَا لَنَا عٰبِدُوْنَ ﴿47﴾ فَكَذَّبُوْهُمَا فَكَانُوْا مِنَ الْمُهْلَكِيْنَ ﴿48﴾ وَلَقَدْ
اٰتَيْنَا مُوْسَى الْكِتٰبَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿49﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَاُمَّهٗٓ اٰيَةً وَّ
اٰوَيْنٰهُمَآ اِلٰى رَبْوَةٍ ذَاتِ قَرَارٍ وَّمَعِيْنٍ ﴿50﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الرُّسُلُ كُلُوْا مِنَ الطَّيِّبٰتِ
وَاعْمَلُوْا صَالِحًا ۭ اِنِّيْ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿51﴾ وَاِنَّ هٰذِهٖٓ اُمَّتُكُمْ اُمَّةً وَّاحِدَةً
وَّاَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاتَّقُوْنِ ﴿52﴾ فَتَقَطَّعُوْٓا اَمْرَهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ زُبُرًا ۭ كُلُّ حِزْبٍۢ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ
فَرِحُوْنَ ﴿53﴾ فَذَرْهُمْ فِيْ غَمْرَتِهِمْ حَتّٰى حِيْنٍ ﴿54﴾ اَيَحْسَبُوْنَ اَنَّمَا نُمِدُّهُمْ
بِهٖ مِنْ مَّالٍ وَّبَنِيْنَ ﴿55﴾ نُسَارِعُ لَهُمْ فِي الْخَيْرٰتِ ۭ بَلْ لَّا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿56﴾ اِنَّ
الَّذِيْنَ هُمْ مِّنْ خَشْيَةِ رَبِّهِمْ مُّشْفِقُوْنَ ﴿57﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ بِاٰيٰتِ رَبِّهِمْ
يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿58﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ بِرَبِّهِمْ لَا يُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿59﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ يُؤْتُوْنَ مَا اٰتَوْا
وَّقُلُوْبُهُمْ وَجِلَةٌ اَنَّهُمْ اِلٰى رَبِّهِمْ رٰجِعُوْنَ ﴿60﴾ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ يُسٰرِعُوْنَ فِي الْخَيْرٰتِ
وَهُمْ لَهَا سٰبِقُوْنَ ﴿61﴾ وَلَا نُكَلِّفُ نَفْسًا اِلَّا وُسْعَهَا ۭ وَلَدَيْنَا كِتٰبٌ يَّنْطِقُ
بِالْحَقِّ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُوْنَ ﴿62﴾ بَلْ قُلُوْبُهُمْ فِيْ غَمْرَةٍ مِّنْ هٰذَا وَلَهُمْ

At this the Messenger prayed, "Lord, help me against these people, who have treated me as an impostor". In answer, it was said, "The time is nearing when they shall be remorseful". In due course a great scourge overwhelmed them in all justice and We cast them away like scum.[37]–So away with the wicked people ! 39-41

After them We raised other peoples. No people ceased to exist before its appointed term nor could any people outlive it. Then We sent Our Messengers in succession. Whenever a Messenger came to his people, they treated him as an impostor: so We went on destroying one people after the other till We made them mere legends.–Accursed be those who do not believe.[38] 42-44

Then We sent Moses and his brother Aaron with Our Signs and a clear Authority[39] to Pharaoh and his nobles. But they received them with arrogance, for they were very haughty people.[40] They said, "What! should we believe in these two men who are human beings like ourselves[40-a] and whose people are our bondsmen?"[41] So they treated them as impostors and incurred destruction.[42] As regards Moses, We gave him the Book so that the people might be guided by it. 45-49

And We made the son of Mary and his mother a Sign[43] to mankind and We gave them shelter on a plateau where they could have peace, and which was watered by running springs.[44] 50

O Messengers,[45] eat of pure things and do righteous deeds,[46] for I am fully aware of what you do. And you all belong to one and the same community, and I am your Lord: so fear Me.[47] 51-52

Yet afterwards people divided themselves into different sects, and each sect rejoices in what it has.[48]–Well, leave them deeply involved in their heedlessness up to an appointed term.[49] 53-54

Do they think that, by continuing to provide them with wealth and children, We are solicitous for their welfare? Nay, they do not understand the reality of the matter.[50] Those who feel the fear of their Lord;[51] who believe in the Signs of their Lord;[52] who do not associate anyone with their Lord;[53] who give whatever they give, and whose hearts are filled with awe by the very idea that they shall have to return to their Lord:[54] they indeed are the people, who work for their true welfare and try to be the first to attain it. We do not burden anyone with 55-63

more than he can bear.[55] And We have a book which tells accurately (about everyone),[56] and the people will in no case be treated unjustly.[57] But these people are heedless of this,[58] and their deeds are also of a different nature (from those mentioned above).

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37. Lexically, the word *ghuthā'* means the rubbish which is brought by flood waters and is deposited on the banks to rot there.

38. That is, "Those who do not believe in the Messengers."

39. The use of "a clear Authority" along with "Our Signs" may either mean that the "Signs" were a clear proof that they were Messengers of Allah, or the "Signs" may refer to all other miracles of Prophet Moses than the "staff", which may stand here for a clear Authority, because the miracles shown by means of it were a clear proof that the two brothers had been sent by Allah.

40. The words in the Text may either mean: (1) They were highly arrogant and tyrannous people, or (2) They showed haughtiness and selfconceit.

40a. For explanation, see E.N. 26.

41. *'Ābid* is worshipper. According to the Arabic usage, to be a "worshipper" and a "bondsman" are almost synonymous. Therefore when the Prophets invited their people to worship Allah alone, they wanted them to worship and serve and obey none but Allah, and that is the real significance of the word "*'ibādat*". For further explanation, see E.N. 50 of Al-Kahf (XVIII).

42. For fuller details of the story of Prophet Moses and Pharaoh, see Al-Baqarah (II): 49-50, Al-A'arāf (VII): 103-136, Yūnus (X): 75-92, Hūd (XI): 96-99, Banī Isrā'īl (XVII): 101-104, Ṭā Hā (XX): 9-80 along with the relevant E.N.'s.

43. The wording "We made the son of Mary and his mother a Sign" is very significant, because it means that neither the son of Mary nor his mother was each a separate Sign, but both of them together were a Sign. This verse is a clear proof that a son was born to Mary without cohabitation with a man and that Jesus had no father. For fuller details see Āl-'Imrān (III): 45-49, An-Nisā' (IV): 156, 171, Maryam (XIX): 16-35 and Al-Anbiyā' (XXI): 91 and the relevant E.N.'s.

In this connection, it should also be noted that the case of the error in regard to Prophet Jesus and his mother was different from the error in regard to other Prophets, who were rejected because they were human beings. But the deviation in regard to Prophet Jesus and his mother was that the credulous people raised them from the low position of human beings to the high rank of Godhead.

On the other hand, those, who went to the other extreme accused Mary of unchastity, although they were witnesses of the miraculous birth of Jesus and had heard him speak in the cradle.

44. Different people have mentioned different places, like Damascus, Ar-Ramlah, Jerusalem and Egypt, in regard to the plateau where Allah gave them shelter. From the Christian traditions it appears that Mary had to leave her home twice after the birth of Prophet Jesus, first in the time of Herod when she took him to Egypt and stayed there till Herod's death, and then in the time of Archelaus when she took him to Nazareth in Galilee. (Matthew, 2: 13-23). Therefore it cannot be said with certainty to which of these two emigrations the Qur'ān refers here. It is, however, obvious that the place of shelter was a plateau which provided them with all the necessities of life.

45. In the preceding passage (vv. 23-50), the stories of some Prophets have been related as individuals, but in this verse all of them have been addressed together. However, it does not mean that they were present at one and the same place at the time of address. As a matter of fact, this way of address has been adopted to show that the Message of all the Messengers, who came to different countries in different ages, was the same and they all belonged to one and the same community. (v. 52). Therefore the Message to one Messenger was meant to be the Message for each one of them. In this verse, they have been addressed together as if they were present at one and the same place in order to emphasize this same aspect of the matter. But it is an irony that some stupid people of this age have concluded that this verse has been addressed to those messengers who were to come after Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him). It is obvious that this interpretation cannot fit in the context in which the verse occurs.

46. "Pure things" implies that they should be wholesome and must have been earned in lawful ways. Here the instruction, "eat of pure things", is meant to refute the theory and practice of asceticism. The Qur'ān teaches the middle way between the life of asceticism and that of licence. The fact that the instruction, "eat of pure things", precedes "do righteous deeds", is meant to impress that righteous deeds are meaningless without eating lawful provisions. The Holy Prophet impressed this very thing, saying, "O people, Allah is pure and loves pure things." Then he recited this verse (51) and said, "A person makes a long pilgrimage in a dishevelled condition and prays with raised hands, 'O my Lord, O my Lord', whereas he eats unlawful food, wears unlawful clothes and has been brought up on unlawful provisions. How can such a one expect that Allah will grant his prayer?" (Related by Abū Hurairah).

47. The original Arabic word *ummat* (community) comprises those individuals who have something basic common among them. All the Messengers of

Allah belonged to one and the same community because they had the same creed and the same religion and the same Message. See also Al-Baqarah (II): 130-133 and 213, Āl-'Imrān (III): 19-20, 33-34, 64, 79-85, An-Nisā'(IV): 150-152, Al-A'arāf (VII): 59, 65, 73, 85, Yūsuf (XII): 37-40, Maryam (XIX) :49-59, and Al-Anbiyā' (XXII): 71-93 along with the relevant E.N.'s.

48. This is not a mere statement of a fact, but it is a link of the same argument which is being put forward from the very beginning of the Sūrah. The argument is this: Islam has been the real and original religion of all the Prophets from Noah to Jesus (Allah's peace be upon them all), because all of them brought and taught the same doctrines of *Tauḥīd* and the Hereafter. On the contrary, all the other religions are the perversions of "the real and original religion", which has been tampered with in many ways. Therefore, those who are following the perverted religions are in the wrong and not the Holy Prophet who is inviting them to "the real and original religion".

49. There is a gap between v. 53 and v. 54, which has been left to the listener to fill, because the background of the whole discourse itself helps to fill it. Five years had passed since the Holy Prophet had been inviting his people to the original religion. He had left no stone unturned to convince them by reasoning and by historical evidence that his Message was based on the truth. His people had seen the practical results of the acceptance of his Message and had witnessed his own high character which was by itself a guarantee that he was a trustworthy man. But in spite of all this, his people were rejoicing in their erroneous beliefs which they had inherited from their forefathers. This was not all. They had become his bitter enemies and were trying to defeat him and his Message by every wicked machination.

After filling the gap, the meaning of verse 51 becomes quite clear. It does not mean that the Holy Prophet should give up his preaching and leave the disbelievers to themselves. This way of address has been employed to shake and rouse the disbelievers. This verse warns them to realize that the time was coming near when they would see for themselves that the Messenger was in the right and they were in the wrong.

50. This question has been posed as a proof of the main theme of the Sūrah. It is meant to remove their misconception of "success", "welfare" and "prosperity", which the disbelievers had formed to delude themselves. According to them, the one, who enjoyed the good things of life and wielded power and influence in the society, had attained "success". On the other hand, the one who was deprived of these things was a "failure". This misconception had involved them in another serious misunderstanding. They thought that the one who had attained "success" was in the right, and the beloved of Allah. Otherwise, how

could he have attained all the "successes"? On the contrary, the one who was apparently deprived of these things was surely wrong in his creed and erroneous in his deeds, and was under the wrath of God (or gods). As this misconception is one of the greatest deviations of the materialists, the Qur'ān has stated it and refuted it in different ways at different places and made the reality plain. For instance, see Al-Baqarah (II): 126, 212, Al-A'arāf (VII): 32, At-Taubah (IX): 55, 69, 85, Yūnus (X): 17, Hūd (XI) :3, 27-31, 38-39, Ar-Ra'd (XIII): 26, Al-Kahf (XVIII): 28, 32-43, 103-105, Maryam (XIX): 77-80, Ṭā Hā (XX): 131-132, Al-Anbiyā' (XXI) :44 along with the relevant E.N.'s.

In order to remove the above-mentioned misconceptions one should keep in view the following:

(1) "Success" is a far higher thing than the material prosperity and the transitory success of an individual, community or nation

(2) It is absolutely wrong to consider "prosperity" and "success" as a criterion of truth and falsehood.

(3) It should be noted well that this world is a place of test and trial and not a place of reward and retribution. It is true that even in this world, sometimes there is some punishment or reward, but it is on a very limited scale, and even in this, there is an aspect of the test. Therefore it is an utter folly to consider material "success" and "prosperity" to be a proof that the recipient is in the right and so the beloved of the Lord, and *vice versa*. Moreover, the tests and trials of individuals and communities are of many varieties and a seeker after truth must understand at the outset that the worldly "success" or "failure" of the people is not the result of ultimate reward or punishment and cannot be regarded as the criterion for the right or wrong creed, morals and actions and a sign of being the beloved of God or otherwise.

(4) One must have a firm belief that truth and righteousness will ultimately gain victory over falsehood and wickedness. As regards the criterion of truth and falsehood and right and wrong, one must judge this in the light of Revelations and teachings of the Messengers, because common sense confirms the same, and it is also supported by the general conception which mankind has always had of good and evil.

(5) As a corollary of the above, it would have become clear that according to the Qur'ān (and this is confirmed by common sense), the conception of "reward" and "punishment" should also be different from the common one. For instance, if a wicked person or community is enjoying "prosperity", it is not a reward of its evil deeds but a harder test for it, and it is not a blessing but the wrath of Allah. It means that Allah has decided to punish the "prosperous people" with a severe scourge. On the other hand, if the righteous people are

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أَعْمَالٌ مِّنْ دُوْنِ ذٰلِكَ هُمْ لَهَا عٰمِلُوْنَ ﴿٦٣﴾ حَتّٰٓى إِذَآ أَخَذْنَا مُتْرَفِيْهِمْ
بِالْعَذَابِ إِذَا هُمْ يَجْـَٔرُوْنَ ﴿٦٤﴾ لَا تَجْـَٔرُوا الْيَوْمَ ۖ إِنَّكُمْ مِّنَّا لَا تُنْصَرُوْنَ ﴿٦٥﴾
قَدْ كَانَتْ اٰيٰتِىْ تُتْلٰى عَلَيْكُمْ فَكُنْتُمْ عَلٰٓى أَعْقَابِكُمْ تَنْكِصُوْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾ مُسْتَكْبِرِيْنَ ۖ
بِهٖ سٰمِرًا تَهْجُرُوْنَ ﴿٦٧﴾ أَفَلَمْ يَدَّبَّرُوا الْقَوْلَ أَمْ جَآءَهُمْ مَّا لَمْ يَأْتِ اٰبَآءَهُمُ
الْأَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿٦٨﴾ أَمْ لَمْ يَعْرِفُوْا رَسُوْلَهُمْ فَهُمْ لَهٗ مُنْكِرُوْنَ ﴿٦٩﴾ أَمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ بِهٖ
جِنَّةٌ ۚ بَلْ جَآءَهُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَأَكْثَرُهُمْ لِلْحَقِّ كٰرِهُوْنَ ﴿٧٠﴾ وَلَوِ اتَّبَعَ الْحَقُّ
أَهْوَآءَهُمْ لَفَسَدَتِ السَّمٰوٰتُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيْهِنَّ ۚ بَلْ أَتَيْنٰهُمْ بِذِكْرِهِمْ
فَهُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِهِمْ مُّعْرِضُوْنَ ﴿٧١﴾ أَمْ تَسْـَٔلُهُمْ خَرْجًا فَخَرَاجُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ ۖ وَّ
هُوَ خَيْرُ الرّٰزِقِيْنَ ﴿٧٢﴾ وَإِنَّكَ لَتَدْعُوْهُمْ إِلٰى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ﴿٧٣﴾ وَإِنَّ ع ٦
الَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْاٰخِرَةِ عَنِ الصِّرَاطِ لَنٰكِبُوْنَ ﴿٧٤﴾ وَلَوْ رَحِمْنٰهُمْ وَكَشَفْنَا
مَا بِهِمْ مِّنْ ضُرٍّ لَّلَجُّوْا فِىْ طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُوْنَ ﴿٧٥﴾ وَلَقَدْ أَخَذْنٰهُمْ بِالْعَذَابِ
فَمَا اسْتَكَانُوْا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَمَا يَتَضَرَّعُوْنَ ﴿٧٦﴾ حَتّٰٓى إِذَا فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ بَابًا ذَا
عَذَابٍ شَدِيْدٍ إِذَا هُمْ فِيْهِ مُبْلِسُوْنَ ﴿٧٧﴾ ع ٧ وَهُوَ الَّذِىْٓ أَنْشَأَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَ
الْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْـِٔدَةَ ۚ قَلِيْلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿٧٨﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِىْ ذَرَأَكُمْ فِى الْأَرْضِ
وَإِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُوْنَ ﴿٧٩﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِىْ يُحْىٖ وَيُمِيْتُ وَلَهُ اخْتِلَافُ الَّيْلِ وَ
النَّهَارِ ۚ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٨٠﴾ بَلْ قَالُوْا مِثْلَ مَا قَالَ الْأَوَّلُوْنَ ﴿٨١﴾ قَالُوْٓا ءَإِذَا مِتْنَا
وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَّعِظَامًا ءَإِنَّا لَمَبْعُوْثُوْنَ ﴿٨٢﴾ لَقَدْ وُعِدْنَا نَحْنُ وَاٰبَآؤُنَا هٰذَا مِنْ
قَبْلُ إِنْ هٰذَآ إِلَّآ أَسَاطِيْرُ الْأَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿٨٣﴾ قُلْ لِّمَنِ الْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيْهَآ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ
تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٨٤﴾ سَيَقُوْلُوْنَ لِلّٰهِ ۚ قُلْ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٨٥﴾ قُلْ مَنْ رَّبُّ السَّمٰوٰتِ السَّبْعِ

They will continue their misdeeds till We bring punishment on 64-67
the epicureans among them:[59] then they will begin to bellow.[60] –Now[61]
stop your groanings: you will get no help from Us this Day; for when
My Revelations were recited to you, you turned on your heels (hearing
the voice of the Messenger).[62] In your arrogance you paid no heed to
him, ridiculed him in your meeting places[63] and talked nonsense about
him.

Have the disbelievers never considered the Word[64]? Or, has he 68-71
brought something the like of which had not come to their forefathers?[65]
Or, did they not know their Messenger well that they fight shy of him
(as if he were a stranger)?[66] Or, are they really convinced that he is
possessed (by a jinn)?[67] Nay! the real thing is that he has brought the
Truth and most of them have aversion to the Truth.—And had the Truth
followed their lusts, the whole system of the heavens and the earth, and
of all who dwell in them, would have been disrupted.[68]—Nay, We have
brought them admonition for their own good, but they are turning away
from it.[69]

Are you demanding some recompense from them? Allah's 72-74
recompense is best for you, for He is the best Providence.[70] As a matter
of fact, you are inviting them to the Straight Path, but it suits those,
who do not believe in the Hereafter, to deviate from the Straight Path.[71]

If We take compassion on them and relieve them of their 75-77
affliction, they will persist blindly in their rebellion:[72] for even now,
when they are suffering from a torment, they have not bowed before
their Lord nor humbled themselves. However, when We will smite them
with a dreadful scourge, you will see that they will despair of all good
and become desperate.[73]

It is Allah Who has endowed you with the faculties of hearing 78-83
and seeing and given you hearts to think, but you do not show any
gratitude.[74] It is He Who has scattered you in the earth, and before Him
you shall all be mustered. It is He Who gives life and ordains death, and
controls the alternation of the night and the day.[75] Can you not
understand this ?[76] Nay! these people say what their forefathers said
before them. They say, "Shall we be raised up again, when we have
turned into dust after death and become mere bones? We have heard

many such threats and so did our forefathers before us. These are nothing but ancient tales".[77]

84-85 Say to them, "Tell me, if you know, whose is the earth and all who dwell in it?" They will say, "Allah's". Ask them, "Then why do you not understand this"?.[78]

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suffering from hardships and afflictions, it is not a punishment from Allah but a blessing in disguise to pass them through the "fire" to remove impurity, if any, from the pure gold. If this hard trial is a blessing for the righteous people, it is a test for the wicked people to give them a severe punishment for the persecution of the former.

51. That is, they do not live a carefree life devoid of the fear of God. They live in awe of Him and are fully conscious that He oversees and watches them in all their motives and actions and they are thus deterred from thinking and doing evil.

52. "Signs" here means both Divine Revelations to the Prophets and the signs found in man's own self and in the universe around him. To believe in the verses of the Book is to affirm them, and to believe in the signs of human self and the universe is to affirm the realities which they point to.

53. Though belief in the Revelations itself engrains the doctrine of *Tauhīd* in the hearts, yet the believers have been warned to guard against *shirk*. This is because, in spite of believing in the Revelations, man is inclined to commit *shirk* in one form or the other, for instance, in exaggerating the teachings of the Prophets and righteous people, supplicating and serving others than Allah, etc.

54. This verse (60) may be elaborated like this: "They serve their Lord and try their best to obey Him and do righteous deeds, but all along they remain humble in their hearts and are not puffed up with the pride of their piety: nay, in spite of all their good deeds, their hearts are always filled with awe that they shall have to render an account to their Lord, and they are not sure whether they will come out successful in the judgment of their Lord or not."

A concrete interpretation of this verse is afforded by Caliph 'Umar. Although he served his Allah in a way that was exemplary, yet he was so afraid of accountability to Him that he is reported to have said before death: "I shall consider it a favour, if I am neither rewarded nor punished in the Hereafter." Hadrat Ḥasan Baṣrī has expressed the same thing in a beautiful manner: "A believer obeys Allah and is yet fearful of Him, and a hypocrite disobeys Allah and is yet fearless of Him."

55. The enunciation of this fundamental proposition, in the context in which it occurs, is very meaningful. In the preceding passage (vv. 57-61), the characteristics of those people, who deserve true success, have been stated, and in this verse (62), it has been made clear that those excellent qualities can be attained by anyone who tries to achieve true success, as if to say, "The conditions We have laid down for true success are within the reach of those who strive for it, for 'We do not burden ... Therefore if you, O disbelievers, desire to achieve true success, you should follow the example of the Believers from among yourselves, who have really attained it"

56. According to the Qur'ān, an elaborate "conduct book" of every individual is being maintained accurately. This records every word he utters, every deed or act he performs, even every hidden thought and intention that he cherishes in his heart and mind. See also Al-Kahf (XVIII) :49 and E.N. 46 thereof.

57. That is, neither a person will be accused of and punished for something he had not done, nor will he be deprived of the full reward of a good act that he had done.

58. They are heedless that everything they are saying and doing, is being recorded in some "book" and that they shall have to render an account of everything.

59. The epicureans will probably be punished in this worldly life because in the enjoyment of luxury and pleasure they forgot the rights of the other people and transgressed the prescribed limits.

60. *Ju'ār* is bellowing by a bull painfully. Here the word has been used tauntingly for a groaning person who does not deserve any mercy, as if to say, "Now that you are going to be punished for your misdeeds, you have started bellowing."

61. That is, they will be told this at that time.

62. That is to say, "In the worldly life you did not pay any heed to what the Messenger said; nay, you did not even like to hear his voice."

63. The meeting places where the people of Makkah gathered together at night to hold consultations, to gossip and tell tales, etc.

64. That is, "Do they mean to imply that they reject the Message because they do not understand it? whereas the Qur'ān is not an enigma, nor is it being presented in an incomprehensible language, nor does it deal with themes and

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وَرَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيْمِ ﴿٨٦﴾ سَيَقُوْلُوْنَ لِلّٰهِ ؕ قُلْ اَفَلَا تَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿٨٧﴾ قُلْ مَنْۢ بِيَدِهٖ
مَلَكُوْتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَّهُوَ يُجِيْرُ وَلَا يُجَارُ عَلَيْهِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٨٨﴾
سَيَقُوْلُوْنَ لِلّٰهِ ؕ قُلْ فَاَنّٰى تُسْحَرُوْنَ ﴿٨٩﴾ بَلْ اَتَيْنٰهُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَاِنَّهُمْ لَكٰذِبُوْنَ ﴿٩٠﴾
مَا اتَّخَذَ اللّٰهُ مِنْ وَّلَدٍ وَّمَا كَانَ مَعَهٗ مِنْ اِلٰهٍ اِذًا لَّذَهَبَ كُلُّ اِلٰهٍۢ بِمَا خَلَقَ
وَلَعَلَا بَعْضُهُمْ عَلٰى بَعْضٍ ؕ سُبْحٰنَ اللّٰهِ عَمَّا يَصِفُوْنَ ﴿٩١﴾ عٰلِمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ
فَتَعٰلٰى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿٩٢﴾ قُلْ رَّبِّ اِمَّا تُرِيَنِّيْ مَا يُوْعَدُوْنَ ﴿٩٣﴾ رَبِّ فَلَا تَجْعَلْنِيْ
فِي الْقَوْمِ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٩٤﴾ وَاِنَّا عَلٰٓى اَنْ نُّرِيَكَ مَا نَعِدُهُمْ لَقٰدِرُوْنَ ﴿٩٥﴾ اِدْفَعْ بِالَّتِيْ
هِيَ اَحْسَنُ السَّيِّئَةَ ؕ نَحْنُ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَصِفُوْنَ ﴿٩٦﴾ وَقُلْ رَّبِّ اَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْ
هَمَزٰتِ الشَّيٰطِيْنِ ﴿٩٧﴾ وَاَعُوْذُ بِكَ رَبِّ اَنْ يَّحْضُرُوْنِ ﴿٩٨﴾ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا جَآءَ اَحَدَهُمُ
الْمَوْتُ قَالَ رَبِّ ارْجِعُوْنِ ﴿٩٩﴾ لَعَلِّيْٓ اَعْمَلُ صَالِحًا فِيْمَا تَرَكْتُ كَلَّا ؕ اِنَّهَا
كَلِمَةٌ هُوَ قَآئِلُهَا ؕ وَمِنْ وَّرَآئِهِمْ بَرْزَخٌ اِلٰى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُوْنَ ﴿١٠٠﴾ فَاِذَا نُفِخَ فِي
الصُّوْرِ فَلَآ اَنْسَابَ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَّلَا يَتَسَآءَلُوْنَ ﴿١٠١﴾ فَمَنْ ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِيْنُهٗ
فَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿١٠٢﴾ وَمَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِيْنُهٗ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ خَسِرُوْٓا
اَنْفُسَهُمْ فِيْ جَهَنَّمَ خٰلِدُوْنَ ﴿١٠٣﴾ تَلْفَحُ وُجُوْهَهُمُ النَّارُ وَهُمْ فِيْهَا كٰلِحُوْنَ ﴿١٠٤﴾
اَلَمْ تَكُنْ اٰيٰتِيْ تُتْلٰى عَلَيْكُمْ فَكُنْتُمْ بِهَا تُكَذِّبُوْنَ ﴿١٠٥﴾ قَالُوْا رَبَّنَا غَلَبَتْ عَلَيْنَا
شِقْوَتُنَا وَكُنَّا قَوْمًا ضَآلِّيْنَ ﴿١٠٦﴾ رَبَّنَآ اَخْرِجْنَا مِنْهَا فَاِنْ عُدْنَا فَاِنَّا ظٰلِمُوْنَ ﴿١٠٧﴾
قَالَ اخْسَـُٔوْا فِيْهَا وَلَا تُكَلِّمُوْنِ ﴿١٠٨﴾ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ فَرِيْقٌ مِّنْ عِبَادِيْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ
رَبَّنَآ اٰمَنَّا فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا وَاَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرّٰحِمِيْنَ ﴿١٠٩﴾ فَاتَّخَذْتُمُوْهُمْ
سِخْرِيًّا حَتّٰٓى اَنْسَوْكُمْ ذِكْرِيْ وَكُنْتُمْ مِّنْهُمْ تَضْحَكُوْنَ ﴿١١٠﴾ اِنِّيْ جَزَيْتُهُمُ

Say to them, "To whom do the seven heavens and the Glorious Throne belong?" They will say, "To Allah"[79] Say, "Then why do you not fear Him".[80] Say to them, "Tell me, if you know, whose is the Sovereignty[81] over everything? And who is that Being who gives protection while none can give protection against Him?" They will surely reply, "This power belongs to Allah." Say, "How then are you so bewitched?"[82] The fact is that We have brought the Truth before them and undoubtedly these people are liars.[83] Allah has no offspring,[84] and there is no other deity as a partner with Him. Had it been so, every deity would have become an independent ruler over its creation; moreover, in that case, they would have tried to override one another.[85] Exalted is Allah and free from the sort of things they attribute to Him. He has full knowledge of all that is open and hidden,[86] and He is far above the *shirk* these people invent. 86-92

O Muḥammad, pray, "Lord, if You inflict, during my presence among them, that punishment with which they are being threatened, then, O my Lord, do not include me among these unjust people[87] And the fact is that We have the power to make you a witness of what they are being threatened with. 93-95

O Muḥammad, repel evil with that which is best: We are fully aware of what they utter against you. And pray, "Lord, I seek refuge in You from the promptings of the satans; more than that: I seek refuge in You, my Lord, even from their coming near me".[88] 96-98

(Those people will not desist from their doing) till when deathcomes to any one of them, he will say, "Lord, send me back to the world[89] which I have left: I hope I will now do righteous deeds."[90]--By no means![91] it is a mere saying that he is uttering:[92] for now there is a barrier between the dead (and the world which they have left) up to the Day[93] when they shall be raised up again. Then, when the Trumpet will be blown, all (worldly) relations between them shall cease to function and they will not inquire about one another.[94] Then only those whose scales will be heavy,[95] will attain success; and those, whose scales will be light, will be the people who made themselves liable to loss;[96] they shall abide in Hell for ever. The "Fire" will scorch their faces so as to expose their jaws[97]--(It will be said to them,) "Are you not the same people, who treated as lies My Revelations, when they were recited to you?" They will say, "Our Lord, our bad luck 99-110

prevailed over us, and we were, indeed, erring people. Our Lord, now take us out of this place: after this, if we be guilty of such a thing, we shall indeed be wrong-doers." In answer to this, Allah will say, "Get away from here, remain herein and do not speak to Me.[98] For, you are the very same people, who made fun of some of Our servants when they prayed to Us, 'Our Lord, we have believed: so forgive us and have mercy on us, for You are the Most Merciful of all who show mercy? So much so that in your obduracy, you even forgot My very existence, and went on scoffing at them

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subjects which are beyond human understanding. The fact is that they understand everything it presents, but they oppose and reject it, because they have no intention to follow and believe what it presents."

65. That is, "Is the Qur'ān presenting something which they had never heard before? No, that is not so. Allah had been sending His Messages through His Prophets, who came to Arabia and in the adjoining lands and they are well acquainted with them, especially with Prophets Abraham and Ismael, and Hūd, Ṣaleḥ and Shoaib, who are acknowledged by them as Prophets of God, and who were not idol-worshippers but enjoined the worship of One God." For further explanation, see E.N. 84 of Al-Furqān (XXV), E.N. 5 of As-Sajdah (XXXII) and E.N. 35 of Sabā (XXXIV).

66. That is, "Do they reject the Message because Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) who is inviting them to it, is a stranger among them? No, this is not so, for he was born and bred among them in a noble family; he bears a pure and high character: he has been truthful, upright, trustworthy, honest and morally chaste throughout his life: he is a noble and gentle person, peace-loving and just by nature, honest in word and deed, sympathetic and helpful to the weak and poor. And they themselves testified to all this before he claimed to be a Messenger of Allah. Then he has been consistently preaching the same Message from the first day of his Mission. Then whatever he has preached he has first practised it himself and demonstrated its truth: there has been no contradiction between his word and deed: he and his followers have faithfully and honestly put into practice the Message of the Qur'ān and shown excellent results." For further details, see E.N. 21 of Al-An'ām (VI), E.N. 21 of Yūnus (X) and E.N. 105 of Banī Isrā'īl (XVII).

67. That is, "Do they reject his Message because they regard Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) to be possessed by a *Jinn?* No, this is also not correct, because in their heart of hearts, they themselves regard him as a wise and sagacious person. It is therefore ridiculous to regard a man like him to be

possessed by a jinn, for such a person cannot say wise things and do noble deeds like him. How strange that a person possessed by a *jinn* (or having epileptic fits according to the western orientalists) should utter and recite sublime discourses of the Qur'ān and start and guide a successful Movement which should revolutionise the way of life not only of his own people but of the whole world."

68. This brief sentence expresses a great reality which should be understood well. The foolish people in the world generally feel offended by a person who points out the Truth to them. They do not like to hear and consider the Truth because it goes against their desires and interests but the Truth remains the Truth and cannot be changed after one's personal whims and wishes. Man is subject to the eternal and unalterable laws operating in the universe and has therefore to adjust his thinking, desires and conduct accordingly and should try to discover the Truth and Reality through experience, reasoning and observation. Only a foolish person can stick to and regard his personal whims, wishes and prejudices to be the reality and refuse to hear and consider any argument, however rational and scientific, simply because it goes against them.

69. Here the word *zikr* means:

(1) Mention of human nature and its demands, (2) admonition, (3) esteem, honour and fame.

In the light of these, the full meaning of the verse will be: "Your rejection of the Qur'ān is irrational, for it contains the mention of those things which develop the best in human nature: it is an admonition that will result in your own good and well-being, and it will bring esteem and honour for you in this world as well as in the Hereafter."

70. This was yet another proof of the Holy Prophet's Prophethood: he was conveying the Message without demanding any recompense for it, and he had no self-interest in it. Nay, he had staked his business, reputation, peaceful home life, relationships with the unbelieving kindred for the success of his Mission and was being ruthlessly persecuted for its sake. A selfish person could not have risked his all for the sake of only worldly motives. He would rather have exploited the racial and tribal prejudices of his people to become their ruler and leader. On the contrary, his Message not only cut at the root of those prejudices but tended to destroy the very bases which helped his tribe to wield influence and authority over the polytheists of Arabia. This is an argument which the Qur'ān has advanced again and again as a proof of the truth of the Mission of the other Prophets as well. See Al-An'ām (VI): 90, Yūnus (X): 72, Hūd (XI): 29, 51, Yūsuf (XII): 104, Yā Sīn (XXXVI): 21 along with the relevant E.N.'s.

71. This was the real reason why they were deviating from the Right Path. As they did not believe in the Hereafter, they thought that no account would be taken from them of what they did in this world. Therefore it did not matter whether they followed the Truth or falsehood. Their only aim in life was to gratify the lusts of the flesh and gratify them in the best way possible.

72. The affliction alluded to in this verse was the famine which occurred in Makkah some time after the advent of Prophethood. According to Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, when the Quraish persistently refused to accept the invitation of the Holy Prophet and started putting up stiff resistance, he prayed, "O Allah, help me against them with a seven-year famine like the seven-year famine of the time of Prophet Joseph." So a severe famine started in Makkah with the result that people were obliged to eat carrion. This famine has been alluded to in a number of Makki Sūrahs. For instance see Al-An'ām (VI): 42-44, Al-A'arāf (VII): 94-99, Yūnus (X): 11, 12, 21, An-Nahl (XVI): 112-113 and Ad-Dukhān (XLIV): 10-16 along with the relevant E.N.'s.

73. The Arabic word *mublis* is used for one whom frustration makes so desperate and obdurate that he does not hesitate to resort to any crime. The Devil has been called *Iblis* for the same reason.

74. The disbelievers have been told to consider the great blessings of eyes, ears, mind and heart and use them as human beings should, and show gratitude to the Creator by accepting His Message.

75. If one makes the right use of one's faculties and observes these things properly, one can find the Truth, for it is obvious that the great mechanism of the universe could not have come into existence by a mere accident. There must be its Creator who need not have any associates or partners and that the universe could not have been created without a purpose as a mere sport. The very existence of a wonderful, rational thinking and feeling creature—Man—who has been delegated with powers, is a clear proof that his life will not come to an end at death.

76. Here attention is being drawn to the proof of both *Tauḥīd* and Life-after-death, and in the other phenomena cited to the refutation of both *shirk* and rejection of the Hereafter.

77. Their denial of the Life-after-death implied the denial of the powers and wisdom of Allah as well.

78-79. That is, "If you acknowledge this, why do you not then understand that none but Allah deserves to be worshipped and that when He has once created the earth and all the things in it, it is not difficult for Him to re-create them once again?"

80. That is, "Why are you not afraid of rebelling against Him and worshipping others besides Him? Why do you not dread that one day you shall have to give an account of all your deeds to the All-Powerful Sovereign of the universe?"

81. The word *malakūt* in the Text is a strong word which combines both sovereignty and ownership. The verse therefore means: "Whose is the Sovereignty and Who possesses the real ownership rights over everything?"

82. In order to understand the significance of this question, we should know that the art of magic makes a thing appear different from what it really is. Thus the question will mean: "Who has bewitched you that, in spite of knowing and acknowledging all these things, you do not understand the Reality ? Who has bewitched you that even after acknowledging Allah to be the Owner and the All-Powerful Sovereign, you set up other owners and sovereigns along with Him or make them partners with Him and worship them ? Who has deluded you that you should dare to be treacherous and unfaithful to Allah knowing that none can protect you against Him, and forget that you will be called to account for these things?"

In this connection, it should also be noted that this question has a subtle meaning also. The Quraish accused the Holy Prophet of practising magic and sorcery. This question turns the tables on them, as if to say, "O foolish people, the man who presents the Reality appears to you to be a sorcerer, while those leaders who say things against Reality, against common sense and against your own convictions and beliefs, do not appear to you to be sorcerers at all."

83. They are liars because they say that others besides Allah have a share in His Godhead and that there is no Life-after-death, because their first saying contradicts their own admission that Allah is the Owner and the Sovereign of the universe. Then their second assertion is based on the presumption that the All-Powerful Allah cannot recreate what He has created once. This is clearly a contradiction in terms.

84. It should be noted that this is a general refutation of the belief that Allah has a child or children, and incidentally refutes the Christian belief that Christ is the son of God. Yet even some eminent commentators confine this to the refutation of the Christian belief. Obviously, there is no reason why it was necessary to refute the Christian belief specifically in this context, when the whole discourse has been directed towards the disbelievers of Makkah alone, who were, like the Christians, guilty of this sort of *shirk*.

85. Here the argument of *Tauhid* is based on this principle : Had there

[Contd. on p.268

الْيَوْمَ بِمَا صَبَرُوْٓا ۙ اَنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْفَآئِزُوْنَ ﴿١١١﴾ قٰلَ كَمْ لَبِثْتُمْ فِي الْاَرْضِ عَدَدَ
سِنِيْنَ ﴿١١٢﴾ قَالُوْا لَبِثْنَا يَوْمًا اَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ فَسْـَٔلِ الْعَآدِّيْنَ ﴿١١٣﴾ قٰلَ اِنْ
لَّبِثْتُمْ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا لَّوْ اَنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿١١٤﴾ اَفَحَسِبْتُمْ اَنَّمَا خَلَقْنٰكُمْ عَبَثًا وَّ
اَنَّكُمْ اِلَيْنَا لَا تُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿١١٥﴾ فَتَعٰلَى اللّٰهُ الْمَلِكُ الْحَقُّ ۚ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۚ رَبُّ
الْعَرْشِ الْكَرِيْمِ ﴿١١٦﴾ وَمَنْ يَّدْعُ مَعَ اللّٰهِ اِلٰهًا اٰخَرَ ۙ لَا بُرْهَانَ لَهٗ بِهٖ ۙ فَاِنَّمَا
حِسَابُهٗ عِنْدَ رَبِّهٖ ۭ اِنَّهٗ لَا يُفْلِحُ الْكٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿١١٧﴾ وَقُلْ رَّبِّ اغْفِرْ وَ
ارْحَمْ وَاَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرّٰحِمِيْنَ ﴿١١٨﴾

111-115 Today I have recompensed them for their fortitude, and they have triumphed over you."[99] Then Allah will inquire from them, "For how many years did you live on the Earth?" They will say, "We stayed there for a day or for part of a day.[100] You may inquire from those who kept account." It will be said, "Well, you know now that you stayed there for a little while only. What a pity! you did not realize it then.[101] Did you think that We had created you without any purpose,[102] and that you would never be brought back to Us?"

116-117 So Exalted is Allah,[103] the true and real Sovereign. There is no god other than He: He is the Lord of the Glorious Throne. Therefore, if some one invokes any other deity along with Allah, whereof he has no proof,[104] he shall have to give an account to his Lord.[105] Such disbelievers can never attain "success".[106]

118 O Muḥammad, say, "Lord, forgive and have mercy! You are the most Merciful of all, who show mercy".[107]

Contd. from p.267]

been more than one God or partners in Godhead, there would have been serious differences, conflicts and wars among the different sovereigns and rulers. See Banī Isrā'īl (XVII): 42 and E.N. 47 thereof, and Al-Anbiyā' (XXI): 22 and E. N. 22 thereof.

86. This contains a subtle allusion to the refutation of the doctrine of "intercession". See E.N.'s 85, 86 of Ṭā Hā (XX) and E.N. 27 of Al-Anbiyā' (XXI).

87. This prayer does not mean that, God forbid, there was any real danger of the Holy Prophet's also being involved in the punishment, or that if he had not invoked this prayer, he might have been invoked in it. This way of address has been adopted to warn that all people should fear Allah's punishment. They should not demand it nor persist in their wickedness, if Allah gives them respite. As a matter of fact, Allah's punishment is a thing which should be dreaded not only by the sinful people but also by the righteous people, and they should all seek His refuge from it, for when the scourge of God comes, it does not destroy only the wicked people but may also involve the righteous people in it. Therefore the right course for those, who have to live in a wicked society, is that they should always pray to Allah for His refuge, for one does not know when that scourge might come down.

88. For explanation, see E.N.'s 71, 72 of Al-An'ām (VI), E.N.'s 138, 150 to 153 of Al-A'arāf (VII), E.N. 39 of Yūnus (X), E.N. 48 of Al-Ḥijr (XV), E.N.'s 122 to 124 of An-Naḥl (XVI), E.N.'s 58 to 63 of Banī Isrā'īl (XVII), and E.N.'s 35 to 41 of Ḥā Mīm Sajdah (XLI).

89. In the original Text plural number has been used for Allah, which may be for reverence, or may include the angels as well, who will be seizing the criminal soul. The entreaty would be: "O my Lord! send me back!"

90. It occurs at several places in the Qur'ān that each of the criminals, after his death till his entry into Hell, and even after that, will plead again and again: "Lord, send me back to the world: I will no more disobey Thee: I will now do righteous deeds." See Al-An'ām (VI): 27, 28, Al-A'arāf (VII): 53, Ibrāhīm (XIV): 44, 45, Ash-Shu'arā' (XXVI): 102, Al-Fāṭir (XXXV): 37, Az-Zumar (XXXIX): 58, 59, Al-Mu'min (XL): 10-12, and Ash-Shūrā (XLII): 44 along with the relevant E.N.'s.

91. That is, "He will never be sent back nor given another opportunity, for in that case the test and trial for which man is sent in this world becomes meaningless." For further explanation, see Al-Baqarah (II): 210 and E. N. 228 thereof, and E.N.'s 6, 139, 140 of Al-An'ām (VI) and E.N. 26 of Yūnus (X).

92. That is, "Now, when he has met his doom, he has nothing more to say than that he should be sent back to the world; so let him say what he likes; he will never be allowed to go back."

93. That is, "Now there is a 'barrier' between them and the world, which will not allow them to go back to it. Therefore they shall remain in that state up to the Day of Resurrection."

94. It does not mean that the father will not remain "father" and the son will not remain "son", etc.. It only means that they will not be able to help each other, nor shall they be able to enquire about each other as father and son, for each one will be worried and anxious about his own plight. See also Al-Ma'ārij (LXX): 10-14, and 'Abasa (LXXX: 34-37.

95. That is, those whose good deeds will be heavy and will out-weigh their evil deeds.

96. For the criterion of "success" and "failure" in the Hereafter, please refer to E.N.'s 1 and 50 above.

97. The word *kâlih* means a face whose skin has been removed so as to expose the jaws. When somebody asked Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd the meaning of *kālih*, he said, "Haven't you seen the scorched head of a slaughtered animal?"

98. "...do not speak to Me" "...do not plead your case with Me." According to some traditions, these will be their last words and they shall never be allowed to speak again, but this is contradicted by the Qur'ān itself in the succeeding verses. Therefore, it only means this that they will not be able to plead their case again.

99. This is again a reference to those who will deserve success or be doomed to failure in the Hereafter.

100. For explanation, see Ṭā Hā (XX): 103 and E.N. 80 thereof.

101. That is, "Our Messengers warned you that the life in this world is transitory and is for test and trial, but you did not realize it then and denied that there was any life in the Hereafter and behaved in accordance with that belief."

102. The Arabic word *'abathan* in the Text also means "for the sake of sport". Then the verse will mean: "Did you think that We had created you merely for the sake of sport and there was no purpose behind your creation ? Therefore you may eat, drink, be merry and enjoy yourself as you please."

103. Allah is above this that He should create you without any purpose and that you may associate partners with Him with impunity.

104. It may also be translated as: "The one who invokes any other deity along with Allah, has nothing to support him in this act."

105. That is, he cannot escape accountability.

106. Again, the reference is to those who will attain true success and to those who will be deprived of it.

107. Compare and contrast this "prayer" with verse 109. Here the Holy Prophet has been told to make the same prayer as contained in verse 109, as if to say, "You (and your followers) should supplicate Allah with the same prayer so that, if the people scoff at you, they themselves might provide a proof of a strong case against themselves."


XXIV
AL-NŪR
اَلنُّور

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XXIV
AL-NŪR
سُورَةُ النور

INTRODUCTION

Name

This Sūrah takes its name, An-Nūr, from verse 35.

Period of Revelation

The consensus of opinion is that it was sent down after the Campaign against Banī al-Muṣṭaliq and this is confirmed by vv. 11-20 that deal with the incident of the "Slander", which occurred during that Campaign. But there is a difference of opinion as to whether this Campaign took place in 5 A.H. before the Battle of the Trench or in 6 A.H. after it. It is important to decide this issue in order to determine whether this Sūrah was sent down earlier or Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb (XXXIII), which is the only other Sūrah containing the Commandments about the observance of purdah by women. Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb was admittedly sent down on the occasion of the Battle of the Trench. Now if this Battle occurred earlier, it would mean that the initial instructions in connection with the Commandments of purdah were sent down in Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb and they were complemented later by the Commandments revealed in this Sūrah. On the other hand, if the Campaign against Banī al-Muṣṭaliq occurred earlier, the chronological order of the Commandments would be reversed, and it would become difficult to understand the legal wisdom and implications of the Commandments of purdah.

According to Ibn Sa'd, the Campaign against Banī al-Muṣṭaliq took place in Sha'bān, 5 A.H. and the Battle of the Trench in Zil-Qa'dah the same year. This opinion is based on some traditions from Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah about the events connected with the "Slander" in which she

refers to a dispute between Hadrat Sa'd bin 'Ubādah and Sa'd bin Mu'āz. Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin Mu'āz, according to authentic traditions, died during the Campaign against Banī Quraizah, which took place immediately after the Battle of the Trench. It is, therefore, evident that he could not be present in 6 A.H. to take part in a dispute about the "Slander".

On the other hand, Muḥammad bin Ishāq says that the Battle of the Trench took place in Shawwāl 5 A.H. and the Campaign against Banī al-Muṣṭaliq in Sha'bān 6 A.H. This opinion is supported by many authentic traditions from Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah and others. According to these traditions, (1) the Commandments about purdah had been sent down in Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb before the incident of the "Slander", (2) the Holy Prophet had married Ḥaḍrat Zainab in Zil-Qa'dah 5 A.H. after the Battle of the Trench, (3) Ḥamnah, sister of Ḥaḍrat Zainab, had taken a leading part in spreading the "Slander", just because Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah was a rival of her sister. All this evidence supports the view of Muḥammad bin Ishāq.

Now let us consider the two opinions a little more closely. The only argument in favour of the first opinion is the mention of the presence of Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin Mu'āz in a dispute connected with the incident of the "Slander". But this argument is weakened by some other traditions from Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, in which she mentions Ḥaḍrat Usaid bin Ḥudair instead of Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin Mu'āz in this dispute. It may, therefore, be assumed that there has been some confusion regarding the two names in reporting the traditions. Moreover, if we accept the first opinion, just because of the mention of the name of Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin Mu'āz in some traditions, we encounter other difficulties that cannot be resolved in any way. For, in that case, we shall have to admit that the revelation of the Commandments of purdah and the Holy Prophet's marriage with Ḥaḍrat Zainab had taken place even earlier than the Battle of the Trench. But we learn from the Qur'ān and many authentic traditions that both these events happened after that Battle and the Campaign against Banī Quraizah. That is why Ibn Hazm, Ibn Qayyim and some other eminent scholars have held the opinion of Muḥammad bin Isḥāq as correct, and we also hold it to be so. Thus, we conclude that Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb was sent down earlier than Sūrah An-Nūr, which

was revealed in the latter half of 6 A.H. several months after Sūrah Al-Aḥzab.

Historical Background

Now let us review the circumstances existing at the time of the revelation of this Sūrah. It should be kept in mind that the incident of the "Slander", which was the occasion of its revelation, was closely connected with the conflict between Islam and the disbelievers.

After the victory at Badr, the Islamic movement began to gain strength day by day; so much so that by the time of the Battle of the Trench, it had become so strong that the united forces of the enemy numbering about ten thousand failed to crush it and had to raise the siege of Al-Madinah after one month. It meant, and both the parties understood it well, that the war of aggression which the disbelievers had been waging for several years, had come to an end. The Holy Prophet himself declared: "After this year, the Quraish will not be able to attack you: now you will take the offensive."

When the disbelievers realized that they could not defeat Islam on the battlefield, they chose the moral front to carry on the conflict. It cannot be said with certainty whether this change of tactics was the outcome of deliberate consultations, or it was the inevitable result of the humiliating retreat in the Battle of the Trench, for which all the available forces of the enemy had been concentrated. They knew it well that the rise of Islam was not due to the numerical strength of the Muslims nor to their superior arms and ammunition nor to their greater material resources: nay; the Muslims were fighting against fearful odds on all these fronts. They owed their success to their moral superiority. Their enemies realized that the pure and noble qualities of the Holy Prophet and his followers were capturing the hearts of the people, and were also binding them together into a highly disciplined community. As a result of this, they were defeating the *mushriks* and the Jews both on the peace and on the war fronts, because the latter lacked discipline and character.

Under the above-mentioned circumstances, the wicked designs of the disbelievers led them to start a campaign of vilification against the Holy Prophet and the Muslims in order to destroy the bulwark of morale that was helping them to defeat their enemies. Therefore the strategy was to attain the assistance of the hypocrites to spread slanders against

the Holy Prophet and his followers so that the *mushriks* and the Jews could exploit these to sow the seeds of discord among the Muslims and undermine their discipline.

The first opportunity for the use of the new strategy was afforded in Zil-Qa'dah 5 A.H. when the Holy Prophet married Hadrat Zainab (daughter of Jahsh), who was the divorced wife of his adopted son, Zaid bin Hārithah. The Holy Prophet had arranged this marriage in order to put an end to the custom of ignorance, which gave the same status to the adopted son that was the right only of the son from one's own loins. The hypocrites, however, considered it a golden opportunity to vilify the Holy Prophet from inside the community, and the Jews and the *mushriks* exploited it from outside to ruin his high reputation by this malicious slander. For this purpose fantastic stories were concocted and spread to this effect: "One day Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) happened to see the wife of his adopted son and fell in love with her; he manoeuvred her divorce and married her." Though this was an absurd fiction it was spread with such skill, cunning and artfulness that it succeeded in its purpose; so much so that some Muslim traditionists and commentators also have cited some parts of it in their writings, and the orientalists have exploited these fully to vilify the Holy Prophet. As a matter of fact, Hadrat Zainab was never a stranger to the Holy Prophet that he should see her by chance and fall in love with her at first sight. For she was his first cousin, being the daughter of his real paternal aunt, Umaimah, daughter of 'Abdul Muttalib. He had known her from her childhood to her youth. A year before this incident, he himself had persuaded her against her will to marry Hadrat Zaid in order to demonstrate practically that the Quraish and the liberated slaves were equal as human beings. As she never reconciled herself to her marriage with a liberated slave, they could not pull on together for long, which inevitably led to her divorce. The above-mentioned facts were well known to all, yet the slanderers succeeded in their false propaganda with the result that even today there are people who exploit these things to defame Islam.

The second slander was made on the honour of Hadrat 'Ā'ishah, a wife of the Holy Prophet, in connection with an incident which occurred while he was returning from the Campaign against Banī al-

Muṣṭaliq. As this attack was even severer than the first one and was the main background of this Sūrah, we shall deal with it in greater detail.

Let us say a few words about 'Abdullah bin Ubayy, who played the part of a villain in this attack. He belonged to the clan of Khazraj and was one of the most important chiefs of Al-Madīnah. The people had even intended to make him their king a little before the Holy Prophet's migration there, but the scheme had to be dropped because of the changed circumstances. Though he had embraced Islam, he remained at heart a hypocrite and his hypocrisy was so manifest that he was called the "Chief of the Hypocrites". He never lost any opportunity to slander Islam in order to take his revenge.

Now the main theme. When in Sha'bān 6 A.H. the Holy Prophet learnt that the people of Banī al-Muṣṭaliq were making preparations for a war against the Muslims and were trying to muster other clans also for this purpose, he forestalled and took the enemy by surprise. After capturing the people of the clan and their belongings, the Holy Prophet made a halt near Muraisi', a spring in their territory. One day a dispute concerning taking water from the spring started between a servant of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar and an ally of the clan of Khazraj, and developed into a quarrel between the Muhājirs (immigrants) and the Anṣār (Muslims of Madīnah), but was soon settled. This, however, did not suit the strategy of 'Abdullah bin Ubayy, who also had joined the expedition with a large number of hypocrites. So he began to incite the Anṣār, saying, "You yourselves brought these people of the Quraish from Makkah and made them partners in your wealth and property. And now they have become your rivals and want domination over you. If even now you withdraw your support from them, they shall be forced to leave your city." Then he swore and declared, "As soon as we reach back Al-Madīnah, the respectable people will turn out the degraded people from the city."[1]

When the Holy Prophet came to know of this, he ordered the people to set off immediately and march back to Al-Madīnah. The forced march continued up to noon the next day without a halt on the way so that the people became exhausted and had no time for idle talk.

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1. These words of his have been cited in the Qur'ān: LXIII: 8.

Though this wise judgment and quick action by the Holy Prophet averted the undesirable consequences of the mischief, 'Abdullah bin Ubayy got another opportunity for doing a far more serious and greater mischief, i.e. by engineering a "Slander" against Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, for that was a mischief which might well have involved the young Muslim Community in a civil war, if the Holy Prophet and his sincere and devoted followers had not shown wisdom, forbearance and marvellous discipline in dealing with it. In order to understand the events that led to the incident of the "Slander", we cite the story in Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah's own words. She says:

"Whenever the Holy Prophet went out on a journey, he decided by lots[1] as to which of his wives should accompany him. Accordingly, it was decided that I should accompany him during the expedition to Banī al-Muṣṭaliq. On the return journey, the Holy Prophet halted for the night at a place which was the last stage on the way back to Al-Madīnah. It was still night, when they began to make preparations for the march. So I went outside the camp to ease myself. When I returned and came near my halting place, I noticed that my necklace had fallen down somewhere. I went back in search of it but in the meantime the caravan moved off and I was left behind all alone. The four carriers of the litter had placed it on my camel without noticing that it was empty. This happened because of my light weight due to lack of food in those days. I wrapped myself in my sheet and lay down in the hope that when it would be found that I had been left behind, a search party would come back to pick me up. In the meantime I fell asleep. In the morning, when Ṣafwān bin Mu'aṭṭal Sulamī[2] passed that way, he saw me and recognised

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1. The *Sharī'ah* has allowed to decide a matter by drawing lots when the lawful rights of several persons are equal and there is no reason to prefer one to the other but the right can be given to only one of them. Obviously this is not so in a lottery.

2. Safwan was one of those Companions, who had taken part in the Battle of Badr. He might have remained behind because: (1) He was in the habit of over-sleeping even after sunrise according to some traditions, or (2) which is more likely, he had been instructed by the Holy Prophet to remain behind to make a search for anything that might have been left in the camping ground because of darkness.

me for he had seen me several times before the Commandment about purdah had been sent down. No sooner did he see me than he stopped his camel and cried out spontaneously: "How sad ! the wife of the Holy Prophet has been left here!" At this I woke up all of a sudden and covered my face with my sheet. Without uttering another word, he made his camel kneel by me and stood aside, while I climbed on to the camel back. He led the camel by the nose-string and we overtook the caravan at about noon, when it had just halted and nobody had yet noticed that I had been left behind. I learnt afterwards that this incident had been used to slander me and 'Abdullah bin Ubayy was foremost among the slanderers. (According to other traditions, when Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah reached the camp on the camel, led by Ṣafwān, and it was known that she had been left behind, 'Abdullah bin Ubayy cried out, 'By God, she could not have remained chaste. Look, there comes the wife of your Prophet openly on the camel led by the person with whom she passed the night.')

"When I reached Al-Madīnah, I fell ill and stayed in bed for more than a month. Though I was quite unaware of it, the news of the "Slander" was spreading like a scandal in the city, and had also reached the Holy Prophet. Anyhow, I noticed that he did not seem as concerned about my illness as he used to be. He would come but without addressing me directly, would inquire from others how I was and leave the house. Therefore it troubled my mind that something had gone wrong somewhere. So I took leave of him and went to my mother's house for better nursing.

"While I was there, one night I went out of the city to ease myself in the company of Mistah's mother, who was a first cousin of my father. As she was walking along she stumbled over something and cried out spontaneously, 'May Miṣṭaḥ perish!' To this I retorted, 'What a good mother you are that you curse your own son-the son who took part in the Battle of Badr.' She replied, 'My dear daughter, are you not aware of his scandal-mongering?' Then she told me everything about the campaign of the "Slander". (Besides the hypocrites, some true Muslims also had been involved in this campaign, and among them who took leading part in it, were Miṣṭaḥ, Ḥassān bin Thābit, the famous poet of Islam, and Ḥamnah, daughter of Jahsh and sister of Ḥaḍrat Zainab). Hearing this horrible story, my blood curdled, and I immediately returned home, and passed the rest of the night in crying over it.

"During my absence the Holy Prophet took counsel with 'Ali and Usāmah bin Zaid about this matter. Usāmah said good words about me to this effect: 'O Messenger of Allah, we have found nothing but good in your wife. All that is being spread about her is a lie and calumny.' As regards 'Ali, he said, 'O Messenger of Allah, there is no dearth of women; you may, if you like, marry another wife. If, however, you would like to investigate into the matter, you may send for her maid-servant and enquire into it through her.' Accordingly, the maid-servant was sent for and questioned. She replied, 'I declare on an oath by Allah, Who has sent you with the Truth, that I have never seen any evil thing in her, except that she falls asleep when I tell her to look after the kneaded dough in my absence and a goat comes and eats it.'

"On that same day the Holy Prophet addressed the people from the pulpit, saying: 'O Muslims, who from among you will defend my honour against the attacks of the person who has transgressed all bounds in doing harm to me by slandering my wife. By God, I have made a thorough enquiry and found nothing wrong with her nor with the man, whose name has been linked with the "Slander". ' At this Usaid bin Ḥudair (or Sa'd bin Mu'āz[1] according to other traditions) stood up and said, 'O Messenger of Allah, if that person belongs to our clan, we will kill him by ourselves, but if he belongs to the Khazraj clan, we will kill him if you order us to do so.' Hearing this Sa'd bin 'Ubādah,[2] chief of

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1. Most probably the reason why some traditionists have named Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin Mu'az in this connection is that 'Ā'ishah might have simply mentioned the person as the "chief of the Aus clan" and they thought it was Sa'd bin Mu'āz, though he had died before this incident and had been succeeded by Ḥaḍrat Usaid bin Ḥudair as the chief of Aus.

2. Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin 'Ubādah was a righteous and sincere Muslim and a devoted follower of the Holy Prophet and was one of those prominent persons, who helped spread Islam in Al-Madīnah. But in spite of all his virtues, he was strongly prejudiced in his attachment to his own clan. That is why he defended 'Abdullah bin Ubayy only because he belonged to his clan. This prejudice clung to him till his death. On the day of the conquest of Makkah, he said, "This is the day of killing in this inviolable place." At this the Holy Prophet was much annoyed and took the banner back from him. The same was the reason why he alone did not acknowledge Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr, a Quraish, as

the Khazraj clan, stood up and said, 'You lie! you can never kill him. You are saying this just because the person belongs to our clan of Khazraj. Had he belonged to your clan, you would never have said so.' Ḥaḍrat Usaid retorted, 'You are a hypocrite: that is why you are defending a hypocrite.' At this, there was a general turmoil in the mosque, which would have developed into a riot, even though the Holy Prophet was present there the whole time. But he cooled down their anger and came down from the pulpit."

The remaining details of the incident will be cited along with our commentary on the Text, which honourably absolved Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah from the blame. But here we would only want to point out the enormity of the mischief that was engineered by 'Abdullah bin Ubayy: (1) It implied an attack on the honour of the Holy Prophet and Ḥaḍrat Abu Bakr Siddīq. (2) He meant to undermine the high moral superiority which was the greatest asset of the Islamic Movement. (3) He intended to ignite civil war between the Muhājirs and the Ansār, and between Aus and Khazraj, the two clans of the Anṣār.

Theme and Topics

This Sūrah and vv. 28-73 of Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb (of which this is the sequel) were sent down to strengthen the moral front, which at that time was the main target of the attack, vv. 28-73 of Al-Aḥzāb were sent down concerning the Holy Prophet's marriage with Ḥaḍrat Zainab, and on the occasion of the second attack (the "Slander" about Hadrat 'Ā'ishah), Sūrah An-Nūr was sent down to repair the cracks that had appeared in the unity of the Muslim Community. If we keep this in view during the study of the two Sūrahs, we shall understand the wisdom that underlies the Commandments about purdah. Allah sent the following instructions to strengthen and safeguard the moral front, and to counteract the storm of propaganda that was raised on the occasion of the marriage of Ḥaḍrat Zainab:

(1) The wives of the Holy Prophet were enjoined to remain within their private quarters, to avoid display of adornments and to be cautious in their talk with other persons (vv. 32, 33).

Caliph after the death of the Holy Prophet although everybody else from among the Muhajirs and Ansār took the oath of allegiance to him.

(2) The other Muslims were forbidden to enter the private rooms of the Holy Prophet and instructed to ask whatever they wanted from behind the curtain. (v. 53).

(3) A line of demarcation was drawn between the *maḥram* and the non-*maḥram* relatives. Only the former were allowed to enter the private rooms of those wives of the Holy Prophet with whom they were so closely related as to prohibit marriage with them. (v. 55).

(4) The Muslims were told that the wives of the Prophet were prohibited for them just like their own real mothers; therefore every Muslim should regard them with the purest of intentions. (vv. 53,54).

(5) The Muslims were warned that they would invite the curse and scourge of Allah if they offended the Holy Prophet. Likewise it was a heinous sin to attack the honour of or slander any Muslim man or woman. (vv. 57, 58).

(6) All the Muslim women were enjoined to cover their faces with their sheets if and when they had to go out of their houses. (v. 59).

On the occasion of the second attack, this Sūrah was sent down to keep pure and strengthen the moral fibre of the Muslim society, which had been shaken by the enormity of the slander. We give below a summary of the Commandments and instructions in their chronological order so that one may understand how the Qur'ān makes use of the psychological occasion to reform the Community by the adoption of legal, moral and social measures.

(1) Fornication which had already been declared to be a social crime (IV: 15, 16) was now made a criminal offence and was to be punished with a hundred lashes.

(2) It was enjoined to boycott the adulterous men and women and the Muslims were forbidden to have any marriage relations with them.

(3) The one, who accused the other of adultery but failed to produce four witnesses, was to be punished with eighty lashes.

(4) The Law of *Li'ān* was prescribed to decide the charge of adultery against his own wife by a husband.

(5) The Muslims were enjoined to learn a lesson from the incident of the "Slander" about Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, as if to say, "You should be very cautious in regard to charges of adultery against the people of good reputation, and should not spread these; nay, you should refute and suppress them immediately." In this connection, a general principle was enunciated that the proper spouse for a pure man is a pure woman, for he cannot pull on with a wicked woman for long, and the same is the case with a pure woman, as if to say, "When you knew that the Holy Prophet was a pure man, nay, the purest of all human beings, how could you believe that he had experienced happiness with a wicked woman and exalted her as the most beloved of his wives? For it was obvious that an adulterous woman could not have been able to deceive, with her affected behaviour, a pure man like the Holy Prophet. You ought also to have considered the fact that the accuser was a mean person while the accused was a pure woman. This should have been enough to convince you that the accusation was not worth your consideration; nay, it was not even conceivable.

(6) Those who spread news and evil rumours and propagate wickedness in the Muslim Community, deserve punishment and not encouragement.

(7) A general principle was laid down that relations in the Muslim Community should be based on good faith and not on suspicion: everyone should be treated as innocent unless he is proved to be guilty and *vice versa*.

(8) The people were forbidden to enter the houses of others unceremoniously and were instructed to take permission for this.

(9) Both men and women were instructed to lower their gaze and forbidden to cast glances or make eyes at each other.

(10) Women were enjoined to cover their heads and breasts even inside their houses.

(11) Women were forbidden to appear with make-up before other men except their servants or such relatives with whom their marriage is prohibited.

(12) They were enjoined to hide their make-ups when they went out of their houses, and even forbidden to put on jingling ornaments, while they moved out of their houses.

(13) Marriage was encouraged and enjoined even for slaves and slave-girls, for unmarried people help spread indecency

(14) The institution of slavery was discouraged and the owners and other people were enjoined to give financial help to the slaves to earn their freedom under the law of *Mukātabat*.

(15) Prostitution by slave-girls was forbidden in the first instance, for prostitution in Arabia was confined to this class alone. This in fact implied the legal prohibition of prostitution.

(16) Sanctity of privacy in home life was enjoined even for servants and under-age children including one's own. They were enjoined not to enter the private rooms of any man or woman without permission, especially in the morning, at noon and at night.

(17) Old women were given the concession that they could set aside their head-covers within their houses but should refrain from display of adornments. Even they were told that it was better for them to keep themselves covered with head-wrappers.

(18) The blind, lame, crippled and sick persons were allowed to take any article of food from the houses of other people without permission, for it was not to be treated like theft and cheating, which are cognizable offences.

(19) On the other hand, the Muslims were encouraged to develop mutual relationships by taking their meals together, and the nearest relatives and intimate friends were allowed to take their meals in each other's house without any formal invitation. This was to produce mutual affection and sincere relationships between them to counteract any future mischief. Side by side with these instructions, clear signs of the Believers and the hypocrites were stated to enable every Muslim to discriminate between the two. At the same time the Community was bound

together by adopting disciplinary measures in order to make it stronger and firmer than it was at the time so as to discourage the enemies from creating mischief in it.

Above all, the most conspicuous thing about this discourse is that it is free from the bitterness which inevitably follows such shameful and absurd attacks. Instead of showing any wrath at this provocation, the discourse prescribes some laws and regulations and enjoins reformative commandments and issues wise instructions that were required at the time for the education and training of the Community. Incidentally, this teaches us how to deal with such provocative mischiefs coolly, wisely and generously. At the same time, it is a clear proof that this is not the word of Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) but of a Being Who is observing all human conditions and affairs from the highest level, and guiding mankind without any personal prejudices, feelings and leanings. Had this been the word of the Holy Prophet; there would have been at least some tinge of natural bitterness in spite of his great generosity and forbearance, for it is but human that a noble man naturally becomes enraged when his own honour is attacked in this mean manner.



سُوْرَةٌ اَنْزَلْنٰهَا وَفَرَضْنٰهَا وَاَنْزَلْنَا فِيْهَآ اٰيٰتٍۢ بَيِّنٰتٍ لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ۝١
اَلزَّانِيَةُ وَالزَّانِيْ فَاجْلِدُوْا كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا مِائَةَ جَلْدَةٍ ۖ وَّلَا تَاْخُذْكُمْ
بِهِمَا رَاْفَةٌ فِيْ دِيْنِ اللّٰهِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْاٰخِرِ ۚ وَلْيَشْهَدْ
عَذَابَهُمَا طَآئِفَةٌ مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ۝٢ اَلزَّانِيْ لَا يَنْكِحُ اِلَّا زَانِيَةً اَوْ مُشْرِكَةً ۖ
وَّالزَّانِيَةُ لَا يَنْكِحُهَآ اِلَّا زَانٍ اَوْ مُشْرِكٌ ۚ وَحُرِّمَ ذٰلِكَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ۝٣ وَ
الَّذِيْنَ يَرْمُوْنَ الْمُحْصَنٰتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَاْتُوْا بِاَرْبَعَةِ شُهَدَآءَ فَاجْلِدُوْهُمْ ثَمٰنِيْنَ
جَلْدَةً وَّلَا تَقْبَلُوْا لَهُمْ شَهَادَةً اَبَدًا ۚ وَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْفٰسِقُوْنَ ۝٤ اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ
تَابُوْا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ ذٰلِكَ وَاَصْلَحُوْا ۚ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ۝٥ وَالَّذِيْنَ يَرْمُوْنَ
اَزْوَاجَهُمْ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَّهُمْ شُهَدَآءُ اِلَّآ اَنْفُسُهُمْ فَشَهَادَةُ اَحَدِهِمْ اَرْبَعُ
شَهٰدٰتٍۭ بِاللّٰهِ ۙ اِنَّهٗ لَمِنَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ۝٦ وَالْخَامِسَةُ اَنَّ لَعْنَتَ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْهِ

XXIV
AL-NŪR
اَلنُّور

Verses: 64 *Revealed at Al-Madīnah*

In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate

This is a Sūrah which We have sent down and We have made it mandatory, and We have sent down clear Commandments in it[1] so that you may learn lessons. 1

The woman and the man guilty of fornication, flog each one of them with a hundred stripes,[2] and let not any pity for them restrain you in regard to a matter prescribed by Allah, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day,[3] and let some of the believers witness the punishment inflicted on them.[4] 2

A man guilty of adultery (or fornication) shall not marry any but the woman guilty of the same or a *mushrik* woman, and none shall marry a woman guilty of adultery (or fornication) but the man guilty of the same or a *mushrik* man; such marriages are forbidden to true believers.[5] 3

As for those persons who charge chaste women with false accusations but do not produce four witnesses, flog them with eighty stripes and never accept their evidence afterwards, for they themselves are transgressors, except those who repent and reform themselves; Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.[6] 4-5

As for those who accuse their own wives but have no witness except themselves, the evidence of one of them is that he shall swear four times by Allah and declare that he is true (in his charge). Then the fifth time he shall declare that Allah's curse be upon him if he be false (in his charge). 6-7

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1. In all these sentences the emphasis is on "We", which implies that it is Allah Who has revealed this and none else; therefore, "You should not treat these

instructions lightly like the word of an ordinary preacher. You should note it well that these have been sent down by One Who controls your lives and destinies and from Whom you can never escape even after your death."

The second sentence emphasizes that the instructions sent down in this Sūrah are not of the nature of advice which you may accept or reject at will. These are mandatory Commandments which must be obeyed. If you are a believer and a true Muslim you are obliged to act upon them.

The third sentence states that the instructions given in this Sūrah are free from any ambiguity and are couched in clear and plain words. Therefore, you cannot put up the excuse that you could not act upon them as you did not understand them.

This is the 'Preamble' of this blessed Message after which the specific Commandments follow. The tone of the preamble itself indicates the great importance which Allah has attached to the Commandments contained in Sūrah An-Nūr. The preamble of no other Sūrah containing Commandments is so forceful as this.

2. There are various legal, moral and historical aspects of this problem which need explanation, for if these are not clarified in detail, the modern man will find it difficult to understand the Divine Law concerning it. Accordingly, we shall discuss the various aspects of the problem below:

(1) The common meaning of *zinā* which everyone knows is: "Sexual intercourse between a man and a woman without the legal relationship of husband and wife existing between them." There has been complete unanimity of view among all the social systems from the earliest times to this day that this act is morally wicked, religiously sinful and socially evil and objectionable, and there has been no dissenting voice except from those stray individuals who have subordinated their moral sense to their lust, or who in their misguided notions try to be "original" and "philosophical" in their approach. The universal unanimity of view in this respect is due to the fact that man by nature abhors *zinā*. In fact, the future of human race and civilization depends on this that the relationship between the husband and wife should be built upon the basis of an enduring and everlasting bond of fidelity, which should not only be fully recognized in the social life but should also be guaranteed by the existing social structure. Without this the human race cannot survive. This is because the human child requires years of tender care and training for its survival and development and a woman alone cannot bear the burden without the cooperation of the man who became the cause of the birth of

the child. Similarly human civilization itself is the product of the corporate life of a man and a woman, their setting up a home, bringing up a family, and establishing mutual relationships and inter-connections between families. If men and women were to lose sight of this essential fact, that is, the establishment of a home and raising a family, and were to meet freely just for pleasure and lust, the entire structure of human society would crumble. In fact, the very foundations on which the structure of human civilization and culture has been built will topple down and the whole basis of the concept of a social life will disappear. It is for these reasons that free mixing of men and women, without any recognized and stable bonds of fidelity, is abhorrent to human nature, and it is for this reason that in every age *zinā* has been considered as a moral evil and, in religious terminology, a grave sin. Accordingly, the social systems in every age recognised and adopted the institution of marriage and also adopted preventive measures against adultery or fornication. The forms of the measures adopted in this direction have, however, differed under different social, cultural and religious systems. This difference has been the result of the realization of the disastrous effects of adultery (or fornication) in varying degrees: some societies have considered it to be more heinous than others, and some have conceived it clearly and some others not so clearly and confused it with other problems.

(2) Though adultery (or fornication) has always been accepted as an evil, opinion has differed as to whether it is legally a punishable offense or not, and this is where Islam differs from other religions and systems of law. Social systems which have been akin to human nature have always considered illicit intercourse between man and woman a serious crime and prescribed severe punishments for it. But with the deterioration in moral standards, this morality grew weaker and weaker and the attitude towards this crime became more and more tolerant.

The first common lapse in this connection was caused by the invidious distinction between fornication and adultery. The former as such was taken as an ordinary offense while the latter only was held as a punishable crime.

Zinā, as defined under various laws, means "sexual intercourse between a man (whether married or bachelor) and a woman, who is not the wife of anybody." This definition takes into account the position of the woman rather than of the man. If a woman is without a husband, the illicit intercourse with her amounts to fornication irrespective of the fact whether the man is married or not. The ancient laws of Egypt, Babylon, Assyria and India provided very light punishments for it, and the same were adopted by the Greeks and the Romans.

which finally influenced the Jewish attitude. According to the Bible, only monetary compensation is payable for such an offense. The Commandment on the subject is as follows:

"And if a man entice a maid that is not betrothed, and lie with her, he shall surely endow her to be his wife. If her father utterly refuses to give her unto him, he shall pay money according to the dowry of virgins." (Exod. 22: 16,17)

The same Commandment is repeated in different words in Deuteronomy, which is as below:

"If a man finds a damsel that is a virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with, and they be found; Then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel's father fifty shekels of silver (about fifty-five rupees), and she shall be his wife; because he hath humbled her." (Deut. 22: 28, 29).

Under the Jewish law, if a priest's daughter acts immorally, she is to be sentenced to burning and the man with whom she was alleged to have acted immorally was to suffer strangulation. (Everyman's Talmud, pp. 319, 320).

To judge the extent to which this conception resembles that of the Hindus, it will be worthwhile to compare it with the laws of Manu. According to him, "Anybody who commits illicit intercourse with an unmarried girl of his own caste with her consent does not deserve any punishment. If the father of the girl is willing, the man should compensate him and marry the girl. But if the girl happens to belong to a higher caste and the man belongs to a lower caste, the girl should be turned out from her parents' house and the limbs of the man should be cut off." (Adhiai 8. Ashlok 365, 366). This punishment may be changed into burning him alive, if the girl happens to be a Brahman. (Ashlok 377).

Under all these laws, illicit intercourse with a married woman only was the real and major crime. The deciding factor for treating it as a crime was not the illicit relationship between the man and the woman but the likelihood of an awkward situation under which a child might have to be reared up by a man (the real husband of the woman), who was not its father. It was therefore not the act of *zinā* itself but the danger of the mixing up of progenies and the problem of rearing up somebody else's child at the expense of another and a possibility of its inheriting his property, that was the real basis of treating it as a crime and holding both the man and the woman as criminals. Under the Egyptian law, the man was to receive a severe beating with sticks and the nose of the woman was to be cut off. Similar punishments existed in Babylon, Assyria and Iran. According to the Hindus, the woman was to be thrown to the dogs to be torn apart and the man was to be put on a hot iron bed with fire all around him to burn him alive. At first the Greek and the Roman laws gave a man the right to kill his wife if he found her

involved in adultery. He had also the option to demand monetary compensation. In the first century B.C. Augustus Caesar enacted that half the property of the man should be confiscated and he should be exiled. In case of the woman, half her dowry should be written off and one-third of her assets confiscated, and she should also be sent out to a distant part of the country. Constantine changed this law and imposed death penalty both for the man and for the woman. In the times of Leo and Marcian, this punishment was changed to imprisonment for life. Justinian further reduced the punishment and ordered that the woman should be flogged with stripes and sent to a monastery and the husband should be given the right to take her out within two years if he liked, otherwise she was to remain there for ever.

Under the Jewish law, the orders for illicit intercourse with a married woman are as under:

"And whosoever lieth carnally with a woman, that is a bondmaid, betrothed to an husband, and not at all redeemed, nor freedom given her, she shall be scourged; they shall not be put to death, because she was not free." (Leviticus 19: 20).

"And the man that committeth adultery with *another* man's wife, *even he* that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death." (Leviticus 20: 10).

"If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, *both* the man that lay with the woman, and the woman: so shalt thou put away evil from Israel." (Deuteronomy 22: 22).

"If a damsel *that is* a virgin be betrothed unto an husband and a man find her in the city, and lie with her; Then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die; the damsel, because she cried not, *being* in the city, and the man, because he had humbled his neighbour's wife: so thou shalt put away evil from among you. But if a man find a betrothed damsel in the field, and the man force her, and lie with her: then the man only that lay with her shall die: But unto the damsel thou shalt do nothing; *there is* in the damsel no sin worthy of death: for as when a man riseth against his neighbour, and slayeth him, even so is this matter." (Deuteronomy 22: 23-26).

However, long before the advent of Christ, the Jewish jurists and scholars, the rich and the poor, had practically ceased to observe these laws. Though it was written in the Old Testament, and it was considered as a Divine Commandment, nobody was inclined to apply it practically; in the entire Jewish history, there is not a single instance where this commandment was ever enforced. When Jesus Christ embarked upon his prophetic mission, and invited the people to the eternal truth, the learned Jews, seeing that there was no way to stop the tide, brought a

woman guilty of adultery before him and asked him to decide her case. (John 8: 1-11). Their object was to create a dilemma for Christ and to tempt and embarrass him. If he decided in favour of any punishment other than stoning, they would vilify him saying, "Here comes a strange Prophet who has changed the Divine Law for the sake of worldly considerations." And if he were to give the verdict of stoning, this would, on the one hand, bring him in direct clash with the Roman law, and on the other, give them the opportunity to tell the people, "Look! Will you believe in a Prophet who will expose you to all the severities of the Torah?" But Jesus turned the tables on them with one sentence, saying: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." This put the jurists to shame and they departed one by one in humiliation, and the moral degeneration of the learned in law was totally exposed. When the woman was left alone, Jesus admonished her and after her repentance let her go. Jesus did this because he was neither a judge of any court competent to decide the case, nor any evidence had been produced against her, nor was there any government to enforce the Divine Law.

On the basis of this incident and some miscellaneous sayings of Jesus on different occasions, the Christians formed an utterly erroneous conception about the crime of *zinā*. According to them, illicit intercourse between an unmarried man and an unmarried woman is a sin but not a punishable offence. But if either of them (or both) is married, adultery is treated as a crime. It is so not because of the illicit intercourse as such but because of the vow of fidelity taken by each of them before the priest at the altar. Nevertheless, there is no punishment even for this, except that the wife has the right to sue her adulterous husband and claim separation for having violated the vow of fidelity. On the other side, the husband of the adulterous woman can also sue his wife for separation and can also claim compensation from the man who had illicit intercourse with his wife. This is the punishment in the Christian law for adultery. The irony is that even this punishment is a double-edged sword, because a woman, though entitled to separation from her husband by proving his infidelity and getting rid of him cannot remarry under the Christian law. Similarly the husband who sues his wife for infidelity can obtain judicial separation, but cannot remarry. Both the man and the woman who accuse each other of infidelity in a Christian court, will be deprived of the right of remarriage for the rest of their lives.

The Western laws of the modern times, which have also been adopted by the Muslims in various countries, are based on such conceptions. According to them, *zinā* may be an evil, and an immoral and sinful thing, but it is not a crime. It becomes a crime only when illicit intercourse is committed without the consent of the other party. As for adultery by a married man, this only provides a cause for complaint to his wife who may, if she likes, prove it and get a divorce. Similarly in the case of an adulteress, her husband can lodge a complaint against her and

also against the man with whom adultery was committed and can sue both of them to claim divorce from the woman and monetary compensation from the man.

(3) The Islamic Law, in contrast to all these conceptions, holds *zinā* as a punishable crime and its committal by the married person enhances the guilt all the more. This is not so because of the violation of the oath of fidelity taken by the man or the woman nor because of the encroachment on the conjugal rights of the other, but because the criminal resorted to an unlawful method when there existed a lawful method for satisfying his sex desires. The Islamic Law views *zinā* as an act which, if allowed to be indulged in freely, will strike at the very roots of both human race and human civilization. In the interest of the preservation of the human race and the stability of human civilization, it is imperative that relationship between man and woman should be regulated only through lawful and reliable means. And it is not possible to restrain this relationship if opportunities for free mixing of the sexes are allowed to exist, for it cannot be expected from a man or a woman to be prepared to bear the onerous responsibilities of the family life if he or she has the opportunities for the gratification of the sex desires without this. For in that case it will be as meaningless as buying a ticket for a railway journey when people can travel without a ticket as well. A ticket is essential only when travelling without a ticket is declared to be an offence. If somebody is found travelling without a ticket because he cannot afford to buy it, he is a criminal though in a lesser degree. But if a rich man resorts to this, his guilt becomes all the more serious.

(4) Islam does not rely on punitive law alone for saving humanity from the menace of *zinā*. It employs both reformatory and prohibitory measures on a large scale. It has provided legal punishment only as a last resort. Islam does not want that the people should go on committing this crime and getting flogged with stripes day and night. Its real aim is that the people should not commit this crime at all and there should be no occasion to resort to the extreme punishment. For this purpose Islam first of all purifies man: it imbues him with the fear of All-Powerful and All-Knowing Allah; it inculcates in him the sense of accountability for his actions in the Hereafter from which even death cannot release him. It fills him with obligation of obedience to Divine Law which is sure to follow true Faith. Then, it repeatedly warns him that *zinā* and unchastity are heinous crimes, which Allah will call to account with a severe reckoning. This theme occurs again and again in the Qur'ān. Moreover, Islam provides all possible facilities for a man to marry. If he is not satisfied with one wife, he is allowed to take up to four. If the husband and the wife cannot pull on amicably, there are provisions for separation. In case of a

dispute between the two, provision exists for reconciliation through the intervention of the members of the family and failing that through the judicial courts so that they should either reconcile or separate and then remarry wherever they like. All this has been explained in Sūrahs Al-Baqarah, An-Nisā and At-Talāq. In this Sūrah too, it is not considered good and right to remain unmarried and a clear Commandment has been given that marriages should be arranged between unmarried persons and even slaves (men and women) should not be allowed to remain unmarried. Then Islam puts an end to all those factors which allure a man to *zinā* or provide occasions for it. A year before the punishment for *zinā* was prescribed, women were commanded (in Sūrah Al-Ahzāb) to cover themselves with sheets and lower their head-covers over their faces when going out of their houses. The wives of the Holy Prophet (Allah's peace be upon him), who were a model for every Muslim family, were ordered to restrict themselves to their houses with decorum and dignity and not to display their charms and adornments. Moreover, they were required to communicate with men from behind the curtain if there be any need for that. This was a model which was followed by all the believing women who considered the Prophet's wives and daughters patterns of virtue and not the immodest women of the age of 'ignorance'. Similarly, the free mixing of the men and women was discouraged before it was declared as a criminal offence and women were prohibited from going out openly in make-up.

After adopting such measures *zinā* was declared to be a punishable offence and spreading of indecency in any way was also prohibited. Prostitution was legally banned and severe punishment was prescribed for charging men and women with adultery and propagating it without proof. Men were enjoined to restrain their gaze so that unrestricted feasting of eyes should not lead to lust for beauty and further on to illicit love. At the same time women were also enjoined to differentiate between *maḥram* and non-*maḥram* relatives.[1] This enables one to understand the entire scheme of reform, a constituent part of which is the prescribed punishment for *zinā*. This extreme punishment is for those incorrigible persons who persist in resorting to the illegal course for the gratification of their sex desires in spite of all the measures adopted to reform the individual and society. They certainly deserve to be flogged. Punishment of a wicked person serves as a psychological deterrent for those who have similar tendencies. This

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1. *Maḥram* relatives are those between whom marriage is not permissible under the Islamic Law, e.g. father and daughter, uncle and niece, nephew and aunt, and so on. Non-*maḥram* are those between whom marriage is permissible e.g. cousins, *etc.*

punishment is not merely a punishment for the criminal but is a declaration of the policy that the Islamic society has no room for debauchery and people cannot be allowed to live lives of indulgence and pleasures without restraint. If one tries to understand the Islamic scheme of reform from this point of view, one will realize that not a single part of the law can either be dispensed with or amended. Only a fool who assumes the role of a self-styled reformer, without understanding this Divine Law, will ever think of changing it, or a mischievous person, who deliberately wants to alter the very object of the social order designed by Allah, will try to tamper with it.

(5) *Zinā* was declared a culpable act in the third year of Hijrah, but, it was not a "legal" crime at that time; as such the police and the courts were not competent to initiate legal proceedings. It was considered as a social crime against the institution of family. Accordingly the members of the family themselves were competent to punish the accused. The Commandment at that time was that if four men should bear witness to having seen a man and a woman committing *zinā*, both the culprits should get a beating and the woman should be imprisoned in the house. But at the same time there was a suggestion that this Commandment would apply till further orders and that the real law was yet to follow. (See IV: 15). After about two to three years the present Commandment was revealed which cancelled the previous Commandment and declared *zinā* to be a cognizable offence.

(6) The punishment prescribed in this verse (2) is for sexual intercourse between unmarried persons; it does not apply to illicit intercourse after marriage, which is a much graver offence under the Islamic Law. This thing is implied in verses 15 and 25 of An-Nisā (IV) that the punishment being prescribed is for the unmarried offenders:

"If any of your women are guilty of indecency, call four witnesses from among yourselves to testify this. If they give evidence and prove the guilt, then confine them to their houses until death comes to them, or Allah opens some other way out for them." (IV: 15). "Whoso cannot afford to marry free Muslim women, he should marry one of the Muslim slave-girls in your possession; Allah has full knowledge of your Faith. You all belong to one and the same Community; therefore you may marry them with the permission of their guardians and give them their dowries so that they may live a decent life in wedlock and not in licentiousness nor may have secret illicit relations. Then if they are guilty of indecency, after they have been fortified by wedlock, they shall be given half the punishment prescribed for free women." (IV: 25).

Verse 15 held out a hope that Allah would open some other way out for those adulterous women who were to be imprisoned according to the Commandment contained in it. Thus, the Commandment in verse 2 of this Sūrah is

the same which was promised in IV: 15. Then in IV: 25 the punishment for a married slave-girl guilty of adultery has been prescribed. The word *muhsanāt* has been used twice in the same verse in the same context and one will have to concede that it has been used in the same sense at both the places. Now let us consider the sentence: "Whoso cannot afford to marry free Muslim women *(muhsanāt)*...." Obviously a *muhsanah* cannot mean a married woman; it can only mean an unmarried woman of a free family. Then at the end of the verse it has been enjoined that if a slave woman commits adultery after her marriage, she should be given half the punishment prescribed for a free unmarried woman. The context clearly indicates that in this sentence the word *muhsanāt* has the same meaning as in the first sentence, i.e. an unmarried woman, who enjoys the protection of a free family. Thus it is concluded from these two verses of An-Nisā that the Commandment contained in this verse of An-Nūr is the same that was promised in v. 15 of An-Nisā and it prescribes punishment for sexual intercourse between unmarried persons. (Also see E. N. 46 of An-Nisā).

(7) As regards the punishment for adultery after marriage, the Qur'ān does not mention it, but it has been prescribed in the Traditions. We learn from many authentic Traditions that not only did the Holy Prophet prescribe the punishment of stoning to death for it verbally but also enforced it practically in several cases. Then after him his successors not only enforced this punishment during their caliphates but also declared repeatedly that this was the legal punishment. The Companions and their followers were unanimous on this point and there is not a single saying of anyone to suggest that anybody doubted the authenticity of this law during that period. After them the jurists of all ages and countries have been unanimous that this is the legal punishment prescribed by the *Sunnah*, for there have been so many strong and continuous proofs of its authenticity that no scholar can refute them. In the entire history of the Muslims nobody ever denied this except the Kharijites and some Mu'tazilites and even they did not deny it on the ground that there was some weakness in the proof of its having been enjoined by the Holy Prophet, but because they considered it to be "against the Qur'ān". This was, however, due to their lack of understanding the Qur'ān. They argued that by using the words *Az-zāni' waz-zāniyatu* in their general sense the Qur'ān has prescribed a punishment of one hundred stripes for this crime. Therefore, according to them, the only punishment for adultery (or fornication) prescribed in the Qur'ān was this, and to prescribe a different punishment for the married persons who committed adultery would be against the Divine Law. But they forgot that the explanation of the Qur'ānic verses by the Holy Prophet carries the same weight and authority in law as the words of the Qur'ān itself, provided that the explanation is proved to be

from the Holy Prophet. The Qur'ān has used *As-sāriqu was-sāriqatu* in similar general terms and prescribed the punishment of amputation of hands for the thief, both male and female. Now if this Commandment were to be interpreted literally without the limitations authentically emanating from the Holy Prophet, the generality of the words used would demand that every man or woman, who steals a needle or a plum, should be declared to be a thief and his or her hand cut off from the shoulder. On the other hand, if a thief, who has stolen a million rupees, declares on his arrest that he has reformed himself and has repented of theft, he should be let off in accordance with: "But whoso repents after his iniquity and reforms himself, Allah will surely turn towards him with His favour." (IV: 39).

Likewise the Qur'ān forbids marriage only with a foster mother and a foster sister. According to their argument, such a ban should not apply to a foster daughter. The Qur'ān forbids a person to keep two sisters as wives at one and the same time; therefore if a person keeps the aunt (paternal or maternal) and her niece together as wives, he should not be charged with violating the Qur'ānic injunction. Again, the Qur'ān forbids marriage with a step-daughter only when she has been brought up in the house of her step-father; therefore, according to their way of reasoning, the absolute prohibition of marriage with a step-daughter should be regarded as against the Qur'ān. Similarly the Qur'ān allows mortgage only when a man is on a journey and nobody is available to prepare the loan documents; therefore if a person is at home and a scribe is also available, mortgage should be regarded as un-Qur'ānic. Then, the Qur'ān enjoins in general terms: "You should have witnesses whenever you buy or sell goods." Therefore, according to them, all sales and purchases taking place in the markets without witnesses should be unlawful.

These few instances should suffice to prove the error in the reasoning of those who hold the Commandment of stoning to death as against the Qur'ān. Nobody can deny the position and authority of the Prophet in the legal system of Islam. It is he alone who can explain the underlying intention of a Divine Command, its procedures and in what cases it will be applicable and in what there is another injunction. To deny this position and authority of the Prophet is not only against the principles of Islam but it also entails innumerable complications in practice.

(8) There is a difference of opinion among the jurists about the legal definition of *zinā*. According to the *Ḥanafīs*, it means frontal sexual intercourse of a man with a woman who is neither his wife nor his bondwoman, nor is there any valid reason to believe that the sexual act was committed under the misapprehension that the woman was his own wife or his own

bondwoman. According to this definition, sexual act with a woman in the rectum, or sodomy, or sex gratification with animals, does not constitute *zinā*. It is confined only to the frontal sexual intercourse with a woman without any legal right or any doubt thereof. According to the Shāfi'īs, *zinā* means insertion of the male sexual organ into the female sexual part, which though forbidden by law may be quite natural. According to the Mālikīs, *zinā* means the entry of the male sexual organ into the frontal sexual part, or in the rectum of a woman or man, without legal right or any doubt about its being legal. According to these two definitions, sodomy also will be included in *zinā*. The correct position, however, is that these definitions are removed from the common meaning of *zinā*. The Qur'ān always employs words in their ordinary meaning and according to their common usage, unless it uses a certain word as a term. In such a case the Qur'ān itself makes plain the particular sense of the term. In the context in which the word *zinā* occurs, there is no indication that it has been used in any particular sense. Accordingly the word will have to be taken in the sense in which it is commonly understood. It is, therefore, confined to an illicit intercourse with a woman in the natural way and does not extend to other forms of sexual gratification. Besides, it is well known that there was a difference of opinion about the punishment for sodomy among the Companions of the Holy Prophet. Had sodomy been included in *zinā* according to the Islamic terminology, there would have been no occasion for such a difference of opinion.

(9) Penetration of the glans of the penis is a sufficient legal ground for punishing the act of *Zinā*. It is not essential that the penetration should be full or the sexual intercourse should be complete. On the other hand, if there is no penetration of the glans of the penis, mere lying of the couple in the same bed or their caressing each other or their being found naked, is not a sufficient ground for declaring them to be guilty of *Zinā*; so much so that the Islamic Law does not bother to get the couple medically examined to establish their guilt of illicit sexual intercourse and then to get them punished according to the law. Those who are found in such an indecent condition are offenders and punishable according to the circumstances. The competent authority to determine the nature of the punishment is either a court or the legislature of the Islamic State. If the punishment is to be given in the form of flogging with stripes, it should not exceed ten stripes as specified in a Tradition: "Except in cases where a specific punishment has been prescribed by Allah, none should be flogged with more than ten stripes for any offence." (Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd). However, if a person is not caught red-handed but confesses his guilt himself, he should only be admonished to repent. According to a Tradition reported by 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, a man came to the Holy Prophet and

said, "I did everything with a woman except the sexual intercourse, outside the city. Now you may give me any punishment you may deem fit." Hadrat 'Umar said, "When Allah had concealed it, you also should have kept it concealed." The Holy Prophet, however, remained silent and the man went away. Then the Holy Prophet called him back and recited the following verse to him:

"Establish *salāt* the two ends of the day and in early part of the night; indeed virtues remove evils." (XI: 114) At this a man asked, "Does the Commandment apply to him alone?" The Holy Prophet replied: " No, it is for all." (Muslim, Tirmizī, Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'ī).

Not only this: The Islamic Law does not permit that in cases where a man confesses his guilt without specifying his offence, any investigation be made to find out what the actual offence was. A man came to the Holy Prophet and said, "O Messenger of Allah, I deserve the prescribed punishment, so enforce the punishment on me." The Holy Prophet did not ask him what punishment he deserved. After the man had offered his prayers, he again came and said, "I am guilty: please punish me." The Holy Prophet asked: "Have you not offered your prayer with us?" When he replied in the affirmative, the Holy Prophet said: "Well Allah has pardoned your sin." (Bukhārī, Muslim, Ahmad).

(10) The mere fact that a person (man or woman) has committed *zinā*, is not enough to declare him guilty of it. For this there are certain conditions which must be satisfied. These conditions are different for fornication and for adultery. In the case of fornication, the offender should be of age and possessing normal common sense. If a child or a lunatic is guilty of it he does not incur the punishment prescribed for *zinā*. In the case of adultery, there are some additional conditions which are as under:

(a) There is unanimity of opinion that the offender must be a free person and not a slave. The Qur'ān itself has indicated that a slave shall not be stoned to death on the charge of *zinā*. As has already been stated, a slave-girl, if found guilty of adultery after marriage, shall get half the punishment prescribed for a free unmarried woman. The jurists are agreed that the same Qur'ānic Law will apply to a slave.

(b) The criminal must be a legally married person. This condition has also the unanimous support of all the jurists. According to this condition, a man who has had sexual intercourse with a slave-girl, or whose marriage was performed in an illegal manner, will not be treated as married and shall not be stoned to death but will be flogged with stripes if he commits *zinā*.

(c) Such a person should not only have been legally married but must have had sexual intercourse with his wife after marriage. The mere ceremony of

marriage does not entitle a man or a woman to be regarded as a *muḥsin* or a *muḥsanah* and be stoned to death in case of *zinā*. Most of the jurists are agreed on this condition. However, Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and Imām Muḥammad have added a supplementary condition to the effect that a man or a woman will be treated as married only when he or she is a free person and is of age and possesses normal common sense at the time of marriage and sexual intercourse. According to this supplementary condition, if a man is married to a slave-girl, or to a minor or mad girl, and even has had sexual intercourse with her, he will not be punishable by stoning to death if found guilty of *zinā*. The same applies to the case of a woman who may have had intercourse with a slave or a mad or immature husband. She will not be stoned to death if found guilty of *zinā*. This is a very reasonable addition by these two far-sighted scholars.

(d) The criminal should be a Muslim. But Imām Shāfi'ī, Imām Abū Yūsuf and Imām Aḥmad have disputed this. According to them, even if a non-Muslim married person, who is a protege of the Islamic State, is found guilty of *zinā*, he will be stoned to death. But Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and Imām Mālik have concurred that the punishment of stoning to death for adultery after marriage, applies only to the Muslims. The most weighty argument advanced in this connection is that a man, who is to be given the extreme punishment of stoning to death, should be the one who, in spite of enjoying the complete state of *iḥṣān* does not refrain from committing adultery. The Arabic word *iḥṣān* means "moral fortification," which has three essential components. First, the man should be a believer in Allah and in the accountability after death and should owe allegiance to Divine Law. Second, he should be a free member of society and not a slave of somebody, which might hinder him from satisfying his desires in a lawful manner, and his helplessness and indigence should make him commit a sin when there is no family to help him in protecting his morality and honour. Third, he should be married and should have the means of statisfying his sex desires lawfully. Where these three components exist, the moral fortification would be complete and anybody who breaks through these three fortifications for the sake of illicit sex gratification, would really deserve the extreme penalty of being stoned to death. But in a case where the very first and foremost component of belief in Allah, in the Hereafter and in Divine Law, does not exist, the fortification is not complete, and accordingly, the gravity of the guilt is not such as to entail the extreme punishment. This is supported by a Tradition related by Ibn 'Umar and cited by Isḥāq bin Rāhavīah in his Musnad and Dāraquṭni in his Sunan: "Whoever is guilty of *shirk*, he is not *muḥṣan* (morally fortified)". There is, however, a difference of opinion whether Ibn 'Umar has quoted this as

a saying of the Holy Prophet or as his own verdict. In spite of this lacuna, the principle is very strong and sound in its theme.

It will not be correct to counteract the above argument by a deduction from the case brought by the Jews to the Holy Prophet in which he ordered the stoning of a person guilty of *zinā*. This is because all the authentic reports about the case show that it was not the Islamic Law of the land which was applied, but the punishment was awarded on the basis of the Jewish personal law itself. According to a Tradition cited by both Bukhārī and Muslim, when this case was brought before the Holy Prophet, he asked: "What is the punishment for this offence in your Torah?" When it was confirmed that the Torah prescribed stoning, the Holy Prophet said: "I pass the same judgment as has been prescribed in the Torah." According to another Tradition, at the time of the judgment the Holy Prophet remarked: "O Allah, I am the first man to revive Thy Commandment which they (the Jews) had rendered null and void." (Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Aḥmad).

(11) In order to hold a person guilty of *Zinā* as punishable, it is necessary to prove that he committed the act of his own free will . If a person is forced to commit the act under compulsion or pressure, he or she is neither an offender nor liable to any punishment. This is not only based on the general principle of the *Sharī'ah* that a person cannot be held responsible for acts done under compulsion, but this is also in accordance with the Qur'ānic Law. In the subsequent verses of this Sūrah the Qur'ān proclaims pardon for those women who are forced into prostitution. It has also been made clear in the various Traditions that in a case of rape only the man was punished and the woman, who had been violated, was let off. According to a Tradition cited by Tirmizī and Abū Da'ūd, a woman went out in darkness for prayers when on the way she was overpowered by a man and raped. She raised a hue and cry and the adulterer was caught red-handed and stoned to death by the order of the Holy Prophet, but the woman was let off. According to a Tradition in Bukhārī, a man raped a girl, during the Caliphate of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, who had the man flogged with stripes and let the girl off. It is clear from these instances that there is unanimity of opinion about the law in regard to the case of a woman raped or forced into prostitution. However, there is a difference of opinion in respect of the man who commits the act under compulsion and coercion. Imām Abū Yūsuf, Imām Muḥammad, Imām Shāfi'ī and Imām Ḥasan bin Ṣāliḥ express the opinion that the man too, who is forced to commit *zinā* under pressure, will be pardoned. Imām Zufar is of the opinion that he will not be let off because the act of *zinā* could not have been performed unless the male organ was fully excited, which means that his own lust and sex desire had urged him to commit the act. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah says that

if the act is done under coercion, of the government or any of its officials, the man will not be punished because when the government itself compels a man to commit it, it has no right to punish him. But if somebody else compels him to it, the adulterer will be punished because he could not have committed this without his own desire for it, as sexual lust cannot be aroused by coercion. Of the three opinions, the first one is convincing. This is because even if erection of the male organ is a proof of the sexual urge of the man, it is not necessarily a proof of his willing participation in the act. Suppose, for example, that a tyrant imprisons a simple God-fearing man and puts a beautiful young woman stripped naked in the same cell and does not want to release him until he commits *zinā* and the tyrant brings four witnesses to prove it in the court, it will not be justice to stone them to death or flog them with stripes in utter disregard of the circumstances. This is because there is a probability that circumstances may be created whereby sexual desire may overpower a man even though he may not be a willing partner. Supposing a man were imprisoned and not given anything to drink except wine; then if he drinks it, will he be punished simply because not a single drop of wine could have gone down his throat if he did not intend it, even though he was forced by the circumstances to drink it? For in order to establish a guilt, mere existence of intention is not enough, but it is also necessary to see that the person was in a position to exercise his free will. Therefore, if a person is placed in such circumstances that he is compelled to commit a crime, he will not be a real culprit in some cases, and in some his offence will be very light.

(12) The Islamic Law does not confer on anybody the authority except the government to sit in judgment against the man or the woman accused of *zinā* and none except an Islamic court has the authority to punish them. There is a complete consensus of all the jurists that in verse 2 the Commandment, "flog them with stripes", is not addressed to the common people but to the officials and judges of an Islamic government. There is, however, a difference of opinion whether the owner of a slave is competent to punish him or not. According to the Ḥanafī scholars, he is not, but according to the Shāfi'īs he is. The Mālikīs hold that the owner has no right to cut the hand in case of theft, but in case of *zinā*, calumny and drinking of wine, he can enforce the prescribed punishments.

(13) Under the Islamic Law the punishment for *Zinā* is a part of the law of the land. Accordingly it will apply to all people in the Islamic State whether they are Muslims or non-Muslims. Probably none of the jurists except Imām Mālik has differed with this opinion. As regards the opinion of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah that a non-Muslim guilty of *zinā* should not be stoned to death, it is not based on the reason that a non-Muslim is not a complete

muḥṣin, which is one of the conditions of stoning for *Zinā*, for this condition is not satisfied unless one is a Muslim. On the other hand, Imām Mālik says that a non-Muslim should not be stoned to death because the Commandment is a part of the Muslim personal law and the addressees are the Muslims and not the non-Muslims. As for the foreigner who has entered an Islamic State with due permission and is found guilty of *Zinā*, he should also be stoned according to Imām Shāfi'ī and Imām Abū Yūsuf, but according to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and Imām Muḥammad he cannot be given the prescribed punishment.

(14) The Islamic Law does not make it obligatory that a person must confess his guilt of *zinā*, or those who have knowledge of it must inform the authorities about it. But in case his guilt comes to the notice of the authorities, there is then no room for pardoning the guilt. This is based on a Tradition of the Holy Prophet: "If any of you is guilty of any immorality, he should better remain hidden under the curtain of Allah, but if he discloses it to us, we shall certainly enforce the Law of Allah on him." According to a Tradition of Abū Da'ûd, when Mā'iz bin Mālik Aslamī; committed the crime of *zinā*, he, on the advice of Hazzāl bin Nu'aim, went before the Holy Prophet and confessed his guilt. The Holy Prophet ordered that he should be stoned to death, but at the same time he said to Hazzāl: "Would that you had kept the matter hidden: this would have been better for you." In another Tradition cited in Abū Da'ūd and Nasā'i, the Holy Prophet said: "You should yourselves pardon the crimes which merit prescribed punishments because when a crime which calls for such a punishment comes to my notice, it will become obligatory on me to award the punishment."

(15) Under the Islamic Law *Zinā* is not a compoundable crime. This is based on a Tradition which has been cited in almost all the collection of Hadīth. A boy who was working as a labourer in a certain house committed *Zinā* with the wife of his employer. The father of the boy gave 100 goats and one slave-girl to the man and made a compromise with him. But when the case came before the Holy Prophet, he said: "The goats and the slave-girl are yours and they are returned to you." Then he awarded the prescribed punishment to both the guilty ones. This shows that the crime of *zinā* is not compoundable and that under the Islamic Law, an outraged chastity cannot be compensated in terms of money. This shameless conception of monetary compensation for outraged modesty is a part of Western laws only.

(16) The Islamic government shall not take action against anybody for *zinā* unless it is fully proved. If the guilt is not proved, the authorities cannot pass orders for punishment even if they have the knowledge of the crime

through many other sources. There was a woman in Al-Madīnah who openly practised prostitution according to Traditions cited in Bukhārī and Ibn Mājah, but in spite of this no punishment was given to her as there was no proof of *zinā* against her; so much so that the Holy Prophet once uttered the following words about her:

"If I were to stone anybody to death without a proof, I would have certainly got this woman stoned."

(17) The first possible proof of *Zinā* is that proper evidence should be established against the criminal. The important components of the law are:

(a) The Qur'ān explicitly ordains that there should at least be four eye-witnesses to prove the guilt. This has been stated in An-Nisā (IV): 15, and in this Sūrah An-Nūr too, it has been reiterated twice (vv. 4, 13). A judge is not authorized to decide the case on the basis of his own knowledge even if he has seen with his own eyes the couple committing the crime.

(b) The witnesses should be reliable according to the Islamic Law of Evidence, which requires that they should not have been proved to be false witnesses on any previous occasion: they should not be dishonest, they should not be previous convicts, and there should be no proof of their having any personal grudge against the accused, etc. In short, no one can be stoned nor flogged with stripes on the basis of unreliable evidence.

(c) The witnesses should give evidence to the effect that they saw the man and the woman in the actual state of intercourse, i.e. the union was complete such as a piston in a cylinder, and a rope in a well.

(d) The witnesses should be unanimous in regard to the time, the place and the persons committing the crime. Any difference in these basic things will nullify their testimony.

These conditions amply indicate that the Islamic Law does not intend to punish people as a matter of course. It inflicts severe punishment only when, in spite of all the measures to reform and eradicate the evil, there still exists a shameless couple in the Islamic society who commits the crime in a way as to be witnessed by as many as four men.

(18) There is a difference of opinion as to whether pregnancy by itself in a free woman, when she has no known husband, or in a slave-girl, when she has no known master, is a sufficient circumstantial evidence for the establishment of the crime of *Zinā*. According to Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, this is a sufficient evidence, and the Mālikīs have adopted it. But the majority of the jurists are of the opinion that mere pregnancy is not a sufficient ground for stoning or flogging anybody with a hundred stripes. It is imperative

that such a serious punishment should be based either on the evidence or on the confession of guilt. One of the basic principles of the Islamic Law is that the benefit of doubt should go to the accused. This is supported by a Tradition of the Holy Prophet: "Avoid punishments wherever you find scope for it." (Ibn Mājah). In another Tradition, he said: "Try to avoid punishing the Muslims wherever possible and if there is a way for an accused to escape punishment, let him off. An error of judgment in letting off an accused is better than in punishing him." (Tirmizī) According to this principle, the existence of pregnancy is not a definite proof of *zinā*, however strong it may be for doubt. For there is a possibility that in one out of a million cases the semen of a man may enter the womb of a woman somehow or other without any sexual intercourse and make her pregnant. Even such a slight possibility of doubt should be enough to spare the accused of the horrible punishment for *zinā*.

(19) There is also a difference of opinion as to whether the witnesses will be punished for falsely accusing a person in case their evidence differs from one another, or if they are not able to prove the guilt. According to a section of the jurists they will be regarded as *qāzif* (one who makes a false accusation as a slanderer), and will be punished with 80 stripes each. Others say that they should not be punished because they came as witnesses and not as plaintiffs, Moreover, if the witnesses are to be punished like this, nobody will come forward as a witness in cases involving *zinā*. This is because in that case no one will volunteer to appear as a witness at the risk of punishment, for nobody can be certain that all the four witnesses will be unanimous in their evidence We consider this second opinion as more rational, for the benefit of doubt should also accrue to the witnesses as it does to the accused. Therefore, if lapse in their testimony cannot result in the extreme punishment to the accused, it should also not result in any punishment to the witnesses branding them as false witnesses, unless of course, their falsehood is clearly proved. In support of the first opinion, two strong arguments are offered:

First, the Qur'ān holds false accusation about *zinā* as a punishable offence. But this argument is incorrect because the Qur'ān makes a distinction between the *qāzif* (the slanderer) and the *shāhid* (one who appears in a court as an eye-witness). An eye-witness cannot be branded as a slanderer merely because the court did not hold his evidence as a sufficient proof of the crime.

The second argument is based on the case of Mughirah bin Shu'bah, in which Hadrat 'Umar punished Abū Bakrah and the other two eye-witnesses on the charge of false accusation. A critical study of the entire case shows that this precedent is not applicable to every case where the crime is not proved by proper evidence.

The facts of the case are that Mughīrah bin Sh u'bah, the Governor of Baṣrah, did not have good relations with Abū Bakrah, whose house was opposite to his house across the same street. One day the windows of the two houses were opened by a strong current of wind. When Abū Bakrah got up to close his window, he saw through the opposite window across the street Mughīrah in a state of actual sexual intercourse. He asked three of his friends (Nāf'i bin Kaladah, Ziād and Shibl bin Ma'bad) who were also sitting with him to stand up and witness what Mughīrah was doing. The friends asked him who was the woman. Abū Bakrah said that she was Umm Jamīl. The next day a complaint to this effect was sent to Ḥadrat 'Umar, who immediately suspended Mughīrah and appointed Abū Mūsā Ash'arī as Governor of Baṣrah. Mughīrah along with the witnesses was called to Al-Madīnah. When they were asked about the case, Abū Bakrah said that they had seen Mughīrah actually committing sexual intercourse with Umm Jamīl, but Ziād said that the woman was not clearly visible and that he could not say definitely whether it was Umm Jamīl or not. During the cross examination, Mughīrah proved that they could not have seen the woman distinctly from the place where they were standing. He also proved that there was a close resemblance between his wife and Umm Jamīl. Besides this, circumstantial evidence also showed that during the Caliphate of Ḥadrat 'Umar, the governor of a province could not have committed this crime in his official residence, especially when his wife was also living with him. Thus the supposition of Abū Bakrah and his companions that Mughīrah was having sexual intercourse with Umm Jamīl, instead of his own wife, was nothing but a misplaced suspicion. It was for this reason that Ḥadrat 'Umar not only acquitted the accused but also punished Abū Bakrah, Nāf'i and Shibl as slanderers. It is obvious that this isolated decision was based on the specific circumstances of the case and not on the principle that the witnesses must be punished when they are not able to prove the charge by their evidence. (For details of this case, see *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, Ibn al-'Arabi, Vol. II, pp. 88, 89).

(20) Besides the evidence, the other thing by which the offence of *zinā* can be established, is the confession of the accused himself. This confession must be in clear and plain words and the guilty one must confess that he committed *zinā* with a woman who was unlawful for him, He should also admit that the act of *zinā* was complete in every respect, The court must satisfy itself that the guilty person is confessing his guilt voluntarily without any external pressure and that, at the time of confession, he is in his right senses. Some jurists hold that one confession is not enough and that the guilty one must make four separate confessions. This is the view of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Imām Aḥmad, Ibn Abī Lailā, Isḥāq bin Rāhaviah and Ḥasan bin Ṣāliḥ. But according to Imām Mālik, Imām Shāfi'ī, 'Uthmān al-Batti, only one confession is enough. In cases where the conviction is based on the confession of the guilty person himself without

the support of any other proof, the infliction of punishment should be suspended if during the course of punishment the guilty one retracts his confession. It does not matter even if it is quite evident that he is retracting his confession in order to escape the torture of punishment. This entire law is based on the precedents which have been cited in the Traditions in the various cases of *Zinā*.

The most important case is that of Mā'iz bin Mālik Aslamī, which has been related by a large number of reporters on the authority of many Companions of the Holy Prophet (Allah's peace be upon him) and almost all books of Traditions contain details with regard to it. Mā'iz was an orphan boy from the clan of Aslam who had been brought up by Hazzāl bin Nu'aim. He committed *zinā* with a freed slave-girl. Hazzāl said to him, "Go to the Holy Prophet and inform him of your sin; may be he prays for your forgiveness." Mā'iz went before the Holy Prophet in the Mosque and said, "I have committed *zinā*; please purify me." The Holy Prophet turned his face away from him and said, "Woe be to you, go back and pray to Allah for forgiveness." But the boy again appeared before the Holy Prophet and said the same thing and the Holy Prophet again turned his face away. The boy then repeated his offence for the third time and the Holy Prophet again turned his face away. Hadrat Abū Bakr warned the boy that if he confessed the crime for the fourth time, the Holy Prophet would get him stoned. But the boy persisted and repeated the same thing again. At this the Holy Prophet turned to him and said: "You might have only kissed or embraced or caressed her, or you might have looked at her with lust (and you thought it was an act of *Zinā*)." The boy said, "No." The Holy Prophet asked, "Did you lie with her in the same bed?" The boy replied in the affirmative. The Holy Prophet again asked: "Did you have sexual intercourse with her?" The boy again replied in the affirmative. The Holy Prophet then inquired in the most explicit Arabic expression specifically used for this act. Such a naked expression had never before been heard nor was ever heard afterwards from him. Had it not been the question of the life of an individual, the Holy Prophet would never have uttered such words. But the boy again replied in the affirmative to this explicit question. The Holy Prophet then asked: "Did you commit the act in such a manner that your male organ disappeared in her female part?" The boy answered, "Yes." Again he was asked whether the act was as complete as is a piston in a cylinder and a rope in a well. The boy again answered in the affirmative. Again he was asked whether he really understood what *zinā* meant, and the boy said, "Yes, I have committed the same act with her illegitimately which a husband commits legitimately with his wife." The Holy Prophet asked: "Are you married?" He said, "Yes". Again the Holy Prophet asked whether he had taken any wine. He said, "No", and one of the Companions smelt his mouth and confirmed that he had not. After this the Holy Prophet

inquired of his neighbors whether he was suffering from insanity. They replied that he had not exhibited any sign of insanity. Then the Holy Prophet said to Hazzāl: "Had you kept it secret, it would have been better for you." Then he ordered Mā'iz to be stoned to death and he was stoned to death outside the city. When they began to throw stones at him, Mā'iz tried to escape, and said, "O people, take me back to the Holy Prophet. The people of my clan deluded me, assuring that the Holy Prophet would not condemn me to death." But they did not let him escape. Afterwards when this incident was reported to the Holy Prophet, he said: "Why did you not let him off? Had you brought him to me, he might have repented, and Allah might have accepted his repentance."

The second incident is of Ghāmidiyyah, who was a woman from the clan of Ghāmid, a branch of Juhainah tribe. She also confessed four times that she had committed *zinā* and had become pregnant as a result thereof. At her first confession, the Holy Prophet said: "Woe be to you, go back and ask forgiveness of Allah and repent." But she said, "O Messenger of Allah, do you want to put me off like Mā'iz? I am pregnant as a result of *zinā*." As there existed pregnancy along with the confession, the Holy Prophet did not cross examine her in detail as he did in the case of Mā'iz. He said to her, "Well, if you do not accept my counsel, go back and come to me after the birth of the child." After delivery had taken place, she came along with the child and said, "Please purify me now." The Holy Prophet said: "Go and suckle your child, and come to me after the suckling is over." She again came after the weaning of the child and brought a piece of bread with her. She fed the child with the piece of bread before the Holy Prophet and said, "O Messenger of Allah, now the child has been weaned and has started taking bread." At this the Holy Prophet entrusted the child to a person to bring it up and ordered the stoning of the woman.

In both these cases, four confessions have clearly been mentioned. According to a Tradition, cited by Buraidah in Abū Da'ūd, the Companions of the Holy Prophet, in general, held the opinion that if Mā'iz and Ghāmidiyyah had not confessed their guilt four times, they would not have been stoned to death. In the third incident of this nature (which has been mentioned in para 15 above), the only words used therein, as contained in other Traditions, were: "Go and inquire from his wife about this. If she confesses her guilt, stone her to death". There is no mention of four confessions here and it is on the basis of this that some jurists have argued that only one confession is enough.

(21) The three cases mentioned above clearly show that a guilty person, who confesses his sin, will not be questioned about the other person with whom he or she committed *zinā*. This is because in that case two persons shall have to be punished instead of one. The Islamic Law is not anxious to

punish people. But if the guilty person names the other party to the crime, then that party will be interrogated and also punished in case of confession. But if the other party denies it, only the person confessing the guilt, will be punished. However, there is a difference of opinion among the jurists as to whether such a person will be punished for *zinā* or for false accusation. According to Imām Mālik and Imām Shāfi'ī, he will be awarded the prescribed punishment for *zinā*, because he has confessed that crime alone. According to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and Imām Auzā'i, he shall be convicted as a false accuser, because the denial of the other party has made his crime of *zinā* doubtful but his guilt of false accusation stands proved anyhow. According to Imāni Muhammad and it is supported by a saying of Imām Shāfi'ī also, he will be punished for *zinā* as well as for slander. This is because he has confessed the guilt of *zinā* himself and has not been able to prove his accusation against the other party. A similar case was brought before the Holy Prophet. A Tradition to this effect cited in Musnad Aḥmad and in Abū Da'ūd by Sahl bin Sa'd contains these words: "A person confessed before the Holy Prophet that he had committed *zinā* with such and such a woman." The Holy Prophet inquired of the woman but she denied it. Then he gave him the prescribed punishment but forgave the woman. This Tradition, however, does not specify the punishment that was awarded. In another Tradition cited in Abū Da'ūd and Nasā'ī from Ibn 'Abbās, it has been stated that on the man's confession the Holy Prophet gave him the prescribed punishment for *zinā*. But when the woman denied it, the man was flogged with stripes for making a false accusation. But this Tradition is weak as regards its links, because one of its reporters, Qāsim bin Fayyāz, is not considered as reliable by many scholars of Traditions. Moreover, this Tradition appears to be opposod to reason because it cannot be expected of the Holy Prophet that he would first punish the man for *zinā* and then make an inquiry from the woman. Common sense and justice, which the Holy Prophet could not have overlooked, demanded that his case should not have been decided before making an inquiry from the woman. This is supported by a Tradition cited by Sahl bin Sa'd. Therefore, the second Tradition cannot be considered as reliable.

(22) There is a difference of opinion among the jurists as to what punishment should be given to the person who has been proved guilty of *zinā*. The various opinions in this regard are as under:

Punishment for married persons guilty of *Zinā*:

(a) According to Imām Aḥmad, Da'ūd Ẓāhirī: and Isḥāq bin Rāhavīah they shall be flogged with 100 stripes and then stoned to death.

(b) All other jurists are unanimous that they shall be stoned to death; stoning to death and flogging will not be combined together.

Punishment for unmarried persons:

(a) According to Imām Aḥmad, Imām Shāfi'ī, Da'ūd Zāhirī, Sufyān Thaurī, Ibn Abī Laila and Ḥasan bin Ṣāliḥ; the punishment is flogging with 100 stripes and exile for one year both for the man and the woman.

(b) According to Imām Mālik and Imām Auzā'ī, the man should be flogged with 100 stripes and exiled for one year, while the woman should only be flogged with 100 stripes. (According to these jurists, "exile" means that the guilty one should be banished from his own habitation and sent to such a distant place where one has to shorten one's prayer. But according to Zaid bin 'Alī and Imām Ja'far Sādiq, imprisonment also serves the purpose of exile.)

(c) Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and his disciples—Imām Abū Yūsuf, Imām Zufar and Imām Muḥammad—are of the opinion that the *"ḥadd"* (prescribed punishment) for *zinā* in such cases is only 100 stripes both for the man and for the woman. Any additional punishment, such as exile or imprisonment, is not *"hadd"* but *ta'zīr* (discretionary punishment). If the judge feels that the guilty man is of immoral character, or that the illicit relations of the guilty ones are too intimate, he may exile or imprsion them as the occasion may demand. The difference between *ḥadd* and *ta'zīr* is that *ḥadd* is a specific punishment which must be inflicted provided that the guilt has been proved according to the conditions laid down in the *Sharī'ah*, whereas *ta'zīr* is a punishment which has not been specified by the *Sharī'ah* with regard to its nature and gravity, but is determined by the court in accordance with the circumstances of the case.

All the above different opinions have been based on various Traditions of the Holy Prophet, which are given below:

According to a Tradition related by 'Ubādah bin Ṣāmit and cited by Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Ibn Mājah, Tirmizī and Imām Aḥmad, the Holy Prophet said: "Take it from me. Take it from me. Allah has prescribed the method for dealing with women guilty of *zinā*. An unmarried man committing *zinā* with an unmarried woman should get 100 stripes and one year's exile. The married man committing *zinā* with a married woman, should get 100 stripes and stoning to death." Though this Tradition is technically correct according to its authentic links, we learn from a large number of correct Traditions that it was neither acted upon during the time of the Holy Prophet nor during the rightly-guided Caliphate nor any jurist ever gave any verdict strictly in accordance with it.

According to a Tradition from Abū Hurairah and Zaid bin Khālid Juhanī, which has been cited by Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmizī Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah and Aḥmad, a case was brought by two Beduins before the Holy Prophet. One of them said, "My son, who worked as a labourer in the house of this man, got involved with his wife. I compromised with him by giving him 100 goats and one slave-girl, but I have been told by the scholars that this is against the Book of Allah. Please decide the case between us according to the Book of Allah." The second man also said the same thing and asked for the decision according to the Divine Book. The Holy Prophet said: "I will decide according to the Divine Book. You should take back your goats and the slave-girl. Your son shall get 100 stripes and a year's exile." Then the Holy Prophet said to a man from the clan of Aslam: "O Unais, go to this man's wife and inquire from her about this. If she confesses her guilt, stone her to death." The woman confessed the guilt and was stoned to death. It should be noted that in this Tradition there is no mention of flogging the married woman before stoning her to death, whereas the unmarried man, guilty of *zinā* with a married woman, was punished with flogging and exile.

Besides this, the accounts of the cases of Mā'iz and Ghāmidiyyah, which have been cited in the various books of Traditions, do not mention anywhere that the Holy Prophet ordered flogging of the guilty person before stoning him or her to death.

There is no Tradition in any book of Traditions to the effect that the Holy Prophet, in any case, combined flogging with stoning to death. In all the cases of *zinā* by married persons, he awarded the punishment of stoning to death only.

In his well-known address, cited by Bukhāri, Muslim, Tirmizī, and Nasā'ī on the authority of various reporters, Hadrat 'Umar declared most emphatically that the punishment for *zinā* after marriage is stoning to death. Imām Ahmad also has cited various Traditions regarding this but in none of these there is any mention of flogging before stoning to death.

From among the rightly-guided Caliphs Ḥadrat 'Alī alone combined flogging with stoning to death in one case. Imām Aḥmad and Bukhārī have cited this case on the authority of 'Āmir Sha'bī that a woman named Shurāha confessed being pregnant as a result of illicit intercourse. Ḥadrat 'Alī got her flogged on Thursday and stoned to death on Friday, saying, "We flogged her according to the Book of Allah and stoned her to death in accordance with the *Sunnah* of the Prophet." There is no other case than this in which both the punishments were combined during the rightly-guided Caliphate.

According to a Tradition cited in Abū Da'ūd and Nasā'i on the authority of Jābir bin 'Abdullah, a man committed *zinā* and the Holy Prophet awarded him

the punishment of flogging. Afterwards when it came to be known that he was a married man, he ordered that he should be stoned to death. Besides this, we have already cited several other Traditions showing that the Holy Prophet awarded the punishment of flogging only to the unmarried persons guilty of *zinā*. For instance, the man who raped a woman while she was going out for prayers, and the man who confessed his crime of *zinā* but the woman did not, were given the punishment of flogging.

As regards "exile", the authority may use its own discretion. Ḥaḍrat 'Umar exiled Rabi'ah bin Umayyah bin Khalf on a charge of drinking and he fled and joined the Romans. At this Ḥaḍrat 'Umar said that in future he would not exile a man and a woman guilty of *zinā*, because he feared that there was a risk of mischief in it. *(Aḥkām al-Qur'ān,* Al-Jaṣṣāṣ, Vol. III, p. 315).

In the light of these traditions and cases as a whole, it becomes quite plain that the view of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and his disciples is correct: the punishment for a married man or woman for *zinā* is stoning to death alone while the punishment for unmarried persons is 100 stripes only. Flogging and stoning to death were never combined from the time of the Holy Prophet up to the Caliphate of Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān. As for combining flogging and exile, it was practised on some occasions while on others it was not. This clearly establishes the correctness of the way of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah.

(23) The first reference to the nature of flogging with stripes is implied in the word *fajlidū* of the Qur'ān itself. The word *jald* is derived from *jild*, which means "skin". Accordingly all lexicographers and commentators have taken it to mean that flogging should be carried out in such a way that its effect should be confined to the skin only and should not reach the flesh under it. The flogging that causes deep wounds into the flesh or tears it up into pieces is against the Qur'ān.

The whip or the cane used for the purpose of flogging should be medium in all respects: it should neither be thick and hard nor thin and soft. According to a Tradition cited by Imām Mālik in *Mu'aṭṭa*, the Holy Prophet asked for a whip for flogging but as it had worn out owing to long use, he said: "Bring a harder one." Then a new whip was brought which was very hard because of lack of use. The Holy Prophet said: "Get me one between these two." Accordingly a whip was brought which had been used in riding and with it he gave the flogging. A similar tradition has also been cited by Abū 'Uthmān an-Nahdī about Ḥaḍrat 'Umar that he always used a medium whip. *(Aḥkam al-Qur'ān,* Al-Jaṣṣāṣ, Vol. III, p. 322). A whip with knots or one having two or three prongs is also prohibited.

Flogging should also be of average intensity. Ḥaḍrat 'Umar used to instruct the flogger, "Strike in such a way that your armpit should not become

visible during flogging," i.e., Do not stretch your arm fully to strike with full force. (*Aḥkam al-Qur'ān*, Ibn al-'Arabi, Vol. II, p. 84, and *Aḥkam al-Qur'ān*. Al-Jaṣṣās, Vol. III, p. 322). All the jurists are agreed that:

(a) the stripe should not be such as may cause a wound;

(b) the flogging should not be confined to one and the same place but should be spread over the whole body;

(c) the face and the private parts, and, according to the Ḥanafis, the head also should be spared but all other parts should get some flogging. Ḥaḍrat 'Ali once said to the flogger, "Let every part of the body get its due share except the face and the private parts." According to another tradition, he said, "Save the head and the private parts only." (*Aḥkam al-Qur'ān*, Al-Jassās Vol. III, p. 321). The Holy Prophet has said: "When anyone of you is flogging, he should not strike on the face." (Abū Da'ūd).

While flogging, a man should be made to stand and a woman to sit. In the time of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Qāzī Ibn Abī Lailā of Kūfah got a woman flogged while she was standing. The Imām took a strong objection to it and openly declared it to be a wrong thing. Incidentally, this also throws light on Imām Abū Ḥanīfah's stand with regard to the law of the contempt of court. At the time of flogging, the woman should be in her full dress: her clothes should rather be tied down on her so that no part of her body might be exposed; her thick clothes only will be taken off; but in regard to a man, there is some difference of opinion. According to some jurists, he will be allowed to remain in his pyjamas only, and according to some others, the shirt will not be taken off. Hadrat Abū 'Ubaidah bin al-Jarrāḥ sentenced a person guilty of *zinā* to be flogged. The man said, "This sinful body should get a severe flogging." Then he started taking off his shirt, but Abū 'Ubaidah said, "Do not let him take off his shirt." (*Aḥkāmu al-Qur'ān*, Al-Jassās, Vol. III, p. 322). During the time of Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, a man was flogged while he was wrapped in a sheet of cloth.

Flogging is prohibited in severe cold and in severe heat. In winter it should be done when it is hot and in summer when it is cool.

It is also not permissible to tie down a person at the time of flogging unless he tries to run away. According to 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, it is not permissible in the Islamic Community to flog anybody after stripping him naked or after tying him on a tripod.

Jurists have permitted that at least twenty stripes may be given daily but it is better to inflict full punishment at one and the same time.

Flogging should not be entrusted to uncouth, uncultured executioners, but it should be done by men of deep insight who understand how the flogging should

be carried out in order to meet the requirements of the *Sharī'ah*. Ibn Qayyim has cited in *zād al-Ma'ād* that the Holy Prophet employed the services of such pious and respectable people as 'Ali, Zubair, Miqdād bin 'Amr, Muḥammad bin Maslamah, 'Āṣim bin Thābit and Ḍaḥāk bin Sufyān for this purpose. (Vol. I, pp. 44, 45)

If the guilty person is suffering from some disease and there is no hope of his recovery or is too old, it is enough to strike him once with a branch of 100 twigs, or with a broom of 100 twigs in order to meet the requirements of the law. During the time of the Holy Prophet, an old man, who was suffering from some disease, was found guilty of *zinā* and the Holy Prophet awarded him the same kind of punishment. (Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'ī Ibn Mājah). In the case of a pregnant woman, the flogging will be postponed till the delivery and the complete discharge of blood after childbirth. But if she is to be stoned to death, the punishment will not be given till the child has been weaned.

If *zinā* is proved by evidence, the flogging will be initiated by the witnesses themselves. If the punishment is based on confession, the judge himself will initiate the punishment. This is to make the witnesses and the judge realize the seriousness of the matter. In the case of Shurāha, when Ḥaḍrat 'Alī decided to stone her to death, he said, "Had there been any witness to this crime, he should have initiated the stoning, but as she is being punished on the basis of confession, I will initiate it myself." According to the Ḥanafīs, this procedure is essential but according to the Shāfi'īs, it is not essential; it is, however, preferable according to all jurists.

After examining the above details of the law of flogging, just consider the audacity of those who hold this punishment as barbarous. This accusation becomes all the more ridiculous when the same people allow a harsher punishment in their jails. According to the existing law, not only the court but an ordinary superintendent of the jail also is authorized to award a punishment of 30 stripes to a prisoner for disobedience or insolence, and this flogging is carried out by a specialist who keeps himself ready and fit by regular practice and the canes are wetted beforehand so that they may cut through the body like a knife. The convict is stripped off his clothes and nothing but a thin cloth wetted with tincture of iodine is left to cover his private parts. Then he is tied down to a tripod to prevent him from making any movement at the flogging and the flogger comes running from a distance and strikes him with full force. Every time the same part (buttocks) is struck so hard that the flesh flies out like minced meat and often the bones become bare. Often it so happens that even the strongest man does not stand 30 canes and becomes unconscious and it takes a long time before his wounds are healed. It is an irony that those people, who are themselves enforcing this 'civilized'

punishment in jails today, have the cheek to call the punishment enjoined by Islam as "barbarous". Then the horrible tortures which are inflicted by their police not only on proved criminals but on suspects, especially those suspected of criminal crimes, are well known to every one.

(24) After a convict has been stoned to death, he (or she) will be treated like any other Muslim: his (or her) body will be washed and shrouded: funeral prayer will be said in the Islamic way, and he (or she) will be buried with due respect in a Muslim graveyard. Prayers for his forgiveness will be offered and it will be improper for anyone to talk ill of him. According to Jābir bin 'Abdullah Ansārī, as cited in Bukhārī, when Mā'iz bin Mālik was stoned to death, the Holy Prophet said good words about him and himself led his funeral prayer. A Tradition from Buraidah, as cited in Muslim, states that the Holy Prophet said: "Pray for the forgiveness of Mā'iz bin Mālik: he has offered such a repentance that if it were to be distributed over a whole community, it would suffice for the forgiveness of all its people." In the same Tradition it has been mentioned that when Ghāimidiyyah died due to stoning, her funeral prayer was led by the Holy Prophet. When Khāid bin Walid talked ill of her, the Holy Prophet said: "Khālid, hold your tongue! I swear by Him Who controls my life that her repentance was such that even if a cruel tax-collector had offered such a repentance, he would have been forgiven." According to Abū Hurairah, as cited in Abū Da'ūd, after the stoning of Mā'iz one day when the Holy Prophet was walking along, he heard two men talking ill of Mā'iz. When he had gone a few paces further, he saw the dead body of a donkey. He stopped there and asked the two men: "Come on and eat something out of it." They said, "O Prophet of Allah, who can eat a dead donkey?" The Holy Prophet replied: "Talking ill of your own brother was much worse than eating a dead donkey."

According to a Tradition from 'Imrān bin Ḥusain cited in Muslim, when the funeral prayer of Ghāmidiyyah was about to be offered, Ḥaḍrat 'Umar said to the Holy Prophet, "Are we going to offer funeral prayer for this adulteress?" The Holy Prophet said: "She has offered such a repentance that if it were to be distributed over the whole of the population of Al-Madīnah, it would suffice for their forgiveness." According to another Tradition from Abū Hurairah, cited in Bukhārī: when a man was being punished for drinking, somebody said, "May God defame him!" The Holy Prophet said: "Do not utter such words and thus help Satan against him." In Abū Da'ūd there is an addition to this, according to which the Holy Prophet said: "Pray like this: 'O Allah, pardon him and show mercy to him'."

This is the true spirit of punishment in Islam. Islam does not punish even the biggest criminal with vindictiveness but with the intention to reform him. That is why after the punishment, mercy and compassion are shown towards him. In contrast to this, the modern civilization adopts a very mean attitude towards those who are killed by the state military or police and whose death is upheld by a judicial inquiry. It is not tolerated that even somebody may carry his dead body to the graveyard or utter a good word about him. In the face of this behaviour, they have the "moral courage" (a euphemism for impudence) to preach tolerance to the world.

(25) As regards the law of punishment concerning *zinā* with prohibited relations, see E.N. 33 of An-Nisā (IV), and for the punishment of sodomy see E.N.'s 64-68 of A'arāf (VII). As regards the committal of this heinous act with animals, some jurists treat it as *zinā* and hold that the guilty person deserves the prescribed punishment of this crime. But Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Imām Yūsuf, Imām Muḥammad, Imām Zufar, Imām Mālik and Imām Shāfi'ī hold that it is not *zinā*, and therefore, the offender should be given the discretionary punishment and not the prescribed punishment. We have already stated that the discretionary punishment has been left to the judge, or if necessary the state legislature can devise some appropriate form of punishment for it.

3. The first thing that deserves attention in this verse is that the criminal law is being termed as the "Way of Allah". This shows that the "Way of Allah" does not merely consist in *Ṣalāt*, Fasting, *Ḥajj* and payment of *Zakāt* dues, but the law of the land is also a part of the "Way of Allah". The establishment of the "Way" does not mean the establishment of *Ṣalāt* alone but it also includes the establishment of the Divine Law and the system of law based on it. If these things are not established, the mere establishment of the system of *Ṣalāt* will be regarded as partial implementation of the "Way". But when instead of this an un-Islamic system of law is adopted, it amounts to the total rejection of the Divine Way itself.

The second thing which deserves attention is the warning from Allah that no feeling of compassion or pity should restrain you from inflicting the prescribed punishment on the guilty person. The same thing has been further elaborated by the Holy Prophet in the following Tradition:

"On the Day of Judgment, a judge who had reduced the punishment by one stripe in a certain case, will be called to account. He will be asked: 'Why did you do so?' He will say, 'It was out of pity for your people.' Allah will say: 'Well, it means you were more compassionate towards those people than Myself.' Then it will be ordered: 'Take him to Hell.' Another judge, who had enhanced the punishment by one stripe will be brought forth. He will be asked: 'Why did you do

so?' He will say, 'It was done to serve as a deterrent for others.' Allah will say: 'Well, it means you were wiser than I with regard to them.' It will be ordered: 'Take him to Hell.' *(Tafsīr Kabīr,* Vol. VI, p. 225).

The above applies to the case when reduction or enhancement in the punishment was the result of compassion or some other factor. But if the quantum of punishments were to be changed according to the status of the culprit, it would constitute the worst type of crime. According to a Tradition related by Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, the Holy Prophet (Allah's peace be upon him) said in an address: "The communities before you perished because whenever anyone from among their aristocrats committed a theft, he was forgiven but whenever an ordinary man committed the same offence, he was awarded the prescribed punishment." According to another Tradition, the Holy Prophet said: "The enforcement of one prescribed punishment is more beneficial to the people than 40 days of rainfall." (Nasā'ī, Ibu Mājah)

Some commentators have interpreted this verse to mean that the culprit should neither be forgiven after his guilt has been proved nor his punishment reduced. He must be flogged with 100 stripes. Some others have taken it to mean that the flogging should not be so light that the culprit may not feel its effect at all. The verse covers both the above interpretations and, in fact, both are plausible. It also means that the one guilty of fornication should get the same punishment which has been prescribed by Allah and no other type of punishment. It is a sin to inflict any other type of punishment instead of flogging even for the sake of compassion or pity. But if any other type of punishment is inflicted on the ground that flogging with stripes is a barbarous type of punishment, it amounts to *'kufr'*, which should never be tolerated even for a moment by a true Believer. To believe in the Divinity of Allah and then to call Him a barbarian, suits only those who are the meanest of hypocrites.

4. The punishment should be awarded publicly so that, on the one hand, the guilty one may feel disgraced and, on the other, it may serve as a deterrent for the other people. This throws light on the concept of punishment in Islam. In verse 38 of Al-Mā'idah (V), in connection with the punishment of theft, it was said:

"... it is the recompense for what they have earned, and an exemplary punishment from Allah."

And now here it is being enjoined that the adulterer should be given the punishment publicly. This shows that in Islamic Law punishment is awarded to meet three purposes:

(a) To inflict pain on the criminal for the excesses he committed against the other person or society,

(b) To stop him from repeating the crime,

(c) To serve as a deterrent for others, so that the people having evil inclinations in society may be deterred and dare not commit such crimes again.

Another advantage of awarding the punishment publicly is that the officials concerned should not be able to reduce or enhance the punishment at will while executing it.

5. That is, only an adulterous woman is a fit match for an adulterous man who has not repented, or an idolatrous woman. No believing, virtuous woman can be a match for him. It is forbidden for the Believers that they should give their daughters in marriage to such wicked people knowing them to be so. Similarly the fit match for adulterous women (who have not repented) can only be adulterous or idolatrous men; they are not fit for any righteous Believer. It is forbidden for the Believers that they should marry women who are known to possess immoral character. This thing applies to those men and women who persist in their evil ways, and not to those who repent and reform themselves, for after repentance and reformation they will no longer be regarded as "adulterous."

According to Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal, the prohibition of marriage with an adulterous man implies that such a marriage, if contracted, will have no legal effect. But this view is not correct. Prohibition does not have any legal implications. It cannot mean that if a person violates this prohibition, the marriage will be void, and the parties concerned will be involved in *zinā* in spite of marriage. For the Holy Prophet has stated: "The unlawful does not make the lawful unlawful." (Ṭabarānī, Dāraquṭnī). In other words, an illegal act does not make a legal act also illegal. Therefore, if a person commits *zinā* and then marries, his conjugal relations with his spouse cannot be considered as *zinā*, because in that case the other party of the marriage contract who is not immoral, will also have to be considered as involved in *zinā*. As a rule, no illegal act except open rebellion can cause the one guilty of it to be declared an outlaw, so that no act of his can be regarded legal after that. If the verse is considered in this light the plain meaning would be this: It is a sin to select such persons for marriage as are known to be immoral. The Believers should shun them, otherwise they will feel encouraged, whereas the *Sharī'ah* intends to segregate them as the undesirable and contemptible element of society.

Similarly this verse does not validate the marriage of an adulterous Muslim with an idolatrous woman and of an adulterous Muslim woman with an idolatrous man. The verse simply means to emphasize the act of *zinā*, and declares that the person who commits it being a Muslim, makes himself unfit for contracting a marriage in the pure and pious Muslim society. He should either

stripes so that he does not utter such a slander in future. Even if the accuser is an eye-witness of an immoral act, he should keep the secret and let the filth remain where it is instead of causing it to spread. However, if he has witnesses, he should abstain from publicising the matter in society but should bring the case to the notice of the authorities and get the criminals duly punished by the court of law. Below we give the details of the law in serial order:

(1) The context in which the words *wallaziina yarmūn-al-muhsanāt* (those who charge chaste women with false accusation) occur clearly shows that it does not imply any common sort of accusation but specifically the accusation of *zinā* against the chastity of pure women. Then the demand from the accusers to produce four witnesses in support of their accusation also shows that it relates to *zinā*, for in the entire Islamic Law producing four witnesses is the legal requirement only in a case *zinā* and in no other matter. The scholars are, therefore, agreed that this verse describes the law relating to the accusation of *zinā*, which has been termed *qazf* for convenience so that this law is not extended to cover cases of other accusations like that of theft, drinking, taking of interest, etc. Apart from *qazf*, the question of determining punishments for other allegations can be left to the discretion of the judge, or to the consultative council of the Islamic state, who can make general laws to cover cases of contempt and defamation as and when required

(2) Though the verse only mentions *al-muhsanāt* (pure and chaste women), the jurists are agreed that the law is not confined to the accusation in respect of women, but it extends to the accusation in respect of chaste men also. Likewise, though the masculine gender has been used for the accusers, the law is not confined to male accusers only but extends to female accusers as well. For as regards the gravity and wickedness of the crime, it does not make any difference whether the accuser or the accused is a man or a woman. Therefore in either case, the man or accuser or the woman accusing a virtuous and chaste man or woman of *zinā*, will be dealt with under this law.

(3) This law can be applied only in a case where the accuser has accused a *muhsan or muhsanah*, i.e., "a morally fortified" man or woman. In case the accused is not "morally fortified", the law cannot be applied. If a person who is not "morally fortified" is known for his immorality, there will be no question of the "accusation", but if he is not, the judge can use his discretion to award a punishment to the accuser, or the consultative council can make necessary laws to deal with such cases.

(4) For an act of *qazf* to be considered as punishable, it is not enough that somebody has accused somebody else of immorality without a proof, but

stripes so that he does not utter such a slander in future. Even if the accuser is an eye-witness of an immoral act, he should keep the secret and let the filth remain where it is instead of causing it to spread. However, if he has witnesses, he should abstain from publicising the matter in society but should bring the case to the notice of the authorities and get the criminals duly punished by the court of law. Below we give the details of the law in serial order:

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(4) For an act of *qazf* to be considered as punishable, it is not enough that somebody has accused somebody else of immorality without a proof, but

there are certain conditions which have to be fulfilled in respect of the *qāzif* (accuser), *maqzūf* (the accused) and the act of *qazf* itself.

As for the *qāzif*, he should satisfy the following conditions:

(a) He should be an adult: if a minor commits the crime of *qazf* he can be given a discretionary punishment but not the prescribed punishment.

(b) He should possess normal common sense: an insane and mentally abnormal person cannot be given the prescribed punishment; similarly, a person under the influence of an intoxicant, other than a forbidden intoxicant, e.g., chloroform, cannot be considered as guilty of *qazf*.

(c) He should have committed *qazf* out of his own free will or choice, and not under duress,

(d) He should not be the father or grandfather of *maqzūf* (the accused), for they cannot be given the prescribed punishment.

According to the Ḥanafīs, the fifth condition is that the accuser should not be drunk, because the person who only gesticulates cannot be held guilty of *qazf*. But Imām Shāfi'ī disputes this. He says that if the gesticulation of the drunk person is clear and unambiguous by which everybody can understand what he wants to say, he will be considered as a *qāzif*, because his gesticulation is no less harmful to defame a person than the word of mouth. On the contrary, the Ḥanafīs do not hold mere gesticulation as a strong enough ground for awarding the prescribed punishment of 80 stripes; they, therefore, recommend a discretionary punishment for it.

The conditions to be satisfied by *maqzūf* (the accused) are as follows:

(a) He should be possessing normal common sense, i.e., he should be accused of having committed *zinā* while in the normal state of mind; the accuser of an insane person (who might or might not have become sane later) cannot be held guilty of *qazf*, for the insane person cannot possibly safeguard his chastity fully; and even if the evidence of *zinā* is established against him, he will neither become deserving of the prescribed punishment nor incur personal defamation; therefore, the one accusing him also should not be held as deserving of the prescribed punishment of *qazf*. However, Imām Mālik and Imām Laith bin Sa'd hold that the *qāzif* of an insane person deserves to be awarded the prescribed punishment of *qazf*, because he is accusing another person of *zinā* without a proof thereof.

(b) He should be an adult, i.e., he should be accused of having committed *zinā* while being of full age legally; accusing a minor, or a grown up person that he committed *zinā* when a minor, does not deserve the prescribed punishment, for, like an insane person, a child also cannot fully

safeguard his honour and chastity. However, according to Imām Mālik, if a boy approaching the age of majority is accused of *zinā*, the accuser will not deserve the prescribed punishment, but if a girl of that age is accused of having submitted herself for *zinā*, when sexual intercourse with her is possible, her *qāzif* will deserve the prescribed punishment, for the accusation defames not only the girl's family but ruins the girl's future as well.

(c) He should be a Muslim, i.e., he should be accused of having committed *zinā* while in Islam. Accusing a non-Muslim, or a Muslim that he committed *zinā* when a non-Muslim, does not entail the prescribed punishment.

(d) He should be free; accusing a slave or a slave-girl, or a free person that he committed *zinā* when a slave, does not call for the prescribed punishment, for the helplessness and weakness of the slave can hinder him from safeguarding his honour and chastity. The Qur'ān itself has considered the state of slavery as excluded from the state of *iḥṣān* (moral fortification). (IV: 25). But Da'ūd Dhāhirī does not concede this argument; he holds that the *qāzif* of the slave or slave-girl also deserves the prescribed punishment of *qazf*.

(e) He should possess a pure and blameless character, i.e., he himself should be free from *zinā* proper and everything resembling therewith. This means that he should neither have been held guilty of *zinā* in the past, nor should have had sexual intercourse in an illegal marriage, nor with a slave girl who was not clearly in his possession legally, nor with a woman whom he mistook for his wife. His day to day life should be such that nobody could accuse him of immorality, nor he should have been held guilty of lesser crimes than *zinā* before. In all such cases the moral purity of the person falls into disrepute, and the accuser of such a person cannot deserve the prescribed punishment of 80 stripes. So much so that if the guilt of *zinā* against an accused person is proved on the basis of evidence just before the enforcement of the prescribed punishment on an accuser, the latter will be forgiven, because the former is no longer chaste and morally pure.

Though the prescribed punishment cannot be enforced in any of these five cases, it does not, however, mean that a person who accuses an insane person or a minor or a non-Muslim, or a slave, or an unchaste person of *zinā* without proof, does not even deserve a discretionary punishment.

Now let us consider the conditions which must be found in the act of *qazf* itself. An accusation will be considered as *qazf*, if either an accuser accuses a person of such a sexual act which, if proved to be correct by necessary evidence, would make the accused liable to the prescribed punishment, or the accuser holds

the accused as of illegitimate birth. But in either case the accusation must be unambiguous and in clear terms; vague references in which the accusation of *zinā* or illegitimacy depends upon the accuser's intention, are not reliable. For instance, using words like adulterer, sinner, wicked, immoral, etc. for a man, and prostitute, harlot, whore, etc. for a woman is only a reference and not *qazf*. Similarly, words which are used as an abuse like bastard, etc. cannot be regarded as *qazf*. There is, however, a difference of opinion among the jurists whether an allusion is also *qazf* or not. According to Imām Mālik, if the allusion is clear and is meant to charge the addressee of *zinā* or hold him as of illegitimate birth, it will be *qazf*, and the *qāzif* will be liable to the prescribed punishment. But Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and his companions and Imām Shafi'ī, Sufyān Thaurī, Ibn Shubrumah, and Ḥasan bin Sāleh hold the view that an allusion is in any way ambiguous and doubtful, and wherever there is doubt, prescribed punishment cannot be awarded. Imām Aḥmad and Isḥāq bin Rāhaviyah maintain that if an allusion is made in the heat of a quarrel or fight, it is *qazf*, but if in sport and fun, it is not. Ḥaḍrat 'Umar and Ḥaḍrat 'Ali, from among the Caliphs, awarded the prescribed punishment in cases of allusion. In the time of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, one of the two men, who were involved in a brawl, said to the other, "Neither was my father an adulterer nor was my mother an adulteress." The case was brought before Ḥaḍrat 'Umar. He asked those present there what they understood by the remark. Some said that the man had only praised his parents and had not imputed anything to the other man's parents. Others objected to the use of the words and said that by these he had clearly alluded that the other man's parents were adulterous. Ḥaḍrat 'Umar concurred with the latter and awarded the prescribed punishment. (Al-Jaṣṣāṣ, vol. III, p. 330). There is also a difference of opinion as to whether accusing somebody of sodomy is *qazf* or not. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah does not regard it *qazf*, but Imam Abū Yūsuf, Imām Muhammad, Imām Mālik and Imām Shāfi'ī hold it as *qazf* and recommend the prescribed punishment for it.

(5) There is a difference of opinion among the jurists as to whether *qazf* is a cognizable offence or not. Ibn Abī Lailā says that this is the right of Allah; therefore, the *qāzif* will be awarded the prescribed punishment whether *maqzūf* (the accused) demands it or not. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and his companions hold that it is certainly a right of Allah in so far as the enforcement of the prescribed punishment on the establishment of the offence is concerned, but in so far as the trial of the accuser under the law is concerned, it depends on the demand of the accused, and in this respect it is the right of man. The same is the opinion of Imām Shafi'ī, and Imām Auzā'ī. According to Imām Mālik, if the offence of *qazf* is committed in the presence of the ruler, it is a cognizable offence, otherwise legal action against the accuser will depend on the demand of the accused.

(6) *Qazf* is not a compoundable offence. If the accused does not bring the case to the court: it will be a different thing; but when the case is brought to the court. the accuser will be pressed to prove his accusation, and if he fails to prove it, he will be awarded the prescribed punishment. The court then cannot pardon him nor the accused himself. nor the matter can be settled by making monetary compensation, nor the accuser can escape punishment by offering repentance or apology. The Holy Prophet has instructed: "Forgive among yourselves offences that deserve the prescribed punishment, but when a case is brought before me. the punishment will become obligatory."

(7) According to the Hanafis, the demand for the prescribed punishment of *qazf* call either be made by the accused, or, if the accused is not there, by the one whose lineage suffers the stigma, e.g., the father, mother, children and the children's children. But according to Imām Mālik and Imām Shāfi'i. this right is inherited. If the accused dies. each one of his legal heirs can make the demand for the prescribed punishment. It is, however, strange that Imām Shāfi'i excludes the husband and the wife from this right on the ground that their marriage bond breaks with death. and the accusation against one spouse does not affect the lineage of the other. The fact is that both these arguments are weak. When it is conceded that the right to demand the prescribed punishment for *qazf* is inheritable, it will be against the Qur'ān to exclude the husband and the wife from the exercise of this right on the ground that their marriage bond breaks with death. because the Qur'ān itself has declared each of them as an heir on the death of the other. As for the argument that the accusation against one does not affect the lineage of the other, it may be correct in the case of the husband but it is absolutely wrong in the case of the wife; the man whose wife is accused of *zinā* has the lineage of his children automatically rendered doubtful. Moreover, it is not correct to think that the punishment for *qazf* has been prescribed only to protect the lineage of the people; honour along with lineage is equally important. Thus, it is no less damaging for a gentleman or a lady that his wife or her husband is accused of *zinā*. Therefore, if the right to demand the prescribed punishment for *qazf* be inheritable there is no reason why the husband and the wife should be debarred from exercising that right.

(8) After it has been established that a person has committed *qazf*, the only thing that can save him from the prescribed punishment is that he should produce four witnesses who should give evidence in the court that they have seen the accused committing *zinā* practically with such and such a man or woman. According to the Hanafis, all the four witnesses should appear at one and the same time in the court and they should give evidence

all together. For if they appear one after the other, each one of them will become a *qāzif*, and will need four witnesses to support him. But this is a weak argument. The correct position is the one adopted by Imām Shāfi'ī and 'Uthmān al-Battī, that it is immaterial whether the witnesses appear all together or come one after the other; it is rather better that as in other cases the witnesses should come one after the other and give evidence. The Ḥanafīs hold that it is not necessary that the witnesses should be righteous; even if the *qāzif* produces four immoral persons as witnesses, he will escape the prescribed punishment of *qazf*, and the accused also the prescribed punishment of *zinā*, because the witnesses are not righteous. However, if the *qāzif* produces witnesses who are unbelieving, or blind, or slave, or those already convicted of *qazf*, he will not escape the punishment. Imām Shāfi'ī holds that if the *qazif* produces witnesses who are immoral, he and his witnesses, all will become liable to the prescribed punishment, and the same is the opinion of Imām Mālik. But the view of the Ḥanafīs in this matter appears to be nearer the truth. According to them, if the witnesses are righteous, the *qāzif* will be acquitted of the charge of *qazf*, and the crime of *zina* will become established against the accused. But if the witnesses are not righteous, the *qāzif's* crime of *qazf*, the *maqzūf's* crime of *zinā* and the evidence of the witnesses will all stand doubtful, and none will be held liable to punishment on account of the element of doubt.

(9) The Qur'ān has given three Commandments in respect of the person who fails to produce proper evidence which can cause his acquittal of the crime of *qazf*:

(a) He should be awarded 80 stripes,

(b) His evidence should not be accepted in future,

(c) He himself is a transgressor.

After this the Qur'an says:

" .... except those who repent of it and mend their ways; Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.".

The question arises: To which of these three Commands is the forgiveness due to repentance and reformation as mentioned in the verse related? The jurists are agreed that it is not related to the first Command. That is, repentance will not render the punishment null and void, and the criminal will be given flogging in any case. The jurists are also agreed that the forgiveness is related to the third Command, which means that after repentance and reformation the criminal will no longer be a sinner and Allah will forgive him. (Here the difference of opinion is

only in this matter whether the criminal becomes a sinner due to the crime of *qazf* itself, or after his conviction by the court. Imām Shāfi'ī and Laith bin Sa'd hold that he becomes a sinner due to the crime of *qazf* itself, and therefore, they reject his evidence thenceforth. On the contrary, Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, his companions and Imām Mālik maintain that he becomes a sinner after the enforcement of the sentence; therefore, till the enforcement of the sentence his evidence will be acceptable. But the truth is that in the sight of Allah the criminal becomes a sinner as a result of the crime of *qazf* itself, but for the people his being a sinner depends on his conviction by the court and the enforcement of the punishment on him). Now as far as the second Command, viz. "The evidence of *qāzif* should not be accepted in future", is concerned, there has been a great difference of opinion among the jurists as to whether the sentence ". . . except those who repent. ." is related to this or not. One group says that this sentence is related only to the last Command. That is, a person who repents and mends his ways, will no longer be a sinner in the sight of Allah and the common Muslims, but the first two Commands will remain effective, i.e. the sentence will be enforced on him and his evidence will never be accepted in future. To this group belong eminent jurists like Qāzī Shuraih, Sa'īd bin Musayyab, Sa'īd bin Jubair, Ḥasan Baṣrī, Ibrahim Nakha'ī Ibn Sīrīn, Makḥūl, 'Abdur Rahmān bin Zaid, Abū Ḥanīfah, Abū Yūsuf, Zufar, Muḥammad, Sufyān Thaurī, and Hasan bin Sāleh. The other group says that the clause... except those who repent . . ." is not related to the first Command but is related to the other two. That is, after repentance, not only will the evidence of the offender who has been punished for *qazf* be acceptable, but he will also not be regarded as a sinner. This group comprises jurists of the status of 'Aṭa', Ṭa'ūs, Mujāhid, Sha'bi, Qāsim bin Muhammad, Sālim, Zuhrī, 'Ikrimah, 'Umar bin 'Abdul 'Azīz, Ibn Abī Nujaih, Sulemān bin Yasār, Masrūq, Zaḥḥāk, Mālik bin Anas, 'Uthmān al-Batī, Laith bin Sa'd, Shāfi'ī, Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal and Ibn Jarīr Tabarī. Among other arguments, these scholars cite the verdict of Hadrat 'Umar which he gave in the case of Mughīrah bin Shu'bah. For, according to some traditions, after enforcing the punishment, Ḥadrat 'Umar said to Abū Bakrah and his two companions: "If you repent (or confess your lie), I shall accept your evidence in future, otherwise not." His companions confessed but not Abu Bakrah. On the face of it, it appears to be a strong argument. But from the details given above of Mughīrah bin Shu'bah's case, it would become obvious that it is not correct to cite this precedent in support of this view. For in that case, there was complete unanimity as far as the act (of sexual intercourse) was concerned and Mughīrah bin Shu'bah himself did not deny it. The point of dispute was the identity of the woman. Mughīrah said that she was his own wife, whom the accusers had mistaken for Umm Jamīl. Then it had also been established that the wife of Ḥadrat Mughīrah and Umm Jamīl resembled with each other to a degree that from the distance and in the kind of light that they were seen, the former could

be mistaken for the latter. But the circumstantial evidence was wholly in favour of Mughirah bin Shu'bah, and a witness of the case also had admitted that the woman was not clearly visible. That is why Ḥaḍrat 'Umar decided the case in favour of Mughirah bin Shu'bah, and after punishing Abū Bakrah, said the words as mentioned in the above-quoted traditions. This clearly shows that the real intention of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar was to impress on the accusers that they should confess that they had given way to undue suspicion and that they should repent of accusing people on the basis of such suspicions in future, otherwise their evidence would never be accepted. From this it cannot be concluded that in the eyes of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar the evidence of a person whose falsehood had been established, could become acceptable just after he had repented. The truth is that in this matter the view of the former group is more sound. None except Allah can know whether a person has repented sincerely or not. If a person repents before us, we may not consider him as a transgressor afterwards, but once his falsehood has been established, we cannot afford to trust him in future simply because he has uttered repentance. Moreover, the words in the Text themselves indicate that except those who repent ..." is related only to "... they themselves are transgressors". The reason is that the first two things, in the sentence ---" flog them with eighty stripes, and never accept their evidence afterwards"--have been given in the imperative form, while the third thing-- "they themselves are transgressors"--is a predicate. Then the clause"... except those who repent ..." just after the predicate itself indicates that the exception relates to the predicate and not to the two imperative sentences. Nevertheless, if it is conceded that the exception is not confined to the last sentence, one does not understand why it should be made to apply to "never accept their evidence" only and not extended to "flog them with eighty stripes" also.

(10) A question may be asked: Why should not the exception in "... except those who repent...." be made applicable to the first Command also? *Qazf* after all is a sort of defamation. Why should not a person who confesses his guilt, apologizes and repents, be let off, when Allah Himself says: "... except those who repent and mend their ways; Allah is Forgiving and Merciful." It will be strange that Allah forgives while the people do not forgive. The answer is that the act of *Taubah* (repentance) is not merely uttering the word *Taubah* with the tongue; it rather implies having a feeling of regrets, a resolve to reform and an inclination to do right; and this can only be known to Allah whether a person has repented sincerely or not. That is why on repentance worldly punishments are not forgiven but only punishments of the Hereafter; and that is why, Allah does not say that if the offenders repent, they may be forgiven, but says: "For those who repent, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful." If the worldly punishments

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إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الْكٰذِبِيْنَ ۝ وَيَدْرَؤُا عَنْهَا الْعَذَابَ أَنْ تَشْهَدَ أَرْبَعَ شَهٰدٰتٍ
بِاللّٰهِ ۙ إِنَّهٗ لَمِنَ الْكٰذِبِيْنَ ۝ وَالْخَامِسَةَ أَنَّ غَضَبَ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْهَآ إِنْ كَانَ
مِنَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ۝ وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهٗ وَأَنَّ اللّٰهَ تَوَّابٌ
حَكِيْمٌ ۝ إِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ جَآءُوْ بِالْإِفْكِ عُصْبَةٌ مِّنْكُمْ ۚ لَا تَحْسَبُوْهُ شَرًّا لَّكُمْ ۚ
بَلْ هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ ۚ لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مِّنْهُمْ مَّا اكْتَسَبَ مِنَ الْإِثْمِ ۚ وَالَّذِيْ تَوَلّٰى
كِبْرَهٗ مِنْهُمْ لَهٗ عَذَابٌ عَظِيْمٌ ۝ لَوْلَآ إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوْهُ ظَنَّ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ وَ
الْمُؤْمِنٰتُ بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ خَيْرًا ۙ وَّقَالُوْا هٰذَآ إِفْكٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ۝ لَوْلَا جَآءُوْ عَلَيْهِ
بِأَرْبَعَةِ شُهَدَآءَ ۚ فَإِذْ لَمْ يَأْتُوْا بِالشُّهَدَآءِ فَأُولٰٓئِكَ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ هُمُ الْكٰذِبُوْنَ ۝
وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهٗ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْاٰخِرَةِ لَمَسَّكُمْ فِيْ مَآ
أَفَضْتُمْ فِيْهِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيْمٌ ۝ إِذْ تَلَقَّوْنَهٗ بِأَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَتَقُوْلُوْنَ بِأَفْوَاهِكُمْ
مَّا لَيْسَ لَكُمْ بِهٖ عِلْمٌ وَّتَحْسَبُوْنَهٗ هَيِّنًا ۖ وَّهُوَ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ عَظِيْمٌ ۝ وَلَوْ
لَآ إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوْهُ قُلْتُمْ مَّا يَكُوْنُ لَنَآ أَنْ نَّتَكَلَّمَ بِهٰذَا ۖ سُبْحٰنَكَ هٰذَا بُهْتَانٌ
عَظِيْمٌ ۝ يَعِظُكُمُ اللّٰهُ أَنْ تَعُوْدُوْا لِمِثْلِهٖٓ أَبَدًا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ۝ وَيُبَيِّنُ
اللّٰهُ لَكُمُ الْاٰيٰتِ ۚ وَاللّٰهُ عَلِيْمٌ حَكِيْمٌ ۝ إِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يُحِبُّوْنَ أَنْ تَشِيْعَ الْفَاحِشَةُ
فِي الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيْمٌ ۙ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْاٰخِرَةِ ۚ وَاللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ
لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝ وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهٗ وَأَنَّ اللّٰهَ رَءُوْفٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ۝
يٰٓأَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تَتَّبِعُوْا خُطُوٰتِ الشَّيْطٰنِ ۚ وَمَنْ يَّتَّبِعْ خُطُوٰتِ الشَّيْطٰنِ فَإِنَّهٗ
يَأْمُرُ بِالْفَحْشَآءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ ۚ وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهٗ مَا زَكٰى مِنْكُمْ
مِّنْ أَحَدٍ أَبَدًا ۙ وَّلٰكِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُزَكِّيْ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ۚ وَاللّٰهُ سَمِيْعٌ عَلِيْمٌ ۝ وَلَا

(As for the woman), it shall avert the punishment from her if she swears four times by Allah that the man is false (in his charge) and the fifth time she invokes Allah's wrath upon herself, if he be true (in his charge).[7] If Allah had not shown you His grace and mercy and if Allah had not been most Forgiving and All-Wise, (you would have been in a great fix because of accusing your wives). 8-10

Those who have invented the slander,[8] are some of your own people.[9] You should not, however, regard this matter as evil for it has good in it for you.[10] Whoso took any part in this, he earned his share of the sin accordingly, and the one, who had the greatest share of responsibility in it,[11] shall have a terrible punishment. When you heard of it, why didn't the Believing men and the Believing women have a good opinion of themselves,[12] and why did they not say, "This is a manifest slander?"[13] Why did the slanderers not bring four witnesses (to prove their charge)? Now that they have not brought witnesses, they themselves are liars in the sight of Allah.[14] Were it not for Allah's grace and mercy towards you in this world and in the Hereafter, a painful scourge would have visited you because of the things in which you were involved. (Just think how erroneous you were,) when you passed this lie on from one tongue to the other and uttered with your mouths that of which you had no knowledge. You took it as a trifling matter whereas it was a grave offence in the sight of Allah. 11-15

Why did you not, as soon as you heard of it, say, "It is not proper for us to utter such a thing ? Glory be to Allah ! This is a great slander." Allah admonishes you that in future you should never repeat a thing like this, if you are true Believers. Allah makes His Revelations clear to you, and He is All-Knowing, All-Wise.[15] 16-18

As for those, who like that indecency should spread among the Believers, they deserve a painful punishment in this world and in the Hereafter,[16] for Allah knows and you do not know (its consequences).[17] If Allah had not shown His grace and mercy to you, (this scandal would have produced very evil results): Allah is indeed very Kind and Merciful. 19-20

O Believers, do not follow in Satan's footsteps, for he will incite to indecency and wickedness any who will follow him. If Allah had not shown His grace and mercy to you, none of you would have 21

been able to cleanse yourself,[18] for it is Allah alone Who cleanses whom He wills, and Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.[19]

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are also excused on repentance, there will be no offender who will not offer repentance in order to escape his sentence.

(11) Another side of the question is that if a person cannot produce witnesses in support of his accusation, it may not necessarily mean that he is a liar. Is it not possible that he be true in his accusation, yet he may fail to produce evidence? Then, how is it that he should be condemned as a sinner on account of his failure to produce witnesses not only by the people but also by Allah ? The answer is that even if a person is an eye-witness to the immorality committed by an other person, he will be considered as a sinner for publicising the act and accusing the offender without necessary evidence. The Divine Law does not want that if a person gets polluted in filth in a private place, the other person should start spreading the filth in the whole society. If he has any knowledge of the presence of the filth, there are two ways open for him: either he should let it remain where it is, or he should produce a proof of its existence, so that the officials of the Islamic State should cleanse it. There is no third way for him. If he publicises it, he will be committing the crime of spreading the filth everywhere; and if he brings the matter to the notice of the officials without satisfactory evidence, they will not be able to deal with it effectively. The result will be that the failure of the case will become a means of spreading the filth and encouraging the wicked element of society. Therefore, the one who commits *qazf* without necessary proof and evidence, will in any case be a sinner even if he be true in his accusation.

(12) The Ḥanafī jurists hold that the *qāzif* should be given a lighter punishment than the one who is convicted of *zinā*. That is, he should be given eighty stripes but flogging should be less intense, the reason being that his being a liar is not certain in the offence for which he is being punished.

(13) Majority of the jurists including the Ḥanafīs are of the view that only one punishment will be enforced on the *qāzif* no matter how often he repeats the accusation before or during the enforcement of the punishment. If after the punishment the *qazif* goes on repeating the same accusation, the punishment which he has already been awarded, will suffice. however, if after the enforcement of the prescribed punishment, he brings another charge of *zinā* against the accused, he will be tried again for the new charge of *qazf*. Abū Bakrah after getting the punishment in the case against Mughīrah bin Shū'bah, went on repeating openly that he bore witness that Mughīrah had committed *zina*. Ḥadrat 'Umar wanted to try

him again, but as he was repeating the same accusation, Ḥaḍrat 'Ali expressed the opinion that he could not be tried again and Hadrat 'Umar conceded it. After this the jurists became almost unanimous that a *qāzif* who has received the prescribed punishment for a crime, cannot he tried again unless he commits a fresh crime of *qazf*.

(14) There is a difference among the jurists with regard to *qazf* against a group. According to the Ḥanafīs, if a person accuses a number of persons in one word or in more words separately, he will be awarded only one prescribed punishment unless, of course, he commits a fresh crime of *qazf* after the enforcement of the first punishment. The words of the verse — "Those who accuse chaste woman..."—indicate that the accuser of one person or more persons deserves only one punishment. Moreover, there can be no *zinā* for which at least two persons cannot be accused, but in spite of that the Law-giver has prescribed only one punishment and not two, one for accusing the woman and the other for accusing the man. Contrary to this, Imām Shāfi'ī holds that the person who accuses a group of persons, whether in one word or in more words separately, will be awarded as many punishments as the number of the persons accused, one for each. The same is the opinion of 'Uthmān al-Battī. However, the ruling of Ibn Abī Laila, to which Sha'bi and Auzā'ī also subscribe, is that the one who accuses a group of persons of *zinā* in one word, deserves one punishment, and the one who accuses them separately in separate words, deserves separate punishments, one for each.

7. These verses were sent down some time after the preceding verses. The Law of *Qazf* prescribed the punishment for the person who accused the other man or woman of *zinā*, and did not produce witnesses to prove his charge, but the question naturally arose, what should a man do if he finds his own wife involved in *zinā?* If he kills her, he will be guilty of murder and punishable; if he goes to get witnesses, the offender might escape; if he tries to ignore the matter, he cannot do so for long. He can, of course, divorce the woman, but in this case there will be no moral or physical punishment either for the woman or her seducer; and if the illicit intercourse results in pregnancy, he will have to suffer the burden of bringing up another person's child. Initially this question was raised by Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin 'Ubādah as an hypothetical case, who said that if he happened to see such a thing in his own house, he would not go in search of witnesses, but would settle the matter there and then with the sword. (Bukhārī, Muslim). But soon afterwards actual cases were brought before the Holy Prophet by the husbands who were eye-witnesses of this thing. According to traditions related by 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd and Ibn 'Umar, an Anṣār Muslim (probably 'Uwaimir 'Aj̱lānī) came to the Holy Prophet and said, "O Messenger of Allah, if a person finds another man with his wife, and utters an accusation, you will enforce the prescribed punishment of *qazf*

on him; if he commits murder, you will have him killed; if he keeps quiet, he will remain involved in anguish; then, what should he do?" At this the Holy Prophet prayed, "O Allah, give a solution of this problem." (Muslim, Bukhārī, Abū Da'ūd, Aḥmad, Nasā'ī). Ibn 'Abbās has reported that Hilāl bin Umayyah presented the case of his wife whom he had himself witnessed involved in the act of sin. The Holy Prophet said, "Bring your proof, otherwise you will have the prescribed punishment of *qazf* inflicted on you." At this a panic spread among the Companions, and Hilāl said, "I swear by Allah Who has sent you as a Prophet that I am speaking the truth: I have seen it with my eyes and heard it with my ears: I am sure Allah will send down a Command, which will protect my back (from the punishment). So, this verse was revealed." (Bukhārī, Ahmad, Abū Da'ūd). The legal procedure which has been laid down in this verse, is termed as the Law of *Li'ān*.

The details of the cases which the Holy Prophet judged in accordance with the Law of *Li'ān* are found in the books of *Ḥadīth* and these form the source and basis of this law.

According to the details of Hilāl bin Umayyah's case as reported in Ṣiḥāḥ Sitta, Musnad Ahmad and Tafsīr Ibn Jarīr, on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās and Anas bin Mālik, both Hilāl and his wife were presented before the Holy Prophet, who first of all apprised them of the Divine Law, and then said: "You should note it well that the punishment of the Hereafter is much severer than the punishment of this world." Hilāl submitted that his charge was absolutely correct. The woman denied it. The Holy Prophet then said: "Let us proceed according to the Law of Li'ān." So, Hilāl stood up first and swore oaths according to the Qur'ānic Command. The Holy Prophet went on reminding them again and again: "Allah knows that one of you is certainly a liar: then, will one of you repent?" Before Hilal swore for the fifth time, the people who were present there, said to him, "Fear God: the punishment of the world is lighter than of the Hereafter. The fifth oath will make the punishment obligatory on you." But Hilāl said that God Who had protected his back (from punishment) in this world, will also spare him in the Hereafter. After this he swore the fifth oath, too. Then the woman began to swear oaths. Before she swore the fifth oath, she was also stopped and counselled. "Fear God: the worldly punishment is easier to bear than the punishment of the Hereafter. This last oath will make the Divine punishment obligatory on you." Hearing this the woman hesitated a little. The people thought that she was going to make the confession. But instead of that she said: "I do not want to put my clan to disgrace for ever," and swore for the fifth time, too. At this the Holy Prophet ordered separation between them and ruled that her child after birth would be attributed to her and not to the man: that nobody after that would blame her or her child: that anybody who accused either of them would incur the punishment of

qazf; and that she had no right left to claim maintenance, etc. from Hilāl, during her legal waiting period, because she was being separated neither on account of divorce nor due to the husband's death. Then the Holy Prophet asked the people to see whether the child on birth took after Hilāl or the man who was being accused in connection with the woman. After delivery when it was seen that the child took after the other man, the Holy Prophet said: 'If there had been no swearing of the oaths (or if Allah's Book had not settled the matter before this), I would have dealt with this woman most severely."

The details of the case of 'Uwaimir 'Ajlānī have been cited in Bukhari, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Nasa'ī, Ibn Mājah and Musnad Ahmad, on the authority of Sahl bin Sa'd Sā'idī and Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both). According to these, 'Uwaimir and his wife were both summoned to the Prophet's Mosque. Before proceeding against them in accordance with the Law of *Li'an*, the Holy Prophet warned them thrice, saying: "Allah knows full well that one of you is a liar: then, will one of you repent ?" When neither repented, they were told to exercise *Li'ān*. After that 'Uwaimir said, "O Messenger of Allah, now if I keep this woman, I would be a liar" and then he divorced her thrice there and then even without the Holy Prophet's permission to do so. According to Sahl bin Sa'd, the Holy Prophet enforced the divorce to separate them, and said, "There shall be separation between the husband and the wife if they exercise *Li'ān*. "This became established as a *Sunnah* that the couple who swore against each other would separate never to marry again. Ibn 'Umar only says this that the Holy Prophet enforced separation between them. Sahl bin Sa'd, however, adds that the woman was pregnant and 'Uwaimir said that it was not due to his seed; so the child was attributed to the mother. The practice that thus became established was that such a child would inherit the mother and the mother him.

Apart from these two cases, we find several other traditions also in the books of *Hadith*, which may or may not be related to these cases, but some of these traditions mention other cases as well, which provide important components of the Law of *Li'an*.

Ibn 'Umar has reported traditions according to which the Holy Prophet ordered separation between the spouses after *Li'an* and ruled that in case of pregnancy the child would be attributed to the mother (Ṣiḥaḥ Sitta, Aḥmad). According to another tradition of Ibn 'Umar, the Holy Prophet said to a man and woman after *Li'an*: "Now your affair is with Allah: in any case one of you is a liar." Then he said to the man, "Now she is not yours: you have no right on her, nor can you treat her vindictively in any way." The man requested, "Sir, please have my dowry returned to me." The Holy Prophet said, "You have no right to have the dowry back. If you are true in your accusation: the dowry is the price of

the pleasure you had from her when she was lawful to you; and if your accusation is false, the dowry has receded farther away from you than it is from her." (Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd).

Dāraquṭni has quoted 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib and Ibn Mas'ūd (may Allah be pleased with them both) as saying: "The *Sunnah* that has become established is that the spouses who have exercised *Li'ān* against each other, can never re-unite in marriage." Again Dāraquṭnī has quoted Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās as saying, "The Holy Prophet himself has ruled that the two can never re-unite in wedlock."

Qabīsah bin Zu'aib has reported that a man in the time of Hadrat 'Umar alleged that his wife was pregnant by illicit intercourse, then admitted that it was by his own seed, but after delivery again denied that the child was his. The case was brought to the court of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, who enforced the prescribed punishment of *qazf* on the man and ruled that the child would be attributed to him. (Dāraquṭni, Baihaqī).

Ibn 'Abbās has reported that a man came to the Holy Prophet and said. "Sir, I have a wife for whom I have great love; but her weakness is that she does not mind if the other man touches her. (By this he might have meant *zinā* or a lesser moral evil)." The Holy Prophet replied, "You may divorce her." The man said, "But I cannot live without her." Thereupon the Holy Prophet said, "Then you should put on with her." (The Holy Prophet did not ask the man for any explanation, nor took his complaint as an accusation of *zinā*, nor applied the law of *li'ān*). (Nasā'ī)

Abū Hurairah has narrated the case of a beduin who came to the Holy Prophet and said that his wife had given birth to a dark-coloured son and he was doubtful that it was his. (That is, the child's colour had caused him the suspicion, otherwise there was no ground with him to accuse her of *zinā*). The Holy Prophet asked him, "Do you have any camels ?" The man replied in the affirmative. The Holy Prophet then asked, "What is their colour?" He said they were red. The Holy Prophet said, "Is any of them grey also?" He said, "Yes, Sir, some are grey also." The Holy Prophet asked, "What caused that colour?" He said, "Might be due to some ancestor of theirs." The Holy Prophet replied, "The same might be the cause for your child's colour." And he did not allow him to doubt and deny the child's fatherhood. (Bukhārī, Muslim, Ahmad, Abū Da'ūd).

According to another tradition of Abū Hurairah, explaining the verse of *li'ān* the Holy Prophet said: "The woman who brings a child into a family which does not actually belong to it (i.e. marries a man of the family with illicit pregnancy), has no relation with Allah. Allah will never admit her into Paradise. Similarly, the man who denies the fatherhood of his child, whereas the child looks

up towards him, will never see Allah on the Day of Judgment, and Allah will put him to disgrace in front of all mankind." (Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'ī, Dārimī).

Thus, the verse of *li'ān*, the traditions of the Holy Prophet, the precedents and the general principles of the *Sharī'ah* together form the basis of the Law of *Li'ān*, which the jurists have formulated a complete code with the following main clauses:

(1) There is a difference of opinion about the man who sees his wife involved in *zinā* with another man and kills him instead of having recourse to *li'ān*. One group holds that he will be put to death because he had no right to take the law in his own hand and enforce the punishment. The other group says that he will not be put to death nor will he be held accountable for his act in any way provided that it is confirmed that he killed the man (adulterer) on account of *zinā* and nothing else. Imām Aḥmad and Isḥāq bin Rāhaviyah maintain that the man will have to produce two witnesses to confirm that he killed the adulterer only on account of *zinā*. Ibn al-Qāsim and Ibn Habīb, from among the Mālikīs, attach an additional condition that the murdered person should be a married man; otherwise the murderer will be made subject to the law of retaliation for killing an unmarried adulterer. But the majority of jurists are of the opinion that the man will be exonerated from retaliation only when he produces four witnesses to establish *zinā*, or if the murdered person himself confesses before death that he committed *zinā* with the wife of the murderer, and if it is also confirmed that the murdered person was a married man. *(Nail al-Autār*, vol. IV, p. 228).

(2) The Law of *Li'ān* cannot be applied mutually at home, but in a court of law in front of the Judge.

(3) Exercise of li'ān is not the sole right of the man: the woman also has a right to demand it in a court of law if her husband accuses her of *zinā*, or denies fatherhood of her child.

(4) There is a difference of opinion among the jurists as to whether *li'an* can be resorted to between any husband and his wife, or whether they have to satisfy certain conditions. Imāmu Shāfi'ī holds that only that husband whose oath is legally reliable and who can exercise the right of divorce, can swear the oaths of *li'ān*. In other words, sanity and maturity according to him, are the sufficient conditions which entitle a husband to exercise *li'ān* no matter whether the spouses are Muslim or non-Muslim, slave or free, and whether their evidence is acceptable or not, and whether the Muslim husband has a Muslim or a *zimmi* wife. Imām Mālik and Imām Aḥmad have also given almost the same opinion. But the Ḥanafīs maintain that *li'ān* can be exercised only by free Muslim spouses, who should not have

been convicted of *qazf* previously. If both husband and wife are non-Muslim, or slaves, or convicted of *qazf* previously, they cannot exercise *li'ān* against each other. Furthermore, if the woman was ever found guilty of an illicit or doubtful relationship with another man, exercise of *li'ān* will not be valid. The Ḥanafīs have imposed these conditions, because according to them, there is no other difference between *li'ān* and *qazf* than this: —the other man commits *qazf*, he is given the prescribed punishment, but if the husband himself commits it, he can escape the punishment by exercising *li'ān*. In all other respects, *li'ān* and *qazf* are identical. Moreover, since according to the Ḥanafīs, the oaths of *li'ān* are in the nature of evidence, they do not concede this right to a person who is not legally fit to give evidence. But the truth is that in this matter the position of the Hanafīs is weak, and the opinion of Imām Shāfi'ī is correct, because the Qur'ān has not made the accusation of the wife a component part of the verse of *qazf*, but has prescribed a separate law for it. Therefore, it cannot be linked with the law of *qazf* and treated under the conditions prescribed for *qazf*. Then, the wording of the verse of *li'ān* is different from the wording of the verse of *qazf* and the two lay down separate injunctions. Therefore, the law of *li'ān* should be derived from the verse of *li'ān* and not from the verse of *qazf*. For instance, according to the verse of *qazf*, the person who accuses chaste women *(muḥsanāt)* of *zinā*, deserves to be punished. But in the verse of *li'ān*, there is no condition of the chastity of the wife. A woman might have committed sins in life, but if she repents later on and marries somebody, the husband is not authorised by the verse of *li'ān* to accuse her unjustly whenever he likes, and to deny fatherhood of her children simply because she had once lived in sin. The other equally important reason is that there is a world of difference between accusing a wife and accusing the other woman. The law cannot treat the two alike. A man has nothing to do with the other woman. He is neither attached to her emotionally, nor his honour, his family relations and rights are at stake nor his lineage. The only meaningful interest he can have in the woman's character can be his desire to see a morally pure and clean society. Contrary to this, his relationship with his wife is deep and of varied nature. She is the custodian of the purity of his race, of his property and his house; she is his life partner, sharer of his secrets, and with her he is attached in most delicate and deep feelings. If she is morally corrupt, it will deal a serious blow to his honour, his interests and his progeny. These two things, therefore, cannot be considered alike, and the law cannot treat them as equal to each other. Is an evil affair of the wife of a *dhimmī*, or a slave, or a convicted husband in any way different, or less serious, in consequences than that of the wife of a free, mature and sound Muslim? If the husband himself sees his wife involved in *zinā* with another

person, or has reasons to believe that his wife is pregnant by illicit intercourse, how can he be denied the right of *li'ān?* And if he is denied this right, what else is there in our law which can help him out of his awkward situation? The intention of the Qur'ān seems to be to open a way out of a difficult situation for married couples in which a husband may find himself placed due to the wife's immorality or illicit pregnancy, or a wife due to the husband's false accusation or unjustified denial of the fatherhood of her child. This is not particularly the need of the free and sound Muslims alone; there is in fact nothing in the Qur'ānic Text which may confine it to them only. As for the argument that the Qur'ān has described the oaths of *li'ān* as evidence *(shahādat)*, and therefore the conditions of evidence will apply here, the logical implication would be that in case a righteous and just husband whose evidence is acceptable, takes the necessary oaths, and the wife declines to take the oaths, she would have to be stoned to death, because her immorality would thus become established. But it is strange that in this case the Hanafis do not recommend stoning. This is a clear proof of the fact that they too do not regard the oaths as exactly identical with evidence. The truth is that though the Qu'ān describes the oaths of *li'ān* as evidence, it does not regard them as evidence in the technical sense, otherwise it would have required the woman to swear eight oaths and not four.

(5) *Li'ān* is not necessitated by an allusion or expression of doubt or suspicion, but only when the husband accuses his wife clearly of *zinā*, or denies in plain words that the child is his. Imām Mālik and Laith bin Sa'd impose an additional condition that the husband while exercising *li'ān* must say that he has himself seen his wife involved in *zinā*. But this is an unnecessary restriction which has no basis whatever in the Qur'an and *Hadith*.

(6) If after accusing his wife, the husband declines to swear the oaths, the verdict of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and his companions is that he will be imprisoned and shall not be released until he exercises *li'ān* or confesses the falsehood of his accusation, in which case he will be awarded the prescribed punishment of *qazf*. On the contrary, Imām Mālik, Shafi'i, Ḥasan bin Ṣāleḥ and Laith bin Sa'd express the opinion that refusal to exercise *li'ān* itself amounts to confessing one's being a liar, which makes the prescribed punishment of *qazf* obligatory.

(7) If after the swearing of oaths by the husband, the wife declines to take the oaths, the Ḥanafis give the opinion that she should be imprisoned and should not be released until she exercises *li'ān*, or else confesses her guilt of *zinā*. On the contrary, the other Imams (as mentioned in clause 6 above) say that in this case she will be stoned to death. They base their

argument on the Qur'ānic injunction: "... it shall avert the punishment from her if she swears four times by Allah." Now that she declines to swear the oaths, she inevitably deserves the punishment. But the weakness in this argument is that the Qur'ān does not specify here the nature of "punishment"; it simply mentions punishment. If it is argued that punishment here means the punishment of *zinā* only, the answer is that for the punishment of *zinā* the Qur'ān has imposed the condition of four witnesses in clear words, and this condition cannot be fulfilled by four oaths sworn by one person. The husband's oaths can suffice for him to escape the punishment of *qazf* and for the wife to face the injunction of *li'ān*, but they are not enough to prove the charge of *zinā* against her. The woman's refusal to swear the oaths in self-defense certainly creates a suspicion, and a strong suspicion indeed, but a prescribed punishment cannot be enforced on the basis of suspicions. This thing cannot be considered as analogous with the prescribed punishment of *qazf* for the man, because his *qazf* is established, and that is why he is made to exercise *li'ān*. But contrary to this, the woman's guilt of *zinā* is not established unless she herself makes a confession of it or four eye-witnesses are produced to prove it.

(8) If the woman is pregnant at the time of *li'ān* according to Imām Aḥmad, *li'ān* itself suffices to absolve the husband from the responsibility for pregnancy whether he has denied accepting it or not. Imām Shāfi'ī, however, says that accusation of *zinā* by the husband and his refusal to accept responsibility for pregnancy are not one and the same thing. Therefore, unless the husband categorically refuses to accept the responsibility for pregnancy, he will be considered as responsible for it in spite of the accusation of *zinā* by him, because the woman's being adulterous does not necessarily mean that her pregnancy is also due to *zinā*.

(9) Imām Mālik, Imām Shāfi'ī and Imām Aḥmad concede the husband's right to deny responsibility for pregnancy during pregnancy, and allow him the right of *li'ān* on that basis. But Imām Abū Ḥanīfah says that if the basis for the man's accusation is not *Zinā*, but only this that he has found pregnancy in the woman when it could not possibly be due to him, exercise of *li'an* should be deferred until after delivery because sometimes symptoms of pregnancy appear due to some disease and not actual pregnancy.

(10) If a husband denies fatherhood of a child, there is a consensus that *li'ān* becomes necessary There is also a consensus that after he has accepted the child once (whether it is in clear words or by implication, e.g. by receiving congratulatory messages on its birth, or by treating it lovingly like one's own child and taking due interest in its bringing up), he loses

his right to deny him later, and if he does so, he makes himself liable to the prescribed punishment of *qazf*. There is, however, a difference of opinion as to how long the father retains a right to deny fatherhood of the child. According to Imām Mālik, if the husband was present at home while the wife was pregnant, he can deny the responsibility from the time of pregnancy till the time of delivery; after that he will have no right. However, if he was away from home and delivery took place in his absence, he can deny the child's fatherhood as soon as it comes to his knowledge. According to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, if he denies within a day or two of the child's birth, he will be absolved from the responsibility of the child after exercising *li'ān*, but if he denies after a year or two, *li'ān* will be valid, but he will not be absolved from the responsibility of the child. According to Imām Abū Yūsuf, the father has the right to deny fatherhood within 40 days of the child's birth or knowledge of its birth; after that he will have no right. But this restriction of 40 days is meaningless. The correct view is that of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah that fatherhood can be denied within a day or two of the child's birth or knowledge of its birth, unless one is hindered from doing so due to a sound and genuine reason.

(11) If a husband accuses a divorced wife of *zinā*, according to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, this will be a case of *qazf* and not of *li'ān*. *Li'ān* can be resorted to between the spouses and cannot be extended to a divorced woman unless it is a retractable divorce and the accusation is made within the period of retraction. But Imām Mālik holds that this will be *qazf* only if it does not involve the question of accepting or denying the responsibility of pregnancy or fatherhood of the child. If it is not that, the man has the right to exercise *li'ān* even after pronouncing the final divorce, because in that case he would not be having recourse to *li'ān* for the purposes of bringing infamy on the woman but to absolve himself from the responsibility of the child who, he believes, is not his. The same almost is the opinion of Imām Shāfi'ī.

(12) There is a complete consensus of opinion in respect of certain legal implications of *li'ān*, but certain others have been disputed by the jurists. The agreed ones are the following:

Neither the woman nor the man is liable to punishment. If the man denies fatherhood of the child, it will be attributed to the mother alone; it will neither be attributed to the father nor will inherit him; the child will inherit the mother and the mother him. Thereafter nobody will have the right to call the woman adulterous nor the child illegitimate, whether the people might be wholly sure of her being adulterous under the circumstances at the time of *li'ān*. Any person who

repeats the old charge against the woman or her child, will make himself liable to the punishment of *qazf*. The woman's dowry will remain intact, but she will not be entitled to claim maintenance, etc. from the man, and she will become forbidden to him for ever.

There is, however, a difference of opinion in respect of two things:

(a) After *li'ān* how will separation be effected between the husband and the wife?

(b) Is it possible for them to re-unite in marriage after they have been separated on account of *li'ān*?

As regards the first question, Imām Shāfi'ī holds the opinion that as soon as a man has exercised his *li'ān*, the woman stands automatically separated whether she refutes the man's charge by her *li'ān* or not. Imām Mālik, Laith bin S'ad and Zufar maintain that separation is effected when both a man and a woman have exercised their *li'ān* one after the other. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Abū Yūsuf and Muḥammad hold that separation does not take place automatically after *li'ān*, but it is effected by the judge. If the husband pronounces divorce, it takes effect, otherwise the judge will announce their separation.

Regarding the second question, the opinion of Imām Mālik, Abū Yūsuf, Zufar, Sufyān Thauri, Ishāq bin Rāhaviyah, Shāfi'ī, Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal and Ḥasan bin Zaid is that the spouses who have been separated due to *li'ān*, are forbidden to each other for ever. Even if they wish to remarry, they cannot do so in any case. The same is the opinion also of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, Ḥaḍrat 'Ali and Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd. Contrary to this, Sa'īd bin Musayyab, Ibrahīm Nakha'ī, Sha'bī, Sa'īd bin Jubair, Abū Ḥanīfah and Muḥammad (may Allah be pleased with them all) opine that if the husband confesses his lie, and he is awarded the prescribed punishment for *qazf*, the two can re-unite in marriage. They argue that it is *li'ān* which makes them unlawful for each other. As long as they stand by their *li'ān*, they will remain forbidden for each other, but when the husband confesses his lie and receives the punishment, *li'an* will become null and void and so will their prohibition to marry each other again.

8. This is an allusion to the slander against Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah. Allah has Himself described it as *Ifk* (false accusation, calumny) which implies its total refutation

From here begins the mention of the incident which provided the occasion of this Sūrah's revelation. We have reproduced the initial part of it in the Introduction as related by Hadrat 'Ā'ishah herself; the rest of it is reproduced below. She says:

"Rumours about this slander went on spreading in the city for about a month, which caused great distress and anguish to the Holy Prophet. I cried due to helplessness and my parents were sick with mental agony. At last one day the Holy Prophet visited us and he sat near me, which he had not done since the slander had started. Feeling that something decisive was going to happen that day, Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr and Umm Rūmān (Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah's mother) also sat near us. The Holy Prophet started the conversation, saying: 'Ā'ishah, I have heard this and this about you: if you are innocent, I expect that Allah will declare your innocence. But if you have committed a sin, you should offer repentance and ask for Allah's forgiveness; when a servant (of Allah) confesses his guilt and repents, Allah forgives him.' Hearing these words, tears dried in my eyes. I looked up to my father expecting that he would reply to the Holy Prophet, but he said, 'Daughter, I do not know what I should say.' Then I turned to my mother, but she also did not know what to say. At last I said, 'You have all heard something about me and believed it. Now if I say that I am innocent—and Allah is my witness that I am innocent—you will not believe me; and if I confess something which I never did—and Allah knows that I never did it—you will believe me.' At that time I tried to call to memory the name of Prophet Jacob but could not recall it. Therefore in view of the predicament that I was placed in, I said, "I cannot but repeat the words which the father of Prophet Joseph had spoken: *fa-sabrun jamīl*: I will bear this patiently with good grace.' (XII: 83). Saying this I lay down and turned to the other side. I was thinking that Allah was aware of my innocence, and He would certainly reveal the truth, but I could never imagine that Divine Revelation would come down in my defense, which the people will read and recite till the Last Day. What I thought probable was that the Holy Prophet would see a dream in which Allah would indicate my innocence. But in the meantime suddenly, the state of receiving Revelation appeared on the Holy Prophet, when pearl-like drops of perspiration used to gather on his face even in severe winter. We all held our breath and sat silent. As for me I was fearless, but my parents seemed to be struck with fear; they did not know what the Divine Revelation would be. When the Revelation was over, the Holy Prophet seemed to be very pleased. Overjoyed with happiness the first words he spoke were: 'Congratulations, 'Ā'ishah, Allah has sent down proof of your innocence' and then he recited these ten verses (11—21). At this my mother said to me, 'Get up and thank the Holy Prophet.' I said, 'I shall neither thank him nor you two, but thank Allah Who has sent down my absolution. You did not even so much as contradict the charge against me.' (This is not the translation of any one tradition, but the substance of many traditions which are found in the books of *Ḥadīth* in connection with the incident of the slander against Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah).

One subtle point to be underatood here is that before mentioning the absolution of Hadrat 'Ā'ishah, a full section of verses has been devoted to the Commandments pertaining to *zinā*, *qazf* and *li'ān*, by which Allah means to admonish that *zinā* is not a slight matter which may be used as a means of entertaining the people in a gathering. It is very serious. If the accuser is right in his accusation he should produce witnesses, and get a most horrible punishment inflicted upon the adulterer and the adulteress. If the accuser is false, he deserves to be given 80 stripes, so that nobody may dare to bring a false charge against the other person. And if the accuser is a husband, he will have to exercise *li'ān* in a court of law to settle the matter. So, none who utters such an accusation will have peace. The Islamic society which has been brought about for the purpose of establishing goodness and piety in the world, can neither tolerate *zinā* as a means of entertainment nor endure loose talk about it as a diversion and amusement.

9. Only a few persons have been mentioned in traditions, who were spreading the rumours. They were: 'Abdullah bin Ubayy, Zaid bin Rifā'ah (who was probably the son of Rifā'ah bin Zaid, the Jewish hypocrite), Mistah bin Uthāthah, Ḥassān bin Thabit, and Ḥamnah bint Jahsh. The first two of these were hypocrites, and the other three Muslims, who had been involved in the mischief due to misunderstanding and weakness. Names of the other People who were more or less involved in the mischief have not been mentioned in the books of *Hadīth* and life of the Holy Prophet.

10. That is, "You should not lose heart. Though the hypocrites, according to their own presumptions, have made the worst attack on you, it will eventually bring misfortune on them, and will prove to be a blessing in disguise for you."

As mentioned in the Introduction above, the hypocrites had planned to inflict a defeat on the Muslims on the moral front, which was their real field of superiority and responsible for their victory on every other front against the opponents. But Allah turned this mischief into a means of strength for the Muslims. On this occasion, the conduct and attitude adopted by the Holy Prophet, Ḥadrat Abū Bakr and his family, and the Muslims at large proved beyond any doubt that they were the purest people morally, tolerant and just in nature, noble and forbearing in character. If the Holy Prophet had wished he could have got the people responsible for the attack on his honour beheaded immediately. But he bore everything with patience for a whole month. And when Divine injunction came down from Allah, he enforced the punishment for *qazf* only on those three Muslims whose guilt was established, and even spared the hypocrites. Ḥadrat Abū Bakr's own relative, whose whole family he had been supporting all along, continued heaping disgrace on him publicly, but that noble man neither severed his family relations with him nor stopped monetary help to him and his family. None

of the wives of the Holy Prophet took the least part in the slander nor even expressed the slightest approval of it. So much so that Ḥaḍrat Zainab (a wife of the Holy Prophet), for whose sake her real sister, Ḥamnah bint Jahsh, was taking part in the slander, did not utter anything about her rival (Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah) except good words. According to Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, herself: "Zainab among the wives of the Holy Prophet was my strongest rival, but when in connection with the incident of the slander, the Holy Prophet asked her opinion of me, she said, 'O Messenger of Allah, I swear by God that I have perceived nothing in her except piety'." Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah's own nobility of character can be judged by this that though Ḥassan bin Thābit had played a prominent role in the campaign of slander against her, she continued to treat him with due honour and esteem. When the people reminded her that he was the man who had slandered her, she retorted, 'No, he it was who used to rebut the anti-Islamic poets on behalf of the Holy Prophet and Islam.' Such was the conduct and attitude of those people who were directly affected by the slander. As for the other Muslims, their attitude can be judged from one instance. When Ḥaḍrat Abū Ayyūb Anṣārī's wife mentioned before him the rumours of the slander, he said, "Mother of Ayyūb, if you had been there in place of 'Ā'ishah, would you have done that?" She replied, "By God, I would never have done it." Ḥaḍrat Ayyūb then said, "Well, 'Ā'ishah is a much better woman than you. As for myself, if I had been in place of Safwān, I could never have entertained such an evil thought and Ṣafwān is a better Muslim than I." Thus, the result of the mischief engineered by the hypocrites was contrary to what they had planned to achieve, and the Muslims emerged out of this test morally stronger than before.

Then there was more good to come from this. The incident became the cause of some very important additions to the social law and injunctions of Islam. Through these the Muslims received such Commandments from Allah by which the Muslim society can be kept clean and protected against the creation and propagation of moral evils, and if at all they arise, they can be corrected promptly.

Furthermore, there was another aspect of goodness in it also. The Muslims came to understand fully that the Holy Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) had no knowledge of the unseen. He knew only that which Allah taught him. Beside that his knowledge was the same as that of a common man. For one full month he remained in great anxiety with regard to Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah. He would sometimes make enquiries from the maid-servant, sometimes from his other wives, and sometimes from Ḥaḍrat 'Ali and Ḥaḍrat Usāmah. At last when he spoke to Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, he spoke only this: "If you have committed the sin, you should offer repentance, and if you are innocent, I expect that Allah will declare your innocence." Had he possessed any knowledge of the unseen, he would not have felt so upset, nor would have made enquiries, nor counselled repentance. However, when Divine Message revealed the truth, he received that

knowledge which he had not possessed for more than a month. Thus Allah arranged to safeguard the Muslims, through direct experience and observation, against exaggerated notions in which people generally get involved in regard to their religious leaders on account of excessive blind faith. Perhaps this was the reason why Allah withheld Revelation for a month, for if Revelation had been sent down on the very first day, it could not have had any beneficial effect.

11. That is, 'Abdullah bin Ubayy, who was the real author of the false accusation and mischief. In some traditions it has been wrongly claimed that this verse refers to Ḥaḍrat Ḥassān bin Thābit; this is actually due to a misunderstanding of the narrators themselves. As a matter of fact, Ḥaḍrat Ḥassān bin Thābit's only weakness was that he became involved in the mischief engineered by the hypocrites. Ḥāfiz Ibn Kathīr has rightly observed that if this tradition had not been included in Bukhārī, it would not have deserved any notice. The greatest falsehood, rather a calumny, in this connection is the assertion by the Umayyads that it was Ḥaḍrat 'Alī who had been referred to in this verse. A saying of Ḥishām bin 'Abdul Mālik has been cited in Bukhārī, Ṭabarānī and Baihaqī to the effect: "The one who had the greatest share of responsibility in it" refers to 'Alī bin Abī Tālib. The fact, however, is that Ḥaḍrat 'Alī had no hand whatever in this mischief. The truth is that when Ḥaḍrat 'Alī saw the Holy Prophet in a perturbed state of mind and the Holy Prophet asked for his counsel, he said: "Allah in this matter has not laid any restriction on you: suitable women are plenty: you may if you like divorce 'Ā'ishah and marry another woman." But this did not at all mean that Ḥaḍrat 'Alī had supported the accusation against Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah. His object was only to allay the Holy Prophet's mental anguish.

12. This may also be translated as: "Why did they not have a good opinion of the people of their own community and society?" The words in the Text are comprehensive and contain a subtle meaning which should be understood well. What happened concerning Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah and Ṣafwān bin Mu'attal was only this: A woman belonging to the caravan (apart from the fact that she was the Holy Propher's wife) was left behind, and a man belonging to the same caravan, who was also left behind, chanced to see her and brought her on his camel to the camp. Now if a person alleges that when the two found themselves alone, they became involved in sin, the accusation would imply two other hypotheses: First, if the accuser himself (whether man or woman) had been there, he would certainly have availed of the rare opportunity and committed the sinful act, for he had never before chanced upon a person of the opposite sex in a situation like this. Second, the accuser's assessment of the moral condition of the society he belongs to is that in that society there is no man or woman who could possibly have abstained from sin in similar circumstances. This will be the case when it involves any one man and any one woman. But supposing if the man and the woman happened to belong

to the same place, and the woman who was left behind by chance was the wife, or sister, or daughter of a friend, or a relative, or a neighbour, or an acquaintance of the man, the matter would become much more serious and grave. Then it would mean that the one who utters such an accusation has a very poor and degraded opinion of himself as well as of his society, which has nothing to do with morality and good sense. No gentleman can imagine that if he finds a woman belonging to the family of a friend, or a neighbour or an acquaintance, stranded on the way, the first thing he would do would be to molest and dishonour her, and then would think of escorting her home. But here the matter was a thousand times more serious. The lady was no other than the wife of the Holy Prophet of Allah, whom every Muslim esteemed higher than his own mother, and whom Allah Himself had forbidden for every Muslim just like his own mother. The man was not only a follower of the same caravan and a soldier of the same army, and an inhabitant of the same city, but also a Muslim, who believed in the lady's husband to be the Messenger of Allah and his religious leader and guide, and had even followed him and fought in the most dangerous battle at Badr. Viewed against this background, it would seem that the person who uttered such an accusation and those who considered the accusation as probable, formed a very poor opinion not only of their moral selves but also of the whole society.

13. That is, "The accusation was not worth any consideration; the Muslims should have rejected it there and then as a lie and a falsehood." A question might be asked: Why did not the Holy Prophet and Hadrat Abū Bakr Siddīq reject it on the very first day, and why did they give it all that importance? The answer is that the position of the husband and the father is different from that of the common people. Though none else can know a woman better than her husband and a righteous husband cannot doubt the character of a virtuous and pious wife only on account of the people's accusations, but when the wife is accused, the husband is placed in a difficult situation. Even if he rejects it outright as a calumny, the accusers will not listen. They will rather say that the woman is clever and has beguiled the husband into believing that she is virtuous and pious whereas she is not. A similar situation is faced by the parents. They also cannot remove the accusers' slander regarding their daughter's chastity even if they know that the accusation is manifestly false. The same thing had afflicted the Holy Prophet, Ḥadrat Abū Bakr and Umm Rūmān, otherwise they did not entertain any doubt about Ḥadrat 'Ā'ishah's character. That is why the Holy Prophet had declared in his sermon that he had neither seen any evil in his wife nor in the man who was being mentioned in the slander.

14. " .... in the sight of Allah": in the Law of Allah, or according to the

[Contd. on p. 350

يَأْتَلِ أُولُوا الْفَضْلِ مِنْكُمْ وَالسَّعَةِ أَنْ يُؤْتُوا أُولِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينَ
وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۖ وَلْيَعْفُوا وَلْيَصْفَحُوا ۗ أَلَا تُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ
اللَّهُ لَكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٢٢﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ الْغَافِلَاتِ
الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ لُعِنُوا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٢٣﴾ يَوْمَ تَشْهَدُ
عَلَيْهِمْ أَلْسِنَتُهُمْ وَأَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾ يَوْمَئِذٍ
يُوَفِّيهِمُ اللَّهُ دِينَهُمُ الْحَقَّ وَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ الْمُبِينُ ﴿٢٥﴾
الْخَبِيثَاتُ لِلْخَبِيثِينَ وَالْخَبِيثُونَ لِلْخَبِيثَاتِ ۚ وَالطَّيِّبَاتُ لِلطَّيِّبِينَ وَالطَّيِّبُونَ
لِلطَّيِّبَاتِ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ مُبَرَّءُونَ مِمَّا يَقُولُونَ ۖ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٢٦﴾
يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتًا غَيْرَ بُيُوتِكُمْ حَتَّىٰ تَسْتَأْنِسُوا وَتُسَلِّمُوا
عَلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا ۖ ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَجِدُوا فِيهَا
أَحَدًا فَلَا تَدْخُلُوهَا حَتَّىٰ يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ ۖ وَإِنْ قِيلَ لَكُمُ ارْجِعُوا فَارْجِعُوا
هُوَ أَزْكَىٰ لَكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٨﴾ لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا
بُيُوتًا غَيْرَ مَسْكُونَةٍ فِيهَا مَتَاعٌ لَكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تُبْدُونَ وَمَا
تَكْتُمُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾ قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ۚ
ذَٰلِكَ أَزْكَىٰ لَهُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ
مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ
مِنْهَا وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَىٰ جُيُوبِهِنَّ ۖ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ
أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَائِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ
أَوْ بَنِي إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي أَخَوَاتِهِنَّ أَوْ نِسَائِهِنَّ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُنَّ أَوِ

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Those among you, who are bountiful and persons of means, should not swear on oath that they would withhold their help from their relatives, the indigent and those who have left their homes for the cause of Allah: they should forgive and forbear. Do you not wish that Allah should forgive you? and Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.[20] 22

Those who charge with slander those Believing women, who are chaste but simple souls,[21] are accursed in this world and in the Hereafter: there is a great punishment for them. They should not forget the Day when their own tongues and their own hands and feet will bear testimony in regard to their misdeeds.[21a] On that Day Allah will give them the full recompense they deserve, and they will realize that Allah is the very Truth, Who makes the Truth manifest. 23-25

Impure women are for impure men and impure men for impure women, and pure women are for pure men and pure men for pure women. They are free from those scandals which the slanderers utter.[22] There is forgiveness for them and honourable provision. 26

O Believers,[23] do not enter other houses than your own until you have the approval of the inmates[24] and have wished them peace; this is the best way for you: it is expected that you will observe it.[25] Then, if you do not find anyone therein, do not enter until you have been given permission,[26] and if you are told to go back, you should go back. This is a purer way for you;[27] and Allah has full knowledge of what you do. There is, however, no harm if you enter houses which are not dwelling places, but contain something useful for you ;[28] Allah knows what you disclose and what you conceal. 27-29

And O Prophet, enjoin the Believing men to restrain their gaze[29]and guard their private parts.[30] This is a more righteous way for them: Allah has knowledge of what they do. 30

O Prophet, enjoin the Believing men to restrain their gaze[31] and guard their private[32] parts.[33] and not to display their adornment[34] except that which is displayed of itself,[35] and to draw their veils over their bosoms[36] and not to display their adornment except before their husbands,[37] their fathers, the fathers of their husbands,[38] their sons and the sons of their husbands[39] (from other wives), their brothers,[40] 31

their brothers' sons,[41] their sisters' sons,[42] their female associates[43] and those in their possession[44] (contd. on p. 369)

Contd. from p.347]

Law of Allah. Obviously, in Allah's knowledge, the accusation was by itself false and its falsehood was in no way dependent on the production of witnesses by the accusers.

Here nobody should have the misunderstanding that failure to bring witnesses is being regarded as the basis and argument to prove that the accusation was false, and that the Muslims are also being told to regard it as a manifest calumny only because the accusers did not bring four witnesses. This misunderstanding can arise if one does not keep in view the background of the actual incident. As a matter of fact, none of the accusers had actually witnessed the thing which they were uttering with their tongues. The only basis of their accusation was that Ḥadrat 'Ā'ishah had been left behind from the caravan and afterwards Ṣafwān had brought her to the camp on his camel. From this nobody with a little common sense could conclude that Ḥadrat 'Ā'ishah's being left behind was intentional. These are not the ways of those who do these things. It cannot happen that the wife of the army commander quietly stays back with a man, and then the same man makes her ride on his camel and makes haste to catch up with the army at the next halting place in the open daylight at noon. The situation itself warranted that they were innocent. There could, however, be some justification in the charge if the accusers had seen something with their own eyes, otherwise the circumstances on which the accusers had based their accusation did not contain any ground for doubt and suspicion.

15. These verses, especially verse 12, wherein Allah says: "Why did not the Believing men and the Believing women have a good opinion of themselves ?" provide the general principle that all dealings in the Islamic society must be based on 'good faith'. The question of a bad opinion should arise only when there is a definite and concrete basis for it. Every person should, as a matter of principle, be considered as innocent unless there are sound reasons to hold him guilty or suspect. Every person should be considered as truthful unless there are strong grounds for holding him as unreliable

16. The direct interpretation of the verse, in the context in which it occurs, is this: "Those who cast aspersions, propagate evil, publicise it and bring Islamic morality into disrepute, deserve punishment." The words in the Text, however, comprehend all the various forms that can be employed for the propagation of evil. These include actual setting up of brothels, production of erotic stories, songs, paintings, plays and dramas as well as all kinds of mixed gatherings at clubs and

hotels, which induce the people to immoralities. The Qur'ān holds all those who resort to such things as criminals, who deserve punishment not only in the Hereafter but in this world as well. Accordingly it is the duty of an Islamic government to put an end to all such means of propagating immorality. Its penal law must hold all those acts as cognizable offences which the Qur'ān mentions as crimes against public morality and declares the offenders punishable.

17. "You do not know...": "You do not visualise the full impact of individual acts on society as a whole: Allah knows best the number of people who are affected by these acts and their cumulative effect on the collective life of the community. You should accordingly trust in Him and do all you can to eradicate and suppress the evils pointed out by Him. These are not trivial matters to be treated lightly; these have very serious repercussions and the offenders must be dealt with severely."

18. 'Satan' is bent upon involving you in all kinds of pollutions and indecencies: had it not been for the mercy and kindness of Allah Who enables you to differentiate between good and evil and helps you to educate and reform yourselves, you would not have been able to lead a pure and virtuous life on the strength of your own faculties and initiative alone.

19. It is Allah's Will alone which decides whom to make pious and virtuous. His decisions are not arbitrary but based on knowledge. He alone knows who is anxious to live a life of virtue and who is attracted towards a life of sin. Allah hears a person's most secret talk, and is aware of everything that passes in his mind. It is on the basis of this direct knowledge that Allah decides whom to bless with piety and virtue and whom to ignore.

20. Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah has stated that after the revelation of verses 11—21 absolving her from the accusation, Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr swore that he would no longer support Miṣṭaḥ bin Uthātha. This was because the man had shown absolutely no regard for the relationship nor for the favours that Abū Bakr had all along been showing him and his family. At this verse 22 was revealed and Ḥaḍrat Abu Bakr, on hearing it, immediately said: "By God! we do want that Allah should forgive us." Consequently he again started to help Mistah and in a more liberal manner than before. According to Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, some other Companions besides Hadrat Abū Bakr, also had sworn that they would discontinue helping those who had taken an active part in the slander. After the revelation of this verse, all of them revoked their oaths and the ill-will that had been created by the mischief was gone.

Here a question may arise as to whether a person, who swears for something and later on revokes the oath on finding that there was no good in it and

adopts a better and more virtuous course, should offer expiation for breaking the oath or not. One group of the jurists is of the opinion that adoption of the virtuous course itself is the expiation and nothing more needs to be done. They base their argument on this verse where Allah commanded Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr to revoke his oath but did not require him to atone for it. They also cite a Tradition of the Holy Prophet in support of their argument, saying: "If anybody takes an oath for something and later on finds that another course is better and adopts it, his adoption of a better course by itself is the atonement for breaking the oath."

The other group is of the view that there is a clear Commandment in the Qur'ān concerning the breaking of oath (II: 225, V: 89), which has neither been abrogated by this verse nor clearly amended. Therefore the earlier Commandment stands. No doubt, Allah commanded Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr to revoke his oath but He did not tell him that expiation was not necessary. As regards the Tradition of the Holy Prophet, it only means this that the sin of taking an oath for a wrong thing is wiped out when the right course is adopted; it does not absolve one from making expiation for the oath itself. Another Tradition of the Holy Prophet clarifies this view. He said: "Whoso swears for something and then finds that another course is better than the one he had sworn for, he should adopt the better course and atone for his oath." This shows that expiation for breaking one's oath and expiation of the sin for not doing good are different things. The expiation for the first is to adopt the right course, and for the second the same as has been laid down in the Qur'ān. For further explanation, see E.N. 46 of Sūrah Sād.

21. The word *ghāfilāt* as used in the Text means the women who are simple, unpretentious souls, who do not know any artifice, who have pious hearts and have no idea of immorality. They cannot even imagine that their names could ever be associated with any slander. The Holy Prophet has said: "To slander chaste women is one of the seven 'deadly' sins." According to another Tradition cited by Ṭabarānī from Ḥaḍrat Ḥuzaifah, the Holy Prophet said: "To slander a pious woman suffices to ruin the good deeds of a hundred years."

21 (a). For explanation, see E.N. 55 of Sūrah Yā Sīn and E.N. 25 of Ḥā Mīm Sajdah.

22. This verse enunciates a fundamental principle: Impure men are a fit match for impure women and pious men are a fit match for pious women. It never happens that a man is good in all other aspects but is addicted to a solitary vice. As a matter of fact, his very habits, manners and demeanour, all contain a number of evil traits, which sustain and nourish that single vice. It is impossible that a man develops a vice all of a sudden without having any trace of its existence in his demeanour and way of life. This is a psychological truth which everybody experiences in the daily lives of the people. How is it then possible that a man who

has all along lived a pure and morally clean life, will put up and continue to live for years in love with a wife who is adulterous? Can a woman be imagined who is an adulteress, but she does not manifest her evil character through her talk, gait, manners and deportment? Is it possible for a virtuous man of high character to live happily with a woman of this type? What is being suggested here is that people in future should not credulously put their belief in any rumour that reaches them. They should carefully see as to who is being accused and on what account and whether the accusation fairly sticks on the person or not. And when there exists no trace of evidence to support the accusation, people cannot believe it just because a foolish or wicked person has uttered it.

Some commentators have interpreted this verse to mean that evil things are for the evil people and good things for the good people: the good people are free from the evil things which the wicked people utter about them. Some others have interpreted it to mean that evil deeds only go with evil people and good deeds with good people: the pious people are free from the evil deeds which the wicked people ascribe to them. Still others interpret it to mean that evil and filthy talk is indulged in only by the evil and filthy people and good and pious talk only by the good and pious people: the pious people are free from the sort of talk that these mischievous people are indulging in. The words of the verse are comprehensive and can be interpreted in any of the three ways, but the first meaning that strikes the reader is the one that we have adopted above, and the same fits in more meaningfully with the context than others.

23. The Commandments given in the beginning of the Sūrah were meant to help eradicate evil when it had actually appeared in society. The Commandments being given now are meant to prevent the very birth of evil, to reform society and root out the causes responsible for the creation and spread of evil. Before we study these Commandments, it will be useful to understand two things clearly:

First, the revelation of these Commandments immediately after the Divine appraisal of the incident of the "slander" clearly indicates that permeation of a calumny against the noble person of a wife of the Holy Prophet in the society, was the direct result of the existence of a sexually charged atmosphere, and in the sight of Allah there was no other way of cleansing society of the evil than of prohibiting free entry into other people's houses, discouraging free mixing of the sexes together, forbidding women to appear in their make up before the other men, excepting a small circle of close relatives, banning prostitution, exhorting men and women not to remain unmarried for long, and arranging marriages even of the slaves and slave-girls. In other words, the movement of the women without purdah and the presence of a large number of unmarried persons in society were, in the

knowledge of Allah, the real causes that imperceptibly give rise to sensuality in society. It was this sexually charged atmosphere which kept the ears, eyes, tongues and hearts of the people ever ready to get involved in any real or fictitious scandal. Allah in His wisdom did not regard any other measure more suitable and effective than these Commandments to eradicate this evil; otherwise He would have enjoined some other Commandments.

The second important thing to remember is that Divine Law does not merely forbid an evil or only prescribe a punishment for the offender, but it also puts an end to all those factors which provide occasions for the evil, or incite or force a person to commit it. It also imposes curbs on the causes, incentives and means leading to the evil so as to check the wrongdoer much before he actually commits the crime. It does not like that people should freely approach and loiter about near the border lines of sin and get caught and punished all the time. It does not merely act as a prosecutor but as a guide, reformer and helper, too. So it uses all kinds of moral, social and educational devices to help the people to safeguard themselves against evil and vice.

24. The Arabic word *tasta'nisū* in the Text has been generally interpreted to mean the same as *tasta'zinū*. There is, however, a fine difference between the two words which should not be lost sight of. Had the word in the Text been *tasta'zinū*, the verse would have meant: "Do not enter other people's houses until you have taken their permission". Allah has used *tasta'nisū* which is derived from the root *uns*, meaning fondness, affection, regard, etc. According to this, the verse would mean: "Do not enter other people's houses until you are sure of their affection and regard for yourself." In other words, you should make sure that your entry in the house is not disagreeable to the inmates and you are sure of a welcome. That is why we have translated the word into 'approval' of the inmates instead of 'permission' of the inmates, because the word 'approval' expresses the sense of the original more precisely.

25. According to the Arab custom of the pre-Islamic days, people would enter each other's house freely without permission just by pronouncing 'good morning' or 'good evening'. This unannounced entry sometimes violated the privacy of the people and their women folk. Allah enjoined the principle that everybody has a right to privacy in his own house and no one is entitled to force his entry unannounced and without permission of the inmates. The rules and regulations enforced by the Holy Prophet in society on receipt of the above Commandment are given below serially:

(1) The 'right of privacy' was not merely confined to the question of entry in the houses, but it was declared as a common right according to which it is forbidden to peep into a house, glance from outside, or even read the other

person's letter without his permission. According to Thaubān, who was a freed slave of the Holy Prophet, the Holy Prophet said: "When you have already cast a look into a house, what is then the sense in seeking permission for entry?" (Abū Da'ūd). Ḥaḍrat Huzail bin Shurahbīl has reported that a man came to see the Holy Prophet and sought permission for entry while standing just in front of the door. The Holy Prophet said to him: "Stand aside: the object of the Commandment for seeking permission is to prevent casting of looks inside the house." (Abū Da'ūd). The practice of the Holy Prophet was that whenever he went to see somebody, he would stand aside, to the right or the left of the door, and seek permission as it was not then usual to hang curtains on the doors. (Abū Da'ūd). Ḥaḍrat Anas, the attendant of the Holy Prophet, states that a man glanced into the room of the Holy Prophet from outside. The Holy Prophet at that time was holding an arrow in his hand. He advanced towards the man in a way as if he would thrust the arrow into his belly. (Abū Da'ūd). According to Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, the Holy Prophet said: "Whoever glances through the letter of his brother without his permission, glances into fire." (Abū Da'ūd). According to Muslim and Bukhārī;, the Holy Prophet is reported to have said: "If someone peeps into your house, it will be no sin if you injure his eye with a piece of stone." In another Tradition, he has said: "The inmates of a house, who injure the eye of the man peeping into their house, are not liable to any punishment." Imām Shāfi'ī has taken this Commandment literally and permits smashing of the eye of the one who casts a glance like this. The Hanafīs, however, do not take the Command in the literal sense. They express the opinion that it is applicable only in that case where an outsider forces his entry into a house in spite of the resistance from the inmates and has his eye or some other limb smashed in the scuffle. In such a case, no penalty will lie on the inmates. *(Aḥkām'al-Qur'ān*, Al-Jaṣṣān, Vol. III, p. 385).

(2) The jurists have included 'hearing' also under 'glancing'. For instance, if a blind man enters a house without permission, he will not be able to see anybody, but he will certainly be able to hear whatever is going on in the house. This also amounts to violation of the other person's right of privacy.

(3) The Command to seek permission is not only applicable in cases where a person wants to enter the other people's houses, but it also applies to entry in the house of one's own mother or sister. A man asked the Holy Prophet: "Sir, should I seek permission to enter my mother's house also?" The Holy Prophet replied that he should. The man stated that there was nobody beside him to look after her, and asked whether it was necessary to get permission every time he wanted to go in. The Holy Prophet

replied: "Yes; would you like that you should see your mother in a naked state" (Ibn Jarīr quoting from 'Aṭā bin Yasār). According to a saying of 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, one should seek permission even when going to see one's own mother or sister. (Ibn Kathīr). He has suggested that even when a person goes to visit one's wife in one's own house, he should announce his arrival by coughing, etc. It is related by his wife Zainab that 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd would always announce his arrival by coughing, etc. and never liked that he should enter the house unannounced all of a sudden. (Ibn Jarīr).

(4) The only exception to the general rule is that no permission is needed in case of an emergency or a calamity like theft, fire, etc. One can go for help without permission in such cases.

(5) In the beginning when the system of seeking permission was introduced, people did not know the exact procedure to be followed. Once a man came to the Prophet's house and shouted at the door, "Should I be in ?" The Holy Prophet said to his maid servant, Roudah, "Go and instruct him about the correct way. He should say: *Assalām-o-'alaikum* (peace be upon you): May I come in?" (Ibn Jarīr, Abū Da'ūd). Jābir bin 'Abdullah says that once he went to the Holy Prophet's house in connection with certain liabilities of his father and knocked at the door. The Holy Prophet asked: "Who is it?" I replied, "It's me." The Holy Prophet thereupon repeated twice or thrice: "It's me, it's me!" That is, how can one understand from this who you are? (Abū Da'ūd).

A man named Kaladah bin Hanbal went to see the Holy Prophet and got seated without the customary salutation. The Holy Prophet told him to go out and come in again after calling: *Assalām-o-'alaikum* (peace be upon you). (Abū Da'ūd). Thus, the correct method of seeking permission was to disclose one's identity first and then ask for permission. It is related that whenever Hadrat 'Umar went to see the Holy Prophet, he would say: "*Assalām-o-'alaikum yā Rasūl-Allah*, I am 'Umar: May I enter!" (Abū Da'ūd). The Holy Prophet enjoined that permission should be asked thrice at the most. If there is no reply even at the third call, one should come back. (Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū D'ūd). The same was his own practice. Once he went to the house of Hadrat Sa'd bin 'Ubādah and sought permission twice after greeting with: *Assalām-o-'alaikum wa Rahmatullah* (peace be upon you and mercy of Allah), but there was no response. After calling for the third time when he received no response, he turned back. Sa'd came out running from the house, and said, "O Messenger of Allah, I was hearing you all right, but I desired to have Allah's peace and mercy invoked upon me through your sacred tongue as often as possible; therefore, I was replying to you in a low voice." (Abū D'ūd, Aḥmad). The three calls as enjoined above should not be made in quick

succession, but at suitable intervals so as to allow sufficient time to the inmates to make the response in case they are not free to do so.

(6) The permission for entry should come from the master of the house himself or from some other reliable inmate like a servant or a responsible person, who gives permission on behalf of the master. One should not enter the house on the word of a mere child.

(7) Undue insistence for permission to enter or to keep standing at the door obstinately even after refusal, is not permissible. If no entry is permitted even after three calls, or the master refuses to see, one should go back.

26. Entry into an empty house is not allowed unless permitted as such by the master of the house. One may, for instance, have told a visitor or sent him a message to wait in his room till his arrival. The mere fact that there is nobody in the house or the call is not answered does not entitle anybody to enter without permission.

27. That is, nobody should mind if entry is refused, for everybody has a right to refuse to meet another person, or offer a plea if otherwise busy. The Command "Go back", according to the jurists, means going back in the literal sense and moving away from the door. Nobody has any right to compel the other person for a meeting or to embarrass him by standing obstinately at his door.

28. "Houses which are not dwelling place" are the hotels, inns, guest houses, shops, staging bungalows, etc. which are generally open to all people.

29. The word *ghaḍḍ* means to reduce, shorten or lower down something. Accordingly, *ghaḍḍ baṣar* is generally translated as 'lowering the gaze' or 'keeping it lowered'. But the Command of *ghaḍḍ baṣar* does not imply that the gaze should always be kept lowered. It only means to imply that one should restrain one's gaze and avoid casting of looks freely. That is, if it is not desirable to see a thing, one should turn the eyes away and avoid having a look at it. The restriction of a 'restrained gaz' is applicable only in a limited sphere. The context in which the words occur shows that this restriction applies to the men's gazing at women, or casting looks at the *satar* of the other persons, or fixing the eyes at indecent scenes.

The details of this Divine Commandment as explained in the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet are given below:

(1) It is not lawful for a man to cast a full gaze at the other women except at his own wife or the *maḥram* women of his family. The chance look is pardonable but not the second look which one casts when one feels the lure of the object. The Holy Prophet has termed such gazing and glancing as wickedness of the eyes. He has said that man commits adultery with all

his sensory organs. The evil look at the other woman is the adultery of the eyes; lustful talk is the adultery of the tongue; relishing the other woman's voice is adultery of the ears; and touching her body with the hand or walking for an unlawful purpose is adultery of the hands and feet. After these preliminaries the sexual organs either bring the act of adultery to completion or leave it incomplete. (Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd).

According to a Tradition related by Hadrat Buraidah, the Holy Prophet instructed Ḥadrat 'Alī: "O 'Alī, do not cast a second look after the first look. The first look is pardonable but not the second one." (Ṭirmizī;, Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd). Hadrat Jarīr bin 'Abdullah Bajalī says that he asked the Holy Prophet, "What should I do if I happen to cast a chance look?" The Holy Prophet replied, "Turn your eyes away or lower your gaze." (Muslim, Aḥmad, Ṭirmizī, Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'ī). Ḥadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd quotes the Holy Prophet as having said: "Allah says that the gaze is one of the poisonous arrows of Satan. Whoever forsakes it, out of His fear, he will be rewarded with a faith whose sweetness he will relish in his own heart." (Ṭabarānī). According to a Tradition related by Abū Umāmah, the Holy Prophet said: "If a Muslim happens to glance at the charms of a woman and then turns his eyes away, Allah will bless his worship and devotion and will make it all the more sweet." (Musnad Aḥmad). Imām Ja'far Sādiq has quoted from his father, Imām Muhammad Bāqir, who has quoted Ḥadrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah Ansārī as saying: "On the occasion of the Farewell Pilgrimage, Faḍal bin'Abbās, who was a young cousin of the Holy Prophet, was riding with him on the camelback during the return journey from Mash'ar al-Harām. When they came to a few women passing on the way, Fadal started looking at them. Thereupon the Holy Prophet put his hand on his face and turned it to the other side." (Abū Da'ūd). On another occasion during the same Pilgrimage, a woman of the clan of Khath'am stopped the Holy Prophet on the way and sought clarification about a certain matter pertaining to Ḥajj. Faḍal bin 'Abbās fixed his gaze at her, but the Holy Prophet turned his face to the other side. (Bukhārī, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmizī).

(2) Nobody should have the misunderstanding that the Command to restrain the gaze was enjoined because the women were allowed to move about freely with open faces, for if veiling of the face had already been enjoined, the question of restraining or not restraining the gaze would not have arisen. This argument is incorrect rationally as well as factually. It is incorrect rationally because even when veiling of the face is the usual custom, occasions can arise where a man and a woman come face to face with each other suddenly, or when a veiled woman has to uncover her face under necessity. Then even if the Muslim women observe purdah, there will be non-Muslim women who will continue to move about unveiled. Thus, the Commandment to lower the gaze or restrain the eyes, does not

necessarily presume existence of a custom allowing the women to move about with unveiled faces. It is incorrect factually because the custom of purdah which was introduced after the revelation of the Commandments in Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb included veiling of the face, and this is supported by a number of Traditions relating to the time of the Holy Prophet himself. Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah in her statement relating to the incident of the "slander", which has been narrated on the authority of reliable reporters, has said: "When I came back to the camp, and found that the caravan had left, I lay down and was overpowered by sleep. In the morning when Safwān bin Mu'attal passed that way he recognised me because he had seen me before the Commandment of purdah had been sent down. On recognising me he exclaimed: *Innā lillāhi wa innā ilaihi rāji'ūn:* 'To Allah we belong and to Him we shall return'; and I awoke and covered my face with my sheet." (Bukhārī, Muslim, Aḥmad, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Hishām). Abū Da'ūd contains an incident that when the son of Umm Khallād was killed in a battle, she came to the Holy Prophet to enquire about him and was wearing the veil as usual. It was natural to presume that on such a sad occasion one is liable to lose one's balance and ignore the restrictions of purdah. But when questioned she said, "I have certainly lost my son but not my modesty." Another Tradition in Abū Da'ūd quoted on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah relates that a woman handed an application to the Holy Prophet from behind a curtain. The Holy Prophet enquired: "Is it a man's hand or a woman's?" She replied that it was a woman's. Thereupon the Holy Prophet said: "If it is a woman's hand, the nails at least should have been coloured with henna!" As regards the two incidents relating to the occasion of Ḥajj, which we have mentioned above, they cannot be used as an argument to prove that the veil was not in vogue in the time of the Holy Prophet. This is because wearing of the veil is prohibited in the state of *iḥrām*. However, even in that state pious women did not like to uncover their faces before the other men. Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah has stated that during the Farewell Pilgrimage when they were moving towards Makkah in the state of *iḥrām*, the women would lower down their head sheets over their faces whenever the travellers passed by them, and would uncover their faces as soon as they had passed by. (Abū Da'ūd).

There are certain exceptions to the Command of lowering the gaze or restraining the look. These exceptions relate to occasions when it is really necessary to see a woman, for instance, when a man intends to marry her. It is not only permissible to see the woman in such a case but even commendable. Mughirah bin Shu'bah has stated, "I wanted to marry in a certain family. The Holy Prophet asked me whether I had seen the girl or not. When I replied in the negative, he said: 'Have a look at her; this will enhance harmonious relationship between you two'." (Aḥmad, Tirmizi,

Nasā'i, Ibn Mājah, Dārimī). According to a Tradition related by Abū Hurairah, a man wanted to marry in a family of the Anṣār. The Holy Prophet asked him to have a look at the girl, for the Anṣār usually had a defect in their eyes. (Muslim, Nasā'i, Aḥmad). According to Jābir bin 'Abdullah, the Holy Prophet said: "When a person from among you wants to marry a woman, he should have a look at her to satisfy himself that there is some quality in the woman which induces him to marry her." (Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd). According to another Tradition emanating from Abū Ḥumaidah and quoted in Musnad Aḥmad, the Holy Prophet said that there was no harm in such a procedure. He also permitted that the girl may be seen without her being aware of it. From this the jurists have concluded that there is no harm in looking at a woman when it is really necessary. For instance, there is no harm in looking at a suspect woman when investigating a crime, or in the judge's looking at a female witness, who appears in the court, or in the physician's looking at a female patient, etc.

(4) The intention of the Command to restrain the gaze also implies that no man or woman should look at the private parts of the other man or woman. The Holy Prophet has said: "No man should look at the *satar* of another man nor a woman at the *satar* of another woman." (Ahmad, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmizī). Ḥadrat 'Alī has quoted the Holy Prophet as saying: "Do not look at the thigh of another person, living or dead". (Abū Da'ūd, Ibn Mājah).

30. "Guard their private parts": Abstain from illicit sexual gratification and from exposing their *satar* before others. For males, the *satar* is the part of the body from the navel to the knee, and it is not permissible to expose that part of the body intentionally before anybody except one's own wife. (Dāraqutnī, Baihaqī). Ḥadrat Jarhad Aslamī states that once he was sitting in the company of the Holy Prophet with his thigh exposed. The Holy Prophet said: "Do you not know that the thigh has to be kept concealed." (Tirmizī, Abū Da'ūd, Mu'attā). Ḥadrat 'Alī reports that the Holy Prophet said: "Do not expose your thigh." (Abū Da'ūd, Ibn Mājah). Not only is the *satar* to be kept concealed before others but even when alone. The Holy Prophet has warned: "Beware, never remain naked, for with you are those (that is, the angels of goodness and mercy), who never leave you alone except when you ease yourself or you go to your wives. So feel shy of them and give them due respect." (Tirmizī). According to another Tradition, the Holy Prophet said: "Guard your *satar* from everybody except from your wife and your slave-girl." The questioner asked, "Even when we are alone?" The Holy Prophet replied, "Yes, even when alone, for Allah has a greater right that you should feel shy of Him." (Abū Da'ūd, Tirmizī, Ibn Mājah).

31. The Commandments of restraining the gaze for women are the same as for men. They should not glance intentionally at the other men, and if they happen to cast a chance look, they should turn their eyes away; and they should abstain from looking at the *satar* of others. However, the Commandments relating to the men's looking at women are a little different from those relating to the women's looking at men. On the one hand, there is an incident related in a Tradition saying that Hadrat Umm Salamah and Ḥadrat Umm Maimūnah, wives of the Holy Prophet, were sitting with him when Ibn Umm Maktūm, a blind Companion, made his appearance. The Holy Prophet said to his wives: "Conceal your faces from him." The wives said, "O Messenger of Allah: Is he not a blind man ? Neither will he see us nor recognize us." Thereupon the Holy Prophet remarked: "Are you two also blind? Do you not see him?" Ḥadrat Umm Salamah has clarified that this incident occurred at a time when the Commandments about the observance of purdah had already been sent down. (Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmizī. This is also supported by a Tradition in Mu'attā saying that a blind man came to see Ḥadrat 'Ā'ishah and she observed purdah from him. When asked as to why she observed purdah when the man could not see her, she replied: "But I do see him." On the other hand, there is a different Tradition from Hadrat 'Ā'ishah. In 7 A.H. a deputation of the negroes came to Al-Madīnah and they gave a performance of physical skill in the compound of the Prophet's Mosque. The Holy Prophet himself showed their performance to Ḥadrat 'Ā'ishah. (Bukhārī, Muslim, Aḥmad). In another case, we find that when Fātimah bint Qais was irrevocably divorced by her husband, the question arose as to where she should pass her *'Iddah* (the prescribed waiting term after divorce or death of husband). The Holy Prophet first told her to stay with Umm Sharīk Ansārī, but then instructed her to stay in the house of Ibn Umm Maktūm, where she could stay with greater freedom as he was a blind man. He did not approve of her staying in the house of Umm Sharīk because she was a rich lady and her house was frequented by the Companions whom she entertained generously. (Muslim, Abū Da'ūd). Read together these Traditions show that the restrictions about the women's looking at men are not so hard as about the men's looking at women. While it is forbidden for women to sit face to face with men, it is not unlawful if they cast a look at men while passing on the way or see a harmless performance by them from a distance. There is also no harm for women to see the other men in case of real need if they are living in the same house. Imām Ghazzālī; and Ibn Ḥajar 'Asqalānī have also reached almost the same conclusion. Shaukānī in his *Nail al-Auṭār* has quoted Ibn Ḥajar as saying: "Such a permission in respect of women is also supported by the fact that they have always enjoyed this type of freedom in outdoor duties While they came out veiled when visiting the mosques, or moving in the streets, or during the journey, so that men may not gaze at them, the men were never commanded to use the veil so that women may not gaze at them. This shows that

the Commandments in respect of the two sexes are different." (Vol. VI, p. 101). However, it is not at all permissible that women should gaze leisurely at men and draw pleasure of the eye in doing so.

32. That is, they should abstain from illicit gratification of their sex desire as well as from exposing their *satar* before others. Though the commandments for men in this respect are the same as for women, the boundaries of *satar* for women are different from those prescribed for men. Moreover, the female *satar* with respect to men is different from that with respect to women

The female *satar* with respect to men is the entire body, excluding only the hand and the face, which should not be exposed before any other man, not even the brother and father, except the husband. The woman is not allowed to wear a thin or a tight fitting dress which might reveal the skin or the outlines of the body. According to a Tradition from Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, once her sister Asmā' came before the Holy Prophet in a thin dress. The Holy Prophet immediately turned his face away and said: "O Asmā', when a woman has attained her maturity, it is not permissible that any part of her body should be exposed except the face and the hand." (Abū Da'ūd). Ibn Jarīr has related a similar incident from Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah saying that once the daughter of 'Abdullah bin Ṭufail, who was her mother's son from her former husband, came to her house on a visit. When the Holy Prophet (Allah's peace be upon him) entered the house, he saw her but turned his face to the other side. Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah said: "O Messenger of Allah, she is my niece." Thereupon the Holy Prophet remarked: "When a woman reaches the age of puberty, it is not lawful for her to display her body except the hand and the face. (Then he indicated what he meant by the hand by gripping his own hand from the wrist so that there was hardly a breadth left between his grip and the palm of the hand)." The only relaxation permitted in this connection is that a woman can uncover only that much of her body before her close relatives (for example, her brother, father, etc.) as is absolutely necessary for attending to the household duties. For instance, she can roll up her sleeves while kneading the flour, or tuck up her trousers while washing the floor.

The boundaries of female *satar* with respect to women are the same as the boundaries of the male *satar* with respect to men, which is the part of the body from the navel to the knee. This does not, however, mean that a woman should appear half naked before other women. It only means that while it is obligatory to keep the part of body from the navel to the knee duly covered, it is not so in case of other parts.

33. It should be carefully noted that the demands that Divine Law makes from women are not only those it has made from men, that is restraining of looks and guarding of the private parts, but it makes some other demands from them

also, which it has not made from men. This shows that men and women are not identical in this respect.

34. "Adornment" includes attractive clothes, ornaments and other decorations of the head, face, hand, feet, etc. which the women usually employ, and is expressed by the modern word 'make-up'. The injunction that this 'make-up' should not be displayed before others is discussed in detail in the following Notes.

35. Different interpretations given by different commentators of this verse have greatly confused its real meaning. All that is obviously meant is that "women should not display their make-up and adornment" except that "which is displayed of itself" and is beyond their control. This clearly means that women should not purposely and intentionally display their make-up, but there is no accountability if the make-up becomes displayed without any purpose or intention on their part; for instance, the head-wrapper's being blown aside by the wind thus exposing the adornment, or the outer-garment itself which cannot be concealed but which nevertheless has attraction being a part of the female dress. This very interpretation of this verse has been given by Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Ḥasan Baṣrī, Ibn Sīrīn and Ibrahim Nakha'ī. On the contrary, some other commentators have interpreted the verse to mean "all those parts of the body which usually remain exposed or uncovered" and in this they include the hands and the face with all their adornments. This is the view of Ḥaḍrat Ibn 'Abbās and his followers, and a large number of the Ḥanafī jurists have accepted it. (*Aḥkām-ul-Qur'ān*, Al-Jaṣṣāṣ, Vol. III, pp. 388-389). Thus, according to them, it is permissible for a woman to move out freely with the uncovered face in full make-up and adornment of the hands

We are, however, unable to subscribe to this view. There is a world of difference between "displaying something" and "its becoming displayed of itself." The first implies 'intention' and the second 'compulsion' and a state of helplessness. Moreover, such an interpretation also goes against the traditions which state that the women never moved out with open and uncovered faces in the time of the Holy Prophet after the Commandments of purdah had been sent down. These Commandments implied veiling of the face as well, and the veil had become a part of the female dress except during *Ḥajj* when one has to be in the prescribed state of *iḥrām* and keep the face uncovered. Another argument that is advanced in support of this view is that the hands and the face are not included in the *satar* of the woman, whereas *satar* and purdah are two entirely different things. Sanctity of *satar* is such that it cannot be violated even before the *maḥram* males like the father, brother, etc. As for purdah it is over and above *satar* which is meant to segregate women from non *maḥram* males; the discussion here relates to the Commandments of purdah and not to *satar*.

36. In the pre-Islamic days of ignorance, women used to wear a sort of head-band, which was tied in a knot at the rear of the head. The slit of the shirt in the front partly remained open exposing the front of the neck and the upper part of the bosom. There was nothing except the shirt to cover the breasts, and the hair was worn in a couple or two of plaits hanging behind like tails. *(Al-Kashshāf,* Vol. II, p. 90, and *Ibn Kathīr,* Vol. III, pp. 283-284). At the revelation of this verse, the head-wrapper *(dopatta)* was introduced among the Muslim women, which was meant to cover the head, the breasts, and the back, completely. The way the Muslim women responded to this Command has been described by Ḥadrat 'Ā'ishah in a vivid manner. She states that when Sūrah An-Nūr was revealed and the people learnt of its contents from the Holy Prophet, they immediately went back to their houses and recited the verses before their wives, daughters and sisters. There was an instantaneous response. The Anṣār women, one and all, immediately got up and made wrappers from whatever piece of cloth that was handy. The next morning all the women who came to the Prophe's Mosque for prayers were dressed in wrappers. In another tradition Ḥadrat 'Ā'ishah says that thin cloth was discarded and the women selected only coarse cloth for the purpose. *(Ibn Kathīr,* Vol.III, p. 284, Abū Da'ūd).

The very nature and object of the Command demanded that the wrapper should not be made out of fine and thin cloth. The Anṣār women immediately understood the real object and knew what type of cloth was intended to be used. The Law-Giver himself clarified this and did not leave it to be interpreted by the people. Diḥyā Kalbī states: "Once a length of fine Egyptian muslin was presented to the Holy Prophet. He gave a piece of it to me and said, 'Use one part of it for your shirt, and give the rest of it to your wife for a wrapper, but tell her that she should stitch another piece of cloth on the inner side so that the body may not be displayed through it." (Abū Da'ūd).

37. This verse describes the circle in which a woman can move freely with all her make-up and adornment. Outside this circle she is not allowed to appear with make-up before the other people, whether they are relatives or strangers. The Commandment implies that she should not display her embellishments outside this limited circle, intentionally or through carelessness. However, what becomes displayed incidentally, in spite of care and concern, or what cannot be concealed, it is excused by Allah.

38. 'Fathers' include grandfathers and great grandfathers as well, both paternal and maternal. Accordingly a woman can appear before her own and her husband's grandfathers just as she can appear before her own father and father-in-law.

39. 'Sons' include grandsons and great grandsons from the male or female offspring. No distinction is to be made between the real sons and the step-sons.

40. 'Brothers' include real and stepbrothers.

41. 'Sons of brothers and sisters' include sons, grandsons and great grandsons of all the three kinds of brothers and sisters.

42. After the relatives the other people are now being mentioned. But before we proceed further, it would be useful to understand three things in order to avoid confusion.

First, some jurists hold that the freedom of movement and display of adornment by a woman is restricted to the circle of relatives mentioned in this verse. All others, even the real paternal and maternal uncles, are excluded from this list and a woman should observe purdah from them because they have not been mentioned in the Qur'ān. This is, however, not a correct view. Let alone the real uncles, the Holy Prophet disallowed Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah to observe purdah even from her foster uncles. A tradition quoted in Ṣiḥāḥ Sitta' and Musnad Aḥmad on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah says that once Aflaḥ, brother of Abul Qu'ais, came to see her and sought permission to enter the house. But since the Commandment of purdah had been received, Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah refused him permission. On this Aflaḥ sent back the word saying, "You are my niece: you were suckled by my brother Abul Qu'ais's wife." But Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah still was hesitant whether it was permissible to appear unveiled before such a relative or not. In the meantime the Holy Prophet arrived and he ruled that he could see her. This shows that the Holy Prophet himself did not interpret the verse in the way these jurists do that it was lawful to appear unveiled only before those relatives who have been mentioned in the verse and not before others. He interpreted it to mean that purdah need not be observed from those relatives with whom marriage is prohibited, for instance, paternal and maternal uncles, son-in-law and foster relatives. Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣri from among the followers has expressed the same opinion and the same has been supported by 'Allāma Abū Bakr al-Jassās in his *Aḥkam-ul-Qur'ān.* (Vol. III, p. 390).

Secondly, there is the question of those relatives with whom marriage is not permanently prohibited; they neither fall in the category of *maḥram* relatives (that women may freely appear before them with adornment) nor in the category of complete strangers that they should observe full purdah from them as from others. What should be the right course between the two extremes has not been determined by the *Sharī'ah* for such a course cannot possibly be determined. The observance of purdah or otherwise in such cases will inevitably depend on the mutual relationship, age of the woman and of men, family relations and contacts and other circumstances (e.g. residence in the same house or in different houses). The

personal example of the Holy Prophet himself in this matter gives us the same guidance. A large number of traditions confirm that Ḥaḍrat Aṣmā', daughter of Abū Bakr, who was a sister-in-law of the Holy Prophet, appeared unveiled before him and no purdah, at least of the face and hands, was observed by her. This same position continued till the Farewell Pilgrimage which took place just a few months before the death of the Holy Prophet. (Abū Da'ūd). Similarly Ḥaḍrat Umm Hāni', daughter of Abū Ṭālib and a first cousin of the Holy Prophet, appeared before him till the end without ever observing purdah of the face and hands. She herself has narrated an incident pertaining to the conquest of Makkah, which confirms the same. (Abū Da'ūd). On the contrary, we see that Ḥaḍrat 'Abbās sends his son Faḍal, and Rabī'ah bin Ḥārith bin 'Abdul Muṭṭalib (a first cousin of the Holy Prophet) his son 'Abdul Muttalib before the Holy Prophet with the request for a job, as they could not be married till they became earning members of the family. They both see the Holy Prophet in the house of his wife Zainab, who is a first cousin of Faḍal and is similarly related to the father of 'Abdul Muṭṭalib bin Rabī'ah. But she does not appear before them and talks to them from behind a curtain in the presence of the Holy Prophet. (Abū Da'ūd). Taking the two kinds of precedents together we come to the same conclusion as we have stated above.

Thirdly, in cases where the relationship itself becomes doubtful, purdah should be observed even from the *maḥram* relatives. Bukhārī, Muslim and Abū Da'ūd have related a case where Saudah, a wife of the Holy Prophet, had a brother born of a slave woman. 'Utbah, the father of Saudah and the boy, left a will enjoining his brother, Sa'd bin Abī Waqqās, to look after the boy as a nephew for he was from his own seed. When the case came before the Holy Prophet, he rejected the claim of Ḥaḍrat Sa'd, saying: "The boy belongs to him on whose bed he was born; as for the adulterer, let stones and pebbles be his lot." But at the same time he told Ḥaḍrat Saudah to observe purdah from the boy because it was doubtful whether he was really her brother.

43. The Arabic word *nisā-i-hinna* means "their female associates". Before we consider what women are exactly meant, it is worth noting that the word used here is not *an-nisā*, which merely means "women", but *nisā i-hinna* which means "their female associates". In the former case, it would be quite permissible for a Muslim woman to appear unveiled before all sorts of women and display her adornment. The use of *nisā-i-hinna*, however, has circumscribed her freedom within a specific circle. As to what specific circle of women is implied, the commentators and jurists have expressed different opinions.

According to one group, the "female associates" mean only the Muslim women; as for the non-Muslim women, whether *zimmīs* or otherwise, they are excluded and purdah should be observed from them as from men. Ibn 'Abbās, Mujāhid and Ibn Juraij hold this opinion and cite the following incident in support

thereof: Caliph 'Umar wrote to Ḥadrat Abū 'Ubaidah: "I hear that some Muslim women have started going to public baths along with the non-Muslim women. It is not permissible for a woman who believes in Allah and the Last Day that she should expose her body before the women other than of her own community." On receipt of this letter Hadrat Abū 'Ubaidah was much upset, and he cried out: "May the face of the woman who goes to the public baths to whiten her complexion be blackened on the Last Day!" (Ibn Jarīr, Baihaqī, Ibn Kathīr).

Another group, which includes Imām Rāzī, is of the view that "female associates" are all women without exception. But it is not possible to accept this view as in that case *an-nisā* should have sufficed and there was no need to use *nisā-i-hinna*.

The third opinion, and this appears to be reasonable and nearer the Qur'ānic Text, is that "their female associates" mean those familiar and known women with whom a woman usually comes into contact in her daily life and who share in her household chores, etc. whether they are Muslim or non-Muslim. The object here is to exclude those women from the circle who are either strangers whose cultural and moral background is not known or whose antecedents are apparently doubtful, which make them unreliable. This view is also supported by the authentic Traditions which state that *zimmī* women used to visit the wives of the Holy Prophet. The real thing to be considered in this connection would be the moral character and not the religious belief. Muslim women can meet and have intimate social contacts with noble, modest and virtuous women, who come from well-known and reliable families even if they are non-Muslim. But they must observe purdah from immodest, immoral and vulgar women even if they happen to be "Muslims". Their company from the moral viewpoint is as dangerous as of other men. As for contacts with un-known, unfamiliar women, they may at the most be treated like *non-maḥram* relatives. A woman may uncover her face and hands before them but she must keep the rest of her body and adornments concealed.

44. There is a good deal of difference of opinion among the jurists about the correct meaning of this injunction. One group holds that this refers only to the slave girls owned by a lady. Accordingly they interpret the Divine Command to mean that the Muslim woman can display her adornment before a slave girl, whether she is an idolatress or a Jew or a Christian, but she cannot appear before a slave man even if he is legally owned by her; for purposes of purdah, he is to be treated just like a free male stranger. This is the view of 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Mujāhid, Ḥasan Baṣrī, Ibn Sīrīn, Sa'īd bin Musayyab, Tā'ūs and Imām Abū

[Contd. on p.370

التّٰبِعِيْنَ غَيْرِ اُولِى الْاِرْبَةِ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ اَوِ الطِّفْلِ الَّذِيْنَ لَمْ يَظْهَرُوْا عَلٰى
عَوْرٰتِ النِّسَآءِ ۪ وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِاَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِيْنَ مِنْ زِيْنَتِهِنَّ ؕ
وَتُوْبُوْٓا اِلَى اللّٰهِ جَمِيْعًا اَيُّهَ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿۳۱﴾ وَاَنْكِحُوا الْاَيَامٰى
مِنْكُمْ وَالصّٰلِحِيْنَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ وَاِمَآئِكُمْ ؕ اِنْ يَّكُوْنُوْا فُقَرَآءَ يُغْنِهِمُ اللّٰهُ
مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿۳۲﴾ وَلْيَسْتَعْفِفِ الَّذِيْنَ لَا يَجِدُوْنَ نِكَاحًا
حَتّٰى يُغْنِيَهُمُ اللّٰهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ ؕ وَالَّذِيْنَ يَبْتَغُوْنَ الْكِتٰبَ مِمَّا مَلَكَتْ اَيْمَانُكُمْ
فَكَاتِبُوْهُمْ اِنْ عَلِمْتُمْ فِيْهِمْ خَيْرًا ۖ وَّاٰتُوْهُمْ مِّنْ مَّالِ اللّٰهِ الَّذِيْٓ اٰتٰىكُمْ ؕ
وَلَا تُكْرِهُوْا فَتَيٰتِكُمْ عَلَى الْبِغَآءِ اِنْ اَرَدْنَ تَحَصُّنًا لِّتَبْتَغُوْا عَرَضَ الْحَيٰوةِ
الدُّنْيَا ؕ وَمَنْ يُّكْرِهْهُّنَّ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ اِكْرَاهِهِنَّ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿۳۳﴾ وَ
لَقَدْ اَنْزَلْنَآ اِلَيْكُمْ اٰيٰتٍ مُّبَيِّنٰتٍ وَّمَثَلًا مِّنَ الَّذِيْنَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَ
مَوْعِظَةً لِّلْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿۳۴﴾ اَللّٰهُ نُوْرُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ مَثَلُ نُوْرِهٖ كَمِشْكٰوةٍ فِيْهَا
مِصْبَاحٌ ؕ اَلْمِصْبَاحُ فِيْ زُجَاجَةٍ ؕ اَلزُّجَاجَةُ كَاَنَّهَا كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ يُّوْقَدُ مِنْ
شَجَرَةٍ مُّبٰرَكَةٍ زَيْتُوْنَةٍ لَّا شَرْقِيَّةٍ وَّلَا غَرْبِيَّةٍ ۙ يَّكَادُ زَيْتُهَا يُضِيْٓءُ وَلَوْ
لَمْ تَمْسَسْهُ نَارٌ ؕ نُوْرٌ عَلٰى نُوْرٍ ؕ يَهْدِى اللّٰهُ لِنُوْرِهٖ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ؕ وَيَضْرِبُ
اللّٰهُ الْاَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿۳۵﴾ فِيْ بُيُوْتٍ اَذِنَ اللّٰهُ اَنْ
تُرْفَعَ وَيُذْكَرَ فِيْهَا اسْمُهٗ ۙ يُسَبِّحُ لَهٗ فِيْهَا بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْاٰصَالِ ﴿۳۶﴾ رِجَالٌ ۙ
لَّا تُلْهِيْهِمْ تِجَارَةٌ وَّلَا بَيْعٌ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللّٰهِ وَاِقَامِ الصَّلٰوةِ وَاِيْتَآءِ الزَّكٰوةِ ۙ
يَخَافُوْنَ يَوْمًا تَتَقَلَّبُ فِيْهِ الْقُلُوْبُ وَالْاَبْصَارُ ﴿۳۷﴾ لِيَجْزِيَهُمُ اللّٰهُ اَحْسَنَ مَا
عَمِلُوْا وَيَزِيْدَهُمْ مِّنْ فَضْلِهٖ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿۳۸﴾ وَ

and male attendants incapable of sex desire[45]and those boys who have not yet attained knowledge of sex matters concerning women;[46] also forbid them to stamp their feet on the ground lest their hidden ornaments should be displayed.[47] 31

O Believers, turn all together towards Allah :[48] it is expected that you will attain true success.[49]

Arrange marriages between the single men and women among you[50] and between your slave men and slave women, who are righteous,[51,52] if they be indigent, Allah will provide means for them out of His bounty:[53] Allah has boundless resources and He is All-Knowing. And those, who cannot find a match, should observe continence till Allah provides them with means out of His bounty[54] 32-33

And if those who are in your possession, ask for a deed of emancipation, execute the deed of emancipation with them,[56] provided that you find some good in them ;[57] and give them something out of the means Allah has given you.[58]

And do not force your slave-girls into prostitution for your own worldly gains when they themselves want to keep chaste;[59] and if anyone forces them into it, after such a compulsion Allah will be forgiving and merciful for them.

We have sent down to you Revelations giving clear guidance and cited examples of the peoples who went before you to serve as warning and We have imparted admonitions for the God-fearing.[60] 34

Allah[61] is the light of the heavens and the earth:[62] His light (in the universe) may be likened (to the light of) a lamp in a niche: the lamp is in a glass shade: the glass shade is like a glittering star and lamp is lit with the olive oil of a blessed tree[63] which is neither eastern nor western:[64] its oil is (so fine) as if it were going to shine forth by itself though no fire touched it (as though all the means of increasing) light upon light (were provided[65]); Allah guides to His light whomever He wills.[66] He cites parables to make the Message clear to the people; He has perfect knowledge of everything.[67] (Those who obtain guidance to His light are found) in the houses which He has enjoined to raise up and to mention His name therein.[68] In them such people glorify Him morning and evening as are not diverted by trade and merchandise from 35-38

remembering Him and from establishing *Salāt* and paying *Zakāt*, for they fear the Day when the hearts will be overturned and the eyes will become petrified. (And they behave like this) so that Allah may reward them for their excellent deeds and, in addition to it, show His favour to them out of His bounty: Allah provides without stint[69] for anyone He pleases.

Contd. from p. 367]

Ḥanīfah, and a saying of Imām Shafi'ī also supports this. They argue that the slave is not a *maḥram* to the lady; if he is freed, he can marry his former owner. Therefore the mere fact of his being a slave cannot by itself entitle him to be treated like the male *maḥrams* and allow the lady to appear freely before him. The question, why should the words" those in their possession" which are general and applicable to both slaves and slave girls, be restricted to mean only slave girls, is answered by these jurists like this: Though the words are general, the context and background in which they occur make them specifically applicable to slave girls only. The , words "those in their possession" occur just after "their female associates" in the verse; therefore one could understand that the reference was to a woman's relatives and other associates; this could lead to the misunderstanding that the slave girls perhaps were excluded; the words "those in their possession" therefore were used to clarify that a woman could display her adornments before the slave girls as before her free female associates.

The other group holds that the words "those in their possession" include both the slaves and the slave girls. This is the view of Hadrat 'Ā'ishah, Umm Salamah and some learned scholars of the house of the Holy Prophet and also of Imam Shāfi'ī. They do not argue merely on the basis of the general meaning of the words, but they also cite precedents from the *Sunnah* in support of their view. For instance, the incident that the Holy Prophet went to the house of his daughter, Ḥaḍrat Fāṭimah, along with his slave 'Abdullah bin Musa'dah al-Fazārī. She was at that time wearing a 'sheet which would leave the feet exposed if she tried to cover the head, and the head exposed if she tried to cover the feet. The Holy Prophet felt her embarrassment and said: "No harm: there are only your father and your slave!" (Abū Da'ūd, Ahmad, Baihaqī on the authority of Anas bin Malik). Ibn 'Asākir has stated that the Holy Prophet had given that slave to Ḥaḍrat Fāṭimah, who brought him up and then freed him. (But the man turned out to be an ungrateful wretch; in the battle of Siffīn, he was the bitterest opponent of Ḥaḍrat 'Alī and a zealous supporter of Amir Mu'awiyah). They also quote the following words of the Holy Prophet in support of their stand: "When any of you agrees to a deed of emancipation with her slave, and the slave has the necessary means to buy

his freedom, she (the owner) should observe purdah from him." (Abū Da'ūd, Tirmizī, Ibn Mājah on the authority of Umm Salamah).

45. The literal translation of the Text would be: "those from among the men who are your subordinates and have no desire." The obvious meaning is that apart from the *maḥram* males, a Muslim woman can display her adornment only before the man who satisfies two conditions; firstly, he should be in a subordinate capacity, and secondly, he should be free from sexual urges either due to advanced age, impotence, mental weakness, poverty or low social position, so that he cannot cherish the desire or have the boldness to think evilly of his master's wife, daughter, sister or mother. Anybody who studies this injunction in the right spirit with a view to obeying it, and not for the sake of finding ways and means of escaping from or violating it, will readily appreciate that the bearers, cooks, chauffeurs and other grown up servants employed these days in the houses do not fall in this category. The following clarifications given by the commentators and the jurists of this point would show the type of men envisaged in the verse:

Ibn 'Abbās: This implies a man who is a mere simpleton and has no interest in women.

Qatadah: A poor man who is attached to you merely for his sustenance.

Mujāhid: A fool who only needs food and has no desire for women.

Sha'bi: The one who is a subordinate, entirely dependent on his master, and cannot have the boldness to cast an evil look at the women-folk of the house.

Ibn Zaid: The one who remains attached to a family for such a long time that he is regarded as a member brought up in that house, and who has no desire for the women of the house. He is there merely because he gets his sustenance from the family.

Tā'ūs & Zuhrī: An idiot who does not cherish the desire for the women nor has the courage to do so. (*Ibn Jarīr*, Vol. XVIII, pp. 95-96, *Ibn Kathīr*, Vol. III, p. 285).

The best explanation in this regard is the incident that happened in the time of the Holy Prophet, which has been quoted by Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'ī and Aḥmad on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah and Umm Salamah. There was a certain eunuch in Madīnah who was allowed free access to the wives of the Holy Prophet and the other women of the city, on the assumption that he being incapable of sex was free from the sexual urge. One day when the Holy Prophet went to the house of his wife, Umm Salamah, he heard him talking to her brother, 'Abdullah bin Abī Umayyah. He was telling 'Abdullah that if Ṭā'if was taken the following day, he should try to have Badia, daughter of Ghailan Thaqafī. And then

he started praising Bādia's beauty and her physical charms and even went to the extent of describing her private parts. On hearing this the Holy Prophet said: "O enemy of Allah! you seem to have seen her through." Then he ordered that the women should observe purdah from him and he should not be allowed to enter the houses in future. After this he turned him out of Madīnah and forbade the other eunuchs also to enter the houses, because the women did not mind their presence, while they would describe the women of one house before the other men of other houses in the society. This shows that the word "incapable of sex desire" do not merely imply physical impotence. Anyone who is physically unfit but cherishes sex desire in the heart and takes interest in women, can become the cause of many mischiefs.

46. That is, the children who do not yet have their sex feelings aroused. This may apply to boys of 11 to 12 at the most. Older boys start having sex feelings though they may still be immature otherwise.

47. The Holy Prophet did not restrict this injunction to the jingle of the ornaments, but has derived from it the principle that besides the look, anything which tends to excite any of the senses, is opposed to the objective for which Allah has forbidden the women to display their adornment. Therefore he ordered the women not to move out with perfumes. According to Ḥaḍrat Abū Ḥurairah, the Holy Prophet said: "Do not stop the bondmaids of Allah from coming to the mosques, but they should not come with perfumes." (Abū Da'ūd, Aḥmad). According to another tradition, Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah passed by a woman who was coming out of the mosque and felt that she had perfumed herself. He stopped her and said: "O bondmaid of Allah, are you coming from the mosque?" When she replied in the affirmative, he said: "I have heard my beloved Abul Qasim (Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) say that the prayer of the woman who comes to the mosque with perfumes, is not accepted till she purifies herself with a complete bath as is done after a sexual intercourse." (Abū Da'ūd, Ibn Mājah, Aḥmad, Nasā'i). Abū Musa Ash'arī has quoted the Holy Prophet as saying: "A woman who passes on the way with perfumes so that people may enjoy her perfumes, is such and such: he used very harsh words for her." (Tirmizī, Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'i). His instruction was that women should use scents with bright colours but light odours. (Abū Da'ūd).

Similarly the Holy Prophet disapproved that feminine voices should enter the ears of men unnecessarily. In case of genuine need the Qur'ān itself has allowed women to speak to men, and the Holy Prophet's wives themselves used to instruct people in religious matters. But where there is no necessity, nor any moral or religious objective, the women have been discouraged to let their voices be heard by men. Thus if the Imām happens to commit a mistake during a

congregational prayer, and he is to be warned of the lapse, the men have been taught to say *Subhān-Allah* (Glory be to Allah), while the women have been instructed to tap their hands only. (Bukhari, Muslim, Aḥmad, Tirmizī, Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'i, Ibn Mājah).

48. "Turn towards Allah": Repent of the lapses and errors that you have been committing in this regard so far, and reform your conduct in accordance with the Commands given by Allah and His Prophet.

49. It would be useful to give here a resume of the other reforms which the Holy Prophet introduced in the Islamic society after the revelation of these Commandments.

(1) He prohibited the other men (even if they are relatives) to see a woman in privacy or sit with her in the absence of her *maḥram* relatives. Ḥadrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah has reported that the Holy Prophet said: "Do not visit the women whose husbands are away from home, because Satan circulates in one of you like blood." (Tirmizī). According to another Tradition from Ḥadrat Jābir, the Holy Prophet said: "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should never visit a woman when alone unless she has a mahram relative also present, because the third one would be Satan." (Aḥmad). Imām Aḥmad has quoted another Tradition from 'Āmir bin Rabī'ah to the same effect. The Holy Prophet himself was extremely cautious in this regard. Once when he was accompanying his wife Hadrat Ṣafiyyah to her house at night, two men of Ansar passed by them on the way. The Holy Prophet stopped them and said: "The woman with me is my wife Ṣafiyyah." They said: "Glory be to Allah! O Messenger of Allah, could there be any suspicion about you?" The Holy Prophet said: "Satan circulates like blood in the human body; I was afraid lest he should put an evil thought in your minds." (Abū Da'ūd).

(2) The Holy Prophet did not approve that a man's hand should even touch the body of a non-maḥram woman. That is why while administering the oath of allegiance, he would take the hand of the men into his own hand, but he never adopted this procedure in the case of women. Ḥadrat 'Ā'ishah has stated that the Holy Prophet never touched the body of any other woman. He would administer the oath verbally to them; when this was done, he would say: "You may go, Your allegiance is complete." (Abū Da'ūd).

(3) He strictly prohibited the woman from proceeding on a journey alone without a *maḥram* or in company with a non-*maḥram*. A Tradition from Ibn 'Abbās has been quoted in Bukhārī and Muslim saying that the Holy Prophet gave a sermon and said: "No man should visit the other woman when she is alone unless she has a *maḥram* also present, and no woman should travel alone unless accompanied by a *maḥram*." A man stood up

and said: "My wife is going for Ḥajj, while I am under orders to join a certain expedition." The Holy Prophet said: "You may go for Hajj with your wife." Several other Traditions on the subject, emanating from Ibn 'Umar, Abū Sa'īd Khudrī and Abū Hurairah, are found in authentic books of Traditions, which concur that it is not permissible for a Muslim woman who believes in Allah and the Last Day that she should go on a journey without a *maḥram*. There is, however, a variation with regard to the duration and the length of the journey. Some Traditions lay down the minimum limit as 12 miles and some lay down the duration as one day, a day and night, two days or even three days. This variation, however, neither renders the Traditions unauthentic nor makes it necessary that we should accept one version as legally binding in preference to others. For a plausible explanation for the different versions could be that the Holy Prophet gave different instructions at different occasions depending on the circumstances and merit of each case. For instance, a woman going on a three-day journey might have been prohibited from proceeding without a *maḥram*, while another going on a day's journey might also have been similarly prohibited. Here the real thing is not the different instructions to the different people in different situations, but the principle that a woman should not go on a journey without a *maḥram* as laid down in the Tradition quoted above from Ibn 'Abbās.

(4) He not only took practical measures to stop free mixing of the sexes together but prohibited it verbally as well. Everyone knows the great importance of the congregational and the Friday prayers in Islam. The Friday Prayer has been made obligatory by Allah Himself; the importance of the congregational prayer can be judged from a Tradition of the Holy Prophet, which says: "If a person does not attend the mosque without a genuine reason and offers his prayer at home, it will not be acceptable to Allah." (Abū Da'ūd, Ibn Mājah, Dāraqutnī, Ḥākim on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās). But in spite of this, the Holy Prophet exempted the women from compulsory attendance at the Friday Prayer. (Abū Da'ūd, Dāraqutnī, Baihaqī). As for the other congregational prayers, he made the women's attendance optional, saying: "Do not stop them if they want to come to the mosque." Then at the same time, he made the clarification that it was better for them to pray in their houses than in the mosques. According to Ibn 'Umar and Abū Hurairah, the Holy Prophet said: "Do not prohibit the bondmaids of Allah from coming to the mosques of Allah." (Abū Da'ūd). Other Traditions from Ibn 'Umar are to the effect: "Permit the women to come to the mosques at night." (Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmizī, Nasā'ī, Abū Da'ūd). And: "Do not stop your women-folk from coming to the mosques though their houses are better for them than the mosques." (Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd). Umm Ḥumaid Sā'idiyyah states that once she said to the Holy

Prophet, "O Messenger of Allah, I have a great desire to offer my prayer under your leadership." He replied: "Your offering the prayer in your room is better than your offering it in the verandah, and your offering the prayer in your house is better than your offering it in the neighbouring mosque, and your offering the prayer in the neighbouring mosque is better than offering it in the principal mosque (of the town)." (Aḥmad, Ṭabarānī). A Tradition to the same effect has been reported from 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd in Abū Da'ūd. According to Ḥaḍrat Umm Salamah, the Holy Prophet said: "The best mosques for women are the innermost portions of their houses." (Aḥmad, Ṭabarānī). But when Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah saw the conditions that prevailed in the time of the Umayyads, she said: "If the Holy Prophet had witnessed such conduct of the women, he would certainly have stopped their entry into the mosques as was done in the case of the Israelite women," (Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd). The Holy Prophet had appointed a separate door in his Mosque for the entry of women, and Ḥaḍrat 'Umar in his time had given strict orders prohibiting men to use that door. (Abū Da'ūd). In the congregational prayers the women were instructed to stand separately behind the men; at the conclusion of the prayer, the Holy Prophet and his followers used to remain sitting for a while so that the women could leave the mosque before the men. (Aḥmad, Bukhārī). The Holy Prophet would say: "The best row for the men is the front row and the worst the last one (nearest to the women's row); and the best row for the women is the rearmost row and the worst the front one (just behind the men's). (Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmizī, Nasā'i, Aḥmad). The women joined the 'Īd congregational prayers but they had a separate enclosure from men. After the sermon the Holy Prophet used to address them separately (Abū Da'ūd, Bukhārī, Muslim). Once outside the Mosque the Holy Prophet saw the men and women moving side by side in the crowd. He stopped the women and said: It is not proper for you to walk in the middle of the road; walk on the sides." On hearing this the women immediately started walking along the walls. (Abū Da'ūd). All these Commandments clearly show that mixed gatherings of the men and women are wholly alien to the temper of Islam. It cannot therefore be imagined that Divine Law which disallows the men and women to stand side by side for prayers in the sacred houses of Allah, would allow them to mix together freely in colleges, offices, clubs and other gatherings.

(5) He permitted the women to make modest use of the make-ups, even instructed them to do so, but strictly forbade its overdoing. Of the various types of make-up and decoration that were prevalent among the Arab women in those days, he declared the following as accursed and destructive of communities:

(a) To add extra hair to one's own artificially with a view to make them appear longer and thicker.

(b) To tattoo various parts of the body and produce artificial moles.

(c) To pluck hair from the eye-brows to give them a special shape, or to pluck hair from the face to give it a cleaner look.

(d) To rub the teeth to make them sharp, or to produce artificial holes in them.

(e) To rub the face with saffron or other cosmetic to produce an artificial complexion.

These instructions have been reported in Sihāh Sitta and in Musnad Ahmad on the authority of Ḥadrat 'Ā'ishah, Asmā' bint Abū Bakr, Ḥadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās and Amīr Mu'āwiyah through reliable narrators.

After having the knowledge of these clear Commandments from Allah and His Prophet, a Muslim has only two courses open before him. Either he should follow these Commandments practically and purify himself, his family life and the society at large of the moral evils for the eradication of which Allah and His Prophet have given such detailed Commandments, or if due to some weakness he violates one or more of these Commandments, he should at least realize that he is committing a sin, and regard it as such, and should abstain from labelling it as a virtue by misinterpretation. Apart from these alternatives, the people who adopt the Western ways of life against the clear injunctions of the Qur'ān and Sunnah, and then try their utmost to prove them Islam itself, and openly claim that there is no such thing as purdah in Islam, not only commit the sin of disobedience but also display ignorance and hypocritical obstinacy. Such an attitude can neither be commended by any right-thinking person in this world, nor can it merit favour with Allah in the Hereafter. But among the Muslims there exists a section of modern hypocrites who are so advanced in their hypocrisy that they repudiate the Divine injunctions as false and believe those ways of life to be right and based on truth, which they have borrowed from the non-Muslim communities. Such people are not Muslims at all, for if they still be Muslims, the words 'Islam' and 'un-Islam' lose all their meaning and significance. Had they changed their Islamic names and publicly declared their desertion of Islam, we would at least have been convinced of their moral courage. But in spite of their wrong attitudes, these people continue to pose themselves as Muslim. There is perhaps no meaner class of people in the world. People with such character and morality cannot be unexpected to indulge in any forgery, fraud, deception or dishonesty.

50. The word *ayāmā* is the plural of *ayyim* which means a single person, and is applicable to every man who is without a wife and to every woman who is without a husband.

51. That is, those who show the right attitude in their dealings with you and in whom you find the capability of discharging the responsibilities of married life. The owner whose slave does not show the right attitude nor seems to possess the necessary capability and temper to lead a reasonably happy married life, has not been required to arrange his or her marriage. For in that case he would become the cause of ruining another person's life. This condition, however, has not been imposed on free persons because in their case the people who promote marriages are no more than mere advisers, associates and introducers. The actual marriage depends on the mutual willingness of the bride and the bridegroom. In the case of a slave, however, the entire responsibility lies on the owner, and if he makes the mistake of marrying a poor person with an ill-natured, ill-mannered spouse, the responsibility for the consequences will be entirely his.

52. The imperative mood of the verb in "Arrange marriages .... the right attitude", has led some scholars to assume that it is obligatory to arrange such marriages; whereas the nature of the problem indicates that it cannot be so. Obviously it cannot be obligatory for somebody to arrange the marriage of the other person. Marriage is not a one-sided affair; it needs another party also. If it were obligatory, what would be the position of the person who is going to be married? Should he willingly accept to be married wherever others arrange it? If so, it would mean that he or she had absolutely no choice in the matter. And if the one has a right to refuse, how are the others going to discharge their responsibility? Taking all these aspects into account the majority of the jurists have held that the Commandment is not obligatory but recommendatory. The intention is that the Muslims should ensure that none in the society should remain unmarried. The people of the house, friends and neighbours, all should take necessary interest in the matter, and where no such help is available, the state should make necessary arrangements.

53. This does not mean that Allah will certainly bestow wealth on anybody who marries. The intention is to discourage a calculative approach. This instruction is both for the parents of the girl and of the boy. The former should not reject a pious and virtuous suitor merely because he happens to be poor. Similarly the boy's parents should not go on postponing his marriage because he is not yet a full earning member or is not yet earning sufficiently. Young men have been advised not to go on postponing their marriage unnecessarily waiting for better times. Even if the income is not yet sufficient, one should marry with full faith in Allah. Very often the marriage itself becomes the cause of improving straitened

circumstances. The wife helps to control the family budget, or the husband starts to exert himself more to meet the new challenges and responsibilities. The wife can also earn to supplement the family budget. Then, who knows what the future holds in store for him. Good times can change into bad times and bad into good. One should therefore refrain from being too calculative in this regard.

54. The best commentary on these verses are the Traditions which have been reported from the Holy Prophet in this connection. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd has related that the Holy Prophet once said: "O young men, whoso among you can afford to marry, he should marry, because this will be a means of restraining the eyes from casting the evil look and of keeping one pure and chaste, and the one who cannot afford, should fast, because fasting helps cool down the passions." (Bukhārī, Muslim). According to Hadrat Abū Hurairah, the Holy Prophet said: "Allah has taken upon Himself to succour three men: (a) the one who marries with a view to guarding his chastity, (b) the slave who works to earn his freedom, and (c) the one who goes out to fight in the way of Allah." (Tirmizī, Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah, Ahmad) For further explanation, see Sūrah An-Nisā: 25.

55. *Mukātabat* as a term means a deed of emancipation between the owner and the slave entitling the latter to earn his or her freedom after payment of an agreed sum of money in a certain period. This is one of the methods laid down in Islam for the slaves to attain their freedom. It is not essential that the slave must always pay in cash; he can also earn his freedom by rendering some special service to the owner, provided that both the parties agree. Once the agreement is signed, the owner is not entitled to put any obstacles in the way of the slave's freedom. He will have to provide opportunities to enable him to earn for his emancipation and shall have to free him when the agreed amount has been paid in time. In the time of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, a slave entered into such an agreement with his lady owner, but managed to collect the amount in advance of the time limit. When the amount was offered to the lady, she refused to accept it on the ground that she would like to have it in monthly and yearly instalments. The slave complained to Ḥaḍrat 'Umar who ordered that the amount be deposited in the state treasury and the slave be set free. The lady was informed that her money lay in the treasury and she had the option to take it in a lump sum or in yearly or monthly instalments. (Dāraquṭnī).

56. A group of jurists have interpreted the words "execute the deed of emancipation with them" to mean that it is obligatory for the owner to accept the offer of a slave to earn his emancipation. This is the view of 'Atā', 'Amr bin Dinar, Ibn Sirīn, Masrūq, Ḍaḥḥāk, 'Ikrimah, the Zahiriyyah and Ibn Jarir Ṭabari, and Imām Shafi'ī also favoured it in the beginning. The other group holds that it is not obligatory but only recommendatory and commendable. This group includes jurists like Sha'bi, Muqātil bin Ḥayyān, Ḥasan Baṣri, 'Abdul Raḥmān bin Zaid,

Sufyān Thaurī, Abū Ḥanīfah and Mālik bin Anas and Imām Shafi'ī later on also had adopted this view. The first view is supported by two things:

(a) The imperative mood of the verb in "execute the deed...." suggests that it is a Command from Allah.

(b) Authentic Traditions contain the incident that when Sīrīn, father of Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad bin Sīrīn, the great jurist and traditionalist, made a request to his master, Ḥaḍrat Anas, for a deed of emancipation, the latter refused to accept it. Sīrīn took the matter before Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, who whip in hand turned on Anas, saying: "Allah's Command is that you execute the deed." (Bukhārī). From this it has been argued that it was not a discretionary and personal decision of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar but it was taken in the presence of the Companions and none expressed any difference of opinion. This therefore should be taken as an authentic interpretation of the verse.

The other group argues that Allah does not merely say: "Execute the deed of emancipation with them", but adds: ". . . provided that you find some good in them." This condition of finding some good in them" lies entirely on the owner, and there is no fixed standard or means by which the question of "finding good in them" be got adjudicated through a court. Legal Injunctions are never couched in such language. As such this injunction can only be regarded as recommendatory and not as legally mandatory. As regards the precedent of the case of Sirin, the jurists say that there was not one slave who asked for a deed of emancipation but thousands of them in the time of the Holy Prophet and the rightly-guided Caliphs, and a large number of them earned their freedom in that way. But apart from Sirin's there is no case where an owner was forced by a judicial verdict to execute a deed of emancipation. Accordingly this decision of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar cannot be taken as a judicial decision. All that can be said is that Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, apart from his position of a judge, was like a father to the Muslims and might have used his paternal authority in a matter where he could not intervene as a judge.

57. "Good" implies three things:

(a) The slave must be capable of earning his emancipation money through hard work and labour. The Holy Prophet has said: "Execute the deed when you are sure that the slave can earn the required amount of money: do not let him go about begging the people for it." (Ibn Kathir).

(b) He should be honest, truthful and reliable for the purposes of the agreement. He should make the best of the opportunities and should not waste his earnings.

(c) The owner should make sure that the slave has no immoral trends and does not harbour feelings of enmity against Islam or the Muslims, nor should there be any apprehension that his freedom might prove harmful to the interests of the Muslim society. In other words, he should prove to be a loyal and faithful member of the Muslim society and not a fifth columnist. It should be noted that such precautions were absolutely necessary in the case of the prisoners of war taken as slaves.

58. This Command is general and is addressed to the owners, the common Muslims and the Islamic government.

(a) The owner is instructed that he should remit a part of the emancipation money. There are traditions to confirm that the Companions used to remit a sizeable amount of the emancipation money to their slaves. Ḥaḍrat 'Ali used to remit a quarter of the amount and exhorted others also to do the same. (Ibu Jarīr).

(b) The common Muslim is instructed that he should extend liberal help to all such slaves who asked for help in this regard. One of the heads of *Zakāt* expenditure as laid down in the Qur'ān is "the ransoming of slaves". (IX: 60) In the sight of Allah "freeing of slaves" is a great act of virtue. (XC :13). According to a Tradition, a Bedouin came to the Holy Prophet and requested him to instruct him what he should do to earn Paradise. The Holy Prophet replied "You have asked about the most important thing in a most concise way. You should free the slaves and help them to earn their freedom, If you present a head of cattle to somebody, present such a one as gives plenty of milk. Treat your relatives kindly even if they treat you unjustly. If you cannot do all this, you should feed the poor, give water to the thirsty, exhort the people to do good and forbid them to do evil. If you cannot do even this, you should restrain your tongue: if you have to speak, speak something good, otherwise keep quiet". (Baihaqī).

(c) The Islamic government is advised to spend a part of the *Zakāt* collections on the emancipation of slaves.

Here it should be noted that slaves in the ancient times were of three kinds: (i) Prisoners of war, (ii) Free men who were captured and traded as slaves, (iii) Hereditary slaves who did not know when their ancestors became slaves and to which of the above categories they originally belonged. Before the advent of Islam, Arabia as well as the outside world abounded in all kinds of slaves. The entire social and economic structure of society depended more on slave labour than on servants and wage-earners. The first question before Islam was to tackle the problem of the hereditary slaves, and secondly, to find a solution to the entire problem of slavery for all times to come. In tackling the first problem, Islam did

not abruptly abrogate the ownership rights in respect of the hereditary slaves as it would have completely paralysed the entire social and economic system, and involved Arabia in a far more destructive civil war than the one fought in America, leaving the problem where it was as it is in America, where the Negroes are still facing humiliation and disgrace. Islam did not follow any such foolhardy policy of reform. Instead it generated a great moral movement for the emancipation of slaves and employed inducements, persuasions, religious injunctions and legal enactments to educate and motivate the people to free the slaves voluntarily for earning their salvation in the Hereafter, or as expiation of their sins as enjoined by Islam, or by accepting monetary compensation. To set the pace the Holy Prophet himself freed 63 slaves. One of his wives, Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, alone freed 67 slaves. The Holy Prophet's uncle, Ḥaḍrat 'Abbās, freed 70 slaves. Among others, Ḥakīm bin Hizām freed 100 slaves, 'Abdullah bin 'Umar 1,000; Zulkal'a Himyari 8,000, and 'Abdur Rehmān bin 'Auf 30,000. The other Companions among whom Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr and Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān were prominent also set a large number of slaves free. The people, in order to win Allah's favour, not only emancipated their own slaves, but also bought them from others and then set them free. The result was that in so far as hereditary slaves were concerned, almost all of them had been freed even before the righteous Caliphate came to an end.

As for the future, Islam completely prohibited free men from being kidnapped and traded as slaves. As for the prisoners of war, it was permitted (not commanded) that they might be kept as slaves so long as they were not exchanged for Muslim prisoners of war, or freed on payment of ransom. Then, on the one hand, the slaves were also allowed to earn their freedom through written agreements with their masters, and on the other, the masters were exhorted to set them free just like the hereditary slaves, as an act of virtue, to win Allah's approval, or as expiation of sins, or by willing that a slave would automatically gain his freedom on the master's death, or that a slave girl would be free on the master's death if she had borne him children, whether he had left a will or not. This is how Islam solved the problem of slavery. Ignorant people raise objections without trying to understand this solution, and the apologists offer all sorts of apologies and have even to deny the fact that Islam had prohibited slavery absolutely.

59. This does not mean that if the slave girls do not want to lead a chaste and virtuous life they can be forced into prostitution. It only means this that if a slave girl commits an immoral act of her own free will, she herself is responsible for it and the law will be applied against her alone. But if the owner forces her into it, it will be entirely his responsibility, and the law will proceed against him. Obviously the question of force arises only when someone is compelled to act

against his own will. As for the words "for your own worldly gains", these have not been used in a conditional or restrictive sense that if the owner is not sharing the immoral earnings of the slave girl, he is not an offender if he forces her into prostitution. The intention is to declare all such money unlawful as has been earned through illegal and immoral ways.

It is, however, not possible to comprehend the full import of this injunction merely from the words of the text. For this it is necessary to understand the entire background and circumstances prevalent at the time of its revelation. Prostitution in Arabia existed in two forms: Domestic prostitution and open prostitution in the brothel.

(a) 'Domestic' prostitution was carried out by freed slave girls who had no guardians, or by free women who had no family or tribal support. They would take residence in a house and enter into an agreement with a number of men simultaneously for financial help in return for sexual gratification. Whenever a child was born, the mother would name whomsoever she liked as its father and the man was accepted in society as the father of the child. This was an established custom in the pre-Islamic days, which was considered almost analogous to "marriage". When Islam came, it recognised only that contract as legal marriage where a woman had only one husband. Thus all other forms of sexual gratification came to be regarded as adultery and punishable offences as such. (Abū Da'ūd).

(b) Open prostitution which was carried out entirely through slave girls was of two kinds. First, the slave girls were obliged to pay a fixed heavy amount every month to the owner, which they could only earn through prostitution. The owner knew fully well how the money was earned, and in fact there was no other object of imposing a heavy demand on the poor slave girl, especially when it was much higher than the usual wages for work or labour. Secondly, beautiful and young slave girls were made to stay in the brothel and a flag was put at the door to indicate that a "needy person" could satisfy his lust there. Such women were called *"qaliqiyāt"* and their houses were well known as "*mawākhir*". All prominent men of the day owned and maintained such houses of prostitution. 'Abdullah bin Ubayy (the chief of the hypocrites of Madīnah, who had been nominated as king of Madīnah before the Holy Prophet's arrival there and who was in the forefront of the campaign to slander Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah) himself owned a regular house of prostitution in Madīnah, which had six beautiful slave girls. Not only did he earn money through them but also used them to entertain his respectable and important guests who came to see him from different parts of Arabia. He employed the illegitimate children thus born to enhance the splendour and strength of his army of slaves. When one of these prostitutes, named Mu'āzah, accepted Islam and wanted to

offer repentance for her past sins, Ibn Ubayy subjected her to torture. She complained of it to Hadrat Abū Bakr, who brought it to the notice of the Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet ordered that the woman be taken away from the cruel man. (*Ibn Jarīr*, Vol. XVIII, pp. 55 -58, and 103-104; Al-Istī'āb Vol. II, p. 762; p. 762; *Ibn Kathīr*, Vol. III, pp. 288-289). Such were the conditions when this verse was revealed. If these conditions are kept in view, it will become obvious that the real object was not merely to stop the slave girls from being forced into prostitution but to ban prostitution itself as illegal within the boundaries of the Islamic state. Simultaneously there was a declaration of general pardon for those who had been forced into this business in the past.

After the revelation of this Divine Command the Holy Prophet declared: "There is no place for prostitution in Islam." (Abū Da'ūd). The second Command that he gave was that the earnings made through adultery were unlawful, impure and absolutely forbidden. According to a tradition reported by Rāfi' bin Khadīj, the Holy Prophet described such earnings as impure, product of the worst profession and most filthy income. (Abū Da'ūd, Tirmizī, Nasā'ī). According to Abū Ḥujaifah, he termed the money earned through prostitution as unlawful. (Bukhārī, Muslim, Aḥmad). Abū Mas'ūd 'Uqbah bin 'Amr says that the Holy Prophet forbade the people to take prostitution earnings. (Ṣiḥāḥ Sitta and Aḥmad). The third Command was that the slave girl could be employed for lawful manual labour, but the owner had no right to impose or receive any money from her about which he was not sure how it had been earned. According to Rāfi' bin Khadīj, he prohibited accepting any earnings from the slave girl unless it was known how she had earned it. (Abū Da'ūd). Rāfi' bin Rifā'ah Anṣārī has reported the same Command in clearer words. He says: "The Prophet of Allah prohibited us from accepting anything from the earnings of a slave girl except that which she earned through manual labour, such as (and he indicated this with his hand) baking bread, spinning cotton or carding wool or cotton." (Musnad Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd). Another tradition quoted from Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah in Abū Da'ūd and Musnad Aḥmad says that taking of money earned by a slave girl through unlawful means is prohibited. Thus the Holy Prophet in accordance with the intention of this verse, banned by religious injunction and law all kinds of prostitution prevalent in Arabia in those days. Over and above this, the decision he gave in the case of Mu'āzah, the slave girl of 'Abdullah bin Ubayy, shows that an owner who forces his slave girl into prostitution loses his rights of ownership over her. This is a tradition from Imam Zuhri, which Ibn Kathīr has quoted on the authority of Musnad 'Abdur Razzaq.

60. This verse is not only connected with the verse immediately preceding it but with the entire discourse right from the beginning. "Revelations giving clear

guidance" are those verses which: (1) state the law concerning *Zinā, Qazf* and *Li'ān.* (2) forbid the believers to marry impure men or women, (3) prohibit the slandering of chaste people and propagating indecencies in society, (4) lay stress on men and women to restrain their gaze and guard their private parts, (5) prescribe the limits of purdah for women, (6) disapprove of the marriageable people's remaining unmarried, (7) lay down the rule for slaves to earn their freedom through written agreements, and (8) ban prostitution to purify society. After all these commands and instructions, a warning is being given that now if the people violated these instructions it would only mean that they wanted to meet with the same doom as had been the lot of the wretched communities before them, whose stories have been related in the Qur'ān itself. There could probably be no severer warning at the end of an edict. But it is a pity that a people who profess to be believers, and recite the holy edict and hold it sacred, yet continue to defy and violate its provisions in spite of the severe warning.

61. From here the discourse is directed towards the hypocrites, who were bent upon starting mischief in the Islamic community, and were as active from within as the unbelievers were from without to harm the Islamic movement and the body politic of Islam. As these people professed belief, and apparently belonged to the Muslim community, and had blood relationships with the Muslims, especially with the Anṣār, they were better placed to start and spread mischief. The result was that even some sincere Muslims, due to simplicity or weakness, became tools in their hands and even their supporters. But in spite of their profession of faith, the lure of worldly gains had utterly blinded them to the light that was spreading in the world through the teachings of the Qur'ān and the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). The indirect address to the hypocrites here has three things in view: Firstly, to admonish them, for the first and foremost demand of Allah's providence and His mercy is to go on admonishing the misguided and the erring one till the last in spite of his persistence in mischief and wickedness. Secondly, to differentiate clearly between belief and hypocrisy so that every right thinking person from the Muslim community should be able to distinguish between a true believer and a hypocrite. Then if anybody, in spite of this differentiation, falls a prey to the machinations of the hypocrites or supports them, he should himself be responsible for his conduct.

Thirdly, to warn the hypocrites clearly and plainly that Allah's promises for the believers are meant only for those who sincerely believe and then fulfil the demands and requirements of their Faith. These promises are not meant for anybody who poses himself as a Muslim. The hypocrites and the sinful people therefore should not cherish any hope that they will have any share in these.

62. The phrase "heavens and the earth" in the Qur'ān is generally used for the "universe". Thus the verse would also mean: "Allah is the light of the whole universe".

Light is something which makes things visible; which is itself manifest and helps make other things manifest. The human mind conceives light in this very sense. Absence of light is termed darkness, invisibility and obscurity. On the other hand, when there is visibility and things become exposed to view, man says there is light. Allah has been called 'Light' in this basic sense, and not in the sense of a beam of light which travels at the speed of 186,000 miles per second and stimulates the optic nerve through the retina. This conception of light has nothing to do with the reality of the meaning for which human mind has coined this word; rather the word light is used for all those lights which we experience in this physical world. All human words used for Allah are used in their basic sense and meaning, and not with reference to their physical connotation. For instance, when the word "sight" is used with respect to Allah, it does not mean that Allah has an eye like men and animals with which He sees. Similarly when we say that Allah 'hears' or 'grips' or 'grasps', it does not mean that He hears through ears, or grips or grasps with the hand like us. These words are used in a metaphorical sense and only a man of very poor intelligence would have the misconception that hearing or seeing or grasping is not possible except in the limited and specific sense in which we experience it. Similarly it will be shortsightedness to interpret the word 'light' in the sense of physical light rays emanating from a luminous body and affecting the retina. This word is not applicable to Allah in its limited sense, but in its absolute sense. That is, He alone in this universe is the real and prime "Cause of manifestation", otherwise there is nothing but darkness here. Everything which gives light and illuminates other things has got its light from Him; it has no light of its own.

The word light is also used for knowledge, and ignorance is termed as darkness. Allah is the Light of the universe in this sense too, because the knowledge of Reality and of right Guidance can be obtained from Him alone: without having recourse to His 'Light', there will be nothing but darkness of ignorance and the resultant vice and wickedness in the world.

63. "Blessed": yielding multiple benefits.

64. ".... which is neither eastern nor western": which grows in an open plane or on a hill, where it gets sunshine from morning till evening. Such an olive tree yields fine oil which gives a bright light. On the other hand, a tree which gets sunlight only from the east or only from the west, yields thick oil which gives weak light.

65. In this parable, Allah has been likened to the Lamp and the universe to the Niche. The glass shade is the veil behind which Allah has concealed Himself from His creation. This veil is not a physical veil for concealment, but a veil caused by the intensity of Divine manifestation. The human eye is unable to see Him not because of the intervening darkness but because of the intensity of the all-pervading, all-embracing Light radiating through the transparent veil. The human vision which is limited in nature cannot comprehend it. It can only comprehend and perceive limited physical lights which vary in brightness, which disappear and reappear, and which can be perceived only by contrast to existing darkness. But the 'Absolute Light' has no confronting darkness: it does not vanish, it shines forth and pervades all around with ever-existing glory; it is beyond human perception and comprehension.

As for "the lamp which is lit with the oil of a blessed olive tree, which is neither eastern nor western", this is a metaphor to give an idea of the perfect light of the lamp and its brilliance. In antiquity the source for brilliant light were the olive lamps, and the most superior oil for the purpose was that obtained from a tree standing in an open and elevated place. The epithet of Lamp for Allah in the parable does not mean that Allah is deriving His energy from some external source. It only means that the Lamp of the parable is not an ordinary lamp but the most brilliant lamp that can be imagined. Just as a brilliant lamp illuminates the whole house, so has Allah illuminated the whole universe.

Again, the words " .... its oil is (so fine) as if it were going to shine forth by itself though no fire touched it", are also meant to emphasize the brilliance of the light of the lamp, which is being fed by the finest and most readily combustible oil. The 'olive' and 'its being neither eastern nor western', and 'high combustibility of its oil by itself (without fire)' are not the essential elements of the parable, but attributes of the lamp, which is the primary element of the parable. The essential elements of the parable are only three: the Lamp, the Niche and the transparent Glass Shade.

The sentence, "His light may be likened.....", dispels the possible misunderstanding that one could have from the words: "Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth." This shows that the use of the word "light" for Allah does not at all mean that the essence of His Being is nothing but 'light'. In essence, He is a Perfect Being, Who is All-Knowing, All-Powerful, All-Wise etc. and also possessing all 'Light'. He has been called 'Light' itself because of His Perfection as a Source of Light, just as somebody may be called 'Grace' on account of his being highly gracious and beneficent and 'Beauty' because of his being highly beautiful and attractive.

66. That is, although Allah's Light is illuminating the whole world, everybody does not and cannot perceive it. It is Allah alone Who blesses whomsoever He wills with the capacity for perceiving His Light and benefiting by it. Just as the day and night are alike to a blind man, so is the case of a man without the gift of inner perception: he may see the electric light, the sunlight, the moonlight and the light from stars, but he cannot perceive the Light of Allah. For him, there is nothing but darkness in the universe. Just as a blind man cannot see the stone in his way unless he stumbles over it, so is the man without the gift of inner perception, who cannot perceive even those realities around him which may be all brilliance and shining by Allah's Light. He will perceive them only when he is overtaken by the consequences of his own misdeeds.

67. This means two things: First, He knows what parable can best explain a certain reality, and secondly, He knows who is entitled to receive this bounty and who is not. Allah has no need to show His Light to the one who has no desire or longing for it and who is utterly lost in worldly pursuits and in seeking material pleasures and gains. This bounty can be bestowed only on the one who in the knowledge of Allah has a sincere desire for it.

68. Some commentators have interpreted these "houses" to mean the mosques, and 'raising them' to mean constructing and reverencing them. Some others, however, take them to mean the houses of the believers and 'raising them' to mean raising their moral status. The words "to mention His name therein" seem to refer to the mosques and support the first interpretation, but if we look deeper, we see that they support the second interpretation equally well. This is because Divine Law does not confine worship to mosques alone as is the case with the priest-ridden religions where the rituals can only be performed under the leadership of a clergy. In Islam a house is also a place of worship like the mosque and every man is his own priest. As this Sūrah mostly contains instructions for ennobling domestic life, we feel that the second interpretation is more in keeping with the context though there is no reason for rejecting the first interpretation. There will be no harm if both the mosques and the houses of the believers are implied here.

69. Here those characteristics have been described which are necessary for the true perception of Allah's Absolute Light and for benefiting from His bounties. Allah does not bestow His bounties without reason. He bestows them on the deserving ones alone. He only sees this that the recipient has sincere love for Him, stands in awe of Him, seeks His favours and avoids His wrath; he is not lost in material pursuits but in spite of his worldly engagements keeps his heart warm with God's remembrance. Such a person does not rest content with low spiritual

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الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْٓا اَعْمَالُهُمْ كَسَرَابٍۢ بِقِيْعَةٍ يَّحْسَبُهُ الظَّمْاٰنُ مَآءً ؕ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا
جَآءَهٗ لَمْ يَجِدْهُ شَيْـًٔا وَّوَجَدَ اللّٰهَ عِنْدَهٗ فَوَفّٰىهُ حِسَابَهٗ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ سَرِيْعُ
الْحِسَابِ ﴿39﴾ اَوْ كَظُلُمٰتٍ فِيْ بَحْرٍ لُّجِّيٍّ يَّغْشٰىهُ مَوْجٌ مِّنْ فَوْقِهٖ مَوْجٌ مِّنْ
فَوْقِهٖ سَحَابٌ ؕ ظُلُمٰتٌۢ بَعْضُهَا فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ ؕ اِذَآ اَخْرَجَ يَدَهٗ لَمْ يَكَدْ يَرٰىهَا ؕ
وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَجْعَلِ اللّٰهُ لَهٗ نُوْرًا فَمَا لَهٗ مِنْ نُّوْرٍ ﴿40﴾ اَلَمْ تَرَ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ يُسَبِّحُ لَهٗ
مَنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَالطَّيْرُ صٰٓفّٰتٍ ؕ كُلٌّ قَدْ عَلِمَ صَلَاتَهٗ وَتَسْبِيْحَهٗ ؕ
وَاللّٰهُ عَلِيْمٌۢ بِمَا يَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿41﴾ وَلِلّٰهِ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۚ وَاِلَى اللّٰهِ
الْمَصِيْرُ ﴿42﴾ اَلَمْ تَرَ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ يُزْجِيْ سَحَابًا ثُمَّ يُؤَلِّفُ بَيْنَهٗ ثُمَّ يَجْعَلُهٗ
رُكَامًا فَتَرَى الْوَدْقَ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ خِلٰلِهٖ ۚ وَيُنَزِّلُ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مِنْ جِبَالٍ
فِيْهَا مِنْۢ بَرَدٍ فَيُصِيْبُ بِهٖ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَيَصْرِفُهٗ عَنْ مَّنْ يَّشَآءُ ؕ يَكَادُ سَنَا
بَرْقِهٖ يَذْهَبُ بِالْاَبْصَارِ ﴿43﴾ يُقَلِّبُ اللّٰهُ الَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ ؕ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ
لَعِبْرَةً لِّاُولِي الْاَبْصَارِ ﴿44﴾ وَاللّٰهُ خَلَقَ كُلَّ دَآبَّةٍ مِّنْ مَّآءٍ ۚ فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ
يَّمْشِيْ عَلٰى بَطْنِهٖ ۚ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَّمْشِيْ عَلٰى رِجْلَيْنِ ۚ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَّمْشِيْ
عَلٰٓى اَرْبَعٍ ؕ يَخْلُقُ اللّٰهُ مَا يَشَآءُ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿45﴾ لَقَدْ اَنْزَلْنَآ اٰيٰتٍ
مُّبَيِّنٰتٍ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ يَهْدِيْ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ اِلٰى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ﴿46﴾ وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ اٰمَنَّا
بِاللّٰهِ وَبِالرَّسُوْلِ وَاَطَعْنَا ثُمَّ يَتَوَلّٰى فَرِيْقٌ مِّنْهُمْ مِّنْۢ بَعْدِ ذٰلِكَ ؕ وَمَآ
اُولٰٓئِكَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿47﴾ وَاِذَا دُعُوْٓا اِلَى اللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهٖ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ اِذَا
فَرِيْقٌ مِّنْهُمْ مُّعْرِضُوْنَ ﴿48﴾ وَاِنْ يَّكُنْ لَّهُمُ الْحَقُّ يَاْتُوْٓا اِلَيْهِ مُذْعِنِيْنَ ﴿49﴾
اَفِيْ قُلُوْبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ اَمِ ارْتَابُوْٓا اَمْ يَخَافُوْنَ اَنْ يَّحِيْفَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَ

(On the other hand,) the deeds of those who disbelieved,[70] may be likened to a mirage in a waterless desert, which the thirsty one took for water; but when he reached there he found nothing to drink; nay, he found there Allah Who settled his full account, and Allah is very swift at reckoning.[71] Or (their efforts may be likened to those of a man trying to swim in) a deep dark ocean, covered with billows, one over the other, and above it a cloud: darkness upon darkness: so much so that if he stretches out his hand, he cannot see[72] it. There is no light for the one whom Allah does not give light.[73] 39-40

Do[74] you not observe that all those who are in the heavens and the earth, and the birds with outspread wings, glorify Allah ? Each one knows the mode of its prayer and glorification, and Allah has full knowledge of all they do. The kingdom of the heavens and the earth belongs to Allah alone, and all shall have to return to Him 41-42

Do you not observe that Allah makes the cloud move gently: then joins its pieces together: then gathers it into a mass of thick cloud: then you see that rain-drops fall down from its midst: and He sends down hail out of the high up mountains in the heaven:[75] then He smites with it whom He wills and turns it away from whom He pleases: then a flash of lightning from it dazzles the eyes. He alternates the day and the night: there is indeed a lesson in it for those who have observing eyes. 43-44

And Allah created every creature from a sort of water: of them some one crawls upon its belly: another walks on two legs and still another on four; Allah creates whatever He wills for He has power over everything. 45

We have sent down Revelations that make the reality quite plain; however, Allah guides to the straight path whomsoever He pleases. 46

These people say "We have believed in Allah and the Messenger and we have submitted"; but soon after this, some of them turn away (from obedience): such people are not true Believers.[76] When they are called to Allah and His Messenger so that the Messenger may judge between them,[77] a party of them turns away.[78] However, if the truth be on their side, they come towards the Messenger in all obedience.[79] Are their hearts afflicted with the disease (of hypocrisy)? 47-50

Or, are they in doubt? Or, do they fear that Allah and His Messenger will be unjust to them ? In fact, they themselves are unjust.[80]

Contd. from p. 387]

levels, but actively endeavours to attain the heights towards which his Master may guide him. He does not go for the paltry gains of this transitory world, but has his gaze constantly fixed on the everlasting life of the Hereafter. These are the things which determine whether or not a person should be granted the favour to benefit from Allah's Light. Then, when Allah is pleased to bestow His bounties, He bestows them without measure; and it will be man's own incapacity if he does not receive them in full.

70. That is, they refused to accept sincerely the Divine Message which was brought by the Prophets, and which at that time was being given by the Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). These verses clearly show that the truthful and righteouse believers only can benefit from Allah's Light. In contrast to them, the state of those people is being described here, who refused to believe and obey the Holy Prophet, who was the real and sole means of attaining the Light of Allah.

71. This parable describes the condition of those people who, in spite of disbelief and hypocrisy, practise some good deeds and also believe, among other things, in the life after death, in the hope that their good deeds will be of some help to them in the Hereafter even if they did not believe and follow the Prophet and lacked the qualities of true believers. In this parable they are being told that their expectations of reaping benefits of their ostentatious deeds of virtue in the Hereafter are no more than a mirage. Just as a traveller in the desert takes the glittering sands for a surging pool of water and runs towards it for quenching his thirst, so are these people travelling on the road to death cherishing false hopes on account of their good deeds. But just as the one running towards a mirage does not find anything there to quench his thirst, so will these people find nothing to avail them when they enter the state of death. On the contrary, they will find Allah there, Who will require them to account for their disbelief, hypocrisy and misdeeds, which they committed along with their ostentatious deeds of virtue, and will deal with them in full justice.

72. This parable describes the condition of all the disbelievers and the hypocrites including those who perform good deeds for ostentation. It is being stated that such people are passing their life in a state of absolute and complete ignorance, whether otherwise they are the most learned people in the world and leaders in their respective fields of learning. They are like the man who is lost in complete darkness where no ray of light can reach him. They think that knowledge

merely consists in producing atom bombs, hydrogen bombs, supersonic planes and moon rockets, or in attaining excellence in economics and finance and law and philosophy. But they little understand that real knowledge is something entirely different and they have no idea of it. Thus considered they are just ignorant, and an illiterate peasant who has gained some acquaintance of the Divine Truth is wiser than they.

73. Here is stated the real object of the discourse which began with: "Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth." When in fact there is no light in the universe except the Light of Allah and all manifestation of reality is due to that Light, where from can the one whom Allah does not give light have light? There exists no other source of light from where he can receive a ray.

74. As has been explained above, Allah is the Light of the whole universe, but His Light can be perceived and comprehended by the righteous believers only. All other people grope about in the dark like the blind in spite of the all-pervading, all-embracing Light. Here a few of the countless signs which guide to the Light are being mentioned by way of example. If a person whose eyes of the heart are open, sees them, he can perceive Allah working everywhere around him at all times. But those who are blind of the heart, and can only see with the head's eyes, can see Biology and Zoology and other sciences working in the world, but they fail to perceive and recognize Allah's signs anywhere working in the world.

75. This may mean frozen clouds which have been called 'mountains in the heavens' metaphorically. It may also mean the mountains of the earth which stand high in the heavens and whose snow-capped peaks cause condensation in the clouds which results in hailstorms.

76. That is, their turning away from obedience itself belies their claim that they are believers and their conduct clearly shows that their profession of faith and submission was absolutely false.

77. These words clearly state that the judgement of the Prophet is the judgement of Allah and the Command of the Prophet is the Cammand of Allah. Therefore, the invitation to obey the Prophet is an invitation to obey both Allah and His Prophet. (Also see An-Nisā: 59-61, and the E.N.'s thereof).

78. This does not only apply to the cases which came up before the Holy Prophet for a decision in his lifetime, but this continues valid even today. Thus, a summon from the court of a judge in an Islamic government, who judges a case in accordance with the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet, is actually a summon from the Court of Allah and His Prophet and the one who repudiates the

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رَسُوْلَهٗ ؕ بَلْ اُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الظّٰلِمُوْنَ ﴿٥٠﴾ اِنَّمَا كَانَ قَوْلَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ اِذَا دُعُوْٓا
اِلَى اللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهٖ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ اَنْ يَّقُوْلُوْا سَمِعْنَا وَاَطَعْنَا ؕ وَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ
الْمُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿٥١﴾ وَمَنْ يُّطِعِ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ وَيَخْشَ اللّٰهَ وَيَتَّقْهِ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ
الْفَآئِزُوْنَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَاَقْسَمُوْا بِاللّٰهِ جَهْدَ اَيْمَانِهِمْ لَئِنْ اَمَرْتَهُمْ لَيَخْرُجُنَّ ؕ قُلْ لَّا
تُقْسِمُوْا ۚ طَاعَةٌ مَّعْرُوْفَةٌ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ خَبِيْرٌۢ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٥٣﴾ قُلْ اَطِيْعُوا اللّٰهَ وَ
اَطِيْعُوا الرَّسُوْلَ ۚ فَاِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَاِنَّمَا عَلَيْهِ مَا حُمِّلَ وَعَلَيْكُمْ مَّا حُمِّلْتُمْ ؕ وَاِنْ
تُطِيْعُوْهُ تَهْتَدُوْا ؕ وَمَا عَلَى الرَّسُوْلِ اِلَّا الْبَلٰغُ الْمُبِيْنُ ﴿٥٤﴾ وَعَدَ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ
اٰمَنُوْا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِى الْاَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ
الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۪ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِيْنَهُمُ الَّذِى ارْتَضٰى لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُمْ
مِّنْۢ بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ اَمْنًا ؕ يَعْبُدُوْنَنِىْ لَا يُشْرِكُوْنَ بِىْ شَيْـًٔا ؕ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ بَعْدَ
ذٰلِكَ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْفٰسِقُوْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَاَقِيْمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَاٰتُوا الزَّكٰوةَ وَاَطِيْعُوا
الرَّسُوْلَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُوْنَ ﴿٥٦﴾ لَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مُعْجِزِيْنَ فِى الْاَرْضِ ۚ
وَمَاْوٰىهُمُ النَّارُ ؕ وَلَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيْرُ ﴿٥٧﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لِيَسْتَاْذِنْكُمُ الَّذِيْنَ
مَلَكَتْ اَيْمَانُكُمْ وَالَّذِيْنَ لَمْ يَبْلُغُوا الْحُلُمَ مِنْكُمْ ثَلٰثَ مَرّٰتٍ ؕ مِنْ قَبْلِ
صَلٰوةِ الْفَجْرِ وَحِيْنَ تَضَعُوْنَ ثِيَابَكُمْ مِّنَ الظَّهِيْرَةِ وَمِنْۢ بَعْدِ صَلٰوةِ
الْعِشَآءِ ۚ ثَلٰثُ عَوْرٰتٍ لَّكُمْ ؕ لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَا عَلَيْهِمْ جُنَاحٌۢ بَعْدَهُنَّ ؕ طَوّٰفُوْنَ
عَلَيْكُمْ بَعْضُكُمْ عَلٰى بَعْضٍ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللّٰهُ لَكُمُ الْاٰيٰتِ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ عَلِيْمٌ حَكِيْمٌ ﴿٥٨﴾
وَاِذَا بَلَغَ الْاَطْفَالُ مِنْكُمُ الْحُلُمَ فَلْيَسْتَاْذِنُوْا كَمَا اسْتَاْذَنَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ؕ
كَذٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللّٰهُ لَكُمْ اٰيٰتِهٖ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ عَلِيْمٌ حَكِيْمٌ ﴿٥٩﴾ وَالْقَوَاعِدُ مِنَ النِّسَآءِ

As regards the Believers, when they are called towards Allah and His Messenger so that the Messenger may judge between them, they say, "We have heard and obeyed"; such are the people who attain true success, and only those attain true success who obey Allah and His Messenger and fear Allah and refrain from His disobedience. 51-52

They (the hypocrites) solemnly swear by Allah and say, "If you order us, we will leave our homes." Say to them, "Do not swear oaths for your 'obedience' is well known;[81] Allah is fully aware of what you are doing."[82] Say, "Obey Allah and obey the Messenger, but if you turn away, you should note it well that the Messenger is responsible for the duty entrusted to him and you are responsible for the duty entrusted to you. If you obey him, you will be rightly guided, for the responsibility of the Messenger is only to convey the Message clearly to you." 53-54

Allah has promised to those among you who believe and do righteous deeds, that He will make them successors in the land just as He made those who passed away before them, and that He will establish their religion, which He has approved for them, on strong foundations and will change their (present) state of fear into peace and security. Let them worship Me and associate none with Me;[83] and the one who disbelieves after this,"[84] shall be of those who are perverse transgressors. Therefore, establish *Ṣalāt,* pay the *Zakāt* dues and obey the Messenger; it is expected that you will be shown mercy. Do not think about those who have disbelieved that they will be able to frustrate Allah in the land; their abode is Hell and it is a very evil abode. 55-57

O Believers,[85] your slaves [86] and those of your children, who have not yet become sex conscious,[87] must ask your permission before coming in to see you on three occasions: before the Fajr Prayer and at noon when you put off your clothes and after the 'Ishā' Prayer. These are your three times of privacy.[88] There is no sin for you or for them[89] if they come without permission at other times than these, for you have to visit one another over and over again.[90] In this way Allah makes His Commandments clear to you for He is All-Knowing, All-Wise. And when your children have grown sex conscious,[91] they should receive your permission for this just as their elders get permission. In this way 58-59

Allah makes His Revelations plain to you for He is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

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judge indeed repudiates both Allah and His Prophet. This thing has been explained in a tradition related by Ḥasan Baṣrī thus: "Whosoever is summoned to appear before a judge from among the judges of the Muslims but fails to appear before him, he is a transgressor and forfeits his rights." (Al-Jaṣṣāṣ, *Aḥkam-ul-Qur'ān,* Vol. III, p. 405). In other words, such a person not only renders himself punishable but also guilty and liable to be proceeded against.

79. This verse states that a person who willingly accepts only that part of the Divine Law which serves his advantage, but rejects that which goes against his interests and desires, and prefers the worldly laws instead, is not a believer but a hypocrite. His profession of Faith is false for he does not in fact believe in Allah and His Prophet but in his own interests and desires. With this attitude even if he believes in and follows a portion of the Divine Law, his belief has no value whatever in the sight of Allah.

80. That is, there can be only three reasons for such a conduct. First, a person may not have believed at all but may only be posing as a Muslim in order to enjoy the benefits of belonging to the Muslim community. Secondly, he might have believed but may still be having doubts about the reality of the Prophethood, Revelations, life-after-death, and even the existence of Allah Himself. Thirdly, he may be a believer but might at the same time be apprehending injustice from Allah and His Prophet and considering their Commands disadvantageous to him personally in one way or the other. There can be no doubt that the people belonging to any of these categories are themselves unjust. A person who, having such doubts and suspicions, enters the Muslim community and enjoys undeserved benefits posing himself as a member thereof, is indeed a deceiver, cheat and forger. He is not only doing injustice to himself, practising constant falsehood and developing the meanest traits of character, but he is being unjust to the Muslim people as well, who look upon him as one of themselves merely on the basis of his verbal profession of the Faith and let him enjoy all sorts of social, cultural, political and moral relations with them as such.

81. The verse may also mean that the obedience expected of the believers is of recognised and well known type, which is above every kind of suspicion, and not such as may need swearing of oaths to convince others of its sincerity. Their conduct is manifest and everybody who comes into contact with them feels that they are truly obedient to Allah and His Prophet.

82. That is, "You might succeed in deceiving the people, but you cannot deceive Allah, Who is aware of everything, open or hidden, even of your innermost motives and intentions."

83. As has been hinted in the beginning of this discourse, this means to warn the hypocrites that the promise of Allah to bestow successorship in the land is not meant for those people who are Muslims only in name, but for those who are true in faith, pious in character, sincere in devotion and who follow Allah's religion in letter and spirit eschewing every tinge of *shirk*. Those who lack these qualities and pay mere lip service to Islam are neither worthy of this promise nor its addressees. Therefore they should entertain no hope of having any share in it.

Some people interpret *Khilafat* (successorship in the land) to mean political power and authority, and conversely conclude that whosoever possesses power and authority in the land is necessarily a true believer and a follower of Allah's approved religion and His devotee, free from all traces of *shirk*. Then in order to get support for their wrong conclusion, they even change the very meanings of Faith, virtue, Divine Creed, Allah's worship, idolatry, etc. to suit their interpretation. This is the worst distortion of the meaning of the Qur'ān, even worse than what the Jews and Christians did with their Scriptures. This interpretation of the verse tends to destroy the very message of the Qur'ān. If 'successorship in the land' were to mean mere power and authority in the land, then all those people who wielded power and authority in the world, or wield it today, would fit in with the description contained in the verse, even if they denied Allah, Revelations, Prophethood, life in the Hereafter, and were involved in all kinds of major sins like usury, adultery, drinking and gambling. Now if all such people are regarded as pious believers and considered worthy of holding the high offices because of their qualities as such, then 'Faith' would imply simple obedience to physical laws and 'Virtue' would mean making use of those laws effectively and successfully. Allah's approved religion would mean making maximum progress in the fields of industry and trade, commerce and politics by achieving excellence in the physical sciences; devotion to Allah would mean abiding by the rules and procedures which are naturally useful and essential for success in individual and collective enterprises; and *shirk* would mean adopting a few harmful methods also along with the useful procedures and rules. But the question is: Would a person who has studied the Qur'ān with an open heart and mind ever believe that the terms 'Faith', 'Righteous deeds', 'True Religion', 'Devotion to Allah', *Tauḥīd* and *Shirk* as used in the Qur'ān really mean this ? As a matter of fact, such a meaning can be understood either by the one who has never made an intelligent study of the Qur'ān as a whole, but has picked up verses from here and there and given them his own biased meaning according to pre-conceived notions and theories, or by the one who has read the Qur'ān through but

has all along been holding all those verses as wrong and absurd, which invite people to accept Allah as the One and only Lord, His Revelations as the only source of Guidance, His Messengers as the only true Guides worthy of absolute obedience, and which demand not only belief in the life-after-death, but also state that the people who would consider success in the worldly life as their sole and ultimate objective, without any idea of their accountability in the Hereafter, would be deprived of real success. The Qur'ān has repeated these themes so frequently in diverse ways and in such clear and plain language that it is difficult to believe that anybody who studies it honestly can ever be involved in those misunderstandings in which the modern interpreters of this verse have been involved. The fact is that they have misconstrued *Khilāfat* and *Istikhlāf* (successorship) after their own notions, which cannot be held as correct by anybody who has some knowledge of the Qur'ān.

The Qur'ān has used *Khilāfat* and *Istikhlāf* in the following three meanings and the context determines in which particular meaning it has been used in a particular place:

(a) "To bear the authority delegated by Allah". The whole human race is Allah's *Khalīfah* (successor) on the earth in this sense.

(b) "To acknowledge Allah as the Supreme Sovereign and to use His delegated powers and authority in accordance with His Law." In this sense only a pious and righteous believer can be a *Khalīfah*, because he alone can discharge the responsibilities of *Khilāfat* truly. On the other hand, a disbeliever and sinner cannot be *Khalīfah*: he is rather a rebel against Allah, because he abuses the power and authority delegated by Allah in disobedience to Him in the land bestowed by Him.

(c) "The succession of one ruling nation in the land after the fall of another nation." The meanings (a) and (b) imply vicegerency while (c) implies successorship. Both these meanings of *Khilāfat* are well known and recognised in the Arabic lexicon.

Now anybody who reads this verse in this context cannot have any doubt that the word *Khilāfat* has been used here for the government which discharges the responsibilities of Allah's Vicegerency strictly in accordance with Allah's Law, and not in accordance with mere physical laws of the world. That is why, not to speak of the disbelievers, even the hypocrites, who professed faith in Islam, are being excluded from the purview of Allah's promise. That is why it is being stated that true and righteous believers only are worthy of this promise. That is why it is being averred that the establishment of *Khilāfat* will result in the establishment of Islam, Allah's approved religion, on strong foundations; and that is why the condition being put forward for earning this favour is that the believers should

remain steadfast in their faith and devotion to Allah avoiding every tinge of *shirk*. To remove this promise from its right context and apply it on the international scene to the case of America and Russia, or any other power that be, is sheer absurdity and nonsense. (For further details, see E. N. 99 of Al-Anbiyā' also).

Another thing that needs to be mentioned here is that the direct addressees of this promise were the Muslims living in the time of the Holy Prophet though indirectly it applies to the future generations of Muslims as well. When in the beginning this promise was held out by Allah, the Muslims were living in a state of fear and Islam had not yet taken firm roots even in Ḥejāz. A few years later this state of fear not only gave way to peace and equanimity but Islam also spread outside Arabia to large parts of Africa and Asia, and it became firmly established not only in its own land of birth but outside it as well. This is a historical proof of the fact that Allah fulfilled His promise in the times of Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmān (may Allah be pleased with them all). No right thinking person, therefore, can have any doubt that the *Khilafat* of the first three Caliphs has been authenticated by the Qur'ān itself and Allah Himself has testified to their being pious Believers. If anybody still has a doubt, he should read the address of Hadrat 'Ali in Nahjal Balāghah, which was meant to dissuade Ḥaḍrat 'Umar from going personally to fight against the Iranians. He said:

"Our success in this work is not dependent on numerical strength; it is the religion of Allah for which He Himself has opened ways. We are grateful to Him for His help and succour which has enabled us to serve its cause till it has been raised to its present glory. Allah Himself has said: 'Allah has promised to those among you, who believe and do righteous deeds that He will make them successors in the land .... ' Allah will certainly fulfil this promise and will help the armies of Islam. The position of the Caliph in Islam is like that of the string in a necklace of pearls. If the string breaks, the pearls scatter away and the order is destroyed. Once scattered and dispersed, it becomes difficult to collect them again. No doubt the Arabs are small in number, but they have been increased by Islam and strengthened by unity. You should therefore stick to Madīnah like the pivot and make the grindstone of Arabia rotate about you and guide the war-machine from here. Once you leave this place, your entire organisation will begin to crumble, then you will start feeling more worried about the dangers behind than the enemies in front. Moreover, the Iranians will concentrate their whole attention on you, and will like to exterminate you, taking you as the main and only hurdle in their way to victory. As for your apprehension that they have come out in much greater strength, I would say that hitherto we have been fighting them not merely on the strength of numbers, but have been putting them to rout on the strength of Allah's help and succour."

[Contd. on p. 400

الّٰتِیْ لَا یَرْجُوْنَ نِكَاحًا فَلَیْسَ عَلَیْهِنَّ جُنَاحٌ اَنْ یَّضَعْنَ ثِیَابَهُنَّ غَیْرَ
مُتَبَرِّجٰتٍۭ بِزِیْنَةٍ ؕ وَ اَنْ یَّسْتَعْفِفْنَ خَیْرٌ لَّهُنَّ ؕ وَ اللّٰهُ سَمِیْعٌ عَلِیْمٌ ﴿۶۰﴾ لَیْسَ
عَلَى الْاَعْمٰى حَرَجٌ وَّ لَا عَلَى الْاَعْرَجِ حَرَجٌ وَّ لَا عَلَى الْمَرِیْضِ حَرَجٌ وَّ لَا
عَلٰۤى اَنْفُسِكُمْ اَنْ تَاْكُلُوْا مِنْۢ بُیُوْتِكُمْ اَوْ بُیُوْتِ اٰبَآىِٕكُمْ اَوْ بُیُوْتِ اُمَّهٰتِكُمْ اَوْ
بُیُوْتِ اِخْوَانِكُمْ اَوْ بُیُوْتِ اَخَوٰتِكُمْ اَوْ بُیُوْتِ اَعْمَامِكُمْ اَوْ بُیُوْتِ عٰمّٰتِكُمْ اَوْ
بُیُوْتِ اَخْوَالِكُمْ اَوْ بُیُوْتِ خٰلٰتِكُمْ اَوْ مَا مَلَكْتُمْ مَّفَاتِحَهٗۤ اَوْ صَدِیْقِكُمْ ؕ لَیْسَ
عَلَیْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ اَنْ تَاْكُلُوْا جَمِیْعًا اَوْ اَشْتَاتًا ؕ فَاِذَا دَخَلْتُمْ بُیُوْتًا فَسَلِّمُوْا عَلٰۤى
اَنْفُسِكُمْ تَحِیَّةً مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللّٰهِ مُبٰرَكَةً طَیِّبَةً ؕ كَذٰلِكَ یُبَیِّنُ اللّٰهُ لَكُمُ الْاٰیٰتِ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿۶۱﴾ اِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ الَّذِیْنَ اٰمَنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ وَ رَسُوْلِهٖ وَ اِذَا كَانُوْا
مَعَهٗ عَلٰۤى اَمْرٍ جَامِعٍ لَّمْ یَذْهَبُوْا حَتّٰى یَسْتَاْذِنُوْهُ ؕ اِنَّ الَّذِیْنَ یَسْتَاْذِنُوْنَكَ
اُولٰٓىِٕكَ الَّذِیْنَ یُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَ رَسُوْلِهٖ ۚ فَاِذَا اسْتَاْذَنُوْكَ لِبَعْضِ شَاْنِهِمْ فَاْذَنْ
لِّمَنْ شِئْتَ مِنْهُمْ وَ اسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمُ اللّٰهَ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِیْمٌ ﴿۶۲﴾ لَا تَجْعَلُوْا دُعَآءَ
الرَّسُوْلِ بَیْنَكُمْ كَدُعَآءِ بَعْضِكُمْ بَعْضًا ؕ قَدْ یَعْلَمُ اللّٰهُ الَّذِیْنَ یَتَسَلَّلُوْنَ مِنْكُمْ لِوَاذًا ۚ
فَلْیَحْذَرِ الَّذِیْنَ یُخَالِفُوْنَ عَنْ اَمْرِهٖۤ اَنْ تُصِیْبَهُمْ فِتْنَةٌ اَوْ یُصِیْبَهُمْ عَذَابٌ
اَلِیْمٌ ﴿۶۳﴾ اَلَاۤ اِنَّ لِلّٰهِ مَا فِی السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الْاَرْضِ ؕ قَدْ یَعْلَمُ مَاۤ اَنْتُمْ عَلَیْهِ ؕ وَ یَوْمَ
یُرْجَعُوْنَ اِلَیْهِ فَیُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا عَمِلُوْا ؕ وَ اللّٰهُ بِكُلِّ شَیْءٍ عَلِیْمٌ ﴿۶۴﴾

(۸) ع ۱۴ — (۹) ع ۱۵

There is no sin for such elderly women as are past the age of marriage,[92] if they lay aside their outer graments[93] provided that they do not mean to display their adornment.[94] Nevertheless, if they behave modestly, it would be better for them: for Allah hears everything and knows everything. 60

There is no harm if a blind or a lame or a sick person (takes a meal at another's house): nor is there any harm for yourselves if you take meals at your own houses or at the houses of your fathers and grandfathers or at the houses of your mothers and grandmothers or at your brothers' houses or at your sisters' houses or at the houses of your paternal uncles or at the houses of your paternal aunts or at the houses of your maternal uncles or at the houses of your maternal aunts or from the houses whose keys are in your possession or at the houses of your friends.[95] There is no harm if you take your meals together or separately;[96] however, when you enter the houses, you should send greetings of peace on your people, for the prayer of greetings prescribed by Allah is blessed and pure. Thus Allah makes His Revelations clear to you. It is expected that you will use your common sense to grasp these. 61

True Believers[97] are those who sincerely believe in Allah and His Messenger and who do not leave him without permission when they are with the Messenger for some common good;[98] only those who ask your permission sincerely believe in Allah and His Messenger. Therefore, when they ask your permission for a private business,[99] you may give permission to whomever you like,[100] and ask Allah's forgiveness for such people:[101] Allah is indeed Forgiving and Merciful. 62

O Believers, do not consider the summoning by the Messenger like the summoning among you by one another.[102] Allah knows well those of you who steal away, concealing themselves behind others.[103] Let those who disobey the order of the Messenger beware lest they should be involved in some affliction,[104] or are visited by a woeful scourge. Beware! whatever is in the heavens and the earth belongs to Allah. He knows whatever you are doing. On the Day you shall return to Him, He will let you know what you have done: He has full knowledge of everything. 63-64

Contd. from p. 397]

Any discerning reader can see for himself as to which side is being held by Hadrat 'Alī as worthy of Allah's promise with regard to successorship in the land.

84. *Kufr* (disbelief) here may also mean ingratitude or denial of the truth. In the first case, the verse will refer to those people who deviate from the right path after Allah has favoured them with successorship, and in the second, to the hypocrites, who do not give up their hypocritical attitude even after hearing this promise of Allah.

85. From here again, the Commandments for social life are being resumed. It is just possible that this portion of Sūrah An-Nūr was sent down at a later date.

86. According to the majority of commentators and jurists, this refers to both male and female slaves. Ibn 'Umar and Mujāhid, however, have expressed the opinion that it refers to the male slaves only. But in view of the Commandment that follows there appears to be no reason for making this distinction. Violation of one's privacy by one's children is as undesirable as by one's female slaves. All jurists are agreed that the Commandment given in this verse is applicable both to the minor and to the grown up slaves.

87. Another translation can be: "who have not yet reached the age of seeing wet dreams." From this the jurists have deduced the principle that in case of boys puberty starts when they begin having nocturnal emissions. But the translation that we have adopted is preferable because the injunction is meant both for boys and for girls. If nocturnal emission is taken as the sign of attaining puberty, the injunction would be confined to boys only, because in the case of girls it is the menstrual discharge, and not noctural emission, which marks the beginning of puberty. In our opinion the intention is that the children of the house should follow this procedure till the time that they become sex conscious. After they have become sex conscious they have to follow the injunction that follows.

88. Literally, *'aurat'* is a place of danger and trouble; it also means a private part of the body, which one would not like to expose before others, and something which is not fully secured. All these meanings are close to each other and all are implied in the meaning of this verse. The verse means to say that these are your times of privacy when you are either alone or with your wives in a state when it is not proper for your children and servants to come in to see you unannounced. Therefore, they should be instructed that they must take your permission before coming in to see you in your places of privacy at these three times.

89. That is, at other times than these, there is no restriction on the entry of minor children and slaves in your private rooms without permission. If on such an occasion you are not properly dressed and they enter without permission, you will have no right to take them to task. For in that case, it will be your own folly to have kept yourself in an improper state at a time when you should have been properly dressed for the day's business. However, if they enter without permission during the times of privacy, the blame will lie with them provided they have been taught the necessary etiquette.

90. This is the reason for the general permission for children and slaves to come without permission at other times than those mentioned above. This throws light on a fundamental *Fiqh* principle that every religious injunction is based on some wisdom or good reason, whether it has been explained or not.

91. That is, when they have reached the age of puberty. As has been explained in E.N. 87 above, the signs of puberty in the case of boys and girls are nocturnal emission and menstrual discharge respectively. There is, however, a difference of opinion among the jurists regarding the beginning of puberty in those boys and girls who for some reason do not show these physical signs for an unduly long time. According to Imám Shafi'ī, Imām Abū Yūsuf, Imām Muḥammad and Imām Aḥmad, a boy or a girl of 15 years will be considered to have attained puberty, and a saying of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah also supports this view. But the well-known view of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah is that in such cases the age of puberty will be 17 years for girls and 18 years for boys. Both these opinions are the result of juristic reasoning and neither is based on any injunction of the Qur'ān or Sunnah. It is therefore not necessary that the age limits of 15 or 18 years be accepted as marking the beginning of puberty everywhere in the world in abnormal cases. In different countries and ages there are different conditions of physical development and growth. The age of puberty in a certain country can be determined by means of the law of averages in normal cases. As for abnormal cases, the mean difference of ages may be added to the upper age limit to determine the age of puberty. For instance, if in a country, the minimum and maximum ages for noctural discharge are normally 12 and 15 years respectively, the mean difference of one and a half years may be added to the maximum limit of 15 years to determine the beginning of puberty for abnormal cases. The same principle can be used by the legal experts of various countries to fix the age of puberty keeping in view their peculiar local conditions.

There is a tradition quoted from Ibn 'Umar in support of the age of 15 years for puberty. He says: "I was 14, when I presented myself before the Holy Prophet to ask his permission to join the Battle of Uhud, but he declined permission. Then on the occasion of the Battle of the Trench, when I was 15, I

was again presented and he permitted me to join." (Sihāh Sitta, Musnad Aḥmad). This tradition, however, does not stand scrutiny for the following two reasons:

(a) The Battle of Uḥud took place in Shawwāl, 3 A.H., and the Battle of the Trench in Shawwāl, 5 A.H. according to Ibn Isḥāq, and in Zil-Qa'd, 5 A.H., according to Ibn Sa'd. There is an interval of two years or more between the two events. Now if Ibn 'Umar was 14 at the time of the Battle of Uḥud, he could not be 15 at the time of the Battle of the Trench. It may be that he mentioned 14 years for 13 years and 11 months and 15 years for 15 years and 11 months.

(b) It is a different thing to be regarded as an adult for the purposes of war and quite different to be legally adult for social affairs. They are not necessarily interconnected. Therefor the correct view is that the age of 15 for an abnormal boy has been fixed on the basis of analogous and juristic reasoning and not on the basis of anything in the Qur'ān or Sunnah.

92. Literally, "the seated women". This means those women who are no longer capable of bearing children, who no longer cherish sexual desires, and who cannot excite the passions of men.

93. Literally, "if they lay aside their clothes". Obviously it cannot mean that they should strip themselves naked. That is why all the jurists and commentators are agreed that it implies the outer garments which are used to hide the adornments as enjoined in Al-Aḥzāb: 59.

94. *"Tabarruj"* is display and exhibitionism. When used with regard to a woman, it would imply the one who displays her charms and adornments before other men. The permission to lay aside the outer garments is being given to those old women who are no longer interested in personal embellishments and whose sex desires are gone. But if they still have a hidden desire smouldering in their hearts and an urge to display, they cannot avail of this permission.

95. Three things are necessary to understand this verse:

(a) The verse consists of two parts: the first part relates to the sick, the lame, the blind and other handicapped people, and the second part to the other People.

(b) The moral teachings of the Qur'ān had so thoroughly changed the Arab mind that they had become highly sensitive with regard to the distinction between the lawful and the unlawful. According to Ibn 'Abbās, when Allah commanded them "not to devour one another's property by unlawful ways" (IV: 29), the people became unduly cautious and would not eat freely at each other's house; so much so that unless a formal invitation was extended, they considered it unlawful even to dine in the house of a relative or a friend

(c) The mention of "taking meals at your own houses" only means to impress that taking meals at the house of a relative or a friend is just like taking meals at one's own house, where no permission is required.

With these three things in mind, one can easily understand the meaning of the verse. It says that the handicapped person can have his meal anywhere and at any house in order to satisfy his hunger, because the society as a whole owes to him this privilege on account of his handicap. As for the other people, for them their 'own houses' and the houses of the relatives mentioned in the verse are equally good for the purpose. No formal invitation or permission is needed to have the meals at their houses. In the absence of the master, if his wife or children offer something, it can be taken without hesitation. In this connection, it should be noted that the houses of one's children are just like one's own house, and the friends imply close friends.

96. In ancient Arabia, some tribes had the tradition that each member sat and ate separately. Eating together in one place was considered bad as the Hindus do even today. On the contrary, some other tribes considered it bad to eat alone individually: so much so that they would even go without food if they did not have company at meals. This verse means to abolish such customs and restrictions.

97. These are the final instructions being given to tighten the discipline of the Muslim Community and make it more organised than before:

98. This Commandment is also applicable in respect of the successors of the Holy Prophet after him and other leaders of the Muslims. When the Muslims are called upon to get together for a common cause, whether relating to war or peace, it is not permissible for them to retreat or disperse without due permission of the leader.

99. This contains a warning that it is absolutely unlawful to ask permission without any genuine need.

100. That is, it depends upon the Prophet or his successor after him to grant or not to grant permission even in case of a genuine need. If he deems the collective cause to be more important than the individual need of the person, he may refuse permission, and a believer will not mind it.

101. This again contains a warning: If in asking permission there is even a tinge of excuse making, or of placing individual interests above collective interests, it would be a sin. Therefore the Prophet or his successor should also pray for the forgiveness of the one whom he gives permission.

102 *Duā''* means 'to summon', 'to pray' and 'to call'. *Duā'-ar-Rasūl*, therefore, may mean 'summoning or praying by the Messenger' or 'calling the

Messenger'. The verse can thus have three meanings which would all be equally correct:

(a) "The Prophet's summons should not be treated as a common man's summons", for the Prophet's summon is of extraordinary importance, which you cannot ignore, because if you fail to respond to it, or feel hesitant about it, you will be doing so at the very risk of your faith

(b) "Do not consider the Prophet's prayer as a common man's prayer". If he is pleased with you and prays for you, there can be no greater good fortune for you. But if he is displeased with you and curses you, there can be no greater misfortune for you.

(c) "Calling the Prophet should not be like calling among yourselves of each other." That is, you should not call or address the Prophet just as you call and address other people aloud by their names. You should have full respect for him, because the slightest disrespect in this regard will call for Allah's reckoning in the Hereafter.

Though all the three meanings quite fit in with the context, the first meaning is more in keeping with the theme which follows.

103. This is yet another trait of the hypocrites. When they are summoned to gather together for a collective cause, they do respond to the call, because they want to be counted among the Muslims. But they grudge their presence, and steal away somehow as soon as they find an opportunity.

104. According to Imām Ja'far Sādiq, "affliction" means "rule of the unjust". That is, if the Muslims will disobey the Commands of the Prophet, they will be put under tyrants. Besides this, there can be many other forms of affliction also; for instance, sectarian differences, civil war, moral degradation, disruption of community life, internal chaos, disintegration of political and material power, subjugation by others, etc.



XXV
AL-FURQĀN
سُورَةُ الفُرقَان

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XXV
AL-FURQĀN
سورة الفرقان

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name "Al-Furqān" from the first verse. Though it is symbolic like the names of many other Sūrahs, it has a close relation to its subject-matter.

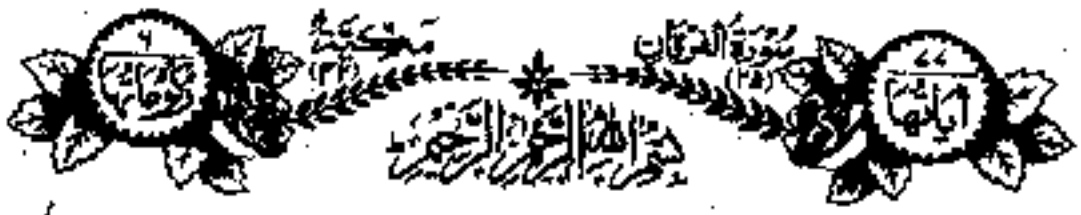
Period of Revelation

It appears from its style and subject-matter that, like Sūrah Al-Mu'minūn, it was also revealed during the third stage of Prophethood at Makkah. Ibn Jarīr and Imām Rāzī have cited a tradition of Dahhāk bin Muzāhim that this Sūrah was revealed eight years before Sūrah An-Nisā. This also confirms our opinion as to its period of revelation. *(Ibn Jarīr*, Vol. XIX, pp. 28-30, and *Tafsīr Kabīr*, Vol. VI, p. 358).

Subject-Matter and Topics

The Sūrah deals with the doubts and objections that were being raised against the Qur'ān, the Prophethood of Muhammad (Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) and his teachings by the disbelievers of Makkah. Appropriate answers to each and every objection have been given and the people have been warned of the consequences of rejecting the Truth. At the end of the Sūrah, a clear picture of the moral superiority of the Believers has been depicted as in the beginning of Sūrah Al-Mu'minūn, as if to say, "Here is the criterion for distinguishing the genuine from the counterfeit. This is the noble character of those people who have believed in and followed the teachings of the Holy Prophet and this is the kind of people that he is

trying to train. You may yourselves compare and contrast this type of people with those Arabs, who have not as yet accepted the Message, and who are upholding "ignorance" and exerting their utmost to defeat the Truth. Now you may judge for yourselves as to which you would like to choose." Though this question was not posed in so many words, it was placed before every one in Arabia in a tangible shape. It may be noted that during the next few years, the practical answer given to this question by the whole nation, with the exception of a small minority, was that they chose Islam.



تَبٰرَكَ الَّذِيْ نَزَّلَ الْفُرْقَانَ عَلٰى عَبْدِهٖ لِيَكُوْنَ لِلْعٰلَمِيْنَ نَذِيْرَا ۝١ الَّذِيْ

XXV
AL-FURQĀN
سُوْرَةُ الْفُرْقَانِ

Verses: 77 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

Highly blessed[1] is He, Who has sent down *Al-Furqān* [2,3] to His servant so that it may be a warner to all mankind :[4] 1

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1. The Arabic word *tabāraka* is very comprehensive, and cannot be understood fully and completely by "highly blessed", not even by a sentence. However, its meanings may be grasped by keeping in view the remaining portion of vv. 1-2. Here it has been used to convey the following meanings:

(1) He is the most Beneficent: that is why He has bestowed the great blessing of *Al-Furqān* by degrees on His servant so that he may admonish all mankind.

(2) He is the most Exalted and Great: for the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth belongs to Him.

(3) He is the most Holy, Pure and Perfect: He is free from every tinge of *shirk* and has neither a partner in His Godhead, nor needs a son to succeed Him; for He is Ever-Lasting.

(4) He is the Highest and the Most Supreme in rank: the Kingdom and the Dominion wholly and solely belong to Him, and there is none who has any share in His Authority and Powers.

[Coutd. on p.412

لَهٗ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَلَمْ يَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا وَّلَمْ يَكُنْ لَّهٗ شَرِيْكٌ فِي
الْمُلْكِ وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَقَدَّرَهٗ تَقْدِيْرًا ۝٢ وَاتَّخَذُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِهٖٓ اٰلِهَةً لَّا
يَخْلُقُوْنَ شَيْـًٔا وَّهُمْ يُخْلَقُوْنَ وَلَا يَمْلِكُوْنَ لِاَنْفُسِهِمْ ضَرًّا وَّلَا نَفْعًا وَّ
لَا يَمْلِكُوْنَ مَوْتًا وَّلَا حَيٰوةً وَّلَا نُشُوْرًا ۝٣ وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْٓا اِنْ هٰذَآ
اِلَّآ اِفْكُ ِۨافْتَرٰىهُ وَاَعَانَهٗ عَلَيْهِ قَوْمٌ اٰخَرُوْنَ ۚ فَقَدْ جَآءُوْ ظُلْمًا وَّزُوْرًا ۝٤
وَقَالُوْٓا اَسَاطِيْرُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ اكْتَتَبَهَا فَهِيَ تُمْلٰى عَلَيْهِ بُكْرَةً وَّاَصِيْلًا ۝٥ قُلْ
اَنْزَلَهُ الَّذِيْ يَعْلَمُ السِّرَّ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۭ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ غَفُوْرًا رَّحِيْمًا ۝٦
وَقَالُوْا مَالِ هٰذَا الرَّسُوْلِ يَاْكُلُ الطَّعَامَ وَيَمْشِيْ فِي الْاَسْوَاقِ ۭ لَوْلَآ اُنْزِلَ
اِلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ فَيَكُوْنَ مَعَهٗ نَذِيْرًا ۝٧ اَوْ يُلْقٰٓى اِلَيْهِ كَنْزٌ اَوْ تَكُوْنُ لَهٗ جَنَّةٌ
يَّاْكُلُ مِنْهَا ۭ وَقَالَ الظّٰلِمُوْنَ اِنْ تَتَّبِعُوْنَ اِلَّا رَجُلًا مَّسْحُوْرًا ۝٨ اُنْظُرْ كَيْفَ
ضَرَبُوْا لَكَ الْاَمْثَالَ فَضَلُّوْا فَلَا يَسْتَطِيْعُوْنَ سَبِيْلًا ۝٩ تَبٰرَكَ الَّذِيْٓ اِنْ شَاۗءَ
جَعَلَ لَكَ خَيْرًا مِّنْ ذٰلِكَ جَنّٰتٍ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ ۙ وَيَجْعَلْ لَّكَ
قُصُوْرًا ۝١٠ بَلْ كَذَّبُوْا بِالسَّاعَةِ ۣ وَاَعْتَدْنَا لِمَنْ كَذَّبَ بِالسَّاعَةِ سَعِيْرًا ۝١١
اِذَا رَاَتْهُمْ مِّنْ مَّكَانٍۢ بَعِيْدٍ سَمِعُوْا لَهَا تَغَيُّظًا وَّزَفِيْرًا ۝١٢ وَاِذَآ اُلْقُوْا مِنْهَا
مَكَانًا ضَيِّقًا مُّقَرَّنِيْنَ دَعَوْا هُنَالِكَ ثُبُوْرًا ۝١٣ لَا تَدْعُوا الْيَوْمَ ثُبُوْرًا وَّاحِدًا
وَّادْعُوْا ثُبُوْرًا كَثِيْرًا ۝١٤ قُلْ اَذٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ اَمْ جَنَّةُ الْخُلْدِ الَّتِيْ وُعِدَ الْمُتَّقُوْنَ ۭ
كَانَتْ لَهُمْ جَزَاۗءً وَّمَصِيْرًا ۝١٥ لَهُمْ فِيْهَا مَا يَشَاۗءُوْنَ خٰلِدِيْنَ ۭ كَانَ عَلٰي رَبِّكَ
وَعْدًا مَّسْـُٔوْلًا ۝١٦ وَيَوْمَ يَحْشُرُهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ فَيَقُوْلُ ءَاَنْتُمْ
اَضْلَلْتُمْ عِبَادِيْ هٰٓؤُلَاۗءِ اَمْ هُمْ ضَلُّوا السَّبِيْلَ ۝١٧ قَالُوْا سُبْحٰنَكَ مَا كَانَ يَنْۢبَغِيْ

He to Whom belongs the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth:[5] Who has begotten no son:[6] Who has no partner in His Sovereignty:[7] Who created each and every thing and then ordained its destiny.[8] Yet the people have set up, besides Him, deities, who do not create anything but are themselves created :[9] who can neither harm nor help even themselves: who have no power over life or death, nor can they raise up the dead.[10] 2-3

Those who have rejected the Message of the Prophet, say, "This (Al-Furqān) is a forgery which this man himself has devised, and some others have helped him at it." What a cruel injustice[11] and an impudent lie! They say, "These things are the writings of the ancients which he has got copied down for himself, and then these are recited to him in the morning and evening." O Muhammad, say to them, "This has been sent down by Him, Who knows the secret of the heavens and the earth."[12] The fact is that He is very Forgiving and Merciful.[13] 4-6

They say, "What sort of a Messenger is he that he eats food and moves about in the streets?[14] Why has not an angel been sent down to accompany him and threaten (the disbelievers)?[15] Or why has not at least a treasure been sent down for him or a garden given to him for (easy) sustenance?"[16] And the wicked people say, "You are following a man bewitched."[17] Just see what strange arguments they bring forward with regard to you! They have gone so far astray that they cannot charge any thing against you.[18] Highly blessed[19] is He, Who, if He wills, could give you much more and better things than what they propose for you: (Not one but) many gardens, beneath which rivers flow; and big castles. 7-10

The fact of the matter is that these people have denied "the Hour"[20,21]—And for the one who denies the coming of the Hour, We have prepared a blazing Fire. When it will see[22] them from afar, they will hear the sounds of its raging and roaring. And when they are chained together and flung into a narrow space therein, they will begin to call for death. (Then it will be said to them:) "Do not call for one death today, but call for many deaths." 11-14

Ask them "Is this (Fire) better or the everlasting Garden which has been promised to the God-fearing righteous people ?" which will be the recompense of their good deeds and the final destination of their journey wherein they will get everything they desire and wherein they 15-16

will dwell for ever. This is a promise which your Lord has taken upon Himself to fulfil.[23]

And on that Day (your Lord) will gather all these people together as well as their deities,[24] whom they worship besides Allah. Then He will ask them, "Did you mislead these servants of Mine, or did they themselves go astray?"[25]

Contd. from p. 409]

(5) He is the sole Creator of the universe and has created each and everything in it and predetermined its destiny. For further details, see E.N. 14 of Al-Mu'minūn and E.N. 19 of Al-Furqān.

2. *Al-Furqān:* The Criterion. The Qur'ān has been called Al-Furqān because it is the Criterion for judging right and wrong virtue and vice, truth and falsehood.

3. The word *nazzala* implies revelation of the Qur'ān piecemeal by degrees. The wisdom of this introductory remark will be explained in the study of verse 32, where the objection of the disbelievers of Makkah — as to why the Qur'ān has not been sent down all at once—has been dealt with.

4. "..... warner to all mankind": To warn all mankind of the evil consequences of their heedlessness and deviation. The warner may be Al-Furqān or the Holy Prophet to whom it was revealed. In fact, both were the warners because they were both sent for one and the same purpose. The message of the Qur'ān and Prophethood of Muḥammad (Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) were not meant for any particular country but for the whole world; and not for their own time, but for all times to come. This has been stated at several places in the Qur'ān; for instance: "O Muḥammad, say, O mankind, I am a Messenger to all of you from Allah ....." (Al-A'rāf: 158); "..... and this Qur'ān has been revealed to me so that I should thereby warn you all and whom it may reach." (Al-An'ām: 19); "We have sent you only as a bearer of good news and as a warner to all mankind." (Sabā: 28); and "We have sent you as a mercy to all mankind." (Al-Anbiyā': 107). The Holy Prophet himself has stated this clearly in the Hadīth; for instance, he said: "I have been sent to all men—the red and the black." "Before me a Prophet was sent only to his own people, but I have been sent to all mankind." (Bukhari, Muslim). "I have been sent to all mankind, and I am the Last of the Prophets." (Muslim).

5. Another translation may be: "To Him belongs the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth." That is, He alone has an exclusive right to it, and no one else has any right to it nor any share in it.

6. That is, "He has neither any relation of direct parenthood to anyone, nor has He taken anyone as a son. Therefore, none else in the universe is entitled to worship. He is Unique and there can be no partner in His Godhead. Thus all those who associate with Him angels or jinns or saints as His offspring, are ignorant. Likewise, those who believe that some one, is His "son", are also ignorant. They have no true conception of the Greatness of Allah and consider Him to be weak and needy like human beings, who require some one to become their inheritor. It is sheer ignorance and folly." For further details, see E.N.'s 66 to 68 of Sūrah Yūnus.

7. The Arabic word *mulk* means Sovereignty, Supreme Authority, and Kingship. Thus the sentence will mean: "Allah is the Absolute Ruler of the whole universe and there is none other who may have any right to authority; therefore He alone is God." For whenever a man takes anything else as his lord, he does so under the presumption that his deity has the power to do good or bring harm and make or mar his fortune; nobody will like to worship a powerless deity. Now when it is recognized that none but Allah has the real power and authority in the universe, nobody will bow before anyone other than Him in worship, nor will sing anybody else's hymns, nor commit the folly of bowing in worship before any thing else except his real God, or recognize any other as his ruler, because "To Allah belongs the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth and to Him alone."

8. There may be other translations of this also: "He has ordained it in due proportion"; or "He has appointed an exact measure for everything." But no translation can convey its real meaning, which is: "Allah has not only created everything in the universe but also determined its shape, size, potentialities, characteristics, term of existence, the limitations and extent of its development and all other things concerning it. Then, He has created the means and provisions to enable it to function properly in its own separate sphere."

This is one of the most comprehensive verses of the Qur'ān with regard to the Doctrine of *Tauhīd*. According to Traditions, the Holy Prophet himself taught this verse to every child of his family as soon as it was able to speak and utter a few words. Thus, this verse is the best means of impressing the Doctrine of *Tauhīd* on our minds, and every Muslim should use it for educating his children as soon as they develop understanding.

9. The words are comprehensive and cover all the false gods whom the *mushriks* worship whether they are angels, jinns, Prophets, saints, the sun, the moon, the stars, trees, rivers, animals etc., which have been created by Allah, or those which have been created by man, as the idols of stone, wood, etc.

10. That is, "Allah has sent down *Al-Furqān* on His servant so that he may invite the people to the Truth, which they have forsaken due to heedlessness and waywardness, and warn them of the evil consequences of their folly. The *Furqān* is being revealed piecemeal so that he may distinguish right from wrong and the genuine from the counterfeit."

11. Another translation may be: "a great injustice."

12. This is the same objection which the modern orientalists have raised against the Qur'ān, but strange as it may seem, no contemporary of the Holy Prophet ever raised such an objection against him. Nobody, for instance, ever said that Muḥammad (Allah's peace be upon him) as a boy had met Buḥairah, the monk, and had attained religious knowledge from him, nor did anybody claim that he had obtained all that information from the Christian monks and Jewish rabbis during the trade journeys in his youth. In fact, they knew that he had never travelled alone but in the caravans and if they said such a thing, it would be refuted by hundreds of their own people from the city.

Then, one could ask, if he had gained all that knowledge from Buhairah when he was about 12, and during trade journeys when he was 25, why did he keep it secret from the people till he became 40? whereas he did not leave his country even for a single day, but lived for years among his own people in the same city. That is why the people of Makkah dared not bring such an impudent and baseless charge against him. Their objections related to the time when he claimed to be a Prophet of Allah and not to the time preceding that claim. Their argument was like this: "This man is illiterate and cannot obtain any knowledge through books. He has lived among us for forty years, but we have never heard from him anything that might have shown that he had any acquaintance with what he is preaching; therefore he must have had the help of other people who copied these things from the writings of the ancients for him: he learns these things from them and recites them as Divine Revelations: this is a fraud." So much so that according to some traditions, they named some of his "helpers", who were the people of the Book, were illiterate and lived in Makkah. They were: (1) Addās, a freed slave of Ḥuvaitib bin 'Abdul 'Uzzā(2) Yasār, a freed slave of 'Alā bin Al-Hadramī, and (3) Jabr, a freed slave of 'Āmir bin Rabbī'ah.

Apparently this is a weighty argument. For there can be no greater proof of the "fraud" of Prophethood than to specify its source. But it looks strange that no argument has been put forward to refute this charge except a mere denial, as if to say, "Your charge is an impudent lie: you are cruel and unjust to bring such a false charge against Our Messenger; for the Qur'ān is the Word of Allah Who knows all the secrets in the heavens and the earth." Had their charge been based on facts, it would not have been rejected with contempt, for in that case the

disbelievers would have demanded a detailed and clear answer. But they realized the strength of the arguments and did not make such a demand. Moreover, the fact that the "weighty" argument failed to produce any doubt in the minds of the new Muslims, was a clear proof that it was a lie.

The enigma is clearly explained if we keep in view the prevalent circumstances:

(1) The disbelievers of Makkah did not take any decisive steps to prove their charge, although they could, had there been any truth in their charge. For instance, they could have made raids on the houses of the alleged helpers and on the house of the Holy Prophet himself and taken hold of the whole "material" which was being used in this "fraud", and made it public to expose his Prophethood. And this was not difficult for them because they never hesitated to resort to anything to defeat him, including persecution, as they were not bound by any moral code.

(2) The alleged helpers were not strangers. As they lived in Makkah, everyone knew it well how learned they were. The disbelievers themselves knew that they could never have helped to produce a unique and sublime Book like the Qur'ān which had the highest literary excellence and merit. That is why none of them challenged the answer to the charge. That is why even those people, who did not know them, considered this frivolous. Then if the alleged helpers were such geniuses, why did they not claim to be prophets themselves?

(3) Then, all the alleged helpers were freed slaves who were attached to their former masters even after their freedom according to the customs of Arabia; therefore they could not have become willing accomplices of the Holy Prophet in this "fraud" of false prophethood because their former masters could have coerced them to expose it. The only reason for them to help the Holy Prophet in his claim could have been some greed or interest which, under the circumstances, could not even be imagined. Thus, apparently there was no reason why they should have offended those whose protection and patronage they needed and enjoyed, and become accomplices in the "fraud".

(4) Above all, all these alleged helpers embraced Islam. Could it be possible that those very persons, who had helped the Holy Prophet to make his "fraud" successful, could have possibly become his devoted followers? Moreover, if, for the sake of argument, it be admitted that they helped him, why was not any of them raised to a prominent rank as a reward of his help? Why were not 'Addās and Yasār and Jabr exalted to the same status as were Abū Bakr and 'Umar and Abu 'Ubaidah?

Another odd thing is that if the "fraud" of prophethood was being carried on with the help of the alleged helpers, how could it remain hidden from Zaid bin Hārithah, 'Ali bin Abī Tālib, Abū Bakr and other people, who were the Holy Prophet's closest and most devoted Companions? Thus the charge was not only frivolous and false, but it was also below the dignity of the Qur'ān to give any answer to it. The charge has been cited merely to prove that those people had been so blinded by their opposition to the Truth that they could say anything.

13. "... He is very Forgiving and Merciful" is very meaningful here. It means that Allah is giving full respite to the enemies of the Truth, for He is "Forgiving and Merciful"; otherwise He would have sent down a scourge to annihilate them because of the false charges they were bringing against the Messenger. It also contains an admonition, as if to say, "O unjust people! if even now you give up your enmity and obduracy and accept the Truth, We shall forgive your previous misdeeds."

14. That is, "He cannot be a Messenger of Allah because he is a human being like us. Had Allah willed to send a Messenger, He would have sent an angel, and if at all a human being was to be sent, he should have been a king or a millionaire, who would have resided in a castle and been guarded by attendants. A Messenger could not be an ordinary person who has to move about in the market-places like the common people, for it is obvious that such a human Messenger cannot attract the attention of the people. In other words, they thought that a Messenger was not meant to guide the people to the right path but to coerce them to obedience by show of worldly power and grandeur. For further details, see E.N. 26 of Al-Mu'minūn.

15. That is, "If a human being was to be sent as a Messenger, an angel should have been appointed to accompany him to proclaim: 'If you do not believe in him, I will scourge you.' But what sort of a Messenger is he, who has to suffer from abuse and persecution?"

16. That is, "If nothing else, Allah should at least have made extraordinary arrangements for his livelihood. But this man has no treasure and no gardens; yet he claims to be a Messenger of the Lord of the universe."

17. The disbelievers of Makkah made the false propaganda against the Holy Prophet that he had been bewitched by some jinn or by the sorcery of an enemy or by the curse of some god or goddess for his insolence. But it is strange that they also admitted that he was a clever man who could make use of extracts from the ancient writings for the sake of his "prophethood", could practise sorcery and was also a poet.

18. As these objections were frivolous and meaningless like others, the Qur'ān has ignored them, saying, "Your objections are irrelevant, unreasonable

and void of sense. You bring no sound argument to prove your doctrine of *shirk*, or to refute the Doctrine of *Tauḥīd* put forward by him, whereas the Messenger gives such proofs of the Doctrine of *Tauḥīd* that you cannot refute them except by saying, 'He is bewitched'. The same is true of the doctrine of the life-after-death and of the moral system of the Qur'ān, which has produced men of high character. You cannot deny these things; you reject them, saying, "He is a human being like us, etc. etc."

19. Here again the word *tabāraka* has been used and in the context it means: "Allah has full control over everything and has unlimited powers: if he wills to favour somebody, He can do so as and when He wills without let or hindrance.".

20. The word *As-Sā'at*, meaning the Time or the Hour, has been used in the Qur'ān as a term for the promised Hour of Resurrection, when all human beings of all ages will be raised from the dead and gathered together before Allah Almighty to account for their beliefs and deeds, right or wrong, and rewarded or punished accordingly.

21. That is, "The objections they are raising are not due to the reason that they doubt the authenticity of the Qur'ān on some rational ground, or that they do not believe in you for the reason that you eat food and walk about in the streets like the common people, or that they did not accept your Message of Truth only because you were not escorted by an angel, or were not given a treasure. But the real reason why they are putting forward all sorts of absurd arguments to reject your Message, is that they do not believe in the life-after-death, and this denial has made them free from all moral obligations. For when one denies the life-after-death, there remains no need for him to consider and decide what is true or false, or what is right or wrong, etc. Their argument is like this: 'There is going to be no life after this one on the earth when we will be called to account for our deeds before God. Death will be the end of everything, and it will therefore make no difference whether one was a worshipper of God or a disbeliever or a *mushrik* or an atheist. When the ultimate end is to become one with the dust, there is no need of judging what is right and what is wrong except by the criterion of "success" and "failure" in this life'. Those who deny the Hereafter also see that worldly success or failure does not entirely depend upon one's faith or conduct; nay, they very often see that the righteous and the wicked persons meet with the same end irrespective of their faith for which there is no ordained punishment or reward in this life; one righteous person may be living a life of hardship while another enjoying all the good things of life; one wicked person may be suffering for his misdeeds while the other enjoying a life of pleasure and plenty. As such, as far as the worldly consequences of adopting a particular moral attitude are concerned,

(Contd. on p.420

لَنَآ اَنْ نَّتَّخِذَ مِنْ دُوْنِكَ مِنْ اَوْلِيَآءَ وَلٰكِنْ مَّتَّعْتَهُمْ وَاٰبَآءَهُمْ حَتّٰى
نَسُوا الذِّكْرَ ۚ وَكَانُوْا قَوْمًۢا بُوْرًا ﴿١٨﴾ فَقَدْ كَذَّبُوْكُمْ بِمَا تَقُوْلُوْنَ ۙ فَمَا تَسْتَطِيْعُوْنَ
صَرْفًا وَّلَا نَصْرًا ۚ وَمَنْ يَّظْلِمْ مِّنْكُمْ نُذِقْهُ عَذَابًا كَبِيْرًا ﴿١٩﴾ وَمَآ اَرْسَلْنَا
قَبْلَكَ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ اِلَّآ اِنَّهُمْ لَيَاْكُلُوْنَ الطَّعَامَ وَيَمْشُوْنَ فِى الْاَسْوَاقِ ۗ
وَجَعَلْنَا بَعْضَكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ فِتْنَةً ۗ اَتَصْبِرُوْنَ ۚ وَكَانَ رَبُّكَ بَصِيْرًا ﴿٢٠﴾ ع

وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ لَا يَرْجُوْنَ لِقَآءَنَا لَوْلَآ اُنْزِلَ عَلَيْنَا الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ اَوْ نَرٰى

رَبَّنَا ۗ لَقَدِ اسْتَكْبَرُوْا فِىْٓ اَنْفُسِهِمْ وَعَتَوْ عُتُوًّا كَبِيْرًا ﴿٢١﴾ يَوْمَ يَرَوْنَ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةَ
لَا بُشْرٰى يَوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُجْرِمِيْنَ وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ حِجْرًا مَّحْجُوْرًا ﴿٢٢﴾ وَقَدِمْنَآ اِلٰى
مَا عَمِلُوْا مِنْ عَمَلٍ فَجَعَلْنٰهُ هَبَآءً مَّنْثُوْرًا ﴿٢٣﴾ اَصْحٰبُ الْجَنَّةِ يَوْمَئِذٍ خَيْرٌ
مُّسْتَقَرًّا وَّاَحْسَنُ مَقِيْلًا ﴿٢٤﴾ وَيَوْمَ تَشَقَّقُ السَّمَآءُ بِالْغَمَامِ وَنُزِّلَ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ
تَنْزِيْلًا ﴿٢٥﴾ اَلْمُلْكُ يَوْمَئِذِ الْحَقُّ لِلرَّحْمٰنِ ۗ وَكَانَ يَوْمًا عَلَى الْكٰفِرِيْنَ عَسِيْرًا ﴿٢٦﴾
وَيَوْمَ يَعَضُّ الظَّالِمُ عَلٰى يَدَيْهِ يَقُوْلُ يٰلَيْتَنِى اتَّخَذْتُ مَعَ الرَّسُوْلِ سَبِيْلًا ﴿٢٧﴾
يٰوَيْلَتٰى لَيْتَنِىْ لَمْ اَتَّخِذْ فُلَانًا خَلِيْلًا ﴿٢٨﴾ لَقَدْ اَضَلَّنِىْ عَنِ الذِّكْرِ بَعْدَ اِذْ
جَآءَنِىْ ۗ وَكَانَ الشَّيْطٰنُ لِلْاِنْسَانِ خَذُوْلًا ﴿٢٩﴾ وَقَالَ الرَّسُوْلُ يٰرَبِّ اِنَّ قَوْمِى
اتَّخَذُوْا هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ مَهْجُوْرًا ﴿٣٠﴾ وَكَذٰلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نَبِىٍّ عَدُوًّا مِّنَ
الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ ۗ وَكَفٰى بِرَبِّكَ هَادِيًا وَّنَصِيْرًا ﴿٣١﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لَوْلَا
نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ الْقُرْاٰنُ جُمْلَةً وَّاحِدَةً ۚ كَذٰلِكَ ۚ لِنُثَبِّتَ بِهٖ فُؤَادَكَ وَرَتَّلْنٰهُ
تَرْتِيْلًا ﴿٣٢﴾ وَلَا يَاْتُوْنَكَ بِمَثَلٍ اِلَّا جِئْنٰكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَاَحْسَنَ تَفْسِيْرًا ﴿٣٣﴾
اَلَّذِيْنَ يُحْشَرُوْنَ عَلٰى وُجُوْهِهِمْ اِلٰى جَهَنَّمَ ۙ اُولٰٓئِكَ شَرٌّ مَّكَانًا وَّاَضَلُّ

They will answer, "Glory be to Thee! We dared not take any guardian besides Thee: (they were misled because) Thou didst give them and their forefathers all the good things of life till they forgot the Admonition, and incurred the punishment."[26] Thus will your gods deny all that you are professing today.[27] Then you shall neither be able to repel your punishment nor shall get any help from anywhere; and whoso is guilty of iniquity[28] among you, We shall make him taste a severe torment. 18-19

O Muḥammad, all the Messengers whom We sent before you also ate food and moved about in the streets.[29] In fact, We have made you all a means of test for one another.[30] Will you show patience?[31] for your Lord sees everything.[32] 20

Those people, who have no fear of coming before Us, say, "Why should not the angels be sent down to us?[33] Or else we should see our Lord."[34] Great arrogance have they assumed in regard to themselves,[35] and have transgressed all limits in their rebellion. The Day, when they will see the angels, will not be a day of rejoicing for the criminals ;[36] they will cry out, "May Allah save us!" Then We shall turn to what they had done and render it vain like scattered dust.[37] (On the contrary) only those who have deserved the Garden, will have a good abode on that Day and a cool place for midday rest.[38] On that Day, a cloud will appear rending the sky and the angels will be sent down rank after rank. The real Kingdom on that Day will belong only to the Merciful,[39] and it will be a very hard Day for the disbelievers. The unjust man will bite at his hand and say, "Would that I had stood by the Messenger! O, woe to me ! Would that I had not chosen so and so for a friend! For it was he, who had deluded me to reject the Admonition which had come to me. Satan has proved very treacherous to man."[40] And the Messenger will say, "O my Lord, my people had made this Qur'ān the object of their ridicule."[41] 21-30

O Muḥammad, in this very way We have made the criminals the enemies of every Prophet,[42] but your Lord suffices for you as your Guide and Helper.[43] 31

The disbelievers say, "Why has not the entire Qur'an been sent down to this man all at once?"[44]—Well, this has been done to impress it deeply on your mind,[45] and (for the same object) We have sent it 32-34

down piecemeal by degrees. And (there is another wisdom in this :) whenever they brought to you an odd thing (or a strange question), We sent its right answer to you in time and explained it all in the best manner,[46] those who are going to be driven to Hell upon their faces, have taken an utterly wrong stand and their way is most erroneous ![47]

Contd. from p.417]

the disbelievers in the Hereafter cannot be satisfied whether it is right or wrong. In view of this, those who deny the Hereafter, do not see any need to consider an invitation to faith and morality even if it is presented in a most forceful way."

22. "The Fire will see them" The words used in the Text may be metaphorical, or they may mean that the Fire of Hell will be endowed with the faculties of seeing, thinking and judging.

23. Literally: "It is a promise whose fulfilment can be demanded (from Allah)".

Here one may ask the question: How can the promise of the Garden and the threat of the Fire produce any effect on the attitude of a person who denies Resurrection and the existence of Paradise and Hell? In order to understand the wisdom of this method of admonition, one should keep in view that it is meant to appeal to the self-interest of an obdurate person, who does not otherwise listen to such arguments. This is, as if to say, "Even if, for the sake of argument, there is no proof of the reality of the life-after-death, there is also no proof that such an event will not occur at all, and there is a possibility for both. In the latter case, the Believer and the disbeliever both will be in one and the same position, but if there is life in the Hereafter, as the Prophet asserts, then the disbelievers will be doomed to utter ruin". Therefore, such an approach breaks the stubbornness of the disbelievers and proves to be highly effective when the entire scene of Resurrection, gathering of the people, their accountability and of Hell and Heaven is presented in a vivid manner as if the Prophet had himself seen it with his own eyes. For further explanation, see Ḥa Mīm Sajdah: 52 and E. N. 69 thereof, and Al-Aḥqāf: 10.

24. Here, deities do not mean idols but the angels, the prophets, the saints, the martyrs and the pious men, whom the *mushriks* of different communities have made their deities.

25. Such dialogues between Allah and the gods of the disbelievers occur at several places in the Qur'ān. For instance, in Sūrah Sabā it has been stated: "On the day when He will gather them all together, He will ask the angels, 'Did these

people worship you?' They will answer, 'Glory be to Thee ! Thou art our Patron and not they: they in fact worshipped the jinns (that is, satans); most of these believed in them." (vv. 40-41). Similarly in Sūrah Al-Mā'idah, it is said:" And when Allah will say "O Jesus, son of Mary, did you ever say to the people: 'Make me and my mother gods instead of Allah?' He will answer, 'Glory be to Thee ! It did not behove me to say that which I had no right to say...I told them only that which Thou didst bid me: 'Worship Allah, Who is my Lord as well as your Lord'." (vv. 116, 117).

26. That is, "They were mean people: You gave them all the provisions of life so that they may show gratitude to You, but they became ungrateful and ignored all the admonitions given by the Prophets."

27. That is, "On that Day your religion, which you now believe to be true, will prove to be false and even your gods, whom you yourselves have set up, will declare it to be a lie; for none of them ever asked you to make them your deities and worship them as such. Consequently, instead of interceding on your behalf; they will bear witness against you."

28. "... who will be guilty of iniquity ...": " .... who will be unjust to the Reality and the Truth and guilty of disbelief and *shirk*." The context shows that those who reject the Prophet and set up other deities instead of Allah and deny life in the Hereafter, are guilty of *zulm* (iniquity),

29. This is an answer to the objection of the disbelievers of Makkah that Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) could not be a Messenger of Allah because he ate food and moved about in the streets. They have been told that all the Messengers of Allah who came before Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) like Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Moses and many others whom they knew and acknowledged as Prophets and Messengers of Allah also ate food and walked about in the streets. Nay, even Prophet Jesus, son of Mary, himself, whom the Christians had made the son of God (and whose image had also been placed in the Ka'bah by the disbelievers of Makkah) ate food and walked about in the streets like a common man even according to the Gospels themselves.

30. It is obvious that the Messenger and the Believers were a test for the disbelievers as to whether they would believe even after hearing the Divine Message and seeing their pure character. On the other hand, the disbelievers were a test for the Messenger and his followers in the sense that they were a means of proving and trying their true Faith by their persecution. For it is this test alone which helps to discriminate the true Believers from the hypocrites. That is why, at first, only the poor and the helpless but sincere people embraced Islam. Had there

been no persecution and hardships but prosperity, wealth and grandeur, the worshippers of the world and the selfish people would have been the first to embrace Islam.

31. That is, "Now when you have understood the wisdom of the test by persecution, it is hoped that you will endure all kinds of hardships without complaint, and willingly undergo the persecutions that are inevitable."

32. It probably means two things: First, the way your Lord is conducting your affairs, is according to His will and nothing that happens is without His knowledge. Second, He is fully aware of your sincerity and righteousness in serving His cause under all kinds of hardships. You should therefore rest assured that you will have your full reward. He also sees the persecution and iniquity of the disbelievers; therefore they will not escape the consequences of their wickedness.

33. That is, "If Allah had really intended to convey His Message to us, He would not have chosen a prophet and sent an angel only to him, but to each one of us individually with the guidance, or He should have sent a deputation of angels to appear before the people with the Message". The same objection has been stated in Sūrah Al-An'ām thus: "When a Revelation comes before them; they say, 'We will not believe in it unless we are given the like of what has been given to the Messengers of Allah.' Allah knows best whom to entrust with His Mission and how it should be enforced." (v. 124)

34. That is, "Allah Himself should appear before us and make the appeal."

35. Another translation could be: "They have formed a very high opinion of their own selves."

36. This very theme has been expressed in much greater detail in Al-An'ām: 8, Al-Ḥijr: 7-8 and 51-64, and also in Banī Isrā'īl: 90-95.

37. For explanation, see Ibrāhīm: 18 and E. N.'s 25, 26 thereof.

38. In contrast to the miserable plight of the disbelievers on the Day of Resurrection, the Believers will be protected from the hardships of that Day; they will be treated with honour and will have a blissful place for midday rest. According to a Tradition, the Holy Prophet said: "I declare on oath by Allah, in Whose hand is my life, that the long, horrible Day of Resurrection will be made very short and light for a Believer, as short and light as the time taken in offering an obligatory Prayer." (Musnad Aḥmad)

39. That is, "On that Day all other kingdoms, which deluded man in the world, will come to an end, and there will be only the Kingdom of Allah, Who is

the real Sovereign of the universe. In Sūrah Mu'min: 16, the same thing has been stated thus: "On that Day when all the people will stand exposed, and nothing of them will be hidden from Allah, it will be asked, 'Whose is the Sovereignty today?' The response from every side will be: 'Of Allah, the Almighty'." According to a Tradition, the Holy Prophet said, "Allah will take the heavens in one hand and the earth in the other, and will declare: 'I am the Sovereign: I am the Ruler. Where are the other rulers of the earth? Where are those tyrants? Where are the arrogant people?" (Musnad Aḥmad, Bukhārī, Muslim, and Abū Da'ūd, with slight variations).

40. "Satan has proved very treacherous to man" may also be a part of the disbelievers' lament, or it may be a remark by Allah, in which case the meaning will be: "And Satan is indeed the one who always deceives man."

41. The Arabic word *mahjūr* is capable of several meanings. As such, the sentence may mean: "These people did not regard the Qur'ān as worthy of their consideration: they neither accepted it nor followed it"; or "They considered it to be a nonsense or the delirium of insanity: or "They made it the target of their ridicule and mockery."

42. That is, "It is not a new thing that the disbelievers have become your enemies, for it has always been so with all the former Prophets and Messengers. (See also Al-An'ām: 112-113). This is inevitable because it is Our Law that the criminals will always oppose the Truth. You should, therefore, pursue your mission with full confidence and determination without expecting any immediate results."

43. "Guidance" does not only imply bestowing of the knowledge of the Truth, but it also means giving the right guidance at the right time to guide the Islamic Movement on the right lines and to defeat the strategy and scheme of the enemies of Islam. "Help" means all kinds of moral, spiritual and material help to the followers of the Truth in their conflict against falsehood. Thus, Allah is All-Sufficient for the righteous people and they need no other support provided they have full faith in Allah and fight falsehood with all their energies and strength.

This meant to encourage the Holy Prophet, otherwise the previous assertion would have been very discouraging without this. It meant to say, "Even if the unbelievers have become your enemies, you should continue your mission, for We shall guide you in every stage and situation and help you against them. We shall defeat all the schemes of your enemies and help you in every way in your conflict with falsehood. We shall provide you with material means also, but you should trust in Us and exert your utmost against falsehood."

Contd. on p. 426

سَبِيْلًا ﴿٣٦﴾ وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا مُوْسَى الْكِتٰبَ وَجَعَلْنَا مَعَهٗۤ اَخَاهُ هٰرُوْنَ وَزِيْرًا ﴿٣٧﴾
فَقُلْنَا اذْهَبَاۤ اِلَى الْقَوْمِ الَّذِيْنَ كَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا ۚ فَدَمَّرْنٰهُمْ تَدْمِيْرًا ﴿٣٨﴾ وَقَوْمَ نُوْحٍ
لَّمَّا كَذَّبُوا الرُّسُلَ اَغْرَقْنٰهُمْ وَجَعَلْنٰهُمْ لِلنَّاسِ اٰيَةً ۚ وَاَعْتَدْنَا لِلظّٰلِمِيْنَ
عَذَابًا اَلِيْمًا ﴿٣٩﴾ وَّعَادًا وَّثَمُوْدَا وَاَصْحٰبَ الرَّسِّ وَقُرُوْنًا بَيْنَ ذٰلِكَ كَثِيْرًا ﴿٤٠﴾
وَكُلًّا ضَرَبْنَا لَهُ الْاَمْثَالَ ۖ وَكُلًّا تَبَّرْنَا تَتْبِيْرًا ﴿٤١﴾ وَلَقَدْ اَتَوْا عَلَى الْقَرْيَةِ الَّتِيْۤ
اُمْطِرَتْ مَطَرَ السَّوْءِ ۭ اَفَلَمْ يَكُوْنُوْا يَرَوْنَهَا ۚ بَلْ كَانُوْا لَا يَرْجُوْنَ نُشُوْرًا ﴿٤٢﴾ وَ
اِذَا رَاَوْكَ اِنْ يَّتَّخِذُوْنَكَ اِلَّا هُزُوًا ۭ اَهٰذَا الَّذِيْ بَعَثَ اللّٰهُ رَسُوْلًا ﴿٤١﴾ اِنْ كَادَ
لَيُضِلُّنَا عَنْ اٰلِهَتِنَا لَوْلَاۤ اَنْ صَبَرْنَا عَلَيْهَا ۭ وَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُوْنَ حِيْنَ يَرَوْنَ
الْعَذَابَ مَنْ اَضَلُّ سَبِيْلًا ﴿٤٢﴾ اَرَءَيْتَ مَنِ اتَّخَذَ اِلٰهَهٗ هَوٰىهُ ۭ اَفَاَنْتَ تَكُوْنُ
عَلَيْهِ وَكِيْلًا ﴿٤٣﴾ اَمْ تَحْسَبُ اَنَّ اَكْثَرَهُمْ يَسْمَعُوْنَ اَوْ يَعْقِلُوْنَ ۭ اِنْ هُمْ اِلَّا كَالْاَنْعَامِ
بَلْ هُمْ اَضَلُّ سَبِيْلًا ﴿٤٤﴾ اَلَمْ تَرَ اِلٰى رَبِّكَ كَيْفَ مَدَّ الظِّلَّ ۚ وَلَوْ شَاۗءَ لَجَعَلَهٗ
سَاكِنًا ۚ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَا الشَّمْسَ عَلَيْهِ دَلِيْلًا ﴿٤٥﴾ ثُمَّ قَبَضْنٰهُ اِلَيْنَا قَبْضًا يَّسِيْرًا ﴿٤٦﴾
وَهُوَ الَّذِيْ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا وَّالنَّوْمَ سُبَاتًا وَّجَعَلَ النَّهَارَ نُشُوْرًا ﴿٤٧﴾
وَهُوَ الَّذِيْۤ اَرْسَلَ الرِّيٰحَ بُشْرًۢا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ رَحْمَتِهٖ ۚ وَاَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاۗءِ مَاۗءً
طَهُوْرًا ﴿٤٨﴾ لِّنُحْيِيَ بِهٖ بَلْدَةً مَّيْتًا وَّنُسْقِيَهٗ مِمَّا خَلَقْنَآ اَنْعَامًا وَّاَنَاسِيَّ كَثِيْرًا ﴿٤٩﴾
وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنٰهُ بَيْنَهُمْ لِيَذَّكَّرُوْا ۡ فَاَبٰٓى اَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ اِلَّا كُفُوْرًا ﴿٥٠﴾ وَلَوْ شِئْنَا
لَبَعَثْنَا فِيْ كُلِّ قَرْيَةٍ نَّذِيْرًا ﴿٥١﴾ فَلَا تُطِعِ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ وَجَاهِدْهُمْ بِهٖ جِهَادًا
كَبِيْرًا ﴿٥٢﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِيْ مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ هٰذَا عَذْبٌ فُرَاتٌ وَّهٰذَا مِلْحٌ اُجَاجٌ ۚ
وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَهُمَا بَرْزَخًا وَّحِجْرًا مَّحْجُوْرًا ﴿٥٣﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَ مِنَ الْمَاۗءِ بَشَرًا

We gave Moses the Book[48] and appointed his brother Aaron as his counsellor: then We said to them, "Go to the people who have treated Our Revelations as false."[49] So We annihilated those people utterly. The same was the case with the people of Noah when they charged the Messenger with imposture:[50] We drowned them and made them a sign of warning for entire mankind, and We have prepared a painful chastisement for the unjust.[51] Likewise were destroyed the 'Ād and the Thamūd and the people of the Rass,[52] and many a generation in between. We admonished each one of them by citing the examples (of those who were destroyed before them) and ultimately annihilated all of them. Surely, these people have passed by that habitation on which was rained an evil rain:[53] have they not seen its ruins ? But they do not expect another life in the Hereafter.[54] 35-40

When these people see you, they scoff at you, (saying), "Is this the man whom Allah has sent as His Messenger? He had almost led us astray from our gods, had we not remained firm in our faith with regard to them."[55] The time is not far when they will see the torment and realize who had strayed far from the truth. 41-42

Have you ever considered the case of the person who has made his lust his god?[56] Can you take the responsibility of guiding such a one aright ? Do you think that most of them hear or understand ? They are only like the cattle; nay, even worse than the cattle.[57] 43-44

Have you not seen how your Lord lengthens out the shadow? Had He willed, He would have made it constant, but We have made the sun its pilot;[58] then (as the sun climbs up), We roll it up little by little towards Ourselves.[59] 45-46

And it is Allah Who has ordained the night as a garment[60] for you, and the sleep as a repose of death, and the day as the time of return to life.[61] 47

And it is He, Who drives the winds to be the harbingers of His mercy: then He sends down pure water[62] from the sky so that He may revive the dead land, and quench the thirst of many of His creatures from among beasts and men.[63] We present the same phenomenon over and over again before them[64] so that they may learn a lesson from it; but most people decline to adopt any other attitude than of disbelief and ingratitude.[65] 48-50

52 Had We willed, We would have raised up a separate Warner in each habitation.[66] So, O Prophet, do not yield to the disbelievers, but wage a *Jihād* against them with this Qur'ān.[67]

And it is He, Who has let loose the two seas, one palatable and sweet, the other bitter and saltish, and there is a partition between them, which is an insurmountable barrier.[68]

And it is He, Who created man from water: then from him He caused two kinds of kindred, by blood and by marriage :[69] your Lord is All-Powerful.

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44. As the disbelievers of Makkah considered this objection to be very strong, they repeated it over and over again. The Qur'ān also has cited it with its answer at several places; for instance, see E.N.'s 101-106 of Sūrah An-Naml and E.N. 119 of Banī Isrā'īl. Their question implied: "Had the Qur'ān been really the Word of Allah, it would have been sent as a complete book all at once; for Allah has the knowledge of everything and every human affair. Thus it is obvious that nothing is being sent down from above; but this man himself fabricates all its themes or gets these from other people or other books."

45 Another translation can be: "So that by it We may strengthen your heart and imbue it with courage." The words are comprehensive and imply both the meanings. This concise sentence contains the following explanation why the Qur'ān was revealed piecemeal by degrees:

(1) So that the Holy Prophet may commit it to memory perfectly and recite it to his people, who are illiterate, rather than present it in a written form.

(2) So that its teachings and messages may be impressed deeply on the minds.

(3) So that the way of life it teaches, may be followed with complete conviction, which would not be possible if all the Commandments and the whole system of life had been sent down all at once.

(4) So that the hearts of the Prophet and his followers may be imbued with courage during the conflict between the Truth and falsehood. This required that the Divine Guidance and messages of encouragement should be revealed as and when needed according to the practical situation. Obviously, this could not have been possible if these had been sent down all at once. This also showed that Allah had not left His Messenger alone amidst persecution to counter all sorts of resistance and opposition after appointing him to the mission, but He Himself was watching the struggle

with concern and guiding His Prophet through every difficulty by direct communion in every critical situation.

46. This is yet another point of wisdom of sending down the Qur'ān by degrees. Allah did not intend to produce a book on "Guidance" and spread its teachings through the agency of His Prophet. Had it been so the disbelievers would have been justified in their objection as to why the Qur'ān had not been sent down as a complete book all at once. The real object of the revelation of the Qur'ān was that Allah intended to start a Movement of faith, piety and righteousness to combat disbelief, ignorance and sin, and He had raised a Prophet to lead and guide the Movement. Then, on the one hand, Allah had taken it upon Himself to send necessary instructions and guidance to the leader and his followers as and when needed, and on the other, He had also taken the responsibility to answer the objections and remove the doubts of opponents and give the right interpretation of things which they misunderstood. Thus the Qur'ān was the collection of the different discourses that were being revealed by Allah; it was not merely meant to be a code of laws or of moral principles, but a Book, which was being sent down piecemeal to guide the Movement in all its stages to suit its requirements on different occasions. (See also Introduction: The Meaning of the Qur'ān, Vol. I, pp. 9-18).

47. That is, "They will be driven towards Hell upon their faces because of their perversion and their perverted thinking."

48. Here by "the Book" is not meant the Torah, which was given to Prophet Moses after the exodus from Egypt, but it implies that Divine Guidance which was given to him after his appointment as a Prophet up to the Exodus. It included the orations delivered by him in the court of Pharaoh and also the instructions given to him during his conflict with Pharaoh as mentioned in the Qur'ān here and there. Most probably, these things were not included in the Torah; the Torah began with the Ten Commandments which were given to Moses engraved on stone tablets on Mount Sinai after the Exodus.

49. "Revelations": The Divine teachings which had reached them through Prophets Jacob and Joseph, and which had been preached to them by the righteous people of Israel for centuries.

50. They did not charge only Prophet Noah with imposture because he was a man, but, in fact, charged all the Prophets with imposture because they were all human beings.

51. That is, a painful chastisement in the Hereafter.

52. There is no definite knowledge about "the people of the Rass". Different commentators have said different things about them, but nothing is

convincing. The only thing that may be said about them is that they were a people who had killed their Prophet by throwing him into or hanging him down a *"Rass"* (an old or dry well).

53. The habitation referred to was that of the people of Prophet Lot, which was destroyed by a rain of stones. The people of Ḥijāz while traveling to Palestine and Syria, passed by its ruins and heard the horrible tales of its destruction.

54. As the disbelievers did not believe in the Hereafter, they looked at these ancient ruins as mere spectators and did not take any warning from them. Incidentally, this is the difference between the observation of a disbeliever and of a Believer in the Hereafter: the former looks at such things as a mere spectator or at the most as an archaeologist whereas the latter learns moral lessons from the same and obtains an insight into the realities beyond this worldly life.

55. Obviously there is a contradiction between the question posed by the disbelievers and the assertion made by them about their deities. The question was meant to bring the Holy Prophet into contempt, as if to say, "You are making a claim that is far above your low position." On the other hand, their assertion shows that they indirectly admitted the force of the arguments and the high character of the Holy Prophet and were even afraid of the effectiveness and success of his Message, because, according to them, it was going to turn them away from their false gods.

56. "...the person who makes his lust his god" is the one who becomes the slave of his lusts and desires. As he serves his lust like the one who worships his deity, he becomes as much guilty of *shirk* as the one who worships an idol. According to a Tradition, related by Ḥadrat Abū Hurairah, the Holy Prophet said, "Of all the false gods being worshipped and served, instead of Allah, the worst in the sight of Allah is one's own lust." (Ṭabarānī). For further explanation, see E.N. 50 of Al-Kahf,

The man who keeps his desires under control, and uses his common sense to make decisions, can be expected to come to the right path by making an appeal to his reason even though he might have been involved in *shirk* or disbelief; for if he decides to follow the right way he will remain firm and steadfast on it. On the other hand, the man who is the slave of his own lust, is like a ship without an anchor, who wanders about on any path where his lust leads him. He is least bothered about the distinction between the right and the wrong, the true and the false, and has no desire to choose one against the other. And, if at all, such a person is persuaded to accept the message of Guidance, no one can take the responsibility that he will observe any moral laws.

57. "They are only like the cattle" because they follow their lusts blindly. Just as the sheep and cattle do not know where their driver is taking them, to the meadow or to the slaughter house, so are these people also following their leaders blindly without knowing or judging where they are being led—to success or to destruction.. The only difference between the two is that the cattle have no intelligence and will not be accountable as to the place where they are being taken by the driver. But it is a pity that human beings who are endowed with reason, should behave like cattle; therefore their condition is worse than that of cattle.

Incidentally, it should be noted that this passage (vv . 43, 44) is not meant to dissuade the Holy Prophet from conveying the Message to such people, but it is an indirect warning to the disbelievers of the consequences if they continued to behave like cattle.

58. The word *dalīl* has been used in the sense of the "pilot", who is a person trained to take ships safely in or out of a harbour, or along a waterway. The sun has been made the pilot of the shadow because the lengthening out of the shadow and its being rolled up depends on the rising, declining and setting of the sun.

59. "We roll it up .....Ourselves": "We annihilate it or cause it to disappear", for everything which is annihilated returns to Allah, because everything comes from Him and returns to Him.

The Qur'ān has used the phenomenon of the shadow caused by the sun for two purposes. If it is taken literally, it is meant to warn the disbelievers that they should learn a lesson from this and should not behave like cattle, as if to say, "If you had considered the benefits of the shadow in regard to your everyday experience, you would have accepted without any hesitation the Doctrine of *Tauḥīd*. Had the shadow been constant, there would have been no life on earth, for life depends on the light and heat of the sun. On the other hand, if there had been no shadow at all, the constant heat and light of the sun would have made life impossible. Besides this, if there had been sudden changes in the sun and the shadow, they would not have been able to endure it for long; therefore you should reflect on this phenomenon and understand it well that it has been so ordained by the All-Wise and the All-Powerful Creator so that it always increases or decreases gradually in accordance with fixed natural laws. Thus it is obvious that it could not have come into existence by itself nor produced by blind mechanisms nor functioned so regularly and continuously under many independent gods."

But if it is taken in the metaphorical sense, there is between the lines a subtle suggestion, and it is this: Just as the shadow does not remain in one and the

same state, likewise the shadow of disbelief and *shirk*, which appears to have spread far and wide, will begin to shorten as the "Sun" of Guidance gradually rises; but it requires patience, for Allah never brings about sudden changes.

60. The night is a "garment" in the sense that it covers and hides things.

61. This verse has three objects:

(1) It provides a proof of *Tauḥīd*,

(2) It furnishes a proof of the possibility of life-after-death from everyday human experience, and

(3) It bears the good news that the night of ignorance has come to an end and now the bright day of Knowledge and Guidance has dawned. It is therefore inevitable that those who were sleeping the sleep of ignorance, will sooner or later wake up, but those who have slept the sleep of death, will not wake up and will themselves be deprived of life, while the business of the day will go on thriving even without them.

62. That is, such water as is pure and free from all sorts of impurities, germs and poison, which cleanses and washes away filth and becomes a source of life for men, beasts as well as all kinds of plant life.

63. This verse also gives proofs of the Doctrine of *Tauḥīd* and the Hereafter. Besides, it contains a subtle suggestion that the period of the "drought" of ignorance has been replaced through Allah's mercy by the "blessed rain" of Prophethood, which is showering the life-giving knowledge of Revelation from which many servants of Allah will certainly benefit, if not all.

64. "We present...before them" may have three meanings:

(1) "We have cited the phenomenon of rainfall over and over again in the Qur'ān in order to make plain to them the Reality."

(2) "We are time and again showing them the wonderful phenomenon of the heat and drought, seasonal winds and clouds, rainfall and its life-producing effects."

(3) "We go on changing the system of the distribution of rainfall throughout the world year after year, so that the same place does not receive the same amount of rainfall every time; sometimes a place is left completely dry, another has more or less of rainfall than usual, while some other is flooded with rain water. They see all these different phenomena with their countless different results in their daily life."

65. The verse means to impress that the wonderful system of rainfall is by itself a proof of the existence of Allah, of One Lord of the universe, and of His attributes. Its wonderful distribution during the year and over different parts of the earth is a clear proof that there is an All-Wise Designer. But the obdurate disbelievers do not learn any lesson from it, and persist in their ingratitude, though this has been cited in the Qur'ān repeatedly for this purpose.

It is also a proof of the life-after-death, for the disbelievers themselves see it time and again that rainfall brings to life dead land year after year. This clearly proves that Allah has the power to bring the dead back to life, but the disbelievers do not learn any lesson from it and persist in their irresponsible ways.

If verse 48 is taken in the metaphorical sense, the "pure water" of rain will mean the blessings of Prophethood. Human history shows that whenever this blessing has been sent down, ignorance has been replaced by knowledge, injustice by justice and wickedness by righteousness. The coming of Prophets has always proved to be the harbinger of a moral revolution. But only those who accepted their guidance benefited from it. This is the lesson of history, yet the disbelievers reject it because of their ingratitude.

66. That is, "If We had willed, We could have sent a separate Prophet to every habitation but We did not do so, because like the sun, Our Last Prophet suffices to enlighten the whole world."

67. The Arabic words *Jihād-I-Kabīr* imply three meanings:

(1) To exert one's utmost for the cause of Islam,

(2) To dedicate all one's resources to this cause, and

(3) To fight against the enemies of Islam on all possible fronts with all one's resources in order to raise high the "Word of Allah". This will include *Jihād* with one's tongue, pen, wealth, life and every other available weapon.

68. This phenomenon has been perceived in many places in the sea and on the land that sweet water and bitter water has existed side by side. Turkish Admiral Syedī Alī Ra'īs, in his book *Mir'āt-al-Mamālik*, written in the 16th century, has mentioned a place in the Persian Gulf, where springs of sweet water exist under the bitter waters of the sea, where he could get drinking water for his fleet. The American Oil Company at first obtained water from the same springs in the Persian Gulf, before they dug up wells near Dhahran for supply of drinking water. Near Bahrain also there exist springs of sweet water at the sea bed from which people have been taking water until quite recently.

[Contd. on p.434

فَجَعَلَهٗ نَسَبًا وَّصِهْرًا ؕ وَكَانَ رَبُّكَ قَدِيْرًا ﴿۵۴﴾ وَيَعْبُدُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ مَا
لَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ وَلَا يَضُرُّهُمْ ؕ وَكَانَ الْكَافِرُ عَلٰى رَبِّهٖ ظَهِيْرًا ﴿۵۵﴾ وَمَآ اَرْسَلْنٰكَ اِلَّا
مُبَشِّرًا وَّنَذِيْرًا ﴿۵۶﴾ قُلْ مَآ اَسْـَٔلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ اَجْرٍ اِلَّا مَنْ شَآءَ اَنْ يَّتَّخِذَ اِلٰى
رَبِّهٖ سَبِيْلًا ﴿۵۷﴾ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى الْحَيِّ الَّذِيْ لَا يَمُوْتُ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِهٖ ؕ وَكَفٰى بِهٖ
بِذُنُوْبِ عِبَادِهٖ خَبِيْرًا ﴿۵۸﴾ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فِيْ سِتَّةِ ع
اَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوٰى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ ۛ اَلرَّحْمٰنُ فَسْـَٔلْ بِهٖ خَبِيْرًا ﴿۵۹﴾ وَاِذَا قِيْلَ لَهُمُ
اسْجُدُوْا لِلرَّحْمٰنِ قَالُوْا وَمَا الرَّحْمٰنُ اَنَسْجُدُ لِمَا تَاْمُرُنَا وَزَادَهُمْ نُفُوْرًا ﴿۶۰﴾
تَبٰرَكَ الَّذِيْ جَعَلَ فِي السَّمَآءِ بُرُوْجًا وَّجَعَلَ فِيْهَا سِرٰجًا وَّقَمَرًا مُّنِيْرًا ﴿۶۱﴾ وَهُوَ
الَّذِيْ جَعَلَ الَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ خِلْفَةً لِّمَنْ اَرَادَ اَنْ يَّذَّكَّرَ اَوْ اَرَادَ شُكُوْرًا ﴿۶۲﴾
وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمٰنِ الَّذِيْنَ يَمْشُوْنَ عَلَى الْاَرْضِ هَوْنًا وَّاِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجٰهِلُوْنَ
قَالُوْا سَلٰمًا ﴿۶۳﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ يَبِيْتُوْنَ لِرَبِّهِمْ سُجَّدًا وَّقِيَامًا ﴿۶۴﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ يَقُوْلُوْنَ
رَبَّنَا اصْرِفْ عَنَّا عَذَابَ جَهَنَّمَ ۖ اِنَّ عَذَابَهَا كَانَ غَرَامًا ﴿۶۵﴾ اِنَّهَا سَآءَتْ مُسْتَقَرًّا
وَّمُقَامًا ﴿۶۶﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ اِذَآ اَنْفَقُوْا لَمْ يُسْرِفُوْا وَلَمْ يَقْتُرُوْا وَكَانَ بَيْنَ ذٰلِكَ
قَوَامًا ﴿۶۷﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ لَا يَدْعُوْنَ مَعَ اللّٰهِ اِلٰهًا اٰخَرَ وَلَا يَقْتُلُوْنَ النَّفْسَ الَّتِيْ
حَرَّمَ اللّٰهُ اِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا يَزْنُوْنَ ۚ وَمَنْ يَّفْعَلْ ذٰلِكَ يَلْقَ اَثَامًا ﴿۶۸﴾ يُّضٰعَفْ
لَهُ الْعَذَابُ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ وَيَخْلُدْ فِيْهٖ مُهَانًا ﴿۶۹﴾ اِلَّا مَنْ تَابَ وَاٰمَنَ وَ
عَمِلَ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا فَاُولٰٓئِكَ يُبَدِّلُ اللّٰهُ سَيِّاٰتِهِمْ حَسَنٰتٍ ؕ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ غَفُوْرًا
رَّحِيْمًا ﴿۷۰﴾ وَمَنْ تَابَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَاِنَّهٗ يَتُوْبُ اِلَى اللّٰهِ مَتَابًا ﴿۷۱﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ
لَا يَشْهَدُوْنَ الزُّوْرَ ۙ وَاِذَا مَرُّوْا بِاللَّغْوِ مَرُّوْا كِرَامًا ﴿۷۲﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ اِذَا ذُكِّرُوْا

Yet they worship, instead of Allah, those who can neither benefit them nor harm them: more than this, the disbeliever has become a helper of every rebel against his Lord.[70] 55

O Muhammad, We have sent you only to proclaim good tidings and to give warning.[71] Tell them, "I do not ask of you any recompense for this work: I only ask of the one, who will, to adopt the way of his Lord."[71a] 56-57

O Muhammad, trust in that Allah Who is Ever-Living and will never die: Glorify Him with His praise, for He alone is sufficient to be aware of the sins of His servants. In six days He created the earth and the heavens and all that is between them; then He established Himself on the "Throne" (of the Kingdom of the universe).[72] (He is) the Merciful: as to His Glory, ask the one who knows. 58-59

When it is said to them, "Prostrate yourselves before the Merciful," they retort, "What is the Merciful? Would you have us prostrate ourselves before whomsoever you will?"[73] And this invitation only helps to increase their hatred all the more.[74] 60

Highly blessed is He, Who has made fortified spheres[75] in the heavens and has set in it a "lamp"[76] and a shining moon. He it is Who caused the night and the day to succeed each other so that everyone who desires may learn a lesson or become grateful.[77] 61-62

The (true) servants of the Merciful are those[78] who walk humbly on the earth ;[79] who, when the ignorant people behave insolently towards them, say, "Peace to you";[80] who pass their nights in prostrating themselves and standing before their Lord:[81] who pray, "Our Lord, save us from the torment of Hell, for its torment is killing: it is an evil abode and an evil resting place":[82] who, when they spend, are neither extravagant nor miserly but keep the golden mean between the two (extremes);[83] who do not invoke any god but Allah nor kill a soul, which Allah has forbidden, unjustly, nor commit adultery.[84] —He who does this shall be punished for his sin, and his torment shall be doubled on the Day of Resurrection,[85] and he shall abide in a state of ignominy, except the one who may have repented (after those sins) and have believed and done righteous works,[86] for then Allah will change his evil deeds into good deeds, and He is very Forgiving and Merciful. In fact, the one who repents and does righteous deeds, returns to Allah 63-73

as one rightly should.[88]—(And the servants of the Merciful are those:) who do not bear witness to falsehood[89] and who, if they have ever to pass by what is vain, pass by like dignified people:[90] who do not behave like the blind and the deaf, when the Revelations of their Lord are recited to them for admonition :[91]

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Besides this apparent meaning which gives a rational proof of Allah's being the One and the only Lord of the universe, the verse contains a subtle suggestion as well: When Allah wills, He can raise up a righteous community from among a large wicked society just as He can cause springs of palatable and sweet water to gush out from under the salty waters of the sea.

69. Here the miracle of the birth of man from a mere sperm drop and the procreation of his offspring from man and woman have been cited as a proof of *Tauhíd*. Though both man and woman belong to the same genus, they are two species, having important common human characteristics but different physical structures and psychological traits. It is a proof of *Tauhíd* that the All-Powerful Allah has used this "difference" for making the two as complements and not antagonists. It is also the design of the All-Powerful Creator that He is creating sons and daughters in the world in due proportion Then the sons marry and create blood relationships, and the daughters are married and become means of forming new relationships. This process goes on widening to produce families, tribes and nations belonging to the same race and bound by the same civilization.

The verse has also a subtle suggestion: The whole of life is being run on the principle of "difference", for example, the difference between the night and the day, the summer and the winter, etc. Therefore, "O Muslims, you should patiently endure the differences you are having with your opponents for these are certain to produce good results."

70. This is a characteristic of the typical disbeliever: he is a helper and defender of all those who are rebels against Allah and an enemy of all those who may be striving to raise Allah's Word and enforce His Law in the world; he is associated directly or indirectly with all the works of Allah's disobedience and opposes and resists in one way or the other every effort that is made to bring people to the path of Allah's obedience and service.

71. This verse (56) was meant to comfort the Holy Prophet and to warn the disbelievers who opposed him and obstructed his work, as if to say, "Your duty is only to convey the Message of good news to the people and to warn them

of the consequences of disbelief: you are not responsible as to whether they accept your Message or reject it, or to reward the Believers and punish the disbelievers."

Such words occur in the Qur'ān at other places also and are obviously directed to the disbelievers, as if to say, "The Message of the Prophet is meant to reform the people without any tinge of selfishness. As he does not force the people to accept his Message, there is no reason why you should feel offended. If you accept the Message, it will be for your own good, and if you reject it, you will be harming yourselves alone. For after conveying the Message, he is relieved of his duty and responsibility; then the matter will be between you and Us."

Although this is a very simple and clear interpretation of verse 56 (and of similar other verses), yet some people erroneously conclude from it that the only duty and responsibility of the Prophet is to convey the Message and nothing else. They forget that the Qur'ān has stressed over and over again that the Prophet is not only a giver of good news to the Believers but he is also their teacher, their law-giver, judge and guide, a purifier of their morals and a model of life for them, and that every word which he utters is law which they have to obey and follow willingly in all walks of life and for all times to come.

71a. For explanation, see E.N. 70 of Al-Mu'minūn.

72. For explanation of "Throne", see E.N.'s 41, 42 of Al-A'rāf, E.N. 4 of Yūnus, and E.N. 7 of Hūd.

It is difficult to say what exactly is meant by "six days" Here a "day" may mean a period of time or an ordinary day of this world. For explanation of the "day", see E.N.'s 11 to 15 of Sūrah Ḥā Mīm Sajdah.

73. This they said due to their arrogance and stubbornness just as Pharaoh had said to Prophet Moses: "What is the Lord of the universe?" For the disbelievers of Makkah were not unaware of the Merciful *(Raḥmān)*, nor was Pharaoh unaware of the "Lord of the universe". The wording of the verse itself shows that their question about the "Merciful" was not the result of their ignorance of Him but was due to their rebelliousness; otherwise Allah would not have punished them for this but would have informed them politely that He Himself is "Merciful". Besides this, it is well known historically that the word *Raḥmān* (Merciful) for Allah had been in common usage in Arabia since the ancient times. Please see also E.N. 5 of As-Sajdah and E.N. 35 of Sabā.

74. All scholars are agreed that here a 'Prostration of Recital' *(Sajdah Tilāwat)* has been enjoined, which means that every reader and every hearer must prostrate himself on reciting or hearing the recital of this verse. According to traditions, the one who hears this verse being recited should say: *Zādan Allahu,*

khudā'an-ammā zada ill-ā'dā-i nufūra: "May Allah increase us in humility even as the enemies are increased in their hatred."

75. See E.N.'s 8 to 12 of Al Ḥijr.

76. That is, the sun, as mentioned clearly in Sūrah Nūḥ: 16: "... and made the sun a lamp."

77. The observation and deep consideration of the wonderful phenomenon of the alternation of the day and night is a proof of *Tauḥīd* and His Providence so that man may feel grateful to Him and prostrate himself before Him in all humility.

78. That is, "Though all human beings are by birth the servants of the Merciful before Whom you have been invited to prostrate yourselves, and which you disdain, his true servants are those who adopt the way of His obedience consciously and develop such desirable characteristics. Then the natural consequences of the prostration are those found in the lives of the Believers and the evil results of rejecting the invitation, those found in your lives." Here attention is being drawn to the two patterns of character and life: first of those who had accepted the Message of the Holy Prophet and were following it, and the second of those who persisted in the ways of ignorance. Here only the prominent characteristics of the true Believers have been cited, and for contrast, the characteristics of the disbelievers have been left to every discerning eye and mind which could see them all around in society and make its own decision.

79. That is, "They do not walk haughtily and arrogantly like the tyrants and mischief-makers, but their "gait" is of a gentle, right-thinking and good-natured person." "Walking humbly" does not mean walking like a weak or sick person, nor does it imply the gait of a hypocrite who walks ostentatiously to show humility or fear of God. According to Traditions, the Holy Prophet himself used to walk with firm, quick steps. One day Caliph 'Umar saw a young man walking slowly like a weak, sick person, and asked him, "Are you ill?" When the man replied in the negative, the Caliph raised his whip, rebuked him and told him to walk like a healthy man. This shows that the "humble gait" is the natural gait of a noble and gentle person and not a gait which shows weakness and undue humility.

In this connection, the first characteristic of the true servants of Allah to which attention has been drawn, is their "gait" This is because the gait indicates the character of an individual. If a man walks in a humble and dignified way, as opposed to a haughty, vain and proud manner, it shows that he is a noble and gentle person. Thus the different "gaits" of the different types of people show what sort of characters they possess. The verse means to imply that the true servants of the Merciful can be easily recognized by their "gait" among the people. Their

attitude of Allah's worship and obedience has changed them so thoroughly that it can be seen at first sight from their "gait" that they are noble, humble and good natured people, who cannot be expected to indulge in any mischief. For further explanation, see E.N.43 of Banī Isrā'īl and E.N. 33 of Luqmān.

80. "Ignorant people": Rude and insolent people and not uneducated and illiterate ones. The true servants of the "Merciful" do not believe in "vengeance", even though they may have to deal with the ignorant people who behave rudely and insolently towards them. If they happen to come across such people, they wish them peace and turn away. The same thing has been expressed in Al-Qasas: 55, thus: "And when they hear something vain and absurd they turn away from it, saying, 'Our deeds are for us and your deeds are for you: peace be to you: we have nothing to do with the ignorant'." For details see E.N.'s 72 to 78 of Al-Qaṣaṣ.

81. That is, they neither spend their nights in fun and merry-making nor in gossips and telling tales, nor in doing wicked deeds, for these are the ways of the ignorant people. The true servants of Allah pass their nights in worshipping and remembering Him as much as they can. This characteristic of theirs has been brought out clearly at several places in the Qur'ān, thus: "their backs forsake their beds and they invoke their Lord in fear and in hope." (As-Sajdah: 16). "These people (of Paradise) slept but little at night, and prayed for their forgiveness in the hours of the morning." (Az-Zāriyāt: 17, 18). And: "Can the end of the one, who is obedient to Allah, prostrates himself and stands before Him during the hours of the night, fears the Hereafter and places his hope in the mercy of his Lord, be like that of a *mushrik?*" (Az-Zumar: 9).

82. That is, their worship has not made them vain and proud to presume that they are the beloved ones of Allah and that the Fire of Hell will not touch them. On the other hand, in spite of all their worship and good deeds, they are so filled with the fear of the torment of Hell that they pray to their Lord to save them from it, for they do not depend upon their own work for success in the Hereafter but upon the mercy of Allah.

83. The true servants of Allah adopt "the golden mean" between the two extremes in spending their money. They neither go beyond prudence and necessity in expenditure nor live in wretched circumstances in order to save and hoard money but are frugal. This was the characteristic of the followers of the Holy Prophet, which distinguished them from the well-to-do people of Arabia, who were either spend-thrifts in regard to the gratification of their own lusts or niggardly in spending their money on good works.

According to Islam extravagance is: (1) To spend even the smallest amount of money in unlawful ways, (2) to go beyond one's own resources in expenditure even in lawful ways, or to spend money for one's own pleasure, and (3) to spend money in righteous ways not for the sake of Allah but for mere show. On the other hand, one is miserly if one does not spend money for one's own needs and requirements and those of one's family in accordance with one's resources and position, or if one does not spend money for good works. The way taught by Islam is the golden mean between the two extremes. The Holy Prophet has said, "It is a sign of wisdom to adopt the "golden mean" in one's living." (Aḥmad, Ṭabarānī).

84. The true servants refrain from three great sins: *Shirk*, murder and adultery. The Holy Prophet himself warned of their gravity. According to 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, when some one asked him about the worst sins, he replied, (1) "It is to set up someone as equal in rank with Allah, Who has created you, (2) to kill your own child for fear of its sustenance, and (3) to commit adultery with the wife of your neighbour." (Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmizī, Nasā'ī, Aḥmad). Obviously this is not a complete list of the "heinous sins". But these three instances have been cited because they were most prevalent in the Arab society of those days.

As regards the inclusion of refraining from *shirk* among the excellences of the true servants, one may ask why it should be presented as virtue before the disbelievers who did not regard *shirk* as a vice. It is because the Arabs had doubts about the doctrine of *shirk*, even though they appeared to be deeply involved in it. This is amply supported by their history. For instance, when Abraha invaded Makkah, the Quraish did not invoke their idols to save the Ka'bah from him, but they begged Allah to save it. Their contemporary poetry bears sufficient evidence that they regarded the destruction of the "people of the elephant" due to Allah's power and supernatural interference and not due to any help of their idols. The Quraish and the polytheists of Arabia had also come to know that when Abraha reached Ṭā'if on his way to Makkah, the people of Tā'if had offered him their services to destroy the Ka'bah and had even provided him guides to take him safely to Makkah through the hills, for fear that he might also destroy the temple of "Lāt", their chief deity. This event so much offended the Arabs that for years after this they continued pelting the grave of the chief guide with stones for retaliation. Moreover, the Quraish and the other Arabs attributed their creed to Prophet Abraham and looked upon their religious and social customs and their Ḥajj rites as part of Abraham's religion. They knew that Prophet Abraham was a worshipper of Allah and not of idols. They also had traditions to show as to when they had started idol-worship, and which idol had been brought from where, when

and by whom. The fact is that the common Arab did not have much of reverence for his idols. He would even speak insultingly of it and withheld his offerings when it failed to fulfil his wishes and prayers. For instance, there is the story of an Arab who wanted to avenge the murder of his father. He went to the temple of his idol, Zul-Khalaṣah, and wanted to take an omen. The response came that he should abandon his intention. At this the Arab became furious and cried out: 'O Zul-Khalaṣah! Had you been in my place, and your father was murdered, you would not have said that the murderers should not be punished." Another Arab took his herd of camels to the shrine of his god, named Sa'd, for seeking its blessings. It was a tall idol which had been smeared with sacrificial blood. On seeing it, the camels became terrified and started running in all directions. The Arab was so filled with rage that he started pelting the idol with stones, shouting, "May God destroy you ! I had come to you to seek blessings for my camels, but you have deprived me of all of them." There were certain idols about whose origin filthy stories were current. For instance, the story about Asāf and Nā'ilah whose images had been placed at Ṣafā and Marwa, was that they were actually a man and a woman, who had committed adultery inside the Holy Ka'bah and had been turned into stone by God as a punishment. When the deities had such reputation, no worshipper could cherish any reverence for them in his heart. From this one can easily understand that the Arabs did recognize the value of true God-worship deep in their hearts, but, on the one hand, it had been suppressed by ancient customs and ways of ignorance, and on the other, the priestly class among the Quraish had vested interests, who were busy creating prejudices against it among the people. They could not give up idol-worship because such a step would have brought to an end their supremacy in Arabia. That is why, refraining from *shirk* and worship of One Allah has been mentioned as a mark of superiority of the followers of the Holy Prophet without any fear of contradiction by the disbelievers, for even they in their heart of hearts knew that it was a weighty argument against them.

85. This can have two meanings: (1) His punishment will never come to an end, but it will continue being inflicted relentlessly over and over again; and (2) the person who in addition to the sins of disbelief, *shirk* and atheism, would have committed murders, adultery and other sins, will get separate punishment for rebellion and for each other sin. He will be accountable for each of his major and minor sins none of which will be pardoned. For instance, for each murder and for each act of adultery he will be given a separate punishment, and likewise, there will be a separate punishment for every sin committed by him.

86. This is a good news for those people who repented and reformed

[Contd. on p. 440

بِاٰيٰتِ رَبِّهِمْ لَمْ يَخِرُّوْا عَلَيْهَا صُمًّا وَّعُمْيَانًا ﴿٧٣﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ يَقُوْلُوْنَ رَبَّنَا هَبْ
لَنَا مِنْ اَزْوَاجِنَا وَذُرِّيّٰتِنَا قُرَّةَ اَعْيُنٍ وَّاجْعَلْنَا لِلْمُتَّقِيْنَ اِمَامًا ﴿٧٤﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ
يُجْزَوْنَ الْغُرْفَةَ بِمَا صَبَرُوْا وَيُلَقَّوْنَ فِيْهَا تَحِيَّةً وَّسَلٰمًا ﴿٧٥﴾ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا
حَسُنَتْ مُسْتَقَرًّا وَّمُقَامًا ﴿٧٦﴾ قُلْ مَا يَعْبَؤُا بِكُمْ رَبِّيْ لَوْلَا دُعَآؤُكُمْ فَقَدْ
كَذَّبْتُمْ فَسَوْفَ يَكُوْنُ لِزَامًا ﴿٧٧﴾

74-76 who pray, Our Lord, bless us with wives and children, who may be the comfort of our eyes[92], and make us leaders of the righteous."[93]—Such are the people who will be rewarded with high palaces for their fortitude,[94,95] wherein they will be welcomed with due respect, honour and salutations and wherein they will live for ever: what an excellent abode and what an excellent resting place!

77 O. Muhammad, tell the people, "My Lord does not care at all if you do not invoke Him.[96] Now that you have denied (His Revelations), you will soon be awarded such a punishment which you will never be able to avoid."

Contd. from p.439]

themselves, for they will have the benefit of the "general amnesty" contained in verse 70. This was regarded as a great blessing by the true servants because very few of those who embraced Islam had been free from those vices during their 'ignorance', and were terrified by the threat contained in vv. 68-69, but this amnesty not only redeemed them but filled them with hope.

Many instances of such people, who sincerely repented and reformed their lives, have been related in the traditions. For instance, Ibn Jarīr and Tabarānī have related an incident from Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, who says, "One day when I returned home after offering the 'Ishā prayer in the Prophet's Mosque, I saw a woman standing at my door. I saluted her and walked into my room, closed the door and busied myself in voluntary worship. After a while she knocked at the door. I opened the door and asked what she wanted. She said that she had come with a problem: She had committed *zinā*, had become pregnant, given birth to a child and then killed it. She wanted to know if there was any chance of her sin being forgiven. I replied in the negative. She went back grief-stricken, exclaiming, "Ah! this beautiful body was created for the fire!" The next morning, after the prayer, when I related the night's incident before the Holy Prophet, he said, "You

gave a very wrong answer, Abū Hurairah: Haven't you read the Qur'ânic verse which says: '(Those) who do not invoke any other deity than Allah...except the one who may have repented (after those sins) and have believed and done righteous deeds' ?" Hearing this from the Holy Prophet, I went out in search of the woman, and had her traced again at the 'Ishā time. I gave her the good news and told her what the Holy Prophet had said in reply to her question. She immediately fell prostrate on the ground and thanked Allah, Who had opened a way for her forgiveness. Then she offered repentance and set a slave-girl, along with her son, free." A similar incident about an old man has been related in the Traditions. He came before the Holy Prophet and said, "O Messenger of Allah, all my life has passed in sin: there is no sin which I have not committed; so much so that if my sins were to be distributed over the people of the whole world, they would all be doomed. Is there any way out for my forgiveness?" The Holy Prophet asked him, "Have you embraced Islam?" He said, "I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah." The Holy Prophet said, "Go back, Allah is All-Forgiving and has the power to change your evil deeds into good deeds." He asked,"Is it about all my crimes and errors?" The Holy Prophet replied, "Yes, it is about all your crimes and errors." (Ibn Kathīr).

87. It has two meanings: (1) When he has repented sincerely, he will start a new life of belief and obedience to Allah and by His grace and help will start doing good deeds instead of evil deeds that he used to do in his life of unbelief, and his evil deeds will be replaced by good deeds; and (2) Not only will his evil deeds done in the past be written off, but it will also be recorded in his conduct register that he was the servant who gave up rebellion against his Lord and adopted the way of His obedience. Then, as he will feel more and more sorry for his past sins and offer repentance, more and more good deeds will be credited to him; for repenting of one's wrong doing and seeking forgiveness is in itself a good deed. Thus, good deeds will supersede all his evil deeds in his conduct register, and he will not only escape punishment in the Hereafter but, in addition, he will also be blessed with high favours by Allah.

88. That is, ultimately everyone has to return to Allah for Allah alone is man's last and real refuge: He alone can reward one for his good deeds or punish one for his evil deeds: He alone is All-Merciful and All-Compassionate, Who receives the penitent with forgiveness and Who does not rebuke him for his past errors provided that he has repented sincerely, and adopted the right attitude and reformed himself.

89. This also has two meanings: (1) They do not give evidence (in a law court etc.) in regard to a false thing in order to prove it right, when in fact it is a

falsehood, or at best a doubtful thing; and (2) they have no intention to witness any thing which is false, evil or wicked as spectators. In this sense, every sin and every indecency, every sham and counterfeit act is a falsehood. A true servant of Allah recognizes it as false and shuns it even if it is presented in the seemingly beautiful forms of "art".

90. The Arabic word *laghv* implies all that is vain, useless and meaningless and it also covers "falsehood". The true servants pass by in a dignified manner if ever they come across "what is vain", as if it were a heap of filth. They do not tarry there to enjoy the "filth" of moral impurity, obscenity or foul language, nor do they intentionally go anywhere to hear or see or take part in any sort of "filth". For further details, see E.N. 4of Al-Mu''minūn.

91. The true servants of Allah do not behave like the blind and the deaf towards the Revelations of Allah, when they are recited to them for their admonition. They do not turn a deaf ear to their teachings and Message and do not deliberately close their eyes to the Signs that they are asked to observe, but are deeply moved by them. They follow and practise what they are enjoined and refrain from what is forbidden.

92. The most distinctive characteristic of the true servants is their eagerness for prayer to Allah. In verse 65 their "prayer" for their own salvation and in verse 74 their prayer for their wives and children have been cited: "Our Lord, make our wives and children true believers so that they should practise righteousness and become a source of comfort for us." Their prayer shows that the true servants of Allah are more concerned about the salvation of their beloved ones in the Hereafter than the enjoyment of the world.

It should be noted that this characteristic has been cited here to show that the true servants had sincerely believed in the Message. That is why they were so concerned about the "Faith" of their beloved ones. It should also be kept in mind that many of the near and dear ones of the Believers had not as yet embraced Islam. If a husband had embraced Islam, the wife was still an unbeliever, and if a youth had accepted Islam, his parents and brothers and sisters were still involved in disbelief, and *vice versa*. Therefore, the true servants wept and prayed for them, whenever the picture of their horrible state in Hell came before their mind's eyes.

93. That is, "We should excel in piety, righteousness and good works; nay, we should become the leaders of the pious people so that we may lead them in the propagation of virtue and piety in the world." Incidentally, this characteristic of the true servants was in great contrast to that of the disbelievers, who strove in competition and rivalry with one another for superiority in worldly power and

wealth. But it is a pity that some people in our time have misinterpreted this verse as containing sanction for seeking candidature for political leadership. According to them, the verse means: "Our Lord, make us rulers over the pious people."

94. The word *sabr* (fortitude) has been used here in its most comprehensive sense. The true servants courageously endured their persecution by the enemies of the Truth; they remained firm and steadfast in their struggle to establish Allah's way in the land; they carried out their duties enjoined by Allah sincerely and fearlessly without any concern for the worldly losses and deprivation; and they withstood all temptations held out by Satan and all the lusts of the flesh.

95. *"Ghurfah"* is a high mansion and the word is generally used for the "upper chamber" of a double-storeyed house. But the reality is that the highest buildings made by man in this world, even the Taj Mahal of India and the sky-scrapers of New York, are an ugly imitation of the "excellent abodes" in Paradise. They are so magnificent, grand and beautiful that human imagination cannot form any picture of their grandeur.

96. This warning to the disbellevers has been given in order to contrast it with the great rewards that have been promised to the true servants of Allah, as if to say, "If you do not invoke Allah for help and protection, and do not worship Him, you will have no value and importance in His sight, and He will not care at all for you because He does not stand in need of any help from you. It is indeed for your own sake that He has given you the opportunity to invoke Him so that He may turn in mercy towards you; otherwise there is no difference between you and the rest of creation."



XXVI
ASH-SHU'ARĀA'
اَلشُّعَرَاءُ

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XXVI
ASH-SHU'ARĀA'

اَلشُّعَرَاءُ

INTRODUCTION

Name.

The Sūrah takes its name from verse 224 in which the word *Ash-Shu'arâa'* occurs.

Period of Revelation.

The subject-matter and the style show, and the traditions confirm, that it was revealed during the middle Makkan period. According to Ibn 'Abbās, Sūrah Ṭā Hā was revealed first, then Sūrah Al-Wāqi'ah, and then Sūrah Ash-Shu'arāa'. *(Rūḥ-ul-Maā'nī,* Vol. XIX, p. 64). About Sūrah Ṭā Hā it is well known that it had been revealed before Ḥaḍrat 'Umar embraced Islam.

Subject-Matter and Topics

The background of the Sūrah is that the disbelievers of Makkah were persistently refusing, on one pretext or the other, to accept the message of Islam given by the Holy Prophet. Sometimes they would say that he did not show them any sign to convince them of his Prophethood; sometimes they would brand him as a poet or a sorcerer and mock his message; and sometimes they would ridicule his Mission, saying that his followers were either a few foolish youth, or the poor people and slaves—whereas, they argued, if his Mission had really some value for the people, the nobles and the elders would have accepted it first. Thus, while on the one hand, the Holy Prophet was becoming wearied by his

efforts to show them rationally the errors of their creeds and prove the truth of the Doctrines of *Tauḥīd* and the Hereafter, the disbelievers, on the other, were never tired of adopting one kind of obduracy after the other. This state of affairs was causing great anguish and grief to the Holy Prophet.

Such were the conditions when this Sūrah was revealed. It begins with words of consolation to the Holy Prophet, implying, "Why do you fret for their sake? If these people have not believed in you, it is not because they have not seen any Sign, but because they are obdurate. They will not listen to reason; they want to see a Sign which makes them bow their heads in humility. When this Sign is shown in due course of time, they will themselves realize that what was being presented to them was the Truth."

After this introduction, till verse 191, one and the same theme has been presented continuously, and it is said: "The whole earth abounds in such Signs as can guide a seeker after truth to Reality, but the stubborn and misguided people have never believed even after seeing the Signs, whether these were the Signs of the natural phenomena or the miracles of the Prophets. These wretched people have stubbornly adhered to their erroneous creeds till the Divine scourge actually overtook them." It is to illustrate that the history of seven of the ancient tribes has been told, Who persisted in disbelief just like the disbelievers of Makkah. In this connection, the following points have been stressed:

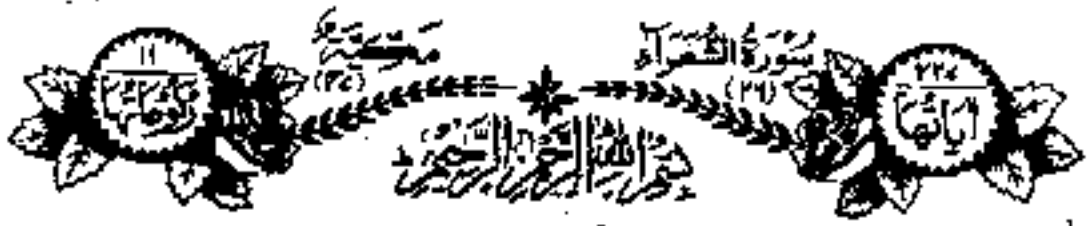
(1) The Signs are of two kinds: (a) Those which are scattered all over the earth, and by seeing which an intelligent person can judge for himself whether what the Prophet is presenting is the Truth or not; and (b) those which were seen by Pharaoh and his people, Noah's people, the 'Ad and the Thamūd, Lot's people and the people of Aiykah. Now it is for the disbelievers to decide which kind of the Signs they are eager to see.

(2) The mentality of the disbelievers has been the same throughout the ages; their arguments and their objections, and their excuses and subterfuges for not believing have been similar and ultimately the fates that they met have also been the same. Likewise, the Prophets in every age presented the same teachings, their personal character and their reasoning and

arguments against their opponents were the same, and they were all similarly blessed with mercy by Allah Almighty. Both these patterns of behaviour and conduct are found in history, and the disbelievers could themselves see as to which respective patterns they and the Holy Prophet belonged.

(3) Allah is All-Mighty, All-Powerful and All-Merciful at the same time. History contains instances of His Wrath as well as of His Mercy. Now, therefore, it is for the people to decide whether they would like to deserve Allah's Mercy or His Wrath.

(4) Lastly, the discussion has been summed up, saying: "O disbelievers, if at all you want to see the Signs, why should you insist on seeing those horrible Signs that visited the doomed communities of the past? Why don't you see the Qur'ān which is being presented in your own language ? Why don't you see Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and mercy) and his Companions? Can the revelations of the Qur'ān be the work of a satan or a jinn? Does the recipient of the Qur'ān appear to be a sorcerer? Are Muḥammad and his Companions no different from a poet and his admirers ? Why don't you give up disbelief and search your hearts for their judgment? When in the heart of your hearts you yourselves believe that the Revelations of the Qur'ān have nothing in common with sorcery and poetry, then you should know that you are being cruel and unjust, and will certainly meet the doom meant for the cruel and unjust."



طٰسٓمٓ ﴿١﴾ تِلْكَ اٰيٰتُ الْكِتٰبِ الْمُبِيْنِ ﴿٢﴾ لَعَلَّكَ بَاخِعٌ نَّفْسَكَ اَلَّا يَكُوْنُوْا مُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٣﴾
اِنْ نَّشَاْ نُنَزِّلْ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ اٰيَةً فَظَلَّتْ اَعْنَاقُهُمْ لَهَا خٰضِعِيْنَ ﴿٤﴾ وَمَا
يَاْتِيْهِمْ مِّنْ ذِكْرٍ مِّنَ الرَّحْمٰنِ مُحْدَثٍ اِلَّا كَانُوْا عَنْهُ مُعْرِضِيْنَ ﴿٥﴾ فَقَدْ كَذَّبُوْا
فَسَيَاْتِيْهِمْ اَنْۢبٰٓؤُا مَا كَانُوْا بِهٖ يَسْتَهْزِءُوْنَ ﴿٦﴾ اَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا اِلَى الْاَرْضِ كَمْ اَنْۢبَتْنَا فِيْهَا
مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجٍ كَرِيْمٍ ﴿٧﴾ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً ۭ وَمَا كَانَ اَكْثَرُهُمْ مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٨﴾ وَ
اِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿٩﴾ وَاِذْ نَادٰى رَبُّكَ مُوْسٰٓى اَنِ ائْتِ الْقَوْمَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿١٠﴾
قَوْمَ فِرْعَوْنَ ۭ اَلَا يَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿١١﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ اِنِّيْٓ اَخَافُ اَنْ يُّكَذِّبُوْنِ ﴿١٢﴾ وَيَضِيْقُ صَدْرِيْ
وَلَا يَنْطَلِقُ لِسَانِيْ فَاَرْسِلْ اِلٰى هٰرُوْنَ ﴿١٣﴾ وَلَهُمْ عَلَيَّ ذَنْۢبٌ فَاَخَافُ اَنْ يَّقْتُلُوْنِ ﴿١٤﴾
قَالَ كَلَّا ۚ فَاذْهَبَا بِاٰيٰتِنَآ اِنَّا مَعَكُمْ مُّسْتَمِعُوْنَ ﴿١٥﴾ فَاْتِيَا فِرْعَوْنَ فَقُوْلَآ اِنَّا رَسُوْلُ
رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿١٦﴾ اَنْ اَرْسِلْ مَعَنَا بَنِيْٓ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ ﴿١٧﴾ قَالَ اَلَمْ نُرَبِّكَ فِيْنَا وَلِيْدًا وَّ
لَبِثْتَ فِيْنَا مِنْ عُمُرِكَ سِنِيْنَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَفَعَلْتَ فَعْلَتَكَ الَّتِيْ فَعَلْتَ وَاَنْتَ مِنَ
الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ قَالَ فَعَلْتُهَآ اِذًا وَّاَنَا مِنَ الضَّاۗلِّيْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾ فَفَرَرْتُ مِنْكُمْ لَمَّا خِفْتُكُمْ

XXVI
ASH-SHU'ARĀA'
اَلشُّعَرَآءُ

Verses: 227 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

Tā Sīn Mīm. These are the verses of the lucid Book[1] 1-2

O Muhammad, you will perhaps consume yourself with grief because these people do not believe.[2] If We will, We can send down from the sky a Sign before which they will bend down their necks in submission.[3] Whatever new admonition comes to them from the Merciful, they turn away from it. Now that they have rejected it, they will soon come to know (in various forms) the reality of what they have been mocking[4]. 3-6

And have they never looked at the earth (and seen) how We have created in it a variety of fine vegetation in abundance ? This surely has a Sign,[5] but most of them would not believe. The fact is that your Lord is Mighty as well as Merciful.[6] 7-9

Relate to them the story of the time when your Lord called Moses,[7] saying: "Go forth to the wicked people—the people of Pharaoh.[8] Do they not fear ?"[9] Moses answered, "My Lord, I am afraid that they will treat me as a liar. My breast straitens and I am not eloquent of tongue: so appoint Aaron to Prophethood.[10] And they have the charge of a crime against me, too; therefore, I fear that they will put me to death."[11] Allah said: "No, never! Go, both of you, with Our Signs:[12] We shall be with you, hearing everything. Go to Pharaoh and tell him, 'We have been sent by the Lord of all Creation (with the message) that you should let the Israelites go with us'."[13] 10-17

18-19 Pharaoh said. "Did we not bring you up as a child in our house?[14] You lived quite a few years of your life among us, and then you did what you did, [15] you are indeed an un grateful man."

20-21 Moses answered, "I did it inadvertently;[16] then I fled from you out of fear; then my Lord bestowed wisdom and knowledge upon me,"[17] and included me among the Messengers.

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1. That is, the verses being presented in this Sūrah are of that Book, which presents and explains its subject-matter clearly and plainly so that every reader and listener may easily understand what it invites to, what it enjoins and what it forbids, and what it regards as true and what as false. To believe or not to believe is a different matter; but no one can have the excuse that he could not understand the teachings of the Book and its injunctions and prohibitions.

"Al-Kitāb-ul-Mubīn" also has the meaning that the Qur'ān is, beyond any doubt, a Divine Book. Its language, its diction and themes, the facts presented by it and the background of its revelations, all testify to the fact that this is indeed the Book of the Master of all Creation. In this sense, its every sentence is a Sign and a miracle. As such, any person who has common sense has no need of any other Sign than the verses of this Book for believing in the Prophethood of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings).

This brief introductory sentence, which covers both these meanings, has a close connection with the subject-matter of this Sūrah. The disbelievers of Makkah demanded a miracle from the Holy Prophet so as to be convinced that the message he gave was really from Allah. In answer to that, it has been said that if some one really wanted a Sign for believing in the Prophet, he should study the verses of this Book. Then, the disbelievers accused the Holy Prophet of being a sorcerer. This charge has been refuted by saying that the Qur'ān has nothing ambiguous or mysterious in it; but it plainly puts forward all its teachings which cannot be the creation of a poet or a sorcerer's imagination.

2. The words *bākhi'un-nafsaka* literally mean: "You would kill yourself." The verse in fact describes the extreme anguish, anxiety and grief of the Holy Prophet over the Makkan disbelievers' ways of deviation, moral degradation, and obduracy and opposition to his message of reform. Sometimes it seemed as if his grief and mental suffering for their sake would cause his death. This state of the Holy Prophet has been referred to at other places in the Qur'ān as well, for instance in Al-Kahf: 6, thus: "Well, O Muḥammad, it may be that you will consume your life for their sake out of sorrow if they do not believe in this message." And in Al-Fāṭir: 8, thus:" ....let not your life be consumed in grief for their sake."

3. That is, "It is not at all difficult for Allah to send down a Sign which would make all the disbelievers yield and submit. If, however, He does not send one, it does not mean that such a thing is beyond His powers, but the reason is that belief under compulsion is not acceptable to Him. Allah wants that people should use their common-sense and recognize the Truth through the verses of the Divine Book and the Signs which are scattered all over the universe and are found even in their ownselves. Then, when their hearts are satisfied that the message of the Prophets contains the Truth, and the beliefs and the creeds which are opposed to it, are false, they should willingly give up falsehood and adopt the Truth. This voluntary belief, acceptance of the Truth and rejection of falsehood, is what Allah demands from man. It is for this reason that Allah has bestowd upon man choice and free will, and freedom to follow any way, right or wrong, that he pleases. For the same reason He has placed in his nature both the tendencies, towards good and towards evil, and opened up before him both the ways, to piety and to sin. For the same purpose He has given Satan the freedom and respite to mislead him and has made arrangements of Prophethood, Revelation and invitation to goodness to guide him to the right way, and has placed man on trial to see whether he adopts the way of belief and obedience or of disbelief and sin. On the other hand, if Allah had adopted a method of coercing people to believe and obey, it would have defeated the very purpose of the trial and test. Then there was no need to send down the Signs for the purpose, but He would have created man with a pure nature, without any inclination for evil, disbelief and sin, and made him obedient by birth like the angels. This has been referred at several places in the Qur'ān, for instance in Yūnus: 99: ' Had your Lord willed all the dwellers of the earth would have believed in Him;" and in Hūd: 118: "Your Lord could have made mankind one community had He so willed, but now they will continue to follow different ways, but only those on whom Allah has His mercy (escape wrong ways). It will be so because He has created them for this (very freedom of choice and action)." For further explanation, see E.N.'s 101,102 of Yūnus and E.N. 116 of Hūd.

4. That is, the people who show lack of feeling and interest for every rational attempt made to bring them to the right way, cannot be made to believe forcibly by sending down Signs from heaven. They only deserve to be shown their evil end after they have been duly warned and shown guidance, which they not only treated with indifference but rejected scornfully. This evil end can be shown to them in several ways:

(1) The Truth which they have bitterly opposed and scoffed at should prevail in the world in front of their very eyes in spite of their antagonism. (2) They should be visited by a painful torment and eliminated from the world. (3) After a few years of misguided life they should meet death and see for themselves that what they had been following wholeheartedly

throughout their lives was nothing but falsehood and what the Prophets had been presenting was the very Truth, which they had been scoffing at. Thus the evil end can take place differently for different people as it happened in the past.

5. That is, the seeker after truth does not have to look far for a Sign. If only he sees with open eyes the phenomena of vegetation around him, he will be able to judge for himself whether the reality about the system of the world *(i.e., Tauhīd)* which was being presented by the Prophets is true, or the speculations of the polytheists and atheists. From the variety and abundance of creation found on the earth, the various elements and factors supporting it, the laws of nature causing it to grow and flourish, and the accord and harmony existing between its characteristics and the countless needs and demands of innumerable creatures, only a fool will conclude that all this is happening automatically without the wisdom, knowledge, power and design of an All-Mighty, All-Powerful Creator. Obviously, many masters and gods could not have by any device arranged and produced the perfect harmony and accord between the soil, the sun and the moon, and the animal and plant life produced with their help and the needs of a great variety of creatures living on the earth. A sensible person, unless he is prejudiced and biased, cannot help feeling convinced that these are the clear signs and proofs of the existence of One God, and there is no further need of a miracle to convince him of the reality of *Tauhīd*.

6. That is, "He has the power and ability to annihilate completely anyone whom He wills to punish, but it is His mercy that He does not hasten to punish the wrong-doer, but gives him respite for years and centuries to allow him time to think, understand and mend his ways, and is ever ready to forgive the sins of a lifetime if the sinner offers repentance but once."

7. After a brief introduction, historical events have been presented beginning with the story of Prophet Moses and Pharaoh, and attention has been drawn specifically to the following points:

(1) The conditions under which Prophet Moses had to work were much harsher and more severe than those faced by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him). Prophet Moses belonged to a slave community very much suppressed by Pharaoh and his people. In contrast to them, the Holy Prophet was a member of the clan of Quraish and his family enjoyed an equal status with the other clans. Then Prophet Moses had been bred and brought up in the house of Pharaoh and after remaining a fugitive for ten years due to a charge of murder, he was commanded to go before the same king from whom he had fled for life. The Holy Prophet did not have to face any such situation. Then the empire of

Pharaoh was the most extensive and powerful empire of the time and the meagre power of the Quraish had no comparison with it. In spite of that Pharaoh could not do any harm to Prophet Moses and ultimately perished in the conflict. From this Allah wanted the Quraish to learn this lesson: "None can defeat the one who has Allah to help him? When Pharaoh with all his might became helpless against Moses, how can you, O poor Quraish, succeed against Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings)?"

(2) There could not be clearer and more manifest Signs (miracles) than those which were shown to Pharaoh through Moses. Then in an open contest with the magicians before a gathering of hundreds of thousands of people to meet the challenge of Pharaoh himself, it had been conclusively demonstrated that what was presented by Moses, was not magic. The skilful magicians who were themselves Egyptians and had been summoned by Pharaoh himself bore witness to the fact that turning of Moses' staff into a serpent was a real change of nature, which could only happen through a Divine miracle, and not by any trick of magic. Then the magicians' believing in Moses immediately, even at the risk of life, proved beyond any doubt that the Sign presented by Moses was a miracle and not magic. Yet the disbelievers were not inclined to believe in the Prophet. Now how can you, O Quraish, say that you will believe only when you are shown a perceptible miracle and a physical Sign ? As a matter of fact, if a person is free from prejudice, false sense of prestige and vested interest, and has an open mind to appreciate the distinction between truth and falsehood, and is prepared to give up falsehood for the truth, he does not stand in need of any other signs than those found in this Book, in the life of the one presenting it and in the vast universe around him. On the contrary, an obstinate person, who is not interested in the truth, and who because of selfish motives is determined not to recognize and accept any such truth as may clash with his interests, will not be prepared to believe after seeing any sign whatever, even if the earth and the heaven are turned upside down in front of his eyes.

(3) The tragic end of such obstinacy as met by Pharaoh is not something for which other people should become so impatient. Those who do not believe even after seeing with their own eyes the Signs of Divine power have inevitably to meet a similar fate. Therefore, instead of learning a lesson why do you insist on seeing such a dreadful sign? For comparison, see Al-A'rāf: 103-137, Yūnus: 75-92, Banī Isrā'īl: 101-104, and Ṭā Hā: 9-79.

8. The epithet of "the wicked people" describes the extremely wicked character of the people of Pharaoh.

9. That is, "O Moses! Just see how these people are perpetrating crime and injustice presuming that they are all-powerful in the land having no fear of God, Who will call them to account in the Hereafter".

10. The sentence, "My breast straitens", shows that Prophet Moses was somewhat hesitant of going alone on such a difficult mission, and also had the feeling that he was not eloquent in speech. That is why he begged Allah to appoint Aaron too, as messenger to assist him who, being more vigorous in speech, could support and strengthen him as and when the need arose. It is just possible that in the beginning, the Prophet Moses might have begged that Aaron be appointed to Prophethood instead of him, but later when he felt that Allah willed him to be appointed to that position, he might have appealed that Aaron should at least be made his counsellor and assistant. We say this because here Prophet Moses is not praying for Aaron to be made his counsellor, but says, "Appoint Aaron to Prophethood." On the other hand, in Sūrah Ṭā Hā, he says, "Appoint for me a counsellor from my family—(let it be) my brother Aaron." Then in Sūrah Al-Qaṣaṣ, he says, "My brother Aaron is more vigorous in speech than myself, so send him as an assistant with me to confirm (and support) me." From this it appears that these two requests were made later, but originally Prophet Moses had begged Allah to appoint Aaron to Prophethood instead of himself.

The Bible has a different story to tell. According to it, Prophet Moses, fearing that he would be rejected by the people of Pharoah, and putting forward the excuse of his faltering speech, had declined to accept his appointment to prophethood on the pretext that he lacked vigour and eloquence in speech : "O my Lord, send, I pray Thee, by the hand of him *whom* thou wilt send." (Exodus, 4: 13). Then Allah, of His own will, appointed Aaron to be his assistant and persuaded them to go together before Pharaoh. (Exodus, 4: 1-13). For further details, see E.N. 19 of Ṭā Hā.

11. The allusion is to the incident of Prophet Moses' giving a blow to an Egyptian, who was fighting with an Israelite, and thus causing his death. Then as soon as Moses came to know that the report had reached Pharaoh and his people and they were planning to take revenge, he fled the country and took refuge in Midian. (See Al-Qaṣaṣ: 15-21) Now when after a period of almost ten years of hiding he was suddenly called upon and commanded to go before Pharaoh, who had already a charge of murder against him, with the message, Prophet Moses rightly felt apprehensive that he would immediately be involved in the murder case even before he was able to convey the message as commanded by Allah.

12. Here by "Signs" are meant the miracles of the staff and the shining hand, which were given to Moses. For details see Al-A'rāf: 106-117, Tā Hā: 17-23, An-Naml: 7-14, and Al-Qaṣaṣ: 31-32).

13. The Mission of the Prophets Moses and Aaron was twofold: First, to invite Pharaoh to the worship and obedience of Allah which has been the foremost aim of the Mission of every Prophet, and secondly, to liberate the Israelites from the bondage of Pharaoh, which was specifically assigned to them. The Qur'ān has mentioned sometimes only the first part of their Mission (as in Sūrah An-Nāzi'āt) and sometimes only the second.

14. This remark of Pharaoh shows that he was not the same Pharaoh who had brought up Moses in his house, but his son. Had he been the same Pharaoh, he would have said, "I brought you up." But, on the contrary, he says, "You were brought up among ourselves." For a detailed discussion, see E.N.'s 85-93 of Al-A'rāf.

15. The allusion is to the incident of murder committed by Moses accidentally.

16. The word *ḍalālat* does not always mean "straying away", but it is also used in the sense of ignorance, folly, error, forgetfulness, inadvertence, etc. As mentioned in Sūrah Al-Qaṣaṣ, Prophet Moses had only given a blow to the Egyptian (Copt) when he saw him treating an Israelite cruelly. A blow does not cause death, nor is it given with the intention of causing death. It was only an accident that the Egyptian died. As such, it was not a case of deliberate murder but of accidental murder. A murder was committed but not intentionally, nor was any weapon used, which is usually employed for murder, or which can cause murder.

17. The word *ḥukm* means wisdom, knowledge or authority, which is granted by Allah to a Prophet so that he may speak with confidence and power.

فَوَهَبَ لِيْ رَبِّيْ حُكْمًا وَّجَعَلَنِيْ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَتِلْكَ نِعْمَةٌ تَمُنُّهَا عَلَيَّ اَنْ
عَبَّدْتَّ بَنِيْٓ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ ﴿٢٢﴾ قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ وَمَا رَبُّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ قَالَ رَبُّ السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَالْاَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا ۭ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّوْقِنِيْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾ قَالَ لِمَنْ حَوْلَهٗٓ اَلَا تَسْتَمِعُوْنَ ﴿٢٥﴾ قَالَ
رَبُّكُمْ وَرَبُّ اٰبَاۗىِٕكُمُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿٢٦﴾ قَالَ اِنَّ رَسُوْلَكُمُ الَّذِيْٓ اُرْسِلَ اِلَيْكُمْ لَمَجْنُوْنٌ ﴿٢٧﴾
قَالَ رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا ۭ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ قَالَ لَىِٕنِ اتَّخَذْتَ
اِلٰهًا غَيْرِيْ لَاَجْعَلَنَّكَ مِنَ الْمَسْجُوْنِيْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾ قَالَ اَوَلَوْ جِئْتُكَ بِشَيْءٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿٣٠﴾ قَالَ
فَاْتِ بِهٖٓ اِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٣١﴾ فَاَلْقٰى عَصَاهُ فَاِذَا هِيَ ثُعْبَانٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَ
نَزَعَ يَدَهٗ فَاِذَا هِيَ بَيْضَاۗءُ لِلنّٰظِرِيْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾ قَالَ لِلْمَلَاِ حَوْلَهٗٓ اِنَّ هٰذَا لَسٰحِرٌ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿٣٤﴾
يُّرِيْدُ اَنْ يُّخْرِجَكُمْ مِّنْ اَرْضِكُمْ بِسِحْرِهٖ ۤ فَمَاذَا تَاْمُرُوْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾ قَالُوْٓا اَرْجِهْ وَاَخَاهُ
وَابْعَثْ فِي الْمَدَاۗىِٕنِ حٰشِرِيْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾ يَاْتُوْكَ بِكُلِّ سَحَّارٍ عَلِيْمٍ ﴿٣٧﴾ فَجُمِعَ السَّحَرَةُ
لِمِيْقَاتِ يَوْمٍ مَّعْلُوْمٍ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَّقِيْلَ لِلنَّاسِ هَلْ اَنْتُمْ مُّجْتَمِعُوْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾ لَعَلَّنَا نَتَّبِعُ السَّحَرَةَ
اِنْ كَانُوْا هُمُ الْغٰلِبِيْنَ ﴿٤٠﴾ فَلَمَّا جَاۗءَ السَّحَرَةُ قَالُوْا لِفِرْعَوْنَ اَىِٕنَّ لَنَا لَاَجْرًا اِنْ كُنَّا
نَحْنُ الْغٰلِبِيْنَ ﴿٤١﴾ قَالَ نَعَمْ وَاِنَّكُمْ اِذًا لَّمِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِيْنَ ﴿٤٢﴾ قَالَ لَهُمْ مُّوْسٰٓى
اَلْقُوْا مَآ اَنْتُمْ مُّلْقُوْنَ ﴿٤٣﴾ فَاَلْقَوْا حِبَالَهُمْ وَعِصِيَّهُمْ وَقَالُوْا بِعِزَّةِ فِرْعَوْنَ
اِنَّا لَنَحْنُ الْغٰلِبُوْنَ ﴿٤٤﴾ فَاَلْقٰى مُوْسٰى عَصَاهُ فَاِذَا هِيَ تَلْقَفُ مَا يَاْفِكُوْنَ ﴿٤٥﴾
فَاُلْقِيَ السَّحَرَةُ سٰجِدِيْنَ ﴿٤٦﴾ قَالُوْٓا اٰمَنَّا بِرَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٤٧﴾ رَبِّ مُوْسٰى وَهٰرُوْنَ ﴿٤٨﴾
قَالَ اٰمَنْتُمْ لَهٗ قَبْلَ اَنْ اٰذَنَ لَكُمْ ۭ اِنَّهٗ لَكَبِيْرُكُمُ الَّذِيْ عَلَّمَكُمُ السِّحْرَ ۚ
فَلَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ۭ لَاُقَطِّعَنَّ اَيْدِيَكُمْ وَاَرْجُلَكُمْ مِّنْ خِلَافٍ وَّلَاُوصَلِّبَنَّكُمْ
اَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿٤٩﴾ قَالُوْا لَا ضَيْرَ ۭ اِنَّآ اِلٰى رَبِّنَا مُنْقَلِبُوْنَ ﴿٥٠﴾ اِنَّا نَطْمَعُ اَنْ يَّغْفِرَ لَنَا

As for the favour of which you have reminded me, the fact is 22
that you had reduced the Israelites to bondsmen."[18]

Pharaoh said,[19] "And what is this Lord of all Creation?"[20] 23

Moses answered, "The Lord of the heavens and the earth and 24
of all that is between them, if only you care to believe!"[21]

Pharaoh said to those around him, "Do you hear?" 25

Moses said, "Your Lord as well as Lord of your forefathers 26
who have gone before."[22]

Pharaoh said (to all those present), "This messenger of yours, 27
who has been sent to you, seems to be utterly mad."

Moses said, "(He is) Lord of the east and the west and of all 28
that is between them, if only you people have any common-sense"[23]

Pharaoh said, "If you take any one other than me as a deity, I 29
will cast you among those who are rotting in the prisons."[24]

Moses said, "Even if I bring forth a convincing thing?"[25] 30

Pharaoh replied, "Well, bring it if you are truthful."[26] 31

(No sooner had he uttered these words than) Moses cast down 32-33
his staff, and suddenly it became a serpent.[27] Then he drew out his hand (from the armpit) and it was shining bright for all the spectators.[28]

Pharaoh said to the chiefs around him, "This fellow is certainly 34-35
a skilled magician: he wants to drive you out of your land by means of his magic.[29] Now, what is your command ?"[30]

They said, "Detain him and his brother for a while, and send 36-37
forth heralds to the cities to summon every skilled magician into your presence."

So, the magicians were gathered together on an appointed day 38-40
and time,[31] and the people were asked, "Would you come to the gathering?[32] We may perhaps still follow the magicians' way if they are dominant."[33]

When the magicians arrived for the contest, they said to 41
Pharaoh, "Shall we have rewards if we win ?"[34]

42 He replied, "Of course, and then you will be included among those nearest to me."[35]

43 Moses said, "Cast down what you have to cast down."

44-48 They forthwith cast down their cords and staffs and said, "By Pharaoh's honour, we shall surely win"[36] Then Moses cast down his staff, and lo ! it started devouring up their false devices. At this, all the magicians fell down in prostration, and cried out, "We have believed in the Lord of all creation the Lord of Moses and Aaron !"[37]

49 Pharaoh said, "You have believed in Moses even before I should have permitted you ! He must be your chief who has taught you magic[38] Well, you shall soon come to know: I shall have your hands and feet cut off on opposite sides and shall crucify you all"[39]

50-51 They replied, "We care not: we shall pass into our Lord's presence, and we expect that our Lord will forgive us our sins because we are the first to believe."[40]

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18. That is, "If you had not been unjust and cruel to the Israelites, I should not have been brought to your house for upbringing. It was only on account of your barbarism that my mother put me in a basket and cast it into the river. Had it not been so, I should have been happily brought up in my own house. Therefore, it does not behove you to remind me of your favour of bringing me up in your house."

19. Here the details that Prophet Moses went before Pharaoh as the Messenger of the Lord of the universe and conveyed to him His message, have been omitted, and only the conversation that took place between them has been related.

20. This question of Pharaoh concerned the assertion of Moses that he had been sent by the Lord, Master and Ruler of all Creation with the message that he should let the Israelites go with him. This was a political message. It implied that the One, Whom Moses claimed to represent, possessed authority and sovereign rights over all the people of the world including Pharaoh and that he was not only encroaching upon his sphere of sovereignty as Supreme Ruler, but was also sending him the Command that he should hand over a section of his subjects to the representative appointed by Him, so that he should take them out of his kingdom. That is why Pharaoh asked, "Who is this Master and Ruler of all Creation who is sending such a command to the king of Egypt through an ordinary subject of his kingdom?"

21. That is, "I have not been sent by any mortal king ruling in the world, but I come from Him Who is the Owner of the heavens and the earth. If you believe that there is a Creator and Master and Ruler of this universe, it should not be difficult for you to understand who is the Lord of all Creation."

22. These words were addressed to the chiefs of Pharaoh, whom he had asked, "Do you hear?" Prophet Moses said: "I do not believe in the false gods who exist today, but did not exist yesterday, or who existed yesterday but do not exist today. This Pharaoh, whom you worship as your lord today, did not exist yesterday, and the Pharaohs whom your elders worshipped yesterday, do not exist today; whereas I believe in the sovereignty and authority of that Lord Who is both your Lord and Pharaoh's Lord as much today as He was your elders' Lord before this."

23. That is, "You regard me as a mad person, but if you think you are wise people, you should yourself decide as to who is the real lord: this wretched Pharaoh who is ruling over a small piece of earth, or He Who is the Owner of the east and the west and of everything bounded by the east and the west including the land of Egypt. I believe in His sovereignty alone and have been sent to convey His message to a creature of His."

24. To understand and appreciate this conversation fully, one should bear in mind the fact that as it is today, in the ancient times too, the concept of "deity" was confined to its religious sense only. The deity was meant to be worshipped and presented offerings and gifts, and because of its "supernatural powers" and authority the people were to pray to it for help and fulfilment of their desires. But a deity's being supreme legally and politically also and his right to enjoin anything he pleased in the mundane affairs and man's duty to submit to his commands as to superior law, has never been recognized by the socalled worldly rulers. They have always claimed that in the mundane affairs, they alone possess absolute authority and no deity has any right to interfere in the polity and law prescribed by them. This very thing has been the real cause of the conflict between the Prophets and their righteous followers, on the one hand, and the worldly kingdoms and governments on the other. The Prophets have been trying their utmost to make the worldly rulers acknowledge the sovereign and absolute rights of the Lord of the Worlds, but they in return have not only been claiming sovereign powers and rights for themselves, but have been considering every such person as a criminal and rebel, who has held someone else as a deity in the political and legal sphere. With this background one can easily understand the real significance of Pharaoh's words. Had it been a question of mere worship and offerings, he would have least bothered that Moses, forsaking all gods, regarded only Allah, the Lord of all Creation, as worthy of those rights. If Moses had invited him to serve Allah alone,

he would not have felt provoked and offended. At the most he would have refused to give up the creed of his forefathers, or would have challenged Moses to have a debate with his own religious scholars. But what caused him provocation was that Prophet Moses was presenting himself as the representative of the Lord of all Creation and was conveying to him a political command as if he was a subordinate ruler and the representative of the superior authority was demanding obedience from him to the command. In this sense, he was not prepared to acknowledge any other political or legal authority, nor allow any of his subjects to acknowledge anybody instead of himself as the supreme ruler. That is why he challenged the term "Lord of all Creation", for the message sent by Him clearly reflected sovereignty in the political and not in the mere religious sense. Then, when Prophet Moses explained over and over again what he meant by the "Lord of all Creation", Pharaoh threatened that if he held any one other than him as sovereign in the land of Egypt, he would be cast into prison.

25. That is, "Will you still deny me and send me to prison, even if I present a convincing Sign to prove that I am really the Messenger of God, Who is Lord of all Creation, Lord of the heavens and the earth and Lord of the east and the west?"

26. This reply of Pharaoh shows that he was not in any way different from the common polytheists of the ancient and modern times. Like all other polytheists he believed in Allah's being the highest Deity in the supernatural sense. Who wielded greater power and authority than all other gods and goddesses. That is why Prophet Moses said to him, "If you do not believe that I have been appointed by Allah, I can present such clear Signs as will prove that I have really been sent by Him", and that is why Pharaoh said, "If you are true in your claim, come out with your Sign", otherwise if he had any doubt about the existence of Allah or His being Master of the universe, he would not have asked for the Sign.

27. *Thub'ān* means a serpent. At other places, the Qur'ān has used *ḥayyatun* (snake) and *jānn* (a small snake) to describe the snake of the staff. The interpretation given by Imām Rāzī is that the snake of the staff looked like a serpent from its big size and has been called *jānn* on account of its swift movement which is characteristic of small snakes.

28. Some commentators under the influence of the Israelite traditions have translated *baiḍā'* as white and have taken it to mean that the healthy hand when drawn out of the armpit became white as if struck by leprosy. But commentators like Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Kathīr, Zamakhsharī, Rāzī, Abul Sa'ūd 'Imādī, Ālūsī and others are agreed that *baiḍā'* here means shining and bright. As soon as Prophet Moses took out his hand from the armpit, it made the whole place bright as if by the sun. For further explanation, see E.N. 13 of Ṭā Hā.

29. The impact of the two miracles can be judged from the fact that a moment before this Pharaoh was calling Moses a mad man, because he had claimed to be a Prophet and had had the boldness to openly demand release of the Israelites. He was also threatening Moses that if he took somebody else as Lord instead of him, he would cast him into the prison for life. But, after he had seen the Signs, he became so terror-stricken that he felt his kingdom to be at stake, and in his confusion he did not realize that he was talking meaninglessly to his servants in the court. Two men from the oppressed community of the Israelites were standing before the most powerful ruler of the time: they had no military force with them, they belonged to a weak and lifeless community, and there was no sign of any rebellion in any corner of the country, nor did they have the support of any foreign power, yet as soon as the miracles of the snake of the staff and the shining hand were shown, the tyrant desperately cried out: "These two men want to seize power and deprive the ruling class of their sovereign rights!" His apprehension that Moses would do so by force of his magic again reflected a confused state of mind, for nowhere in the world has a political revolution been ever brought about, nor a country taken, nor a war won merely by force of magic. There were many magicians in Egypt, who could perform masterly tricks of magic, but Pharaoh knew it well that they were nonentities because they performed magic only for the sake of rewards.

30. This sentence further shows Pharaoh's perplexed state of mind. A moment before he was the deity of his courtiers and, now, struck by awe, the deity is asking his servants as to what he should do to meet the dangerous situation.

31. As already mentioned in Sūrah Ṭā Hā (v. 59), the day fixed for the purpose was the day of the national festivities of the Egyptians so that large crowds of people coming to the festivals from every part of the country should also witness the grand "contest" which was to be held in the broad daylight so that the spectators could see the performances clearly.

32. That is, besides proclamation heralds were sent to urge the people to come and see the contest. It appears that the news of the miracle shown by Prophet Moses before the packed court had reached the common people also, and Pharaoh fearing that the people at large might be influenced, wanted that they should come together in large numbers so that they could see for themselves that turning a staff into a snake had nothing extraordinary in it because such a trick could be performed by every common magician of their own country as well.

33. This sentence confirms the idea that those who had witnessed the miracle of Moses in the royal court and those who had heard of it reliably outside were losing faith in their ancestral religion, and now the strength of their faith depended on this that their own magicians also should give a performance similar

to that of Moses. That is why Pharaoh and his chiefs themselves regarded this contest as a decisive one, and their heralds were busy moving about in the land, impressing on the people that if the magicians won the day, they would yet be secured against the risk of being won over to Moses' religion, otherwise there was every possibility of their creed's being exposed and abandoned for ever.

34. Such was the mentality of the supporters of the polytheistic creed of the land, whose only ambition was to win rewards from the king if they won the day.

35. This was then the highest honour that the king could confer on those who served the creed best. Thus, at the very outset, Pharaoh and his magicians manifested by their conduct the great moral distinction that exists between a Prophet and a magician. On the one side, there stood that embodiment of courage and confidence, who in spite of belonging to the suppressed community of the Israelites and having remained in hiding for ten long years on account of a charge of murder, had suddenly appeared in Pharaoh's court to proclaim fearlessly that he had been sent by the Lord of all Creation and demanded release of the Israelites. He did not even feel the least hesitation in starting a discussion face to face with Pharaoh not caring in the least for his threats. On the other side, there were the wretched magicians wholly lacking in moral fibre, who had been summoned by Pharaoh himself to help secure the ancestral religion, and yet they were begging for rewards in return for the services. And when they are told that they will not only be given rewards but will also be included among the royal courtiers, they feel greatly overjoyed. These two types of characters clearly bring out the difference between the grand personality of a Prophet and that of a mere magician. Unless a man loses all sense of modesty and decency, he cannot have the audacity to call a Prophet a magician.

36. As soon as they cast down their cords and staffs, these started moving like so many snakes towards Moses. This has been described in greater detail at other places in the Qur'ān. According to Al-A'rāf: 116: "When they threw down their devices, they bewitched the eyes of the people and terrified their hearts: for they had indeed produced a great magic." And according to Ṭā Hā: 66, 67: "Suddenly it so appeared to Moses that their cords and staffs were running about by the power of their magic, and Moses' heart was filled with fear."

37. This was not merely an acknowledgment of their defeat at the hands of Moses as though he was a greater magician, but their falling prostrate in submission to Allah, Lord of the universe, was an open declaration before thousands of Egyptians that what Moses had brought about was no magic at all, but a manifestation of the powers of Allah, Almighty.

38. This only shows the extreme obstinacy and obduracy of Pharaoh, who even after witnessing a clear miracle and the testimony of the magicians on it, was still insisting that it was magic. But according to Al-A'rāf: 123, Pharaoh said, "Indeed it was a plot you conspired in the capital to deprive the rightful owners of their power." Thus he tried to make the people believe that the magicians had yielded to Moses not because of the miracle but due to a conspiracy with Moses before they entered the contest, so that they might seize political power and enjoy its fruits together.

39. This horrible threat was held out by Pharaoh to justify his thinking that the magicians had entered a conspiracy with Moses. He thought that the magicians, in order to save their lives, would confess the plot and thus the effect produced by their falling prostrate and believing in Moses in front of thousands of spectators would be gone.

40. That is, "We have to return to our Lord in any case. If you kill us now, we shall present ourselves before Him just today, and we have nothing to worry in this. We rather expect that we shall be forgiven our sins and errors because out of this entire gathering we were the first to believe as soon as reality became known to us."

This reply of the magicians made two things absolutely clear to the people who had been gathered together by Pharaoh heralds:

First, that Pharaoh was a dishonest obdurate and deceitful person. When he saw that Moses had come out successful in the contest which he himself had arranged to be decisive, he concocted a plot and forced the magicians to confess it by coercion and threats. Had there been any truth in it, the magicians would not have readily offered to have their hands and feet cut off on opposite sides and get crucified. The fact that the magicians remained steadfast and firm in their belief even in the face of such a horrible threat, proves that the accusation of plotting a conspiracy against Pharaoh was baseless. The fact was that the magicians being experts in their art had realized that what Moses had displayed was no magic, but surely a manifestation of the powers of Allah, Lord of the universe.

Secondly, thousands of the people who had gathered together from all corners of the land had themselves witnessed the great moral change that had occurred in the magicians as soon as they professed belief in the Lord of the universe. The same magicians who had been summoned to strengthen and secure the ancestral creed by means of their magic and who, a minute before, were humbly begging Pharaoh for rewards had now become so bold and ennobled spiritually that they would not take any notice of Pharaoh's powers and his threats

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رَبُّنَا خَطٰيٰنَآ اَنْ كُنَّآ اَوَّلَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٥١﴾ وَاَوْحَيْنَآ اِلٰى مُوْسٰٓى اَنْ اَسْرِ بِعِبَادِيْٓ
اِنَّكُمْ مُّتَّبَعُوْنَ ﴿٥٢﴾ فَاَرْسَلَ فِرْعَوْنُ فِى الْمَدَآئِنِ حٰشِرِيْنَ ﴿٥٣﴾ اِنَّ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ لَشِرْذِمَةٌ
قَلِيْلُوْنَ ﴿٥٤﴾ وَاِنَّهُمْ لَنَا لَغَآئِظُوْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَاِنَّا لَجَمِيْعٌ حٰذِرُوْنَ ﴿٥٦﴾ فَاَخْرَجْنٰهُمْ مِّنْ
جَنّٰتٍ وَّعُيُوْنٍ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَّكُنُوْزٍ وَّمَقَامٍ كَرِيْمٍ ﴿٥٨﴾ كَذٰلِكَ ۖ وَاَوْرَثْنٰهَا بَنِىْٓ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ ﴿٥٩﴾
فَاَتْبَعُوْهُمْ مُّشْرِقِيْنَ ﴿٦٠﴾ فَلَمَّا تَرَآءَ الْجَمْعٰنِ قَالَ اَصْحٰبُ مُوْسٰٓى اِنَّا لَمُدْرَكُوْنَ ﴿٦١﴾
قَالَ كَلَّا ۚ اِنَّ مَعِىَ رَبِّىْ سَيَهْدِيْنِ ﴿٦٢﴾ فَاَوْحَيْنَآ اِلٰى مُوْسٰٓى اَنِ اضْرِبْ بِّعَصَاكَ
الْبَحْرَ ۖ فَانْفَلَقَ فَكَانَ كُلُّ فِرْقٍ كَالطَّوْدِ الْعَظِيْمِ ﴿٦٣﴾ وَاَزْلَفْنَا ثَمَّ الْاٰخَرِيْنَ ﴿٦٤﴾
وَاَنْجَيْنَا مُوْسٰى وَمَنْ مَّعَهٗٓ اَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿٦٥﴾ ثُمَّ اَغْرَقْنَا الْاٰخَرِيْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾ اِنَّ فِىْ ذٰلِكَ
لَاٰيَةً ۖ وَمَا كَانَ اَكْثَرُهُمْ مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٦٧﴾ وَاِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿٦٨﴾
وَاتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَاَ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ ﴿٦٩﴾ اِذْ قَالَ لِاَبِيْهِ وَقَوْمِهٖ مَا تَعْبُدُوْنَ ﴿٧٠﴾ قَالُوْا
نَعْبُدُ اَصْنَامًا فَنَظَلُّ لَهَا عٰكِفِيْنَ ﴿٧١﴾ قَالَ هَلْ يَسْمَعُوْنَكُمْ اِذْ تَدْعُوْنَ ﴿٧٢﴾ اَوْ
يَنْفَعُوْنَكُمْ اَوْ يَضُرُّوْنَ ﴿٧٣﴾ قَالُوْا بَلْ وَجَدْنَآ اٰبَآءَنَا كَذٰلِكَ يَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿٧٤﴾ قَالَ
اَفَرَءَيْتُمْ مَّا كُنْتُمْ تَعْبُدُوْنَ ﴿٧٥﴾ اَنْتُمْ وَاٰبَآؤُكُمُ الْاَقْدَمُوْنَ ﴿٧٦﴾ فَاِنَّهُمْ عَدُوٌّ لِّىْٓ
اِلَّا رَبَّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٧٧﴾ الَّذِىْ خَلَقَنِىْ فَهُوَ يَهْدِيْنِ ﴿٧٨﴾ وَالَّذِىْ هُوَ يُطْعِمُنِىْ
وَيَسْقِيْنِ ﴿٧٩﴾ وَاِذَا مَرِضْتُ فَهُوَ يَشْفِيْنِ ﴿٨٠﴾ وَالَّذِىْ يُمِيْتُنِىْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيْنِ ﴿٨١﴾ وَ
الَّذِىْٓ اَطْمَعُ اَنْ يَّغْفِرَ لِىْ خَطِيْٓـَٔتِىْ يَوْمَ الدِّيْنِ ﴿٨٢﴾ رَبِّ هَبْ لِىْ حُكْمًا وَّ
اَلْحِقْنِىْ بِالصّٰلِحِيْنَ ﴿٨٣﴾ وَاجْعَلْ لِّىْ لِسَانَ صِدْقٍ فِى الْاٰخِرِيْنَ ﴿٨٤﴾ وَاجْعَلْنِىْ
مِنْ وَّرَثَةِ جَنَّةِ النَّعِيْمِ ﴿٨٥﴾ وَاغْفِرْ لِاَبِىْٓ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ مِنَ الضَّآلِّيْنَ ﴿٨٦﴾ وَلَا تُخْزِنِىْ
يَوْمَ يُبْعَثُوْنَ ﴿٨٧﴾ يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ مَالٌ وَّلَا بَنُوْنَ ﴿٨٨﴾ اِلَّا مَنْ اَتَى اللّٰهَ بِقَلْبٍ

We inspired Moses with this:[41] "Set off with My servants by night, for you will be pursued."[42] At this, Pharaoh sent out heralds to the cities (for mobilization, saying): "These are but a handful of people, who have provoked us much; and we are a host who are always on our guard."[43] Thus did We draw them out from their gardens and their water-springs and their treasure-houses and fine dwellings.[44] This is how they were dealt with, while (on the other hand) We made the Children of Israel inherit all these things.[45] 52-59

In the morning these people set out in pursuit of them. When the two hosts came face to face with each other, the companions of Moses cried out: "We are overtaken !" Moses said, "No, never! With me indeed is my Lord: He will surely guide me."[46] We inspired Moses with the Command: "Smite the sea with your staff." The sea parted forthwith and its each part stood like a mighty mountain.[47] And We led to the same place the other host, too. We saved Moses and all his companions, and drowned the others. 60-66

There is indeed a Sign in this,[49] but most of these people would not believe. The fact is that your Lord is Mighty as well as Merciful. 67-68

And tell them the story of Abraham[50] when he asked his father and his people: "What are these things that you worship?"[51] They answered, "These are idols which we worship and we serve them devotedly."[52] Abraham asked, "Do they hear you when you call on them? Or do they bring any good or harm to you?" They replied, "No, but we have found our elders doing the same."[53] At this, Abraham said, "Have you ever seen (with open eyes) the things which you and your elders have been worshipping ?[54] They are all enemies to me,[55] except One Lord of the worlds,[56] Who created me,[57] then He it is Who guides me, Who gives me food and drink, and Who gives me health when I am ill,[58] Who will cause me to die and then will give me life again, and of Whom I expect that He will forgive me my errors on the Day of Judgment."[59] (After this Abraham prayed:) "My Lord, bestow upon me knowledge and wisdom[60] and join me with the righteous,[61] and grant me true renown among posterity,[62] and include me among the inheritors of the blissful Garden, and forgive my father, for indeed he is from among those who have strayed,[63] and do not disgrace me on the Day when everybody will be raised back to life,[64] when neither wealth will avail 69-89

anybody, nor children, except that one should appear before Allah with a sound heart."[65]

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and were even prepared to face death and extreme physical torture for the sake of their Faith. Thus psychologically there could not be a better occasion to expose the polytheistic creed of the Egyptians in their own eyes and help impress the truth of Moses' religion in the minds of the people.

41. The mention of migration here does not mean that Prophet Moses and the Israelites were immediately ordered to leave Egypt. The history of the intervening period has been related in Al-A'rāf: 127-135 and Yūnus: 83-89, and a part of it has been mentioned in Al-Mu'min: 23-46 and Az-Zukhruf: 46-56. Here the story is being cut short and only the final phase of the conflict between Pharaoh and Prophet Moses is given to show the tragic end of Pharaoh who had remained obdurate even after witnessing clear Signs and the ultimate success of Moses who had Divine support behind his message.

42. The warning that "you will be pursued" shows the wisdom of the instruction to set off during the night. The idea was that before Pharaoh came out with his hosts to pursue them, they should have gone far enough so as to be out of reach of him. It should be borne in mind that the Israelites were not settled in one place in Egypt but were scattered in cities and habitations all over the country and lived in large numbers especially in the land between Memphis and Rameses called Goshen. (See map in Vol. III, p. 31, on the Exodus of the Israelites). It appears that when Prophet Moses was commanded to leave Egypt, he must have sent instructions to the Israelite habitations telling the people to make necessary preparations for migration and he must have also fixed a night for them to leave their homes for the exodus.

43. All this shows that Pharaoh in fact was terror-stricken, but was trying to hide his fear under cover of fearlessness. On the one hand, he was mobilizing forces to face the situation; on the other, he wanted to show that he was undaunted and undeterred, for a despotic ruler like Pharaoh could have no danger from a suppressed and slave community which had been living in disgrace for centuries. That is why his heralds made the people believe that the Israelites were just a handful of people, who could do them no harm, but had to be punished for the provocation they had caused. As for mobilization, it was only a precautionary measure which had been taken to meet any eventuality in time.

44. The general mobilization ordered by Pharaoh was aimed to crush the Israelites completely, but God's device turned the tables on him and drew out all his chiefs and courtiers from their dwelling places and drove them to the place

where they and their hosts were to be drowned all together. Had they not pursued the Israelites, nothing would have happened save that a community would have left the country quietly and they would have continued to enjoy life in their fine dwellings as before. But they in fact had cleverly planned not to allow the Israelites go away peacefully, but to attack the migrating caravans suddenly to finish them completely. For this very purpose the princes and the high chiefs and the nobles came out of their palaces and joined Pharaoh in the campaign, but their cleverness did not avail them anything. Not only did the Israelites succeed in escaping from Egypt, but also at the same time the elite of Pharaoh's tyrannical kingdom perished in the sea.

45. Some commentators have interpreted this verse to mean that Allah made the Children of Israel to inherit the gardens, water-springs, treasure-houses and fine dwellings vacated and left behind by Pharaoh and his people. This would inevitably mean that after the drowning of Pharaoh, the Israelites returned to Egypt and took possession of the wealth and properties of Pharaoh's people. This interpretation, however, is neither supported by history nor by other verses of the Qur'ān. The relevant verses of Sūrahs Al-Baqarah, Al-Mā'idah, Al-A'rāf and Tā Hā confirm that after the destruction of Pharaoh in the sea, the Israelites did not return to Egypt but proceeded towards their destination (Palestine) and then, till the time of Prophet David (973-1013 B.C.) all the major events of their history took place in the lands which are now known as the Sinai Peninsula, northern Arabia, Transjordan and Palestine. As such, in our opinion the verses mean this: On the one hand, Allah deprived the people of Pharaoh of their wealth, possessions and grandeur, and on the other, He bestowed the same on the Children of Israel in Palestine, and not in Egypt. This same meaning is borne out by vv. 136-137 of Al-A'rāf: "Then We took Our vengeance on them and drowned them in the sea because they had treated Our Signs as false and grown heedless of them. And after them We gave as heritage to those who had been abased and kept low, the eastern and the western parts of that land, which had been blessed bountifully by Us." The epithet of "the blessed land" has generally been used for Palestine in the Qur'ān as in Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl: 1, Al-Anbiyā': 71-81, and Sabā': 18.

46. That is, "He will show me the way out of this calamity"

47. Literally, *tawd* is a high mountain. It appears that as soon as Prophet Moses struck the sea with his staff, it tore the sea asunder and the waters stood like two mighty mountains on the sides and remained in that condition for so long that, on the one hand, the Israelite caravans consisting of hundreds of thousands of the migrants were able to pass through safely, and on the other, Pharaoh and his hosts stepped in and reached the middle of the sea. In the natural course, a phenomenon like this has never occurred that due to a windstorm, however strong, the sea

should have parted and stood like mighty mountains on either side for such a long time. According to verse 77 of Ṭā Hā, Prophet Moses was commanded by Allah "to make for them (the Israelites) a dry path across the sea." This shows that the smiting of the sea did not only result in dividing the waters into two parts, which stood like mighty mountains on either side, but it also created a dry path in between without any mud or slush. In this connection, one should also consider verse 24 of Sūrah Dukhān, which says that after Moses had crossed the sea along with his people, he was commanded by Allah "to let the sea remain as it is because Pharaoh is to be drowned in it." This implies that if after crossing the sea, Moses had again struck it with his staff, the two sides would have rejoined, but he was forbidden to do so. Obviously, this was a miracle, and the view of those who try to interpret it as a natural phenomenon, is belied. For explanation, see E.N. 53 of Ṭā Hā.

48. That is, Pharaoh and his army.

49. That is, the Quraish have this lesson to learn from this: "The obdurate people like Pharaoh, his chiefs and followers had not believed even though they had been shown clear miracles for years. They had been so blinded by obduracy that even on the occasion of their drowning in the sea although they had seen the sea parting asunder in front of their very eyes, the waters standing like high mountains on either side, and the dry path in between for the Israelite caravans to pass, yet they failed to understand that Moses had Divine succour and support with him which they had come out to fight. At last when they came to their senses, it was too late, because they had been overtaken by the wrath of Allah and the sea waters had covered them completely. It was on this occasion that Pharaoh had cried out "I have believed that there is no god but the real God in Whom the Children of Israel have believed and I am of those who surrender." (Yūnus: 90).

On the other hand, there is a Sign in this for the believers, too. They should understand how Allah by His grace causes the Truth to prevail in the long run and the falsehood to vanish even though the forces to evil may appear to be dominant for the time being.

50. This part of the life-history of Prophet Abraham relates to the time when after his appointment to Prophethood, a conflict had started between him and his people on the questions of *shirk* and *Tauḥīd*. In this connection, the reader should also see Al-Baqarah: 258-260, Al-An'ām: 75-83, Maryam: 41-50, Al-Anbiyā': 51-70, As- Ṣāffāt: 83-113, and Al-Mumtaḥanah: 4-5.

The Qur'ān has specially repeated this part of Prophet Abraham's life-story over and over again because the Arabs in general and the Quraish in particular regarded themselves as his followers and professed his way and creed.

Besides them, the Christians and the Jews also claimed that Abraham was their religious leader and guide. That is why the Qur'ān admonishes them over and over again that the creed brought by Abraham was Islam itself, which is now being presented by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him), and which they are opposing tooth and nail. Prophet Abraham was not a *mushrik*, but an antagonist against *shirk*, and for the same reason he had to leave his home and country and live as a migrant in Syria, Palestine and Hejāz. Thus he was neither a Jew nor a Christian, because Judaism and Christianity appeared centuries after him. This historical argument could neither be refuted by the *mushriks*, nor by the Jews or the Christians, because the *mushriks* themselves admitted that idol-worship in Arabia had started several centuries after Prophet Abraham, and the Jews and the Christians also could not deny that Prophet Abraham had lived long before the beginning of Judaism and Christianity. This obviously meant that the special beliefs and customs which those people thought formed the basis of their religion, were not part of the original religion taught by Prophet Abraham. True religion was the one which had no tinge of those impurities, but was based on those worship and obedience of One Allah alone. That is why the Qur'ān says:

"Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he was a Muslim, sound in the Faith, and he was not of those who set up partners with Allah. Surely only those people who follow Abraham are entitled to claim a relationship with him. Now this Prophet and the believers are better entitled to this relationship." (Al-An'ām: 67, 68).

51. Obviously the object of this question was to remind the people that the deities which they worshipped were false and absolutely powerless. In Sūrah Al-Anbiyā', the same question has been posed thus: "What are these images to which you are so devoted ?" (V. 52).

52. Though everybody knew that they worshipped idols, their answer implied that they were firm in faith and their hearts were satisfied with it, as if to say, "We also know that these are idols of stone and wood, which we worship, but our faith demands that we should serve and worship them devotedly."

53. That is, "We do not worship and serve them because they hear our prayers and supplications, or that they can harm and benefit us, but because we have seen our elders worshipping and serving them." Thus, they themselves admitted that the only reason of their worshipping the idols was the blind imitation of their forefathers. In other words, they meant this: "There is nothing new in what you are telling us. We know that these are idols of stone and wood, which do not hear anything, nor can harm or do good; but we cannot believe that our elders who have been worshipping them since centuries, generation after generation,

were foolish people. They must have had some good reason for worshipping these lifeless images, so we are doing the same as we have full faith in them."

54. That is, "Is it enough to say that a religion is true only because it has been held as such by their ancestors ? Should people, generation after generation, go on following their ancestors in their footsteps blindly without ever caring to see whether the deities they worship possess any divine attribute or not, and whether they have any power to influence their destinies?"

55. That is, "When I consider them, I see that if I worship them, I shall ruin myself both in this world and in the Hereafter. As their worship is clearly harmful, worshipping them is worshipping one's enemy." These words of Prophet Abraham bear a close connection with verses 81, 82 of Sūrah Maryam, which say: "These people have set up other gods than Allah so that they may become their supporters. But they will have no supporter; all of them will not only disown their worship but also become their opponents (on the Day of Judgment)."

It should be noted that Prophet Abraham did not say, "They are enemies to you", but said, "They are enemies to me." In the first case, there was every chance that the people would have felt offended and provoked, because it would have been difficult for them to understand how their own gods could be their enemies. As a matter of fact, Prophet Abraham appealed to the natural feeling of man that he is his own well-wisher and cannot wish ill of himself deliberately. This would inevitably have led the addressees to think whether what they were doing was really for their good and was in no way harmful.

56. That is, "Of all the deities who are being worshipped in the world, there is only One Allah alone, Lord of the universe, in whose worship I find any good for myself, and Whose worship is the worship of one's own Cherisher and Supporter, and not of one's enemy." Then Prophet Abraham briefly gives the arguments, which nobody could refute, as to why Allah alone is worthy of man's worship and indirectly suggests that his addressees (the idol-worshippers) had no rational basis for worshipping deities other than Allah except in blind imitation of their forefathers.

57. This is the first reason for which Allah, and One Allah alone, is worthy of man's worship. The people also knew and believed that Allah alone was their Creator without any partner. Not only they but all the polytheists of the world also have always held the belief that even the deities they worshipped were the creation of Allah, and except for the atheists none have ever denied that Allah is the Creator of the whole universe. This argument of Prophet Abraham implied that being a creature, he could only worship his Creator, Who was alone worthy of his worship, and none else, because none besides Allah had any share in His creation.

58. The second reason for worshipping Allah and Allah alone is that Allah had not become unconcerned with man after creating him and let him alone to see

other supporters for help, but had also taken the responsibility of making arrangements for his guidance, protection and fulfilment of his needs. The moment a human child is born, milk is produced for it in the breasts of its mother, and some unseen power teaches it the way to suck it and take it down the throat. From the first day of his life till his death, the Creator has provided in the world around him all necessary means required for every stage of his life for his development and guidance, sustenance and survival. He has also endowed him with all those powers and abilities which are needed to use the means with advantage and given him all necessary guidance for every sphere of life. Then for the protection of human life against all sorts of disease, germs and poisons, He has created such effective antidotes that they have not yet been fully encompassed by human knowledge. If these natural arrangements had not been made, even a thorn-prick would have proved fatal. When this all-pervading mercy and providence of the Creator is supporting and sustaining man at all times in every way, there could be no greater folly and ingratitude on the part of man than this that he should bow down before others than Allah and seek their help in need and trouble.

59. The third reason for worshipping none but Allah is that man's relation with his God is not merely confined to this worldly life, which will end at death, but extends to life-after-death also. The same God Who brought him into existence, recalls him and there is no power which can stop his return from the world. No remedy, no physician no god or goddess has ever been able to catch the hand which takes man out of this world. Even all those men who were made deities and worshipped, could not ward off their own deaths. Only Allah judges and decides when a particular person is to be recalled from the world, and whenever somebody is recalled by Him, he has to leave this world in any case. Then it is Allah alone Who will decide as to when He should raise back to life all those people who were born in this world and died and buried here, and ask them to account for their worldly lives. Then also nobody will have the power to stop resurrection of himself or others. Every human being will have to rise on the Command of Allah and appear in His Court. Then Allah alone will be the Judge on that Day, and nobody else will be a partner in his judgment in any degree. To punish or to forgive will be entirely in Allah's hand. Nobody will have the power to get somebody forgiven if Allah would want to punish him, and punished if Allah would want to forgive him. All those who are regarded as intercessors in the world, will themselves be hoping for Allah's mercy and grace for their forgiveness. In view of these facts anybody who worships others than Allah, is in fact preparing for his own doom. There can be no greater misfortune than this that man should turn away from Allah Who controls his life here as well as in the Hereafter, and should turn for help and support to those who are utterly powerless in this regard.

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سَلِيْمٍ ﴿٨٩﴾ وَ اُزْلِفَتِ الْجَنَّةُ لِلْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿٩٠﴾ وَ بُرِّزَتِ الْجَحِيْمُ لِلْغٰوِيْنَ ﴿٩١﴾ وَ قِيْلَ
لَهُمْ اَيْنَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْبُدُوْنَ ﴿٩٢﴾ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ ؕ هَلْ يَنْصُرُوْنَكُمْ اَوْ يَنْتَصِرُوْنَ ﴿٩٣﴾
فَكُبْكِبُوْا فِيْهَا هُمْ وَ الْغَاوٗنَ ﴿٩٤﴾ وَ جُنُوْدُ اِبْلِيْسَ اَجْمَعُوْنَ ﴿٩٥﴾ قَالُوْا وَ هُمْ فِيْهَا
يَخْتَصِمُوْنَ ﴿٩٦﴾ تَاللّٰهِ اِنْ كُنَّا لَفِيْ ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿٩٧﴾ اِذْ نُسَوِّيْكُمْ بِرَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٩٨﴾
وَ مَاۤ اَضَلَّنَاۤ اِلَّا الْمُجْرِمُوْنَ ﴿٩٩﴾ فَمَا لَنَا مِنْ شَافِعِيْنَ ﴿١٠٠﴾ وَ لَاۤ صَدِيْقٍ حَمِيْمٍ ﴿١٠١﴾
فَلَوْ اَنَّ لَنَا كَرَّةً فَنَكُوْنَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٠٢﴾ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً ؕ وَ مَا كَانَ
اَكْثَرُهُمْ مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٠٣﴾ وَ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿١٠٤﴾ كَذَّبَتْ قَوْمُ نُوْحِ
الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿١٠٥﴾ اِذْ قَالَ لَهُمْ اَخُوْهُمْ نُوْحٌ اَلَا تَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿١٠٦﴾ اِنِّيْ لَكُمْ رَسُوْلٌ
اَمِيْنٌ ﴿١٠٧﴾ فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَ اَطِيْعُوْنِ ﴿١٠٨﴾ وَ مَاۤ اَسْـَٔلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ اَجْرٍ ۚ اِنْ اَجْرِيَ
اِلَّا عَلٰى رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿١٠٩﴾ فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَ اَطِيْعُوْنِ ﴿١١٠﴾ قَالُوْۤا اَنُؤْمِنُ لَكَ وَ
اتَّبَعَكَ الْاَرْذَلُوْنَ ﴿١١١﴾ قَالَ وَ مَا عِلْمِيْ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿١١٢﴾ اِنْ حِسَابُهُمْ
اِلَّا عَلٰى رَبِّيْ لَوْ تَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿١١٣﴾ وَ مَاۤ اَنَا بِطَارِدِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١١٤﴾ اِنْ اَنَا اِلَّا نَذِيْرٌ
مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿١١٥﴾ قَالُوْا لَئِنْ لَّمْ تَنْتَهِ يٰنُوْحُ لَتَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ الْمَرْجُوْمِيْنَ ﴿١١٦﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ اِنَّ
قَوْمِيْ كَذَّبُوْنِ ﴿١١٧﴾ فَافْتَحْ بَيْنِيْ وَ بَيْنَهُمْ فَتْحًا وَّ نَجِّنِيْ وَ مَنْ مَّعِيَ مِنَ
الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١١٨﴾ فَاَنْجَيْنٰهُ وَ مَنْ مَّعَهٗ فِي الْفُلْكِ الْمَشْحُوْنِ ﴿١١٩﴾ ثُمَّ اَغْرَقْنَا بَعْدُ
الْبٰقِيْنَ ﴿١٢٠﴾ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً ؕ وَ مَا كَانَ اَكْثَرُهُمْ مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٢١﴾ وَ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ
لَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿١٢٢﴾ كَذَّبَتْ عَادُ ِۨ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿١٢٣﴾ اِذْ قَالَ لَهُمْ اَخُوْهُمْ
هُوْدٌ اَلَا تَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿١٢٤﴾ اِنِّيْ لَكُمْ رَسُوْلٌ اَمِيْنٌ ﴿١٢٥﴾ فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَ اَطِيْعُوْنِ ﴿١٢٦﴾ وَ
مَاۤ اَسْـَٔلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ اَجْرٍ ۚ اِنْ اَجْرِيَ اِلَّا عَلٰى رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿١٢٧﴾ اَتَبْنُوْنَ

___(On that Day)[66] Paradise will be brought close to the righteous, and Hell will be set open before the straying ones,[67] and they will be asked: "Where are those whom you worshipped instead of Allah? Are they of any help to you, or even to themselves ?" Then these deities and those erring people, and the hosts of Satan, all will be hurled into it, one upon the other.[68] Therein they will dispute with one another, and these erring people will say (to their deities): "By God ! We had certainly strayed when we held you equal in rank with the Lord of the worlds, and they were criminals indeed who led us astray.[69] Now we have neither any intercessor[70] nor any true friend.[71] Would that we were given a chance to return (to the world) so that we became believers."[72] 90-102

Indeed there is a great Sign in this,[73] but most of these people would not believe. The fact is that your Lord is Mighty as well as Merciful. 103-104

Noah's people[74] rejected the Messengers.[75] Remember the time when their brother Noah said to them: "Do you not fear?[76] I am a Messenger to you worthy of full trust:[77] so fear Allah and obey me:[78] I do not ask of you any reward for this duty, for my reward is with the Lord of the worlds;[79] therefore, you should fear Allah and obey me (without hesitation)."[80] They replied, "Should we believe in you, whereas the meanest of the people have become your followers?"[81] Noah said, "I have no knowledge of what they do: their account is the concern of my Lord : would that you had used some common-sense ![82] I am not here to drive away those who believe; I am only a plain Warner."[83] They said, "O Noah, if you do not desist from this, you will surely become one of the accursed."[84] Noah prayed: "My Lord, my people have treated me as a liar:[85] now settle the accounts between us, and deliver me and the believers with me to safety."[86] At last, We rescued him and his companions in a laden Ark,[87] and then drowned all the others. 105-120

Indeed there is a Sign in this, but most of these people would not believe. The fact is that your Lord is Mighty as well as Merciful. 121-122

'Ād rejected the Messengers.[88] Remember the time when their brother Hūd said to them,[89] "Do you not fear? I am a Messenger to you worthy of full trust: so fear Allah and obey me. I do not ask of you any 123-127

reward for this duty, for my reward is with the Lord of the worlds.

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60. *Hukm* here does not mean "Prophethood", because at the time this prayer was made, Prophet Abraham had already been appointed a Prophet. Even if this prayer was made before that, Prophethood is not bestowed on request, but it is something which Allah Himself bestows on those He wills. That is why, *hukm* has been translated wisdom, knowledge, right understanding and power of judgment. The Holy Prophet is also reported to have made a similar prayer:

ارنا الاشياء كما هي *Arinal-ashyāa' Kamā hiya:* "O Allah, give us the power to see and understand a thing as it really is and to form an opinion about it according to its reality."

61. "Join me with the righteous": "Give me a righteous society to live in in this world and raise me along with the righteous in the Hereafter." To be raised back to life with the righteous and to attain one's salvation have one and the same meaning. Therefore, this should be the prayer of every person who believes in the life-after-death and in reward and punishment. Even in this world a pious man cherishes the desire that God should save him from living a life in an immoral and wicked society and should join him with the righteous people. A pious and righteous person will remain ill at ease and restless until either his own society should become clean and pure morally, or he leaves it to join another society which is practising and following the principles of truth and honesty

62. "Grant me true renown among posterity": "Grant me the grace that posterity should remember me as a good and pious man after my death and not as one of the unjust people, who were not only wicked themselves, but who left nothing but wickedness behind them in the world. Enable me to perform such high deeds that my life should become a source of light for others for all times to come, and I should be counted among the benefactors of humanity."

This is not a prayer for worldly greatness and renown, but for true greatness and renown, which can be achieved only as a result of solid and valuable services. A person's achieving such true renown and glory has two good aspects:

(1) The people of the world get a good example to follow, as against bad examples, which inspires them with piety and encourages them to follow the right way; and

(2) The righteous person will not only get the rewards of works done by posterity who were guided aright by the good example left and set by him, but in addition to his own good works, he will have the evidence of the

millions of people in his favour that he had left behind him in the world fountains of guidance, which went on benefiting people, generation after generation, till the Day of Resurrection.

63. Some commentators have interpreted this prayer of Prophet Abraham for his father's forgiveness to imply that he had prayed to God to grant his father the favour to accept Islam because forgiveness in any case is inter-linked with and dependent upon Faith. But this interpretation is not borne out by the other verses of the Qur'ān. The Qur'ān says that when Prophet Abraham left his home at the tyrannical treatment of his father, he said, "I bid farewell to you; I shall pray to my Lord to forgive you for He is very kind to me." (Maryam: 47) To fulfill this promise, he not only prayed for the forgiveness of his father, but for both his parents: "Lord, forgive me and my parents..." (Ibrāhīm: 41). But afterwards he himself realized that an enemy of the Truth, even if he be the father of a believer, does not deserve a prayer of forgiveness. Thus according to verse 114 of At-Taubah: "The prayer of Abraham for his father was only to fulfil a promise he had made to him, but when he realized that he was an enemy of Allah, he disowned him."

64. That is, "Do not put me to disgrace on the Day of Judgement by inflicting punishment on my father in front of all mankind, when I myself shall be witnessing his punishment helplessly."

65. It cannot be said with certainty whether vv. 88, 89 are a part of Prophet Abraham's prayer, or they are an addition by Allah. In the first case, they will mean that Prophet Abraham while praying for his father had a full realization of these facts. In the second case, they will be a comment by Allah on Abraham's prayer, as if to say, "On the Day of Judgement, only a sound heart, sound in faith and free from disobedience and sin, will be of any avail to man and not wealth and children, for wealth and children can be useful only if one possesses a sound heart. Wealth will be useful if one would have spent it sincerely and faithfully for the sake of Allah, otherwise even a millionaire will be a poor man there. Children also will be of help only to the extent that a person might have educated them in Faith and good conduct to the best of his ability; otherwise even if the son is a Prophet, his father will not escape punishment, if he died in the state of unbelief, because such a father will have no share in the goodness of his children."

66. Verses 90-102 do not seem to be a part of Prophet Abraham's speech, but they are Allah's words.

67. That is, on the one hand, the righteous people will be shown the countless blessings which they will enjoy in Paradise by Allah's grace, and on the other, Hell will be set open with all its dreads and horrors before the straying people, when they will still be in the Plain of Resurrection.

68. *Kubkibū* in the Text has two meanings: (1) They will be hurled into Hell one upon the other; and (2) they will go on rolling down into the depths of Hell.

69. This is how the followers will treat their religious leaders and guides, whom they served and revered like deities in the world, whose words and patterns of behaviour they took as authoritative and before whom they presented all sorts of offerings in the world. In the Hereafter when the people will find that their guides had misled them and caused their ruin as well as their own, they will hold them responsible for it and will curse them. The Qur'ān has presented this horrible scene of the Hereafter at several places so as to admonish the blind followers to see and judge carefully whether their guides in this world were leading them on the right path or not. For instance: "As each generation will be entering Hell, it will curse its preceding generation till all generations shall be gathered together there; then each succeeding generation will say regarding the preceding one, 'O Lord, these were the people who led us astray; therefore give them a double chastisement of the Fire.' Allah will reply, 'There is a double chastisement for every one but you know it not'." (Al-A'rāf: 38). "And the disbelievers will say, 'Our Lord, bring those jinns and men before us, who led us astray so that we may trample them under our feet and put them to extreme disgrace'." (Ḥā Mīm Sajdah: 29). "And they will say, 'Our Lord, we obeyed our chiefs and our great men and they misled us from the right path; our Lord, give them a double chastisement and curse them with a severe curse'." (Al-Aḥzāb: 67-68).

70. That is, "Those whom we regarded as our intercessors in the world and who, we believed, would take us safely into Paradise, are utterly helpless today and of no avail to us."

71. That is, "We have no sympathizer either who could feel for us and console us." The Qur'ān says that in the Hereafter only the believers will continue to be friends; as for the disbelievers, they will turn enemies of one another even though they had been sworn friends in the world. Each will hold the other as responsible for the doom and try to get him maximum punishment. "Friends on that Day will become enemies of one another except the righteous (who will continue to be friends)." (Az-Zukhruf: 67).

72. That Qur'ān has given an answer to this kind of longing and desire as well: "... even if they be sent back to the earthly life, they would do all that they had been forbidden to do." (Al-An'ām: 28). As for the reasons why they will not be allowed to return to the world, please see E.N.'s 90-92 of Al-Mu'minūn above.

73. There are two aspects of the Sign in the story of Prophet Abraham: (1) On the one hand, the *mushriks* of Arabia, especially the Quraish, claimed that they

were the followers of Prophet Abraham and were proud of being his descendents, but on the other, they were involved in *shirk* against which Prophet Abraham had been engaged in a relentless struggle throughout his life. Then these people were opposing and treating the Prophet who was inviting them towards the religion brought by Prophet Abraham in the like manner as Prophet Abraham himself had been opposed and treated by his people. They have been reminded that Abraham was an enemy of *shirk* and an upholder of *Tauḥīd*, which they themselves admitted, and yet they persisted in their obduracy to follow the creed of *shirk*. (2) The people of Abraham were eliminated from the world: if any of them survived, it was the children of Prophet Abraham and his sons, Ishmael and Isaac (may Allah's peace be upon them). Though the Qur'ān does not mention the torment that descended on Abraham's people after he had left them, it has included them among the tormented tribes: "Has not the story reached them of those who had gone before them: the people of Noah, the tribes of 'Ād and Thamūd, the people of Abraham, and the inhabitants of Midian and of the overturned cities ?" (At-Taubah: 70).

74. For comparison, see Al-A'rāf: 59-64, Yūnus: 71-73, Hūd: 25-48, Banī Isrā'īl: 3, Al-Anbiyā' 76-77, Al-Mu'minūn:: 23-30, and Al-Furqān: 37. For the details of the story of Prophet Noah, see Al-'Ankabūt: 15, Aṣ-Ṣāffāt: 75-82, Al-Qamar: 9-15 and Sūrah Nūḥ itself.

75. Though they had rejected only one Messenger, it amounted to rejecting all the messengers because all of them had brought one and the same message from Allah. This is an important fact which the Qur'ān has mentioned over and over again in different ways. Thus, even those people who rejected just one Prophet have been regarded as unbelievers though they believed in all other Prophets, for the simple reason that the believer in the truth of one Messenger cannot deny the same truth in other cases unless he does so on account of racial prejudice, imitation of elders, etc.

76. The initial address of Prophet Noah to his people, as mentioned at other places in the Qur'ān, was as follows: "O my people, worship Allah alone: you have no other deity than Him. Are you not afraid (of Him)?" (Al-Mu'minūn: 23); and "Worship Allah and fear Him and obey me." (Nūh: 3). That is, "Are you not afraid of the consequences of adopting an attitude of rebellion against Allah and worshipping others than Him?"

77. It has two meanings: (1) "I present before you nothing but what Allah reveals to me;" and (2) "I am a Messenger whom you have already known to be a trustworthy and honest and righteous man. When I have been honest and true in my dealings with you, how can I be dishonest and untrustworthy in conveying the

Message of God? Therefore, you should rest assured that whatever I am presenting is the Truth."

78. That is, "When I am a truthful and trustworthy Messenger, you are duty-bound to obey me alone as against all other patrons, and carry out my commands and instructions, because I represent the will of God: obedience to me is in fact obedience to God and disobedience to me is disobedience to Him." In other words, the people are not only required to accept a Messenger as a true Messenger sent by Allah, but it inevitably implies that they have to obey him and follow his Law against all other laws. To reject a Prophet, or to disobey him after accepting him as a Prophet, is tantamount to rebellion against God, which inevitably leads to His wrath. The words "fear Allah" are, therefore, a warning that every hearer should clearly understand the consequences of rejecting the message of a Messenger or of disobeying his commands.

79. This is the second of the two arguments of Prophet Noah about the truth of his message, the first being that they had known him as a trustworthy man during his earlier life, which he had lived among them. This second argument implies this: "I do not have any selfish motive or personal interest in conveying the message which I am propagating day and night in spite of all sorts of opposition and antagonism from you. At least you should understand this that I am sincere in my invitation, and am presenting honestly only that which I believe to be the truth and in following which I see the true success and well-being of humanity at large. I have no personal motive in this that I should fabricate falsehood to fool the people."

These two arguments are among the most important arguments which the Qur'ān has advanced repeatedly as proofs of the truthfulness of the Prophets, and which it presents as criterion for judging Prophethood. A man who before Prophethood has lived a life in a society and has always been found to be honest, truthful and righteous, cannot be doubted even by a prejudiced person that he would suddenly start fabricating falsehood in the name of Allah and making people believe that he has been appointed a Prophet by Him, whereas he has been not. More important than that: such a lie cannot be fabricated with a good intention unless somebody has a selfish motive attached to this kind of fraud. And even when a person indulges in this sort of fraud, he cannot hide it completely from the people. The foul means and devices adopted by him to promote his "business" become known and all the various selfish interests and gains become all too apparent. Contrary to this, the personal life of a Prophet is full of moral excellencies: it has no trace of the employment of foul means and devices. Not to speak of any personal interest, he expends whatever he has for the cause of a mission which to all appearances is fruitless. No person who possesses any

common sense and also has a sense of justice, can ever imagine that a sensible man who was leading a perfectly peaceful life, would come out all of a sudden with a false claim, when such a false claim does not do him any good, but on the contrary, demands all his money, time and energy and earns him nothing in return but the antagonism and hostility of the whole world. Sacrifice of personal interests is the foremost proof of a man's sincerity; therefore, doubting the intentions and sincerity of a person who has been sacrificing his personal interests for years and years can only be the pastime of the one who himself is selfish and insincere. Please also see E.N. 70 of Al-Mu'minūn above.

80. Repetition of this sentence is not without reason. In the first case (v. 108), it implied this: "You should fear Allah if you treat as false a true and trustworthy Messenger from Him, whom you yourselves have been regarding as a true and trustworthy man in the past." Here it means: "You should fear Allah if you doubt the intention of a person who is working sincerely only for the reformation of the people without any personal interest." This thing has been stressed because the chiefs of Prophet Noah's people, in order to find fault with his message of Truth, accused him of struggling merely for his personal superiority: "He merely intends to obtain superiority over you." (Al-Mu'minūn: 24).

81. This answer to Prophet Noah's message of Truth was given by the chiefs, elders and nobles of his people as mentioned in Hūd: 27: "In answer to this, those chiefs of his people, who had rejected his message, said, 'We see that you are no more than a mere man like ourselves, and we also see that only the meanest from among us have become your followers without due consideration, and we find nothing in you that might give you superiority over us'." This shows that those who believed in Prophet Noah were mostly the poor people, and ordinary workmen, or some youth who enjoyed no position in society. As for the influential and rich people, they had become his bitter opponents, and were trying by every trick and allurement to keep the common man behind them. One of the arguments they advanced against Prophet Noah was this: "Had there been some weight and substance in Noah's message, the rich people, scholars, religious divines, nobles and wise people of the community should have accepted it, but none of them has believed in him; the only people to follow him are the foolish people belonging to the lowest stratum of society, who have no common-sense. Now how can the noble and high ranking people like us join the company of the common people?"

Precisely the same thing was being said by the unbelieving Quraish about the Holy Prophet and his followers. Abū Sufyān in reply to the questions asked by Heraclius had said: "Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) has been followed by the poor and weak of our people." What they seemed to be thinking was that Truth was that which was considered as Truth by the chiefs and elders of the

community, for only they had the necessary common-sense and power of judgment. As for the common people, their being common was a proof that they lacked sense and judgment. As such, if a thing was accepted by them but rejected by the chiefs, it meant that the thing itself was without worth and value. The disbelievers of Makkah even went further. They argued that a Prophet could not be a common man: if God had to appoint a Prophet, He would have appointed a great chief to be a Prophet: "They say: why has not the Qur'ān been sent down to a prominent man of our two cities (Makkah and Tā'if)?" (Az-Zukhruf: 31).

82. This is the first answer to their objection, which was based on the assumption that the poor people belonging to the working classes and lower social strata who performed humble duties, did not possess any mental maturity and were without intelligence and common sense. Therefore, their belief was without any rational basis, and so unreliable, and their deeds were of no value at all. To this Prophet Noah replies, "I have no means of judging the motives and assessing the worth of the deeds of the people who accept my message and act accordingly. This is not my concern but the responsibility of God".

83. This is the second answer to their objection, which implied that since those who were gathering around Noah as believers, belonged to the lowest social strata, none of the nobles would like to join them, as if to say, "O Noah, should we believe in you in order to be counted among the low-ranking people like the slaves and servants and workmen?" To this Prophet Noah answers, "How can I adopt this irrational attitude that I should attend earnestly to those who do not like to listen to me, but drive away those who have believed and followed me? I am simply a warner, who has declared openly that the way you are following is wrong and will lead you to ruin, and the way that I am inviting to is the way of salvation for all. Now it is up to you whether you heed my warning and adopt the right path, or go on following blindly the way to your ruin. It does not behove me that I should start inquiring into the castes and ancestry and trades of the people who have heeded my warning and adopted the right path. They might be "mean" in your sight, but I cannot drive them away and wait to see when the "nobles" will give up the path of destruction and adopt the way of salvation and success instead."

Precisely the same thing was going on between the Holy Prophet and the disbelievers of Makkah when these verses were revealed, and one can fully understand why the dialogue between Prophet Noah and the chiefs of his people, has been related here. The chiefs of the disbelievers of Makkah thought exactly the same way. They said how they could sit side by side with the slaves like Bilāl, 'Ammār and Ṣuhaib and other men of the working class, as if to say, "Unless these poor people are turned out, there can be no possibility that the nobles may consider to become believers; it is impossible that the master and the slave should

stand shoulder to shoulder with each other." In answer to this the Holy Prophet was commanded by Allah to tell the vain and arrogant disbelievers plainly that the poor believers could not be driven out of Islam just for their sake: "O Muhammad, you attend earnestly to him who has shown indifference (to your message), whereas you have no responsibility if he does not reform himself; and the one who comes to you earnestly, fearing Allah, to him you pay no attention. Nay! this indeed is an Admonition, so let him who wills, accept it." ('Abasa :5-12).

"And do not drive away those who invoke their Lord morning and evening and are engaged in seeking His favour. You are not in any way accountable for them, nor are they in any way accountable for you: so, if you should drive them away, you shall be counted among the unjust. As a matter of fact, in this way We have made some of them a means of test for others, so that, seeing them, they should say, 'Are these the people from among us upon whom Allah has showered His blessings?' --Yes: does not Allah know His grateful servants better than they?" (Al-An'ām: 52-53)

84. The words in the Text may have two meanings: (1) "You will be stoned to death"; and (2) "You will be showered with abuses from all sides, and cursed and reviled wherever you go."

85. That is, "They have rejected me completely and absolutely and now there is no hope of their becoming believers." Here nobody should have the misunderstanding that just after this conversation between Prophet Noah and the chiefs of his people, and the rejection of his message by them, the Prophet submitted a report to Allah that his people had rejected him and now He should settle the accounts between them. The Qur'ān has mentioned at different places the details of the long struggle that went on for centuries between Prophet Noah and his people, who persisted in unbelief. According to verse 14 of Sūrah Al-'Ankabūt, the struggle continued for 950 years: "He (Noah) remained among them for a thousand years save fifty years." Prophet Noah during this long period studied their collective behaviour, generation after generation, and came to the conclusion that they had no inclination to accept the Truth, and formed the opinion that in their future generations also there was no hope of anybody's becoming a believer and adopting the righteous attitude: "My Lord, if You should leave them, they will lead Your servants astray, and they will bear as children none but sinners and disbelievers." (Nūḥ: 27). Allah Himself confirmed this opinion of Noah, saying, "No more of your people will believe in you now than those who have already believed. So do not grieve at their misdeeds." (Hūd: 36).

86. "Deliver me and the believers with me to safety": "You should not only give Your judgment as to who is in the right and who is in the wrong, but

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بِكُلِّ رِيْعٍ اٰيَةً تَعْبَثُوْنَ ﴿١٢٨﴾ وَتَتَّخِذُوْنَ مَصَانِعَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَخْلُدُوْنَ ﴿١٢٩﴾ وَاِذَا
بَطَشْتُمْ بَطَشْتُمْ جَبَّارِيْنَ ﴿١٣٠﴾ فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَاَطِيْعُوْنِ ﴿١٣١﴾ وَاتَّقُوا الَّذِيْٓ اَمَدَّكُمْ
بِمَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿١٣٢﴾ اَمَدَّكُمْ بِاَنْعَامٍ وَّبَنِيْنَ ﴿١٣٣﴾ وَجَنّٰتٍ وَّعُيُوْنٍ ﴿١٣٤﴾ اِنِّيْٓ اَخَافُ
عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيْمٍ ﴿١٣٥﴾ قَالُوْا سَوَآءٌ عَلَيْنَآ اَوَعَظْتَ اَمْ لَمْ تَكُنْ مِّنَ
الْوٰعِظِيْنَ ﴿١٣٦﴾ اِنْ هٰذَآ اِلَّا خُلُقُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿١٣٧﴾ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُعَذَّبِيْنَ ﴿١٣٨﴾ فَكَذَّبُوْهُ
فَاَهْلَكْنٰهُمْ ۭ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً ۭ وَمَا كَانَ اَكْثَرُهُمْ مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٣٩﴾ وَاِنَّ رَبَّكَ
لَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿١٤٠﴾ كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُوْدُ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿١٤١﴾ اِذْ قَالَ لَهُمْ اَخُوْهُمْ
صٰلِحٌ اَلَا تَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿١٤٢﴾ اِنِّيْ لَكُمْ رَسُوْلٌ اَمِيْنٌ ﴿١٤٣﴾ فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَاَطِيْعُوْنِ ﴿١٤٤﴾ وَ
مَآ اَسْـَٔلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ اَجْرٍ ۚ اِنْ اَجْرِيَ اِلَّا عَلٰي رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿١٤٥﴾ اَتُتْرَكُوْنَ فِيْ
مَا هٰهُنَآ اٰمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٤٦﴾ فِيْ جَنّٰتٍ وَّعُيُوْنٍ ﴿١٤٧﴾ وَّزُرُوْعٍ وَّنَخْلٍ طَلْعُهَا هَضِيْمٌ ﴿١٤٨﴾
وَتَنْحِتُوْنَ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوْتًا فٰرِهِيْنَ ﴿١٤٩﴾ فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَاَطِيْعُوْنِ ﴿١٥٠﴾ وَلَا
تُطِيْعُوْٓا اَمْرَ الْمُسْرِفِيْنَ ﴿١٥١﴾ الَّذِيْنَ يُفْسِدُوْنَ فِي الْاَرْضِ وَلَا يُصْلِحُوْنَ ﴿١٥٢﴾
قَالُوْٓا اِنَّمَآ اَنْتَ مِنَ الْمُسَحَّرِيْنَ ﴿١٥٣﴾ مَآ اَنْتَ اِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُنَا ۡ فَاْتِ بِاٰيَةٍ اِنْ
كُنْتَ مِنَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿١٥٤﴾ قَالَ هٰذِهٖ نَاقَةٌ لَّهَا شِرْبٌ وَّلَكُمْ شِرْبُ يَوْمٍ مَّعْلُوْمٍ ﴿١٥٥﴾
وَلَا تَمَسُّوْهَا بِسُوْٓءٍ فَيَاْخُذَكُمْ عَذَابُ يَوْمٍ عَظِيْمٍ ﴿١٥٦﴾ فَعَقَرُوْهَا فَاَصْبَحُوْا
نٰدِمِيْنَ ﴿١٥٧﴾ فَاَخَذَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ ۭ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً ۭ وَمَا كَانَ اَكْثَرُهُمْ مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٥٨﴾
وَاِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿١٥٩﴾ كَذَّبَتْ قَوْمُ لُوْطِ ِۨالْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿١٦٠﴾ اِذْ قَالَ لَهُمْ
اَخُوْهُمْ لُوْطٌ اَلَا تَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿١٦١﴾ اِنِّيْ لَكُمْ رَسُوْلٌ اَمِيْنٌ ﴿١٦٢﴾ فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَاَطِيْعُوْنِ ﴿١٦٣﴾
وَمَآ اَسْـَٔلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ اَجْرٍ ۚ اِنْ اَجْرِيَ اِلَّا عَلٰي رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿١٦٤﴾ اَتَاْتُوْنَ

What! you erect for mere pleasure, a monument on every high spot,[90] and build huge castles as if you were immortal;[91] and when you seize somebody, you seize him like a tyrant.[92] So fear Allah and obey me. Fear Him Who has bestowed on you all that you know: He gave you cattle and children and gardens and water-springs. I fear the torment of a dreadful Day for you." They replied, "Whether you admonish us or not, it is the same for us: such things have been said in the past as well,[93] and we are certainly not going to be chastised." At last, they rejected him, and We destroyed them.[94] 128-139

Indeed there is a Sign in this, but most of these people would not believe. The fact is that your Lord is Mighty as well as Merciful. 139-140

Thamūd rejected the Messengers.[95] Remember the time when their brother Ṣāliḥ said to them, "Do you not fear? I am a Messenger to you worthy of full trust:[96] so fear Allah and obey me. I do not ask of you any reward for this duty, for my reward is with the Lord of the worlds. Will you be left in security amidst all that is around you here?[97] —in the gardens and the water-springs? ——in the corn-fields and the date-groves laden with juicy fruit?[98] You proudly carve out dwellings in the hills.[99] Fear Allah and obey me, and do not follow the transgressors who spread mischief in the land and reform nothing."[100] They replied, "You are only an enchanted person :[101] you are no more than a man like us: bring forth a sign if you are truthful."[102] Ṣāliḥ said, "Here is a she-camel.[103] One day will be for her to drink, and one day for you all to take water.[104] Do not at all molest her; otherwise you will be overtaken by the torment of a dreadful day." Yet they hamstrung her,[105] and then became regretful, for the torment overtook them.[106] 141-158

Indeed there is a Sign in this, but most of these people would not believe; and the fact is that your Lord is Mighty as well as Merciful 158-159

The people of Lot rejected the Messengers.[107] Remember the time when their brother Lot said to them, "Do you not fear? I am a Messenger to you worthy of full trust: so fear Allah and obey me. I do not ask of you any reward for this duty, for my reward is with the Lord of the worlds. 160-164

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deliver Your Judgment in such a manner that the followers of the Truth are saved

and the followers of falsehood are completely annihilated from the earth."

87. "Laden Ark", because the Ark became full with the believers and the pairs of animals from every species. For further details, see Hūd: 40.

88. For comparison, see Al-A'rāf: 65-72, Hūd: 50-60; and for further details of this story, see Ḥā Mīm Sajdah: 13-16, Al-Aḥqāf: 21-26, Az-Zāriyāt: 41-45, Al-Qamar :18-22, Al-Ḥāqqah: 4-8, and Al-Fajr: 6-8.

89. In order to understand this discourse of Prophet Hūd fully, we should keep in mind the various details about the people of 'Ād which the Qur'ān has given at different places. For instance, it says:

(1) After the destruction of the people of Noah, the 'Ād were given power and prominence in the world: "Do not forget that after Noah's people your Lord made you the successors." (Al-A'rāf: 69).

(2) Physically they were very robust and powerful people: " .... and made you very robust." (Al-A'rāf: 69).

(3) They had no parallel as a nation in the world: "The like of which was not created in the lands." (Al-Fajr: 8).

(4) They were civilized and were well-known in the world for their great skill and art in erecting lofty buildings with tall columns: "Have you not seen what your Lord did with 'Ād Iram, of lofty columns?" (Al-Fajr: 6, 7).

(5) This material progress and physical power had made them arrogant and vain: "As for 'Ād, they deviated from the right path and adopted an arrogant attitude in the land and said, 'who is mightier than we in power'?" (Ḥā Mīm Sajdah: 15).

(6) Their political power was in the hands of a few tyrants before whom none could dare raise his voice: "....and they followed and obeyed every tyrannous enemy of the Truth." (Hūd: 59).

(7) They were not disbelievers in the existence of Allah, but were involved in *shirk*; they only denied that Allah alone should be worshipped and none else: "They said (to Hūd), 'Have you come to us (with the demand) that we should worship Allah alone and discard those whom our elders have been worshipping?" (Al-A'rāf: 70).

90. That is, "You build grand buildings merely to show off your wealth and power, whereas they have no use and purpose except that they stand as monuments to your grandeur and glory."

91. That is, "Though you have built other buildings also for dwelling purposes, in order to make them grand, beautiful and strong, you expend your

wealth and mental and physical abilities in a manner as if you were going to live for ever, and there was no purpose of life except seeking of comfort and pleasure and nothing beyond this worldly life which might deserve your attention."

In this connection, one should bear in mind the fact that extravagance in architecture is not a solitary vice in a people. This happens as a result of a people's becoming affluent and then crazy for selfish gains and materialistic pursuits. When a people reach such a stage, their whole social system becomes corrupted and polluted. Prophet Hūd's criticism of his people's extravagant and luxurious architecture was not simply aimed at the high castles and monuments, but he was actually criticising their corrupt civilization and social system, whose glaring symptoms could be seen everywhere in the land in the shape of castles and monuments.

92. That is, "In order to meet the demands of your ever rising standards of life, you do not rest content with small living quarters but you build castles and fortresses, and yet being unsatisfied you erect lofty edifices unnecessarily just for ostentation. But as human beings you have become so depraved that there is no mercy in your hearts for the weak, no justice for the poor, and all people of lower social strata, living inside or around your land, are being oppressed tyrannically and none is safe from your barbarities."

93. This can have two meanings: (1) "Whatever we are doing is not new but has been happening from the time of our elders since centuries: they had the same creed, the same way of life, the same morality and the same kind of dealings and yet they remained unharmed and safe from every calamity. If there was any evil in this way of life, we should have met the doom with which you are threatening us." (2) "The things you are preaching have been preached and said before also by religious maniacs and so-called moralists, but they could not change the ways of the world. It has never happened that the world suffered a disaster only because people refused to listen to preachers like you."

94. According to the Qur'ān, the people of 'Ād were destroyed by a violent windstorm. When they saw it advancing towards their valleys, they rejoiced with the hope that those were dense clouds which would bring much rain for them, but in reality it was Allah's scourge. The windstorm continued to rage for eight days and seven nights and destroyed everything. The people were swept away like straw and everything on which the hot, dry wind blew was left rotting. The storm did not abate until the last man of the wicked tribe had met his doom. Only ruins of their habitations remained to tell the tale of their terrible fate, and today even the ruins have become extinct. The whole territory of Aḥqāf has turned into dreadful desert dunes. For details, see E.N. 25 of Al-Aḥqāf.

95. For comparison, see Al-A'rāf: 73-79, Hūd: 61-68, Al-Ḥijr: 80-84, Banī Isrā'īl: 59; and for further details, see An-Naml . 45-53, Az-Zāriyāt: 43-45, Al-Qamar: 23-31, Al-Ḥāqqah: 4-5, Al-Fajr: 9, and Ash-Shams: 11.

Thamūd achieved power and glory after the destruction of 'Ād and as far as progress in civilization is concerned, they followed in the footsteps of their predecessors. In their case, too, the standards of living went on rising higher and higher and the standards of humanity continued to fall lower and lower, suffering one deterioration after the other. On the one hand, they erected large edifices on the plains and hewed beautiful houses out of the hills like those in the caves of Ellora and Ajanta in India, and on the other, they became addicted to idol-worship and the land was filled with tyranny and oppression. The worst men became leaders and rulers in the land. As such, Prophet Ṣāliḥ's message of Truth only appealed to the weak people belonging to the lower social strata and the people of the upper classes refused to believe in him.

96. According to the Qur'ān, the people of Prophet Sālih themselves admitted that he was a man of great integrity and extraordinary calibre: "They said, 'O Ṣāliḥ, till now you were such a person among us of whom we had great expectations." (Hūd: 62).

97. That is, "Do you consider that your life of indulgence and pleasure is everlasting, and you will never be asked to account for Allah's favours to you and for your own misdeeds?"

98. *Hadīm:* heavy bunches of ripe, juicy and soft date-palm fruit hanging from trees.

99. Just as the most prominent feature of the 'Ād civilization was that they built large edifices with high pillars, so the most prominent feature of the Thamūd civilization for which they were known among the ancient peoples was that they carved out dwellings in the hills. That is why in Sūrah Fajr, the 'Ād have been referred to as "(people) of the pillars", and the Thamūd as "those who hewed rocks in the valley". These people also built castles on the plains, the purpose and object of which was nothing but display of wealth and power and architectural skill as there was no real necessity for them. These are, in fact, the ways of the perverted people: the poor among them do not have proper shelters, and the wealthy members not only have sufficient fine dwellings but over and above those they raise monuments for ostentation and display.

Some of these Thamūdic works exist even today, which I have seen in December, 1959. (See pictures. This place is situated between Al-Madīnah and Tabūk, a few miles to the north of Al-'Ulā (Wād-il-Qurā of the Holy Prophet's time) in Hejāz. The local inhabitants call it Al-Ḥijr and Madā'in Ṣāliḥ even today.

Al-'Ulā is still a green and fertile valley abounding in water springs and gardens, but Al-Ḥijr appears to be an abandoned place. It has thin population, little greenery and a few wells one of which is said to be the one at which Prophet Ṣāliḥ's she-camel used to drink water. This well is now dry and located within a deserted military post of the time of the Turks. When we entered this territory and approached Al-'Ulā, we found hills which seemed to have been shattered to pieces from top to bottom as if by a violent earthquake. (See pictures on the opposite pages). We saw the same kind of hills while travelling to the east, from Al-'Ulā to Khaibar, for about 50 miles, and towards the north inside Jordan, for about 30 to 40 miles. This indicated that an area, stretching well over 300 to 400 miles in length and 100 miles in width, had been devastated by the terrible earthquake.

A few of the Thamūdic type monuments that we saw at Al-Ḥijr were also found at Madyan along the Gulf of 'Aqabah and at Petra in Jordan. At Petra specially the Thamūdic and Nabataean works stand side by side, and their styles and architectural designs are so different that anyone who examines them will find that they were neither built in the same age nor by the same nation. (See pictures for contrast). Doughty, the British orientalist, in his attempt to prove the Qur'ān as false, has claimed that the works found at Al-Ḥijr were not carved out by Thamūd but by the Nabataeans. I am of the view that the art of carving houses out of the rocks started with the Thamūd, and thousands of years later, in the second and first centuries B.C., it was considerably developed by the Nabataeans and it reached perfection in the works of the caves of Ellora, which were carved out about 700 years after Petra.

100. That is, "You should give up obedience to your chiefs, guides and rulers under whose leadership you are following an evil way of life. These people have transgressed all bounds of morality: they cannot bring about any reforms and they will corrupt every system of life that they adopt. The only way for you towards success and well-being is that you should inculcate fear of God, give up obedience to the misguides and obey me, because I am God's Messenger: you are fully aware of my honesty and integrity: I have no personal interest and motive for undertaking the work of reform."

This was in short the manifesto which Prophet Ṣāliḥ presented before his people: it not only contained the religious message but invitation to cultural, moral and political revolution as well.

101. "Enchanted person": Mad and insane person who has lost reasoning power. According to the ancient conceptions, madness was either due to the influence of a jinn or magic. That is why a mad person was either called *majnūn* (one under the influence of a jinn) or one enchanted by magic.

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الذُّكْرَانَ مِنَ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿165﴾ وَتَذَرُوْنَ مَا خَلَقَ لَكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ مِّنْ اَزْوَاجِكُمْ ۭ بَلْ
اَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ عٰدُوْنَ ﴿166﴾ قَالُوْا لَىِٕنْ لَّمْ تَنْتَهِ يٰلُوْطُ لَتَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ الْمُخْرَجِيْنَ ﴿167﴾
قَالَ اِنِّىْ لِعَمَلِكُمْ مِّنَ الْقَالِيْنَ ﴿168﴾ رَبِّ نَجِّنِىْ وَاَهْلِىْ مِمَّا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿169﴾ فَنَجَّيْنٰهُ
وَاَهْلَهٗٓ اَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿170﴾ اِلَّا عَجُوْزًا فِى الْغٰبِرِيْنَ ﴿171﴾ ثُمَّ دَمَّرْنَا الْاٰخَرِيْنَ ﴿172﴾ وَاَمْطَرْنَا
عَلَيْهِمْ مَّطَرًا ۚ فَسَآءَ مَطَرُ الْمُنْذَرِيْنَ ﴿173﴾ اِنَّ فِىْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً ۭ وَمَا كَانَ اَكْثَرُهُمْ
مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿174﴾ وَاِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿175﴾ كَذَّبَ اَصْحٰبُ لْـَٔيْكَةِ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿176﴾
اِذْ قَالَ لَهُمْ شُعَيْبٌ اَلَا تَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿177﴾ اِنِّىْ لَكُمْ رَسُوْلٌ اَمِيْنٌ ﴿178﴾ فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَ
اَطِيْعُوْنِ ﴿179﴾ وَمَآ اَسْـَٔلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ اَجْرٍ ۚ اِنْ اَجْرِىَ اِلَّا عَلٰى رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿180﴾
اَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ وَلَا تَكُوْنُوْا مِنَ الْمُخْسِرِيْنَ ﴿181﴾ وَزِنُوْا بِالْقِسْطَاسِ الْمُسْتَقِيْمِ ﴿182﴾ وَ
لَا تَبْخَسُوا النَّاسَ اَشْيَآءَهُمْ وَلَا تَعْثَوْا فِى الْاَرْضِ مُفْسِدِيْنَ ﴿183﴾ وَاتَّقُوا الَّذِىْ
خَلَقَكُمْ وَالْجِبِلَّةَ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿184﴾ قَالُوْٓا اِنَّمَآ اَنْتَ مِنَ الْمُسَحَّرِيْنَ ﴿185﴾ وَمَآ اَنْتَ اِلَّا
بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُنَا وَاِنْ نَّظُنُّكَ لَمِنَ الْكٰذِبِيْنَ ﴿186﴾ فَاَسْقِطْ عَلَيْنَا كِسَفًا مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ اِنْ
كُنْتَ مِنَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿187﴾ قَالَ رَبِّىْٓ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿188﴾ فَكَذَّبُوْهُ فَاَخَذَهُمْ
عَذَابُ يَوْمِ الظُّلَّةِ ۭ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيْمٍ ﴿189﴾ اِنَّ فِىْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً ۭ وَمَا
كَانَ اَكْثَرُهُمْ مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿190﴾ وَاِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿191﴾ وَاِنَّهٗ لَتَنْزِيْلُ
رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿192﴾ نَزَلَ بِهِ الرُّوْحُ الْاَمِيْنُ ﴿193﴾ عَلٰى قَلْبِكَ لِتَكُوْنَ مِنَ الْمُنْذِرِيْنَ ﴿194﴾
بِلِسَانٍ عَرَبِيٍّ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿195﴾ وَاِنَّهٗ لَفِىْ زُبُرِ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿196﴾ اَوَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَّهُمْ اٰيَةً اَنْ
يَّعْلَمَهٗ عُلَمٰٓؤُا بَنِىْٓ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ ﴿197﴾ وَلَوْ نَزَّلْنٰهُ عَلٰى بَعْضِ الْاَعْجَمِيْنَ ﴿198﴾ فَقَرَاَهٗ
عَلَيْهِمْ مَّا كَانُوْا بِهٖ مُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿199﴾ كَذٰلِكَ سَلَكْنٰهُ فِىْ قُلُوْبِ الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿200﴾ لَا

Do you go to the males from the creatures of the world,[108] and leave that which your Lord has created for you in your wives ?[109] You have indeed transgressed all limits."[110] They said, "O Lot, if you do not desist from this, you will surely be included among those who have been expelled from our towns."[111] He said, "I am certainly one of those who abhor your wickedness. My Lord, deliver me and my people from their wicked deeds."[112] At last, We delivered him and all his people except an old woman who was of those who were left behind.[113] Then We destroyed all the rest of them, and rained on them a horrible rain, which fell on those who had been warned.[114] 165-173

Indeed there is a Sign in this, but most of these people would not believe. The fact is that your Lord is Mighty as well as Merciful. 174-175

The people of Aiykah rejected the Messengers.[115] Remember the time when Shu'aib said to them, "Do you not fear? I am a Messenger to you worthy of full trust: so fear Allah and obey me. I do not ask of you any reward for this duty, for my reward is with the Lord of the worlds. Give full measure and do not give people less than what is due to them; weigh with even balance and do not cheat people of their goods; and do not spread evil in the land, and fear Him Who has created you and those who have gone before you." They said, "You are only an enchanted person and are no more than a man like us: we consider you to be an utter liar. However, if you are truthful, cause a fragment of the sky to fall down upon us." Shu'aib said, "My Lord knows whatever you are doing."[116] They treated him as a liar. At last, the torment of the Day of Canopy overtook them,[117] and it was the torment of an extremely dreadful day. 176-189

Indeed there is a Sign in this, but most of these people would not believe. The fact is that your Lord is Mighty as well as Merciful. 190-191

This[118] (Book) has been revealed by the Lord of the worlds.[119] The trustworthy Spirit[120] has come down with it upon your heart so that you may become one of those who are (appointed by God) to warn (the people) in plain Arabic language;[121] and this is also contained in the Scriptures of the former people.[122] Is it not a Sign for the people (of Makkah) that the learned men of the Children of Israel know it ?[123] (But they are obdurate to the extent) that even if We had sent it down to some non Arab, and he had recited this (discourse in 192-200

lucid Arabic) before them, they would still not have believed in it.[124] Likewise, We have caused this (Qur'ān) to pass through the hearts of the criminals:[125]

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102. That is, "We cannot believe you to be a Messenger from God because you are just like us and we see no distinction in you. However, if you are true in your claim that God has appointed you as His Messenger, you should present such a clear miracle as should make us believe that you have really been sent by the Creator and Master of the universe.".

103. From the context it appears that it was not a common she-camel, but it was brought about in a supernatural manner because it was presented in response to the demand for a miracle. Prophet Ṣāliḥ could not have produced before the people an ordinary she-camel as a proof of his Prophethood because that would not have satisfied them. At other places in the Qur'ān it has been clearly referred to as a miracle. In Sūrah Al-A'rāf and Hūd it has been said: "....here is Allah's she camel, a Sign for you." (VII: 73) In Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl the same thing has been stated more emphatically: "And nothing has hindered Us from sending Signs except that the former people refused to acknowledge them as such. (For example) We sent the she-camel as an open Sign to Thamūd but they treated her with cruelty; whereas We send Signs only by way of warning." (v. 59) Moreover, the challenge given to the wicked people of Thamūd, after presenting the she-camel before them, was such that it could only be given after presenting a miracle.

104. That is, "One day the she-camel will drink water all alone at your wells and springs, and one day you and your animals will take water, and this arrangement will not be violated in any way." There could hardly be a greater challenge for the people of Arabia, for taking of water had been the foremost cause of feuds and fights among them, which mostly resulted in bloodshed, even loss of life. As such, the challenge given by Prophet Ṣāliḥ was indeed a challenge to the whole nation, which could not be acceptable unless the people were sure that the challenger had a great power at his back. But Prophet Ṣāliḥ threw this challenge all by himself without any worldly power behind him, and the whole nation not only received it quietly, but also abided by it submissively for quite some days.

In Sūrahs Al-A'rāf and Hūd there is an addition to this: "Here is Allah's she-camel, a Sign for you. So let her graze at will in Allah's land, and do not touch her with an evil intention." (XI: 64) That is, the challenge was not only this that the she-camel would drink water all alone every alternate day, but, in addition, she would freely move about and graze at will in their fields and gardens and palm groves and pastures and was not to be touched with an evil intention.

105. This does not mean that as soon as they heard the challenge, they attacked the she-camel at once and hamstrung her. Actually, when the she-camel became a problem for the whole nation, the hearts of the people were filled with rage, and they began to hold lengthy consultations as to how to get rid of her. At last, a haughty chief undertook the task of putting an end to her, as mentioned in Sūrah Ash-Shams thus: "When arose the most villainous of the people.. ." (v. 12) and in Sūrah Al-Qamar thus: "They appealed to their companion, so he took up the responsibility and hamstrung (her)." (v. 29).

106. As stated at other places in the Qur'ān, when the she-camel was killed, Prophet Sālih declared: "You have only three more days to enjoy yourselves in your houses." (Hūd: 65) When this time limit came to an end, a shocking explosion took place in the night at about dawn, followed by a violent earthquake, which destroyed the whole nation completely. In the morning their dead bodies lay scattered here and there like dry pieces of bush trampled down by animals around an enclosure. Neither their stony castles nor their rock-hewn caves could protect them against the calamity. "We sent against them a single blast and they became as the trampled twigs of the fence of a fold-builder." (Al-Qamar: 31). "Consequently a shocking catastrophe overtook them and they lay lifeless in their dwellings" (Al-A'rāf: 78). "At last a violent blast overtook them with the approach of the morning, and all that they had achieved proved of no avail to them." (Al-Ḥijr: 83, 84).

107. For comparison, see Al-A'rāf: 80-84, Hūd: 74-83, Al-Ḥijr: 57-77, Al-Anbiyā': 71-75, An-Naml; 54-58, Al-'Ankabūt: 28-35, As-Ṣāffāt: 133-138 and Al-Qamar: 33-39.

108. This can have two meanings: (1) Of all the creatures you have chosen males only for the purpose of gratifying your sex desires, whereas there are plenty of women in the world; and (2) You alone are the people in the whole world, who go to men to satisfy the sex desires; even the animals do not resort to this. This second meaning has been explained in Sūrahs Al-A'rāf and Al- 'Ankabūt thus: "Have you become so shameless that you commit such indecent acts as no one committed before you in the world?" (Al-A'rāf: 80).

109. This can also have two meanings: (1) "You leave your wives whom God has created for you to satisfy your sex desire and adopt unnatural ways with the males for the purpose." (2) "Even with respect to your wives you do not follow the natural way but adopt unnatural ways for the gratification of your lust?" This they might have been doing with the intention of family planning.

110. That is, "This is not the only vice in you; your whole lives have become corrupted and perverted, as stated in An-Naml: 54 thus : "Do you commit

indecent acts openly and publicly?" And in Al-'Ankabūt: 29 thus: "Have you become so perverted that you gratify your lust with the males, you rob travellers, and you commit wicked deeds publicly in your assemblies?" For further details, see E.N. 39 of Al-Ḥijr.

111. That is, "You know that whosoever has spoken against us, or protested against our doings, or opposed us in any way, he has been turned out of our habitations. If you also behave like that, you too will be treated likewise." It has been stated in Sūrahs Al-A'rāf and An-Naml that before giving this warning to Prophet Lot, the wicked people had decided to "turn out these people of your habitations for they pose to be very pious." (VII: 82).

112. This may also mean: "My Lord, deliver us from the evil consequences of their misdeeds," and also this: "Protect the children of the believers from the evil effects of the immoral acts of the wicked people."

113. This refers to the Prophet Lot's wife as stated in verse 10 of Sūrah Taḥrīm about the wives of Prophets Noah and Lot: "These two women were in the houses of Our two pious servants but they acted treacherously towards them." That is, they did not believe, and sided with the unbelievers instead of their righteous husbands. Therefore, when Allah decreed to send a torment on the people of Lot, He commanded Lot to leave the place along with his people but to leave his wife behind: "So depart from here with the people of your household in the last hours of the night. And look here: none of you should turn round to look behind; but your wife (who will not accompany you) shall meet the same doom as they." (Hūd: 81).

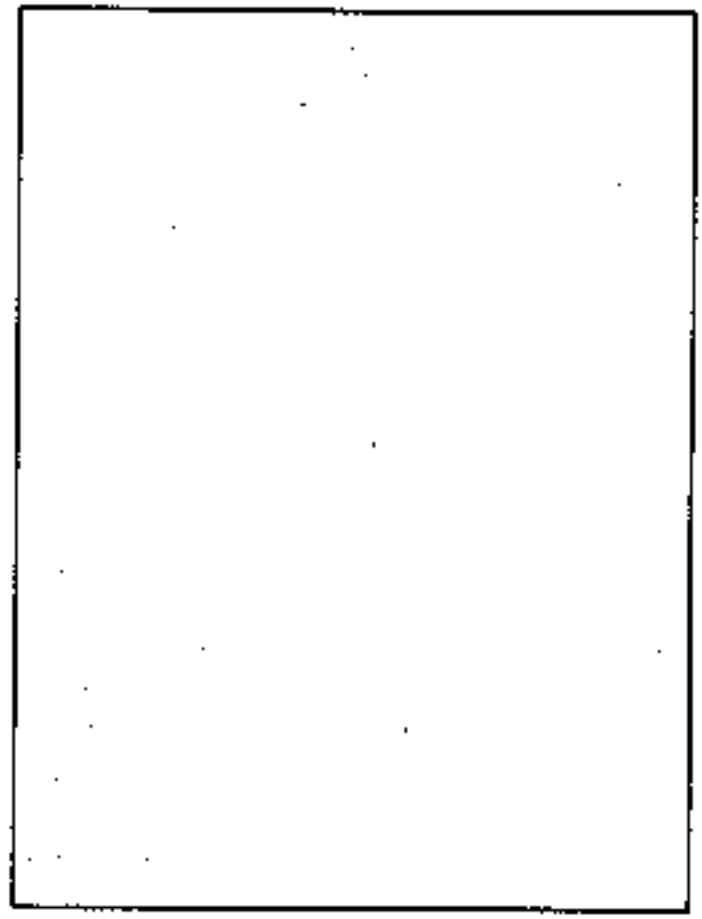
114. This was not a rain of water but a rain of stones. According to the details given at other places in the Qur'ān, when Prophet Lot had left the place along with the people of his household in the last hours of the night, there occurred a terrible explosion at dawn and a violent earthquake, which turned all their habitations upside down and rained on them stones of baked clay as a result of a volcanic eruption and a strong blast of wind.

Below we give a resume of the Biblical account and of ancient Greek and Latin writings and modern geological researches and archaeological observations about the torment and the place where it occurred:

The hundreds of ruins found in the waste and uninhabited land lying to the south and east of the Dead Sea indicate that this must have been a prosperous and thickly populated area in the past. The archaeologists have estimated that the age of prosperity of this land lasted between 2300 and 1900 B.C. According to historians, Prophet Abraham lived about 2000 B C. Thus the archaeological evidence

confirms that this land was destroyed in the time of Prophet Abraham and his nephew Prophet Lot.

The most populous and fertile part of the area was "the vale of Siddim" as mentioned in the Bible: "And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it *was* well watered everywhere, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt" (Gen. 13 :10) The present-day scholars are of the opinion that that valley is now under the Dead Sea and this opinion is supported by firm archaeological evidence. In the ancient times the Dead Sea did not so much extend to the south as it does today. Opposite and to the west of the present Jordanian city of Al-Karak, there is a small peninsula called Al-Lisān. This was the end of the sea in ancient days. The area to the south of it, which is now under sea water (the shaded portion in the map) was a fertile valley, "the vale of Siddim", in which were situated Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim, Zoar, the famous cities of the people of Lot. In about 2000 B.C. this valley sank as a result of a violent earthquake and was submerged in sea water. Even today this is the most shallow part of the Sea. In the Roman period it was more so and was fordable from Al-Lisān to the western coast. One can still see submerged jungles along the southern coast and there might as well be submerged buildings.



According to the Bible and the ancient Greek and Latin writings, the region abounded in pits of petroleum and asphalt and at places inflammable gas also existed. It appears from the geological observations that with the violent earthquake shocks, petroleum, gases and asphalt were thrown up and ignited, and the whole region exploded like a bomb. The Bible says that when Prophet Abraham got the news and went from Hebron to see the affected valley, he saw that "the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace." (Gen. 19: 28).

115. The people of Aiykah have been briefly mentioned in vv. 78-84 of Sūrah Al-Hijr. More about them here. There is a difference of opinion among the commentators as to whether the Midianites and the people of Aiykah were two different tribes or one and the same people. One group holds that they were different tribes and gives the argument that in Sūrah Al-A'rāf Prophet Shu'aib has been called "brother of the Midianites" (v. 85), whereas here, with regard to the people of Aiykah, he has not been called so.

The other group holds that they were one and the same people on the ground that the moral diseases and characteristics mentioned of the Midianites in Sūrahs Al-A'rāf and Hūd are the same as of the people of Aiykah mentioned here. Then the message and admonition of Prophet Shu'aib to both the tribes was the same, and the two tribes also met the same end.

Research in this regard has shown that both the views are correct. The Midianites and the people of Aiykah were doubtless two different tribes but branches of the same stock. The progeny of Prophet Abraham from his wife (or slave girl) Keturah, is well known in Arabia and in the history of the Israelites as the children of Keturah. Their most prominent branch was the one which became famous as the Midianites, after their ancestor, Midian, son of Abraham. They had settled in the territory between northern Arabia and southern Palestine, and along the coasts of the Red Sea and the Gulf of 'Aqabah. Their capital city was Madyan, which was situated, according to Abul Fidā, on the western coast of the Gulf of 'Aqabah at five days' journey from Aiylah (present-day 'Aqabah). The rest of the children of Keturah, among whom the Dedanites are comparatively better known, settled in the territory between Taimā' and Tabūk and Al-'Ulā in northern Arabia, their main city being Tabūk, the Aiykah of the ancient times. (Yaqūt in his *Mu'jam al-Buldān,* under Aiykah, writes that this is the old name of Tabūk, and the natives of Tabūk confirm this).

The reason why one and the same Prophet was sent to the Midianites and the people of Aiykah was probably that both the tribes were descendants of the same ancestors, spoke the same language and had settled in the adjoining areas. It is just possible that they lived side by side in the same areas and had marriage and other social relations between them. Then, these two branches were traders by profession and had developed similar evil practices and social and moral

weaknesses. According to the early books of the Bible, these people worshipped Baal-peor. When the Children of Israel came out of Egypt and entered their territory, they also became infected with the evils of idolatry and adultery. (Numbers, 25: 1-5, 31: 16-17). Then those people had settled on the two main international trade routes, the one joining Yaman with Syria and the other the Persian Gulf with Egypt. Due to their advantageous position they had started big scale highway robbery and would not let any caravan pass till it had paid heavy taxes. They had thus rendered these trade routes highly unsafe. Their characteristic of highway robbery has been mentioned in the Qur'ān, for which they were admonished through Prophet Shu'aib, thus: "And do not lie in ambush by every path (of life) as robbers in order to frighten the people" (Al-A'rāf: 86). These were the reasons why Allah sent to both the tribes the same Prophet, who conveyed to them the same teachings and message. For the details of the story of Prophet Shu'aib and the Midianites, see Al-A'rāf: 85-93, Hūd: 84-95, Al-'Ankabūt: 36-37

116. That is, "It is not in my power to bring down the torment; it is in Allah's power, and He is fully aware of your misdeeds. He will send down the torment as and when He wills." In this demand of the people of Aiykah and the answer of Prophet Shu'aib to them there was an admonition for the Quraish as well. They also demanded from the Holy Prophet to bring down the torment on them: "Or.... you cause the sky to fall down on us in fragments, as you threaten us." (Banī Isrā'īl: 92). As such the Quraish are being told that the people of Aiykah had also demanded a similar thing from their Prophet, and the answer that they got from their Prophet is the answer of Muhammad (Allah's peace be on him) to you.

117. The details of this torment are neither found in the Qur'ān nor in any authentic Tradition. What one can learn from the Text is this: As these people had demanded a torment from the sky, Allah sent upon them a cloud which hung over them like a canopy and kept hanging until they were completely destroyed by the torment of continuous rain. The Qur'ān clearly points out that the nature of the torment sent upon the Midianites was different from that sent upon the people of Aiykah. The people of Aiykah, as mentioned here, were destroyed by the torment of the Canopy, while the torment visiting the Midianites was in the form of a terrible earthquake: "It so happened that a shocking catastrophe overtook them and they remained lying prostrate in their dwellings." (Al-A'rāf: 91). And: "A dreadful shock overtook them and they lay lifeless and prostrate in their homes." (Hūd: 94). Therefore, it is wrong to regard the two torments as identical. Some commentators have given a few explanations of "the torment of the Day of Canopy", but we do not know the source of their information. Ibn Jarīr has quoted Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās as saying: "If somebody from among the scholars

gives you an explanation of the torment of the Day of Canopy, do not consider it as correct."

118. At the end of the historical account, the same theme, with which the Sūrah began, is resumed. For reference, see vv. 1-9.

119. That is, "This lucid Book whose verses are being recited to you, and this 'Admonition' from which the people are turning away, is not the product of the whims of a man; it has not been written and compiled by Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) himself, but it consists of the Revelations of the Lord of this universe."

120. That is, Angel Gabriel, as mentioned in Al-Baqarah: 97: "Say to them, 'Whoever is the enemy to Gabriel, he should understand that he has, by Allah's Command, revealed to your heart the Qur'ān'." Here the object of using the title of "the trustworthy Spirit" for Gabriel implies that the Qur'ān is not being sent down by Allah through some material agency, which is subject to change and vacillation; but through a pure Spirit, having no tinge of materialism, and who is perfectly trustworthy. This Spirit conveys the Messages of Allah precisely in the same form and with the same content as they are entrusted to him: it is not possible for him to tamper with the Messages, or to make his own additions to them in any way.

121. This sentence may be related to: "... the trustworthy Spirit has come down" and also to: "..., who are (appointed by God) to warn." In the first case, it will mean that the trustworthy Spirit has brought it down in plain Arabic language, and in the second case, it will mean that the Holy Prophet is included among those Prophets who were appointed to warn the people in the Arabic language, i.e., Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Ishmael and Shu'aib (Allah's peace be upon them). In both cases the object is the same: the Divine Message has not been sent down in a dead or mysterious language, or in a language of riddles and enigmas, but in such clear and lucid Arabic, which can be understood easily by every Arab and every non-Arab who has learnt Arabic. As such, the people who are turning away from it, cannot have the excuse that they could not understand the message of the Qur'ān. The only reason of their denial and aversion is that they are afflicted with the same disease with which Pharaoh, the people of Abraham the people of Noah, the people of Lot, the 'Ād and the Thamūd, and the people of Aiykah were afflicted.

122. That is, this very Admonition and Divine Message and teachings are contained in the former Scriptures also. The same message of submission to One God, the same belief in the Hereafter and the same invitation to follow the Prophets has been given in all those Books. All the Books sent down by God condemn *shirk* and the materialistic philosophy of life and invite people to accept

the true and sound philosophy of life, which is based on the concept of man's accountability before God, and demands that man should give up his independence in deference to Divine Commands brought and preached by the Prophets. None of these things is new, which the Qur'ān may be presenting for the first time, and none can blame the Holy Prophet of saying something which had never been said before by the former Prophets.

Among other arguments this verse also is quoted in support of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah's early opinion that if a person recites the translation of the Qur'ān in the prayer, his prayer will be in order and valid, whether he is able to recite the Qur'ān in Arabic or not. According to 'Allāma Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣās, the basis of this argument is: "Allah says that the Qur'ān was contained in the former Scriptures also; obviously this could not be in Arabic words, As such, if translated and presented in another language, it will still be the Qur'ān." *(Aḥkam-ul-Qur'ān,* Vol. III, p. 429). But the weakness of this argument is obvious. The Qur'ān, or any other Divine Book, was never revealed in a manner that Allah inspired the Prophet with its meaning and then he presented it before the people in his own words. The fact is that every Book, in whatever language it came, was revealed in Divine words and meanings together. As such, the teachings of the Qur'ān were contained in the former Scriptures in Divine words and not in human, and none of their translations could be considered as the Divine Book or its representation. As regards the Qur'ān, it has been stated over and over again that it was literally revealed in the Arabic language: "We have sent it down as Qur'ān in Arabic". (Yūsuf: 2). "We have sent this Command in Arabic to you." (Ar-Ra'd: 37). "An Arabic Qur'ān without any crookedness." (Az-Zumar: 28). Then just before this verse, it has been said that the trustworthy Spirit has brought it down in Arabic. Now how can it be said that the translation of the Qur'ān made into another language will also be the Qur'ān and its words will represent the words of Allah? It appears that later the Imām himself felt this weakness in the argument and, according to authentic traditions, gave up his earlier opinion, and adopted the opinion of Imāms Abū Yūsuf and Muḥammad, who held that a person who could not recite Arabic words, could recite the translation of the Qur'ān in his prayer till he was able to pronounce Arabic words. However, the prayer of a person, who was able to recite the Qur'ān in Arabic, would not be valid if he recited its translation. The fact is that the two Imāms had proposed this concession only for those non-Arab converts who were not able to offer their prayer in Arabic immediately after embracing Islam. In this the basis of their argument was not that the translation of the Qur'ān was the Qur'ān itself, but that just as a person unable to perform *Rukū'* and *Sajdah* was allowed to offer his prayer by making signs, so a person unable to pronounce Arabic words could recite the translation. Then just as the prayer of a person who offered it by making signs could not be valid as soon as

the cause of inability was removed, so the prayer of a person who recited the translation would not be valid as soon as he became able to pronounce Arabic words. (For a detailed discussion, see *Al-Mabsūt* by Sarkhasi, Vol. I, p. 37; *Fatḥ ul-Qadīr* and *Sharḥ 'Ināya 'alal-Hedāya*, Vol. I. pp. 190-201).

123. That is, "The learned men of the Israelites know that the teachings of the Qur'ān are the same as of the former Scriptures. Though the people of Makkah themselves are un-initiated in the knowledge of the Book, there are many scholars among the Israelites living in the surrounding areas, who fully understand that the Qur'ān did not bring a novel "message", which was being presented by Muḥammad bin 'Abdullah for the first time, but it was the same message which had been brought and preached by Prophets of Allah one after the other since thousands of years. Is it not then a convincing proof of the fact that the Qur'ān has been sent down by the same Lord of the universe, Who sent down the former Books ?"

According to Ibn Hishām's Life of the Holy Prophet, a little before the revelation of these verses a deputation of 20 men, who had been influenced by the preaching of Ḥadrat Ja'far, came to Makkah from Ḥabash. They met the Holy Prophet in Masjid al-Ḥarām and asked him in the presence of the unbelieving Quraish what his teachings were. In response, the Holy Prophet recited a few verses of the Qur'ān, whereupon tears came down from their eyes and they believed in him there and then to be a true Messenger of Allah. When they took leave of the Holy Prophet, Abū Jahl met them along with a few other men of the Quraish and rebuked them, saying, "Never has a more stupid company come here before: O foolish men, you were sent here by your people with a view to inquiring about this man, but no sooner did you meet him than you gave up your own faith!" Those gentle people did not like to have a dispute with Abū Jahl, so they left him, saying, "We have no wish to enter an argument with you: you are responsible for your faith and we are for ours: we adopted something in which we saw some good for ourselves." (Vol II, p. 32). This same incident has been mentioned in Sūrah Qasas, thus: "Those to whom We had given the Book before this, believe in the Qur'ān and when it is recited to them, they say, 'We have believed in it: this is the very Truth from our Lord: we were even before this followers of Islam'. And when they heard vain and meaningless talk, they refrained from entering an argument, saying, 'For us are our deeds and for you yours: peace be to you: we do not like the ways of the ignorant!'" (vv. 52-55).

124. That is, "Now when a man from among themselves is reciting to them this Divine Revelation in lucid Arabic, they say that he himself has composed it, and therefore it cannot be from Allah. But if the same Revelation in eloquent Arabic had been sent down by Allah to a non-Arab as a miracle, and he had

recited it before them in perfect Arabic accent, they would have invented some other excuse for not believing in him. They would have said that he is under the power and influence of a jinn, who speaks Arabic through a non-Arab." As a matter of fact, a lover of the truth considers the thing presented before him coolly and forms an opinion about it after due thought. But an obdurate person who is unwilling to believe, pays no attention to it at all, but instead seeks all sorts of excuses to reject it, and will, in any case, invent an excuse for his denial. This obduracy of the unbelieving Quraish has been exposed over and over again in the Qur'ān, and they have been clearly told that even if a miracle were shown to them, they would certainly have found an excuse to deny it because they are not inclined to believe: "O Messenger, even if We had sent down to you a Book written on paper, and even if they had touched it with their own hands, the disbelievers would have said, 'This is nothing but manifest sorcery'." (Al-An'ām: 7). "Even if We had opened a gate for them in heaven, and they had begun to ascend through it, they would have said, 'Our eyes have been dazzled; nay, we have been bewitched'" (Al-Hijr: 14-15).

125. That is, unlike the truth-loving people to whom the Qur'ān brings peace of the mind and heart, it passes like a hot iron rod through the hearts of the disbelievers, which sets them ill at ease, and they, instead of pondering over its themes, start looking for subterfuges to deny it.

يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِهٖ حَتّٰى يَرَوُا الْعَذَابَ الْاَلِيْمَ ﴿201﴾ فَيَاْتِيَهُمْ بَغْتَةً وَّهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿202﴾
فَيَقُوْلُوْا هَلْ نَحْنُ مُنْظَرُوْنَ ﴿203﴾ اَفَبِعَذَابِنَا يَسْتَعْجِلُوْنَ ﴿204﴾ اَفَرَءَيْتَ اِنْ مَّتَّعْنٰهُمْ
سِنِيْنَ ﴿205﴾ ثُمَّ جَآءَهُمْ مَّا كَانُوْا يُوْعَدُوْنَ ﴿206﴾ مَآ اَغْنٰى عَنْهُمْ مَّا كَانُوْا يُمَتَّعُوْنَ ﴿207﴾
وَمَآ اَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ اِلَّا لَهَا مُنْذِرُوْنَ ﴿208﴾ ذِكْرٰى ۛ وَمَا كُنَّا ظٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿209﴾ وَمَا
تَنَزَّلَتْ بِهِ الشَّيٰطِيْنُ ﴿210﴾ وَمَا يَنْۢبَغِيْ لَهُمْ وَمَا يَسْتَطِيْعُوْنَ ﴿211﴾ اِنَّهُمْ عَنِ السَّمْعِ
لَمَعْزُوْلُوْنَ ﴿212﴾ فَلَا تَدْعُ مَعَ اللّٰهِ اِلٰهًا اٰخَرَ فَتَكُوْنَ مِنَ الْمُعَذَّبِيْنَ ﴿213﴾ وَاَنْذِرْ
عَشِيْرَتَكَ الْاَقْرَبِيْنَ ﴿214﴾ وَاخْفِضْ جَنَاحَكَ لِمَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿215﴾
فَاِنْ عَصَوْكَ فَقُلْ اِنِّيْ بَرِيْٓءٌ مِّمَّا تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿216﴾ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى الْعَزِيْزِ الرَّحِيْمِ ﴿217﴾
الَّذِيْ يَرٰىكَ حِيْنَ تَقُوْمُ ﴿218﴾ وَتَقَلُّبَكَ فِي السّٰجِدِيْنَ ﴿219﴾ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿220﴾
هَلْ اُنَبِّئُكُمْ عَلٰى مَنْ تَنَزَّلُ الشَّيٰطِيْنُ ﴿221﴾ تَنَزَّلُ عَلٰى كُلِّ اَفَّاكٍ اَثِيْمٍ ﴿222﴾
يُّلْقُوْنَ السَّمْعَ وَاَكْثَرُهُمْ كٰذِبُوْنَ ﴿223﴾ وَالشُّعَرَآءُ يَتَّبِعُهُمُ الْغَاوٗنَ ﴿224﴾ اَلَمْ تَرَ
اَنَّهُمْ فِيْ كُلِّ وَادٍ يَّهِيْمُوْنَ ﴿225﴾ وَاَنَّهُمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ مَا لَا يَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿226﴾ اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ
اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ وَذَكَرُوا اللّٰهَ كَثِيْرًا وَّانْتَصَرُوْا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا
ظُلِمُوْا ۭ وَسَيَعْلَمُ الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْٓا اَيَّ مُنْقَلَبٍ يَّنْقَلِبُوْنَ ﴿227﴾

they do not believe in it until they see the painful torment.[126] Then, when it overtakes them unawares, they say, "May we be given some respite ?"[127] 201-203

Are these people clamouring for Our torment to be hastened ? Have you considered that even if We grant them the respite to enjoy life for years, and then there comes down on them that with which they are being threatened, the provisions of life that they have got, will not avail them anything ?[128] 204-207

(Note it that) We have never destroyed a habitation unless it had its warners to administer admonition; and We have never been unjust.[129] 208-209

This (lucid Book) has not been brought down by satans,[130] nor does this work behove them,[131] nor are they able to do it.[132] They have indeed been kept out of its hearing.[133] 210-212

So, O Muhammad, do not invoke any other deity besides Allah lest you should also be included among those who will be chastised.[134] Warn your nearest kinsfolk[135] and treat with kindness those of the believers who follow you, but if they disobey, tell them: "I am not responsible for what you do."[136] And put your trust in the Mighty and Merciful One,[137] Who watches you when you get up,[138] and when you move about among those who prostrate themselves in worship.[139] He is indeed All-Hearing, All-Knowing. 213-220

O people, shall I tell you upon whom the satans come down? They come down upon every sinning forgerer:[140] they whisper hearsay into ears, and most of them are liars.[141] 221-223

As for the poets, they have the erring people to follow them.[142] Do you not see that they stray aimlessly in every valley?[143] and say that which they do not practise themselves.[144] save those who believed and did good works and remembered Allah much, and when they were treated unjustly, they only defended themselves (and did not show vindictiveness)[145].—And the iniquitous people will soon come to know what punishment awaits them.[146] 224-227

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126. The kind of torment with which the tribes and communities mentioned above were punished.

Contd. from p.501]

127. That is, "Until the criminals are actually overtaken by the torment, they do not believe in the Prophet. Then they feel remorse and desire to be given some respite when it is too late."

128. There is a subtle gap between this and the preceding sentence, which the reader himself can fill with a little thinking. They were asking for the torment to be hastened because they were not sure that it would ever come. They were confident that they would continue living a life of ease and indulgence as they had been living till then. On account of the same confidence they challenged the Holy Prophet, as if to say, "If you are a Messenger of Allah, and we deserve to be chastised by Allah because we have treated you as a liar, then you should hasten that torment on us, with which you threaten us." At this it is being said, "Well, even if they be right in their confidence, and the torment is not sent upon them immediately, and they are allowed a long respite to enjoy life as they expect, the question is: What will these few years of worldly pleasure and comfort avail them when the inevitable scourge from Allah overtakes them suddenly as it overtook the 'Ād and the Thamūd, or the people of Lot and of Aiykah, or if they are visited by death which nobody can escape ?"

129. That is, "We could not be blamed for any injustice when they did not heed the warning and admonition of the warners and were destroyed. It would have been injustice if no effort had been made to admonish them and guide them aright prior to their destruction."

130. After the positive aspect as stated in vv. 192-193, the negative aspect is being stated that the Qur'ān has not been brought down by satans as the enemies of the Truth allege. The unbelieving Quraish in their campaign to spread lies and slander against the Holy Prophet were facing a real difficulty. They did not know how to account for the wonderful discourses which were being presented before the people in the form of the Qur'ān and which were moving their hearts deeply. They could not stop the Qur'ān from reaching the people. The only thing they could do to counteract its effect and influence was to create doubts and suspicions about it in their minds and hearts. Therefore, in their desperation they charged that Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) was a sorcerer, who was being inspired by the satans, and they considered this charge of theirs to be the most effective because it could neither be easily verified nor refuted.

131. That is, these revelations and themes do not at all suit the satans. Any person who has a little common sense can well understand that the sublime discourses being presented in the Qur'ān cannot be inspired by the satans. Never has it happened that the satans might have taught the people through the sorcerers to worship God and fear Him, or forbidden them from *shirk* and idol-worship, or warned them of the accountability of the Hereafter, or prohibited them from

tyranny and sexual and moral evils, and exhorted them instead to act righteously and do good to others. Such works cannot behove the satans. Their only pastime can be to sow the seeds of discord among the people and to arouse them to mischief and vice. The common observation is that people visit the sorcerers to find out whether they will succeed in their love affairs or not, what move would suit them in gambling, what trick and stratagem would be helpful against the enemy, or who had stolen the camel of so and so. Apart from such affairs and problems, the sorcerers and their patron-saints cannot be expected to worry themselves about matters like reforming the people, teaching them morals and cleansing their lives of vice and evil.

132. That is, even if the satans wanted they could not impart Truth and Goodness to the people like a true teacher and reformer as the Qur'ān does. Even if to deceive the people, they came out under the guise of a benefactor, their work would not be free from blemishes, which would betray their ignorance and their hidden satanic nature. Similarly the life and the teachings of a person who poses to be a religious guide, under the influence and inspiration of satans, would inevitably reflect the wickedness of intention and design. Thus the satans can neither inspire others with piety and goodness, nor can those, who have any relation with the satans, become pious and righteous themselves. Then in addition to its high and noble teachings, the Qur'ān is a lucid and eloquent Book, which contains the knowledge of Reality. That is why it has over and over again put forward the challenge that human beings and jinns would never be able to produce a book like the Qur'ān even if they collaborated with all their energies and capacities. "Declare this: Even if human beings and jinns should cooperate with one another to bring forth a book like the Qur'ān, they will never be able to bring anything like it, even though all of them help one another" (Banī Isrā'īl: 88).

"Tell them: if what you say be true, then produce one Sūrah like this, and you may call to your assistance anyone you can other than Allah." (Yūnus: 38).

133. That is, "Not to speak of interfering with the revelation of the Qur'ān, the satans are not even given a chance to hear the Qur'ān any moment from the time Angel Gabriel receives it from Allah till he reveals it to the heart of the Holy Prophet. They are so kept out of its hearing that they cannot get any hint as to its words and contents so as to tell their friends that the Holy Prophet was going to give such and such a message to his followers, or that his address would contain such and such a thing that day. For further details see E. N.'s 8 to 12 of Al-Ḥijr, E.N.'s 5 to 7 of As -Sāffāt and Sūrah Jinn: 8-9-27.

134. This does not mean that the Holy Prophet was going to be involved in *shirk* from which he was to be admonished to desist. The object was to warn the disbelievers and polytheists to the effect: "As the message of the Qur'ān is based

on pure Truth revealed by the Almighty Ruler of the universe, and there is no tinge of any satanic impurity in it, there could be no question of showing a favour to somebody in regard to the Truth. Even if the Holy Messenger himself, who is nearest to Allah and His most beloved servant, deviated a little from the path of His obedience and invoked any other deity than Allah, he could not escape the punishment." When it was so in the case of the Holy Prophet, who else could have the hope that after committing *shirk* with regard to Allah, he would be able to escape the punishment or help others to escape it.

135. Just as there could be no concession or favour for the person of the Prophet in a matter concerning Allah's religion, so there could be no question of a favour being shown to the Prophet's family or his nearest kinsfolk. Here the case of everybody will be judged on merit, and nobody will be shown any favour on account of his ancestry or relation with somebody else. The accountability of the Hereafter and punishment for deviation and misdeeds are the same for everybody and even the Prophet's nearest kinsfolk are no exception. Therefore, the Holy Prophet was commanded to warn his relatives and kindred to attain the right belief and to act righteously because they would not escape punishment only by virtue of being his relations.

There are authentic Traditions to show that after the revelation of this verse, the Holy Prophet first of all addressed the sons and daughters of his grandfather. Calling each one of them by name, he said: "O children of 'Abdul Muṭṭalib, O 'Abbās, O Ṣafiah, paternal aunt of Allah's Messenger, O Fāṭimah, daughter of Muḥammad! You are warned to beware and save yourselves from the torment of the Hell-Fire: I cannot protect you from Allah's punishment; you may, however, demand whatever you like from my worldly property." Then as was the custom in Arabia, to warn the people of an impending calamity, he stood on top of Mount Ṣafā one morning and called out: "O people of Quraish, O children of Ka'b bin Luayy, O children of Murrah, O children of Qaṣayy, O children of 'Abd Manāf, O children of 'Abd Shams, O children of Hāshim, O children of 'Abdul Muṭṭalib....", and in this way he called out each branch and clan of the Quraish by name. When all the people had got together, he said, "O People, if I tell you that on the other side of this hill, there is a huge army ready to attack you, will you believe my word?" With one voice they replied in the affirmative, saying that they had never heard a lie from him in the past. Thereupon the Holy Prophet said, "Well, I warn you of the impending scourge of Allah: save yourselves from His punishment: I cannot be of any help to you against Him. On the Day of Resurrection, the righteous only will be nearest to me. Let it not happen that others should come forth with good deeds and you should appear with the burden of sins on your heads. Then you will call me for help, but I shall be constrained to turn my face away from you. Of course, here in this world, I am bound to you by

blood relations, and I shall treat you with all possible politeness as a good relation should." (Several Traditions on this subject have been reported in Bukhāri, Muslim, Musnad Aḥmad, Tirmizī, Ibn Jarīr on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, Ḥaḍrat Abu Huraīrah, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, Ḥaḍrat Zubair bin 'Amr and Ḥaḍrat Qabīsah bin Makhāriq).

The matter was not simply this that on receipt of the Command to "warn your nearest kinsfolk", the Holy Prophet called together all his relatives and complied with it. In fact, the principle it meant to stress was that in the matter of religion the Prophet and his relations enjoyed no special privilege of which the other people might be deprived. What was harmful for one man, was harmful for everybody. The Prophet was supposed to first protect himself from this and then warn his nearest kinsfolk and the common people of its fatal consequences. On the other hand, what was good and beneficial for one man, was good and beneficial for all. As such, the Prophet should first adopt it himself and then exhort his relatives also to adopt it, so that everybody may see that the Prophet does not only preach his message to others but practises it himself also sincerely. The Holy Prophet followed this principle throughout his life. On the conquest of Makkah, when he entered the city, he declared: "Every kind of interest payable from the people during the age of ignorance, is trampled under my feet, and first of all, I remit the interest payable to my uncle 'Abbās." (It should be noted that before the prohibition of interest, Ḥaḍrat 'Abbās traded money on interest, and a substantial amount of interest payable to him at that time was outstanding against the people). Once the Holy Prophet ordered cutting off of the hand of a Quraishite woman, named Fāṭimah, on the charge of theft. Ḥaḍrat Usāmah bin Zaid came to intercede for her, whereupon the Holy Prophet said: "By God, even if Fatimah, daughter of Muḥammad, had committed the theft, I would have ordered amputation of her hand, too."

136. This can have two meanings: (1) "Treat those of your relatives with kindness, who have believed in you and followed your teachings practically; as for those who have not accepted your message, you may declare that you are not responsible for what they do." (2) "You should treat with kindness every such person, who believes in and obeys you, and you should warn every unbeliever that you take no responsibility for his actions."

This verse shows that at that time there were some people among the Quraish and the neighbouring Arabs, who had believed in the truth of the Holy Prophet's message; but they had not as yet started obeying his teachings practically. They were still, as usual, living the same life of unbelief among their people as were the other unbelievers. Allah set apart such believers from those true Believers who after belief had adopted total obedience of the Holy Prophet. The

Command "to treat with kindness" was meant only for the latter group. As for those who had turned away from his obedience, and who included both those who believed in the truth of his message and those who rejected it, the Holy Prophet was instructed to disown them, and tell them plainly that they themselves were responsible for their deeds, and that after giving them the warning he was not at all responsible for what they did.

137. That is, "You should not care at all for any worldly power, howsoever big and strong, but should continue to perform your mission with complete trust in that Being Who is Mighty as well as Merciful. He is Mighty and, therefore, anybody enjoying His support, cannot be overcome by any other power; He is Merciful and, therefore, He will not let go waste the sacrifices and efforts of the one who struggles for the sake of raising His Word in the world."

138. "Getting up" may mean getting up for the Prayers during the night, or coming out for the purpose of performing the Prophetic Mission.

139. This can have several meanings: (1) Allah watches you when in the congregational Prayers you stand and sit and perform *Rukū'* and *Sajdah* with your followers behind you. (2) He watches you when you get up in the night to see what your Companions (whose mark of distinction is that "they prostrate themselves in worship") are doing for their own well-being in the Hereafter. (3) He is fully aware of how you and your Companions are endeavouring to reform the people. (4) He is fully aware of all your efforts to revolutionise the lives of the people who "prostrate themselves in worship"; He knows what sort of training you are giving them to reform them; how you have purified their lives and transformed them into the best people.

These characteristics of the Holy Prophet and his Companions have a special significance in the context here. In the first place, the Holy Prophet deserves Allah's Mercy and His Support for Allah, being All-Hearing and All-Knowing, is fully aware of the struggle he is waging for His cause and of the efforts he is making to reform his Companions; Secondly, when a person is living such a noble life as Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) is actually living, and the characteristics of his followers are those which Muhammad's Companions have, only an idiot can have the boldness to say that he is inspired by the satans, or that he is a poet. People are fully aware of the lives of the sorcerers who are inspired by the satans and also of the poets and their admirers living among them. Can anybody honestly say that there is no difference whatever between the noble life being led by Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and his Companions and the sort of life being led by the poets and the sorcerers? Then, what is it if not sheer impudence that the former are openly being branded as poets and sorcerers without any shame?

140. This implies the sorcerers, astrologers, fortune-tellers and conjurers who pose as knowers of the unseen and tell the people their future, or as wise men who have control over jinns and spirits and can make the destinies of the people through them.

141. This may have two meanings: (1) The satans somehow get a little hint of the truth and inspire their agents with it, mixing it with all kinds of falsehood; and (2) the deceitful, unscrupulous sorcerers hear something from the satans and then mixing it with falsehood, whisper it into the people's ears. This has been explained in a Tradition which Bukhārī has quoted on the authority of Hadrat 'Ā'ishah. She says that when some people asked the Holy Prophet about sorcerers, he replied that they were nothing. They said, "O Messenger of Allah, they, sometimes, tell the right thing" The Holy Prophet answered, "That right thing is overheard by the jinns who whisper it into their friend's ear, who concocts a story by mixing a lot of falsehood in it."

142. That is, the people who follow and accompany the poets, are wholly different in their characteristics, habits and temper from those who follow and accompany Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). The difference between the two groups is so obvious that one group can be easily distinguished from the other. On the one side, there are the people who are characterised by the high seriousness, civilized and gentle behaviour, righteousness and fear of God, sense of responsibility and a high regard for the rights of others; people who are fair and just in their dealings, who do not utter a word except in the cause of goodness, who have a high and pure ideal before them, which they pursue with single-minded devotion and for whose attainment they expend all their energies and capabilities. On other side, there are the people whose only pastime is to portray erotic scenes of love and wine-drinking, mocking and jesting, satirizing and eulogizing, or to arouse feelings of hatred and enmity and vengeance against others, or to describe charms of unchaste women to the brothel or of chaste ladies in the houses, only for the sake of pleasing the people and winning their applause. From the crowds who throng the poetic sessions and follow the "famous" poets, one cannot help forming the impression that those people are free from every moral restriction, who have no object in life except to gratify the lusts of the flesh like animals, and who have no idea whatever of the higher and nobler ideals and ends of life. The person who cannot see the obvious difference between the two types is indeed blind. But if in spite of seeing and knowing the difference, only for the purpose of suppressing the Truth, he says that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and his Companions are no different from the poets and their followers, he is not only a liar but has also transgressed all bounds of modesty and decency.

143. That is, they follow no fixed pattern for their thought and speech, but wander aimlessly in every valley. Every new impulse makes them take up a new theme regardless as to whether it has any truth in it or not. Under one momentary impulse they would start uttering wise things; under another they would give expression to filthy and base feelings. If they felt pleased with somebody, they would exaggerate his praises, and if they felt offended by him, they would condemn him and run him down to hell. If they had a selfish motive, attached with somebody, they would feel no hesitation in giving preference to a miserly person over a generous person and to a cowardly person over a gallant person. On the contrary, if they felt displeased with somebody, they would not feel any shame in blotting his character and ridiculing him and his ancestors. That is why, one can find God-worship and atheism, materialism and spiritualism, morality and immorality, piety and filthiness, seriousness and jesting, eulogy and satire expressed side by side in the poetry of one and the same poet. A person who is aware of these well known characteristics of the poets cannot reconcile himself to charging the recipient of the Qur'ān with poetry, whose every discourse and word is clear and precise, whose objective is clearly defined, and who has never in his life uttered a word deviating in any way from the path of truth, righteousness and virtue.

At another place in the Qur'ān, it has been stated that poetry is not suited to the temperament of the Holy Prophet: "We have not taught him poetry, nor does it suit him." (Yā Sīn: 69). And this fact was fully known to the people who had any personal acquaintance with the Holy Prophet. Authentic Traditions show that he could not recite a complete verse from memory. If ever during conversation he remembered of a good verse of some poet, he would recite it without much care and regard for its metre and order of words.

Once Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah was asked whether the Holy Prophet ever made use of poetic verses in his discourses. She replied that he hated poetic verses the most, though sometimes he would recite a verse of a poet of Banī Quais, but in so doing he would unconsciously change the order of its words. When Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr corrected him, he would say, "Brother, I am not a poet, nor composing poetry is my object." Arabic poetry abounded in themes of sex and love romances, wine-drinking, tribal hatreds and feuds, ancestral pride and vanity and made little or no mention of pure and noble themes. It was so saturated with falsehood, exaggeration, false accusations, undue praises, vanity, satiric invectives, jesting and polytheistic obscenities that the Holy Prophet once remarked: "It is better that the interior of one of you be filled with pus than with poetic verses" However, if there was something good in a verse, he would appreciate it, and say, "Some verses are based on wisdom." When he heard the verses of Umayyah bin Abi-Salt, he said, "His verse is a believer but his heart a disbeliever." Once a Companion

recited a hundred or so good verses before him, and he went on urging him to recite more.

144. This characteristic of the poets was just the antithesis of the Holy Prophet's conduct and practice. Everybody knew that the Holy Prophet said what he practised and practised what he said. The fact that there was complete conformity between his word and deed, could not be denied by anybody. On the contrary, everyone was well aware that the poets said one thing and practised just the opposite of it. For instance, they would express noble themes of generosity, indifference to worldly wealth, contentment and self-respect in their poetry, but, in practical life, they would turn out to be extremely stingy and cowardly, avaricious and selfish. They would find fault with others on trifles, but would themselves be involved in grave moral weaknesses.

145. Here those poets have made an exception from the general reproach, who possess the following four characteristics:

(1) They should be believers in Allah, His Prophets, His Books and the Hereafter.

(2) They should be pious in practical life and not sinners, nor free from moral restrictions to say whatever they like.

(3) They should be remembering Allah much in their day to day lives as well as in their literary work. It should not be so that their personal lives reflect God-consciousness and piety, but their poetry is replete with themes of debauchery and lusts of the flesh, or that their poetry is full of serious themes of wisdom and God-consciousness, but their personal lives are devoid of any trace of the remembrance of Allah. As a matter of fact, both these states are equally despicable. A good poet is he who is God-conscious in his personal life and whose poetic talent and skills also are devoted to the advancement of the way of life followed by the God-conscious, God-fearing and God-worshipping people.

(4) They should not satirize others for personal reasons, nor take vengeance on others on account of personal, racial and national prejudices, but when they are required to support the truth, they should use their literary powers like weapons of war against the unjust and treacherous people. It does not behove the believers to adopt a humble, supplicating attitude against injustice and oppression. Traditions show that when the unbelieving and *mushrik* poets raised a storm of false accusations against Islam and the Holy Prophet and spread the poison of hatred against the Muslims, the Holy Prophet urged and encouraged the poets of Islam to counter attack them. Once he said to Ka'b bin Mālik, "Satirize them, for, I swear by God in Whose hand is my soul, your verse will be more effective and

damaging for them than the arrow." Likewise he said to Ḥassān bin Thābit, "Deal with them and Gabriel is with you". And, "Say and the Holy Spirit is with you." Once he said, "The believer fights with the sword as well as with the tongue."

146. "The iniquitous people": The people who out of sheer obduracy calumniated the Holy Prophet of being a sorcerer, poet and a mad and enchanted man, in order to defeat Islam, and to confuse the other people and distract them from his message and invitation.



XXVII

AN-NAML

اَلنَّمل

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XXVII
AN-NAML
سورة النمل

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from the phrase *wād-in-namel* which occurs in verse 18, implying that it is a Sūrah in which the story of An-Naml (the Ant) has been related.

Period of Revelation

The subject-matter and the style bear full resemblance with the Sūrahs of the middle Makkan period and this is supported by traditions as well. According to Ibn 'Abbās and Jābir bin Zaid, "First the Sūrah Ash-Shu'arāa' was sent down, then the Sūrah An-Naml and then Al-Qaṣaṣ."

Theme and Topics

The Sūrah consists of two discourses, the first from the beginning of the Sūrah to the end of verse 58, and the second from verse 59 to the end of the Sūrah.

The theme of the first discourse is that only those people can benefit from the guidance of the Qur'ān and become worthy of the good promises made in it, who accept the realities which this Book presents as the basic realities of the universe, and then follow up their belief with obedience and submission in their practical lives as well. But the greatest hindrance for man to follow this way is the denial of the Hereafter. For it makes him irresponsible, selfish and given to worldly life, which in turn makes it impossible for him to submit himself before God and to accept the moral restrictions on his lusts and desires. After this introduction three types of character have been presented.

The first type is characterised by Pharaoh and the chiefs of Thamūd and the rebels of the people of Lot, who were all heedless of the accountability of the Hereafter and had consequently become the slaves of the world. These people did not believe even after seeing the miracles. Rather they turned against those who invited them to goodness and piety. They persisted in their evil ways which are held in abhorrence by every sensible person. They did not heed the admonition even until a moment before they were overtaken by the scourge of Allah.

The second type of character is of the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him), who had been blessed by God with wealth and kingdom and grandeur to an extent undreamt of by the chiefs of the disbelievers of Makkah. But, since he regarded himself as answerable before God and had the feeling that whatever he had was only due to Allah's bounty, he had adopted the attitude of obeisance before Him and there was no tinge of vanity in his character.

The third type is of the queen of Sheba, who ruled over a most wealthy and well-known people in the history of Arabia. She possessed all those means of life, which could cause a person to become vain and conceited. Her wealth and possessions far exceeded the wealth and possessions of the Quraish. Then she professed *shirk*, which was not

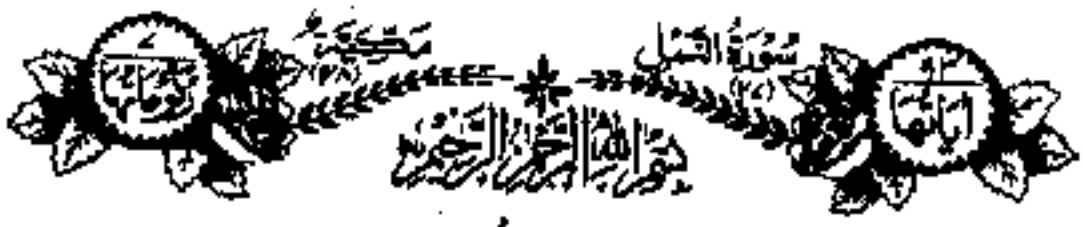
only an ancestral way of life with her, but she had to follow it in order to maintain her position as a ruler. Therefore, it was much more difficult for her to give up *shirk* and adopt the way of *Tauḥīd* than it could be for a common *mushrik*. But when the Truth became evident to her, nothing could stop her from accepting it. Her deviation was, in fact, due to her being born and brought up in a polytheistic environment and not because of her being a slave to her lusts and desires. Her conscience was not devoid of the sense of accountability before God.

In the second discourse, at the outset, attention has been drawn to some of the most glaring and visible realities of the universe, and the disbelievers of Makkah have been asked one question after the other to the effect: "Do these realities testify to the creed of *shirk* which you are following, or to the truth of *Tauḥīd* to which the Qur'ān invites you?" After this the real malady of the disbelievers has been pointed out, saying, "The thing which has blinded them and made them insensitive to every glaring reality is their denial of the Hereafter. This same thing has rendered every matter and affair of life non-serious for them. For, when according to them, everything has to become dust ultimately, and the whole struggle of life is purposeless and without an object before it, the truth and falsehood are equal and alike. Therefore, the question whether one's system of life is based on the right or wrong foundations, becomes meaningless for him."

But the discourse, as outlined above, is not meant to dissuade the Prophet and the Muslims from calling the obdurate and heedless people to the way of *Tauḥīd;* it is, in fact, intended *to* arouse them from their slumber. That is why in vv. 67-93 certain things have been said repeatedly in order to produce in the people a sense of the Hereafter, to warn them of the consequences of being heedless of it, and to convince them of its coming, like an eye witness of something, who convinces the other person of it, who has not seen it.

In conclusion, the real invitation of the Qur'ān, that is, the invitation to serve One Allah alone, has been presented in a concise but forceful manner, and the people warned that accepting it would be to their own advantage and rejecting it to their own disadvantage. For if

they deferred their faith until they saw those Signs of God after the appearance of which they would be left with no choice but to believe and submit, they should bear in mind the fact that that would be the time of judgement and believing then would be of no avail.



طٰسٓ تِلْكَ اٰيٰتُ الْقُرْاٰنِ وَكِتَابٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ۙ هُدًى وَّ بُشْرٰى لِلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ۙ
الَّذِيْنَ يُقِيْمُوْنَ الصَّلٰوةَ وَيُؤْتُوْنَ الزَّكٰوةَ وَهُمْ بِالْاٰخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوْقِنُوْنَ ۚ
اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْاٰخِرَةِ زَيَّنَّا لَهُمْ اَعْمَالَهُمْ فَهُمْ يَعْمَهُوْنَ ۗ

XXVII

AN-NAML

النمل

Verses: 93

Revealed at Makkah

In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

Ṭā. Sīn. These are the verses of the Qur'ān and the lucid Book,[1] a guidance and good news[2] for those believers who establish the *Ṣalāt* and pay the *Zakāt*,[3] and they are the ones who fully believe in the Hereafter.[4] The fact is that We have made the misdeeds of those who deny the Hereafter seem fair to them; therefore, they stray about blindly.[5] 1-4

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1. *Kitāb-i-mubīn* has three meanings: (1) This book presents its teachings and instructions and injunctions plainly; (2) it distinguishes between the Truth and falsehood clearly; and (3) its being a Divine Book is obvious: whoever studies it with open eyes will realize that it has not been composed and forged by the Holy Prophet himself.

2. That is, the verses themselves are a "guidance" and "good news", because they give guidance and convey good news in a most excellent manner.

3. That is, "These verses of the Qur'ān give guidance and convey the good news of a good end only to those people who possess these two qualities: (1) They should affirm faith, that is, accept the invitation of the Qur'ān and the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), believe in One

[Contd. on p.522

أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَهُمْ سُوءُ الْعَذَابِ وَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ هُمُ الْأَخْسَرُونَ ﴿٥﴾ وَ
إِنَّكَ لَتُلَقَّى الْقُرْآنَ مِن لَّدُنْ حَكِيمٍ عَلِيمٍ ﴿٦﴾ إِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِأَهْلِهِ إِنِّي
آنَسْتُ نَارًا ۖ سَآتِيكُم مِّنْهَا بِخَبَرٍ أَوْ آتِيكُم بِشِهَابٍ قَبَسٍ لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَصْطَلُونَ ﴿٧﴾
فَلَمَّا جَاءَهَا نُودِيَ أَن بُورِكَ مَن فِي النَّارِ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا ۖ وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ
رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٨﴾ يَا مُوسَىٰ إِنَّهُ أَنَا اللَّهُ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٩﴾ وَأَلْقِ عَصَاكَ ۚ فَلَمَّا
رَآهَا تَهْتَزُّ كَأَنَّهَا جَانٌّ وَلَّىٰ مُدْبِرًا وَلَمْ يُعَقِّبْ ۚ يَا مُوسَىٰ لَا تَخَفْ ۖ إِنِّي
لَا يَخَافُ لَدَيَّ الْمُرْسَلُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ إِلَّا مَن ظَلَمَ ثُمَّ بَدَّلَ حُسْنًا بَعْدَ سُوءٍ
فَإِنِّي غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١١﴾ وَأَدْخِلْ يَدَكَ فِي جَيْبِكَ تَخْرُجْ بَيْضَاءَ مِنْ غَيْرِ
سُوءٍ ۖ فِي تِسْعِ آيَاتٍ إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَقَوْمِهِ ۚ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمًا فَاسِقِينَ ﴿١٢﴾ فَلَمَّا
جَاءَتْهُمْ آيَاتُنَا مُبْصِرَةً قَالُوا هَٰذَا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿١٣﴾ وَجَحَدُوا بِهَا وَاسْتَيْقَنَتْهَا
أَنفُسُهُمْ ظُلْمًا وَعُلُوًّا ۚ فَانظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿١٤﴾ وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا
دَاوُودَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ عِلْمًا ۖ وَقَالَا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي فَضَّلَنَا عَلَىٰ كَثِيرٍ مِّنْ عِبَادِهِ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٥﴾ وَوَرِثَ سُلَيْمَانُ دَاوُودَ وَقَالَ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ عُلِّمْنَا مَنطِقَ الطَّيْرِ
وَأُوتِينَا مِن كُلِّ شَيْءٍ ۖ إِنَّ هَٰذَا لَهُوَ الْفَضْلُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿١٦﴾ وَحُشِرَ لِسُلَيْمَانَ
جُنُودُهُ مِنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنسِ وَالطَّيْرِ فَهُمْ يُوزَعُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَتَوْا عَلَىٰ
وَادِ النَّمْلِ ۙ قَالَتْ نَمْلَةٌ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّمْلُ ادْخُلُوا مَسَاكِنَكُمْ ۖ لَا يَحْطِمَنَّكُمْ
سُلَيْمَانُ وَجُنُودُهُ ۙ وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ فَتَبَسَّمَ ضَاحِكًا مِّن قَوْلِهَا وَقَالَ
رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَىٰ وَالِدَيَّ وَأَنْ
أَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضَاهُ وَأَدْخِلْنِي بِرَحْمَتِكَ فِي عِبَادِكَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١٩﴾ وَ

They are the ones for whom there is an evil chastisement,[6] and in the Hereafter they shall be the worst losers. And (O Muhammad), you are most surely receiving this Qur'ān from the One, Who is All-Wise, All-Knowing.[7] 5-6

(Tell them the story of the time) when Moses said to the people of his house,[8] "I have seen a fire: I may either bring some information from there or a burning brand so that you may warm yourselves."[9] When he came to it, a voice called out:[10] "Blessed is He Who is in the fire and the one who is around it. Glorified is Allah, Lord of the worlds.[11] O Moses, this is I, Allah, the Almighty, the All-Wise: Just cast down your staff." No sooner did Moses see the staff writhing like a snake[12] than he turned about and fled, without even looking behind. "O Moses, fear not: the Messengers never feel afraid in My Presence,[13] unless, of course, someone has committed an offence.[14] Then, if after the evil, he changed (his act) into a good one, I am indeed All-Forgiving, All-Merciful.[15] And just put your hand into your bosom: it will come out shining, without any hurt. These (two Signs) are from among the nine Signs (you will take)[16] to Pharaoh and his people: they are indeed a very wicked people." 7-12

But when Our clear Signs came before those people, they said, "This is plain magic." They rejected those Signs out of sheer injustice and vanity, whereas in their heart of hearts they were convinced.[17] See, then, what fate those mischief-makers met. 13-14

(On the other hand,) We gave knowledge to David and Solomon,[18] and they said, "Praise is for Allah Who exalted us above many of His believing servants."[19] And Solomon succeeded David,[20] and he said, "O people, we have been taught the speech of the birds,[21] and we have been granted all sorts of things.[22] This is indeed a great favour (of Allah)." For Solomon were gathered hosts of jinn and men and birds,[23] which were kept under strict discipline. (Once he was marching in an expedition with them) until when they came to the valley of the ants, an ant said, "O ants, get into your holes lest Solomon and his hosts should trample you down without even knowing it."[24] Hearing its words, Solomon laughed smilingly and said "O My Lord, restrain[25] me so that I may render thanks to Thee for Thy favours which Thou hast bestowed upon me and my parents, and (enable me) to 15-19

do such good works as may please Thee; and admit me, by Thy mercy, among Thy righteous servants."[26]

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God as their only Deity and Lord, accept the Qur'ān as the Book of Allah, acknowledge the Holy Prophet as a true Prophet and their Leader, and also adopt the belief that after this life there is another life, in which man has to render his full account of deeds and be rewarded or punished accordingly. (2) They should not only profess faith verbally, but should also be inclined to follow and obey the Divine Commands practically, and the first indication of this inclination is that they should establish the *Ṣalāt* and pay the *Zakāt*. The verses of the Qur'ān will show the right way of life only to those people who fulfil these two conditions; they will explain to them the difference between the right and the wrong at every stage on the way, protect them against the wrong ways at every turn of the way, and bless them with the satisfaction that whatever be the consequences of following the Right Way in the world, in the Hereafter they will certainly attain the eternal and everlasting success and the goodwill of Allah only through it. For in order to derive full benefit from the teaching of a teacher, one has first to have faith in him, then accept to be his student, and then work according to his instructions. Similarly, a patient who wants to be benefited by a doctor has first to accept him as a physician, and then follow his instructions with regard to medical dosage, prevention, etc. Then only he can assure the patient of the desired results.

Some people have interpreted the words *yu'tūn-az-zakāt* in this verse to mean that they should adopt moral purity. But, wherever in the Qur'ān the word *ītā-i-zakāt* has occurred along with the word *iqāmat-i-ṣalāt*, it means payment of the *Zakāt*, which is the second pillar of Islam after the *Ṣalāt*. Moreover, the Qur'ān has used the word *tazakkā* for adopting piety and purity and not *ītā'* which is specifically used for the payment of the *Zakāt*. In fact, what is meant to be impressed here is this: In order to benefit fully by the guidance of the Qur'ān, it is imperative that one should adopt the attitude of submission and obedience in practical life as well after the affirmation of the Faith, and the establishment of the *Ṣalāt* and the payment of the *Zakāt is* the first indication that one has actually adopted such an attitude. If there is no such indication, it will become obvious that one is rebellious: he might have acknowledged a ruler as such, but he is not inclined to carry out his commands.

4. Although belief in the Hereafter is an article of the Faith, and a believer will also believe in it along with believing in *Tauḥīd* and the Prophethood, here it has been specially mentioned separately in order to bring out its unique importance. The object is to impress that for those people who do not believe in

the Hereafter, it is impossible to follow, even tread, the way taught by the Qur'ān. For the people of this way of thinking naturally determine their criterion of good and evil by the results that appear, in this world. For them it is not possible to accept any admonition or guidance which seeks to determine the good and evil by the criterion of the gain and loss in the Hereafter. Such people in the first instance do not at all heed the teachings of the Prophets, but if for some reason, they also get included among the believers, they find it difficult to take even the initial steps on the way of the Faith and Islam because of the lack of faith in the Hereafter. For as soon as they will encounter the first situation where the demands of the worldly gains and the losses of the Hereafter will pull them in opposite directions, they will freely allow themselves to be pulled towards the worldly gains without caring in the least for the losses of the Hereafter, even though they may be making all sorts of claims to be the believers.

5. That is, "This is God's Law of Nature and the natural logic of human psychology that when man thinks that the results of his life's struggle are confined to this world only, when he does not believe in the existence of any court where his life's work has to be scrutinized and judged finally for good and evil, and when he does not believe in any life hereafter when he will be requited strictly in accordance with the real worth of his life's deeds, he will inevitably develop in himself a material outlook on life, and every kind of conflict between the Truth and falsehood, good and evil, morality and immorality, will appear utterly meaningless to him. Then, whatever earns him pleasure and enjoyment, material progress and prosperity, power and authority, will be the good for him, no matter it be any philosophy of life, any way of life and any system of morality. He will have no concern for truth and reality. His real ambition will be to win successes and earn adornments only of this worldly life, and their pursuit will lead him astray into every valley. Then, whatever he does with this object in view, will be a thing of beauty for him, and he will regard all those others as foolish, who are not absorbed like him in seeking the world, and doing anything and everything without any moral qualm and inhibition.

6. Nothing definite has been said about the form, time and place of this "evil chastisement." For it is imposed in this world also on different persons and groups and nations in countless different ways; a part of it is also experienced by the wicked when they are about to leave the world; man experiences it also in the intermediary state between death and Resurrection; and then after Resurrection it will become endless and everlasting.

7. That is, the things being mentioned in the Qur'ān are not imaginary nor are they based on the presumptions and opinions of a man, but they are being revealed by the One Who is All-Wise and All-Knowing, Who is perfect in Wisdom

and Knowledge, Who has full knowledge of the affairs of His creation and of its past and present and future, and Whose Wisdom devises the best schemes for the reform and guidance of His servants.

8. This happened at the foot of Mount Ṭūr when the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was travelling along with his family in search of a suitable place for settlement, after passing eight to ten years in Madyan (Midian). From Madyan, whose territory lay on both sides of the Gulf of 'Aqabah, on the sea-shores of Arabia and the Sinai Peninsula, he reached the place called Mt. Sinai and Jabal Mūsa in the southern part of the Peninsula, which at the time of the revelation of the Qur'ān was well known as Tūr. (See also *The Meaning of Qur'ān*, Vol. VIII Ash-Shu'arāa', E.N. 115). The details of this story have already been given in Sūrah Ṭā Hā: 9-24 above and will follow in Sūrah Al-Qaṣaṣ: 29-36 below.

9. The context shows that it was a cold wintry night and the Prophet Moses was passing through unfamiliar land. Therefore, he said to his family, "Let me go and find out what habitation it is where a fire is alight, and get some information about the travelling routes and the nearby habitations. I shall at least bring a few embers for you to light a fire and warm yourselves."

The place where the Prophet Moses had seen a burning bush is situated at about 5,000 ft. above sea level at the foot of Mt. Ṭūr. Constantine, the first Christian Emperor of the Roman Empire, had a church built in about 365 A.D. right at the spot where this event had occurred. Two hundred years later Emperor Justinian had a monastery built which included the church built by Constantine as well. Both the monastery and the church stand even today and are under the control of the monks of the Greek Orthodox Church. Some photographs of it are given on the opposite page.

10. According to Al-Qaṣaṣ: 30, the voice was calling out from a tree. What one understands from this is this: A sort of a fire was alight on the ground on the edge of the valley, but neither was anything burning nor any smoke arising. In the midst of the fire there stood a lush green tree from which a voice started calling out this all of a sudden.

This is a strange thing which the Prophets of Allah have been experiencing. When the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (may Allah's peace be upon him) was first blessed with Prophethood, an Angel appeared before him in the solitude of the Cave of Hirā' and started delivering Allah's Message. A similar thing happened with the Prophet Moses also. A journeying person has halted at a place, sees a fire at a distance, approaches it in order to get some information about the route, or to pick a burning ember, and suddenly Allah, Lord of the Worlds, the Infinite, the Inconceivable Being, starts speaking to him. On such

occasions, there exists externally as well as within the Prophets' own selves an extraordinary state which fills them with the assurance that it is not a jinn or a satan or an illusion of their own mind, nor are their senses being deceived, but it is the Lord of the universe, or His Angel, who is speaking to them. (For further explanation, see E.N. 10 of An-Najm).

11. Here the use of the words *Subḥān-Allah* (glorified is Allah) is meant to warn the Prophet Moses to this effect: "You should never think that Allah, Lord of the universe, is sitting in the tree, or has entered into it, or that His absolute Light has concentrated itself into the limited sphere of your sight, or some tongue is functioning in some mouth to produce speech, but it is Allah, Who is Pure and Free from all such limitations, Who is Himself speaking to you."

12. In Sūrahs Al-A'rāf and Ash-Shu'arāa', the snake has been called thu'bān (a large serpent) but here *jāānn*, a small snake. The reason is that in physical size it was a serpent but in movement it was swift like a small snake. The same thing has been expressed by *ḥayyatun tas'ā* (a running snake) in Ṭā Hā: 20.

13. That is, "In My Presence there is no danger of any harm to the Messenger. When I call someone into My Presence to appoint him to the high office of Prophethood, I Myself become responsible for his safety. Therefore, the Messenger should remain fearless and confident in every kind of unusual situation: it will never harm or hurt him in any way."

14. This exception can be contiguous as well as remote. In the first case it will imply that there can be a genuine cause of fear if the Messenger has committed an offence; in the second case it will mean: "None should have any cause of fear in My Presence, unless, of course, someone has committed an offence."

15. That is, "If even an offender repents and reforms himself and does good instead of evil, I will pardon him." This implied both a warning and a good news. The Prophet Moses had killed a Copt inadvertently and fled from Egypt. This was an offence to which a subtle reference was made. When this offence was committed un-intentionally by the Prophet Moses, he had immediately offered repentance to Allah, saying, "O my Lord ! I have sinned against myself, so forgive me." So, "Allah forgave him" there and then. (Al-Qaṣaṣ: 16). Here the good news of the same forgiveness has been given him, as if to say, "O Moses, there could be a genuine cause for you to feel afraid in My Presence, because you had committed an offence, but when you have changed the evil into good, I have nothing but forgiveness and mercy for you. I have not called you here at this time to punish you, but I am going to send you on a great mission with wonderful miracles."

16. According to Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl:101, the Prophet Moses had been granted nine clearly visible Signs, which according to the details given in Al-A'rāf were the following: (1) The staff's turning into a serpent, (2) the shining hand when it was drawn out of the armpit, (3) public triumph over the magicians, (4) occurrence of a widespread famine in the land as foretold by the Prophet Moses; (5) the storm, (6) the locusts, (7) the incidence of weevils in the grain stores and of lice among human beings and animals, (8) the frogs, and (9) the rain of blood. (For explanation, see E.N. 43 of Az Zukhruf).

17. As mentioned at other places in the Qur'ān, whenever a plague befell Egypt as foretold by the Prophet Moses, Pharaoh would say, "O Moses, pray to your Lord to remove this plague; then we shall submit to what you say." But as soon as the plague was removed, Pharaoh would break his promise. (Al-A'rāf: 134, Az-Zukhruf: 49-50). The Bible also has mentioned it (Exod., chs. 8 to 10), and otherwise also it could not be imagined that the occurrence of a famine throughout the country and the coming of a violent storm and the incidence of the locusts and the frogs and the weevils in such abundance could be due to any trick of magic. The miracles were so manifest that even a stupid person could not help realizing that the occurrence of the plagues on such a large scale and their removal at the Prophet's prayer could be only due to Allah, Lord of all Creation's power and authority. That is why the Prophet Moses had told Pharaoh plainly: "You know it full well that none but the Lord of the heavens and the earth has sent down these Signs." (Banī Isrā'īl:102). But the reason why Pharaoh and his chiefs rejected Moses knowingly was: "What! should we believe in these two men who are human beings like ourselves and whose people are our bondsmen?" (Al-Mu'minūn: 47)

18. That is, the knowledge of the Reality, the knowledge that whatever they have is not theirs but the gift of Allah and whatever rights they have been granted over those things should be used strictly according to Allah's will, for they will be held answerable before Allah, the real Owner, for the right and wrong use of those rights. This knowledge is the opposite of the ignorance in which Pharaoh was involved. The type of character built on the ignorance has been presented in the preceding verses. Now, in the following verses, the model of the character built on the knowledge is being presented. The sort of kingdom, wealth, power and grandeur were common on both the sides. The Pharaoh had been given these as well as the Prophets David and Solomon. But the distinction of the ignorance and the knowledge built and moulded them into entirely different personalities.

19. That is, "There were other believing servants as well, who could be blessed with vicegerency. But it is only Allah's favour, not due to any special quality in ourselves, that He has chosen us to be rulers over this kingdom."

20. Succession here does not mean inheritance of wealth and properties, but the succession to the Prophet David in the Prophethood and vicegerency. For the wealth and possessions, if at all transferred, could not be transferred to the Prophet Solomon only, because Prophet David had other children also. Therefore, this verse cannot be cited to refute the *Hadīth* reported from the Holy Prophet, saying, "The inheritance left by us, the Prophets, is not divided as such: whatever we leave behind is charity." *(Bukhārī)* And: "There is no heir to a Prophet. Whatever he leaves behind, is divided among the needy and the indigent of the Muslims." *(Musnad Aḥmad:* Traditions from Abū Bakr, *Aḥādīth* No. 60 and 78).

The Prophet Solomon was the youngest son of the Prophet David. His Hebrew name Solomon is a synonym of *Salīm* (right-minded, affable). He succeeded the Prophet David in 965 B.C. and ruled his kingdom for forty years, till 926 B.C. For other details of his life and works, see E. N.'s 74-75 of Al-Anbiyāa in *The Meaning of the Qur'ān,* Vol. VII). Our commentators have greatly exaggerated the vastness of his kingdom, and have held that he ruled over a large part of the world. The fact, however, is that his kingdom comprised only the present Palestine and Transjordan and a part of Syria. (See Map: Kingdom of the Prophets David and Solomon, *The Meaning of the Qur'ān,* Vol. II, Banī Isrāel E.N. 7).

21. There is no mention in the Bible that the Prophet Solomon had been taught speech of the birds and animals, though the Israelite traditions contain a reference to it. *(Jewish Encyclopedia,* Vol. XI.p. 598)

22. That is, "Allah has bestowed on us all sorts of things." This, however, should not be understood literally; it only means the abundance of the wealth and the means of life granted by Allah. This was not said proudly by Prophet Solomon but only to express his gratitude to Allah for His grace and bounty and favours.

23. The Bible does not either make any mention that there were jinns also in the Prophet Solomon's armies, and he took service from them; but the Talmud and the rabbinical traditions contain details of this. *(Jewish Encyclopedia,* Vol. XI, p. 440). Some of the present-day writers have strained every nerve to prove that the words *jinn* and *ṭair* do not refer to the jinns and birds but to men who performed different duties in the Prophet Solomon's army. They say that the *jinn* imply the people of the mountain tribes whom Prophet Solomon had subdued and who performed feats of great strength and skill under him; and *ṭair* implies cavalry which could move much faster than the infantry. But these are indeed the worst examples of misinterpreting the Qur'ān. The Qur'ān here mentions three distinct kinds of the army consisting of the men, the jinns and the birds, and all the three have been qualified by the prefix *al (alif-lām)* to denote a class. Therefore, *al-jinn*

and *al-ṭair* could not be included in *al-ins* (the men), but could be two separate and different classes from the men. Moreover, a person who has a little acquaintance with Arabic cannot imagine that in this language the mere word *al-jinn* could ever imply a group of the men, or *al-ṭair* troops mounted on horses, nor could any Arab understand these meanings from these words. Calling a man a jinn only figuratively because of some supernatural feat of his, or a woman a fairy because of her beauty, or a fast moving person a bird does not mean that the words *jinn* and fairy and bird will henceforth be taken to mean a powerful man and a beautiful woman and a fast moving person respectively. These are only the metaphoric and not the real meanings of these words. In a discourse, a word is used in its figurative instead of its real meaning, and the listeners also will take it in that meaning, only when there exists in the context a clear pointer to its being figurative. What, after all, is the pointer in the context here from which one may understand that the words *jinn* and *ṭair* have been used not in their real and lexical meaning but in their figurative meaning? Contrary to this, the work and the state of a member each of the two groups that have been mentioned in the following verses, fall entirely against the purport of this interpretation. If a person does not want to believe in something stated in the Qur'ān, he should frankly say that he does not believe in it. But it would be moral cowardice and intellectual dishonesty if one should force the clear words of the Qur'ān to give the meaning that he wants them to give, and tell the world that he believes in what the Qur'ān says, whereas he does not, in fact, believe in it but believes in his own distorted meaning.

24. This verse also has been greatly misconstrued by some commentators of the present day. They say that *wād-in-naml* does not mean "valley of the ants", but it is the name of a valley that was in Syria, and *namlah* does not mean an ant but it is the name of a tribe. Thus, according to them, the verse means this: "When the Prophet Solomon reached the valley of the ants, a Namilite said, 'O people of the Naml tribe ....." But this also is an interpretation which is not supported by the words of the Qur'ān. Even if we took *wād-in-naml* to be the name of a valley and supposed that it was inhabited by the tribe of Banī an-Naml, it would be against the Arabic idiom and usage to speak of a member of the tribe as *namlah*. Although there are many Arab tribes which have been named after the animals, e.g. *Kalb* (dog), *Asad* (lion), etc"., yet no Arab would ever say in respect of a member of the Kalb or the Asad tribe: "A dog said, or a lion said, etc." Therefore, it would be against the Arabic idiom to say in respect of a member of the Naml tribe: "A *namlah* (ant) said this." Then a member of the Naml tribe's warning the people of his tribe, saying, "O Namilites, get into your houses lest Solomon's hosts should trample you down without even knowing it," becomes meaningless. It has never happened that an army of men should have trampled down a group of men without knowing it. If the army has come with the intention

of an attack, it would be useless for the other side to get into their houses, for in that case the invaders would follow them into their houses, and trample them more ruthlessly. And if the army is only on the routine march, it is just enough to clear off the way for it. Human beings may be harmed by the marching columns, but it can never happen that the soldiers on the march would trample down other men without knowing it. Therefore, if Banī an-Naml were a tribe of human beings, and one of its members were to warn his people, then in case of an attack, he would have said, "O Namilites, flee your houses and take refuge in the mountains lest Solomon's armies should destroy you." And in case there was no danger of an attack, he would have said, "O Namilites, clear off the way lest one of you should be harmed by the marching columns of Solomon's armies."

This error in the interpretation is on account of the Arabic idiom and the subject-matter. As for the name of the valley and the tribe of Banī an-Naml inhabiting it, it is a mere hypothesis for which there exists no scientific proof. Those who hold that *wād-in-naml* was the name of a valley have themselves pointed out that it had been so named because of the abundance of ants in it. Qatādah and Muqātil say, "It is a valley in the land of Syria where ants are found in abundance." But in no book of history and geography and in no archaeological research it is mentioned that it was inhabited by a tribe called Banī an-Naml. Thus, it is merely a concoction that has been invented to support one's own interpretation.

This story is also found in the Israelite traditions but its latter portion falls against the Qur'ān as well as against the regal dignity of the Prophet Solomon. According to it, when the Prophet Solomon was passing through a valley which abounded in ants, he heard an ant calling out to the other ants to say, "Get into your holes, otherwise you will be trampled down by Solomon's hosts." At this, Prophet Solomon displayed great vanity before the ant to which the ant rejoined, "What are you?—the product of a mere sperm-drop!" Hearing this the Prophet Solomon felt greatly ashamed. (*Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. XI, p. 440). This shows how the Qur'ān corrects the wrong traditions of the Israelites, and cleanses the filthy spots with which they had themselves branded the characters of their Prophets. It is these traditions about which the Western orientalists shamelessly claim that the Qur'an has plagiarized them for its narratives.

Rationally also it is not at all inconceivable that an ant should warn members of its own species of an impending danger and tell them to get into their holes. As for the question as to how the Prophet Solomon heard it, the answer is: It is not all difficult to understand the crude speech of an ant for a person whose senses can comprehend and receive a subtle message like the Word of Revelation.

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تَفَقَّدَ الطَّيْرَ فَقَالَ مَا لِيَ لَآ أَرَى الْهُدْهُدَ ۖ أَمْ كَانَ مِنَ الْغَآئِبِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾
لَأُعَذِّبَنَّهُۥ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا أَوْ لَأَاذْبَحَنَّهُۥٓ أَوْ لَيَأْتِيَنِّي بِسُلْطَٰنٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٢١﴾ فَمَكَثَ
غَيْرَ بَعِيدٍ فَقَالَ أَحَطتُ بِمَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهِۦ وَجِئْتُكَ مِن سَبَإٍۭ بِنَبَإٍ يَقِينٍ ﴿٢٢﴾
إِنِّي وَجَدتُّ ٱمْرَأَةً تَمْلِكُهُمْ وَأُوتِيَتْ مِن كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَلَهَا عَرْشٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٢٣﴾
وَجَدتُّهَا وَقَوْمَهَا يَسْجُدُونَ لِلشَّمْسِ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ وَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ ٱلشَّيْطَٰنُ
أَعْمَٰلَهُمْ فَصَدَّهُمْ عَنِ ٱلسَّبِيلِ فَهُمْ لَا يَهْتَدُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾ أَلَّا يَسْجُدُوا۟ لِلَّهِ ٱلَّذِي
يُخْرِجُ ٱلْخَبْءَ فِي ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تُخْفُونَ وَمَا تُعْلِنُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾
ٱللَّهُ لَآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ رَبُّ ٱلْعَرْشِ ٱلْعَظِيمِ ﴿٢٦﴾ قَالَ سَنَنظُرُ أَصَدَقْتَ أَمْ كُنتَ
مِنَ ٱلْكَٰذِبِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾ ٱذْهَب بِّكِتَٰبِي هَٰذَا فَأَلْقِهْ إِلَيْهِمْ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ فَٱنظُرْ
مَاذَا يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾ قَالَتْ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلْمَلَؤُا۟ إِنِّيٓ أُلْقِيَ إِلَيَّ كِتَٰبٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٢٩﴾ إِنَّهُۥ مِن
سُلَيْمَٰنَ وَإِنَّهُۥ بِسْمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ ﴿٣٠﴾ أَلَّا تَعْلُوا۟ عَلَيَّ وَأْتُونِي مُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٣١﴾
قَالَتْ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلْمَلَؤُا۟ أَفْتُونِي فِيٓ أَمْرِي مَا كُنتُ قَاطِعَةً أَمْرًا حَتَّىٰ تَشْهَدُونِ ﴿٣٢﴾
قَالُوا۟ نَحْنُ أُو۟لُوا۟ قُوَّةٍ وَأُو۟لُوا۟ بَأْسٍ شَدِيدٍ ۖ وَٱلْأَمْرُ إِلَيْكِ فَٱنظُرِي مَاذَا
تَأْمُرِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾ قَالَتْ إِنَّ ٱلْمُلُوكَ إِذَا دَخَلُوا۟ قَرْيَةً أَفْسَدُوهَا وَجَعَلُوٓا۟ أَعِزَّةَ
أَهْلِهَآ أَذِلَّةً ۖ وَكَذَٰلِكَ يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَإِنِّي مُرْسِلَةٌ إِلَيْهِم بِهَدِيَّةٍ فَنَاظِرَةٌۢ بِمَ
يَرْجِعُ ٱلْمُرْسَلُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾ فَلَمَّا جَآءَ سُلَيْمَٰنَ قَالَ أَتُمِدُّونَنِ بِمَالٍ فَمَآ ءَاتَىٰنِۦَ ٱللَّهُ
خَيْرٌ مِّمَّآ ءَاتَىٰكُم ۖ بَلْ أَنتُم بِهَدِيَّتِكُمْ تَفْرَحُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾ ٱرْجِعْ إِلَيْهِمْ فَلَنَأْتِيَنَّهُمْ بِجُنُودٍ
لَّا قِبَلَ لَهُم بِهَا وَلَنُخْرِجَنَّهُم مِّنْهَآ أَذِلَّةً وَهُمْ صَٰغِرُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾ قَالَ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلْمَلَؤُا۟
أَيُّكُمْ يَأْتِينِي بِعَرْشِهَا قَبْلَ أَن يَأْتُونِي مُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٣٨﴾ قَالَ عِفْرِيتٌ مِّنَ ٱلْجِنِّ

(On another occasion) Solomon reviewed his birds[27] and said, "How is it that I do not see the hoopoe? Has he disappeared somewhere? I will punish him severely, or even slaughter him, unless he presents before me a reasonable excuse."[28] The bird did not take long when it came and said, "I have obtained knowledge of things of which you have no knowledge. I have brought sure information about Sabā.[29] There I have seen a woman ruling over her people: she has been given all sorts of provisions, and she has a splendid throne. I saw that she and her people prostrate themselves before the sun, instead of Allah."[30] ---- Satan[31] made their deeds seem fair to them,[32] and hindered them from the highway: therefore, they do not find the right path that they may prostrate themselves before that God Who brings to light the hidden things of the heavens and the earth[33] and knows all that you conceal and reveal.[34] Allah: none but He is worthy of worship: He is the Owner of the glorious Throne.[35] 20-26

Solomon said, "We shall just now see whether what you say is true, or that you are a liar. Take this letter of mine and cast it before them; then get aside and see what reaction they show."[36] 27-28

The queen said, "O chiefs, a very important letter has been cast before me. It is from Solomon, and it begins with the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate. It says, 'Do not adopt a rebellious attitude against me and present yourselves as Muslims before me'."[37] 29-31

(Having read out the letter) the queen said, "O chiefs, counsel me in this matter; I do not take a decision in any matter without (consulting) you."[38] They replied, "We are a powerful people, and good fighters. The decision, however, rests with you. You may yourselves consider as to what command you should give." The queen said, "When the kings enter a land, they ruin it and debase its honourable people;[39] they do just the same.[40] I shall send to them a gift, and then wait to see with what reply my envoys return." 32-35

When (the envoy of the queen) came to Solomon, the king said, "Do you want to help me with wealth? What God has given me is much more than what He has given you.[41] May you yourselves rejoice in your gift! (O messengers,) go back to your people; we shall bring against them such forces[42] which they will not be able to withstand, and we shall drive them out (of their land) humbled and disgraced." 36-37

Contd. from p.529]

25. "Restrain me...thanks to Thee" means this: "O my Lord! the wonderful powers and abilities that You have given me are such that if I become even a little forgetful and heedless, I might transgress the bounds of service and be puffed up with pride and go astray. Therefore, O my Lord, restrain me so that I may remain grateful to You for all Your blessings instead of being ungrateful."

26. "Admit me..righteous servants" probably implies this: "I should be included among the righteous in the Hereafter and should enter Paradise along with them." For a person who does righteous acts will automatically be righteous, but one's entry into Paradise in the Hereafter cannot come about merely on the strength of one's good works, but it will depend on Allah's mercy. According to a *Hadīth,* the Holy Prophet once said, "Merely the deeds of any one of you will not enable him to enter Paradise." It was asked, "In your case too, O Messenger of Allah?" He replied, "Yes, I also shall not enter Paradise only on the strength of my deeds, unless Allah Almighty covers me with His mercy."

This prayer of the Prophet Solomon on this occasion becomes irrelevant if *an-Naml is* taken to mean a tribe of human beings and *namlah* a member of that tribe. After all, there could be nothing extraordinary in the warning given by a member of a human tribe to the people of his tribe about the approaching troops of a powerful king that it should have induced the king to make such a prayer to Allah. However, a person's having such a wonderful power of comprehension that he may hear the speech of an ant from a distance and also understand it, is certainly something extraordinary, which can involve a person in self-conceit and vanity. In such a case only the prayer of the Prophet Solomon can be relevant.

27. That is, the birds whose troops, as mentioned above, were included in the armies of Prophet Solomon like the troops of the men and jinns. It is just possible that the Prophet Solomon had employed them for communicating messages, hunting and performing other such services.

28. Some people of the modern time say that the *hud-hud* (hoopoe) does not mean the bird commonly known by this name, but is the name of a man who was an officer in the army of Solomon. This claim is not based on any historical research in which they might have found a person named *hud-hud* included in the list of the officers of the government of the Prophet Solomon, but they base their claim on the argument that the custom of naming human beings after animals is prevalent in Arabic as in other languages and was also found in Hebrew. Moreover, the work that has been ascribed to the *hud-hud* in the following verses and its conversation with the Prophet Solomon, can, according to them, be only performed by a human being. But if one keeps in view the context in which this

thing occurs in the Qur'an, it becomes evident that this is no commentary of the Qur'ān but its distortion. After all, why should the Qur'ān put the intellect and intelligence of man to the test by using enigmatic language ? Why should it not clearly say that a soldier of the Prophet Solomon's cavalry, or platoon, or communication department, was missing, whom he ordered to be searched out, and who came and gave this news and whom he despatched on such and such a mission? Instead, it uses such language that the reader, from the beginning to the end, is compelled to regard it as a bird. Let us, in this connection, consider the facts in their sequence as presented in the Qur'ān.

First of all, the Prophet Solomon expresses his gratitude to Allah for His this bounty: "We have been taught the speech of the birds." In this sentence, firstly, the word *ṭair* has been used absolutely which every Arab and scholar of Arabic will take in the meaning of a bird, because there is nothing in the context that points to its being figurative; secondly, if *ṭair* implied a group of men and not a bird, the word language or tongue would have been used concerning it and not speech. Then, a person's knowing the tongue of another people is not so extraordinary a thing that it should be specially mentioned. Today there are among us thousands of men and women, who can speak and understand many foreign languages. This is in no way an unusual achievement which may be mentioned as an extraordinary gift of God.

Then the Qur'ān says, "For Solomon were gathered hosts of jinns and men and birds." In this sentence, firstly, the words *jinn* and *ins* (men) and *ṭair* have been used as names for three well-known and distinct species denoted by these words in Arabic. Then they have been used absolutely and there is nothing in the context that may point to any of them being used metaphorically, or as a simile, because of which one may take them in another meaning than their well-known lexical meaning. Then the word *ins* has occurred between the words *jinn* and *ṭair*, which does not allow taking it in the meaning that the *jinn* and the *ṭair* were, in fact, two groups included in the species of *ins* (men). Had this been meant the words would have been: *al-jinn wal-ṭair min-al-ins* and not *min-al-jinn wal-ins wal-ṭair*.

A little further on the Qur'an says that the Prophet Solomon said this when during his review of the birds he found the *hud-hud* missing. If the *ṭair* were human beings and *hud-hud* also was the name of a man, a word or two should have been there to indicate this so that the poor reader should not have taken the word for a bird. When the group being mentioned is clearly of the birds and a member of it is called *hud-hud*, how can it be expected that the reader will of his own accord understand them to be human beings?

Then the Prophet Solomon says, "I will punish him severely, or even slaughter him, unless he presents before me a reasonable excuse." A man is killed, or hanged, or sentenced to death, but never slaughtered. Some hard-hearted person may even slaughter another person out of vengeance, but it cannot be expected of a Prophet that he would sentence a soldier of his army to be slaughtered only for the offence of desertion, and Allah would mention this heinous act of the Prophet without a word of disapproval.

A little further on we shall again see that the Prophet Solomon sends the same *hud-hud* with a letter to the queen of Sheba and tells him "to cast it before her". Obviously, such an instruction can be given to a bird but not at all to a man when he is sent as an envoy or messenger. Only a foolish person will believe that a king would send his envoy with a letter to the queen of another country and tell him to cast or throw it before her. Should we suppose that the Prophet Solomon was not aware of the preliminary social etiquette which even common people like us also observe when we send our servant to a neighbour? Will a gentleman tell his servant to carry his letter to the other gentleman and throw it before him?

All these things show that the word *hud-hud* here has been used in its lexical meaning, showing that he was not a man but a bird. Now, if a person is not prepared to believe that a *hud-hud* can speak those things that have been ascribed to it in the Qur'ān, he should frankly say that he does not believe in this narrative of the Qur'ān. It is sheer hypocrisy to misconstrue plain and clear words of the Qur'ān according to one's own whims only in order to cover up one's lack of faith in it.

29. Sabā' were a well-known commercial people of southern Arabia, whose capital city of Mā'rib lay about 55 miles to the north-east of Ṣan'ā', the present capital of Yaman. They rose to power after the decline of the Minaean Kingdom in about 1100 B.C. and flourished for a thousand years in Arabia. Then in 115 B.C. they were replaced by the Himyarites, the other well-known people of southern Arabia, who ruled Yaman and Ḥadramaut in Arabia and Ḥabash in Africa. The Sabaeans controlled the whole trade that passed between eastern Africa, India, the Far East and Arabia itself, on the one hand, and Egypt, Syria, Greece and Rome on the other. That is why they were famous for their wealth in the ancient times; so much so that according to the Greek historians they were the richest people of the world. Besides trade and commerce, another great reason for their prosperity was that they had built dams here and there in their country to store rainwater for irrigation purposes, which had turned their whole land into a veritable garden. The Greek historians have made mention of the unusual greenery of their country; and the Qur'ān also refers to it in Sūrah Sabā': 15.

The statement of the *hud-hud*, "I have obtained knowledge of things of which you have no knowledge", does not imply that the Prophet Solomon was wholly unaware of Sabā'. Obviously, the ruler of Syria and Palestine whose kingdom extended to the northern shores of the Red Sea (Gulf of 'Aqabah), could not be unaware of a people who ruled the southern shores (Yaman) of the same Red Sea, and who also controlled an important part of the international trade. Moreover, according to Psalms, Solomon's father, Prophet David, knew Sabā' We find the following words of his prayer in Psalms:

> "Give the king thy judgement, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son (i.e. Solomon)... The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba (i.e. of Yaman's and Habash's branches) shall offer gifts." (72: 1-2, 10-11).

Therefore, what the hud-hud means to say is this: "The knowledge of the things I have seen with my eyes in the central city of the Sabaeans. has not yet reached you."

30. This shows that the people of Sabā' at that time followed the religion of sun-worship, which is also supported by the ancient traditions of Arabia. Ibn Ishāq has cited the genealogists' saying to the effect that Sabā' have in fact descended from an ancestor whose name was 'Abd Shams (slave of the sun, or sun-worshipper) and title Sabā'. This is supported by the Israelite traditions as well. According to these when the *hud-hud* arrived with the Prophet Solomon's letter, the queen of Sheba was going for the worship of the sun-god, and it threw the letter on the way before the queen.

31. The style shows that the sentences from here to the end of the paragraph are not a part of the *hud-hud's* speech but its speech ended with: "they prostrate themselves before the sun", and these words are an addition by Allah to its speech. This opinion is supported by the sentence: "He knows all that you conceal and reveal." These words give the impression that the speaker and the addressees here are not the *hud-hud* and the Prophet Solomon and his courtiers respectively, but the Speaker is Allah and the addressees the *mushriks* of Makkah, for whose admonition this story has been related. From among the commentators, 'Allāmah Ālūsi;, the author of *Rūh-al-Ma'ānī*, also has preferred the same opinion.

32. That is, Satan has made them believe that earning the worldly wealth and making their lives more and more grand and pompous is the only real and fit use of their mental and intellectual and physical powers. Apart from these, they need not think seriously on anything else: they need not bother themselves to see whether there was any factual reality behind the apparent life of the world or not, and whether the basis of their religion, morality, culture and system of life accorded with that Reality or went utterly against it. Satan satisfied them that when

they were making adequate progress in respect of wealth and power and worldly grandeur, they had no need to see whether their beliefs and philosophies and theories were correct or not, for the only proof of their being correct was that they were earning wealth and enjoying life to their hearts content.

33. That is, He is bringing continuously into existence those things which before their birth were hidden here and there: He is bringing out continuously countless kinds of vegetation and minerals from the bowels of the earth: He is manifesting from upper space such things as could not even be conceived by human mind before their manifestation.

34. That is, His knowledge embraces everything; the open and hidden are alike for Him; He is aware of everything.

By citing these two attributes of Allah the object is to impress that if they had not been deluded by Satan, they could have seen the right way clearly: they could have perceived that the hot burning sphere of the sun which has no sense of its own existence, did not deserve to be worshipped but worship was due to Him alone Who is the All-Knowing and the All-Wise Being, and Whose power is bringing into existence new and ever new phenomena every moment.

35. This is one of those verses of the Qur'ān, whose recital makes it obligatory for one to perform a *Sajdah* (prostration), and there is a consensus on this of the Muslim jurists. The object of performing a *Sajdah* here is that a believer should set himself apart from the sun-worshippers and should decalre by his action that he does not regard the sun but Allah Almighty alone as his Deity and Lord.

36. Here ends the role of the *hud-hud* (hoopoe). The rationalists deny its being a bird for the reason that a bird could not possibly be endowed with such powers of observation, discrimination and expression that it should pass over a country and should come to know that it is the land of Sabā', it has such and such a system of government, it is ruled by a certain woman, its religion is sun-worship, that it should have worshipped One God instead of having gone astray, and then on its return to the Prophet Solomon it should so clearly make a report of all its observations before him. Due to these very reasons the open atheists object that the Qur'ān is a book of fables and legends; then those who try to interpret the Qur'ān rationally misconstrue its clear words in order to prove that the hud-hud was not at all a bird but he was a man. But the question is: What scientific information have these gentlemen got by which they could tell with absolute certainty what powers and abilities the different species of animals and their different individuals have got? The information that they possess only consists of the results inferred from the grossly insufficient observation made cursorily by them of the life and behaviour of the animals. In fact, man has not so far been able to know through any certain means what different animals know and what they see

and hear, and what they feel and think and understand, and how the mind of each one of them works. Yet, whatever little observation has been made of the life of the different species of animals, it has revealed some of their wonderful abilities. Now, when Allah, Who is the Creator of these animals, tells us that He had taught the speech of the birds to one of His Prophets and blessed him with the ability *to* speak to them, and the Prophet's taming and training had so enabled a *hud-hud* that it could make certain observations in the foreign lands and could report them to the Prophet, we should, in fact, be prepared to revise our little knowledge about the animals in the light of Allah's statement. But, instead, we commit the folly of taking our this insufficient knowledge as the criterion and belie this statement of Allah or distort it out of its true meaning.

37. That is, "The letter is important for several reasons: (1) It has reached me in an unusual way. Instead of an envoy it has been brought and dropped at me by a bird. (2) It is from Solomon, the great ruler of Palestine and Syria. (3) It has been begun with the name of Allah, the Compassionate, and Merciful, which is an unusual way of correspondence and is not followed by any kingdom in the world. (4) Then, it is also unusual that a letter should be written only in the name of Allah, the Exalted, apart from all other gods and goddesses. (5) The most important thing in it is that it quite clearly and plainly invites us to give up rebellion and adopt obedience and present ourselves before Solomon in submission (or as Muslims)."

"Present yourselves as Muslim" can have two meanings: (I) "Present yourselves in submission"; and (2) "present yourselves as Muslims (after embracing Islam)." The first meaning is in accordance with the Prophet Solomon's position as a ruler, and the second with his position as a Prophet. Probably this comprehensive word was used in order to convey both the meanings through the letter. The same sort of invitation has always been extended by Islam to independent nations and governments that they should either accept Islam and become equal partners in the Islamic system of life, or surrender political independence and submit to the system of Islam and pay *Jizyah*.

38. The words used in the Text are: *hattā tash-hu-dūn* (unless you are present, or unless you bear witness). That is: "I regard your presence necessary when I take a decision in important matters, and also that whatever decision I take you should be there to testify that it is right and correct." This shows that though the system of government among Sabā' was kingship, it was not tyrannical; but the ruler of the time decided matters in consultation with the important people in the government.

39. In this one sentence a thorough criticism has been made of imperialism. The kings' invasion of the other countries and the victorious nations'

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39
أَنَا آتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَقُومَ مِنْ مَقَامِكَ ۚ وَإِنِّي عَلَيْهِ لَقَوِيٌّ أَمِينٌ ﴿٣٩﴾ قَالَ
الَّذِي عِنْدَهُ عِلْمٌ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ أَنَا آتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَرْتَدَّ إِلَيْكَ طَرْفُكَ ۚ فَلَمَّا
رَآهُ مُسْتَقِرًّا عِنْدَهُ قَالَ هَٰذَا مِنْ فَضْلِ رَبِّي لِيَبْلُوَنِي ءَأَشْكُرُ أَمْ أَكْفُرُ ۖ وَمَنْ
40
شَكَرَ فَإِنَّمَا يَشْكُرُ لِنَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ رَبِّي غَنِيٌّ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٤٠﴾ قَالَ نَكِّرُوا لَهَا
41
عَرْشَهَا نَنْظُرْ أَتَهْتَدِي أَمْ تَكُونُ مِنَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَهْتَدُونَ ﴿٤١﴾ فَلَمَّا جَاءَتْ قِيلَ
42
أَهَٰكَذَا عَرْشُكِ ۖ قَالَتْ كَأَنَّهُ هُوَ ۚ وَأُوتِينَا الْعِلْمَ مِنْ قَبْلِهَا وَكُنَّا مُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾
43
وَصَدَّهَا مَا كَانَتْ تَعْبُدُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ ۖ إِنَّهَا كَانَتْ مِنْ قَوْمٍ كَافِرِينَ ﴿٤٣﴾
قِيلَ لَهَا ادْخُلِي الصَّرْحَ ۖ فَلَمَّا رَأَتْهُ حَسِبَتْهُ لُجَّةً وَكَشَفَتْ عَنْ سَاقَيْهَا ۚ
قَالَ إِنَّهُ صَرْحٌ مُمَرَّدٌ مِنْ قَوَارِيرَ ۗ قَالَتْ رَبِّ إِنِّي ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي وَأَسْلَمْتُ
مَعَ سُلَيْمَانَ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَىٰ ثَمُودَ أَخَاهُمْ صَالِحًا
45
أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ فَإِذَا هُمْ فَرِيقَانِ يَخْتَصِمُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾ قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ لِمَ تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ
46
بِالسَّيِّئَةِ قَبْلَ الْحَسَنَةِ ۖ لَوْلَا تَسْتَغْفِرُونَ اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾ قَالُوا
اطَّيَّرْنَا بِكَ وَبِمَنْ مَعَكَ ۚ قَالَ طَائِرُكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ تُفْتَنُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾
48
وَكَانَ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ تِسْعَةُ رَهْطٍ يُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا يُصْلِحُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾ قَالُوا
تَقَاسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ لَنُبَيِّتَنَّهُ وَأَهْلَهُ ثُمَّ لَنَقُولَنَّ لِوَلِيِّهِ مَا شَهِدْنَا مَهْلِكَ أَهْلِهِ
وَإِنَّا لَصَادِقُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾ وَمَكَرُوا مَكْرًا وَمَكَرْنَا مَكْرًا وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾ فَانْظُرْ
كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ مَكْرِهِمْ أَنَّا دَمَّرْنَاهُمْ وَقَوْمَهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٥١﴾ فَتِلْكَ بُيُوتُهُمْ
خَاوِيَةً بِمَا ظَلَمُوا ۗ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةً لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَأَنْجَيْنَا الَّذِينَ
آمَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾ وَلُوطًا إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ أَتَأْتُونَ الْفَاحِشَةَ وَأَنْتُمْ

To his courtiers Solomon[43] said, "Which of you can fetch me her throne before those people come to me in submission?"[44] A mighty one from among the jinns submitted, "I shall fetch it to you even before you rise from your place[45]: I possess the necessary power for it and am trustworthy."[46] He who possessed knowledge of the Book, spoke out, "I will fetch it to you in the twinkling of an eye."[47] As soon as Solomon saw the throne placed before him, he exclaimed: "This is by the Grace of my Lord so that He may test me (to see) whether I am grateful or ungrateful![48] And the one who is grateful is grateful only for the good of his own self; as for the one who is ungrateful, my Lord is All-Sufficient and Self-Exalted."[49] 38-40

Solomon said,[50] "Set her throne before her casually; let us see whether she reaches the truth, or she is one of those who are not guided aright."[51] When the queen arrived, she was asked, "Is your throne like this?" She replied, "It is just the same.[52] We had already known this and we had surrendered (or we had become Muslims)."[53] The worship of the deities whom she served instead of Allah had hindered her (from believing), for she came of an unbelieving people.[54] 41-43

She was asked to enter the palace. When she saw it, she thought it was a pool of water, so she tucked up her skirt to enter it. Solomon said, "It is the glossy floor of glass."[55] At this she exclaimed, "O my Lord! I have (hitherto) been unjust to myself; now I submit myself, with Solomon, to Allah, Lord of the worlds."[56] 44

And[57] to Thamūd We sent their brother Sālih (with the message) that they should worship Allah, but they divided themselves forthwith into two wrangling groups.[58] Sālih said, "O my people, why do you hasten for the evil in preference to the good?[59] Why don't you ask forgiveness of Allah? Maybe that you are shown mercy." They said, "We regard you and your companions as a sign of bad omen."[60] Ṣāliḥ said, "Your good and bad omens issue forth from Allah. The fact is that you are a people on trial."[61] 45-47

Therewere in that city nine ring-leaders of the men,[62] who spread mischief in the land and reformed nothing. They said to one another, "Let us pledge on an oath by Allah that we shall attack Ṣāliḥ and his household by night, and then tell his guardian[63] that we were not even present at the time his family were killed: we are telling the 4853

truth."[64] They plotted thus, and We too devised a plot of which they were unaware.[65] Just see how their plot ended. We annihilated them and all their people together. There, their houses lie desolate in consequence of their wicked deeds. There is a lesson in this for those who have knowledge;[66] and We saved those who had believed and avoided disobedience.

Contd. from p.537]

violence against the oppressed nations has never been for the sake of reform and goodwill. The object has been to control and exploit the means and resources of sustenance granted to the other nation by God, and make it so helpless that it should never be able to rise in resistance and demand its share. For this purpose they block up all its means of prosperity, power and honour, crush down all self-respecting elements, instil in its members attitudes of slavery, flattery, treachery and spying against one another, imitation of the conqueror and respect for his civilization, contempt of their own civilization and other such mean qualities of character. Thus, gradually they bring them down to such a low level of character where they may not hesitate even to sell off any of their most sacred objects of heritage and be ready to perform any wretched service on payment.

40. This sentence has two meanings and both are equally probable: (1) It may be a part of the queen of Sheba's speech, which she might have added in order to emphasize her foregoing words; and (2) it may be Allah's Words which have been added as a parenthesis in support of the queen's speech.

41. This sentence is not meant to express pride and vanity. What it means to say is this: "I have no desire for your wealth; I only desire that you should believe, or at least submit to a righteous system. If you agree to neither of these alternatives, it is not possible for me to accept the bribes of wealth and leave you free in the matter of a polytheistic and wicked system of life. What my Lord has given me is enough for me to cherish any desire for your wealth."

42. There is a subtle gap between this and the previous sentence, which one can easily fill up by a careful study of the discourse. It means this: "O Messengers, take this gift back to the people who have sent you. They will either have to yield to our first proposal, i. e. they should come before us as Muslims, or we shall bring forces against them."

43. The details of the story that have been omitted are to the effect: The envoys returned to the queen with the gift and made a report of what they had seen and heard; the queen decided on the basis of what she heard about the Prophet Solomon to make a visit to Jerusalem to see him personally; she left Sabā' for

Palestine accompanied by her royal entourage and sent a message to Solomon's court that she was herself coming to personally hear the invitation from the king himself and to have a direct talk with him. Here, the story is resumed from the time when the queen had reached near Jerusalem and was going to appear before Solomon in a day or two.

44. That is, the same throne about which the hoopoe *(hud-hud)* had reported, "She has a splendid throne." Some commentators have given a strange interpretation here. They say that the Prophet Solomon wanted to have the throne before him before the queen's arrival because he wanted to take possession of it. For he feared that if the queen became a Muslim, it would be unlawful to take possession of her property without her approval; therefore, he made haste to have the queen's throne with him even before her arrival in Jerusalem because at that time it was lawful to take it into his possession. May Allah pardon us! This is a strange concept about the intention of a Prophet. Why should one not understand the verse in the light that Prophet Solomon wanted to show a miracle also to the queen and her courtiers besides preaching his message so that she might know what extraordinary powers Allah, Lord of the worlds, had granted His Prophet so that she might be convinced that Solomon was surely a Prophet of Allah? Some modern commentators have put an even more strange meaning on this verse. They translate the verse thus: "Which of you can bring me a throne for the queen?" whereas the Qur'ān has used the word *bi-'arshi-hā* which means "her throne', and not *bi-'arshi,-lahā*, "a throne for her". They mistranslate the verse in order to get rid of what the Qur'ān has stated that the Prophet Solomon wanted the queen's own throne to be brought from Yaman to Jerusalem and that too before the queen's arrival.

45. From this it becomes obvious whether the jinns under the Prophet Solomon were, according to the interpretation of some rationalist commentators of the modern times, from among mankind or from among the hidden creation commonly known as jinns. Obviously, the sitting of the Prophet Solomon's court would at the most be of three to four hours, and the distance of Ma'rib, capital of Sabā', from Jerusalem was, even as the crow flies, not less than 1500 miles. To fetch a splendid throne of a queen from such a distant place in such a short time could not be possible for a man, even if he be a very strong and robust person. This task cannot be performed even by a jet plane of today. The throne was not lying in a jungle from where it had just to be fetched. It lay in a queen's palace, which must have been well-guarded, and in the absence of the queen it must have been kept in a secure place. If a man had gone to fetch it, he should have been accompanied by a commando force so that he could overwhelm the guards and snatch away the throne. How could all this be accomplished before the rising of the court ? This thing can be conceived only in connection with a real *jinn !*

46. That is, "You can trust me in that I will not carry it away, nor steal any valuable thing from it."

47. Nothing is known with certainty as to who this person was, what special knowledge he had and what Book is referred to here, whose knowledge he had. No explanation of these things has been given either in the Qur'ān or in any authentic *Ḥadīth*. Some of the commentators say that it was an angel; others say that it was a man. Then they differ as to the identity of the man. Someone mentions the name of Āsaf bin Barchiah, who, according to the rabbinical traditions, was the Prince of Men. Someone says that he was Khidr; someone mentions some other name; and Imām Rāzī insists that it was the Prophet Solomon himself. But none of these has any reliable source for his information, and Imam Rāzī's opinion does not even fit in with the Qur'ānic context. Likewise, about the Book also the commentators differ. Someone says that it refers to *Lauḥ-i-Maḥfūz* (the Preserved Tablet) and some other takes it for the Book of Law. But all this is mere guess-work. Similar guesses have been made about the knowledge the man had from the Book. We only know and believe what has been said in the Qur'ān, or what becomes evident from its words. In any case the person was not from among the jinns, and possibly he was a man. He possessed some extraordinary knowledge, which had been derived from some Divine Book *(al-Kitāb)*. The jinn had claimed to fetch the throne within a few hours by means of his physical strength; this man fetched it in a moment by the power of his knowledge.

48. The words of the Qur'ān are very clear in this regard. This person's claim did not remain a claim like the jinn's, but, in fact, as soon as he made the claim the throne was seen placed before the Prophet Solomon the next moment. Just consider these words:

"The person said, 'I will bring it to you in the twinkling of an eye.' As soon as Solomon saw the throne placed before him...."

Anyone who reads these words, regardless of the extraordinary nature of the event, will surely understand that no sooner did the person utter these words than the event as claimed by him took place forthwith. There is, therefore, no need to make far-fetched interpretations of this plain matter. Then, on seeing the throne, the Prophet Solomon's exclaiming, "This is by the Grace of my Lord so that He may test me (to see) whether I am grateful or ungrateful!" can be relevant only if the event be extraordinary; otherwise if only a skilful craftsman of the king had hurriedly made or arranged a throne for the queen, it could not be so novel an event at which the Prophet Solomon should have spontaneously exclaimed: "This is by the Grace of my Lord!..." and feared that the prompt arrangement of a throne for the honourable guest might cause him to become ungrateful to Allah instead of being grateful. After all, there could be no question of a believing

ruler's becoming involved in vanity and self-conceit on this small achievement, especially when he was not merely an ordinary believer but a Prophet of Allah

As for the question as to how a royal throne was fetched over a distance of 1,500 miles in the twinkling of an eye, it can be briefly answered thus: "The concepts of time and space, and matter and movement, that we have formed on the basis of our experiments and observations, are only applicable to us. These concepts are not correct in respect to God, nor is He bound by these. Not to speak of an ordinary throne, His power can make the sun, and even much larger stars, travel millions of millions of miles in the matter of moments. The God Who by His one Command brought this huge universe into being, had the power to have moved the throne of the queen of Sheba at a speed greater than the speed of light. In this very Qur'ān it has been stated that Allah, by His powers, took his servant Muḥammad (may Allah's peace be upon him) from Makkah to Jerusalem and also brought him back in the same night.

49. That is. He does not stand in need of somebody's gratefulness. His Godhead is neither enhanced by an iota by somebody's gratefulness nor diminished by that amount by somebody's ingratitude or thanklessness. He is a Sovereign in His own right. His Sovereignty is not dependent on His creation's acknowledgement or rejection. The same thing has been expressed in the Qur'ān through the Prophet Moses: "If you prove thankless, you and all the dwellers of the earth, (you should know that) Allah is All-Sufficient and worthy of all praise by Himself." (Ibrāhīm: 8). The same theme is contained in a *Ḥadīth Qudsī* related in Muslims saying:

"Allah says: O My servants, if you all men and jinns, from the beginning to the end, together become like the heart of the most righteous person among you, it will not cause any increase in My Kingdom; and O My servants, if you all men and jinns, from the beginning to the end, together become like the heart of the most sinful person among you, it will not cause any decrease in My Kingdom. O My servants, it is your own deeds which I credit to your account, and then fully recompense you for them. So, whoever receives something good, let him be grateful to Allah, and whoever receives something else, let him curse his own self only".

50. As to how the queen reached Jerusalem and how she was received, has been omitted. The story is resumed from the time when she had arrived at the palace to see Prophet Solomon.

51. This is a meaningful sentence, which means: (1) "Whether she understands or not that it is her own throne which has been fetched in no time from her capital to distant place like Jerusalem;" and also (2) "whether she is

guided aright after seeing this wonderful miracle, or persists in her error." This refutes the wrong idea of the people who say that the Prophet Solomon intended to take possession of the throne. Here he himself clearly says that he had done this in order to help the queen see Guidance.

52. This also refutes the speculations of those people who depict the event in a manner as though the Prophet Solomon wanted to have a throne made for the queen; and for this purpose he invited tenders and a strong, robust artisan offered to make him a throne in the matter of a few hours, but an expert craftsman submitted that he could make and produce it in no time. This whole guess-work is destroyed by the fact that Solomon himself ordered the throne to be fetched before him (v. 38), and when it had been fetched, ordered his servants to set it before the queen casually (v. 41), and then when she arrived, she was asked whether her throne was like that (v. 42), and she answered, "It is just the same." Obviously, there could be no room for the absurd interpretations in the face *of* such a clear statement of facts. If there is still any doubt left, it can be satisfied by the next sentence.

53. That is, "Even before we saw this miracle we had been convinced by what we had heard of Solomon (peace be upon him) that he was a Prophet of Allah, and not merely a ruler of a kingdom." After seeing the throne and saying, "It is just the same", what could be the relevance of adding this sentence if it is supposed that the Prophet Solomon had got a throne manufactured and set the same before her? Even if it is supposed that no effort was spared to have a throne manufactured closely resembling the queen's what special excellence it could have to make a sun-worshipping queen exclaim: "We had already known this and we had become Muslims!"

54. This sentence has been added by Allah to clarify the queen's position, saying that she was not obdurate and stubborn. She had been an unbeliever till then mainly because she came of an unbelieving people. As she had become accustomed to bowing down before a false deity since her childhood, it had become a hindrance for her to the right way. As soon as she came in contact with the Prophet Solomon, she discerned the right way and the hindrance was removed forthwith.

55. This was the last thing that opened the queen's eyes. The first thing was Solomon's letter that had been begun with the name of the All-Compassionate, the All-Merciful Allah, a way different from the common custom prevalent among the kings. The second was his rejection of her gifts, which made the queen understand that he was a different kind of king. The third was the report made by the queen's envoys from which she came to know about Solomon's pious life, his wisdom and his message of the Truth. This very thing had induced her to travel to

Jerusalem herself to personally meet the Prophet Solomon, and to this she had referred when she said, "We had already known this and we had become Muslims." The fourth thing was the removal of her throne from Mā'rib to Jerusalem in no time, from which the queen realized that he had Allah's power at his back. Now this was the last thing that removed every doubt from her mind regarding the unique and great personality of the Prophet Solomon. When she saw that in spite of possessing every means of comfort and ease and a grand palace for a dwelling, he was so free from every conceit, so God-fearing and righteous and so grateful to God that he bowed before Him for every small favour and his life so different from the life of those who were enamoured of the world, she exclaimed the words that follow.

56. This story of the Prophet Solomon and the queen of Sheba has been related in the Old and the New Testaments and the Israelite traditions in different ways, but the Qur'ānic narration differs from all others. A resume of the story as given in the Old Testament is as follows:

"And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, she came to prove Solomon with hard questions at Jerusalem, with a very great company ..... when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart. And Solomon told her all her questions ..... And when the queen of Sheba had seen the wisdom of Solomon, and the house that he had built, and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel; his cupbearers also, and their apparel; and his ascent by which he went up into the house of the Lord; there was no more spirit in her. And she said to the king, It was a true report which I heard in mine own land of thine acts, and of thine wisdom: Howbeit I believed not their words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the one half of the greatness of thy wisdom was not told me: for thou exceedest the fame that I heard. Happy *are* thy men, and happy *are* these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and hear thy wisdom. Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighted in thee to set thee on his throne ..... And she gave the king an hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices great abundance and precious stones: neither was there any such spice as the queen of Sheba gave king Solomon ..... And king Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatever she asked ..... So she turned, and went away to her own land, she and her servants." (2 Chronicles, 9: 1-12. A similar account is also found in I Kings, 10: 1-13).

In the New Testament, the following sentence only has been reported from a discourse of the Prophet Jesus about the queen of Sheba.

"The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgement with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the

earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here." (Matthew, 12: 42; Luke, 11: 31).

The story of the Prophet Solomon and the queen of Sheba as given in the rabbinical traditions resembles in most parts with the Qur'ānic version. The hoopoe's absence, then its arrival and reporting about Sheba and its queen, the Prophet Solomon's sending her a letter through it, the hoopoe's dropping the letter in front of the queen right at the time when she was going for sun-worship, the queen's calling for her ministers' council, then her sending of valuable gifts to Solomon, her travelling to Jerusalem and meeting him personally, her arrival in the palace and thinking that Prophet Solomon was sitting in the midst of a pool of water, tucking up her skirt in order to enter it-all this has been mentioned in these traditions as in the Qur'ān. But there is no mention whatsoever in these traditions of the Prophet Solomon's reply on receipt of the gift, having the queen's throne fetched from Mā'rib, his bowing down before God in thankfulness for every favour of His, and the queen's embracing the Faith ultimately, at his hand, his belief in the oneness of God, etc. And worst of all, these wicked people have accused Prophet Solomon of having committed adultery, God forbid, with the queen of Sheba, giving rise to an illegitimate race, which gave birth to Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, who destroyed Jerusalem. *(Jewish Encyclopedia,* Vol. XI, p. 443). The fact of the matter is that n section of the Jewish learned men have been highly critical of the Prophet Solomon. They have accused him of heinous crimes like violating the Commandments of the Torah, of pride of government, pride of wisdom, of being a hen-pecked husband, and of luxurious living, polytheism and idol-worship. (Jewish *Encyclopedia,* Vol. XI, pp. 439-441). It is due to this propaganda that the Bible presents him only as a king instead of a Prophet, a king who was lost in the love of polytheistic women against the Divine Commandments, whose heart was turned away from God, and was turned to other gods and goddesses. (I Kings, 11: 1-11). As against this it can be seen what great favour has the Qur'ān done to the Israelites by cleansing the personalities of their elders of the filth thrown at them by themselves, and yet the Israelites, ungrateful as they are, look upon the Qur'ān and him who brought it as their enemies.

57. For comparison. see Al-A'rāf: 73-79, Hūd: 61-68, Ash-Shu'arā': 141-159, Al-Qamar: 23-32, Ash-Shams: 11-15.

58. That is, as soon as the Prophet Ṣāliḥ embarked on his mission, his people were divided into two groups, the believers and the disbelievers, and a conflict started between them as stated elsewhere in the Qur'ān:

"The chiefs of his tribe, who were full of pride, said to those who had believed from among the oppressed people, 'Do you know it for certain that Ṣāliḥ

is a Messenger from his Lord?' They replied, 'Indeed, we believe in the message with which he has been sent.' But those who had arrogant assumption of superiority, said, 'We deny that which you believe'." (Al-A'rāf: 75-76).

One should note that precisely the same situation arose in Makkah at the advent of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (may Allah's peace be upon him). The nation was divided into two factions and a conflict started between them. Therefore, this story fully applied to the conditions in which these verses were revealed.

59. That is, "Why do you hasten in asking for a torment instead of some good from Allah?" The following saying of the chiefs of the Prophet Ṣāliḥ's people has been related at another place: "O Ṣāliḥ, bring that scourge with which you threaten us, if you really are one of the Messengers." (Al-A'rāf:77).

60. One meaning of what they said is: "Your movement has proved to be an evil omen for us. Since you and your companions have revolted against the ancestral religion, one or the other calamity is befalling us almost daily, because our deities have become angry with us. In this sense, this saying is similar to the sayings of most of those polytheistic nations who regarded their Prophets as ominous. In Sūrah Yā Sīn, for instance, a nation has been mentioned, which said to its Prophet: "We regard you as an evil omen for ourselves." (v. 18) The same thing was said by the Pharaoh's people about the Prophet Moses: "Whenever a good time came, they would say, 'This is but our due', and when there was a bad time, they would ascribe their calamities to Moses and his companions." (Al-A'rāf: 130) Almost similar things were said in Makkah about the Holy Prophet also.

The other meaning of their saying is this: "Your advent has stirred up divisions in our nation. Before this we were a united people, who followed one religion. Your ominous coming has turned brother against brother, and separated son from father." This very accusation was being brought against the Holy Prophet by his opponents over and over again. Soon after he started his mission of inviting the people to the Faith, the delegation of the chiefs of the Quraish, who went to Abū Ṭālib, had said, "Give up to us this nephew of yours: he has opposed your religion and your forefathers' religion and has sown discord among your people, and has held the whole nation as foolish." (Ibn Hishām, Vol. I. p. 285).

On the occasion of Ḥajj, when the disbelievers of Makkah feared that the visitors from outside might be influenced by the Holy Prophet, they held consultations and decided to approach the Arab tribes and tell them: "This man is a sorcerer, who by his sorcery separates son from his father, brother from his brother, wife from her husband, and man from his family." (Ibn Hishām, p. 289).

[Contd. on p.550

تُبْصِرُوْنَ ﴿٥٤﴾ اَئِنَّكُمْ لَتَاْتُوْنَ الرِّجَالَ شَهْوَةً مِّنْ دُوْنِ النِّسَآءِ ؕ بَلْ اَنْتُمْ
قَوْمٌ تَجْهَلُوْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾ فَمَا كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهٖۤ اِلَّاۤ اَنْ قَالُوْۤا اَخْرِجُوْۤا اٰلَ لُوْطٍ مِّنْ
قَرْيَتِكُمْ ۚ اِنَّهُمْ اُنَاسٌ يَّتَطَهَّرُوْنَ ﴿٥٦﴾ فَاَنْجَيْنٰهُ وَ اَهْلَهٗۤ اِلَّا امْرَاَتَهٗ ۫ قَدَّرْنٰهَا
مِنَ الْغٰبِرِيْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَ اَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ مَّطَرًا ۚ فَسَآءَ مَطَرُ الْمُنْذَرِيْنَ ﴿٥٨﴾ قُلِ الْحَمْدُ
لِلّٰهِ وَ سَلٰمٌ عَلٰى عِبَادِهِ الَّذِيْنَ اصْطَفٰى ؕ آٰللّٰهُ خَيْرٌ اَمَّا يُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿٥٩﴾

الجزء ٢٠

اَمَّنْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الْاَرْضَ وَ اَنْزَلَ لَكُمْ مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً ۚ فَاَنْۢبَتْنَا

بِهٖ حَدَآئِقَ ذَاتَ بَهْجَةٍ ۚ مَا كَانَ لَكُمْ اَنْ تُنْۢبِتُوْا شَجَرَهَا ؕ ءَاِلٰهٌ مَّعَ اللّٰهِ ؕ
بَلْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ يَّعْدِلُوْنَ ﴿٦٠﴾ اَمَّنْ جَعَلَ الْاَرْضَ قَرَارًا وَّ جَعَلَ خِلٰلَهَاۤ اَنْهٰرًا وَّ
جَعَلَ لَهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَ جَعَلَ بَيْنَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ حَاجِزًا ؕ ءَاِلٰهٌ مَّعَ اللّٰهِ ؕ بَلْ اَكْثَرُهُمْ
لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٦١﴾ اَمَّنْ يُّجِيْبُ الْمُضْطَرَّ اِذَا دَعَاهُ وَ يَكْشِفُ السُّوْٓءَ وَ يَجْعَلُكُمْ
خُلَفَآءَ الْاَرْضِ ؕ ءَاِلٰهٌ مَّعَ اللّٰهِ ؕ قَلِيْلًا مَّا تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٦٢﴾ اَمَّنْ يَّهْدِيْكُمْ فِيْ ظُلُمٰتِ
الْبَرِّ وَ الْبَحْرِ وَ مَنْ يُّرْسِلُ الرِّيٰحَ بُشْرًۢا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ رَحْمَتِهٖ ؕ ءَاِلٰهٌ مَّعَ اللّٰهِ ؕ
تَعٰلَى اللّٰهُ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿٦٣﴾ اَمَّنْ يَّبْدَؤُا الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيْدُهٗ وَ مَنْ يَّرْزُقُكُمْ
مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ وَ الْاَرْضِ ؕ ءَاِلٰهٌ مَّعَ اللّٰهِ ؕ قُلْ هَاتُوْا بُرْهَانَكُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٦٤﴾
قُلْ لَّا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الْاَرْضِ الْغَيْبَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ ؕ وَ مَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ
اَيَّانَ يُبْعَثُوْنَ ﴿٦٥﴾ بَلِ ادّٰرَكَ عِلْمُهُمْ فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ ۚ بَلْ هُمْ فِيْ شَكٍّ مِّنْهَا ۚ بَلْ
هُمْ مِّنْهَا عَمُوْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾ وَ قَالَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْۤا ءَاِذَا كُنَّا تُرٰبًا وَّ اٰبَآؤُنَاۤ اَئِنَّا
لَمُخْرَجُوْنَ ﴿٦٧﴾ لَقَدْ وُعِدْنَا هٰذَا نَحْنُ وَ اٰبَآؤُنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ ۙ اِنْ هٰذَاۤ اِلَّاۤ اَسَاطِيْرُ
الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿٦٨﴾ قُلْ سِيْرُوْا فِي الْاَرْضِ فَانْظُرُوْا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿٦٩﴾

And We sent Lot.[67] Remember the time when he said to his people, "Do you commit indecency while you see it?[68] Do you leave women and seek men for the gratification of your sexual desire? The fact is that you are a people steeped in ignorance."[69] But the only reply his people gave was to say, "Expel the family of Lot from your habitation: they pose to be very pious." At last We saved him and his family except his wife about whom We had decreed that she would linger behind,[70] and rained on then a rain, an extremely evil rain for the people who had been warned. 54-58

(O Prophet)[71] say, "Praise is for Allah and peace upon those servants of His whom He has chosen." 59

(Ask them:) "Is Allah better or those deities whom they set up as His associates?"[72]

Well, Who is He Who created the heavens and the earth and sent down rainwater for you from the sky, then caused to spring up by it beautiful gardens, whose trees you had no power to cause to grow? Is there besides Allah another god (who is His associate in these works)?[73] (Nay,) but these people themselves have strayed from the right path. 60

And Who is it Who made the earth as a place of rest'[74] and caused in it rivers to flow, and set in it firm mountains and placed barriers between the two bodies of water?[75] Is there besides Allah another god (who is His associate in these works)? Nay, but most of these people have no knowledge. 61

Who is it Who listens to the oppressed one when he invokes Him, and Who relieves him of his affliction?[76] And (Who is it Who) makes you vicegerents in the earth?[77] Is there besides Allah another god (to do this)? How little you reflect! 62

And Who is it Who shows you the way in the darkness of the land and the sea,[78] and Who sends the winds as harbingers of His mercy?[79] Is there besides Allah another god (who does this)? Far exalted is Allah above what they associate with Him. 63

And Who is it Who originates the creation and then reproduces it?[80] And Who provides you sustenance from the sky and the earth?[81] Is there besides Allah another god (who is a partner in these works) ? Say, "Bring your proof if you are truthful."[82] 64

65 Tell them, "None but Allah has the knowledge of the unseen, in the heavens and the earth,[83] and they (your deities) do not even know when they will be raised back to life."[84]

66-69 But (on the contrary,) these people have lost the knowledge of the Hereafter; nay, they are in doubt about it; nay, they are blind to it.[85] The disbelievers say, "When we and our forefathers have become dust, shall we be really raised up from the graves? This news has been given to us as well as to our forefathers before us, but these are nothing but tales, which we have been hearing since the ancient times." Say to them, "Move about in the land and see what doom the criminals have met."[86]

Contd from p.547]

61. That is, "The truth is not that which you understand it to be. The fact which you have not yet realized is that my advent has put you to the test. Until my arrival you were following a beaten track in your ignorance. You could not recognize the truth from the falsehood; you had no criterion for judging the genuine from the counterfeit; your worst people were lording over your best people, who were rolling in the dust. But now a criterion has come against which you will all be judged and assessed. Now a balance has been set up publicly, which will weigh everybody according to his true worth. Now both the truth and the falsehood have been made manifest. Whoever accepts the truth will weigh heavy whether he was not being held even worth a farthing so far; and whoever persists in falsehood will not weigh a gramme even though he was being esteemed as the chief of the chiefs before this. Now the judgement will not be based on the nobility or otherwise of the family one came of, or the abundance of the means and resources that one possessed, or one's physical strength but on this whether one accepted the truth gracefully or preferred to remain attached to falsehood."

62. That is, nine chiefs of the tribes each of whom had a band of followers with him.

63. "The guardian": the chief of the Prophet Ṣāliḥ's tribe, who, according to the ancient tribal tradition and custom, could make a claim to blood vengeance. The same was the position in Makkah of the Holy Prophet's uncle, Abū Ṭālib. The Quraish were hesitant that if they attacked and killed the Holy Prophet, Abu Ṭālib, the chief of Banī Hāshim, would come out with a claim to blood vengeance on behalf of his clan.

64. This precisely was the kind of plot which the Makkan chiefs of the clans were devising against the Holy Prophet, and they devised the same ultimately

on the occasion of migration *(Hijrah)* to kill him. They decided that men from all the clans would attack him in a body so that the Banī Hāshim could not hold any one of the clans as responsible for the murder, and, therefore, would find it impossible to fight all of them at one and the same time.

65. That is, "Before they could make the night attack on the Prophet Ṣāliḥ at the appointed time Allah sent down His scourge which destroyed their whole nation completely. It appears that they made this plot after hamstringing the she-camel. According to Sūrah Hūd: 65, when they had killed the she-camel, Prophet Sālih gave them a notice to enjoy life in their houses for three more days, for then they would be seized by the torment. At this they might have thought that the torment with which Ṣāliḥ threatened them might come or might not, but they must take the vengeance on Ṣāliḥ himself. Therefore, most probably they chose the same night for the attack which Allah had appointed for sending down the torment, and thus were struck down by Allah even before they could touch the Prophet Ṣāliḥ."

66. That is, "The ignorant people will say, 'There is no link between the Prophet Ṣāliḥ and his she-camel and the earthquake which struck the people of Thamūd. These things have their natural causes. Their occurrence or otherwise has nothing to do with the piety and wickedness of the people of a place, with their high-handedness or their show of mercy. It is meaningless merely to say that such and such a city or land was filled with sin and wickedness, and therefore, it was overwhelmed by flood, or its habitation turned upside down by an earthquake, or it was ruined by a sudden disaster'." But the people who possess knowledge know that this universe is not being ruled by a deaf and blind God, but by an All-Wise, All-Knowing One Who is deciding the destinies. His decisions are not subject to physical causes, but the physical causes are subject to His will. His decisions to debase or exalt nations are not taken blindly but with wisdom and justice. In His Book of Law there is also included the principle of retribution, according to which the wicked are made to suffer for their evil deeds even in this world, on moral grounds. The people who are aware of these realities, cannot explain away the occurrence of an earthquake by citing physical and natural causes; they will rather look upon them as the scourge of warning for themselves, and they will learn lessons from it. They will try to understand those moral causes because of which the Creator annihilated a flourishing nation, which He Himself had created. They will divert their conduct and attitude from the track that brings Allah's wrath to the way that joins them to His mercy.

67. For comparison, See Al-A'rāf: 80-84; Hūd, 74-83, Al-Ḥijr: 57-77, Al-Anbiyā': 71-75, Ash-Shu'arā': 160-174, Al-'Ankabūt: 28-75, As-Ṣāffāt: 133-138, Al-Qamar: 33-39.

68. This can have several meanings and probably all are implied: (1) "That you are not unaware of this act's being wicked, but you commit it knowing it to be so"; (2) "You are also not unaware that the man has not been created for the man's sex satisfaction but the woman, and the distinction between them (man and woman) is not such as you cannot perceive, yet with open eyes you commit this abominable act." (3) "You indulge in this indecency publicly when there are people watching you", as stated in Sūrah 'Ankbūt: 29, thus: " ..... and you indulge in indecencies in your assemblies."

69. The word *jahālat* here has been used in the sense of folly and stupidity. But even if it is taken in the sense of ignorance and lack of knowledge, it will mean: "You do not know the evil consequences of your acts. You only know that you are deriving sensual pleasure, but you do not know what severe punishment awaits you for this criminal and heinous pleasure-seeking. The scourge of Allah is ready to strike you but you are engaged in a senseless, filthy game with impunity."

70. That is, "The Prophet Lot had already been instructed not to take the woman along because she had to be destroyed along with her people."

71. From here starts the second discourse, and this is its introductory sentence. This introduction teaches how the Muslims should begin a speech. That is why the truly Islamic-minded people have always been starting their speeches and discourses with the praise of Allah and salutation on His righteous servants. But now this is looked upon as characteristic of bigotry, and the present-day Muslim speakers have no idea of starting their speech with these words, or feel shy of doing so.

72. Superficially the question whether Allah is better or the false deities appears to be odd. As a matter of fact, there can be no question of goodness in the false gods and, therefore, they cannot be compared to Allah. As for the polytheists, even they had no misconception that Allah could be compared to their gods. But they were asked this question in order to be warned against their error. For obviously none in the world would do anything unless he saw some good in it. Now if the polytheists served their deities and implored them for their needs instead of Allah, and presented their offerings before them, this would be meaningless unless they perceived some good in them. That is why they have been explicitly asked to consider whether Allah is better or their deities, for they could not face and answer this forth-right question. Even the most hardened polytheist among them could not venture to say that their deities were better. But if they acknowledged that Allah is better it would demolish their whole creed, for then it would be unreasonable to adopt the inferior against the superior creed.

Thus, the Qur'ān at the very outset made the opponents helpless. After this, pointed questions have been asked, one after the other, about the manifestations of the power and creation of Allah to the effect: "Whose works are these? Is there besides Allah any other god also associated with these works? If not, why have you then set up these others as your deities?"

According to traditions, whenever the Holy Prophet recited this verse, he would immediately respond to it, saying: "Nay, but Allah is better, and He alone is the Everlasting and Exalted and High."

73. No one from among the *mushriks* could answer that someone other than Allah had done these works, or someone else was Allah's associate in doing these. The Qur'ān at other places says with respect to the pagans of Makkah and the Arab *mushrikīn*: "If you ask them, 'Who has created the heavens and the earth?' they will surely say: 'The All-Mighty, the All-Knowing One has created them'." (Az-Zukhruf: 9) "And if you ask them, Who has created them? they will surely say, 'Allah'." (Az-Zukhruf: 87), "If you ask them, 'Who sent down rain water from the sky and thereby raised the dead earth back to life ?' They will surely say, 'Allah'." (Al-'Ankabūt: 63). "Ask them: Who provides for you from the heavens and the earth? Who has power over these faculties of hearing and sight? Who brings forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living? Who controls and directs the system of the universe?' They will surely say, 'Allah'." (Yūnus: 31). Not only the polytheists of Arabia but of the whole world generally acknowledged, and acknowledge even today, that Allah is the Creator of the universe and He alone controls and directs its system. Therefore, none of them could answer this question even obstinately for the sake of the argument that their deities were Allah's associates in those works, for if he had done so, thousands of his own people would have belied him saying that, that was not their belief.

This and the other questions that follow not only contain a refutation of the creed of *shirk* (polytheism) but of atheism as well. For example, in this first very question, it has been asked, "Who has sent down rainwater and caused to spring up by it beautiful gardens?" Just consider whether the presence of the substances essential for the growth of countless kinds of plant life, in the soil or near the soil, and the existence in water of those very qualities which are in accordance with the requirements of animal and vegetable life, and the evaporation of this water again and again from the seas, and its condensation and raining regularly in different parts of the earth from time to time, and the coordination between the soil and the air, the water, the temperature, etc., conducive to proper growth of plant life and fulfilment of the countless requirements of every sort of animal life, could be just accidental, or the result of the wise scheming and planning the supreme power and will of an All-Wise Designer. And is it possible that this accident should continue

to recur constantly for millions and millions of years on end? Only an obstinate person who has been blinded by prejudice will regard it as accidental, for no truth-loving, sensible person can make such a senseless claim or accept it.

74. It is not a simple thing for the earth to be a place of rest for the countless kinds of different creations living on it. If man looks into the wise harmony and coordination with which this sphere of the earth has been established, he is simply amazed and starts feeling that these harmonies and concordances and relations could not be brought about without the grand design of an All-Wise, All-Knowing and All-Powerful God. This sphere of the earth is floating in space and is not resting on anything, yet there is no commotion and no vibration in its movement. Had there been any vibration in it, such as we experience during an earthquake, life could not exist here. This sphere comes before the sun and hides from it regularly, which causes the alternation of the day and night. Had it turned the same face perpetually towards the sun and kept the other side always hidden, no life could be possible here, for on the bright side all life would have been shrivelled up, and on the dark side all life would have been frozen to death. The sphere is enveloped by a five hundred mile thick atmosphere, which protects it against the continual bombardment of meteors, otherwise the twenty million meteors on the average, which dart towards the earth daily at 30 miles per second, would have caused such destruction as would not have allowed any man animal or tree to survive. The same atmosphere controls the temperature, raises clouds from the oceans, carries water to different parts of the earth and provides the required gases that sustain the human, animal and plant life. Without it the earth could not become a fit place of rest for any kind of animal life. Just under the earth's surface all those minerals and chemicals which are essential to the survival of vegetable and animal life have been provided in abundance. Wherever these natural resources do not exist, the land there cannot sustain any kind of life. A great store of water has been arranged on the earth in the form of oceans, rivers, lakes, springs and underground channels and snow on the mountains which melts and flows down in the form of rivers. Without such an arrangement there could be no life. Then the earth has been endowed with an appropriate gravitational pull by which it keeps the water and the air and all other things found on it attracted to it. If this pull had been a little less strong, it could not have stopped the air and the water from escaping. It would also have so much increased the temperature that life here would have become difficult. On the other hand, if the gravitational pull had been a little stronger, the atmosphere would have been denser, its pressure would have increased, evaporation would have become difficult and rains impossible; the cold would have increased and less areas on earth would have been inhabitable; men and animals would have been shorter in size but heavier in weight, which would have made movement difficult. Besides, this sphere has been

located at a suitable distance from the sun, which is most approriate for the population here. If the distance had been longer, the earth would have received less of heat, the climate would have been much colder, the seasons much longer and the earth would be hardly inhabitable. On the other hand, if the distance had been shorter, the intensity of the heat along with other factors would have rendered it unfit for the kind of life man is living here.

These are a few of those harmonies and concordances due to which earth has become a place of rest for its population. A man with a little common sense who is aware of these facts cannot imagine for a moment that these concordances have come into existence without the design of an All-Wise Creator, as a mere accident, nor can he ever conceive that a god or goddess, jinn or prophet, saint or angel, could have had any hand in the creation and bringing into operation of this grand design.

75. That is, the bodies of sweet and saline waters that exist on the earth but do not intermingle. Underground water channels mostly flow separately with sweet water and saline water side by side. Even in the middle of the bitter seas there exist at some places springs of sweet water; their current remains separate from the sea water and the sea passengers obtain their drinking water from it. (For further explanation, see, E.N. 68 of Sūrah Al-Furqān).

76. The Arab polytheists themselves knew and acknowledged that Allah alone could avert a disaster. Therefore, the Qur'ān reminds them again and again that they implore Allah alone for help when they are confronted by a calamity. But when the calamity is removed, they start invoking others besides Allah. (For details, see E.N.'s. 29 to 41 of Al-An'ām, Yūnus: 21-22, E.N. 46 of An-Nahl, and E.N. 84 of Banī Isrā'īl). And this is not only true of the Arab polytheists but of all polytheists; so much so that even the Russian atheists who are regularly campaigning against God-Worship, had to invoke God when in the Second World War they were tightly encircled by the German forces.

77. This has two meanings: (1) "He raises one generation after the other and one nation after the other"; and (2) "He gives you power and authority to rule in the earth".

78. That is, "He has made such arrangements by means of the stars that you can find your way even in the darkness of the night." This is also because of the wise planning of Allah that He has created such means by which man can determine his direction and the way to his destination in his journeys by sea and land. In the day time he is guided by different land-marks and the direction of sun-rise and sun-set, and in the dark nights by the stars. In Sūrah An-Nahl this has

been counted among the bounties of Allah: "He has placed land-marks to direct people, and by the stars, too, they are guided aright." (v. 16)

79. "Allah's mercy": the rain whose coming is promptly foretold by the winds.

80. The simple fact hat has been expressed in this one sentence is so vast in meaning and detail that as one considers it more and more deeply one goes on getting new and ever new proofs of Allah's existence and His unity. In the first place, take the question of the creation itself. Man by his knowledge has not been able to discover what is life, how and whereform it comes. So far the admitted scientific fact is that the mere arrangement of inanimate matter by itself cannot bring about life. Though the atheists assume, unscientifically, that life comes into existence automatically when all the elements essential for its creation combine together accidentally in the right proportion, yet if the mathematical law of chance is applied to it, the possibility of its occurrence comes to nought. All attempts made so far to produce animate matter out of inanimate matter experimentally in the laboratory have met with utter failure in spite of employing every possible care. At the most what has been created is DNA, which is the basic constituent of the living cell. This is the essence of life but not life itself. Life in itself even now is a miracle which cannot be explained scientifically except by saying that it is the result of a Creator's will and command and design.

Furthermore, life does not exist in a solitary form but in a limitless variety of forms. Man has so far discovered more or less a million species of animals and two hundred thousand species of plants on the earth, which in their constitution and special characteristics are so clearly and absolutely different from one another, and have been maintaining their distinctive features since the earliest known times so consistently that no Darwin could ever give any rational explanation of this great variety of life except the existence of the creative design of One God. Not a link has so far been discovered between any two species, which might have broken up the form of the characteristics and constitution of one species and might be struggling to attain the characteristics and constitution of another species. The whole record of the fossils is without such a precedent, and among the existing animals also there is no such "eunuch" in its physical form. Any member of any species that exists is found with the distinctive features of its own species, and every story that is invented and announced from time to time about the discovery of some missing link is destroyed by the facts themselves. Therefore, the inevitable fact is that it is the All-Wise Designer, the Planner of creation, its Enforcer and its Fashioner, Who has endowed life with all its countless different forms.

This was about the beginning of the creation. Now let us consider its reproduction. The Creator has placed in the constitution and make-up of every

animal and vegetable species such a wonderful mechanism, which goes on producing through its countless members an endless race exactly with its own distinctive form and nature and characteristics, and it never has happened even by mistake that in these millions and millions of tiny sex workshops a certain workshop of a species may have turned out a specimen of a different species. The observations of modern Genetics in this connection present wonderful facts. Every plant has been so endowed with the capability of procreating its species that the new generation should possess all the distinctive characteristics of its own species and its every member should be distinguished in its special features from the members of all other species. This element for the survival of the species and its procreation is contained in a part of a cell of every plant, which can be seen with effort only through a most powerful microscope. This tiny engineer directs the whole development the plant precisely and definitely on the way which is the way of its own distinctive species. That is why all the plants that have emerged from a grain of wheat any where in the world have in turn produced only wheat. In no climate and in no region has it ever happened that from the whole race of a grain of wheat even a single grain of barley might have emerged. The same is the case with animals and men. None of them has been created just for once, but on an inconceivably high scale a huge factory of reproduction is functioning every where, which is constantly bringing into existence, from the members of every species, countless other members of the same species. If one considers the microscopic germ of procreation which along with all the distinctive features and hereditary characteristics of its species is found in a small portion of its tiny self and then looks at the extremely delicate and complex physiological system and the subtle, intricate processes by which the procreative seed of every member of every species produces a member of the same species, one cannot conceive for a moment that such a fine and subtle system could come into being by itself, and then keep on functioning by itself in millions and millions of the members of different species. This thing stands in need of an All-Wise Designer not only for its beginning but for its proper and perpetual functioning also it needs an Administrator Who is at once Wise and Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent, Who is ever watching and guiding the work of these workshops.

These facts destroy the very basis of an atheist's denial of God as also of a polytheist's creed of polytheism. A foolish person only can think that an angel or a jinn or a prophet or a saint has any hand in this work of God, but no unbiased person possessed of a little common sense can ever say that this huge workshop of production and reproduction with all its underlying wisdom and order started working just accidentally and has since been working so automatically.

81. The question of the provision of sustenance also is not so simple as a person may feel it to be from a cursory study of this brief sentence. There exist on

this earth millions of animal and vegetable species, each comprising billions of members having different food requirements. The Creator has arranged the means of sustenance for each species in such abundance and so within easy reach that members of no species ever go without food. Then the agencies of the earth and sky which combine and work together in this system are varied and countless. Unless there is the right kind of coordination and harmony between the heat, light, air, water and the diverse substances of the earth, not a single particle of food can be produced.

Can anyone conceive that this wise system could come about just accidentally, without the intelligent planning and design of an All-Wise Creator? And can anybody in his senses imagine that in this system there could be any hand of a *jinn* or an angel or the spirit of a pious man?

82. That is, "You should either bring a proof to show that someone else is an associate of Allah in these works, or, if that is not possible, you should at least explain by an argument why you should worship and serve any other god beside Allah, when One Allah alone has done, and is doing, all these works."

83. In the preceding verses, arguments have been given to prove that Allah is the One and only Deity when considered from the viewpoint of creation, design and provision of the means of sustenance. Now in this verse it is being told that from the viewpoint of knowledge too, which is an important attribute of Godhead, Allah is Unique and without associate. Whatever creations are therein the heavens and the earth, whether angels or jinns, prophets and saints, or other men and other creatures, they have only limited knowledge. Something is hidden from all of them. The All-Knowing One is only Allah, from Whom nothing whatever of this universe is hidden, and Who knows every thing of the past and the present and the future.

The word *ghaib* means something hidden and covered. As a term it implies everything which is unknown, and beyond one's sphere of knowledge and information. There are many things in the world which individually are known to some human beings and unknown to others. And there are many others which taken as a whole have never been known to any of mankind, nor are known at present, nor will be known in the future. The same is the case with the *jinns* and the angels and other kinds of creation: certain things are known to some of them and hidden from others, and many things hidden from all of them and known to none. All kinds of hidden things are only known to One Being, the All-Knowing Allah. For Him nothing is unknown everything is known and evident.

In order to bring out this reality the method of the question as employed above with regard to creation, design and sustenance of the universe has not been

adopted here. The reason is that the manifestations of those attributes are clear and evident which everyone sees, and which even the pagans and polytheists acknowledged, and do even today, that they are the works of Allah. So, the argument adopted above was: When all these works, as you admit, are being done by Allah, and no one else is His partner in these, why have you then made others His associates in Divinity, and in His worship? However, the attribute of knowledge has no perceptible manifestation which may be referred to and pointed out. It can be comprehended only by thought and reflection. Therefore, it has been put forward as an assertion instead of a question. Now it is for every intelligent person to think and consider for himself whether it is reasonable to believe that there should be any other than Allah, who is all-knowing, i.e. who knows all those conditions and things and realities which existed in the universe in the past; or exist now, or will exist in the future. And if there is none other who is all-knowing, and cannot be, then is it reasonable to believe that any of those who are not aware fully of the realities and conditions and circumstances can become the answerer of the people's prayers, fulfiller of their needs and remover of their hardships ?

There is a subtle relationship between Divinity and the knowledge of the unseen and hidden. Since the earliest times in whatever being has man imagined the presence of an attribute of Godhead, he has taken it for granted that it knows everything and nothing is hidden from it. In other words, it is self-evident for man to believe that making or marring the destinies, answering the prayers, fulfilling the needs and helping everyone in need of help, can be the work of the being who knows everything and from whom nothing is hidden. That is why whomever man has regarded as possessor of the powers and authority of Godhead he has necessarily regarded him as the knower of all hidden things as well. For his intellect testifies rightly that knowledge and authority are inter-dependent. Now if it is a fact that none but God is the Creator and the Designer and the Answerer of the prayers and the Providence, as has been proved in the foregoing verses, then it is also a self-evident reality that none but God is the Knower of the hidden things. After all, who in his senses could imagine that an angel or a jinn or a prophet or a saint or any other creature would be knowing where and what kinds of animals existed in the oceans and in the atmosphere and under the layers of the earth and upon its surface? And what is the correct number of the planets in the heavens? And what kinds of creatures exist in each of them? And where is each one of these creatures living and what are its requirements? All this should necessarily be known to Allah, because He has created them and He alone has to watch over their conditions and control their affairs and arrange for their sustenance. But how can some one else with his limited self have this vast and all-embracing knowledge and

what has he to do with the functions of creation and sustenance that he should know these things?

Then this quality is also not divisible in the sense that a person, for instance, may be the knower of everything on the earth, or the knower of everything concerning human beings only, on the earth. It is in the same way indivisible as are God's Creativity and His Providence and His Self-Subsistence indivisible. After all, how can it be possible for one to know all the affairs and all the conditions and states of all human beings who have been born in the world since the beginning of creation, and will be born till Resurrection, from the time their mothers conceived them till the time they will breathe their last ? And how and why will he know all this ? Is he the creator of these countless multitudes ? Did he create their seed in their fathers' sperm-drop ? Did he mould and shape them in their mother's womb? Did he arrange for their normal birth? Did he make the destiny of each one of them? Is he responsible for taking decisions with regard to their life and death, their health and ill-health, their prosperity and adversity, and their rise and fall in the world ? And since when did he become responsible for it? Since before his own birth or since after it ? And how can these responsibilities remain confined only to human beings? This is only a part of the universal administration of the heavens and the earth. The Being Who is controlling the whole universe is the Being Who alone can be responsible for the creation and death of men, for restricting and extending their provisions and for making and marring their destinies.

That is why it is a fundamental article of Islam that none other than Allah is the Knower of the hidden and unseen things. Allah may disclose whatever of His information He wills to whomsoever of His servants He pleases and bless him with the knowledge of one or more of the hidden things as a whole. Being the Knower of all hidden and unseen things is the attribute only of Allah, Who is the Lord of all creation "He alone has the keys of the 'unseen' of which none has the knowledge ,but He." (Al-An'ām: 59) "Allah alone has the knowledge of the Hour: He alone sends down the rain and He alone knows what is (taking shape) in the wombs of the mothers. No living being knows what he will earn the next day, nor does anybody know in what land he will die." (Luqmān 34) "He knows what is before the people and also what is hidden from them; and they cannot comprehend anything of His knowledge save whatever He Himself may please to reveal." (Al-Baqarah: 255).

The Qur'ān does not rest content with this general and absolute negation of the knowledge of the hidden and unseen for the different forms of creation, but about the Prophets in particular, and the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) himself it clearly says that they do not possess the knowledge of the

hidden and unseen, and that they were given only that much knowledge of the hidden by Allah as was necessary to enable them to carry out the duties of Prophethood. Sūrah Al-An'ām.: 50, Al-A'rāf: 187, At-Taubah: 101, Hūd: 31, Al-Aḥzāb: 63, Al-Aḥqāf: 9, At-Taḥrīm: 3 and Al-Jinn: 26-28 do not leave any room for doubt in this regard.

All these elucidations of the Qur'ān support and explain the verse under discussion after which there remains no doubt that looking upon another than Allah as the knower of the hidden and unseen and believing that someone else also possesses the knowledge of all the past and future events, is an absolutely un-Islamic belief. Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Nasā'ī, Imām Aḥmad, Ibn Jarīr and Ibn Abū Ḥātim have cited this saying of Ḥadrat 'Ā'ishah through authentic reporters: "Whoever claimed that the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) knew what was going to happen the next day, accused Allah of lying, for Allah says: O Prophet, say, 'None in the heavens and the earth has the knowledge of the hidden and unseen but Allah'." Ibn al-Mundhir has reported this on the authority of 'Ikrimah, the well-known pupil of Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās: "A person asked the Holy Prophet: O Muḥammad, when will Resurrection be? And our territory is suffering from famine: when will it rain ? And my wife is pregnant: what will she deliver, a boy or a girl? And I know what I have earned today; but what shall I earn tomorrow? And I know where I was born, but where shall I die?" In reply, the Holy Prophet recited verse 34 of Sūrah Luqmān as cited above. Then the well-known Tradition as reported in Bukhārī; and Muslim and other works of *Ḥadīth* also supports the same. According to it one of the questions asked by Angel Gabriel from the Holy Prophet when he sat among the Companions in human shape before him, was: "When will Resurrection be?" The Holy Prophet replied: "The one being questioned knows no better than the one questioning." Then added, "This is one of those five things whose knowledge is possessed by none but Allah," and then he recited the above-cited verse of Sūrah Luqmān .

84. That is "Those others about whom it is thought that they possess the knowledge of the hidden and, therefore, are regarded as partners in Divinity, are themselves unaware of their future. They do not know when will Resurrection be when Allah will raise them up again.

85. After warning the people about their basic errors with regard to Divinity, it is being said that the reason why these people are involved in these errors is not that they have reached this conclusion after serious thought and deliberation that there exist other beings also who are Allah's associates in His Divinity, but the actual reason is that they have never considered this matter seriously. As they are unaware of the Hereafter, or are in doubt about it, or are

[Contd. on p.564

وَلَا تَحْزَنْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا تَكُنْ فِيْ ضَيْقٍ مِّمَّا يَمْكُرُوْنَ ﴿٧٠﴾ وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ مَتٰى هٰذَا
الْوَعْدُ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٧١﴾ قُلْ عَسٰٓى اَنْ يَّكُوْنَ رَدِفَ لَكُمْ بَعْضُ الَّذِيْ
تَسْتَعْجِلُوْنَ ﴿٧٢﴾ وَاِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَذُوْ فَضْلٍ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿٧٣﴾
وَاِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَيَعْلَمُ مَا تُكِنُّ صُدُوْرُهُمْ وَمَا يُعْلِنُوْنَ ﴿٧٤﴾ وَمَا مِنْ غَآئِبَةٍ فِي
السَّمَآءِ وَالْاَرْضِ اِلَّا فِيْ كِتٰبٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿٧٥﴾ اِنَّ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ يَقُصُّ عَلٰى بَنِيْٓ
اِسْرَآءِيْلَ اَكْثَرَ الَّذِيْ هُمْ فِيْهِ يَخْتَلِفُوْنَ ﴿٧٦﴾ وَاِنَّهٗ لَهُدًى وَّرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٧٧﴾
اِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَقْضِيْ بَيْنَهُمْ بِحُكْمِهٖ ۚ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿٧٨﴾ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللّٰهِ ۭ اِنَّكَ
عَلَى الْحَقِّ الْمُبِيْنِ ﴿٧٩﴾ اِنَّكَ لَا تُسْمِعُ الْمَوْتٰى وَلَا تُسْمِعُ الصُّمَّ الدُّعَاۗءَ اِذَا
وَلَّوْا مُدْبِرِيْنَ ﴿٨٠﴾ وَمَآ اَنْتَ بِهٰدِ الْعُمْيِ عَنْ ضَلٰلَتِهِمْ ۭ اِنْ تُسْمِعُ اِلَّا مَنْ
يُّؤْمِنُ بِاٰيٰتِنَا فَهُمْ مُّسْلِمُوْنَ ﴿٨١﴾ وَاِذَا وَقَعَ الْقَوْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ اَخْرَجْنَا لَهُمْ دَاۗبَّةً
مِّنَ الْاَرْضِ تُكَلِّمُهُمْ ۙ اَنَّ النَّاسَ كَانُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا لَا يُوْقِنُوْنَ ﴿٨٢﴾ وَيَوْمَ نَحْشُرُ
مِنْ كُلِّ اُمَّةٍ فَوْجًا مِّمَّنْ يُّكَذِّبُ بِاٰيٰتِنَا فَهُمْ يُوْزَعُوْنَ ﴿٨٣﴾ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا جَاۗءُوْ
قَالَ اَكَذَّبْتُمْ بِاٰيٰتِيْ وَلَمْ تُحِيْطُوْا بِهَا عِلْمًا اَمَّا ذَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٨٤﴾ وَوَقَعَ
الْقَوْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ بِمَا ظَلَمُوْا فَهُمْ لَا يَنْطِقُوْنَ ﴿٨٥﴾ اَلَمْ يَرَوْا اَنَّا جَعَلْنَا الَّيْلَ
لِيَسْكُنُوْا فِيْهِ وَالنَّهَارَ مُبْصِرًا ۭ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يُّؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٨٦﴾ وَيَوْمَ
يُنْفَخُ فِي الصُّوْرِ فَفَزِعَ مَنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْاَرْضِ اِلَّا مَنْ شَاۗءَ
اللّٰهُ ۭ وَكُلٌّ اَتَوْهُ دٰخِرِيْنَ ﴿٨٧﴾ وَتَرَى الْجِبَالَ تَحْسَبُهَا جَامِدَةً وَّهِيَ تَمُرُّ مَرَّ
السَّحَابِ ۭ صُنْعَ اللّٰهِ الَّذِيْٓ اَتْقَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ ۭ اِنَّهٗ خَبِيْرٌۢ بِمَا تَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿٨٨﴾ مَنْ
جَاۗءَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهٗ خَيْرٌ مِّنْهَا ۚ وَهُمْ مِّنْ فَزَعٍ يَّوْمَىِٕذٍ اٰمِنُوْنَ ﴿٨٩﴾ وَمَنْ

O Prophet, do not grieve for them nor feel distressed at their machinations.[87]—They say, "When will this threat be carried out if you are truthful?"[88] Say, "No wonder that a part of the torment you wish to be hastened, may well have approached you."[89] The fact is that your Lord is highly Gracious to the people, but most of them are not grateful.[90] No doubt your Lord knows fully well what they keep hidden in their breasts and what they reveal.[91] There is no secret thing in the heavens and the earth, which is not recorded in a clear Book.[92] 70-75

The fact is that this Qur'ān tells the children of Israel the reality of most of those things in which they differ;[93] and this is a Guidance and a Mercy for the believers.[94] (Likewise) your Lord will surely judge between these people[95] as well by His Command, and He is the All-Mighty, the All-Knowing.[96] Therefore, O Prophet, put your trust in Allah: you are certainly on the manifest Truth. You cannot make the dead to hear you,[97] nor can convey your call to the deaf, who have turned their backs and are running away from you,[98] nor can guide the blind against their errors.[99] You can only make those people to listen to you, who believe in Our Revelations and then submit (to Us) completely. 76-81

And when the time of the fulfilment of Our Decree approaches them,[100] We shall bring forth a beast for them from the earth, which will speak to them (about this) that the people did not believe in Our Revelations.[101] And imagine the Day when We shall gather together from every community a host of those people who used to treat Our Revelations as false; then they will be arranged (according to their classification and merit) until when all of them will have arrived, (their Lord) will ask them, "Did you treat My Revelations as false whereas you did not comprehend them by knowledge?[102] If not this, what else were you doing?"[103] And the threat of the torment will be carried out on them in consequence of their wicked deeds; then they will not be able to utter a word. Did they not perceive that We had ordained the night for them to have rest in it, and made the day bright?[104] Surely in this there were many Signs for those who believed.[105] 82-86

And on the Day when the Trumpet will be blown, all those who are in the heavens and the earth, shall be struck with terror[106]— except those whom Allah shall be pleased to protect.—And all shall 87-90

present themselves before Him in submission. Today, you see the mountains and think that they are firmly set, but on that Day they will be flying about like the clouds; this will be a manifestation of the powers of Allah, Who has ordered everything with wisdom. He is fully aware of what you do.[107] He who will bring good deeds, will have a reward better than that,[108] and such people shall be secure from the terror of that Day.[109] And the one who will come with evil deeds, all such people shall be flung upon their faces into the Fire. Can you be rewarded except in accordance with your deeds?[109a]

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blind to it, their heedlessness of the Hereafter has developed in them an utterly irresponsible attitude. They are not at all serious about the universe and the real problems of their own lives. They do not bother to know what reality is and whether their philosophy of life accords with that reality or not. For, according to them, in the end the polytheist and the atheist, the monotheist and the agnostic, all will become one with the dust after death, and nothing will bear any fruit.

The theme of the Hereafter is contained in this sentence of the preceding verse: "They do not know when they will be raised back to life." In that sentence it was said that those who are made deities—the angels, jinns, prophets, saints, etc., do not themselves know when will Resurrection be. Here three things have been said about the common polytheists and the atheists: (1) They do not at all know whether there will be any Hereafter or not; (2) this lack of information on their part is not due to the reason that they were never informed of this, but because they did not believe in the information given to them and doubted its authenticity; and (3) they never bothered to consider with due thought and seriousness the arguments that were advanced about the coming of the Hereafter, but they preferred to remain blind to it.

86. This brief sentence contains two strong arguments for the Hereafter as well as admonition:

Firstly, those communities who rejected the Hereafter could not help becoming criminals: they lived irresponsibly; they committed cruelties and all kinds of sin; and ultimately their moral depravity led them to utter ruin. This continuous experience of human history which is testified by the doomed communities all over the world, clearly shows that belief and unbelief in the Hereafter has a deep relationship with the soundness or the unsoundness of human behaviour. Belief in it generates sound behaviour and denial of it unsound behaviour. This is a clear proof of the fact that belief in it is in accordance with the

reality; that is why belief helps life to follow the right path. And rejection of it is against the reality; that is why rejection leads life into crooked alleys.

Secondly, the destruction of the communities, which became criminals, one after the other, in the long experience of history is a clear pointer to the fact that this universe is not being ruled by the deaf and blind and senseless forces, but this is a wise system which is functioning according to the unalterable law of retribution, which is dealing with the human communities only on moral grounds, in which no community is given long enough rope to commit whatever evil it likes and continue to enjoy life and commit injustices after it has once risen to power and prosperity. But when a wicked community happens to reach a certain stage, a mighty hand topples it from power and hurls it into the abyss of ignominy. Anyone who realizes this fact can have no doubt that the same law of retribution calls for the establishment of a new world after this world, where all individuals and nations and the whole mankind collectively should be rewarded and punished for their deeds. For the requirements of justice cannot be fulfilled only by the destruction of a wicked nation; this does not in any way redress the grievances of the oppressed people; this does not punish those who had enjoyed life and left the world before the coming down of the scourge; this does not also take to task those wicked people who went on leaving behind them legacies of immoralities and deviations for the coming generations. The torment that visited the nation only put a stop to the further tyrannies of its last generation. The court has not yet started working, to punish every wicked person for the evil done, to compensate every oppressed person for the losses incurred, and to reward all those who stood by the right against the onslaught of evil, endeavoured to reform things and faced persecutions in this way throughout their lives. All this should necessarily happen at some time. For the continuous operation in the world of the law of retribution clearly points to the temperament and technique of the ruling government of the universe that it judges human deeds by moral standards and punishes and rewards them accordingly.

Besides these two arguments, the aspect of admonition in this verse is: "Learn lessons from the fate of the guilty people of the past, and do not persist in the foolish belief of the denial of the Hereafter, which, in fact, was responsible for making them criminals."

87. That is, "You have done full justice to your mission of preaching. Now if they do not listen to you, and wish to persist in their folly and deserve the Divine torment, you should not consume yourself by being distressed and grieved at their condition. Then, why should you feel vexed at their mean machinations that they are devising in order to fight the truth and to frustrate your movement of

reform ? You have Allah's power at your back. If they do not listen to you, they will only be harming themselves, not you."

88. The same threat which is implied in the preceding verse. What they meant was: "When will the scourge with which you threaten us overtake us? Why are we not being punished when we have not only rejected you but have also done whatever we could to frustrate your mission?"

89. This is a royal way of saying a thing. When words like "perhaps", "no wonder", etc. occur in the Divine discourse, they do not contain any sense of doubt, but express Allah's Independence and Self-Sufficiency. Allah's power is so great that His willing a thing and its happening is one and the same thing. It is inconceivable that He should will a thing and it should not happen. Therefore, when He says, "No wonder it may well be so", it means, "It will certainly be so if you do not mend your ways."

90. That is, "It is Allah's mercy that He does not seize the culprit immediately after his commission of a crime but gives him respite to reform himself. But most people are not grateful for this, and do not utilize the period of respite for their reformation. On the contrary, when they see that they have not been taken to task immediately, they form the idea that there is none to call them to account. Therefore, they are free to do whatever they like and they should not listen to any word of admonition".

91. That is, "He is not only aware of their open misdeeds but is also fully aware of the malice and spite which they are concealing in their hearts and the evil plots which they are making secretly. Therefore, when the time comes to call them to account, they will be taken to task for everything done and thought."

92. Here by "Book" is not meant the Qur'ān, but the Divine Record in which everything has been registered.

93. This sentence is connected with the foregoing theme as well as with what follows. In the first case, it means that it is a manifestation of the knowledge of the All-Knowing God that He is explaining through a gentile (non-Jew) in this Qur'ān the reality of those events which are a part of the Israelite history, and which are being disputed by the learned men of the Israelites themselves. (The examples of this have been given in the early part of this Sūrah as explained in our Notes). In the second case, it means that just as Allah has decided those disputes, so He will decide this dispute also which is going on between the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (may Allah's peace be upon him) and his opponents as to who is following the truth and who the falsehood. So, a few years after the revelation of these verses the Decision came before the whole world. In the same land of Arabia and in the same clan of the Quraish there was not left a single person who was not convinced that it was Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) who was

following the Truth and not Abū Jahl and Abū Lahab. Even the children of these people admitted that their fathers were in the wrong.

94. That is, "It is Mercy and Guidance for those who accept the message of the Qur'ān and believe in what it presents. Such people will be saved from the errors in which their own people are involved. They will find the right way of life by means of the Qur'ān and they will be blessed with such favours by Allah, which the disbelievers among the Quraish cannot even imagine today." This shower of Allah's mercy was also witnessed by the world after a few years. The same people who were living unknown lives in a corner of the Arabian desert and could at the most become successful raiders in the state of unbelief, suddenly emerged after their belief in the Qur'ān as the guides of the world, leaders of the nations, makers of human civilization and rulers over a vast part of the world.

95. "Between these people": Between the disbelievers of the Quraish and the believers.

96. That is, "Neither can any power withhold His judgement from being enforced, nor is there any chance of an error in His judgement."

97. "The dead": the ones whose consciences are dead and whose stubbornness, obstinacy and love of the usage and custom have deprived them of the sense of discrimination between the Truth and falsehood.

98. That is, "Who not only close their ears against what you say, but slink away from the place where they fear they might hear what you say.

99. That is, "It is none of your job to pull them forcibly to the right way and drag them along with you. You can only tell them by the word of mouth and by your example that this is the right way and the way they are following is the wrong way. But how can you guide the one who has closed his eyes and is not at all inclined to see anything?"

100. That is, "...when Resurrection which they are being promised will approach."

101. According to Ibn 'Umar, this will happen when there remains no one in the world to command the people to do good and forbid them to do evil. Ibn Mardūyah has reported a *Hadīth* on the authority of Abu Sa'id Khudrī; according to which the latter heard the same thing from the Holy Prophet himself. This shows that when man gives up the duty of exhorting others to do good and forbidding them to do evil, Allah will bring forth a beast to serve as the final warning just before Resurrection. This, however, is not clear whether it will be just one beast, or a particular species of beasts, who will spread all over the earth. The words *dābbat-an-min-al-ard* might contain both the meanings. In any case, what it will say will be: "The people did not believe Allah's Revelations in which

Resurrection was foretold. Now the same Resurrection is about to come; let everyone know that what Allah said was true". The sentence, "The people did not believe in Our Revelations", is either a part of the beast's own speech, or Allah's narration of its words. If these are its own words, the word "Our" will be understood in the style of an official who speaks on behalf of his government and not on his personal behalf. In the second case, since Allah is narrating the beast's words, He has used "Our Revelations" in the normal sense.

As to the time and occasion of the appearance of this beast, the Holy Prophet has said: "The sun will rise in the west and the beast will suddenly appear in the open daylight. Whichever of these signs appears first, it will be closely followed by the other." (Muslim) In the other traditions related in Muslim, Ibn Mājah, Tirmidhi, Musnad Ahmad, etc. the Holy Prophet foretold that the signs of Resurrection—emergence of the Anti-Christ *(Dajjāl)*, appearance of the beast, smoke and the rising of the sun in the west -will appear one after the other.

As for the nature, general appearance, place of appearance and other details about the beast, contradictory traditions have been reported, which only cause confusion and are not relevant to the object for which this thing has been mentioned in the Qur'ān.

As regards the beast's speaking to human beings in a human language, this will be a manifestation of the power of Allah, Who can give the power of speech to anything He pleases. He will give this power only to a beast before the event of Resurrection, but when Resurrection will have taken place, each limb of man—his ears, his eyes, even his skin—will speak out and give evidence in the Court of Allah, as has been clearly stated in Hā Mīm As-Sajdah: 20-21: "Then, when all will have reached there, their ears and their eyes and their very skins will bear witness against them concerning what they had been doing in the world. They will say to their skins, "Why have you borne witness against us?' They will reply, 'The same God Who has given speech to everything has given us speech'."

102. That is, "You did not deny My Revelations on the basis of some scientific investigation, which might have proved them to be false, but you denied them without any sound reason."

103. That is, "If it is not so, can you then prove that you treated them as false only after a thorough scientific investigation through which you came to know that the reality was not that which was being presented in these verses?"

104. That is, "Two out of the countless signs were such which they were observing at all times, whose benefits they were enjoying every moment, and which were not hidden even from a blind or deaf or dumb person. While they benefited by the rest at night and the opportunities afforded by the day, why did they not think that it is a system devised by an All-Wise Being, Who has

established the relationship between the sun and the earth precisely to meet their requirements and needs ? This cannot be a mere accident, for it clearly manifests purposefulness, wisdom and planning, which cannot be the characteristic of the blind forces of nature, nor the work of many gods. It can only be a system established by the One Creator and Master and Disposer, Who is ruling over the earth, the moon, the sun and all other planets. From the observation of this single phenomenon they could judge that the alternation of the day and night testified to the truth that We have conveyed through Our Messenger and Our Book."

105. That is, "It was not something incomprehensible either. There were among their own relatives, their own clan and their own brotherhood people like themselves, who had seen the same very Signs and believed that the creed of God-worship and *Tauḥid* towards which the Prophet was inviting them was precisely in accordance with the truth and reality."

106. For a detailed discussion of the blowing of the Trumpet, see E.N. 47 of Al-An'ām, E.N. 57 of Ibrāhīm, E.N. 78 of Ṭā Hā, E.N. I of Al-Ḥajj, E.N.'s. 46, 47 of Yā Sīn and E.N. 79 of Az-Zumar.

107: That is, "From such God you should not expect that after giving you the powers of intellect and discrimination and control over things, He will remain unaware of your deeds and actions and will not see how you have been using the delegated authority in the earth."

108. The reward will be better in two ways: (1) It will be higher than what a person will actually deserve for his good deeds; and (2) it will be everlasting and for ever though the good act was temporary and its influence confined to a limited period only.

109. That is, "Though the terrors of Resurrection will stun and confound the disbelievers, the believers will remain safe and secure from them, for everything in the Hereafter will be according to their expectations. They had already known from the messages brought by the Messengers of Allah that Resurrection will take place, and a new World will be established when everyone will be called to account for his deeds. Therefore, they will neither be bewildered nor alarmed, which will be the case with those who had denied this Day and remained heedless of it, till their last breath in the world. They will also be satisfied because they had worked for this Day and had brought necessary provisions from the world for their success here. Therefore, they will not be stupefied and confounded as will be those who had invested all their energies and capabilities in their struggle for achieving worldly successes only, and had never thought that there would be life hereafter also for which they should make some provision. Contrary to them, the believers will be satisfied that the Day for the

[Contd. on p.570

جَآءَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ فَكُبَّتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ فِي النَّارِ ۖ هَلْ تُجْزَوْنَ إِلَّا مَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٠﴾
إِنَّمَا أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ رَبَّ هَٰذِهِ الْبَلْدَةِ الَّذِي حَرَّمَهَا وَلَهُ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ ۖ وَأُمِرْتُ
أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٩١﴾ وَأَنْ أَتْلُوَ الْقُرْآنَ ۖ فَمَنِ اهْتَدَىٰ فَإِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِي
لِنَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَن ضَلَّ فَقُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُنذِرِينَ ﴿٩٢﴾ وَقُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ سَيُرِيكُمْ
آيَاتِهِ فَتَعْرِفُونَهَا ۚ وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٣﴾

91-93 (O Muḥammad, say to them:) "What I have been commanded is that I should worship the Lord of this City, Who has made it sacred, and Who is the Owner of every thing.[110] I have been commanded to live as a Muslim and to recite the Qur'ān." Now whosoever follows the guidance, will follow it for his own good, and to him who goes astray, say, "I am only a warner." Say to them, "Praise is only for Allah; very soon He will show you His Signs, which you shall recognize; and your Lord is not unaware of what you do."

Contd. from p.569]

sake of which they had given up the unlawful benefits and pleasures of life and had undergone hardships and toil, had at last come, and they will not be deprived of the rewards of their works."

109a. At several places in the Qur'ān it has been stated clearly that an evil will be punished in the Hereafter only to the extent of the evil committed, but a good act will be rewarded much more generously by Allah than what the doer will actually deserve for it. For more examples of this, see Sūrah Yūnus: 26-27, Al-Qaṣaṣ: 84. Al-'Ankabūt: 7, Sabā': 37-38, Al-Mu'min: 40.

110. As this Sūrah was sent down at a stage when the message of Islam was confined to Makkah and its addressees were the people of that City only, it was said, "I have been commanded that I should worship the Lord of this City." And the characteristic of the Lord was stated to be that He had made that City sacred. This was meant to warn the disbelievers of Makkah, as if to say, " You may if you so like prove thankless to that God Who has done you the great favour of making this City of yours a haven of peace in the strife-ridden land of Arabia, and Who by His grace has made it the centre of spiritual affiliation for the whole of Arabia, but I have been commanded to be grateful to Him and bow down before Him. None of your deities had the power to make this City a sanctuary and make the quarrelsome and plundering tribes of Arabia have respect for it. I cannot abandon my real Benefactor and bow down before those who have done me no favour at all."



XXVIII

AL-QAṢAṢ

اَلقَصَصُ

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XXVIII
AL-QASAS

ٱلْقَصَص

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from verse 25 in which the word Al-Qaṣaṣ occurs. Lexically, *qaṣaṣ* means to relate events in their proper sequence. Thus, from the viewpoint of the meaning too, this word can be a suitable title for this Sūrah, for in it the detailed story of the Prophet Moses has been related.

Period of Revelation

As already mentioned in the Introduction to Sūrah An-Naml, according to Ibn 'Abbās and Jābir bin Zaid, Sūrahs Ash-Shu'arāa.', An-Naml and Al-Qaṣaṣ were sent down one after the other. The language, the style and the theme also show that the period of the revelation of these three Sūrahs is nearly the same. Another reason for their close

resemblance is that the different parts of the Prophet Moses' story as mentioned in these Sūrahs together make up a complete story. In Sūrah Ash-Shu'arāa', excusing himself for not accepting the office of Prophethood, the Prophet Moses submits, "The people of Pharaoh have the charge of a crime against me; therefore, I fear that they will put me to death." Then, when he goes before Pharaoh, the latter says, "Did we not bring you up as a child in our house? You lived quite a few years of your life among us, and then you did what you did." Nothing more of this has been mentioned there, but in this Sūrah the other details have been supplied. Similarly, in Sūrah An-Naml the story starts abruptly from the time when the Prophet Moses was journeying with his family and suddenly saw a fire at a distance. In that Sūrah nothing has been said about the nature of his journey, or the place he was coming from, or his destination, but this Sūrah supplies all the necessary details. Thus, the three Sūrahs read together complete the story of the Prophet Moses (Allah's peace be upon him).

Theme and Topics

The main theme is to remove the doubts and objections that were being raised against the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) and to invalidate the excuses which were being offered for not believing in him.

For this purpose, first the story of the Prophet Moses has been related, which, by analogy with the period of revelation, impresses the following points in the listener's mind automatically:

First, Allah provides the means and motives of whatever He wills to do, in imperceptible ways. Thus, Allah so arranged things that the child through whom Pharaoh had to be removed from power, was bred and brought up in his own house, and he could not know whom he was fostering. Who can then fight God and frustrate Him by his machinations?

Secondly, Prophethood is not granted to a person amid festivities by issuing a proclamation from the earth and heavens. You wonder how Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) has been blessed with prophethood unexpectedly, all of a sudden, but Moses whom you

yourselves acknowledge as a Prophet (v. 48) had also become a Prophet unexpectedly, while on a journey, and nobody had known what event had occurred in the desolation at the foot of Mt. Sinai. Even Moses himself did not know a moment before what he was going to be blessed with. He, in fact, had gone to bring a piece of the fire but had returned with the gift of Prophethood.

Thirdly, the person from whom Allah wants to take some service comes out without any army and armour and without an apparent helper or force at his back, yet he puts to rout much stronger and better equipped opponents. The contrast that existed between the strengths of Moses (peace be upon him) and Pharaoh was much more prominent and glaring than that which existed between Muḥammad (peace be upon him) and the Quraish; yet the world knows who had come out victorious in the end and who had been routed.

Fourthly, you refer to Moses again and again and say, "Why has Muḥammad not been given the same which was given to Moses?—i.e. miracles of the staff, the shining hand, etc.—as if to suggest that you would readily believe only if you were shown the kind of the miracles that were shown by Moses to Pharaoh. But do you know what sort of response was made by those who were shown those miracles ? They had not believed even after seeing the miracles, and had only said, "This is magic", for they were involved in stubbornness and hostility to the Truth. The same malady afflicts you today. Will you believe only when you are shown the same kind of miracles? Then, do you know what fate the disbelievers had met even after seeing the miracles ? They were annihilated by Allah. Do you now wish to meet the same doom by asking for the miracles in your obstinacy?

These were the things which were automatically impressed in the mind of every listener who heard this story in the pagan environment of Makkah, for a similar conflict was going on at that time between the Holy Prophet and disbelievers of Makkah as had already taken place between the Prophet Moses and Pharaoh before. This was the background against which the story of the Prophet Moses was narrated so that a perfect analogy was established automatically in every detail

between the conditions prevailing then in Makkah and those existing in the time of the Prophet Moses. Then, from verse 43 onward the discourse turns to the real theme.

In the first place, the narration of a two thousand year old historical event by the Holy Prophet with such accuracy and detail, is presented as a proof of his Prophethood although he was un-lettered and the people of his city and clan knew full well that he had no access to any source of such information as they could point out.

Then his appointment as a Prophet is put forward as Allah's mercy to them, for they were heedless and Allah had made this arrangement for their guidance. Then their oft-repeated objection, "Why has not this Prophet brought the miracles which Moses had brought?" has been answered. It is said to them, "How can you be justified in demanding miracles from this Prophet when you did not believe in Moses either, who, as you yourselves acknowledge, had brought miracles from God ? You can still see the truth only if you do not serve your lusts and whims. But if you remained afflicted with this malady, you would never see it even though you were shown any kind of miracles."

Then the disbelievers of Makkah have been warned and put to shame for an event that occurred in those very days. Some Christians had come to Makkah and embraced Islam when they heard the Qur'ān from the Holy Prophet. Instead of learning any lesson from this the Makkans were so upset at this that their leader, Abu Jahl, disgraced those people publicly.

In conclusion, the excuse that the disbelievers put forward for not believing in the Holy Prophet has been dealt with. What they feared was this: "If we give up the polytheistic creed of the Arabs and accept the doctrine of *Tauḥīd* instead, this will put an end to our supremacy in the religious, political and economic fields, which, in turn, will destroy our position of the most influential tribe of Arabia and we shall be left with no refuge anywhere in the land." As this was the real motive of the chiefs of the Quraish for their antagonism towards the Truth, and their doubts and objections were only the pretences, which they invented to

deceive the common people, Allah has dealt with these fully till the end of the Sūrah, considered each aspect of these in a wise manner and offered the remedy for their basic ailment due to which those people judged the Truth and falsehood only from the viewpoint of their worldly interests.



طٰسٓمٓ ۝١ تِلْكَ اٰيٰتُ الْكِتٰبِ الْمُبِيْنِ ۝٢ نَتْلُوْا عَلَيْكَ مِنْ نَّبَاِ مُوْسٰى وَفِرْعَوْنَ
بِالْحَقِّ لِقَوْمٍ يُّؤْمِنُوْنَ ۝٣ اِنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ عَلَا فِى الْاَرْضِ وَجَعَلَ اَهْلَهَا شِيَعًا
يَّسْتَضْعِفُ طَآئِفَةً مِّنْهُمْ يُذَبِّحُ اَبْنَآءَهُمْ وَيَسْتَحْىٖ نِسَآءَهُمْ ۭ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ مِنَ
الْمُفْسِدِيْنَ ۝٤ وَنُرِيْدُ اَنْ نَّمُنَّ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ اسْتُضْعِفُوْا فِى الْاَرْضِ وَنَجْعَلَهُمْ
اَىِٕمَّةً وَّنَجْعَلَهُمُ الْوٰرِثِيْنَ ۝٥ وَنُمَكِّنَ لَهُمْ فِى الْاَرْضِ وَنُرِىَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَ
هَامٰنَ وَجُنُوْدَهُمَا مِنْهُمْ مَّا كَانُوْا يَحْذَرُوْنَ ۝٦ وَاَوْحَيْنَآ اِلٰٓى اُمِّ مُوْسٰٓى اَنْ
اَرْضِعِيْهِ ۚ فَاِذَا خِفْتِ عَلَيْهِ فَاَلْقِيْهِ فِى الْيَمِّ وَلَا تَخَافِىْ وَلَا تَحْزَنِىْ ۚ اِنَّا
رَآدُّوْهُ اِلَيْكِ وَجَاعِلُوْهُ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ۝٧ فَالْتَقَطَهٗٓ اٰلُ فِرْعَوْنَ لِيَكُوْنَ لَهُمْ
عَدُوًّا وَّحَزَنًا ۭ اِنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامٰنَ وَجُنُوْدَهُمَا كَانُوْا خٰطِـِٕيْنَ ۝٨ وَقَالَتِ
امْرَاَتُ فِرْعَوْنَ قُرَّتُ عَيْنٍ لِّىْ وَلَكَ ۭ لَا تَقْتُلُوْهُ ۖ عَسٰٓى اَنْ يَّنْفَعَنَآ اَوْ نَتَّخِذَهٗ
وَلَدًا وَّهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ۝٩ وَاَصْبَحَ فُؤَادُ اُمِّ مُوْسٰى فٰرِغًا ۭ اِنْ كَادَتْ لَتُبْدِىْ
بِهٖ لَوْلَآ اَنْ رَّبَطْنَا عَلٰى قَلْبِهَا لِتَكُوْنَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ۝١٠ وَقَالَتْ لِاُخْتِهٖ قُصِّيْهِ

XXVIII
AL-QAṢĀṢ
اَلْقَصَص

Verses: 88 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah , the Merciful, the Compassionate.

Ṭā. Sīn. Mīm. These are the verses of the lucid Book. We narrate to you accurately some of the history of Moses and Pharaoh[1] for the benefit of those who believe.[2] 1-3

The fact is that Pharaoh adopted an attitude of rebellion in the land[3] and divided its dwellers into groups,[4] one of which he debased, putting their sons to death, and letting their daughters live:[5] indeed he was one of the mischief-makers. And it was Our will to show favour to those who had been oppressed in the land to make them leaders and to make them the heirs; to give them power in the land and to show Pharaoh and Hāmān[8] and their hosts, at their hands, the same which they feared. 4-6

We[9] inspired the mother of Moses, saying, "Suckle him, and when you see any danger for him, cast him into the river, and fear not nor grieve, for We shall restore him to you and shall include him among the Messengers."[10] Consequently, Pharaoh's household picked him up (from the river) so that he may become their enemy and cause of grief for them.[11] Really, Pharaoh and Hāmān and their hosts were misguided (in their scheming). Pharaoh's wife said (to him), "He is a comfort of the eyes for me and for you! Do not kill him: maybe that he proves useful to us, or we may adopt him as a son."[12] And they were unaware (of the ultimate result). 7-9

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1. For comparison, see Al-Baqarah: 47-59, Al-A'rāf: 100-141, Yūnus: 75-92, Hūd: 96-109, Banī Isrā'īl: 101-111, Maryam: 51-53, Ṭā Hā: 1-89, Al-

Mu'minūn: 45-49, Ash-Shu'arāa: 10-68, An-Naml: 7-14, Al-'Ankabūt: 39-40, Al-Mu'min: 23-50, Az-Zukhruf: 46-56, Ad-Dukhān: 17-33, Adh-Dhāriyāt: 38-40, An-Nāziyāt: 15-26.

2. That is, "For the benefit of those who are not obstinate and stubborn, for it would be useless to address those who are not at all inclined to listen to you."

3. The words *'alā fil-arḍ* in the Text are comprehensive and mean that he adopted a rebellious attitude in the land, assumed independence and godhead and superiority instead of behaving like a servant and a subordinate, and started oppressing his subjects like a tyrannical and haughty ruler.

4. That is, "He did not rule his subjects with an even hand giving equal rights to all of them, but he had adopted the polity of dividing them into groups. He bestowed privileges and preferential rights on some to be made the ruling class and reduced others to serfs to be oppressed and exploited."

Here, nobody should have the doubt that an Islamic government also discriminates between its Muslim and *dhimmī* subjects, and does not allow them equal rights and privileges in every way. This doubt is misplaced because this distinction, contrary to Pharaonic discrimination, is not based on any distinction owing to race, colour, language or class, but on the distinction of ideology and way of life. In the Islamic system there is absolutely no difference between the legal rights of the Muslims and the *dhimmīs*. The only difference is in their political rights, for the simple reason that in an ideological state the ruling class can only be the one which believes in its basic ideology. Every person who accepts this ideology can enter that class, and anyone who rejects it quits it. Thus, there can be no element of resemblance between this discrimination and the Pharaonic discrimination according to which no member of the oppressed race can ever enter the ruling class, under which the people of the oppressed race do not even enjoy the basic human rights, not to speak of their political and economic rights; so much so that they are even deprived of their right to live and survive, and denied security of any right whatever, all special privileges and benefits and high of offices and good things of life being reserved for the ruling class and for every such person who happens to have been born in it.

5. The Bible elucidates this as follows:

"Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: Come on, let us deal wisely with them: lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and *so* get them up out of the land. Therefore they

did set over them task masters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Ra'amses ....And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour; And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour .... And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives .... And he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to Hebrew women, and see *them* upon the stools; if it *be* a son, then ye shall kill him: but if it *be* a daughter, then she shall live." (Exod. 1: 8-16).

This shows that after the passing away of the Prophet Joseph a nationalist revolution took place in Egypt, and when the Copts regained power the new nationalist government employed every means to subdue the Israelites. They did not only humiliate and disgrace them and took mean services from them, but, over and above this, they adopted the policy of reducing their population, by killing their sons and allowing their daughters to live so that their women should gradually pass into the Copts' hands and produce the Coptic instead of the Israelite race. The Talmud adds that this revolution had taken place a little over a hundred years after the death of the Prophet Joseph. According to it, the new government, in the first instance, deprived the Israelites of their fertile lands and houses and possessions, and then removed them from the government jobs and offices. Even after this whenever the Coptic rulers felt that the Israelites and their Egyptian co-religionists were becoming formidable they would disgrace them and employ them in rigorous jobs on little or no wages at all. This is the explanation of the Qur'ānic verse: "He debased a section of the Egyptian population", and of verse 49 of Al-Baqarah: "They had inflicted a dreadful torment on you."

However, neither the Bible nor the Qur'ān mentions that the Pharaoh was told by an astrologer that a boy would be born among the Israelites, who would become a cause of his deposition from power and to meet this danger he had issued orders to kill the male children born in the Israelite homes, or that Pharaoh himself had seen a dreadful dream and the explanation given was that a son would be born among the Israelites, who would cause his downfall. Our commentators have taken this "legend" from the Talmud and other Israelite traditions. (See *Jewish Encyclopedia*, under ;"Moses", and *The Talmud Selections*, pp. 123-24).

6. That is, "Make them leaders and guides of the people in the world."

7. That is, "Bestow on them inheritance of the land so that they should be rulers over it."

8. The Western orientalists have been very critical of this. They say that Hāmān was a courtier of the Persian King Xerxes, who reigned hundreds of years after the Prophet Moses, from 486 to 465 B.C., but the Qur'ān has made him a

minister of Pharaoh in Egypt. This is nothing but an instance of sheer prejudice. After all, what historical evidence have these orientalists got to prove that there never lived any other person called Hāmān before Xerxes' courtier Hāmān? If an orientalist has been able to discover, through authentic means, a complete list of all the ministers and chiefs and courtiers of the Pharaoh under discussion which does not contain the name of Hāmān he should make it public, or publish a photostat of it, because there could be no better or more effective instrument than this of the refutation of the Qur'ān.

9. That a son was born in the same period to an Israelite parents who was later known by the name of Moses to the world, has been omitted. According to the Bible and the Talmud, the family descended from Levi, a son of the Prophet Jacob, and the name of the Prophet Moses' father was Amram, which has been pronounced as Imrān by the Qur'ān. They already had two children before Moses, the elder a daughter, named Miriam, and the younger her brother, Aaron. Probably the proclamation that every male child born in an Israelite home would be killed, had not yet been issued when the Prophet Aaron was born; therefore, he was saved. The third child was born when the proclamation was in full force.

10. That is, "She was not commanded to cast the child into the river immediately after birth, but to suckle it till she felt a real danger for it. For instance, if she felt that the secret had been exposed and the enemies had come to know of the child's birth through some means, or through some wretched informer from among the Israelites themselves, she should place the child in a box and cast it into the river, without any hesitation. According to the Bible, the Prophet Moses' mother kept him hidden for three months after his birth. The Talmud adds that the Pharaoh's government had appointed Egyptian women who carried infants into the Israelite homes, and would make these babies cry, so as to make any hidden Israelite infants also cry and be thus discovered. This new method of spying worried Moses' mother and in order to save her child's life, she cast him into the river three months after his birth. Upto this point the version given by these Books is the same as the Qur'ān's, and the event of casting the box into the river has also been described just as the Qur'ān has described it. In Sūrah Ṭā Hā it has been said: Put this child in a box and place the box in the river." (v.39). The same has been said by the Bible and the Talmud. According to these, the Prophet Moses' mother made a basket of reeds and covered it with slime (tar) and with pitch to make it watertight. Then she laid the child in it and placed it in the river Nile. But the most important thing, which the Qur'ān mentions, has found no mention anywhere in the Israelite traditions, that is, that the Prophet Moses' mother had done all this according to an inspiration from Allah, and Allah had already assured her that by following that device not only would her child remain safe and secure but the child

would ultimately be restored to her, and that her child would become Allah's Messenger in the future.

11. This was not their aim, but the ultimate destiny of their act. They picked up the child through whom they were to be destoyed in the end.

12. What one understands from this is briefly so: "When the ark or the basket was carried by the river to the place where Pharaoh's palaces were situated, the servants of Pharaoh picked it up and took it before the king and the queen. It is just possible that the king and the queen were at that time strolling along the river bank and might have noticed the basket and ordered it to be picked up. When they saw a child in it, they could easily guess that it belonged to an Israelite family. For it came from the quarters inhabited by the Israelites, whose sons were being put to death in those days. It was understood that somebody had hidden the child for some time but when it could not be hidden any longer, it was cast to the river in the hope that it might be picked up and rescued from death. With this in view the most obedient servants submitted that the king order the child to be killed forthwith, for it might prove dangerous for him. But the Pharaoh's wife was a woman and might even be childless. Then it was a lovely child, as Allah has reminded Moses in Ṭā Hā: 39, thus: "I had cast on you love from Myself." That is "I had made you such a lovely child that the beholders could not help regarding you with love." Therefore, the woman could not help feeling for him, and said to the king, "Do not kill him, but let us adopt him. When he grows up in our house as our son, he will not know that he was an Israelite: he will rather think he is one of Pharaoh's own kinsfolk, and he will be useful for us as against the Israelites."

According to the Bible and the Talmud, the woman who had counselled adoption of Moses was Pharaoh's daughter, but according to the Qur'ān his wife *(imra'at-u-Fir'aun)*. Obviously, the direct Word of Allah is more reliable than the verbal traditions which were compiled centuries afterwards. Therefore, it is absolutely needless to translate *imra'at-u-Fir'aun* as a woman of Pharaoh's family" against the Arabic idiom and usage only for the sake of seeking conformity with the Israelite traditions.

فَبَصُرَتْ بِهٖ عَنْ جُنُبٍ وَّهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ۙ وَحَرَّمْنَا عَلَيْهِ الْمَرَاضِعَ مِنْ
قَبْلُ فَقَالَتْ هَلْ اَدُلُّكُمْ عَلٰٓى اَهْلِ بَيْتٍ يَّكْفُلُوْنَهٗ لَكُمْ وَهُمْ لَهٗ نٰصِحُوْنَ ۝١٢
فَرَدَدْنٰهُ اِلٰٓى اُمِّهٖ كَيْ تَقَرَّ عَيْنُهَا وَلَا تَحْزَنَ وَلِتَعْلَمَ اَنَّ وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ حَقٌّ وَّ
لٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝١٣ وَلَمَّا بَلَغَ اَشُدَّهٗ وَاسْتَوٰٓى اٰتَيْنٰهُ حُكْمًا وَّعِلْمًا ؕ
وَكَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِى الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ۝١٤ وَدَخَلَ الْمَدِيْنَةَ عَلٰى حِيْنِ غَفْلَةٍ مِّنْ اَهْلِهَا
فَوَجَدَ فِيْهَا رَجُلَيْنِ يَقْتَتِلٰنِ ۗ هٰذَا مِنْ شِيْعَتِهٖ وَهٰذَا مِنْ عَدُوِّهٖ ۚ
فَاسْتَغَاثَهُ الَّذِىْ مِنْ شِيْعَتِهٖ عَلَى الَّذِىْ مِنْ عَدُوِّهٖ ۙ فَوَكَزَهٗ مُوْسٰى فَقَضٰى
عَلَيْهِ ۗ قَالَ هٰذَا مِنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطٰنِ ؕ اِنَّهٗ عَدُوٌّ مُّضِلٌّ مُّبِيْنٌ ۝١٥ قَالَ رَبِّ
اِنِّىْ ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِىْ فَاغْفِرْ لِىْ فَغَفَرَ لَهٗ ؕ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ الْغَفُوْرُ الرَّحِيْمُ ۝١٦ قَالَ رَبِّ
بِمَآ اَنْعَمْتَ عَلَىَّ فَلَنْ اَكُوْنَ ظَهِيْرًا لِّلْمُجْرِمِيْنَ ۝١٧ فَاَصْبَحَ فِى الْمَدِيْنَةِ خَآئِفًا
يَّتَرَقَّبُ فَاِذَا الَّذِى اسْتَنْصَرَهٗ بِالْاَمْسِ يَسْتَصْرِخُهٗ ؕ قَالَ لَهٗ مُوْسٰٓى اِنَّكَ
لَغَوِىٌّ مُّبِيْنٌ ۝١٨ فَلَمَّآ اَنْ اَرَادَ اَنْ يَّبْطِشَ بِالَّذِىْ هُوَ عَدُوٌّ لَّهُمَا ۙ قَالَ يٰمُوْسٰٓى
اَتُرِيْدُ اَنْ تَقْتُلَنِىْ كَمَا قَتَلْتَ نَفْسًۢا بِالْاَمْسِ ۚ اِنْ تُرِيْدُ اِلَّآ اَنْ تَكُوْنَ
جَبَّارًا فِى الْاَرْضِ وَمَا تُرِيْدُ اَنْ تَكُوْنَ مِنَ الْمُصْلِحِيْنَ ۝١٩ وَجَآءَ رَجُلٌ
مِّنْ اَقْصَا الْمَدِيْنَةِ يَسْعٰى ۙ قَالَ يٰمُوْسٰٓى اِنَّ الْمَلَاَ يَاْتَمِرُوْنَ بِكَ لِيَقْتُلُوْكَ
فَاخْرُجْ اِنِّىْ لَكَ مِنَ النّٰصِحِيْنَ ۝٢٠ فَخَرَجَ مِنْهَا خَآئِفًا يَّتَرَقَّبُ ۙ قَالَ رَبِّ
نَجِّنِىْ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ۝٢١ وَلَمَّا تَوَجَّهَ تِلْقَآءَ مَدْيَنَ قَالَ عَسٰى رَبِّىْٓ
اَنْ يَّهْدِيَنِىْ سَوَآءَ السَّبِيْلِ ۝٢٢ وَلَمَّا وَرَدَ مَآءَ مَدْيَنَ وَجَدَ عَلَيْهِ اُمَّةً مِّنَ
النَّاسِ يَسْقُوْنَ ۙ وَوَجَدَ مِنْ دُوْنِهِمُ امْرَاَتَيْنِ تَذُوْدٰنِ ۚ قَالَ مَا خَطْبُكُمَا

On the other hand, the heart of Moses' mother was sorely distressed. She would have disclosed his secret, had We not strengthened her heart so that she might have faith (in Our promise). She said to his sister, "Follow him up." So, she watched him from a distance in a manner that (the enemies) did not notice it.[13] And We had already forbidden the breasts of the nurses for the child.[14] (On seeing this) the girl said to them, "Shall I tell you of a house whose people will bring him up for you and look after him well?"[15] Thus We restored Moses[16] to his mother so that her eyes might be cooled and she might not grieve and she might know that Allah's promise was true.[17] But most people do not know this. 10-13

When Moses had reached his full maturity and become full-grown,[18] We gave him judgement and knowledge;[19] thus do We reward the righteous. (One day) he entered the city at a time when the people were heedless.[20] There he saw two men fighting, the one of his own people, the other of his enemies. The one belonging to his own people asked his help against the one belonging to the enemy. Moses gave him a blow[21] and killed him. (On seeing what had happened) Moses said, "This is the work of Satan: he is a deadly enemy (of man) and an open misleader."[22] Then he said, "O my Lord, I have sinned against myself, so forgive me." So, Allah forgave him: He is the All-Forgiving, the All-Merciful.[24] Moses promised, "O my Lord, after this favour that You have shown me,[25] I shall never again be a helper of the criminals."[26] 14-17

The next morning, as he was walking in a state of fear and caution in the city, suddenly he saw the same man who had asked his help the day before, again calling him for help. Moses said, "You are certainly a misguided man."[27] Then, when Moses was about to assault the man, who was their enemy,[28] he cried out,[29] "O Moses! would you kill me today just as you killed a person yesterday? You certainly wish to become a tyrant in the land and reform nothing." Then, a man came running from the other end of the city,[30] who said, "O Moses, the chiefs are holding consultations to kill you, so leave this place: I am your well-wisher." Hearing this, Moses left the place, in a state of fear and vigilance, and prayed, "O my Lord, save me from the wicked people." 18-21

22-23 (Leaving Egypt) when Moses set his direction towards Madyan[31] he said "I expect that my Lord will guide me to the right path."[32] And when he arrived at the well of Madyan[33] he saw a multitude of people watering their animals and apart from them two women keeping their animals back. Moses asked the women "What is your worry?" They said "We cannot water our animals until these shepherds have taken away their animals; and our father is a very old man."[34]

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13. That is, the girl walked along and watched the floating basket in such a manner that the enemies could not know that she had anything to do with the child in it. According to the Israelite traditions, this sister of the Prophet Moses was 10 to 12 years old. She followed up her brother intelligently and cleverly and ascertained that he had been picked up by the Pharaoh's household.

14. That is, "The child would not take to any nurse whom the queen would call for suckling him."

15. This shows that the sister did not go and sit back at home when she found that her brother had reached Pharaoh's palace, but cleverly hung about the palace to watch every new development. Then, when she found that the child was not taking to any nurse, and the queen was anxious to get a nurse who would suit it, the intelligent girl went straight into the palace, and said, "I can tell you the whereabouts of a nurse, who will bring him up with great affection." Here it should be borne in mind that in old days the well-to-do and noble families of these countries generally used to entrust their children to nurses for bringing up. We know that in the time of the Holy Prophet also nurses from the suburbs used to visit Makkah from time to time in order to get infants from the well-to-do families for suckling and nursing on rich wages. The Holy Prophet himself was brought up by Ḥalīmah Sa'diyah in the desert. The same custom was prevalent in Egypt. that is why the Prophet Moses' sister did not say that she would bring a suitable nurse, but said that she would tell them of a house whose people would take up the responsibility of bringing him up with care and affection.

16. According to the Bible and the Talmud, the child was named "Moses" in Pharaoh's house. It is not a Hebrew but a Coptic word, which means, "I drew him out of the water", for in Coptic *mo* meant water and *oshe* rescued.

17. Another good thing that resulted from this wise device by Allah was that the Prophet Moses could not become a real prince in Phoraoh's house, but grew up among his own people and became fully aware of his family and community traditions and his ancestral religion. Thus, instead of growing up as a member of Pharaoh's class and people he arose sentimentally and intellectually as a full-fledged Israelite.

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In a *Ḥadīth* the Holy Prophet has said: "He who works to earn his livelihood and keeps in view Allah's goodwill also, has a likeness with the Prophet Moses' mother, who suckled her own son as well as received her wages for the service, too." That is, although such a person works to earn a living for his children, since he works honestly with a view to pleasing God he is just and upright in his dealings with others, seeks lawful provisions for himself and his children in the spirit of God's worship he does deserve a reward from Allah even for earning his own livelihood.

18. That is, when he had attained his full mental and physical development. In this connection, different ages of the Prophet Moses have been mentioned in the Jewish traditions. Some say he was 18, others have mentioned 20 years and still others 40 years. According to the New Testament, he was 40 years old. (Acts, 7: 23). But the Qur'ān does not mention any age. For the purpose of the incident being mentioned in the following verses, it is enough to know that he had attained his full maturity at that time.

19. *Ḥukm* implies wisdom, understanding and power of judgement, and *'Ilm* is both religious and worldly knowledge. The Prophet Moses became familiar with the teachings of his forefathers the Prophets Joseph, Jacob, Isaac and Abraham (peace be upon all of them) through his contact with his parents, and with the sciences prevalent in Egypt by virtue of his training as a prince in the king's palace. Here the gift of *Ḥukm* (wisdom) and *'Ilm* (knowledge) does not refer to the gift of Prophethood, because Prophethood was bestowed on Moses several years afterwards, as is mentioned below, and has already been mentioned in Ash-Shu'arāa: 21 above.

Regarding his education and training while as a prince the New Testament says: "Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds." (Acts, 7: 22). The Talmud says: Moses grew up, a handsome lad, in the palace of the king: he dressed royally, was honoured by the people, and seemed in all things of royal lineage. He visited the land of Goshen daily, observing the rigour with which his brethren were treated.... Moses urged the king of Egypt to grant the men of Goshen one day of rest from the labour, in each week, and the king acceded to his request. Moses said, "If you compel them to labour steadily their strength will fail them; for your benefit and profit allow them at least one day in the week for rest and renewal of strength", And the Lord was with Moses, and his fame extended through all the land." (H. Polano: *The Talmud Selection* pp. 128-29).

20. It might be the early morning, or midday in summer, or night in winter, when the roads were deserted and there was all quiet in the city. The words "entered the city" indicate that the royal palaces were situated outside the

capital, away from the common population. The words used are "entered the city" and not "came out in the city", because the Prophet Moses lived in the royal palace.

21. The word *wakaza* in the original means both giving a slap and giving a blow. We have adopted "Moses gave a blow" for the reason that a blow can cause death but not so a slap.

22. One can imagine the state of utter remorse and confusion in which the Prophet Moses uttered these words when he saw the Egyptian fall down after receiving the blow and breathe his last. He had no intention to murder, nor is a blow struck to kill, nor can one expect that a healthy person would die on receiving a blow. That is why the Prophet Moses exclaimed: "This is the work of Satan! He has made me do this in order to work some great mischief, so that I am accused of killing an Egyptian while defending an Israelite, and a violent storm of anger and indignation is aroused in the whole of Egypt not only against me but the whole Israelite community." In this connection, the Bible gives a different version from the Qur'ān. It declares the Prophet Moses to be guilty of wilful murder. It says that when Moses saw an Egyptian and an Israelite fighting, "He (Moses) looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, He slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand." (Exod. 2: 12). The same is the version of the Talmud also. Now anybody can see how the Israelites brand the characters of their elders with infamy and how the Qur'ān exonerates them. The verdict of common sense also is that a wise and discreet person, who was to become a great Prophet in the future, and who had to give man a great code of law and justice, could not be such a blind nationalist that seeing a member of his own community fighting with a man of the other community he would be so infuriated that he would kill the other person wilfully. Evidently, it could not be lawful to kill the Egyptian only for the sake of rescuing an Israelite from his tyranny.

23. What the Prophet Moses meant by this prayer was: "O my Lord, forgive this sin of mine, which you know I have not committed wilfully, and also cover and conceal it from the people."

24. This has two meanings and both are implied here: Allah pardoned Moses' error as well as concealed his sin from the people so that neither any Egyptian nor any official of the Egyptian government passed that way at that time that he might witness the incident. So, the Prophet Moses got an opportunity to escape undetected from the place of the occurrence of murder.

25. That is, "The favour of concealing my 'act' from my enemies and enabling me to escape unharmed from Egypt."

26. This pledge of the Prophet Moses is in very comprehensive words. What he meant by this was that he would neither become a helper of an individual nor of those who perpetrated cruelty and tyranny in the world. Ibn Jarīr and several other commentators have rightly understood this to mean that on that very day the Prophet Moses pledged to sever his relations with Pharaoh and his government, for it was a tyrannical government, which had set up a wicked system on God's earth. He realized that it was not for any honest person to continue as a functionary of a tyrannical kingdom and become an instrument of increasing its power and grandeur.

The Muslim scholars in general have deduced from this pledge of the Prophet Moses that a believer should completely refrain from helping a tyrant, whether the tyrant is an individual or a group, or a government or kingdom. Somebody asked Ḥadrat 'Atā' bin Abī Rabāḥ, the well-known follower of the Companions, "My brother is secretary to the governor of Kūfah, under the Umayyids. Though he does not decide the disputes of the people, the decisions, however, are issued through his pen. He has to continue in this service because this is his only source of income." Ḥadrat 'Atā' recited this verse, and said, "Your brother should throw away his pen: the Providence is Allah.

Another secretary asked 'Āmir Sha'bī, "O Abū 'Amr, I am only responsible for writing down and issuing the judgements: I have nothing to do with passing them. Is it lawful provision for me ?" He replied, "It is just possible that a sentence of murder is passed against an innocent person and it is issued under your pen; or a person's property is confiscated unjustly; or somebody's house is ordered to be pulled down, and the orders are issued under your pen." Then the said Imam recited this verse, hearing which the secretary said, "After this day my pen will not be used for issuing judgements of the Umayyids." The Imām said, "Then Allah also will not deprive you of your daily bread."

'Abdur Rehmān bin Muslim had only asked Ḍaḥḥak to go to Bukhāra and distribute the salaries of the officials there, but he declined even this. When his friends said there was nothing wrong in it, he replied, "I do not want to be a helper of the unjust in any way." *(Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī,* Vol. XX, p. 49)

All of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah's authentic biographers including Al-Muwaffaq al-Makkī, Ibn al-Bazzāz al-Karvarī, Mullā 'Alī Qārī, etc., have related that Ḥasan bin Qaḥtubaḥ, the commander-in-chief of Manṣūr, had tendered his resignation only on his instruction, saying, "Whatever I have done to support your kingdom until today, is enough for me if it was in the cause of Allah, but if it was for injustice and tyranny, then I do not want to add to my crimes in my conduct-book.

27. That is, "You seem to be a quarrelsome man: you have daily a new quarrel with one or the other person."

28. Here, the Biblical version is different from the Qur'ānic. The Bible says that the fight on the next day was between two Israelites, but according to the Qur'ān this fight also was between an Israelite and an Egyptian. This second version seems to be credible, for the manner in which the secret of the murder of the first day became known, as is being mentioned below, could be possible only if a member of the Coptic community had come to know of the matter. An Israelite's knowledge of it could not be so treacherous: he could not have gone to inform the Pharaonic government of such a heinous crime committed by the prince, who was a great supporter of his own community.

29. The one who cried out was the same Israelite whom the Prophet Moses wanted to help against the enemy. When after scolding and rebuking him, he turned to assault the Egyptian, the Israelite thought that Moses was going to strike him; therefore, he raised a hue and cry and disclosed the secret of the previous day's murder by this own folly.

30. This happened when in the second day's fight, the secret of the murder became known and the Egyptian informed the authorities about the case accordingly.

31. Both the Bible and the Qur'ān agree that after leaving Egypt the Prophet Moses had gone to live in Madyan (Midian). But the Talmud tells the absurd story that Moses fled to Ethiopia and became a great favourite with the king there. After the king's death the people made Moses their king and leader and gave him the widow of the king for a wife, but during the 40 years of his reign there he never had intercourse with his negro wife. Then the queen of Ethiopia, who was a wife to Moses in name only, said to the people, "Why should this stranger continue to rule over you ? He has never worshipped the gods of Ethiopia." At this the people of Ethiopia deposed him and made him many rich presents and dismissed him with great honours. Then he came to Midian and met with the events being mentioned below. At this time he was 67 years old.

A clear proof of this story's being absurd is that according to it Assyria (northern Iraq) in those days was under Ethiopia, and the Prophet Moses and the Ethiopian king, his predecessor, had led military campaigns to crush the Assyrian revolts. Now anybody who has a little acquaintance with the history and geography can have a look at the map and see things for himself. Assyria could be under Ethiopian domination and have been attacked by the Ethiopian army only in case Egypt and Palestine and Syria had been under its subjugation, or the whole of Arabia under its sway, or, at least the Ethiopian navy so powerful as to have conquered 'Irāq across the Indian ocean and the Persian Gulf. History, however, does not support the view that the Ethiopians ever held sway over these countries, or their naval force was ever so powerful. This indicates how imperfect was the

Israelites' knowledge of their own history, and how the Qur'ān corrects their errors and presents the true facts in their pure form. Nevertheless, the Christian and the Jewish orientalists are never ashamed of asserting that the Qur'ān has plagiarized the Israelite traditions for its narratives.

32. The right path: "The path that may take me to Midian safely." It should be borne in mind that Midian in those days was outside Pharaoh's empire. Egypt did not have control over the whole of the Sinai Peninsula but only on its western and southern parts. The Midianites who inhabited the eastern and western coasts of the Gulf of 'Aqabah were free from Egyptian influence and authority. That is why the Prophet Moses had headed for Midian after leaving Egypt, because that was the nearest free and inhabited land. But to reach Midian he had to pass through Egyptian territories; avoiding the Egyptian police and military posts on the way. That is why he prayed to God to put him on the right track which should take him to Midian safely.

33. This place where the Prophet Moses had arrived was situated, according to the Arab tradition, on the western coast of the Gulf of 'Aqabah, a few miles to the north of Maqnā . Today it is called Al-Bid, and is a small habitation. I visited this place in December, 1952, when I was travelling from Tabūk to 'Aqabah. The natives told me that, as they had heard from their elders, Midian was situated there. From Josephus to Burton, all ancient and modern explorers and geographers, have generally confirmed this very place as the location of ancient Midian. Nearby there is the place now called Maghā'ir Shu'aib or Maghārāt Shu'aib. There are some Thamūdic monuments here. A mile or so away, There are some ancient ruins, where we saw two dry wells, one of which was said to be the well where the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) had watered the goats. The same has been related by Abū Fidā' (d. 732 A.H.) in *Taqvīm al-Buldān* and Yāqūt in *Mu'jam al-Buldān,* on the authority of Abu Zaid Anṣārī; (d. 216 A.H.), that the natives point to the same well there as the well of Moses. This indicates that the tradition is being handed down since centuries among the people, and therefore, it can be confidently asserted that this is the same place which has been mentioned in the Qur'ān. See some photographs of this on the opposite page.

34. That is, "We are women: it is not possible for us to water our animals by resisting these shepherds. Our father is too old to perform this rigorous duty. There is no other male member in the house either. Therefore we, the womenfolk, have to come out to perform these chores, and until all the shepherds have watered their animals and left, we have to wait." This whole meaning was conveyed by the ladies in a brief sentence, which is indicative of their modesty. They did not want to have a lengthy conversation with a stranger, but at the same time, they did not

[Contd. on p. 594]

قَالَتَا لَا نَسْقِيْ حَتّٰى يُصْدِرَ الرِّعَآءُ ؕ وَ اَبُوْنَا شَيْخٌ كَبِيْرٌ ﴿۲۳﴾ فَسَقٰى لَهُمَا ثُمَّ
تَوَلّٰۤى اِلَى الظِّلِّ فَقَالَ رَبِّ اِنِّيْ لِمَاۤ اَنْزَلْتَ اِلَيَّ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَقِيْرٌ ﴿۲۴﴾ فَجَآءَتْهُ
اِحْدٰىهُمَا تَمْشِيْ عَلَى اسْتِحْيَآءٍ ۫ قَالَتْ اِنَّ اَبِيْ يَدْعُوْكَ لِيَجْزِيَكَ اَجْرَ مَا
سَقَيْتَ لَنَا ؕ فَلَمَّا جَآءَهٗ وَ قَصَّ عَلَيْهِ الْقَصَصَ ۙ قَالَ لَا تَخَفْ ۫ نَجَوْتَ
مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿۲۵﴾ قَالَتْ اِحْدٰىهُمَا يٰۤاَبَتِ اسْتَاْجِرْهُ ۫ اِنَّ خَيْرَ مَنِ اسْتَاْجَرْتَ
الْقَوِيُّ الْاَمِيْنُ ﴿۲۶﴾ قَالَ اِنِّيْۤ اُرِيْدُ اَنْ اُنْكِحَكَ اِحْدَى ابْنَتَيَّ هٰتَيْنِ عَلٰۤى اَنْ
تَاْجُرَنِيْ ثَمٰنِيَ حِجَجٍ ۚ فَاِنْ اَتْمَمْتَ عَشْرًا فَمِنْ عِنْدِكَ ۚ وَ مَاۤ اُرِيْدُ اَنْ
اَشُقَّ عَلَيْكَ ؕ سَتَجِدُنِيْۤ اِنْ شَآءَ اللّٰهُ مِنَ الصّٰلِحِيْنَ ﴿۲۷﴾ قَالَ ذٰلِكَ بَيْنِيْ وَ بَيْنَكَ ؕ
اَيَّمَا الْاَجَلَيْنِ قَضَيْتُ فَلَا عُدْوَانَ عَلَيَّ ؕ وَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى مَا نَقُوْلُ وَكِيْلٌ ﴿۲۸﴾ فَلَمَّا
قَضٰى مُوْسَى الْاَجَلَ وَ سَارَ بِاَهْلِهٖۤ اٰنَسَ مِنْ جَانِبِ الطُّوْرِ نَارًا ۚ قَالَ
لِاَهْلِهِ امْكُثُوْۤا اِنِّيْۤ اٰنَسْتُ نَارًا لَّعَلِّيْۤ اٰتِيْكُمْ مِّنْهَا بِخَبَرٍ اَوْ جَذْوَةٍ مِّنَ النَّارِ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَصْطَلُوْنَ ﴿۲۹﴾ فَلَمَّاۤ اَتٰىهَا نُوْدِيَ مِنْ شَاطِئِ الْوَادِ الْاَيْمَنِ فِي الْبُقْعَةِ
الْمُبٰرَكَةِ مِنَ الشَّجَرَةِ اَنْ يّٰمُوْسٰۤى اِنِّيْۤ اَنَا اللّٰهُ رَبُّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿۳۰﴾ وَ اَنْ اَلْقِ
عَصَاكَ ؕ فَلَمَّا رَاٰهَا تَهْتَزُّ كَاَنَّهَا جَآنٌّ وَّلّٰى مُدْبِرًا وَّ لَمْ يُعَقِّبْ ؕ يٰمُوْسٰۤى
اَقْبِلْ وَ لَا تَخَفْ ۫ اِنَّكَ مِنَ الْاٰمِنِيْنَ ﴿۳۱﴾ اُسْلُكْ يَدَكَ فِيْ جَيْبِكَ تَخْرُجْ بَيْضَآءَ
مِنْ غَيْرِ سُوْٓءٍ ۫ وَّ اضْمُمْ اِلَيْكَ جَنَاحَكَ مِنَ الرَّهْبِ فَذٰنِكَ بُرْهَانٰنِ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ
اِلٰى فِرْعَوْنَ وَ مَلَا۟ئِهٖ ؕ اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا قَوْمًا فٰسِقِيْنَ ﴿۳۲﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ اِنِّيْ قَتَلْتُ
مِنْهُمْ نَفْسًا فَاَخَافُ اَنْ يَّقْتُلُوْنِ ﴿۳۳﴾ وَ اَخِيْ هٰرُوْنُ هُوَ اَفْصَحُ مِنِّيْ لِسَانًا
فَاَرْسِلْهُ مَعِيَ رِدْاً يُّصَدِّقُنِيْۤ ۫ اِنِّيْۤ اَخَافُ اَنْ يُّكَذِّبُوْنِ ﴿۳۴﴾ قَالَ سَنَشُدُّ

Hearing this Moses watered their animals for them, then turned and sought a shady place and said, "Lord, I stand in need of any good that You may send down to me." (Not long afterwards) one of the two women came bashfully towards him,[35] and said, "My father calls you so that he may reward you for watering our animals for us."[36] When Moses went to him and narrated to him his whole story he said, "Have no fear for you have now escaped from the wicked people." 24-25

One of the two women said to her father, "Dear father, employ this man as a servant, for the best man for you to employ as a servant can be the one who is strong and trustworthy."[37] Her father said (to Moses),[38] "I wish to give you one of my daughters in marriage provided that you serve me for eight years; and if you wish you may complete ten. I do not want to be harsh to you; if God wills, you will find me a righteous man." Moses replied, "Be it an agreement between me and you. Whichever of the two terms I complete, let there be no injustice to me after that; and Allah is a witness to what we have agreed upon."[39] 26-28

When Moses completed the term[40] and he was travelling with his family, he saw a fire in the direction of Ṭūr.[41] He said to his family, "Stay a while: I have seen a fire: I may bring some information from there, or a burning brand with which you may warm yourselves." When he reached there, a voice called out from a tree in the blessed ground[42] on the right side[43] of the valley: "O Moses, I am Allah, Lord of the universe." And (it was commanded), "Cast down your staff." When Moses saw that the staff was writhing like a snake, he turned about and fled and did not even look behind. (It was said,) "Moses, come back and have no fear: you are quite safe. Put your hand into your bosom: it will come out shining, without any harm to you ;[44] and fold back your arm to ward off fear.[45] These are two clear Signs from your Lord to be shown to Pharaoh and his courtiers: they are very disobedient people indeed."[46] Moses submited, "My Lord, I have killed a man of theirs: I fear that they will put me to death;[47] and my brother Aaron is more eloquent of tongue than I: send him with me as a helper so that he may support me; I fear that they will treat me as a liar." Allah said, "We shall strengthen your hand with your brother and shall give both of you such authority that they will not be able to harm you 29-35

in any way. With Our Signs you and your followers only shall triumph."[48]

Contd .from p.591]

to have a lengthy conversation with a stranger, but at the same time, they did not like that he should form a wrong impression about their family, thinking how lethargic were the manfolk who sat back in their homes and sent the women to perform outdoor duties.

About the father of these ladies traditions that have become current among the Muslims are that he was the Prophet Shu'aib (peace be upon him), but the Qur'ān makes no allusion to this, although Prophet Shu'aib is a prominent character of the Qur'ān. If he were really the father of the ladies, it would have been clearly mentioned here. No doubt there are some traditions in which his name has been mentioned, but both 'Allāma Ibn Jarīr and Ibn Kathīr concur that none of them has been authentically reported. That is why great commentators like Ibn 'Abbās, Ḥasan Baṣri, Abū 'Ubaidah and Sa'īd bin Jubair have relied on the Israelite traditions and mentioned the same names of this personage which appear in the Talmud. etc. Evidently, if the name of Shu'aib had actually been reported from the Holy Prophet these scholars would not have mentioned any other name.

The Bible mentions him as Re'uel in one place and Jethro in another (Exod. 2: 16-18, 3: 1, 18: 5), and says that he was the priest of Midian. In the Talmudic literature he has been variously called as Re'uel, Jethro and Hobab. The present-day Jewish scholars are of the view that Jethro was a synonym for "his excellency' and his real name was Re'uel or Hobab. Similarly, they differ about the meaning of the word Kohen. Some regard it as a synonym of priest and others of prince.

According to the Talmud Re'uel used to visit Pharaoh from time to time before the birth of Prophet Moses, and Pharaoh relied on his knowledge and good counsel and mature opinion. But when the royal council of Egypt started consultations for the subduing of the Israelites and it was decided that their male children be killed on their birth, he did his best to stop Pharaoh from enforcing this wrong decision, warned him of its evil consequences and counselled that if he found the Israelites unbearable, he should let them go to Canaan, the land of their forefathers. These words of Re'uel angered Pharaoh, and he sent him in shame from his presence. Re'uel then left Egypt for his country. Midian, and settled there ever afterwards.

As to his religion it is commonly believed that, like the Prophet Moses, he was a follower of Prophet Abraham's Faith, for just as the Prophet Moses was a descendant of Isaac, son of Abraham (peace be upon both of them), so was he a

descendant of Midian, son of Abraham. Probably due to this relationship he tried to prevent Pharaoh from persecuting the Israelites and angered him. Nisābūrī, the commentator, writes on the authority of Ḥasan Baṣri: "He was a Muslim: he had embraced the religion of the Prophet Shu'aib." The Talmud says that he publicly condemned the idol-worship of the Midianites as a folly. Due to this the people of Midian had turned his opponents,

35. Ḥadrat 'Umar has explained this sentence, thus: "She came walking modestly, with her face covered with a part of her outer garment, unlike those immodest women, who go about wherever they like, and enter wherever they like without any hesitation." Several traditions bearing on this subject have been reported by Sa'īd bin Mansūr, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Ḥātim and Ibn al-Mundhir from Ḥadrat 'Umar through authentic chains of athorities. This shows that the Islamic concept of modesty which the Companions of the Holy Prophet had understood from the Qur'ān and the teaching and training of the Holy Prophet was absolutely opposed to keeping the face exposed to the other men and moving about immodestly. outside the house. Ḥadrat 'Umar has clearly regarded covering of the face as a symbol of modesty and exposing it to the other men as an immodesty and shamelessness.

36. She said this also out of modesty, for she had to give a sound reason for her coming to another man all alone; otherwise it was not at all necessary that a gentleman should have been rewarded if he had rendered some service to the (helpless) women in trouble. And then, in spite of hearing of a reward, the Prophet Moses' willingness to follow her forthwith to her house indicates the state of extreme helplessness in which he found himself at that time. He had left Egypt empty-handed and might have taken at least eight days to reach Midian. He must be hungry and worn out by journey. And, above all, he must be anxious to find a shelter in the unfamiliar land and a sympathetic person to give him refuge. Under this very compulsion, in spite of hearing that he was being called to be rewarded for a small service he had rendered, the Prophet Moses felt no hesitation in going with the woman. He must have thought that the prayer he had just made to God was being answered thus by God Himself. Therefore, he did not think it was right to turn down the means of hospitality provided by his Lord by an unnecessary show of self-respect.

37. It is not necessary that the girl said this to her father in his very first meeting with Moses. Most probably her father made the traveller stay with him for a couple of days, and the girl counselled him thus during that time. What she meant by this counsel was: "Father, you are old, and therefore, we girls have to go out to perfom outdoor duties. We have no brother either, who could take up these chores. You may, therefore, employ this man as a servant: he is strong and

will be able to face all kind of rigours, and he is also trustworthy. He helped us only due to his noble nature when he found us standing helpless, but he never raised his eyes at us."

38. It is also not necessary that the father should have said this to Moses immediately at the daughter's counsel. One feels that he must have formed this opinion after due consideration. He must have thought: "No doubt he is a noble person, but employing a healthy and strong young man like him as a servant in a house where there are grown up daughters would not be the right thing. When he is a gentle, educated and civilized man of a noble family (as he must have come to know from the story told by Moses), why shouldn't he be kept as a son-in-law in the house?" After reaching such a decision, he might have spoken to Moses at a suitable time.

Here again the Israelites have done a grave injustice to their illustrious Prophet, greatest benefactor and national hero. The Talmud says, "Moses lived with Re'uel, and he looked with favour upon Ziporah, the daughter of his host, and married her." Another Jewish tradition related in the *Jewish Encyclopedia* is to the effect: When Moses related his story to Jethro, the latter understood that he was the person at whose hand the kingdom of Pharaoh was to be destroyed according to prophecies. Therefore, he immediately imprisoned Moses so that he should hand him over to Pharaoh and get a reward. He remained imprisoned for seven or ten years in a dark underground cell, but Jethro's daughter, Ziporah, whom he had first met at the well of water, kept visiting him in the cell secretly and providing him with food and drink;. They had even decided to marry. After seven or ten years Ziporah said to her father, "Years ago you put a man in the cell and then forgot him altogether. He should have died by now. But if he is still alive, he must be a godly person." Hearing this when Jethro went to the prison, he found Moses alive and was convinced that he had miraculously remained so. Then he married Ziporah to him.

Have the Western orientalists who are ever on the lookout for the sources of the Qur'ānic narratives ever cared to see this manifest difference that exists between the Qur'ānic version and the Israelite traditions?

39. Some people have taken this conversation between the Prophet Moses and the girl's father for a contract of marriage, and have started the dispute whether service under the father can be looked upon as a dower of the daughters marriage, and whether such external conditions can be laid down for the marriage contract; whereas the words of the verses under discussion themselves indicate this was not the contract of marriage but the initial proposal that is generally made before the execution of the marriage contract itself. After all, how can this be taken for a contract of marriage when it had not yet been decided which of the two

girls was to be given away in marriage. The purport of the conversation was that the girl's father said, "I am prepared to marry one of my daughters to you provided that you promise that you will stay in my house for eight to ten years and help me in performing household chores, for I am old and have no son either, who could manage my properties. I have only daughters whom I have to send to perform outdoor duties. I want you to strengthen me as my would-be son-in-law. If you are willing to accept this responsibility, and do not intend to take away your wife soon after marriage, I will marry one of my daughters to you." The Prophet Moses himself was in search of a shelter at that time, so he accepted the proposal. Evidently, it was a sort of contract that had been agreed upon between the two parties before the marriage. After this the actual marriage must have taken place according to the law and the dower also settled. There could be no question of including the condition of service in the marriage bond itself.

40. According to Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan bin 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib, the Prophet Moses had completed the ten years term instead of the eight years. According to Ibn 'Abbās, this has been related on the authority of the Holy Prophet himself. He has said, "Moses (peace be upon him) completed the term which was more perfect and more agreeable to his father-in-law, i.e. ten years."

41. That the direction of the journey was towards Mt. Ṭūr shows that the Prophet Moses might be travelling to Egypt with his family, for Ṭūr lies on the way from Midian to Egypt. Probably Prophet Moses thought that he had stayed away from home for ten long years and the Pharaoh in whose reign he had left Egypt had also died, if he quietly went back and stayed with his people, nobody would know it.

The Biblical version of the sequence of events is different from the Qur'ān's. It says that the Prophet Moses 'led the flocks (of his father-in-law) to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb." There God spoke to him, and appointed him to Prophethood and commanded him to go to Egypt. Then Moses went back to Jethro, his father-in-law, took his permission and went to Egypt with his family. (Exod. 3: 1, 4: 18) Contrary to this, the Qur'ān says that the Prophet Moses left Midian with his family after completing the term and during this journey Allah spoke to him and appointed him to Prophethood.

Both the Bible and the Talmud agree that the Pharaoh in whose house Prophet Moses had been brought up had died during his stay in Midian, and now another Pharaoh was the king of Egypt.

42. That is, in the ground which was being lit up by Divine Light.

Contd. on p. 599

عَضُدَكَ بِاَخِيْكَ وَنَجْعَلُ لَكُمَا سُلْطٰنًا فَلَا يَصِلُوْنَ اِلَيْكُمَا ۚ بِاٰيٰتِنَآ ۚ اَنْتُمَا
وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَكُمَا الْغٰلِبُوْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾ فَلَمَّا جَآءَهُمْ مُّوْسٰى بِاٰيٰتِنَا بَيِّنٰتٍ قَالُوْا مَا هٰذَآ
اِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُّفْتَرًى وَّمَا سَمِعْنَا بِهٰذَا فِيْٓ اٰبَآئِنَا الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَقَالَ مُوْسٰى
رَبِّيْٓ اَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ جَآءَ بِالْهُدٰى مِنْ عِنْدِهٖ وَمَنْ تَكُوْنُ لَهٗ عَاقِبَةُ
الدَّارِ ۭ اِنَّهٗ لَا يُفْلِحُ الظّٰلِمُوْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الْمَلَاُ مَا
عَلِمْتُ لَكُمْ مِّنْ اِلٰهٍ غَيْرِيْ ۚ فَاَوْقِدْ لِيْ يٰهَامٰنُ عَلَى الطِّيْنِ فَاجْعَلْ لِّيْ
صَرْحًا لَّعَلِّيْٓ اَطَّلِعُ اِلٰٓى اِلٰهِ مُوْسٰى ۙ وَاِنِّيْ لَاَظُنُّهٗ مِنَ الْكٰذِبِيْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَاسْتَكْبَرَ
هُوَ وَجُنُوْدُهٗ فِي الْاَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَظَنُّوْٓا اَنَّهُمْ اِلَيْنَا لَا يُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾
فَاَخَذْنٰهُ وَجُنُوْدَهٗ فَنَبَذْنٰهُمْ فِي الْيَمِّ ۚ فَانْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٤٠﴾
وَجَعَلْنٰهُمْ اَىِٕمَّةً يَّدْعُوْنَ اِلَى النَّارِ ۚ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ لَا يُنْصَرُوْنَ ﴿٤١﴾ وَ
اَتْبَعْنٰهُمْ فِيْ هٰذِهِ الدُّنْيَا لَعْنَةً ۚ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ هُمْ مِّنَ الْمَقْبُوْحِيْنَ ﴿٤٢﴾
وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا مُوْسَى الْكِتٰبَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَآ اَهْلَكْنَا الْقُرُوْنَ الْاُوْلٰى بَصَاۗىِٕرَ
لِلنَّاسِ وَهُدًى وَّرَحْمَةً لَّعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَمَا كُنْتَ بِجَانِبِ الْغَرْبِيِّ
اِذْ قَضَيْنَآ اِلٰى مُوْسَى الْاَمْرَ وَمَا كُنْتَ مِنَ الشّٰهِدِيْنَ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَلٰكِنَّآ اَنْشَاْنَا
قُرُوْنًا فَتَطَاوَلَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْعُمُرُ ۚ وَمَا كُنْتَ ثَاوِيًا فِيْٓ اَهْلِ مَدْيَنَ تَتْلُوْا
عَلَيْهِمْ اٰيٰتِنَا ۙ وَلٰكِنَّا كُنَّا مُرْسِلِيْنَ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَمَا كُنْتَ بِجَانِبِ الطُّوْرِ اِذْ نَادَيْنَا
وَلٰكِنْ رَّحْمَةً مِّنْ رَّبِّكَ لِتُنْذِرَ قَوْمًا مَّآ اَتٰىهُمْ مِّنْ نَّذِيْرٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَلَوْلَآ اَنْ تُصِيْبَهُمْ مُّصِيْبَةٌۢ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ اَيْدِيْهِمْ
فَيَقُوْلُوْا رَبَّنَا لَوْلَآ اَرْسَلْتَ اِلَيْنَا رَسُوْلًا فَنَتَّبِعَ اٰيٰتِكَ وَنَكُوْنَ مِنَ

Then, when Moses came to those people with Our clear Signs, they said, "This is nothing but false magic,[49] and we have never heard of such things in the time of our forefathers."[50] Moses replied, "My Lord is fully aware of the person who has brought guidance from Him and He alone knows who will fare best in the end; the truth is that the unjust never attain true success."[51] 36-37

And Pharaoh said, "O chiefs, I do not know of any other god of yours than myself.[52] Burn for me bricks of clay, O Hāmān, and build me a high tower so that I may climb it to see the God of Moses for I consider him to be an utter liar."[53] 38

He and his hosts assumed haughtiness in the land unjustly, without any right,[54] and they thought they had never to return to Us.[55] Consequently, We seized him and his hosts and cast them into the sea.[56] Now behold what fate the wicked people met! We made them leaders who invited the people to Hell-fire,[57] and on the Day of Resurrection they will not be able to get any help from anywhere. We set a curse to follow them in this world and on the Day of Resurrection, they shall be involved in an awkward predicament.[58] 39-42

After We had destroyed the former generations, We gave Moses the Book, which We made a means of enlightenment for the people, and a Guidance and a Mercy, so that they may learn lessons.[59] (O Muḥammad,) you were not present on the western side[60] when We gave Moses the Law, nor were you among the witnesses,[61] but after him (until your time) We have raised up many a generation, and a long time has passed over them.[62] You were also not present among the Midianites that you might have recited to them Our Revelations,[63] but it is We Who are sending to you (this news of that time). And you were also not present at the side of Ṭūr when We had called out (to Moses for the first time), but this is your Lord's Mercy (that you are being given this information[64]) so that you should warn those to whom no warner had come before you:[65] may be they take heed. (This We have done) lest, when a calamity befalls them in consequence of their own misdeeds, they should say, "Our Lord, had You sent a messenger to us, we would have obeyed Your Revelations and been among the believers."[66] 43-47

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43. That is, on that side of the valley which lay to the right of the Prophet Moses.

44. These two miracles were shown to the Prophet Moses at that time so that, firstly, he himself is fully convinced that the same Being Who is speaking to him is, in fact, the Creator and Master and Ruler of the whole system of the universe and secondly, he should have full satisfaction that he was not going unarmed before Pharaoh, to perform the dangerous mission assigned to him, but would go well armed with the two powerful weapons.

45. That is, "Whenever you experience the fear of any danger, fold back your arm to yourself: this will strengthen your heart and will deliver you completely from every feeling of fear and dread."

The arm probably implies the right arm. The arm can be folded back in two ways: either by bringing the arm and pressing it against the side, or by pressing one hand under the armpit of the other. Probably the first way was implied, for in that case the other person cannot perceive that one is specially doing so in order to ward off fear.

The Prophet Moses was taught this device because he was being sent to counter a tyrannical government without any army and worldly equipment. He was going to meet with many a dreadful situation when a great Prophet also could not remain safe from fear and terror. Allah said to him, "Whenever you face such a situation, just do this, and Pharaoh will not be able to shake your heart in spite of all the power of his mighty kingdom."

46. The words by themselves imply: "Go to Pharaoh with these Signs and present yourself as Allah's Messenger, and invite him and his chiefs to the obedience and worship of Allah, Lord of the worlds." That is why his appointment has not been specified here, though at other places it has been clearly stated, thus: 'Go to Pharaoh for he has become rebellious' "(Ṭā Hā: 24) And: "When your Lord called Moses, saying: "Go forth to the wicked people--the people of Pharaoh'." (Ash-Shu'arāa: 10).

47. It did not mean that he was hesitant to go there because of the fear, but it meant this: "Kindly make some such arrangement that I am not apprehended on the charge of murder just on arrival even before I may convey to them Your message, for in that case the very object for which I am being sent will be defeated." The next verse makes it plain that the Prophet Moses, by this submission, did not at all mean to reject the office of Prophethood and refuse to go before Pharaoh because of the fear.

48. This meeting of the Prophet Moses with Allah and the mutual conversation has been described in much greater detail in Sūrah Ṭā Hā (vv. 9-48). Anyone possessed of fine taste, who compares this Qur'ānic version with the story given in the Bible (Exod., chs. 3, 4), will be himself able to judge which of the

two is Divine Revelation and which the result of human story-telling. Besides, he will also be able to judge whether the Qur'ānic version is, God forbid, a plagiarism of the Bible and Israelite traditions, or that God Himself is describing the actual event, Who had honoured Moses by calling him up into His Presence. (For further explanation, see E.N. 19 of Sūrah Ṭā Hā).

49. The words of the Text mean "Fabricated or forged magic." If fabrication is taken to mean falsehood, it would mean, "The staff's turning into a serpent and the shining of the hand is not any real change in the nature of the thing itself, but a mere illusion, which this man calls a miracle in order to deceive us." And if it is taken to mean a forgery it will imply: "This person has forged something which appears to be a staff; but when it is thrown on the ground, it moves like a snake. As for the hand, he has rubbed something on it so that when he draws it out of the armpit, it shines. He himself works these magical tricks but tries to make us believe that these are miracles which God has granted him."

50. The reference is to the teachings which the Prophet Moses had presented while conveying this message of *Tauḥīd*. The details have been given at other places in the Qur'ān. For example, according to Sūrah An-Nāziyāt: 18-19, he said to Pharaoh: "Will you mind to purify yourself, that I may guide you to your Lord so that you may have fear (of Him)?" And in Sūrah Ṭā Hā: 47-48: "We have come to you with Signs from your Lord; peace is for him who follows the Right Way. We have been informed by Revelation that there is punishment for him who rejects it and turns away." And: "We are Messengers from your Lord: so let the Israelites go with us." It was about these things that Pharaoh said, "Even our forefathers had never heard that there was a Being more powerful than Pharaoh of Egypt, Who was authorised to command him, to punish him, to send a man to his court to convey His instructions to him, and to warn the king of Egypt to fear Him. These are strange things which we are hearing today from a man like you."

51. That is, "You think I am a magician and a forger, but my Lord is well aware of me. He knows what sort of a man is the person whom He has appointed as a Messenger; and the final judgement rests with Him. If I am a liar, I shall meet an evil end; and if you are a liar, you should know that your end will not be good. In any case, the inevitable fact is that the unjust will not attain true success. He who is not Allah's messenger but falsely presents himself as a messenger for selfish motives, is also unjust and will not attain success. And the one who rejects a true Messenger by false accusations and suppresses the Truth by deceit and fraud, is also unjust and will never attain success."

52. By this Pharaoh did not, and could not, mean that he was the creator of his people and the earth and the heavens, for such a thing be uttered only by a madman. Likewise, he also did not mean that they had no other deity besides him,

for the Egyptians worshipped many gods, and the Pharaoh himself had been made the incarnation of the sungod. The Qur'ān testifies that the Pharaoh himself worshipped many gods: "The chiefs of Pharaoh's people said, 'Will you leave Moses and his followers free to spread disorder in the land, and to discard you and your deities?" (Al-A'rāf: 127) Therefore, inevitably, the Pharaoh had not used the word "god" here for himself as a creator and deity, but as an absolute and supreme sovereign. What he meant was this: "I am the owner of this land of Egypt: I alone will rule here: My law will be the law of the land; I alone shall be accepted as the fountainhead of all commands and prohibitions here. None else is entitled to give commands in this country. Who is this Moses, who has appeared as the delegate of the Lord of the universe and is conveying orders to me as though he is the ruler and I am his subordinate?" That is why he addressed his courtiers, thus: "O people: Is not the kingdom of Egypt mine? And are not these canals flowing beneath me?" (Az-Zukhruf: 51) And that is why he said to Moses again and again, "Have you come to turn us away from the faith of our forefathers so that you too may dominate over the land?" (Yūnus: 78) "O Moses, have you come to drive us out of our land by the power of your sorcery?" (Ṭā Hā: 57) "I fear he will change your religion, or cause mischief to appear in the land." (Al-Mu'min: 26)

If the matter is considered from this angle it will become evident that the position of Pharaoh was no different from the position of those states which claim political and legal sovereignty independent of Divine Law brought by the Prophets. Whether they accept a king as the fountainhead of law and commands and prohibitions, or the will of the nation, in any case as long as they stick to the position that the country will be ruled by their law and not by the Law of Allah and His Messengers, there will be no fundamental difference between their position and that of Pharaoh. It is, however, a different thing that the ignorant people curse Pharaoh but approve these as lawful. A person who understands reality will look for the spirit and sense and not merely for words and terminology. Pharaoh had used the word "god" for himself but these states use the term "sovereignty" in the same sense. (For further explanation, see E.N. 21 of Ṭā Hā

53. This was the same kind of mentality as the Russian communists of today are displaying. They launch Sputniks and Lunics and tell the world that these balls have not found God anywhere above. That stupid man of yore wanted to see God from the top of a tower. This shows that the extent of the imagination of the straying people during the past 3,500 years has remained where it was. They have not advanced even an inch. It is not known who told them that the Being Whom the God-worshippers acknowledge as the Lord of the universe resided some where above according to their belief. And if they do not see Him a

few thousand feet or a few lakh miles above the earth's surface in this limitless universe, it will be a proof that He exists nowhere.

The Qur'ān does not specify whether Pharaoh actually got such a tower built and tried to see God from the top of it, but it only relates what he said. Apparently, he did not commit the folly. He only meant to befool the people.

This also is not clear whether Pharaoh was, in actual fact, a disbeliever in the Being of the Lord of the universe, or talked atheism only due to stubbornness. In this regard his sayings point to the same mental confusion which one finds in the statements of the Russian Communists. Sometimes he wanted to climb into the sky and come back to tell the world that he had nowhere seen the God of Moses, and sometimes he would say, "Why were not bracelets of gold sent down on him, or a company of angels as attendants?" (Az-Zukhruf: 53) These things are not much different from what a former Prime Minister of Russia, Khrushchev, said. He sometimes rejected God and sometimes invoked Him and swore by Him. We are of the opinion that after the passage of the period of the Prophet Joseph and his successors when Egypt was dominated by the Coptic nationalism and a political revolution took place in the country owing to the racial and nationalistic prejudice, the new leaders, in their nationalistic enthusiasm, revolted against the God also towards Whom the Prophet Joseph and his followers, the Israelites and the Egyptian Muslims, had been calling the people. They thought that if they believed in God, they would never be able to shed the influence and impact of the civilization brought about by the Prophet Joseph. For if that civilization remained, they would never be able to consolidate their political influence. For them belief in God and Muslim sovereignty were inseparable and inter-dependent. Therefore, to get rid of the one it was necessary to reject the other, although they could not root out belief in One God from the depths of their hearts.

54. That is, Allah, Lord of the worlds, alone is entitled to the right to greatness, but Pharaoh and his hosts assumed greatness when they attained a little power in a small territory on the earth.

55. That is, "They thought they were answerable to none and with this assumption they started behaving absolutely independently in their day to day life."

56. Allah in these words has depicted their worthlessness and insignificance as against their false pride. They thought they were big people, but when the respite Allah had granted them to reform themselves came to an end, they were thrown into the sea like so much rubbish.

57. That is, "They have set a precedent for the later generations as to committing injustices, rejecting the Truth and persistence in their rejection till the last, and using all sorts of devices to defend falsehood against the Truth." They

showed these ways to the people and have gone to Hell, and now their descendants are following in their footsteps and rushing towards the same doom.

58. The words in the Text mean: "On the Day of Resurrection they will be among the *maqbūḥīn*", which has several meanings: (1) They will stand rejected and repulsed; (2) they will be wholly deprived of Allah's mercy; and (3) they will be severely beaten up and their faces will become distorted.

59. That is, "When the former generations met with the evil consequences of turning away from the teachings of the Prophets, and they met the doom that was experienced by Pharaoh and his hosts, then Moses was granted the Book so as to usher in a new era for mankind."

60. "Western side": Mount Sinai, which lies to the west of the Ḥijāz and on which the Prophet Moses was given the Divine Law.

61. "The witnesses": the seventy of the elders of Israel who had been summoned along with Moses for the covenant to follow the Law. (For reference, see Al-A'rāf: 155 and Exod., ch. 24)

62. That is, "You had no direct means of obtaining this information. All this is being revealed to you by Allah. That is how you have been enabled to relate these two-thousand-year old events, in a manner as if you were an eye-witness."

63. That is, "You did not exist at the time when the Prophet Moses reached Midian, passed ten years of his life there, and then left for Egypt. You were not preaching in the habitations of Midian that which you are preaching in the streets of Makkah. You are not relating those events as an eye-witness, but because you have been given the knowledge of these by Us through Revelation."

64. These things have been presented as a proof of the Holy Prophet's Prophethood. At the time when these were cited all the chiefs of Makkah and the common disbelievers were bent upon somehow proving him as a non-prophet, and, God forbid, a false claimant to Prophethood. To help and assist them in their campaign there were the Jewish scholars and the Christian monks also, who were living in the habitations of the Ḥijāz. Besides, the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (may Allah's peace be upon him) had not appeared all of a sudden from somewhere and started reciting the Qur'ān to the people, but he was a resident of the same city of Makkah, and no aspect of his life was hidden from the people of his city and clan. That is why when these three things were presented like an open challenge as a proof of his Prophethood, not a single person from Makkah and Ḥijāz and the entire land of Arabia could stand up to say the absurd thing which the modern orientalists say, although those people were no less efficient in fabricating falsehood than these so-called scholars. But how could they utter an unprofitable

lie that could not survive for a single moment? How could they say, "O Muḥammad, you have attained this information from such and such a Jewish scholar and a Christian monk?" For, this purpose, they could not mention any name in the entire land. For whatever name they mentioned, it would become manifest there and then that the Holy Prophet had not obtained any information from him. How could they say, "O Muḥammad, you possess a full-fledged library containing all sorts of books on ancient history and sciences and literature, from which you take help to prepare all your discourses?"' For not to speak of a library, no one could seize even a scrap of paper from his house containing such information. Everyone in Makkah knew that Muḥammad (may Allah's peace be upon him) was un-lettered and no one could also say that he had had some translators at his disposal, who supplied him with translations from Hebrew and Assyrian and Greek books. Then, none of them could be so shameless as to dare claim that he had obtained this information during the trade journeys to Syria and Palestine, for he had not performed those journeys alone, but had travelled in company with trade caravans of Makkah. Had somebody made any such assertion, hundreds of living witnesses would have refuted this and testified that he had received no such instruction from anyone there. Then, within two years of the Holy Prophet's death war had started between the Romans and the Muslims. If he had any sort of discussion anywhere in Syria and Palestine with any Christian monk or Jewish rabbi, the Roman Empire would not have hesitated to launch a propaganda campaign, saying, that Muḥammad (peace be upon him), God forbid, had learnt everything from them and gone back to Makkah and proclaimed himself a Prophet. In short, at that time when the challenge of the Qur'ān was the knell of the disbelieving Quraish and the polytheists and the need of those people to refute it was far greater then of the modern orientalists, no one could discover any material by which he could prove that the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) had some other means than Revelation for obtaining that information.

One should also know that the Qur'ān has not given this challenge only here, but at several other places also in connection with different stories. After narrating the story of the Prophet Zacharias and Mary, it was said: "These are of the 'unseen' things We are revealing to you: you were not present there when the priests of the Temple were casting lots by throwing their quills to decide which of them should be the guardian of Mary: nor were you there with them when they were arguing about it." (Āl-i-'Imrān: 44) At the end of the Prophet Joseph's story it was said: "This story which We are revealing to you is of those things that were

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الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿47﴾ فَلَمَّا جَآءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ عِنْدِنَا قَالُوْا لَوْلَآ اُوْتِيَ مِثْلَ مَآ
اُوْتِيَ مُوْسٰى ؕ اَوَلَمْ يَكْفُرُوْا بِمَآ اُوْتِيَ مُوْسٰى مِنْ قَبْلُ ۚ قَالُوْا سِحْرٰنِ تَظٰهَرَا ۫
وَقَالُوْٓا اِنَّا بِكُلٍّ كٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿48﴾ قُلْ فَاْتُوْا بِكِتٰبٍ مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللّٰهِ هُوَ اَهْدٰى مِنْهُمَآ
اَتَّبِعْهُ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿49﴾ فَاِنْ لَّمْ يَسْتَجِيْبُوْا لَكَ فَاعْلَمْ اَنَّمَا يَتَّبِعُوْنَ
اَهْوَآءَهُمْ ؕ وَمَنْ اَضَلُّ مِمَّنِ اتَّبَعَ هَوٰىهُ بِغَيْرِ هُدًى مِّنَ اللّٰهِ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ
لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿50﴾ وَلَقَدْ وَصَّلْنَا لَهُمُ الْقَوْلَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿51﴾
اَلَّذِيْنَ اٰتَيْنٰهُمُ الْكِتٰبَ مِنْ قَبْلِهٖ هُمْ بِهٖ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿52﴾ وَاِذَا يُتْلٰى عَلَيْهِمْ قَالُوْٓا
اٰمَنَّا بِهٖٓ اِنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَّبِّنَآ اِنَّا كُنَّا مِنْ قَبْلِهٖ مُسْلِمِيْنَ ﴿53﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ يُؤْتَوْنَ
اَجْرَهُمْ مَّرَّتَيْنِ بِمَا صَبَرُوْا وَيَدْرَءُوْنَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ السَّيِّئَةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنٰهُمْ
يُنْفِقُوْنَ ﴿54﴾ وَاِذَا سَمِعُوا اللَّغْوَ اَعْرَضُوْا عَنْهُ وَقَالُوْا لَنَآ اَعْمَالُنَا وَلَكُمْ
اَعْمَالُكُمْ ۫ سَلٰمٌ عَلَيْكُمْ ۫ لَا نَبْتَغِي الْجٰهِلِيْنَ ﴿55﴾ اِنَّكَ لَا تَهْدِيْ مَنْ اَحْبَبْتَ وَ
لٰكِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَهْدِيْ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ۚ وَهُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِيْنَ ﴿56﴾ وَقَالُوْٓا اِنْ نَّتَّبِعِ
الْهُدٰى مَعَكَ نُتَخَطَّفْ مِنْ اَرْضِنَا ؕ اَوَلَمْ نُمَكِّنْ لَّهُمْ حَرَمًا اٰمِنًا يُّجْبٰٓى
اِلَيْهِ ثَمَرٰتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ رِّزْقًا مِّنْ لَّدُنَّا وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿57﴾ وَكَمْ
اَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ بَطِرَتْ مَعِيْشَتَهَا ۚ فَتِلْكَ مَسٰكِنُهُمْ لَمْ تُسْكَنْ مِّنْۢ بَعْدِهِمْ
اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا ؕ وَكُنَّا نَحْنُ الْوٰرِثِيْنَ ﴿58﴾ وَمَا كَانَ رَبُّكَ مُهْلِكَ الْقُرٰى حَتّٰى
يَبْعَثَ فِيْٓ اُمِّهَا رَسُوْلًا يَّتْلُوْا عَلَيْهِمْ اٰيٰتِنَا ۚ وَمَا كُنَّا مُهْلِكِي الْقُرٰٓى اِلَّا وَ
اَهْلُهَا ظٰلِمُوْنَ ﴿59﴾ وَمَآ اُوْتِيْتُمْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ فَمَتَاعُ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَزِيْنَتُهَا ۚ وَ
مَا عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ خَيْرٌ وَّاَبْقٰى ؕ اَفَلَا تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿60﴾ اَفَمَنْ وَّعَدْنٰهُ وَعْدًا حَسَنًا فَهُوَ

النصف

But when the Truth came to them from Us, they said, "Why has he not been given the same which was given to Moses?"[67] Have they not rejected that which had been given to Moses before?[68] They said, "Both are works of magic,[69] which assist each other." And they said, "We believe in neither." (O Prophet,) say to them, "Well, bring a book from Allah, which may give better guidance than these two, if you are truthful; I shall follow the same."[70] Now, if they do not meet this demand of yours, you should know that they are, in fact, the followers of their own lusts. And who could go farther astray than the one who follows his own lusts, without guidance from Allah ? Allah does not at all guide such wicked people. And We have conveyed to them the admonition over and over again so that they may take heed.[71] 48-51

The people whom We gave the Book before this, believe in this (Qur'ān),[72] and when it is recited to them, they say, "We have believed in it: this is indeed the Truth from our Lord: we were Muslims even before this."[73] These are the people who shall be given their reward twice[74] for the fortitude they showed;[75] they repel evil with good[76] and spend out of what We have provided them with.[77] And when they heard vain talk,[78] they withdrew from it, saying, "Our deeds are for us and your deeds are for you: peace be on you: we do not seek the way of the ignorant." O Prophet, you cannot give guidance to whom you please, but Allah gives guidance to whom He pleases, and He best knows those who would accept guidance.[79] 52-56

They say, "If we follow this guidance with you, we shall be snatched away from our land."[80]

Is it not a fact that We have made a safe Sanctuary a dwelling-place for them, to which fruits of every kind are drawn, as a provision from Ourself ? But most of them do not know this.[81] 57

And how many habitations have We destroyed whose people exulted in their means of subsistence ! Just see those dwellings of theirs only a few of which have been inhabited after them. At last, We alone became the heirs.[82] 58

And your Lord would never destroy habitations until He had sent in their central place a Messenger, who recited to them Our Revelations; and We would not destroy Habitations until their dwellers had become wicked.[83] 59

60-61 Whatever you have been given, is merely a provision for this worldly life and its adornment; and that which is with Allah is better and more lasting. Do you not use common sense? Can the person to whom We have made a good promise, which he would certainly meet, be ever like the one, whom We have only given the provisions of the worldly life, and who, on the Day of Resurrection, would be presented for punishment.[84]

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not known to you: for you were not with the brothers (of Joseph), when they had conspired together a plot against Joseph." (Yūsuf: 102) Similarly, after relating the full story of the Prophet Noah, it was said: "These are some of the tidings of the 'unseen' which We are revealing to you. You did not know these before nor did your people." (Hūd: 49) That this thing has been reiterated several times shows that this was one of the main arguments that the Qur'ān gave to prove its being Allah's Word and the Holy Prophet's being a Messenger of Allah. For there was no perceptible means of knowledge available to the Holy Prophet who was an unlettered person, apart from Revelation, through which he could narrate so accurately the events that had happened hundreds and thousands of years in the past. And this was one of the important reasons why the contemporaries of the Holy prophet were coming to believe, in larger and still larger numbers, that he was really a Prophet of Allah and received Allah's Revelations. Now one can easily imagine how important it must have been for the opponents of the Islamic movement at that time to meet this challenge, and what efforts they must have made to collect arguments and proofs against it. One can also see that if, God forbid, there was the slightest weakness in this challenge, it would not have been at all difficult for the contemporary people to provide evidence for its refutation.

65. No prophet had been born especially in Arabia after the Prophets Ishmael and Shu'aib (peace be upon them both), during the past two thousand years or so, though teachings of the Prophets like Moses and Solomon and Jesus (peace be upon all of them) had reached the people of that land.

66. This very thing has been presented at several places in the Qur'ān as the reason for sending the Messengers, but it will not be correct to conclude from this that a Messenger should be sent on every occasion at every place for this purpose. As long as the message of a Prophet remains intact in the world and the means of conveying it to others exist, there is no need for a new Prophet, unless need arises to supplement the previous message, or to supplant it by a new message. Nevertheless, when the teachings of the Prophets are forgotten, or become mixed up with errors and deviations and can no longer be relied upon as

means of guidance, then the people do get a chance to make the excuse that there existed no arrangement whatever to make them aware of the distinction between the Truth and the untruth and guide them to the right way: so they could not be guided aright. To meet such an excuse Allah sends the Prophets in such conditions so that any one who follows a wrong way after that may himself be held responsible for his going astray.

67. That is, "Why has not Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) been given all those miracles which had been given to the Prophet Moses? He also should have shown us the miracle of the staff; his hand also should have shone like the sun; his deniers also should have been struck with storms and plagues from the earth and heaven; and he also should have brought them Commandments written on stone tablets."

68. This is a reply to their objection, which implies: "The disbelievers of Makkah had not believed in Moses either, nor followed his teachings. Therefore they had no right to say: Why has the Prophet Muhammad not been given the same miracles that were given to the Prophet "Moses?" In Sūrah Sabā': 31, this saying of the disbelievers of Makkah has been related: "We shall never believe in this Qur'ān, nor in any other Book which came before it."

69. That is, the Qur'ān and the Torah both.

70. That is, "I have to follow the guidance in any case, provided that it is not forged but is real guidance from God. If you possess a Divine Book which gives better guidance than the Qur'ān and the Torah, you should produce it: I shall follow it without any hesitation."

71. That is, "As far as conveying of the admonition is concerned, we have done full justice to it in the Qur'ān in the best way. But guidance is attained only by him who gives up stubbornness and frees his heart from prejudices and is inclined to accept the Truth willingly and sincerely."

72. This does not mean that all the people of the Book (the Jews and the Christians) affirm faith in it. This, in fact, contains an allusion to the event that occurred during the period when this Sūrah was revealed, and was meant to put to shame the people of Makkah, as if to say, "You are denying and rejecting a blessing that has been sent in your own city, whereas the people from far off places, when they hear of it, come to recognize its worth and benefit from it."

This event has been related by Ibn Hishām, Baihaqī and others on the authority of Ibn Isḥāq, thus: "After the migration to Habash when the news about the Holy Prophet's advent and message spread in that land, a deputation of about twenty Christians came to Makkah to find out the truth, and they met the Holy Prophet in the *Masjid-al-Harām* A crowd of the Quraish also gathered around them

to watch what happened. The members of the deputation asked the Holy Prophet some questions, which he answered. Then he invited them to accept Islam and recited some verses of the Qur'ān before them. When they heard the Qur'ān, tears came down from their eyes and they confirmed its being Allah's Word and believed in the Holy Prophet. When the meeting was over and the people left, Abu Jahl and some of his men overtook them on the way, and rebuked them severely, saying, "Never has a more stupid company come here before: O foolish men you were sent here by your people with a view to inquiring about this man, but no sooner did you meet him than you gave up your own faith!" Those gentle people answered, "Peace be to you! We have no wish to enter all argument with you: you are responsible for your faith and we are for ours: we cannot afford to deprive ourselves knowingly of goodness." *(Ibn Hishām,* Vol. II, p. 32; *Al-Bidāyah wan-Nihayah,* Vol. III, p. 82. For further details, see E.N. 123 of Ash-Shu'arāā).

73. That is, "Even before this we were believers in the Prophets and the Divine Books. Therefore, we had no other Faith than Islam and we have believed in that Book too, which this Prophet has brought from Allah. Thus, no change has occurred in our religion: we were Muslims before even as we are Muslims now."

This saying clearly indicates that Islam is not the name of the Faith brought by the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) and the term "Muslim" is not only applicable to his followers, but Islam has been the Faith of all the Prophets since the very beginning and their followers were Muslims in every age. These Muslims became disbelievers only when they refused to acknowledge a true Prophet who came afterwards. But no interruption occurred in the Islam of those people who believed in the former Prophet and also affirmed faith in the Prophet who succeeded him. They continued to be Muslims as they had been Muslims before.

It is strange that even some learned men also have failed to comprehend this fact, and this clear verse also could not satisfy them. 'Allāma Suyūṭī wrote a treatise on the subject that the term "Muslim" was only reserved for the followers of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (may Allah's peace be upon him). Then, as he himself says, when this verse came before him he was stunned: he prayed to God that He guide him in the matter. At last, instead of revising his opinion he stuck to it even more firmly and gave several interpretations of the verse, each to which is more meaningless than the other. For example, one of his interpretations is: *"We were Muslims even before this"* means: We intended to become Muslims even before the revelation of the Qur'ān, because we had been foretold by our Scriptures that it would come, and we had the intention that when it came we would accept Islam." Another interpretation is: "In this sentence, the word *bi-hi* (بِهٖ) after *muslimin* is omitted, implying: We believed in the Qur'ān beforehand,

because we expected it would come, and had believed in it in anticipation. Therefore, we were Muslims, not because we believed in the Torah and the Gospels, but because we had believed in the Qur'ān as Allah's Word even before its revelation." The third interpretation is: "It had been divinely destined for us that we would accept Islam on the advent of the Holy Prophet and the revelation of the Qur'ān; therefore, we were Muslims even before this." None of these interpretations bears any impress that Divine help had become available for the right understanding of this verse.

The fact is that the Qur'ān has expressed this fundamental principle not only here, but at scores of other places also that the real Way of life is only Islam (submission to Allah), and in God's universe there can be no other way of life than this for His creatures. Since the beginning of the creation every Prophet who came for the guidance of mankind brought this very Way of Life: the Prophets themselves have always been Muslims, and they impressed upon their followers also to live as Muslims, and all their followers who submitted to the Divine Command brought by the Prophets, were also Muslims in every age. Consider the following few verses for instance:

(1) Indeed, Islam is the only right way of life in the sight of Allah." (Āl-i-'Imrān: 19)

(2) "Whoever adopts any other than this way of submission (Islam), it will not be accepted from him." (Āl-i-'Imrān: 85)

(3) "My reward is with Allah, and I have been commanded to believe like a Muslim." (Yūnus: 72)

About Prophet Abraham and his descendants it has been said:

(4) "When his Lord said to him, 'Surrender', he promptly responded, 'I have surrendered to the Lord of the universe (and become a Muslim)'. He also enjoined on his children to follow the same way. Jacob also did the same and his last will to his sons was: 'O my children, Allah has chosen the same way of life for you. Hence, remain Muslims up to your last breath.' (Dare you deny this?) Were you present at the time when Jacob was on the point of death ? He asked his children, 'Whom will you worship after me?' They all answered, 'We will worship the same One Allah Whom you, your forefathers Abraham, Ishmael and Isaac acknowledged as their Allah and to Him we all surrender as Muslims'." (Al-Baqarah: 133)

(5) "Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he was a Muslim, sound in the Faith." (Āl-i-'Imrān: 67) Prophets Abraham and Ishmael themselves prayed:

(6) "Lord, make us Thy Muslims and raise from our offspring a community which should also be Muslim (submissive to Thy will)." (Al-Baqarah: 128). In connection with the story of the Prophet Lot it has been said:

(7) "We did not find in it any house of the Muslims except one." (Adh-Dhāriyāt: 36)

The Prophet Joseph prayed to Allah:

(8) "Let me die as a Muslim, and join me with the righteous in the end." (Yūsuf: 101)

Prophet Moses says to his people:

(9) "O my people, if you sincerely believe in Allah, put your trust in Him, if you are Muslims." (Yūnus: 84)

The real religion of the Israelites was not Judaism but Islam as was known to their friends and foes alike. That is why the last words that Pharaoh said while drowning were:

(10) "I have believed that there is no god but the real God in Whom the children of Israel have believed, and *I* am of the Muslims." (Yūnus:90)

Islam was the Way of life of all the Israelite Prophets:

(11) "Indeed, We sent down the Torah wherein was Guidance and Light: thereby all the Prophets, who were Muslims, judged the cases of those who had become Jews." (Al-Mā'idah: 44).

The same was the Prophet Solomon's way of life. So when the queen of Sheba believed in him, she said.

(12) "I submit myself (as a Muslim) with Solomon to Allah, Lord of the worlds." (An-Naml: 44).

And the same was the religion of the disciples of the Prophet Jesus:

(13) "And when I inspired the disciples to believe in Me and My Messenger, they said: 'We believe and bear witness that we are Muslims'." (Al-Mā'idah: 111).

In this connection, if somebody expresses the doubt that the Arabic words "Islam" and "Muslims" could not have been used in different languages and countries, it would obviously be a foolish objection. For the real thing is not the Arabic words but the meaning in which they are used in Arabic. In fact, what has been stressed in the above-cited verses is that the real Way of life sent by God was neither Christianity nor Mosaicism nor Muhammadanism, but to surrender to the Divine Commands taught by the Prophets and the Scriptures, and whoever adopted

this Way anywhere and at any time in the world, is the follower of the same universal, eternal and everlasting true Way of Life. For those who have adopted this Way consciously and sincerely, it is no change of the faith to believe in Jesus after Moses and in Muḥammad after Jesus(may Allah's peace be upon all of them), but a natural and logical demand following the same real Way of life (Islam). Contrary to this, those people who got into the Prophets' communities without due understanding or were born in them, and for whom nationalistic and racial and tribal prejudices were the religion, became mere Jews or Christians, and on the advent of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) their ignorance was exposed. For by refusing to believe in the Last Prophet of Allah, they not only refused to remain Muslims in the future but also proved that they were not "Muslims" even before: they had been charmed by the personality of a Prophet or Prophets, or had taken blind conformity to their forefathers for religion.

74. That is, one reward for affirming faith in the Prophet Jesus (Allah's peace be upon him) and the second for affirming faith in Muḥammad (may Allah's peace be upon him). The same thing has been expressed in the *Ḥadīth* which Bukhārī and Muslim have related on the authority of Ḥadrat Abū Mūsā Ash'arī. He says that the Holy Prophet said: "One of the three persons who will get a double reward is he who belonged to the people of the Book, had full faith in his Prophet and then affirmed faith in Muḥammad (may Allah's peace be upon him)."

75. That is, "They will get a double reward for the reason that they avoided nationalistic, racial and tribal prejudices and remained steadfast on the way of true Faith. When, on the advent of the new Prophet, they were confronted by a hard test, they proved by their conduct that they were not Christ-worshippers but God-worshippers: they were not charmed by Christ's personality but were followers of "Islam". That is why when the new Prophet after Christ brought the same Islam that Christ had brought, they adopted the way of Islam under his leadership, without any hesitation, and gave up the way of those who remained stuck to Christianity."

76. That is, "They answer evil and falsehood with what is good and right: they repel injustice and mischief with what is just and noble; and they do not pay the other man back in the same coin."

77. That is, "They also make monetary sacrifices in the way of the truth. There might also be in it an allusion to this that those people had travelled from Habash to Makkah in search of the truth: they had no material gain in view when they undertook a toilsome journey involving a lot of expenses. When they heard that a man in Makkah had made a claim to be a Prophet, they thought it necessary to go and find out the truth, so that if a prophet had really been sent by God, they should not be deprived of affirming faith in him and being guided aright."

78. The reference is to the "vain talk" that Abū Jahl and his men had with the Christians from Ḥabash, as mentioned in E.N. 72 above.

79. The context shows that the object of addressing this sentence to the Holy Prophet, after mentioning the affirmation of the Faith by this Christians from Habash, was to put the disbelievers of Makkah to shame, as if to say, "O unfortunate people, what wretches you are! People from far off places are coming to benefit from the fountainhead of blessings that has been made available in your own city, but you are wilfully depriving yourselves of it." But the same thing has been said like this: "O Muḥammad, you wish that your clansmen and your kinsfolk; and your near and dear ones should benefit from this life-giving nectar, but your willing alone cannot avail. To give guidance is in the power of Allah: He favours with it only those whom He finds inclined to accept guidance. If your kinsfolk lack this inclination, how can they be favoured with this blessing?"

According to Bukhārī and Muslim, this verse was sent down with regard to the Holy Prophet's uncle, Abu Ṭalib. When he was about to breathe his last, the Holy Prophet tried his utmost that he should affirm faith in *Lā ilāha illallāh*, so that he might die as a Muslim, but he preferred to die on the creed of 'Abdul Muṭṭalib; that is why Allah said: "You cannot give guidance to whom you please.." But this is a well-known method of the traditionists and commentators that when they find that a particular verse applies to an event of the Prophet's time, they regard it as the occasion of the verse's revelation. Therefore, it cannot be necessarily concluded from this and the other similar traditions that have been related in Tirmidhī, Musnad Ahmad, etc. on the authority of Ḥadrat Abu Hurairah, Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn 'Umar, etc. that this verse of Sūrah Al-Qaṣaṣ was revealed on the occasion of Abū Ṭalib's death. This only shows that the truth of its meaning became most evident only on that occasion. Though the Holy Prophet sincerely wished that every man should be blessed with guidance, the person whose dying on disbelief could cause him the greatest anguish and of whose guidance he was most desirous on account of personal bonds of love and affection, was Abū Ṭalib. But when he was helpless in affording guidance even to him, it became evident that it did not lie in the power of the Prophet to give guidance to one or withhold it from another, but it lay wholly in the power of Allah. And Allah bestows this favour on whomever He wills not on account of a family or tribal relationship, but on the basis of one's sincerity, capability and inclination of the heart.

80. This was the most important excuse which the unbelieving Quraish made for not accepting Islam. To understand fully we shall have to see what was the position of the Quraish historically which they feared would be affected if they accepted Islam.

The importance that the Quraish gained initially in Arabia was due to their being genealogically the descendents of the Prophet Ishmael, and therefore, the Arabs looked upon them as the children of the Prophets. Then, when they became the custodians of the Ka'bah through Quṣayy bin Kilāb's sagacity, and Makkah became their home, their importance grew, because they were the attendants of the most sacred shrine of Arabia, and its priests too. Therefore, every Arab tribe had to have relations with them on account of the annual pilgrimage. Taking advantage of this central position the Quraish started gaining prominence as a commercial people, and to their great good fortune, the political conflict between the Eastern Roman Empire and Iran helped them to gain an important place in the international trade. Iran in those days had blocked entrance to all the trade routes between Rome, Greece, Egypt and Syria in the north and China, India, Indonesia and eastern Africa in the south-east. The only exception was the Red Sea route. This also was blocked when Yaman fell to Iran. After this no way of the transit of trade goods remained except that the Arab merchants should transport merchandise of the Roman territories to the harbours of the Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf, and then lift trade goods of the eastern countries from these harbours and transport them to the Roman territories This sort of arrangement made Makkah an important center of the international trade, and the Quraish were its monopolists. But the chaotic conditions prevailing in Arabia did not allow smooth transit of the trade goods unless the Quraish had had pleasant relations with the tribes through whose territories the trade caravans passed. For this the religious influence of the Quraish was not enough; they had had to enter into treaties with the tribes concerned, pay them dividends from their profits, and make gifts to the tribal chiefs and other influential people. Besides, they traded in money-lending also on a vast scale, which had ensnared the merchants and the chiefs of almost all the neighbouring tribes.

Such were the conditions when the Holy Prophet gave his message of *Tauḥīd*. More than the prejudice of ancestral religion what caused the Quraish the greatest provocation against it was that in it they saw their own interests in jeopardy. They thought that even if polytheism and idol-worship were proved wrong and *Tauḥīd* right by rational arguments and reasoning, it was ruinous for them to accept *Tauḥīd*. For as soon as they did so the whole of Arabia would rise in revolt against them. Then, they would be ousted from the custodianship of the Ka'bah, and all their bonds and pacts of friendship with the polytheistic tribes would be severed, which alone guaranteed the safe transit of their trade caravans through their territories. Thus, the new Faith would not only put an end to their religious influence but also to their economic prosperity, and they might even be forced by the Arabs to quit Makkah.

This presents a strange phenomenon of the lack of insight on the part of the world-worshippers. The Holy Prophet tried his best to make them believe that if they accepted his Message, the whole world would yield and submit to them. (See also Introduction to Sūrah Ṣād). But they saw their death in it. They thought that the change of the Faith would not only deprive them of their wealth and prosperity and influence but would render them so completely helpless in the land that the birds of the sky would pick and eat their flesh. They could not foresee the time when a few years afterwards the whole of Arabia was going to be ruled by a central government under the Holy Prophet himself. Then even during the lifetime of their own generation Iran and 'Irāq and Syria and Egypt were going to fall, one after the other, to the same central authority and within a century of this utterance by them Caliphs from the clan of the Quraish itself were to rule over vast territories, from Sind to Spain and from Caucasus to the coasts of Yaman.

81. This is the first reply to their excuse by Allah. It means this: It is all due to the sacredness and the central position *of* this Sanctuary that the merchandise of the entire world is being drawn and attracted to this barren and uncultivated valley, for your benefit and use. You should know that you are in no way responsible for giving it the central position it enjoys and for the state of security that prevails in the areas around it. 2,500 years ago a servant of Allah came to this barren valley in the bare mountains with his wife and suckling child. Here he built a small room with stone and mud, proclaimed that Allah had made it a Sanctuary, and that the people should come to visit it and go round it in worship and adoration. Now this is only due to Allah's blessing that this Sanctuary has been the centre of Arabia for the past 25 centuries. Peace reigns here even when there is chaos all around. It is held in the highest esteem by every Arab, and thousands of people are drawn to it every year for going round it in worship. It is only by virtue of this blessing that you are looked upon as the spiritual leaders of Arabia and a large part of the international trade is under your control. Now, do you think; that if you turned and revolted against that God Who has favoured you with this blessing. you will prosper, but as soon as you followed His Faith you would be ruined?

82. This is the second answer to their excuse. It means to imply this: The worldly wealth and prosperity of which you are so proud and whose probable danger of loss makes you stick to falsehood and turn away from the Truth was also possessed once by 'Ād and Thamūd and Sabā' and the people of Lot. Then, did it save them from destruction? After all, a high standard of living is not the only aim in life that man should endeavour to pursue it regardless of every consideration for truth and falsehood, and refuse to accept the right way only because there was a risk of losing it if one did so. Do you have any guarantee that if you persisted in

the errors and evils that ruined the prosperous peoples of the past, you would remain safe and never meet the doom that they met?"

83. This is the third answer to their excuse. It means: "The nations which were destroyed before you had become wicked. To warn them finally Allah sent His Messengers, but when they took no notice of their warnings and persisted in their evil ways, they were destroyed. The same is the case with you now. You have also become wicked, and a Messenger has come to you to warn you too. Now if you persist in your disbelief and denial, you will not be safeguarding your prosperity and comforts of life but endangering them. The destruction that you are afraid of will overtake you not because of believing but on account of refusal to believe."

84. This is the fourth answer to their excuse. To understand it fully one should bear in mind two things:

First, the present life which is no more than a few years for anyone, is only the temporary phase of a journey. The real life which will be everlasting is yet to come. In this life man may amass as much provision as he may please and live the few years at his disposal as comfortably as he can, it will in any case come to an end, and man will depart from the world empty-handed. No sensible person will like to make the bad bargain of suffering the everlasting distress and affliction in the Hereafter in exchange for the pleasures and comforts of his brief sojourn in the world. As against this, he would rather prefer to face a few years of hardships here and earn the goodness that may earn him everlasting bliss and comfort in the eternal life of the Next World.

Secondly, Allah's religion does not demand that man should totally refrain from seeking and enjoying the good things of life and discard its adornments in any case. Its only demand is that he should prefer the Hereafter to the world, for the world is perishable and the Hereafter everlasting; and the pleasures of the world are inferior and of the Hereafter superior. Therefore, man must try to attain those provisions and adornments of the world that may enable him to fare well in the everlasting life of the Next World, or at least protect him from the eternal loss there. But in case there is a question of a comparison between the two, and the success of the world and of the Hereafter oppose and contradict each other, the Faith demands, and this is the demand of man's good sense too, that he should sacrifice the world to the Hereafter, and should never adopt the way of only seeking the transitory provisions and adornments of this world, which inevitably lead to his ruin in the Hereafter for ever.

[Contd. on p. 619

لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ كَمَنْ مَّتَّعْنٰهُ مَتَاعَ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا ثُمَّ هُوَ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ مِنَ الْمُحْضَرِيْنَ ﴿٦١﴾ وَيَوْمَ يُنَادِيْهِمْ فَيَقُوْلُ أَيْنَ شُرَكَآءِيَ الَّذِيْنَ كُنْتُمْ تَزْعُمُوْنَ ﴿٦٢﴾ قَالَ الَّذِيْنَ حَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَوْلُ رَبَّنَا هٰٓؤُلَآءِ الَّذِيْنَ أَغْوَيْنَا ۚ أَغْوَيْنٰهُمْ كَمَا غَوَيْنَا ۚ تَبَرَّأْنَآ إِلَيْكَ ۖ مَا كَانُوْٓا إِيَّانَا يَعْبُدُوْنَ ﴿٦٣﴾ وَقِيْلَ ادْعُوْا شُرَكَآءَكُمْ فَدَعَوْهُمْ فَلَمْ يَسْتَجِيْبُوْا لَهُمْ وَرَأَوُا الْعَذَابَ ۚ لَوْ أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا يَهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿٦٤﴾ وَيَوْمَ يُنَادِيْهِمْ فَيَقُوْلُ مَاذَآ أَجَبْتُمُ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿٦٥﴾ فَعَمِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَنْۢبَآءُ يَوْمَئِذٍ فَهُمْ لَا يَتَسَآءَلُوْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾ فَأَمَّا مَنْ تَابَ وَاٰمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَعَسٰٓى أَنْ يَّكُوْنَ مِنَ الْمُفْلِحِيْنَ ﴿٦٧﴾ وَرَبُّكَ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَآءُ وَيَخْتَارُ ۗ مَا كَانَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ ۗ سُبْحٰنَ اللّٰهِ وَتَعٰلٰى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿٦٨﴾ وَرَبُّكَ يَعْلَمُ مَا تُكِنُّ صُدُوْرُهُمْ وَمَا يُعْلِنُوْنَ ﴿٦٩﴾ وَهُوَ اللّٰهُ لَآ إِلٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ۖ لَهُ الْحَمْدُ فِي الْأُوْلٰى وَالْاٰخِرَةِ ۖ وَلَهُ الْحُكْمُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿٧٠﴾ قُلْ أَرَءَيْتُمْ إِنْ جَعَلَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْكُمُ الَّيْلَ سَرْمَدًا إِلٰى يَوْمِ الْقِيٰمَةِ مَنْ إِلٰهٌ غَيْرُ اللّٰهِ يَأْتِيْكُمْ بِضِيَآءٍ ۖ أَفَلَا تَسْمَعُوْنَ ﴿٧١﴾ قُلْ أَرَءَيْتُمْ إِنْ جَعَلَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْكُمُ النَّهَارَ سَرْمَدًا إِلٰى يَوْمِ الْقِيٰمَةِ مَنْ إِلٰهٌ غَيْرُ اللّٰهِ يَأْتِيْكُمْ بِلَيْلٍ تَسْكُنُوْنَ فِيْهِ ۖ أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُوْنَ ﴿٧٢﴾ وَمِنْ رَّحْمَتِهٖ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ لِتَسْكُنُوْا فِيْهِ وَلِتَبْتَغُوْا مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿٧٣﴾ وَيَوْمَ يُنَادِيْهِمْ فَيَقُوْلُ أَيْنَ شُرَكَآءِيَ الَّذِيْنَ كُنْتُمْ تَزْعُمُوْنَ ﴿٧٤﴾ وَنَزَعْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ شَهِيْدًا فَقُلْنَا هَاتُوْا بُرْهَانَكُمْ فَعَلِمُوْٓا أَنَّ الْحَقَّ لِلّٰهِ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَّا كَانُوْا يَفْتَرُوْنَ ﴿٧٥﴾ إِنَّ قَارُوْنَ كَانَ مِنْ قَوْمِ مُوْسٰى فَبَغٰى عَلَيْهِمْ ۖ وَاٰتَيْنٰهُ مِنَ الْكُنُوْزِ مَآ إِنَّ مَفَاتِحَهٗ لَتَنُوْٓأُ بِالْعُصْبَةِ أُولِي الْقُوَّةِ

And (let them not forget) the Day when He will call them and ask, "Where are those associates of Mine whom you deemed as such?"[85] Those concerning whom this Word will be true,[86] will say, "Our Lord, these are indeed the people whom we had misled: we led them astray even as we ourselves were led astray. We plead our innocence before You:[87] they did not worship us."[88] Then it will be said to them, "Call now on those whom you held as (Allah's) partners."[89] They will call them, but will get no answer, and they will see the torment. Would that they had followed the guidance! 62-64

And (let them not forget) the Day when He will call them and ask, "What answer did you give to Our Messengers?" At that time, no reply will strike them, nor will they be able to consult one another. However, the one who has repented here and believed and done good works, can expect to be among those who will attain true success there. 65-67

Your Lord creates whatever He wills; and chooses (for His work whomever He pleases). To choose is not for them.[90] Allah is Pure and Exalted far above the *shirk* that these people commit. Your Lord knows what they hide in their hearts and what they reveal.[91] He is Allah, the One: none but He is worthy of worship: to Him is all praise due, both in this world and in the Hereafter: Sovereignty is His, and to Him shall all of you be returned. O Prophet, say to them, "Have you ever considered that if Allah should make the night perpetual for you, till the Day of Resurrection, which deity, besides Allah, would bring you light? Don't you hear anything?" Ask them, "Have you ever considered that if Allah should make the day perpetual for you, till the Day of Resurrection, which deity, besides Allah, would bring you the night so that you may have rest in it? Don't you see anything?" It is His Mercy that He has made the night and the day for you so that you may have rest (in the night) and seek your Lord's bounty (in the day); maybe that you are grateful. 68-73

(They should be mindful of) the Day when He will call them and ask "Where are those associates of Mine whom you deemed as such?" And We shall bring forth from every nation a witness[92] and say, "Bring now your proof."[93] Then they will come to know that the Truth is with Allah alone, and all falsehoods that they had forged will vanish. 74-75

Contd. from p. 619]

Keeping these two things in view let us see what Allah says to the

disbelievers of Makkah in the foregoing sentences. He does not tell them to wind up their business, stop their trade and follow His Prophets and become mendicants. What He says is that the worldly wealth of which they are so enamoured, is very meager and they can utilize it only for a few days in this worldly life. Contrary to this, that which is with Allah is much better both in quality and in quantity and is also everlasting. Therefore, they would be foolish if for the sake of benefiting by the limited blessings of this transitory life, they adopted the way whose evil results they will have to suffer in the form of everlasting loss in the Next World. They should judge for themselves as to who is successful: He who exerts himself in the service of his Lord and then is blessed with His favours for ever, or he who will be produced as a culprit in His Court, only after having had an opportunity of enjoying unlawful wealth for a few days in the world.

85. This discourse is in continuation of the fourth answer, and is linked with the last sentence of the preceding verse. It means to imply this: Those who persist in the evil of *shirk* and idol-worship and refuse to believe in the Prophet only for the sake of their worldly interests, will meet with such and such evil consequences in the eternal life of the Hereafter. They should, therefore, carefully judge for themselves whether it would be a good bargain if they were to be doomed to such an end, after they had enjoyed fully the provisions and adornments of the short worldly life even if no calamity befell them in the world.

86. This implies those satans from among jinns and men, who had been set up as associates, of God in the world, whose teachings had been followed in preference to Divine Commandments, and dependence on whom had made the people give up the Right Way and adopt the wrong ways of life. Such persons may not have been called gods and lords as such, but since they were worshipped and obeyed as one should worship and obey only God, they were inevitably made partners in Godhead.

87. That is, "We did not lead them astray forcibly. We neither deprived them of their powers of seeing and hearing nor of their powers of thinking, nor there ever arose a situation when they wanted to follow the right way but we might have forcibly pulled them to the wrong way. But just as we ourselves had gone astray of our own free will, so they also of their own free will accepted the wrong way when we presented it before them. Therefore, we are not responsible for what they did: we are responsible for our acts and they are responsible for theirs."

There is a subtle point to be noted here. Allah, in fact, will question those who had set up others as associates with Him, but before they make an answer, those who had been set up as associates will speak up. The reason is: When the common polytheists will be questioned thus, their leaders and guides will feel that their doomsday had come, for their followers will certainly blame them for their

deviation. Therefore, even before the followers say something in response, the leaders will forestall them and start pleading their innocence.

88. That is, "They did not serve us but served their own selves alone."

89. That is, "Invoke them for help. In the world you had relied on them and rejected Our Commandments. So invoke them to come to your rescue here also and save you from the punishment."

90. This, in fact, is a refutation of *shirk*. Allah objects to the setting up of countless gods from among His creatures by the *mushriks* and assigning to them from themselves of attributes and ranks and offices, and says: "We Ourselves bless with whatever attributes, capabilities and powers whomever We like from among the men, angels, jinns and other servants whom We have created, and employ whomever We will for whatever service We will. But, how and wherefrom have the *mushriks* got the authority that they should make whomever they like from among My servants remover of hardships, bestower of treasures and answerer of prayers? That they should make someone the lord of rain, another the giver of jobs and children, still another bestower of health and ill-health? That they should look upon whomever they please as the ruler of a part of My Kingdom and assign to him whichever of My powers they like? Whether it is an angel or a jinn, or a prophet, or saint, or anybody else, he has been created by Us. Whatever excellences he has, have been granted by Us, and whatever service We willed to take from him, We have taken. Therefore, the selection of someone for a particular service does not mean that he should be raised from the position of a servant to godhead and worshipped instead of God, invoked for help, prayed to for fulfilment of needs, taken as maker or destroyer of destinies and possessor of divine; attributes and powers.

91. The object for which this thing has been said in this context is: A person (or persons) can make a claim before the people in this world that he is fully satisfied on rational grounds that the deviation he has adopted is sound and right, and the arguments that are given against it are not convincing; that he has adopted the deviation not due to any evil motive but with the sincerest and purest intentions; that he has never been confronted by anything that might have proved him to be in the wrong. But he cannot advance such an argument before Allah, for Allah is not only aware of the open, but also of the hidden secrets of the mind and heart: He knows directly what kind of knowledge and feelings and sentiments and desires and intentions and conscience a certain person has: He is aware of the occasions and the means and the ways through which a person was warned, through which the Truth reached him, through which falsehood was proved to be

[Contd. on p.624

إِذْ قَالَ لَهُ قَوْمُهُ لَا تَفْرَحْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْفَرِحِينَ ﴿٧٦﴾ وَابْتَغِ فِيمَا آتَاكَ
اللَّهُ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ وَلَا تَنْسَ نَصِيبَكَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَأَحْسِنْ كَمَا أَحْسَنَ
اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ وَلَا تَبْغِ الْفَسَادَ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٧٧﴾
قَالَ إِنَّمَا أُوتِيتُهُ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ عِنْدِي ۚ أَوَلَمْ يَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَهْلَكَ مِنْ
قَبْلِهِ مِنَ الْقُرُونِ مَنْ هُوَ أَشَدُّ مِنْهُ قُوَّةً وَأَكْثَرُ جَمْعًا ۚ وَلَا يُسْأَلُ عَنْ
ذُنُوبِهِمُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾ فَخَرَجَ عَلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ فِي زِينَتِهِ ۖ قَالَ الَّذِينَ يُرِيدُونَ
الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا يَا لَيْتَ لَنَا مِثْلَ مَا أُوتِيَ قَارُونُ إِنَّهُ لَذُو حَظٍّ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٧٩﴾ وَ
قَالَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ وَيْلَكُمْ ثَوَابُ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لِمَنْ آمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا
وَلَا يُلَقَّاهَا إِلَّا الصَّابِرُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾ فَخَسَفْنَا بِهِ وَبِدَارِهِ الْأَرْضَ ۖ فَمَا كَانَ لَهُ
مِنْ فِئَةٍ يَنْصُرُونَهُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ ۖ وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُنْتَصِرِينَ ﴿٨١﴾ وَأَصْبَحَ
الَّذِينَ تَمَنَّوْا مَكَانَهُ بِالْأَمْسِ يَقُولُونَ وَيْكَأَنَّ اللَّهَ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ
يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَيَقْدِرُ ۖ لَوْلَا أَنْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا لَخَسَفَ بِنَا ۖ وَيْكَأَنَّهُ
لَا يُفْلِحُ الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾ تِلْكَ الدَّارُ الْآخِرَةُ نَجْعَلُهَا لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُرِيدُونَ عُلُوًّا
فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فَسَادًا ۚ وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾ مَنْ جَاءَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهُ
خَيْرٌ مِنْهَا ۖ وَمَنْ جَاءَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ فَلَا يُجْزَى الَّذِينَ عَمِلُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ إِلَّا مَا
كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِي فَرَضَ عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ لَرَادُّكَ إِلَىٰ مَعَادٍ ۚ قُلْ رَبِّي
أَعْلَمُ مَنْ جَاءَ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَمَنْ هُوَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٨٥﴾ وَمَا كُنْتَ تَرْجُو أَنْ
يُلْقَىٰ إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابُ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ ظَهِيرًا لِلْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾ وَ
لَا يَصُدُّنَّكَ عَنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ بَعْدَ إِذْ أُنْزِلَتْ إِلَيْكَ وَادْعُ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ وَلَا

ع ٨ ١١

The fact[94] is that Korah was of the people of Moses, but he rebelled against them;[95] and We had given him so many treasures that their very keys would have weighed down a band of strong men.[96] Once his people said to him, "Do not exult, for Allah does not like the exultant. Seek through the wealth that Allah has given you to make your abode in the Hereafter, and also do not forget your share from this world; and do good to others as Allah has done good to you; and do not strive to make mischief on the earth, for Allah does not like the mischief-makers." But he replied, "All that I have been given is by virtue of the knowledge that I possess."[97]—Did he not know that Allah had destroyed before him many such people who were mightier than him in power and strength ?[98] But the criminals are not asked as to their sins.[99] 76-78

One day he came out before his people in all his fineries. Those who sought the life of this world, said, "Would that we had the like of what Korah has been given! He is indeed a very lucky man." But those who possessed the knowledge, said, "Alas for you ! Allah's reward is better for him who believes and does good works, and this fortune is attained only by those who show patience."[100] 79-80

Consequently, We sank him and his people in all his dwelling-place underground; then he had no host of supporters, who could help him against Allah, nor was he able to help himself. Now the same people who yearned for his lot the day before, began to say, "Alas! We had forgotten that Allah extends the provisions for whom He wills of His servants and restricts it for whom He wills.[101] If Allah had not been gracious to us, He would have sunk us also underground. Alas! We did not remember that the disbelievers do never prosper."[102] 81-82

That abode of the Hereafter[103] We shall reserve for those who do not seek glory in the earth,[104] nor wish to make mischief;[105] and the ultimate good is only for the Godfearing.[106] Whoever brings a good deed shall have a better reward than that, and whoever brings an evil deed, the evil-doers will have their rewards according to their deeds. 83-84

O Prophet, be assured that the One Who has ordained this Qur'ān for you[107] will certainly bring you to the best end.[108] Tell these people, "My Lord best knows who has brought the guidance, and who is involved in obvious error." You never hoped that the Book would be 85-86

sent down to you. Only through your Lord's mercy (has it been sent own to you);[109] therefore, do not be a helper of the unbelievers. [110]

Contd. from p.621]

falsehood to him, and also the real motives for which he preferred his deviation to the Right Way.

92. "A witness": the Prophet who had warned that community, or a rightly-guided person from among the followers of the Prophets, who had performed the duty of preaching the Truth in the community, or a means through which the message of the Truth had reached the community.

93. That is, "Present a cogent argument in your defence so that you are pardoned. You should either prove that the *shirk* and the denial of the Hereafter and Prophethood in which you persisted were the correct creed and you had adopted it on rational grounds, or, if you cannot do that, you should at least prove that no arrangement had been made by God to warn you of this error and guide you to the right path."

94. This fact also is being related in continuation of the answer to the excuse which has been the theme of the discourse from verse 57 onward. In this regard, one should bear in mind the fact that the people who feared that the Holy Prophet Muḥammad's message would affect the overall national interests adversely were, in fact, the big money owners, money-lenders and capitalists of Makkah, who by virtue of their international trade and money-lending business had become the Korahs of their time. These were the people who thought that the real truth was to earn and amass maximum wealth. Anything that seemed to vitiate this object was an untruth which could not be accepted in any case. On the other hand, there were the common people who looked with longing eyes at these magnates and earnestly desired that they should also attain the same heights as those people had attained. In an atmosphere charged with the love of money, as it was, people considered it to be a weighty argument that if the invitation *of* the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) towards *Tauhīd* and the Hereafter and the moral code was accepted it would spell ruin for the Quraish not only commercially but economically too.

95. *Qārūn* who has been called Korah in the Bible and the Talmud was a first cousin of the Prophet Moses. According to the account of descent given in Exodus (6: 18-21) the fathers of the Prophet Moses and Korah were real brothers. At another place in the Qur'ān it has been stated that this man had joined with Pharaoh inspite of being an Israelite and become one of his favourites; so much so that one of the two ring-leaders of opposition to Prophet Moses after Pharaoh was this same Korah: "We sent Moses to Pharaoh and Hāmān and Korah with Our

Signs and a clear authority of appointment, but they said, 'He is a sorcerer, a liar'." (Al-Mu'min :23-24).

From this it follows that Korah had rebelled against his own people and become a supporter of the hostile forces which were bent upon wiping out the Israelites. On account of this rebellion against his own people he had attained a high place with Pharaoh and the two persons, besides Pharaoh, to whom the Prophet Moses had been sent were Pharaoh's minister, Hāmān, and this Israelite capitalist, Korah. All other chiefs and couriers were of inferior status, who were not worth mentioning. The same position of Korah has been alluded to in Al-'Ankabūt: 39.

96. In the story related of him in the Bible (Num., ch. 16), there is no mention of this man's wealth. But according to the Jewish traditions, he possessed immense wealth, so much so that three hundred mules were required to carry the keys of his treasures. *(Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. VII, p. 556). Though greatly exaggerated this statement shows that even according to the Israelite traditions, Korah was a very wealthy man of his time.

97. The words of the Text can have two meanings: (1) "Whatever I have obtained is by virtue of my own ability. It is not a bounty which somebody else might have given me as a favour without my deserving it as a right, and now I may have to render thanks for it by giving a portion of it to those who have not been given anything, as a favour, or give some of it in charity so that the bounty is not withdrawn from me." (2) "I think God has given me this wealth in view of my qualities and excellences Had I not been a likeable person, He would not have given me all this. That He has bestowed on me all kinds of blessings is a proof that I am His favourite and he approves of the way of life that I am following."

98. That is, "Did this person who was proud of being so knowledgeable and wise and well-informed and capable never know that people with greater wealth and grandeur and power and might than him had lived before him in the world, and Allah, at last, had annihilated them completely? If capability and skill and competence are the only factors conducive to worldly progress, then why didn't these virtues avail them when they were destroyed? And if the worldly progress of a person is a sure proof that Allah is pleased with him and approves of his deeds and qualities, then why were those people doomed to destruction at all?"

99. That is, "The criminals have always been claiming to be the best people, who are free from every evil, but their punishment is not dependent on their own confessions. Whenever they are seized; they are not seized on the basis of their own confessions of sins, etc."

100. That is, "This kind of character and the way of thinking and the bounty of Allah's reward falls to the lot of only those who stick firmly and steadfastly and patiently to the lawful ways in life, whether by so doing they are able to earn only a bare living, or are enabled to become millionaires, but are never inclined to follow the unlawful ways even if they promise all the benefits and wealth of the world. In this verse, "Allah's reward" means the bounteous provision that is gained by man in the world and the Hereafter as a result of labour and toil undertaken within the bounds set by Allah; and "patience" means to have control over one's emotions and desires, to stick to honesty and righteousness as against greed and lust, to bear the losses that one may have to incur on account of the truth and justice, to spurn the gains that might accrue from employing unlawful devices, to remain content and satisfied with the lawful earning even if it is meagre and insufficient, to eschew feelings of envy and jealousy at the splendour of the corrupt people and avoid even casting a glance at it, and to be satisfied with the thought that for an honest man the colourless purity that Allah has granted him by His grace is better than the lustrous filth of evil and corruption. As for "fortune", it implies Allah's reward as well as the pure mentality by virtue of which a believing and righteous person finds it easier to suffer hunger and starvation than become a multi-millionaire by adopting dishonest and corrupt ways and means."

101. That is, "The extension or the restriction of provisions is always according to the will of Allah, and Allah's will is determined by His own reasons and considerations. His favouring somebody with generous provisions does not necessarily mean that Allah is well pleased with him and is honouring him with gifts. Mostly it so happens that a person is under Allah's wrath, but He goes on favouring him with more and more wealth till, at last, the same wealth causes Allah's torment to descend on him. Contrary to this, if somebody is being given restricted provisons it does not necessarily mean that Allah is displeased with him and is punishing him. Mostly the righteous men live in hardship although they are Allah's favourites, and in many cases the same hardship becomes a cause of Allah's mercy for them. Consequently, a person who does not understand this reality looks with envious eyes at the prosperity of those who actually deserve Allah's wrath."

102. That is, "We had the misconception that worldly prosperity and wealth by themselves constituted real success. Therefore, we thought that Korah was highly successful, but now we have come to know that real success is an entirely different thing, and it is never attained by the disbelievers."

This moral of the story of Korah has been mentioned only in the Qur'ān. The Bible and the Talmud are without it. However, according to the details given in these books, when the Israelites left Egypt, Korah also accompanied them along

with his men, and then conspired against the Prophets Moses and Aaron and was joined in this by 250 of his followers. At last, Allah's wrath descended on him, and the earth opened up and swallowed him and his followers together with their possessions."

103. That is, Paradise which is the abode of real success.

104. "Who do not seek glory": who are not desirous of establishing their own glory in God's earth: who do not live like rebels and tyrants and arrogant people but like humble servants: who do not seek to make God's servants their personal servants.

105. "Mischief" implies the chaos that inevitably appears in human life in consequence of violating the truth. Whatever man does when he disobeys Allah and turns away from His service is nothing but mischief. Partly this mischief occurs when wealth is amassed through unlawful means and expended in unlawful ways.

106. "The Godfearing": those who refrain from His disobdience.

107. That is, "He has placed on you the responsibility of conveying the Qur'ān and teaching it to the people, and reforming the world according to the guidance contained in it."

108. The word *ma'ād* in the original means the place to which one has to return ultimately. Its use as a common noun implies that it is a place of eminence and glory. Some commentators think it refers to Paradise. But there is no reason why it should be restricted only to Paradise. Let it remain indefinite as Allah Himself has put it so that the promise become applicable both his world and to the Next World. The context also requires that it should be looked upon as a promise to bestow the highest glory and eminence on the Holy Prophet ultimately not only in the Hereafter but in this world too. In the saying of the disbelievers of Makkah, which has been the theme of the discourse from verse 57 until now, they had said, "O Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him), do you want us also to be doomed with you ? If we join you and adopt this Faith, it will become hard for us to live in Arabia." In response to this, Allah tells His Prophet: "O Muhammad, that God Who has placed the burden of conveying the message of the Qur'ān on you, will not destroy you; rather He will exalt you to the rank which these people cannot even imagine today." And, in actual fact, in a few years after this, even in this world, Allah granted the Holy Prophet complete authority over the whole of Arabia, and there was no power to resist him, and no religion to stand its ground. There had been no precedent in the history of Arabia that the whole peninsula might have come under the sway of one man so completely that no opponent might be there to challenge him and no soul to dare disobey his orders. Then it was not

only a political domination but religious too, for the whole population had been won over to Islam.

Some commentators opine that this verse of Sūrah Al-Qaṣaṣ was sent down on the way during the Holy Prophet's migration from Makkah to Madīnah, and in this Allah had promised His Prophet that He would again bring him back to Makkah. But, firstly, the words of the verse do not allow that *"ma'ād"* be taken to mean "Makkah". Secondly, this Sūrah, both according to the traditions and the internal evidence of its theme, was revealed some time during the time of the migration to Ḥabash, and one cannot understand that if this verse was revealed after several years on the way during the migration to Madīnah, why was it inserted in this context without any relevance? Thirdly, in this context, the mention of the Holy Prophet's return to Makkah seems quite irrelevant. For if the verse is taken to mean this, it will not be a reply to the disbelievers' excuse but would rather strengthen it. It would mean this: "No doubt, what you say, O people of Makkah, is correct. Muḥammad will be expelled from this city, but he will not remain an exile for ever, but eventually We will bring him back to this very place." Though this tradition has been reported by Bukhārī, Nasā'ī, Ibn Jarīr and other traditionists on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās, it is, in fact, Ibn 'Abbas's own opinion; it is not a tradition that might have been received direct from the Holy Prophet that one may have to accept it.

109. This thing is being presented as a proof of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad's Prophethood. Just as the Prophet Moses was wholly unaware that he was going to be appointed a Prophet, and sent on a grand mission—when he had never even expected or wished for such a thing, but had been suddenly called upon while on a journey and made a Prophet and assigned a mission which had no relevance with his previous life—so was precisely the case with the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (may Allah's peace be upon him). The people of Makkah knew full well what kind of life he was leading till a day before the day when he came down from the Cave of Hirā' with the message of Prophethood. They were fully aware of his occupations, of the topics of his conversation, of the nature of his interests and activities. No doubt it was a life which was an embodiment of truth, honesty and righteousness, a model of nobility, peacefulness, fulfilment of obligations and rights of others and of the service to humanity, but there was nothing in it which could give somebody any idea that the righteous man was going to make a claim to Prophethood the next day. There was no one among his most intimate friends and relations and neighbours, who could say that he had already been preparing to become a Prophet. No one had ever heard a word on the themes and problems and topics from him, which became the subject of his daily conversation all of a sudden after the revolutionary moment in the Cave of Hirā'. No one had heard him employing the kind of diction and words and terms, which the people started

hearing from him in the shape of the Qur'ān. He had never stood up for preaching, had never given a message or started a movement, and none of his activities had ever indicated that he was anxious to undertake a programme for the solution of the social problems or for religious or moral reformation. Till a day before this revolutionary moment he was leading the life of a trader, who earns his living by fair and lawful means, who lives a happy life with his family, receives his guests, helps the poor and treats his relatives well, and at times retires from society into seclusion for the sake of worship. For such a person it would be a great change if he started making, all of a sudden, world-moving orations, preaching a revolutionary message, producing a sublime literature and propounding an enduring philosophy of life and a profound system of thought and morality and social life. For psychologically too, such a change is not possible through any kind of preparation and conscious effort. Any such effort and preparation, in any case, has to pass through certain evolutionary stages, which cannot remain hidden from the people among whom a person is passing his life. Had the Holy Prophet's life passed through any such stages of gradual development, hundreds of the people in Makkah would have come out to say, "Did we not tell you beforehand that this man would one day make a tall claim?" But history bears evidence that no one in Makkah ever made such an objection although the disbelievers of Makkah raised all sorts of other objections against the Holy Prophet.

Then another thing: the Holy Prophet himself never wished for or expected or awaited his appointment to prophethood, but he came across this experience all of a sudden quite unexpectedly. This is supported by the event that has been reported in the Traditions in connection with the beginning of Revelation. After his first meeting with the Angel Gabriel and the revelation of the initial verses of Sūrah Al-'Alaq he rushes back home from Hirā' trembling with fear, and says to his wife, "Cover me with a cloak! Cover me with a cloak!" After a while when he recovers a little from the state of anxiety, he relates what he had experienced to his wife and says, "I feel there is danger to my life!" She responds, "No, never! Allah will never bring you to grief: you render the rights of your kindred, you support the indigent, help the poor, treat your guests well, and are ever ready to contribute to a good cause." Then she takes him to Waraqa bin Naufal, who was her cousin and a righteous and knowledgeable person from among the people of the Book. Hearing from him what had happened, Waraqa says without any hesitation, "The one who came to you is the same *Nāmūs* (the specially appointed Divine Messenger), who used to come to Moses. I wish I were a young man and could live till the time when your people will expel you." The Holy Prophet asks, "Will my people expel me?" He replies, "Yes; no one has

[Contd. on p. 630

تَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ ﴿٨٧﴾ وَلَا تَدْعُ مَعَ اللّٰهِ اِلٰهًا اٰخَرَ ۘ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۭ كُلُّ
شَيْءٍ هَالِكٌ اِلَّا وَجْهَهٗ ۭ لَهُ الْحُكْمُ وَاِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿٨٨﴾

87-88 And let it never happen that the unbelievers should divert you[111] from Allah's Revelations when they are sent down to you. Invite (the people) towards your Lord and do not join the *mushriks*, nor invoke any deity other than Allah. There is no deity but He. Everything is perishable except Himself: Sovereignty is His,[112] and to Him will all of you be returned.

Contd. from p.629]

passed before, who brought same thing that you have brought, and his people did not turn hostile to him."

This whole event depicts the state which a simple man will naturally undergo when he is confronted unexpectedly by a most extraordinary experience all of a sudden. If the Holy Prophet had already been anxious to become a prophet and thinking that a man like him ought to be a prophet, and had been meditating and straining his mind and awaiting the arrival of an angel with a message, he would have been filled with delight at the experience in the Cave, and descending from the mountain would have gone straight before his people and proclaimed Prophethood. But, quite to the contrary, he is confounded at what he had seen, reaches home trembling and lies in bed fully covered up. When he is composed a little, he tells his wife quietly what had happened in the solitude of the Cave, and expresses feelings of anxiety and insecurity. How different is this state from the state of a candidate for prophethood !

Then, who can be better aware of the husband's life, his ambitions and thoughts, than the wife? If she had perceived before-hand that the husband was a candidate for prophethood and had been anxiously awaiting the arrival of the angel, her reply would have been different from what Ḥaḍrat Khadījah said. She would have answered, "Dear husband! Why are you so agitated? You have got what you have been longing since long. Now, flourish as a saint: I too shall get ready for collecting gifts and offerings." But on the basis of what she had seen of her husband during her 15-year-long companionship, she did not take more than a moment to understand that Satan could not have come to a righteous and selfless man like him, nor could Allah have put him to a severe test. Therefore, whatever he had seen was the very truth and reality.

The same is also true in the case of Waraqa bin Naufal. He was not an outsider, but a member of the Holy Prophet's own clan and a brother-in-law by a close relationship. Then being a knowledgeable Christian he could discriminate the

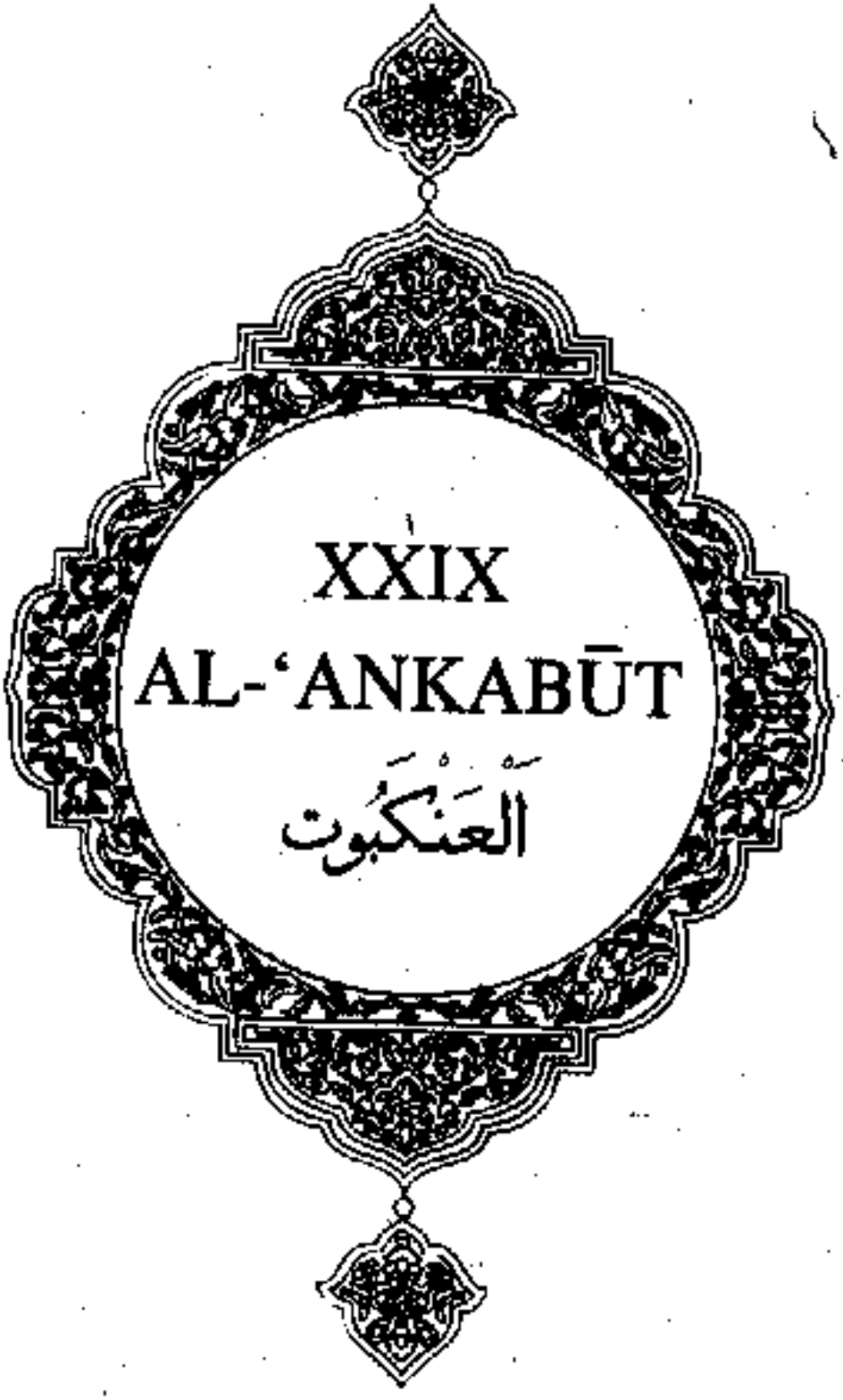
prophethood and book and revelation from fabrication and fraud. Being the Holy Prophet's senior by many years his whole life since childhood had been spent before him. Therefore, when he heard what the Holy Prophet had to say about his experience in the Cave, he at once said that it was most surely the same Angel who used to bring Divine messages to the Prophet Moses. For in this case also precisely the same thing had happened as in the case of the Prophet Moses. He also was a pure and righteous person, simple in thought and without any pre-conceived notions about prophehood, he also had experienced the same thing unexpectedly in full cousciousness similarly. Therefore, without the least hesitation, he was led to the firm conclusion that there was no self-deception or satanic insinuation involved, but whatever the truthfulman had seen, without any will or desire on his own part, was in fact, an experience of the Reality.

This is such a clear proof of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad's Prophethood that a realistic person can hardly deny it. That is why it has been presented as a proof of Prophethood at several places in the Qur'ān. For example, in Sūrah Yūnus it has been said: "O Prophet, say to them: Had Allah willed so, I would never have recited this Qur'ān to you, nor would He have told you anything (about its existence). I have already lived a lifetime among you before its revelation. Do you not use common sense?" (v. 16) And in Sūrah Ash-Shūrā it has been said: "O Prophet, you did not know at all what was the Book and what was the Faith but We made that Revelation a light by which We show the way to any of Our servants We will." (v. 52) For further explanation, see E.N. 21 of Sūrah Yūnus, E.N.'s 88 to 92 of Al-'Ankabūt, and E.N. 84 of Ash-Shu'arā.

110. That is, "When Allah has granted you this blessing without your asking for it, you are under an obligation to exercise all your energies and spend all your efforts in upholding it, conveying it to others and promoting its cause. Any slackness in this regard would mean that you helped the disbelievers. This does not mean that, God forbid, there was any chance of such slackness on the part of the Holy Prophet. Allah, in fact, is exhorting the Holy Prophet, as if to say, "You should go on doing your mission in spite of the disbelievers' opposition and their uproar, and do not at all mind what fears the enemies of the Truth express regarding your message's being harmful to their national interests."

111. "...divert you": divert you from conveying them to others and acting in accordance with them in practical life.

112. Another meaning can be: "Sovereignty is for Him, for He alone is entitled to it by right."



XXIX
AL-'ANKABŪT
ٱلْعَنْكَبُوت

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XXIX
AL-'ANKABŪT
اَلعَنكَبُوت

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from verse 41 in which the word *'Ankabūt* (Spider) has occurred.

Period of Revelation

Verses 56 to 60 clearly show that this Sūrah was sent down a little before the migration to Ḥabash, and this is supported by the internal evidence of the subject-matter as well. Some commentators have opined that since it mentions the hypocrites, and hypocrisy appeared in Madīnah, the first ten verses of this Sūrah were revealed at Madīnah and the rest of it at Makkah; whereas the people whose hypocrisy has been mentioned here are those who had adopted a hypocritical way of life because they were afraid of the oppression and extreme physical torture to which the Muslims were being subjected by the disbelievers. Evidently, this kind of hypocrisy could be there only at Makkah and not at Madīnah. Similarly, some other commentators, seeing that in this Sūrah the Muslims have been exhorted to migrate, have regarded it as the last Sūrah to be revealed at Makkah, whereas the Muslims had migrated to Ḥabash even before their migration to Madīnah. These opinions are not based on any tradition but on the internal evidence of

the subject-matter, and this internal evidence, when considered against the subject-matter of the Sūrah as a whole, points to the conditions prevailing in the time of the migration to Ḥabash and not to the last stage at Makkah.

Theme and Subject-matter

A perusal of the Sūrah shows that the period of its revelation was the period of extreme persecution of the Muslims at Makkah. The disbelievers were opposing and fighting Islam tooth and nail and the new converts were being subjected to the severest oppression. Such were the conditions when Allah sent down this Sūrah to strengthen and encourage the sincere Muslims as well as to put to shame those who were showing weakness of the faith. Besides, the disbelievers of Makkah have been threatened and warned not to invite for themselves the fate that the antagonists of the Truth have been experiencing in every age.

In this connection, the questions that some young men were facing in those days, have also been answered. For instance, their parents were urging them to abandon Muḥammad (may Allah's peace be upon him), and return to their ancestral religion, for they argued: "The Qur'ān in which you have put your faith, regards the rights of the parents as the uppermost; therefore, listen to what we say; otherwise you will be working against the dictates of your own Faith." This has been answered in verse 8.

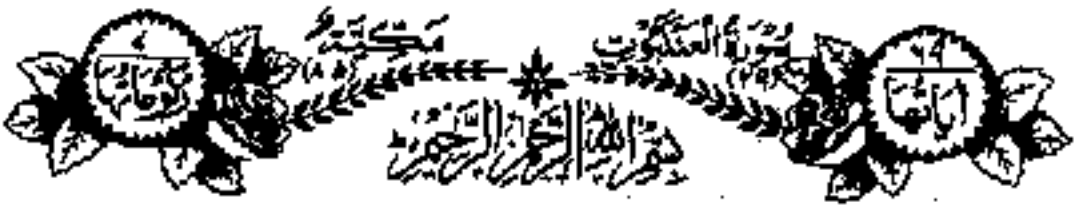
Similarly, the people of some clans said to the new converts to Islam, "Leave the question of punishments, etc., to us. Listen to us and abandon this man. If God seizes you in the Hereafter, we will come forward and say, 'Lord, these people are innocent: we had forced them to give up the Faith; therefore, seize us'." This has been dealt with in vv. 12-13.

The stories mentioned in this Sūrah also impress the same point mostly, as if to say, "Look at the Prophets of the past: they were made to suffer great hardships and were treated cruelly for long periods. Then, at last they were helped by Allah. Therefore, take heart: Allah's succour will certainly come. But a period of trial and tribulation has to be undergone." Besides teaching this lesson to the Muslims, the disbelievers also have been warned, as if to say, "If you are not being immediately seized by Allah, you should not form the wrong impression

that you will never be seized. The signs of the doomed nations of the past are before you. Just see how they met their doom and how Allah succoured the Prophets."

Then the Muslims have been instructed to the effect: "If you feel that the persecution has become unbearable for you, you should give up your homes, instead of giving up your Faith: Allah's earth is vast: seek a new place where you can worship Allah with the full peace of mind."

Besides all this, the disbelievers also have been urged to understand Islam. The realities of *Tauḥīd* and the Hereafter have been impressed with rational arguments, *shirk* has been refuted and drawing their attention towards the Signs in the universe, they have been told that all these Signs confirm the teachings that the Prophet is presenting before them.



الٓمّٓ ﴿١﴾ اَحَسِبَ النَّاسُ اَنْ يُّتْرَكُوْٓا اَنْ يَّقُوْلُوْٓا اٰمَنَّا وَهُمْ لَا يُفْتَنُوْنَ ﴿٢﴾ وَ
لَقَدْ فَتَنَّا الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ صَدَقُوْا وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ
الْكٰذِبِيْنَ ﴿٣﴾ اَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِيْنَ يَعْمَلُوْنَ السَّيِّاٰتِ اَنْ يَّسْبِقُوْنَا ؕ سَآءَ مَا
يَحْكُمُوْنَ ﴿٤﴾ مَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوْا لِقَآءَ اللّٰهِ فَاِنَّ اَجَلَ اللّٰهِ لَاٰتٍ ؕ وَهُوَ
السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿٥﴾ وَمَنْ جَاهَدَ فَاِنَّمَا يُجَاهِدُ لِنَفْسِهٖ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَغَنِيٌّ
عَنِ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٦﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ لَنُكَفِّرَنَّ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّاٰتِهِمْ
وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ اَحْسَنَ الَّذِيْ كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٧﴾ وَوَصَّيْنَا الْاِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ
حُسْنًا ؕ وَاِنْ جَاهَدٰكَ لِتُشْرِكَ بِيْ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهٖ عِلْمٌ فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَا ؕ اِلَيَّ
مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَاُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٨﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ
لَنُدْخِلَنَّهُمْ فِي الصّٰلِحِيْنَ ﴿٩﴾ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَّقُوْلُ اٰمَنَّا بِاللّٰهِ فَاِذَآ
اُوْذِيَ فِي اللّٰهِ جَعَلَ فِتْنَةَ النَّاسِ كَعَذَابِ اللّٰهِ ؕ وَلَئِنْ جَآءَ نَصْرٌ مِّنْ
رَّبِّكَ لَيَقُوْلُنَّ اِنَّا كُنَّا مَعَكُمْ ؕ اَوَلَيْسَ اللّٰهُ بِاَعْلَمَ بِمَا فِيْ صُدُوْرِ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿١٠﴾
وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ الْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ ﴿١١﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا
لِلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اتَّبِعُوْا سَبِيْلَنَا وَلْنَحْمِلْ خَطٰيٰكُمْ وَمَا هُمْ بِحٰمِلِيْنَ مِنْ
خَطٰيٰهُمْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ ؕ اِنَّهُمْ لَكٰذِبُوْنَ ﴿١٢﴾ وَلَيَحْمِلُنَّ اَثْقَالَهُمْ وَاَثْقَالًا مَّعَ

XXIX
AL-'ANKABŪT
اَلْعَنْكَبُوت

Verses: 69

Revealed at Makkah

In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

Alif. Lām. Mīm. Do the people think that they will be left alone after they have once said, "We have believed," and they will not be tested?[1] The fact is that we have put to test all those who have gone before them.[2] Surely, Allah has to see[3] who are the truthful and who the liars. 1-3

And do those who are committing evil deeds[4] reckon that they will outstrip Us?[5] Evil is their judgement. 4

Whoever expects to meet Allah (should know that) Allah's appointed time is about to come,[6] and Allah hears everything and knows everything.[7] Whoever will exert will exert for his own good;[8] Allah is certainly Independent of all His creations.[9] As for those who believe and do good works, We shall wipe off their evils and reward them for the best of their deeds.[10] 5-7

We have conjoined man to do good to his parents, but if they force you to associate with Me another (deity) whom you do not know (as such), you should not obey them.[11] You have all to return to Me: then I shall tell you what you had been doing.[12] And those who will have believed and done good deeds, We shall certainly include them among the righteous. 8-9

There is among the people such a one, who says, "We have believed in Allah", but when he was persecuted in the cause *of* Allah, he deemed the persecution by the people as the punishment of Allah.[14] Now if there comes help and victory from your Lord, the same person 10-11

will say, "We were with you".[15] Is not Allah fully aware of what is in the hearts of the people of the world? And surely Allah has to see who are the believers and who the hypocrites.[16]

12-13 The disbelievers say to the believers, "Follow our way and we will bear (the burden of) your sins",[17] whereas they will not bear (the burden of) your sins:[18] they are utter liars. Of course, they shall bear their own burdens as well as many other burdens in addition to their own.[19] And on the Day of Resurrection, they will surely be questioned about their scandal mongering.[20]

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1. When this thing was said, the conditions prevailing in Makkah were extremely trying. Whoever accepted Islam was made a target of tyranny and humiliation and persecution. If he was a slave or a poor person, he was beaten and subjected to unbearable tortures; if he was a shopkeeper or artisan, he was made to suffer economic hardships, even starvation; if he was a member of an influential family, his own people would tease and harass him in different ways and make life difficult for him. This had created an atmosphere of fear and fright in Makkah, due to which most people were afraid of believing in the Holy Prophet although they acknowledged him to be a true Prophet in their hearts; and some others who believed would lose heart soon afterwards and would submit and yield to the disbelievers when they confronted dreadful persecutions. Though these trying circumstances could not shake the determination of the strong-willed Companions, naturally they also were sometimes overwhelmed by an intense feeling of anxiety and distraction. An instance of this is found in the tradition of Ḥaḍrat Khabbāb bin Arat, which has been related by Bukhārī, Abu Da'ūd and Nasā'ī. He says, "During the time when we had become sick of our persecution by the *mushriks*, one day I saw the Holy Prophet sitting in the shade of the wall of the Ka'bah. I went up to him and said, 'O Messenger of Allah, don't you pray for us !' Hearing this his face became red with feeling and emotion, and he said, 'The believers who have gone before you had been subjected to even greater persecutions. Some one of them was made to sit in a ditch in the earth and was sawed into two pieces from head to foot. Someone's joints were rubbed with ironcombs so as to withhold him from the Faith. By God, this Mission will be accomplished and the time is not far when a person will travel without apprehension from Ṣan'ā' to Ḥaḍramaut and there will be none but Allah Whom he will fear."

In order to change this state of agitation into forbearance, Allah tells the believers, "No one can become worthy of Our promises of success in the world and the Hereafter merely by verbal profession of the Faith, but every claimant to the Faith will have to pass through trials and tribulations so as to furnish proof of the truth of his claim. Our Paradise is not so cheap, nor Our special favours in the

world so low-priced, that We should bless you with all these as soon as you proclaim verbal faith in Us. The trial is a pre-requisite for them. You will have to undergo hardships for Our sake, suffer losses of life and property, face dangers, misfortunes and difficulties; you will be tried both with fear and with greed; you will have to sacrifice everything that you hold dear for Our pleasure, and bear every discomfort in Our way. Then only will it become manifest whether your claim to faith in Us was true or false. This thing has been said at every such place in the Qur'ān where the Muslims have been found placed in hardships and difficulties and obsessed by fear and consternation. In the initial stage of life at Madinah, after the migration, when the Muslims were in great trouble on account of economic hardships, external dangers and internal villainy of the Jews and the hypocrites, Allah said:

"Do you think that you will enter Paradise without undergoing such trials as were experienced by the believers before you? They met with adversity and affliction and were so shaken by trials that the Prophet of the time and his followers cried out, 'when will Allah's help come?' (Then only they were comforted with the good tidings:) "Yes, Allah's help is near!'" (Al-Baqarah: 214).

Likewise, when after the Battle of Uhud, the Muslims again confronted a period of afflictions, it was said:

"Do you think that you will enter Paradise without undergoing any trial? whereas Allah has not yet tried you to see who among you are ready to lay down their lives in His way and who will show fortitude for His sake." (Āl-i-'Imrān: 142).

Almost the same thing has been said in Āl-i-'Imrān: 179, Taubah: 16 and Sūrah Muḥammad: 31. Allah in these verses has impressed on the Muslims that trial is the touchstone by which the pure and the impure are judged. The impure is turned aside by Allah and the pure is selected so that Allah may honour them with His favours which the sincere believers only deserve.

2. That is, "This is not a new thing which you alone may be experiencing. The same has been happening before also. Whoever made a claim to the Faith was made to pass through trials and tribulations. And when the others were not given anything without the trial, you are in no way any special people that you should be favoured and rewarded merely on verbal profession of the Faith."

3. Literally, "It is necessary that Allah should find out." A question may be asked: "When Allah already knows the truth of the truthful and the untruth of the liar, why should He put the people to the test for the sake of these?" The answer is: Until a person has manifested his potential and capability to do a thing in practical terms, justice requires that he neither deserves any rewards nor any

punishment. One man, for example, is capable of being trustworthy and another man of being un-trustworthy. Unless both are tried and one manifests trustworthiness and the other the lack of it practically, it will not be justice on the part of Allah that He should reward one for trustworthiness and punish the other for the lack of it only on the basis of His knowledge of the unseen. Therefore the knowledge Allah already possesses about the capabilities of the people and about their conduct in the future is not enough to satisfy the requirements of justice until the people have manifested their potentialities in practical ways. Justice with Allah is not based on the knowledge that a person possesses a tendancy to steal and will commit a theft, but on the knowledge that he has actually committed a theft. Likewise, Allah does not bestow favours and rewards on the basis of the knowledge that a person has the potential and capability to become a great believer and fighter in His way, but on the basis of the knowledge that the person concerned has practically proved by deed and action that he is a sincere believer and a brave fighter in His way. That is why we have translated the words of the verse as: "Allah has to see..."

4. This may refer to all those people who disobey Allah's Commands but here particularly it implies those wicked chiefs of the Quraish, who were in the forefront in their antagonism to Islam and persecution of the converts to Islam, e.g. Walīd .bin Mughīrah, Abu Jahl, 'Utbah, Shaibah, 'Uqbah bin Abī Mu'aīt, Hanzatah bin Wā'il, etc. Here the context itself requires that after exhorting the Muslims to patience and fortitude against the trials and tests, those people also should be chided and scolded, who were persecuting the believers."

5. It may also mean: "...that they will escape Our grasp." The words *yasbiqūnā* in the original may have two meanings: (1)'Whatever we will (i.e. the success of the mission of Our Messenger) should meet with failure, and whatever they wish (i.e. to frustrate the mission of Our Messenger) should be accomplished;" and (2) "We may want to seize them for their excesses and they should be able to escape and get out of Our reach."

6. That is, "The case of the one who does not believe in the life hereafter and thinks he is answerable to none for his deeds and there is no accountability whatever, is different. He may remain heedless and act as he likes, for he will himself see the consequences when they appear against his expectations. But those who expect that they have to meet their Lord one day and rewarded and punished according to their deeds, should not have the misunderstanding that the time of death is yet far off. They should rather think that it is near at hand and the respite for action is about to come to an end. Therefore, whatever they can do for their well-being in the Hereafter, they should do. They should not delay self-reform on account of the baseless belief that they have yet to live a long life."

7. That is, "That God before Whom they will appear to render their accounts is not uninformed. He hears everything and knows every thing, and nothing about them is hidden from Him."

8. The word *mujāhadah* means to struggle and exert one's utmost against an opponent, and when the particular opponent force is not pointed out, the word implies an all-out, many-sided struggle. The struggle that a believer has to make in the world, is of this very nature. He has to fight against Satan, who frightens him every moment of the possible losses he may have to incur for the sake of good and allures him with the benefits and pleasures of the evil. He has to fight his own self also, which exerts to make him the slave of its lusts. He has also to fight all those men, from home to the world outside, whose ideology, trends, morality, customs way of life and social and economic principles may be in conflict with his Faith; and he has to fight that state too, which enforces its laws independent of obedience to Allah, and employs its forces to promote evil instead of the good. This struggle is not of a day or two, but of a lifetime, of every moment of the day and night. And it is not a struggle in one field only but on every front of life. It is about this that Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣri has said: "Man exerts in the way of Allah even though he may not strike one sword at any time."

9. That is, "Allah is not asking you to exert your utmost because he stands in need of any help from you to establish His Godhead and keep it established and sustained. But He instructs you to enter this conflict because this opens the way to your own progress. Through this way only you can get rid of the evil and follow the way of truth; through this way alone you can develop the ability and power to rise as the standard-bearers of goodness in the world and become worthy of Allah's Paradise in the Hereafter. By waging this war you will not do any favour to Allah, but will only be helping your own selves."

10. *Imān* means to believe in and accept sincerely all those things to which the Messenger of Allah and this Book invite; and "good works" are those which are performed in accordance with the guidance of Allah and His Messenger. The good work of the heart and mind is that man's thinking and his ideas and his intentions should be right and pure. The good work of the tongue is that man should refrain from talking evil things, and whatever he says should be just and right and true; and the good work of the limbs is that man's entire life should be spent in Allah's worship and in obedience to His Commands and Law. Two results of the belief and righteous deeds have been mentioned: (1) That man's evils will be wiped off; and (2) that he will be rewarded for the best of his deeds better than what he will actually deserve.

Wiping off of evils means several things: (1) All kinds of sins that man might have committed before his affirmation of the Faith will be pardoned as soon

as he believes; (2) the errors that man might have committed after the affirmation of the faith due to human weakness, but not because of a rebellious attitude, will be overlooked in view of his good deeds; (3) man's self reform will automatically take place when he adopts a life of belief and righteousness, and most of his weaknesses will be removed from him.

The sentence, "We shall reward them for the best of their deeds", has two meanings: (1) Man will be given his rewards on the basis of the best of his deeds; and (2) he will be rewarded better and more handsomely than what he will actually deserve for his deeds. This thing has been stated at other places also in the Qur'ān. For instance, in Sūrah Al-An'ām, :160, it has been said: "He who will bring a good deed before Allah, will receive a tenfold reward for it", and in Sūrah Al-Qaṣaṣ :4: "Whoever brings a good deed, shall have a better reward than that", and in Sūrah An-Nisā :40: "Indeed Allah does not wrong anyone even by a jot: if one does a good deed, He increases it manifold."

11. According to Muslim, Tirmidhi, Ahmad, Abū Da'ūd and Nasā'ī, this verse was sent down in respect of Ḥadrat Sa'd bin Abī Waqqās. He was 18 or 19 years old when he embraced Islam. When his mother, Hamnah, daughter of Sufyān bin Umayyah (neice of Abu Sufyān), came to know that her son had become a Muslim, she said, "I will neither eat nor drink nor sit in shade unless you disown Muḥammad. The rights of the mother are supermost even according to Allah's Command. Therefore if you disobey me, you will be disobeying Allah too." Hadrat Sa'd was perplexed and came before the Holy Prophet and told his whole story. At this, this verse was revealed. Possibly other young men who embraced Islam in the initial stage at Makkah were also confronted with similar situations. Therefore, the same theme has been repeated forcefully in Sūrah Luqmān: 15 also.

What the verse means to impress is this: The rights of the parents, among the creation of Allah, are to be held as the supreme, but even if the parents force a person to adopt *shirk*, they should not be obeyed. The words, "If both of them force you to associate..." imply that a lesser pressure, or a pressure by either of them, deserves to be set aside much more promptly. The next sentence, ".... whom you do not know (as such)," is also noteworthy. This gives a sound reason for not obeying the parents in this regard. The parents certainly have the right that the children should serve them, respect them, and obey them in lawful things. But they do not have the right that one should obey them blindly against one's knowledge of the reality. Therefore, there is no reason why a person should go on following his parents' religion just because it is their religion. If the children come to know that their parents are following a false religion, they should give it up and adopt the right religion, and should not follow the wrong way whose falsehood has

become clear to them even if the parents use every kind of pressure for it. When this is so in the case of even the parents, it should be so with every other person, too. No one deserves to be followed and obeyed unless one is sure that the person being followed is on the right path.

12. That is, "The relationships of the world and their obligations are confined to the world. At last, the parents as well as the children have to return to their Creator, and before Him everybody will be held answerable only on the basis of his personal responsibility. If the parents have misled the children, they will be called to account. If the children have accepted deviation for the sake of the parents, they will be punished. And if the children adopted the right way, and showed no slackness in rendering the parents' lawful rights either, but the parents ill-treated them only for the reason that they did not join them in their deviation, they will not be able to escape Allah's punishment."

13. Though the speaker is a single person, he uses the plural pronoun and says, "We have believed," Imam Rāzī has pointed out a subtle point in it. He says that the hypocrite always tries to be counted among the believers and mentions his faith as though he is also a true believer like others. His case is like that of a cowardly soldier who accompanies an army to the battlefield where the soldiers have fought well and put the enemy to rout. This cowardly person might have made no contribution at all, but when he returns home, he will say, "We put up a good fight and routed the enemy", as if he was one of the heroes of the battlefield.

14. That is, "Just as one should desist from disbelief and sin due to fear of Allah's punishment, so did this man desist from faith and goodness due to fear of persecution by the people. When after belief he was confronted with threats and imprisonment and harsh treatment from the disbelievers, he thought that Allah's punishment in Hell which he will have to suffer after death in consequence of his disbelief, will be no severer than that. Therefore, he decided that he would suffer the torment of the Next World at its own time, but should give up faith and rejoin the disbelievers so that he might save himself from the torment of this world and pass an easy life."

15. That is, "Today he has joined the disbelievers in order to save his skin, and has abandoned the believers for he is not prepared even to suffer a thorn-prick in the cause of promoting Allah's religion, but when Allah will favour with success and victory those who are struggling in His cause with their lives and properties, this person will come forward to have his share of the fruits of the victory and will tell the Muslims, "Our hearts were with you: we used to pray for your success: we thought very highly of your devotion to duty and your sacrifices."

Here, one should understand that in case of an unbearable persecution and loss and extreme fear, one is permitted to disown Islam and save one's life, provided that one remains firm in one's faith with a sincere heart. But there is a big difference between the sincere Muslim who disowns Islam under compulsion in order to save his life and the time-server who ideologically believes in Islam as a true religion but joins the disbelievers when he sees the dangers and risks involved in the life of Faith. Apparently, they do not seem to be much different from each other, but the thing which sets them poles apart is this: The sincere Muslim who utters disbelief under compulsion not only remains attached to Islam ideologically, but practically also his sympathies remain with Islam and the Muslims; he feels happy over their successes and unhappy at their defeat. Even under compulsion he tries to avail himself of every opportunity to cooperate with the Muslims, and remains on the look-out for a chance to join his brethren-in-faith as soon as the grip of the enemies loosens a little. Contrary to this, when the time-server finds that the way of the Faith is difficult to follow and calculates carefully that the disadvantages of siding with Islam outweigh the advantages of re-joining the disbelievers, he turns away from Islam and the Muslims for the sake of personal safety and worldly gains, establishes friendship with the disbelievers and is prepared to carry out for his own interests any service for them, which may be utterly opposed to the Faith and harmful to the Muslims. But at the same time, he does not close his eyes to the possibility that Islam also might prosper some time in the future. Therefore, whenever he gets an opportunity to talk to the Muslims, he acknowledges their ideology and admits his faith and pays homage to their sacrifices most generously, so that his verbal admissions might be helpful as and when required. At another place in the Qur'ān this same bargaining mentality of the hypocrites has been described, thus: "The hypocrites are watching you closely to see (how the wind blows). If victory comes to you from Allah, they will say to you, 'Were we not with you?' And if the disbelievers gain the upper hand, they will say to them, 'Were we not strong enough to fight against you? Yet we defended you from the Muslims'." (An-Nisā': 141).

16. That is, "Allah provides occasions for the trial again and again so that the faith of the believers and the hypocrisy of the hypocrites become manifest, and whatever is hidden in the hearts becomes exposed. The same thing has been said in Āl-i-'Imrān: 179: "'Allah will not leave the believers in the state in which you happen to be at present: He will surely separate the pure from the impure people."

17. What they meant to say was: "In the first place, the talk about life hereafter and Resurrection and accountability is all meaningless. But supposing there is another life in which the people will be called to account for their deeds, we take the responsibility that we shall take the punishment, etc. on our own selves. You should, therefore, listen to us and give up this new Faith and return to

your ancestral religion." According to the traditions several chiefs of the Quraish used to counsel thus the people who embraced Islam in the beginning. So, when Ḥaḍrat 'Umar accepted Islam, Abu Sufyān and Ḥarab bin Umayyah bin Khalaf met him and said these very things."

18. That is, "It is not at all possible that a person should take the responsibility for another before Allah, and thus enable the actual sinner to escape the punishment of his sin, for every person will be responsible for his own deeds there. "No bearer of a burden shall bear the burden of another." (An-Najm: 38) But if at all it be so, none will have the nerve, in face of the blazing Hell got ready to punish the disbelievers, to say to Allah, only for the sake of honouring his pledge in the world, "Lord, forgive this person and send him to Paradise: he had turned apostate on my counselling: I offer myself to suffer the punishment for my own disbelief as well as for his in Hell."

19. That is, "Though they will not bear the burdens of others, they will neither escape bearing a double burden: one burden of their own selves going astray, and the burden of leading the othere astray." This can be understood by an example. A person commits theft and also asks another person to join him. Now if the other person also commits theft, no judge will let him off only because he had committed the offence on someone else's prompting. He will in any case be punished for the theft and it will not be fair according to any law of justice to let him off and punish instead of him the first thief who had prompted him to commit the theft. However, the first thief will suffer punishment for two offences: the offence of committing theft himself and the offence of turning another person into a thief along with himself. This principle has been stated at another place in the Qur'ān thus: ".....so that they should bear the full brunt of their own burdens on the Day of Resurrection together with some of the burdens of those whom they are leading astray in their ignorance." (An-Naḥl: 25) The same principle has been elucidated by the Holy Prophet in this *Ḥadīth*: "Whoever invited others to the right path will be granted a reward equal to the rewards of all those who listened to him and adopted the right path, without diminishing their rewards in any way. And whoever invited others to deviation will earn a sin equal to the sins of all those who followed him, without diminishing their sins in any way."

20. "Scandal-mongering" implies all those untruths which were hidden in this saying of the disbelievers: "Follow our way and we will bear the burden of your sins." In fact, they said this on the basis of two presumptions: (1) The creed of *shirk* they are following is based on the truth and the Holy Prophet Muḥammad's doctrine of *Tauḥīd is* false; therefore, there is nothing wrong if it is rejected; and (2) there is going to be no Resurrection, and the doctrine of the Hereafter which deters a Muslim from unbelief is baseless. With these

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أَثْقَالِهِمْ ۖ وَلَيُسْـَٔلُنَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿١٣﴾ وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا
نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ فَلَبِثَ فِيهِمْ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ إِلَّا خَمْسِينَ عَامًا ۚ فَأَخَذَهُمُ
الطُّوفَانُ وَهُمْ ظَٰلِمُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ فَأَنجَيْنَٰهُ وَأَصْحَٰبَ السَّفِينَةِ وَجَعَلْنَٰهَآ ءَايَةً
لِّلْعَٰلَمِينَ ﴿١٥﴾ وَإِبْرَٰهِيمَ إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ ٱعْبُدُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ وَٱتَّقُوهُ ۖ ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ
لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٦﴾ إِنَّمَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ أَوْثَٰنًا وَتَخْلُقُونَ
إِفْكًا ۚ إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ تَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ لَكُمْ رِزْقًا فَٱبْتَغُوا۟
عِندَ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرِّزْقَ وَٱعْبُدُوهُ وَٱشْكُرُوا۟ لَهُۥٓ ۖ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَإِن تُكَذِّبُوا۟
فَقَدْ كَذَّبَ أُمَمٌ مِّن قَبْلِكُمْ ۖ وَمَا عَلَى ٱلرَّسُولِ إِلَّا ٱلْبَلَٰغُ ٱلْمُبِينُ ﴿١٨﴾ أَوَ
لَمْ يَرَوْا۟ كَيْفَ يُبْدِئُ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُۥٓ ۚ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ ﴿١٩﴾
قُلْ سِيرُوا۟ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ فَٱنظُرُوا۟ كَيْفَ بَدَأَ ٱلْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ ٱللَّهُ يُنشِئُ ٱلنَّشْأَةَ
ٱلْءَاخِرَةَ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٠﴾ يُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَآءُ وَيَرْحَمُ مَن
يَشَآءُ ۖ وَإِلَيْهِ تُقْلَبُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَمَآ أَنتُم بِمُعْجِزِينَ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِى ٱلسَّمَآءِ
وَمَا لَكُم مِّن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ مِن وَلِىٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ بِـَٔايَٰتِ
ٱللَّهِ وَلِقَآئِهِۦٓ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ يَئِسُوا۟ مِن رَّحْمَتِى وَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٣﴾
فَمَا كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهِۦٓ إِلَّآ أَن قَالُوا۟ ٱقْتُلُوهُ أَوْ حَرِّقُوهُ فَأَنجَىٰهُ ٱللَّهُ
مِنَ ٱلنَّارِ ۚ إِنَّ فِى ذَٰلِكَ لَـَٔايَٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَقَالَ إِنَّمَا ٱتَّخَذْتُم مِّن
دُونِ ٱللَّهِ أَوْثَٰنًا ۖ مَّوَدَّةَ بَيْنِكُمْ فِى ٱلْحَيَوٰةِ ٱلدُّنْيَا ۖ ثُمَّ يَوْمَ ٱلْقِيٰمَةِ يَكْفُرُ
بَعْضُكُم بِبَعْضٍ وَيَلْعَنُ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا ۖ وَمَأْوَىٰكُمُ ٱلنَّارُ وَمَا لَكُم مِّن
نَّٰصِرِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾ فَـَٔامَنَ لَهُۥ لُوطٌ ۘ وَقَالَ إِنِّى مُهَاجِرٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّىٓ ۖ إِنَّهُۥ هُوَ ٱلْعَزِيزُ

We sent Noah to his people[21] and he lived among them for a thousand years save fifty.[22] Consequently, the Flood overtook them while they persisted in wickedness.[23] Then We rescued Noah and those in the Ark[24] and made it an object of warning for the people of the world.[25] 14-15

And (We) sent Abraham,[26] when he said to his people "Worship Allah and fear Him:[27] this is better for you only if you know it. Those whom you worship instead of Allah are mere idols, and you are forging a lie.[28] In fact, Those whom you worship, besides Allah, have no power to give you any sustenance. Ask Allah for sustenance, and worship Him alone and be grateful to Him, for to Him you will be returned.[29] And if you deny, many a nation before you also have denied (the Truth)[30]; and the Messenger's only responsibility is to convey the message clearly. 16-18

Have[31] these people never seen how Allah originates the creation, and then repeats it ? Surely this (repetition) is easier for Allah.[32] Say to them, "Go about in the earth and see how He has begun the creation; then Allah will recreate life: surely Allah has power over everything.[33] He may punish whom He wills and show mercy to whom He wills; to Him you shall be turned back. You can neither make (Him) helpless in the earth nor in the heaven,[34] and you have no patron and helper to save you from Allah.[35] Those who have denied Allah's Revelations and their meeting with Him, have despaired of My Mercy,[36] and they will have a painful punishment. 19-23

Then[37] the only answer his people gave was to say, "Kill him or burn him."[38] At last, Allah saved him from the fire;[39] surely in this there are Signs for those who believe.[40] He said,[41] "Here in the worldly life you have made the idols, instead of Allah, a means of love among yourselves,[42] but on the Day of Resurrection, you will disown and curse one another.[43] Fire will be your abode and you shall have no helper." Then Lot believed in him,[44] and Abraham said, "I shall migrate towards my Lord:[45] He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise."[46] 24-26

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presumptions they would counsel a Muslim, saying, "Well, if you think that disbelief is really a sin, and there is going to be Resurrection when you will be called to account for this sin, then we are ready to take this sin of yours on our

selves. You leave it to us and give up the religion of Muḥammad and return to your ancestral religion." In this two other false things were also included: (a) Their belief that a person who commits an offence on someone else's prompting can be exempted from its responsibility, and the whole responsibility can be assumed by the one who had prompted the commission of the offence; and (b) their false promise that on the Day of Resurrection they will certainly assume the responsibility for those who might have turned apostates on their counselling. For when Resurrection will actually be established, and they will see Hell against their expectations, they will never be prepared to receive the punishment of their own disbelief as well as bear the whole burden of the sins of those others whom they had deceived and misled in the world.

21. For comparison, see Āl-i-'Imrān: 33-34, An-Nisā': 163, Al-An'ām: 84, Al-A'rāf: 59-64, Yūunus: 71-73, Hūd: 25-48, Al-Anbiyāā: 76-77, Al-Mu'minūn: 23-30, Al-Furqān: 37, Ash-Shu'arāa: 105-123, As-Ṣāffāt: 75-82, Al-Qamar: .9-15, Al-Ḥāāqqah: 11-12, Nūḥ (the whole of it).

One should keep the initial verses of the Sūrah in view in order to understand the relevancy of these stories in this context. There, on the one hand, it has been said to the believers, "We have put to the test all those believers who have passed before you", and, on the other, the wicked disbelievers have been warned to the effect: "You should not have the misunderstanding that you will outstrip Us and escape Our grasp." It is to impress these two things that these historical events are being related here.

22. This does not mean that the Prophet Noah lived for 950 years, but it means that after his appointment to Prophethood till the coming of the Flood, he went on making efforts for 950 years for the reformation of his wicked people, and he did not lose heart even though he suffered persecutions for such a long time. The same is the aim of the discourse here. The believers are being told: "You have been suffering persecutions and experiencing stubbornness of your wicked opponents hardly for six years or so. Just imagine the patience and resolution and firmness of Our servant who braved such afflictions and hardships continuously for nine and a half centuries."

The Qur'ān and the Bible differ about the age of the Prophet Noah. The Bible says that he lived for 950 years. He was 600 years old when the Flood came, and lived for another 350 years after the Flood. (Gen. 7: 6 and 9: 28-29). But according to the Qur'ān, he must have lived for at least a thousand years, because 950 years is the time that he spent in preaching his mission after his appointment to Prophethood till the coming of the Flood. Evidently, he must have been appointed to Prophethood after he had attained his maturity, and must have lived some life after the Flood also.

For some people such a long life is inconceivable. But in this world of God strange happenings are not rare. Wherever one may look one will see extraordinary manifestations of His power. The occurrence of certain events and things in a usual form and manner is no proof that the event or thing cannot happen in an unusual and extraordinary way. To break these assumptions there exists a long list of unusual events and things that have taken place in every kind of creation in every part of the universe. In particular, the person who has a clear concept of God's being All-Powerful, cannot be involved in the misunderstanding that it is not possible for God, Who is the Creator of life and death, to grant a life of a thousand years or so to any man. The fact is that man of his own will and wish cannot live even for a moment, but if Allah wills, He can make him live for as long as He pleases.

23. That is, the Flood came when they still persisted in their wickedness. Had they desisted from it before the coming of the Flood Allah would not have sent this torment on them.

24. That is, the people who had believed in Noah, and who had been permitted by Allah to board the Ark. This has been elucidated in Sūrah Hūd: 40, thus: "Until when Our Command came to pass and *at-Tannūr* began to boil up, We said, '(O Noah), take into Ark a pair from every species, and embark your own people—save those who have already been specifically marked—and also those who have believed; and those who had believed with Noah were only a few."

25. It can also mean this: "We made this dreadful punishment or this great event a Sign of warning for the later generations." But from the way this has been mentioned here and in Sūrah Qamar, it appears that the object of warning was the Ark itself, which remained on the top of the mountain for centuries and continued to remind the later generations that a Flood of such magnitude had once come in that land because of which the Ark had risen up to rest on the mountain. In Sūrah Qamar: 13-15, it has been said: "And We bore Noah upon a thing (Ark) made of planks and nails, which floated under Our care. This was a vengeance for the sake of him who had been slighted. And We left that Ark as a Sign. Then, is there any who would take admonition ?"

In his commentary on this verse of Sūrah Qamar, Ibn Jarīr says on the authority of Qatādah that during the period of the Companions when the Muslims went to the land of al-Jazīrah, they saw the Ark on mount Jūdī (according to another tradition, near the habitation of Bāqirwā). In the modern times also news appear from time to time in the papers that expeditions are being sent to search out the boat, because something resembling a boat has been sighted many time from aeroplanes during flights over Mount Ararat. (For further details, see E.N. 47 of Al-A'raf and E.N. 46 of Hūd).

26. For comparison, see Al-Baqarah: 122-141, 258-260; Āl-i-'Imrān: 64-71; Al-An'ām: 71-82; Hūd: 69-83; Ibrāhīm: 35-41; Al-Ḥijr: 45-60; Maryam: 41-50; Al-Anbiyāa: 51-75; Ash-Shu'arāa: 69-104; As-Ṣāffāt: 75-113; Az-Zukhruf: 26-35; Adh-Dhāriyāt: 24-46.

27. That is, "Fear disobeying Him and associating others with Him."

28. That is, "You are not forging idols but a lie. These idols are in themselves a lie. Then your beliefs that they are gods and goddesses, or they are incarnation of God, or His offspring, or His favourites, or intercessors with Him, or that someone of them is bestower of health, or giver of children or jobs, are all lies, which you have invented from your own whims and conjecture. The fact is that they are in no way more than idols—lifeless, powerless and impotent.

29. In these few sentences the Prophet Abraham has put together all rational arguments against idol-worship. There must necessarily be some reason for making somebody or something a deity. One such reason can be that somebody should be entitled to being a deity due to some personal excellence. Another, that he should be the creator of man, and man should be indebted to him for his existence. Third, that he should be responsible for man's sustenance, his food and other means of life. Fourth, that man's future should be linked up with his support and bounty, and man may be afraid that annoying him would mean bringing about his own ruin. The Prophet Abraham said that none of these four things favoured idol-worship, but they all favoured and demanded pure God-worship. Saying that they are mere idols, he demolished the first argument, for a mere idol could have no excellence to entitle it to be a deity. Then, by saying that "You are their creator", he refuted the second argument, and "they have no power to give you any sustenance" destroyed the third reason. Lastly, he said, "You have to return to Allah ultimately" and not to the idols; therefore, it was not in their power to make or mar your destiny, but in the power of God alone. Thus, after a complete refutation of *shirk*, the Prophet Abraham made it clear to them that all the reasons for which man could regard somebody as a deity only applied to Allah, Who alone should be worshipped without associating anyone else with him.

30. That is, "If you reject my invitation to *Tauhīd and* deny my message that you have to return to your Lord and render an account of your deeds, it will not be a new thing. In the history of mankind many Prophets—like Noah, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ (on whom be Allah's peace) before also have brought the same teachings, and their peoples denied them likewise. Now you may judge for yourselves as to whether they harmed the Prophets or only themselves".

31. From here to the end of verse 23 is a parenthesis, which has been interposed in the story of the Prophet Abraham and addressed to the disbelievers of

Makkah. The relevance of this interposition in the story, which is being related for the admonition of the disbelievers, is that they were basically involved in two kinds of deviation: *shirk* and idol-worship, and the denial of the Hereafter. The first of these has been refuted in the Prophet Abraham's speech as related above. Now the second is being refuted in these few sentences by Allah Himself.

32. That is, "On the one hand, countless new things come into existence from non-existence, and on the other, similar new members continue coming into existence to take the place of the dying members of every species. The polytheists ackowledged that that was all due to Allah's power of creation and invention. They never denied Allah's being a Creator, just as the polytheists of today do not do. Therefore, the argument has been based upon what they themselves acknowledged as a reality, as if to say, "How do you think that God, Who, according to your own belief, . brings things into existence from non-existence, and does not create things just once, but goes on bringing into existence similar things in place of the dying things repeatedly in front of your very eyes, will not be able to raise you back to life after death ?" (For further explanation, see E.N. 80 of Sūrah An-Naml).

33. That is, "When you yourselves are witnessing things being created in the first instance by God's competence and skill, you should understand it well that re-creation shall also take place by the same competence and skill. Such a thing is not beyond His power nor can it be."

34. That is, "You cannot escape Allah's grasp wherever you may flee. Whether you descend into the depths of the earth or climb into the heights of the sky, you will be apprehended in any case and brought before your Lord." The something has been said in Sūrah Ar-Rahmān as a challenge to the jinns and mankind: "O company of jinns and men! If you have the power to escape across the bounds of the earth and heavens, then do escape! You shall not escape, for it requires a great power." (v. 33).

35. That is,"Neither you yourselves have the power that you should escape Allah's grasp, nor is any of your guardians or patrons or supporters so powerful that he should give you refuge against Allah and save you from His punishment. None in the entire universe can dare rise as a supporter of those who have committed *shirk* and disbelief, who have refused to submit before Divine Commands, who have dared disobey Allah impudently, and raised storms of wickedness and mishief on His earth; and withhold enforcement of the Divine decree of torment against them, or have the nerve to say in God's Court: "They are my followers: therefore, whatever they might have done should be forgiven them."

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الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَوَهَبْنَا لَهٗٓ اِسْحٰقَ وَيَعْقُوْبَ وَجَعَلْنَا فِيْ ذُرِّيَّتِهِ النُّبُوَّةَ وَالْكِتٰبَ
وَاٰتَيْنٰهُ اَجْرَهٗ فِي الدُّنْيَا ۚ وَاِنَّهٗ فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ لَمِنَ الصّٰلِحِيْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَلُوْطًا اِذْ
قَالَ لِقَوْمِهٖٓ اِنَّكُمْ لَتَاْتُوْنَ الْفَاحِشَةَ ۖ مَا سَبَقَكُمْ بِهَا مِنْ اَحَدٍ مِّنَ
الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ اَىِٕنَّكُمْ لَتَاْتُوْنَ الرِّجَالَ وَتَقْطَعُوْنَ السَّبِيْلَ ۙ وَتَاْتُوْنَ فِيْ نَادِيْكُمُ
الْمُنْكَرَ ۭ فَمَا كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهٖٓ اِلَّآ اَنْ قَالُوا ائْتِنَا بِعَذَابِ اللّٰهِ اِنْ كُنْتَ
مِنَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ انْصُرْنِيْ عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْمُفْسِدِيْنَ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَلَمَّا جَاۗءَتْ

رُسُلُنَآ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ بِالْبُشْرٰى ۙ قَالُوْٓا اِنَّا مُهْلِكُوْٓا اَهْلِ هٰذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ ۚ اِنَّ اَهْلَهَا
كَانُوْا ظٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٣١﴾ قَالَ اِنَّ فِيْهَا لُوْطًا ۭ قَالُوْا نَحْنُ اَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ فِيْهَا ۡ
لَنُنَجِّيَنَّهٗ وَاَهْلَهٗٓ اِلَّا امْرَاَتَهٗ ۡ كَانَتْ مِنَ الْغٰبِرِيْنَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَلَمَّآ اَنْ جَاۗءَتْ
رُسُلُنَا لُوْطًا سِيْۗءَ بِهِمْ وَضَاقَ بِهِمْ ذَرْعًا وَّقَالُوْا لَا تَخَفْ وَلَا تَحْزَنْ ۡ
اِنَّا مُنَجُّوْكَ وَاَهْلَكَ اِلَّا امْرَاَتَكَ كَانَتْ مِنَ الْغٰبِرِيْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾ اِنَّا مُنْزِلُوْنَ عَلٰٓى
اَهْلِ هٰذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ رِجْزًا مِّنَ السَّمَاۗءِ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَفْسُقُوْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَلَقَدْ تَّرَكْنَا
مِنْهَآ اٰيَةًۢ بَيِّنَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَّعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَاِلٰى مَدْيَنَ اَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا ۙ فَقَالَ
يٰقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ وَارْجُوا الْيَوْمَ الْاٰخِرَ وَلَا تَعْثَوْا فِي الْاَرْضِ مُفْسِدِيْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾
فَكَذَّبُوْهُ فَاَخَذَتْهُمُ الرَّجْفَةُ فَاَصْبَحُوْا فِيْ دَارِهِمْ جٰثِمِيْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَعَادًا وَّ
ثَمُوْدَا وَقَدْ تَّبَيَّنَ لَكُمْ مِّنْ مَّسٰكِنِهِمْ ۡ وَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطٰنُ اَعْمَالَهُمْ
فَصَدَّهُمْ عَنِ السَّبِيْلِ وَكَانُوْا مُسْتَبْصِرِيْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَقَارُوْنَ وَفِرْعَوْنَ وَ
هَامٰنَ ۡ وَلَقَدْ جَاۗءَهُمْ مُّوْسٰى بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوْا فِي الْاَرْضِ وَمَا كَانُوْا
سٰبِقِيْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾ فَكُلًّا اَخَذْنَا بِذَنْۢبِهٖ ۚ فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ اَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِ حَاصِبًا ۚ وَ

And We bestowed on him (children like) Isaac and Jacob,[47] and placed in his progeny the Prophethood and the Book,[48] and give him his reward in this world, and in the Hereafter he will surely be among the righteous.[49] 27

And We sent Lot,[50] when he said to his people, "You commit the indecency which no other people has ever committed before you in the world. What! Do you go to the males,[51] and commit robbery and indulge in indecencies in your assemblies ?"[52] Then the only answer his people gave was to say, "Bring forth the torment of Allah if you are truthful." Lot said, "O my Lord, help me against these mischief-makers." 28-30

And when Our messengers came to Abraham with the good news,[53] they said to him, "We are going to destroy the people of this habitation,[54] for its people have become very wicked." Abraham said, "There is Lot in it."[55] They replied, "We know full well who is in it we shall save him and all his household except his wife;" his wife was of those who remained behind.[56] 31-35

Then, when Our messengers came to Lot, he grew anxious for them and distressed at heart.[57] They said, "Do not fear nor grieve;[58] we shall save you and your household, except your wife, who is of those who will remain behind. We are going to bring down a torment from the sky upon the people of this habitation on account of the evil they have been committing" And We have left from the habitation a clear Sign[59] for those who use their common sense.[60] 33-37

And to Madyan, We sent their brother Shu'aib.[61] He said, "O my people, worship Allah and look forward to the Last Day,[62] and do not commit excesses in the land wickedly." But they treated him as a liar.[63] Consequently, a severe earthquake overtook them, and they lay lifeless in their dwelling-places.[64] 36-37

And We destroyed 'Ād and Thamhūd. You have seen the places where they lived.[65] Satan made their deeds seem fair to them and misled them from the right path, although they were sensible people.[66] And We destroyed Korah and Pharaoh and Hāmān. Moses came to them with clear Signs, but they assumed arrogance in the land, whereas 38-39

they could not outstrip[67] Us.

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36. That is, "They have no share in My mercy, and they should entertain no hope whatever of getting any share of My mercy. When they denied the Revelations of Allah, they themselves gave up their right to benefit by the promises Allah has made to the believers. Then, when they have denied the Hereafter and do not at all believe that one day they will have to stand before their God, it only means that they cherish no hope at all of Allah's pardon and forgiveness. After this when they will open their eyes in the-Hereafter, against their expectations, and will also see the truth of those Signs of Allah, which they had denied, there is no reason why they should expect to receive any share from Allah's mercy."

37. From here the discourse again turns to the story of the Prophet Abraham.

38. That is, they had no answer to the Prophet Abraham's rational arguments. The only answer they gave was: "Cut off the tongue that talks the truth and let not the person live, who points out our error and tells us to give it up." The words, "Kill him or burn him", indicate that the whole crowd was unanimous that the Prophet Abraham should be put to death. However, they differed about the method. Some said that he should be killed, and others said that he should be burnt alive, so that no one in future should dare say the sort of the thing he said.

39. This sentence by itself shows that they had at last decided to burn the Prophet Abraham and he was cast into the fire. Here it has only been said that Allah saved him from the fire; but in Sūrah Al-Anbiyāa it has been elucidated that Allah commanded: "O fire! Be cool and become safe for Abraham!" (v. 69) Evidently, if he was not at all cast into the fire, the Command to the fire to become cool and safe would be meaningless. This proves that properties of all things are dependent on Allah's Command and whenever He pleases He can change the property of anything He likes. Normally fire burns and every combustible thing catches fire. But this property of the fire is not of its own acquisition but given by God. And this property has in no way tied up God that He may give no Command against it. He is the Master of His fire. He can command it any time to give up the property of burning. At any time He can turn a furnace into a bed of roses. But events contrary to the course of nature occur only rarely to serve some great purpose or cause. However, the usual phenomena to which we are accustomed in our daily lives, cannot be made an argument to say that Allah's power has been tied up with these, and nothing unusual can take place even by Allah's Command.

40. "Signs ... believe": Signs for the believers in this that the Prophet Abraham did not follow the religion of his family, community and country but followed the true knowledge through which he came to know that *shirk* is falsehood and *Tauḥīd* the Reality; and in this that he went on exhorting his people to accept the Truth and to desist from falsehood in spite of their stubbornness and prejudices; and in this that he was even prepared to suffer the horrible punishment by the fire, but was not prepared to give up the Truth; and in this that Allah did not even spare the Prophet Abraham, His Friend, from the trials and tests; and in this that when the Prophet Abraham got successfully through the tests set by Allah, then did come Allah's succour, and in such a miraculous way that the bonfire was turned cool for him!

41. The Prophet Abraham must have said this after his safe deliverance from the fire.

42. That is, "You have built up your collective life on the foundation of idol-worship instead of God-worship, which can keep you bound together as a nation only to the extent of mudane life. For here in this world people can be got together around any creed, true or false, and any kind of agreement and concord on any belief, however wrong and ill-conceived, can become a means of the establishment of mutual friendships, kinships, brotherhoods, and all other religious, social, cultural, economic and political relationships."

43. That is, "The collective life that you have built on the false creed in the world cannot endure in the Hereafter. Only those relationships of love and friendship and cooperation and kinship and mutual regard and esteem will endure there, which have been based on the worship of One God and virtue and piety in the world. All relationships founded on disbelief and *shirk* and deviation will be severed, and all kinds of love will change into enmity and hatred. The son and the father, the husband and the wife, the saint and the disciple, all will curse each other, and each will blame his deviation on the other, and will say, "This wicked person led me astray: he should be given a double punishment." This thing has been stated at several places in the Qur'ān. For example, in Sūrah Zukhruf, it has been said: "Friends on that Day shall become enemies of one another, except the righteous." (v. 67) In Sūrah Al-A'rāf: "As each generation will be entering Hell, it will curse its preceding generation till all generations shall be gathered together there: then each succeeding generation will say regarding the preceding one, "O Lord, these were the people who led us astray; therefore, give them a double chastisement of the Fire." (v. 38) And in Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb: "And they will say; 'Our Lord, we obeyed our chiefs and our great men, and they led us astray from

the right path. Lord, give them a double chatisement and curse them severely." (vv. 67-68).

44. The context shows that when the Prophet Abraham came out of the fire and spoke the preceding sentences, only Prophet Lot from the entire crowd came forward to proclaim his belief and adopt his obedience. It is just possible that many other people also on this occasion might have been convinced of the Prophet Abraham's being a true Prophet, but in view of the violent reaction that had been shown openly by the entire community and the government against Abraham's Faith, no one else could muster up courage to affirm faith in such a dangerous truth and follow it. This good fortune fell to the lot of only one man, the Prophet Lot, the nephew of the Prophet Abraham, who at last accompanied his uncle and aunt (Ḥaḍrat Sarah) in their migration also.

Here, the question may arise: Was the Prophet Lot a disbeliever and a *mushrik* before this, and did he believe only after witnessing the miracle of the Prophet Abraham's emerging safe and sound from the fire? If it is so, can a person who has been a *mushrik* be appointed to Prophethood? The answer is this: Here the Qur'ān has used the words *fa-āmana la-hū Lūt*, which do not necessarily imply that the Prophet Lot disbelieved in God before this, or associated other deities with Him. They only show that after this he confirmed the Prophethood of the Prophet Abraham, and adopted his obedience. Possibly the Prophet Lot was a young boy then and this might be the first very occasion when he became acquainted with the teachings of his uncle and his Prophethood.

45. That is, "I shall leave my country for the sake of my Lord and go wherever my Lord may take me."

46. That is, "He possesses the power to help and protect me, and whatever He decides for me will be based on wisdom."

47. The Prophet Isaac was the son and the Prophet Jacob the grandson. The other sons of the Prophet Abraham have not been mentioned here, because from his Midianite descendants only the Prophet Shu'aib was appointed a Prophet, and no Prophet was born among his Ishmaelite descendants for 2500 years or so till our Holy Prophet Muḥammad (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). Contrary to this, the descendants of the Prophet Isaac (peace be upon him) continued to be blessed with the Prophethood and the Book till the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him).

48. This covers all the Prophets who were raised from all the branches of the Prophet Abraham's progeny.

49. What is meant to be said is this: The rulers and the learned men and the priests of Babylon who tried to defeat the mission of the Prophet Abraham (Allah's peace be upon him) and the polytheistic people who had followed their wicked chiefs blindly, have since been blotted out and no trace of them is to be found anywhere in the world, but the person whom they had wanted to annihilate by burning in the fire only because he had proclaimed the Word of Allah, and who eventually had to leave his country empty-handed, was so blessed by Allah that his name has been well known in the world since the past 4,000 years and will remain so till the Last Day. All the Muslims and the Christians and the Jews unanimously recognize that Friend of the Lord of the worlds as their spiritual Leader. Whatever guidance mankind has received during the past 40 centuries has been received through this one man and his righteous descendants. The unique reward that he will get in the Hereafter is assured, but the place of honour that he has gained even in this world has not been gained so far by any of those who have exerted themselves in pursuit of the worldly benefits and advantages.

50. For comparison, see Al-A'rāf: 80-84; Hūd: 69-83; Al-Ḥijr: 57-79; Al-Anbiyāa: 71-75; Ash-Shu'arāā: 160-175; An-Naml: 54 59; As-Sāffat: 133-138; Al-Qamar: 33-40.

51. That is, "You satisfy your sex desire with the males." As stated in Al-A'rāf: 81: "You gratify your lust with men instead of women."

52. That is, "You do not even hide yourself when you commit this filthy act, but commit it openly in your assemblies, in front of others." The same has been stated in Sūrah An-Naml: 54, thus: "Do you commit the indecency while you see it?"

53. According to the details given of this in Sūrah Hūd and Al-Ḥijr, the angels who had been sent to bring the torment on the people of the Prophet Lot, first came to the Prophet Abraham and gave him the good news of the birth of the Prophet Isaac and after him of the Prophet Jacob. Then they told him that they had been sent to destroy the people of Lot.

54. "This habitation" refers to the territory of the people of Lot. The Prophet Abraham at that time resided in the Palestinian city of Hebron, now called Al-Khalil. A few miles to the south-east of this city lies that part of the Dead Sea, which was once inhabited by the people of Lot and which is now under sea water. It is a low-lying area and is clearly visible from the hill country of Hebron. That is why the angels, pointing towards it, had said: "We are going to destroy this habitation." (See also E.N. 114 of Ash-Shu'arāāa).

55. According to the initial part of this story as related in Sūrah Hūd, the

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مِنْهُمْ مَّنْ اَخَذَتْهُ الصَّيْحَةُ ۚ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ خَسَفْنَا بِهِ الْاَرْضَ ۚ وَمِنْهُمْ
مَّنْ اَغْرَقْنَا ۚ وَمَا كَانَ اللّٰهُ لِيَظْلِمَهُمْ وَلٰكِنْ كَانُوْٓا اَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُوْنَ ﴿٤٠﴾
مَثَلُ الَّذِيْنَ اتَّخَذُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ اَوْلِيَآءَ كَمَثَلِ الْعَنْكَبُوْتِ ۚ اِتَّخَذَتْ
بَيْتًا ۭ وَاِنَّ اَوْهَنَ الْبُيُوْتِ لَبَيْتُ الْعَنْكَبُوْتِ ۘ لَوْ كَانُوْا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٤١﴾ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ
يَعْلَمُ مَا يَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ۭ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَتِلْكَ
الْاَمْثَالُ نَضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ ۚ وَمَا يَعْقِلُهَآ اِلَّا الْعٰلِمُوْنَ ﴿٤٣﴾ خَلَقَ اللّٰهُ السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَالْاَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ ۭ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً لِّلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٤٤﴾

اُتْلُ مَآ اُوْحِيَ اِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتٰبِ وَاَقِمِ الصَّلٰوةَ ۭ اِنَّ الصَّلٰوةَ تَنْهٰى

عَنِ الْفَحْشَاۗءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ ۭ وَلَذِكْرُ اللّٰهِ اَكْبَرُ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَصْنَعُوْنَ ﴿٤٥﴾
وَلَا تُجَادِلُوْٓا اَهْلَ الْكِتٰبِ اِلَّا بِالَّتِيْ هِيَ اَحْسَنُ ۡ اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا مِنْهُمْ
وَقُوْلُوْٓا اٰمَنَّا بِالَّذِيْٓ اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْنَا وَاُنْزِلَ اِلَيْكُمْ وَاِلٰهُنَا وَاِلٰهُكُمْ وَاحِدٌ
وَّنَحْنُ لَهٗ مُسْلِمُوْنَ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَكَذٰلِكَ اَنْزَلْنَآ اِلَيْكَ الْكِتٰبَ ۭ فَالَّذِيْنَ اٰتَيْنٰهُمُ
الْكِتٰبَ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِهٖ ۚ وَمِنْ هٰٓؤُلَاۗءِ مَنْ يُّؤْمِنُ بِهٖ ۭ وَمَا يَجْحَدُ بِاٰيٰتِنَآ اِلَّا
الْكٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَمَا كُنْتَ تَتْلُوْا مِنْ قَبْلِهٖ مِنْ كِتٰبٍ وَّلَا تَخُطُّهٗ بِيَمِيْنِكَ
اِذًا لَّارْتَابَ الْمُبْطِلُوْنَ ﴿٤٨﴾ بَلْ هُوَ اٰيٰتٌۢ بَيِّنٰتٌ فِيْ صُدُوْرِ الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا
الْعِلْمَ ۭ وَمَا يَجْحَدُ بِاٰيٰتِنَآ اِلَّا الظّٰلِمُوْنَ ﴿٤٩﴾ وَقَالُوْا لَوْلَآ اُنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ اٰيٰتٌ
مِّنْ رَّبِّهٖ ۭ قُلْ اِنَّمَا الْاٰيٰتُ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ ۭ وَاِنَّمَآ اَنَا نَذِيْرٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿٥٠﴾ اَوَلَمْ
يَكْفِهِمْ اَنَّآ اَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتٰبَ يُتْلٰى عَلَيْهِمْ ۭ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَرَحْمَةً وَّ
ذِكْرٰى لِقَوْمٍ يُّؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٥١﴾ قُلْ كَفٰى بِاللّٰهِ بَيْنِيْ وَبَيْنَكُمْ شَهِيْدًا ۚ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي

Consequently, We seized each one of them on account of his sin: then against some We sent a wind to rain stones on them;[68] some others were overtaken by a terrible blast,[69] and some other We sank underground,[70] and some We drowned.[71] Allah was not unjust to them, but they were themselves being unjust to their souls.[72] 40

The likeness of those who have taken other patrons than Allah, is the likeness of a spider, which makes itself a dwelling; and the weakest of all dwellings is the dwelling of a spider. Would that these people had knowledge![73] Allah surely knows whomever they invoke instead of Him: He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.[74] These parables We cite for the instruction of the people, but only those people understand them, who have knowledge. Allah has created the heavens and the earth with the Truth.[75] Indeed there is a Sign in this for the believers.[76] 41-44

(O Prophet,) recite this Book which has been revealed to you, and establish the *Ṣalāt*:[77] surely the *Ṣalāt* restrains from indecent and evil acts,[78] and the remembrance of Allah is a thing even greater[79] than this; Allah knows whatever you do. 45

And[80] do not dispute with the people of the Book except in the best manner,[81]—save with those who are wicked among them[82]—and say to them, "We have believed in that which has been sent down to us as well as in that which had been sent down to you. Our God and your God is One, and to Him we have surrendered[83] (as Muslims). (O Prophet,) We have likewise sent down the Book to you:[84] therefore, those to whom We gave the Book before this, believe in it,[85] and so do many of these people,[86] and none but the disbelievers deny Our Revelations.[87] 46-47

(O Prophet,) you did not read any book before this, nor did you write any with your hand. If it were so, the worshippers of falsehood could have been involved in doubt.[88] These are, in fact, clear Signs in the hearts of those who have been given knowledge;[89] and none deny Our Revelations except the wicked. They say, "Why have Signs[90] not been sent down upon this person from his Lord ?" Say, "The Signs are with Allah: I am only a plain warner." Is this (Sign) not enough for these people that We have sent down to you the Book, which is recited to them?[91] Indeed, there is mercy in it and admonition for those who 48-52

believe.[92] (O Prophet,) say, "Allah suffices as a witness between me and you. He knows all that is there in the heavens and the earth. Those who believe in falsehood and deny Allah, shall be the losers."

Contd. from p. 569]

Prophet Abraham at first was perturbed to see the angels in human shape, for he knew that the coming of the angels in human shape was always a prelude to some dangerous mission. Then, when they gave him the good news, his fear was allayed and he came to know that they had been sent to the people of Lot. Then he began making entreaties of mercy for those people (Hūd: 74-75), but his entreaties were not granted, and it was said: "Do not plead for them any more: your Lord's decree has been issued, and the punishment now cannot be averted." (v. 76) After this answer, when the Prophet Abraham lost all hope of any increase in the respite of Lot's people, he became anxious about the Prophet Lot himself, and said, what has been related here: "There is Lot in it." That is, "If the torment comes down when Lot is there, how will he and his household remain safe from it?"

56. According to Sūrah Taḥrīm: 10, this woman was not faithful to the Prophet Lot. That is why it was decreed that she too, would be afflicted with the torment in spite of being a Prophet's wife. Most probably when the Prophet Lot had come to Jordan after the migration and settled there, he might have married among the people living there. But the woman did not believe even after spending a lifetime with him, and her sympathies remained with her own people. As Allah has no consideration for relationships and brotherhoods and every person's case is decided on the basis of his own faith and morality, even being a Prophet's wife did not profit her in any way and she met her doom along with her own people with whom she had remained attached in faith and morality.

57. The reason for this anxiety and distress was that the angels had come in the shape of handsome, young boys. The Prophet Lot was aware of his people's morals. Therefore, he became perturbed at their arrival. He was thinking, "If I receive these guests in my house, it will be difficult to save them from the immoral people; if I do not receive them, it will be highly uncivil and unbecoming of the noble people. Moreover, if I do not provide shelter to these travellers, they will stay the night elsewhere, which would mean that I have myself given them away to the wicked people." What happened after this has not been related here. But according to the details given in Sūrahs Hūd, Al-Ḥijr and Al-Qamar, the people of the city thronged to the Prophet Lot's house and insisted that the guests be handed over to them for immorality.

58. That is, "As for us, you should neither fear that they will in any way be able to harm us, nor be anxious about how you will protect us from them."

This was the time when the angels revealed their identity to the Prophet Lot, and said that they were not men but angels, who had been sent to bring the scourge on his people. According to the elucidation in Sūrah Hūd, when the people were rushing into Lot's house and he felt that he could in no way save his guests from them, he cried out: "I wish I had the power to set you right, or I could find some strong support for refuge."' (v. 80) At this time the angels said: "O Lot, we are messengers sent by your Lord; they will not be able to harm you at all." (v. 81).

59. "A clear Sign": the Dead Sea, which is also called Sea of Lot. The Qur'an at several places has addressed the disbelievers of Makkah, saying, "A Sign of the torment that visited this wicked people on account of their misdeeds still exists on the highway, which you see night and day during your trade journeys to Syria." (Al-Ḥijr: 76; As-Ṣāffāt: 137).

Today it is being admitted with near certainty that the southern end of the Dead Sea came into being as a result of a violent earthquake when the area in which Sodom, the central city of the people of Lot, was located sank underground. In this part there are still signs of some submerged habitations. Exploratory attempts are being made with the modern diving apparatus but the results are still awaited. (For further explanation, see E. N. 114 of Ash-Shu'arāa

60. For the Islamic punishment of sodomy, see E.N. 68 of Sūrah Al-A'rāf.

61. For comparison, see Al-'rāf: 85-93, Hūd: 84-96, Ash-Shu'arāa: 177-191.

62. This can have two meanings: (1) "Look forward to the life hereafter, and do not think that there is no life after this worldly life, when you will have to render an accout of your deeds and be rewarded or punished accordingly.'' (2) "Work righteously so as to meet a good end in the Hereafter."

63. That is, "They did not believe that the Prophet Shu'aib was a Messenger of Allah and the teachings he gave were from Allah and that if they rejected him they would be punished by a torment from Allah."

64. "Dwelling-places": the whole area and country inhabited by those people.

65. Every Arab was acquainted with the lands where these two nations had lived. The whole of southern Arabia now known as Aḥqāf, Yaman and Ḥaḍramaut, was the land of 'Ād in the ancient times, and the Arabs knew it. The whole area in the north of the Ḥijāz, from Rābigh to 'Aqabah and from Madīnah and Khaiber to Taimā' and Tabūk, still abounds with Thamūdic monuments, which

must have been more prominent than they are today in the time when the Qur'ān was being revealed.

66. That is, "They were not ignorant and foolish people, but were the most civilized people of their own times. They performed and carried out their worldly duties and chores very carefully and intelligently. Therefore, it cannot be said that Satan deluded them and pulled them on to his way by artifice and deception. Nay, they adopted the way shown by Satan with open eyes and with full understanding because it promised great pleasures and advantages; and they abandoned the way presented by the Prophets because it appeared to be colourless, tasteless and troublesome due to moral restrictions."

67. That is, "They could not have got away and escaped Allah's grasp: they had no power to frustrate and defeat Allah's plans and schemes."

68. That is, 'Ād who were subjected to a furious windstorm which blew on them for seven nights and eight days continuously.

69. That is, Thamūd.

70. That is, Korah.

71. That is, Pharaoh and Hāmān.

72. The stories that have been related in the foregoing verses, have been addressed and directed both to the believers and to the disbelievers. To the believers they have been addressed so that they do not feel discouraged and distressed at heart, and keep aloft the banner of the Truth firmly and patiently even in the face of the severe persecutions and hardships, and should have full faith in Allah that His succour shall ultimately come, and He will frustrate the designs of the wicked people and make the Word of the Truth to prevail. On the other hand, these have been addressed to those wicked people also, who in their arrogance were bent upon exterminating the Islamic movement. They have been warned to the effect: "You have formed a wrong opinion about Allah's forbearance and clemency. You think; that His is a lawless Kingdom. If you have not been seized so far for your rebellion and your tyrannies and wicked deeds and have been granted a long respite so that you may reform yourselves, you have inferred that there exists no power whatever which can call you to account, and that one can go on doing whatever one likes endlessly on this earth. This misconception will ultimately lead you to the same doom that has already been met by the peoples of Noah and Lot and Shu'aib, and experienced by 'Ād and Thamūd, and seen by Korah and Pharaoh.

73. All the above-mentioned nations were involved in *shirk*, and their belief about their deities was that they were their supporters and helpers and

guardians, and had the power to make or mar their destinies; so when they will have won their goodwill by worship and presentation of offerings they will succour them in need and protect them against calamities and afflictions. But, as shown by the historical events cited above, all their beliefs and superstitions proved to be baseless when their destruction was decreed by Allah. Then no god, and no god-incarnate, and no saint or spirit, and no jinn or angel, whom they worshipped came to their rescue, and they met their destruction with the realization that their expectations and beliefs had been false and futile. After relating these events, Allah is now warning the *mushriks* to the effect: "The reality of the toy-house of expectations that you have built on your faith in the powerless servants and imaginary deities, apart from the real Master and Ruler of the universe, is no more than the cobweb of a spider. Just as a cobweb cannot stand the slightest interference by a finger, so will the toy-house of your expectations collapse in its first clash with the scheme of Allah. It is nothing but ignorance that you are involved in the web of superstition. Had you any knowledge of the Reality you would not have built your system of life on baseless props. The fact is that none other than the One Lord of the worlds in this universe is the Owner of power and authority, and His support is the only support which is reliable. "Now whoever rejects *ṭāghūt* and believes in Allah has taken a firm support that never gives way. And Allah hears everything and knows everything." (Al-Baqarah: 256).

74. That is, "Allah knows full well the reality of those beings and things which they have taken as their deities and which they invoke for help. They are absolutely powerless. The Owner of power is only Allah, Who is controlling the system of this universe according to His own wisdom and design."

Another translation of this verse can be: "Allah knows full well that those whom they invoke, apart from Him, are nonentities, and He alone is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise."

75. That is, "The system of the universe is based on the truth and not on falsehood. Whoever ponders over this system with an unbiased mind will realize that the earth and the heavens owe their existence to reality and fact and not to superstition and fancy. Here there is no possibility that whatever a person may conceive in his mind and whatever philosophy he may invent out of his personal whim and conjecture should fit in with the system. Here only such a thing can succeed and endure, which is in harmony with the reality and actual fact. A structure that is raised on unreal presumptions and hypotheses will ultimately collapse when it clashes with the reality. The system of the universe clearly testifies that its Creator is One God, and One God alone is its Master and Disposer. If a person works against this basic Reality on the presumption that this world has no God, or that it has many gods, who devour the offerings of their

devotees and in return give them a licence to do whatever they please and a guarantee to live in peace and happiness, the Reality will not change due to his presumptions, but, on the contrary, he himself will some time meet with a grave disaster."

76. That is, "A clear evidence exists in the creation of the earth and the heavens about the truth of *Tauḥīd* and the refutation of polytheism and atheism, but this evidence is found only by those who accept the teachings of the Prophets of Allah. Those who deny them do not find it even though they see everything."

77. The address apparently is directed to the Holy Prophet but, in fact, it is meant for all the believers. Until now they were being counselled patience and reliance on Allah to brave the extreme trying conditions in which they found themselves and the persecutions they were being subjected to on account of their faith. Now they are being told to recite the Qur'ān and establish the *Ṣalāt* as a practical device, for these are the two things which endow a believer with a strong character and a wonderful capacity by which he can not only brave successfully the most violent storms of evil and falsehood but can even subdue them. But man can acquire this power from the recitation of the Qur'ān and the Prayer only when he does not remain content with the mere recital of the words but also understands well the Qur'ānic teachings and absorbs them in his soul, and his Prayer does not remain confined to physical movements but becomes the very function of his heart and the motive force for his morals and character. The desired quality of the Prayer is being mentioned by the Qur'ān itself in the next sentence. As for its recitation, one should know that the recitation which does not reach the heart beyond the throat, cannot even give man enough power to remain steadfast to his faith, not to speak of enabling him to withstand the furies of unbelief. About such people, a *Ḥadīth* says: "They will recite the Qur'ān, but the Qur'ān will not go beyond their throats; they will leave the Faith just as the arrow leaves the bow." (Bukhārī, Muslim, Mu'aṭṭā'). As a matter of fact, the recitation which does not effect any change in a man's way of thinking, and his morals and character, and he goes on doing what the Qur'ān forbids, is not the recitation of a believer at all. About such a one the Holy Prophet has said: ;'He who makes lawful what the Qur'ān has declared unlawful, has not believed in the Qur'ān at all." (Tirmidhi, on the authority of Ṣuhaib Rumi). Such a recitation does not reform and strengthen a man's self and spirit, but makes him even more stubborn against Allah and impudent before his own conscience, and destroys his character altogether. For the case of the person who believes in the Qur'ān as a Divine Book, reads it and comes to know what his God has enjoined, and then goes on violating His injunctions, is of the culprit, who commits a crime not due to ignorance but after full knowledge of the law. The Holy Prophet has elucidated this point in a brief sentence, thus: "The Qur'ān is a testimony in your favour as well as against you."

(Muslim). That is, "If you follow the Qur'ān rightly it is a testimony in your favour. Whenever you are called to account for your deeds, here or in the hereafter, you can produce the Qur'ān as a testimony in your defence, saying that whatever you did was in accordance with this Book. If what you did was precisely according to it, no jurist in the world will be able to punish you, nor will God in the Hereafter hold you accountable for it. But if this Book has reached you, and you have read it and found out what your Lord demands from you, what He enjoins and what He forbids, and then you adopt an attitude opposed to it, then this Book will be a testimony against you. It will further strengthen the criminal case against you in the Court of God. Then it will in no way be possible for you to escape the punishment, or receive a light punishment, by making the excuse of ignorance."

78. This is an important characteristic out of the many characteristics of the Prayer, which has been presented here prominently in view of its relevance to the context. To counter the severe storm of opposition and resistance that the Muslims were experiencing in Makkah, they stood in need of a moral force rather than any material power. To bring about the moral force and develop it suitably two practical devices were pointed out in the first instance, the recitation of the Qur'ān and the establishment of the *Ṣalāt*. Now they are being told that the establishment of the *Ṣalāt* is the means through which they can get rid of those evils in which they themselves had been involved before they embraced Islam and in which the non-Muslim Arabs and the non-Arab world around them were involved at that time.

With a little thinking one can easily understand why this special advantage of the Prayer has been particularly mentioned here. Evidently, getting rid of the moral evils is not only useful insofar as it is beneficial for those who attain the moral purity, both here and in the Hereafter, but its inevitable advantage is that it gives them unique superiority over those who might be involved in diverse moral evils, and who might be exerting their utmost to sustain the impure system of ignorance, which nourishes those evils, against the efforts of the morally pure people. Indecent and evil acts are those which man by nature abhors, and which have always been held as evil in principle by the people of every community and society, however depraved and perverted practically. The Arab society in the days of the revelation of the Qur'ān was no exception to this. Those people also were aware of the moral virtues and the evils: they valued the good above the evil and there might be none among them, who regarded the evil as identical with the good, or depreciated good. Under such conditions, in a perverted society like that, the emergence of a movement which revolutionised morally members of the same society itself as soon as they came into contact with it, and raised them in character high above their contemporaries, inevitably had widespread effects. The common

Arabs could not possibly fail to feel the moral impact of the movement, which eradicated evils and promoted goodness, and instead go on following those who were themselves morally corrupt and were fighting to sustain the system of ignorance, which had been nourishing those evils since centuries. That is why the Qur'ān at that time exhorted the Muslims to establish *Ṣalāt* instead of urging them to collect material resources and force and strength that could win over the people's hearts and defeat the enemy without any material force.

The virtue of the Prayer that has been mentioned here has two aspects: its essential and inseparable quality that it restrains from evil and indecent acts, and its desired quality that the one who performs it should in actual fact refrain from evil and indecent acts. As for the first quality the Prayer does restrain people from the evils. Anyone who ponders a little over the nature of the Prayer, will admit that of all the checks and brakes that can be put on man to restrain him from the evils, the Prayer can be the most effective. After all, what check could be more effective than this that man should be called upon five times a day for the remembrance of Allah and made to remind himself again and again that he is not wholly free and independent in this world but is the servant of One God, and his God is He Who is aware of his open as well as hidden acts, even of the most secret aims and intentions of his heart, and a time will surely come when he will have to account for all his deeds before his God. Then he is not only reminded of this but is given practical training at every Prayer time that he should not disobey any of his God's Commands even secretly. From the time that he stands up for the Prayer till its completion man has to perform continuously certain acts in which there is no third person, besides him and his God, who can know whether he has obeyed God's law or disobeyed it. For instance, if the man's *wuḍū* (state of ablutions) has become void and he stands up for the Prayer, there can be no one, besides him and God, who will know that he is no longer in the state of wudū. If the man has expressed no intention of the Prayer but just goes on performing all the required movements and recites poetry, for instance, instead of the prescribed texts quietly, there is none, besides him and his God who can be aware of the secret that he has not, in fact, performed his Prayer at all. Notwith standing this, if a person offers the Prayer five times a day, fulfilling faithfully all the conditions of the Divine law in respect of the cleanliness of the body and dress, and the essentials of the Prayer and its recitation, etc. it means that through this Prayer his conscience is being awakened to life several times a day, he is being helped to become a responsible and dutiful person, and he is being practically trained that he should, under his own urge of obedience, abide by the law which he has believed in openly as well as secretly, regardless whether there is any external force to make him abide by it or not, and whether the people of the world have any knowledge of his intentions and deeds or not.

Thus considered, one cannot help admitting that the Prayer not only restrains man from the evils and indecencies, but, in fact, there is no other method of training in the world, which may be so effective as the Prayer is in restraining man from the evils. As for the question whether or not man in actual fact refrains from the evils even after attendance at the Prayer, this depends upon the man himself, who is undergoing training for self-reform. If he has the intention to benefit from it, and endeavours for it, the reformatory effects of the Prayer will certainly have their impact on him. Otherwise, evidently, no reformatory device in the world can be effective with a person, who is not prepared to receive any impact of it, or tries to avoid its impact intentionally. This can be explained by an example. The essential quality of food is to nourish the body and develop it. But this advantage can be had only when food is allowed to be assimilated. If a person vomits what he eats after every meal, his food cannot profit him in any way. Just as, keeping such a person in view, one cannot say that food is not nutritious for the body, because so-and-so is becoming a skeleton in spite of eating food, so can no one present the example of an unrighteous offerer of the Prayer and say that the Prayer does not restrain from the evils, because so-and-so is unrighteous in spite of his Prayer. Just as about such a person it will be apt to say that he does not offer the Prayer at all, so about the person who vomits everything he eats, it will be apt to say that he does not eat his food at all.

Precisely the same thing has been reported from the Holy Prophet and some great Companions and their followers. 'Imrān bin Ḥusain reports that the Holy Prophet said: "He Whose Prayer did not restrain him from the evil and indecent acts, offered no Prayer at all." (Ibn Abī Ḥātim). Ibn 'Abbās has reported the Holy Prophet as saying: "The Prayer which did not restrain a person from the evil and indecent acts, led him further away from Allah." (Ibn Abī Hātim, Ṭabarānī). A *Ḥadīth* containing the same theme has been reported by Ḥasan Baṣri directly from the Holy Prophet (Ibn Jarīr, Baihaqi). Another Ḥadīth reported on the authority of Ibn Mas'ūd is to the effect: "He who did not obey the Prayer, offered no Prayer at all, and obedience to the Prayer is that one should refrain from the evil and indecent acts." (Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Ḥātim). Several sayings to the same effect have been reported on the authority of 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, Ḥasan Baṣri, Qatādah and A'amash, etc. Imam Ja'far Ṣādiq has said: "He who wants to know whether his Prayer has been accepted or not, should see how far his Prayer has restrained him from the evil and indecent acts. If he has been restrained from the evils, his Prayer has been accepted." *(Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī).*

79. This can have several meanings: (1) "That the remembrance of Allah (i.e. Prayer) is a thing of much higher value: it not only restrains from the evils, but, over and above that, it induces people to act righteously and urges them to

excel one another in good acts," (2) "that Allah's remembrance in itself is a great thing: it is the best of acts: no act of man is greater in value than this.' (3) "that Allah's remembrance of you is a greater thing than your remembrance of Him. Allah has said in the Qur'ān: "So remember Me: I will remember you'." (Al-Baqarah: 156). Thus, when the servant remembers Allah in the Prayer, inevitably Allah also will remember him, and the merit of Allah's remembering the servant is certainly greater than the servant's remembering Allah. Besides these three meanings, there is another subtle meaning also, which the wife of Ḥaḍrat Abud-Dardā' has explained. She says, "Allah's remembrance is not restricted to the Prayer, but, its sphere is much vaster. When a man observes a fast, or pays the *Zakāt*, or performs a righteous act, he inevitably remembers Allah. That is why the righteous act emanates from him. Likewise, when a man refrains from an evil act when an opportunity exists for it, even this also is the result of Allah's remembrance. Thus, the remembrance of Allah pervades the entire life of a believer."

80. It should be noted that a little below in this Sūrah the people are being exhorted to migrate. At that time Ḥabash was the only place of safety to which the Muslims could migrate, and Ḥabash in those days was under the domination of the Christians. Therefore, in these verses the Muslims are being instructed as to how they should argue and discuss matters concerning religion with the people of the Book when such an occasion arises.

81. That is, "The discussion should be conducted rationally, in a civilized and decent language, so that the ideas of the other person may be reformed. The preacher's chief aim should be to appeal to the addressee's heart, convey the truth to him and bring him to the right path. He should not fight like a wrestler whose only object is to defeat his opponent. He should rather conduct himself like a physician who is ever cautious not to cause the patient's ailment to worsen by any of his own mistakes, and tries to cure him with the least possible trouble. This instruction has been given here especially in connection with the conduct of a discussion with the people of the Book, but is a general instruction pertaining to the preaching of the religion and it has been given at several places in the Qur'ān. For example, "O Prophet, invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and excellent admonition and discuss things with the people in the best manner." (An-Naḥl: 125). "O Prophet, goodness and evil are not alike. Repel evil with what is best. You will see that he, with whom you had enmity, has become your closest friend.' (Ḥā Mīm As-Sajdah: 34). "O Prophet, repel evil with what is best: We are fully aware of what they utter against you." (Al-Mu'minūn: 96) "O Prophet, adopt the way of leniency and forbearance; enjoin what is good and avoid useless discussions with the ignorant people. If Satan ever excites you to anger, seek refuge in Allah." (Al-A'rāf: 199-200).

82. That is, "With those who adopt an attitude of wickedness a different attitude may also be adopted according to the nature and extent of their wickedness. In other words, one cannot, and should not adopt a soft and gentle attitude towards all sorts of the people under all circumstances at all time, which might be mistaken for the weakness and meekness of the inviter to the Truth. Islam does teach its followers to be polite, gentle and reasonable, but it does not teach them to be unduly humble and meek so that they are not taken for granted by every cruel and wicked person."

83. In these sentences Allah Himself has provided guidance to the best method of discussion, which the inviters to the Truth should adopt. The method is this: "Do not make the error or deviation of the other person the basis and starting point of the discussion, but begin the discussion with those points of truth and justice which are common between you and your opponent. That is, the discussion should start from the points of agreement and not from the points of difference. Then, arguing from the agreed points, the addressee should be made to understand that, in the matter of the things in which you differ, your stand is in conformity with the agreed points whereas his stand is contradictory to them

In this connection, one should bear in mind the fact that the people of the Book did not deny Revelation, Prophethood and *Tauhīd*, like the polytheists of Arabia, but believed in these realities just like the Muslims. After agreement on these basic things, the main thing that could become the basis of difference between them could be that the Muslim would not believe in the Divine Scriptures sent down to them and would invite them to believe in the Divine Book sent down to themselves, and would declare them disbelievers if they did not believe in it. This would have been a strong basis of their conflict. But the Muslims had a different stand. They believed as true all those Books that were with the people of the Book, and then also had believed in the Revelation that had been sent down to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him). After this it was for the people of the Book to tell the rational ground for which they believed in one Book sent by Allah and rejected the other. That is why Allah here has instructed the Muslims that whenever they have to deal with the people of the Book, they should first of all present before them this very point of view in a positive manner. Say to them: "We believe in the same God in Whom you believe and we are obedient to Him. We have submitted ourselves to all those Commands and injunctions and teachings that have come from Him, whether they were sent down to you, or to us. We are obedient servants of God and not of a country or a community or a race, that we should submit to God's Command when it is sent down in one place and reject it when it is sent down in another place. This thing has been repeated at several places in the Qur'ān and particularly in relation to the people of the Book, it has been presented forcefully. For this,see Al-Baqarah: 4,

136, 177, 285; Āl-i-'Imrān: 84; An-Nisā': 136, 150 to 152, 162 to 164; Ash-Shu'arāa: 13.

84. This can have two meanings: (1) "Just as We had sent down the Books to the former Prophets, so We have sent down this Book to you"; and (2) "We have sent down this Book with the teaching that it should be believed in not by rejecting Our former Books but by affirming faith in all of them."

85. The context itself shows that this does not imply all the people of the Book but only those who were blessed with the right understanding and the knowledge of the Divine Scriptures, and were "the people of the Book" in the true sense. When this last Book of Allah came before them, confirming His earlier Books, they did not show any stubbornness or obstinacy but accepted it sincerely as they had accepted the previous Books.

86. "These people": the people of Arabia. What it means to say is: The truth-loving people, whether they already possess a Divine Book or do not possess any, are affirming faith in it everywhere.

87. Here, "the disbelievers" imply those people who are not prepared to give up their prejudices and accept the truth, or those who reject the truth because they do not want their lusts and their unbridled freedom to be subjected to restrictions.

88. This is the same argument that has already been given in Sūrahs Yūnus and Qaṣaṣ as a proof of the Holy Prophet's Prophethood. (See E.N. 21 of Yūnus and E.N.'s 64 and 109 of Al-Qaṣaṣ. For further explanation, see E.N. 107 of An-Naḥl, E.N. 105 of Banī Isrā'īl, E.N. 66 of Al-Mu'minūn, E.N. 12 of Al-Furqān, and E.N. 84 of Ash-Shu'arāa).

The basis of the argument in this verse is that the Holy Prophet was unlettered. His compatriots and his kinsmen among whom he had spent his whole life, from birth to old age, knew fully well that he had never read a book nor ever handled a pen. Presenting this actual fact Allah says: "This is a proof of the fact that the vast and deep knowledge of the teachings of the Divine Books, of the stories of the former Prophets, of the beliefs of the various religions and creeds, of the histories of the ancient nations, and the questions of social and moral and economic life, which is being presented through this unlettered, illiterate man, could not have been attained by him through any means but Revelation. If he had been able to read and write and the people had seen him reading books and undertaking serious studies, the worshippers of falsehood could have had some basis for their doubts, that he had acquired the knowledge not through Revelation but through study and reading. But the fact of his being absolutely illiterate has left no basis whatever for any such doubt. Therefore, there can be no ground, except sheer

stubbornness, which can be regarded as rational in any degree for denying his Prophethood."

89. That is, "The presentation of a Book like the Qur'ān by an unlettered person, and the manifestation by him, all of a sudden, of extraordinary qualities of character while nobody ever noticed him making any preparation for these previously, are in fact the clearest Signs which serve as pointers to his Prophethood for those who are possessed of knowledge and wisdom." If one reviews the life-story of any great historical personage, one can always discover the factors in his environment, which moulded his personality and prepared him for the excellences and qualities that emanated from him in life. There always exists a clear relationship between his environment and the component aspects of his personality. But no source whatever can be discovered in his environment of the wonderful qualities and excellences that the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (may Allah's peace be upon him) displayed. In his case, neither in the contemporary Arab society nor in the society of the neighbouring countries with which Arabia had any relations can one discover those factors which could have any remote relationship with the component aspects of the Holy Prophet's personality. This is the reality on whose basis it has been asserted here that the Holy Prophet Muḥammad's personality is not one Sign but a collection of many clear Signs. An ignorant person may not see any of these Signs but those who are possessed of knowledge have become convinced in their hearts by seeing these Signs that he is most certainly a true Prophet of Allah.

90. That is, miracles by seeing which one may be convinced that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is really a Prophet of Allah.

91. That is, "A Book like the Qur'ān has been sent down to you in spite of your being unlettered. Is it not by itself a great miracle which should convince the people of your Prophethood? Do they yet need another miracle after this? The other miracles were the miracles for those who witnessed them. But this miracle is ever present in front of them. It is being recited before them almost daily; they can witness it as and when they like."

Even after such an assertion and argument by the Qur'ān the audacity of those who try to prove that the Holy Prophet was literate is astonishing. The fact, however, is that the Qur'ān here has presented in clear terms the Holy Prophet's being illiterate as a strong proof of his Prophethood. The traditions which lend support to the claim that the Holy Prophet could read and write, or had learnt reading and writing later in life, stand rejected at first glance, for no tradition opposed to the Qur'ān can be acceptable. Then these traditions in themselves are too weak to become the basis for an argument. One of these is a tradition from

[Contd. on p. 676

السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۙ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا بِالْبَاطِلِ وَكَفَرُوْا بِاللّٰهِ ۙ اُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ
الْخٰسِرُوْنَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَيَسْتَعْجِلُوْنَكَ بِالْعَذَابِ ۭ وَلَوْلَآ اَجَلٌ مُّسَمًّى لَّجَاۗءَهُمُ
الْعَذَابُ ۭ وَلَيَاْتِيَنَّهُمْ بَغْتَةً وَّهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿٥٣﴾ يَسْتَعْجِلُوْنَكَ بِالْعَذَابِ ۭ
وَاِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ لَمُحِيْطَةٌۢ ۙ بِالْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿٥٤﴾ يَوْمَ يَغْشٰىهُمُ الْعَذَابُ مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ وَ
مِنْ تَحْتِ اَرْجُلِهِمْ وَيَقُوْلُ ذُوْقُوْا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾ يٰعِبَادِيَ الَّذِيْنَ
اٰمَنُوْٓا اِنَّ اَرْضِيْ وَاسِعَةٌ فَاِيَّايَ فَاعْبُدُوْنِ ﴿٥٦﴾ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَاۗىِٕقَةُ الْمَوْتِ ۚ
ثُمَّ اِلَيْنَا تُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ لَنُبَوِّئَنَّهُمْ مِّنَ الْجَنَّةِ
غُرَفًا تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا ۭ نِعْمَ اَجْرُ الْعٰمِلِيْنَ ﴿٥٨﴾ الَّذِيْنَ
صَبَرُوْا وَعَلٰي رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُوْنَ ﴿٥٩﴾ وَكَاَيِّنْ مِّنْ دَاۗبَّةٍ لَّا تَحْمِلُ رِزْقَهَا ڰ اَللّٰهُ
يَرْزُقُهَا وَاِيَّاكُمْ ۡ وَهُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَلَىِٕنْ سَاَلْتَهُمْ مَّنْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَالْاَرْضَ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ لَيَقُوْلُنَّ اللّٰهُ ۚ فَاَنّٰى يُؤْفَكُوْنَ ﴿٦١﴾ اَللّٰهُ
يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَّشَاۗءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهٖ وَيَقْدِرُ لَهٗ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ
عَلِيْمٌ ﴿٦٢﴾ وَلَىِٕنْ سَاَلْتَهُمْ مَّنْ نَّزَّلَ مِنَ السَّمَاۗءِ مَاۗءً فَاَحْيَا بِهِ الْاَرْضَ مِنْۢ
بَعْدِ مَوْتِهَا لَيَقُوْلُنَّ اللّٰهُ ۭ قُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ ۭ بَلْ اَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٦٣﴾ وَمَا
هٰذِهِ الْحَيٰوةُ الدُّنْيَآ اِلَّا لَهْوٌ وَّلَعِبٌ ۭ وَاِنَّ الدَّارَ الْاٰخِرَةَ لَهِيَ الْحَيَوَانُ ۘ
لَوْ كَانُوْا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٦٤﴾ فَاِذَا رَكِبُوْا فِي الْفُلْكِ دَعَوُا اللّٰهَ مُخْلِصِيْنَ لَهُ الدِّيْنَ ۚ
فَلَمَّا نَجّٰىهُمْ اِلَى الْبَرِّ اِذَا هُمْ يُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿٦٥﴾ لِيَكْفُرُوْا بِمَآ اٰتَيْنٰهُمْ ۙ وَلِيَتَمَتَّعُوْا ۣ
فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾ اَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا اَنَّا جَعَلْنَا حَرَمًا اٰمِنًا وَّيُتَخَطَّفُ النَّاسُ مِنْ
حَوْلِهِمْ ۭ اَفَبِالْبَاطِلِ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ وَبِنِعْمَةِ اللّٰهِ يَكْفُرُوْنَ ﴿٦٧﴾ وَمَنْ اَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ

وقف لازم

These people wish that you hasten the torment on them.[93] Had a time not been fixed for it, the torment would already have overtaken them. And most certainly it shall come (at the appointed time) suddenly while they would least expect it. They challenge you to hasten the torment, whereas Hell has encircled the disbelievers, (and they will know of it) on the Day when the torment will cover them from above them as well as from beneath their feet, and will say, "Now taste your own misdeeds." 53-55

O My servants, who have believed, My earth is vast: so worship Me alone.[94] Every living being has to taste death: then, ultimately you shall all be returned to Us.[95] Those who have believed and done good works, We shall lodge them in the high palaces of Paradise, beneath which canals will be flowing: therein they shall live for ever. What an excellent reward for the doers (of good)[96] for those who have shown patience[97] and put full trust in their Lord![98] How many creatures are there that do not carry their provisions with them: Allah provides for them and for you too: He hears everything and knows everything.[99] 56-60

If you ask them,[100] "Who has created the earth and the heavens and Who has subjected the moon and the sun?" they will surely say, "Allah." How are they then being deceived? Allah it is Who gives abundantly to those of His servants He pleases and sparingly to those He wills. Surely Allah knows everything. If you ask them, "Who sent down rainwater from the sky and thereby raised the dead earth back to life?" they will surely say, "Allah!" Say, "Praise be to Allah!"[101] Yet most of them do not use their common sense. 61-63

And the life of this world is nothing but a sport and a pastime![102] The home of real life is the Hereafter. Would that they knew![103] When they board the ship, they invoke Allah, making their Faith pure for Him only; then, when He brings them safe to land, they start committing *shirk* that they may show ingratitude to Him for safe deliverance and enjoy (the life of this world).[104] Well, they will soon come to know. Do they not see that We have made a safe Sanctuary, while the people are snatched away from all around them?[105] Do they yet believe in falsehood and deny the favours of Allah ? 64-67

Contd. from p.675]

Bukhārī that when the peace treaty of Ḥudaibiya was being written down, the representative of the disbelievers of Makkah objected to the word *Rasūl Allah* being added to the name of the Holy Prophet. At this the Holy Prophet ordered the writer (Ḥaḍrat 'Alī) to cross out the word *Rasūl-Allah* and write Muhammad bin 'Abdullah instead. Ḥaḍrat 'Ali refused to cross out *Rasūl-Allah*. Then the Holy Prophet took it in his own hand, struck out the word himself and wrote Muḥammad bin 'Abdullah.

But this tradition from Bāra' bin 'Āzib appears at four places in Bukhārī and at two places in Muslim and everywhere in different words:

(1) At one place in Bukhārī *(Kitāb-us-Ṣulh)* the words of this tradition are to the effect: "The Holy Prophet told Ḥaḍrat 'Alī to strike out the words. He submitted that he could not do that. At last, the Holy Prophet crossed them out with his own hand."

(2) In the same book the second tradition is to the effect: "Then he (the Holy Prophet) said to 'Alī: Cross out Rasūl-Allah. He said: By God, I shall never cross out your name. At last, the Holy Prophet took the document and wrote: This is the treaty concluded by Muḥammad bin 'Abdullah."

(3) The third tradition, again from Barā' bin 'Āzib is found in *Kitāb-ul-Jizia* in Bukhārī to the effect: "The Holy Prophet himself could not write. He said to 'Ali: Cross out *Rasūl-Allah*. He submitted: By God, I shall never cross out these words. At this, the Holy Prophet said: Show me the place where these words are written. He showed him the place, and the Holy Prophet crossed out the words with his own hand."

(4) The fourth tradition is in Bukhārī's *Kitāb-ul-Maghāzī* to the effect: "So the Holy Prophet took the document although he did not know writing, and he wrote: This is the treaty concluded by Muhammad bin 'Abdullah."

(5) Again from Barā' bin 'Āzib there is a tradition in Muslim *(Kitāb-ul-Jihād)* saying that on Ḥaḍrat 'Ali's refusal the Holy Prophet himself wiped off the words *Rasūl-Allah."*

(6) The second tradition from him in the same book says, "The Holy Prophet said to 'Alī: Show me where the word *Rasūl Allah* is written. Ḥaḍrat 'Alī showed him the place, and he wiped it off and wrote Ibn 'Abdullah.

The disparity in the traditions clearly indicates that the intermediary reporters have not reported the words of Ḥaḍrat Barā' bin 'Āzib (may Allah be pleased with him) accurately. Therefore, none of these reports can be held as perfectly reliable so that it could be said with certainty that the Holy Prophet had written the words "Muḥammad bin 'Abdullah" with his own hand. Probably when

Ḥaḍrat 'Ali refused to wipe off the word *Rasūl-Allah*, the Holy Prophet might have himself wiped it off after finding out the place where it was written, and then might have got the word Ibn 'Abdullah substituted by him or by some other writer. Other traditions show that there were two writers who were writing down the peace treaty; Ḥaḍrat 'Ali and Muḥammad bin Maslamah (*Fatḥ al-Bārī*, Vol. V, p. 217). Therefore, it is not impossible that what one writer did not do was got done by the other writer. However, if the Holy Prophet actually wrote his name with his own hand, there are plenty instances of this in the world. The illiterate people learn to write their own name although they cannot read or write anything else.

The other tradition on whose basis it has been claimed that the Holy Prophet was literate, has been reported by Ibn Abī Shaibah and 'Umar bin Shabbah from Mujāhid. It says: "The Holy Prophet had learnt reading and writing before his death." But, in the first place, it is a weak tradition on account of its links as said by Ḥāfiz Ibn Kathīr: "It is weak: it has no basis." Secondly, it is weak otherwise also, for if the Holy Prophet had really learnt reading and writing later in life, it would have become a well known fact. Many of the Companions would have reported it, and it would also have been known from which person (or persons) he had learnt this. But no one except one man, 'Aun bin 'Abdullah, from whom Mujāhid heard this, has reported it. And this 'Aun was not even a Companion,. but a follower of the Companions, who does not at all tell from which Companion (or Companions) he got this information. Evidently, on the basis of such weak traditions nothing which contradicts well known facts can become acceptable.

92. That is, "The revelation of this Book is, without any doubt, a great bounty of Allah, and it contains great admonitions for the people. But only those people can benefit by it, who believe in it."

93. That is, "They are challenging you again and again that If you are a true messenger and they are really denying the Truth, then you should not delay the torment with which you threaten them."

94. This is an allusion to the Hijrah, which implies this: if you feel that it is becoming difficult to worship God in Makkah, you may leave it and move to another place where you can live as the true servants of God, for God's earth is vast. You should serve Allah and not your nation and country." This shows that the real thing is not the nation and the home and the country but the worship of Allah. If at some time the demands of the nation and country's love clash with the demands of Allah's worship, it is the time of trial for the believer's faith. The true believer will worship Allah and spurn the nation and the country and home. The false claimant to the Faith will abandon the Faith and remain clinging to his nation

فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِالْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُ ۚ أَلَيْسَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ مَثْوًى لِّلْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٦٨﴾
وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا ۚ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٦٩﴾

68-69 Who would be more wicked then he who forges a lie against Allah, or denies the Truth when it has reached him?[106] Is not Hell the fit abode for such disbelievers? Those who will strive in Our cause, We shall guide them to Our own paths,[107] and surely Allah is with the righteous.

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and his country and home. This verse is clearly indicative of the fact that a true worshipper of God can be a patriot but he cannot be a worshipper of the nation and the country. For him the worship of God is the dearest thing in life for the sake of which he will sacrifice everything else, but with never be prepared to sacrifice it for anything else.

95. That is, "Do not be anxious for your life: one has to die sooner or later. No one has come to live for ever in this world. Therefore, your real problem is not how to save life, but your real problem is how to save your Faith, and fulfil the requirements of God-worship. You have ultimately to return to Us. If you lost your faith for the sake of saving your life the result in the Hereafter will be different, but if you lost your life for the sake of saving your faith the result will be just the opposite. Therefore, you should be anxious only about what you will bring when you return to Us. Will you come with a faith sacrificed for the sake of life, or a life sacrificed for the sake of the faith?"

96. That is, "Even if you remained deprived of all the worldly blessings because of your faith and righteousness and ended up as a total failure from the worldly point of view, you should rest assured that you will be compensated for it; and not only compensated but rewarded excellently."

97. "Who . . . patience": who remained steadfast in faith in the face of hardships and afflictions and losses and persecutions; who have endured the consequences of the faith and have not turned away; who have seen the advantages and benefits of abandoning the faith and have not been lured away by them; who have seen the disbelievers and the wrongdoers prosper in the world and have not cast even a stray glance at their wealth and splendour."

98. "Put . . . Lord": Who did not put their trust in their possessions and their business and their clans and tribes but in their Lord; who were prepared to fight every power and endure every danger for the sake of their faith only on the

basis of their trust in their Lord irrespective of the worldly means, and left their homes if their faith so demanded; who trusted their Lord that He would not let go waste the rewards of their faith and good works, and were sure that He would succour His believers and righteous servants even in this world and bless them with the best rewards in the Hereafter as well.

99. That is, "While migrating you should not be worried about your means of livelihood as you should not worry about your life's safety. For none of the birds and the animals of the land and the sea that you find around yourself carries its provision with it. Allah is providing for all of them; wherever they go they get their provision through Allah's bounty. Therefore, do not be disheartened by the thought that if you left your homes for the sake of your faith, you would have nothing to eat. Allah will provide for you as well from the sources from which He is providing for the countless of His other creatures."

Precisely the same thing was taught by the Prophet Jesus (may Allah's peace be upon him) to his disciples when he had said:

"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." (Matt. 6: 24-34).

The background of these discourses of the Qur'ān and the Gospel is the same. There always comes a stage in the way of the propagation of the Truth when the follower of the Truth is left with no alternative but to stake his very life only with trust in Allah, regardless of the support and means of the material world. In these conditions, those who are too calculating about the possibilities of the future

and seeking guarantees of the saftey of life and assurance of provisions cannot do anything. Indeed, such conditions are changed only by the efforts and power of those who rise fearlessly in face of every danger and are even prepared to risk their very lives. It is all due to their sacrifices that ultimately the Word of Allah is raised high and all other words and creeds stand humbled and subdued before it.

100. From here the discourse is again directed to the disbelievers of Makkah.

101. Here the word *al-hamdu-lillah* (Praise be to Allah) gives two meanings: (1) "When all this is done by Allah, then He alone is worthy of all praise, and none else", and (2) "Thank God that you yourselves also admit this."

102. That is "The reality of it is no more than the children's engaging in a sport and pastime for a while, and then returning home. The one has become a king here, has not become a king in reality but is only playing the king. A time comes when his play ends, and he leaves the royal throne as empty-handed as he was when he had entered the world. Similarly, no phase of life here is enduring and lasting. Every one is playing his part only temporarily for a limited time. Those who are charmed by the short-lived triumphs of this life and are able to collect some means of enjoyment and pleasure and of glory and grandeur by losing their conscience and faith, are only engaged in a pastime. What will these toys profit them when after amusing themselves with these for a score or three score and ten years in the world they will enter through the gate of death empty-handed into the Next World of eternal life and find their same allurements to have caused them an everlasting affliction ?"

103. That is, "If these people had known the reality that the life of this world is only a period of preparation for the test, and the real life for man, which is everlasting, is the life hereafter, they would not have wasted this preparatory period in sport and merry-making, but would instead have utilized each moment of it in works conducive to better results in the eternal life of the Hereafter."

104. For explanation, see E.N.'s 29 and 41 of Sūrah Al-An'ām; E.N.'s 29 and 31 of Sūrah Yūnus and E.N. 84 of Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl.

105. That is, Has the City of Makkah, in whose surroundings they enjoy perfect saftey and security, been made a sacred place by some Lāt or Hubal? Was it possible for a god or goddess to have secured this place against all sorts of mischief and violence for 2,500 years or so, in a strife-ridden land like Arabia? Who could then keep and maintain its sacredness and sanctity except Us?"

106. That is, "The Prophet has made a claim to Prophethood, and you have denied him. Now there can be only two alternatives: If the Prophet has made

a false claim in the name of Allah, there can be no one more wicked than he, and if you have belied a true Prophet, there can be no one more wicked than you."

107. The word mujāhadah has already been explained in E.N. 8 above. There it was said that a person who exerts will exert for his own good (v. 6.). Here it is being reassured that Allah does not leave alone those who strive in His cause sincerely, even at the risk of a conflict with the entire world, but He helps and guides them and opens for them ways towards Himself. He teaches them at every step the way of winning His approval and good-will and He shows them the light at every turning point to discriminate between the Right Way and the wrong ways of life. In short, Allah helps and succours and guides them according to their sincerity and intensity of desire for goodness.



XXX
AR-RŪM
الرُّوم

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XXX

AR-RŪM

الرُّوم

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name Ar-Rūm from the second verse in which the words *ghulibat-ir-Rūm* have occurred

Period of Revelation

The period of the revelation of this Sūrah is determined absolutely by the historical event that has been mentioned at the outset. It says: "The Romans have been vanquished in the neighboring land." In those days the Byzantine occupied territories adjacent to Arabia were Jordan, Syria and Palestine, and in these territories the Romans were completely overpowered by the Iranians in 615 A.D. Therefore, it can be said with absolute certainty that this Sūrah was sent down in the same year, and this was the year in which the migration to Ḥabash took place.

Historical Background

The prediction made in the initial verses of this Sūrah is one of the most outstanding evidences of the Qur'ān's being the Word of Allah and the Holy Prophet Muḥammad's being a true Messenger of Allah. Let us have a look at the historical background relevant to the verses.

Eight years before the Holy Prophet's advent as a Prophet the Byzantine Emperor Maurice was overthrown by Phocus, who captured

the throne and became king. Phocus first got the Emperor's five sons executed in front of him, and then got the Emperor also killed and hung their heads in a thoroughfare in Constantinople. A few days after this he had the empress and her three daughters also put to death. The event provided Khusrau Parvez, the Sassanid king of Iran, a good moral excuse to attack Byzantium. For Emperor Maurice had been his benefactor; with his help he had got the throne of Iran. Therefore, he declared that he would avenge his godfather's and his children's murder upon Phocus, the usurper. So, he started war against Byzantium in 603 A.D. and within a few years, putting the Phocus armies to rout in succession, he reached Edessa (modern, Urfa) in Asia Minor, on the one hand, and Aleppo and Antioch in Syria, on the other. when the Byzantine ministers saw that Phocus could not save the country, they sought the African governor's help, who sent his son, Heraclius, to Constantinople with a strong fleet. Phocus was immediately deposed and Heraclius made emperor. He treated Phocus as he had treated Maurice. This happened in 610 A.D., the year the Holy Prophet was appointed to Prophethood.

The moral excuse for which Khusrau Parvez had started the war was no more valid after the deposition and death of Phocus. Had the object of his war really been to avenge the murder of his ally on Phocus for his cruelty, he would have come to terms with the new Emperor after the death of Phocus. But he continued the war, and gave it the colour of a crusade between Zoroastrianism and Christianity. The sympathies of the Christian sects (i.e. Nestorians and Jacobians, etc.) which had been excommunicated by the Roman ecclesiastical authority and tyrannized for years also went with the Magian (Zoroastrian) invaders, and the Jews also joined hands with them; so much so that the number of the Jews who enlisted in Khusrau's army rose up to 26,000.

Heraclius could not stop this storm. The very first news that he received from the East after ascending the throne was that of the Iranian occupation of Antioch. After this Damascus fell in 613 A.D. Then in 614 A.D. the Iranians occupying Jerusalem played havoc with the Christian world. Ninety thousand Christians were massacred and the Holy Sepulchre was desecrated. The Original Cross on which, according to

the Christian belief, Jesus had died was seized and carried to Madā'in. The chief priest Zachariah was taken prisoner and all the important churches of the city were destroyed. How puffed up was Khusrau Parvez at this victory can be judged from the letter that he wrote to Heraclius from Jerusalem. He wrote: "From Khusrau, the greatest of all gods, the master of the whole world: To Heraclius, his most wretched and most stupid servant: 'You say that you have trust in your Lord. Why didn't then your Lord save Jerusalem from me?"

Within a year afterthis victory the Iranian armies overran Jordan, Palestine and the whole of the Sinai Peninsula, and reached the frontiers of Egypt. In those very days another conflict of a far greater historical consequence was going on in Makkah. The believers in One God, under the leadership of the Prophet Muḥammad (may Allah's peace be upon him), were fighting for their existence against the followers of *shirk under* the command of the chiefs of the Quraish, and the conflict had reached such a stage that in 615 A.D., a substantial number of the Muslims had to leave their homes and take refuge with the Christian kingdom of Ḥabash, which was an ally of the Byzantine Empire. In those days the Sassanid victories against Byzantium were the talk of the town, and the pagans of Makkah were delighted and were taunting the Muslims to the effect: "Look ! the fire-worshippers of Iran are winning victories and the Christian believers in Revelation and Prophethood are being routed everywhere. Likewise, we, the idol-worshippers of Arabia, will exterminate you and your religion."

These were the conditions when this Sūrah of the Qur'ān was sent down, and in it a prediction was made, saying: "The Romans have been vanquished in the neighbouring land and within a few years after their defeat, they shall be victorious. And it will be the day when the believers will rejoice in the victory granted by Allah." It contained not one but two predictions: First, the Romans shall be victorious; and second, the Muslims also shall win a victory at the same time. Apparently, there was not a remote chance of the fulfilment of the either prediction in the next few years. On the one hand, there were a handful of the Muslims, who were being beaten and tortured in Makkah, and even till eight years after this prediction there appeared no chance of

their victory and domination. On the other, the Romans were losing more and more ground every next day. By 619 A.D. the whole of Egypt had passed into Sassanid hands and the Magian armies had reached as far as Tripoli. In Asia Minor they beat and pushed back the Romans to Bosphorus, and in 617 A.D. they captured Chalcedon (modern, Kadikoy) just opposite Constantinople. The Emperor sent an envoy to Khusrau, praying that he was ready to have peace on any terms, but he replied, "I shall not give protection to the emperor until he is brought in chains before me and gives up obedience to his crucified god and adopts submission to the fire-god." At last, the Emperor became so depressed by defeat that he decided to leave Constantinople and shift to Carthage (modern, Tunis). In short, as the British historian Gibbon says, even seven to eight years after this prediction of the Qur'ān, the conditions were such that no one could even imagine that the Byzantine Empire would ever gain an upper hand over Iran. Not to speak of gaining domination, no one could hope that the Empire, under the circumstances, would even survive.[1]

When these verses of the Qur'ān were sent down, the disbelievers of Makkah made great fun of them, and Ubayy bin Khalaf bet Hadrat Abū Bakr ten camels if the Romans became victorious within three years. When the Holy Prophet came to know of the bet, he said, "The Qur'ān has used the words *bid'i sinīn*, and the word *bid'* in Arabic applies to a number upto ten. Therefore, make the bet for ten years and increase the number of camels to a hundred." So, Ḥadrat Abu Bakr spoke to Ubayy again and bet a hundred camels for ten years.

In 622 A.D. as the Holy Prophet migrated to Madīnah, the Emperor Heraclius set off quietly for Trabzon from Constantinople via the Black Sea and started preparations to attack Iran from rear. For this he asked the Church for money, and Pope Sergius lent him the Church collections on interest, in a bid to save Christianity from Zoroastrianism. Heraclius started his counter attack in 623 A.D. from Armenia. Next year, in 624 A.D, he entered Azerbaijan and destroyed Clorumia, the

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1. Gibbon: *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Vol. II, p. 788, Modern Library, New York.

birth-place of Zoroaster, and ravaged the principal fire-temple of Iran. Great are the powers of Allah! This was the very year when the Muslims achieved a decisive victory at Badr for the first time against the *mushriks*. Thus both the predictions made in Sūrah Rūm were fulfilled simultaneously within the stipulated period of ten years.

The Byzantine forces continued to press the Iranians hard and in the decisive battle at Nineveh (627 A.D.) they dealt them the hardest blow. They captured the royal residence of Dastagerd, and then pressing forward reached right opposite to Ctesiphon, capital of Iran in those days. In 628 A.D. in an internal revolt, Khusrau Parvez was imprisoned and 18 of his sons were executed in front of him and a few days later he himself died in the prison. This was the year when the peace treaty of Hudaibiya was concluded, which the Qur'ān has termed as "the supreme victory", and in this very year Khusrau's son, Qubād II, gave up all the occupied Roman territories, restored the True Cross and made peace with Byzantium. In 628 A.D., the Emperor himself went to Jerusalem to instal the "Holy Cross" in its place, and in the same year the Holy Prophet entered Makkah for the first time after the *Hijrah* to perform the *'Umra-tul-Qadā'*.

After this no one could have any doubt about the truth of the prophecy of the Qur'ān, with the result that most of the Arab polytheists accepted Islam. The heirs of Ubayy bin Khalaf lost their bet and had to give a hundred camels to Ḥaḍrat Abu Bakr Ṣiddiq. He took them before the Holy Prophet, who ordered that they be given away in charity, because the bet had been made at a time when gambling had not yet been forbidden by the *Sharī'ah;* now it was forbidden. Therefore, the bet was allowed to be accepted from the belligerent disbelievers, but instruction given that it should be given away in charity and should not be brought in personal use.

Theme and Subject-matter

The discourse begins with the theme that the Romans have been overcome and the people the world over think that the empire is about to collapse, but the fact is that within a few years the tables will be turned and the vanquished will again become victorious.

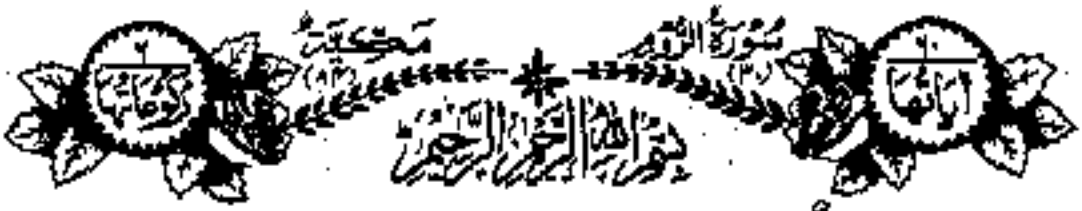
This introductory theme contains the great truth that man is accustomed to seeing only what is apparent and superficial. That which is behind the apparent and superficial he does not know. When in the petty matters of life, this habit to see only the apparent and superficial can lead man to misunderstandings and miscalculations, and when he is liable to make wrong estimates only due to lack of knowledge about "what will happen tomorrow", how stupendous will be his error if he risks his whole life-activity by placing reliance only upon what is visible and apparent with respect to his worldly life as a whole!

Then, from the question of the conflict between Byzantium and Iran the direction of the discourse turns to the theme of the Hereafter, and as far as verse 27, man has been made to understand in different ways that the Hereafter is possible as well as rational and necessary; then for the sake of keeping the system of his life also stable and balanced it is absolutely necessary that he should plan and order his present life on the faith in the Hereafter; otherwise he will commit the same error as has always been the result of placing one's reliance only upon the apparent and the visible.

In this connection, the Signs of the universe which have been presented as evidence to prove the doctrine of the Hereafter are precisely the same which support the doctrine of *Tauhīd*. Therefore from verse 28 onward, the discourse turns to the affirmation *of Tauḥīd* and the refutation of *shirk*, and it is stressed that the natural way of life for man is none else but to serve One God exclusively. *Shirk is* opposed to the nature of the universe as to the nature of man. Therefore, whenever man has adopted this deviation, chaos has resulted. Again here, an allusion has been made to the great chaos that had gripped the world on account of the war between the two major powers of the time, and it has been indicated that this chaos too, is the result of *shirk*, and all the nations who were ever involved in mischief and chaos in the history of mankind were also *mushriks.*

In conclusion, a parable has been presented to make the people understand that just as dead earth comes to life, all of a sudden, by a shower of rain sent by God and swells with vegetation and plant life, so

is the case with the dead humanity. When God sends a shower of His mercy in the form of Revelation and Prophethood, it also gives a new life to mankind and causes it to grow and develop and flourish. Therefore: "If you take full advantage of this opportunity, the barren land of Arabia will bloom by Allah's mercy and the whole advantage will be yours. But if you do not take advantage of it, you will harm only yourselves. Then no regret will avail and no opportunity will be provided to make amends.



الٓمّٓ ﴿١﴾ غُلِبَتِ الرُّوْمُ ﴿٢﴾ فِيْٓ اَدْنَى الْاَرْضِ وَهُمْ مِّنْۢ بَعْدِ غَلَبِهِمْ سَيَغْلِبُوْنَ ﴿٣﴾
فِيْ بِضْعِ سِنِيْنَ ۭ لِلّٰهِ الْاَمْرُ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَمِنْۢ بَعْدُ ۭ وَيَوْمَىِٕذٍ يَّفْرَحُ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٤﴾
بِنَصْرِ اللّٰهِ ۭ يَنْصُرُ مَنْ يَّشَاۗءُ ۭ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿٥﴾ وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ ۭ لَا يُخْلِفُ
اللّٰهُ وَعْدَهٗ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٦﴾ يَعْلَمُوْنَ ظَاهِرًا مِّنَ الْحَيٰوةِ
الدُّنْيَا ۡ وَهُمْ عَنِ الْاٰخِرَةِ هُمْ غٰفِلُوْنَ ﴿٧﴾ اَوَلَمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوْا فِيْٓ اَنْفُسِهِمْ ۭ مَا
خَلَقَ اللّٰهُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَآ اِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَاَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۭ
وَاِنَّ كَثِيْرًا مِّنَ النَّاسِ بِلِقَاۗئِ رَبِّهِمْ لَكٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿٨﴾ اَوَلَمْ يَسِيْرُوْا فِي الْاَرْضِ
فَيَنْظُرُوْا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۭ كَانُوْٓا اَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً وَّ
اَثَارُوا الْاَرْضَ وَعَمَرُوْهَآ اَكْثَرَ مِمَّا عَمَرُوْهَا وَجَاۗءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ ۭ
فَمَا كَانَ اللّٰهُ لِيَظْلِمَهُمْ وَلٰكِنْ كَانُوْٓا اَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُوْنَ ﴿٩﴾ ثُمَّ كَانَ عَاقِبَةَ
الَّذِيْنَ اَسَاۗءُوا السُّوْٓآٰى اَنْ كَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ وَكَانُوْا بِهَا يَسْتَهْزِءُوْنَ ﴿١٠﴾
اَللّٰهُ يَبْدَؤُا الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيْدُهٗ ثُمَّ اِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿١١﴾ وَيَوْمَ تَقُوْمُ السَّاعَةُ
يُبْلِسُ الْمُجْرِمُوْنَ ﴿١٢﴾ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَّهُمْ مِّنْ شُرَكَاۗىِٕهِمْ شُفَعٰٓؤُا وَكَانُوْا
بِشُرَكَاۗىِٕهِمْ كٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿١٣﴾ وَيَوْمَ تَقُوْمُ السَّاعَةُ يَوْمَىِٕذٍ يَّتَفَرَّقُوْنَ ﴿١٤﴾ فَاَمَّا
الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ فَهُمْ فِيْ رَوْضَةٍ يُّحْبَرُوْنَ ﴿١٥﴾ وَاَمَّا الَّذِيْنَ

XXX
AR-RŪM

الرُّوم

Verses: 60 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

Alif. Lām. Mīm. The Romans have been overcome in the neighboring land and within a few years after their defeat, they shall be victorious.[1] Allah's is the authority before as well as afterwards.[2] And it will be the day when the believers will rejoice in the victory granted by Allah.[3] Allah helps whomsoever He wills: He is the All-Mighty, the All-Merciful. This is Allah's promise: Allah never breaks His promise; but most people do not know. 1-6

The people only know the outward aspect of the worldly life, and of the Hereafter they are heedless.[4] Have they never reflected in their own selves?[5] Allah has created the earth and the heavens and all that lies between them, with the truth, and only for an appointed term;[6] but most people disbelieve in the meeting with their Lord.[7] And have they never travelled in the earth that they could see the end of those who have gone before them?[8] They were mightier than these in strength: they tilled the land[9] and built more on it than these people have.[10] Their Messengers came to them with clear Signs;[11] then it was not Allah Who was unjust to them, but it was they who were being unjust to themselves.[12] At last, evil was the end of those who had committed evil because they had denied the Revelations of Allah and scoffed at them. 7-10

Allah originates the creation; then He it is Who will repeat it,[13] and then to Him you will be returned. And when the Hour[14] is established, the criminals will be dumb-founded;[15] none of those whom 11-16

they have set up as associates (with Allah) will intercede for them,[16] and they will even disown their associates.[17] The Day the Hour is established, (mankind) on that Day will be separated into groups.[18] Those who have believed and done good works, will be kept in a Garden,[19] happy and rejoicing;[20] and those who have disbelieved and rejected Our Revelations and the meeting of the Hereafter, will be presented for punishment.

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1. From what Ibn 'Abbās and the other Companions and their followers have said, it appears that the Muslims' sympathies in this war between Byzantium and Iran were with Byzantium and of the disbelievers of Makkah with Iran. This had several reasons. First, the Iranians had given it the colour of a crusade between Magianism and Christianity, and, apart from the object of political conquest, they were making it a means of spreading Magianism. In the letter that Khusrau Parvez wrote to the Emperor Heraclius after the conquest of Jerusalem, he had clearly mentioned his victory as a proof of the truth of Magianism. In principle, the Magian creed resembled the polytheistic creed of the people of Makkah, because the Magis too, were disbelievers of *Tauḥīd* they believed in two gods and worshipped the fire. That is why the *mushriks* of Makkah were in sympathy with them. Contrary to them, the Christians, however corrupted their monotheism might be, still regarded belief in One God as the basis of religion, believed in the Hereafter and admitted Revelation and Prophethood as the source of guidance. Thus, their religion in principle resembled Islam, and therefore, the Muslims were naturally in sympathy with them, and could not like that a polytheistic people should dominate them. Secondly, the people who believe in a previous Prophet before the advent of a new Prophet are naturally regarded and counted as Muslims until the message of the new Prophet reaches them and they clearly discard it. (Please see E.N. 73 of Sūrah Al-Qaṣaṣ also). At that time only five to six years had passed since the Holy Prophet's advent as a Prophet and his message had not yet reached outside Arabia. Therefore, the Muslims did not look upon the Christians as disbelievers, but they certainly regarded the Jews as disbelievers because they had rejected the Prophet Jesus (may peace be upon him) to be a Prophet. Thirdly, the Christians from the very beginning had been treating the Muslims with sympathy as already mentioned above in Al-Qaṣaṣ: 52-55, and in Al-Mā'idah: 82-85, and many of them were even accepting the message of the Truth with an open heart. Then, the way the Christian king of Ḥabash had given refuge to the Muslims on their migration there and turned down the demand of the disbelievers of Makkah to return them, also required that the Muslims should wish the Christians well as against the Magians.

2. That is, "When the Iranians became victorious first, it did not mean that the Lord of the worlds, God forbid, had been humbled and when the Romans will gain victory afterwards, it will not mean that Allah's lost kingdom will be restored to Him. Sovereignty in any case belongs to Allah. Allah gave victory to the side that became victorious first, and Allah will give victory to the side that will gain victory after wards. For no one in his Kingdom can achieve domination solely by his own power. He whom He raises, rises and he whom He causes to fall, falls."

3. Ibn 'Abbās, Abu Sa'īd Khudrī, Sufyān Thauri;, Suddī and others have stated that the Romans' victory against the Iranians and the Muslims' victory at Badr against the polytheists took place almost at the same time. The Muslims, therefore, were doubly pleased. The same is supported by the histories of Byzantium and Iran. 624 A.D. is the year in which the Battle of Badr was fought and the same is the year in which the Byzantine Emperor destroyed the birth-place of Zoroaster and ravaged the principal fire-temple of Iran.

4. That is, "Although there are plenty of Signs and evidences which point to the Hereafter, and there is no reason why one should be heedless of it, yet the people are being heedless of it due to their own short-sightedness. They only see the apparent and the outward aspect of the worldly life and are unaware of what is hidden behind it; otherwise there has been no slackness on the part of God to warn them of it."

5. This in itself is a strong argument for the Hereafter. It means this: "If these people had reflected over their own selves, apart from the external phenomena, they would have found in themselves the arguments which prove the necessity of a second life after the present life. There are three special characteristics of man which distinguish him from the other creations on the earth: (1) The earth and the countless things around it have been subjected for him, and he has been granted vast powers to exploit them. (2) He has been life free to choose a way of life for himself. He can follow the way of belief or disbelief, obedience or sin, virtue or vice, as he likes. Any way of life, right or wrong, that he chooses, he is helped to follow it and allowed to use and exploit all the means and resources provided by God, whether the way chosen is of God's obedience or of His disobedience. (3) An innate moral sense has been placed in him, by which he discriminates between the voluntary and the involuntary actions; he judges the voluntary acts as good and bad, and decides spontaneously that a good act ought to be rewarded and an evil act ought to be punished.

These three characteristics which are found in man's own self serve as a pointer to the fact that there must be a time when man should be called to account for his deeds, when he should be asked how he used the powers delegated to him over what he had been given in the world, when it should be seen whether he had

adopted the right way or the wrong way by use of the freedom of choice given to him, when his voluntary acts should be judged, and good acts be rewarded and evil acts punished. This time inevitably can come only after man's life-activity has ceased and the account-book of his actions closed, and not before it. And this time should necessarily come only when the account-book of not one man or of one nation but of all mankind has closed. For on the passing away of one man or of one nation the influence that he or it has generated by his or its acts does not cease to operate. The good or bad influence left by him should also be credited to his account. How can accountability be carried out and full rewards and punishments given with justice unless the influences are allowed to run their full course? Thus, man's own self testifies that the position he occupies in the world by itself demands that after his present life there should be another life when a Court should be established, his life-record examined justly and every person rewarded or punished according to his deeds.

6. In this sentence, two more arguments have been given for the Hereafter. It says that if man makes a deep observation of the system of the universe, he will see two things very outstanding about it: First, that the universe has been created with the truth. It is not a plaything of a child, which he might have made to amuse himself, and whose making and un-making might be meaningless. But it is a serious system whose every particle testifies that it has been created with great wisdom, its each component has a law underlying it, and everything in it has a purpose behind it. Man's whole social and economic life and all his sciences and arts are a witness that whatever man has done in the world became possible only because he was able to discover the laws working behind everything and the purpose for which it was made. Had he been placed as a puppet in a lawless and purposeless toy-house, no science and no civilization and social life could be conceived. Now, how does it stand to reason that the Wise Being Who has created this world with such wisdom and design and Who has placed in it a creation like man, who is endowed with great mental and physical capabilities, powers and authority, freedom of action and choice, moral sense and entrusted with unlimited means and resources of the world, would have created him without a purpose and design ? That man would live a full life involving both goodness and evil, justice and injustice, virtue and vice, and end up in the dust, and his good and evil acts will not bear any fruit ? That each act of man will influence his own life as well as the lives of thousands of other men like himself and countless other things in the world, for good or for evil, and the whole record of his life-activity will be just set aside after his death, without accountability?

The other thing that becomes apparent after a deep observation of the system of the universe is that nothing here is immortal. Everything has an age appointed for it after attaining which it dies and expires, and the same is the case

with the universe as a whole. All the forces that are working here are limited. They can work only till an appointed term and they have inevitably to run out in time, and this system has to end. In the ancient days the philosophers and scientists who said that the world was eternal and everlasting could have their way, due mainly to lack of knowledge. But modern science almost definitely has cast its vote in favour of the God-worshippers in the debate that had been going on since centuries between them and the atheists regarding the eternal and the temporal nature of the world. Now the atheists are left with no leg to stand on. They cannot claim on the basis of reason and knowledge that the world has existed since eternity and will exist for ever and there is going to be no resurrection. The ancient materialistic creed rested on the belief that matter was indestructible, only its form could be changed, but after every change matter remained matter and no increase or decrease occurred in its quantity. Therefore, it was inferred that this material world had neither a beginning nor an end. But now the discovery of the atomic energy has demolished the entire materialistic edifice. Now it has come to light that energy changes into matter, and matter changes back into energy with the result that nothing persists, neither form nor appearance. The Second Law of Thermodynamics has proved that this material world has neither existed since eternity nor will last till eternity. It certainly began in time and has to end in time. Therefore, it is no longer possible to deny the Hereafter even according to science. And obviously, when science has surrendered, how will philosophy stand to deny the Hereafter?

7. "Disbelieve...meeting": disbelieve that they have to appear before their Lord after death.

8. This is an historical argument for the Hereafter. It means this: "The Hereafter has not been denied only by a couple of the people in the world, but a large number of them have been involved in this disbelief in human history. Even there have been entire nations which either denied it altogether or lived heedless of it, or invented such false beliefs about life-after-death as rendered the concept of the Hereafter meaningless. Then the continuous experience of history reveals that in whatever form the Hereafter has been denied, its inevitable result has been that the people became corrupted morally, they lived irresponsible lives they transgressed all limits of tyranny and wickedness, which became the cause of the destruction of one nation after the other. Does not this experience of thousands of years of history, which has been faced by human generations successively, prove that the Hereafter is a reality whose denial is fatal to man? Man has come to believe in gravitation only because he has always experienced and seen material things falling to the ground. He has recognized poison to be poison only because whoever took poison died. Similarly, when the denial of the Hereafter has always led to the corruption of morals for man, is not this experience enough to teach the

lesson that the Hereafter is a reality, and to live one's life heedless of it is dangerous?

9. The words athār-ul- ard in the original may either mean to plough the land for cultivation, or to dig the earth for taking out canals, underground water channels, minerals, etc.

10. This contains an answer to the argument of those who regard mere material progress as the sign of a nation's being righteous. They argue like this: "How is it possible that Allah will make fuel of Hell those people who have exploited the resources of the earth on such a large scale, who have constructed wonderful works on the earth and given birth to grand civilizations?" The Qur'ān refutes this argument, thus: "Such works of construction have been built before also by many nations on a large scale. Then, have you not seen that those nations have perished along with their civilization and their grand and magnificent "works"? There is no reason why the Law of God that has so treated in the world the mere material progress of a people lacking the right belief and conduct, will not treat them likewise in the Next World and make them fuel of Hell."

11. That is, "They came with such Signs as were sufficient for anyone to be convinced of their being the true Prophets." The mention of the coming of the Prophets in this context implies this: "On the one hand, there are evidences in man's own self, and in the universe around him, and in the continuous experience of human history, and, on the other, there also came such Prophets, one after the other, who showed clear Signs of their being true Prophets and warned (the people) that the Hereafter is sure to come."

12. That is, "The destruction that overtook those nations afterwards was not due to Allah's being unjust to them but due to the injustice they had done to themselves. The person (or persons) who neither thinks rightly himself nor adopts the right attitude by listening to others, will be himself responsible for his evil end if he meets destruction. God cannot be blamed for this, for God has not only made arrangements for conveying to man the knowledge of the reality through His Books and His Prophets, but also blessed man with the intellectual resources and powers by exploiting which he can always judge the authenticity of the knowledge brought by the Prophets and the Divine Books. Had God deprived man of this guidance and these resources and he had to meet with the consequences of following a wrong way then doubtlessly could God have been blamed for injustice."

13. Though this thing has been put forward as a claim, it contains the basis of the claim too. Commonsense testifies that the One Who can originate creation, can reproduce the same creation far more easily. The origination of the creation is

an actuality, which exists before everybody, and the disbelievers and the *mushriks* also admit that this is the work of Allah alone. Now it will be clearly absurd on their part to think that God Who has originated this creation, cannot reproduce it."

14. "The Hour": the Hour of returning to Allah and appearing before Him.

15. The word *iblās* in the Text means to be dumbfounded on account of a sudden shock and despair, to be confounded on finding one-self in a hopeless situation, to stand aghast on finding no means of help and support. When this word is used for a culprit, it depicts a person who is caught red-handed, who then finds no way to escape, nor expects to save himself by offering a plea in self-defense; therefore, he stands dumb and dejected and depressed.

One should also understand that "the criminals" here does not only imply those people, who have committed murders and thefts and robberies, etc. in the world, but all those who have rebelled against God, refused to accept the guidance and teachings of His Messengers, denied the accountability of the Hereafter, or lived heedless of it, and have been worshipping others than God in the world, or their own selves, whether or not, besides this basic deviation, they also committed those acts, which are commonly called crimes. Besides, it includes those people also, who in spite of believing in God and His Messengers and the Hereafter, have knowingly disobeyed their Lord and persisted in their rebellious conduct till the end. When these people will suddenly come back to life in the Hereafter, against their expectations, and will find that they are confronted with the second life, which they had denied, or ignored, in their life-activity in the world, they will stand dumbfounded as has been depicted in the words: *yublisul-mujrimūn*.

16. "Associates" *(shurakā')* includes three kinds of beings:

(1) The angels, prophets, saints, martyrs and the righteous men, to whom the polytheists assigned divine attributes and powers in different ages and whom they worshipped as gods. On Resurrection Day, they will say to their worshippers, "You did whatever you did without our consent, rather against our teachings and guidance. Therefore, we have nothing to do with you. Do not place any hope in us that we will intercede for you before Allah Almighty."

(2) Inanimate things like the moon, the sun, the planets, trees, stones, animals, etc. The polytheists worshipped them as gods, prayed to them, but the poor things themselves were unaware that the vicegerent of Allah was worshipping them so humbly and devotedly. Evidently, none of these also will come forward to intercede for him.

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كَفَرُوْا وَكَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا وَلِقَآءِ الْاٰخِرَةِ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ فِي الْعَذَابِ مُحْضَرُوْنَ ﴿١٦﴾
فَسُبْحٰنَ اللّٰهِ حِيْنَ تُمْسُوْنَ وَحِيْنَ تُصْبِحُوْنَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَالْاَرْضِ وَعَشِيًّا وَّحِيْنَ تُظْهِرُوْنَ ﴿١٨﴾ يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَيُخْرِجُ
الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَيُحْيِ الْاَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا ۭ وَكَذٰلِكَ تُخْرَجُوْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ وَمِنْ
اٰيٰتِهٖٓ اَنْ خَلَقَكُمْ مِّنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ اِذَآ اَنْتُمْ بَشَرٌ تَنْتَشِرُوْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهٖٓ
اَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِّنْ اَنْفُسِكُمْ اَزْوَاجًا لِّتَسْكُنُوْٓا اِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَّوَدَّةً
وَّرَحْمَةً ۭ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّتَفَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهٖ خَلْقُ السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَالْاَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافُ اَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَاَلْوَانِكُمْ ۭ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّلْعٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَ
مِنْ اٰيٰتِهٖ مَنَامُكُمْ بِالَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَابْتِغَاۗؤُكُمْ مِّنْ فَضْلِهٖ ۭ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ
لِّقَوْمٍ يَّسْمَعُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهٖ يُرِيْكُمُ الْبَرْقَ خَوْفًا وَّطَمَعًا وَّيُنَزِّلُ مِنَ
السَّمَاۗءِ مَاۗءً فَيُحْيٖ بِهِ الْاَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا ۭ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ
يَّعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهٖٓ اَنْ تَقُوْمَ السَّمَاۗءُ وَالْاَرْضُ بِاَمْرِهٖ ۭ ثُمَّ اِذَا دَعَاكُمْ
دَعْوَةً ۖ مِّنَ الْاَرْضِ ۖ اِذَآ اَنْتُمْ تَخْرُجُوْنَ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَلَهٗ مَنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۭ
كُلٌّ لَّهٗ قٰنِتُوْنَ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِيْ يَبْدَؤُا الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيْدُهٗ وَهُوَ اَهْوَنُ عَلَيْهِ ۭ
وَلَهُ الْمَثَلُ الْاَعْلٰى فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۚ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿٢٧﴾ ضَرَبَ لَكُمْ
مَّثَلًا مِّنْ اَنْفُسِكُمْ ۭ هَلْ لَّكُمْ مِّنْ مَّا مَلَكَتْ اَيْمَانُكُمْ مِّنْ شُرَكَاۗءَ فِيْ مَا رَزَقْنٰكُمْ
فَاَنْتُمْ فِيْهِ سَوَاۗءٌ تَخَافُوْنَهُمْ كَخِيْفَتِكُمْ اَنْفُسَكُمْ ۭ كَذٰلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ الْاٰيٰتِ
لِقَوْمٍ يَّعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ بَلِ اتَّبَعَ الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْٓا اَهْوَاۗءَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ ۚ فَمَنْ
يَّهْدِيْ مَنْ اَضَلَّ اللّٰهُ ۭ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِّنْ نّٰصِرِيْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾ فَاَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّيْنِ

So,[22] glorify Allah[23] in the evening and in the morning: praise is due to Him alone in the heavens and the earth; and (glorify Him) in the afternoon and at the declining of the day.[24] He brings out the living from the dead and the dead from the living, and gives life to the earth after its death.[25] Likewise, you too, shall be taken out (of the state of death). 17-19

Of His[26] Signs is this that He has created you from dust; then behold, you are men who are multiplying (in the earth).[27] 20

And of His Signs is this that He has created for you wives from your own species[28] that you may find peace with them,[29] and created love and mercy between you.[30] Surely in this there are many Signs for those who reflect. 21

And of His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth[31] and the difference of your tongues and colours.[32] Surely in this there are many Signs for the learned. 22

And of His Signs is your sleep by night and by day and your seeking of His bounty.[33] Surely in this there are many Signs for those who pay heed. 23

And of His Signs is this that He shows you the lightning, for fear as well as for hope,[34] and He sends down rainwater from the sky and thereby gives life to the earth after its death.[35] Surely in this there are many Signs for those who use their common sense. 24

And of his Signs is this that the Heaven and the Earth stand firm by His Command ;[36] then as soon as He summons you out of the earth, you shall come out at one call.[37] Whoever exist in the heavens and the earth, are His servants; all are obedient to Him.He it is Who originates the creation; then He alone will repeat it, and this is easier for Him.[38] His are the most exalted attributes in the heavens and the earth, and He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise. 25-27

He draws[39] out a comparison for you from your own selves: Are there among the slaves that you possess any such slaves also who may be sharing with you equally the wealth that We have given you, and you fear them as you fear one another among yourselves ?[40]--Thus do We present the Revelations clearly for those who use their common sense. But the wrongdoers are following their own desires, without any 28--29

knowledge. Now, who can guide the one whom Allah has led astray?[41] Such people can have no helper.

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(3) The arch-criminals, who by deception and fraud, or by use of force, compelled the servants of God to worship them, e.g. Satan, false religious guides, and tyrants and despots. They themselves will be in trouble there. Not to speak; of interceding for others, they will rather try to prove before God that their worshippers and followers were themselves responsible for their crimes, and therefore, they should not be made to bear the burden of their deviation. Thus, the polytheists there will not get any intercession from anywhere.

17. That is, "The polytaeists will themselves admit that they had wrongly held them associates of God. They will realize that none of them really had any share in Godhead. Therefore, in the Hereafter they will disown the *shirk* on which they insist in the world."

18. That is, "All communities and groups that have been formed in the world on the basis of race, country, language, tribe and clan, and economic and political interests, will break, and the people will be re-grouped on the basis of true belief, morality and character. On the one hand, all the believing and righteous people will be separated from all the nations of mankind and put in one group, and on the other, people professing every false ideology and committing every kind of crime in the world will be sorted out severally from the multitudes of mankind and put into separate groups. In other words, the thing which Islam regards as the real basis of separation and union in the world and which the worshippers of ignorance refuse to accept, will become the basis of separation and union in the Hereafter. Islam says that the real thing which joins men together or divides them is the belief and morality. Those who believe and build the system of life on Divine guidance are one community, whether they belong to any race, any country and any region. The two cannot belong to one nation. They can neither walk together on a common path of life in the world, nor can meet with the same end in the Hereafter. From the world to the Hereafter they tread separate paths and have separate destinations. Contrary to this, the worshippers of falsehood have been insisting in every age, and still insist, that mankind should be classified and grouped on the bases of race and country and language. The people who have a common race and country and language should constitute a separate nation, regardless of their religion and belief, and should offer a common front against the other similar nations. And this nation should have such a system of life which should bind the followers of *Tauhīd* and the polytheists and the atheists together. The same was the concept of Abū Jahl and Abū Lahab and the chiefs of the

Quraish. That is why they accused the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may Allah's peace be upon him) again and again of having stirred up divisions in their nation. That is why the Qur'ān is warning that the groups made in the world on wrong bases will ultimately break and mankind will be permanently divided on the basis of the belief and the philosophy of life and morality and character on which Islam wants to build it in the world. The people who do not have a common destination cannot follow a common way of life.

19. "A Garden": A garden of bliss and perfect happiness as a reward and source of everlasting joy.

20. The word *yuhbarūn* in the original implies this: "They will be lodged in it with honour, will remain happy and be provided with every kind of pleasure."

21. One thing here is noteworthy. "Good works" have been mentioned as a necessary adjunct of the "faith", which will earn one the blissful Garden, but no mention has been made of the "evil acts" while mentioning the evil end of "disbelief". This clearly indicates that disbelief by itself is enough to mar the destiny of a person, whether it is accompanied by the evil act or not.

22. "So", here, implies: "When you have come to know the good results of belief and righteous acts and the evil consequences of disbelief and denial of the Truth, you should adopt the following conduct." It also means: "By holding the life Hereafter to be impossible, the polytheists and disbelievers are, in fact, holding Allah to be helpless. Therefore, as against them, you should glorify Allah, and proclaim that He is free from this weakness." This Command has been addressed to the Holy Prophet and through him to all the believers.

23. "To glorify Allah" means to proclaim Allah's being free from and exalted above the defects and faults and weaknesses, which the *mushriks* ascribe to Him due to their *shirk* and denial of the Hereafter. The best form of this proclamation and expression is the Prayer. That is why Ibn 'Abbās, Mujāhid, Qatādah, Ibn Zaid and other commentators say that here "to glorify" means to offer the prescribed Prayer. A clear indication in favour of this commentary is contained in the verse itself. It lays down certain definite times for the glorification of Allah. Evidently, if it was meant to instil the belief that Allah is free from all defects and weaknesses, there should be no question of the restriction of the times of the morning and evening, and the early and late afternoon, for a Muslim should always have this belief. Similarly, if it was meant to teach glorifying Allah merely verbally, it should be meaningless to specify the times, for a Muslim should express Allah's glory at all times. Therefore, inevitably the Command to glorify Allah with the restriction of the times points to its particular practical form which is none other than the Prayer.

24. This verse clearly points to the times of the *Fajr* (morning), *Maghrib (evening), 'Asr* (late afternoon) and the *Zuhr* (early afternoon) Prayers. Besides this, the other allusions made to the times of the Prayer in the Qur'ān are as follows:

"Establish the *Ṣalāt* from the declining of the sun to the darkness of the night, and be particular about the recital of the Qur'ān at dawn." (Banī Isrā'īl 78)

"Establish the *Ṣalāt* at the two ends of the day and in the early part of the night." (Hūd: 114).

"And glorify your Lord with His praise before the rising of the sun and before its setting, and glorify Him again during the hours of the night and at the extremes of the day." (Ṭā Hā: 130)

The first of these verses tells that the times of the Prayer are from the declining of the sun to the darkness of the night ('Ishā') after which is the time of the morning Prayer *(Fajr)*. In the second verse, the '"two ends of the day" imply the times of the morning *(Fajr)* and the evening *(Maghrib)* Prayers, and "in the early part of the night" implies the time of *'Ishā'*. In the third verse, "before the rising of the sun" implies the *Fajr* time and "before its setting" the *'Asr* time, and "during the hours of the night" implies the times of both the *Maghrib* and the 'Ishā' Prayers; and the "extremes of the day" are three: the morning, the declining of the sun and the evening. Thus, the Qur'ān at different places has pointed to the five Prayer times at which the Muslims the world over offer their Prayers. But, obviously, no one by merely reading these verses could have determined the Prayer times unless the divinely appointed teacher of the Qur'ān, the Holy Prophet himself, had given guidance to these by his word and deed.

Let us pause a while here and consider the boldness of the deniers of Hadīth. They make fun of "offering the Prayer", and say that the Prayer that the Muslims offer today is not at all the thing prescribed by the Qur'ān. They assert that the Qur'ānic injunction to establish the *Salāt* does not mean the offering of the Prayer but establishing the *Nizām-i-Rubūbiyat* (Order of Providence). Ask them: "What is that novel order of Providence which can either be established before the rising of the sun or after the declining of the sun till the early hours of the night? And what is that order of Providence which is required to be established especially on Fridays? ("O believers when you hear the call to the Friday Prayer, hasten to the remembrance of Allah".--(LXII: 9). And what is that special kind of the order of Providence for establishing which one has first to wash one's face and the hands up to the elbows and the feet up to the ankles and wipe one's head with wet hands, otherwise one will not establish it ? ("O believers, when you stand up to offer the *Ṣalāt,* you must wash your faces and your hands and arms up to the elbows, and

wipe your heads with wet hands."--(V: 6). And what is this peculiarity of this order of Providence that one cannot establish it unless one has completely washed oneself after sexual intercourse? ("O believers, do not offer the Prayer . . . if you are unclean until you take your bath, except when passing on the way."--(IV: 433) And what is this odd thing that if one has touched the women, one will have to strike one's hands on pure dust and wipe thereby one's face and hands in case one does not find water, for the purpose of establishing this strange order of Providence ? (" . . . or if you have touched women and you can find no water, then cleanse yourselves with pure dust: strike your palms on it and wipe your hands and faces with it."--(IV: 43). And what is this amazing order of Providence that while on a journey one should establish only half of it? ("When you go on a journey, there is no harm if you shorten the *Ṣalāt.*"--(IV: 101) Then, what an odd thing that during a war half of the soldiers should fall out, carrying their weapons, in order to establish the order of Providence behind the *Imām*, and the other half should stick to their positions and continue fighting the enemy; when the first group has performed one *sajdah* behind the *Imām* in its effort to establish the "order of Providence" it should go to relieve the other group, which should fall out and start establishing the "order of Providence" behind the *Imām*? ("And when you, O Prophet, are among the Muslims and are going to lead them in *Ṣalāt* (in a state of war), let a party of them stand behind you, carrying their weapons with them. When they have made their prostrations, they should fall back, and let another party of them, who have not yet offered their Salāt say it with you."--(IV : 102)

All these verses of the Qur'ān clearly indicate that to establish the Salāt implies the Prayer that the Muslims offer everywhere in the world today. But the deniers of *Ḥadīth* seem to be bent upon changing the Qur'ān instead of changing themselves. The fact is that unless a person becomes wholly fearless of Allah, he cannot dare play with His Word as these people do. Or, only such a person can engage in a pastime like this with respect to the Qur'ān who believes it is not Allah's Word, but intends to mislead the Muslims in the name of the Qur'ān. (See also E.N. 50 below in this connection).

25. That is ."How can that God Who is doing all this perpetually in front of your eyes, be helpless in raising man to life after death? He is causing absolutely dead matter to be discharged from living men and animals. He is ever bringing into existence countless animals and human beings by breathing life into dead matter, whereas the substances themselves which make up the bodies of the living beings are absolutely without life He is making you witness the phenomenon that wherever water becomes available, lands previously lying barren start blooming and blossoming with animal and vegetable life. In spite of witnessing all this if a person thinks that the God Who is sustaining the universe

will be helpless to raise man back to life after death, he is wholly devoid of the common sense. His mind's eyes do not see the clear realities gleaming from the manifestations which his head's eyes see."

26. It should be noted that from here to the end of verse 27, the Signs of Allah that are being mentioned point, on the one hand, to the possibility and occurrence of the life hereafter, in the context of the foregoing discourse, and on the other, the same Sings also point to the reality that this universe is neither God-less nor under many gods, but One God alone is its Creator, Disposer, Master and Ruler, except for Whom there should be no other deity of man. Thus, this section (vv.20-27) is fully well connected with the discourse preceding it and the discourse following it.

27. That is. "The stuff from which man has been created is nothing but a few dead substances which are found in the earth, like carbon, calcium, sodium and a few other elements like them. With their combination a wonderful being, called man, has been raised up, and in him have been placed great powers of sentiments, consciousness, imagination, none of which can be traced back to any of the constituent substances of his physical being. Then, not only has just one man so risen up by a mere accident, but in him has also been placed that wonderful procreative power by which millions and billions of human beings are coming continuously into being bearing the same physical structure and capabilities and possessing countless hereditary and personal characteristics. Therefore, O man! Does your intellect approve that this extremely wise creation has come into being of itself without the creative power of a Wise Creator? Can you say, being in your senses, that making a wonderful design of the creation of man and bringing it into effect and rendering the countless powers of the earth and heavens favourable and subservient to human life could be the result of the thinking and design of many gods? And will you be in your right senses when you think that the God Who has brought man into being from absolute nothingness, will not be able to raise the same man back to life after giving him death?"

28. That is, "The Creator's perfect wisdom is such that He has not created man in one sex only but in two sexes, which are identical in humanity, which have the same basic formula of their figure and form, but the two have been created with different physical structures, different mental and psychological qualities, and different emotions and desires. And then there has been created such a wonderful harmony between the two that each is a perfect counterpart of the other. The physical and psychological demands of the one match squarely with the physical and psychological demands of the other. Moreover, the Wise Creator is continuously creating the members of the two sexes in such a proportion since the dawn of the creation that in no nation and in no region has it ever happened that only boys or only girls may have been born. This is one thing in which human

intelligence has absolutely no part to play. Man cannot at all influence the course of nature according to which girls continue to be born with the feminine qualities and the boys with the masculine qualities, which are perfectly complimentary to each other, nor has he any means by which he may change the proportion in which men and women continue to be born everywhere in the world. The working of this system and arrangement so harmoniously and perpetually in the birth of millions and billions of human beings since thousands of years cannot be accidental either, nor the result of the common will of many gods. This is a clear indication of the reality that One Wise Creator and One only, in the beginning made a most appropriate design of a man and a woman by His Infinite Wisdom and Power and then made arrangements that precisely in accordance with that design countless men and countless women should be born along with their separate individual qualities in the right proportion."

29. That is, "This system has not come about by chance, but the Creator has brought it about deliberately with the object that the man should find fulfilment of the demands of his nature with the woman and the woman with the man, and the two should find peace and satisfaction in association and attachment with each other. This is the wise arrangement which the Creator has made the means of the survival of the human race, on the one hand, and of bringing the human civilization into existence, on the other. If the two sexes had been created on different patterns and designs, and the state of agitation which changes into peace and tranquillity only through union and attachment between the two had not been placed in each, the human race might have survived like sheep and goats, but there was no possibility of the birth of a civilization. Contrary to all other species of animal life, the fundamental factor that has helped create human civilization is that the Creator by His wisdom has placed a desire and a thirst and a longing in the two sexes for each other, which remains unsatisifed unless the two live in complete attachment and association with each other. This same desire for peace and satisfaction compelled them to make a home together. This same desire brought families and clans into being, and this same desire made social life possible for man. In the development of social life man's mental capabilities have certainly been helpful, but they were not its real motives. The real motivating force was the same longing with which man and woman were endowed and which compelled them to establish the "home". Can anyone possessed of common sense say that this masterpiece of wisdom has come about by chance through the blind forces of nature? Or, that it has been arranged so by many gods, and countless men and women have been continuously coming into being with the same natural longing since thousands of years? This is a Sign of the wisdom of One Wise Being, and of One only, which the people devoid of common sense only can refuse to acknowledge.

30. "Love" here means sexual love, which becomes the initial motive for attraction between man and woman, and then keeps them attached to each other. "Mercy" implies the spiritual relationship which gradually develops in the matrimonial life, by virtue of which they become kinder, affectionate and sympathetic towards each other; so much so that in old age, sexual love falls into the background and the two partners in life prove to be even more compassionate towards each other than they were when young. These two are the powerful forces which the Creator has created in man to support the initial longing of [illegible]. That longing and restlessness only seeks peace and satisfaction and brings the man and the woman into contact with each other. After that these two forces emerge and bind the two strangers brought up in different environments so intimately together that the two remain attached to each other through every thick and thin of life. Evidently, this love and mercy which is being experienced by millions and millions of people in their lives, is not anything material, which may be weighed and measured, nor can it be traced back to any of the constituent elements of human body, nor the cause of its birth and growth found out in a laboratory. The only explanation of this can be that the human self has been endowed with it by a Wise Creator, Who has done so of His own will to serve a special purpose.

31. That is, "Their coming into existence from nothingness and their being established an eternal law, and the functioning in them of innumerable forces in great harmony and equilibrium, contain many Signs of the reality that One Creator, and One only, has brought the entire universe into existence, and He alone is running this grand system. On the one hand, by reflecting over the origin of the initial energy that assumed the form of matter, then the transformation of the matter into so many elements, then the combination of the elements in a wonderful and wise proportion and coming into being of an awe-inspiring system of the universe, and then the functioning of this system since billions of centuries With such regularity and discipline, every unbiased mind will come to the conclusion that all this could not happen by mere chance, without the all-embracing will of an All-Knowing, All-Wise Creator. Then, on the other hand, if one sees that every thing from the earth to the farthest stars in the universe is made up of the same basic elements and the same law of nature is working in it, every intellect, which is not stubborn, will certainly admit that this cannot be the result of the godhead of many gods but there is One God Who is the Creator and Sustainer of this whole universe."

32. That is, "Although your vocal chords are similar, and there is no difference in the structure of the mouth, the tongue and the brains, yet people speak different languages in different regions of the world. Even in the regions where the same language is spoken different dialects are spoken from city to city and from town to town. Moreover, the accent and pronunciation and the style of

speech of every person is different from the other. Similarly, although the semen and the formula of your physical structure is the same, yet your colours are so different that, nations apart, even the colour of the two sons of the same parents is not exactly the same. In this verse, attention has been drawn only to two aspects, but if one looks around one will notice an infinite variety everywhere in the world. One will find countless differences in the species of man, animal, plants and other things in spite of the basic uniformity in their different members; so much so that no member of the species is exactly identical with the other. Even the two leaves of a tree are not exactly alike. This shows that the world is not a factory in which automatic machines might be working and turning out things in mass production bearing the stamp of their own separate species. But in this factory there is a Master-Artist at work, Who gives individual attention to everything and produces it on a new design with new embellishments and proportions and qualities, and everything thus produced is unique in its own way. His inventive genius is turning out a new model of everything every moment, and His creative power abhors repeating the same design the second time. Anyone who sees this wonderful phenomenon with open eyes, can never be involved in the foolish misconception that the Maker of the universe has gone to sleep after having made it go. This is, on the contrary, a clear proof of the fact that He is ever engaged in His creative activity, and is giving individual attention to each and everything in His creation.

33. "To seek bounty" is to seek the livelihood. Though man generally sleeps at night and works for his living in the day, this is not a law. Many people also sleep in the day and work for their livelihood at night. That is why the night and the day both have been mentioned and it has been said: "In both day and nights you sleep as well as work for your livelihood."

This also is a Sign which points to the design of the Wise Creator. Furthermore, it also points to the fact that He is not merely a Creator but also extremely Compassionate and Merciful to His creations, and is more anxious than the creation to meet its needs and requirements. Man cannot constantly labour but needs to have a rest of a few hours after every few hours of hard work so as to rebuild energy to take up work again. For this purpose, the Wise and Merciful Creator has not rested content with creating a feeling of fatigue and a desire for rest in man, but has placed in his nature a powerful urge for the "sleep", which without his will, even inspite of resistance from him, overpowers him automatically after every few hours of work and wakefulness, and compels him to have a few hours of rest, and leaves him as soon as the need has been fulfilled. Man has so far been unable to understand the naturer and real causes of the sleep. This is something wholly innate, which has been placed in the nature and structure of man. Its being precisely according to the requirements of man is enough to testify that it is not anything accidental, but has been provided by a Wise Being in

accordance with a purpose and plan. It is based on a clear wisdom and reason and purposefulness. Moreover, the sleep itself testifies that the One Who has placed this compulsive urge in man is a greater well wisher of man than man himself, otherwise man would have deliberately resisted the sleep and endeavoured to keep constantly awake and worked continuously hard and thus exhaust not only his work-power but also his vital powers.

Then, by using the word "seeking Allah's bounty" for the seeking of livelihood, allusion has been made to another series of the Signs. How could have man sought and found his livelihood if the innumerable and unlimited forces of the earth and heavens had not been put to work to provide means of the livelihood and supply countless resources for man to seek it in the earth? Not only this. Man could not have exploited these means and resources had he not been given appropriate limbs and suitable physical and mental capabilities for the purpose. Thus the ability in man to seek the livelihood and the presence of the resources of the livelihood outside of him, clearly indicate the existence of a Merciful and Beneficent God. An intellect which is not sick can never presume that all this has happened by chance, or is the manifestation of the godhead of many gods, or some merciless, blind force is responsible for these bounties and blessings.

34. That is, "Its thunder and lightning give hope that rain will come and help the crops, but at the same time they cause a fear that the lightning may strike somewhere, or heavy rain may fall, which may wash away everything."

35. This thing, on the one hand, points to the life hereafter, and on the other, proves that God exists, and there is One God alone, Who is controlling the earth and the heavens. innumerable creatures of the earth live on the products that come out from the earth. These products depend on the productivity of the earth. The productivity depends on the rain, whether it directly falls on the earth, or its water gathers together on the surface of the earth, or takes the form of underground water channels or springs or wells, or freezes on the mountains and then flows down in the form of rivers. Then the rain depends on the heat of the sun, the change of seasons, atmospheric changes in temperature, circulation of the winds, and on the lightning, which causes the rain to fall as well as mixes a kind of natural manure in the rainwater. The establishment of a harmony and proportion between different things existing from the earth to the sky, their becoming favourable and subservient to a variety of aims and objects, and their remaining continuously and constantly favourable in perfect harmony for millions of million years cannot be the product of mere chance. Has it all happened without the all-embracing will and plan and wisdom of a Fashioner and Designer? And is it not a proof of the fact that the Creator and Lord of the earth, the sun, the water, the heat and coolness is One and only One?

36. That is, "Not only have they come into being by His Command, but their continuous existence and the functioning in them of a grand workshop of life constantly is also due to His Command. If His Command does not sustain them even for a moment, the entire system should break down at once."

37. That is, "It is not at all difficult for the Creator and Controller of the universe to raise you back to life; for this He will have to make no preparation. His one call will be enough to raise and muster together from every corner of the earth all human beings who have been born since the beginning of creation and will be born in the future."

38. That is, "If it was not difficult for Him to create you in the first instance, how can it be difficult for Him to re-create you? Your first creation was not difficult for Him because your present existence is a living proof of that. Now it is simple commonsense that the re-making of a thing should be relatively easier for the one who made it for the first time .

39. In the foregoing section, arguments have been given both for *Tauḥīd* and for the Hereafter; now the discourse turns to only *Tauḥīd.*

40. The *mushriks,* even after admitting that Allah is the Creator and Master of the earth and heavens and all that they contain, held some of His creatures as associates in His attributes and powers, and prayed to them, presented offerings and performed rites of worship before them. Their belief regarding their self-made associates is found in the words of the *Talbīh* that they used to pronounce while going round the Ka'bah. They said: "Here I am, O Allah, here I am in Thy presence! Thou hast no partner except the partner who is Thy own. Thou art his owner as well as owner of what he owns." (Ṭabarānī on the authority Ibn 'Abbās) Allah has refuted this kind of *shirk* in this verse. The argument is to this effect: "When you do not make your own slaves partners in your wealth, how do you think and believe that Allah will make His creatures partners in His Godhead?" (For further details, see E.N. 62 of An-Naḥl).

41. That is, "When a person neither thinks on the right lines himself, nor is prepared to listen to a well-wisher, his intellect comes under the curse of Allah. After this everything that can help reasonable person to reach the Truth, only helps this stubborn and ignorant person to be involved more and more deeply in further deviation and error. This is what has been conveyed in the word "leading astray". When a truth-loving person invokes Allah for the grace of guidance, Allah creates for him maximum means of the guidance according to the sincerity of his invocation. And when a strayed person insists on his deviation, Allah creates for him the means which mislead him further and further away from the Truth."

[Contd on p. 714

حَنِيفًا ۚ فِطْرَتَ اللّٰهِ الَّتِيْ فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا ۚ لَا تَبْدِيْلَ لِخَلْقِ اللّٰهِ ۚ ذٰلِكَ
الدِّيْنُ الْقَيِّمُ ۙ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝ 30 مُنِيْبِيْنَ اِلَيْهِ وَاتَّقُوْهُ وَ
اَقِيْمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَلَا تَكُوْنُوْا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ ۝ 31 مِنَ الَّذِيْنَ فَرَّقُوْا دِيْنَهُمْ وَ
كَانُوْا شِيَعًا ۚ كُلُّ حِزْبٍ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ فَرِحُوْنَ ۝ 32 وَاِذَا مَسَّ النَّاسَ ضُرٌّ
دَعَوْا رَبَّهُمْ مُّنِيْبِيْنَ اِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ اِذَآ اَذَاقَهُمْ مِّنْهُ رَحْمَةً اِذَا فَرِيْقٌ مِّنْهُمْ
بِرَبِّهِمْ يُشْرِكُوْنَ ۝ 33 لِيَكْفُرُوْا بِمَآ اٰتَيْنٰهُمْ ۚ فَتَمَتَّعُوْا ۟ فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝ 34 اَمْ اَنْزَلْنَا
عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطٰنًا فَهُوَ يَتَكَلَّمُ بِمَا كَانُوْا بِهٖ يُشْرِكُوْنَ ۝ 35 وَاِذَآ اَذَقْنَا النَّاسَ
رَحْمَةً فَرِحُوْا بِهَا ۚ وَاِنْ تُصِبْهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ ۢ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ اَيْدِيْهِمْ اِذَا هُمْ
يَقْنَطُوْنَ ۝ 36 اَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَيَقْدِرُ ۚ اِنَّ فِيْ
ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يُّؤْمِنُوْنَ ۝ 37 فَاٰتِ ذَا الْقُرْبٰى حَقَّهٗ وَالْمِسْكِيْنَ وَابْنَ
السَّبِيْلِ ۚ ذٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ لِّلَّذِيْنَ يُرِيْدُوْنَ وَجْهَ اللّٰهِ ۖ وَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُوْنَ ۝ 38
وَمَآ اٰتَيْتُمْ مِّنْ رِّبًا لِّيَرْبُوَا۟ فِيْٓ اَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ فَلَا يَرْبُوْا عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ ۚ وَمَآ اٰتَيْتُمْ
مِّنْ زَكٰوةٍ تُرِيْدُوْنَ وَجْهَ اللّٰهِ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْمُضْعِفُوْنَ ۝ 39 اَللّٰهُ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَكُمْ
ثُمَّ رَزَقَكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيْتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيْكُمْ ۚ هَلْ مِنْ شُرَكَآئِكُمْ مَّنْ يَّفْعَلُ مِنْ ذٰلِكُمْ
مِّنْ شَيْءٍ ۚ سُبْحٰنَهٗ وَتَعٰلٰى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُوْنَ ۝ 40 ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا
كَسَبَتْ اَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيْقَهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِيْ عَمِلُوْا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُوْنَ ۝ 41 قُلْ
سِيْرُوْا فِي الْاَرْضِ فَانْظُرُوْا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۚ كَانَ اَكْثَرُهُمْ
مُّشْرِكِيْنَ ۝ 42 فَاَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّيْنِ الْقَيِّمِ مِنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ يَّاْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَّا مَرَدَّ لَهٗ
مِنَ اللّٰهِ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَّصَّدَّعُوْنَ ۝ 43 مَنْ كَفَرَ فَعَلَيْهِ كُفْرُهٗ ۚ وَمَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا

So,[42] (O Propnet and the followers of the Prophet,) set your face sincerely and truly[43] towards this Faith,[44] and be steadfast on the Nature whereupon Allah has created mankind.[45] There can be no alteration in the Nature made by Allah.[46] This is the right and true Faith,[47] but most people do not know. (Be steadfast on this) turning wholly towards Allah,[48] and fear Him,[49] and establish the *Ṣalāt,*[50] and do not be of the *mushriks* who have set up their separate creeds and divided themselves into sects, each sect rejoicing in what it has.[51] 30-32

When an affliction befalls the people, they invoke their Lord, turning penitently towards Him;[52] then when He makes them taste of His Mercy, some of them start committing *shirk*[53] *so* that they may show ingratitude for Our favours. Well, enjoy yourselves, for soon you shall know. Have We sent down to them an authority, which may testify to the truth of the *shirk* they are committing?[54] 33-35

When We make the people taste mercy, they exult at it; and when an affliction befalls them on account of their own misdeeds, they grow despondent.[55] Do they not see that it is Allah Who gives abundantly to whom He wills and sparingly (to whom He wills)? Surely in this there are many Signs for those who believe.[56] Therefore, (O believers,) give to your relative his due, and to the needy and the wayfarer (his due).[57] This is the best way for those who seek Allah's goodwill: such alone will attain true success.[58] The interest that you give in order to increase the wealth of the people, does not increase in the sight of Allah;[59] and the *Zakāt* that you pay in order to win Allah's approval, its payers do indeed increase their wealth.[60] 36-39

Allah[61] it is Who created you, then provided for you,[62] then He causes your death, and then He will bring you back to life. Is there among the associates you have set up (with Allah) anyone who can do any of these things?[63] Glorified is He and far exalted above the *shirk* these people commit. Mischief has appeared in the land and the sea on account of men's own doings that He may make them taste some of their (evil) works: maybe they mend their ways.[64] (O Prophet,) say to them, "Go about in the land and see what has been the end of those who lived before (you). Most of them were *mushriks* (idolaters)."[65] So, (O Prophet,) set your face firmly towards the true Faith before that Day 43-44

arrives of which there is no chance of being averted by Allah.[66] On that Day people will break asunder.

Contd. from 711]

42. This "so" implies that when the reality has become clear to you, and you have come to know that none but Allah is the Creator and Master and Sovereign of this universe and of man himself, then inevitably your conduct should be such as indicated in this verse.

43. "Set your face. .truly": "Do not turn your face to any other direction after you have .adopted this way of life. ' Then you should think like a Muslim and your likes and dislikes should be of a Muslim. Your values and standards should be the ones set by Islam and your character and conduct should bear the stamp of Islam, and the affairs of your individual and collective life should be ordered according to the way taught by Islam."

44. "This Faith": the Faith that the Qur'ān presents, in which none but Allah is .worthy of worship and obedience, in which none can be held as an associate of Allah in His Divinity, in His attributes and His powers and rights, in which man by his own free will chooses to order his life in accordance with the Guidance and Law of Allah.

45. That is, "All human beings have been created on the nature that none but One Allah is their Creator and Lord and Deity. You should be steadfast on this nature. If you adopt the attitude of independence, you will be following a way opposed to your nature, and if you serve and worship another besides Allah, then also you will be working against your nature."

This subject has been explained by the Holy Prophet in a number of *Aḥadīth*. According to Bukhārī and Muslim, the Holy Prophet said: "Every child who is born, is born on true human nature; it is his parents who make him a Jew or a Christian or a Magian, etc. afterwards. Its example is of an animal which gives birth to complete and sound young ones - none is born with torn and cut off ears—but the *mushriks* tear their ears afterwards on account of their superstitions of ignorance."

According to another *Ḥadīth* reported in Musnad Ahmad and Nasā'ī, the Muslims in a war killed even the children of the enemy. When the Holy Prophet came to know of it, he became very angry, and said: "What has happened to the people that they have transgressed the limits and killed even the children?" A man said, "Sir, were they not the children of the *Mushriks?*" The Holy Prophet replied: "Even the best of your people are the children of the *mushriks!*" Then he said:

"Every living being is born on true nature: then when he becomes able to speak, his parents turn him into a Jew or a Christian."

In another *Hadīth* which has been reported by Imām Ahmad on the authority of 'Ayād bin Himār-ul-Mujāshi'ī, it has been related that one day the Holy Prophet said during an address: "My Lord says: I had created all My servants on true Faith; then the satans came and led them astray from their Faith, and made unlawful what I had made lawful for them, and commanded them to associate with Me those for whom I have sent down no authority'."

46. That is, "God has made man His servant and created him only for his own service. This natural disposition of man cannot be altered, however hard one may try. Neither can man effect a change in his position of a servant, nor can anything other than God become his God in the real sense. Man may make for himself as many gods as he may please, but the fact remains that he is the servant of none but One God alone. Man by his own folly and ignorance may regard anyone as holder of Divine attributes and powers and take any one as the maker and un-maker of his destiny, but the fact of the matter is that neither does anyone other than Allah possess Divine attributes nor His authority, nor has anyone else the power to make or mar the destiny of man."

Another translation of this verse can be: "Do not effect any alteration in the Nature made by Allah." That is, it is not right to corrupt and spoil the Nature on which Allah has created man.

47. "Right and true Faith": To remain steadfast on one's true Nature.

48. That is, "Whoever has adopted an attitude of independence and freedom and turned away from his true Lord, and whoever has adopted service of another than Allah and proved to be disloyal to his real and true Lord, should desist from this, and return to the service of the One God, Whose real servant he is by birth."

49. That is, "You should have the fear that if in spite of being a servant of Allah by birth, you adopted the way of living independently of Him, or served another beside Him, you will have to suffer a severe punishment for rebellion and ingratitude. Therefore, you should avoid every such way of life which earns you the wrath of God."

50. Both turning to Allah and having fear of His wrath are the acts of the heart. This state of the heart, for its manifestation and stability, inevitably needs a physical act, which may make it known to others in society that so-and-so has really returned to the service of One Allah alone, and which, at the same time, may go on nourishing and developing the state of piety and devotion in one's own self also by means of practical experience and discipline. That is why immediately

after giving the Command for a mental change Allah has given the Command for this physical act, i.e. establishment of the *Ṣalāt*. As long as an idea is only an idea in the mind of man, it can neither be stable nor enduring. It may fade away or even change. But when he starts practising it, the idea takes root in him and goes on increasing in stability and strength with more and more practice; so much so that when it has become a belief it can neither change nor fade away easily. Considered from this viewpoint, no act can be more effective than the offering of the Prayer regularly five times a day for strengthening piety and fear of God in oneself. The other act, whatever it be, is carried out at intervals, or in different forms on different occasions, but the Prayer is an act, which is performed every few hours in one and the same specific form permanently, in which man has to rehearse over and over again the whole lesson taught him by the Qur'ān about Islam, so that he does not forget it. Furthermore, both the believers and the disbelievers have to know who among the people has given up the way of rebellion and adopted the way of obedience to the Lord. The believers have to know this so that they can form into a community and society and can cooperate with one another in the way of Allah; then as soon as the relationship of any one of them starts showing signs of laxity with respect to the Faith and Islam, this should become known to all of them at once. The disbelievers have to know this so that the dormant nature in them wakens up when they see the people from their own kith and kin turning humbly to their real God over and over again, and till their nature wakes up they continue to be awe-stricken when they see the practical enthusiasm of the obedient servants of God. For these two objectives also the establishment of the Prayer is the most effective means.

Here, it should be noted that the Command for the establishment of the Prayer was given at Makkah at a time when a handful of the Muslims were being severely persecuted by the disbelieving Quraish, and went on being persecuted for another nine years after this. At that time there was no sign of the Islamic government yet in sight. If the offering of the Prayer was meaningless without the Islamic government, as some ignorant people think, or if the establishment of the *Ṣalat* did not mean the offering of the Prayer at all but the establishment of *Nizām-i-Rubūbiyat* (order of Providence), as the deniers of *Ḥadīth* claim, the Qur'ānic injunction at that stage would have been meaningless. The question is: How did the Holy Prophet and the Muslims carry out this Command for nine years after it had been enjoined ?

51. This is an allusion to the fact that the real way of life for mankind is the same Way of Nature as elucidated above. This way of life has not evolved from a polytheistic creed to *Tauḥīd* as thought by those who invent a philosophy of religion on the basis of speculation. But, contrary to this, all the religions found in the world today have appeared because of the corruption of the original Way of

life. This corruption occurred because different people added their different self-made creeds to the natural realities and created separate sects and every-one became a devotee of the additional thing, which was the basis of the separate sect, and gave up the original Way of life. Now the only way of attaining true guidance is that one should return to the original Reality which was the basis of the true Faith, and rid oneself of all the later additions and excrescences and their devotees. If he still keeps any kind of contact with them, he will only be harming the true Faith.

52. This is a clear proof of the fact that in the depths of their heart there still exists an evidence of *Tauḥīd*. Whenever the hopes start crumbling, their hearts cry out from within that the real Ruler of the universe is its Master and His help alone can improve their lot.

53. That is, "They again start presenting offerings before other deities, and claiming that their misfortune has been removed through the help and grace of such and such a saint and shrine."

54. That is "What authority have they got to say that the calamities are not averted by God but by the so-called saint? Does common sense approve of it? Or, is there any Divine Book which says that Allah has delegated His powers to such and such saints, and that they should now be invoked by the people to help them out of difficulties?"

55. In the preceding verse man has been censured for his ignorance, folly and ingratitude. In this verse, he has been censured for puerility and meanness When a person attains a little wealth and power and respect, and he sees that his business has started flourishing, he forgets that he has been given all this by Allah. He exults at his success and is so puffed up and conceited that he has neither any regard left for Allah nor for the people. But as soon as good luck deserts him, he loses heart and a single stroke of ill-luck so disheartens and frustrates him that he is prepared to do any mean thing, even commit suicide.

56. That is, "The believers can learn how disbelief and *shirk* affect man's morality and what is the impact of belief in Allah on his morals. The person who sincerely believes Allah and looks upon Him as the Master of the treasure-houses of provisions, can never be involved in meanness, in which those forgetful of God are involved. If he is given abundantly he will not be puffed up; he will rather be grateful to Allah, will treat his fellowmen generously and benevolently, and will expend his God-given wealth for His sake. On the other hand, he will exercise patience; he will never gamble away his honesty and self-respect, but will have hope of Allah's bounty till the last. Such a moral excellence can neither fall to the lot of an atheist nor of a polytheist."

57. It has not been said: "Give charity to the relative, the needy and the wayfarer, but their due because this is their right (due to them from you), which you must give them in any case. You will not do them any favour if you part with a part of your wealth for their sake. You should remember it well that if the real owner of the wealth has given you more than others, your extra wealth is, in fact, the right of others, which has been given to you for your trial so that your Lord may see whether you recognize the rights of others and render their rights to them or not."

Anyone who reflects over this Divine Command and its real spirit cannot help feeling that the way proposed by the Qur'ān. for man's moral and spiritual development inevitably envisages the existence of a free society and economy. This development is not possible in a social environment in which the people's rights of ownership are set aside and stifled. The system in which the state assumes ownership of all resources and the government machinery the entire responsibility of distributing provisions among the people, so much so that neither can an individual recognize the right of the other and render it, nor a person develop a feeling of goodwill for the other after he has received help, is a purely communist system. Such an economic and social system, which is being advocated in our country today under the deceptive name of the 'Qur'ānic Order of Providence" *(Nizām-i Rubūbiyat), is* entirely opposed to the Qur'ānic scheme itself, for it suppresses the development of individual morality and formation of character altogether. The Qur'ānic scheme can operate and function only in a society where the indivduals own some resources of wealth, possess rights to expend it freely, and then render willingly and sincerely the rights of God and His servants. In such a society alone there can arise the possibility that, on the one hand, the people may develop individually the virtues of sympathy, kindliness and affection, sacrifice, recognition of the rights of others and rendering those rights in the right spirit, and on the other, the beneficiaries may develop in their hearts pure feelings of well-wishing, gratitude and thankfulness for the donors. This system only can produce the ideal conditions in which the elimination of evil and the promotion of goodness does not depend on the intervention of a law-enforcing authority but the people's own purity of the self and their own good intentions take up this responsibility.

58. This does not mean that true success can be attained just by rendering the rights of the needy and the wayfarer and the relative and nothing else is needed to be done for this. But it means that those who do not recognize these rights of others nor render them, will not attain true success. It will be attained by those who render the rights sincerely only for the sake of Allah's goodwill and pleasure.

59. This is the first verse revealed in the Qur'ān that condemned interest. It only says this: "You pay interest thinking that it will cause an increase in the wealth of the money-lender. But actually, in the sight of Allah, interest does not

increase the wealth, but the wealth is increased by the payment of the *Zakāt*". Afterwards when the Commandment prohibiting interest was sent down at Madīnah, it was said: "Allah deprives interest of all blessing and develops charity." (For the later Commands, see Āl-i-'Imrān: 130, and Al-Baqarah: 275 to 281).

This verse has been given two interpretations by the commentators. One section of them says: Here *ribā'* does not mean the interest which is forbidden by the *Sharī'ah,* but it means the gift or the present which is given with the intention that the recipient will return it redoubled, or will perform some useful service for the donor, or his becoming prosperous will be beneficial for the donor himself. This is the view of Ibn 'Abbās, Mujāhid, Dahhāk, Qatādah, 'Ikrimah, Muhammad bin Ka'b al-Qurzī and Sha'bī. Probably this comment has been made by these scholars for the reason that in this verse the only consequence mentioned of the act is that in the sight of Allah such wealth will not increase at all; if, however, it had meant the interest forbidden by the *Sharī'ah,* it would have been positively said that it will be severely punished by Allah.

The other group differs from this and says that it means the same well known *ribā'* which has been forbidden by the *Sharī'ah.* This is the opinion of Ḥasan Baṣrī and Suddī, and 'Allāma Ālūsī also has opined that the apparent meaning of the verse is the same, for ribā, in Arabic is used in the same meaning. This interpretation has been adopted by the commentator Nisābūrī also.

In our opinion also this second interpretation is correct, for the argument given in favour of the first interpretation is not enough for discarding the well known meaning of the word ribā'. In the period when Sūrah Ar-Rūm was sent down, interest had not been forbidden yet. The prohibition was made several years afterwards. The way of the Qur'ān is that it first prepares the minds for the thing that it has to prohibit at a later stage. About wine also the only thing said in the beginning was that it is not pure food. (An-Naḥl: 67). Then in Al-Baqarah: 219, it was said that the harm of its sin is greater than its benefit. Then it was enjoined that the Prayer should not be offered in the state of intoxication. (An-Nisā': 43). Then, finally, it was prohibited totally. Similarly, about interest here it has been only said that it does not increase the wealth, but the real increase is caused by the *Zakāt.* After this, the compound interest was forbidden (Āl-i-'Imrān: 130); and finally, interest itself was made absolutely unlawful. (Al-Baqarah: 275).

60. There is no limit to this increase. The greater the sincerity of intention, the deeper the sense of sacrifice, the greater the intensity of desire for Allah's pleasure with which a person spends his wealth in His way, the greater and more handsome will be the rewards that Allah will give him. According to an

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فَلِاَنْفُسِهِمْ يَمْهَدُوْنَ ﴿٤٤﴾ لِيَجْزِيَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ
اِنَّهٗ لَا يُحِبُّ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهٖٓ اَنْ يُّرْسِلَ الرِّيَاحَ مُبَشِّرٰتٍ وَّلِيُذِيْقَكُمْ
مِّنْ رَّحْمَتِهٖ وَلِتَجْرِيَ الْفُلْكُ بِاَمْرِهٖ وَلِتَبْتَغُوْا مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿٤٦﴾
وَلَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ رُسُلًا اِلٰى قَوْمِهِمْ فَجَآءُوْهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ فَانْتَقَمْنَا
مِنَ الَّذِيْنَ اَجْرَمُوْا ؕ وَكَانَ حَقًّا عَلَيْنَا نَصْرُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٤٧﴾ اَللّٰهُ الَّذِيْ يُرْسِلُ
الرِّيٰحَ فَتُثِيْرُ سَحَابًا فَيَبْسُطُهٗ فِي السَّمَآءِ كَيْفَ يَشَآءُ وَيَجْعَلُهٗ كِسَفًا
فَتَرَى الْوَدْقَ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ خِلٰلِهٖ ۚ فَاِذَآ اَصَابَ بِهٖ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهٖٓ اِذَا
هُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُوْنَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَاِنْ كَانُوْا مِنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ يُّنَزَّلَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ قَبْلِهٖ
لَمُبْلِسِيْنَ ﴿٤٩﴾ فَانْظُرْ اِلٰٓى اٰثٰرِ رَحْمَتِ اللّٰهِ كَيْفَ يُحْيِ الْاَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا ؕ
اِنَّ ذٰلِكَ لَمُحْيِ الْمَوْتٰى ۚ وَهُوَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَلَئِنْ اَرْسَلْنَا رِيْحًا
فَرَاَوْهُ مُصْفَرًّا لَّظَلُّوْا مِنْۢ بَعْدِهٖ يَكْفُرُوْنَ ﴿٥١﴾ فَاِنَّكَ لَا تُسْمِعُ الْمَوْتٰى وَلَا
تُسْمِعُ الصُّمَّ الدُّعَآءَ اِذَا وَلَّوْا مُدْبِرِيْنَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَمَآ اَنْتَ بِهٰدِ الْعُمْيِ عَنْ ضَلٰلَتِهِمْ ؕ
اِنْ تُسْمِعُ اِلَّا مَنْ يُّؤْمِنُ بِاٰيٰتِنَا فَهُمْ مُّسْلِمُوْنَ ﴿٥٣﴾ اَللّٰهُ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَكُمْ مِّنْ
ضُعْفٍ ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ ضُعْفٍ قُوَّةً ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ قُوَّةٍ ضُعْفًا وَّ
شَيْبَةً ؕ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَآءُ ۚ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيْمُ الْقَدِيْرُ ﴿٥٤﴾ وَيَوْمَ تَقُوْمُ السَّاعَةُ يُقْسِمُ
الْمُجْرِمُوْنَ ۙ مَا لَبِثُوْا غَيْرَ سَاعَةٍ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ كَانُوْا يُؤْفَكُوْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ
اُوْتُوا الْعِلْمَ وَالْاِيْمَانَ لَقَدْ لَبِثْتُمْ فِيْ كِتٰبِ اللّٰهِ اِلٰى يَوْمِ الْبَعْثِ ۚ فَهٰذَا
يَوْمُ الْبَعْثِ وَلٰكِنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٥٦﴾ فَيَوْمَئِذٍ لَّا يَنْفَعُ الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا
مَعْذِرَتُهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يُسْتَعْتَبُوْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَلَقَدْ ضَرَبْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِيْ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنِ

The one who has disbelieved, will bear the burden of his disbelief,[67] and those who have acted righteously, are indeed preparing the way for their own true success, so that Allah may reward with His bounty those who believed and did good works. Surely He does not like the disbelievers. 44-45

Of His Signs is this that He sends the winds to give good news[68] and to bless you with His Mercy and to make the ships sail by His Command,[69] so that you may seek His bounty[70] and be grateful to Him. And We sent before you Messengers to their peoples who came to them with clear Signs.[71] Then We took vengeance on the guilty ones[72] and it was their right on Us that We should help the believers. 46-47

It is Allah Who sends the winds, which raise the cloud; then He spreads the clouds in the sky as He pleases, and breaks them up; and then you see drops of rainwater falling from the cloud. When He showers this rain upon those of His servants He pleases, they are filled with joy, though before its coming they had lost all hope. Just see the Signs of Allah's Mercy, how He brings back to life the dead earth.[73] Likewise, He will bring back the dead to life: He has power over everything. And if We send a wind due to which they see their crops turn yellow,[74] they do become even more firm in their disbelief.[75] (O Prophet,) you cannot make the dead hear you,[76] nor can you make the deaf to hear your call, when they show their backs and turn away;[77] nor can you take the blind out of their deviation and guide them aright.[78] You can only make those people to hear you, who believe in Our Revelations and bow down in submission. 48-53

Allah it is Who originated your creation from a state of weakness; then He gave you strength after that weakness; then made you weak and old after that strength. He creates whatever He wills:[79] He knows everything and has power over everything. And when the Hour is established,[80] the criminals will swear that they had not stayed for more than an hour ;[81] thus they used to be deceived in their worldly life.[82] But those who had been given knowledge and faith, will say, "You have stayed, according to the book of Allah, till the Day of Resurrection: so this is the same Day of Resurrection, but you did not know." So, on that Day, the excuse of the wicked will not avail them anything, nor will they be asked to seek forgiveness[83] 54-57

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authentic *Ḥadīth*, even if a person gives a fig in the way of Allah, Allah will increase it to the size *of* Mount Uhud.

61. From here again the discourse turns to the theme of *Tauḥīd* and the Hereafter for the admonition of the disbelievers and the *mushriks*.

62. That is, "He provided all the various means in the earth for your sustenance and made such arrangements that everyone should receive something from the circulation of the provision."

63. That is, "If those whom you have set up as deities can neither create, nor provide sustenance, nor have power over life and death, nor can raise you back to life after death, then what for have you set them up as your deities?"

64. This is again an allusion to the war that was going on between Byzantium and Iran, which was telling on the whole of the Middle East. "Man's own doings" means the wickedness and oppression and tyranny, which inevitably appear in human conduct and character as a result of adopting *shirk* and atheism and ignoring the Hereafter. "Maybe they mend their ways" means that Allah shows the evil consequences of some of the acts of men in this world before the punishment of the Hereafter so that they understand the reality, feel the error of their conjectures and turn to the righteous belief, which the Prophets of Allah have been presenting before man since the earliest times, and besides adopting which there is no other way of ordering human conduct on sound foundations. This subject has been presented at several places in the Qur'ān, e.g. in At-Taubah: 126, Ar-Ra'd: 31, As-Sajdah: 21, Aṭ-Ṭūr: 47.

65. That is, "The disastrous war between Byzantium and Iran is not a new thing of its kind. The past history of mankind is full of the accounts of the destruction of great nations. The root cause of the evils that caused the destruction of those nations was *shirk* which you are today being admonished to avoid."

66. That is, "The Day which neither Allah Himself will avert nor has He given power to anyone else to avert it."

67. This is a comprehensive sentence which encompasses all those harms which can afflict a disbeliever on account of his disbelief. No list of the harms could be so comprehensive as this.

68. That is, to give good news of the rain.

69. This refers to winds, which are helpful in sailing. In ancient times, sailing boats and ships mostly depended on favourable winds and adverse winds

were disastrous for them. Therefore, the mention of these winds after the rain-bringing winds has been made as a special favour of Allah.

70. "To seek His bounty": To perform trade journeys.

71. That is, "One kind of the Signs are those which are scattered in the world around man, which he comes across at every moment of his life, one of which is the system of the circulation of winds, as mentioned in the preceding verse. The other kind of the Signs are those which the Prophets of Allah brought in the form of the miracles and Divine Revelations and the extraordinary pure characters and their healthy and life-giving influence on human society. Both kinds of the Signs point to the same Reality, which is this: The *Tauhid* which the prophets teach is based on the Truth. Each of these Signs supports the other. The Signs of the universe testify to the truth of what the Prophets say, and the Signs brought by the Prophets explain the reality being pointed out by the Signs of the universe.

72. "The guilty ones": those who remained blind to these two kinds of the Signs and persisted in their denial of Tauhid and their rebellion against God.

73. There is a subtle allusion in the mention of the Prophethood and the rain, one after the other, to the reality that the advent of a Prophet is a blessing for man's moral life even as the coming of the rain proves to be a blessing for his material life. Just as the dead earth awakens to life by a shower of the rain from the sky and starts blooming and swelling with vegetation, so is the morally and spiritually desolate human world quickened to life at the coming down of Divine Revelation and starts blossoming with moral excellences and virtues. This is the disbelievers' own misfortune that they show ingratitude, and regard the blessing of Prophethood as a portent of death for themselves instead of a good news of life.

74. That is, a frosty wind or a heat wave which ruins their crops after they started flourishing by the shower of rain.

75. That is, they start cursing God and blaming Him for all their misfortunes and troubles, whereas when God had showered His blessings on them, they had shown ingratitude instead of being grateful to Him. Here again there is a subtle allusion to the theme that when the Messengers of Allah bring the messages of Mercy to the people, they do not listen to them and reject the blessing; then when God imposes tyrants and despots upon them in consequence of their disbelief, who persecute them severely, and destroy their humanity, the same people start abusing and blaming God for creating a world full of tyranny and cruelty.

76. That is, those whose consciences have become dead, whose moral

مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ ۚ وَلَئِنْ جِئْتَهُمْ بِآيَةٍ لَّيَقُولَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا
مُبْطِلُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾ كَذَٰلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾ فَاصْبِرْ
إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ ۖ وَلَا يَسْتَخِفَّنَّكَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾

30-60 We have set forth in this Qur'ân every sort of argument to make the people understand, but whatever Sign you may bring, the disbelievers will certainly say, "You are following falsehood." Thus Allah seals the hearts of those who lack knowledge. So, (O Prophet,) have patience: surely Allah's promise is true;[84] and let not those who lack (certainty of) faith find you light.[85]

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selves have become devoid of life, whose self-worship and stubbornness and obstinacy have destroyed their capacity to understand and accept the Truth.

77. "The deaf": those who have put locks on their minds and hearts so that they do not understand anything although they hear everything; then, when such people also try that the message of the Truth should not at all enter their ears, and they should avoid and keep away from the inviter, nobody can make them hear and understand anything.

78. That is, "It is not for the Prophet that he should help and guide the blind by the hand to the the right way all through the life. He can only show guidance to the right path. But guiding those whose mind's eyes have been blinded and who do not at all see the way that the Prophet tries to show them, is not within the power of the Prophets."

79. That is, "The states of childhood and youth and old age have all been created by Him. It is dependent upon His will that He may create whomever He pleases weak and whomever He pleases strong; He may give death to whomever He pleases before attaining manhood and whomever He pleases in the prime of youth; He may grant a long life and yet keep in sound health whomever He pleases and bring to a wretched, agonising old age after a brimful youth whomever He likes. Man may live in self-conceit and arrogance if he so likes, but he is so helpless in God's powerful grip that he cannot change by any artifice the state that He may place him in.

80. That is, Resurrection, which is being foretold here.

81. That is, from the time of death till Resurrection. Even if thousands of years might have elapsed since their death they will feel that they had gone to sleep a few hours earlier and then a sudden calamity had roused them from sleep.

82. That is, "They used to make similar wrong estimates in the world, too. There also they lacked the realization of Reality, and therefore, used to assert that there was going to be no Resurrection, no life-after-death, and no accountability before God."

83. Another translation can be: ".. nor it will be required of them to please their Lord", because they will have lost all opportunity for recourse to repentance and Faith and righteous acts, and wasted the time allotted for the test and reached the eve of the announcement of the result.

84. The allusion is to the promise made in verse 47 above. There, Allah has mentioned His way of taking vengeance on those criminals who denied and resisted and ridiculed the clear Signs brought by the Messengers of Allah stubbornly, and of helping the believers.

85. That is, "Let not the enemies find you so weak as to suppress you by their uproar, nor to cow you by their campaign of slander-mongering, nor to disheartren you by their jesting, taunts and derision, nor frighten you by their threats, show of power and persecution, nor allure you by offering baits, nor make you effect a compromise with them on the basis of their appeals in the name of national interests. Instead of this, they should find you so sagacious in the awareness of your objective, so firm in faith and conviction, so resolute in determination, and so strong in character that they should neither be able to cow you by threats, nor purchase you, nor lure you away by temptation, nor strike any bargain with you in the matter of the Faith. This whole theme has been compressed in a short sentence by Allah, saying: "Let not those who lack faith find you light." Now this is borne out by the firm evidence of history that the Holy Prophet proved to be as invincible and indomitable as Allah wanted His Last Prophet to be. Anyone who tried his strength with him in any field and sphere was routed, and eventually the Holy Prophet succeeded in bringing about the desired revolution in spite of every kind of opposition and resistance put up by the whole of polytheistic and unbelieving Arabia.



XXXI

LUQMĀN

لُقْمان

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XXXI

LUQMĀN

لُقمان

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah has been named Luqmān after Luqmān the Sage, whose admonitions to his son have been related in vv. 12-19 of this Sūrah.

Period of Revelation

A perusal of the subject-matter shows that it was sent down in the period when persecution to suppress and thwart the invitation to Islam

had begun and every sort of machination had started being employed for the purpose. This is borne out by vv. 14-15, in which the young converts to Islam have been told that although the rights of the parents are the uppermost after God, they should not listen to them if they prevented them from accepting Islam, or compelled them to revert to the creed of *shirk* and polytheism. The same thing has been said in Sūrah Al-'Ankabūt, which indicates that both these Sūrahs were sent down in the same period. A study of the style and subject-matter of the two Sūrahs on the whole, however, shows that Sūrah Luqmān was sent down earlier, for one does not see any sign of the antagonism in its background though, contrary to this, while studying Sūrah Al-'Ankabūt one can clearly feel that the Muslims were being severely persecuted during the period of its revelation.

Theme and Subject-matter

In this Sūrah the people have been made to understand the meaninglessness and absurdity of *shirk* and the truth and reasonableness of *Tauhīd*, and they have been invited to give up blind imitation of their forefathers, consider with a cool mind the teachings which the Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) is presenting from the Lord of the worlds, and see with open eyes the manifest Signs found in the universe around them and in their own selves, which bear evidence to its truth.

In this connection, it has also been pointed out that this is not a new teaching which might have been presented in the world, or in the land of Arabia, for the first time, and with which the people might be unfamiliar. The learned and wise people of the past ages said and taught the same thing which Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is teaching today. It is as if to say, "O people: In your own country there has lived a wise man, named Luqmān, whose wisdom has been well known among you, whose proverbs and wise sayings are cited in your daily conversation and who is often quoted by your poets and orators. Now you should see for yourselves what creed and what morals he used to teach."

سُوْرَةُ لُقْمٰنَ مَكِّيَّةٌ

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

الٓمّٓ ﴿١﴾ تِلْكَ اٰيٰتُ الْكِتٰبِ الْحَكِيْمِ ﴿٢﴾ هُدًى وَّرَحْمَةً لِّلْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿٣﴾ الَّذِيْنَ
يُقِيْمُوْنَ الصَّلٰوةَ وَيُؤْتُوْنَ الزَّكٰوةَ وَهُمْ بِالْاٰخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوْقِنُوْنَ ﴿٤﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ
عَلٰى هُدًى مِّنْ رَّبِّهِمْ وَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿٥﴾ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَّشْتَرِيْ
لَهْوَ الْحَدِيْثِ لِيُضِلَّ عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ ۖ وَّيَتَّخِذَهَا هُزُوًا ۚ اُولٰٓئِكَ
لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِيْنٌ ﴿٦﴾ وَاِذَا تُتْلٰى عَلَيْهِ اٰيٰتُنَا وَلّٰى مُسْتَكْبِرًا كَاَنْ لَّمْ يَسْمَعْهَا
كَاَنَّ فِيْٓ اُذُنَيْهِ وَقْرًا ۚ فَبَشِّرْهُ بِعَذَابٍ اَلِيْمٍ ﴿٧﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ
لَهُمْ جَنّٰتُ النَّعِيْمِ ﴿٨﴾ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا ۚ وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ حَقًّا ۚ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿٩﴾
خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ بِغَيْرِ عَمَدٍ تَرَوْنَهَا وَاَلْقٰى فِي الْاَرْضِ رَوَاسِيَ اَنْ تَمِيْدَ بِكُمْ
وَبَثَّ فِيْهَا مِنْ كُلِّ دَآبَّةٍ ۚ وَاَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَاَنْۢبَتْنَا فِيْهَا مِنْ كُلِّ
زَوْجٍ كَرِيْمٍ ﴿١٠﴾ هٰذَا خَلْقُ اللّٰهِ فَاَرُوْنِيْ مَاذَا خَلَقَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ ۚ بَلِ
الظّٰلِمُوْنَ فِيْ ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿١١﴾ وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا لُقْمٰنَ الْحِكْمَةَ اَنِ اشْكُرْ لِلّٰهِ ۚ وَ
مَنْ يَّشْكُرْ فَاِنَّمَا يَشْكُرُ لِنَفْسِهٖ ۚ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَنِيٌّ حَمِيْدٌ ﴿١٢﴾ وَاِذْ قَالَ
لُقْمٰنُ لِابْنِهٖ وَهُوَ يَعِظُهٗ يٰبُنَيَّ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِاللّٰهِ ۚ اِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيْمٌ ﴿١٣﴾
وَوَصَّيْنَا الْاِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ ۚ حَمَلَتْهُ اُمُّهٗ وَهْنًا عَلٰى وَهْنٍ وَّفِصٰلُهٗ فِيْ عَامَيْنِ

XXXI

LUQMĀN

لقمان

Verses: 34

Revealed at Makkah

In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate

Alif. Lām. Mīm. These are the verses of the wise Book,[1] a Guidance and Mercy for the righteous people[2], who establish the *Salāt*, pay the *Zakāt* and fully believe in the Hereafter.[3] They are the ones who are on the right path enjoined by their Lord, and they are the ones who will attain true success.[4] 1-5

And there is among the men such a one also[5], who buys alluring tales[6] so that he may lead the people astray from Allah's Way, without any knowledge,[7] and make a mockery of the invitation to it.[8] For such people there is a disgraceful torment.[9] When Our Revelations are recited to him, he turns his face away disdainfully as though he did not hear them, as though his ears were deaf. Well, give him the good news of a painful torment. However, for those who believe and do good works, there are blissful Gardens[10] wherein they shall live for ever. This is a true promise of Allah: He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.[11] 6-9

He[12] created the heavens without pillars that you could see;[13] He set mountains in the earth lest it should tilt away along with you[14]; He scattered all kinds of animals in the earth, and sent down rainwater from the sky and caused a variety of bounteous vegetation to grow in it. This is Allah's creation: now, show Me what have these others created?[15] —The fact is that these wicked people are involved in manifest error.[16] 10-11

We [17] had bestowed wisdom on Luqmān that he may be grateful 12
to Allah.[18] Whoever is grateful, his gratefulness is for his own good, and whoever is ungrateful, then Allah is indeed Self-Sufficient and Self-Praiseworthy.[19]

13 Remember the time when Luqmān was admonishing his son, saying, "My son, join not another as an associate with God;[20] the truth is that joining associates (with God) is a grave iniquity".[21]

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1. That is, "verses of the Book which is full of wisdom and whose every teaching is based on wisdom."

2. That is, "These verses give guidance to the Right Way and have been sent down as a mercy from God. But the people who can profit by this mercy and guidance are only those who adopt a righteous attitude, who wish to become good, who crave for their own well-being, whose quality is that they avoid the evil when they are warned of it, and follow the good when they are shown the ways to it. As for the wicked and mischievous people, they will neither profit by this guidance nor receive any share from this mercy."

3. It does not mean that "the righteous people" bear only these three qualities. By using the common epithet of "righteous" for them, it has been pointed out that they refrain from all those evils which this Book forbids and practise all those good things which this Book enjoins. Then, the three qualities of the "righteous" have been especially mentioned in order to show that all other good acts depend on these three things. They establish the *Salāt* which engenders God-worship and piety as a permanent habit with them; they pay the *Zakāt* which strengthens the spirit of sacrifice in them, subdues the love of the world and arouses a desire for the goodwill of Allah; and they believe in the Hereafter, which instils the sense of responsibility and answerability, which does not allow them to live like an animal, which is free to graze at will in the pasture, but like a man who is fully conscious of the fact that he is not independent but the slave of a Master before Whom he is answerable for all his activities of life. Owing to these three qualities, these "righteous" people are not the kind of the righteous persons who happen to do good just by chance, who may commit evil as often and as freely as they would do good. Contrary to this, these qualities inculcate in them an enduring system of thought and morality owing to which goodness issues forth from them in a regulated and systematic manner, and the evil, if at all committed, is committed just by chance. They do not have any deep-rooted motives, which might be arising from their own system of thought and morality and leading them on to the evil way under their own nature impulse.

4. At the time when these verses were sent down, the disbelieves of Makkah thought, and said so openly, that Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and those who accepted his message were wasting and ruining their lives. Therefore, it was rejoined with full force and emphasis: "...these are the ones who will attain true success." That is, "They will not ruin themselves as you seem to think in your ignorance, but they in fact are the ones who alone will attain true success, and the utter failures will be those who have refused to adopt this way."

Here the one who regards "true success" as confined to the world, in the sense of material prosperity, will be wholly missing the Qur'ānic concept of it. To understand the real concept of the true success one should study the following verses of the Qur'ān along with the relevant E.N.'s: Al-Baqarah: 2-5, Āl-'Imrān: 102, 130, 200, Al-Mā'idah: 35, 90, Al-An'ām: 21, Al-A'rāf: 7, 8, 157, At-Taubah: 88, Yūnus: 17, An-Nahl: 116, Al-Hajj: 77, Al-Mu'minūn: 117, An-Nūr: 51, Ar-Rūm: 38.

5. That is, "On the one hand, there is this Mercy and Guidance sent down by Allah, of which some people are taking full advantage, and on the other, there are also some unfortunate people living side by side with the fortunate ones, who are adopting this sort of attitude as against the Revelations of Allah."

6. The words *lahv al-hadīth* in the Text imply such a thing as may allure and absorb a listener completely and make him heedless of everything else around him. Lexically, there is nothing derogatory in these words, but in custom and usage they apply to evil and useless and vain things, such as gossip, nonsensical talk, joking and jesting, legends and tales, singing and merry-making, etc.

"To buy" alluring tales may also mean that the person concerned adopts falsehood instead of the Truth, turns away from the guidance and turns to those things which can neither benefit him in the world nor in the Hereafter. But this is the metaphorical meaning. The real meaning of the sentence is that a person should purchase an absurd and useless thing for his money, and this is supported by many traditions. Ibn Hishām has related on the authority of Ibn Ishāq that when the disbelievers of Makkah could not stop the message of the Holy Prophet from spreading in spite of their best efforts, Nadr bin Hārith said to the people of Quraish: "The way you are counteracting this man will avail you nothing. He has lived a lifetime among you. Until now he was the best of your men morally: he was the most truthful and the most trustworthy person among you. Now you say that he is a sorcerer and enchanter and a poet and a madman. Who will believe all this? Don't the people know the way the sorcerers talk? Don't they know the enchanters and the way they conduct their business? Are they unaware of poetry and of the states of madness? Which of these accusations sticks to Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) by exploiting which you would turn the people's

attention away from him? Look! I will tell you how to deal with him." Then he left Makkah for Irāq and managed to get from there legends and tales about the kings of Iran and Rustam and Isfandyar and started to arrange tale-telling parties to distract the people from the Qur'ān and to absorb them in the tales. (Ibn Hishām, vol. I, pp. 320-321). The same tradition has been cited by Vāhidi in *Asbāb un Nazūl* on the authority of Kalbī and Muqātil. And according to Ibn 'Abbās, Nadr had bought singing girls also for the purpose. Whenever he heard that someone was coming under the Holy Prophet's influence, he would impose a singing girl on him with the instruction: "Feed him and entertain him with your songs so that he is absorbed in you and distracted from the other side." This was the same device which the arch-criminals of the nations have been employing in every age. They try to get the common people so absorbed in fun and sport and musical entertainment's in the name of culture that they are left with no time and sense to attend to the serious problems of life, and in their heedlessness they do not even feel what destruction they are being driven to.

The same commentary of *lahv al-hadīth* has been reported from a large number of the Companions and their immediate followers. 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd was asked, "What does *lahv al-hadīth* mean in this verse ?" He said thrice emphatically, "By God! it means singing." (Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Shaibah, Hākim, Baihaqī). Similar traditions have been reported from scholars like 'Abdullah bin' Abbas, Jābir bin 'Abdullah, Mujāhid, 'Ikrimah, Sa'īd bin Jubair, Hasan Basrī and Makhūl. Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abi Hātim and Tirmidhi have related on the authority of Hadrat Abū Umāmah Bāheli that the Holy Prophet said, "It is not lawful to buy and sell and trade in singing girls nor is it lawful to take their price." In another tradition, the last sentence is to the effect: " ... it is unlawful to eat their price". Yet another tradition from Abū Umāmah is to the effect: "To teach music to slave-girls and to trade in them is not lawful and their price is forbidden." All these *Ahadīth* also elucidate that the verse containing *lahv al-hadīth* was sent down in this very connection. Qādī Abū Bakr Ibn al-'Arabi has related in the *Ahkam al-Qur'ān* a *Hadīth* from Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Mubārak and Imam Mālik on the authority of Hadrat Anas, saying, that the Holy Prophet said: "He who hears the song of a singing-girl in a musical concert, will have molten lead poured into his ear on the Day of Judgement" (In this connection, one should also note that the "culture" of music in those days flourished almost entirely through the slave-girls. Free women had not yet become "artists". That is why the Holy Prophet spoke about trading in slave-girls, and described their wages and earnings as their price, and used the word *qaynah* for the singing-girl, which is specifically used for a slave-girl in Arabic).

7. "Without any knowledge" may be connected with "buys" and also "lead...astray". In the first case, it would mean: "The ignorant foolish person

buys this alluring thing and does not know that he is buying a ruinous thing at the cost of a highly valuable thing. On the one hand, there are the Divine verses which are full of wisdom and guidance, which he can obtain without any cost, but he turns away from them. On the other, there are these absurd things, which are disastrous for his morals and he is expending his wealth to obtain them." In the second case, it would mean: "He has come out to guide the people without any knowledge: he does not know what burden of sin he is taking on himself by trying to lead the people astray from Allah's Way."

8. That is, "This person wants to make fun of the Divine Revelations by alluring and absorbing the people in legends and tales and music. He intends that the invitation of the Qur'ān should be derided and ridiculed and laughed away. He plans to fight the Religion of God with the strategy that as soon as Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) should come out to recite Revelations of God to the people, there should be a charming, sweet-voiced damsel giving her performance in a musical concert, on the one hand, and a glib-tongued story teller telling tales and legends of Iran, on the other, and the people should become so absorbed in these "cultural activities" that they may not be in a mood to hear anything about God and the morals and the Hereafter."

9. This punishment will be in accordance with their crime. They want to debase and disgrace Go's Religion, His Revelations and His Messenger; God will take His vengeance on them by giving them a disgraceful torment.

10. Instead of saying "There are blessings of Paradise (Gardens) for them," it has been said, "there are blissful Gardens for them." In the first case, it would have meant this: "They will enjoy the blessings but the Gardens will not belong to them." In the second case, it automatically becomes evident that the whole Gardens will be handed over to them, and they will take advantage of their blessings as an owner does of his own possession, and not like the one who is allowed to use something without giving him ownership rights over it."

11. That is, "Nothing can withhold Him from fulfilling His promise, and whatever He does, He does strictly according to the demands of wisdom and justice. The object of mentioning these two attributes of Allah after saying: "This is a true promise of Allah", is to stress that Allah neither violates His promise wilfully nor is there in this universe any such power as can prevent Him from fulfilling His promise. Therefore, there can be no chance that one may not receive what Allah has promised to give as a reward for faith and righteous deeds. Moreover, Allah's open promise to bestow this reward is wholly based on His wisdom and His justice. He does not misjudge: it cannot be that He may deprive a deserving person of his reward, and reward a non-deserving one instead. The

people characterised by true faith and righteous deeds indeed deserve this reward and Allah will bestow this on them only."

12. After the above introductory sentence, the discourse now turns to the real theme, *i.e.*, the refutation of shirk and the invitation to *Tauhīd*.

13. The actual words *bi-ghair-i 'amad-in tarauna-hā* in the Text may have two meanings: (1) "You can see for yourself that they stand without pillar"; and (2) "they stand on the pillars which you cannot see" Ibn 'Abbās and Mujāhid have favoured the second meaning, and many other commentators take the first meaning. If the meaning is expressed in terms of the natural sciences of the present day, it can be said that the countless stars and planets in the heaven have been established in their positions and orbits without any visible support and prop: there are no strings and wires which might have tied them together; there are no iron bars which might be withholding them from falling on one another. It is the law of gravitation which is supporting the system. This interpretation is according to the present-day knowledge. It may be that tomorrow some new addition to our knowledge enables us to interpret the reality better.

14. For explanation, see E.N. 12 of Sūrah An-Nahl.

15. "These others" "the beings whom you have set up as your deities, whom you regard as makers and un-makers of your destinies, whom you have been worshipping as such persistently"

16. That is, "When they do not point out in this universe any creation of anyone else than Allah, and obviously they cannot, their setting up the non-creators as associates in Godhead and bowing before them in worship and invoking them for help, is nothing but mere stupidity, because their foolish conduct cannot be explained in any other way. Unless a person has taken leave of his senses he cannot commit the folly that he should himself admit before you that his deities are non-creators and that Allah alone is the Creator, and yet insist on their being the deities. If somebody has a little of the common sense, he will inevitably think how the one who has no power to create anything, and who has no share whatever in the creation of anything in the earth and heavens, can be our deity. Why should man bow before it and adore it as a deity? Does it possess any power that it could fulfil one's needs and requirements? Even if it hears one's prayers, what could it do to answer them when it did not have any power to create anything? For, evidently, afflictions can be removed only by him who can create something and not by him who can create nothing."

17. After presenting a rational argument to refute *shirk* the Arabs are being told that this rational point of view is not being presented before them for the first time, but the wise and learned people before them also have been saying

the same thing, including their own famous sage, Luqmān. Therefore, they cannot refute the Holy Prophet's message, saying, "If *shirk* was an irrational creed, why didn't it strike so to somebody else before?".

Luqmān was well known as a wise and learned man in Arabia. He has been mentioned in the poetry of the pre-Islamic poets like Imra'ul-Qais, Labid, A'ashā, Tarafa and others. Some educated Arabs also possessed a collection of the wise sayings of Luqmān. According to traditions, three years before the Hijrah the very first person of Madinah to be influenced by the Holy Prophet was Suwaid bin Sāmit. He went to Makkah for Ḥajj. There the Holy Prophet was as usual preaching Islam to the pilgrims coming from different places, at their residences. When Suwaid heard his speech, he submitted, "I have also got a thing similar to what you preach," When the Holy Prophet asked what it was, he said, "The roll of Luqmān." Then on the Holy Prophet's instance, he read out a portion of it, whereupon the Holy Prophet said, "This discourse is fine, but that which I have is better still." Then he recited the Qur'ān to him, and Suwaid admitted that that was certainly better than the wisdom of Luqmān. (Ibn Hishām, vol. II, p. 378). According to the historians, this person (Suwaid bin Sāmit) was known by the title of Kāmil (Perfect) in Madīnah on account of his ability, bravery, nobility and poetry. But when after his meeting with the Holy Prophet he returned to Madīnah, he was killed in the battle of Bu'āth, which was fought some time afterwards. His tribesmen were of the opinion that he had become a Muslim after his meeting with the Holy Prophet.

Historically, Luqmān is a disputed personage. In the dark centuries of ignorance there was no compiled history. The only source of information were the traditions that were being handed down since centuries. According to these, some people thought that Luqmān belonged to the people of 'Ād and was a king of Yaman. Relying on these traditions, Maulānā Sayyid Sulaiman Nadvī has expressed the opinion in the *Ard al-Qur'ān* that Luqmān was a descendent of the believers who remained safe with the Prophet Hūd after the destruction of the people of 'Ād by a Divine torment, and he was one of the kings of Yaman when it was ruled by the 'Ād. But other traditions which have been reported from some learned Companions and their immediate followers do not support this view. Ibn 'Abbās says Luqmān was a negro slave, and the same is the opinion of Ḥadrat Abū Hurairah, Mujāhid, 'Ikrimah and Khālid ar-Rab'i. According to Ḥadrat Jābir bin'Abdullah Ansārī, he belonged to Nūbah. S'īd bin al-Musayyib says that he was an Egyptian negro. These three sayings closely resemble one another. The Arabs generally called the black people negroes (Habashīs) in those days, and Nūbah is the country south of Egypt and north of Sudan. Therefore, calling the same person an Egyptian and a Nubian and a negro, in spite of the difference in words, is one

[Contd. on p. 16

لقمٰن

أَنِ اشْكُرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيْكَ ۚ إِلَيَّ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٤﴾ وَإِنْ جَاهَدَاكَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ تُشْرِكَ
بِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَا وَصَاحِبْهُمَا فِي الدُّنْيَا مَعْرُوفًا ۖ وَاتَّبِعْ
سَبِيلَ مَنْ أَنَابَ إِلَيَّ ۚ ثُمَّ إِلَيَّ مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَأُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٥﴾ يَا بُنَيَّ
إِنَّهَا إِنْ تَكُ مِثْقَالَ حَبَّةٍ مِنْ خَرْدَلٍ فَتَكُنْ فِي صَخْرَةٍ أَوْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ أَوْ
فِي الْأَرْضِ يَأْتِ بِهَا اللَّهُ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَطِيفٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٦﴾ يَا بُنَيَّ أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ وَأْمُرْ
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَانْهَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا أَصَابَكَ ۖ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ
الْأُمُورِ ﴿١٧﴾ وَلَا تُصَعِّرْ خَدَّكَ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا ۖ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا
يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ ﴿١٨﴾ وَاقْصِدْ فِي مَشْيِكَ وَاغْضُضْ مِنْ صَوْتِكَ ۚ إِنَّ
أَنْكَرَ الْأَصْوَاتِ لَصَوْتُ الْحَمِيرِ ﴿١٩﴾ أَلَمْ تَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ
وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَأَسْبَغَ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعَمَهُ ظَاهِرَةً وَبَاطِنَةً ۗ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ
يُجَادِلُ فِي اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَلَا هُدًى وَلَا كِتَابٍ مُنِيرٍ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ
اتَّبِعُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ قَالُوا بَلْ نَتَّبِعُ مَا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَنَا ۚ أَوَلَوْ كَانَ
الشَّيْطَانُ يَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَىٰ عَذَابِ السَّعِيرِ ﴿٢١﴾ وَمَنْ يُسْلِمْ وَجْهَهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَهُوَ
مُحْسِنٌ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ ۗ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ عَاقِبَةُ الْأُمُورِ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَمَنْ
كَفَرَ فَلَا يَحْزُنْكَ كُفْرُهُ ۚ إِلَيْنَا مَرْجِعُهُمْ فَنُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا عَمِلُوا ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ
الصُّدُورِ ﴿٢٣﴾ نُمَتِّعُهُمْ قَلِيلًا ثُمَّ نَضْطَرُّهُمْ إِلَىٰ عَذَابٍ غَلِيظٍ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَلَئِنْ سَأَلْتَهُمْ
مَنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ ۚ قُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ۚ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا
يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَلَوْ
أَنَّ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ أَقْلَامٌ وَالْبَحْرُ يَمُدُّهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ سَبْعَةُ أَبْحُرٍ

And[22] the fact is that We have Ourself enjoined on man to recognize the rights of his parents: his mother bore him in her womb with weakness upon weakness and his weaning took two years.[23] (That is why We admonished him to the effect:) "Give thanks to me and to your parents: to Me you have to return. But if they press you to join with Me another about whom you have no knowledge,[24] do not obey them at all. Treat them kindly in the world, but follow the way of him who has turned to Me. Then to Me will all of you return;[25] then I shall tell you what you had been doing.[26] 14-15

(And Luqmān[27] had said:) "My son, even if a thing be equal to a grain of mustard seed and hidden in a rock, or in the heavens, or in the earth, Allah will bring it forth.[28] He is Knower of subtleties and is All-Aware. O my son, establish the *Ṣalāt*, enjoin good, forbid evil and bear with fortitude every affliction that befalls you.[29] These are the things which have been strictly enjoined.[30] And do not speak to the people with your face turned away,[31] nor walk proudly on the earth, for Allah does not love any self-conceited, boastful person.[32] Be moderate in your gait,[33] and lower your voice, for the most disagreeable of all voices is the braying of the asses".[34] 16-19

Do you not see that Allah has subjected to you whatever is in the earth and the heavens,[35] and has bestowed on you all His favours, visible as well as invisible?[36] Yet there are some among the people who wrangle about Allah,[37] without any knowledge, or guidance, or an enlightening Book.[38] And when it is said to them, "Follow what Allah has sent down," they say, "We shall only follow that upon which we found our forefathers." What ! will they still be following them even if Satan had been calling them to the raging Fire?[39] 20-21

Whoever surrenders himself to Allah,[40] and is a doer of good,[41] he has indeed taken hold of a reliable support[42] and the ultimate disposal of all affairs is in the hand of Allah. As for the one who disbelieves, let not his disbelief grieve you.[43] To Us they have to return; then We shall tell them what they had been doing. Most surely Allah knows the hidden secrets of the breasts. We are allowing them to enjoy themselves for a while in the world; then We shall drag them to a severe torment in a helpless condition. 22-24

25-26 If you ask them, "Who has created the earth and the heavens?" they will surely say, "Allah." Say, "Praise is then only for Allah,"[44] but most of them do not know.[45] Whatever is in the heavens and the earth, is Allah's.[46] Indeed, Allah is self-Sufficient and Self Praiseworthy.[47]...

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and the same thing. Then the elucidations made by Suhayli in *Raud al-Unuf* and Mas'ūdī in *Murūj adh-Dhahab* also throw some light on the question as to how the wisdom of this Sudanese slave spread in Arabia. They both agree that this person though originally a Nubian was an inhabitant of Madyan and Aylah (modern, 'Aqabah). That is why he spoke Arabic and his wisdom spread in Arabia. Besides, Suhayli also elucidates that Luqmān the Sage and Luqmān bin 'Ād were two different persons, and it is not correct to regard them as one and the same man. (*Raud al-Unuf*, vol. I, p. 266; Mas'ūdī, vol. I, p. 57).

Another thing may also be made clear here. The Arabic manuscript from the Library of Paris, which the orientalist Derenbourg has published under the title *Amthāl Luqmān Ḥakīm* (Fables De Loqman Le Sage) is a fabricated thing which has nothing to do with the Roll of Luqmān. These Fables were compiled by somebody in the 13th century A.D. Its Arabic is poor, and a perusal shows that it is, in fact, a translation of some other book in a different language, which the author or translator has himself ascribed to Luqmān the Sage. The orientalists make such researches with a special object in view. They bring out such forged and fake things in order to prove that the narratives of the Qurān are unhistorical legends and therefore unreliable. Anyone who reads B. Helle's article on "Luqmān" in the *Encyclopeadia of Islam* will not fail to understand the real motive of these people.

18. That is, "The very first demand of the wisdom and knowledge, insight and sagacity, granted by Allah was that man should have adopted the attitude of gratefulness and obedience before his Lord, and not of ingratitude and thanklessness. And this gratefulness should not have merely been lip-service but expressed and translated in thought and word and deed. One should have the conviction in the depths of one's heart and mind that whatever one has got, has been given by God. One's tongue should always be acknowledging the favours of God; and practically also one should be trying to prove by carrying out His Commands, by avoiding sins, by striving to achieve His good-will, by conveying His blessings and favours to His servants and by fighting those who have rebelled against Him that one is really a grateful servant of one's God."

19. That is, "The one who is ungrateful and unbelieving, his unbelief is harmful to his own self. Allah does not lose anything. He is Independent and does not stand in need of anyone's gratitude. The gratitude of someone does not add anything to His Godhead, nor does anyone's ingratitude and disbelief change the factual reality that whatever the servants have got, has been granted by Him. He is Self-Praiseworthy whether someone praises Him or not. Every particle in the universe bears testimony to His Perfection and Beauty, His Creativity and Providence, and every creature is paying homage to His glory perpetually."

20 This particular admonition from the wisdom of Luqmān has been cited here for two reasons: (1) He gave this admonition to his son, and obviously, no one can be insincere to one's own children. A person may deceive others, may behave hypocritically towards them, but no one, not even a most depraved person, will try to deceive and defraud his own children. Therefore, Luqmān's admonishing his son thus is a clear proof of the fact that in his sight *shirk* was indeed the most heinous sin, and for that very reason he first admonished his dear son to refrain from this iniquity. (2) The second reason for this narration is that many parents from among the disbelievers of Makkah were compelling their children to turn away from the message of *Tauḥīd* being preached by the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and remain steadfast on the creed of *shirk*, as is being stated in the following verses. Therefore, those foolish people are being told, as if to say, "The well-known sage of your own land had wished his children well by admonishing them to avoid *shirk*; now you should judge it for yourself whether you are wishing your children well or ill when you compel them to follow the same creed of *shirk*."

21. *Ẓulm* means to deprive someone of his right and to act unjustly. *Shirk* is a grave iniquity because man sets up such beings as equals with his Creator and Providence and Benefactor as have no share whatever in creating him, nor in providing for him, nor in bestowing the blessings on him, which he is enjoying in the world. There could be no greater injustice than this. The Creator's right on man is that he should worship Him alone, but he worships others and so deprives Him of His right. Then, in whatever he does in connection with the worship of others than Allah, he exploits many things, from his own mind and body to the earth and heavens, whereas, all these things have been created by Allah, the One, and man has no right to use any of them in the worship of any other than Allah. Then, the right of man's own self on him is that he should not debase and involve it in punishment. But when he worships others than his Creator, he debases his self as well as makes it deserving of the punishment. Thus, the entire life of a *mushrik* becomes *Ẓulm* in every aspect and at all times and his every breath becomes an expression of injustice and iniquity.

22. The whole passage from here to the end of the paragraph is a parenthesis, which Allah has inserted as a further explanation of the saying of Luqmān.

23. From these words, Imām Shāfe'ī, Imam Aḥmad, Imam Abū Yūsuf, and Imām Muḥammad have drawn the conclusion that the suckling period of the child is two years. If a child has been suckled by a woman within this period, they will be forbidden for each other, but if outside and beyond this period, they will not be so. A saying of Imām Mālik also supports this. But Imām Abū Ḥanīfah has proposed the period of two and a half years as a precaution, and has added that if the child has been weaned after two years, or even earlier, and it is no longer dependent upon suckling for its food, no woman would be forbidden for him if she gave him suck after that period. However, if the real food of the child is still milk, suckling during the period will render him and her forbidden for each other in spite of his eating the other food in a more or less quantity. For, the verse does not mean that the child should be suckled necessarily for two years. In Sūrah Al-Baqarah it has been said: "The mothers shall suckle their children for two whole years, if the fathers desire the suckling to be completed." (v. 233). Ibn 'Abbās from these words has concluded, and other scholars have agreed with him in this, that the shortest period of pregnancy is six months, for the Qur'ān at another place says: "His bearing (in the womb) and his weaning took thirty months." (Aḥqāf: 15) This is an important legal point which helps resolve many disputes concerning legitimate and illegitimate births.

24. That is, "About whom you have no knowledge that he is My associate."

25. "All of you": the children as well as the parents.

26. For explanation, see E. N.'s 11 and 12 of Sūrah Al-'Ankabūt.

27. The other admonitions of Luqmān are being narrated here to imply that like the basic beliefs, the teachings pertaining to morals that the Holy Prophet is presenting, are not anything new in Arabia.

28. That is, "Nothing can escape Allah's knowledge and His grasp. A seed in the rock may be hidden for you, but it is known to Allah. A particle in the heavens may be very distant for you, but for Allah it is very near. A thing lying in the layers of the earth may be lying in darkness for you but for him it is in full light. Therefore, you cannot do anything good or bad, anywhere or any time, which may remain hidden from Allah. He is not only aware of it, but when the time for accountability comes, He will place before you a full record of each act of yours."

29. In this there is a subtle allusion to this that whoever will enjoin good and forbid evil, will inevitably have to face and undergo afflictions and hardships in the world.

30. Another meaning can be: "These are things which require courage and resolution. To rise for the reformation of the people and to brave the hardships of the way cannot be the job of a mean-spirited and cowardly person."

31. *Tusa'ir* in the original is from *sa 'ar*, a disease in the camel's neck due to which it keeps its face turned to one side. The idiom implies the attitude of a person who shows arrogance and vanity, turns his face away and treats others with scant respect.

32. *Mukhtāl* in the original implies a person who has an over-high opinion of himself, and *fakhūr* is the one who boasts of his superiority over others. A man becomes haughty and arrogant and vain in his gait only when he is puffed up with pride, and wants that others should feel his superiority.

33. According to some commentators it means this: "Walk neither fast nor slow but at a moderate pace;" but the context shows that here the pace or the rate of walking is not the question. There is nothing morally wrong with a fast or a slow pace in itself, nor can there be a rule made for it. When a man is in a hurry, he has to walk fast, and there is nothing wrong if one walks slow when walking for pleasure. Even if there is a standard for the moderate pace, it cannot be made a law for every person at all times. What is actually meant by this is to reform the state of the self under which a person walks haughtily. The haughtiness and arrogance of a person inevitably manifests itself in his gait and style of walking, which shows the state of his mind and also the cause of his pride and haughtiness. Wealth, authority, beauty, knowledge, power and such other things cause a man to become proud and vain, and each of these gives him a special style of gait. Contrary to this, manifestation of humility in the gait is also the result of one or the other morbid mental state. Sometimes the hidden conceit of the self of a man takes on the form of ostentatious humility, piety and godliness and this is shown by his gait; and sometimes man really feels so embittered by the frustrations of the world that he adopts a sick man's gait. What Luqmān means to say is this: "Avoid these states of the mind and self and walk the gait of a simple, honest and noble person, which neither shows any vanity and haughtiness nor weakness nor ostentatious piety and humility."

The taste of the Holy Prophet's great Companions in this regard can be judged from a few instances. When Ḥaḍrat Umar once saw a man walking with his head hung down, he shouted out to him, saying, "walk with your head raised up. Islam is not sick." He saw another person walking like a weak, sick man, and said, "wretch! Do not sully our religion!" Both these incidents show that in the

sight of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar religious piety did not at all require that one should walk cautiously like the sick man and show undue humility by one's gait. Whenever he saw a Muslim walking such a gait, he would have the apprehension that it would misrepresent Islam and would depress the other Muslims. A similar incident was once met with by Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah. She saw a person walking as if run down and exhausted. She asked what was the matter. It was said, "He is one of the reciters of the Qur'ān (i.e. a person who remains engaged in reciting and teaching the Qur'ān and in worship)." At this she said, 'Umar was the chief of the reciters of the Qur'ān, but as it was he would walk with a firm foot, and he would speak with force and strength, and he would give a good beating if he had to." (For further explanation, see E.N, 43 of Banī Isrā'īl and E.N. 79 of Al-Furqān).

34. This does not mean that one should always speak in a low voice and should never raise one's voice. By citing the braying of the asses, it has been clearly indicated what sort of the tone and voice in speech is meant to be discouraged. One kind of lowness and loudness, roughness and softness, of the tone and voice is that which is needed under natural and genuine requirements. For example, when speaking to a man close at hand, or to a small group of the people, one would speak in a low voice, and when speaking to a man at a distance or to a large number of the people, one would inevitably have to speak loudly. Similar is inevitably the difference in tones depending on the occasion and situation. The tone of praise has to be different from the tone of condemnation, and of the expression of goodwill from that of indignation. This thing is in no way objectionable. Nor does the admonition of Luqmān imply that one should always speak in a soft and low voice and tone regardless of the occasion and requirement. What is objectionable is that one should shout oneself hoarse and produce a voice like the ass's braying in order to bully and debase and browbeat the other person.

35. A thing can be subjected to somebody in two ways: (1) The thing may be made subordinate to him and he may be authorised to use and exploit it as he likes, and (2) the thing may be subjected to a law and system so that it becomes useful for him and serves his interests accordingly. Allah has not subjected everything in the earth and heavens to man in one and the same sense, but has subjected certain things in the first sense and certain others in the second sense. For example, He has subjected the air, water, earth, fire, vegetation, minerals, cattle and many other things in the first sense, and the sun, the moon, etc. in the second sense.

36. "Visible favours" imply those favours which are perceived by man in one way or the other, or are known to him. And the "invisible favours" are those which are neither perceived by him nor are known to him. There are countless things in man's own body and in the world outside him, which are working in his interest, but man is utterly unaware of the means which his Creator has provided

for his protection and safety, for his development and provision of sustenance to him, and for his well-being and happiness. Research of man in the different branches of science is revealing many such favours of God as were hidden from him before. And the favours and blessings which have so far been revealed are insignificant as against those which still lie hidden from man.

37. "Who wrangle about Allah": Who wrangle and dispute about questions such as these: Does Allah exist or not? Is He One God alone, or are there other gods also? What are His attributes and what is their nature? What is the nature of His relationship with His creations etc.?

38. That is, "They neither have any means of knowledge by which they might themselves have observed or experienced the reality directly, nor do they have the guidance of a guide available to them, who might have guided them after observing the reality, nor do they possess a Divine Book, which might be the basis of their belief."

39. That is, "It is not at all necessary that the forefathers of every person and every family and nation should have been on the right path. The mere argument that a particular way of life had been bequeathed by the elders cannot be a proof of its being right also. No sane person can commit the folly that he should blindly go on following the way of his forefathers even if they were not rightly guided, and should never bother to find out where the way is leading him."

40. "Whoever.....Allah": Who submits himself wholly to the service of Allah, entrusts all his affairs to Him and makes His Guidance the law of his entire life.

41. That is, practically also he should adopt the attitude of an obedient servant of Allah.

42. That is, "He will neither have the apprehension that he will be misguided, nor the fear that he will meet an evil end after having served Allah."

43. This means to say, "O Prophet, the one who refuses to listen to you, thinks that by rejecting Islam and insisting on unbelief he has harmed you, but in fact he has not harmed you but harmed only himself. If he does not listen to you, you need not bother yourself about him at all."

44. That is, "Thank God that you at least know this and believe in this. But if this be the reality, all praise should then belong to Allah alone. How can any other being deserve praise when it has no share whatever in the creation of the

[Contd. on p. 23

مَّا نَفِدَتْ كَلِمٰتُ اللّٰهِ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَزِيْزٌ حَكِيْمٌ ﴿٢٧﴾ مَا خَلْقُكُمْ وَلَا بَعْثُكُمْ اِلَّا
كَنَفْسٍ وَّاحِدَةٍ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ سَمِيْعٌۢ بَصِيْرٌ ﴿٢٨﴾ اَلَمْ تَرَ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ يُوْلِجُ الَّيْلَ فِى
النَّهَارِ وَيُوْلِجُ النَّهَارَ فِى الَّيْلِ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ ۙ كُلٌّ يَّجْرِىْٓ اِلٰٓى اَجَلٍ
مُّسَمًّى وَّاَنَّ اللّٰهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ خَبِيْرٌ ﴿٢٩﴾ ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ وَاَنَّ مَا
يَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِهِ الْبَاطِلُ ۙ وَاَنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَ الْعَلِىُّ الْكَبِيْرُ ﴿٣٠﴾ اَلَمْ تَرَ اَنَّ الْفُلْكَ
تَجْرِىْ فِى الْبَحْرِ بِنِعْمَتِ اللّٰهِ لِيُرِيَكُمْ مِّنْ اٰيٰتِهٖ ؕ اِنَّ فِىْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ
لِّكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُوْرٍ ﴿٣١﴾ وَاِذَا غَشِيَهُمْ مَّوْجٌ كَالظُّلَلِ دَعَوُا اللّٰهَ مُخْلِصِيْنَ لَهُ
الدِّيْنَ ۚ فَلَمَّا نَجّٰىهُمْ اِلَى الْبَرِّ فَمِنْهُمْ مُّقْتَصِدٌ ؕ وَمَا يَجْحَدُ بِاٰيٰتِنَآ اِلَّا كُلُّ
خَتَّارٍ كَفُوْرٍ ﴿٣٢﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوْا رَبَّكُمْ وَاخْشَوْا يَوْمًا لَّا يَجْزِىْ وَالِدٌ عَنْ
وَّلَدِهٖ ۫ وَلَا مَوْلُوْدٌ هُوَ جَازٍ عَنْ وَّالِدِهٖ شَيْـًٔا ؕ اِنَّ وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ حَقٌّ فَلَا تَغُرَّنَّكُمُ
الْحَيٰوةُ الدُّنْيَا ۪ وَلَا يَغُرَّنَّكُمْ بِاللّٰهِ الْغَرُوْرُ ﴿٣٣﴾ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عِنْدَهٗ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ ۚ
وَيُنَزِّلُ الْغَيْثَ ۚ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِى الْاَرْحَامِ ؕ وَمَا تَدْرِىْ نَفْسٌ مَّاذَا تَكْسِبُ
غَدًا ؕ وَمَا تَدْرِىْ نَفْسٌۢ بِاَىِّ اَرْضٍ تَمُوْتُ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلِيْمٌ خَبِيْرٌ ﴿٣٤﴾

If all the trees in the earth were to become pens and the ocean (an inkpot) which is replenished with ink by seven more oceans, (the writing of) Allah's Words would not exhaust.[48] Allah is indeed All-Mighty and All-Wise. Your creation and your resurrection are as simple for Him as (the creation and resurrection) of a single soul. The fact is that Allah hears everything and sees everything.[49] 27-28

Do you not see that Allah causes the night to pass into the day and the day into the night? He has subjected the sun and the moon,[50] each voyaging (in its course) till an appointed time.[51] And (do you not know) that Allah is aware of whatever you do? This is because Allah is the very Truth,[52] and all those whom the people invoke instead of Allah, are false,[53] and (this is because) Allah alone is the High, the Great.[54] 29-30

Do you not see that the ship sails in the sea by Allah's grace so that he may show you some of His Signs ?[55] Indeed, there are many signs in this for every patient and grateful person.[56] And when a wave (in the sea) covers them like the mountains, they invoke Allah making their faith pure for Him alone. Then, when He brings them safe to the land, some one among them follows the middle way[57] and does not deny Our Signs except the one who is treacherous and ungrateful.[58] 31-32

O people ! Avoid the wrath of your Lord and fear the Day when no father shall avail anything for his son, nor shall any son avail anything for his father.[59] Allah' promise is surely true.[60] So let not this world' life deceive you,[61] nor let the deceiver deceive you concerning Allah.[62] 33

Allah alone has the knowledge of the Hour: He alone sends down the rain and He alone knows what is taking shape in the wombs of the mothers. No living being knows what he will earn the next day, nor does anybody know in what land he will die. Allah alone is All-Knowing, All-Aware.[63] 34

[Contd. from p. 21]

universe?"

45. That, is, "Most of the people do not know what are the inevitable results and demands of accepting Allah as the Creator of the universe, and what contradicts it. When a person acknowledges Allah as the Creator of the earth and

the heavens, he should also acknowledge that Allah alone is the Deity and Lord: that He alone is worthy of worship and obedience: that He alone can be invoked for needs, and no one other than He can be the Law-Giver and Ruler of His creation. To acknowledge one as the Creator and another as the deity is contrary to reason and a contradiction in terms, which can be upheld only by an ignorant person. Likewise, it would be a contradiction in terms to believe in one Being as the Creator and to regard another from among the creation as remover of hardships or as a deity and possessor of power and authority and sovereignty, which no reasonable will acknowledge and accept."

46. That is, "The reality is not merely this that Allah is the Creator of the earth and the heavens, but in fact He alone is the Master of all things found in the earth and heavens. Allah has not created this universe and left it to others to become masters of the whole or a part of it, but He Himself is Master of His creation and everything that exists in this universe is His. Here, He alone possesses Divine rights and powers and no one else."

47. This has been explained in E. N. 19 above.

48. "Allah's Words": Allah's creative works and the manifestations of His power and wisdom. This very theme has been presented in Sūrah Al-Kahf: 109 above a little differently. A person might think there is exaggeration in this, but if one considers the matter a little deeply, one will feel that there is in fact no exaggeration whatever in it. All the pens that can be made from the trees of the world and all the ink that can be provided by the oceans of the world, which are replenished by seven more oceans, cannot perhaps help prepare a complete list of all the creations in the universe, not to speak of all the manifestations of Allah's power and wisdom and creative works. When it is impossible even to count all the things found on the earth only, how can one bring into writing all the creations found in this limitless universe?

Here, the object is to make man realize that no creature can become a deity and an associate in the works of Allah, Who has brought into being such a vast Universe, Who is administering its affairs and Whose powers and resources are limitless. Not to speak of becoming an associate in the administration of this vast Kingdom, it is not within the power of any creation to obtain a mere nodding acquaintance with the minutest portion of it. How can then one imagine that one or the other creation can have any share in the Divine powers and authority on the basis of which it may answer prayers and make or un-make destinies?

49. That is, "He is hearing every sound in the universe distinctly at one and the same time, and no sound can absorb his hearing so completely that He may hear no other sound. Likewise, He is seeing the whole universe in each of its details as to thing and event at one and the same time and nothing can absorb His

sight so completely that He may see nothing else. The same precisely is the case concerning the creation of men and their re-creation also. He can re-create instantaneously all the men who have been born since the beginning of the creation and will be born till the end of time. His creative power is not absorbed so completely in the creation of one man that He may be unable to create other men at the same time. For Him the creation of one man and of the billions of men, therefore, is equal and one and the same thing."

50. That is, "The appearance and alternation of the day and night consistently and regularly by itself shows that the sun and the moon have been subjected to a system." The sun and the moon have been mentioned here in particular because both these are the most prominent bodies of the heaven, which man has been worshipping as deities since the earliest times, and which many people worship as gods even today. The fact, however, is that Allah has bound all the stars and planets of the universe including the earth into an unalterable system from which they cannot deviate even by an inch."

51. That is, nothing in the world, whether the sun or the moon, or any other star or planet, in the universe, is eternal and ever-lasting. Everything has a term for it and can function only till its expiry. Everything has a beginning in time before which it was not there and an end in time after which it will not be there. This means to imply that such temporal and powerless things cannot become the deities of men.

52. That is, the real Sovereign is Allah. He alone is the real Owner of power and authority over the creation and its disposal.

53. That is, "They are figments of your own imagination. You have yourselves presumed that so-and-so has got a share in Godhead, and so-and-so has been given the powers to remove hardships and fulfil needs, whereas in fact none of them has any power to make or un-make anything."

54. That is, "He is the Highest of all before Whom everything is low, and He is the Greatest of all before Whom everything is small".

55. That is, "Such Signs as show that all powers rest only with Allah. Man may make as strong and suitable ships for his sea journeys as he likes, and may achieve whatever perfection in marine science and in the related knowledge and experience, these by themselves cannot avail him anything to perform safe voyages especially when confronted by the terrible forces at the sea, unless he is succoured by the grace of Allah. As soon as Allah's grace is withdrawn, man immediately realizes how meagre and insufficient are the means and resources and knowledge of the sciences. Similarly, man in the state of peace and security may be a hardened atheist or polytheist, but when his boat loses balance in the storm at

sea, even the atheist comes to realize that there is God and the polytheist that there is only One God."

56. That is, "When the people who possess these two qualities, recognize the reality by these signs, they come to understand *Tauḥīd* clearly and stick to it firmly. The first quality is that they should be patient: they should not be fickle but firm and persistent: they should remain steadfast on the righteous belief under all circumstances, pleasant or unpleasant, difficult or easy, favourable or unfavourable. They should not have the weakness that when the hard times come they start imploring God humbly, and when they change into good times, they forget God altogether. Or that, to the contrary, they should worship God in good times and start cursing Him when touched by afflictions and misfortunes. The other quality is that they should be grateful: they should not prove ungrateful and thankless; but appreciative of favour and should remain perpetually disposed from within to render thanks to the one who conferred the favour."

57. *"Iqtiṣād"* in the original may mean uprightness or moderateness. In the first case, the verse would mean: "A few of them only remain steadfast on *Tauḥīd*, which they had promised to follow when overwhelmed by the storm, and this makes them adhere to uprightness ever afterwards." If it is taken to mean moderateness, it would mean: "Some of them become moderate and less rigid in their creed of atheism and polytheism, or they lose some of their fervour and enthusiasm that had been caused by the incident of calamity." Most probably Allah has used this0 meaningful sentence here in order to allude to all the three states simultaneously. The object probably is to point out the fact that during the storm at sea the mind of everybody is automatically set right, and everybody gives up atheism and polytheism and starts invoking One Allah for help. But as soon as they safely land on the shore, only a few of them seem to have learnt any enduring lesson from their experience. Then, this small number also is divided into three groups: those who adopt uprightness ever afterwards, and those who become moderate in their disbelief, and those who retain some of the spirit of enthusiasm caused temporarily by the calamity.

58. These two qualities are the antithesis of the two qualities mentioned in the preceding verse. A treacherous person is he who is utterly disloyal and who has no regard for his promise and pledge, and the ungrateful he who does not acknowledge the good and the gains and the benefits received by him, and even behaves rebelliously towards his benefactor. The people having these qualities return to their disbelief, their atheism and their polytheism without any hesitation as soon as the danger has been averted. They do not admit that they had perceived some signs in their own selves as well as outside themselves of Allah's existence and of His being only One when overwhelmed by the storm, and their invoking Allah was in fact the result of their recognition of the same reality. The atheists

among them explain away their act, saying, "It was a weakness which we manifested in the state of confusion and bewilderment, whereas there exists no God, Who might have saved us from the storm: we in fact succeeded in escaping by virtue of such and such a device and means and resources." As for the mushriks, they generally say, "We had the succour and protection of such and such a saint or god and goddess available to us by virtue of which we escaped." Therefore, as soon as they land on the shore, they start giving thanks to these false gods and presenting offerings at their shrines. They do not bother to think that when they had lost hope, there was none beside Allah, the One, whom they might have implored and invoked for help.

59. That is, "The relationship of a person with his friend, or his leader, or his spiritual guide, etc. is not so close and intimate as the relationship that exists between the children and their parents. But on the Day of Resurrection even the son and the father will not be able to help each other. The father will not have the courage to come forward and say that he may be seized instead of the son for his sins, nor will the son have the nerve to say that he may be sent to Hell instead of the father. How can then a person expect that one will be able to avail something for the other there? Therefore, foolish is the person who spoils his Hereafter in the world for the sake of another, or adopts the way of sin and deviation by dependence on others. Here, one should keep in view the theme of verse 15, in which the children have been admonished not to accept deviation in the matter of the faith and religion on behest of the parents, though in affairs of mundane life they are duty bound to serve them as best as they can."

60. "Allah's promise": the promise of Resurrection, when the Court of Allah will be established and everyone will be called to render an account of his deeds.

61. The life of the world involves the people, who only see the superficial, in different kinds of misunderstandings. Someone thinks that life and death only belong to this world, and there is no life hereafter; therefore, whatever one has to do, one should do it here and now. Another one who is lost in his wealth and power and prosperity, forgets his death and gets involved in the foolish idea that his grandeur and his power are everlasting. Another one overlooking the moral and spiritual objectives regards the material gains and pleasures in themselves as the only objectives and does not give anything any importance but the "standard of living", no matter whether his standard of humanity goes on falling lower and lower as a result thereof. Someone thinks that worldly prosperity is the real criterion of truth and falsehood: every way of life that ensures this is the truth and everything contradictory to it is falsehood. Someone regards this very prosperity as a sign of being Allah's favourite, and assumes the law that whoever is leading a prosperous life here is Allah's beloved no matter by what means he

might have achieved this prosperity, and whoever is leading a miserable life in the world, even if it be so due to his love of the truth and his uprightness, will live a miserable life in the Hereafter, too. These and other such misunderstandings have been called "deceptions of the worldly life" by Allah.

62. *Al-gharūr* (the deceiver) may be Satan or a man or a group of men, or even man's own self, or something else. The reason for using this comprehensive and meaningful word in its absolute form without identifying a particular person or thing, is that for different people there are different means that cause them deception. Any particular means or cause that deceived a person to be misled and misguided from the right way to the wrong way, will be *al gharūr* in his particular case.

"To deceive (someone) concerning Allah" are also comprehensive words, which include countless kinds of deceptions. "The deceiver" deceives one man with the idea that there is no God at all, and another man with the idea that God after making the world has handed over its control and administration to the men and is no more concerned with it; he misleads another one, saying, "There are some favourite ones of God: if you attain nearness to them, you will surely win your forgiveness whatever you may do, or may have done, in the world;" he deceives another one, saying, "God is All-Forgiving and All-Merciful: you may go on committing sins freely, and He will go on forgiving each sin of yours." He gives another person the idea of determinism and misguides him, saying, "Everything that you do is pre-ordained: if you commit evil, it is God Who makes you commit it; if you avoid goodness, it is God Who makes you avoid it." Thus, there are countless kinds of such deceptions with which man is being deceived concerning God. When analyzed it comes to light that the basic cause of all errors and sins and crimes is that man has been deceived concerning God in one way or the other, and that is how he has been misled to some ideological deviation or moral error."

63. This verse is, in fact an answer to the disbelievers' question as to when the Hour of Resurrection will come, which they asked when they heard the Holy Prophet mention it and the promise of the Hereafter, again and again. The Qur'ān has answered this sometimes by citing the question and sometimes without citing it, because the addressees knew what they were asking. This is one of those verses which answer the question without citing the question itself.

The first sentence: "Allah alone has the knowledge of the Hour", is the real answer to the question. The four sentences that follow constitute the argument to support it. The argument means this: "O man, you do not have the knowledge even about those things with which you are most closely and intimately concerned in life. How then can it be possible for you to know as to when will the whole

world come to an end? Your prosperity and adversity mainly depend on the rain. But its control and regulation is entirely in the hand of Allah. He sends down the rain whenever and wherever and in whatever measure He pleases and withholds it whenever he pleases. You do not at all know how much of the rain will fall at a particular place at a particular time and which land will remain without it, and which land will be adversely affected in spite of it. Your wives conceive by your own sperm-drop, which perpetuates your race in the future, but you do not know what is taking shape in their wombs, and in what form and with what good or evil it will emerge. You do not even know what you are going to meet with the next day. A sudden accident can change your destiny; but you are unaware of it even a minute before its occurrence. You do not know where your present life will eventually come to an end. Allah has kept all this information with Himself alone, and has not given you any knowledge of any of these. You actually desire that you should have the knowledge of each of these things so that you may make necessary preparations beforehand, but you have no other course open to you than to depend only on Allah's decree and disposal in these matters. Likewise, about the end of the world also there is no alternative but to rely on Allah's decree and decision. The knowledge of this also has neither been given to anybody, nor can it be given."

Here, another thing also should be understood well, and it is this: This verse does not give a list of the unseen and hidden things, which are known to no one but Allah. Here only some of the most apparent things have been pointed out only to serve as an illustration. These are the things with which man is most deeply and intimately concerned, yet he is unaware of them. From this it would be wrong to conclude that these are the only five unseen and hidden things which are known to no one but Allah. As a matter of fact, *ghaib* applies to every such thing which is hidden from the creation but is in the knowledge of Allah, and such things are countless and limitless. (For a detailed discussion of this, see An-Naml: 65 and the E.N.'s thereof).



XXXII
AS-SAJDAH

اَلسَّجدة

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

XXXII

AS-SAJDAH

اَلسَّجدہ

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah has been entitled As-Sajdah after the theme of *Sajdah* (prostration) as expressed in verse 15.

Period of Revelation

From the style of the Sūrah it appears that it was sent down during the middle Makkan period, more particularly in its initial stage, for one does not find in its background that severity of the persecution and tyranny which one finds in the Sūrahs sent down in the later stages.

Theme and Topics

The main theme of the Sūrah is to remove the doubts of the people concerning *Tauhīd*, the Hereafter and the Prophethood, and to invite them to all these three realities. The disbelievers of Makkah, when they talked of the Holy Prophet in private, said to one another, "This person is forging strange things. Sometimes he gives news of what will happen after death. He says: when you have become dust, you will be called to render your accounts, and these will be Hell and Heaven. Sometimes he says: these gods and goddesses and saints are nonentities: One God alone is the Deity. And sometimes he says: the discourses which I recite are not my own but Allah's Word. All these are strange things which he presents." The answer to these doubts and misgivings forms the theme and subject-matter of this Sūrah.

In this connection, the disbelievers have been told: "Most certainly it is Allah's Word, which has been sent down in order to arouse a people who are sunk in heedlessness, being deprived of the bounties and blessings of Prophethood. How can you call it a fabrication when its having been sent down from Allah is manifest and self-evident?"

Then, they have been asked, "Use your common sense and judge for yourselves which of the things presented by the Qur'ān is strange and novel? Look at the administration of the heavens and the earth: consider your own creation and structure. Don't these things testify to the teaching which this Prophet is presenting before you in the Qur'ān? Does the system of the universe point to *Tauḥid* or to *shirk?* When you consider this whole system and your own creation, does your intellect testify that the One Who has given you your present existence, will not be able to create you once again?"

Then a scene of the Hereafter has been depicted, the fruits of belief and the evil consequences of disbelief have been mentioned and the people exhorted to give up disbelief even before they meet their doom and accept that teaching of the Qur'ān, which will be to their own advantage in the Hereafter.

Then they have been told: It is Allah's supreme mercy that He does not seize man immediately for his errors to punish him finally and decisively but warns him beforehand by afflicting him with small troubles and hardships and calamities and losses and strokes of misfortune so that he may wake up and take admonition.

Then it is said: "This is not the first and novel event of its kind that a Book has been sent down upon a man from God. Before this the Book had been sent upon Moses also, which you all know. There is nothing strange in this at which you should marvel. Be assured that this Book has come down from God, and note it well that the same will happen now as has already happened in the time of Moses. Leadership now will be bestowed only on those who will accept this Divine Book. Those who reject it shall be doomed to failure."

Then the disbelievers of Makkah have been admonished to the effect: "See the end of the doomed communities of the past by whose ruined habitations you pass during your trade journeys. Will you like to

meet the same doom yourself ? Do not be deluded by the apparent and superficial. Today you see that no one is listening to Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) except a few young men and some slaves and poor men, and he is being made the target of curses and ugly remarks from every side. From this you have formed the wrong impression that his mission will fail. But this is only a deception of your eyes. Don't you see the phenomenon in your daily life that a land previously lying absolutely barren starts swelling with vegetation and plant life everywhere just by a single shower of the rain though before this no one could ever imagine that under the layers of its soil there lay hidden such treasures of greenery and herbage?"

In conclusion, the Holy Prophet has been addressed to the effect: "These people mock at what you say and ask as to when you will attain this decisive victory. Tell them: when the time comes for the final judgement regarding you and us, believing then will not profit you at all. If you have to believe, believe now. But if you intend to await the final judgement, then await it as you please."



الٓمّٓ ﴿١﴾ تَنْزِيْلُ الْكِتٰبِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيْهِ مِنْ رَّبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٢﴾ اَمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ
افْتَرٰىهُ ۚ بَلْ هُوَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ لِتُنْذِرَ قَوْمًا مَّآ اَتٰىهُمْ مِّنْ نَّذِيْرٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿٣﴾ اَللّٰهُ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فِيْ
سِتَّةِ اَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوٰى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ ۭ مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِهٖ مِنْ وَّلِيٍّ وَّلَا شَفِيْعٍ ۭ

XXXII

AS-SAJDAH

اَلسَّجدہ

Verses : 30 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate

Alif. Lām Mīm. The revelation of this book is, without any doubt, from the Lord of the Worlds.[1] Do[2] the people say that this man himself has forged it?[3] Nay, but it is the Truth from your Lord so that you may warn a people to whom no warner has come before you.[4] Maybe they are guided aright.[5] 1-3

1. Several Sūrahs of the Qur'ān begin with one or the other such introductory sentence, which is meant to declare at the outset wherefrom this discourse is being issued. This is apparently the same sort of an introductory sentence as an announcer speaks in the beginning of a radio programme to tell which radio station he is speaking from. But unlike the ordinary announcement from a radio station, when the extraordinary declaration at the beginning of a Sūrah is made to the effect that this message is being issued by the Ruler of the

Universe, it is not merely meant to specify the origin of the discourse, but, besides, it also puts forward a big claim, a great challenge and a severe warning, for at the very outset it gives the big news that this is not human but the Lord of the Worlds' Word. This declaration at once brings man face to face with the grave question: "Should I or should I not accept this claim? If I accept it I shall have to bow my head in submission before it for ever. Then, Ishall be left with no freedom concerning it. If I do not accept it, I shall have to take the great risk that if it be really the Lord of the Worlds' Word, I shall have to meet with eternal misery and misfortune in consequence of rejecting it." That is why this introductory sentence solely on account of its extraordinary nature compels man to listen to this Word with full attention and seriousness, and then take the decision whether he would accept it as Divine Word or not;

Here, what has been said is not merely that this Book has been sent down by the Lord of the Worlds, but, besides, it also asserts most forcefully: "It is without any doubt the Book of God: there is absolutely no room for doubt about its having been revealed by Allah." If this assertive sentence is studied in the actual context itself, it will be seen that it contains the argument also along with the assertion, and this argument was not hidden from the people of Makkah before whom the assertion was being made. The whole life of the person presenting it had been spent before them. They had known him before he presented the Book as well as after he had presented it. They knew that the person presenting the Book with that assertion was the most righteous, the most serious and the most pious and virtuous man of their society. They also knew that until a day before he made the claim to Prophethood, no one had ever heard from him those things which he had started presenting suddenly just after his claim to Prophethood. They found a marked difference between the diction and style used in the Book and the diction and style used by Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) himself, in his daily life, and they also recognized naturally that one and the same person could not have two styles so different from each other. They were also experiencing the highly miraculous literature being presented in the Book and, being the Arabic speaking people themselves, knew that all their literary men and poets were feeling utterly helpless in producing anything the like of it. They were also not unaware that there was a world of difference between the literary productions and orations of their poets and sorcerers and orators, and the Divine discourses being recited before them and the sublimity of the pure themes being presented in them. They did not see in the Book and in the message of the one presenting it any trace whatever of selfishness, which is always present in the work and message of a false claimant to prophethood. They could not find out, however, hard they might have tried, that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) by laying claim to Prophethood was trying to secure a certain benefit for himself or his family or his clan and tribe, or that he had any vested interest in the message he gave. Then,

they could also see what sort of the people of their society were being drawn to his message and what great revolution was taking place in them as soon as they came in contact with his invitation. All these things together supported and proved the assertion and claim. That is why in that background it was enough to say that it is beyond any doubt a Book that has been sent down by the Lord of the Worlds. No further argument was needed to substantiate the claim.

2. After the above introductory sentence, the first objection of the polytheists of Makkah, which they raised concerning the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet, is being dealt with.

3. This is not merely a question but also an expression of great surprise and astonishment. It means to imply this: In spite of all those things on account of which this Book is, without any doubt, a Revelation from Allah, do those people yet say stubbornly that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) has himself forged it and is falsely attributing it to Allah? Don't they feel any shame in uttering such a senseless and baseless accusation? Don't they at all realize what opinion will those people form who are aware of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and his work and his discourses and also understand the Book, when they hear their absurd accusation?

4. Just as in the first verse it was considered sufficient to say, "It is without any doubt the Book of God," and no further argument was needed to be advanced to prove the Qur'ān to be Divine Word, so in this verse also the only thing being said to refute the disbelievers' charge that the Qur'ān was being forged is: "It is the Truth from your Lord." The reason for it is the same as we have given in E.N. 1 above. The listeners were well aware of the person who was presenting the Qur'ān, of the environment in which he was presenting it and the confidence and grace with which he was presenting it; they also knew the Book, its diction and literary excellence and its themes; they were also feeling the influence and impact it was having on contemporary society of Makkah. Under those conditions the Book's being the Truth sent down by the Lord of the Worlds, was such an evident factual reality that the mere mention of it in clear and definite terms was enough to refute the accusation of the disbelievers. Any attempt to strengthen this assertion by resort to reasoning would have caused it to be weakened instead. The case would be like this. Supposing it's day and the sun is shining bright, and a stubborn person calls it a dark night. To refute him it would be enough to say: "Do you call it a night when the bright day is clearly visible all around?" If after this, one tried to bring logical arguments to prove the day to be day, it would not in any way strengthen the reply but would rather weaken it instead.

[Contd. on p. 42

أَفَلَا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٤﴾ يُدَبِّرُ الْأَمْرَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ يَعْرُجُ إِلَيْهِ فِي
يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهُ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ مِمَّا تَعُدُّونَ ﴿٥﴾ ذَٰلِكَ عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ
الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٦﴾ الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ وَبَدَأَ خَلْقَ الْإِنسَانِ مِن
طِينٍ ﴿٧﴾ ثُمَّ جَعَلَ نَسْلَهُ مِن سُلَالَةٍ مِّن مَّاءٍ مَّهِينٍ ﴿٨﴾ ثُمَّ سَوَّاهُ وَنَفَخَ
فِيهِ مِن رُّوحِهِ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ ۚ قَلِيلًا مَّا
تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٩﴾ وَقَالُوا أَإِذَا ضَلَلْنَا فِي الْأَرْضِ أَإِنَّا لَفِي خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ ۚ بَلْ
هُم بِلِقَاءِ رَبِّهِمْ كَافِرُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ قُلْ يَتَوَفَّاكُم مَّلَكُ الْمَوْتِ الَّذِي وُكِّلَ بِكُمْ ثُمَّ
إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿١١﴾ وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذِ الْمُجْرِمُونَ نَاكِسُوا رُءُوسِهِمْ عِندَ رَبِّهِمْ
رَبَّنَا أَبْصَرْنَا وَسَمِعْنَا فَارْجِعْنَا نَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا إِنَّا مُوقِنُونَ ﴿١٢﴾ وَلَوْ شِئْنَا
لَآتَيْنَا كُلَّ نَفْسٍ هُدَاهَا وَلَٰكِنْ حَقَّ الْقَوْلُ مِنِّي لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنَ
الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٣﴾ فَذُوقُوا بِمَا نَسِيتُمْ لِقَاءَ يَوْمِكُمْ هَٰذَا إِنَّا نَسِينَاكُمْ
وَذُوقُوا عَذَابَ الْخُلْدِ بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ إِنَّمَا يُؤْمِنُ بِآيَاتِنَا الَّذِينَ إِذَا
ذُكِّرُوا بِهَا خَرُّوا سُجَّدًا وَسَبَّحُوا بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَهُمْ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴿١٥﴾
تَتَجَافَىٰ جُنُوبُهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ
يُنفِقُونَ ﴿١٦﴾ فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَّا أُخْفِيَ لَهُم مِّن قُرَّةِ أَعْيُنٍ ۚ جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا
يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ أَفَمَن كَانَ مُؤْمِنًا كَمَن كَانَ فَاسِقًا ۚ لَّا يَسْتَوُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ أَمَّا الَّذِينَ
آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَلَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ الْمَأْوَىٰ نُزُلًا بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٩﴾ وَأَمَّا
الَّذِينَ فَسَقُوا فَمَأْوَاهُمُ النَّارُ ۖ كُلَّمَا أَرَادُوا أَن يَخْرُجُوا مِنْهَا أُعِيدُوا فِيهَا وَ
قِيلَ لَهُمْ ذُوقُوا عَذَابَ النَّارِ الَّذِي كُنتُم بِهِ تُكَذِّبُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَلَنُذِيقَنَّهُم مِّنَ

Allah it is[6] Who created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them in six days, and then sat Himself upon the throne.[7] You have no supporter and helper besides Him nor any intercessor before Him. Will you not then take heed?[8] He administers the affairs of the world from the heavens to the earth, and the report of this administration ascends (to be presented) before Him in a Day whose length, according to your reckoning, is a thousand years.[9] He alone is the Knower[10] of the hidden and the open, the All-Mighty,[11] the Compassionate.[12] Who gave everything He created the best form.[13] He began the creation of man from clay; then spread his progeny by an extract of the nature of a despicable water;[14] then He shaped him[15] and breathed into him of His Spirit;[16] and He gave you the ears, and the eyes and the hearts:[17] yet you are seldom grateful.[18] 4-9

And[19] the people say, "When we have become dust, shall we be created again?" The fact is that they disbelieve in the meeting with their Lord.[20] Say to them, "The angel of death who has been appointed over you, shall seize you completely, and then to your Lord you will be made to return."[21] 10-11

Would[22] that you could see the criminals when they will be standing before their Lord with hanging heads. (Then they will be saying: "Our Lord, we have indeed seen and heard: now send us back so that we may act righteously: we are now convinced." (In reply it will be said :) "Had We so willed We would have given every soul its guidance from the beginning,[23] but the Word of Mine, which I had said, has been fulfilled that I shall fill Hell with jinns and men,[24] all together. So, taste now the recompense of your having forgotten the meeting of this Day.[25] We, too, have forgotten you now! Taste the everlasting torment in consequence of your misdeeds." 12-14

Only such people believe in our Revelations, who, when these are recited to them for their admonition, fall down prostrate and glorify their Lord with His praises, and are not proud ;[26] who forsake their beds and invoke their Lord in fear and in hope;[27] and who spend out of what We have given them.[28] No living being knows what comfort of the eyes has been kept hidden from them as a recompense for their deeds.[29] Can he who is a believer be like him who is a sinner?[30] They cannot be alike.[31] For those who have believed and done good works, 15-20

there will be Gardens for their dwellings,[32] an entertainment as a recompense for their deeds. As for those who have adopted evil, their abode shall be Hell. Whenever they try to get out of it, they will be pushed back into it and it will be said to them, "Taste now the torment of the Fire which you used to deny".

Contd. from p. 39]

5. That is, "Just as its being the Truth and a Revelation from Allah is absolutely certain, so is its being based on wisdom and Allah's mercy for you also evident. You yourselves know that for the past many centuries no Prophet has been raised among you, and you also know that your entire nation has been involved in ignorance and moral degeneration and sheer backwardness. In a state like this if a Prophet has been raised among you to awaken you and show you the right way, you should not be surprised. This was a great need which Allah has fulfilled for the sake of your own welfare and well-being.

One should note that in Arabia the light of the true Faith was first of all spread by the Prophets Hūd and Sālih, who lived in the pre-historic age. They were followed by the Prophets Abraham and Ishmael, who lived 2,500 years before the Holy Prophet. After them the last Prophet to be raised in Arabia before the Holy Prophet was the Prophet Shu'aib, who had passed about 2,000 years earlier. This is a very long period. That is why it has been said, and rightly so, that no warner had come to those people. This did not mean that no warner had ever come to them, but it meant that the people had long stood in need of a warner.

Here, another question may arise in the minds, which should be answered straightaway. One may ask: When no Prophet had come to the Arabs for hundreds of years before the Holy Prophet, what would be the basis of accountability of the people who had lived in that age of ignorance? They could not tell guidance from deviation and error. Then, if they had gone astray, how could they be held responsible for their deviation? The answer is this: The detailed knowledge of the true Faith might have been lost to those people, but even in that age of ignorance the people were not unaware that the true Faith was based on *Tauḥīd*, and the Prophets had never taught idol-worship to their followers. This truth was also contained in those traditions which the Arabs had received from the Prophets born in their own land, and they were also aware of this through the teachings of the Prophets Moses, David, Solomon and Jesus (peace be upon all of them) who had been born in the land adjoining their own. In the traditions of Arabia also it was well known that in the earliest times the Arabs' real religion was the Religion of Abraham and that idol-worship had been introduced among them by a person named 'Amr bin Luhayy. In spite of the prevalence of *shirk* and idol-worship,

there were living in different parts of Arabia many such people, who rejected *shirk*, professed *Tauhīd* and openly condemned offering of sacrifices at the shrines of idols. In the age close to the Holy Prophet's own, there had passed people like Quss bin Sā'idat-il-Iyādī, Umayyah bin Abī as-Salt, Suwaid bin 'Āmr al-Mustalhqī, Waki' bin Salamah bin Zuhair al-Iyādī', 'Āmr bin Jundub al-Juhanī, Abū Qais Sarmah bin Abī Anas, Zaid bin 'Āmr bin Nufail, Waraqah bin Naufal, 'Uthmān bin al-Ḥuwairith, 'Ubaidah bin Jahsh, 'Āmir bin az-Zarb ál-'Advānī 'Allaf bin Shahāb at-Tamīmī;, Al-Mutalammis bin Umayyah al-Kinānī;, Zuhair bin Abī Salmā, Khālid bin Sinān bin Ghais al-'Absī, 'Abdullah al-Qudā'ī and many others, who were known as *Ḥunafā'*. These people publicly professed *Tauhīd* as the basis of the Faith and declared their dissociation from the religion of the *mushriks*. Obviously, they had got this concept from whatever had remained behind from the influence of the teaching of the Prophets. Moreover, the inscriptions belonging to the 4th and 5th centuries A.D., which have been discovered in Yaman as a result of modern archaeological research and investigation, reveal that a monotheistic religion existed there in that age, whose followers acknowledged *ar-Raḥmān* (the All-Merciful) and *Rabb-us-samā' wal-ard* (Lord of the heavens and earth) alone as the One and only Deity. An inscription, dated 378 A.D. has been found from the ruins of a house of worship, which says that this house of worship has been built for the worship of "God of heavens" or "Lord of heavens". In an inscription of 465 A.D. there are words which clearly point to the doctrine of *Tauhīd*. Similarly, an inscription of 512 A.D. has been discovered at Zabad, a place between the river Euphrates and Qinnasrīn, in northern Arabia, bearing the words: *Bism-illāhu, lā 'izza illā lahū, lā shukra, illā lahū*. All this shows that before the advent of the Holy Prophet, the teachings of the former Prophets had not altogether been forgotten, and there still existed many means which at least reminded man of the truth: "Your God is only One God." (For further explanation, see E.N. 84 of Sūrah Al-Furqān).

6. Now the second objection of the *mushriks* which they raised against the Holy Prophet's message of *Tauhīd*, is being dealt with. They were severely critical of him because he rejected their gods and saints and openly invited the people to the creed that there is no helper, no fulfiller of needs except Allah and no answerer of prayers, no remover of ills and no sovereign other than Him.

7. For explanation, see E.N. 41 of Al-A'rāf, E.N. 4 of Yūnus and E.N. 3 of Ar-Ra'd.

8. That is, "Your real God is the Creator of the heavens and earth. But you in your folly have set up others than Him as your helpers and supporters in the vast Kingdom of this Universe. The Creator of this whole Universe and whatever it contains is Allah. Here, everything except Himself is created, and Allah has not gone to sleep after having created and made the world go. But He Himself is the

Ruler and Sovereign and Sustainer of His Kingdom. Then, how senseless you are that you have set up a few of His creatures as the masters of your destinies ! If Allah does not help you, none of them has the power to help you. If Allah should seize you, none of them has the power to secure your liberty. If Allah does not permit, none of them has the power to intercede for you before Him."

9. That is, "The events of a thousand years of your history are a day's work for Allah." He entrusts His scheme of work to the "angels of destiny", who submit their report of work before Him and receive orders for the scheme of the next day (whose length according to your calculation would be a thousand years). "This thing has been expressed at two other places also in the Qur'ān, the study of which can help to understand it fully well. The disbelievers of Arabia said, "Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) claimed to be a Prophet many years ago. He has warned us again and again that if we did not accept his message and rejected his invitation, we would be seized by Allah's torment. He has been repeating this threat since many years, but the torment has not overtaken us, although we have denied and rejected him clearly over and over again. Had his threats any substance in them, we would have been seized in the torment long ago." In this connection, in Sūrah Al-Ḥajj Allah says: "These people are demanding of you to hasten the chastisement. Allah will never fail to fulfil His threat, but a day with your Lord is equal to a thousand years as you reckon." (v. 47)

In Sūrah Al-Ma'ārij (vv. 1-7), it has been said: "An asker has asked for a torment, (the torment) which must befall the disbelievers. There is none to avert it. It is from that God Who is the Owner of the Steps of Ascent. The angels and the Spirit ascend to His Presence in a day whose measure is fifty thousand years. So, have patience, O Prophet, a graceful patience! They think it is far off, but We see it near at hand."

What is meant to be impressed in these verses is this: Allah's decrees are not passed and enforced in the history of mankind according to the earthly watches and calendars. When a nation is warned that if it adopted such and such an attitude in life, it would meet with such and such an end, the people would be foolish if from this they understood that the predicted consequences would follow their evil acts and deeds immediately. Not to speak of days and months and years, the occurrence of the results may even take centuries.

10. That is, "For others one thing may be open and known but countless other things hidden. Whether angels or jinns, prophets or saints, or other pious people, none of them has the knowledge of everything. It is Allah alone Who knows everything. He knows all that has passed, all that is present, and all that will happen in the future."

11. "The All-Mighty": The One Who is dominant over everything: no power in the universe can hinder Him in His Design and Will and obstruct His Command from being enforced. Everything is subdued to Him and nothing can resist Him.

12. That is, He is not tyrannous to His creatures but is Gracious and Merciful in spite of being overwhelmingly dominant and possessor of all power and authority.

13. That is, "In this limitless universe He has created countless numbers of things, but none of them is ugly and ill-shaped: everything has its own special beauty: everything is proportionate and symmetrical in its own way. Whatever He has made for a particular purpose, He has given it the most appropriate form and invested it with the most suitable qualities for it. No better and more appropriate structure could be conceived; for example, for the eye and the ear which have been made for seeing and hearing. The air has precisely the same qualities which it should have for the purpose for which it has been made, and the water precisely the same qualities for the purpose for which it has been made. No one can point out any defect or flaw in the design of anything made by God, nor can anyone offer an alteration or modification in it."

14. That is, "In the beginning He created man directly by His own act of Creation, and then placed in man himself such a procreative ability that similar men continue being produced by his sperm-drop. By one excellent act He gave life and consciousness and intellect to a combination of earthly elements by His creative Command so that a wonderful creation like man came into being; by another excellent act He placed in man's own organism such a wonderful machinery for the production of similar more men in the future, whose mode of functioning is highly astonishing and amazing.

This is one of those verses of the Qur'ān, which points to the direct creation of the first man. The scientists since the time of Darwin have felt greatly critical of this concept and have rejected it with contempt as unscientific. But the fact is that they cannot get rid of the concept of the direct creation of the first germ, if not of the first man, or of the first species of animals. If creationism is not accepted, then one will have to accept the utterly absurd idea that life originated merely accidentally; whereas even the simplest form of life as found in the single cell organism is so full of complexities and subtleties that regarding it as the result of an accident would be a million times more unscientific an idea than what the evolutionists think of creationism. And if once it is accepted that the first germ came into being by an act of direct creation, it would be no longer difficult to accept that the first member of every species of animal life was created by the Creator's own act of creation, and then its race started through different forms of

procreation. If accepted this concept would explain away all those riddles and complexities which have remained unsolved in their theory of evolution in spite of all the scientific theorizing by the upholders of Darwinism. (For further explanation, see E.N. 1 of An-Nisā', E.N. 10 and 146 of Al-A'rāf, and E.N. 17 of Al-Hijr).

15. "Shaped him": developed him from a microscopic organism into a full fledged human being and perfected him with limbs and other organs of the body.

16. "Spirit" does not merely imply the life because of which a living thing moves, but the essential human characteristic which imbues man with consciousness and thought, discretion and judgement, discernment, and discrimination, by virtue of which he is distinguished from all other earthly creations and becomes possessor of a personality and self and worthy of Allah's vicegerency. Allah has called this "Spirit" His own either because it belongs to Him alone, and its being attributed to Himself is just like a thing's being attributed to its master, or because the attributes of knowledge, thought, consciousness, will, judgment, discretion, etc. with which man has been characterised are a reflection to the attributes of Allah. They have not arisen from any combination of matter, but from Allah Himself. Man has received knowledge from Allah's Knowledge, wisdom from Allah's Wisdom, and discretion and authority from Allah's Authority. He has not received these from a source which is without knowledge, without wisdom and without discretion and authority. (For further explanation, see E.N. 19 of Al-Hijr).

17. This is a fine way of saying something. Before the mention of "breathing into him of His spirit", man has been referred to in the third person: "He created him ..... spread his progeny ..... shaped him ..... breathed into him His spirit," for till then he was not even worthy of being addressed. Then, when the spirit had been breathed into him, he became worthy of the honour and it was said: "He gave you the ears . . . gave you the eyes . . . gave you the hearts," for after having been blessed with the Spirit, man became worthy of being addressed.

The ears and the eyes imply the instruments by which man obtains knowledge. Although the senses of taste and touch and smell are also instruments of obtaining knowledge, hearing and sight are the major and by far the more important senses. Therefore, the Qur'ān has mentioned only these two at different places as the most important gifts of God to man. "The Heart" implies the mind which arranges the information obtained through the senses and draws inferences from it, and selects a possible way of action and decides to follow it.

18. That is, "The wonderful human spirit with such excellent qualities has not been given to you so that you may live like the animals in the world and plan

life for yourselves as an animal would. You were given the eyes so that you may see things with insight and not that you should live like the blind people; you were given the ears so that you may hear things with attention and not that you should live like the deaf people; you were given the hearts so that you may understand the reality and adopt the right way in thought and action and not that you should expend all your capabilities for collecting the means of nourishing and sustaining your animality, or that you may devise philosophies and programmes of rebellion against your Creator. After having received these invaluable blessings from God, when you adopt polytheism and atheism, when you assume godhead yourself or become servants of other gods, when you lose yourself in sensual pleasure by serving your lusts, you in fact tell your God: "We were not worthy of these blessings: You should have made us a monkey, or a wolf, or an alligator, or a crow, instead of man."

19. After answering the disbelievers' objections about the Prophethood and *Tauhīd* now their objection about the Hereafter, which is the third basic belief of Islam, is being dealt with. The conjunction *wāw* (and) in the beginning of the verse connects this paragraph with the foregoing theme, as if the sequence were like this: "They say: Muḥammad is not Allah's Messenger," "They say: Allah is not One and the only Deity," and "They say: we shall not be raised back to life after death."

20. The gap between the preceding and this sentence has been left for the listener to fill. The objection of the disbelievers as cited in the first sentence is so absurd that no need has been felt to refute it. Only its citation was regarded as enough to show its absurdity. For the two parts which make up the objection are both unreasonable. Their saying: "When we have become dust" is meaningless for that which is "we" can never become dust. Dust is the destiny of the body after it has become devoid of the "we" The body itself is not the "we". When alive, limbs and other parts of the body may be cut off one by one, but the "we" remains intact. No part of it is cut off with the cut off limb. And when the "we" has vacated a body, the "we" remains no longer applicable even in its remotest sense although the body still remains intact. That is why a sincere lover goes and buries the body of his beloved, because the beloved is no more in the body. He buries not the beloved but the empty body, which was once the home of his beloved. Thus, the very first premise of the disbelievers' objection is baseless. As for its second part, "Shall we be re-created?" this question containing surprise and denial would not have arisen, had the objectors considered and taken into account the meaning of the "we" and its creation. The present existence of this "we" is nothing more than that a little of coal and iron and lime and some other earthly substances got together from here and there to combine themselves into a body, which became the home of the "we". Then what happens when it dies? When the

"we" has left the body, the constituent substances of its abode which had been gathered together from different parts of the earth go back to the same earth. The question is: He who had made this home for the "we", can He not make the same home from the same substances once again and settle the "we" in it? When this was possible before and has in actual fact existed, what can hinder its possibility and its existing as an actual fact once again? These are such things as can be understood by the application of a little of the common sense. But why doesn't man allow his mind to think on these lines? Why does he raise the meaningless objections about the life hereafter and the Hereafter? Leaving out all these details, Allah has answered this question in the second sentence, saying: "The fact is that they disbelieve in the meeting with their Lord." That is, "The real thing is not this that the recreation of man is something odd and remote in possibility, which they cannot understand, but in fact, what prevents them from understanding this is their desire to live freely and independently in the world and commit any sin, any excess that they please and then escape scot-free from here: they should not be held accountable for anything, nor answerable for any of their misdeeds."

21. That is, "Your 'ego' will not mix in the dust, but as soon as its term of action comes to an end, God's angel of death will come and will take it out of the body and seize it completely. No part of it will be allowed to become dust with the body. It will be taken intact into custody and produced before its Lord."

Let us consider in some detail the facts which have been presented in this brief verse:

(1) It says that death does not occur as a matter of course, like the stopping of a watch suddenly when it needs re-winding, but for this purpose Allah has appointed a special angel, who comes to receive the soul precisely in the manner as an official receiver takes something into his custody. From the details which have been mentioned at other places in the Qur'ān, it becomes apparent that the chief angel of death has a whole staff of the angels under him, who perform a variety of duties in connection with causing the death, seizing the soul and taking it into custody. Moreover, their treatment of a guilty soul is different from their treatment of a believing, righteous soul. (For details, see An-Nisā': 97, Al-An'ām: 93, An-Nahl: 28, Al-Wāqi'ah: 83-94).

(2) It also shows that man does not cease to exist after death, but his soul survives the body. The words of the Qur'ān: "The angel of death shall seize you completely," point out the same reality. For something which does not exist cannot be seized. Seizing something and taking it into custody implies that the seized thing should be in possession of the seizer.

(3) It also shows that at the time of death that which is seized is not the biological life of man but his self, his ego, which is connoted by the words like "I" and "we" and "you". Whatever personality this ego may have developed during its life-activity in the world, the same is taken out intact as a whole, without effecting any increase or decrease in its characteristics, and the same is made to return to its Lord after death. The same personality will be given a new birth and a new body in the Hereafter; the same will be subjected to trial; the same will be called to account; and the same will have to experience rewards or punishments.

22. This will be the scene when after returning to its Lord the human 'ego' will be standing before Him to render an account of its deeds.

23. That is, "Had it been Our will to give guidance to the people after having made them observe and experience the reality, We would not have brought you here after making you undergo this hard test in the world. We could have given you such guidance even before. But We had a different scheme for you from the very beginning. We wanted to test you by keeping the reality hidden from your eyes and senses in order to see whether you could recognize it by your intellect after perceiving its signs in the universe and in your own selves or not, whether you could take advantage of the help that We provided to you through Our Prophets and Our Books to recognize the reality or not, and whether after knowing the reality you could attain such control over your self or not that you should free yourselves from the service of your desires and lusts and believe in the reality and mend your ways and attitudes accordingly. You have failed in this test. Now setting the same test once again will be useless. If the second test is set in a condition when you remember everything that you have seen and heard here, it will be no test at all. And if, like before, you are given re-birth in the world, while you do not remember anything and the reality is kept hidden from you, and you are set the test once again as before the result will not be any different." (For further explanation, see Al-Baqarah: 210, Al-An'ām: 7-9, 27-28, 158; Yūnus: 19; Al-Mu'minūn: 99-100).

24. The allusion is to what Allah had said, addressing Satan, at the creation of Adam: In vv. 69-88 of Sūrah Sād the whole story of that time has been related. When Satan refused to prostrate himself before Adam and asked for

[Contd. on p.51

الْعَذَابِ الْأَدْنٰى دُوْنَ الْعَذَابِ الْأَكْبَرِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ
مِمَّنْ ذُكِّرَ بِاٰيٰتِ رَبِّهٖ ثُمَّ أَعْرَضَ عَنْهَا ۚ إِنَّا مِنَ الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ مُنْتَقِمُوْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾
وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا مُوْسَى الْكِتٰبَ فَلَا تَكُنْ فِيْ مِرْيَةٍ مِّنْ لِّقَآئِهٖ وَجَعَلْنٰهُ هُدًى
لِّبَنِيْٓ إِسْرَآءِيْلَ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ أَئِمَّةً يَّهْدُوْنَ بِأَمْرِنَا لَمَّا صَبَرُوْا ۖ وَكَانُوْا
بِاٰيٰتِنَا يُوْقِنُوْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ يَفْصِلُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ فِيْمَا كَانُوْا فِيْهِ
يَخْتَلِفُوْنَ ﴿٢٥﴾ أَوَلَمْ يَهْدِ لَهُمْ كَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِّنَ الْقُرُوْنِ يَمْشُوْنَ
فِيْ مَسٰكِنِهِمْ ۚ إِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ ۖ أَفَلَا يَسْمَعُوْنَ ﴿٢٦﴾ أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا نَسُوْقُ
الْمَآءَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ الْجُرُزِ فَنُخْرِجُ بِهٖ زَرْعًا تَأْكُلُ مِنْهُ أَنْعَامُهُمْ وَأَنْفُسُهُمْ ۖ
أَفَلَا يُبْصِرُوْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ مَتٰى هٰذَا الْفَتْحُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ قُلْ
يَوْمَ الْفَتْحِ لَا يَنْفَعُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْٓا إِيْمَانُهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يُنْظَرُوْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾ فَأَعْرِضْ
عَنْهُمْ وَانْتَظِرْ إِنَّهُمْ مُّنْتَظِرُوْنَ ﴿٣٠﴾

21-22 Even in this world We shall make them taste (one or the other) lesser torment before that greater torment; may-be they desist (from their rebellious attitude).[33] And who could be more wicked than the one who is admonished by the Signs of his Lord and he spurns them?[34] We shall certainly take vengeance on such criminals.

23-25 Before this We gave Moses the Book. You should, therefore, have no doubt on receiving the same.[35] We had made that Book a Guidance for the children of Israel;[36] and when they showed patience and continued to have faith in Our Revelations, We raised among them such leaders as guided (the people) by Our Command.[37] Surely on the Day of Resurrection your Lord alone will decide those things about which (the Israelites) have been differing among themselves.[38]

26-30 And have they found no guidance (in the historical events) that before them We have destroyed many a nation in whose dwelling places they move about?[39] There are many Signs in this. Do they not hear? And have they never seen how We cause the water to flow to a barren land and therefrom bring forth crops of which their animals and they themselves eat? Do they not see anything?[40] They ask, "When will this judgement take place if you are truthful?"[41] Tell them, "To believe on the Day of Judgement will not in any way profit those who have disbelieved, nor will they get any respite after that."[42] Well, leave them to themselves, and wait: they too are waiting.

Contd. from p. 49]

respite till Resurrection in order to seduce mankind, Allah had replied: "The truth is this, and the truth only I speak, that I shall fill Hell with you and all those who follow you from among mankind."

The word *ajma'in* (all together) here does not mean that all jinns and all men will be cast into Hell, but it means that the satans and the men who follow them, will be cast into Hell all together.

25. That is, "You became so absorbed in pleasure-seeking in the world that you totally forgot that you had to meet your Lord on this Day."

26. In other words, they do not regard it as below their dignity to give up their false notions and believe in Allah's Revelations and adopt His service and obedience. Their conceit does not hinder them from accepting the truth and obeying their Lord.

27. That is, "They worship their Lord instead of enjoying sensuous pleasures at night. They are not like the world-worshippers, who seek entertainments in music and dancing, drinking and merry-making, in the night in order to get relief from the day's fatigue and labour and toil. Instead, when they are free from their day's work and duties, they devote themselves to the adoration of their Lord, spend their nights in His remembrance, tremble out of fear of Him, and pin all their hopes on Him."

"Who forsake their beds" does not mean that they do not sleep at all at night, but that they spend a part of the night in Allah's worship.

28. In the original, *rizq:* lawful provisions. Unlawful provisions have nowhere been called *rizq* by Allah. The verse therefore means: They spend from whatever little or much of pure provisions We have given them; they do not over-spend and do not grab unlawful wealth in order to meet their expenses.

29. Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī and Imām Ahmad have in different ways cited on the authority of Hadrat Abū Hurairah that the Holy Prophet said: "Allah says: I have got ready for My righteous servants that which has neither been seen by the eye, nor heard by the ear, nor ever conceived by any man." The same thing has been reported with a little difference in wording by Ḥaḍrat Abū Sa'īd Khudrī, Mughīrah bin Shu'bah and Sahl bin Sa'd as-Sāi'dī from the Holy Prophet and related with authentic links by Muslim, Aḥmad, Ibn Jarīr and Tirmidhī.

30. Here *mu'min* (believer) and *Fāsiq* (sinner) have been used as two contrasting terms. *Mu'min* is he who believes in Allah as his Lord and the One and only Deity and adopts obedience of the Law which Allah has sent down through His Prophets. Contrary to this, *fāsiq* is he who adopts the attitude of *fisq* (disobedience, rebellion, independence and obedience to others than Allah).

31. That is, "They can neither have the same way of thinking and life in the world nor can they be treated alike by God in the Hereafter."

32. That is, "The Gardens will not merely be a means of entertainment for them, but the same will be their dwelling-places in which they will live for ever."

33. "The greater torment" is the torment of the Hereafter, which will be imposed on the guilty ones in consequence of disbelief and disobedience. "The lesser torment", in contrast, implies those calamities which afflict man even in this world, e.g., diseases in the life of individuals, deaths of the near and dear ones, serious accidents, losses, failures, etc. and storms, earthquakes, floods, epidemics, famines, riots, wars and many other disasters, in collective life, which affect hundreds of thousands of the people simultaneously. The reason given for sending these calamities is that the people should take heed even before they are involved in the "greater torment" and give up the attitude and way of life in consequence of which they will have to suffer the greater torment ultimately. In other words, it means this: Allah has not kept man in perfect security in the world so that he may live in full peace, and become involved in the misunderstanding that there is no power above him, which can cause him harm. But Allah has so arranged things that He sends disasters and calamities on individuals as well as on nations and countries from time to time, which give man the feeling that he is helpless and that there is above him an All-Powerful Sovereign Who is ruling His universal Kingdom. These calamities remind each individual and group and nation that there is another Power above him Who is controlling their destinies. Everything has not been placed at man's disposal. The real Power is in the hand of the Sovereign. When a calamity from Him descends on man, you can neither avert it by any artifice, nor can escape from it by invoking a jinn, or a spirit, or a god or goddess, or a prophet or saint. Considered in this light, these calamities are not

mere calamities but warnings of God, which are sent to make man conscious of the reality and to remove his misunderstandings. If man learns a lesson from these and corrects his belief and conduct here in the world, he will not have to face the greater torment of God in the Hereafter."

34. "The Signs of his Lord" include all kinds of the Signs. A perusal of all the Qur'ânic verses in this regard shows that these Signs are of the following six kinds:

(1) The Signs which are found in everything from the earth to the heavens and in the system of the universe as a whole.

(2) The Signs which are found in man's own creation and in his constitution and body.

(3) The Signs which are found in man's intuition, his unconscious and subconscious mind and in his moral concepts.

(4) The Signs which are found in the continuous experience of human history.

(5) The Signs which are found in the coming down of the earthly and heavenly calamities on man.

(6) And, over and above all these, the Revelations which Allah sent through His Prophets so that man may be made conscious in a rational way of those realities, which are pointed out by all the above-mentioned Signs.

All these Signs proclaim consistently and clearly: "O man, you are neither without God, nor the servant of many gods, but your God is only One God: no other way of life is correct for you except the way of His service and obedience. You have not been left to live a free and independent and irresponsible life in this world, but you have to appear before your God and render an account of your deeds after your life-activity here has come to an end, and be rewarded or punished accordingly. Therefore, it is in your own interest that you should follow the guidance which your God has sent through His Prophets and His Books for your instruction and desist from an independent way of life." Now, obviously, the man who has been warned in so many different ways, for whose admonition countless different Signs have been provided, and who has been blessed with the eyes to see and the ears to hear and the mind to think, and yet he closes his eyes to all these Signs, and closes his ears to the admonitions of his well-wishers, and uses his mind also for inventing stupid and blind philosophies only can be a wretched and wicked person. He only deserves to be given full punishment for rebellion when he appears before his God after the expiry of the period of test in the world.

35. The address apparently is to the Holy Prophet, but the real addressees are the people who doubted his Prophethood and the revelation of the Divine Book

to him. From here the discourse turns to the same theme that was mentioned in the beginning of the Sūrah (vv. 2-3). The disbelievers of Makkah were saying: "No book has come down to Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) from Allah. He has himself forged it, but claims that it has been sent down by Allah." The first answer to this was given in the initial verses. This is the second answer. The first thing said in this regard is: "O Prophet, these ignorant people regard it as impossible that a Book should be sent down to you, and want that every other person also should at least be involved in suspicion about it even if he does not reject it altogether. But the revelation of a Book to a servant from Allah is not a novel and new event, which might have occurred for the first time today in human history. Before this Books have been sent down to several Prophets, the most well known among these being the Book which was sent down to the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him). A Book of the same nature has been sent down to you now. Therefore, there is nothing odd and strange in this, which may cause doubts in the minds of the people."

36. That is, "That Book was made a means of guidance for the children of Israel, and this Book, likewise, has been sent down for your guidance." As has already been elucidated in verse 3, the full meaning of this verse can be understood only if one keeps in view the historical background. History bears evidence, and the disbelievers of Makkah also were not unaware, that the children of Israel had been passing miserable lives for centuries in Egypt. At such a juncture, Allah raised the Prophet Moses among them, and delivered them from bondage. Then He sent down the Book among them, because of which the same very suppressed and subdued nation got guidance and became a prominent nation in the world. Alluding to this historical background, the Arabs are being told: "Just as that Book was sent for the guidance of the Israelites, so has this Book been sent for your guidance."

37. That is, "Whatever progress the children of Israel made and whatever heights they attained by that Book, was not simply due to the reason that a Book had been sent among them. It was not an amulet that they might have hung around their necks and they might have started ascending the steps of glory under its good and protective influence. But the glory was the direct result of their firm faith in the Revelations of Allah, and of the patience and perseverance that they showed in following the Divine Commandments. Among the Israelites themselves also leadership fell to the lot of only those who were true believers of the Book of Allah and were not tempted at all by the greed of worldly gains and enjoyments. When in their love of the truth they stood firm against every danger, endured every loss and affliction, and exerted their utmost against every hostile force, from the lusts of their own selves to the external enemies of the true Faith, then only did they become the leaders of the world. The object is to warn the disbelievers of

Arabia that just as the coming of the Book of Allah had decided the destinies of the children of Israel, so will this Book decide the destinies among you. Now only those people will become the leaders, who will believe in it and follow the Truth presented by it patiently and resolutely. Those who turn away from it are destined to end up in failure and wretchedness."

38. The allusion is to the differences and schisms in which the children of Israel were involved after they became deprived of the faith and belief and gave up obedience of their righteous leaders and were given to the worship of the world. One result of this is obvious and before the whole world: they suffer from disgrace and infamy and misfortune; the other result is that which is not known, to the world: it will appear on the Day of Resurrection."

39. That is, "Have they not learnt any lesson from this continuous experience of history that to whichever nation a Messenger came, the decision of its destiny became dependent upon the attitude it adopted with regard to him? If it rejected its Messenger, it could not escape its doom. The only people to escape were those who believed in the Messenger. Those who disbelieved became an object of warning for ever and ever."

40. Keeping the context in view it becomes obvious that this thing has not been mentioned here for the sake of providing an argument for the life-after-death, as generally found in the Qur'ān, but in this context its object is different. This, in fact, contains a subtle allusion to this effect: "Just as a person seeing a barren land cannot imagine that it will ever bloom and swell with vegetation, but a single shower of the rain sent by God changes its colour altogether, so is the case with the message of Islam at this juncture. People think that it is not going to gain ground, but a single manifestation of Allah's power and grace will cause it to gain such glory that people will be amazed at its progress."

41. That is, "You say that Allah's succour will at last reach you and your rejectors will be struck down by His wrath. Then, tell us: When will this happen? When will judgement be passed between you and us?"

42. That is, "It is not a thing for which you should feel so impatient and restless. When the torment of Allah comes, you will get no time to mend your ways. Make the best of the time which is available before the coming of the torment. If you will believe only when you see the torment, it will not avail you anything then."


XXXIII
AL-AḤZĀB
الأحزاب

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XXXIII

AL-AHZĀB

الاحزاب

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah derives its name *Al-Ahzāb* from verse 20.

Period of Revelation

The Sūrah discusses three important events which are: the Battle of the Trench (or *Al-Ahzāb:* the Clans), which took place in Shawwāl, A.H. 5; the raid on Banī Quraiẓah, which was made in Dhil-Qa'dah, A.H. 5; and the Holy Prophet's marriage with Ḥaḍrat Zainab, which also was contracted in Dhil-Qa'dah, A.H. 5. These historical events accurately determine the period of the revelation of this Sūrah.

Historical Background

The Islamic army's setback in the Battle of Uḥud (A.H. 3) that resulted from the error of the archers appointed by the Holy Prophet so boosted up the morale of the Arab pagans and the Jews and the hypocrites that they started entertaining the hope that they would soon be able to exterminate Islam and the Muslims completely. Their high state

of morale can be judged from the events that occurred in the first year after Uhud. Hardly two months had passed when the tribe of Banī Asad of Najd began to make preparations for a raid on Madīnah and the Holy Prophet had to despatch an expedition under Abū Salamah to counteract them. In Safar A.H. 4 some people of the tribes of 'Adal and Qārah asked the Holy Prophet to send some men to instruct them in Islam. Accordingly six of the Companions were allowed to accompany them for the purpose. But when they reached Rajī' (a place between Rābigh and Jeddah), they summoned Hudhail against them, who killed four of the Companions, and took the other two (Hadrat Khubaib bin 'Adī and Hadrat Zaid bin ad-Dathinnah) to Makkah and sold them to the enemy. Then in the same month of Safar, on the request of a chief of Banī 'Āmir, the Holy Prophet sent another deputation of 40 (according to others, 70) preachers, consisting of the Ansar young men, to Najd. But they were also betrayed. The people of 'Usayyah and Ri'l and Dhakwān, tribes of Banī Sulaim, surrounded them suddenly at Bi'r Ma'ūnah and slew all of them. Meanwhile the Jewish tribe of Banī an-Nadīr of Madīnah, getting encouragement, continued to commit breaches of the treaties; so much so that in Rabī'ul Awwal, A.H. 4, they plotted against the life of the Holy Prophet himself. Then in Jamādī al-Ūlā, A.H. 4, Banī Tha'lbah and Banī Muhārib, the two tribes of Banī Ghatafān started making preparations to attack Madīnah and the Holy Prophet had to go to punish them. Thus, after their setback at Uhud, the Muslims went on encountering repercussions continuously for seven to eight months.

However, it was the Holy Prophet's determination and wisdom and his great Companions' spirit of sacrifice that changed these adverse conditions completely within a short span of time. The economic boycott by the Arabs had made life hard for the people of Madīnah. All the polytheistic tribes around Madīnah were becoming rebellious. Inside Madīnah itself the Jews and the hypocrites were bent upon mischief. But the successive steps taken by a handful of the sincere Muslims, under the leadership of the Holy Prophet, not only restored the image of strength of Islam in Arabia but also increased it manifold.

Raids preceding the Battle of the Trench

The first such step was taken immediately after the Battle of Uhud. The very next day when quite a large number of Muslims lay wounded and the martyrdom of the near and dear ones was being

mourned in many houses, and the Holy Prophet himself was injured and sad at the martyrdom of his uncle, Hadrat Hamzah, he called out to the devoted servants of Islam to accompany him in pursuit of the pagans so as to deter them from returning and attacking Madīnah again. The Holy Prophet's assessment was absolutely correct. He knew that, although the Quraish had retreated without taking any advantage of their almost complete victory, they would certainly regret their folly when they would halt and consider the whole matter coolly on the way, and would return to attack Madinah again. Therefore, he decided to go in pursuit of them, and 630 of the Muslims at once volunteered to accompany him. When they reached Hamra'al-Asad on the way to Makkah and camped there for three days, the Holy Prophet came to know through a sympathetic non-Muslim that Abū Sufyān had stayed at Ar-Rauhā', 36 miles short of Madīnah, with an army 2,978 strong: they were regretting their error and were, in fact, planning to return and attack Madīnah once again. But when they heard that the Holy Prophet was coming in pursuit of them with an army, they lost heart and gave up their plan. Thus, not only were the Quraish deterred by this action but the other enemies living around Madīnah also realized that the Muslims were being led by a person, who was highly well-informed, wise and resolute, and that the Muslims were ever ready to lay down their lives at his command. (For further details, see Introduction to Sūrah Āl-i-'Imrān and E.N. 122 thereof).

Then as soon as the Banī Asad started making preparations for a raid on Madīnah, the Holy Prophet's secret agents gave him timely information about their intention. Thus, before they could come in force to attack Madīnah, he sent an army 150 strong, under Hadrat Abū Salamah (the first husband of Hadrat Umm Salamah) to punish them. They took Banī Asad by surprise, who fled in panic leaving all their possessions behind, which fell into the Muslim hands.

After this came the turn of the Banī an-Nadīr. The day they plotted against the life of the Holy Prophet, and the secret was disclosed, the Holy Prophet ordered them to leave Madīnah within ten days and warned that anyone who remained behind after that would be put to death. 'Abdullah bin Ubayy, the chief of the hypocrites of Madīnah, encouraged them to defy the order and refuse to leave Madīnah. He even promised to help them with 2,000 men, and assured them that the Banī

Ghaṭafān from Najd also would come to their aid. Accordingly, the Banī an-Naḍir sent word that they would not leave no matter what the Holy Prophet might do.

As soon as the time limit of ten days came to an end, the Holy Prophet laid siege to their quarters, but none of their supporters had the courage to come to their rescue. At last, they surrendered on condition that every three of them would be allowed to load a camel with whatever they could carry and go away leaving the rest of their possessions behind. Thus, the whole suburbs of the city which were inhabited by the Banī an-Naḍir, and their gardens and their fortresses and other properties fell to the Muslims, and the people of this treacherous tribe became scattered in Khaiber, Wād il-Qurā' and Syria.

Then the Holy Prophet turned his attention to the Banī Ghaṭafān, who were preparing for a war against Madīnah. He took 400 of the Muslims and overtook them at Dhāt ar-Riqā'. They were so taken by surprise that they fled their houses without a struggle and took refuge in the mountains.

After this in Sha'bān A.H. 4, the Holy Prophet went forth to Badr to fight Abū Sufyān. At the end of the Battle of Uḥud, he had challenged the Holy Prophet and the Muslims, saying, "We shall again meet you in combat at Badr next year." In reply the Holy Prophet announced through a Companion: "All right: we accept your challenge." Accordingly, at the appointed time he reached Badr with 1,500 of the Muslims. From the other side, Abū Sufyān left Makkah with an army of 2,000 men, but could not have the courage to march beyond Marr-aẓ-Ẓahrān (modern, Wādī Fāṭimah). The Holy Prophet waited for him at Badr for eight days; the Muslims during these days did profitable business with a trading party. This incident helped more than restore the image of strength of the Muslims that had been tarnished at Uḥud. It also made the whole of Arabia realize that the Quraish alone could no longer resist Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings). (Please also refer to E.N. 124 of Āl-i-'Imrān).

This image and position of the Muslims was further strengthened by another event. Dūmat al-Jandal (modern, Al-Jauf) was an important place at the border between Arabia and Syria. When the caravans of the Arabs, trading between 'Irāq in the south and Syria and Egypt in the

north, passed that way, they were harassed and looted by the natives. In Rabi' al-Awwal, A.H. 5, the Holy Prophet himself went to punish them with an army of 1,000 men. They could not muster up courage to come out and fight him and, therefore, fled the place. This caused the whole of northern Arabia to dread the power of Islam, and the tribes began to realize that the great power emerging from Al Madīnah was formidable and could no longer be resisted by one or a few of the tribes.

The Battle of the Trench

Such were the conditions when the Battle of the Trench took place. It was in fact a combined raid by many of the Arab tribes, who wanted to crush the power of Madīnah. It had been instigated by the leaders of the Banī an-Nadīr, who had settled in Khaiber after their banishment from Madīnah. They went round to the Quraish and Ghaṭafān and Hudhail and many other tribes and induced them to gather all their forces together and attack Madīnah jointly. Thus, in Shawwāl, A.H. 5, an unprecedentedly large army of the Arab tribes marched against the small city of Madīnah. From the north came Jews of Banī an-Naḍir and Banī Qainuqā', who after their banishment from Madīnah, had settled in Khaiber and Wād il-Qurā. From the east advanced the tribes of Ghaṭafān— Banī Sulaim, Fazārah, Murrah, Ashja', Sa'd, Asad, etc. — and from the south the Quraish, along with a large force of their allies. Together they numbered from ten to twelve thousand men.

Had it been a sudden attack, it would have been disastrous. But the Holy Prophet was not unaware of this in Madīnah. His intelligence men and the sympathisers of the Islamic movement and the people influenced by it were present in every tribe, who kept him informed of the enemy's movements.[1] Even before the enemy could reach his city, he got a trench dug out on the north-west of Madīnah in six days, and having the Mount Sal'a at their back, took up a defensive position with 3,000 men in the protection of the Trench. To the south of Madīnah there were

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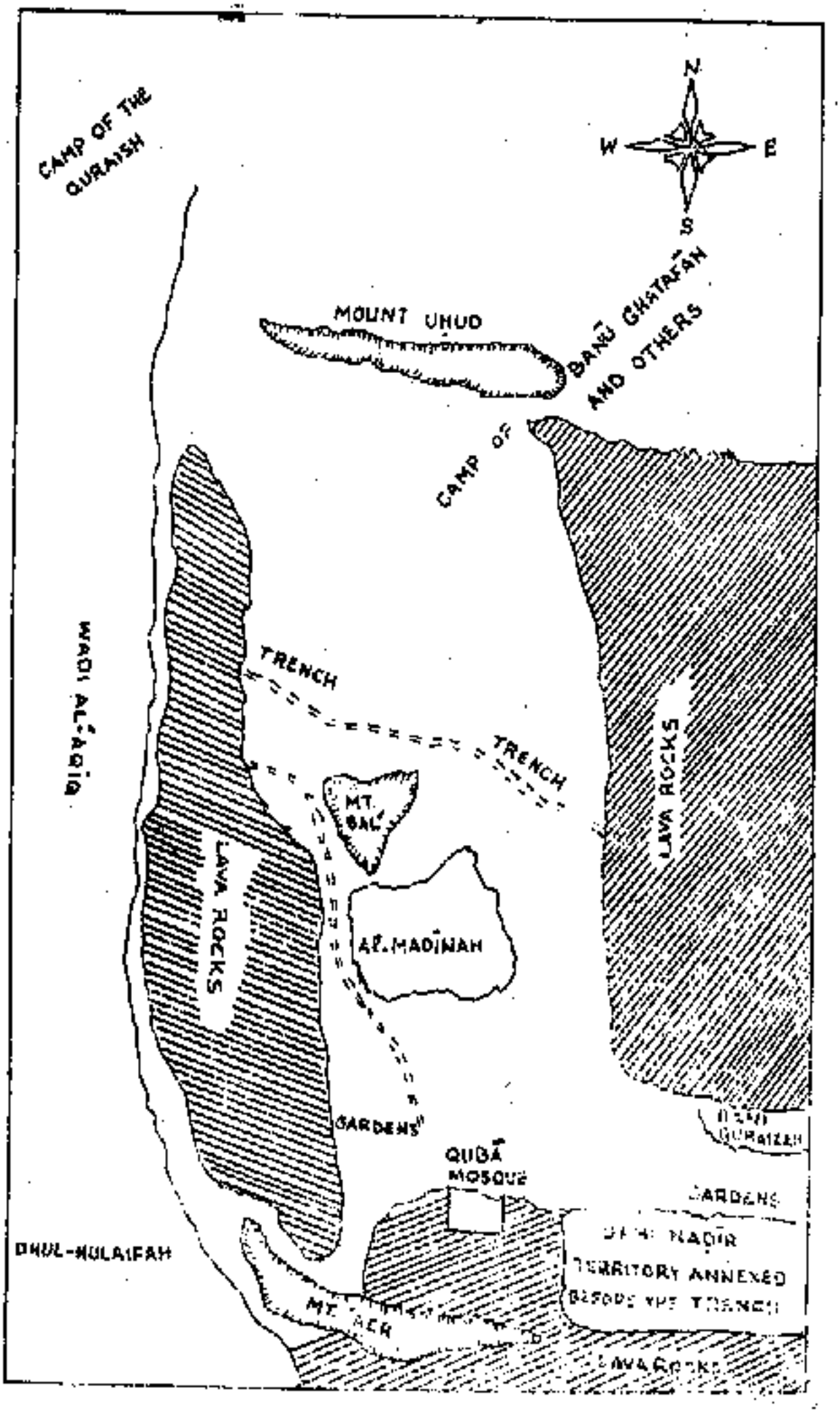
1. This is an important factor of the superiority of an ideological movement over nationalist hordes, who only rely on the support of the individuals of their own tribes and nations. An ideological movement, on the other hand, advances in every direction, and draws its supporters even from among the nationalist hordes themselves.

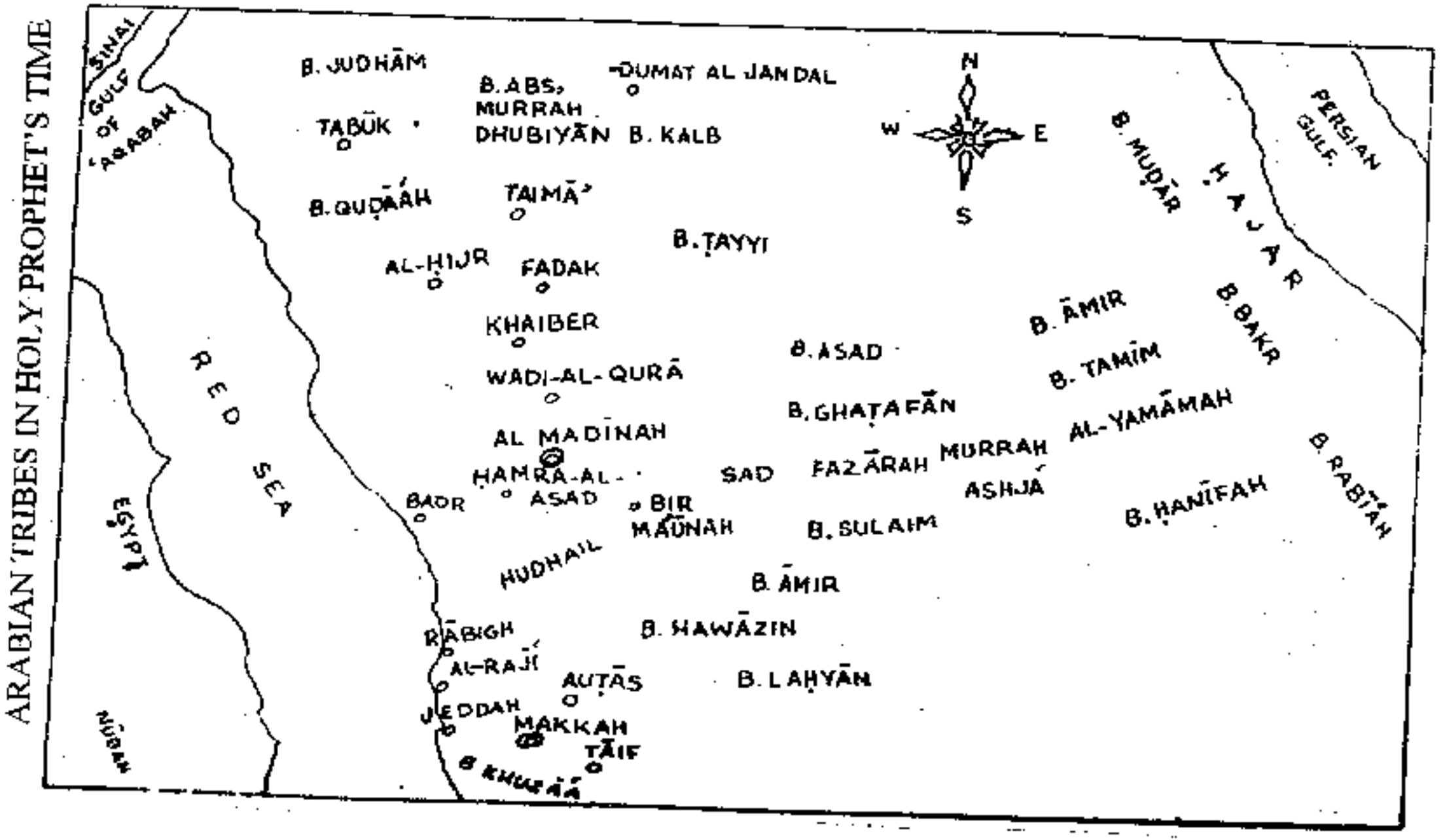
many gardens (even now there are) so that it could not be attacked from that side. To the east there are lava rocks which are impassable for a large army. The same is the case with the south-western side. The attack, therefore, could be made only from the eastern and western sides of the Uhud, which the Holy Prophet had secured by digging a trench. The disbelievers were not at all aware that they would have to counter the trench outside Madīnah. This kind of a defensive stratagem was unknown to the Arabs. Thus, they had to lay a long siege in winter for which they had not come prepared.

After this, only one alternative remained with the disbelievers: to incite the Jewish tribe of Banī Quraiẓah, who inhabited the south-eastern part of the city, to rebellion. As the Muslims had entered a treaty with them that in case of an attack on Madīnah they would defend the city along with them, the Muslims had made no defensive arrangement there and had even sent their families to take shelter in the forts situated on that side. The invaders perceived this weakness of the Islamic defenses. They sent Ḥuyayy bin Akhṭab, the Jewish leader of the Banī an-Naḍīr, to the Banī Quraiẓah so as to induce them to break the treaty and join the war. In the beginning, they refused to oblige and said that they had a treaty with Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), who had faithfully abided by it and given them no cause for complaint. But when Ibn Akhṭab said to them, "Look, I have summoned the united force of entire Arabia against him: this is a perfect opportunity to get rid of him. If you lose it, you will never have another opportunity," the anti-Islamic Jewish mind prevailed over every moral consideration and the Banī Quraiẓah were persuaded to break the treaty.

The Holy Prophet received news of this. He at once told Sa'd bin 'Ubādah, Sa'd bin Mu'ādh, 'Abdullah bin Rawāhah and Khawwāt bin Jubair, chiefs of the Anṣār, to go and find out the truth. He advised them that if they found Banī Quraiẓah still loyal to the treaty, they should return and say so openly before the Muslim army; however, if they found that they were bent upon treachery they should only inform him so that the common Muslims would not be disheartened. On reaching there the Companions found the Banī Quraiẓah fully bent on mischief. They told the Companions openly, "There is no agreement and no treaty between us and Muḥammad." At this they returned to the Islamic army and submitted their report to the Holy Prophet, saying,

BATTLEFIELD OF THE TRENCH




ARABIAN TRIBES IN HOLY PROPHET'S TIME
SINAI
GULF OF 'AQABAH
B. JUDHĀM
DUMAT AL JANDAL
B. ABS,
MURRAH
DHUBIYĀN
B. KALB
TABŪK
B. QUḌĀ'AH
TAIMĀ'
B. ṬAYYI
AL-ḤIJR
FADAK
KHAIBER
WADI-AL-QURĀ
AL MADĪNAH
ḤAMRA-AL-ASAD
BADR
BIR MAŪNAH
HUDHAIL
RĀBIGH
AL-RAJĪ
AUṬĀS
JEDDAH
MAKKAH
ṬĀIF
B. KHUZĀ'Ā
RED SEA
EGYPT
YEMEN
N
W
E
S
PERSIAN GULF
B. MUḌAR
ḤAJAR
B. BAKR
B. ĀMIR
B. TAMĪM
AL-YAMĀMAH
B. ASAD
B. GHAṬAFĀN
FAZĀRAH
MURRAH
ASHJA'
B. SAD
B. SULAIM
B. ĀMIR
B. HAWĀZIN
B. LAḤYĀN
B. ḤANĪFAH
B. RABĪ'AH

"Adal and Qārah." That is, "The Quraiẓah are bent upon doing what the 'Adal and Qārah had done with the preachers of Islam at Rajī'."

This news spread among the Muslims and caused great consternation among them, for they had been encircled and their city had been endangered on the side where there existed no defensive arrangement and where they had also sent their families to take shelter in the forts. This further increased the activities of the hypocrites and they started making psychological attacks to break the morale of the Muslims. One said, "How strange! We were being foretold that the lands of Caesar and Chosroes would fall to us, but here we are that not one of us can go out even to relieve himself." Another one asked for permission to leave his post at the Trench so that he could go and protect his own house which was in danger. Another one started making secret propaganda to the effect: "Settle your affair with the invaders yourselves and hand over Muḥammad to them." This was a highly critical hour of trial, which exposed every person who harboured any hypocrisy in his heart. Only the true and sincere Muslims remained firm and steadfast in their resolve and devotion.

The Holy Prophet at that critical moment initiated peace negotiations with the Banī Ghaṭafān and tried to persuade them to accept one-third of the fruit-harvest of Madīnah and withdraw. But when he asked Sa'd bin 'Ubādah and Sa'd bin Mu'ādh, chiefs of the Anṣār, for their opinion about the conditions of peace, they said, "O Messenger of Allah: Is it your personal wish that we should agree on these conditions, or is it Allah's Command that we have no option but to accept it? Or, are you giving this proposal only in order to save us from the enemy?" The Holy Prophet replied, "I am proposing this only to save you: I see that the whole of Arabia has formed a united front against you. I want to divide the enemy." At this the two chiefs protested, saying, "Sir, if you want to conclude this pact for our sake, kindly forget it. These tribes could not subdue us under tribute when we were polytheists. Now that we have the honour of believing in Allah and His Messenger, will they make us sink to this depth of ignominy? The sword now shall be the arbiter till Allah passes His judgement between them and us." With these words they tore up the draft for the treaty which had not yet been signed.

In the meantime Nu'aim bin Mas'ūd, a member of the Ashja' branch of the Ghaṭafān tribe, became a Muslim and came before the Holy Prophet and submitted: "No one as yet knows that I have embraced Islam: You can take from me whatever service you please." The Holy Prophet replied: "Go and sow the seeds of discord among the enemy.[1] So, first of all, Nu'aim went to the Quraiẓah with whom he was on friendly terms, and said to them, "The Quraish and the Ghaṭafān can become wearied of the siege and go back, and they will lose nothing, but you have to live here with the Muslims. Just consider what was be your position if the matter turns that way. Therefore, I would advise you not to join the enemy until the outsiders should send some of their prominent men as hostages to you." This had the desired effect upon the Banī Quraiẓah and they decided to demand hostages from the united front of the tribes. Then he went to the chiefs of the Quraish and the Ghaṭafān and said to them, "The Banī Quraiẓah seem to be slack and irresolute. May be they demand some men as hostage from you, and then hand them over to Muḥammad (upon whom be Allāh's peace) to settle their affair with him. Therefore, be very firm and cautious in your dealing with them." This made the leaders of the united front suspicious of Banī Quraiẓah and they sent them a message, saying, "We are tired of the long siege; let there be a decisive battle; let us, therefore, make a general assault simultaneously from both the sides." The Banī Quraiẓah sent back the word, saying, "We cannot afford to join the war unless you hand over some of your prominent men to us as hostages." The leaders of the united front became convinced that what Nu'aim had said was true. They refused to send hostages. And the Banī Quraiẓah, on the other side, also felt that Nu'aim had given them the correct counsel. Thus, the strategy worked: it divided the enemy against itself.

The siege was prolonged for more than 25 days. It was winter. The supply of food and water and forage was becoming more and more scarce everyday and division in the camp was also a great strain on the state of morale of the besiegers. Then, suddenly one night a severe windstorm accompanied by thunder and lightning hit the camp. It added to the cold and darkness. The wind overthrew the tents and put the

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1. On this occasion the Holy Prophet had said: "It is permissible to practise deception in war."

enemy in disarray. They could not stand this severe blow of nature. They left the battleground even during the night and returned to their homes. When the Muslims awoke in the morning, there was not a single enemy soldier to be seen on the battlefield. The Holy Prophet, finding the battlefield completely empty, said: "The Quraish will never be able to attack you after this: now you will take the offensive." This was a correct assessment of the situation. Not only the Quraish but the united front of all the enemy tribes had made their final assault against Islam and had failed. Now they could no longer dare invade Madīnah; now the Muslims were on the offensive.

Raid on Banī Quraiẓah

When the Holy Prophet returned from the Trench, Gabriel came to him in the early afternoon with the Divine Command that the Muslims should not lay aside the arms yet but should deal with the Banī Quraiẓah as well. On receipt of this Command, the Holy Prophet got announced "Everyone who is steadfast in obedience should not offer his 'Asr Prayer till he reaches the locality of the Banī Quraiẓah." Immediately after this, he despatched Ḥaḍrat 'Ali with a contingent of soldiers as vanguard towards the Quraiẓah. When they reached there, the Jews climbed on to their roof tops and started hurling abuses on the Holy Prophet and the Muslims, but their invectives could not save them from the consequences of their treachery. They had committed breach of the treaty right at the most critical moment of the war, joined hands with the invaders and endangered the entire population of Madīnah. When they saw the contingent of Ḥaḍrat 'Ali, they thought that they had come only to overawe them. But when the whole Islamic army arrived under the command of the Holy Prophet himself and laid siege to their quarters, they were very frightened. They could not stand the severity of the siege for more than two or three weeks. At last, they surrendered themselves to the Holy Prophet on the condition that they would accept whatever decision Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin Mu'ādh, the chief of the Aus, would give. They had accepted Ḥaḍrat Sa'd as their judge because in the pre-Islamic days the Aus and the Quraiẓah had been confederates and they hoped that in view of the past ties he would help them quit Madīnah as had happened in the case of the Banī Qainuqā' and the Banī an-Naḍīr before. The people of the Aus themselves wished that Ḥaḍrat Sa'd treat their previous allies leniently. But Ḥaḍrat Sa'd had just experienced and seen

how the two Jewish tribes who had been allowed to leave Madinah previously had instigated the other tribes living around Madinah and summoned the united front of ten to twelve thousand men against the Muslims. He was also aware how treacherously this last Jewish tribe had behaved right on the occasion when the city was under attack from outside and threatened the safety of the whole of its population. Therefore, he decreed that all the male members of the Quraiẓah should be put to death, their women and children taken prisoners, and their properties distributed among the Muslims. The sentence was carried out duly. When the Muslims entered their strongholds they found that the treacherous people had collected 1,500 swords, 300 coats of mail, 2,000 spears and 1,500 shields in order to join the war. If Allah's succour had not reached the Muslims, all this military equipment would have been used to attack Madinah from the rear right at the time when the polytheists were making preparations for a general assault on the Muslims after crossing the Trench. After this disclosure there remained no doubt that the decision of Ḥaḍrat Sa'd concerning those people was absolutely correct.

Social Reforms

Though the period of two years between the Battles of Uhud and the Trench was a period of disturbance and turmoil and the Holy Prophet and his Companions could hardly relax in peace and security even for a day, the work of reform as a whole and the reconstruction of the Muslim society continued uninterrupted. This was the time when the Islamic laws pertaining to marriage and divorce were complemented; the law of inheritance was introduced, drinking and gambling were prohibited, and the new laws and regulations concerning many other aspects of the economic and social life were enforced.

In this connection, an important thing that needed to be reformed was the question of the adoption of a son. Whoever was adopted by the Arabs as a son was regarded as one of their own offspring: he got share in inheritance; he was treated like a real son and real brother by the adopted mother and the adopted sister; he could not marry the daughter of his adopted father and his widow after his death. And the same was the case if the adopted son died or divorced a wife. The adopted father regarded the woman as his real daughter-in-law. This custom clashed in every detail with the laws of marriage and divorce and inheritance

enjoined by Allah in Sūrahs Al-Baqarah and An-Nisā'. It made a person who could get no share in inheritance entitled to it at the expense of those who were really entitled to it. It prohibited marriage between the men and the women who could contract marriage perfectly lawfully. And, above all, it helped spread the immoralities which the Islamic Law wanted to eradicate. For a real mother and a real sister and a real daughter cannot be like the adopted mother and the adopted sister and the adopted daughter, however one may try to sanctify the adopted relations as a custom. When the artificial relations endued with customary sanctity are allowed to mix freely like the real relations, it cannot but produce evil results. That is why the Islamic law of marriage and divorce, the law of inheritance and the law of the prohibition of adultery required that the concept and custom of regarding the adopted son as the real son should be eradicated completely.

This concept, however, could not be rooted out by merely passing a legal order, saying, "The adopted son is not the real son." The centuries old prejudices and superstitions cannot be changed by mere word of mouth. Even if the people had accepted the command that these relations were not the real relations, they would still have looked upon marriage between the adopted mother and the adopted son, the adopted brother and the sister, the adopted father and the daughter, and the adopted father-in-law and the daughter-in-law odious and detestable. Moreover, there would still exist some freedom of mixing together freely; Therefore, it was inevitable that the custom should be eradicated practically, and through the Holy Prophet himself. For no Muslim could ever conceive that a thing done by the Holy Prophet himself, and done by him under Allah's Command, could be detestable. Therefore, a little before the Battle of the Trench, the Holy Prophet was inspired by Allah that he should marry the divorced wife of his adopted son, Zaid bin Ḥarithah (may Allah be pleased with him), and he acted on this Command during the siege of the Banī Quraiẓah. (The delay probably was caused for the reason that the prescribed waiting period had not yet ended, and in the meantime the Holy Prophet had to become busy in the preparation for war).

Storm of Propaganda at the Marriage of Ḥaḍrat Zainab

As soon as the marriage was contracted, there arose a storm of propaganda against the Holy Prophet. The polytheists, the hypocrites

and the Jews, all were burning with jealousy at his triumphs which followed one after the other. The way they had been humbled within two years after Uhud, in the Battle of the Trench, and in the affair of the Quraizah, had made them sore at heart. They had also lost hope that they could ever subdue him on the battlefield. Therefore, they seized the question of this marriage as a god-send for themselves and thought they would put an end to his moral superiority, which was the real secret of his power and success. Therefore, stories were concocted that Muhammad, God forbid, had fallen in love with his daughter-in-law, and when the son had come to know of this, he divorced his wife, and the father married his daughter-in-law. The propaganda, however, was absurd on the face of it. Hadrat Zainab was the Holy Prophet's first cousin. He had known her from childhood to youth. So, there could be no question of his falling in love with her at first sight. Then he himself had arranged her marriage with Hadrat Zaid under his personal influence, although her whole family had opposed it. They did not like that a daughter of the noble Quraish should be given in marriage to a freed slave. Hadrat Zainab herself was not happy at this arrangement. But everyone had to submit to the Holy Prophet's command. The marriage was solemnized and a precedent was set in Arabia that Islam had raised a freed slave to the status of the Quraishite nobility. If the Holy Prophet had in reality any desire for Hadrat Zainab, there was no need of marrying her to Hadrat Zaid; he himself could have married her. But in spite of all this, the shameless opponents invented stories of love, spread them with great exaggeration and publicised them so vehemently that even some Muslims also began to accept them as true.

Preliminary Commandments of Purdah

The fact that the tales invented by the enemies also became topics of conversation among the Muslims was a clear sign that the element of sensuality in society had crossed all limits. If this malady had not been there, it was not possible that minds would have paid any attention whatever to such absurd and disgusting stories about a righteous and pure person like the Holy Prophet. This was precisely the occasion when the reformative Commandments pertaining to the law of *Hijāb* or Purdah were first enforced in the Islamic society. These reforms were introduced in this Sūrah and complemented a year later in Sūrah An-

Nur, when a slander was made on the honour of Hadrat 'Ā'ishah. (For further details, see Introduction to Sūrah An-Nūr).

Domestic Affairs of the Holy Prophet

There were two other problems which needed attention at that time. Though apparently they pertained to the Holy Prophet's domestic life, it was necessary to resolve them for the domestic and mental peace of the person, who was exerting every effort to promote the cause of Allah's Religion and was day and night absorbed in this great mission. Therefore, Allah took these two problems also officially in His own hand.

The first problem was that economically the Holy Prophet at that time was in straitened circumstances. During the first four years he had no source of income whatever. In 4 A.H. after the banishment of the Banī an-Nadīr, a portion of their evacuated lands was reserved for his use by the Command of Allah, but it was not enough for his family requirements. On the other hand, the duties of the office of Prophethood were so onerous that they were absorbing all his energies of the mind and body and heart and every moment of his time, and he could not make any effort at all for earning his livelihood. In conditions such as these when his wives happened to disturb his mental peace because of economic hardships he would feel doubly strained and taxed.

The other problem was that before marrying Hadrat Zainab, he had four wives already in the houses: Hadrat Saudah, Hadrat 'Ā'ishah, Hadrat Hafsah, and Hadrat Umm Salamah. Hadrat Zainab was his fifth wife. At this the opponents raised the objection, and the Muslims also started entertaining doubts, that as for others it had been forbidden to keep more than four wives at a time, but how the Holy Prophet himself had taken a fifth wife also.

Subject Matter and Topics

These were the questions that were engaging the attention of the Holy Prophet and the Muslims at the time Sūrah Al-Ahzāb was revealed, and replies to the same form the subject-matter of this Sūrah.

A perusal of the theme and the background shows that the Sūrah is not a single discourse which was sent down in one piece but it consists of several injunctions and commandments and discourses, which were

sent down, one after the other, in connection with the important events of the time, and then were put together in one Sūrah. Its following parts stand out clearly distinguished from one another:

1. Verses 1-8 seem to have been sent down before the Battle of the Trench. Their perusal, keeping the historical background in view, shows that at the time of their revelation Hadrat Zaid had already divorced Ḥaḍrat Zainab. The Holy Prophet was feeling the necessity that the concepts and customs and superstitions of ignorance concerning the adoption of the son should be eradicated, and he was also feeling that the delicate and deep sentiments the people cherished about the adopted relations merely on emotional grounds would not be rooted out until he himself took the initiative to eradicate the custom practically. But at the same time he was hesitant and considering seriously that if he married the divorced wife of Ḥaḍrat Zaid then, the hypocrites and the Jews and the *mushriks* who were already bent on mischief would get a fresh excuse to start a propaganda campaign against Islam. This was the occasion of the revelation of vv. 1-8.

2. In verses 9-27 an appraisal has been made of the Battle of the Trench and the raid against the Banī Quraiẓah. This is a clear proof that these verses were sent down after these events.

3. The discourse contained in vv. 28-35 consists of two parts. In the first part Allah has given a notice to the wives of the Holy Prophet, who were being impatient of the straitened circumstances, to the effect: "Choose between the world and its adornments, and Allah, His Prophet and the Hereafter. If you seek the former, you should say so openly: you will not be kept back in hardship even for a day, but will be sent off gracefully. And if you seek the latter, you should cooperate with Allah and His Messenger and bear patiently." In the second part, initial steps were taken towards the social reforms whose need was being felt by the minds moulded in the Islamic pattern themselves. In this regard, reform was started from the house of the Holy Prophet himself and his wives were commanded to avoid behaving and conducting themselves in the ways of the pre-Islamic days of ignorance, to remain in their houses with dignity,

and to exercise great caution in their conversation with the other men. This was the beginning of the Commandments of Purdah.

4. Verses 36-48 deal with the Holy Prophet's marriage with Hadrat Zainab. In this section the opponents' objection about this marriage have been answered; the doubts that were being created in the minds of the Muslims have been removed; the Muslims have been acquainted with the Holy Prophet's position and status; and the Holy Prophet himself has been counselled to exercise patience on the false propaganda of the disbelievers and the hypocrites.

5. In verse 49 a clause of the law of divorce has been laid down. This is a unique verse which was sent down on some occasion probably in connection with the same events.

6. In verses 50-52 a special regulation of marriage has been laid down for the Holy Prophet, which points out that he is an exception to the several restrictions that have been imposed on the other Muslims in regard to marital life.

7. In verses 53-55 the second step was taken towards social reform. It consists of the following injunctions: Restriction on the other men to visit the houses of the Holy Prophet's wives; Islamic etiquette concerning visits and invitations; the law that only the near relatives could visit the holy wives in their houses; as for the other men, they could speak to or ask them a thing from behind a curtain; the injunction that the Holy Prophet's wives were forbidden for the Muslims like their mothers; and none could marry any of them after him.

8. In verses 56-57 warning was given to stop criticizing the Holy Prophet's marriage and his domestic life, and the believers instructed not to indulge in fault-finding like the enemies of Islam, but to invoke the blessings of Allah for their Prophet; moreover, they were instructed that they should avoid falsely accusing one another even among themselves, not to speak of the person of the Prophet.

9. In verse 59 the third step for social reform was taken. All the Muslim women were commanded that they should come out well

covered with the outer garments and covering their faces whenever they came out of their houses for a genuine need.

After this till the end of the Sūrah the hypocrites and other foolish and mean people have been rebuked for the propaganda that they were carrying on at that time against Islam and the Muslims.



يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ اتَّقِ اللّٰهَ وَلَا تُطِعِ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ وَالْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ عَلِيْمًا
حَكِيْمًا ۝ وَّاتَّبِعْ مَا يُوْحٰٓى اِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ
خَبِيْرًا ۝ وَّتَوَكَّلْ عَلَي اللّٰهِ ۭ وَكَفٰى بِاللّٰهِ وَكِيْلًا ۝ مَا جَعَلَ اللّٰهُ لِرَجُلٍ مِّنْ
قَلْبَيْنِ فِيْ جَوْفِهٖ ۚ وَمَا جَعَلَ اَزْوَاجَكُمُ الّٰۗـِٔيْ تُظٰهِرُوْنَ مِنْهُنَّ اُمَّهٰتِكُمْ ۚ وَمَا
جَعَلَ اَدْعِيَاۗءَكُمْ اَبْنَاۗءَكُمْ ۭ ذٰلِكُمْ قَوْلُكُمْ بِاَفْوَاهِكُمْ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ يَقُوْلُ الْحَقَّ وَهُوَ
يَهْدِي السَّبِيْلَ ۝ اُدْعُوْهُمْ لِاٰبَاۗىِٕهِمْ هُوَ اَقْسَطُ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ ۚ فَاِنْ لَّمْ تَعْلَمُوْٓا

XXXIII
AL-AḤZĀB
الاحزاب

Verses: 73 *Revealed at Madīnah*

In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

O Prophet,[1] fear Allah and do not obey the disbelievers and the hypocrites; in fact, Allah alone is All-Knowing, All-Wise.[2] Follow that which you are being inspired with from your Lord: Allah is aware of whatever you do.[3] Have trust in Allah, for Allah alone is sufficient as a Guardian.[4] 1-3

Allah has not put two hearts in a person's body,[5] nor has He made those wives of yours whom you divorce by *Zihār* your mothers,[6] 4-5

nor has made your adopted sons your real sons.[7] These are the things which you utter from your mouths, but Allah says that which is based on the reality and He alone guides to the Right Way. Call your adopted sons after their fathers' names: this is more just in the sight of Allah.[8] And if you do not know who their fathers are, then they are your brothers in faith and your friends.[9] There is no blame on you if you say something unintentionally, but you will surely be to blame for what you say with the intention of your hearts.[10] Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.[11]

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1. As we have mentioned in the introduction to the Sūrah, these verses were sent down at a time when Hadrat Zaid had already divorced Hadrat Zainab. Then the Holy Prophet himself was feeling, and Allah also had inspired him with this, that that was the right time for striking at the root of the tradition and customs of ignorance regarding the adopted relations, and that he should take the initiative and marry the divorced wife of his adopted son (Zaid) so that the custom was completely eradicated. But the reason why he was hesitant in this regard was the fear that this would provide a strong excuse to the disbelievers and the hypocrites, who were already burning with jealousy at his successive victories, to start a propaganda campaign against him. This fear was not due to any apprehension for personal defamation, but for the reason that it would harm Islam; it would cause mistrust of Islam among the people who were inclined towards it; it would make the neutral people to join the enemy; and it would cause the weak-minded people among the Muslims themselves to be involved in doubts and suspicions. Therefore, the Holy Prophet thought it was unwise to take a step for the eradication of a custom of ignorance, which would harm the greater interests and objectives of Islam.

2. In the first very sentence, in the beginning of the discourse, Allah removed all the apprehensions of the Holy Prophet, as if to say: "We know better what is useful and beneficial for our Religion and what is not. We know what would be wise and what unwise in this regard. Therefore, you should not behave in a manner which would suit the disbelievers and the hypocrites, but you should behave in a manner which is according to Our Will. You should fear Us and not the disbelievers and the hypocrites."

3. This sentence is addressed to the Holy Prophet as well as to the Muslims and the opponents of Islam. It means : "If the Prophet earns defamation by acting according to the Command of Allah, and bears patiently the attacks of the enemy on his honour, his devoted and sincere services will not remain hidden from Allah. The state of the Muslims who remain steadfast in their loyalty to the Prophet and of those who are involved in doubts and suspicions will be known to

Allah. And Allah will also not remain unaware of the attempts of the disbelievers and the hypocrites who try to defame the Prophet."

4. The addressee of this sentence is again the Holy Prophet. He is being instructed to the effect "Carry out the duty that is being entrusted to you with full confidence in Allah, and do not care at all even if the whole world turns hostile to you." When a man comes to know with certainty that a certain Command has been given by Allah, he should have the satisfaction that his whole well-being and his good lies in its compliance. Then, it is not for him to see and understand its wisdom, but he should carry it out with full confidence in Allah. Allah is enough for him that the servant should entrust all his affairs to Him. He is enough for his guidance as well as help, and He alone is also responsible that the one working under His guidance should never meet with evil consequences.

5. That is, "One and the same person cannot be a believer and a hypocrite, truthful and false, wicked and righteous, at one and the same time. He does not have two hearts in this chest that one should have sincerity in it and the other fearlessness of God. Therefore, a man can have only one kind of character at a time: either he will be a believer or a hypocrite, a disbeliever or a Muslim. Now if you call a believer a hypocrite, or a hypocrite a believer, it will not change the reality. The true character of the person will inevitably remain the same."

6. *Ziḥār is* a term in Arabic. In old days when an Arab, in the heat of a domestic quarrel, would say to his wife: "Your back for me is as the back of my mother," it was thought that the woman was no longer lawful for him because he had compared her to his mother. About this Allah says: "A woman does not become a man's mother just because he has called her his mother or compared her to his mother. His mother is the woman who bore him. Only his calling his wife his mother cannot change the reality." (For the Islamic Law concerning *Ziḥār*, see Sūrah Mujādalah: 2-4).

7. This is what is intended to be said. The two preceding sentences are meant to support and emphasize this same point.

8. The first reform introduced in connection with the implementation of this Command was that Zaid, the adopted son of the Holy Prophet, began to be called Zaid bin Ḥārithah, after his real father, instead of Zaid bin Muḥammad. Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī and Nasā'ī have related this tradition from Ḥadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar' that in the beginning the people called Zaid bin Ḥārithah Zaid bin Muḥammad. After the revelation of this verse they began calling him Zaid bin Ḥārithah. Moreover, after this Revelation it was forbidden that a person should

[Contd. on p. 80

اٰبَآءَهُمْ فَاِخْوَانُكُمْ فِي الدِّيْنِ وَمَوَالِيْكُمْ ۭ وَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ فِيْمَآ اَخْطَاْتُمْ
بِهٖ ۙ وَلٰكِنْ مَّا تَعَمَّدَتْ قُلُوْبُكُمْ ۭ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ غَفُوْرًا رَّحِيْمًا ۝ اَلنَّبِيُّ اَوْلٰى
بِالْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ مِنْ اَنْفُسِهِمْ وَاَزْوَاجُهٗٓ اُمَّهٰتُهُمْ ۭ وَاُولُوا الْاَرْحَامِ بَعْضُهُمْ اَوْلٰى
بِبَعْضٍ فِيْ كِتٰبِ اللّٰهِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَالْمُهٰجِرِيْنَ اِلَّآ اَنْ تَفْعَلُوْٓا اِلٰٓى اَوْلِيٰۗىِٕكُمْ
مَّعْرُوْفًا ۭ كَانَ ذٰلِكَ فِي الْكِتٰبِ مَسْطُوْرًا ۝ وَاِذْ اَخَذْنَا مِنَ النَّبِيّٖنَ مِيْثَاقَهُمْ
وَمِنْكَ وَمِنْ نُّوْحٍ وَّاِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَمُوْسٰى وَعِيْسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ ۠ وَاَخَذْنَا مِنْهُمْ
مِّيْثَاقًا غَلِيْظًا ۝ لِّيَسْـَٔلَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ عَنْ صِدْقِهِمْ ۚ وَاَعَدَّ لِلْكٰفِرِيْنَ عَذَابًا
اَلِيْمًا ۝ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اذْكُرُوْا نِعْمَةَ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْكُمْ اِذْ جَاۗءَتْكُمْ جُنُوْدٌ فَاَرْسَلْنَا
عَلَيْهِمْ رِيْحًا وَّجُنُوْدًا لَّمْ تَرَوْهَا ۭ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ بَصِيْرًا ۝ اِذْ جَاۗءُوْكُمْ
مِّنْ فَوْقِكُمْ وَمِنْ اَسْفَلَ مِنْكُمْ وَاِذْ زَاغَتِ الْاَبْصَارُ وَبَلَغَتِ الْقُلُوْبُ
الْحَنَاجِرَ وَتَظُنُّوْنَ بِاللّٰهِ الظُّنُوْنَا ۝ هُنَالِكَ ابْتُلِيَ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ وَزُلْزِلُوْا زِلْزَالًا
شَدِيْدًا ۝ وَاِذْ يَقُوْلُ الْمُنٰفِقُوْنَ وَالَّذِيْنَ فِيْ قُلُوْبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ مَّا وَعَدَنَا اللّٰهُ
وَرَسُوْلُهٗٓ اِلَّا غُرُوْرًا ۝ وَاِذْ قَالَتْ طَّاۗىِٕفَةٌ مِّنْهُمْ يٰٓاَهْلَ يَثْرِبَ لَا مُقَامَ لَكُمْ
فَارْجِعُوْا ۚ وَيَسْتَاْذِنُ فَرِيْقٌ مِّنْهُمُ النَّبِيَّ يَقُوْلُوْنَ اِنَّ بُيُوْتَنَا عَوْرَةٌ ۛ وَمَا هِيَ
بِعَوْرَةٍ ۚ اِنْ يُّرِيْدُوْنَ اِلَّا فِرَارًا ۝ وَلَوْ دُخِلَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ اَقْطَارِهَا ثُمَّ سُىِٕلُوا
الْفِتْنَةَ لَاٰتَوْهَا وَمَا تَلَبَّثُوْا بِهَآ اِلَّا يَسِيْرًا ۝ وَلَقَدْ كَانُوْا عَاهَدُوا اللّٰهَ مِنْ
قَبْلُ لَا يُوَلُّوْنَ الْاَدْبَارَ ۭ وَكَانَ عَهْدُ اللّٰهِ مَسْـُٔوْلًا ۝ قُلْ لَّنْ يَّنْفَعَكُمُ الْفِرَارُ
اِنْ فَرَرْتُمْ مِّنَ الْمَوْتِ اَوِ الْقَتْلِ وَاِذًا لَّا تُمَتَّعُوْنَ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا ۝ قُلْ مَنْ ذَا
الَّذِيْ يَعْصِمُكُمْ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ اِنْ اَرَادَ بِكُمْ سُوْۗءًا اَوْ اَرَادَ بِكُمْ رَحْمَةً ۭ وَلَا

Indeed, the Prophet is preferable for the believers to their own selves,[12] and the Prophet's wives are their mothers.[13] But, according to the Book of Allah, the blood relations have a greater right on one another than the other believers and the migrants. However, you may do any good (you wish) to your friends.[14] This is written in the Divine Book. 6

And (O Prophet,) remember the Covenant that We took from all the Prophets—from you as well as from Noah and Abraham and Moses and Jesus son of Mary. We took a solemn Covenant from all of them[15] so that (their Lord) may question the truthful about their truth;[16] as for the disbelievers, He has indeed reserved a painful punishment for them.[17] 7-8

O people[18] who have believed ! Remember the bounty of Allah, which He has (just now) shown you. When the hosts came down on you, We sent against them a violent wind and the armies which you could not see.[19] Allah was watching all that you were doing. When the enemies came upon you from above and from below you,[20] when eyes were petrified due to fear and the hearts leapt up to the throats, and you began to entertain all sorts of doubts about Allah, the believers then were thoroughly tested and severely shaken.[21] 9-11

Remember the time when the hypocrites and all those whose hearts were diseased were openly saying that the promises Allah and His Prophet had made with them,[22] were nothing but a delusion; when a party of them said, "O people of Yathrib, you have no chance to stay, so go back;"[23] when a section of them sought leave of the Prophet, saying, "Our homes are insecure,"[24] whereas they were not insecure;[25] in fact, they wished to flee (the battle front). If the enemies had made entry from all sides of the city, and these people had been urged to treachery,[26] they would have committed it, and would have little hesitated to become partners in it. They had indeed already made a pledge with Allah that they would not show their backs; and the pledge made with Allah had to be questioned.[27] 12-15

O Prophet, say to them, "If you flee from death or slaughter, your flight will avail you nothing; after that you will enjoy life but for a little while only."[28] Ask them, "Who can protect you from Allah if He intends harm for you? And who can prevent Him if He intends to 16-17

show you mercy?" In fact, they cannot find a protector and helper against Allah.

Contd. from p. 77]

assign his parentage to any other man than his own real father. Bukhārī, Muslim and Abū Da'ūd have related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin Abī Waqqāṣ that the Holy Prophet said: "Paradise is forbidden for the one who called himself son of another person than his own father." Other traditions bearing on the subject have been related in Aḥādith, which have regarded this as a heinous sin.

9. That is, even in such a case it will not be right to ascribe the parentage of a person to someone else.

10. It means: "There is no harm if a person is called a son out of love. Likewise, there is no sin if someone calls another one a mother, or a daughter, or sister or brother, etc. out of affection and regard, but if such a thing is said with the intention that the one being called so will be accorded the same status and position and rights and privileges as actually belong to these relations, it would certainly be objectionable and one will be held answerable for it."

11. That is, "Allah has frogiven the errors already committed in this regard; no one will be called to account for them." Another meaning is: "Allah does not call a people to account for actions done unintentionally. He will not punish a person for doing something which he did not do intentionally although it resembled a forbidden act apparently."

12. That is, "The relationship of the Holy Prophet with the Muslims and of the Muslims with the Holy Prophet is of a superior nature, over and above all human relationships. No other relationship is in any way comparable with the relationship that exists between the Holy Prophet and the believers. The Holy Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) is more compassionate and affectionate and a greater well-wisher of the Muslims than their own parents, even their own selves. Their parents and their wives and children can harm them, can treat them in a selfish manner and mislead them, can make them commit errors and mistakes, can push them into Hell, but the Holy Prophet's case is different: he will do for them only that which results in and leads to their eternal well-being and enduring happiness. They can commit follies resulting in their own ruin and disaster, but the Holy Prophet will wish for them only that which is beneficial and useful for them. And when it is so, the Holy Prophet also has a right on the Muslims that they should regard him dearer than their own parents, their own children, even their own selves. They should love him more than anything and anybody else in the world; should prefer his judgement and opinion to their own and should submit to every command that he gives.

The same thing has been said by the Holy Prophet in a *Ḥadīth*, which Bukhārī and Muslim and others have related with a little difference in wording: "No one of you can be a believer until I become dearer to him than his own father and his own children and all mankind."

13. On the basis of the special relationship mentioned above, another characteristic of the Holy Prophet is that his wives are forbidden to the Muslims just like their own real mothers although their adopted mothers are in no sense their real mothers. This thing is peculiar only to the person of the Holy Prophet and of no other man in the world.

In this connection, one should also know that the wives of the Holy Prophet are mothers of the believers only in the sense that the Muslims are under obligation to have reverence and respect for them, and no Muslim could marry them. As for other matters they are not like the mothers. For example, apart from their real relatives, all other Muslims were *non-maḥram* for them from whom they had to observe Purdah; their daughters were not like real sisters for the Muslims, so that no Muslim could marry them; their brothers and sisters were not like the maternal uncles and aunts for the Muslims; they could not be inherited by a Muslim, unless a close relative, as a mother is inherited by her son.

Another noteworthy point in this connection is that according to the Qur'ān, this status accrues to all the wives of the Holy Prophet among whom Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah is also included. But, when a section (of the Muslims) made Ḥaḍrat 'Alī and Fātimah (may Allah be pleased with them) and their children the centre of their Faith and made the whole system of religion revolve around them, and made Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah also, along with many other Companions, the target of curse and abuse, this verse became a hindrance for them, for according to it every person who claims to be a believer has to acknowledge her as his mother. Consequently, to overcome this difficulty a strange claim was made to the effect: The Holy Prophet had given Ḥaḍrat 'Alī the authority that after his death he could allow any of his wives he liked to retain her position of the holy wife and divorce any other on his behalf. Abū Manṣūr Aḥmad bin Abū Ṭālib Ṭabrasī has written this in *Kitāb al-Iḥtijāj* and Sulemān bin 'Abdullah al-Baḥrānī has related that the Holy Prophet said to Ḥaḍrat 'Alī "O Abul Ḥasan: this honour will last till the time that we remain steadfast on obedience to Allah. Therefore, you may divorce any of my wives, who after me disobeys Allah by revolting against you, and deprive her of the honour that belongs to the mothers of the faithful."

This is a false tradition even according to the principles of reporting *Ḥadīth*. But if one studies vv. 28-29 and 51-52 of this very Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb itself, one finds that this tradition goes against the Qur'ān as well. For after the revelation of the "verse of the option" (v. 29), the Holy Prophet's right of divorce

against those of his wives who chose to remain with him through every difficulty had been curtailed. For further explanation, see E.N.'s 42 and 93 below.

Moreover, if an unbiased person only uses his common sense and considers this tradition carefully, he will find that it is utterly absurd and highly derogatory in respect to the Holy Prophet. The rank and position of the Messenger of Allah is very high and exalted. It cannot even be expected of an ordinary man that he would think of divorcing his wife after his death and on leaving the world would authorise his son-in-law to divorce her on his behalf if there arose a dispute between him and her in the future. This shows what regard these sectarians have for the honour and reverence of the Holy Prophet himself, and even for the Divine Law.

14. The verse means this: As for the Holy Prophet the nature of the Muslims' relationship with him is unique. But as far as the common Muslims are concerned, their mutual relationship will be based on the principle that the rights of the relatives on one another are given priority over the rights of others. No charity is right if a person overlooks the needs and requirements of his own parents and children and brothers and sisters, and gives away charities to others. The *Zakāt* money also will be used first of all to help one's own poor relatives and then the other needy people. The inheritance will necessarily be divided among those who are nearest in relation to the deceased. As for others, the dying person may give them a part of his wealth as a gift or by trust and will. But in no case is he allowed to deprive his rightful heirs and give away everything to others. After this Divine Command the system of "Brotherhood" that had been established between the *Muhājirīn* and the *Anṣār* after the Hijrah also became abolished, for according to it the *Muhājirīn* and the *Anṣār* became heirs to one another only on the basis of their relationship of being the brethren in faith. Allah enjoined the law that inheritance will be divided only on the basis of blood relationship; however, a person could help his brother-in-faith by making him a gift or through a will if he so liked.

15. Allah in this verse has reminded the Holy Prophet that, like all other Prophets, He has taken from him too a solemn covenant which he should abide by strictly. A study of the preceding verse shows that the Covenant implies: "The Prophet will first himself obey and follow every Command received from Allah, and then make others also to obey and follow it: he will convey Allah's Commands intact to others and will show no laxity in the struggle to enforce them practically." This Covenant has been mentioned at several other places in the Qur'ān, *e.g.*

(1) "He has appointed for you the same way of life which He appointed for Noah and which (O Muhammad,) We have now revealed to you, and

which We had already enjoined on Abraham and Moses and Jesus, stressing : 'Establish this Way and be not divided in it." (Ash-Shūrā:13).

(2) "And remember that Allah had made the Covenant with the people who had been given the Scripture, and enjoined: 'You shall spread the teachings of the Book among the people and shall not conceal them." (Āl-'Imrān: 187).

(3) "Remember that We made a solemn Covenant with the children of Israel to the effect: 'Worship (and submit to) none save Allah." (Al-Baqarah: 83).

(4) "Has not the Covenant of the Book been taken from them.. .: 'Hold fast the Book We have given you, and keep in mind what it contains: it is expected that you will refrain from wrong ways." (Al-A'rāf: 169-171).

(5) "Keep in mind the blessing Allah has bestowed on you and do not forget the solemn Covenant which He made with you, when you said, 'We have heard and submitted.' " (Al-Mā'idah: 7)

The reason why Allah is reminding of this Covenant in this context is that the Holy Prophet was feeling hesitant to break the custom of ignorance in respect of the adopted relations due to the apprehension that the enemies of Islam would put him to a disadvantage. He was feeling shy time and again at the thought: The question is of marrying a woman. I may take this initiative with the purest intention only for the sake of a social reform, but the enemies will certainly say that I have done so for the purpose of satisfying my sensual desires, and I am in fact trying to deceive others under the guise of a reformer. That is why Allah assures him, saying: "You are a Prophet appointed by Us. Like all other Prophets, you also are bound in the Covenant that you will carry out whatever Command We give yourself and command others to follow it. Therefore, you should not bother at all about taunts and derision by others, do not be afraid and fight shy of others, and carry out without hesitation the service that We want to take from you."

A section of the people think that this Covenant is the covenant that was taken from all the Prophets and their communities, who came before the Holy Prophet, to the effect that they would believe in the Prophet who came afterwards and cooperate with him. On the basis of this interpretation they claim that the door to Prophethood is still open after the Holy Prophet and this covenant has been taken from the Holy Prophet too, that his followers will believe in the prophet who will come after him. But the context in which the verse occurs is explicit that this interpretation is absolutely wrong, There is no occasion whatever in the context to indicate that other prophets will come also after the Holy Prophet and his

followers should believe in them. If the verse is read in this sense, it becomes irrelevant and incoherent. Moreover, there is no indication in the words of the verse to show which covenant is implied here. Therefore, to find out the nature of the covenant, we shall have to turn to other verses of the Qur'ān in which mention has been made of the covenants taken from the Prophets. Now, if only one sort of the covenants had been mentioned in the entire Qur'an, *i.e.*, the covenant that the people shall believe in the prophets coming afterwards, it would be correct to think that here also the covenant implied the same covenant. But anyone who has studied the Qur'ān with an open mind knows that it has mentioned many covenants, which were taken from the Prophets and their followers. Therefore, only that covenant from among the different covenant would be implied here, which fitted in with the context here, and not the one which was altogether irrelevant. Such wrong interpretations reveal the mentality of the people who wish to draw no guidance from the Qur'ān but want to re-interpret it instead.

16. That is, "Allah has not just taken the covenant but will also question as to how far it has been kept. Then only those who will have kept Allah's Covenant faithfully, will be declared to be the truthful."

17. To understand the theme of vv. 1-8 well these should be read together with vv. 36-41 of this Sūrah.

18. In vv. 9-27 an appraisal has been made of the Battle of the Trench and the raid against the Banī Quraiẓah and were revealed at the end of the raid. One should keep the details of these events in view as given in the Introduction above.

19. The windstorm did not lash the enemy hordes immediately on their arrival but it occurred when the siege of Madīnah had lasted about a month. "Armies which you could not see" implies the hidden powers which operate in the affairs of men under Allah's Command and of which men are wholly unaware. Man regards the occurrence of events and incidents as resulting from apparent causes and does not take into account the hidden forces at work, whereas in most cases these very hidden forces play the decisive role. As these forces function under the Command of Allah's angels, the "armies" may imply the angels as well though there is no indication here of sending the armies of the angels.

20. It may mean: "The enemies came upon you from every side, and also that those coming from Najd and Khaiber came from above and those coming from Makkah from below you."

21. "The believers": All those who accepted the Holy Prophet as Allah's Messenger and became included among his followers, which comprised both the true believers and the hypocrites. In this paragraph Allah has made mention of the

Muslim community as a whole. In the following three paragraphs the attitude of the hypocrites has been commented upon, and the next two deal with the Holy Prophet and the true believers.

22. That is, "Promises to the effect that the believers will get Allah's support and succour and will be helped to attain victory in the end."

23. This sentence has two meanings: The apparent meaning is that there is no chance for them to stay at the Trench against the polytheists; therefore, they should return to the city. And the hidden meaning is that there is no chance for them to remain in Islam; therefore, they should return to their ancestral religion, so that they might escape the danger in which they had involved themselves by earning the hostility of the whole of Arabia. The hypocrites uttered such mischievous things so that they could make the one who would listen to them understand the intended hidden meaning, but in case someone took exception to their words, they could say they had been misunderstood.

24. That is, "When the Banī Quraizah also joined the invaders, the hypocrites had a good excuse for defection and they started asking the Holy Prophet for leave to go and protect their houses and families, which, they said, had been endangered, whereas at that time the Holy Prophet was responsible for the defence and protection of all the people of Madīnah. After the treachery of the Quraizah it was for the Holy Prophet to devise plans for the protection of the city and its people and not of the soldiers of the army individually."

25. That is, "The Holy Prophet had already made arrangements for protection against the danger, which were a part of the collective scheme of defence being implemented by him as Commander of the Islamic forces. Therefore, there was no immediate danger in the face of which these people could justifiably make such an excuse."

26. "Urged to treachery": Urged by the disbelievers to join them to vanquish the Muslims after entering the city as conquerors.

27. That is, "They had felt regret at the weakness they had shown on the occasion of the Battle of Uhud and pledged to Allah that they would compensate for their error in any trial that they would confront in the future. But Allah cannot be deceived by empty words. He puts to one or the other test everyone who makes a pledge with Him so that his sincerity of intention or otherwise is found out. Therefore, just after two years of the Battle of Uhud, He made them confront an even more serious danger and discovered how far they were sincere in their pledge."

[Contd. on p. 88

يَجِدُوْنَ لَهُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ وَلِيًّا وَّلَا نَصِيْرًا ﴿١٧﴾ قَدْ يَعْلَمُ اللّٰهُ الْمُعَوِّقِيْنَ
مِنْكُمْ وَالْقَآئِلِيْنَ لِاِخْوَانِهِمْ هَلُمَّ اِلَيْنَا ۚ وَلَا يَاْتُوْنَ الْبَاْسَ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا ﴿١٨﴾
اَشِحَّةً عَلَيْكُمْ ۚ فَاِذَا جَآءَ الْخَوْفُ رَاَيْتَهُمْ يَنْظُرُوْنَ اِلَيْكَ تَدُوْرُ اَعْيُنُهُمْ
كَالَّذِيْ يُغْشٰى عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْمَوْتِ ۚ فَاِذَا ذَهَبَ الْخَوْفُ سَلَقُوْكُمْ بِاَلْسِنَةٍ
حِدَادٍ اَشِحَّةً عَلَى الْخَيْرِ ۚ اُولٰٓئِكَ لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوْا فَاَحْبَطَ اللّٰهُ اَعْمَالَهُمْ ۚ وَكَانَ ذٰلِكَ
عَلَى اللّٰهِ يَسِيْرًا ﴿١٩﴾ يَحْسَبُوْنَ الْاَحْزَابَ لَمْ يَذْهَبُوْا ۚ وَاِنْ يَّاْتِ الْاَحْزَابُ يَوَدُّوْا
لَوْ اَنَّهُمْ بَادُوْنَ فِي الْاَعْرَابِ يَسْاَلُوْنَ عَنْ اَنْۢبَآئِكُمْ ۚ وَلَوْ كَانُوْا فِيْكُمْ مَّا
قٰتَلُوْٓا اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا ﴿٢٠﴾ لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِيْ رَسُوْلِ اللّٰهِ اُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَنْ كَانَ
يَرْجُوا اللّٰهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْاٰخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللّٰهَ كَثِيْرًا ﴿٢١﴾ وَلَمَّا رَاَ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ الْاَحْزَابَ ۙ
قَالُوْا هٰذَا مَا وَعَدَنَا اللّٰهُ وَرَسُوْلُهٗ وَصَدَقَ اللّٰهُ وَرَسُوْلُهٗ ۚ وَمَا زَادَهُمْ اِلَّا
اِيْمَانًا وَّتَسْلِيْمًا ﴿٢٢﴾ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ رِجَالٌ صَدَقُوْا مَا عَاهَدُوا اللّٰهَ عَلَيْهِ ۚ فَمِنْهُمْ
مَّنْ قَضٰى نَحْبَهٗ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَّنْتَظِرُ ۡ وَمَا بَدَّلُوْا تَبْدِيْلًا ﴿٢٣﴾ لِيَجْزِيَ اللّٰهُ
الصّٰدِقِيْنَ بِصِدْقِهِمْ وَيُعَذِّبَ الْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ اِنْ شَآءَ اَوْ يَتُوْبَ عَلَيْهِمْ ۚ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ
كَانَ غَفُوْرًا رَّحِيْمًا ﴿٢٤﴾ وَرَدَّ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا بِغَيْظِهِمْ لَمْ يَنَالُوْا خَيْرًا ۚ وَكَفَى
اللّٰهُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ الْقِتَالَ ۚ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ قَوِيًّا عَزِيْزًا ﴿٢٥﴾ وَاَنْزَلَ الَّذِيْنَ ظَاهَرُوْهُمْ
مِّنْ اَهْلِ الْكِتٰبِ مِنْ صَيَاصِيْهِمْ وَقَذَفَ فِيْ قُلُوْبِهِمُ الرُّعْبَ فَرِيْقًا تَقْتُلُوْنَ
وَتَاْسِرُوْنَ فَرِيْقًا ﴿٢٦﴾ وَاَوْرَثَكُمْ اَرْضَهُمْ وَدِيَارَهُمْ وَاَمْوَالَهُمْ وَاَرْضًا لَّمْ
تَطَئُوْهَا ۚ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرًا ﴿٢٧﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِّاَزْوَاجِكَ اِنْ
كُنْتُنَّ تُرِدْنَ الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا وَزِيْنَتَهَا فَتَعَالَيْنَ اُمَتِّعْكُنَّ وَاُسَرِّحْكُنَّ سَرَاحًا

Allah knows very well those among you, who create hindrances (in the war efforts), who say to their brothers, "Come to us,"[29] who take part in the fighting only to be counted in, who are ever reluctant to join you.[30] When there is danger, they look towards you, their eyes rolling like the one who is fainting, being on the point of death. But when the danger is gone, they come out to greet you with their scissor-like sharp tongues in greed for gains.[31] These people have not believed at all; so Allah has made all their works fruitless,[32] and this is an easy thing for Allah.[33] They think that the invading hosts are not yet gone, and if they should attack again they would (rather) wish to be in the desert among the beduins and seek information about you from there. However, even if they remained among you, they would take but little part in the fighting. 18-20

There was indeed the best model for you in the Messenger of Allah,[34] for every such person who looks forward to Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah much.[35] And when the true believers (at that time)[36] saw the invading hosts, they cried out, "This is what Allah and His Messenger had promised us: Allah and His Messenger were absolutely true."[37] This increased them all the more in faith and resignation.[38] There are among the believers those who have been true in their pledge to Allah: some one of them has fulfilled his vow, and some other is waiting for it;[39] they have made no change in their attitude. (All this happened) so that Allah may reward the truthful for their truthfulness, and punish the hypocrites, or accept their repentance as He will. Indeed Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Merciful. 21-24

Allah turned back the disbelievers: they retreated in their rage without gaining any advantage, and Allah was sufficient to fight on behalf of the believers: Allah is All-Powerful, All-Mighty. Allah brought down from their fortresses those of the people of the Book, who had joined forces with the invaders[40] and created such terror in their hearts that some of them you are slaying today and some taking as prisoners. He made you heirs of their land and their dwellings and their wealth and gave you that land which you had never trodden before. Allah is All-Powerful. 25-27

[Contd. from p. 85]

28. That is, "This flight of yours will not add anything to your life. In no case will you live for ever and gain the whole wealth of the world. Hardly a few years will you live after your flight and enjoy life only as long as it is destined for you."

29. That is, "Abandon this Prophet and do not become involved in dangers and afflictions only for the sake of the Faith and Truth. Live a life of ease and comfort as we do."

30. "Who are ever reluctant...: "Who are not at all willing to spend their energies, their time, their wealth, etc. in any way in which the true believers are expending whatever they have. Not to speak of exerting themselves and braving the dangers, they do not want to cooperate with the believers in anything with an open heart."

31. Lexically, this verse has two meanings: (1) "When you return victorious from a war, they receive you warmly, and try to impress you with a glib tongue that they too are sincere believers and they too have made their contribution to promote the cause of Islam, and therefore, they too deserve a share from the booty." (2) "If victory is attained these people show great powers of the tongue at the time of the division of the spoils and make great demands for their shares, recounting their services to the cause of Islam."

32. That is, "Allah will make null and void all the prayers that they offered, all the fasts that they observed, the *Zakāt* that they paid, and other good works that they did after embracing Islam, and will give them no reward for these. For Allah does not judge actions and deeds according to their external form but on the basis of the faith and sincerity underlying them. When the actions are altogether devoid of this quality, there will be mere show and, therefore, meaningless. Here, one thing is especially noteworthy. A clear verdict has been given about the people who professed to believe in Allah and His Messenger, offered the Prayers, observed the fast, gave the *Zakāt* and co-operated with the Muslims in other good works, to the effect that they did not believe at all. This verdict has been given because when they were put to the test during the conflict between Islam and un-Islam, they showed double-facedness, preferred selfish interests above the interests of the Faith, and shirked offering their selves and their wealth and their energies for the protection of Islam. This shows that the real criterion of the judgement are not the apparent deeds but the loyalties of man. If a person is not loyal to God and His Way, his profession of the Faith and his worship and other good deeds are worthless."

33. That is, "As their deeds and actions do not carry any value, Allah renders them fruitless without the slightest hesitation; and as they do not have any power to resist Allah has no difficulty in destroying their deeds altogether."

34. In view of the context in which this verse occurs, the object of presenting the Holy Prophet's conduct and way of life as a model was to teach a lesson to the people, who had been motivated by considerations of selfish interests and personal safety on the occasion of the Battle of the Trench. They are being addressed, as if to say: "You claimed to be the believers and Muslims and followers of the Holy Messenger. You should have seen how the Messenger whose followers you claimed to be conducted himself on the occasion. If the leader of a group is himself a seeker of personal security, is lazy and indolent, gives preference to personal interests to everything else, and is ever ready to flee danger, it would be reasonable to expect manifestation of such weakness from his followers. But here the case was different. The Holy Prophet endured along with others every toil and labour that he asked others to endure, and endured better than others; there was no trouble which others might have experienced and he himself did not. He was among those who dug the trench, and endured hunger and other afflictions just as the common Muslims did. He did not leave the battlefront even for a moment during the siege nor retreated an inch. After the betrayal of the Banī Quraiẓah his own family had also been exposed to danger even as the families of the other Muslims were. He did not make any special arrangement for his own and his family's protection, which did not exist for others. He was always in the forefront to offer maximum sacrifices for the great objectives for which he was constantly asking others to make sacrifices. Therefore, whoever made a claim of being his follower should have followed the practical example set by the leader.

This is the meaning of the verse in the context here. But its words are general and there is no reason why it should be confined to these meanings only. Allah does not say that only in this respect His Messenger's life is a model for the Muslims to follow, but has regarded it as a model absolutely. Therefore, the verse demands that the Muslims should take the Holy Prophet's life as a model for themselves in every affair of life and should mould their character and personality according to it.

35. That is, "The Prophet's life is no model for the person who is forgetful of God, but it certainly is a model for him who remembers Allah much and consistently and not only occasionally just by chance. Likewise, this life is no model for him who has no hope from Allah and does not expect Resurrection to take place, but it is most surely a model for the person who is hopeful of Allah's grace and His favors, and who is also mindful that the Day of Judgement will come when his well-being will wholly depend on how closely his conduct resembled the conduct and character of the Messenger of Allah in this world."

36. After drawing attention to the model of the Holy Prophet, Allah now presents the model of his Companions so that the character of the false claimants to faith and of the sincere followers of the Messenger is clearly contrasted.

Although both were alike apparently in the affirmation of the faith, both were counted as Muslims, and both attended at the Prayers, they were separated from each other as soon as the time of the trial approached, and it became clear who were loyal to Allah and His Messenger and who were Muslims only in name.

37. Here, one should keep verse 12 in view. There it was said that when the hypocrites and the people with diseased hearts found themselves surrounded by a huge force of ten to twelve thousand men from the front and by the Banī Quraizah from behind, they openly started saying: "The promises that Allah and His Messenger had made with us were nothing but a delusion. We were promised that if we believed in Allah's religion, His succour would be at our back and we would rule Arabia and the world outside and all the wealth of Caesar and Chosroes will be ours, but here we are that the whole of Arabia is bent upon exterminating us, and there is no sign yet of the armies of the angels in sight, who would save us and protect us against this grave calamity." Now they are being told: "One meaning of the promise of Allah and His Messenger was that which was understood by these false claimants to faith. The other meaning is that which is understood by the sincere and true Muslims. When they saw the storms of danger gathering, they too remembered the promises of Allah, but these promises did not mean that as soon as they affirmed the faith they would overwhelm and subdue the whole world without the slightest effort, and the angels would come to perform their coronation, but the promises actually meant that they would have to pass through severe trials, endure extreme hardships and afflictions, offer supreme sacrifices; then only will Allah bless them with His grace and they will be granted successes of the world and the Hereafter, which Allah has promised His believing servants.

"Do you think that you will enter Paradise without undergoing such trials as were experienced by the believers before you? They met with adversity and afflictions and were so shaken by trials that the Prophet of the time and his followers cried out: 'When will Allah's help come?' — "Yes, Allah's help is near." (Al-Baqarah: 214).

"Do the people think that they will be left alone after they have once said, 'We have believed', and they will not be tested ? The fact is that We have put to the test all those who have gone before them. Surely, Allah has to see who are the truthful and who the liars." (Al-'Ankabūt: 2-3).

38. That is, "On seeing the hard times of affliction approaching they did not waver in their faith but were strengthened in it all the more, and instead of giving up Allah's obedience they became ready to resign and surrender to Him whatever they had with complete conviction and satisfaction of the heart."

Here, one should fully understand that faith and resignation is indeed a quality of the self which is put to trial and test at every command and demand of the Faith. At every step in life man comes across situations where the Faith either enjoins something or forbids something, or requires one to make sacrifices of life and wealth and time and desires of the self. At every such occasion the faith and conviction of the person who deviates from obedience will suffer decline and the faith and conviction of him who submits to the command and demand will be strengthened and enhanced. Although in the beginning a man becomes a believer and Muslim only by embracing the fundamental creed *(Kalimah)* of Islam, yet his state of faith does not remain static but is open to both deterioration and development. Decline in sincerity and the spirit of obedience causes it to deteriorate; so much so that constant retrogression may cause the person to reach the last limits of the faith where the slightest move backward may turn him from a believer to a hypocrite. Contrary to this, the more sincere a person is, the more perfect his obedience and the greater his devotion and dedication to the cause of the true Faith, the stronger and more sound will he grow in faith and may even attain the supreme rank of the truthful. But this increase and decrease in the faith has only the moral significance which can be judged and reckoned by none but Allah. As for the man, faith is simply the act of affirmation by which a Muslim enters Islam and is regarded as a Muslim as long as he remains steadfast to it. In this regard we cannot say that so and so is half a Muslim, or one-third a Muslim, and another one double a Muslim or triple a Muslim. Likewise, in legal rights the Muslims are equal and alike. It cannot be that one is regarded a greater believer and given more rights and another one a lesser believer and given less rights. In these aspects there can be no question of the increase and decrease in the faith, and in fact, in this very sense has Imām Abū Ḥanīfah said: "Faith in Islam neither increases nor decreases."

39. That is, "Someone has already offered his life in the way of Allah, and someone is awaiting the time when he will offer it for the sake of his Faith."

40. That is, Jews of the Banī Quraiẓah.

جَمِيلًا ﴿٢٨﴾ وَإِن كُنتُنَّ تُرِدْنَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَالدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ أَعَدَّ
لِلْمُحْسِنَاتِ مِنكُنَّ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٢٩﴾ يَا نِسَاءَ النَّبِيِّ مَن يَأْتِ مِنكُنَّ بِفَاحِشَةٍ
مُّبَيِّنَةٍ يُضَاعَفْ لَهَا الْعَذَابُ ضِعْفَيْنِ ۚ وَكَانَ ذَٰلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا ﴿٣٠﴾

الجزء ٢٢

وَمَن يَقْنُتْ مِنكُنَّ لِلَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا نُّؤْتِهَا أَجْرَهَا مَرَّتَيْنِ

وَأَعْتَدْنَا لَهَا رِزْقًا كَرِيمًا ﴿٣١﴾ يَا نِسَاءَ النَّبِيِّ لَسْتُنَّ كَأَحَدٍ مِّنَ النِّسَاءِ إِنِ
اتَّقَيْتُنَّ فَلَا تَخْضَعْنَ بِالْقَوْلِ فَيَطْمَعَ الَّذِي فِي قَلْبِهِ مَرَضٌ وَقُلْنَ قَوْلًا
مَّعْرُوفًا ﴿٣٢﴾ وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الْأُولَىٰ وَأَقِمْنَ
الصَّلَاةَ وَآتِينَ الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِعْنَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ ۚ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ
عَنكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا ﴿٣٣﴾ وَاذْكُرْنَ مَا يُتْلَىٰ فِي

ع ١ ٩

بُيُوتِكُنَّ مِنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَالْحِكْمَةِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ لَطِيفًا خَبِيرًا ﴿٣٤﴾ إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ
وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْقَانِتِينَ وَالْقَانِتَاتِ وَالصَّادِقِينَ
وَالصَّادِقَاتِ وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّابِرَاتِ وَالْخَاشِعِينَ وَالْخَاشِعَاتِ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ
وَالْمُتَصَدِّقَاتِ وَالصَّائِمِينَ وَالصَّائِمَاتِ وَالْحَافِظِينَ فُرُوجَهُمْ وَالْحَافِظَاتِ
وَالذَّاكِرِينَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ ۙ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُم مَّغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٣٥﴾
وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا مُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَى اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْرًا أَن يَكُونَ لَهُمُ
الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ ۗ وَمَن يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا مُّبِينًا ﴿٣٦﴾
وَإِذْ تَقُولُ لِلَّذِي أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَأَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِ أَمْسِكْ عَلَيْكَ زَوْجَكَ وَ
اتَّقِ اللَّهَ وَتُخْفِي فِي نَفْسِكَ مَا اللَّهُ مُبْدِيهِ وَتَخْشَى النَّاسَ ۖ وَاللَّهُ أَحَقُّ
أَن تَخْشَاهُ ۖ فَلَمَّا قَضَىٰ زَيْدٌ مِّنْهَا وَطَرًا زَوَّجْنَاكَهَا لِكَيْ لَا يَكُونَ عَلَى

O Prophet,[41] say to your wives, "If you seek the world and its adornments, come, I shall give you of these and send you off in a good way. But if you seek Allah and His Messenger and the abode of the Hereafter, you should rest assured that Allah has prepared a great reward for those of you who do good."[42] 28-29

Wives of the Prophet, whoever among you commits a manifest indecency, will be doubly punished:[43] this is an easy thing for Allah.[44] And whoever among you obeys Allah and His Prophet, and does good works, We shall doubly reward her,[45] and for her We have prepared an honourable provision. 30-31

Wives of the Prophet, you are not like the other women.[46] If you are Godfearing, do not talk in a soft voice lest the man of the diseased heart should cherish false hopes from you, but speak in an unaffected manner.[47] Stay in your houses,[48] and do not go about displaying your fineries as women used to do in the days of ignorance.[49] Establish the *Ṣalāt*, pay the *Zakāt*, and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah only intends to remove uncleanliness from you, O people of the Prophet's household, and purify you completely.[50] Remember the Revelations of Allah and the wise sayings which are recited in your houses.[51] Surely, Allah is the Knower of everything[52] and is All-Aware. 32-34

Most surely[53] the men and the women who have surrendered themselves to Allah;[54] who are believing,[55] obedient,[56] truthful,[57] and patient;[58] who bow down before Allah,[59] practise charity,[60] observe the fasts,[61] guard their private parts[62] and remember Allah much:[63] Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a vast reward.[64] 35

It[65] does not behove a believing man and a believing woman that when Allah and His Messenger have given their decision in a matter, they should exercise an option in that matter of theirs; and whoever disobeys Allah and His Prophet, has indeed strayed into manifest error.[66] 36

O Prophet,[67] remember the time when you were saying to the man, whom Allah as well as you had favoured, "Keep your wife and fear Allah."[69] You were at that time keeping hidden in your heart that which Allah intended to reveal: you were fearing the people, whereas 37

Allah has a greater right that you should fear Him.[70] So, when Zaid had fulfilled his desire of her,[71] We married (the divorced woman) to you[72] so that there remains no hindrance for the believers in regard to the wives of their adopted sons when they have fulfilled their desire of them.[73] And Allah's Command had to be carried out.

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41. The verses from here to 35 were sent down in the period contiguous to the Battle of the Trench and the raid on Bani Quraizah, whose background we have touched upon in the Introduction to this Sūrah. According to a tradition related in Muslim on the authority of Hadrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah, "One day when Hadrat Abū Bakr and Hadrat 'Umar visited the Holy Prophet, they saw that his wives were sitting around him and he was quiet. Addressing Hadrat 'Umar, he said: 'They are sitting around me as you see: they are asking for money for household expenditure'." At this both the Companions rebuked their daughters and said, "Why do you embarrass the Holy Prophet and demand from him that which he does not have." This event shows how hard pressed the Holy Prophet was economically at that time and how distressed and embarrassed he was feeling at his wives' demand for domestic expenditure during the period when a bitter conflict was going on between Islam and paganism.

42. At the time when this verse was sent down, the Holy Prophet had four wives with him: Hadrat Saudah, Hadrat 'Ā'ishah, Hadrat Hafsah and Hadrat Umm Salamah. He had not yet married Hadrat Zainab. (Ibn 'Arabi: *Ahkām al-Qur'ān*, Egyptian Edition, 1958, vol. III, pp. 512-13). When this verse was revealed, he first spoke to Hadrat 'Ā'ishah, and said: "I ask you a thing; do not be hasty in answering; consult your parents, then decide." Then he told her of Allah's Command and recited this verse. She replied: "Should I consult my parents about this?—I seek Allah and His Messenger and the Hereafter. After this he went to each of his wives and asked the same thing and each one gave the same reply as had been given by Hadrat 'Ā'ishah. (Musnad Ahmad, Muslim, Nasā'ī).

This is termed *takhyīr*, *i.e.* to give the wife the option to decide for herself whether she would stay in wedlock or would separate from the husband. This was obligatory for the Holy Prophet because he had been commanded by Allah to offer such an option to his wives. If a lady from among the holy wives had opted to separate she would not have separated automatically but would have been separated by the Holy Prophet, as is clear from the words: " . . . I shall give you of these and send you off gracefully." But the Holy Prophet would certainly have separated her because as a Prophet it would not behove him not to honour the word. After divorce apparently the lady would have stood excluded from the category of the holy wives, and she would not be forbidden to any other Muslim;

for she would have chosen divorce from the Holy Prophet only for the sake of the world and its adornments of which she had been given the choice, and obviously the option could not be exercised in case she was forbidden to re-marry. On the other hand, the intention of the verse also seems that the Holy Prophet was not left with any authority to divorce the wives who chose Allah and His Messenger and the Hereafter in preference to the world. For *takhyīr* had only two sides: if a wife opted for the world, she would be divorced; if she opted for Allah and His Messenger and the Hereafter, she would not be divorced. Obviously, if a lady chose one alternative, the other would become forbidden in her case by itself.

In Islamic Law *takhyīr*, in fact, amounts to delegation of the right to obtain divorce. The husband himself gives the wife the choice to stay in wedlock with him or be separated. Here are briefly the injunctions which the jurists have derived from the Qur'ān and *Sunnah* in this regard:

(1) Once a husband has given this choice to a wife, he can neither withdraw it nor stop her from exercising it. However, it is not necessary that the woman must exercise it. She may choose to remain in weldlock with the husband, or may prefer to separate, or may opt nothing and let the right of divorce be annulled.

(2) There are two conditions of this choice being transferred to the woman: (a) The husband should have given her the right of divorce in clear words, or if there was no clear mention of the divorce, he should have had the intention of giving this right; *e.g.* if he says, "You have the choice" or "your business is in your own hand," such indirect words will not transfer the right of divorce to the woman without the intention of the husband. If the woman claims it and the husband states on oath that he had no intention of giving the right of divorce, his statement will be admitted, unless the woman produces evidence to the effect that those words were said during a dispute, or in connection with divorce, because in that context delegation of the right would mean that the husband had the intention of giving the right of divorce. (b) The woman knows that she has been given the right of divorce. If she was absent, she should receive information of this, and if she is present, she should hear the words. Unless she hears the words, or receives the news, the right will not be transferred to her.

(3) As to the time limit within which the wife has to exercise her right if the husband gives it her absolutely without specifying any limit, there is a difference of opinion among the jurists. Some jurists have expressed the opinion that the woman can exercise the right at the same sitting at which the husband gave it her; if she leaves the place without making a response, or turns her attention to something else which indicates that she

does not want to make a response, she forfeits the right invested in her and her choice no longer remains. This is the opinion of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān, Ḥaḍrat Ibn Mas'ūd, Ḥaḍrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah, 'Attā, Jābir bin Zaid, Mujāhid, Sha'bī, Nakha'ī, Imām Mālik, Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Imām Shāfe'ī, Imām Auzā'ī, Sufyān Thaurī 'and Abū Thaur. The other opinion is that her exercise of the choice is not confined to that sitting but she can exercise it even afterwards. This opinion is held by Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Basrī, Qatādah and Zuhrī.

(4) If the husband specifies a time limit and says, for instance, "You have the option for a month or a year, or your business is in your own hand for so long," the wife would enjoy the option only for that long. However, if he says, "You can exercise this option as and when you like," her option would be unlimited.

(5) If the woman intends to obtain separation, she should express her intention clearly and definitely. Vague words which do not express the intention clearly will have no effect.

(6) Legally, the husband can give the option to the wife in three forms: *(a)* He may say, "Your business is in your own hand;" or *(b)* he may say: "You have the option;" or *(c)* "You are divorced if you so please." The legal consequences of each are separate as explained below:

(a) If the husband has said: "Your business is in your own hand," and the woman responds clearly to the effect that she would opt for separation, it would amount to an irreversible divorce according to the Ḥanifites. That is, after this the husband will forfeit his right to have her back as his wife. However, they can remarry if they so like after the expiry of the waiting period. And if the husband said, "Your affair is in your own hand to the extent of one divorce," this will be regarded as the first reversible divorce. That is, the husband can take her back as his wife within the waiting-period. But if the husband had the intention of all the three divorces at the time of delegating to the woman the right of divorce, or mentioned this specifically, the woman's exercise of the option in such a case would amount to divorce no matter whether she pronounces divorce thrice on herself or says only once that she has chosen separation or divorced herself.

(b) If the husband gives the woman the option to separate with the words: "You have the option," and the woman opts for separation in clear words, it will amount to one reversible divorce according to the Ḥanifites even if the husband had the intention of giving option for three divorces. However, if the husband has clearly given option for three divorces, the three divorces will take place only on the woman's

exercise of the option for divorce. According to Imām Shāfe'ī, if at the time of giving the option, the husband had the intention of divorce, and the woman opts for separation, it will amount to one reversible divorce. According to Imām Mālik, it will amount to three divorces in case the wife had been enjoyed; in case she had not been enjoyed, the husband's claim to have intended only one divorce will be admitted.

(c) In case the words "You are divorced if you so please" have been used and the woman has opted for divorce, it will be a reversible divorce and not an irreversible one.

(7) If after the husband has given the option for separation, the woman chooses to remain in wedlock, no divorce will take place at all. This is the opinion of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, Ḥaḍrat Abū ad-Dardā, Ibn 'Abbās and Ibn 'Umar, and the same has been adopted by majority of the jurists. When Masrūq asked Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah about this, she replied: "The Holy Prophet had given his wives the option and they chose to continue to live as his wives. Then, was it deemed to be a divorce?" The opinion of Ḥaḍrat 'Alī and Zaid bin Thābit that has been reported in this regard is that one reversible divorce will take place. But accoring to another tradition these two great Companions also held the opinion that no divorce will take place at all.

43. This does not mean that there was, God forbid, any chance of the Holy Prophet's wives committing an indecency, but this was meant to make them realize that they were the mothers of the Muslims; therefore, their responsibilities were accordingly very high, and so their moral conduct should be the purest. This is just like Allah's addressing the Holy Prophet to the effect: "If you committed *shirk*, all your works would be rendered vain." (Az-Zumar: 65). This also does not mean that there was, God forbid, any chance of the Holy Prophet's committing *shirk*, but this is meant to make the Holy Prophet realize, and through him the common Muslims, that *shirk* is a most heinous crime which must be guarded against most judiciously.

44. That is, "You should not be under the delusion that your being the Prophet's wives will protect you from Allah's punishment, or that it will be difficult for Allah to call you to account on account of your high rank and position in the world."

45. The reason for giving a double punishment for a sin and a double reward for a good work is that those whom Allah honours with a high rank in society generally become the leaders of men and the majority of the people follow them for good or for evil. Thus, their evil does not remain their own evil but becomes the cause of a people's degeneration, and their goodness does not remain

their own goodness but becomes the cause of the true success of many other people also. Therefore, when they commit evil they are punished for their own as well as for others degeneration, and when they do good they are not only rewarded for their own good works but also for this that they guided others also to do good.

This verse also gives the principle that the greater the degree of prohibition and trust in respect of somebody and something the greater and more serious will be the crime of violating that prohibition and trust and the greater will be the punishment for it. For example, drinking in the mosque is a much more serious crime than drinking privately in the house, and therefore, it will entail a severer punishment. Likewise, committing adultery with the prohibited relations is a far more serious crime than committing it with another woman, and therefore, will call for a severer punishment.

46. The verses from here to the end of the paragraph are those with which the Commandments of Purdah were introduced in Islam. In these verses though the wives of the Holy Prophet only have been addressed, the intention is to enforce reforms in all the Muslim houses. The object of addressing the Holy Prophet's wives particularly is that when a pure way of life will start from his house, it will be followed by the women of all other Muslim houses as well, because this house was looked upon by the Muslims as a model to follow. Some people, when they see that these verses have been addressed only to the wives of the Holy Prophet, assert that these Commandments were only meant for them. But when one reads what follows in these verses one feels that there is nothing which might have been meant particularly for the holy wives and not for the other Muslim women. Could Allah have intended only this that the holy wives alone should be free from uncleanliness and they alone should obey Allah and His Prophet and they alone should offer the *Salāt* and pay the *Zakāt*? If this could not be the intention, then how could the Command for them to stay in their houses and avoid displaying the fineries and abstain from talking to the other men in an alluring voice be meant particularly for them to the exclusion of all other Muslim women? Is there any rational proof on the basis of which some Commands in one and the same context and series be regarded as general and some others as particular and special?

As for the sentence, "You are not like the other women," it also does not mean that the other women should come out in full make-up and should talk to the other men coquettishly and flirt with them, but "as for you, you should not adopt such a conduct." The style, to the contrary, is such as if a gentleman would tell his child, "You are not like the common children of the street: you should not use abusive language." From this no sensible person would ever conclude that the

speaker regarded only his own child using abusive language as bad; as for others he would not mind if they used abusive language.

47. That is, "There is no harm if the other man is spoken to in case of a genuine need, but on such an occasion the woman's tone and manner of speech should be such as does not let the other man think that he could cherish any false hope from her. There should be no undue softness in her tone, no allurement in her conversation, no consciously affected mellowness in her voice, which should excite the male hearer's emotions and encourage him to make advances.

About such a manner of speech Allah clearly says that this does not behove a woman who has any fear of God in her heart and desire to avoid evil. In other words, this is the way and manner of the wicked and unchaste woman's speech and not of the believing pious woman's speech. If this verse is read together with verse 31 of Sūrah An-Nūr, in which Allah says: "They should not stamp the ground in walking lest their hidden decoration is revealed," the intention of the Lord clearly seems to be that the women should not attract other men by their voice or the jingle of their ornaments unnecessarily and if at all they have to speak to the other men, they should speak to them in an un-affected tone and manner. That is why it is forbidden for the woman to pronounce the call to the Prayer. Moreover, if a woman is attending a congregational Prayer and the Imām commits a mistake, she is not permitted to say *Subhan-Allah* like the males but should only tap her hands to call the Imām's attention to the error.

Now just consider this: When Islam disallows the woman to talk to other men in a soft and sweet tone and even forbids her to produce her voice before the other men without a genuine need, will it approve her to appear on the stage and sing, dance, flirt and behave, coquettishly? Will it permit her to sing love songs over the radio and excite the people's emotions by presenting sweet melodies full of obscene themes? Will it permit that she should play the roles of the wives and sweet-hearts of others in dramas? Or that the women should be made the air-hostesses and be especially trained to charm and allure the passengers? Or that they should visit clubs and attend social functions and gatherings in full make-up and mix freely with men and have fun and a good time with them ? From which Qur'ān has this culture been derived? For the Qur'ān that was sent down by God there is to be found no hint as to the admissibility of this sort of culture.

48. The word *qarna* in the original is derived from *qarar* according to some lexicographers and from *waqār* according to others. In the first sense, it will mean: "Settle down, stick firmly;" and in the second sense: "Live peacefully, sit with dignity." In both the cases the verse means to impress that the woman's real sphere of activity is her home; she should carry out her functions within that sphere peacefully, and she should come out of the house only in case of a genuine

need. This meaning is clear from the words of the verse itself and the Holy Prophet's *Aḥadīth* also impress it even more forcefully. Ḥāfiz Abū Bakr Bazzār has related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Anas that the women made a submission to the Holy Prophet, saying: "All kinds of virtues have been secured by the men: they fight and accomplish great deeds in the way of Allah. What should we do that we may also get a reward equal to that of the warriors?" The Holy Prophet replied: "The one who sits in her house from among you, will attain the reward of the warriors." What he meant was : The warrior can fight confidently and with full peace of the mind in the way of Allah only when he is sure that all is well at home: his wife is there to look after the house and the children, and there is no cause for him to worry that she will betray him in his absence. The woman who will provide him this satisfaction and peace of the mind will be an equal partner with him in his fighting though she will be sitting back at home. According to another tradition that Bazzār and Tirmidhī have related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, the Holy Prophet said: "The woman must remain veiled and concealed. When she comes out of her house, Satan stares at her. And she is closer to Allah's mercy when she is inside her house." (For further details, see E.N. 49 of Sūrah An-Nūr).

In the presence of such a clear and express command of the Qur'ān, it is not at all permissible that the Muslim women should seek membership of the councils and parliaments; that they should run after social activities outside the house; that they should work side by side with men in the government offices, should get education along with boys in the colleges, serve as nurses in the male wards of hospitals, should be employed as hostesses in the aeroplanes and rail cars, and should be sent abroad for education and training. The greatest argument that is given in support of the permissibility of the women's outdoor activities is that Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah had taken part in the Battle of the Camel. But the people who present this argument perhaps do not know what was Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah's own opinion in this regard. 'Abdullah bin Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal has related in his *Zawā'id az-Zuhd* and Ibn Mundhir, Ibn Abī Shaibah and Ibn Sa'd in their own books the tradition from Masrūq, saying that when Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah during her recitation of the Qur'ān would reach this verse *(wa qarna fī buyūt-i kunna)*, she would start crying involuntarily; so much so that her head-wrapper would become wet, for this reminded her of the error that she had committed in the Battle of the Camel.

49. In this verse two important words have been used, which must be understood for the proper understanding of its intention. They are *tabarruj* and *jahiliyyat al-ūlā*.

The word *tabarruj* in Arabic means to become manifest and appear openly before others. The Arabs use the word *barāj* for every conspicuous and elevated object. A *burj* (tower) is so called because of its prominence and elevation. A

sailing-boat is called *bārijah*, because its sails become visible from a distance. The word *tabarruj* when used in respect of a woman will have three meanings: (1) that she should show the charms of her face and body before the people; (2) that she should display the adornments of her dress and ornaments before others; and (3) that she should make herself conspicuous by her gait and figure and coquetry. The same explanation of this word has been given by the leading lexicographers and commentators. Mujāhid, Qatādah and Ibn Abī Nujaiḥ say: "*Tabarruj* means to walk in a vain, alluring and coquettish manner." Muqātil says: "It means a woman's displaying of her necklaces, ear-rings and bosom." Al-Mubarrad says: "That a woman should reveal her adornments which she should conceal." Abū 'Ubaidah comments: "This that a woman should make herself conspicuous by display of her body and dress to attract the attention of men."

The word *jāhiliyyat* has been used at three other places in the Qurān besides this, in Āl-i 'Imrān: 154, where about those who shirk fighting in the way of Allah, it has been said: "They began to cherish about Allah thoughts of Ignorance *(jāhiliyyat)* which were void of the truth," and in Al-Mā'idah: 50, where about those who want to be judged by their own law instead of the law of Allah, it has been said: "Do they desire to be judged by the laws of ignorance *(jāhiliyyat)?"* and in Al-Fatḥ: 26, where the prejudice of the people of Makkah due to which they did not permit the Muslims to perform 'Umrah, has been called as "the haughty spirit of paganism *(jāhiliyyat)."* According to a *Ḥadīth* once Ḥaḍrat Abū ad-Dardā' in the heat of a quarrel abused another person in respect of his mother. When the Holy Prophet heard of it, he remarked: "You still have *jāhiliyyat* in you." According to another *Ḥadīth* the Holy Prophet said: "Three things show *jāhiliyyat* to taunt the lineage of another person, to take omens from the movement of the stars, and to mourn over the dead." All these customs show that *jāhiliyyat* in the Islamic terminology is every such conduct which goes against Islamic culture and civilization and Islamic morality and etiquette and Islamic way of thinking and behaviour. Thus, *jāhiliyyat al-ūlā* would mean all those evils in which the Arabs of the pre-Islamic days and the people of the entire world were involved.

This explanation makes it abundantly clear that what Allah forbids women is to move out of their houses showing off their physical charms and beauty. He instructs them to stay in their houses because their real sphere of activity is their home and not the world outside. However, if they have to move out of the house for an out-door duty, they should not move out as the women used to do in the pre-Islamic days of ignorance. For it does not behove the women of a Muslim society to walk out fully embellished to make their face and figure conspicuous by adornments and tight-fitting or transparent dresses, and to walk coquettishly. These are the ways of ignorance which Islam does not approve. Now everybody

can see for himself whether the culture which is being made popular in our country is the culture of Islam, according to the Qur'ān, or the culture of ignorance.

50. The context in which this verse occurs makes it manifest that the word *ahl al-bait* (people of the house) here implies the wives of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace), because the address begins with: "O wives of the Prophet," and they are the addressees in the whole discourse preceding it as well as following it. Moreover, the word *ahl al-bait* in Arabic is used precisely in the sense in which the word "household" is used in English, which includes both a man's wife and children. No one would exclude the wife from the "household." The Qur'ān itself has used this word at two other places besides this, and at both the wife is included in its sense, rather as the most important member of the family. In Sūrah Hūd, when the angels give the Prophet Abraham the good news of the birth of a son, his wife exclaims: "Shall I bear a child now when I have grown too old, and this husband of mine has also become old?" The angels say: "What! Are you surprised at Allah's decree, O people of Abraham's household? Allah's mercy and blessings are upon you." In Sūrah Al-Qaṣaṣ, when the Prophet Moses reaches the Pharaoh's house as a suckling, and the Pharaoh's wife is in search of a suitable nurse for the child, the Prophet Moses' sister says, "Shall I tell you of a household whose people will bring him up for you and look after him well?" Thus, the Arabic idiom and the usage of the Qur'ān and the context of this verse, all point clearly to the fact that the Holy Prophet's wives as well as his children are included in his *ahl al-bait;* rather the more correct thing is that the verse is actually addressed to the wives and the children become included in the household only because of the sense of the word. That is why according to Ibn 'Abbās and 'Urwah bin Zubair and 'Ikrimah, the word *ahl al-bait* in this verse implies the wives of the Holy Prophet.

But if somebody says that the word *ahl al-bait* has been used only for the wives and none else can be included in it, it will also be wrong. Not only this that the word "household" includes all the members of a man's family, but the Holy Prophet has himself explained that this includes even himself. According to Ibn Abī Ḥātim, once when Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah was asked about Ḥaḍrat 'Ali, she said, "Do you ask me about the person who was among the most loved ones of the Holy Prophet and whose wife was the Holy Prophet's daughter and most beloved to him?" Then she related the event when the Holy Prophet had called Ḥaḍrat 'Ali and Fāṭimah and Ḥasan and Ḥusain (may Allah be pleased with them all) and covered them all with a sheet of cloth and prayed: "O Allah, these are my household, remove uncleanness from them and make them pure." Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah says, "I said: I also am included among your household (i.e. I may also be covered under the sheet and prayed for)." Thereupon the Holy Prophet replied:

"You stay out, you, of course, are already included." A great many Aḥādīth bearing on this subject have been related by traditionists like Muslim, Tirmidhī, Aḥmad, Ibn Jarīr, Ḥākim, Baihaqī, etc. on the authority of Abū Sa'īd Khudrī, Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, Ḥaḍrat Anas, Ḥaḍrat Umm Salamah, Ḥaḍrat Wāthilah bin Aqṣa' and some other Companions, which show that the Holy Prophet declared Ḥaḍrat 'Alī and Fāṭimah and their two sons as his *ahl al-bait*. Therefore, the view of those who exclude them from the *ahl al-bait* is not correct.

Similarly the view of those people also is not correct, who, on the basis of the above-cited *Aḥādīth*, regard the wives of the Holy Prophet as excluded from his *ahl al-bait*. In the first place, anything which has been clearly stated in the Qurān cannot be contradicted on the basis of a *Ḥadīth*. Secondly, these *Aḥādīth* also do not have the meaning that is put on them. As related in some traditions that the Holy Prophet did not cover Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah and Ḥaḍrat Umm Salamah under the sheet of cloth which he put on the four members of his family, does not mean that he had excluded those ladies from his "household." But it means that the wives were already included in *ahl al-bait*, because the Qur'ān, in fact, had addressed them as *ahl al-bait*. The Holy Prophet, however, thought that the apparent words of the Qur'ān might cause somebody the misunderstanding about these members that they were excluded from the *ahl al-bait*. Therefore, he felt the need for clarification in their case and not in the case of his wives.

A section of the people have not only misconstrued this verse to the extent that they have made the word *ahl al-bait* exclusively applicable to Hadrat 'Ali and Fāṭimah and their children to the exclusion of the holy wives, but have gone even further and concluded wrongly from its words "Allah only intends to remove uncleanliness from you and purify you completely", that Ḥaḍrat 'Ali and Fāṭimah and their children are infallable like the Prophets of Allah. They say that "uncleanliness" implies error and sin, and, as Allah says, these *ahl al-bait* have been purified of this, whereas the words of the verse do not say that uncleanliness has been removed from them and they have been purified. But the words are to the effect: "Allah intends to remove uncleanliness from you and purify you completely." The context also does not tell that the object here is to mention the virtues and excellences of the Holy Prophet's household. On the contrary, they have been advised here what they should do and what they should not, because Allah intends to purify them. In other words, they have been told that if they adopted such and such an attitude and way of life, they will be blessed with cleanliness, otherwise not. However, if the words "Allah intends to remove uncleanliness from you . . ." are taken to mean that Allah has made them infallable, there is no reason why all the Muslims who perform their ablutions before offering the Prayer are not held as infallable, because about them also

Allah says: "But Allah wills to purify you and complete His blessings upon you." (Al-Mā'idah: 6)

51. The word *wadhkurna* in the original has two meanings: Remember and mention. According to the first meaning the verse would mean: "O wives of the Prophet, you should never forget that yours is the house from where the world is being instructed in Divine Revelations and Wisdom; therefore, your responsibility is very great. Let it not happen that the people might see specimens of ignorance in this very house." According to the second meaning, it would mean: "O wives of the Prophet, you should mention and relate before the people whatever you hear and see, for by virtue of your close and constant social association and attachment with the Prophet you will know and experience many such things which the other people will not be able to know by any other means than you."

Two things have been mentioned in this verse: (1) The Revelations of Allah; and (2) the wise sayings. The revelations of Allah are the verses of Allah's Book, but *ḥikmat* (wisdom) is a comprehensive word which includes all those wise things which the Holy Prophet taught the people. This word may also imply the teachings of the Book of Allah, but there is no reason why it should be made exclusively applicable to them. It inevitably includes the wisdom that the Holy Prophet taught by his pure character and by his sayings besides reciting the verses of the Qur'ān. Some people, only on the basis that the word *mā yutlā* (that which is recited) has been used in the verse, make the assertion that the "Revelations of Allah" and "Wisdom" imply only the Qur'ān, for the word "recitation" as a term is specifically used for the recitation of the Qur'ān. But this reasoning is absolutely wrong. The use of the word "recitation" specifically as a term for the recitation of the Qur'ān or the Book of Allah is the work of the people of the later ages. The Qur'ān has not used this word as a term. In Sūrah Al-Baqarah: 102, this same word has been used for the incantation of the magical formulas which the satans falsely attributed to the Prophet Solomon and taught the people. ("They followed that which the satans recited attributing it to the kingdom of Solomon.") This shows that the Qur'ān uses this word in its lexical meaning, and does not specify it for reciting the verses of the Book of Allah.

52. "Knower of everything": Knower of even the most secret and hidden things.

53. Presentation of this theme immediately after the foregoing paragraph contains a subtle allusion to the fact that the instructions given above to the Holy Prophet's wives are not exclusively meant for them but the Muslim society as a whole should reform itself in accordance with them.

54. "Who have surrendered themselves to Allah": Who have accepted Islam as a code of life for themselves, and have decided to follow it in their lives, and who have no wish to resist the Islamic way of life and thought, but have adopted the way of obedience and submission to it.

55. "Who are believing": Whose obedience is not merely outward nor unwilling but who sincerely regard the guidance given by Islam as based on the truth whose faith is that the way shown by the Qur'ān and the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) is the only right and straight way in following which alone lies their true success. That which has been declared as wrong by Allah and His Prophet is certainly wrong even according to their judgement and that which has been declared as right by Allah and His Prophet is certainly right even according to their thinking and sense. Psychologically and intellectually also they do not regard as improper any injunction that has been enjoined by the Qur'ān and *Sunnah*, and do not remain on the lookout to change it somehow to suit their own desire or mould it according to the current trends of the world, avoiding at the same time the blame that they have effected a change in the Command given by Allah and His Prophet. The Holy Prophet has described the true state of faith in a *Ḥadīth* in these words:

"He who reconciled himself to Allah as his Lord and to Islam as his Way of Life and to Muhammad as his Messenger, has the true taste of Faith." (Muslim)

In another *Ḥadīth*, he has explained it thus:

"None of you becomes a believer until the desires of his self become subordinate to what I have brought." *(Sharh as-Sunnah)*

56. That is, "They do not rest content with mere belief but are obedient practically also. They are not the sort of the people who would honestly believe that what Allah and His Messenger have commanded was true but would violate it in practice: that they would sincerely regard what Allah and His Messenger have forbidden as bad but would go on following the same in practical life."

57. That is, "They are truthful in their speech and honest in their dealings. They do not deal in lies, deceptions, frauds and forgeries. They utter with their tongues only what their conscience approves as true. They practise and perform only what they honestly find to be in accordance with righteousness and truth, and they are honest in all their dealings with others."

58. That is, "They patiently and steadfastly bear and face all the obstacles, dangers, difficulties and losses that they might have to encounter in following the right way taught by Allah and His Messenger and in establishing

Allah's Religion in the world; no fear and no temptation and no lust of the self can succeed in diverting them from the right way."

59. That is, "They are free from pride, vanity and haughtiness: they have full understanding of the reality that they are servants and they have no other position than that of servitude. Therefore, their hearts as well as their bodies remain bowed before Allah, dominated by fear of Him. They never display the attitude which is the hall-mark of the lives of those who are fearless of God and are involved in arrogance." From the sequence it appears that the mention of *Khushū'* (expression of humility) in particular along with the general attitude of the fear of God implies the Prayer, for the mention of the practice of charity and fast has been made just after it.

60. This does not only imply payment of the obligatory *Zakāt*, but it also includes general charity. It means to say that they spend their wealth freely in the way of Allah and they are not at all niggardly in the matter of helping the servants of Allah as much as they can. No orphan and no sick or afflicted person, no weak or disabled person, no poor and needy one remains deprived of their support in their dwelling; and if there arises the need for monetary help for promoting the cause of Allah's Religion, they are never miserly in expending their wealth for that purpose.

61. This includes both the obligarory and the voluntary fasts.

62. This has two meanings: (1) They refrain from adultery; and (2) they avoid nudity. One should also note that nudity does not only mean being naked but it is also nudity to put on a thin dress which shows the body, or is so tight-fitting that it reveals all the outlines of the body.

63. "Remember Allah much" means that one should mention Allah's name in one way or other at all times in every business of life. Man cannot develop such a state of the mind unless the thought of God becomes deeply embedded in his heart. When this idea has passed beyond his conscious mind and settled deep in his subconscious and unconscious mind, then only he will remember and mention God's name in whatever he does and in whatever he says. He will begin with bismillah when he eats and say *al-ḥamdu lillah* when he finishes; he will remember Allah when he goes to bed, and mention Allah's name when he gets up. In his conversation also he will again and again pronounce *bismillah, al-ḥamdu-lillah, inshā-Allah, mā shā Allah*, etc. and ask for Allah's help in every matter, and thank Him for every blessing. He will seek His mercy in every affliction, and turn to Him in every trouble. He will fear Him on encountering every evil, and ask for His forgiveness when he happens to have committed an error and will pray to Him for fulfilment of every need. In short, in every state and in every business of life his function will be to remember Allah.

This, in fact, is the essence of the Islamic life. For all other acts of worship there is a prescribed time when they are performed, and one is free when one has performed them. But this is the worship which has no special time; it has to be performed constantly so that it links up the man's life with Allah and His service permanently. The other worships and religious acts themselves also become meaningful only when the heart of man remains inclined to Allah not only at the time when the act is actually being carried out but at all times when the tongue is uttering Allah's name constantly. In such a state as this worship and religious acts develop and flourish in a man's life precisely in the same manner as a plant grows in a congenial climate and environment. Contrary to this, the example of the religious services and worships which are carried out only on special times and occasions in the life which is devoid of this constant remembrance of Allah is of the plant which has been planted in an un-congenial climate, and which is growing only due to the special attention and care of the gardener. This very thing has been explained by the Holy Prophet in a *Ḥadīth*, thus:

"Mu'ādh bin Anas Juhanī relates that a person asked the Holy Prophet of Allah, who among those who fight in the way of Allah will get the highest reward? He replied: The one who remembers Allah the most. The man asked: Who among the observers of the fast will get the highest reward? He replied: The one who remembers Allah the most. The man then asked the same question about the offerer of the Prayer, the payer of the *Zakāt* and charities and the performer of *Ḥajj*, and the Holy Prophet in every case gave the same answer, saying: He who remembers Allah the most." (Musnad Aḥmad)

64. This verse plainly tells what qualities and characteristics are of real worth in the sight of Allah. These are the basic values of Islam which have been compressed into one sentence. As regards these, there is no difference between the man and woman. However, as for their life-activity, the two sexes have separate spheres to function. The males have to function in some particular spheres and the females in some others. But if they possess these qualities and characteristics equally, Allah will raise them to equal ranks and bless them with equal rewards. It will in no way affect their rank and reward if one carried out household chores and the other performed the duties of caliphate and enforced the *Sharī'ah* injunctions; one reared children in the house and the other went to the battlefield and fought for the sake of Allah and His religion.

65. From here begin the verses which were sent down in connection with the Holy Prophet's marriage with Ḥaḍrat Zainab.

66. Ibn 'Abbās, Qatādah, 'Ikrimah and Muqātil bin Ḥayyān say that this verse was sent down at the time when the Holy Prophet proposed Ḥaḍrat Zainab for Ḥaḍrat Zaid, and Zainab and her relatives did not agree. According to Ibn

'Abbās, when the Holy Prophet made the proposal, Ḥaḍrat Zainab said, "I am better than him in lineage." Ibn Sa'd says that she also said, "I do not approve him for myself. I am a Quraishite by birth." The same sort of disapproval was expressed by her brother, 'Abdullah bin Jahsh, because Ḥaḍrat Zaid was a freed slave of the Holy Prophet and Hadrat Zainab was the daughter of his paternal aunt, Umaimah bint 'Abdul Muṭṭalib. They did not like the Holy Prophet to propose a girl of a noble Quraishite family, who was none other than his own first cousin, for his freed slave. At this, this verse was sent down and on hearing it Hadrat Zainab and all her relatives yielded to the proposal at once. Then the Holy Prophet married them, paid ten dīnārs and 60 dirhams from his own pocket as dower on behalf of Zaid, provided the bridal dress and sent some articles of food for domestic use.

Though this verse was sent down on a special occasion, the injunction given in it is the cardinal principle of the constitutional law of Islam, and it applies to the entire Islamic system of life. According to it no Muslim individual or nation, or institution, or court or parliament or state, is entitled to use its own freedom of opinion in a matter in which Allah and His Prophet have already given a decision. To be a Muslim means to surrender one's freedom of opinion and action before Allah and His Messenger. It would be a contradiction in terms if a person or a nation claimed to be Muslim and then reserved for itself the freedom of choice and action. No sensible person can think of combining the two contradictory attitudes together. The one who desires to remain a Muslim will inevitably have to bow down to the Command of Allah and His Prophet, and the one who is not inclined to bow will have to admit that he is not a Muslim. If he does not admit he will be regarded as a hypocrite both by God and by the people even though he might proclaim to be a Muslim at the top of his voice.

67. The discourse from here to verse 48 was sent down after the Holy Prophet had married Ḥaḍrat Zainab, and the hypocrites, the Jews and the *mushriks* had started a relentless propaganda campaign against him. While studying these verses one should bear in mind the fact that this Divine discourse was not meant for the instruction of the enemies who were engaged in a wilful campaign of vilification and slander and falsehood to defame the Holy Prophet intentionally and to satisfy their rancour. But its real object was to protect the Muslims against the influence of their campaign and to safeguard them against doubts and suspicions. Evidently, the Word of Allah could not satisfy the unbelievers. It could give peace of mind only to those who knew and believed it to be Allah's Word. There was a danger that those righteous people also might be confused and influenced by the objections that were being raised by their enemies. Therefore, on the one hand, Allah removed all possible doubts from their minds, and on the other, taught the

Muslims as well as the Holy Prophet himself how they should conduct themselves under the circumstances.

68. It refers to Ḥaḍrat Zaid as has been mentioned clearly below. In order to understand how Allah had favoured him and how the Holy Prophet, it is necessary here to relate his story briefly. He was the son of Ḥārithah bin Shurahbil, a person of the Kalb tribe, and his mother, Su'dā bint Tha'labah, was from the Banī Ma'n, a branch of the Tay tribe. When he was eight years old, she took him along to her parents. There the people of Banī Qain bin Jasr raided their camp, plundered their goods and took some men prisoners, Ḥaḍrat Zaid included. Then they sold Zaid at the fair of 'Ukāz near Tā'if. His buyer was Ḥākim bin Ḥizām, a nephew of Ḥaḍrat Khadījah. Hākim brought him to Makkah and presented him to his paternal aunt. When the Holy Prophet married Ḥaḍrat Khadījah he found Zaid in her service and was so impressed by his good manners and conduct that he asked him of her. Thus, this fortunate boy entered the service of the best of men, whom Allah, after a few years, was going to appoint a Prophet. Ḥaḍrat Zaid at that time was 15 years old. Afterwards when his father and uncle came to know that their child was at Makkah, they came to the Holy Prophet and requested him to return him in exchange for ransom. The Holy Prophet said, "I shall call the boy and leave it to him whether he would like to go with you or stay with me. If he chose to go, I would take no ransom but would let him go with you. However, if he chose to stay back, I am not the one who would turn out a person who would like to stay with me." They said, "This is perfectly right and just. Please ask the boy." The Holy Prophet called Zaid and asked him, "Do you know these two gentlemen?" He said, "Yes sir, this is my father and this my uncle." The Holy Prophet then said, "Well, you know them as well as me. You have the choice to go with them, or stay with me if you so desire." He said, "I have no wish to leave you and go with anyone else." His father and uncle said, "Zaid, will you prefer slavery to freedom, and choose to stay with others in preference to your parents and family?" He replied, "After what I have seen of this person I cannot now prefer anything else of the world to him." Hearing the reply the father and uncle of Zaid were reconciled to his remaining with the Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet set Zaid free immediately and proclaimed before a gathering of the Quraish in the Ka'bah, "Bear witness that hence-forth Zaid is my son: he will receive inheritance from me and I from him." Thereafter, he began to be called Zaid bin Muhammad by the people. All this happened before the Holy Prophet's advent as a Prophet. Then, when he was blessed with Prophethood by Allah, there were four persons who accepted his claim to it without a moment's hesitation as soon as they heard of it from him. They were Hadrat Khadijah, Hadrat Zaid, Hadrat 'Ali and Hadrat Abū Bakr. Hadrat Zaid was 30 years old then, and had already spent 15 years in the Holy Prophet's service. In the fourth year after Hijrah, the Holy Prophet married him to his first cousin Hadrat Zainab.

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الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ حَرَجٌ فِيْٓ اَزْوَاجِ اَدْعِيَآئِهِمْ اِذَا قَضَوْا مِنْهُنَّ وَطَرًا ۭ وَكَانَ اَمْرُ
اللّٰهِ مَفْعُوْلًا ۝ مَا كَانَ عَلَي النَّبِيِّ مِنْ حَرَجٍ فِيْمَا فَرَضَ اللّٰهُ لَهٗ ۭ سُنَّةَ اللّٰهِ
فِي الَّذِيْنَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ ۭ وَكَانَ اَمْرُ اللّٰهِ قَدَرًا مَّقْدُوْرَۨا ۝ الَّذِيْنَ يُبَلِّغُوْنَ
رِسٰلٰتِ اللّٰهِ وَيَخْشَوْنَهٗ وَلَا يَخْشَوْنَ اَحَدًا اِلَّا اللّٰهَ ۭ وَكَفٰى بِاللّٰهِ حَسِيْبًا ۝
مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ اَبَآ اَحَدٍ مِّنْ رِّجَالِكُمْ وَلٰكِنْ رَّسُوْلَ اللّٰهِ وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيّٖنَ ۭ وَ
كَانَ اللّٰهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيْمًا ۝ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا اللّٰهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيْرًا ۝
وَّسَبِّحُوْهُ بُكْرَةً وَّاَصِيْلًا ۝ هُوَ الَّذِيْ يُصَلِّيْ عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَلٰۗىِٕكَتُهٗ لِيُخْرِجَكُمْ مِّنَ
الظُّلُمٰتِ اِلَى النُّوْرِ ۭ وَكَانَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ رَحِيْمًا ۝ تَحِيَّتُهُمْ يَوْمَ يَلْقَوْنَهٗ سَلٰمٌ ۚ
وَاَعَدَّ لَهُمْ اَجْرًا كَرِيْمًا ۝ يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ اِنَّآ اَرْسَلْنٰكَ شَاهِدًا وَّمُبَشِّرًا وَّ
نَذِيْرًا ۝ وَّدَاعِيًا اِلَى اللّٰهِ بِاِذْنِهٖ وَسِرَاجًا مُّنِيْرًا ۝ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ بِاَنَّ
لَهُمْ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ فَضْلًا كَبِيْرًا ۝ وَلَا تُطِعِ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ وَالْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ وَدَعْ اَذٰىهُمْ
وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَي اللّٰهِ ۭ وَكَفٰى بِاللّٰهِ وَكِيْلًا ۝ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اِذَا نَكَحْتُمُ
الْمُؤْمِنٰتِ ثُمَّ طَلَّقْتُمُوْهُنَّ مِنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ تَمَسُّوْهُنَّ فَمَا لَكُمْ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ عِدَّةٍ
تَعْتَدُّوْنَهَا ۚ فَمَتِّعُوْهُنَّ وَسَرِّحُوْهُنَّ سَرَاحًا جَمِيْلًا ۝ يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ اِنَّآ اَحْلَلْنَا
لَكَ اَزْوَاجَكَ الّٰتِيْٓ اٰتَيْتَ اُجُوْرَهُنَّ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ يَمِيْنُكَ مِمَّآ اَفَاۗءَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْكَ وَ
بَنٰتِ عَمِّكَ وَبَنٰتِ عَمّٰتِكَ وَبَنٰتِ خَالِكَ وَبَنٰتِ خٰلٰتِكَ الّٰتِيْ هَاجَرْنَ مَعَكَ ۡ
وَامْرَاَةً مُّؤْمِنَةً اِنْ وَّهَبَتْ نَفْسَهَا لِلنَّبِيِّ اِنْ اَرَادَ النَّبِيُّ اَنْ يَّسْتَنْكِحَهَا ۡ
خَالِصَةً لَّكَ مِنْ دُوْنِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ۭ قَدْ عَلِمْنَا مَا فَرَضْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ فِيْٓ اَزْوَاجِهِمْ
وَمَا مَلَكَتْ اَيْمَانُهُمْ لِكَيْلَا يَكُوْنَ عَلَيْكَ حَرَجٌ ۭ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ غَفُوْرًا رَّحِيْمًا ۝

There is no harm for the Prophet to do a thing which Allah has ordained for him.[74] The same has been the Way of Allah with regard to all the Prophets who have gone before, and Allah's Command is an absolutely settled decree.[75] (This is the Way of Allah for those) who convey His messages, who fear Him alone and fear none but One God: Allah is enough to take account.[76] 38-39

(O people) Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the last of the Prophets and Allah is the Knower of everything.[77] 40

O you who have believed, remember Allah much and glorify Him morning and evening.[78] He it is Who blesses you, and His angels pray for His blessings for you, so that He may bring you out of darkness into light: He is very Kind to the believers.[79] Their salutation on the day they meet Him will be "Peace",[80] and Allah has prepared for them an honourable reward. 41-44

O Prophet,[81] We have sent you as a witness,[82] a bearer of good news and a warner,[83] an inviter to Allah by His leave[84] and a luminous lamp. Give good news to those who have believed (in you) that there are great bounties in store for them from Allah, so do not yield to the disbelievers and the hypocrites, disregard their persecution and put your trust in Allah: for Allah is sufficient for being entrusted with all one's affairs. 45-48

O you who have believed, when you marry the believing women, and then divorce them before you have touched them,[85] they do not have to fulfil a waiting term, whose completion you may demand of them; so provide them with something and send them off gracefully.[86] 49

O Prophet, We have made lawful to you those of your wives, whose dowers you have paid,[87] and those women who come into your possession out of the slavegirls granted by Allah, and the daughters of your paternal uncles and aunts, and of your maternal uncles and aunts, who have migrated with you, and the believing woman who gives herself to the Prophet if the Prophet may desire to marry her.[88] This privilege is for you only, not for the other believers.[89] We know what restrictions We have imposed on the other believers concerning their 50

wives and slavegirls. (You have been made an exception) so that there may be no hindrance to you;[90] and Allah is AllForgiving, AllMerciful.

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paid her dower on his behalf and provided them with necessary articles for setting up the house.

This is to what Allah has alluded in the verse, saying: "Whom Allah as well as you had favoured."

69. These words were said when the relations between Ḥaḍrat Zaid and Ḥaḍrat Zainab had become very strained, and after making repeated complaints Ḥaḍrat Zaid had finally told the Holy Prophet that he intended to divorce her. Although Ḥaḍrat Zainab had accepted to be married to him in obedience to Allah and His Messenger's command, she could not overcome her feeling that Zaid was a freed slave, who had been brought up by her own family, and she in spite of being the daughter of a noble Arab family, had been wedded to him. Due to this feeling she could never regard Ḥaḍrat Zaid as her equal in matrimonial life, and this caused more and more bitterness between them. Thus after a little more than a year the marriage ended in divorce.

70. Some people have misconstrued this sentence to mean this: The Holy Prophet desired to marry Ḥaḍrat Zainab and wanted that Zaid should divorce her. But when Zaid came to the Holy Prophet and said that he wanted to divorce his wife, the Holy Prophet stopped him from this only half-heartedly. At this Allah said: "You were keeping hidden in your heart that which Allah intended to reveal." The real meaning, however, is contrary to this. If this the sentence is read with verses 1, 2, 3 and 7 of this Sūrah, one can clearly see that in the very days when bitterness was increasing between Ḥaḍrat Zaid and his wife, Allah had hinted to His Prophet that when Zaid had divorced his wife, he would have to marry the divorced lady. But since the Holy Prophet knew what it meant to marry the divorced wife of the adopted son in the contemporary Arab society, and that too at a time when apart from a handful of the Muslims the entire country had become jealous of him, he was hesitant to take any step in that direction. That is why when Ḥaḍrat Zaid expressed his intention to divorce his wife, the Holy Prophet said to him, "Fear Allah and do not divorce your wife." What he meant by this was that Zaid should not divorce his wife so that he was saved from facing the trial, otherwise in case the divorce was pronounced he would have to comply with the command, and thus provoke a severe storm of criticism and vilification against himself. But when the Holy Prophet deliberately forbade Zaid to divorce his wife so that he himself might be saved from what he feared would cause him defamation, Allah found this below the high position that He wanted His Prophet

to enjoy, whereas Allah intended to effect a great reform through this marriage of the Prophet. The words "You were fearing the people, whereas Allah has a greater right that you should fear Him," clearly point to the same theme.

The same explanation of this verse has been given by Imām Zain-ul-'Ābedīn Ḥadrat 'Ali bin Hussain (may Allah be pleased with him). He says, "Allah had indicated to His Prophet that Zainab would be included among his wives. But when Zaid complained about her to him, the Holy Prophet admonished him to fear Allah and keep his wife. At this Allah said to His Prophet, 'I had informed you that I would marry you to Zainab. But when you were forbidding Zaid to divorce his wife, you were hiding that which Allah was going to reveal'." (Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Kathīr on the authority of Ibn Abī Ḥātim).

'Allāma Ālūsī also in his *Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī* has given the same meaning of it. He says, "This is an expression of displeasure on abandoning the better course, which was that the Holy Prophet should have kept quiet, or should have told Zaid to do as he liked. The displeasure amounted to this: 'Why did you tell Zaid to keep his wife, whereas I had informed you beforehand that Zainab would be included among your wives?'"

71. That is, Zaid divorced his wife and her waiting-period came to an end. The words "fulfilled his desire of her" by themselves give the meaning that Zaid was left with no desire attached to her. And this state of affairs does not appear on mere pronouncement of the divorce, because even during the waiting-period the husband can take his wife back if he has any interest in her; and the husband also has this desire left with the divorced wife that it should become known whether she is pregnant or not. Therefore, the desire of her former husband with the divorced wife comes to an end only on the expiry of the waiting-period.

72. These words are explicit that the Holy Prophet had married Hadrat Zainab not because of any personal desire but under the Command of Allah.

73. These words clearly indicate that Allah accomplished this social reform through the Holy Prophet to effect a great change which could not be enforced by any other means. There was no way to put an end to the wrong customs that had become prevalent in Arabia in respect of the adopted relations but that Allah's Messenger himself should take initiative to abolish them. Therefore, Allah arranged this marriage not for the sake of adding a wife to the Holy Prophet's household but for enforcing an important social change.

74. These words show that for the other Muslims such a marriage is just permissible but for the Holy Prophet it was a duty which Allah had imposed on him.

75. That is, "For the Prophets it has always been a law that whatever Command they receive from Allah, they have to act on it as a duty which they cannot in any case avoid. When Allah enjoins something on His Prophet, he has to accomplish it even if the whole world is deadly opposed to it."

76. The words in the Text have two meanings: (1) That Allah is enough to counter every fear and danger; and (2) that Allah is enough to take account: none else but Allah should be feared for accountability.

77. This one sentence cuts at the root of all those objections which the opponents were raising in connection with this marriage of the Holy Prophet.

Their first objection was that he had married his own daughter-in-law, whereas according to his own law the son's wife is forbidden for the father. This was answered by saying: "Muhammad is not the father of any of your men." That is, Zaid was not his real son, and so it was not unlawful to marry his divorced wife.

Their second objection was that even if his adopted son was not his real son, it was not necessary that he should have married his divorced wife. This was answered by saying: " . . . but he is the Messenger of Allah." That is, it was his duty as the Messenger of Allah to put an end to all kinds of prejudices about a lawful thing which custom and tradition had made unlawful without good reason and declare it to be lawful once again.

The point was stressed by saying: " ... and (he is) the last of the Prophets." That is, not to speak of a Messenger, no other Prophet would be raised after him, who could make up for a possible deficiency in the enforcement of a reform in the law and society that might have been left un-enforced in his time. Therefore, it had become all the more necessary that he should himself root out the custom of ignorance.

Again, to further emphasize this point, it was said: "Allah has knowledge of everything," that is, Allah knows best why it was imperative to get the custom of ignorance rooted out at that juncture through the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) rather than let it remain as it was. He knows that no other prophet would be coming after him in the future; therefore, if He did not abolish this custom through His Last Prophet, no other person after him would be able to abolish it for all the Muslims of the world for ever. Even if the later reformers would abolish it, no action of any one of them will have the permanent and universal authority behind it so that the people of every country and every age might start following it, and none of them would have a personality endowed with that holiness and sanctity that an action's being merely his way *(Sunnah)* might root out every feeling of aversion and abhorrence from the mind of the people.

It is a pity that a section of the people in our age have given wrong interpretations of this verse and opened the way to a great mischief. We have therefore added a comprehensive appendix at the end of the commentary of this Sūrah for the explanation of the question of the Finality of Prophethood and the eradication of the misunderstanding spread by these people.

78. This is meant to instruct the Muslims to the effect: When the Messenger of Allah is being showered with taunts and abuses by the enemies and his person being made the target of a propaganda campaign to frustrate his mission, the believers should neither listen to these absurd things unconcerned nor should become themselves also involved in the doubts and suspicions spread by the enemies nor should resort to abusive language in retaliation, but they should turn to Allah and remember Him more than usual as a special measure, The meaning of "remembering Allah much" has been explained in E.N. 63 above. "To glorify Allah morning and evening" means to glorify Him constantly, to express His holiness and purity by word of mouth and not merely by counting beads on the rosary.

79. This is meant to make the Muslims realize this: "The jealousy and malice of the disbelievers and hypocrites towards you is only due to the mercy that Allah has shown you through His Messenger. It is through him that you have been blessed with the faith, that you have come out from the darkness of unbelief and ignorance into the light of Islam, that you have developed the high moral and social qualities by virtue of which you stand distinguished above others. It is this which has filled the jealous people with malice and rage against the Messenger of Allah. However, in this state you should not adopt any unbecoming attitude which might alienate you from the mercy of Allah."

The word *Ṣalāt* when used with the preposition *'alā* by Allah in respect of the servants, it means mercy and kindness and compassion and when used by the angels in respect of the human beings, it means the prayer for mercy. That is, the angels pray to Allah to bless the human beings with His bounty and favours. Another meaning of *yuṣallī 'alaikum* is: "Allah blesses you with renown among the people and exalts you to a high rank so that the people begin to praise you and the angels begin to eulogize you."

80. This can have three meanings: (1) That Allah will Himself receive them with: "Peace be upon you," as has been stated in Sūrah Yā Sīn :58: "...they have been greeted with 'peace' from the Merciful Lord." (2) That the angels will greet them, as stated in Sūrah An-Naḥl: 32: "This is the reward for those pious people whose souls are received in a pure state, by the angels, who welcome them, saying: 'Peace be upon you: enter into Paradise as the reward of your good deeds." (3) That they will greet one another among themselves, as stated in Sūrah

Yūnus: 10, thus: "Therein their prayer will be 'Glory to Thee, O Lord,' and their greeting: 'Peace be to you,' and the burden of their hymn: 'Praise is for Allah alone, Lord of the universe.'"

81. After admonishing the Muslims, Allah now addresses a few words of consolation to His Prophet, as if to say: "We have blessed you with such and such a high rank and raised you to an exalted place of honour. Your opponents will not be able to harm you in any way by their propaganda campaign of slander and calumny. Therefore, you should not take their mischief to heart, nor give any weight to their propaganda. You should continue doing the duties of your mission, and let them utter whatever nonsense they like." Along with this, incidentally, the other people, both the believers and the unbelievers, also have been told that the person they have to deal with is not an ordinary man but a great personality, whom Allah has raised to the highest ranks of honour and glory.

82. The meaning of the Prophet's being a "witness" is very vast. It includes three kinds of evidence:

(1) *Verbal evidence*, i.e. the Prophet should bear out the truth of the realities and principles on which Allah's Religion is based and tell the world plainly that they are the truth and all that is opposed to them is falsehood. He should rise to proclaim without hesitation and fear the Being of Allah and His Unity, the existence of the angels, the coming down of Revelation, the occurrence of life-after-death, the Hell and Heaven, all are realities, even if they appear strange to the world, and the people mock the one presenting them, or call him a madman. Likewise, the Prophet should openly present before the people the concepts, values, principles and rules pertaining to morality and civilization and social life that God has revealed to him, and reject as wrong all the concepts and ways which are prevalent and are opposed to them, even if the whole world rejects them as wrong and violates them in practice. Similarly, the Prophet should proclaim as lawful what is lawful in Allah's Law even if the whole world regards it as unlawful, and should proclaim as unlawful whatever is unlawful in Allah's Law even if the world regards it as lawful and pure.

(2) *Practical evidence:* That is, the Prophet in his own life should practically demonstrate all that he has been commissioned to present before the world. His life should be free from every shade of that which he calls evil, and his own character should clearly reflect that which he calls good; he should be the foremost in carrying out what he regards as obligatory, and most cautious in refraining from what he calls sinful. He should exert his utmost to enforce the code of life which he calls Divine. His own character and conduct should bear out how sincere and truthful he is in his

invitation; and his own self should be such a model of his teaching that anyone who sees him should know what kind of a man he wants to produce by the Faith to which he invites the world, what kind of a character he wants to instil in him and what system of life he wants to be established through him in the world.

(3) *Evidence in the Hereafter:* That is, when the Court of Allah is established in the Hereafter, the Prophet should give evidence to prove that he had conveyed to the people the whole message, without making any alteration or change in it, that had been entrusted to him, and that he had shown no slackness in making the truth manifest before them, by word and by deed. On the basis of this evidence it will be determined what reward the believers deserve and what punishment the disbelievers deserve

From this one can have an idea of how great a responsibility had Allah placed upon the Holy Prophet by raising him to the position of a "witness", and how great should be the personality worthy of that high position. Evidently, there has been no slackness whatever on the part of the Holy Prophet in the matter of giving evidence with regard to the Faith, verbally as well as practically. That is why in the Hereafter he will be able to testify that he had made the Truth plain to the people, and that is how Allah's argument will be established against them; otherwise, if, God forbid, there had been any slackness on the part of the Prophet in providing evidence, he could neither be a witness against them in the Hereafter nor could any case be established against the deniers of the truth.

Some people have tried to give a different interpretation to the word "witness". They say that the Holy Prophet in the Hereafter will bear witness to the acts and deeds of the people. From this they conclude that the Holy Prophet is watching and witnessing the acts of all the people; otherwise he could not bear the witness. But according to the Qur'ān this interpretation is absolutely wrong. The Qur'ān tells us that Allah has arranged a different system for recording the acts of the people. For this purpose His angels are preparing the conduct-book of every person. (See in this connection Sūrah Qāf: 17-18, and Al-Kahf: 49). After this He will make the people's own limbs also to bear witness against them. (Yā Sīn: 65, Ḥā Mīm As-Sajdah: 20-21). As for the Prophets, they are not to testify to the acts of the people, but to give evidence to prove that they had conveyed the Truth to the people. The Qur'ān clearly says:

"On the Day when Allah will assemble all the Messengers, He will ask: 'What was the response you received?' They will answer, 'We have no knowledge: You alone have the full knowledge of all that is hidden'." (Al-Mā'idah: 109)

In the same connection, the Qurān says about the Prophet Jesus that when he will be questioned about the deviation of the Christians, he will say: "I was a witness to their conduct as long as I remained among them, but after You recalled me, You watched over them." (Al-Mā'idah: 117)

These verses clearly show that the Prophets will not be witnesses in regard to the acts of the people. As to what they will bear witness to the Qur'an gives an equally clear answer:

"O Muslims, We have made you a community of the 'Golden Mean' so that you may be witnesses in regard to mankind and the Messenger may be a witness in regard to you." (Al-Baqarah: 143)

"(O Muhammad, warn them of) the Day when We shall call a witness from among every community to testify against it. And We shall call you to testify against these people." (An-Nahl: 89)

This shows that on the Day of Resurrection the Holy Prophet's evidenc in its nature will not be any different from the evidence for bearing which the Holy Prophet's community and the witnesses in regard to every other community will be summoned. Evidently, if it be an evidence in regard to the acts, then the omnipresence of all of them also becomes necessary. And if these witnesses will be called to give evidence to confirm that the Creator's message had reached His creation, inevitably the Holy Prophet also will be called upon to give a similar evidence.

The same is supported by the *Hadīth* which Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah, Imām Aḥmad and others have related on the authority of 'Abdullah bin 'Mas'ūd, 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, Abū ad-Dardā', Anas bin Mālik and many other Companions (may Allah be pleased with them all), whose common theme is this: "The Holy Prophet on the Day of Resurrection will see some of his Companions being brought, but instead of coming to him they will either be going or being pushed to the other side. Thereupon the Holy Prophet will say: 'O Allah, they are my Companions!' Allah will say: 'You do not know what misdeeds they committed after you'." This theme has been reported by numerous Companions and with so many chains of authorities that there remains no doubt about its authenticity. This proves that the Holy Prophet is not at all a witness to each individual of his community and to each of his acts. As for the *Hadīth* which says that the acts of the people of his Ummah are presented before him, it does not in any way contradict this, because its purport is that Allah keeps him informed of the affairs of his *Ummah*, which does not mean that the Holy Prophet is actually witnessing the acts of every person.

83. One should note that a person's giving the good news of a good end for belief and righteous acts and the warning of an evil end for disbelief and evil acts, in his personal capacity, is a different thing, and another's being appointed by Allah as a bearer of the good news and a warner is quite another thing. The one who is appointed to this office by Allah necessarily possesses an authority to give the good news and administer the warnings due to which his good news and his warnings are invested with legality. His giving a good news for an act has the meaning that the Greatest of all Judges, Who has sent him, approves of the act and holds it worthy of a reward; so, it is certainly imperative or obligatory or commendable in nature, and its doer will surely get a reward. On the other hand, his giving a warning of an evil end for an act has the meaning that the Sovereign forbids that act; so, it is certainly sinful and unlawful, and its doer will surely be punished. The good news and warnings of the one who is not divinely appointed cannot ever be invested with such an authority.

84. Here also the same difference as pointed out above exists between the preaching of a common man and of a Prophet. As for the invitation to Allah, it is given, and can be given, by every preacher, but he is not appointed by Allah to do so. Contrary to this, a Prophet rises to call the people towards Allah by the leave of Allah. His call is not mere preaching but has also the support of the authority of the Lord of the Universe, Who sent him. That is why resistance and opposition to the inviter to Allah amounts to rebellion against Allah Himself precisely as resistance to a government official when he is performing official duty is regarded as hostile to the government itself.

85. This sentence is explicit that the word *nikāḥ* here has been used for the contract of marriage only. The lexicographers have greatly disputed over the real meaning of the Arabic word *nikāḥ*. One section of them says that as a word it is common both for intercourse and for the contract of marriage. The second section says that in its meaning it is common for both. The third section opines that its real meaning is the contract of marriage and for intercourse it is used only figuratively. And the fourth section expresses the opinion that its real meaning is intercourse and for the contract of marriage it is used only figuratively. Each section has cited Arabic poetry in support of its view. But Rāghib Iṣfahānī has emphatically asserted this: "The real meaning of the word *nikāḥ* is contract of marriage; it has been used for intercourse metaphorically. It is impossible that its real meaning be intercourse and may have been used for the contract of marriage only metaphorically." The argument he gives is that all the words that have been actually coined for intercourse in Arabic, or in other languages of the world, are obscene and vulgar. No gentleman would like to utter them in a civilized gathering. Therefore, it is not possible that a society should use the word which has actually been coined for this act for marriage as a metaphor. For conveying

this meaning only chaste words have been used in every language of the world and not obscene words.

As far as the Qur'ān and *Sunnah* are concerned, *nikāh* is a term, which either implies only contract of marriage, or intercourse after the contract of marriage; but it has nowhere been used for intercourse outside marriage. This kind of intercourse has been called *zinā* (adultery) by the Qur'ān and *Sunnah* and not *nikāh*.

86. This is a unique verse which was sent down probably in the same period respecting some case of divorce, and so inserted in this context. This shows that it was sent down after the preceding and before the following discourse.

Below is given a summary of the legal injunctions that have been derived from this verse:

(1) Although the word "believing women" has been used, which apparently may give the impression that the law enunciated in this verse is not applicable to the women of the people of the Book, yet all scholars are agreed that this very injunction is applicable to them also. That is, in case a Muslim has married such a woman, all the injunctions relating to her divorce, dower, waiting-period *('iddat)* and provision at divorce are the same as of marriage with a believing woman. The scholars are also agreed that Allah's mentioning the believing women here in particular is actually meant to tell the Muslims that only the believing women are suitable for them. That is, although it is permissible for them to marry Jewish and Christian women, it is not proper and commendable. In other words, the Qur'ān seems to impress that Allah expects that the believers would marry only the believing women.

(2) The word *mas* (to touch) here has been used for intercourse by implication. Thus, the verse apparently implies that if the husband has not had intercourse with the woman, even though he has had seclusion with her and has even touched her with the hand, she will not have to observe the waiting-term *('iddat)* in case of divorce. But the jurists, for the sake of precaution, have decreed that if they have had seclusion proper (i.e. seclusion during which intercourse could be possible), waiting-period will have to be observed if divorce is pronounced after it, and the waiting-period would be annulled only in case divorce was pronounced before they have had the seclusion.

(3) The annulment of the waiting-period in case of divorce before the event of seclusion means that in this case the man forfeits his right to take the woman back as his wife, and the woman becomes entitled to marry anyone she likes immediately after the divorce. But it should be borne in

mind that this applies only to the divorce which is pronounced before the event of the seclusion. If a woman's husband dies before having had seclusion, the waiting-period that has to be observed after death will not be annulled, but she will have to pass the same waiting-period of four months and ten days as is obligatory for a married woman in normal conditions. (*'Iddat* is the waiting-period before the expiry of which a divorced woman or a widow is forbidden to remarry).

(4) The words "they do not have to fulfil a waiting-period for you", show that the waiting-period is a right of the man on the woman. But it does not mean that this is only the man's right. It, in fact, includes two other rights as well: the right of the children, and the right of Allah or of the Law. The man's right is on the ground that he has the right to take the woman back as his wife during the period, and also on the ground that the proof of the parentage of his children, which depends on the woman's being pregnant or otherwise, becomes established in the waiting-period. The reason for including the right of the children is that the proof of a child's parentage is necessary for the establishment of his legal rights and his moral status also depends on this that his parentage should not be doubtful. The reason for including the right of Allah (or the right of the Law) is that even if the people and their children become heedless of their rights, the Divine Law requires that their rights should be protected. That is why even if a man gives a warrant to a woman that after his death or after obtaining divorce from him, there will be no waiting-period binding on her from him, the Divine Law will in no case annul it.

(5) "Provide them with something and send them away with kindness"; The intention of this injunction would be fulfilled by acting in either of the two ways: If the dower had been fixed at the time of marriage, and then divorce pronounced before the event of seclusion proper, payment of half of the dower will be obligatory, as enjoined in Al-Baqarah: 237. To give more than what is obligatory is not binding but certainly commendable. For instance, it is commendable that besides paying half of the dower the man should let the woman retain the bridal garments, or any other articles that he had sent her for the occasion of marriage. But if no dower had been fixed at the time of marriage, it is obligatory to pay her something before sending her away, and this "something" should be according to the status and financial means of the man, as has been enjoined in Al-Baqarah: 236. One section of the scholars hold that something in any case has to be paid in case of divorce as an obligation whether dower has been fixed or not.

(6) "Sending off gracefullly" does not only mean that the woman should be provided with something on divorce but this also that separation should be

adopted in a gentlemanly way, without any kind of vilification. If a man does not happen to like a woman, or there has been some other cause of complaint due to which he does not want to keep the woman, he should divorce her like a gentleman and send her away. He should not start mentioning her faults and relating his complaints against her before the people so as to also prejudice them against her. This instruction of the Qur'ān clearly shows that annexing the enforcement of divorce to the permission of a local council or court is wholly against the wisdom and spirit of the Divine Law, for in that case there remains no chance of "sending her away gracefully", but defamation, revilement and vilification do inevitably result even if the man does not so will. Moreover, the words of the verse also do not admit that the power of the man to divorce should be bound up with the permission of a local council or court. The verse is clearly giving the married man the power of divorce and placing on him alone the responsibility that if he wants to release the woman before touching her he must pay her half the dower as an obligation, or something else according to his means. From this the object of the verse clearly seems to be that in order to prevent divorce from being taken lightly the man should be placed under the burden of a financial responsibility so that he himself uses his power of divorce with sense, and there is no chance of an external interference in the internal affairs of the two families.

(7) Ibn 'Abbās, Sa'īd bin al-Musayyib, Ḥasan Baṣrī, 'Alī bin al-Ḥusain (Zain al-'Ābidīn), Imām Shāfe'ī and Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal have deduced from the words, "when you marry...and then divorce ..." that divorce takes effect only when marriage has been contracted. Divorce before the contract of marriage is without effect. Therefore if a person says, "If I marry such and such a woman, or a woman of such and such a tribe or nation, or any other woman, she is divorced," it will be an absurd and meaningless thing; no divorce can take effect from this. The following *Aḥadīth* are presented in support of this view:

"The son of Adam is not entitled to use his power of divorce in respect of that which he does not possess." (Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah). And: "There is no divorce before marriage." (Ibn Mājah). But a great number of the jurists hold that this verse and these *Aḥadīth* apply in the case when a man says to a woman, who is not his wife, "You have divorce on you," or "I divorce you." Saying such a thing is no doubt absurd, and is of no legal consequence, but if he says, "If I marry you, you are divorced," this is not divorcing before the marriage, but the person is in fact declaring his intent that when the woman is married to him, she will stand divorced. Such a declaration cannot be absurd and without effect, but, as a matter of fact, whenever the woman is married to him,

divorce will fall on her. The jurists who hold the view have further differed as to the extent this kind of divorce will have effect.

Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Imām Muḥammad and Imām Zufar hold that divorce will take place in any case whether a person specifies a woman or a tribe or a nation, or talks generally so as to say, "Any woman whom I marry is divorced." Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣās has cited the same opinion also from Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Ibrāhīm Nakha'ī, Mujāhid and 'Umar bin 'Abdul 'Azīz (may Allah show mercy to them all).

Sufyān Thaurī and 'Uthmān al-Battī say that divorce will take place only in case the person says, "If I marry such and such a woman, she is divorced."

Ḥasan bin Sālih, Laith bin Sa'd and 'Āmir ash-Sha'bi, say that such a divorce will take place even if something is said in general terms provided that a particular class of the people has been mentioned; for instance, if the person has said, "If I marry a woman of such and such a family, or such and such a tribe, or such and such city or country or nation, she is divorced."

Ibn Abī Lailā and Imām Mālik, disputing the above opinion, have added a condition that the time limit also should be determined. For example, if the man said, "If I marry within this year or the next ten years such and such a woman or a woman from such and such a class, she is divorced," divorce will take place, otherwise not. Imām Mālik also adds that if the time limit is so long that the man is not expected to outlive it, his declaration will have no effect.

87. This, in fact, is an answer to the objection of the people who said that Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) forbade others to keep more than four wives at a time but had himself taken a fifth wife. This objection was raised because at the time the Holy Prophet married Ḥaḍrat Zainab, he already had four wives with him: (1) Ḥaḍrat Saudah whom he had married in the 3rd year before the Hijrah, (2) Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah whom he married in the 3rd year before the Hijrah but who came to live with him in Shawwāl, A.H. 1, (3) Ḥaḍrat Ḥafsah whom he married in Sha'bān, A.H. 3, and (4) Ḥaḍrat Umm Salamah whom he married in Shawwal, A.H. 4. Thus, Ḥaḍrat Zainab was his fifth wife. Here Allah has answered the objection of the disbelievers and the hypocrites, as if to say, "O Prophet, We have made lawful for you all these five wives whom you have married by giving them their dowers." In other words, the answer means this: "It is We Who have imposed the restriction of four wives on others, and it is also We Ourselves Who have made Our Prophet an exception to the restriction. When We could impose the restriction, We could also make the exception."

About this answer also one should note that it was not meant to satisfy the disbelievers and the hypocrites but those Muslims to whom the opponents of Islam

were trying to impart evil suggestions. Since they believed that the Qur'ān is Allah's speech and has been sent down in Allah's own words, Allah declared through a clear and decisive verse that the Prophet had not made himself an exception from the general law about four wives of his own accord, but the exception in regard to him had been decreed by Allah.

88. Besides making the fifth wife lawful for the Prophet, Allah in this verse also granted him the permission to marry a few other kinds of the women:

(1) The woman who came into his possession from among the slave-girls granted by Allah. According to this the Holy Prophet selected for himself Ḥaḍrat Raihānah from among the prisoners of war taken at the raid against the Banī Quraizah, Ḥaḍrat Juwairiyah from among the prisoners of war taken at the raid against the Banī al-Mustaliq, Ḥaḍrat Safiyyah out of the prisoners of war captured at Khaiber, and Ḥaḍrat Mārīah the Copt, who was presented by Maqauqis of Egypt. Out of these he set three of them free and married them, but had conjugal relations with Mārīah on the ground of her being his slave-girl. In her case there is no proof that the Holy Prophet set her free and married her.

(2) The ladies from among his first cousins, who emigrated along with him. The words "who emigrated with you" do not mean that they accompanied the Holy Prophet in his migration journey but this that they also had migrated in the way of Allah for the sake of Islam. The Holy Prophet was given the choice to marry any one of them he liked. Accordingly, in A.H. 7 he married Ḥaḍrat Umm Habībah. (Incidentally, in this verse it has been elucidated that the daughters of one's paternal and maternal uncles and aunts are lawful for a Muslim. In this regard the Islamic Law is different both from the Christian Law and from the Jewish Law. Among the Christians one cannot marry a woman whose line of descent joins one's own anywhere in the last seven generations, and among the Jews it is permissible even to marry one's real niece, i.e. daughter of one's brother or sister).

(3) The believing woman who gives herself to the Prophet, i.e. who is prepared to give herself in marriage to the Prophet without a dower, and he may like to marry her. On account of this permission the Holy Prophet took Ḥaḍrat Maimūnah as his wife in Shawwāl, A.H. 7, but he did not think he should have conjugal relations with her without paying her the dower. Therefore, he paid her the dower even though she did not demand or desire it. Some commentators say that the Holy Prophet did not have any wife who had offered herself to him; but this in fact means that he did not keep any wife without paying her the dower although she offered herself to him.

89. If this sentence is taken to be related with the preceding sentence, it will mean that it is not permissible for any Muslim to take in marriage a woman who gives herself to him, without paying her the dower; and if it is taken to be related with the whole preceding passage, it will imply that the concession to marry more than four wives is only reserved for the Holy Prophet, not for the other Muslims. This verse also shows that certain commandments are specifically meant for the Holy Prophet to follow and are not applicable to the other Muslims. A study of the Qur'ān and *Sunnah* reveals several such commandments. For example, the *Tahajjud* prayer was obligatory for the Holy Prophet but is voluntary for the Ummah. It is unlawful for him and his family to receive charities though it is not so for others. The inheritance left by him cannot be divided; as for the inheritance left by others relevant commandments have been given in Sūrah An-Nisā'. Keeping of more than four wives was made lawful for him though he was not enjoined to do equal treatment with them. He was permitted to marry a woman who gave herself to him without any dower, and after his death his wives were forbidden for the Ummah. None of these privileges could be enjoyed by any other Muslim. Another special thing that the commentators have mentioned in this regard is that it was forbidden for the Holy Prophet to marry a woman from among the people of the Book though it is lawful for the Muslims to do so.

90. This is the reason why Allah made the Holy Prophet an exception to the general rule. "So that there may be no restraint on you" does not mean that he was, God forbid, a very lustful person, and therefore, he was permitted to marry several wives so that he might not feel any hindrance due to the restriction to four wives. This meaning will be understood only by the person who, blinded by prejudice, forgets that the Holy Prophet at the age of 25 married a lady who was 40 years old, and lived a happy, contented married life with her for full 25 years. Then, when she died, he married another old lady Ḥaḍrat Saudah, who remained his only wife for the next four years. Now, no sensible and honest person can imagine that when he became over fifty-three he was suddenly filled with lust and needed to have more and more wives. In fact, in order to understand the meaning of "no restraint", one should, on the one hand, keep in view the great task whose responsibility Allah had placed on the Holy Prophet, and on the other, understand the conditions and circumstances under which he had been appointed to accomplish the great task. Anyone who understands these two things with an unbiased mind, will certainly realize why it was necessary to grant him freedom in respect of the wives and what "hindrance" was there for him in the restriction to four wives.

The task entrusted to the Holy Prophet was that he should mould and chisel by all-round education and training an uncouth, uncultured nation which was not uncivilized only from the Islamic point of view but from a general viewpoint as well, into a highly civilized, refined and virtuous nation. For this purpose it was

[Contd. on p. 128.

تُرْجِیْ مَنْ تَشَآءُ مِنْهُنَّ وَتُـْٔوِیْۤ اِلَیْكَ مَنْ تَشَآءُ ؕ وَمَنِ ابْتَغَیْتَ مِمَّنْ عَزَلْتَ
فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَیْكَ ؕ ذٰلِكَ اَدْنٰۤی اَنْ تَقَرَّ اَعْیُنُهُنَّ وَلَا یَحْزَنَّ وَیَرْضَیْنَ بِمَاۤ
اٰتَیْتَهُنَّ كُلُّهُنَّ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ یَعْلَمُ مَا فِیْ قُلُوْبِكُمْ ؕ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ عَلِیْمًا حَلِیْمًا ﴿۵۱﴾ لَا
یَحِلُّ لَكَ النِّسَآءُ مِنْۢ بَعْدُ وَلَاۤ اَنْ تَبَدَّلَ بِهِنَّ مِنْ اَزْوَاجٍ وَّلَوْ اَعْجَبَكَ
حُسْنُهُنَّ اِلَّا مَا مَلَكَتْ یَمِیْنُكَ ؕ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰی كُلِّ شَیْءٍ رَّقِیْبًا ﴿۵۲﴾ یٰۤاَیُّهَا
الَّذِیْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تَدْخُلُوْا بُیُوْتَ النَّبِیِّ اِلَّاۤ اَنْ یُّؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ اِلٰی طَعَامٍ غَیْرَ
نٰظِرِیْنَ اِنٰىهُ ۙ وَلٰكِنْ اِذَا دُعِیْتُمْ فَادْخُلُوْا فَاِذَا طَعِمْتُمْ فَانْتَشِرُوْا وَلَا
مُسْتَاْنِسِیْنَ لِحَدِیْثٍ ؕ اِنَّ ذٰلِكُمْ كَانَ یُؤْذِی النَّبِیَّ فَیَسْتَحْیٖ مِنْكُمْ ۫ وَاللّٰهُ
لَا یَسْتَحْیٖ مِنَ الْحَقِّ ؕ وَاِذَا سَاَلْتُمُوْهُنَّ مَتَاعًا فَسْـَٔلُوْهُنَّ مِنْ وَّرَآءِ حِجَابٍ ؕ
ذٰلِكُمْ اَطْهَرُ لِقُلُوْبِكُمْ وَقُلُوْبِهِنَّ ؕ وَمَا كَانَ لَكُمْ اَنْ تُؤْذُوْا رَسُوْلَ اللّٰهِ وَلَاۤ
اَنْ تَنْكِحُوْۤا اَزْوَاجَهٗ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهٖۤ اَبَدًا ؕ اِنَّ ذٰلِكُمْ كَانَ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ عَظِیْمًا ﴿۵۳﴾
اِنْ تُبْدُوْا شَیْـًٔا اَوْ تُخْفُوْهُ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ بِكُلِّ شَیْءٍ عَلِیْمًا ﴿۵۴﴾ لَا جُنَاحَ
عَلَیْهِنَّ فِیْۤ اٰبَآىِٕهِنَّ وَلَاۤ اَبْنَآىِٕهِنَّ وَلَاۤ اِخْوَانِهِنَّ وَلَاۤ اَبْنَآءِ اِخْوَانِهِنَّ وَ
لَاۤ اَبْنَآءِ اَخَوٰتِهِنَّ وَلَا نِسَآىِٕهِنَّ وَلَا مَا مَلَكَتْ اَیْمَانُهُنَّ ۚ وَاتَّقِیْنَ اللّٰهَ ؕ
اِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ عَلٰی كُلِّ شَیْءٍ شَهِیْدًا ﴿۵۵﴾ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ وَمَلٰٓىِٕكَتَهٗ یُصَلُّوْنَ عَلَی
النَّبِیِّ ؕ یٰۤاَیُّهَا الَّذِیْنَ اٰمَنُوْا صَلُّوْا عَلَیْهِ وَسَلِّمُوْا تَسْلِیْمًا ﴿۵۶﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِیْنَ یُؤْذُوْنَ
اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ لَعَنَهُمُ اللّٰهُ فِی الدُّنْیَا وَالْاٰخِرَةِ وَاَعَدَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا مُّهِیْنًا ﴿۵۷﴾
وَالَّذِیْنَ یُؤْذُوْنَ الْمُؤْمِنِیْنَ وَالْمُؤْمِنٰتِ بِغَیْرِ مَا اكْتَسَبُوْا فَقَدِ احْتَمَلُوْا
بُهْتَانًا وَّاِثْمًا مُّبِیْنًا ﴿۵۸﴾ یٰۤاَیُّهَا النَّبِیُّ قُلْ لِّاَزْوَاجِكَ وَبَنٰتِكَ وَنِسَآءِ الْمُؤْمِنِیْنَ

You are granted the option that you may keep aside any of your wives you please, and keep to yourself any of them you please, and call back any of them you had set aside: there is no blame on you in this regard. Thus, it is expected that their eyes will be cooled and they will not grieve, and they will all remain well satisfied with whatever you give them.[91] Allah knows whatever is in your hearts, and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Forbearing.[92] No other women are lawful to you after this, nor are you allowed to have other wives instead of them, even if their beauty may be very pleasing to you.[93] You may, however, have slave-girls.[94] Allah is Watchful over everything. 51-52

O you who have believed, do not enter the houses of the Prophet without permission,[95] nor stay watching for the meal time; but if you are invited to meals, do come,[96] and when you have taken food, disperse. Do not engage in talk and discussion,[97] for such behaviour causes trouble to the Prophet but he is shy of saying anything, and Allah does not feel shy in telling the truth. If you have to ask the wives of the Prophet for something, ask for it from behind a curtain. This is a better way for the purity of your as well as their hearts.[98] It is not at all permissible that you should trouble the Messenger of Allah,[99] nor is it permissible that you should marry his wives after him.[100] This is a grave offence in the sight of Allah. Whether you reveal something or conceal it, Allah has full knowledge of everything.[101] 53-54

There is no blame on the wives of the Prophet that they are visited in their houses by their fathers, their sons, their brothers, their brothers' sons, their sisters' sons,[102] their familiar women[103] and their slaves.[104] (O women,) you should avoid the disobedience of Allah, for Allah observes everything.[105] 55

Indeed Allah and His angels send blessings on the Prophet.[106] O you who have believed, you also should ask and send blessings and peace on him.[107] 56

Allah has cursed in this world and in the Hereafter those who cause trouble to Allah and His Messenger, and has prepared for them a disgraceful punishment.[108] And those who cause trouble to the believing men and women for no fault of theirs, have indeed born on their head the burden of a grave slander[109] and a manifest sin. 57-58

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unbiased mind, will certainly realize why it was necessary to grant him freedom in respect of the wives and what "hindrance" was there for him in the restriction to four wives.

The task entrusted to the Holy Prophet was that he should mould and chisel by all-round education and training an uncouth, uncultured nation which was not uncivilized only from the Islamic point of view but from a general viewpoint as well, into a highly civilized, refined and virtuous nation. For this purpose it was not enough only to train men but the training of the women also was equally necessary. However, the principles of social life and civilization which he had been appointed to teach forbade free mixing of the sexes together, and it was not possible for him to impart direct training to the womenfolk himself without violating this rule. Therefore, for imparting education to the women the only alternative left for him was that he should marry several women of different ages and mental capabilities and should prepare them by education and training to become his helpers, and then employ them to give religious instructions to the young, middle-aged and old women of the city and desert and teach them the new principles of morality and civilization.

Moreover, the Holy Prophet had also been appointed to abolish the system of life of the pre-Islamic days of ignorance and replace it with the Islamic system of life practically. For the accomplishment of this task a conflict was inevitable with those who upheld the system of ignorance, and this conflict was being encountered in a country where the tribal system of life was prevalent with all its peculiar customs and traditions. Under these conditions, besides other devices, it was also necessary that the Holy Prophet should marry in different families and clans in order to cement many ties of friendship and put an end to enmities. Thus, the selection of the ladies whom he married was to some extent determined by this object besides their personal qualities. By taking Hadrat 'Ā'ishah and Hadrat Ḥafsah to wife he further strengthened and deepened the relations with Hadrat Abū Bakr and Ḥadrat 'Umar. Ḥadrat Umm Salamah was the daughter of the family to which Abū Jahl and Khālid bin Walīd belonged, and Umm Ḥabībah was the daughter of Abū Sufyān. These marriages neutralized the enmity of these families to a large extent; so much so that after Umm Habībah's marriage Abū Sufyān never confronted the Holy Prophet on the battefield. Ḥadrat Safiyyah, Ḥadrat Juwairiah and Raiḥānah belonged to Jewish families. When the Holy Prophet married them, after setting them free, the hostile Jewish activities against him subsided. For according to the Arab traditions when the daughter of a clan or tribe was married to a person, he was regarded as the son-in-law of not only the girl's family but of the entire tribe, and it was disgraceful to fight the son-in-law.

Practical reformation of the society and abolition of its customs of ignorance was also included among the duties of his office. Therefore, he had to undertake one marriage for this purpose also, as has been related in detail in this Sūrah Aḥzāb itself.

For these reasons it was essential that there should be no restriction for the Prophet in respect of marriage so that in view of the requirements of the great mission entrusted to him he could marry as many women as he wanted.

This also brings out the error of the view of those people who think that polygamy is permissible only under special personal requirements and apart from these there can be no other object for which it may be permissible. Evidently, the reason for the Holy Prophet to marry more wives than one was not that the wife was sick, or barren, or that he had no male child, or that there was the question of the bringing up of some orphans. Without these restrictions he married all his wives either in view of the educational requirements, or for the reformation of society, or for political and social objectives. The question is, when Allah Himself has not kept polygamy restricted to a few particular needs, which are being mentioned these days and the Messenger of Allah took several wives for many purposes other than these, how is another person entitled to propose some restrictions in the law and then claim that he is imposing these in accordance with the Sharī'ah? As a matter of fact, the root cause for the imposition of these restrictions is the Western concept that polygamy is an evil in itself. That very concept has given rise to the idea that this unlawful thing can become lawful only in case of extreme circumstances. Now, however hard one may try to label this imported concept with Islam artificially, it is entirely alien to the Qur'ān and *Sunnah* and the whole Muslim literature.

91. This verse was meant to relieve the Holy Prophet of the domestic worries and anxieties so that he could carry out his duties with full peace of mind. When Allah clearly gave him the power and the authority to treat any of his wives as he liked, there remained no chance that those believing ladies would trouble him in any way, or would create complications for him by their mutual rivalries and domestic squabbles. But in spite of having this authority from Allah the Holy Prophet meted out full justice to his wives. He did not prefer one to the other and would visit each of them regularly by turns. Only Abū Razīn from among the traditionists has said that the Holy Prophet visited only four of his wives (Hadrat 'Ā'ishah, Ḥaḍrat Hafsah, Ḥaḍrat Zainab and Ḥaḍrat Umm Salamah) by turns and no turn had been fixed for the other wives. But all other traditionists and commentators contradict this and prove by authentic traditions that even after having this authority the Holy Prophet visited all his wives in turn and treated them alike. Bukhārī, Muslim, Nasā'ī, Abū Da'ūd and others have reported on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah that even after the revelation of this verse the Holy

Prophet's practice was that whenever he wanted to visit any of us, his wives, on the turn of another wife, he would first ask her permission for it. Abū Bakr al-Jassās relates from 'Urwah bin Zubair that Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah told him, "As to our turns the Holy Prophet never preferred any of us to the other, although it seldom happened that he did not visit all his wives on the same day, but he never touched a wife unless it was her day by turn." And this also is a tradition from Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah that during his last illness when it became difficult for him to move about he asked for his other wives' permission to stay with her, and only on their approval he passed his last days in her apartment. Ibn Abi Ḥātim has cited this from Imām Zuhri that the Holy Prophet is not known to have deprived any of his wives of her turn. To this Ḥaḍrat Saudah only was an exception, who on account of her advanced age had willingly surrendered her turn in favour of Hadrat 'Ā'ishah.

Here, nobody should entertain the doubt that Allah had, God forbid, shown an undue privilege to His Prophet and deprived his wives of their rights. As a matter of fact, the great objectives for the sake of which the Holy Prophet had been made an exception to the general rule in respect of the number of wives, also demanded that he should be afforded full peace in domestic life and anything that could cause him distraction and embarrassment should be eradicated. It was a unique honour for the holy wives that they were privileged to be the life-partners of the greatest of all men like the Holy Prophet, and by virtue of this they got the opportunity to become his Companions and helpers in the great task of reform and invitation that was to become the means of true success for mankind till the end of time. Just as the Holy Prophet was offering every kind of sacrifice for the sake of this objective and the Companions also were following his example according to their capabilities, so it was the duty of his wives also to display selflessness in every way. Therefore, all the wives accepted Allah's decision with regard to themselves happily and willingly.

92. This is a warning for the Holy Prophet's wives as well as for all other people. For the wives it is a warning in the sense that if after the coming down of this Divine Command they did not feel reconciled to it in their hearts, they would not escape Allah's punishment. And for others the warning is that if they entertained any kind of suspicion in their hearts in regard to the Holy Prophet's matrimonial life, or harboured any misgiving in any recess of their minds, this would not remain hidden from Allah. Along with this Allah's attribute of forbearance also has been mentioned so that one may know that although even a thought of insolence in regard to the Prophet is also punishable, yet if a person got rid of such a suspicion he might have the hope of His forgiveness.

93. This has two meanings: (1) "No other woman except those made lawful to you in verse 50 above, is any more lawful to you"; and (2) "when your

wives have become pleased and ready to stay with you through every kind of hardship and have rejected the world in preference to the Hereafter, and are satisfied that you may treat them as you please, it is no longer lawful for you that you should divorce any of them and take another wife instead."

94. This verse explains why one is permitted to have conjugal relations with one's slave-girls besides the wedded wives, and there is no restriction on their number. The same thing has also been stated in Sūrah An-Nisā': 3, Al-Mu'minūn: 6, and Al-Ma'ārij: 30. In all these verses the slave-girls have been mentioned as a separate class from the wedded wives, and conjugal relations with them have been permitted. Moreover, verse 3 of Sūrah An-Nisā' lays down the number of the wives as four, but neither has Allah fixed the number of the slave-girls in that verse nor made any allusion to their number in the other relevant verses. Here, of course, the Holy Prophet is being addressed and told: "It is no more lawful for you to take other women in marriage, or divorce any of the present wives and take another wife in her stead; slave-girls, however, are lawful." This shows that no restriction has been imposed in respect of the slave-girls.

This, however, does not mean that the Divine Law has provided the rich an opportunity to purchase as many slave-girls as they like for their carnal indulgence. This is in fact how the self-seeking people have exploited and abused the Law. The Law had been made for the convenience of the people; it had not been made to be abused. One could, for instance, similarly abuse the Law concerning marriage. The *Shari'ah* permits a man to marry up to four wives and also gives him the right to divorce his wife and take another one. This law had been made in view of man's requirements and needs. Now, if a person, merely for the sake of sensual enjoyment, were to adopt the practice of keeping four wives for a time and then divorcing them to be replaced by another company of them, it would be abusing the provisions of the law, for which the person himself would be responsible and not the *Shari'ah*. Likewise the *Shari'ah* has allowed that the women who are captured in war and whose people do not exchange them for Muslim prisoners of war nor ransom them, may be kept as slave-girls, and gave the persons to whom they are assigned by the government the right to have conjugal relations with them so that they do not become a moral hazard for the society. Then, as it was not possible to determine the number of the prisoners of war, legally also it could not be determined how many slave girls a person could keep at a time. The sale of the slaves and slave-girls was also allowed for the reason that if a slave or a slave-girl could not pull on well with a master, he or she could be transferred to another person so that the same person's permanent ownership did not become a cause of unending torture for both the master and the captive. The *Shari'ah* made all these laws keeping in view human conditions and

requirements for the convenience of men. If these have been made a means of sexual enjoyment and luxury by the rich, it is they who are to blame for this and not the *Sharī'ah*.

95. This is an introduction to the general Command that was given in Sūrah An-Nūr: 27 about a year later. In the ancient times the Arabs would enter one another's house unceremoniously. If a person had to see another person he did not think it was necessary to call at the door or take permission for entry, but would enter the house and ask the womenfolk and children whether the master was at home or not. This custom of ignorance was the cause of many evils and would often give rise to some serious evils. Therefore, in the beginning a rule was made in respect of the houses of the Holy Prophet that no person, whether a close friend or a distant relative, could enter them without permission. Then in Sūrah An-Nūr a general command was given to enforce this rule for the houses of all the Muslims.

96. This is the second command in this connection. An uncivilized practice prevalent among the Arabs was that the visitors would call on a friend or acquaintance right at the time of the meals, or would come and prolong their stay till the meals time approached. This would often cause the master of the house great embarrassment. He could neither be so discourteous as to tell the visitors to leave because it was his meals time, nor could feed so many unexpected guests together. For it is not always possible for a person to arrange meals immediately for as many visitors as happened to call on him at a time. Allah disapproved of this practice and commanded that the visitors should go for meals to a house only when invited. This Command did not in particular apply to the Holy Prophet's house only but the rules were in the beginning enforced in that model household so that they become general rules of etiquette in the houses of the other Muslims as well.

97. This was to reform yet another foolish practice. The guests at a feast, after they had finished eating, would sit down to endless gossip and discussions much to the inconvenience of the people of the house. They would often embarrass the Holy Prophet also by this practice, but he would forbear and forget. At last on the day of the marriage feast of Ḥaḍrat Zainab the embarrassment thus caused crossed all limits. According to the Holy Prophet's special attendant, Ḥaḍrat Anas bin Mālik, the feast was held at night. Most of the people left after taking food but a couple or two of them got engaged in gossip. Disconcerted the Holy Prophet rose and went round to his wives. When he returned he found the gentlemen still sitting. He turned back and sat in Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah's apartment. When a good deal of the night had passed he came to know that the gentlemen had left. Then he returned and went to the apartment of Ḥaḍrat Zainab. After this it became inevitable that Allah Himself should warn the people of these evil

practices. According to Ḥaḍrat Anas these verses were sent down on this occasion. (Muslim, Nasā'ī Ibn Jarīr).

98. This is the verse which is called "the verse of the veil". Bukhārī has related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Anas that before the coming down of this verse, Ḥaḍrat 'Umar had made a suggestion several times to the Holy Prophet to the effect: "O Messenger of Allah, all sorts of the people, good and bad, come to visit you. Would that you commanded your wives to observe hijab. According to another tradition, once Ḥaḍrat 'Umar said to the holy wives, "If what I say concerning you is accepted, my eyes should never see you." But since the Holy Prophet was not independent in making law, he awaited Divine Revelation. At last, this Command came down that except for the *maḥram* males (as being stated in v. 55 below) no other man should enter the Holy Prophet's houses, and whoever had to ask some thing from the ladies, should ask for it from behind a curtain. After this Command curtains were hung at the doors of the apartments of the wives, and since the Holy Prophet's house was a model for the Muslims to follow, they too hung curtains at their doors. The last sentence of the verse itself points out that whoever desire that the hearts of the men and women should remain pure, should adopt this way.

Now whosoever has been blessed with understanding by Allah can himself see that the Book which forbids the men and women to talk to each other face to face and commands them to speak from behind a curtain because "this is a better way for the purity of your as well as their hearts," could not possibly permit that the men and women should freely meet in mixed gatherings, educational and democratic institutions and offices, because it did not affect the purity of the hearts in any way. For him who does not want to follow the Qur'ān, the best way would be that he should disregard its Commands and should frankly say that he has no desire to follow it. But this would be the height of meanness that he should violate the clear Commandments of the Qur'ān and then stubbornly say that he is following the "spirit" of Islam which he has extracted. After all, what is that spirit of Islam which these people extract from sources outside the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah?*

99. The allusion is to the false allegations that were being made in those days against the Holy Prophet, and some weak-minded Muslims also were joining the disbelievers and the hypocrites in doing this.

100. This is the explanation of what has been said in verse 6:"...the Prophet's wives are mothers of the believers."

101. That is, "If a person entertains an evil thought in his heart against the Holy Prophet, or harbours an evil intention about his wives, it will not remain hidden from Allah, and he will be punished for it."

102. For explanation, see E.N.'s 38 to 42 of Sūrah An-Nūr. 'Allāma Ālūsī's commentary in this connection is also noteworthy. He says, "Brothers and sons of brothers and sisters include all those relatives who are unlawful for a woman, whether they are blood relations or foster relations. This list does not mention the paternal and maternal uncles because they are like the parents to the woman, or perhaps they have been left out because there was no need to mention them after mentioning their sons. For the reason for not observing purdah from the brother's son and sister's son is the same as of not observing it from the paternal and maternal uncles." *(Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī.*

103. For explanation, see E. N. 43 of An-Nūr.

104. For explanation, see E. N. 44 of An-Nūr.

105. It means this: "After the coming down of this absolute Command no person outside the circle of the relatives, who have been made an exception, should be allowed to enter the houses without purdah being observed from them." Another meaning is: "The woman should never adopt the attitude that they should observe purdah when the husband is present, but should appear without purdah before the other men, when he is away. Such a conduct may remain hidden from the husband but not from Allah.

106. "Allah's sending His blessings on His Prophet" means this: "Allah is very kind to His Prophet: He praises him, blesses his work, exalts his name, and showers His mercies on him." "Blessings of the angels" means: "They love the Prophet most dearly and pray to Allah to bless him with the highest ranks, cause his religion and *Shari'ah* to flourish and exalt him to the laudable position." One can clearly see from the context, why this thing has been said here. This was the time when the enemies of Islam were making all sorts of false allegations against the Holy Prophet in order to satisfy their jealousy on the success of Faith. By sullying him they thought they would destroy his moralinfluence through which Islam and the Muslims were gaining more and more ground every day. Such were the conditions when Allah sent down this verse, as if warn the people: "However hard the disbelievers and the hypocrites and the polytheists might try to vilify and slander My Prophet with a view to frustrating his mission, they are bound to suffer disgrace and humiliation in the end, for I am kind to him, and the angels, who are administering the entire universe, are his supporters and admirers. His enemies cannot gain anything by their condemnation of him because I am exalting his name and My angels are adoring him constantly. They cannot harm him by their mean machinations when My mercies and blessings are with him, and My angels pray for him day and night to the effect: "O Lord of the worlds, raise Muhammad to even higher ranks and make his Religion flourish and prosper."

107. In other words, it means this: "O people, who have found the right path through Muḥammad, the Messenger of Allah, you should recognize his true worth and be grateful to him for his great favours to you. You were lost in the darkness of ignorance: He afforded you the light of knowledge: you had become morally bankrupt: he raised you high on the moral level so that the people now feel envious of you; you had sunk to barbarism and savagery: he adorned you with the most refined human civilization. The disbelievers everywhere have turned his enemies only because he has done you these favours; otherwise personally he has not done any harm to anyone. Therefore, the inevitable demand of your gratitude to him is that you should regard him with an equal, or even greater, love than the malice and grudge these people display against him; that you should show a greater attachment to him than the hatred these people show towards him; that you should praise and adore him even more fervently than they condemn him; that you should wish him well even more heartily than they wish him ill, and pray for him just as the angels do day and night, saying: "O Lord of the worlds: Just as Your Prophet has done us countless and endless favours, so do You also show him endless and limitless mercy: raise him to the highest ranks in the world and bless him with the greatest nearness to Yourself in the hereafter."

In this verse, Muslims have been commanded two things: (1) *Ṣallū 'alaihi;* and (2) *ṣallimū taslīmā.* The word *Salāt* when used with the associating particle *'alā* gives three meanings: (1) To be inclined to some body, to attend to him with love, and to bend over him; (2) to praise somebody; and (3) to pray for somebody. Obviously, when the word is used in regard to Allah, it cannot be in the third meaning, for it is absolutely inconceivable that Allah should pray to someone else; it can only be used in the first two meanings. But when this word is used for the servants, whether angels or men, it will be in all the three meanings. It will contain the sense of love as well as praise and prayer for mercy. Therefore, the meaning of giving the Command of *ṣallū 'alaihi* to the believers for the Holy Prophet is: "Be attached to him, praise and adore him and pray for him."

The word *salām* also has two meanings: (1) To be secure from every kind of affliction and fault and defect; and (2) to be at peace and refrain from opposing the other person. Therefore, one meaning of *ṣallimū taslīmā* in regard to the Holy Prophet is: "You should pray for his well-being and security," and another meaning is: "Cooperate with him with all your heart and mind; refrain from opposing him and obey him most faithfully and sincerely."

When this Command was sent down, several of the Companions said to the Holy Prophet, "O Messenger of Allah, you have taught us the method of pronouncing *salām* (i.e. of saying *as-salāmu 'alaika ayyuhannabiyyu wa raḥmatullahi wa barakāt-u-hū* in the Prayer, and *as-salāmu 'alaika yā Rasūl-Allah* as a greeting, but what is the method of sending *Ṣalāt* on you ?" In response to

thus, the methods of pronouncing *Ṣalāt* and *darūd* that the Holy Prophet taught to many people on different occasions are as follows:

Ka'b bin'Ujrah: *Allahumma ṣalli 'alā Muḥammad-in wa 'alā āl-i Muḥammad-in kamā ṣallaita 'alā Ibrāhīma wa 'alā āl-i Ibrāhīma innaka Ḥamīd-um-Majīd, wa bārik 'alā Muḥammad-in wa 'alā āl-i Muḥammad-in kamā bārakta 'alā Ibrāhīma wa 'alā āl-i Ibrāhīma innaka Ḥamīd-um-Majīd.* This *darūd* with a little difference in wording has been reported by Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dā'ūd, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah, Imām Aḥmad, Ibn Abī Shaibah, 'Abdur Razzāq, Ibn Abī Hātim and Ibn Jarīr on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Ka'b bin 'Ujrah.

Ibn 'Abbās: From him also the same *darūd* as given above has been reported with a slight difference. (Ibn Jarīr).

Abū Humaid Ṣā'idī: *Allahumma salli 'alā Muḥammad-in wa azwāji-hī wa dhurriyāti-hī kamā ṣallaita 'alā Ibrāhīma wa 'alā āl-i Ibrāhīma wa bārik 'alā Muḥammad-in wa azwāji-hi wa dhurriyāt-hī kamā bārakta 'alā āl-i Ibrāhīma innaka Ḥamīd-um-Majīd.* (Mālik, Aḥmad, Bukhārī, Muslim, Nasā'ī, Abū Da'ūd, Ibn Mājah).

Abū Mas'ūd Badrī: *Allahumma ṣalli 'ala Muḥammad-in wa 'alā āl-i Muḥammad-in kamā ṣallaita 'alā Ibrāhīma wa 'alā āl-i Ibrāhīma wa bārik 'alā Muḥammad-in wa 'alā āl-i Muḥammad-in kāma bārakta 'ala Ibrāhīma fil-'ālamīn innaka Ḥamīd-ūm-Majīd* (Mālik, Muslim, Abū Dā'ūd, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī Aḥmad, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Ḥabbān, Ḥākim).

Abū Sa'īd Khudrī: *Allahumma ṣalli 'alā Muḥammad-in 'abdika wa rasūli-ka kamā sallaita 'alā Ibrāhīma wa bārik 'alā Maḥammad-in wa 'alā āl-i Muhammad-in kamā bā rakta 'alā Ibrāhīm.* (Ahmad, Bukhārī, Nasā'ī Ibn Mājah).

Buraidah al-Khuza'ī: *Allahumm-aj'al Salātaka wa rahmataka wa barakāti-ka 'alā Muḥammad-in wa 'alā āl-i Muḥammad-in kamā ja'altahā 'alā Ibrāhīma innaka Hamīd-um-Majīd.* (Aḥmad, 'Abd bin Humaid, Ibn Mardūyah).

Abū Hurairah: *Allahumma salli 'alā Muḥammad-in wa alā āl-i Muḥammad-in wa bārik alā Muhammad-in wa 'alā āl-i Muḥammad-in kamā sallaita wa bārakta 'alā Ibrāhīma wa 'alā āl-i Ibrāhīm fil-'ālamīn innaka Ḥamīd-um-Majīd.* (Nasāī).

Talhah: *Allahumma ṣalli 'alā Muḥammad-in wa 'alā āl-i Muḥammad-in kamā ṣallaita 'alā Ibrāhīma innaka Ḥamīd-um-Majīd wa bārik 'alā Muḥammad-in wa alā āl-i Muḥammad-in kamā bārakta 'alā Ibrāhīma innaka Ḥamīd-um-Majīd.* (Ibn Jarīr).

All these *darūds* agree in meaning despite the difference in wording. A few points concerning them should be understood clearly:

First, in all these the Holy Prophet tells the Muslims that the best way of sending *darūd* and *Ṣalāt* on him is that they should pray to Allah, saying, "O God: send *darūd* on Muḥammad." Ignorant people who do not possess full understanding of the meaning immediately raise the objection: "How strange that Allah commands us to send *darūd* on His Prophet, but we, in return, implore Allah that He should send it." The fact, however, is that the Holy Prophet has instructed the people, as if to say, "You cannot do full justice to sending of darūd and *Ṣalāt* on me even if you want to. Therefore, pray only to Allah to bless me with *Ṣalāt*." Evidently, the Muslims cannot raise the ranks of the Holy Prophet. Allah only can raise them; the Muslims cannot repay the Holy Prophet for his favours and kindness, Allah only can adequately reward him for this; the Muslims cannot attain any success in exalting the Holy Prophet's name and promoting the cause of religion unless Allah favours them with His help and succour. So much so that the Holy Prophet's love can be impressed in our hearts only by Allah's help; otherwise Satan can turn us away from him by every kind of evil suggestion sand suspicions. May Allah protect us from this! Therefore, there is no other way of doing full justice to sending of *darūd* and *salāt* on the Holy Prophet than that we should supplicate Allah to send *salāt* on him. The person who says: *Allahumma ṣalli 'alā Muḥammad-in*, in fact, admits his helplessness before Allah, and says: "O God: it is not in my power to send *salāt* on Your Prophet as it should be sent. I, therefore, implore You to send it on my behalf and take from me whatever service You will in this regard."

Secondly, the Holy Prophet did not want to have this prayer reserved for only himself but included his followers and his wives and offsprings also. The meaning of the wives and offspring is obvious. As for the word *āl* it does not merely denote the people of the Holy Prophet's household, but it applies to all those people who follow him and adopt his way. Lexically, there is a difference between the words *āl* and *ahl*. By the *āl* of a person are understood all those people who are his companions, helpers and followers, whether they are related to him or not, and his *ahl* are those who are related to him, whether or not they are his companions and followers. The Qur'ān has used the word *āl Fir'aun* at fourteen places but nowhere has it been used to mean the people of Pharaoh's household only; everywhere it implies all those who sided with him in the conflict against the Prophet Moses. (For example, see Al-Baqarah: 49-50, Āl-i-'Imrān: 11, Al-A'rāf: 130, Al-Mu'min: 46). Thus, from *āl-Muḥammad* is excluded every such person who is not on the way of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), whether he be a member of his household, and in it is included every such person, who is following in his footsteps, whether he is not even distantly related to him by blood. However, those members of the Prophet's

household who are related to him by blood and are also his followers are most worthy to be regarded as *āl-Muhammad*.

Thirdly, the same thing found in all the *darūds* taught by the Holy Prophet is that he may be blessed with the same kindness with which Abraham and the followers of Abraham have been blessed. The people have found it difficult to understand this. The scholars have given different interpretations of it but none of them is appealing. In my opinion the correct interpretation is this (though the real knowledge is with Allah): Allah blessed the Prophet Abraham in particular with something with which He has blessed no one else in the world, and it is this: All those human beings who regard the Prophethood and the Revelation and the Book as the source of guidance are agreed on the leadership of the Prophet Abraham, whether they are Muslims or Christians or Jews. Therefore, what the Holy Prophet means to say is this: "O Allah, just as You have made the Prophet Abraham the refuge of the followers of all the Prophets, so You make me also the refuge, so that no one who is a believer in Prophethood, may remain deprived of the grace of believing in my Prophethood."

That it is an Islamic practice to send *darūd* on the Holy Prophet, that it is commendable to pronounce it when the Holy Prophet's name is mentioned, that it is a *Sunnah* of the Prophet to recite it in the Prayer in particular, is agreed upon by all the scholars. There is also a consensus that it is obligatory to pronounce the *darūd* on the Holy Prophet at least once in a lifetime, because Allah has clearly commanded it, but apart from this there are differences among the scholars regarding it.

Imām Shāfe'ī holds the view that it is obligatory to recite *salāt* on the Prophet during *tashahhud* in the final sitting of the Prayer, for without it the Prayer would be void. Hadrat Ibn Mas'ūd, Abū-Mas'ūd Ansārī, Ibn 'Umar and Jābir bin 'Abdullah from among the Companions, Sha'bī, Imām Muhammad bin Bāqir, Muhammad bin Ka'b al-Qurzī and Muqātil bin Hayyān from among the immediate followers of the Companions, and Ishāq bin Rahwayah from among the jurists also held the same opinion, and Imām Ahmad bin Hanbal also had adopted the same in the end.

Imām Abū Hanīfah, Imām Mālik and the majority of the scholars hold that the pronouncing of the *Salāt* is obligatory only once in a life time. It is just like the *Kalimah:* whoever affirmed the divinity of Allah and the Prophethood of the Messenger of Allah once in a lifetime carried out his duty. Likewise, the one who pronounced the *darūd* and *salāt* once in his lifetime would be deemed to have done his duty of pronouncing the *darūd* on the Holy Prophet. After it, it is neither obligatory *(farḍ)* to recite the *Kalimah* nor the *darūd*.

Another group holds that it is absolutely *wājib* to recite it in the Prayer but not necessarily in the *tashahhud*.

Still another group holds the view that it is *wājib* to pronounce the *darūd* in every supplication. Some others say that it is *wājib* to pronounce it whenever the Holy Prophet's name is mentioned, and according to another group recitation of the *darūd* is *wājib* only once in an assembly or sitting no matter how often the name of the Holy Prophet is mentioned during it.

These differences only pertain to the *darūd's* being obligatory in status or otherwise. As for its merit and excellence, its being conducive to high spiritual rewards and its being a great righteous act, there is complete unanimity among the Ummah. No one who is a believer in any degree can have any different opinion about it. The *darūd is* the natural supplication of the heart of every Muslim, who realizes that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon Whom be Allah's peace) is the Ummah's greatest benefactor after Allah. The greater one's appreciation of Islam and the Faith, the greater will one be appreciative of the favours of the Holy Prophet himself; and the greater one's appreciation of the favours of the Holy Prophet, the more often will he pronounce the *darūd* and *salāt* on him. Thus, in fact, the frequency with which a person pronounces the *darūd* is the measure which shows the depth of his relationship with the Holy Prophet's Religion and the extent of his appreciation of the blessing of the Faith. On this very basis the Holy Prophet has said: "The angels send *darūd* on him who sends *darūd* on me, as long as he does so." (Ahmad, Ibn Mājah). "He who sends *darūd* on me once, Allah sends *darūd* on him ten times over." (Muslim) "The one who sends *darūd* on me most often will deserve to remain close to me on the Day of Resurrection" (Tirmidhi). "Niggardly is the person who does not send *darūd* on me when I am mentioned before him." (Tirmidhi)

As to whether it is permissible to use the words *Allahumma salli 'alā* so-and-so, or *sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam,* or similar other words for others than the Holy Prophet, it is disputed. One group of the scholars of whom Qādī 'Iyād is most prominent holds it as absolutely permissible. Their argument is this: Allah Himself has used the word *salāt* in respect of those who were not prophets at several places in the Qur'ān, *e.g.* in Al-Baqarah; 157, At-Taubah: 103, Al-Ahzāb;

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يُدْنِيْنَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ جَلَابِيْبِهِنَّ ۚ ذٰلِكَ اَدْنٰٓى اَنْ يُّعْرَفْنَ فَلَا يُؤْذَيْنَ ۗ وَ
كَانَ اللّٰهُ غَفُوْرًا رَّحِيْمًا ﴿٥٩﴾ لَئِنْ لَّمْ يَنْتَهِ الْمُنٰفِقُوْنَ وَ الَّذِيْنَ فِيْ قُلُوْبِهِمْ
مَّرَضٌ وَّ الْمُرْجِفُوْنَ فِي الْمَدِيْنَةِ لَنُغْرِيَنَّكَ بِهِمْ ثُمَّ لَا يُجَاوِرُوْنَكَ فِيْهَآ
اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا ﴿٦٠﴾ مَّلْعُوْنِيْنَ ۚ اَيْنَمَا ثُقِفُوْٓا اُخِذُوْا وَ قُتِّلُوْا تَقْتِيْلًا ﴿٦١﴾ سُنَّةَ اللّٰهِ فِي
الَّذِيْنَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ ۚ وَ لَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّةِ اللّٰهِ تَبْدِيْلًا ﴿٦٢﴾ يَسْـَٔلُكَ النَّاسُ عَنِ
السَّاعَةِ ۭ قُلْ اِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ ۭ وَ مَا يُدْرِيْكَ لَعَلَّ السَّاعَةَ تَكُوْنُ قَرِيْبًا ﴿٦٣﴾
اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَعَنَ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ وَ اَعَدَّ لَهُمْ سَعِيْرًا ﴿٦٤﴾ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَآ اَبَدًا ۚ لَا يَجِدُوْنَ
وَلِيًّا وَّ لَا نَصِيْرًا ﴿٦٥﴾ يَوْمَ تُقَلَّبُ وُجُوْهُهُمْ فِي النَّارِ يَقُوْلُوْنَ يٰلَيْتَنَآ اَطَعْنَا
اللّٰهَ وَ اَطَعْنَا الرَّسُوْلَا ﴿٦٦﴾ وَ قَالُوْا رَبَّنَآ اِنَّآ اَطَعْنَا سَادَتَنَا وَ كُبَرَآءَنَا فَاَضَلُّوْنَا
السَّبِيْلَا ﴿٦٧﴾ رَبَّنَآ اٰتِهِمْ ضِعْفَيْنِ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ وَ الْعَنْهُمْ لَعْنًا كَبِيْرًا ﴿٦٨﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا
الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تَكُوْنُوْا كَالَّذِيْنَ اٰذَوْا مُوْسٰى فَبَرَّاَهُ اللّٰهُ مِمَّا قَالُوْا ۭ وَ كَانَ
عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ وَجِيْهًا ﴿٦٩﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَ قُوْلُوْا قَوْلًا سَدِيْدًا ﴿٧٠﴾
يُّصْلِحْ لَكُمْ اَعْمَالَكُمْ وَ يَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوْبَكُمْ ۭ وَ مَنْ يُّطِعِ اللّٰهَ وَ رَسُوْلَهٗ فَقَدْ
فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيْمًا ﴿٧١﴾ اِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْاَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الْاَرْضِ وَ الْجِبَالِ
فَاَبَيْنَ اَنْ يَّحْمِلْنَهَا وَ اَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَ حَمَلَهَا الْاِنْسَانُ ۭ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ ظَلُوْمًا
جَهُوْلًا ﴿٧٢﴾ لِّيُعَذِّبَ اللّٰهُ الْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ وَ الْمُنٰفِقٰتِ وَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ وَ الْمُشْرِكٰتِ وَ
يَتُوْبَ اللّٰهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَ الْمُؤْمِنٰتِ ۭ وَ كَانَ اللّٰهُ غَفُوْرًا رَّحِيْمًا ﴿٧٣﴾

O Prophet, enjoin your wives and daughters and the women of the believers that they should let down over their faces a part of their outer-garments;[110] it is expected that they will thus be recognized and not molested.[111] Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.[112] 59

If the hypocrites and those whose hearts are diseased[113] and the scandal-mongers in Madīnah[114] do not desist, We shall stir you up to take action against them; then they will hardly be able to live in this city as your neighbors. They will be cursed from every side and will be seized wherever they are found and killed mercilessly. This has been the Way of Allah with regard to such people before, and you will never find any change in the Way of Allah.[115] 60-62

The people ask you as to when will Resurrection take place.[116] Say, "The knowledge of it is with Allah alone: you may not know that it may well be near at hand. In any case, it is certain that Allah has laid curse on the disbelievers and has prepared for them a blazing Fire, in which they will live for ever and will have no protector and helper. On the Day their faces are rolled about on the Fire, they will say, "Would that we had obeyed Allah and His Messenger!" And (they) will say, "Our Lord, we obeyed our chiefs and our great men, and they led us astray from the right path. Lord, give them a double chastisement and curse them severely."[117] 63-68

O you who have believed,[118] do not be like those who had maligned Moses; then Allah cleared him of what they said of him, and he was honourable in the sight of Allah[119]. O believers fear Allah and say the right thing: Allah will adorn your deeds and will overlook your errors. Whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, has indeed attained a great success. 69-71

We offered this trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains but they refused to bear it and were afraid of it, the but man undertook to bear it. Indeed, he is unjust and ignorant.[120] (The inevitable result of bearing the burden of the trust is) that Allah should punish the hypocritical men and women and *mushrik* men and women, and accept the repentance of the believing men and women: Allah is indeed Forgiving and Merciful. 72-73

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43. Similarly, the Holy Prophet also prayed for those who were not prophets using the word *salāt* on several occasions. For example, he prayed for a Companion, thus: *Allahumma salli 'ala āl Abi Aufā;* on the request of Ḥaḍrat Jabir bin 'Abdullah's wife, he said: *Ṣallallahu 'alaiki wa 'ala zaujiki.* Then concerning those who came with the *Zakāt* money, he would say: *Allahumma salli 'alaihim.* Praying for Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin 'Ubādah he said: *Allahumma aj'al ṣalātaka wa rahmataka 'ala āl-i Sa'd bin 'Ubādah.* And about the soul of the believer the Holy Prophet gave the news that the angels prayed for him, thus: *Ṣallallahu 'alaika wa 'ala jasadika.* However, the majority of the Muslim scholars opine that it was correct for Allah and His Messenger but not so for the Ummah. They say that it has become a convention with the Muslims to use *ṣalāt-o-salām* exclusively for the Prophets. Therefore, it should not be used for those who are not prophets. On this very basis Ḥaḍrat 'Umar bin 'Abdul 'Aziz once wrote to one of his governors, saying: "I hear that some preachers have started using the word *ṣalāt* in respect of their patrons and supporters in the manner of *ṣalāt 'alan-Nabi.* As soon as you receive this letter, stop them from this practice and command them to use *Ṣalāt* exclusively for the Prophets and remain content with the prayer for the other Muslims." *(Ruḥ al-Ma'āni).* Most scholars also hold that using the words *ṣallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam* for any other Prophet than the Holy Prophet is not correct.

108. "To trouble Allah" implies two things: That Allah should be disobeyed, that an attitude of disbelief and *shirk* and atheism be adopted with regard to Him, and that things made unlawful by Him be made lawful; and (2) that His Messenger be troubled, for just as obedience to the Messenger is obedience to Allah, so is opposition and disobedience of the Messenger opposition and disobedience of Allah.

109. This verse determines the definition of slander. It is to ascribe a fault to a person which he does not have, or an error which he has not committed. The Holy Prophet also has explained it. According to Abū Dā'ūd and Tirmidhī, when he was asked as to what is *ghībat* (backbiting), he replied: "It is to make mention of your brother in a manner derogatory to him." The questioner said, "And if the fault is there in my brother?". The Holy Prophet replied: "If the fault that you mentioned is there in him, you backbite him; if it is not there, you slandered him." Such an act is not only a moral sin, which will entail punishment in the Hereafter, but this verse also requires that in the law of an Islamic State also false allegation should be held as a culpable offence.

110. *Jilbāb* is a large sheet and *idnā'* is to draw close and wrap up, but when this word is used with the associating particle *'alā,* it gives the meaning of

letting something down from above. Some modern translators, under the influence of the West, have translated this word "to wrap up" so as to avoid somehow the Command about covering of the face. But if Allah had meant what these gentlemen want to construe, He would have said: *yudnīna ilal-hinna* and not *yudnīna 'alal-hinna*. Anyone who knows Arabic knows that *yudnīna 'alal-hinna* cannot merely mean "wrapping up." Moreover, the words *min jalābīb-i hinna* also do not permit of this meaning. It is obvious that the preposition *min* here signifies a part of the sheet, and also that wrapping up is done by means of a whole sheet and not merely by a part of it. The verse, therefore, clearly means : The women should wrap themselves up well in their sheets, and should draw and let down a part of the sheet in front of the face.

This same meaning was understood by the major commentators who lived close to the time of the Holy Prophet. Ibn Jarīr and Ibn al-Mundhir have related that Muḥammad bin Sīrīn asked Ḥaḍrat 'Ubaidah as-Salmānī the meaning of this verse. (This Ḥaḍrat 'Ubaidah had become a Muslim in the time of the Holy Prophet but had not been able to visit him. He came to Madīnah in the time of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar and settled down there. He was recognized as equal in rank with Qādī Shuraih in jurisprudence and judicial matters). Instead of giving a verbal reply Ḥaḍrat 'Ubaidah put on his sheet and gave a practical demonstration by covering his head and forehead and face and an eye, leaving only the other eye uncovered. Ibn 'Abbās also has made almost the same commentary. In his statements which have been reported by Ibn Abī Ḥātim and Ibn Mardūyah, he says: "Allah has commanded the women that when they move out of their houses for an outdoor duty, they should conceal their faces by drawing and letting down over themselves a part of their sheets, keeping only the eyes uncovered." The same explanation of this verse has been given by Qatādah and Suddī.

All the great commentators who have passed after the period of the Companions and their immediate followers have given the same meaning of this verse. Imām Ibn Jarīr Tabarī, in his commentary of this verse, says: "The respectable women should not look like the slave-girls from their dress when they move out of their houses, with uncovered faces and loose hair; they should rather draw and let down over them a part of their sheets or outer-garments so that no evil person may dare molest them." *(Jāmi' al Bayān,* vol. XXII, p. 33).

'Allāma Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣās says: "This verse points out that the young woman has been commanded to conceal her face from the other men; when moving out of the house she should cover herself up well to express chastity and purity of character so that people of doubtful character do not cherish any false hope when they see her." *(Aḥkām al-Qur'an,* vol. III, p. 458).

'Allāma Zamakhshari says: "It means that they should let down a part of their sheet over themselves, and should cover their faces and wrap up their sides well." *(Al-Kashshāf,* vol. II, p. 221).

'Allāma Nizāmuddin Nishāpūrī says: "That is, they should let down a part of the sheet over them; in this verse, the women have been commanded to cover the head and face." *(Gharā'ib al-Qur'ān,* vol. XXII, p. 32).

Imām Rāzī says: "What is meant is that the people may know that they are not promiscuous women. For the woman who covers her face, though the face is not included in the *satar,* cannot be expected to uncover her *satar,* which is obligatory to cover before the other man. Thus, everyone will know that they are modest and virtuous women who cannot be expected to do anything indecent." *(Tafsīr Kabīr,* vol. VI, p 591).

Incidentally, another thing that is proved by this verse is that the Holy Prophet had several daughters, for Allah Himself says: "O Prophet, enjoin your wives and daughters." These words absolutely refute the assertion of those people who without any fear of God make the claim that the Holy Prophet had only one daughter, Hadrat Fātimah, and the other daughters were not from his own loins but by the former husbands. These people are so blinded by prejudice that they do not even bother to consider what crime they are committing by denying the parentage of the children of the Holy Prophet, and what severe punishment will await them in the Hereafter. All authentic traditions concur that from Ḥadrat Khadījah the Holy Prophet had not one daughter, Ḥadrat Fātimah, but three other daughters as well. The Holy Prophet's earliest biographer, Muḥammad bin Ishāq, after mentioning his marriage with Ḥadrat Khadījah, says; "She was the mother of all the Holy Prophet's children except Ibrāhīm, namely Qāsim and Tāhir and Tayyib and Zainab and Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthūm and Fātimah." (Ibn Hishām, vol. I, p. 202).

The famous genealogist, Hāshim bin Muḥammad bin as-Sā'ib al-Kalbī, states: "The first born child to the Messenger of Allah before his call to Prophethood was Qāsim; then Zainab was born to him, then Ruqayyah, then Umm Kulthum." (Tabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, vol. I, p. 133). Ibn Hazam writes in *Jawāmi' as-Sīrah* that from Ḥadrat Khadījah the Holy Prophet had four daughters, the eldest being Zainab, then Ruqayyah, then Fātimah and then Umm Kulthūm (pp. 38-39). Tabari, Ibn Sa'd, Abū Ja'far Muḥammad bin Ḥabīb (author of *Kitāb al-Muhabbar)* and Ibn 'Abd al-Barr (author of *Kitāb al-Isti'āb)* state on the strength of authentic sources that before her marriage with the Holy Prophet Ḥadrat Khadījah had two husbands, Abū Hālah Tamīmī by whom she had a son named Hind bin Abū Hālah, and 'Atīq bin 'Ā'idh Makhzūmī, by whom she had a daughter named Hind. Then she was married to the Holy Prophet and all the genealogists agree

that from his loins she had the four daughters as stated above. (See Tabari, vol. II, p. 411; *tabaqāt Ibn Sa'd,* vol. VIII, pp. 14-16; *Kitāb al-Muhabbar,* pp. 78, 79, 452; *Al-Isti'āb,* vol. II, p. 718). All these statements are authenticated by the Qur'ānic declaration that the Holy Prophet had not one but several daughters.

111. "... will thus be recognized": will be recognized to be noble and chaste women from their simple and modest dress, and not women of ill repute from whom some wicked person could cherish evil hopes. ".. are not molested": will not be teased but let alone.

Let us pause here for a while and try to understand what spirit of the social law of Islam is being expressed by this Qur'ānic Command and what is its object which Allah Himself has stated. Before this in Sūrah An-Nūr: 31, the women have been forbidden to display their adornments before others except such and such men and women, and "also that they should not stamp their feet on the ground lest their hidden decoration (ornaments) should be known." If that Command is read with this verse of Al-Ahzāb it becomes obvious that the intention of the Command for the woman to cover herself well with the sheet here is to conceal her adornments from others. And, evidently, this purpose can be fulfilled only if the sheet or the outer-garment itself is simple; otherwise wrapping up oneself with a decorated and attractive sheet will defeat the purpose itself. Besides, Allah does not only command the woman to conceal her adornment by covering herself with the sheet, but also enjoins that she should let down a part of the sheet over herself. No sensible person can take any other meaning of this Command than that it requires to conceal the face along with the concealment of the adornments of the body and dress. Then, Allah Himself states the reason for enjoining the Command, saying: "This is an appropriate way by adopting which the Muslim women will be recognized and will remain safe from trouble." Evidently, this instruction is being given to those women who regard flirtation and stares and evil advances by men as annoying and troublesome and not as enjoyable, who do not want to be counted among ill-reputed, immodest society-girls, but wish to be known as chaste and modest domestic women. To such noble and pious women Allah says: "If you really wish to be known as good women, and the men's lustful attention is not pleasurable but embarrassing for you, then you should not come out of your houses in full make-up like the newly-wed brides so as to display your beauty and physical charms before the greedy eyes of the people, but the best way for this would be that you should come out in a simple sheet fully concealing your adornments and covering your face and walking in a manner that even the jingle of your ornaments does not attract attention. The woman who applies herself to make-up and does not step out of the house until she has fully embellished and decorated herself with every adornment cannot have any other intention that to become the center of attention of all the men, whom she

herself allures. After this if she complains that the greedy looks of the people cause embarrassment to her, and she does not wish to be known as a "society woman" and a "popular lady", but wants to live as a chaste house-wife, it will be nothing but a fraud. It is not the word of the mouth of a person that determines his intention, but his real intention is manifested in his act and mode of behavior. Therefore, the act of the woman who appears before the other men attractively itself shows what motivates her behaviour. That is why the mischievous people cherish the same hopes from her as can be cherished from such a woman. The Qur'ān tells the women: "You cannot be chaste women and society women at one and the same time. If you want to live as modest, chaste women, you will have to give up the ways that are conducive to becoming society women only, and adopt the way of life that can be helpful in becoming chaste women."

Whether a man's personal opinion is according to the Qur'ān or opposed to it, and whether he wants to accept the Qur'ānic guidance as a practical guide for himself or not, in any case if he does not wish to be intellectually dishonest in interpreting the Qur'ān, he cannot fail to understand its real intention. If he is not a hypocrite he will frankly admit that the Qur'ān's intention is what has been stated above. After this if he violates any Command, he will do so with the realization that he is violating the Qur'ānic Command, or regards the Qur'ānic guidance as wrong.

112. That is, "Allah will forgive the errors and mistakes that were committed in the pre-Islamic days of ignorance, provided that you reform yourselves now when you have received clear guidance, and do not violate it intentionally."

113. "Having diseased hearts" points to two kinds of evils: (1) That a person should be an ill-wisher of Islam and the Muslims although he gets himself counted among the Muslims; and (2) that he should be cherishing evil intentions and having criminal mentality and his evil tendencies be manifesting themselves in everything he thinks and does.

114. This implies the people who, in order to cause panic among the Muslims and to lower their morale, used to spread rumours in Madīnah to the effect that the Muslims had suffered such and such serious setback, that a huge army was gathering together against them at such and such a place, that Madīnah was under threat of a sudden attack, etc. Besides this, they had another pastime. they would concoct and spread imaginary stories about the domestic life of the Holy Prophet's household and of other Muslims so as to produce suspicions among the common people and destroy the moral influence of the Muslims.

115. That is, "This is a permanent law of Allah's *Sharī'ah* that in an Islamic society and state such mischief-mongers are never given an opportunity to

flourish and prosper. Whenever the system of society and state is established on Divine Law, such people will be warned to mend their ways and if they still persisted in their evil ways they would be severely dealt with and exterminated."

116. The Holy Prophet was generally asked this question by the disbelievers and the hypocrites. By this they did not mean to obtain any knowledge but they did so out of fun and jest. As a matter of fact, they did not believe in the coming of the Hereafter at all; they regarded its concept as an empty threat only. They did not ask about the time of its coming so that they could set their affairs right, but what they really meant was : "O Muhammad, we have been doing everything to frustrate your mission, and you have not been able to do any harm to us so far; now let us know as to when will Resurrection take place when we will be taken to task by Allah."

117. This thing has been stated at several places in the Qur'ān. For instance, see Al-A'rāf: 187; An-Nāziyāt: 42-46: Sabā: 3-5; Al-Mulk: 24-27; Al-Mutaffifīn: 10-17; Al-Hijr: 2-3; Al-Furqān: 27-29; Ḥā Mīm As-Sajdah: 26-29.

118. One should note that the Holy Qur'ān has at some places addressed the true Muslims with: "O you who have believed," and at others the Muslim community as a whole, which includes the believers as well as the hypocrites and the Muslims of the weak faith, and at still others only the hypocrites. When the hypocrites and the Muslims of the weak faith are addressed with: "O you who have believed," it is meant to put them to shame, as if to say, "You claim to have affirmed faith, but your acts and deeds do not support your claim." A little study of the context can easily show which class of the people has been addressed at a particular place. Here, obviously, the common Muslims are being addressed.

119. In other words, it means: "O Muslims, do not behave like the Jews. You should not behave towards your Prophet as the children of Israel behaved towards the Prophet Moses." The Israelites themselves admit that the Prophet Moses was their greatest benefactor. Whatever they achieved as a nation was only due to him; otherwise in Egypt they would have been doomed to a worse fate than that of the Shudras in India. But how the Israelites treated the greatest benefactor of theirs can be judged by a cursory glance at the following places of the Bible: Exodus, 5: 20-21, 14: 12, 16: 2-3, 17: 3-4. Numbers, 11:1-15,14:1-10, 16 (the whole chapter), 20: 1-5.

The Qur'ān by referring to this ingratitude of the children of Israel, warns the Muslims, so as to say: "Refrain from adopting this same attitude towards Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace); otherwise you should be ready to face the same fate as the Jews."

This same thing was said by Holy Prophet himself on several occasions. Once he was dividing some goods among the Muslims. When the people

dispersed, a man said; "Muhammad in this division has shown no regard for Allah and the Hereafter." Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd heard this remark and told the Holy Prophet what had been said concerning him that day. He replied, "May Allah show mercy to Moses: he was maligned even more severely, but he showed patience." (Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Abū Dā'ūd).

120. In the end, Allah wants man to realize his real position in the world; if in that position he regarded the life of the world as mere fun and sport and adopted a wrong attitude carelessly, he would only be working for his own doom.

Here, the word "*amānat*" (trust) implies *khilāfat* (caliphate) which, according to the Qur'ān, man has been granted in the earth. The inevitable result of the freedom given to man to choose between obedience and disobedience, and the powers and authority granted him over countless creations for using that freedom, is that he himself be held responsible for his voluntary acts and should deserve rewards for his righteous conduct and suffer punishment for his evil conduct. Since man has not attained these powers by his own efforts but has been granted those by Allah, and he is answerable before Allah for their right or wrong use, these have been described by the word *khilāfat* at other places in the Qur'ān, and by *amānat* here.

In order to give an idea of how important and heavy this "trust" *(amānat)* is, Allah says that the heavens and the earth, in spite of their glory and greatness, and the mountains, in spite of their size and firmness, could not have the power and courage to bear it. But man, the weak and frail man, has borne this heavy burden on his tiny self.

The presentation of the trust before the earth and the heavens and their refusal to bear it and their being afraid of it may be true literally, or it may have been said so metaphorically. We can neither know nor can comprehend Allah's relationship with His creations. The earth and the sun and the moon and the mountains are dumb, deaf and lifeless for us but they may not be so also for Allah. Allah can speak to each of His creations and it can respond to Him, though its nature is incomprehensible for us. Therefore, it is just possible that Allah, in fact, might have presented this heavy trust before them, and they might have shuddered to see it, and they might have made this submission before their Master and Creator:

"Lord, we find our good and our convenience only in remaining as Your powerless servants: we do not find courage to ask for the freedom to disobey and do justice to it, and then suffer Your punishment in case we cannot do justice to it." Likewise, it is also quite possible that before this present life Allah might have given another kind of existence to mankind and summoned it before Himself, and it might have willingly undertaken to accept the delegated powers and authority. We have no rational argument to regard this as impossible. Only such a person,

who might have made a wrong estimate of his mental and intellectual powers and capabilities, can think of regarding it as impossible.

However, this also is equally possible that Allah may have said so allegorically. In order to give an idea of the extraordinary importance of the matter, He may have depicted the scene as if the earth and the heavens and the mountains like the Himalayas were present before Him on one side and a 5 to 6-foot man, on the other. Then Allah might have asked:

"I want to invest someone of My creation with the power that being a subject of My Kingdom, it may acknowledge My Supremacy and obey My Commands of its own free will; otherwise it will also have the power to deny Me, even rebel against Me. After giving him this freedom I shall so conceal Myself from him as if I did not exist at all. And to exercise this freedom I shall invest him with vast powers, great capabilities, and shall give him dominion over countless of My creations so that he may raise any storm that he may in the universe. Then I shall call him to account at an appointed time. The one who will have misused the freedom granted by Me, will be made to suffer a most terrible punishment; and the one who will have adopted My obedience in spite of all chances and opportunities for disobedience, will be raised to such high ranks as no creation of Mine has ever been able to attain. Now tell, which of you is ready to undergo this test?"

Hearing this discourse a hush might have prevailed for a while all through the universe. Then one huge creation after the other might have bowed down and submitted that it should be excused from the severe test. Then, at last, this frail creation might have risen and submitted: "O my Lord, I am ready to undergo this test. I shall brave all the dangers inherent in the freedom and independence only in the hope that I shall be blessed with the highest office in Your Kingdom if I pass the test."

By imagining this scene through his mind's eye only can man judge exactly what delicate position he holds in the universe. Allah in this verse has called the person "unjust and ignorant", who lives a carefree life in the place of test, and has no feeling at all of how great a responsibility he is shouldering, and what consequences he will encounter of the right or wrong decisions that he makes in choosing and adopting an attitude for himself in the life of the world. He is ignorant because the fool holds himself as responsible to no one; he is unjust because he is himself preparing for his doom and is also preparing the doom of many others along with him.

APPENDIX

THE FINALITY OF PROPHETHOOD

(IN CONTINUATION OF E.N. 77)

A section of the people who in the present age have created great mischief by introducing a new prophethood, translate the word *khātam an-Nabiyyīn* as meaning the "seal of the Prophets." By this they imply that the prophets who would come after the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) would become the prophets only by bearing his seal; or, in other words, unless a person's prophethood was stamped with his seal, he could not be a prophet.

But this word, when considered in the context of the verse, does not at all bear this meaning. For if it had meant that, it would not only be irrelevant to the context but would also contradict the theme itself.[1] After all, what could be the relevance of saying abruptly that Muhammad was the "seal of the Prophets" and anyone who became a prophet in the future would become so only by bearing his seal, when the context, in fact, related to the objections of the people concerning Hadrat Zainab's marriage and removal of their doubts in that regard ? In this context not only is such a meaning absolutely irrelevant but, on the contrary, it also weakens the argument being advanced to answer the objections of the people. If it were so they would have been well justified by saying: "There would have been no harm if you did not contract this marriage at this time. If it was all that necessary to abolish this custom, one of the prophets coming after you, with your seal, could have abolished it."

Another interpretation given by these people is that *"khātam an-Nabiyyīn"* means *"afdal an-Nabiyyīn"* (the best of the Prophets). That is, the door to new prophethoods is open, though the perfections of prophethood have been exhausted with the advent of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). But this meaning too suffers from the same drawback as we have indicated above. It also has no

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1. For this please refer to E.N.'s 67 to 79 of this Sūrah.

hypocrites could very well say, "Sir, even if minor ones, prophets in any case will continue to come after you. Therefore, it was not necessary that you only should have abolished this custom."

Lexical Meaning of Khātam an-Nabiyyīn

Thus, as far as the context is concerned, it means that the *word khātam an-Nabiyyīn* here be only taken to mean that Prophethood has been brought to a close and no other prophet will come after the Holy Prophet Muhammad. But this is not only the demand of the context but of the lexical considerations as well. According to Arabic lexicon, *"khatam"* means to put a seal, to close, and to be free after bringing something to completion. Thus, *khatam-al 'amal* means *faragha min-al-'amal:* (he) finished the work; *khatam-al-inā':* (he) closed the mouth of the utensil and sealed it so that neither should anything come out of it nor enter it; *khatam-al-kitab:* (he) closed the letter and sealed its so as to make it secure; *khatama 'alal-qalb:* sealed the heart so that it neither understands anything new nor forgets anything already learnt; and *khitāmu kulli mashrūb-in* means "the flavour left by a drink after it has been drunk." *Khatam-ashshai': balagha akhiruhu: "khatam* of something is to reach the end of it." In this very sense is the word *khatam-i-Qur'ān* understood, and in the same sense are the last verses of the Sūrahs called *khawātim.* Similarly, *khatam-ul-qaum* implies the last person of the tribe. (See *Lisān-ul-'Arab, Qāmūs, Aqrab-ul-Muwārid).*[2]

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2. We have cited only three lexicons here but the same meaning of the word *khatam* will be borne out by every authentic lexicon of Arabic. The deniers of the Finality of Prophethood, however, in order to contravene the Religion of God, pay no attention to the lexicon but try to argue like this: Calling a person *khātam ash-shu'arā'*, or *khātam al-fuqahā'*, or *khātam al-mufassirīn* does not mean that after such a person, no other poet, or jurist, or commentator would be born, but it means that this particular branch of knowledge was exhausted with that person. But this is a fallacious argument. The use of such a title as an exaggeration does not at all mean that the real meaning of *khatam* should become "perfect and excellent", and using it in the sense of "last and final" should be discontinued as absolutely wrong. Such a thing can be said only by a person who is unaware of the rules of language. In no language is there the rule that if a word is some times used in a figurative sense, apart from its real sense, the figurative meaning should become its real meaning, and the word be forbidden to be used in its real meaning afterwards. If somebody were to say *jā'a khātam al-qaum,* before an Arab, the, latter would never understand it to mean

On this very basis, all the lexicographers and commentators have unanimously taken *Khātam an-Nabiyyīn* to mean *Ākhir an-Nabiyyīn*. From the viewpoint of Arabic usage and lexicon, *khātam* does not imply the postal seal which is used to issue letters, but it implies the seal which is put on the envelope so that it is secured and neither should anything come out of it nor enter it.

Traditions of the Holy Prophet Concerning Finality of Prophethood

The meaning of the word *khātam* as understood from the Qur'ānic context and Arabic lexicon is further confirmed by the explanations given by the Holy Prophet himself. Below we quote some of the most authentic *Aḥādīth* in this regard:

(1) The Holy Prophet said: The children of Israel were guided by the Prophets. When a prophet died, another succeeded him. However, there will be no prophet after me: there will be only caliphs. (Bukhārī: *kitāb al-Manāqib).*

(2) The Holy Prophet said: "My position in relation to the Prophets who came before me can be understood by a parable: A person

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that the most perfect man of the tribe had come, but that the entire tribe had come, and its last man had also arrived.

One should also note that the titles of *khātam ash-shu'arā'*, *khātam al-fuqahā'*, etc. given to some people, were given by human beings, and no human being can ever know that after the person whom he is calling *khātam* for some quality, another person of the same quality would never be born. That is why in human language, these titles are no more than mere exaggerations and recognition of excellence, but when Allah says that such and such a quality has been culminated and finalised in a particular person, there is no reason why we should understand it also in its metaphoric sense just as we do in case of human appelations. If Allah had called someone *Khatam ash-Shu'ara'*, most certainly there could be no poet after him. Likewise, after the one whom He has called *Khātam an-Nabiyyīn*, it is impossible that another prophet should come. This is so because Allah is the Knower of the unseen and hidden, man is not. Therefore, Allah's calling someone *Khatam an-Nabiyyīn* and the man's calling someone *khātam ash-shu'ara'* or *khātam al-fuqahā'*, etc. cannot be regarded as at the same level.

(2) The Holy Prophet said: "My position in relation to the Prophets who came before me can be understood by a parable: A person erected a great building and decorated and adorned it well, but in a corner he left a niche, an empty space, for just one brick. The people went round the building and wondered at its beauty, but said: Why was not a brick laid here ? So, I am that brick and I am the Last of the Prophets. (That is, with my advent the edifice of Prophethood has been perfected. Now there is found no empty niche, which may have to be filled by another prophet)." (Bukhāri: *Kitab al-Manāqib).*

Four *Aḥādīth* on the same subject have been reported in Muslim *(Kitāb al-Faḍā'il: Khâtam an-Nabiyyin)* with the following additional words in the last *Ḥadīth: fa-ji'tu fakhatam-tal-anbiya': "So,* I came and I closed the line of the Prophets." This same *Ḥadīth* in these very words is found in Tirmidhi: *Kitāb al-Manāqib,* chap. *Faḍl an-Nabī.*

In Musnad Abū Dā'ūd Tayālisi, this *Ḥadith* is one of those reported by Jābir bin 'Abdullah, and its last words are to the effect: "Through me the Prophethood was brought to a close."

In Musnad Aḥmad Traditions on the subject with a slight difference in wording have been reported on the authority of Hadrat Ubayy bin Ka'b, Ḥaḍrat Abū Sa'īd Khudrī and Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah.

(3) The Holy Prophet said: "I have been distinguished from the other Prophets in six things: (1) I have been endowed with the eloquent speech, (2) I have been succoured with awe, (3) Booty has been made lawful for me, (4) the earth has been made a mosque for me as well as a means of obtaining purity (i.e. In my *Sharī'ah* the Prayer can be offered anywhere on the surface of the earth and not only in specific houses of worship, and *tayammum* (purification through dust) can be resorted to for ablutions in case water is not available, (5) I have been appointed a Messenger for the entire world, and (6) with me the office of Prophethood has been closed. (Muslim, Tirmidhi, Ibn Mājah)."

(4) The Holy Prophet said: "The line of Prophethood and Apostleship has come to an end: after me there will neither be a prophet nor an apostle." (Tirmidhi)

(5) The Holy Prophet said: "I am Muḥammad, I am Aḥmad. I am the effacer: disbelief will be effaced through me. I am the assembler: after me the people will be assembled in the Plain of Resurrection. (That is, after me now only Resurrection is to take place). And I am the Last: after me there is no prophet." (Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī, Mu'wattā, Al-Mustadrak).

(6) The Holy Prophet said: "Allah has sent no Prophet who did not warn his people of the coming of the *Dajjāl* (the Antichrist, but he did not come in their times). Now I am the last of the Prophets and you are the last Community. Therefore, he is about to appear among you now." (Ibn Mājah).

(7) 'Abdur Rahmān bin Jubair says: "I heard 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin 'Ās say that the Holy Prophet one day came out to us in a manner as though he were taking his leave. He said: I am Muḥammad, the un-lettered Prophet, thrice; then said: and no prophet will come after me." (Musnad Aḥmad: Traditions from 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin 'Āṣ).

(8) The Holy Prophet said: "There is no prophethood after me; there are only harbingers of good news. It was asked, "What are the harbingers of good news, O Messenger of Allah ?" He replied: "A true vision," or said, "A righteous vision." (That is, there is no possibility of Divine Revelation now. At the most a person may receive an inspiration, which will be in the form of a true vision.) (Musnad Aḥmad, Nasā'ī, Abū Dā'ūd).

(9) The Holy Prophet said: "If there were a prophet after me, it would have been 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb." (Tirmidhī).

(10) The Holy Prophet said to Ḥaḍrat 'Ali: "You are to me as Aaron was to Moses, but there is no prophet after me." (Bukhārī, Muslim)

Bukhārī and Muslim have related this *Ḥadīth* in connection with the Tabūk Expedition. Two *Aḥādīth* on this subject have been related in Musnad Aḥmad on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Ṣa'd bin Abī Waqqās, the last sentence of one of which is to the effect: "But there is no prophethood after me." The detailed traditions related in this connection by Abū Dā'ūd Tayālisī, Imām Aḥmad and Muḥammad bin Ishāq show that on

the eve of his departure on the Tabūk Expedition the Holy Prophet had decided to leave Ḥaḍrat 'Ali behind in the defense and protection of Madīnah. The hypocrites thereupon had an opportunity to pass discourteous remarks about him. He went to the Holy Prophet and asked him: "O Messenger of Allah, are you leaving me behind among the women and children?" On this occasion the Holy Prophet consoled him, saying: "You are to me as Aaron was to Moses." That is, "Just as the Prophet Moses, on his departure for Mount Ṭūr, had left the Prophet Aaron behind to look after the children of Israel, so am I leaving you behind for the defence of Madīnah." But at the same time, apprehending lest Ḥaḍrat 'Ali's comparison with the Prophet Aaron might cause mischief later, the Holy Prophet immediately added: "But there will be no prophet after me."

(11) Thaubān says that the Holy Prophet said: " . . . and that 30 impostors will appear in my community each one of whom will claim to be a prophet, whereas I am the last Prophet: there is no prophet after me." (Abū Dā'ūd).

Abū Dā'ūd has related another *Ḥadīth* on this subject in *Kitāb al-Malāḥim* on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah. Tirmidhī also has related these two Traditions on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Thaubān and Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah; the second Tradition is to the effect: "So much so that about 30 impostors will arise, each of whom will claim to be a messenger of Allah."

(12) The Holy Prophet said: "There have been before you among the children of Israel such people, who were spoken to (by God) though they were not prophets. If there be such a one in my Ummah, it will be 'Umar." (Bukhārī: *Kitāb al-Manāqib).*

A *Ḥadīth* on this subject in Muslim has the word *muḥaddathūn* instead of *yukallamūn,* which both mean the persons who are spoken to by God, or are spoken to from the unseen. This shows that if there had been any in this Ummah, who could have the honour of being spoken to by God, without being a prophet, it would have been 'Umar.

(13) The Holy Prophet said: "There is no prophet after me, and there is no ummah (of any other prophet) after my Ummah." (Baihaqi: *Kitāb ar-Ru'yā',* Tabarānī).

(14) The Holy Prophet said: "I am the last Prophet and my Mosque is the last Mosque (i.e. the Prophet's Mosque at Madīnah)."[3] (Muslim: *Kitāb al-Ḥajj*).

These *Aḥādīth* have been reported by a large number of the Companions and related by many Traditionists with many strong chains of authorities. A study of these shows that the Holy Prophet has on different occasions in different ways and in different words affirmed that he is the last of the Prophets, that no prophet will come after him, that prophethood has been finalised in him, and that the people who claim to be messengers and prophets after him would be impostors[4] . There can

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3. The deniers of the Finality of Prophethood have argued thus, from this Ḥadīth: "Just as the Holy Prophet has called his Mosque the last Mosque, whereas it is not the last mosque, but countless other mosques have been built after it in the world, so when he said that he is the last Prophet, it also meant that other prophets would continue to appear after him in the world; however, with regard to excellence and perfection he is the last Prophet and his Mosque the last Mosque." But interpretations such as these are, in fact, a proof that these people have lost the faculty of understanding the true meaning of the words of Allah and His Messenger. If a person has a glance through all the *Aḥādīth* on this subject as related in Muslim, he will understand precisely in what sense has the Holy Prophet called his Mosque the last Mosque. The Traditions related by Imām Muslim in this connection on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar and Ḥaḍrat Maimūnah (wife of the Prophet) are explicit that there are three such Mosques in the world, which are superior to all other mosques in the sense that offering the Prayer in them carries a thousand times greater spiritual rewards than offering it in other mosques. On that very basis, to undertake a journey for the purpose of offering the Prayer in these three Mosques only is permissible. No other mosque has the right and merit that one should make a journey especially to it for offering the Prayer in it, apart from the other mosques. The first of these is the *masjid al-Ḥarām*, which was built by the Prophet Abraham; the second is the *Masjid al-Aqṣā* which was built by the Prophet Solomon; and the third is the Prophet's Mosque at Madīnah, which was founded by the Holy Prophet himself. What the Holy Prophet meant was this: "Since no other prophet will come after me, no fourth mosque will be built in the world, offering the Prayer in which might carry greater rewards than offering it in other mosques and making a journey to which especially for the purpose of offering the Prayer in it might be lawful."

4. As against all these sayings of the Holy Prophet, the deniers of the Finality of Prophethood cite a saying of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah to the effect: "Do say

be no more authentic and reliable and conclusive explanations of the Qur'ānic word *Khātam an-Nabiyyīn* than this. The Holy Prophet's statement by itself is authoritative and decisive. But when it explains a text of the Qur'ān, it becomes all the more authenticated and conclusive. The question is: Who can be better qualified to understand and explain the Qur'ān than the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) himself? Thus, if a person gives a different meaning to *Khatam Nubuwwat* (Finality of Prophethood), how can we hold it worthy of any attention or consideration, much less accept it as correct?

Consensus of the Companions

After the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* the third place is accorded to the consensus of the Holy Prophet's Companions. All reliable historical traditions agree that the Companions by complete consensus had fought wars against the people who claimed to be the prophets and those who accepted them as such, immediately after the death of the Holy Prophet.

In this connection, the case of Musailimah the Liar is particularly noteworthy. This man did not deny the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet, but claimed that he had been made an associate with him in his Prophethood. Some time before the Holy Prophet's death, he had written:

"From Musailimah, the messenger of Allah, to Muḥammad, the Messenger of Allah: Peace be on you: You should know that I have been made an associate with you in the work of prophethood." (Ṭabari, vol. II, p. 399. Egyptian Edition).

Furthermore, the historian Ṭabari has related that in the call to the prayer that was pronounced under Musailimah, the words: *Ash-hadu*

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that the Holy Prophet is the last of the Prophets, but do not say that no prophet will come after him." But, in the first place, to cite a saying of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah as against the authentic statements of the Holy Prophet is highly derogatory; besides, the tradition in which this saying has been ascribed to Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah is in itself un-authentic. No traditionist worthy of any mention has related it in any reliable *Ḥadīth* Collection. It is only traced to *Durr-i Manthūr*, a commentary of the Qur'ān, and *Takmilah Majma' al-Biḥār*, a dictionary of *Ḥadīth*, but without any reference to its chain of transmitters. How then can such a weak tradition containing a saying of a Companion be cited to contradict the sayings of the Holy Prophet, which have been related by all the eminent traditionists with strong and authentic chains of the transmitters?

anna Muḥammad ar-Rasūl Allah were also included. In spite of this clear affirmation of the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet by him, he was declared a *kāfir*, excommunicated and fought against. History also proves that the Banū Ḥanīfah had believed in him in good faith, and they had been made to understand that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) himself had made him an associate in his Prophethood. Moreover, the verses of the Qur'ān had been presented before them in a way as if they had been sent down to Musailmah, by a person who had received instruction in the Qur'ān at Madīnah. *(Al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah,* vol. V, p. 51). But, in spite of this, the Companions did not accept them as Muslims and sent an army to fight them. Then, it cannot also be claimed that the Companions had fought against them not on account of apostasy but for the crime of rebellion. According to the law of Islam, in case war is fought against rebellious Muslims, their prisoners of war cannot be made slaves. Not to speak of Muslims, even the rebellious *dhimmīs* cannot be made the slaves in case they are captured in war. But when invasion was made on Musailimah and his followers, Hadrat Abū Bakr declared that their women and children would be made slaves; and when they were taken prisoners they were actually made slaves. Thus, it was from among them that a slave-girl was assigned to Hadrat 'Alī of whom Muḥammad bin Ḥanafiah[5], so well-known to the history of Islam, was born. *(Al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah,* vol. VI, pp. 316, 325). Thus, evidently, it was not the crime of rebellion for which the Companions fought them but the crime was that a person had claimed to be a prophet after the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and others had believed in his prophethood. This action was taken immediately after the death of the Holy Prophet, under the leadership of Abū Bakr, and the full consensus of all the Companions. Perhaps there does not exist a more explicit example than this of a perfect consensus of the Companions.

Consensus of Religious Scholars

After the consensus of the Holy Prophet's Companions the next place with regard to authority is accorded to the consensus of the religious scholars who lived after the period of the Companions. A study of their verdicts shows that right from the first century after Ḥijrah till

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5. Ḥanafiah: a woman of the tribe of Banū Ḥanīfah.

the present day the religious scholars of every country of the entire Muslim world have held the unanimous belief that there can be no prophet after the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), and this also that anyone who lays a claim to this office after him, or accepts such a claim, is a *kāfir* and must be excommunicated from Islam. Some of these verdicts are given below:

(1) A man in the time of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah (80-150 A.H.) claimed to be a prophet, and said, "Allow me to present proofs of my prophethood." The Imām ruled: "Anyone who demands a proof of prophethood from him, will also turn a disbeliever, for the Messenger of Allah has said: 'There is no prophet after me'." *(Manāqib* al-Imām al-A'zam Abī Ḥanīfah, Ibn Aḥmad al-Makki, vol. I, p. 161 . Hyderabad Ed. 1 321 A.H.)

(2) 'Allāma Ibn Jarīr Ṭabari (224-310 A.H.) in his well-known commentary of the Qur'ān, has explained the meaning of this verse, thus: "He brought the Prophethood to a close and sealed it: Now this door will not open for anyone till Resurrection." *(Tafsīr Ibn Jarīr,* vol. XXII, p 12).

(3) Imām Ṭahāvi (239-321 A.H.) writes in his *'Aqīdah Salfīyah,* in connection with the beliefs of the righteous, especially of Imam Abū Ḥanīfah, Imām Abū Yūsuf and Imām Muḥammad (may Allah show mercy to all of them), in respect of Prophethood, "And that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) is a chosen servant of Allah, His Prophet and favourite Apostle; and he is the last of the Prophets, the leader of the righteous, the chief of the Apostles, and beloved of the Lord of the worlds. Any claim to prophethood after him is deviation and worship of the lusts of the self." *(Sharh at-Ṭaḥaviah,* Dār al-Ma'ārif, Egypt, pp. 15, 87, 96, 97, 100, 102).

(4) 'Allāma Ibn Ḥazm Andalusi (384-456 A.H.) writes: "Most certainly the coming down of the Revelation after the death of the Holy Prophet has ceased, the reason being that the Revelation comes down to none but a Prophet, and Allah Himself has stated: Muḥammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the last of the Prophets." *(Al-Muḥallā,* vol. I, p. 26).

(5) Imām Ghazzālī (450-505 A.H.) says: "There is complete consensus among the Muslim Ummah that there is no prophet after the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) . . . The whole Ummah is unanimous that the Holy Prophet by his words *La nabiyya ba'dī* meant nothing but that after him there will neither be a prophet nor an apostle. Anyone who interprets this saying in any other way, falls outside the pale of Islam; his interpretation would be nonsensical and his writing heretical. Besides, the Ummah is also unanimous that there is no scope whatever for any other interpretation than this; the one who denies it, denies the consensus of the *Ummah*" *(Al-Iqtisād fil I'tiqād*, Egypt, p. 114).

(6) Muḥy-is-Sunnah Baghavī (d. 510 A.H.) writes in his Commentary *Ma'ālim at-Tanzīl:* "Allah closed the Prophethood through the Holy Prophet; thus, he is the last of the Prophets.... And Ibn 'Abbās says that Allah Almighty (in this verse) has decreed that after him there will be no prophet." (Vol. III, p. 158).

(7) 'Allāma Zamakhsharī (467-538 A.H.) writes in his Commentary *Al-Kashshāf:* "If you ask: How can the Holy Prophet be the last of the Prophets when there is the belief that the Prophet Jesus will come down in the last days before Resurrection? I shall say: The Holy Prophet is the last of the Prophets in the sense that no other person will be raised as a prophet after him. As for the Prophet Jesus, he is one of those who had been made the Prophets before the advent of the Holy Prophet. And when he comes again, he will come as a follower of the *Sharī'ah* of Muḥammad (peace be upon him) and will offer the Prayer with his face towards his *qiblah* (the Ka'bah) like any other member of his Ummah." (Vol. II, p. 215).

(8) Qāḍī 'Iyād (d. 544 A.H.) writes: "He who lays a claim to prophethood for himself, or holds that one can acquire it and can attain the rank of prophethood through the purification of the heart, as some philosophers and so-called *ṣūfīs* assert, and likewise he who does not claim to be a prophet but claims that he receives Revelation . . . all such people are disbelievers and

deniers of the Holy Prophet, for he has informed us that he is the last of the Prophets and that no prophet is to come after him. And he has conveyed this news from Allah that he has closed the Prophethood and that he has been sent to all mankind; and the whole Ummah is unanimous that these words have no other but the apparent meaning. There is no room for a different interpretation or special meaning. Therefore, there can be absolutely no doubt about such people's being *kāfir* both according to the consensus and the Traditions." *(Shifā'*, vol. II, pp. 270, 271).

(9) 'Allāma Shehrastāni (d. 548 A.H.) writes in his famous *Al-Milal wan-Niḥal:* "And likewise the one who says . . . that another prophet (except for the Prophet Jesus) will be raised after the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), is a *Kāfir* and there is no difference of opinion about this even between two men." (Vol. III, p. 249).

(10) Imām Rāzī (543-606 A. H.), explaining the verse of *Khātam-an-Nabiyyīn* says in his *Tafsīr Kabīr;* "In this context, the reason for saying *wa Khātam-an-Nabiyyīn* is this: If a prophet after whom another prophet is to be raised, leaves the work of admonition and explanation of injunctions somewhat incomplete, the one coming after him can complete it. But the Prophet after whom no other prophet is to be raised, is by far more compassionate to his people (Ummah) and gives them explicit guidance, for he is like the father who knows that after him his son has no guardian and patron to look after him." (Vol. VI, p. 581).

(11) 'Allāma Baiḍāwī (d. 685 A.H.) writes in his Commentary *Anwār at-Tanzīl:* "That is, the Holy Prophet is the last of the Prophets, who closed their line, or through whom the line of the Prophets was sealed. And the Prophet Jesus' second advent does not contradict the Holy Prophet's being the last Prophet, for when he comes, he will be a follower of his *Sharī'ah."* (Vol. IV, p. 164).

(12) 'Allāma Ḥāfiz ad-Dīn Nasafī (d. 710 A.H.) writes in his Commentary *Madārik at-Tanzīl:* "And the Holy Prophet is *Khātam an-Nabiyyīn,* i.e. the last of the Prophets: After him no other person will be appointed a prophet. As for the Prophet

Jesus, he is one of those who had been appointed Prophets before him, and when he comes the second time, he will come as a follower of the Law of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), and as a member of his own Ummah." (p. 471).

(13) 'Allāma 'Alā' ad-Dīn Baghdādī (d. 725 A.H.) writes in his Commentary *Khāzin:* "*Wa Khātam an-Nabiyyīn*, i.e. Allah closed the line of the Prophethood in the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be His peace). Now there is neither any Prophethood after him nor any associate with him in this.... *wa kān-Allah-u bi-kulli shai'in 'Alīmā:* Allah has the knowledge that there is no prophet after him." (pp. 471-472).

(14) 'Allāma Ibn Kathīr (d. 774 A.H.) writes in his well-known Commentary: "Thus, this verse is an express injunction in this regard that after the Holy Prophet there in no prophet; and when there is no prophet after him, there can be no apostle either, for apostleship is specific and prophethood general: every apostle is a prophet but every prophet is not an apostle. ... Anyone who lays a claim to this office after the Holy Prophet, is a liar and impostor and deviator and unbeliever, no matter what supernatural and magical spells and charms and sorcery he practises. . . . The same is the position of every such person who lays a claim to this office till Resurrection." (Vol. III, pp. 493, 494)

(15) 'Allāma Jalāl ad-Dīn Suyūtī (d. 911 A.H.) writes in *Jalālayn:* "*Wa kān-Allah-u bi-kulli shai'in 'Alīmā:* Allah knows that there is no prophet after the Holy Prophet; and when the prophet Jesus comes down, he will be a follower of the Holy Prophet's *Shari'ah.*" (p. 768).

(16) 'Allāma Ibn Nujaim (d. 970 A.H.) writes in his *Kitāb al-Ashbāh wan-Nazā'ir,* the famous work on the principles of jurisprudence: "If a person disbelieves that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is the last of the Prophets, he is not a Muslim, for this is one of those fundamental things knowing and believing which is a basic requirement of the faith." (p. 179).

(17) Mullā 'Ali Qārî (d. 1016 A.H.) writes in *Sharh Fiqh Akbar:* "There is complete consensus of the Ummah that laying claim to

prophethood after the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is *kufr* (heresy)." (p. 202).

(18) Shaikh Ismā'īl Ḥaqqī (d. 1137 A.H.), explaining this verse in his Commentary *Rūḥ al-Bayān*, writes:" 'Aṣim has read the word as *Khātam*, which is the sealing instrument with which things are sealed. It implies that the Holy Prophet came at the end and in him the line of the Prophets was closed and sealed. ... Some people have read it as *Khātim*, which means the one who puts a seal. Thus, *Khātim* also is a synonym of *Khātam* . . . Henceforth the scholars of his Ummah will only inherit him in *Walāyat* (spiritual eminence, saintliness), the inheritance of the Prophethood having been brought to a close in him. And the second coming of the Prophet Jesus does not affect the Holy Prophet's being the last of the Prophets, for *Khātam an-Nabiyyin* means that no other prophet will be raised after him.... And Jesus had been raised as a Prophet before him. When he comes the second time, he will come as a follower of the *Sharī'ah* of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). He will offer the Prayer with his face towards his *qiblah*, like any other man belonging to his Ummah. He will neither receive revelation nor issue new commands, but he will be a Caliph of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). ... And the followers of the *Sunnah* believe that there is no prophet after our Holy Prophet, for Allah has said: "But he is the Messenger of Allah and the last of the Prophets," and the Holy Prophet has declared: "There is no prophet after me." Now whoever says that there is a prophet after our Holy Prophet, will be declared a *kāfir*, for he has denied a fundamental article of the faith; likewise, the one who doubts it, will also be declared a *kāfir*, for the Truth has been made distinct from falsehood. And the claim of the one who claims to be a prophet after the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) can be nothing but imposture." (Vol. XXII, p. 188).

(19) According *to Fatāwā 'Ālamgīrī*, *a* compilation of the 12th century after Hijrah, compiled by a board of eminent scholars under orders of Aurangzeb 'Alamgir: "If a person disbelieves that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is the last of the

Prophets, he is not a Muslim; and if he claims that he is Allah's messenger or prophet, he will be declared a *kāfir*." (Vol. II, p. 263).

(20) 'Allāma Shaukānī (d. 1255 A.H.) writes in his Commentary *Fath al-Qadīr:* "The majority of the scholars have read the word as *Khātim* and 'Āsim as *Khātam*. According to the first reading, it would mean this: "The Holy Prophet closed the line of the Prophets, i.e. he came at the end of them," and according to the second reading this: "He was like a seal for them, with which their line was sealed, and with whose inclusion their group was embellished." (Vol. IV, p. 275).

(21) 'Allāma Ālūsi (d. 1270 A.H.) writes in his Commentary *Rūh al-Ma'āni:* "The word *Nabí* (Prophet) is general and *Rasūl* (Apostle) specific. Therefore, the Holy Prophet's being *Khātam an-Nabiyyín* by itself requires that he should also be *Khātam al-Mursalín;* and his being the last of the Prophets and Apostles implies that after his being blessed by Allah with the Prophethood in this world, the office of Prophethood for any jinn or human being has been abolished." (Vol. XXII, p. 32). "Whoever after him claims to be the recipient of revelation of prophethood, will be declared a *kāfir* and there is no difference of opinion among the Muslims in this regard." (Vol. XXII, p. 38). The Holy Prophet's being the last of the Prophets has been explicitly stated by the Book of Allah, clearly enunciated by the *Sunnah* and fully agreed upon by the entire Ummah. Therefore, whoever claims something contrary to it, will be declared a *kāfir*." (Vol. XXII, p. 39).

These elucidations have been made by the eminent scholars, jurists, traditionists and commentators of every Muslim country from India to Morocco and Spain and from Turkey to Yaman. A glance at their dates of birth and death will show that they include eminent authorities of every century of the history of Islam, from the first to the 13th. Although we could have cited the Muslim scholars of the 14th century as well, we have deliberately omitted them because someone might say that these scholars had given this meaning of the Finality of Prophethood especially in order to counter the claim of the modern

claimant to prophethood. Therefore, we have cited the writings of the earlier scholars who, evidently, could have no ill-will or animosity against any person of the present day. These writings conclusively prove that from the first century after Hijrah till today the entire Islamic world has unanimously understood the word *Khātam an-Nabiyyīn* to mean' "the last of the Prophets," that there has been complete unanimity of belief among the Muslims of every age that the door to prophethood after the Holy Prophet has been closed for ever and ever, and that there has never been any difference of opinion that the one who laid claim to prophethood or apostleship after the Holy Prophet, and the one who accepted such a claim, would fall outside the pale of Islam.

Now it is for every sensible person to see and judge for himself what room is there for anybody to open the door of prophethood for a new claimant and to take the word *Khātam an-Nabiyyīn* in a meaning different from that which is established lexically, which is evident from the Qur'ānic context, which the Holy Prophet himself has explained, which is completely agreed upon by the Companions, and which has been accepted unanimously by the entire Ummah, from the time of the Companions till the present day; and how can such people be regarded as Muslims, who have not merely expressed the opinion that the door to prophethood is still open, but have practically affirmed belief in the prophethood of a person, who has actually broken into the sacred house of the Prophethood ?

Three other things also merit consideration in this regard:

Is Allah the Enemy of Our Faith?

In the first place, Prophethood is a delicate matter. According to the Qur'ān, it is one of those fundamental articles of the faith whose acceptance or rejection determines whether a person is a believer or a non-believer. If a person is a prophet and one does not believe in him, one will be a *kāfir;* and if the person is an impostor and one believes in him, one will again be a *kāfir.* Concerning a delicate matter like this, Allah certainly could not be expected to have made any mistake. If a prophet were to be raised after the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), Allah would have clearly stated this in the Qur'ān, would have had it openly proclaimed through His Prophet, and the Holy Prophet would not have left the world until he had forewarned

his followers in unequivocal terms that other prophets would come after him and that they must believe in them. After all, what enmity could Allah and His Prophet have against our faith and belief that although the door to prophethood had been open and another prophet had to come without believing in whom we could not be Muslims, yet not only should we have been kept uninformed, but, on the contrary, both Allah and His Messenger should have made such statements as would involve the whole Ummah, throughout 1,300 years, and even today, in the misunderstanding that no other prophet was to be raised after the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (may Allah's peace be upon him)?

Now, supposing the door to prophethood is still open and another prophet has also appeared, we will deny him straight way without any hesitation. The only risk could be of our accountability before Allah. If Allah were to question us on the Day of Resurrection, we could produce the whole evidence in His Court to establish that, God forbid, we had been involved in disbelief and deviation only by Allah's own Book and the *Sunnah* of His own Prophet. We do not at all apprehend that Allah will still punish us in spite of the evidence for not having believed in the new prophet. But if, on the contrary, the door to ptopethood is really closed, and no new prophet is to be raised, and in spite of that someone believes in the prophethood of an impostor, he should well consider what evidence he will produce in God's Court to escape the punishment for disbelief and deviation. Before the time comes for him to be produced in Allah's Court, he should examine his defence material here, and by comparison with the arguments presented above, should see and judge for himself whether a sensible person could run the risk of the punishment for disbelief by placing reliance on the kind of the defence pleas that he has at his disposal.

Is there Need for a New Prophet?

The second point that demands consideration is that prophethood is not a quality which someone could develop by making himself worthy of it through worship and righteous acts, nor is it a prize which might be awarded for rendering some services. This is indeed an office to which Allah appoints a person to fulfil a specific need. When the need arises, a prophet is appointed to fulfil it, and when there is no need, or does not remain any need, prophets are not sent unnecessarily in vain.

When we turn the Qur'ān to find out as to what were precisely the conditions that made the appointment of the Prophets necessary in the past, we find that there have been four situations which made their appointment essential:

(1) A particular nation stood in need of a prophet because no prophet had come to it before, nor had the message of a prophet sent to another nation reached it.

(2) The appointment of a prophet became necessary because the teaching of the former prophet had been forgotten, or tampered with, and it was no longer possible to know and follow his message in practical life.

(3) The people might not have received the full message and guidance through the former prophet and more prophets were needed to supplement his teaching.

(4) A prophet might have needed another prophet to help and support him in carrying out his mission.

Now, evidently, none of these situations needs to be fulfilled after the advent of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). The Qur'ān itself tells that the Holy Prophet has been raised for the guidance of the entire mankind and the cultural history of the world tells that since his advent conditions have been constantly such that his message and invitation could reach, and still can reach, every nation. Therefore, there remains no need for separate prophets to be sent to separate nations:

Again the Qur'ān bears evidence, and the whole *Ḥadīth* and biographical literature (on the Holy Prophet's life) testifies, that the teaching of the Holy Prophet still remains safe in its original form. It has not been tampered with in any way. The Book that he brought remains intact to each letter and syllable and will remain so till the Last Day. The full account and record of the guidance that he gave by precept and example is still available in its entirety and in such pure and original form as if we were a living witness to it. This sets aside the second need also.

Then the Qur'ān also proclaims unequivocally that the Religion of Islam was perfected through the Holy Prophet. Therefore, for the perfection of Religion also no new prophet is required.

As regards the fourth need, if a prophet were actually needed, he should have been appointed in the time of the Holy Prophet to assist him. Evidently, when none was appointed then, this need and condition is also eliminated.

Now we should be told what is that fifth kind of need for which a prophet may have to be raised after the Holy Prophet. If it is argued that the community has degenerated, and a prophet was needed for its reformation, we shall say that no prophet ever had been raised only for the sake of reformation in the world. A prophet is appointed so that Divine Revelation is sent to him, and Divine Revelation is needed either to convey a new message, or to supplement a former message, or to cleanse it of impurities and corruption. Now when the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) are safe and intact and the Religion has been perfected and completed, there remains no need for a new Divine Revelation. Now for the sake of the reformation only reformers will be needed and not any prophets.

A New Prophethood is a Curse rather than a Blessing for the Ummah

The third point worthy of consideration is that whenever a prophet arises among a people, they will immediately be confronted with the question of belief and unbelief. Those who accept him will form one community and those who reject him inevitably a separate community. The difference between the two communities will not be of superficial nature but a fundamental one owing to their believing and disbelieving in a prophet, which will prevent them from ever uniting together unless one or the other community abandons its faith. Then practically also they will have separate sources of the guidance and law, because one community will derive its law from the Revelation and *Sunnah* of the Prophet accepted and recognized by it, while the other community will reject it altogether as a source of law. For this reason it will be impossible for the two communities to unite and become a cohesive society.

If one keeps these realities in view one will understand that the Finality of Prophethood is a great blessing of Allah, which alone has made it possible for the Muslim Ummah to become an enduring and universal brotherhood. It has secured the Muslims against every fundamental difference which might have caused a permanent division in it. Now, whoever accepts the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) as his guide and leader and is not prepared to turn to any other source of guidance except his teaching, is a member of this brotherhood and can always be. This unity could never have been achieved by the Ummah had the door to prophethood not been closed and sealed, for it would have continued to sufferdisintegration on the advent of every new prophet.

Any sensible person after a little deliberation can easily understand that when a prophet has been sent for the entire mankind, when Religion has been perfected and completed through him, when his teaching has been fully secured and preserved for ever, the door to prophethood should naturally be closed and sealed in order that the believers the world over may unite into a single community permanently by adherence to the teaching of the Last Prophet, and the appearance of the new prophets every now and then does not cause divisions to appear in the Ummah. Whether a prophet is a "shadow prophet" or a "reincarnation", or whether he is the follower of a former Prophet, or a lawgiver and bearer of a book, in any case whenever such a prophet arises, and is sent by God, his emergence will necessarily cause mankind to be divided into two communities: those who accept him as a prophet will form the community of the believers and those who reject him will stand condemned as the disbelievers. This division is inevitable when there is really the need for a new prophet, but when there is no such need, it cannot be expected that Allah in His wisdom and mercy would cause His servants to be needlessly involved in the conflict of belief and unbelief and would prevent their becoming one integrated Ummah for ever. Therefore, whatever is established by the Qur'ān and confirmed by the *Sunnah* and consensus, is also corroborated by reason, and reason also demands that the door to prophethood should now remain closed and sealed for ever and ever.

The Reality about the "Promised Messiah"

The inviters to the new prophethood usually tell the ignorant Muslims that the traditions of the Holy Prophet have foretold the coming of a "promised Messiah", and the Messiah (Jesus Christ) was a prophet, and therefore, his second coming does not contradict the doctrine of the Finality of Prophethood. Thus, the doctrine of the Finality of Prophethood is true and, at the same time, the advent of the "promised Messiah" is also true.

In this regard, they also say that the "promised Messiah" does not imply Jesus son of Mary. Jesus is dead. The one whose coming has been foretold in *Ḥadīth* is a man like the Messiah, a Messiah like the Prophet Jesus, and he is so-and-so, who has already come. To believe in him is not contradictory to the belief in the Finality of Prophethood.

In order to expose this fraud we reproduce below, with full references to their sources, the authentic Traditions, which are found in the most reliable *Ḥadīth* collections. By going through these Traditions everyone can know what the Holy Prophet has said in this regard and how it is being misconstrued and misinterpreted these days for ulterior motives.

Traditions Relating to the Second Advent of Jesus Son of Mary

(1) Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah reports that the Holy Prophet said: "I swear by Him in Whose hand is my soul: the son of Mary shall descend among you, as a just ruler. Then he will break the Cross, and kill the swines,[6] and put an end to war (in another

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6. "To break the Cross and kill the swine" means that Christianity will cease to exist as a separate religion. The entire creed of Christianity is based on the doctrine that God caused His only son (the Prophet Jesus) to die an "accursed" death on the Cross, which made him the Atonement for the sin of man. And the distinction of the Christians among the prophetic communities is that they abandoned the whole Divine Law and only took this doctrine; so much so that they made the swine lawful, which was forbidden in the Law of all the Prophets. Therefore, when the Prophet Jesus will himself declare: "I am neither son of God, nor did I die on the Cross, nor became atonement for anybody's sin," the Christian faith will have no basis left for it. Likewise, when he will declare that he

Tradition, there is the word *jizyah* instead of *harb* (war), meaning that he will abolish *jizyah)* ;[7] then there will be such abundance of wealth that nobody will like to accept it, and (conditions will be such that) performing of one *sajdah* (prostration) before Allah will be considered better than the world and what it contains." (Bukhāri: *Kitāb Aḥādīth al-Anbiyā', bāb Nuzūl 'Isā Ibn Maryam;* Muslim: *bāb Nuzūl 'Isā;* Tirmidhi: *Abwāb al-Fitan, Bāb fī Nuzūl 'Isā;* Musnad Aḥmad: *Marwiyāt Abū Hurairah).*

(2) Another Tradition from Hadrat Abū Hurairah is to the effect: "Resurrection will not take place until Jesus son of Mary has descended..." (This is followed by the same theme as reported in the above cited Tradition). (Bukhāri: *Kitāb al-Mazālim, Bāb Kasr as-Salīb;* Ibn Mājah: *Kitāb al-Fitan).*

(3) Ḥadrat Abū Hurairah reports that the Holy Prophet said: "How will you be when the son of Mary will descend among you, and your Imām at that time will be from among yourselves?"[8] (Bukhāri: *Kitāb Aḥādīth Anbiyā', Bāb Nuzūl 'Isā;* Muslim: *Nuzūl 'Isā;* Musnad Aḥmad) .

(4) Ḥadrat Abū Hurairah has reported that the Holy Prophet said: "Jesus son of Mary shall descend; then he will kill the swine and destroy the Cross; and a congregation will be held for him for the Prayer; and he will distribute so much wealth that people will be satiated with it; and he will abolish the tribute; and he will encamp at Rauhā',[9] and from there will go to perform Hajj or

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had neither made the swine lawful for his followers nor given them the freedom to disobey the Law, the other distinctions of Christianity will also disappear.

7. In other words it means: "All kinds of differences among the communities will disappear and human beings will join one community, the Community of Islam; thus, war will be put to an end, and *jizyah* will cease to be imposed." This same thing is supported by the Traditions No. 5 and 15 below.

8. That is, "The Prophet Jesus, will not lead the people in the Prayer, but will perform his Prayer behind the existing Imam of the Muslim"

9. A place at a distance of 35 miles from Madīnah.

'Umrah, or both."[10] (The reporter is in doubt as to what exactly the Holy Prophet said) ... (Musnad Aḥmad: *Marwiyāt Abū Hurairah;* Muslim: *Kitāb al-Ḥajj).*

(5) Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah reports that the Holy Prophet (after making mention of the appearance of the *Dajjāl)* said: "In the meantime, when the Muslims will be making preparations to fight him, will be lining up (for the Prayer) and the *Iqāmah will* have been pronounced, Jesus son of Mary shall descend and lead them in the Prayer; and the enemy of Allah (i.e. the *Dajjāl)* on seeing him shall start dissolving like salt in water. If Jesus were to leave him alone, he would melt to death anyway, but Allah will have him killed at his hand, and he will show his blood on his spear to the Muslims." (Mishkāt: *Kitāb al-Fitan,* with reference to Muslim).

(6) Abū Hurairah reports that the Holy Prophet said: "There is no prophet between me and him (i.e. Jesus Christ), and he shall descend. So, recognize him when you see him. He is a man of medium height, of ruddy and fair complexion; he will be dressed in two yellow garments; the hair of his head will appear as though water was going to trickle down from it, whereas it will not be wet. He will fight people in the cause of Islam, will break the Cross and kill the swine and will abolish *jizyah;* and Allah will put an end to all communities in his time except Islam; and he will slay the Antichrist *(Dajjāl);* and he will stay in the world for 40 years; then will die and the Muslims will offer the funeral Prayer for him." (Abū Da'ūd: *Kitāb al-Malāḥim;* Musnad Aḥmad: *Marwiyāt Abū Hurairah).*

(7) Ḥaḍrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah says that he heard the Holy Prophet say: " . . . then Jesus son of Mary will descend. The leader of the Muslims will say to him, 'Come, lead us in the Prayer', but he will say, 'No: you yourselves are leaders over one another.'[11] This he will say in view of the honour that Allah has bestowed on

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10. One should note that the person who has been accepted as "Jesus incarnate" in our time performed neither Hajj nor 'Umrah during his lifetime.

11 That is, "Your leader should be from among yourselves."

this Community." (Muslim: *Bayān Nuzūl 'Isā Ibn Maryam*, Musnad Ahmad: *Marwiyāt Jābir bin 'Abdullah*).

(8) Jābir bin 'Abdullah reports (in connection with the story of Ibn Sayyād): "Then, 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb submitted: O 'Messenger of Allah, permit me to kill him. The Messenger of Allah replied: If he is the same person (i.e. the *Dajjāl*), then you will not kill him, but he will be killed by Jesus son of Mary. And if he is not he (i.e. the *Dajjal*), then you have no right to kill a man from among the *dhimmís*." (Mishkāt: *Kitāb al-Fitan*).

(9) Jābir bin 'Abdullah reports that the Holy Prophet (while relating the story of the *Dajjal*) said: "At that time suddenly Jesus son of Mary (on whom be peace) shall appear among the Muslims. Then the people will stand up for the Prayer, and he will be asked, 'Step forward, O Spirit of Allah (and lead us in the Prayer); but he will say, 'No: your own leader should step forward and lead the Prayer.' Then, after offering the Morning Prayer, the Muslims shall go forth to fight the *Dajjal*.' He said, 'When the liar will see Jesus, he will start dissolving like the salt in water. Then Jesus will advance towards him and will slay him; and it will so happen that the trees and the stones will cry out: 'O Spirit of Allah, here is a Jew hiding behind me.' None will be left from among the followers of the *Dajjal*, whom he (i.e. Jesus) will not kill." (Musnad Aḥmad: *Rawāyāt Jābir bin 'Abdullah*).

(10) Ḥaḍrat Nawwās bin Sam'ān Kilābī reports (in connection with the story of the *Dajjal*): In the mean time when the *Dajjal* will be busy doing this and this, Allah will send down Messiah son of Mary, and he will descend in the eastern part of Damascus, near the white tower, dressed in the two yellow garments with his hands resting on the arms of two angels. When he will bend down his head, waterdrops will appear trickling down, and when he will raise it, it will appear as though pearl-like drops are rolling down. Any disbeliever whom the air of his breath reaches—and it will reach up to the last limit of his sight—will fall dead. Then the son of Mary will go in pursuit of the *Dajjāl*,

and will overtake him at the gate of Lod,[12] and will kill him." (Muslim: *Dhikr ad-Dajjal;* Abū Da'ūd: *Kitāb al-Malāhim;* Tirmidhi: *Abwāb al-Fitan;* Ibn Mājah: *Kitāb al-Fitan).*

(11) 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin 'Āṣ reports that the Holy Prophet said: "The *Dajjāl* will appear in my Ummah, and will live for forty (I do not know whether he said 40 days, or 40 months or 40 years). Then Allah will send Jesus son of Mary. He will closely resemble 'Urwah bin Mas'ūd (a Companion). He will pursue him and kill him. Then for seven years the people will live in such a state that no ill-will and enmity will exist between any two of them." (Muslim: *Dhikr ad-Dajjāl).*

(12) Hudhaifah bin Asid al-Ghifārī says: Once the Holy Prophet joined our company and we were engaged in mutual talk. He asked, "What are you talking about?" The people said, "We were talking about Resurrection." He said, "Resurrection will not take place until ten Signs have appeard." He then pointed out the ten Signs:(1) Smoke, (2) the *Dajjāl,* (3) *Dāābbat al-Ard,* (4) Rising of the sun in the west, (5) Descent of, Jesus son of Mary, (6) Gog and Magog, (7) Three big landslides: one in the east, (8) the second in the west, (9) the third in the Arabian peninsula, and (10) a fire which will arise from the Yaman and will drive mankind towards the plain of Resurrection." (Muslim: *Kitāb al-Fitan;* Abū Da'ūd: *Kitāb al-Malāhim).*

(13) Thaubān, the freedman of the Holy Prophet, reports that the Holy Prophet said: "Allah has saved from the fire of Hell two armies of my Ummah: the army which will invade India, and the army which will be with *Jesus son of Mary."* (Nasā'ī: *Kitāb al-jihād;* Musnad Aḥmad: *Rawāyāt Thaubān).*

(14) Mujammi' bin Jārlah Ansārī says: "I have heard the Holy Prophet say that the son of Mary will slay the *Dajjāl* at the gate of Lod." (Musnad Aḥmad; Tirmidhi: *Abwāb al-Fitan).*

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12. Lod (Lydda) is situated 13 miles south-east of Tel-Aviv, Capital of Israel, and is the most important airport of the country.

(15) Abū Umāmah Bāheli (while mentioning the *Dajjal* in a lengthy *Ḥadīth)* reports: Exactly at the time when the Imām of the Muslims will have stepped forward to lead them in the Morning Prayer, Jesus son of Mary shall descend upon them. The Imām will step back so that Jesus may step forward (to lead the Prayer), but Jesus, placing his hand between his two shoulders, will say, "No, you should lead, for the congregation has assembled to follow you." So, the Imām will lead the Prayer. After the salutation, Jesus will say, "Open the gate;" so the gate will be opened. Outside there will be the *Dajjāl* along with 70,000 of the armed Jews. As soon as he will look at Jesus (upon whom be peace) he will start melting like the salt in water, and will flee. Jesus will say, "I shall strike you a blow which will not let you live." And he will overtake him at the eastern gate of Lod, and Allah will cause the Jews to be defeated. ... And the earth will be so filled with the Muslims as a vessel is filled with water. The entire world shall recite and follow one and the same *Kalimah* and none shall be worshipped except Allah." (Ibn Mājah: *Kitāb al-Fitan)*.

(16) 'Uthmān bin Abī al-'Āṣ says: I have heard the Holy Prophet say:".....and Jesus son of Mary (peace be upon him) shall descend at the time of the Morning Prayer. The Imām of the Muslims will say: O Spirit of Allah, lead us in the Prayer. He will reply: The people of this Ummah are themselves leaders one over the other. Then the *Imām* will step forward and lead the Prayer. After the Prayer, Jesus will hold his weapon and advance towards the *Dajjāl*. On seeing Jesus he will start melting like lead. Jesus will kill him with his weapon and his followers will flee, routed and vanquished, but will find no place to hide; so much so that the trees will call out: "O believer, here is a Jew behind me," and the stones will call out "O believer, here is a Jew behind me." (Musnad Aḥmad, Ṭabarāni, Ḥākim).

(17) Samurah bin Jundub (in a lengthy *Ḥadīth)* has reported that the Holy Prophet said: Then in the morning Jesus son of Mary will join the Muslims, and Allah will cause the *Dajjāl* and his hosts to be routed, until the walls and the roots of the trees will cry out:

"O believer, here is a disbeliever hidden behind me: come and kill him." (Musnad Aḥmad, Ḥākim).

(18) 'Imrān bin Hasīn reports that the Holy Prophet said: There will always be in my Ummah a group who will remain steadfast on the Truth, and will overwhelm the opponents, till Allah's Decree comes to pass and Jesus son of Mary. (on whom be peace) descends. (Musnad Ahmad)

(19) Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah has reported (in connection with the story of the *Dajjāl):* Then Jesus shall descend and kill the *Dajjāl.* After this Jesus will stay on the earth for forty years as a just leader and an equitable ruler. (Musnad Aḥmad)

(20) Safīnah, freed slave of the Holy Prophet, reports (in connection with the story of the *Dajjāl):* Then Jesus (on whom be peace) will descend, and Allah will cause the *Dajjāl* to be killed near the mountain pass of Afiq.[13] (Musnad Aḥmad)

(21) Ḥaḍrat Ḥudhaifah bin Yamān reports (with reference to the *Dajjāl):* Then, when the Muslims will stand up to offer the Prayer, Jesus *son of Mary* will descend just in front of them, and he will lead the Muslims in the Prayer. Then after the salutation, he will tell the Muslims to go away from between him and the enemy of Allah.... And Allah will make the Muslims to dominate over the followers of the *Dajjāl,* and they will inflict heavy casualties on them; so much so that the trees and the stones will cry out: "O 'Abdullah, O 'Abdur Raḥmān, O Muslim, here is a Jew, kill him." Thus, Allah will annihilate them, and the Muslims will be dominant; they will break the Cross, kill the swine and abolish the *Jizyah. (Mustadrak Ḥākim.* A brief version of this Tradition has also been reported in Muslim, and Ḥāfiz Ibn

13. Afiq (mod.Fiq) is the last Syrian city on the border between Syria and Israel. A little further on towards west at a few miles is the Lake Tiberias (Sea of Galilee), the source of River Jordan. Towards the south-west in the mountains is a low pass, which descends about 2,000 feet to the point from where River Jordan comes out from Lake Tiberias. This same mountain path is called 'Aqabah Afiq, the pass of Afiq.

Hajar in his *Fath al-Bārī* (vol. VI, p. 450) has declared it to be authentic).

These are 21 Traditions in all, which have been reported on the authority of 14 of the Companions of the Holy Prophet and related with correct references in the most reliable and authentic *Hadīth* Collections. Though, in addition to these, there are many other Traditions on the subject as well, we have cited only those few which are sound and authentic as regards the chains of their transmitters.

What do these Traditions Prove?

Anyone who goes through these Traditions will see for himself that they do not contain any mention whatever of the advent of a "promised Messiah", or "a man like the Messiah", or a "projection of the Messiah", nor do they admit that somebody in this age having been born from the womb of any mother and by the sperm of any father, should put forward the claim that he is the Messiah whose coming has been foretold by the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). All these Traditions clearly and explicitly give the news of the advent of the same Jesus Christ (upon whom be peace) who was born of the Virgin Mary two thousand years ago. It would be useless to debate here the point whether Jesus has died or is still living somewhere in the universe. Even if he is dead, Allah has the power to raise him back to life;[14] otherwise also it is not beyond the power of Allah that He should keep a servant of His alive for thousands of years somewhere in His universe, and then bring him back into the world whenever He wills. In any case if a person believes in *Ḥadīth*, he will have to admit that the one whose advent has been foretold will be Jesus son of Mary; and if he does not believe in *Ḥadīth*, he cannot be a believer in the advent of anyone whatever, for the doctrine of the Advent is based on *Ḥadīth* and on nothing else. But this is strange logic that the people should adopt the doctrine of the Advent from *Ḥadīth* and then should discard the particularities given in the same *Ḥadīth*, which clearly state that the one

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14. Those who deny this should see Al-Baqarah: 259, where Allah has clearly stated: "He (Allah) kept a servant of His dead for a hundred years and then brought him back to life."

whose advent has been foretold will be Jesus son of Mary, and not a "man who is spiritually like unto the Messiah."

Another thing which becomes equally evident from these Traditions is that the advent of the Prophet Jesus will not be in the capacity of a new Prophet: he will neither receive Revelation nor bring a new message or new injunctions from God, nor make any change or alteration in the *Sharī'ah* of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), nor will be raised in the world for the revival of Islam, nor will invite the people to believe in his prophethood, nor make a separate community of those who follow him.[15] He will be sent for a specific task, which will be to crush the mischief created by the *Dajjāl*. For this purpose he will descend in a manner that the Muslims among whom he descends will have no doubt at all that he is Jesus son of Mary, who has appeared at the right time, as foretold by the Holy Prophet. He will

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15. The Islamic scholars have explained this in great detail. 'Allāma Taftāzānī (722-792 A.H.) writes in *Sharh 'Aqā'id Nasafī*: "This is an established fact that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is the Last Prophet ..... If it is said that after him the coming of the Prophet Jesus has been mentioned in *Ḥadīth*, we shall say: yes, this thing has been mentioned, but he will come as a follower of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), for his *Sharī'ah* stands abrogated; therefore he will neither receive Revelation nor enjoin new injunctions, but will only work as a representative of the Holy Prophet." (Egyptian Ed. p. 135).

The same thing has been said by 'Allāma Ālūsī in *Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī*: "Then, when the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) will descend he will retain his previous prophethood and will not be divested of it, but he will not follow his previous *Sharī'ah*, because it stands abrogated for him as well as for all other people; he will be under obligation to follow this *Sharī'ah* in every detail. Therefore, he will neither receive Revelation nor enjoin new injunctions but he will function as a representative of the Holy Prophet and as a ruler from among the rulers of his Ummah". (Vol. XXII, p. 32).

Imām Rāzī has further elucidated this point like this: "The period of the Prophets was up to the advent of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). With his appointment as a Prophet, the era of the Prophets came to an end. Now it is not at all incomprehensible that the Prophet Jesus after his second advent will be a follower of the Holy Prophet." *(Tafsīr Kabīr*, vol. III, p. 343).

immediately join the congregation of the Muslims, will offer his Prayer behind the Imam of the Muslims present at the time,[16] and will follow the leader of the Muslims as such so that there remains no room for anyone to entertain the doubt that he has come back to the world again to perform his prophetic duties in his previous capacity as a Prophet. Evidently, when a Prophet of God is present in a community, no one else can act as an Imām or a leader. Thus, when he will join the Muslims' Community as an individual, it will by itself be a declaration that he has not come as a prophet. On this basis therefore there will be no question whatever of the violation of the sanctity of the seal of prophethood on his advent.

It may be said (without making any real comparison) that his advent will be like the visit of a former head of a state in the time of the ruling head of a state and his rendering some service to the state under him. Even a person of ordinary common sense can understand that the mere visit and arrival of a former head of the state in the time of a ruling head of the state does not affect the constitution at all. The constitution, however, would be violated in two cases: First, that the former head of the state should, on his return, try to resume the office of the head of state, second, that somebody should challenge his former position of the head of state, for this would be tantamount to challenging the validity of all the works that had been accomplished during his past tenure of office. If neither case exists, the former head of the state's arrival by itself does not effect any change in the constitutional position of the country. The same will be the case with the Prophet Jesus' second coming. His mere advent does not affect the Finality of Prophethood. However, if he resumes the office of Prophethood on his advent and starts performing the duties and functions of Prophethood, or somebody repudiates and disowns his being a former Prophet also, this would certainly violate the sanctity of Allah's Law of raising Prophets in the

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16. Although according to the Traditions (No. 5 and 21) the Prophet Jesus after his descent will lead the Muslims himself in the Prayer, most of the Traditions which are more sound comparatively tell that he will decline the request to lead the Prayer, and will tell the Imām present at the time to step forward to lead the Prayer. This same thing has the consensus of the traditionists and commentators.

world. The Traditions have clearly ruled out the possibility of both. On the one hand, they explain that no other prophet will be raised after the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), and on the other, they give the news that Jesus son of Mary will come for the second time. This clearly shows that this second coming of Jesus will not be for the purpose of performing the duties of the office of Prophethood.

Likewise, his second advent will also not create the new question of belief and unbelief among the Muslims. Even if a person disbelieves in his being a former Prophet today, he turns an apostate. The Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) himself believed in his Prophethood and his entire Ummah has been his believer from the very beginning. The same will be his position then. The Muslims will not have to believe in a new prophet, but will believe in Jesus son of Mary as a former Prophet as they do today. This is neither contrary to the belief in the Finality of Prophethood today nor will be so then.

The last thing which becomes evident from these and many other Traditions is that the *Dajjāl* for the eradication of whose mischief the Prophet Jesus will be sent, will be from among the Jews, and he will present himself as the "Messiah." A person cannot understand the reality of this unless he gets acquainted with the history of the Jews and their religious beliefs. After the death of the Prophet Solomon when the Israelites suffered one calamity after the other and were ultimately scattered throughout the world as slaves by the Babylonian and Assyrian empires, their Prophets began to give them the good news of the advent of a "Messiah", who would deliver them from their disgrace and humiliation. On account of these prophecies the Jews had been expecting the advent of a Messiah, who would be a king, would fight and conquer lands and would gather together the Jews from all over the world and assemble them in Palestine and create a mighty empire for them. But when, contrary to these expectations, the Prophet Jesus son of Mary came as a Messiah from God, and came without an army, the Jews refused to accept and acknowledge him as the Messiah and made up their mind to kill him. Since then the Jews the world over have been awaiting the coming of the Promised Messiah, whose coming they had been foretold. Their literature is replete with the visions of the millenium. They have been waiting for many centuries the imaginary pleasures of

the millenium as described in the Talmud and the rabbinical literature and living by the hope that the Promised Messish would be a great military and political leader, who would restore to them the whole land between the river Nile and the river Euphrates (which the Jews regard as their heritage), and will gather the Jews together from every part of the world and assemble them once again in this country.

Now if a person looks at the affairs of the Middle East and studies them in the light of the background of the Holy Prophet's prophecies, he will at once perceive that the stage is fully set for the emergence of the great *Dajjāl*, who would arise as the "promised Messiah" of the Jews as foretold by the Holy Prophet. The Muslims have been expelled from the major part of Palestine and a Jewish state of Israel has been established there. The Jews from all over the world are being drawn to it. The U.S.A., Britain and France have turned it into a great military power. The Jewish scientists and experts are developing it with the massive aid of the Jewish capital and its power has become a great danger for the Muslim nations of the region. The leaders of Israel have never made a secret of their desire that they want to have the "land of their heritage". The map of the Jewish empire of the future which they have been openly publicising since long is given on the opposite page. This shows that they want to take the whole of Syria, the whole of Lebanon, the whole of Jordan and almost the entire Iraq in addition to Iskenderun from Turkey, Sinai and the Delta area from Egypt and the upper Ḥejāz and Najd from Saudi Arabia, which also includes Madīnah. From this one can clearly perceive that taking advantage of the confusion and chaos created by the prospect of some future world war, they will try to occupy these territories. Right on that occasion the great *Dajjāl* will arise as their Promised Messiah. The Holy Prophet has not only given the news of his coming but has also foretold that the Muslims will suffer colossal hardships in those days; so much so that one day will appear as long as a year. That is why not only did the Holy Prophet himself ask for Allah's refuge from the great mischief of the *Dajjāl* but also exhorted his followers to implore Allah for protection against him.

To counter and fight this Antichrist Allah will not send a "man like the Messiah" but the real Messiah, whom the Jews had declined to acknowledge as such two thousand years ago, and whom they thought they had disposed of by putting him on the Cross. The place where the

real Messiah will descend will not be in India or Africa or America, but in Damascus, for Damascus at that time will be the actual battle front. (Please see the map on the following page). In this map you will see that Damascus is hardly 50 to 60 miles from the Israeli border. From the foregoing Traditions it should not be difficult for anyone to understand that the *Dajjāl* will enter Syria with a Jewish army 70,000 strong, and will take position right in front of Damascus. Right at this critical moment the Prophet Jesus son of Mary shall descend in the eastern part of Damascus near a white minaret in the morning, and will lead the Muslims against him after the Prayer. The *Dajjāl* will retreat towards Israel by way of the Afiq Pass (with reference to Tradition No. 21), and Jesus will pursue him and overtake and kill him at the Lod airfield. (Traditions No. 10, 14, 15). After this the Jews will be picked off and killed wherever found so as to put an end to Jewish community (Traditions No. 9, 15, 21). Christianity also will be finished after the proclamation of the reality by the Prophet Jesus. (Traditions No. 1, 2, 4, 6), and all these communities will merge into the single Community of Islam (Traditions No. 6, 15).

This is the reality that becomes apparent from *Hadīth* without any ambiguity. In view of his, there remains no doubt that the business being spread in our country in the name of a "promised messiah" is no more than a deception and fraud.

The most peculiar aspect of this fraud and forgery is that the person who claims to be the subject of these prophecies has given the following explanation to prove that he himself is Jesus son of Mary:

> "He (i.e. Allah Almighty) named me Mary in the third part of *Burāhīn-i Aḥmadiyyah*. Then, as is evident from *Burāhīn-i Aḥmadiyyah*, I was reared up with the nature of "Maryhood" for two years.... Then... the spirit of Jesus was breathed into me as it had been in the case of Mary, and I was made pregnant in the metaphorical sense. At last, after a period of several months, which did not last more than ten months, by virtue of the inspiration recorded at the end of the fourth part of *Burāhīn-i Aḥmadiyyah*, I was made Jesus from Mary. So, in this way I became son of Mary." *(Kashti-i Nūḥ*, pp. 87, 88, 89).

That is, he became Mary in the first instance, then became pregnant by his own agency, then from his own self took birth as Jesus son of Mary ! One difficulty, however, remained to be overcome. According to the Traditions, Jesus son of Mary will descend in Damascus, which has been a well-known city in Syria for several thousand years, and still exists on the map of the world with the same name. This difficulty was overcome by another peculiar explanation:

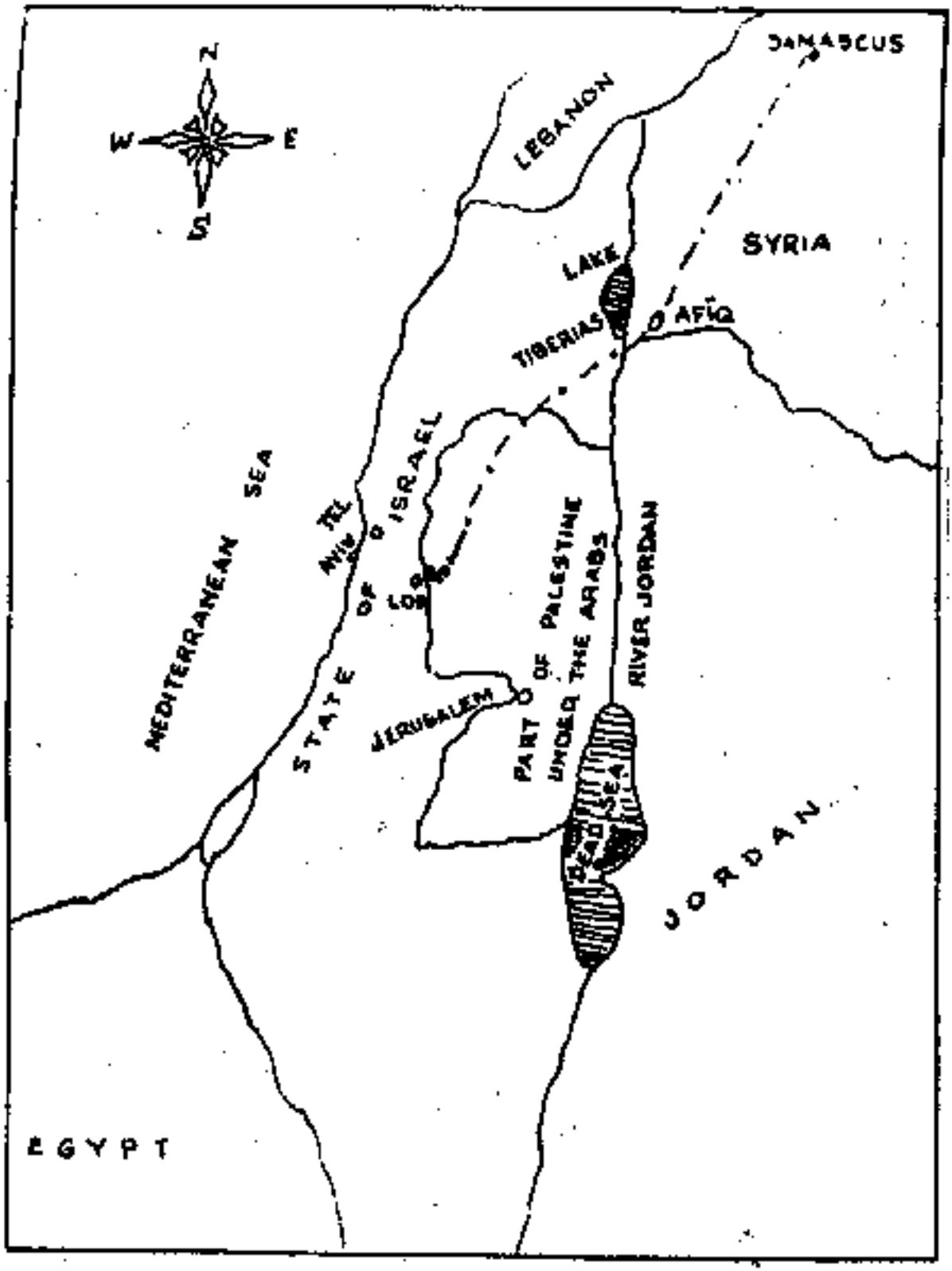
"Let it be known that in respect of the interpretations of the word Damishq (Damascus) it has been explained to me through revelation by Allah that in this place the name Damascus has been given to a town whose inhabitants possess the characteristics of Yazīd and follow the ways and notions of the unclean Yazīd.....This town of Qādiān, for the reason that most of its inhabitants possess the qualities and characteristics of Yazīd, bears a resemblance and similarity with Damascus." (Footnote, *Izāla-i Auhām*, pp. 63 to 73).

Yet another difficulty needed to be resolved. According to the Traditions, the son of Mary would descend near a white tower. This was resolved when the "Messiah" later got a minaret built for himself, although, according to the Traditions the minaret should have been there before the descent of the son of Mary.

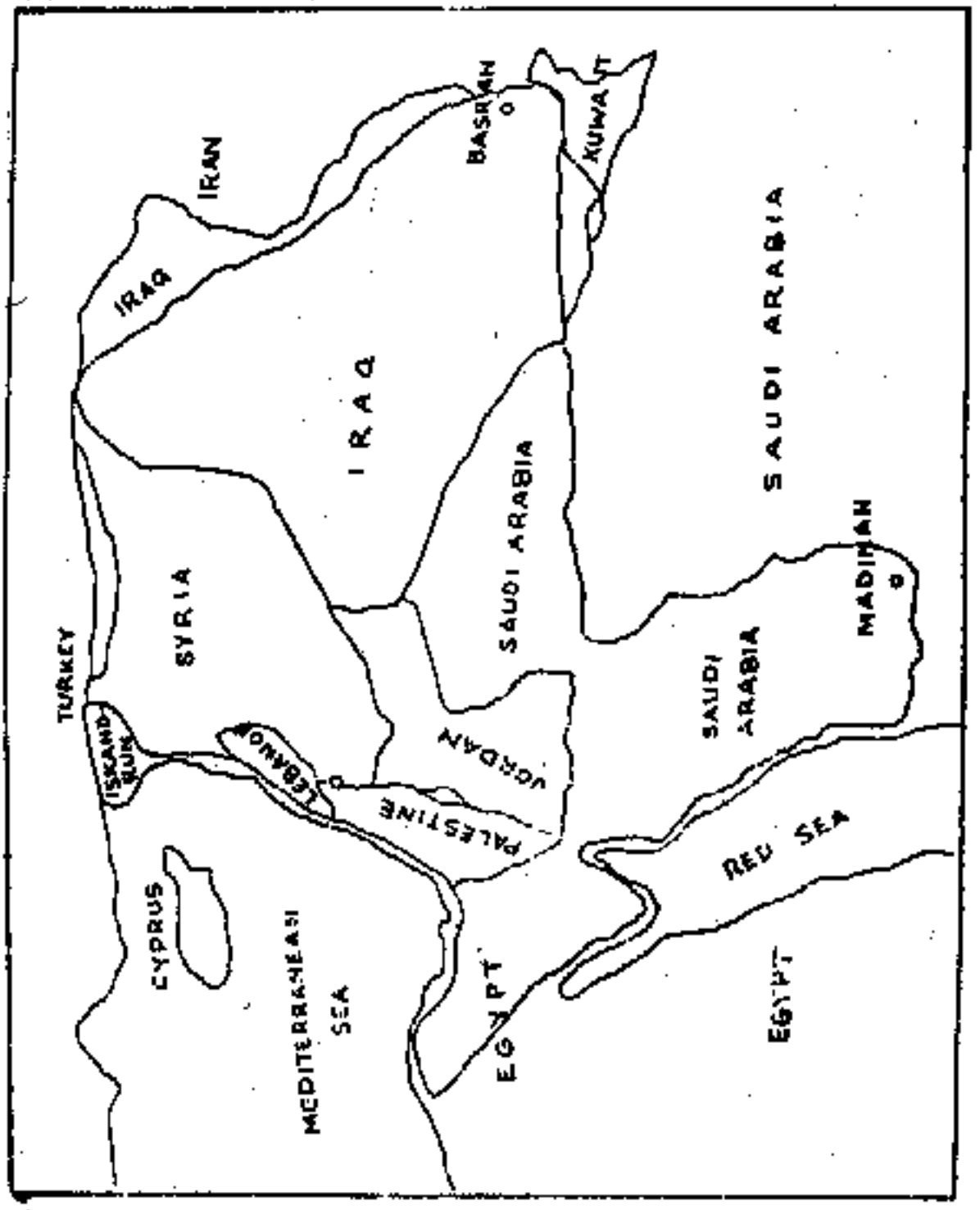
The last and most serious difficulty was that according to the Traditions, Jesus son of Mary was to kill the Dajjāl at the gate of Lod. To resolve this difficulty, in the beginning, different sorts of explanations were given. Sometimes it was said that Lod is the name of a village in the vicinity of Bait al-Maqdis *(Izāla-i Auhām*, published by Anjuman Aḥmadiyyah, Lahore, p.220). Then it was said, "Lud is a name given to the people who pick quarrels without reason. ... When the quarrels of the *Dajjāl* shall reach the extreme limits, the promised Messiah will appear, and he will put an end to all such quarrels." *(Izāla-i Auḥām*, p.730). But when this also did not help, it was plainly said that Lud meant Ludhiana, and the *Dajjāl's* being slain at its gate implied that in spite of the opposition of the mischief-mongers, it was from there that the first person swore fealty to the Mirzā Sāhib. *(Al-Hudā*.p.91).

Anyone who goes through these far-fetched interpretations will come to the conclusion that this is nothing but a clear case of imposture.

THE PLACE WHERE THE REAL MESSIAH WILL DESCEND



THE JEWISH STATE OF WHICH THE ISRAELI LEADERS ARE DREAMING





XXXIV

SABĀ

سبَا

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XXXIV

SABĀ

سبا

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from verse 15 in which the word *Sabā* has occurred, which implies that it is the Sūrah in which mention has been made of Sabā. (i.e. the Sabaeans).

Period of Revelation

The exact period of its revelation is not known from any reliable tradition. However, the style shows that it is either the middle or the early Makkan period. If it is the middle period, it was probably its initial stage when the persecution had not yet become tyrannical and the Islamic movement was being suppressed only by resort to derision and ridicule, rumour-mongering, false allegations and casting of evil suggestions in the people's minds.

Theme and Subject Matter

The Sūrah deals with those objections of the disbelievers, which they were raising against the Holy Prophet's message of *Tauḥīd* and the Hereafter, and about his Prophethood itself, mostly in the form of absurd allegations and taunts and mockery. These objections have been answered, sometimes by citing them and sometimes without citing them, and the discourse itself shows which objection is being answered at a

particular place. The answers mostly take the form of instruction and admonition and argument, but at some places the disbelievers have been warned also of the evil consequences of their stubbornness. In this connection, the stories of the Sabaeans and the Prophets David and Solomon have been related to impress this lesson: "You have both these historical precedents before you. On the one hand, there were the Prophets David and Solomon, who had been blessed by Allah with great powers and such grandeur and glory as had been granted to hardly any people before them. In spite of this, they were not proud and arrogant, but remained grateful servants of their Lord. They were never rebellious. On the other hand, there were the people of Sabā, who, when blessed by Allah, became proud, and were consequently so thoroughly destroyed and dispersed as to be remembered only in myths and legends. With these precedents in view, you may see and judge for yourselves as to which kind of the life is better: that which is built on belief in *Tauḥid* and the Hereafter and the attitude of gratefulness to Allah, or that which is based on disbelief and *shirk* and denial of the Hereafter and the worship of the world."

سُوْرَةُ سَبَا مَكِّيَّةٌ
اٰيَاتُهَا ٥٤ رُكُوْعَاتُهَا ٦
بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ لَهٗ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ فِي
الْاٰخِرَةِ ۭ وَهُوَ الْحَكِيْمُ الْخَبِيْرُ ۝١ يَعْلَمُ مَا يَلِجُ فِي الْاَرْضِ وَمَا يَخْرُجُ
مِنْهَا وَمَا يَنْزِلُ مِنَ السَّمَاۗءِ وَمَا يَعْرُجُ فِيْهَا ۭ وَهُوَ الرَّحِيْمُ الْغَفُوْرُ ۝٢ وَ
قَالَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لَا تَاْتِيْنَا السَّاعَةُ ۭ قُلْ بَلٰى وَرَبِّيْ لَتَاْتِيَنَّكُمْ ۙ عٰلِمِ الْغَيْبِ ۚ
لَا يَعْزُبُ عَنْهُ مِثْقَالُ ذَرَّةٍ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَلَا فِي الْاَرْضِ وَلَآ اَصْغَرُ مِنْ
ذٰلِكَ وَلَآ اَكْبَرُ اِلَّا فِيْ كِتٰبٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ۝٣ لِّيَجْزِيَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا
الصّٰلِحٰتِ ۭ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ لَهُمْ مَّغْفِرَةٌ وَّرِزْقٌ كَرِيْمٌ ۝٤ وَالَّذِيْنَ سَعَوْ فِيْٓ اٰيٰتِنَا مُعٰجِزِيْنَ
اُولٰۗىِٕكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مِّنْ رِّجْزٍ اَلِيْمٌ ۝٥ وَيَرَى الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْعِلْمَ الَّذِيْٓ اُنْزِلَ
اِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ هُوَ الْحَقَّ ۙ وَيَهْدِيْٓ اِلٰى صِرَاطِ الْعَزِيْزِ الْحَمِيْدِ ۝٦ وَقَالَ
الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا هَلْ نَدُلُّكُمْ عَلٰي رَجُلٍ يُّنَبِّئُكُمْ اِذَا مُزِّقْتُمْ كُلَّ مُمَزَّقٍ ۙ اِنَّكُمْ
لَفِيْ خَلْقٍ جَدِيْدٍ ۝٧ اَفْتَرٰى عَلَي اللّٰهِ كَذِبًا اَمْ بِهٖ جِنَّةٌ ۭ بَلِ الَّذِيْنَ لَا
يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْاٰخِرَةِ فِي الْعَذَابِ وَالضَّلٰلِ الْبَعِيْدِ ۝٨ اَفَلَمْ يَرَوْا اِلٰى مَا بَيْنَ
اَيْدِيْهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ مِّنَ السَّمَاۗءِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۭ اِنْ نَّشَاْ نَخْسِفْ بِهِمُ الْاَرْضَ
اَوْ نُسْقِطْ عَلَيْهِمْ كِسَفًا مِّنَ السَّمَاۗءِ ۭ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً لِّكُلِّ عَبْدٍ مُّنِيْبٍ ۝٩
وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا دَاوٗدَ مِنَّا فَضْلًا ۭ يٰجِبَالُ اَوِّبِيْ مَعَهٗ وَالطَّيْرَ ۚ وَاَلَنَّا لَهُ الْحَدِيْدَ ۝١٠
اَنِ اعْمَلْ سٰبِغٰتٍ وَّقَدِّرْ فِي السَّرْدِ وَاعْمَلُوْا صَالِحًا ۭ اِنِّىْ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ
بَصِيْرٌ ۝١١ وَلِسُلَيْمٰنَ الرِّيْحَ غُدُوُّهَا شَهْرٌ وَّرَوَاحُهَا شَهْرٌ ۚ وَاَسَلْنَا لَهٗ

XXXIV

SABĀ

سبا

Verses: 54 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

Praise is for Allah alone Who is the Owner of everything in the heavens and the earth,[1] and the praise is for Him alone in the Hereafter, too:[2] He is the All-Wise, the All-Aware.[3] He knows whatever goes into the earth and whatever comes out of it; and whatever comes down from the sky and whatever ascends into it: He is the All-Merciful, the All-Forgiving.[4] 1-2

The disbelievers say, "How is it that the Resurrection is not coming upon us?"[5] Say, "By my Lord, Knower of the Unseen, it shall certainly come upon you.[6] Not an atom's weight of anything is hidden from Him, neither in the heavens nor in the earth, nor anything smaller than an atom nor greater than it: everything is recorded in a clear register."[7] Resurrection shall take place so that Allah may reward those who have believed and done good works. For them there is forgiveness and a generous provision. As for those who have striven hard to discredit Our Revelations, for them there is a painful torment of the worst kind.[8] O Prophet, those who possess the knowledge fully well know that whatever has been revealed to you from your Lord, is the very Truth, and it guides to the Way of the All-Mighty, All-Praiseworthy God.[9] 3-6

The disbelievers say to the people, "Shall we point out to you a man who gives the news that when your body will have been scattered into particles, you will be resurrected once again? No one knows whether this man forges a lie in the name of Allah or is mad."[10] 7-8

9 Nay, but those only, who do not believe in the Hereafter, will incur the punishment and they are involved in gross error.[11] Have they never seen the earth, which surrounds them from front and from behind? If We will, We can sink them underground, or cause some fragments of the sky to fall down upon them.[12] There is indeed a Sign in this for every such servant who turns to God.[13]

10-11 We had blessed David with a great bounty from Ourself.[14] (We commanded:) "O mountains, join with him in glorification," and (the same Command We gave to) the birds.[15] We made iron soft for him, saying, "Make coats of mail and set the rings in proper measure."[16] (O people of David,) "Do good works: surely I see whatever you do."

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1. The Arabic word *hamd* is used both for praise and for gratitude and both the meanings are implied here. When Allah alone is the Owner of the whole universe and of everything in it, then inevitably He alone deserves to be praised for every beauty, perfection, wisdom, power and excellent skill and design shown and manifested by it. Therefore, every inhabitant of the world must thank Allah alone for any benefit and pleasure that he draws from anything here. For when no one else is a partner in the ownership of these things, no one else deserves to be praised or thanked.

2. That is, "Just as every blessing in this world is granted by Allah alone, so in the Hereafter also whatever a person will get, he will get from His treasures and by His grace. Therefore, in the Hereafter too, Allah alone deserves to be praised as well as thanked."

3. That is, "All His works are based on perfect wisdom and knowledge. Whatever He does, He does right. He has full knowledge about every creation of His as to where it is, in what state it is, what are its requirements, what precisely needs to be done for its well-being, what it has done so far and what it will do in the future. He is not unaware of the world created by Himself, but is fully aware of the condition and state of every particle in it."

4. That is, "If a person (or persons) is not being seized in spite of rebellion against Him in His Kingdom, it is not because this world is a lawless kingdom and Allah is ruler, but because Allah is an inept All-Merciful and All-Forbearing. Although it lies in His power to seize the sinner and the wrongdoer immediately on the commission of sin, to withhold his sustenance, to paralyse his body, and to put him to death suddenly, yet He does not do so. It is the demand of His Beneficence that in spite of being All-Powerful He gives the disobedient servant plenty of rope and enough respite to mend his ways and as soon as he desists from his evil ways, He pardons and forgives him."

5. This they said satirically and mockingly. What they meant was: "This Prophet has been giving us the news of his coming of Resurrection for a long time now, but Resurrection has not overtaken us so far although we have openly denied and rejected him as a Prophet, have been insolent to him and have ridiculed him in every way."

6. The use of the attribute "Knower of the unseen" for Allah while swearing by him by itself points to the fact that the coming of Resurrection is certain, but no one knows except Allah, Knower of the unseen, when exactly it will come. This same theme has been explained at different places in the Qur'ān in various ways. For details, see Al-A'rāf: 187, Ṭā Hā: 15. Luqmān: 34, Al-Aḥzāb: 63, Al-Mulk: 25-26, An-Nāziyāt: 42-44.

7. This is one of the arguments for the possibility of the Hereafter as is being stated in verse 7 below. One of the reasons why the deniers of the Hereafter regarded the life-after-death as irrational was : They said that when all human beings will have become dust after death, and scattered away in particles, how it will be possible to bring all the countless particles together and combine them to be re-created as the same human bodies once again. This doubt has been dispelled, saying, "Every particle wherever it is, is recorded in God's Register, and God knows where a particle is. Therefore, when He wills to recreate, He will not face any difficulty in gathering together all the particles of the body of each and every man."

8. The above was an argument for the possibility of the Hereafter: this is an argument for its need and necessity. It means: A time must come when the wicked should be requited for their wickedness and the righteous rewarded for their righteousness. Reason wants and justice demands that a worker of goodness should be rewarded and a worker of evil punished. Now when you see that in the present worldly life neither is an evildoer fully requited for his evil nor a worker of goodness for his goodness, rather there are opposite results of evil and goodness in most cases, you should admit that this necessary demand of both reason and justice must be fulfilled at some time in the future. Resurrection and the Hereafter will be the same time. It is not its coming but its not coming which is contrary to reason and against justice.

In this connection, another point becomes evident from the preceding verses. They tell that the result of faith and righteous acts is forgiveness and a bounteous provision, and for those who strive and act antagonistically in order to discredit and defeat Allah's Religion, there will be a torment of the worst kind. This makes it manifest that he who believes sincerely will not be deprived of forgiveness even though he may not get a bounteous provision owing to some flaw or weakness in his deeds. And the one who is a disbeliever but who does not adopt

an attitude of enmity and antagonism towards the true Faith, will not be able to avoid the torment but he will be saved from the worst torment.

9. That is, "These antagonists cannot succeed in their object to prove the truth presented by you false, however hard they may try, for they can only delude and misguide the ignorant people by their designs. Those possessed of knowledge cannot be deceived by them."

10. The chiefs of the Quraish knew full well that it was extremely difficult for the common people to accuse Muhammad (upon whom be Allah' peace) of being a liar, for the whole nation knew that he was a completely truthful person, and no one had ever heard a lie from him all his life. Therefore, they presented their charge against him before the people like this: "When this person utters an impossible thing like the life-after-death from his mouth, he is either uttering (God forbid) a falsehood deliberately, or he is mad." But this accusation of madness also was as absurd as of falsehood, for a stupid person only could admit that such a wise and intelligent man as the Holy prophet could be mad. That is why Allah did not feel it was necessary to refute their absurd charge by an argument, and only made mention of their wonder which they expressed at the possibility of the life-after-death.

11. This is the first answer to their charge. It means: "O foolish people, it is you who have lost your reason. For you do not listen to the one who is informing you of the truth and are recklessly galloping on the way that leads to Hell. But the height of your stupidity is that you are calling the one who is anxious for your salvation, mad."

12. This is the second answer to their charge. To understand it well one should bear in mind the fact that three things were most prominent among the reasons for which the disbelieving Quraish denied the life-after-death: (1) They did not want to believe in any kind of accountability before God, for after believing in such a thing they would be left with no freedom whatever to behave and act as they pleased in the world. (2) They thought it was inconceivable that Resurrection would take place and the present material order of the universe would be destroyed and replaced by a new order. (3) They thought it was impossible that the people who had died hundreds of thousands of years in the past and whose bones even had decayed and disintegrated, would be raised back to life, with the same body and soul. The answer given above covers all these three aspects, and contains a severe warning as well. The details of the theme contained in these brief sentences are given below:

(1) If you ever had observed this earth and the heavens with clear sightedness, you would have seen that it is not a plaything nor has its creation come into being by accident. Everything in this universe points to

the fact that it has been created by an All-Powerful Being with great wisdom. In such a wise system it would be highly absurd to think that somebody could be left to live an irresponsible and unaccountable life after he had been given the faculties of intellect and discrimination and authority.

(2) Anyone who sees the natural order with discerning eyes will realize that the occurrence of Resurrection is not at all difficult. It can take place suddenly as soon as the system in which the earth and the heavens are bound together is disturbed. And the same system testifies that the One Who has made and is running this world today can create another world again. If it were difficult for Him to do so, this world would not have existed as it does today.

(3) Your opinion and judgement about the Creator of the universe that it will be impossible for Him to resurrect the dead, is strange. The bodies of the men who die may utterly decay and disintegrate and be scattered but nevertheless remain within the bounds of this very universe and do not go anywhere outside its bounds. Then it is not at all difficult for the God Who has created this earth and the heavens to gather together everything from the earth and water and air wherever it happens to be. Whatever makes up your body today was collected and combined by Him, and brought out from this very earth, water and air. When the collecting and assembling of these elements together is possible today, how will it be impossible tomorrow?

Besides these three arguments, the discourse also contains a subtle warning to the effect: "You are surrounded by God's Kingdom on all sides. Wherever you may go, you would be covered and surrounded by the same universe. You cannot find any place of refuge against God, and God's power is such that He can afflict you whenever He likes with a calamity from under your feet or from above your heads. You do not know what forces might be working under the very surface of the earth which you find as an abode of perfect peace and safety for yourselves, and when they would cause an earthquake to take place and turn the same earth into your grave. You do not know when a disaster might befall you—a lightning, or a devastating rain, or some other calamity—from the same sky under which you walk about with full peace and satisfaction of the heart as if it were the ceiling of your own house. In a state like this, your fearlessness of God, your heedlessness of any thought of the Hereafter and your vain and nonsensical talk against the admonition of a well-wisher has no other meaning than that you are only inviting your own doom."

[Contd. on p. 196

عَيْنَ الْقِطْرِ ۖ وَمِنَ الْجِنِّ مَنْ يَّعْمَلُ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ بِاِذْنِ رَبِّهٖ ۖ وَمَنْ يَّزِغْ
مِنْهُمْ عَنْ اَمْرِنَا نُذِقْهُ مِنْ عَذَابِ السَّعِيْرِ ﴿١٢﴾ يَعْمَلُوْنَ لَهٗ مَا يَشَآءُ مِنْ
مَّحَارِيْبَ وَتَمَاثِيْلَ وَجِفَانٍ كَالْجَوَابِ وَقُدُوْرٍ رّٰسِيٰتٍ ۖ اِعْمَلُوْٓا اٰلَ دَاوٗدَ
شُكْرًا ۖ وَقَلِيْلٌ مِّنْ عِبَادِيَ الشَّكُوْرُ ﴿١٣﴾ فَلَمَّا قَضَيْنَا عَلَيْهِ الْمَوْتَ مَا دَلَّهُمْ
عَلٰى مَوْتِهٖٓ اِلَّا دَآبَّةُ الْاَرْضِ تَاْكُلُ مِنْسَاَتَهٗ ۚ فَلَمَّا خَرَّ تَبَيَّنَتِ الْجِنُّ اَنْ
لَّوْ كَانُوْا يَعْلَمُوْنَ الْغَيْبَ مَا لَبِثُوْا فِي الْعَذَابِ الْمُهِيْنِ ﴿١٤﴾ لَقَدْ كَانَ لِسَبَاٍ
فِيْ مَسْكَنِهِمْ اٰيَةٌ ۚ جَنَّتٰنِ عَنْ يَّمِيْنٍ وَّشِمَالٍ ۚ كُلُوْا مِنْ رِّزْقِ رَبِّكُمْ وَ
اشْكُرُوْا لَهٗ ۚ بَلْدَةٌ طَيِّبَةٌ وَّرَبٌّ غَفُوْرٌ ﴿١٥﴾ فَاَعْرَضُوْا فَاَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ سَيْلَ
الْعَرِمِ وَبَدَّلْنٰهُمْ بِجَنَّتَيْهِمْ جَنَّتَيْنِ ذَوَاتَيْ اُكُلٍ خَمْطٍ وَّاَثْلٍ وَّشَيْءٍ
مِّنْ سِدْرٍ قَلِيْلٍ ﴿١٦﴾ ذٰلِكَ جَزَيْنٰهُمْ بِمَا كَفَرُوْا ۚ وَهَلْ نُجٰزِيْٓ اِلَّا الْكَفُوْرَ ﴿١٧﴾
وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ وَبَيْنَ الْقُرَى الَّتِيْ بٰرَكْنَا فِيْهَا قُرًى ظَاهِرَةً وَّقَدَّرْنَا فِيْهَا
السَّيْرَ ۚ سِيْرُوْا فِيْهَا لَيَالِيَ وَاَيَّامًا اٰمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٨﴾ فَقَالُوْا رَبَّنَا بٰعِدْ بَيْنَ اَسْفَارِنَا وَظَلَمُوْٓا
اَنْفُسَهُمْ فَجَعَلْنٰهُمْ اَحَادِيْثَ وَمَزَّقْنٰهُمْ كُلَّ مُمَزَّقٍ ۚ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ
لِّكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُوْرٍ ﴿١٩﴾ وَلَقَدْ صَدَّقَ عَلَيْهِمْ اِبْلِيْسُ ظَنَّهٗ فَاتَّبَعُوْهُ اِلَّا فَرِيْقًا
مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَمَا كَانَ لَهٗ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ سُلْطٰنٍ اِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يُّؤْمِنُ
بِالْاٰخِرَةِ مِمَّنْ هُوَ مِنْهَا فِيْ شَكٍّ ۚ وَرَبُّكَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَفِيْظٌ ﴿٢١﴾ قُلِ ادْعُوا
الَّذِيْنَ زَعَمْتُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ ۚ لَا يَمْلِكُوْنَ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَلَا
فِي الْاَرْضِ وَمَا لَهُمْ فِيْهِمَا مِنْ شِرْكٍ وَّمَا لَهٗ مِنْهُمْ مِّنْ ظَهِيْرٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَلَا
تَنْفَعُ الشَّفَاعَةُ عِنْدَهٗٓ اِلَّا لِمَنْ اَذِنَ لَهٗ ۚ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا فُزِّعَ عَنْ قُلُوْبِهِمْ قَالُوْا

And for Solomon We subjected the wind which covered a month's journey in the morning and a month's journey in the evening;[17] and We made a fountain of molten copper to flow for him[18] and subdued such jinns to him who served before him by the command of his Lord.[19] Whoever from among them swerved from Our Command, We made him taste the blazing Fire. They made for him whatever he desired: lofty edifies, images,[20] bowls like troughs and immovable heavy cooking-pots.[21] ___ O people of David, work gratefully:[22] a few of My servants only are grateful. 12-13

Then, when we decreed death for Solomon, there was nothing to inform the jinns of his death except the wood louse which was eating away his staff. So, when Solomon fell down, it became clear to the jinns[23] that if they had known the unseen, they would not have continued in the humiliating torment.[24] 14

For Sabā[25] there was a Sign in their own dwelling-place:[26] two gardens, on the right and on the left: eat of the provisions of your Lord and be grateful to Him: pure and pleasant is the land and Forgiving the Lord. But they turned away.[28] Consequently, We sent upon them a flood due to bursting of the dam[29] and replaced their two gardens by two other gardens producing bitter fruit and tamarisks and a few lote bushes.[30] This was Our retribution for their disbelief and We recompense none with such a retribution except the ungrateful. 15-17

And We had made between them and the habitations which We had blessed, (other) conspicuous habitations and set between them their travelling distances:[31] "Travel on these ways night and day in complete security." But they said, "Our Lord, make our journeys longer."[32] They wronged their own selves. Consequently, We made them mere legends and scattered them utterly.[33] Surely there are Signs in this for every patient and grateful person.[34] In their case Iblīs found his suspicions correct, and they all followed him except for a small group of the believers.[35] Iblīs did not have any power over them, but whatever happened, it happened because We wanted to see who believed in the Hereafter and who cherished any doubt about it.[36] Your Lord is Watchful over everything.[37] 18-21

(O Prophet,)[38] say (to the *mushriks*), "Call those whom you worship as deities instead of Allah.[39] They neither own an atom's 22-23

weight of anything in the heavens nor in the earth, nor have they anything to share in either, nor is any of them a helper of Allah. And no intercession before Allah can avail anyone except for the one for whom Allah permits it.[40] So much so that when dread is gone from their hearts, the people will ask (the intercessors), "What reply did your Lord give?" They will say, "The right reply! And He is the Exalted, the Great!"[41]

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13. That is, "The person who is neither prejudiced nor obstinate and stubborn, but is a sincere seeker of guidance from his God, can learn many lessons from the observation of the earth and heavens; but the one whose heart is turned away from God, will see everything in the universe, but will never perceive any Sign pointing to the Truth."

14. This is an allusion to the countless favours with which Allah had blessed the Prophet David. He was an ordinary young man of the tribe of Judah, living at Bethlehem. In a campaign against the Philistines he slew the giant Goliath, the great enemy of Israel, and suddenly grew in esteem of the Israelites. With this event began his rise to prominence; so much so that after the death of Saul he was first elected king of Judah in Hebron (mod. Al-Khalīl), and then a few years later he was made king over all the tribes of Israel. He took Jerusalem and made it the capital of the kingdom of Israel. It was under his leadership that for the first time in history a God-worshipping kingdom was established, whose boundaries extended from the Gulf of 'Aqabah to the western banks of the River Euphrates. In addition to these favours, he was further graced with Divine bounties in the form of knowledge and wisdom, and the qualities of justice and mercy and devotion to the truth. (For details, see E.N. 273 of Al-Baqarah and E.N. 7 of Banī Isrā'īl).

15. For this please refer to Al-Anbiyā': 79 and E.N. 71 thereof.

16. For this also please refer to Al-Anbiyā': 80 and E.N. 72 thereof.

17. For this also please refer to Al-Anbiyâ: 81 and E.N. 74 thereof.

18. Some former commentators have taken this to mean that a spring from the earth had erupted for the Prophet Solomon from which molten copper flowed out instead of water. But another interpretation of this verse can be that in the time of the Prophet Solomon the work of melting and moulding copper for different uses was done on a very large scale and the same has been referred to here as the flowing of a spring of molten copper for him. (For further details, see E.N. 74 of Al-Anbiyā').

19. The question whether the jinns who had been subdued to the Prophet Solomon were human beings of the mountain tribes or really the jinns who are well known by this name as the hidden creation, has been discussed in detail in our commentary of Sūrah Al-Anbiyā' and Sūrah An-Naml. (Please see E.N. 75 of Al-Anbiyā' and E.N.'s 23, 45 and 52 of An-Naml).

20. The word *tamāthīl* in the Text is the plural of *timthāl*, which in Arabic is used for every such thing as is made to resemble a natural thing, whether it is a human being, an animal, a tree, a flower, a river, or some inanimate object. "*Timthāl* is the name of every artificial thing which may have been made to resemble something made by God." *(Lisān al-'Arab).* "*Timthāl* is every such picture which may have been made to resemble the likeness of something else, whether living or dead." (The Commentary, *Al Kashshāf).* On this basis the statement of the Qur'ān does not necessarily imply that the "images" made for the Prophet Solomon were the pictures or images of human beings and animals. They might have been floral designs or natural landscape or different kinds of decorations with which the Prophet Solomon might have decorated his buildings and works.

The misunderstanding has been created by some commentators who have stated that the Prophet Solomon had got the pictures of the Prophets and the angels made for himself. They took such things from the Israelite traditions and then explained them saying that in the former *Sharī'ahs* it was not forbidden to make the pictures. But while accepting and citing these traditions without question, these scholars did not keep in mind the fact that the Prophet Solomon was a follower of the Mosaic Law and in that Law also making of the pictures and images of human beings and animals was forbidden as it is in the *Sharī'ah* of Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). And they also did not remember that because of the enmity which a section of the Israelites bore against the Prophet Solomon they have accused him of crimes like polytheism, idolatry, sorcery and adultery. Therefore, one should not place reliance on the Israelite traditions and accept anything about this great Prophet, which might contradict any *Sharī'ah* enjoined by God. Everyone knows that all the Prophets who came after the Prophet Moses till the Prophet Jesus among the Israelites were the followers of the Torah, and none of them had brought forth a new law, which might have abrogated the Law of the Torah. Now the Torah clearly enjoins repeatedly that making of the pictures and images of human beings and animals is absolutely forbidden.

"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of *any thing* that *is* in the heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth." (Exod., 20: 4)

"Ye shall make you no idols nor graven image, nor rear you up a standing image, neither shall ye set up any image of stone in your land, to bow down unto it." (Levit., 26: 1)

"Lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female. The likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air. The likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that *is* in the waters beneath the earth." (Deut., 4: 16-18).

"Cursed be the man that maketh any graven or molten image, an abomination unto the Lord, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and putteth it in a secret place." (Deut., 27: 15).

In the face of these clear and express injunctions how can it be accepted that the Prophet Solomon might have employed the jinns to make pictures and images of the Prophets and the angels for him? And how can this thing be admitted on the authority of the statements of the Jews who accuse the Prophet Solomon of idolatry due to his love for polytheistic wives? (t Kings, ch., 11).

However, the Muslim commentators, while citing the Israelite traditions, had made it clear that in the *Shari'ah* of Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) this thing is forbidden; therefore, it is no more lawful for anybody to make pictures and images in imitation of the Prophet Solomon. But some people of the modern time, who want to make photography and carving of idols lawful in imitation of the West, took this verse of the Qur'ān as an argument for themselves. They argue like this: "When a Prophet of Allah has done this and Allah Himself has mentioned this act of the Prophet in His Book, and has expressed no disapproval of it either, it must be lawful."

This argument of these followers of the West is wrong for two reasons. First, the word *tamāthīl* that has been used in the Qur'ān, does not explicitly give the meaning of the human and animal pictures, but it applies to the pictures of lifeless things as well. Therefore, only on the basis of this word, it cannot be concluded that it is lawful to make the human and animal pictures according to the Qur'ān. Secondly, it is established by a large number of the *Aḥādīth*, which have been reported through authentic chains of transmitters, and commonly reported by many authorities, that the Holy Prophet absolutely forbade the making and keeping of the pictures of the living things. In this connection, we reproduce below the authentic Traditions of the Holy Prophet and the verdicts given by the eminent Companions:

(1) Mother of the faithful Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah has reported that Ḥaḍrat Umm Ḥabībah and Ḥaḍrat Umm Salamah had seen a church in Ḥabash, which

had pictures in it. When they mentioned this before the Holy Prophet, he said: "The custom among those people was that when a pious man from among them died, they would build a house of worship at his grave and would make his pictures in it. On the Day of Resurrection, these people will be among the most wretched creatures in the sight of Allah." (Bukhārī: *Kitāb as-Ṣalāt;* Muslim: *Kitāb al-Masājid;* Nasā'ī: *Kitāb al-Masājid).*

(2) Abū Ḥujaifah has reported that the messenger of Allah has cursed the maker of pictures. *(Bukhārī: Kitāb al-Buyū', Kitāb al-Ṭalāq, Kitāb al-Libās).*

(3) Abū Zur'ah says, "Once when I entered a house along with Hadrat Abū Hurairah I saw that a painter was making pictures at the top. Thereupon, Hadrat Abū Hurairah said, 'I have heard the Holy Prophet say: Allah says who could be more wicked than the one who tries to create a thing like My creation? Let them, if they can, create a seed or an ant'." (Bukhārī: *Kitāb al-Libās;* Musnad Aḥmad. According to the tradition in Muslim, this was the house of Marwān).

(4) Abū Muḥammad Hudhali has reported on the authority of Ḥadrat 'Ali: The Holy Prophet was present at a funeral prayer when he said: Who from among you would go to Madīnah and demolish every idol that he sees, and level down every grave that he sees, and blot out every picture that he sees. A man said that he would go. So he went but came back without carrying out the task due to fear of the people of Madīnah. Then Ḥadrat 'Ali submitted that he would go, and the Holy Prophet allowed him to go. Ḥadrat 'Ali went, then came back and said: I have demolished every idol and leveled down every grave and blotted out every picture. Thereupon the Holy Prophet said: "Now if any one made any of these things, he would be denying the teaching sent down on Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace)." (Musnad Aḥmad; Muslim: *Kitāb al-Janā'iz;* Nasā'ī *(Kitāb al-Janā'iz)* also contain a Tradition on the same subject).

(5) Ibn 'Abbās has reported: ".....And he who made a picture would be chastised and compelled to breathe the soul into it, which he will not be able to do." (Bukhārī: *Kitāb al-Ta'bīr;* Tirmidhī: *Abwāb al Libās;* Nasā'ī: *Kitāb az-Zīnah;* Musnad Aḥmad).

(6) Sa'īd bin al-Ḥasan says: "I was sitting with Ibn 'Abbās when a man came and said: O Ibn 'Abbās, I am a man who earns his living with his hand, and my profession is to make these pictures. Ibn 'Abbās replied: I shall say to you the same that I have heard from the Holy Prophet. I have heard this from him that Allah will chastise the one who makes pictures, and will not leave him till he breathes the soul into it, and he will never be

able to breathe the soul into it. At this the man was much upset and his face turned pale. Ibn 'Abbās said: Well, if you have to make the pictures, make of this tree, or of something which is lifeless." (Bukhārī: *Kitāb al-Buyū';* Muslim: *Kitāb al-Libās;* Nasā'ī; *Kitāb al-Zīnah;* Musnad Aḥmad).

(7) "Abdullah bin Mas'ūd has reported that the Holy Prophet said: "On the Day of Resurrection the ones to be most severely punished by Allah would be the painters of the pictures."(Bukhārī: *Kitāb al-Libās;* Muslim: *Kitāb al-Libās;* Nasā'ī; *Kitāb al-Zīnah;* Musnad Aḥmad).

(8) 'Abdullah bin 'Umar has reported that the Holy Prophet said: Those who paint the pictures will be punished on the Day of Resurrection. They will be asked to put life into what they have made. (Bukhārī: *Kitāb al-Libās;* Muslim: *Kitāb al-Libās;* Nasā'ī; *Kitāb al-Zīnah;* Musnad Aḥmad).

(9) Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah says that she bought a cushion in which pictures had been painted. Then the Holy Prophet came and stood at the door and did not enter. I said: "I repent before God of any sin that I may have committed." The Holy Prophet asked: "What is this cushion for?" I said: "This is here so that you may sit and may recline on it." He said: "The painters of these pictures will be chastised on the Day of Resurrection: they will be asked to put life into what they have made; and the angels (*i.e.* the angels of mercy) do not enter a house which has pictures in it."(Bukhārī;: *Kitāb al-Libās;* Muslim: *Kitāb al-Libās;* Nasā'ī: *Kitāb az-Zīnah;* Ibn Mājah: *Kitāb at-Tajārāt;* Mu'waṭṭā': *Kitāb al-Istīdhān).*

(10) Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah says: Once the Holy Prophet came to my house, and I had hung a curtain which had pictures on it. The colour of his face changed. Then he took hold of the curtain and tore it and said: "Those who try to create like the creation of Allah will be among those who will be severely punished by Allah on the Day of Resurrection." (Muslim: *Kitāb al-Libās;* Bukhāri: *Kitāb al-Libās;* Nasā'i: *Kitāb az -Zīnah).*

(11) Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah says: Once the Holy Prophet came back; from a journey and I had hung a curtain at my door, which had the pictures of winged horses on it. The Holy Prophet commanded me to remove it and I removed it. (Muslim: *Kitāb al-Libās;* Nasā'i: *Kitāb al-Zīnah).*

(12) Jābir bin 'Abdullah says: The Holy Prophet prohibited keeping of the pictures in the house and also forbade that somebody should make pictures. (Tirmidhi: *Abwāb al-Libās*).

(13) Ibn 'Abbās has related on the authority of Abū Ṭalḥah Anṣarī: The Holy Prophet said that the angels (i.e. of mercy) do not enter a house where there is a dog, nor where there is a picture. (Bukhārī: *Kitāb al-Libās).*

(14) 'Abdullah bin 'Umar says: Once Gabriel promised to pay the Holy Prophet a visit, but the time passed and he did not come. The Holy Prophet felt troubled and came out of his house and met him. When he complained to him, he (Gabriel) replied: "We do not enter a house where there is a dog or a picture." (Bukhārī: *Kitāb al-Libās*. Several Traditions on this subject have been related by Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhi, Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah, Imām Mālik and Imām Aḥmad on the authority of several Companions).

As against these, there are some other Traditions which allow some exceptions regarding the pictures. For example, according to a tradition of Abū Talhah Anṣārī, it is permissible to hang the curtain of a cloth which has pictures embroidered on it. (Bukhārī: *Kitāb al-Libās);* and according to Hadrat 'Ā'ishah's tradition, when she tore a cloth having pictures on it and made a cushion from it to be spread on the floor, the Holy Prophet did not forbid it. (Muslim: *Kitāb al-Libās);* and Sālim bin 'Abdullah bin 'Umar's tradition that the prohibition is of the picture which is displayed and installed prominently and not of the one which is used as a carpet. (Musnad Aḥmad). But none of these traditions contradicts the Traditions which have been cited above. None of these sanctions the making and painting of the pictures. They only tell that if a person has got a piece of cloth having pictures on it, how he should use it. In this regard, the tradition of Abū Ṭalḥah Anṣarī cannot at all be accepted because it contradicts many other authentic Traditions in which the Holy Prophet not only forbade use of cloth having pictures on it as a curtain but even tore it into pieces. Moreover, Ḥadrat Abū Ṭalḥah Anṣari's own practice that has been reported in Tirmidhi and Mu'wattā', in this regard, was that he did not even like to use a piece of cloth which had pictures on it, as a carpet, not to speak of hanging it as a curtain.

As for the traditions related by Ḥadrat 'Ā'ishah and Salim bin 'Abdullah, they only permit that if a picture is not placed prominently out of respect and esteem but is used as a carpet disrespectfully and is trodden under the feet, it could be tolerable. After all, how can these Traditions be cited for obtaining sanction for the culture which regards the art of painting and portrait making and sculpture as an enviable achievement of the human civilization, and wants to popularize it among the Muslims?

The code of practice that the Holy Prophet left for his Ummah with regard to the pictures, can be seen from the conduct and practice of the eminent Companions, which they adopted in this regard. The admitted principle of law in Islam is that the authentic and reliable Islamic Law is that which the Holy Prophet enjoined during the latter part of his life after it had passed through gradual and preliminary injunctions and exceptions. And after the Holy Prophet the eminent Companions' practice and persistence on a particular way is a proof that he left

the Ummah on that way. Now let us see how these holy and pious people treated and regarded the pictures.

Ḥaḍrat 'Umar said to the Christians: "We do not enter your churches because there are pictures in them." (Bukhāri: *Kitāb as -Ṣalāt).*

Ibn 'Abbās would sometimes offer his Prayer in the church, but not in a church which had pictures in it. (Bukhārī;: *Kitāb as-Ṣalāt).*

Abū al-Hayyāj al-Asadī says: Ḥaḍrat 'Ali said to me: "Should I not send you on the same mission on which the Holy Prophet had sent me? And it is this that you should not leave any idol that you should not break, and you should not leave any grave that you should not level down, and you should not leave any picture that you should not blot out." (Muslim: *Kitāb al-Janā'iz;* Nasā'ī: *Kitāb al Janā'iz).*

Hanash al-Kinānī says: Ḥaḍrat 'Ali said to his chief of the police: "Do you know on what mission I am going to send you?—on the mission on which the Holy Prophet had sent me, that you should blot out every picture and level down every grave." (Musnad Aḥmad).

This very established Law of Islam has been accepted and acknowledged by the jurists of Islam and regarded as an article of the Islamic Law. Thus, 'Allāma Badruddīn 'Aini writes with reference to *Tauḥīd:*

"Our elders *(i.e.* the Ḥanifite jurists) and other jurists say that making the pictures of a living thing is not only unlawful but strictly forbidden and a major sin, whether the maker has made it for a purpose where it would be held with contempt or for some other use and purpose. The making and painting of the picture anyway is unlawful, because it is an attempt to create like the creation of Allah. Likewise. the making of pictures whether in the cloth, or in the carpet, or on a coin, or in a utensil, or in a wall, is in any case unlawful. However, making the pictures of something else, for instance, of a tree, etc., is not forbidden. Whether the picture casts a shadow or not is immaterial. The same is the opinion of Imām Mālik, Sufyān Thaurī, Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, and other scholars. Qādī Iyād says that the dolls of girls are an exception, but Imām Malik; disapproved of even buying them." *('Umdat al-Qārī,* vol. XXII p. 70). Imām Nawawī has elucidated this same view in greater detail in his commentary of Muslim. Please refer to *Sharh Nawawī,* Egyptian Ed., vol. XIV, pp. 81-82).

This is then the injunction about the making of pictures. As regards the use of the pictures made by others, 'Allāma Ibn Ḥajar has cited the views of the jurists of Islam as follows:

"Ibn 'Arabi, the Malikite jurist, says that the consensus of opinion is that the picture that casts a shadow is unlawful, whether it is regarded with contempt or not. Only the dolls of girls are an exception ... Ibn 'Arab; also says that the picture which does not cast a shadow but which persists (as in the printed form, unlike the reflection of a mirror) is also unlawful, whether it is regarded with contempt or not. However, if its head is cut off, or its limbs or parts are separated, it may be used. ... Imām al-Harmayn has cited a verdict according to which a curtain or a cushion having pictures on it may be used, but the picture hung on the wall or ceiling is forbidden, for it would show respect and esteem for it, while the picture on the curtain or cushion, on the contrary, would be held with contempt. ... Ibn Abī Shaibah has related on the authority of 'Ikrimah that the scholars among the immediate followers of the Companions held the opinion that the picture's being in the carpet or cushion is disgraceful for it; they also opined that the picture hung prominently is unlawful, but the one trodden under the feet is permissible. The same opinion has been cited from Ibn Sirīn, Sālim bin 'Abdullah, 'Ikrimah bin Khālid and Sa'īd bin Jubair." *(Fath al-Bārī*, vol. X, p. 300).

The details given above clearly show that the forbiddence of the pictures is not a controversial or doubtful matter in Islam, but it is an established article of the law according to the express instructions of the Holy Prophet, the practice of the Companions and the unanimous verdicts of the jurists of Islam, which cannot be changed by the hairsplitting of the people influenced by the alien cultures.

In this connection, certain other things should also be understood so that there remains no misunderstanding in this regard.

Some people try to make a distinction between a photograph and a painting, whereas the *Shari'ah* forbids the picture itself and not any process or method of making pictures. There is no difference between a photograph and a painting: they are both pictures. Whatever difference is there between them is due to the method of making them, and in this regard the *Shari'ah* injunctions make no difference between them.

Some people give the argument that the picture was forbidden in Islam in order to put an end to idol-worship. As there is no such danger now, this injunction should be annulled. But this argument is absolutely wrong. In the first place, nowhere in the Traditions has it been said that the pictures have been made unlawful in order to avoid the danger of *shirk* and idol-worship. Secondly, the assertion that *shirk* and idol-worship have been eradicated from the world is also baseless. Today in the Indo-Pak sub-continent itself there are millions of idol-worshippers and polytheists. *Shirk* is being practised in different regions of the world in different ways. The Christian people of the Book also are worshipping the images and portraits of the Prophet Jesus and Mary and other saints; so much

so that even a large number of the Muslims also are involved in the evil of worshipping others than God.

Some people say that only those pictures which are polytheistic in nature should be forbidden, *i.e.*, pictures and images of those persons who have been made gods. As for the other pictures and images there is no reason why they should be forbidden. But the people who argue like this, in fact, become their own law-givers instead of deriving law from the Commandments and instructions of the Law-Giver. They do not know that the picture does not become the cause of polytheism and idol-worship only but has become the cause of many other mischiefs in the world, and is becoming so even today. The picture is one of those major means by which the aura of greatness of the kings, dictators and political leaders has been impressed upon the minds of the common people. The picture also has been used extensively for spreading obscenity and today this mischief has touched heights unknown to previous history. Pictures have also been used for sowing discord and hatred and for creating mischief between the nations and for misleading the masses in different ways. Therefore, the view that the Law-Giver forbade the picture only in order to eradicate idol-worship is basically wrong. The Law-Giver has absolutely forbidden pictures of the living things. If we are not our own law-givers but are the followers of the Law-Giver, we should desist from this accordingly. It is not at all lawful for us that we should propose from ourselves a basis for a particular injunction and then, on the basis of it, should declare some pictures lawful and some as unlawful.

Some people refer to some apparently "harmless' kinds of pictures and say that there could be no danger from these; they could not cause the mischiefs of *shirk*, obscenity, political propaganda or other evils; therefore, they should not be forbidden. Here again the people commit the same error: they first propose a cause and a basis for an injunction, and then argue that when the cause is not found in a particular forbidden thing, it should not be forbidden. Furthermore, these people also do not understand the rule of the Islamic *Sharī'ah* that it does not make vague and ambiguous boundaries between the lawful and the unlawful from which a man may not be able to judge when he is within the bounds and when he has crossed them; but it draws a clear line of demarcation which every person can see like the broad daylight. The demarcation in respect of the picture is absolutely clear: pictures of living things are unlawful and of the lifeless things lawful. This line of demarcation does not admit any ambiguity. The one who has to follow the injunctions can clearly know what is permissible for him and what is not. But, if some pictures of the living things had been declared lawful and some unlawful, no list of the two kinds of the pictures however extensive, would have made the boundary between the lawful and the unlawful clear, and the case of many pictures would still have remained ambiguous as to whether they were within the

bounds of lawfulness or outside them. This is similar to the Islamic injunction about wine that one should completely abstain from it, and this marks a clear limit. But, if it had been said that one should abstain from such a quantity of wine as intoxicates, it would be impossible to demarcate between the lawful and the unlawful, and no one would have been able to decide what quantity of wine he could drink; and where he had to stop. (For a further discussion, see *Rasā'il-o-Masā'il,* Part 1, pp. 152-155).

21. This gives an idea of the generous and large scale hospitality practised by the Prophet Solomon. Big bowls like troughs had been arranged to serve as containers of food for the guests and heavy cooking pots were meant for cooking food for thousands of the people at one and the same time.

22. "Work gratefully": work like grateful servants. The mere verbal thankfulness of a person who acknowledges only verbally the favours done by the benefactor but uses them against his will is meaningless. The truly grateful person is he who acknowledges the favours with the tongue as well as uses and employs the favours according to the will of the benefactor.

23. Another meaning of the sentence can be: "The true state and condition of the jinns became clear and exposed." According to the first meaning, it will mean: "The jinns realized that their claim to have the knowledge of the unseen was wrong." According to the second, it will mean: "The people who thought that the jinns possessed the knowledge of the unseen, came to know that they had no such knowledge."

24. Some modern commentators have interpreted it as follows: As the Prophet Solomon's son, Rehoboam, was unworthy and given to luxurious living and surrounded by flatterers, he could not sustain the heavy burden of responsibility that fell on his shoulders after the death of his great father. A short time after his succession, the kingdom collapsed, and the frontier tribes *(i.e.,* of the jinns) whom the Prophet Solomon had subdued by his mighty power, rebelled and broke away. But this interpretation does not at all conform to the words of the Qur'ān. The scene depicted by the words of the Qur'ān is somewhat like this: Death came to the Prophet Solomon in a state when he was standing or sitting with the support of a staff. His body stood in place due to the staff, and the jinns continued to perform their duties and services, thinking that he was living. At last, when the wood-louse started eating away the staff and it became hollow from within, the Prophet Solomon's body fell down; then the jinns realized that he had died. After all, why should this clear and unambiguous description of the event be construed to mean that the wood-louse implied the unworthiness of the Prophet Solomon's son, and the staff implied his power and authority and the falling down of his body implied the disintegration of his kingdom? Had Allah meant to say all

this, there was no dearth of the words in the vast Arabic language. The Qur'ān, in fact, has nowhere used such enigmatic language. How could the common Arabs, who were its first addressees, have solved this riddle?

Then, the most absurd part of this interpretation is that according to it the jinns imply the people of the frontier tribes whom the Prophet Solomon had subdued to perform certain services under him. The question is, which of these tribes had claimed to have the knowledge of the unseen, and whom did the *mushriks* regard as the knower of the unseen? A person who reads the last words of the verse with open eyes can himself see that jinn here necessarily implies a group of beings who either had themselves made a claim to have the knowledge of the unseen, or who, the people believed, had the knowledge of the unseen; and the secret of this group's being ignorant and unaware of the unseen became disclosed when they continued to serve the Prophet Solomon under the impression that he was living, whereas he had died. This statement of the Qur'ān was enough to induce an honest person to revise his this opinion that the jinn imply the frontier tribes, but the people who feel shy of admitting the existence of the hidden creation called the jinn before the materialistic world still insist on this interpretation of theirs in spite of the plain meaning of the Qur'ān.

At several places in the Qur'ān Allāh tells that the *mushriks* of Arabia regarded the jinns as the associates of Allah, and as His children, and used to seek their refuge:

"They set up the jinns as partners with Allah, whereas He has created them." (Al-An'ām: 100). "And they have invented a blood-relationship between Allah and the jinns." (Aṣ-Ṣaffāt: 158). "And that, some people from among the men used to seek refuge with some people from among the jinns." (Al-Jinn: 6).

One of their beliefs was that they regarded the jinns as the knowers of the unseen and hidden, and used to turn to them to obtain knowledge of the hidden things. Allah has related this event here in order to repudiate this belief and to make the Arabs realize that they are following the false creeds of ignorance without any valid reason, whereas the fact is that these beliefs are absolutely baseless. (For further explanation, see E.N. 63 below).

25. To understand the continuity of the subject-matter one should keep in view the theme as expressed in vv.1-9. There it has been pointed out that the pagans of Arabia regarded the coming of the Hereafter as irrational, and declared openly that the Messenger who was presenting this doctrine was either a mad man or deliberately was fabricating falsehood. In reply to this, Allah first gave some rational arguments, which we have elaborated in E.N.'s 7, 8 and 12 above. Then in vv. 10-21 the story of the Prophets David and Solomon and of Sabā has been related as an historical argument, which is meant to impress the reality that the

history of the human species on the earth itself testifies to the law of retribution. If man studies his own history carefully he will see that this world is not a lawless kingdom, which might be functioning blindly, but it is being ruled by an All-Hearing and All-Seeing Being, Who treats and deals with His grateful servants in one way and with the ungrateful and thankless people in quite another way. If one wants one can learn this lesson from the same history that in the Kingdom of God which has such a character, goodness and evil cannot have one and the same result. The necessary demand of its justice is that a time must come when goodness should be fully rewarded and evil fully punished.

26. That is, "A Sign of this that whatever they have is the gift of some one else and not of their own creation, and a Sign of this that the one worthy of their service and worship and gratitude is that God Who has blessed them with these favours and not those who have no share in bestowing these, and a Sign of this that their wealth is not imperishable but can perish even as it has been amassed".

27. This does not mean that there were only two gardens in the whole country, but that the entire land of Sabā was like a garden. Wherever a man stood he could see a garden on his right and a garden on his left.

28. That is, "They adopted the way of disobedience and ingratitude instead of obedience and gratefulness."

29. The word *'arim* as used in *sayl al-'arim* in the Text is derived from the South Arabic word *'ariman*, which stands for a "dam". In the ancient inscriptions that have been unearthed in the ruins of the Yaman, this word has been commonly used in this meaning. For example, in an inscription dated 542 or 543 A.D., which Abraha, the Abyssinian governor of the Yaman, had got installed after the repairs to the great dam of Maā'rib, this word has been used repeatedly in the meaning of a dam. Therefore, *sayl al-'arim* implies a flood that comes when a dam breaks.

30. That is, "As a result of the flood that came after the dam burst, the whole land was laid waste. The canals which the Sabaeans had dug out by building dams between the mountains, were ruined and the irrigation system destroyed. Then the same land which had been like a garden before, became a jungle of wild growth and no eatable plants were left in it except the small plum-like fruit of the lote bushes."

31. "Blessed habitations": the lands of Syria and Palestine, which have been generally mentioned in the Qur'ān by this title, as for instance, in Al-A'rāf: 137, Banī Isrā'īl: 1, Al-Anbiyā': 71, 81.

"Conspicuous habitations": habitations situated on the highway and not inside the country. It may also mean that the habitations were not very far apart but contiguous so that as the outlying areas of one habitation came to an end those of the other started coming into view.

"Set...distances" implies that from the Yaman to the borders of Syria the whole journey passed through inhabited lands, and the distances between one station and another were known and determined. That makes the distinction between the journey through inhabited land and the journey through uninhabited desert area. In the desert the traveller continues to travel as long as he wills and halts when tired. Contrary to this, in settled areas as the distance between one habitation and the other is well known, the traveller can plan beforehand where he would break his journey, where he would have his midday rest and where he would stay for the night.

32. They may not have prayed thus in so many words. As a matter of fact, whoever is ungrateful to Allah for His blessings, tells Allah, as if to say that he is not worthy of those blessings. Likewise, the nation which abuses the bounties of Allah, in fact, prays to Him, as if to say, "Our Lord, withdraw Your blessings from us: we are not worthy of these."

Moreover, the words in the Text also seem to suggest that the Sabaeans perhaps regarded their large population as a calamity for themselves, and they also wanted like the other foolish people that their population should fall.

33. That is, "The people of Sabā were so dispersed in all directions that their dispersion became proverbial. Even today when the Arabs have to mention the complete dispersion of any people they refer to the people of Sabā as an example. When Allah caused His blessings to be withdrawn from them, the different tribes of the Sabaeans started leaving their homes and migrating to other parts of Arabia. The Banū Ghassān went to settle in Jordan and Syria, the Aus and Khazraj in Yathrib, and the Khuzā'ah in Tihāmah near Jeddah. The Azd left for 'Umān and the Banī Lakhm and Judhām and Kindah were also forced to give up their homes for other places. Thus, the "Sabaeans" ceased to exist as a nation and became a mere legend."

34. In this context the "patient and grateful person" implies every such person (or persons) who does not lose his balance after he has received blessings from Allah, nor exults at prosperity, nor becomes heedless of God Who has blessed him with these. Such a person can learn great lessons from the history of those people who adopted the way of disobedience after attaining opportunities for progress and prosperity and ultimately met with their doom.

35. History shows that in ancient times there lived among the Sabaeans a small group of the people, who believed in one God, apart from all other gods. The inscriptions that have been discovered in the ruins of Yaman as a result of modern archaeological research point to the existence of this small element. Some inscriptions of the period about 650 B.C. indicate that at several places in the kingdom of Sabā there existed such houses of worship as were exclusively meant for the worship of *dhu-samavī or dhu-samāvī (i.e. Rabb as-Samā'*: Lord of the heavens). In some places this Deity has been mentioned as *Malikan dhu-samavī* (the King who is the Owner of the heavens). This remnant of the Sabaeans continued to live in Yaman for centuries afterwards. Thus, in an inscription of 378 A.D. also there is found the mention of a house of worship built in the name of *Ilāh dhu-samavī*. Then, in an inscription dated 465 A.D. the words are: *Bi-nasr wa ridā ilāh-in ba'l samīn wa ardin* (i.e. with the help and support of that God Who is the Owner of the heavens and the earth). In another inscription of the period dated 458 A.D., the word *Raḥmān* has been used for the same God, the actual words being *bi-ridā Raḥmanan (i.e.* with the help of *Raḥmān).*

36. That is, *"Iblīs* did not have the power to have forcibly misled these people to the way of God's disobedience although they had wanted to adopt His obedience. Allah had only given him the power that he may seduce and mislead them and make all such people his followers, who may like to follow him of their own accord. And *Iblīs* was provided these opportunities for seduction so that the believers of the Hereafter were distinguished from those who entertained doubts about its coming."

In other words, this Divine statement makes the truth explicit that nothing in this world other than belief in the Hereafter can ensure man's adherence to the right way. If a man disbelieves that he is to be raised back to life after death and has to render an account of his deeds before his God, he will certainly be misled and go astray, for he will never be able to develop in himself the sense of responsibility which alone can make him adhere to the right way. That is why the artifice of Satan by which he ensnares man is that he makes him heedless of the Hereafter. The one who escapes this satanic enticement can never agree that he should sacrifice the interests of his real everlasting life to the interests of the transient life of the world. On the contrary, the one who disbelieves in the Hereafter under the evil influence of Satan, or at least entertains doubts about it, can never be induced to withdraw from the cash bargain being made in this world only due to the apprehension that it might cause loss in some later life. Whoever has gone astray in the world, has gone astray only due to the denial of the Hereafter, or some suspicion about it; and whoever has adopted righteousness has done so because his righteous deeds have issued from his belief in the Hereafter.

37. To understand fully the allusions made in the Qur'ān to the history of the Sabaeans, one should also keep in view the information that has been obtained through other historical sources about this nation.

Historically, "Sabā" were a great nation of Southern Arabia, which comprised some large tribes. Imām Ahmad, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn 'Abd al-Barr and Tirmidhī have related from the Holy Prophet that Sabā was the name of an Arab, from whose race issued the following tribes of Arabia: Kindah, Himyar, Azd, Ash'ariyyīn, Madhhij, Anmār (with its two branches: Khath'am and Bajīlah), 'Āmilah, Judhām, Lakhm and Ghassān.

Since antiquity this Arabian nation has been well known to the rest of the world. Ur inscriptions of 2500 B.C. mention it by the name of Sabom. Then in the Babylonian and Assyrian inscriptions and also in the Bible it has been mentioned several times. (See, for instance, Psalms 72:15; Jeremiah 6: 20; Ezekiel 27:22, 38: 13; Job 6: 19). The Greek and Roman historians and the geographer Theophrastus (288 B.C.) have mentioned it continuously for many centuries of the Christian era since before Christ.

Its home was the south-western corner of the Arabian peninsula, now called al-Yaman. Its rise to prominence started in 1100 B.C. In the time of the Prophets David and Solomon the Sabaeans had become world famous as a wealthy people. In the beginning they were a sun-worshipping nation. Then, when their queen affirmed faith at the hand of the Prophet Solomon (965-926 B.C.) probably most of them became Muslims. But then in some unknown later period they again began to worship gods and goddesses like Almaqah (the moon-god), 'A thtar (Venus), Dhāt Ḥamīm, Dhāt Bad'ān (the sun-god), Harmatam or Harimat and many others. Almaqah was their chief deity, and the kings made claim to the people's obedience as representatives of this deity. Many inscriptions have been unearthed in the Yaman, which show that the whole land abounded in the temples of these gods, especially of Almaqah, and thanksgiving services for them were held at every important event.

As a result of the modern archaeological researches about 3,000 inscriptions have been discovered, which throw a good deal of light on the history of this nation. Besides these, if the information yielded by the Arabian traditionists and the Roman and Greek historians is compiled, a detailed history of this nation can be prepared. According to this information the following are the important periods of its history:

(1) *The Pre-mid-seventh Century Period:* In this period Mukarrib was the title of the Sabaean kings. Probably a synonym of *Muqarrib*, it signified that the kings regarded themselves as the link between men and gods; or, in other words, they were the priest-kings. Their capital was Sirwāh, whose

ruins are found at a day's journey to the west of Maā'rib, and are now called al-Kharībah. The foundations of the great Maā'rib dam were laid in this period: then the different kings extended it from time to time.

(2) 650 *B.C. to* 115 *B.C.*: In this period the Sabaean kings discarded *Mukarrib* and adopted the title of *Malik* (king), which signified that theocracy was replaced by secular kingship. They left Sirwāh and made Maā'rib their capital and extended it in every way. This place lay 3900 feet above the sea, and is some 60 miles east of San'ā'. Even today its ruins bear evidence that it was once the centre of a highly civilized nation.

(3) 115 *B.C.* to 300 *A.D.* : In this period the Sabaean kingdom fell under the domination of the tribe of Himyar, a more numerous tribe of Sabā. They discarded Maā'rib and made their central place, Raydān, their capital, which later became known as Zafār. Its ruins can still be seen on a circular hill near the modern city of Yarīm. Close by it there resides a small tribe by the name of Hinmar, perhaps the remnant of the great nation which was once well known throughout the world for its glory and grandeur. In the same period the word Yamanat and Yamanāt began to be used for the first time for a part of the kingdom, which gradually became Yaman and the name of the entire land, which extends from 'Asīr to Aden and from Bāb al-Mandab to Ḥaḍramaut. During this very period the decline of the Sabaean began.

(4) 300 *A.D. to the rise of Islam* : This is the period of the Sabaea's destruction. They started fighting civil wars, which provided occasion for external intervention. This resulted in the decline in their trade and their agriculture and even loss of political freedom. Taking advantage of the internal conflicts between the Himyarites and other tribes, the Abyssinians occupied the Yaman and ruled it briefly from 340 A.D. to 378 A.D. Then, though political freedom was restored, breaches began to appear in the great dam of Maā'rib, which in 450 or 451 A.D. led to the catastrophe occasioned by the "bursting of the dam" as has been referred to in verse 16 above. Although after it till the time of Abraha the dam was extensively repaired, the population that had dispersed could not be brought back, nor could the ruined system of irrigation and agriculture be restored. In 523 A.D., dhū-Nuwās, the Jewish king of the Yaman, carried out the great massacre of the Christians of Najrān, which has been referred to in the Qur'ān under *"ashāb al-ukhdūd"* (LXXXV: 4). In retaliation, the Christian kingdom of Abyssinia invaded Yaman and occupied the whole land. Later the Abyssinian governor of Yaman, Abrahah, in a bid to put an end to the central position of the Ka'bah and to bring the whole of western Arabia into the sphere of the Byzantine-Abyssinian influence invaded Makkah in 570 or 571 A.D., a few days

before the birth of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). The Abyssinian army was completely destroyed as alluded to under *ashāb al-fīl* in the Qur'ān. At last, in 575 A.D. Yaman fell to the Iranians; their rule came to an end in 628 A.D. when their governor Bādhān embraced Islam.

The Sabaeans owed their prosperity to two main factors: agriculture and commerce. They had developed their agriculture by means of a wonderful irrigation system unknown in the ancient world except in Babylon. There were no natural rivers in their land; in the rainy season small hill-torrents rose on which they had built dams every where in the country and collected water in small lakes from which they had taken out canals to water their lands. This had virtually turned the whole country into a vast garden as mentioned in the Qur'ān. The largest reservoir was the lake which had been formed by the construction of a dam on the opening in the Jabal Balaq near Maā'rib. But when Allah caused His favours to be turned away from them, the great dam burst in the mid-fifth century A.D. and the resultant floods went on breaking one dam after the other on the way, destroying the entire irrigation system, which could never again be restored.

For commerce the Sabaeans had been blessed by God with the most favourable geographical position of which they took full advantage. For more than a thousand years they monopolised the means of trade between the East and the West. On the one hand, they received silk from China, spices from Indonesia and Malabar, fabrics and swords from India, negro slaves, monkeys, ostrich feathers and ivory from East Africa at their ports, and on the other, they transported this merchandise to the Egyptian and Syrian marts, to be supplied onward to Rome and Greece. Besides, they themselves were great producers of frankincense and myrrh and other perfumes, which were in great demand in Egypt and Syria and in Rome and Greece.

Two great routes existed for this international trade: the sea route and the land route. The maritime trade remained in the Sabaeans' control for more than a thousand years for they alone knew the mysteries of the Red Sea monsoons, breakers and rocks and the anchorages, and no other nation could risk navigation through these dangerous waters. Through this maritime route they took their trade goods to the harbours of Jordan and Egypt. The land routes from Aden and Hadramaut joined at Ma'ārib, from where a highway led to Petra through Makkah, Jeddah, Yathrib, Al-'Ulā, Tabūk and Aylah, forking at the northern end to Egypt and Syria. Along this land route, a number of Sabaean colonies had been established right from the Yaman to the borders of Syria, as mentioned in the Qur'ān, and trade caravans passed by these day and night. The signs of many of these colonies still exist on this route from which the Sabaean and the Himyarite inscriptions are being discovered.

After the first century after Christ Sabaean trade began to suffer a decline. When the Greek, and then the Roman, kingdoms were established in the Middle East, the citizens began complaining of the high prices that the Arabian traders were charging for the oriental goods because of their monopoly, and urged their governments to take the initiative to break their supremacy in the sea trade. Thus, in the beginning, Ptolemy II (985-246 B.C.), the Greek ruler of Egypt, reopened the Nile-Red Sea canal originally dug by Pharaoh Sesostris some seventeen centuries previously. Consequently, it was through this canal that the Egyptian fleet entered the Red Sea for the first time, but it could not succeed much against the Sabaeans. When Egypt fell to the Romans they brought a stronger merchant marine into the Red Sea and put a naval fleet at its back. The Sabaeans could not withstand this force. Consequently, the Romans set up their trade colonies at every seaport, arranged supplies for the ships and also stationed their military troops wherever possible. At last, the time came when Aden passed under the military occupation of the Romans. In this connection, the Roman and the Abyssinian kingdoms also entered secret pacts against the Sabaeans, which ultimately deprived this nation of its political freedom as well.

After losing control over maritime trade the Sabaeans were left with trade over the land route only, but many factors combined to gradually break its back too. First, the Nabataeans ousted them from all the colonies of the upper Hejāz and Jordan, from Petra to Al-'Ulā. Then in 106 A.D. the Romans put an end to the Nabataean kingdom and captured all the Syrian and Jordanian territories up to the Hejāz. After this Abyssinia and Rome jointly tried to ruin the Sabaean trade completely by taking advantage of their internal conflicts. That is why the Abyssinians intervened in the Yaman again and again, till at last they brought the whole land under their occupation.

Thus, Allah's wrath caused this nation to be toppled from the heights of glory and prosperity into oblivion from which they were never able to rise again. There was a time when the Greeks and the Romans felt tempted when they heard of the legendary wealth of this people. Strabo writes, "The Sabaeans use gold and silver utensils and even the ceilings, walls and doors of their houses are bedecked with ivory, gold, silver and jewels." Pliny says, "The whole wealth of Rome and Persia is flowing into Sabaean hands. They are the richest people of the world today, and their fertile land abounds in gardens, crops and cattle." Artemidorus says, "These people roll in luxury. They burn cinnemon, sandalwood and other sweet smelling wood as fuel." Likewise, other Greek historians relate that the passengers passing by their shores can smell the perfumes of their land in the merchant ships at sea. For the first time in history they built a skyscraper, called the castle of Ghumdān, on the hill top in San'ā'. This citadel, according to the Arab historians, had twenty storeys, each storey being 36 feet high. Thus did they

[Contd. on p. 216

مَاذَا ۙ قُلِ اللّٰهُ ۙ وَاِنَّآ اَوْ اِيَّاكُمْ لَعَلٰى هُدًى اَوْ فِيْ ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿٢٤﴾
قُلْ لَّا تُسْـَٔلُوْنَ عَمَّآ اَجْرَمْنَا وَلَا نُسْـَٔلُ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٢٥﴾ قُلْ يَجْمَعُ بَيْنَنَا
رَبُّنَا ثُمَّ يَفْتَحُ بَيْنَنَا بِالْحَقِّ ۭ وَهُوَ الْفَتَّاحُ الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿٢٦﴾ قُلْ اَرُوْنِيَ الَّذِيْنَ
اَلْحَقْتُمْ بِهٖ شُرَكَاۗءَ كَلَّا ۭ بَلْ هُوَ اللّٰهُ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَمَآ اَرْسَلْنٰكَ اِلَّا
كَاۗفَّةً لِّلنَّاسِ بَشِيْرًا وَّنَذِيْرًا وَّلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ
مَتٰى هٰذَا الْوَعْدُ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾ قُلْ لَّكُمْ مِّيْعَادُ يَوْمٍ لَّا تَسْتَاْخِرُوْنَ
عَنْهُ سَاعَةً وَّلَا تَسْتَقْدِمُوْنَ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لَنْ نُّؤْمِنَ بِهٰذَا
الْقُرْاٰنِ وَلَا بِالَّذِيْ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ ۭ وَلَوْ تَرٰٓى اِذِ الظّٰلِمُوْنَ مَوْقُوْفُوْنَ عِنْدَ
رَبِّهِمْ ۚ يَرْجِعُ بَعْضُهُمْ اِلٰى بَعْضِ ۨ الْقَوْلَ ۚ يَقُوْلُ الَّذِيْنَ اسْتُضْعِفُوْا لِلَّذِيْنَ
اسْتَكْبَرُوْا لَوْلَآ اَنْتُمْ لَكُنَّا مُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٣١﴾ قَالَ الَّذِيْنَ اسْتَكْبَرُوْا لِلَّذِيْنَ اسْتُضْعِفُوْٓا
اَنَحْنُ صَدَدْنٰكُمْ عَنِ الْهُدٰى بَعْدَ اِذْ جَاۗءَكُمْ بَلْ كُنْتُمْ مُّجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَقَالَ
الَّذِيْنَ اسْتُضْعِفُوْا لِلَّذِيْنَ اسْتَكْبَرُوْا بَلْ مَكْرُ الَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ اِذْ تَاْمُرُوْنَنَآ اَنْ
نَّكْفُرَ بِاللّٰهِ وَنَجْعَلَ لَهٗٓ اَنْدَادًا ۭ وَاَسَرُّوا النَّدَامَةَ لَمَّا رَاَوُا الْعَذَابَ ۭ وَجَعَلْنَا
الْاَغْلٰلَ فِيْٓ اَعْنَاقِ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا ۭ هَلْ يُجْزَوْنَ اِلَّا مَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَمَآ
اَرْسَلْنَا فِيْ قَرْيَةٍ مِّنْ نَّذِيْرٍ اِلَّا قَالَ مُتْرَفُوْهَآ ۙ اِنَّا بِمَآ اُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهٖ كٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾
وَقَالُوْا نَحْنُ اَكْثَرُ اَمْوَالًا وَّاَوْلَادًا ۙ وَّمَا نَحْنُ بِمُعَذَّبِيْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾ قُلْ اِنَّ رَبِّيْ
يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَّشَاۗءُ وَيَقْدِرُ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَمَآ
اَمْوَالُكُمْ وَلَآ اَوْلَادُكُمْ بِالَّتِيْ تُقَرِّبُكُمْ عِنْدَنَا زُلْفٰٓى اِلَّا مَنْ اٰمَنَ وَعَمِلَ

(O Prophet), ask them, "Who gives you sustenance from the heavens and the earth?" Say, "Allah.[42] Only either we or you are on the Right Way or in manifest error."[43] Say to them, "You will not be questioned for the errors we have committed, nor shall we be answerable for what you are doing."[44] Say, "Our Lord will gather us together, then He will judge between us rightly. He is such a great Judge Who knows everything."[45] Say to them, "Just show me those whom you have made associates with Him."[46] Nay, never! Allah alone is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise. 24-27

And (O Prophet,) We have sent you to the entire mankind as a bearer of good news and a warner, but most people do not know.[47] 28

These people say to you, "When will the promise (of Resurrection) be fulfilled if you are truthful?"[48] Say, "For you the appointment of a day is fixed, which you can neither hold back for an hour nor hasten on by an hour."[49] 29-30

The disbelievers say, "We shall never believe in this Qur'ān, nor in any other Book which came before it."[50] Would that you could see these wicked people at the time when they will be standing before their Lord! Then, they will blame one another. Those who had been oppressed in the world, will say to the arrogant, "But for you we would have been the believers."[51] The arrogant ones will say to the oppressed once, "Did we hinder you from the guidance when it came to you? Nay, but you yourselves were guilty."[52] The oppressed ones will say to the arrogant ones, "Nay, but it was your plotting by day and night when you told us to deny Allah and to set up others as equals with Him."[53] At last, when they will see the torment, they will repent in their hearts, and We shall put fetters on the necks of the disbelievers. Can the people be requited except in accordance with their deeds? 31-33

It has never happened that We sent a warner to a habitation and its people of means did not say, "We disbelieve the message you have brought."[54] They always said this: "We have more wealth and children than you, and we shall never be punished."[55] O Prophet, say to them, "My Lord gives abundantly to whom He wills and sparingly to whom He wills, but most people do not realize this."[56] It is not your wealth and your children, which bring you nearer to Us, save him who believes and does good works.[57] These are the ones who will have a 34-38

double reward for their deeds, and they will live in peace in high mansions.[58] As for those who strive hard in order to frustrate Our Revelations, they shall be severely punished.

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prosper and enjoy life as long as Allah favoured them with His bounties. At last, when they transgressed all limits in their ingratitude, the Almighty Allah also withdrew His attention, and they were so utterly destroyed as if they had never existed at all.

38. Until now the *mushriks'* wrong notions about the Hereafter have been dealt with. From here the discourse turns to the refutation of *shirk* itself.

39. That is, "Allah makes and un-makes the destinies of individuals and nations and kingdoms in ways as you have seen from the stories of the Prophets David and Solomon and the people of Sabā. Now, you may invoke, if you so like, these self-made gods of yours to see whether they also possess the power to change someone's good fortune into misfortune and misfortune into good fortune."

40. That is, "Not to speak of owning something, or being a partner in the ownership of something, or being a helper of Allah in any way, there exists no one in the universe, who of his own accord may intercede for someone before Allah. You are involved in the misunderstanding that there are some beloved ones of God, or some such powerful personalities, who can force and press God to accept their intercession, whereas the fact is that no one will dare utter a word of recommendation there without Allah's permission. Only such a one will be able to make his submissions, who is permitted by Allah to do so, and will intercede for him alone for whom permission for intercession is granted. (To understand the distinction between the Islamic concept of intercession and the polytheistic concept, see Yūnus: 3, 18; Hūd: 76, 105; Tā Hā: 109; Al-Anbiyā': 28; Al-Ḥajj: 76).

41. Here a graphic picture has been drawn of the time when on the Day of Resurrection an intercessor will be seeking permission to intercede on behalf of another. It presents this scene: "After submitting the application for permission, both the intercessor and the intercessee are awaiting the reply in a state of restlessness and awe. At last, when the permission is granted and the intercessee perceives satisfaction in the face of the intercessor he feels a little comforted and asks the intercessor: 'What reply has been received?' The intercessor says, 'The right reply: permission has been granted.' What is meant to be impressed is this: 'O foolish people! Such will be the awe of the great Court of Allah ! How dare you entertain the notion that anybody will have you forgiven by his own power, or -

dare behave stubbornly and tell Allah: These are my favourites: they will have to be forgiven!'"

42. There is a subtle gap between the question and the answer. The addressees were the *mushriks* who not only did not disbelieve in the existence of Allah but also knew and believed that the keys of the provisions are in His hand. But in spite of this they held others also as Allah's associates in His work. Now when they were confronted with the question: "Who gives you sustenance from the heavens and the earth?" they were put in a tight corner. If they mentioned another beside Allah they would say a thing contrary to their own and their people's creed. If they showed stubbornness and said such a thing, they feared that their own people would immediately refute them. And if they acknowledged that Allah alone is their Sustainer, they would immediately be confronted with the next question: "Then, why and what for have you made these others your gods?" When Allah is the Sustainer, why should these others be served and worshipped? Thus they stand confused and bewildered. Neither can they say that Allah alone is the Sustainer nor that another god is the sustainer. When the questioner sees that they do not make any answer, he himself answers his question and says, "Allah."

43. This sentence contains an important point of the wisdom of preaching. The logical conclusion of the question and answer cited above would be that the one who serves and worships Allah should be on right guidance and the one who worships others beside Him should be misguided. Therefore, apparently, the conclusion should have been: "Then, we are rightly guided and you are misguided." But such a plain and straight reply, although correct and true, would not have been a wise thing from the point of view of preaching. For when a person is addressed and told plainly that he is misguided and the speaker claims to be rightly-guided himself, he will become obdurate and will never be inclined to accept and acknowledge the truth. As the Messengers of Allah are not sent only for the sake of speaking the plain truth, but are also entrusted with the duty of reforming the wrongdoers as tactfully as possible, Allah has not asked His Prophet to tell them plainly, after the question and answer, that they are all misguided and that he alone is rightly-guided. Instead of this, it was said: "Tell them: it has become clear that we regard as our Deity only Him Who is the Sustainer, and you have taken as deities those who are not sustainers. Now, it is not possible that both you and we should be on right guidance simultaneously. Only one of us can be rightly-guided, and the other inevitably will be misguided. Now it is for you to consider and judge who is being proved by reason to be in the right and who in the wrong."

44. The above question had already made the listeners to think seriously. This additional sentence was meant to make them think even more seriously, as if to say, "It is in our own interest individually that we should consider and decide

the question of guidance and misguidance rightly. For if we are misguided, we shall ourselves bear the consequences of our error; you will not be held answerable for it. Therefore, it is in our own interest that we should consider seriously, before adopting a creed, that we are not following a wrong way. Likewise, you also should think seriously for your own sake, not for our sake in any way, and make sure that you are not investing your life's capital in a false creed. For if you committed an error in this regard, you would be harming only your own selves and not us."

45. This is the last and the strongest motive for the consideration of which the listeners' attention has been invited. It means to impress: "The thing is not only that there is the diffrence of the truth and the falsehood between you and us, but that both we and you have to be presented before our Lord, the Being Who knows the truth and is also fully aware of the affairs of each of us. There before Him not only will this thing be decided who, between you and us, was in the right and who in the wrong, but this issue also will be settled how we made every possible effort to make the truth plain to you, and how you opposed and resisted us in your antagonism to the truth."

46. That is, "Before ever you take the great risk due to your reliance on these deities, just tell me here who among them is so powerful as to arise in the Court of Allah as your supporter and save you from His punishment."

47. That is, "You have not been sent as a Prophet for the people of this city, or this country, or this age alone, but for the people of the entire world and for ever, but your compatriots do not recognize your worth and they do not realize how great a person has been raised among them as a Prophet and how uniquely they have been blessed by Allah."

The fact that the Holy Prophet has not been appointed a Prophet only for his own country or for his own age but for all mankind till Resurrection, has been stated at several places in the Qur'ān. For instance,

"And this Qur'ān has been revealed to me that I should thereby warn you and all those whom it may reach." (Al-An'ām: 19).

"O Prophet, say: O mankind, I am a Messenger to all of you from Allah." (Al-A'rāf: 158).

"O Prophet, We have sent you to be a real blessing for all the people of the world." (Al-Anbiyā': 107).

"Highly blessed is He Who has sent down *Al-Furqān* to His servant so that he may be a warner to all mankind." (Al-Furqān: 1).

The same thing has been stated by the Holy Prophet in a number of *Aḥādīth* in different ways. For example.

"I have been sent to all mankind, the black as well as the white." (Musnad Aḥmad: *Marwiyāt 'Abū Mūsā Ash'arī).*

"I have been sent to all mankind as a whole, whereas every Prophet before me was only sent to his own people." (Musnad Aḥmad: *Marwiyāt 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin 'Āṣ).*

"Before me every Prophet was specifically sent to his own people; but I have been sent for all mankind." (Bukhārī and Muslim: From Traditions related by Jābir bin 'Abdullah).

"My appointment as a Prophet and Resurrection are like this. Saying this the Holy Prophet raised his two fingers." (Bukhārī and Muslim). What he meant by this was : "Just as no third finger intervenes between these two fingers, so there is no prophethood between me and Resurrection. After me there will be Resurrection only, and I shall be the Prophet till Resurrection."

48. That is, "When will the time come about which you say: 'Our Lord will gather us together, then He will judge between us rightly?' We have been denying you persistently and opposing you openly for so long. Why is not then the judgement being passed against us ?"

49. In other words, the reply means: "Allah's judgments are not subject to your whims that He should be bound to do a thing at the time which you have fixed for it. He carries out His designs only according to His own discretion. You cannot understand how long is mankind to be allowed to function in this world in the scheme of Allah, how many individuals and how many nations are to be put to the test in different ways, and what Will be the right time for the Day of Judgment and summoning mankind of all ages for rendering their accounts. All this will be accomplished only at the time which Allah has fixed for it in His scheme of things. Your demands can neither hasten it on by a second nor your supplications can withhold it by a second."

50. The allusion is to the pagans of Arabia, who did not believe in any Divine Book.

51. That is, "The common people who are following their leaders, chiefs, saints and rulers blindly, and are not prepared to listen to any word of advice from a well-wisher against them. When the same people will see the actual reality and will also remember how their religious leaders used to misrepresent things, and when they will realize what doom they are going to meet on account of following

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صَالِحًا فَأُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ جَزَآءُ الضِّعْفِ بِمَا عَمِلُوْا وَهُمْ فِي الْغُرُفٰتِ اٰمِنُوْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾
وَالَّذِيْنَ يَسْعَوْنَ فِيْٓ اٰيٰتِنَا مُعٰجِزِيْنَ اُولٰٓئِكَ فِي الْعَذَابِ مُحْضَرُوْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾ قُلْ اِنَّ
رَبِّيْ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَّشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهٖ وَيَقْدِرُ لَهٗ ۭ وَمَآ اَنْفَقْتُمْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ فَهُوَ
يُخْلِفُهٗ ۚ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الرّٰزِقِيْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَيَوْمَ يَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيْعًا ثُمَّ يَقُوْلُ لِلْمَلٰۗىِٕكَةِ اَهٰٓؤُلَاۗءِ
اِيَّاكُمْ كَانُوْا يَعْبُدُوْنَ ﴿٤٠﴾ قَالُوْا سُبْحٰنَكَ اَنْتَ وَلِيُّنَا مِنْ دُوْنِهِمْ ۚ بَلْ كَانُوْا يَعْبُدُوْنَ
الْجِنَّ ۚ اَكْثَرُهُمْ بِهِمْ مُّؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٤١﴾ فَالْيَوْمَ لَا يَمْلِكُ بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ نَّفْعًا وَّلَا ضَرًّا ۭ
وَنَقُوْلُ لِلَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا ذُوْقُوْا عَذَابَ النَّارِ الَّتِيْ كُنْتُمْ بِهَا تُكَذِّبُوْنَ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَاِذَا تُتْلٰى
عَلَيْهِمْ اٰيٰتُنَا بَيِّنٰتٍ قَالُوْا مَا هٰذَآ اِلَّا رَجُلٌ يُّرِيْدُ اَنْ يَّصُدَّكُمْ عَمَّا كَانَ يَعْبُدُ
اٰبَاۗؤُكُمْ ۚ وَقَالُوْا مَا هٰذَآ اِلَّآ اِفْكٌ مُّفْتَرًى ۭ وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لِلْحَقِّ لَمَّا
جَاۗءَهُمْ ۙ اِنْ هٰذَآ اِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَمَآ اٰتَيْنٰهُمْ مِّنْ كُتُبٍ يَّدْرُسُوْنَهَا وَ
مَآ اَرْسَلْنَآ اِلَيْهِمْ قَبْلَكَ مِنْ نَّذِيْرٍ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَكَذَّبَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۙ وَمَا بَلَغُوْا
مِعْشَارَ مَآ اٰتَيْنٰهُمْ فَكَذَّبُوْا رُسُلِيْ ۭ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيْرِ ﴿٤٥﴾ قُلْ اِنَّمَآ اَعِظُكُمْ
بِوَاحِدَةٍ ۚ اَنْ تَقُوْمُوْا لِلّٰهِ مَثْنٰى وَفُرَادٰى ثُمَّ تَتَفَكَّرُوْا ۣ مَا بِصَاحِبِكُمْ مِّنْ
جِنَّةٍ ۭ اِنْ هُوَ اِلَّا نَذِيْرٌ لَّكُمْ بَيْنَ يَدَيْ عَذَابٍ شَدِيْدٍ ﴿٤٦﴾ قُلْ مَا سَاَلْتُكُمْ
مِّنْ اَجْرٍ فَهُوَ لَكُمْ ۭ اِنْ اَجْرِيَ اِلَّا عَلَي اللّٰهِ ۚ وَهُوَ عَلٰي كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيْدٌ ﴿٤٧﴾
قُلْ اِنَّ رَبِّيْ يَقْذِفُ بِالْحَقِّ ۚ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوْبِ ﴿٤٨﴾ قُلْ جَاۗءَ الْحَقُّ وَمَا يُبْدِئُ
الْبَاطِلُ وَمَا يُعِيْدُ ﴿٤٩﴾ قُلْ اِنْ ضَلَلْتُ فَاِنَّمَآ اَضِلُّ عَلٰي نَفْسِيْ ۚ وَاِنِ اهْتَدَيْتُ
فَبِمَا يُوْحِيْٓ اِلَيَّ رَبِّيْ ۭ اِنَّهٗ سَمِيْعٌ قَرِيْبٌ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَلَوْ تَرٰٓى اِذْ فَزِعُوْا فَلَا فَوْتَ وَاُخِذُوْا
مِنْ مَّكَانٍ قَرِيْبٍ ﴿٥١﴾ وَّقَالُوْٓا اٰمَنَّا بِهٖ ۚ وَاَنّٰى لَهُمُ التَّنَاوُشُ مِنْ مَّكَانٍۢ بَعِيْدٍ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَ

O Prophet, say to them, "My Lord gives abundantly to whomever of His servants He wills and sparingly to whom He wills.[59] Whatever you spend, He replenishes it by other provisions: He is the best of Providers."[60] 39

And the Day when He will gather all mankind together, He will ask the angels, "Did they really worship you?"[61] They will reply, "Glory be to Thee: our connection is with Thee, not with them.[62] They, in fact, worshipped the jinns, not us. It was in them that most of them believed."[63] (At that time We shall say:) "Today you can neither help nor harm one another." And to the wrongdoers We shall say, 'Now taste the torment of Hell which you used to deny." 40-42

When Our clear Revelations are recited to these people, they say, "This person only wants to turn you away from those deities whom your forefathers have been worshipping." And they say, "This (Qur'ān) is only a forged falsehood." When the Truth came before these disbelievers, they said, "This is plain magic," whereas We had neither given them a book before that they might study it, nor sent to them any warner before you.[64] Those who have gone before them denied likewise. These people have not attained even a tenth of what We had given them. But when they treated My Messengers as liars, see how severe was My punishment![65] 43-45

O Prophet, say to them, "I shall advise you of one thing: Think hard singly or in twos for the sake of Allah and reflect as to what is there of madness in your companion.[66] He is only a warner to you before the coming of a dreadful torment."[67] Say to them, "If I have asked you for a reward, keep it with yourselves,[68] for my reward is with Allah and He is a witness over everything."[69] Say to them, "My Lord inspires (me) with the Truth,[70] and He is the Knower of all the hidden realities." Say, "The Truth has come; now falsehood cannot succeed whatever it may do." Say "If I have gone astray, the burden of my going astray is on myself alone, and if I am on right guidance, it is by virtue of what my Lord reveals to me. He hears everything and is near at hand."[71] 46-50

Would that you could see these people when they will be in a state of confusion! They will not be able to escape but will be seized from a place closeby.[72] Then they will say, "We believe in it,"[73] 51-52

whereas they cannot attain a thing gone far out of hand.[74]

Contd. from p.219]

their leaders, they will turn on them, and say, "O wretched people, you led us astray: you are responsible for all our afflictions. Had you not misguided us, we would have listened to the Messengers of Allah and believed in what they said."

52. That is; "They will say: We had no power by which a few of us could have compelled hundreds of thousands of the people like you to follow us. If you had the will to believe, you could have deposed us from leadership and power and authority and government. In fact, you were our army: you were the source of our wealth and power. But for your offerings and gifts and taxes we should have been paupers. Had you not sworn allegiance to us, we could not have flourished as saints even for a day. Had you not appreciated and applauded us as leaders, we would have remained unknown. Had you not become our army and fought against the whole world for our sake, we could not have ruled over a single individual. Now why don't you admit that you yourselves did not want to follow the way that the Messengers had presented before you. You were the slaves of your own lusts and desires, and the demands of your selves could not be fulfilled by the righteous way of life presented by the Messengers but by what we presented before you. You were heedless of the lawful and the unlawful and craved for the luxuries of life, which we only could provide you. You were in search of such guides as could give you the licence to commit any sin, any crime, and take on themselves the responsibility to have you forgiven by God, in exchange for gifts. You wanted to listen to such religious scholars only who could please you by proving every kind of *shirk* and every innovation in religion and every lust of your self to be the very truth. You needed such forgerers who could invent a new religion by altering the Religion of God after your desires. You wanted to follow such leaders who could help you become prosperous in this world, no matter how you fared in the Hereafter. You wished to have such rulers who were immoral and dishonest so that under their patronage you also could have the freedom to indulge in any sin, any immorality. Thus, you and we were equal partners in the bargain. Now you cannot delude anyone by saying that you were absolutely innocent and that we had spoiled and corrupted you against your will."

53. In other words, the common people's reply will be: "How can you hold us as equal partners in this responsibility? Do you also remember what sort of trickeries and deceptions and false propaganda you practised and what efforts you used to make to tempt and entice the people day and night. It is not just that you presented the world before us and we were allured, but this also is a fact that you used to befool us by your frauds and deceptions and each one of you brought a new bait every day to tempt and lure the simple people."

The Qur'ān has made mention of the dispute between the religious guides and their followers at different places in different ways. For details, see Al-A'rāf: 38-39; Ibrāhīm: 21; Al-Qaṣaṣ: 63; Al-Aḥzāb: 66-68; Al-Mu'min: 47-48; Ḥā Mīm Sajdah: 29.

54. That the message of the Prophets was first of all opposed and resisted by the well-to-do people who possessed wealth and influence and authority, has been stated at many places in the Qur'ān. For instance, see Al-An'ām: 123; Al-A'rāf: 60, 66, 75, 88, 90; Hūd: 27; Banī Isrā'īl: 16; Al-Mu'minūn: 24, 33 to 38, 46, 47; Az-Zukhruf: 23.

55. Their reasoning was: "We are greater favourites of Allah than you. That is why He has favoured us with the blessings of which you are deprived, or have received them in lesser measure. Why should Allah have given us all these provisions and wealth and power had He not been pleased with us? Now, how can we believe that Allah Who is showering us with all kinds of His blessings here will punish us in the Hereafter? He will punish only those who are deprived of His favours here."

This misunderstanding of the world-worshippers also has been mentioned at several places in the Qur'ān and refuted. For instance, see Al-Baqarah: 126, 212; At-Taubah: 55, 69; Hūd: 3, 27; Ar-Ra'd: 26; Al-Kahf: 34 to 43; Maryam: 73 to 77; Tā Hā: 131; Al-Mu'minūn: 55 to 61; Ash-Shu'arā': 111; Al-Qaṣaṣ: 76 to 83; Ar-Rūm: 9; Al-Muddaththir: 11-26; Al-Fajr: 15 to 20.

56. They do not understand the wisdom on which the system of the distribution of provisions is based in the world, and are thus involved in the misunderstanding that whoever is being given abundantly is a beloved of Allah and whoever is being given sparingly is under His wrath. The fact, however, is that if a person looks around with open eyes he will see that in most cases the people with filthy and repulsive character are prosperous, and many good and noble people, who are known and recognized as morally pure, are found living in poverty. Now, how can a sensible person say that Allah dislikes the people of pure character and favours the wicked wrongdoers?"

57. This can have two meanings and both are correct: (1) That which brings the people nearer to Allah is not wealth and children but faith and righteous deeds; and (2) wealth and children can become a means of nearness to Allah only for that believing, righteous person, who spends his wealth in the way of Allah and tries to make his children God-conscious and righteous by good education and training.

58. Here there is also a subtle allusion that their blessing shall be imperishable, and their reward endless. For one cannot enjoy with full satisfaction of the heart a reward which is likely to perish or withdrawn suddenly at any time.

59. The repetition of this theme is meant to impress this: The abundance or restriction of the provisions is connected with Allah's will, not with His pleasure and approval. Under the will of Allah every good or evil person is receiving his provision. Both those who believe in Him and those who do not believe are getting their provisions. Neither is abundance of the provisions a proof that one is Allah's favourite servant nor is its restriction a sign that one is under His wrath. Under His will a wicked and dishonest person prospers, although wickedness and dishonesty are disliked by Allah. On the contrary, under the same Divine will a truthful and honest man suffers losses and undergoes hardships although these qualities are liked by Allah. Hence, the person who regards the material gains and benefits as the criterion for the good and evil is grossly mistaken. The real criterion is Allah's pleasure and approval which is attained through the moral qualities liked and approved by Him. With these qualities if a person gets the worldly blessings as well it will certainly be Allah's bounty for which he should be grateful to Him. But if from the moral point of view a person is Allah's rebel and is disobedient to Him and in spite of that is being favoured with worldly blessings, it would mean that he is preparing himself for a strict accountability and a most severe punishment.

60. Sustainer, Creator, Inventor, Donor and many other such attributes are in actual fact the attributes of Allah, but are metaphorically applied to men also. For example, about a person we may say, "He provided a job for so-and-so, or he made or invented such and such a thing, or he made a gift to so-and-so." Accordingly, Allah has used the word *Khair ar Rāziqīn* (the Best of Providers) for Himself. It means to impress the fact that Allah is the best of Providers among all those about whom you think that they are in any way connected with arranging the provisions.

61. Since the earliest times the polytheists in every age have been looking upon the angels as gods and goddesses and carving their idols and worshipping them. One has been regarded as the god of rain, another of lightning and another of wind; one is the goddess of wealth, another of knowledge and another of life and death. About this Allah says that on the Day of Resurrection the angels will be asked: "Were you being worshipped as deities by these people?" This question is not meant merely to find out the truth, but to ask, "Did you approve of their worship? Did you tell the people that you were their deities, so they should worship you? Or, did you wish that the people should do obeisance to you?" This question will not only be asked of the angels but of all those beings who have been worshipped as gods in the world. In Sūrah Al-Furqān it has been said: "On that

Day (Allah) will gather all these people together as well as their deities, whom they worship beside Allah. Then he will ask them, 'Did you mislead these servants of Mine, or did they themselves go astray?' " (V. 17).

62. That is, "They will answer: You are Pure and Exalted far above that another should be made a partner in Godhead with you. We have no connection with these people: we are not responsible for them, nor for what they did. We are Your servants only."

63. In this sentence, jinn implies the satans among the jinns. The answer means: "Apparently these people worshipped us, by mentioning our names and by making our images according to their imaginations. But, in fact, they did not worship us but worshipped the satans, for the satans only had shown them the way that they should regard others than Allah as fulfillers of their needs, and should make offerings before them."

This verse clearly brings out the error of the view of those people who take the word "jinn" to mean the dwellers of the mountains and deserts and rural areas. Can a sensible person imagine, on the basis of this verse, that the people used to worship the dwellers of the mountains and the deserts and the villages and believed in them?

This verse also throws light on another meaning of *'ibādat*. It shows that *'ibādat* is not mere worship and service, but it also implies carrying out somebody's orders and obeying him without question. Even if one curses another (as one curses Satan) but at the time follows his way, one would be performing his *'ibādat*. For other examples, see An-Nisā': 117-119; Al-Mā'idah: 60; At-Taubah: 31; Maryam: 42; Al-Qaṣaṣ:63.

64. That is, "Neither a book from God has come to them before this nor a messenger, who might have taught them to worship and serve others than God. Therefore, they are denying the invitation to *Tauḥīd* being given by the Qur'ān and Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) due to sheer ignorance, and not on the basis of any knowledge. They have in fact no authority for this."

65. That is, "The people of Makkah have not attained even one-tenth of the power and grandeur and prosperity that was possessed by those people. But just see how they went to their doom ultimately and their power and wealth could not avail them anything, when they refused to believe in the realities presented before them by the Prophets, and founded their system of life on falsehood."

66. That is, "Free yourselves of selfish interests and whims and prejudices

[Contd. on p. 226

قَدْ كَفَرُوا بِهٖ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۚ وَيَقْذِفُوْنَ بِالْغَيْبِ مِنْ مَّكَانٍۢ بَعِيْدٍ ۝٥٣ وَحِيْلَ بَيْنَهُمْ
وَبَيْنَ مَا يَشْتَهُوْنَ كَمَا فُعِلَ بِاَشْيَاعِهِمْ مِّنْ قَبْلُ ۭ اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا فِيْ شَكٍّ مُّرِيْبٍ ۝٥٤

* Even before they had disbelieved and used to conjecture without true knowledge.[75] At that time they will be deprived of that which they will desire, as will have been deprived their likes before them: Indeed they had been involved in a misleading suspicion.[76] 53-54

Contd. from p.225]

and consider this sincerely for the sake of Allah: consider this singly as well as jointly in two's and three's and four's in an objective manner and consider it well and deeply: What after all can be the reason that the person whom you call a madman today was, until yesterday, being looked upon as a very wise man among you ? The incident that happened a little before his appointment to Prophethood is well known among you. When after the re-construction of the Ka'bah the different clans of the Quraish were going to clash among themselves on the question as to who should place the Black Stone in the wall, you yourselves had unanimously agreed to accept Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) as the arbitrator, and he had settled the question amicably to the entire satisfaction of all concerned. Now, how is it that you have started calling the same person mad, whose wisdom and sagacity has been thus tested and experienced by your whole nation? What is it if not stubbornness? Do you really mean the same that you say with your tongues?"

67. That is, "Do you call him mad only for this reason? Do you regard as wise him who finds you following the path of ruin, and applauds you, and mad him who warns you beforehand of the coming of a disaster and shows you the way to safety and well-being?"

68. Another meaning of this can be: "I do not seek anything but your well-being: My only recompense is that you should be reformed." This thing has been expressed at another place thus; "O Prophet, say to them: I do not ask of you any recompense for this: I only ask of the one, who will, to adopt the way of his Lord." (Al-Furqān 57)

69. That is, "The accusers may say whatever they like but Allah knows everything. He is a witness that I am a selfless person: I am not performing this mission for any selfish motive."

70. The words *yaqdhifu bil-ḥaqq* give two meanings: (1) "He inspires me with the knowledge of the truth by Revelation;" and (2) "He is making the truth to prevail: He is crushing falsehood by means of the truth."

71. From this verse some people of the modern age have argued thus: "According to it the Holy Prophet also could go astray: rather used to go astray. That is why Allah has made the Holy Prophet himself say: 'If I have gone astray, I am myself responsible for this. And I am on right guidance only when my Lord sends down Revelation (*i.e.*, verses of the Qur'ān) to me." By this wrong interpretation these unjust people in fact want to prove that the Holy Prophet's life was, God forbid, a combination of guidance and error, and Allah had made him confess this before the disbelievers lest one should adopt his obedience completely, taking him to be wholly on right guidance. The fact however is that whoever considers the theme in its correct context will know that here the words, 'If I have gone astray', are not meant to give the meaning that the Holy Prophet actually used to go astray, but it means: 'If I have gone astray, as you accuse I have, and my claim to Prophethood and my this invitation to *Tauḥīd* are the result of the same deviation, as you seem to imagine, then the burden of my going astray will be on me alone; you will not be held responsible for it. But if I am on right guidance, as in fact I am, it is because I receive Revelation from my Lord, by virtue of which I have obtained the knowledge of the guidance. My Lord is near at hand and is hearing everything. He knows whether I have gone astray or am on right guidance from Him."

72. That is, "On the Day of Resurrection, every culprit will be seized in a way as though he lay in hiding closeby. As he will try to flee, he will be seized immediately."

73. "We believe in it": "We believe in the message presented by the Messenger in the world."

74. That is, "They should have believed when they lived in the world; they have come a long way away from it. After having arrived in the Next World how can they get a chance to repent and believe ?"

75. That is, "They used to charge the Messenger and the believers with false accusations and used to taunt and mock his message. Some times they said he was a sorcerer or a madman; sometimes they ridiculed *Tauḥīd* and the concept of the Hereafter; sometimes they invented the story that another one taught him everything; and sometimes they said that the believers had started following him only on account of folly and ignorance."

76. As a matter of fact, no one adopts *shirk* and atheism and denial of the Hereafter by conviction, nor can he, for conviction comes from knowledge. And

no one has the knowledge that there is no God, or that many others have a share in Divine authority, or that there should be no Hereafter. Thus, whoever has adopted these beliefs in the world, has raised a structure on mere conjecture, which has no basis except doubt and suspicion, and this suspicion has led him to sheer error. Consequently, they doubted God's existence, they doubted the truth of *Tauḥīd*, they doubted the coming of the Hereafter; so much so that they made this doubt their faith and did not listen to the Prophets and expended and wasted their whole lifetime indulging in a wrong creed and way of life.



XXXV

FĀṬIR

فَاطِر

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XXXV

FĀṬIR

فَاطِر

INTRODUCTION

Name

The word *Fāṭir* of the first very verse is the title given to this Sūrah, which simply means that it is a Sūrah in which the word *Fāṭir* has occurred. The other name is *Al-Malā'ika*, which also occurs in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

The internal evidence of the style shows that the period of the revelation of this Sūrah is probably the middle Makkan period, and especially that part of it, when antagonism had grown quite strong and every sort of mischief was being adopted to frustrate the mission of the Holy Prophet.

Subject Matter and Theme

The discourse is meant to warn and reprove the people of Makkah and their chiefs for their antagonistic attitude that they had then adopted towards the Holy Prophet's message of *Tauḥid*, like a well-wisher, and also to admonish them like a teacher, as if to say: "O foolish people, the way to which this Prophet is calling you is to your own advantage. Your anger, your tricks and machinations against it and your conspiracies and designs to frustrate it are not directed against him but against your own selves. If you do not listen to him, you will be harming your own selves, not him. Just consider and ponder over what he says: there is nothing wrong in it. He repudiates *shirk*. If you look around carefully, you will yourself realize that there is no basis for *shirk* in the world. He presents the doctrine of *Tauḥid*. If you use your common sense, you will come to the conclusion that there is no being, beside Allah, Creator of the Universe, which might possess divine attributes and powers and authority. He tells you that you have not been created to be irresponsible in this world, but you have to render an account of your deeds before your God, and that there is life after the life of this world when everyone will meet the consequences of what he has done here. If you think a little you will see that your doubts and your astonishment about it are absolutely baseless. Don't you see the phenomenon of the reproduction of creation day and night? How can then your own recreation be impossible for that God Who created you from an insignificant sperm-drop? Doesn't your own intellect testify that the good and the evil cannot be alike? Then think and judge for yourselves as to what is reasonable: should the good and the evil meet with the same fate and end up in the dust, or should the good be requited with good and the evil with evil? Now, if you do not admit and acknowledge these rational and reasonable things and do not abandon your false gods, and wish to continue living only as irresponsible people in the world, the Prophet will not lose anything. It is you yourselves only who will suffer the consequences. The Prophet's only responsibility was to make the truth plain to you, which he has done".

In this connection, the Holy Prophet has been consoled again and again, as if to say: "When you are doing full justice to the preaching of your mission, you do not incur any responsibility for those who persist in their error and do not accept and follow the right way". Furthermore,

he has also been consoled to the effect: "You should neither grieve on account of those who do not want to believe, nor consume yourself with the thought of how to bring them to the right path. Instead of this, you should pay your full attention to those who are inclined to listen to you".

The believers also, in this connection, have been given the good news so that they may feel strengthened and encouraged and remain steadfast on the path of the truth with full faith in the promises made by Allah.



اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ فَاطِرِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الْاَرْضِ جَاعِلِ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ رُسُلًا اُولِيْٓ اَجْنِحَةٍ
مَّثْنٰى وَ ثُلٰثَ وَ رُبٰعَ ؕ يَزِيْدُ فِي الْخَلْقِ مَا يَشَآءُ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
قَدِيْرٌ ۝١ مَا يَفْتَحِ اللّٰهُ لِلنَّاسِ مِنْ رَّحْمَةٍ فَلَا مُمْسِكَ لَهَا ۚ وَ مَا يُمْسِكْ ۙ
فَلَا مُرْسِلَ لَهٗ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهٖ ؕ وَ هُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ۝٢ يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اذْكُرُوْا
نِعْمَتَ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْكُمْ ؕ هَلْ مِنْ خَالِقٍ غَيْرُ اللّٰهِ يَرْزُقُكُمْ مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ وَ الْاَرْضِ ؕ
لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۚ فَاَنّٰى تُؤْفَكُوْنَ ۝٣ وَ اِنْ يُّكَذِّبُوْكَ فَقَدْ كُذِّبَتْ رُسُلٌ مِّنْ
قَبْلِكَ ؕ وَ اِلَى اللّٰهِ تُرْجَعُ الْاُمُوْرُ ۝٤ يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اِنَّ وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ حَقٌّ فَلَا
تَغُرَّنَّكُمُ الْحَيٰوةُ الدُّنْيَا ۪ وَ لَا يَغُرَّنَّكُمْ بِاللّٰهِ الْغَرُوْرُ ۝٥ اِنَّ الشَّيْطٰنَ لَكُمْ
عَدُوٌّ فَاتَّخِذُوْهُ عَدُوًّا ؕ اِنَّمَا يَدْعُوْا حِزْبَهٗ لِيَكُوْنُوْا مِنْ اَصْحٰبِ السَّعِيْرِ ۝٦
اَلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيْدٌ ۚ وَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَ عَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ لَهُمْ
مَّغْفِرَةٌ وَّ اَجْرٌ كَبِيْرٌ ۝٧ اَفَمَنْ زُيِّنَ لَهٗ سُوْٓءُ عَمَلِهٖ فَرَاٰهُ حَسَنًا ؕ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ
يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَ يَهْدِيْ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ۫ فَلَا تَذْهَبْ نَفْسُكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَسَرٰتٍ ؕ
اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلِيْمٌۢ بِمَا يَصْنَعُوْنَ ۝٨ وَ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْٓ اَرْسَلَ الرِّيٰحَ فَتُثِيْرُ سَحَابًا
فَسُقْنٰهُ اِلٰى بَلَدٍ مَّيِّتٍ فَاَحْيَيْنَا بِهِ الْاَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا ؕ كَذٰلِكَ النُّشُوْرُ ۝٩
مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيْدُ الْعِزَّةَ فَلِلّٰهِ الْعِزَّةُ جَمِيْعًا ؕ اِلَيْهِ يَصْعَدُ الْكَلِمُ الطَّيِّبُ وَ

XXXV

FĀṬIR

فَاطِر

Verses: 45 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate

Praise is only for Allah, Who is the Creator of the heavens and the earth and the Employer of the angels[1] having wings in twos and threes and fours,[2] as His messengers. He adds to His creation as He pleases[3]: surely Allah has power over everything. Whatever door of mercy Allah may open for the people, none can withhold it, and the door that He closes, none has the power to open it after Him.[4] He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.[5] 1-2

O people, remember the favours Allah has done to you.[6] Is there beside Allah any other creator also, who provides for you from the heavens and the earth ? There is no god but He. Wherefrom then are you being deceived[7]? Now (O Prophet,) if these people treat you as a liar,[8] (it is not a new thing :) many Messengers before you also have been treated as liars. And all affairs shall ultimately be presented before Allah.[9] 3-4

O people, the promise of Allah is surely true.[10] Therefore, let not the worldly life deceive you,[11] nor let that great deceiver deceive you concerning Allah.[12] Indeed, Satan is your enemy; therefore, you also should treat him as your enemy. He is inviting his followers towards his way so that they may join the dwellers of Hell. Those who disbelieve[13] shall have a severe punishment, and those who believe and do good works shall have forgiveness and a rich reward.[14] 5-7

(Can[15] the deviation of that person be imagined) whose evil deed is made seem fair to him and he deems it as good[16]? The fact is that Allah leads astray whomsoever He pleases and shows the Right Way to whomsoever He pleases. So, (O Prophet,) let not yourself be consumed 8-9

with grief for the sake of these people[17]: Allah is aware of whatever they are doing.[18] Allah it is Who sends the winds; then they raise the cloud, then We drive it towards a waste land and revive it thereby after its death. Likewise shall be the Resurrection of the dead men.[19]

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1. This can have two meanings: (1) "That these angels perform the service of communicating messages between Allah and His Prophets;" and (2) "that it is the duty of these angels to convey and enforce the Commands of Allah Almighty throughout the universe." The object is to impress this truth: The position of the angels whom the polytheists have made their gods and goddesses is no more than of obedient servants of Allah, the One. Just as the servants of a king run about for the implementation of his orders, so do these angels fly about in the service of the real Sovereign of the Universe. These servants have no authority of their own; all powers rest with Allah, Who is the real Sovereign.

2. We have no means to know what is the nature of the wings of these angels. But when Allah has used this word, which in human language is used for the wings of birds, instead of any other words, to express and depict the truth, one can certainly conclude that this very word of our language is nearest to the actual meaning. The mention of two and three and four pairs of the wings shows that different angels have been granted different degrees of powers by Allah. They have been equipped with different powers of speed and efficiency as demanded by the nature of service for which they are employed.

3. These words show that the number of the wings of the angels is restricted to four, but Allah has provided some angels with more wings than four. According to a *Ḥadīth* related by Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, the Holy Prophet once saw the Angel Gabriel (peace be upon him) with six hundred wings. (Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī). Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah relates that the Holy Prophet had seen Gabriel twice in his real shape: he had six hundred wings and had covered the whole horizon. (Tirmidhī)

4. This also is meant to remove the misunderstanding of the polytheists, who believed that from among the servants of Allah some one gave them the jobs, some one the children and some one health to their patients. All these superstitions of *shirk* are baseless, and the pure truth is just that whatever of mercy reaches the people, reaches them only through Allah Almighty's bounty and grace. No one else has the power either to bestow it or to withhold it. This theme has been expressed at many places in the Qur'ān and the *Aḥādīth* in different ways so that man may avoid the humiliation of begging at every door and at every shrine and may realize that making or marring of his destiny is in the power of One Allah alone and of none else.

5. "He is the All-Mighty": He is dominant and the owner of Sovereignty: none can stop His judgments from being enforced. Also "He is All-Wise": every judgement of His is based on wisdom. When He gives somebody something He gives it because it is demanded by wisdom, and when He withholds something from somebody He withholds it because it would be against wisdom to give it.

6. "Remember.....you": "Do not be ungrateful: do not forget that whatever you have has been given by Allah". In other words, this sentence is meant to warn that whoever worships another than Allah, or regards a blessing as a favour done by another than Allah, or thanks another than Allah for a favour received, or prays to another than Allah for the grant of a blessing, is ungrateful".

7. There, is a subtle gap between the first and the second sentence, which is being filled by the context itself. To understand this, one may visualize the scene like this: The polytheists are being addressed. The speaker asks the audience: "Is there another creator beside Allah, who might have created you, and might be arranging provisions for you from the earth and heavens ?" After this question the speaker waits for the answer. But there is no reply from anywhere. No one replies that there is another one beside Allah, who is their creator and sustainer. This by itself shows that the audience also believe that there is none beside Allah, who could be their creator and sustainer. Then the speaker says: "If so, then He alone can be the Deity also and no one else. How have you been so deceived ? Why have you taken these others as your deities, when Allah alone is your Creator and Sustainer?"

8. "If they ...liar": "If they do not believe that there is no one worthy of worship but Allah, and accuse you of having made a false claim to Prophethood."

9. That is, "It is not for the people to give the verdict that whomsoever they call a liar should in actual fact become a liar. The judgement rests with Allah. He shall in the end decide who was the liar, and shall bring the real liars to their evil end."

10. "The promise" implies the promise of the Hereafter to which allusion was made in the preceding sentence, saying: "All affairs shall ultimately be presented before Allah. "

11. "Let not...deceive you": "Deceive you that the world is an end in itself: that there is no Hereafter when one will have to render an account of one's deeds; or that even if there is the Hereafter, the one who is enjoying life here will enjoy life there, too."

12. "Great deceiver": Satan, as is evident from the next sentence. And "deceive you concerning Allah" means: (1) That he should make some people

[Contd. on p. 240

الْعَمَلُ الصَّالِحُ يَرْفَعُهٗ ؕ وَالَّذِيْنَ يَمْكُرُوْنَ السَّيِّاٰتِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيْدٌ ؕ
وَمَكْرُ اُولٰٓئِكَ هُوَ يَبُوْرُ ﴿١٠﴾ وَاللّٰهُ خَلَقَكُمْ مِّنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُّطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ
جَعَلَكُمْ اَزْوَاجًا ؕ وَمَا تَحْمِلُ مِنْ اُنْثٰى وَلَا تَضَعُ اِلَّا بِعِلْمِهٖ ؕ وَمَا
يُعَمَّرُ مِنْ مُّعَمَّرٍ وَّلَا يُنْقَصُ مِنْ عُمُرِهٖٓ اِلَّا فِيْ كِتٰبٍ ؕ اِنَّ ذٰلِكَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ
يَسِيْرٌ ﴿١١﴾ وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْبَحْرٰنِ ۖ هٰذَا عَذْبٌ فُرَاتٌ سَآئِغٌ شَرَابُهٗ وَهٰذَا
مِلْحٌ اُجَاجٌ ؕ وَمِنْ كُلٍّ تَاْكُلُوْنَ لَحْمًا طَرِيًّا وَّتَسْتَخْرِجُوْنَ حِلْيَةً تَلْبَسُوْنَهَا ۚ
وَتَرَى الْفُلْكَ فِيْهِ مَوَاخِرَ لِتَبْتَغُوْا مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿١٢﴾ يُوْلِجُ
الَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَيُوْلِجُ النَّهَارَ فِي الَّيْلِ ۙ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ ۚ كُلٌّ
يَّجْرِيْ لِاَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ؕ ذٰلِكُمُ اللّٰهُ رَبُّكُمْ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ ؕ وَالَّذِيْنَ تَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ
دُوْنِهٖ مَا يَمْلِكُوْنَ مِنْ قِطْمِيْرٍ ﴿١٣﴾ اِنْ تَدْعُوْهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُوْا دُعَآءَكُمْ ۚ وَلَوْ
سَمِعُوْا مَا اسْتَجَابُوْا لَكُمْ ؕ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ يَكْفُرُوْنَ بِشِرْكِكُمْ ؕ وَلَا يُنَبِّئُكَ
مِثْلُ خَبِيْرٍ ﴿١٤﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اَنْتُمُ الْفُقَرَآءُ اِلَى اللّٰهِ ۚ وَاللّٰهُ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيْدُ ﴿١٥﴾
اِنْ يَّشَاْ يُذْهِبْكُمْ وَيَاْتِ بِخَلْقٍ جَدِيْدٍ ﴿١٦﴾ وَمَا ذٰلِكَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ بِعَزِيْزٍ ﴿١٧﴾ وَلَا
تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِّزْرَ اُخْرٰى ؕ وَاِنْ تَدْعُ مُثْقَلَةٌ اِلٰى حِمْلِهَا لَا يُحْمَلْ مِنْهُ شَيْءٌ
وَّلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبٰى ؕ اِنَّمَا تُنْذِرُ الَّذِيْنَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَيْبِ وَاَقَامُوا
الصَّلٰوةَ ؕ وَمَنْ تَزَكّٰى فَاِنَّمَا يَتَزَكّٰى لِنَفْسِهٖ ؕ وَاِلَى اللّٰهِ الْمَصِيْرُ ﴿١٨﴾ وَمَا يَسْتَوِي
الْاَعْمٰى وَالْبَصِيْرُ ﴿١٩﴾ وَلَا الظُّلُمٰتُ وَلَا النُّوْرُ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَلَا الظِّلُّ وَلَا الْحَرُوْرُ ﴿٢١﴾
وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْاَحْيَآءُ وَلَا الْاَمْوَاتُ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُسْمِعُ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ۚ وَمَآ اَنْتَ
بِمُسْمِعٍ مَّنْ فِي الْقُبُوْرِ ﴿٢٢﴾ اِنْ اَنْتَ اِلَّا نَذِيْرٌ ﴿٢٣﴾ اِنَّآ اَرْسَلْنٰكَ بِالْحَقِّ بَشِيْرًا

Whoever seeks honour should know that the honour wholly belongs to Allah.[20] Only the pure Word rises up to Him, and the righteous deed causes it to rise.[21] As for those who plot evil,[22] there is a severe torment for them, and their plotting shall itself perish. 10

Allah[23] created you from dust, then from the sperm-drop,[24] then made you pairs (*i.e.*, male and female). No woman conceives or is delivered but it is in the knowledge of Allah. No aging person grows old nor is anything reduced of his age except in accordance with a Book[25]: this is an easy thing for Allah.[26] And the two bodies of water are not alike[27]: one is sweet and thirst-quenching, pleasant to drink, while the other is saltish and pungent; yet from both you get fresh flesh[28] and bring out decorations to wear,[29] and in the same waters you see the ships which plough through it so that you may seek Allah's bounty and be grateful to Him. He causes the night to pass into the day and the day into the night[30] and He has subjected the sun and the moon till an appointed time.[31] The same Allah (Whose works are these) is your Lord: Sovereignty is His. Those whom you invoke instead of Him do not own even a blade of grass.[32] If you call them, they cannot hear your prayers, and if they hear, they cannot answer you[33]; and on the Day of Resurrection they will disown your *shirk*.[34] None can inform you of the truth except the One Who is All-Aware.[35] 11-14

O people it is you who stand in need[36] of Allah: Allah is Self-Sufficient and Self-Praiseworthy.[37] If He wills He can remove you and bring a new creation in your place: this is not at all difficult for Allah.[38] No bearer of a burden will bear another's burden[39], and if a laden soul cries out for help, none will come forward to share the least of its burden, even though it be the nearest kinsman.[40] (O Prophet,) you can only warn those who fear their Lord though they cannot see Him, and establish the *ṣalāt*.[41] Whoever adopts purity does so for his own good, and to Allah shall all return. The blind and the seeing are not alike, nor are the darknesses and light alike, nor are the cool shade and the heat of the sun, nor the living and the dead alike.[42] Allah causes whomever He wills, to hear, but (O Prophet,) you cannot make those who are buried in the graves to hear you.[43] You are only a warner,[44] We have sent you with the Truth, as a bearer of good news and a 15-24

warner. And there has been no nation which was not visited by a warner.[45]

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believe that Allah does not exist at all; (2) involve others in the misunderstanding that Allah after having once created the world, has retired and has now practically nothing to do with the universe any more; (3) delude others into believing that Allah no doubt is running the universe, but He has taken no responsibility of providing guidance to man: therefore, Revelation and Prophethood are a mere deception; and (4) give still others the false hope that since Allah is All-Forgiving and All-Merciful, He will forgive one whatever sins one might have committed, and that He has some beloved ones too: if one remains attached to them, success and salvation are assured.

13. "Those who disbelieve": those who will refuse to believe in this invitation of Allah's Book and His Messenger.

14. That is, Allah will overlook their errors and will reward them for their good deeds not merely with what they will just deserve but much more richly and generously.

15. Verses 3-7 were addressed to the common people. In this paragraph mention has been made of the standard-bearers of error and deviation, who were exerting their utmost to frustrate and defeat the mission of the Holy Prophet.

16. That is, one kind of perverted person is he who commits evil but knows and understands that he is committing evil. Such a person can be reformed by counsel and advice, and sometimes his own conscience also pricks and brings him to the right path, for his habits only are perverted, not his mind. But there is another kind of a person whose mentality has been perverted, who has lost the discrimination between good and evil, for whom the life of sin has become alluring and lustrous, who abhors good and takes evil for civilization and culture, who regards goodness and piety as things of the past, and sinfulness and wickedness as progressiveness, and for whom guidance becomes error and error guidance. Such a person is not amenable to any advice, any admonition. He neither takes warning from his own follies, nor listens to a well-wisher. It is useless to waste one's time and energy for the reformation of such a person. Instead, the inviter to the truth should turn his attention towards those whose consciences may still be alive and who may still be inclined to listen to the truth.

17. The insertion of the words "Allah leads astray whomsoever He pleases and shows the Right Way to whomsoever He pleases", between the preceding and this sentence, clearly gives the meaning that Allah deprives, of the

grace of guidance, those who become so perverted mentally, and leaves them to wander aimlessly in the ways in which they themselves wish to remain lost. After making the Holy Prophet realize this fact Allah exhorts him to the effect: "It is not within your power to bring such people to the right path; therefore, have patience in their regard. Just as Allah is indifferent about them, so should you also avoid being unduly anxious about their reformation."

Here, one should bear in mind two things very clearly. First, the people being mentioned here were not the common people, but the chiefs of Makkah, who were employing every falsehood, every fraud and every trick to defeat the mission of the Holy Prophet. These people were in fact not involved in any misunderstanding about the Holy Prophet. They knew full well what he was calling them to and what were the evils and moral weaknesses which they themselves were striving to maintain. After knowing and understanding all this they had firmly resolved not to let him succeed in his object, and for this purpose they did not feel any hesitation in using any mean or petty device. Now, evidently the people who deliberately and after mutual consultation invent a new falsehood every next day and spread it against a person, can deceive the whole world but as for themselves they know that they are the liars and that the person whom they have accused is free of every blame. Then, if the person against whom the false propaganda is being made also does not react and respond in a way opposed to truth and righteousness, the unjust people also cannot help realizing that their opponent is a truthful and honest man. If in spite of this the people do not feel ashamed of their misconduct and continue to oppose and resist the truth with falsehood, their conduct itself testifies that they are under Allah's curse and they can no longer discriminate between good and evil.

Secondly, if Allah had only meant to make His Prophet understand the supreme truth, He could have secretly made him aware of this. There was no need to proclaim it openly in the Revelation. To mention it in the Qur'ān and to proclaim it to the world was in fact meant to warn the common people that the leaders and the religious guides whom they were following blindly were the people of perverted mentality, whose mean conduct was itself an evidence that they were under the curse of Allah.

18. This sentence in itself contains the threat that a time is coming when Allah will punish them for their misdeeds. When a ruler says that he is fully aware of the misdeeds of a culprit, it does not only mean that the ruler has the knowledge of his misconduct, but it necessarily contains the warning that he will also punish him for this certainly.

19. That is, "These ignorant people think that the Hereafter is impossible. That is why they are living under the delusion that they may do whatever they like

in the world, the time will never come when they will have to appear before their God and render an account of their deeds. But this is no more than a delusion. On the Day of Resurrection, the dead men of all ages will suddenly rise back to life at one call of Allah just as the dead earth comes back to life at one shower of the rain and the roots, lying dead for ages, become green and start sprouting up from the layers of the earth."

20. It should be noted that whatever the chiefs of the Quraish were doing against the Holy Prophet, they were doing it for the sake of their honour and dignity. They thought that if the Holy Prophet succeeded in his mission, their greatness and glory would fade away, their influence would die out and their honour among the Arabs would be ruined. At this it is being said: "The honour that you have attained for yourselves by your disbelief in and rebellion against Allah, is a false honour, which is destined to be ruined. The true and enduring honour, which can never suffer debasement, can be attained only through service of Allah. If you turn sincerely and faithfully to Him, you will attain it; and if you turn away from Him you are bound to live an abject, wretched life."

21. This is the real means of attaining the honour. In the sight of Allah the false, vicious and mischievous can never rise and flourish. In His sight only such a word can rise and flourish, which is true and pure and based on the truth, and in which a righteous creed and a correct point of view may have been expressed and presented. Then the thing which makes the pure word rise and prosper is the action which conforms to it. Wherever the word is pure but the action opposed to it, the purity of the word suffers a blemish. The mere extravagant use of the tongue does not exalt a word: the power of the righteous action is needed to exalt and raise it high.

Here, one should also note that the Qur'ān presents the righteous word and the righteous action as inter-dependent. No action can be righteous merely on the basis of its external and apparent form unless it has a righteous creed behind it. And no righteous creed can be reliable unless it is supported and confirmed by a person's action. For instance, if a person says that he regards Allah, the One, alone as his Deity, but worships others than Allah in practical life, his action belies his word. If a person says that he regards the wine as unlawful but drinks, his mere word can neither be acceptable to the people nor deserve approval in the sight of Allah.

22. "Those who plot evil": Those who propagate false and evil words by means of cunning tricks, deceit and deceptive reasoning, and do not feel any hesitation in employing any device, however mean and depraved, to frustrate and defeat the word of the truth.

23. From here again the discourse is directed to the common people.

24. That is, man in the first instance was created from the dust directly, then his race was perpetuated through the sperm-drop.

25. That is, "It is pre-ordained for everyone who is born in this world how long he will live. If a person lives a long life, he does so by Allah's decree, and if another one lives a short life, he too lives so by Allah's decree. Some ignorant people give the argument that in the past the death-rate of the newly-born children used to be high, and now it has been checked by the advancement of the medical science; and the people used to live short lives in the past, now due to better medical facilities the life-span has increased. But this argument could be presented in refutation of the Qur'ānic argument only when it could be ascertained that Allah, for instance, had pre-ordained a two-year life for a certain person, and the modern medical facilities have enhanced it by a day. If a person has no such knowledge, he cannot refute this Qur'ānic statement on any rational grounds. Only on the basis of the statistics that the death-rate among children has fallen, or that the people now are living longer lives, it cannot be argued that man has now become able to change the decrees of Allah. Rationally it is not impossible that Allah might have fixed different life-spans for the people born in different periods, and this might also be Allah Almighty's decree that man in such and such an age would be granted curative power to treat such and such diseases, and in such and such a period man would be given greater means for longevity.

26. That is, "It is not at all difficult for Allah to give commands and pass judgements about each individual of His countless creations when He possesses detailed and perfect knowledge about them."

27. That is, the body of water in the oceans, and the body of water in the rivers and springs and lakes.

28. "Fresh flesh": Flesh of water animals.

29. That is pearls and corals and, in some rivers, diamonds and gold.

30. That is, "The light of the day starts diminishing and the darkness of the night increasing gradually so as to cover up everything completely. Likewise, towards the end of the night, in the beginning, a streak of the light appears on the horizon, and then the bright day dawns."

31. "Subjected .." : subjected to a law.

32. The word *qiṭmīr* in the original means the thin skin that covers the stone of the date-fruit; but what is meant to be said is that the gods of the *mushriks* do not own anything whatever. That is why we have translated it "a blade of grass", which is an insignificant thing.

33. This does not mean that they cannot tell aloud, in answer to your prayer, whether your prayer has been accepted or not, but it means that they cannot take any action on your supplications. If a person sends his application to someone who is not a ruler, his application miscarries. For the person to whom it has been sent, has no authority whatever: he can neither reject it nor accept it. However, if the same application is sent to the one who is really a ruler, one or the other action will certainly be taken on it.

34. That is, "They will plainly say: We had never told them that we are Allah's associates and that they should worship us. On the contrary, we were not at all aware that they regarded us as Allah's associates and were invoking us for help. None of their prayers has reached us, nor has any of their gifts and offerings".

35. "All-Aware": Allah Almighty Himself. It means this: "The other person can at the most refute *shirk* and prove the powerlessness of the gods of the polytheists by rational arguments only, but We are directly aware of the Absolute Truth. We are telling you, on the basis of knowledge, that all those whom the people believe to be possessing some powers in Our Godhead are absolutely powerless. They have no authority whatever by which they might do somebody good or harm. And We know this directly that on the Day of Resurrection, these gods of the *mushriks* will themselves refute their *shirk*."

36. That is, "You should not remain under the delusion that Allah stands in need of your help. If you do not accept Him as God, His Godhead will fail, and if you do not serve and worship Him, He will incur some loss. Nay, but the fact is that you stand in need of Him. You cannot remain alive for a moment if He does not keep you alive, and does not provide you with the means by which you remain alive in the world and function. Therefore, when you are told to adopt His service and obedience, it is not because Allah stands in need of it, but because upon it depends your own success here as well as in the Hereafter. If you do not do so, you will be harming your own selves only, and not Allah in any way."

37. The word *Ghaní* implies that He is the Owner of everything: He is Self-Sufficient and Independent of all: He does not stand in need of anyone's help. The word *Hamíd* implies that He is Self-Praiseworthy: someone may praise Him, or may not, but He alone is worthy of *hamd* (praise and gratitude). These two attributes have been used together because one would be *ghaní* even if one did not do any good to anyone by one's wealth. In such a case one would be *ghaní* but not *hamíd*. One will be *hamíd* only in case one does not draw any benefit for oneself but benefits others in every way from the treasures of one's wealth and resources. Since Allah is perfect in these two attributes, it has been said: "He is not just *Ghaní* (self-sufficient) but such *Ghaní* as is worthy of every kind of praise and

gratitude, for He is fulfilling your needs as well as the needs of all other creatures."

38. That is, "You are not enjoying life on Allah's earth solely by dint of your own power and might. He has the power to remove you from here in no time and raise another people to take your place. Therefore, you should understand your true worth, and should desist from adopting the conduct which has been causing the downfall of the nations. When Allah wills to send someone to his doom, there is no one in the universe, who can stop Him and withhold His decree from being enforced."

39. "Burden": the burden of the responsibilities of actions. It means: In the sight of Allah every one is responsible for his own actions and for no one else's. There is no possibility that Allah will place the burden of one man's responsibility upon the other, nor is there the possibility that a person will take the burden of another's responsibility upon himself and get himself seized for the crime committed by the other. This thing has been said here because the polytheist kinsmen and relatives of the people who were embracing Islam in Makkah, used to urge them, saying, "Give up Islam and return to your ancestral faith. We take the responsibility of any punishment etc. on ourselves."

40. In the preceding sentence, Allah's law of justice has been enunciated, according to which He will not seize any person for the sin committed by another, but will hold everyone responsible for his own sin. In this sentence the Muslims have been told: "Those who urge you to give up faith and commit evil on the assurance that they will take on themselves the burden of your sins on the Day of Resurrection, are in fact giving you a false hope. When Resurrection comes and the people see what fate they are going to meet in consequence of their misdeed, everyone will be concerned only about himself. Brother will turn away from brother and father from son, and no one will be prepared to take even an atom's weight of another's burden on himself."

41. In other words, "Your warnings cannot have any effect on obstinate and stubborn people. Your admonitions can bring only such people to the right path, who have fear of God in their hearts, and who are inclined to bow before their real Master."

42. In these comparisons the present and the future of a believer and a disbeliever have been contrasted. There is a person who has closed his eyes to the realities and does not care to see as to what truth the whole system of the universe and his own existence itself are pointing. There is the other person, whose eyes are open and who clearly sees that everything outside and inside himself bears evidence to the Unity of God and to man's answerability before him. There is a

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وَّنَذِيْرًا ۚ وَاِنْ مِّنْ اُمَّةٍ اِلَّا خَلَا فِيْهَا نَذِيْرٌ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَاِنْ يُّكَذِّبُوْكَ فَقَدْ كَذَّبَ
الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۚ جَآءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ وَبِالزُّبُرِ وَبِالْكِتٰبِ الْمُنِيْرِ ﴿٢٥﴾
ثُمَّ اَخَذْتُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا ۖ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيْرِ ﴿٢٦﴾ اَلَمْ تَرَ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ اَنْزَلَ مِنَ
السَّمَآءِ مَآءً ۚ فَاَخْرَجْنَا بِهٖ ثَمَرٰتٍ مُّخْتَلِفًا اَلْوَانُهَا ۚ وَمِنَ الْجِبَالِ جُدَدٌ
بِيْضٌ وَّحُمْرٌ مُّخْتَلِفٌ اَلْوَانُهَا وَغَرَابِيْبُ سُوْدٌ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ وَالدَّوَآبِّ
وَالْاَنْعَامِ مُخْتَلِفٌ اَلْوَانُهٗ كَذٰلِكَ ۗ اِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللّٰهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمٰٓؤُا ۗ اِنَّ
اللّٰهَ عَزِيْزٌ غَفُوْرٌ ﴿٢٨﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يَتْلُوْنَ كِتٰبَ اللّٰهِ وَاَقَامُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَاَنْفَقُوْا
مِمَّا رَزَقْنٰهُمْ سِرًّا وَّعَلَانِيَةً يَّرْجُوْنَ تِجَارَةً لَّنْ تَبُوْرَ ﴿٢٩﴾ لِيُوَفِّيَهُمْ اُجُوْرَهُمْ
وَيَزِيْدَهُمْ مِّنْ فَضْلِهٖ ۗ اِنَّهٗ غَفُوْرٌ شَكُوْرٌ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَالَّذِيْٓ اَوْحَيْنَآ اِلَيْكَ مِنَ
الْكِتٰبِ هُوَ الْحَقُّ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ ۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ بِعِبَادِهٖ لَخَبِيْرٌ بَصِيْرٌ ﴿٣١﴾
ثُمَّ اَوْرَثْنَا الْكِتٰبَ الَّذِيْنَ اصْطَفَيْنَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا ۚ فَمِنْهُمْ ظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهٖ ۚ وَ
مِنْهُمْ مُّقْتَصِدٌ ۚ وَمِنْهُمْ سَابِقٌۢ بِالْخَيْرٰتِ بِاِذْنِ اللّٰهِ ۗ ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَضْلُ
الْكَبِيْرُ ﴿٣٢﴾ جَنّٰتُ عَدْنٍ يَّدْخُلُوْنَهَا يُحَلَّوْنَ فِيْهَا مِنْ اَسَاوِرَ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ
وَّلُؤْلُؤًا ۚ وَلِبَاسُهُمْ فِيْهَا حَرِيْرٌ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْٓ اَذْهَبَ عَنَّا
الْحَزَنَ ۗ اِنَّ رَبَّنَا لَغَفُوْرٌ شَكُوْرٌ ﴿٣٤﴾ الَّذِيْٓ اَحَلَّنَا دَارَ الْمُقَامَةِ مِنْ
فَضْلِهٖ ۚ لَا يَمَسُّنَا فِيْهَا نَصَبٌ وَّلَا يَمَسُّنَا فِيْهَا لُغُوْبٌ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ
كَفَرُوْا لَهُمْ نَارُ جَهَنَّمَ ۚ لَا يُقْضٰى عَلَيْهِمْ فَيَمُوْتُوْا وَلَا يُخَفَّفُ
عَنْهُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابِهَا ۚ كَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِيْ كُلَّ كَفُوْرٍ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَهُمْ يَصْطَرِخُوْنَ فِيْهَا ۚ
رَبَّنَآ اَخْرِجْنَا نَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا غَيْرَ الَّذِيْ كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ ۗ اَوَلَمْ نُعَمِّرْكُمْ مَّا

Now if they treat you as a liar, those who lived before them also 25-26
treated (their Messengers) as liars. Their Messengers came to them with clear proofs[46] and Scriptures and the enlightening Book.[47] Then I seized those who disbelieved, and behold, how terrible was My punishment !

Do you not see that Allah sends down rainwater from the sky 27-28
and we bring forth thereby a variety of fruits of different colours ? In the mountains also there are streaks, white and red and jetblack, with different hues. And likewise, men, beasts and cattle also have different colours.[48] The fact is that only those of His servants, who possess knowledge, fear Allah.[49] Surely, Allah is All-Mighty, All-Forgiving.[50]

Those who recite the Book of Allah and establish the *Salāt*, and 29-35
spend out of what We have given them, secretly and openly, do hope for a bargain which involves no loss. (They have invested their all in this bargain) so that Allah may give them their full rewards and bless them with even more from His grace.[51] Surely, Allah is Forgiving and Bounteous. [52] (O Prophet,) the Book that We have sent to you by revelation is the very Truth, which confirms the previous Scriptures.[53] Allah is indeed well aware of His servants, and watchful over everything.[54] Then We made those people heirs of this Book, whom We chose (for this inheritance) from among Our servants.[55] Now someone of them is being unjust to his own self, and someone following a middle course, and someone excelling in good deeds by Allah's leave. This is the supreme bounty.[56] There are everlasting Gardens which they shall enter[57] to be decorated with bracelets of gold and pearls, and their dress will be of silk. They will say, "Praise be unto Allah Who has removed sorrow from us[58]: surely, our Lord is Forgiving and Bounteous,[59] Who by His grace has lodged us in an eternal abode[60]: here we do neither experience any trial nor any weariness."[61]

And for those who have disbelieved[62] there is the Fire of Hell: 36-37
neither will it be decreed that they should die, nor will the torment of Hell be lightened for them in any way. Thus do We requite every disbeliever. There they will cry out and say,"Our Lord, take us out from here so that we may do good works other than those which we had been doing." (The reply will be :) "Did We not give you lives long enough so that he who would, could take a warning[63] ? and the warner also had come to you. Now taste (the torment): the wicked will have no

helper here."

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person, who is wandering blindly in the superstitions of ignorance and the darknesses of presumptions and speculations, and is not inclined to benefit by the light of the candle lit by the Prophet. There is the other person, whose eyes are open and who, as soon as the light spread by the Prophet appears before him, comes to realize that all the ways being followed by the polytheists and the disbelievers and the atheists lead to destruction, and the way to success is only that which has been shown by the Messenger of God. Now how can it be possible that the attitude of the two persons be the same in the world and the two may follow one and the same path together ? And how can this also be possible either that the two should meet the same end and should both end up in the dust after death ? Neither should one be punished for his wrongdoings, nor the other be rewarded for his righteous conduct. The sentence, "the cool shade and the heat of the sun are not alike", points to the same fate. The one will be provided shelter under the shade of Allah's mercy and the other will burn in the fire of Hell. Thus, the notions that the two will ultimately meet the same end is utterly false. In the end, the believer has been likened to the living and the stubborn disbeliever to the dead. That is, the believer is he whose feeling, understanding and perception are alive and whose conscience is making him aware of the distinction between the good and the evil every moment. Contrary to this, the person who has been, wholly lost in the prejudices of disbelief is even worse than the blind person who is wandering about in darkness. Nay, he is like a dead person who has no sense or feeling left in him.

43. That is, "As for the powers of Allah, they are unlimited. He can even make the stones to hear. But it is not within the power of the Messenger to make those people to listen to him whose consciences have become dead and whose ears deaf to every call to the truth. He can only make those people to hear him, who are inclined to listen to every reasonable thing."

44. That is, "Your only duty is to warn the people and nothing else. If even after this a person does not come to his senses, and remains lost in his deviations, you are not to blame for that, for you have not been entrusted with the duty of making the blind to see and the deaf to hear."

45. That there has been no community in the world for whose guidance Allah did not appoint the Prophets, has been stated at several places in the Qur'ān. In Sūrah Ar-Ra'd: 7, it was said: "Every people has its guide ;" in Sūrah Al-Ḥijr: 10: "O Prophet, We have already sent Messengers before you among many of the ancient peoples;" in Sūrah An-Naḥl: 36: "We sent to every community a

Messenger;" and in Sūrah Ash-Shu'arā: 208: "We have never destroyed a habitation unless it had its warners to administer admonition." But, in this connection, one should note two things so that there remains no misunderstanding. First, one and the same Prophet is enough for the lands to which his message may reach. It is not necessary that Prophets be sent to every separate habitation and to every separate community. Second, no new Prophet needs to be sent as long as the message and teaching and guidance given by a previous Prophet remains safe and intact. It is not necessary that a separate Prophet be sent for every race and every generation.

46. "Clear proofs": Proofs which clearly testified that they were Allah's Messengers.

47. "Scriptures" probably consisted of good counsels and moral precepts and "the Book" comprised a complete code of the law.

48. This is meant to impress that in the universe created by Allah nowhere is there homogeneity and uniformity; there is variety everywhere. From the same earth and by the same water different kinds of trees are appearing. Even the two pieces of the fruit of the same tree are not uniform in colour and size and taste. In the same mountain one will see a variety of colours and a great difference in the material composition of its different parts. Even among human beings and animals one will not see two offspring of the same parents exactly alike. If a person seeks uniformity of the temperaments and dispositions and mentalities in this universe and is bewildered at the differences which have been alluded to in vv. 19-22 above, it will be his own perception and understanding to blame. This same variety and difference, in fact, point to the reality that this universe has been created by a Wise Being with great wisdom; its Maker is a Unique Creator and a Matchless Fashioner, Who does not have the same model of everything before Him, but has a variety of countless and limitless designs of everything. Then if one ponders over the differences in human temperaments and minds, in particular, one will see that it is not a mere accident, but in fact the masterpiece of the wisdom of creation. If all human beings had been created with the uniform temperaments and desires and feelings and inclinations and ways of thinking, and no room had been left for any difference, it would have been absolutely useless to bring about a new creation like man in the world. When the Creator decided to bring into existence a responsible creation, a creation having power and authority, the necessary inevitable demand of the nature of the decision was that room for all sorts of differences should be provided in its nature and structure. This is the main proof of the fact that the creation of man is not the result of an accident, but the result of a wonderful and wise plan and design. And obviously, wherever there is a wise plan and design, there must necessarily be a Wise Being working behind it, for the existence of wisdom without a Wise Being would be un-imaginable.

49. That is, the more a person is unaware of the attributes of Allah, the more he will be fearless of Him. Contrary to this, the more a person is aware and conscious of Allah's powers, His knowledge, His wisdom, His vengeance and His omnipotence and His other attributes, the more he will fear His disobedience. Thus, in fact, "knowledge" in this verse does not imply knowledge of academic subjects like philosophy and science and history and mathematics, etc. but the knowledge of Divine attributes, no matter whether one is literate or illiterate. The one who is fearless of God is illiterate merely as regards this knowledge even if he has all the knowledge of the world. And the one who knows the attributes of God and fears Him in his heart, is learned even if he is illiterate. In the same connection, one should also know that in this verse the '*ulamā'* does not imply the scholars in the technical sense, who are termed as religious scholars because of their knowledge of the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth* and *Fiqh* and philosophy. They will prove true to this verse only when they possess fear of God in their hearts. The same thing has been said by Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, thus: "knowledge is not due to much narration of *Ḥadīth* but due to much fear of Allah." And also by Ḥaḍrat Ḥassan Basri, thus: "The scholar is he who fears Allah though he has not seen Him, and turns to what is approved by Him and keeps away from what makes Him angry."

50. That is, He is All-Mighty, and therefore, can seize the disobedient as and when He likes: no one can escape His grasp. But He is All-Forgiving also and is, therefore, giving respite to the wrongdoers.

51. This kind of conduct and practice of the believers has been likened to a trade bargain because in trade a man invests his money and labour and capabilities in the hope that he will not only get his capital back and his wages for the time and energy spent but in addition some profit as well. Likewise, a believer also invests his wealth and his time and his labour and capabilities in carrying out Allah's Commands and in His service and worship and in the struggle to promote the cause of His Religion in the hope that he will not only get his full rewards for it but Allah will bless him with much more from His bounty as well. But there is a great difference between the two kinds of bargains. In the worldly trade bargains there is the risk of loss also along with the hope of profits. Contrary to this, in the bargain that a sincere servant makes with his God there is no risk of any loss whatever.

52. That is, "Allah's relation with the sincere believers is not that of a miserly master who checks his servant on trivialities and brings all his services and loyalties to nought on account of a minor error. But Allah is the Most Beneficent and Generous Master. He overlooks the errors of His obedient servant and appreciates whatever service he might be able to render."

53. It means: "This Book is not presenting anything new which might be opposed to the teaching brought by the former Prophets, but it is presenting the same eternal Truth which all the Prophets have been presenting from the very beginning."

54. The object of mentioning these auributes of Allah here is to arouse the people to the aims and ideals in which their true well being lies, to the principles which alone can afford the right guidance and to the rules and regulations which are precisely in accordance with them. None can know these except Allah, because He alone is aware of the nature of His servants and its demands, and He alone watches over their well-being and affairs. The people do not know their own selves as much as their Creator knows them. Therefore, the truth is that, and can only be that, which He has taught by Revelation.

55. This implies the Muslims, who have been sorted out from all mankind so that they may become heirs to the Book of Allah, and convey its message to others after the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings). Though this Book has been presented before all human beings, those who accepted it in the first instance, were chosen for the honour to become heirs to a great Book like the Qur'ān and the trustees of the teaching and guidance imparted by a great Messenger like the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings).

56. That is, "All these Muslims are not alike but are divided into three classes:

(1) Those unjust to themselves: They are those who believe sincerely and honestly that the Qur'ān is the Book of Allah and Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) the Messenger of Allah, but in practical life do not fully follow the Book of Allah and the *Sunnah* of His Messenger. They are believers but sinful; culprits but not rebellious; weak of faith but not hypocritical and unbelieving at heart. Therefore, although they are "unjust to themselves," they have been included among the chosen servants of God and among the heirs to the Book; otherwise, obviously the rebels and the hypocrites and the unbelieving people could not be so treated and honoured. This class of the believers have been mentioned first of all because they are most numerous among the Muslims.

(2) Those following the middle course: They are the people who fulfil the obligations of this inheritance to some extent but not fully. They are obedient as well as erring. They have not left their self altogether free but try as best as they can to turn it to God's obedience; however, at times they give it undue freedom and become involved in sin. Thus, their life becomes a combination of both the good and the evil actions.

They are less numerous than the first group but more than the third; that is why they have been mentioned second.

(3) Those excelling in good deeds: They are the people of the first rank among the heirs to the Book, and they are the ones who are doing full justice to the inheritance. They are in the forefront in following and adhering to the Book and the *Sunnah;* in conveying the message of God to His servants, in offering the sacrifices for the sake of the true Faith, and in every pious and good work. They are not the ones who would commit a sin deliberately, but if they happened to commit a sin inadvertantly, they would be filled with remorse as soon as they became conscious of it. They are less numerous than the people of the first two groups, and therefore, have been mentioned last, although they merit the first place in the matter of doing justice to the heritage of the Book of Allah.

As for the sentence, "this is the supreme bounty", if it is related with the last sentence, it would mean that to excel in good deeds is the supreme bounty, and the people who excel in good deeds are the best of the Muslim community. And if it is taken to be related with the first sentence, it would mean that to be a heir to the Book of Allah and to be chosen for this heritage is the supreme bounty, and the people who have been so chosen on account of their faith in the Qur'ān and the Holy Prophet Muhammad are the best among the human beings created by Allah.

57. One section of the commentators has held the view that this sentence is related with the two sentences immediately preceding it. That is, the ones who excel in good deeds are the best of the people and they alone will enter the Gardens. As for the first two groups, nothing has been stated about them so that they became worried concerning their fate and try to improve their lot. This view has been presented by 'Allāma Zamakhshari forcefully and supported by Imām Rāzi.

But the majority of the commentators opine that it is related with the whole preceding discourse, which means that all the three classes of the *Ummah* shall eventually enter Paradise, whether without accountability, or after the accountability, whether remaining secure from every punishment, or after receiving some punishment. This commentary is supported by the Qur'ānic context, for a little below about those who are contrasted with the heirs of the Book, it has been said: "And for those who have disbelieved, there is the fire of Hell." This shows that there is Paradise for all those who have believed in the Book, and Hell for all those who have refused to believe in it. The same has been supported by the *Hadīth* of the Holy Prophet, which Imām Aḥmad, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn

Abī Ḥātim, Ṭabarānī, Baihaqī and some other traditionists have related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abu ad-Dardā'. The Holy Prophet said:

"Those who have excelled in good works shall enter Paradise without; and those who are following the middle course, shall be subjected to accountability; but their accountability shall be light. As for those who have been unjust to themselves, they shall be detained throughout the long period of Resurrection and accountability *(mahshar)*. Then Allah shall cover them also with His mercy. And they are the ones who will say: 'Thanks to Allah Who has removed sorrow from us!'"

In this *Ḥadīth* the Holy Prophet has himself given a complete commentary of the verse under discussion, and stated separately the end to be met by each of the three groups of the believers. The "light accountability" for the ones following the middle course means this: The disbelievers will be punished for their disbelief as well as for each single crime and sin of theirs separately, but, contrary to this, the good and bad deeds of the believers who come with both the good and evil deeds will be judged on the whole: they will not be rewarded for each good deed and punished for each evil deed separately. As for those "who will be detained throughout the period of Resurrection and accountability because they had been unjust to themselves," it means: They will not be thrown into Hell, but will be sentenced to be detained "till the rising of the Court." In other words, they will be exposed to all the severities and rigours of the lengthy Day of Resurrection (and God alone knows how lengthy it will be !) till Allah Almighty will turn to them in His mercy and command at the rising of the Court that they too be admitted into Paradise. The traditionists have cited several sayings to the same effect from many Companions like Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, Ḥaḍrat Abū Sa'īd Khudrī and Ḥaḍrat Barā bin 'Āzib. And obviously, the Companions could not have said any such thing in such matters unless they had heard it from the Holy Prophet himself.

But from this one should not form the impression that "those who have been unjust to themselves" from among the Muslims will only be sentenced to be detained "till the rising of the Court", and none of them will go to Hell at all. Several crimes have been mentioned in the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth*, whose perpetrator will go to Hell in spite of his faith. For instance, Allah Himself has declared that the believer who kills another believer wilfully shall go to Hell. Likewise, Hell has been mentioned as the punishment of those people also who violate the provisions of the Divine Law of Inheritance. Those who devour interest even after its prohibition have been declared to be "the dwellers of Hell." Besides these, some other major sins also have been mentioned in *Ḥadīth*, whose perpetrator shall go to Hell.

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يَتَذَكَّرَ فِيهِ مَنْ تَذَكَّرَ وَجَآءَكُمُ النَّذِيرُ ۖ فَذُوقُوا فَمَا لِلظّٰلِمِينَ مِنْ
نَّصِيرٍ ﴿37﴾ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ عٰلِمُ غَيْبِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۚ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌۢ بِذَاتِ
الصُّدُورِ ﴿38﴾ هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَكُمْ خَلٰٓئِفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ ۚ فَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَعَلَيْهِ كُفْرُهُ ۚ
وَلَا يَزِيدُ الْكٰفِرِينَ كُفْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ إِلَّا مَقْتًا ۖ وَلَا يَزِيدُ الْكٰفِرِينَ
كُفْرُهُمْ إِلَّا خَسَارًا ﴿39﴾ قُلْ أَرَءَيْتُمْ شُرَكَآءَكُمُ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ
اللّٰهِ ۖ أَرُونِي مَاذَا خَلَقُوا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ أَمْ لَهُمْ شِرْكٌ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ ۖ أَمْ ءَاتَيْنٰهُمْ
كِتٰبًا فَهُمْ عَلٰى بَيِّنَتٍ مِّنْهُ ۚ بَلْ إِنْ يَعِدُ الظّٰلِمُونَ بَعْضُهُمْ بَعْضًا إِلَّا
غُرُورًا ﴿40﴾ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُمْسِكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضَ أَنْ تَزُولَا ۚ وَلَئِنْ زَالَتَآ
إِنْ أَمْسَكَهُمَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ مِّنْ بَعْدِهِ ۚ إِنَّهُ كَانَ حَلِيمًا غَفُورًا ﴿41﴾ وَ
أَقْسَمُوا بِاللّٰهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمٰنِهِمْ لَئِنْ جَآءَهُمْ نَذِيرٌ لَّيَكُونُنَّ أَهْدٰى مِنْ
إِحْدَى الْأُمَمِ ۖ فَلَمَّا جَآءَهُمْ نَذِيرٌ مَّا زَادَهُمْ إِلَّا نُفُورًا ﴿42﴾ اسْتِكْبَارًا فِي
الْأَرْضِ وَمَكْرَ السَّيِّئِ ۚ وَلَا يَحِيقُ الْمَكْرُ السَّيِّئُ إِلَّا بِأَهْلِهِ ۚ فَهَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ
إِلَّا سُنَّتَ الْأَوَّلِينَ ۚ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّتِ اللّٰهِ تَبْدِيلًا ۖ وَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّتِ
اللّٰهِ تَحْوِيلًا ﴿43﴾ أَوَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَٰقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ
مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَكَانُوٓا أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً ۚ وَمَا كَانَ اللّٰهُ لِيُعْجِزَهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فِي
السَّمٰوٰتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۚ إِنَّهُ كَانَ عَلِيمًا قَدِيرًا ﴿44﴾ وَلَوْ يُؤَاخِذُ اللّٰهُ
النَّاسَ بِمَا كَسَبُوا مَا تَرَكَ عَلٰى ظَهْرِهَا مِنْ دَآبَّةٍ وَلٰكِنْ يُؤَخِّرُهُمْ إِلٰٓى
أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۖ فَإِذَا جَآءَ أَجَلُهُمْ فَإِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ بِعِبَادِهِ بَصِيرًا ﴿45﴾

Surely, Allah is aware of every secret thing in the heavens and 38-39
the earth: He even knows the hidden secrets of the breasts. He it is
Who has made you vicegerents in the earth.[64] Now whoever disbelieves
shall himself bear the burden of his disbelief,[65] and for the disbelievers
their disbelief does not increase anything except the wrath of their Lord
and the disbelievers do not gain anything except an increase in their
loss.

(O Prophet,) say to them, "Have you ever seen those associates 40-41
of yours[66] whom you invoke instead of Allah ? Tell me: What have
they created in the earth, or what is their share in the heavens?" (If
they cannot tell this, ask them :) "Have We given them a writing
affording a clear sanction (for their *shirk*)?"[67] Nay, but these wicked
people are only beguiling one another with delusions.[68] The fact is that
it is Allah alone Who is sustaining the heavens and the earth from
falling into oblivion and if they fall into the abyss there is none to
sustain them after Allah.[69] Indeed, Allah is Forbearing and All-
Forgiving.[70]

These people used to swear on solemn oaths by Allah that if a 42-45
warner had visited them, they would certainly have been better guided
than any other nation in the world.[71] But when a warner did come to
them, it increased them in nothing but aversion to the Truth. They
began to behave even more haughtily in the land and to plot evil,
whereas the plotting of evil recoils only on the plotters themselves.
Now, are these people awaiting that they should be dealt with (by
Allah) in the like way as the preceding nations were dealt with?[72] Well,
you will never find any change in the Way of Allah, nor will you see
that a power can turn the Way of Allah from its appointed course. Have
they never travelled about in the land that they could see the end of
those who have passed before them, and who were far mightier than
they? There is nothing that could make Allah helpless, neither in the
heavens nor in the earth: He knows everything and has power over
everything. If Allah were to seize the people for their misdeeds, He
would not have left alive any living being on the earth. But He is giving
them respite till an appointed time. So, when the appointed time comes,

Allah will Himself see His servants.

Contd. from p. 253]

58. "Sorrow": Sorrow of every kind: sorrows and griefs and worries of the world and of the Hereafter with regard to the final end. It means : "Now we have nothing to worry about: now there can be no question of any sorrow and trouble afflicting us here."

59. That is "He has forgiven us our errors, has appreciated whatever little provision of deeds we had brought and blessed us with His Paradise as a reward."

60. That is, "The world was a stage in our journey of life, which we have crossed, and the plain of Resurrection also is a stage of the same journey, which we have also crossed. Now we have reached a place which is our eternal abode: we have not to go elsewhere from here."

61. In other words, "All our toils and afflictions have come to an end. Now we do not have to perform any work here in carrying out which we might have to experience any rigour or hardship and after carrying out which we might be fatigued."

62. "Who have disbelieved": Who have refused to believe in the Book which Allah has sent down on Muḥammad (upon whom be His peace and blessings).

63. This implies every such age of life in which a person may be able to distinguish between good and evil, truth and falsehood, if he likes to, and turn to right guidance instead of deviation, if he wishes. If a person has died before attaining such an age, he will not be called to any account according to this verse. However, the one who has attained this age will certainly be held answerable for his actions. Then, as long as he lives after attaining this age and gets more and more opportunities for choosing and adopting the right path, his responsibility also will increase accordingly; so much so that the one who does not adopt right guidance even in old age will have no chance left for making any excuse. This same thing has been reported by Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah and Ḥaḍrat Sahl bin Sa'd as-Sā'idī in a *Ḥadīth*, saying: "The one who lives a short life has an excuse to offer, but there is no room for making an excuse for him who lives for 60 years or more." (Bukhārī Aḥmad, Nasā'ī, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Ḥātim).

64. This can have two meanings: (1) "Now He has settled you on His earth after the passing away of the previous generations and nations;" and (2) "the powers and authority that He has given you over different things in the earth are not meant to make you the owners of these things but are meant to enable you to function as the representatives of their real Owner."

65. If the previous sentence is taken to mean that you have been made successors to the previous nations, this sentence would mean this: "The one who did not learn any lesson from the fate of the previous nations and adopted the conduct of disbelief due to which those nations have gone to their doom, will himself see the evil end of his folly." And if the sentence is taken to mean this that Allah has delegated to you powers and authority as His vicegerents in the earth; this sentence would mean: "He who forgot this position of vicegerency and became independent, or he who adopted service of someone else, apart from his real Master, would see the evil end of his rebellious conduct himself."

66. "Associates of yours", because they are not in fact the associates of Allah, but the ones whom the polytheists themselves have made associates of Allah.

67. That is, "Do they possess a written sanction from Us in which We might have indicated that We have given such and such persons the powers to heal the sick, or to get jobs for the jobless, or to fulfil needs of the needy, or that We have made such and such beings Our representatives in such and such parts of the earth and now it is in their hands to make or mar the destinies of the people of those parts; therefore, Our servants now should pray to them and present gifts and offerings before them, and for whatever blessings they receive they should thank those "demigods" only? If you possess any such sanction, produce it. And if you have no such sanction, you should consider on what grounds you have invented these polytheistic creeds and practices. When you are asked as to what sign is there in the heavens and the earth that may point to your self invented gods as being God's associates, you cannot point out any. When you are asked to produce any Divine sanction from any Book of Allah, or from your own possession, or from the possession of your self-invented gods, which may testify to God's having Himself delegated to them those powers which you assign to them, you do not produce any. What then is the basis of your these creeds and concepts? Are you the owners of the Divine rights and powers that you may assign and distribute them to whomsoever you please?"

68. That is, "These religious guides, saints, priests, sorcerers, preachers and attendants of shrines and their agents are befooling the people for selfish motives, and are concocting stories to give them false hopes that if they became the followers of such and such personalities, apart from God, they would have all their wishes and needs fulfilled in the world, and all their sins, no matter how grave and numerous, forgiven by Allah in the Hereafter."

69. That is, "This limitless universe is being sustained by Allah alone. No angel, or jinn, or prophet, or saint can sustain it. Not to speak of sustaining the universe these helpless creatures do not even have the power to sustain their own

selves. Each one of them is entirely dependent on Allah Almighty for his birth and survival every moment. To think that any one of them has any share in the attributes and powers of Divinity is sheer folly and deception."

70. That is, "It is Allah's Clemency and Forbearance that He is not seizing the culprits immediately in punishment in spite of all kinds of disobedience which are being shown towards Him."

71. Before the advent of the Holy Prophet, the same thing used to be said by the Arabs, in general, and by the Quraish, in particular, when they witnessed the moral degeneration of the Jews and the Christians. Mention of this saying of theirs has also been made in Sūrah Al-An'ām :156-157 above, and in Sūrah Aṣ-Ṣāffāt: 167-169 below.

72. That is, this Law of Allah that the nation which repudiates its Prophet, is destroyed should be applied in their case as well.



XXXVI

YĀ SĪN

يٰسٓ



XXXVI

YĀ SĪN

يٰسٓ

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from the two letters of the alphabet with which it begins.

Period of Revelation

A study of the style shows that it was either sent down during the last stage of the middle Makkan period, or it is one of those Sūrahs, which were sent down during the last stage of the Holy Prophet's stay at Makkah.

Subject Matter and Theme

The object of the discourse is to warn the Quraish of the consequences of not believing in the Prophethood of Muḥammad (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) and of resisting and opposing it with tyranny, ridicule and mockery. The aspect of the warning is dominant and conspicuous although along with repeatedly giving the warnings, arguments also have been given for the correct understanding by the people.

Arguments have been given for three things: (1) For *Tauḥīd*, from the signs of the universe and from common sense; (2) for the Hereafter, from the signs of the universe, from common sense and from man's own existence itself; and (3) for the Prophethood of the Prophet Muḥammad, from the fact that he was facing all kinds of hardships in the preaching of his message without any selfish motive, and from that whatever he was inviting the people to was rational and reasonable, accepting which was in the people's own interest.

On the strength of these arguments, themes of reprobation, reproof and warning have been presented repeatedly in a highly forceful manner, so that hearts are shaken up and those which have any capacity for accepting the truth left in them should not remain unmoved.

Imām Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd, Nasa'ī, Ibn Mājah and Ṭabarānī have related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Ma'qil bin Yasār that the Holy Prophet said: "Sūrah Yā Sīn is the heart of the Qur'ān." This is similar to describing the Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah as the *Umm al-Qur'ān* (the essence or core of the Qur'ān), because Al-Fātiḥah contains the sum and substance of the teaching of the whole Qur'ān. The Sūrah Yā Sīn has been called the throbbing heart of the Qur'ān because it presents the message of the Qur'ān in a most forceful manner, which breaks the inertness and stirs the spirit of man to action.

Again Imām Aḥmad, Abū Dā'ūd and Ibn Mājah have related from the same Ma'qil bin Yasār that the Holy Prophet said: "Recite Sūrah Yā Sīn to the dying ones among you." The object is not only to revive and refresh the whole Islamic creed in the mind of the dying

person but also bring before him, in particular, a complete picture of the Hereafter so that he may know what stages he would have to pass through after crossing the stage of this worldly life. In view of this, it would be desirable that along with the recitation of the Sūrah Yā Sīn its translation also is made for the benefit of the person who does not know Arabic so that the purpose of the admonition is duly fulfilled.



بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

يٰسٓ ﴿١﴾ وَالْقُرْاٰنِ الْحَكِيْمِ ﴿٢﴾ اِنَّكَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿٣﴾ عَلٰى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ﴿٤﴾
تَنْزِيْلَ الْعَزِيْزِ الرَّحِيْمِ ﴿٥﴾ لِتُنْذِرَ قَوْمًا مَّآ اُنْذِرَ اٰبَآؤُهُمْ فَهُمْ غٰفِلُوْنَ ﴿٦﴾
لَقَدْ حَقَّ الْقَوْلُ عَلٰٓى اَكْثَرِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٧﴾ اِنَّا جَعَلْنَا فِيْٓ اَعْنَاقِهِمْ
اَغْلٰلًا فَهِيَ اِلَى الْاَذْقَانِ فَهُمْ مُّقْمَحُوْنَ ﴿٨﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْۢ بَيْنِ اَيْدِيْهِمْ
سَدًّا وَّمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ سَدًّا فَاَغْشَيْنٰهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُبْصِرُوْنَ ﴿٩﴾ وَسَوَآءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ
ءَاَنْذَرْتَهُمْ اَمْ لَمْ تُنْذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿١٠﴾ اِنَّمَا تُنْذِرُ مَنِ اتَّبَعَ الذِّكْرَ
وَخَشِيَ الرَّحْمٰنَ بِالْغَيْبِ ۚ فَبَشِّرْهُ بِمَغْفِرَةٍ وَّاَجْرٍ كَرِيْمٍ ﴿١١﴾ اِنَّا نَحْنُ نُحْيِ
الْمَوْتٰى وَنَكْتُبُ مَا قَدَّمُوْا وَاٰثَارَهُمْ ۗ وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ اَحْصَيْنٰهُ فِيْٓ اِمَامٍ
مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿١٢﴾ وَاضْرِبْ لَهُمْ مَّثَلًا اَصْحٰبَ الْقَرْيَةِ ۘ اِذْ جَآءَهَا الْمُرْسَلُوْنَ ﴿١٣﴾ اِذْ

وقف لازم ۱ ۱۲ ۱۸

اَرْسَلْنَآ اِلَيْهِمُ اثْنَيْنِ فَكَذَّبُوْهُمَا فَعَزَّزْنَا بِثَالِثٍ فَقَالُوْٓا اِنَّآ اِلَيْكُمْ
مُّرْسَلُوْنَ ﴿١٤﴾ قَالُوْا مَآ اَنْتُمْ اِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُنَا ۙ وَمَآ اَنْزَلَ الرَّحْمٰنُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ۙ
اِنْ اَنْتُمْ اِلَّا تَكْذِبُوْنَ ﴿١٥﴾ قَالُوْا رَبُّنَا يَعْلَمُ اِنَّآ اِلَيْكُمْ لَمُرْسَلُوْنَ ﴿١٦﴾ وَ
مَا عَلَيْنَآ اِلَّا الْبَلٰغُ الْمُبِيْنُ ﴿١٧﴾ قَالُوْٓا اِنَّا تَطَيَّرْنَا بِكُمْ ۚ لَئِنْ لَّمْ تَنْتَهُوْا
لَنَرْجُمَنَّكُمْ وَلَيَمَسَّنَّكُمْ مِّنَّا عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿١٨﴾ قَالُوْا طَآئِرُكُمْ مَّعَكُمْ ۗ اَئِنْ ذُكِّرْتُمْ ۗ
بَلْ اَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ مُّسْرِفُوْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ وَجَآءَ مِنْ اَقْصَا الْمَدِيْنَةِ رَجُلٌ يَّسْعٰى قَالَ
يٰقَوْمِ اتَّبِعُوا الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾ اتَّبِعُوْا مَنْ لَّا يَسْـَٔلُكُمْ اَجْرًا وَّهُمْ مُّهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾

XXXVI

YĀ SĪN

يٰسٓ

Verses: 83 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

Yā Sīn.[1] By the wise Qur'ān, you are indeed one of the Messengers,[2] are on the Straight Way, (and this Qur'ān) is the Revelation of the All-Mighty, the All-Merciful One,[3] so that you may warn a people whose forefathers were not warned, and so, they live in heedlessness.[4] 1-6

Most of these people have already deserved the decree of torment; therefore, they do not believe.[5] We have put on their necks fetters which reach to their chins, so they stand with heads upright.[6] We have set a barrier before them and a barrier behind them: We have covered them, so they cannot see anything.[7] It is all the same for them whether you warn them or warn them not, they would not believe.[8] You can only warn him who follows the admonition and fears the Merciful God, though he cannot see Him. Give him the good news of forgiveness and of a generous reward. 7-11

We shall certainly one day raise the dead to life. We are recording all the deeds they have done and also that which they have left behind:[9] We have preserved everything in an open Book. 12

Tell them, for instance, the story of the people of the habitation when the Messengers came to it.[10] We sent to them two Messengers and they denied both. Then We sent a third one to strengthen them, and they all said, "We have been sent to you as Messengers." The people said, "You are no more than men like us,[11] and the Merciful God has sent down nothing:[12] you are only telling a lie." 13-15

16-19 The Messengers said, "Our Lord knows that we have indeed been sent as Messengers to you and our only responsibility is to convey the message plainly"[13] The people said, "We regard you as an evil omen for ourselves. If you do not desist (from this), we shall stone you, and you will receive a painful punishment from us."[14] The Messengers replied, "Your evil omen is with your own selves.[15] Do you say this because you have been admonished? The fact is that you are a people who have transgressed all limits."[16]

20-21 In the meantime a man came running from the remote part of the city, and he said, "O my people, follow the Messengers: follow those who do not ask any reward of you and are on the Right Way.[17]

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1. Ibn 'Abbās, 'Ikrimah, Ḍaḥḥāk, Ḥasan Baṣrī and Sufyān bin 'Uyainah have opined that it means, "O man", or "O person"; some other commentators have regarded it as an abbreviation of *"Yā Sayyid"* as well, which, according to this interpretation, would be an address to the Holy Prophet.

2. To begin a discourse like this does not mean that the Holy Prophet, God forbid, had some doubt about his Prophethood, and Allah had to say this in order to reassure him of it. But the reason is that the disbelieving Quraish at that time were most vehemently refusing to believe in his Prophethood; therefore, Allah at the very beginning of the discourse has said: "You are indeed one of the Messengers," which implies that the people who deny your Prophethood, are misled and mistaken. To further confirm the same, an oath has been taken by the Qur'ān, and the word "wise" has been used as an epithet of the Qur'ān, which means this: "An obvious proof of your being a Prophet is this Qur'ān, which is full of wisdom, This itself testifies that the person who is presenting such wise revelations is most surely a Messenger of God. No man has the power to compose such revelations. The people who know Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) can never be involved in the misunderstanding that he is himself forging these discourses, or reciting them after having learnt them from another man." (For further explanation, see Yūnus: 16-17, 37 39; Banī Isrā'īl: 88; An-Naml: 75; Al-Qaṣaṣ: 44-46, 85-87; Al-'Ankabūt: 49-51; Ar Rūm: 1-5 and the relevant E.N.'s).

3. Here, two of the attributes of the Sender of the Qur'ān have been mentioned. First, that He is All-Mighty; second, that He is All-Merciful. The first attribute is meant to impress the reality that the Qur'ān is not the counsel of a powerless preacher, which if you overlook or ignore, will not bring any harm to you; but this is the Edict of that Owner of the Universe, Who is All-Mighty, Whose decrees cannot be withheld from being enforced by any power, and Whose

grasp cannot be avoided by anyone. The second attribute is meant to make one realize that it is all due to His kindness and mercy that He has sent His Messenger for your guidance and instruction and sent down this great Book so that you may avoid errors and follow the right path which may lead you to the successes of the world and the Hereafter.

4. Another translation can be: "You should warn the people of the same of which their forefathers had been warned, because they live in heedlessness." If the first meaning, as given above in the text, is taken, the forefathers would imply the forefathers of the immediate past, for in the ancient time several Prophets had appeared in Arabia. And if the second meaning is adopted, it would imply this: "Revive and refresh the message that had been conveyed to the forefathers of this nation by the Prophets in the past, for these people have forgotten it." Obviously, there is no contradiction between the two translations, and, as to meaning, each is correct in its own place!

A doubt may arise here: How could the forefathers of a nation to whom no warner had been sent at a particular time in the past, be held responsible for their deviation at that time? The answer is: When Allah sends a Prophet in the world, the influence of his message and teaching spreads far and wide, and is handed down by one generation to the other. As long as this influence remains and there continue arising among the followers of the Prophet such people as keep his message of guidance fresh, the period of time cannot be said to be without the guidance. And when the influence of the Prophet's teaching dies out, or the teaching is tampered with, the appointment of another Prophet becomes inevitable. Before the advent of the Holy Prophet the influence of the teachings of the Prophets Abraham, Ishmael, Shu'aib and Moses and Jesus (peace be upon all of them) could be seen everywhere in Arabia and from time to time there had been arising among the Arabs, or coming from outside, men, who revived their teachings. When the influence was about to die out, and the real teaching was also distorted, Allah raised the Prophet Muhammad, and made such arrangements that his message can neither be wiped out nor tampered with. (For further explanation, see E N. 5 of Sūrah Sabā above).

5. This is about those people who were being obstinate and stubborn with regard to the message of the Holy Prophet and had made up their minds not to listen to him at all. This is because: They have already deserved the torment; therefore, they do not believe." It means: "The people who do not heed the admonition, and persist in their denial and hostile attitude to the truth in spite of the final warning from Allah conveyed through the Prophets, are themselves overwhelmed by the evil consequences of their misdeeds and deprived of every opportunity to believe." The same thing has been expressed more clearly in verse

11 below: "You can only warn him who follows the admonition and fears the Merciful God though he cannot see Him."

6 "Fetters" in this verse implies their own stubbornness which was preventing them from accepting the truth. "Which reach to their chins" and "their standing with heads upright" implies the stiffness of the neck which is caused by pride and haughtiness. Allah means to impress this: "We have made their obstinacy and stubbornness the fetters of their neck, and their pride and haughtiness has made them so stiff-necked that they will not pay heed to any reality, however clear and evident it may be."

7. "Set a barrier before them and a barrier behind them" means that the natural result of their stubbornness and pride is that they neither learn any lesson from their past history nor ever consider the consequences of the future. Their prejudices have so covered them from every side and their misconceptions have so blinded them that they cannot see even those glaring realities which are visible to every right-thinking and unbiased person.

8. This does not mean that it is futile to preach, but it means: "Your preaching reaches every kind of people. Some of them are the ones mentioned above, and some others those who are being mentioned in the next verse. When you come across the people of the first kind and you see that they continue to persist in their denial, pride and antagonism, you should leave them alone, but at the same time you should not feel disheartened so as to give up your mission, for you do not know exactly where among the multitudes of the people are those sincere servants of God, who would heed your admonition and fear God and turn to the right path. The real object of your preaching, therefore, should be to search out and collect this second kind of the people. You should ignore the stubborn people and gather this precious element of the society about you."

9. This shows that three kinds of the entries are made in the conduct-book of men. First, whatever a person does, good or bad is entered in the Divine Register. Second, whatever impressions a man makes on the objects of his environment and on the limbs of his own body itself, become recorded, and all these impressions will at one time become so conspicuous that man's own voice will become audible and the whole history of his ideas and intentions and aims and objects and the pictures of all of his good and bad acts and deeds will appear before him. Third, whatever influences he has left behind of his good and bad actions on his future generation, on his society and on mankind as a whole, will go on being recorded in his account as far as they reach and as long as they remain active and operative. The full record of the good and bad training given by him to his children, the good or evil that he has spread in the society, and its impact on

mankind as a whole, will go on being maintained till the time that it goes on producing good or evil results in the world.

10. The early commentators, generally, have expressed the opinion that the "habitation" implies the Syrian city of Antioch, and the messengers mentioned here were the ones sent by the Prophet Jesus for the preaching of his message there. Another thing that has been mentioned in this connection is that Antiochus was the king of this land at that time. But historically this story which Ibn 'Abbas, Qatādah, 'Ikrimah, Ka'b Ahbār and Wahb bin Munabbih, and others have related on the basis of unauthentic Christian traditions is baseless. There have been 13 kings of the Seleucid dynasty named Antiochus who reigned in Antioch, and the rule of the last king of this name, rather the rule of this dynasty itself, came to an end in 65 B.C. At the time of the Prophet Jesus, the whole land of Syria and Palestine, including Antioch, was under the Romans. Then, no proof is forthcoming from any authentic tradition of the Christians that the Prophet Jesus might himself have sent any of his disciples to Antioch for preaching his message. On the contrary, the Acts of the Apostles (N.T.) shows that the Christian preachers had reached Antioch for the first time a few years after the event of the crucifixion. Now, evidently, the people who were neither appointed messengers by Allah nor sent by His Messenger cannot be regarded as messengers of Allah by any interpretation even if they might have travelled for the purpose of preaching of their own accord. Moreover, according to the Bible; Antioch was the first city where the non-Israelites embraced Christianity in large numbers and where the Christian faith met with great success; whereas the habitation mentioned by the Qur'ān was some such habitation which rejected the invitation of the messengers, and was consequently punished with a Divine torment. History also does not bear any evidence that Antioch was ever afflicted with a destruction, which might be regarded as the result of denying the Prophethood.

On account of these reasons it cannot be accepted that the "habitation" implies Antioch. The habitation has neither been clearly determined in the Qur'ān nor in any authentic *Hadīth;* the identity of the messengers also is not known through any authentic means nor the time when they were appointed. To understand the purpose for which the Qur'ān is narrating this story here, it is not necessary to know the names of the habitation and the messengers. The object is to warn the Quraish, as if to say: "You are following the same path of stubbornness, prejudice and denial of the truth as had been followed by the people of that habitation, and are preparing yourselves to meet the same doom as was met by them."

11. In other words, what they wanted to say was: "Since you are human beings, you cannot be the messengers of God." The same was the view of the

disbelievers of Makkah. They also said; "Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) cannot be a messenger because he is a man."

"They say: what sort of a Messenger is he that he eats food and moves about in the streets." (Al-Furqān: 7).

"And the unjust people whisper to one another, saying, 'This man is no more than a human being like yourselves. What! will you then be enticed by this sorcery while you perceive it ?" (Al-Anbiyā': 3).

The Qur'ān refutes this erroneous notion of the people of Makkah and says that it is not any new kind of ignorance which these people are displaying, but all the ignorant people since the earliest times have been involved in the misunderstanding that a human being cannot be a messenger and a Messenger cannot be a human being. When the chiefs of the people of the Prophet Noah had rejected his Prophethood, they had said the same thing:

"This person is no more than a human being like yourselves. By this he merely intends to obtain superiority over you. Had Allah willed, He would have sent down angels. Since the time of our forefathers we have never heard (that a human being should come as a Messenger)." (Al-Mu'minūn: 24).

The people of 'Ād had said the same about the Prophet Hūd: "This person is no more than a human being like yourselves, for he eats of what you eat and drinks of what you drink. Now if you submit to a human being like yourselves, you will indeed be the losers." (Al-Mu'minūn: 33-34).

The people of Thamūd also said the same about the Prophet Sālih: "Shall we follow a man from among ourselves?" (Al-Qamar: 24). And the same thing happened with almost every Prophet that the disbelievers said: "You are no more than a human being like ourselves," and the Prophets always replied: "It is true that we are no more than human beings like you, but Allah shows His favour to anyone of His servants He pleases." (Ibrāhim: 10-11).

Then the Qur'ān says that this very notion of ignorance has been preventing the people from accepting guidance in every age, and the same has been the cause of every nation's downfall:

"Has not the news reached you of those who had disbelieved before this, and then tasted the evil results of their deeds ? And in the Hereafter there awaits them a painful torment. They deserved this fate because their Messengers came to them with clear Signs, but they said, 'Shall human beings show us guidance ? 'So they refused and turned away." (At-Taghābun: 5-6).

"Whenever guidance came before the people, nothing prevented them from believing in it except this (excuse): they said: 'Has Allah sent a human being as His messenger?' " (Banī Isrā'īl: 94).

Then the Qur'ān says explicitly that Allah has always sent human beings as the Messengers and a human being alone can be a Messenger for the guidance for mankind, and not an angel, or a supernatural being:

"And We sent before you also human beings as Messengers to whom We revealed (Our Message). If you (O objectors) have no knowledge of this, you may ask those who have the knowledge. We did not give them such bodies as could survive without food nor were they immortal." (Al-Anbiyā'; 7-8).

"All the Messengers whom We sent before you also ate food and moved about in the streets." (Al-Furqān: 20).

"O Prophet, say to them: Had angels settled on the earth and moved about in peace, We would certainly have sent an angel as a messenger to them." (Banī Isrā'īl: 95).

12. This is another notion of ignorance in which the disbelievers of Makkah were involved. In it are also involved the so-called rationalists of today and in it have been involved the deniers of Revelation and Prophethood of every age since the earliest times. These people have held the view that Allah does not send down any Revelation at all for the guidance of man. He is only concerned with the affairs of the heavens: He has left the affairs and problems of man to be resolved by man himself.

13. That is, "Our only duty is to convey to you the Message that Allah has entrusted us with. Then it is for you to accept it or reject it. We have not been made responsible to make you accept it forcibly; and if you do not accept it, we shall not be seized in consequence of your disbelief: you will yourselves be answerable for your crimes.

14. What they meant was: "You are an evil omen for us. Our gods have become angry with us on account of what you have been saying against them. Now whatever calamity is befalling us is only because of you." Precisely the same thing used to be said by the disbelievers and the hypocrites of Arabia concerning the Holy Prophet: "If they suffer a loss, they say: this is because of you." (An-Nisā': 77). That is why at several places in the Qur'ān these people have been told that in the ancient times also people used to say such things of ignorance in regard to their Prophets. The people of Thamūd said to their Prophet: "We regard you and your companions as a sign of bad omen." (An-Naml: 47). And the same was

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وَمَا لِيَ لَآ أَعْبُدُ الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾ ءَأَتَّخِذُ مِن

دُونِهِ آلِهَةً إِن يُرِدْنِ الرَّحْمَٰنُ بِضُرٍّ لَّا تُغْنِ عَنِّي شَفَاعَتُهُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَا
23 24 25
يُنقِذُونِ ﴿٢٣﴾ إِنِّي إِذًا لَّفِي ضَلَٰلٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٢٤﴾ إِنِّي آمَنتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ فَاسْمَعُونِ ﴿٢٥﴾
26
قِيلَ ادْخُلِ الْجَنَّةَ ۖ قَالَ يَا لَيْتَ قَوْمِي يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾ بِمَا غَفَرَ لِي رَبِّي وَ
27
جَعَلَنِي مِنَ الْمُكْرَمِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَمَا أَنزَلْنَا عَلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ مِن بَعْدِهِ مِن جُندٍ
28
مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ وَمَا كُنَّا مُنزِلِينَ ﴿٢٨﴾ إِن كَانَتْ إِلَّا صَيْحَةً وَاحِدَةً فَإِذَا هُمْ
29
خَامِدُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾ يَا حَسْرَةً عَلَى الْعِبَادِ ۚ مَا يَأْتِيهِم مِّن رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا كَانُوا بِهِ
30
يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾ أَلَمْ يَرَوْا كَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُم مِّنَ الْقُرُونِ أَنَّهُمْ إِلَيْهِمْ لَا
31 32
يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٣١﴾ وَإِن كُلٌّ لَّمَّا جَمِيعٌ لَّدَيْنَا مُحْضَرُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَآيَةٌ لَّهُمُ الْأَرْضُ
33
الْمَيْتَةُ ۖ أَحْيَيْنَاهَا وَأَخْرَجْنَا مِنْهَا حَبًّا فَمِنْهُ يَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا فِيهَا
34
جَنَّاتٍ مِّن نَّخِيلٍ وَأَعْنَابٍ وَفَجَّرْنَا فِيهَا مِنَ الْعُيُونِ ﴿٣٤﴾ لِيَأْكُلُوا مِن
ثَمَرِهِ وَمَا عَمِلَتْهُ أَيْدِيهِمْ ۖ أَفَلَا يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾ سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْأَزْوَاجَ
36
كُلَّهَا مِمَّا تُنبِتُ الْأَرْضُ وَمِنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَمِمَّا لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَآيَةٌ لَّهُمُ
37
اللَّيْلُ ۖ نَسْلَخُ مِنْهُ النَّهَارَ فَإِذَا هُم مُّظْلِمُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَالشَّمْسُ تَجْرِي لِمُسْتَقَرٍّ
38
لَّهَا ۚ ذَٰلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَالْقَمَرَ قَدَّرْنَاهُ مَنَازِلَ حَتَّىٰ عَادَ
كَالْعُرْجُونِ الْقَدِيمِ ﴿٣٩﴾ لَا الشَّمْسُ يَنبَغِي لَهَا أَن تُدْرِكَ الْقَمَرَ وَلَا الَّيْلُ
40
سَابِقُ النَّهَارِ ۚ وَكُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَآيَةٌ لَّهُمْ أَنَّا حَمَلْنَا ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ
41 42
فِي الْفُلْكِ الْمَشْحُونِ ﴿٤١﴾ وَخَلَقْنَا لَهُم مِّن مِّثْلِهِ مَا يَرْكَبُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَإِن نَّشَأْ
43
نُغْرِقْهُمْ فَلَا صَرِيخَ لَهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يُنقَذُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً مِّنَّا وَمَتَاعًا

Well, why should I not worship the Being Who has created me, 22-25
and to whom all of you have to return?[18] Should I take other gods than
Him? Whereas if the Merciful God intends to harm me, their
intercession cannot avail me anything, nor can they rescue me.[19] If I do
so,[20] I would be involved in manifest error. I have believed in your
Lord:[21] so, you also should listen to me."

(Consequently, they killed the man and) it was said to him, 26-27
"Enter Paradise."[22] He said, "Would that my people knew how my
Lord has forgiven me and included me among the honoured ones!"[23]

After him We did not send any army against his people from 28-32
heaven nor was it needful for Us to send one. There only occurred a
single blast and they all became extinct.[24] Alas for the servants! There
came no Messenger to them but they scoffed at him. Have they not seen
how many nations We have destroyed before them, and they never
returned to them?[25] One day they will all be presented before Us!

The[26] dead land is a Sign for these people.[27] We gave it life and 33-36
produced grain from it, which they eat. We made gardens of date-palms
and grapes in it and caused springs to gush out of it so that they may eat
fruits thereof. It is not their hands which have made all this.[28] Do they
not then give thanks?[29] Glorified is He[30] Who created in pairs all
species, whether of vegetable kingdom or of their own (i.e., human)
kind, or of those things of which they know nothing.[31]

Another Sign for them is the night: We remove the day from 37-40
above it, and they are covered in darkness.[32] And the Sun: it is moving
to its place of rest.[33] This is the decree of the All-Mighty, All-Knowing
God. And the Moon: We have determined stages for it till it again
becomes like an old dry palm-branch.[34] Neither is it possible for the
Sun to overtake the Moon,[35] nor for the night to outstrip the day.[36]
Each is gliding in its own orbit.[37]

Yet another Sign for them is that We bore their progeny in a 41-44
laden vessel,[38] and then made for them similar other vessels which they
board.[39] If We please We can drown them when they would have no
one to hear their cry, nor would they be rescued in any way. It is Our
Mercy alone which sustains them and enables them to enjoy life till an
appointed time.[40]

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the attitude of the people of Pharaoh: "Whenever a good time came, they would say: This is but our due, and when there was a hard time, they would ascribe their calamities to Moses and his companions." (Al-A'rāf: 130).

15. That is, "No one is an evil omen for another. Everyman's augury is hanging around his own neck. If a person sees an evil, it is because of his own self; and if he sees a good, it is also because of his own self. 'We have fastened the augury of every man to his own neck'." (Banī Isra'īl: 13).

16. That is, "You in fact want to avoid the good and you like the deviation instead of the guidance. Therefore, instead of determining the truth and falsehood by means of an argument, you are making these false pretences on account of your superstitious whims."

17. That servant of God, in this one sentence, put together all the arguments required for determining the genuineness of Prophethood. The genuineness of a Prophet can be determined by two things. First, his word and deed; second, his being selfless. What the person meant to say was this: "First, whatever these people are saying is perfectly reasonable, and their own character also is pure; second, no one can prove that they are calling the people to this faith on account of a selfish motive. Therefore, there is no reason why they should not be listened to." By citing this reasoning of the person the Qur'ān set a criterion before the people of how to judge and determine the genuineness of the Prophethood of a Prophet, as if to say: "The word and deed of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) bear full evidence that he is on the right path. Then, no one can point out any selfish motive or interest behind his struggle of preaching his message. Therefore, there is no reason why a sensible person should reject what he presents."

18. This sentence has two parts. The first part is a masterpiece of reasoning, the second of the wisdom of preaching. In the first part he says: "To worship the Creator is the demand of both reason and nature; it would be highly unreasonable that one should worship those who have not created him and should deny to be the servant of Him Who has created him." In the second part he warns his people to the effect: "All of you ultimately have to die and return to that God adoption of Whose service you object to. Therefore, you should consider for yourselves as to what goodness you could expect by turning away from Him."

19. That is, "They are neither such favourites of God that even if I commit grave crimes He will forgive me on their recommendation, nor are they so powerful that they should be able to rescue me if God may please to punish me."

20. "If I do so": "If I make them my gods in spite of knowing all this."

21. This sentence again contains a subtle point of the wisdom of preaching. Saying this the man made the people realize: "The Lord in Whom I have believed is not merely my Lord but your Lord, too. I have committed no error by believing in Him, but you, in fact, are certainly committing an error by not believing in Him."

22. That is, "Immediately following his martyrdom, the man was given the good news of Paradise. As soon as he entered the Next World through the gate of death, there were the angels to receive him, and they gave him the good news that Paradise was awaiting him." The commentators have disputed the meaning of this sentence. Qatādah says, "Allah admitted him into Paradise straightway and he is living in it and receiving his sustenance." And Mujāhid says, "This was told him by the angels as a good news; he will enter Paradise on the day of Resurrection along with the other believers."

23. This is a specimen of the high morality of the believer. He had no ill-will or feeling of vengeance in his heart against the people who had just then killed him so that he should invoke Allah against them. Instead, he was still wishing them well. After death the only wish that he cherished was: "Would that my people could know the good end that I have met, and could learn a lesson from my death, if not from my life, and adopt the righteous way." The noble person did not wish Hell for his murderers but wished that they should believe and become worthy of Paradise. The same thing has been commended in the *Hadīth:* "He wished his people well when living as well as when dead."

Allah has narrated this event in order to warn the disbelievers of Makkah to the effect: "Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and his believing Companions are also your well-wishers just as the believer was of his people. They do not cherish any ill-will or feeling of vengeance against you in spite of your persecutions of them. They are not your enemies but enemies of your deviation and error. The only object of their struggle against you is that you should adopt the right way."

This verse also is one of those verses which clearly prove the existence of *barzakh.* This shows that the period of time between death and Resurrection is not a period of non-existence altogether, as some ignorant people think. But in this period the spirit lives without the body, speaks and hears speech, has feelings and desires, feels happy and unhappy, and also continues to be concerned about the people of the world. Had it not been so, the believer would not have been given the good news of Paradise after death, and he could not have wished that his people became aware of his good end.

24. These words contain a subtle satire. In their arrogance and pride of power and their strong antagonism towards the true faith, they thought they would

annihilate the three Prophets and their followers, but, contrary to their plot, they were themselves annihilated by only one stroke of the Divine punishment.

25. That is, they were annihilated so completely that not a trace of them was left behind them. No one in the world even remembers them today. Their civilization as well as their race has become extinct.

26. Until now the disbelieves of Makkah were being warned and reproved for their denial of the truth and their attitude of antagonism which they had adopted towards the Holy Prophet. Now the discourse turns to the basic thing which was the actual cause of the conflict between them and the Holy Prophet, i.e., the doctrine of *Tauḥīd* and the Hereafter, which the Holy Prophet was presenting and the disbelievers were refusing to accept. In this connection, some arguments have been given, one after the other, to make the people ponder over the realities, as if to say, "Observe these phenomena of the universe, which are ever present before you. Do they not point to the same reality, which this Prophet is presenting before you?"

27. "A Sign": A Sign that *Tauḥīd* is the Truth and *shirk* the falsehood.

28. Another translation of this sentence can be: ".....so that they may eat fruits thereof and what their own hands make." That is, the artificial kinds of food, which the people prepare from the natural products, e.g., bread, curry, jam, pickles, sauces and countless other things.

29. In these brief sentences the vegetable and plant life of the earth has been presented as an argument. Man is eating the products of the earth day and night and regards this as very ordinary. But if he considers it seriously, he will see that the growth of rich crops and lush green gardens from the dry earth and the flowing in it of the springs and rivers is not a simple thing, which might be happening of itself, but there is a great wisdom and power and providence which is working behind it. Consider the reality of the earth. The substances of which it is composed do not possess any power of their own for growth. All these substances individually as well as after every sort of combination, remain inorganic, and thus do not possess any sign of life. The question is: How did it become possible for plant life to emerge from the lifeless earth? If one looks into it, one will see that there are some important factors without whose provision beforehand life here could not have come into existence.

First, in particular regions of the earth, on its outer surface, a layer was arranged of many such substances, which could serve as food for vegetation. This layer was kept soft so that the roots of the vegetation could spread in it and suck food.

Secondly, a system of irrigation was arranged on the earth in different ways so that the food elements could get dissolved in water and absorbed by the roots.

Thirdly, the atmosphere was arranged around the earth which protects it against the calamities of the sky, becomes a means of the rainfall, and possesses gases which are necessary for the life and growth of the vegetation.

Fourthly, a relationship was established between the sun and the earth so as to provide proper temperature and suitable seasons for the vegetation.

With the provision of these main factors (which in themselves are combinations of countless other factors), the coming to life of the vegetation becomes possible. After arranging the suitable conditions the seed of each species of the vegetation was so constituted that as soon as it received favourable soil, water, air and season, vegetable life should begin stirring within it. Besides, inside the same seed a system was so arranged that from the seed of every species a plant precisely of the same species should grow with all the characteristics of its own species and heredity. Then, in addition to this, another wonderful thing was done. Vegetation was not created in twenty, or fifty, or a hundred kinds but in countless species, and they were so made that they should fulfil the requirements of food, medicine and clothing and innumerable other needs of the countless kinds of animals and man, who were to be brought into being after the vegetation on the earth.

Anyone who ponders over this wonderful arrangement, if he is not stubborn and prejudiced, will himself testify that all this could not have come about by itself. There is certainly a wise plan underlying it, according to which harmonies and relationships of the soil, water, air and season with respect to the vegetation, and harmonies and relationships of the vegetation with respect to the needs and requirements of animals and human beings have been determined, keeping in view the finest detail. No sensible person can imagine that these universal, all-embracing relationships could be a mere accident. This same subtle arrangement points to the fact that this cannot be the work of many gods. This is, and can only be, the work of One God, Who is the Creator and Lord of the earth, water, air, sun, vegetation, animals and mankind. If each of these had a separate god, it cannot be imagined that such a comprehensive and universal plan with such deep and wise relationship and harmony could be produced, and should have continued to work with such regularity for millions upon millions of years.

After giving these arguments for Tauḥīd, Allah says: "Do they not then give thanks?" That is: "Are these people so thankless and ungrateful that they do not render thanks to that God Who has provided all this for their survival, but thank others for the blessings and favours done by Him ? Are they so wretched

that instead of bowing before Him they bow before the false gods, who have not created even a blade of grass for them ?"

30. "Glorified is He": "He is free from every defect and fault, from every error and weakness, and that another one should be His associate and partner in His work." The Qur'ān has generally used these words when refuting polytheistic beliefs, because every belief of shirk is, in fact, an imputation of some defect, some weakness and some fault to Allah. When a person says that Allah has an associate, he, in fact, thinks that either Allah is incapable of running and ruling His Kingdom alone, or He is under compulsion to make another His associate in His work. Or, some other beings are so powerful in themselves that they are interfering in God's administration and God is putting up with their interference. Or, God forbid, Allah has the weaknesses of the worldly kings, due to which He is surrounded by an army of ministers, courtiers, flatterers and beloved princes or princesses, and thus many powers of Godhead have become divided among them. Had there been no such notions of ignorance about Allah in the minds, there could be no question of any idea of shirk in the world. That is why it has been stated again and again in the Qur'ān that Allah is free from and exalted far above those defects and faults and weaknesses which the mushriks ascribe to Him."

31. This is still another argument for Tauḥid. Here again certain realities of daily experience have been mentioned and it is suggested that man observes these day and night but does not ponder over them seriously, whereas they contain signs and pointers to the reality. The coming together of the man and woman is the cause of man's own birth. Procreation among the animals also is due to the combination between the male and the female. About vegetation also man knows that the law of sex is working in it. Even among the lifeless substances when different things combine with one another, a variety of compounds come into existence. The basic composition of matter itself has become possible due to the close affinity between the positive and the negative electric charges. This law of the pairs which is the basis of the existence of the entire universe, contains in itself such complexities and finenesses of wisdom and workmanship, and there exist such harmonies and mutual relationships between the members of each pair that an objective observer can neither regard it as the result of an accident, nor can he believe that many different gods might have created these countless pairs and matched their members, one with the other, with such great wisdom. The members of each pair's being a perfect match for each other and coming into being of new things with their combination itself is an explicit argument of the Creator's being One and only One.

32. The alternation of the night and day also is one of those realities which man does not regard as worthy of much attention only because it is a phenomenon of daily occurrence and experience; whereas if he considers how the

day passes and how the night falls, and what is the wisdom in the passing of the day and in the falling of the night, he will himself realize that this is an obvious sign of the existence of an All-Powerful and All-Wise Allah and of His being One and only One. The day cannot pass and the night cannot fall until the sun hides from the earth. The great regularity which is found in the alternation of the day and night, was not possible unless the sun and the earth were bound in one and the same relentless system. Then the deep relationship which exists between the alternation of the day and night and the other creations on the earth clearly points to the fact that this system has been established deliberately by a Being with perfect wisdom. The existence on the earth, of the men and animals and vegetation, and even of water and air and different minerals, is in fact, the result of placing the earth at a particular distance from the sun, with the arrangement that the different parts of the earth should go on successively coming before the sun and hiding from it at definite intervals. If the distance of the earth from the sun had been a little longer, or a little shorter, or there had been a perpetual night on one side of it and a perpetual day on the other, or the alternation of the day and night had been much faster or much slower, or sometimes the day had appeared suddenly and sometimes the night without any system, no life could be possible on this planet, and even the form and appearance of the inorganic substances would have been much different from what it is now. If the mind's eye is not closed, one can clearly perceive in this system the working of a God, Who willed to bring into being this particular kind of creation on the earth and then established relevances, harmonies and relationships between the earth and the sun precisely in accordance with its needs and requirements. If a person regards the concept of the existence of God and His Unity as far removed from reason, he should think for himself and see how much farther removed should it be from reason to ascribe this wonderful creation to many gods, or to think that all this has happened automatically under some deaf and blind law of nature. When a person who can accept without question these latter unreasonable explanations, only on the basis of conjecture and speculation, says that the existence of a system and wisdom and purpose is not a sufficient proof of the existence of God, it becomes difficult for us to believe whether such a person really feels the need and necessity of a rational proof, sufficient or insufficient in any degree whatever, for accepting any concept or creed in the world.

33, "Place of rest" may either mean the place where the sun will ultimately come to a halt, or the time when it will come to a halt. The true meaning of this verse can be determined only when man has attained the full and exact knowledge of the realities of the universe. But man's knowledge is such that it has been changing in every age and what he seems to know today might change tomorrow. The people of the ancient times on the basis of their observations of the

sun believed that it was moving round the earth. Then after further research and observation the view became that the sun was stationary and all the planets of the solar system were revolving round it. But this theory also did not last long. The later observations revealed that not only the sun but all the stars also are moving in a particular direction, at speeds of 10 to 100 miles per second. About the sun the modern astronomers hold the view that it is moving at a speed of 20 kilometres (about 12 miles) per second along with its whole family of the planets. (See "Star" and "Sun" in Encyclopedia Britannica).

34. That is, the phases of the moon go on changing throughout the month. It begins as a crescent, then goes on waxing every day till it becomes the full moon on the 14th of the month. Then it starts waning every day till at last it returns to its original shape of the crescent. The same has been happening for millions of years with perfect regularity, and no change has ever occurred in the phases of the moon. That is why one can always calculate and find out exactly in what phase the moon will be on a particular day. If the movement of the moon had not been bound in a system, estimation of its phases would not have been possible.

35. This sentence can have two meanings and both are correct: (1) The sun does not have the power that it should draw the moon into itself, or enter its orbit and collide with it; and (2) the sun cannot appear in the times which have been appointed for the rising and appearing of the moon. It is not possible that the sun should suddenly appear on the horizon when the moon is shining at night.

36. Nor does this happen either that the night should approach before the appointed period of the day comes to an end, and should start spreading its darkness suddenly during the time when the day is meant to spread its light.

37 The word *falak* in Arabic is used for the orbit of the planets, and it gives a different meaning from the word *samā'* (sky). The sentence, "Each is gliding in its own orbit," points to four realities: (1) That not only the sun and the moon but all the stars and planets and celestial bodies are moving; (2) the *falak*, or orbit, of each one of them is separate; (3) that the orbits are not moving with the stars in them, but the stars are moving in the orbits; and (4) that the movement of the stars in their orbits is similar to the floating of something in a fluid.

These verses are not intended to describe the realities of astronomy, but are meant to make man understand that if he looks around himself, with open eyes, and uses his common sense, he will find countless and limitless proofs of the existence of God and His Unity, and he will not come across a single proof of atheism and shirk. The vastness of the solar system in which our earth is included is such that its parent body, the sun, is 300,000 times bigger than the earth, and its farthest planet Neptune is at least 2,793 million miles distant from the sun. However, if Pluto is taken as the farthest planet, it revolves 4,600 million miles

away round it. Notwithstanding this vastness, the solar system occupies a very insignificant part of a huge galaxy. The galaxy which includes our solar system has about 3,000 million suns in it, and its nearest sun is so distant from our earth that its light takes about four years to reach us. Then this galaxy also is not the whole universe. According to the investigations made so far, it has been estimated that it is one of about 2,000,000 spiral nebulae, and the nearest nebula is about a million light years away from the earth. As for the farthest celestial bodies which are visible through the modern instruments, their light reaches the earth in about 100 million years. Even now it cannot be claimed that man has seen the whole universe. It is a small part of the Kingdom of God which man has yet been able to observe. It cannot be predicted how far and deep man will yet be able to see with greater and more efficient means of observation at his disposal.

All the information that has been gathered so far about the universe proves that this whole world is made up of the same substance of which our tiny earthly world is made, and the same law is working in the universe which is working in the world of our earth; otherwise it was not at all possible, that man should have made observations of the very distant worlds from the earth, measured their distances and estimated their movements. Is it not a clear proof of the fact that this whole universe is the creation of One God and the Kingdom of One Ruler? Then from the order and the wisdom and the excellence of workmanship and the deep relationships which are found in the hundreds of thousands of the galaxies and in the millions and billions of the stars and planets revolving in them no sensible person can imagine that all this has come about automatically. Is it possible that there should be no administrator behind this order and system, no sage behind this wisdom, no designer behind this design and work of art, and no planner behind this planning?

38. "A laden vessel": the Ark of the Prophet Noah. As to boarding of the progeny of man in it, it means that although apparently a few companions of the Prophet Noah had boarded it, in reality all human beings who are to be born till Resurrection were boarding it; all the rest of mankind had been drowned in the Flood, all later human beings are the children of those who were rescued in the Ark.

39. This indicates that the first vessel ever to be made in the world was the one made by the Prophet Noah. Before that time man did not know any method of crossing the rivers and the seas. This method was first of all taught by Allah to the Prophet Noah, and when some servants of Allah were rescued in it from the Flood, their future generations started making boats and ships for their sea journeys.

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إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ اتَّقُوا مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَمَا خَلْفَكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَمَا تَأْتِيهِم مِّنْ آيَةٍ مِّنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ إِلَّا كَانُوا عَنْهَا مُعْرِضِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَ
إِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ أَنفِقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ قَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
أَنُطْعِمُ مَن لَّوْ يَشَاءُ اللَّهُ أَطْعَمَهُ إِنْ أَنتُمْ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَيَقُولُونَ
مَتَىٰ هَٰذَا الْوَعْدُ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٤٨﴾ مَا يَنظُرُونَ إِلَّا صَيْحَةً وَاحِدَةً
تَأْخُذُهُمْ وَهُمْ يَخِصِّمُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾ فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ تَوْصِيَةً وَلَا إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِمْ
يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَنُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَإِذَا هُم مِّنَ الْأَجْدَاثِ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَنسِلُونَ ﴿٥١﴾
قَالُوا يَا وَيْلَنَا مَن بَعَثَنَا مِن مَّرْقَدِنَا هَٰذَا مَا وَعَدَ الرَّحْمَٰنُ وَصَدَقَ الْمُرْسَلُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾
إِن كَانَتْ إِلَّا صَيْحَةً وَاحِدَةً فَإِذَا هُمْ جَمِيعٌ لَّدَيْنَا مُحْضَرُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾ فَالْيَوْمَ لَا
تُظْلَمُ نَفْسٌ شَيْئًا وَلَا تُجْزَوْنَ إِلَّا مَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾ إِنَّ أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ
الْيَوْمَ فِي شُغُلٍ فَاكِهُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾ هُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُهُمْ فِي ظِلَالٍ عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ مُتَّكِئُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾
لَهُمْ فِيهَا فَاكِهَةٌ وَلَهُم مَّا يَدَّعُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾ سَلَامٌ قَوْلًا مِّن رَّبٍّ رَّحِيمٍ ﴿٥٨﴾ وَ
امْتَازُوا الْيَوْمَ أَيُّهَا الْمُجْرِمُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾ أَلَمْ أَعْهَدْ إِلَيْكُمْ يَا بَنِي آدَمَ أَن لَّا تَعْبُدُوا
الشَّيْطَانَ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَأَنِ اعْبُدُونِي هَٰذَا صِرَاطٌ مُّسْتَقِيمٌ ﴿٦١﴾
وَلَقَدْ أَضَلَّ مِنكُمْ جِبِلًّا كَثِيرًا أَفَلَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾ هَٰذِهِ جَهَنَّمُ الَّتِي
كُنتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾ اصْلَوْهَا الْيَوْمَ بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾ الْيَوْمَ نَخْتِمُ عَلَىٰ
أَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَتُكَلِّمُنَا أَيْدِيهِمْ وَتَشْهَدُ أَرْجُلُهُم بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾ وَلَوْ
نَشَاءُ لَطَمَسْنَا عَلَىٰ أَعْيُنِهِمْ فَاسْتَبَقُوا الصِّرَاطَ فَأَنَّىٰ يُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾ وَلَوْ نَشَاءُ
لَمَسَخْنَاهُمْ عَلَىٰ مَكَانَتِهِمْ فَمَا اسْتَطَاعُوا مُضِيًّا وَلَا يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾ وَمَن نُّعَمِّرْهُ

When it is said to them, "Guard against the end which is before you and which you have left behind,[41] so that you are shown mercy," (they pay no heed), whatever Revelation of the Revelations of their Lord reaches them, they turn away from it.[42] And when it is said to them, "Spend also in the way of Allah out of what He has given you," those who disbelieve say to those who believe, "Should we feed those whom Allah Himself could have fed had He so willed? You have utterly gone astray!"[43] 45-47

They[44] say, "When will the threat of Resurrection be carried out? Tell us if you are truthful."[45] In fact, what they are awaiting is a single blast, which will suddenly seize them while they will be disputing (about their worldly affairs). Then they will neither be able to make a will, nor be able to return to their families.[46] Then a Trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come out of their graves forthwith to present themselves before their Lord.[47] Bewildered they will say, "Ah! who has roused us from our sleeping-place?"[48] ---- "This is the same which the Merciful God had promised and the Messengers had spoken the truth."[49] There shall only be a single loud blast and they shall be presented before Us, all together. 48-53

On this Day[50] no one will be wronged in the least, and you will be rewarded exactly according to what you had been doing.——(On this Day) the inmates of Paradise are absorbed in enjoying bliss[51]: they and their wives are in thick shades, reclining upon couches: they have all kinds of tasteful foods and whatever they may desire: they have been greeted with 'Peace' from the Merciful Lord. ——And O criminals, get you apart today![52] Children of Adam, did I not enjoin on you not to worship Satan, who is your open enemy, but to worship Me alone? This is the Straight Way.[53] Yet, in spite of this, he led astray a great multitude of you: did you not have common sense?[54] This is the same Hell with which you used to be threatened. Now be its fuel in consequence of your disbelief in the world. 54-64

On that Day We shall seal their tongues: their hands will speak to Us, and their feet will testify as to what they had been earning in the world.[55] 65

66-68 If We will, We can put out their eyes: then let them strive to seek the way: wherefrom will they see it? If We please, We can so transform them in their places that they would neither be able to go forward nor turn backward.[56] Whomsoever We grant a long life, We just reverse him in nature and constitution.[57] Do they not understand anything (from this)?

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40. The signs till now were mentioned as arguments for *Tauhīd*. This sign has been mentioned to make man realize that whatever powers he has been given over the forces of nature, have been given him by Allah and are not of his own acquirement. And whatever methods he has discovered of exploiting these forces; have been discovered also through the guidance of Allah and not solely by himself. Man did not have the power and strength to have subdued these great forces by his own power, nor the capability to have discovered the secrets of nature himself and known the methods of taking service from them. Then he can use and employ the forces over which he has been given control by Allah only till the time that Allah wills them to remain subdued to him. For when Allah wills otherwise the same forces which were serving man turn against him suddenly and he finds himself utterly helpless before them. To call man's attention to this reality Allah has presented the case of the sea journey only as an example. The whole human race would have perished in the Flood had Allah not taught the method of making the vessel to the Prophet Noah and had his followers not boarded it. Then the scattering of the human race over the whole earth became possible only because the people learnt the principles of building vessels from Allah and became able to cross the rivers and oceans. But from that humble beginning till today in spite of making great strides in the art of building huge ships and attaining every possible perfection in the science of navigation, man cannot claim that he has brought the rivers and the oceans fully under his control and power. Even today the water of God is still in God's own power alone and whenever He wills He drowns man along with his ships in it.

41. "Which you have left behind": Which the peoples before you have seen and experienced.

42. "Revelations": Verses of the Divine Book by which man is admonished, and the Signs which are found in the universe and in man's own self and in his history which serve as object lessons for man, provided he is inclined to learn any lesson.

43. This means to show that disbelief has not only blinded their intellect but has destroyed their moral sense, too. They neither have the right thought about Allah nor do they adopt the right attitude towards the people. They react adversely to every admonition, follow a perverse philosophy in respite of every deviation and immorality and have a ready made pretence for escape from every good.

44. After *Tauḥīd* the other question about which a dispute was raging between the Holy Prophet and the disbelievers was the question of the Hereafter. Rational arguments about this have been given in the end of the discourse. Here, before giving the arguments, the Hereafter has been depicted with all its horrors so that the people should know that what they are refusing to believe in cannot be averted by their denial, but they have to meet and experience it one day inevitably.

45. The question did not mean that they wanted to know the exact date of the coming of the Hereafter, and if, for instance, they were told that it would take place on such and such a date in such and such a month and year, their doubts would have been removed and they would have believed in it. Such questions, in fact, were put as a challenge only for the sake of argument. What they meant to say was that there would be no Resurrection whatever, as if to say, "You are threatening us with Resurrection without rhyme or reason." That is why in reply it has not been said that Resurrection will take place on such and such a day, but that it shall come and shall be accompanied by such and such horrors."

46. That is, "The Resurrection will not take place piecemeal so that the people may leisurely watch its coming, but it will come all of a sudden when the people will be engaged in their daily business and they will have no idea whatever that the end of the world had approached. There will be a terrible blast and everyone will fall dead at the spot."

Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Amr and Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah have related a *Ḥadīth* from the Holy Prophet saying: "The people will be walking on the roads as usual, will be buying and selling in the markets, will be disputing matters in their assemblies, when suddenly the Trumpet shall be sounded. Thereupon the one who was buying cloth would collapse and he would not have the time to put down the cloth from his hand; the one who was filling a cistern to water his animals would not have the time to water; and the one who was going to eat, would not have the time to lift the morsel to his mouth and Resurrection will take place."

47. For the explanation of the blowing of the "Trumpet", see E.N. 78 of Sūrah Ṭā Hā. As for the length of the interval between the first blowing of the Trumpet and its second blowing, we have no information. The interval may be of hundreds and thousands of years. Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah has related that the Holy Prophet said: "Isrāfīl has put the Trumpet to his mouth and is looking up to the Divine Throne, awaiting orders for blowing it. The Trumpet will be blown thrice:

On the first blowing (called *nafakhat al-faza'*) everything in the earth and heavens will be struck with terror. On the second blowing *(nafakhat as-Sa'q)* everyone will fall down dead. Then, when none shall remain except Allah, the One, the Everlasting, the earth will be changed altogether and will be spread flat and smooth without a crease or wrinkle in it. Then Allah will administer a rebuke to His Creation, whereupon everyone will rise at the spot where he had fallen dead, on the changed earth, and this will happen on the third blowing of the Trumpet *(nafakhat al qiyām li-Rabbil-'Ālamīn).* This is supported by several allusions in the Qur'ān also.

For example, see Sūrah Ibrāhīm: 48; Sūrah Ṭā Hā: 105-108, and the E.N.'s thereof.

48. That is, "At that time they will not realize that they had been dead and had been raised back to life after a long period, but they will be thinking that they had fallen asleep, and had been woken up suddenly by some terrible catastrophe, and were running away from it." (For further explanation, see Ṭā Hā: 103, Al-Hajj: 1-2).

49. Here, it is not clear as to who will give this answer. It may be that they themselves would realize after some time to their horror that it was the same thing of which the Messengers of God used to inform them and they used to belie them. It may also be that the believers will remove their misunderstanding and tell them that it was not waking up from sleep but the second life after death. And it may also be that they will understand this from the general conditions prevailing on the Day of Resurrection or the angels might tell them this.

50. This is what Allah will tell the disbelievers and the polytheists, the sinners and the culprits, when they will be presented before Him.

51. To understand this one should remember that the righteous believers will not be withheld in the Plain of Resurrection, but in the very beginning they will be sent to Paradise without accountability, or after a mild reckoning, because their record will be clean. There will be no need to keep them waiting during the hearing by the Court. Therefore, Allah will tell the culprits, who will be required to render their accounts, in the Plain of Resurrection: "Look ! the righteous people whom you used to mock and regard as foolish in the world, are today enjoying the pleasures of Paradise because of their wisdom, and you, who in your own judgement were very prudent and sagacious, are being condemned to accountability for your misdeeds."

52. This can have two meanings:(1) "Get you apart from the righteous believers, for in the world even if you belonged to the same community and the same clan and the same brotherhood, here you have no connection and

relationship left with them;" and (2) "get you apart from one another: now you can no longer remain a group: all your parties have been disbanded: all your relations and connections have been severed. Now each of you will be held answerable in your personal capacity for your actions and deeds."

53. Here again Allah has used *'ibādat* in the sense of *itā'at* (obedience). This subject has already been explained above in Al-Baqarah: 172, An-Nisā': 117, Al-An'ām: 121, 137, At-Taubah: 31, Ibrāhīm: 22, Al-Kahf: 52, Maryam: 42, Al-Qasas: 63 and E.N. 63 of Sabā. In this connection, the fine explanation given of it by Imām Rāzī in his *Tafsīr Kabīr is* also noteworthy. He writes: *"Do not worship Satan* means: Do not obey him, the reason being that only falling prostrate before him is not forbidden, but following him and obeying his commands also is forbidden; therefore, *itā'at* (obedience) is *'ibādat* (worship)." After this, the Imām raises the question: If *'ibādat* means *itā'at*, then have the Muslims been commanded to worship the Prophet and the rulers in the verse: *Atī'ullaha wa ati'-ur-rasūla wa ulil-amr-i min-kum?* He himself answers it thus: "If obedience to them is in accordance with the Commands of Allah, it will be Allah's worship *('ibādat)* and His obedience (*itā'at*). Did not the angels fall prostrate before Adam in obedience to Allah's Command ? This was nothing but worship of Allah. Obedience of the rulers will be their worship only in cases where they are obeyed in matters in which Allah has not given leave to obey them." Then he writes: "If a person comes to you and commands you to do something, you should see whether his command is in accordance with the Command of Allah or not. If it is not, Satan is with him; and if you obeyed him in this, you worshipped him and his Satan. Likewise, if your self urges you to do something, you should see whether it is permissible to do it according to the *Sahari'ah* or not. If it is not permissible, your self is Satan itself, or Satan is with it. If you obeyed him, you in fact became guilty of worshipping him." Further on, he writes: "But there are different degrees of the worship of Satan. Sometimes it so happens that a man does a work and his limbs and his tongue also join him in this, and his heart also cooperates. At another time it so happens that a man uses his limbs to do a work but his heart and tongue do not cooperate in this. Some people commit a sin while their heart is disagreeable and their tongue is invoking Allah for forgiveness, and they confess that they are committing an evil. This is Satan's worship with external limbs. There are other people who commit a crime with a cool mind and express pleasure and satisfaction with the tongue also. .....Such people are the worshippers of Satan from outside as well as from inside. *(Tafsīr Kabīr,* vol. VII, pp. 103-104).

54. That is, "If you had been deprived of reason and you had served your enemy instead of your Lord, you could have the reason to offer an excuse. But you, in fact, had been blessed with reason by Allah and you were using it to advantage in all the affairs of the world, and you had been warned by Allah

through the Prophets as well, yet, when you were deceived by your enemy and he succeeded in leading you astray, you could not be excused from the responsibility of your folly."

55. This command will be given in respect of the stubborn culprits, who will refuse to confess their crimes, will belie the witnesses, and will also not acknowledge the genuineness of their conduct-book. Then will Allah Almighty command; "Well, stop your babbling. Just see what your own limbs say about your misdeeds." In this connection, here only the evidence to be given by the hands and the feet has been mentioned. But at other places it has been said that their eyes and their ears and their tongues, and the very skins of their body, will tell how they had been employed in the world. "They should not forget the Day when their own tongues and their own hands and feet will bear testimony to their misdeeds." (An-Nūr: 24) "Then, when all will have reached there, their ears and their eyes and their very skins will bear witness against them concerning what they had been doing in the world." (Ḥā Mīm Sajdah: 20). The question arises: On the one hand, Allah says: "We shall seal their mouths," and on the other, in the verse of Sūrah An-Nūr, He says: "Their tongues will bear testimony against them." How can these two things be reconciled ? The answer is: "To seal the mouths means to deprive them of their power of speech. That is, after this they will not be able to say whatever they like with their tongue. The testimony of their tongues means that their tongues themselves will tell how the wicked people had used them, what blasphemies and lies they had been made to utter, what mischiefs they had invented and what falsehoods they had been made to say on different occasions."

56. After depicting the scene of Resurrection, the people are being warned to this effect: "The Resurrection may seem yet far off to you, but even if you consider seriously your life in this world of which you are so proud, you will see how helpless you are in the powerful grip of Allah. Your eyes by virtue of whose sight you are carrying out all your obligations in the world can be blinded at one command of Allah. Your legs on whose strength you are showing all this activity can become paralyzed as and when Allah wills. As long as the powers and capabilities granted by Allah continue to function, you remain lost in the arrogance of your self, but as soon as one of them fails to function, you come to understand how helpless you are!"

[Contd. on p.290

نُنَكِّسْهُ فِي الْخَلْقِ ۖ أَفَلَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾ وَمَا عَلَّمْنَاهُ الشِّعْرَ وَمَا يَنْبَغِي لَهُ ۚ إِنْ
هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ وَقُرْآنٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿٦٩﴾ لِيُنْذِرَ مَنْ كَانَ حَيًّا وَيَحِقَّ الْقَوْلُ عَلَى
الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٧٠﴾ أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا خَلَقْنَا لَهُمْ مِمَّا عَمِلَتْ أَيْدِينَا أَنْعَامًا فَهُمْ لَهَا
مَالِكُونَ ﴿٧١﴾ وَذَلَّلْنَاهَا لَهُمْ فَمِنْهَا رَكُوبُهُمْ وَمِنْهَا يَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾ وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا مَنَافِعُ
وَمَشَارِبُ ۖ أَفَلَا يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٧٣﴾ وَاتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ آلِهَةً لَعَلَّهُمْ يُنْصَرُونَ ﴿٧٤﴾
لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ نَصْرَهُمْ وَهُمْ لَهُمْ جُنْدٌ مُحْضَرُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾ فَلَا يَحْزُنْكَ قَوْلُهُمْ
إِنَّا نَعْلَمُ مَا يُسِرُّونَ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ ﴿٧٦﴾ أَوَلَمْ يَرَ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُ مِنْ
نُطْفَةٍ فَإِذَا هُوَ خَصِيمٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿٧٧﴾ وَضَرَبَ لَنَا مَثَلًا وَنَسِيَ خَلْقَهُ ۖ قَالَ مَنْ
يُحْيِي الْعِظَامَ وَهِيَ رَمِيمٌ ﴿٧٨﴾ قُلْ يُحْيِيهَا الَّذِي أَنْشَأَهَا أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ ۖ وَهُوَ
بِكُلِّ خَلْقٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٩﴾ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الشَّجَرِ الْأَخْضَرِ نَارًا فَإِذَا أَنْتُمْ

We have not taught this (Prophet) poetry nor does poetry behove him.[58] This is only an Admonition and a lucid poetry Book, so that he may warn everyone who is living[59] and the charge is established against the disbelievers. 69-70

Do they not see that out of what Our hands have fashioned,[60] We have created for them cattle of which they are masters? We have so subjected these to them that they ride on some and eat the flesh of others, and in them there are different advantages and drinks for them. Then, will they not be grateful?[61] Yet, they have set up other gods, apart from Allah, hoping that they would be helped. They cannot help them at all; yet do these people stand as an ever ready army at their service.[62] Well, let not their words grieve you; We know whatever they hide and whatever they reveal.[63] 71-76

Does[64] not man see that We created him from a sperm-drop, and yet he stands forth as a manifest adversary?[65] Now he strikes out 77-83

مِّنْهُ تُوْقِدُوْنَ ﴿٨٠﴾ أَوَلَيْسَ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِقٰدِرٍ عَلٰٓى
أَنْ يَّخْلُقَ مِثْلَهُمْ ۭ بَلٰى ۚ وَهُوَ الْخَلّٰقُ الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿٨١﴾ إِنَّمَآ أَمْرُهٗٓ إِذَآ أَرَادَ شَيْـًٔا أَنْ
يَّقُوْلَ لَهٗ كُنْ فَيَكُوْنُ ﴿٨٢﴾ فَسُبْحٰنَ الَّذِيْ بِيَدِهٖ مَلَكُوْتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَّإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿٨٣﴾

likenesses for Us and forgets his own creation.[67] He says, "Who will give life to these bones when they are rotten?" Tell him, "He Who created them in the first instance will give them life again: He is skilled at every kind of creation. He it is Who created fire for you from the green tree, with which you kindle your fuel.[68] Is not He, Who created the heavens and the earth, able to create the like of them ? Why not, when He is the skilful Creator. When He intends anything, He needs only say: 'Be', and it is. Glorified is He in Whose hand is the absolute control of everything, and to Him you shall all be returned.

Contd. from p.288]

57. "Reverse him in nature," means that in old age Allah turns him back to the state of childhood. He becomes unable to stand and walk without the help and support of others; he is fed by others; he urinates and defecates in bed; talks childishly and is laughed at by others. In short, towards the end of life he returns to the same state of weakness with which he had started life in this world."

58. This is a rejoinder to the disbelievers, who slighted the Holy Prophet and his message by branding him a poet when he preached *Tauhīd* and talked of the Hereafter, life-after-death, and Hell and Heaven. (For further explanation, see Ash-Shu'arā: 224-227 and the E.N.'s thereof).

59. "Every living person": Every person who is capable of thinking and understanding, who is not like a stone, which neither hears nor understands nor moves from its place, however rationally and sympathetically one may explain the distinction between the truth and falsehood and give admonition before him.

60. The word "hands" has been used metaphorically for Allah. This does not mean that, God forbid, Allah has a body and He works with the hands like human beings, but it means to impress that Allah has made these things Himself, and none else has any share in the matter of their creation.

61. It is ingratitude to regard a blessing as a gift of someone other than the donor, to be grateful to another for it, and to cherish the hope of receiving it or to seek it from another than the donor. Likewise, it is also ingratitude that one should

use a blessing against the will of the donor. Therefore, a *mushrik* or a disbeliever or a hypocrite or a sinful person cannot be regarded as a grateful servant of God when he utters words of thankfulness only with the tongue. The disbelievers of Makkah did not deny that the cattle had been created by Allah; none of them said that the other deities had any hand in their creation. But despite knowing all this when they paid homage to their deities for the blessings granted by Allah, presented offerings before them and prayed to them for more blessings and offered sacrifices for their sake, their verbal gratitude became meaningless. That is why Allah has regarded them as guilty of ingratitude and thanklessness.

62. That is, the poor false gods themselves are dependent upon their worshippers for their survival and their safety and their needs. But for their multitudes they could not survive as gods even for a day. These people are behaving as their humble servants. They are setting up and decorating their shrines; they carry out propaganda for them; they fight and quarrel with others for their sake. Then only are they recognized as gods. They are not the real God, Who, whether someone recognizes Him or not, is ruling over the whole universe by His own might and authority.

63. The address is to the Holy Prophet. Here the allusion is to the campaign of vilification which the chiefs of the disbelievers of Makkah were carrying on against him. They knew in their hearts and acknowledged in their private assemblies that the charges they brought against him were absolutely baseless. In order to create suspicions against him in the minds of the people, they branded him a poet, sorcerer, magician, madman, etc. But their consciences recognized, and they also acknowledged before one another, that whatever they were uttering Was false, which they were forging only to frustrate his mission. That is why Allah says to His Prophet: "Do not grieve at their absurd and meaningless talk. Those who are opposing and resisting the Truth with falsehood shall ultimately meet with failure in this world and see their evil end in the Hereafter, too."

64. Here the disbelievers' question cited in verse 48 above, is being answered by reason and argument. The question, "When will the threat of Resurrection be carried out?" had not been asked with a view to find out the exact date of the coming of the Hereafter. But they asked it because they thought it was impossible, rather irrational, that human beings would be raised back to life after death. That is why, in reply to their question, arguments are being given for the possibility of the Hereafter.

According to the traditions related by Ibn 'Abbās, Qatādah and Sa'īd bin Jubair, one of the chiefs of Makkah, on this occasion, came up with a rotten bone of a dead person, from the graveyard. He broke and crushed it into pieces before the Holy Prophet and scattering its particles in the air, said, "O Muḥammad, you

say that the dead will be raised back to life. Tell us who will give life to these decayed and rotten bones?" The answer was given immediately in the form of these verses.

65. That is, "We caused the sperm-drop which contained nothing but the basic germ of life to develop to an extent that it started moving and eating like the animals. Furthermore, it has developed such powers of intellect and reasoning and disputation and speech, which are not possessed by any animal; so much so that now he dares stand up as an adversary before his Creator !"

66. That is, "He regards Us powerless and weak like the creation, and thinks that just as man cannot raise the dead back to life, so also can't We."

67. "Forgets his own creation": "Forgets that We created the basic germ of life from dead matter, which became the means of his creation; then We caused the germ to develop to such an extent that now he stands before Us as a disputant."

68. It either means that He has placed the inflammable matter in the green trees due to which people kindle fire from the pieces of wood. Or, it is an allusion to the *markh* and *'afār* trees, whose green branches the Arabs struck against each other to produce the sparks. In ancient times the Bedouins used this method of kindling the fire and might even be using the same today.


XXXVII
AṢ-ṢĀĀFFĀT
الصّٰٓفّٰت

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XXXVII

AS-SĀĀFFĀT

الصّٰفّٰت

INTRODUCTION

Name

The name is derived from the word *waṣ-ṣāāffāt* with which the Sūrah begins.

Period of Revelation

The subject-matter and the style show that this Sūrah probably was sent down in the middle of the Makkan period, or perhaps in the last stage of the middle Makkan period. The style clearly indicates that antagonism is raging strong in the background and the Holy Prophet and his Companions are passing through very difficult and discouraging circumstances.

Subject-Matter and Theme

The disbelievers of Makkah have been severely warned for their attitude of mockery and derision with which they were responding to the Holy Prophet's message of *Tauhīd* and the Hereafter and for their utter refusal to accept and acknowledge his claim to Prophethood. In the end,

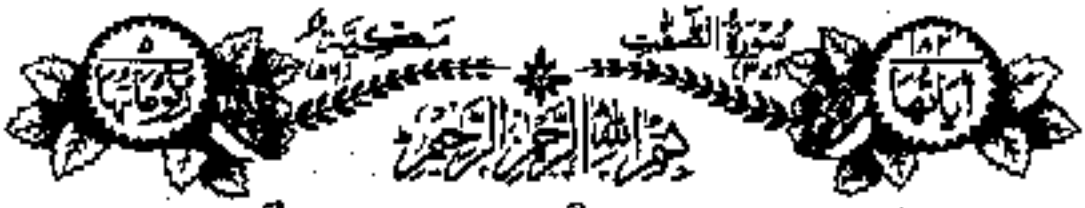
they have been plainly warned that the Prophet whom they are mocking and ridiculing will overwhelm them in spite of their power and pelf and they will find the army of Allah encamping in the very courtyards of their houses (vv. 171-179). This notice was given at a time when there appeared no chance whatever of the Holy Prophet's success and triumph. The Muslims (who have been called Allah's army in these verses) were being made the target of severe persecution. Three-fourth of their population had already emigrated and hardly 40 to 50 of the Companions were left with the Holy Prophet in Makkah who were exrperiencing all sorts of the excesses with utter helplessness. Under such circumstances, in view of the apparent conditions, no one could believe that the Holy Prophet and the handful of his ill-equipped Companions would ultimately attain dominance. The people rather thought that the new movement would end and be buried in the ravines of Makkah. But hardly 15 to 16 years had passed when on the conquest of Makkah precisely the same thing happened of which the disbelievers had been forewarned.

Along with administering warnings, Allah in this Sūrah has done full justice also to the theme of inducement and instruction in a balanced way. Brief but impressive arguments have been given about the validity of the doctrines of *Tauḥīd* and the Hereafter. Criticism has been made of the creed of the *mushrikīn* to show the absurdity of their beliefs; they have been informed of the evil consequences of their deviations, which have been contrasted with the splendid results of the faith and righteous acts. Then, in continuation of the same, precedents from past history have been cited to show how Allah has been treating His Prophets and their followers: how He has been favouring His faithful servants and punishing their deniers and rejectors.

The most instructive of the historical narratives presented in this Sūrah is the important event of the pious life of the Prophet Abraham, who became ready to sacrifice his only son as soon as he received an inspiration from Allah. In this there was a lesson not only for the disbelieving Quraish, who waxed proud of their blood relationship with him, but also for the Muslims who had believed in Allah and His Messenger. By narrating this event they were told what is the essence and the real spirit of Islam, and how a true believer should be ready to

sacrifice his all for the pleasure and approval of Allah after he has adopted it as his Faith and Creed.

The last verses of the Sūrah were not only a warning for the disbelieves but also a good news for the believers who were passing through highly unfavourable and discouraging conditions on account of their supporting and following the Holy Prophet. In these verses they were given the good news that they should not be disheartened at the hardships and difficulties they had to encounter in the beginning, for in the end they alone would attain dominance, and the standard-bearers of falsehood, who appeared to be dominant at the time would be overwhelmed and vanquished at their hands. A few years later the turn the events took, proved that it was not an empty consolation but an inevitable reality of which they had been foretold in order to strengthen their hearts.



وَالصّٰٓفّٰتِ صَفًّا ۝١ فَالزّٰجِرٰتِ زَجْرًا ۝٢ فَالتّٰلِيٰتِ ذِكْرًا ۝٣ اِنَّ اِلٰهَكُمْ لَوَاحِدٌ ۝٤
رَبُّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَرَبُّ الْمَشَارِقِ ۝٥ اِنَّا زَيَّنَّا السَّمَآءَ
الدُّنْيَا بِزِيْنَةِ ِۨالْكَوَاكِبِ ۝٦ وَحِفْظًا مِّنْ كُلِّ شَيْطٰنٍ مَّارِدٍ ۝٧ لَا يَسَّمَّعُوْنَ
اِلَى الْمَلَاِ الْاَعْلٰى وَيُقْذَفُوْنَ مِنْ كُلِّ جَانِبٍ ۝٨ دُحُوْرًا وَّلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ

XXXVII

AṢ-ṢĀĀFFĀT

اَلصّٰٓفّٰت

Verses: 182 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

By those who range themselves in ranks; then by those scold and curse; then by those who recite admonition:[1] your real Deity is but One.[2] ----He Who is Lord of the earth and the heavens and of all that is between them, and Lord[3] of all Easts.[4] 1-5

We have adorned the lower heaven with the adornment of the stars and have secured it against every rebel satan.[6] These satans cannot hear the words of the exalted ones; they are darted at and driven off from every side, and for them there is a perpetual torment. However, if some one snatches away something, a flashing flame follows him.[7] 6-10

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1. The majority of the commentators are agreed that all these three groups imply the groups of the angels, and the same explanation of it has been reported from 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Ibn 'Abbās, Qatādah, Masrūq Sa'id bin Jubair, 'Ikrimah, Mujāhid, Suddī, Ibn Zaid and Rabī' bin Anas. Some commentators have

given other commentaries also, but this commentary is more in keeping with the context. The words "range themselves in ranks" refer to the fact that all the angels who are administering the affairs of the universe, are the humble servants of Allah, and are ever ready to carry out any service and implement any command of His. This theme has been further repeated in verse 165 below, where the angels say with regard to themselves: "We are the ranged servants (of Allah)."

As for "scolding and cursing", some commentators think that it refers to those angels who drive the clouds and arrange the rainfall. Although this meaning is not incorrect either, the meaning which is more relevant to the following context is that among these angels there is also a group of those, who scold and curse the disobedient people and the culprits, and this scolding and cursing is not merely verbal but it rains on human beings in the form of natural disasters and calamities.

"To recite admonition" implies that among these angels there are also those, who perform the service of admonition in order to draw the people's attention to the Truth. This they do by bringing about natural calamities from which the needful take heed, and by bringing down the teachings to the Prophets, and in the form of revelations with which the pious men are blessed through them.

2. This is the Truth to impress which an oath has been taken by the angels bearing the above-mentioned qualities. In other words, what is meant to be said is: "The whole system of the universe which is functioning in the service of Allah, and all those manifestations of this universe which bring the evil consequences of deviation from the service of Allah before men, testify that the "Deity" of men is One and only One."

The word *"Ilāh"* applies to two meanings: (1) The deity who is actually being served and worshipped; and (2) the Deity Who, in reality, is worthy of being served and worshipped. Here, the word *"Ilāh"* has been used in the second meaning, for, as far as the first meaning is concerned, men have adopted many other deities. That is why we have translated *"Ilāh"* as the "real Deity".

3. The Truth that has been conveyed in these verses is: "The Master and Ruler of the Universe is the real Deity of men: He alone can be, and should be, the Deity. It would be utterly irrational that the *Rabb* (i.e. Master, Ruler, Guardian and Sustainer) of the man should be one but his *Ilāh* (deity) another. The basic reason for worship is that man should naturally bow down before and acknowledge the superiority of him who can bring him harm and good, who can fulfil his needs and requirements, who can make or mar his destiny and has power over his life and survival itself. If man understands this he will automatically understand that to worship the one who has no power and not to worship Him Who has all the powers are both against reason and nature. The One Who alone is worthy of worship is He Who possesses the powers. As far as the powerless

beings are concerned, they are neither worthy of worship, nor is it in any way profitable to worship and pray to them, for it is not in their power to take any action whatever on man's petitions and prayers. To bow before them humbly and to petition them would be as foolish and meaningless an act as to bow before and petition another one who has himself gone before a ruler to make obeisance and submit his petitions.

4. The sun does not always rise at the same point but at a different point every day. Moreover, it does not rise at one and the same time for the whole world but rises at different times for the different parts of the earth. That is why the plural *"Mashāriq"* (Easts) has been used to indicate the different points at which the sun rises according to the season of the year. The corresponding word *"Maghārib"* (Wests) has not been used because *Mashāriq* itself points to *Maghārib* However, in Sūrah Al-Ma'ārij, the word *maghārib* also has been used along with *mashāriq: Rabb-al-mashāriqi wal-maghārib.*

5. "Lower heaven": The nearer heaven which can be seen with the naked eye, without the help of a telescope. The worlds beyond which can be seen through the telescopes of different powers, and the worlds which have not so far been observed through any means, are the distant heavens. In this connection, one should also note that *"samā"* is not something definite and determined, but man generally has been using this word and its other synonyms for the heavens since the earliest times.

6. That is, "Heaven is not merely empty space so that anyone who likes may enter it, but it has been fortified strongly, and its different regions have been bounded by such strong barriers that it is impossible for any rebel satan to exceed them. Every star and planet in the universe has its own circle and sphere escaping from which, is as difficult as entering it. With the naked eye one can only see empty space, but, in reality, there are countless regions in space which have been even more strongly fortified and protected than they could be by steel walls. One can imagine and estimate the strength of these barriers by the difficulties man is experiencing in the way of reaching the moon, which is our nearest neighbour in space. Similar difficulties prevent the other creation of the earth, the jinns, from ascending towards the heavens.

7. To understand this one should keep in view the fact that in the time of the Holy Prophet, soothsaying was in great vogue in Arabia. The soothsayers used to make predictions, give news of the unseen, tell the whereabouts of the lost

[Contd. on p. 304

وَاصِبٌ ۝٩ إِلَّا مَنْ خَطِفَ الْخَطْفَةَ فَأَتْبَعَهُ شِهَابٌ ثَاقِبٌ ۝١٠ فَاسْتَفْتِهِمْ
أَهُمْ أَشَدُّ خَلْقًا أَمْ مَنْ خَلَقْنَا ۚ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُمْ مِنْ طِينٍ لَازِبٍ ۝١١ بَلْ
عَجِبْتَ وَيَسْخَرُونَ ۝١٢ وَإِذَا ذُكِّرُوا لَا يَذْكُرُونَ ۝١٣ وَإِذَا رَأَوْا آيَةً
يَسْتَسْخِرُونَ ۝١٤ وَقَالُوا إِنْ هَٰذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُبِينٌ ۝١٥ أَإِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا
وَعِظَامًا أَإِنَّا لَمَبْعُوثُونَ ۝١٦ أَوَآبَاؤُنَا الْأَوَّلُونَ ۝١٧ قُلْ نَعَمْ وَأَنْتُمْ دَاخِرُونَ ۝١٨
فَإِنَّمَا هِيَ زَجْرَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ فَإِذَا هُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ ۝١٩ وَقَالُوا يَا وَيْلَنَا هَٰذَا يَوْمُ
الدِّينِ ۝٢٠ هَٰذَا يَوْمُ الْفَصْلِ الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تُكَذِّبُونَ ۝٢١ احْشُرُوا الَّذِينَ
ظَلَمُوا وَأَزْوَاجَهُمْ وَمَا كَانُوا يَعْبُدُونَ ۝٢٢ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَاهْدُوهُمْ إِلَىٰ
صِرَاطِ الْجَحِيمِ ۝٢٣ وَقِفُوهُمْ إِنَّهُمْ مَسْئُولُونَ ۝٢٤ مَا لَكُمْ لَا تَنَاصَرُونَ ۝٢٥
بَلْ هُمُ الْيَوْمَ مُسْتَسْلِمُونَ ۝٢٦ وَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ ۝٢٧
قَالُوا إِنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ تَأْتُونَنَا عَنِ الْيَمِينِ ۝٢٨ قَالُوا بَلْ لَمْ تَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ ۝٢٩
وَمَا كَانَ لَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ ۚ بَلْ كُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا طَاغِينَ ۝٣٠ فَحَقَّ عَلَيْنَا
قَوْلُ رَبِّنَا ۖ إِنَّا لَذَائِقُونَ ۝٣١ فَأَغْوَيْنَاكُمْ إِنَّا كُنَّا غَاوِينَ ۝٣٢ فَإِنَّهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ
فِي الْعَذَابِ مُشْتَرِكُونَ ۝٣٣ إِنَّا كَذَٰلِكَ نَفْعَلُ بِالْمُجْرِمِينَ ۝٣٤ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا إِذَا
قِيلَ لَهُمْ لَا إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ ۝٣٥ وَيَقُولُونَ أَئِنَّا لَتَارِكُو آلِهَتِنَا
لِشَاعِرٍ مَجْنُونٍ ۝٣٦ بَلْ جَاءَ بِالْحَقِّ وَصَدَّقَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ۝٣٧ إِنَّكُمْ لَذَائِقُو
الْعَذَابِ الْأَلِيمِ ۝٣٨ وَمَا تُجْزَوْنَ إِلَّا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ۝٣٩ إِلَّا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ
الْمُخْلَصِينَ ۝٤٠ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ رِزْقٌ مَعْلُومٌ ۝٤١ فَوَاكِهُ ۖ وَهُمْ مُكْرَمُونَ ۝٤٢ فِي
جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ ۝٤٣ عَلَىٰ سُرُرٍ مُتَقَابِلِينَ ۝٤٤ يُطَافُ عَلَيْهِمْ بِكَأْسٍ مِنْ مَعِينٍ ۝٤٥

Now ask them: What is more difficult: their own creation or of those things which We have created?[8] Of sticky clay We have created them.[9] You marvel (at the wonders of Allah's power), but they are scoffing at it. When they are warned they do not take the warning. When they see a Sign they mock at it, and say, "This is plain magic.[10] What ! when we are dead and have become dust and bones, shall we be raised up to life?. And also our forefathers of ancient times ?" Say to them, "Yes, and you are helpless (against God)."[11] 11-18

There will only be a single shout and suddenly they will be seeing (all of which they are being warned) with their own eyes.[12] Then they will say, "Woe to us! This is the Day of Requital."—"The same Day of Judgement which you used to deny."[13] (It will be commanded): "Gather all the unjust people[14] and their associates[15] together, and those gods whom they used to worship instead of Allah[16]; then show them the way to Hell. And stop them for a while: they have to be questioned: What is the matter? Why don't you help one another? Today, they are surrendering themselves (and others to God)[17] !" Then they will turn to each other for mutual reproaches. (The followers) will say (to their guides): "You used to come to us from the right side."[18] They will reply, "Nay but it was yourselves who did not believe: we had no power over you: you yourselves were a rebellious people. Consequently, we have deserved the verdict of our Lord that we should taste the torment. So we led you astray for we ourselves had gone astray."[19] 19-32

So, on that Day they shall all share the torment.[20] Thus do We deal with the criminals. These were the people that when it was said to them, "There is no god but Allah," they were puffed up with pride and would say, "Should we give up our gods for the sake of a mad poet?" Whereas he had come with the Truth and had confirmed the Messengers.[21] (Then it will be said to them :) "You shall have to taste the painful scourge, and your retribution will be strictly according to the deeds that you have been performing." 33 39

But the chosen servants of Allah will remain safe (from this evil end). For them there is a known provision:[22] tasteful things of all kinds[23] and gardens of delight wherein they shall be lodged with honour. They will sit face to face on couches: cups filled from 40-46

fountains[24] of wine[25] will be passed round to them[26], of crystal white drink, delicious for those who drink it.....

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properties and articles, and the people used to visit them to know the events of their past and future lives. These soothsayers claimed that they had some jinns and satans under their control, who brought them all sorts of news. In this environment when the Holy Prophet was appointed to Prophethood, and he began to recite the verses of the Qur'ān, which described the past history and contained news of the future, and also stated that an angel brought him these verses, his opponents immediately branded him a soothsayer and started telling others that, like the other soothsayers, he too was associated with a satan, who brought him news from the heavens, which he presented as revelations from Allah. To refute this accusation, Allah says: "The satans have no access to heaven. They have no power to hear the conversations of the angels and bring its news for others; if by chance a little of it enters the ear of a satan, and he tries to bring it down, he is followed by a flashing flame." In other words, it means: "The grand system of the universe, which is functioning under the agency of the angels has been firmly guarded and secured against every interference of the satans. Not to speak of interfering in it, they do not even have the power to obtain any kind of information about it." (For further explanation, see Al-Ḥijr: 17-18 and the E.N's thereof).

8. This is an answer to the suspicions of the disbelievers of Makkah, which they presented about the Hereafter. They thought that the Hereafter was not possible, for it is impossible that the dead men should be recreated. In answer to it, Allah presents arguments for the possibility of the Hereafter and asks: "If you think that the recreation of the dead men is a very difficult task which We do not have the power to accomplish, do you think it is easy to create the earth and the heavens and the countless things that they contain? Why don't you use your common sense ? Do you think that God for Whom it was not at all difficult to create this great Universe and Who has created you in the first instance, will not have the power to create you once again ?"

9. That is, "Man is not a difficult thing to make. He has been created from clay, and can again be created from the same clay." "Created man of sticky clay" means that the first man was created directly from the clay and then his race was perpetuated by means of the sperm-drop. It also means that every man has been created from the sticky clay, for the whole substance of man's body is obtained from the earth. The sperm-drop of which he is created, is a product of the food, and all the substances which make up his physical being, from the time he is conceived till his death, are also supplied by the food. The source of the food, whether animal flesh or vegetable, is ultimately the same earth which, in

combination with water produces corn and vegetables and fruit to become food for man, and nourish the animals, which supply milk and flesh for the use of man.

Thus, the basis of the argument is: Man could not be living today if the earth and clay had not become the source of life for him. And if it is possible today to create life in it, as your own existence is a clear and definite pointer to this possibility, why should it be impossible to bring about your re-creation from the same earth tomorrow ?

10. That is, "This person is talking of the world of magic in which the dead will rise, and will be produced before a court and sent to Heaven and Hell" or, it may also mean: "This person is talking like a madman. What he talks is a clear proof that somebody has worked magic on him; otherwise a sensible person could not talk such things.

11. That is, "Allah can make of you whatever He likes. When He willed, you came into being forthwith; when He wills, you will die at one Command by Him; and then whenever He wills, His one Command will raise you back to life."

12. That is, "When the time comes for this, it will not be difficult to re-establish the whole world. Just a single shout will be enough to make the people to wake up. Here, the word "shout" or "cry" is very meaningful. It depicts the Resurrection as though the people who had died since the beginning of the creation till the last Day, were lying asleep, and a sudden command to them to "wake up", will cause them to rise up all at once."

13. It may be that this is said by the believers, or by the angels; or it may be, as it were, the common expression of the conditions prevailing in the plain of Resurrection or it may as well be another reaction of the people themselves. That is, they may be saying in their hearts. "In the world, you lived in a way as if no Day of Judgement would ever come. Now you have come to your doom! This is the same Day that you used to deny !"

14. "The unjust people" does not only imply those who committed injustices in the world, but as a Qur'ânic term *Ẓālim* implies every such person, who might have adopted the way of rebellion and disobedience against Allah."

15. The word *"azwāj"* in the original might also imply their wives, who were their associates in this rebellion, and also all those people who were rebellious and disobedient like them. Moreover it may also mean that the culprits of different categories will be gathered together in separate groups.

16. "Gods" here implies two kinds of the gods: (1) Those men and satans who themselves desired that the people should worship them instead of Allah; and (2) those idols and trees and stones, etc., which have actually been worshipped in

the world. The first kind of the gods will be included among the culprits themselves and will be led to Hell for punishment; the other kind of them will be thrown into Hell along with their worshippers so that they constantly feel ashamed of and continue to regret their follies. Besides, there is also a third kind of the gods, who have been worshipped in the world, but without their own consent and knowledge; they rather forbade the people to worship anyone but Allah, e.g. the angels, prophets and saints. Obviously, this kind of the gods will not be included among the gods who will be driven to Hell along with their worshippers.

17. The first sentence will be addressed to the culprits, and the second to the common spectators, who will be watching the scene of the culprits' departure for Hell. This sentence itself tells of the general conditions at the time. It tells how the haughty and stubborn culprits of the world will be moving towards Hell meekly and without showing any resistance. Somewhere some kind will be seen being pushed about, and no one from among his courtiers will come forward to rescue "his majesty"; somewhere some conqueror of the world and some dictator will be moving away in humiliation and disgrace, and his brave army itself will deliver him for the punishment; somewhere some saint or some holy father will be seen being thrown into Hell, and no one of his disciples will bother to save him from disgrace; somewhere some leader will be trudging helplessly towards Hell, and those who used to glorify and applaud him in the world, will turn away their eyes from him. So much so that the lover who was ever prepared to sacrifice everything for the beloved in the world, will feel least concerned to save him from his plight. By depicting this scene Allah wants to impress how the relationships of man with man, which are based on rebellion against Allah in the world, will break in the Hereafter, and how the pride of those who are involved in arrogance and conceit here, will be ruined.

18. The word *yamīn* in Arabic is used for several meanings. It may mean use of the force, or well-wishing, or swearing of an oath. Accordingly, the verse would mean: (1) "You compelled us into following error and deviation"; or (2) "you deceived us by posing as our well-wishers"; or (3) "you swore oaths to satisfy us that what you were presenting was the very truth."

19. For explanation, see E.N's 51, 52, 53 of Sūrah Sabā,

20. That is, the followers as well as the guides, misleaders as well as the misled, all shall suffer the same torment. Neither will the followers' excuse be heeded that they did not go astray but had been led astray, nor the guides' excuse accepted that the people themselves were not desirous of following the right way.

21. Confirmation of the Messengers has three meanings and all the three are implied here: (1) That he had not opposed any former Messenger so that the believers of that Messenger could have a rational ground of prejudice against him;

he had rather confirmed all the former Messengers sent by God; (2) that he had not brought any new or novel thing, but he had presented the same that the former Messengers of God had been presenting from the very beginning; and (3) that he truly fulfilled and corresponded to the predictions that the former Messengers had made concerning him.

22. "A known provision": A provision all of whose characteristics have been made known to them, which they are sure to receive, about which they have also the full satisfaction that they will continue to receive it for ever, and about which there is no apprehension that they may or may not get it at some time.

23. In this there is a subtle allusion to this also that in Paradise food will be provided not to serve as food but for pleasure and delight. That is, the food there will not be meant to replenish the bodily deficiencies through diet, for no deficiency whatever will occur in the body in that eternal life, nor will man have appetite, for appetite is caused by the process of assimilation in the body, nor will the body demand food for its survival. That is why the word *fawākih* has been used for the different kinds of food in Paradise, which contains the sense of taste and pleasure more than that of nutrition.

24. That is, "It will not be the kind of wine that is extracted from rotten fruit and corn in the world, but it will flow naturally from fountains like canals. In Sūrah Muhammad, the same thing has been described more clearly, thus: ".....and canals will be flowing in it of wine which will be delightful for the drinkers." (v. 15)

25. Here the word *ka's* (cup) only has been used and there is no mention of the wine. But in Arabic the use of *ka's* always implies wine. The cup which contains milk or water, instead of wine, or is empty, is not called *ka's*. The word *ka's* is used for a cup only when it contains wine.

26. Here it has not been mentioned as to who will take these cups of wine round to the dwellers of Paradise. This has been stated at other places: "And there will go round to them young boys, exclusively appointed for their service, who will be as lovely as well-guarded pearls." (At-Ṭūr :24). "They will be attended by brisk-moving boys who will for ever remain boys. If you saw them, you would think they were pearls, scattered." (Ad-Dahr: 19). Then, its further details are found in the traditions related by Ḥaḍrat Anas and Ḥaḍrat Samurah bin Jundub from the Holy Prophet, according to which: "The children of the *mushrikīn* will be attendants of the dwellers of Paradise." (Abū Dā'ūd Ṭayālisi, Ṭabarāni, Bazzār). Though these traditions are weak as regards their links of transmitters, there are

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بَيْضَآءَ لَذَّةٍ لِّلشّٰرِبِيْنَ ﴿٤٦﴾ لَا فِيْهَا غَوْلٌ وَّلَا هُمْ عَنْهَا يُنْزَفُوْنَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَعِنْدَهُمْ
قٰصِرٰتُ الطَّرْفِ عِيْنٌ ﴿٤٨﴾ كَاَنَّهُنَّ بَيْضٌ مَّكْنُوْنٌ ﴿٤٩﴾ فَاَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلٰى بَعْضٍ
يَّتَسَآءَلُوْنَ ﴿٥٠﴾ قَالَ قَآئِلٌ مِّنْهُمْ اِنِّيْ كَانَ لِيْ قَرِيْنٌ ﴿٥١﴾ يَّقُوْلُ اَئِنَّكَ لَمِنَ
الْمُصَدِّقِيْنَ ﴿٥٢﴾ ءَاِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَّعِظَامًا ءَاِنَّا لَمَدِيْنُوْنَ ﴿٥٣﴾ قَالَ هَلْ
اَنْتُمْ مُّطَّلِعُوْنَ ﴿٥٤﴾ فَاطَّلَعَ فَرَاٰهُ فِيْ سَوَآءِ الْجَحِيْمِ ﴿٥٥﴾ قَالَ تَاللّٰهِ اِنْ كِدْتَّ
لَتُرْدِيْنِ ﴿٥٦﴾ وَلَوْلَا نِعْمَةُ رَبِّيْ لَكُنْتُ مِنَ الْمُحْضَرِيْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾ اَفَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَيِّتِيْنَ ﴿٥٨﴾
اِلَّا مَوْتَتَنَا الْاُوْلٰى وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُعَذَّبِيْنَ ﴿٥٩﴾ اِنَّ هٰذَا لَهُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيْمُ ﴿٦٠﴾
لِمِثْلِ هٰذَا فَلْيَعْمَلِ الْعٰمِلُوْنَ ﴿٦١﴾ اَذٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ نُّزُلًا اَمْ شَجَرَةُ الزَّقُّوْمِ ﴿٦٢﴾ اِنَّا
جَعَلْنٰهَا فِتْنَةً لِّلظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٦٣﴾ اِنَّهَا شَجَرَةٌ تَخْرُجُ فِيْٓ اَصْلِ الْجَحِيْمِ ﴿٦٤﴾ طَلْعُهَا
كَاَنَّهٗ رُءُوْسُ الشَّيٰطِيْنِ ﴿٦٥﴾ فَاِنَّهُمْ لَاٰكِلُوْنَ مِنْهَا فَمَالِـُٔوْنَ مِنْهَا الْبُطُوْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾
ثُمَّ اِنَّ لَهُمْ عَلَيْهَا لَشَوْبًا مِّنْ حَمِيْمٍ ﴿٦٧﴾ ثُمَّ اِنَّ مَرْجِعَهُمْ لَاِلَى الْجَحِيْمِ ﴿٦٨﴾
اِنَّهُمْ اَلْفَوْا اٰبَآءَهُمْ ضَآلِّيْنَ ﴿٦٩﴾ فَهُمْ عَلٰٓى اٰثٰرِهِمْ يُهْرَعُوْنَ ﴿٧٠﴾ وَلَقَدْ ضَلَّ
قَبْلَهُمْ اَكْثَرُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿٧١﴾ وَلَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا فِيْهِمْ مُّنْذِرِيْنَ ﴿٧٢﴾ فَانْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ
عَاقِبَةُ الْمُنْذَرِيْنَ ﴿٧٣﴾ اِلَّا عِبَادَ اللّٰهِ الْمُخْلَصِيْنَ ﴿٧٤﴾ وَلَقَدْ نَادٰىنَا نُوْحٌ فَلَنِعْمَ
الْمُجِيْبُوْنَ ﴿٧٥﴾ وَنَجَّيْنٰهُ وَاَهْلَهٗ مِنَ الْكَرْبِ الْعَظِيْمِ ﴿٧٦﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا ذُرِّيَّتَهٗ هُمُ
الْبٰقِيْنَ ﴿٧٧﴾ وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ فِي الْاٰخِرِيْنَ ﴿٧٨﴾ سَلٰمٌ عَلٰى نُوْحٍ فِي الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٧٩﴾ اِنَّا
كَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿٨٠﴾ اِنَّهٗ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٨١﴾ ثُمَّ اَغْرَقْنَا
الْاٰخَرِيْنَ ﴿٨٢﴾ وَاِنَّ مِنْ شِيْعَتِهٖ لَاِبْرٰهِيْمَ ﴿٨٣﴾ اِذْ جَآءَ رَبَّهٗ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيْمٍ ﴿٨٤﴾
اِذْ قَالَ لِاَبِيْهِ وَقَوْمِهٖ مَاذَا تَعْبُدُوْنَ ﴿٨٥﴾ اَئِفْكًا اٰلِهَةً دُوْنَ اللّٰهِ تُرِيْدُوْنَ ﴿٨٦﴾

Neither will they be harmed physically thereby nor become drunk.[27] And beside them there will be chaste women[28] with beautiful eyes, restraining their looks,[29] delicate as the thin skin hidden under the egg shell.[30] 47-49

Then they will turn to one another to ask questions. One of them will say, "I had a friend in the world, who used to say, 'Are you also of those who affirm?[31] What! when we are dead and have become dust and bones, shall we really be rewarded and punished?' "Now, do you want to see where that man is?" Saying this as he will look down, he will see him in the depth of Hell. He will address him, saying, "By God! you had almost ruined me. But for the favour of my Lord, I also should have been among those who have been seized and brought here.[32] Well ! Are we not to die any other than our first death? Are we not to be punished?"[33] 50-59

This indeed is the supreme success. For the like of this, then, should the workers work. Say, "Is this feast better or the *zaqqūm* tree?[34] We have made that tree a trial for the wicked people.[35] It is a tree that grows out from the bottom of Hell. Its buds are like the heads of satans.[36] The dwellers of Hell shall eat it and fill their bellies with it. Then, upon it, they will get boiling water to drink. Then, their return shall be to the same Fire of Hell.[37] These are the people, who found their forefathers astray and they hastened in their footsteps, whereas many people before them had gone astray though We had sent warners among them. Now see what was the end of those who had been warned. Only such servants of Allah were able to avoid this evil end, whom Allah has chosen for Himself. 60-74

(Before this)[39] Noah had called on Us[40]: Just see how excellent Answerers (of the prayers) We were ! We saved him and his household from the great distress[41] and made his progeny to be the only survivors[42] and left for him praise among posterity. Peace be upon Noah among the people of the world.[43] Thus do We reward the righteous. He was indeed one of Our believing servants. Then We drowned the others. 75-82

And Abraham was the one who followed the way of Noah. When he approached his Lord with a sound heart[44]: when he said to his 83-87

father and his people,[45] "What are these things that you worship? Do you seek false gods instead of Allah? What do you think about the Lord of the worlds?"[46]

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several other *Ahādīth* which mean that children who died young, before attaining maturity, will go to Paradise. *Ahādīth* also show that the children whose parents are blessed with Paradise, will live with them so as to be a comfort of the eyes for them. This leaves behind those children whose parents will not go to Paradise. Thus, with regard to them, it seems reasonable that they will be made the attendants of the dwellers of Paradise. (For a detailed discussion of this, see Fath ul-Bārī and 'Umdat ul-Qārī: *Kitāb ul-Janā'iz, Bāb; Māqīla fī aulād il -mushrikīn; Rasā'il-o-Masā'il*, vol. III, pp. 177-187).

27. That is, the wine of Paradise will be free from both the evils which are found in the wine of the world. The wine of the world, first of all, afflicts man with its stink; then it embitters his taste, upsets his stomach, affects his mind and causes giddiness; then it affects the liver and spoils the health generally. Then, when the intoxication is gone, it leaves behind other ill-effects on the body. Its other evil is that man gets drunk with it, talks nonsense and brawls. This is how the wine affects man's mind and reason. Man suffers both these evil effects of the wine only for the sake of delight and pleasure. Allah says that the wine of Paradise will certainly afford and give full pleasure and delight, but it will be free from the kinds of the evils that go with the worldly wine.

28. Probably these will be the girls who died before attaining the age of discretion in the world, and whose parents did not deserve to enter Paradise. This can be said on the basis of analogy that just as the boys similarly placed will be appointed for the service of the dwellers of Paradise, and they will ever remain boys, so will the girls be made the houris and they will ever remain young and beautiful. The correct knowledge, however, is with Allah.

29. "Restraining their looks": Restraining their looks from everyone except their husbands.

30. The words of the Text actually mean this: "As if they were the hidden or well preserved eggs." The commentators have given different interpretations of these words, but the correct commentary is the one which Hadrat Umm Salamah has related from the Holy Prophet. She says that when she asked the meaning of this verse from the Holy Prophet, he said: "Their delicacy and elegance and tenderness will be like the thin skin which is there between the shell of the egg and its fleshy part." (Ibn Jarīr).

31. That is, "Were you also one of those credulous people who put their faith in an irrational and impossible thing like life-after-death ?"

32. This shows how powerful will be man's hearing, seeing and speaking powers in the Hereafter. Sitting in Paradise he bends his head a little and is able to see a person, who is undergoing torment thousands of miles away in Hell, without the agency of a television set. Then, they not only just see each other, but also commune with each other directly without the medium of the telephone or radio and they speak and hear each other over vast distances.

33. The style clearly shows that while speaking to his friend in Hell, the dweller of Paradise suddenly starts talking to himself. He speaks these three sentences in a way as if he found himself in a state much better than that he ever expected and imagined for himself, and now being beside himself with wonder and joy he is engaged in a sort of soliloquy. In such a state the speaker does not speak to an addressee, nor the questions he asks are meant to find out something from somebody, but in this state the man's own feelings find expression through his tongue. The dweller of Paradise, while speaking to the dweller of Hell, suddenly starts feeling how he has been favoured by good fortune: now there is neither death nor any torment: all troubles and distresses have come to an end and he has been blessed with immortality. Under this very feeling he exclaims: "Well ! are we not to die any other than our first death ? Are we not to be punished?"

34. *Zaqqūm* is a tree of the cactus species found in Tihāmah. It is bitter in taste, obnoxious in smell and sheds a milk like juice when cut or broken.

35. That is, "On hearing this the disbelievers get a new opportunity to taunt the Qur'ān and mock the Holy Prophet. They ridicule it saying, 'Listen another strange thing: a tree will grow in the blazing fire of Hell'!"

36. Nobody should have the misunderstanding that since no one has seen the head of Satan, it was no use likening the buds of *zaqqūm* to it. This is, in fact, an imaginative kind of the simile, and is employed in the literature of every language. For example, in order to give an idea of the rare beauty of a woman, it is said she is a fairy, and in order to describe her ugliness, it is said that she is a hag or a demon. Likewise, a pious-looking person is described as an angel and a dreadful-looking person as a devil.

37. This shows that when the dwellers of Hell will be in distress due to hunger and thirst, they will be driven to the side where there would be the *zaqqūm* trees and the springs of boiling water. When they will have eaten and drunk, they will be brought back to Hell.

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فَمَا ظَنُّكُمْ بِرَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٨٧﴾ فَنَظَرَ نَظْرَةً فِي النُّجُوْمِ ﴿٨٨﴾ فَقَالَ إِنِّي سَقِيْمٌ ﴿٨٩﴾
فَتَوَلَّوْا عَنْهُ مُدْبِرِيْنَ ﴿٩٠﴾ فَرَاغَ إِلٰى اٰلِهَتِهِمْ فَقَالَ أَلَا تَأْكُلُوْنَ ﴿٩١﴾ مَا لَكُمْ لَا
تَنْطِقُوْنَ ﴿٩٢﴾ فَرَاغَ عَلَيْهِمْ ضَرْبًا بِالْيَمِيْنِ ﴿٩٣﴾ فَأَقْبَلُوْا إِلَيْهِ يَزِفُّوْنَ ﴿٩٤﴾ قَالَ
أَتَعْبُدُوْنَ مَا تَنْحِتُوْنَ ﴿٩٥﴾ وَاللّٰهُ خَلَقَكُمْ وَمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٩٦﴾ قَالُوا ابْنُوْا لَهٗ بُنْيَانًا
فَأَلْقُوْهُ فِي الْجَحِيْمِ ﴿٩٧﴾ فَأَرَادُوْا بِهٖ كَيْدًا فَجَعَلْنٰهُمُ الْأَسْفَلِيْنَ ﴿٩٨﴾ وَقَالَ إِنِّي
ذَاهِبٌ إِلٰى رَبِّي سَيَهْدِيْنِ ﴿٩٩﴾ رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنَ الصّٰلِحِيْنَ ﴿١٠٠﴾ فَبَشَّرْنٰهُ بِغُلٰمٍ حَلِيْمٍ ﴿١٠١﴾
فَلَمَّا بَلَغَ مَعَهُ السَّعْيَ قَالَ يٰبُنَيَّ إِنِّي أَرٰى فِي الْمَنَامِ أَنِّي أَذْبَحُكَ فَانْظُرْ
مَاذَا تَرٰى ۚ قَالَ يٰأَبَتِ افْعَلْ مَا تُؤْمَرُ ۖ سَتَجِدُنِي إِنْ شَاءَ اللّٰهُ مِنَ الصّٰبِرِيْنَ ﴿١٠٢﴾
فَلَمَّا أَسْلَمَا وَتَلَّهٗ لِلْجَبِيْنِ ﴿١٠٣﴾ وَنَادَيْنٰهُ أَنْ يّٰإِبْرٰهِيْمُ ﴿١٠٤﴾ قَدْ صَدَّقْتَ الرُّءْيَا ۚ
إِنَّا كَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿١٠٥﴾ إِنَّ هٰذَا لَهُوَ الْبَلٰٓؤُا الْمُبِيْنُ ﴿١٠٦﴾ وَفَدَيْنٰهُ بِذِبْحٍ
عَظِيْمٍ ﴿١٠٧﴾ وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ فِي الْآخِرِيْنَ ﴿١٠٨﴾ سَلٰمٌ عَلٰٓى إِبْرٰهِيْمَ ﴿١٠٩﴾ كَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِي
الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿١١٠﴾ إِنَّهٗ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١١١﴾ وَبَشَّرْنٰهُ بِإِسْحٰقَ نَبِيًّا مِّنَ
الصّٰلِحِيْنَ ﴿١١٢﴾ وَبٰرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ وَعَلٰٓى إِسْحٰقَ ۚ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِهِمَا مُحْسِنٌ وَّظَالِمٌ
لِّنَفْسِهٖ مُبِيْنٌ ﴿١١٣﴾ وَلَقَدْ مَنَنَّا عَلٰى مُوْسٰى وَهٰرُوْنَ ﴿١١٤﴾ وَنَجَّيْنٰهُمَا وَقَوْمَهُمَا
مِنَ الْكَرْبِ الْعَظِيْمِ ﴿١١٥﴾ وَنَصَرْنٰهُمْ فَكَانُوْا هُمُ الْغٰلِبِيْنَ ﴿١١٦﴾ وَاٰتَيْنٰهُمَا الْكِتٰبَ
الْمُسْتَبِيْنَ ﴿١١٧﴾ وَهَدَيْنٰهُمَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيْمَ ﴿١١٨﴾ وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِمَا فِي الْآخِرِيْنَ ﴿١١٩﴾
سَلٰمٌ عَلٰى مُوْسٰى وَهٰرُوْنَ ﴿١٢٠﴾ إِنَّا كَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿١٢١﴾ إِنَّهُمَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا
الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٢٢﴾ وَإِنَّ إِلْيَاسَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿١٢٣﴾ إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهٖ أَلَا تَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿١٢٤﴾
أَتَدْعُوْنَ بَعْلًا وَّتَذَرُوْنَ أَحْسَنَ الْخَالِقِيْنَ ﴿١٢٥﴾ اللّٰهَ رَبَّكُمْ وَرَبَّ اٰبَائِكُمُ

Then[47] he cast a glance at the stars[48] and said, "I am sick."[49] So they left him behind and went away.[50] In their absence, he stole into the temple of their gods and said, "Why don't you eat?[51] What is the matter that you do not even speak?" Then he fell upon them, smiting them with his right hand. (On their return) the people came to him running.[52] He said, "Do you worship those that you have yourselves carved? whereas Allah has created you as well as those (things) which you make." They said to one another, "Prepare for him a bonfire and throw him into the blazing flames." They had designed a plan against him, but We defeated them in their plan.[53] 88-98

Abraham said,[54] "I shall go to my Lord[55]: He will guide me. O my Lord ! grant me a son who should be righteous".[56] (In answer to this prayer) We gave him the good news of a gentle (clement) son.[57] When the boy reached the age to work with him, (one day) Abraham said to him, "My son! I have dreamt that I am sacrificing you.[58] Now tell me what you think of it."[59] He said, "My dear father, do as you are being commanded.[60] You will find me, if Allah so wills, of the patient." At last, when the two had submitted themselves (to Allah) and Abraham had flung his son down on his brow,[61] and We called out[62]: "O Abraham! You have indeed fulfilled your vision.[63] Thus do We reward the righteous.[64] This was indeed a manifest trial."[65] And We ransomed his son for a great sacrifice,[66] and left for him praise among posterity for ever. Peace is upon Abraham. Thus do We reward the righteous. Indeed he was one of Our believing servants; and We gave him the good news of Isaac, a Prophet among the righteous. And we blessed him as well as Isaac.[67] Now among their offspring someone is righteous and someone clearly a sinner against his own self.[68] 99-113

And We showed favour to Moses and Aaron: We delivered them and their people from a great distress[69]: We helped them and so they became triumphant: We gave them a clear Book, and guided them to the Right Way, and left good words for them among posterity. Peace is on Moses and Aaron. Thus do We reward the righteous. Indeed they were among Our believing servants. 114-122

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38 That is, they never used their own common sense to see whether the way their forefathers had been following was right or wrong; they just blindly adopted the way that they found others following.

39. This theme is related with the preceding sentences. A study of them shows why these stories are being narrated here.

40. This refers to the prayer that the Prophet Noaḥ had at last made to Allah Almighty, being disappointed with his people, after having preached the true Faith to them for a very long period of time, without much success. This prayer has been related in Sūrah Al-Qamar, thus: "He called out to his Lord, saying: I am overcome: take now Thy vengeance." (v. 10).

41. That is, from the severe distress that was being caused to him on account of the continuous opposition and antagonism of a wicked and cruel people. This also contains a subtle allusion that just as the Prophet Noaḥ and his companions were saved from the great distress, so also shall We ultimately save the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and his Companions from the great distress that is being caused to them by the people of Makkah.

42. This can have two meanings: (1) That the progeny of the people who were opposing the Prophet Noaḥ was made extinct and the Prophet Noaḥ's progeny alone was allowed to survive; and (2) that the whole human race was made extinct, and only the Prophet Noaḥ's progeny was allowed to inhabit the earth after that. The commentators generally have adopted this second meaning, but the words of the Qur'ān are not explicit in this regard and no one knows the reality except Allah.

43. That is, there is none in the world today, who would talk evil of the Prophet Noaḥ. After the Flood till today the world has been praising and speaking well of him for thousands of years.

44. "Approached his Lord": Turned to his Lord sincerely and exclusively; "with a sound heart": with a heart that was free from all kinds of moral evils and weaknesses of faith, free from every trace of unbelief and *shirk*, doubt and suspicion, from every feeling of disobedience and rebellion, from every crookedness, confusion and complexity, and free from every evil inclination and desire, and a heart that neither cherished any malice and jealousy and ill-will against anyone, nor had any evil intention.

45. For further details of this story of the Prophet Abraham, please see Sūrah Al-An'ām: 72-90; Maryam: 41-60; Al-Anbiyā: 51-75; Ash-Shu'arā; 69-89; Al-'Ankabūt: 16-17, and the E.N's thereof.

46. That is, "Why have you formed such a wrong view of Allah? Do you think that the gods that you have yourselves carved out from wood and stone can be like Him, or can be His associates in his attributes and rights? And are you involved in the misunderstanding that you will somehow manage to escape His punishment after you have indulged in such blasphemy ?"

47. The reference is to a particular incident the details of which have been given in Sūrah Al-Anbiyā': 71-73 and Al-'Ankabūt: 16-27 above.

48. Ibn Abī Ḥātim has cited a saying of the famous commentator Qatādah, an immediate follower of the Companions, to the effect that the Arabic idiomatic expression, "cast a glance at the stars," means that he pondered deeply, or that he started thinking seriously. 'Allāma Ibn Kathīr has preferred this same view, and this is also supported by the common observation: when a person is confronted by a problem that needs serious consideration, he looks upward or to the sky for a while, and then makes a reply, after due consideration.

49. This is one of those three things concerning which it is said that the Prophet Abraham had told three lies in his life, whereas it should be ascertained before declaring it a lie, or anything contrary to fact, whether the Prophet Abraham at that time was not suffering from any illness, and therefore, he had made this excuse only as a pretence. If there is no proof, there is no reason why it should be regarded as a lie. For a detailed discussion, please refer to E.N. 60 of Sūrah Al-Anbiyā' and *Rasā'il-o-Masā'il,* vol. II, pp. 35 to 39.

50. This sentence by itself shows the real state of the affairs. It appears that the people might be going to some fair of theirs. The family of the Prophet Abraham might have asked him also to accompany them. He might have excused himself, saying that he was indisposed, and therefore, could not go. Had it been something contrary to fact, the people of the house would have said: "You look perfectly normal; you are making a false excuse. But when they accepted his excuse and left him behind, it clearly shows that the Prophet Abraham must at that time be suffering from cough and cold or some other such visible illness on account of which the people of the house agreed to leave him behind.

51. This shows that there were different kinds of food placed before the idols in the temple.

52. Here the story has been told in brief. According to the details given in Sūrah Al-Anbiyā', when they returned and found all their idols broken to pieces in the temple, they started making investigations. Some people said that a young man, called Abraham, had been talking such and such things against idol-worship. At this the multitude demanded that he should be immediately seized and brought before them. Therefore, a group of the people went running to him and brought him before the multitude.

53. The words in Sūrah Al-Anbiyā': 69 are to the effect: "We commanded: O fire, be cool and become safe for Abraham," and in Sūrah Al-'Ankbūt: 24, it has been said: "Then Allah saved him from the fire." This proves that those people had actually thrown the Prophet Abraham into the fire, and then

Allah had rescued him from it safe and sound. The words of the verse, "They had designed a plan against him, but We defeated them in their plan," cannot be taken to mean that they had only intended to throw the Prophet Abraham into the fire but could not carry their plan into effect; but when these words are read with the verses cited above, the meaning becomes plain that they had wanted to kill him by casting him into the fire but could not do so, and the Prophet Abraham's miraculous escape proved his superiority and the polytheists were humbled by Allah. The real object of relating this incident is to warn the people of the Quraish to this effect: "The way that you have adopted is not the way of the Prophet Abraham, whose descendants you claim yourselves to be, but his way is the one being presented by the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings). Now, if you plot against him in order to defeat him and frustrate his mission, as the people of the Prophet Abraham had done against him, you alone will be defeated in the end, because you cannot defeat Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace).

54. The Prophet Abraham said these words on his departure after he had been delivered safe from the fire and had decided to leave the country.

55. It mean: "I am leaving my home and country for the sake of Allah, for my people have turned hostile to me only because of my turning to Him exclusively; otherwise there was no worldly dispute between them and me because of which I might have had to leave my country. Moreover, I have no place of refuge in the world, to which I may turn. I am leaving my home with full faith and trust only in Allah: I shall go wherever He leads me."

56. This prayer by itself shows that the Prophet Abraham at that time was childless. From the details given at other places in the Qur'ān, it becomes clear that he had left his country with only one wife and one nephew (the Prophet Lot). Therefore, he naturally desired that Allah should bless him with a righteous child, who could be a source of comfort and consolation for him in a foreign land.

57. From this one should not understand that this good news was given him immediately following his prayer. In the Qur'ān itself, at another place, this saying of the Prophet Abraham has been related: "All praise be to Allah Who has given me sons like Ishmael and Isaac in my old age." (Ibrāhīm: 39). This proves that there was an interval of many years between the prayer and this good news. The Bible says that at the birth of the Prophet Ishmael, the Prophet Abraham was 86 years old (Gen. 16: 16) and at the birth of the Prophet Isaac a hundred years. (Gen. 21: 5).

58. One should note that the Prophet Abraham had dreamt that he was sacrificing his son and not that he had sacrificed him. Although at that time he understood the dream to mean that he should sacrifice his son and on that very

basis, he became ready to sacrifice him, with a cool mind, yet the fine point that Allah had in view in making him see the dream has been explained by Himself in verse 105 below.

59. The object of asking this of the son was not that he would carry out Allah's Command only if he agreed, otherwise not, but the Prophet Abraham, in fact, wanted to find out how righteous, in actual reality, was his child for whom he had prayed to Allah. If the son himself was found to be ready to lay down his life for the sake of Allah's approval and pleasure, it would mean that the prayer had been fully granted, and the son was not his offspring in the natural way only but was morally and spiritually also a true son.

60. The words clearly tell that the son had not taken the dream of his Prophet father to be a mere dream but a Command from Allah. Had it not been a Command actually, it was necessary that Allah should have explicitly or implicitly stated that the son of Abraham had mistaken it for a command. But the whole context is without any such allusion. On this very basis, there is the Islamic belief that the dream of the Prophets is never a mere dream it is also a kind of Revelation. Obviously, if a thing, which could become such a fundamental principle in the Divine *Shari'ah*, had not been based on reality, but had been a mere misunderstanding, it was not possible that Allah should not have refuted it. It is impossible for the one who believes the Qur'ān to be Allah's Word, to accept that such an error and omission could emanate from Allah also.

61. That is, "The Prophet Abraham did not make his son lie flat on his back but made him lie prostrate lest while slaughtering him the sight of his face should arouse compassion and love and make him shaky. Therefore, he wanted to use the knife from under the throat".

62. One section of the grammarians says that here "and" has been used to mean "then"; thus, the sentence would be: "When the two had submitted themselves (to Allah) and Abraham had flung his son down on his brow, then We called out..." But another section of them says that here the answer to the word "when" has been omitted and left for the listener to fill; for it was better to leave such an indescribable thing to the imagination instead of expressing it in words. When Allah amight have seen that the old father who had got a son after long earnest prayers, had become ready to sacrifice him only for His pleasure and approval; and the son also had become ready to get slaughtered, His infinite Mercy might have been aroused at the sight, and the Master might have felt great love for the father and son. All this can only be imagined. No words would ever describe the scene adequately.

63. That is, "We did not make you see in the dream that you had actually slaughtered your son and he had died, but that you were slaughtering him. That

vision you have fulfilled. Now, it is not Our will to take the life of your child: the actual object of the vision has been fulfilled by your submission and preparation to sacrifice him for Our sake."

64. That is, "We do not subject the people who adopt the righteous way to trials in order to involve them in trouble and distress and affliction just for the sake of it, but these trials are meant to bring out their excellencies and to exalt them to high ranks, and then We deliver them also safe and sound from the dilemma in which We place them for the sake of the trial. Thus, your willingness and preparation to sacrifice your son is enough to entitle you to be exalted to the rank that could be attained only by the one who would actually have slaughtered his son for Our approval and pleasure. Thus, We have saved the life of your child as well as exalted you to this high rank."

65. That is, "The object was not to get your son slaughtered through you but to test you to see that you did not hold anything of the world dearer than Us.

66. "A great sacrifice": A ram, as mentioned in the Bible and the Islamic traditions, that Allah's angel presented at the time before the Prophet Abraham, so that he should sacrifice it instead of his son. This has been called "a great sacrifice" because it was to serve as a ransom from a faithful servant like Abraham for a patient and obedient son like Ishmael, and Allah made it a means of fulfilling the intention of an unprecedented sacrifice. Another reason for calling it "a great" sacrifice is that Allah made it a tradition till the Day of Resurrection that all the believers should offer animal sacrifice on the same date in the entire world so as to keep fresh the memory of the great and unique event signifying faithfulness and devotion."

67. Here, the question arises: Who was the son whom the Prophet Abraham had got ready to offer as a sacrifice, and who had willingly offered himself to be slaughtered as a sacrifice? The first answer to this question is given by the Bible, and it is this:

"And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: ... Take now thy son thine only *son* Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." (Gen. 22: 1-2).

In this statement, on the one hand, it is being said that Allah had asked for the offering of the Prophet Isaac, and on the other, that he was Abraham's only son, whereas the Bible itself, at other places, conclusively states that the Prophet Isaac was not the only son of the Prophet Abraham. Consider the following statements of the Bible:

"Now Sarai, Abram's wife bore him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name *was* Hagar. And Sarai said unto Abraham, Behold now, the Lord hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abraham hearkened to the voice of Sarai. And Sarai Abraham's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abraham had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her husband Abram to be his wife. And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived." (Gen .16: 1-4)

"And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Behold thou *art* with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael." (16: 11)

"And Abraham *was* fourscore and six years old, when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abraham." (16: 16).

"And God said unto Abraham, 'As for Sarai thy wife, ... I will bless her and give thee a son also of her: .....and thou shalt call his name Isaac .....which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.And Abraham took Ishmael his son and .....every male among the men of Abraham's house; and ..... circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the selfsame day, as God had said unto him. And Abraham *was* ninety years old and nine, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. And Ishmael his son *was* thirteen years old, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. " (Gen. 17: 15-25).

"And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him." (Gen. 21: 5).

This brings out the contradictions of the Bible. It is evident that for 14 years the Prophet Ishmael was the only son of the Prophet Abraham. Now if the offering had been asked of the only son, it was not of Isaac but of Ishmael, for he alone was the only son; and if the offering of Isaac had been asked, it would be wrong to say that the offering of the only son had been asked.

Now let us consider the Islamic traditions, and they contain great differences. According to traditions cited by the commentators from the Companions and their immediate followers, one group of them is of the opinion that the son was the Prophet Isaac, and this group contains the following names:

Hadrat 'Umar, 'Ḥaḍrat 'Ali, 'Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Ḥaḍrat 'Abbās bin 'Abdul Muṭṭalib, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, Qatādah, 'Ikrimah, Ḥaṣan Basri, Sa'id bin Jubair, Mujāhid, Sha'bī, Masrūq, Makhūl, Zuhrī, 'Aṭā, Muqātil, Suddī, Ka'b Aḥbār, Zaid bin Aslam, and others.

The other group says that it was the Prophet Ishmael, and this group contains the names of the following authorities:

Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr, Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, Ḥaḍrat Mu'āwiyah, 'Ikrimah, Mujāhid, Yūsuf bin Mahrān, Ḥasan Basrī, Muḥammad bin Ka'b al-Qurzī, Sha'bī, Sa'id bin al-Musayyab, Dahhāk, Muḥammad bin 'Ali bin Ḥussain (Muḥammad al-Bāqir), Rabī' bin Anas, Aḥmed bin Ḥanbal, and others.

When compared, the two lists will be seen to contain several common names: this is due to the reason that from the same person two different views have been reported. For example, from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, 'Ikrimiah has related the saying that the son was the Prophet Isaac, but from him again 'Atā' bin Abi Rabāh relates: "The Jews claim that it was Isaac, but the Jews tell a lie." Likewise, from Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Basrī, one tradition is to the effect that the Prophet Isaac was the son meant to be made the offering, but 'Umar bin 'Ubaid says that Ḥasan Basrī had no doubt regarding that the son whom the Prophet Abraham had been commanded to offer as a sacrifice was the Prophet Ishmael (peace be upon him).

This diversity of tradition has resulted in the diversity of opinion among the scholars of Islam. Some of them e.g. Ibn Jarīr and Qāḍī 'Iyād, have expressed the firm opinion that the son was the Prophet Isaac. Others, like Ibn Kathīr, have given the verdict that it were the Prophet Ishmael. There ware others who are uncertain and wavering, e.g. Jalāluddīn Suyūtī. However, a deep inquiry into the question establishes the fact that the son intended to be offered as a sacrifice was the Prophet Ishmael. The following are the arguments:

(1) As stated by the Qur'ān above, at the time of his emigration from the country, the Prophet Abraham had prayed for a righteous son and in answer to it, Allah had given him the good news of a clement boy. The context shows that this prayer was made at a time when he was childless, and the boy whose good news was given was his first-born child. Then, this also becomes obvious from the Qur'ānic story that when the child grew up to boyhood, he was inspired to offer him as an offering. Now, it is established beyond any doubt that the Prophet Abraham's first-born son was the Prophet Ishmael and not the Prophet Isaac. The Qur'ān itself has stated the order between the two sons, thus: "All praise be to Allah Who has given me sons like Ishmael and Isaac in my old age." (Ibrāhīm: 39).

(2) The words used in the Qur'ān with regard to the Prophet Isaac while giving the good news of his birth are: "And they gave him the good news of the birth of a son, possessing knowledge *('alīm)*." (Adh-Dhāriyāt: 28). "Do not be afraid: we give you the good news of a son, possessing knowledge." (Al-Ḥijr: 53). But the son, the good news of whose birth has been given here; has been called a clement *(ḥalīm)* son.

This shows that the two sons had distinctive qualities, and the offering had been asked of the clement son and not of the son possessing knowledge.

(3) Along with giving the good news of the birth of the Prophet Isaac in the Qur'ān, the good news of the birth of a grandson like Jacob was also given: "Then We gave her the good news of Isaac, and after Isaac of Jacob." (Hūd: 71). Now obviously, if about the son along with the news of whose birth the news of a worthy son to be born to him had also been given, the Prophet Abraham was shown a vision that he was sacrificing him, he would never have understood that he was being inspired to offer that very son as an offering. 'Allāma Ibn Jarīr contends that the Prophet Abraham might have been shown this vision at a time when Jacob had already been born to the Prophet Isaac. But this is, in fact, a very weak reply to the argument. The Qur'ān says: "When the boy became able to work with his father," then he was shown the vision. Anyone who reads these words with an unbiased mind will have the image of an 8 to 10 years lad before him. No one can imagine that these words had been used about a young man having children.

(4) Allah, at the end of the story, says: "We gave him the good news of Isaac, a Prophet among the righteous." This clearly shows that it was not the same son, whom he had been inspired to offer as a sacrifice; but before this the good news of some other son had been given; then when he grew up and became able to work with his father, it was commanded to sacrifice him. Afterwards, when the Prophet Abraham came through this test successfully, he was given the good news of the birth of another son, the Prophet Isaac (may peace be upon him). This order of the events conclusively proves that the son whom the Prophet Abraham had been commanded to sacrifice was not Isaac but another son who had been born several years before him. 'Allāma Ibn Jarīr rejects this express argument, saying that in the beginning only the good news of the birth of the Prophet Isaac had been given. Then, when he became ready to be scarificed for the sake of Allah's approval and pleasure, it was rewarded in the form of the good news of his Prophethood. But this reply to the argument is weaker still. If it had really been so, Allah would not have said: "We gave him the good news of Isaac, a Prophet among the righteous," but "We gave him the good news that this same son of yours would be a Prophet among the righteous."

(5) Authentic traditions confirm that the horns of the ram which was slaughtered as a ransom for the Prophet Ishmael remained preserved in the Holy Ka'bah till the time of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Zubair. Afterwards when Ḥajjaj bin Yūsuf besieged Ibn Zubair in the Ka'bah

and demolished the Kab'bah, the horns also were destroyed. Both Ibn 'Abbās and 'Amir Sha'bī; testify that they had seen the horns in the Ka'bah. (Ibn Kathīr). This is a proof of the fact that the event of the sacrifice had taken place in Makkah and not in Syria, and concerned the Prophet Ishmael. That is why a relic of it had been preserved in the Holy Ka'bah built by the Prophets Abraham and Ishmael.

(6) The Arab traditions confirmed that this event of the sacrfice had taken place in Minā (near Makkah), and it was not only a tradition but practically also it had been a part of the Ḥajj rites for centuries. Even until the time of the Holy Prophet people used to offer the animal sacrifice in Mina at the place where the Prophet Abraham had offered the sacrifice. Afterwards when the Holy Prophet was raised as a Prophet, he also maintained and continued the same tradition; so that even till today sacrifices are offered in Minā on the 10th of Dhil-Ḥajj. This continual practice of 4,500 years or so is an undeniable proof of the fact that the heirs to the tradition of sacrifice made by the Prophet Abraham have been the descendents of the Prophet Ishmael and not of the Prophet Isaac. There has never been any such tradition among the descendents of the Prophet Isaac according to which the whole community might have offered the sacrifice at one and the same time and regarded it as a continuation of the sacrifice made by the Prophet Abraham.

In the face of such arguments it appears strange how the idea of the Prophet Isaac's being the son offered as the sacrifice spread among the Muslim community itself. If the Jews might have tried to attribute the honour to their ancestor, the Prophet Isaac, by depriving the Prophet Ishmael of it, it would be understandable.

But the question is: How did a large number of the Muslims come to accept this wrong notion? A very satisfactory answer to this question has been given by 'Allāma Ibn Kathīr in his commentary. He says: "The reality is known to Allah alone but it appears that all the sayings (in which the Prophet Isaac has been mentioned as the son offered as a sacrifice) are related from Ka'b Ahbār. This man, when he became a Muslim in the time of Hadrat 'Umar, used to relate before him the contents of the ancient Jewish and Christian scriptures, and Hadrat 'Umar would hear them. On this basis, the other people also began to listen to him, and started relating every mixture of the truth and falsehood that they heard from him, whereas this *Ummah* did not stand in need of anything whatever from the store of his knowledge and information."

This thing is further explained by a tradition from Muḥammad bin Ka'b al-Kurzi He says that once during his presence the question whether the son

offered as a sacrifice was the Prophet Isaac or the Prophet Ishmael arose before Ḥaḍrat 'Umar bin 'Abdul 'Azīz. Among them at that time was a person who had been a Jewish scholar but had become a sincere Muslim afterwards. He said, "O Commander of the Faithful! By God it was Ishmael, and the Jews know it, but claim on account of their jealousy of the Arabs that it was the Prophet Isaac." (Ibn Jarīr). When the two things are put side by side, it becomes evident that actuaul it was the Jewish propaganda that spread among the Muslims who have always been unbiased in scholastic literary matters, a large number of them accepted the statements of the Jews as a historic truth, which they presented as historical traditions with reference to the ancient scriptures, and did not realize that these were based on prejudice instead of knowledge.

68. This sentence throws light on the real object for which this event of the Prophet Abraham's sacrifice has been related here. From the race of his two sons arose two great nations in the world. First, the children of Israel, from whose house two major religions (Judaism and Christianity) emerged, which dominated and won over large human populations. Second, the children of Ishmael, who were the religious leaders and guides of all the Arabs at the time of the revelation of the Qur'ān, and the tribe of Quraish of Makkah at that time held the most important position among them. Whatever eminence these two branches of the offspring of the Prophet Abraham attained became possible only on account of their connection and relation with the Prophet Abraham and his two illustrious sons; otherwise, God alone knows how many such families have arisen in the world and been assigned to oblivion. Now, Allah relates the most glorious event of the history of this family and makes both its branches realize that whatever honour and eminence they have attained in the world, has been due actually to the great traditions of God-worship and sincerity and obedience, which were set by their ancestors, the Prophets Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac (may peace be upon them all). He tells them: "The great blessings which We bestowed on them, were not bestowed arbitrarily and haphazardly: We did not just pick out a person and his two sons blindly and blessed them, but they gave definite proofs of their loyalty and faithfulness to their real Master and then became deserving of His favours. Now, you cannot become entitled to those favours merely on the basis of your pride of descent, for We shall see who among you is righteous and who is wicked and then deal with him accordingly."

[Contd. on p. 326

الْاٰوَّلِيْنَ ﴿١٢٦﴾ فَكَذَّبُوْهُ فَاِنَّهُمْ لَمُحْضَرُوْنَ ﴿١٢٧﴾ اِلَّا عِبَادَ اللّٰهِ الْمُخْلَصِيْنَ ﴿١٢٨﴾ وَتَرَكْنَا
عَلَيْهِ فِي الْاٰخِرِيْنَ ﴿١٢٩﴾ سَلٰمٌ عَلٰٓى اِلْ يَاسِيْنَ ﴿١٣٠﴾ اِنَّا كَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿١٣١﴾
اِنَّهٗ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٣٢﴾ وَاِنَّ لُوْطًا لَّمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿١٣٣﴾ اِذْ نَجَّيْنٰهُ وَاَهْلَهٗٓ
اَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿١٣٤﴾ اِلَّا عَجُوْزًا فِي الْغٰبِرِيْنَ ﴿١٣٥﴾ ثُمَّ دَمَّرْنَا الْاٰخَرِيْنَ ﴿١٣٦﴾ وَاِنَّكُمْ لَتَمُرُّوْنَ
عَلَيْهِمْ مُّصْبِحِيْنَ ﴿١٣٧﴾ وَبِالَّيْلِ ۭ اَفَلَا تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿١٣٨﴾ وَاِنَّ يُوْنُسَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿١٣٩﴾
اِذْ اَبَقَ اِلَى الْفُلْكِ الْمَشْحُوْنِ ﴿١٤٠﴾ فَسَاهَمَ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْمُدْحَضِيْنَ ﴿١٤١﴾ فَالْتَقَمَهُ
الْحُوْتُ وَهُوَ مُلِيْمٌ ﴿١٤٢﴾ فَلَوْلَآ اَنَّهٗ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُسَبِّحِيْنَ ﴿١٤٣﴾ لَلَبِثَ فِيْ بَطْنِهٖٓ اِلٰى
يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُوْنَ ﴿١٤٤﴾ فَنَبَذْنٰهُ بِالْعَرَآءِ وَهُوَ سَقِيْمٌ ﴿١٤٥﴾ وَاَنْۢبَتْنَا عَلَيْهِ شَجَرَةً مِّنْ
يَّقْطِيْنٍ ﴿١٤٦﴾ وَاَرْسَلْنٰهُ اِلٰى مِائَةِ اَلْفٍ اَوْ يَزِيْدُوْنَ ﴿١٤٧﴾ فَاٰمَنُوْا فَمَتَّعْنٰهُمْ اِلٰى حِيْنٍ ﴿١٤٨﴾
فَاسْتَفْتِهِمْ اَلِرَبِّكَ الْبَنَاتُ وَلَهُمُ الْبَنُوْنَ ﴿١٤٩﴾ اَمْ خَلَقْنَا الْمَلٰۗىِٕكَةَ اِنَاثًا وَّهُمْ
شٰهِدُوْنَ ﴿١٥٠﴾ اَلَآ اِنَّهُمْ مِّنْ اِفْكِهِمْ لَيَقُوْلُوْنَ ﴿١٥١﴾ وَلَدَ اللّٰهُ ۙ وَاِنَّهُمْ لَكٰذِبُوْنَ ﴿١٥٢﴾
اَصْطَفَى الْبَنَاتِ عَلَى الْبَنِيْنَ ﴿١٥٣﴾ مَا لَكُمْ ۣ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُوْنَ ﴿١٥٤﴾ اَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿١٥٥﴾ اَمْ
لَكُمْ سُلْطٰنٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿١٥٦﴾ فَاْتُوْا بِكِتٰبِكُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿١٥٧﴾ وَجَعَلُوْا بَيْنَهٗ وَ
بَيْنَ الْجِنَّةِ نَسَبًا ۭ وَلَقَدْ عَلِمَتِ الْجِنَّةُ اِنَّهُمْ لَمُحْضَرُوْنَ ﴿١٥٨﴾ سُبْحٰنَ اللّٰهِ عَمَّا
يَصِفُوْنَ ﴿١٥٩﴾ اِلَّا عِبَادَ اللّٰهِ الْمُخْلَصِيْنَ ﴿١٦٠﴾ فَاِنَّكُمْ وَمَا تَعْبُدُوْنَ ﴿١٦١﴾ مَآ اَنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ
بِفٰتِنِيْنَ ﴿١٦٢﴾ اِلَّا مَنْ هُوَ صَالِ الْجَحِيْمِ ﴿١٦٣﴾ وَمَا مِنَّآ اِلَّا لَهٗ مَقَامٌ مَّعْلُوْمٌ ﴿١٦٤﴾ وَ
اِنَّا لَنَحْنُ الصَّاۗفُّوْنَ ﴿١٦٥﴾ وَاِنَّا لَنَحْنُ الْمُسَبِّحُوْنَ ﴿١٦٦﴾ وَاِنْ كَانُوْا لَيَقُوْلُوْنَ ﴿١٦٧﴾ لَوْ
اَنَّ عِنْدَنَا ذِكْرًا مِّنَ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿١٦٨﴾ لَكُنَّا عِبَادَ اللّٰهِ الْمُخْلَصِيْنَ ﴿١٦٩﴾ فَكَفَرُوْا بِهٖ
فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿١٧٠﴾ وَلَقَدْ سَبَقَتْ كَلِمَتُنَا لِعِبَادِنَا الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿١٧١﴾ اِنَّهُمْ لَهُمُ

And Elias also was one of the Messengers.[70] Remember when he said to his people, "Do you not fear ? Do you invoke Ba'al[71] and leave the Best of Creators, that Allah Who is your Lord and Lord of all your forefathers?" But they treated him as a liar, so they will certainly be presented for punishment, except for the true servants of God,[72] and We left good words for Elias among posterity.[73] Peace is upon Elias![74] Thus do We reward the righteous. Indeed he was one of Our believing servants . 123-132

And Lot also was one of the Messengers. Remember when We rescued him and all his household, except for an old woman who was among those who remained behind.[75] Then We destroyed the others completely. Now you pass by their ruins by day and by night[76]: Have you then no sense? 133-138

And indeed Jonah also was one of the Messengers.[77] Remember when he fled to the laden vessel;[78] then he took part in the casting of lots and lost. At last, the fish swallowed him, for he was blameworthy.[79] Had he not been of those who glorify[80](Us), he would have remained in the fish's belly till the Day of Resurrection.[81] At last We cast him on a bare shore in a state of sickness,[82] and caused a creeper[83] to grow over him. Then We sent him to a hundred thousand people, or more[84]; they believed in him and We let them live till an appointed time .[85] 139-148

Just ask the people[86] (whether it appeals to them) that their Lord should have daughters and they should have sons![87] Have We really created the angels females and they are eye-witnesses of it? Note it well: they, in fact, invent a falsehood when they say, "Allah has children." They are utter liars. Did Allah choose daughters for Himself instead of sons? What is the matter with you? How you judge? Will you not have sense? Or, if you have a clear authority for this, then bring your Book if you are truthful.[88] 149-157

They have invented a blood-relationship between Allah and the angels,[89] whereas the angels know full well that these people will be brought up as culprits. (And they say :) "Allah is free from the things which the other people than His true servants attribute to Him. Therefore you and your gods cannot turn anyone from Allah, except him who shall burn in the blazing Fire of Hell.[90] As for ourselves, each 158-166

one of us has an appointed place,[91] and we are the ranged servants and the glorifiers (of Allah)."

Before this they used to say, "If we had the 'Admonition' which 167-173
the earlier people had received, we would have been the chosen servants of Allah."[92] But (when it did come) they denied it. Now, they will soon come to know (the consequences of this attitude). We have already promised Our servants whom We sent that they would certainly be helped, and Our army alone would be triumphant.[93]

Contd from p. 323]

69. "A great distress" the distress in which they were involved at the hands of Pharaoh and his people.

70. The Prophet Elias was from among the Israelite Prophets. He has been mentioned only twice in the Qur'ān, here and in Sūrah Al-An'ām: 85. The present-day scholars have determined his period between 875 and 850 B.C. He was an inhabitant of Gilead, which in ancient days was the territory now under the northern districts of the modern state of Jordan, to the south of the River Yarmūk. In the Bible he has been mentioned as Elijah the Tishbite. Here is briefly his life-story:

After the death of the Prophet Solomon the Israelite kingdom was broken up into two parts due mainly to the unworthiness of his son, Rehoboam. One part which consisted of Jerusalem and southern Palestine remained with the descendants of the Prophet David, while in the second, which comprised northern Palestine, an independent state by the name of Israel was established with Samaria as its capital. Although conditions in both the states were very bad, the state of Israel, from the very beginning, followed the path of depravity due to which the evils of polytheism and idol-worship and tyranny and wickedness went on increasing and multiplying in it endlessly; so much so that when Ahab, the king of Israel, married Jezebel, the daughter of the king of Sidon (mod., Lebanon), the mischief reached its extremity. Under the influence of this polytheistic princess Ahab himself became a polytheist. He built a temple and altar to Ba'al in Samaria, tried his very best to introduce and popularise Ba'al-worship instead of the worship of One God, and consequently, offerings began to be made publicly in the name of Ba'al in the Israelite towns and cities.

This was the time when the Prophet Elijah (peace be upon him) appeared on the scene. He came from Gilead and gave Ahab a notice that in consequence of his sins, the land of Israel would go without rain, even without the dew. This word of the Prophet of Allah proved to be literally true and there fell no rain in

Israel for three and a half years. At last, Ahab came to his senses and he got the Prophet Elijah searched out. But Elijah, before praying for the rain, thought it necessary to make the distinction between Allah, Lord of the worlds, and Ba'al plain before the people of Israel. For this purpose, he commanded that the priests of Ba'al would make an offering in the name of their deity, and he also would make an offering in the name of Allah, Lord of the worlds, in front of the assembled people. Then the one whose offering would be consumed by a fire from heaven, without the agency of the human hand, the truth of his deity would be established beyond doubt. Ahab accepted this proposal. Thus, 850 of the priests of Ba'al assembled on Mt. Carmel to answer the challenge given by the Prophet Elijah. In this encounter the Ba'al worshippers were defeated, and the Prophet Elijah proved that Ba'al was a false god, and the real God is the One God alone Who had appointed him as His Prophet. After this, Elijah got the priests of Ba'al slaughtered in front of the same assembly of the people; then he prayed for the rain, and his prayer was immediately answered and the whole land of Israel was saturated with water

But, despite these miracles, Ahab could not shake off the influence of his polytheistic wife. Jezebel turned hostile to the Prophet Elijah and she swore that he would be put to death just as the Ba'al worshippers had been put to death. Under the circumstances the Prophet Elijah was compelled to leave the country and he remained lodged in a cave at the foot of Mt. Sinai for several years. The lamentation that he made to Allah, on this occasion, has been related in the Bible, in these words:

"The children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, *even* I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away." (I Kings, 19: 10).

About the same time Jehoram, the ruler of the Jewish state of Jerusalem, married the daughter of Ahab, the king of Israel, and under her polytheistic influence the same evils that had spread in Israel also began to spread in Judah. The Prophet Elijah carried out his prophetic duty again and wrote a letter to Jehoram, the following words of which have been reported in the Bible:

"Thus saith the Lord God of David thy father, Because thou hast not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat thy father, nor in the ways of Asa king of Judah. But hast walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and hast made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to go a whoring, like to the whoredoms of the house of Ahab, and also hast slain thy brethren of thy father's house, *which were* better than thyself: Behold, with a great plague will the Lord smite thy people, and thy children, and thy wives, and all thy goods: And thou *shalt have* great sickness by

disease of thy bowels, until thy bowels fall out by reason of the sickness day by day." (2 Chronicles, 21: 12-15).

Whatever the Prophet Elijah had prophesied in this letter proved true. First, the kingdom of Jehoram was destroyed by the external invaders, and the enemies even carried away his wives, then he himself died of the disease of the bowels.

A few years later the Prophet Elijah again went to Israel and constantly tried hard to bring Ahab, and after him his son, Ahaziah, to the right path, but the evil that had taken root in the house of the royal family of Samaria could not be eradicated. At last, due to the curse of the Prophet the family of Ahab met its doom, and then Allah recalled his Prophet from the world.

For details, see the following books of the Bible: I Kings, chs., 17, 18, 19, 21; 2 Kings, chs., 1, 2; 2 Chronicles, ch. 21.

71. Lexically, *ba'al* means master, chief and possessor. This word was also used for husband, and has been used in this sense at several places in the Qur'ān itself, e.g. in Sūrah Al-Baqarah: 228, An-Nisā': 127, Hūd: 72 and An-Nūr: 31. However, in the ancient times the Semetic nations used it in the meaning of deity or lord; they had even given the name of Ba'al to a special god. The chief male god of the Phoenicians, in particular, was Ba'al and their chief goddess was Ashtoreth, his wife. The scholars differ as to whether Ba'al meant the sun or Jupiter, and Ashtoreth the moon or Venus. In any case, historically it is certain that Ba'al worship was prevalent from Babylon to Egypt throughout the Middle East, and the polytheistic communities of the Lebanon and Syria and Palestine, in particular, had become its devotees. When the Israelites settled in Palestine and Jordan after they came out from Egypt, they started contracting marriage and other social relations with the polytheistic nations round about them, in violation of the strict prohibitive injunctions of the Torah, the disease of idol-worship began to spread among them, too. According to the Bible, this moral and religious decline had started appearing among the Israelites soon after the death of Joshua, son of Nūn, who was the first caliph of the Prophet Moses:

"And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Ba'alim ..... And they forsook the Lord, and served Ba'al and Ashtoreth." (Judges, 2: 11-13).

"And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amonites, and Perizzites and Hivites, and Jebusites. And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods." (Judges, 3: 5-6).

At that time worship of Ba'al had so deeply affected the Israelites that, according to the Bible, in one of their habitations a public altar had been built at which offerings were made to Ba'al. A God-worshipping Israelite could not bear the sight; so he pulled down the altar one night. Next morning a great multitude of the people gathered together and demanded that the man who had cast down the altar be put to death. (Judges, 6:25-32). This evil, at last, was put to an end by Samuel, Saul and the Prophets David and Solomon (peace be upon them); they not only reformed the Israelites generally but also eradicated polytheism and idol-worship from their kingdom. But after the death of the Prophet Solomon the mischief was again revived and the Israelite state of northern Palestine was swept away in the flood of Ba'al-worship.

72. That is "Only those people will be made an exception from the punishment, who did not belie the Prophet Elijah, and whom Allah chose from among the nation for His worship."

73. The treatment that the Israelites meted out to the Prophet Elijah in his life has been referred to above, but after his death they became so enamoured of him that they held him in the highest esteem and reverence after the Prophet Moses. They formed the belief that Elijah (peace be upon him) had been taken up alive into heaven by a whirlwind (2 Kings, ch. 2), and that he will come back to the world again. Thus, in Malachi (O.T.) it is written:

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the Prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." (4: 5).

At the time the Prophets John and Jesus (peace be upon them) appeared, the Jews were awaiting the advent of these three men: the Prophet Elias, the Christ and "that Prophet" (i.e. the Holy Prophet Muhammad). When the ministry of the Prophet John began and he started baptizing the people, the Jews sent priests to him to ask, "Are you the Christ?" And he said that he was not the Christ. Then they asked, "Are you Elijah?" And he answered that he was not Elias; then they asked, "Are you 'that Prophet'?" And he answered that he was not "that Prophet" either. Thereupon they said, "If you are neither the Christ, nor Elias, nor that Prophet, why do you then baptize?" (John, 1: 19-26;). Afterwards when the name of the Prophet Jesus spread among the people, the Jews thought that perhaps the Prophet Elias had come. (Mark, 6: 14-15). Even among the disciples of Jesus themselves the idea was common that Elias the Prophet would come, but Jesus removed their misunderstanding, saying, "Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatever they listed." Then the disciples understood that he spoke to them of John the Baptist and not of Elias who had appeared eight hundred years earlier.' (Matthew, 11: 14, and 17: 10 13).

74. The words in the original are: *Salām-un 'alā Il-yā-sīn.* Some commentators say that *Il-yā-sīn* is the other name of the Prophet Elias, just as Abraham is the other name of the Prophet Ibrahīm; some others say that different versions of the Hebrew names were prevalent among the Arabs, e.g. one and the same angel was called Mīchāl and Michā'īl and Mīchā'īn. The same has been the case with the name of the Prophet Elias also. In the Qur'ān itself the same mountain has been called Ṭūr Sīnā' and Ṭūr Sīnīn.

75. This implies the wife of the Prophet Lot, who did not migrate with her illustrious husband, but remained behind with her people and was punished.

76. The reference is to the ruined habitations of the people of Lot by which the Quraishite merchants passed day and night during their trade journeys to Syria and Palestine.

77. This is the third place where the Prophet Jonah (peace be upon him) has been mentioned in the Qur'ān. Before this he has already been mentioned in Sūrah Yūnus and Sūrah Al-Anbiyā'. (For reference, please see Yūnus: 98 and Al-Anbiyā': 87-88 and the E.N.'s thereof).

78. The word *abaqa* in Arabic is used for the flight and escape of a slave from his master's house.

79. This is what one understands from a study of these sentences:

(1) The vessel which the Prophet Jonah boarded was already overloaded.

(2) Lots were drawn in the vessel probably at a time when during the voyage it was felt that the lives of the passengers had been endangered due to the overloading; therefore, lots were cast to pick out a person to be thrown overboard.

(3) The lot fell on the Prophet Jonah, and so he was thrown into the sea, and a fish swallowed him.

(4) The Prophet Jonah was so afflicted because he had fled and abandoned the place of his mission without the permission of his Master (Allah Almighty). This meaning is confirmed by the word *abaqa* as has been explained in E.N. 78 above, and also by the word *mulīm*. *Mulīm* is a blameworthy person, who becomes worthy of blame by himself because of his sin and error, whether somebody else blames himfor it or not. *(Ibn Jarīr).*

80. It has two meanings and both are implied: (1) That the Prophet Jonah was not of the people who are heedless of God, but was of those who glorify and adore Allah constantly and perpetually; and (2) that when he went inside the fish, he turned to Allah alone and glorified Him. In Sūrah Al-Anbiyā' it has been said:

"He invoked Us from the depths of the darkness, saying: 'There is no god but You: Glory be to You: I am indeed blameworthy.'" (v. 87).

81. This does not mean that the fish would have lived till Resurrection and the Prophet Jonah would have remained alive in its belly till then, but that the fish's belly would have become his grave till Resurrection. The famous commentator Qatādah has given this same meaning of this verse. *(Ibn Jarīr).*

82. That is, "When the Prophet Jonah confessed his fault, and began to glorify Allah like a true and sincere believer, the fish spat him up on the beach by Allah's Command. The beach was a bare plain, without any vegetation on it, or anything to provide him shade, or any means of food."

Here, the rationalists have been heard expressing the misgiving that it is impossible for a man to come out alive from the belly of a fish. But, towards the end of the last century, an event took place near the sea-shores of England (the centre of this so-called rationalism), which belies this claim. In August, 1891, some fishermen went to the high sea to hunt whales in a ship called Star of the East. There they injured a great fish which was 20 feet long, 5 feet wide and weighed a hundred tons, but during the struggle the fish swallowed a fisherman, James Bartley, in front of the very eyes of his companions. Next day the same fish was found dead on the sea. The fishermen hauled it up on board and when they cut open its belly, James Bartley came out alive. He had remained in the fish's belly for full 60 hours. (*Urdū Digest,* February, 1964). Obviously, when such a thing is possible in normal circumstances naturally, why should it be impossible under abnormal conditions as a miracle of God ?

83. The Arabic word *yaqtīn* applies to a tree which does not stand on a stem but grows and spreads like a creeper, e.g. a pumpkin, cucumber, water-melon, etc. In any case, a creeper was produced miraculously, so that its leaves should provide shade to the Prophet Jonah and its fruit should serve him both as food and as shade.

84. The mention of "a hundred thousand people or more" does not mean that Allah had any doubt about their number, but it means that a casual observer would have estimated the population to be more than a hundred thousand people in any case. Probably it was the same place which the Prophet Jonah had left and fled. After his departure when the people of the place saw the scourge approaching they believed, but this was only a kind of repentance which was accepted and the scourge averted. Now, the Prophet Jonah was again sent to them so that the people should believe in him as a Prophet and become Muslims formally. To understand this, one should keep in view verse 98 of Sūrah Yūnus.

85. Some people have taken exception to what we have written concerning this story of the Prophet Jonah in our commentary of Sūrahs Yūnus and Al-Anbiyā'. It would therefore be proper that we should reproduce here the explanations given by the other commentators in this regard.

The famous commentator Qatādah in his commentary of verse 98 of Sūrah Yūnus says: "There has been no habitation which disbelieved and might have believed after the arrival of the scourge, and then might have been left unpunished. The only exception were the people of the Prophet Jonah. When they searched for their Prophet and did not find him, and felt that the scourge had approached near at hand, Allah put repentance in their hearts." *(Ibn Kathīr,* vol. II, p. 433).

Commenting on the same verse 'Allāma Ālūsī says: "The Prophet Jonah (peace be upon him) had been sent to the people of Nineveh in the land of Mosul. They were polytheistic people. The Prophet Jonah invited them to believe in Allah, the One, and to give up idol-worship. They refused to believe and belied him. Jonah gave them the news that they would be visited by a scourge after three days and he left the place at midnight before the expiry of the three days. Then, in the day time when the scourge approached..... and the people realized that they would all perish, they began to search for the Prophet but did not find him. At last, they took their families and their cattle and came out in the desert and expressed belief and repentance.....So, Allah showed them mercy and accepted their prayer." *(Rūḥ al-Ma'anī,* vol. XI, p. 170).

Commenting on v. 87 of Sūrah Al-Anbiyā', 'Allāma Ālūsī writes: "The Prophet Jonah's forsaking his people in anger was an act of migration, but he had not been commanded to do so." (*Rūḥ al-Ma*'ānī, vol. XVII, p. 77). Then he explains the meaning of the sentence, *"Innī kun-tu min-az-ẓālimīn"*, of Jonah's prayer, thus: "That is, I was blameworthy in that I hastened to migrate, against the way of the Prophets, before receiving the command for it." This was, in fact, a confession of his sin and expression of repentance so that Allah might remove his affliction. (*Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī,* vol. :XVII, p. 78).

Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī's note on this verse is: "He became angry with his people when they did not believe, and forsook them, and did not return to them of his own accord when the scourge had been averted, and did not await Our Command for the migration." (*Bayān al-Qur'ān).*

Maulānā Shabbīr Ahmad 'Uthmānī writes in his note on this verse: "Vexed at the misconduct of his people he left the city in anger, did not await the Divine Command and threatened the people that they would be visited by a torment after three days.....*Innī kun-tu min az-ẓālimīn:* He confessed his error that he had made haste and left the habitation without awaiting Allah's Command

"Explaining these verses of Sūrah Ṣāāffāt, Imām Rāzī writes: "The Prophet Jonah's fault was that when Allah threatened to destroy the people who had belied him, he thought that the scourge would inevitably befall them. Therefore, he did not show patience and abandoned his mission and left the place, whereas he ought to have continued the work of his mission, for there was a possibility that Allah might not destroy those people." *(Tafsīr Kabīr*, vol. VII, p. 158).

Explaining the verse *Idh abaqa*....., 'Allāma Ālūsī writes: "Literally, *abaqa* means the escape of a slave from his master's house. Since Jonah had run away from his people without Allah's leave, the word has been rightly used about him." Then he writes: "When the third day came, the Prophet Jonah left the place without Allah's permission. Thus, when his people did not find him, they came out along with their young and old people and their cattle, and they implored Allah and begged for His forgiveness and Allah forgave them." *(Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī*, vol. XXII, p. 13).

Maulānā Ṣhabbīr Ahmad 'Uthmānī has explained the words *wa huwa mulīm*, thus: "The accusation against him was that he had left the city because of an error of judgement, without awaiting the Divine Command, and even specified the day for the coming of the scourge."

Then Maulānā Ṣhabbīr Ahmad's note on v. 48 of Sūrah Al-Qalam is: "Do not be perplexed and agitated with regard to the deniers like the Man of the Fish (i.e. the Prophet Jonah)." And about the sentence: *wa huwa makẓūm* of the same verse, he writes: "That is, he was full of anger against his people, so he prayed for the torment, rather foretold it, in fretful haste."

These explanations by the commentators clearly show that there were three offences on account of which the Prophet Jonah was made to suffer Allah's displeasure: (1) That he himself fixed the day of the torment, whereas Allah had not made any declaration in this regard; (2) that he emigrated from the city even before the day came; whereas a Prophet should not leave the place of his mission until Allah commands him to do so; and (3) that he did not return to his people after the torment had been averted from them.

86. Another theme starts from here. In the preceding theme that started from v. 11, the Quraish had been put this question: "Ask them: what is more difficult: their own creation or of those things that We have created?" Now, they are being asked this second question. The object of the first question was to warn the disbelievers of their deviation because of which they regarded life-after-death and the meting out of rewards and punishments as impossible, and therefore, mocked the Holy Prophet for it. Now they are being asked this second question to warn them of their ignorance due to which they attributed children to

Allah and would join anybody with Allah in any relationship they liked on mere conjecture.

87. Traditions show that in Arabia the tribes of Quraish, Juhainah, Banī Salimah, Khuzā'ah, Banī Mulaih, etc., held the belief that the angels were Allah's daughters. This belief of their ignorance has been referred to at several places in the Qur'ān, e.g. in An-Nisā': 117, An-Naḥl: 57-58, Banī Isra'īl: 40, Az-Zukhruf: 16-19, An-Najm: 21-27.

88. That is, "There can be only two bases for regarding the angels as the daughters of Allah: Either such a thing could be said on the basis of observation, or the one who asserted it should possess a Divine book in which Allah Himself might have stated that the angels were His daughters. Now, if those who held such a belief could neither make a claim to have observed such a thing nor did they possess any divine book that might contain such a thing, there could be no greater stupidity than this that one should base one's religious belief on mere conjecture, and attribute to Allah, Lord of the worlds, such things as were patently ridiculous."

89. Though the word used is *al-jinnah* instead of *al-malā'ikah*, some major commentators have opined that here the word *jinn* has been used for *malā'ikah* in its literal sense (of hidden creation); *malā'ikah* (angels) also are, in reality, a hidden creation, and the following theme also demands that *al-jinnah* here be taken in the sense of *al-malā'ikah*

90. Another translation of this verse can be: "Therefore, you and your worship: on this you cannot tempt into mischief anyone except him ..." According to this second translation, the meaning would be: "O you who have gone astray, by this worship that you are performing before us, and regarding us as the children of Allah, Lord of the worlds, you cannot tempt us into mischief. By this you can only beguile a fool who might be working for his own doom. So, we refuse to fall into the trap that you have set for us."

91. That is, "Not to speak of being Allah's children, we do not have the power to exceed in any way or degree the place and position and status appointed for each of us by Allah."

92. This same thing has already been mentioned in Sūrah Fāṭir: 42 above.

93. "Allah's army": implies the believers who obey Allah's Messenger and side with him. This also includes those unseen powers by which Allah helps the followers of the truth.

[Contd. on p. 335

الْمَنْصُورُونَ ﴿١٧٣﴾ وَإِنَّ جُندَنَا لَهُمُ الْغَالِبُونَ ﴿١٧٤﴾ فَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ حَتَّىٰ حِينٍ ﴿١٧٥﴾ وَ
أَبْصِرْهُمْ فَسَوْفَ يُبْصِرُونَ ﴿١٧٦﴾ أَفَبِعَذَابِنَا يَسْتَعْجِلُونَ ﴿١٧٧﴾ فَإِذَا نَزَلَ بِسَاحَتِهِمْ فَسَاءَ
صَبَاحُ الْمُنذَرِينَ ﴿١٧٨﴾ وَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ حَتَّىٰ حِينٍ ﴿١٧٩﴾ وَأَبْصِرْ فَسَوْفَ يُبْصِرُونَ ﴿١٨٠﴾
سُبْحَانَ رَبِّكَ رَبِّ الْعِزَّةِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ ﴿١٨١﴾ وَسَلَامٌ عَلَى الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٨٢﴾ وَ
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٨٢﴾

Therefore, O Prophet, leave them for a while to themselves and watch (them); soon they will see it for themselves.[94] Are they clamouring for our torment? The day when it descends in their courtyards, will be a dreadful day for those who have been warned. So leave them alone for a while and watch ;soon they will themselves see. 174-179

Glorified is your Lord, Lord of Honour, (and free) from all that they attribute to Him., and peace on the Messengers, and all praise is only for Allah, Lord of the Universe. 180-182

Contd. from p. 334]

This help and domination does not necessarily mean that in every age every Prophet of Allah and his followers must attain political dominance, but this dominance has many forms, one of which is political rule as well. Wherever the Prophets of Allah did not attain any such dominance, they did establish their moral superiority even in those places. The nations which did not accept their message and adopted a way contrary to their teachings, were ultimately doomed to destruction. Whatever philosophies of error and misguidance the people invented and whatever corrupt and evil practices of life they enforced died out ultimately after they had their sway for some time. But the truths preached by the Prophets of Allah for thousands of years have been unalterable before as they are unalterable today. No one has been able to disprove them in any way.

94. That is, "It will not take long when they will see their defeat and your victory with their own eyes." This proved to be true as it had been foretold. Hardly 14 to 15 years had passed after the revelation of these verses when the pagans of Makkah witnessed the Holy Prophet enter their city as a conqueror, and then a few years later the same people saw that Islam had overwhelmed not only Arabia but the mighty empires of Rome and Iran as well.



XXXVIII

ṢUĀD

ص

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XXXVIII

ṢUĀD

ص

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from the alphabetic letter *Ṣuād* with which it begins.

Period of Revelation

As will be explained below, according to some traditions this Sūrah was sent down in the period when the Holy Prophet had started calling the people openly to Islam in Makkah, and this had caused great alarm among the chiefs of the Quraish. If this be true, its period of revelation would be about the 4th year of the Prophethood. According to some other traditions, it was sent down after Ḥaḍrat 'Umar's embracing Islam, and this happened, as is well known, after the migration to Ḥabash. Another chain of the traditions shows that the event which occasioned the revelation of this Sūrah took place during the last illness of Abū Ṭālib. If this be correct, the period of its revelation would be the 10th or 11th year of the Prophethood.

Historical Background

Here is a resume of the traditions related by Imām Aḥmad, Nasa'ī, Tirmidhi, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Shaibah, Ibn Abi Ḥātim, Muḥammad bin Isḥāq and others:

When Abū Ṭālib fell ill, and the Quraish chiefs knew that his end was near, they held consultations and decided to approach the old chief with the request that he should solve the dispute between them and his nephew. For they feared that if Abū Ṭālib died and then they subjected Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) to a harsh treatment, after his death, the Arabs would taunt them, saying, "They were afraid of the old chief as long as he lived; now that he is dead they have started maltreating his nephew." At least 25 of the Quraish chiefs including Abū Jahl, Abū Sufyān, Umayyah bin Khalaf, 'Āṣ bin Wā'il, Aswad bin al-Muṭṭalib, 'Uqbah bin Abi Mu'aiṭ, 'Utbah and Shaibah went to Abū Ṭālib. First, they put before him their complaints against the Holy Prophet as usual, then said, "We have come to present before you a just request and it is this: let your nephew leave us to our religion, and we shall leave him to his. He may worship whomever he may please: we shall not stand in his way in this matter; but he should not condemn our gods, and should not try to force us to give them up. Please tell him to make terms with us on this condition". Abū Ṭālib called the Holy Prophet and said, "Dear nephew, these people of your tribe have come to me with a request. They want you to agree with them on a just matter so as to put an end to your dispute with them." Then he told him about the request of the chiefs of the Quraish. The Holy Prophet replied, "Dear uncle: I shall request them to agree upon a thing which, if they accept, will enable them to conquer the whole of Arabia and subject the non-Arab world to their domination."[1] Hearing this the people were first confounded; they did not know how they should turn down such a proposal. Then, after they had considered the matter, they replied: "You speak of one word: we are prepared to repeat ten others like it, but please tell us what it is." The Holy Prophet said: *Lā ilāha Ill-Allāh.* At

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1. This saying of the Holy Prophet has been reported in different words by the different reporters. But in spite of the difference in the wording, the meaning of all the reports is one and the same. He said: "If I present before you a word accepting and following which will enable you to overpower the whole of Arabia and the non-Arab adjacent countries, tell me what would be better: My word or that which you are presenting before me as an equitable thing? Just consider this: Does your well-being lie in accepting and believing in my word or in this that I should leave you in whatever state you are and should myself remain preoccupied in the worship of my God?"

this they got up all together and left the place saying what Allah has narrated in the initial part of this Sūrah.

Ibn Sa'd in his *Ṭabaqāt* has related this event just as cited above, but, according to him, this did not happen during Abū Ṭālib's last illness but at the time when the Holy Prophet had started preaching Islam openly, and the news of the conversion of one person or the other was being heard almost daily in Makkah. In those days the Quraish chiefs had led several deputations to Abū Ṭālib and had asked him to stop Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) from preaching his message, and it was with one of those deputations that this conversation had taken place.

Zamakhshari, Rāzī, Nīsābūrī and some other commentators say that this deputation went to Abū Ṭālib at the time when the chiefs of the Quraish had been upset at Ḥaḍrat 'Umar's embracing Islam; but no reference to its basis is available in any book of the traditions, nor have these commentators cited their source of this information. However, if it be true, it is understandable. For the unbelieving Quraish had already been bewildered to see that the person who had arisen from among themselves with the message of Islam had no parallel in the entire tribe as regarded nobility, purity of character, wisdom and seriousness. Moreover, his right-handman and chief supporter was a man like Abū Bakr, who was well known in and around Makkah as a gentle, righteous and brilliant man. Now when they might have seen that a brave and resolute man like 'Umar also had joined them, they must have felt that the danger was growing and becoming intolerable.

Subject-Matter and Topics

The Sūrah begins with a review of the aforesaid meeting. Making the dialogue between the Holy Prophet and the disbelievers as the basis, Allah says that the actual reason with those people for their denial is not any defect in the message of Islam but their own arrogance, jealousy and insistence on following the blind. They are not prepared to believe in a man from their own clan as a Prophet of God and follow him. They want to persist in the ideas of ignorance which they have found their ancestors following. And when a person exposes their this ignorance and

presents the truth before them, they are alarmed and regard it as an oddity, rather as a novel and impossible thing. For them the concept of *Tauḥīd* and the Hereafter is not only an unacceptable creed but also a concept which only deserves to be ridiculed and mocked.

Then, Allah, both in the initial part of the Sūrah and in its last sentences, has precisely warned the disbelievers, as if to say, "The man whom you are ridiculing today and whose guidance you reject will soon overpower you, and the time is not far when in this very city of Makkah, where you are persecuting him, he will overwhelm you completely."

Then describing nine of the Prophets, one after the other with greater details of the story of the Prophets David and Solomon; Allah has emphasized the point that His Law of Justice is impartial and objective, that only the right attitude of man is acceptable to Him, that He calls to account and punishes every wrongdoer whoever he be, and that He likes only those people who do not persist in wrongdoing but repent as soon as they are warned of it, and pass their life in the world keeping in mind their accountability in the Hereafter.

After this, the final end that the obedient servants and the disobedient people will meet in the Hereafter, has been depicted, and two things have been especially impressed on the disbelievers: (1) That the leaders and guides whom the ignorant people are following blindly in the world, on the way of deviation, will have reached Hell even before their followers in the Hereafter, and the two groups will be cursing each other there; and (2) that the disbelievers will be amazed to see that there is no trace whatever in Hell of the believers whom they used to regard as contemptible in the world and will themselves be involved in its torment.

In conclusion, mention has been made of the story of Adam and *Iblīs* (Satan), which is meant to tell the disbelieving Quraish that the same arrogance and vanity which was preventing them from bowing before Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) had prevented *Iblīs* also from bowing before Adam. *Iblīs* felt jealous of the high rank God had given to Adam and became accursed when he disobeyed His

Command. Likewise, "You, O people of Quraish, are feeling jealous of the high rank God has bestowed on Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and are not prepared to obey him whom God has appointed His Messenger. Therefore, you will be doomed ultimately to the same fate as will be met by Satan."

سُوْرَةُ صٓ (٣٨) مَكِّيَّةٌ

اٰيَاتُهَا ٨٨ رُكُوْعَاتُهَا ٥

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

صٓ وَالْقُرْاٰنِ ذِى الذِّكْرِ ۝١ بَلِ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا فِىْ عِزَّةٍ وَّشِقَاقٍ ۝٢ كَمْ اَهْلَكْنَا
مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِّنْ قَرْنٍ فَنَادَوْا وَّلَاتَ حِيْنَ مَنَاصٍ ۝٣ وَعَجِبُوْٓا اَنْ جَآءَهُمْ
مُّنْذِرٌ مِّنْهُمْ وَقَالَ الْكٰفِرُوْنَ هٰذَا سٰحِرٌ كَذَّابٌ ۝٤ اَجَعَلَ الْاٰلِهَةَ اِلٰهًا
وَّاحِدًا ۚ اِنَّ هٰذَا لَشَىْءٌ عُجَابٌ ۝٥ وَانْطَلَقَ الْمَلَاُ مِنْهُمْ اَنِ امْشُوْا وَاصْبِرُوْا
عَلٰٓى اٰلِهَتِكُمْ ۚ اِنَّ هٰذَا لَشَىْءٌ يُّرَادُ ۝٦ مَا سَمِعْنَا بِهٰذَا فِى الْمِلَّةِ الْاٰخِرَةِ ۖ اِنْ
هٰذَآ اِلَّا اخْتِلَاقٌ ۝٧ ءَاُنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ الذِّكْرُ مِنْۢ بَيْنِنَا ۭ بَلْ هُمْ فِىْ شَكٍّ مِّنْ
ذِكْرِىْ ۚ بَلْ لَّمَّا يَذُوْقُوْا عَذَابِ ۝٨ اَمْ عِنْدَهُمْ خَزَآئِنُ رَحْمَةِ رَبِّكَ الْعَزِيْزِ
الْوَهَّابِ ۝٩ اَمْ لَهُمْ مُّلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا ۖ فَلْيَرْتَقُوْا فِى
الْاَسْبَابِ ۝١٠ جُنْدٌ مَّا هُنَالِكَ مَهْزُوْمٌ مِّنَ الْاَحْزَابِ ۝١١ كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ
نُوْحٍ وَّعَادٌ وَّفِرْعَوْنُ ذُو الْاَوْتَادِ ۝١٢ وَثَمُوْدُ وَقَوْمُ لُوْطٍ وَّاَصْحٰبُ لْـَٔيْكَةِ ۭ
اُولٰٓئِكَ الْاَحْزَابُ ۝١٣ اِنْ كُلٌّ اِلَّا كَذَّبَ الرُّسُلَ فَحَقَّ عِقَابِ ۝١٤ وَمَا يَنْظُرُ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ
اِلَّا صَيْحَةً وَّاحِدَةً مَّا لَهَا مِنْ فَوَاقٍ ۝١٥ وَقَالُوْا رَبَّنَا عَجِّلْ لَّنَا قِطَّنَا قَبْلَ

XXXVIII

ṢUĀD

ص

Verses: 88

Revealed at Makkah

In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

Ṣuād.[1] By the Qur'ān which is full of admonition:[2] but the people who have disbelieved, are themselves involved in sheer arrogance and stubbornness.[3] How many a nation have we destroyed before them! (And when their doom approached) they cried out, but that was not the time of being saved. 1-3

These people wondered that a warner from among themselves has come to them.[4] The disbelievers began to say, "He is a sorcerer,[5] a liar! Has he made just One God in place of all the gods? This is indeed a strange thing!" And their chiefs went away,[6] saying, "Go and stand firm in the service of your gods; for this thing[7] is being said with a purpose.[8] We have not heard such a thing from anyone of the people of latter days.[9] This is nothing but a fabrication. Was he the only (fit) person among us to whom Allah's Admonition should have been sent down?" 4-8

The fact of the matter is that they doubt My "Admonition",[10] and they say this because they have not yet tasted My punishment. Do they possess the treasures of the mercy of your Mighty and Bounteous Lord? Do they own the heavens and the earth and all that is between them? If so, let them climb up to the heights of the worldly means![11] 8-10

This is a small host from among the hosts, which shall be routed here.[12] Before them did the people of Noah and 'Ād and the Pharaoh of the stakes,[13] and Thamūd, and the people of Lot and those of Aiykah reject (the Messengers). Hosts were they. Each one of them treated the Messengers as liars, and justly deserved the decree of My chastisement. 11-16

These people too await but a single blast after which there will be no other blast![14] And they say, "Our Lord, hasten to us our share even before the Day of Reckoning."[15]

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1. Although like all other enigmatic letters *(muqatta'āt)* it is difficult to determine the meaning of the letter Ṣuād also, yet the interpretation of it given by Ibn 'Abbās and Dahhāk is quite plausible. According to them, it implies: *Ṣādiq-un fi qauli-hi,* or *Ṣadaqa Muḥammad-un:* Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) is Truthful: whatever he says is the very Truth.

2. The words *dhi-dh-dhikr* of the Text can have two meanings: *(1) Dhi-sharaf:* the noble Qur'ān; and (2) *Dhi at-tadhkir:* the Qur'ān which is full of admonition, or the Qur'ān which serves as a reminder, or arouses a heedless person.

3. If the interpretation given of *ṣuād* by Ibn 'Abbās and Dahhāk is accepted, the sentence would mean this: "By this noble Qur'ān, or by this Qur'ān which is full of admonition, Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is presenting the Truth, but the people who persist in their denial, are in fact, involved in arrogance and stubbornness." And if suād is taken as one of those enigmatic letters whose meaning cannot be determined, then the answer to the oath is omitted, which is indicated by "but" and the sentence following it. The meaning then would be: "The reason for the denial of these disbelievers is not that the religion which is being presented before them is unsound, or that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) has shown some slackness in the matter of presenting the Truth before them, but their own boasting and bragging, their haughtiness and stubbornness, and this is borne out by this Qur'ān itself, which is full of admonition. Every unbiased person who studies it will admit that full justice has been done in it to the task of making the people understand the Truth."

4. That is, "They are so foolish that when a man from their own kind and from their own clan and brotherhood, whom they knew fully well, was appointed to warn them, they wondered at it, whereas it would have been strange if some other kind of creature had been sent down from heaven to warn human beings, or an utter stranger had arisen among them suddenly and started functioning as a prophet. In that case they would have been perfectly justified to say, "What an odd thing! How can this strange creature know our conditions and feelings and requirements that he should guide us? How can we test and find out the truth about the stranger who has suddenly arisen among us and know whether he is trustworthy or not? And how can we decide whether we should or should not believe in him when we have not judged and seen his character and personality?"

5. The disbelievers used the word *sāḥir* (sorcerer, magician) for the Holy Prophet in the sense that whoever came in contact with him was so influenced by him that he would become his follower like a possessed person; he would least mind severing of his connections with others or incurring material losses; the father would give up the son and the son the father; the wife would separate from the husband and the husband from the wife; he would at once be prepared to leave his country if it was so required; he would even be ready to pass through the severest persecutions for the sake of the faith. (For further details, see Sūrah Al-Anbiyā': 3 and E.N. 5 thereof).

6. The allusion is to the chiefs who got up and left Abū Ṭālib when they had heard what the Holy Prophet said.

7. "This thing": the Holy Prophet's asking them to affirm faith in *"Lā ilāha ill-Allāh"* so as to overpower both Arabia and the adjoining lands.

8. What they meant to say was this: "Muḥammad has some vested interests: He is extending this invitation to us in order to subjugate us and rule us as his subjects."

9. That is, "There have been our own elderly people in the recent past; there are Christians and Jews also living in our land and in the adjoining lands; and there are the Zoroastrians abounding in Iran and Iraq and eastern Arabia. None of them has ever preached that man should only believe in One Allah, Lord of the worlds, and in none else beside Him: no one can remain content with one God only: everyone believes in the beloved ones of Allah also: they are all paying obeisance to them, making offerings at their shrines and praying for fulfilment of their needs and requirements. From one place people get children and from another provisions of life, and from yet another whatever they pray for. The whole world believes in their powers and capabilities, and those who have benefited from them tell how the needs of the people are being met and their difficulties being removed through their help and grace. Now this man is telling us a queer thing which we had never heard before. He says that none of these holy men has any share in Godhead and that Godhead wholly belongs only to Allah!"

10. In other words Allah says: " Muḥammad, these people are not belying you but Me. As for your truthfulness, they had never doubted it before; now that they are doubting it, it is because of My Admonition; now that I have entrusted to you the Mission of admonishing them, they have started doubting the truthfulness of the very person whose righteousness and piety they used to swear by." The same theme has also been discussed above in Al-An'ām: 33 and E.N. 21 thereof.

11. This is an answer to this saying of the disbelievers "Was he the only

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يَوْمِ الْحِسَابِ ﴿٢٦﴾ اِصْبِرْ عَلٰى مَا يَقُوْلُوْنَ وَاذْكُرْ عَبْدَنَا دَاوٗدَ ذَا الْاَيْدِ ۚ اِنَّهٗ
اَوَّابٌ ﴿١٧﴾ اِنَّا سَخَّرْنَا الْجِبَالَ مَعَهٗ يُسَبِّحْنَ بِالْعَشِيِّ وَالْاِشْرَاقِ ﴿١٨﴾ وَالطَّيْرَ مَحْشُوْرَةً ۭ
كُلٌّ لَّهٗ اَوَّابٌ ﴿١٩﴾ وَشَدَدْنَا مُلْكَهٗ وَاٰتَيْنٰهُ الْحِكْمَةَ وَفَصْلَ الْخِطَابِ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَهَلْ
اَتٰىكَ نَبَؤُا الْخَصْمِ ۘ اِذْ تَسَوَّرُوا الْمِحْرَابَ ﴿٢١﴾ اِذْ دَخَلُوْا عَلٰي دَاوٗدَ فَفَزِعَ مِنْهُمْ ۭ
قَالُوْا لَا تَخَفْ ۚ خَصْمٰنِ بَغٰى بَعْضُنَا عَلٰي بَعْضٍ فَاحْكُمْ بَيْنَنَا بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا
تُشْطِطْ وَاهْدِنَآ اِلٰى سَوَاۗءِ الصِّرَاطِ ﴿٢٢﴾ اِنَّ هٰذَآ اَخِيْ لَهٗ تِسْعٌ وَّتِسْعُوْنَ نَعْجَةً
وَّلِيَ نَعْجَةٌ وَّاحِدَةٌ فَقَالَ اَكْفِلْنِيْهَا وَعَزَّنِيْ فِي الْخِطَابِ ﴿٢٣﴾ قَالَ لَقَدْ ظَلَمَكَ
بِسُؤَالِ نَعْجَتِكَ اِلٰى نِعَاجِهٖ ۭ وَاِنَّ كَثِيْرًا مِّنَ الْخُلَطَاۗءِ لَيَبْغِيْ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلٰي
بَعْضٍ اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ وَقَلِيْلٌ مَّا هُمْ ۭ وَظَنَّ دَاوٗدُ اَنَّمَا
فَتَنّٰهُ فَاسْتَغْفَرَ رَبَّهٗ وَخَرَّ رَاكِعًا وَّاَنَابَ ﴿٢٤﴾ فَغَفَرْنَا لَهٗ ذٰلِكَ ۭ وَاِنَّ لَهٗ عِنْدَنَا
لَزُلْفٰى وَحُسْنَ مَاٰبٍ ﴿٢٥﴾ يٰدَاوٗدُ اِنَّا جَعَلْنٰكَ خَلِيْفَةً فِي الْاَرْضِ فَاحْكُمْ
بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا تَتَّبِعِ الْهَوٰى فَيُضِلَّكَ عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ ۭ اِنَّ
الَّذِيْنَ يَضِلُّوْنَ عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيْدٌۢ بِمَا نَسُوْا يَوْمَ
الْحِسَابِ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاۗءَ وَالْاَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا بَاطِلًا ۭ ذٰلِكَ
ظَنُّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا ۚ فَوَيْلٌ لِّلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مِنَ النَّارِ ﴿٢٧﴾ اَمْ نَجْعَلُ الَّذِيْنَ
اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ كَالْمُفْسِدِيْنَ فِي الْاَرْضِ ۡ اَمْ نَجْعَلُ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ
كَالْفُجَّارِ ﴿٢٨﴾ كِتٰبٌ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ اِلَيْكَ مُبٰرَكٌ لِّيَدَّبَّرُوْٓا اٰيٰتِهٖ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ
اُولُوا الْاَلْبَابِ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَوَهَبْنَا لِدَاوٗدَ سُلَيْمٰنَ ۭ نِعْمَ الْعَبْدُ ۭ اِنَّهٗٓ اَوَّابٌ ﴿٣٠﴾
اِذْ عُرِضَ عَلَيْهِ بِالْعَشِيِّ الصّٰفِنٰتُ الْجِيَادُ ﴿٣١﴾ فَقَالَ اِنِّيْٓ اَحْبَبْتُ

O Prophet, have patience at what they utter,[16] and tell them the story of Our servant David,[17] who was a man of great strength.[18] He turned to Allah in every matter. We had subdued for him the mountains, which joined with him in praise morning and evening. The birds would gather together: they all turned to his (hymns of) praise.[19] We had strengthened his kingdom, had given him wisdom and the ability to pronounce sound judgements.[20] Has the story of the litigants, who had entered into his upper chamber by climbing over the wall, reached you?[21] When they came before David, he was alarmed to see them.[22] They said, "Have no fear: we are two parties in a suit, one of which has wronged the other, so decide between us rightly: do not be unjust and guide us to the right way. This is my brother:[23] he has ninety-nine ewes and I have only one ewe. He said to me, 'Give this ewe also in my charge, and he has prevailed over me in the dispute'."[24] David replied, "This person has certainly wronged you in demanding your ewe to be added to his ewes.[25] And the fact is that the people who live together often wrong one another; the only exception are those who believe and do good works, and they are few." (While he said this) David realized that We had, in fact, tried him. So he asked forgiveness of his Lord and fell down prostrate and turned (to Him).[26] Then We forgave him for his error, and certainly he has a place of nearness with Us and an excellent abode![27] (We said:) "O David, We have made you vicegerent in the earth, so rule among the people with justice and do not follow your lust, for it will lead you astray from Allah's Way." For those who go astray from Allah's Way, there is a severe punishment because they forgot the Day of Reckoning."[28] 17-26

We have not created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them, in vain.[29] This is the fancy of those who have disbelieved, and woe to such disbelievers from the Fire of Hell. Should We treat those who believe and do good works like those who spread mischief in the earth? Should We treat the pious as the sinners?[30] ——— This is a highly blessed Book,[31] which We have sent down to you (O Muḥammad), so that these people may ponder over its verses and the men of understanding may learn lessons from it. 27-29

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(fit) person among us to whom Allah's Admonition should have been sent down?" Allah says: "It is for Us to decide whom We should choose and appoint as a

Prophet and whom We should not. These people do not possess any power and authority to exercise choice in this regard. If they wish to attain such an authority they should try to reach the Divine Throne in order to obtain control over the office of sovereignty of the Universe, so that revelation should come down on him whom they regard as deserving their mercy and not on him whom We regard as fit for it. This theme has occurred at several places in the Qur'ān, because the unbelieving Quraish again and again said, "How did Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah' peace) become a Prophet? Did Allah find no better man among the principal leaders of the Quraish worthy of this office?" (See Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl: 100; Az-Zukhruf: 31-32).

12. "Here" implies the city of Makkah. That is, "The time is coming when these people shall be humbled and routed in the very place where they are opposing and mocking you. Then, they will be standing, with heads hung down, before the same men whom they despise and refuse to recognize as a Prophet of Allah."

13. The use of *dhil-autād* (of the stakes) for Pharaoh is either in the sense that his kingdom was very strong as though a stake were firmly driven into the ground, or for the reason that wherever his large armies camped, pegs of the tents were seen driven into the ground on every side, or because he would torture and punish at the stakes anyone with whom he was angry; and possibly the stakes may imply the pyramids of Egypt which seem to be driven into the earth like the stakes.

14. That is, "Only a single blast of the torment will be enough to annihilate them; no other will be needed for the purpose." Another meaning of the sentence can be: "After this they will get no more relief and no more respite."

15. That is, "Allah's torment will be so severe and terrible as mentioned above, but just consider the behaviour of these foolish people: they are telling the Prophet mockingly: 'Do not put off our affairs till the Day of Reckoning with which you are threatening us, but settle our account just now: whatever punishment is to be inflicted on us should be inflicted immediately.'"

16. The allusion is to the absurd conversation of the disbelievers of Makkah, as narrated above, to the effect that the Holy Prophet was a sorcerer and a liar, and to their objection whether he was the only fit person in the sight of Allah to be appointed as a Messenger, and to their some accusation that he had vested interest in preaching the doctrine of *Tauḥīd* to the people and not any religious mission.

17. Another translation of this sentence can be: "Remember Our servant David." According to the first translation, it would mean: "There is a lesson in

this story for these people," and according to the second: "The remembrance of this story will help you too, to have patience." As the narrative is meant to serve both purposes, comprehensive words have been used as contain both meanings. (For the story of the prophet David, see Al-Baqarah :251, Banī Isrā'īl: 55, Al-Anbiyā': 78-81, An-Naml: 15 and the E.N.'s thereof; and E.N.'s 14 to 16 of Sabā).

18. The words in the original are: *dhal-ayd* (possessor of the hands). The word "hand" is used metaphorically for strength and power not only in Arabic but in other languages also. When as an attribute of the Prophet David it is said that he was a "possessor of the hands", it will necessarily mean that he possessed great powers. These powers may mean the physical strength which he displayed during his combat against Goliath, military and political power by which he crushed the neighbouring idolatrous nations and established a strong Islamic empire, moral strength by which he ruled like a poor king and always feared Allah and observed the bounds set by Him, and the power of worship by virtue of which, besides his occupations in connection with rule and government and fighting in the cause of Allah, he fasted every alternate day and spent a third of the night in worship according to a tradition of Bukhārī. Imām Bukhārī in his History has related, on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abū ad-Dardā', that whenever the Prophet David was mentioned, the Holy Prophet used to say: "He was the greatest worshipper of God."

19. For explanation, see Sūrah Al-Anbiyā' :79 and E.N. 71 thereof.

20. That is, "He was never ambiguous in speech but clear and forthright. Whatever problem he talked about he would lay bare its basic points, and would clearly and precisely determine the real issue under question, and would pass a decisive judgement." This quality is not attained by a person unless he is granted wisdom, understanding and mastery of language of the highest degree.

21. The object why the Prophet David has been mentioned here is to relate the story that begins from here; the object of mentioning his sterling qualities in the introduction was only to point out the high calibre of the Prophet David with whom this incident took place.

22. He was alarmed because the two men had appeared in the private quarters of the ruler of the land suddenly, by climbing over the wall, instead of going before him by the proper entrance.

23. "Brother" does not mean a real brother but a brother-in-faith and a member of one's own clan.

24. To understand what follows one should note that the complainant did not say that the other person had taken away his only ewe and added it to his own

ewes, but said that he was asking for it, and since he was a powerful person he had prevailed over him in the matter and he could not reject his demand, being a weak and poor man.

25. Here, one should not doubt that the Prophet David gave his decision after hearing only what one party had to say. The fact of the matter is that when the respondent kept quiet at the complaint of the complainant and said nothing in defence it by itself amounted to a confession by him. That is why the Prophet David came to the conclusion that the facts of the case were the same as the complainant had stated.

26. There is a difference of opinion as to whether it is obligatory to perform a *sajdah* (prostration) on this occasion or not. Imām Shāfe'ī says that it is not obligatory, for this is only a Prophet' repentance; but Imām Abū Ḥanīfah has opined that prostration here is obligatory. The traditionists have related three traditions from Ibn 'Abbās in this regard. According to 'Ikrimah, Ibn 'Abbās said: "this is not one of those verses on the recitation of which prostration is obligatory, but I have seen the Holy Prophet prostrating himself on this occasion." (Bukhārī, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhi, Nasā'ī, Musnad Aḥmad). The second tradition which Sa'īd bin Jubair has related from Ibn 'Abbās is to the effect: "The Holy Prophet prostrated himself in Sūrah Ṣuād and said: "The Prophet David (on whom be peace) had prostrated himself in order to express his repentance and we prostrate ourselves as a token of gratitude, because his repentance was accepted. (Nasā'ī) In the third tradition that Mujāhid has related from him, he says: "Allah has commanded the Holy Prophet in the Qur'ān: "These were the ones whom Allah had shown the Right Way: therefore, you should follow their way'." (Al-An'ām: 90) Now, since David was a Prophet and he had prostrated himself on this occasion, the Holy Prophet also prostrated himself here only to follow his way. (Bukhārī). These three are the statements of Hadrat Ibn 'Abbās; and Hadrat Abū Sa'īd Khudrī says: "The Holy Prophet once recited Sūrah Ṣuād in his address, and when he came to this verse, he descended from the pulpit and performed a prostration and the audience also did the same along with him. Then, on another occasion, he recited this same Sūrah and when the people heard this verse, they were ready to perform the prostration. The Holy Prophet said 'This is the repentance of a Prophet, but I see that you have got ready to perform the prostration' ——Saying this he descended from the pulpit and prostrated himself and the people also did the same." (Abū Da'ūd). Although these traditions do not provide any absolute argument to prove that it is obligatory to perform the prostration here, yet they prove at least that because the Holy Prophet generally performed a prostration on this occasion, it is in any case commendable to prostrate here.

Another thing that one notices in this verse is that Allah has used the words *kharra rākiʿan* (fell in *rukū'*) here, but all the commentators are agreed that this implies *kharra sājid-an* (fell in *sajdah*: prostration). On this very basis, Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and his companions have expressed the opinion that one may perform only a *rukū'* instead of a *sajdah*, when one recites or hears being recited a verse requiring a *sajdah* in the Prayer or outside it. For when Allah has used the word *rukū'* to imply *sajdah*, it becomes obvious that *rukū'* can represent *sajdah*. Imām Khaṭṭābī, a Shāfe'ite jurist, also holds the same opinion. Though this opinion in itself is sound and reasonable, we do not find any precedent in the practices of the Holy Prophet and his Companions that they might have been content with performing a *rukū'* only instead of a *sajdah* on a verse requiring a *sajdah*. Therefore, one should act upon the view only when there is an obstruction in performing the *sajdah*; it would be wrong to make it a practice. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and his companions themselves also did not intend that it should be made a practice; they only ruled that it was permissible

27. This shows that the Prophet David had certainly committed an error, and it was an error which bore some resemblance with the case of the ewes. Therefore, when he gave a decision on it, he at once realized that he was being put to the test. But the nature of the error was not such as could be forgiven, or if forgiven, it would have deposed him from his high rank. Allah Himself says: "When he fell down prostrate and repented, he was not only forgiven but his high rank in the world and the Hereafter also remained unaffected."

28. This is the warning that Allah gave the Prophet David on accepting his repentance along with giving him the good news of exalting his rank. This by itself shows that the error that he had committed contained an element of the desires of the flesh; it also pertained to the abuse of power and authority; and it was an act which was unworthy of a just and fair-minded ruler.

We are confronted with three questions here:

(1) What was the error that the Prophet David committed?

(2) Why has Allah made only tacit allusions to it instead of mentioning it openly and directly?

(3) What is its relevance to the present context?

The people who have studied the Bible (the Holy Book of the Jews and Christians) are not unaware that in this Book the Prophet David has been accused clearly of committing adultery with the wife of Uriah the Hittite and then marrying her after having Uriah intentionally slain in a battle. It has also been alleged that this same woman, who had surrendered herself to the Prophet David, while being another man's wife, was the mother of the Prophet Solomon. This story is found

with all its details in chapters 11 and 12 of the Second Book of Samuel in the Old Testament. It had been included in it centuries before the revelation of the Qur'ān. Any Jew or Christian who read his Holy Book anywhere in the world, or heard it read, was not only aware of this story but also believed in it as true. It spread through them, and even in the present time no book is written in the West on the history of the Israelites and the Hebrew religion, in which this charge against the Prophet David is not repeated. This well known story also contains the following:

"And the Lord sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich *man* had exceeding many flocks and herds: But the poor *man* had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man' lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him. And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, *As* the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die: And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this *thing*, and because he had no pity. And Nathan said to David, Thou *art* the man. Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if *that had* been too little, I would moredver have given unto thee such and such things. Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight? Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife *to be* thy *wife*, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon." (2 Samuel, ch 12: 1-9).

When this story was so well known among the people there was no need that a detailed account of it should have been given in the Qur'ān, nor is it the way of Allah to mention such things openly in His Holy Book. That is why only tacit allusions have been made to it here as well as pointed out what the actual event was and what the people of the Book have turned it into. The actual event as one clearly understands from the aforesaid statement of the Qur'ān was:

"The Prophet David (peace be upon him) had only expressed this desire before Uriah (or whatever be the name of the man) that he should divorce his wife; as this desire had been expressed not by a common man but by an illustrious king and a great Prophet before a member of the public, the man was finding himself constrained to yield to it even in the absence of any compulsion. On this occasion, before the man could act as the Prophet David had desired, two righteous men of the nation suddenly made their appearance before David and

presented before him this matter in the form of an imaginary case. At first, the Prophet David thought it was a real case, and so gave his decision after hearing it. But as soon as he uttered the words of the decision, his conscience gave the warning that the parable precisely applied to the case between him and the person, and that the act which he was describing as an injustice had issued forth from his own person. As soon as he realized this, he fell down prostrate, repented and reversed his decision."

The question, as to how this event took the ugly shape as related in the Bible, also becomes obvious after a little consideration. It appears that the Prophet David had come to know of the unique qualities of the woman through some means and had started thinking that she should be the queen of the country instead of being the wife of an ordinary officer. Overwhelmed by the thought he expressed the desire before her husband that he should divorce her. He did not see any harm in it because it was not looked upon as anything improper among the Israelites. It was an ordinary thing among them that if a person happened to like the wife of another, he would freely request him to give her up for him. Nobody minded such a request, and often it so happened that friends would divorce their wives for each other's sake of their own accord, so that the other may marry her. However, when the Prophet David expressed this desire, he did not realize that the expression of such a desire could be without compulsion and coercion when expressed by a common man, but it could never be so when expressed by a king. When his attention was drawn to this aspect of the matter through a parable, he gave up his desire immediately, and the thing was forgotten. But afterwards when, without any desire or planning on his part, the woman's husband fell martyr on the battlefield, and he married her, the evil genius of the Jews started concocting stories and this mischievous mentality became even more acute after a section of the Israelites turned hostile to the Prophet Solomon. (Please see E.N. 56 of An-Naml). Under these motives the story was invented that the Prophet David, God forbid, had seen Uriah's wife washing herself from the roof of his palace. He had her called to his house and committed adultery with her and she had conceived. Then he had sent Uriah on the battle-front to fight the children of Ammon, and had commanded Joab, the army commander, to appoint him in the forefront of the battle where he should be killed. And when he was killed, he married his widow, and from the same woman the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) was born. The wicked people described all these false accusations in their "Holy Book", so that they should go on reading it generation after generation and slandering the two most illustrious men of their community, who were their greatest benefactors after the Prophet Moses.

A section of the commentators of the Qur'ān has almost entirely accepted these tales that have reached them through the Israelites. They have dropped only

that part of these traditions in which mention has been made of the accusation of adultery against the Prophet David and the woman's having conceived. The rest of the story as found in the traditions reproduced by them is the same as it was well known among the Israelites. Another group of the commentators has altogether denied that any such act was ever committed by the Prophet David, which bore any resemblance with the case of the ewes. Instead of this, they have put forward such interpretations of this story as are wholly baseless, unauthentic and without relevance to the context of the Qur'ān itself. But among the Muslim commentators themselves there are some who have accepted the truth and the facts of the story through the clear references made to it in the Qur'ān. Here are, for instance, some of their views:

Both Masrūq and Sa'īd bin Jubair have related this saying of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, "The only thing that the Prophet David did was that he expressed his desire before the woman' husband that he should give up his wife for him." *Ibn Jarīr).*

'Allāma Zamakhsharī writes in his commentary *Al-Kashshāf:* "The way Allah has narrated the story of the Prophet David indicates that he had only expressed his desire before the man that he should leave his wife for him."

'Allāma Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣās has expressed the opinion that the woman was not the other man's wedded wife but was only his betrothed. The Prophet David had also asked for the same woman's hand in marriage. This earned him Allah's displeasure, for he had asked for her hand in spite of the fact that another Muslim had already asked for her hand, and the Prophet David had several wives already with him in his house. *(Aḥkām al-Qur'ān).* Some other commentators also have expressed the same opinion, but this does not entirely conform to what the Qur'ān has said. The words of the suitor as related in the Qar'ān are to the effect: "I have only one ewe; he says: Give this ewe also in my charge." The Prophet David also said the same thing in his decision: "This person has certainly wronged you in demanding your ewe to be added to his ewes." This parable could apply to the case between the Prophet David and Uriah only in case the woman was the latter's wife. Had it been the case of asking for the woman's hand when another Muslim had already asked for her hand, the parable would have been like this: "I desired to have an ewe, and this man said: leave this also for me."

Qāḍī Abū Bakr Ibn al-'Arabi has discussed this question in detail in his *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* and concluded: "What actually happened was just that the Prophet David asked one of his men to leave his wife for him and made this demand seriously ...The Qur'ān does not say that the man gave up his wife on this demand and the Prophet David then married her and the Prophet Solomon was born of her womb ...What displeased Allah was that he asked the woman's

husband to leave her for him. This act, even if otherwise lawful, was unworthy of the office of Prophethood; that is why he earned Allah's displeasure and was admonished."

This commentary fits in well with the context in which this story has been told. A little consideration of the context shows that it has been related in the Qur'ān on this occasion for two objects. The first object is to exhort the Holy Prophet to patience, and for this purpose he has been addressed and told: "Have patience on what these people say against you, and remember Our servant David." That is, "You are being accused only of sorcery and lying, but Our servant David was even accused of adultery and having a person killed wilfully, by the wicked people; therefore, bear up against what you may have to hear from these people." The other object is to warn the disbelievers to the effect: "You are committing all sorts of excesses in the world with impunity, but the God in Whose Godhead you are committing these misdeeds does not spare anyone from being called to account. Even if a favourite and beloved servant of His happens to commit but a minor error, He calls him to strict accountability. For this very object the Holy Prophet has been asked: 'Tell them the story of Our servant David, who was a man of high character, but when he happened to commit sin, We did not even spare him but condemned him severely'."

In this regard, there is another misunderstanding which must also be removed. The suitor in his parable said that his brother had 99 ewes and he had only one ewe, which he was demanding from him. From this one gets the idea that perhaps the Prophet David had 99 wives, and by having another he wanted to make their number 100. But, in fact, it is not necessary that every minor part of the parable should be literally applicable to the case between the Prophet David and Uriah the Hittite. In common idiom the numbers ten, twenty, fifty, etc. are mentioned to express plurality and not to indicate the exact number of something. When a man tells another that he has told him something ten times over, he only means to stress that he has been told that thing over and over again. The same is also true here. By means of the parable the suitor wanted the Prophet David to realize that he already had several wives with him, and even then he desired to have the only wife of the other man. This same thing has been cited by the commentator Nīsābūrī from Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Basri: "The Prophet David did not have 99 wives: this is only a parable." (For a detailed and well-reasoned discussion of this story, see our book *Tafhīmāt*, vol. II, pp. 29-44).

29. That is, "We have not created anything in the world merely in sport and fun so that it may be without any wisdom and purpose and justice, and there may accrue no result from any act, good or bad." This is the conclusion of the

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حُبَّ الْخَيْرِ عَنْ ذِكْرِ رَبِّيْ ۚ حَتّٰى تَوَارَتْ بِالْحِجَابِ ﴿٣٢﴾ رُدُّوْهَا
عَلَيَّ ۖ فَطَفِقَ مَسْحًۢا بِالسُّوْقِ وَالْاَعْنَاقِ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا سُلَيْمٰنَ وَاَلْقَيْنَا
عَلٰى كُرْسِيِّهٖ جَسَدًا ثُمَّ اَنَابَ ﴿٣٤﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِيْ وَهَبْ لِيْ مُلْكًا لَّا يَنْۢبَغِيْ
لِاَحَدٍ مِّنْۢ بَعْدِيْ ۚ اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ ﴿٣٥﴾ فَسَخَّرْنَا لَهُ الرِّيْحَ تَجْرِيْ بِاَمْرِهٖ
رُخَآءً حَيْثُ اَصَابَ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَالشَّيٰطِيْنَ كُلَّ بَنَّآءٍ وَّغَوَّاصٍ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَّاٰخَرِيْنَ مُقَرَّنِيْنَ
فِي الْاَصْفَادِ ﴿٣٨﴾ هٰذَا عَطَآؤُنَا فَامْنُنْ اَوْ اَمْسِكْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَاِنَّ لَهٗ عِنْدَنَا
لَزُلْفٰى وَحُسْنَ مَاٰبٍ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَاذْكُرْ عَبْدَنَآ اَيُّوْبَ ۘ اِذْ نَادٰى رَبَّهٗٓ اَنِّيْ مَسَّنِيَ الشَّيْطٰنُ
بِنُصْبٍ وَّعَذَابٍ ﴿٤١﴾ اُرْكُضْ بِرِجْلِكَ ۚ هٰذَا مُغْتَسَلٌۢ بَارِدٌ وَّشَرَابٌ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَوَهَبْنَا لَهٗٓ
اَهْلَهٗ وَمِثْلَهُمْ مَّعَهُمْ رَحْمَةً مِّنَّا وَذِكْرٰى لِاُولِي الْاَلْبَابِ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَخُذْ بِيَدِكَ
ضِغْثًا فَاضْرِبْ بِّهٖ وَلَا تَحْنَثْ ۗ اِنَّا وَجَدْنٰهُ صَابِرًا ۚ نِعْمَ الْعَبْدُ ۚ اِنَّهٗٓ اَوَّابٌ ﴿٤٤﴾
وَاذْكُرْ عِبٰدَنَآ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَاِسْحٰقَ وَيَعْقُوْبَ اُولِي الْاَيْدِيْ وَالْاَبْصَارِ ﴿٤٥﴾ اِنَّآ
اَخْلَصْنٰهُمْ بِخَالِصَةٍ ذِكْرَى الدَّارِ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَاِنَّهُمْ عِنْدَنَا لَمِنَ الْمُصْطَفَيْنَ الْاَخْيَارِ ﴿٤٧﴾
وَاذْكُرْ اِسْمٰعِيْلَ وَالْيَسَعَ وَذَا الْكِفْلِ ۗ وَكُلٌّ مِّنَ الْاَخْيَارِ ﴿٤٨﴾ هٰذَا ذِكْرٌ ۗ وَاِنَّ
لِلْمُتَّقِيْنَ لَحُسْنَ مَاٰبٍ ﴿٤٩﴾ جَنّٰتِ عَدْنٍ مُّفَتَّحَةً لَّهُمُ الْاَبْوَابُ ﴿٥٠﴾ مُتَّكِـِٕيْنَ فِيْهَا
يَدْعُوْنَ فِيْهَا بِفَاكِهَةٍ كَثِيْرَةٍ وَّشَرَابٍ ﴿٥١﴾ وَعِنْدَهُمْ قٰصِرٰتُ الطَّرْفِ اَتْرَابٌ ﴿٥٢﴾
هٰذَا مَا تُوْعَدُوْنَ لِيَوْمِ الْحِسَابِ ﴿٥٣﴾ اِنَّ هٰذَا لَرِزْقُنَا مَا لَهٗ مِنْ نَّفَادٍ ﴿٥٤﴾ هٰذَا ۗ
وَاِنَّ لِلطّٰغِيْنَ لَشَرَّ مَاٰبٍ ﴿٥٥﴾ جَهَنَّمَ ۚ يَصْلَوْنَهَا ۚ فَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ ﴿٥٦﴾ هٰذَا ۙ فَلْيَذُوْقُوْهُ
حَمِيْمٌ وَّغَسَّاقٌ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَّاٰخَرُ مِنْ شَكْلِهٖٓ اَزْوَاجٌ ﴿٥٨﴾ هٰذَا فَوْجٌ مُّقْتَحِمٌ مَّعَكُمْ ۚ لَا
مَرْحَبًۢا بِهِمْ ۚ اِنَّهُمْ صَالُوا النَّارِ ﴿٥٩﴾ قَالُوْا بَلْ اَنْتُمْ ۚ لَا مَرْحَبًۢا بِكُمْ ۚ اَنْتُمْ قَدَّمْتُمُوْهُ

And to David We gave (a son like) Solomon,[32] an excellent servant, who turned to his Lord over and over again. Worthy of mention is the occasion when, one evening, well-bred horses were presented before him,[33] and he said, "I have adopted the love of this wealth[34] because of the remembrance of my Lord." So, when the horses disappeared from sight, (he commanded:) "Bring them back to me." Then he began to stroke their shanks and necks.[35] And (note that) We put Solomon too to the test and placed a mere body on his throne. Then he turned (to Allah), and said, "My Lord, forgive me and grant me a kingdom as may belong to no one else after me. Indeed, Thou art the real Giver."[36] So, We subdued to him the wind, which blew gently at his bidding wherever he directed it;[37] and We subjected to him the satans: all kinds of builders and divers and others who were bound in chains.[38] (We said to him:) "This is Our gift: you may give to whomsoever you will and withhold from whomsoever you will, without reckoning."[39] Surely, he has a place of nearness to Us and an excellent resort.[40] 30-40

And make mention of Our servant Job[41] when he called upon his Lord, (saying), "Satan has afflicted me with great distress and torment."[42] (We commanded him:) "Stamp your foot on the ground: this is cool water for washing and drinking."[43] We restored to him his family and as many more with them,[44] as a mercy from Ourself, and an admonition for the men of understanding.[45] (And We said to him:) "Take a handful of straw and strike therewith: do not break your oath."[46] We found him patient, an excellent servant, who turned to his Lord over and over again.[47] 41-44

And make mention of Our servants, Abraham and Isaac and Jacob: they were men of great power and insight.[48] We had chosen them because of a pure quality —the remembrance of the abode of the Hereafter.[49] Indeed, they are, in Our sight, included among the chosen, the righteous. And make mention of Ishmael and Elisha[50] and Dhul-Kifl:[51] they were all of the righteous. 45-48

This was an admonition. (Now listen:) for the righteous there is indeed an excellent resort: everlasting Gardens whose gates shall remain open to them.[52] Therein they shall be reclining, calling for plentiful of fruit and drink, and beside them there will be modest wives 49-54

of equal age.[53] These are the things which you are being promised for the Day of Reckoning. This is Our provision: it will never come to an end.

55-60 This is (the recompense) for the righteous. And for the rebellious, there is a most evil home—Hell in which they will burn, the worst abode! This is for them: so let them taste boiling water and pus blood[54] and other things of the same sort. (When they see their followers coming towards Hell, they will say to one another:) "This is a host coming in to you: there is no welcome for them: they will burn in the Fire." They will reply, "Nay, but you yourselves are burning: there is no welcome for you (either): it is you who have brought us to this end. What an evil resting-place!"

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preceding discourse as well as an introduction to the following theme. The object of this statement as a conclusion to the discourse is to impress the following truth: "Man has not been left to wander about at will in the world, nor is this world a lawless kingdom that one may do here whatever one likes with impunity." As an introduction to the following theme, the sentence is meant to say: "The person who does not believe in the meting out of the rewards and punishments, and thinks that both the good and the evil people will ultimately end up in the dust after death and that nobody will be called to account, nor will anyone be rewarded for good or punished for evil, in fact, regards the world as a plaything and its Creator a senseless player, and thinks that by creating the world and man in it, the Creator of the Universe has committed a useless thing. The same thing has been stated in different ways at several places in the Qur'ān, e.g. "Did you think that We created you without any purpose, and that you would never be brought back to Us?" (Al-Mu'minūn: 115).

"We have not created the heavens and the earth and whatever lies between them merely in sport: We have created them with the truth, but most of them do not know. For the resurrection of them all the appointed time is the Day of Decision." (Ad-Dukhān: 38-40).

30. That is, "Do you think it is reasonable and fair that both the pious and the wicked should be treated alike in the end? Do you regard this concept as satisfying that the pious man should not get any reward for his piety and the wrongdoer should not receive any punishment for his sins? Obviously, if there is to be no Hereafter, and there is to be no accountability and no rewards and no punishments for human acts, it negates both Allah's wisdom and His justice, and

the entire order of the Universe becomes a blind order. On this assumption there remains no motive for doing good and no deterrent against evil. God forbid, if the Godhead of God should be such a lawless kingdom, the one who leads a pious life in the face of all kinds of hardships in the world and endeavours to reform the people, would be a foolish person, and the one who gains benefits by committing all kinds of excesses and enjoys sinful pleasures of life, would be a wise man."

31. The Qur'ān has been called a blessed Book in the sense that it is highly useful for man: it gives him the best guidance to improve and reform his life: by following it he has only to gain and nothing to lose.

32. The Prophet Solomon has been mentioned already at the following places: Al-Baqarah: 102, Banī Isrā'īl: 5, Al-Anbiyā': 78-82, An-Naml: 15-44, Sabā: 12-14.

33. The words *as-sāfināt-ul-jiyād* in the original imply the horses, which are very calm and quiet when they stand, and very fast-moving when they run.

34. The Arabic word *khair* in the Text is used for abundance of wealth as well as for horses metaphorically. As the Prophet Solomon had kept these horses for fighting in the way of Allah, he called them "*khair*".

35. There is a difference of opinion among the commentators about the translation and commentary of these verses.

One section of them interprets them as follows:

The Prophet Solomon became so absorbed in reviewing the horses and watching their races, that he forgot to offer his 'Aṣr Prayer, or according to some others, to perform certain devotions that he used to perform before the sunset. Then when the sun went down, he commanded that the horses be brought back, and when they came back, the Prophet Solomon started slashing them with the sword, or in other words, slaughtering them as a sacrifice to Allah, because they had caused him to become heedless of the remembrance of Allah. Accordingly, the verses have been translated thus: "And he said: I so preferred the love of this wealth that I became heedless of the remembrance (the 'Aṣr Prayer, or the special devotions) of my Lord till (the sun) went down (behind the veil of the west). (Then he commanded :) bring them back, (and when the horses came back) he began to stroke their shanks and necks (with the sword)." Although this commentary has been given by some major commentators, it is not plausible for the reason that in this the commentator has to add three things from himself, which have no basis whatever. In the first place, he has to assume that the Prophet Solomon's 'Aṣr Prayer was lost in the occupation, or some special devotions that he used to perform at that time, whereas the words of the Qur'ān are only to the effect: "I so preferred this wealth that I became heedless of the remembrance of

my Lord." In these there is no ground for taking any word for the 'Aṣr Prayer or the special devotions. Secondly, he also assumes that the sun set, whereas there is no mention of the sun whatever. On the contrary, when one reads the words *ḥattā tawārat bil-ḥijāb* (when they disappeared from sight) one's mind automatically turns to *as-sāfināt ul-jiyād* (well-bred horses) which have been mentioned in the preceding verse. Thirdly, he also has to assume that the Prophet Solomon did not simply stroke the shins and necks of the horses with the hand but stroked them with the sword, whereas the Qur'ān does not contain the words *masḥan-bis-saif* or any other pointer from which stroking may be taken to mean stroking with the sword. We have a fundamental difference with this kind of the commentary. In our opinion, only in four cases it would be right to interpret the words of the Qur'ān in other than their normally accepted meaning: (1) Either there should be a pointer to it in the words of the Qur'ān itself; or (2) there should be an allusion to it at some other place in the Qur'ān; or (3) an explanation of it should be afforded by some authentic *Ḥadīth;* or (4) it should have some other reliable source, e.g., if it pertains to history, there should be an historical evidence to support it; if it pertains to the manifestations of the universe, there should be authentic scientific knowledge to substantiate it; and if it pertains to the *Sharī'ah* values, the sources of Islamic law should explain it. In the absence of any of these, we do not think it is right to invent a story on the basis of one's own imagination and add it to the words of the Qur'ān.

One section of the commentators has differed a little from the above translation and commentary. They say that the pronoun in both *ḥattā tawārat bil-ḥijāb* and *ruddū-hā 'alayya* turns only to the sun. That is, when the 'Aṣr Prayer was lost and the sun went down behind the veil of the west, the Prophet Solomon said to the workers of destiny: "Turn the sun back so that the 'Aṣr time comes back for me to offer the Prayer." So, the sun retreated and he performed his Prayer. But this commentary is even more unacceptable than the previously mentioned one not because Allah is powerless to bring the sun back, but because Allah has made no mention of it anywhere. On the contrary, if such a wonderful miracle had actually been worked for the sake of the Prophet Solomon, it would certainly be worthy of mention. Moreover, if the extraordinary event of the returning of the sun after having set had actually taken place, the history of the world would never be without it. In support of this commentary these commentators present some *Ahadith* also in order to prove that the returning of the sun after having set is not a rare event that happened only once, but it has happened several times. There is the mention of bringing the sun back in connection with the Holy Prophet's Ascension (mi'rāj); the sun was also brought back on the occasion of the Battle of the Trench for the Holy Prophet, and also for Ḥaḍrat 'Ali, when the Holy Prophet was sleeping with his head in Ḥaḍrat Ali's lap

and his 'Aṣr Prayer was lost: then the Holy Prophet had prayed for the return of the sun and it had returned. But the reasoning from these traditions is even weaker than the commentary in support of which they have been presented. Ibn Taimiyyah has proved as fabricated the tradition about Ḥaḍrat 'Alī after a detailed discussion of its chains and transmitters. Imām Ahmad says it has no basis, and Ibn Jauzī says that it is without any doubt a forged tradition. The tradition of the sun's being brought back on the occasion of the Battle of the Trench also is weak according to some traditionists and fabricated according to others. As far as the tradition regarding the event of the Ascension is concerned, the truth about it is that when the Holy Prophet was describing what had happened in the Night of Ascension, before the disbelievers of Makkah, they asked for a proof of it. The Holy Prophet replied that on the way from Jerusalem he had seen a caravan at such and such a place, which had met with such and such an accident. When asked as to when that caravan would reach Makkah, the Holy Prophet named the day. When the day came, the people of the Quraish waited for the caravan all day till the sun began to set. On this occasion the Holy Prophet prayed that the sun should not set till the caravan had arrived. So, the caravan actually arrived before the sunset. Some reporters even have stated that the day on that occasion had been enhanced by an hour, and the sun had stood still for that long. The question is: Are such traditions sufficient evidence for the proof of such an extraordinary event? As we have said above, the returning of the sun, or its standing still for an hour, is no ordinary event. Had such an event actually taken place, it would have become well known the world over. Its mention and narration could not remain restricted to only a few reporters.

The third section of the commentators interprets these verses as any unbiased person would interpret them from these words. According to this commentary, what actually happened was this: When a squadron of fine, well-bred horses was presented before the Prophet Solomon, he said: "I love this wealth not for the sake of personal glory or desire but for the cause of raising the Word of my Lord." Then he ordered that the horses run a race, and they disappeared from sight. Then he ordered that they be brought back, and when they were brought back, according to Ibn 'Abbās: "He started passing his hand on their necks and shanks with love." This same commentary is correct in our opinion, because it corresponds to the words of the Qur'ān, and for the sake of the full meaning, nothing needs to be added to it, which may neither be in the Qur'ān, nor in any authentic *Ḥadīth*, nor in the Israelite history.

Besides, one should also note that Allah has narrated this event immediately after using epithets like *ni'm al-'abd, inna-hū awwāb* (an excellent servant, who turned to His Lord over and over again) for the Prophet Solomon. This clearly shows that the object is to relate this message: Behold, what a good

servant of Ours he was! He loved the means of kingly pomp and glory not for the sake of the world but for Our sake! After watching and reviewing his grand cavalry he did not boast of his power and grandeur like the worldly rulers but even at that time he remembered only Us.

36. In view of the contest, the real object here is to relate this event; the preceding verses are an introduction to it. Just as above this, first the Prophet David was praised, then the event narrated by which he was put to temptation, then it was said that Allah Almighty does not spare even such a beloved servant from accountability, then about his noble nature it was said that as soon as he was warned of the temptation, he repented and bowed before Allah and withheld himself from the act, so also here the sequence is like this: First, the Prophet Solomon's high rank and his deep sense of devotion has been mentioned, then it is said that he also was put to the test, then it has been stated that when a mere body was placed on his throne, he immediately felt warned on his error, and pleading the forgiveness of his Lord, withdrew from the act, because of which he was involved in the temptation. In other words, Allah by means of these two stories wants to impress two things upon the reader simultaneously: (1) Not to speak of the common men, even high-ranking Prophets were not spared from His strict accountability; and (2) the right attitude for man is not to brag and feel proud after committing an error, but to bow down humbly before his Lord as soon as he realizes his sin. It was the result of this attitude that Allah not only forgave the mistakes of those illustrious men but blessed them with still more favours and kindness.

Here, the question again arises as to what was the temptation in which the Prophet Solomon was involved; what is the meaning of placing a mere body on his throne, and what was the nature of the warning on the occurrence of which he repented? In reply to this the commentators have adopted four different points of view:

One section of them has related a long story whose details are disputed, but their resume is this: The error committed by the Prophet Solomon was either that one of his wives continued to worship the idols in the palace for forty days and he remained unaware of it, or that he remained confined to his residence for a few days and did not attend to redressing of the oppressed people's grievances. For this he was punished as follows: A satan somehow made away with his ring by which he ruled over the jinns, men and wind. As soon as he lost the ring he was deprived of his powers and he remained wandering from place to place for forty days; in the interval the satan continued to rule in the guise of Solomon. The placing of a mere body on Solomon's throne implied this very satan, who had sat on his throne. Some people have gone to the extent to say that during that period even the chastity of the women in the royal household did not remain safe from

the satan. At last from his conduct the ministers and the chiefs and the scholars of the court began to doubt that he was not Solomon. Therefore, when they opened the Torah before him, he fled. On the way the ring fell from his hand in the sea, or he cast it into the sea himself, and a fish swallowed it. Then, somehow the Prophet Solomon came by the fish. When in order to cook it, he cut open its belly he found his ring in it. Then, no sooner did he get the ring than the jinns and men presented themselves humbly before him.—— This whole story, from the beginning to the end, is nonsensical and absurd, which the converts from among the Jews and Christians took from the Talmud and other Israelite traditions and spread it among the Muslims. It is strange that some of our well known scholars took these traditions as authentic and cited them as the explanation of the allusions of the Qur'ān, whereas neither is there any truth in Solomon's ring, nor could his glorious works be attributed to any ring, nor had the satans been given the power that they might disguise themselves as Prophets and mislead the people, nor can it be imagined about Allah that He would punish a Prophet for an error in such a manner as to enable a satan to corrupt and destroy a whole community, disguised as a prophet. The Qur'ān itself repudiates this commentary. In the verses that follow Allah says: When Solomon met with the trial, and he asked Our forgiveness for it, then We subdued the wind and the satans to him. But, on the contrary, according to the above commentary, the satans were already under his control by virtue of the ring. It is strange that the scholars who have made this commentary did not care to consider what the subsequent verses say.

The second section of them says that a son was born to the Prophet Solomon after twenty years. The satans feared that if he became king after Solomon, they would continue to remain slaves as they were under him. Therefore, they plotted to kill him. When Solomon came to know of this plot, he hid the child in the clouds so that he was brought up there. This was the temptation in which he was involved; he placed reliance on the protection of the clouds instead of having trust in Allah. For this he was punished in this way that the child died and fell on his throne as a mere body .... This tale also is baseless and is expressly against the Qur'ān, for in this also it has been assumed that the winds and satans were already under the Prophet Solomon's control, whereas the Qur'ān in clear words has stated their subjection to be an event that took place after the trial.

The third section says that the Prophet Solomon one day swore that he would go in to his 70 wives that night, and from each a warrior would be born, who would fight in the cause of Allah, but while he said this he did not say: *In sha'Allah:* if Allah so wills. Consequently, only one wife conceived and from her also a defective child was born, whom the midwife brought and placed on his throne. This *Ḥadīth* has been reported by Ḥadrat Abū Harairah from the Holy

Prophet and it has been related by Bukhārī and Muslim and other traditionists in several ways. In Bukhārī itself this tradition has been related at different places in different ways. At one place the number of the wives has been stated as 60 and at others 70 or 90 or 99 or 100. As far as the chains of the transmitters are concerned, most of the traditions have strong chains, and their authenticity cannot be disputed from the point of view of the principles of reporting. But the subject-matter of the *Hadith is* patently against reason, and proclaims aloud that such a thing could not have been said by the Holy Prophet, as reported. But, on the contrary, he might have probably mentioned it as an example of the foolish and nonsensical tale-telling of the Jews, and the hearer might have misunderstood that the Holy Prophet himself had stated it as an event. To force the people to accept such traditions only on the strength of their chains of transmitters would be making religion a matter of mockery and jest. Everyone can calculate for himself that even in the longest night of winter the interval between the 'Isha' and the Fajr Prayers cannot be of more than ten to eleven hours. If the minimum number of the wives be 60, it would mean that the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) went on having intercourse with them continuously for 10 to 11 hours that night at the rate of six wives per hour, without having a moment's rest. Is it practically possible? And can it be expected that the Holy Prophet might have related it as an event? Then in the *Hadith* nowhere has it been said that the body that had been placed on Solomon's throne, as stated in the Qur'ān, implied the malformed child. Therefore, it cannot be claimed that the Holy Prophet had narrated this event as a commentary of this verse. Furthermore, though it is understandable why the Prophet Solomon asked for Allah's forgiveness on the birth of the child, one fails to understand why, along with the prayer for forgiveness, he prayed: "My Lord, grant me a kingdom as may belong to no one else after me."

Another commentary which Imām Rāzī has preferred is this: The Prophet Solomon was afflicted with a serious disease, or on account of an impending danger his body had been reduced to a mere skeleton. But this commentary also does not conform to the words of the Qur'ān. The Qur'ān says: "We put Solomon to the test and placed a mere body on his throne. Then he turned (to Allah)." From these words no one can understand that the mere body implied the body of the Prophet Solomon himself. They clearly show that putting to the test implied some error that he happened to commit. On this, the way he was given the warning was that a mere body was placed on his throne, and when he realized his error he turned to Allah.

As a matter of fact, this is one of the most difficult places of the Qur'ān, and we do not find any indisputable ground for giving a definite and absolute commentary of it. But if the words of the Prophet Solomon's prayer: "My Lord, forgive me, and grant me a kingdom as may belong to no one else after me," are

read in the light of the Israelite history, it appears that probably he cherished in his heart the desire that his son should succeed him on the throne so that His kingdom and sovereignty should continue in his own race after him. This same thing has been called a "temptation" for him by Allah, and he realized this when his heir Rehoboam grew up into an unworthy young man, whose ugly manners clearly foretold that he would not be able to sustain the mighty kingdom of the Prophets David and Solomon (peace be upon them) even for a few days. "Placing a mere body on his throne" probably means that the son whom he wanted to succeed him on the throne, was an unworthy person. Therefore, he restrained his desire, asked for Allah's forgiveness and prayed that the kingdom should end with him, and he would curb his desire to have it continued in his dynasty. The Israelite history also shows the same thing. The Prophet Solomon did not make any will about his successor, nor made it binding for the people to obey a particular person. After him his ministers put Rehoboam on the throne, but not long afterwards ten tribes of Israel took northern Palestine and broke away, and only the tribe of Judah remained loyal to the throne of Jerusalem.

37. For explanation, see Sūrah Al-Anbiyā': 81 and E.N. 74 thereof. However, there is one thing which requires further explanation here. In Sūrah AlAnbiyā' where mention has been made of subjecting the wind for the Prophet Solomon, it has been described as "the strongly blowing wind," but here "which blew gently at his bidding". This means that the wind in itself was strong and violent as is needed for moving the sailing-ships but it had been made gentle for the Prophet Solomon in the sense that it blew whither-so-ever he wanted it to blow for his commercial fleets.

38. For explanation, see Al-Anbiyā': 82, An-Naml: 17, 39 and the E.N.'s thereof. "The satans" imply the jinns, and "the satans bound in chains" imply the serving satans, who were fettered and imprisoned as a punishment for making mischief. It is not necessary that the fetters and chains in which those satans were bound might be made of iron and they might appear as bound in them like the human prisoners. In any case, they were imprisoned in a manner that they could neither escape nor were able to commit further mischief.

39. This verse can have three meanings: (1) "This is Our unlimited gift: you have the authority to give of it freely to whomsoever you like and keep it from whomsoever you like;" (2) "this is Our gift: you may give of it to whomsoever you like and keep it from whomsoever you like: you will not be called to account for giving it or keeping it from the people;" and (3) Another meaning of it given by some commentators is: The satans have been placed entirely under your control: you may set free whomsoever you like and restrain whomsoever you like: you will not be held accountable for this."

40. Here, the object is to tell that just as a servant's arrogance causes Allah's displeasure and wrath, so does his humility earns Allah's pleasure and approval for him. If a servant commits an error and becomes even more arrogant when warned, he is led to the same fate as is being mentioned in connection with the story of Adam and Satan below. Contrary to this, if a servant happens to commit an error and he repents and bows down before his Lord humbly, he is blessed with such bounties as the Prophets David and Solomon were blessed with. The prayer that Solomon had made after seeking Allah's forgiveness, was literally fulfilled and Allah actually granted him a kingdom as had neither been granted to anyone before him nor bestowed on anyone after him. Having control over the winds and the jinns is an extraordinary power, which has been granted only to the Prophet Solomon and to none else in human history.

41. This is the fourth place in the Qur'ān where the Prophet Job has been mentioned. Before this he has been mentioned in An-Nisā: 163, Al-An'ām: 84 and Al-Anbiyā': 83-84 above. For the details about him, please see E.N.'s 76 to 79 of Sūrah Al-Anbiyā'.

42. This does not mean that Satan has afflicted me with illness and brought distress upon me, but it means: "The affliction of the severities of illness, the loss of property and wealth, and the desertion of the near and dear ones, is not so great a torment and trouble for me as the temptation of Satan, who is exploiting my condition to despair me of my Lord and wants that I should turn ungrateful to Him and become desperate and impatient." This meaning of the lamentation of the Prophet Job is preferable for two reasons: (1) According to the Qur'ān, Allah has granted Satan only the power of temptation: He has not given him the power to afflict with illness the worshippers of Allah and compel them to deviate from the way of service and obedience by causing them physical ailments. (2) In Surah Al-Anbiyā' when the Prophet Job puts before Allah his complaint about illness and disease, he does not mention Satan at all, but says only: "I have been afflicted with the disease and You are most Merciful."

43. That is, "As soon as he stamped his foot on the ground, a spring gushed forth by Allah's Command, drinking from which and washing with which was the remedy of the Prophet Job's disease." Most probably he was suffering from some skin disease. According to the Bible also: "Satan smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown." (Job, 2: 7).

44. Traditions show that during this illness everyone except his wife had deserted the Prophet Job; even his children had turned away. To this Allah has alluded, saying: "When We granted him health, the whole family returned to him, and then We granted him even more children."

45. That is, in it there is a lesson for an intelligent man: "Neither should man forget God and become arrogant in good times nor despair of Him in bad times: Good fortune and misfortune are entirely in the Power of Allah, the One. If He wills He can change the best times of man into the worst times and the worst into the best. Therefore, a wise person should trust in Him alone in all sorts of circumstances and should pin all his hopes on Him."

46. A careful study of these words shows that the Prophet Job during illness had been annoyed with somebody (according to traditions, his wife) and sworn to beat him or her by giving so many stripes. When Allah restored him to health and the anger of the illness was gone, he became worried as how to fulfil the oath. For if he carried out the oath, he would be inflicting pain on an innocent person, and if he did not, he would be committing the sin of breaking the oath. Allah took him out of the difficult situation by the Command: "Take a broom containing as many sticks of straw as the number of the stripes you had sworn to give; then strike the person just once with the broom so as both to fulfil your oath and to avoid giving undue trouble to the person concerned."

Some jurists hold the view that this concession was specially meant for the Prophet Job, and some others think that other people also can take advantage of it. The first view has been cited by Ibn 'Asākir from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās and by Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣās from Mujāhid, and Imām Mālik also held the same view. The second view has been adopted by Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Imām Abū Yūsuf, Imām Muḥammad, Imām Zufar and Imām Shāfe'ī. They say that if a person, for instance, has sworn to give his servant ten stripes, and afterwards combines ten whips and strikes him only once in a way that some part of each whip strikes him, his oath will be fulfilled.

Several *Aḥādīth* show that the Holy Prophet, in order to inflict the prescribed punishment on a fornicator who was too ill or too weak to receive a hundred stripes, also adopted the method taught in this verse. 'Allāma Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣās has related a tradition on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Saīd bin Sa'd bin 'Ubādah to the effect that a person from the tribe of Banī Sā'idah happened to commit fornication, and he was a sick man and a mere skeleton. Thereupon the Holy Prophet commanded: "Take a branch of the palm tree with a hundred twigs on it and strike him therewith once and for all." *(Aḥkām al Qur'ān)*. In Musnad Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'i, Ibn Mājah, Ṭabarānī, 'Abdur Razzāq and other collections of *Ḥadīth* also there are several *Aḥādīth* supporting it, which conclusively proves that the Holy Prophet had devised this very method for inflicting the prescribed punishment on a sick or weak person. However, the jurists lay the condition that some part of every twig or piece of straw must strike the culprit, and even if only one stroke, it must also hurt the culprit; that is, it is not enough just to touch him but he must be struck with it.

Here the question also arises that if a person has sworn to do something and afterwards he comes to know that it is improper, then what should he do? There is a tradition from the Holy Prophet to the effect that in such a case one should do only that which is better, and the same is the atonement for the oath. Another tradition from him says that one should do something good instead of the improper thing and should atone for his oath. This verse supports this second tradition, for if keeping oneself from an improper thing had been the atonement for the oath, Allah would not have told the Prophet Job to strike the broom once and fulfil his oath, but would have said: "Do not do this improper thing, and your restraint itself is the atonement for your oath."

This verse also shows that it is not necessary to carry out immediately what one has sworn to do. The Prophet Job had sworn an oath in the state of illness, and fulfilled it after complete recovery, and not immediately even after the recovery.

Some people have regarded this verse as an argument for practising pretence under the *Sharī'ah*. No doubt it was a pretence which the Prophet Job had been taught but it had been taught not for evading anything obligatory but for avoiding an evil. Therefore, in the *Sharī'ah* those pretences only are lawful, which are adopted to remove injustice and sin and evil from one's own self or from another person, otherwise practice of pretence is highly sinful if it is employed for the purpose of making the unlawful lawful, or evading the obligatory duties and righteous acts. For a person who practises pretence for such impious objects, in fact, tries to deceive God. For example, a person who transfers his wealth to another before the completion of a year on it, only for the purpose of evading payment of the *Zakāt* on it, not only evades an obligatory duty, but also thinks that Allah will get deceived by this trickery and will consider him as relieved of his duty. The jurists who have mentioned such pretences in their books, do not mean that one should practise them in order to evade the *Sharī'ah* obligations, but they mean to point out that a judge or ruler cannot take to task a person who escapes the consequences of a sin under a legal cover for his affair is with Allah.

47. The Prophet Job has been mentioned in this context to impress the reader that when the righteous servants of Allah are afflicted with hardships and calamities, they do not complain of their distress to Allah but endure the tests and trials set by Him patiently and invoke only Him for help. They do not despair of God and do not turn to others for help if their distress is not removed after making invocations to God for some time, but they believe that whatever they will get, they will get only from Allah. Therefore, they remain hopeful of His mercy, no matter how long they might have to suffer the distress. That is why they are honoured and blessed with the favours and bounties with which the Prophet Job was honoured and blessed in his life. So much so that if they get involved in a

moral dilemma due to a state of agitation, Allah shows them a way out of it in order to save them from evil, as He showed a way to the Prophet Job.

48. The actual words in the Text mean "Those who possessed the hands and the insights." The hand, as we have explained above, implies power and capability. To describe these Prophets as "men of great power and insight" means that they were practical men: they possessed great power to obey Allah and to abstain from sin, and they had made great efforts for raising the Word of Allah in the world. "Insight" does not mean eye-sight but the vision of the heart and mind. They could see and recognize the Truth: they did not live like the blind in the world, but they walked the straight path of guidance, in the full light of knowledge, with open eyes. In these words, there is a subtle allusion to this also that the people who commit evil, and have gone astray, are in fact, deprived of the hands as well as the eyes. He only, who works in the cause of Allah, possesses the hands, and he, who distinguishes between the light of the Truth and the darkness of falsehood, only possesses the eyes.

49. That is, "The real cause for their success and eminence was that there was no tinge of worldliness in their character: all their efforts, mental and physical, were directed towards the Hereafter. They remembered it themselves and urged others also to remember it. That is why Allah exalted them to such high ranks as have never been attained by those who remained absorbed in earning worldly wealth and prosperity. In this regard, one should also keep in view the subtle point that Allah here has only used the word *ad-dār* (that abode, or the real abode) for the Hereafter. This is meant to impress the truth that this world is no abode for man, but only a passage and a rest house, which man has to leave in any case. The real abode is the abode of the Hereafter. He who works to adorn that abode is the man of insight and such a one should inevitably be a commendable person in the sight of Allah. As for him who in order to adorn his transitory abode in this rest house behaves in a way as to ruin his real abode in the Hereafter, is foolish, and naturally cannot be liked by Allah.

50. The Prophet Al-Yas'a has been mentioned only twice in the Qur'ān, in Sūrah Al-An'ām: 86 and here, without any detail about him; only his name appears in the chain of the Prophets. He was one of the major Prophets of Israel, belonged to Abel Meholah, a place on the river Jordan, and is well known as Elisha among the Jews and Christians. When the Prophet Elijah (peace be upon

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لَنَا ۚ فَبِئْسَ الْقَرَارُ ﴿٦٠﴾ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا مَنْ قَدَّمَ لَنَا هٰذَا فَزِدْهُ عَذَابًا ضِعْفًا فِي
النَّارِ ﴿٦١﴾ وَقَالُوا مَا لَنَا لَا نَرَىٰ رِجَالًا كُنَّا نَعُدُّهُمْ مِنَ الْأَشْرَارِ ﴿٦٢﴾ أَتَّخَذْنَاهُمْ
سِخْرِيًّا أَمْ زَاغَتْ عَنْهُمُ الْأَبْصَارُ ﴿٦٣﴾ إِنَّ ذٰلِكَ لَحَقٌّ تَخَاصُمُ أَهْلِ النَّارِ ﴿٦٤﴾
قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا مُنْذِرٌ ۖ وَمَا مِنْ إِلٰهٍ إِلَّا اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ ﴿٦٥﴾ رَبُّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ
الْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا الْعَزِيزُ الْغَفَّارُ ﴿٦٦﴾ قُلْ هُوَ نَبَؤٌا عَظِيمٌ ﴿٦٧﴾ أَنْتُمْ عَنْهُ مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾
مَا كَانَ لِيَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ بِالْمَلَإِ الْأَعْلَىٰ إِذْ يَخْتَصِمُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾ إِنْ يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ إِلَّا أَنَّمَا
أَنَا نَذِيرٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿٧٠﴾ إِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلٰئِكَةِ إِنِّي خَالِقٌ بَشَرًا مِنْ طِينٍ ﴿٧١﴾ فَإِذَا
سَوَّيْتُهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي فَقَعُوا لَهُ سٰجِدِينَ ﴿٧٢﴾ فَسَجَدَ الْمَلٰئِكَةُ
كُلُّهُمْ أَجْمَعُونَ ﴿٧٣﴾ إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ ۖ اسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكٰفِرِينَ ﴿٧٤﴾ قَالَ يٰإِبْلِيسُ مَا
مَنَعَكَ أَنْ تَسْجُدَ لِمَا خَلَقْتُ بِيَدَيَّ ۖ أَسْتَكْبَرْتَ أَمْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الْعَالِينَ ﴿٧٥﴾
قَالَ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِنْهُ ۖ خَلَقْتَنِي مِنْ نَارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِنْ طِينٍ ﴿٧٦﴾ قَالَ فَاخْرُجْ مِنْهَا
فَإِنَّكَ رَجِيمٌ ﴿٧٧﴾ وَإِنَّ عَلَيْكَ لَعْنَتِي إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ﴿٧٨﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ فَأَنْظِرْنِي إِلَىٰ
يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾ قَالَ فَإِنَّكَ مِنَ الْمُنْظَرِينَ ﴿٨٠﴾ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ الْوَقْتِ الْمَعْلُومِ ﴿٨١﴾ قَالَ
فَبِعِزَّتِكَ لَأُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٨٢﴾ إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمُ الْمُخْلَصِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾ قَالَ فَالْحَقُّ
وَالْحَقَّ أَقُولُ ﴿٨٤﴾ لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنْكَ وَمِمَّنْ تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾ قُلْ
مَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُتَكَلِّفِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ
لِلْعٰلَمِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾ وَلَتَعْلَمُنَّ نَبَأَهُ بَعْدَ حِينٍ ﴿٨٨﴾

Then they will say, "Our Lord, give him who has brought this 61-64
fate on us a double punishment in Hell." And they will say to one another, "How is it that we do not see those whom we regarded as bad people in the world?[55] Did we treat them as such in ridicule, or are they hidden from sight?" Indeed, this is the Truth! Such will be the disputes among the dwellers of Hell.

(O Prophet,)[56] say to them, "I am only a warner:[57] there is no 65-68
real god but Allah, the One, the All-Mighty, Lord of the heavens and the earth and of all that is between them, the Mighty, the Forgiving." Say to them, "This is a great News from which you turn away."[58]

(Say to them,) "I had no knowledge of the time when the 69-85
exalted ones were disputing among themselves. I am informed of all this by revelation because I am an open warner." When your Lord said to the angels,[59] "I am about to create man from clay:[60] then, when I have fashioned him duly, and have breathed into him of My Spirit,[61] prostrate yourselves before him."[62] Accordingly, the angels prostrated themselves, all in obedience, but Iblīs assumed arrogance, and became one of the disbelievers.[63] The Lord said, "O Iblis, what has prevented you from prostrating yourself before him whom I have made with both My hands?[64] Are you assuming arrogance, or are you one of the high ones?" He replied, "I am better than he: You have created me from fire and him from clay." (The Lord) said: "Then get you gone from here:[65] you are accursed,[66] and My curse shall be on you till the Day of Judgment."[67] He said, "My Lord, if so, then give me respite till the time when these people shall be raised (back to life)." (The Lord) said: "Well, you are given respite till the Day of appointed time." He said, "By Thy Honour! I shall certainly lead them astray except those of Thy servants whom Thou hast chosen."[68]—(The Lord) said, "The truth is this, and the truth only I speak, that I shall fill Hell with you[69] and with all those who follow you from among mankind."[70]

(O Prophet,) say to them, "I do not ask any recompense of you 86-88
for this message,[71] nor am I an impostor.[72] This is only an admonition for all the people of the world, and after a while you shall yourself come to know all about it."[73]

Contd. from p.371]

him) had taken refuge in the Sinâi peninsula, he was commanded to return to Syria and Palestine for some important works, one of which was to prepare the Prophet

Elisha for his successorship. Accordingly, when the Prophet Elijah came to his town, he found Elisha ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth. The Prophet Elijah passed by him and cast his mantle upon him, and he left the oxen and followed him. (I Kings, 19:15-21). He remained under training with him for 10 to 12 years. Then, when Allah recalled Elijah, he was appointed Prophet in his place. (2 Kings, ch.2). The Second Book of the Kings gives a detailed account of the Prophet Elisha (chs., 2 to 13), which shows that when the Israeli state of northern Palestine got lost in polytheism and idol-worship and moral evils, Elisha a nointed Jehu, the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi, king of Israel against the royal dynasty due to whose misdeeds those evils had spread in Israel. jehu not only put an end to Ba'al-worship, but also condemned to death every member of the wicked family, including its children. But in spite of this reformist revolution the evils that had taken root in Israel could not be completely eradicated, and after the death of the Prophet Elisha they assumed enormoue propertions; so much so that the Assyrians begn to invade Samaria whenever they pleased. (For further details, see E.N. 7 of Sūrah Banī-Isrā'īl and E.N.'s 70, 71 of Sūrah As-Ṣāāffāt).

51. Dhul-Kifi also has been mentioned only twice in the Qur'ān, in Al-Anbiyā': 85 and here. For our research about him see E.N. 81 of Al-Anbiyā'.

52. The words *mufattahat-al-lahum-ul-abwāb* may have several meanings: (1) They will go about in the Gardens (Paradise) freely without any hesitation; (2) no effort will have to be made to open the gates of Paradise: they will open automatically as soon as they will have the desire to enter them; (3) the angels appointed for keeping Paradise will open the gates for them as soon as they see them. This third meaning has been expressed more clearly at another place in the Qur'ān, thus: "When they arrive there, and its gates shall already have been opened, its keepers will say: Peace be upon you: you have fared well: enter here to dwell for ever." (Az-Zumar: 73)

53. "Wives of equal age" may mean that they will be of equal age among themselves, and also that they will be of the same age as their husbands.

54. Several meanings of the word *ghassāq*, as used in the original, have been given by the lexicographers: (1) Any moisture that is discharged by the body in the form of pus, blood, or mixture of pus and blood, etc. and this includes tears as well; (2) something extremely cold; and (3) something stinking and giving out offensive smell. However, the word is generally used in the first meaning only, though the other two meanings also are correct lexically.

55. This implies the believers whom the disbelievers used to look down upon as bad people in the world. It means: They will look around bewildered and will find only themselves and their guides in Hell but will find no trace of those

people of whom they used to talk disparagingly in the world, and whom they used to mock in their meetings for talking about God, the Messenger and the Hereafter.

56. Now the discourse turns to the same theme with which it began. One should read it with vv. 1-14 in order to understand the meaning fully.

57. In verse 4 it was said: "The people wonder that a warner from among themselves has come to them." Here it is being said: "Tell them: I am only a warner. " That is, "I do not command an army that I may forcibly pull you from a wrong way and put you on the Right Way. If you do not listen to me and do not accept my message, you will only be causing a loss to yourselves. If you like to remain ignorant, you may continue to be heedless, for you will see your end yourselves."

58. This is the answer to what the disbelievers said in verse 5: "Has he made just One God in place of all the gods? This is indeed a strange thing." It means: "You may frown and scowl as you like, but this is a reality of which I am informing you, and your frowning and scowling cannot change it."

This answer not only contains the statement of the truth, but it also contains the argument for it. The *mushriks* said: "Deities are many of whom one is Allah also. How is it that you have done away with all other deities and kept only One Allah?" In answer it was said: "The real Deity is One Allah alone, for He is dominant over everything: He is the Owner of the earth and the heavens, and everything in the Universe belongs to Him. Every being other than Him, whom you have set up as other gods in the Universe, is dominated and subdued before Him; therefore, the subservient beings cannot be associates in the Godhead of the Dominant and All-Mighty God. Therefore, there is no ground for which they may be regarded as deities."

59. This is the explanation of the dispute referred to above, and the dispute implies Satan's dispute with God, as becomes evident from the verses that follow. In this regard, one should bear in mind the fact that "the exalted ones" implies the angels, and the dialogue between Allah and Satan was not direct but it took place through some angel. Therefore, no one should have the misunderstanding that Allah also was included among the exalted ones. This story has already been narrated at the following places above: Al-Baqarah: 30-39, Al-A'rāf: 11-25, Al-Ḥijr: 26-44; Banī Isrā'īl: 61-65, Al-Kahf: 50, Ṭā Hā: 116-126.

60. Lexically, *bashar* means a gross body whose surface is bare and uncovered by anything else. After the creation of man this word has been used for man himself, but mentioning him by the word *bashar* before his creation and making him from clay clearly means: "I am about to make an image of clay,

which will be without any feathers and hair, etc., whose skin will not be covered by wool or hair or feathers like the skin of other animals."

61. For explanation, see Al-Hijr: 29-30, and E.N. 16 of Sūrah As-Sajdah.

62. For explanation, see Al-Baqarah: 34, Al-A'rāf: 11 and the E.N.'s thereof.

63. For explanation, see Al-Baqarah: 34, Al-Kahf: 50 and the E.N.'s thereof.

64. These words have been used to point out the honour, rank and glory bestowed on man by his Creator. In other words, Allah did not get man created through his angels but created him Himself because his creation was a highly noble task. Therefore, what is meant to be said is: "What has prevented you from prostrating yourself before him whom I have made directly Myself?"

The words "both hands" probably are meant to refer to the fact that this new creation combines in itself two important aspects of Allah's power of creation: (1) That man has been given an animal body on account of which he belongs to the animal kingdom; and (2) that on account of the Spirit breathed into him, he has been characterised with qualities which place him in honour and merit above all earthly creations and creatures.

65. "From here": from the place where Adam was created and where the angels were commanded to bow down before Adam, and where Iblīs committed disobedience of Allah.

66. Lexically, the word *rajīm*, as used in the original, means "cast off" or "smitten"; in common usage it is used for the person, who has been thrown down from a place of honour and humiliated. In Sūrah Al-A'rāf, the same thing has been expressed thus: "Get out: you are indeed one of those who wish themselves ignominy." (v. 13).

67. This does not mean that there will be no curse on him after the Day of Judgment, but rather it means: "He will remain accursed till the Day of Judgment because of his disobedience, and after the Day of Judgment he will be punished for the sins which he will have committed from the creation of Adam till Resurrection."

68. This does not mean "I will not lead Your chosen servants astray," but this: "I shall have no power over Your chosen servants."

69. "With you" is not only addressed to *Iblīs* but to the whole species of satans; that is, *Iblīs* and his whole army of the satans who will be joining him in misleading mankind till Resurrection.

70. This whole story has been related in answer to this saying of the chiefs of the Quraish: "Was he the only (fit) person among us to whom Allah's Admonition should have been sent down?" Its first answer was the one given in vv. 9-10, saying: "Are you the owners of the treasures of the mercy of your Mighty and Bounteous Lord? And does the kingdom of the heavens and the earth belongs to you, and is it for you to decide as to who should be appointed God's Prophet and who should not be appointed?" The second answer is: In this the chiefs of the Quraish have been told: "Your jealousy, your pride and arrogance against Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) are similar to the jealousy and arrogance of *Iblís* against Adam (peace be upon him). *Iblís* also had refused to acknowledge the right of Allah to appoint anyone He pleased His vicegerent, and you also are refusing to acknowledge His right to appoint anyone He pleases as His Messenger: he disobeyed the Command to bow down before Adam, and you are disobeying the Command to follow Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). Your resemblance with him does not end here, but your fate also will be the same as has been pre-ordained for him, i.e. the curse of God in the world and the fire of Hell in the Hereafter."

Besides, in connection with this story, two other things also have been stressed: (1) Whoever is disobeying Allah in this world, is in fact, falling a prey to *Iblís*, his eternal enemy, who has resolved to mislead and misguide mankind since the beginning of creation; and (2) the one who disobeys Allah on account of arrogance and persists in His disobedience is under His wrath: such a one has no forgiveness from Him.

71. That is, "I am a selfless person: I have no vested interest in preaching this message."

72. That is, "I am not one of those who arise with false claims for the sake of vanity and pose to be what actually they are not." The Holy Prophet has not been made to say this merely for the information of the disbelievers of Makkah but this is testified by his whole life which he lived among the same people for forty years before his advent as a Prophet. Every child of Makkah was a witness that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) was not an impostor. Never had anybody from among the people of Makkah ever heard anything from him, which might have caused somebody the doubt that he aspired to be a great man and was planning and scheming for that end.

73. That is, "Those of you who live will see for themselves within a few years that what I am saying is fulfilled; those who die will come to know as soon as they pass through the gate of death that the truth is the same which I am preaching."


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AZ-ZUMAR
الزُّمَر

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XXXIX

AZ-ZUMAR

الزمر

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah derives its name from verses 71 and 73 in which the word *zumar* has occurred.

Period of Revelation

In verse 10 *(wa ardullah-i-wāsi'atun:* and Allah's earth is vast) there is abundant evidence that this Sūrah was sent down before the migration to Ḥabash. Some traditions provide the explanation that this verse was sent down in respect of Ḥaḍrat Ja'far bin Abī Ṭālib and his companions when they made up their mind to emigrate to Ḥabash. *(Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī*, vol. XXII, p. 226).

Theme and Subject-matter

The entire Sūrah is a most eloquent and effective address which was given some time before the emigration to Ḥabash in an environment filled with tyranny and persecution, ill-will and antagonism, at Makkah. It is a sermon whose addressees mainly are the unbelieving Quraish, although here and there the believers also have been addressed. In it the real aim of the invitation of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) has been enunciated, which is:

Man should adopt Allah's servitude sincerely, and should not pollute his God-worship with the service of any other. Presenting this cardinal principle in different ways over and over again, the truth of *Tauhid* and the excellent results of accepting it, and the falsehood of *shirk* and the evil consequences of following it, have been explained in a most forceful way, and the people exhorted to give up their wrong way of life and return to the mercy of their Lord. In this very connection, the believers have been instructed, as if to say: "If a place has become narrow for the worship and service of Allah, His earth is vast: you may emigrate to some other place in order to save your faith: Allah will reward you for your patience." On the other hand, the Holy Prophet has been encouraged, so as to say: "Tell the disbelievers plainly that they may do whatever they like, but their persecutions and tyrannies will never deter you from the way of Islam; that they may go on doing their worst to obstruct your way, but you will continue to perform your mission in spite of the adverse conditions and circumstances."

سُوْرَةُ الزُّمَر ٣٩ — مَكِّيَّة — رُكُوعَاتُهَا ٨ — اٰيَاتُهَا ٧٥

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

تَنْزِيْلُ الْكِتٰبِ مِنَ اللّٰهِ الْعَزِيْزِ الْحَكِيْمِ ۝١ اِنَّآ اَنْزَلْنَآ اِلَيْكَ الْكِتٰبَ بِالْحَقِّ
فَاعْبُدِ اللّٰهَ مُخْلِصًا لَّهُ الدِّيْنَ ۝٢ اَلَا لِلّٰهِ الدِّيْنُ الْخَالِصُ ؕ وَالَّذِيْنَ اتَّخَذُوْا
مِنْ دُوْنِهٖٓ اَوْلِيَآءَ ۘ مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ اِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُوْنَآ اِلَى اللّٰهِ زُلْفٰى ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَحْكُمُ
بَيْنَهُمْ فِيْ مَا هُمْ فِيْهِ يَخْتَلِفُوْنَ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَهْدِيْ مَنْ هُوَ كٰذِبٌ كَفَّارٌ ۝٣
لَوْ اَرَادَ اللّٰهُ اَنْ يَّتَّخِذَ وَلَدًا لَّاصْطَفٰى مِمَّا يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَآءُ ۙ سُبْحٰنَهٗ ؕ هُوَ اللّٰهُ
الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ ۝٤ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ ۚ يُكَوِّرُ الَّيْلَ عَلَى النَّهَارِ وَيُكَوِّرُ
النَّهَارَ عَلَى الَّيْلِ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ ؕ كُلٌّ يَّجْرِيْ لِاَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ؕ اَلَا هُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ
الْغَفَّارُ ۝٥ خَلَقَكُمْ مِّنْ نَّفْسٍ وَّاحِدَةٍ ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَاَنْزَلَ لَكُمْ مِّنَ
الْاَنْعَامِ ثَمٰنِيَةَ اَزْوَاجٍ ؕ يَخْلُقُكُمْ فِيْ بُطُوْنِ اُمَّهٰتِكُمْ خَلْقًا مِّنْۢ بَعْدِ خَلْقٍ فِيْ
ظُلُمٰتٍ ثَلٰثٍ ؕ ذٰلِكُمُ اللّٰهُ رَبُّكُمْ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ ؕ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۚ فَاَنّٰى تُصْرَفُوْنَ ۝٦
اِنْ تَكْفُرُوْا فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنْكُمْ ۚ وَلَا يَرْضٰى لِعِبَادِهِ الْكُفْرَ ۚ وَاِنْ تَشْكُرُوْا
يَرْضَهُ لَكُمْ ؕ وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِّزْرَ اُخْرٰى ؕ ثُمَّ اِلٰى رَبِّكُمْ مَّرْجِعُكُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا
كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ؕ اِنَّهٗ عَلِيْمٌۢ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُوْرِ ۝٧ وَاِذَا مَسَّ الْاِنْسَانَ ضُرٌّ دَعَا
رَبَّهٗ مُنِيْبًا اِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ اِذَا خَوَّلَهٗ نِعْمَةً مِّنْهُ نَسِيَ مَا كَانَ يَدْعُوْٓا اِلَيْهِ مِنْ
قَبْلُ وَجَعَلَ لِلّٰهِ اَنْدَادًا لِّيُضِلَّ عَنْ سَبِيْلِهٖ ؕ قُلْ تَمَتَّعْ بِكُفْرِكَ قَلِيْلًا ۖ اِنَّكَ
مِنْ اَصْحٰبِ النَّارِ ۝٨ اَمَّنْ هُوَ قَانِتٌ اٰنَآءَ الَّيْلِ سَاجِدًا وَّقَآئِمًا يَّحْذَرُ الْاٰخِرَةَ
وَيَرْجُوْا رَحْمَةَ رَبِّهٖ ؕ قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِيْنَ يَعْلَمُوْنَ وَالَّذِيْنَ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ؕ

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AZ-ZUMAR

الزُّمَر

Verses: 75 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

The revelation of this Book is from the All-Mighty, the All-Wise Allah.[1] 1

(O Muḥammad,) We have sent down this Book to you with the truth[2]; so worship Allah alone, making your religion His exclusively.[3] Beware! Religion is exclusively Allah's right.[4] As for those who have taken other guardians besides Him (and justify their conduct, saying): "We worship them only that they may bring us closer to Allah."[5] Allah will surely judge between them concerning all that in which they differ.[6] Allah does not show guidance to any liar and denier of the truth[7] 2-3

Had Allah willed to take a son, He would have chosen anyone He pleased out of His creation.[8] Glorified is He (that He should have a son)! He is Allah, the One, the Omnipotent.[9] He has created the heavens and the earth with the truth.[10] He it is Who wraps the night about the day and the day about the night . He has so subjected the sun and the moon that each is moving till an appointed time. Note it well: He is the All-Mighty, the All-Forgiving.[11] It is He Who created you from a single being, then from that being He created its mate,[12] and it is He Who created for you eight heads of cattle, male and female.[13] He shapes you in your mothers' wombs, giving you one form after the other, under three dark veils.[14] This same Allah (Whose works are these) is your Lord:[15] sovereignty is His:[16] there is no god but He.[17] Whence are you, then, being turned away?[18] 4-6

If you disbelieve, Allah is independent of you;[19] yet He does not approve of disbelief for His servants;[20] and if you are thankful, He approves it for you.[21] No bearer will bear the burden of another;[22] 7

ultimately, all of you have to return to your Lord. Then He will tell you what You have been doing. He knows even the secrets of the hearts.

8-9 When an affliction befalls man,[23] he calls upon his Lord, turning to Him (in penitence);[24] then, when his Lord blesses him with his favour, he forgets the affliction for which he was calling upon Him before,[25] and sets up others as equals with Allah,[26] to lead astray from His way.[27] (O Prophet,) Tell him, "Enjoy your disbelief for a while: you shall certainly go to Hell." (Whose conduct is better: of this man or of him) who is obedient, who passes the hours of night standing and prostrating (in worship), and who dreads the Hereafter and hopes for the mercy of his Lord? Ask them, "Can those who know and those who do not know ever be equal?"[28] Only men of understanding do accept the admonition.

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1. This is a brief introduction to the Sūrah which only stresses the point that the Qur'ān is not Muhammad's word, as the disbelievers assert, but it is Allah's Word, which He Himself has sent down. Along with this, two of Allah's attributes have been mentioned to warn the listeners of two realities so that they do not underestimate this Word but understand its full importance: (1) That Allah Who has sent it down, is All-Mighty; that is, He is so powerful that no power can prevent His will and decisions from being enforced and none can dare resist Him in any way; (2) that He is All-wise; that is, the guidance He is giving in this Book, is wholly based on wisdom, and only an ignorant and foolish person can turn away from it. (For further explanation, see E.N. 1 of Sūrah As-Sajdah).

2. That is, it contains nothing but the truth, and there is no element of falsehood in it.

3. This is a very important verse, which states the real objective of the message of Islām. Therefore, one should not pass over it superficially, but should try to understand its meaning and intention well. It has two basic points without grasping which one cannot understand the verse: (1) That the demand is to worship Allah; and (2) that the demand is of such worship as may be performed by making religion exclusively Allah's.

'Ibādat is derived from *'abd*, and this word is used as an antonym of "freeman" for the "slave" and 'bondsman" in Arabic. Accordingly, *'ibādat* contains two meanings: (1) Worship and devotion; and (2) humble and willing obedience, as is borne out by the well-known and authoritative Arabic Lexicon, *Lisān al-'Arab*. Thus, according to the authentic lexical explanation, the demand

is not only of Allah's worship but also of willing and sincere obedience to His Commands and His Law.

The Arabic word *dīn* contains several meanings:

(1) Domination and sovereignty, rulership and political power and authority to enforce one's decisions on others.

(2) Obedience, compliance with commands and servitude.

(3) The practice and the way that a man follows.

In view of these three meanings, *dīn* in this verse means: "The way of life and attitude which a man adopts after acknowledging the supremacy and accepting the obedience of another;" and "to worship Allah making one's religion exclusively His" means that one should refrain from combining another's worship with the worship of Allah, but should worship Allah alone, should follow His Guidance alone, and should comply with His Commands and injunctions only.

4. This is an actual fact and reality, which has been presented as an argument for the above demand. It means: "You should worship Allah, making *dīn* exclusively His, for it is only Allah's right that He should be obeyed and worshipped sincerely and exclusively." In other words, there is no one else who may deserve to be worshipped so that he also should be served and worshipped besides Allah and his commands and laws also obeyed. If a person serves another, apart from Allah, sincerely and exclusively, he does wrong. Likewise, if he combines the worship of another with his worship of Allah, this also is against the truth. The best commentary of this verse is the *Ḥadīth* which Ibn Mardūyah has related from Yazīd ar-Raqāshī. He says: A person asked the Holy Prophet: "We give away our wealth so that we become well-known. Shall we get a reward for this?" The Holy Prophet replied: No. He asked: "What, if one has the intention both of Allah's reward and of reputation in the world?" The Holy Prophet replied: "Allah does not accept any deed unless it is performed exclusively for His sake." After this he recited this same verse.

5. The disbelievers of Makkah said, and the polytheists the world over generally say the same, "We do not worship other beings regarding them as our creators: the Creator is only Allah, and He alone is the real Deity; but He is too high for us to have access to Him. Therefore, we make these saintly beings a means to convey our prayers and our petitions to Allah."

6. One should understand it well that unity and concord is possible only through *Tauḥīd*: there can be no unity through *shirk*. The polytheists the world over have never agreed as to which beings are the definite means of access to Allah. Some people have taken some particular gods and goddesses as the means.

but even among them there is no agreement on all the gods and goddesses; some others have taken the moon, the sun, Mars, Jupiter, etc. as the means, and they also are not agreed as to which of them holds what rank and which is the real means of approach to Allah; some others have taken the dead saints as the means, but they also differ widely about them: one believes in one saint and another in another. The reason is that the belief about these different beings is neither based on any knowledge, nor has Allah ever sent down a list telling that such and such persons are His special favourites; therefore, they only should be made the means to have access to Him. This is a creed which has spread among the people only on account of superstitions and whims and blind imitation of the elders. Hence the differences.

7. Here, Allah has used two words for these people, *kāzib* (liar) and *kaffār* (denier). They have been called *kāzib* because they have falsely invented this creed by themselves, and then they spread falsehood among others. As for *kaffār*, it has two meanings: (1) A stubborn disbeliever, i.e. the people who insist on their false creed even after the doctrine of *Tauḥīd* has come before them; and (2) ungrateful for blessings, i.e. they are receiving all kinds of blessings from Allah, but are thanking those other beings about whom they have assumed that these blessings are reaching them through their agency and influence.

8. That is, "It is just impossible that Allah should have begotten a son. The only possibility is that Allah should choose someone for Himself; and whomever He chooses will inevitably be from among the creatures, for everything in the world, apart from Allah, is His creation. Now, evidently, however exalted and chosen a creature might be, it cannot have the position of the offspring. For between the Creator and the created there exists a great disparity of nature and essence and character, and parenthood necessarily demands that there should be the unity of nature and essence between a father and his offspring."

Besides, one should also bear in mind the point that the words: "Had Allah willed to take a son, He would....." themselves give the meaning that Allah has never willed so. Here the object is to impress that not to speak of taking a son, Allah has never even willed so.

9. The following are the arguments by which the doctrine of parenthood has been refuted:

First, that Allah is free from every defect and fault and weakness. Obviously, children are needed by the one who is defective and weak; the one who is mortal stands in need of them, so that his progeny should continue to live after him in the world. Likewise, he who adopts a son does so either because he feels the need of having an heir, being childless himself, or he adopts a son being overpowered by love of somebody. Attributing such human weaknesses to Allah

and forming religious creeds on their basis is nothing but ignorance and short-sightedness.

The second argument is that Allah in His essence and Being is unique: He is not a member of a species, whereas, evidently, offspring must necessarily belong to a species. Furthermore, there can be no concept of offspring without marriage, and marriage can take place only between homogeneous individuals. Therefore, the one who proposes offspring for the Unique and Matchless Being like Allah, is ignorant and foolish.

The third argument is that Allah is Omnipotent, i.e. whatever is there in the world is subdued to Him and is held in His powerful grasp. No one in this Universe has any resemblance with Him in any way or degree on account of which it may be imagined that he has some relation with Allah.

10. For explanation, see Ibrāhīm: 19, An-Nahl: 3, Al-'Ankabūt: 44, and the E.N.'s thereof.

11. That is, "He is All-Mighty: if He wills to punish you, no power can resist Him. But it is His kindness that He does not seize you forthwith in spite of your arrogant and insolent behaviour, but He goes on giving you respite after respite." Here, Allah's making no haste in seizing people in punishment and His giving them respite has been called forgiveness.

12. This does not mean that first He created the human beings from Adam and then created his wife, Eve. But here, instead of the chronological order, there is the order of presentation, examples of which are found in every language. For instance, we say, "Whatever you did today is known to me, and whatever you did yesterday is also in my knowledge." This cannot mean that what happened yesterday has happened after today.

13. That is, the camel, cow, sheep and goat whose four males and four females together make eight heads of cattle.

14. The three dark veils are: the belly, the womb and the caul or membrane enclosing the foetus.

15. "Your Lord": your Master, Ruler and Providence.

16. That is, "All powers and authority rest with Him and it is He Who is ruling over the whole Universe."

17. In other words, the reasoning is this: "When Allah alone is your Lord and His is the sovereignty, then inevitably your Deity also is He. How can another be your deity when he has neither any share in providence nor any role in sovereignty? After all, how can it be reasonable for you to take others as your

deities when Allah alone is the Creator of the heavens and the earth, when Allah alone has subjected the sun and the moon for you, when He alone brings the day after the night and the night after the day, and when He alone is your own Creator and Lord as well as of all animals and cattle?"

18. These words need deep consideration. It has not been said: "Where are you turning away?" but "where are you being turned away?" That is, "There is someone else who is misleading you, and being thus deceived you do not understand such a simple and reasonable thing." The other thing which by itself becomes evident from the style is: The word "you" is not addressed to the agents but to those who were turning away under their influence. Their is a subtle point in this which can be understood easily after a little thought. Those who were working to turn away others (from the Right Way) were present in the same society and were doing whatever they could openly and publicly. Therefore, there was no need to mention them by name. It was also useless to address them, for they were trying to turn away the people from the service of Allah, the One, and entrapping them for the service of others, and keeping them entrapped for selfish motives. Obviously, such people could not be made to see reason by argument, for it lay in their own interest not to understand and see reason, and even after understanding they could hardly be inclined to sacrifice their interests. However, the condition of the common people who were being deceived and cheated, was certainly pitiable. They had no interest involved in the business; therefore, they could be convinced by reasoning and argument, and after a little understanding they could also see what advantages were being gained by those who were showing them the way to other deities, after turning them away from Allah. That is why the address has been directed to the common people, who were being misguided rather than those few who were misguiding them.

19. That is, "Your disbelief cannot cause any decrease or deficiency in His Kingdom. He will be God if you believe in Him, and He will still be God if you deny Him. He is ruling over His Kingdom by His own power; your believing or denying Him does not affect His Sovereignty in any way." According to a *Ḥadīth*, Allah says: "O My servants, if all of you, the former and the latter, the men and the jinns, become like the heart of a most sinful person among you, it will cause no deficiency whatever in My Kingdom." (Muslim).

20. That is, "He does not approve, not for any interest of His own but for the interest and benefit of the servants themselves, that they should disbelieve, for disbelief is harmful for them." Here, one should bear in mind the fact that Allah's will is one thing and His approval and pleasure another. Nothing in the world can happen against Allah's will, but many things can happen against His approval, and are happening day and night. For example, the dominance of the tyrants and the wicked in the world, the existence of thieves and robbers, the presence of

murderers and adulterers, are possible only because Allah has made room for the occurrence of these evils and the existence of these criminals in the scheme of things ordained by Him. Then He provides opportunities also of committing evil just as He provides opportunities to the good of doing good. Had He made no room for these evils and had provided no opportunities of committing wrongs to the evildoers, no evil would have ever occurred in the world. All this is based on Allah's Will. But the occurrence of an act under Divine Will does not mean that Allah's approval also goes with it. This may be explained by an example. If a person tries to obtain his living only by lawful means, Allah provides him his living through those means. This is His will. But providing for the thief or the robber or the corrupt person under the will does not mean that Allah also likes stealing and robbery and taking of bribes. Allah says the same thing here, as if to say: "If you want to disbelieve, you may do so: We will not stop you from this nor make you believe forcibly. But We do not approve that you should deny your Creator and Providence, being His servants, for it is harmful for yourselves: Our Godhead is not harmed and affected by it in any way."

21. The word *shukr* (gratitude) has been used here as against *kufr* (disbelief) instead of *Imān* (belief). This by itself shows that *kufr* is, in fact, ingratitude and disloyalty, and faith is the necessary requirement of gratitude. The person who has any feeling of the favours of Allah Almighty, cannot adopt any other way than that of belief and faith. Therefore, gratitude and faith are correlatives: wherever there is gratitude there will be faith also. On the contrary, wherever there is disbelief, there will be no question of gratitude at all, for gratitude along with disbelief is meaningless.

22. It means this: "Each one of you is himself responsible for his deeds. If a person adopts disbelief in order to please others, or to avoid their displeasure, those others will never bear the burden of his disbelief, but will leave him to bear his own burden. Therefore, anyone who comes to know that disbelief is wrong and belief is right, should give up the wrong attitude. and adopt the right attitude, and avoid making himself liable for Allah's punishment by associating himself with his family or brotherhood or nation."

23. "The man": the disbeliever who adopted the way of ingratitude.

24. That is, "At that time he does not remember those other deities whom he used to invoke in good times; but he despairs of them all and turns only to Allah, Lord of the worlds." This is a clear proof of the fact that in the depths of

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إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُوا الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٩﴾ قُلْ يَا عِبَادِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمْ ۚ لِلَّذِينَ
أَحْسَنُوا فِي هَٰذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةٌ ۗ وَأَرْضُ اللَّهِ وَاسِعَةٌ ۗ إِنَّمَا يُوَفَّى الصَّابِرُونَ
أَجْرَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿١٠﴾ قُلْ إِنِّي أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ الدِّينَ ﴿١١﴾ وَ
أُمِرْتُ لِأَنْ أَكُونَ أَوَّلَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿١٢﴾ قُلْ إِنِّي أَخَافُ إِنْ عَصَيْتُ رَبِّي عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ
عَظِيمٍ ﴿١٣﴾ قُلِ اللَّهَ أَعْبُدُ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ دِينِي ﴿١٤﴾ فَاعْبُدُوا مَا شِئْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ ۗ قُلْ
إِنَّ الْخَاسِرِينَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَأَهْلِيهِمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ۗ أَلَا ذَٰلِكَ هُوَ
الْخُسْرَانُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿١٥﴾ لَهُمْ مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ ظُلَلٌ مِنَ النَّارِ وَمِنْ تَحْتِهِمْ ظُلَلٌ ۚ
ذَٰلِكَ يُخَوِّفُ اللَّهُ بِهِ عِبَادَهُ ۚ يَا عِبَادِ فَاتَّقُونِ ﴿١٦﴾ وَالَّذِينَ اجْتَنَبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ
أَنْ يَعْبُدُوهَا وَأَنَابُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ لَهُمُ الْبُشْرَىٰ ۚ فَبَشِّرْ عِبَادِ ﴿١٧﴾ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَمِعُونَ
الْقَوْلَ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ أَحْسَنَهُ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَاهُمُ اللَّهُ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمْ أُولُو
الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿١٨﴾ أَفَمَنْ حَقَّ عَلَيْهِ كَلِمَةُ الْعَذَابِ ۚ أَفَأَنْتَ تُنْقِذُ مَنْ فِي النَّارِ ﴿١٩﴾ لَٰكِنِ
الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ لَهُمْ غُرَفٌ مِنْ فَوْقِهَا غُرَفٌ مَبْنِيَّةٌ ۙ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا
الْأَنْهَارُ ۚ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ ۚ لَا يُخْلِفُ اللَّهُ الْمِيعَادَ ﴿٢٠﴾ أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ
مَاءً فَسَلَكَهُ يَنَابِيعَ فِي الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ يُخْرِجُ بِهِ زَرْعًا مُخْتَلِفًا أَلْوَانُهُ ثُمَّ
يَهِيجُ فَتَرَاهُ مُصْفَرًّا ثُمَّ يَجْعَلُهُ حُطَامًا ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَذِكْرَىٰ لِأُولِي
الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٢١﴾ أَفَمَنْ شَرَحَ اللَّهُ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ فَهُوَ عَلَىٰ نُورٍ مِنْ رَبِّهِ ۚ فَوَيْلٌ
لِلْقَاسِيَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ مِنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ اللَّهُ نَزَّلَ أَحْسَنَ
الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابًا مُتَشَابِهًا مَثَانِيَ ۖ تَقْشَعِرُّ مِنْهُ جُلُودُ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ ۖ
ثُمَّ تَلِينُ جُلُودُهُمْ وَقُلُوبُهُمْ إِلَىٰ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ هُدَى اللَّهِ يَهْدِي بِهِ

(O Prophet:) Say, "O My servants, who have believed, fear your Lord.[29] There is good for those who have adopted the righteous attitude in this world,[30] and God's earth is vast.[31] Those who endure with patience shall be rewarded without measure."[32] 10

(O Prophet,) say to them, "I have been commanded to serve Allah, making religion sincerely His, and I have been commanded to be a Muslim myself first of all."[33] Say, "If I disobey my Lord, I fear the torment of a dreadful Day." Say; "I shall serve Allah alone, making my religion sincerely His. As for you, you may serve whomever you please besides Him." Say, "The real losers are those who would risk loss for themselves and for their families on the Day of Resurrection." Note it well: this is the real bankruptcy.[34] They shall have the canopies of fire covering them from above them and also from beneath them. This is the doom of which Allah frightens His servants. So, O My servants, avoid My wrath. Contrary to this, those who refrained from serving *tāghūt*[35] and turned to Allah, for them there is good news. So (O Prophet,) give good news to those of My servants who listen to the word carefully and follow what is best in it.[36] These are they whom Allah has shown guidance and these are the ones who possess understanding. 11-18

(O Prophet,) who can protect the person for whom the torment has already been decreed?[37] Can you rescue him who has already fallen into the fire? Of course, those who truly feared their Lord, for them there are high mansions, built with storey upon storey, beneath which there will be canals flowing. This is Allah's promise: Allah never fails in His promise. 19-20

Do you not see that Allah sent down rainwater from the sky,then made it to flow in the earth in the form of springs and fountains and rivers,[38] then He brings forth thereby a variety of crops of different kinds; then they ripen and wither and you see them turn yellow, and then, finally, He reduces them to straw? Indeed, there is a lesson in this for the men of understanding.[39] Now, can the person whose breast Allah has opened for Islam[40] and he is walking in the light shown by his Lord[41] (be like the one who has learnt no lesson from these things)? Woe to those whose hearts became even more hardened[42] from Allah's admonition! They are in manifest error. 21-22

23 Allah has sent down the best of discourses, a Book all whose parts are uniform in style[43] and whose themes have been repeated over and over again. Those who fear their Lord are filled with awe when they hear it, and then their bodies and their hearts soften and turn to the remembrance of Allah. This is Allah's guidance, whereby He guides to the Right Way whomever He wills; and the one whom Allah does not guide has no guide whatever.

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his heart he has the feeling that all other deities are helpless, and the realization that Allah alone is the Possessor of all powers and authority, lies buried and hidden deep in his mind."

25. That is, "He again forgets the bad times when abandoning all other deities he was invoking only Allah, the One."

26. That is, "He again starts serving others: he obeys them, prays to them and makes offerings before them."

27. That is, "He is not content with his own self having gone astray, but also leads others astray, telling them that the affliction which had befallen him, had been averted by the help of such and such a pious man or saint, or god and goddess." Thus, many other people also put their faith in these deities besides Allah, and are further misled as the ignorant and foolish people describe their experiences before them.

28. It should be noted that two kinds of the men are being contrasted here. First, those who turn to Allah when a calamity befalls them, but worship others than Allah normally. Second, those who have made it their permanent way of life to obey Allah and worship and serve Him, and their worshipping Him in solitude during the night is a proof of their sincerity. The first kind of the men have been called ignorant by Allah, even if they might have devoured whole libraries. And the second kind of the men have been called the learned, even if they might be illiterate. For the real supremely important thing is the knowledge of the Truth and man's action according to it, and on this depends his true success. Allah asks: How can these two be equal? How can they possibly follow the same way together in the world, and meet with the same end in the Hereafter?

29. That is, "Do not rest content with belief but follow it up with piety and fear of God. Act according to what Allah has enjoined and avoid what He has forbidden and live in the world fearing His accountability."

30. Good and well-being both of this world and of the Hereafter.

31. That is, "If one city, territory or land has become difficult for the worshippers of Allah, they may emigrate to another place where they may not have to face any such hardship."

32. "Those ... measure": Those who brave all kinds of hardships and persecutions in following the way of God-worship and piety but do not abandon the way of the Truth. This also includes those people who emigrate to other countries and experience hardships in the foreign land for the sake of religion and faith, and those also who continue to face every kind of temptation and calamity firmly and patiently in the land where they are being persecuted."

33. That is, "My mission is not only to exhort others but also to practise what I preach myself: I first myself follow the way which I call others to follow."

34. Bankruptcy is loss of a person's capital and failure of his business so that he is unable to pay his debts in full. This same metaphor Allah has used here for the disbelievers and polytheists. The sum total of whatever man has got in this world—his life, his intellect, body, powers, capabilities, means and opportunities—is in fact, the capital, which he invests in the business of the worldly life. If a person invested this whole capital on the hypothesis that there is no God, or that there are many gods, whose servant he is, and that he is not accountable to anyone, or that someone else will rescue him on Judgment Day, it would mean that he made a losing bargain and lost all his capital. This is his first loss. His second loss is that in everything that he did, on the basis of the wrong hypothesis, he went on wronging himself and many other men, and the coming generations and many other creatures of Allah, throughout his life. Thus, he got into countless debts, but has no money with which he may fully pay his debts. Over and above this, he has not only himself incurred this loss, but has caused the same loss to his children and near and dear ones and friends and fellow countrymen by his wrong education and training and wrong example. It is these three losses together which Allah has called *khusrān-i-mubīn* (utter bankruptcy) in this verse.

35. *Ṭāghūt* is from *ṭughyān* and means rebellion. If someone is called *ṭāghūt* (rebellion) instead of *ṭāghī* (rebel), it would mean that he is a rebel incarnate. For example, if a person is called *ḥusn* (beauty) instead of *ḥasīn* (beautiful), it would mean that he has reached perfection in beauty. The other deities than Allah have been called *ṭāghūt* because it is rebellion to worship others besides Allah, but the one who has others worship him, is a rebel of the worst kind. (For further explanation, see Al-Baqarah: 256, Al-Nisā: 60, 76, An-Naml: 36 and the E.N.'s thereof).

36. This verse can have two meanings: (1) That they do not follow every voice but ponder over what every man says and accept only what is right and true:

and (2) that they do not try to give a false meaning to what they hear but adopt its good and righteous aspects.

37. That is, the person who has made himself worthy of Allah's punishment and about whom Allah has already decided that he will be punished.

38. The word *yanābi'* in the Text is comprehensive and applies to all the three sources of water.

39. That is, "A man of understanding learns this lesson from it that the life of this world and its adornments are all transitory: the end of every spring is autumn; the fate of every youth is weakness and death; and every rise has a fall. Therefore, this world is not something of which one should be charmed and enamoured so as to forget God and the Hereafter and should conduct himself here in a manner as to ruin his Hereafter, only for the sake of enjoying the short lived pleasures of this world. Then a man of understanding also learns this lesson from these phenomena that the spring and autumn of this world are only under Allah's control: Allah allows to grow and prosper whomever He wills and ruins and lays waste whomever He wills. Neither it is in anybody's power to stop the growth of someone whom Allah wills to grow, nor has anyone the power to save him from destruction whom Allah wills to destroy.

40. "Whose breast ... Islam": Whom Allah helps to learn a lesson from these realities and to be satisfied with Islam as based on the Truth. Opening of a man's breast for something is, in fact, a state in which there remains no anxiety or ambiguity or suspicion and doubt in his mind about the thing, nor has he the feeling of any danger and loss in accepting and adopting it, but he decides with full satisfaction of the heart that it is the Truth; therefore, he must follow it whatever be the consequences. Having made such a decision when a person adopts the way of Islam, he obeys whatever Command he receives from Allah and His Messenger willingly and with pleasure, without any hesitation. He accepts whatever beliefs and ideas, rules and regulations, he comes across in the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet as if they were the voice of his own heart. He does not feel any compunction on giving up an unlawful gain, because he believes that it was no gain for him at all; it was rather a loss from which Allah saved him by His grace. Likewise, even if he incurs a loss while following the way of righteousness, he does not feel sad about this but bears it with patience and regards it as an ordinary loss as compared to the loss of turning away from the Way of Allah. The same is his behaviour on confronting dangers. He believes that there is no other way for him, which he may follow in order to avoid the danger. The Straight Way of Allah is only one, which he has to follow in any case: if there is a danger in following it, let it be.

41. "In the light shown by his Lord": In the light of the knowledge of the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet, by the help of which he sees clearly at every step which is the straight path of the Truth among the countless by-paths of life.

42. As against the opening of the breast there can be two other states of man's heart: (1) The state of narrowing of the breast and squeezing of the heart; and in this state there still remains some room for the truth to permeate it; and (2) the state of hardening or petrifying of the heart; in this there is left no room whatever for the truth to permeate. About this second state Allah says that the person who reaches such a stage is totally ruined. This means that if a person becomes inclined to accept the truth, even though with an unwiling and squeezed heart, there remains some possibility for him to be redeemed. This second theme becomes obvious from the style and tenor of the verse itself, though Allah has not stated it directly. For the real intention of the verse was to warn those who were bent upon stubbornness in their antagonism towards the Holy Prophet, and had made up their mind not to listen to him at all. For this they have been warned, as if to say: "You take pride in this stubbornness of yours, but, as a matter of fact, there cannot be a greater misfortune and unworthiness of man than that his heart should become even more hardened, instead of becoming soft, when he hears Allah being mentioned and the admonition sent by Him."

43. That is, there is no contradiction and disagreement between them. The whole Book, from the beginning to the end, projects one and the same aim, one and the same belief, and one and the same system of thought and action. Each of its parts confirms and supports and explains the other themes; and there is perfect consistency in it both in meaning and in style.

مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ۭ وَمَنْ يُّضْلِلِ اللّٰهُ فَمَا لَهٗ مِنْ هَادٍ ۝ اَفَمَنْ يَّتَّقِيْ بِوَجْهِهٖ سُوْۗءَ
الْعَذَابِ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ ۭ وَقِيْلَ لِلظّٰلِمِيْنَ ذُوْقُوْا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْسِبُوْنَ ۝ كَذَّبَ
الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَاَتٰىهُمُ الْعَذَابُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ۝ فَاَذَاقَهُمُ
اللّٰهُ الْخِزْيَ فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا ۚ وَلَعَذَابُ الْاٰخِرَةِ اَكْبَرُ ۘ لَوْ كَانُوْا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝
وَلَقَدْ ضَرَبْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِيْ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ لَّعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُوْنَ ۝
قُرْاٰنًا عَرَبِيًّا غَيْرَ ذِيْ عِوَجٍ لَّعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُوْنَ ۝ ضَرَبَ اللّٰهُ مَثَلًا رَّجُلًا
فِيْهِ شُرَكَاۗءُ مُتَشٰكِسُوْنَ وَرَجُلًا سَلَمًا لِّرَجُلٍ ۭ هَلْ يَسْتَوِيٰنِ مَثَلًا ۭ
اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ ۭ بَلْ اَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝ اِنَّكَ مَيِّتٌ وَّاِنَّهُمْ مَّيِّتُوْنَ ۝
ثُمَّ اِنَّكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ عِنْدَ رَبِّكُمْ تَخْتَصِمُوْنَ ۝

فَمَنْ اَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ كَذَبَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ وَكَذَّبَ بِالصِّدْقِ اِذْ جَاۗءَهٗ ۭ

اَلَيْسَ فِيْ جَهَنَّمَ مَثْوًى لِّلْكٰفِرِيْنَ ۝ وَالَّذِيْ جَاۗءَ بِالصِّدْقِ وَصَدَّقَ بِهٖٓ
اُولٰۗىِٕكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُوْنَ ۝ لَهُمْ مَّا يَشَاۗءُوْنَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ۭ ذٰلِكَ جَزٰۗؤُا الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ۝
لِيُكَفِّرَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُمْ اَسْوَاَ الَّذِيْ عَمِلُوْا وَيَجْزِيَهُمْ اَجْرَهُمْ بِاَحْسَنِ الَّذِيْ
كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ۝ اَلَيْسَ اللّٰهُ بِكَافٍ عَبْدَهٗ ۭ وَيُخَوِّفُوْنَكَ بِالَّذِيْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ ۭ
وَمَنْ يُّضْلِلِ اللّٰهُ فَمَا لَهٗ مِنْ هَادٍ ۝ وَمَنْ يَّهْدِ اللّٰهُ فَمَا لَهٗ مِنْ مُّضِلٍّ ۭ
اَلَيْسَ اللّٰهُ بِعَزِيْزٍ ذِي انْتِقَامٍ ۝ وَلَىِٕنْ سَاَلْتَهُمْ مَّنْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ
الْاَرْضَ لَيَقُوْلُنَّ اللّٰهُ ۭ قُلْ اَفَرَءَيْتُمْ مَّا تَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ اِنْ اَرَادَنِيَ
اللّٰهُ بِضُرٍّ هَلْ هُنَّ كٰشِفٰتُ ضُرِّهٖٓ اَوْ اَرَادَنِيْ بِرَحْمَةٍ هَلْ هُنَّ مُمْسِكٰتُ
رَحْمَتِهٖ ۭ قُلْ حَسْبِيَ اللّٰهُ ۭ عَلَيْهِ يَتَوَكَّلُ الْمُتَوَكِّلُوْنَ ۝ قُلْ يٰقَوْمِ اعْمَلُوْا عَلٰى

الجزء ٢٤

Now, how can you imagine the plight of the one who will receive the severe punishment of the Day of Resurrection on his face?[44] To such wrongdoers it will be said, "Taste now (the fruit of) what you had been earning."[45] Many a people before them also denied likewise. Consequently, the scourge overtook them from whence they least expected. Then Allah made them to taste disgrace even in their worldly life, but the punishment of the Hereafter is far more terrible. Would that they knew it! 24-26

We have cited for the people in this Qur'ân every kind of parable, so that they may take heed. It is a Qur'ân in Arabic[46] without any crookedness in it,[47] so that they may guard against the evil end. Allah cites a parable: There is a man who is shared by many harsh masters, each pulling him to himself, and there is the other man who entirely belongs to one master. Can the two be alike in comparison?[48]—Praise be to Allah![49] But most of the people have no knowledge.[50] (O Prophet,) you shall die, and they, too, shall die.[51] Then on the Day of Resurrection, you all will present your disputes before your Lord. Then, who could be more wicked than the one who invented a falsehood against Allah, and denied the Truth when it came before him? Is not there in Hell a place for such disbelievers? And the one who came with the Truth, and those who confirmed it, they indeed shall remain secure from the torment.[52] They shall get from their Lord whatever they will desire.[53] This is the compensation of those who do right, so that Allah may wipe off from their account their worst deeds and reward them according to their best deeds[54] 27-35

(O Prophet:) Is not Allah enough for His servant? These people frighten you with others besides Him,[55] whereas there is none to guide him whom Allah lets go astray, and there is none to misguide him whom He guides aright. Is not Allah Mighty and capable of revenge?[56] If you ask them, "Who created the heavens and the earth?" they will say, "Allah." Ask them, "When the fact is this, do you think that if Allah wills harm for me, these goddesses, whom you invoke instead of Allah, will avert His harm from me? Or, if Allah wills to show me mercy, will they be able to withhold His mercy?" Therefore, tell them, "Allah is enough for me. In Him do those who trust place their trust."[57] Tell them plainly, "O my people: Do whatever you can,[58] so 36-41

shall I. Soon you shall come to know as to whom comes the disgraceful torment and who gets the enduring punishment." (O Prophet:) We have sent down to you for all mankind this Book with the truth. Now whosoever adopts the right way, will do so for his own sake, and whosoever goes astray, will himself bear the burden of his deviation: you are not responsible for them.[59]

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44. One takes a blow on one's face only when one is absolutely helpless and powerless, otherwise until one has some power to resist, one goes on receiving the blows on the other parts of one's body but saves one's face. Therefore, here the extreme state of helplessness of a person has been depicted, saying that he will receive the severe punishment on his face.

45. The word *kasab*, in the Qur'ānic terminology, implies one's deserving and earning a reward and punishment in consequence of one's actions and deeds. The real earning of a doer of good is that he becomes worthy of Allah's reward, and the earning of the evil-doer is the punishment that he will receive in the Hereafter.

46. That is, "It has not been sent down in a foreign language so that the people of Makkah and Arabia should stand in need of a translator or interpreter, but it is in their own language, which they can understand directly."

47. That is, "There is nothing of double-dealing in it so that a common man should find it difficult to understand, but everything has been presented in it in a straightforward manner, from which everyone can know what this Book states as wrong and why, what it states as right and on what ground, what it wants the people to accept and what it wants them to reject, and what it enjoins and what it forbids."

48. Allah in this parable has explained the difference between *shirk* and *Tauhīd* and the impact each has on human life so clearly that it is not possible to put across such a vast theme so concisely and effectively in other words. Everyone will admit that the person who has many masters, each one pulling him to himself, and the masters also so ill-tempered that no one spares him time in his service to obey the other, and no one rests content only with threatening and cursing him if he fails to carry out his command from among the contradictory commands of the other masters, but is bent upon punishing him, his life would certainly be in great anguish. On the contrary, the person who is the slave or servant of only one master, would be living a life of ease and comfort because he will not have to serve and seek the pleasure of another master. This is such a straightforward thing which does not need deep consideration for its understanding. After this it remains no longer difficult for a person to understand that the peace of mind and

satisfaction that accrue to him from the service of One God, can never accrue from the service of many gods.

Here, it should be understood well that the parable of many ill-tempered and contesting masters cannot apply to the images of stone, but it only applies to living masters, who practically give contradictory commands to man and keep pulling him to themselves in actual reality. One such master sits in one's own self, which presents before him desires of every kind and compels him to fulfil them. Other countless masters are there in the house, in the family, in the brotherhood, in the society, among the religious guides and the rulers and legislators, in the business and economic circles and among the dominant powers of civilization whose contradictory demands and requirements keep on pulling man to themselves at all times; then any god whose demand he fails to fulfil in any way, does not let him go unpunished in his own circle. However, each one's instrument of punishment is different. Someone causes a heart-break, another takes offence, another humiliates, another boycotts, another bankupts, another makes a religious or a legal attack. Man has no other way of being saved from this anguish and agony but to adopt the Way of *Tauḥíd* and become the slave of One God, and throw off the yoke of servitude of every other god.

Adoption of the Way of *Tauḥíd* also has two forms, which lead to different results:

First, that an individual should decide to become the servant of One God individually but his environment is hostile. In this case the external conflict and his anguish and agony might increase, but if he has adopted the Way sincerely, internal peace and satisfaction will necessarily accrue. He will turn down every such desire of the self as goes against the Divine Commands, or whose fulfilment may clash with the demands of God-worship. He will also reject every such demand of the family, society, nation, government, religious guides and economic powers that conflicts with the Divine Law. Consequently, he might have to face extreme hardships, rather he will surely face, but his heart will have full satisfaction that he is fulfilling the demand of the servitude of that God Whose servant he actually is, and that those whose servant he is not, have no right on him, because of which he may have to serve them against the Command of his God. No power of the world can deprive him of this satisfaction of the heart and peace of mind; so much so that even if he has to go to the gallows for its sake, he will go to it with a clear conscience, and he will have no compunction as to why he did not save his life by bowing before the false gods.

The second form is that the whole society be established on the basis of the *Tauḥíd* imbibing the principles of morality, civilization, culture, education, religion, law, social custom, politics, economics in every sphere of life as a creed,

which the Master of the Universe has given through His Book and His Messenger. The law should declare as a crime everything which God's religion has declared sinful and the government administration should try to eradicate the same; the system of education and training should prepare the minds and character to avoid the same; the same should be condemned from the religious pulpit, and regarded as vicious and forbidden in every economic enterprise. Likewise, everything that Allah's religion has declared as good and virtuous should be protected and defended by the law, developed by the administrative forces, impressed in the minds and instilled in character by the entire system of education and training, infused from the religious pulpit, admired by the society and followed by it practically and enforced in every economic enterprise. This is how man can attain to perfect internal and external peace and satisfaction, and all the doors to material and spiritual progress are thrown open, for the conflict in it between God-worship and the worship of others would be reduced to the minimum.

Although Islam invites every single individual to adopt *Tauhīd* as his creed and to worship Allah alone, braving every danger and hardship, even in the absence of the established order, it cannot be denied that Islam's ultimate aim and object is to establish this second order, and the same has been the objective of the endeavors of all the Prophets: to bring into existence a community of the Muslims, who should follow Allah's religion collectively, free from the domination and influence of unbelief and the unbelievers. No one, unless he is unaware of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah and senseless, can say that the objective of the Prophets' struggle has been only the faith and obedience of the individual, and that it has never been their aim to enforce and establish Islam in the society and state.

49. Here, in order to understand the real significance of *al-ḥamdu-lillah* (praise be to Allah), one should visualise this scene: after presenting the above question before the people the speaker observed a pause so that the opponents of *Tauhīd* could give an answer to it if they had any. Then, when they could not give any answer, and from nowhere it was said that both were equal, the speaker said: *"Al-ḥamdu-lillah:* Thank God that you too appreciate the difference between the two situations and none among you can dare say that slavery to many masters is better than slavery to one master, or that both are equal."

50. That is, "You fully understand and appreciate the difference between slavery to one master and slavery to many masters, but when you are made to understand the difference between God-worship and the worship of many gods, you show lack of understanding."

51. There is a subtle gap between the preceding sentence and this, which can be filled by every intelligent person himself by a little consideration of the context. It contains this theme: "You are making every effort to make the people

understand a simple thing in a simple way, but they are not only showing stubbornness with regard to what you say and rejecting it but are also bent upon harming you in order to suppress the manifest truth. Well, neither you are immortal nor they : both you and they have to die one day: then, each of you will experience his own end."

52. It means this: "As to who will receive punishment in the trial before Allah on the day of Resurrection, you should note it well that the punishment inevitably will be inflicted on those wicked people who invented a false creed that there were other associates also with Allah, who had a share in His Being, authority, powers and rights, and worse than that, when the truth was presented before them, they not only paid no heed to it, but, on the contrary, treated the one who presented it as an impostor. As far as the person who came with the truth, and those who affirmed faith in him, are concerned there can obviously be no question of their receiving any punishment from the Court of Allah."

53. One should note that the words used here are *'inda Rabbi-him* (with their Lord) and not *fil-jannah* (in Paradise), and obviously man reaches in the presence of his Lord just after death. Therefore, the intention of the verse seems to be: Not only after entering Paradise but right from the time of death till his entry into Paradise also Allah will treat the righteous believer in the same kind manner. The believer will certainly desire to be saved from the torment of *barzakh*, from the severities of the Day of Resurrection and Judgment, from the humiliation of the Plain of Gathering and from the punishment of his errors and shortcomings, and Allah Almighty will fulfil all his desires.

54. The people who believed in the Holy Prophet had happened to commit most heinous sins, both ideological and moral, in the days of ignorance, and after affirmation of the faith the good that they did was not only that they gave up the falsehood they had been professing and accepted the Truth that the Holy Prophet had presented, but in addition, they had performed the best righteous acts in morality, devotion and in their dealing's with others, Allah says: The worst deeds that they had committed in the days of ignorance will be wiped off from their account, and they will be rewarded for the best of their deeds found in their conduct book.

55. The disbelievers of Makkah used to say to the Holy Prophet, "You behave insolently in respect of our deities and utter rude words against them : you do not know how powerful they are and what miraculous powers they possess. Anybody who dishonoured them was ruined. If you also do not desist from what you say against them, you too will be annihilated."

[Contd. on p. 405

مَكَانَتِكُمْ إِنِّي عَامِلٌ ۚ فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿39﴾ مَنْ يَأْتِيهِ عَذَابٌ يُخْزِيهِ وَ
يَحِلُّ عَلَيْهِ عَذَابٌ مُقِيمٌ ﴿40﴾ إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ لِلنَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ ۖ فَمَنِ
اهْتَدَىٰ فَلِنَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا ۖ وَمَا أَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِوَكِيلٍ ﴿41﴾
اللَّهُ يَتَوَفَّى الْأَنْفُسَ حِينَ مَوْتِهَا وَالَّتِي لَمْ تَمُتْ فِي مَنَامِهَا ۖ فَيُمْسِكُ
الَّتِي قَضَىٰ عَلَيْهَا الْمَوْتَ وَيُرْسِلُ الْأُخْرَىٰ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُسَمًّى ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ
لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿42﴾ أَمِ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ شُفَعَاءَ ۚ قُلْ أَوَلَوْ
كَانُوا لَا يَمْلِكُونَ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿43﴾ قُلْ لِلَّهِ الشَّفَاعَةُ جَمِيعًا ۖ لَهُ مُلْكُ
السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۖ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿44﴾ وَإِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ اشْمَأَزَّتْ
قُلُوبُ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ ۖ وَإِذَا ذُكِرَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِ إِذَا هُمْ
يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ ﴿45﴾ قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ فَاطِرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ عَالِمَ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ
أَنْتَ تَحْكُمُ بَيْنَ عِبَادِكَ فِي مَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿46﴾ وَلَوْ أَنَّ لِلَّذِينَ
ظَلَمُوا مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا وَمِثْلَهُ مَعَهُ لَافْتَدَوْا بِهِ مِنْ سُوءِ الْعَذَابِ
يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ۖ وَبَدَا لَهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يَكُونُوا يَحْتَسِبُونَ ﴿47﴾ وَبَدَا لَهُمْ
سَيِّئَاتُ مَا كَسَبُوا وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ ﴿48﴾ فَإِذَا مَسَّ
الْإِنْسَانَ ضُرٌّ دَعَانَا ثُمَّ إِذَا خَوَّلْنَاهُ نِعْمَةً مِنَّا قَالَ إِنَّمَا أُوتِيتُهُ عَلَىٰ
عِلْمٍ ۚ بَلْ هِيَ فِتْنَةٌ وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿49﴾ قَدْ قَالَهَا الَّذِينَ مِنْ
قَبْلِهِمْ فَمَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿50﴾ فَأَصَابَهُمْ سَيِّئَاتُ مَا كَسَبُوا
وَالَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْ هَٰؤُلَاءِ سَيُصِيبُهُمْ سَيِّئَاتُ مَا كَسَبُوا وَمَا هُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ ﴿51﴾
أَوَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ

It is Allah Who takes the souls at death and the soul of the one, who has not yet died, during sleep.[60] Then He withholds that for whom He decrees death and restores the souls of others till an appointed time. In this there are many signs for the people who reflect.[61] What! Have they taken besides Allah others as intercessors?[62] Say to them, "Will they intercede even if they have no power whatever nor understanding?" Say, "Intercession is wholly in the power of Allah:[63] His is the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth. Then, to Him you will be returned." 42-44

When Allah alone is mentioned, the hearts of those who do not believe in the Hereafter, are filled with anguish; but when others beside Him are mentioned, they are at once filled with joy.[64] Say, "O God! Creator of the heavens and the earth, Knower of the unseen and the seen! You alone shall judge between Your servants concerning that in which they have been differing." Even if the wicked people possessed all the wealth of the earth, and as much more, they would be prepared to offer it all as ransom to escape the terrible punishment of the Day of Resurrection; yet from Allah there would appear before them that which they would never have imagined. There, all the evil results of their deeds shall become manifest to them, and the same which they had been mocking shall encompass them completely. 45-48

Man[65] is such that when a little affliction touches him, he calls upon Us, and when We bestow Our favour on him, he says, "I have been given this because of my knowledge!"[66] Nay, it is a trial, but most of them do not know.[67] The same was said also by those who went before them, but whatever they earned did not avail them anything.[68] So, they met the evil consequences of their deeds, and the wicked ones among these people, too, shall soon meet the evil consequences of their deeds. They cannot frustrate Us. And do they not know that Allah provides abundantly for whom He wills and sparingly for whom He wills?[69] In this there are signs for those who believe. 49-52

Contd. from p. 403]

56. That is, "This also is a result of their lack of guidance that the foolish people esteem highly the power and honour of their deities but they never think that Allah also is Almighty and they can also be punished for insulting Him by the *shirk* they are committing against Him."

57. Ibn Abi Ḥātim has related from Ibn 'Abbās that the Holy Prophet said: "The person who desires that he should become most powerful among men should repose his trust in Allah; and the person who desires that he should become the wealthiest among men should have more trust in that which is with Allah than that which is in his own hand; and the person who desires that he should become most honourable among men should fear Allah Almighty."

58. That is, "You may go on doing what you can in order to harm me and do not give me any respite."

59. That is, "It is not for you to bring them to the Right Path. Your only duty is to present the Right Path before them. If they prefer to remain astray after that, you are not responsible for it."

60. "Taking the souls during sleep" implies the suspension of the powers of feeling and consciousness, understanding and will.

61. By this Allah wants every man to realize how life and death are entirely in His own hand. No one has the guarantee that he will certainly get up alive in the morning when he goes to sleep at night. No one knows what disaster could befall him within a moment, and whether the next moment would be a moment of life for him or of death. At any time, while asleep or awake, in the house or outside it, some unforeseen calamity, from inside his body or from outside, can suddenly cause his death. Thus, man who is so helpless in the hand of God, would be foolish if he turned away from the same God or became heedless of Him.

62. That is, "In the first place, these people have foolishly presumed that there are some beings who wield great influence with Allah, and whose intercession is never turned down, whereas there is no proof of their being intercessors at all, nor has Allah ever said that they hold such a position with Him, nor did these beings themselves ever claim that they would use their influence with Allah and help them out in every case. Another folly of these people is that they have ignored the real Master and have believed the imaginary beings to be all-powerful, who deserve to receive all their devotion and dedication."

63. That is, "Not to speak of getting his intercession granted, no one has the power to stand before Allah as an intercessor. The right to grant or not to grant anyone the permission to intercede with Him exclusively rests with Allah. Then He may allow intercession for whomever He may please and forbid for whomever He may please." (For understanding the difference between the Islamic concept of intercession and the polytheistic concept, see Al-Baqarah: 255, Al-An'ām: 51, Yūnus: 3, 18, Hūd: 105, Ar-Ra'd 11, An-Naml: 73, 84, Ṭā Hā: 109-110, Al-Anbiyā': 23, Al-Ḥijr: 76, and the E.N.'s thereof and E.N. 40 of Sabā.

64. This evil is common to almost all polytheistic people of the world, and even some unfortunate Muslims also suffer from it. They profess with the tongue that they believe in Allah, but when One Allah alone is mentioned before them, their faces are distorted, and they say, "This man certainly does not believe in the saints and holy men; that is why he talks of Allah and Allah alone." And if others besides Allah are mentioned, they are delighted, and their faces brighten up with joy. Their this attitude shows as to who is the actual object of their love and esteem. 'Allāma Ālūsī, in his commentary *Rūh al-Ma'ānī*, has related his own experience here. He says: "One day I saw that a man was invoking the help of a dead saint in his affliction. I said; O bondsman of Allah, invoke Allah, for He Himself says: 'If My servants ask you, O Prophet, concerning Me, tell them I am quite near to them. I hear and answer the prayer of the supplicant when he calls to Me." (Al-Baqarah: 186). Hearing this the man became angry, the people told me afterwards that he said: This man is a denier of the saints; and some others heard him also say: The saints answer the prayers more promptly than does Allah."

65. "The man": the one who has aversion to Allah and whose face is distorted on hearing Allah alone being mentioned.

66. This sentence can have two meanings: (1) "That Allah knows that I am worthy of this blessing; that is why He has given me all this, otherwise He would not have blessed me if I had been an evil and wicked person in His sight;" and (2) "that I have attained to this by virtue of my ability."

67. People ignorantly think that whoever is being blessed by Allah in some way is being so blessed necessarily on account of his worth and ability and that the same is a sign or proof of his being a favourite in His sight; whereas the fact is that whoever is being given something here, is being given it for the sake of a trial by Allah. This is a means of the test, and not any reward for ability, otherwise many able and worthy people would not be living in poverty and many unworthy people would not be rolling in prosperity. Likewise, these worldly blessings are not a sign of one's being a favourite with Allah either. Everyone can see that many good people whose goodness is unquestionable are living in hardships in the world, and many wicked people whose evil-doing is well known are enjoying the pleasures of life. Now, can a sensible man take the affliction of the one and the life of ease and comfort of the other as an argument to say that Allah hates the good man and prefers the bad man?

68. That is, "When they were seized for evil-doing, the ability of which they were so proud, did not avail them anything, and this also became known that they were not Allah's favourites. Evidently, if their earning had been due to their capability and their being favourites with Allah, they would not have been seized for evil-doing at all."

[Contd. on p.410

لِقَوْمٍ يُّؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٥٢﴾ قُلْ يٰعِبَادِيَ الَّذِيْنَ اَسْرَفُوْا عَلٰٓى اَنْفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوْا
٥ ع ١١ ٩ ٣
مِنْ رَّحْمَةِ اللّٰهِ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوْبَ جَمِيْعًا ؕ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ الْغَفُوْرُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿٥٣﴾
وَاَنِيْبُوْٓا اِلٰى رَبِّكُمْ وَاَسْلِمُوْا لَهٗ مِنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ يَّاْتِيَكُمُ الْعَذَابُ ثُمَّ لَا
تُنْصَرُوْنَ ﴿٥٤﴾ وَاتَّبِعُوْٓا اَحْسَنَ مَآ اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْكُمْ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ مِّنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ يَّاْتِيَكُمُ
الْعَذَابُ بَغْتَةً وَّاَنْتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾ اَنْ تَقُوْلَ نَفْسٌ يّٰحَسْرَتٰى عَلٰى مَا
فَرَّطْتُّ فِيْ جَنْۢبِ اللّٰهِ وَاِنْ كُنْتُ لَمِنَ السّٰخِرِيْنَ ﴿٥٦﴾ اَوْ تَقُوْلَ لَوْ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ
هَدٰىنِيْ لَكُنْتُ مِنَ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾ اَوْ تَقُوْلَ حِيْنَ تَرَى الْعَذَابَ لَوْ اَنَّ لِيْ
كَرَّةً فَاَكُوْنَ مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿٥٨﴾ بَلٰى قَدْ جَآءَتْكَ اٰيٰتِيْ فَكَذَّبْتَ بِهَا وَاسْتَكْبَرْتَ
وَكُنْتَ مِنَ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿٥٩﴾ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ تَرَى الَّذِيْنَ كَذَبُوْا عَلَى اللّٰهِ وُجُوْهُهُمْ
مُّسْوَدَّةٌ ؕ اَلَيْسَ فِيْ جَهَنَّمَ مَثْوًى لِّلْمُتَكَبِّرِيْنَ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَيُنَجِّي اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ اتَّقَوْا
بِمَفَازَتِهِمْ ۫ لَا يَمَسُّهُمُ السُّوْٓءُ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُوْنَ ﴿٦١﴾ اَللّٰهُ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ ۫
وَّهُوَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَّكِيْلٌ ﴿٦٢﴾ لَهٗ مَقَالِيْدُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ وَالَّذِيْنَ
٦ ع ١١ ٩ ٣
كَفَرُوْا بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ اُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْخٰسِرُوْنَ ﴿٦٣﴾ قُلْ اَفَغَيْرَ اللّٰهِ تَاْمُرُوْٓنِّيْٓ اَعْبُدُ اَيُّهَا
الْجٰهِلُوْنَ ﴿٦٤﴾ وَلَقَدْ اُوْحِيَ اِلَيْكَ وَاِلَى الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ ۚ لَئِنْ اَشْرَكْتَ
لَيَحْبَطَنَّ عَمَلُكَ وَلَتَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ الْخٰسِرِيْنَ ﴿٦٥﴾ بَلِ اللّٰهَ فَاعْبُدْ وَكُنْ مِّنَ
الشّٰكِرِيْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾ وَمَا قَدَرُوا اللّٰهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهٖ ۖ وَالْاَرْضُ جَمِيْعًا قَبْضَتُهٗ يَوْمَ
الْقِيٰمَةِ وَالسَّمٰوٰتُ مَطْوِيّٰتٌۢ بِيَمِيْنِهٖ ؕ سُبْحٰنَهٗ وَتَعٰلٰى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿٦٧﴾ وَ
نُفِخَ فِي الصُّوْرِ فَصَعِقَ مَنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْاَرْضِ اِلَّا مَنْ شَآءَ
اللّٰهُ ؕ ثُمَّ نُفِخَ فِيْهِ اُخْرٰى فَاِذَا هُمْ قِيَامٌ يَّنْظُرُوْنَ ﴿٦٨﴾ وَاَشْرَقَتِ الْاَرْضُ

(O Prophet,) say, "O My servants,[70] who have wronged their own souls: Do not despair of Allah's mercy: surely Allah forgives all sins: He is the All-Forgiving, the All-Merciful.[71] Return to your Lord and submit to Him before the scourge overtakes you, and then you may get no help from anywhere. And follow the best aspect[72] of the Book sent down by your Lord, before the scourge comes down upon you suddenly while you are unaware, lest afterwards someone should say, "Alas for the negligence (in duty) I showed towards Allah! Indeed, I was among those who mocked." Or: "Would that Allah had shown me guidance so that I too would have been among the righteous!" Or, when he sees the torment: "Would that I could get another chance so that I also should be among the doers of good!" (And then he should get this answer:) "Why not! My Revelations did come to you; then you denied them, and showed arrogance, and you were among the disbelievers." You will see that on the Day of Resurrection the faces of those who have invented falsehoods against Allah, will be blackened. Is not there in Hell enough room for the arrogant? On the contrary, those who have adopted righteousness here, Allah will rescue them because of their means of success. No evil shall touch them nor will they grieve. 53-61

Allah is the Creator of everything and over every thing He is the Guardian.[73] To Him belong the keys of the treasures of the heavens and the earth; and the losers are only those who disbelieve His Revelations. (O Prophet,) say to them, "Ignorant people! Do you bid me worship others than Allah?" (Tell them plainly this because) the Revelation sent to you and to all the Prophets before you has been this: "If you commit *shirk*, all your works will be rendered vain[74] and you will be among the losers." Therefore, (O Prophet), you should worship only Allah and be among His grateful servants. 62-66

These people have not recognized the true worth of Allah as His worth should truly be recognized.[75] (As for His Omnipotence) the entire earth on the Day of Resurrection shall be in His grasp and the heavens shall be rolled up in His right hand.[76] Glorified is He and Exalted above what they associate with Him.[77] And the Trumpet shall be blown on that Day[78] and all those who are in the heavens and the earth shall fall down dead except those whom Allah may allow to live. 62-66

Then the Trumpet shall be blown again and they will all stand up, looking around.[79]

Contd. from p.407]

69. That is, "The Abundance or restriction of the provisions is based on another law of Allah, which has some other wisdom. The distribution of the provisions does not at all depend on man's worthiness and ability, or on his being a favourite of Allah, or for being under His wrath." (For details, see At-Taubah: 55, 69, 85; Yūnus: 17; Hūd: 3, 27; Ar-Ra'd: 26; Al-Kahf: 34-36; Ṭā Hā: 131-132; Al-Anbiyā': 105; Al-Mu'minūn: Introduction and vv. 55-56; Ash-Shu'arā': 111; Al-Qaṣaṣ: 78, 89 and the E N. thereof, and E.N.'s 54 to 60 of Sabā).

70. Some commentators have given a strange interpretation to these words. They say that Allah Himself has commanded the Holy Prophet to address the people as "My servants" therefore, all men are the servants of the Holy Prophet. This interpretation is no interpretation at all but a worst distortion of the meaning of the Qur'ān and indeed tampering with the Word of Allah. If this interpretation were correct, it would falsify and negate the whole Qur'ān.

For the Qur'ān, from the beginning to the end, establishes the concept that men are the servants of Allah alone, and its whole message revolves around the point that they should serve none but One Allah alone. The Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) himself was Allah's servant. Allah had sent him not as *rabb* (sustainer, providence) but as a Messenger so that he should himself serve Him and teach the other people also to serve Him alone. After all, how can a sensible person believe that the Holy Prophet might have one day stood up before the disbelieving Quraish of Makkah and made the sudden proclamation: "You are in fact the slaves of Muhammad and not of al-'Uzzah and ash-Shams." (We seek Allah's refuge from this).

71. The address here is to all mankind. There is no weighty argument to regard only the believers as the addressees. As has been observed by 'Allāma Ibn Kathīr, to address such a thing to the common men does not mean that Allah forgives all sins without repentance, but Allāh Himself has explained in the following verses that sins are forgiven only when the sinner turns to Allah's worship and service and adopts obedience to the message sent down by Him. As a matter of fact, this verse brought a message of hope for those people who had committed mortal sins like murder, adultery, theft, robbery, etc. in the days of ignorance, and had despaired whether they would ever be forgiven. To them it has been said: "Do not despair of Allah's mercy: whatever you might have done in the past, if you sincerely turn to your Lord's obedience, you will be forgiven every sin." The same interpretation of this verse has been given by Ibn 'Abbās,

Qatādah, Mujāhid and Ibn Zaid. (Ibn Jarir, Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhi). For further explanation, see Al-Furqān: 70-71 and the E.N.'s thereof.

72. "To follow the best aspect of the Book of Allah" means that one should carry out the Commands Allah has given and refrain from what He has forbidden, and learn lessons from what He has brought out in the parables and narratives. As against this, the one who turns away from Allah's Commands, indulges in the forbidden things, and does not heed His admonitions, follows the worst aspect of the Book of Allah, i.e. that aspect which the Divine Book has declared as the most evil.

73. That is, "He did not just create the world and then left it alone, but He is constantly guarding and watching over everything. Just as everything in the world came into being by His act of creation so everything is living and surviving by His leave, and flourishing and functioning only under His protection and care."

74. That is, "No act which is performed along with *shirk* will be adjudged as a righteous act, and no one who, being a *mushrik*, performs many acts as good acts in his personal judgement, will deserve any reward for them, and his whole life work will be deemed to have gone waste."

75. That is, "They have no conception of the greatness and glory of Allah; they have never tried to understand how high is the position of the Lord of the Universe and how insignificant are the beings whom these foolish people have made associates in Godhead and worthy of their worship."

76. This is a figurative way of describing the complete control and authority of Allah over the earth and heavens. Just as a man encloses a small ball in the hollow of his hand with perfect ease, or a person rolls up an handkerchief in his hand without any difficulty, so will all men (who fail to conceive the greatness and glory of Allah) see with their own eyes, on the Day of Resurrection, that the earth and the heavens are like an ordinary ball and a small scroll in the hand of Allah. Traditions have been related in Musnad Aḥmad, Bukhārī, Muslim, Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Jarīr and others, on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar and Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, that once during a sermon the Holy Prophet recited this verse and then said: "Allah will hold the heavens and the earths (i.e. the planets) in His grasp and will roll them about in such a way as a child rolls a ball, and will say: 'I am God, the One: I am the King: I am the All Mighty, Owner of glory: Where are the kings of the world? Where are the tyrants? Where are the arrogant?' —Saying these words he started so shaking that we feared that he might topple over along with the pulpit."

[Contd. on p. 413

بِنُوْرِ رَبِّهَا وَ وُضِعَ الْكِتٰبُ وَ جِایْٓءَ بِالنَّبِیّٖنَ وَ الشُّهَدَآءِ وَ قُضِیَ بَیْنَهُمْ
بِالْحَقِّ وَ هُمْ لَا یُظْلَمُوْنَ ﴿۶۹﴾ وَ وُفِّیَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا عَمِلَتْ وَ هُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا
یَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿۷۰﴾ وَ سِیْقَ الَّذِیْنَ كَفَرُوْٓا اِلٰى جَهَنَّمَ زُمَرًا ؕ حَتّٰۤى اِذَا جَآءُوْهَا
فُتِحَتْ اَبْوَابُهَا وَ قَالَ لَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَاۤ اَلَمْ یَاْتِكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِّنْكُمْ یَتْلُوْنَ
عَلَیْكُمْ اٰیٰتِ رَبِّكُمْ وَ یُنْذِرُوْنَكُمْ لِقَآءَ یَوْمِكُمْ هٰذَا ؕ قَالُوْا بَلٰى وَ لٰكِنْ حَقَّتْ
كَلِمَةُ الْعَذَابِ عَلَى الْكٰفِرِیْنَ ﴿۷۱﴾ قِیْلَ ادْخُلُوْۤا اَبْوَابَ جَهَنَّمَ خٰلِدِیْنَ فِیْهَا ۚ
فَبِئْسَ مَثْوَى الْمُتَكَبِّرِیْنَ ﴿۷۲﴾ وَ سِیْقَ الَّذِیْنَ اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ اِلَى الْجَنَّةِ زُمَرًا ؕ
حَتّٰۤى اِذَا جَآءُوْهَا وَ فُتِحَتْ اَبْوَابُهَا وَ قَالَ لَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا سَلٰمٌ عَلَیْكُمْ طِبْتُمْ
فَادْخُلُوْهَا خٰلِدِیْنَ ﴿۷۳﴾ وَ قَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِیْ صَدَقَنَا وَعْدَهٗ وَ اَوْرَثَنَا
الْاَرْضَ نَتَبَوَّاُ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ حَیْثُ نَشَآءُ ۚ فَنِعْمَ اَجْرُ الْعٰمِلِیْنَ ﴿۷۴﴾ وَ تَرَى
الْمَلٰٓئِكَةَ حَآفِّیْنَ مِنْ حَوْلِ الْعَرْشِ یُسَبِّحُوْنَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ ۚ وَ قُضِیَ بَیْنَهُمْ
بِالْحَقِّ وَ قِیْلَ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِیْنَ ﴿۷۵﴾

The earth will shine forth with the light of her Lord and the conduct book will be laid open, and the Prophets and the witnesses[80] shall be brought in, and the people shall be judged with full justice, and none shall be wronged. And every living being shall be recompensed fully for whatever it had done. Allah knows full well what the people do. 71-72

(After this Judgement) those who had disbelieved, shall be driven towards Hell, in groups, till, when they have reached there, its gates will be opened,[81] and its keepers will say to them, "Did not Messengers come to you from among yourselves, who recited to you the Revelations of your Lord, and warned you that you shall have to encounter this Day?" They will reply, "Yes, they did come, but the sentence of punishment proved true against the disbelievers." It will be said, "Enter the gates of Hell, to dwell therein for ever. What an evil abode for the arrogant!" 71 72

And those who had refrained from the disobedience of their Lord shall be led towards Paradise, in groups, till, when they arrive there, and its gates shall already have been opened, its keepers will say, "Peace be upon you: you have fared well. Enter herein to dwell for every" And they will say, "Praise is for Allah, Who has proved true to us His promise and made us heirs of the earth:[82] now we can dwell in Paradise wherever we like."[83] How excellent a reward for the virtuous![84] 73-74

And you will see the angels circling around the Throne, glorifying their Lord with His praises; and the people shall be judged with full justice, and it will be proclaimed: "Praise is for Allah; Lord of the worlds!"[85] 75

Contd. from p.411]

77. That is, there is no comparison whatever between Allah's greatness and glory and the insignificance of those who are associated with Him in Godhead.

78. For the explanation of Sūr (Trumpet), see Al-An'ām: 73, Ibrāhīm: 48, Al-Kahf: 99, Ṭā Hā: 102-103, Al-Ḥajj: 1, Al-Mu'minūn: 101, An-Naml: 87 and the E.N.'s thereof.

79. Here, mention has been made of the Trumpet's being blown only twice. Besides, in Sūrah An-Naml there is the mention of another blowing of the Trumpet before these two, on hearing which everything in the earth and the heavens will be struck with terror (v. 87). On this very basis, the *Aḥādīth* mention that the Trumpet will be blown thrice: (1) *Nafakhat al-Fazz'* on hearing which everything will be struck with terror, (2) *nafakhat as-Sa'q*, on which everyone will fall down dead, and (3) *nafakhat al-qiyām li-Rabbil-'ālamin*, i.e. the Trumpet on the blowing of which all dead men will return to life and arise from their graves to present themselves before their Lord.

80. "The witnesses": those who will bear witness to the effect that the Message of Allah had been conveyed to the people as well as those who will bear witness to the acts and deeds of the people. It is not necessary that these witnesses will be only human beings. The angels, the jinns, the beasts, men's own limbs, their dwelling places and the trees and stones, will all be included among the witnesses.

81. That is, the gates of Hell will not have already been opened but will be opened on their arrival there just as the gate of a prison is opened on the arrival of the culprits and is closed as soon as they have entered it.

82. For explanation, see Ṭā Hā: 106-107, 124; Al-Anbiyā': 106-107 and the E.N.'s thereof.

83. That is, "The Paradise which has been granted to each of us, is now our property and we possess full rights over it."

84. Maybe this is said by the dwellers of Paradise, or maybe this sentence is added by Allah to what the dwellers of Paradise will say.

85. That is, the entire Universe will proclaim the praises of Allah Almighty.



XL

AL-MU'MIN

المؤمن

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

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INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name *Al-Mu'min* from verse 28, implying thereby, that it is a Sūrah in which *Al-Mu'min* (the Believer of Pharaoh's people) has been mentioned.

Period of Revelation

According to Ibn 'Abbās and Jābir bin Zaid, this Sūrah was sent down consecutively after Sūrah Az-Zumar, and its present position in the order of the Sūrahs in the Qur'ān is the same as its chronological order.

Background of Revelation

There are clear indications in the subject-matter of this Sūrah to the conditions in which it was revealed. The disbelievers of Makkah at that time were engaged in two kinds of activities against the Holy

Prophet. First, they were creating every kind of suspicion and misgiving in the minds of the people about the teaching of the Qur'ān and the message of Islam and about the Holy Prophet himself by starting many disputes and discussions, raising irrelevant objections and bringing ever new accusations so that the Holy Prophet and the believers were sick of trying to answer them. Second, they were preparing the ground for putting an end to the Holy Prophet himself. They were devising one plot after the other, and on one occasion had even taken the practical steps to execute a plot. Bukhārī has related a tradition on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin 'As saying that one day when the Holy Prophet was offering his Prayer in the precincts of the Ka'bah, suddenly Uqbah bin Abi Mu'ait, rushed forward and putting a piece of cloth round his neck started twisting it so as to strangle him to death. Ḥaḍrat Abu Bakr, who happened to go there in time, pushed him away. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah says that when Abū Bakr was struggling with the cruel man, he was saying words to the effect: Would you kill a man only because he says: Allah is my Lord?" With a little variation this event has also been mentioned in Ibn Hishām, Nasā'ī and Ibn Abī Ḥātim.

Theme and Topics

Both aspects of this have been clearly stated at the very outset, and then the whole following discourse is a most effective and instructive review of them.

As an answer to the conspiracies of murder the story of the Believer of the people of Pharaoh has been narrated (vv. 23-55) and through this story three different lessons have been taught to the three groups:

(1) The disbelievers have been admonished: "Whatever you intend to do against Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), the same did the Pharaoh with his might intend against the Prophet Moses. Now, would you like to meet with the same fate with which he met by plotting such conspiracies?"

(2) The Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and his followers have been taught the lesson: "These wicked people may apparently be very strong and powerful and you very weak and helpless against them, yet you should rest assured that the might of that God Whose Word you are trying to raise high is superior

to every other power. Therefore, you should only seek Allah's refuge in response to every and any dreadful threat that they utter against you, and then busy yourself after this in fearlessly performing your mission. The God-worshipper has only one answer to every threat of the tyrant: 'I have taken refuge in my Lord and your Lord against every arrogant person who does not believe in the Day of Reckoning.' (v. 27) Thus, if you go on performing your mission fearless of every danger and with full trust in God, His succour will ultimately reach you, and the Pharaohs of today shall be doomed just as the Pharaohs of yesterday. Till that time you will have to face and bear patiently every wave of persecution and tyranny that may be directed against you.

(3) Besides these two, there was a third group of the people also in the society, who had been convinced in their hearts that the Truth was only on the side of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), and that the disbelieving Quraish were being unjust and cruel. But in spite of the conviction they were watching quietly and unconcerned the conflict between the Truth and falsehood. Allah here has aroused their conscience as if to say: "When the enemies of the Truth have openly plotted, in front of your very eyes, it would be a sad reflection on you if you still remained indifferent. Under such conditions, unless a person's conscience has wholly become dead, he should rise and perform the duty, which a righteous man from among the courtiers of Pharaoh himself had performed at a time when the Pharaoh had made up his mind to kill the Prophet Moses. The circumstances that prevent you from raising your voice had also obstructed the way of the Believer, but he had full faith in Allah and disregarded all expediency; then note that the Pharaoh was not able to do him any harm."

Now as for the conspiracies, which were continuing in Makkah day and night to defeat the Truth, on the one hand, arguments have been given to prove the doctrines of *Tauḥīd* and the Hereafter as true, which were the real basis of the dispute between the Holy Prophet and the disbelievers, and it has been stated plainly and openly that the disbelievers are wrangling over those truths without any knowledge. On

the other, the motives which were the real cause of the Quraishite chiefs' conflict against the Holy Prophet, have been exposed. Apparently they were trying to have the common people believe that they had some genuine objections against the teaching of the Prophet and his claim to prophethood; that is why they were not prepared to listen to him. But, in fact, this was their struggle for power. In verse 56, they have been openly warned, so as to say: "The real cause of your denial is your arrogance and vanity. You think that if you acknowledge the prophethood of Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), your power and authority will come to an end. That is why you are straining every nerve to frustrate and defeat him."

In the same connection, the disbelievers have been warned again and again to the effect: "If you do not desist from wrangling against the Revelations of Allah, you will be doomed to the same fate as the nations of the past. Much worse torment awaits you in the Hereafter. Then you will repent, but it will be too late.



حٰمٓ ۝١ تَنْزِيْلُ الْكِتٰبِ مِنَ اللّٰهِ الْعَزِيْزِ الْعَلِيْمِ ۝٢ غَافِرِ الذَّنْۢبِ وَقَابِلِ
التَّوْبِ شَدِيْدِ الْعِقَابِ ذِي الطَّوْلِ ۭ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۭ اِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيْرُ ۝٣ مَا يُجَادِلُ
فِيْٓ اٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا فَلَا يَغْرُرْكَ تَقَلُّبُهُمْ فِي الْبِلَادِ ۝٤ كَذَّبَتْ
قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوْحٍ وَّالْاَحْزَابُ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهِمْ ۠ وَهَمَّتْ كُلُّ اُمَّةٍۢ بِرَسُوْلِهِمْ
لِيَاْخُذُوْهُ وَجٰدَلُوْا بِالْبَاطِلِ لِيُدْحِضُوْا بِهِ الْحَقَّ فَاَخَذْتُهُمْ ۡ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ

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Verses: 85 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the compassionate, the Merciful.

1-3 Ḥā-Mīm. The revelation of this Book is from Allah, the All-Mighty, the All-Knowing, the Forgiver of sin and Acceptor of repentance. He is stern in punishment and is highly Bountiful. There is no deity beside Him. To Him shall all return.[1]

4-6 None dispute about the Revelations of Allah[2] but those who have disbelieved:[3] so let not their strutting about in the lands deceive you.[4] Before them the people of Noah also denied, and so did many a host after them. Every nation fell upon its Messenger to seize him: they all tried to defeat the Truth by means of falsehood, but, at last, I seized them. Then, just see, how severe was My punishment! Likewise has this judgement of your Lord also proved true against those people who have denied that they would go to Hell.[5]

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1. This is the introduction to the discourse. By this the listener has been forewarned to the effect: "What is being presented before you, is not the word of an ordinary being but of that God Who has infinite power." After this, some of

Allah's attributes have been mentioned, one after the other, which bear a deep relevance to the following theme:

First, that He is "All-Mighty", i.e. He is Dominant over everything. His every decree concerning anybody is always enforced; none can fight Him and win; none can escape His grasp. Therefore, a person who expects to be successful after turning away from His Command and expects to frustrate His Message after having a dispute with Him is himself foolish. Such notions are only deceptions.

Second, that He is "All-Knowing", i.e. He does not say anything on mere conjecture, but has the direct knowledge of everything. Therefore, whatever information He gives about the supernatural realities, is true, and the one who does not accept it, is following nothing but ignorance. Likewise, He knows in what lies the true success of man and what rules and laws and commands are necessary for his well-being. His every teaching is based on wisdom and correct knowledge, which does not admit of any error. Therefore, if a person does not accept His guidance, he only wants to follow the path of his own ruin. Then, nothing from the acts and deeds of man can remain hidden from Him; so much so that He even knows the intentions of man, which are the real motives of his deeds. Therefore, man can never escape His punishment.

The third attribute is that He is "Forgiver of sin and Acceptor of repentance." This attribute brings hope and causes inducement, which has been mentioned so that the people who have led lives of sin, should not despair but should reform themselves with the hope that if they refrained from their behaviour even now, they could still be redeemed by Allah's mercy. Here, one should understand well that forgiving of sins and accepting of repentance are not necessarily one and the same thing, but in most cases Allah forgives sins even without the repentance. For example, a person commits errors as well as does good, and his good acts become the means of forgiveness for his mistakes, whether or not he had opportunity to show repentance for the errors, but might even have forgotten them. Likewise, all the troubles and hardships and diseases and calamities that afflict man and cause him grief in the world, serve as penance for his mistakes. That is why mention of forgiveness of sins has been made separately from the acceptance of repentance. But one should remember that the concession of forgiveness of errors without repentance only refers to those believers, who are free from defiance and who committed sins due to human weakness and not persistence in pride and sin.

The fourth attribute is that "He is stern in punishment." By this the people have been warned that just as Allah is Merciful for those who adopt the way of His service, so He is stern for those who adopt an attitude of rebellion against Him. When a person (or persons) transgresses the limits where he can still deserve

pardon and forgiveness from Allah, then he becomes worthy of His punishment, and His punishment is so dreadful that only a fool would persist in his wrongdoing.

The fifth attribute is that "He is Bountiful", i.e. He is Generous and Beneficent: all creatures are being showered with His blessings and favours every moment: whatever the servants are getting, they are getting only through His bounty and beneficence.

After these five attributes, two realities have been stated expressly: (1) That none but Allah is the Deity no matter how many false gods the people might have set up; and (2) that to Him everyone must return: there is no other deity which can call the people to account and reward or punish them. Therefore, if somebody makes another his deity, apart from Him, he will himself face the consequences of his folly.

2. "To dispute" means using crooked arguments in reasoning, raising irrelevant objections, isolating a word or a sentence from its context, subjecting it to hair-splitting and making it the basis of doubts and accusations, misconstruing words from their true sense and intention so that neither should one understand the meaning oneself nor let others understand it. Such a way of dispute is adopted only by those whose difference of opinion is based on ill-will and malice. If a well-intentioned opponent disputes a point, he does so for the sake of arriving at the truth, and wants to be satisfied through discussion whether his own point of view is correct. Such a discussion is engaged in quest of truth and not for refutation. Contrary to this, the real purpose of the malicious opponent is not to understand anything nor to help others to understand, but to degrade and humiliate the other man; he joins a discussion only with the intention that he would not let the other man carry his point. That is why he never faces the real problems but launches his attacks only on the irrelevant issues

3. Here, the word *"kufr"* has been used in two meanings: for ingratitude and for denial of the truth. According to the first meaning, the sentence would mean: As against the Revelations of Allah this sort of behaviour is adopted only by those who have forgotten His bounties and who have even lost the feeling that it is by His bounty that they are flourishing. According to the second, it would mean: "This sort of behaviour is adopted only by those who have turned away from the truth and are determined not to accept it. " From the context it becomes obvious that here the disbeliever does not imply every non-Muslim, for a non-Muslim who disputes a point in good faith for the sake of understanding Islam, and who tries to grasp thoroughly those things which he finds hard to follow, although a non-Muslim technically, yet that which has been condemned in this verse does not apply to him.

4. There is a gap between the previous sentence and this, which has been left for the listener to fill. From the context and style it becomes evident that those who adopt the attitude of disputation as against the Revelations of Allah Almighty, can never escape the punishment. Therefore, they shall inevitably meet their doom. Now, if one sees that those people, even after adopting such an attitude, are strutting about, their business is flourishing, their governments functioning in a grand style, and they are enjoying the good things of life, one should not be misled into thinking that they have escaped Allah's punishment, or that war against Allah's Revelations is a sport which can be adopted as a pastime and its evil consequences warded off easily. This, in fact, is a respite which they have been granted by Allah. Those who abuse this respite for doing more mischief are indeed preparing for an ignominious end.

5. That is, "The torment that seized them in the world was not their final punishment, but Allah has also decreed that they shall go to Hell." Another meaning can be: "Just as the nations of the past have gone to their doom, so will those people also who are committing disbelief go to Hell, according to the fixed decree of Allah."

عِقَابِ ۝٥ وَكَذٰلِكَ حَقَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْٓا اَنَّهُمْ اَصْحٰبُ
النَّارِ ۝٦ اَلَّذِيْنَ يَحْمِلُوْنَ الْعَرْشَ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهٗ يُسَبِّحُوْنَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَ
يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِهٖ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُوْنَ لِلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا ۚ رَبَّنَا وَسِعْتَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ رَّحْمَةً وَّ
عِلْمًا فَاغْفِرْ لِلَّذِيْنَ تَابُوْا وَاتَّبَعُوْا سَبِيْلَكَ وَقِهِمْ عَذَابَ الْجَحِيْمِ ۝٧ رَبَّنَا
وَاَدْخِلْهُمْ جَنّٰتِ عَدْنِ ِالَّتِيْ وَعَدْتَّهُمْ وَمَنْ صَلَحَ مِنْ اٰبَآئِهِمْ وَاَزْوَاجِهِمْ
وَذُرِّيّٰتِهِمْ ۚ اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ۝٨ وَقِهِمُ السَّيِّاٰتِ ۚ وَمَنْ تَقِ السَّيِّاٰتِ
يَوْمَىِٕذٍ فَقَدْ رَحِمْتَهٗ ۚ وَذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيْمُ ۝٩ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا يُنَادَوْنَ
لَمَقْتُ اللّٰهِ اَكْبَرُ مِنْ مَّقْتِكُمْ اَنْفُسَكُمْ اِذْ تُدْعَوْنَ اِلَى الْاِيْمَانِ فَتَكْفُرُوْنَ ۝١٠
قَالُوْا رَبَّنَآ اَمَتَّنَا اثْنَتَيْنِ وَاَحْيَيْتَنَا اثْنَتَيْنِ فَاعْتَرَفْنَا بِذُنُوْبِنَا فَهَلْ اِلٰى
خُرُوْجٍ مِّنْ سَبِيْلٍ ۝١١ ذٰلِكُمْ بِاَنَّهٗٓ اِذَا دُعِيَ اللّٰهُ وَحْدَهٗ كَفَرْتُمْ ۚ وَاِنْ يُّشْرَكْ
بِهٖ تُؤْمِنُوْا ۚ فَالْحُكْمُ لِلّٰهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْكَبِيْرِ ۝١٢ هُوَ الَّذِيْ يُرِيْكُمْ اٰيٰتِهٖ وَيُنَزِّلُ لَكُمْ
مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ رِزْقًا ۚ وَمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ اِلَّا مَنْ يُّنِيْبُ ۝١٣ فَادْعُوا اللّٰهَ مُخْلِصِيْنَ لَهُ
الدِّيْنَ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكٰفِرُوْنَ ۝١٤ رَفِيْعُ الدَّرَجٰتِ ذُو الْعَرْشِ ۚ يُلْقِي الرُّوْحَ مِنْ
اَمْرِهٖ عَلٰى مَنْ يَّشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهٖ لِيُنْذِرَ يَوْمَ التَّلَاقِ ۝١٥ يَوْمَ هُمْ بٰرِزُوْنَ ۚ لَا
يَخْفٰى عَلَى اللّٰهِ مِنْهُمْ شَيْءٌ ۚ لِمَنِ الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ ۚ لِلّٰهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ ۝١٦ اَلْيَوْمَ
تُجْزٰى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ ۚ لَا ظُلْمَ الْيَوْمَ ۚ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ سَرِيْعُ الْحِسَابِ ۝١٧ وَ
اَنْذِرْهُمْ يَوْمَ الْاٰزِفَةِ اِذِ الْقُلُوْبُ لَدَى الْحَنَاجِرِ كٰظِمِيْنَ ۚ مَا لِلظّٰلِمِيْنَ
مِنْ حَمِيْمٍ وَّلَا شَفِيْعٍ يُّطَاعُ ۝١٨ يَعْلَمُ خَآئِنَةَ الْاَعْيُنِ وَمَا تُخْفِي الصُّدُوْرُ ۝١٩
وَاللّٰهُ يَقْضِيْ بِالْحَقِّ ۚ وَالَّذِيْنَ يَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ لَا يَقْضُوْنَ بِشَيْءٍ ۚ

The angels who bear the Divine Throne and those who stand around it, all are glorifying their Lord with His praises. They affirm faith in Him, and ask forgiveness for the believers.[6] They say, "Our Lord, You embrace everything in Your mercy and knowledge,[7] so forgive and save from the torment of Hell[8] those who have repented and followed Your Way.[9] Admit them, Our Lord, to the eternal Gardens which You have promised them,[10] and (admit therein also) of their parents and wives and children who are righteous.[11] You are surely All-Mighty, All-Wise. And deliver them from evils,[12] for whomever You delivered from evils on the Day of Resurrection,[13] to him You showed great mercy. This is indeed the supreme success." 7-9

To those who have disbelieved, it will be proclaimed, on the Day of Resurrection: "Allah's wrath against you was greater than is your own anger against yourselves today, when you were called to belief and you disbelieved."[14] They will answer, "Our Lord, You indeed gave us death twice and life twice.[15] Now we confess our sins.[16] Is there any way out from here?"[17] (They will be answered:) "You have incurred this fate because when you were called towards Allah, the One, you refused to believe, and when others were associated with Allah, you readily believed. Now the Judgement rests with Allah, the High, the Great!"[18] 10-12

It is He Who shows you His Signs[19] and sends down for you sustenance from heaven,[20] but only such a one learns lesson (from the observation of these Signs) who turns to Allah again and again.[21] (Therefore, O you who turn to Him: "Invoke Allah alone, making your religion sincerely His,[22] although the disbelievers may dislike your conduct." 13-14

Exalted in ranks[23] and Master of the Throne,[24] He sends down the Spirit by His Command upon whomsoever of His servants He pleases,[25] to give warning of the Day of Meeting,[26] the Day when all people shall be naked, and nothing of them will be hidden from Allah. (On that Day it will be asked:) "Whose is the Kingdom today?"[27] (The whole universe will cry out:) Of Allah, the One, the Omnipotent (It will be said): "Today every living being shall be recompensed for what it has earned: none shall be wronged today.[28] And Allah is swift at reckoning."[29] O Prophet, warn them of the Day that has approached 15-20

near,[30] when the hearts will leap up to the throats and the people will be standing mute, grief stricken: the wrongdoers will neither have any kindly friend[31] nor any intercessor who may be listened to.[32] Allah is aware of the treachery of the eyes and even of the secrets that the breasts keep hidden, and Allah shall judge with full justice. As for those whom they (the *mushriks)* invoke instead of Allah, they shall judge nothing. Indeed, Allah alone hears everything and sees everything.[33]

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6. This thing has been said for the consolation of the Holy Prophet's Companions, who were feeling greatly discouraged at the impudence and rebellious attitude of the disbelievers of Makkah as against their own helplessness, as if to say: "Why do you feel grieved at what these mean and worthless people say? You have the support of the angels who bear the Divine Throne and of those who stand around it; they are interceding with Allah for you." The mention of the angels who bear the Divine Throne and of those who stand around it, has been made, instead of the common angels, to impress the fact that not to speak of the common angels of Divine Kingdom, even the angels who are the pillars of this Kingdom, being nearest in rank and station to Allah, bear deep sympathy and regard for you. Then the words: "They affirm faith in Him and ask forgiveness for the believers", show that the relationship of the faith is the real relationship, which has joined the heavenly creatures and the earthly creatures together, and which has induced sympathy and esteem in the angels stationed around the Throne for the mortal humans inhabiting the earth, who affirm faith in Allah just like them. The angels' affirming the faith in Allah does not mean that they could disbelieve, and they adopted belief instead of disbelief, but it means that they believe in the sovereignty of Allah, the One, alone there is no other being that may be commanding them and they submit before it in utter obedience. When the same attitude and behaviour was adopted by the human believers, a strong relationship of cherishing a common creed and faith was established between them and the angels in spite of the great disparity in species and remoteness in rank and station.

7. That is, "The weakness, lapses and errors of Your servants are not hidden from You: You indeed know everything, but like Your knowledge Your Mercy also is infinite; therefore, forgive the poor creatures in spite of knowing their errors." Another meaning can be: "Forgive by Your Mercy all those about whom by Knowledge You know that they have repented sincerely and have, in reality, adopted Your Way."

8. To forgive and to save from the torment of Hell are although relatives, and there seems to be no need to mention the other when one has

been mentioned, this style, in fact, reflects the deep interest the angels have in the believers. It is customary that when a person who is deeply involved in a matter, finds an opportunity to make submissions before a judge, he presents the same petition humbly over and over again, in different ways, and does not rest content with making the petition just once.

9. "Who . . . way": "Who have given up disobedience and rebellion, adopted obedience and followed the way which You Yourself have shown."

10. Here again there is the same state of solicitude as referred to in E.N. 8 above. Obviously, forgiving and saving from Hell by itself amounts to admitting to Paradise. And then soliciting Allah for granting the believers the same Paradise which He Himself has promised them, seems to be unnecessary, but the angels are so earnest in their desire of well-being for the believers that they go on repeating their good wishes for them although they know that Allah will certainly bless them with these favours in the Hereafter.

11. That is, "Join with them their parents and their wives and children for the comfort of their eyes." This same thing Allah Himself has stated as among the blessings which the believers will be granted in Paradise. For this see Ar-Ra'd: 23 and At-Ṭūr: 21. In the verse of Sūrah Ṭūr, there is also the explanation that if a person will deserve a higher rank in Paradise, which his parents will not deserve, he will not be lowered in rank to be joined with them but Allah will raise them to join him in the higher station.

12. The word *sayyi'āt* (evils) is used in three different meanings and all three are implied here: (1) False beliefs, perverted morals and evil deeds; (2) consequences of deviation and evil deeds; and (3) calamities, disasters and suffering in this world, or in *barzakh*, or on the Day of Resurrection. The object of the angels' prayer is that they be saved from everything which may be evil for them.

13. "Evils on the Day of Resurrection" implies the dread and terror of the Day, deprivation of the shade and every other comfort, severity of accountability, the ignominy of exposing every secret of life before all mankind, and other humiliations and hardships which the guilty ones will experience in the Hereafter.

14. That is, "When the disbelievers will see on the Day of Resurrection that they had committed a grave folly by founding their entire life-work on polytheism and atheism, denial of the Hereafter and opposition to the Messenger, and due to the folly they were now doomed to that evil end, they will bite at their fingers and will curse themselves fretfully. At that time the angels will proclaim to them: "Today you are being angry with yourselves, but in the world when the Prophets of Allah and the other good people invited you to the right path to save

you from this evil end, you turned down their invitation, Allah's wrath against you then was even greater."

15. This same thing has already been mentioned in Al-Baqarah: 28 above. It implies this: "How can you disbelieve in Allah? He granted you life when you were lifeless; then He will give you death, and then will again raise you back to life." The disbelievers do not deny the first three of these conditions, because they are perceptible and therefore un-deniable. But they refuse to accept the occurrence of the fourth condition, for they have not yet experienced it, and only the Prophets have foretold it. On the Day of Resurrection when the fourth condition also will be practically experienced by them, then they will acknowledge that the same which the Prophets had foretold had actually happened.

16. That is, "We confess that we made a grave mistake when we denied this after-life; our life was filled with sins when we followed falsehood."

17. That is, "Is there any possibility now that our confession of sins be accepted and we be rescued from this state of torment in which we have been seized?"

18. That is, "The Judgement now rests entirely with that God alone, Whose Godhead you did not acknowledge, and those others whom you persistently regarded as associates and partners in the powers of Godhead, have no share whatever in the judgement." (For a fuller understanding of this point, please see verse 45 of Az-Zumar and its E.N. 64). This sentence by itself gives the meaning that there would be no possibility of any way out for the disbelievers from the state of torment, for they did not only deny the Hereafter but they had aversion to their Creator and Sustainer, and they were not satisfied until they had associated others with Him.

19. "Signs" imply those Signs which point to the great truth that the Fashioner, Ruler and Administrator of the Universe is One and only One God.

20. "Sustenance" here implies the rain, for every kind of the sustenance that man gets in the world, depends ultimately on the rainfall. Allah presents this one single Sign out of His countless Signs, as if to draw the people's attention to the fact: "If you only consider and ponder over the arrangement of this one thing, you will understand that the concept being presented in the Qur'ān of the administration of the Universe, is true. This arrangement could exist only if the Creator of the earth and its creatures and of water and air and the sun and the heat and cold was only One God, and this arrangement could continue to exist for millions and millions of years with perfect regularity only if the same Eternal God caused it to exist continually. And the One Who brought this arrangement into existence could only be an All-Wise and All-Merciful Lord, Who along with

creating men, animals and vegetables in the earth, also created water precisely according to their needs and requirements, and then made these wonderful arrangements for transporting and spreading that water to different parts of the earth with perfect regularity. Now, who can be more unjust than the one who sees all this and yet denies God, or associates some other beings also with Him in Godhead?"

21. That is, "A person who has turned away from God and whose intellect has been clouded and corrupted by heedlessness or prejudice, cannot learn any lesson from any Sign. He will see with his animal eyes that the winds blew, the clouds gathered, the lightning thundered and flashed and the rain fell; but his human eyes will never perceive why all this happened, who caused it, and what rights He has on him."

22. For the explanation of "making one's religion sincerely Allah's", see E.N. 3 of Az-Zumar.

23. That is, "He is exalted far above all the creations of the world. Anything that exists in the Universe, whether an angel or a prophet or a saint, or some other creation, may be very exalted and superior to other creations, but it cannot be imagined to have a station anywhere near the highest rank and position of Allah, not to speak of its being an associate in His attributes and powers and authority."

24. That is, He is King and Ruler of the whole Universe, and Master of the Throne of the Kingdom of the Universe. (For explanation, see Al-A'rāf: 54 and E.N. 41 thereof; Yūnus: 3, Ar-Ra'd: 2, Ṭā Hā: 5 and the E.N.'s thereof).

25. "The Spirit" implies Revelation and Prophethood. (For explanation, see An-Nahl 2, Banī Isrā'īl: 85 and the E.N.'s thereof). And the words: "Allah sends down the Spirit by His Command upon whomsoever of His servants He pleases" mean this: "Nobody has a monopoly over the bounties of Allah. Just as no one has a right to object as to why was so and so given beauty, and so-and-so extraordinary powers of memory or intelligence, so also no one has the right to object as to why so-and-so only was chosen to be a prophet and why a person of some one's own choice was not made a prophet."

26. "The Day of Meeting": the Day when all mankind, jinn and satans will be gathered together before their Lord simultaneously and the witnesses of their acts and deeds also will be present to bear the witness.

27. That is, "Thougth in the world many vain and self-conceited people publicly proclaimed to be the kings and sovereigns, whose, in fact, is the Kingdom today? Who is the Owner of the powers and authority and Whose is the Command?" If a person hears these words in his right senses, he will be filled

with terror, no matter how mighty a king or dictator he might be posing himself to be, and will immediately come to his senses. Here the mention of an historical event will not be out of place. When the Sāmānid ruler, Nasr bin Ahmad (301-331 A.H.), entered Nishāpur, he held a court and after ascending the throne desired that the proceedings be started with recitation from the Holy Qur'ān. At this an elderly pious man came forward and recited this very section of this Sūrah. When he came to this verse, Nasr was struck with awe; he descended the throne trembling, took off the crown and fell down in prostration, saying: "O my Lord, Kingdom is Thine, not mine!"

28. That is, "None shall be wronged in any way whatever today." It should be noted that in respect of recompense, injustice can have several forms; (1) A person may deserve a reward but he is not given it; (2) he is given a lesser reward than what was due to him; (3) he is given a punishment although he is not liable to any punishment; (4) the one who is liable to punishment is not given any punishment; (5) the one who is liable to a lesser punishment is given a greater punishment; (6) the oppressor goes scot-free; and (7) one is seized for the sin committed by another. What Allah means to say is that none of these different kinds of injustices will be allowed to take place in His Court.

29. It means: "It will take Allah no time to do the reckoning. Just as He is providing for every creature of the universe simultaneously and He is not so occupied in providing for one that He may have no time to provide for others, and just as He is seeing everything in the universe simultaneously, and hearing everything simultaneously, is managing every small and big affair simultaneously, and nothing absorbs His attention so completely that He may be unable to give attention to others, at the same time, so He will subject to reckoning every single individual simultaneously and the hearing of one case will not make Him so occupied as to render Him unable to hear other countless cases at the same time. Then, in His Court no delay also will be allowed to take place due to any difficulty in the investigation of the facts of the case and the availability of the witnesses. The Judge of the Court will Himself be aware of all the facts directly. Each party in every case will stand completely exposed before Him, and clear, undeniable evidence of the events and deeds, with each minor detail, will come forward without any delay. Therefore, each case will be settled and decided instantaneously.

30. In the Qur'ān the people have been made to realize again and again that Resurrection is not far off but has approached near at hand, and can take place any moment. In An-Nahl: 1, it has been said: "Allah's Judgement has come, so do not clamour for hastening it;" in Al-Anbiyā': 1: "The time of the reckoning of the people has drawn near, and yet they are turning away in heedlessness;" in Al-Qamar: 1: "The Hour of Resurrection has drawn near and the moon has split

asunder;" and in An-Najm: 57: "That which is coming is near at hand: none but Allah can avert it." All this is meant to warn the people to the effect that they should not become fearless of Resurrection thinking it to be yet far away, but should mend their ways and reform themselves at once.

31. The word *hamīm* as used in the original implies such a friend of a person as is aroused to action when he sees him being beaten, and rushes forward to protect and save Him.

32. This thing has been said to refute the concept of intercession held by the disbelievers. As a matter of fact, the wicked people will have no intercessor at all, for permission to intercede, if at all granted, can be granted only to the righteous servants of Allah, and Allah's righteous servants can never make friends with the disbelievers, polytheists and sinners so that they should even think of intruding on their behalf to save them. But as the disbelievers have generally held, and still hold, the belief that the saints, whose disciples they are, will not allow that they go to Hell, but will see that they are forgiven. Therefore, it has been said: "There will be no such intercessor there, who may have to be listened to, and whose recommendation Allah may have to accept necessarily."

33. That is, "He is not a blind and deaf god like your deities that He may be unaware of the misdeeds of a person about whom He is passing judgement."

إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ ﴿٢٠﴾ أَوَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنظُرُوا كَيْفَ
كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا مِن قَبْلِهِمْ ۚ كَانُوا هُمْ أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً وَآثَارًا
فِي الْأَرْضِ فَأَخَذَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ ۖ وَمَا كَانَ لَهُم مِّنَ اللَّهِ مِن وَاقٍ ﴿٢١﴾
ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانَتْ تَّأْتِيهِمْ رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَكَفَرُوا فَأَخَذَهُمُ اللَّهُ ۚ إِنَّهُ
قَوِيٌّ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَىٰ بِآيَاتِنَا وَسُلْطَانٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٢٣﴾ إِلَىٰ
فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ وَقَارُونَ فَقَالُوا سَاحِرٌ كَذَّابٌ ﴿٢٤﴾ فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُم بِالْحَقِّ
مِنْ عِندِنَا قَالُوا اقْتُلُوا أَبْنَاءَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ وَاسْتَحْيُوا نِسَاءَهُمْ ۚ وَ
مَا كَيْدُ الْكَافِرِينَ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ ذَرُونِي أَقْتُلْ مُوسَىٰ وَلْيَدْعُ
رَبَّهُ ۖ إِنِّي أَخَافُ أَن يُبَدِّلَ دِينَكُمْ أَوْ أَن يُظْهِرَ فِي الْأَرْضِ الْفَسَادَ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَ
قَالَ مُوسَىٰ إِنِّي عُذْتُ بِرَبِّي وَرَبِّكُم مِّن كُلِّ مُتَكَبِّرٍ لَّا يُؤْمِنُ بِيَوْمِ
الْحِسَابِ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَقَالَ رَجُلٌ مُّؤْمِنٌ مِّنْ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَكْتُمُ إِيمَانَهُ أَتَقْتُلُونَ
رَجُلًا أَن يَقُولَ رَبِّيَ اللَّهُ وَقَدْ جَاءَكُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ مِن رَّبِّكُمْ ۖ وَإِن يَكُ كَاذِبًا
فَعَلَيْهِ كَذِبُهُ ۖ وَإِن يَكُ صَادِقًا يُصِبْكُم بَعْضُ الَّذِي يَعِدُكُمْ ۖ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا
يَهْدِي مَنْ هُوَ مُسْرِفٌ كَذَّابٌ ﴿٢٨﴾ يَا قَوْمِ لَكُمُ الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ ظَاهِرِينَ فِي
الْأَرْضِ فَمَن يَنصُرُنَا مِن بَأْسِ اللَّهِ إِن جَاءَنَا ۚ قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ مَا أُرِيكُمْ إِلَّا
مَا أَرَىٰ وَمَا أَهْدِيكُمْ إِلَّا سَبِيلَ الرَّشَادِ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِي آمَنَ يَا قَوْمِ إِنِّي
أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُم مِّثْلَ يَوْمِ الْأَحْزَابِ ﴿٣٠﴾ مِثْلَ دَأْبِ قَوْمِ نُوحٍ وَعَادٍ وَثَمُودَ
وَالَّذِينَ مِن بَعْدِهِمْ ۚ وَمَا اللَّهُ يُرِيدُ ظُلْمًا لِّلْعِبَادِ ﴿٣١﴾ وَيَا قَوْمِ إِنِّي أَخَافُ
عَلَيْكُمْ يَوْمَ التَّنَادِ ﴿٣٢﴾ يَوْمَ تُوَلُّونَ مُدْبِرِينَ ۖ مَا لَكُم مِّنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ عَاصِمٍ ۗ

Have they never travelled in the land that they could see the end of those who have gone before them? They were stronger than they in power and have left mightier traces in the land, but Allah seized them because of their sins and there was none to save them from Allah. They met this doom because their Messengers came to them with clear Signs[34] and they refused to believe in them. Consequently, Allah seized them. Indeed, He is Mighty and very stern in punishment. 21-22

We sent Moses[35] to Pharaoh and Hāmān[36] and Korah with Our Signs and a clear authority of appointment,[37] but they said, "He is a sorcerer, a liar."[38] Then, when he brought them the truth from Ourself, they said, "Kill the sons of those who have believed and joined him[1] and spare their daughters."[39] But the disbelievers' plot ended in vain.[40] 23-25

One day[41] Pharaoh said to his courtiers, "Let me alone that I may kill this Moses[42] and let him call to his Lord. I fear he will change your religion, or cause mischief to appear in the land."[43] 26

Moses said, "I have taken refuge in my Lord and your Lord against every arrogant person who does not believe in the Day of Reckoning."[44] 27

At this, a believing man from among the kinsfolk; of Pharaoh, who had kept his faith hidden, spoke out, "Would you kill a man merely because he says: My Lord is Allah? whereas he has brought clear Signs to you from your Lord.[45] If he is a liar, his lie will recoil on him;[46] but if he is truthful, some of the dreadful things with which he threatens you, will certainly befall you. Allah does not guide the one who is a transgressor and a liar.[47] O my people, today you possess the kingdom and are dominant in the land, but who will help us if we are visited by Allah's scourge?"[48] 28-29

Pharaoh said, "I am telling you the same which I think is proper, and I am only guiding you to the way which is right."[49]

The man who had believed, said, "O my people! I fear that you also may be overtaken by the day that has already overtaken many hosts, a day that overtook the people of Noah and 'Ād and Thamūd and the peoples after them. And the fact is that Allah does not seek to wrong His servants.[50] O my people! I fear for you the day of wailing, 30-33

when you will cry out to one another and run about, but there will be none to protect you from Allah; the truth is that there is none to guide the one whom Allah lets go astray.

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34. *Bayyināt* means three things: (1) The clear signs which pointed to the Messengers' being appointed by Allah; (2) the convincing arguments which were a clear proof of their teachings being based on the Truth; and (3) the clear guidance and instructions about the problems and affairs of life which could enable every reasonable person to see that such pure teachings could not be given by an impostor.

35. For the other details of the story of the Prophet Moses, see Al-Baqarah: 49-61; An-Nisā: 164; Al-Mā'idah: 20-26; Al-A'rāf: 103-162; Yūnus: 75-92; Hūd 17, 96-97, 110; Introduction to Sūrah Yūsuf; Ibrāhīm: 5-8; Banī Isrā'īl: 101-104; Al-Kahf: 60-82; Maryam: 51-53; Ṭā Hā: 9-98; Al-Mu'minūn: 45-49; Ash-Shu'arā': 10-68; An-Naml: 7-14; Introduction to Sūrah Al-Qaṣaṣ and Al-Qaṣaṣ: 3-44; Al-Aḥzāb: 69; Aṣ-Ṣaff: 114-122 and the E.N.'s thereof.

36. For a reply to the critics' objections about Hāmān, see E.N. 8 of Al-Qasas above.

37. "A clear authority of appointment": With such clear Signs as left no doubt that he had been sent by Allah, and he had Allah, Lord of the worlds' power at his back. From a careful study of the details of the Prophet Moses' story, as given in the Qur'ān, it becomes obvious as to what were those Signs which are being described here as "a clear authority of his appointment" as a Prophet by Allah. In the first place, even this was strange that a person who, a few years earlier, had fled the country after killing a man of Pharaoh's nation and whose warrants of arrest had been issued, should make a sudden appearance directly in the full-packed court of Pharaoh, with a staff in hand, and should boldly and fearlessly address the king and his nobles and demand that they should acknowledge him as the representative of Allah, Lord of the worlds, and should act according to what he says, and none dares to lay his hands on him, whereas the nation to which Moses belonged, had been so suppressed under slavery that if he had been apprehended immediately on the charge of murder, no one would have voiced even a protest, not to speak of rising in rebellion. This shows that Pharaoh and his courtiers had been awe-inspired just at the appearance of the Prophet Moses, even before they witnessed the miracles of the staff and the shining hand, and they had realized in the very beginning that he had some greater power behind him. Then each of the wonderful miracles that he performed, one after the other, was enough to bring about the conviction that it was not a manifestation of magic but of Divine Power. After all, what power of magic could cause a staff to change into a serpent? or cause a whole country to suffer from

famine? or cause different sorts of disasters to strike vast areas of the land on a sudden notice by Moses and be removed on a notice by him? That is why, according to the Qur'ān, Pharaoh and all the responsible people of his kingdom had been convinced in their hearts, whether they might be refusing to profess with the tongue, that Moses had indeed been appointed a Prophet by Allah. (For details, see Al-A'rāf: 106-117; Ṭā Hā: 56 78; Ash-Shu'arā': 30-51; An-Naml: 10-13).

38. "The truth": the miracles and signs by which the Prophet Moses proved that he was a Messenger sent by Allah and the strong arguments by which he showed that he was wholly in the right.

39. As already mentioned in Al-A'rāf: 127 above, Pharaoh's courtiers had said to him: "Will you leave Moses and his people free to spread disorder in the land?" And he himself had said: "I will have their sons slain and let their daughters live." This verse states that this order was at last issued from Pharaoh's court. It was, in fact, meant to so terrify the Prophet Moses himself and his supporters and followers that they should abandon him out of fear.

40. Another meaning of this sentence can be: "Whatever the disbelievers had plotted, was aimed at deviation, tyranny and antagonism to the truth. That is, even after being convinced of the truth in their hearts, they continued to show stubbornness and did not hesitate to adopt any mean device whatever in order to defeat and frustrate the Truth.

41. The event which is being related here is a very important event of the Israelite history, which the Israelites themselves have totally forgotten. Both the Bible and the Talmud are without it, and no mention of it is found in the other Israelite traditions either. Only through the Qur'ān has the world come to know that during the conflict between Pharaoh and the Prophet Moses this event had taken place at some time. Anybody who reads this story, provided that he has not been blinded by prejudice against Islam and the Qur'ān, cannot but realize that from the viewpoint of the invitation to the Truth this story is very valuable, and this thing by itself also is in no way against reason that a person from among the nobles of the kingdom of Pharaoh himself might have quietly believed in his heart, having been influenced by the personality of the Prophet Moses, his preaching and the wonderful miracles shown by him, and might not have been able to restrain himself when he saw that Pharaoh was planning to kill him. But the way the Western orientalists, in spite of their tall claims to knowledge and research, try to repudiate the self-evident truths of the Qur'ān, on account of prejudice, can be judged from this that the author of the article "Mūsā" in the Encyclopaedia of Islam writes in respect of this story:

"The Kur'ānic story of a believer at the court of Pharaoh who wants to save Mūsā is not quite clear (xl, 28). Ought we to compare Jethro in the Haggada who advises clemency at Pharaoh's court?"

In other words, these so-called researchers have one thing settled with them: they must find fault with everything that the Qur'ān presents. Now, if they do not find any ground for criticising a statement of it, they should at least say this much out of mischief that the story is not entirely clear, and also should incidentally create this doubt in the reader's mind that the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) might have heard from somewhere the story of Jethro mentioned in the Haggada taking place even before the birth of Prophet Moses, and inserted it here in this form. This is the type of "literary research" which these people have adopted with regard to Islam and the Qur'ān and the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace).

42. In this sentence Pharaoh tries to give the impression as if some people were restraining him from killing the Prophet Moses. Had they not stood in his way, he would have killed him long ago, whereas in fact there was no external power to restrain him; it was the fear of his own heart which was preventing him from laying his hands on the Messenger of Allah.

43. That is, "I fear a revolution from him, and even if he is unable to bring it about, there is at least the danger that he will cause mischief to appear in the country by his activities. Therefore, even if he doesn't commit a crime punishable with death, he should be put to death only for the sake of the maintenance of public order. As for this whether there is a real danger to the public order from him, the king's satisfaction in this regard is enough. If his majesty is convinced that he is dangerous, it should be declared that he is really dangerous and punishable with death."

Here, the meaning of "changing the religion" also should be understood well, on account of which Pharaoh wanted to put the Prophet Moses to death. *Dīn* here implies the system of government, and what Pharaoh meant to say was this: "I fear that he will change your king." *(Ruḥ al-Ma'ānī,* vol. XXIV, p. 56). In other words, the *dīn* of the land was the religious, political, cultural and economic system that was prevalent in Egypt on the basis of Pharaoh's and his family's sovereignty, and Pharaoh was afraid that Moses' message would change that very *dīn*. But like the cunning and deceitful rulers of every age he also did not say that he feared being deposed from his position of authority and, therefore, he wanted to kill Moses, but he presented the case like this: "O people, the danger is for you, not for me; for if Moses' movement succeeded your *dīn* would change. I am not worried for myself: I am worried for your sake as to what would become of you when you have been deprived of the protection of my authority. Therefore,

the wicked man who poses such a danger should be put to death, for he is an enemy of the state."

44. Here, there are two equal probabilities and there is no ground for preferring one to the other. The first probability is that the Prophet Moses might himself be present in the court at the time and Pharaoh might have expressed his intention to kill him in his presence, and the Prophet might have given this direct answer there and then, addressing him and his courtiers. The other probability is that Pharaoh might have expressed this intention in the absence of Moses in a meeting with the responsible people of his government and a report of this conversation might have been conveyed to the Prophet by some of the believers, whereupon he might have said these words in some gathering of his followers. Whatever be the case, it is apparent from the words that the threat of Pharaoh could not cause any state of fear in Moses' heart and with trust in Allah he flung his threat back at Pharaoh. The context in which this event has been related in the Qur'ān by itself shows that the same also was the reply from the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) to those wicked people who, being fearless of the Day of Reckoning, were devising plots to kill him.

45. That is, "He has shown such manifest Signs to you as have made it absolutely clear that he is a Messenger sent by your Lord." The Believer, from among the people of Pharaoh, was obviously referring to the Signs the details of which have already been given in Al-A'rāf: 107-117,130-133; Banī Isrā'īl: 101-102; Ṭā Hā: 56-73; Ash-Shu'arā': 30-51; An-Naml :10-13).

46. That is, "If in spite of such manifest Signs as he has shown you, you regard him as a liar, you should leave him alone, for the alternative probability, and a very strong probability too, is that he is truthful, and therefore you may involve yourselves in God's torment by laying your hands on him. Therefore, even if you think that he is a liar, you should leave him to himself. For if he is lying, in the name of Allah, Allah Himself will take him to task." Similar words had the Prophet Moses himself said to Pharaoh before this: "If you do not believe in me, do not harm me." (Ad-Dukhān: 21)

Here, one should keep in mind that the Believer of the people of Pharaoh had not openly disclosed in the beginning that he had affirmed faith in the Prophet Moses, but he spoke as if he also belonged to Pharaoh's side, and was only wishing his people well. But when Pharaoh and his courtiers did not seem to see reason and continued to behave stubbornly, he at last disclosed the secret of his faith, as becomes obvious from his speech in vv. 38-44.

[Contd. on p. 440]

وَمَنْ يُّضْلِلِ اللّٰهُ فَمَا لَهٗ مِنْ هَادٍ ﴿33﴾ وَلَقَدْ جَآءَكُمْ يُوْسُفُ مِنْ قَبْلُ
بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ فَمَا زِلْتُمْ فِيْ شَكٍّ مِّمَّا جَآءَكُمْ بِهٖ ؕ حَتّٰۤى اِذَا هَلَكَ قُلْتُمْ لَنْ
يَّبْعَثَ اللّٰهُ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهٖ رَسُوْلًا ؕ كَذٰلِكَ يُضِلُّ اللّٰهُ مَنْ هُوَ مُسْرِفٌ مُّرْتَابُ ﴿34﴾
الَّذِيْنَ يُجَادِلُوْنَ فِيْۤ اٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ بِغَيْرِ سُلْطٰنٍ اَتٰىهُمْ ؕ كَبُرَ مَقْتًا عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ وَ
عِنْدَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا ؕ كَذٰلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى كُلِّ قَلْبِ مُتَكَبِّرٍ جَبَّارٍ ﴿35﴾ وَقَالَ
فِرْعَوْنُ يٰهَامٰنُ ابْنِ لِيْ صَرْحًا لَّعَلِّيْۤ اَبْلُغُ الْاَسْبَابَ ﴿36﴾ اَسْبَابَ السَّمٰوٰتِ فَاَطَّلِعَ
اِلٰۤى اِلٰهِ مُوْسٰى وَاِنِّيْ لَاَظُنُّهٗ كَاذِبًا ؕ وَكَذٰلِكَ زُيِّنَ لِفِرْعَوْنَ سُوْٓءُ عَمَلِهٖ وَ
صُدَّ عَنِ السَّبِيْلِ ؕ وَمَا كَيْدُ فِرْعَوْنَ اِلَّا فِيْ تَبَابٍ ﴿37﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِيْۤ اٰمَنَ
يٰقَوْمِ اتَّبِعُوْنِ اَهْدِكُمْ سَبِيْلَ الرَّشَادِ ﴿38﴾ يٰقَوْمِ اِنَّمَا هٰذِهِ الْحَيٰوةُ الدُّنْيَا
مَتَاعٌ ۫ وَّاِنَّ الْاٰخِرَةَ هِيَ دَارُ الْقَرَارِ ﴿39﴾ مَنْ عَمِلَ سَيِّئَةً فَلَا يُجْزٰۤى اِلَّا
مِثْلَهَا ۚ وَمَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ اَوْ اُنْثٰى وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ يَدْخُلُوْنَ
الْجَنَّةَ يُرْزَقُوْنَ فِيْهَا بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿40﴾ وَيٰقَوْمِ مَا لِيْۤ اَدْعُوْكُمْ اِلَى النَّجٰوةِ وَ
تَدْعُوْنَنِيْۤ اِلَى النَّارِ ﴿41﴾ تَدْعُوْنَنِيْ لِاَكْفُرَ بِاللّٰهِ وَاُشْرِكَ بِهٖ مَا لَيْسَ لِيْ بِهٖ
عِلْمٌ ۫ وَّاَنَا اَدْعُوْكُمْ اِلَى الْعَزِيْزِ الْغَفَّارِ ﴿42﴾ لَا جَرَمَ اَنَّمَا تَدْعُوْنَنِيْۤ اِلَيْهِ لَيْسَ
لَهٗ دَعْوَةٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَلَا فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ وَاَنَّ مَرَدَّنَاۤ اِلَى اللّٰهِ وَاَنَّ الْمُسْرِفِيْنَ
هُمْ اَصْحٰبُ النَّارِ ﴿43﴾ فَسَتَذْكُرُوْنَ مَاۤ اَقُوْلُ لَكُمْ ؕ وَاُفَوِّضُ اَمْرِيْۤ اِلَى اللّٰهِ ؕ
اِنَّ اللّٰهَ بَصِيْرٌۢ بِالْعِبَادِ ﴿44﴾ فَوَقٰىهُ اللّٰهُ سَيِّاٰتِ مَا مَكَرُوْا وَحَاقَ بِاٰلِ فِرْعَوْنَ
سُوْٓءُ الْعَذَابِ ﴿45﴾ اَلنَّارُ يُعْرَضُوْنَ عَلَيْهَا غُدُوًّا وَّعَشِيًّا ۚ وَيَوْمَ تَقُوْمُ السَّاعَةُ ۫
اَدْخِلُوْۤا اٰلَ فِرْعَوْنَ اَشَدَّ الْعَذَابِ ﴿46﴾ وَاِذْ يَتَحَآجُّوْنَ فِي النَّارِ فَيَقُوْلُ الضُّعَفٰٓؤُا

Before this Joseph had brought to you clear Signs, but you continued to be in doubt concerning his teachings. Then, when he died, you said, "Allah will never send another Messenger after him."[51]— Likewise,[52] Allah lets go astray the transgressors and doubters who dispute concerning the Revelations of Allah even without any authority having come to them.[53] Such an attitude is abhorred by Allah and the believers. Thus does Allah set a seal on the heart of every arrogant, self-exalting person.[54] 34-35

Pharaoh said, "O Hāmān, build for me a tower that I may reach the paths, the paths of the heavens, and peep at the God of Moses, for I think that Moses is a liar."[55]—Thus the misdeeds of Pharaoh were made seem fair to him and he was barred from the Right Way; all his scheming only led to (his own) ruin. 36-37

The man who had believed, said, "O my people! Follow me: I shall show you the right way. O my people! the life of this world is temporary:[56] only the abode of the Hearafter is everlasting. Whoever does evil shall be recompensed to the extent of the evil done; and whoever does good, whether man or woman, provided that he is a believer, all such people shall enter Paradise wherein they shall be provided without measure. O my people! How it is that I call you to salvation and you call me to the Fire! You call me to deny Allah and associate with Him those whom I do not know,[57] while I am calling you to the All-Mighty, the All-Forgiving God. Nay, the truth is, and it cannot be otherwise, that those to whom you call me, can neither be called to in this world nor in the Hereafter,[58] and to Allah have we all to return, and the transgressors[59] shall go to Hell. Soon you will remember what I am telling you today. To Allah I entrust my affairs: He is ever Watchful over His servants."[60] 38-44

At last, Allah saved the Believer from all those evil plots that the people devised against him,[61] and the companions of Pharaoh themselves were encompassed by the horrible scourge.[62] It is the fire of Hell before which they are presented morning and evening. And when the Hour of Resurrection comes, it will be commanded: "Admit the people of Pharaoh to the severest torment."[63] Then imagine the time when these people will be disputing with one another in Hell. The weak ones will say to the haughty one, "We were your followers: now, can 45-47

you save us from some part of our punishment in Hell?"[64]

Contd. from p. 437]

47. This sentence can have two meanings and probably the Believer had intentionally employed it, because he did not yet want to express his belief openly. Its one meaning is: "One and the same person cannot combine righteousness and lying and falsehood. You can clearly see that Moses is a man of very sublime and pure character. Therefore, how can you believe that, on the one hand, he should be such a liar as to lay a baseless claim to prophethood in the name of Allah, and on the other, Allah should bless him with such high morals?" The other meaning is: "If you are bent upon taking the life of Moses (peace be upon him) by transgressing all limits and will execute your evil designs by bringing false accusations against him, you should remember that Allah will never show you the way to success."

48. That is, "Why are you being ungrateful to Allah for His blessing of granting you domination in the land and are inviting His scourge to visit you?"

49. From this answer of Pharaoh it appears that he had not yet found out that thenoble of his court had become a Believer in his heart. That is why he did not show any displeasure at what he said, but made clear that he was not inclined to change his opinion even after hearing what he had to say.

50. That is, "Allah has no enmity with His servants that He should destroy them without any reason: He sends calamities upon them only when they have transgressed all limits, and sending the torment then is the very demand of justice."

51. That is, "Your deviation, and then your stubbornness, is such that before Moses (peace be upon him) there came in your land the Prophet Joseph about whom you yourselves admit that he was a man of the highest morals, and you also admit that by giving the right interpretation of the king's dream he saved you from the dreadful effects of the seven-year-long famine, which had struck Egypt in his time; and your entire nation also acknowledges that Egypt has never witnessed a period of greater justice and prosperity than the period of his rule. But in spite of knowing and recognizing all his merits and high qualities you did not believe in him during his life time, and when he died, you said: "Never will the like of him come again!" That is, you recognized his excellences only for an excuse to deny every prophet who came after him. This means that you would not accept guidance in any case."

52. It so appears that the next few sentences are an addition by Allah and an explanation of the words of the Believer of the people of Pharaoh.

53. That is, "Allah allows only those people to go astray who possess the following three qualities: (1) They transgress all limits in their evildoing, and then develop such a taste for it that they do not feel inclined to accept any invitation to reform their morals; (2) their permanent attitude in respect of the Prophets is characterised by doubt and suspicion. The Prophets of God may bring any clear Signs before them, yet they doubt their Prophethood as well as view with suspicion those truths which they present with regard to *Tauhid* and the Hereafter; and (3) they try to resist the Revelations of the Book of Allah with crooked arguments instead of considering them rationally, and these objections are neither based on any sound reason nor on the authority of a revealed Book, but from the beginning to the end their only basis is obstinacy and stubbornness. When a group of the people develops these three evils, Allah hurls it into the deep pit of Hell-fire wherefrom no power can then rescue them.

54. That is, "The seal is not set on the heart of anybody without a reason. This seal of curse is set only on the heart of the one who is filled with arrogance and spirit of violence and tyranny."

55. Pharaoh addresses these words to Hāmān, his minister, interposing in the speech of the Believer in a way as though he has no regard for what he was saying. Therefore, he turns away from him arrogantly and says to Hāmān, "Build me a high tower so that I may climb it to see where the God of whom this Moses speaks, lives." (For explanation, see Al-Qaṣaṣ: 38 and E.N.'s thereof).

56. That is, "You are being forgetful of Allah on account of your pride in the transient wealth and prosperity of this world; this is your folly."

57. That is, "About whom I have no scientific proof that they are God's associates, why should I then accept such a stupendous thing blindly that they also have a share in Godhead and that I have to serve them too along with Allah?"

58. This sentence can have several meanings: (1) That they neither possess here nor in the Hereafter any right that the people should be invited to acknowledge their godhead; (2) that they have been made gods by the people themselves without any reason, for they have neither claimed godhead for themselves in this world nor will they put forward any such claim in the Hereafter that they also were gods and should have been acknowledged as such; and (3) that it is no use invoking them here nor in the Hereafter, for they are absolutely powerless and invoking them is of no avail at all.

59. A "transgressor" is every such person who recognizes the godhead of others than Allah, or assumes godhead for himself, or rebels against God and adopts an attitude of independence in the world, and then commits excesses against himself, against other creatures of God and against everything else with

which he has to deal. Such a person, in fact, transgresses all limits of reason and justice.

60. This sentence clearly shows that while saying all this the Believer was certain that he would have to bear the brunt of the wrath of the entire kingdom of Pharaoh in consequence of his speaking the Truth, and that he would have to lose all his honours and privileges, even his life. But in spite of knowing all this he performed his duty only with his trust in Allah, according to the call of his conscience, on this critical occasion.

61. This shows that the Believer was such an important man in the kingdom of Pharaoh that although he spoke out the truth in the face of Pharaoh, in the full-packed court, yet none could have the courage to punish him publicly. That is why, Pharaoh and his supporters had to make secret plans to kill him, but these plans also were frustrated by Allah.

62. It so appears from the style that this event of the Believer's speaking out the truth had taken place in the last stage of the conflict between the Prophet Moses and Pharaoh. Probably being fed up and disgusted with the long drawn out conflict, Pharaoh might have at last made up his mind to kill the Prophet Moses. But he might have felt from the truthfulness of that influential person of his kingdom that the Prophet Moses' influence had even reached the higher circles of his government. Therefore, he might have decided that before taking the extreme step against Moses he should find out who among the chiefs and nobles and higher officials of the kingdom had been influenced by the movement, and should seize Moses after having punished them. But while he was still busy devising his plans, Allah commanded the Prophet Moses and his companions to migrate, and it was while pursuing them that Pharaoh was drowned in the sea along with his hosts.

63. This verse is an express proof of the torment of *barzakh*, which has often been mentioned in the Traditions as the torment of the grave. Allah here has in clear words mentioned two stages of the torment; a lesser torment, which is being given now to Pharaoh and his people before the coming of Resurrection, and it is this that they are presented before the fire of Hell morning and evening, which strikes terror in their hearts and they see the Hell which they will have to enter ultimately. After this when Resurrection comes, they will be given the real and greater punishment which is destined for them, i.e. they will be hurled into the same Hell, which they are being made to witness since the time they were drowned till today, and will continue to witness it till the Hour of Resurrection. And such a treatment is not especially meant for Pharaoh and his people: all the culprits continue to witness the evil end, from the hour of death till Resurrection, which is awaiting them. On the other hand, the righteous people are made to see continually the pleasant picture of the good end, which Allah has got ready for

them. A Tradition has been related in *Bukhārī, Muslim,* and *Musnad Aḥmad* on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, saying that the Holy Prophet said: "Whoever from among you dies is shown his final resting place morning and evening continually, whether he be a dweller of Paradise or of Hell. It is said to him: This is the place which you will enter when Allah will raise you back to life on the Day of Resurrection and will call you into His presence." (For further details, see Al-Anfāl: 50-51; An-Naḥl: 28-32; Al-Mu'minūn: 99-100 and the E.N.'s thereof, and E.N.'s 22, 23 of Sūrah Yā Sīn).

64. This they will not say in any hope that their previous guides or rulers or leaders would actually be able to save them from the torment, or would have it reduced. At that time they will have fully realized that those people could not avail them anything there. But they will say this in order to humiliate them, as if to say: "In the world you ruled over us with great show of power and authority: now save us also from this disaster which has befallen us only because of you."

لِلَّذِيْنَ اسْتَكْبَرُوْٓا اِنَّا كُنَّا لَكُمْ تَبَعًا فَهَلْ اَنْتُمْ مُّغْنُوْنَ عَنَّا نَصِيْبًا مِّنَ النَّارِ ﴿٤٧﴾ 47
قَالَ الَّذِيْنَ اسْتَكْبَرُوْٓا اِنَّا كُلٌّ فِيْهَآ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ قَدْ حَكَمَ بَيْنَ الْعِبَادِ ﴿٤٨﴾ 48 وَقَالَ
الَّذِيْنَ فِي النَّارِ لِخَزَنَةِ جَهَنَّمَ ادْعُوْا رَبَّكُمْ يُخَفِّفْ عَنَّا يَوْمًا مِّنَ الْعَذَابِ ﴿٤٩﴾ 49
قَالُوْٓا اَوَلَمْ تَكُ تَاْتِيْكُمْ رُسُلُكُمْ بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ ۭ قَالُوْا بَلٰى ۭ قَالُوْا فَادْعُوْا ۚ وَمَا دُعٰٓؤُا
الْكٰفِرِيْنَ اِلَّا فِيْ ضَلٰلٍ ﴿٥٠﴾ 50 اِنَّا لَنَنْصُرُ رُسُلَنَا وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا
وَيَوْمَ يَقُوْمُ الْاَشْهَادُ ﴿٥١﴾ 51 يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ مَعْذِرَتُهُمْ وَلَهُمُ اللَّعْنَةُ
وَلَهُمْ سُوْۗءُ الدَّارِ ﴿٥٢﴾ 52 وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا مُوْسَى الْهُدٰى وَاَوْرَثْنَا بَنِيْٓ اِسْرَاۗءِيْلَ
الْكِتٰبَ ﴿٥٣﴾ 53 هُدًى وَّذِكْرٰى لِاُولِي الْاَلْبَابِ ﴿٥٤﴾ 54 فَاصْبِرْ اِنَّ وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ حَقٌّ وَّ
اسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنْۢبِكَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ بِالْعَشِيِّ وَالْاِبْكَارِ ﴿٥٥﴾ 55 اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ
يُجَادِلُوْنَ فِيْٓ اٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ بِغَيْرِ سُلْطٰنٍ اَتٰىهُمْ ۙ اِنْ فِيْ صُدُوْرِهِمْ اِلَّا كِبْرٌ
مَّا هُمْ بِبَالِغِيْهِ ۚ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللّٰهِ ۭ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْبَصِيْرُ ﴿٥٦﴾ 56 لَخَلْقُ السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَالْاَرْضِ اَكْبَرُ مِنْ خَلْقِ النَّاسِ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾ 57 وَمَا
يَسْتَوِي الْاَعْمٰى وَالْبَصِيْرُ ۙ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ وَلَا الْمُسِيْۗءُ ۭ
قَلِيْلًا مَّا تَتَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٥٨﴾ 58 اِنَّ السَّاعَةَ لَاٰتِيَةٌ لَّا رَيْبَ فِيْهَا وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا
يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٥٩﴾ 59 وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمُ ادْعُوْنِيْٓ اَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ ۭ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يَسْتَكْبِرُوْنَ عَنْ
عِبَادَتِيْ سَيَدْخُلُوْنَ جَهَنَّمَ دٰخِرِيْنَ ﴿٦٠﴾ 60 اَللّٰهُ الَّذِيْ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الَّيْلَ لِتَسْكُنُوْا
فِيْهِ وَالنَّهَارَ مُبْصِرًا ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَذُوْ فَضْلٍ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ
النَّاسِ لَا يَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿٦١﴾ 61 ذٰلِكُمُ اللّٰهُ رَبُّكُمْ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ ۡ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۚ
فَاَنّٰى تُؤْفَكُوْنَ ﴿٦٢﴾ 62 كَذٰلِكَ يُؤْفَكُ الَّذِيْنَ كَانُوْا بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ يَجْحَدُوْنَ ﴿٦٣﴾ 63 اَللّٰهُ

The haughty ones will say, "We are all in the same state here, and Allah already has passed judgement between His servants."[65] Then these dwellers of Hell will say to its keepers, "Pray to your Lord to relieve us of the torment for only one day." They will ask, "Did not your Messengers come to you with clear Signs?" They will say, "Yes". The keepers of Hell will say, "Then pray (for help) yourselves. But the prayer of the disbelievers only ends in vain."[66] 48-50

Believe it that We do help Our Messengers and the Believers in the life of this world,[67] and so shall We help them on that Day also when the witnesses shall stand up,[68] and the excuses of the wrongdoers shall not avail them anything. They shall have the curse on them and the worst abode. Just consider this: We showed Moses guidance[69] and made the children of Israel to inherit the Book, which was guidance and admonition for the men of understanding.[70] So, be patient,[71] O Prophet: Allah's promise is true.[72] Ask forgiveness of your errors,[73] and glorify your Lord morning and evening with His praise.[74] The fact is that the hearts of those who are disputing concerning the Revelations of Allah without any authority having come to them, are filled with pride,[75] but they shall never attain to their ambitions.[76] So, seek Allah's refuge.[77] He hears everything and sees everything. 51-56

Surely[78] the creation of the heavens and the earth is a greater thing than the creation of man, but most people do not know.[79] And the blind and the seeing cannot be equal, nor are the believing and righteous men equal to the wicked, but you people understand only a little.[80] The Hour of Resurrection is sure to come; there is no doubt about it, but most people do not believe.[81] 57-59

Your[82] Lord says: "Call upon Me. I will answer your prayers.[83] Those who disdain My worship on account of pride, shall certainly enter Hell, disgraced."[84] 60

It is Allah Who made the night for you to rest in it, and made the day bright. The fact is that Allah is highly Bounteous to the people, yet most people are not thankful.[85] The same Allah (Who has done all this for you) is your Lord, the Creator of everything. There is no god but He.[86] Whence then are you being deluded?[87] Likewise were all 61-63

those people deluded, who denied the Revelations of Allah.[68]

65. That is, "Both you and we have already been sentenced and Allah has passed His judgement regarding each of us. Now it does not lie in anyone's power to change the sentence of Allah, or to make any increase or decrease in the punishment awarded by Him."

66. That is, "When the fact is this that the Messengers had come to you with the clear Signs, and you have already been sentenced to suffer punishment here, because you had refused to believe in them, it is not possible for us to pray for you to Allah. For obviously there should be some plea for such a prayer, and you have exhausted every plea by your misconduct. So, you pray for yourselves if you so like; but we would tell you beforehand that the prayers of the people who had disbelieved in the world like you have been of no avail.

67. For explanation, see E.N. 93 of Aṣ Ṣāāffāt.

68. That is, when Allah's Court will be established and the witnesses will be produced before Him.

69. That is, "We did not just leave Moses alone when We sent him against Pharaoh, but We gave him guidnece at every step till success." This contains a subtle allusion to the effect: "O Muḥammad, We shall help you too in the same manner. We have neither left you alone after raising you as a Prophet in the city of Makkah and the tribe of Quraish so that these wicked people may treat you as they like, but We Ourselves are at your back and are giving you guidance at every step."

70. That is, "Just as those who disbelieved Moses were deprived of this blessing and the Israelites who believed in him were made heirs to the Book, so will also those who deny you be deprived and only those who believe in you will have the good fortune to inherit the Qur'ān and rise in the world as the standard-bearers of guidance."

71. "Be patient": "Bear up with a cool mind against these hardships through which you are passing."

72. The allusion is to the promise made above in the sentence: "We do help Our Messengers and the Believers in the life of this world."

73. A study of the context shows that here "error" implies the state of impatience that was being caused to the Holy Prophet on account of the severe antagonism, especially the persecution of his followers. He earnestly desired that either some miracle should be shown, which should convince the disbelievers, or something else should soon come down from Allah, which should quell the storm of opposition. Though this desire in itself was not a sin, which should have called

for repentance, the high rank with which Allah had blessed the Holy Prophet demanded great grit and will power; so the little impatience shown by him was regarded as inconsistent with his high rank. Therefore, he was required to ask Allah's forgiveness for showing the weakness and was told to stand his ground like a rock as a man of a high rank like him should.

74. That is, "Glorification of Allah with His praises is the only means by which those who work for the sake of Allah can get the strength to resist and overcome the hardships faced in the way of Allah." Glorifying the Lord morning and evening can have two meanings: (1) "Remembering Allah constantly and perpetually;" and (2) "performing the Prayers at the specific times." And in this second case, the allusion is to the five times of the Prayers, which were enjoined on all the believers as a duty some time after the revelation of this Sūrah. For the word *'ashiyy* in Arabic is used for the time from the declining of the sun till the early part of night, which covers the times of the four Prayers from Zuhr to 'Isha'; and *ibkār* is the time from dawn to the rising of the sun, which is the time of the Fajar Prayer. (For further details, see Al-Baqarah: 3, 43, 45, 238; Hūd: 114; Al-Ḥijr: 98-99; Introduction to Banī Isrā'īl and vv. 78-79; Ṭā Hā: 130; An-Nūr: 56-58; Al-'Ankabūt: 45; Ar-Rūm: 17-18, 31 and the E.N.'s thereof).

75. That is, "The real cause for their opposition without any argument and their irrational, crooked argumentation is not that they do not understand the truths and the themes of goodness and reform being presented before them in the form of the Revelations of Allah; therefore, they dispute about them in good faith in order to understand them; but the actual reason for their wrong attitude is that their self-conceit does not permit them tolerate that while they are living in Arabia the guidance and leadership of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) be accepted and acknowledged and ultimately one day they themselves should have to accept the leadership of the person as against whom they think they have a greater right to be the chiefs and leaders. That is why they are straining every nerve not to let Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) have his way, and they do not hesitate to use any mean device whatever for the purpose.

76. In other words it means: "He whom Allah has made great, will remain great, and the efforts of the small people who are trying to establish their superiority, will ultimately end in failure."

77. That is, "Just as Moses had become free from fear and anxiety after invoking Allah Almighty's help and refuge against Pharaoh's threats, so should you also seek His help and refuge against the threats and conspiracies of the chiefs of the Quraish, and then should busy yourself in raising His word being free from every anxiety."

78. After reviewing the conspiracies and plots of the chiefs of the Quraish in vv. 21-56, the address is now being directed towards the common people, and they are being made to understand that the truths to which Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is inviting them, are absolutely rational, as if to say: "Your own good and well-being lies in accepting them and rejecting them is ruinous for your own selves." In this connection, first of all arguments have been given for the doctrine of the Hereafter, for the disbelievers regarded this very doctrine as most bewildering and incomprehensible.

79. This is an argument for the possibility of the Hereafter. The disbelievers thought it was impossible for man to be resurrected after death. In answer to this, it is being said: "Those who talk like this are, in fact, ignorant. If they use their common sense, they will easily understand that for that God Who has created this wonderful Universe it cannot at all be difficult to create men once again."

80. This is an argument for the necessity of the Hereafter. In the preceding sentence it was said that the Hereafter can take place, and its occurrence is not impossible; in this it is being said that the Hereafter should take place; it is the demand of both reason and justice that it should occur, and its non-occurrence is against reason and justice, not its occurrence. After all, how can a reasonable man believe it to be right that those who live like the blind in the world and fill God's earth with mischief by their immoral and wicked deeds, should not see the evil end of their misdeeds and wrong conduct; likewise, those people who pass their lives in the world with open eyes, and believe and do good works, should be deprived of seeing a good result of their righteousness? If this is expressly against reason and justice, then the belief of denying the Hereafter also should be against reason and justice, for the non-occurrence of the Hereafter means that the good and the bad should both become dust after death and meet with one and the same end. For in this case, not only are reason and justice destroyed but morality also is proved to be meaningless and absurd. For if good and evil have one and the same end and destiny, then the evildoer would be highly wise, because he gratified all his desires before his death, and the good man highly foolish because he kept himself subjected to every sort of moral restoration without any reason.

81. This is the absolute assertion about the occurrence of the Hereafter, which can be made only on the basis of knowledge and not on the basis of reasoning, and in no other discourse than of Revelation this assertion can be made with such absoluteness. That which can be said without Revelation only on the basis of intellecual reasoning is that Resurrection can take place and it should take place. Beyond this, to assert that Resurrection will certainly take place, can be said only by that Being Who knows that Resurrection will occur, and that Being is

none but Allah. It is here that it becomes explicit and evident that if Religion can be based on pure knowledge, instead of speculation and reasoning, it can only be on the knowledge obtained through Divine Revelation

82. After the Hereafter the discourse now turns to *Tauhid* which was the second point of dispute between the Holy Prophet and the disbelievers.

83. That is, "All the powers to answer our prayers vest in Me only; so you should not pray to others but pray to Me." To understand the spirit of this verse well, three points should be comprehended properly:

First, man prays only to that being whom he regards as All-Hearing and All-Seeing and Possessor of supernatural powers. And the real motive of prayer for man is the internal feeling that the natural means and resources of the material world are not enough to remove any of his troubles and to fulfil any of his needs, or are not proving to be enough. Therefore, it is inevitable that he should turn to a being who is possessor of supernatural powers and authority. Man invokes that Being even without having seen Him; he invokes Him at all times, at all places, and under all circumstances; he invokes Him in solitude, aloud as well as in a low voice, and even in the depths of his heart. He does so inevitably on the basis of the belief that that Being is watching him everywhere, is also hearing whatever he has in his heart, and possesses such absolute powers that, it can come to the help of the supplicant wherever he is, and can help him out of every trouble and difficulty. After having known this truth about the prayer, it remains no longer difficult for man to understand that the one who invokes another than Allah for help, commits *shirk* absolutely and purely and clearly, for he believes those attributes to be belonging to the other being, which only belong to Allah. Had he not believed the other being to be an associate of Allah in the Divine attributes, he would never have even thought of invoking it for help.

Second, one should fully understand that man's merely thinking about a being that it is the possessor of powers and authority, does not necessitate that it should actually become possessor of the powers and authority. Being possessor of powers and authority is a factual matter, which is not dependent on somebody's understanding or not understanding it. The one who is actually the Possessor of the powers will in any case remain the Possessor whether man regards Him so or not. And the one who is not in reality the possessor, will not be able to have any share whatever in the powers only because man has believed it to be possessing the powers. Now, the fact of the matter is that the Being Who is All-Powerful, All-Hearing, All-Seeing, and Who is actually controlling the whole Universe is only Allah, and He alone is Possessor of all powers and authority. There is none else in this Universe, who may have any power to hear the prayers and to answer them or reject them. As against this factual matter if some people of themselves

start entertainting the belief that some prophets, saints, angels, jinns, planets or imaginary gods also are share-holders in the powers, the reality will not change in any way whatever. The Owner will remain the Owner and the helpless servants the servants.

Thirdly, the one who invokes others than Allah behaves like the supplicant who takes his petition to a government office, but leaving aside the real officer who has authority, presents it before one of the other supplicants who may be present there with his petition, and then starts imploring him humbly, saying, "Sir, you possess all the powers, and yours is the only authority here; so, you alone can fulfil my needs." Such a conduct, in the first place, is in itself highly foolish, but in a case like this it also amounts to high insolence, because the real officer who has the authority, is present and before his very eyes applications and petitions are being made before another, apart from him. Then this ignorance and folly reaches its height when the person before whom the petition is being presented makes the petitioner understand over and over again that he himself is a petitioner like him and possesses no power at all, and that the real officer who has the powers is present, and he should make his petition before him. But in spite of this counsel and warning, the foolish person goes on saying: "Sir, you are my lord: you alone can fulfil my need."

Keeping these three things in view, one should try to understand what Allah has said here: "Call upon Me: I shall answer your prayers: it is for Me to accept them."

84. Two things deserve special attention in this verse: (1) *Du'ā* (prayer) and *'ibādat* (worship) have been used as synonyms here. The "prayer" of the first sentence has been called "worship" in the second. This makes it explicit that prayer itself is worship, rather the essence of worship; and (2) the words "they disdain My worship on account of pride" have been used for those who do not pray to Allah. This shows that praying to Allah is the very requirement of one's servitude to Him, and turning away from Him amounts to being vain and arrogant. According to Ḥaḍrat Nu'mān bin Bashīr, the Holy Prophet said: "The prayer is the very essence of worship. Then he recited this verse." (Aḥmad, Tirmidhi, Abu Da'ūd, Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Abū Ḥātim, Ibn Jarīr). According to Ḥaḍrat Anas, the Holy Prophet said. "Prayer is the marrow of worship." (Tirmidhi) Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah says that the Holy Prophet said: "Allah becomes angry with him who does not ask Him for anything." (Tirmidhi)

In the light of the above, the enigma that often causes confusion in the minds is also resolved. In connection with prayer, people say that when the evil or the good destiny is in the control of Allah, and whatever He has already decreed in accordance with His dominant wisdom and expedience has to take place

inevitably, what is then the use of the prayer? This is a serious misunderstanding which destroys the importance of prayer from the heart of man, and with this false notion even if man prays, his prayer would be soulless. The above verse of the Qur'ān removes this misunderstanding in two ways:

In the first place, Allah says in clear words: "Call upon Me: I will answer your prayers." This proves that fate or destiny is not something which, God forbid, might have tied the hands of Allah Himself also, and the powers to answer the prayer might have been withdrawn from Him. The creatures have no doubt no power to avert or change the decrees of Allah; but Allah Himself certainly has the power to change His decrees and decisions on hearing a servant's prayer and petition. The other thing that has been stated in this verse is that whether a prayer is accepted or not, it is never without an advantage. The servant by presenting his petition before his Lord and by praying to Him acknowledges His Lordship and Supremacy and admits his own servitude and helplessness before Him. This expression of servitude is in itself "worship", rather the essence of worship of whose reward the servant will in no case be deprived, irrespective of whether he is granted the particular thing for which he had prayed or not.

We get a full explanation of these two themes in the Sayings of the Holy Prophet. The following Traditions throw light on the first theme:

Ḥaḍrat Salmān Fārsī (relates that the Holy Prophet said: "Nothing can avert destiny but the prayer." (Tirmidhi) that is, no one has the power to change the decisions of Allah but Allah Himself can change His decisions, and this happens when the servant prays to Him.

Ḥaḍrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah says that the Holy Prophet said: "Whenever man prays to Allah, Allah either gives him the same which he prayed for, or prevents a calamity of the same degree from befalling him provided that he does not pray for a sin or for severing relations with the kindred." (Tirmidhi) Another *Ḥadīth* on the same subject has been reported by Hadrat Abu Sa'īd Khudri in which the Holy Prophet said: "Whenever a Muslim prays, unless it be a prayer for a sin or for severing relations with a kindred, Allah grants it in one of the three ways: Either his prayer is granted in this very world, or it is preserved for rewarding him in the Hereafter, or a disaster of the same degree is prevented from befalling him." (Musnad Aḥmad)

Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah says that the Holy Prophet said: "When-ever one of you prays, he should not say: O God, forgive me if You so please, show me mercy if You so please, grant me provisions if You so please, but he should say definitely: O God, fulfil my such and such need." (Bukhāri). According to another

[Contd. on p. 454

الَّذِیْ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْاَرْضَ قَرَارًا وَّ السَّمَآءَ بِنَآءً وَّصَوَّرَكُمْ فَاَحْسَنَ صُوَرَكُمْ
وَرَزَقَكُمْ مِّنَ الطَّیِّبٰتِ ؕ ذٰلِكُمُ اللّٰهُ رَبُّكُمْ ۚ فَتَبٰرَكَ اللّٰهُ رَبُّ الْعٰلَمِیْنَ ﴿۶۴﴾ هُوَ
الْحَیُّ لَاۤ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ فَادْعُوْهُ مُخْلِصِیْنَ لَهُ الدِّیْنَ ؕ اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ
الْعٰلَمِیْنَ ﴿۶۵﴾ قُلْ اِنِّیْ نُهِیْتُ اَنْ اَعْبُدَ الَّذِیْنَ تَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ لَمَّا
جَآءَنِیَ الْبَیِّنٰتُ مِنْ رَّبِّیْ ۪ وَ اُمِرْتُ اَنْ اُسْلِمَ لِرَبِّ الْعٰلَمِیْنَ ﴿۶۶﴾ هُوَ الَّذِیْ
خَلَقَكُمْ مِّنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُّطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ عَلَقَةٍ ثُمَّ یُخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلًا ثُمَّ
لِتَبْلُغُوْۤا اَشُدَّكُمْ ثُمَّ لِتَكُوْنُوْا شُیُوْخًا ۚ وَ مِنْكُمْ مَّنْ یُّتَوَفّٰى مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلِتَبْلُغُوْۤا
اَجَلًا مُّسَمًّى وَّ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿۶۷﴾ هُوَ الَّذِیْ یُحْیٖ وَ یُمِیْتُ ۚ فَاِذَا قَضٰۤى اَمْرًا
فَاِنَّمَا یَقُوْلُ لَهٗ كُنْ فَیَكُوْنُ ﴿۶۸﴾ اَلَمْ تَرَ اِلَى الَّذِیْنَ یُجَادِلُوْنَ فِیْۤ اٰیٰتِ اللّٰهِ ؕ
اَنّٰى یُصْرَفُوْنَ ﴿۶۹﴾ اَلَّذِیْنَ كَذَّبُوْا بِالْكِتٰبِ وَ بِمَاۤ اَرْسَلْنَا بِهٖ رُسُلَنَا ۚ فَسَوْفَ یَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿۷۰﴾ معانقة ۱۳
اِذِ الْاَغْلٰلُ فِیْۤ اَعْنَاقِهِمْ وَ السَّلٰسِلُ ۬ یُسْحَبُوْنَ ﴿۷۱﴾ فِی الْحَمِیْمِ ۙ ثُمَّ فِی النَّارِ
یُسْجَرُوْنَ ﴿۷۲﴾ ثُمَّ قِیْلَ لَهُمْ اَیْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ تُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿۷۳﴾ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ ؕ قَالُوْا
ضَلُّوْا عَنَّا بَلْ لَمْ نَكُنْ نَّدْعُوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ شَیْـًٔا ؕ كَذٰلِكَ یُضِلُّ اللّٰهُ الْكٰفِرِیْنَ ﴿۷۴﴾
ذٰلِكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَفْرَحُوْنَ فِی الْاَرْضِ بِغَیْرِ الْحَقِّ وَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَمْرَحُوْنَ ﴿۷۵﴾
اُدْخُلُوْۤا اَبْوَابَ جَهَنَّمَ خٰلِدِیْنَ فِیْهَا ۚ فَبِئْسَ مَثْوَى الْمُتَكَبِّرِیْنَ ﴿۷۶﴾ فَاصْبِرْ اِنَّ
وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ حَقٌّ ۚ فَاِمَّا نُرِیَنَّكَ بَعْضَ الَّذِیْ نَعِدُهُمْ اَوْ نَتَوَفَّیَنَّكَ فَاِلَیْنَا
یُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿۷۷﴾ وَ لَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلًا مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْهُمْ مَّنْ قَصَصْنَا عَلَیْكَ وَ
مِنْهُمْ مَّنْ لَّمْ نَقْصُصْ عَلَیْكَ ؕ وَ مَا كَانَ لِرَسُوْلٍ اَنْ یَّاْتِیَ بِاٰیَةٍ اِلَّا بِاِذْنِ
اللّٰهِ ۚ فَاِذَا جَآءَ اَمْرُ اللّٰهِ قُضِیَ بِالْحَقِّ وَ خَسِرَ هُنَالِكَ الْمُبْطِلُوْنَ ﴿۷۸﴾ اَللّٰهُ الَّذِیْ

It is Allah Who made the earth a resting-place for you[89] and the sky a canopy over it,[90] Who shaped you, and shaped you so well, and Who provided you with pure things.[91] The same Allah (Who did all this) is your Lord. Highly blessed is Allah, Lord of the Universe. He is the Living One:[92] there is no god but He. Call upon Him alone, making your religion sincerely His.[93] All praise is only due to Allah, Lord of the Universe.[94] 64-65

O Prophet, tell the people, "I have been forbidden to worship those whom you invoke instead of Allah.[95] (How can I do this) when clear Signs have come to me from my Lord? I have been commanded to submit to the Lord of all creation." 66

He it is Who created you from dust, then from a sperm, then from a clot of blood, then He delivers you as an infant, then He makes you to grow up to attain to full strength, then makes you to grow further to reach old age, though some one of you is recalled earlier.[96] This is done so that you may reach an appointed time[97] and may understand the reality.[98] He it is Who gives life and ordains death. Whatever He decrees, He only commands it to be and it is. 67-68

Have you seen how those who dispute concerning Allah's Revelations are being turned about?[99] Those who deny this Book and those Books which We sent with Our Messengers,[100] shall soon know when, with fetters round their necks and chains, they shall be dragged towards boiling water and then cast into the fire of Hell.[101] Then they will be asked, "Where are those other gods than Allah, whom you associated?"[102] They will answer, "They have been lost to us; nay, we did not call upon anything before this."[103] Thus will Allah establish the deviation of the disbelievers. It will be said to them, "You have met this fate because you rejoiced on the earth in things other than the Truth, and then exulted in it.[104] Enter now the gates of Hell to live therein for ever. What an evil abode for the arrogant! So, be patient.[105] O Prophet: Allah's promise is true. Whether We let you witness a part of the evil consequences with which We are threatening them, or recall you from the world (before this), they have to return to Us.[106] 69-77

O Prophet, We have sent many a Messenger before you. Of them there are some whose stories We have related to you, and of others We have not related. Yet it was not in the power of any 78

Messenger to have himself brought a Sign,[108] without Allah's leave. Then, when Allah's Command came, the judgement was passed with justice, and the wrongdoers then incurred loss.[109]

Contd. from p.451]

Tradition from Abu Hurairah, the Holy Prophet said: "Pray to Allah with the certainty that He will answer it." (Tirmidhī). In still another Tradition Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah has reported that the Holy Prophet said: "The servant's prayer is granted provided that he does not pray for a sin or for severing connections with the kindred, and is not hasty. It was asked: What is being hasty, O Messenger of Allah? He replied: Being hasty is that man should say: I have prayed much, too much, but I see that my prayer is not being answered. Then he should be tired of it and give up praying." (Muslim).

The other theme is explained by the following Traditions:

Ḥaḍrat Abu Hurairah relates that the Holy Prophet said: "Nothing is as praiseworthy in the sight of Allah as the prayer." (Tirmidhi, Ibn Mājah).

Ḥaḍrat Ibn Mas'ūd says that the Holy Prophet said: "Ask of Allah His bounty, because Allah likes that He should be asked." (Tirmidhi)

Ḥaḍrat Ibn 'Umar and Ḥadrat Mu'ādh bin Jabal state that the Holy Prophet said: "The prayer is in any case beneficial, both with respect to those calamities which have descended and with respect to those which have not yet descended. So, O servants of Allah, you must always pray." (Tirmidhi, Musnad Aḥmad).

Ḥaḍrat Anas says that the Holy Prophet said: "Each one of you should ask his every need of Allah; so much so that even if his shoe-lace breaks, he should pray for it to Allah." (Tirmidhi). That is, even in matters which man feels are in his own power, he should invoke Allah's help for it before planning his own devices for it, for in no matter can man succeed only on the basis of his own devices without the help and succour of Allah, and praying before devising plans means that the servant is at all times acknowledging the supremacy of Allah and admitting his own helplessness.

85. This verse comprises two important themes: First, the night and the day have been presented in it as an argument for *Tauḥīd*, because their alternating regularly means that One God alone is ruling over the earth and the sun, and their alternation's being beneficial for man and other earthly creatures is an express proof of the fact that the same One God is also the Creator of all these things and has devised this system with such great wisdom that it should be beneficial and useful for all His creatures. Secondly, in this verse the atheists and the polytheists

have been made to realize how great a blessing has Allah bestowed on them in the shape of the night and the day, and what ungrateful wretches they are that while they are benefiting from this blessing of His, they are being disloyal and rebellious to Him day and night. (For further explanation, see Yūnus: 87, Al-Furqān: 62, An-Naml: 86, Al-Qaṣaṣ: 71-73, Ar-Rūm. 23, Luqmān: 29, Yā Sīn: 37 and the E.N.'s thereof).

86. That is, "The alternation of the night and day has proved that Allah alone is your Creator as well as of everything else, and the great advantage and benefits that accrue from this alternation for your life, prove that He is your highly Beneficent Lord. After this, it automatically follows that He is your real Deity too. For it would be wholly against reason and justice that your Creator and Providence should be Allah and your deities others."

87. That is, "Who is misleading you to think that those who are neither the creators nor providers should deserve to be worshipped by you?"

88. That is, "In every age the common people have been deluded by the misguides only because the people did not believe in the Revelations that Allah sent down through His Messengers to make them understand the Truth. Consequently, they were trapped by the selfish, dishonest people, who had set up shrines of false gods as a business."

89. For explanation, see An-Naml: 61 and E.N. 74 on it.

90. That is, "You have not been exposed to outer space so that heavenly calamities should rain on you and annihilate you completely, but We have built over the earth a fully fortified celestial system (which appears like a dome to the eye), which does not allow any destructive element to reach you; so much so that even the destructive cosmic rays cannot reach you and that is how you are living peacefully on the earth."

91. That is, "We had provided for you such a safe and peaceful place of rest even before your creation. Then We created you and gave you a fine body with most appropriate limbs and physical and mental powers of a high calibre. You did not create this erect stature, these hands and feet, these eyes and nose and ears, this talking tongue and this brain, which is a treasure-house of great capabilities, nor were these created by your mother and father, nor had a prophet or a saint or a god the power to create them. Their Maker and Creator was the All-Wise, All-Merciful, All-Mighty Sovereign, Who created Man with this wonderful body to function in the world, when He decided to bring him into being. Then as soon as you were created, you found by His beneficence a vast table laid out with pure provisions containing items of pure food which is not poisonous but health-giving, which is not bitter and tasteless but tasty, which is not

rotten and stale and stinking but goodsmelling, which is not lifeless dregs but rich in vitamins and useful organic substances, so essential for the proper development and nourishment of your body. Who has provided in such abundance this water, and corn, vegetables, fruits, milk, honey, meat and condiments, which not only add relish to your food but also provide you vitality and pleasures of life? And who has made the arrangements that these measureless granaries of food should go on coming out from the earth endlessly and their supply should never fail? Just consider this: What would have become of life if there had been no arrangement of food and man had been brought into existence suddenly? Is this not a clear proof that Your Creator is not merely a Creator but is an All-Wise Creator and All-Merciful Lord? (For further explanation, see Hūd: 6, An-Naml 60-66 and the E.N.'s thereof).

92. That is, "His is the real and true life. He only is living by virtue of His own power. No one else has the eternal and everlasting life but He. All others have borrowed and temporary life, which is destined to death and perishable."

93. For explanation, see E.N.'s :3, 4 of Az-Zumar.

94. That is, "There is none else the hymns of whose praise may be sung and who may be thanked."

95. Here again *'ibādat* (worship) and *du'ā* (prayer) have been used as synonyms.

96. That is, "Someone dies before birth, and someone before attaining youth, and someone before reaching old age."

97. "An appropriate time" may either imply the time of death, or the time when all human beings will be resurrected and presented before their Lord. In the first case, the meaning would be: Allah passes every man through different stages of life and takes him to the specific time which He has appointed for everyone's return. Before that time even if the whole world joins to kill him, it cannot kill him; and when that time has arrived, none can keep him alive even if all the powers of the world join together to do so. In the second case, it would mean: This gamut of life has not been brought about so that man may end up in the dust and be completely annihilated, but Allah passes him through different stages of life so that all human beings may present themselves before Him at the time which He has appointed for the purpose.

98. That is, "You are not being passed through these different stages of life so that you may live as the animals live and die as they die, but for the purpose that you may use your common sense which Allah has granted you and may understand the system in which you are living. The creation of a wonderful thing like life from the lifeless substances of the earth, then the coming into being

of a marvellous creation like man from the microscopic germ of the sperm, then its developing inside the mother's womb, from the time of conception till delivery, in such a manner that its sex, its form and appearance, its bodily structure, its mental qualities and characteristics, and its faculties and capabilities should be determined therein, un-influenced by any external factor or agency. Then the one who is to be eliminated by abortion does fall a prey to abortion, the one who is to die in infancy, does die in infancy, whether he be the child of a king, and the one who is to reach maturity or old age, does reach that age, even through highly dangerous conditions, in which death should be certain, and the one who is to die in a particular stage of life, does die in that stage even if he is given the best medical attention and treatment in the best hospitals by the best doctors. Are not all these things pointing to the truth that the ultimate control of our life and death is in the hand of an All-Mighty Sovereign? And when the reality is this that an All-Powerful Being is controlling our life and death, then how did a prophet or a saint or an angel or a star or planet become worthy of our worship and service? When did a creature attain the rank that we should pray to it, and accept it as the maker and un-maker of our destiny? And how did a human power have the status that we should obey its commands and prohibitions and its self-made law about the lawful and the unlawful, without question? (For further explanation, see Al-Ḥajj: 5-7 and the E.N.'s on it).

99. That is, "Have you not understood even after the above discourse what is the real source of these people's misunderstanding and misconduct, and what has caused them to go astray? "(One should note that the addressee here is not the Holy Prophet but every such person who reads these verses or hears them read).

100. This is the real cause of their going astray. Their denial of the Qur'ān and the teachings brought by the Messenger of Allah and their resisting by disputation the Revelations of Allah instead of pondering over them seriously, was the basic cause, which has led them astray and exhausted all possibilities of their adopting the Right Way.

101. That is, "When compelled by the intensity of thirst they will ask for water, the keepers of Hell will drag them by the chains towards the springs of boiling water, and when they will have drunk from them, they will drag them back to be cast into the fire of Hell."

102. That is, "If they really were gods or associates in Godhead, and you worshipped them in the hope that they would help you in the evil time, then why don't they come to rescue you now?"

103. They do not mean to say, "We did not associate them with God in the world," but they mean: "Now we have understood well that those whom we invoked in the world, were nothing and mere nonentities."

104. That is, "You not only followed that which was untrue and false, but you became so enamoured of the untruth that when the Truth was presented before you, you paid no heed to it, but continued to exult in your worship of the falsehood."

105. That is, "You should have patience at what those people say and do, who are opposing you by disputation and wrangling and want to defeat you by mean devices."

106. That is, "It is not necessary that We should punish every such person who has tried to harm you, in this world and during your lifetime. Whether a person receives his punishment here or not, he cannot in any case escape Our grasp: he has to return to Us after death. Then he will receive full punishment of his misdeeds."

107. A new theme starts from here. The disbelievers of Makkah said to the Holy Prophet, "We would not believe you to be Allah's Messenger unless you showed us the miracle that we ask you to show us." In the following verses an answer is being given to this very demand without mentioning it. (For the type of the miracles they demanded, see Hūd: 12, Al-Ḥijr 7, Banī Isrā'īl: 90-93, Al-Furqān: 21 and the E.N.'s thereof).

108. That is, "No Prophet ever showed a miracle by his own will and desire, nor had any Prophet the power to show a miracle by himself. Whenever a miracle was shown through a Prophet, it was shown when Allah willed it to be shown through him to the disbelievers." This is the first answer to the disbelievers' demand.

109. That is, "A miracle has never been shown for the mere fun of it. It is a decisive thing. If a nation does not believe even after a miracle has been shown, it is destroyed. You are demanding a miracle only for the sake of fun, but you have no idea that by making such a demand you are, in fact, inviting your own doom.". This is the second answer to their demand. (For details, please see Al-Ḥijr: 8, 58-60, Banī Isrā'īl 59, Al-Anbiyā': 5-9, Al-Furqān: 22-23, Ash-Shua'rā': 66-67 and the E.N.'s thereof).

جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْاَنْعَامَ لِتَرْكَبُوْا مِنْهَا وَمِنْهَا تَاْكُلُوْنَ ﴿٧٩﴾ وَلَكُمْ فِيْهَا مَنَافِعُ وَ
لِتَبْلُغُوْا عَلَيْهَا حَاجَةً فِيْ صُدُوْرِكُمْ وَعَلَيْهَا وَعَلَى الْفُلْكِ تُحْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٨٠﴾ وَيُرِيْكُمْ
اٰيٰتِهٖ ۖ فَاَيَّ اٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ تُنْكِرُوْنَ ﴿٨١﴾ اَفَلَمْ يَسِيْرُوْا فِي الْاَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوْا كَيْفَ
كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۚ كَانُوْٓا اَكْثَرَ مِنْهُمْ وَاَشَدَّ قُوَّةً وَّاٰثَارًا فِي
الْاَرْضِ فَمَآ اَغْنٰى عَنْهُمْ مَّا كَانُوْا يَكْسِبُوْنَ ﴿٨٢﴾ فَلَمَّا جَآءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ
بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ فَرِحُوْا بِمَا عِنْدَهُمْ مِّنَ الْعِلْمِ وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَّا كَانُوْا بِهٖ
يَسْتَهْزِءُوْنَ ﴿٨٣﴾ فَلَمَّا رَاَوْا بَاْسَنَا قَالُوْٓا اٰمَنَّا بِاللّٰهِ وَحْدَهٗ وَكَفَرْنَا بِمَا كُنَّا بِهٖ
مُشْرِكِيْنَ ﴿٨٤﴾ فَلَمْ يَكُ يَنْفَعُهُمْ اِيْمَانُهُمْ لَمَّا رَاَوْا بَاْسَنَا ۖ سُنَّتَ اللّٰهِ الَّتِيْ
قَدْ خَلَتْ فِيْ عِبَادِهٖ ۚ وَخَسِرَ هُنَالِكَ الْكٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿٨٥﴾

It is Allah Who has provided the cattle that you may ride on some and eat the flesh of others. Then you have many other uses also in them: you ride on them to places that you desire in your hearts to reach, and you are carried on them as well as on ships. Allah shows you these Signs of His. Then, which Signs of His will you still deny?[110] 79-81

Well,[111] have they not travelled in the earth that they could see the fate of those who have gone before them? They were more in number and stronger-in might and have left behind greater traces of their power in the land; yet what they earned did not avail them anything. When their Messengers came to them with clear Signs, they remained stuck to the knowledge that they already had,[112] and then were encompassed by the same thing that they mocked. When they saw Our scourge, they cried out, "We now believe in Allah, the One, and we reject all those gods whom we used to associate with Him." But after having seen Our scourge, their belief could be of no avail to them, because the same has been the standing law of Allah to eal with His servants, in the past, [113] and then the disbelievers only incurred loss. 82-85

110. It means this: "If you are not demanding a miracle only for the sake of fun and amusement, but want to have the satisfaction whether that to which

Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is inviting you(i.e. *Tauhīd* and the Hereafter) is true or not,then God's those Signs which you are observing and experiencing at all times, are quite enough.For there remains no need for other signs when there are these Signs to help you understand theTruth." This is the third answer to their demand of the miracles. This answer also has been given at several places in the Qur'ān and we have given detailed commentary on it. (Please see Al-An'ām: 37-39; Yūnus: 101; Ar-Ra'd: 7-13;.Ash-Shua'rā': 4-9 and the F.N.'s thereof).

The animals which serve man on the earth, especially the cow, ox, buffalo, sheep, goat, camel and horse, have been created with such nature by the Creator that they easily become man's domestic pet servants and he uses them to fulfil countless of his needs. He rides on them, employs them for carrying loads and in agriculture, gets milk from them, which he drinks and also uses it for making curd, butter, ghee, condensed milk, cheese and different sorts of confectionaries; eats their flesh, uses their fat, and puts to good uses their wool and hair and skin and intestines and bones, even their blood and dung. Is it not a manifest proof that the Creator of man had created these animals even before creating him in view of his countless needs, on a special pattern so that he may use them to advantage?

The three-fourths of the earth's surface is under water and only one-fourth is dry land. In the dry parts also there are small and wide tracts of land which are separated by water. The spreading of human populations on the dry lands and the establishment of commercial and other relations between them could not be possible unless water and oceans and winds were made subject to such laws as would make navigation possible, and such materials were made available on the earth, which man could employ for building ships. Is it not an express sign that there is One God and only One All-Powerful, All-Merciful and All-Wise Lord, Who has made man and earth and water and oceans and winds .and everything on the earth according to His own special scheme? Rather, if man only considers from the viewpoint of navigation how the positions of the stars and regular movements of the planets are helpful in it, he will have the testimony that not only of the earth but of the heavens too the Creator is the same One Bountiful Lord.

Then, consider also this: Can you in your right senses imagine that the All-Wise God, Who has given His countless things in the control of man and has granted him all these provisions for his well-being, will be, God forbid, so blind of the eye and so thoughtless as would never call man to account after giving him all this?

111. This is the conclusion to the discourse. While studying this please also keep in view vv. 4-5 and v. 21 of this Sūrah.

112. That is, "They took their philosophy and their science, their law, their secular sciences and their mythology and theology invented by their religious guides as the real knowledge, and regarded the Knowledge brought by the Prophets of Allah as worthless and therefore paid no heed to it."

113. "The standing Law of Allah": the Law that repentance and faith are beneficial only till the time man is not seized by the torment of Allah or death. Believing or repenting after the torment has arrived or the signs of death have appeared, is not acceptable to Allah.



XLI

ḤĀ-MĪM AS-SAJDAH

حٰمٓ السَّجدة

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XLI

ḤĀ-MĪM AS-SAJDAH

حٰمٓ السَّجدة

INTRODUCTION

Name

The name of this Sūrah is composed of two words, *Ḥa-Mīm* and *As-Sajdah,* which implies that it is a Sūrah which begins with *Ḥā Mīm* and in which a verse requiring the performance of *sajdah* (prostration) has occurred.

Period of Revelation

According to authentic Traditions, it was sent down after the affirmation of the Faith by Ḥaḍrat Ḥamzah and before the affirmation of the Faith by Ḥaḍrat 'Umar. Muḥammad bin Isḥāq, the earliest biographer of the Holy Prophet, has related on the authority of Muḥammad bin Ka'b al-Qurzi, the famous follower of the Companions, that one day some of the Quraish chiefs were sitting in their assembly in the Masjid al-Ḥarām, while in another corner of the Mosque there was the Holy Prophet sitting by himself. This was the time when Ḥaḍrat

Hamzah had already embraced Islam and the people of the Quraish were feeling upset at the growing numbers of the Muslims. On this occasion, 'Utbah bin Rabi'ah (the father-in-law of Abu Sufyān) said to the Quraish chiefs: "Gentlemen, if you like I would go and speak to Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) and put before him some proposals; maybe that he accepts one of them, to which we may also agree, and so he stops opposing us." They all agreed to this, and 'Utbah went and sat by the Holy Prophet. When the Holy Prophet turned to him, he said: "Nephew, you know the high status that you enjoy in the community by virtue of your ancestry and family relations, but you have put your people to great trouble: you have created divisions among them and you consider them to be fools: you talk ill of their religion and gods, and say things as though all our forefathers were pagans. Now listen to me and I shall make some suggestions. Consider them well: maybe that you accept one of them." The Holy Prophet said: "Abul Walīd, say what you want to say and I shall listen to you." He said, "Nephew, if by what you are doing, you want wealth, we will give you enough of it so that you will be the richest man among us; if you want to become an important man, we will make you our chief and will never decide a matter without you; if you want to be a king, we will accept you as our king; and if you are visited by a jinn, whom you cannot get rid of by your own power, we will arrange the best physicians and have you treated at our own expense." 'Utbah went on speaking in this strain and the Holy Prophet went on listening to him quietly. Then he said, "have you said, O Abul Walīd, what you had to say?" He replied that he had. The Holy Prophet said: "Well, now listen to me." Then pronouncing *Bismillah ir-Reḥmān-ir-Raḥim* he began to recite this very Sūrah, and 'Utbah kept on listening to it, putting his hands behind his back and leaning on them as he listened. Coming to the verse of prostration (v. 38) the Holy Prophet prostrated himself; then raising his head, said, "This was my reply, O Abul Walīd, now you may act as you please." When 'Utbah arose and walked back towards the chiefs, the people saw him from afar, and said: "By God! 'Utbah's face is changed. He does not look the same man that he was when he went from here." Then, when he came back and sat down, the people asked, "What have you heard?" He replied, "By God! I have heard something the like of which I had never heard before. By God, it's neither poetry, nor sorcery, nor magic. O chiefs of the Quraish, listen to what I say and leave this man to

himself. I think what he recites is going to have its effect. If the other Arabs overcome him, you will be saved from raising your hand against your brother, and the others will deal with him. But if he overcame Arabia, his sovereignty would be your sovereignty and his honour your honour." Hearing this the chiefs spoke out: "You too, O father of Walīd, have been bewitched by his tongue." 'Utbah replied, "I have given you my opinion; now you may act as you please." (Ibn Hishām, vol. I, pp. 313-314).

This story has been narrated by several other traditionists also on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah in different ways, with a little variation in wording. In some traditions it has also been related that when during the recitation the Holy Prophet had come to verse 13, viz. "If they turn away, say to them: I warn you of a thunderbolt the like of which had visited the 'Ad and the Thamūd," 'Utbah had spontaneously placed his hand on the Holy Prophet's mouth, and said: "For God's sake, have mercy on your people." Afterwards he justified his action before the Quraish chiefs, saying: "You know that whatever Muḥammad says is always fulfilled; therefore, I feared lest a torment should descend on us." (For details, see *Tafsīr* Ibn Kathīr vol. IV, pp. 90-91; *Al-Bedāyah wan-Nihāyah*, vol. III, p. 62).

Theme and Subject-Matter

In the discourse that Allah sent down in response to what 'Utbah said, no attention whatever was paid to the absurd proposals that he had made to the Holy Prophet. For what he had said was, in fact, an attack on the Holy Prophet's intention and his intellect. His assumption was that as there was no possibility of his being a Prophet and the Qur'ān's being Allah's Revelation, inevitably the motive of his invitation must either be the desire to obtain wealth and political power, or, God forbid, he had lost his reason. In the first case, he wanted to make a bargain with the Holy Prophet; in the second, he was insulting him when he said that the Quraish chiefs would have been cured of his madness at their own expense. Obviously, when the opponents come down to such absurd things, no gentleman would like to answer them, but would ignore them and say what he himself had to say.

Therefore, ignoring what 'Utbah said, this Sūrah makes antagonism its subject of discussion, which the unbelieving Quraish were

showing stubbornly and wickedly in order to defeat the message of the Qur'ān. They would say to the Holy Prophet, "You may try however hard you may: we would not listen to you. We have put coverings on our hearts and we have closed our ears. There is a wall between you and us, which would never let us meet together."

They had given a clear notice to the holy Prophet to the effect: "You may continue your mission of inviting the people to yourself, but we would go on opposing you as hard as we can to frustrate your mission."

For this object they had devised the following plan: Whenever the Holy Peophet or a follower of his would try to recite the Qur'ān before the people, they would at once raise such a hue and cry that no one could hear anything.

They were desperately trying to misconstrue the verses of the Qur'ān and spread every kind of misunderstanding amoag the people. They misconstrued everything and found fault even with the straight forward things. They would isolate words and sentences from their right context, from here and there, and would add their own words in order to put new meanings on them so as to mislead the people about the Qur'ān and the Messenger who presented it.

They would raise strange objections a specimen of which has been presented in this Sūrah. They said, "If an Arab presents a discourse in Arabic, what could be the miracle in it? Arabic is his mother tongue. Anyone could compose anything that he pleased in his mother tongue and then make the claim that he had received it from God. It would be a miracle if the person would suddenly arise and make an eloquent speech in a foreign tongue which he did not know. Then only could one say that the discourse was not of his own composition but a revelation from God."

Here is a resume of what has been said in answer to this deaf and blind opposition:

(1) The Qur'ān is most certainly the Word of God, which He has sent down is Arabic. The ignorant people do not find any light of knowledge in the truths that have been presented in it plainly and clearly, but the people of understanding are seeing this light as

well as benefiting by it. It is surely Allah's mercy that He has sent down this Word for the guidance of man. If a person regarded it as an affliction, it would be his own misfortune. Good news is for those who benefit by it and warning for those who turn away from it.

(2) If you have put coverings on your hearts and have made yourselves deaf, it is none of the Prophet's job to make the one hear who does not want to hear, and the one who does not want to understand, understand forcibly. He is a man like you; he can make only those to hear and understand, who are inclined to hear and understand.

(3) Whether you close down your eyes and ears and put coverings on your hearts, the fact, however, is that your God is only One God, and you are not the servant of any one else. Your stubbornness cannot change this reality in any way. If you accept this truth and correct your behaviour accordingly you will do good only to yourselves, and if you reject it, you will only be preparing your own doom.

(4) Do you have any understanding as to whom you disbelieve and with whom you associate others in divinity? It is with regard to that God Who has created this limitless universe, Who is the Creator of the earth and heavens, from Whose blessings you are benefiting on the earth, and on Whose provisions you are being fed and sustained. You set up His mean creatures as His associates and when you are made to understand the truth you turn away in stubbornness.

(5) If you still do not believe, then be aware that a sudden torment is about to visit you, the like of which had visited the 'Ād and the Thamūd, and this torment also will not be the final punishment of your crimes, but there is in addition the accountability and the fire of Hell in the Hereafter.

(6) Wretched is the man who gets as company such satans from among men and jinn, who show him nothing but green and pleasant, who make his follies seem fair to him, who neither let him think aright himself nor let him hear right from others. But on the Day of Reckoning when their doom overtakes them, each

one of them will say that if he happened to get hold of those who had misled and deceived him in the world, he would trample them under his foot.

(7) This Qur'ān is an unchangeable Book. You can not defeat it by your machinations and falsehoods. Whether falsehood comes from the front or makes a secret and indirect attack from behind, it cannot succeed in refuting it.

(8) Today when this Qur'ān is being presented in your own language so that you may understand it, you say that it should have been sent down in some foreign tongue. But had We sent it in a foreign tongue for your guidance, you would yourselves have called it a joke, as if to say, "What a strange thing! The Arabs are being given guidance in a non-Arabic language, which nobody understands." This means that you, in fact, have no desire to obtain guidance. You are only inventing ever new excuses for not affirming the faith.

(9) Have you ever considered that if it became established that the Qur'ān was really from Allah, then what fate you would meet by denying it and opposing it so vehemently as you do?

(10) Today you do not believe but soon you will see with your own eyes that the message of this Qur'ān has pervaded the whole world and you have yourselves been overwhelmed by it. Then you will come to know that what you were being told was the very truth.

Besides giving these answers to the opponents, attention has been paid to the problems which the believers and the Holy Prophet himself were facing in that environment of active resistance. Not to speak of preaching the message to others, the believers were even finding it difficult to follow the way of the Faith. Any one about whom it became known that he had become a Muslim, life would become an agony. As against the dreadful combination of the enemy and its all-pervading power, they were feeling utterly helpless and powerless. In this state, in the first place, they were consoled and encouraged, as if to say: "You are not, in fact, helpless and powerless, for any person who believes in God as his Lord and adheres to this belief and way of life resolutely, God's angels descend on him and help and support him at every stage,

from the life of this world till the Hereafter." Then they were encouraged with the consolation: "The best man is he who does good, invites others to God and proclaims firmly that he is a Muslim."

The question that was vexing the Holy Prophet at that time was as to how he should carve out a way of preaching his message when he had to face such heavy odds on every side. The solution he was given to this question was: "Although apparently the obstacles seem to be insurmountable, the weapon of good morals and character can smash and melt them away. Use this weapon patiently, and whenever Satan provokes you and incites you to use some other device, seek refuge in Allah."



حٰمٓ ﴿١﴾ تَنْزِيْلٌ مِّنَ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ ﴿٢﴾ كِتٰبٌ فُصِّلَتْ اٰيٰتُهٗ قُرْاٰنًا عَرَبِيًّا
لِّقَوْمٍ يَّعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٣﴾ بَشِيْرًا وَّنَذِيْرًا ۚ فَاَعْرَضَ اَكْثَرُهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُوْنَ ﴿٤﴾ وَ
قَالُوْا قُلُوْبُنَا فِيْٓ اَكِنَّةٍ مِّمَّا تَدْعُوْنَآ اِلَيْهِ وَفِيْٓ اٰذَانِنَا وَقْرٌ وَّمِنْۢ بَيْنِنَا وَ
بَيْنِكَ حِجَابٌ فَاعْمَلْ اِنَّنَا عٰمِلُوْنَ ﴿٥﴾ قُلْ اِنَّمَآ اَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُوْحٰٓى اِلَيَّ
اَنَّمَآ اِلٰهُكُمْ اِلٰهٌ وَّاحِدٌ فَاسْتَقِيْمُوْٓا اِلَيْهِ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوْهُ ۗ وَوَيْلٌ لِّلْمُشْرِكِيْنَ ﴿٦﴾
الَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْتُوْنَ الزَّكٰوةَ وَهُمْ بِالْاٰخِرَةِ هُمْ كٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿٧﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا
وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ لَهُمْ اَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُوْنٍ ﴿٨﴾ قُلْ اَئِنَّكُمْ لَتَكْفُرُوْنَ بِالَّذِيْ
خَلَقَ الْاَرْضَ فِيْ يَوْمَيْنِ وَتَجْعَلُوْنَ لَهٗٓ اَنْدَادًا ۗ ذٰلِكَ رَبُّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٩﴾ وَجَعَلَ

XLI

ḤĀ-MĪM AS-SAJDAH

حٰمٓ السَّجدة

Verses: 54

Revealed at Makkah

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Ḥā-Mīm. This is a Revelation from the All-Compassionate, the All-Merciful God, a Book whose verses are well-expounded, an Arabic Qur'ān for those who have knowledge, a giver of good news and a warner.[1] 1-4

Yet most of these people have turned away from it, and they pay no heed. They say, "Our hearts are covered with veils from that to which you are calling us;[2] our ears have become deaf, and between us and you there is a curtain:[3] so do as you please; we shall do as we 4-5

will."[4]

6-8 O Prophet, say to them I am only a man, like you,[5] I am told by revelation that your God is only One God:[6] therefore, turn straight to Him alone[7] and ask for His forgiveness.[8] Woe to the *mushriks* who do not pay the *Zakāt*[9] and deny the Hereafter. As for those who have believed and done right, for them there is surely an unfailing reward.[10]

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1. This is a brief introduction to the Sūrah. A study of the following discourse can show what relevance the things mentioned in it have with the theme that follows.

The first thing said is that this Word is being sent down by God, as if to say: "You, O people, may go on saying again and again that this Word is being composed by Muḥammed (upon whom be Allah's peace) but the fact is that its revelation is from God, Lord of the worlds." Furthermore, the addressees have also been warned, so as to say: "If you express your displeasure on hearing this discourse, this displeasure is not against Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) but against God. If you reject it, you reject Allah's Word, not of a man, and if you turn away from it, you do not turn away from a man but from Allah."

Secondly, that the one sending it down is that God, Who is extremely Merciful *(Raḥmān* and *Raḥīm)* to His creatures. The mention of the attribute of mercy of the Sender of Revelation, instead of any other attributes, points to the truth that He has sent down this Word under the requirement of His mercifulness. By this the addressees have been warned, so as to say: "If someone spurns this Word, or rejects it, or expresses displeasure at it, he in fact is his own enemy. This is indeed a supreme blessing, which God has sent down, out of this infinite mercy, for the guidance and well-being and happiness of man. If God were merciless to mankind, He would have left them to wander about in darkness and would have least cared what pit they fell into. But this is His bounty and beneficence that along with bringing men into existence and providing for them He has taken on Himself the responibility to show them the light of knowledge also in order to adorn their lives, and is sending down this Word to a servant of His for the same purpose. Now, who could be more ungrateful and a greater enemy of himself than the one who instead of benefiting from this mercy made up his mind to fight it?"

Thirdly, that the verses of this Book are well-expounded. That is, there is nothing confusing and ambiguous in it so that somebody might excuse himself from accepting it on the ground that he was unable to understand the contents of the Book.It has been plainly told in it what is the truth and what is the falsehood,

what are the right beliefs and what are the wrong beliefs, what is good and what is evil, what is high morality and wha is vice, in what way lies the good of man and in what he incurs loss for himself. If a person rejects such clear and manifest guidance, or pays no heed to it, he cannot offer any excuse for it. His attitude clearly implies that he wants to remain in the wrong wilfully.

Fourthly, that this is an Arabic Qur'ān, which implies this: "If this Qur'ān had been sent down in some other language, the Arabs would have presented the excuse that they were ignorant of the language in whcih God had sent His Book. But this is their own language. They cannot put forward the excuse that they cannot understand it. (Here, one should keep in view verse 44 also, in which the same theme has been expressed in a different way, and the suspicion that in that case there is a reasonable excuse for the non-Arabs not to accept the message of the Qur'ān, we have already removed in our commentary of Sūrah Yūsuf: 2 and E.N. 2 on it. Please also see Rasā'il-o-Masā'il. Vol. I, pp. 19-23).

Fifthly, that this Book is for those who possess knowledge. That is, only the people of understanding can draw any benefit from this Book. For the ignorant it is as useless as a precious diamond for the one who cannot distinguish it from a mere stone.

Sixthly, that this Book gives good news and administers warning. That is, it does not consist of mere fantasy, or a philosophy, or a specimen of good literary composition, which one may accept or reject without entailing any consequence, but it is openly administering a warning to the whole world that the results of accepting and believing in it are marvellous and of rejecting it very dreadful. Thus only a fool could reject it with scant attention.

2. That is, "It has no way open to reach our hearts."

3. That is, "This invitation has divided us: it has cut us off from you: it has become a hindrance for us to join you."

4. It has two meanings: (1) "That we have nothing to do with you ;" and (2) "that if you do not desist from your preaching, you may go on doing your mission, we also will not stop our opposition to you, and we will do whatever we can to defeat and frustrate your mission."

5. That is, "It is not in my power to remove the covering that envelops your hearts, open your ears, and tear away the curtain which you have drawn between me and yourselves. I am only a man: I can make only him understand who is inclined to listen, and can only meet him who is ready to meet me."

6. That is, "You may if you so like put coverings on your hearts and make your ears deaf, but the fact is that you don't have many gods; there is only One

[Contd. on p. 478

فِيْهَا رَوَاسِيَ مِنْ فَوْقِهَا وَبٰرَكَ فِيْهَا وَقَدَّرَ فِيْهَآ اَقْوَاتَهَا فِيْٓ اَرْبَعَةِ اَيَّامٍ ؕ
سَوَآءً لِّلسَّآئِلِيْنَ ﴿١٠﴾ ثُمَّ اسْتَوٰٓى اِلَى السَّمَآءِ وَهِيَ دُخَانٌ فَقَالَ لَهَا وَلِلْاَرْضِ
ائْتِيَا طَوْعًا اَوْ كَرْهًا ؕ قَالَتَآ اَتَيْنَا طَآئِعِيْنَ ﴿١١﴾ فَقَضٰىهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمٰوَاتٍ فِيْ
يَوْمَيْنِ وَاَوْحٰى فِيْ كُلِّ سَمَآءٍ اَمْرَهَا ؕ وَزَيَّنَّا السَّمَآءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيْحَ ۖ وَ
حِفْظًا ؕ ذٰلِكَ تَقْدِيْرُ الْعَزِيْزِ الْعَلِيْمِ ﴿١٢﴾ فَاِنْ اَعْرَضُوْا فَقُلْ اَنْذَرْتُكُمْ صٰعِقَةً
مِّثْلَ صٰعِقَةِ عَادٍ وَّثَمُوْدَ ﴿١٣﴾ اِذْ جَآءَتْهُمُ الرُّسُلُ مِنْۢ بَيْنِ اَيْدِيْهِمْ وَمِنْ
خَلْفِهِمْ اَلَّا تَعْبُدُوْٓا اِلَّا اللّٰهَ ؕ قَالُوْا لَوْ شَآءَ رَبُّنَا لَاَنْزَلَ مَلٰٓئِكَةً فَاِنَّا بِمَآ
اُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهٖ كٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿١٤﴾ فَاَمَّا عَادٌ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوْا فِي الْاَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَقَالُوْا
مَنْ اَشَدُّ مِنَّا قُوَّةً ؕ اَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَهُمْ هُوَ اَشَدُّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً ؕ
وَكَانُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا يَجْحَدُوْنَ ﴿١٥﴾ فَاَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيْحًا صَرْصَرًا فِيْٓ اَيَّامٍ نَّحِسَاتٍ
لِّنُذِيْقَهُمْ عَذَابَ الْخِزْيِ فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا ؕ وَلَعَذَابُ الْاٰخِرَةِ اَخْزٰى
وَهُمْ لَا يُنْصَرُوْنَ ﴿١٦﴾ وَاَمَّا ثَمُوْدُ فَهَدَيْنٰهُمْ فَاسْتَحَبُّوا الْعَمٰى عَلَى الْهُدٰى
فَاَخَذَتْهُمْ صٰعِقَةُ الْعَذَابِ الْهُوْنِ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَكْسِبُوْنَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَنَجَّيْنَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا
وَكَانُوْا يَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَيَوْمَ يُحْشَرُ اَعْدَآءُ اللّٰهِ اِلَى النَّارِ فَهُمْ يُوْزَعُوْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ حَتّٰٓى
اِذَا مَا جَآءُوْهَا شَهِدَ عَلَيْهِمْ سَمْعُهُمْ وَاَبْصَارُهُمْ وَجُلُوْدُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوْا
يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَقَالُوْا لِجُلُوْدِهِمْ لِمَ شَهِدْتُّمْ عَلَيْنَا ؕ قَالُوْٓا اَنْطَقَنَا اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْٓ
اَنْطَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَّهُوَ خَلَقَكُمْ اَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَّاِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ
تَسْتَتِرُوْنَ اَنْ يَّشْهَدَ عَلَيْكُمْ سَمْعُكُمْ وَلَآ اَبْصَارُكُمْ وَلَا جُلُوْدُكُمْ وَلٰكِنْ
ظَنَنْتُمْ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَعْلَمُ كَثِيْرًا مِّمَّا تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَذٰلِكُمْ ظَنُّكُمُ الَّذِيْ

O Prophet, say to them, "Do you deny that God, and set up 9-12
others as equals with Him, Who created the earth in two days? He indeed is the Lord of all creation. He set mountains over the earth (after its creation) and bestowed blessings on it,[11] and provided in it means of sustenance adequately according to the needs and demands of all those who ask.[12] This was done in four days.[13] Then He turned to the heaven, which was only smoke at that time.[14] He said to the heaven and the earth: "Come into being, whether you like it or not." They both said, "We do come in submission."[15] Then in two days He made the seven heavens, and in each heaven He ordained its law, and We adorned the lower heaven with lights and made it fully secure.[16] Such is the design of the One, Who is the All-Mighty, the All-Knowing.

Now if they turn away,[17] say to them, "I warn you of a 13-14
thunderbolt of punishment the like of which had descended upon the 'Ād and the Thamūd. When the Messengers of God came to them from every side, from front and from behind,[18] saying, "Worship none but Allah", they said, "Had our Lord so willed, He would have sent down angels; therefore, we deny what you have been sent with."[19]

As for the 'Ād, they became arrogant with pride in the land, 15-16
without any right, and said, "Who is stronger than us in might?" Did they not see that God, Who had created them, is stronger than they in might? Yet they continued to deny Our Revelations. Consequently, We sent upon them a stormy wind over a few ill-omened days[20] so that We might make them taste a disgraceful scourge in the life of this world,[21] but the scourge of the Hereafter is even more disgraceful; there they shall have none to help them.

As for the Thamūd, We presented before them the right way, 17-18
but they preferred to remain blind rather than see the way. Consequently, a humiliating scourge overtook them all of a sudden on account of their misdeeds, and We saved those, who had believed and refrained from error and wrongdoing.[22]

And imagine the time when the enemies of Allah will be 19-23
gathered together to be driven to Hell.[23] Their former generations will be withheld till their later generations also will join them.[24] Then, when all will have reached there, their ears and their eyes and their very skins will bear witness against them concerning what they had been

doing in this world.[25] They will say to their skins. "Why have you borne witness against us?" They will reply, "The same God Who has given speech to everything has given us speech.[26] He it is, Who created you in the first instance, and now to Him you are being brought back. When in the world you hid yourselves while committing crime, you never thought that your ears and your own eyes and your own skins would ever bear witness against you. Rather you thought that even Allah had no knowledge of many of your deeds. This same thought that you had concerning your Lord, has ruined you, and on the same count you have incurred loss."[27]

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God, whose servants you are. And this is no philosophy, which I might have thought out myself, and which might have equal probability of being true or false, but this reality has been made known to me through revelation, which cannot admit of any likelihood of error."

7. That is, "Do not make any other your God; do not serve and worship any other deity: do not invoke and bow to any other for help: and do not obey and follow the customs and laws and codes made and set by others."

8. "Ask for His forgiveness": Ask for His forgiveness for the unfaithfulness that you have been showing so far towards Him, for the *shirk* and disbelief and disobedience that you have been committing till now, and for the sins that you happened to comit due to forgetfulness of God.

9. Here, the meaning of the word *zakāt* has been disputed by the commentators. Ibn 'Abbās and his illustrious pupils, 'Ikrimah and Mujāhid, say that *zakāt* here implies the purity of the soul and self which accrues from belief in *Tauḥīd* and obedience to Allah. According to this explanation, the translation of the verse would be: "Woe to the *mushriks*, who do not adopt purity." The other group which includes commentators like Qatādah, Suddī, Ḥasan Baṣri, Ḍaḥḥāk, Muqātil and Ibn as-Sā'ib take this word here also in the meaning of the *zakāt* on property and wealth. According to this explanation, the verse means: "Woe to those who do not fulfil the right of Allah by committing *shirk* and the right of the men by withholding the *zakāt*."

10. The words *ajrun ghairu mamnūn* in the original have two other meanings also: (1) That it will be a reward which will never decrease and diminish; and (2) that this reward will not be given with reminders of good done, like the gift made by a miserly person, who keeps on reminding the beneficiary of his favour if at all he gives away anything.

11. "Blessings of the earth" imply those measureless and countless things which have been continuously coming out of it since millions and millions of years, and are fulfilling the ever increasing needs and requirements of all the creatures from the microscopic germs to the highly civilized man. Among these the principal blessings are the air and the water by which alone vegetable, animal and then human life became possible on the earth.

12. This sentence has been interpreted by the commenators in different ways:

Some of them interpret it to mean: "The provisions of the earth were placed in it precisely according to the needs and requirements of those who ask, in exactly four days." That is, it took exactly four days, neither more nor less.

Ibn 'Abbās, Qatādah and Suddi interpret it to mean: "The provisions of the earth were placed in it in four days. The answer to those who ask is completed." That is, whoever asks as to how long it took, his complete answer is that it took four days.

According to Ibn Zaid it means: "The provisions of the earth were placed in it for those who ask within four days, precisely in accordance with the demand and need of everyone."

As far as the rules of the language are concerned, the words of the verse admit of all these three meanings, but in our opinion the first two meanings have no merit. In view of the context, it is immaterial whether the work was completed in exactly four days and not in more or less four days. There is no need whatever for such an addition to make up for any deficieney in supporting the description of Allah's perfect power, perfect providence and perfect wisdom. Likewise, the commentary: "The answer to those who ask is completed," is a very weak commentary. There is no indication in the theme preceding the verse and following it, to show that at that time somebody had asked the question as to how long it had taken for those works to be completed, and this verse was sent down as an answer to it. That is why we have adopted the third meaning in our translation. In our opinion the correct meaning of the verse is this: "Allah placed within the earth the full provisions of food precisely and exactly in accordance with the demands and needs of every kind of creature that Allah had to create in the earth from the beginning of the creation till Resurrection. There are countless kinds of vegetation found on land and in water and the food requirements of each kind are different from those of other kinds. Allah has created countless species of living creatures in the air and on land and in water, and every species demands a different kind of food. Then unique among all these is the species of man, who requires different kinds of food not only for the development and nourishment of his body but also for the satisfaction of his taste. Who beside Allah could know

how many members of the different kinds of creatures would be born on this globe, from the beginning of life till its end, and when and where they would be born and how much and what kind of food would be required for their nourishment? Just as He had made the plan of creating those creatures who stood in need of food in His scheme of creation, so He made full arrangements of food also to meet their requirements and demands.

In the modern age, the people who have brought out the Islamic edition of the Marxist conception of Socialism in the name of "the Qur'ānic order of providence", translate the words *sawā-al-lis-sā'-ilīn* as "equal for all those who ask", and raise the edifice of reasoning on it, saying that Allah has kept equal provisions for all the people in the earth; therefore, in order to fulfil the intention of the verse a system of the state is needed which may provide equal rations of food to everybody. For in the system of individual ownership the equality which the "Qur'ānic law" demands cannot be established. But these people, in their enthusiasm to press the Qur'ān in the service of their theories, forget that "those who ask", who have been mentioned in this verse, are not only human beings but all those different species of animals and plants who need food for survival. Has Allah really established equality among all of them, or even among all the members of each different species of the creatures, in the matter of the provision of food? Do you find anywhere in this entire system of nature the arrangement of the distribution of equal rations of food? If that is not the case, it means that in the vegetable and animal kingdom, where the distribution of the provisions is directly being arranged by the State of Allah, and not by the human state, Allah Himself is violating His own this "Qur'ānic law", rather, God forbid, is practicing injustice! Then, they also forget that "those who ask" also include those animals which man domesticates and arranging provisions for which is also his responsibility, e.g. sheep, goats, cows, buffaloes, horses, asses, mules, camels, etc. If the Qur'ānic law is that equal food be given to all those who ask, and to enforce the same law a state is needed, which may administer the order of providence, will that state establish economic equality between men and animals also?

13. Here, the commentators generally have been confronted with this question: If it is admitted that the creation of the earth took two days and the setting up of the mountains and placing of the provisions and blessings in it took four days, and the creation of the heavens, as mentioned below, took another two days, the total number of the days would be eight, whereas at several places in the Qur'ān Allah has said that the creation of the earth and heavens took six days in all. (For example, see Al-A'rāf: 54, Yūnus: 3, Hud: 7, Al-Furqān: 59). On this very basis, almost all the commentators agree that these four days include the two days of the creation of the earth. That is, two days were taken for the creation of the earth and two days for the creation of the rest of the things within the earth, as

mentioned below. Thus, the earth along with its provisions became complete in four days in all. But this not only is against the apparent words of the Qur'ān, but the difficulty also is, in fact, an imaginary difficulty, to avoid which need for this interpretation has been felt. The two days of the creation of the earth are, in fact, not separate from the two days in which this universe as a whole was created. If we consider the following verses, we see that in them the creation of both the earth and the heavens has been mentioned together, and then it has been stated that Allah made the seven heavens in two days. These seven heavens imply the whole universe, one part of which is also our earth. Then, when like the other countless stars and planets of the universe this earth also took the shape of a unique globe within two days, Allah began to prepare it for animate creatures, and in four days created in it all those provisions which have been mentioned in the above verse. What development works were carried out in the other stars and planets in these four days have not been mentioned by Allah, for not to speak of the man of the period of the revelation of the Qur'ān, even the man of the present age does not have the capability to digest and assimilate this information.

14. Three things need to be explained here:

First, by "heaven" is meant the whole universe, as becomes obvious from the following sentences. In other words, "turning to the heaven" means that Allah turned to the creation of the universe.

Second, by "smoke" is implied the initial and primary stage of matter, in which it lay diffused in space in a shapeless, dustlike condition before the formation of the universe. Scientists of the modern age describe the same thing as nebulae, and the same also is their view about the beginning of the universe: that is, before creation the matter of which the universe was built lay diffused in smoke-like nebulous form.

Third, it would be wrong to interpret "then He turned to the heaven" to mean that first He created the earth, then set mountains in it, then arranged blessings and provisions of food in it, and then, at the end, He turned towards the creation of the universe. This misunderstanding is removed by the following sentence: "He said to the heavens and the earth: Come into being; and they said: we come in submission." This makes it clear that in this verse and in the following verses, mention is being made of the time when there was neither the earth nor the heaven, but the creation of the universe was being started. Only the word *thumma* (then) cannot be made the argument to say that the earth had been created before the heavens. There are several instances of this in the Qur'ān that the word *thumma* is not necessarily used to show the chronological order but it is also used for the order of Presentation. (Please see E.N. 12 of Sūrah Az-Zumar).

Among the earliest commentators the dispute has been going on for ages as to what was created first according to the Qur'ān, the earth or the heavens. One group of them argues on the basis of this verse and verse 29 of Al-Baqarah that the earth was created first. The other group argues from verses 27-33 of An-Nāzi'āt that the heavens were created first, because there it has been clearly stated that the earth was created after the heavens. But the fact is that nowhere in the Qur'ān has the mention of the creation of the universe been made to teach Physics or Astronomy, but while inviting towards belief in the doctrines to *Tauḥīd* and the Hereafter, like countless other Signs, the creation of the heavens and the earth also has been presented as food for thought. For this purpose it was not at all necessary that the chronological order of the creation of the heavens and the earth should have been presented, and it should have been told whether the heavens were created first or the earth. No matter whether this was created first or that, in any case both are an evidence of Allah Almighty's being the One and only Deity, and are a testimony that their Creator has not created this whole universe as a plaything for a care-free person. That is why the Qur'ān sometimes mentions the creation of the earth first and sometimes the creation of the heavens first. Where the object is to make man realize the blessings of God, there generally it has mentioned the earth first, for it is closer to man; and where the object is to give man the concept of God's greatness and His omnipotence there it has generally mentioned the heavens first, for the scene of the revolving heavens has always been awe-inspiring for man.

15. In these words Allah has described the nature of His method of creation in a manner as to differentiate between Divine creation and human workmanship. When man wants to make something, he prepares a plan for it in his mind; then gathers together the necessary material; then works persistently hard to mould the material according to his plan, and in the process of his effort the material which he wants to mould according to his mental plan constantly resists him; so much so that sometimes the resistance of the material succeeds and the thing is not made precisely according to the desired plan, and sometimes man's effort overcomes the resistance and he succeeds in giving it the desired form and shape. For example, when a tailor wants to make a shirt, he first conceives in his mind the shape of the shirt, then arranging the cloth he tries to cut and sew it according to his concept of the shirt, and during this effort, he has constantly to face the resistance of the cloth, for it does not easily yield to be moulded according to the tailor's concept; so much so that sometimes the resistance of the cloth dominates and the shirt doesn't take the desired shape, and sometimes the tailor's effort dominates and he is able to shape it precisely according to his concept. Now, consider Allah's mode of creation. The matter of the universe lay scattered and diffused in the form of smoke. Allah willed to give it the shape of

the universe as it is now. For this purpose, He did not have to sit down, like a human artisan, and chisel and mould the earth and the moon and the sun and the other stars and planets, but He only commanded the scheme of the universe that was in His Mind to come into being, i.e. the smoke-like diffused matter to take the shape of the galaxies and stars and planets, which He wanted to create. This matter did not have the power to resist the Command of Allah. Allah did not have to make any effort to give it the shape of the universe. No sooner was the Command given than the matter started contracting and condensing and taking shape obediently according to the scheme of its Master, so that the whole universe including the earth became ready in 48 hours.

This same scheme of Allah's method of creation has been described at several other places in the Qur'ān like this: When Allah decides to do something He only commands it to be and it is done. (See Al-Baqarah: 117, Āl-'Imrān: 47, 59; An-Naḥl: 40, Maryam: 35, Yā Sīn: 82, Al-Mu'min: 68).

16. To understand these verses well, it would be useful to study the following portions of the *Tafhīm al-Qur'ān:* Al-Baqarah: 29, Ar-Ra'd: 2, Al-Ḥijr: 16-18, Al-Anbiyā': 30-33, Al-Ḥajj: 65, Al-Mu'minūn: 17, Yā Sīn: E.N. 37, and E.N.'s 5, 6 of Aṣ-Ṣāāffāt.

17. That is, "If they do not believe that God and Deity is One and only One, who has created this earth and the whole universe, and still persist in their ignorance that they would make others also, who are in fact His creatures and slaves, deities beside Him, and regard them as His associates in His Being and rights and powers."

18. This sentence can have several meanings: (1) That the Messengers continued to come to them one after the other; (2) that the Messengers tried in every way to make them understand the truth and did not leave any stone unturned to bring them to the Right Path; and (3) that the Messengers came to them in their own country as well as in the adjoining countries.

19. That is, "If Allah had disapproved of our religion, and had willed to send a messenger to us to keep us away from it, He would have sent the angels. As you are not an angel but a man like us, we do not believe that you have been sent by God, and sent for the purpose that we give up our religion and adopt the way of life that you are presenting." The disbelievers' saying that they deny "what you have been sent with", was only sarcastic. It does not mean that they believed him to have been sent by God and then denied what he said. But this is a sarcastic expression of the type that Pharaoh had uttered before his courtiers about the Prophet Moses: "This messenger of yours, who has been sent to you, seems to be utterly mad." (Ash-Shua'rā' 27). For further explanation, see E.N. 11 of Sūrah Yā Sīn.

20. "Ill-omened days" does not mean that the days in themselves were ill-omened, and the torment came because the people of 'Ād met with those ill-omened days. If this were the meaning and there were some ill omen in the days themselves, the torment would have visited all the nations of the world. The correct meaning, therefore, is that since in those days God's torment descended on this nation, the days were ill-omened for the people of 'Ād. It is not correct to argue on the basis of the verse that some days are ill-omened and some auspicious.

The lexicographers have disputed the meaning of the words *rīh-an sarsar-an*, which have been used for the stormy wind. Some say that they imply an intensely hot wind; others say that they imply an extremely cold wind; and some others say that they imply a wind which produces a great noise when it blows. In any case, they all agree that the words are used for a severe storm.

The details of this torment given at other places in the Qur'ān show that this wind continued to rage for seven nights and eight days consecutively. It swept the people off the ground and they fell down dead and lay scattered here and there like hollow trunks of the palm-tree. (Al-Ḥāāqqah: 7). It left rotting everything on which it blew. (Adh-Dhariyāt 42). When the people of 'Ād saw it advancing, they rejoiced with the hope that the dense clouds would bring much rain, which would water their withering crops. But when it came it laid waste the entire land." (Al-Aḥqāf: 24-25).

21. This ignominious torment was an answer to their arrogance and vanity because of which they had assumed greatness in the land without any right, and would boast that there was none more powerful than they on the entire earth. Allah disgraced them and destroyed the major part of their population along with their civilization. The remnant of their population was humbled and debased before those very nations whom they used to overawe by their show of power and might (for the details of the story of 'Ād see Al-A'rāf: 65-72; Hūd: 50-60; Al-Mu'minūn: 32-41; Ash-Shua'rā' : 123-140; Al-'Ankabūt; 40 and the relevant E.N.'s).

22. For the details of the story of Thamūd see Al-A'rāf: 73-79; Hūd: 61.68; Al-Ḥijr: 80-84; Banī Isrā'īl: 59; Ash-Shua'arā' :141.159; An-Naml: 45-53 and the E.N.'s.

23. What is meant to be said here is: "When they will be rounded up to be presented in the Court of Allah," though the words used are to the effect: "When they will be gathered to be driven to Hell," for Hell in any case will be their final destination.

24. That is, all the former and latter generations and races will be gathered together at a time and called to account together. For whatever a person

does in his lifetime, whether good or evil, its influence and impact does not end with his life, but continues to operate even after his death for long periods of time, for which he is totally responsible. Likewise, whatever a generation does in its own time, its influence continues to affect the later generations for centuries, and it is responsible for its heritage. It is inevitable to examine all these influences and their results and to collect their evidences. For that very reason, generation after generation of the people will go on arriving and will be withheld. The Court will start its work when all the former and latter generations will have assembled together in the Plain of Resurrection. (For further explanation, see Al-A'rāf: 38-39 and E.N. 30 on it).

25. The explanation of this given in the *Ḥadīth* is that when a stubborn culprit will go on denying his crimes, and will even belie all the witnesses, then the limbs of his body will bear the witness, one after the other, by the Command of Allah, and will tell what offences he had committed through them. This thing has been reported by Ḥaḍrat Anas, Ḥaḍrat Abū Mūsā Ash'ari, Ḥaḍrat Abū Sa'īd Khudri and Ḥaḍrat Ibn 'Abbās from the Holy Prophet, and traditionists like Muslim, Nasā'i, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abi Ḥatim, Bazzār and others have related these in their books. (For further explanation, see E.N. 55 of Sūrah Yā Sīn).

This verse is one of those many verses which prove that the Hereafter will not only be a spiritual world but human beings will be resurrected with the body and soul as they are now in this world. Not only this: they will be given the same body in which they live now. The same particles and atoms which composed their bodies in the world, will be collected on the Day of Resurrection, and they will be resurrected with the same previous bodies in which they had lived and worked in the world. Evidently, the limbs of man can bear the witness in the Hereafter only in case they are the same limbs with which he committed a crime in his previous life. This subject is borne out decisively and absolutely by the following verses of the Qur'ān: Banī Isrā'īl: 49 51, 98; Al-Mu'minūn: 35-38, 82-83; An-Nūr: 24; As-Sajdah: 10; Yā Sīn: 65, 78, 79; Aṣ-Ṣāffāt: 16-18; Al-Wāqi'ah: 47-50; An-Nāzi'āt: 10-14.

26. This shows that not only man's own limbs will bear witness on the Day of Resurrection, but every such thing before which man would have committed any crime will also speak out. The same thing has been said in Sūrah Al-Zilzāl, thus: "The earth will cast out all the burdens, which lie within her, and man will say: what has befallen her? On that Day shall she relate whatever had

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ظَنَنْتُمْ بِرَبِّكُمْ اَرْدٰىكُمْ فَاَصْبَحْتُمْ مِّنَ الْخٰسِرِيْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ فَاِنْ يَّصْبِرُوْا فَالنَّارُ مَثْوًى
لَّهُمْ ۚ وَاِنْ يَّسْتَعْتِبُوْا فَمَا هُمْ مِّنَ الْمُعْتَبِيْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَقَيَّضْنَا لَهُمْ قُرَنَآءَ فَزَيَّنُوْا
لَهُمْ مَّا بَيْنَ اَيْدِيْهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَحَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَوْلُ فِيْٓ اُمَمٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ
مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْاِنْسِ ۚ اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا خٰسِرِيْنَ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا
لَا تَسْمَعُوْا لِهٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنِ وَالْغَوْا فِيْهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَغْلِبُوْنَ ﴿٢٦﴾ فَلَنُذِيْقَنَّ الَّذِيْنَ
كَفَرُوْا عَذَابًا شَدِيْدًا ۙ وَّلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ اَسْوَاَ الَّذِيْ كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾ ذٰلِكَ
جَزَآءُ اَعْدَآءِ اللّٰهِ النَّارُ ۚ لَهُمْ فِيْهَا دَارُ الْخُلْدِ ۭ جَزَآءًۢ بِمَا كَانُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا
يَجْحَدُوْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا رَبَّنَآ اَرِنَا الَّذَيْنِ اَضَلّٰنَا مِنَ الْجِنِّ وَ
الْاِنْسِ نَجْعَلْهُمَا تَحْتَ اَقْدَامِنَا لِيَكُوْنَا مِنَ الْاَسْفَلِيْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ قَالُوْا
رَبُّنَا اللّٰهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوْا تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ اَلَّا تَخَافُوْا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوْا وَ
اَبْشِرُوْا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِيْ كُنْتُمْ تُوْعَدُوْنَ ﴿٣٠﴾ نَحْنُ اَوْلِيٰٓؤُكُمْ فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا
وَفِي الْاٰخِرَةِ ۚ وَلَكُمْ فِيْهَا مَا تَشْتَهِيْٓ اَنْفُسُكُمْ وَلَكُمْ فِيْهَا مَا تَدَّعُوْنَ ﴿٣١﴾
نُزُلًا مِّنْ غَفُوْرٍ رَّحِيْمٍ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَمَنْ اَحْسَنُ قَوْلًا مِّمَّنْ دَعَآ اِلَى اللّٰهِ وَعَمِلَ
صَالِحًا وَّقَالَ اِنَّنِيْ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِيْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَلَا تَسْتَوِي الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ ۭ اِدْفَعْ
بِالَّتِيْ هِيَ اَحْسَنُ فَاِذَا الَّذِيْ بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهٗ عَدَاوَةٌ كَاَنَّهٗ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيْمٌ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَمَا
يُلَقّٰىهَآ اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ صَبَرُوْا ۚ وَمَا يُلَقّٰىهَآ اِلَّا ذُوْ حَظٍّ عَظِيْمٍ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَاِمَّا يَنْزَغَنَّكَ
مِنَ الشَّيْطٰنِ نَزْغٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللّٰهِ ۭ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهِ
الَّيْلُ وَالنَّهَارُ وَالشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ ۭ لَا تَسْجُدُوْا لِلشَّمْسِ وَلَا لِلْقَمَرِ وَ
اسْجُدُوْا لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَهُنَّ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ اِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُوْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾ فَاِنِ اسْتَكْبَرُوْا فَالَّذِيْنَ

As such, whether they are patient (or not), the Fire will still be their abode, and if they want to make amends, they will not be allowed to do so.[28] We had set upon them companions who made everything, in front of them and behind them, seem fair to them.[29] At last, the same Decree of punishment proved true against them, which had proved true against the jinn and the men who had gone before them. Certainly they were the losers. 24-25

The disbelievers say, "Do not listen to this Qur'ān, and when it is recited, cause interruption in it, so that you might attain the upper hand."[30] We shall certainly make these disbelievers to taste a severe chastisement, and shall fully requite them for the worst of their misdeeds. That is Hell, the requital of the enemies of Allah, wherein they shall live for ever. This is the punishment of the crime that they denied Our Revelations. There the disbelievers will say, "Our Lord, show us the jinn and the men, who led us astray. We shall trample them under our feet so that they are utterly disgraced."[31] 26-29

Those[32] who said, "Allah is our Lord," and then stood steadfast,[33] angels descend on them[34] and say, "Fear not nor grieve,[35] and rejoice in the good news of Paradise that has been promised to you: we are your companions in the life of this world, and in the Hereafter, too. There you will have whatever you desire, and whatever you ask for will be yours---an entertainment from the One, Who is All-Forgiving, All-Merciful." 30-32

And who could be better of speech than the one who called to Allah and did right and said, "I am a Muslim."[36] 33

And O Prophet, goodness and evil are not equal. Repel evil with what is best. You will see that he with whom you had enmity, has become your closest friend.[37] But none can attain to this quality except those who endure with patience,[38] and none can attain to this rank except those who are men of great good fortune.[39] And if you feel an incitement from Satan, seek refuge in Allah:[40] He hears everything and knows everything.[41] 34-36

Among[42] the signs of Allah are the night and the day and the sun and the moon.[43] Do not prostrate yourselves before the sun and the moon, but prostrate yourselves before that God, Who created them, if 37-38

you really are His worshippers.[44] But it does not matter if these people show arrogance and still persist in their way,[45] for the angels who are nearest to your Lord, glorify Him day and night and never feel wearied.[46]

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happened (on her), because your Lord will have commanded her (to do so)." (vv. 2-5).

27. Hadrat Hasan Basri (may Allah bless him) has explained this verse thus "Every man's attitude and conduct is determined by the thought and conjecture that he has about his God. The conduct of a righteous believer is right because his thought and conjecture about his Lord is right, and the conduct of a disbeliever and a hypocrite and a sinful person is wrong because his thought and conjecture about his Lord is wrong." This same theme has the Holy Prophet expressed in a comprehensive and brief *Hadith*, thus: "Your Lord says: I am with the thought and conjecture that My servant holds about Me." (Bukhari, Muslim).

28. It can also mean this: "If they would want to return to the world, they would not be able to return," and this: "If they would want to come out from Hell, they would not be able to come out of it," and this: "If they would want to offer an excuse or repentance, it would not be accepted."

29. This is the permanent and eternal way of Allah that He does not let the men with evil intentions and desires have good companions, but lets them have bad companions according to their own inclinations. Then, as they go on descending into the depths of vice, more and more evil and wicked men and devils go on joining them as their associates and advisers and companions. Some people's saying that so-and-so is himself a very good man but happens to have bad companions is, in fact, contrary to fact. The law of nature is that every man gets the same sort of friends as he himself is. If bad people happen to be associated with a good man, they cannot remain associated with him for long. Likewise, if good and noble men happen to be associated with evil intentioned and immoral men by chance, their association cannot last long. An evil man naturally attracts only evil men to himself and only evil men become attracted towards him just as filth attracts flies and flies are attracted by the filth.

The meaning of: "They made every thing, in front of them and behind them, seem fair to them," is this: They assured them that their past had been glorious and their future would also be bright; they made them see everything attractive and pleasant on every side; they told them that those who criticised them were foolish, because they were not doing anything novel or strange: those who had made any progress in the world before them had been doing the same that

they were doing; ahead of them there was no Hereafter at all in which they might have to be called to account for their deeds, but if at all the Hereafter did take place, as some foolish people assert it would, the God who was blessing them in the world, would bless them there too. Hell had not been made for them but for those whom God had deprived of His blessings here.

30. This was one of those plans of the disbelievers of Makkah with which they wanted to frustrate the Holy Prophet's mission of preaching his message. They knew fully well how impressive was the Qur'ān, how high was the character of the man presenting it, and how effective and inspiring the style of his preaching. They knew that anyone who heard such matchless discourses in such an attractive style from such a noble person could not help being lured and charmed. Therefore, they planned that they should neither hear it themselves nor let anyone else hear it; whenever Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) should start reciting it, they should create noise, clap hands, pass taunting remarks and raise all sorts of objections and such a hue and cry as to drown his voice. By this plan they hoped they would be able to defeat the Prophet of Allah.

31. That is, "In the world these people were at the beck and call of their leaders and religious guides and deceitful devils, but when on the Day of Resurrection they will come to know where their leaders had led them, they will curse them and would wish that they should somehow get hold of them so that they may trample them under their foot."

32. After warning the disbelievers of the consequences of their opposition to the truth and their stubbornness, the address now turns to the believers and the Holy Prophet.

33. That is, they did not call Allah their Lord merely incidentally, nor were they involved in the error to regard Allah as their Lord and at the same time others as well as their lords, but they embraced the Faith sincerely and stood by it steadfastly: neither adopted a creed contrary to it later nor mixed it up with a false creed, but they fulfilled the demands of the doctrine of *Tauḥīd* in their practical lives as well.

"Standing steadfast on *Tauḥīd*" has been explained by the Holy Prophet and the eminent Companions thus:

Ḥaḍrat Anas has reported that the Holy Prophet said: "Many people called Allah their Lord, but most of them became disbelievers. Firm and steadfast is he who remained firm on this creed till his death." (Ibn Jarīr, Nasā'i, Ibn Abi Ḥātim).

Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) has explained it thus: "Then he did not associate another with Allah: did not attend to any other deity beside Him." (Ibn Jarīr).

Ḥaḍrat 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) once recited this verse on the pulpit and said: "By God, the steadfast are those who remained firm on obedience to Allah: did not run about from place to place like foxes." (Ibn Jarīr).

Ḥaḍrat 'Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) says "Performed his deeds sincerely for the sake of Allah only." (Kashshāf)

Ḥaḍrat 'Alī (may Allah be pleased with him) says: "Performed the duties enjoined by Allah faithfully and obediently." (Kashshāf)

34. It is not necessary that the coming down of the angels may be perceptible, and the believers may see them with the eyes, or hear their voices with the ears. Although Allah also sends the angels openly for whomever He wills, generally their coming down for the believers, especially in hard times when they are being persecuted by the enemies of the Truth, takes place in imperceptible ways and their voices penetrate into the depths of the heart as peace and tranquillity instead of just striking the ear-drums. Some commentators have regarded this coming down of the angels as restricted to the time of death or grave, or the Plain of Resurrection. But if the conditions in which these verses were sent down are kept in view there remains no doubt that the real object of stating this thing here is to mention the coming down of the angels on those who struggle with their lives in this world in the cause of the Truth, so that they are consoled and encouraged and they rest assured that they are not helpless but the angels of Allah are at their back. Although the angels also come to receive the believers at the time of death and they also welcome them in the grave (in the state of *barzakh),* and they will also accompany them constantly on the Day of Resurrection, from the time Resurrection takes place till their entry into Paradise, yet their company is not particularly restricted to the Hereafter but remains available in this world also. The context clearly shows that in the conflict between the Truth and falsehood just as the worshippers of falsehood are accompanied by the devils and mischievous people, so are the believers accompanied by the angels. On the one hand, the companions of the worshippers of falsehood show their misdeeds seem fair to them and assure them that the tyrannical and dishonest acts that they are committing are the very means of their success and through them only will their leadership and dominance remain safe in the world. On the other, the angels come down to the worshippers of the Truth and give them the message that is being mentioned in the following sentences.

35. These are very comprehensive words, which contain a new theme of consolation and peace for the believers, in every stage of life, from the world till

the Hereafter. This counsel of the angels in this world means: "No matter how strong and powerful be the forces of falsehood, you should not be afraid of them, and whatever hardships and deprivations you may have to experience on account of your love of the Truth, you should not grieve on account of them, for ahead there lie in store for you such things against which every blessing of the world is insignificant." When the angels say the same words at the time of death, they mean this: "There is no cause of fear for you in the destination you are heading for, for Paradise awaits you there, and you have no cause of grief for those whom you are leaving behind in the world, for we are your guardians and companions here." When the angels will say these very words in the intermediary state between death and Resurrection and in the Plain of Resurrection, they will mean: "Here, there is nothing but peace for you. Do not grieve for the hardships you had to suffer in the world, and do not fear what you are going to face in the Hereafter, for we are giving you the good news of Paradise, which used to be promised to you in the world."

36. After consoling and encouraging the believers, now they are being exhorted towards their real duty. In the preceding verse they were told: "Being firm in the service to Allah and standing steadfast on this way after adopting it is by itself the basic good, which makes man a friend of the angels and worthy of Paradise." Now they are being told: "The next thing which wins man the highest place of honour is that he should do good deeds himself and should invite others to the service of Allah, and even in the environment of severe antagonism where to proclaim Islam is tantamount to inviting hardships for oneself, one should firmly say that one is a Muslim." To understand the full significance of these words, one should keep in view the conditions in which they were said. The conditions were that anyone who proclaimed to be a Muslim, would feel as if he had stepped into a jungle of beasts, where everyone was rushing at him to tear him into pieces. More than that: if anyone opened his mouth to preach Islam he would feel as if he had called on the beasts to come and devour him. Such were the conditions when it was said: "A person's believing in Allah as his Lord and adopting the Right Way and standing steadfast on it is indeed a great and fundamental good, but the greatest good is that man should boldly say that he is a Muslim and should invite others towards Allah's service, fearless of the consequences, and while performing this duty should remain so pure and pious in conduct and character that no one should have a cause to find fault with Islam and with those who uphold it.

37. To understand the full significance of these words also, one should keep in view the conditions in which the Holy Prophet and, through him, his followers were given this instruction. The conditions were that the invitation to the Truth was being resisted and opposed with extreme stubbornness and severe antagonism, in which all bounds of morality, humanity and decency were being

transgressed. Every sort of lie was being uttered against the Holy Prophet and his Companions; every kind of evil device was being employed to defame him and to create suspicions against him in the minds of the people; every kind of accusation was being levelled against him and a host of the propagandists were busy creating doubts against him in the hearts; in short, he and his Companions were being persecuted in every possible way because of which a substantial number of the Muslims had been compelled to emigrate from the country. Then the programme that had been prepared to stop him from preaching was that a band of the mischievous people was set behind him, who would raise such a hue and cry that no one should be able to hear anything as soon as he opened his mouth to preach his message. In such discouraging conditions when apparently every way of extending invitation to Islam seemed to be blocked, the Holy Prophet was taught this recipe for breaking the opposition.

First, it was said that goodness and evil are not equal, as if to say: "Although apparently your opponents might have raised a dreadful storm of mischief and evil, as against which goodness might seem absolutely helpless and powerless, yet evil in itself has a weakness which ultimately causes its own destruction. For as long as man is man, his nature cannot help hating evil. Not only the companions of evil, even its own upholders know in their hearts that they are liars and wicked people and are being stubborn for selfish motives. Not to speak of creating dignity and honour for them in the hearts of others, it lowers them in their own esteem, and causes their morale to be weakened and destroyed in the event of every conflict. As against this evil, the good which appears to be utterly helpless and powerless, goes on operating and working and it becomes dominant in the long run. For, in the first place, the good has a power of its own which wins the hearts and no man however perverted and corrupted, can help esteeming it in his own heart. Then, when the good and evil are engaged in a face to face conflict and their nature and merits become apparent and known, after a long drawn out struggle, not many people would be left, who would not start hating the evil and admiring the good.

Second, it was said that evil should be resisted not by the mere good but by a superior good, as if to say: "If a person treats you unjustly and you forgive him, it is the mere good. The superior good is that you treat the one who ill-treats you with kindness and love."

The result would be that "your worst enemy would become your closest friend," for that is human nature itself. If you remain quiet in response to an abuse, it will be mere goodness but it will not silence the abuser. But if you express good wishes for him in response to his abuses, even the most shameless opponent will feel ashamed, and then would hardly ever be able to employ invectives against you. If a person doesn't miss any opportunity to harm you, and

you go on tolerating his excesses, it may well make him even bolder in his mischiefs. But if on an occasion he gets into trouble and you come to his rescue, he will fall down at your feet, for no mischief can hold out against goodness. However, it would be wrong to take this general principle in the meaning that every enemy will necessarily become a close friend when you have treated him with the superior good. There are such wicked people also in the world, whose inimical nature will never change for the better no matter how tolerantly you may overlook their excesses and how benevolently you may react and respond to every evil committed by them. But such devil-incarnates are as few in the world as the embodiments of goodness are.

38. Although a very efficacious recipe, it is not easy to use. It requires a great will power, resolution, courage, power of endurance and full control over one's own self. A man may act benevolently in response to an evil done, on an impulse, and there is nothing extraordinary in it. But when a person has to fight for years and years, for the sake of the Truth, those mischievous worshippers of falsehood, who do not feel any hesitation in violating any bond of morality, and are also intoxicated with power, it requires extraordinary grit to go on resisting the evil with good, and that too with the superior good, without ever showing any lack of restraint and self-control. Such a work can be accomplished only by him who has resolved with a cool mind to work for the cause of upholding the Truth, who has subdued his self to intellect and sense and in whom good and righteousness have taken such deep roots that no malice and mischief of the opponents can succeed in deposing him from his high position.

39. This is a law of nature. Only a man of very high rank is characterised by these qualities, and the one who possesses these qualities cannot be prevented by any power of the world from attaining to his goal of success. It is in no way possible that the depraved people may defeat him with their mean machinations and shameless devices.

40. Satan feels grieved when he sees that in the conflict between the Truth and falsehood meanness is being resisted with nobility and evil with goodness. He wants that he should somehow incite the fighters for the sake of the Truth and their prominent men in particular, and especially their leaders, to commit such a mistake, even if once, on the basis of which he may tell the common people that evil is not being committed by one side only; if mean acts are being committed by one side, the people of the other side also are not morally any better: they too have committed such and such a shameless act. The common people do not have the capability that they may assess and counterbalance fairly the excesses being committed by one party by the reactions of the other. As long as they see that while the opponents are adopting every mean act yet these people do not swerve at all from the path of decency and nobility, goodness and righteousness, they

continue to regard and esteem them highly. But if at some time they happen to commit an unworthy act, even if it is in retaliation against a grave injustice, both the sides become equal in their esteem, and the opponents also get an excuse to counter one blameable act with a thousand abuses. That is why it has been said: "Be on your guard against the deceptions of Satan. He will incite you as a well-wisher to take note of every abuse and every insult and attack and urge you to pay the opponent in the same coin, otherwise you would be regarded as a coward and weaken your image of strength." On every such occasion whenever you feel any undue provocation, you should take care that this is an incitement of Satan who is arousing you to anger and wants you to commit a mistake. And after having been warned do not be involved in the misunderstanding that you have full control over yourself, and Satan cannot make you commit any mistake. This high opinion of one's own power of judgement and will is another and more dangerous deception of Satan. Instead of it you should seek Allah's refuge, for man can save himself from mistakes only if Allah helps and grants him protection.

The best commentary of this subject is the event which Imām Aḥmad has related in his Musnad on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abū Huraīrah. He says that once a man started uttering invectives against Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr, in the presence of the Holy Prophet. Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr kept on hearing the invectives quietly and the Holy Prophet kept on smiling at it. At last, when Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr could restrain himself no longer, he also uttered a harsh word for the person in response. No sooner did he utter the word than the Holy Prophet was seized by restraint, which appeared on his face, and he rose and left the place immediately. Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr also rose and went behind him. On the way he asked, "How is it that as long as the person went on abusing me, you kept quiet and smiling, but when I also said a word in retaliation, you were annoyed?" The Holy Prophet replied, "Until you were quiet an angel remained with you, who went on replying to him on your behalf, but when you spoke out Satan came in place of the angel: I could not sit with Satan."

41. After seeking Allah's refuge against the storm of opposition, the thing that brings patience and peace and tranquility to the heart of the believer is this conviction: "Allah is not unaware: He knows whatever we are doing as well as that which is being done against us. He is hearing whatever we and our opponents utter and watches the conduct of both of us." On the basis of this very conviction the believer entrusts his own and the opponents of the truth's affair to Allah and remains satisfied.

This is the fifth place where the Holy Prophet and, through him, the believers have been taught this wisdom of preaching and reforming the people. For the other four places, see Al-A'rāf: 199-204, An-Naḥl: 125-128, Al-Mu'minūn: 96-98, Al-'Ankabūt: 46-47 and the E.N.'s.

42. Now the discourse turns to the common people and they are made to understand the truth in a few sentences.

43. That is, "They are not the objects of Divine power that you may start worshipping them, thinking that Allah is manifesting Himself in their form, but they are the Signs of Allah by pondering over which you can understand the reality of the universe and its system, and can know that the doctrine of the Oneness of God which the Prophets are teaching is the actual Reality. The mention of the night and day before the sun and moon has been made to give the warning that the hiding of the sun and appearing of the moon at night, and the hiding of the moon and appearing of the sun in the day clearly point to the fact that neither of them is God or object of Divine power, but both are helpless and powerless objects, and are moving subject to the law of God.

44. This is an answer to the philosophy that the intelligent among the polytheists generally used to propound to prove that polytheism was rational. They said that they did not bow to these objects but bowed to God through them. An answer to this has been given, so as to say: "If you really are Allah's worshippers, there is no need of these intermediaries: why don't you bow down to Him directly?"

45. "If they show arrogance": If they think it is beneath them to listen to you and persist still in the ignorance in which they are involved.

46. It means this: "The system of this whole universe, whose agents these angels are, is running on the basis of Allah's Oneness and His servitude. The angels who are its agents are testifying every moment that their Lord is pure and exalted far above that another should be His associate in His Divinity and worship. Now, if a few foolish persons do not believe even after admonition, and turn away from the way that is being followed by the whole universe and persist in following the way of *shirk* only, let them remain involved in their folly."

The consensus is that it is obligatory to perform *sajdah* (prostration) here, but the jurists differ as to which of the two preceding verses requires the performance of *sajdah*. Ḥaḍrat 'Alī and Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd performed the *sajdah* at the end of v. 37, while Ḥaḍrat Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn 'Umar, Sa'id bin Musayyab, Masrūq, Qatādah, Ḥaṣan Baṣrī, Abū 'Abdur Raḥmān as-Sulamī, Ibn Sīrīn, Ibrahīm Nakha'ī and several other prominent jurists have expressed the opinion that it should be performed at the end of v. 38. The same also is the

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عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ يُسَبِّحُوْنَ لَهٗ بِالَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَهُمْ لَا يَسْـَٔمُوْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهٖٓ
اَنَّكَ تَرَى الْاَرْضَ خَاشِعَةً فَاِذَآ اَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْهَا الْمَآءَ اهْتَزَّتْ وَرَبَتْ ؕ اِنَّ
الَّذِيْٓ اَحْيَاهَا لَمُحْيِ الْمَوْتٰى ؕ اِنَّهٗ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿٣٩﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يُلْحِدُوْنَ
فِيْٓ اٰيٰتِنَا لَا يَخْفَوْنَ عَلَيْنَا ؕ اَفَمَنْ يُّلْقٰى فِي النَّارِ خَيْرٌ اَمْ مَّنْ يَّاْتِيْٓ اٰمِنًا
يَّوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ ؕ اِعْمَلُوْا مَا شِئْتُمْ ۙ اِنَّهٗ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ بَصِيْرٌ ﴿٤٠﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا
بِالذِّكْرِ لَمَّا جَآءَهُمْ ۙ وَاِنَّهٗ لَكِتٰبٌ عَزِيْزٌ ﴿٤١﴾ لَّا يَاْتِيْهِ الْبَاطِلُ مِنْۢ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ
وَلَا مِنْ خَلْفِهٖ ؕ تَنْزِيْلٌ مِّنْ حَكِيْمٍ حَمِيْدٍ ﴿٤٢﴾ مَا يُقَالُ لَكَ اِلَّا مَا قَدْ قِيْلَ
لِلرُّسُلِ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ ؕ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَذُوْ مَغْفِرَةٍ وَّذُوْ عِقَابٍ اَلِيْمٍ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَلَوْ جَعَلْنٰهُ
قُرْاٰنًا اَعْجَمِيًّا لَّقَالُوْا لَوْلَا فُصِّلَتْ اٰيٰتُهٗ ؕ ءَاَعْجَمِيٌّ وَّعَرَبِيٌّ ؕ قُلْ هُوَ لِلَّذِيْنَ
اٰمَنُوْا هُدًى وَّشِفَآءٌ ؕ وَالَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ فِيْٓ اٰذَانِهِمْ وَقْرٌ وَّهُوَ عَلَيْهِمْ
عَمًى ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ يُنَادَوْنَ مِنْ مَّكَانٍۢ بَعِيْدٍ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا مُوْسَى الْكِتٰبَ
فَاخْتُلِفَ فِيْهِ ؕ وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ لَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ ؕ وَاِنَّهُمْ لَفِيْ
شَكٍّ مِّنْهُ مُرِيْبٍ ﴿٤٥﴾ مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلِنَفْسِهٖ ۚ وَمَنْ اَسَآءَ فَعَلَيْهَا ؕ
وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِظَلَّامٍ لِّلْعَبِيْدِ ﴿٤٦﴾

اِلَيْهِ يُرَدُّ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ ؕ وَمَا تَخْرُجُ مِنْ ثَمَرٰتٍ مِّنْ اَكْمَامِهَا ۚ وَمَا

تَحْمِلُ مِنْ اُنْثٰى وَلَا تَضَعُ اِلَّا بِعِلْمِهٖ ؕ وَيَوْمَ يُنَادِيْهِمْ اَيْنَ شُرَكَآءِيْ ؕ
قَالُوْٓا اٰذَنّٰكَ ۙ مَا مِنَّا مِنْ شَهِيْدٍ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَّا كَانُوْا يَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ
قَبْلُ وَظَنُّوْا مَا لَهُمْ مِّنْ مَّحِيْصٍ ﴿٤٨﴾ لَا يَسْـَٔمُ الْاِنْسَانُ مِنْ دُعَآءِ الْخَيْرِ ۖ وَ
اِنْ مَّسَّهُ الشَّرُّ فَيَـُٔوْسٌ قَنُوْطٌ ﴿٤٩﴾ وَلَئِنْ اَذَقْنٰهُ رَحْمَةً مِّنَّا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ ضَرَّآءَ

And among the Signs of Allah is this that you see the earth dry and desolate; then as soon as We send down rain on it, it stirs (to life) and swells. Surely the God Who gives the dead earth life will raise the dead men also to life.[47] Indeed, He has power over everything. 39

Those[48] who misconstrue Our Revelations[49] are not in any way hidden from Us.[50] Just consider who is better: he who will be cast into the Hell-Fire, or he who will appear on the Day of Resurrection in full security? Do as you please; Allah is watching over everything you do. These are the people who refused to believe in the Admonition when it came to them. But the fact is that this is a mighty Book.[51] Falsehood can neither come at it from before it nor from behind it:[52] it is a Revelation from the All-Wise, All-Praiseworthy One. 40-42

O Prophet, nothing is being said to you that has not already been said to the Messengers before you. Surely your Lord is highly forgiving,[53] yet stern in inflicting a painful punishment. 43

Had We sent this Qur'ān in a foreign tongue, the people would have said, "Why have not its verses been well expounded? What! the scripture in a foreign language and the listeners are Arabs?"[54] Say to them, "This Qur'ān is a guidance and a healing for the believers, but to those who do not believe, it is a plug in their ears and a covering over their eyes. It is as though they are being summoned from afar.[55] Before this We had given to Moses the Book, and it was similarly disputed.[56] If your Lord had not already decreed a thing, the judgement would have been passed between the disputants;[57] and the fact is that they are involved in an anxious doubt about it.[58] 44-45

Whoever does good will do so for his own self, and whoever does evil will himself bear its consequences: your Lord is never unjust to His servants.[59] 46

To Allah is remitted[60] the knowledge of the Hour:[61] He alone knows all the fruits that come out from their sheaths: He alone knows which female has conceived and which has given birth.[62] Then on the Day when He will call out to the people, asking, "Where are those associates of Mine"? they will say, "We have submitted: there is none of us to bear witness to that".[63] At that time, all those gods whom they used to invoke before this, shall be lost to them,[64] and they will realize 47-48

that they have no refuge.

[Contd. from p. 495]

opinion of Imām Abu Hanīfah, and the Shāfe'ites also have held the same view as preferable.

47. For explanation, see An-Naḥl: 65, Al-Ḥijr: 5-7, Ar-Rūm: 19 and E.N. 19 of Al-Fāṭir.

48. After telling the common people in a few sentences that the doctrine of *Tauḥīd* and the Hereafter to which Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is inviting them, is rational and the signs of the universe testify to its being right and true, the discourse again turns to the opponents who were determined to oppose it stubbornly.

49. The word *yulḥidūn* in the original is derived from *ilḥād* which means to deviate, to turn away from the right to the wrong path, to adopt crookedness. Thus, *ilḥād* in the Revelations of Allah would mean that instead of understanding them in their clear and straightforward meaning one should misconstrue them and go astray and also lead others astray. One of the devices being adopted by the disbelievers of Makkah to defeat the message of the Qur'ān was that they would hear the verses of the Qur'ān and then would isolate one verse from its context, tamper with another, misconstrue a word or a sentence and thus raise every sort of objection and would mislead the people, saying that the Prophet had said such and such a thing that day.

50. These words imply a severe threat. The All-Powerful Ruler's saying that the acts of such and such a person are not hidden from Him by itself contains the meaning that he cannot escape their consequences.

51. "A mighty Book": An unchanging Book, which cannot be defeated by tricks and cunning devices, which the worshippers of falsehood are employing against it. It has the force of the Truth in it, the force of true knowledge, the force of argument and reason, the force of eloquence and style, the force of Divinity of God Who sent it, and the force of the personality of the Messenger who presented it. No one, therefore, can defeat it by falsehood and hollow propaganda .

52. "Falsehood .... from before it" means that none can succeed in proving anything wrong or any teaching false in the Qur'ān by making a frontal attack on it; " .... nor from behind it" means that nothing can be discovered till Resurrection which may be opposed to the truths and realities presented by the Qur'ān; no new science, if it is really a "science", can be propounded, which may contradict the knowledge contained in the Qur'ān; no new experiment or observation can be made to prove that the guidance given to man by the Qur'ān in

respect of the beliefs, morality, law, civilization or culture, and economic, social and political life is wrong. That which this Book has declared as the Truth can never be proved to be falsehood and that which it has declared as falsehood can never be proved to be the truth. Furthermore, it also means that whether falsehood makes a frontal attack, or makes a surprise attack by deception, it cannot defeat the message which the Qur'ān has brought. In spite of all sorts of open and secret machinations of the opponents the message will spread and none shall be able to defeat and frustrate it.

53. That is, "It is all due to His clemency and forgiveness that although His Messengers were opposed, abused and persecuted yet He went on giving respite to their opponents for years and years on end."

54. This is the kind of the stubbornness that the Holy Prophet was confronting. The disbelievers said, "Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is an Arab. Arabic is his mother tongue. How can one believe that the Arabic Qur'ān that he presents has not been forged by himself but has been revealed to him by God? The Qur'ān could be believed to be the Revelation of God if he had started speaking fluently in a foreign language unknown to him, like Persian, Latin, or Greek." This argument of theirs has been refuted by Allah, saying, "Now when the Qur'ān has been sent down in their own tongue so that they may understand it, they raise the objection: Why has it been sent down to an Arab in Arabic? But if it had been sent down in a foreign tongue, these very people would have said, 'How strange! An Arab Messenger has been sent to the Arabs, but the Revelations being sent to him are in a tongue which is neither understood by him nor by his people'."

55. When a person is summoned from afar, he hears a voice but does not understand what is being said to him. This is a wonderful simile which fully depicts the psychology of the stubborn opponents. Naturally when you talk to a person who is free from prejudice, he will listen to you, will try to understand what you say, will accept it if it is reasonable, with an open mind. On the contrary, the person who is not only prejudiced against you but is also malicious and spiteful, will not at all listen to you however hard you may try to make him understand your viewpoint. In spite of hearing you all the time he will not understand at all what you had been saying.

56. That is, some people had believed in it and some others had made up their minds to oppose it.

57. It has two meanings: (1) If Allah had not already decreed that the people would be given enough respite for consideration the disputants would have long been destroyed; (2) if Allah had not already decreed that the disputes would

finally be decided on the Day of Judgement, the reality would have been made plain as to who is in the right and who is in the wrong.

58. In this brief sentence the spiritual disease of the disbelievers of Makkah has been clearly diagnosed. It says that they are involved in doubt about the Qur'ān and the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), and this doubt has caused them great anguish and confusion. That is, although apparently they deny the Qur'ān's being Allah's Word and the Holy Prophet's being His Messenger very vehemently, yet this denial is not based on any coviction, but their minds are afflicted with great vacillation, and doubt. On the one hand, their selfish motives, their interests and their prejudices demand that they should belie the Qur'ān and the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and oppose them strongly; on the other, their hearts are convened from within, that the Qur'ān is, in fact, a unique and un-paralleled Word the like of which has never been heard from any literary man or poet. Neither can the insane utter such things in their madness, nor can devils come to teach God-worship, piety and righteousness to the people. Likewise, when they say that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is a liar, their hearts from within put them to shame, and ask: Can such a person ever be a liar? When they brand him a madman, their hearts cry out from within and ask: Do you really think that he is mad? When they accuse that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is not interested in the truth but is working for selfish motives, their hearts from within curse them and ask: Do you call this virtuous man selfish, whom you have never seen striving for the sake of wealth and power and fame, whose life has been free from every trace of self-interest, who has always been working to bring about goodness and piety, but has never acted from any selfish motives.

59. That is, "Your Lord can never be so unjust as to let go to waste the good deeds of a good man and fail to punish the evil-doers for their evil."

60. That is, "None but Allah knows when the Hour would occur." This is the answer to the disbelievers' question as to when the threat being given them of meeting with the consequences of their evil deeds will be carried out. Allah has answered their question without citing it.

61. "The Hour": the Hour of Resurrection, i.e. the Hour when the evildoers will be punished for their evil and the grievances of the oppressed good people will be redressed.

62. By this the listeners have been made to realize two things: (1) That not only of Resurrection but the knowledge of all unseen things is reserved for Allah alone; there is no other knower of the unseen; and (2) that God Who possesses the detailed knowledge of the most minor things cannot remain unaware of the acts and deeds of anybody. Therefore, no one in His Kingdom should act

fearlessly, with impunity. Only according to this second meaning the sentence becomes relevant to what follows. If one studies the following sentences the theme that immediately becomes obvious is: "Don't concern your selves about finding out the date of the coming of Resurrection; you should, however, be anxious about the consequences of your deviations you will have to bear when it comes. "This same thing had the Holy Prophet once said to a person, who asked him the date of the coming of Resurrection. All the major collections of *Hadith* contain a commonly reported Tradition to the effect: "Once when the Holy Prophet was on a journey, a man on the way shouted his name from a distance. The Holy Prophet asked what he wanted to say. He said: When will Resurrection come? The Holy Prophet replied: It must come in any case! What preparations have you made for it?"

63. That is, "Now we have realized that what we had in our minds was absolutely wrong. Now none among us is of the view that there is another one also who is Your associate in Godhead." The words "we have submitted" show that on the Day of Resurrection the disbelievers will be asked again and again, on every occasion, "In the world you went on refusing to believe what the Messengers of God said: now say who was in the right: they or you? And the disbelievers will every time confess that the truth indeed was that which the Messengers preached and they themselves were in the wrong because they forsook the knowledge and persisted in their own ignorance.

64. That is, "In their utter hopelessness they will look around to see if they could find any one of those whom they used to serve and worship in the world, who could come to their rescue and save them from God's torment, or at least have their punishment reduced, but they will find no helper on any side."

مَسَّتْهُ لَيَقُوْلَنَّ هٰذَا لِيْ ۙ وَمَآ اَظُنُّ السَّاعَةَ قَآئِمَةً ۙ وَّلَئِنْ رُّجِعْتُ اِلٰى
رَبِّيْٓ اِنَّ لِيْ عِنْدَهٗ لَلْحُسْنٰى ۚ فَلَنُنَبِّئَنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا بِمَا عَمِلُوْا وَلَنُذِيْقَنَّهُمْ
مِّنْ عَذَابٍ غَلِيْظٍ ۝٥٠ وَاِذَآ اَنْعَمْنَا عَلَى الْاِنْسَانِ اَعْرَضَ وَنَاٰ بِجَانِبِهٖ ۚ وَاِذَا
مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ فَذُوْ دُعَآءٍ عَرِيْضٍ ۝٥١ قُلْ اَرَءَيْتُمْ اِنْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللّٰهِ ثُمَّ
كَفَرْتُمْ بِهٖ مَنْ اَضَلُّ مِمَّنْ هُوَ فِيْ شِقَاقٍ بَعِيْدٍ ۝٥٢ سَنُرِيْهِمْ اٰيٰتِنَا فِي الْاٰفَاقِ
وَفِيْٓ اَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتّٰى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ اَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ ۗ اَوَلَمْ يَكْفِ بِرَبِّكَ اَنَّهٗ عَلٰى كُلِّ
شَيْءٍ شَهِيْدٌ ۝٥٣ اَلَآ اِنَّهُمْ فِيْ مِرْيَةٍ مِّنْ لِّقَآءِ رَبِّهِمْ ۗ اَلَآ اِنَّهٗ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّحِيْطٌ ۝٥٤

Man is never wearied of praying for good,[65] and when an evil befalls him, he loses hope and becomes desperate. But when We let him taste Our mercy after the hardship, he says, "I deserve this,[66] and I do not think that the Hour (of Resurrection) will ever come. But if I am really brought back to my Lord, I shall have good reward with Him, too." The fact, however, is that We shall certainly tell the disbelievers what they had done, and We shall make them taste a most degrading Chastisement. 49-50

When We bless man, he turns away and grows stiffnecked;[67] but when an evil touches him, he comes with lengthy supplications.[68] 51

O Prophet, say to them, "Did you ever consider this: If this Qur'ān were really from Allah, And you went on denying it, who could be more astray than the one who had gone far off in antagonism towards it?"[69] 52

Soon shall We show them Our Signs in the World around them, as well as in themselves, till it becomes clear to them, that this Qur'ān is indeed the Truth.[70] Is it not enough that your Lord watches everything?[71] Look! these people are in doubt about the meeting with their Lord: [72]Listen! He encompasses everything![73] 53-54

Contd. from p. 501]

65. "For good": For prosperity, abundance of provisions, good health, well-being of children, etc. And "man" here does not imply every human being,

for it also includes the Prophets and the righteous people, who are free from this weakness as is being mentioned below. But here it implies the mean and shallow person, who starts imploring God humbly when touched by harm and is beside himself with joy when he receives the good things of life. As most human beings are involved in this weakness, it has been called a weakness of man.

66. That is, "I have got all this because of my being worthy of it: it is my right that I should receive all this."

67. That is, "He turns away from Our obedience and worship, and thinks it is below his dignity to bow to Us."

68. For other verses on this subject, see Yūnus: 12, Banī Isrā'īl: 83, Ar-Rūm: 33-36, Az.Zumar: 8-9, 49 and the E.N.'s.

69. It does not mean that they should believe in it only owing to the danger that if it were really from Allah they would be inviting their own doom by denying it, but it means this "It is not wisdom that you should be bent upon opposing it stubbornly without seriously trying to understand what it says. You cannot assert that you have come to know that this Qur'ān is not from God, and you have known with certainty that God has not sent it. Obviously, your refusal to believe in it as Divine Word is not based on knowledge, but on conjecture, which may possibly be right as well as wrong. Now consider both the possibilities. If your conjecture were right, then, according to your own thinking, both the believers and the unbelievers would be equal, because both will become dust after death, and there is no life hereafter where belief and unbelief might be distinguished. But, if their Qur'ān were really from God, and that of which it is forewarning did really take place, then think what doom you would invite for yourselves by denying it and opposing it like that. Therefore, your own interest demands that you should give up stubbornness and consider this Qur'ān seriously; if even after due consideration, you decide not to believe in it, you may not, but you should not oppose it to the extent that you start employing falsehood and deception and persecution to bar the way of its message and prevent others from believing in it, not being content with your own unbelief.

70. This verse has two meanings and both have been given by the major commentators:

First, that they will soon see with their own eyes that the message of the Qur'ān has spread in all the adjoining lands, and they themselves have yielded to it. Then they will realize that what they are being told today, which they are denying, was absolutely true. Some people have objected to this meaning, saying that a message's being dominant and overwhelming vast areas is no argument to prove that it is the truth. False messages also become dominant and their adherents

also go on subduing one country after the other. But this is a superficial objection which has been raised without a thorough study of the matter. The wonderful conquests that Islam achieved in the period of the Holy Prophet and the rightly-guided Caliphs, were not the Signs of Allah only in the sense that the believers conquered one country after the other, but in the sense that this conquest of the countries was not like other conquests of the world, which make one man or one family or one nation master of the life and property of others and God's earth is filled with tyranny and injustice. Contrary to this, this conquest brought with it a great religious, moral, intellectual, cultural, political, economic and social revolution; whose influence, wherever it reached, elicited what was best in man and suppressed what was worst in him. This revolution developed and nurtured the moral excellences which the world could hope to see only in the hermits and the meditating recluses and could never imagine that they could also be found among the people responsible for running the worldly affairs—in the politics of the rulers, in the chambers of justice, in the wars and conquests of the commanders of forces, in the work of the tax collectors and in the commerce of the big businessmen. This revolution so raised the common people in the society created by it in respect of the sense of morality, character, cleanliness and purity that even the select people of other societies seemed to be much inferior to them. It took man out of the labyrinths of superstition and whim and put him on the broad highway of scientific research and rational thought and action. It treated and cured these diseases of the collective life of whose treatment no idea existed in the other systems, or if at all they tried to treat them, they did not succeed in it. For example, separation between men on the basis of colour, race, country and language, classification of men in the same society and discrimination among them, non existence of legal rights and equality in practical life, degeneration of women and their deprivation of the basic rights, prevalence of crime, liqour drinking and use of all intoxicating drugs, the governments being above criticism and accountability, deprivation of the fundamental human rights the masses', disrespect of agreements in international relations, barbarism in wars, and such other diseases. In Arabia itself this revolution brought about order in place of chaos, peace in place of bloodshed and anarchy, piety in place of wickedness, justice in place of tyranny and injustice, purity and culture in place of filth and indecency, knowledge in place of ignorance, brotherhood and love in place of long-standing feuds, and it made a nation whose people could not dream of anything beyond chiefship of their tribe, leaders of the world. These were the Signs which the very generation before whom the Holy Prophet had recited this verse for the first time, saw with their own eyes, and after that till today Allah has been constantly showing those Signs. The Muslims, even during their downfall, displayed such high morals as could never be attained by those people who represent as the leaders of civilization and culture. No precedent can be found from any period of the history of the Muslims

of the tyrannical treatment that has been meted out by the European nations to the subdued nations of Africa, America, Asia and of Europe itself. This is the blessing of the Qur'ān which has so humanised Muslims that they could not become so tyrannical even when they had attained domination as the non-Muslims have been in all periods of history and are even today. A person who has eyes can himself see how the Muslims treated the Christians in Spain when they ruled it for centuries, and how the Christians treated the Muslims when they gained power there; how the Muslims behaved towards Hindus during their eight hundred year long rule in India and how the Hindus are now treating them after they have attained power; how the Muslims treated the Jews during the past 1300 years and how the Jews are treating the Muslims in Palestine.

The other meaning of this verse is that Allah will show the people in the external world around them as well as in their own selves such signs as will make manifest that the teaching the Qur'ān is giving is the very truth. Some people have raised the objection that the people even at that time were observing the world around them and also their own selves; therefore, it would be meaningless to show them any such Signs in the future. But this objection also is as superficial as the objection against the first meaning. No doubt, the external world is the same as man has been seeing in the past and his own self also is of the same nature as has been seen in every age, yet in these the Signs of God are so numerous that man has never comprehended them fully nor will ever be able to do so. In every age man has met with many new Signs and this will go on happening till the Resurrection Day.

71. That is, "Is it not enough to warn the people of their evil end that Allah is watching whatever they are doing to belie and defeat the Message of the truth?"

72. That is, "The basic cause of their attitude and conduct is that they are not sure that they will ever have to appear before their Lord and be held accountable for their deeds and actions."

73. That is, "They cannot escape His grasp nor can anything of their deeds be prevented from being recorded by Him."



XLII

ASH-SHŪRĀ

الشُّورىٰ

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

XLII

ASH-SHŪRĀ

الشُّوریٰ

INTRODUCTION

Name

It is derived from the sentence, *we amru-hum shūrā baina-hum*, of verse 38, implying thereby that it is a Sūrah in which the word *shūrā* has occurred.

Period of Revelation

Although it could not be known from any authentic traditions, yet one feels after a study of its subject-matter that this Sūrah might have been sent down consecutively after Ḥā-Mīm As-Sajdah, for it seems to be, in a way, a supplement to it. This will become clear to every person who first studies Sūrah Ḥā-Mīm As-Sajdah carefully and then goes

through this Sūrah. He will see that in that Sūrah the Quraish chiefs had been taken to task for their deaf and blind opposition so that anyone in Makkah and in its out-skirts, who had any sense of morality and nobility left in him, should know how unreasonably the chiefs of the people were opposing Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), and as against them, how serious he was in everything he said, how rational was his standpoint and how noble his character and conduct. Immediately after that warning this Sūrah was sent down, which did full justice to teaching and instruction, and made the truth of the Holy Prophet's message plain in such an impressive way that anyone who had any element of the love of the truth in him and who had not been blinded by the errors of ignorance, could not help being influenced by it.

Theme and Subject-Matter

The discourse begins in a way as if to say: "Why are you expressing surprise and amazement at what Our Prophet is presenting before you? What he says is not new or strange, nor anything novel, which might have been presented for the first time in history: that Revelation should come down to a man from God and he should be given instructions for the guidance of mankind. Allah has been sending similar Revelations with similar instructions to the former Prophets before this. It is not surprising that the Owner of the Universe should be acknowledged as Deity and Ruler, but what is strange is that one should accept another as divine and deity in spite of being His subject and slave. You are being angry with him who is presenting *Tauḥīd* before you, whereas the *shirk* that you are practicing with regard to the Master of the Universe is such a grave crime as may cause the heavens to break asunder. The angels are amazed at this boldness of yours and fear that the wrath of Allah might descend on you any moment."

After this the people have been told that a person's being appointed to Prophethood and presenting himself as a Prophet does not mean that he has been made master of the people's destinies and he has come to the world with that very claim. Allah has kept the destinies in His own hand. The Prophet has come only to arouse the heedless and guide the strayed ones to the Right Path. To call to account those who do not listen to him and to punish or not to punish them is Allah's own responsibility, and not a part of the Prophet's work. Therefore, they

should take it out of their head that the prophet has come with a claim similar to those that are made by their so-called religious guides and saints to the effect that he who would not listen to them, or would behave insolently towards them, would be burnt to death. In this very connection, the people have also been told that the Prophet has not come to condemn them but he is their well-wisher; he is warning them that the way they are following will only lead to their own destruction.

Then, an answer has been given to the question: Why didn't Allah make all human beings righteous by birth, and why did He allow the difference of viewpoint owing to which the people start following each and every way of thought and action? The answer given is: Owing to this very fact has it become possible for man to attain to the special Mercy of Allah, which is not meant for other dumb creatures, but is only meant for those endowed with power and authority, who should take Allah as Patron and Guardian not instinctively but consciously by willing choice. Allah supports the man who adopts this way and guides and helps him to do good and right and admits him into His special Mercy. On the contrary, the man who misuses his option and makes his patron those who are not, in fact, the guardians, and cannot be, are deprived of Divine Mercy. In this connection, it has also been made clear that only Allah is the Patron of man and of all other creatures. Others are neither the patron nor have the power to do full justice to patronage. Man's success depends only on that he should make no mistake in choosing a patron for himself by the use of his free choice, and should take only Him his Guide Who, in reality, is the real Patron.

After this, it has been explained what the *Dīn* being presented by the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) really is:

Its primary basis is that as Allah Almighty is the Creator, Master and Real Patron of the Universe and Man, He alone is Man's Ruler, He alone has the right to give Man Faith (*Dīn*) and Law (system of belief and practice) and judge the disputes of man and tell what is Truth and what is falsehood. No other being has any right whatever to be man's lawgiver. In other words, like the natural sovereignty, the sovereignty with regard to lawmaking also is vested only in Allah. No man or creature, apart from Allah, can be the bearer of this sovereignty. And if

a person does not recognize and accept this Divine rule of Allah, it is merely futile for him to recognize the natural Sovereignty of Allah.

On this very basis has Allah ordained a *Dīn* (True Religion) for Man from the very beginning. It was one and the same Religion that was vouchsafed in every age to all the Prophets. No Prophet ever founded any separate religion of his own. The same one Religion has been enjoined by Allah for all mankind since the beginning of creation, and all the Prophets have been following it and inviting others to follow it.

This Religion and Creed was not sent so that man may rest content only with believing in it, but it was sent with the purpose and intention that it alone should be introduced, established and enforced in the world, and no man made religion be made to prevail in Allah's earth apart from His Religion. The Prophets had not been appointed only to preach this Religion but to establish it particularly in the world.

This same was the original Religion of mankind, but after the death of the Prophets, selfish people created new creeds by creating schisms for vested interests due to self-conceit, vanity and ostentation. All the different religions and creeds found in the world today have resulted from corruption of the original Divine Truth.

Now, the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) has been sent so that he may present before the people the same original Religion in place of the various practices and artificial creeds and man-made religions, and may try to establish the same. On this, if instead of being grateful, you feel angry and come out to fight him, it is your folly; the Prophet will not abandon his mission only because of your foolishness. He has been enjoined to adhere to his faith at all costs and to carry out the mission to which he has been appointed. Therefore, the people should not cherish any false hope that in order to please them he would cater to the same whims and superstitions of ignorance which has corrupted Allah's Religion before.

You do not understand how great an impudence it is against Allah to adopt a man-made religion and law instead of the Religion and Law enjoined by Allah. You think it is an ordinary thing and there is nothing wrong with it. But in the sight of Allah it is the worst kind of *shirk* and a grave crime whose punishment will be imposed on all those

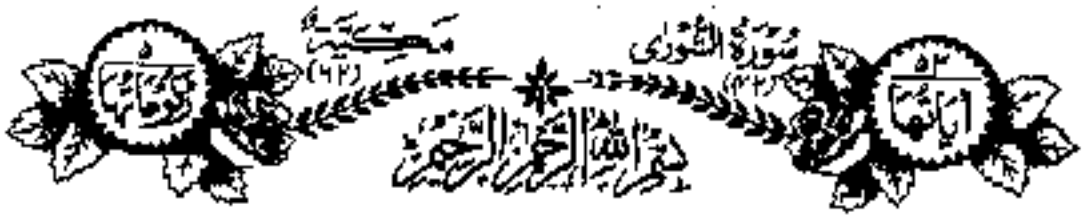
who enforced their own religion on Allah's earth and those who adopted and followed their religion.

Thus, after presenting a clear and visible concept of Religion it is said: "The best possible method that could be employed for your instruction and for bringing you to the Right Path has already been employed. On the one hand, Allah has sent down His Book, which is teaching you the truth in a most impressive way in your own language; and on the other, the lives of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and his Companions are present before you by which you can see for yourselves what kind of men are prepared by the guidance given in this Book. Even then if you do not accept this guidance, nothing else in the world can bring you to the Right Path. The only alternative, therefore, is that you should be allowed to persist in the same error in which you have remained involved for centuries, and made to meet with the same doom which has been destined by Allah for such wrongdoers."

While stating these truths, brief arguments have been given, here and there, for *Tauḥīd* and the Hereafter, the world-worshippers have been warned of the evil consequences and their punishment in the life hereafter, and the disbelievers have been criticised for the moral weaknesses, which were the real cause of their deviation from the truth. The Sūrah has been concluded with two important themes:

First, that the Holy Prophet was wholly unaware of this concept of the "Book" or the True Faith during the first forty years of his life, and then his sudden appearance before the people with those two things, is a manifest proof of his being a Prophet.

Secondly, his presenting his own teaching as the teaching of God does not mean that he claims to have spoken to God, face to face, but God has conveyed to him this Guidance, as in the case of all other Prophets, in three ways: He speaks to His Prophets either through Revelation, or from behind a veil, or He sends an angel with the message. This thing was clarified so that the opponents did not have an opportunity of accusing the Holy Prophet of claiming to have spoken to God, face to face, and the lovers of the truth should know by what methods Allah gave instruction to the man whom He had appointed to the mission of Prophethood.



حٰمٓ ﴿١﴾ عٓسٓقٓ ﴿٢﴾ كَذٰلِكَ يُوْحِيْٓ اِلَيْكَ وَاِلَى الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ ۙ اللّٰهُ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿٣﴾
لَهٗ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ ۭ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيْمُ ﴿٤﴾ تَكَادُ السَّمٰوٰتُ
يَتَفَطَّرْنَ مِنْ فَوْقِهِنَّ وَالْمَلٰۗىِٕكَةُ يُسَبِّحُوْنَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُوْنَ لِمَنْ
فِي الْاَرْضِ ۭ اَلَآ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَ الْغَفُوْرُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿٥﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ اتَّخَذُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِهٖٓ
اَوْلِيَاۗءَ اللّٰهُ حَفِيْظٌ عَلَيْهِمْ ۡ وَمَآ اَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِوَكِيْلٍ ﴿٦﴾ وَكَذٰلِكَ اَوْحَيْنَآ
اِلَيْكَ قُرْاٰنًا عَرَبِيًّا لِّتُنْذِرَ اُمَّ الْقُرٰى وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا وَتُنْذِرَ يَوْمَ الْجَمْعِ لَا
رَيْبَ فِيْهِ ۭ فَرِيْقٌ فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَفَرِيْقٌ فِي السَّعِيْرِ ﴿٧﴾ وَلَوْ شَاۗءَ اللّٰهُ لَجَعَلَهُمْ
اُمَّةً وَّاحِدَةً وَّلٰكِنْ يُّدْخِلُ مَنْ يَّشَاۗءُ فِيْ رَحْمَتِهٖ ۭ وَالظّٰلِمُوْنَ مَا لَهُمْ مِّنْ
وَّلِيٍّ وَّلَا نَصِيْرٍ ﴿٨﴾ اَمِ اتَّخَذُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِهٖٓ اَوْلِيَاۗءَ ۚ فَاللّٰهُ هُوَ الْوَلِيُّ وَهُوَ
يُحْيِ الْمَوْتٰى ۡ وَهُوَ عَلٰي كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿٩﴾ وَمَا اخْتَلَفْتُمْ فِيْهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ

XLII
ASH-SHŪRĀ
الشُّورٰى

Verses: 53 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Hā Mīm 'Ain Sīn Qāf. Likewise has Allah, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise, been inspiring you and those (Messengers) before you.[1] Whatever is in the heavens and the earth is His. He is the High, the Great![2] Near it is that the heavens should break asunder from above.[3] The angels are glorifying their Lord with His praise and begging 1-6

forgiveness for those on the earth.[4] Listen! Allah is indeed All-Forgiving, All-Merciful.[5] Those who have taken some others than Him as guardians[6], Allah is watching them; you are not responsible for their conduct[7].

7 Yes: thus have We revealed to you, O Prophet, this Arabic Qur'ān[8] so that you may warn those who dwell in the centre of habitations (i.e. Makkah) and around it,[9] and warn them of the Day of Gathering[10] which is sure to come: one group shall go to Paradise and the other to Hell.

8-9 Had Allah so willed, He would have made all of them a single nation, but He admits into His mercy whomever He wills; and the wrongdoers have neither any protector nor helper.[11] What! Have (the foolish people) taken other guardians besides Him? Guardian is Allah alone: He alone gives life to the dead, and He has power over everything.[12]

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1. The style of the opening verses by itself shows that in the background there are the misgivings, wonder and amazement which were being expressed at that time in every assembly, every meeting place, every street and every house and shop of Makkah at the message of the Holy Prophet and the themes of the Qur'ān. The people said, "Wherefrom is this man bringing us new revelations everyday? The like of these we had never heard nor seen before. How strange that he rejects as false the religion that our forefathers have been following in the past, the religion that is still being followed by all of us, and the traditions and ways that have been prevalent in the country for so many centuries; and he says that the religion that he presents only is right and true." They said: "Had he presented even this new religion in a way as to substitute some of the falsehood he found in the ancestral paganism and prevalent customs with certain others which might be the result of his own thought, there could be a dialogue with him. But he says that what he recites is Divine Word. How can we accept this? Does God visit him, or does he visit God? Or does some dialogue take place between him and God?" It is in the background of such expression of wonder and doubt that although the address is apparently directed to the Holy Prophet, the disbelievers have in fact been told: "Yes: these very things are being revealed by the Almighty, All-Wise Allah, and with the same themes has its Revelation been coming down to all the former Prophets."

Lexically, *waḥī* means "swift and secret instruction", i.e. an inspiration which is made with such haste and speed that none may know it except the inspirer and the one being inspired. As a term this word has been used for the guidance

and instruction that is put in the mind of a man by Allah like a flash of lightning. What is meant to be said here is this: "There is no question of Allah's visiting somebody or somebody's visiting Allah and speaking face to face with Him. He is All-Mighty and All-Wise. Whenever He pleases to have a contact with a servant for the guidance and instruction of mankind, nothing can obstruct His will and intention, for He adopts the method of revelation for the purpose by His wisdom." This very theme has been repeated in the last verses of the Sūrah with greater clarity and detail.

As to the people's objection that the Holy Prophet was presenting strange and novel things, it has been said: There is nothing strange and novel in what Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) presents; Allah has been giving the same guidance and instruction to the Prophets who came before him in the world."

2. These introductory sentences are not meant to be said merely in praise of Allah Almighty, but their each word has a deep link with the background in which these verses were sent down. The foremost basis of the objections of the people who were expressing wonder and doubts against the Holy Prophet and the Qur'ān was that he was inviting them to *Tauḥīd* and they were being alarmed at this and saying that if Allah alone is the Creator, Sustainer and Ruler, what would be the position of their saints and holy men? At this it has been said: "This whole Universe belongs to Allah. How can therefore the godhead of another work and operate in the kingdom of the real Sovereign, particularly when those others whose godhead is acknowledged, are themselves also His subjects?" Then, it has been said: "He is the High, the Great!" That is, He is far above that somebody else should be equal to Him in rank and should become His associate in His Being, attributes, powers or rights."

3. That is, "It is not a trivial matter that a creature should be joined in lineage with Allah and regarded as His son or daughter; another regarded as fulfiller of the needs and the answerer of the petitions so that the people should start invoking him for help; another taken as the maintainer of the entire world, and his devotees should start proclaiming that their holy saint heard the prayer of everyone at all places at all times and comes to his help and answers his petition; another invested with the authority to enjoin and prohibit things and declare them as lawful and unlawful, and the people should start obeying his commands, instead of the Commands of God, as if he alone was their God. These boldnesses against God are such that they may well cause the heavens to break asunder." (This same theme has also been presented in Sūrah Maryam: 88-91 above).

4. It means: "The angels shudder with disgust when they hear such nonsense being uttered by the people in respect of their Lord, and they regard it as a rebellion against Him." They say: "Glorified be Allah! No one can have the

position that he should become an associate with Allah, Lord of the worlds, in Divinity and Command; there is none beside Him who may be our and all other servants' benefactor so that hymns be sung in his praise and he be thanked." So, they feel that it is a grave crime being committed in the world, and it may provoke Allah Almighty's wrath any moment. Therefore, they implore Allah for mercy again and again for the dwellers of the earth, who have forgotten themselves and their God, and pray that they may yet be spared from the torment and given more respite to mend their ways.

5. That is, "It is only Allah's clemency, mercifulness and forgiveness that the people who have touched the extreme limits in disbelief, polytheism, atheism, sinfulness and tyranny, have been receiving respite after respite for years and years, even for centuries; yet they not only go on receiving their sustenance but are also acclaimed as the great people of the world and they are provided with such adornments of the worldly life as cause the ignorant people the misunderstanding that this world perhaps has no God."

6. The word *auliyā' (sing. wali)* as used in the Text is very comprehensive in meaning. The different beliefs and all sorts of diverse practices with regard to the false deities held and worshipped by the polytheistic people, have been described as "taking others as auliyā' (guardians) instead of Allah" in the Qur'ān. According to the Qur'ān, a person takes such a one his *walī:* (1) whom he obeys in all matters, whose instructions he carries out and Whose ways and customs and rules he follows in all affairs of life (An-Nisā: 118-120; Al-A'rāf: 3, 27-30); (2) in whose guidance he has full faith, and who he thinks will lead him aright and save him from error and deviation (Al-Baqarah: 257, Banī Isrā'īl: 97, Al-Kahf: 17 50. Al-Jāthiah: 19); (3) about whom he trusts he will protect him from the torment of God in the Hereafter if it really existed (An Nisā: 123, 173; Al-An'ām: 51, Ar-Ra'd: 37, Al-'Ankabūt: 22, Al-Aḥzāb: 65, Az-Zumar: 3); (4) about whom he has the belief that he helps him in the world in supernatural ways, protects him from disaster and afflictions, gets him jobs, blesses him with children, and fulfils his desires and all other needs. (Hūd: 20, Ar-Ra'd: 16, Al-'Ankabūt: 41).

At some places in the Qur'ān the word *walī* has been used in one of these senses and at others in all its meanings. The verse being commented upon is one of such verses. In it, taking others as guardians instead of Allah implies regarding them as one's patron and supporter and helper in all the four above-mentioned meanings.

7 "Allah is watching them": Allah sees whatever they are doing and is recording their conduct. It is His responsibility to call them to account and punish them. As for the words "You are not responsible for their conduct", these have been addressed to the Holy Prophet. They mean: "Their destiny has not been

placed under your control so that you may burn to ashes anyone who does not listen to you, or depose him from power, or annihilate him." This, however, does not mean that, God forbid, the Holy Prophet regarded himself as such, and this was said in order to remove his misunderstanding or self-conceit, but this was meant for the disbelievers. Although apparently the Holy Prophet himself is the addressee, the real object is to tell the disbelievers that the Prophet of Allah has made no such claims as were usually made by their so-called saints who posed to possess great spiritual powers. Among the ignorant people it is generally thought that the so-called "holy men" have the power to ruin the destiny of anyone who behaves insolently towards them in any way; so much so that even after their death if somebody happened to dishonour their grave, or if nothing else, only nursed an evil thought about them in his mind, they destroyed him completely. Such a thought is in most cases spread by the "holy men" themselves. As for the good men who do not themselves say any such thing, their names are exploited by some other clever people, who spread such thoughts about them in order to promote their business. In any case this is regarded as a necessary corollary of spirituality and piety among the common people that one should possess the powers of making and marring destinies. To destroy the spell of this same fraud, Allah is addressing His Holy Messenger, as if to tell the disbelievers: "You are no doubt Our Messenger and We have blessed you with Our Revelations, but your duty is only to guide the people to the Right Path. Their destinies have not been placed under your control; they are in Our hand; therefore, to watch over the deeds and acts of the servants and to punish or not to punish them is Our own responsibility."

8. The same thing which had been said in the beginning of the discourse has been said again with greater emphasis, and by making mention of the "Arabic Qur'ān", the listeners have been warned to the effect: "The Qur'ān is not in any foreign language but in your own language: you can understand it yourself directly; study its themes and see for yourself that the pure and selfless guidance that is being given in it can be from none other than the Lord of the Universe."

9. That is, "Arouse them from slumber and warn them that there is nothing but destruction in store for them in consequence of the errors of morality and conduct in which they are involved and of the perverse principle on which they have ordered their individual and collective lives."

10. That is, "Tell them also that this destruction is not confined only to this world but the Day has to come when Allah will gather together all mankind and subject them to accountability. Even if a person escaped the evil consequences of his deviation and wickedness in the world, there will be no chance of his escape on that Day, and highly unfortunate is he, who is doomed to a tragic fate both in this world and in the Hereafter."

11. This theme has three objects in this context:

First, it is meant to instruct and console the Holy Prophet, as if to say: "Do not grieve so much at the ignorance and deviation of the disbelievers of Makkah and their stubbornness and obduracy. It is Allah's will that man should be granted the freedom of choice and action: then whoever desires to have guidance should be given guidance, and whoever wants to remain astray should be allowed to go astray. Had this not been Allah's will, there was no need whatever of sending the Prophets and the Book; for this only a creative hint of Allah Almighty's was enough: all human beings would have become as obedient as the rivers, mountains, trees, stones, and all other creatures." (In this connection, please also see Al-An'ām: 35-36, 107).

Secondly, its addressees are all those people who were involved in the confusion, and even now are, that if Allah really had wanted to show guidnce to human beings and He did not like the differences of creed and practice that were prevalent among the people, and wanted to have the people adopt the way of the Faith and Islam, there was no need of the Revelation and the Book and the Prophethood. He could have easily achieved this object by creating everyone a believer and Muslim by birth. Another result of this confusion was also this reasoning: "When Allah has not done so, the different ways that we are following, are approved by Him, and whatever we are doing, is according to His will. Therefore, nobody has any right to object to it." (To remove this misunderstanding also this theme has been mentioned at several places in the Qur'ān. Please see Al-An'ām: 112, 137, 148-149; Yūnus : 99; Hūd: 118-119; An-Naḥl: 9, 35 and the relevant E.N.'s).

Thirdly, its object is to make the believers realize the truth about the difficulties that one generally faces in the way of preaching religion and reforming the people. Those people who do not understand the reality of the God, given freedom of choice and will and of the resulting differences of temperament and methods, sometimes become despondent at the slow progress of the reformatory work and wish that some supernatural things should appear from Allah, which should change the hearts of the people, and are sometimes inclined to adopt unsound methods of bringing about reformation, owing to excessive enthusiasm. (For this object also this theme has occurred at some places in the Qur'ān, for which see Ar-Ra'd: 31, An-Naḥl: 91-93).

To highlight these objects a very important theme has been expressed in these brief sentences. Allah's real vicegerency in the world and His Paradise in the Hereafter is not an ordinary blessing, which may be distributed over creatures of the rank of the earth and stones and donkeys and horses as a common blessing. This is indeed a special blessing and a blessing of a very high order for which

even the angels were not considered fit. That is why Allah created man as a creature endowed with power and authority and placed vast means of His earth under his control and blessed him with these special powers so that he may pass through the test, success in which alone can entitle a servant to His blessings. This blessing is Allah's own; no one has a monopoly over it, nor can anyone claim to have it on the basis of a personal right, nor has anyone the power to take it by force. He who presents service before Allah, who takes Him as his Guardian and comes under His protection, alone can have it. Then Allah blesses him with help, guidnace and grace to pass this test, so that he may enter His Mercy. As for the unjust man who turns away from Allah Himself and instead takes others as his patrons, Allah Has no need that he should become his guardian by force. And the others whom He takes as his guardians do not possess any knowledge and power and authority that they may enable him to achieve success by dint of their guardianship of him.

12. That is, "Guardianship is not a thing of one's personal choice and satisfaction that one may take anyone one may please as one's guardian, and the other may also become one's real and true guardian and may do full justice to the function of guardianship. This is an actual reality, which does not change with the whims of the people; the Guardian is He Who is really the Guardian, whether someone regards and acknowledges Him as his Guardian or not, and the one who is not in reality the guardian is not the guardian, no matter whether someone continues to regard and acknowledge him as his guardian till the last moment. Now, as for the question: What is the proof of only Allah's being the real Guardian and of no one else's being the guardian? the answer is: Man's real Guardian can be the one who changes death into life, who has created a living man by breathing life into inorganic substances, and who also possesses the powers and authority to do full justice to the function of Guardianship. If there is such a one, apart from Allah, he may be made the guardian, and if He is Allah alone, then taking another beside Him as one's guardian is nothing but ignorance and folly and self-destruction.

فَحُكْمُهٗۤ اِلَى اللّٰهِ ؕ ذٰلِكُمُ اللّٰهُ رَبِّیْ عَلَیْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ ۬ؕ وَ اِلَیْهِ اُنِیْبُ ﴿۱۰﴾ فَاطِرُ السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَ الْاَرْضِ ؕ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِّنْ اَنْفُسِكُمْ اَزْوَاجًا وَّ مِنَ الْاَنْعَامِ اَزْوَاجًا ۚ یَذْرَؤُكُمْ
فِیْهِ ؕ لَیْسَ كَمِثْلِهٖ شَیْءٌ ۚ وَ هُوَ السَّمِیْعُ الْبَصِیْرُ ﴿۱۱﴾ لَهٗ مَقَالِیْدُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ
الْاَرْضِ ۚ یَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ یَّشَآءُ وَ یَقْدِرُ ؕ اِنَّهٗ بِكُلِّ شَیْءٍ عَلِیْمٌ ﴿۱۲﴾ شَرَعَ
لَكُمْ مِّنَ الدِّیْنِ مَا وَصّٰی بِهٖ نُوْحًا وَّ الَّذِیْۤ اَوْحَیْنَاۤ اِلَیْكَ وَ مَا وَصَّیْنَا بِهٖۤ
اِبْرٰهِیْمَ وَ مُوْسٰی وَ عِیْسٰۤی اَنْ اَقِیْمُوا الدِّیْنَ وَ لَا تَتَفَرَّقُوْا فِیْهِ ؕ كَبُرَ عَلَی
الْمُشْرِكِیْنَ مَا تَدْعُوْهُمْ اِلَیْهِ ؕ اَللّٰهُ یَجْتَبِیْۤ اِلَیْهِ مَنْ یَّشَآءُ وَ یَهْدِیْۤ اِلَیْهِ
مَنْ یُّنِیْبُ ﴿۱۳﴾ وَ مَا تَفَرَّقُوْۤا اِلَّا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَآءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ بَغْیًۢا بَیْنَهُمْ ؕ وَ لَوْ
لَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ اِلٰۤی اَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّی لَّقُضِیَ بَیْنَهُمْ ؕ وَ اِنَّ الَّذِیْنَ
اُوْرِثُوا الْكِتٰبَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهِمْ لَفِیْ شَكٍّ مِّنْهُ مُرِیْبٍ ﴿۱۴﴾ فَلِذٰلِكَ فَادْعُ ۚ وَ اسْتَقِمْ
كَمَاۤ اُمِرْتَ ۚ وَ لَا تَتَّبِعْ اَهْوَآءَهُمْ ۚ وَ قُلْ اٰمَنْتُ بِمَاۤ اَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ مِنْ كِتٰبٍ ۚ وَ
اُمِرْتُ لِاَعْدِلَ بَیْنَكُمْ ؕ اَللّٰهُ رَبُّنَا وَ رَبُّكُمْ ؕ لَنَاۤ اَعْمَالُنَا وَ لَكُمْ اَعْمَالُكُمْ ؕ لَا
حُجَّةَ بَیْنَنَا وَ بَیْنَكُمْ ؕ اَللّٰهُ یَجْمَعُ بَیْنَنَا ۚ وَ اِلَیْهِ الْمَصِیْرُ ﴿۱۵﴾ وَ الَّذِیْنَ یُحَآجُّوْنَ
فِی اللّٰهِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا اسْتُجِیْبَ لَهٗ حُجَّتُهُمْ دَاحِضَةٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَ عَلَیْهِمْ
غَضَبٌ وَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِیْدٌ ﴿۱۶﴾ اَللّٰهُ الَّذِیْۤ اَنْزَلَ الْكِتٰبَ بِالْحَقِّ وَ الْمِیْزَانَ ؕ
وَ مَا یُدْرِیْكَ لَعَلَّ السَّاعَةَ قَرِیْبٌ ﴿۱۷﴾ یَسْتَعْجِلُ بِهَا الَّذِیْنَ لَا یُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِهَا ۚ
وَ الَّذِیْنَ اٰمَنُوْا مُشْفِقُوْنَ مِنْهَا ۙ وَ یَعْلَمُوْنَ اَنَّهَا الْحَقُّ ؕ اَلَاۤ اِنَّ الَّذِیْنَ یُمَارُوْنَ
فِی السَّاعَةِ لَفِیْ ضَلٰلٍۢ بَعِیْدٍ ﴿۱۸﴾ اَللّٰهُ لَطِیْفٌۢ بِعِبَادِهٖ یَرْزُقُ مَنْ یَّشَآءُ ۚ وَ هُوَ الْقَوِیُّ
الْعَزِیْزُ ﴿۱۹﴾ مَنْ كَانَ یُرِیْدُ حَرْثَ الْاٰخِرَةِ نَزِدْ لَهٗ فِیْ حَرْثِهٖ ۚ وَ مَنْ كَانَ یُرِیْدُ

It[13] is for Allah to give judgement in whatever you may differ.[14] The same Allah[15] is my Lord: in Him did I put my trust, and to Him I turn.[16] He is the Creator of the heavens and the earth. Who made for you pairs from your own kind, and pairs also of the cattle (from their own kind) so as to multiply you. There is nothing like Him in the universe:[17] He hears everything and sees everything.[18] To Him belong the keys of the treasures of the heavens and the earth: He gives abundantly to whomsoever He wills and sparingly to whomsoever He wills: He has knowledge of everything.[19] 10-12

He has appointed for you the same Way of life which He had ordained for Noah and which (O Muhammad) We have now revealed to you, and which We had already enjoined on Abraham and Moses and Jesus, stressing: "Establish this Way and be not divided in it."[20] The same thing to which you (O Muhammad) are calling the *mushriks* has set them ill at ease. Allah chooses for Himself whomever He wills, and He guides to His Way only him who turns to Him (in penitence).[21] 13

The people became divided only after the Knowledge had come to them[22] just because they wanted to wrong one another.[23] Had your Lord not already issued the Word to defer their punishment till an appointed time, the matter would surely have been settled between them.[24] And the fact is that those who were made to inherit the Book after them, are involved in a disquieting doubt concerning it.[25] 14

Because of this, therefore, O Muhammad, you should call them to the same Way, and hold fast to it yourself as you have been commanded, and do not follow their whims.[26] Say to them, "I have believed in whatever Book Allah has sent down,[27] and I have been commanded to do justice between you.[28] Allah is our Lord as well as your Lord. For us are our deeds and for you your deeds.[29] There is no dispute between us.[30] Allah shall gather us all together one day and to Him we shall all return." 15

After Allah's invitation has been accepted, those who dispute (with those who have accepted it) concerning Allah's religion,[31] their argument is absurd in the sight of their Lord, and on them is His wrath and for them there is a severe punishment. 16

17-18 It is Allah Who has sent down this Book with the truth and the Balance;[32] and what will make you understand that the Hour of Judgement might well have drawn near at hand?[33] Those who do not believe in its coming, seek to hasten it, but those who believe in it, dread it, and know that it is sure to come. Note it well that those who dispute concerning the coming of the Hour, in order to create doubts about it, have gone far astray.

19-20 Allah is very Kind to His servants:[34] He gives whatever He pleases to whom He wills:[35] He is the All-Powerful, the All-Mighty.[36] Whoever seeks the harvest of the Hereafter, We do increase his harvest; and whoever seeks the harvest of this world, We do give him of it here, but in the Hereafter he will have no share whatever.[37]

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13. From here to the end of verse 12, though the whole discourse is a Revelation from Allah, the speaker is not Allah but the Holy Messenger of Allah. In other words, Allah Almighty is telling His Prophet to make this proclamation to the people. Such themes in the Qur'ān sometimes begin with *qul* (say, O Prophet) and sometimes without it. only the style indicates that the speaker at a place is not Allah but Allah's Messenger. Even at some places though the words are Allah's, the speaker are the believers, as for example in Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah; or, the speaker are the angels as in Sūrah Maryam: 64-65.

14. This is the natural and logical demand of Allah Almighty's being the Master of the Universe and His being the real Guardian. When Sovereignty and Guardianship belong to Him only inevitably He alone is also the Ruler, and it is for Him to judge human beings' mutual disputes and differences. Those who restrict it only to the Hereafter make a mistake. There is no argument to prove that Allah's position as a Ruler has no effect in this world but is meant only for the life hereafter. Likewise, those who restrict it only to beliefs and a few questions of "religious nature" are also in the wrong. The words are general and they clearly proclaim Allah as having the sole right to judge all disputes and differences. According to them, just as Allah is the Master of the Day of Judgement in the Hereafter, so He is the best of Judges in this world too; and just as He is the Settler of the differences pertaining to beliefs as to what is the Truth and what is falsehood, so also in legal matters He is the Settler of differences as to what is pure for man and what is impure, what is lawful and desirable for him and what is forbidden and undesirable, what is evil and vicious in morals and what is good and virtuous, what are the rights of the people in their mutual dealings and what are the right practices in social, political and economic life and what are wrong. On this very basis the Qur'ān has declared this principle as the fundamental of law:

"If there arises any dispute between you about anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger." (An-Nisā: 59). And: "It does not behove a believing man and a believing woman that when Allah and His Messenger have given their verdict in a matter, they should exercise an option in that matter of theirs." (Al-Aḥzāb: 36). And: "O people, follow what has been sent down to you from your Lord and do not follow other patrons beside Him." (Al-A'rāf: 3).

Then, in the context in which this verse has occurred, it gives another meaning also and it is: "To decide differences is not only Allah's legal right on accepting or rejecting which depends man's being a believer or an unbeliever, but Allah, in fact, practically also is deciding between the truth and falsehood due to which falsehood and its worshippers are ultimately being destroyed and the truth and the faithful are being honoured and exalted, no matter how delayed the enforcement of this decision may seem to be. This theme occurs in verse 24 below, and has been expressed at several places above in the Qur'ān. For this please see Ar-Ra'd: 17, 41; Ibrāhīm: 24-27; Banī Isrā'īl 81; Al-Anbiyā': 18, 44; and the E.N.'s.

15. "The same Allah", Who is the real Settler of disputes.

16. These are two verbs one of which is in the past tense and the other in the present which contains the sense of perpetuity. In the past verb it was said: "In Him did I put my trust," i.e. "I decided once and for all that as long as I live I have to rely on His help, on His guidance, on His support and protection, and on His decision." Then in the present verb it was said: "To Him I turn," i.e. "Whatever situation I face in life, I turn only to Allah in it. I do not look towards others in an affliction or trouble or difficulty but invoke only Him for help; I seek only His refuge when I face a danger and depend on His protection; I turn to Him for guidance whenever I am confronted by a problem and seek its solution in His teaching and guidance; and I look up only to Him when I have a dispute with somebody with the belief that He alone will give the final decision, and have the faith that whatever decision He gives will be the right one."

17. Literally, "Nothing is like His likeness," which implies this: Even if there were a likeness of Allah, nothing would be like it not to speak of being like unto Allah Himself.

18. That is, "At one and the same time He is hearing everybody and seeing everything in the Universe."

19 These are the arguments to prove why Allah alone is the true Guardian and why putting trust in Him alone is right and correct and why He alone should be turned to in all matters. (For explanation, see An-Naml: 60-66, Ar-Rūm: 20-22 and the E.N.'s).

20. Here the same thing as already mentioned in the first verse has been further elaborated. It clearly states that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is not the founder of any new religion, nor was any of the Prophets a founder of a separate religion, but it has been one and the same Religion which all the Prophets have been presenting from Allah from the very beginning, and the same is being presented by Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). In this regard, the first name mentioned is of the Prophet Noaḥ, who was the first Prophet after the Flood. After him the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) has been mentioned, who is the last of the Prophets; then the Prophet Abraham has been mentioned, whom the Arabs acknowledged as their guide, and last of all, the Prophets Moses and Jesus have been mentioned to whom the Jews and the Christians attribute their religions. This does not mean that only these five Prophets had been enjoined this Religion, but what is meant to be said is that all the Prophets who came to this world, brought one and the same Religion and the names of the five illustrious Prophets have been mentioned only as examples through whom the world received the most well known codes of Divine Law.

As this verse throws important light on *Dīn* (Religion) and its aim, it is necessary that we should study it to understand it well.

Lexically, the word *shara'a* in *shara'a la-kum* (ordained for you) means to make the way. As a term it implies appointing a way, a code and a rule. Accordingly, in Arabic the words *tashrī'* and *sharī'at* and *shāri'* are understood as the synonyms of legislation and law and law giver respectively. This Divine legislation, in fact, is the natural and logical result of the fundamental truths which have been stated in verses 1, 9 and 10 above: that Allah alone is the Owner of everything in the Universe, and He alone is man's real Guardian and it is for Him to judge the disputes that arise between human beings. Now, when Allah alone is the Owner and Guardian and Ruler, inevitably He alone is entitled to make the code of law for man and it is His responsibility that He should give this code of law to man. So, He has carried out His responsibility like this.

Then the words *min-ad-dīn* (of the nature of *dīn*) denote that the way appointed by Allah is legislation pertaining to *dīn*. If the explanation of the word *dīn* that we have given in E.N. 3 of Sūrah Zumar above, is kept in view, there can be no difficulty in understanding that *dīn* means nothing but acknowledging the sovereignty and leadership of someone and obeying his commands. And when this word is used in the meaning of the way, it implies the way which man must regard as obligatory for himself to follow and the one appointing it as the one whom he ought to obey. On this basis, calling God-appointed Way as legislation pertaining to *dīn* clearly means that it is not merely recommendatory in nature or a mere counsel, but it is a law enjoined by the Master, which must necessarily be obeyed by the servants and disobedience of which is tantamount to rebellion, and the one

who does not obey it, in fact, denies Allah's being the Sovereign and Ruler and his own position of a servant.

Then, it has been said that this legislation which pertains to dīn is the same as was enjoined on Noah, Abraham and Moses (peace be upon them all) and the same now has been enjoined on Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). This contains several points: (1) That Allah did not send this legislation of His directly to every man, but appointed Whenever He deemed proper and necessary a person as His Messenger and consigned the legislation to him; (2) that this legislation has been the same from the beginning: it did not so happen that in one age one particular *dīn* was appointed for a nation, and in another age another and contradictory *dīn* was sent for another nation. Allah did not send many *dīns* but on every occasion He sent one and the same *dīn;* (3) that it is an essential part of this *dīn* to acknowledge the apostleship of those men through whom the legislation has been sent and the Revelation in which the legislation has been couched, besides acknowledging the Sovereignty of Allah; and it is the demand of reason and logic too, that it should be a necessary part of it, for a man cannot obey this legislation at all unless he is satisfied that it is authentically from Allah.

Then it has been said that the Prophets were given this legislation pertaining to *dīn",* with the express instruction: *"Aqīm-ud-dīn";* "Establish this *dīn*", or "Keep this *dīn* established," as variously translated by Shāh Waliullah, Shāh Rafi'uddīn and Shāh 'Abdul Qādir. Both these translations are correct, for *iqāmat* means both to establish and to keep established, and the Prophets were appointed to perform both the functions. Their first duty was to establish this *dīn* wherever it was not established, and the second that they should keep it established after they had established it, or had found it already established in a place. Obviously, a thing can be kept established only when it has already been established, otherwise the primary requirement would be to establish it first, and then make continuous effort to keep it established.

Here, two questions arise : First, what is the meaning of establishing the *dīn?* Second, what is *dīn* itself, which we have been enjoined to establish and then keep it established? Let us try to understand these questions well.

The word *iqāmat* (to establish) when used in respect of a material or physical object implies causing it to rise from the sitting or lying positions or assembling the scattered parts of a thing and raising it up high. But when *iqāmat* is used in respect of a thing which is not material but spiritual in nature it does not merely imply preaching it, but also acting according to it as best as one can, introducing it and enforcing it practically. For example, when we say that so-and-so established his rule, it does not mean that he invited others to his government but that he subdued the people of the land and organised the different departments

of the government in a way that the administration of the country began to function according to his orders. Similarly, when we say that courts have been established in the country, it means that judges have been appointed to do justice and they are hearing the cases and giving judgements, and not that hymns in praise of justice are being sung and the people being impressed. Likewise, when the Qur'ān enjoins the establishment of the Prayer (*Ṣalāt*), it does not imply that one should merely preach and exhort others to the Prayer but that one should not only perform it oneself, observing all its conditions, but should also strive to make arrangement so that it becomes a regular practice among the believers. There should be mosques, there should be arrangements for offering the Prayer collectively and for the Friday congregational Prayer, and for making calls to the Prayer punctually; there should be the *Imāms* to lead the Prayers and the scholars to give sermons, and the people should visit the mosques regularly and punctually and make offering the Prayer an essential part of their daily routine. After this explanation, there should remain no difficulty in understanding that when the Prophets were enjoined to establish the *dīn* and to keep it established, it did not simply mean that they should practise it themselves and not even this that they should preach it to others so that the people may accept its truth, but also that when the people have accepted it, steps should be taken to introduce and enforce the entire *dīn* practically among them so that they may start living according to it for ever afterwards. No doubt preaching is the primary necessary stage of this work without which there can be no second stage, but every intelligent person can himself see that in this Command preaching has not been made the object, but the real object is to establish the *dīn* and keep it established. Preaching is certainly a means to the end but not the end in itself, but nobody can say that it was the only and foremost object of the mission of the Prophets.

Now, let us take the second question. When some people saw that the *dīn* which has been enjoined to be established is common among all the Prophets, and their *sharī'ahs* have been different, as Allah Himself says: "We appointed for each community among you a law and a way of life", they formed the view that inevitably this *dīn* did not imply the *sharī'ah* commandments, rules and regulations but only the acceptance of *Tauḥīd*, the Hereafter and the Book and the Prophethood and performance of certain acts of devotion to Allah, or at the most, it included some of the major moral principles which have been common to all the *sharī'ahs*. But this is a superficial view, which has been formed after having a cursory glance over the unity of religion and the difference of the *sharī'ahs*. This is, however, a dangerous view, which if not corrected in time, may well lead to the separation between *dīn* (religion) and *sharī'ahs* (law). It was this very view in which St. Paul was involved, who presented the doctrine of the *dīn* (religion) without *sharī'ah* (law), and corrupted the community of the Prophet Jesus (peace

be upon him). For, if *sharī'ah* (law) is something separate from *dīn* (religion) and the command is only for establishing the *dīn* and not the *sharī'ah*, inevitably the Muslims also, like the Christians, would regard the *sharī'ah* as unimportant and overlook its establishment as not being the real object by itself, and would remain content with only beliefs and a few important moral principles. Instead of determining the meaning of *dīn* from such speculations, let us turn to the Qur'ān itself and see whether the *dīn* which we have been enjoined here to establish implies the beliefs and a few important moral principles only, or the *sharī'ah* values and commandments as well. When we explore the Qur'ān we find that what it regards as *dīn* includes the following things as well:

(1) "And the only Command they were given was to worship Allah, making their *dīn* sincerely His, turning all their attention towards Him, and to establish the *Ṣalāt* and to pay the *Zakāt*: this alone is the true and right *dīn*." (Al-Bayyinah: 5). This shows that the *Ṣalāt* and the *Zakāt* are included in this *dīn*, whereas the commandments pertaining to both have been different in the different *sharī'ahs*. No one can say that in all the previous *sharī'ahs* the *Ṣalāt* has had the same form, the same elements, the same number of the *rak'ahs*, the same direction of the *qiblah*, the same times and the same other commands concerning it. Likewise, no one can claim also about the *Zakāt* that in all the *sharī'ahs the* same has been the exemption limit, the same rates and the same injunctions concerning its collection and distribution. But in spite of the difference of the *sharī'ahs*, Allah has regarded both these as part of *dīn*.

(2) "You are forbidden carrion and blood, the flesh of swine and of that animal which has been slaughtered in any other name than of Allah, and of the strangled animal, and of that beaten to death or killed by a fall or gored to death or mangled by a beast of prey---save of that you duly slaughtered while it was still alive — and of that which is slaughtered at (ungodly) shrines. It is also unlawful for you to try to find your fortune by means of divining devices, for all these things are sinful acts. Today the disbelievers have despaired of (vanquishing) your religion; therefore do not fear them but fear Me. Today I have perfected your *dīn* for you and completed My blessing on you and approved Islam as the *dīn* (way of life) for you." (Al-Mā'idah: 3). This shows that all these *sharī'ah* commandments are also *dīn*.

(3) "Fight with those from among the people of the Book, who do not believe in Allah nor in the Last Day; who do not make unlawful what Allah and His Messenger have made unlawful, and do not adopt the right *dīn* as their *dīn*." (At Taubah: 29). This shows that besides belief in Allah and the Hereafter it is also *dīn* to accept and follow the Commands about the lawful and the unlawful, which have been given by Allah and His Messenger.

(4) "The woman and the man guilty of fornication, flog each one of them with a hundred stripes, and let not any pity for them restrain you in regard to a matter prescribed in the *dīn* of Allah, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day." (An-Nūr: 2). "It did not behove Joseph to seize his brother by the king's *dīn*." (Yūsuf: 76). This shows that the criminal law is also dīn. If a man follows the criminal law prescribed by God, he is a follower of God's *dīn* and if he follows a king's law, he is a follower of the king's *dīn*.

These are the four specimens in which the *sharī'ah* commandments have been described as *dīn* in clear words. But, besides these, a careful study shows that the eradication of the sins for which Allah has held out the threat of Hell (e.g. adultery, taking of interest, killing of a believer, consuming the property of the orphan, taking possession of the other peoples properties in unlawful ways etc.), and the crimes which become the cause of God's torment, e.g. sodomy (the act of Lot's people) and dishonesty in business dealings (as practised by the Prophet Shu'aib's people) should necessarily be included in *dīn*, for if *dīn* cannot save one from Hell and Allah's torment, what use could it be ? Likewise, those *sharī'ah* commandments also should be part of the *dīn* violation of which has been regarded as cause of entry into the Fire, e.g. injunctions relating to inheritance, after stating which it has been said: "And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger and transgresses the limits prescribed by Him, Allah will cast him into the Fire wherein he will have a disgraceful torment." (An-Nisā: 14,). Likewise, the prohibition of those things whose prohibition Allah has mentioned with great emphasis and absoluteness, e.g. prohibition of the mother, sister and daughter and prohibition of wine, theft, gambling, false evidence, etc. if not included in the establishment of the *dīn*, it would mean that Allah has given some unnecessary Commands also, which are not meant to be introduced and enforced. Similarly, establishing those things which Allah has made obligatory, e g. fasting and pilgrimage, cannot be excluded from the establishment of *dīn* only on the pretext that the 30 fasts of Ramadān had not been enjoined in the previous *sharī'ah*, and pilgrimage to the Ka'bah was enjoined only in the *Sharī'ah* which was inherited by the Ishmaelite branch of the Prophet Abraham's progeny.

As a matter of fact, the misunderstanding was caused only because the verse: "We appointed for each community among you a law and a way of life", has been misconstrued to mean that since the *sharī'ah* appointed for every community was separate, and the command given was only to establish the *dīn* (way of life) which was common to all the Prophets, the establishment of the *sharī'ah* was not included in the establishment of the *dīn*, whereas the real meaning of this verse is just the opposite of it. If the context (vv. 41-50) in which this verse has occurred in Sūrah Al-Mā'idah is studied carefully, it will be seen that the correct meaning of this verse is: Whatever *sharī'ah* was given by Allah to

the community of a Prophet, was the *dīn* for that community, and the establishment of the same *dīn* was the object during his Prophethood. And since now is the period of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad's Prophethood, the *sharī'ah* which has been given to the Ummah of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is the *dīn* of this time, and to establish the same is to establish the *dīn*. As for the difference of the *sharī'ah*, it does not mean that the *sharī'ahs* sent by God were mutually contradictory, but it means that in their details there have been some differences owing to the different environments, take, for instance, the Prayer and the Fast. The Prayer has been obligatory in all the *sharī'ahs*, but the *qiblah* of all the *sharī'ahs* was not the same, and there was a difference in its times and *rak'ahs* and elements as well. Likewise, the Fast was obligatory in every *sharī'ah*, but the 30 fasts of Ramadān were not there in the other *sharī'ahs*. From this it is not correct to conclude that the Prayer and the Fast as such are included in the establishment of *dīn* but performing the Prayer in a particular way and observing the Fast at a particular time is excluded from it. However, the correct conclusion that one can draw is: To perform the Prayer and observe the Fast according to the rules and procedures that had been appointed for the people in the *sharī'ah* of every Prophet amounted to establishment of *dīn* in his time. In the present age the establishment of the *dīn* is that these acts of worship be performed according to the procedures enjoined in the *Sharī'ah* of the Prophet Muhammad. The same is true about all other *Sharī'ah* commandments as well.

Whoever studies the Qur'ān carefully will see that this Book does not envisage that its adherents will live as subjects of the disbelievers and will pass a religious life under them, but it openly proclaims that it will have its own rule established; it demands from its followers that they should struggle with their lives for the intellectual, cultural, legal and political supremacy of the true Faith; and it gives them a programme for the reformation of human life, the major part of which can be acted upon only when political power and authority is in the believers' hand. As stated by itself, the object of this Book's being sent down is: "We have sent down this Book to you with the Truth so that you may judge between the people in accordance with the light that Allah has shown you." (An-Nisā: 105). The Commandments given in this Book about the collection and distribution of the *Zakāt* expressly envisage a government who should be responsible for collecting the *Zakāt* and distributing it among the deserving people according to a laid down procedure. (At-Taubah:60,103). The prohibition of interest that has been enjoined in this Book and the declaration of war that has been made against those who do not abstain from taking interest (Al-Baqarah: 275-279) can be enforced only when the political and economic system of the country is entirely in the believers' hand. The Law of Retribution for murder (Al-Baqarah: 178), cutting off of the hand for theft (Al-Mā'idah 38) and carrying out

of the prescribed punishment for adultery and calumny (An-Nūr: 2-4) have not been enjoined on the assumption that the believers will remain subject to the police and courts of the disbelievers. The Command to fight the disbelievers (Al-Baqarah: 190, 216) has not been given with the idea that the followers of this *dīn* will carry out this Command by getting enlisted in the army of disbelief. The command to take *Jizyah* from the followers of the former Books (At-Taubah: 29) has not been given on the assumption that the Muslims will take *Jizyah* from them while being their subjects and will be responsible for their protection. And this thing is not true only about the Madinite Sūrahs; in the Makkan Sūrahs as well a discerning eye can clearly see that the scheme envisaged from the very beginning was of Islam's supremacy and dominance and not of Islam's and the Muslims' subjugation under an un Islamic rule. See, for instance, Banī Isrā'īl: 76-89; Al-Qaṣaṣ: 85-86; Ar-Rūm: 1-6; Aṣ-Ṣāffāt: 171-179; Ṣuād: Introduction, v. 11 and E.N. 12 on it.

Above all, this misinterpretation clashes with the great work that the Holy Prophet himself accomplished during the 23 years of his Prophethood. Who can deny the fact that he subdued entire Arabia by means of both preaching and the sword and established in it a full fledged system of government with a detailed law, covering all aspects of life, from beliefs and rites of worship to personal conduct, collective morality, culture and civilization, economic and social life, politics and judiciary, peace and war. If this entire work of the Holy Prophet is not accepted as a commentary of the Command of *"iqāmat dīn"* (establishment of *dīn*) which, according to this verse, he had been enjoined to undertake like all other Prophets, then it could have one of the two meanings: That earlier, God forbid, the Holy Prophet should be blamed that he had been appointed only to preach and teach beliefs and a few important moral rules but he exceeded his mandate and established a government of his own whim and laid down a code of law, which was different from the common law of the Prophets as well as in excess of it; or that Allah should be blamed that after having made the above-mentioned declaration in Sūrah Ash-Shūrā, He went back on His own word, and made His Last Prophet do something which was not only much over and above and different from the objective of *"iqāmat dīn"* as stated in this Sūrah but on the completion of this mission He also made this declaration, contrary to His first declaration: "Today I have perfected your *dīn* for you." (Al-Mā'idah:3). May Allah keep us safe from this! Apart from these two, if there is any third alternative, which makes this interpretation of *"iqāmat dīn"* plausible and also does not lay any blame on Allah or His Messenger, we would like to know it.

After giving the Command for *"iqāmat dīn"*, the last thing that Allah has stated in this verse is this: *Lā tatafarraqū fī-hi:* "Do not create schisms in the *dīn*: Be not divided in it" Creating schisms in *dīn* implies that one should introduce

something new in religion for which there exists no sound basis, and then should insist that belief and unbelief depend on the acceptance of the innovation, and should separate along with those who have accetped it from those who have not accetped it. This new thing can be of several kinds: (1) To introduce something entirely new into *dīn;* (2) to exclude from *dīn* something which actually belonged to it; (3) to tamper with the fundamentals of *dīn* by misinterpretations and introduce new beliefs and novel practices; and (4) to distort the *dīn* by making changes of fundamental nature in it, for example, by reducing what was important in it to un-important, by raising what was at most permissible to the position of imperative and obligatory, even to the position of the most fundamental pillar of Islam. Owing to such innovations, divisions first appeared in the communities of the Prophets; then gradually the creeds of the sects developed into wholly separate and mutually exclusive religious systems whose followers now do not have any idea that once they all belonged to one and the same origin. These divisions have nothing to do with the permissible and reasonable difference of opinion which naturally takes place among the scholars when they are engaged in understanding and studying the injunctions and fundamentals of the *dīn* for the purpose of deriving and extracting points of law, and for which there is room in the words of the Book of Allah itself owing to the considerations of lexicon, idiom and rules of grammar. (For a detailed discussion of this subject, see Al-Baqarah: 213, Āl-'Imrān: 19, 50; An-Nisā: 171, Al-Mā'idah: 77; Al-An'ām; 159; An-Naḥl: 118-124; Al-Anbiyā': 92-93; Al-Ḥajj: 67; Al Mu'minūn: 53-54; Al-Qaṣaṣ: 53; Ar-Rūm: 32 and the E.N.'s)

21. Here the same thing as stated in vv. 8-9 above, has been reiterated, and we have explained it in E.N. 11 above. The object of repeating it here is as if to say: "You are presenting the clear highway of religion before them but the foolish people, instead of appreciating the blessing, are becoming annoyed over it. But even among them there are the people of their own tribe, who are turning to Allah, and Allah also is drawing them closer to Himself. But one should understand that Allah's bestowal of His blessings is not blind: He draws only him towards Himself who is inclined to be drawn and not him who runs away from Him."

22. That is, "The divisions were created not because Allah had failed to send the Prophets and the Books, and therefore, the people could not know the Right Way and so invented their own separate religions, sects, schools of thought and systems of life, but divisions appeared after knowledge had come to them from Allah. Therefore, Allah is not responsible for it, but the people who abandoned the clear principles of religion and commands of the *Shari'ah* and created their own creeds and religions are themselves responsible for it".

23. That is, "The motive for creating the divisions was not good, but they resulted from the desire for ostentation, love of an independent entity, mutual rivalry and stubbornness, the urge to humiliate and defeat one another, and greed for worldly wealth and position. When the clever and ambitious saw that if the godly people followed the true religion honestly, there would only be One God before whom the people would bow, there would be one Messenger whom they would acknowledge as their guide and leader, there would be one Book which they would turn to and there would be a clearly defined creed and code of life which they would be following. In such a system there could be no place of distinction for themselves, on the strength of which they could have their own leadership flourish so that the people should rally round them, and bow to them and also make rich offerings to them. This was the real cause which became the motive of the invention of new creeds and philosophies, new ways and rites of worship and new systems of life, and diverted a large part of humanity from the highway of Divine Religion and misled them into blind alleys. Then the mutual disputes of the factions and their religious, economic and political conflicts gave rise to intense bitterness, which in turn led to bloodshed and violence among humanity."

24. That is, all such people who were guilty of inventing false systems and followed them would have been annihilated in the world itself by a torment, and only the righteous ones allowed to survive, which should have indicated as to who was a follower of the Truth and who of falsehood in the sight of Allah. But Allah has deferred this plain decisions till Resurrection, for after such a decision in the world, the trial of mankind becomes meaningless.

25. It means: "After the passage of the time of every Prophet and his closest followers when the Divine Book reached the later generations, they did not receive it with faith and conviction but were involved in doubts and suspicions and confusions about it. There were many causes for this state of affairs, which can be easily understood by a study of the case of the Torah and the Gospel. The earlier generations have not conveyed both these Books to the later generations well preserved in their original state and in their original words and language. They mixed up the Divine Word in them with the human word in the form of their commentary, history, verbal traditions and juristic hair-splitting. They made their translations prevail until the original was lost and only the translations remained. Their historical authenticity also was ruined; so much so that nobody now can say with certainty that the Book in his hand is the same that the world had once received through the Prophet Moses or the Prophet Jesus. Then their elders in the different periods of history initiated such discussions on religion, divinity, philosophy, law, physics, psychology and sociology and invented such systems of thought that the people were lost in them and it became impossible for them to

decide as to which was the straight highway of the Truth among the countless crooked ways. And since the Divine Book did not exist in its original, reliable state, they could neither turn to any authority that could help them to distinguish the truth from falshood.

26. That is, "Do not make any change nor effect any increase or decrease in this religion only to please them. Do not resort to any compromises with the misguided people on the principle of "give and take": Do not make any room in the Religion for their whims, prejudices and practices of ignorance in the hope that they would embrace Islam. Let the one who wants to accept, accept the original, pure Religion of God, as sent down by Him, straight forwardly; otherwise let him go and enter any hell that he chooses for himself. The Religion of God cannot be changed for the sake of the people; if the people are desirous of their own well-being and true success, let them change their ways and mould themselves according to it."

27. In other words, "I am not like those schismatic people who believe in some Books sent down by God and disbelieve in others; I believe in every Book sent down by Him."

28. This pithy sentence has several meanings:

(1) "I have been appointed to discard the schisms and adopt true impartiality: I do not like to harbour prejudice in favour of one and against the other schism: I have one and the same kind of relationship with all human beings, and it is the relationship of justice and equity. I am a companion and supporter of everyone who follows the truth, whether he is an utter stranger for me, and an opponent of everyone who follows falsehood, whether he is a neighbour or a close kinsman.

(2) "There is no place of distinction for anybody in the system of truth, which I have been appointed to present before you. It honours everyone equally. It does not contain separate sets of the rights for the kindred and the stranger, the big and the small, the poor and the rich, the noble and the humble. Whatever is good in it is good for everyone; and whatever is sinful and unlawful and criminal in it is sinful, unlawful and criminal for everybody. In its just system, there is no exception even for my own self."

(3) "I have been appointed to establish justice in the world. I have been entrusted with the mission of doing justice between the people and should put an end to their excesses and injustice, which are prevalent in your society."

Besides, there is a fourth meaning also of this sentence, which remained hidden in Makkah life but became clear after emigration to Madīnah, and it was: "I am a judge appointed by God: I am responsible to do justice between you."

29. That is, "Each one of us is himself responsible and accountable for his deeds. If you do good, you will yourself profit by its good results, and not we. If we do evil, we ourself shall bear all its evil consequences and not you. The same thing has been stated in Al-Baqarah: 139, Yūnus: 41, Hūd: 35, and Al-Qaṣaṣ: 55 above.

30. That is, "We have done our best in conveying to you the message in a rational way. Now there is no use wrangling and disputing; therefore, even if you try to have a dispute with us, we have no desire to join in."

31. This is an allusion to the state of affairs that was being experienced in Makkah at that time almost daily. Whenever it became known about somebody that he had become a Muslim, the people would start treating him mercilessly: they would worry and vex him, would neither let him have peace in the house nor in the street nor in society; wherever he went, they would start an endless discussion with the object to somehow make him abandon Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and return to the same creed of ignorance which he had rejected.

32. *Mīzān* (Balance): the *Sharī'ah* of Allah, which, like a balance, brings out clearly the distinction between the right and the wrong, the Truth and falsehood, justice and injustice, and righteousness and wickedness. In verse 15 above, the Holy Prophet has been made to say: "I have been commanded to do justice between you." Here, it has been told that with this Holy Book the "Balance" has come by which justice will be established.

33. That is, "The one who is inclined to mend his ways, must mend his ways forthwith; he should not lose time under the delusion that the Hour of Judgement is yet far off. Man cannot be sure whether he will be able to take another breath or not: his present breath may be his last."

34. The word "Kind" cannot fully convey the meaning of the word "*Laṭīf*" as used in the original. This word contains two meanings: First, that Allah is very Kind and Compassionate to His servants; second, that He is a subtle observer and keeps in view even their minutest and most ordinary needs, which none else can see, and He fulfils them in such ways that they themselves do not perceive as to which need of theirs has been fulfilled at what time and by whom. Then the "servants" here does not imply only the believers but all servants. That is, Allah is Kind and Compassionate to all His servants."

35. It means: The demand of His general kindness and compassion is not this that all the servants should be given everything equally. For although He is providing for each and every one from His treasures, there is no equality and uniformity in the measure of His provisions. He has given one thing to one and

another to another: He has provided someone with something in a greater measure and another with another thing more generously.

36. That is, "His system of providence is functioning under His own might. No one has the power to change it, or take away something forcibly from Him, or prevent Him from providing for somebody."

37. Two of the truths have been mentioned in the previous verse, which we are observing everywhere at all times: (1) That Allah is Kind and Compassionate to all His servants; and (2) that the measure of His provisions is not the same for everybody, but it varies from man to man. Now, in this verse it is being told that although the partial differences in kindness and measures of provisions are countless, there is also a difference of fundamental nature, which is: there is one kind of the provision for the seeker of the Hereafter and of another kind for the seeker of the world.

This is a very important truth which has been stated here briefly. Let us understand it fully, for it helps every man to determine his attitude to life.

Both the seeker of the Hereafter and the seeker of the world have been likened to the farmer in this verse, who labours persistently hard right from the time he prepares the soil till the time his crop is ready for harvesting. He puts in all his labour so that he may reap and gather the crop of the seeds he sowed. But because of the difference of the intention and objective and also the difference of the attitude and conduct, to a large extent, a vast difference takes place between the farmer who sows for the Hereafter and the farmer who sows for this world. Therefore, Allah has ordained different results and consequences of the labours of each, although the place of activity of both is this very earth.

As to the farmer who is sowing for the Hereafter, Allah has not said that he will get no share from the world. The world, in a more or less measure, he will get in any case, for he also has a share in the common provisions being bestowed by Allah, and every person, good or bad, is getting his sustenance here. But Allah has not given him the good news of the harvest of this world but that his harvest of the Hereafter will be increased, for he is a seeker of the same, and is concerned about his end there. There are several ways in which this harvest can be increased; for example, as he will go on doing righteous deeds with sincere intentions, he will be blessed with the grace to do more and more righteous deeds and his breast will be opened out for more and more good works. When he will make up his mind to adopt pure means for achieving pure aims, he will be blessed with pure means only and Allah will not let it so happen that all doors to goodness be closed and only doors to evil to remain open for him. Above all, his each good

[Contd. on p.540]

حَرْثَ الدُّنْيَا نُؤْتِهٖ مِنْهَا وَمَا لَهٗ فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ مِنْ نَّصِيْبٍ ﴿٢٠﴾ اَمْ لَهُمْ شُرَكٰٓؤُا
شَرَعُوْا لَهُمْ مِّنَ الدِّيْنِ مَا لَمْ يَاْذَنْ بِهِ اللّٰهُ ۭ وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةُ الْفَصْلِ لَقُضِيَ
بَيْنَهُمْ ۭ وَاِنَّ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿٢١﴾ تَرَى الظّٰلِمِيْنَ مُشْفِقِيْنَ مِمَّا
كَسَبُوْا وَهُوَ وَاقِعٌۢ بِهِمْ ۭ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ فِيْ رَوْضٰتِ الْجَنّٰتِ ۚ
لَهُمْ مَّا يَشَاۗءُوْنَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ۭ ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَضْلُ الْكَبِيْرُ ﴿٢٢﴾ ذٰلِكَ الَّذِيْ يُبَشِّرُ
اللّٰهُ عِبَادَهُ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ ۭ قُلْ لَّآ اَسْـَٔلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ اَجْرًا اِلَّا
الْمَوَدَّةَ فِي الْقُرْبٰى ۭ وَمَنْ يَّقْتَرِفْ حَسَنَةً نَّزِدْ لَهٗ فِيْهَا حُسْنًا ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ
شَكُوْرٌ ﴿٢٣﴾ اَمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ افْتَرٰى عَلَي اللّٰهِ كَذِبًا ۚ فَاِنْ يَّشَاِ اللّٰهُ يَخْتِمْ عَلٰي قَلْبِكَ ۭ
وَيَمْحُ اللّٰهُ الْبَاطِلَ وَيُحِقُّ الْحَقَّ بِكَلِمٰتِهٖ ۭ اِنَّهٗ عَلِيْمٌۢ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُوْرِ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَ
هُوَ الَّذِيْ يَقْبَلُ التَّوْبَةَ عَنْ عِبَادِهٖ وَيَعْفُوْا عَنِ السَّيِّاٰتِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا
تَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَيَسْتَجِيْبُ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ وَيَزِيْدُهُمْ مِّنْ
فَضْلِهٖ ۭ وَالْكٰفِرُوْنَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيْدٌ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَلَوْ بَسَطَ اللّٰهُ الرِّزْقَ لِعِبَادِهٖ لَبَغَوْا
فِي الْاَرْضِ وَلٰكِنْ يُّنَزِّلُ بِقَدَرٍ مَّا يَشَاۗءُ ۭ اِنَّهٗ بِعِبَادِهٖ خَبِيْرٌۢ بَصِيْرٌ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَهُوَ
الَّذِيْ يُنَزِّلُ الْغَيْثَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا قَنَطُوْا وَيَنْشُرُ رَحْمَتَهٗ ۭ وَهُوَ الْوَلِيُّ
الْحَمِيْدُ ﴿٢٨﴾ وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهٖ خَلْقُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَمَا بَثَّ فِيْهِمَا مِنْ دَاۗبَّةٍ ۭ
وَهُوَ عَلٰي جَمْعِهِمْ اِذَا يَشَاۗءُ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَمَآ اَصَابَكُمْ مِّنْ مُّصِيْبَةٍ فَبِمَا كَسَبَتْ
اَيْدِيْكُمْ وَيَعْفُوْا عَنْ كَثِيْرٍ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَمَآ اَنْتُمْ بِمُعْجِزِيْنَ فِي الْاَرْضِ ۚ وَمَا لَكُمْ
مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ مِنْ وَّلِيٍّ وَّلَا نَصِيْرٍ ﴿٣١﴾ وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهِ الْجَوَارِ فِي الْبَحْرِ
كَالْاَعْلَامِ ﴿٣٢﴾ اِنْ يَّشَاْ يُسْكِنِ الرِّيْحَ فَيَظْلَلْنَ رَوَاكِدَ عَلٰي ظَهْرِهٖ ۭ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ

Have they set up such associates of God, who have laid down for them a (religious) way of life, which Allah has not permitted?[38] Had the word of judgement not already been issued, their case would long have been settled.[39] Surely for these wrongdoers there is a painful torment. You will see that at that time these wicked people will be fearing the consequence of their deeds, and it will certainly befall them. Contrary to this, those who have believed and done righteous deeds, shall be in the Gardens of Paradise; they shall have with their Lord whatever they will desire. This is the greatest bounty. This is that of which Allah gives good news to His servants, who believed and did good works. O Prophet, say to them: "I do not ask of you any reward for this work;[40] however, I do seek the love of the kindred."[41] Whoever earns a good deed, We shall increase its good for him. Indeed, Allah is All-Forgiving and Appreciative.[42] 21-23

Do they say, "He has forged a lie against Allah?"[43] If Allah so wills, He may seal up your heart.[44] He blots out falsehood and proves the truth to be true by His Words:[45] He even knows the secrets hidden in the breasts.[46] It is He Who accepts repentance from His servants and overlooks sins although He knows whatever you do.[47] He answers the prayers of those who believe and do good works and gives them even more out of His bounty. As for the disbelievers, there is a severe punishment for them. 24-26

If Allah had given His provisions abundantly to all His servants, they would have rebelled in the earth, but He sends down in due measure what He wills. He is well informed of His servants and watches over them.[48] He it is Who sends down the rain when the people have lost all hope, and spreads His mercy, and He alone is the Praiseworthy Guardian.[49] Among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the living things, which He has scattered in both;[50] He can gather them all together whenever He wills.[51] Whatever affliction has befallen you, it is for what your own hands have earned, and there is many a sin that He pardons.[52] You cannot frustrate your God in the earth, and you do not have any protector and helper against Allah. Among His signs are the ships which look like mountains in the sea. If Allah so wills He can still the wind and leave them motionless on its back.—In this there are many signs for every such person who 27-35

patiently endures and is grateful.[53] ——Or, forgiving many of the sins (of the voyagers), He may drown them in consequence of a few of their misdeeds, and then those who dispute about Our Revelations, may realize that they have no refuge.[54]

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work, however small and insignificant, will at least be increased ten times over in the Hereafter, and there is no limit to this increase. Allah will increase it hundreds of thousands of times for whomever He may please.

As for the one who is only sowing for this world, and is not at all concerned about the Hereafter, Allah has plainly told him of two of the results of his labours: (1) That, however hard he may struggle and strive, he will not get the whole of what he is trying for, but only a fraction of it, which Allah has ordained for him; and (2) that whatever he has to get, he will get only in this world: there is no share for him in the good things of the Hereafter.

38. In this verse the word *shurakā* (associates) obviously does not mean those beings whom the people invoke, or those in whose names they make offerings, or those before whom they carry out rites of worship, but inevitably it refers to those men whom the people regard as associates in the authority and sovereignty of Allah, whose thoughts, creeds, ideologies and philosophies they believn in, whose values they admit, whose moral precepts and norms of civilization and culture they accept, and whose laws and rules and regulations they adopt in their rituals and rites of worship, in their personal and collective lives, in their trade and business dealings, in their politics and governments, as if they constituted the *sharī'ah* that they had to follow faithfully. This is a complete code of life which the inventors invented against the legislation of Allah, Lord of the worlds, without His sanction and followed by the followers. This is the same sort of *shirk* as prostrating oneself before another and invoking another than Allah. (For further explanation, see An Nisā: 60; Al-Mā'idah: 87; Al.An'ām: 121, 136, 137; At-Taubah: 31; Yūnus: 59; Ibrāhīm: 22; An-Nahl: 115-116; Al.Kahf: 52; Al-Qaṣaṣ: 62.64 ; Sabā : 41; Yā Sīn: 60 and the relevant E.N.'s).

39. That is, "This is such a boldness against Allah that had not judgement been deferred till Resurrection, the torment would have been sent down on every such person, who in spite of being Allah's servant, enforced his own religion and way of life on Allah's earth, and those people also would have been visited by it, who forsook Allah's Religion and accetped the religion invented by others."

40. "This work": Every effort that the Holy Prophet was making to save the people from Allah's punishment and to enable them to become worthy of the promise of Paradise.

41. The word *qurbā* in the original has been interpreted differently by the different commentators. One section of them takes it in the meaning of kinship and has given this meaning to the verse: "I do not ask of you any reward for this service, but I do desire that you (O people of Quraish) should show some regard for the kinship that there is between me and you. You should have accetped my invitation, but if you do not accept it, you should not be so hard-hearted as to become my bitterest enemies in the entire land of Arabia." This is the interpretation given by Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, which has been cited by Imām Aḥmad, Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī, Ibn Jarīr, Ṭabarānī, Baihaqi, Ibn Sa'īd and others on the authority of many reporters and the same commentary has been given by Mujāhid, 'Ikrimah, Qatādah, Suddī, Abū Mālik, 'Abdur Reḥmān bin Zaid bin Aslam, Ḍaḥḥāk, 'Atā bin Dinār and the other major commentators.

The other section takes *qurbā* in the meaning of nearness and interprets the verse to mean: "I do not seek from you any other reward than this that you should develop in yourselves a desire for attaining nearness to Allah. That is, you should be reformed. That is my only reward." This commentary has been reported from Hasan Basri and a saying of Qatādah also has been cited in support of this; so much so that in a tradition by Tabarānī this saying has also been attributed to Ibn 'Abbās. In the Qur'ān itself, at another place, this same subject has been treated, thus: "Tell them: I do not seek of you any reward for this work: I only ask of the one who will, to adopt the way of his Lord." (Al-Furqān: 57).

The third group takes *qurbā* in the meaning of the kindred, and interprets the verse to mean this: "I do not seek from you any other reward than this that you should love my near and dear ones." Then, some of the commentators of this group interpret "the kindred" to mean all the children of 'Abdul Muṭṭalib, and some others restrict it to Ḥaḍrat 'Alī and Fāṭimah and their children. This commentary has been reported from Sa'īd bin Jubair and 'Amr bin Shu'aib, and in some traditions it has been attributed to Ibn 'Abbās and Ḥaḍrat 'Alī bin Ḥusain (Zain al-'Ābedīn), but this interpretation cannot be accetped for several reasons. Firstly, when Sūrah Ash-Shūrā was sent down at Makkah, Ḥaḍrat 'Alī and Fāṭimah had not yet been married and, therefore, there could be no question of their children. As for the children of 'Abdul Muṭṭalib, they were not all following the Holy Prophet but some of them had openly joined with his enemies, and the enmity of Abu Lahab is too well known. Second, "the kindred" of the Holy Prophet were not only the children of 'Abdul Muṭṭalib but he had his kindred among all the families of the Quraish through his mother and his father and his wife, Ḥaḍrat Khadījah. In all these clans he had his best supporters as well as his staunch enemies. Third, and this is the most important point, in view of the high position of a Prophet from which he starts his mission of inviting the people towards Allah, it does not seem fitting that he would ask the people to love his

kindred in return for his services in connection with his great Mission. No person of fine taste could imagine that Allah would have taught His Prophet such a mean thing, and the Prophet would have uttered the same before the Quraish. In the stories that have been narrated of the Prophets in the Qur'ān, we find that a Prophet after a Prophet stands up before his people and says: "I do not ask of you any reward: my reward is with Allah, Lord of the worlds." (Yūnus: 72; Hūd: 29, 51; Ash-Shu'arā': 109, 127, 145, 164, 180). In Sūrah Yā Sīn the criterion given of a Prophet's truthfulness is that he gives his invitation without any selfish motive. (v. 21). In the Qur'ān the Holy Prophet himself has been made to say again and again words to the effect: "I demand no reward from you for this message." (Al-An'ām: 90, Yūsuf: 104, Al-Mu'minūn: 72, Al-Furqān: 57, Sabā: 47, Ṣuād: 86, At-Ṭur: 40, Al Qalam: 46). After this, what could be the occasion for the Holy Prophet to tell the people that in return for his service of inviting them to Allah, they should love his relatives. Then it seems all the more irrelevant when we see that the addressees here are the disbelievers and not the believers. The whole discourse, from the beginning to the end, is directed to them. Therefore, there could be no question in this regard of asking the opponents for any reward, for a reward is asked of those who show some appreciation for the services that a person has rendered for them. The disbelievers were not at all appreciative of the Holy Prophet's services: on the contrary, they regarded them as a crime and had turned bitterly hostile to him.

42. That is, "Contrary to the culprits who commit disobedience knowingly, Allah's affair with the servants who strive to do good, is like this: (1) He makes them even more righteous than they could be solely by their own efforts; (2) He overlooks the weaknesses that remain in their work, and the sins that are committed by them inadvertently, in spite of striving to become good; and (3) Allah appreciates whatever little provision of the good deeds they bring and rewards them richly and generously for it."

43. In this interrogative sentence the style is of severe reproach. It means: "O Prophet: Have these people become so bold and fearless that they do not feel any shame in accusing you of inventing a lie, and that too of a heinous sin of a lie against Allah? They calumniate you that you are forging the Qur'ān yourself and then falsely attributing to Allah."

44. That is, "Such big lies are only uttered by those whose hearts have been sealed up. If Allah wills, He may include you also among them, but it is His mercy that He has kept you away from them. This answer contains a severe satire against the people who were so accusing the Holy Prophet. It means this: "O Prophet, they think that you are a man like them. Just as they are in the habit of uttering any big lie only for the sake of a selfish motive, so they thought you also

must have forged a lie for selfish ends. But it is Allah's mercy that He has not sealed up your heart as He has sealed up theirs."

45. That is, "It is Allah's way that He does not grant stability to falsehood, and in the long run proves the truth to be true. Therefore, O Prophet, you should go on doing your mission, without paying any attention to their false accusations. A time will come when this whole falsehood will vanish like dust, and the truth of that which you are presenting will become visible and manifest."

46. That is, "He knows why you are being thus falsely accused and what are the actual motives that are working behind all this struggle that is being made to frustrate and defeat you."

47. Calling the people's attention to repentance immediately after the preceding verse by itself gives the meaning, as if to say: "O wicked people: Why are you making yourselves still more worthy of God's punishment by falsely accusing the true Prophet? If you desist from your misdeeds even now, and offer true repentance Allah will forgive you." Repentance means that one should feel remorse for the evil one has done, and should refrain and desist from it in the future. Moreover, it is also an inevitable demand of true repentance that one should try one's utmost to compensate for the evil one has done in the past, and wherever compensation is not possible, one should seek Allah's forgiveness and should do more and more good to wipe off the blot from oneself. But no repentance can be true repentance unless it is offered with the intention of pleasing Allah. Giving up an evil for some other reason or intention is no repentance at all.

48. If the context in which this thing has been said is kept in view, it appears that Allah here is alluding to the basic factor that was working in the rebellion of the disbelievers of Makkah. Although they were insignificant as against the mighty Roman and Iranian Empires and their position among the nations of the neighbouring countries was no more than of a commercial tribe of a backward people, the relative prosperity and glory that they enjoyed among the other Arabs had made them so proud and arrogant that they were not inclined even to listen to the Prophet of Allah, and their chiefs of the tribes regarded it below their dignity that Muḥammad bin 'Abdullah (upon whom be Allah's peace) should be their guide and they his followers. On this it is being said "If We had actually opened up the gates of provisions for these mean people, they would have burst with pride. But We are watching over them, and are providing for them only sparingly so as to keep them within limits." According to this meaning this verse, in other words, is touching on the same subject which has already been treated in At-Taubah: 68-70, Al-Kahf: 32-42, Al-Qaṣaṣ: 75-82, Ar-Rūm: 9, Sabā: 34-36 and Al-Mu'min: 82-85 above.

[Contd. on p. 546

لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُوْرٍ ﴿٣٣﴾ اَوْ يُوْبِقْهُنَّ بِمَا كَسَبُوْا وَيَعْفُ عَنْ كَثِيْرٍ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَّ
يَعْلَمَ الَّذِيْنَ يُجَادِلُوْنَ فِيْٓ اٰيٰتِنَا ۭ مَا لَهُمْ مِّنْ مَّحِيْصٍ ﴿٣٥﴾ فَمَآ اُوْتِيْتُمْ مِّنْ
شَيْءٍ فَمَتَاعُ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا ۚ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ خَيْرٌ وَّاَبْقٰى لِلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا
وَعَلٰي رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُوْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ يَجْتَنِبُوْنَ كَبٰٓئِرَ الْاِثْمِ وَالْفَوَاحِشَ وَاِذَا
مَا غَضِبُوْا هُمْ يَغْفِرُوْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ اسْتَجَابُوْا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَاَقَامُوا الصَّلٰوةَ ۠
وَاَمْرُهُمْ شُوْرٰى بَيْنَهُمْ ۠ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنٰهُمْ يُنْفِقُوْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ اِذَآ اَصَابَهُمُ
الْبَغْيُ هُمْ يَنْتَصِرُوْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَجَزٰٓؤُا سَيِّئَةٍ سَيِّئَةٌ مِّثْلُهَا ۚ فَمَنْ عَفَا وَاَصْلَحَ
فَاَجْرُهٗ عَلَي اللّٰهِ ۭ اِنَّهٗ لَا يُحِبُّ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَلَمَنِ انْتَصَرَ بَعْدَ ظُلْمِهٖ فَاُولٰۗىِٕكَ
مَا عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ سَبِيْلٍ ﴿٤١﴾ اِنَّمَا السَّبِيْلُ عَلَي الَّذِيْنَ يَظْلِمُوْنَ النَّاسَ وَيَبْغُوْنَ
فِي الْاَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ ۭ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَلَمَنْ صَبَرَ وَغَفَرَ
اِنَّ ذٰلِكَ لَمِنْ عَزْمِ الْاُمُوْرِ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَمَنْ يُّضْلِلِ اللّٰهُ فَمَا لَهٗ مِنْ وَّلِيٍّ مِّنْۢ
بَعْدِهٖ ۭ وَتَرَى الظّٰلِمِيْنَ لَمَّا رَاَوُا الْعَذَابَ يَقُوْلُوْنَ هَلْ اِلٰى مَرَدٍّ مِّنْ
سَبِيْلٍ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَتَرٰىهُمْ يُعْرَضُوْنَ عَلَيْهَا خٰشِعِيْنَ مِنَ الذُّلِّ يَنْظُرُوْنَ مِنْ طَرْفٍ
خَفِيٍّ ۭ وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اِنَّ الْخٰسِرِيْنَ الَّذِيْنَ خَسِرُوْٓا اَنْفُسَهُمْ وَاَهْلِيْهِمْ يَوْمَ
الْقِيٰمَةِ ۭ اَلَآ اِنَّ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ فِيْ عَذَابٍ مُّقِيْمٍ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَمَا كَانَ لَهُمْ مِّنْ اَوْلِيَاۗءَ
يَنْصُرُوْنَهُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ ۭ وَمَنْ يُّضْلِلِ اللّٰهُ فَمَا لَهٗ مِنْ سَبِيْلٍ ﴿٤٦﴾ اِسْتَجِيْبُوْا
لِرَبِّكُمْ مِّنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ يَّاْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَّا مَرَدَّ لَهٗ مِنَ اللّٰهِ ۭ مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ مَّلْجَاٍ يَّوْمَىِٕذٍ
وَّمَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ نَّكِيْرٍ ﴿٤٧﴾ فَاِنْ اَعْرَضُوْا فَمَآ اَرْسَلْنٰكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيْظًا ۭ اِنْ عَلَيْكَ
اِلَّا الْبَلٰغُ ۭ وَاِنَّآ اِذَآ اَذَقْنَا الْاِنْسَانَ مِنَّا رَحْمَةً فَرِحَ بِهَا ۚ وَاِنْ تُصِبْهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ

Whatever you have been given, is merely a provision for the transitory life of this world,[55] and that which is with Allah is better as well as more lasting.[56] That is for those who have believed and put their trust in their Lord;[57] who refrain from gross sins and indecencies;[58] who, when they are angry, forgive;[59] who obey their Lord,[60] establish the *Ṣalāt*, and conduct their affairs by mutual consultation;[61] who spend out of what We have given them as sustenance;[62] who, when they are oppressed, help and defend themselves.[63]—The recompense[64] of evil is a like evil;[65] then whoever pardons and seeks reconcilement, his reward is with Allah.[66] Allah does not like the wrongdoers.[67] And those who avenge themselves after they have been wronged, cannot be held blameworthy, for blameworthy indeed are those who oppress others and commit excesses in the land without any right. For such people there is a painful torment. However, the one who practices patience and is forgiving, these indeed are works of great courage and resolution.[68] 36-43

The one whom Allah lets go astray, has no protector after Him.[69] You will see that when the wrongdoers see the torment, they will say, "Is there any way back?"[70] And you will see that when they are brought before Hell, they shall be downcast with disgrace and shall look at it with stealthy glances.[71] At that time those who had believed, will say, "The real losers indeed are those who have lost themselves and their followers on this Resurrection Day." Beware! The wrongdoers shall suffer an everlasting torment, and they will have no protectors and guardians, who could come to their help against Allah. The one whom Allah lets go astray has no way of escape. 44-46

Answer your Lord before there comes the Day of which there is no chance of being averted by Allah.[72] On that Day you will have no place of refuge, nor will there be any who could change your condition.[73] Now if they turn away, We have not sent you, O Prophet, to be a keeper over them:[74] your only responsibility is to convey the Message. Man is such that when We let him taste Our mercy, he exults at it, and if an evil befalls him in consequence of what his own hands have done before, he turns utterly ungrateful.[75] 47-48

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49. Here, the word *walī* implies the Being who is the Governor of the affairs of all His creations, Who has taken the responsibility of fulfilling all the needs and requirements of His servants.

50. "In both": In both the earth and the heavens. This is a clear pointer to the fact that life does not only exist on the earth but on other planets as well.

51. That is, "Just as He has the power to scatter them, so He has also the power to gather them all together. Therefore, it is wrong to think that Resurrection cannot take place, and all the former and the latter generations cannot be raised up and gathered all together."

52. One should note that here the cause of all human afflictions is not being stated but the address is directed to the people who were at that time committing disbelief and disobedience at Makkah. They are being told: "Had Allah seized you for all your sins and crimes, He would not have even allowed you to live, but the calamities (probably the allusion is to the famine of Makkah) that have descended on you, are only a warning so that you may take heed and examine your actions and deeds to see as to what attitude and conduct you have adopted as against your Lord, and try to understand how helpless you actually are against God against Whom you are rebelling, and know that those whom you have taken as your patrons and supporters, or the powers that you have relied upon, cannot avail you anything against the punishment of Allah."

For further explanation it is necessary to state that as regards the sincere believer, Allah's law for him is different. All the calamities and hardships that befall him go on becoming an atonement for his sins, errors and deficiencies. There is an authentic *Ḥadīth* to the effect: "Whatever sorrow and suffering, distress and grief, and affliction and worry that a Muslim experiences, even if it be a thornprick, it is made an atonement by Allah for one or the other of his errors." (Bukhārī, Muslim). As for the hardships that a believer faces in the way of raising Allah's Word, they do not merely become an atonement for his deficiencies but also a means of the exaltation of ranks with Allah. In this connection, it cannot even be imagined that they descend as a punishment for sins."

53. "Who patiently endures": who keeps himself fully under control and remains steadfast on the path of servitude under all circumstances, good or bad; who does not forget himself so as to become rebellious against God and cruel to the people, when favoured with good times, and loses heart and stoops to anything when visited by evil times. A "gratefull person" is every such person who regards it as a bounty of Allah and not the result of any merit or excellence in himself when he is exalted to any high place of honour in life by a Divine decree, and keeps his mind concentrated on the blessings which remain available to man even under the worst circumstances instead of his deprivations when deposed to the

lowest of the low position. Thus, he continues to thank his Lord in both prosperity and adversity with his tongue and heart.

54. The Quraish, in connection with their business and trade, had also to visit Ḥabash and the coastal lands of Africa, and in these journeys they used sailing ships and boats for crossing the Red Sea, which is a very dangerous sea. It is generally stormy and abounds in submerged rocks which are a serious hazard for navigation especially during the storms. Therefore, the state that has been depicted here by Allah could be fully realized by the people of the Quraish in the light of their personal experiences.

55. That is, "It is not a thing at which man should exult. Whatever worldly wealth a person has in his possession, he has it only for a short time. He uses it for a few years and then leaves the world empty-handed. Then, although the amount of the wealth may be very high in the ledgers, practically only a fraction of it is used by the man himself. To exult at such wealth does not behove a man who understands the truth about himself, about his wealth and this world itself."

56. That is, that wealth is far more superior as regards its nature and quality; and is also eternal and everlasting.

57. Here, trust *(tawakkul)* in Allah has been regarded as an inevitable demand of the faith and a necessary characteristic for success in the Hereafter. *Tawakkul* means: (1) That man should have full confidence in the guidance of Allah, and should understand that the knowledge of the truth, the principles of morality, the bounds of the lawful and the unlawful, and the rules and regulations of passing life in the world, that Allah had enjoined, are based on the truth and in following them alone lies man's good and well being; and (2) that man should not place reliance on his own powers and abilities, means and resources, plans and schemes and the help of others than Allah, but he should keep deeply impressed in his mind the fact that his success in every thing, here and in the Hereafter, actually depends on the help and succour of Allah, and that he can become worthy of Allah's help and succour only if he works with the object of winning His approval, within the bounds prescribed by Him; (3) that man should have complete faith in the promises that Allah has made with those who would adopt the way of faith and righteousness and work in the cause of the truth instead of falsehood, and having faith in the same promises would discard all those benefits, gains and pleasures that may seem to accrue from following the way of falsehood, and endure all those losses, hardships and deprivations that may become his lot on account of following the truth steadfastly. From this explanation of the meaning of *tawakkul* it becomes obvious how deeply it is related with the faith, and why those wonderful results that have been promised to the believers who practice *tawakkul*, cannot be obtained from the mere empty affirmation of the faith.

58. For explanation, see An-Nisā: 31, Al-An'ām: 151, An-Naml: 90, An-Najm: 32 and the E.N.'s.

59. That is, they are not wrathful and crazy but are temperate and cool-minded; they are not revengeful but forbearing and forgiving by nature. If ever they feel angry at something they control their rage. This characteristic is the best of man's qualities, which has been highly commended in the Qur'ān (Āl-'Imrān: 134) and regarded as a major factor of the Holy Prophet's success (Al-'Imrān: 159). According to Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, "The Holy Messenger of Allah never avenged himself on anybody; however, when a thing enjoined to be held sacred by Allah was desecrated, he would award the punishment." (Bukhārī, Muslim)

60. Literally: "Who answer the call of their Lord". That is they hasten to do whatever Allah enjoins them to do, and accept whatever Allah invites them to accept.

61. This thing has been counted here as the best quality of the believers, and has been enjoined in Sūrah Āl-'Imrān: 159. On this basis, consultation, is an important pillar of the Islamic way of life, and to conduct the affairs of collective life without consultation is not only the way of ignorance but also an express violation of the law prescribed by Allah. When we consider why consultation has been given such importance in Islam, three things become obvious:

First, that it is injustice that a person should decide a matter by his personal opinion and ignore others when it involves the interests of two or more persons. No one has a right to do as he likes in matters of common interest. Justice demands that all those whose interests are involved in a matter be consulted, and if it concerns a large number of the people, their reliable representatives should be made a party in consultation.

Second, that a man tries to do what he likes in matters of common interest either because he wants to usurp the rights of others for selfish ends, or because he looks down upon others and regards himself as a superior person. Morally both these qualities are equally detestable, and a believer cannot have even a tinge of either of these in himself. A believer is neither selfish so that he should get undue benefits by usurping the rights of others, nor he is arrogant and self-conceited that he should regard himself as all-wise and all-knowing.

Third, that it is a grave responsibility to give decisions in matters that involve the rights and interests of others. No one who fears God and knows what severe accountability for it he will be subjected to by his Lord, can dare take the heavy burden of it solely on himself. Such a boldness is shown only by those who are fearless of God and heedless of the Hereafter. The one who fears God and has the feeling of the accountability of the Hereafter, will certainly try that in a matter

of common interest he should consult all the concerned people or their authorised representatives so as to reach, as far as possible, an objective and right and equitable decision, and if there occurs a mistake one man alone should not be held responsible for it.

A deep consideration of these three things can enable one to fully understand that consultation is a necessary demand of the morality that Islam has taught to man, and departure from it is a grave immorality which Islam does not permit. The Islamic way of life requires that the principle of consultation should be used in every collective affair, big or small. If it is a domestic affair, the husband and the wife should act by mutual consultation, and when the children have grown up, they also should be consulted. If it is a matter concerning the whole family, the opinion of every adult member be solicited. If it concerns a tribe or a fraternity or the population of a city, and it is not possible to consult all the people, the decision should be taken by a local council or committee, which should comprise the trustworthy representatives of the concerned people according to an agreed method. If the matter concerns a whole nation, the head of government should be appointed by the common consent of the people, and he should conduct the national affairs in consultation with the leaders of opinion, whom the people regard as reliable, and he should remain at the helm of affair only as long as the people themselves want him to remain in that position. No honest man can try to assume the headship of a nation by force, or desire to continue in that position indefinitely, nor can think of coming into power by deception and then seek the people's consent by coercion, nor can he devise schemes so that the people may elect representatives to act as his advisers not by their own free choice but according to his will. Such a thing can be desired only by the one who cherishes evil intentions, and such a fraud against the Islamic principle of consultation can be practiced only by him who does not feel any hesitation in deceiving both God and the people whereas the fact is that neither can God be deceived nor the people be so blind as to regard the robber, who is committing robbery in the bright day light openly, as their well-wisher and servant.

The principle of consultation as enshrined in *amru-hum shūrā bainu-hum* by itself demands five things:

(1) The people whose rights and interests relate to collective matters, should have full freedom to express their opinion and they should be kept duly informed of how their affairs are being conducted; they should also have the full right that if in the conduct of the affairs they see an error, a weakness or a deficiency, they can check it and voice a protest, and if they do not see any change for the better, they can change their rulers. To conduct the people's

affairs by keeping them silent and un-informed is sheer dishonesty which no one can regard as adherence to the principle of consultation in Islam.

(2) The person who is to be entrusted with the responsibility of conducting the collective affairs, should be appointed by the people's consent, and this consent should be their free consent, which is not obtained through coercion, temptation, deception, and fraud, because in that case it would be no consent at all. A nation's true head is not he who becomes its head by trying every possible method, but he whom the people make their head by their own free choice and approval.

(3) The people who are appointed as advisers to the head of the state should be such as enjoy the confidence of the nation, and obviously the people who win representative positions by suppression or by expending wealth, or by practising falsehood and fraud, or by misleading the people cannot be regarded as enjoying the confidence in the real sense.

(4) The advisers should give opinion according to their knowledge and faith and conscience and they should have full freedom of such expression of opinion. Wherever this is not the case, wherever the advisers give advice against their own knowledge and conscience, under duress or temptation, or under party discipline, it will be treachery and dishonesty and not adherence to the Islamic principle of consultation.

(5) The advice that is given by a consensus of the advisers, or which has the support of the majority of the people, should be accepted, for if a person (or a group of persons) behaves independently and acts on his own whims, even after hearing the advice of others, consultation becomes meaningless. Allah does not say: "They are consulted in their affairs", but says: "They conduct their affairs by mutual consultations". This instruction is not implemented by mere consultation, but for its sake it is necessary that the affairs be conducted according to what is settled by consensus or by majority opinion in consultation.

Along with this explanation of the Islamic principle of consultation, this basic thing also should be kept in view that this consultation is not independent and autocratic in conducting the affairs of the Muslims, but necessarily subject to the bounds that Allah Himself has set by His legislation, and is subject to the fundamental principle: "It is for Allah to give a decision in whatever you may differ," and "if there arises any dispute among you about anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger." According to this general principle, the Muslims can hold consultations in *Shari'ah* matters with a view to determining the correct meaning of a text or verse and to find out the ways of implementing it so as to fulfil its requirements rightly but they cannot hold consultations in order to give an

independent judgement in a matter which has already been decided and settled by Allah and His Messenger.

62. It has three meanings:

(1) "They spend only out of what lawful provisions We have given them: they do not touch unlawful things for supplementing their expenditure."

(2) "They do not set aside the provisions granted by us, but spend them."

(3) "They spend out of what they have been given in the cause of Allah also: they do not reserve everything for personal use only."

The first meaning is based on this that Allah calls the lawful and pure provisions only as "the provisions granted by Him"; He does not call the provisions earned in impure and unlawful ways His provisions. The second meaning is based on that whatever Allah provides for man is provided so that he may spend it and not that he may set it aside and hoard it up like a miser. The third meaning is based on that according to the Qur'ān, spending does not mean spending merely on one's own self and for one's personal needs, but it also contains the meaning of spending for the sake of Allah in His way. On account of these three reasons Allah here is counting spending of wealth among the best qualities of the believers because of which the blessings of the Hereafter have been reserved only for them.

63. This also is one of the best characteristics of the believers: they do not fall a prey to the tyrants. Their tender heartedness and forgiving nature is not the result of any weakness. They have not been taught to live humbly and meekly like the hermits and ascetics. Their nobility demands that when they are victors they should forgive the errors of the vanquished; when they possess the power, they should avoid vengefulness and when a weak or subdued person happens to commit a mistake they should overlook it; but when a powerful person, drunk with authority, commits violence against them, they should resist and fight him with all their might. A believer is never cowed by a wicked person nor bows to an arrogant man. For such people he proves to be a hard nut which breaks the teeth of those who try to break it.

64. The passage from here to the end of verse 43 is an explanation of verse 39.

65. This is the first fundamental principle which must be borne in mind in retaliation. The right limit of retaliation is that one should return the same sort of ill treatment that one has received; one has no right to return a greater ill treatment.

66. This is the second principle. It means: Although it is permissible to retaliate against the one who has committed a violence, wherever pardoning can be conducive to reconcilement, pardoning is better for the sake of reconcilement than retaliation. And since man pardons the other by suppressing his own feelings, Allah says that the reward of such a one is with Him, for he has suppressed his own self for the sake of reforming the evil-doers.

67. In this warning allusion has been made to a third principle about retaliation, and it is this: One should not become a wrongdoer oneself in the process of avenging a wrong done by the other. It is not permissible to do a greater wrong in retaliation for the wrong done. For example, if a person gives another a slap, the other can return only one slap; he cannot shower blows and kicks. Likewise, it is not right to commit a sin in retaliation for a sin. For example, if a wicked man has killed the son of someone, it is not right to go and kill the son of the former. Or, if a mean person has violated the chastity of a person's sister or daughter, it is not lawful for him to commit rape on the former's sister or daughter.

68. One should note that the qualities of the believers that have been mentioned in these verses, practically existed in the lives of the Holy Prophet and his Companions, and the disbelievers of Makkah were their eye-witnesses. Thus, Allah has, in fact, told the disbelievers: "The real wealth is not the provisions that you have received for passing the transitory life of the world, and are bursting with pride of it, but the real wealth are the morals and characteristics which the believers from your own society have developed by accepting the guidance given by the Qur'ān."

69. That is, "Allah sent the best Book like the Qur'ān for the guidance of the people, which is giving them the knowledge of the reality in a rational and effective way and guiding them to the right way of life. He sent a Prophet like Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) for their guidance, a man of better character than whom they had never seen before. And then Allah also showed them the results of the teaching and training of this Book and this Messenger in the lives of the Believers. Now, if after witnessing all this, a person turns away from the guidance, Allah casts him into the same deviation from which he has no desire to come out. And when Allah Himself has driven him away, who else can take the responsibility of bringing him to the Right Way."

70. That is, "Today when there is a chance of coming back, they are refusing to come back. Tomorrow when the judgement will have been passed and the sentence enforced, then seeing their fate they will wish to come back."

71 By nature man is such that when a dreadful scene comes before him and he knows that soon he is going to fall a prey to it, he closes his eyes forthwith

in fear. Then, when he cannot hold himself any longer, he tries to see what kind of the calamity it is and how far away it is from him. But he does not find the courage to lift up his head and have a full view of it. Therefore, he opens his eyes a little again and again and sees it from the corner of the eye, and then again closes his eyes from fear. The same state of those who will be driven to Hell has been depicted here.

72. That is, neither will Allah Himself avert it, nor has anyone else the power to avert it.

73. This sentence has several other meanings also: (1) "You will not be able to deny any of your misdeeds"; (2) "you will not be able to hide yourself even in disguise ;" (3) "you will not be able to protest or show any displeasure against any treatment that is meted out to you;" (4) "it will not be in your power to change the condition in which you are placed."

74. That is, "You have not been made responsible that you must bring them to the right path anyhow, nor will you be held accountable as to why these people did not come to the right path."

75. "Man" here implies the mean and shallow people who are the subject of the discourse here, who have got a measure of the worldly provisions and are exulting in this, and who do not pay any attention when they are admonished to come to the right path. But when they are visited by a disaster in consequence of their own misdeeds, they start cursing their fate, and forget all those blessings which Allah has blessed them with, and do not try to understand how far they themselves are to be blamed for the condition in which they are placed. Thus, neither does prosperity become conducive to their reformation nor can adversity teach them a lesson and bring them to the right path. A study of the context shows that this is, in fact, a satire on the attitude of the people who were the addressees of the above discourse, but they have not been addressed to tell them of their weakness directly, but the weakness of man has been mentioned in a general way and pointed out that what is the real cause of his sad plight. This gives an important point of the wisdom of preaching: the weaknesses of the addressee should not be made the target directly, but they should be mentioned in a general way so that he is not provoked, and if his conscience has still some life in it, he may try to understand his shortcoming with a cool mind.

بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ اَيْدِيْهِمْ فَاِنَّ الْاِنْسَانَ كَفُوْرٌ ﴿48﴾ لِلّٰهِ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ
يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَآءُ ۚ يَهَبُ لِمَنْ يَّشَآءُ اِنَاثًا وَّيَهَبُ لِمَنْ يَّشَآءُ الذُّكُوْرَ ﴿49﴾ اَوْ
يُزَوِّجُهُمْ ذُكْرَانًا وَّاِنَاثًا ۚ وَيَجْعَلُ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ عَقِيْمًا ۚ اِنَّهٗ عَلِيْمٌ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿50﴾
وَمَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ اَنْ يُّكَلِّمَهُ اللّٰهُ اِلَّا وَحْيًا اَوْ مِنْ وَّرَآئِ حِجَابٍ اَوْ يُرْسِلَ
رَسُوْلًا فَيُوْحِيَ بِاِذْنِهٖ مَا يَشَآءُ ۚ اِنَّهٗ عَلِيٌّ حَكِيْمٌ ﴿51﴾ وَكَذٰلِكَ اَوْحَيْنَآ اِلَيْكَ
رُوْحًا مِّنْ اَمْرِنَا ۚ مَا كُنْتَ تَدْرِيْ مَا الْكِتٰبُ وَلَا الْاِيْمَانُ وَلٰكِنْ جَعَلْنٰهُ
نُوْرًا نَّهْدِيْ بِهٖ مَنْ نَّشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا ۚ وَاِنَّكَ لَتَهْدِيْٓ اِلٰى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ﴿52﴾
صِرَاطِ اللّٰهِ الَّذِيْ لَهٗ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ ۗ اَلَآ اِلَى اللّٰهِ تَصِيْرُ الْاُمُوْرُ ﴿53﴾

ع ١٦

To Allah belongs the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth;[76] He creates whatever He wills: He gives daughters to whom He wills, and sons to whom He wills; or He gives both sons and daughters to whom He wills and makes barren whom He wills. Indeed. He knows everything and has power over everything.[77] 49-50

It[78] is not given to any mortal that Allah should speak to him, face to face. He speaks either through revelation (secret instruction),[79] or from behind a veil,[80] or He sends a messenger (an angel), who by His Command, reveals whatever He wills:[81] He is the Exalted, the All-Wise.[82] Even so We have, (O Muhammad), revealed a Spirit to you by Our Command.[83] You did not know at all what was the Book and what was the Faith,[84] but We made that Spirit a light by which We show the way to any of Our servants We will. You are indeed guiding to the Right Way, the Way of God, to Whom belongs everthing in the heavens and the earth. Beware! All affairs tend to Allah alone![85] 51-53

Contd. from p. 555]

76. That is, "If the people who are involved in disbelief and polytheism do not believe even after the admonition, they may not, for the truth is the truth. The kingdom of the earth and heavens has not been entrusted to the so called kings and despots and chiefs of the world nor has any prophet, saint, god or goddess any share in it, but its Master is One Allah alone. His rebel can neither

succeed by his own power, nor can any of the beings whom the people look upon as owners of divine powers by their own folly, come to their rescue and aid."

77. This is a manifest proof of Allah's Sovereignty being absolute. No man, whether he be posing as owner of the highest worldly authority, or regarded as owner of great spiritual powers, has ever been able to produce children for himself according to his own choice and desire, not to speak of providing children for others. The one whom Allah made barren could not have children through any medicine, any treatment, any amulet or charm. The one whom Allah gave only daughters could not get a single son by any device, and the one whom Allah gave only sons could not have a single daughter by any means. In this matter everyone is absolutely helpless. So much so that before the birth of a child no one could know whether a son was taking shape in the mother's womb or a daughter. Even after seeing all this if some one posed to be all-powerful in God's Kingdom, or regarded another as a possessor of the powers, it would be his own short-sightedness for which he himself will suffer, the truth will not change at all.

78. In conclusion, the same theme with which the discourse began has been reiterated. To understand it fully, please see the first verse of this Sūrah and the E.N. on it.

79. Here, *wahī* means to inspire somebody with something, or to show something to somebody in a vision as were the Prophets Abraham and Joseph shown. (Yūsuf: 4, 100; Aṣ-Ṣāffāt: 102).

80. That is, "One may hear a voice without seeing the speaker, just as it happened in the case of the Prophet Moses when he suddenly began to hear a voice from a tree on Mount Ṭūr, while the Speaker was hidden from him." (Tā Hā: 11-48, An Naml: 8-12, Al-Qaṣaṣ: 30-35).

81. This is the form of *wahī* by which all Divine Scriptures have actually reached the Prophets of Allah. Some people have misinterpreted this sentence and given it this meaning: "Allah sends a messenger who by His Command conveys His message to the common people." But the words of the Qur'ān *fa-yūḥiya bi-idhni-hī mā yashā'u* (then He reveals by His Command whatever He wills) show that this interpretation is absolutely wrong. The Prophets' preaching before the common people has neither been called *wahī* anywhere in the Qur'ān, nor is there any room in Arabic for describing a man's speaking to another man openly by the word *wahī*. Lexically, *wahī* means secret and swift instruction. Only an ignorant person will apply this word to the common preaching by the Prophets.

82. That is, He is far above that He should speak to a man face to face, and His wisdom is not helpless that He may adopt another method of conveying His instructions to a servant of His than of speaking to him face to face.

83. "Even so" does not refer only to the last method of *waḥī*, but to all the three methods as mentioned in the preceding verses, and a "Spirit" implies *waḥī* (Revelation), or the teaching given to the Holy Prophet by revelation. Both the Qur'ān and the *Ḥadīth* confirm that the Holy Prophet was given instruction by all these three methods:

(1) In a *Ḥadīth* Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah has stated that Revelation in the beginning came to the Holy Prophet in the form of true visions. (Bukhāri, Muslim) This continued in later life also. Traditions mention many visions in which he was given some teaching or informed of something and in the Qur'ān also a vision of his has been clearly mentioned (Al Fatḥ: 27). Besides, several Traditions also mention that the Holy Prophet said, "I have been inspired with such and such a thing, or I have been informed of this and this or I have been enjoined this, or I have been forbidden this." All such things relate to the first kind of the *waḥī* and the Divinely inspired Traditions *(Aḥādīth Qudsī)* mostly belong to this category of the Traditions.

(2) On the occasion of the *Mi'rāj* (Ascension) the Holy Prophet was honoured with the second kind of the *waḥī* also. In several authentic Traditions the way mention has been made of the Commandment of the *Ṣalāt* five times a day and the Holy Prophet's making submissions in that regard again and again clearly shows that at that time a similar dialogue took place between Allah Almighty and His servant Muḥammad (upon whom be His peace and blessings) as had taken place between Allah and the Prophet Moses at the foot of Mount Ṭūr.

(3) As for the third kind, the Qur'ān itself testifies that it was conveyed to the Holy Prophet through Angel Gabriel, the Trustworthy. (Al-Baqarah: 97, Ash-Shu'arā' : 192-195).

84. That is, "Before his appointment to Prophethood, the Holy Prophet had never had any idea that he was going to receive a Book, or that he should receive one, but he was wholly unaware of the heavenly Books and the subjects they treated. Likewise, although he believed in Allah, intellectually he was not aware of the requirements of the Faith in Allah, nor did he know that along with that belief it was also necessary that he should believe in other things-the angels, the Prophethood, the Divine Books and the Hereafter. Both these things---were such as were not hidden even from the disbelievers of Makkah. No one belonging to Makkah could bear witness that he had ever heard anything pertaining to a Divine Book from the Holy Prophet before his sudden proclamation of the Prophethood, or any such thing that the people should believe in such and such things. Obviously if a person had already been looking forward to becoming a prophet, it could not be that the people who remained socially associated with him day and night for 40 years should not have even so much as heard the word Book

and the Faith from him, and after 40 years he should suddenly have started making fiery speeches on the same themes.

85 This is the final warning that has been given to the disbelievers. It means: "The Prophet said something and you heard and rejected it. The matter would not end there. Whatever is happening in the world, will be presented before Allah, and ultimately He Himself will decide what should be the end of each and every person."


XLIII
AZ-ZUKHRUF
الزُّخرُف

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XLIII

AZ-ZUKHRUF

الزُّخرُف

INTRODUCTION

Name

It is derived from the word *zukhruf-an* which occurs in verse 35 of this Sūrah.

Period of Revelation

It could not be known from any authentic tradition, but a study of its subject-matter shows that this Sūrah also was sent down in the same period in which the Sūrahs Al-Mu'min, Ḥā-Mīm As-Sajdah and Ash-Shūrā, were sent down. It appears that the revelation of this series of the Sūrahs began when the disbelievers of Makkah were planning to put an end to the Holy Prophet's life. Day and night they were holding consultations in their assemblies as how to eliminate him, and even an attack on his life also had been made as has been clearly referred to in vv. 79-80.

Theme and Topics

In this Sūrah a forceful and severe criticism has been made of the Quraish's and the common Arabs' creeds and superstitions of ignorance in which they persisted, and their stubbornness has been exposed in a firm and effective way, so that every member of the society, who was reasonable in some degree, should be made to consider the evils in which the community was involved and its tyrannical treatment of the person who was trying to redeem it.

The discourse starts in a way as if to say: "You, by means of your mischiefs, want that the revelation of this Book should be stopped, but Allah has never withheld the appointment of His Prophets and the revelation of His Books because of the mischiefs of the people, but has destroyed the wicked people, who obstructed the way of His guidance. The same He will do again. A little further in vv. 41-43 and 79-80 the same thing has been reiterated. Though the people who were plotting against his life are meant, the Holy Prophet has been addressed to the effect: "Whether you remain alive or not, We will certainly punish the wicked," and the people themselves have been plainly warned to the effect: "If you have decided to take an action against Our Prophet, We too will take a decisive action."

Then, it has been told what is the reality of the religion that the people are following so devotedly and what are the arguments on whose strength they are resisting Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings).

They themselves admit that the Creator of the earth and heavens and of themselves and their deities is only Allah. They also know and admit that the blessings they are benefiting from, have been bestowed by Allah; yet they insist on making others associates of Allah in His Godhead.

They regard the servants as the children of Allah, and that too daughters, whom they regard as disgraceful for themselves.

They believe that the angels are goddesses; they have carved their images as females; they adorn them with female dresses and ornaments, and call them daughters of Allah: they worship them and invoke them

for the fulfilment of their needs. How did they know that the angels were female?

When they are rebuked for these superstitions, they present the pretence of destiny and say: "Had Allah disapproved of these practices, we could not have worshipped these images, whereas the means of finding out whether Allah had approved of something or not, are His Books and not those things which are happening in the world according to His Will. For under His Will not only idol-worship but crimes like theft and adultery, robbery, murder, etc. also are being committed. Can this argument be used to justify as right and proper this commission of every crime and evil in the world?

When it is asked: Have you any other authority, apart from this wrong argument, for the polytheism of yours? they reply, "The same has been the practice since the time of our forefathers." In other words, this in their opinion is a strong enough argument for a creed's being right and true, whereas the Prophet Abraham, descent from whom is the only basis of their pride and distinction, had rejected the religion of his elders and left his home, and he had discarded every such blind imitation of his forefathers, which did not have the support of any rational argument. Then, if these people had to follow their elders only, for this also they selected their most ignorant elders and abandoned their most illustrious elders like the Prophets Abraham and Ishmeal (on whom be peace).

When they are asked: "Has ever a Prophet or a Book sent down by God also given this teaching that others beside Allah too are worthy of worship? they present this practice of the Christians as an argument that they took Jesus son of Mary as son of God and worshipped him; whereas the question was not whether the community of a Prophet had committed *shirk* or not, but that whether a Prophet had himself taught *shirk*. Jesus son of Mary had never said that he was son of God and that the people should worship him. His own was the same teaching which every other Prophet had given: "My Lord as well as your Lord is Allah: so worship Him alone."

They were disinclined to believe in the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet because he was neither a rich man nor a person of high worldly position and rank. They said. "Had Allah willed to appoint a prophet

among us, he would have appointed one of the great men of our two cities (Makkah and Ṭā'if)." On that very basis, Pharaoh also had looked down upon the Prophet Moses and said: "If Allah, the King of the heavens, had to send a messenger to me, the king of the earth, He would have sent him with bracelets of gold and a company of angels in attendance. Wherefrom has this mendicant appeared? I am superior to him, for the kingdom of Egypt belongs to me, and the canals of the River Nile are flowing under my control. What is the status of this man as against me? He has neither wealth nor authority."

Thus, after criticising each practice of ignorance of the disbelievers and rejecting it with rational arguments, it has been pointed out: "Neither has God any offspring, nor are there separate gods of the earth and heavens, nor is there any intercessor who may be able to protect from His punishment those who adopt deviation knowingly. Allah is far above that He should have children. He alone is the God of the whole Universe: all others are His servants and not associates in His attributes and powers, and only such men can intercede with Him, who are themselves followers of the Truth and they also can intercede only for those who may have adopted obedience of the Truth in the world."



حٰمٓ ۝١ وَالْكِتٰبِ الْمُبِيْنِ ۝٢ اِنَّا جَعَلْنٰهُ قُرْءٰنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُوْنَ ۝٣ وَاِنَّهٗ
فِيْٓ اُمِّ الْكِتٰبِ لَدَيْنَا لَعَلِيٌّ حَكِيْمٌ ۝٤ اَفَنَضْرِبُ عَنْكُمُ الذِّكْرَ صَفْحًا اَنْ كُنْتُمْ
قَوْمًا مُّسْرِفِيْنَ ۝٥ وَكَمْ اَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ نَّبِيٍّ فِي الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ۝٦ وَمَا يَاْتِيْهِمْ مِّنْ
نَّبِيٍّ اِلَّا كَانُوْا بِهٖ يَسْتَهْزِءُوْنَ ۝٧ فَاَهْلَكْنَآ اَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ بَطْشًا وَّمَضٰى مَثَلُ
الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ۝٨ وَلَئِنْ سَاَلْتَهُمْ مَّنْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ لَيَقُوْلُنَّ خَلَقَهُنَّ
الْعَزِيْزُ الْعَلِيْمُ ۝٩ الَّذِيْ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْاَرْضَ مَهْدًا وَّجَعَلَ لَكُمْ فِيْهَا سُبُلًا
لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُوْنَ ۝١٠ وَالَّذِيْ نَزَّلَ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءًۢ بِقَدَرٍ ۚ فَاَنْشَرْنَا بِهٖ بَلْدَةً
مَّيْتًا ۚ كَذٰلِكَ تُخْرَجُوْنَ ۝١١ وَالَّذِيْ خَلَقَ الْاَزْوَاجَ كُلَّهَا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِّنَ
الْفُلْكِ وَالْاَنْعَامِ مَا تَرْكَبُوْنَ ۝١٢ لِتَسْتَوٗا عَلٰى ظُهُوْرِهٖ ثُمَّ تَذْكُرُوْا نِعْمَةَ رَبِّكُمْ

XLIII
AZ-ZUKHRUF
الزُّخْرُف

Verses: 89 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Ḥā-Mīm. By this lucid Book, We have made it an Arabic Qur'ān so that you (O people) may understand it.[1] And, in fact, it is inscribed in Umm al-Kitāb,[2] a Book truly sublime and full of wisdom with Us.[3] 1-4

Now, should We despair and stop sending this Admonition to you only because you are a people who have transgressed (all limits)?[4] Many a Prophet have We sent among the ancient peoples, too. Never 5-8

did it so happen that a Prophet came to his people and they did not mock him.[5] So, We destroyed them though they were much stronger than these in might; there have gone before the examples of the ancient peoples.[6]

9-14 If you ask them, "Who has created the heavens and the earth?" they will surely say, "The Almighty, the All-Knowing One has created them." He it is Who made this earth a cradle for you[7] and made in it paths[8] for you so that you may be guided to your destinaions[9]; Who sent down water from heaven in due measure[10] and revived thereby the dead earth—even so shall you be brought out from the earth[11]; Who created all these pairs[12]; and Who made ships and animals as conveyance for you to ride on their back, so that when you sit on them, you may remember your Lord's favour, and say, "Glorified is He Who has subjected them to us, otherwise we could not have brought them under control,[13] and one day we have to return to our Lord."[14]

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1. The object of taking an oath by the Qur'ān is to impress this fact: "We are the Author of this Book and not Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace)," and the attribute of the Qur'ān chosen for the oath is that it is a "lucid Book". To swear by the Qur'ān itself with its this attribute in order to impress that the Qur'ān is Divine Word by itself implies this: "O people, this is an open Book before you. Read it intelligently. Its clear and un-ambiguous themes, its language and literary style, its teaching which distinguishes the truth from falsehood, all are testifying to the fact that none but the Lord of the Universe could be its Author." Then the sentence: "We have made it an Arabic Qur'ān so that you may understand it." has two meanings:(1) "It is not in any foreign tongue but in your own language; therefore, you can have no difficulty in assessing its value and worth. Had it been in a non-Arabic language, you could have offered the excuse that you could not determine its being Divine, or otherwise, for you did not understand it. But you cannot offer this excuse about this Arabic Qur'ān. Its each word is clear to you: its each passage and discourse, both in language and in theme, is plain for you. Now you may see it for yourself whether this could be the word of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) or of some other Arab." (2) "We have sent this Book in Arabic because We are addressing the Arabs, who can only understand an Arabic Qur'ān. The person who disregards this expressly rational ground for sending down the Qur'ān in Arabic and regards it as the word of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) instead of Divine Word only because Muḥammad's mother tongue is also Arabic, commits a grave injustice." (To understand this second meaning, please see Sūrah Ḥā-Mīm As-Sajdah: 44 and its E.N.'s).

2. "*Umm al-Kitāb*": the "Original Book": the Book from which all the Books sent down to the Prophets have been derived. In Sūrah Al-Wāqi'ah the same thing has been described as *Kitāb-um-Maknūn* (the hidden and preserved Book) and in Sūrah Al-Burūj 22 as *Lauḥ-i Maḥfūẓ* (the Preserved Tablet), that is, the Tablet whose writing cannot be effaced, which is secure from every kind of interference. By saying that the Qur'ān is inscribed in *Umm al-Kitāb*, attention has been drawn to an important truth. Different Books had been revealed by Allah in different ages to different Prophets for the guidance of different nations in different languages, but all these Books invited mankind to one and the same Faith; they regarded one and the same thing as the Truth; they presented one and the same criterion of good and evil; they propounded the same principles of morality and civilization; in short, they brought one and the same *Dīn* (Religion). The reason was that their source and origin was the same, only words were different; they had the same meaning and theme which is inscribed in a Source Book with Allah, and whenever there was a need, He raised a Prophet and sent down the same meaning and subject-matter clothed in a particular diction according to the environment and occasion. Had Allah willed to raise the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be His peace) in another nation instead of the Arabs, He would have sent down the same Qur'ān in the language of that nation. In it the meaning and content would have been expressed according to the environments and conditions of the people and land; the words would have been different and the language also different but the teaching and guidance the same basically, and it would be the same Qur'ān though not the Arabic Qur'ān. This same thing has been expressed in Sūrah Ash-Shu'arā, thus: "This (Book) has been revealed by the Lord of the worlds. The trustworthy Spirit has come down with it upon your heart so that you may become one of those who are (appointed by God) to warn (the people) in plain Arabic language; and this is also contained in the scriptures of the former peoples." (vv. 192-196). (For explanation, see Ash-Shu'arā: 192-196 and the E.N.'s on it).

3. This sentence is related both to *Kitāb-i mubīn* and to *Umm al-Kitāb*. Thus, it is in praise of both the Qur'ān and the Original Book from which the Qur'ān has been derived. This praise is meant to impress the fact that if a person does not recognize the true worth of this Book and does not benefit from its wise teachings because of his own folly, it would be his own misfortune. If someone tried to degrade it and found fault with it, it would be his own meanness. It cannot become worthless on account of someone's lack of appreciation of it, and its wisdom cannot be eclipsed by anyone's throwing dust at it. This is by itself a glorious Book, which stands exalted by its matchless teaching, miraculous eloquence, faultless wisdom and the sublime personality of its great Author. Therefore, none can succeed in minimizing its value and worth. In verse 44 below

the Quraish in particular and the Arabs in general have been told that the revelation of the Book for which they are showing such lack of appreciation had provided them a unique opportunity of honour, which if they lost, would subject them to a severe accountability before God. (Please see E.N. 39 below).

4. In this one sentence the whole history that had taken place since the time the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) had proclaimed to be a Prophet till the revelation of these verses during the past few years has been compressed. This sentence depicts the following picture: A nation has been involved in ignorance, backwardness and depravity for centuries. Suddenly, Allah looks at it with favour. He raises in it an illustrious guide and sends down His own Word to take it out of the darkness of ignorance so that it is aroused from slumber, it gives up superstitions of ignorance and it becomes aware of the truth and adopts the right way of life. But the ignorant people of the nation and the tribal chiefs turn hostile to the guide, and try their utmost to defeat him and his mission. With the passage of time their hostility and mischief go on increasing; so much so that they make up their mind to kill him. At this, it is being said: "Should We stop making any efforts to reform you because you are proving to be un-worthy people? Should We withhold sending down this Admonition, and leave you lying in the same wretched state in which you have been lying since centuries ? Do you really think that should be the demand of Our Mercy ? Have you ever considered what doom you would meet when you have turned down the bounty of Allah and persisted in falsehood after the truth has come before you?"

5. That is, if such absurdity and senselessness had barred the sending of a Prophet or a Book, no Prophet would ever have come to any nation nor a Book sent to it,

6. That is, the result of the senselessness of some particular people could not be that the entire mankind should be deprived of the guidance of the Prophethood and the Book, but its result always has been that the worshippers of falsehood who, being drunk with the pride of power, did not desist from mocking the Prophets, were ultimately destroyed. When Allah's wrath descended even the people, who possessed thousands of times greater power than that possessed by the puny chiefs of the Quraish, were crushed to annihilation like mosquitoes and fleas.

7. At other places the earth has been described as a bed, but here as a cradle. That is, just as a child lies resting in its cradle, so is this great globe meant to be a place of rest for you, which is suspended in space, which is spinning on its axis at a speed of 1,000 miles an hour, which is revolving around the sun at a speed of 66,000 miles an hour. Its interior is so intensely hot that it can melt the stones and it manifests its power sometimes in the form of volcano eruptions. But, in spite of that, the Creator has made it so tranquil that one sleeps on it in full

peace and there is no jerk whatever. One lives on it and does not at all feel that this globe is suspended and one is hanging from it with one's head pointing downward. One moves about on it with satisfaction and never thinks that one is riding on a vehicle moving faster than a bullet. You dig it at will and turn it inside out and beat it as you like to obtain your sustenance, whereas a little shaking of it in an earthquake makes you feel what a terrible giant it is, which Allah has subdued for you. (For further explanation, see Al-Naml: 61 and E.N. 74 on it).

8. The passes in the mountains and the rivers in the hill and plain regions are the natural paths, which Allah has provided on the surface of the earth. Man has spread on the earth by means of these. If the mountainous ranges had been created erect, without a crevice, and there had been no rivers and streams, man would have been confined to the same areas where he was born. Then, Allah through another grace has not made the whole surface of the earth uniform in nature, but has created different marks of distinction by means of which man recognizes different lands and feels the difference between one land and another. This is the second important means by which man became able to move about on the earth. This blessing can be appreciated by the one who has had a chance of going on a vast desert, where for thousands of miles the earth is without any land-marks and one does not know where one has reached and where one has to go.

9. This sentence gives two meanings simultaneously: (1) "That by means of these natural paths and land-marks you may find your way and reach the place you want to reach:" and (2) "that you may obtain guidance from the observation of this craftsmanship of Allah Almighty: may reach the underlying reality and understand that this system of the earth is not functioning haphazardly, nor has been devised by many gods jointly, but there is one All-Wise Creator, Who has made these paths in the hills and on the plains in view of the needs and requirements of His creatures, and has given each region of the earth a different form in countless different ways by means of which man can distinguish one region from the other.

10. That is, "For each region He has ordained an average measure of the rain, which falls year after year for long ages regularly. It does not happen that an area may have two inches of the rainfall one year and 200 inches of it the next year. Then He spreads the rainfall over different places in different times in such a way that it becomes beneficial on the whole for the products of the earth. And this is also His wisdom that He has deprived some parts of the earth of the rainfall almost wholly and turned them into dry, barren deserts, and in some other parts, He sometimes causes famines to occur and sometimes sends torrential rains so that man may know what a great blessing the rain and its general regularity is for the populated areas, and he may also remember that this system is under the control of another power, whose decrees cannot be changed by anyone. No one has the

power that he may change the general average of the rainfall of a country, or effect a variation in its distribution over vast areas of the earth, or avert an impending storm, or attract the displeased clouds towards one's own land and compel them to rain." (For further explanation, see Al Ḥijr: 21-22, Al-Mu'minūn: 18-20).

11. Here, the birth of vegetation in the earth by means of water has been presented as an argument for two things simultaneously: (1) That these things are happening by the power and wisdom of One God; no one else is His associate in these works; and (2) that there can be life after death, and it will be. (For further explanation, see An-Naḥl: 65-67, Al-Ḥajj: 5-7, An-Naml: 60, Ar-Rūm: 19, 24; Fāṭir: E.N. 19 and Yā Sīn: E.N. 29).

12. Pairs here does not imply only pairs of men and women among human beings and of males and females among animals and vegetation, but there are countless other things which the Creator has made as matching partners of each other and by whose coming together and combination new and ever new things come into being in the world. For example, among the elements, some can be combined with others and some cannot be. The combination of these which can combine is resulting into various compositions, e.g. the negative and positive charges in electricity are the matching partners of each other and their mutual attraction is causing wonderful things to happen in the world. If man considers the structure and the mutual relationships and the different forms of cooperation and the results of the combination of this and other countless pairs which Allah has created among countless of His creations. He cannot help testifying to the truth that this great workshop of the world is the creation of one and only one Almighty, All-Wise Designer, and is functioning only under His care and control. Only a man of mean intelligence could suppose that all this happened, and is happening, without a Wise Being, or there is the possibility in it of the agency and interference of more gods than one.

13. That is, "Only man from among all the creatures of the earth was not given this power by Allah to use boats and ships and animals as conveyance so that he may be loaded on them like bags of grain and should never think as to who it is who created possibilities for him to run boats in the mighty oceans, and who created some animals of the countless kinds of animals, with a nature that they become his servants in spite of being far stronger than him in power, and he rides on them and drives them wherever he likes. To benefit by these blessings and to forget the Benefactor is a sign of the heart's becoming dead and the conscience's being insensitive. For when a man endowed with a living heart and a sensitive conscience will sit on these conveyances, he will be filled with the feelings of the blessings and with the gratitude for it, and will cry out: "Glorified is the Being Who subjected these things to me: Glorified is He from that another should be His

associate in His Being and attributes and powers: Glorified is He and free from the weakness that He should become helpless of performing the functions of His Godhead by Himself and should stand in need of other associate gods: Glorified is He that I should make another an associate with Him in rendering thanks for these blessings."

The best practical commentary of the intention and meaning of this verse are the words that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) used to pronounce at the time he sat on the conveyance. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar says that whenever the Holy Prophet sat on a conveyance for a journey, he would pronounce *Allah-u Akbar* thrice, then would recite this verse, and then pray: "O God, I implore You to grant me in this journey the grace of goodness and piety and such acts as may please You. O God, make the journey easy and roll up the long distance for us; O God, You alone are the Companion during the journey and Guardian of the family in our absence. O God, take care of us during the journey and our household in our absence." (Musnad Aḥmad, Muslim, Abu Da'ūd, Nasā'i, Dārimi, Tirmidhī).

Ḥaḍrat 'Alī says: Once the Holy Prophet put his foot in the stirrup with *bismillah*, and then, after riding, said: *Al-ḥamd-u lillāh, ṣubḥán-alladhi sakhkhara lanā ḥādhā* ...., then pronounced *al-ḥamd-u-lillah* thrice, and *Allah-u Akbar* thrice; then said: *Subḥāna-ka, lā-ilāha illā anta, qad ẓalamtu nafsi fagh fir-lī*. Then he laughed. I asked: What made you laugh, O Messenger of Allah? He replied: When a servant says: *Rabb-igḥfir-lī*, Allah Almighty is very pleased with this. He says: My servant knows that there is none beside Me who can forgive sins." (Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī, and others).

Abū Mijlaz says: "Once I rode on my animal and recited this verse: *Subḥān-alladhī sakhkhara lanā hādhā* ...; Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan (may Allah be pleased with him) said: Have you been commanded to say so ? I said: What should I say then? He replied: Say, thank God, Who guided us to Islam: Thanks to Him, Who did us a favour by sending Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace): Thanks to Him, Who admitted us into the best community that has been raised for the people; then recite this verse." *(Ibn Jarīr, Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* by Jaṣṣāṣ)

14. That is, "While embarking on every journey one should remember that there is ahead a longer and final journey also. Besides there is the possibility in the use of every conveyance that an accident may turn that very journey into one's last journey; therefore, every time one should remember one's return to one's Lord so that if something untoward happens, one does not die unawares.

[Contd. on p. 572]

13
إِذَا اسْتَوَيْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ وَتَقُولُوا سُبْحٰنَ الَّذِي سَخَّرَ لَنَا هٰذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لَهُ مُقْرِنِينَ ﴿١٣﴾
وَإِنَّا إِلٰى رَبِّنَا لَمُنْقَلِبُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ وَجَعَلُوا لَهُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ جُزْءًا ۚ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ
لَكَفُورٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿١٥﴾ أَمِ اتَّخَذَ مِمَّا يَخْلُقُ بَنَاتٍ وَأَصْفٰكُمْ بِالْبَنِينَ ﴿١٦﴾ وَإِذَا بُشِّرَ
أَحَدُهُمْ بِمَا ضَرَبَ لِلرَّحْمٰنِ مَثَلًا ظَلَّ وَجْهُهُ مُسْوَدًّا وَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ ﴿١٧﴾ أَوَ
مَنْ يُنَشَّؤُا فِي الْحِلْيَةِ وَهُوَ فِي الْخِصَامِ غَيْرُ مُبِينٍ ﴿١٨﴾ وَجَعَلُوا الْمَلٰٓئِكَةَ الَّذِينَ
هُمْ عِبٰدُ الرَّحْمٰنِ إِنَاثًا ۚ أَشَهِدُوا خَلْقَهُمْ ۚ سَتُكْتَبُ شَهَادَتُهُمْ وَيُسْـَٔلُونَ ﴿١٩﴾
وَقَالُوا لَوْ شَاءَ الرَّحْمٰنُ مَا عَبَدْنٰهُمْ ۚ مَا لَهُمْ بِذٰلِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ ۖ إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا
يَخْرُصُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾ أَمْ آتَيْنٰهُمْ كِتٰبًا مِنْ قَبْلِهِ فَهُمْ بِهِ مُسْتَمْسِكُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ بَلْ قَالُوا إِنَّا
وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا عَلٰٓى أُمَّةٍ وَإِنَّا عَلٰٓى آثٰرِهِمْ مُهْتَدُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَكَذٰلِكَ مَا أَرْسَلْنَا
مِنْ قَبْلِكَ فِي قَرْيَةٍ مِنْ نَذِيرٍ إِلَّا قَالَ مُتْرَفُوهَا ۙ إِنَّا وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا عَلٰٓى
أُمَّةٍ وَإِنَّا عَلٰٓى آثٰرِهِمْ مُقْتَدُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ قٰلَ أَوَلَوْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِأَهْدٰى مِمَّا وَجَدْتُمْ
عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَكُمْ ۖ قَالُوا إِنَّا بِمَا أُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهِ كٰفِرُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾ فَانْتَقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ ۖ فَانْظُرْ
كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرٰهِيمُ لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِ إِنَّنِي
بَرَآءٌ مِمَّا تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي فَإِنَّهُ سَيَهْدِينِ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَجَعَلَهَا كَلِمَةً
بَاقِيَةً فِي عَقِبِهِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾ بَلْ مَتَّعْتُ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ وَآبَاءَهُمْ حَتّٰى
جَآءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ وَرَسُولٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَلَمَّا جَآءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ قَالُوا هٰذَا سِحْرٌ
وَإِنَّا بِهِ كٰفِرُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنُ عَلٰى رَجُلٍ مِنَ
الْقَرْيَتَيْنِ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٣١﴾ أَهُمْ يَقْسِمُونَ رَحْمَتَ رَبِّكَ ۚ نَحْنُ قَسَمْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ
مَعِيشَتَهُمْ فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا ۚ وَرَفَعْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجٰتٍ لِيَتَّخِذَ

(In spite of knowing and recognizing all this) these people have made some of His servants to be part of Him.[15] The fact is that man is manifestly ungrateful. 15

Did Allah choose from His creation daughters for Himself and blessed you with sons? whereas when the birth of the offspring whom they ascribe to the Merciful God, is announced to any of them, his face grows black and he is filled with grief.[16] Would they assign to Allah the offspring who is brought up among ornaments and is even unable to make itself clear in disputation?[17] 16-18

They have regarded the angels, who are themselves servants of the Merciful God,[18] as females. Have they seen them in person?[19] Their evidence will be recorded and they will be called to account for it. 19

They say, "Had the Merciful God willed (that we should not worship them), We would never have worshipped them."[20] They do not at all know the fact of the matter: they only conjecture. Did We give them a Book before this of which they hold an authority (for their angel-worship)?[21] Nay! but they say, "We found our forefathers on a way and we are only walking in their footsteps."[22] Even so, whenever before you We sent a warner to a habitation, its people of means said, "We have found our forefathers on a way and we are only following in their footsteps."[23] Every Prophet asked them, "Will you still go on following the same old way even if I guide you to a more right way than that you found your forefathers following?" They replied, "We disbelieve the religion with which you have been sent." Consequently, We took vengeance on them. Just consider what was the end of those who denied (the Truth) ! 20-25

Recall the time when Abraham had said to his father and his people :[24] "I have nothing to do with those whom you worship. I worship only Him Who created me: He alone will guide me."[25] And Abraham left behind the same Word[26] among his descendants so that they should turn to it.[27] (In spite of that when the people started worshipping others, I did not annihilate them), but I went on providing sustenance of life to them and to their forefathers until the Truth came to them and a Messenger who expounded everything clearly.[28] But when the Truth came to them, they said, "This is a sorcery[29] and we refuse to believe in it." 26-30

31-32 They say, "Why was not this Qur'ân sent down to one of the great men from the two cities?"[30] Is it they who distribute the mercy of your Lord? It is We Who have distributed the means of their sustenance in the life of this world and raised some of them above others in ranks so that they may take one another in service;[31] and your Lord's Mercy is far greater in worth than the wealth which (their chiefs) are amassing.[32]

Contd. from p. 571]

Let us pause here for a while and consider the moral results of this teaching. Can one imagine that a person who while sitting on a conveyance starts his journey consciously with full remembrance of Allah and his return and accountability before Him, would commit sins and injustices and tyrannies on the way? Can a person think or utter these words from his mouth when he intends to go to meet a prostitute, or to visit a club for the purpose of drinking and gambling? Can a ruler, or a government official, or a merchant who has stepped out of his house with such thoughts and such words at his lips, usurp the rights of others when he reaches his destination? Can a soldier utter these words while boarding his aircraft or tank when he goes out to shed blood of the innocent and deprive the weak of their freedom? If not, then this one thing alone is enough to bar every movement undertaken for the commission of a sin.

15. "To make part of Allah" implies declaring a servant of Allah His offspring, for an offspring inevitably is homogeneous with and a part of the father's body, and regarding somebody as Allah's son or daughter means that he or she is being made a partner in Allah's Being. Besides, another form of making a creature a part of Allah is that it should be regarded as possessor of the attributes and powers as are specifically Allah's own, and it should be invoked under the same concept, or rites of worship performed before it, or its sanctities observed and regarded as imperative and binding, for in that case man divides divinity and providence between Allah and His servants and hands over a part of it to the servants.

16. Here, the folly of the polytheists of Arabia has been fully exposed. They said that the angels were the daughters of Allah. They had carved out their images as females, and these were their goddesses whom they worshipped. About this Allah says: In the first place, in spite of knowing and recognizing that the Creator of the earth and heavens is Allah and it is He Who has made this earth a cradle for you and it is He Who sends down the rain from the sky and it is He Who has created these animals for your service, yet you have taken others as gods beside Him, whereas those whom you serve as deities are not God but creatures of

God. Then, further more, you have made some of the servants associates of Allah not only in His attributes but in His Being as well, and invented the creed that they were Allah's offspring. Then, not resting content with this, you assigned to Allah that kind of the offspring which you regard as disgraceful for your own selves: When a daughter is born in your house, your face grows dark, you feel distressed, and sometimes you bury her alive. This offspring you assign to Allah and reserve for yourselves the sons, whom you regard as a source of joy and pride. Even then you claim that you believe in Allah.

17. In other words, "You have assigned to Allah the offspring that is by nature delicate, weak and frail, and adopted for yourselves the offspring that is bold, courageous and fearless."

This verse shows permissibility of the ornaments for the women, for Allah has mentioned the ornaments as a natural thing for them. The same is also confirmed by the *Ḥadith*. Imam Aḥmad, *Abū* Da'ūd and Nasā'ī have related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Ali that the Holy Prophet took silk in one hand and gold in the other and said that both were forbidden to be used in dress by the men of his *Ummah*. Tirmidhī and Nasā'ī have related from Ḥaḍrat Abu Musa Ash'ari a tradition, saying that the Holy Prophet said: "Silk and gold have been forbidden for the men but made lawful for the women of my *Ummah*." 'Allāma Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣāṣ has discussed this question in his *Aḥkām al-Qur'an* and related the following traditions:

Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah says: Once Usāmah, son of Zaid bin Ḥārithah, was hurt and started bleeding. The Holy Prophet loved him like his own children. He sucked his blood and spat it out, and cheered him saying, "Had Usāmah been a daughter we would have adorned him with ornaments! Had Usāmah been a daughter, we would have dressed him in fine clothes !"

Ḥaḍrat Abū Mūsā Ash'arī has related that the Holy Prophet said: "Wearing of silken clothes and ornaments of gold is unlawful for the men of my *Ummah* but lawful for the women."

Ḥaḍrat 'Amr bin 'Āṣ has related: "Once two women came before the Holy Prophet, and they were wearing bracelets of gold. He said: Would you like that Allah should make you wear bracelets of the fire instead of these? They replied that they would not. Thereupon he said: Pay their dues, i.e. the *zakāt* due on them."

Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'isha has stated that there is no harm in wearing the ornaments if the *zakāt* due on them is paid.

Ḥaḍrat 'Umar wrote to Ḥaḍrat Abū Mūsā Ash'arī: Order the Muslim women who live in the areas under your administrative control that they should pay the *zakāt* dues on their ornaments.

Imam Abū Ḥanīfah has related the following traditions on the authority of 'Amr bin Dīnār: Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah had arranged ornaments of gold for her sisters and Ḥadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar for his daughters.

After citing all these traditions 'Allama Jaṣṣāṣ writes: "The traditions that have been related from the Holy Prophet and the Companions about the permissibility and lawfulness of gold and silk for the women are better known and more common than those that are there about their unlawfulness, and the above verse also points to their lawfulness. Then the practice of the Muslims also from the time of the Holy Prophet and his Companions till our time (i.e. till the latter part of the 4th century of *hijrah)* has been the same, and no one ever objected to it. In such matters, no objection can be admitted on the basis of the isolate reports *(Akhbār āhād)*."

18. That is, who are free from this that they should be males or females.

19. Another translation can be: "were they present at the time of their creation?"

20. This was their reasoning from destiny to cover up their deviation and error, and this has been the argument of the wrong-doers in every age. They argued that their worshipping the angels became possible only because Allah allowed them to do so. Had He not willed so they could not have done it; and then it had been a practice with them for centuries and no torment from Allah had descended on them, which meant that Allah did not disapprove of their this practice.

21. It means this: "These ignorant people think that whatever is happening in the world has the approval of Allah for it, because it is happening according to His will. This argument, however, is wrong. For it is not only *shirk* which is being committed in the world, but countless other crimes like stealing, robbery, murder, bribery, etc. also are taking place, which nobody likes. Then, can it be said by the same reasoning that all such acts are lawful and good only because Allah is letting them happen in His world, and when He allows them to happen, He must have approved of them also? The means of knowing what Allah likes and what He hates are not the events that are happening in the world, but the Book of Allah, which comes through His Messenger and in which Allah Himself states as to what beliefs, what deeds and what morals He likes and what He dislikes. If these people have a Book, which came before the Qur'ān, and which tells that Allah has appointed the angels also as deities beside himself and that they should

worship them also, they should cite it." (For further explanation, see Al-An'ām: 107, 112, 137, 148-149; Al-A'rāf: 28; Yūnus: 99; Hūd: 118-119; Ar-Ra'd: 31; An-Naḥl: 9, 35-36, 93; and E.N. 20 of Az-Zumar and E.N. 11 of Ash-Shūrā).

22. That is, "They have no authority of any divine book; the only authority they have is that it has been the practice since the time of their forefathers; therefore, they have taken the angels as goddesses in imitation of them."

23. Here, the point worth consideration is why the well-to-do people of every community only have resisted the Prophets and upheld the imitation of their forefathers in every age. Why have they alone been in the forefront to oppose the Truth and to endeavour to maintain the established falsehood and to beguile and incite the common people against them ? Its basic causes were two: (1) The well-to-do and affluent people are so absorbed in making and enjoying the world of their own that they are not inclined to bother themselves about the useless debate (as they assume it to be) between the Truth and falsehood. Their love of ease and mental lethargy renders them so heedless of religion and conservative that they want the established order, no matter whether it is based on truth or falsehood, to remain in force so that they do not have to take the trouble of thinking about the new order at all for themselves. (2) Their interests become so dependent on the established order that when they get the first glimpse of the order presented by the Prophets they start feeling that if it came, it would not only put an end to their leadership but also would deprive them of the freedom to consume the lawful and commit the unlawful. (For further details, see Al-An'ām: 103; Al-A'rāf: 66-70, 75, 88, 109, 127; Hūd: 27-28; Banī Isrā'īl : 16; Al-Mu'minūn: 24-33, 46; Sabā: 34 and the corresponding E.N.'s).

24. For details, see Al-Baqarah 124-133, Al-An'ām 74-84, Ibrāhīm: 35-41, Maryam: 41-50, Al-Anbiyā': 51-73, Ash-Shu'arā: 69-89, Al-'Ankabūt: 16-27, Aṣ-Ṣāffāt: 83-100 and the corresponding E.N 's.

25. In these words not only did the Prophet Abraham state his creed but also gave the argument for it. The reason for not having any connection with the other deities is that they neither have created nor they give right guidance in any matter, nor they can; and the reason for having a connection only with Allah Almighty is that He alone is the Creator and He alone gives, and can give, the right guidance to mankind.

26. "The same word": the word that none but the Creator is worthy of worship in the world.

27. That is, "Whenever they swerve from the right path, this word should be there to guide them so that they return to it again." This event has been

mentioned here in order to expose the foolishness of the disbelieving Quraish and to put them to shame, as if to say: "When you have adopted obedience of your ancestors, you have selected the most depraved of them for the purpose instead of the most righteous and illustrious, who were the Prophets Abraham and Ishmael (peace be upon them)." The basis of the leadership of the Quraish in Arabia was that they were the descendants of the Prophets Abraham and Ishmael and were the attendants of the Ka'bah built by them. Therefore, they should have followed them and not their ignorant forefathers who had given up the way of the Prophets and adopted polytheism from the neighbouring idol-worshippers. Furthermore, by mentioning this event another error of those people has been pointed out. That is, if the blind imitation of the fore-fathers, without the distinction of good and evil, had been the right thing, the Prophet Abraham should have done so in the first instance. But he had plainly told his father and his people that he could not follow their creed of ignorance in which they had abandoned the Creator and made those imaginary beings their deities, who were not the creator. This shows that the Prophet Abraham did not believe in following the forefathers, but his creed was that before one followed the forefathers one should see whether they were following the right way or not, and if it became known by reason that they were following the wrong way, one should give up their way and adopt the way that was proved right.

28. Another meaning of the word *"rasūlum-mubīn* can be: "A Messenger whose being a Messenger was obvious and apparent: whose life before and after the Prophethood clearly testified that he was certainly Allah's Messenger."

29. For explanation, see Sūrah Al-Anbiyā':3 and E.N. 5 on it, and E.N. 5 of Sūrah Suād.

30. "The two cities": Makkah and Ṭā'if. What the disbelievers meant was: "Had Allah really willed to send a messenger and intended to send down a book to him, He would have selected a great man from our these central cities for the purpose. For Allah could not have selected for this great mission a person who was born an orphan, who did not inherit much property, who passed his youth by tending goats, who even at present earned his living through business with his wife's money, and who was neither the chief of a tribe nor the head of a family. Were not there well known chiefs like Walīd bin Mughīrah and 'Utbah bin Rabī'ah in Makkah, and nobles like 'Urwah bin Mas'ūd, Ḥabīb bin 'Amr, Kinānah bin 'Abd-i -'Amr and Ibn 'Abd Yālil in Ṭā'if? This was their reasoning. in the first instance, they were also not inclined to believe that a man could be a Messenger. But when the Qur'ān refuted this misconception by argument and reason and they were told that in the past only men had come as Messengers and a man only could be a Messenger for the guidance of the people, and not another kind of being and the Messenger who came did not descend, suddenly from

heavens, but were born in the same ordinary dwellings, walked about in the streets, had children and families and stood in need of food and drink (see An-Naḥl: 43, Banī Isrā'īl: 94-95, Yūsuf: 109, Al-Furqān: 7, 20; Al-Anbiyā: 7-8; Ar-Ra'd: 38), they took this stand, saying: "Well, even if a human being, he should be a big man, who should be wealthy, influential and awe-inspiring and having a large following. How could Muḥammad bin 'Abdullah (upon whom be Allah's peace) be fit for this appointment?"

31. This is the answer to their objection, which briefly mentions many important things: First, it asks: "Since when have these people become responsible for distributing the mercy of your Lord ? Is it for them to decide whom Allah should favour with His mercy and whom He should not ? (Here, by Allah's mercy is implied His general mercy from which everyone has a share).

Second, Allah says: "Prophethood is a great blessing: We have even kept the distribution of the common means of life in the world in Our own hand, and have not entrusted it to anyone else. We create someone beautiful and another ugly, someone with a sweet voice and another with a harsh voice, someone robust and strong and another weak and frail, someone intelligent and another dull, someone with a strong memory and another forgetful, some with healthy limbs and another a cripple, or blind or deaf and dumb, someone in a rich family and another among the poor, someone in an advanced country and another in a backward community. No one can do anything about this destiny concerning birth. One is compelled to be what We have made him. And it is in no one's power to avert the impact one's circumstances of birth have on one's destiny. Then it is We ourself Who are distributing provisions, power, honour, fame, wealth, government, etc. among men. No one can degrade the one whom We have blessed with good fortune, and no one can save from ruin the one whom We have afflicted with misfortune. All plans and schemes of man become ineffective against Our decrees. In this universal Divine System, therefore, how can these people decide as to whom should the Master of the universe make His Prophet and whom He should not?

Thirdly, "An abiding principle that We have kept in view in this Divine System is that everything should not be given to one and the same person, or everything should not be given to everybody. If you look around carefully, you will see that great differences exist between the people in every respect. We have given one thing to one person but deprived him of another, and given the same to another one. This is based on the wisdom that no human being should become

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بَعْضُهُمْ بَعْضًا سُخْرِيًّا ۗ وَرَحْمَتُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا يَجْمَعُوْنَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَلَوْلَآ اَنْ
يَّكُوْنَ النَّاسُ اُمَّةً وَّاحِدَةً لَّجَعَلْنَا لِمَنْ يَّكْفُرُ بِالرَّحْمٰنِ لِبُيُوْتِهِمْ سُقُفًا مِّنْ
فِضَّةٍ وَّمَعَارِجَ عَلَيْهَا يَظْهَرُوْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَلِبُيُوْتِهِمْ اَبْوَابًا وَّسُرُرًا عَلَيْهَا يَتَّكِـُٔوْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾
وَزُخْرُفًا ۗ وَاِنْ كُلُّ ذٰلِكَ لَمَّا مَتَاعُ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا ۗ وَالْاٰخِرَةُ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ
لِلْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَمَنْ يَّعْشُ عَنْ ذِكْرِ الرَّحْمٰنِ نُقَيِّضْ لَهٗ شَيْطٰنًا فَهُوَ لَهٗ
قَرِيْنٌ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَاِنَّهُمْ لَيَصُدُّوْنَهُمْ عَنِ السَّبِيْلِ وَيَحْسَبُوْنَ اَنَّهُمْ مُّهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾
حَتّٰٓى اِذَا جَآءَنَا قَالَ يٰلَيْتَ بَيْنِىْ وَبَيْنَكَ بُعْدَ الْمَشْرِقَيْنِ فَبِئْسَ الْقَرِيْنُ ﴿٣٨﴾
وَلَنْ يَّنْفَعَكُمُ الْيَوْمَ اِذْ ظَّلَمْتُمْ اَنَّكُمْ فِى الْعَذَابِ مُشْتَرِكُوْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾ اَفَاَنْتَ تُسْمِعُ
الصُّمَّ اَوْ تَهْدِى الْعُمْىَ وَمَنْ كَانَ فِىْ ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿٤٠﴾ فَاِمَّا نَذْهَبَنَّ بِكَ
فَاِنَّا مِنْهُمْ مُّنْتَقِمُوْنَ ﴿٤١﴾ اَوْ نُرِيَنَّكَ الَّذِىْ وَعَدْنٰهُمْ فَاِنَّا عَلَيْهِمْ مُّقْتَدِرُوْنَ ﴿٤٢﴾
فَاسْتَمْسِكْ بِالَّذِىْٓ اُوْحِىَ اِلَيْكَ ۚ اِنَّكَ عَلٰى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَاِنَّهٗ لَذِكْرٌ
لَّكَ وَلِقَوْمِكَ ۚ وَسَوْفَ تُسْـَٔلُوْنَ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَسْـَٔلْ مَنْ اَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رُّسُلِنَآ
اَجَعَلْنَا مِنْ دُوْنِ الرَّحْمٰنِ اٰلِهَةً يُّعْبَدُوْنَ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَلَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا مُوْسٰى بِاٰيٰتِنَآ
اِلٰى فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَا۟ئِهٖ فَقَالَ اِنِّىْ رَسُوْلُ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٤٦﴾ فَلَمَّا جَآءَهُمْ بِاٰيٰتِنَآ
اِذَا هُمْ مِّنْهَا يَضْحَكُوْنَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَمَا نُرِيْهِمْ مِّنْ اٰيَةٍ اِلَّا هِىَ اَكْبَرُ مِنْ اُخْتِهَا ۖ
وَاَخَذْنٰهُمْ بِالْعَذَابِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُوْنَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَقَالُوْا يٰٓاَيُّهَ السّٰحِرُ ادْعُ لَنَا
رَبَّكَ بِمَا عَهِدَ عِنْدَكَ ۖ اِنَّنَا لَمُهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿٤٩﴾ فَلَمَّا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمُ الْعَذَابَ اِذَا
هُمْ يَنْكُثُوْنَ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَنَادٰى فِرْعَوْنُ فِىْ قَوْمِهٖ قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اَلَيْسَ لِىْ مُلْكُ
مِصْرَ وَهٰذِهِ الْاَنْهٰرُ تَجْرِىْ مِنْ تَحْتِىْ ۚ اَفَلَا تُبْصِرُوْنَ ﴿٥١﴾ اَمْ اَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْ

But for the fear that all mankind would follow the same way, 33-35
We would have made for those who disbelieve in the Merciful God,
houses with roofs of silver and gold, and stairways by which they go to
upper chambers, and their doors and their couches on which they
recline (all of silver and gold).[33] But all this is merely a provision of
this worldly life; and the Hereafter with your Lord is only for the
righteous.

He who does not heed the admonition of the Merciful,[34] We set 36-39
a satan upon him, and he becomes his companion. These satans hinder
such people from the right way while they think that they are guided
aright. Ultimately, when he comes to Us, he will say to his satan
companion, "would that between me and you there were the distance of
the East and the West: you turned out to be a most evil companion."
Then it will be said to them, "When you have done wrong, it will avail
you nothing today as you and your satans are partners in the same
torment."[35]

Now, O Prophet, will you make the deaf to hear you, or show 40-45
the way to the blind and those who are involved in manifest deviation?[36]
Now We have to punish them, whether We take you away from the
world, or let you see their end, which We have promised them: We
have full power over them.[37] So, hold fast to the Book that has been
revealed to you: you are surely on the Straight Way.[38] The fact is that
this Book is a great honour for yon and your people, and soon you shall
be called to account for it.[39] You may ask all other Messengers whom
We sent before you if We ever had appointed any other gods to be
worshipped besides the Merciful God.[40]

We[41] sent Moses with Our Signs[42] to Pharaoh and his chiefs, 46-53
and he said to them, "I am a Messenger of the Lord of the worlds".
Then? when he showed Our Signs to them, they laughed at him. We
showed them Sign after Sign, each greater than the one preceding it,
and We seized them with the torment that they might give up their
attitude.[43] Whenever a torment visited them, they said, "O sorcerer,
pray to your Lord for us by virtue of the appointment you hold from
Him: we shall surely take the right way." But whenever We removed
the torment from them, they would go back on their word.[44] One day
Pharaoh proclaimed among his people,[45] "O my people: Is not the

kingdom of Egypt mine? And are not these canals flowing beneath me? Can you not see who is better:[46] I or this contemptible, wretched person,[47] who can hardly express himself clearly?[48] Why were not bracelets of gold sent down on him, or a company of angels as attendants?"[49]

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independent of others, but everyone should remain dependent on the other in one way or the other. Now it would be foolish on your part to think that We should have given the Prophethood also to the same person whom We had blessed with wealth and nobility. Likewise, will you also say that wisdom, knowledge, wealth, beauty, power, authority and all other excellences should be assembled in one and the same person, and the one who has not been given one thing, should not be given anything else?"

32. "Your Lord's mercy": the Prophethood. It means: "Your leaders and chiefs whom you regard as big people because of their wealth and dignity and chiefship, are not worthy of this wealth, which has been given to Muḥammad bin 'Abdullah (upon whom be Allah's peace). This wealth is far superior to that and for this the criterion is different. If you think that every noble and rich man is worthy of becoming a prophet, it would only show your own thinking. Why do you expect Allah to be so ignorant and simple?"

33. That is, "This silver and gold whose possession by somebody is the highest blessing and the very climax of good fortune in your sight, is so base and contemptible a thing in the sight of Allah that had there been no danger of all human beings being inclined towards unbelief, He would have made every disbeliever's house of gold and silver. Since when has the abundance of this worthless commodity become proof of man's nobility and his piety and his spiritual purity? This kind of wealth is even found in the possession of those foul and wicked people whose filthy characters make the whole society stink. And this you have made the criterion of man's greatness of character."

34. "*Dhikr* of the Merciful": His remembrance as well as His admonition and the Qur'ān.

35. That is, "In this there is no aspect of consolation for you that the one who misguided you is being punished, for you also are receiving the same punishment for accepting and following the deviation."

36. It means to say: "Pay attention to those who are inclined to listen and have not closed their eyes to the realities, and do not consume yourself in showing the way to the blind and making the deaf to hear, nor consume yourself with the

grief as to why your near and dear ones are not coming to the right path, and why they are making themselves worthy of Allah's torment."

37. This thing can be understood fully only by keeping in view the background in which it was said. The disbelievers of Makkah thought that the person of the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) had become a source of trouble for them. If they could somehow get rid of him, matters would become normal. On the basis of this evil thought they were holding consultations day and night and planning to kill him. At this, Allah addresses His Prophet so as to tell them indirectly: "It doesn't make any difference whether you remain among them or not: if you live, you will see them meet their doom with your own eyes; if you are recalled from the world, they will be sent to their doom in your absence, because they cannot in any case escape the consequences of their misdeeds."

38. That is, "You should not worry as to what punishment do those who are resisting and opposing the truth with injustice and dishonesty receive and when, nor should you worry whether Islam flourishes during your lifetime or not. For you this satisfaction is qute enough that you are on the Right Path. Therefore, you should go on fulfilling your mission unconcerned about the results, and leave it to Allah whether He defeats falsehood in front of you or after you."

39. That is, "There can be no greater good fortune for a person than that Allah should choose him from among all men to become the recipient of His Book, and there can be no greater good fortune also for a nation than that Allah should raise His Prophet in it, apart from all other nations of the world, and should send down His Book in its tongue, and give it the opportunity to rise as the standard-bearer of Divine Message in the world. If the Quraish and the people of Arabia have no sense of this great honour, and spurn it, a time will come when they will be called upon to account for it."

40. "Ask the Messengers": Find out from the Books brought by them. Just as the meaning of: "If there arises any dispute among you about anything, refer it to Allah and His Prophet," is not that the dispute should be taken before Allah and His Messenger, but that one should turn to the Book of Allah and the *Sunnah* of His Messenger for a decision, so "asking the Messengers" also does not mean that one should approach all the Messengers who have left the world and ask them, but the right meaning is: "Discover what teachings the Messengers of Allah have left in the world as to which of them taught that another than Allah also is worthy of worship and service."

41. This story has been narrated here for three objects: (1) That when Allah sends His Prophet to a country and nation and affords it the opportunity which He has now given to the Arabs by appointing the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) to Prophethood, and it, instead of taking advantage of it,

commits the folly of Pharaoh and his people, it meets the same fate which has become an object lesson in history. (2) That just as Pharaoh also on account of his arrogance and pride of kingdom and grandeur and wealth and possessions had belittled the Prophet Moses as mean and contemptible, so the unbelieving Quraish now are regarding Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) as insignificant as against their chiefs. But God's judgement was different which ultimately proved who was really great. (3) That to mock Allah's Revelations and show stubbornness against His warnings is not a mere joke, but a very serious sin. If you do not learn a lesson from the fate of those who have been doomed on account of this, you also would go to your doom on account of the same."

42. This implies the signs with which the Prophet Moses had gone to the court of Pharaoh, i.e. the Signs of the staff and the shining hand. (For explanation, see Al-A'rāf: 107-108, Ṭā Hā: 20-22, Ash-Shu'arā: 32-33, An-Naml: 10-12, Al-Qaṣaṣ: 31-32).

43. This implies the Signs which Allah showed them through the Prophet Moses afterwards, and these were the following:

(1) A public encounter of Allah's Prophet with the magicians, who believed after their defeat. For details, see Al-A'rāf: 112-126, Ṭā Hā: 68-73, Ash-Shu'arā: 37-51.

(2) A severe famine which hit the land of Egypt according to the Prophet Moses' announcement and which left the country only on his prayer.

(3) Dreadful rain and hail-storms accompanied by lightning and thunder struck the country even as the Prophet had announced, which destroyed the crops and dwellings and which also was removed only on his prayer.

(4) The sudden appearance of locusts in the land. This calamity also was not removed till the Prophet prayed to Allah.

(5) Lice and weavils spread throughout the country according to the announcement made by Moses, which afflicted men and animals on the one hand, and destroyed granaries on the other. This torment also was averted when the Prophet Moses was requested to pray for its removal.

(6) Frogs appeared everywhere in the country according to the warning given by Moses, which put the whole population to great distress; this calamity also did not retreat till the Prophet prayed for it.

(7) The torment of blood appeared precisely as foretold by Moses, which turned the water of all canals, wells, springs, pools and cisterns into blood. The fish died and the water smelled so bad that the Egyptians could not drink from it for a full week. This evil also was averted when the

Prophet Moses was asked to pray for its removal. For details, see Al-A'rāf: 130-136. An-Naml: 12 and E.N. 37 of Al-Mu'min.

Chapters 7 to 10 of Exodus also contain the details of these calamities, but it is a combination of gossip and truth. It says that when the calamity of blood appeared, the magicians also worked a similar miracle, but when the calamity of the lice came, the magicians could not produce lice in response, and they said that it was God's work. Even more strange than this is that when the storm of the frogs came, the magicians also brought about frogs, but in spite of that Pharaoh requested only the Prophet Moses to pray to God to take away the frogs. The question is when the magicians could produce frogs, why didn't Pharaoh get the frogs taken away through them? And how did it become known which of the frogs were Allah's work and which of the magicians'? The same question arises about the blood. When according to the warning of Moses water became blood everywhere, which water did the magicians turn into blood? And how was it known that the water of a particular place had turned blood by the power of the magicians? Such are the things which show that the Bible does not consist of purely Divine revelation, but the people who wrote it mixed up many things in it from their own imagination. The pity, however, is that the authors also were people of ordinary intelligence, who did not even know how to invent a story.

44. The stubbornness of Pharaoh and the chiefs of his people can be judged from the fact that when distressed by the torment they wanted the Prophet Moses to pray for its removal, even then they did not recognize him as a Prophet but addressed him as a magician, whereas they were not unaware of the truth about magic, and they also knew that those miraculous things could not be brought about by the power of magic. The most that a magician can do is that in a limited area he can so influence the people present in front of him as to make them feel that water has become blood, or frogs are coming out in large numbers or swarms of locusts are advancing. And within this limited place also no water will actually become blood, but water will remain water as soon as it comes outside it; no frog will be produced in actual fact, but will prove to be an imaginary thing as soon as brought outside the circle; locusts also would be imaginary: they would not be able to destroy any crop. As for this that a famine appears throughout a country, or that the canals and springs and wells of the country are filled with blood, or that swarms of locusts spread over thousands of square miles and eat up crops growing over lakhs of acres, this has neither been accomplished by a magician so far, nor can it ever happen by the power of magic. Should such magicians be there in the service of a king, he need not keep forces and fight wars; he could conquer the whole world by the power of magic. Even if the magicians possessed such power, they would not seek service under the kings, but would assume kingship themselves.

هٰذَا الَّذِیْ هُوَ مَهِیْنٌ ۙ وَّ لَا یَكَادُ یُبِیْنُ ﴿۵۲﴾ فَلَوْ لَاۤ اُلْقِیَ عَلَیْهِ اَسْوِرَةٌ مِّنْ
ذَهَبٍ اَوْ جَآءَ مَعَهُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ مُقْتَرِنِیْنَ ﴿۵۳﴾ فَاسْتَخَفَّ قَوْمَهٗ فَاَطَاعُوْهُ ؕ اِنَّهُمْ
كَانُوْا قَوْمًا فٰسِقِیْنَ ﴿۵۴﴾ فَلَمَّاۤ اٰسَفُوْنَا انْتَقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ فَاَغْرَقْنٰهُمْ اَجْمَعِیْنَ ﴿۵۵﴾
فَجَعَلْنٰهُمْ سَلَفًا وَّ مَثَلًا لِّلْاٰخِرِیْنَ ﴿۵۶﴾ وَ لَمَّا ضُرِبَ ابْنُ مَرْیَمَ مَثَلًا اِذَا قَوْمُكَ
مِنْهُ یَصِدُّوْنَ ﴿۵۷﴾ وَ قَالُوْۤا ءَاٰلِهَتُنَا خَیْرٌ اَمْ هُوَ ؕ مَا ضَرَبُوْهُ لَكَ اِلَّا جَدَلًا ؕ بَلْ
هُمْ قَوْمٌ خَصِمُوْنَ ﴿۵۸﴾ اِنْ هُوَ اِلَّا عَبْدٌ اَنْعَمْنَا عَلَیْهِ وَ جَعَلْنٰهُ مَثَلًا لِّبَنِیْۤ
اِسْرَآءِیْلَ ﴿۵۹﴾ وَ لَوْ نَشَآءُ لَجَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ مَّلٰٓئِكَةً فِی الْاَرْضِ یَخْلُفُوْنَ ﴿۶۰﴾ وَ اِنَّهٗ
لَعِلْمٌ لِّلسَّاعَةِ فَلَا تَمْتَرُنَّ بِهَا وَ اتَّبِعُوْنِ ؕ هٰذَا صِرَاطٌ مُّسْتَقِیْمٌ ﴿۶۱﴾ وَ لَا
یَصُدَّنَّكُمُ الشَّیْطٰنُ ۚ اِنَّهٗ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِیْنٌ ﴿۶۲﴾ وَ لَمَّا جَآءَ عِیْسٰی بِالْبَیِّنٰتِ
قَالَ قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَ لِاُبَیِّنَ لَكُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِیْ تَخْتَلِفُوْنَ فِیْهِ ۚ
فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَ اَطِیْعُوْنِ ﴿۶۳﴾ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَ رَبِّیْ وَ رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوْهُ ؕ هٰذَا صِرَاطٌ
مُّسْتَقِیْمٌ ﴿۶۴﴾ فَاخْتَلَفَ الْاَحْزَابُ مِنْۢ بَیْنِهِمْ ۚ فَوَیْلٌ لِّلَّذِیْنَ ظَلَمُوْا مِنْ عَذَابِ
یَوْمٍ اَلِیْمٍ ﴿۶۵﴾ هَلْ یَنْظُرُوْنَ اِلَّا السَّاعَةَ اَنْ تَاْتِیَهُمْ بَغْتَةً وَّ هُمْ لَا
یَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿۶۶﴾ اَلْاَخِلَّآءُ یَوْمَىٕذٍۭ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ اِلَّا الْمُتَّقِیْنَ ﴿۶۷﴾ یٰعِبَادِ
لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَیْكُمُ الْیَوْمَ وَ لَاۤ اَنْتُمْ تَحْزَنُوْنَ ﴿۶۸﴾ الَّذِیْنَ اٰمَنُوْا بِاٰیٰتِنَا وَ كَانُوْا
مُسْلِمِیْنَ ﴿۶۹﴾ ادْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ اَنْتُمْ وَ اَزْوَاجُكُمْ تُحْبَرُوْنَ ﴿۷۰﴾ یُطَافُ عَلَیْهِمْ
بِصِحَافٍ مِّنْ ذَهَبٍ وَّ اَكْوَابٍ ۚ وَ فِیْهَا مَا تَشْتَهِیْهِ الْاَنْفُسُ وَ تَلَذُّ الْاَعْیُنُ ۚ
وَ اَنْتُمْ فِیْهَا خٰلِدُوْنَ ﴿۷۱﴾ وَ تِلْكَ الْجَنَّةُ الَّتِیْۤ اُوْرِثْتُمُوْهَا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿۷۲﴾
لَكُمْ فِیْهَا فَاكِهَةٌ كَثِیْرَةٌ مِّنْهَا تَاْكُلُوْنَ ﴿۷۳﴾ اِنَّ الْمُجْرِمِیْنَ فِیْ عَذَابِ جَهَنَّمَ

He took his people to be light, and they obeyed him, for they were indeed a sinful people.[50] At last, when they had annoyed Us, We took vengeance on them and drowned them all together, and made them a precedent and an object lesson for the later generations.[51] 54-56

And when the son of Mary was cited as an example, your people raised a clamour at it, saying, "Are our gods better, or is he?"[52] They have cited this example to you only in the spirit of dispute. The fact is that they are a quarrelsome people. The son of Mary was no more than a servant whom We favoured and made an example of Our power for the children of Israel.[53] If We please We can create angels from you[54] to succeed you in the earth. And he is, in fact, a Sign of the Hour;[55] therefore, do not have any doubt about it, and follow Me: this is the Straight Way. Let not Satan hinder you from this[56]: he is your open enemy. And when Jesus had come with clear Signs, he had said, "I have brought wisdom to you, and have come to make plain to you the reality of those things in which you differ: so fear Allah and follow me. The fact is that Allah is my Lord and your Lord, too. Worship Him alone: this is the Straight Way."[57] But (in spite of his clear teachings) the sects disagreed among themselves.[58] So, woe to those who committed evil from the punishment of a painful Day. 57-65

Do these people now only await the Hour (of Resurrection) that it should come upon them suddenly while they are unaware? When the Day comes all friends shall become enemies of one another except the righteous.[59] On that Day it will be said to those who had believed in Our Revelations and surrendered themselves, "O My servants ! Today you have nothing to fear, nor will there be any cause for you to grieve. Enter Paradise, you and your wives[60]: you will be made happy !" There they shall have platters and cups of gold passed round to them and there they shall have everything that the souls can desire and the eyes can delight in. It will be said to them, "You shall live here for ever. You have inherited this Paradise by virtue of the deeds you did in the world. You have abundance of fruit here, which you will eat." As for the criminals, they shall endure for ever the torment of Hell; their punishment will never be lightened for them, and there they shall remain, despairing. We did not wrong them, but they themselves were the wrongdoers. They will call out, "O Mālik,[61] let your Lord put an end to us!" He will answer, "Here you must remain! We had brought 66-78

the Truth to you, but most of you abhor the Truth."[62]

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The commentators in general have been perplexed as to why Pharaoh and his courtiers addressed the Prophet Moses as "O sorcerer," when they requested him to pray for the removal of the calamity, for the one who seeks another's help in a hard time flatters him and does not condemn him. They have given the interpretation that sorcery in the Egypt of those days was held as a very respectable art, and when they addressed Moses as "O sorcerer" they did not condemn him, but honoured him because it amounted to calling him as "O learned man" But this interpretation is absolutely wrong on the ground that wherever at other places in the Qur'ān Pharaoh's sayings have been cited in which he had called the Prophet Moses a sorcerer and the miracles presented by him sorcery, the sense of condemnation and contempt becomes apparent, and it becomes manifestly clear that sorcery was false in his sight, which he imputed to the Prophet Moses so as to prove his claim to the Prophethood to be false !Therefore, it cannot be acceptable that suddenly at this time "sorcerer" became the title of an honourable and learned man in his sight. As for the question: Why did the Prophet Moses accede to his request at all when even while requesting him for the prayer, Pharaoh insulted him publicly, the answer is that the object before the Prophet Moses was to strengthen the case against those people by Allah's command. Their request to him to pray for the removal of the torment by itself proved that in their heart of hearts they had come to know why the torments were occurring, who was sending them and who could avert them. In spite of that, when they called him a "sorcerer" stubbornly, and went back on their word of following the right way as soon as the torment was averted, they in fact, did not do any harm to Allah's Prophet, but only caused the case and argument to be strengthened against themselves, which Allah at last decided against them with their total destruction. When they called him a sorcerer, this did not mean that they believed in their hearts as well that the torments against them were coming by the power of sorcery, but they realized it fully well that those were Allah's Signs and yet they denied them deliberately. The same thing has been said in Sūrah An-Naml: 14: "They rejected those Signs out of sheer injustice and vanity, whereas in their heart of hearts they were convinced."

45. Pharaoh probably sent heralds to the cities and towns throughout the country to proclaim what he said in his address to his ministers and courtiers in the capital. Pharaoh could not have availed of the services of a sycophantic press, controlled news agencies and official radio.

46. The words of the proclamation clearly show that ground was slipping from under the Pharaoh's feet. The miracles performed one after the other by the

Prophet Moses had caused the common people's beliefs in their gods to waver and the Pharaoh's spell under which their dynasty was ruling over Egypt as representatives of the gods, was shattered. Thereupon, Pharaoh cried out: "O wretched people, can't you see who is ruling over this land and under whose control are the canals which have been dug out from the Nile, upon which depends your whole economy ? All these developments in this country have been brought about by me and my predecessors, but you are being devoted, charmed and fascinated by this pauper!"

47. "Wretched person": the person who has neither wealth, power nor authority. This same objection had been raised by the disbelieving Quraish against the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace).

48. Some commentators have expressed the opinion that Pharaoh referred to the impediment of speech from which the Prophet Moses suffered since childhood. But this is not a correct opinion. As has been mentioned in Sūrah Ṭā Hā above, when the Prophet Moses was being appointed to Prophethood, he had implored Allah Almighty to remove the defect from his tongue so that the people might understand his speach, and at that very time his request had also been granted along with his other requests (vv. 27-36). Moreover, orations of the Prophet Moses that have been cited at different places in the Qur'ân, point to his perfect eloquence and fluency. Therefore, the basis of Pharaoh's objection was not any impediment of speech from which Moses might be suffering but what he meant was: "This person talks confusedly at least I have never been able to understand what he says."

49. In the ancient times when a person was appointed to be governor of a land or sent as an ambassador to a foreign country, a robe of honour was conferred on him by the king, which also included bracelets of gold, and he was also accompanied by a contingent of soldiers and servants for over-awing the people and for showing the glory and grandeur of the king who had appointed him. What Pharaoh meant to say was: "If the King of the heavens had really sent Moses (peace be upon him) as His ambassador to His counterpart on the earth, he should have been dressed in a robe of honour and come with several contingents of angels in attendance. How strange that a poor man should appear with a staff in his hand and say that he was the messenger of the Lord of the worlds!"

50. A tremendous reality has been expressed in this brief sentence. When a person wishes to become autocratic in a country, and contrives every plan openly to achieve his object—practises every deception and trick, buys and sells consciences, and persecutes and crushes ruthlessly those who cannot be purchased—he, in fact, shows by his actions, whatever he may say to the contrary, that he takes the people of the country to be light as regards their

intellect, morals and manliness, and has formed the impression that he can drive the foolish, unscrupulous and cowardly people wherever he likes. Then, when he has succeeded in his designs and the people have become his obedient servants, they prove by their conduct and behaviour that they are actually what the wicked man had taken them to be, and the main cause of their depravity is that they are basically a "sinful people." They are not in the least concerned as to what is the truth and what is falsehood, what is justice and what is injustice, whether the noble traits of character are truthfulness and honesty or falsehood and dishonesty and meanness. Instead of this, only their personal interests are of real importance to them, for the sake of which they remain ever ready to cooperate with every wicked person, to yield to every tyrant, to accept every falsehood and to suppress every protest that is voiced in favour of the truth.

51. That is, "They are a precedent for those who do not learn any lesson from their example, and an object lesson for those who are keen to learn a lesson."

52. In verse 45 above, it was said: "You may ask all other Messengers whom We sent before you whether We had appointed any other gods to be worshipped beside the Merciful God." When this discourse was being presented before the people of Makkah, a person called 'Abdullah ibn az-Ziba'rā in the traditions, put forward the objection: "Well, is it not a fact that the Christians regard the son of Mary as the son of God and worship him ? What is then wrong with our gods?" This caused much laughter among the crowd of the disbelievers and they started clamouring for an answer to this objection. But at this foolish behaviour, the continuity of the revelation was not broken, but was first completed and then the objection of the questioner was taken up. (It should be borne in mind that this incident has been reported in the books of commentaries in different ways which contain great variations, but after a study of the context and the traditions the real incident in our view is the same as we have mentioned above).

53. "Making an example of Our power" implies causing the Prophet Jesus to be born without a father, and then granting him such miracles as had not been granted to anyone before him nor to anyone after him. He would make a bird of clay and then breathe into it and it would become a living bird; he would give sight to those born blind; he would cure the lepers; so much so that he would raise the dead back to life. What Allah means to say is: "It is wrong to worship him as son of God and regard him as above servitude only because of his extraordinary birth and the great miracles granted to him. He was no more than a mere servant, whom We had blessed and made an example of Our power." (For details, see Āl-'Imrān: 42-49, 59; An-Nisā: 156; Al-Mā'idah: 17, 110; Maryam: 17-35; Al-Anbiyā': 91, Al-Mu'minūn: 50).

54. Another translation can be: ".....make some of you angels."

55. Another translation of this sentenee can be: "He is a means of the knowledge of Resurrection." Here the question arises: What is implied by "he"? According to Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Basri and Sa'id bin Jubair it implies the Qur'ān. That is, one can learn from the Qur'ān that Resurrection will come. But this commentary is irrelevant to the context. There is nothing in the context on the basis of which it may be said that it refers to the Qur'ān. Other commentators almost unanimously have expressed the opinion that it implies the prophet Jesus Christ, and this is suitable to the context. Now the question is: In what sense has Jesus Christ been called a Sign or a means of the knowledge of Resurrection? Ibn 'Abbās, Mujāhid, 'Ikrimah, Qatādah, Suddī, Ḍaḥḥāk, Abul 'Āliyah and Abu Mālik say that this refers to the second coming of the Prophet Jesus as has been foretold in a large number of the Traditions, and the verse means that when he comes the second time to the world, it will become known that Resurrection is not far behind. But in spite of the great authority that these scholars hold it is difficult to believe that in this verse the second advent of the Prophet Jesus has been called a Sign of Resurrection, or a means of its knowledge. For it is contradicted by the next verse. His second advent, indeed, can be a means of the knowledge of Resurrection only for those people who will be living in that future period or will be born after that. How could he be regarded as a means of the knowledge for the pagans of Makkah, who are being asked "not to have any doubt about it"? Therefore, the correct interpretation in our opinion is the one that has been given by some other commentators, according to which the Prophet Jesus' birth without a father and his making a bird out of clay and his raising the dead back to life has been presented as a proof of the possibility of Resurrection. So, the Divine Words would mean: why do you think it is impossible for God to raise you and all mankind from death when He can create a child without a father and a servant of His can breathe life into an image of clay and raise the dead back to life?"

56. "..... hinder you from this": hinder you from believing in Resurrection.

57. That is, "The Prophet Jesus himself had never claimed that he was God or son of God, and that the people should worship him, but, on the contrary, his message was the same as of all other Prophets, the same as was now being conveyed to you through Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace)." (For explanation, see Āl-'Imrān: 50-51, An-Nisā: 171-172, Al-Mā'idah: 72, 116-117, Maryam: 30-36).

58. That is, one group of the people denied him and in their antagonism went to the extent of accusing him of illegitimate birth and got him crucified as they thought; the other group believed in him but owing to exaggerated reverence

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خٰلِدُوْنَ ﴿٧٤﴾ لَا يُفَتَّرُ عَنْهُمْ وَهُمْ فِيْهِ مُبْلِسُوْنَ ﴿٧٥﴾ وَمَا ظَلَمْنٰهُمْ وَلٰكِنْ
كَانُوْا هُمُ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٧٦﴾ وَنَادَوْا يٰمٰلِكُ لِيَقْضِ عَلَيْنَا رَبُّكَ ۭ قَالَ اِنَّكُمْ مّٰكِثُوْنَ ﴿٧٧﴾
لَقَدْ جِئْنٰكُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَكُمْ لِلْحَقِّ كٰرِهُوْنَ ﴿٧٨﴾ اَمْ اَبْرَمُوْٓا اَمْرًا فَاِنَّا
مُبْرِمُوْنَ ﴿٧٩﴾ اَمْ يَحْسَبُوْنَ اَنَّا لَا نَسْمَعُ سِرَّهُمْ وَنَجْوٰىهُمْ ۭ بَلٰى وَرُسُلُنَا
لَدَيْهِمْ يَكْتُبُوْنَ ﴿٨٠﴾ قُلْ اِنْ كَانَ لِلرَّحْمٰنِ وَلَدٌ ۖ فَاَنَا اَوَّلُ الْعٰبِدِيْنَ ﴿٨١﴾
سُبْحٰنَ رَبِّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ عَمَّا يَصِفُوْنَ ﴿٨٢﴾ فَذَرْهُمْ
يَخُوْضُوْا وَيَلْعَبُوْا حَتّٰى يُلٰقُوْا يَوْمَهُمُ الَّذِيْ يُوْعَدُوْنَ ﴿٨٣﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِيْ فِي
السَّمَاۗءِ اِلٰهٌ وَّفِي الْاَرْضِ اِلٰهٌ ۭ وَهُوَ الْحَكِيْمُ الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿٨٤﴾ وَتَبٰرَكَ الَّذِيْ لَهٗ
مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا ۚ وَعِنْدَهٗ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ ۚ وَاِلَيْهِ
تُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿٨٥﴾ وَلَا يَمْلِكُ الَّذِيْنَ يَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِهِ الشَّفَاعَةَ اِلَّا مَنْ شَهِدَ
بِالْحَقِّ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٨٦﴾ وَلَىِٕنْ سَاَلْتَهُمْ مَّنْ خَلَقَهُمْ لَيَقُوْلُنَّ اللّٰهُ ۚ فَاَنّٰى
يُؤْفَكُوْنَ ﴿٨٧﴾ وَقِيْلِهٖ يٰرَبِّ اِنَّ هٰٓؤُلَاۗءِ قَوْمٌ لَّا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٨٨﴾ فَاصْفَحْ عَنْهُمْ
وَقُلْ سَلٰمٌ ۭ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٨٩﴾

79-80 Have they decided to contrive a plan?[63] Well, we too, shall contrive. Do they think that We do not hear their secret talk and their whisperings? We hear everything and Our angels at their sides are recording it.

81-83 Say to them, "If the Merciful really had a son, I would be the first to worship him."[64] Exalted is the Ruler of the heavens and the earth, Lord of the Throne, above what they ascribe to Him! Well, let them remain absorbed in their falsehoods and sport, till they see that Day of theirs with which they are being threatened.

He alone is God in heavens anal God on earth: He is the All-Wise, the All-Knowing.[65] Highly blessed is He to Whom belongs the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth and of all that lies between them.[66] He alone has the knowledge of the Hour of Resurrection, and to Him you shall all be returned.[67] 84-85

Those whom they call upon beside Him, have no power of intercession except that one may testify to the Truth by virtue of knowledge.[68] 86

And if you ask them who created them, they will surely say, "Allah."[69] Whence then are they being deluded? By this word of the Messenger: "O my Lord, these are a people who would not believe."[70] 87-88

Well, O Prophet, bear with them and say, "Peace to you!"[71] Soon they shall know. 89

Contd. from p. 591]

made him son of God, and then the question of man's being God became such a riddle for it that every effort to resolve it caused it to be divided into countless sects. (For explanation, see An-Nisā: 171, Al-Mā'idah 17, 77,116-117 and the corresponding E.N.'s),

59. In other words, only those friendships will remain unaffected which are based on righteousness and piety in the world; all other friendships will turn into enmities, and those who are cooperating with one another in deviation, tyranny and wickedness today, will on the Day of Resurrection, put the blame on others and try to escape. This subject has been treated repeatedly at many places in the Qur'ān so that every person in this very world may fully realize with whom it would be beneficial for him to cooperate and with whom it is harmful

60. The word *azwāj* as used in the original can be used both for the wives and for those people who are a person's close associates, friends and peers. This comprehensive word has been used so as to cover both the meanings. The believers will be accompanied both by their believing wives and by their believing friends in Paradise.

61. "Mālik": a keeper of Hell as is evident from the context.

62. That is, "We made the reality plain to you, but you were fond of the imaginary, and you had an aversion to the truth. Now, why do you lament at the fate of your foolish choice?" It may be a part of the Hell-keeper's answer, and it may also be that his answer ended with: "Here you must remain !" and this

second sentence an addition by Allah. In the first case, the keeper's saying: "We had brought the Truth to you," is just like an official's using the word "we" on behalf of his government, when he wants to say, "Our government did this or gave such and such an order."

63. The allusion is to the plans that the chiefs of the Quraish were devising in their secret assemblies in order to take a decisive action against the Holy Prophet.

64. It means: "My rejection of somebody's being God's offspring and my refusal to worship those whom you regard as His offspring is not due to any stubbornness and obduracy. My reason for the refusal is only this that God has no son or daughter, and your such beliefs are against the reality; otherwise I am such a faithful servant of my Lord that if at all the reality had been the same as you state I would have submitted myself in worship before you."

65. That is, "The gods of the heavens and the earth are not separate, but there is only One God of the entire universe. It is His wisdom that is working in the whole system of the universe and only He has the knowledge of all realities."

66. That is, "He is far above it that another should be His associate in Godhead and may have any share whatever in ruling this great universe. Whatever is there in the earth and the heavens, whether the Prophets, the saints, the angels, jinn, spirits, stars or planets, they are His servants and slaves and subjects. It is impossible for them to be characterised with a Divine attribute or be possessed with a Divine power."

67. That is, "You may have taken anyone as your helper and patron in the world, but after death you will have to face only One God and render an account of your deeds before Him alone."

68. This sentence has several meanings:

(1) Those whom the people have made their deities in the world, will not at all be their intercessors before Allah. Those of them who were wicked, will themselves be presented as culprits there. However, those who had borne witness to the Truth by virtue of knowledge (and not unconsciously) will certainly be able to intercede for others.

(2) Those who will be permitted to intercede, will be able to do so only for those who had testified to the Truth consciously (and not heedlessly). They will neither intercede of their own will, nor will have the permission to intercede for anyone who had gone and been led astray from the Truth in the world, or had been affirming the faith in Allah as the only Deity unconsciously as well as serving other deities at the same time

(3) If a person says that those whom he has made gods necessarily possess the powers of intercession, and they wield such an influence with Allah that they can have anyone they like forgiven, irrespective of his beliefs and deeds, is totally wrong. No one enjoys such a position with Allah. If the one who claims that another has such powers of intercession, can testify to the truth of this matter by virtue of knowledge, one should have the courage to say so. But if one is not in a position to bear such a testimony, and one is certainly not, it would be sheer folly to invent such a creed on the basis of mere hearsay, or conjecture, and risk one's life hereafter relying only on an imaginary support.

Incidentally, this verse also gives two important principles: First, it shows that bearing a testimony to the truth without knowledge may be reliable in the world, but it is not so before Allah. In the world, whoever affirms the Faith verbally will be regarded as a Muslim and treated as such unless he openly commits an act expressly contradictory to belief. But as before Allah only such a one will be counted as a Muslim, who has uttered *Lā ilāha ill-Allāh* consciously, with full understanding of what he is denying and what he is affirming according to his best knowledge.

Secondly, it gives this principle of the law of evidence that knowledge is a pre-requisite of bearing the evidence. If the bearer of an evidence has no knowledge of the event to which he is bearing evidence, his evidence is meaningless. The same is borne out by a decision given by the Holy Prophet. He said to a witness: "If you saw what happened with your own eyes as you are seeing the sun, then you may bear the witness, otherwise not." *(Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* by al Jaṣṣās).

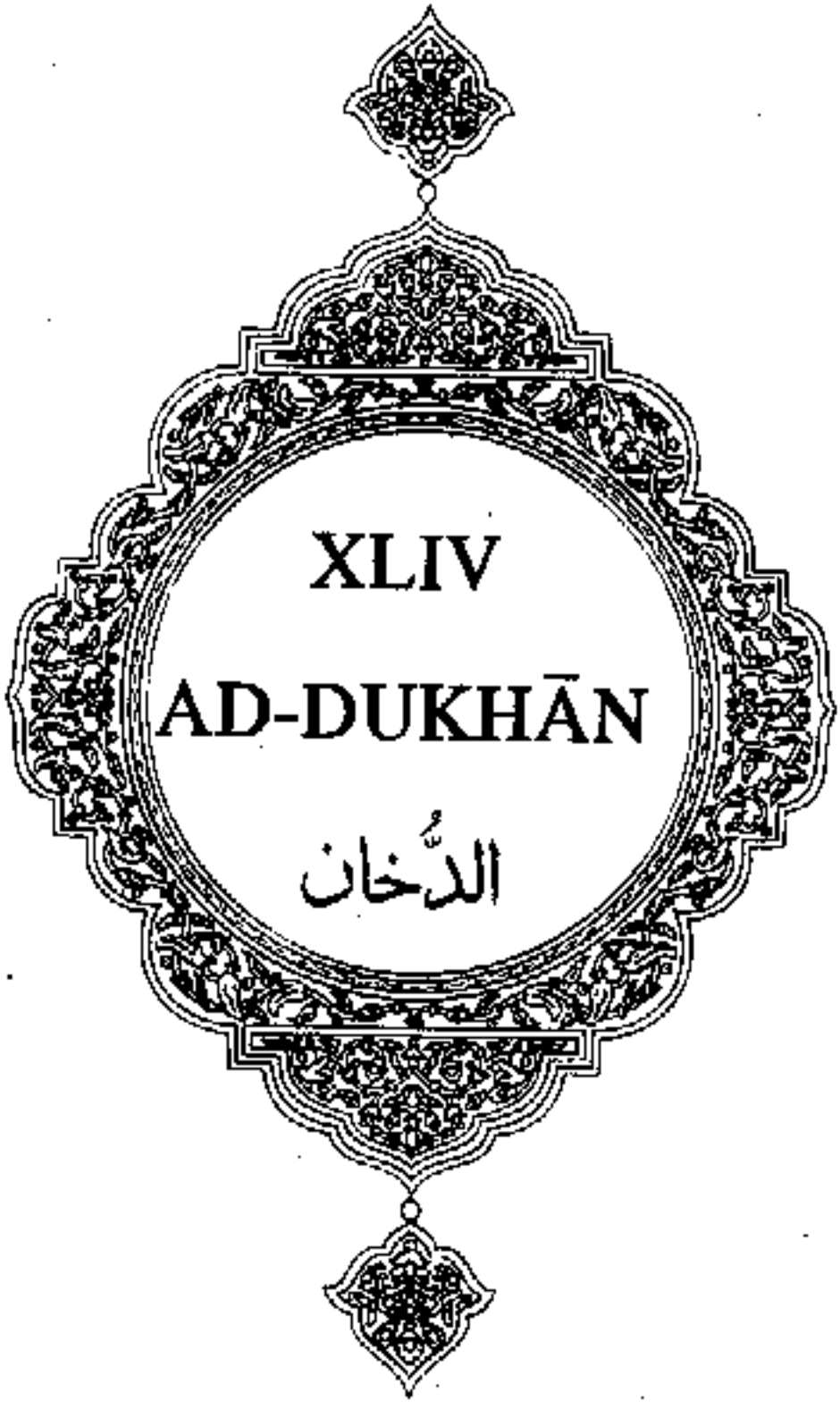
69. This verse has two meanings: (1) "If you ask them who has created them, they will say: Allah"; and (2) "If you ask them who is the Creator of their gods, they will say: Allah."

70. This is one of the most difficult verses of the Qur'ān as it involves the complicated syntactic question of the kind of *wāw* that has been used in *wa qīl-i-hī*. From the translation of Shah 'Abdul Qādir it appears that the *wāw* here is not conjunctive but for taking oath, and is related to *fa-anna yu'fakūn*, and the pronoun in *qīli-hī* turns to the Holy Prophet of Allah. Therefore, the verse means this: "By this saying of the Messenger: 'O my Lord, these are a people who would not believe'": they are so utterly deluded that although they themselves admit that Allah alone is their Creator and Creator of their gods, yet they abandon the Creator and persist in worshipping His creatures."

The object of swearing by this saying of the Messenger is that the conduct of the people clearly shows that they are, in fact, stubborn, for the foolishness of

their attitude is apparent from their own admission, and such an irrational attitude can be adopted only by such a person, who is resolved not to believe. In other words, the oath implies: "The Messenger has rightly said so: indeed these people would not believe."

71. That is, "You should neither curse them for their scornful words and attitude of mockery and derision, nor respond with harsh words: just wish them well and take your leave."


XLIV
AD-DUKHĀN
الدُّخان

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

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INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from the word *dukhān* which occurs in verse 10.

Period of Revelation

Its period of revelation also could not be determined from any authentic tradition, but the internal evidence of the subject-matter shows that this Sūrah too was sent down in the same period in which Sūrah Zukhruf and a few other earlier Sūrahs had been revealed. However,

this Sūrah was sent down somewhat later. Its historical background is this: When the disbelievers of Makkah became more and more antagonistic in their attitude and conduct, the Holy Prophet prayed: O God, help me With a famine like the famine of Joseph. He thought that when those people would be afflicted with a calamity they would remember God, their hearts would soften and they would accept the admonition. Allah granted his prayer, and the whole land was overtaken by such a terrible famine that the people were sorely distressed. At last, some of the Quraish chiefs among whom Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd has particularly mentioned the name of Abu Sufyān came to the Holy Prophet and requested him to pray to Allah to deliver his people from the calamity. On this occasion Allah sent down this Sūrah.

Subject-Matter and Topics

The introduction to the address revealed on this occasion for the admonition and warning of the people of Makkah contained some important points, which are as follows:

(1) "You, O people of Makkah, are wrong in thinking that the Qur'ān is being composed by Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). This Book by itself bears the clear testimony that it is not the composition of a man but of Allah, Lord of the worlds."

(2) "You are making a wrong estimate of the worth of this Book. You think it is a calamity that has descended on you, whereas the Hour when Allah, out of sheer mercy, decided to send His Messenger and His Book to you was highly blessed."

(3) "You are foolishly involved in the misunderstanding that you will fight this Messenger and this Book and will win, whereas the fact is that the Messenger has been raised and the Book sent down in that particular Hour when Allah decides the destinies, and Allah's decisions are not so weak that they may be changed to a person's liking, nor are they based on ignorance and folly that there may be the likelihood of a mistake or error or weakness in them. They are rather the firm and unalterable decisions of the Ruler of the Universe, Who is All-Hearing, All-Knowing and All-Wise. Therefore, they cannot be treated lightly.

(4) "You yourselves acknowledge that Allah alone is the Master and Lord of the earth and heavens and of everything in the Universe and also admit that life and death are only in His power, yet you insist on making others your deities, for which the only argument you offer is that it has been the practice since the time of your forefathers, whereas if a person has the conviction that Allah alone is the Master, Sustainer and Giver of life and death, he can never entertain the doubt that there can be other gods also beside Him, who can be worthy of worship. If your forefathers had committed this folly, there is no reason why you also should continue committing it blindly. As a matter of fact, their Lord too was only One God, Who is your Lord, and they also should have worshipped only Him, Whom you should worship."

(5) "The only demand of Allah's Providence and Mercifulness is not that He should feed you, but also that He should arrange guidance for you. For this very guidance He has sent His Messenger and His Book."

After this introduction, the question of the famine that was raging in Makkah has been discussed. As already mentioned, this famine had occurred on the Holy Prophet's prayer, and he had prayed for it so that when the calamity befell it would break the stubbornness of the disbelievers and then they would listen to the rebuke. It looked as if this expectation was being fulfilled to some extent, for some of the most stubborn enemies of the Truth, on account of the severities of the famine, had cried out: "O Lord, avert this torment from us and we will believe." At this, on the one hand, the Holy Prophet has been foretold: "These people will not learn any lesson from such calamities. When they have turned away from the Messenger, whose life, character, works and speech clearly show that he is Allah's true Messenger, how will a mere famine help remove their disbelief?" On the other, the unbelievers have been addressed, so as to say: "You lie when you say that you will believe as soon as the torment is removed from you. We shall just remove it to see how sincere you are in your promise. There is a graver disaster about to fall upon you. You need a much more crushing blow: minor misfortunes cannot set you right."

In this very connection, a reference has been made a little below to Pharaoh and his people, implying that those people also had met with precisely the same trial as the chiefs of the disbelieving Quraish are now afflicted. To them also a similar noble and honourable Messenger had come; they also had seen those express pointers and signs which clearly showed that he had been appointed by Allah; they also had gone on witnessing one sign after the other but they did not give up their stubbornness, till at last they made up their mind to put an end to the Messenger's life, and they met their doom, which has since become an object lesson for the people for ever.

After this the theme of the Hereafter has been taken up, which the disbelievers of Makkah vehemently denied. They said: "We have never seen anyone rising back to life after death. Raise our forefathers back to life if you are true in your claim about the life hereafter." In response to this, two arguments for the Hereafter have been presented briefly (1) That the denial of this creed has always proved destructive for the morals; and (2) that the universe is not a plaything of a thoughtless diety, but it is a wise system and no work of wisdom is ever vain or useless. Then the disbelievers' demand to bring their forefathers back to life has been answered, thus: "This cannot be done every day to meet the demand of the individuals, but Allah has appointed a time when He will resurrect all mankind simultaneously and will subject them to accountability in His Court. If one has to protect oneself there, one should think about it here. For no one will be able to save himself there by his own power, nor by the power of any one else."

In connection with this Court of Allah, mention has been made of the fate of those who will be declared as culprits and of the rewards of those who will be declared as successful. The discourse has been concluded with this warning: "This Qur'ān has been revealed in simple language in your own tongue so that you may understand it; yet if you do not understand it and insist on seeing your evil end, you may wait; Our Prophet too is waiting. Whatever is to happen, will happen at its own appointed time."



حٰمٓ ۝١ وَالْكِتٰبِ الْمُبِيْنِ ۝٢ اِنَّآ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ فِيْ لَيْلَةٍ مُّبٰرَكَةٍ اِنَّا كُنَّا مُنْذِرِيْنَ ۝٣
فِيْهَا يُفْرَقُ كُلُّ اَمْرٍ حَكِيْمٍ ۝٤ اَمْرًا مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا ۭ اِنَّا كُنَّا مُرْسِلِيْنَ ۝٥ رَحْمَةً
مِّنْ رَّبِّكَ ۭ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ ۝٦ رَبِّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا ۭ
اِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّوْقِنِيْنَ ۝٧ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ يُحْيٖ وَيُمِيْتُ ۭ رَبُّكُمْ وَرَبُّ اٰبَاۗىِٕكُمُ

XLIV

AD-DUKHĀN

الدُّخان

Verses: 59 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Hā-Mīm. By this lucid Book, We have sent it down in a highly blessed night, for We intended to warn the people.[1] This was a night in which every matter is decided wisely[2] by Our Command.[3] We had to send a Messenger, as a mercy from your Lord.[4] Indeed, He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing,[5] Lord of the heavens and the earth, and Lord of all that lies between them, if you would really believe.[6] There is no god but He.[7] It is He Who gives life and death.[8] He is your Lord and Lord of your ancestors who have gone before.[9] (But, in fact, they have no faith:) nay, they play about in doubt.[10] 1-9

1. The meaning of taking an oath by "the lucid Book" has been explained in E.N. 1 of Sūrah Zukhruf. Here also what has been sworn by is that Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is not the author of this Book but "We", and this Book by itself is enough to provide a proof of this. Furthermore, it has been said that the night in which it was sent down was full of blessings. That is, the foolish

and ignorant people, who have no idea of their own well-being or otherwise, regard the revelation of this Book as a disaster for themselves and are deeply anxious as how to get rid of it. But, as a matter of fact, the Hour when "We" decided to send down this Book to arouse the heedless, was highly blessed for them and for all mankind.

Some commentators have expressed the opinion that the meaning of sending down the Qur'ān in that night is that its revelation began during that night, and some others think that the whole of the Qur'ān was transferred from *Umm al-Kitāb* and entrusted to the bearers of Revelation (angels), and then revealed to the Holy Prophet as and when required and demanded by the occasion and circumstances during 23 years. As to what actully happened Allah alone has the best knowledge.

The night implies the same night which has been called *lailat-ul qadr* in Sūrah Al-Qadr (97), There it has been said: "We sent it down in a Night of Glory," and here: "We sent it down in a blessed Night." Then the Qur'ān itself has told that it was a night of the month of Ramadān (Al-Baqarah).

2. The word *amr in-ḥakīm* as used in the Text has two meanings: (1) That the Command is wholly based on wisdom: there is no likelihood of any error or weakness in it; and (2) that it is a firm and stable decision: it lies in no one's power to change it.

3. In Sūrah Al-Qadr, this same thing has been expressed thus: "The angels and the Spirit (Angel Gabriel) descend in it with every decree, by the leave of their Lord." This shows that it is such a Night in the Divine administration of Allah in which He decides the destinies of the individuals and nations and countries and entrusts His decisions to His angels, who then implement them accordingly. Some commentators among whom Ḥaḍrat 'Ikrimah is most prominent, have been involved in the misunderstanding that this is the 15th night of Sha'bān, for in some traditions it has been said that the destinies of people are decided during that night. But Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn 'Umar, Mujāhid, Qatādah, Ḥasan Baṣri, Sa'id bin Jubair, Ibn Zaid, Abū Mālik, Ḍaḥḥāk and many other commentators are agreed that this is the same night of Ramadān, which has been called *lailat-ul-qadr*, *for* the Qur'ān itself has stated this, and where any Qur'ānic statement exists, no other view can be formed on the basis of random reports. Ibn Kathir says, "The traditions that Imām Zuhri has related from 'Uthmān bin Muḥammad that destinies are decided from one Sha'bān to the next Sha'bān is an indirect tradition and such traditions cannot be cited as against the clear texts of the Qur'ān." Qāḍi Abū Bakr Ibn al-'Arabi says: "No *Ḥadith* in respect of the 15th of Sha'bān is reliable, either in respect of its merit, or about this that decisions

with regard to the destinies are taken in it; therefore, they do not merit attention. *(Aḥkām ul-Qur'ān).*

4. That is, "It was not only a demand of wisdom to send a Messenger with this Book but also of Allah's mercy, for He is the Providence, and Providence requires that not only should arrangements be made for nourishing the servants' bodies but they should also be afforded right guidance by knowledge, that they should be made aware of the distinction between right and wrong and that they should not be left wandering in darkness."

5. The object of mentioning these two attributes of Allah in this context is to warn the people of the truth that He alone can give correct knowledge for He alone knows all the realities. Not to speak of one man, even if all men join to determine a way of life for themselves, there can be no guarantee of its being the right way, for even the whole of mankind together cannot become all-hearing and all-knowing. It does not lie in its power to comprehend all those realities whose knowledge is essential for determining a correct way of life. This knowledge is only with Allah: He alone is All-Hearing and All-Knowing. Therefore, He alone can tell what is guidance for man and what is falsehood, what is the Truth and what is wrong, what is good and what is evil.

6. The Arabs themselves admitted that Allah alone is the Lord (Master and Providence) of the Universe and of everything in it. Therefore, it has been said to them: "If you are not admitting only verbally but are really conscious of His being the Providence and are convinced of His being the Master, you should admit that: (1) It is the very demand of His Mercifulness and Providence that He should send a Book and a Messenger for the guidance of man; and (2) it is His right as the Master and your duty as His servants that you should obey every Guidance and submit to every Command that comes from Him."

7. The real God Who alone has the right that He should be worshipped and served.

8. That is, "There is no god other than Allah, nor can there be. Therefore, it is against reason that you should disdain the worship of Him Who breathed life into dead matter and made you a living man, and Who possesses full powers to keep you alive as long as He likes and bring your life to an end whenever He likes, or you serve any other than Him, or start worshipping others besides Him."

9. There is a subtle allusion in it to this: "He was also Lord of those of your ancestors who took other gods besides Allah; they had not done the right thing by giving up their real Lord and serving others that you should be justified in imitating them and regard their conduct as an argument for the soundness of your creed. They ought to have served only Him, because He alone was their Lord. But

الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿٥﴾ بَلْ هُمْ فِيْ شَكٍّ يَّلْعَبُوْنَ ﴿٦﴾ فَارْتَقِبْ يَوْمَ تَاْتِي السَّمَآءُ بِدُخَانٍ
مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿١٠﴾ يَّغْشَى النَّاسَ ؕ هٰذَا عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿١١﴾ رَبَّنَا اكْشِفْ عَنَّا الْعَذَابَ اِنَّا
مُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿١٢﴾ اَنّٰى لَهُمُ الذِّكْرٰى وَ قَدْ جَآءَهُمْ رَسُوْلٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿١٣﴾ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّوْا
عَنْهُ وَ قَالُوْا مُعَلَّمٌ مَّجْنُوْنٌ ﴿١٤﴾ اِنَّا كَاشِفُوا الْعَذَابِ قَلِيْلًا اِنَّكُمْ عَآئِدُوْنَ ﴿١٥﴾
يَوْمَ نَبْطِشُ الْبَطْشَةَ الْكُبْرٰى ۚ اِنَّا مُنْتَقِمُوْنَ ﴿١٦﴾ وَ لَقَدْ فَتَنَّا قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمَ
فِرْعَوْنَ وَ جَآءَهُمْ رَسُوْلٌ كَرِيْمٌ ﴿١٧﴾ اَنْ اَدُّوْۤا اِلَيَّ عِبَادَ اللّٰهِ ؕ اِنِّيْ لَكُمْ رَسُوْلٌ
اَمِيْنٌ ﴿١٨﴾ وَّ اَنْ لَّا تَعْلُوْا عَلَى اللّٰهِ ۚ اِنِّيْۤ اٰتِيْكُمْ بِسُلْطٰنٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿١٩﴾ وَ اِنِّيْ عُذْتُ
بِرَبِّيْ وَ رَبِّكُمْ اَنْ تَرْجُمُوْنِ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَ اِنْ لَّمْ تُؤْمِنُوْا لِيْ فَاعْتَزِلُوْنِ ﴿٢١﴾ فَدَعَا رَبَّهٗۤ
اَنَّ هٰۤؤُلَآءِ قَوْمٌ مُّجْرِمُوْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾ فَاَسْرِ بِعِبَادِيْ لَيْلًا اِنَّكُمْ مُّتَّبَعُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَ اتْرُكِ
الْبَحْرَ رَهْوًا ؕ اِنَّهُمْ جُنْدٌ مُّغْرَقُوْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾ كَمْ تَرَكُوْا مِنْ جَنّٰتٍ وَّ عُيُوْنٍ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَّ زُرُوْعٍ
وَّ مَقَامٍ كَرِيْمٍ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَّ نَعْمَةٍ كَانُوْا فِيْهَا فٰكِهِيْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾ كَذٰلِكَ ۫ وَ اَوْرَثْنٰهَا قَوْمًا اٰخَرِيْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾
فَمَا بَكَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّمَآءُ وَ الْاَرْضُ وَ مَا كَانُوْا مُنْظَرِيْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَ لَقَدْ نَجَّيْنَا بَنِيْۤ
اِسْرَآءِيْلَ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ الْمُهِيْنِ ﴿٣٠﴾ مِنْ فِرْعَوْنَ ؕ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ عَالِيًا مِّنَ الْمُسْرِفِيْنَ ﴿٣١﴾
وَ لَقَدِ اخْتَرْنٰهُمْ عَلٰى عِلْمٍ عَلَى الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَ اٰتَيْنٰهُمْ مِّنَ الْاٰيٰتِ مَا فِيْهِ بَلٰٓؤٌا مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿٣٣﴾
اِنَّ هٰۤؤُلَآءِ لَيَقُوْلُوْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾ اِنْ هِيَ اِلَّا مَوْتَتُنَا الْاُوْلٰى وَ مَا نَحْنُ بِمُنْشَرِيْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾
فَاْتُوْا بِاٰبَآئِنَاۤ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾ اَهُمْ خَيْرٌ اَمْ قَوْمُ تُبَّعٍ ۙ وَّ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۛ
اَهْلَكْنٰهُمْ ۫ اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا مُجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَ مَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الْاَرْضَ وَ مَا بَيْنَهُمَا
لٰعِبِيْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾ مَا خَلَقْنٰهُمَاۤ اِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَ لٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾ اِنَّ يَوْمَ
الْفَصْلِ مِيْقَاتُهُمْ اَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿٤٠﴾ يَوْمَ لَا يُغْنِيْ مَوْلًى عَنْ مَّوْلًى شَيْـًٔا وَّ لَا هُمْ

Well, wait for the Day when the sky shall appear with a visible smoke, which shall envelope mankind: this is a painful punishment. (Now they say:) "Our Lord, remove this torment from us: we do now believe." How can they rid themselves of their heedlessness? Even when a manifest Messenger[11] came to them, they paid no heed to him, and said, "He is a madman taught by others."[12] Were We to remove the torment a little, you would revert to the same that you were doing before. The Day We inflict the severest stroke shall be the Day when We shall take Our vengeance[13] 10-16

Before them We put the people of Pharaoh to the same test. A noble Messenger[14] came to them, and said,[15] "Deliver to me the servants of Allah ;[16] I am a trustworthy Meseenger to you :[17] Do not rebel against Allah: I present before you a clear authority[18] (of my appointment), and I have taken refuge in my Lord and your Lord lest you should assault me. If you do not believe in me, do not harm me."[19] At last, he called to his Lord, saying, "These are criminals."[20] (The reply came:) "Set forth with My servants by night[21] for you will be pursued.[22] Leave the sea as it is: the whole host shall be drowned."[23] How many were the gardens and springs and cornfields and grand palaces that they left behind, and how many means of luxury and comfort, which they used to enjoy ! This was their end, and We made others to inherit those things.[24] Then neither did the heaven weep on them nor the earth,[25] and they were not given the least respite. Even so We delivered the children of Israel from an abasing scourge, from Pharaoh,[26] who was indeed a most prominent man among the transgressors,[27] and We exalted them, knowing them to be so, above the other nations of the world,[28] and showed them such Signs as were clearly a trial (for them).[29] 17-33

These people say, "There is nothing beyond our first death, and we are not going to be raised back to life.[30] Bring back our forefathers if you are truthful."[31] Are they better or the people of Tubba'[32] and those before them ? We destroyed them only because they had become wicked.[33] We have not created the heavens and the earth and whatever lies between them merely in sport: We have created them with the truth, but most of them do not know.[34] For the resurrection of them all, the appointed time is the Day of Decision,[35] the Day when a kinsman shall not avail his kinsman[36] anything at all, nor shall they receive any 34-42

help from anywhere except that Allah Himself may show His mercy to some one: He is the All-Mighty, the All-Merciful.[37]

Contd. from p.607]

10. In this brief sentence an allusion has been made to an important truth. Even atheists or polytheists do come across occasions when their heart from within says: There is somewhere some weakness in the creed that you have adopted. The atheist may apparently be very firm in his denial of God, his heart at one or the other time does bear the testimony that this wonderful and wise system which extends from the particle of dust to the galaxies and from a blade of grass to the creation of man, could not come into existence without an All-Wise Designer. Likewise, a polytheist may be deeply submerged in his polytheism, his heart also sometimes cries out: Those whom you have adopted as deities cannot be God. But this testimony of the heart neither leads the atheist and the polytheist to the conviction about, the existence and Oneness of God, nor to conviction and satisfaction about their creed of atheism and polytheism itself. Instead, their religion, in fact, is based on doubt, no matter how convinced they might appear to be of its truth. As for the question: Why doesn't this doubt make them restless, and why don't, they seek the truth seriously so as to obtain a satisfactory ground for their convictions? the answer is: they lack seriousness in religious matters. What they really regard as important are the worldly earnings and acquisitions and their enjoyment, in search of which they expend all their powers and abilities of the heart and mind and body. As for the religious matters, they are in fact no more than fun, a mere pastime, amusement, or a mental diversion for them, for which they cannot spare even a few moments of serious study. Religious rites are being performed as an entertainment; discussions about denial and atheism are being engaged in as an amusement; no one can spare a few moments from his worldly pursuits to consider whether he has turned away from the Truth, and if so, what would be its consequences.

11. *Rasūl-i-mubīn* has two meanings: (1) His being a Messenger is quite evident from his character, his morals and his works; and (2) he has made every effort to make the truth plain and clear.

12. What they meant was: "This was a simple man, some others have incited and deceived him: they secretly forge and teach him verses of the Qur'ān, and he comes and recites them before the people: they sit back in peace and leave him alone to receive the abuses and be pelted with stones." They would make a mockery of all the arguments, the admonitions and the serious teachings which the Holy Prophet had been presenting since several years and was growing weary. Neither they paid any attention to the rational things being expressed in the Qur'ān nor recognized the extraordinary character of the man who was presenting them,

nor took any trouble to think what nonsense they were uttering when they imputed such things to the Holy prophet. Obviously, if there had been another person who gave secret instruction to the Holy Prophet, he could not have remained hidden from Ḥaḍrat Khadījah and Abu Bakr, 'Alī and Zaid bin Ḥārithah and other early Muslims, who were the closest and constant Companions of the Holy Prophet. Then, how it is that these very people only became his most devoted and dedicated followers, whereas if the business of prophethood had depended on the secret instruction of some other person, these very people would have been in the forefront to oppose him (For further explanation, see An-Naḥl: 103, Al-Furqān: 4-6 and the corresponding E.N.'s).

13. The commentators have seriously disputed the meaning of these verses, and the difference of opinion existed even in the time of the Companions. Masrūq, the well-known pupil of Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, states: One day when we entered the mosque of Kufah, we saw a preacher addressing the people. He recited the verse: *Yauma ta'tis-samā-u bidukhān-im-mubīn*, then asked: "Do you know what kind of smoke it is ? This smoke will appear on the Day of Resurrection and will make the disbelievers and the hypocrites blind and deaf, but the believers will be affected only to the extent as if they had caught cold." Hearing this commentary we went to Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd and reported to him what the preacher had said. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah at that time was lying down. On hearing this commentary he sat up startled and said: "When a person does not have the knowledge he should ask those who have it. The fact is that when the people of the Quraish went on refusing to accept Islam and continued to oppose the Holy Prophet, the Holy Prophet prayed: O God, help me with a famine like the famine of Joseph (peace be upon him); consequently, a very severe famine overtook Makkah and the people were forced to eat bones, skins and carrion. The conditions became so bad that whoever looked up to the sky would see nothing but smoke due to intensity of hunger. At last, Abū Sufyān came to the Holy Prophet and said: "You tell the people to treat their kindred kindly: your own people are starving: kindly pray to God to remove this calamity." This was the time when the people of the Quraish had started saying: "O God, if You remove this torment from us, we will believe." This same event has been referred to in these verses; and the severest blow implies the calamity that was inflicted on the Quraish in the Battle of Badr." This tradition has been related by Imām Ahmād, Bukhārī Tirmidhi, Nasā'i, Ibn Jarīr and Ibn Abī Ḥātim from Masrūq with several chains of authorities. Besides Masrūq, Ibrahīm Nakha'ī Qatādah, 'Āsim and 'Amir also have related that Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd had given the same commentary of this verse. Therefore there cannot be any doubt that Ibn Mas'ūd actually held this same opinion. Among the immediate followers of the Companions, Mujāhid,

Qatādah, Abul 'Āliyah, Muqātil, Ibrahim Nakha'ī, Ḍaḥḥāk and 'Atiyyah al-'Aufi and others have also concurred with Ibn Mas'ūd in this commentary.

On the contrary, scholars like Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, Ibn 'Umar, Ibn 'Abbās, Abū Sa'īd Khudrī, Zaid bin 'Alī, and Ḥasan Baṣrī say that in these verses mention has been made of the time just before Resurrection, and the smoke that has been foretold will envelop the earth at that time. This commentary is further strengthened by the Traditions that have been reported from the Holy Prophet. Hudhaifah bin Asīd al-Ghifārī says: One day when we were talking about Resurrection, the Holy Prophet came out to us and said: "Resurrection will not be established till ten Signs have appeared one after the other: Rising of the sun in the west, smoke, the beast, emergence of God and Magog, descent of Jesus son of Mary, sinking of the earth in the East, in the West and in the Arabian Peninsula, and the appearance of a fire from Yaman, which will drive the people away." (Muslim) This is confirmed by Abū Mālik Ash'arī's tradition which has been related by Ibn Jarīr and Ṭabarānī, and Abū Sa'īd Khudrī's tradition which has been related by Ibn Abī Ḥātim. Both these traditions show that the Holy Prophet regarded the smoke as one of the Signs of Resurrection and also said that when that smoke will spread, it will affect the believer only like a cold, but will infuse every nerve of the disbeliever and come out from every part of his body.

A study of the verses under consideration can remove the disparity between the two commentaries. As for the commentary of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, it is a fact that a severe famine had hit Makkah resulting from the Holy Prophet's prayer and it had unnerved the disbelievers considerably and they had requested the Holy Prophet to pray for its removal, as referred to at several places in the Qur'ān. (See Al-An'ām: 43, Al-A'rāf: 94-95, Yūnus: 21, Al-Mu'minūn: 75-77 and the corresponding E.N.'s). In these verses also there is a clear pointer to the same conditions. The disbelievers' saying: "Our Lord, remove this torment from us: we will believe," Allah's saying: "How can they rid themselves of their heedlessness? Even when a manifest Messenger came to them, they paid no heed to him, and said: He is a madman taught by others," then saying: "Were We to remove the torment a little, you would revert to the same that you were doing before." all this can be relevant only if it refers to the conditions of the Holy Prophet's time. To apply them to what will happen near the time of Resurrection, is not correct. Therefore, in view of this, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd's commentary seems to be correct, but its this part that "the smoke" also had appeared in that very time, in that when the people in their extreme state of hunger looked up to the sky, they could see nothing but smoke, does not seem to be correct. It also does not conform to the apparent words of the Qur'ān and is against the Traditions as well. The Qur'ān does not say: the sky brought forth the smoke and it spread over the people; but it says: "Wait for the Day when the sky

will appear with a visible smoke, and it will envelop mankind." A study of the subsequent verses clearly points to this meaning: "When you do not believe even after the Messenger's admonition, nor take heed from the warning given in the shape of the famine, then you should wait for Resurrection. At that time when you see your doom confronting you, you will fully realize what was the truth and what was falsehood." Therefore, as for the smoke, the correct view is that it has nothing to do with the time of the famine, but it is a Sign of Resurrection and the same is also confirmed by the *Ḥadīth*. It is surprising that those commentators who confirmed what Hadrat Ibn Mas'ūd said confirmed him wholly and those who refuted what he said refuted him wholly, whereas a study of the verses and the *Ḥadīth* clearly shows how far he was correct and how far he was wrong.

14. The words *rasūl-un karīm* in the original imply a man who is characterised with most noble traits of character and highly praiseworthy qualities.

15. One should note that the sayings of the Prophet Moses being cited here, are not parts of a continuous address delivered by him at any one time, but they are a summary in a few sentences of what he said to Pharaoh and his courtiers on different occasions during many years. For the details, see Al-A'rāf: 103-136, Yūnus: 75-92, Ṭā Hā : 45-76, Ash-Shua'rā: 10-68, An-Naml: 7-14, Al-Qaṣaṣ: 32-42, Al-Mu'min: 23-46, Az-Zukhruf: 46-56 and the corresponding E.N.'s.

16. That is, "Leave the children of Israel to go with me." This demand is synonymous with the demand made in Al-A'rāf: 105, Ṭā Hā: 47 and Ash-Shur'rā: 17. Another translation that has been reported from Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās is: "Servants of Allah, fulfil my right," i.e. "Accept what I say : believe in me: follow my guidance. This is my right on you from Allah." The following sentence: "I am a trustworthy Messenger to you," is more in keeping with the second meaning.

17. That is, "I am a reliable Messenger: I do not forge anything from myself, nor am I the one who would present something based on personal interest or desire, or forge a command or law, in the name of Allah. Rest assured that I shall convey to you intact only that which my Sender has commanded." (It should be noted that these two sentences belong to the time when the Prophet Moses first started preaching His Message).

18. In other words, it means: "Your rebellion against me is in fact rebellion against Allah, for what annoys you is not what I say but what Allah says, and I only present those things as His Messenger. If you doubt whether I have really been sent by Him or not, I present before you a clear authority of my appointment from Allah." This authority does not imply any one miracle but a long series of the miracles which the Prophet Moses continued to show to Pharaoh

and his people for years since the time he arrived in the court of Pharaoh till his last days in Egypt. Whatever Sign they denied, was followed up by a greater Sign of authority by him. (For explanation, see E.N.'s 42, 43 of Az-Zukhruf).

19. This was said at the time when, as against all the Signs presented by the Prophet Moses, Pharaoh was still showing stubbornness, but was feeling upset and confounded at the realization that all classes of the Egyptian society were rapidly being influenced by those Signs. In that period first of all he made the speech before his full packed court as mentioned in vv. 51-53 of Sūrah Zukhruf above (see E,N.'s 45 to 49). Then, when he felt the ground slipping from under his feet, he made up his mind to kill Allah's Messenger. At that time the Prophet said the words as mentioned in Sūrah Al-Mu'min: 27 , to the effect: "I have taken refuge in my Lord and your Lord against every arrogant person who does not believe in the Day of Reckoning." Here, the Prophet Moses is referring to that same thing and telling Pharaoh and his chiefs: "Look, I have sought Allah's refuge against all sorts of violence from you ; now you cannot harm me: but if you wish yourselves well, do not harm me. If you do not want to believe what I say, you may not, but you should never lay your hands on me, otherwise you will meet with catastrophic consequences".

20. This is the final report that the Prophet Moses presented before his Lord, saying: "These are criminals." That is, their being the criminals has been confirmed finally and absolutely. They have exhausted every chance of concession and respite for reformation. It is time that the final fatal decision be passed against them.

21. "With my servants": with all those people who have believed, including both the Israelites and the Egyptian Copts who had become Muslims since the time of the Prophet Joseph till that of the Prophet Moses, and those also who had been influenced by the Signs shown by Moses and His preaching and accepted Islam from among the Egyptians. (For explanation, see Sūrah Yūsuf: E.N. 68).

22. This was the initial command given to the Prophet Moses for the migration. (For explanation, see Ṭā-Hā: 77, Ash-Shu'arā': 52-68 and the corresponding E.N.'s).

23. This command was given when the Prophet Moses had crossed the sea along with his caravan and wanted that he should restore the sea to its former state by smiting it with the staff so that Pharaoh and his hosts should not pursue them on the dry path created by the miracle. At that times it was said: "Leave the sea divided as it is, so that Pharaoh and his armies should descend into it; then the sea will be restored and they will be drowned all together."

24. Ḥadrat Ḥasan Baṣri says that "others" here implies the children of Israel, whom Allah made heirs of the land of Egypt after Pharaoh's people, and Qatādah says it implies the other people who inherited Egypt after the people of Pharaoh, for the Histories do not make any mention that the Israelites ever returned to Egypt after the exodus and inherited it. This same point has been disputed by the later commentators also. (For a detailed discussion, see Ash-Shuʿarā: 57-59 and the E.N.'s on it).

25. That is, "When they were the rulers, they were known for their glory and grandeur: hymns were sung of their praise, flatterers flattered them to such an extent as if the whole world was devoted to them for their excellences and indebted to them for their favours and there was none more popular in the world than they. But when they fell there was none to shed a tear on their fall; rather the world felt relieved that a cause of distress had been removed. Obviously, they had neither done any good to the people that the dwellers of the earth might weep on them, nor anything for the sake of Allah's pleasure that the dwellers of the heavens might grieve over their ruin. As long as Allah continued to give them rope by His will, they enjoyed life as they pleased; but when they transgressed all limits in their crimes, they were cast aside like so much rubbish.

26. That is, Pharaoh by himself was an abasing torment for them and all other torments were indeed offshoots of the same great torment .

27. There is a subtle satire in it on the chiefs of the disbelieving Quraish. It means to say this: "You do not enjoy any place of distinction among the transgressors against Allah. Pharaoh indeed was a rebel of the highest order who was ruling on the throne of the largest kingdom of the time as a god. When he was swept away like straw, how can you prevent the Divine wrath?"

28. That is, "Allah was well aware both of the qualities and of the weaknesses of the children of Israel. He had not chosen them blindly. For when he chose them from among the contemporary nations to become the standard-bearers of His message and His *Tauḥīd,* they were the most suitable people in His knowledge for the purpose."

29. For explanation, see Al-Baqarah :49-74, An-Nisā: 153-160, Al-Māʾidah: 20-26, Al-Aʿrāf: 138-171, Ṭā-Hā: 80-97 and the corresponding E.N.'s.

30, That is, "When we die the first time, we shall be annihilated: there will be no other life after that".

31. This was their reasoning: We have never seen a dead person resurrected to life. Therefore, we believe that there will be no other life after death. If you claim that there will be another life, then resurrect our forefathers from their graves, so that we are convinced of the life-after-death. If you do not

do this, we would think that your claim is false. This was, as they thought, a very strong argument for the refutation of life-after-death, whereas it was absurd. Nobody had told them that the dead would return to this very world after being raised back to life, nor the Holy Prophet, nor any Muslim, had ever claimed that he could raise the dead back to life.

32. *Tubba'* was the title of the kings of the Himyarites, like the titles of Khosroes, Caesar, Pharaoh etc. which have been associated with the kings of different countries. They were a branch of the Sabaeans, who attained domination over Sabā in 115 B.C. and ruled it till 300 A.D. They have been a well known people of Arabia for centuries. (For details, see E.N. 37 of Sūrah Sabā).

33. This is the first answer to the disbelievers' objection; it means: No individual group or nation which denies the Hereafter can help becoming criminal. Perversion of the morals is its inevitable result, and human history bears evidence that whichever nation adopted this view of life ultimately perished. As for the question: Are they better or the people of Tubba' or the people before them? it means this: The disbelievers of Makkah have not been able to attain to the prosperity and splendour that became the lot of the people of Tubba' and of the people of Sabā and of the people of Pharaoh and others before them. But this material prosperity and worldly splendour could not save them from the consequences of their moral degeneration. How will then the chiefs of the Quraish be saved from destruction on the strength of their puny resources and wealth? (For details, see E.N.'s 25 to 36 of Sūrah Sabā).

34. This is the second answer to their objection; it means: "Whoever denies life-after-death and the rewards and punishments of the hereafter, in fact, regards this world as a plaything and its Creator as a foolish child. This is why he has formed the view that man, after raising all sorts of the storms in the world, will end up in the dust one day and none of his good or bad acts will bear any fruit. The fact, however, is that this universe is the creation of an All-Wise Creator and not of a frivolous being, and it cannot be expected from an All-Wise Creator that he would perform a useless and vain act." (For a detailed explanation, see Al-An'ām: 73, Yūnus: 5-6, Al-Anbiyā: 16-18, Al-Mu'minūn: 115, Ar-Rūm: 8-9 and the corresponding E.N.'s).

35. This is the answer to their demand: "Bring back our forefathers if you are truthful." It means: "Life-afer-death is not a trivial matter; it cannot be that whenever somebody denies it, a dead person may he raised immediately from the graveyard and presented before him. For it a time has been fixed by the Lord of the worlds, when He will resurrect to life all the former and the latter

[Contd. on p. 616

يُنْصَرُوْنَ ﴿٤١﴾ اِلَّا مَنْ رَّحِمَ اللّٰهُ ؕ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿٤٢﴾ اِنَّ شَجَرَتَ الزَّقُّوْمِ ﴿٤٣﴾
طَعَامُ الْاَثِيْمِ ﴿٤٤﴾ كَالْمُهْلِ ۚ يَغْلِيْ فِي الْبُطُوْنِ ﴿٤٥﴾ كَغَلْيِ الْحَمِيْمِ ﴿٤٦﴾ خُذُوْهُ فَاعْتِلُوْهُ
اِلٰى سَوَآءِ الْجَحِيْمِ ﴿٤٧﴾ ثُمَّ صُبُّوْا فَوْقَ رَاْسِهٖ مِنْ عَذَابِ الْحَمِيْمِ ﴿٤٨﴾ ذُقْ ۚ اِنَّكَ
اَنْتَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْكَرِيْمُ ﴿٤٩﴾ اِنَّ هٰذَا مَا كُنْتُمْ بِهٖ تَمْتَرُوْنَ ﴿٥٠﴾ اِنَّ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ فِيْ
مَقَامٍ اَمِيْنٍ ﴿٥١﴾ فِيْ جَنّٰتٍ وَّعُيُوْنٍ ﴿٥٢﴾ يَّلْبَسُوْنَ مِنْ سُنْدُسٍ وَّاِسْتَبْرَقٍ
مُّتَقٰبِلِيْنَ ﴿٥٣﴾ كَذٰلِكَ ۫ وَزَوَّجْنٰهُمْ بِحُوْرٍ عِيْنٍ ﴿٥٤﴾ يَدْعُوْنَ فِيْهَا بِكُلِّ فَاكِهَةٍ
اٰمِنِيْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾ لَا يَذُوْقُوْنَ فِيْهَا الْمَوْتَ اِلَّا الْمَوْتَةَ الْاُوْلٰى ۚ وَوَقٰىهُمْ عَذَابَ
الْجَحِيْمِ ﴿٥٦﴾ فَضْلًا مِّنْ رَّبِّكَ ۚ ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيْمُ ﴿٥٧﴾ فَاِنَّمَا يَسَّرْنٰهُ بِلِسَانِكَ
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٥٨﴾ فَارْتَقِبْ اِنَّهُمْ مُّرْتَقِبُوْنَ ﴿٥٩﴾

The zaqqūm-tree[38] shall be the sinner's food, like the dregs of oil.[39] It will boil in the belly like the boiling of hot water. "Seize him and drag him into the midst of Hell, and pour over his head the chastisement of boiling water. Taste this: a mighty and honourable man that you are! This is the same thing about which you entertained doubts." 43-50

The God-fearing shall be in a secure place,[40] in the gardens and springs, dressed in silk and brocade,[41] sitting face to face. Such will be their station! And We shall wed to them fair-complexioned, gazelle-eyed women.[42] There, in full peace, they shall ask for all kinds of tasty things.[43] There they shall never taste death, after their first death in the world, and Allah by His grace will protect them from the torment of Hell.[44] This is the supreme success! 51-57

O Prophet, We have made this Book easy in your own tongue so that they may take counsel Wait then, as they too are waiting.[45] 58-59

Contd. from p. 615]

generations, gather them together in His Court and will decide their cases. You

may believe in it or may not, but this will in any case happen on its own pre ordained time. If you believe in it, it will be to your own advantage, for, being forewarned, you will make preparations to fare well in that Court. If you do not believe in it, you will incur loss for yourselves, for you will expend your whole life in the misunderstanding that good and evil are confined only to this worldly life; after death there is going to be no court where our good or bad deeds might have to be judged for any permanent results."

36. The Arabic word *"maulā"* is used for a person who supports another person either because of kinship, or friendship, or some other relationship.

37. These sentences portray the nature of the Court that will be established on the Day of Decision. It will be a Court where nobody's help or support will help rescue any culprit nor have his sentence reduced. All powers will rest with the real Sovereign Whose decisions cannot be withheld from being enforced nor influenced by any power. It will entirely depend on His own discretion whether He forgives somebody mercifully, or awards him a lesser punishment; it indeed behoves Him to exercise justice mercifully and not mercilessly, but whatever decision He gives in any case, will be enforced entirely and completely. After this portrayal of the nature of the Divine Court, in the following few sentences it has been stated what will be the fate of those who will be found guilty in that Court, and what will be conferred on those about whom it will be established that they had been refraining from Allah's disobedience in the world out of fear of Him.

38. For the explanation of *zaqqūm*, see E.N. 34 of Sūrah Aṣ-Ṣāāffāt.

39. The word *al-muhl* in the original has several meanings: molten metal, pus-blood, molten tar, lava, dregs of oil. These are the different meanings given by the lexicographers and commentators, but if this word is understood with reference to *zaqqūm* (cactus), it may mean its juice which will probably be like the dregs of oil.

40. "A secure place": A place safe from every kind of fear, grief, worry and danger, hardship and trouble. According to a *Ḥadīth*, the Holy Prophet said: "It will be proclaimed to the dwellers of Paradise: You will remain in good health, will never fall ill; will live for ever: will never die; will ever remain happy and prosperous and will never meet with a misfortune; will ever remain youthful, will never become old." (Muslim, on the authority of Abū Hurairah and Abū Sa'īd Khudri).

41. *Sundus* and *istabraq* in the original are fine silk cloth and thick silk cloth respectively.

42. In the original, *ḥūr-un 'īn* : fair complexioned, large-eyed women. (For further explanation, see E.N.'s 26,29 of Aṣ-Ṣaaffat).

43. That is, they will order the attendants in Paradise to bring anything they would like in any measure they would demand, and it will be presented before them. In this world, a man cannot ask for a thing in a hotel, or even his own things in his own house, with the freedom and satisfaction as he will ask for these in Paradise, for in the world nothing is found anywhere in un-limited measure; whatever man uses here, he has to pay for it. In Paradise, things will belong to Allah, and the servants will enjoy full freedom to use them. Neither will there be the danger of the failure of the supply, nor the necessity of a bill to pay.

44. Two things are worthy of notice in this verse.

First, after mentioning the blessings of Paradise special mention has been made of being secure from Hell separately whereas a person's entry into Paradise by itself amounts to his being safe from Hell. This is because man can feel the worth of the reward of obedience fully only when he is informed what end the disobedient people have met and from what evil end he himself has been saved.

Secondly, Allah is mentioning those people's safety from Hell and their entry into Paradise as a result of His own grace. This is meant to warn man of the truth that this success cannot be achieved by any person unless he is blessed by Allah's grace. Although man will be rewarded for his own good deeds, in the first place he cannot do good unless favoured by Allah's succour; then even the best deed that man is able to perform, cannot be absolutely perfect and none can claim that it is flawless and faultless. It is only Allah's bounty that He should overlook the servant's weaknesses and defects in his actions and accept his services and bless him with rewards; otherwise if He resorts to minute accountability no one can dare claim to win Paradise only on the strength of his own deeds. The same thing has been said by the Holy Prophet in a *Ḥadīth* to the effect: "Act and try to act as righteously as you possibly can, but know that the action of a person alone will not make him enter Paradise. It was asked: What about your own action, O Messenger of Allah? He replied: Yes, even I won't enter Paradise on the strength of my actions, unless, of course, my Lord covers me up in His mercy."

45. That is, "If they do not accept the admonition even now, you should wait to see how they are visited by their doom; and they also are waiting to see what becomes of the message that you are giving them."


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AL-JĀTHIYAH
الجاثيه

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XLV

AL-JĀTHIYAH

الجاثیہ

INTRODUCTION

Name

It is derived from the sentence *wa tarā kullu ummat-in jāthiyat-un* of verse 28, implying thereby that it is the Sūrah in which the word jāthiyah has occurred.

Period of Revelation

The period of the revelation of this Sūrah also has not been mentioned in any authentic tradition, but its subject-matter clearly shows that it was revealed consecutively after Sūrah Ad-Dukhān. The close resemblance between the contents of the two Sūrahs makes them look like the twin Sūrahs.

Subject-Matter and Topics

It answers the doubts and objections of the disbelievers of Makkah about *Tauḥīd* and the Hereafter and warns them for their attitude that they had adopted against the message of the Qur'ān.

The discourse begins with the arguments for *Tauḥīd*. In this connection, reference has been made to the countless Signs that are found in the world, from man's own body to the earth and heavens and it is pointed out that everywhere around him man finds things which testify to *Tauḥīd* which he refuses to acknowledge. If man sees carefully the variety of animals, the day and night, the rainfall and the vegetation thereby, the winds and his own creation, and ponders over them intelligently, without prejudice, he will find these Signs sufficiently convincing of the truth that this universe is not Godless, nor under the control of many gods, but it has been created by One God, and He alone is its Controller and Ruler. However, the case of the person who is determined not to acknowledge and wants to remain involved in doubts and suspicions is different. He cannot be blessed with the faith and conviction from anywhere in the world.

A little below, in the beginning of the second section, it has been reiterated that the things man is exploiting in the world, and the countless forces and agencies that are serving his interests in the universe, did not come into being just accidentally, nor have they been provided by the gods and goddesses, but it is One God alone, Who has supplied and subjected these to him from Himself. If only a person uses his mind properly and rightly, his own intellect will proclaim that God alone is man's real Benefactor and He alone deserves that man should pay obeisance to Him.

After this, the disbelievers of Makkah have been taken to task and reproved for their stubbornness, arrogance, mockery and insistence on disbelief with which they were resisting the invitation of the Qur'ān; they have been warned that this Qur'ān has brought the same blessing which had been granted to the children of Israel before, by virtue of which they became distinguished above all the people of the world. But, when they failed to recognize the true worth of this blessing and disputed their religion and lost it, this blessing now has been sent to them. This is such a code of guidance which shows the clear highway of

Religion to man. The people who would turn it down by their own folly, would only prepare for their own doom, and only such people would become worthy of God's succour and mercy who would adopt obedience to it and lead a life of piety and righteousness.

In this connection, the followers of the Holy Prophet have been instructed that they should forbear and pardon the absurd and foolish behaviour towards them of the people fearless of God, for if they showed patience God Himself would deal with their opponents and would reward them for their fortitude.

Then, there is a criticism of the erroneous ideas that the disbelievers held about the Hereafter. They said that life was only this worldly life; there was no life hereafter. Man dies in the course of time just as a watch stops functioning suddenly. The body is not survived by any soul, which might be seized and then breathed again into the human body some time in the future. In this regard, they challenged the Holy Prophet, saying: "If you lay a claim to this, then raise our dead forefathers back to life." In answer to this, Allah has given the following arguments:

(1) "You do not say this on the basis of any knowledge but are uttering this grave thing on the basis of conjecture. Do you really have the knowledge that there is no other life after death, and the souls are not seized but are annihilated?"

(2) "Your this claim rests mainly on that you have not seen any dead person rising back to life and returning to the world. Is this basis strong enough for a person to make a claim that the dead people will never rise to life? When you do not experience and observe a thing, does it mean that you have the knowledge that it does not exist at all?"

(3) It is utterly against reason and justice that the good and the bad, the obedient and the disobedient, the oppressor and the oppressed, should be made equal ultimately. Neither a good act should bear a good result nor an evil act an evil result; neither the grievances of the oppressed be redressed nor the oppressor be punished, but everyone should meet with the same fate ultimately. Whoever has formed this view about the universe of God, has formed a patently wrong view. The unjust and wicked

people adopt this view because they do not want to face the evil results of their deeds, but this world of God is not a lawless kingdom; it is rather a system based on the Truth, in which there can be no question of the injustice of regarding the good and the bad as equal.

(4) That the creed of the denial of the Hereafter is highly destructive of morals. This is adopted only by such people as are the slaves of their lusts, and for the reason that they should have full freedom to serve their lusts. And, when they have adopted this creed, it goes on making them more and more perverse till at last their moral sense becomes dead and all avenues of guidance are closed against them

After giving these arguments Allah says most emphatically: "Just as you did not become living of your own accord, but became living by Our power, so you do not die of your own accord, but die when We send death on you. And a time is certainly coming when you will all be gathered together. If you do not believe in this because of your ignorance and folly today, you may not; when the time arrives, you will see for yourself that you are present before your God and your whole book of conduct is ready accurately, which bears evidence against each of your misdeeds. Then you will come to know how dearly has your denial of the Hereafter and your mockery of it cost you."



حٰمٓ ﴿١﴾ تَنْزِيْلُ الْكِتٰبِ مِنَ اللّٰهِ الْعَزِيْزِ الْحَكِيْمِ ﴿٢﴾ اِنَّ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ
لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٣﴾ وَفِيْ خَلْقِكُمْ وَمَا يَبُثُّ مِنْ دَآبَّةٍ اٰيٰتٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يُّوْقِنُوْنَ ﴿٤﴾
وَاخْتِلَافِ الَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَمَآ اَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مِنْ رِّزْقٍ فَاَحْيَا بِهِ
الْاَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَتَصْرِيْفِ الرِّيٰحِ اٰيٰتٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٥﴾ تِلْكَ اٰيٰتُ اللّٰهِ
نَتْلُوْهَا عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ ۚ فَبِاَيِّ حَدِيْثٍ بَعْدَ اللّٰهِ وَاٰيٰتِهٖ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٦﴾ وَيْلٌ
لِّكُلِّ اَفَّاكٍ اَثِيْمٍ ﴿٧﴾ يَّسْمَعُ اٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ تُتْلٰى عَلَيْهِ ثُمَّ يُصِرُّ مُسْتَكْبِرًا كَاَنْ لَّمْ
يَسْمَعْهَا ۚ فَبَشِّرْهُ بِعَذَابٍ اَلِيْمٍ ﴿٨﴾ وَاِذَا عَلِمَ مِنْ اٰيٰتِنَا شَيْـًٔا اتَّخَذَهَا هُزُوًا ۚ
اُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِيْنٌ ﴿٩﴾ مِنْ وَّرَآئِهِمْ جَهَنَّمُ ۚ وَلَا يُغْنِيْ عَنْهُمْ مَّا كَسَبُوْا

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AL-JĀTHIYAH

الجاثیہ

Verses: 37 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Hā-Mīm. The revelation of this Book is from Allah, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.[1] 1-2

The fact is that there are countless Signs in the heavens and the earth for those who believe.[2] And in your own creation and in the animals, whom Allah is scattering (all over the earth), there are signs for those who affirm faith.[3] And in the difference of the night and day,[4] and in the provisions[5] that Allah sends down from the heaven, whereby He revives the earth after its death,[6] and in the circulation of the winds,[7] there are many signs for those who use their common sense. These are the Revelations of Allah, which We are rehearsing to you 3-6

accurately. Then, what is there after Allah and His Revelations in which they will believe.[8]

7-10 Woe to every lying, sinful person before whom the Revelations of Allah are recited and he hears them, yet he persists in his disbelief arrogantly as if he never heard them.[9] Give such a one the good news of a painful torment. When something of Our Revelations comes to his knowledge, he takes it in jest.[10] For all such people there is an abasing torment. They have Hell in front of them.[11] Nothing of what they have earned in the world will avail them anything, nor those whom they have taken for guardians instead of Allah.[12] There is a great punishment for them.

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1. In this brief introduction to the Sūrah, the listeners have been warned of two things: (1) That this Book is not the composition of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) himself, but it is being sent down to him by Allah; and (2) that it is being sent down by that Allah Who is All-Mighty as well as All-Wise. His being the Almighty demands that man should not dare disobey His Commands, for if he disobeys Him, he cannot escape His punishment; and His being the All-Wise demands that man should obey and follow His Guidance and His Commands with full satisfaction and willingness of the heart, for there can be no possibility of His teachings being wrong or inadequate or harmful in any way.

2. To begin the discourse like this after the introduction, indicates that in the background there are the objections of the people of Makkah, which they were raising against the teachings of the Holy Prophet. They said: "After all, how can we believe this one man when he says that all those great beings to whose shrines we have been dedicated and devoted so far, are nothing and that Godhead belongs to only One God ?" About this it is being said that the world is replete with the signs of the Reality to which they are being invited. If only they saw with open eyes, they would find those signs in themselves and outside them everywhere, which testify that this whole universe is the creation of One and only One God, and He alone is its Master and Ruler and Controller. It didn't need to be pointed out what was the nature of the signs in the earth and heavens, for the dispute at that time centred around the point that the polytheists were insisting on believing in other gods and deities also besides Allah and the Qur'ān gave the message that there was neither a god nor a deity beside One God. Therefore, it was apparent by itself from the context that the signs were of the truth of *Tauḥīd* and of the refutation of *shirk*.

As for the sentence: "The signs are for those who believe," it means that although the signs are meant for all human beings, only those people can reach the

right conclusion from their observation, who are inclined to believe; as for the heedless people, who live like animals and the stubborn people who are resolved not to believe, the existence and the non-existence of the signs is equal. The splendour and beauty of the garden is for those who can see; a blind man cannot perceive any splendour and beauty; for him even the existence of the garden is meaningless.

3. That is, "The case of those who have made up their minds not to believe, or of those who have chosen for themselves to remain lost in the blind alleys of doubt, is different, but when those who have not locked up their hearts against belief and conviction, will consider seriously their own creation, the structure of their own body, and the variety of animals found on the earth, they will see countless such signs as will leave no doubt in their minds that all this did not come into being without a God, or that it stood in need of more than one God for its creation. (For explanation, see Al An'ām: 37-38, An-Naḥl: 5,8, Al-Ḥajj: 5-7, Al Mu'minūn: 12-14, Al-Furqān: 54, Ash-Shu'arā': 78-81, An-Naml: 64, Ar-Rūm: 20-21, 54, E.N.'s 14 to 18 of As-Sajdah, Yā Sīn: 71-73, Az-Zumar: 6, and E.N.'s 97, 98,110 of Al-Mu'min).

4. The difference of the night and day is a sign because one follows the other with full regularity, because one is bright and the other dark, because over a certain period the day goes on shortening and the night lengthening gradually till the two become equal in duration, then again the day goes on lengthening and the night shortening till the two again become equal in duration. These different kinds of variations found in the night and the day and the great aspects of wisdom that accrue from these, are a clear pointer to the fact that the Creator of the sun and the earth and of every thing on the earth is one and that one All-Powerful Being is keeping both these spheres under His control; that that Being is not deaf and blind and unwise but All-Wise, Who has established this unalterable system and made His earth a suitable place for the countless species of life, which He has created here in the form of vegetables, animals and men. (For explanation, see Yūnus: 67, An Naml: 86, Al-Qaṣaṣ: 71-73, Luqmān: 29 and E.N. 50, Yā Sīn: 37 and E.N. 32)

5. "Provisions": rainfall as becomes evident from the following sentence.

6. For explanation, see Al-Mu'minūn: 18-20, Al-Furqān: 48-49, Ash-Shu'arā': 7, An-Naml: 61, Ar-Rūm: 24, 48, Yā Sīn: E.N.'s 26 to 31.

7. The circulation of the winds implies the circulation of the different kinds of winds at different times, on different parts of the earth and at different heights, which cause change of the seasons. What deserves attention is not only that above the surface of the earth there is a thick atmosphere, which contains all those elements needed by living beings for breathing, and this thick covering has kept

the earth's population safe from many of the heavenly calamities. Besides, another noteworthy thing is that the air is not just filled inertly in the atmosphere, but it blows occasionally in different ways. Sometimes a cool wind blows and sometimes a hot wind; sometimes it stops blowing and sometimes it starts blowing; sometimes it blows soft and sometimes strong, and sometimes it assumes the proportions of a storm, sometimes a dry wind blows and sometimes a moist wind; sometimes it brings the rain and sometimes it drives away the clouds. These different kinds of the winds do not blow without a purpose, but under a law and a system, which testifies that this arrangement is based on perfect wisdom, and it is serving great objectives. Then it is deeply related with coolness and heat, which go on increasing and decreasing according to the changing conditions and relationships between the earth and the sun. Furthermore, it has a deep relation with the seasonal changes and the distribution of the rain. All these facts proclaim that these arrangements have not been made haphazardly by some blind nature, nor have the sun and the earth and the air and water and vegetation and animals separate controllers, but inevitably One God alone is the Creator of them all, and it is His Wisdom that has established this system for a great objective, and it is His power that it is functioning regularly according to a pre-ordained law.

8. That is, "When these people have not believed even after Allah's own arguments have been presented for His Existence and His Unity, what else can be there by which they will gain the faith? For Allah's Word is the final thing by which a person can attain to this blessing, and the maximum of the rational arguments that could possibly be given to convince someone of an unseen reality have been presented in this Divine Word. In spite of this if a person is bent upon denial, he may persist in his denial, for his denial cannot change the reality."

9. In other words, there is a marked difference between the person who listens to Allah's Revelations sincerely with an open mind and ponders over them seriously and the person who listens to them resolved that he would deny them, and then persists in the resolve already made without any serious thought. If the first person does not believe in the Revelations immediately, it does not mean that he wants to remain an unbeliever, but because he wants to have greater satisfaction. Therefore, even if he is taking time to believe, it is just possible that another Revelation might enter his heart and he might believe sincerely with full satisfaction. As for the other person, he would never believe in any Revelation whatever, for he has already locked his heart up to every Revelation of Allah. In this state such people generally are involved as are characterised by the following three qualities: (1) They are liars; therefore, the truth does not appeal to them; (2) they are wrongdoers; therefore, it is very hard for them to believe in a teaching or guidance that may impose moral restrictions on them; and (3) they are involved in the conceit that they know everything, and that none can teach them anything;

therefore, they do not regard as worthy of attention and consideration Allah's Revelations that are recited to them, and it is all the same for them whether they listen to them or not.

10. That is, "He does not rest content with mocking any one particular Revelation, but mocks all the Revelations. For example, when he hears that a particular thing has been mentioned in the Qur'ān, he does not take it in its straight-forward meaning, but first puts a crooked meaning on it in order to make it a subject of ridicule and mockery, then after making fun of it, says: "These are strange things: one daily hears one or the other funny thing from them."

11. The word *warā' is* used for every such thing as is hidden from man, whether it is before him or behind him. Therefore, another translation can be: "They have Hell behind them." In the first case, the meaning would be: "They are unconsciously running on this way and have no idea that there is Hell in front of them in which they would fall ;" in the second case, it would mean: "They are engaged in this mischief of theirs, thoughtless of the Hereafter, and they have no idea that Hell is in pursuit of them."

12. Here, the word *walī* (guardian) has been used in two meanings; (1) For those gods and goddesses and living and dead guides about whom the polytheists thought that anybody who was devoted to them, would escape Allah's punishment, whatever he might have done in the world, for their intercession will save them from Allah's wrath; and (2) for those chiefs and leaders and rulers whom the people took as their guides and patrons independent of God and followed them blindly and tried to please them even if they had to displease God. This verse warns all such people that when they will face Hell in consequence of this way of life, neither of the two kinds of the guardians will come forward to save them from it. (For further explanation, see E.N. 6 of Sūrah Ash- Shūrā).

شَيْئًا وَّلَا مَا اتَّخَذُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ اَوْلِيَآءَ ۚ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيْمٌ ﴿١٠﴾ هٰذَا
هُدًى ۚ وَالَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا بِاٰيٰتِ رَبِّهِمْ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مِّنْ رِّجْزٍ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿١١﴾ اَللّٰهُ
الَّذِيْ سَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الْبَحْرَ لِتَجْرِيَ الْفُلْكُ فِيْهِ بِاَمْرِهٖ وَلِتَبْتَغُوْا مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ وَ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿١٢﴾ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مَّا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ جَمِيْعًا مِّنْهُ ۚ
اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّتَفَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿١٣﴾ قُلْ لِّلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا يَغْفِرُوْا لِلَّذِيْنَ لَا
يَرْجُوْنَ اَيَّامَ اللّٰهِ لِيَجْزِيَ قَوْمًا بِمَا كَانُوْا يَكْسِبُوْنَ ﴿١٤﴾ مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا
فَلِنَفْسِهٖ ۚ وَمَنْ اَسَآءَ فَعَلَيْهَا ۚ ثُمَّ اِلٰى رَبِّكُمْ تُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿١٥﴾ وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا بَنِيْٓ
اِسْرَآءِيْلَ الْكِتٰبَ وَالْحُكْمَ وَالنُّبُوَّةَ وَرَزَقْنٰهُمْ مِّنَ الطَّيِّبٰتِ وَفَضَّلْنٰهُمْ عَلَى
الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿١٦﴾ وَاٰتَيْنٰهُمْ بَيِّنٰتٍ مِّنَ الْاَمْرِ ۚ فَمَا اخْتَلَفُوْٓا اِلَّا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَآءَهُمُ
الْعِلْمُ ۢ بَغْيًۢا بَيْنَهُمْ ۭ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَقْضِيْ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ فِيْمَا كَانُوْا فِيْهِ
يَخْتَلِفُوْنَ ﴿١٧﴾ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنٰكَ عَلٰى شَرِيْعَةٍ مِّنَ الْاَمْرِ فَاتَّبِعْهَا وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ اَهْوَآءَ
الَّذِيْنَ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿١٨﴾ اِنَّهُمْ لَنْ يُّغْنُوْا عَنْكَ مِنَ اللّٰهِ شَيْـًٔا ۭ وَاِنَّ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ
بَعْضُهُمْ اَوْلِيَآءُ بَعْضٍ ۚ وَاللّٰهُ وَلِيُّ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ هٰذَا بَصَاۗىِٕرُ لِلنَّاسِ وَهُدًى
وَّرَحْمَةٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يُّوْقِنُوْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾ اَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِيْنَ اجْتَرَحُوا السَّيِّاٰتِ اَنْ نَّجْعَلَهُمْ
كَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ ۙ سَوَاۗءً مَّحْيَاهُمْ وَمَمَاتُهُمْ ۭ سَاۗءَ مَا يَحْكُمُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾
وَخَلَقَ اللّٰهُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ وَلِتُجْزٰى كُلُّ نَفْسٍۢ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ
لَا يُظْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾ اَفَرَءَيْتَ مَنِ اتَّخَذَ اِلٰهَهٗ هَوٰىهُ وَاَضَلَّهُ اللّٰهُ عَلٰي عِلْمٍ وَّخَتَمَ
عَلٰي سَمْعِهٖ وَقَلْبِهٖ وَجَعَلَ عَلٰي بَصَرِهٖ غِشٰوَةً ۭ فَمَنْ يَّهْدِيْهِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ اللّٰهِ ۭ
اَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَقَالُوْا مَا هِيَ اِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا نَمُوْتُ وَنَحْيَا وَمَا يُهْلِكُنَا

This Qur'ān is true Guidance, and for those who have refused to believe in the Revelations of their Lord, there is the torment of a terrible scourge. 11

Allah it is Who subjected to you the ocean so that ships may sail in it by His Command,[13] and you may seek His bounty[14] and be grateful to Him. He subjected to you everything that the heavens and the earth contain,[15] all from Himself.[16] There are many signs in this for those who think.[17] 12-13

O Prophet, tell the believers to pardon the errors of those who do not fear the coming of the evil days from Allah,[18] so that Allah may Himself recompense a group for what they have earned.[19] Whoever does good will do so for himself, and whoever does evil will himself bear its burden. To your Lord you have all to return! 14-15

Before this We had bestowed on the children of Israel the Book and the Judgement[20] and the Prophethood. We blessed them with good things of life; We exalted them above all the people of the world,[21] and gave them clear instructions with regard to religion. Then they differed among themselves (not because of ignorance but) after the Knowledge had come to them, only because they wanted to wrong one another.[22] Your Lord will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection concerning the matters in which they have been differing. After this We have set you, O Prophet, upon a clear highway (of the *Shari'ah)* concerning religion:[23] so follow it, and do not follow the lusts of those who have no knowledge. They cannot avail you at all against Allah.[24] The wrongdoers are companions of one another and the Companion of the righteous is Allah. These are the lights of discernment for all mankind and guidance and mercy for those who affirm the faith.[25] 16-20

Do[26] those who have committed evil, think that We shall hold them and those who have believed and done right as equal, so that their life and their death should be alike ? Evil indeed are the judgements they pass![27] Allah has created the heavens and the earth with the truth[28] in order that each living being be rewarded for what it has earned. The people shall not be wronged at all.[29] 21-22

Then, have you ever considered the case of the person who made his lust his god,[30] and Allah, in spite of knowledge,[31] let him go 23

astray and set a seal upon his heart and ears and laid a covering on his eyes ?[32] Who is there after Allah Who can guide him? Do you learn no lesson?[33]

Contd. from p.629]

13. For explanation, see Banī Isrā'īl: 66-67, Ar-Rūm: 46 and the corresponding E.N.'s, and E.N. 55 of Luqmān, E.N. 110 of Al Mu'min, and E.N. 54 of Ash-Shūrā.

14 "Seek His bounty": Seek lawful provisions by trade, fishing, diving, navigation and other means in the sea.

15. For explanation, see Ibrahīm: 32 and E.N. 44 on it, and E.N. 35 of Luqmān.

16. This sentence has two meanings: (1) "This gift and favour of Allah is not like the gift of the worldly kings, who favour their favourites with the wealth that they have collected from the people themselves, but, on the contrary, all the good things, in the universe have been created by Allah Himself, and He has granted these to man from Himself;" and (2) "neither is anyone a partner of Allah in the creation of these good things, nor has anyone anything to do in making them subservient to man. Allah alone is their Creator and He alone has granted these to man from Himself."

17. That is, "In their subjection and in making them beneficial for man there are many signs for those who think and reflect. These signs clearly point to the truth that the Creator and Master and Administrator of everything and of every power in the universe, from the earth to the heavens, is One God alone Who has subjected them to a law; and that God alone is Lord of man Who has made all these things and powers favourable and helpful for man's life his sustenance, his convenience, his development and his civilization and social life by His power and wisdom and mercy, and that God alone is worthy of man's service and gratitude and devotion and not some other beings, who have neither any share in creating the things and powers nor anything to do with subjecting them to man and making them beneficial for him."

18. Literally: "Who do not except the days of Allah." But in Arabic usage on such occasions *ayyām* does not merely mean days but those memorable days in which important historical events may have taken place. For example, the word *ayyām-ul 'Arab* is used for the important events of the history of the Arabs and the major battles of the Arab tribes, which the later generations remember for centuries. Here, *ayyām-Allah* implies the evil days of a nation when the wrath of Allah may descend on it and ruin it in consequence of its misdeeds. That is why

we have translated it: "Those who do not fear the coming of evil days from Allah," i.e. those who do not fear that a day will come when they will be called to account for their actions and deeds, and this same fearlessness has made them bold and stubborn in acts of wickedness.

19. The commentators have given two meanings of this verse and the words of the verse admit of both: (1) "That the believers should pardon the excesses of this wicked group so that Allah may reward them for their patience and forbearance and nobility from Himself and recompense them for the persecutions they have suffered for His sake." (2) "That the believers should pardon these people so that Allah may Himself punish them for their persecutions of them."

Some other commentators have regarded this verse as repealed. They say that this command was applicable only till the Muslims had not been permitted to fight. Then, when they were permitted to fight, this command became abrogated. But a careful study of the words of the verse shows that the claim about abrogation is not correct. The word "pardon" is never used in the sense that when a person is not able to retaliate upon another for the latter's excesses, he should pardon him, but on such an occasion the usual words are patience and forbearance. Instead of them, when the word "pardon" has been used here, it by itself gives the meaning that the believers, in spite of their ability for retaliation, should refrain from retaliating upon the people for their excesses, whom fearlessness of God has made to transgress all limits of morality and humanity. This commad does not contradict those verses in which the Muslims have been permitted to fight. Permission to fight pertains to the condition when the Muslim government has a reasonable ground for taking military action against an unbelieving people, and the command concerning forgiveness and pardon pertains to the common conditions in which the believers have to live in contact with a people who are fearless of God and have to suffer persecutions by them in different ways. The object of this command is that the Muslims should keep their moral superiority and should not stoop to the level of the morally inferior people by indulging in disputes and wranglings with them and resort to retaliation for every frivolity. As long as it is possible to respond to an accusation or objection gently and rationally, or to defend oneself against an excess, one should not refrain from this, but when things seem to be crossing these limits, one should hold one's peace and entrust the matter to Allah. If the Muslims themselves become involved in a fight or quarrel with them, Allah will leave them alone to deal with them; but if they pardon and forbear, Allah will Himself deal with the wicked people and reward the oppressed ones for their patience.

20. *Hukm* (judgement) implies three things: (1) Knowledge and understanding of the Book and Religion; (2) wisdom to act according to the intention of the Book; and (3) capability to give right decisions in disputes.

21. It does not mean that they were given preference over all the people of the world for ever, rather it means: Allah had chosen the children of Israel from among all the contemporary nations of the world for the service that they should hold fast to the Divine Book and should rise as the standard-bearers of God-worship in the world.

22. For explanation, see Al-Baqarah: 213, Āl-'Imrān: 19 and E.N.'s 22, 23 of Ash-Shūrā.

23. It means: "The mission that had been entrusted to the children of Israel before you has now been entrusted to you. They, in spite of receiving knowledge, created such differences in religion out of selfish motives and stirred up such divisions among themselves that they became disqualified to call the people to God's way. Now you have been set upon the clear highway of Religion so that you may perform the service which the children of Israel have failed to perform and become disqualified to perform it." (For further explanation, see Ash-Shūrā: 13-15 and E.N.'s 20 to 26).

24. That is, "If you make any changes in Allah's Religion only to please them, they will not be able to save you from Allah's accountability and punishment."

25. That is, "This Book and this *Shari'ah* present such a light for all the people of the world, which distinguishes the truth from falsehood, but only such people receive any guidance from it who believe in its truth; for them only it is a mercy."

26. After the invitation to *Tauhīd*, the discourse now turns to the theme of the Hereafter.

27. This is the moral reasoning for the truth of the Hereafter. The difference of good and evil in morals and of goodness and wickedness in deeds necessarily demands that the good and the evil people should not meet with one and the same end, but the good should be rewarded for their good and the wicked punished for their evil deeds. Otherwise, if the good and the evil end up similarly, the distinction of virtue and vice in morals becomes meaningless and God becomes unjust. The people who follow evil ways in the world do want that there should be no accountability and no rewards and punishments, for this concept goes against their enjoyment of life, but it is against the justice and wisdom of the Lord of the worlds that He should treat the good and the evil alike, and should not care to see how the righteous believer has lived his life in the world and how the sinful

unbeliever has been enjoying it. One of them kept himself subjected to moral restrictions all his life, rendered the rights of those to whom they were due, restrained himself from the unlawful benefits and pleasures, and continued to incur losses for the sake of the truth; the other fulfilled his desires in every possible way: neither recognized the rights of God nor hesitated from violating the rights of the people, but went on collecting benefits and good things of life in every possible way. Can it be expected of God that He would overlook the difference between the lives of the two kinds of men? If the end of both be the same, no greater injustice could be conceived. (For further explanation, see Yūnus: 4, Hūd: 106, An-Naḥl: 38 39, Al-Ḥajj: E N. 9, An-Naml: E,N. 86, Ar-Rūm: 7-8, Suād: 28 and E.N. 30 on it).

28. That is, "Allah has not created the earth and the heavens for mere sport, but it is a wise system with a purpose. In this system it is absolutely unimaginable that the people who may have accomplished good deeds by the right use of the powers and means and resouces granted by Allah and the people who may have spread mischief and wickedness by their wrong use, should end up ultimately in the dust after death, and there should be no life hereafter in which their good and bad deeds should lead to good or bad results according to justice. If this were so, this universe would be the plaything of a thoughtless being, and not a purposeful system devised by a Wise Being." (For further explanation, see Al-An'am: 73, Yūnus: 5-6, Ibrahim: 19, An-Naḥl: 3, Al-'Ankabūt: 44 and E.N.'s 75, 76; Ar-Rūm: 8 and E.N. 6 on it).

29. In this context the sentence clearly means: "If the good people are not rewarded for their goodness, and the wicked are not punished for their wickedness, and the grievances of the oppressed are not redressed, it would be injustice. There cannot be such an injustice in the Kingdom of God. Likewise, there cannot also be the other kind of injustice that a good man be given a lesser reward than what is due to him, or a bad man given a greater punishment than what he deserves."

30. "To make one's lust one's god" implies that one should become a slave of one's lusts and desires: one should do whatever one likes whether God has forbidden it, and should not do what one dislikes, whether God has made it obligatory. When a man starts obeying somebody like this, it means that his deity is not God but the one whom he is obeying without question, no matter whether he calls him his lord (with the tongue) or not, and carves out an image of him and worships him or not. For when he has worshipped him directly without question, it is enough to make him a deity and after this practical *shirk* one cannot be absolved from the guilt of *shirk* only because one did not call the object of one's worship one's deity with the tongue, nor prostrated oneself before it. The other major commentators also have given the same commentary of this verse. Ibn Jarīr says:

إِلَّا الدَّهْرُ ۚ وَمَا لَهُمْ بِذٰلِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ ۚ إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَظُنُّونَ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَإِذَا تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ
آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ مَا كَانَ حُجَّتَهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا ائْتُوا بِآبَائِنَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾
قُلِ اللَّهُ يُحْيِيكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يَجْمَعُكُمْ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ وَ
لٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۚ وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ
السَّاعَةُ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَخْسَرُ الْمُبْطِلُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَتَرَىٰ كُلَّ أُمَّةٍ جَاثِيَةً ۚ كُلُّ أُمَّةٍ تُدْعَىٰ
إِلَىٰ كِتٰبِهَا ۚ الْيَوْمَ تُجْزَوْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾ هٰذَا كِتٰبُنَا يَنْطِقُ عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْحَقِّ ۚ
إِنَّا كُنَّا نَسْتَنْسِخُ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ
فَيُدْخِلُهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ فِي رَحْمَتِهِ ۚ ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ۖ
أَفَلَمْ تَكُنْ آيَاتِي تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ فَاسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ وَكُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا مُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٣١﴾ وَإِذَا قِيلَ
إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَالسَّاعَةُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهَا قُلْتُمْ مَا نَدْرِي مَا السَّاعَةُ ۙ إِنْ
نَظُنُّ إِلَّا ظَنًّا وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُسْتَيْقِنِينَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَبَدَا لَهُمْ سَيِّئَاتُ مَا عَمِلُوا وَحَاقَ
بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَقِيلَ الْيَوْمَ نَنْسٰكُمْ كَمَا نَسِيتُمْ لِقَاءَ يَوْمِكُمْ
هٰذَا وَمَأْوٰكُمُ النَّارُ وَمَا لَكُمْ مِنْ نّٰصِرِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾ ذٰلِكُمْ بِأَنَّكُمُ اتَّخَذْتُمْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ
هُزُوًا وَغَرَّتْكُمُ الْحَيٰوةُ الدُّنْيَا ۚ فَالْيَوْمَ لَا يُخْرَجُونَ مِنْهَا وَلَا هُمْ يُسْتَعْتَبُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾
فَلِلَّهِ الْحَمْدُ رَبِّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَرَبِّ الْأَرْضِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَلَهُ الْكِبْرِيَاءُ
فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۚ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٣٧﴾

They say, "Life is only this worldly life of ours. Here we shall 24-27
die and live and nothing but the change of time destroys us." In fact, they have no knowledge concerning this: they merely guess.[34] And when Our clear Revelations are recited to them,[35] their only argument is that they say, "Bring back our forefathers if you are truthful."[36] O Prophet, say to them, "It is Allah Who gives you life, then He it is Who causes your death,[37] then He it is Who will gather you together on the Day of Resurrection, which is sure to come,[38] but most people do not know.[39] To Allah belongs the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth,[40] and the Day the Hour of Resurrection arrives, the worshippers of falsehood on that Day shall be doomed to loss."

At that time you will see every nation on their knees.[41] Each 28-35
nation will be summoned to see its record. It will be said to them, "Today you shall be rewarded for what you have done. This is a record which We have prepared: it gives true evidence against you. We were recording all your deeds."[42] Then, those who had believed and done righteous deeds, their Lord shall admit them to His mercy; this is the manifest success! And to those who had disbelieved, it will be said: "Were not My Revelations recited to you? But you showed arrogance[43] and became criminals. And when it was said, 'Allah's promise is true and there is no doubt about the coming of Resurrection', you used to say, 'We do not know what Resurrection is: we do only guess: we are not certain.'"[44] The evils of their deeds then will become manifest to them[45] and they will be encompassed by the same that they used to mock. It will be said to them, "We will today forget you even as you yourselves had forgotten the meeting of this Day. Your abode now is Hell and there is none to help you. You have met this fate because you took Allah's Revelations in jest, and the life of the world deluded you. Therefore, neither shall they be taken out of Hell today, nor shall they be asked to make amends and please their Lord."[46]

So, praise is for Allah alone, Who is the Lord of the heavens 36-37
and the earth and the Lord of all the worlds. To Him belongs Greatness in the heavens and the earth, and He alone is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.

Contd. from p.635]

the forbidden things by Allah as forbidden, nor regarded the things made lawful by Him as lawful." Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣaṣ gives this meaning: "He obeys his lusts as one should obey one's God." Zamakhshari explains it, thus: "He is obedient to the lusts of his self: He follows his self wherever it beckons him, as if he serves him as one should serve one's God." (For further explanation, see E.N. 56 of Al-Furqān, E.N. 63 of Sabā, E N. 53 of Yā Sīn, and E.N. 38 of Ash-Shūrā).

31. The words *adalla hullā-hu 'alā 'ilm-in* may either mean: "The person in spite of being knowledgeable was driven astray by Allah, for he had become a slave of his lusts ;" or "Allah, by virtue of His knowledge that he had made his lusts his god, drove him astray."

32. For the commentary of letting a person go astray and setting a seal upon his heart and ears and a covering on his eyes, see Al-Baqarah: 7, 18, Al-An'ām:25 and E.N. 28, Al-A'rāf: 100, At-Taubah: 87, 93, Yūnus: 74 and E.N. 73, Ar-Ra'd: 27, Ibrahīm: 4, 27, An-Naḥl: 108, Banī Isrā'īl: 46, Ar-Rūm; 59, Fajir: 8 and E.N.'s 16, 17, and E.N. 54 of Al-Mu'minūn).

33. From the context in which this verse occurs, it becomes obvious that only those people deny the Hereafter, who want to serve their lusts and who regard belief in the Hereafter as an obstacle to their freedom. Then, once they have denied the Hereafter, their servitude of the self goes on increasing and they go on wandering further into deviation. They commit every kind of evil without feeling any qualms; they do not hesitate to usurp the rights of others; they cannot be expected to restrain themselves when there is an opportunity for them to commit an excess or injustice only because of a regard for justice and truth in their hearts. The events and incidents that can serve as a warning for a man, are witnessed by them too, but they draw the wrong conclusion that whatever they are doing is right and they should do the same. No word of advice moves them; no argument, which can stop a man from evil, appeals to them; but they go on devising and furnishing more and more arguments to justify their unbridled freedom, and their minds remain day and night engaged only in devising ways and means of fulfilling their own interests and desires in every possible way instead of engaging in a good thought. This is an express proof of the fact that the denial of the Hereafter is destructive for human morals. The only thing that can restrain man within the bounds of humanity is the feeling that man is not irresponsible but has to render an account of his deeds before God. Being devoid of this feeling even if a person is highly learned, he cannot help adopting an attitude and behaviour worse than that of the animals.

34. This is, "There is no means of knowledge by which they might have known with certainty that after this life there is no other life for man, and that man's soul is not seized by the Command of God, but he dies and perishes merely in the course of time. The deniers of the Hereafter say these things not on the basis of any knowledge but on mere conjecture. The maximum that they could say scientifically is: "We do not know whether there is any life after death or not;" but they cannot say: "We know that there is no other life after this life." Likewise, they cannot make the claim of knowing scientifically that man's soul is not seized by God's Command but he perishes after death just like a watch which suddenly stops functioning. The most they can say is just this: "We do not know what exactly happens in either case." Now the question is: When to the extent of the means of human knowledge there is an equal possibility of there being life after death or there being no life after death, and the soul's being seized by Allah's Command, or man's dying of himself in the course of time, what is the reason that these people abandon the probability of the possibility of the Hereafter and give their judgement in favour of its denial? Do they have any other reason than this that they, in fact, decide this question on the basis of their desire and not by any argument? As they do not like that there should be any life after death and death should mean total annihilation and not seizure of the soul by Allah's Command, they make their heart's desire their creed and deny the other probability."

35. "Our clear Revelations": the Revelations in which strong arguments have been given for the possibility of the Hereafter and in which it has been stated that its occurrence is the demand of both wisdom and justice, and its non-occurrence renders the whole system of the universe meaningless and absurd.

36. In other words, what they meant to say was: When somebody tells them that there is life after death, he must raise a dead person from the grave and present him before them. And if this is not done, they cannot believe that the dead would ever be raised to life once again at some time in the future, whereas nobody ever told them that the dead would be raised to life in this world as and when required separately, but what was said was: On the Day of Resurrection Allah will raise all human beings to life simultaneously and will subject them to accountability and punish and reward them accordingly.

37. This is the answer to their saying that death comes to man automatically in the course of time. It means: "Neither you get life accidentally nor your death occurs automatically. It is God Who gives you life and it is He Who takes it away."

38. This is the answer to their demand: "Bring back our forefathers if you are truthful." To this it has been said: "This will not happen now separately for individuals, but a Day has been fixed for gathering all mankind together."

39. That is, "It is lack of knowledge and right understanding which is the real cause of the people's denying the Hereafter; otherwise it is not its coming but its not coming which is against reason. If a person reflects rightly on the system of the universe and on his own self, he will himself realize that there can be no doubt about the coming of the Hereafter."

40. In view of the context, this sentence by itself gives the meaning that it is not at all beyond the power of God Who is ruling over this great and marvellous universe that He should bring the human beings whom He has created in the first instance back into existence once again.

41. That is, the dread and terror of the Plain of Resurrection and the awe of the Divine Court will be such that it will break the stubbornness of the most arrogant and boastful people, and everyone will be found fallen on his knees humbly.

42. The only possible way of getting a thing recorded is not by means of the pen and paper only. Man himself has discovered in this world several other forms of recording human words and actions and reproducing them exactly and accurately; and we cannot even imagine what other possibilities of it lie yet undiscovered, which man himself will discover and exploit in the future. Now, who can know how and by what means is Allah getting recorded man's every word, his every movement and action, even his hidden intentions and motives and desires and ideas, and how He will place before every man and every group and every nation his or its whole lifework accurately and exactly ?

43 That is, "You thought it was below your dignity to believe in Allah's Revelations and submit to them, and considered yourselves to be above subjection and servitude."

44. The people mentioned in verse 24 above were those who denied the Hereafter openly and absolutey, here those who are not sure of it although they do not deny its possibility because of conjecture. Apparently there is a vast difference between the two groups in that one of them denies the Hereafter absolutely and the other regards it as possible on the basis of conjecture. But as for the result and final end, there is no difference between them, for the moral consequences of the denial of the Hereafter and of lack of the faith in it are the same. A person whether he disbelieves in the Hereafter or lacks faith in it, will in either case be inevitably devoid of the feeling of accountability before God, and this lack of feeling will necessarily involve him in the error and deviation of thought and

action. Only faith and belief in the Hereafter can keep a man on the right track in the world. In the absence of it, both doubt and denial give him a similar attitude of irresponsibility, and since this same attitude of irresponsibility is the real cause of man's being doomed in the Hereafter, therefore neither the denier of it can escape Hell nor the one who lacks faith in it.

45. That is, "There they will come to know that their ways of behaviour, their practices and manners, and their actions and pastimes, which they regarded as very good in the world were, in fact, very bad: they had committed a basic mistake in thinking that they were not answerable to anyone, and this had rendered their whole lifework fruitless and vain."

46. This last sentence depicts the manner of a master who after rebuking some of his servants turns to others and says: "Well, these wretched people now deserve such and such punishment!"



XLVI

AL-AḤQĀF

الاحقاف

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XLVI
AL-AḤQĀF

الاحقاف

INTRODUCTION

Name

It is derived from the sentence *idh andhara qauma-hū bil Aḥqāf-i* of verse 21.

Period of Revelation

It is determined by an historical event that has been mentioned in vv. 29-32. This incident of the visit of the jinn and their going back after listening to the Qur'ān had occurred, according to agreed traditions of the *Ḥadith* and biographical literature, at the time when the Holy

Prophet had halted at Nakhlah during his return journey from Ṭā'if to Makkah. And according to all authentic historical traditions he had gone to Tā'if three years before the *Hijrah;* therefore it is determined that this Sūrah was sent down towards the end of the 10th year or in the early part of the 11th year of the Prophethood.

Historical Background

The 10th year of the Prophethood was a year of extreme persecution and distress in the Holy Prophet's life. The Quraish and the other tribes had continued their boycott of the Bani Ḥāshim and the Muslims for three years and the Holy Prophet and the people of his family and Companions lay besieged in Shi'b Abi Ṭālib.[1] The Quraish had blocked up this locality from every side so that no supplies of any kind could reach the besieged people. Only during the Ḥajj season they were allowed to come out and buy some articles of necessity. But even at that time whenever Abu Lahab noticed any of them approaching the market place or a trading caravan he would call out to the merchants exhorting them to announce forbidding rates of their articles for them, and would pledge that he himself would buy those articles so that they did not suffer any loss. This boycott which continued un-interrupted for three years had broken the back of the Muslims and the Bani Hāshim; so much so that at times they were even forced to eat grass and the leaves of trees.

At last, when the siege was lifted, Abu Ṭālib, the Holy Prophet's uncle, who had been shielding him for ten long years, died, and hardly a month later his wife, Ḥaḍrat Khadijah, who had been a source of peace and consolation for him ever since the beginning of the call, also passed away. Because of these tragic incidents, which closely followed each other, the Holy Prophet used to refer to this year as the year of sorrow and grief.

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1. Shi'b Abi Ṭālib was a locality of Makkah inhabited by the Bani Hāshim. As it was located in one of the ravines of the Mount Abū Qubais and Abū Ṭālib was the chief of the Banī Hāshim, it was called Shi'b Abi Tālib. It lay by the house which according to local tradition is well known as the birthplace of the Holy Prophet in Makkah. Now it is called Shi'b 'Alī or Shi'b Banī Hāshim.

After the death of Ḥaḍart Khadījah and Abu Ṭālib the disbelievers of Makkah became even bolder against the Holy Prophet. They started treating him even more harshly. So much so that it became difficult for him to step out of his house. Of these days Ibn Hishām has related the incident that a Quraish scoundrel one day threw dust at him openly in the street.

At last, the Holy Prophet left for Ṭā'if with the intention that he should invite the Banī Ṭhaqīf to Islam, for even if they did not accept Islam, they might at least be persuaded to allow him to work for his mission peacefully. He did not have the facility of any conveyance at that time, and travelled all the way to Ṭā'if on foot. According to some traditions, he had gone there alone, but according to others, he was accompanied by Zaid bin Ḥārithah. He stayed at Ṭā'if for a few days, and approached each of the chiefs and nobles of the Banī Ṭhaqīf and talked to him about his mission. But not only they refused to listen to him, but plainly gave him the notice that he should leave their city, for they feared that his preaching might "spoil" their younger generation. Thus, he was compelled to leave Ṭā'if. When he was leaving the city, the chiefs of Thaqīf set their slaves and scoundrels behind him, who went on crying at him, abusing him and pelting him with stones for a long way from either side of the road till he became broken down with wounds and his shoes were filled with blood. Wearied and exhausted he took shelter in the shade of the wall of a garden outside Ṭā'if, and prayed:

"O God, to Thee I complain of my weakness, little resource, and lowliness before men. O Most Merciful, Thou art the Lord of the weak, and Thou art my Lord. To whom wilt Thou confide me? To one afar who will misuse me? Or to an enemy to whom Thou hast given power over me? If Thou art not angry with me I care not. Thy favour is more wide for me. I take refuge in the light of Thy countenance by which the darkness is illumined, and the things of this world and the next are rightly ordered, lest Thy anger descend upon me or Thy wrath light upon me. It is for Thee to be satisfied until Thou art well pleased. There is no power and no might save in Thee." (Ibn Hishām: A. Guillaume's Translation, p. 193).

Grieved and heart-broken when he returned and reached near Qarn al-Manāzil, he felt as though the sky was overcast by clouds. He looked up and saw Gabriel in front of him, who called out: "Allah has heard the way your people have responded. He has, therefore, sent this angel incharge of the mountains. You may command him as you please." Then the angel of the mountains greeted him and submitted: "If you like I would overturn the mountains from either side upon these people." The Holy Prophet replied: "No, but I expect that Allah will create from their seed those who will worship none but Allah, the One." (Bukhāri, *Dhikr al Malā'ikah;* Muslim: *Kitāb al-Maghazi;* Nasa'i: *Al Ba'ūth).*

After this he went to stay for a few days at Nakhlah, perplexed as to how he would face the people of Makkah, who, he thought, would be still further emboldened against him after hearing what had happened at Tā'if. It was here that one night when he was reciting the Qur'ān in the Prayer, a group of the jinn happened to pass by and listened to the Qur'ān, believed in it, and returned to their people to preach Islam. Thus, Allah gave His Prophet the good news that if the men were running away from his invitation, there were many of the jinn, who had become its believers, and they were spreading his message among their own kind.

Subject-Matter and Topics

Such were the conditions when this Sūrah was sent down. Anyone who keeps this background in view, on the one hand, and studies this Sūrah, on the other, will have no doubt left in his mind that this is not at all the composition of Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), but "a Revelation from the All-Mighty, All-Wise Allah." For nowhere in this Sūrah, from the beginning to the end, does one find even a tinge of the human feelings and reactions, which are naturally produced in a man who is passing through such hard conditions. Had it been the word of Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) whom the occurrence of personal griefs one after the other and the countless and the recent bitter experience at Ṭā'if had caused extreme anguish and distress, it would have reflected in some degree the state of the mind of the man who was the subject of these afflictions and griefs. Consider the prayer that we have cited above: it contains his own language: its every

word is saturated with the feelings that he had at the time. But this Sūrah which was sent down precisely in the same period and was recited even by him under the same conditions, is absolutely free from every sign or trace of the time.

The subject-matter of the Sūrah is to warn the disbelivers of the errors in which they were involved, and also persisted arrogantly, and were condemning the man who was trying to redeem them. They regarded the world as a useless and purposeless place where they were not answerable to anyone. They thought that invitation to *Tauḥīd* was false and stuck to the belief that their own deities were actually the associates of Allah. They were not inclined to believe that the Qur'ān was the Word of the Lord of the worlds. They had a strange erroneous concept of apostleship on the basis of which they were proposing strange criteria of judging the Holy Prophet's claim to it. In their estimation one great proof of Islam's not being based on the truth was that their elders and important chiefs of the tribes and so called leaders of their nation were not accepting it and only a few young men, and some poor folks and some slaves had affirmed faith in it. They thought that Resurrection and life after death and the rewards and punishments of the Hereafter were fabrications whose occurrence was absolutely out of the question.

In this Sūrah each of these misconceptions has been refuted in a brief but rational way, and the disbelievers have been warned that if they would reject the invitation of the Qur'ān and the Prophethood of the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) by prejudice and stubbornness instead of trying to understand its truth rationally, they would only be preparing for their own doom.

سُوْرَةُ الْاَحْقَافِ مَكِّيَّةٌ

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

حٰمٓ ۚ تَنْزِيْلُ الْكِتٰبِ مِنَ اللّٰهِ الْعَزِيْزِ الْحَكِيْمِ ۚ مَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَالْاَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَآ اِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَاَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۭ وَالَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا عَمَّآ
اُنْذِرُوْا مُعْرِضُوْنَ ۝ قُلْ اَرَءَيْتُمْ مَّا تَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ ۭ اَرُوْنِيْ مَاذَا
خَلَقُوْا مِنَ الْاَرْضِ اَمْ لَهُمْ شِرْكٌ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ ۭ ائْتُوْنِيْ بِكِتٰبٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِ هٰذَآ
اَوْ اَثٰرَةٍ مِّنْ عِلْمٍ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ۝ وَمَنْ اَضَلُّ مِمَّنْ يَّدْعُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِ
اللّٰهِ مَنْ لَّا يَسْتَجِيْبُ لَهٗٓ اِلٰى يَوْمِ الْقِيٰمَةِ وَهُمْ عَنْ دُعَاۗىِٕهِمْ غٰفِلُوْنَ ۝ وَ
اِذَا حُشِرَ النَّاسُ كَانُوْا لَهُمْ اَعْدَاۗءً وَّكَانُوْا بِعِبَادَتِهِمْ كٰفِرِيْنَ ۝ وَاِذَا تُتْلٰى
عَلَيْهِمْ اٰيٰتُنَا بَيِّنٰتٍ قَالَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لِلْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاۗءَهُمْ ۙ هٰذَا سِحْرٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ۝
اَمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ افْتَرٰىهُ ۭ قُلْ اِنِ افْتَرَيْتُهٗ فَلَا تَمْلِكُوْنَ لِيْ مِنَ اللّٰهِ شَيْـــًٔا ۭ هُوَ
اَعْلَمُ بِمَا تُفِيْضُوْنَ فِيْهِ ۭ كَفٰى بِهٖ شَهِيْدًۢا بَيْنِيْ وَبَيْنَكُمْ ۭ وَهُوَ الْغَفُوْرُ
الرَّحِيْمُ ۝ قُلْ مَا كُنْتُ بِدْعًا مِّنَ الرُّسُلِ وَمَآ اَدْرِيْ مَا يُفْعَلُ بِيْ وَلَا بِكُمْ ۭ
اِنْ اَتَّبِعُ اِلَّا مَا يُوْحٰٓى اِلَيَّ وَمَآ اَنَا اِلَّا نَذِيْرٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ۝ قُلْ اَرَءَيْتُمْ اِنْ كَانَ
مِنْ عِنْدِ اللّٰهِ وَكَفَرْتُمْ بِهٖ وَشَهِدَ شَاهِدٌ مِّنْ بَنِيْٓ اِسْرَاۗءِيْلَ عَلٰي مِثْلِهٖ
فَاٰمَنَ وَاسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ۝ وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ
كَفَرُوْا لِلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَوْ كَانَ خَيْرًا مَّا سَبَقُوْنَآ اِلَيْهِ ۭ وَاِذْ لَمْ يَهْتَدُوْا بِهٖ
فَسَيَقُوْلُوْنَ هٰذَآ اِفْكٌ قَدِيْمٌ ۝ وَمِنْ قَبْلِهٖ كِتٰبُ مُوْسٰٓى اِمَامًا وَّرَحْمَةً ۭ
وَهٰذَا كِتٰبٌ مُّصَدِّقٌ لِّسَانًا عَرَبِيًّا لِّيُنْذِرَ الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا ۠ وَبُشْرٰى

XLVI
AL AḤQĀF

الاحقاف

Verses: 35 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Hā-Mīm. The revelation of this Book is from the All-Mighty, All-Wise Allah. 1-2

We have created the heavens and the earth and all that lies between them with the truth and to last for an appointed term,[2] but the disbelievers are turning away from the reality of which they have been warned.[3] 3

O Prophet, say to them, "Have you ever seen with open eyes those whom you invoke instead of Allah? Show me what they have created in the world, or, have they any share in the creation and control of the heavens? Bring me a Book revealed before this, or produce some remnant of knowledge (in support of your beliefs) if you are truthful."[4] And who could be further astray than the one who invokes, instead of Allah, those who cannot answer him till the Day of Resurrection?[5] Nay, they are even unaware that they are being invoked.[6] And when all mankind shall be gathered together, they will become enemies of those who invoked them and will disown their worship.[7] 4-6

Whenever Our clear Revelations are recited to them and the Truth comes before them, the disbelievers say, "This is plain magic."[8] Do they mean to say that the Messenger himself has fabricated it?[9] Say to them, "If I have fabricated it myself, you will not be able to do anything to save me from Allah's punishment. Allah knows full well whatever you utter. He is enough as a witness between me and you ;[10] and He is the All-Forgiving, the All-Merciful."[11] 7-8

Say to them, "I am not a novel Messenger, I do not know what shall befall you tomorrow nor what shall befall me. I only follow that 9-10

which is revealed to me, and I am no more than a warner."[12] O Prophet, say to them, "Have you ever considered that if this (Qur'ān) were really from Allah, and yet you denied it, (what would be your end)?[13] And a witness from among the children of Israel has already borne witness to the like of it; he believed while you showed arrogance.[14] Allah does not show guidance to such wrongdoers."

11-12 Those who have refused to believe say with regard to those who have believed, "If it had been any good to believe in this Book, they would not have believed in it before us."[15] As they have not received any guidance from it, they will surely say, "This is an ancient falsehood."[16] Yet before it there has come the Book of Moses as a guide and a mercy, and this Book has been revealed to confirm it in the Arabic tongue so as to warn the wrongdoers[17] and to give good news to those who have adopted the righteous conduct.

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1. For explanation, see E. N. 1 of Sūrah Az-Zumar, E. N. 1 of Al-Jāthiyah and also E. N. 1 of As-Sajdah for understanding the true spirit of this introduction.

2. For explanation, see Al-An'ām: 73, Yūnus: 5-6, Ibrāhīm: 19, Al-Hijr: 85, An-Nahl: 3, Al-Anbiyā,: 16-18. Al-Mu'minūn: 115, Al-'Ankabūt: 44, Ar-Rūm: 8 and the corresponding E.N.'s.

3. That is, "The actual fact is that this universe is not a purposeless plaything but a purposeful, wise system in which the decisions regarding the good and the bad, the oppressor and the oppressed, will necessarily be based on justice; and the present system of the universe is not permanent and eternal, but it has a fixed term appointed for it on the expiry of which it will inevitably come to an end. For the Court of Allah also there is a settled time and it will certainly be established when the time for it reaches its term. But the people who have refused to believe in Allah's Prophet and His Book, have an aversion to these truths. They are least mindful of this that a time has to come when they will have to render an account of their deeds. They think that the Messenger of Allah has done them a great wrong by warning them of these truths, whereas he has done them a great good by fore-warning them not only of the time when they will be subjected to accountability but also of what they will be questioned at that time so that they may prepare themselves accordingly."

To understand the following discourse it should be borne in mind that man's basic error is the one that he commits with regard to determining his belief about God. In this regard, the adoption of a creed carelessly on the basis of mere

hearsay, without any serious and deep thought and investigation, is a stupendous folly, which vitiates man's whole attitude to life in the world and ruins his destiny for ever afterwards. But the reason why man becomes involved in this dangerous kind of heedlessness is that he regards himself as irresponsible and un-answerable and develops the misunderstanding that whatever creed he may adopt about God, it would make no difference, because either there is no life after death in which he might have to face accountability, or if there is any such life and he is also called to account, the beings of whom he is a devotee, will save him from any evil fate. This same lack of the sense of responsibility renders him frivolous in the selection of a religious creed, and on the basis of the same he fabricates all sorts of absurd creeds, from atheism to every form of polytheism, or adopts the creeds fabricated by others.

4. As the addresses are a polytheistic people they are being told the reality of the irrational creed in which they persisted carelessly due to lack of the sense of responsibility. Along with acknowledging Allah as the Creator of the universe they had made many other beings their deities: they invoked them, regarded them as fulfillers of their needs and removers of hardships: prostrated themselves and made offerings before them, and thought they had the powers of making and un-making of their destinies. About the same beings, they are being asked: "On what basis have you made them your deities ?" Obviously, there can be only two bases for regarding someone as an associate in worship along with Allah: either man himself should know through some means of knowledge that his deity too has a share in making the earth and heavens, or Allah Himself may have stated that so-and-so also is His associate in the functions of Godhead. Now, if a polytheist can neither make the claim that he possesses direct knowledge of his deity's being an associate of God, nor he can show in a Book sent by God that God Himself has appointed somebody as His associate, his creed would inevitably be baseless.

In this verse, "a Book revealed before this" implies a Book sent by Allah before the Qur'ān, and "some remnant" of knowledge implies some part of the teachings of the Prophets and righteous men of the ancient times, which may have reached the later generations reliably. There is no tinge of *shirk* in whatever man has received through these two means. All the heavenly Books unanimously present the same *Tauḥīd* to which the Qur'ān invites the people, and no existing remnant of the ancient lore bears evidence to this that some Prophet or saint or righteous man might have taught the people to serve and worship any other than God. Even if we do not take a Book to mean a Divine Book and remnant of knowledge the knowledge bequeathed by the Prophets and righteous men, no authentic book or the research made by a scholar of religious or secular lore has pointed out that such and such a thing in the earth or the heavens has been created by such and such a saint or god, or a certain blessing of the blessings of life which

man is benefiting from in the universe has been created by such and such a deity instead of God.

5. "Cannot answer him": Cannot answer the supplications of any one. That is, these gods do not possess the powers by virtue of which they could give decisions on the prayers and petitions of their devotees. (For further explanation, see E.N. 33 of Az-Zumar).

"Till the Day of Resurrection" means that as long as the world lasts they will get no answer to their supplications and prayers from their deities, but when Resurrection will have taken place, the deities will turn hostile to their worshippers themselves, as becomes explicit from the next verse.

6. That is, "they do not even hear the supplications of the supplicants, neither through their own ears nor through any other means." This thing can be elaborated like this: The being whom the polytheists the world over have been invoking are divided into three categories: (1) Lifeless and inanimate creation; (2) the pious men who have passed away; and (3) the wicked men who had themselves gone astray, and who misled others and passed away. As for the first category of the deities they will naturally remain unaware of the supplications of their worshippers. As for the deities of the second kind, who were favourites with their God, there are two reasons of their remaining unaware: (a) They are in the presence of Allah in a state where human voices cannot reach them directly; and (b) even Allah and His angels do not inform them that the people whom they had been teaching to invoke Allah alone in the world, were invoking them instead, for no information could cause them a greater shock than this, and Allah does not at all like to vex the souls of His righteous servants. Now if we consider the case of the third kind of the deities, we shall see that there are two reasons also of their remaining unaware: (a) That they have been placed in confinement as the accused, and no voice from the world can reach them; and (b) that even Allah and His angels do not convey to them the news that their mission is flourishing in the world, and the people have set them up as deities, for this news would be a happy news for them, and Allah does not like to make the wicked people happy.

In this connection, one should also understand that Allah conveys to His righteous servants the greetings of peace and prayers of mercy from the people of the world, for these things are a source of joy and pleasure for them; likewise, He informs the culprits of the curses, censures and condemnations of the people of the world, as the disbelievers killed in the Battle of Badr were made to hear the curse of the Holy Prophet according to a *Hadith*, for it is a cause of anguish for them. But anything which might cause distress to the righteous people and joy to the culprits is not conveyed to them. This explanation makes the truth about the question of hearing by the dead plain and easy to understand.

7. That is, they will say: "We had neither told the people to invoke us for help, nor are we aware that they used to invoke us. They themselves had presumed that we could fulfil their needs and so had started invoking us."

8. It means: When the Revelations of the Qur'ān were recited before the disbelievers of Makkah, they realized that the Qur'ān was far superior to human speech. The compositions of their greatest poets, orators and literary men were no match with the un-paralleled eloquence, enchanting oratory, sublime themes and heart-moving style of the Qur'ān. Above all, even the Holy Prophet's own words and speech were not comparable with the discourses that were being sent down to him by God. Those who had known him since childhood knew full well the vast difference that was there between his language and words and the words of the Qur'ān, and it was not possible for them to believe that a man who had been living day and night among them for forty years would suddenly one day forge a speech whose diction and style would bear no resemblance with his familiar and known manner of speech and style. This thing made the truth plain before them, but since they were bent upon denial, they would say: "This is plain magic," instead of acknowledging it as Divine Word after witnessing this manifest Sign. (They regarded the Qur'ān as magic from another aspect also, which we have explained in our commentary of Al-Anbiyā' :3 and E:.N. 5 of Sūrah Suād).

9. This interrogative tone expresses great surprise and amazement. It means to say: "Are these people so shameless that they accuse Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) of fabricating the Qur'ān himself? Whereas they know that it cannot be his word; and their calling it magic is by itself an express proof that they regard it as an extraordinary word, which cannot be of human composition even according to themselves."

10. As it was quite evident that their accusation was baseless and motivated by stubbornness, there was no need to present arguments to refute it. Therefore, only this much was regarded as a sufficient response: "If I have really fabricated something and committed a grave crime by imputing it to Allah, as you accuse me of, you will not be able to rescue me from Allah's punishment. But if it is really Allah's Word, and you are rejecting it by bringing false accusations, Allah Himself will deal with you. For the reality is not hidden from Allah, and He is sufficient to decide between the truth and falsehood. If the whole world calls some one a liar, although he is truthful in Allah's knowledge, the final decision will be in his favour. On the country: if the whole world regards some one as truthful, though he is a liar in the knowledge of Allah, he will be regarded as a liar in the final judgement. Therefore, do not confuse things but pay heed to your final end."

11. Here, this sentence gives two meanings: (1) "It is in fact Allah's mercy and His forbearance that these people are surviving in the world, although they have no hesitation in declaring Allah's Word as falsehood; otherwise if a merciless and cruel god had been the master of this universe, he would not have allowed such insolent people to live even for a moment in the world." (2) "O unjust people, if you give up your stubbornness even now, the door of God's mercy is still open for you, and whatever misdeeds you may have committed heretofore can be forgiven."

12. Its background is this: When the Holy Prophet presented himself as Allah's Messenger, the people of Makkah raised different kinds of objections against it. They said: "what kind of a Messenger he is who has a family, who moves about in the streets, eats and drinks and lives a common man's life. There is nothing special about him, which might distinguish him above the other people and therefore we may know that Allah has specially made this man His Messenger." Then they said: "Had he been appointed a Messenger by God, He would have sent an angel as an attendant with him who would have announced that he was God's Messenger, and would have punished with a scourge every such person who had behaved insolently towards him. How strange that God should appoint a person as His Messenger and then should leave him alone to roam the streets of Makkah and suffer every kind of humiliation. If nothing else Allah should at least have created a magnificent palace and a blooming garden for His Messenger. He should not have been left to depend on his wife's resources so that when they exhausted the Messenger should be forced to go without food and should not even afford a conveyance to Ṭā'if." Besides, these people demanded different kinds of miracles from him and asked news of the unseen. They thought that a person's being God's Messenger meant that he should possess supernatural powers so that mountains should move at his bidding and deserts at once turn into green fields; he should have the knowledge of the past and the future events and of everything hidden from others.

An answer to the same has been given in these sentences, and each sentence contains a world of meaning.

First, it is said: "Tell them: I am not a novel Messenger." That is, "My being appointed as a Messenger is not a novel event of its kind in the world so that you may have some confusion about the characteristics of a Messenger. Many Messengers have come to the world before me, and I am not any different from them. Never has a Messenger come, who did not have a family, who did not eat and drink, or who did not live a common man's life. Never has an angel descended as an attendant with a Messenger, heralding his prophethood and carrying a whip before him. Never have gardens and palaces been created for a Messenger and never has a Messenger been spared of the hardships which I am

suffering. Never has a Messenger shown a mircle by his own power, or known everything by his own knowledge. Then, how is it that you are bringing forth these strange criteria only to judge my Prophethood?"

Then it is said: Tell them also : "I do not know what shall befall you tomorrow nor what shall befall me. I only follow that which is revealed to me." That is, "I am not a knower of the unseen so that everything of the past and present and future should be known to me, and I should have the knowledge of everything in the world. Not to speak of your future, I do not even know my own future. I only know that of which I am given knowledge by revelation. More than that I have never claimed to know, nor has there ever been a Messenger in the world, who made that claim. It is not a Messenger's job to tell the whereabouts of the lost articles, or tell whether a pregnant woman will deliver a boy or a girl, or whether a sick patient will live or die."

In conclusion, it is said: "Say to them: I am no more than a plain warner." That is, "I do not possess Divine powers so that I may show you the wonderful miracles that you demand from me every next day. My only mission is that I should present the right way before the people, and should warn of an evil end those who do not accept it."

13. This same theme has been expressed in another way in Sūrah Ḥa-Mīm As-Sajdah: 62 above. For explanation, see E.N. 69 of the said Sūrah.

14. A large number of the commentators have taken this "witness" to imply Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Salām, who was a famous Jewish scholar of Madīnah, and who believed in the Holy Prophet after the migration. As this thing happened in Madīnah, these commentators say that this verse was revealed at Madīnah. This commentary is based on a statement of Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin Abi Waqqaṣ according to which this verse was sent down in respect of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Salām (Bukhārī, Muslim, Nasā'ī Ibn Jarīr); and on the same basis have several major commentators like Ibn 'Abbas, Mujāhid, Qatādah, Ḍaḥḥāk, Ibn Sīrīn, Ḥasan Baṣri, Ibn Zaid and 'Auf bin Mālik al-Ashja'ī accepted this commentary. But, on the other hand, 'Ikrimah and Sha'bī and Masrūq say that this verse cannot be about 'Abdullah bin Salām (may Allah be pleased with him) for this entire Sūrah was sent down at Makkah. Ibn Jarīr Ṭabarī also has preferred this view. He says: The whole previous discourse is an address directed to the pagans of Makkah and the following discourse also is directed to them. In this context it is not conceivable that a verse revealed at Madīnah was inserted here. The later commentators who have accepted this second version, do not reject the tradition of Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin Abī Waqqaṣ, but have opined that as this verse also applies to Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Salām's affirmation of the faith, Ḥaḍrat Sa'd expressed the opinion, in the

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لِلْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿١٣﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ قَالُوْا رَبُّنَا اللّٰهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوْا فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا
هُمْ يَحْزَنُوْنَ ﴿١٤﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ اَصْحٰبُ الْجَنَّةِ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا جَزَآءًۢ بِمَا كَانُوْا
يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿١٥﴾ وَوَصَّيْنَا الْاِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ اِحْسٰنًا حَمَلَتْهُ اُمُّهٗ كُرْهًا وَّوَضَعَتْهُ
كُرْهًا وَحَمْلُهٗ وَفِصٰلُهٗ ثَلٰثُوْنَ شَهْرًا حَتّٰٓى اِذَا بَلَغَ اَشُدَّهٗ وَبَلَغَ اَرْبَعِيْنَ
سَنَةً قَالَ رَبِّ اَوْزِعْنِيْٓ اَنْ اَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِيْٓ اَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلٰى
وَالِدَيَّ وَاَنْ اَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضٰىهُ وَاَصْلِحْ لِيْ فِيْ ذُرِّيَّتِيْ اِنِّيْ تُبْتُ
اِلَيْكَ وَاِنِّيْ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِيْنَ ﴿١٦﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ نَتَقَبَّلُ عَنْهُمْ اَحْسَنَ مَا عَمِلُوْا
وَنَتَجَاوَزُ عَنْ سَيِّاٰتِهِمْ فِيْٓ اَصْحٰبِ الْجَنَّةِ وَعْدَ الصِّدْقِ الَّذِيْ كَانُوْا
يُوْعَدُوْنَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَالَّذِيْ قَالَ لِوَالِدَيْهِ اُفٍّ لَّكُمَآ اَتَعِدٰنِنِيْٓ اَنْ اُخْرَجَ وَقَدْ خَلَتِ
الْقُرُوْنُ مِنْ قَبْلِيْ وَهُمَا يَسْتَغِيْثٰنِ اللّٰهَ وَيْلَكَ اٰمِنْ اِنَّ وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ حَقٌّ
فَيَقُوْلُ مَا هٰذَآ اِلَّآ اَسَاطِيْرُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿١٨﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ حَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَوْلُ
فِيْٓ اُمَمٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْاِنْسِ اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا خٰسِرِيْنَ ﴿١٩﴾
وَلِكُلٍّ دَرَجٰتٌ مِّمَّا عَمِلُوْا وَلِيُوَفِّيَهُمْ اَعْمَالَهُمْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَيَوْمَ
يُعْرَضُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا عَلَى النَّارِ اَذْهَبْتُمْ طَيِّبٰتِكُمْ فِيْ حَيَاتِكُمُ الدُّنْيَا وَ
اسْتَمْتَعْتُمْ بِهَا فَالْيَوْمَ تُجْزَوْنَ عَذَابَ الْهُوْنِ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَسْتَكْبِرُوْنَ فِي
الْاَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَفْسُقُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَاذْكُرْ اَخَا عَادٍ اِذْ اَنْذَرَ قَوْمَهٗ
بِالْاَحْقَافِ وَقَدْ خَلَتِ النُّذُرُ مِنْۢ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهٖٓ اَلَّا تَعْبُدُوْٓا اِلَّا
اللّٰهَ اِنِّيْٓ اَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيْمٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ قَالُوْٓا اَجِئْتَنَا لِتَاْفِكَنَا عَنْ اٰلِهَتِنَا
فَاْتِنَا بِمَا تَعِدُنَآ اِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ قَالَ اِنَّمَا الْعِلْمُ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ وَ

Indeed, those who said, "Allah alone is our Lord," then remained steadfast, they shall neither neither have anything to fear nor shall they grieve.[18] They all shall go to Paradise wherein they shall live for ever, a reward for the deeds they did in the world. 13-14

We have enjoined man to treat his parents with kindness. His mother bore him with hardship and she gave him birth with hardship, and his bearing and his weaning took thirty months,[19] until when he attained to his full strength and became forty years old, he said, "O my Lord, grant me the grace that I may thank You for the favours You have bestowed on me and on my parents, and that I should do such good works as may please You,[20] and make my children also good to comfort me. I turn to You in penitence and I am of those who have surrendered to You (as Muslims)." From such people We accept the best of their deeds and overlook their evils.[21] They will be among the dwellers of Paradise according to the true promise that has been made to them (here). But the one who said to his parents, "Fie upon you! what, do you frighten me with this that I shall be taken out of the grave after death? whereas many a generation has passed away before me (and none has risen from among them). The mother and father cry for Allah's help and say, "Believe, O wretch! Allah's promise is true." But he says, "These are nothing but tales of the ancient times." Such are the people against whom the decision of torment has already been decreed. They will also join those hosts of the jinns and men (of their own kind) who have passed away before them. Indeed, they are the losers.[22] Each one of the two groups will have their ranks according to their deeds so that Allah may reward them fully for what they have done, and they shall not be wronged at all.[23] When the disbelievers are mustered at the Fire, it will be said to them, "You have exhausted your share of the good things in your life of the world and you enjoyed them fully. Today you shall be punished with a torment of disgrace in consequence of the arrogance that you showed on the earth, without any right, and the transgressions that you committed."[24] 15-20

And relate to them the story of the brother of 'Ād (Hūd), when he warned his people in Aḥqāf[25]—and such warners had preceded as well as followed him—saying, "Worship none but Allah. I fear for you the torment of a dreadful day." They said, "Have you come to seduce us away from our own gods ? Well, bring down your torment with 21-23

which you threaten us, if you are really truthful." He said, "The knowledge of this is with Allah.[26] I am only conveying to you the message with which I have been sent. But I see that you are a people sunk in ignorance."[27]

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tradition of the ancients, that it was sent down with regard to him. This does not, however, mean that when he believed, it was revealed then about him only, but that this verse precisely applied to him and his acceptance of Islam.

Apparently, this second view seems to be more correct and reasonable. Now, the question that remains to be answered is: Who is implied by this "witness?" Some of the commentators who have accepted the second view say that it implies the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him), but the following sentence: "He believed while you showed arrogance", bears no relevance to this explanation. What seems to be nearer the truth is that which the commentator Nisabūrī and Ibn Kathīr have stated. They say: Here, by "a witness" is not meant any particular person but a common Israelite. The meaning is this; "The teachings that the Qur'ān is presenting before you are not new so that you could deny them by offering the excuse that they were novel teachings which had never been presented before man in the past. Before this these very teachings have been similarly revealed and exist with the Israelites in the form of the Torah and other scriptures, and a common Israelite has already believed in them, and also admitted that Allah's Revelation is a means of the coming down of these teachings. Therefore, you cannot make the claim that Revelation and these teachings are incomprehensible. The only thing that hinders you from believing is your arrogance and baseless conceit."

15. This is one of those arguments that the chiefs of the Quraish employed to beguile and mislead the common people against the Holy Prophet. They said: If the Qur'ān were really based on the truth and Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) were inviting towards a right thing, the chiefs and the elders and the noblemen of the community would have been in the forefront to accept it. How could it be that a few young boys and mean slaves only should accept a reasonable thing but the distinguished men of the nation, who are wise and experienced, and who have been held as reliable by others, would reject it? This was the deceptive reasoning by which they tried to make the common people believe that there was something wrong with the new message; that is why the elders of the people were not believing it; therefore, they also should avoid it.

16. That is, "They regard themselves as a criterion of the truth and falsehood. They think that whatever (guidance) they reject must be falsehood. But

they cannot dare call it a "new falsehood" for before it also the Prophets have been presenting the same teachings, and all the heavenly scriptures which the followers of the previous Books possess, are full of the same beliefs and instructions. Therefore, they call it an "ancient falsehood." In other words, they seem to think that all those people who have been presenting these truths and those accepting them since thousands of years also were devoid of wisdom and knowledge, and the whole wisdom has now become these people's monopoly."

17. "To warn the wrongdoers :" To warn of the evil end those who are being unjust to themselves and to the truth itself by disbelieving in Allah and serving others than Allah, and are involved because of this deviation of theirs in the evils of morals and deeds, which have filled human society with every kind of wickedness and injustice.

18. For explanation, see E.N.'s 33 to 35 of Ḥā-Mīm As-Sajdah.

19. This verse tells that although the children should serve both the mother and the father, the mother's right is greater in importance, on the ground that she undergoes greater hardships for the sake of the children. The same is borne out by a *Ḥadith*, which has been related with a little variation in wording in Bukhāri, Muslim, Abu Dā'ūd, Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah, Musnad Aḥmad, and in *Adab al-Mufrad* of Imam Bukhāri, to the effect that a person asked the Holy Prophet: "Who has got a greater right to my service? The Holy Prophet replied: Your mother. He asked: Who after her? He replied: Your mother. He asked: Who after her? He replied: Your mother. He asked: Who after her? He replied: Your father." This *Ḥadith* precisely explains this verse, for in it also allusion has been made to the triple right of the mother: His mother bore him with hardship; (2) she gave him birth with hardship; and (3) his bearing and his weaning took thirty months.

Another legal point also is derived from this verse and verse 14 of Sūrah Luqmān and verse 233 of Al-Baqarah, which was pointed out by Ḥaḍrat 'Alī and Ḥaḍrat Ibn 'Abbās in a law case and made Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān change his decision. The story goes that during the caliphate of Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān (may Allah be pleased with him) a person married a woman from the Juhainah tribe, and just six months after the marriage she gave birth to a healthy and sound child. The man took the case before Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān, who declared the woman to be an adultress and ordered that she be stoned to death. On hearing this Ḥaḍrat 'Alī immediately came to Ḥaḍrat 'Uthman and asked: What sort of a decision have you given ? He replied: She has given birth to a sound child six months after marriage. Is it not a clear proof of her being an adultress? Ḥaḍrat 'Alī did not agree, and recited the three above mentioned verses in their sequence. In Sūrah Al-Baqarah Allah says: "The mothers shall suckle their children for two whole inyears, if the fathers

desire the suckling to be completed." In Sūrah Luqman it is said: "And his weaning took two years," and in Sūrah Al-Aḥqāf: "And his bearing and his weaning took thirty months." Now, if two years of suckling are taken away from 30 months, six months of bearing remain. This shows that the minimum period of pregnancy in which a sound child can be born is six months. Therefore, the woman who has given birth to a child six months after the marriage cannot be declared an adultress. On hearing this reasoning of Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān admitted that he had not considered that thing at all. Then he recalled the woman and changed his decision. According to another tradition, Ibn 'Abbas also supported the reasoning of Ḥaḍrat 'Alī; and then Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān changed his decision. (Ibn Jarīr, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* by al-Jassās Ibn Kathīr).

The following legal injunctions are derived from the three verses when they are read together:

(1) The woman who gives birth to a sound and complete child in less than six months after marriage (i.e. in a proper delivery and not abortion) will be declared an adultress and her child's lineage from her husband will not be established.

(2) The woman who delivers a sound and complete child six months or more after marriage, cannot be accused of adultery only on the basis of the child birth, nor can her husband have the right to slander her, nor can he refuse to acknowledge fatherhood of the child; the child will certainly be recognized as his, and the woman will not be punished.

(3) The maximum period for fosterage is two years. If a woman has suckled a child after this age, she will not be regarded as his foster mother, nor will the injunctions pertaining to fosterage (An-Nisa: 23) be applicable to her. In this regard, Imām Abu Ḥanīfah has out of caution proposed the period of two and a half years instead of two years so that there remains no chance of error in a delicate matter like the prohibition of the foster relations. (For explanation, see E N. 23 of Sūrah Luqmān).

Here, it would be useful to know that according to the latest medical research a child needs at least 28 weeks to remain in the mother's womb to be developed and delivered as a living baby. This period amounts to a little more than 6 months. The Islamic law has allowed a concession of about half a month, because a woman's being declared an adultress and a child's being deprived of lineage is a grave matter, and its gravity demands that maximum period be allowed to save both the mother and the child from its legal consequences. Furthermore, no physician and no judge, not even the pregnant woman herself and the man impregnating her, can know as to when exactly did the conception take

place. This thing also demands that a few more days be allowed in determining the minimum legal period of pregnancy.

20. That is, "O Lord, grant me the grace of such righteous deeds as may conform to Your Law in the apparent form as well as be acceptable to You in their actual worth." If an action, however good in the sight of the people, does not conform to obedience to Allah's Law, it cannot have any value in the sight of Allah, no matter how highly it is praised by the people. On the contrary, another action which conforms to the *Shari'ah* exactly and has no flaw or deficiency in its apparent form, becomes hollow from within, on account of an evil intention, conceit, arrogance and greed of the world, and so worthless in the sight of Allah.

21. That is, "Their ranks in the Hereafter will be determined by the best deeds they would have done in the world, and their lapses and weaknesses and errors will be overlooked. It is just like a generous and appreciative master who determines the worth of his loyal and obedient servant not by the petty services that he renders but by some work of merit that he might accomplish or a feat of devotion and dedication that he might perform. He will not call his servant to account for his minor shortcomings and overlook his major services."

22. Here, two types of the charactor have been placed side by side and the listeners asked the silent question as to which of them is better. At that time both these types of charactor practically existed in the society, and it was not at all difficult for the people to know where they could find the first type of the character and where the second. This is the answer to this saying of the chiefs of the Quraish: "If it had been any good to believe in this Book, these few youngsters and slaves would not have believed in it before they did." In the light of this answer everyone could see for himself as to what was the character of the believers and what of the unbelievers.

23. That is, "Neither will the good deeds and sacrifices of the good people be lost, nor the evildoers awarded a greater punishment than what they will actually deserve. If a good man is deprived of his reward and receives a lesser reward than what is actually his due, it is injustice. Likewise, if an evildoer is not punished appropriately for his evil deeds, or receives a greater punishment than deserved, it is also injustice."

24. "A torment of disgrace", because of the arrogance that they showed. They thought they were big people and it was below their dignity to believe in the Messenger and join the group of the poor and indigent believers. They were involved in the false pride that if the big people like them would believe in a thing which a few slaves and poor men had believed in, they would incur infamy. That is why Allah will disgrace them in the Hereafter and will destroy their pride.

[Contd. on p.666

أُبَلِّغُكُمْ مَّآ أُرْسِلْتُ بِهٖ وَلٰكِنِّيْٓ أَرٰىكُمْ قَوْمًا تَجْهَلُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهُ عَارِضًا
مُّسْتَقْبِلَ أَوْدِيَتِهِمْ ۙ قَالُوْا هٰذَا عَارِضٌ مُّمْطِرُنَا ۭ بَلْ هُوَ مَا اسْتَعْجَلْتُمْ بِهٖ ۭ
رِيْحٌ فِيْهَا عَذَابٌ أَلِيْمٌ ﴿٢٤﴾ تُدَمِّرُ كُلَّ شَيْءٍۢ بِأَمْرِ رَبِّهَا فَأَصْبَحُوْا لَا يُرٰٓى
إِلَّا مَسٰكِنُهُمْ ۭ كَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الْقَوْمَ الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَلَقَدْ مَكَّنّٰهُمْ فِيْمَآ إِنْ
مَّكَّنّٰكُمْ فِيْهِ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ سَمْعًا وَّأَبْصَارًا وَّأَفْـِٕدَةً ۖ فَمَآ أَغْنٰى عَنْهُمْ
سَمْعُهُمْ وَلَآ أَبْصَارُهُمْ وَلَآ أَفْـِٕدَتُهُمْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ ۖ إِذْ كَانُوْا يَجْحَدُوْنَ بِاٰيٰتِ
اللّٰهِ وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَّا كَانُوْا بِهٖ يَسْتَهْزِءُوْنَ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَلَقَدْ أَهْلَكْنَا مَا حَوْلَكُمْ مِّنَ
الْقُرٰى وَصَرَّفْنَا الْأٰيٰتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُوْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾ فَلَوْلَا نَصَرَهُمُ الَّذِيْنَ اتَّخَذُوْا
مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ قُرْبَانًا اٰلِهَةً ۭ بَلْ ضَلُّوْا عَنْهُمْ ۚ وَذٰلِكَ إِفْكُهُمْ وَمَا كَانُوْا
يَفْتَرُوْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ وَإِذْ صَرَفْنَآ إِلَيْكَ نَفَرًا مِّنَ الْجِنِّ يَسْتَمِعُوْنَ الْقُرْاٰنَ ۚ فَلَمَّا
حَضَرُوْهُ قَالُوْٓا أَنْصِتُوْا ۚ فَلَمَّا قُضِيَ وَلَّوْا إِلٰى قَوْمِهِمْ مُّنْذِرِيْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾ قَالُوْا يٰقَوْمَنَآ
إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا كِتٰبًا أُنْزِلَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مُوْسٰى مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ يَهْدِيْٓ إِلَى
الْحَقِّ وَإِلٰى طَرِيْقٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ﴿٣٠﴾ يٰقَوْمَنَآ أَجِيْبُوْا دَاعِيَ اللّٰهِ وَاٰمِنُوْا بِهٖ يَغْفِرْ
لَكُمْ مِّنْ ذُنُوْبِكُمْ وَيُجِرْكُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيْمٍ ﴿٣١﴾ وَمَنْ لَّا يُجِبْ دَاعِيَ اللّٰهِ
فَلَيْسَ بِمُعْجِزٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَيْسَ لَهٗ مِنْ دُوْنِهٖٓ أَوْلِيَآءُ ۭ أُولٰٓئِكَ فِيْ ضَلٰلٍ
مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿٣٢﴾ أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّ اللّٰهَ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَمْ يَعْيَ
بِخَلْقِهِنَّ بِقٰدِرٍ عَلٰٓى أَنْ يُّحْيِۦَ الْمَوْتٰى ۭ بَلٰٓى إِنَّهٗ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَ
يَوْمَ يُعْرَضُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا عَلَى النَّارِ ۭ أَلَيْسَ هٰذَا بِالْحَقِّ ۭ قَالُوْا بَلٰى وَرَبِّنَا ۭ
قَالَ فَذُوْقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُوْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾ فَاصْبِرْ كَمَا صَبَرَ أُولُوا الْعَزْمِ

Then, when they saw the torment coming towards their valleys, they said, "This is a cloud that will give us much rain."—Nay,[28] but this is the same thing which you asked to be hastened. This is a storm of wind bringing a painful torment. It will destroy everything by the Command of its Lord. Consequently, there remained nothing to be seen except their (empty) dwelling places. Thus do We recompense the culprits.[29] We had given them that which We have not given you,[30] We had given them ears and eyes and hearts, but nothing did their ears and their eyes and their hearts avail them, because they denied the Revelations of Allah,[31] and they were encompassed by the same thing that they mocked. 25-26

We have destroyed many habitations around you. We sent Our Revelations to them over and over again in various ways that they might desist (from wrongdoing). Then, why did not those beings help them whom they had made their gods instead of Allah, and regarded them as a means of attaining nearness to Him?[32] Nay, they were lost from them: and this was the end of their lies and their false beliefs that they had invented. 27-28

(And recall the event) when We brought to you a group of jinns so that they might listen to the Qur'ān.[33] When they reached the place (where you were reciting it), they said to one another, "Be silent." When the recitation was over, they returned to their people as warners. They said to them, "O our people! We have just listened to a Book that has been sent down after Moses. It contains the Books that came before it and it guides to the Truth and to a Straight Way.[34] O our people! Accept the invitation of the one calling to Allah and believe in him. Allah will forgive you your sins and will save you from a painful torment."[35] And[36] he who does not answer the one calling to Allah neither possesses any power in the earth to make Allah helpless nor has any protector and guardian to save him from Allah. Such people are involved in manifest error. 29-32

Do they not see that God Who created the heavens and the earth and was not wearied by their creation, has surely the power to raise the dead to life! Why not! Surely He has power over everything. The Day the disbelievers are mustered at the Fire, they will be asked, "Is not this the Truth?" They will say, "Yes, by our Lord (this is the very 33-34

Truth!)." Allah will say, "Well, then taste the torment in consequence of your denying the Truth (in the world)."

[Contd. on p. 663]

25. As the chiefs of the Quraish had a false pride of their superiority and exulted in their wealth and prosperity, the story of 'Ād is being related to them about whom it was well known that they had been the mightiest people in Arabia.

Literally, *Aḥqāf* (pl. of *ḥiqf*) are long dunes of sand less in height than mountains, but technically it is a name given to the southern-western part of the Arabian desert *(Ar-Rub'ul-khāli)* which is wholly un-inhabited. Please see the map on page 672.

Ibn Isḥāq says that the territory of 'Ād extended from 'Omān to Yaman, and the Qur'ān tells us that they actually belonged to Al-Aḥqāf from where they spread to the adjoining lands and subdued weak nations. 125 miles to the north of the present day city of Makkah there is a place in Ḥaḍramaut, where the people have built a tomb to the Prophet Hūd, and the place is well known as the Grave of Hūd. A religious festival is held there on the 15th of Sha'bān and thousands of people from different parts of Arabia gather there annually. Although it is not historically established, the grave's being built there and the southern Arabs' visiting it in large numbers is at least a proof that local tradition regards this very territory as the land of 'Ād. Besides, there are several ruins in Hadramaut which the natives still call by the name of *Dār-'Ād* (Abode of 'Ād).

From the present condition of Al-Aḥqāf no one can even imagine that this land might have been the home of a mighty people boasting of magnificent civilization. Probably it was a green and fertile land thousands of years ago, and then the change of climate might have turned it into a sandy desert. Today it is a vast, wind swept desert, and no one can dare go into its interior. In 1843 A.D. a Bavarian soldier was able to reach its southern edge. He says that if one looks down from the northern plateau of Ḥaḍramaut one can see this desert about a thousand feet in the depression. Here and there in it there are white areas where if a thing falls it goes on sinking into the sand and decays. The Arab Beduins fear this land and are never willing to step into it at any cost. Once when the Bedouins were not ready to take him there, he went by himself. He says that the sand there is very fine powder, and when he threw a plummet into it from a distance, it sank into it within five minutes and the end of the line to which it was attached, also decayed.

For detailed information, see:

Arabia and The Isles, Harold Ingrams, London, 1946.

The Unveiling of Arabia, R H. Kiman, London, 1937.

The Empty Quarter, Philby, London, 1933.

26. That is, "Allah alone knows as to when the torment will descend on you and for how long you will be granted respite."

27. That is, "You are taking my warning as a joke in your ignorance and are demanding the torment for fun. You have no idea of how dreadful is God's torment and how near at hand it might have approached because of your misdeeds."

28. Here, there is no indication as to who gave them this answer. However, the style shows explicitly that this was the answer they were given by the existing conditions. They thought it was a cloud which was coming to give rain to their valleys, but in reality it was a windstorm that was coming on to completely exterminate them.

29. For the details of the story of 'Ād, see Al-A'rāf: 65-72; Hūd: 50-60, Al-Mu'minūn: 31-41, Ash-Shu'arā: 123-140, Al-'Ankabūt: 40, Ḥā-Mīm As-Sajdah: 15-16 and the corresponding E.N.'s.

30. That is, "You are no match for them as far as wealth, power, authority and other things are concerned; your sphere of authority is restricted to the bounds of the city of Makkah, but they had dominated a large part of the earth."

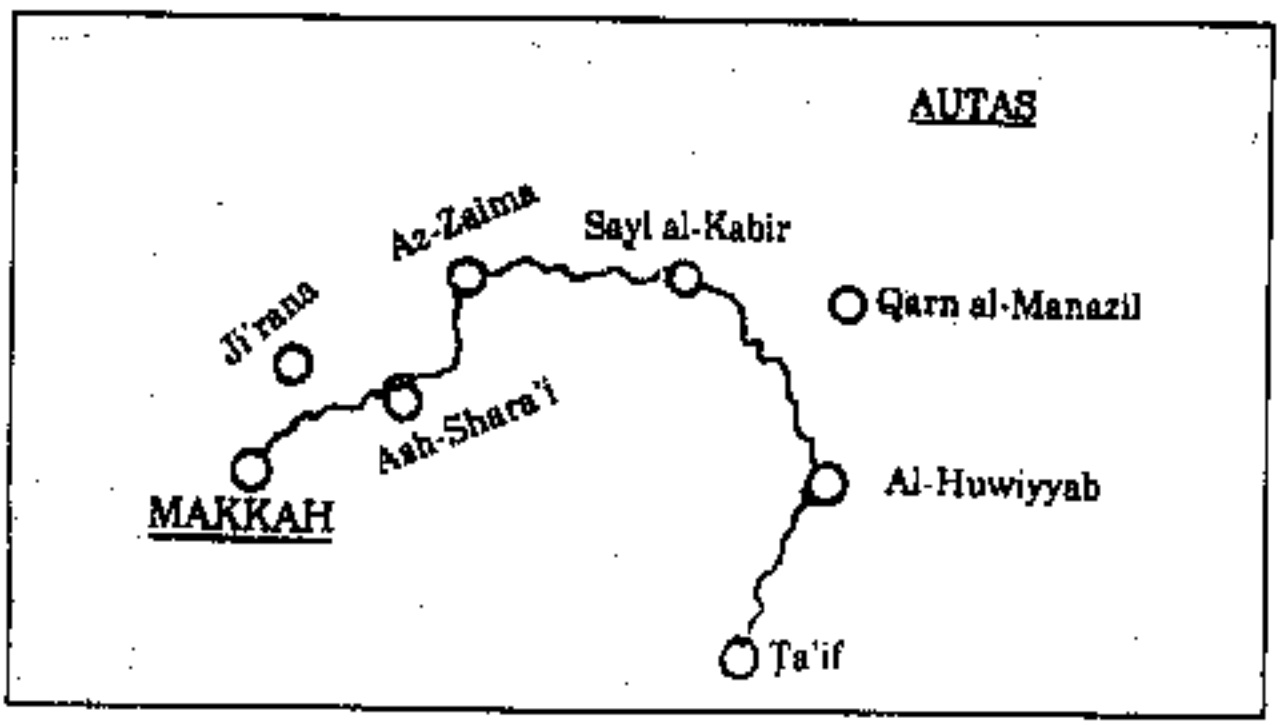
31. An important truth has been stated in this brief sentence. It is only the Revelations of Allah which give the right knowledge and understanding of the truth and reality to man. If man has this understanding and knowledge he sees the right thing with his eyes, hears the right thing with his ears, thinks the right thing with his mind and intellect and takes the right decisions. But when he refuses to believe in the Revelations of Allah, he fails to see the truth in spite of the eyes, becomes deaf to every word of admonition in spite of the ears, and misuses the blessings of the mind and intellect that God has granted him, and goes on drawing wrong conclusions one after the other; so much so that he starts using all his capabilities for his own destruction.

32. That is, "They had put faith in those things in the beginning with the idea that they were favourite servants of God and through them they would attain nearness to Him, but then gradually they made them their gods. They started invoking them for help; they formed the belief that they had the powers to change their destinies and could answer their prayers and remove their hardships." To deliver them from this error Allah sent His Revelations through His Messengers over and over again in different ways to bring them to the right path, but they persisted in the worship of their false gods, and continued to insist that they would

still invoke them instead of Allah. Now consider this: When the torment of Allah visited these polytheists because of their deviation, where had their redressers of grievances and removers of hardships disappeared? Why didn't they come to their rescue at the time of affliction?

33. The traditions that have been related from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Ḥaḍrat Zubair, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, Ḥasan Baṣrī, Sa'īd bin Jubair, Zarr bin Ḥubaish, Mujāhid, 'Ikrimah and others in connection with the commentary of this verse concur that this incident of the first visit of the jinns, which has been mentioned in this verse, had occurred in the valley of Nakhlah. And according to Ibn Isḥāq, Abū Nu'aim Iṣfahāni and Wāqidi, this incident occurred during the Holy Prophet's return journey from Ṭā'if to Makkah. On the way, when he halted at Nakhlah, and was reciting the Qur'ān in the 'Ishā' or the Fajr or the Tahajjud Prayer, a group of the jinns happened to pass by and stopped to listen to him. In this connection, all the traditions agree that on this occasion the jinns did not appear before the Holy Prophet, nor did he feel their presence, but Allah informed him afterwards by revelation that they had come and listened to the Qur'anic recitation.

The place where this incident took place was either Az-Zaimah or As-Sayl-ul-Kabīr, for both these places are situated in the valley of Nakhlah and at both water is available and are green; if the travellers from Ṭā'if have to halt in this valley, they can halt at either of the places. Please see the map for the location of these places.



34. This shows that these jinns had already had faith in the Prophet Moses and in the Divine Books. After hearing the Qur'ān they felt that it gave the same teachings as the former Prophets had been preaching. Therefore, they believed in this Book forthwith and also in the Holy prophet who had brought it.

مِنَ الرُّسُلِ وَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلْ لَّهُمْ ۚ كَأَنَّهُمْ يَوْمَ يَرَوْنَ مَا يُوعَدُونَ لَمْ يَلْبَثُوٓا
إِلَّا سَاعَةً مِّن نَّهَارٍ ۚ بَلَٰغٌ ۚ فَهَلْ يُهْلَكُ إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

Therefore, endure with patience, O Prophet, as did the 35
Messengers endowed with the firmness of purpose,[37] and do not be in haste concerning them.[38] The day these people see that with which they are being threatened, it will so appear to them that they did not stay in the world for more than an hour of a day. The Message has been conveyed. Now, shall any other than the disobedient people be destroyed?

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35. Authentic traditions show that after this several deputations of the jinns visited the Holy Prophet, one after the other, and met him face to face. When all the traditions related in the collections of *Ḥadīth* on this subject are read together, it appears that at least six deputations had visited him in Makkah before the Hijrah.

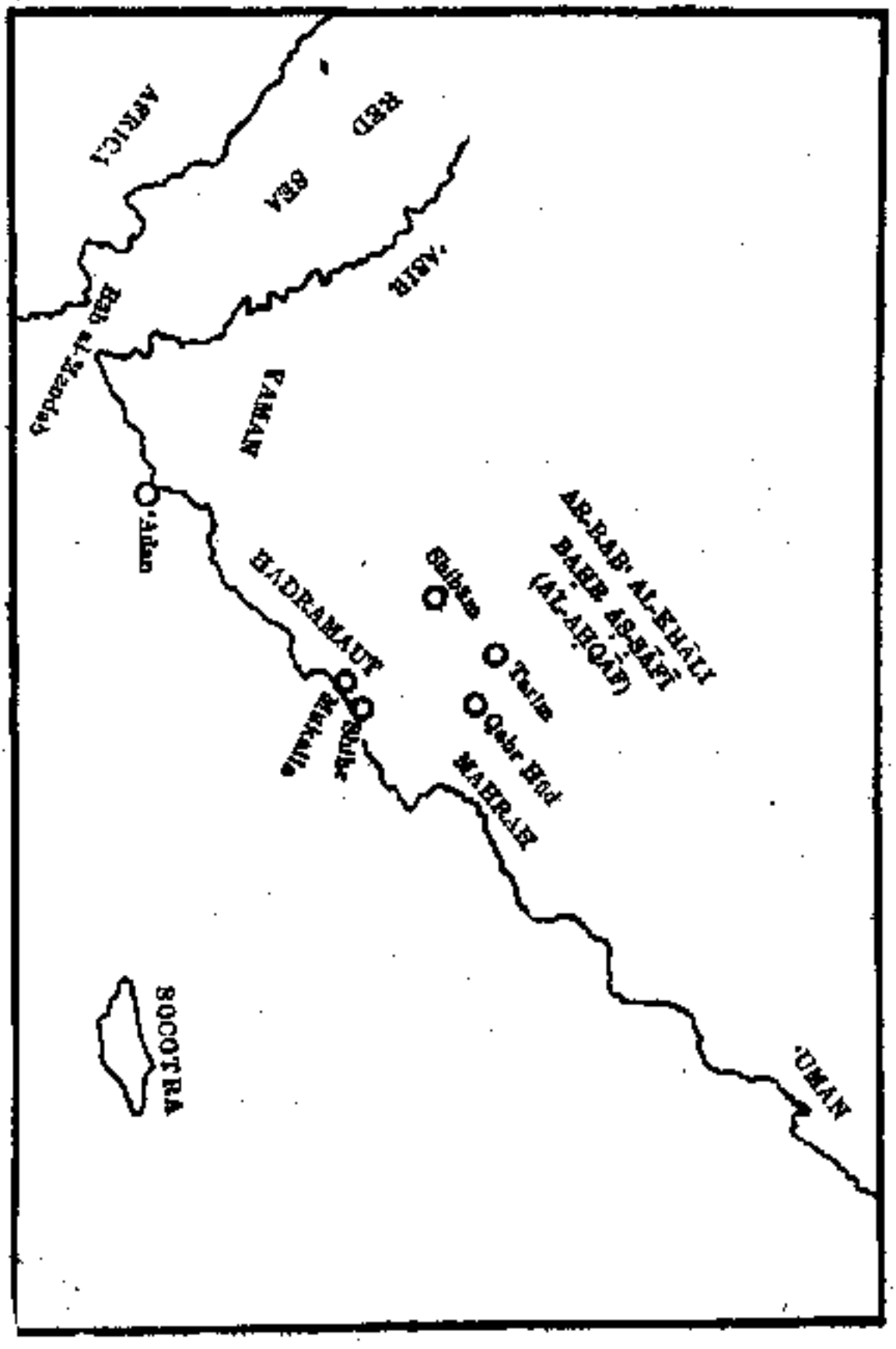
About one of these deputations Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd relates: "One day the Holy Prophet remained missing from Makkah for the whole night. We could not know his whereabouts and feared he might have been attacked by somebody. Early in the morning we saw him coming from the direction of Ḥirā'. On enquiring he said that a jinn had come to invite him and he had accompanied him and recited the Qur'ān to a gathering of them there." (Muslim, Musnad Aḥmad, Tirmidhi, Abū Da'ūd).

Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd has related another tradition, saying: "Once the Holy Prophet asked his Companions in Makkah as to which of them would accompany him that night to meet the jinns. I became ready to go with him. At a place in the upper quarters of Makkah the Holy Prophet drew a line and told me not to cross it. Then he went forward and stood and began to recite the Qur'ān. I saw that a number of the people had gathered around him and they stood between me and him." (Ibn Jarīr, Baihaqī: *Dalā'il an-Nubuwwat;* Abū Nu'aim Iṣfahāni: *Dalā'il an-Nubuwwat).*

On another occasion also during the night Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd was with the Holy Prophet and he decided a case of the jinns at Ḥajūn in Makkah. Many years later Ibn Mas'ūd saw a group of the villagers at Kūfa and said that the group of the jinns he had seen at Ḥajūn closely resembled those people. (Ibn Jarīr).

36. This sentence might also be a part of the saying of the jinns, or it might be an addition by Allah to their saying. In view of the context the second view seems to be more reasonable.

37. That is, "Just as the Prophets before you went on enduring with patience and ceaseless struggle the indifference, opposition, resistance and persecutions of their people for years on end, so should you also do the same, and do not entertain the idea that either the people should believe in you immediately or, if they do not believe, Allah should visit them with His torment."





XLVII

MUHAMMAD

محمد

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XLVII

MUḤAMMAD

محمّد

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah derives its name from the sentence *wa āmanū bi-mā nuzzila 'alā Muḥammad-in* of verse 2, thereby implying that it is the Sūrah in which the holy name of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) has occurred. Besides, it has another well-known name *"al-Qitāl"* also, which is derived from the sentence *wa dhukira fi-hal-qitāl* of verse 20.

Period of Revelation

The contents of this Sūrah testify that it was sent down after the Hijrah at Madīnah at the time when the fighting had been enjoined, though active fighting had not yet been undertaken. Detailed arguments in support of this view have been given in E.N. 8 below.

Historical Background

The conditions at the time when this Sūrah was sent down were such that the Muslims were being made the target of persecution and tyranny in Makkah in particular and in Arabia in general, and life had become miserable for them. Although the Muslims had emigrated to the haven of Madīnah from every side, the disbelieving Quraish were not

prepared to leave them alone and let them live in peace even there. Thus, the small settlement of Madīnah was hemmed in by the enemy, who was bent upon exterminating it completely. The only alternative left with the Muslims were that either they should surrender to the forces of ignorance, giving up their mission of preaching the true Faith, or even following it in their private lives, or should rise to wage a war at the cost of their lives to settle finally and for ever whether Islam would stay in Arabia or the creed of ignorance. On this occasion Allah showed the Muslims the same way of resolution and will, which is the only way for the true believers. He first permitted them to fight in Sūrah Al-Ḥajj : 39 and then enjoined fighting in Al-Baqarah: 190. But at that time everyone knew fully well what it meant to wage a war in those conditions. There were only a handful of Muslims in Madīnah, who could not muster even a thousand soldiers; yet they were being urged to take up the sword and clash against the pagan forces of the whole of Arabia. Then the kind of the weapons needed to equip its soldiers for war could hardly be afforded by the town in which hundreds of emigrants were still homeless and un-settled even by resort to starving its members at a time when it had been boycotted economically by the Arabs on all sides.

Theme and Subject Matter

Such were the conditions when this Sūrah was revealed. Its theme is to prepare the believers for war and to give them preliminary instructions in this regard. That is why it has also been entitled *al-Qitāl.* It deals with the following topics:

At the outset it is said that of the two groups confronting each other at this time, one has refused to accept the Truth and has become an obsruction for others on the way of Allah, while the other group has accepted the Truth which had been sent down by Allah to His servant, Muḥammad (Upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings). Now, Allah's final decision is that He has rendered fruitless and vain all the works of the former group and set right the condition and affairs of the latter group.

After this, the Muslims have been given the initial war instructions: they have been reassured of Allah's help and guidance: they have been given hope for the best rewards on offering sacrifices in the cause of Allah: and they have been assured that their struggle in the

cause of the Truth will not go to waste, but they will be Abundantly rewarded both in this world and in the Hereafter.

Furthermore, about the disbelievers it has been said that they are deprived of Allah's support and guidance: none of their designs will succeed in their conflict with the believers, and they will meet a most evil fate both in this world and in the Hereafter. They thought they had achieved a great success by driving the Prophet of Allah out of Makkah, but in fact by this they had hastened their own doom.

After this, the discourse turns to the hypocrites, who were posing to be sincere Muslims before the command to fight was sent down, but were confounded when this command actually came down, and began to conspire with the disbelievers in order to save themselves from the hazards of war. They have been plainly warned to the effect that no act and deed is acceptable to Allah of those who adopt hypocrisy with regard to Him and His Prophet. Here, the basic issue against which all those who profess the Faith are being tried is whether one is on the side of the Truth or Falsehood, whether one's sympathies are with Islam and the Muslims or with disbelief and the disbelievers, whether one keeps one's own self and interests dearer or the truth which one professes to believe in and follow. One who fails in this test is not at all a believer; his Prayer and his Fasting and his discharging of the *zakāt* deserve no reward from Allah.

Then the Muslims have been exhorted not to lose heart for being small in numbers and ill-equipped as against the great strength of the disbelievers: they should not show weakness by offering peace to them, which might still further embolden them against Islam and the Muslims, but they should come out with trust in Allah and clash with the mighty forces of disbelief. Allah is with the Muslims: they alone shall triumph; and the might of disbelief will be humbled and vanquished.

In conclusion, the Muslims have been invited to spend their wealth in the cause of Allah. Although at that time they were economically very weak, the problem that they confronted was the very survival of Islam and the Muslims. The importance and delicacy of the problem demanded that the Muslims should not only risk their lives for safeguarding themselves and their Faith from the dominance of disbelief and for exalting Allah's Religion but should also expend their economic

resources as far as possible in the preparations for war. Therefore, they were clearly warned to the effect: Anyone who adopted a niggardly attitude at the time, would not, in fact, harm Allah at all, but would result in his own destruction, for Allah does not stand in need of help from men. If one group of men shirked offering sacrifices in the cause of His Religion, Allah would remove it and bring another group in its place.

سُوْرَةُ مُحَمَّدٍ ٣٨ — اٰيَاتُهَا ٤ — رُوْعُهَا ٢ — مَدَنِيَّةٌ (٩٥)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

اَلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا وَصَدُّوْا عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ اَضَلَّ اَعْمَالَهُمْ ۝١ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا
وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ وَاٰمَنُوْا بِمَا نُزِّلَ عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ وَّهُوَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَّبِّهِمْ ۙ
كَفَّرَ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّاٰتِهِمْ وَاَصْلَحَ بَالَهُمْ ۝٢ ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوا اتَّبَعُوا
الْبَاطِلَ وَاَنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اتَّبَعُوا الْحَقَّ مِنْ رَّبِّهِمْ ۭ كَذٰلِكَ يَضْرِبُ اللّٰهُ
لِلنَّاسِ اَمْثَالَهُمْ ۝٣ فَاِذَا لَقِيْتُمُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا فَضَرْبَ الرِّقَابِ ۭ حَتّٰٓى اِذَآ
اَثْخَنْتُمُوْهُمْ فَشُدُّوا الْوَثَاقَ ۙ فَاِمَّا مَنًّۢا بَعْدُ وَاِمَّا فِدَاۗءً حَتّٰى تَضَعَ الْحَرْبُ
اَوْزَارَهَا ۚ ذٰلِكَ ۛ وَلَوْ يَشَاۗءُ اللّٰهُ لَانْتَصَرَ مِنْهُمْ وَلٰكِنْ لِّيَبْلُوَا بَعْضَكُمْ
بِبَعْضٍ ۭ وَالَّذِيْنَ قُتِلُوْا فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ فَلَنْ يُّضِلَّ اَعْمَالَهُمْ ۝٤ سَيَهْدِيْهِمْ
وَيُصْلِحُ بَالَهُمْ ۝٥ وَيُدْخِلُهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ عَرَّفَهَا لَهُمْ ۝٦ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اِنْ
تَنْصُرُوا اللّٰهَ يَنْصُرْكُمْ وَيُثَبِّتْ اَقْدَامَكُمْ ۝٧ وَالَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا فَتَعْسًا لَّهُمْ وَ
اَضَلَّ اَعْمَالَهُمْ ۝٨ ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّهُمْ كَرِهُوْا مَآ اَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ فَاَحْبَطَ اَعْمَالَهُمْ ۝٩ اَفَلَمْ
يَسِيْرُوْا فِي الْاَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوْا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۭ دَمَّرَ اللّٰهُ
عَلَيْهِمْ ۭ وَلِلْكٰفِرِيْنَ اَمْثَالُهَا ۝١٠ ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّ اللّٰهَ مَوْلَى الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَاَنَّ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ لَا
مَوْلٰى لَهُمْ ۝١١ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُدْخِلُ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ جَنّٰتٍ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا
الْاَنْهٰرُ ۭ وَالَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا يَتَمَتَّعُوْنَ وَيَاْكُلُوْنَ كَمَا تَاْكُلُ الْاَنْعَامُ وَالنَّارُ مَثْوًى لَّهُمْ ۝١٢ وَ

XLVII

MUHAMMAD

محمد

Verses: 38 *Revealed at Al-Madinah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Those who disbelieved[1] and debarred (others) from Allah's Way,[2] Allah rendered their works fruitless.[3] As for those who believed, and did good works, and accepted that which has been sent down to Muḥammad[4]—and it is the very Truth from their Lord—Allah removed their evils from them[5] and set their condition right.[6] This is because the disbelievers followed falsehood and the believers followed the Truth which has come from their Lord. Thus does Allah make the people aware of their true state.[7] 1-3

Therefore, when you meet the disbelievers in the battle-field, first smite their necks; then, when you have crushed them completely, bind the prisoners tight. After that (you have the choice) whether you show them favour or accept ransom, until the war lays down its arms.[8] So shall you do. Had Allah willed, He would Himself have dealt with them. But (He has adopted this way so that) He may test some of you by means of others.[9] And those who are killed in the way of Allah, Allah will never let their deeds go waste.[10] He will guide them, set their condition right, and will admit them to the Paradise with which He has acquainted them.[11] 4-6

O you who have believed, if you help Allah, Allah will help you[12] and make your footsteps firm. As for those who have disbelieved, for them is destruction[13] and Allah has rendered their deeds astray, because they have disapproved of what Allah has sent down;[14] therefore, Allah rendered their deeds fruitless. Have they not travelled in the earth that they could see the end of those who had gone before them? Allah destroyed them utterly and the disbelievers are destined for 7-12

a similar end.[15] This is because Allah is the Protector and Helper of the believers and the disbelievers have no protector and helper.[16] Allah shall admit those who have believed and done good works into Gardens underneath which rivers flow. As for the disbelievers, they are only enjoying the temporary life of this world, and eating as the animals eat,[17] and their final abode is Hell.

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1. "Those who disbelieved": Those who refused to accept the teachings and guidance presented by Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings).

2. The verb *ṣadd* (from which *ṣaddū* of the original is derived) is used both as a transitive and as an intransitive verb in Arabic. Therefore, the sentence would mean "they themselves refrained from adopting Allah's Way" as well as "they prevented others from adopting this way."

There are several ways of preventing others from adopting Allah's Way: (1) That one should forcibly prevent another from believing; (2) that one should so persecute the believers that it should become difficult for them to remain steadfast on the Faith and for others to embrace the Faith in view of the dreadful conditions; (3) that one should mislead the people against the Religion and its followers in different ways and create doubts in the hearts so that the people may become suspicious of the Religion itself. Besides, every disbeliever prevents others from the way of Allah in the sense that he brings up his children on the way of disbelief, and then it becomes difficult for his future generation to give up the ancestral faith and accept Islam. Likewise, every unbelieving society is an obstruction to the Way of Allah, for it creates obstacles in the way of the progress of the Faith by its system of education and training, its government and its customs and prejudices.

3. The words *aḍalla a'mālahum* (led their deeds astray, let them go to waste) are very comprehensive in meaning. Their one meaning is: Allah deprived them of the grace that their efforts and their labours should be spent in the right way: now, whatever they do, they will do that for wrong aims and objects in wrong ways: all their endeavours will be directed to the way of error and deviation instead of guidance. Their second meaning is: The works that they have been performing as pious deeds, e.g. guardianship of the Ka'bah, entertaining the guests, treating the kindred well, and such other works, which are counted among religious services and noble actions morally, were rendered fruitless by Allah; they will get no reward for them, for when they refuse to accept *Tauḥīd* and to adopt the way of Allah's service and worship and stop others also from adopting Islam, none of their works can be acceptable to Allah. The third meaning is Allah

rendered fruitless and vain the efforts they were making to obstruct the way of the Truth and to keep their creed of disbelief alive in Arabia as against the Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings): all their designs and endeavours now are aimless: they will never attain their goals by these designs.

4. Although after saying *alladhīna āmanū* (those who believed) there was no need to say *wa āmanū bi-mā nuzzilā 'alā Muḥammad-in* (and accepted that which has been sent down to Muhammad), for belief by itself implies believing in the Holy Prophet Muḥammad and in the teachings sent down to him, yet making a separate mention of it is particularly meant to assert this: After the appointment of Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) to Prophethood, a person's belief in Allah and the Hereafter and the former Messengers and the Books cannot be beneficial until he also believes in him and the teachings brought by him. This explanation was necessary because after the emigration, the Muslims had also to deal with those people, who recognized and accepted all the requirements of the Faith but refused to acknowledge and accept the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings).

5. This has two meanings: (1) That Allah wiped off from their record all those sins which they had happened to commit in the pre-Islamic days of ignorance: now, they will not at all be held accountable for them; and (2) that Allah removed from them the evils of creed, thought, morals and action in which they were involved. Now their minds were changed; their creed and ideas were changed; now there was faith in their hearts instead of ignorance and righteous acts instead of the immoral evil.

6. This also has two meanings: (1) That Allah changed their previous condition and put them on the right path and improved and bettered their lives for them; and (2) that Allah has taken them out of the condition of weakness and helplessness and oppression in which they were placed till then; now He has created for them such conditions in which instead of being persecuted they will defend themselves against the oppressors; instead of living as subjects, they will now live and order their lives as free people, and will have the upper hand instead of being subdued and suppressed.

7. That is, "He makes both the parties aware of their positions. One party insists on following falsehood; therefore, Allah has brought all its endeavours to naught; and the other party has adopted obedience of the Truth; therefore, Allah has purified it of its evils and corrected its condition."

8. The words of this verse as well as the context in which it occurs clearly show that it was sent down after the revelation of the command for fighting and before the actual fighting began. The words, "When you meet the disbelievers in

the battlefield ...", indicate that the fighting has not yet taken place and the Muslims are being instructed that when it does take place, what they should do.

The words of verse 20 below testify that this Sūrah was sent down at a time when the command for fighting had already been given in Sūrah Al-Ḥajj: 39 and Al-Baqarah: 190, and the hypocrites of Madīnah and the people of the weak faith had been so upset that it seemed as if they were actually facing death.

Besides, vv. 67-69 of the Sūrah Al-Anfāl also testify that this verse had been sent down before the Battle of Badr. There it has been said:

"It does not behove a Prophet to have captives until he has crushed down the enemies in the land. *You desire the gains of this world, but Allah desires the Hereafter*, and Allah is All-Powerful, All-Wise. Had not a decree already been issued by Allah, you would have incurred a severe chastisement in consequence of what you have done. So eat of what you have taken as spoils because it is lawful and pure."

A careful study of this passage, especially of its italicised portions, shows that what had displeased Allah on this occasion was that before crushing down the enemy completely in the Battle of Badr, the Muslims had started taking the enemy soldiers as captives, whereas the instruction given them in Sūrah Muḥammad before the actual fighting was this: "When you have crushed them completely, then bind the captives tight." However, as the Muslims had been permitted, among other things in Sūrah Muḥammad, to accept ransom from the prisoners, Allah declared the money taken from the captives of Badr as lawful and did not punish them for that. The words "Had not the decree already been issued by Allah." are clearly pointing to the fact that the command for permission to accept ransom had already been given in the Qur'ān before this event, and obviously, there is no other verse in the Qur'ān beside this verse of Sūrah Muḥammad, which contains this command. Therefore, it will have to be admitted that this verse had been sent down before the above-cited verse of the Sūrah Al-Anfāl. (For explanation, see E. N 49 on Al-Anfāl).

This is the first verse of the Qur'ān in which preliminary instructions have been given about the laws of war. Below is given a resume of the injunctions that are derived from this verse and the Holy Prophet's and his Companions' practice according to it and the juristic inferences as based on this verse and the Sunnah:

(1) The real aim of the Muslim army in war is to break the fighting power of the enemy till it is crushed and the war lays down its arms. Under no circumstances, should the Muslim's lose sight of this aim and start taking the enemy soldiers as captives. Captives should be taken after the enemy has been completely crushed and its numbers thinned down. The

Arabs have been so instructed at the outset lest in the greed for ransom and taking slaves they should forget and overlook the real aim of the war.

(2) About the prisoners taken in war it has been said: "You have the option whether you show them favour or accept ransom from them." This gives the general law that the prisoners of war should not be put to death. Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, Ḥasan Baṣrī, 'Atā' and Ḥammād bin Abī Sulaimān favour this view, which is quite valid. They say that a man can be killed only during the war. When the war is over and one has been made a prisoner, it is not lawful to kill him. Ibn Jarīr and Abū Bakr al-Jassās have related that Ḥajjāj bin Yūsuf handed over one of the prisoners of war to Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar and commanded him to put him to death. He refused to obey and cited this verse and said: "We are not allowed to kill a man when he is a prisoner." Imām Muhammad in *As-Siyar al-Kabīr* also has related that 'Abdullah bin 'Āmir had commanded Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar to kill a prisoner of war, and he had refused to obey the command for this reason.

(3) But since in this verse it has neither been clearly forbidden to kill the prisoner the Holy Prophet understood this intention of Allah's Command, and also acted accordingly, that if there was a special reason for which the ruler of an Islamic government regarded it as necessary to kill a particular prisoner (or prisoners), he could do so. This is not the general law, but an exception to it, which would be applied only when necessary. Thus, the Holy Prophet put to death only 'Uqbah bin Abī Mu'aiṭ and Naḍr bin al-Ḥārith from among the 70 prisoners taken at Badr, and only the poet Abū 'Azzah from the prisoners taken at Uhud. Since the Banī Quraizah had surrendered on the condition that they would accept whatever decision Hadrat Sa'd bin Mu'ādh would give in their regard, and he had decreed that all the males of the Quraiẓah should be killed, the Holy Prophet had them executed. From among the prisoners taken at Khaiber only Kinānah bin Abī al-Ḥuqaiq was put to death because of his violating the agreement. At the conquest of Makkah, the Holy Prophet commanded in respect of only a few particular persons from among all the inhabitants of Makkah that any one of them who was captured should be put to death. Apart from these exceptions, the Holy Prophet never killed prisoners of war, and the same also continued to be the practice of the righteous Caliphs. During their times also killing of prisoners of war was rare, which was resorted to only for a special reason. Ḥadrat, 'Umar bin 'Abdul 'Azīz also during his caliphate put to death only one prisoner of war for the reason that he had persecuted the Muslims very cruelly. On this very basis the majority

of the jurists have held the view that the Islamic government can put a prisoner to death if necessary. But it is for the government to take such a decision; every soldier is not permitted to kill any prisoner he likes. However, if there is the danger of a prisoner's running away or of his committing a dangerous mischief, the guard can kill him. In this connection, the jurists of Islam have also made three other points: (a) That if a prisoner accepts Islam, he cannot be killed; (b) that the prisoner can be killed only as long as he is in the government's custody; if he has been allotted to, or given in somebody else's possession by sale, he cannot be killed; and (c) that if the prisoner has to be killed, he should be killed in a straightforward way; he should not be tortured to death.

(4) The general command that has been given about the prisoners of war is: "Show them favour, or accept ransom from them."

Favour includes four things: (a) That they should be treated well as prisoners; (b) that instead of killing them or keeping them in captivity for lifetime, they should be handed over to the individual Muslims as slaves; (c) that they should be put under *jizyah* and made *dhimmīs;* and (d) that they should be set free without ransom.

There are three ways of ransoming them: (a) That they should be set free on payment of a ransom; (b) that they should be set free after taking some special service from them; and (c) that they should be exchanged for the Muslim prisoners of war who are in the possession of the enemy.

The Holy Prophet and the Companions at different times acted in one or the other way as the occasion demanded. The Divine Law has not bound the Islamic government to act in only one particular way. The government can take any action it deems appropriate on a particular occasion.

(5) The practice of the Holy Prophet and the Companions confirms that as long as a prisoner of war is in the government's custody, the government will be responsible for his food and clothing, and his treatment if he is ill or wounded. Islamic Law does not permit prisoners to be kept without food or clothing, or be subjected to torture. On the contrary, instructions also have been given to treat them well and generously, and precedents of this very practice are found in the *Sunnah*. The Holy Prophet distributed the prisoners of Badr in the houses of different Companions and gave the instruction: "Treat these prisoners well." One of those prisoners, Abū 'Azīz, has reported: "The Anṣār Muslims, in whose house I was kept, gave me bread morning and evening, but as for themselves they had only dates to eat." About another prisoner, Suhail bin 'Amr, the Holy Prophet was told: "He is a fiery speaker, and has been making speeches against you: please have

his teeth broken." The Holy Prophet replied: "If I have his teeth broken, Allah will break my teeth, although I am a Prophet." (Ibn Hishām). When Thumāmah bin Uthāl, the chief of Yamāmah, was brought as a prisoner, he was provided with good food and milk on the Holy Prophet's orders as long as he remained a captive. (Ibn Hishām). The same was the practice in the time of the Companions. No precedent is found when a prisoner might have been mistreated in their time.

(6) Islam has not permitted that the prisoners be kept in captivity for ever so that the government may subject them to forced labour as long as it likes. If they are not exchanged for other prisoners of war, or ransomed, the method enjoined of doing them favour is that they should be made slaves and given in possession of individuals, and their masters instructed to treat them well. This method was acted upon during the time of the Holy Prophet as well as of the Companions, and the jurists of Islam have unanimously upheld it as permissible. In this regard, it should be borne in mind that a person who might have accepted Islam before being taken as prisoner, and then is somehow made a prisoner, will be set free, but the acceptance of Islam by a person who accepts it after being taken prisoner, or after being given in possession of somebody, will not gain him freedom automatically. A tradition has been related in Musnad Aḥmad, Muslim and Tirmidhi on the authority of Hadrat 'Imrān bin Husain that a person from among the Banī 'Uqail was brought as a prisoner and he said: "I have accepted Islam." Thereupon the Holy Prophet said: "If you had said this when you were free, you would certainly have attained to success. The same thing was said by Ḥadrat 'Umar: "When a prisoner becomes a Muslim after falling into the hands of the Muslims as a captive, he will not be killed, but will remain a slave." On this very point, the jurists of Islam have unanimously ruled that the prisoner who becomes a Muslim after being taken captive cannot escape slavery. (Imām Muḥammad, *As-Siyar al-Kabīr).* And this also is quite reasonable. If our law had been that anyone who embraced Islam after being taken a captive, would be set free, no prisoner would be so foolish as not to win his freedom by pronouncing the *Kalimah.*

(7) The third manner of doing favour with the prisoners according to the Law of Islam is that they may be put under *jizyah* and made *dhimmī* subjects of the Islamic state and allowed to live as free citizens of *dār al-Islām* (abode of Islam) just like the Muslims. Imām Muḥammad writes in his *As-Siyar al-Kabīr:* "Any person who can be made a slave, can also be made a *dhimmī* and put under *jizyah.*" At another place he says: "The ruler of the Muslims has the right to levy *jizyah* on them and a tax on their lands and set them absolutely free." This method has been practised generally in the condition when the territory of the people who

have been made prisoners, is conquered and annexed to the Islamic state. The Holy Prophet, for instance, practised this method in the case of the people of Khaiber, and then Ḥaḍrat 'Umar followed and practised it extensively on the conquest of 'Irāq and other territories. Abū 'Ubaid writes in his *Kitāb al-Amwāl*: "After the conquest of 'Irāq a deputation of the leading men of that country came before Ḥaḍrat 'Umar and submitted: 'O Commander of the Faithful, before this the people of Iran had subdued us; they subjected us to harsh treatment and committed all sorts of excesses against us. Then, when God sent you, we became very pleased, and we neither put up any resistance against you nor participated in the war. Now, we hear that you want to make us slaves.' Ḥaḍrat 'Umar replied: 'You have the option either to become Muslims, or accept to pay *jizyah* and remain free.' They agreed to pay the *jizyah* and they were granted full freedom." At another place in the same book, Abū 'Ubaid says: Ḥaḍrat 'Umar wrote to Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī: Set free every farmer and peasant from among the people who have been captured in the war."

(8) The fourth favour is that the prisoner be set free without ransom. This is a special concession that the Islamic government can give only in case the special conditions of a prisoner demand it, or when it is expected that the concession will win the prisoner's gratitude for ever, and help turn him a friend from an enemy, or a believer from a disbeliever; otherwise, obviously it would in no way be a wise thing to set free a person of the enemy camp, who could again return to fight the Muslims. This is why the Muslim jurists generally have opposed it, and imposed the condition: "If the ruler of the Muslims finds it expedient to set the prisoners, or some of them, free as a favour, there is no harm in doing so." (*As-Siyar al-Kabīr*). Many precedents of this are found in the time of the Holy Prophet, and in almost every case expediency seems to be the reason.

About the prisoners taken at Badr, he said: "If Muṭ'im bin 'Adī were alive, and had spoken to me in respect of these treacherous people, I would have let them go for his sake." (Bukhārī, Abū Da'ūd, Musnad Aḥmad). The Holy Prophet said this because when he had returned from Tā'if to Makkah, Muṭ'im at that time had given him refuge, and his armed sons had escorted him to the Ka'bah. Therefore, he wanted to repay his debt of gratitude in this way.

According to Bukhārī, Muslim and Musnad Ahmad, when Thumāmah bin Uthāl, the chief of Yamāmah, was brought as a prisoner, the Holy Prophet asked him: "Thumāmah, what do you say?" He replied: "If I am killed, then such a one would be killed, whose blood has some value; if I am shown favour, then favour would be shown to a person, who appreciates favour; and if you want wealth, ask for it, you will be given it." For three days the Holy Prophet asked him the same

thing and he gave the same reply. At last, the Holy Prophet ordered that Thumamah be set free. On attaining freedom, he went to a nearby oasis, washed himself and came back, pronounced the *kalimah* and became a Muslim, saying: "Before this day nobody was more detestable than you and no religion more odious than your religion in my sight, but now for me no man is more lovable than you and no religion more lovable than your religion." Then he went to Makkah for 'Umrah and gave the people of Quraish a notice to the effect: "After this no grain will reach you from Yamāmah unless Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) permits it." So, he stopped the grain supply and the people of Makkah had to request the Holy Prophet that he should not stop the supply of grain for them from Yamāmah.

From among the prisoners of the Banī Quraiẓah, the Holy Prophet forgave Zabīr bin Bāṭā and 'Amr bin Sa'd (or Ibn Su'dā), the former because he had given refuge to Ḥaḍrat Thābit bin Qais Anṣārī in the Battle of Bu'āth, in the pre-Islamic days of ignorance; therefore, he handed him over to Hadrat Thābit that he may repay him for his favour. And he forgave 'Amr bin Sa'd because it was he who was exhorting his tribe not to be treacherous when the Banī Quraizah were committing breach of the trust with the Holy Prophet.

After the Battle of Banī al-Mustaliq, when the prisoners were brought and distributed among the people, the Holy Prophet paid Hadrat Juwairiyah's ransom to the person to whom she was allotted to secure her freedom and then married her himself. At this all the Muslims set their own prisoners free, saying: "Now they have become the Holy Prophet's relatives." Thus, the prisoners of a hundred families became free. (Musnad Aḥmad, Tabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Hishām).

On the occasion of the treaty of Ḥudaibiyāh, at about dawn, 80 men came from the direction of Tan'īm with the intention of launching a sudden attack on the Muslim camp, but were all captured, and the Holy Prophet set all of them free lest it became a cause of war on that critical occasion. (Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'ī, Tirmidhī, Musnad Aḥmad).

At the conquest of Makkah, the Holy Prophet forgave all the people of Makkah except only a few men, and did not kill more than three or four of even those who had been made an exception. The whole of Arabia was well aware of what atrocities the people of Makkah had committed against the Holy Prophet and the Muslims; yet the large-heartedness with which he forgave them after attaining complete victory over them, gave the Arabs the satisfaction that they had not been overpowered by a tyrant but by a merciful, affectionate and generous leader. That is why after the conquest of Makkah the Arabian peninsula did not take longer than two years to be completely subdued.

After the Battle of Hunain, when the Hawāzin deputation came to secure the freedom of their prisoners, the prisoners had already been distributed. The

Holy Prophet called the Muslims together and said: "These people have come with repentance, and I am of the opinion that their men should be returned to them. The one who would like to set the prisoner allotted to him free willingly without ransom, should set him free, and the one who would like to take ransom, shall be paid it out of the first income that is received in the Public Treasury." Thus, six thousand prisoners were set free, and those who wanted to take ransom, were given it by the government. (Bukhārī, Abū Da'ūd, Musnad Aḥmad, Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa'd). This also shows that the government is not authorised to set the prisoners free after they have been distributed; this can be done by the willing approval of those in whose possession the prisoners have been given, or by paying them the ransom.

After the Holy Prophet, precedents of setting the prisoners free as a favour continue to be found throughout the period of the Companions also. Hadrat Abū Bakr set free Ash'ath bin Qais al-Kindī and Ḥaḍrat 'Umar granted freedom to Hurmuzān and the prisoners of Manādhir and Maisān. (Abū 'Ubaid, *Kitāb al-Amwāl).*

(9) The precedent of setting the prisoners free on payment of the ransom in the time of the Holy Prophet is found only on the occasion of Badr, when the prisoners were set free on payment of one thousand to four thousand dirhams each. (Tabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-Amwāl).* No precedent of this is found in the time of the Companions; and the jurists of Islam have generally disapproved it, for it means that we should take money and set a man free so that he may again rise against us with the sword. But since taking of ransom has been permitted in the Qur'ān, and the Holy Prophet also acted according to it once, it is not absolutely forbidden. Imām Muḥammad writes in his *As-Siyar al-Kabir* that if the need arises the Muslims can free their prisoners on payment of the ransom.

(10) The criterion of freeing a prisoner for a service rendered is also found in connection with the Battle of Badr. For those of the Quraish prisoners who had no ransom the Holy Prophet imposed the condition that they should teach reading and writing to ten Anṣār children each to win their freedom. (Musnad Aḥmad, Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-Amwāl.*

(11) Several instances of the exchange of prisoners are found in the time of the Holy Prophet. Once he dispatched Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr on an expedition and he brought some captives, including a beautiful woman, who fell to the lot of Ḥaḍrat Salamah bin Akwa'. The Holy Prophet urged him to give her back, then sent her to Makkah and had several Muslim prisoners released, in exchange for her. (Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Ṭaḥāwī *Kitāb al-Amwāl* of Abī 'Ubaid, *Tabaqāt* Ibn Sa'd). Ḥaḍrat

'Imrān bin Husain relates that once the tribe of Thaqīf arrested two men of the Muslims. Some time later, a man of the Banī 'Uqail, who were allies of the Thaqīf, was arrested by the Muslims. The Holy Prophet sent him to Tā'if and got both the Muslims released in exchange for him. (Muslim, Tirmidhī, Musnad Ahmad). From among the jurists Imām Abū Yūsuf, Imām Muḥammad, Imām Shāfe'ī, Imām Mālik and Imām Ahmad hold the exchange of the prisoners as permissible. A ruling of Imām Abū Hanīfah is that exchange should not be practised, but according to another ruling of his exchange can be practised. However, there is a consensus that the prisoner who becomes a Muslim should not be handed over to the disbelievers for the purpose of exchange.

This explanation makes it abundantly clear that Islam has formulated a comprehensive code in respect of the prisoners of war, which contains provision for this problem in every age under all sorts of conditions. Those people who take this Qur'ānic verse in its simple meaning that the prisoners of war should "either be shown favour and set free or freed for ransom", do not know what different aspects the question of the prisoners of war has, and what problems it has been creating in different ages and can create in the future.

9. That is, "If Allah had only wanted to crush the worshippers of falsehood, He did not stand in need of your help for this. He could have done this through an earthquake or a tempest in no time. But what he wills is that the followers of the Truth among the people should enter into a conflict with the worshippers of falsehood and fight them so that the qualities and characteristics of each are brought out clearly by means of the test and each is given the place and rank that he deserves according to his conduct."

10. It means this: "A person's being slain in the way of Allah does not mean that he lost his life and as far as his person was concerned all his lifework was wasted. It is wrong to think that the sacrifices of the martyrs are not beneficial for themselves but only for those who live after them in the world, and take advantage of their sacrifices. The fact is that even for the martyrs themselves it is a bargain of profit, not of loss at all."

11. This is the profit that the martyrs falling in the way of Allah will gain. Its three grades have been stated: (1) That Allah will guide them; (2) that He will set their condition right; and (3) that He will admit them to the Paradise with which He has acquainted them beforehand. Guidance here obviously implies guiding to Paradise; setting the condition right implies that before their entry into

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كَاَيِّنْ مِّنْ قَرْيَةٍ هِيَ اَشَدُّ قُوَّةً مِّنْ قَرْيَتِكَ الَّتِيْٓ اَخْرَجَتْكَ ۚ اَهْلَكْنٰهُمْ فَلَا نَاصِرَ لَهُمْ ﴿١٣﴾ 13
اَفَمَنْ كَانَ عَلٰى بَيِّنَةٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّهٖ كَمَنْ زُيِّنَ لَهٗ سُوْٓءُ عَمَلِهٖ وَاتَّبَعُوْٓا اَهْوَآءَهُمْ ﴿١٤﴾ 14
مَثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِيْ وُعِدَ الْمُتَّقُوْنَ ۭ فِيْهَآ اَنْهٰرٌ مِّنْ مَّاۗءٍ غَيْرِ اٰسِنٍ ۚ وَاَنْهٰرٌ مِّنْ
لَّبَنٍ لَّمْ يَتَغَيَّرْ طَعْمُهٗ ۚ وَاَنْهٰرٌ مِّنْ خَمْرٍ لَّذَّةٍ لِّلشّٰرِبِيْنَ ۚ وَاَنْهٰرٌ مِّنْ عَسَلٍ
مُّصَفًّى ۭ وَلَهُمْ فِيْهَا مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرٰتِ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّهِمْ ۭ كَمَنْ هُوَ خَالِدٌ
فِي النَّارِ وَسُقُوْا مَاۗءً حَمِيْمًا فَقَطَّعَ اَمْعَاۗءَهُمْ ﴿١٥﴾ 15 وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَّسْتَمِعُ اِلَيْكَ ۚ
حَتّٰٓى اِذَا خَرَجُوْا مِنْ عِنْدِكَ قَالُوْا لِلَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْعِلْمَ مَاذَا قَالَ اٰنِفًا ۭ
اُولٰۗىِٕكَ الَّذِيْنَ طَبَعَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰي قُلُوْبِهِمْ وَاتَّبَعُوْٓا اَهْوَاۗءَهُمْ ﴿١٦﴾ 16 وَالَّذِيْنَ اهْتَدَوْا
زَادَهُمْ هُدًى وَّاٰتٰىهُمْ تَقْوٰىهُمْ ﴿١٧﴾ 17 فَهَلْ يَنْظُرُوْنَ اِلَّا السَّاعَةَ اَنْ تَاْتِيَهُمْ
بَغْتَةً ۚ فَقَدْ جَاۗءَ اَشْرَاطُهَا ۚ فَاَنّٰى لَهُمْ اِذَا جَاۗءَتْهُمْ ذِكْرٰىهُمْ ﴿١٨﴾ 18 فَاعْلَمْ اَنَّهٗ
لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنْۢبِكَ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَالْمُؤْمِنٰتِ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُ
مُتَقَلَّبَكُمْ وَمَثْوٰىكُمْ ﴿١٩﴾ 19 وَيَقُوْلُ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَتْ سُوْرَةٌ ۚ فَاِذَآ اُنْزِلَتْ
سُوْرَةٌ مُّحْكَمَةٌ وَّذُكِرَ فِيْهَا الْقِتَالُ ۙ رَاَيْتَ الَّذِيْنَ فِيْ قُلُوْبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ يَّنْظُرُوْنَ
اِلَيْكَ نَظَرَ الْمَغْشِيِّ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْمَوْتِ ۭ فَاَوْلٰى لَهُمْ ﴿٢٠﴾ 20 طَاعَةٌ وَّقَوْلٌ مَّعْرُوْفٌ ۭ
فَاِذَا عَزَمَ الْاَمْرُ ۚ فَلَوْ صَدَقُوا اللّٰهَ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ ﴿٢١﴾ 21 فَهَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ اِنْ
تَوَلَّيْتُمْ اَنْ تُفْسِدُوْا فِي الْاَرْضِ وَتُقَطِّعُوْٓا اَرْحَامَكُمْ ﴿٢٢﴾ 22 اُولٰۗىِٕكَ الَّذِيْنَ لَعَنَهُمُ
اللّٰهُ فَاَصَمَّهُمْ وَاَعْمٰٓى اَبْصَارَهُمْ ﴿٢٣﴾ 23 اَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُوْنَ الْقُرْاٰنَ اَمْ عَلٰي قُلُوْبٍ
اَقْفَالُهَا ﴿٢٤﴾ 24 اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ ارْتَدُّوْا عَلٰٓى اَدْبَارِهِمْ مِّنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الْهُدَى ۙ
الشَّيْطٰنُ سَوَّلَ لَهُمْ ۚ وَاَمْلٰى لَهُمْ ﴿٢٥﴾ ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّهُمْ قَالُوْا لِلَّذِيْنَ كَرِهُوْا مَا

O Prophet, how many habitations have there been that were much stronger in power than this habitation of yours that has expelled you. We destroyed them so utterly that there was none to save them.[18] Can it ever be that he who is on a clear guidance from his Lord, be like those whose evil deed has been made seem fair to them, and who are following their lusts?[19] The Paradise that has been promised to the righteous is such that canals will be flowing in it of pure water,[20] and canals will be flowing in it of milk of unchanged flavour,[21] and canals will be flowing in it of wine which will be delightful to the drinkers,[22] and canals will be flowing in it of honey, clear and pure.[23] In it there will be fruits of every kind for them and forgiveness from their Lord.[24] (Can the person who will be admitted to this Paradise) be like those who will dwell in Hell for ever and who will be given to drink boiling water that will cut their bowels into pieces? 13-15

There are some among them who give ear to what you say, and then when they leave you, they ask those who have been blessed with knowledge, "What did he say just now?"[25] These are they upon whose hearts Allah has set a seal, and who are following their lusts.[26] As for those who have received guidance, Allah increases their guidance[27] and grants them their due share of piety.[28] Do they now only await Resurrection that it should come upon them suddenly?[29] Its portents indeed have already come.[30] But when it does overtake them, what chance will be there for them to accept admonition ? 16-18

Therefore, O Prophet, know it well that there is none worthy of worship but Allah, and ask forgiveness for your fault and for the believing men and women, too,[31] for Allah is aware of your busy movements and also of your resting places. 19

Those who have believed, were saying, "Why is not a Sūrah sent sent down (to enjoin fighting)?" But when a decisive Sūrah was sent down in which fighting had been mentioned, you saw those in whose hearts was a disease, looking towards you like the one under the shadow of death.[32] Alas for them ! (On their tongue is) the promise of obedience and good works, but if they had proved true in their compact with Allah when the final Command was given, it would have been better for them. Now, what else can be expected of you than this that if you turned about,[33] you would again spread mischief in the land and 20-25

break asunder the ties of blood?[34] These are they whom Allah has cursed and made them deaf and blind. Have they not pondered over the Qur'ān, or are there locks upon their hearts?[35] The fact is that those who turned back, after guidance had become clear to them, for them Satan has made this way easy and prolonged for them the prospects of false hopes.

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Paradise. Allah will adorn them with robes of honour and remove every filth which had polluted them in the life of the world; and the third stage means that even in this world they have been told through the Qur'ān and the Holy Prophet what kind of Paradise it is that has been prepared for them; when they enter that Paradise they will enter a place with which they will already be familiar and they will come to know that they have been blessed precisely with the same that had been promised to them in the world.

12. "If you help Allah": "If you participate in the work of raising Allah's Word with your life and wealth." But this has a deeper meaning too, which we have explained in E. N. 50 of Sūrah Āl-'Imrān above.

13. Literally, *ta's* is to stumble and fall down on the face.

14. That is, "They preferred the whims, superstitions, customs and moral perversion of their former ignorance and did not like the teaching that Allah had revealed to guide them to the right way.

15. This sentence has two meanings: (1) "The same destruction that was met by those disbelievers now awaits these disbelievers, who are not accepting the invitation of Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings); and (2) "the ruin of those people does not end with the torment of the world; the same doom also awaits them in the Hereafter."

16. After being wounded at Uhud when the Holy Prophet was resting in a hill pass with a few Companions, Abū Sufyān shouted: "We have 'Uzzā and there is no 'Uzzā for you." Thereupon the Holy Prophet told his Companions to respond, saying: "Our Protector and helper is Allah, and you have no protector and helper at all." This reply of the Holy Prophet was derived from this very verse.

17. That is, "Just as an animal eats and does not think wherefrom the food it eats has come, who has created it, and what rights of the creator are imposed on it for providing it with food, so are these people also eating and have no higher values or ideals beyond eating."

18. The Holy Prophet was sorely distressed on leaving Makkah. When he was compelled to emigrate, he had stood facing the city outside it and said: "O Makkah, you are the most beloved city in the sight of Allah, and I have the greatest love for you out of all the cities of Allah; if the polytheists had not driven me out, I would never have left you." About this it has been said: "After driving you out of the city the people of Makkah think that they have achieved a great success, whereas, in fact, they have hastened only their own ruin by this evil act." The style of the verse clearly indicates that it must have been sent down close after the *Hijrah*.

19. That is, "How is it possible that when the Prophet and his followers have been guided by God to a clear and straight path and they have started following it in the light of full knowledge and vision, they should walk along, with those who are still persisting in their ways of ignorance, who regard their deviation as guidance and their evildoing as a praiseworthy thing, and who judge on the basis of their personal desires, and not by argument as to what is the truth and what is falsehood. Now, neither can the lives of these two groups be alike in this world nor can their end be alike in the Hereafter."

20. Literally, *āsin* is the taste and colour of water which has changed, or which gives a bad smell. In the world the water of rivers and canals is generally muddy; its taste and colour change due to the mixture of sand and dust and of different kinds of vegetation in it, and it also gives off a kind of bad smell. Therefore, the quality of the water of the rivers and canals of Paradise will be that it will be pure and clear, without any adulteration.

21. In a *Ḥadīth* directly reported from the Holy Prophet, it has been explained thus: "It will not be the milk squeezed from the teats of animals." That is, it will be the milk which Allah will bring out in the form of springs from the earth and cause it to flow into canals; it will not be squeezed from the teats of animals and then made to flow into the canals of Paradise. About this natural milk it has been said: "Its flavour will not have changed at all;" that is, it will not give even the slightest offensive smell that is found in every kind of milk squeezed from the animal teats.

22. In another *Ḥadīth* reported directly from the Holy Prophet, it has been explained, thus: "This wine will not have been distilled from rotten fruit by beating and crushing it under feet," like the wine in the world, but Allah will produce it also in the form of springs and cause it to flow into canals; then its quality will be that "it will be delightful for the drinkers"; that is, it will not be bitter and foul-smelling like the wines of the world, which cannot be drunk even by the most habitual drinker without showing some distaste. In Sūrah As-Sāffāt, another quality of it has been described: "Neither will the drinker be harmed

physically thereby nor become drunk." (v. 47) In Sūrah Al-Wāqi'ah it has been said: "... which will neither cause them giddiness nor affect their sense." (v. 19) This shows that wine will not intoxicate, but will only give pleasure and delight.

23. In the *Ḥadīth* it has been explained, thus: "The honey will not have been drawn from the bees' bellies," but it also will come out from springs and flow into canals; therefore, it will not have wax, and pieces of the honey-comb and legs of dead bees mixed in it, but it will be absolutely pure.

24. The mention of forgiveness from Allah after the blessings of Paradise can have two meanings: (1) That the greatest blessing by far will be that Allah will forgive them; and (2) that the errors and faults that they happened to commit in the world, will not even so much as be mentioned before them, but Allah will cover them up for ever so that they are not put to shame in Paradise.

25. This is concerning those disbelievers and hypocrites and unbelieving followers of the former Books, who sat in the assemblies of the Holy Prophet, listened to his discourses, or the verses of the Qur'ān, but since in their hearts they were averse to the themes presented by him, they would understand nothing in spite of listening to him. Therefore, when they came out, they would ask the Muslims, "What was he saying just now?"

26. This was the real cause because of which their inner ears had become deaf to the teachings of the Holy Prophet; they were the slaves of their lusts, and the teachings that the Holy Prophet was presenting fell against their lusts. Therefore, if ever they sat in the assemblies of the Holy Prophet and listened to him, they would understand nothing.

27. That is, the same revelations about which the disbelievers and hypocrites ask, "What was he (the Holy Prophet) saying just now?" become a cause of further guidance for the rightly-guided people, and from the same assembly from which these unfortunate people rise without gaining anything, the fortunate ones return with a new treasure of knowledge and insight.

28. That is, Allah grants them the grace to develop in themselves the kind of piety *(taqwā)* that they have the capability to develop.

29. That is, as far as the explanation and clarification of the truth is concerned, it has been explained fully well by argument and reasoning, the miraculous discourses of the Qur'ān, the pure character of the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and the revolution in the lives of his Companions. Now, are these people awaiting that Resurrection itself should take place and then only they will believe?

30. The portents of Resurrection imply those signs which indicate that its approach is near. One such important sign is the advent of God's Last Prophet after whom no other prophet will come till Resurrection. Traditions have been related in Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī and Musnad Ahmad on the authority of Hadrat Anas, Hadrat Sahl bin Sa'd As-Sā'idī and Hadrat Buraidah, saying that the Holy Prophet raised his index finger and the middle finger and said: "My advent and Resurrection are like these two fingers." That is, "Just as there is no other finger between these two fingers, so no other prophet will be raised between me and Resurrection; after me only Resurrection now will occur."

31. One of the morals taught to man by Islam is also this: However hard and sincerely may man be trying to serve and worship his Lord and fighting and struggling in the cause of His Religion, he should never be involved in the misunderstanding that he has done and accomplished whatever he was required to do. Rather, on the contrary, he should have the feeling that he has not been able to do full justice to what was expected of him by his Lord and Master. Therefore, he should confess his errors constantly and pray to Allah, saying: "Lord, forgive me for whatever fault and error I may have committed in Your service." This is indeed the essence of Allah's Command: "O Prophet, ask forgiveness for your fault...". This does not mean that, God forbid, the Holy Prophet had actually committed an error wilfully, but its correct meaning is that it did not even behove the servant who was the greatest worshipper of his Lord that he should harbour even a tinge of the pride of accomplishment in his heart, but his true position also was that in spite of all his great and glorious services he should continue confessing his shortcomings before his Lord. It was under this state of the mind that the Holy Prophet often implored his Lord for forgiveness. According to Abū Da'ūd and Nasā'ī, the Holy Prophet is reported to have said: "I implore Allah for forgiveness one hundred times every day.

32. That is; "In view of the conditions through which the Muslims were passing and the attitude that the disbelievers had adopted towards Islam and the Muslims at that time the believers were generally of the opinion that they should be permitted to fight even before fighting was actually enjoined by Allah. Rather they were asking Allah's Command in this regard impatiently and were awaiting again and again: "Why are we not permitted to fight these wicked people ?" But the condition of the people who had joined the ranks of the Muslims hypocritically was quite different from that of the believers. They held their lives and their properties as dearer to themselves than Allah and His Religion, and were not prepared to risk them at any cost. Therefore, as soon as fighting was enjoined they were clearly sorted out from the true believers. Till the time fighting had not been

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نَزَّلَ اللّٰهُ سَنُطِيْعُكُمْ فِيْ بَعْضِ الْاَمْرِ ۚ وَاللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُ اِسْرَارَهُمْ ﴿٢٦﴾ فَكَيْفَ اِذَا [26]
تَوَفَّتْهُمُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ يَضْرِبُوْنَ وُجُوْهَهُمْ وَاَدْبَارَهُمْ ﴿٢٧﴾ ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّهُمُ اتَّبَعُوْا مَآ [27]
اَسْخَطَ اللّٰهَ وَكَرِهُوْا رِضْوَانَهٗ فَاَحْبَطَ اَعْمَالَهُمْ ﴿٢٨﴾ اَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِيْنَ فِيْ [28]
قُلُوْبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ اَنْ لَّنْ يُّخْرِجَ اللّٰهُ اَضْغَانَهُمْ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَلَوْ نَشَآءُ لَاَرَيْنٰكَهُمْ [29]
فَلَعَرَفْتَهُمْ بِسِيْمٰهُمْ ۭ وَلَتَعْرِفَنَّهُمْ فِيْ لَحْنِ الْقَوْلِ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُ اَعْمَالَكُمْ ﴿٣٠﴾ [30]
وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ حَتّٰى نَعْلَمَ الْمُجٰهِدِيْنَ مِنْكُمْ وَالصّٰبِرِيْنَ ۙ وَنَبْلُوَا۟ اَخْبَارَكُمْ ﴿٣١﴾ [31]
اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا وَصَدُّوْا عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ وَشَاۗقُّوا الرَّسُوْلَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا
تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الْهُدٰى ۙ لَنْ يَّضُرُّوا اللّٰهَ شَيْـــًٔا ۭ وَسَيُحْبِطُ اَعْمَالَهُمْ ﴿٣٢﴾ [32]
يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اَطِيْعُوا اللّٰهَ وَاَطِيْعُوا الرَّسُوْلَ وَلَا تُبْطِلُوْٓا اَعْمَالَكُمْ ﴿٣٣﴾ [33]
اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا وَصَدُّوْا عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ ثُمَّ مَاتُوْا وَهُمْ كُفَّارٌ فَلَنْ يَّغْفِرَ اللّٰهُ
لَهُمْ ﴿٣٤﴾ فَلَا تَهِنُوْا وَتَدْعُوْٓا اِلَى السَّلْمِ ۠ وَاَنْتُمُ الْاَعْلَوْنَ ۚ وَاللّٰهُ مَعَكُمْ وَ [34]
لَنْ يَّتِرَكُمْ اَعْمَالَكُمْ ﴿٣٥﴾ اِنَّمَا الْحَيٰوةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَّلَهْوٌ ۭ وَاِنْ تُؤْمِنُوْا وَتَتَّقُوْا [35]
يُؤْتِكُمْ اُجُوْرَكُمْ وَلَا يَسْـَٔـلْكُمْ اَمْوَالَكُمْ ﴿٣٦﴾ اِنْ يَّسْـَٔـلْكُمُوْهَا فَيُحْفِكُمْ تَبْخَلُوْا وَ [36]
يُخْرِجْ اَضْغَانَكُمْ ﴿٣٧﴾ هٰٓاَنْتُمْ هٰٓؤُلَاۗءِ تُدْعَوْنَ لِتُنْفِقُوْا فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ ۚ فَمِنْكُمْ [37]
مَّنْ يَّبْخَلُ ۚ وَمَنْ يَّبْخَلْ فَاِنَّمَا يَبْخَلُ عَنْ نَّفْسِهٖ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ الْغَنِيُّ وَاَنْتُمُ
الْفُقَرَاۗءُ ۚ وَاِنْ تَتَوَلَّوْا يَسْتَبْدِلْ قَوْمًا غَيْرَكُمْ ۙ ثُمَّ لَا يَكُوْنُوْٓا اَمْثَالَكُمْ ﴿٣٨﴾ [38]

That is why they said to those who showed aversion to what Allah had revealed, "We shall obey you in some matters."[36] Allah knows their secret affairs too well. Then, how shall it be when the angels take their souls, and take them away, smiting their faces and their backs ?[37] This would be because they followed the way that made Allah angry, and hated to adopt the way of His pleasure. So, He rendered all their works fruitless.[38] 26-28

Do those in whose hearts is a disease think that Allah will not expose the impurity of their hearts? If We will, We can show them to you and then you may recognize them by their faces. But you will certainly know them from the manner of their speech. Allah is fully aware of all your actions. We shall certainly put you to the test in order to appraise your state and to see who among you are struggling strenuously and enduring patiently. 29-31

Those who disbelieved and hindered (others) from Allah's way and disputed with the Messenger, after the Right Way had become clear to them, can in no way harm Allah, but Allah indeed will render all their works vain.[39] O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and let not your works end in futility[40]. As for those who have disbelieved, and hindered (others) from Allah's Way and have died disbelieving, Allah will never pardon them. Therefore, do not be faint-hearted, and do not beg for peace,[41] for you will surely gain the upper hand. Allah is with you and will never let your works be wasted. The life of this world is only a sport and a pastime.[42] If you believe and follow the way of piety, Allah will give you your rewards, and will not ask of you your possessions.[43] If ever He asks of you your possessions, and demands all of them, you would be niggardly, and He would bring your malice out.[44] Look, you are being called upon to expend in Allah's Way, yet some of you are being niggardly, whereas the one who is niggardly is, in fact, being niggardly only to himself. Allah is Self-Sufficient: it is you who are the needy. If you turn away, Allah will replace you by another people, and they will not be like you. 32-38

Contd. from p. 25]

enjoined, the hypocrites and the common believers could not be distinguished one from the other. The hypocrites offered the Prayer just as the true believers did; they observed the Fast just like them, and practised every article of the Faith as

made no demand of a sacrifice on them. But when time came for making the supreme sacrifice of life for the sake of Islam, their hypocrisy was exposed and their veil of false display of the Faith was rent asunder. In Sūrah An-Nisā', their this state has been described thus: "Have you marked those to whom it was said: Withhold your hands a while and establish the *salāt* and pay the *zakāt?* Now that the fighting has been enjoined for them, some of them fear the people as they should fear Allah, or even more than that; they say: Our Lord, why have You enjoined fighting for us? Why have You not given us a brief respite?" (v. 77)

33. Another translation of the words in the original can be: "If you became rulers over the people."

34. Its one meaning is: "If at this time you shirk supporting and defending Islam and refrain from fighting with your life and wealth for the cause of the great reformist revolution which the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) and his Companions are struggling to bring about, there will be no other consequence of this than that you would return to the same system of ignorance in which you have been cutting each other's throat since centuries, burying your children alive and filling God's earth with injustice and wickedness." Its other meaning is: "You are a people of depraved character. You are not at all sincere in your claim of having affirmed the Faith, because you are not prepared to make any sacrifice in its cause. Now, is Allah gives you power in the land and entrusts the affairs of the world to you when morally you are unsound and unreliable, what else can be expected of you than that you would commit tyranny and mischief and resort to killing of your own near and dear ones.

This verse clearly points out that Islam forbids severing of relations with the kindred. On the other hand, in positive terms also, at several places in the Qur'ān, treating the relatives kindly and well has been enjoined and counted among the major virtues. (For instance, see Al-Baqarah: 83, 177; An-Nisā': 8, 36; An-Naḥl: 90, Banī Isrā'īl: 26; An-Nūr: 22). The word *raḥm* in Arabic is used for kinship and relationship by blood metaphorically. All the relations of a person, whether near or distant, are his kinsmen *(dhwil-arḥām)*. The nearer the relationship the greater the right one has upon the other and graver the sin of severing the ties of blood. To treat the kindred well implies that one should do one's utmost in doing whatever good one possibly can to one's relative, should avoid doing any ill or harm to him. Reasoning from this very verse Ḥaḍrat 'Umar had forbidden as unlawful selling of the slave girl who had given birth to a child from her master, and the Companions had concurred with him in this. Ḥākim in his *Mustadrik* has related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Buraidah that one day when he was sitting among the audience of Hadrat 'Umar, suddenly a clamour arose in the street. On inquiring it was known that a slave girl was being sold and her daughter was crying. Ḥaḍrat 'Umar immediately got the *Anṣār* and the *Muhājirīn* together and

put before them the question: "Do you find in the Religion that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) has brought any room for severing of relations between the blood relationships?" Everybody replied in the negative. Thereupon, Ḥaḍrat 'Umar said: Then, how is it that in your houses a mother is being separated from her daughter? Could there be a greater and more serious instance of the cutting of these relationships? Then he recited this verse. The people said: You may adopt whatever measure you deem fit to stop this practice. At this Ḥaḍrat 'Umar issued this decree for enforcement in all the Islamic territories: "No slave-girl who has given birth to a child from her master is to be sold because this is breaking of kinship ties which is not lawful."

35. That is, "Either these people do not ponder over the Qur'ān at all, or if they try to ponder over it, its teachings and meaning do not enter their hearts, because they have put locks on them." As for this that "there are their locks upon the hearts," it means this: "There are such locks on them as are specially meant for the hearts which are not susceptible to the truth."

36. That is, "In spite of professing the Faith and being counted among the Muslims, they went on conspiring secretly with the enemies of Islam and even pledged to support them in certain matters."

37. That is, "In the world they adopted this attitude so that they may safeguard their interests and may protect themselves from the dangers of the conflict between Islam and infidelity, but how will they escape Allah's wrath after death? At that time no device of theirs will prove helpful for them to remain safe from the punishment by the angels."

This verse also is one of those verses that point to the torment of *barzakh* (i.e. torment of the grave). It clearly shows that the unbelievers and hypocrites start being afflicted with the torment right from the time of death, and this torment is different from the punishment which they will get on Resurrection after their cases will have been decided by Allah. (For further explanation, see An-Nisā': 97; Al-An'ām: 93-94; Al-Anfāl: 50; An-Nahl: 28, 32; Al-Mu'minūn: 99 100; Yā Sīn: 26-27 and E.N.'s 22, 23; Al-Mu'min: 46 and E. N. 63).

38. This refers to all those works that they performed as "Muslims." Their Prayers, their fasting, their payments of the *zakāt*, and all other acts of worship and virtue, which in appearance and form are counted among good works, were rendered void, for they failed to adopt the attitude of sincerity and loyalty towards Allah and Islam and the Muslim community even though they professed to be Muslims; but, on the contrary, they went on conspiring with the enemies of Islam for the sake of small worldly gains, and started devising schemes to save themselves from any possible risks as soon as time came for *Jihād* in the cause of Allah.

These verses are absolutely decisive and conclusive in this regard that in the conflict between Islam and un-Islam the faith of the person whose sympathies are not with Islam and the Muslims, or are with disbelief and the disbelievers, cannot at all be reliable, not to speak of any of his works being acceptable before Allah.

39. This sentence has two meanings: (1) That Allah will render vain and fruitless all those works which they had performed as "good works", and they will get no reward whatever for them in the Hereafter; and (2) that all the devices that they are adopting to obstruct the way of Allah and His Messenger's Religion will prove ineffective and fruitless.

40. In other words, the deeds' being beneficial and yielding of good results depends wholly on one's obedience to Allah and His Messenger. After one has turned away from obedience, no deed remains a good deed so that one may deserve any reward for it.

41. Here, one should bear in mind the fact that when this discourse was revealed only a handful of the Muslims consisting of a couple of hundreds of the *Muhājirūn* and *Ansār* living in the small town of Madīnah were upholding the standard of Islam and they were not only faced by the powerful Quraish but also by the whole of pagan Arabia. Such were the conditions when they were exhorted "not to be faint-hearted and not to beg (the enemy) for peace", but to make preparations for the decisive conflict. This does not mean that the Muslims should never negotiate for peace, but it means that in a state like this it is not right to initiate peace negotiations when it shows the Muslims' weakness, for it will still further embolden the enemy. The Muslims should first establish their superiority in power and strength; then if they negotiate peace there will be no harm.

42. That is, "As against the Hereafter, this world is no more than a means of temporary entertainment. The success or failure here is not anything real and enduring, which might in any way be important. The real life is life hereafter success in which should be man's main concern. (For further explanation, see E.N. 102 of Sūrah Al-'Ankabūt).

43. That is, "Allah is Self-Sufficient: He does not need taking anything from you for His own Self. If He tells you to expend something in His way, He does so not for Himself but only for your own good."

44. That is, "He does not put you to any severe trial that may bring out your weaknesses."


XLVIII
AL-FAT-H
الفَتح

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XLVIII

AL-FAT-Ḥ

الفَتح

INTRODUCTION

Name

It is derived from the words *Innā fataḥ-nā laka fat-ḥan mubīnā* of the very first verse. This is not only a name of the Sūrah but also its title in view of the subject-matter, for it deals with the great victory that Allah granted to the Holy Prophet and the Muslims in the form of the Truce of Ḥudaibiyah.

Period of Revelation

Traditions concur that it was sent down in Dhil-Qa'dah, A.H. 6, at a time when the Holy Prophet was on his return journey to Madīnah after concluding the Truce of Ḥudaibiyah with the disbelievers of Makkah.

Historical Background

The events in connection with which this Sūrah was sent down began like this: One day the Holy Prophet saw in a dream that he had gone to Makkah with his Companions and had performed the 'Umrah there. Obviously, the Prophet's dream could not be a mere dream and fiction; for it is a kind of Divine inspiration as Allah Himself has

confirmed in verse 27 below and said that He Himself had shown that dream to His Messenger. Therefore, it was not merely a dream but a Divine inspiration which the Holy Prophet had to obey and follow.

Apparently, there was no possible way of acting on this inspiration. The disbelieving Quraish had debarred the Muslims from proceeding to the Ka'bah for the past six years and no Muslim had been allowed during that period to approach the Ka'bah for the purpose of performing Ḥajj and 'Umrah. Therefore, it could not be expected that they would allow the Holy Prophet to enter Makkah along with a party of his Companions. If they had proceeded to Makkah in the pilgrim garments with the intention of performing 'Umrah, along with their arms, this would have provoked the enemy to war, and if they had proceeded un-armed, this would have meant endangering his own as well as his Companions' lives. Under conditions such as these nobody could see and suggest how the Divine inspiration could be acted upon.

But the Prophet's position was different. It demanded that he should carry out whatever Command his Lord gave fearlessly and without any apprehension and doubt. Therefore, the Holy Prophet informed his Companions of his dream and began to make preparations for the journey. Among the tribes living in the suburbs also he had the public announcement made that he was proceeding for 'Umrah and the people could join him. Those who could only see the apparent conditions thought that he and his Companions were going into the very jaws of death; none of them therefore was inclined to accompany him in the expedition. But those who had true faith in Allah and His Messenger were least bothered about the consequences. For them this information was enough that it was a Divine inspiration and Allah's Prophet had made up his mind to carry it into effect. After this nothing could hinder them from accompanying the Messenger of Allah. Thus, 1,400 of the Companions became ready to follow him on this highly dangerous journey.

This blessed caravan set off from Madinah in the beginning of Dhil Qa'dah, A.H. 6. At Dhul-Ḥulaifah[1] they entered the pilgrims robe

1. A place 6 miles south of Madinah on the road to Makkah, which is now called Bi'r 'Alī; the pilgrims coming from the direction of Madinah enter the pilgrim's robe for Hajj and 'Umrah here.

with the intention of 'Umrah, took 70 camels with collars round their necks indicating that they were sacrificial animals; kept only a sword each in sheaths, which the pilgrims to the Ka'bah were allowed to carry according to the recognized custom of Arabiá, but no other weapon. Thus, the caravan set out for the Ka'bah, the House of Allah, at Makkah, chanting the prescribed slogan of *Labbaik, Allahumma labbaik.*

The nature of the relations between Makkah and Madinah in those days was known too well to every Arab. Just the previous year, in Shawwāl A.H. 5, the Quraish mustering the united strength of the Arab tribes had invaded Madinah and the well-known Battle of the Trench had taken place. Therefore, when the Holy Prophet along with such a large caravan set off for the home of his blood-thirsty enemy, the whole of Arabia looked up with amazement, and the people also noticed that the caravan was not going with the intention to fight but was proceeding to the House of Allah in a forbidden month in the pilgrims garb carrying sacrificial animals and was absolutely un-armed.

The Quraish were confounded at this bold step taken by the Holy Prophet. Dhil-Qa'dah was one of those forbiddén months which had been held as sacred for pilgrimage in Arabia for centuries. Nobody had a right to interfere with a caravan which might be coming for Ḥajj or 'Umrah in the pilgrims garb in this month; so much so that even an enemy tribe could not hinder it from passing through its territory according to the recognized law of the land. The Quraish therefore were caught in a dilemma, for if they attacked this caravan from Madinah and stopped it from entering Makkah, this would arouse a clamour of protest in the whole country, and all the Arab tribes would have the misgiving that the Quraish had monopolised the Ka'bah as exclusively their own, and every tribe would be involved in the mistrust that now it depended on the will of the Quraish to allow or not to allow anyone to perform Ḥajj or 'Umrah in the future and that they would stop any tribe with which they were angry from visiting the Ka'bah just as they had stopped the Madinese pilgrims. This they thought would be a grave mistake, which would cause the entire Arabia to revolt against them. But, on the other hand, if they allowed Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) and his large caravan to enter their city safely, they would lose their image of power in Arabia and the people would say that they were afraid of Muḥammad. At last, after a great deal of confusion,

perplexity and hesitation they were overcome by their false sense of honour and for the sake of their prestige they took the decision that they would at no cost allow the caravan to enter the city of Makkah.

The Holy Prophet had despatched a man of the Banī Ka'b as a secret agent so that he may keep him fully informed of the intentions and movements of the Quraish. When the Holy Prophet reached 'Usfān[1], he brought the news that the Quraish had reached Dhī-Tuwā[2] with full preparations and they had sent Khālid bin Walīd with two hundred cavalry men in advance towards Kurā'al Ghamīm[3] to intercept him. The Quraish wanted somehow to provoke the Holy Prophet's Companions into fighting so that they may tell the Arabs that those people had actually come to fight and had put on the pilgrims garments for 'Umrah only to deceive others.

Immediately on receipt of this information the Holy Prophet changed his route and following a very rugged, rocky track reached Hudaibiyah,[4] which was situated right on the boundary of the sacred Makkan territory. Here, he was visited by Budail bin Warqā' the chief of the Banī Khuzā'ah, along with some men of his tribe. They asked what he had come for. The Holy Prophet replied that he and his Companions had come only for pilgrimage to the House of Allah and for going round it in worship and not for war. The men of Khuzā'ah went and told this to the Quraish chiefs and counselled them not to interfere with the pilgrims. But the Quraish were obstinate. They sent Ḥulays bin 'Alqamah, the chief of the Aḥābīsh,[5] to the Holy Prophet to persuade him to go back. Their object was that when Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) would not listen to Ḥulays, he would come back disappointed and then the entire power of the Aḥābish would be on their side. But when Ḥulays went and saw that the whole caravan had put on the pilgrims garments, had brought sacrificial camels with festive collars round their necks, and had come for doing reverence to the House of

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1. A place at two days journey on the road to Makkah.
2. A place, outside Makkah, on the way to 'Usfān.
3. A place 8 miles from 'Usfān towards Makkah.
4. Ḥudaibiyah, now called Shumaisī, situated about 13 miles from Makkah on the road to Jeddah.
5. A collection of a few tribes living in the outskirts of Makkah who were allies of the Quraish.

Allah and not to fight, he returned to Makkah without having any dialogue with the Holy Prophet and told the Quraish chiefs plainly that those people had no other object but to pay a visit to the Ka'bah; if they debarred them from it, the Aḥābish would not join them in that, because they had not become their allies to support them even if they violated the sacred customs and traditions.

Then the Quraish sent 'Urwah bin Mas'ūd Thaqafī; he had lengthy negotiations with the Holy Prophet in an effort to persuade him to give up his intention to enter Makkah. But the Holy Prophet gave him also the same reply that he had given to the chief of the Khuzā'ah, that they had not come to fight but to do honour to the House of Allah and carry out a religious duty. 'Urwah went back and said to the Quraish: "I have been to the courts of the Caesar and Khosroes, and the Negus also, but by God, never have I seen any people so devoted to a king as are the Companions of Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) to him. If Muhammad makes his ablutions they would not let the water thereof fall on the ground but would rub it on their bodies and clothes. Now you may decide as to what you should do."

In the meantime when the messages were coming and the negotiations were going on, the Quraish tried again and again to quietly launch sudden attacks on the Muslim camp in order to provoke the Companions and somehow incite them to war, but every time they did so the Companions' forbearance and patience and the Holy Prophet's wisdom and sagacity frustrated their designs. On one occasion forty or fifty of their men came at night and attacked the Muslim camp with stones and arrows. The Companions arrested all of them and took them before the Holy Prophet, but he let them go. On another occasion 80 men came from the direction of Tan'im[1] right at the time of the Fajr Prayer and made a sudden attack. They were also caught, but the Holy Prophet forgave them, too. Thus, the Quraish went on meeting failure after failure in every one of their designs.

At last, the Holy Prophet sent Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān (may Allah be pleased with him) as his own messenger to Makkah with the message

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1. A place near Makkah, outside the sacred territory. The people generally go out to Tan'im to don the pilgrim garments for 'Umrah and then return to Makkah to perform 'Umrah.

that they had not come to fight but only for pilgrimage and had brought their sacrificial camels along, and they would go back after performing the rite of pilgrimage and offering the sacrifice. But the Quraish did not agree and withheld Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān in the city. In the meantime a rumour spread that Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān had been killed; and when he did not return in time the Muslims took the rumour to be true. Now they could show no more forbearance. Entry into Makkah was different for there was no intention to use force. But when the ambassador was put to death, the Muslims had no alternative but to prepare for war. Therefore, the Holy Prophet summoned all his Companions together and took a solemn pledge from them that they would fight to death. In view of the critical occasion it was not an ordinary undertaking. The Muslims numbered only 1,400 and had come without any weapons, were encamping at the boundary of Makkah, 250 miles away from their own city, and the enemy could attack them in full strength, and could surround them with its allies from the adjoining tribes as well. In spite of this, none from the caravan except one man failed to give his pledge to fight to death, and there could be no greater proof of their dedication and sincerity than that in the cause of Allah. This pledge is well known in the history of Islam as the pledge of Ridwān.

Later it was known that the news about Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān was false. Not only did he return but under Suhail bin 'Amr from the Quraish also arrived a deputation to negotiate peace with the Holy Prophet. Now, the Quraish no more insisted that they would disallow the Holy Prophet and his Companions to enter Makkah. However, in order to save their face they only insisted that he went back that year but could come the following year to perform the 'Umrah. After lengthy negotiations peace was concluded on the following terms:

(1) War would remain suspended for ten years, and no party would indulge in any hostility, open or secret, against the other.

(2) If any one during that period from among the Quraish went over to Muḥammad, without his guardian's permission, he would return him to them, but if a Companion of Muḥammad came over to the Quraish, they would not return him to him.

(3) Every Arab tribe would have the option to join either side as its ally and enter the treaty.

(4) Muhammad and his men would go back that year and could come the following year for 'Umrah and stay in Makkah for three days, provided that they brought only one sheathed sword each, and no other weapon of war. In those three days the Makkans would vacate the city for them (so that there was no chance of a clash), but they would not be allowed to take along any Makkan on return.

When the conditions of the treaty were being settled, the whole of the Muslim army was feeling greatly upset. No one understood the expedience because of which the Holy Prophet was accepting the conditions. No one was far-sighted enough to foresee the great benefit that was to result from this treaty. The disbelieving Quraish looked at it as their victory, and the Muslims were upset as to why they should be humiliated to accepting those mean conditions. Even a statesman of the calibre of Hadrat 'Umar says that he had never given way to doubt since the time he had embraced Islam but on this occasion he also could not avoid it. Impatient he went to Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr and said: "Is he (the Holy Prophet) not Allah's Messenger, and are we not Muslims?, and are they not polytheists? Then, why should we agree to what is humiliating to our Faith ?" He replied: "O 'Umar, he is, surely Allah's Messenger and Allah will never make him the loser." Unsatisfied he went to the Holy Prophet himself and put the same questions to him, and he also gave him the same replies as Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr had given. Afterwards Hadrat 'Umar continued to offer voluntary prayers and give alms so that Allah may pardon his insolence that he had shown towards the Holy Prophet on that occasion.

Two things in the treaty were highly disturbing for the Muslim; first, the second condition, about which they said that it was an expressly unfair condition, for if they had to return a fugitive from Makkah, why should not the Quraish return a fugitive from Madinah? To this the Holy Prophet replied: "What use would be he to us, who fled from us to them? May Allah keep him away from us! And if we return the one who flees to us from them, Allah will create some other way out for him." The other thing that was rankling in their minds was the fourth condition. The Muslims thought that agreeing to it meant that they were going back unsuccessful and this was humiliating. Furthermore, the question that was causing them feel upset was that they had accepted the condition of going back without performing the

pilgrimage to the Ka'bah, whereas the Holy Prophet had seen in the vision that they were performing *tawāf* at Makkah. To this the Holy Prophet replied that in his vision the year had not been specified. According to the treaty conditions, therefore, they would perform the *tawāf* the following year if it pleased Allah.

Right at the time when the document was being written, Suhail bin 'Amr's own son, Abū Jandal, who had become a Muslim and been imprisoned by the pagans of Makkah somehow escaped to the Holy Prophet's camp. He had fetters on his feet and signs of violence on his body. He implored the Holy Prophet that he help secure his release from imprisonment. The scene only increased the Companions' dejection, and they were moved beyond control. But Suhail bin 'Amr said the conditions of the agreement had been concluded between them although the writing was not yet complete; therefore, the boy should be returned to them. The Holy Prophet admitted his argument and Abū Jandal was returned to his oppressors.

When the document was finished, the Holy Prophet spoke to the Companions and told them to slaughter their sacrificial animals at that very place, shave their heads and put off the pilgrim garments, but no one moved from his place. The Holy Prophet repeated the order thrice but the Companions were so overcome by depression and dejection that they did not comply. During his entire period of apostleship on no occasion had it ever happened that he should command his Companions to do a thing and they should not hasten to comply with it. This caused him a great shock, and he repaired to his tent and expressed his grief before his wife, Ḥaḍrat Umm Salamah. She said, "You may quietly go and slaughter your own camel and call the barber and have your head shaved. After that the people would automatically do what you did and would understand that whatever decision had been taken would not be changed." Precisely the same thing happened. The people slaughtered their animals, shaved their heads or cut their hair short and put off the pilgrim garb, but their hearts were still afflicted with grief.

Later, when this caravan was returning to Madīnah, feeling depressed and dejected at the truce of Hudaibiyah, this Sūrah came down at Dajnān (or according to some others, at Kurā'al-Ghamīm), which told the Muslims that the treaty that they were regarding as their defeat, was

indeed a great victory. After it had come down, the Holy Prophet summoned the Muslims together and said: "Today such a thing has bean sent down to me, which is more valuable to me than the world and what it contains." Then he recited this Sūrah, especially to Ḥadrat 'Umar, for he was the one who was feeling most dejected.

Although the believers were satisfied when they heard this Divine Revelation, not much longer afterwards the advantages of this treaty began to appear one after the other until every one became fully convinced that this peace treaty indeed was a great victory:

(1) In it for the first time the existence of the Islamic State in Arabia was duly recognized. Before this in the eyes of the Arabs the position of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and his Companions was no more than of mere rebels against the Quraish and other Arab tribes, and they regarded them as the outlaws. Now the Quraish themselves by concluding this agreement with the Holy Prophet recognized his sovereignty over the territories of the Islamic State and opened the way for the Arab tribes to enter treaties of alliance with either of the political powers they liked.

(2) By admitting the right of pilgrimage to the House of Allah for the Muslims, the Quraish also admitted that Islam was not an anti-religious creed, as they had so far been thinking, but it was one of the admitted religions of Arabia, and like the other Arabs, its followers also had the right to perform the rites of Ḥajj and 'Umrah. This diminished the hatred in the Arabs' hearts that had been caused by the propaganda made by the Quraish against Islam.

(3) The signing of a no-war pact for ten years provided full peace to the Muslims, and spreading to every nook and corner of Arabia they preached Islam with such spirit and speed that within two years after Hudaibiyah the number of the people who embraced Islam far exceeded those who had embraced it during the past 19 years or so. It was all due to this treaty that two years later when in consequence of the Quraish's violating the treaty the Holy Prophet invaded Makkah, he was accompanied by an army 10,000 strong, whereas on the occasion of Hudaibiyah only 1,400 men had joined him in the march.

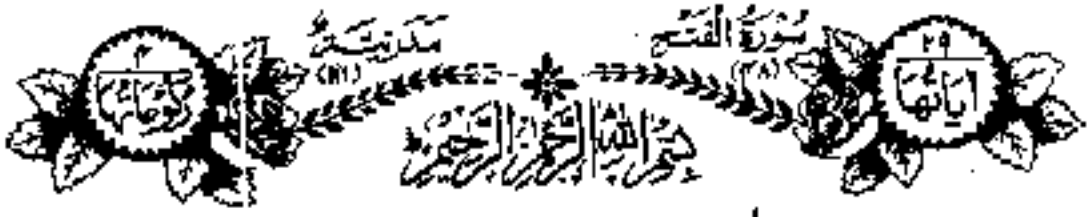
(4) After the suspension of hostilities by the Quraish the Holy Prophet had the opportunity to establish and strengthen Islamic rule in the territories under him and to turn the Islamic society into a full-fledged civilization and way of life by the enforcement of Islamic law. This is that great blessing about which Allah says in verse 3 of Sūrah Al-Mā'idah: "Today I have perfected your Religion for you and completed My blessing on you and approved Islam as the Way of Life for you." (For explanation, see Introduction to Sūrah Al-Mā'idah and its E.N. 15).

(5) Another gain that accrued from the truce with the Quraish was that being assured of peace from the south the Muslims overpowered all the opponent forces in the north and central Arabia easily. Just three months after Hudaibiyah, Khaiber, the major stronghold of the Jews, was conquered and after it the Jewish settlements of Fadak, Wād-il Qurā', Taimā' and Tabūk also fell to Islam one after the other. Then all other tribes of central Arabia, which were bound in alliance with the Jews and Quraish, came under the sway of Islam. Thus, within two years after Hudaibiyah the balance of power in Arabia was so changed that the strength of the Quraish and pagans gave way and the domination of Islam became certain.

These were the blessings that the Muslims gained from the peace treaty which they were looking upon as their defeat and the Quraish as their victory. However, what had troubled the Muslims most in this treaty, was the condition about the fugitives from Makkah and Madīnah, that the former would be returned and the latter would not be returned. But not much long afterwards this condition also proved to be disadvantageous for the Quraish, and experience revealed what far-reaching consequences of it had the Holy Prophet fore-seen and then accepted it. A few days after the treaty a Muslim of Makkah, Abū Basīr, escaped from the Quraish and reached Madīnah. The Quraish demanded him back and the Holy Prophet returned him to their men who had been sent from Makkah to arrest him. But while on the way to Makkah he again fled and went and sat on the road by the Red Sea shore, which the trade caravans of the Quraish took to Syria. After that every Muslim who succeeded in escaping from the Quraish would go and join Abū Basīr instead of going to Madīnah, until 70 men gathered there. They

would attack any Quraish caravan that passed that way and cut it into pieces. At last, the Quraish themselves begged the Holy Prophet to call those men to Madinah, and the condition relating to the return of the fugitives of itself became null and void.

The Sūrah should be read with this historical background in view in order to fully understand it.



إِنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَكَ فَتْحًا مُّبِينًا ۝ لِّيَغْفِرَ لَكَ اللَّهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِن ذَنبِكَ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ

XLVIII

AL-FAT-Ḥ

الفَتح

Verses: 29 *Revealed at Al-Madinah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

O Prophet, We have indeed granted you a manifest victory[1] so that Allah may pardon you your former and latter faults,[2] and may perfect His blessing upon you[3] and show you 1-7

1. When after the treaty of Hudaibiyah this good news of the victory was announced, the people wondered as to how the treaty could be called a victory. The Muslims did believe in this Divine Revelation as true on the basis of their Faith, but no one could understand what aspect of the victory it had. On hearing this verse, Hadrat 'Umar asked: "Is it a victory, O Messenger of Allah?" The Holy Prophet replied: "Yes." (Ibn Jarir) Another Companion came before the Holy Prophet and he also put the same question, whereupon the Holy Prophet replied: "By Him in Whose hand is the life of Muhammad, this indeed is a victory." (Musnad Ahmad, Abū Da'ūd) On arriving at Madīnah still another person said to his companions: "What sort of a victory is it? We were debarred from the House of Allah; our sacrificial camels also could not go to their right places; the Holy Messenger of Allah had to halt at Ḥudaibiyah, and in consequence of this truce two of our oppressed brothers (Abū Jandal and Abū Baṣir) were handed over to their oppressors." When this thing reached the Holy Prophet, he said:

"A very wrong thing has been uttered: it indeed is a great victory. You reached the very home of the polytheists, and they had to persuade you to go back

by soliciting you to perform 'Umrah the following year; they themselves expressed the desire to suspend hostilities and have peace with you, whereas their malice and enmity against you is too well-known. Allah has granted you the upper hand over them. Have you forgotten the day when you were fleeing from Uhud and I was calling you back from behind? Have you forgotten the day when the enemy had descended on us from every side in the Battle of the Trench and the hearts were coming up to the throats?" (Baihaqī on the authority of 'Urwah bin Zubair) . But not long after this the truce's being a victory began to become manifest, and everyone realized that the triumph of Islam had begun with the treaty of Hudaibiyah. Almost one and the same thing has been related from Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Hadrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah and Ḥadrat Barā' bin 'Āzib. They are reported to have said: "The people look upon the Conquest of Makkah as the victory, but we regard the truce of Hudaibiyah as the real victory." (Bukhārī, Muslim, Musnad Ahmad, Ibn Jarir).

2. If the context in which this sentence occurs is kept in view, one will certainly feel that the faults referred to here imply those shortcomings and weaknesses that had remained in the struggle that the Muslims had been making for the success and victory of Islam, under the leadership of the Holy Prophet, for the past nineteen years or so. These shortcomings are not known to any one because the intellect is absolutely helpless to find out any weakness in that struggle. But according to the highest standards of perfection in the sight of Allah there had remained some such weakness in it because of which the Muslims could not attain a decisive victory so soon over the pagans of Arabia. What Allah means to say is this: "If you had carried on your struggle along with those weaknesses, it would have taken you much longer to subdue Arabia, but We have overlooked all those weaknesses and shortcomings and compensated for them only through Our grace, and opened for you at Hudaibiyah the door to victory and conquest which you could not have achieved only by your ordinary endeavours".

Here, this thing also should be understood well that for the weaknesses that might occur and remain in the struggle and endeavour that a group might be making for an object, the leader and guide of the group only is addressed. This does not mean that the weaknesses are the leader's personal weaknesses. Those are, in fact, the weaknesses of the struggle that the group is making as a whole; but the address is made to the leader to tell him that his work suffers from such and such a weakness.

However, as the address is directed to the Holy Prophet and declared that Allah has forgiven him all his former and latter faults, the general words also give this meaning that Allah pardoned all the shortcomings (which were the shortcomings in view of his high position) of His Holy Messenger. That is why when the Companions saw that he took extraordinary pains over his worship, they

would say: "Why do you subject yourself to such hardships when all your former and latter errors and shortcomings have been pardoned ?" the Holy Prophet would reply: "Should I not behave as a grateful servant ?" (Ahmad, Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd).

3. "Perfection of his blessings" implies that the Muslims should become wholly free to live their lives in accordance with Islamic civilization, Islamic law and commandments, secure from every fear, every resistance and every external interference, and they should also be blessed with the power that they may uphold Allah's Word throughout the world. Dominance of disbelief and wickedness which may be a hindrance in the way of Allah's worship and an obstacle in the struggle in propagating Allah's Word, is the greatest calamity for the believers; the Qur'ān calls it *"fitnah"* (mischief). Delivered and freed from this calamity when they are able to achieve an abode of Islam *(dār al-Islam)* in which the Divine Religion is enforced in its entirety, and alongwith that they are also provided with the means and resources by which they may establish faith and righteousness on Allah's earth in place of disbelief and wickedness, this would be the perfection of Allah's blessing on them. As this blessing was achieved by the Muslims only through the Holy Prophet, Allah addressed only him and said: "We willed to complete Our blessing on you; therefore we have granted this victory to you."

وَيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهٗ عَلَيْكَ وَيَهْدِيَكَ صِرَاطًا مُّسْتَقِيْمًا ۙ﴿٢﴾ وَّيَنْصُرَكَ اللّٰهُ نَصْرًا
عَزِيْزًا ﴿٣﴾ هُوَ الَّذِيْٓ اَنْزَلَ السَّكِيْنَةَ فِيْ قُلُوْبِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ لِيَزْدَادُوْٓا اِيْمَانًا مَّعَ
اِيْمَانِهِمْ ۗ وَلِلّٰهِ جُنُوْدُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۭ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ عَلِيْمًا حَكِيْمًا ۙ﴿٤﴾ لِّيُدْخِلَ
الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَالْمُؤْمِنٰتِ جَنّٰتٍ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا وَيُكَفِّرَ
عَنْهُمْ سَيِّاٰتِهِمْ ۭ وَكَانَ ذٰلِكَ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ فَوْزًا عَظِيْمًا ۙ﴿٥﴾ وَّيُعَذِّبَ الْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ وَ
الْمُنٰفِقٰتِ وَالْمُشْرِكِيْنَ وَالْمُشْرِكٰتِ الظَّاۗنِّيْنَ بِاللّٰهِ ظَنَّ السَّوْءِ ۭ عَلَيْهِمْ دَاۗىِٕرَةُ
السَّوْءِ ۚ وَغَضِبَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَنَهُمْ وَاَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ ۭ وَسَاۗءَتْ
مَصِيْرًا ۙ﴿٦﴾ وَلِلّٰهِ جُنُوْدُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۭ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ عَزِيْزًا حَكِيْمًا ۙ﴿٧﴾
اِنَّآ اَرْسَلْنٰكَ شَاهِدًا وَّمُبَشِّرًا وَّنَذِيْرًا ۙ﴿٨﴾ لِّتُؤْمِنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهٖ وَتُعَزِّرُوْهُ
وَتُوَقِّرُوْهُ ۭ وَتُسَبِّحُوْهُ بُكْرَةً وَّاَصِيْلًا ۙ﴿٩﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يُبَايِعُوْنَكَ اِنَّمَا يُبَايِعُوْنَ
اللّٰهَ ۭ يَدُ اللّٰهِ فَوْقَ اَيْدِيْهِمْ ۚ فَمَنْ نَّكَثَ فَاِنَّمَا يَنْكُثُ عَلٰي نَفْسِهٖ ۚ وَمَنْ
اَوْفٰى بِمَا عٰهَدَ عَلَيْهُ اللّٰهَ فَسَيُؤْتِيْهِ اَجْرًا عَظِيْمًا ۙ﴿١٠﴾ سَيَقُوْلُ لَكَ الْمُخَلَّفُوْنَ
مِنَ الْاَعْرَابِ شَغَلَتْنَآ اَمْوَالُنَا وَاَهْلُوْنَا فَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَنَا ۚ يَقُوْلُوْنَ بِاَلْسِنَتِهِمْ
مَّا لَيْسَ فِيْ قُلُوْبِهِمْ ۭ قُلْ فَمَنْ يَّمْلِكُ لَكُمْ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ شَيْـــًٔا اِنْ اَرَادَ بِكُمْ
ضَرًّا اَوْ اَرَادَ بِكُمْ نَفْعًا ۭ بَلْ كَانَ اللّٰهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ خَبِيْرًا ۙ﴿١١﴾ بَلْ ظَنَنْتُمْ
اَنْ لَّنْ يَّنْقَلِبَ الرَّسُوْلُ وَالْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ اِلٰٓى اَهْلِيْهِمْ اَبَدًا وَّزُيِّنَ ذٰلِكَ فِيْ
قُلُوْبِكُمْ وَظَنَنْتُمْ ظَنَّ السَّوْءِ ۚ وَكُنْتُمْ قَوْمًۢا بُوْرًا ۙ﴿١٢﴾ وَمَنْ لَّمْ يُؤْمِنْۢ بِاللّٰهِ
وَرَسُوْلِهٖ فَاِنَّآ اَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكٰفِرِيْنَ سَعِيْرًا ۙ﴿١٣﴾ وَلِلّٰهِ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۭ
يَغْفِرُ لِمَنْ يَّشَاۗءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَّشَاۗءُ ۭ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ غَفُوْرًا رَّحِيْمًا ﴿١٤﴾ سَيَقُوْلُ

the right way,[4] and bestow on you a mighty help.[5] He it is Who sent down tranquillity into the hearts of the believers[6] so that they may have another Faith added to their Faith.[7] To Allah belong the hosts of the heavens and the earth, and He is All-Knowing, All Wise. [8] (He has done this) so that He may admit the believing men and the believing women[9] into the Gardens underneath which canals flow, there to live for ever, and may remove their evils from them.[10]—This is indeed the greatest success in the sight of Allah.—And that He may punish the hypocritical men and women and the *mushrik* men and women, who entertain evil thoughts about Allah.[11] They themselves have been encircled by the evil.[12] They came under the wrath of Allah and He cursed them and prepared for them Hell, which is a most evil abode. To Allah belong the hosts of the heavens and the earth, and He is All-Mighty, All-Wise.[13]

O Prophet, We have sent you as a witness,[14] as a bearer of good news and as a warner,[15] so that you, O people, may believe in Allah and His Messenger, and may help him (i.e. the Messenger) and honour him, and glorify Allah morning and evening.[16] 8-9

O Prophet, those who were swearing allegiance to you,[17] were indeed swearing allegiance to Allah. Allah's hand was over their hands.[18] Now whosoever breaks this pledge breaks it at his own peril, and whosoever keeps his pledge that he has made with Allah,[19] Allah will soon grant him a great reward. 10

O Prophet, the desert Arabs who were left behind,[20] will surely come and say to you, "Our properties and our households kept us occupied; so ask forgiveness for us." They say with their tongues that which is not in their hearts.[21] Say to them: "If it is so, who then can have any power to withhold Allah's decree in your behalf if He intends to do some harm to you or bring some good to you? Allah is well aware of all your actions.[22] (But the real thing is not what you say :) Nay, you rather thought that the Messenger and the believers would never return to their families and this fancy delighted your hearts[23] and you harboured evil thoughts and you are a people, most wicked."[24] 11-12

Whoever does not believe in Allah and His Messenger, for such disbelievers We have prepared a blazing Fire.[25] To Allah belongs the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth. He may pardon whomever He wills and punish whomever He wills, and He is All-Forgiving, All-Merciful .[26] 13-14

4. "The right way": the way to conquest and success. In other words, it implies that by causing the treaty to be concluded at Hudaibiyah Allah paved the way for and inspired the Holy Prophet with the plan by which he could subdue all the forces that were resisting Islam.

5. Another translation can be: "Bestow on you an unprecedented victory," for the word *'aziz* in the original may mean mighty as well as unprecedented and unparalleled. According to the first meaning, the sentence means: "By means of this treaty Allah has helped you in a way as to make your enemies helpless"; and according to the second, it means: "Seldom has this novel method ever been adopted to help somebody, that a thing which apparently is a mere peace treaty, and that too a treaty concluded from a weak position, would turn into a decisive victory."

6. *"Sakinat"* in Arabic is calmness and tranquillity and peace of mind. Here Allah calls its being sent into the hearts of the believers an important factor in the victory that Islam and the Muslims achieved at Hudaibiyah. From a study of the conditions of the time one comes to know what kind of a *Sakinat* it was that was sent down into the hearts of the Muslims during that period and how it became a source of victory. If at the time when the Holy Prophet expressed his intention to go for 'Umrah to Makkah, the Muslims had become terror-stricken and started behaving like the hypocrites as if they were going into the very jaws of death, or if at the time when they heard the news on the way that the disbelieving Quraish were coming out in great strength to fight them, they had been alarmed as to how they would face the enemy un-armed, and thus become panic-stricken, obviously no benefits would have resulted from Hudaibiyah at all. Then, if at the time when at Hudaibiyah the disbelievers had stopped the Muslims from going any further, and when they had tried to provoke them by launching against them repeated sudden attacks, and when the rumour of Hadrat 'Uthmān's martyrdom had spread, and when Abū Jandal had appeared on the scene as the very image of oppression and persecution, the Muslims had actually become provoked and broken the discipline that the Holy Prophet had instilled in them, the result would have been disastrous. Above all, if at the time when the Holy Prophet was going to conclude the treaty on the conditions which were un-acceptable to the entire party of the Muslims, the Muslims had happened to disobey him, the great victory of Hudaibiyah would have turned into a humiliating defeat. Thus, it was all because of Allah's bounty that on all these critical moments the Muslims were blessed with full peace of mind with regard to the leadership and guidance of the Holy Prophet, the truth of Islam and the truthfulness of their mission. This is why they decided with a cool mind that they would face and accept whatever hardships they would encounter in the way of Allah; that is why they remained safe from fear, confusion, provocation and despair; that is why perfect discipline continued

to prevail in the camp; and that is why, in spite of being deeply grieved at the conditions of peace, they submitted to the decision taken by the Holy Prophet. This was the *sakīnat* that Allah had sent down into the hearts of the Muslims, and it was all because of this that the dangerous step of undertaking a journey for performing 'Umrah became the prelude to a unique victory.

7. That is, "One Faith they already had before they set out on this expedition; they attained the additional Faith when they remained steadfast on the way of sincerity, piety and obedience in every trial that they faced in connection with the expedition." This verse is one of those verses which show that Faith is not a static state which is incapable of growth, but it develops as well as decays and deteriorates. After embracing Islam till death the believer at every step in his life continues to be confronted with such tests and trials in which he has to take a decision whether in following the Divine Religion he is prepared to sacrifice his life, his wealth, his sentiments, desires, time, comforts and interests or not. If at the time of every such trial he adopts the way of sacrifice, his Faith progresses and develops, and if he turns away his Faith decays and deteriorates till a time may also come when the initial state of the Faith with which he had entered Islam is even endangered to be lost and destroyed. (For further explanation, see E.N. 2 of Sūrah Al-Anfāl and E.N. 38 of Al-Ahzāb).

8. It means this: Allah has such hosts by which He can destroy and exterminate the disbelievers completely whenever He wills, but He has deliberately and by wisdom only placed this responsibility on the believers that they should enter a conflict with the disbelievers and struggle to make the Religion of Allah prevail and prosper in the world. In this way alone does a door to the enhancement of their ranks and successes in the Hereafter open as is being indicated in the following verse.

9. In the Qur'ān generally mention of the rewards for the believers is made collectively and separate mention is not made of the rewards for the men and the women. But here, since the general mention of giving the rewards could cause the doubt that this reward may perhaps be only meant for the men, Allah has made a separate mention of the believing women, saying that they too would be equal partners in this reward with the believing men. The reason is obvious. Those God-fearing women who encouraged their husbands, sons, brothers and fathers to proceed on the dangerous journey instead of stopping them from it and discouraging them by crying and wailing, who looked after their houses, their properties, their honour and children in their absence faithfully, who did not even feel the alarm lest at the sudden departure of 1,400 of the Companions the disbelievers and hypocrites of the surrounding areas would attack the city, should certainly have become equal partners with their men in the reward of *Jihād* although they stayed behind in their homes.

10. That is, that He may pardon whatever errors they might have committed because of human weaknesses, remove every trace and mark of the errors from them before admitting them into Paradise so that they may enter Paradise absolutely free from every evil that may cause them embarrassment.

11. The hypocrites living in the suburbs of Madīnah were thinking, as has been stated in verse 12 below, that the Holy Prophet and his Companions would not return alive from that journey. As for the polytheists of Makkah and their pagan companions, they were thinking that they had successfully put to rout the Holy Prophet and his Companions by preventing them from performing 'Umrah. In fact, whatever these two groups had thought they had this misunderstanding about Allah that He would not help His Messenger and in the conflict between the Truth and falsehood would allow falsehood to defeat and frustrate the Truth.

12. That is, "They were encompassed by the same evil fate which they wanted to avoid and against which they had devised all those plans, and their same plans caused the evil fate to be hastened."

13. Here the theme of verse 4 has been reiterated for another object. There, the object was to state that Allah instead of employing His supernatural hosts to fight the disbelievers had employed the believers for it only because He willed to favour them. Here, the theme has been repeated to say that in order to punish the one whom Allah wills to punish He can employ whichever of His countless hosts He likes for the purpose; no one has the power to avert His punishment by his own plans.

14. Shah Wallyullah has translated *shāhid* as "a bearer of witness to the truth", and other translators translate it as "a bearer of the witness". The word *shahādat* comprehends both these meanings. For explanation, see E.N. 82 of Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb.

15. For explanation, see E.N. 33 of Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb.

16. According to some commentators the verse means: ".... and help the Messenger, and honour him, and glorify Allah morning and evening", and according to others: "... and help Allah, and honour Him and glorify Him morning and evening."

Glorifying Allah morning and evening does not mean glorifying Him only in the morning and the evening but at all times. It is just like saying about something that it is well-known in the east and the west when one actually means to say that it is well-known everywhere in the world.

17. The reference is to the pledge that the Holy Prophet took from his Companions at Hudaibiyah at the rumour that Ḥadrat 'Uthmān had been killed at

Makkah. According to some traditions it was a pledge unto death, and according to others it was an undertaking that they would not run away from the battlefield. The first thing has been reported from Ḥaḍrat Salamah bin Akwa' and the second from Ḥaḍrat Ibn 'Umar, Jābir bin 'Abdullah and Ma'qil bin Yasār. The purport of both is the same. The Companions had pledged allegiance on the Holy Prophet's hand with the express object that if the news of Hadrat 'Uthmān's martyrdom proved to be true, they would settle the matter with the Quraish there and then even if they were cut to pieces in the clash. As on this occasion it was not yet certain whether Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān actually had been killed or was still living, the Holy Prophet placed one of his own hands on the other and pledged allegiance on his behalf, and thus bestowed a unique honour on Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān in that he made Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān a partner in the pledge by making his own sacred hand represent the hand of Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān. The Holy Prophet's taking the pledge of allegiance on his behalf necessarily meant that he had full confidence that if Hadrat 'Uthmān had been present he would certainly have pledged the allegiance.

18. That is, the hand on which the Muslims were swearing allegiance was not the hand of the Prophet's person but of Allah's representative, and this allegiance was in fact being sworn to Allah through His Messenger.

19. Here, instead of *'alaih-Illah* the words used in the original are *'alaih-ullah*, which is a departure from the general rule of Arabic. 'Allāma Ālūsī has given two reasons for the unusual use of the vowel points here. First, the object on this special occasion is to express the great glory, eminence and majesty of the Being to Whom the pledge was being sworn for which *alaih-u* is more appropriate than *'alaih-i;* second, the *hā* in *'alaih-i* actually represents *huwa;* therefore, adhering here to the vowel points of the original goes well with the theme of the allegiance.

20. This refers to the people living in the suburbs of Madīnah whom the Holy Prophet had invited to accompany him in his march out for 'Umrah, but they had not left their homes in spite of their claim to Faith just because they were afraid of death. Traditions show that these were the people of the tribes of Aslam, Muzainah, Juhainah, Ghifār, Ashja', Dīl and others.

21 This has two meanings: (1) "That after your returning to Madinah the excuse that these people will present for not going out with you, would only be a lame excuse, because they know in their hearts why they had stayed behind"; and (2) "that their imploring the Messenger of Allah for a prayer of forgiveness would only be an empty word of mouth, for in fact, they are neither feeling remorse for

[Contd. on p. 53]

الْمُخَلَّفُوْنَ اِذَا انْطَلَقْتُمْ اِلٰى مَغَانِمَ لِتَاْخُذُوْهَا ذَرُوْنَا نَتَّبِعْكُمْ ۚ يُرِيْدُوْنَ اَنْ
يُّبَدِّلُوْا كَلٰمَ اللّٰهِ ۭ قُلْ لَّنْ تَتَّبِعُوْنَا كَذٰلِكُمْ قَالَ اللّٰهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۚ فَسَيَقُوْلُوْنَ
بَلْ تَحْسُدُوْنَنَا ۭ بَلْ كَانُوْا لَا يَفْقَهُوْنَ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا ۝15 قُلْ لِّلْمُخَلَّفِيْنَ مِنَ
الْاَعْرَابِ سَتُدْعَوْنَ اِلٰى قَوْمٍ اُولِيْ بَاْسٍ شَدِيْدٍ تُقَاتِلُوْنَهُمْ اَوْ يُسْلِمُوْنَ ۚ
فَاِنْ تُطِيْعُوْا يُؤْتِكُمُ اللّٰهُ اَجْرًا حَسَنًا ۚ وَاِنْ تَتَوَلَّوْا كَمَا تَوَلَّيْتُمْ مِّنْ قَبْلُ
يُعَذِّبْكُمْ عَذَابًا اَلِيْمًا ۝16 لَيْسَ عَلَى الْاَعْمٰى حَرَجٌ وَّلَا عَلَى الْاَعْرَجِ حَرَجٌ وَّ
لَا عَلَى الْمَرِيْضِ حَرَجٌ ۭ وَمَنْ يُّطِعِ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ يُدْخِلْهُ جَنّٰتٍ تَجْرِيْ
مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ ۚ وَمَنْ يَّتَوَلَّ يُعَذِّبْهُ عَذَابًا اَلِيْمًا ۝17 لَقَدْ رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ
عَنِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ اِذْ يُبَايِعُوْنَكَ تَحْتَ الشَّجَرَةِ فَعَلِمَ مَا فِيْ قُلُوْبِهِمْ فَاَنْزَلَ
السَّكِيْنَةَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَاَثَابَهُمْ فَتْحًا قَرِيْبًا ۝18 وَّمَغَانِمَ كَثِيْرَةً يَّاْخُذُوْنَهَا ۭ وَ
كَانَ اللّٰهُ عَزِيْزًا حَكِيْمًا ۝19 وَعَدَكُمُ اللّٰهُ مَغَانِمَ كَثِيْرَةً تَاْخُذُوْنَهَا فَعَجَّلَ
لَكُمْ هٰذِهٖ وَكَفَّ اَيْدِيَ النَّاسِ عَنْكُمْ ۚ وَلِتَكُوْنَ اٰيَةً لِّلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَيَهْدِيَكُمْ
صِرَاطًا مُّسْتَقِيْمًا ۝20 وَّاُخْرٰى لَمْ تَقْدِرُوْا عَلَيْهَا قَدْ اَحَاطَ اللّٰهُ بِهَا ۭ وَكَانَ
اللّٰهُ عَلٰي كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرًا ۝21 وَلَوْ قٰتَلَكُمُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لَوَلَّوُا الْاَدْبَارَ ثُمَّ لَا
يَجِدُوْنَ وَلِيًّا وَّلَا نَصِيْرًا ۝22 سُنَّةَ اللّٰهِ الَّتِيْ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۚ وَلَنْ تَجِدَ
لِسُنَّةِ اللّٰهِ تَبْدِيْلًا ۝23 وَهُوَ الَّذِيْ كَفَّ اَيْدِيَهُمْ عَنْكُمْ وَاَيْدِيَكُمْ عَنْهُمْ
بِبَطْنِ مَكَّةَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ اَنْ اَظْفَرَكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ ۭ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ بَصِيْرًا ۝24
هُمُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا وَصَدُّوْكُمْ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَالْهَدْيَ مَعْكُوْفًا اَنْ يَّبْلُغَ
مَحِلَّهٗ ۭ وَلَوْلَا رِجَالٌ مُّؤْمِنُوْنَ وَنِسَاۗءٌ مُّؤْمِنٰتٌ لَّمْ تَعْلَمُوْهُمْ اَنْ تَطَـــُٔوْهُمْ

When you set out to take the spoils, those who were left behind, will surely say to you, "Allow us too to go with you."[27] They wish to change Allah's decree.[28] Tell them plainly, "You shall not come with us. Allah has already said this before."[29] They will say, "Nay, but you are jealous of us." (Whereas there is no question of jealousy), but they little understand the truth. Tell the desert Arabs who were left behind, "You shall soon be called upon to fight a mighty people. You shall have to fight them, or they will submit.[30] Then if you carried out the Command of *Jihād*, Allah will give you a good reward, and if you turned your backs as you did before, Allah will punish you with a painful torment. However, there is no harm if the blind and the lame and the sick person does not come forth for *Jihād*.[31] whosoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, Allah will admit him into Gardens underneath which canals flow; and the one who turns away, him He will punish with a painful torment. 15-17

Allah was well pleased with the believers when they were swearing allegiance to you under the tree.[32] He knew what was in their hearts; therefore, He sent down tranquillity upon them[33] and rewarded them with a victory near at hand, and many spoils which they will (soon) take.[34] Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise. Allah promises you rich spoils which you will acquire.[35] Presently He has granted you this victory,[36] and has restrained the hands of the people from you[37] so that it may be a sign to the believers,[38] and Allah may guide you to the right way.[39] Besides, He promises you other spoils as well, which you are not as yet able to take, and Allah has encompassed them:[40] Allah has power over everything. 18-21

If the disbelievers had fought you then, they would certainly have turned their backs and would have found no protector or helper.[41] This is the Way of Allah that has been followed in the past,[42] and you will find no change in the Way of Allah. It is He Who restrained their hands from you and your hands from them in the valley of Makkah, whereas He had granted you victory over them, and Allah saw what you were doing. 22-24

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their failure to accompany you, nor have they any feeling that they committed a sin by not going out with the Messenger, nor are they seeking forgiveness

sincerely. As for themselves they think that they did a wise thing by not going on the dangerous journey; had they any desire for Allah and His forgiveness, they would not have stayed behind at home."

22. That is, "Allah's decision will be on the basis of the knowledge that He has about the reality of your actions. If your actions deserve the punishment and I pray for your forgiveness, my this prayer will not save you from Allah's punishment; and if your actions do not deserve the punishment, and I do not pray for your forgiveness, my failure to pray will not do any harm to you. Everything is in Allah's control, not mine, and no one's empty words can deceive Him. Therefore, even if I accept as true what you say and then also pray for your forgiveness on its basis, it will be vain and without result."

23. That is, "You were delighted to think that you had saved yourselves from the danger into which the Messenger and his believeing supporters were going. You thought you had done so by dint of your great wisdom; and you also did not feel any compunction in rejoicing at the thought that the Messenger and the believers would not return alive from their expedition. You did not feel uneasy in spite of your claim to the Faith but were pleased to think that you did not put yourselves in the danger by accompanying the Messenger."

24. The word *bā'ir* (pl. *būr* in the original) has two meanings: (1) A sinful, perverted and evil-minded person, who is incapable of doing anything good; and (2) one who is doomed to an evil end, who is following the path of destruction.

25. Here, Allah in clear words is declaring all such people disbelievers and devoid of the faith, who are not sincere with regard to Allah and His Religion, who shirk endangering their interests, their lives and wealth for the sake of Allah's Religion when the time comes of their trial and test. But one should remember that this is not the sort of disbelief on the basis of which somebody in the world may be regarded as excommunicated from Islam, but this is the disbelief because of which he will be declared a disbeliever in the Hereafter. The reason is that the Holy Prophet even after the revelation of this verse did not regard as outside Islam those people in respect of whom it was sent down, nor treated them like the disbelievers.

26 The mention of Allah's being All-Forgiving and All-Merciful after the foregoing warning, contains in it a subtle aspect of admonition. It means this: "Even now if you give up your insincere attitude and way of life and adopt sincerity, you will find Allah All- Forgiving and All-Merciful. He will forgive you your previous shortcomings and will treat you according to the quality of your sincerity in the future."

27. That is, "The time is approaching when these very people who were shirking accompanying you on the dangerous journey, would see you going on an expedition in which there would be the possibility of attaining easy victory and much booty. Then they would come running and request you to take them also along." Such a time came just three months after the truce of Hudaibiyah, when the Holy Prophet invaded Khaiber and took it easily. At that time everyone could see that after the truce with the Quraish not only Khaiber but the Jewish settlements of Taimā, Fadak, Wādi-al-Qurā' and others also of northern Arabia would not be able to withstand the might of the Muslims and would easily fall to the Islamic State. Therefore, Allah in these verses forewarned the Holy Prophet that the opportunists of the suburbs of Madīnah would come up to take part in and receive their share when they would see easy victories being attained, and that he should tell them plainly: "You will never be allowed to take part in these, because only those who had gone forth to offer their lives in the conflict at Ḥudaibiyah regardless of every danger would be entitled o them."

28. "Allah's decree" implies the decree that only those people would be allowed to accompany the Holy Prophet in the expedition to Khaiber, who had taken part in the expedition to Ḥudaibiyah and sworn the pledge there for Allah has reserved the spoils of Khaiber exclusively for them; as has been stated clearly in verse 18 blow.

29. The words "Allah has already said this before" caused the people the misunderstanding that this refers to some other command bearing upon the same subject that might have been sent down before this verse, and since no such command is found in this Sūrah before this verse, they started looking for it at other places in the Qur'ān till they found verse 84 of Sūrah At-Taubah, in which this very subject has been dealt with for another occasion. But that verse, in fact, does not apply to this, for it was sent down in connection with the Battle of Tabūk, and its period of revelation is three years after the period of revelation of Sūrah Al-Fat-ḥ. The fact of the matter is that this verse refers to vv. 18-19 of this Sūrah itself, and Allah's already having said this does not mean its having been said before this verse but its having been said to the laggards before this conversation. This conversation with the laggards about which advance instructions are being given to the Holy Prophet was to take place at the time of the expedition to Khaiber, and this whole Sūrah, including vv. 18-19, had been sent down three months earlier on return from Ḥudaibiyah on the way. A careful study of the context shows that Allah here is giving this instruction to His Messenger: "When after your return at Madīnah the laggards come to you with their excuses, you should give them this reply, and when they express their desire to accompany you in the expedition to Khaiber, you should tell them this."

30. The words *au yuslimūn* in the original can have two meanings and both are implied: (1) "That they should accept Islam"; and (2) "that they should submit to the Islamic rule."

31. That is, the one who has a genuine excuse for not joining *Jihād* is not accountable, but if the able-bodied, strong people make excuses for not joining it, they cannot be regarded as sincere with regard to Allah and His Religion, and they cannot be given the opportunity to take advantage of the gains as members of the Muslim community; but when time comes for making sacrifices for Islam, they should lag behind and seek the safety of their lives and properties."

Here, one should know that two kinds of the people have been exempted from *Jihad* duty by the *Sharī'ah*: (1) Those who are not physically fit for *Jihād*, e.g. young boys, women, the insane, the blind and such patients as cannot perform military duties, and such disabled people as cannot take part in war; and (2) those for whom it may be difficult to join *Jihād* for other sound reasons, e.g. the slaves, or those persons who may be ready for *Jihād* but may not afford weapons of war and other necessary equipment, or such debtors who may have to pay their debts at the earliest opportunity and the creditors may not be willing to allow them more time, or such people whose parents (or a parent) might be alive, who stand in need of the children's help. In this regard, it should also be known that the children should not join *Jihād* without the permission of their parents if they are Muslims, but if they are non-Muslims it is not permissible for a person to stay away from *Jihād* in case they refuse permission.

32. Here again the pledge taken from the Companions at Ḥudaibiyah has been mentioned. This is called *Bai'at Riḍwān*, for Allah in this verse has given the good news that he became well pleased with those who on this dangerous occasion did not show the least hesitation in offering their lives for the cause of Islam and gave an express proof of their being true in their faith by taking the pledge on the hand of the Holy Prophet. The Muslims at this time were equipped only with a sword each, numbered only 1,400, were unprepared for warfare, but were donning the pilgrim garments, were 25 miles away from their military headquarters (Madīnah), while the enemy's stronghold (Makkah) wherefrom it could get any kind of help was just 13 miles off. Had these people been lacking in their sincerity for Allah and His Messenger and His Religion in any degree, they would have abandoned the Messenger on this extremely dangerous occasion, and Islam would have been vanquished for ever. Apart from their own sincerity there was no external pressure under which they might have been compelled to take the pledge. Their becoming ready at that time to fight in the cause of Allah's Religion regardless of the dangers, is a clear proof that they were true and sincere in their Faith and loyal to the cause of Allah and His Messenger in the highest degree. That is why Allah honoured them with this certificate of His good pleasure. Now

if some one becomes angry with them after they have been honoured with this certificate of Allah's good pleasure, or slanders and vilifies them, his enmity is with Allah, not with them. Those who say that at that time when Allah honoured them with this certificate of His good pleasure, they were sincere, but afterwards they became disloyal to Allah and His Messenger, perhaps harbour a mistrust about Allah that while sending down this verse He was unaware of their future; therefore, He awarded them this warrant only in view of their state at that time, and probably due to the same unawareness inscribed this verse in His Holy Book as well so that afterwards also, when those people have turned disloyal, the world should continue reading this verse about them and praising the knowledge of the unseen of that Allah Who, God forbid, had granted those faithless and disloyal people the warrant of His good pleasure.

About the Tree under which this pledge was taken Ibn 'Umar's slave Ḥaḍrat Nāfi's tradition has generally spread saying that the people had started visiting it and offering Prayers by it, so that when Ḥaḍrat 'Umar came to know of it, he rebuked and warned the people and ordered it to be cut down. (*Ṭabaqat* Ibn Sa'd, vol. II, p. 100). But there are several other traditions which contradict it. A tradition from Ḥaḍrat Nāfi' himself has been reported in *Ṭabaqāt* of Ibn S'ad to the effect, that many years after the *Bai'at Ridwān* the Companions looked for the Tree but they could not recognize it and differed as to which tree it was. (p. 106). The second tradition has been reported in Bukhārī, Muslim, and *Tabaqāt* on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Sa'īd bin al-Musayyab. He says that his father was one of those who had participated in the *Bai'at Ridwān*. He told him that when they had gone for *'Umrah al-Qaḍā'* the following year, they had forgotten the Tree, and they could not locate it even after looking for it. The third tradition is from Ibn Jarīr. He says that when Ḥaḍrat 'Umar during his caliphate passed by Ḥudaibiyah, he enquired about the Tree under which the pledge had been sworn. Someone pointed to one tree and another one to another tree. At this Ḥaḍrat 'Umar told the people to forget it as there was no real need to bother about it.

33. Here, *sakīnat* means that state of the heart on whose strength a man throws himself into dangers with complete calm and peace of mind for the sake of a great objective and resolves without fear and consternation to undertake it regardless of the consequences.

34. The reference is to the conquest of Khaiber and its rich spoils and this verse expressly points out that Allah had reserved this reward only for those

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فَتُصِيبَكُمْ مِّنْهُمْ مَّعَرَّةٌۢ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ ۚ لِيُدْخِلَ اللّٰهُ فِيْ رَحْمَتِهٖ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ۚ لَوْ
تَزَيَّلُوْا لَعَذَّبْنَا الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مِنْهُمْ عَذَابًا اَلِيْمًا ﴿٢٥﴾ اِذْ جَعَلَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا
فِيْ قُلُوْبِهِمُ الْحَمِيَّةَ حَمِيَّةَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ فَاَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ سَكِيْنَتَهٗ عَلٰى رَسُوْلِهٖ وَ
عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَاَلْزَمَهُمْ كَلِمَةَ التَّقْوٰى وَكَانُوْٓا اَحَقَّ بِهَا وَ اَهْلَهَا ۚ وَكَانَ
اللّٰهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيْمًا ﴿٢٦﴾ لَقَدْ صَدَقَ اللّٰهُ رَسُوْلَهُ الرُّءْيَا بِالْحَقِّ ۚ لَتَدْخُلُنَّ
الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ اِنْ شَآءَ اللّٰهُ اٰمِنِيْنَ ۙ مُحَلِّقِيْنَ رُءُوْسَكُمْ وَ مُقَصِّرِيْنَ ۙ
لَا تَخَافُوْنَ ۗ فَعَلِمَ مَا لَمْ تَعْلَمُوْا فَجَعَلَ مِنْ دُوْنِ ذٰلِكَ فَتْحًا قَرِيْبًا ﴿٢٧﴾
هُوَ الَّذِيْٓ اَرْسَلَ رَسُوْلَهٗ بِالْهُدٰى وَدِيْنِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهٗ عَلَى الدِّيْنِ كُلِّهٖ ۗ
وَكَفٰى بِاللّٰهِ شَهِيْدًا ﴿٢٨﴾ مُحَمَّدٌ رَّسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ ۗ وَالَّذِيْنَ مَعَهٗٓ اَشِدَّآءُ عَلَى
الْكُفَّارِ رُحَمَآءُ بَيْنَهُمْ تَرٰىهُمْ رُكَّعًا سُجَّدًا يَّبْتَغُوْنَ فَضْلًا مِّنَ اللّٰهِ
وَ رِضْوَانًا ۖ سِيْمَاهُمْ فِيْ وُجُوْهِهِمْ مِّنْ اَثَرِ السُّجُوْدِ ۗ ذٰلِكَ مَثَلُهُمْ فِي
التَّوْرٰىةِ ۚ وَ مَثَلُهُمْ فِي الْاِنْجِيْلِ ۚ كَزَرْعٍ اَخْرَجَ شَطْئَهٗ فَاٰزَرَهٗ
فَاسْتَغْلَظَ فَاسْتَوٰى عَلٰى سُوْقِهٖ يُعْجِبُ الزُّرَّاعَ لِيَغِيْظَ بِهِمُ
الْكُفَّارَ ۗ وَعَدَ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ مِنْهُمْ مَّغْفِرَةً وَّ
اَجْرًا عَظِيْمًا ﴿٢٩﴾

They are the ones who disbelieved and debarred you from the 25-26
Masjid al-Ḥarām and hindered the sacrificial animals from reaching their place of sacrifice.[43] Had there not been certain believing men and women (in Makkah) whom you do not know and the fear that you would trample them under foot without knowing it and incur blame on that account, (the fighting would not have been allowed to stop. It was stopped), so that Allah may admit into His mercy whom He will. Had the believers stood apart (from the people of Makkah), We would have severely punished the disbelievers among them.[44] (That is why) when the disbelievers set in their hearts the arrogance of paganism,[45] Allah sent down His peace upon His Messenger and the believers,[46] and obliged the believers to adhere to the word of piety, for they were most worthy and deserving of it. Allah has knowledge of everything.

Indeed, Allah had shown His Messenger a true vision, which 27
was precisely according to the truth:[47] "You shall surely enter the *Masjid al-Ḥarām,* if Allah so wills,[48] in full security ;[49] you will have your heads shaved, your hair cut,[50] and you will have nothing to fear. He knew what you did not know. Therefore, He granted you this near victory before the fulfilment of the vision".

It is Allah Who has sent His Messenger with the Guidance and 28-29
the religion of Truth that He may make it prevail over all religion, and Allah is sufficient as a Witness in this regard.[51] Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah, and those who are with him are hard[52] on the disbelievers and merciful among themselves.[53] When you see them you will find them bowing down and falling prostrate and craving for Allah's bounty and His good-will. They have the marks of prostrations on their faces by which they are distinguished[54] from others. This is their description in the Torah,[55] and in *the Gospel* they have been likened[56] to a crop which put out its shoot, then strengthened it, then swelled and then stood on its own stem, filling the sowers with delight and the disbelievers with jealousy of them. Allah has promised those of them, who have believed and done good works, forgiveness and a great reward.[57]

Contd from p.59]

people who had taken part in the *Bai'at Ridwān;* apart from them no one else was entitled to take part in the victory and have a share in the spoils. That is why when

the Holy Prophet marched out to attack Khaiber in Ṣafar, A.H. 7, he took only those people with him. No doubt afterwards he gave some of the spoils of Khaiber to those emigrants also who returned from Ḥabash and to some Companions from the Dūs and Ash'ar tribes as well, but this was given either from Khums (one fifth of the spoils of war given into the public treasury), or with the approval of the Companions who had taken the pledge of *Riḍwān;* no one else was given any share of it.

35. This refers to the other victories that the Muslim achieved successively after Khaiber.

36. This implies the treaty of Ḥudaibiyah which has been described as "a manifest victory" in the beginning of the Sūrah.

37. That is, "He restrained the disbelieving Quraish from attacking you at Hudaibiyah although from all appearances they were in a much better position and yours was a much weaker side militarily." Furthermore, it also implies that no enemy power could muster courage to attack Madīnah in those days, whereas after the departure of 1,400 soldiers the Madīnah front had become very weak, and the Jews, the polytheists and hypocrites could take advantage of the situation.

38. Sign of this as to how Allah helps the one who remains steadfast on obedience to Allah and His Messenger and comes out to support and defend the Truth and righteousness with his trust and faith in Allah.

39. "To the right way": "To the way of greater insight and faith so that you may remain steadfast on obedience to Allah and His Messenger in the future and may go on marching on the way of truth with trust in Allah, and may learn this lesson from these experiences that the believer should take practical steps to do whatever is demanded by Allahs Religion with his trust in Him, and should not overestimate either his own strength or the strength of the unbelievers."

40. Most probably this is a reference to the Conquest of Makkah. The same is the opinion of Qatādah and Ibn Jarīr. It seems to mean this: "Though Makkah has not yet fallen to you, Allah has encircled it, and as a result of this victory at Ḥudaibiyah, it will also fall to you."

41. That is, "Allah did not prevent fighting at Ḥudaibiyah because there was a possibility of your being defeated there, but there were other reasons for it, which are being stated in the following verses. Had that factor not been there and Allah had allowed the war to take place, the disbelievers would surely have been routed and Makkah would have fallen to you at that very time."

42. Here, "the Way of Allah" means: Allah disgraces the disbelievers who fight His Messenger and helps His own Messenger.

43. That is, "Allah was seeing the sincerity and the selfless devotion with which you had become ready to lay down your lives in the cause of the true Faith and were obeying the Prophet without any question. Allah was also seeing that the disbelievers were being unfair and high-handed. The demand of this situation was that they should have been punished there and then through you, but in spite of that, Allah restrained your hands from them and their hands from you."

44. This was the reason why Allah did not allow fighting to take place at Ḥudaibiyah. This has two aspects: (1) That at that time there were quite a number of the Muslim men and women living in Makkah, who were either hiding their faith, or were being persecuted because of their faith as they had no means to emigrate. Had there been fighting and the Muslims had pushed back the disbelievers and entered Makkah, these Muslims also would have been killed in ignorance along with the disbelievers. This would not only have grieved the Muslims but the Arab polytheists also would have got an opportunity to say that the Muslims did not even spare their own brethren in faith during wartime. Therefore, Allah took pity on the helpless Muslims and averted the war in order to save the Companions from grief and infamy. The other aspect of the expedience was that Allah did not will that Makkah should fall to the Muslims as a result of the defeat of the Quraish after a bloody clash but He willed that they should be encircled from all sides so that within two years or so they should become absolutely helpless and subdued without offering any resistance, and then the whole tribe should accept Islam and enter Allah's mercy as it actually happened on the Conquest of Makkah.

Here the juristic dispute has arisen that if during a war between the Muslims and the disbelievers, the disbelievers should bring out some Muslim men and women, children and old men, in their possession and put them in the forefront as a shield for themselves, or if there is some Muslim population also in the non-Muslim city under attack by the Muslim forces, or if in a warship of the disbelievers, which is within our gun-fire, the disbelievers have taken some Muslims also on board, can the Muslim army open fire on it? In answer to it the rulings given by different jurists are as follows:

Imām Mālik says that in such a case fire should not be opened, and for this he cites this very verse as an argument. He contends that Allah prevented the war at Ḥudaibiyah only in order to save the Muslims. (Ibn al-'Arabi, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān).* But this in fact is a weak argument. There is no word in the verse which may support the view that launching an attack on the enemy in this case is unlawful and forbidden. At the most what one can say on the basis of this verse is that the launching of an attack in such a case should be avoided in order to save the Muslims, provided that it does not put the disbelievers in an advantageous

position against the Muslims militarily, or does not diminish the Muslims' chances of gaining an upper hand in the conflict.

Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Imām Abū Yūsuf, Imām Zufar and Imām Muḥammad say that it is lawful to open fire in such a case; so much so that even if the disbelievers use the children of the Muslims as a shield by putting them in the forefront, there is no harm in shooting at them, and it is not obligatory for the Muslims to expiate and pay any blood-money for the Muslims thus killed, (Al-Jaṣṣās, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān;* Imām Muḥammad, *:Kitāb as-Siyar).*

Imām Sufyān Thaurī also in this case regards opening of the fire as lawful, but he says that although the Muslims will not pay the blood-money of the Muslims thus killed, it is obligatory for them to expiate the sin. (Al-Jassās, *Ahkām al-Qur'ān).*

Imām Auzā'ī and Laith bin Sa'd say that if the disbelievers use the Muslims as a shield, fire should not be opened on them. Likewise, if it is known that in their warship our own prisoners also are on board, it should not be sunk. But if we attack a city of theirs and we know that there are Muslims also in the city, it is lawful to open fire on the city, for it is not certain that our shells will only hit the Muslims, and if a Muslim becomes a victim of this shelling, it will not be wilful murder of a Muslim but an inadvertant accident. (Al-Jaṣṣās, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān).*

Imām Shāfe'ī holds the view that in such a case if it is not inevitable to open fire it is better to try to save the Muslims from destruction; although it is not unlawful to open fire in this case, it is undesirable. But if it is really necessary and it is feared that in case fire is not opened it will put the disbelievers in a better position militarily against the Muslims, it is lawful to resort to shelling, but even then every effort should be made to save the Muslims as far as possible. Furthermore, Imām Shāfe'ī also says that if during a conflict the disbelievers put a Muslim in front as a shield and a Muslim kills him, there can be two possible alternatives: either the killer knew that the murdered person was a Muslim, or he did not know that he was a Muslim. In the first case, he will be under obligation to pay compensation for manslaughter as well as do expiation; in the second case he will only do expiation. *(Mughnī al-Muḥtāj).*

45. The words *ḥamiyyat al-jāhiliyyah* mean that a man should wilfully do something unworthy and improper only for the sake of his honour and prestige. The ditsbelievers of Makkah themselves acknowledged and admitted that everybody had a right to visit the Ka'bah for performing Ḥajj and 'Umrah, and that they had no right to stop anyone from this duty. This was an ancient admitted law of Arabia. But in spite of knowing that they were absolutely in the wrong and the Muslims in the right, they prevented the Muslims from performing 'Umrah

only for the sake of their prestige. The righteous even among the polytheists also were saying that preventing the people who had come in the pilgrim garbs along with sacrificial camels from performing pilgrimage was an improper act. Yet the Quraish leaders persisted in their resistance only under the idea that if Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) entered Makkah along with a large number of his followers, it would mean loss of prestige for them among the Arabs. This was their arrogance.

46. Here, *sakīnat* means the patience and dignity with which the Holy Prophet and the Muslims resisted the disbelievers' rancour and spirit of paganism. They did not get provoked at their stubborn and insolent behaviour and did not do anything which might have violated the spirit of Truth and righteousness, or which might have further complicated the situation instead of settling it amicably.

47. This is the answer to the question that was constantly agitating the minds of the Muslim. They said, "The Holy Prophet had seen in his vision that he had entered the *Masjid al-Ḥarām* and moved round the Ka'bah in worship. Then how is it that they were returning without performing 'Umrah?" In answer to this, although the Holy Prophet had told them that in his vision he had not seen that they would perform the 'Umrah that very year, still there remained some suspicion in the hearts. Therefore, Allah Himself explained that it was He Who had shown the vision and it was a true vision and it would certainly be fulfilled.

48. Here, about the words *inshā'-Allah* (if Allah so wills), which Allah Himself has used with His promise, one can raise the objection that when Allah Himself is making this promise, what is the meaning of making it conditional upon His own willing it? The answer is: Here the words *inshā'-Allah* have not been used in the sense that if Allah does not will, He will not fulfil His promise, but in fact these relate to the background in which this promise was made. The presumption on the basis of which the disbelievers of Makkah had played the drama of preventing the Muslims from 'Umrah was that only he whom they would allow would perform 'Umrah, and would perform it only when they would allow it. At this Allah has said: "This depends on Our, not on their, will. The reason why 'Umrah has not been performed this year is not because the disbelievers of Makkah did not allow it to be performed, but because We did not will it to be performed; in the future 'Umrah will be performed if We will, no matter whether the disbelievers allow it or disallow it." Besides, these words also contain the meaning that the Muslims too, will perform 'Umrah not by their own power but because We would will that they should perform it; otherwise if We do not will, they do not possess any power to perform it by themselves."

49 This promise was fulfilled in the following year in Dhil-Qa'dah A. H. 7. This 'Umrah is well known in history as *'Umrah al-Qadā'*.

50. The words clearly point out that it is not obligatory to get the head shaved in 'Umrah and Ḥajj, but it is also right to get the hair cut short. However, it is better to have the head shaved, for Allah has mentioned it first and then mentioned having the hair cut short.

51. The reason why this thing has been mentioned here is that when at Ḥudaibiyah the peace treaty was going to be written down, the disbelievers had objected to the use of the words *Rasūl-Allah* (Messenger of Allah) with the name of the Holy Prophet, and on their insistence the Holy Prophet himself had wiped off these words from the document. At this Allah says: "Our Messenger's being a Messenger is a reality which remains unaffected whether someone believes in it or not. If some people do not believe in it, they may not, for "Allah is enough for a witness" over it. Their denial will not change the reality, but the Guidance and the true Faith which this Messenger has brought from Us, shall prevail over all religion, no matter how hard the deniers try to obstruct its progress."

"All religion" implies all those ways of life which include the nature of *dīn* (religion). We have explained it fully in E.N. 3 of Sūrah Az-Zumar and E.N. 20 of Sūrah Ash-Shūrā above. Here what Allah has stated in clear words is: The purpose of the Holy Prophet's appointment as a Prophet was not merely to preach this Religion but to make it prevail over all others. In other words, he did not bring this Religion so that it might survive in a limited compartment of life which is allowed it by the dominant religion, while the rest of the spheres of life, by and large, should remain under the relentless control of some false religion. But he had brought it so that it should be the dominant Religion of life and any other religion should survive, if at all it survives, only within the limits in which it allows it to survive. (For further explanation, see E.N. 48 of Sūrah Az-Zumar).

52. "The Companions (of the Holy Prophet) are hard on the disbelievers": they are not wax that the disbelievers may mould them as they like; they can neither be cowed nor purchased by any inducement. The disbelievers have no power to turn them away from the great objective for the sake of which they have joined and followed the Holy Prophet even at the cost of their lives."

53. That is, "Whatever their hardness and severity, it is only for the disbelievers, not for the believers. As regards the believers they are soft, merciful, affectionate, sympathetic and compassionate. Their unity of aim and object has produced in them love and harmony and complete accord among themselves."

54. This does not imply the mark that appears on the forehead of some people on account of prostrations, but it implies the marks and traces of the fear of God, munificence, nobility and goodness of manner that naturally appears on the face of a person on account of bowing down before God. Man's face is an open book on the pages of which different states of a man's self can be seen easily. A

vain and arrogant person's face is different from the face of a humble, modest and unassuming person; an immoral person's face is clearly distinguished from the face of a righteous and well-mannered person; and there is a marked difference between the facial appearance of a wicked man and of a noble and virtuous man. What Allah means to say is: "The Companions of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) are such that one can recognize them on first sight to be the best of mankind, because their faces shine forth with the light of God-worshirp and God-consciousness." This is the same thing about which Imām Mālik has said that when the armies of the Companions entered Syria, the Syrian Christians remarked: "These people possess the very same qualities and characteristics of the disciples of the Prophet Jesus Christ."

55. The allusion probably is to Deuteronomy, 33: 2-3, in which the Holy Prophet's advent has been foretold and the word "saints" has been used for his Companions. Apart from this, if some other quality of the Companions has been mentioned in the Torah, it is not found in the existing, corrupted Torah.

56 This parable is found in a sermon of the Prophet Jesus that has been reported in the New Testament, thus:

> "And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground: And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come. And he said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth: But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it."

The last portion of this sermon is also found in Matthew, 13: 31-32.

57. A section of the Muslims translates this verse, thus: "Allah has promised forgiveness and a great reward to those from among these people who have believed and done good works." Thus, they invent a way to vilify and slander the Companions, and claim that according to this verse many people among the Companions were not believers and righteous. But this commentary goes against vv. 4, 5, 18 and 26 of this very Sūrah, and does not even accord with the initial sentences of this verse itself. In vv. 4-5, Allah has made mention of sending down *sakīnat* (tranquillity) and of effecting increase in the Faith of all those Companions who were present with the Holy Prophet at Ḥudaibiyah, and

given them without any exception the good news of admission into Paradise. In verse 18, Allah has expressed His good pleasure for all those who took the pledge to the Holy Prophet under the Tree, and in this also there is no exception. In verse 26 also Allah has used the word *mu'minīn* (believers) for all the Companions, has made mention of sending down His *sakīnat* to them, and obliged them to be righteous and pious, for they were most worthy and deserving of all mankind. Here also it was not said that the news was being given only about those who were believers among them. Then in the initial sentences also of this verse itself the characteristics mentioned are of all those people who were with the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings). The words are to the effect that all the people who are with him have this and this quality and characteristic. After this, suddenly in the last sentence there could be no excuse to say that some of them were the believers and others were not.


XLIX
AL-ḤUJURĀT
الحُجُرات

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XLIX

AL-ḤUJURĀT

الحُجُرات

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from verse 4 in which the word *ḥujurāt* has occurred.

Period of Revelation

Traditions show and the subject-matter of the Sūrah also supports the same that this Sūrah is a collection of the commandments and instructions sent down on different occasions, which have been put together because of the relevancy of the theme. Moreover, the traditions also show that most of these commandments were sent down during the final stage of the Holy Prophet's life at Madīnah. For instance, about verse 4 the commentators state that it was sent down concerning the Banī Tamīm whose deputation had arrived in Madīnah and started calling out to the Holy Prophet from outside the apartments (*ḥujurāt*) of his wives, and according to all biographical books on the Holy Prophet's life this deputation had visited Madīnah in A.H. 9. Likewise, about verse 6 a large number of the traditions of *Hadīth* confirm that it was sent down concerning Walīd bin 'Uqbah whom the Holy Prophet had sent to collect the *zakāt* from the Banī al-Muṣṭaliq, and it is well known that Walīd bin 'Uqbah had become a Muslim on the conquest of Makkah.

Subject-Matter and Topics

The subject-matter of this Sūrah is to teach the Muslims the manners worthy of true believers.

In the first five verses they have been taught the manners they should observe with regard to Allah and His Messenger.

Then, they have been given the instruction that it is not right to believe in every news blindly and to act according to it, without due thought. If information is received about a person, a group or a community, it should be seen carefully whether the means of the information is reliable or not. If the means is not reliable, it should be tested and examined to see whether the news is authentic or not before taking any action on it.

Then, it has been told what attitude should the other Muslims adopt in case two groups of the Muslims fall to mutual fighting.

Then the Muslims have been exhorted to safeguard against the evils that corrupt collective life and spoil mutual relationships. Mocking and taunting each other, calling others by nicknames, creating suspicions, prying into other people's affairs and backbiting are the evils which are not only sins in themselves but they also corrupt society. Allah has mentioned all these evils separately and forbidden them as unlawful.

After this, the national and racial distinctions that cause universal corruption in the world have been condemned. Nations' and tribes' and families' pride of ancestry and their looking down upon others as inferior to themselves and their pulling down others only for the sake of establishing their own superiority is an important factor that has filled the world with injustices and tyranny. Allah in a brief verse has cut at the root of this evil by stating that all men are descendants of the same one pair and their division into tribes and communities is only for the sake of recognition, not for boasting and pride, and there is no lawful basis of one man's superiority over the other except on the basis of moral excellence.

In conclusion, the people have been told that the real thing is not the verbal profession of the Faith but to believe in Allah and His Messenger truly, to obey them in practical life and to exert sincerely

with one's self and wealth in the cause of Allah. True believers are only those who adopt this attitude. As for those who profess Islam merely orally without affirmation by the heart and then adopt an attitude as if they had done someone a favour by accepting Islam, may be counted among the Muslims in the world, may even be treated as Muslims in society, but they cannot be counted as believers in the sight of Allah.



يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تُقَدِّمُوْا بَيْنَ يَدَيِ اللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهٖ وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ ۭ اِنَّ
اللّٰهَ سَمِيْعٌ عَلِيْمٌ ۝ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تَرْفَعُوْٓا اَصْوَاتَكُمْ فَوْقَ صَوْتِ

XLIX

AL-ḤUJURĀT

الحُجُرات

Verses: 18 *Revealed at Al-Madinah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

O you who have believed, do not go in advance of Allah and His Messenger,[1] and fear Allah: Allah is All-Hearing, All-knowing.[2] 1

O you who have believed, do not raise your voices above the Prophet's voice, nor speak to him loud as you speak loud to one another[3] lest all your works be rendered void, while you do not know.[4] Those who lower their voices in the presence of the Messenger of God, are, in fact, those whose hearts Allah has disposed to piety.[5] For them is forgiveness and a great reward! 2-3

النَّبِيِّ وَلَا تَجْهَرُوْا لَهٗ بِالْقَوْلِ كَجَهْرِ بَعْضِكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ اَنْ تَحْبَطَ اَعْمَالُكُمْ
وَاَنْتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُوْنَ ۝ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يَغُضُّوْنَ اَصْوَاتَهُمْ عِنْدَ رَسُوْلِ اللّٰهِ اُولٰٓئِكَ
الَّذِيْنَ امْتَحَنَ اللّٰهُ قُلُوْبَهُمْ لِلتَّقْوٰى لَهُمْ مَّغْفِرَةٌ وَّاَجْرٌ عَظِيْمٌ ۝ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ
يُنَادُوْنَكَ مِنْ وَّرَآءِ الْحُجُرٰتِ اَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُوْنَ ۝ وَلَوْ اَنَّهُمْ صَبَرُوْا
حَتّٰى تَخْرُجَ اِلَيْهِمْ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ۝ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ
اٰمَنُوْٓا اِنْ جَاۗءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌۢ بِنَبَاٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوْٓا اَنْ تُصِيْبُوْا قَوْمًۢا بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصْبِحُوْا عَلٰي
مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نٰدِمِيْنَ ۝ وَاعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّ فِيْكُمْ رَسُوْلَ اللّٰهِ ۭ لَوْ يُطِيْعُكُمْ فِيْ كَثِيْرٍ مِّنَ
الْاَمْرِ لَعَنِتُّمْ وَلٰكِنَّ اللّٰهَ حَبَّبَ اِلَيْكُمُ الْاِيْمَانَ وَزَيَّنَهٗ فِيْ قُلُوْبِكُمْ وَكَرَّهَ
اِلَيْكُمُ الْكُفْرَ وَالْفُسُوْقَ وَالْعِصْيَانَ ۭ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ هُمُ الرّٰشِدُوْنَ ۝ فَضْلًا مِّنَ اللّٰهِ
وَنِعْمَةً ۭ وَاللّٰهُ عَلِيْمٌ حَكِيْمٌ ۝ وَاِنْ طَاۗىِٕفَتٰنِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ اقْتَتَلُوْا
فَاَصْلِحُوْا بَيْنَهُمَا ۚ فَاِنْۢ بَغَتْ اِحْدٰىهُمَا عَلَي الْاُخْرٰى فَقَاتِلُوا الَّتِيْ تَبْغِيْ حَتّٰى
تَفِيْۗءَ اِلٰٓى اَمْرِ اللّٰهِ ۚ فَاِنْ فَاۗءَتْ فَاَصْلِحُوْا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَاَقْسِطُوْا ۭ اِنَّ
اللّٰهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِيْنَ ۝ اِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ اِخْوَةٌ فَاَصْلِحُوْا بَيْنَ اَخَوَيْكُمْ وَ
اتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُوْنَ ۝ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا يَسْخَرْ قَوْمٌ مِّنْ قَوْمٍ

ع ۱ ۱۰ ۱۳

عَسٰٓى اَنْ يَّكُوْنُوْا خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاۗءٌ مِّنْ نِّسَاۗءٍ عَسٰٓى اَنْ يَّكُنَّ خَيْرًا
مِّنْهُنَّ ۚ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوْٓا اَنْفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَزُوْا بِالْاَلْقَابِ ۭ بِئْسَ الِاسْمُ الْفُسُوْقُ
بَعْدَ الْاِيْمَانِ ۚ وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَتُبْ فَاُولٰۗىِٕكَ هُمُ الظّٰلِمُوْنَ ۝ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا
اجْتَنِبُوْا كَثِيْرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ ۡ اِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ اِثْمٌ وَّلَا تَجَسَّسُوْا وَلَا يَغْتَبْ
بَّعْضُكُمْ بَعْضًا ۭ اَيُحِبُّ اَحَدُكُمْ اَنْ يَّاْكُلَ لَحْمَ اَخِيْهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوْهُ ۭ وَاتَّقُوا

O Prophet, those who call out to you from outside the apartments, most of them have no sense. If only they had had patience until you came out to them, it would be better for them.[6] Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Merciful.[7] 4-5

O you who have believed, if a wicked person brings you some news, inquire into it carefully lest you should harm others unwittingly and then regret what you have done.[8] Know it well that the Messenger of Allah is among you. If he were to obey you in most affairs, you would certainly be in trouble.[9] But Allah has endeared the Faith to you and made it seem fair in your hearts and made disbelief, wrongdoing and disobedience abhorrent to you. Such are those who are rightly guided through Allah's grace[10] and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.[11] 6-8

And if two parties of the believers fall to mutual fighting,[12] make peace between them.[13] Then if either of them transgresses against the other, fight the one that has transgressed[14] till it returns to Allah's Command.[15] Then if it returns, make peace between them with justice,[16] and be just because Allah loves those who do justice.[17] The believers are brothers of one another; so set the relations right between your brothers,[18] and fear Allah; it is expected that you will be shown mercy. 9-10

O you[19] who have believed, neither should men mock other men, it may be that these are better than they; nor should women mock other women, it may be that these are better than they.[20] Do not taunt one another among yourselves,[21] nor call one another by nicknames.[22] It is an evil thing to be called by a bad name after faith.[23] Those who fail to avoid this are wrongdoers. 11

O you who have believed, avoid much suspicion, for some suspicions are sins.[24] Do not spy,[25] nor should any of you backbite the other.[26] Is there any among you who would like to eat the flesh of his dead brother?[27] Nay, you yourselves abhor it. Fear Allah, for Allah is Acceptor of repentance and All-Merciful. 12

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1. This is the foremost and basic demand of the Faith. If the person who regards Allah as his Lord and accepts Allah's Messenger as his guide and leader, is true in his belief, he can never have the attitude that he should give his own opinion and view precedence over the decision of Allah and His Messenger, or should adopt an independent opinion in the matters, and pass his own judgements

without caring to find out whether Allah and His Messenger have given any guidance in those matters or not, and if they have given it, what it is. That is why it has been said "O believers, do not go 'in advance' of Allah and His Messenger." That is, "Do not go ahead of them, but follow behind: Do not precede them, but be subordinate to them." This Command is, in its application and effect, a step further to verse 36 of Al-Aḥzāb. There it was said: "It does not behove a believing man and a believing woman that when Allah and His Messenger have given their decision in a matter, they should exercise an Option in that matter of theirs", and here it is said that the believers should not decide their matters themselves by their own initiative, but should look for guidance in Allah's Book and His Prophet's Sunnah concerning those matters.

This Command is not confined only to individual matters of the Muslims but it also applies to their collective affairs. This is in fact the fundamental article of the Islamic Law, which can neither be set aside or ignored by a Muslim government, nor by a Muslim court, nor by a parliament. A tradition has been reported in Musnad Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah, with authentic chains of transmitters, saying that when the Holy Prophet was sending Hadrat Mu'ādh bin Jabal to the Yaman as a judge, he asked him: "By what will you decide the matters?" He submitted: "By the Book of Allah." The Holy Prophet said: "If you do not find the Command concerning a matter in the Book of Allah, what will you turn to?" He replied "To the Sunnah of Allah's Messenger." The Holy Prophet asked "If this also fails you?" He replied: "Then I shall exert and find out a solution by myself." Thereupon the Holy Prophet placed his hand on Ḥadrat Mu'ādh's chest and said: "Thank God Who has helped His Messenger's deputy to adopt the way that is approved by His Messenger." This giving of precedence to the Book of Allah and the *Sunnah* of His Messenger over one's own exercise to find out a solution and to turn to them first to obtain guidance is the thing that marks the distinction between a Muslim judge and a non-Muslim judge. Likewise, in the matter of legislation also there is absolute consensus that the first and foremost source of the law is the Divine Book and after it the *Sunnah* of the Messenger of Allah. Even the consensus of the entire *Ummah* cannot go against or remain independent of them, not to speak of the individual Muslims reasoning and endeavour to interpret the law.

2. That is, "If ever you adopted an attitude of independence as against Allah and His Messenger, or gave priority to your own opinion and view over their Command, you should know that you have to deal with that God Who is hearing whatever you utter and is even aware of your secret intentions."

3. This is the etiquette that was taught to the people who sat among the audience of the Holy Prophet or came to visit him. Its intention was that the believers should treat the Holy Prophet with the highest respect and reverence

when visiting him and talking to him. Nobody should raise his voice louder than his; the people should not be unmindful of the fact that they are addressing the Messenger of Allah, and not a common man, or a person of equal rank; therefore, there should be a marked difference between one's tone of conversation with the common people and one's tone of conversation with the Holy Prophet, and no one should talk to him in a voice louder than his.

Although this etiquette was taught for sitting in the Holy Prophet's assembly and its addressees were the people who were living in his time, the people of the later ages also should observe the same respect and reverence on the occasion when the Holy Prophet's name is mentioned, or a command of his is stated, or his sayings are explained. Besides, this verse also points out what attitude the people should adopt when talking to persons of a higher rank and status than themselves. A person's talking before the men of a higher rank in a way as he talks before his friends or the common men, is in fact a sign that he has no respect for them in his heart, and he does not recognize any difference between them and the common people.

4. This shows what high position the person of the Holy Prophet occupies in Islam. No one beside the Holy Prophet, whatever his rank and status, has a position that unmannerly behaviour towards him should deserve in the sight of Allah the same punishment which is, in fact, the punishment for disbelief. In respect of ordinary people it is at the most a sort of rudeness, an uncivilized conduct, but in respect of the Holy Prophet a little lack of reverence is such a grave sin as can destroy all the services of one's lifetime. For the reverence of the Holy Prophet is indeed reverence of that God Who has sent him as His Messenger and lack of reverence for him amounts to lack of reverence to God Himself.

5. That is, "Only those people give due reverence to the Messenger of Allah, who have passed succesfully through the tests and trials set by Allah and proved by their steadfastness that their hearts indeed possess *taqvā* (piety)." From this it follows automatically that the heart which is devoid of reverence for the Holy Prophet is, in fact, devoid of *taqvā*, and a person's raising his voice louder than the Holy Prophet's is not only an uncivilized act outwardly but also a sign of the absence of *taqvā* in his heart.

6. The people who in the blessed time of the Holy Prophet had received training in Islamic etiquette and manners under the Holy Prophet himself had a full regard for his person. They fully realized how busy he remained in performing the mission entrusted to him by Allah; they also understood full well that during those tiresome activities he must necessarily have some time for rest, time for his important occupations and also time for attending to his domestic affairs. Therefore, they would come to visit him only at the time when he was available

outside his house, and if ever they did not find him outside his living quarters among his Companions, they would sit and await his emergence and would avoid giving him the trouble of coming out of his house unless there was a special need for it. But many a time it so happened that the people from far flung areas, who had had no opportunity to receive training in good manners, would come to visit the Holy Prophet with the idea that the one who invited others to Allah and was working for the reformation of the people had no right to have rest at any time, and they had the right to visit and see him any time they pleased in the day or night and it was his duty that whenever they happened to arrive he should be ready to receive them. Some of these people who came to see the Holy Prophet from different parts of Arabia, were so uncouth and impolite that they would not take the trouble to inform him of their arrival through some attendant, but would start shouting from outside the apartments of his wives to call him out. Several such incidents have been reported by the Companions in the *Ḥadīth*. This sort of behaviour troubled him much, but he was tolerant on account of his natural clemency. At last, Allah had to intervene, Who reproved the people for their uncivilized behaviour and gave this instruction: whenever they came to see the Holy Prophet and did not find him, they should wait for him patiently until he came out to them himself, instead of shouting to call him out, from the house.

7. This is, "Whatever had happened until then will be over-looked and forgiven by Allah and He will not hold those people accountable for the trouble they had been causing to His Messenger on account of His mercy and kindness, but they should not repeat such behaviour in the future.

8. Most of the commentators have expressed the view that this verse was sent down concerning Walīd bin 'Uqbah bin Abī Mu'aiṭ. Its background is this: When the tribe of the Banī al-Muṣṭaliq embraced Islam, the Holy Prophet sent Wālid bin 'Uqbah to collect the *zakāt* from them. When he arrived in their territory, he became scared due to some reason and without visiting the people of the tribe returned to Madīnah and complained to the Holy Prophet that they had refused to pay the *zakāt* and had even wanted to kill him. On hearing this the Holy Prophet became very angry and he made up his mind to dispatch a contingent to punish those people. According to some traditions he had despatched the contingent, and according to others, he was about to despatch it. In any case all agree that in the meantime the chief of the Banī al Muṣṭaliq, Ḥārith bin Ḍirār (father of Juwairiyah, wife of the Holy Prophet), arrived at the head of a deputation, and submitted: "By God, we did not at all see Walīd; therefore, there could be no question of refusing to pay the *zakāt* and wanting to kill him. We are steadfast to the Faith and have no intention to withhold the *zakāt*." At this, this verse was sent down. With a little variation in wording this incident has been related by Imām Aḥmad, Abī Ḥātim, Ṭabarānī, and Ibn Jarir, on the authority of

Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, Ḥārith bin Ḍirār, Mujāhid, Qatādah, 'Abdur Reḥmān bin Abī Lailā, Yazīd bin Rūmān, Ḍaḥḥāk and Muqātil bin Ḥayyān. In the tradition reported by Ḥaḍrat Umm Salamah this whole story has been related likewise but there is no reference to the name of Walīd.

On this critical occasion when on account of believing in a baseless report a grave blunder was about to be committed, Allah gave the Muslims this guiding principle to be followed on receipt of news: "Whenever you receive important news bearing upon a vital matter, you should not accept it immediately but should first examine the man who has brought it. If he is an evil man whose report may not be authentic normally, you should inquire into it carefully to ascertain the truth instead of accepting it and acting on it immediately." From this Divine Command an important legal principle is deduced, the sphere of application of which is very vast. According to it, it is not permissible for a Muslim government to take any action against a person or a group or a nation on the basis of the reports provided by the secret agents whose character might be doubtful. On the basis of this very principle the traditionists introduced the art of critical appraisal in the science of *Ḥadīth* in order to determine the value and worth of the people through whom traditions of the Holy Prophet reached the later generations, and the jurists established this principle in the law of evidence that in a matter from which a *Sharī'ah* value can be deduced, or a duty imposed on a person; the evidence of an evil man would be unacceptable. However, all scholars agree that as far as the common worldly matters are concerned it is not necessary to ascertain the truth of every news and the reliability of every informer. For the word used in the verse is *naba'*, which does not apply to every news but only to the news of consequence. That is why the jurists say that this principle does not apply in the case of ordinary matters. For example, if a person goes to visit somebody and seeks permission to enter the house, and a person comes out and conveys the permission, he can enter the house accordingly no matter whether the one conveying the permission from the master of the house was good or bad. Likewise, the scholars are also agreed that the evidence, as well as the report, of the people whose evil does not relate to lying and immorality, but they are regarded as unrighteous only on account of false beliefs, will also be acceptable. Only the falsehood of their creed cannot be a hindrance to accepting their evidence or reports.

9. This is evident from the context as well as understood by several commentators from this verse that the Holy Prophet was hesitant to take any military action against the Banī al-Muṣṭaliq on the report given by Wālid bin 'Uqbah in their case, but some of the people insisted that they should be attacked at once. At this those people were warned that they should not forget that the Holy Prophet was present among them, who understood them better than they did. Therefore, their thinking that the Holy Prophet should act according to their

counsel in important matters was undue boldness. For if he started acting according to what they counselled it would generally lead to blunders for which they themselves would have to suffer.

10. It means this: The whole community of the believers has not committed the error that was committed by those few people who wanted the Holy Prophet to act as they counselled, and the believing community's remaining steadfast on the right path was due to the reason that Allah by His bounty and grace had endeared to them the path of the Faith and made unbelief, wrongdoing and disobedience abhorrent to them. The addressees in the two parts of this verse are two separate groups. The sentence beginning with *lau yuṭī'ukum* is not addressed to the entire class of the Companions but only to those particular Companions who were insisting that the Banī al-Muṣṭaliq should be attacked at once, and the sentence beginning with *wa lākin-nallāha* ... is addressed to the general class of the Companions who would never dare insist on their own opinion and view before the Holy Messenger of Allah, but had full faith in his leadership and remained steadfast on the path of obedience, which is, and should be, the demand of true Faith. From this it cannot be concluded that those who had insisted on their own opinion were devoid of the love of the Faith, but what becomes obvious from this is that they had become forgetful of this demand of the Faith because of which they made the error of insisting on their own opinion in the presence of the Holy Prophet. Therefore, Allah first warned them of their error, then of its evil consequences, and finally stated that the right attitude for a believer was the one that had been adopted by the generality of the Companions.

11. That is, "Allah does not bestow His bounty and favour blindly, but He grants this great blessing to whomever He grants on the basis of wisdom and His knowledge that he is worthy of it."

12. Instead of saying: "When two parties of the believers fight mutually", it has been said: "If two parties of the believers fall to mutual fighting." From these words it by itself follows that mutual fighting is not the character of the Muslims, nor should it be. It is not expected that being the believers they would fight mutually. However, if such a thing ever happens, the procedure that follows should be adopted. Moreover, the word *ṭā'ifah* has been used for a group instead of *firqah;* the words *ṭā'ifah* and *firqah* in Arabic are used for a large group and a small group respectively. This also shows that it is indeed a highly offensive state in the sight of Allah in which large groups of the Muslims cannot be expected to be involved.

13. The recipients of this Command are all those Muslims who may not be a party to either of the groups and for whom it may be possible to try to make peace between them. In other words, Allah does not approve that the other

Muslims should just sit and watch the clash when two groups of their own community have fallen to mutual fighting. But whenever such a sad situation arises all the believers should become concerned and should do whatever they can to bring about peace and reconciliation between the parties. They should urge the parties to desist from fighting; they should exhort them to fear God; their influential people should go and talk to the responsible men of the two sides, should find out the causes of the dispute and do whatever they can to effect reconciliation between them.

14. That is, "The Muslims also should not allow the aggressor to continue his aggression and leave the victim alone, or, still worse, join hands with the aggressor. But their duty is that if all their efforts at reconciliation between the parties fail, they should find out as to who is in the right and who is the aggressor. Then they should join hands with the one who is in the right and fight the aggressor. As this fighting has been enjoined by Allah, it is obligatory and comes under *Jihād;* it is not the *fitnah* (mischief) about which the Holy Prophet has said: "It is a situation in which the one standing is better than the one moving, and the one sitting is better than the one standing" For that *fitnah* implies the mutual fighting of the Muslims in which the parties might be fighting out of bigotry, or for a false sense of honour and worldly possessions and neither may be having the truth on its side. As for the fight that is undertaken in support of the group who is in the right against the aggressor, it is not taking part in the *fitnah* but carrying out Allah's Command. All the jurists are agreed on its being an obligation, and there was no difference of opinion among the Holy Prophet's Companions about its being obligatory. (Al-Jassās, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān).* Some jurists even regard it as superior to *Jihād* itself and their reasoning is that Ḥaḍrat 'Alī spent the entire period of his caliphate in fighting against the rebels instead of performing *Jihād* against the disbelievers. *(Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī).* If a person argues that it was not obligatory because Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar and some other Companions had not participated in the wars fought by Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, he would be in the wrong. Ibn 'Umar himself says: "I have never been so much grieved at heart on anything as on account of this verse as to why I did not fight the rebels as enjoined by Allah." (Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrik).*

The Command to "fight" the aggressor does not necessarily mean that he should be fought with the weapons and killed, but it implies the use of force against him, the real object being the removal of his aggression. For this object whatever force is necessary should be used, and no more and no less force should be used than what is absolutely necessary.

The addressees of this Command are the people who have the power to repel the aggression by the use of force.

15. This shows that the fighting is not meant to punish the rebel (the aggressing party) for his rebellion (aggression), but to force him to return to the Command of Allah. Allah's Command implies that the rebel group should submit to what is right according to the Book of Allah and the *Sunnah* of the Messenger of Allah, and should give up the attitude and conduct that amounts to aggression according to this criterion of the truth. As soon as a rebel group becomes ready and willing to follow this Command, use of force against it should be stopped, for this is the actual object of the fighting and its target. The one who commits an excess after this would himself become the aggressor. As for this as to what is the truth and what is the aggression in a dispute according to the Book of Allah and the *Sunnah* of His Messenger, its determination is inevitably the job of those people of the *Ummah*, who have the ability to carry out research by virtue of their knowledge and insight

16. The Command is not only to make peace but to make peace with justice and equity. This shows that in the sight of Allah the peace (and reconciliation) which is brought about only to stop fighting, overlooking the distinction between the truth and falsehood, and in which pressure is used against the party that is in the right to come to terms with the aggressor, is not commendable. True peace is that which is based on justice. This alone can avert disaster and mischief; otherwise the inevitable result of pressing those in the right and encouraging the aggressors would be that the real causes of the evil would remain as they were, rather would go on adding up, and cause the mischief to appear and re-appear over and over again.

17. This verse forms the actual basis of the Islamic law about the mutual fighting between the Muslims. No explanation of this law is found in the *Sof* the Holy Prophet except one *Ḥadīth* which we shall take up below. For in the time of the Holy Prophet no war took place between the Muslims; hence nothing is found in his practice and sayings that could throw light on the commandments concerning it. Afterwards when during the caliphate of Ḥaḍrat 'Alī wars took place between the Muslims themselves authentic explanation of this law became possible. At that time since a large number of the Companions were still living, a detailed code of this aspect of the Islamic law was compiled in the light of their practice and statements. Ḥaḍrat 'Alī's personal example in particular has been the real source in this matter for all the jurists. Below we give a brief resume of this code:

(1) There are several forms of mutual fighting between Muslims and each has its own separate injunctions:

(a) When both the fighting groups may be the subjects of a Muslim government: In this case it is the duty of the government to make peace

between them, or to decide as to who is the aggressor between them, and to compel him by use of force to revert to the truth.

(b) When the parties may be two powerful groups, or two Muslim governments, and both may be fighting for the sake of the world: In this case, the believers should absolutely refrain from taking part in the *fitnah* and should exhort the parties concerned to fear God and desist from fighting.

(c) When one of the belligerent parties as mentioned under (b) above may be in the right and the other the aggressor, who may not be listening to counsel nor be inclined to make peace: In this case believers should side with and support the party that is in the right against the aggressor.

(d) When one of the parties may be the subjects, who may have revolted against the government, i.e. the Muslim government: The jurists use the term *"bāghī"* (rebel) for this very party which is guilty of rebelling.

(2) The rebels against the government may also be of several kinds:

(a) Those who may have risen only to create chaos and confusion, and may have no legal ground for their revolt. There is consensus that against such people it is lawful for the government to wage war, and it is obligatory for the believers to side with it, no matter whether it is a just government or not.

(b) Those who may revolt against a government in order to depose it from power, and may have no legal ground for this, and may also appear to be unjust and evil. In this case, if the government is just, it is obligatory to side with it without any question, but even if it is unjust, it is obligatory to fight in order to sustain it, for there is peace and order in the country because of it.

(c) Those who may revolt against a government on the basis of a legal ground, but their ground may be false and their belief vicious and perverse, e.g. the Khwārij. In this case also a Muslim government, whether it is just or unjust, has a lawful right to fight them and it is obligatory to side with it.

(d) Those who may revolt against a just government when its head might have assumed power lawfully. In this case whether they have a legal ground or do not have any, the government in any case is justified to wage war against them and it is obligatory to side with it.

(e) Those who may revolt against an unjust government, which might have come to power by coercion and whose leaders might be wicked and the rebels might have risen to establish justice and enforce articles of the

Divine Law, and they might appear to be righteous. In this case, acute difference of opinion has appeared among the jurists as to whether they should be declared the "rebels"(i.e. transgressors) and whether it is obligatory to fight them or not. This we state below briefly:

The generality of the jurists and the Ahl al-Ḥadīth hold the view that it is unlawful to rise in revolt against a ruler whose government has once been established and there is complete peace and order in the land under him, no matter whether he is just or unjust, and he has come to power in any way whatever, except in case he commits disbelief openly. Imām Sarakhsi writes: "In a case when the Muslims are agreed on a ruler and they enjoy peace under him and the roads are safe, if a group of the Muslims rises in revolt against him, everyone who has power is under obligation to side with the ruler of the Muslims and wage war against the rebels." *(Al-Mabsūṭ, Bāb al-Khwārij).* Imām Nawawī writes in his commentary of Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim: "It is forbidden to rise in revolt and fight against the Imāms (i.e. the Muslim rulers) even if they are wicked and unjust." Imām Nawawī claims that there is consensus on this.

But this claim of the consensus is not correct. A large group of the jurists of Islam which includes some major scholars, declares those rising in revolt as "rebels" only in case they rise in revolt against a just ruler. They do not regard as "rebellion" in the Qur'ānic terminology the rising in revolt of the righteous against the unjust and wicked rulers, nor declare the waging of war against them as obligatory. The view of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah about fighting against unjust rulers is well known among the scholars. Abū Bakr al Jaṣṣāṣ clearly writes in his *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* that the Imām regarded this fighting not only as permissible but as obligatory in favourable conditions. (Vol. I, p. 81; Vol. II, p. 39). In Zaid bin 'Alī's revolt against the Umayyads he not only provided financial help but urged others also to do the same. (Al-Jaṣṣāṣ, Vol I, p. 81). In Nafs al-Zakiyah's revolt against Manṣūr he went on earnestly supporting Nafs al-Zakiyah, and he declared this war as superior to a war against the disbelievers. (Al-Jaṣṣāṣ, Vol. I, p. 81; Al-Kardarī, *Manāqib Abī Ḥanīfah,* Vol. II, pp. 71-72). Then the view as stated by Imām Sarakhsī is not unanimous even among the Ḥanafī jurists. Ibn Humām writes in *Fatḥ al-Qadīr* (commentary of *Hedāyā):* "In the parlance of the jurists the rebel is he who gives up obedience of the just ruler." Ibn 'Aqīl and Ibn al-Jawzī from among the Ḥanbalīs regard rising in revolt against an unjust ruler as lawful and present Hadrat Husain's revolt as an argument. *(Al-Inṣāf,* Vol. X, *Bāb Qitāl Ahl al-Baghyi).* Imām Shāfe'ī in his *Kitāb al-Um* regards as rebel the one who fights against a just ruler (Vol. IV, p. 135). Imām Mālik's view as cited in *Al-Mudawwanah* is: "If the rebels come out to fight against a just ruler, they should be forcibly opposed." (Vol. I, p. 407). Qāḍī Abū Bakr Ibn al-'Arabī has cited his this view in *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān:* "When a person rises in revolt against a

just ruler like 'Umar bin Abdul 'Aziz, it is obligatory to resist and repel him; as for some other kind of the ruler, he should be left alone. Allah will punish him through some other unjust person and then both of them through some third unjust person." Another saying of Imām Mālik that has been cited is: "When the pledge has been sworn to a ruler, and then his brothers rise in revolt against him, they will be fought against, if he is a just ruler. As for the rulers of our time, there is no pledge for them, for pledge to them has been taken by coercion." Then the view of the Mālikī scholars that the Qāḍī has cited with reference to Saḥnūn is: "Fighting will be undertaken only under the just ruler, whether the just ruler is the former one or the one who has risen in revolt against him later, but if neither is just, one should keep away from both. However, if one's own self is attacked, or the Muslims are being subjected to tyranny, one should put up resistance." After citing these different views, Qāḍī Abū Bakr says: "We will not fight except on the side of the just ruler, whom the truth-loving people have made their head of their own free will."

(3) If the ones rising in revolt are small in number, and may have no large party on their back, nor be possessing any substantial war equipment, the law of rebellion will not be applied against them, but they will be proceeded against under the common penal law, i.e. if they kill, they will be subjected to the law of retaliation, and if they damage property, they will be required to pay the penalties. The law of sedition is applied only against those rebels who might be powerful, and rise in revolt in large numbers and with substantial military equipment.

(4) As long as the ones rising in revolt only express their false and perverse beliefs or hostile and seditious ideas against the government or its head, they cannot be killed or imprisoned. War will be waged against them only when they actually rise in armed revolt and start shedding blood. *(Al-Mabsūt, Bāb al-Khwārij; Fatḥ al-Qadīr, Bāb al-Bighāt;* al-Jaṣṣāṣ, *Ahkām al-Qur'ān).*

(5) Before starting war against the rebels they will first be invited, according to the Qur'ānic instructions, to give up the way of rebellion and adopt the way of justice; if they have some doubts and objections, effort will be made to remove them; even then if they do not listen, and fighting begins from their side, force will be used to deal with them. *(Fath al-Qadīr;* al Jassās, *Ahkām al-Qur'ān).*

(6) The code of regulations that has to be observed in the war against the rebels is based on the Holy Prophet's following Command that has been related by Ḥākim, Bazzār and al-Jaṣṣāṣ on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar:

"The Holy Prophet asked Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd: O Ibn Umm 'Abd: Do you know what is Allah's Command concerning the rebels of this

Ummah? He replied: Allah and His Messenger have the best knowledge. The Holy Prophet said: Their wounded ones will not be laid hands on and their captives will not be killed, and the one who flees, will not be pursued, and their properties will not be distributed as spoils."

The second source of this code which has been held as trust-worthy by all the jurists is the word and deed of Ḥaḍrat 'Alī. After attaining victory in the Battle of the Camel, he announced; "Do not pursue him who flees; do not attack the wounded; do not kill the captives; give shelter to him who surrenders; do not make forcible entry into the people's houses; and do not raise your hands at the women even if they are abusing and cursing you." Some of his soldiers made the demand that the opponents and their family members be taken prisoners and distributed. At this he became furious and said: "Who among you will take 'Ā'ishah, mother of the Faithful, as his share?"

(7) The injunction concerning the properties of the rebels as derived from the good example of Ḥaḍrat 'Alī is that no part of it, whether it is found on the battlefield or behind them in their houses, and whether they are living or have been killed, will be declared as the spoils nor distributed among the army. However, no compensation will be necessary for the properties that have been damaged or destroyed. As soon as the war comes to an end and rebellion has been put down, their properties and belongings will be returned to them. Their weapons and conveyances, if seized during the war, will be used against them, but will not be made the possession of the victors and distributed as the spoils; and if there is no more fear of a rebellion from them, their these things also will be returned to them. Only Imām Abu Yūsuf has expressed the opinion that the government will declare them to be the spoils. (*Al-Mabsūṭ; Fatḥ al-Qadīr;* al-Jaṣṣāṣ).

(8) Their prisoners of war, after they have pledged not to rise in rebellion again, will be set free. *(Al-Mabsūt).*

(9) To cut off the heads of the slain rebels and to take them about the streets is a highly undesirable thing, for this is mutilation which the Holy Prophet has strictly forbidden. When the head of a Roman patriarch was brought before Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr, he expressed great displeasure at it, and said: "We are not here to imitate the Romans and Iranians." When it is not allowed to meet out such a treatment to the unbelievers, how much more so should it be with regard to the Muslims. *(Al-Mabsūṭ).*

(10) Whatever damage might have been caused to life and property by the rebels during the war, no retaliation and recompense for it will be imposed on them after the war has come to an end and peace has been restored. Neither will there be any retaliation for a slain person nor any recompense for the lost property, so as to avoid any chance of the recurrence of the sedition. This

same law was observed in the mutual fighting between the Companions. *(Al-Mabsūṭ;* al-Jaṣṣāṣ; Ibn al-'Arabī, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān).*

(11) After the government has recaptured the territories which had gone under the rebels and where they had established their rule and order and collected the *zakāt* and other taxes, it will not demand the *zakāt* and the taxes from the people once again. If the rebels have spent the money thus collected lawfully, the payers will be deemed to have paid them off lawfully in the sight of Allah as well, but if the rebels have spent the money unlawfully, it will be a matter between the payers and their God; if they so like they may pay their zakāt dues once again. *(Fat-ḥ al-Qadīr;* al-Jaṣṣāṣ; Ibn al-'Arabī).

(12) The decisions of the judges, who may be just and may have given the decisions according to the *Sharī'ah* in the courts established by the rebels in the territories under them, will be up-held although the ones who appointed them might be guilty of sedition. However, if their decisions are against the *Sharī'ah*, and they are brought before the courts of the government after the rebellion has been put down, they will not be enforced. Moreover, no warrant or summons issued by the courts established by the rebels will be acceptable in the courts of the government. (*Al-Mabsūṭ;* al-Jaṣṣāṣ).

(13) The evidence of the rebels will not be acceptable in the Islamic courts, for it is iniquitous to fight against the just. Imām Muḥammad says: "As long as they do not fight and actually rise in revolt against the people of justice, their evidence will be acceptable, but when they have already fought, I will not accept their evidence." (Al-Jaṣṣāṣ).

From these rulings it becomes plain as to what is the difference between the law of fighting against the disbelievers and of fighting against the Muslim rebels.

18. This verse establishes a universal brotherhood of all the Muslims of the world, and it is by virtue of this that the sort of fraternity that exists among the Muslims exists among the followers of no other religion and creed. The importance of this Command and its demands have been explained by the Holy Prophet in many of his Traditions from which one can understand its full significance and spirit.

Ḥaḍrat Jarīr bin 'Abdullah says: "The Holy Prophet took a pledge from me on three things: That I will establish the Prayer; that I will continue to pay the *zakāt;* and that I will remain a well-wisher of every Muslim." (Bukhārī: *Kitāb-al-Imān).* According to Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, the Holy Prophet said: "To abuse a Muslim is sinful and to fight him disbelief." In Musnad Aḥmad a tradition bearing on the same subject has also been related by Ḥaḍrat Sa'īd bin Mālik on the authority of his father.

Ḥaḍrat-Abū Hurairah relates that the Holy Prophet said: "The life, property and honour of every Muslim is forbidden to every other Muslim." (Muslim: *Kitāb-al-Birr waṣ Ṣilah;* Tirmidhī: *Abwāb-al-Birr was-Ṣilah).*

Ḥaḍrat Abū Sa'id Khudrī and Hadrat Abū Hurairah say that the Holy Prophet said: "A Muslim is a brother to the other Muslim: he does not treat him unjustly; he does not leave him alone; and he does not dishonour him. There is no greater evil than that one should hold a Muslim in contempt." (Musnad Ahmad).

Ḥaḍrat Sahl Bin Sa'd as-Sā'idī has related this saying of the Holy Prophet: "A believer's relation with the community of the believers is just like the head's relation with the body. He feels their afflictions as the head feels the pain of every part of the body." (Musnad Aḥmad). In another Ḥadīth bearing on the same subject the Holy Prophet said: "The believers' example in the matter of their mutual love, relationship and compassion with one another is of the state of the body that when a part of it is afflicted the whole of it is afflicted with fever and restlessness." (Bukhārī, Muslim).

In another *Ḥadīth* he is reported to have said: The believers are with one another like the bricks of a wall so that each is strengthened by the other." (Bukhāri: *Kitāb al-Adab;* Tirmidhī;: *Abwāb al-Birr waṣ-Ṣilah).*

19. In the preceding two verses after giving necessary instructions about the Muslim people's mutual fighting, the believers were made to realize that by virtue of the most sacred relationship of the faith they were brothers one to another, and they should fear God and try to keep their mutual relations right. Now, in the following two verses, they are being enjoined to avoid and shun those major evils which generally spoil the mutual relationships of the people in a society. Slandering and taunting the people and harbouring suspicions and spying on others are, in fact, the evils that cause mutual enmities and then lead to grave mischief. In this connection, from the commandments that are being given in the following verses and the explanations of these found in the *Ḥadīth* a detailed law of libel can be compiled. The western law pertaining to libel in this regard is so defective that a person who sues another under this law may well cause some loss to his own honour. The Islamic law, on the contrary, recognizes a basic honour for every person and gives nobody the right to attack it, no matter whether the attack is based on reality or not, and whether the person who has been attacked has a "reputation" of his own or not. Only the fact that a person has debased and humiliated the other person is enough to declare him a criminal unless, of course, it is proved that the humiliation caused had a legal ground for it.

20. Mocking does not only imply mocking with the tongue but it also includes mimicking somebody, making pointed references to him, laughing at his words, or his works, or his appearance, or his dress, or calling the people's

attention to some defect or blemish in him so that others also may laugh at him. All this is included in mocking. What is actually forbidden is that one should make fun of and ridicule another, for under such ridiculing there always lie feelings of one's own superiority and the other's abasement and contempt, which are morally unworthy of a gentleman. Moreover, it hurts the other person, which causes mischief to spread in society. That is why it has been forbidden.

To make mention of the men and the women separately does not mean that it is lawful for the men to mock the women or the women to mock the men. The actual reason for making a separate mention of the two sexes is that Islam does not at all believe in mixed society. Ridiculing each other generally takes place in mixed gatherings and Islam does not permit that non-*maḥram* males and females should meet in such gatherings and make fun of each other. Therefore, in a Muslim society it is inconceivable that the men would mock a woman, or the women would mock a man in an assembly.

21. The word *lamz* as used in the original is very comprehensive and applies to ridiculing, reviling, deriding, jeering, charging somebody or finding fault with him, and making him the target of reproach and blame by open or tacit references. As all such things also spoil mutual relationships and create bad blood in society, they have been forbidden. Instead of saying, "Do not taunt one another", it has been said "Do not taunt yourselves", which by itself shows that the one who uses taunting words for others, in fact, taunts his own self. Obviously, a person does not use invectives against others unless he himself is filled with evil feelings and is almost in a state of bursting like a volcano. Thus, the one who nourishes such feelings has made his own self a nest of evils before he makes others a target. Then, when he taunts others, it means that he is inviting others to taunt him. It is a different matter that the other person may evade his attacks because of a gentle nature, but he himself has opened the door to mischief so that the other may treat him likewise.

22. This Command requires that a person should not be called by a name or a title which may cause him humiliation, e.g. calling somebody a sinner or a hypocrite, or calling someone a lame or blind one, or one-eyed, or giving him a nickname containing a reference to some defect or blemish in him, or in his parents, or in his family, or calling a person a Jew or a Christian even after his conversion to Islam, or giving such a nickname to a person, or a family, or a community, or a group, which may bring condemnation or disgrace on it. Only those nicknames have been made an exception from this Command, which though apparently offensive, are not intended to condemn the persons concerned, but they rather serve as a mark of recognition for them. That is why the traditionists have allowed as permissible names like Sulemān al-A'mash (the weak-eyed Sulemān) and Wāsil al-Aḥdab (the hunch-backed Wāsil) among the reporters of the *Ḥadīth*.

If there are several men of the same name and a particular man among them may be recognized only by a particular title or nickname of his, the title or nickname can be used, even though the title by itself may be offensive. For instance, if there are several men called 'Abdullah, and one of them is blind, he may be called Abdullah the blind, for his recognition. Likewise, those titles also are excluded from this Command, which though apparently offensive, are in fact, given out of love and the people who are called by those titles themselves approve them, like Abū Hurairah (father of the kitten) and Abū Turāb (father of the dust).

23. That is, "It is very shameful for a believer that in spite of being a believer he should earn a name for using abusive language and for immodest behaviour. If a disbeliever earns reputation for himself for mocking the people, or taunting them, or for proposing evil and offensive titles for others, it may not be a good reputation from the point of view of humanity, but it at least goes well with his disbelief. But if a person after affirming the Faith in Allah and His Messenger and the Hereafter earns reputation on account of these base qualities, it is simply regrettable.

24. What is forbidden is not conjecture as such but excessive conjecture and following every kind of conjecture, and the reason given is that some conjectures are sins. In order to understand this Command we should analyse and see what are the kinds of conjecture and what is the moral position of each.

One kind of conjecture is that which is morally approved and laudable, and desirable and praiseworthy from religious point of view, e.g. a good conjecture in respect of Allah and His Messenger and the believers and those people with whom one comes in common contact daily and concerning whom there may be no rational ground for having an evil conjecture.

The second kind of conjecture is that which one cannot do without in practical life, e.g. in a law court a judge has to consider the evidence placed before him and give his decision on the basis of the most probable conjecture, for he cannot have direct knowledge of the facts of the matter, and the opinion that is based on evidence is mostly based on the most probable conjecture and not on certainty. Likewise, in most cases when one or the other decision has to be taken, and the knowledge of the reality cannot possibly be attained, there is no way out for men but to form an opinion on the basis of a conjecture.

The third kind of conjecture, which is although a suspicion, is permissible in nature, and it cannot be regarded as a sin. For instance, if there are clear signs and pointers in the character of a person (or persons), or in his dealings and conduct, on the basis of which he may not deserve to enjoy one's good conjecture, and there are rational grounds for having suspicions against him, the *Sharī'ah* does not demand that one should behave like a simpleton and continue to have a good

conjecture about him. The last limit of this lawful conjecture, however, is that one should conduct oneself cautiously in order to ward off any possible mischief from him; it is not right to take an action against him only on the basis of a conjecture.

The fourth kind of conjecture which is, in fact, a sin is that one should entertain a suspicion in respect of a person without any ground, or should start with suspicion in forming an opinion about others, or should entertain a suspicion about the people whose apparent conditions show that they are good and noble. Likewise, this also is a sin that when there is an equal chance of the evil and goodness in the word or deed of a person, one should regard it as only evil out of suspicion. For instance, if a gentleman while leaving a place of assembly picks up another one's shoes, instead of his own, and we form the opinion that he has done so with the intention of stealing the shoes, whereas this could be possible because of oversight as well, there is no reason for adopting the evil opinion instead of the good opinion except the suspicion.

This analysis makes it plain that conjecture by itself is not anything forbidden; rather in some cases and situations it is commendable, in some situations inevitable, in some permissible up to a certain extent and un-permissible beyond it, and in some cases absolutely unlawful. That is why it has not been enjoined that one should refrain from conjecture or suspicion altogether but what is enjoined is that one should refrain from much suspicion. Then, to make the intention of the Command explicit, it has been said that some conjectures are sinful. From this warning it follows automatically that whenever a person is forming an opinion on the basis of conjecture, or is about to take an action, he should examine the case and see whether the conjecture he is entertaining is not a sin, whether the conjecture is really necessary, whether there are sound reasons for the conjeceture, and whether the conduct one is adopting on the basis of the conjecture is permissible. Everyone who fears God will certainly take these precautions. To make one's conjecture free and independent of every such care and consideration is the pastime of only those people who are fearless of God and thoughtless of the accountability of the Hereafter.

25. "Do not spy": Do not grope after the secrets of the people: do not search for their defects and weaknesses: do not pry into their conditions and affairs. Whether this is done because of suspicion, or for causing harm to somebody with an evil intention, or for satisfying one's own curiosity, it is forbidden by the *Shari'ah* in every case. It does not behove a believer that he should spy on the hidden affairs of other people, and should try to peep at them from behind curtains to find out their defects and their weaknesses. This also includes reading other people's private letters, listening secretly to private conversation, peeping into the neighbour's house, and trying to get information in different ways about the domestic life or private affairs of others. This is grave

immorality which causes serious mischief in society. That is why the Holy Prophet once said in an address about those who pry into other people's affairs:

"O people, who have professed belief verbally, but faith has not yet entered your hearts: Do not pry into the affairs of the Muslims, for he who will pry into the affairs of the Muslims, Allah will pry into his affairs, and he whom Allah follows inquisitively, is disgraced by Him in his own house." (Abū Da'ūd).

Ḥaḍrat Mu'âwiyah says that he himself heard the Holy Prophet say; "If you start prying into the secret affairs of the people, you will corrupt them, or at least drive them very near corruption." (Abū Da'ūd).

In another *Ḥadīth* he said: "When you happen to form an evil opinion about somebody, do not pry about it." (Al-Jaṣṣāṣ, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān).*

According to still another *Ḥadīth,* the Holy Prophet said: "The one who saw a secret affair of somebody and then concealed it is as though he saved a girl who had been buried alive." (Al-Jaṣṣāṣ).

This prohibition of spying is not only applicable to the individuals but also to the Islamic government. The duty of forbidding the people to do evil that the *Sharī'ah* has entrusted to the government does not require that it should establish a system of spying to enquire too curiously into the people's secret evils and then punish them, but it should use force only against those evils which are manifested openly. As for the hidden evils spying is not the way to reform them but it is education, preaching and counselling, collective training of the people and trying to create a pure social environment. In this connection, an incident concerning Ḥaḍrat 'Umar is very instructive. Once at night he heard the voice of a person who was singing in his house. He became curious and climbed the wall. There he saw wine as well as a woman present. He shouted at the man, saying: "O enemy of God, do you think you will disobey Allah, and Allah will not expose your secret?" The man replied: "Do not make haste, O Commander of the Faithful: if I have committed one sin, you have committed three sins. Allah has forbidden spying, and you have spied; Allah has commanded that one should enter the houses by the doors, and you have entered it by climbing over the wall; Allah has commanded that one should avoid entering the other people's houses without permission, and you have entered my house without my permission." Hearing this reply Hadrat 'Umar confessed his error, and did not take any action against the man, but made him to promise that he would follow the right way in future. (Abū Bakr Muḥammad bin Ja'far al-Kharā'iṭī, *Makārim al-Akhlāq).* This shows that it is not only forbidden for the individuals but also for the Islamic government itself to pry into the secrets of the people and discover their sins and errors and then seize them for punishment. The same thing has been said in a *Ḥadīth* in which the Holy Prophet has said:

"When the ruler starts searching for the causes of suspicions among the people he corrupts them" (Abū Da'ūd).

The only exception from this Command are the special cases and situations in which spying is actually needed. For instance, if in the conduct of a person (or persons) some signs of corruption are visible and there is the apprehension that he is about to commit a crime, the government can enquire into his affairs; or, for instance, if somebody sends a proposal of marriage in the house of a person, or wants to enter into business with him, the other person can enquire and investigate into his affairs for his own satisfaction.

26. *Ghībat* (back-biting) has been defined thus: "It is saying on the back of a person something which would hurt him if he came to know of it." This definition has been reported from the Holy Prophet himself. According to a tradition which Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī and others have related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, the Holy Prophet defined *ghībat* as follows:

"It is talking of your brother in a way irksome to him." It was asked: "What, if the defect being talked of is present in my brother ?" The Holy Prophet replied: "If it is present in him, it would be *ghībat;* if it is not there, it would be slandering him."

In another tradition which Imām Mālik has related in Mu'wattā, on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Muṭṭalib bin 'Abdullah, "A person asked the Holy Prophet: What is *ghībat?* The Holy Prophet replied: It is talking of your brother in a way irksome to him. He asked: Even if it is true, O Messenger of Allah? He replied: If what you said was false, it would then be a calumny."

These traditions make it plain that uttering a false accusation against a person in his absence is calumny and describing a real defect in him *ghībat;* whether this is done in express words or by reference and allusion, in every case it is forbidden. Likewise, whether this is done in the lifetime of a person, or after his death, it is forbidden in both cases. According to Abū Da'ūd, when Mā'iz bin Mālik Aslamī had been stoned to death for committing adultery, the Holy Prophet on his way back heard a man saying to his companion: "Look at this man: Allah had concealed his secret, but he did not leave himself alone till he was killed like a dog!" A little further on the way there was the dead body of an ass lying rotting. The Holy Prophet stopped, called the two men and said: "Come down and eat this dead ass." They submitted: "Who will eat it, O Messenger of Allah?" The Holy Prophet said: "A little before this you were attacking the honour of your brother: that was much worse than eating this dead ass."

The only exceptions to this prohibition are the cases in which there may be a genuine need of speaking in of a person on his back, or after his death, and

this may not be fulfilled without resort to backbiting, and if it was not resorted to, a greater evil might result than backbiting itself. The Holy Prophet has described this exception as a principle, thus: "The worst excess is to attack the honour of a Muslim unjustly." (Abū Da'ūd).

In this saying the condition of "unjustly" points out that doing so "with justice" is permissible. Then, in the practice of the Holy Prophet himself we find some precedents which show what is implied by "justice" and in what conditions and cases backbiting may be lawful to the extent as necessary.

Once a desert Arab came and offered his Prayer under the leadership of the Holy Prophet, and as soon as the Prayer was concluded, walked away saying: "O God, have mercy on me and on Muḥammad, and make no one else a partner in this mercy beside the two of us." The Holy Prophet said to the Companions: "What do you say: who is more ignorant: this person or his camel? Didn't you hear what he said?" (Abū Da'ūd). The Holy Prophet had to say this in his absence, for he had left soon after the Prayer was over. Since he had uttered a wrong thing in the presence of the Holy Prophet, his remaining quiet at it could cause the misunderstanding that saying such a thing might in some degree be lawful; therefore, it was necessary that he should contradict it.

Two of the Companions, Ḥaḍrat Mu'āwiyah and Ḥaḍrat Abū Jahm, sent the proposal of marriage to a lady, Fāṭimah bint Qais. She came to the Holy Prophet and asked for his advice. He said: "Mu'āwiyah is a poor man and Abū Jahm beats his wives much." (Bukhārī, Muslim). In this case, as there was the question of the lady's future and she had consulted the Holy Prophet for his advice, he deemed it necessary to inform her of the two men's weaknesses.

One day when the Holy Prophet was present in the apartment of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, a man came and sought permission to see him. The Holy Prophet remarked that he was a very bad man of his tribe. Then he went out and talked to him politely. When he came back into the house, Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah asked: "You have talked to him politely, whereas when you went out you said something different about him." The Holy Prophet said, "On the day of Resurrection the worst abode in the sight of Allah will be of the person whom the people start avoiding because of his abusive language." (Bukhārī, Muslim). A study of this incident will show that the Holy Prophet in spite of having a bad opinion about the person talked to him politely because that was the demand of his morals; but he had the apprehension lest the people of his house should consider the person to be his friend when they would see him treating him kindly, and then the person might use this impression to his own advantage later. Therefore, the Holy Prophet warned Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah telling her that he was a bad man of his tribe.

Once Hind bint 'Utbah, wife of Ḥaḍrat Abū Sufyān, came to the Holy Prophet and said: "Abū Sufyān is a miserly person: he does not provide enough for me and my children's needs." (Bukhārī, Muslim). Although this complaint from the wife in the absence of the husband was backbiting, the Holy Prophet permitted it, for the oppressed one has a right that he or she may take the complaint of injustice to a person who has the power to get it removed.

From these precedents of the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet, the jurists and traditionists have deduced this principle: "*Ghibat* (backbiting) is permissible only in case it is needed for a real and genuine (genuine from the *Sharī'ah* point of view) necessity and the necessity may not be satisfied without having resort to it". Then on the basis of the same principle the scholars have declared that *ghibat* is permissible in the following cases:

(1) Complaining by an oppressed person against the oppressor before every such person who he thinks can do something to save him from the injustice.

(2) To make mention of the evils of a person (or persons) with the intention of reform before those who can do expected to help remove the evils.

(3) To state the facts of a case before a legal expert for the purpose of seeking a religious or legal ruling regarding an unlawful act committed by a person.

(4) To warn the people of the mischiefs of a person (or persons) so that they may ward off the evil, e g. it is not only permissible but obligatory to mention the weaknesses of the reporters, witnesses and writers, for without it, it is not possible to safeguard the *Sharī'ah* against the propagation of false reports, the courts against injustices and the common people or the students against errors and misunderstandings. Or, for instance, if a person wants to have the relationship of marriage with somebody, or wishes to rent a house in the neighborhood of somebody, or wants to give something into the custody of somebody, and consults another person, it is obligatory for him to apprise him of all aspects so that he is not deceived because of ignorance.

(5) To raise voice against and criticise the evils of the people who may be spreading sin and immorality and error, or corrupting the people's faith and persecuting them.

(6) To use nicknames for the people who may have become well known by those names, but this should be done for the purpose of their recognition and not with a view to condemn them. (For details, see *Fat-h al-Bārī*, vol. X, p. 362; *Sharh Muslim* by An-Nawawī; *Riyāḍ us-Ṣāliḥīn*; al-Jaṣṣās, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*; *Rūh al-Ma'ānī* commentary on verse *wa lā yaghtab ba'ḍukum ba'ḍan*).

Apart from these exceptions it is absolutely forbidden to speak ill of a person behind his back. If what is spoken is true, it is *ghibat*; if it is false, it is

calumny; and if it is meant to make two persons quarrel, it is slander. The *Shari'ah* has declared all these as forbidden. In the Islamic society it is incumbent on every Muslim to refute a false charge made against a person in his presence and not to listen to it quietly, and to tell those who are speaking ill of somebody, without a genuine religious need, to fear God and desist from the sin. The Holy Prophet has said: If a person does not support and help a Muslim when he is being disgraced and his honour being attacked, Allah also does not support and help him when he stands in need of His help; and if a person helps and supports a Muslim when his honour is being attacked and he is being disgraced, Allah Almighty also helps him when he wants that Allah should help him. (Abū Da'ūd).

As for the backbiter, as soon as he realizes that he is committing this sin, or has committed it, his first duty is to offer repentance before Allah and restrain himself from this forbidden act. His second duty is that he should compensate for it as far as possible. If he has backbitten a dead person, he should ask Allah's forgiveness for the person as often as he can. If he has backbitten a living person, and what he said was also false, he should refute it before the people before whom he had made the calumny. And if what he said was true, he should never speak ill of him in future, and should ask pardon of the person whom he had backbitten. A section of the scholars has expressed the opinion that pardon should be asked only in case the other person has come to know of it; otherwise one should only offer repentance, for if the person concerned is unaware and the backbiter in order to ask pardon goes and tells him that he had backbitten him, he would certainly feel hurt.

27. In this sentence Allah by likening backbiting to eating the dead brother's flesh has given the idea of its being an abomination. Eating the dead flesh is by itself abhorrent; and when the flesh is not of an animal, but of a man, and that too of one's own dead brother, abomination would be added to abomination. Then, by presenting the simile in the interrogative tone it has been made all the more impressive, so that every person may ask his own conscience and decide whether he would like to eat the flesh of his dead brother. If he would not, and he abhors it by nature, how he would like that he should attack the honour of his brother-in-faith in his absence, when he cannot defend himself and when he is wholly unaware that he is being disgraced. This shows that the basic reason of forbidding backbiting is not that the person being backbitten is being hurt but speaking ill of a person in his absence is by itself unlawful and forbidden whether he is aware of it, or not, and whether he feels hurt by it or not. Obviously, eating the flesh of a dead man is not forbidden because it hurts the dead man; the dead person is wholly unaware that somebody is eating of his body, but because this act by itself is an abomination. Likewise, if the person who is backbitten also does not come to know of it through any means, he will remain

unaware throughout his life that somebody had attacked his honour at a particular time before some particular people and on that account he had stood disgraced in the eyes of those people. Because of this unawareness he will not feel at all hurt by this backbiting, but his honour would in any case be sullied. Therefore, this act in its nature is not any different from eating the flesh of a dead brother.

28. In the preceding verses the Muslims were addressed and given necessary instructions to safeguard the Muslim community against social evils. In this verse the whole of mankind has been addressed to reform it of the great evil that has always been causing universal disruption in the world, that is, the prejudices due to race, colour, language, country, and nationality. On account of these prejudices man in every age has generally been discarding humanity and drawing around himself some small circles and regarding those born within those circles as his own people and those outside them as others. These circles have been drawn on the basis of accidental birth and not on rational and moral grounds. In some cases their basis is the accident of being born in a paricular family, tribe, or race, and in some particular geographical region, or in a nation having a particular colour or speaking a particular language. Then the discrimination between one's own people and others is not only confined to this that those who are looked upon as one's own people are shown greater love and cooperation than others, but this discrimination has assumed the worst forms of hatred, enmity, contempt and tyranny. New philosophies have been propounded for it, new religions invented, new codes of law made and new moral principles framed; so much so that nations and empires have made this distinction a permanent way of life with them and practised it for centuries. The Jews on this very basis regarded the children of Israel as the chosen people of God and even in the practice of their religious rites looked upon the non-Jews as inferior to the Jews in rights and rank. This very discrimination gave birth to class distinctions (varnashrama) among the Hindus according to which superiority of the Brahmins was established, all other human beings came to be regarded as inferior and unclean and the shūdras cast into the depths of disgrace and degradation. Every person can see for himself even in this 20th century what atrocities have been committed against the coloured people in Africa and America on account of the distinction between the white and the black. The treatment that the Europeans meted out to the Red Indian race in America and to the weak nations of Asia and Africa had the same concept underlying it. They thought that the life and property and honour of all those who had been born outside the frontiers of their own land and nation were lawful for them and they had the right to plunder and take them as their slaves and exterminate them if need be. The worst examples of how the nationalism of the western nations has turned one nation against the others and made it their blood-thirsty enemy have been seen in the wars of the recent past and are being seen even in the present time. In particular, if what was manifested by the racism of the

اللّٰهَ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿١٢﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اِنَّا خَلَقْنٰكُمْ مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ وَّاُنْثٰى وَ
جَعَلْنٰكُمْ شُعُوْبًا وَّ قَبَاۗىِٕلَ لِتَعَارَفُوْا ۭ اِنَّ اَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ اَتْقٰىكُمْ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ
عَلِيْمٌ خَبِيْرٌ ﴿١٣﴾ قَالَتِ الْاَعْرَابُ اٰمَنَّا ۭ قُلْ لَّمْ تُؤْمِنُوْا وَلٰكِنْ قُوْلُوْٓا اَسْلَمْنَا
وَلَمَّا يَدْخُلِ الْاِيْمَانُ فِيْ قُلُوْبِكُمْ ۭ وَاِنْ تُطِيْعُوا اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ لَا يَلِتْكُمْ
مِّنْ اَعْمَالِكُمْ شَيْـــًٔا ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿١٤﴾ اِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا
بِاللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهٖ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوْا وَجٰهَدُوْا بِاَمْوَالِهِمْ وَاَنْفُسِهِمْ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ
اللّٰهِ ۭ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ هُمُ الصّٰدِقُوْنَ ﴿١٥﴾ قُلْ اَتُعَلِّمُوْنَ اللّٰهَ بِدِيْنِكُمْ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا
فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿١٦﴾ يَمُنُّوْنَ عَلَيْكَ اَنْ
اَسْلَمُوْا ۭ قُلْ لَّا تَمُنُّوْا عَلَيَّ اِسْلَامَكُمْ ۚ بَلِ اللّٰهُ يَمُنُّ عَلَيْكُمْ اَنْ هَدٰىكُمْ
لِلْاِيْمَانِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿١٧﴾ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَعْلَمُ غَيْبَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۭ وَ
اللّٰهُ بَصِيْرٌۢ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿١٨﴾

13 O mankind, We created you from one man and one woman, and then divided you into nations and tribes so that you may recognize one another. Indeed, the most honourable among you in the sight of Allah is he who is the most pious of you.[28] Surely, Allah is All-knowing, All-Wise.[29]

14-15 The desert Arabs say, "We have believed".[30] Say to them, "You have not believed: rather say, 'We have submitted'.[31] Faith has not yet entered your hearts. If you adopt obedience to Allah and His Messenger, He will not diminish anything from the reward of your works." Surely, Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Merciful. In fact, the true believers are those who believed in Allah and His Messenger; then they entertained no doubt and exerted their utmost in the Way of Allah with

their selves and their wealth. They indeed are the truthful ones.

O Prophet, say to those (who claim to have believed), "Are you apprising Allah of your Faith? whereas Allah knows all that there is in the heavens and the earth and has knowledge of everything." They deem it as a favour to you that they have accepted Islam. Say to them, "Do not deem your Islam as a favour to me, but rather Allah has done you a favour that He has guided you to the Faith, if you are really truthful (in your claim to have believed). Allah has the knowledge of every hidden thing in the heavens and the earth, and He sees whatever you do."

Nazi Germany and the concept of the superiority of the Nordic race in the last World War is kept in view. One can easily judge how stupendous and devastating is the error for whose reform this verse of the Qur'ān was revealed.

In this brief verse, Allah has drawn the attention of all mankind to three cardinal truths:

(1) "The origin of all of you is one and the same: your whole species has sprung up from one man and one woman: all your races that are found in the world today are, in fact, the branches of one initial race that started with one mother and one father. In this process of creation there is no basis whatever for the divisions and distinctions in which you have involved yourselves because of your false notions. One God alone is your Creator. Different men have not been created by different Gods. You have been made from one and the same substance; it is not so that some men have been made from some pure and superior substance and some other men from some impure and inferior substance. You have been created in one and the same way; it is not also so that different men have been created in different ways. And you are the offspring of the same parents; it is not so that in the beginning there were many human couples which gave birth to different populations in the different regions of the world."

(2) "In spite of being one in origin it was natural that you should be divided into nations and tribes. Obviously, all the men on the earth could not belong to one and the same family. With the spread of the race it was inevitable that countless families should arise, and then tribes and nations should emerge from the families. Similarly, it was inevitable that after settling in different regions of the earth, there should be differences of colours, features, languages and ways of living among the people, and it was also natural that those living in the same region should be closer in affinity and those living in remote regions not so close; but this natural difference never demanded that distinctions of inequality, of high and low, of noble and mean, should be

established on its basis, that one race should claim superiority over the other, the people of one colour should look down upon the people of other colours, and that one nation should take preference over the other without any reason. The Creator had divided the human communities into nations and tribes for that was a natural way of cooperation and distinction between them. In this way alone could a family, a brotherhood, a tribe and a nation combine to give birth to a common way of life and to cooperate with each other in the affairs of the world. But it was all due to satanic ignorance that the differences among mankind created by Allah to be a means of recognition, were made a means of mutual boasting and hatred, which led mankind to every kind of injustice and tyranny.

(3) The only basis of superiority and excellence that there is, or can be, between man and man is that of moral excellence. As regards birth, all men are equal, for their Creator is One, their substance of creation is one, and their way of creation is one, and they are descended from the same parents. Moreover, a person's being born in a particular country, nation, or clan is just accidental. Therefore, there is no rational ground on account of which one person may be regarded as superior to the other. The real thing that makes one person superior to others is that one should be more God-conscious, a greater avoider of evils, and a follower of the way of piety and righteousness. Such a man whether he belongs to any race, any nation and any country, is valuable and worthy on account of his personal merit. And the one who is reverse of him in character is in any case an inferior person whether he is black or white, born in the east or the west.

These same truths that have been stated in this brief verse of the Qur'ān, have been explained in greater detail by the Holy Prophet in his addresses and traditions. In the speech that he made on the conquest of Makkah, after going round the Ka'bah, he said:

"Thank God Who has removed from you the blemish of ignorance and its arrogance. O people, men are divided into classes: the pious and righteous, who are honourable in the sight of Allah, and the sinful and vicious, who are contemptible in the sight of Allah, whereas all men are the children of Adam and Adam had been created by Allah from clay." (Baihaqī, Tirmidhī).

On the occasion of the Farewell Pilgrimage, in the midst of the *Tashrīq* days, he addressed the people, and said:

"O people, be aware: your God is One. No Arab has any superiority over a non-Arab, and no non-Arab any superiority over an Arab, and no white one has any superiority over a black one, and no black one any superiority over a white one, except on the basis of *taqvā* (piety). The most honourable among you in the sight of Allah is he who is the most pious and righteous of you. Say if I have

conveyed the Message to you?" And the great congregation of the people responded, saying: "Yes, you have, O Messenger of Allah." Thereupon the Holy Prophet said: "Then let the one who is present convey it to those who are absent." (Baihaqī)

In a *Ḥadīth* he has said: "You are all the children of Adam, and Adam was created from the dust. Let the people give up boasting of their ancestors, otherwise they will stand more degraded than a mean insect in the sight of Allah." (Bazzār)

In another *Ḥadīth* the Holy Prophet said: "Allah will not enquire about your lineage on the Day of Resurrection. The most honourable in the sight of Allah is he who is most pious."(Ibn Jarīr)

In still another *Ḥadīth* he said: "Allah does not see your outward appearances and your possessions but He sees your hearts and your deeds." (Muslim, Ibn Mājah).

These teachings have not remained confined to words only but Islam has practically established a universal brotherhood of the believers on the basis, which does not allow any distinction on account of colour, race, language, country and nationality, which is free from every concept of high and low, clean and unclean, mean and respectable, which admits all human beings with equal rights, whether they belong to any race and nation, any land or region. Even the opponents of Islam have had to admit that no precedent is found in any religion and any system of the success with which the principle of human equality and unity has been given practical shape in the Muslim society, nor has it ever been found. Islam is the only religion which has welded and combined innumerable races and communities scattered in all corners of the earth into one universal *Ummah*.

In this connection, a misunderstanding also needs to be removed. In the case of marriage, the importance that Islamic law gives to *kufv* (likeness of status) has been taken by some people in the sense that some brotherhoods are noble and some mean, and matrimonial relations between them are objectionable. But this, in fact, is a wrong idea. According to the Islamic law, every Muslim man can marry every Muslim woman, but the success of the matrimonial life depends on maximum harmony and conformity between the spouses as regards habits, characteristics and ways of life, family traditions and economic and social status, so that they may get on well with each other. This is the real object of being equal and alike. Where there is unusual difference and disparity between the man and the woman in this regard, lifelong companionship will be difficult. That is why the Islamic law disapproves of such intermarriages, and not for the reason that one of the spouses is noble and the other mean, but for the reason that in case there is a clear and apparent difference and distention in status, there would be a greater

possibility of the failure of the matrimonial life if the marriage relationship was established.

29. That is, "This is only known to Allah as to who is really a man of high rank and who is inferior in respect of qualities and characteristics. The standards of high and low that the people have set up of their own accord, are not acceptable to and approved by Allah. Maybe that the one who has been regarded as a man of high rank in the world is declared as the lowest of the low in the final judgment of Allah, and maybe that the one who has been looked upon as a very low person here, attains to a very high rank there. The real importance is not of the honour and dishonour of the world but of the honour and dishonour that one will receive from Allah. Therefore, what man should be most concerned about is that he should create in himself those real qualities and characteristics which make him worthy of honour in the sight of Allah.

30. This does not imply all the desert Arabs but only a few particular groups of the Bedouins who had become Muslims, seeing the increasing power of Islam, thinking that they would not only remain safe from any attack by the Muslims but would also gain materially from the Islamic conquests. These people had not embraced Islam sincerely but had professed faith only verbally in order to be counted among the Muslims, and their this inner state became exposed whenever they would come before the Holy Prophet with different sorts of demands and would enumerate and mention their rights as if they had done him a great favour by accepting Islam. Traditions mention several of such tribal groups, e.g. Muzainah, Juhainah, Aslam, Ashja', Ghifār, etc. About the Bani Asad bin Khuzaimah in particular, Ibn 'Abbās and Sa'īd bin Jubair have stated that once during a drought they came to Madīnah and making a demand for financial help they said to the Holy Prophet again and again: "We became Muslims without any conflict: we did not fight against you as have such and such other tribes fought." By this they clearly meant to point out that their refraining from fighting against the Messenger of Allah and their accepting Islam was a favour for which they must be rewarded by the Messenger and the Muslims. It was this same attitude and conduct of the Bedouin group living around Madīnah, which has been commented upon in these verses. One can understand this appraisal better if one reads it together with vv. 90-110 of At-Taubah and vv. 11-17 of Al-Fat-h.

31. Another translation of the words *qūlū aslamnā* can be; "Say: we have become Muslims." From these words some people have concluded that in the language of the Qur'ān, *"Mu'min"* and *"Muslim"* are two opposite terms. A "Mu'min" is he who has believed sincerely and a "Muslim" he who might have accepted Islam only verbally without true faith. But, in fact, this is an absolutely wrong idea. No doubt the word *īmān* here has been used for sincere affirmation by the heart and the word *Islām* for only outward and external submission but to

understand them as two independent and mutually contradictory terms of the Qur'ān is not correct. A study of the Qur'ānic verses in which the words *Islam* and *Muslim* have been used, shows that in the Qur'ānic terminology *"Islām"* is the name of the true Faith, which Allah has sent down for mankind; it comprehends the faith and obedience both, and a *"Muslim"* is he who believes with a sincere heart and obeys the Commands practically. This is borne out by the following verses:

"Indeed, Islam is the only right way of life in the sight of Allah." (Āl-'Imrān: 19)

"And whoever adopts any other than this way of submission (Islam), that way shall not be accepted from him," (Āl-'Imrān: 85)

"And I have approved Islam as the way of life for you." (Al-Mā'idah: 3)

"Whomever Allah wills to guide aright, He makes his breast wide open to Islam." (Al-An'ām: 125)

Obviously, in these verses *"Islām"* does not imply obedience without the Faith. Here are some other verses:

"Say (O Prophet): I have been enjoined to be the first one to affirm (faith in) Islam."(Al-An'ām: 14)

"If they have surrendered (to Islam), they are rightly guided." (Āl-'Imrān: 20)

"All the Prophets, who were Muslims, judged the cases according to the Torah." (Al-Mā'idah: 44)

Here, and at scores of other places, acceptance of Islam cannot mean adopting obedience without the true faith. Likewise, here are a few verses in which the word "Muslim" has occurred signifying the meaning in which it has been used repeatedly in the Qur'ān:

"O you who have believed, fear Allah as He should truly be feared and see that you do not die save as true Muslim." (Āl-'Imrān: 102)

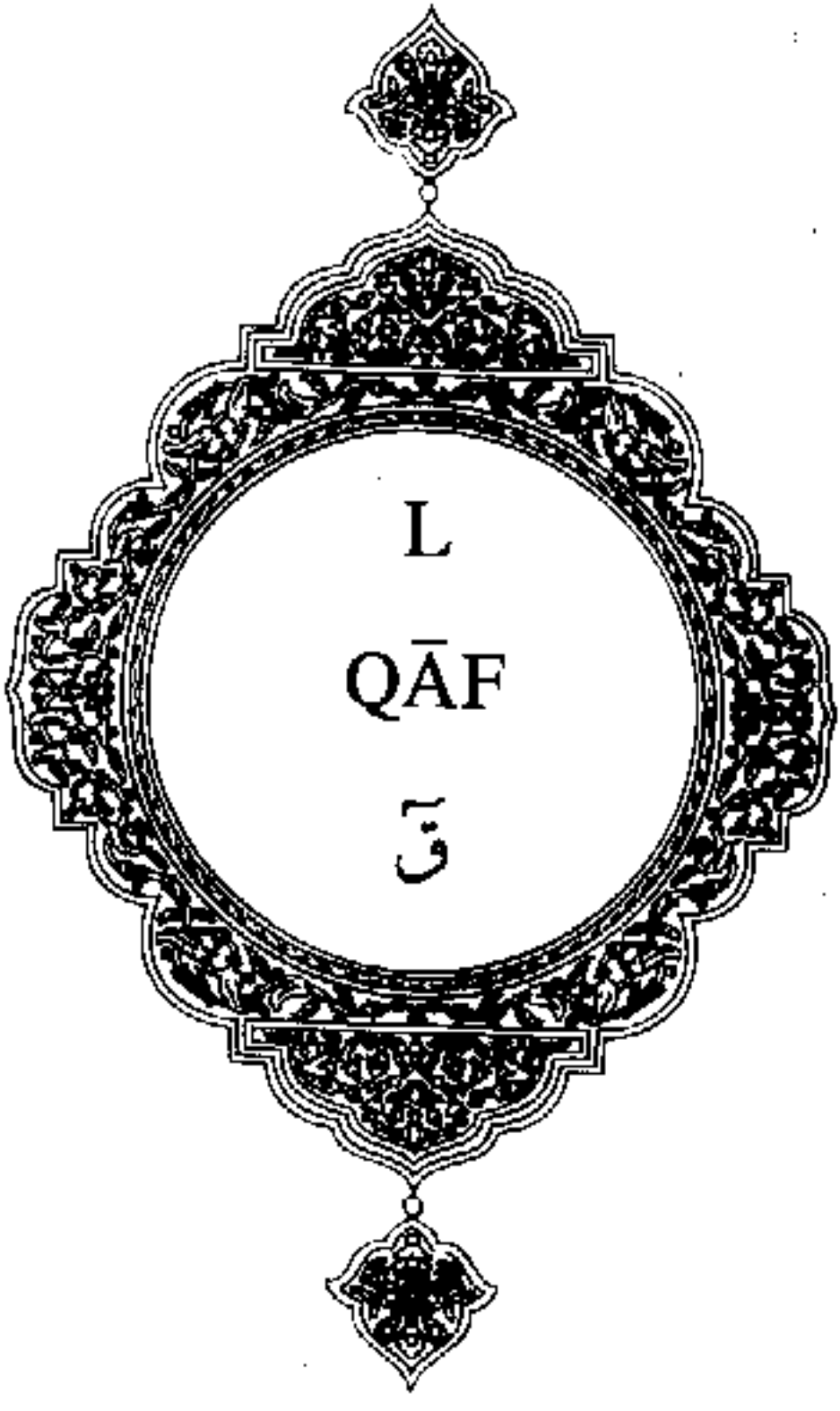
"Allah had called you "Muslims" before this and has called you (by the same name) in this Qur'ān, too." (Al-Ḥajj: 78)

"Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he was a Muslim, sound in the faith." (Āl-i-'Imrān: 67)

"And remember that when Abraham and Ishmael were raising the walls of this House, they prayed: ... Lord, make us Thy Muslims and also raise from our offspring a community which should be Muslim." (Al-Baqarah: 128)

(The Prophet Jacob's will for his children:) "O my children, Allah has chosen the same way of life for you. Hence remain Muslims up to your last breath." (Al-Baqarah: 132)

After a study of these verses who can say that in these the word "Muslim" implies a person who does not believe sincerely but has accepted Islam only outwardly? Therefore, to make the claim that in the Qur'ānic terminology "Islam" implies obedience without the faith and the "Muslim" in the language of the Qur'ān is he who accepts Islam only outwardly is absolutely wrong. Likewise, this claim also is wrong that the words *īmān* and *mu'min* have been used in the Qur'ān necessarily in the sense of believing sincerely. No doubt, at most places these words have occurred to express the same meaning, but there are many places where these words have also been used for outward affirmation of the faith, and all those who might have entered the Muslim Community with verbal profession have been addressed with "O you who have believed", no matter whether they are the true believers, or people with a weak faith, or mere hypocrites. For a few instances of this, see Āl-i-'Imrān: 156, An-Nisā' :136, Al-Ma'idah: 54, Al-Anfāl: 20 27, At-Taubah: 38, Al-Ḥadīd: 28, Aṣ-Ṣaff: 2.


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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

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INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah derives its name from the initiat letter *Qaf,* thereby implying that it is the Sūrah which opens with the alphabetic letter *Qâf.*

Period of Revelation

There is no authentic tradition to show as to when exactly this Sūrah was sent down. A study of the subject-matter, however, reveals that its period of revelation is the second stage of the Holy Prophet's life at Makkah, which lasted from the third year of the Prophethood till the fifth year. We have given the characteristics of this period in the Introduction to the Sūrah Al-An'ām. In view of those characteristics it

can be said that this Sūrah might have been sent down in about the 5th year, when the antagonism of the disbelievers had become quite intense but had not yet assumed tyrannical proportions.

Theme and Topics

Authentic traditions show that the Holy Prophet used to recite this Sūrah generally in the Prayer on the 'Id days. A woman named Umm Hishām bin Ḥārithah, who was a neighbour of the Holy Prophet, says that she was able to commit Sūrah Qāf to memory only because she often heard it from the Holy Prophet in the Friday sermons. According to some other traditions he often recited it in the Fajr Prayer. This makes it abundantly clear that this was an important Sūrah in the sight of the Holy Prophet. That is why he made sure that its contents reached as many people as possible over and over again.

This reason for this importance can be easily understood by a careful study of the Sūrah. The theme of the entire Sūrah is the Hereafter. When the Holy Prophet started preaching his message in Makkah what surprised the people most was the news that people would be ressurected after death, and they would have to render an account of their deeds. They said that that was impossible; human mind could not believe that that would happen. After all, how could it be possible that when the body had disintegrated into dust the scattered particles would be reassembled after hundreds of thousands of years to make up the same body once again and raised up as a living body? Allah in response sent down this discourse. In it, on the one hand, arguments have been given for the possibility and occurrence of the Hereafter in a brief way, in short sentences, and, on the other, the people have been warned, as if to say: "Whether you express wonder and surprise, or you regard it as something remote from reason, or deny it altogether, in any case it cannot change the truth. The absolute, un-alterable truth is that Allah knows the whereabouts of each and every particle of your body that has scattered away in the earth, and knows where and in what state it is. Allah's one signal is enough to make all the scattered particles gather together again and to make you rise up once again as you had been made in the first instance. Likewise, your this idea that you have been created and left free to yourselves in the world and that you have not been made answerable to anyone, is no more than a misunderstanding. The fact is

that not only is Allah Himself directly aware of each act and word of yours, even of the ideas that pass in your mind, but His angels also are attached to each one of you, who are preserving the record of whatever you do and utter. When the time comes, you will come out of your graves at one call just as young shoots of vegetable sprout up from the earth on the first shower of the rain. Then this heedlessness which obstructs your vision will be removed and you will see with your own eyes all that you are denying today. At that time you will realize that you had not been created to be irresponsible in this world but accountable to all your deeds; the meeting out of the rewards and punishments, the Hell and Heaven, which you regard as impossible and imaginary things, will at that time become visible realities for you; in consequence of your enmity and opposition to the Truth you will be cast into the same Hell which you regard as remote from reason today; and the ones who fear the Merciful God and return to the path of righteousness, will be admitted to the same Paradise at whose mention you now express wonder and surprise.



قٓ ۚ وَالْقُرْاٰنِ الْمَجِيْدِ ۝١ بَلْ عَجِبُوْٓا اَنْ جَآءَهُمْ مُّنْذِرٌ مِّنْهُمْ فَقَالَ
الْكٰفِرُوْنَ هٰذَا شَيْءٌ عَجِيْبٌ ۝٢ ءَاِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا ۚ ذٰلِكَ رَجْعٌۢ بَعِيْدٌ ۝٣
قَدْ عَلِمْنَا مَا تَنْقُصُ الْاَرْضُ مِنْهُمْ ۚ وَعِنْدَنَا كِتٰبٌ حَفِيْظٌ ۝٤ بَلْ كَذَّبُوْا
بِالْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَآءَهُمْ فَهُمْ فِيْٓ اَمْرٍ مَّرِيْجٍ ۝٥ اَفَلَمْ يَنْظُرُوْٓا اِلَى السَّمَآءِ فَوْقَهُمْ
كَيْفَ بَنَيْنٰهَا وَزَيَّنّٰهَا وَمَا لَهَا مِنْ فُرُوْجٍ ۝٦ وَالْاَرْضَ مَدَدْنٰهَا وَاَلْقَيْنَا
فِيْهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَاَنْۢبَتْنَا فِيْهَا مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجٍۢ بَهِيْجٍ ۝٧ تَبْصِرَةً وَّذِكْرٰى لِكُلِّ

L

QĀF

قٓ

Verses: 45 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

14 Qāf. By the glorious Qur'ān![1]—Nay, but they wondered that a warner from among themselves had come to them.[2] So the disbelievers said, "This is indeed a strange thing: when we are dead and have become dust, (shall we be raised up again)? Such a return is far removed from reason."[3] (Whereas) We know very well whatever the earth consumes of their bodies, and We have a Book which preserves every thing.[4]

5 Nay, but these people plainly denied the Truth when it came to them. That is why they are confused now[5]

6-8 What![6] Have they never looked up to the sky above them, (and observed) how we made it and adorned it[7] and how there is no flaw in

it.[8] And We spread out the earth and set mountains in it and caused to grow in it every kind of beautiful vegetable.[9] All these things are eye-openers and objectlessons for every servant who turns (to the Truth).

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1. The word *"majid"* is used for expressing two meanings in Arabic: for expressing the high rank, status, honour and dignity of a person, and for saying that somebody is highly generous, charitable and beneficent. This word has been used for the Qur'ān in both these meanings. The Qur'ān is great and glorious in the sense that no book of the world can be brought up against it. It is a miracle both in its language and literary excellence and in its teaching and wisdom. Humans were helpless to produce the like of it at the time when it was sent down and are likewise helpless even today. Nothing of it could ever be proved wrong in any age, nor can anything of it be proved wrong in the present age. Falsehood can neither attack it from the front nor from the rear, and defeat it. And it is generous and beneficent in the sense that the more a man goes on trying to gain guidance from it, the more of guidance it goes on giving him, and the more he follows and obeys its commands and instructions the more he continues to be blessed with good things of the world and the Hereafter. There is no limit to its benefits and advantages where a man may become independent of it, and where it may cease to be beneficial and useful for him.

2. This sentence is a unique example of eloquence. In it a vast subject has been compressed into a few brief words. The object for which an oath has been sworn by the Qur'ān has not been mentioned. Instead, a subtle gap has been left and the sentence is resumed with "nay". If one thinks a little and also keeps in view the background in which this has been said, one comes to know what is the subject of the gap that has been left between the oath and "nay". In fact, what has been sworn of is this: "The people of Makkah have not refused to acknowledge the Prophethood of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) for any sound reason but for the highly unsound reason that a member of their own kind and an individual of their own nation has come to them as a warner from God and this is something highly surprising for them; whereas what would actually be surprising was if God had remained unconcerned about the well-being and adversity of His servants and made no arrangement whatever to warn them; or had sent a non-human to warn the human beings; or a Chinese to warn the Arabs. Therefore, this basis of the denial is absolutely unsound, and a reasonable person cannot but admit that there must exist some arrangement from God to warn the servants, and in the form that the warner himself should be a person from among the people to whom he is sent." As for the question whether Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) is the person whom God has sent on this mission, no other evidence is needed to settle it but this glorious and beneficent Qur'ān, which he is presenting; this is by itself enough to provide a proof of it.

This explanation shows that in this verse an oath has been sworn by the Qur'ān to impress the point that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) is really the Messenger of Allah and the disbelievers' surprise and wonder about his apostleship is misplaced, and the fact of the Qur'ān's being *"majīd"* is a proof of this claim.

3. This was the second cause of their surprise, the first being that a member of their own kind and clan had arisen with the claim that he had come as a warner to them from God. They were further surprised that the person was warning them to the effect that all men will be raised back to life after death and they will be produced all together in the Court of Allah where their deeds will be subjected to accountability and they will be rewarded and punished accordingly.

4. That is, "If it cannot be comprehended by intellect, it is their own narrow mind to blame. It does not mean that Allah's knowledge and power also should be narrow. They think that it is in no way possible to collect the scattered particles of the bodies of the countless human beings who have died since the beginning of creation and will die till Resurrection. But the fact is that Allah directly knows each of those particles in whatever form and in whichever place they are. Furthermore, a full record of this is being maintained in the Register of Allah, which has not left out any particle un-recorded. Then, as soon as Allah commands, His angels will forthwith take out every particle from wherever it is with the help of this record, and will make up the same bodies once again in which human beings had lived and worked in the world."

This verse also is one of those verses which point out that the life hereafter will not only be a physical life as it is in this world, but the body of every person also will be the same which he had in this world. If it were not so, it would be meaningless to tell the disbelievers: "We know very well whatever the earth consumes of their bodies and We have a Book which preserves everything." (For further explanation, see E.N. 25 of Sūrah Ḥā Mīm As-Sajdah)

5. In this brief sentence also a vast subject has been compressed. It means: These people did not rest content only with expressing wonder and declaring the thing to be far removed from reason, but when the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) presented his message of the Truth they denied it as falsehood without any hesitation. Its inevitable result was, and the same only could follow from it, that they are not agreed on any one position with regard to the invitation and the Messenger who has presented it. Sometimes they brand him a poet, sometimes a sorcerer, and sometimes a madman. Sometimes they say that he is a magician and sometimes that he is bewitched. Sometimes they say that he has fabricated this thing by himself in order to establish his superiority, and sometimes they bring the charge that there

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عَبْدٍ مُّنِيْبٍ ۝ وَنَزَّلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً مُّبٰرَكًا فَاَنْۢبَتْنَا بِهٖ جَنّٰتٍ وَّحَبَّ
الْحَصِيْدِ ۝ وَالنَّخْلَ بٰسِقٰتٍ لَّهَا طَلْعٌ نَّضِيْدٌ ۝ رِّزْقًا لِّلْعِبَادِ ۙ وَاَحْيَيْنَا بِهٖ
بَلْدَةً مَّيْتًا ۭ كَذٰلِكَ الْخُرُوْجُ ۝ كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوْحٍ وَّاَصْحٰبُ الرَّسِّ
وَثَمُوْدُ ۝ وَعَادٌ وَّفِرْعَوْنُ وَاِخْوَانُ لُوْطٍ ۝ وَّاَصْحٰبُ الْاَيْكَةِ وَقَوْمُ
تُبَّعٍ ۭ كُلٌّ كَذَّبَ الرُّسُلَ فَحَقَّ وَعِيْدِ ۝ اَفَعَيِيْنَا بِالْخَلْقِ الْاَوَّلِ ۭ بَلْ هُمْ
فِيْ لَبْسٍ مِّنْ خَلْقٍ جَدِيْدٍ ۝ وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْاِنْسَانَ وَنَعْلَمُ مَا تُوَسْوِسُ
بِهٖ نَفْسُهٗ ۚ وَنَحْنُ اَقْرَبُ اِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيْدِ ۝ اِذْ يَتَلَقَّى الْمُتَلَقِّيٰنِ
عَنِ الْيَمِيْنِ وَعَنِ الشِّمَالِ قَعِيْدٌ ۝ مَا يَلْفِظُ مِنْ قَوْلٍ اِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيْبٌ
عَتِيْدٌ ۝ وَجَآءَتْ سَكْرَةُ الْمَوْتِ بِالْحَقِّ ۭ ذٰلِكَ مَا كُنْتَ مِنْهُ تَحِيْدُ ۝ وَ
نُفِخَ فِي الصُّوْرِ ۭ ذٰلِكَ يَوْمُ الْوَعِيْدِ ۝ وَجَآءَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّعَهَا سَآئِقٌ وَّ
شَهِيْدٌ ۝ لَقَدْ كُنْتَ فِيْ غَفْلَةٍ مِّنْ هٰذَا فَكَشَفْنَا عَنْكَ غِطَآءَكَ فَبَصَرُكَ
الْيَوْمَ حَدِيْدٌ ۝ وَقَالَ قَرِيْنُهٗ هٰذَا مَا لَدَيَّ عَتِيْدٌ ۝ اَلْقِيَا فِيْ جَهَنَّمَ كُلَّ
كَفَّارٍ عَنِيْدٍ ۝ مَّنَّاعٍ لِّلْخَيْرِ مُعْتَدٍ مُّرِيْبِ ۝ الَّذِيْ جَعَلَ مَعَ اللّٰهِ اِلٰهًا اٰخَرَ
فَاَلْقِيٰهُ فِي الْعَذَابِ الشَّدِيْدِ ۝ قَالَ قَرِيْنُهٗ رَبَّنَا مَآ اَطْغَيْتُهٗ وَلٰكِنْ كَانَ
فِيْ ضَلٰلٍ بَعِيْدٍ ۝ قَالَ لَا تَخْتَصِمُوْا لَدَيَّ وَقَدْ قَدَّمْتُ اِلَيْكُمْ بِالْوَعِيْدِ ۝
مَا يُبَدَّلُ الْقَوْلُ لَدَيَّ وَمَآ اَنَا بِظَلَّامٍ لِّلْعَبِيْدِ ۝ يَوْمَ نَقُوْلُ لِجَهَنَّمَ هَلِ
امْتَلَاْتِ وَتَقُوْلُ هَلْ مِنْ مَّزِيْدٍ ۝ وَاُزْلِفَتِ الْجَنَّةُ لِلْمُتَّقِيْنَ غَيْرَ بَعِيْدٍ ۝ هٰذَا مَا
تُوْعَدُوْنَ لِكُلِّ اَوَّابٍ حَفِيْظٍ ۝ مَّنْ خَشِيَ الرَّحْمٰنَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَجَآءَ بِقَلْبٍ مُّنِيْبِ ۝
ادْخُلُوْهَا بِسَلٰمٍ ۭ ذٰلِكَ يَوْمُ الْخُلُوْدِ ۝ لَهُمْ مَّا يَشَآءُوْنَ فِيْهَا وَلَدَيْنَا مَزِيْدٌ ۝ وَكَمْ

And from the sky We sent down blessed water where-by We produced gardens and harvest grain and tall palm-trees laden with clusters of fruit, piled one over another. This is the arrangement to provide food for the servants. With this water We revive a dead land;[10] such also will be the resurrection (of the dead from the earth).[11] 9-11

Before them the people of Noah and the people of the Rass[12] and Thamūd also denied, and so did 'Ād and Pharaoh[13] and the brethren of Lot and the dwellers of Aiykah and the people of Tubba'.[14,15] Every one denied the Messengers,[16] and consequently My scourge proved true against them.[17] 12-14

What! were We powerless in case of the first creation? Yet these people are in doubt concerning a new creation.[18] 15

We[19] have created man and know every evil suggestion that arises in his heart: We are even closer to him than his neck-vein.[20] (And besides this direct knowledge of Ours) two scribes, sitting on his right and on his left, are recording everything. He utters not a word but there is an ever ready observer to note it down.[21] Then behold, the agony of death has come with the truth.[22] This is the same thing that you were trying to escape.[23] And then the Trumpet was blown.[24] This is the Day of which you were threatened. Every person has come in a state that there is a driver with him and a witness.[25] You were heedless of this. We have removed your curtain from you, so your sight is very sharp today.[26] His companion submitted, "Here is the one who was given in my charge."[27] It was commanded, "Cast into Hell[28] every stubborn disbeliever,[29] who was hostile to the Truth, who was a forbidder of the good,[30] a transgressor,[31] a doubter[32] and who had set up another god with Allah. Cast him into severe torment."[33] His companion submitted, "Our Lord, I did not cause him to rebel, but he himself had gone far astray."[34] In reply it was said, "Do not dispute in My Presence: I had already warned you of the evil end.[35] My sentence cannot be changed[36] nor am I unjust to My servants."[37] 16-29

The Day when We shall ask Hell, "Are you full?" it will say, "Is there any more?"[38] And Paradise shall be brought close to the righteous, no longer distant.[39] It will be said, "This is that which was promised to you, to every such person who turned (to God) again and again,[40] who was watchful,[41] who feared the Merciful, unseen,[42] and 30-35

who has come with a devoted heart.[43] Enter Paradise in peace."[44] That Day will be the Day of eternal life. There they shall have all that they will desire, and We have with us yet more for them.[45]

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peace and blessings) himself was standing in Makkah and reciting the Qur'ān to the people, who had known and seen him grow up from childhood to youth and mature manhood before their eyes, the full meaning of these allusions was by itself clear and evident to every person. Therefore, leaving it aside, detailed easoning is now being presented about the authenticity of the second thing which those people regarded as strange and far removed from reason and intellect.

7. Here, by the sky is implied the whole firmament that man finds spread over him, day and night, in which the sun shines in the day and the moon and countless stars glitter at night, which amazes him even when he sees it with the bare eye, but which appears as a vast, limitless Universe when he looks at it through the telescope. It seems to be starting from nowhere and ending nowhere. Millions of times larger planets than our earth are moving in it like tiny balls; thousands of times brighter stars than our sun are shining in it; our this entire solar system is located in a corner of its only one galaxy; only in this one galaxy there exist at least three thousand million other stars like our own sun, and man's observation has so far discovered one million such galaxies. Out of the lacs of galaxies our nearest, neighbouring galaxy is so distant from us that its light reaches the earth in ten lac years travelling at the speed of 186,000 miles per second. This shows the vastness of that part of the Universe which has so far been observed and explored by man. As to how vast is the entire Universe of God we have no means to estimate and judge. Maybe that the known Universe of man does not bear with the entire Universe even that ratio which a drop of water bears with the ocean. If about the God Who has brought this huge and wonderful Universe into being, this tiny talking animal, called man, who creeps the earth, asserts that He cannot recreate him once again after death, it would be due to narrowness of his own mind. The power of the Creator of the Universe would not at all be affected by it !

8. That is, "In spite of its amazing vastness the wonderful order of the Universe is so coherent and firm and its composition so perfect that there is no crack or cleft in it, and its continuity breaks nowhere. This can be understood by an example. Radio astronomers of the present age have observed a galactic system which they have named Source 3c 295. They think that its rays which are now reaching us might have left it more than four thousand million years ago. The question is: How could it be possible for the rays to reach the earth from such a distant source had the continuity and coherence of the Universe between the earth

and the galaxy been broken somewhere and its composition been split at some point. Allah, in fact, alludes to this reality and puts this question before man "When you cannot point out even a small breach in this system of My Universe, how did the concept of any weakness in My power enter your mind, that after the respite of your test is over, if I like to bring you back to life to subject you to accountability before Me, I would not be able to do so?"

This is not only a proof of the possibility of the Hereafter but also a proof of *Tauhīd*. These rays' reaching the earth from a distance of four thousand million light years and being detected by the man-made instruments expressly points to the fact that from the galaxy to the earth the entire world has been made up of one and the same substance continuously, one and the same kind of the forces are working in it, and they are functioning according to the same laws without any difference and disparity. Were it not so the rays could neither have reached here, nor detected by the instruments which man had made after understanding the laws working on the earth and its surroundings. This proves that One God alone is the Creator of this whole Universe and its Master and Ruler and Controller.

9. For explanation, see E.N.'s 12, 13, 14 of An-Nahl, E.N.'s 73, 74 of An-Naml, and E.N. 7 of Az-Zukhruf.

10. For explanation, see E.N.'s 73, 74, 81 of An-Naml, E.N.'s 25, 33, 35 of Ar-Rum and E.N. 29 of Yā Sīn.

11. The reasoning is this: "Your conjecture about God Who made this sphere of the earth a suitable home for living creatures and Who by combining the lifeless clay of the earth with the lifeless water from the sky produced such a fine vegetable life that you witness flourishing in the form of your gardens and crops, and Who made the vegetation a means of sustenance for both man and beast, that He has no power to resurrect you after death, is a foolish and absurd conjecture. You witness almost daily the phenomenon that a land is lying barren and lifeless; then as soon as it receives a shower of rain, it gives birth to an endless train of life all of a sudden, the roots lying dead for ages sprout up and a variety of insects emerge playfully from the layers of the earth. This is a manifest proof that life after death is not impossible. When you cannot deny this express observation of yours, how can you deny that when Allah wills, you too will sprout up from the earth as the vegetation sprouts up. In this connection, one may note that in many parts of Arabia it does not sometimes rain for as long as five years at a stretch and sometimes even for longer periods the land does not receive even a drop of rain. For such long intervals in the burning deserts it is not conceivable that the roots of grass and the insects of the earth would survive. In spite of this when a little of the rain falls at some place, grass sprouts up and the insects of the earth return to life.

Therefore, the inhabitants of Arabia can understand this reasoning much better than those people who do not have to experience such long periods of drought.

12. Before this the people of Rass *(Aṣḥāb ar-Rass)* have been mentioned in Sūrah Al-Furqān: 38 above, and now here, but at both places they have been only referred to as of those nations who rejected the Prophets. No other detail about them has been given. In the traditions of Arabia two places are well known by the name of ar-Rass, one in the Najd and the other in northern Hejāz. Of these ar-Rass of the Najd is better known and has been referred to more often in the pre Islamic poetry of Arabia. Now it is difficult to determine which of these was the home of the *Aṣḥāb ar-Rass*. No reliable detail of their story is found in any tradition either. The most that one can say with certainty is that it was a nation which had thrown its Prophet into a well. But from the mere allusion that has been made to them in the Qur'ān one is led to think that in the time of the revelation of the Qur'ān the Arabs were generally aware of this nation and its history, but the traditions about them could not be preserved in historic records.

13. Only the Pharaoh has been mentioned instead of the people of Pharaoh, for he had so dominated his people that they had been left with no independent opinion and will of their own, apart from him. They followed him willy nilly wherever he led them. That is why he alone was held responsible for the deviation and degeneration of his people. Wherever there exists the freedom of will and action for a nation, it by itself bears the burden of its deeds, and wherever one man's dictatorship may have rendered a nation powerless the one man alone takes on his head the burden of the sins of entire nation. This does not mean that the nation becomes absolved from its duty and responsibility when the one man alone has burdened himself with the responsibility. This is not so. The nation in such a case becomes responsible for the moral weakness shown by it in that why it allowed a man to overpower and dominate it so completely. The same thing has been alluded to in Az-Zukhruf: 54, thus: "Pharaoh took his people to be light, and they obeyed him, for they were indeed a sinful people." (For explanation, see E.N. 50 of Sūrah Az-Zukhruf).

14. For explanation, see E.N. 37 of Sūrah Saba; E.N. 32 of Sūrah Dukhān.

15. That is, they all denied the apostleship of their Messengers as well as the news given by them that they will be raised back to life after death.

16. Although every nation denied only the Messenger who was sent to it, as it denied the news which all the Messengers have been presenting unanimously, denying one Messenger, therefore, amounted to denying all of them. Moreover, these nations did not merely deny the apostleship of the Messenger who had come to them, but they were not at all inclined to believe that a mere human could be

appointed by Allah for the guidance of other men. Therefore, they denied apostleship itself, and the crime of no one was confined to belying and rejecting any one Messenger only.

17. This is a reasoning from history for the Hereafter. In the preceding six verses, arguments were given for the possibility of the Hereafter; in these the historical end of the nations of Arabia and the adjoining lands has been presented as an argument to prove that the doctrine of the Hereafter which all the Prophets have been presenting, is the very truth, for whichever nation denied it became involved in the moral degeneration of the worst kind with the result that the torment of God descended on it and eliminated it from the world. This necessary result of the denial of the Hereafter and moral perversion which one can witness throughout history, is an express proof of the fact that man has not been created to be irresponsible in this world, but he has necessarily to render an account of his deeds as soon as the time limit for action at his disposal comes to an end. That is why whenever he works in the world irresponsibly, his whole life pattern is set on the path of ruin. If evil and wrong results go on following a course of action successively, it is a clear proof that that course of action is in conflict with the truth.

18. This is a rational argument for the Hereafter. The person who is not a denier of God and is also not so foolish as to regard this excellently ordered Universe and the creation of man in it as a mere accident, cannot help but admit that God alone has created man and this whole Universe. Now this actual fact that we exist alive in this world and this great work-house of the earth and heavens is functioning before us, by itself is an obvious proof that God was in no way powerless in creating us and this Universe. Yet if a man says that after bringing about Resurrection the same God will not be able to bring about a new world order and will not be able to create us once again, he says an irrational thing. Had God been powerless He would not have been able to create all this in the first instance. When He has created the Universe in the first instance and we ourselves came into existence by virtue of that act of creation, what can then be the rational ground for assuming that He will become powerless to re-make the dismantled thing originally made by Himself?

19. After presenting the arguments for the Hereafter, it is being stated: "Whether you believe in the Hereafter, or deny it, it has to come in any case, and it is such a factual reality, which will certainly come about in spite of your denial. If you heed the warning given by the Prophets in advance and prepare for it, you will be doing good to yourselves; if you do not believe in it, you will be inviting your own doom. Your denial will not prevent the Hereafter from taking place and God's Law of justice will not become suspended."

20. That is, "Our power and Our knowledge has so encompassed man from within and without that Our power and knowledge is closer to him than his own neck-vein. We do not have to travel from a distance to hear what he says, but We directly know every thought that arises in his heart. Likewise, when We shall want to seize him, We will not have to seize him after covering a distance, for wherever he is, he is in Our grasp; and whenever We will, We will seize him."

21. That is, "On the one hand, We Ourself directly know man's actions and movements, even his hidden thoughts; on the other, every man has two angels appointed over him, who are recording whatever he does and says; none of his actions or words is left unrecorded." This means that when man is produced in the Court of Allah, Allah at that time Himself also will be knowing what each person has done in the world; besides, there will also be two witnesses who will produce documentary evidence of the person's actions and deeds. As to what will be the nature of this documentary evidence, it is difficult for us to have a precise conception of it. But from the facts that we are witnessing today, it seems certain that the voices and pictures and marks of man's actions and movements are being preserved and imprinted on every particle of the environment in which he lives and works, and each one of these can be reproduced in exactly the same form and voice so as to leave no difference whatever between the original and its copy. Man is doing this on a very limited scale with the help of his inventions, but the angels of God neither stand in need of these machines nor are bound by any limitation. Man's own body and everything around it is their tape and their film upon which they can record every voice and every image along with its minutest and most delicate detail precisely and exactly, and can make man hear, on the Day of Resurrection, with his own ears, in his own voice, those very things which he talked in the world, and can make him see, with his own eyes, the pictures of all his misdeeds, whose genuineness he would not possibly be able to deny.

Here, one should also understand that in the Court of the Hereafter Allah will not punish anybody only on the basis of His own knowledge, but will punish him after fulfilling all the requirements of justice. That is why an exhaustive record is being got prepared of every person's words and deeds in the world so that a complete proof with undeniable evidence becomes available of everyone's life work and activity.

22. "To come with the truth" implies that the agony of death is the starting point when the reality which had remained concealed in the world, begins to be uncovered. At this point man starts seeing clearly the other world of which the Prophet had forewarned him. Here, man also comes to know that the Hereafter is the very truth, and also this whether he is entering this second stage of life as favoured or damned.

23. That is, "This is the same reality which you refused to believe. You desired that you should live and go about as an unbridled rogue in the world, and there should be no other life after death, in which you may have to suffer for the consequences of your deeds. That is why you shunned the concept of the Hereafter and were not at all inclined to believe that this next world would ever be established. Now, you may see that the same next world is unveiling itself before you."

24. This implies that blowing of the Trumpet at which all dead men will rise back to life in their own physical bodies. For explanation, see E.N. 47 of Al-An'ām, E.N. 57 of Ibrahīm, E.N. 78 of Ṭā. Hā, E.N.1 of Al-Ḥajj, E.N.'s 46,47 of Yā Sīn, and E.N. 79 of Az-Zumar.

25. Most probably this implies the same two angels who had been appointed for compiling the record of the words and deeds of the person in the world. On the Day of Resurrection, when every man will rise from his grave on the sounding of the Trumpet, the two angels will come forth immediately and take him into their custody. One of them will drive him to the Divine Court and the other will be carrying his record.

26. That is, "You can clearly see that everything of which the Prophets foretold is present here."

27. Some commentators say that "the companion" implies the angel who has been referred to as "a witness" in verse 21. He will say: "I have this person's record ready with me here". Some other commentators say that "the companion" implies the satan who was attached to the person in the world. He will say: "This person whom I was controlling and preparing for Hell, is now presented before You." But the commentary that is more relevant to the context is the one that has been reported from Qatādah and Ibn Zaid. They say that the companion implies the angel who drove and brought the person to Allah's Court He will say, "Here is the person who had been given in my charge"

28. As the context shows this command will be given to the two angels who had taken the culprit into their custody as soon as he had risen from the grave, and then brought him before the Court."

29. The word *"kaffār"* as used in the Text means an ungrateful person as well as a denier of the truth.

30. *"Khair"* in Arabic is used both for wealth and for goodness. According to the first meaning, the sentence means that he paid no one his dues from his wealth, neither the dues of Allah nor of the people. According to the second meaning, it would mean that he did not only withhold himself from the path of goodness but forbade others also to follow it. He had become a hindrance

(Contd. on page 126

أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ مِّن قَرْنٍ هُمْ أَشَدُّ مِنْهُم بَطْشًا فَنَقَّبُوا فِي الْبِلَادِ ۖ هَلْ
مِن مَّحِيصٍ ﴿٣٦﴾ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَذِكْرَىٰ لِمَن كَانَ لَهُ قَلْبٌ أَوْ أَلْقَى السَّمْعَ
وَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ
وَمَا مَسَّنَا مِن لُّغُوبٍ ﴿٣٨﴾ فَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ قَبْلَ
طُلُوعِ الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ الْغُرُوبِ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْهُ وَأَدْبَارَ السُّجُودِ ﴿٤٠﴾
وَاسْتَمِعْ يَوْمَ يُنَادِ الْمُنَادِ مِن مَّكَانٍ قَرِيبٍ ﴿٤١﴾ يَوْمَ يَسْمَعُونَ الصَّيْحَةَ
بِالْحَقِّ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ يَوْمُ الْخُرُوجِ ﴿٤٢﴾ إِنَّا نَحْنُ نُحْيِي وَنُمِيتُ وَإِلَيْنَا الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٤٣﴾ يَوْمَ
تَشَقَّقُ الْأَرْضُ عَنْهُمْ سِرَاعًا ۚ ذَٰلِكَ حَشْرٌ عَلَيْنَا يَسِيرٌ ﴿٤٤﴾ نَّحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا
يَقُولُونَ وَمَا أَنتَ عَلَيْهِم بِجَبَّارٍ ۖ فَذَكِّرْ بِالْقُرْآنِ مَن يَخَافُ وَعِيدِ ﴿٤٥﴾

36-37 We have destroyed many nations before them, who were much stronger than they in power, and they ransacked all the lands;[46] then, could they find a place of refuge?[47] Indeed, in this there is a lesson for every such person who has a heart, or who gives ear and listens with attention.[48]

38-40 We created the heavens and the earth and all that lies between them in six days,[49] and no fatigue overcame Us. Therefore, O Prophet, bear with patience whatever they say,[50] and keep up glorifying your Lord with His praise, before sunrise and before sunset. And glorify Him again in the night and also when you are free from prostrations.[51]

41-44 And listen! The Day when the caller shall call out from near (every person),[52] the Day when all the people shall be hearing the Cry rightly,[53] shall be the Day of the coming out of the dead from the earth. It is We Who bestow life and give death and to Us shall all return on that Day, when the earth shall split asunder and the people shall be rushing out of it in all haste. This gathering together is very easy for Us.[54]

for the people in the way of goodness and exerted his utmost to see that goodness did not spread.

31. That is, "He transgressed the bounds of morality in every thing he did. He was ever ready to do anything and everything for the sake of his interests, his desires and his lusts. He amassed wealth by unlawful means and spent it in unlawful ways. He usurped the people's rights, had neither control over his tongue nor over his hands, and committed every injustice and excess. He did not rest content with creating hindrances in the way of goodness but harassed those who adopted goodness and persecuted those who worked for it."

32. The word *"murib"* as used in the original has two meanings: a doubter and the one who puts others in doubt, and both are implied here. It means that he was not only himself involved in doubt but also created doubts in the hearts of others. He held as doubtful the Being of Allah and the Hereafter and the angels and the Prophethood and Revelation and every other truth of religion. Anything that was presented by the Prophets as a truth was held as unbelievable by him, and the same disease he spread to other people. Whomever he came in contact with, he would create one or the other doubt, one or the other evil thought in his mind.

33. Allah, in these verses, has enumerated the qualities that make a man worthy of Hell: (1) Denial of the Truth, (2) ingratitude to Allah, (3) enmity for the Truth and the followers of the Truth, (4) to become a hindrance in the way of goodness, (5) failure to fulfil the rights of Allah and the people from one's wealth, (6) to transgress the bounds in one's affairs, (7) to commit injustices and excesses against others, (8) to doubt the truths of religion, (9) to create doubts in the hearts of the people, and (10) to hold another as an associate in the Godhead of Allah.

34. Here by "companion" is meant the satan who was attached to the disobedient person in the world. And this also becomes evident from the style that both the person and his satan are disputing between themselves in the Court of Allah. He says: "My Lord, this wretched one pursued me in the world and did not leave me until he succeeded in misleading me; therefore he alone should be punished. And the satan replies "Lord, I had no power over him. Had he not himself willed to become rebellious, I could not have seduced him forcibly. This wretched person himself fled from goodness and was fascinated by evil. That is why he did not like anything that the Prophets presented and went on yielding to every temptation and inducement presented by me."

35. That is, "I had warned both of you as to what punishment will be given to the one who beguiles and what punishment will be suffered by him who is beguiled. In spite of this warning when you did not desist from committing your

O Prophet, We know very well what they say;[55] and you are not 45
there to compel them into believing. Therefore, admonish with this Qur'ān every such person who fears My warning.[56]

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respective crimes, there is no use quarreling now. Both the one who beguiled and the one who was beguiled have to be punished for the crimes committed by them."

36. That is, "It is not My way to change the decisions once taken. The decision that I have taken to cast you into Hell cannot be withdrawn, nor can the law that I had announced in the world be changed that the punishment for misleading and for being misled will be awarded in the Hereafter."

37. The word *ẓallām* as used in the original means the one who is highly unjust. It does not mean: "I am unjust to My servants but not highly unjust." But it means: "If I were unjust to My own servants being their Creator and Sustainer, I would be highly unjust. Therefore, I am not at all unjust to My servants. This punishment that I am giving you is precisely the same punishment which you have made yourselves worthy of. You are not being punished an iota more than what you actually deserve, for My Court is a Court of impartial justice. Here, no one can receive a punishment which he does not actually deserve, and for which his being worthy has not been proved by certain and undeniable evidence.

38. This can have two meanings: (1) "There is no room in me for more men;" and (2) "bring all other culprits who may be there." According to the first meaning the scene depicted would be that Hell has been so stuffed up with culprits that it cannot hold any more; so much so that when it was asked: "Are you full ?" it cried out, alarmed: "Are there still more culprits to come ?" According to the second meaning, the scene depicted before the mind is that the wrath of Hell is so flared up against the culprits that it is constantly demanding more and more of them to be cast into it so that no culprit escapes un-punished."

Here, the question arises: What is the nature of Allah Almighty's addressing Hell and its reply? Is it only something metaphoric, or is Hell actually a living and intelligent being which may be spoken to and it may respond and give replies? In this regard nothing can, in fact, be said with certainty. Maybe the meaning is metaphoric and only for the purpose of depicting the actual scene of the state of Hell it may have been described in the form of the question and answer, just as one may ask a motor-car: "Why don't you move forward?" and it may say: "There is no petrol in me." But this also is quite possible that this conversation is based on reality. Therefore, it is not correct to assume about the

things which are lifeless and mute for us in the world that they would be lifeless and mute for Allah as well. The Creator can have communion with any of His creatures and each of His creatures can respond to Him, no matter how incomprehensible its language may be for us.

39. That is, "As soon as a judgement will be passed about a person from the Court of Allah that he is righteous and worthy of Paradise, he will immediately find Paradise in front of him. He will not have to travel a distance on foot or by a conveyance to reach it, and there will be no interval between the pronouncement of the judgement and his entry into Paradise. He will enter Paradise immediately on the pronouncement of the judgement as if he has not been conveyed to Paradise but Paradise itself has been brought before him. From this it can be judged how different will be the concepts of space and time in the Hereafter from our concepts in this world. The concepts of time and distance and nearness with which we are familiar in this world will become meaningless there."

40. The word *awwāb* is very extensive in meaning. It implies the person who might have adopted the way of obedience and Allah's goodwill instead of the way of disobedience and the flesh, who gives up everything that is disapproved by Allah and adopts everything that is approved by him, who gets alarmed as soon as he swerves a little from the path of worship and obedience and repents and returns to the path of worship and obedience, who remembers Allah much and turns to Him in all matters of life.

41. The word *ḥafīẓ* means the "one who guards." This implies the person who takes care of the bounds and duties enjoined by Allah, who guards the trusts imposed by Allah and avoids the things forbidden by him, who keeps watch over his time, energies and activities to see that none of these is being misemployed or misused, who offers repentance, remains steadfast and keeps it strong and intact, who examines himself over and over again to see that he is not disobeying his Lord anywhere, in word or deed.

42. That is, "Although he could not see the Merciful God and could not perceive Him by his senses in any way, yet he feared His disobedience. His heart was more dominated by the fear of the unseen Merciful God than the fear of other perceptible powers and visible and mighty beings, and in spite of knowing that He is All-Merciful, he did not become a sinner, trusting His Mercy, but feared His displeasure in whatever he said and did. Thus, this verse points to two of the believer's important and basic characteristics: first, that he fears God although he cannot see and perceive Him; second, that he does not persist in sin in spite of his full awareness of God's quality of mercy. These very two characteristics make him worthy of honour in the sight of Allah. Besides, there is another subtle point

also in it, which Imām Razi has pointed out. In Arabic, there are two words for fear, *khauf* and *khashiyyat*, which have a difference in their shade of meaning. The word *khauf is* generally used for the fear that a man feels in his heart on account of his sense of weakness as against someone's superior power and strength, and the word *khashiyyat* is used for the dread and awe with which a man is filled and inspired because of somebody's glory and grandeur and greatness. Here, the word *khashiyyat* has been used instead of *khauf*, which is meant to point out that a believer does not fear Allah only on account of the fear of His punishment, but it is the sense of Allah's glory and greatness that keeps him awe-inspired at all times.

43. The word *munīb* in the original is derived from *inābat*, which means to turn to one direction and to turn to the same again and again, just like the needle of the compass that points to the magnetic north persistently, however one may try to turn it away from that direction. Therefore, *qalb-i-munīb* would mean such a heart as has turned away from every other direction and turned towards One Allah alone and then kept on turning towards Him again and again throughout life. The same sense has been conveyed by the "devoted heart." This shows that in the sight of Allah the man of real worth is he who remains attached and devoted to Allah alone not merely verbally but also truly and sincerely.

44. If the word *salām* in *udkhulū-hā bi-salām-in* is taken in the meaning of peace and security, it would mean: "Enter this Paradise safe and secure from every kind of grief, sorrow, anxiety and affiliation"; and if it is taken in the meaning of *salam* itself, it would mean: "Enter this Paradise you are welcomed here with the greeting of peace by Allah and his angels."

In these verses Allah has mentioned the qualities because of which a person makes himself worthy of Paradise, and they are: (1) *Taqvā* (piety), (2) Turning towards Allah, (3) watching over and guarding one's relationship with Allah, (4) fearing Allah although one has not seen Him, and has full faith in His quality of mercy, and (5) coming into His Presence with a devoted and captivated heart, i.e. remaining constant on the way of devotion and dedication till death.

45. That is, "They will certainly get whatever they desire, but in addition We will also give them that which they have never conceived and, therefore, could not desire."

46. That is, "They were not only powerful and strong in their own land but had also made incursions into other lands and brought under their sway far off lands as well."

47. That is, "Could their power and might save them when the time appointed by Allah came for their seizure? And could they find shelter and refuge

anywhere? Now, on what trust do you hope that you will get refuge somewhere in the world when you have rebelled against Allah ?"

48. In other words, either one should have so much of native intelligence that one may think right of one's own accord, or if not so, one should be so free from prejudice and neglect that one may listen with attention when another person tries to make one understand the truth.

49. For explanation, see E.N.'s 11 to 15 of the commentary of Sūrah Ḥā Mīm As-Sajdah.

50. That is, "The fact of the matter is that We have made this entire Universe in six days and We did not become weary at the end so that We might be powerless to reconstruct it. Now, if these ignorant people mock you when they hear the news of the life-after-death from you and call you a madman, have patience at it, listen to whatever nonsense they utter with a cool mind, and continue to preach the truth that you have been appointed to spread."

In this verse, there is a subtle taunt on the Jews and the Christians as well, in whose Bible the story has been fabricated that God made the earth and the heavens in six days and rested on the seventh day (Gen., 2: 2). Although the Christian priests are now feeling shy of it and have changed "rested" into *"fārigh hūa"* (ceased from working) in their Urdu translation of the Holy Bible, yet in King James Authorised Version of the Bible, the words "...and he rested on the seventh day" are still there, and the same words are also found in the translation that the Jews have published from Philadelphia in 1954. In the Arabic translation also the words are: *istarāha fil-yaum as-sābi'*.

51. This is the means by which man gets the power and energy to continue his struggle to raise the Word of the Truth and to call the people towards righteousness throughout life with full determination even though he may have to pass through heart-breaking and soul-destroying conditions and his efforts may seem to be bearing no fruit. Praising and glorifying the Lord implies the Prayer here, and wherever in the Qur'ān the praise and glorification has been associated with specific times, it implies the Prayer. The Prayer "before sunrise" is the Fajr Prayer, and the Prayers "before sunset" are the 'Aṣr and the Ẓuhr Prayers. The Prayers in the night are the Maghrib and the 'Ishā' Prayers, and the third, the Tahajjud Prayer, is also included in the glorification of the night. (For explanation, see E.N. 111 of Ṭā Hā; E.N.'s 23, 24 of Ar-Rūm). As for the glorification that has been commanded after "being free from prostrations", it may imply the after-Prayer devotions as well as the offering of the voluntary prayers at the end of the prescribed obligatory Prayers. Ḥadrat 'Umar, Ḥadrat 'Ali, Ḥadrat Ḥasan bin 'Alī, Ḥadrat Abū Hurairah, Ibn 'Abbās, Sha'bi, Mujāhid, 'Ikrimah, Ḥasan Basri, Qatādah, Ibrahīm Nakha'ī and Auzā'ī say that it implies the two

rak'ats after the Maghrib Prayer. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin 'Āṣ, and according to a tradition, Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās also, held the opinion that it implies the after-Prayer devotions, and Ibn Zaid says that the object of this Command is that voluntary Prayers also should be offered after the prescribed obligatory Prayers.

According to a tradition reported in Bukhārī and Muslim, on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abū Huraīrah, once the poor emigrants from Makkah came before the Holy Prophet, and said "O Messenger of Allah, the rich people have attained high ranks for themselves. The Holy Prophet asked: What has happened ? They said: They offer the Prayers as we offer, and they observe the Fasts as we observe; but they practise charity, which we cannot, and they set the slaves free which we cannot. The Holy Prophet said: Should I tell you a thing which if you practised, you would surpass all others, except those who practised the same that you practised? It is this that you should pronounce *Subḥān-Allah, al-Ḥamdu-lillāh* and *Allah-u-Akbar*, 33 times each after every Prayer." After some time, the same people came and said: "Our rich brothers also have heard this and they too have started practising, it." Thereupon the Holy Prophet said: "This is Allah's bounty and He bestows it on whomever He wills." According to a tradition these devotional words have to be repeated ten times each instead of 33 times each.

Hadrat Zaid bin Thābit has reported that the Holy Prophet instructed his Companions that they should pronounce *Subḥān-Allah*, and *al Ḥamdu-lillāh* 33 times each and *Allah-u-Akbar* 34 times after every Prayer. Afterwards an Ansār Companion submitted: "I have seen in a vision that somebody was telling me that it would be better if I pronounced these three devotional words 25 times each and then *Lā ilāha ill-Allāh* 25 times. The Holy Prophet replied: Well, you may do likewise." (Aḥmad, Nasā'ī, Dārimī).

Ḥaḍrat Abu Sa'īd Khudrī says: "I have heard the Holy Prophet pronounce the following words when he would return after the Prayers were over: *Subḥāna Rabbika Rabbil-'izzat-i 'ammā yaṣifūn' wa salām-un 'alal-mursalīn, wal-ḥamdu lillāh-i Rabb-il 'ālamīn.*" (Jaṣṣās *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān).*

Besides these, several other forms of the after-Prayer devotional pronouncements also have been reported from the Holy Prophet. Those who wish to act on this instruction of the Qur'ān may select the one they find suitable from *Mishkāt: Bāb adh-dhikr ba'd aṣ-Ṣalāt,* commit it to memory and practise it. Nothing can be better than what the Holy Prophet himself has taught in this regard. But what one should bear in mind is that the real object of the devotional pronouncements is not to utter these words only as a matter of course but to refresh and fix their meaning in the mind. Therefore, the meaning of whatever

devotions one pronounces should be understood well and then practised with full consciousness of the meaning.

52. That is, "Wherever a dead person would be lying, or wherever his death had occurred in the world, the cry of the caller shall reach him there, which will urge him to rise and go before his Lord to render his account. This cry will be such that everybody who rises from death anywhere on the surface of the earth, will feel as though the caller had called him from a nearby place. Simultaneously will this cry be heard everywhere on the globe equally clearly. From this also one can judge how different will be the concepts of space and time in the next world from what they are in this world, and what forces will be working there in accordance with the new laws."

53. The words *yasmʿaūn-as-ṣaiḥata bil ḥaqq-i* can have two meanings: (1) That all the people will be hearing the cry of the right Command; and (2) that they will be hearing the cry rightly. In the first case the sentence will mean that the people will be hearing the same right Command with their ears, which they were not inclined to accept in the world, which they had persistently refused to believe, and mocked the Prophets who had brought it. In the second case it will mean that they will certainly hear this cry, and they will realize that it is no fancy but indeed the Cry of Resurrection; they will be left with no doubt that the Day of Resurrection of which they had been forewarned had arrived and the Cry that was being raised was of the same.

54. This is the answer to the saying of the disbelievers that has been reproduced in verse 3 above. They said: "How can it be that when we are dead and become dust, we shall be raised back to life once again ? This resurrection is far removed from reason." In reply it has been said: "This gathering together, *i.e.*, raising back to life and gathering all the people of the former and latter times together, is very easy for Us. It is not at all difficult for Us to know as to where the dust of one particular person lies and where of the other. We shall also face no difficulty in knowing as to which are the particles of Harry and which of Dick among the scattered particles of the dust. Gathering together all these particles separately and re-making each and every man's body once again and then creating in that body, the same very personality which had lived in it before, is not a task that may require any hard labour from Us, but all this can be accomplished immediately at one signal from Us. All those human beings who have been born in the world since the time of Adam till Resurrection can be brought together by one Command of Ours. If your petty mind thinks it is far off, it may think so, but it is not beyond the power of the Creator of the Universe."

55. In this sentence there is consolation for the Holy Prophet as well as a threat for the disbelievers. Addressing the Holy Prophet it has been said: "Do not

care at all about what these foolish people utter about you: We are hearing everything and it is for Us to deal with it." The disbelievers are being warned to the effect: "The taunting remarks that you are passing against Our Prophet, will cost you dearly. We Ourself are hearing everything that you utter and you will have to suffer for its consequences."

56. This does not mean that the Holy Prophet wanted to compel the people into believing and Allah stopped him from this, but, in fact, although the Holy Prophet has been addressed the disbelievers are being warned, as if to say, "Our Prophet has not been sent as a dictator over you. He is not there to compel you to become believers even if you did not wish to believe. His only responsibility is that he should recite the Qur'ān and make the truth plain to the one who would take the warning. Now, if you do not accept his invitation, We Ourself will deal with you, not he."


LI
ADH
DHĀRIYĀT
الذّٰرِيٰت

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

LI

ADH-DHĀRIYĀT

الذّٰرِيٰت

INTRODUCTION

Name

It is derived from the very first word *wadh-dhariyāt*, which implies that it is a Sūrah which begins with the word *adh-dhāriyāt*.

Period of Revelation

The subject-matter and the style clearly show that it was sent down in the period when although the Holy Prophet's invitation was being resisted and opposed with denial and ridicule and false accusations stubbornly, persecution had not yet started. Therefore, this Sūrah also seems to have been revealed in the same period in which the Sūrah Qāf was revealed.

Subject-Matter and Topics

The Sūrah mostly deals with the Hereafter, and in the end it presents the invitation to *Tauḥīd*. In addition, the people have also been warned that refusal to accept the message of the Prophets and persistence in the concepts and creeds of ignorance have proved to be disastrous for those nations themselves which have adopted this attitude and way of life in the past.

About the Hereafter what this Sūrah presents in short but pithy sentences is this: The people's different and conflicting beliefs about the end of human life are themselves an express proof that none of these beliefs and creeds is based on knowledge; everyone by himself has formed an ideology on the basis of conjecture and made the same his creed. Someone thought that there would be no life-after-death; someone believed in the life-after-death, but in the form of the transmigration of souls; someone believed in the life hereafter and the meting out of the rewards and punishments but invented different sorts of props and supports to escape retribution. About a question of such vital and fundamental importance a wrong view of which renders man's whole life-work wrong and waste and ruins his future for ever, it would be a disastrous folly to build an ideology only on the basis of speculation and conjecture, without knowledge. It would mean that man should remain involved in a grave misunderstanding, pass his whole life in the heedlessness of error, and after death should suddenly meet with a situation for which he had made no preparation at all. There is only one way of forming the right opinion about such a question, and it is this: Man should seriously ponder over the knowledge about the Hereafter that the Prophet of Allah is conveying to him from Him, and should study carefully the system of the earth and heavens and his own existence, and should see whether the evidence of that knowledge's being sound and correct is afforded by everything around him or not. In this regard, the arrangement of the wind and rain, the structure of the earth and the creatures found on it, man's own self, the creation of the heavens and of everything in the world in the form of pairs have been presented as evidence of the Hereafter, and instances have been cited from human history to show that the temper of the empire of the Universe requires that the law of retribution must operate here.

After this, giving the invitation to *Tauhîd* briefly, it has been said: "Your Creator has not created you for the service of others but for His own service. He is not like your false gods, which receive sustenance from you and godhead of which cannot function without your help, but He is a God Who is the Sustainer of all, Who does not stand in need of sustenance from anyone and Whose Godhead is functioning by His own power and might.

In this very connection, it has also been stated that whenever the Prophets of Allah have been opposed and resisted, they have not been opposed and resisted on the basis of any rational ground but on the basis of the same obduracy and stubbornness and false pride that is being shown against the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and there is no other motive for it than rebellion and arrogance. Then the Holy Prophet has been instructed not to bother about the rebels but to go on performing his mission of invitation and admonition, for it is useful and beneficial for the believers although it may not be so for the other people. As for the wicked people who still persist in their rebellion, they should know that their predecessors who followed the same way of life, have already received their shares of the punishment, and these people's share of the punishment has been made ready for them.



وَالذّٰرِيٰتِ ذَرْوًا ﴿١﴾ فَالْحٰمِلٰتِ وِقْرًا ﴿٢﴾ فَالْجٰرِيٰتِ يُسْرًا ﴿٣﴾ فَالْمُقَسِّمٰتِ اَمْرًا ﴿٤﴾
اِنَّمَا تُوْعَدُوْنَ لَصَادِقٌ ﴿٥﴾ وَّاِنَّ الدِّيْنَ لَوَاقِعٌ ﴿٦﴾ وَالسَّمَآءِ ذَاتِ الْحُبُكِ ﴿٧﴾
اِنَّكُمْ لَفِيْ قَوْلٍ مُّخْتَلِفٍ ﴿٨﴾ يُّؤْفَكُ عَنْهُ مَنْ اُفِكَ ﴿٩﴾ قُتِلَ الْخَرّٰصُوْنَ ﴿١٠﴾
الَّذِيْنَ هُمْ فِيْ غَمْرَةٍ سَاهُوْنَ ﴿١١﴾ يَسْـَٔلُوْنَ اَيَّانَ يَوْمُ الدِّيْنِ ﴿١٢﴾ يَوْمَ هُمْ عَلَى
النَّارِ يُفْتَنُوْنَ ﴿١٣﴾ ذُوْقُوْا فِتْنَتَكُمْ ؕ هٰذَا الَّذِيْ كُنْتُمْ بِهٖ تَسْتَعْجِلُوْنَ ﴿١٤﴾ اِنَّ
الْمُتَّقِيْنَ فِيْ جَنّٰتٍ وَّعُيُوْنٍ ﴿١٥﴾ اٰخِذِيْنَ مَآ اٰتٰىهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ ؕ اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا قَبْلَ
ذٰلِكَ مُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿١٦﴾ كَانُوْا قَلِيْلًا مِّنَ الَّيْلِ مَا يَهْجَعُوْنَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَبِالْاَسْحَارِ هُمْ
يَسْتَغْفِرُوْنَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَفِيْٓ اَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ لِّلسَّآئِلِ وَالْمَحْرُوْمِ ﴿١٩﴾ وَفِي الْاَرْضِ اٰيٰتٌ

LI

ADH-DHĀRIYĀT

الذّٰرِيٰت

Verses: 60 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

1-6 By the winds that raise up dust, then lift up clouds laden with water,[1] then glide with ease, then distribute a big affair (rain),[2] the truth is that that with which you are being threatened[3] is true, and the meting out of the rewards and punishments is inevitable.[4]

7-9 By the sky of various appearances,[5] you are at variance with one another (concerning the Hereafter)[6]; only such a one is perverted from it who has turned away from the Truth.[7]

Doomed are they who judge by conjecture,[8] who are deeply engrossed in ignorance and heedlessness.[9] They ask, "When will be the Day of Retribution?" It will be when they are punished at the Fire.[10] (It will be said to them:) "Now taste your mischief :[11] this is the same which you were seeking to be hastened."[12] The righteous,[13] however, shall be among gardens and watersprings that Day, and shall be joyfully receiving what their Lord shall give them.[14] They were doers of good even before the coming of this Day: they slept but little in the night,[15] prayed for forgiveness in the early hours of dawn,[16] and in their possessions was a due share of him who asked and of him who was needy.[17] 10-19

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1. All the commentators are agreed that *adh-dhariyāt* implies the winds that disperse and raise up the dust, and *al-ḥamilāt i wiqran* implies the winds that lift up millions of tons of water vapours from the oceans in the form of clouds. This same commentary has been reported from Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, Ḥaḍrat 'Ali, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, and also from Mujāhid, Sa'īd bin Jubair, Ḥasan Baṣrī, Qatādah, Suddī and other scholars.

2. The commentators have disputed the commentary of *al-jāriyat-i yusran* and *al-muqassimāt-i amran*. One group has preferred the view, or held this meaning as admissible, that by these two also are meant the winds; that is, the same very winds then transport the clouds, and spreading over different parts of the earth, distribute the water as and where required according to Allah's command. The other group holds that *al-āriyāt-i yusran* implies fast moving boats, and *al-muqassimat-i amran* implies the angels who distribute among the creatures their shares of the provisions according to Allah's command. According to a tradition, Ḥaḍrat 'Umar explained this very meaning of these two sentences and said: "Had I not heard this from the Holy Prophet, I would not have mentioned it." On this very basis, 'Allama Ālūsī has expressed the opinion that it is not permissible to take any other meaning of these sentences than this, and those who have taken any other meaning, have taken undue liberties. But Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr says that this tradition has weak links of the transmitters and on its basis it cannot be said with absolute certainty that the Holy Prophet might himself have given this commentary of these sentences. There is no doubt that from a good number of the Companions and their immediate followers only this second commentary has been reported, but a good number of the commentators have given the first commentary also, and it fits in better with the context. Shāh Rafī'uddīn, Shāh 'Abdul Qādir and Maulānā Maḥmūd-ul-Ḥasan also have preferred the first meaning in their translations of the Qur'ān.

3. The word used in the original is *tū'adūn*. If it is derived from *wa'd*, the meaning would be: "That which you are being promised;" and if it is from *wa'id*, it would mean: "That which you are being threatened with." As regards the context, the second meaning is preferable, for the addressees are the people who were lost in disbelief, polytheism and sin, and were not prepared to believe that they would be held accountable some time in the future and would be rewarded or punished accordingly. That is why, we have taken *tū'adūn* in the meaning of *wā'id* and not of *wa'd* (promise).

4. This is the thing for which the oath has been sworn. The oath implies this: The unique order and regularity with which the wonderful system of the rain is functioning before your eyes, and the wisdom and good reasons which clearly underlie it, testify to the reality that this world is not a meaningless and useless toy-house where the great drama of life is being presented at random since millions and millions of years. But, it is, in fact, a wise system of the highest order in which everything that happens has a purpose and reason behind it. In this system it is not possible that a creature like man should have been given intellect, sense and the powers to exploit things to advantage, should have been granted moral sense to distinguish the good and evil, right and wrong deeds and then might have been left alone foolishly and meaninglessly in the world to behave as he pleased, and that he should never be questioned as to how he had used and employed the powers of the heart and mind and body, the vast means placed at his disposal to work in the world, and the power and authority granted to him to employ the countless creatures of God to advantage. In this system of the Universe where everything is purposeful, how can the creation of a unique being like man only be purposeless? In a system where everything is based on wisdom, how can the creation of man only be useless and futile? The purpose of the creation of those things which do not possess consciousness and intellect is fulfilled in this very physical world. Therefore, it would be right and reasonable if they were destroyed after they had reached the end of their life term, for they have not been granted any powers and authority for which they might have to be called to account. But a creature which possesses intellect and consciousness and authority, whose activities are not confined only to the physical world, but are also moral in nature, and whose actions entailing moral consequences do not take place only till the end of life, but continue to register their moral effects on it even after death, cannot be destroyed like plants and animals just after it has fulfilled the function of its physical existence. Whatever good or evil act he has committed by his own will and choice, he must get the reward or suffer the punishment for it justly and equitably, for this is the basic requirement of the factor under which, contrary to other creatures, he has been endowed with the freedom of choice and will. If he is not held accountable, if he is not rewarded or punished according to his moral

acts, and if he also is destroyed at the conclusion of his physical life like the creatures which have been given no freedom of will and choice, his creation would inevitably be altogether futile, and a Wise Being cannot be expected to indulge in a futile exercise.

Besides, there is also another reason for swearing an oath by these four phenomena of the Universe regarding the occurrence of the Hereafter and the meting out of rewards and punishments. The ground on which the deniers of the Hereafter regard the life after death as impossible is this: When we are mixed up with dust after death and our particles have scattered away in the earth, how can it be possible that all these scattered particles of the body are reassembled and we are made to rise up again? The error of this apprehension is by itself removed when we consider deeply the four phenomena of the Universe, which have been presented as an argument for the Hereafter. The rays of the sun have their effect on all the collections of water on the surface of the earth, where their heat reaches. In this process countless drops of water evaporate from the collection, but they do not become extinct, and every drop remains preserved in the air as vapour. When Allah commands the same wind gathers the same vapours of the drops together, combines them into thick clouds, spreads those clouds on different parts of the earth and precisely at the time appointed by Allah causes each single drop to fall back to the earth in the form as it was in the beginning. This phenomenon that is occurring before the eyes of man daily testifies that the particles of the bodies of the dead men can also gather together at one command by Allah and the men can be raised up in the shape in which they lived before. Whether these particles are in the dust, or in the water, or in the air, in any case they remain preserved in this very earth and its atmosphere. Why should it be difficult for the God Who gathers together the vapours of water after they had dispersed in the air, by means of the same air, and then causes them to rain as water, to gather together the scattered particles of the human bodies from the air, water and earth and then combine them in their original form and shape?

5. The word *hubuk* in the original is also used for the paths and for the waves which are produced on the sand of the desert and the surface of stagnant water by the wind; it is also spoken for the curls in wavy hair. Here, the sky has been characterised by *"hubuk"* either because the sky is often overcast with clouds of different shapes, which go on changing because of the wind, and no shape lasts nor resembles any other, or because at night one sees the stars scattered in the sky in many different combinations and no combination resembles any other combination.

6. The oath has been sworn by the sky of various appearances on this difference of views because of the similarity. That is, just as the clouds and the clusters of stars in the sky have different appearances and there is uniformity

among them, so are also your views about the Hereafter, each different from the other. Some one says that this world is eternal and no Resurrection can take place. Another says that this system is not eternal and can come to an end in the course of time, but whatever becomes extinct, including man, cannot possibly be resurrected. Another one regards resurrection as possible but, holds the belief that man in order to be requited for his good and evil deeds is born and reborn again and again in this very world. Some one believes in Hell and Heaven but combines the transmigration of the souls also with it. He thinks that the sinner goes to Hell to suffer the punishment as well as is born and reborn in this world for the sake of the punishment. Some one says that the life in the world is in itself an agony; as long as man's self remains attached to physical life, he goes on dying and taking birth again and again in this very world, and his real salvation is that he should attain annihilation. Some one believes in the Hereafter and Hell and Heaven, but says that God by giving death to His only son on the cross had atoned for the original sin of man, and man will escape the evil consequences of his evil acts by believing in the son. Some other people generally believe in the Hereafter and the meting out of the rewards and punishments but at the same time regard certain holy men as the intercessors, who are such favourites of Allah, or wield such influence with Him, that any one who attaches himself to them as a disciple, can escape the punishment whatever he may do in the world. About these holy men also there is no agreement among their devotees; every group of them has its own separate intercessor. This difference of the views itself is a proof that whenever man has formed an opinion about his own and the world's end, independent of Revelation and Prophethood, he has formed it without knowledge; otherwise if man in this regard really had some direct means of knowledge there would not have arisen so many different and contradictory beliefs.

7. The pronoun of *'anhu* in this sentence either turns to the meting out of the rewards and punishments, or to various views. In the first case, it means: "The meting out of the rewards has to take place, in spite of your holding different beliefs about it; but only such a person is perverted from it, who has turned away from the Truth." In the second case, the meaning is: "Only such a one is misled by these different views, who has turned away from the Truth."

8. Here the Qur'ān is warning man of an important truth. To judge or make an estimate on the basis of conjecture and speculation in the ordinary matters of worldly life may be useful to some extent, although it would be no substitute for knowledge, but it would be disastrous to make estimates and give judgements merely according to one's own conjectures and speculations in a question of such fundamental nature and importance as whether we are, or are not, responsible and accountable to anyone for the deeds and actions of our lifetime, and if we are, to whom we are accountable, when and what shall be the accountability, and what

will be the consequences of our success and failure in that accountability. This is not a question on which man may form an estimate merely according to his conjecture and speculation and then stake his entire life capital on the gamble. For if the conjecture proves to be wrong, it would mean that the man has doomed himself to utter ruin. Furthermore, this question is not at all included among those questions about which one may form a right opinion by the exercise of analogy and conjecture. For conjecture and analogy can work only in those matters which are perceptible for man, whereas this is a question which does not come under perception in any way. Therefore, it is not at all possible that a conjectural and analogical judgement about it may be right and correct. As for the question: What is the right way for man to form an opinion about the matters which are non-perceptible and incomprehensible in nature? this has been answered at many places in the Qur'ān, and from this Sūrah also the same answer becomes obvious, and it is this: (1) Man himself cannot reach the reality directly; (2) Allah gives the knowledge of the reality through His Prophets; and (3) man can ascertain the truth of that knowledge in this way: he should study deeply the countless signs that are found in the earth and heavens and in his own self, then consider seriously and impartially whether those signs testify to the reality that the Prophet has presented, or to the different ideologies that the other people have presented in this regard. This is the only method of scientific investigation about God and the Hereafter that has been taught in the Qur'ān. Doomed would be the one who discarded this method and followed his own analogies and conjectures.

9. That is, "They do not know what fate they are heading for on account of their wrong conjectures, whereas every way that is adopted with a wrong view of the Hereafter only leads to ruin. He who is a denier of the Hereafter is not at all preparing himself for any accountability and is engrossed in the thought that there would be no life after death, whereas the time would suddenly come when against all this expectations he would open his eyes in the new life and he would realize that there he has to render an account of each of his acts and deeds. The person who is expending his life under the idea that he would come back to this very world after death, will come to know as soon as he dies that all doors of return are closed, that there is no chance of compensating for the misdeeds of the previous life by any new actions, and that there is another life ahead in which he has to meet with and suffer the consequences of his worldly life for ever after. The person who commits suicide in the hope that after he has destroyed his self and its desires he would escape the agony of life in the form of total annihilation, will find as soon as he passes through the gate of death that there is an everlasting life ahead and not mortality, where he has to explain as to why he had been straining every nerve to destroy the self that he had been blessed with instead of developing and adorning it in every possible way. Likewise, the one who

continued committing disobedience of Allah throughout life, placing reliance upon some son of Allah's becoming an atonement or some holy one's becoming an intercessor, will come to know as soon as he appears before Allah that there is neither any atoner there nor anyone wielding such influence and power that he may save him from Allah's grasp and punishment by means of his own power and influence. Thus, all these conjectural creeds are, in fact, an opiate under the intoxication of which these people are lying senseless, and do not know where they are being misled by the ignorance which they have adopted by rejecting the true knowledge given by God and His Prophets.

10. The disbelievers did not ask the question: When will Resurrection be? for the sake of seeking knowledge but for the purpose of taunt and ridicule. That is why they have been given such an answer. It is just like the taunting reaction of the wicked person who is admonished to desist from his immoral deeds, otherwise he would meet with the evil consequences of those deeds one day, and he asks in jest: When will that day be? Obviously, such a question is not asked to know the date of the occurrence of the evil end but to make fun of the admonition. Therefore, its right answer is that it will occur when the evildoers will meet with their doom. Besides, one should also understand well that if a denier of the Hereafter is discussing the question of the Hereafter sensibly, he can dispute the arguments in favour and against it, but he can never ask the question: On what date will the Hereafter occur? unless he has lost all reason. Whenever he puts such a question, it will only be as a taunt and ridicule. For it does not at all affect the real discussion whether the date of the occurrence of the Hereafter is stated or not. No one can deny the Hereafter only because the year and the month and the day of its occurrence have not been given, nor can one believe in it on hearing that it will occur on such and such a day of such and such a month and year. The date is no argument that may cause a denier to be convinced of its coming, for after that the question will arise: How can one believe whether on that particular day the Hereafter will actually occur?

11. The word *fitnah* gives two meanings here: (1) "Taste this torment of yours;" and (2) "taste the mischief that you had created and spread in the world."

12. The disbelieves' asking: "When will the Day of Retribution be?" implied: "Why is it being delayed?" That is, "When we have denied it and have deserved the punishment for belying it, why doesn't it overtake us immediately?" That is why when they will be burning in the Hell-fire, at that time it will be said to them: "This is that which you sought to be hastened." This sentence by itself gives the meaning: It was Allah's kindness that He did not seize you immediately on the occurrence of disobedience from you and went on giving you respite after

respite to think and understand and mend your ways. But the foolish people that you were, you did not take advantage of the respite but demanded that your doom should be hastened for you instead. Now you may see for yourself what it was that you were seeking to be hastened?"

13. In this context the word *muttaqī* (the righteous) clearly implies those people who believed in the Hereafter when they were given the news of it by the Book of Allah and His Messenger, and adopted the attitude and way of life that they were taught for success in the life hereafter, and refrained from the way about which they had been told that it would involve man in the torment of God.

14. Literally: "... shall be receiving what their Lord will have granted them", but in this context "receiving" does not merely mean "to receive" but to receive joyfully. Obviously, when a person is given something of his own choice and liking, his receiving it will naturally have the meaning of accepting and receiving it joyfully.

15. Some commentators have given this meaning of this verse: "Seldom did it so happen that they spent the whole night sleeping and did not spend a part of it, in the beginning of the night or in the middle or in the end of it, awake in the worship of Allah." This commentary with a little variation in wording has been related from Ḥaḍrat Ibn 'Abbās, Anas bin Mālik, Muḥammad al-Bāqir, Mutrif bin 'Abdullah, Abul 'Āliyah, Mujāhid, Qatādah, Rabī' bin Anas and others. According to some other commentators, it means this: "They spent the major part of their nights in the worship of Allah Almighty and slept little." This meaning has been reported from Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣrī, Aḥnaf bin Qais, and Ibn Shihāb Zuhrī, and the later commentators and translators have preferred this, for this appears to be in better agreement with the words of the verse and the context. That is why we have adopted this meaning in the translation.

16. That is "They did not belong to those who spent their nights in immoral and indecent acts and even then never thought of seeking Allah's forgiveness. On the contrary, they spent a major part of the nights in the worship of Allah and then in the early hours of dawn sought His forgiveness, saying that they did not do full justice to the worship that was due from them. The words *hum yastaghfirūn* also contain an allusion to this that it befitted and suited them alone that they should exert their utmost in the service of their Lord and then, at the same time, should implore Him humbly for the forgiveness of their errors and shortcomings instead of exulting at and waxing proud of their good acts. This could not be the way of those shameless, wicked people who committed sin and behaved arrogantly as well.

[Contd. on p. 148]

لِّلْمُوْقِنِيْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَفِيْٓ اَنْفُسِكُمْ ؕ اَفَلَا تُبْصِرُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَفِي السَّمَآءِ رِزْقُكُمْ وَمَا
تُوْعَدُوْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾ فَوَرَبِّ السَّمَآءِ وَالْاَرْضِ اِنَّهٗ لَحَقٌّ مِّثْلَ مَآ اَنَّكُمْ تَنْطِقُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾
هَلْ اَتٰىكَ حَدِيْثُ ضَيْفِ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ الْمُكْرَمِيْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾ اِذْ دَخَلُوْا عَلَيْهِ فَقَالُوْا سَلٰمًا
قَالَ سَلٰمٌ ۚ قَوْمٌ مُّنْكَرُوْنَ ﴿٢٥﴾ فَرَاغَ اِلٰٓى اَهْلِهٖ فَجَآءَ بِعِجْلٍ سَمِيْنٍ ﴿٢٦﴾ فَقَرَّبَهٗٓ
اِلَيْهِمْ قَالَ اَلَا تَاْكُلُوْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾ فَاَوْجَسَ مِنْهُمْ خِيْفَةً ؕ قَالُوْا لَا تَخَفْ ؕ وَبَشَّرُوْهُ
بِغُلٰمٍ عَلِيْمٍ ﴿٢٨﴾ فَاَقْبَلَتِ امْرَاَتُهٗ فِيْ صَرَّةٍ فَصَكَّتْ وَجْهَهَا وَقَالَتْ عَجُوْزٌ
عَقِيْمٌ ﴿٢٩﴾ قَالُوْا كَذٰلِكِ ۙ قَالَ رَبُّكِ ؕ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ الْحَكِيْمُ الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿٣٠﴾

قَالَ فَمَا خَطْبُكُمْ اَيُّهَا الْمُرْسَلُوْنَ ﴿٣١﴾ قَالُوْٓا اِنَّآ اُرْسِلْنَآ اِلٰى قَوْمٍ
مُّجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿٣٢﴾ لِنُرْسِلَ عَلَيْهِمْ حِجَارَةً مِّنْ طِيْنٍ ﴿٣٣﴾ مُّسَوَّمَةً عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ
لِلْمُسْرِفِيْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾ فَاَخْرَجْنَا مَنْ كَانَ فِيْهَا مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾ فَمَا وَجَدْنَا فِيْهَا
غَيْرَ بَيْتٍ مِّنَ الْمُسْلِمِيْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَتَرَكْنَا فِيْهَآ اٰيَةً لِّلَّذِيْنَ يَخَافُوْنَ الْعَذَابَ
الْاَلِيْمَ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَفِيْ مُوْسٰٓى اِذْ اَرْسَلْنٰهُ اِلٰى فِرْعَوْنَ بِسُلْطٰنٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿٣٨﴾ فَتَوَلّٰى بِرُكْنِهٖ
وَقَالَ سٰحِرٌ اَوْ مَجْنُوْنٌ ﴿٣٩﴾ فَاَخَذْنٰهُ وَجُنُوْدَهٗ فَنَبَذْنٰهُمْ فِي الْيَمِّ وَهُوَ
مُلِيْمٌ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَفِيْ عَادٍ اِذْ اَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الرِّيْحَ الْعَقِيْمَ ﴿٤١﴾ مَا تَذَرُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ اَتَتْ
عَلَيْهِ اِلَّا جَعَلَتْهُ كَالرَّمِيْمِ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَفِيْ ثَمُوْدَ اِذْ قِيْلَ لَهُمْ تَمَتَّعُوْا حَتّٰى حِيْنٍ ﴿٤٣﴾
فَعَتَوْا عَنْ اَمْرِ رَبِّهِمْ فَاَخَذَتْهُمُ الصّٰعِقَةُ وَهُمْ يَنْظُرُوْنَ ﴿٤٤﴾ فَمَا اسْتَطَاعُوْا
مِنْ قِيَامٍ وَّمَا كَانُوْا مُنْتَصِرِيْنَ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَقَوْمَ نُوْحٍ مِّنْ قَبْلُ ؕ اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا قَوْمًا
فٰسِقِيْنَ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَالسَّمَآءَ بَنَيْنٰهَا بِاَيْدٍ وَّاِنَّا لَمُوْسِعُوْنَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَالْاَرْضَ فَرَشْنٰهَا فَنِعْمَ
الْمٰهِدُوْنَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَمِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَا زَوْجَيْنِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٤٩﴾ فَفِرُّوْٓا اِلَى

There are many signs in the earth for those who affirm faith[18] and also in your own selves.[19] Do you not perceive ? In the heaven is your provision and also that which is being promised to you.[20] So, by the Lord of the heaven and the earth ! This is true, as true as you are speaking now. 20-23

O Prophet,[21] has the story of Abraham's honoured guests reached you ?[22] When they came to him, they said, "Peace to you." He said, "Peace to you too— unfamiliar folks they are!"[23] Then he went quietly to his family[24] and brought out a fatted (roasted) calf[25] and laid it before the guests. He said, "Will you not eat ?" Then he became afraid of them.[26] They said, "Be not afraid!" And they gave him the good news of the birth of a son, possessing knowledge.[27] Hearing this his wife came forward, crying, and she smote her face, and said, "An old woman, barren!"[28] "Thus has said your Lord," they replied, "He is the All-Wise, the All-Knowing."[29] Abraham said, "O Divine Messengers, what is your special errand?"[30] They said, "We have been sent to a guilty people,[31] to rain upon them stones of baked clay, which are marked with your Lord for the transgressors."[32]—Then[33] We evacuated all those who were believers in that settlement, and We did not find in it any house of the Muslims except one.[34] Then We left there only one sign for those who fear the painful torment.[35] 24-37

(And there is a sign for you) in the story of Moses. When We sent him to Pharaoh with a clear authority,[36] he showed arrogance on account of his might, and said, "He is a sorcerer or a madman."[37] Consequently, We seized him and his hosts and cast them into the sea, and he became blameworthy.[38] 38-40

And (for you is a sign) in 'Ād when We sent upon them a blighting wind which made rotten everything that it blew on.[39] 41-42

And (for you is a sign) in Thamūd when it was said to them, "Enjoy yourselves for a while."[40] But in spite of this warning they defied the Command of their Lord. Consequently, they were overtaken by a thunderbolt[41] even while they looked on. Then they could neither stand up nor were able to save themselves.[42] 43-45

And before them We destroyed the people of Noah because they were a sinful people. 46

47-51 We[43] have built the heaven with Our own might and We possess the power for it.[44] We have spread out the earth and (behold) how excellent Spreaders We are![45] And We have created everything in pairs;[46] maybe that you learn a lesson from it.[47] So flee unto Allah: I am an open warner from Him to you. And do not set up another god with God; I am on open warner from Him to you[48].

Contd. from p.145]

17. In other words, on the one hand, they recognized the right of their Lord and duly discharged it; on the other, they did not think that whatever Allah had given them, whether little or much, was wholly their own and their children's right, but they had the sense that in their possessions there was the right and share of every such person who was indigent and needy. They did not render help to the people as a charity so as to earn their gratitude for the favour done, but they regarded it as the people's right and discharged it as their own duty. Then their this service to mankind was not only confined to those who came to them for seeking help as beggars but anyone about whom they came to know that he had been left destitute, they would become anxious to render him necessary help of their own accord. There was no orphan who might have been left helpless, no widow who might have had no bread-winner, no disabled person who might be unable to earn a living, no one who might have lost his job, or whose earning might not be sufficing his needs, nobody who might have been hit by a calamity and might be unable to compensate for the loss by himself, in short, there was no needy one whose condition they might have known and yet might have withheld their help when they could have rendered him necessary help and support.

The following are the three qualities on the basis of which Allah regards them as the righteous doers of good, and says that these very qualities have made them worthy of Paradise; (1) That they believed in the Hereafter and refrained from every act and conduct which Allah and His Messenger had stated to be disastrous for the life-after-death; (2) that they exerted their utmost to do full justice to the service of Allah and still sought Allah's forgiveness instead of exulting at their acts of piety; and (3) that they served Allah's servants not as a favour to them but as their own duty and their right due from them.

Here, one should also know and understand another thing; The right of the needy ones that has been mentioned here in the wealth of the believers does not imply the *zakāt*, which has been imposed as religious duty on them. But this is the right that a well-to-do believer himself feels there is in his possessions of the needy even after he has paid off the *zakāt*, and he discharges it willingly even if it has not been made obligatory by the *Sharī'ah*. Ibn 'Abbās, Mujāhid, Zaid bin

Aslam and other scholars have understood this very meaning of this verse. In fact, the real spirit of this Divine Command is that a pious and virtuous person is never involved in the misunderstanding that he has become relieved of his duty of discharging the right of Allah and His servants that there was in his possessions after he has paid the *zakāt*, and now he is not bound to help every needy and destitute person whom he comes across. Contrary to this, every servant of Allah, who is really pious and righteous, remains ever ready to do whatever good he can willingly, does not let slip any opportunity when he could do some good to the people in the world. He is not of the way of thinking that he has done whatever good he had been enjoined to do and now no more good is required to be done by him. The one who has recognized the true value of goodness, does not perform it as a burden but tries to earn more and more of it, greedily as a bargain to his own advantage, in his own interest.

18. The signs imply those proofs which testify to the possibility and necessity of the Hereafter. The earth's own body and its structure, its having been placed at a suitable distance from the sun at a particular angle, the arrangement of heat and light and of different seasons on it, the provision of air and water on it, and of countless different kinds of treasures in its belly, covering its surface with a fertile crest and causing to grow in it an endless variety of vegetables, generating countless races of the animals of the land and water and air, providing suitable food and proper conditions for the life of every species, creating and making available all those means and resources on it even before the creation of man, so as to meet and suit his ever increasing needs in every stage of history as well as accord with the development of his civilization and way of living, these and countless other signs can be seen in the earth and its surroundings by every discerning eye. The case of the one who has closed the doors of his heart to belief and faith is different. He will see in these every thing else but not any sign that may point to the reality. But an un-prejudiced person who has an open mind, will never form the idea after observing these signs that all this has come about as the result of an accidental explosion, that had occurred suddenly in the universe millions of years ago; he will rather be convinced that this wise and perfect work of art is the creation of an Omnipotent and Omniscient God. And that God Who has made this earth cannot be helpless to resurrect man after death, nor can He be so foolish as to leave a sensible and intelligent being like man after granting him powers and authority to roam at will in His earth. The fact that man has been granted powers and authority by itself demands that he should be accountable; otherwise it would be against wisdom and justice; and the Creator's being all-powerful (Omnipotent) is by itself a proof that after the human species has fulfilled its function in the world, He can raise all its members back to life and gather them

together from wherever they are lying dead in the earth for the purpose of accountability.

19. That is, "You may not look outside yourself; look within your own self, and you will find countless signs testifying to the same truth. You will see how your creation was begun by combining a microscopic sperm with a microscopic egg in a corner of the mother's body; how you were blessed with a body of unique structure and a self endowed with wonderful powers and abilities; how you were brought out from the dark world of your mother's womb, as soon as your structure became complete, into this vast world, equipped with an automatic machine within yourself, which goes on functioning by itself from the day you take birth till your maturity and old age, to assimilate food, produce blood and circulate it in the veins, discharge waste matter, prepare new parts in place of the wasted and worn out parts of the body, resisting the internal and the external hazards to the body and compensating for the losses, even for sending you to peaceful sleep after exhaustion, without any effort required to be made by you towards these basic needs of life. A wonderful brain has been placed under your skull in whose complicated layers lies filled an invaluable wealth of intellect, thought, imagination, consciousness, discrimination, will, memory, desire, feeling and emotions, inclinations and trends, and other mental abilities. You have been provided with numerous means of knowledge which supply you with every kind of informational through the eye, nose, ears and skin. You have been given the tongue and the power of speech by which you can express your thoughts and feelings. And then your ego has been placed as a ruler over the entire kingdom of your body so that it may employ all the powers and abilities and form opinions and decide as in what ways you have to expend and employ your time and labour and efforts, what you have to reject and what you have to accept, what should be your objective in life and what you should shun and avoid.

Thus equipped when you were brought into the world, you saw what provisions had been made ready here for your nourishment, development and the progress and perfection of your self by virtue of which you reached a particular stage of life when you became able to use the powers and authority you had been endowed with.

For using these powers you were given means in the earth, provided with opportunities, and given ability to control and employ many of the things as you pleased. You had all the ways of disbelief and faith, sin and obedience, justice and injustice, good and evil, truth and falsehood, open before you; there were those who invited to each of these ways and there were the means to lead to each one of them. Whoever among you selected one particular way did so on his own responsibility, for he had the power to decide and choose endowed in himself. Depending on the choice made by each one and taking advantage of the

opportunities thus afforded of employing his powers of will and intention some one became a good man and another a bad man; some one adopted the way of belief and faith and another the way of disbelief, polytheism or atheism; some one withheld himself from unlawful desires, and another did whatever he wanted in obedience to his self; some one became an oppressor and another the oppressed; some one carried out his duties and another usurped the rights of others; some one continued to do good till his last breath, another went on committing evil till his last moment of life; some one exerted himself to raise the word of the truth, another went on oppressing the followers of the truth in order to cause falsehood to flourish.

Now, can a person, unless he is absolutely blind and senseless, say that a being such as this has appeared on the earth just by an accident? that there is no wisdom and no plan working behind his creation? that the storms that he is raising on the earth are without a purpose and will end up without entailing any consequence ? that there will be no reward for a good act and no punishment for an evil act? and that injustice will not be redressed and the unjust will not be brought to book? Such things may be said by a person who has lost his reason, or by the one who is resolved not to acknowledge at all the wisdom of a Wise Being working behind the creation of man. But an un-prejudiced, sensible person cannot help but admit that the creation of man, the powers and abilities he has been given, and the position he has been granted here, is certainly a grand, wise plan, and the wisdom of the God Whose plan it is, inevitably demands that man should be questioned about his actions and deeds; and it cannot be right to entertain the doubt about the powers of God that He will not be able to recreate man whom He has brought up to this noble position of honour from a mere microscopic cell.

20. By the heaven here is meant the "heavens", by "provisions" all that man is given for his survival and functioning in the world, and by "that which is promised." Resurrection, gathering together, accountability, meting out of rewards and punishments, and Hell and Heaven, which have been foretold and promised in all Divine Books and now in the Qur'ān. The verse means to say; "The decisions as to who should be given what and how much in the world are taken in heavens, and also the decision as to when should any of you be recalled for the purpose of accountability and dispensation of the rewards and punishments."

21. Now, from here to the end of verse 46, brief allusions have been made, one after the other, to the end of Allah's Prophets and some of the nations of the past, which are meant to impress two things:

First, that in human history God's law of retribution has been working constantly, in which precedents are found of the rewards for the righteous and of

punishments for the wicked people continuously. This is a clear evidence of the fact that even in the life of this world the Creator's relationship with man is not merely based on the physical law but the moral law also is working side by aide with it. And when the temper of the kingdom of the universe is such that the creation which has been given an opportunity to act morally while living in a physical body, should not only be dealt with on the basis of physical laws, like animals and plants, but the moral law also should be applied to its moral acts this by itself points to the truth that a time must come in this kingdom when on the completion of man's role in the physical world full results of his moral acts should also appear strictly in accordance with the moral law because in the physical world they do not appear fully.

The second thing that has been impressed by these historical allusions is that the nations which did not believe in the Prophets of Allah and based their conduct and attitude in life on the denial of the Oneness of Allah, the Prophethood and the Hereafter, were ultimately doomed to destruction. This continuous experience of history testifies that God's law of morality that was conveyed through the Prophets, and on the basis of which man will be subjected to accountability in the Hereafter, is entirely based on the truth. For whichever nation determined its conduct and attitude in the world independent of this law, considering itself irresponsible and un-accountable, has gone straight to its doom.

22. This story has been narrated at three places in the Qur'ān above, in Hūd: 69-73, Al-Ḥijr: 51-56 and Al-'Ankabūt: 31.

23. In view of the context in which this sentence has occurred, it can have two meanings: (1) That the Prophet Abraham himself said to the guests, "I have never had the chance to see you before; you are perhaps new-comers in this land." (2) That after responding to their salutation, the Prophet Abraham said these words to himself, or to his servants, while going inside the house for arranging the feast, "They appear to be strangers: people of their noble nature and appearance have not been seen before in this land."

24. That is, "He did not tell his guests that he was going to arrange food for them, but after they were seated he went quietly into the house to arrange a feast for them, so that the guests should not refuse it out of formality."

25. In Sūrah Hūd, the words are *'ijlin ḥanīdh*, a roasted calf; here *bi-'ijlin samīn*: a fatted calf that he got roasted.

26. That is, "When they did not stretch out their hands for food, the Prophet Abraham became afraid in his heart. The reason for this fear could be that in tribal life the strangers' going to a house and avoiding food used to be an indication that they had come with an evil design. But most probably when they

refrained from food the Prophet Abraham realized that they were angels, who had come in human guise; and since the angels came in human guise only on extraordinary occasions, he became afraid that they must have come in that guise on some dreadful mission.

27. According to Sūrah Hūd: 71, this was the good news of the birth of the Prophet Isaac (peace be upon him) and this also contained the good news that through the Prophet Isaac he would have a grandson like the Prophet Jacob (peace be upon him).

28. That is, "I am not only old but barren too. How shall a child be born to me?" According to the Bible, the Prophet Abraham at that time was a hundred years old and Sarah was ninety. (Gen., 17: 17).

29. The object of this story is to tell that Allah will certainly reward His servant, who did full justice to the rights of His worship in the world, in the Hereafter handsomely, but even in this world he rewarded him well by giving him children at an age when according to the common physical laws he could not beget children and his aged wife having remained childless throughout life had completely despaired of ever bearing children; and then He granted him such extraordinary children as have not been granted to any one else in the world. There has been no other man in history in whose line four Prophets might have been born in succession. It was the Prophet Abraham alone whose line continued to be blessed with Prophethood for three generations, and the illustrious Prophets like Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph (peace be upon them) emerged from his house.

30. As the angels come in human guise only on highly important occasaions the Prophet Abraham used the word *khaṭb* to find out the purpose of their visit; the word *khaṭb* in Arabic is used for an errand of some extraordinary nature.

31. That is, to the people of the Prophet Lot. The epithet of "a guilty people" was enough to tell which people were meant in view of the gravity of their crimes. They have already been mentioned in the Qur'ān in Al-A'rāf: 80-84, Hūd: 74-83, Al-Ḥijr: 58-79, Al-Anbiyā': 74-75, Ash-Shu'arā: 160-175, An-Naml: 54-58, Aṣ-Ṣāffāt : 133-137.

32. That is, "Each stone has been marked by your Lord's command to show for which culprit it is meant." According to the details given in the Qur'ān, in Sūrahs Hūd and Al-Ḥijr, their towns were turned upside down, and then showered with stones of baked clay. From this one can understand that the entire land was overturned by a severe earthquake and the people who tried to escape were showered with brimstone and destroyed.

33. As to what happened between them and the people of the Prophet Lot when the angels reached his house after their meeting with the Prophet Abraham, has been left out. The details have been given in the Sūrahs Hūd, Al-Hijr and Al-'Ankabūt above. Here mention is being made only of the time when they were going to be visited by the scourge.

34. That is, "Among the whole nation and in the entire land there was only one house that shone with the light of the Faith and Islam, and it was no other but the house of the Prophet Lot himself. The rest of the entire nation was sunk deep in sin and wickedness and its whole country was brimming over with filth and immorality. Therefore Allah rescued the people of that one house and then sent down the torment on the land, which did not spare any one of the wicked people.

In this verse three important themes have been discussed:

(1) That Allah's law of retribution does not decree the total destruction of a nation as long as there remains a considerable element of good in it. As against the majority of the bad people if it still contains a small element of those who continue trying to invite others to the right way, Allah gives it an opportunity to work, and goes on increasing the respite of the nation which is not yet wholly devoid of goodness. But in case there remains no element of goodness at all in the nation, Allah's law is that He somehow rescues by His power and grace some of the good people, who might have become weary and helpless fighting evil in its settlements, and deals with the rest as every sensible master would deal with his rotten fruit.

(2) That "Muslim" is not the name only of the people who are the followers of the Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) but of all the Prophets before him and their followers who were also Muslims. Their religions were not mutually exclusive that one might be the religion of the Prophet Abraham, another of the Prophet Moses and still another of the Prophet Jesus, but they all were Muslims and their religion was this same Islam. This truth has been explained at several places in the Qur'ān and there is no room for ambiguity in this regard. For instance, see Al-Baqarah: 128, 131-132; Āl-'Imrān: 67; Al-Mā'idah: 44, 111; Yūnus: 72,84; Yūsuf: 101; Al-A'râf: 126; An-Naml: 31, 42, 44.

(3) That the words *"Mu'min"* and *"Muslim"* have been used as synonyms in this verse. If this verse is read with verse 14 of Al-Ḥujurāt, the error of the thinking of those people becomes obvious, who regard *Mu'min* and *Muslim* as two independent terms of the Qur'ān, which have been used in one and the same meaning every where, and *Muslim* is necessarily used for the person who might have entered the fold of Islam by professing the

Faith only verbally, without true faith. (For further explanation, see E.N. 31 of Sūrah Al-Ḥujurāt).

35. "One sign": the Dead Sea, southern part of which still presents the signs of a great disaster. The archaeologists have expressed the opinion that the principal cities of the people of Lot were probably sunk underground and the waters of the Dead Sea spread over them. For that part of this sea which is situated to the south of the small peninsula called "Al-Lisān" clearly seems to be a later development, and the signs of the ruins of the Dead Sea found to the north of this peninsula are very different from those found in the south. From this it is concluded that the southern part was once higher than the sea level. At some later time it sank and went under water. The period of its sinking also seems to be about 2000 B.C. and the same precisely is the time of the Prophets Abraham and Lot historically. In 1965 an American archaeological research party discovered a large grave-yard at Al-Lisān which contains more than twenty thousand graves. From this one is led to think that nearby it there must have existed a large city. But no ruins of any such city are found in the adjoining area, which might have given rise to such a big grave-yard. This fact also strengthens the doubt that the city whose grave-yard it was has sunk under the sea. The area to the south of the sea still abounds in the ruins and the underground stocks of sulphur, resin, tar and natural gas found in this area lead one to believe that hell must have been let loose at this place at some time by the eruption of lava and the play of lightning. (For further explanation, see E.N. 114 of Ash-Shu'arā').

36. "A clear authority": such miracles and clear evidences which made it absolutely manifest that he had been appointed as a Messenger by the Creator of the earth and heavens.

37. That is, they called him sometimes a sorcerer and sometimes a madman.

38. A whole history has been compressed into this brief sentence. To understand it well one should know that Pharaoh was the absolute ruler of the greatest centre of civilization and culture of the world in those days and the people of the adjoining lands were overawed by his power and might. Obviously, when he might have sunk suddenly one day in the sea along with his armies, the event must have become well known not only in Egypt but among all the neighbouring nations as well. At this, except for those whose kith and kin had sunk, there was no one else among their own people, or in the other nations of the world who would mourn them or write an elegy on them, or would at least express sorrow and say that good and noble people had become a victim of the disaster. Instead of this, as the world had become fed up with their wickedness and injustices, every person heaved a sigh of relief at their exemplary fate, everyone cursed them, and

anyone who heard this news exclaimed that the wicked people had deserved the fate justly. In Sūrah Ad-Dukhān the same thing has been expressed, thus: "Then neither did the heavens weep on them nor the earth." (For explanation, see E.N. 26 of Sūrah Ad-Dukhan).

39. The word used for this wind is *'aqīm*, which is used for a barren woman, though literally it means dry. If the literal meaning is taken it would mean that it was such an intensely hot and dry wind that on whatever it blew it caused it to become absolutely dry; and if it is taken in the idiomatic sense it would mean that like a barren woman it was a wind without any benefit: neither it was pleasant, nor it brought rain, nor fertilized the trees, nor contained any other benefit for which the wind blows. At other places it has been stated that this wind was not only useless and dry but it blew so violently that it swept the people off the ground and it continued to rage for eight days and seven nights continuously, till it laid the entire land of the 'Ād waste. (For explanation, see E.N.'s 20, 21 of Sūrah Ḥā Mīm As-Sajdah, and E.N.'s 25 to 28 of Al-Ahqāf).

40. The commentators have disputed as to which respite it implies. Ḥaḍrat Qatādah says that it alludes to that verse of Sūrah Hūd in which it has been stated that when the Thamūd killed the she camel of the Prophet Ṣāliḥ, they were warned by Allah that they had three more days to enjoy life after which they would be overtaken by the torment. Contrary to this, Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣrī has expressed the opinion that this thing had been said by the Prophet Ṣālih to his people in the beginning of his mission and by this he meant that if they would not adopt the way of repentance and faith, they would be granted a respite to enjoy life in the world only till an appointed time, and then they would be overtaken by the torment. The second of these two commentaries seems to be more correct, for the following verse ("But in spite of this they defied the command of their Lord") indicates that the respite being mentioned here had been given before the defiance and they committed it after the warning. On the contrary, the three days' respite mentioned in Sūrah Hūd had been given after the wicked people had committed the final defiance which became decisive in their case and sealed their doom for ever afterwards.

41. Different words have been used for this torment at different places in the Qur'ān. Somewhere it has been called *rajfah* (a frightful and shocking calamity), somewhere *ṣaiḥah* (a crashing and thundering disaster), somewhere *taghiyah* (a most severe affliction) and here it has been described as *ṣā'iqah* (a calamity that strikes like a thunderbolt). Probably this torment had occurred as an earthquake which was also accompanied by a terrible noise.

42. *Intiṣar* from which the word *muntaṣirūn* in the original is derived means to save oneself from an attack by somebody as well as to avenge oneself on the attacker.

43. After presenting historical arguments for the Hereafter, now arguments from the universe are being presented in proof of the same.

44. The word musi' (pl. mūsi'ūn) may mean the one who possesses power and means, and also the one who can extend and expand something. According to the first meaning, the verse would mean: "We have built this heaven by Our own might and not with somebody else's help, and its erection was in no way beyond Us. Then how can you ever conceive that We shall not be able to recreate it ?" According to the second meaning, it would mean: "This huge universe that We have created, is not a finished work, but We are expanding it continuously, and new and ever new manifestations of Our creation are appearing in it every moment. How do you then think that such a marvellous Creator would not be able to repeat His creation.

45. For explanation, see E.N. 18 above. For further explanation, see E.N. 74 of Sūrah An-Naml, E.N. 29 of Sūrah Yā Sīn and E.N.'s 7 to 10 of Az-Zukhruf

46. That is, "Everything in the world has been created on the principle of the pairs. The whole system of the Universe is functioning on the principle that certain things are complementary and matching to certain others, and their combination brings into being countless new forms and combinations. Nothing here is so unique as may have no match, for the fact is that a thing becomes productive only after it has combined with its matching partner." (For further explanation, see E.N. 31 of Sūrah Yā Sīn, and E.N. 12 of Az-Zukhruf).

47. That is, "The erection of the whole Universe on the principle of the pairs and the existence of all things in the world in couples is a reality that testifies expressly to the necessity of the Hereafter. If you consider it deeply you will yourself come to the conclusion that when everything in the world has a partner and nothing becomes productive without combining with its partner, how can the life of the world be without a match and partner? Its match and partner necessarily is the Hereafter. Without that partner it would be absolutely fruitless."

To understand what follows one should also understand that the discussion heretofore centres around the Hereafter, but this very discussion and argument afford a proof of the Oneness of God. Just as the argument of the rain, the structure of the earth, the creation of the heavens, man's own existence, the wonderful working of the law of pairs in the Universe, testify to the possibility and necessity of the Hereafter, so they are also testifying that neither is this

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اللّٰهِ ۚ اِنِّیْ لَكُمْ مِّنْهُ نَذِیْرٌ مُّبِیْنٌ ۝ وَلَا تَجْعَلُوْا مَعَ اللّٰهِ اِلٰهًا اٰخَرَ ۚ اِنِّیْ لَكُمْ
مِّنْهُ نَذِیْرٌ مُّبِیْنٌ ۝ كَذٰلِكَ مَاۤ اَتَى الَّذِیْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِّنْ رَّسُوْلٍ اِلَّا قَالُوْا
سَاحِرٌ اَوْ مَجْنُوْنٌ ۝ اَتَوَاصَوْا بِهٖ ۚ بَلْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ طَاغُوْنَ ۝ فَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ فَمَاۤ
اَنْتَ بِمَلُوْمٍ ۝ وَّذَكِّرْ فَاِنَّ الذِّكْرٰى تَنْفَعُ الْمُؤْمِنِیْنَ ۝ وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَ
الْاِنْسَ اِلَّا لِیَعْبُدُوْنِ ۝ مَاۤ اُرِیْدُ مِنْهُمْ مِّنْ رِّزْقٍ وَّمَاۤ اُرِیْدُ اَنْ یُّطْعِمُوْنِ ۝
اِنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَ الرَّزَّاقُ ذُو الْقُوَّةِ الْمَتِیْنُ ۝ فَاِنَّ لِلَّذِیْنَ ظَلَمُوْا ذَنُوْبًا مِّثْلَ
ذَنُوْبِ اَصْحٰبِهِمْ فَلَا یَسْتَعْجِلُوْنِ ۝ فَوَیْلٌ لِّلَّذِیْنَ كَفَرُوْا مِنْ
یَّوْمِهِمُ الَّذِیْ یُوْعَدُوْنَ ۝

52-55 This has always been so. Whenever a Messenger came to the peoples before them, they said, "He is a sorcerer or a madman."[49] Have they reached a mutual understanding concerning this? Nay, but they are all a rebellious people.[50] So, O Prophet, turn away from them: you are not at all to blame.[51] But go on admonishing them, for the admonition is beneficial for the believers.[52]

56-60 I have not created the jinn and the men except for this that they should worship Me.[53] I do not ask any sustenance of them, nor do I ask them to feed Me.[54] Allah Himself is the Sustainer, Possessor of power and might.[55] Therefore, those who have done wrong,[56] have also their portion of a similar torment ready as the people like them have been meted out their portions before. So let them not ask Me to hasten.[57] Ultimately, there will be destruction for those who have disbelieved, on the Day with which they are being threatened.

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Godless nor it has many gods, but One All-Wise and All-Powerful God alone is its Creator and Master and Controller. That is why in the following verses the

invitation to the Oneness of God is being presented on the basis of these very arguments. Furthermore, the inevitable result of believing in the Hereafter is that man should give up his attitude of rebellion against God and should adopt the way of obedience and servitude. He remains turned away from God as long as he remains involved in the false belief that he is not accountable before anyone and that he will not have to render an account of his deeds of the worldly life to anyone. Whenever this misunderstanding is removed, man immediately comes to the realization that he was committing a grave error by regarding himself as irresponsible, and this realization compels him to return to God. That is why immediately after concluding the arguments for the Hereafter, it has been said: "So flee unto Allah."

48. Though these sentences are the Word of Allah, the speaker here is not Allah but the Holy Messenger of Allah. In fact, Allah has made his Messenger say: "Flee unto Allah: I am warning you from Him." An instance of this style is found in the very first Sūrah of the Qur'ān, Sūrah Al-Fātihah, where the Word is of Allah, but the speakers are the servants, who say: *Iyyāka na'budu wa Iyyāka nasta'īn; ihdi-nas ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm:* "Thee alone we worship and to Thee alone we pray for help. Show us the Straight Way." Just as there it has not been said: "O believers, pray to your Lord thus," but the context itself shows that it is a supplication which Allah is teaching His servants, so here also it has not been said: "O Prophet, say to these people," but the context itself indicates that it is an invitation to the Oneness of God, which the Holy Prophet is presenting according to Allah's command. Besides Sūrah Al-Fātihah, there are several other instances also of this style in the Qur'ān, where though the Word is of Allah, the speakers somewhere are the angels and somewhere the Holy Prophet, and the context shows as through whom Allah is speaking at that particular place. For instance, see Sūrah Maryam: 64-65, Aṣ-Ṣāffāt: 159-167, Ash-Shu'arā': 10.

49. That is, "This has not happened for the first time that the people are calling the Messenger sent by Allah a sorcerer and a madman when they heard the news of the Hereafter and the invitation to the Oneness of Allah from him. The whole history of Apostleship bears evidence that ever since the Messengers started coming for the guidance of mankind, ignorant people have been repeating the same folly in the same manner. Whichever Messenger came and gave them the warning that they were not the servants of many gods but One God alone is their Creator and Deity and Master of their destinies, ignorant people said that he was a sorcerer, who wanted to beguile and misguide them by his sorcery. Whichever Messenger came and warned them that they had not been created and left irresponsible in the world, but that at the conclusion of their life-work they would have to present themselves before their Creator and Master and render an account of their deeds and in consequence thereof they will be rewarded or punished

accordingly, the foolish people cried out that he was a madman and had lost his reason because no one could be resurrected after death."

50. That is, "The fact that the people of different countries and nations adopted the same attitude as against the invitation of the Prophets and opposed them in the same manner in different ages for thousands of years could not be due to the reason that all the former and the latter generations had settled in a conference that whenever a prophet came with his message, he should be given such and such an answer. Then, what could be the reason for the uniformity of their attitude and behaviour? There could be no other reason for this than that rebellion and transgression was their common characteristic. As all the ignorant people of every age have been desirous of living a life free of Allah's service and fearless of His accountability, whoever called them to the service of Allah and to lead a God-conscious life, they gave him one and the same fixed answer."

This also throws light on an important truth and it is this: The motives that man has been naturally endowed with for adopting error and guidance, goodness and evil, justice and injustice, and similar other conducts, have been appearing in every age and in every corner of the world in the like manner no matter how different might have been their forms due to advancement of means and resources. Whether the man of today fights by means of the tanks and aircraft and hydrogen bombs and the man of the ancient time fought with stones and sticks, the basic motives for fighting between men have always been the same. Likewise, the atheist of today might heap up his arguments for atheism as he likes, his motives for following that creed are precisely the same as had been of an atheist six thousand years ago and in his reasoning also he is not basically any different from his predecessor

51. In this verse a method of the preaching of religion has been taught, which should be well understood. When a preacher of the truth has presented his message clearly before a person with rational arguments, and has also removed his doubts and objections and answered his arguments, he becomes relieved of his duty of making the truth plain. Even after this if the other person persists in his belief and creed, the responsibility for it does not lie on the preacher of the truth. It is no more necessary that he should pursue the same person, should go on spending his time in discussing things with him, and should make it a point that he has somehow to convince the same one man of the truth. The preacher, in fact, has done his duty; if the other man is not convinced, let him alone. If the preacher does not any more attend to him, he cannot be blamed for letting a person remain involved in error, because now the other person himself is responsible for his deviation and error.

The Holy Prophet has not been addressed here to be taught this method because, God forbid, in his preaching he unnecessarily pursued the people and Allah wanted to stop him from this fact, the actual reason for stating this method is that when a preacher of the truth has done his best to make the people understand his message in a rational way and then seeing the signs of stubbornness in them withdraws from them, the people inveigh against him and start accusing him of indifference and inattention whereas, they, as they say, want to discuss things in order to understand his message. The fact, however, is that they do not intend to understand anything but only to involve the preacher in disputation and waste his time. Therefore, Allah Himself said in clear words: "Turn away from them: you are not at all to blame for showing any indifference towards them." After this nobody could blame the Holy Prophet that according to the Book that he had brought he had been appointed to make them understand his religion: then why he did not answer their objections.

52. In this verse the second method of preaching has been stated. The real object of the invitation to the truth is to convey the blessing of the faith to those righteous souls who are appreciative of the blessing and are themselves keen to attain it. But the preacher does not know where those righteous souls are among the hundreds of thousands of the members of human society. Therefore, his duty is to continue giving his call so that his voice reaches wherever there are the people who would accept his message. These very people are his real wealth. To search them out is his real task; and to gather them together and bring them on to the path of God should be his objective. The preacher should attend to the useless element of the children of Adam that he comes across in the process only until he finds out by experience that it is a worthless commodity. After he has experienced their worthlessness and base quality, he should not waste his precious time on them, for they are not the people who would benefit from his admonition, and expending his energy on them is indeed a loss of those who are keen to benefit from it.

53. That is, "I have not created them for the service of others but for My own service. They should serve Me, for I am their Creator. When no one else has created them, no one else has the right that they should serve him; and how can it be admissible for them that they should serve others instead of Me, their Creator?" Here, the question arises that Allah Almighty is not the Creator only of the jinn and men but of the entire Universe and of every thing in it. Then, why has it been said only about the jinn and men that He has not created them for the service of others but of Himself ? whereas every single creature is there to serve Allah. The answer is: On the earth only the jinn and men have been granted the freedom that they may serve Allah within their sphere of choice if they so like; otherwise they can turn away from Allah's service as well as serve others beside

Him. The rest of the creatures in the world do not have this kind of freedom. They do not have any choice whatever that they may not worship and serve Allah, or may serve any other. Therefore, only about the jinn and men it has been said here that by turning away from the obedience and servitude of their Creator within the bounds of their option and choice and by serving others than the Creator, they are fighting their own nature. They should know that they have not been created for the service of any other but the Creator, and for them the right way is that they should not abuse the freedom granted them, but within the bounds of this freedom also they should serve God voluntarily just as every particle of their body is serving Him involuntarily in the sphere where they have not been granted any freedom.

The word *'ibādat* (service, worship) in this verse has not been used in the sense of only prayer, fasting and other kinds of such worship so that one may understand that the jinn and men have been created only for performing the Prayer, observing the Fast and for praising and glorifying Allah. Although this sense also is included in it, this is not its complete sense. Its complete sense is that the jinn and men have not been created for the worship, obedience and carrying out of the orders of any other but Allah. They are not there to bow to any other, to carry out the orders of any other, to live in fear of any other, to follow the religion enjoined by any other, to look upon any other as the maker and destroyer of one's destiny, and to supplicate any other than Allah for help. (For further explanation, see E.N. 63 of Sūrah Sabā, E.N. 2 of Az-Zumar, E.N. 30 of Al Jāthiyah).

Another thing that incidentally becomes quite obvious from this verse is that the jinn are a separate and independent creation from men. This brings out the error of the thinking of those people, who assert that some people from among mankind have been called the jinn in the Qur'ān. This same thing is also confirmed and testified by the following verses of the Qur'ān: Al-An'ām :100, 128, Al-A'rāf, 38, 179, Hūd: 119, Al-Ḥijr: 27 to 33, Banī Isrā'īl: 88, Al-Kahf: 50, As-Sajdah: 13, Sabā: 41, Ṣuād: 75, 76, Ḥā Mīm As-Sajdah: 25, Al-Aḥqāf: 18, Ar-Raḥmān: 15, 39, 56. (For a complete discussion of this question, see E.N. 21 of Al-Anbiyā', E.N.'s 23, 45 of An-Naml, E.N. 24 of Sabā).

54. That is, "I do not stand in need of any kind of help from the jinn and men: that My Godhead would not function if they did not worship Me: that I would be no more God if they turned away from My service. I indeed do not stand in need of their service, but it is the demand of their own nature that they should serve Me. They have been created for this very object, and fighting nature would be to their own detriment."

And in saying: "I do not ask any sustenance of them nor do I ask them to feed Me," there is a subtle hint to this Those whom the people who have turned

away from Godworship in the world, worship, indeed, stand in need of these their worshippers. If they do not help sustain their godhead, it would not function even for a day. The gods do not provide for the worshippers but the worshippers provide for the gods instead. The gods do not feed them but they feed the gods instead. The gods do not protect them but the worshippers protect the gods instead. The worshippers, in fact, are their army through whom their godhead functions. Wherever the worshippers of the false gods have ceased to exist, or the worshippers have given up their worship, the gods have lost all their pomp and glory and the world has seen how helpless they have become. Of all the deities Allah Almighty is the only real Deity Whose Godhead is functioning by His own power and might, Who does not take anything from His servants, but He alone gives His servants everything.

55. The word *matīn* as used in the original means strong and stable whom nobody can shake and move.

56. "Those,.....wrong": Those who have violated the reality and the truth and their own nature. The context itself shows that "those who have done wrong", here implies the people who are serving others than the Lord of the Universe, who disbelieve in the Hereafter, who regard themselves as irresponsible in the world, and have denied those Prophets who have tried to make them understand the reality.

57. This is the answer to the disbelievers' demand: "Why doesn't the Day of Retribution overtake us? Why is it being delayed?"



LII

AṬ-ṬŪR

الطُّور

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

LII

AṬ-ṬŪR

الطّور

INTRODUCTION

Name

It is derived from the very first word *"Wat-Ṭūr-i."*

Period of Revelation

From the internal evidence of the subject-matter it appears that this Sūrah too was revealed in the same stage of the Holy Prophet's life at Makkah in which the Sūrah Adh-Dhāriyāt was revealed. While going through it one can clearly feel that during the period of its revelation the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was being showered with objections and accusations but there is no evidence yet to show that severe persecution of the Muslims had started.

Subject-Matter and Topics

The subject-matter of its first section (vv. 1-28) is the Hereafter. As arguments for its possibility, necessity and occurrence had already been given in Sūrah Adh-Dhāriyāt, these have not been repeated here. However, swearing an oath by some realities and signs which testify to the Hereafter, it has been stated most emphatically that it will surely come to pass, and none has the power to prevent its occurrence. Then, it has been stated as to what will be the fate of those who deny it when it actually occurs, and how will those who believe in it and adopt the way of piety and righteousness accordingly, be blessed by Allah.

Then, in the second section (vv. 29-49) the Quraish chiefs' attitude towards the message of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has been criticised. They called him a sorcerer, a madman, or a poet, and would thus mislead the common people against him so that they should not pay any serious attention to the message he preached. They looked upon him as a calamity that had suddenly descended on them and would openly wish that he met with a disaster so that they were rid of him. They accused him of fabricating the Qur'ān by himself and of presenting it in the name of Allah, and this was, God forbid, a fraud that he was practising. They would often taunt him, saying that God could not have appointed an ordinary man like him to the office of Prophethood. They expressed great disgust at his invitation and message and would avoid him as if he was asking them for a reward for it. They would sit and take counsels together to devise schemes in order to put an end to his mission. And while they did all this they never realized what creeds of ignorance they were involved in and how selflessly and sincerely was Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) exerting himself to deliver them from their error. While criticizing them for this attitude and conduct, Allah has put them certain questions, one after the other, each of which is either an answer to some objection of theirs, or a criticism of some error. Then, it has been said that it would absolutely be of no avail to show them a miracle in order to convince them of his Prophethood, for they were such stubborn people as would misinterpret anything they were shown only to avoid affirming the faith.

In the beginning of this section as well as in its end, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has been given the instruction that he should persistently continue giving his invitation and preaching his message in spite of the accusations and objections of his opponents and enemies, and should endure their resistance patiently till Allah's judgement comes to pass. Besides, he has been consoled, as if to say: "Your Lord has not left you alone to face your enemies, after raising you as a Prophet, but He is constantly watching over you. Therefore, endure every hardship patiently till the Hour of His judgement comes, and seek through praising and glorifying your Lord the power that is required for exerting in the cause of Allah under such conditions.



وَ الطُّوْرِ ۙ﴿۱﴾ وَ كِتٰبٍ مَّسْطُوْرٍ ۙ﴿۲﴾ فِیْ رَقٍّ مَّنْشُوْرٍ ۙ﴿۳﴾ وَّ الْبَیْتِ الْمَعْمُوْرِ ۙ﴿۴﴾ وَ
السَّقْفِ الْمَرْفُوْعِ ۙ﴿۵﴾ وَ الْبَحْرِ الْمَسْجُوْرِ ۙ﴿۶﴾ اِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّكَ لَوَاقِعٌ ۙ﴿۷﴾ مَّا لَهٗ
مِنْ دَافِعٍ ۙ﴿۸﴾ یَّوْمَ تَمُوْرُ السَّمَآءُ مَوْرًا ۙ﴿۹﴾ وَّ تَسِیْرُ الْجِبَالُ سَیْرًا ؕ﴿۱۰﴾ فَوَیْلٌ
یَّوْمَىٕذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِیْنَ ۙ﴿۱۱﴾ الَّذِیْنَ هُمْ فِیْ خَوْضٍ یَّلْعَبُوْنَ ؕ﴿۱۲﴾ یَوْمَ یُدَعُّوْنَ اِلٰى
نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ دَعًّا ؕ﴿۱۳﴾ هٰذِهِ النَّارُ الَّتِیْ كُنْتُمْ بِهَا تُكَذِّبُوْنَ ؕ﴿۱۴﴾ اَفَسِحْرٌ هٰذَاۤ اَمْ
اَنْتُمْ لَا تُبْصِرُوْنَ ۙ﴿۱۵﴾ اِصْلَوْهَا فَاصْبِرُوْۤا اَوْ لَا تَصْبِرُوْا ؕ سَوَآءٌ عَلَیْكُمْ ؕ اِنَّمَا تُجْزَوْنَ
مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ؕ﴿۱۶﴾ اِنَّ الْمُتَّقِیْنَ فِیْ جَنّٰتٍ وَّ نَعِیْمٍ ۙ﴿۱۷﴾ فٰكِهِیْنَ بِمَاۤ اٰتٰىهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ ۚ وَ
وَقٰىهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ عَذَابَ الْجَحِیْمِ ۚ﴿۱۸﴾ كُلُوْا وَ اشْرَبُوْا هَنِیْٓـًٔا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ۙ﴿۱۹﴾
مُتَّكِـِٕیْنَ عَلٰى سُرُرٍ مَّصْفُوْفَةٍ ۚ وَ زَوَّجْنٰهُمْ بِحُوْرٍ عِیْنٍ ۚ﴿۲۰﴾ وَ الَّذِیْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَ

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

LII

AṬ-ṬŪR

الطور

Verses: 49 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

By the (mount) Ṭūr,[1] and an open Book written on a fine scroll,[2] and the inhabited House,[3] and the elevated roof,[4] and the surging ocean,[5] the torment of your Lord shall surely come to pass, which none can avert.[6] It will be on a Day when the heaven shall reel and shake violently,[7] and the mountains shall fly about.[8] Woe on that Day to the deniers who are today engaged in their (useless) arguments for sport.[9] The Day when they are driven and pushed to Hell-Fire, it will be said to them, "This is the same Fire that you were wont to deny. Now tell: Is this magic? Or, do you not perceive it?[10] Now burn! Whether you bear it patiently or not, it is all the same for you. You are being recompensed only according to your deeds." 1-16

The righteous[11] shall be in Gardens and Bliss, rejoicing in what their Lord shall give them; and their Lord shall save them from the torment of Hell.[12] (It will be said to them:) "Eat and drink with relish[13] as a reward for what you have been doing." They will be reclining on couches, facing each other, and We shall wed them to houris with beautiful eyes.[14] 17-20

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1. Ṭūr means a mountain, and *aṭ-Ṭūr* the particular mountain on which Allah had blessed the Prophet Moses with the Prophethood.

2. In ancient times the books and writings which were meant to be preserved for long were written on the skin of deer instead of the paper. This skin was especially prepared for writing as a thin and fine parchment and was called *raqq* terminologically. The Jews and Christians in general wrote the Torah, Psalms, the Gospels and the Prophets' Books on this same *raqq* so that they would endure. Here, by "an open Book" is implied the same collection of the holy scriptures which the followers of the Book possessed. It has been described as "an open Book" because it was not extinct; it was read and one could easily find out what was written in it.

3. According to Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣri, "the inhabited House" implies the House of Allah, the Ka'bah, which is never without its visitors and pilgrims at any time of the day and night. However, Ḥaḍrat 'Ali, Ibn 'Abbās, 'Ikrimah, Mujāhid, Qatādah, Ḍaḥḥāk, Ibn Zaid and other commentators have stated that it implies the *Bait-al-ma'mūr* (the inhabited House) which the Holy Prophet referred to in connection with his *Mi'rāj* (Ascension), against the wall of which he had seen the Prophet Abraham reclining. Mujāhid, Qatādah and Ibn Zaid say that just as the Ka'bah is the centre and place of refuge for all God-worshippers, so is there in every heaven a similar Ka'bah for its dwellers which occupies a similar central position for the worshippers of Allah there. One of these Ka'bahs was the one against the wall of which the Holy Prophet had seen the Prophet Abraham reclining on the occasion of the *Mi'rāj;* and with it the Prophet Abraham had a natural affinity, for he himself was the founder of the Ka'bah of the earth. In view of this explanation, this second commentary does not go against the commentary given by Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣri, but if both are read together, we can understand that here the oath has not been sworn only by the Ka'bah of the earth, but it also includes an oath by all the Ka'bahs that are there in the entire Universe.

4. "The elevated roof": the sky which seems to be spread over the earth like a vault; here this word has been used for the entire Universe. (For explanation, see E.N. 7 of Sūrah Qāf).

5. Several meanings have been given of the word *al-baḥr-il-masjūr* as used in the original. Some commentators have taken it in the meaning of "full of fire"; some take it in the sense of "empty and un-occupied", the water of which might have sunk into the earth; some take it in the meaning of "restricted and confined", by which they imply that the ocean has been restrained so that its water neither sinks into the earth nor spreads over the land to drown all its dwellers. Some have taken it in the meaning of mixed and blended because in it sweet and saline, warm and cold, water is mixed together; and some take it in the meaning of brimful and surging. The first two of these meanings bear no relevance to the context. These two states of the ocean-splitting of the bottom of the ocean and sinking of its water into the earth and then its being filled with fire—will appear on

the Day Of Resurrection, as mentioned in Sūrah Takvīr: 6 and Infitār: 3. These states of the future do not exist at present and therefore cannot be sworn by to convince the people of today of the occurrence of the Hereafter. Therefore, here *al-bahr il masjūr* can be taken only in the meaning of confined, mixed, brimful and surging.

6. This is that truth for which an oath has been sworn by the five things. "The torment of your Lord" implies the Hereafter, for it will be a torment for those who deny that it will come. That is why it has been called "the torment of your Lord" instead of the Resurrection, or the Hereafter, or the Day of Retribution. Now let us consider how the five things by which an oath has been sworn point to its occurrence.

Mount Tūr is the place where a decision was taken to exalt an oppressed nation and to abase an oppressive nation, and this decision was taken not on the basis of a physical law but on the basis of a Moral Law and the Law of Retribution. Therefore, Mount Tūr has been presented as a symbol for the Hereafter. It implies that the decision of exalting a helpless nation like the children of Israel and the drowning of a powerful and mighty ruler like the Pharaoh along with his hosts, which was taken in a quiet and listless night on the Mount Tūr, is proof of the fact how the nature of the Kingdom of the Universe demands that man who has been endowed with powers and authority, should be subjected to moral accountability and rewarded and punished accordingly, and for meeting this demand adequately a Day of Reckoning is necessary when the whole of mankind should be gathered together and called to account for its deeds. (For further explanation, see E.N. 21 of Sūrah Adh-Dhariyāt).

The holy scriptures have been sworn by because all the Prophets who came to the world from the Lord of the Universe and the Books they brought gave the same one news in every age which the Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is giving, i.e. that all humans of the former and latter generations will one day be resurrected and presented before their God and rewarded and punished according to their deeds. There has been no heavenly Book that fails to proclaim that this life is not the only life, that man will not end in the dust after death and that there will be both accountability and reckoning.

"The inhabited House" has been sworn by for the reason that in those days the building of the Holy Ka'bah was a great sign, particularly for the Arabs, which pointed to the truthfulness of Allah's Prophets and to the fact that they were supported by Allah Almighty's far-reaching wisdom and great power. 2,500 years before the revelation of these verses a person happens to visit these barren and uninhabited mountains, without any army or worldly provision, leaving behind a wife and a suckling child devoid of material support. Then, some time later the

same man returns and builds at this desolate place a house for the worship of Allah and gives a call to the people to come and visit that house as pilgrims. This same structure and the call are so fervently received that the House becomes the centre of the entire population of Arabia. People respond to the call enthusiastically and are drawn from every corner of the country to the House in a spirit of devotion and dedication. For 2,500 years this House continues to remain such a sanctuary of peace that while blood is shed in the country around it, none can dare raise his hand against another as soon as people enter its sacred boundaries; and then because of this very House Arabia is blessed with four months of such total peace every year when caravans travel in full safety, trade flourishes and markets are held. Then the House inspired such awe that during this whole period no tyrant could ever look towards it with an evil intention, and whoever dared do so was so seized by Allah's wrath that he became an object of warning for others. Such a miracle had been witnessed by the people themselves only 45 years before the revelation of these verses, and many of those who had witnessed it were still present and living in the city at the time when these verses were being recited to the people of Makkah. What greater proof could be there of the fact that the Prophets of God never uttered empty words? They see with their eyes that which others do not see; they talk freely of such realities as cannot be comprehended by others by intellect; they engage at times in works which might be viewed as madness by the contemporary world but which might strike with amazement the people coming centuries afterwards. When men of such calibre have unanimously been giving in every age the news that Resurrection shall occur and accountability shall take place, it would be sheer madness to dub it as the bragging of the insane.

The elevated roof (the sky) and the surging ocean have been sworn by, for both these are a pointer to Allah's wisdom and His power, and the same wisdom and power prove both the possibility of the Hereafter and its occurrence and necessity. As for the sky's being a pointer we have already explained it in E.N. 7 of Sūrah Qāf above. As for the ocean, anyone who considers it deeply with an unbiased mind will testify that the provision of water in such abundance on the earth is by itself such an amazing work which cannot be the result of an accident or chance. This also proves that it is not possible that such a perfect system could come into being by chance and the bodies of each species could be made precisely according to the depth in which it has to live. Its water has been made saline so that the bodies of the millions of the animals which die in it daily do not rot. Its water has been restrained at a particular level in such a way that it neither sinks into the earth's belly passing through its cracks and holes, nor it spreads over the land to submerge it, but has been checked at the same level for millions of years. Because of the existence of this great store of water the rainfall is arranged on the dry parts of the earth, in which the heat of the sun and the

circulation of the winds cooperate with full regularity. Then the ocean's being inhabited with life and the creation in it of the various kinds of creatures has given man the advantage that he obtains from it his food and other necessities in large quantities. Then its being checked and restrained to a limit has given birth to the continents and islands which are the home of man, and because of its adhering to and following some fixed laws has it become possible that man may navigate his ships in it. Such an arrangement could not have possibly existed without the wisdom of an All-Wise Being and the power of an Absolute Ruler, nor could this deep relationship that binds the interests of man and other creatures of the earth to the arrangement of the ocean be established at random. Now, if this is undeniable evidence that an All-Wise and All-Powerful God has created a vast and surging, brackish ocean also besides making countless other arrangements for the purpose of settling man on the earth, that person would be foolhardy, who expects that the All-Wise God would make arrangements for man that he should water his crops from the ocean and provide him sustenance thereby but would never question him as to how he returned thanks after eating His provisions, and that He would grant man the power that he should run his ships on the surface of the ocean but would never question him as to whether he had run the ships for the sake of the truth, righteousness and justice, or had committed robberies. Likewise, it would also be sheer folly to imagine that the Absolute Sovereign of Whose power the creation of the wonderful ocean is a petty, insignificant sign, Who has checked and restrained this vast store of water on this suspended globe which is moving in space, Who has dissolved a huge quantity of salt in it, Who has created countless varieties of creatures in it, and has arranged their sustenance therein, Who carries billions of tons of water from it every year by means of the wind and causes it to fall regularly as rain on millions of square miles of dry land, becomes so helpless and powerless after creating man that He could not resurrect him again.

7. The word *maur* in the original is used for turning round, boiling, fluttering, rotating, swinging and moving forward and backward. The object of depicting the condition of the heavens on the Day of Resurrection in these words is to give the idea that the system of the heavens on that Day will be wholly upset, and when an observer will look up to the sky, he will feel that the constant pattern and order that it always used to present, has been broken and there is disorder, confusion and chaos on every side.

8. In other words, the pull of the earth which is keeping the mountains in place, will become loose, they will be uprooted and start floating about in space like clouds.

9. It means that they are mocking and ridiculing the news of Resurrection, Hereafter, Heaven and Hell when they hear it from the Prophet, and instead of

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اتَّبَعَتْهُمْ ذُرِّيَّتُهُمْ بِإِيمَانٍ أَلْحَقْنَا بِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَمَا أَلَتْنَاهُمْ مِنْ عَمَلِهِمْ
مِنْ شَيْءٍ ۚ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ بِمَا كَسَبَ رَهِينٌ ﴿٢١﴾ وَأَمْدَدْنَاهُمْ بِفَاكِهَةٍ وَلَحْمٍ مِمَّا
يَشْتَهُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾ يَتَنَازَعُونَ فِيهَا كَأْسًا لَا لَغْوٌ فِيهَا وَلَا تَأْثِيمٌ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَيَطُوفُ عَلَيْهِمْ
غِلْمَانٌ لَهُمْ كَأَنَّهُمْ لُؤْلُؤٌ مَكْنُونٌ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾
قَالُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا قَبْلُ فِي أَهْلِنَا مُشْفِقِينَ ﴿٢٦﴾ فَمَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا وَوَقَانَا عَذَابَ
السَّمُومِ ﴿٢٧﴾ إِنَّا كُنَّا مِنْ قَبْلُ نَدْعُوهُ ۖ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْبَرُّ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٢٨﴾ فَذَكِّرْ فَمَا أَنْتَ
بِنِعْمَتِ رَبِّكَ بِكَاهِنٍ وَلَا مَجْنُونٍ ﴿٢٩﴾ أَمْ يَقُولُونَ شَاعِرٌ نَتَرَبَّصُ بِهِ رَيْبَ
الْمَنُونِ ﴿٣٠﴾ قُلْ تَرَبَّصُوا فَإِنِّي مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الْمُتَرَبِّصِينَ ﴿٣١﴾ أَمْ تَأْمُرُهُمْ أَحْلَامُهُمْ
بِهَٰذَا أَمْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ طَاغُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾ أَمْ يَقُولُونَ تَقَوَّلَهُ ۚ بَل لَّا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾ فَلْيَأْتُوا
بِحَدِيثٍ مِّثْلِهِ إِن كَانُوا صَادِقِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾ أَمْ خُلِقُوا مِنْ غَيْرِ شَيْءٍ أَمْ هُمُ الْخَالِقُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾
أَمْ خَلَقُوا السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ ۚ بَل لَّا يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾ أَمْ عِندَهُمْ خَزَائِنُ رَبِّكَ أَمْ
هُمُ الْمُصَيْطِرُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾ أَمْ لَهُمْ سُلَّمٌ يَسْتَمِعُونَ فِيهِ ۚ فَلْيَأْتِ مُسْتَمِعُهُم بِسُلْطَانٍ
مُّبِينٍ ﴿٣٨﴾ أَمْ لَهُ الْبَنَاتُ وَلَكُمُ الْبَنُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾ أَمْ تَسْأَلُهُمْ أَجْرًا فَهُم مِّن مَّغْرَمٍ
مُّثْقَلُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾ أَمْ عِندَهُمُ الْغَيْبُ فَهُمْ يَكْتُبُونَ ﴿٤١﴾ أَمْ يُرِيدُونَ كَيْدًا ۖ فَالَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمَكِيدُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾ أَمْ لَهُمْ إِلَٰهٌ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ ۚ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَإِن
يَرَوْا كِسْفًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ سَاقِطًا يَقُولُوا سَحَابٌ مَّرْكُومٌ ﴿٤٤﴾ فَذَرْهُمْ حَتَّىٰ يُلَاقُوا
يَوْمَهُمُ الَّذِي فِيهِ يُصْعَقُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾ يَوْمَ لَا يُغْنِي عَنْهُمْ كَيْدُهُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَا هُمْ
يُنصَرُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَإِنَّ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا عَذَابًا دُونَ ذَٰلِكَ وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا
يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ فَإِنَّكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ

Those who have believed and their offspring also have followed in their footsteps in degrees of faith, We shall join to them those of their offspring also (in Paradise) and shall not deprive them of anything of their deeds.[15] Every person is a pledge for what he has earned.[16] We shall go on providing them well with fruits and meat,[17] such as they may desire. They shall zealously be passing from hand to hand a cup of wine which shall neither contain idle talk nor immorality.[18] And there will go round to them young boys, exclusively appointed for their service,[19] who will be as lovely as well-guarded pearls. They will turn to one another and ask (about their worldly lives). They will say, "Before this we lived among our kinsfolk, in fear and dread.[20] Consequently, Allah has been bounteous to us and has saved us from the torment of the scorching wind.[21] Indeed, we prayed only to Him in our previous life. Most surely He is the Beneficent, the Merciful." 21-28

So, O Prophet, go on admonishing (them). By the grace of your Lord, you are neither a soothsayer nor mad.[22] 29

Do they say, "He is a poet for whom we are awaiting the adverse turn of fortune?"[23] Say to them, "Yes, wait; I too shall wait with you."[24] Do their minds command them to do so, or, are they a people who have transgressed all limits?[25] 30-32

Do they say, "This man himself has forged this Qur'ān" The fact is that they do not want to believe.[26] Let them then produce a discourse like it, if they are true in what they say.[27] 33-34

Have they been created without a Creator? Or, are they their own creators? Or, have they created the heavens and the earth? The fact is that they lack faith.[28] 35-36

Do they possess the treasures of your Lord? Or, is it they who control them?[29] 37

Do they have a ladder by climbing which they overhear what goes on in heavens? Then let any of them who has overheard bring a clear proof. Is Allah to have daughters and you sons?[30] 38-39

Do you ask them for any rewards that they are weighed down under a load of debt?[31] 40

41 Do they have the knowledge of the unseen realities whereby they may be writing down?[32]

42 Do they intend to devise a plot?[33] (If so,) the plot shall recoil upon the disbelieves themselves.[34]

43 Do they have a god other than Allah? Exalted is Allah above what they associate with Him.[35]

44-47 Even if they saw fragments of the sky falling down, they would say, "this is a mass of clouds advancing."[36] Therefore, O Prophet, leave them to themselves till they meet that Day of theirs wherein they shall be struck down, the Day when neither shall their own plotting avail them anything nor shall anyone else come to their rescue. And even before that there awaits the wrongdoers another torment, but most of them do not know.[37]

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considering it seriously they are disputing it only for fun and amusement. Their discussions of the Hereafter are not meant to understand the reality, but only to amuse themselves, and they do not at all realize the fate for which they are destined.

10. That is, "When the Messengers in the world warned you of this Hell, you said that it was only by magic that they were fooling you. Now say: Is this Hell which you are facing mere magic, or you still do not see that you have actually met with the same Hell which was being foretold to you?"

11. "The righteous": the people who believed in the news given by the Prophets and who safeguarded themselves in the world itself and refrained from thoughts and deeds that doom man to Hell.

12. There seems to be no need to mention a person's being saved from Hell after it has been said that he will be admitted to Heaven, but at several places in the Qur'ān these two things have been mentioned separately because a person's being saved from Hell is by itself a great blessing. And the words, "their Lord shall save them from the torment of Hell", is an allusion to the truth that man's being saved from Hell is possible only through Allah's grace and bounty; otherwise human weaknesses cause such flaws to occur in everyone's work that if Allah does not overlook them by His grace and instead decides to subject him to accountability, none can save himself from His punishment. That is why although entry into Paradise is a great bounty from Allah, his being saved from Hell is no less a mercy.

13. Here, the word "with relish" contains vast meaning in itself. In Paradise whatever a man receives, he will have it without any labour and toil. There will be no question of its sustenance in short supply. Man will not have to spend anything for it. It will be precisely according to his desire and choice and taste. In whatever quantity and whenever he will desire it, it will be made available. He will not be staying there as a guest that he may feel shy of asking for something, but everything will be the reward of his lifelong deeds and the fruit of his own labours. His eating and drinking anything will not cause any illness nor will he eat for satisfying hunger or for survival but only for the sake of enjoyment. Man will be able to obtain as much pleasure from it as he pleases without the fear of indigestion, and the food eaten will not produce any filth. Therefore, the meaning of eating and drinking "with relish" in Paradise is much more vast and sublime than what is understood by it in the world.

14. For explanation, see E.N.'s 20, 29 of Sūrah As-Sāāffāt, and E.N. 42 of Ad-Dukhān.

15. This theme has already been mentioned in Sūrah Ar-Ra'd: 23 and Al Mu'min: 8 above, but here a greater good news has been given. In the verse of Sūrah Ar-Ra'd only this much was said: "They will enter into them (Gardens) along with the righteous from among their forefathers, wives and descendants," and in Sūrah Al-Mu'min: "The angels ask forgiveness for the believers; they say Our Lord...(admit therein also) of their parents and wives and children who are righteous." Here, what has been said in addition is: If the children had been following in the footsteps of their forefathers in faith, they will be joined with them in Paradise even though they might not deserve, on the basis of their deeds, the same high rank which the elders would attain on the basis of their superior faith and deeds, and this joining will not be of the nature of occasional visits and meetings but they will be lodged permanently with them in Paradise as is borne out by the words: *alḥaqnā bi-him*. For the sake of further satisfaction it has been stated: "In order to be joined with their offspring the parents will not be lowered and reduced in rank, but in order to be joined with their elders the rank of the children will be enhanced and exalted".

Here, it should be borne in mind that this news has been given in respect of the children who on reaching maturity voluntarily decided to affirm faith and of their own free will followed in the footsteps of their righteous forefathers. As for those of the children of a believer, who might have died even before reaching maturity, there cannot be any question of belief or disbelief, obedience or disobedience, for they will be admitted to Paradise automatically and will be lodged along with their parents to be a comfort of the eyes for them.

16. Here, the metaphor of *rahn* (pledge) is very meaningful. If a person takes a loan from somebody, and the creditor keeps some article belonging to the debtor as a pledge with himself as a guarantee for the payment of his right, the debtor cannot redeem his pledge unless he pays off the debts; and if he does not redeem his pledge within the fixed time limit, the pledged article stands forfeited. The nature of the affair between man and God has been compared here to this very situation. The provisions, powers, capabilities and authority that God has granted man in the world are a debt that the Master has given to His servant, and as a guarantee for this debt the self of man is a pledge with Allah. If man by employing the provisions and the powers and authority in the right way earns the good by which the debt can be paid off, he will redeem the pledged thing, i.e. his own self, otherwise it will be forefeited. This thing has been said immediately after the preceding verse because even though the righteous believers may themselves be the people of a very high rank, their children cannot redeem their pledge unless they redeem their self by their-own labour and effort. The earning of the forefathers cannot redeem the children. However, if the children are able to redeem themselves by virtue of their faith in some degree by following their righteous forefathers in their footsteps, it would then be Allah's grace and bounty that in Paradise He may exalt them from lower ranks to be joined with their parents in the higher ranks. The good done by the forefathers can benefit the children only so far, but if by their own deeds they deserve Hell, it is not possible that they may be admitted to Paradise for the sake of the forefathers. Another thing that can be deduced from this verse is that the less righteous children's being joined with their more righteous forefathers is not in reality the result of the life-work of the children but of their forefathers'. They by virtue of their deeds will deserve the grace that their children be joined with them in order to be a comfort of the eyes for them. That is why Allah will not lower their ranks to join them with their children but will exalt the children's ranks to be joined with them, so that the perfection of Allah's blessings on them is not marred by the distress that they may suffer on account of the remoteness of their children far away.

17. In this verse, there is the mention of providing the dwellers of Paradise with every kind of meat generally, and in Sūrah Al-Wāqi'ah it has been said: "They will be served with the flesh of fowls." We do not know what exactly will be the nature of this flesh. But just as in some expressions of the Qur'ān and in some *Aḥādith* it has been said about the milk of Paradise that it will not have been drawn from the udders of animals, and about the honey of Paradise it has been said that it will not have been produced by the bees, and about the wine of Paradise it has been said that it will not have been distilled from rotten fruit, but these things will flow out of the springs into the canals by the power of Allah, so it can be argued by analogy that this flesh too will not be obtained from slaughtered

animals but this too will be a natural product. The God Who can produce milk and honey and wine directly from earthly substances can also produce tasty flesh of every kind from the same substances, which should even surpass the flesh of animals in taste and delight. (For further explanation, see E.N. 25 of Sūrah Aṣ-Ṣaāffāt, E.N.'s 21 to 23 of Sūrah Muḥammad).

18. That is, the wine of Paradise will not intoxicate that they should get drunk and talk nonsense, or use abusive language, or conduct and behave indecently as drunkards. (For further explanation, see E.N. 27 of As-Sāaffāt).

19. Here, the word used is *ghilmān-ul lahum* and not *ghilmān-u-hum*. If *ghilmān u-hum* had been used, it would have meant that their servants in the world would be made their servants in Paradise too; whereas whoever from the world goes to Paradise, will go there on the basis of his own work and entitlement, and there is no reason that after his entry in Paradise he may be made a servant of the same master whom he had been serving in the world. But it can also be that a servant on account of his deeds may attain a higher rank than his master in Paradise. Therefor, by using *ghilmān ul-lahum* no room has been left for this suspicion. This word provides the explanation that these will be the boys who will be exclusively appointed for their service in Paradise. (For further explanation, see E.N. 26 of Sūrah Aṣ-Ṣāāffāt).

20. That is, "We were not heedless and living a care-free life of ease and comfort, but we were always on our guard lest we should commit an evil for which we may be held accountable before God." Here, the mention of "...living among our kinsfolk, in fear and dread," in particular, has been made for the reason that man commits evil mostly when he is deeply engrossed in arranging ease and comfort for his children and trying to make their future secure and happy. For the same purpose he earns forbidden things by forbidden means, usurps the rights of others and makes evil plans. That is why the dwellers of Paradise will say to one another: "That which particularly saved us from the evil of the Hereafter was that while living among our families we did not think so much of arranging the pleasures of life and a splendid future for them as for avoiding for their sake those methods and means that might ruin our life in the Hereafter and that we should not lead our children also on to the way that might make them worthy of the torment of Allah.

21. The word *samūm* in the original means hot, scorching wind; here it implies the waves of hot wind that will be arising from Hell.

22. After depicting a scene of the Hereafter the address now turns to the obduracies of the disbelieves of Makkah with which they were resisting the message of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). This verse though apparently addressed to the Holy Prophet is actually meant for the disbelievers through him.

Whenever he spoke of Resurrection and the gathering together of mankind, and accountability, and meting out of rewards and punishments, and Heaven and Hell and recited the verses of the Qur'ān in support thereof, with the claim that he received that information from Allah and that it was Allah's Word that had been revealed to him, their leaders and religious guides and depraved people neither listened to him seriously themselves nor wanted that the other people should pay any attention to him. Therefore, they would sometimes taunt him saying that he was a sorcerer, or that he was a poet, or that he was a madman, or that he fabricated those strange things himself and presented them as Revelations from Allah only in order to impress the people. They thought that by passing such remarks against him they would be able to create suspicions among the people about him and would thus render his preaching ineffective and vain. About this it is being said: "O Prophet, the truth in fact is the same that has been presented from the beginning of the Sūrah to this point. If these people call you a sorcerer and a madman on account of these things, you should not take it to heart but should go on arousing the people from their heedlessness and warning them of the reality, for by the grace of God you are neither."

The word *kāhin* (sorcerer) in Arabic is used for an astrologer, fortune teller and a wise man. In the pre-Islamic days of ignorance it was a full-fledged profession. The sorcerers claimed, and the credulous people thought and believed, that they knew the destinies of the people, or they had a special link with the spirits, devils and jinn through whom they came to know of the unseen realities. If a thing was lost, they could tell where it lay; if a theft occurred somewhere, they could tell who the thief was; and they could foretell destinies. People came to them, and they would tell them unseen things in exchange for gifts and offerings. They would sometimes visit the towns and villages and would cry about their profession so that the people might approach them. They had a way and manner and appearance of their own by which they became easily recognisable. The language they used also differed from the common speech of the people. They would utter rhymed and rhythmical sentences with a peculiar accent and modulation and generally used vague and ambiguous sentences from which every person could draw his own meaning. The Quraish chiefs in order to deceive the common people accused the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) of sorcery only for the reason that he was giving the news of the realities that are hidden and his claim was that an angel from God came to reveal that news to him, and the Word of God that he was presenting was also rhymed. But no one in Arabia could be deceived by this accusation because no one was unaware of the sorcerers' profession and their general way and appearance and their language and business. Everyone knew what they did, why the people visited them, what they told them, what sort of modulated sentences they uttered and what subject-matter they

contained. Then, above all, it could not be that a sorcerer would rise with a creed that went against the prevalent beliefs of the nation and would exert himself preaching it continuously at his own risk. Therefore, this accusation of sorcery did not apply to the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace) at all and no one in Arabia who had any common sense could be deceived by it.

Likewise, the disbelievers of Makkah also accused him of madness only for their own satisfaction, just as some shameless Western scholars of the present day in order to satisfy their malice and enmity against Islam, claim that, God forbid, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had epileptic fits and whatever he uttered during those fits was taken as Divine Revelation by the people. No sensible person in those days regarded such absurd accusations as worthy of any attention, nor can anyone today who reads the Qur'ān and studies the wonderful feats of the Holy Prophet's leadership and guidance believe that these were the product of epileptic fits.

23. That is, "We are waiting for him to be afflicted with calamity so that we be rid of him." Probably they thought that since Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) was opposing their deities and denying their supernatural powers, he would fall under the curse of some deity, or some bold devotee of a god would put an end to him.

24. This can have two meanings: (1) "I would also see whether this desire of yours is fulfilled or not ;" and (2) "I am also waiting to see who goes to his doom, you or I."

25. In these two sentences, the opponents' entire propaganda has been nailed, and they have been completely exposed. The reasoning briefly is this: These Qaraish chiefs and elders pose as very wise people, but does their intellect tell them that they should call a person a poet when he is not a poet, and call him a madman when he is well-known for his wisdom among the people, and dub him a sorcerer when he has not the remotest association with sorcery ? Then, if you are passing these judgments only on the basis of intellect and reason, you should have passed one judgement, and not so many contradictory judgements simultaneously. After all, how can one and the same man be a poet and a madman and a sorcerer at one and the same time ? If he is mad, he can then neither be a sorcerer nor a poet. If he is a sorcerer, he cannot be a poet, and if he is a poet, he cannot be a sorcerer, for the language and diction and themes of poetry are quite different from the language and themes of sorcery. The one who knows the distinctions between poetry and sorcery cannot possibly call and regard the same discourse both as poetry and as sorcery at one and the same time. Therefore, it is evident that these contradictory things are being said against the Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) not on the basis of intellect and reason but only due

to obduracy and stubbornness, and the big chiefs of the nation blinded by their prejudice and enmity are levelling absurd charges which no serious person can regard as worthy of any attention. (For further explanation, see E.N. 104 of Al-A'rāf, E.N. 3 of Sūrah Yūnus, E.N.'s 53, 54, of Banī Isrā'īl, E.N.'s 130, 131, 140, 142-144 of Ash-Shu'arā'.

26. In other words, it means this: The Quraish who think that Muḥammad (upon whom be peace) himself is the author of the Qur'ān know it in their innermost hearts that it cannot be his word, and those others also whose mother tongue is Arabic not only clearly feel that it is far more sublime and superior to human speech but any one of them who knows Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) personally cannot ever suspect that this is actually his own word and speech. Therefore, the thing plainly is that those who ascribe the authorship of the Qur'ān to the Holy Prophet do not, in fact, wish to affirm faith. That is why they are inventing false excuses one of which is this excuse. (For further explanation, see E.N. 21 of Yūnus, E N. 12 of Al-Furqān, E N. 64 of Al-Qaṣaṣ, E.N.'s 88,89 of Al-Ankabūt, E.N.'s 1 to 4 of As-Sajdah, E.N. 54 of Ḥā Mīm As- Sajdah, E.N.'s 8 to 10 of Al-Aḥqāf).

27. That is, "Not only is the Qur'ān not the word of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and bessings) but the truth is that it is not human at all; it is beyond the power of man to compose and produce it. If you think it is human, you are challenged to produce the like of it, which should also be human." This challenge had been given not only to the Quraish but to all the disbelievers of the world first of all in this verse. Then it was repeated thrice in Makkah and then finally in Madīnah. (Please see Yūnus: 38, Hūd: 13, Banī Isra'īl: 88, Al-Baqarah: 23). But no one could dare meet this challenge of the Qur'ān at that time, nor has any one else had so far the ability to compose and produce a man-made work like the Qur'ān.

Some people because of lack of understanding the real nature of this challenge, say that not to speak of the Qur'ān, no one has the power to write prose or compose poetry in the style of another person. Homer, Rūmī, Shakespeare, Goethe, Ghālib, Tagore, Iqbāl, all are unique in their styles: it lies in no one's power to produce poetry like theirs by imitation. Those who give this answer to the challenge of the Qur'ān are, in fact, involved in the misunderstanding that the meaning of "let them then produce a discourse like it", is a challenge to man to compose and write a book like the Qur'ān, in the style of the Qur'ān; whereas it does not imply any resemblance in literary style but it implies this: Bring a book of the same sublimity and quality and rank, not only in Arabic but in any language of the world, that may be regarded as a match for the Qur'ān in respect of the characteristics for which the Qur'ān is a miracle. The following are in brief some

of the main characteristics because of which the Qur'ān has been a miracle before as it is a miracle today:

(1) The Qur'ān is the highest and most perfect model of the literature of the language in which it was revealed. No word and no sentence in the entire Book is sub-standard. Whatever theme has been presented in it, has been presented in the most appropriate words and in the most suitable style. One and the same theme has been presented over and over again but every time in a new style avoiding the defect of repetition everywhere. The entire Book, from the beginning to the end, is set in the choicest words, like chiselled and polished gems, that cannot be replaced. The discourses are so impressive that no one who knows the language, even if he is a disbeliever, can help being moved to ecstasies on hearing them. Even after 1,400 years this Book is still the model of Arabic literature and no other Arabic book can approach it in literary excellence not to speak of equalling it. Not only this: this Book has so controlled the Arabic language that even after the passage of 14 centuries the standard of this language's beauty and eloquence is the same that had been set by it; whereas in such long periods languages change out of recognition. No other language of the world has remained in the same state in so far as its spelling and diction, idiom, rules of language and usages are concerned. But it is only the power of the Qur'ān that has held the Arabic language in place; each idiom of it is still in use in Arabic literature; its literature is still the standard literature of Arabic; and in writing and speech still the same language is regarded as good Arabic that had been used in the Qur'ān 1,400 years ago. Is there any man-made book in any language of the world that bears the same characteristics?

(2) This is the one single Book in the world, which has so extensively and so universally influenced mankind's thoughts, morals, civilization and way of life as has no precedent in history. In the first instance, its impact changed one nation; then that nation rose and changed a major part of the world. No other Book has proved to be so revolutionary. This Book has not remained confined to writing on paper but in the practical world its each word has formed and moulded ideas and thoughts and built up a lasting civilization. Its influence has continued being operative for 1,400 years and its circle of influence and impact is still expanding every day.

(3) The theme that this Book discusses is the most extensive theme which comprehends the whole Universe, from eternity to eternity. It deals with the reality of the Universe, its beginning and end, its system and law. It tells us to who is the Creator and Controller and Disposer of this Universe, what are His attributes, what are His powers, and what is that essence and basis on which He has established this entire system of the

world. It specifies man's position and his place which he cannot change. It tells what is the right and correct way of thought and action for man in view of this place and position, which corresponds to the reality, and what are the wrong ways which clash with the reality. Then to prove why the right way is right and the wrong ways wrong, it presents countless arguments from various phenomena of the earth and heavens, from different aspects of the system of the Universe, from man's own self and existence and from man's own history. Besides, it also tells how and for what reasons man adopts the wrong ways, by what means he can find out the right Way, which has always been one and shall remain one, and how he has been guided to it in every age. It does not merely point to the Right Way but presents a plan of the complete system of life for following that way, which contains a detailed and systematic code concerning beliefs, morals, purification of self, worship, social life, civilization, economy, politics, justice, law and every other aspect of human life. Furthermore, it also tells in full detail what are the results of following this Right Way and of adopting the wrong ways in this world and what consequences of this will appear in the Next World after the present system of the world has come to an end. It depicts fully the coming to an end of the present world and of the establishment of the New World; it gives every detail of the process of change; it portrays the Next World and describes fully how man will find a totally new life there, how his deeds from worldly life will be subjected to accountability, what things he will be questioned about, how his complete record, which he will not be able to deny or dispute, will be placed before him, what strong evidence will be produced in proof thereof, why the culprits will be punished and the righteous rewarded, what rewards will be bestowed on the righteous and in what forms will the culprits suffer the evil consequences of their misdeeds. The way this vast theme has been dealt with in this Book is not of the nature of some conclusions that its Author might have reached from some syllogistic premises but its nature is that its Author has the direct knowledge of the Reality.

He sees everything happening from eternity to eternity. All the realities are manifest for Him and the entire Universe is like an open book before Him. He sees the entire life of mankind, from its origin to its end, even beyond the present life into the second life simultaneously, and He is guiding man not on the basis of conjecture and speculation but on the basis of knowledge. Not a single truth that He presents as knowledge has been proved to be wrong so far. The concept of the Universe and Man that He presents fully explains all the phenomena and events and can become the basis of research in every branch of knowledge. His Word contains the answers to all the ultimate problems of philosophy and natural and social sciences, and they are so coherent and consistent logically that a perfect,

consistent and comprehensive system of thought can be built on their basis. Then from the practical aspect the guidance that He has given to man about various spheres of life is not only highly rational and pure but countless men have been living according to it in actual fact in different parts of the earth for 1,400 years and have found it by experience to be the only valid way. Is there any manmade book of this unique quality present in the world, or has ever been, which may be produced to match this Book ?

(4) This Book was not composed and written all at once and presented before the world, but a reformatory movement was started with some basic and initial instructions, and then for 23 years as the movement passed through different stages of its development its parts were presented by the tongue of the leader, sometimes as lengthy discourses and sometimes as brief sentences, as the conditions and requirements of the occasion demanded. Then, when the Mission was brought to completion, these parts that had been issued at different times were compiled in the form of a complete Book which has been known by the name of the "Qur'ān". The leader of the movement states that these discourses and sentences are not his original work but were sent down to him by the Lord of all Creation. If a person asserts that they are the original work of the leader himself, he should produce a precedent from history to prove his contention. He should show whether it is possible that the speeches made and the instructions given by a man at different times while leading a powerful collective movement for years continuously by himself in different capacities, sometimes as a preacher and teacher of morals, sometimes as a leader of an oppressed class, sometimes as the ruler of a state, sometimes as the commander of a fighting army, sometimes as a victor, sometime as a law-giver and legislator, could form a complete and consistent and comprehensive system of thought and action, which should be free from every contradiction and inconsistency, which should appear to be dominated by the same central idea and pattern of thought, which should show that the leader has been building up a universal system of belief and action on the basis of the same foundation of his message with which he had started his work, and which should be a system each element and part of which is in perfect harmony and consistency with the other parts. Then the one who reads this collection of the discourses with a discerning eye cannot help realizing that the founder of the movement at the outset had a full plan of the movement in view till the last stage, and it never happened that a new idea might have struck him at some later stage, which was unknown to him before, or which he had to change later. If ever there has been a man of this calibre, his name should be made known to the world.

(5) The leader who had been made to give these discourses and speak these sentences did not suddenly emerge from a hidden place to present these before the people nor would disappear after he had done so. He had lived his life in full view of society before he started his movement as well as continued to live in the same society after that till his last breath. The people were well aware of the language and style of his conversation and speech. *Hadīth* still presents a major part of it and by going through it the people who know Arabic can easily find out even today what was the leader's own style of speech and conversation. His contemporaries who spoke his language felt then and those who know Arabic feel today that the language and the style of this Book is very different from the language and style of that leader. So much so that whenever in the midst of a sermon delivered by the leader there occurs a sentence or two of this Book, the distinction between the two becomes all too obvious. The question is: Has a man in the world ever had the power, or can he have the capability, that he should go on conversing in two absolutely different styles consistently for years at a stretch and it should never become known that the two separate styles are, in fact, of one and the same person? It is possible that one may succeed in such affectation temporarily but it is not at all possible that for twenty-three years continuously a person should have a different diction and style when he recites the Revelations from Allah and a wholly different diction and style when he speaks in his personal capacity.

(6) The leader while leading and guiding the movement met with different sorts of conditions. Sometimes he became the target of ridicule, humiliation and severe persecution of his fellow-countrymen and the people of his own tribe and clan; sometimes his companions were so harshly treated that they were compelled to emigrate from the country; sometimes the enemies plotted against his life; sometimes he himself had to leave his home and city; sometimes he had to pass through extreme poverty and starvation; sometimes he had to fight wars successively in which he suffered defeats as well as won victories; sometimes he overcame the enemies and the same enemies who had persecuted him, came before him humbled: sometimes he achieved such power which few people in the world have been able to achieve. Under all such conditions a person's feelings obviously cannot remain the same. When on these different occasions the leader spoke in his personal capacity, his words and speeches carried the clear impression of his personal feelings, which naturally arise in the heart of a man on such occasions. But the discourses that were heard from him as Allah's Revelations in these different conditions, are wholly devoid of human feelings. At no place can even an acute observer and critic point out the play of human feelings in them.

(7) The vast and comprehensive knowledge that is contained in this Book, is not possessed even by any of the distinguished learned people of this 20th century, not to speak of the people of Arabia and Rome and Greece and Iran of those days. The condition today is that after a man has spent his whole life-time studying a branch of philosophy or a natural or social science, he comes to know what ultimate problems of his field of study are, but when he studies the Qur'ān seriously he comes to know that this Book contains a clear answer to those problems. This thing is not confined to any one branch of knowledge but holds good in respect of all those sciences which have anything to do with the Universe and Man. How can one believe that 1,400 years ago an un-lettered man in the Arabian desert possessed such deep insight into every branch of knowledge, and he had thought over every basic problem and thought out an absolute and final answer to it?

Although there are several other aspects also of the Qur'ān's being a miracle, if a man ponders over these few aspects only he will realize that the Qur'ān's being a miracle is far more evident today than it was at the time when it was revealed and if Allah so wills, it will go on becoming more and more evident and manifest as time passes till the Day of Resurrection.

28. The questions asked before this were meant to make the disbelievers of Makkah realize that whatever they were saying to belie the Prophet Muḥammad's claim to prophethood was highly irrational. Now in this verse the question put before them is: "What is that in the message of the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) which you find so embarrassing for yourselves? He just says that Allah is your Creator and you should only serve Him. Why are you annoyed at it? Are you your own creators? Or, has this vast Universe been created by you? If neither of these is true, and you admit that your Creator as well as the Creator of the Universe is Allah alone, why do you then feel angry with the person who tells you that Allah alone is worthy of your service and worship? What you should actually feel angry about is that you worship him who is not your Creator instead of Him Who is your real Creator. You admit with the tongue that Allah alone is your Creator as well as of the whole Universe, but if you really had faith in this, you would not have so maligned the person who was calling you to Allah's service.

This was such a pungent and stinging question that it shook the polytheistic faith to the root. Bukhārī and Muslim have related that after the Battle of Badr, Jubair bin Muṭ'im came to Madīnah to negotiate release of the Quraish prisoners of war on behalf of the people of Makkah. The Holy Prophet at that time was leading the Maghrib Prayer, and he recited this Sūrah aṭ-Ṭūr in it. Muṭ'im himself has stated that when the Holy Prophet reached this place, his heart seemed

to be leaving his breast. One main reason of his embracing Islam afterwards was that Islam had taken root in his heart on hearing these very verses on that day.

29. This is an answer to the objection of the disbelievers of Makkah who said: Why had Muhammad, son of 'Abdullah (upon whom be peace), only been appointed a Messenger? The answer implies this: "Somebody in any case had to be appointed a Messenger in order to deliver the people from their error of serving others than Allah. Now the question is: Who should decide whom Allah should appoint His Messenger and whom He should not ? If these people refuse to accept the Messenger appointed by Allah, it means that either they regard themselves as the masters of the world or they presume that the world may belong to Allah, but it should be ruled by them."

30. A detailed reasoning has been compressed into these brief sentences. It means to say: "If you deny what the Prophet says, then what means have you got to know the reality? Has any of you had access to the heavens where he found out directly from Allah or His angels that the beliefs on which you have based your religion are absolutely in accord with the reality ? If someone makes this claim he should come forward and tell as to when and how he had access to the heavens and what knowledge he has brought from there. If you do not make any such claim, then consider how ridiculous is your creed that you assign children to Allah, Lord of the worlds, and that too daughters, whom you regard as disgraceful for yourselves. Without knowledge you are wandering in the darkness of such errors and turning hostile to the person who bring you the light of knowledge from God."

31. The question is actually directed to the disbelievers. It means: "If the Messenger had a selfish motive and had been exerting only for a personal gain from you, there would be a rational ground for you to avoid him. But you yourselves know that he is absolutely selfless in his invitation and is exerting himself only for your own benefit and well-being. Then, how is it that you are not even inclined to listen to him with a cool mind ?" There is also a subtle hint in this question. Like the self-styled guides and guardians of religious shrines of the world, the religious guides, priests and scholars of the polytheists of Arabia also were engaged in a religious business. In view of the same, this question was put before them: "On the one hand, these dealers in religion are openly receiving gifts and offerings and fees for every religious service from you; on the other, a person who has ruined his trading business, is trying to show you the right way with highly rational arguments, absolutely selflessly. Is it not sheer senselessness that you shun him but run after them?"

32. That is, "What particular knowledge do you have to refute the truths that the Messenger is presenting before you, which you may present with the

claim that you directly know the realities hidden behind the phenomenal world? Do you really have the knowledge that God is not One, but all those whom you have set up as deities also possess godly attributes and powers ? Have you really seen the angels and found that they are girls, and, God forbid, are begotten of God? Do you really know that the Revelation has neither come to Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), nor it can come to any man, from God ? Do you really have the knowledge that no Resurrection will take place, that there is going to be no life after death, that there will be no Hereafter when man will be subjected to accountability and rewarded or punished according to his deeds? If you claim to possess any such knowledge, can you give in writing that you are belying what the Prophet says about the unseen realities on the ground that you have peeped into the hidden realities and seen that the truth is not that which the Prophet presents." Here, one may express the misgiving that if in response to this, those people had given this in writing, in their stubbornness, will not this reasoning have become meaningless? But this misgiving is misplaced because even if they had given this in writing on account of their stubbornness, the common people of society in which this challenge had been given openly were not blind: everyone of them would have understood that the writing had been given out of sheer stubbornness, and no one, in fact, was refuting what the Prophet said on the basis that he had the knowledge that it was false.

33. The allusion is to the secret plots that the disbelievers of Makkah used to devise in their meetings in order to defeat the mission of the Holy Prophet (on whom be Allah's peace) and to kill him.

34. This is one of the clear prophecies of the Qur'ān. In the initial stage at Makkah when the Holy Prophet (on whom be Allah's peace) had no apparent power and support with him except a handful of the ill-equipped Muslims and the whole nation was opposing and resisting him relentlessly, the confrontation between Islam and disbelief appeared to be utterly unequal. No one at that time could imagine that after a few years the tables would be turned on disbelief. Rather, the superficial observer could safely predict that the strong opposition of the Quraish and entire Arabia would at last put an end to the message of Islam. But even under those conditions, a challenge was thrown to the disbelievers and they were told in clear terms: "You may devise whatever plots you wish in order to frustrate this message, they will all recoil upon you, and you will never succeed in defeating and putting an end to it."

35. That is, "The fact of the matter is that those whom they have set up as deities, are not in fact the deities, and *shirk* is wholly an unreal thing. Therefore, the person who has risen with the message of *Tauḥīd* has the power of the truth with him; and those who are supporting *shirk* are indeed fighting for the imaginary. How will then *shirk* win in this conflict?"

[Contd. on p. 192

حِيْنَ تَقُوْمُ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَمِنَ الَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْهُ وَاِدْبَارَ النُّجُوْمِ ﴿٤٩﴾

48-49 Endure patiently, O Prophet, until your Lord's judgement comes to pass[38]: you are in Our sight.[39] Glorify your Lord with His praise when you rise up,[40] and glorify Him in the night too,[41] and also at the retreat of the stars.[42]

Contd. from p.[191]

36. This is meant to expose the stubbornness of the Quraish chiefs, on the one hand, and to console the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and his Companions, on the other. The Holy Prophet and his Companions wished that those people should be shown such a miracle by Allah as should convince them of the truth of his Prophethood. At this, it has been said: Whatever miracle they might see with their eyes, they will in any case misinterpret it and invent an excuse for persisting in disbelief, for their hearts are not at all inclined to believe. At several other places also in the Qur'ān their this stubbornness has been mentioned, e.g. in Sūrah Al-An'ām: 111, it has been said: "Even if we had sent down the angels to them and made the dead speak with them and ranged all the things of the world before them (as a proof thereof), they would still have disbelieved," and in Sūrah Al-Ḥijr: 15: "Even if We had opened a gate for them in heaven, and they had begun to ascend through it during day time, they would have said: "Our eyes have been dazzled; nay, we have been bewitched."

37. This is a repetition of the same theme that has already occurred in As-Sajdah: 21 above: "Even in this world We shall make them taste (one or the other) lesser torment before that greater torment; maybe they desist (from their rebellious attitude)." That is, "We shall send down personal and national disasters from time to time in the world to remind that there is above them a superior power which is deciding their destinies and none has the power to change its decisions. But the people who are involved in ignorance have neither learnt any lesson from these events before nor will learn any lesson in the future. They do not understand the meaning of the disasters and calamities occurring in the world. Therefore, they explain them away in every such way as takes them further and further away from the reality, and their mind never turns to any explanation, which might make the error of their atheism or polytheism manifest to them. This same thing has been explained by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) in a *Ḥadīth*, thus: "The example of a hypocrite who falls ill and then gets well, is of the camel whom the masters tied, but it did not understand why they had tied it, and when they untied

it, it did not understand why they had untied it." (Abū Da'ūd: *Kitāb al-Janā'iz*). For further explanation, see E.N. 45 of Al-Anbiyā', E.N. 66 of An-Naml, E.N.'s 72, 73 of Al-'Ankabūt).

38. Another meaning can be: Remain firm and steadfast in carrying out the Command of your Lord."

39. That is, "We are watching over you and have not left you alone."

40. There can be several meanings of this and possibly all may be implied:

First, "Whenever you rise from a meeting, you should rise glorifying and praising Allah." The Holy Prophet himself acted upon this as well as instructed the Muslims that they should glorify and praise Allah when they rose from a meeting. Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī and Hākim have related, on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, that the Holy Prophet said: "If a person sat in a meeting in which much controversy took place, and he pronounced the following words before rising, Allah would forgive whatever passed in the meeting: *subḥānaka Allāhumma wa bi-ḥamdika, ashhadu-al lā-ilāha illā Anta, astaghfiruka wa utūbu ilaika:* "O Allah, I glorify You with Your praises: I bear witness that there is no deity but You: I seek Your forgiveness and offer repentance before You."

The second meaning is: "When you get up from bed, glorify your Lord with His praise." The Holy Prophet acted upon this himself and had also taught his Companions that they should pronounce the following words when they got up after sleep: *"La ilāha ill-Allah waḥda-hū lā sharīka lahū, lahul mulku wa lahul-ḥamdu wa huwa 'alā kulli shai'in Qadīr. Subḥān-Allāh-i wal-ḥamdu-lillāhi wa lā ilāha ill-Allāh, wallāhu Akbar, wa lā ḥaula wa lā quwwata-illā-billāh."* (Musnad Aḥmad, Bukhārī, on the authority of 'Ubādah bin aṣ-Ṣamit).

Its third meaning is: "When you stand up for the Prayer, begin it with the praise and glorification of Allah." Accordingly, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) taught that the Prayer should be begun, after the first *takbīr*, with the following words: *Subḥānak-Allāhumma wa bi-ḥamdi-ka wa tabārak asmuka wa ta'āla jadduka wa lā ilāha ghairuka:* "Glory be to You, O Allah, and I praise You. Blessed is Your name, and You are exalted. There is no god other than You."

Its fourth meaning is: "When you rise to invite others to Allah, begin your invitation with the praise and glorification of Allah." That also was the Holy Prophet's constant practice, and he always began his addresses with the praise and glorification of Allah Almighty.

Commentator Ibn Jarīr has given still another meaning of it, and it is this: "When you get up after the midday nap, offer the Prayer and this implies the Ẓuhr

Prayer."

41. This implies the Maghrib, the 'Ishā' and the Tahajjud Prayers as well as the recital of the Qur'ān and the remembrance of Allah.

42. "Retreat of the stars" implies the early hours of the morning when the stars set and they lose their lustre on the appearance of dawn. This is the time of the Fajr Prayer.


LIII
AN-NAJM
اَلنَّجم

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

LIII

AN-NAJM

اَلنَّجْم

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah derives its name from the very first word *wan-Najm*. This title also does not relate to the subject-matter, but is a name given to the Sūrah as a symbol.

Period of Revelation

According to a Tradition related by Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd and Nasā'ī, on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, the first Sūrah in which a verse requiring the performance of a *sajdah* (prostration) was sent down, is Sūrah An-Najm. The parts of this *Ḥadīth* which have been reported by Aswad bin Yazīd, Abū Isḥāq and Zuhair bin Mu'āwiyah from Ḥaḍrat Ibn Mas'ūd indicate that this is the first Sūrah of the Qur'ān, which the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had publicly recited before an assembly of the Quraish (and according to Ibn Mardūyah, in the Ka'bah) in which both the believers and the disbelievers were present. At the end, when he recited the verse requiring the performance of a *sajdah* and fell down in prostration, the whole assembly also fell down in prostration with him,

and even those chiefs of the polytheists who were in the forefront of the opposition to the Holy Prophet (peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) could not resist falling down in prostration. Ibn Mas'ūd (may Allah be pleased with him) says that he saw only one man, Umayyah bin Khalaf, from among the disbelievers, who did not fall down in prostration but took a little dust and rubbing it on his forehead said that that was enough for him. Later, as Ibn Mas'ūd relates, he saw this man being killed in the state of disbelief.

Another eye-witness of this incident is Ḥaḍrat Muṭṭalib bin Abī Wadā'ah, who had not yet become a Muslim. Nasā'ī and Musnad Aḥmad contain his own words to the effect: "When the Holy Prophet recited the Sūrah An-Najm and performed the *sajdah* and the whole assembly fell down in prostration along with him, I did not perform the *sajdah*. Now to compensate for the same whenever I recite this Sūrah I make sure never to abandon its performance."

Ibn Sa'd says that before this, in the Rajab of the 5th year of Prophethood, a small group of the Companions had emigrated to Abyssinia. Then, when in the Ramaḍān of the same year this incident took place the news spread that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had recited Sūrah An-Najm publicly in the assembly of the Quraish and the whole assembly, including the believers as well as the disbelievers, had fallen down in prostration with him. When the emigrants to Abyssinia heard this news they formed the impression that the disbelievers of Makkah had become Muslims. Thereupon, some of them returned to Makkah in the Shawwāl of the 5th year of Prophethood, only to learn that the news was wrong and the conflict between Islam and bisbelief was raging as furiously as before. Consequently, the second emigration to Abyssinia took place, in which many more people left Makkah.

Thus, it becomes almost certain that this Sūrah was revealed in the Ramaḍān of 5th year of Prophethood.

Historical Background

The details of the period of revelation as given above point to the conditions in which this Sūrah was revealed. During the first five years of his appointment as a Prophet, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had been extending invitation to Allah's Religion

by presenting the Divine Revelations before the people only in private and restricted meetings and assemblies. During this whole period he could never have a chance to recite the Qur'ān before a common gathering openly, mainly because of the strong opposition and resistance from the disbelievers. They were well aware of how magnetic and captivating was the Holy Prophet's personality and his way of preaching and how impressive were the Revelations of the Qur'ān. Therefore, they tried their best to avoid hearing it themselves and to stop others also from hearing it and to suppress his invitation by false propaganda by spreading every kind of suspicion against him. For this object, on the one hand, they were telling the people that Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had gone astray and was now bent upon misleading others as well; on the other, they would raise an uproar whenever he tried to present the Qur'ān before the people so that no one could know what it was for which he was being branded as a misled and misguided person.

Such were the conditions when the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) suddenly stood up one day to make a speech in the sacred precincts of the Ka'bah, where a large number of the Quraish had gathered together. Allah at that time made him deliver this discourse, which we have now in the form of the Sūrah An-Najm with us. Such was the intensity of the impression that when the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) started reciting it the opponents were so completely overwhelmed that they could not think of raising any disorder, and when at the conclusion he fell down in prostration, they too fell down in prostration along with him. Later they felt great remorse at the weakness they had involuntarily shown. The people also started taunting them to the effect that whereas they had been forbidding others to listen to the Qur'ān, that day not only had they themselves listened to it, with complete absorption, but had even fallen down in prostration along with Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). At last, they had to invent a story in order to get rid of the people's taunt and ridicule. They said: "After he had recited *afara'ait-ul-Lāta wal-'Uzzā wa Manāt ath-thālitha-al-ukhrā,* we heard from Muḥammad the words: *tilk-al-gharāniqatal-'ulā, wa anna shafā'atu-hunna latarjā:* 'They are exalted goddesses: indeed, their intercession may be expected.' From this we understood that Muḥammad had

returned to our faith." As a matter of fact, only a mad person could think that in the context of this Sūrah the sentences they claimed to have heard could have any place and relevance. (For details, please see E.N.'s 96 to 101 of Sūrah Al-Ḥajj).

Subject-Matter and Topics

The theme of the discourse is to warn the disbelievers of Makkah about the error of the attitude that they had adopted towards the Qur'ān and the Prophet Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

The discourse starts in a way as if to say: "Muḥammad is neither deluded nor gone astray, as you are telling others in your propaganda against him, nor has he fabricated this teaching of Islam and its message, as you seem to think he has. In fact, whatever he is presenting is nothing but Revelation which is sent down to him. The verities that he presents before you, are not the product of his own surmise and speculation but realities of which he himself is an eye-witness. He has himself seen the Angel through whom this knowledge is conveyed to him. He has been directly made to observe the great Signs of his Lord: whatever he says is not what he has himself thought out but what he has seen with his own eyes. Therefore, your disputing and wrangling with him is just like the disputing and wrangling of a blind man with a man of sight over a thing which the blind man cannot see but he can see."

After this, three things have been presented in their successive order:

First, the listeners have been made to understand that: "The religion that you are following is based on mere conjecture and invented ideas. You have set up a few goddesses like Lāt and Manāt and 'Uzzā as your deities, whereas they have no share whatever in divinity. You regard the angels as the daughters of Allah, whereas you regard a daughter as disgraceful for your own selves. You think that these deities of yours can influence Allah in your favour, whereas the fact is that all the angels together, who are stationed closest to Allah, cannot influence Him even in their own favour. None of such beliefs that you have adopted, is based on knowledge and reason, but are wishes and desires for the sake of which you have taken some whims as realities. This is a grave error. The right and true religion is that which is in conformity to the reality, and the reality is never subject to the people's wishes and

desires so that whatever they may regard as a reality and truth should become the reality and truth. Speculation and conjecture cannot help to determine as to what is according to the truth and what is not; it is knowledge. When that knowledge is presented before you, you turn away from it, and brand the one who tells you the truth as misguided. The actual cause of your being involved in this error is that you are heedless of the Hereafter. Only this world is your goal. Therefore, you have neither any desire for the knowledge of reality, nor you bother to see whether the beliefs you hold are according to the truth or not.

Secondly, the people have been told that: Allah is the Master and Sovereign of the entire Universe. The righteous is he who follows His way, and the misguided he who has turned away from His way. The error of the misguided and the righteousness of the righteous are not hidden from Him. He knows whatever everyone is doing: He will requite the evil with evil and the good with good. The final judgement will not depend on what you consider yourself to be, and on tall claims you make of your purity and chastity but on whether you are pious or impious, righteous or un-righteous, in the sight of God. If you refrain from major sins, He in His mercy will overlook your minor errors.

Thirdly, a few basic principles of the true Religion which had been presented hundreds of years before the revelation of the Qur'ân in the Books of the Prophets Abraham and Moses have been re-iterated so that the people did not remain involved in the misunderstanding that the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had brought some new and novel religion, but they should know that these are the fundamental truths which the former Prophets of Allah have always been presenting in their respective ages. Besides, the same Books have been quoted to confirm the historical facts that the destruction of the 'Ād and the Thamūd and of the people of the Prophets Noah and Lot was not the result of accidental calamities, but Allah has destroyed them in consequence of the same wickedness and rebellion from which the disbelievers of Makkah were not inclined to refrain and desist in any case.

After presenting these themes and discourses the Sūrah has been concluded, thus: "The Hour of Judgement has approached near at hand, which no one can avert. Before the occurrence of that Hour you are

being warned through Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the Qur'ān in the like manner as the former people had been warned before. Now, is it this warning that you find novel and strange? -which you mock and ridicule? which you turn away from and cause disorder so that no one else also is able to hear what it is ? Don't you feel like weeping at your folly and ignorance? Abandon this attitude and behaviour, bow down to Allah and serve Him alone!"

This was that impressive conclusion hearing which even the most hardened deniers of the Truth were completely overwhelmed, and when after reciting these verses of Divine Word the Holy Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) fell down in prostration, they too could not help falling down in prostration along with him.

سُوْرَةُ النَّجْمِ مَكِّيَّةٌ
اٰيَاتُهَا ٦٢ رُكُوْعَاتُهَا ٣

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

وَالنَّجْمِ اِذَا هَوٰى ۝١ مَا ضَلَّ صَاحِبُكُمْ وَمَا غَوٰى ۝٢ وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوٰى ۝٣
اِنْ هُوَ اِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُّوْحٰى ۝٤ عَلَّمَهٗ شَدِيْدُ الْقُوٰى ۝٥ ذُوْ مِرَّةٍ ؕ فَاسْتَوٰى ۝٦ وَهُوَ
بِالْاُفُقِ الْاَعْلٰى ۝٧ ثُمَّ دَنَا فَتَدَلّٰى ۝٨ فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ اَوْ اَدْنٰى ۝٩ فَاَوْحٰٓى
اِلٰى عَبْدِهٖ مَآ اَوْحٰى ۝١٠ مَا كَذَبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَاٰى ۝١١ اَفَتُمٰرُوْنَهٗ عَلٰى مَا يَرٰى ۝١٢
وَلَقَدْ رَاٰهُ نَزْلَةً اُخْرٰى ۝١٣ عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهٰى ۝١٤ عِنْدَهَا جَنَّةُ الْمَاْوٰى ۝١٥
اِذْ يَغْشَى السِّدْرَةَ مَا يَغْشٰى ۝١٦ مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغٰى ۝١٧ لَقَدْ رَاٰى مِنْ اٰيٰتِ
رَبِّهِ الْكُبْرٰى ۝١٨ اَفَرَءَيْتُمُ اللّٰتَ وَالْعُزّٰى ۝١٩ وَمَنٰوةَ الثَّالِثَةَ الْاُخْرٰى ۝٢٠ اَلَكُمُ
الذَّكَرُ وَلَهُ الْاُنْثٰى ۝٢١ تِلْكَ اِذًا قِسْمَةٌ ضِيْزٰى ۝٢٢ اِنْ هِيَ اِلَّآ اَسْمَآءٌ سَمَّيْتُمُوْهَآ
اَنْتُمْ وَاٰبَآؤُكُمْ مَّآ اَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطٰنٍ ؕ اِنْ يَّتَّبِعُوْنَ اِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَمَا
تَهْوَى الْاَنْفُسُ ۚ وَلَقَدْ جَآءَهُمْ مِّنْ رَّبِّهِمُ الْهُدٰى ۝٢٣ اَمْ لِلْاِنْسَانِ مَا تَمَنّٰى ۝٢٤
فَلِلّٰهِ الْاٰخِرَةُ وَالْاُوْلٰى ۝٢٥ وَكَمْ مِّنْ مَّلَكٍ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ لَا تُغْنِيْ شَفَاعَتُهُمْ شَيْئًا
اِلَّا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ اَنْ يَّاْذَنَ اللّٰهُ لِمَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَيَرْضٰى ۝٢٦ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ
بِالْاٰخِرَةِ لَيُسَمُّوْنَ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةَ تَسْمِيَةَ الْاُنْثٰى ۝٢٧ وَمَا لَهُمْ بِهٖ مِنْ عِلْمٍ ؕ اِنْ
يَّتَّبِعُوْنَ اِلَّا الظَّنَّ ۚ وَاِنَّ الظَّنَّ لَا يُغْنِيْ مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْئًا ۝٢٨ فَاَعْرِضْ عَنْ
مَّنْ تَوَلّٰى ۙ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَلَمْ يُرِدْ اِلَّا الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا ۝٢٩ ذٰلِكَ مَبْلَغُهُمْ مِّنَ
الْعِلْمِ ؕ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيْلِهٖ ۙ وَهُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِمَنِ اهْتَدٰى ۝٣٠

LIII

AN-NAJM

سُورَةُ النَّجْمِ

Verses: 62 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

By the Star[1] when it set, your companion[2] is neither gone astray nor deluded.[3] He does not speak of his own desire; it is but a Revelation which is sent down to him.[4] One mighty in power has taught him,[5] who is endowed with great wisdom.[6] He stood poised in front when he was on the uppermost horizon.[7] Then he drew near and hung suspended above, two bow-lengths away or even closer.[8] Then he revealed to the servant of Allah whatever he had to reveal.[9] The heart belied not what he saw.[10] Do you then dispute with him concerning what he sees (with the eyes)? 1-12

And he saw him once again by the farthest lote-tree, nearby which is the Garden of Repose.[11] At that time the lote-tree was covered with that which covered it.[12] The sight was neither dazzled nor it exceeded the limit,[13] and he saw of the greatest Signs of his Lord.[14] 13-18

Now tell: Have you ever pondered over the reality of this Lāt, and this 'Uzzā, and another, the third goddess, Manāt?[15] Are the sons for you and the daughters for Allah?[16] This would indeed be an unfair division! These are nothing but mere names which you and your forefathers have invented. Allah has sent down no authority for them.[17] The fact is that the people are following mere conjecture and the lusts of their souls,[18] even though right guidance has come to them from their Lord.[19] Is it that whatever man desires should become the truth for him?[20] To Allah belongs the present and the Hereafter. 19-25

How many an angel is there in the heavens! Their intercession can avail nothing until Allah permits it in favour of whomever He wills and is pleased with.[21] But those who do not believe in the Hereafter, 26-28

name the angels with the names of goddesses,[22] although they have no knowledge of this. They follow mere conjecture,[23] and conjecture can avail nothing against the Truth.

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1. In the original the word *"an-najm"* has been used. Ibn 'Abbās, Mujāhid and Sufyān Thaurī opine that it implies the Pleides. Ibn Jarīr and Zamakhsharī have held this same interpretation as preferable, for in Arabic when the word *an-najm is* used absolutely it usually implies the Pleides. Suddī says that it implies Venus; and Abū 'Ubaidah, the grammarian, holds that here the word *an-najm* has been used generically so as to express this idea: "When the day dawned, and the stars set." In view of the context we are of the opinion that this last interpretation is more preferable.

2. "Your Companion" implies the Holy Messenger of Allah (upon whom be peace) and the addressees are the Quraish. The word *Ṣāḥib* as used in the original means a friend, a companion, a close associate. Here, making mention of the Holy Prophet by the word *Ṣāḥib-u-kum* (your Companion) instead of "Our Messenger" is very meaningful. This is meant to make the people of the Quraish realize: "The person being mentioned is no stranger to you: he is not an outsider whom you may not be knowing or recognizing already. He is a man of your own clan and tribe; he lives and moves among you; even your children know who and what he is, what is his character, what are his dealings, what are his ways and habits and characteristics, and how he has passed his life among you so far. If some one of you were to say an improbable thing about him, there would be a thousand men among you who knew him, who could see for themselves whether what was said actually applied to him or not."

3. This is the thing for which an oath has been sworn by the setting star or stars. "Going astray" means a person's adopting a wrong way being unaware of the right way, and "being deluded" means his adopting the wrong way knowingly and consciously. The verse means: "Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) is a well-known man among you. Your accusation that he has gone astray, or is misguided, is utterly wrong. In fact, he is neither gone astray nor misguided." Here, the propriety of swearing by the setting stars is that in the darkness of the starry night a person cannot see the things of his surroundings clearly, and from their vague appearances can form wrong judgements about them, e.g. he may take a tree for a ghost in the dark, a string for a snake, a rock in the sand for a beast of prey. But when the stars have set and the day has dawned, everything appears before man in its real form and shape, and there remains no doubt whatever about the reality of anything. The same is the case also of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) among you. His life and personality is not hidden in darkness, but is manifest like the bright dawn.

You are aware that this "companion of yours" is a right-minded, wise and sagacious man. How can somebody from among the Quraish have the misunderstanding that he has gone astray? You also know how well-intentioned and honest and righteous person he is. How can one of you form the view that he has knowingly adopted a crooked way not only for himself but has started inviting others also to the same falsehood?

4. It means this: "The things for which you accuse him of having gone astray or been misled and deceived, have neither been fabricated by himself nor motivated by any selfish desire on his part, but they have been sent down, and are being sent down, to him by God. He did not intend to become a Prophet of his own desire so that he might have laid a claim to Prophethood in order to satisfy his desire, but when Allah appointed him to that office through Revelation, then only did he rise to preach his mission and to tell you that he had been appointed God's Messenger to you. Likewise, this invitation to Islam, this teaching of the doctrine of *Tauḥīd*, this news about the gathering together of all mankind on the Day of Resurrection and their accountability, the truths that he is presenting about the Universe and Man and the principles of leading a pure life, are not a philosophy propounded by himself, but the knowledge of all this has been bestowed on him by Revelation. Likewise, this Qur'ān that he recites before you, is also not of his own composition but it is Divine Word which is sent down to him by Revelation."

Here, the question arises: To which of the words spoken by the Holy Prophet do Allah's Words: "He does not speak of his own desire; it is only a Revelation which is sent down to him," apply? Do they apply to everything that he spoke, or to some of his words and not to others? The answer is: As far as the Qur'ān is concerned, the Divine Words apply to it most completely. As for the other words, apart from the Qur'ān, which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) spoke, they could inevitably be of three kinds:

First, those words which he employed for preaching religion and inviting others to Allah, and for explaining the themes, teachings and commands of the Qur'ān, or for giving admonition and instruction to the people to fulfil the object for which the Qur'ān was revealed. In this regard, obviously nobody can have the doubt that, God forbid, he fabricated these things from his own mind. In these matters, his position, in fact, was of the official interpreter of the Qur'ān and of Allah's authorised representative. Although these things were not revealed to him literally as the Qur'ān was revealed; yet these were necessarily based on the same knowledge that he had been given by Revelation. The only difference between the Qur'ān and these was that the Qur'ān, both in word and in meaning, was entirely from Allah, and in these other things the meanings were those taught by Allah and the words those which he himself employed to express those meanings. On the basis of this very distinction, the Qur'ān has been described as *waḥī-jalī* (manifest

Revelation) and the Holy Prophet's other sayings as *waḥī-khafī* (concealed Revelation).

The second kind of the words were those which the Holy Prophet spoke in connection with the struggle of raising Allah's Word and his services for establishing Islam. In this regard, he had to perform countless duties of different kinds as the leader and guide of the Muslim community. In this many a time he took counsel with his Companions as well, and followed their advice instead of his own view. On being asked he sometimes told them that he was expressing a particular view not under Allah's command but as his personal opinion, and on several occasions it so happened that he said something on the basis of his own opinion and later an instruction came down against it from Allah. None of the things of this nature that he said or did could be based on a selfish motive. As for the question whether these sayings were based on Divine inspiration, the answer is that except for the things in regard to which he made it explicit that they were not based on Divine command, or about which he took counsel with his Companions and accepted their advice, or with regard to a thing against which Allah sent down an instruction after he had said or done something on the basis of his personal judgement, all other things were based on concealed Revelation *(waḥī khafī)* just like the things of the first kind. For the office of the leader and guide of the Islamic Movement and the chief of the believing community and the ruler of the Islamic State, which he held, was not self-invented or bestowed by the people, but he had been appointed to it by Allah, and whatever he said and did in carrying out the duties of this office, his position in it was of the representative of Divine Will. In this matter, whatever he said on the basis of his personal judgement, his judgement in those matters was approved by Allah, and was, derived from the light of the knowledge which Allah had blessed him with. That is why whenever his personal judgement was even slightly turned away from Allah's pleasure, it was immediately rectified by manifest Revelation *(waḥī jalī)*. This rectification of some of his personal judgements is itself a proof that all the rest of his religious judgements and interpretations were precisely in accordance with Divine Will.

The third kind of the things were those he said concerning common matters of life as a man, which had nothing to do with the duties of Prophethood, which he said before being appointed a Prophet as well as continued saying even after having been appointed a Prophet. About this kind of the things it should be understood at the outset that there was no dispute with the disbelievers concerning them. They had not accused him of being a misled and misguided person because of these but because of the first two kinds of the things. These things were not disputed and therefore could not become the cause of a verse from Allah. But although they were not the subject of any dispute, yet the fact is that in this private aspect of his life also never did the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) utter a

word that was opposed to the truth, but at all times, under all conditions, his words and deeds remained within the bounds that Allah had prescribed for living his life as a Prophet and righteous man. Therefore, the light of Revelation shone in that sphere as well. This same thing has been reported from the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) in some authentic *Aḥādīth*. In Musnad Ahmad a Tradition has been related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, saying that the Holy Prophet once said: "I never say anything but what is true and right." A Companion said, "O Messenger of Allah, you say things sometimes in jest also." The Holy Prophet replied: "Indeed, I never say anything but the truth." According to Musnad Aḥmad and Abū Da'ūd, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin 'Āṣ is reported to have said: "I used to write down whatever I heard from the sacred tongue of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) so as to preserve it. The people of the Quraish forbade me to do this, saying: 'You are writing down everything whereas the Holy Prophet is a man; he sometimes says things in the state of anger too'. At this I gave up writing. Afterwards when I mentioned this before the Holy Prophet, he said: 'You should continue writing; By Him in Whose hand is my life, never have I said anything but the truth'." (For a complete discussion of this question, see my book *Tafhīmāt* vol. I, Article: Prophethood and Its Injunctions).

5. That is, "There is no human being who teaches him this, as you seem to think, but he obtains this knowledge through a supernatural source." According to some people, "mighty in power" implies Allah Himself, but a great majority of the commentators are agreed that it implies the Angel Gabriel (upon whom be peace). This same view has been reported from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, Qatādah, Mujāhid and Rabī' bin Anas. Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Kathīr, Razī, Ālūsī and others also have adopted this very view. Shah Walīyullah and Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī also have followed this same view in their translations. And the fact is that from the other explanations of the Qur'ān itself also this very thing is confirmed. In Sūrah Takvīr it has been said: "This indeed is the Word of a noble Messenger, who has great power and high rank with the Owner of the Throne: there he is obeyed and held as trustworthy. And (O people of Makkah), your Companion is not mad. He has seen that Messenger on the bright horizon." (vv. 19-23). Then, in Sūrah Al-Baqarah: 97, the Angel has been mentioned by name through whom this teaching had been revealed on the heart of the Prophet: "Say to them: Whoever is enemy to Gabriel should understand that he has, by Allah's Command, revealed to your heart the Qur'ān." If these verses are read with this verse of Sūrah An-Najm, there remains no doubt that here "mighty in power" implies the Angel Gabriel and not Allah. More about it to follow.

Here, some people express the doubt as to how the Angel Gabriel can be regarded as the Holy Prophet Muḥammad's teacher. For this would mean that he

was the teacher and the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) his pupil, and this would place him above the Holy Prophet in rank. But this suspicion is misplaced, because Gabriel did not impart instruction to the Holy Prophet from any personal knowledge of his own, which might give him superiority over the Holy Prophet. Allah, in fact, had made him a means of conveying knowledge to the Holy Prophet, and he was the Holy Prophet's teacher in the metaphoric sense for being only a medium of instruction. That does not give him any superiority whatever. To quote an example: After the Prayer was prescribed five times a day, Allah sent Gabriel (peace be upon him) to teach the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) the correct times of the Prayers, and he led him in the Prayers five times daily for two days. This has been related in Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī and Mu'waṭṭā and other collections of the *Aḥādīth*, with authentic chains of reporters, and in this the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) himself has explained that he was the follower and Gabriel his leader in the Prayers. But his being made the leader only for the purpose of instruction does not mean that he was superior to the Holy Prophet in rank.

6. Ibn 'Abbās and Qatādah take *dhū-mirra-tin* of the Text in the meaning of beautiful and grand. Mujāhid, Ḥasan Baṣrī, Ibn Zaid and Sufyān Thaurī say that it means strong and powerful. Sa'īd bin Musayyab has expressed the opinion that it means wise. In a *Ḥadīth* the Holy Prophet has used this word in the sense of healthy and sound. In Arabic usage this word is used in the meaning of sound in judgement, wise and learned also. Allah has chosen this word for Gabriel (peace be upon him) here because he possesses both intellectual and physical powers to the highest degree. We have adopted only one of these meanings in the translation, for his physical powers have been mentioned in the preceding sentence.

7. The horizon means the eastern edge of the sky where the sun rises and the day dawns. The same has been referred to as *ufuq mubīn* (bright horizon) in Sūrah Takvīr: 23. Both the verses make it explicit that when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) saw Gabriel (peace be upon him) for the first time, he had appeared on the eastern horizon of the sky; and there are several authentic Traditions which show that at that time he was in his real shape in which Allah has created him. We shall quote all such Traditions below.

8. That is, "After appearing on the uppermost edge of the sky, Gabriel started advancing towards the Prophet till he reached and hung suspended above him in mid air. Then he bent down to him and came within just two bow-lengths or even closer." The commentators generally have taken *qāba qausain* in the meaning of "two bow-lengths", but Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās and Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd have taken *qaus* in the meaning of a *dhirā'* (an arm-length, cubit), and have interpreted the words *kāna qāba qausain*, saying that the distance between them was reduced to only two arm-lengths. And since all bows are not

equal in length, the approximate distance has been expressed by "two bow-lengths away or even closer."

9. The sentence *fa auḥa illā 'abd-i-hī mā auḥā* of the Text can have two translations: (1) "He revealed to His (Allah's) servant whatever he revealed"; and (2) "He (Allah) revealed to His own servant whatever He revealed." According to the first translation, the meaning would be: Gabriel revealed to the servant of Allah whatever he had to reveal"; according to the second: "Allah revealed through Gabriel to His servant whatever He had to reveal." The commentators have given both these meanings; the first meaning, however, fits in better with the context, and the same has been reported from Ḥadrat Ḥasan Basri and Ibn Zaid. Here, the question may be asked: "How can the pronoun of *'abd-i-hī* turn to Allah instead of to the subject of *auḥā*, whereas Allah has nowhere been mentioned from the beginning of the Sūrah to this place ?" The answer is that wherever it becomes apparent from the context that the antecedent of a pronoun refers to a particular person, the pronoun turns to him automatically whether it has been mentioned before or not. There are several instances of this available in the Qur'ān itself. In Sūrah Al-Qadr: 1, Allah says: "We have sent it down in the Night of Glory." There is no mention of the Qur'ān in this sentence, but the context explicitly shows that the antecedent of the pronoun is the Qur'ān. At another place Allah says: "If Allah were to seize the people because of their misdeeds, He would not leave any creature (unpunished) on its back." In this sentence there is no mention of the earth anywhere, but the context clearly shows that "its back" implies "the earth's back". In Sūrah Yā Sīn: 69, it has been said: "We have not taught him poetry, nor does poetry behove him." Here, there is no mention of the Holy Prophet, neither before this sentence nor after it, yet the context is explicit that the antecedent of the pronouns is the Holy Prophet himself. In Sūrah Ar-Rahmān: 26, it has been said: "Whatever exists on it shall perish." There is no mention of the earth either before or after it, but the style clearly shows that the pronoun of *'alaihā* turns to it. In Sūrah Al-Wāqi'ah: 35, it has been said: "We shall have created them especially." There is no noun or pronoun before or after it to which the pronoun of *hunna* may be referring. It is apparent from the context that it signifies the women of Paradise. Thus, as *auḥā illā 'abd-i hī* cannot at all mean that Gabriel revealed to his servant, the meaning necessarily would be that "Gabriel revealed to the servant of Allah", or that "Allah revealed to His own servant through Gabriel."

10. That is, "As the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be peace) observed all this in broad daylight in the waking condition, with open eyes, his heart did not deem it was a delusion, or that it was a jinn or a devil, who had appeared before him, or that it was an imaginary figure, or a vision that he was seeing while awake, but his heart fully confirmed what his eyes saw. He did not

for a moment doubt that it was the Angel Gabriel and the Message he was conveying was indeed God's Revelation to him."

Here, the question arises: How is it that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) did not entertain any doubt at all concerning such a wonderful and extraordinary observation, and he confirmed with full faith that whatever his eyes saw was an actual fact and not an imaginary figure, nor a jinn or devil ? When we consider this question deeply we are led to five reasons for it:

First, that the external conditions in which this observation was made, testified to its truth and validity. The Holy Prophet did not observe this in darkness, or in a state of meditation, or in a vision, or in a sleep-like condition, but the day had dawned and he was fully awake, and he was seeing the whole scene in the broad daylight in the open with his own eyes precisely in the way as one sees the other things in the world. If doubt is cast on this, then whatever we see in the day time, e.g. rivers, mountains, men, houses, etc., also would become doubtful and illusory.

Second, that the Holy Prophet's own internal condition also testified to its validity. He was in his full senses. He had no idea whatever in his mind that he should observe, or that he was going to observe, such a thing. His mind was absolutely free from such a thought and any longing for it, and in this state he met with this experience suddenly. There was no room for doubting that the eyes were seeing an actual scene, but that an imaginary thing had appeared before his eyes.

Third, that the being who had appeared before him in that condition was so marvellous and magnificent, so beautiful and bright, that neither had he ever had any concept of such a being before that he could take it for a product of his own imagination, nor could a jinn or a devil have such an appearance that he would have taken him for a being other than an angel. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullāh bin Mas'ūd has reported that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said: "I saw Gabriel in the shape that he had six hundred wings." (Musnad Aḥmad). In another Tradition Ibn Mas'ūd has further explained that each single wing of Gabriel (on whom be peace) was so extensive that it seemed to be covering the whole horizon (Musnad Aḥmad). Allah Himself has described him as *shadīd al-quwā* (one mighty in power) and *dhū-mirra* (one endowed with great wisdom).

Fourth, that the teaching that the being was imparting also testified to the validity of the observation. The Holy Prophet had no concept of the knowledge that he received suddenly through him, a knowledge that comprehended the realities and truths of the whole Universe. About it he could not have the doubt that it consisted of his own ideas which were being set and arranged by his own mind. Likewise, there was no ground for thinking either that it was Satan who was imparting that knowledge to him and thus deluding him, for it is not for Satan that

he should teach, nor can he ever teach, the doctrine of *Tauḥīd* to man as against polytheism and idol-worship, that he should warn of the accountability of the Hereafter, that he should create contempt against ignorance and its practices, that he should invite people to moral excellences, and should exhort a person not only to accept that teaching himself but should also rise to eradicate polytheism, injustice, wickedness and sin from the world and replace these evils by the virtues of *Tauḥīd*, justice, equity and piety.

The fifth and by far the most important reason is that when Allah chooses a certain person for His Prophethood, He cleanses his heart of doubts and suspicions and evil suggestions and fills it with faith and conviction. In this state no hesitation or vacillation is caused in his mind about the validity of whatever his eyes see and his ears hear. He accepts with complete satisfaction of the heart every truth that is revealed to him by his Lord, whether it is in the form of an observation that he is made to witness with the eyes, or in the form of knowledge which he is inspired with, or in the form of a Revelation that is recited to him literally. In all these cases the Prophet is fully aware that he is absolutely safe and secure against Satanic interference of every kind, and whatever he is receiving in any form is precisely and definitely from his Lord. Like all God-given feelings this sense and feeling of the Prophet also is a certainty which does not admit of any misunderstanding. Just as the fish has a God-given sense of being a swimmer, the bird of being a bird, and the man of being a man, and there can be no likelihood of any misunderstanding in this regard, so has the Prophet also a God-given sense of his being a Prophet. He does not even for a moment entertain the doubt that he has perhaps been involved in the misunderstanding of being a Prophet.

11. This is about the Holy Prophet's second meeting with Gabriel (upon whom be peace) in which he appeared before him in his real shape and nature. The place where this meeting took place has been described as *Sidrat-al-muntahā*, along with which it has been said that nearby it is located *Jannat al ma'vā* (Garden of Repose).

Sidrah in Arabic means the lote-tree and *muntahā* the extreme edge or limit. Thus, literally, *sidrat al-muntahā* means "the lote-tree that is situated on the extreme edge or limit". 'Allāma Ālūsī in his *Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī* has explained it thus: "At this the knowledge of every learned man comes to an end; whatever is beyond it is known to none but Allah." Almost the same explanation of it has been given by Ibn Jarīr in his commentary, and by Ibn Kathīr in *An-Nihāyah fī Gharīb al-Ḥadīth wal-Āthār*. It is difficult for us to know what kind of a lote-tree it is that is situated at the farthest end of this physical world and what is its nature and state. These are the mysteries of the Divine Universe which are incomprehensible for

us. In any case, it is some such thing for which there was no more appropriate word than *"sidrah"* in human language, in the sight of Allah.

"Jannat al-ma'vā" literally means "the *Jannat* (Garden) that is to be an abode." Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣri says that this is the same *Jannat* which the believers and righteous will be given in the Hereafter, and from this same verse he has argued that that *Jannat* is in the heavens. Qatādah says that this is the *Jannat* in which the souls of the martyrs are kept; it does not imply the *Jannat* that is to be given in the Hereafter. Ibn 'Abbās also says the same but adds that the *Jannat* to be granted to the believers in the Hereafter is not in the heavens but here on the earth.

12. That is, "its Splendour and Glory exceeds all description. The Divine Glory and effulgence was such as can neither be conceived by man nor can any human language depict it adequately.

13. That is, "On the one hand, the Holy Messenger of Allah was so firm and steadfast that even in the Presence of the great Divine Splendour and Glory his sight was not dazzled and he went on gazing at it with great composure. On the other, he was in such complete control of himself and so exclusively attentive that he kept his mind and his sight focussed upon the object for which he had been summoned, and he did not let his sight wander to any side like a spectator's to have a glimpse of the wonderful objects present there. This can be understood by the example of a person who gets an opportunity to be present in the court of a mighty and powerful king, where he comes across such glory and splendour that had never even been conceived by him before. Now, if he be a shallow person, he would be struck with amazement, and if he be un-initiated in the court etiquette, he would become heedless of the royal presence and would turn his gaze to every side to look at the embellishments of the court. But a noble, reverent and dutiful person will neither be stupefied and confounded, nor will become lost in witnessing the court, but will present himself with full dignity and will keep his mind concentrated on the object for which he had been summoned in the royal court. This very virtue and quality of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been esteemed in this verse.

14. This verse clearly states that the Holy Prophet had not seen Allah but His wonderful Sings. Even according to the context, this second meeting also took place with the same being with whom the first meeting had taken place. Therefore, one will have to admit that neither the one whom he had first seen on the uppermost horizon was Allah nor he whom he saw afterwards by the farthest lote-tree was Allah. Had he seen Allah Almighty on either occasion it would have been a great thing and must certainly have been mentioned here explicitly. About the Prophet Moses it has been said in the Qur'ān that he had besought to see Allah

and the reply given was: *Lan tarānī* "You cannot see Me." (Al-A'rāf 143). Now, obviously if this honour that was not granted to the Prophet Moses, had been granted to the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), it would by itself have been such an important thing which must have been stated in clear words. But we see that nowhere in the Qur'ān has it been said that the Holy Prophet had seen his Sustainer and Lord. But in Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl also, where mention has been made of the event of *Mi'rāj* (Ascension), it has been said that "We had transported Our servant...so that We may show him some of Our Signs" *(li-nurīya-hū min āyāt-i nā)*, and here in connection with his visit at *Sidrat al-muntahā* also it has been said: "He saw of the greatest Signs of His Lord" *(laqad ra'ā min āyāt-i Rabb-i-hil kubrā)*.

In view of these reasons apparently there was no ground for the dispute whether the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) on both these occasions had seen Allah Almighty or the Angel Gabriel (on whom be peace). But, the reason that has given rise to this dispute is that the traditions of *Ḥadīth* differ on this question. Below we reproduce in their sequence the *Aḥādīth* that have been reported from the different Companions in this regard:

(1) Traditisons of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah:

Hadrat Masrūq has stated in *Kitāb at-Tafsīr* of Bukhārī asked Hadrat 'Ā'ishah: O mother of the faithful! Had Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) seen his Lord and Sustainer? She replied: Your question has terrified me. Why do you forget that if a person lays claim to three of the things, he would lay a false claim ? (The first of these things that Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah mentioned was): Whoever among you says that Muḥammad (upon whom *be* Allah's peace) had seen his Lord and Sustainer, tells a lie. Then Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah recited these verses: *Lā tudriku-hul-abṣār* "Eyes cannot comprehend Him;" and: *Mā kāna li-bashar-in anyyukallima-hullāh-u illā waḥy-an au min-warā-i-ḥijāb-* in' *au yursila rasūl an fayū-ḥiya bi-idhni hi mā yashā-u:* "It is not given to any mortal that Allah should speak to him, face to face; He speaks either through Revelation (secret instruction), or from behind a curtain, or He sends a messenger (an angel), who by Allah's Command, reveals whatever He wills." (Ash-Shūrā: 51). Then she said: "The Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) in fact had seen Gabriel (on whom be peace) in his real shape twice."

A part of this *Ḥadīth is* also found in Bukhārī (chapter 4 of *Kitāb at-Tauhīd)* And in the tradition that Bukhārī has cited from Masrūq in *Kitāb Bidā'al-Khalq*, he states: "Hearing this thing from Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, I asked: What would then Allah's words, *Thumma danā fa-tadallā, fa-Kāna qāba qausain-i au adnā*, mean ? She replied: This refers to Gabriel; he always appeared before the Holy

Prophet in human shape, but on this occasion he had appeared before him in his real shape and nature and the whole horizon was filled with him."

In Muslim *(Kitāb al-Īmān, Bābu fī Dhikr Sidrat al-muntahā)* this conversation between Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah and Masrūq has been related in greater detail, its most important part being this: "Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah said: The one who claims that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) had seen his Lord and Sustainer imputes a lie to Allah. Masrūq says: I was leaning back. Hearing this I sat up and said: Mother of the faithful, do not make haste: Has not Allah said: *wa laqad ra'a-hu bil-ufuq-il mubīn*? and *laqad ra'ā-hu nazlat-an ukhrā* ? Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah replied: I was the first one in this *Ummah* who inquired of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) about this. He had replied: "It was Gabriel (on whom be peace). I have never seen him in his real shape and form in which Allah has created him except on these two occasions. On these two occasions I saw him descending from the heavens and his great presence was covering the whole space between the earth and the heavens."

Ibn Mardūyah has related this tradition of Masrūq, thus: "Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah said: I was indeed the first person who asked the Holy Prophet: Did you ever see your Lord and Sustainer? He replied: No, I had only seen Gabriel descending from the heavens."

(2) Traditions of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd:

Bukhārī *(Kitāb at-Tafsīr)*, Muslim *(Kitāb al Īmān)* and Tirmidhī *(Abwāb at-Tafsīr)* contain a tradition on the authority of Zirr bin Ḥubaish, saying that Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd gave this commentary of *fa-kāna qāba qausain-i au adnā*: "The Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) saw Gabriel (on whom be peace) in the shape that he had six hundred wings."

In the other traditions of Muslim, Zirr bin Ḥubaish has reported this very commentary of *Ma kadhab al-fu'ādu mā ra'ā* and *laqad ra'ā min āyāt-i Rabbi-hil kubrā* from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd.

In Musnad Aḥmad this commentary of Ibn Mas'ūd has been reported by 'Abdur Raḥmān bin Yazīd and Abū Wā'il also besides Zirr bin Hubaish. Furthermore, in Musnad Aḥmad two more traditions of Zirr bin Ḥubaish have been related in which Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd commenting upon *wa laqad ra'a-hu nazlat-an ukhrā, 'inda-sidrat-il muntahā* stated: "The Holy Messenger of Allah said that he saw Gabriel by the lote-tree he had six hundred wings. "Imām Aḥmad has cited a tradition on the same subject, on the authority of Shaqīq bin Salamah also, in which he states that he heard Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd saying that the Holy Prophet himself had said that he had seen Gabriel (on whom be peace) in that shape at *sidrat al-muntahā*.

(3) When 'Aṭā' bin Abī Rabāḥ asked Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah the meaning of the verse *laqad ra'ā-hu nazlat-an ukhrā*, he replied: "The Holy Prophet had seen Gabriel (on whom be peace).": (Muslim: *Kitāb al Imān).*

(4) Imām Muslim has related in *kitāb al-Imān* two traditions of 'Abdullah bin Shaqīq on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abū Dharr Ghifārī, in one of which he says that he asked the Holy Prophet: "Did you ever see your Lord?" The Holy Prophet replied: *Nūr-un annā arā-hu;* and in the other he says that the Holy Prophet gave this answer to his question: *Ra'aitu nūr-an.* Of the first answer of the Holy Prophet Ibn al-Qayyim has given this meaning in his *Zād al-Ma'ād:* "Between me and the sight of my Lord there was Light," and of the second this: "I did not see my Lord but only a Light."

Nasā'ī and Ibn Abī Hātim have reported the saying of Ḥaḍrat Abū Dharr, thus: "The Holy Prophet had seen his Lord with the heart (mind), not with the eyes.

(5) Imām Muslim in his *Kitāb al-Imān* has related this tradition from Ḥaḍrat Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī: "The Holy Prophet said: The sight of no one from among His creatures has reached Allah Almighty."

(6) Traditions of Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās:

According to Muslim, when Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās was asked the meaning of: *Mā kadhab al-fu'ādu mā ar'ā, wa laqad ra'ā hu nazlat-an ukhrā,* he said: "The Holy Messenger of Allah saw his Lord twice with his heart." This tradition is also contained in Musnad Aḥmad.

Ibn Mardūyah has cited this saying of Ibn 'Abbās, on the authority of 'Aṭā' bin Abī Rabāḥ: The Holy Messenger of Allah had not seen Allah with the eyes but with the heart."

Nasā'ī contains a tradition from 'Ikrimah saying that Ibn 'Abbās said "Do you wonder at this that Allah made the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) His friend, blessed Moses with His Word and honoured Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) with His sight?" Ḥākim also has cited this tradition and held it as authentic.

In Tirmidhī, there is a tradition from Sha'bī to the effect that Ibn 'Abbas said in a gathering: "Allah had distributed His Sight and His Word between Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and Moses (upon whom be peace). He spoke to Moses twice, and Muḥammad saw Him twice " Hearing these very words of Ibn 'Abbās, Masrūq had approached Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah with the question "Had Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) seen his Lord?" She had replied: "What you have said has made my hair stand on end." After this the same

dialogue that we have cited above under the tradition of Hadrat 'Ā'ishah took place between Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah and Masrūq.

In one of the traditions reported in Tirmidhī from Ibn 'Abbās, he says: "The Holy Prophet had seen Allah Almighty." In yet another he says: "He had seen Him twice", and in a third one; "He had seen Him with the heart."

In Musnad Aḥmad a tradition from Ibn 'Abbās is to the effect: "The Holy Prophet said: I saw my Lord, the blessed, the exalted." In another tradition he says: "The Holy Messenger of Allah said: Tonight my Lord came to me in the best shape." I think that by this the Holy Prophet meant that he saw Allah Almighty in a vision.

Ṭabarānī and Ibn Mardūyah have related this tradition also from Ibn 'Abbās: "The Holy Messenger of Allah had seen his Lord twice, once with the eyes and the second time with the heart."

(7) Muḥammad bin Ka'b al-Qurẓī states that when some of the Companions asked the Holy Prophet,: "Did you ever see your Lord? he replied: I have seen Him twice with my heart." (Ibn Abī Hātim) Ibn Jarīr has related this very tradition, thus: "He said: I have not seen Him with the eye, but with the heart twice."

(8) A tradition of Ḥaḍrat Anas bin Mālik which Imām Bukhārī has cited in his *Kitāb at-Tauḥīd* in connection with the event of the *Mi'rāj*, on the authority of Sharīk bin 'Abdullah, contains words to the effect: "When the Holy Prophet reached *sidrat al-muntahā*, Allah Almighty drew near him and hung suspended above him till there remained between the Holy Prophet and Him a distance equal to two bow-lengths or even less. Then, what Allah revealed to him included the Command for 50 Prayers." But, besides the objections that Imām Khaṭṭābī, Ḥāfiz Ibn Ḥajar, Ibn Hazm and Hāfiz 'Abdul Haq (author of *Al-Jam' bain al-Ṣaḥīḥain)* have raised in respect of the authenticity and subject-matter of this tradition, the main objection against it is that it clearly contradicts the Qur'ān, for the Qur'ān mentions two separate occasions when the experience of the vision took place, the first initially at the uppermost horizon to which reference has been made in: *Danā fa-tadallā, fa-kāna qāba qausain-i au adnā*, and a second time near *sidrat al muntahā*. But this tradition mixes up the two occasions and presents them both as one occasion of the vision. Therefore, because of its being contradictory to the Qur'ān, it cannot be acceptable in any case.

As for the other traditions that we have cited above, the weightiest among them are those that have been related from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd and Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, for both of them have unanimously reported this saying of the

Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) himself that on neither occasion he had seen Allah but Gabriel (peace be on him), and these traditions fully conform to the explanations and allusions of the Qur'ān. Furthermore, they are also confirmed by the sayings of the Holy Prophet which Ḥaḍrat Abū Dharr and Ḥaḍrat Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī have reported from him. On the contrary the traditions that have been cited from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās in the books of *Hadīth* are self-contradictory. In some he regards both the experiences as a vision with the eyes, in some both as a vision with the heart, in some one with the eyes and the other with the heart, and in some he wholly negates the vision with the eyes. In none of these traditions he has cited any saying of the Holy Prophet himself and where he has cited such a saying, it contains no mention of either of the two experiences stated in the Qur'ān; besides, the explanation of one of his traditions given by the other indicates that the Holy Prophet at some time had seen Allah Almighty not in the waking condition but in a vision during sleep. Therefore, in fact, for the commentary of these verses the traditions ascribed to Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās cannot be held as reliable. Likewise, although the traditions of Muḥammad bin Ka'b al-Qurẓī cite a saying of the Holy Prophet, they do not mention the names of the Companions who might have heard this thing from the Holy Prophet himself. Moreover, in one of them it has been said that the Holy Prophet had clearly denied having seen Allah with the eyes.

15. That is, "You regard the teachings being given to you by Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) as erroneous and falsehood, whereas he is being given this knowledge by Allah, and Allah has made him see with his own eyes the verities to which he is testifying before you. Now consider it for yourself as to how irrational are the beliefs that you are following persistently and as to whom you are causing loss by opposing and resisting the person who is guiding you to the Right Way. In this connection, especially the three goddesses that were worshipped generally by the people of Makkah, Ṭā'if and other parts of Ḥejāz have been taken as an example. About them, they have been asked: Have you ever considered rationally whether they could have even the slightest role in the affairs of the Godhead of the earth and heavens? Or could they bear any relationship whatever with the Lord of the Universe?

The shrine of Lāt was in Ṭā'if and the Banī Thaqīf were so devoted to it that when Abraha was advancing to Makkah with his army of elephants to destroy the Ka'bah, the people only in order to save the temple of their deity had provided the wicked man with guides to lead him to Makkah so that he should spare Lāt, whereas like all the Arabs the people of Thaqīf also believed that the Ka'bah is Allah's House. Scholars have disputed the meaning of Lāt. According to Ibn Jarīr Ṭabarī, it is the feminine gender of Allah, i.e. originally this word was *allahatun* which became al-Lāt. According to Zamakhsharī, it is derived from *lawā yalwī*,

which means to turn to or bow to somebody. As the polytheists turned to it for worship and bowed to it and circumambulated it, it began to be called Lāt. Ibn 'Abbās reads it as *latt* (with a stress on t) and holds it is derived from *latt yalittu*, which means to churn and mix together. He and Mujāhid state that this, in fact, was a man, who lived on a rock near Ṭā'if, and used to entertain the pilgrims to Makkah with barley drinks and food. When he died the people built a shrine to him on the same rock and began to worship him. But this explanation of Lāt, in spite of having been reported on the authority of scholars like Ibn 'Abbās and Mujāhid, is not acceptable for two reasons. First, that in the Qur'ān it has been called Lāt and not Latt; second, that the Qur'ān describes all the three as goddesses, and according to this tradition Lāt was a man, not a woman.

'Uzzā is derived from *'izzat*, and it means the one (female) enjoying veneration and respect. This was the special goddess of the Quraish and her shrine was situated at Ḥurād in the valley of Nakhlah, between Makkah and Ṭā'if. (For the location of Nakhlah, see E.N. 33 of Sūrah Al-Aḥqāf). The people of Banī Shaibān, who were the allies of the Banī Hāshim, were its attendants. The Quraish and the people of other tribes paid visits to it and presented offerings and made sacrifices to it. As for the Ka'bah sacrificial animals were driven to it also and it was held in the highest esteem. Ibn Hishām relates that when Abū Uḥaiḥah was on the point of death, Abū Lahab paid him a visit and found him weeping. Abū Lahab asked, "Why do you weep, Abū Uḥaiḥah ? Are you afraid of death ?—and death is the destiny of everybody !" He said, "By God, I do not weep because of the fear of death, but I am grieved to think as to how 'Uzzā will be worshipped after me." Abū Lahab said, "It was neither worshipped for your sake in your lifetime, nor will it be given up after you have left the world." Abū Uḥaiḥah said, "Now I am satisfied that there are people who will take my place after me."

The shrine of Manāt was situated at Qudaid by the Red Sea between Makkah and Madīnah, and the people of Khuzā'ah and Aus and Khazraj were in particular its great devotees. People visited it as pilgrims, circumambulated it and made offerings and sacrifices before it. In the Ḥajj months as soon as the pilgrims became free from their visit to the Ka'bah and the religious services at Minā and 'Arafāt, they would start raising cries of *"Labbaik, labbaik"* even there for the purpose of visiting Manāt, and the people who intended to go on this second "ḥajj" did not run between the Ṣafā and the Marwah.

16. That is, "You held these goddesses as daughters of Allah, Lord of the worlds, and did not consider while inventing this absurd creed that as for yourselves you regarded the birth of a daughter as disgraceful, and desired to have only male children, but as for Allah you assign to Him only daughters!"

17. That is, "Those whom you call gods and goddesses are neither gods nor goddesses, nor do they possess any attribute of divinity, nor any share whatever in the powers of Godhead. You have of your own whim made them children of God and deities and associates in Godhead. Allah has sent down no authority which you may produce as a proof in support of your presumptions."

18. In other words, the basic causes of their deviation are two: First, that they do not feel any need for the knowledge of reality for the purpose of adopting a creed and relfgion, but make a supposition on the basis of a mere conjecture and then put belief in it as though it were the reality. Second, that they have, in fact, adopted this attitude in order to follow the lusts of their souls: they desire that they should have such a deity as should help them attain their aims and objects in the world, and if at all there is to be a Hereafter, it should take the responsibility to have them granted forgiveness there too. But it should not impose any restriction of the lawful and the nnlawful on them nor should bind them in any discipline of morality. That is why they do not feel inclined to worship One God as taught by the Prophets, and only like to worship these invented gods and goddesses.

19. That is, in every age the Prophets appointed by Allah have been guiding these wicked people to the Truth, and now Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) has come to tell them as to whom belongs Godhead in reality in the Universe.

20. Another meaning of this verse can be: "Is man entitled to take anyone he pleases as his god?" Still another meaning can be: "Can the desire of man to have his prayers answered by these gods ever be fulfilled?"

21. That. is, "Even if all the angels together intercede for a person, it cannot be beneficial for him not to speak of the intercession by these invented deities of yours, which can do no one any good. All the powers of Godhead rest with Allah. Even the angels cannot dare intercede for somebody before Him unless He permits it and is pleased to hear their intercession in his behalf."

22. That is, "Their first folly is that they have taken these powerless angels who cannot even intercede for anyone before Allah as their deities; their second folly is that they regard them as female and daughters of Allah. The basic reason for these errors is that they do not believe in the Hereafter. For had they been believers in the Hereafter, they would never have behaved so irrationally and irresponsibly. Their denial of the Hereafter has made them heedless of their end, and they think that believing or disbelieving in God, or believing in a thousand gods, does not make any difference, for none of these creeds seems to entail any good or bad result in the present life of the world. Whether the people are deniers

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وَ لِلّٰهِ مَا فِی السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ مَا فِی الْاَرْضِ ۙ لِیَجْزِیَ الَّذِیْنَ اَسَآءُوْا بِمَا عَمِلُوْا وَ
یَجْزِیَ الَّذِیْنَ اَحْسَنُوْا بِالْحُسْنٰی ﴿31﴾ اَلَّذِیْنَ یَجْتَنِبُوْنَ كَبٰٓئِرَ الْاِثْمِ وَ الْفَوَاحِشَ
اِلَّا اللَّمَمَ ؕ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ وَاسِعُ الْمَغْفِرَةِ ؕ هُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِكُمْ اِذْ اَنْشَاَكُمْ مِّنَ الْاَرْضِ وَ
اِذْ اَنْتُمْ اَجِنَّةٌ فِیْ بُطُوْنِ اُمَّهٰتِكُمْ ۚ فَلَا تُزَكُّوْۤا اَنْفُسَكُمْ ؕ هُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِمَنِ اتَّقٰی ﴿32﴾
اَفَرَءَیْتَ الَّذِیْ تَوَلّٰی ﴿33﴾ وَ اَعْطٰی قَلِیْلًا وَّ اَكْدٰی ﴿34﴾ اَعِنْدَهٗ عِلْمُ الْغَیْبِ فَهُوَ
یَرٰی ﴿35﴾ اَمْ لَمْ یُنَبَّاْ بِمَا فِیْ صُحُفِ مُوْسٰی ﴿36﴾ وَ اِبْرٰهِیْمَ الَّذِیْ وَفّٰۤی ﴿37﴾ اَلَّا تَزِرُ
وَازِرَةٌ وِّزْرَ اُخْرٰی ﴿38﴾ وَ اَنْ لَّیْسَ لِلْاِنْسَانِ اِلَّا مَا سَعٰی ﴿39﴾ وَ اَنَّ سَعْیَهٗ سَوْفَ
یُرٰی ﴿40﴾ ثُمَّ یُجْزٰىهُ الْجَزَآءَ الْاَوْفٰی ﴿41﴾ وَ اَنَّ اِلٰی رَبِّكَ الْمُنْتَهٰی ﴿42﴾ وَ اَنَّهٗ هُوَ اَضْحَكَ
وَ اَبْكٰی ﴿43﴾ وَ اَنَّهٗ هُوَ اَمَاتَ وَ اَحْیَا ﴿44﴾ وَ اَنَّهٗ خَلَقَ الزَّوْجَیْنِ الذَّكَرَ وَ الْاُنْثٰی ﴿45﴾
مِنْ نُّطْفَةٍ اِذَا تُمْنٰی ﴿46﴾ وَ اَنَّ عَلَیْهِ النَّشْاَةَ الْاُخْرٰی ﴿47﴾ وَ اَنَّهٗ هُوَ اَغْنٰی وَ
اَقْنٰی ﴿48﴾ وَ اَنَّهٗ هُوَ رَبُّ الشِّعْرٰی ﴿49﴾ وَ اَنَّهٗۤ اَهْلَكَ عَادَا ِۨ الْاُوْلٰی ﴿50﴾ وَ ثَمُوْدَا فَمَاۤ
اَبْقٰی ﴿51﴾ وَ قَوْمَ نُوْحٍ مِّنْ قَبْلُ ؕ اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا هُمْ اَظْلَمَ وَ اَطْغٰی ﴿52﴾ وَ الْمُؤْتَفِكَةَ
اَهْوٰی ﴿53﴾ فَغَشّٰىهَا مَا غَشّٰی ﴿54﴾ فَبِاَیِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكَ تَتَمَارٰی ﴿55﴾ هٰذَا نَذِیْرٌ مِّنَ
النُّذُرِ الْاُوْلٰی ﴿56﴾ اَزِفَتِ الْاٰزِفَةُ ﴿57﴾ لَیْسَ لَهَا مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ كَاشِفَةٌ ﴿58﴾ اَفَمِنْ
هٰذَا الْحَدِیْثِ تَعْجَبُوْنَ ﴿59﴾ وَ تَضْحَكُوْنَ وَ لَا تَبْكُوْنَ ﴿60﴾ وَ اَنْتُمْ
سٰمِدُوْنَ ﴿61﴾ فَاسْجُدُوْا لِلّٰهِ وَ اعْبُدُوْا ﴿62﴾

So, O Prophet, leave him alone who turns away from Our remembrance[24] and seeks nothing but the life of the world,[25]—this[26] only is their amount of knowledge:[27] only your Lord knows best who has gone astray from His Way and who is on the right path, and to Allah belongs everything in the heavens and the earth[28]—so that[29] Allah may recompense the evil doers according to their deeds and give good rewards to those who have adopted the righteous attitude, who avoid grave sins[30] and open indecencies[31] save the minor offences.[32] Surely your Lord is liberal in forgiveness.[33] He knows you well from the time He produced you from the earth and when you were yet embryos in your mothers' wombs. Therefore, do not claim piety for yourselves: He alone knows best who is really pious and Godfearing. 29-32

Then, O Prophet, have you seen him who turned away from God's Way, who gave a little and stopped?[34] Does he possess the knowledge of the unseen that he sees the reality?[35] Has he not heard of those things that have been mentioned in the Books of Moses and in the Books of that Abraham who proved true to his pledge?[36] 33-55

"That no bearer of burdens shall bear the burden of another;[37] and that there is nothing for man but what he has striven for;[38] and that his striving shall soon be seen,[39] and then he will be fully rewarded for it; and that to your Lord is the final goal; and that it is He Who made (men) to laugh and to weep[40]; and that it is He Who gave death and granted life; and that it is He Who created the pair of male and female from a sperm-drop when it is emitted;[41] and that it rests upon Him to grant the second life;[42]and that it is He Who made rich and bestowed property;[43] and that He is the Lord of Sirius;[44] and that it is He Who destroyed the former 'Ād,[45] and annihilated Thamūd so as to spare none of them; and before them He destroyed the people of Noah because they were a most wicked and rebellious people. And He overthrew the subverted settlements, then there covered them that which (you know well) covered them.[46] Then,[47] O man, which of your Lord's bounties will you doubt?"[48]

This is a warning of the warnings already given.[49] That which is coming is near at hand.[50] None but Allah can avert it.[51] Is it at these things that you marvel?[52] And you laugh and weep not?[53] And you ward them off by merry-making?[54] Bow down before Allah and 56-62

worship Him.[55]

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of God, or believers in many gods, or in One God, their crops ripen as well as fail, they fall ill as well as recover from illness, and they pass through all kinds of circumstances, good as well as bad. Therefore it is not at all an important and serious matter for them that man should or should not take some one as a deity, or should take as many deities or of any kind as he likes of his choice. When according to them the decision as to what is truth and what is falsehood is to take place in this very world, depending on the results thereof appearing here, obviously the results here do not decide absolutely that one creed is true and another false. Therefore, the adoption of one creed and rejection of another is a matter of mere whim with these people."

23. That is, "They have not adopted this creed about the angels on the ground that they had found through some means of knowledge that they were females and daughters of God, but they have presumed this on mere conjecture and have set up these shrines at which they pray for fulfillment of desires, make offerings and pay tributes."

24. *Dhikr* here may imply the Qur'ān as well as mere admonition; it may also mean that he does not like that even God be mentioned before him.

25. That is, "You should not waste your time in making him understand the truth, for such a person will never be inclined to accept any invitation which is based on God-worship, which calls to objects and values higher than the material benefits of the world, and according to which the real aim of life may be the eternal success and well-being of the Hereafter. Instead of expending your time and energy on such a materialistic and ungodly person, you should devote attention to the people who are inclined to heed the remembrance of Allah and are not involved in the worship of the world."

26. This is a parenthetical sentence which has been inserted here as an explanation of the preceding verse.

27. That is, "These people neither know nor can think anything beyond the world and its immediate gains; therefore, it is futile merely to expend time and energy on them."

28. In other words, neither the question whether a person is gone astray or is on right guidance, is to be decided in this world, nor has its decision been left to the judgement of the people of the world; the decision rests with Allah. He alone is the Master of the earth and heavens and He alone knows which way out of the different ways being followed by the people of the world, is the way of

guidance and which of error and deviation. Therefore, you should least bother if the polytheistic Arabs and the Makkan disbelievers think you are deluded and misguided and regard their own ignorance as truth and guidance. Leave them alone if they wish to remain lost in their falsehood. You need not waste your time in disputing with them.

29. The theme is resumed here and connected as a continuous whole with verse 29. Without the parenthesis, it would read: "Leave him alone so that Allah may requite the evildoers for their evil deeds."

30. For explanation, see E.N. 53 of An-Nisā.

31. For explanation, see E.N. 130 of Al-An'ām and E.N. 89 of An-Naḥl.

32. The word *lamam* as found in the original is used for a small quantity of something, or its slight effect, or its mere closeness, or its existence for a short time. This word is used to express the sense that a person did not commit an act but was very near to committing it.

On the basis of its usages some commentators have taken the word *lamam* in the meaning of minor sins. Some others have taken it in the meaning that a person should practically reach very near a grave sin but should desist from actually committing it. Still others take it in the sense of a person's remaining involved in a sin temporarily and then desisting from it. And according to some it implies that a person should think of, or wish, or intend to commit a sin but should take no practical steps towards it. In this regard, the views of the Companions and their immediate followers are as follows:

Zaid bin Aslam and Ibn Zaid opine, and a saying of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās also is to the same effect, that it signifies those sins which the people had committed in the pre-Islamic days of ignorance, then after embracing Islam they refrained from them.

Another view of Ibn 'Abbās is, and the same is also the view of Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin 'Āṣ, Mujāhid, Ḥasan Baṣri and Abū Ṣāliḥ, that it implies a person's being involved in a grave sin or indecency temporarily, or occasionally, and then giving it up.

Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Masrūq and Sha'bī say, and the same also has been reported from Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah and Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās in authentic traditions, that this implies a person's approaching the very point of a grave sin and crossing all its preliminaries but then restraining himself at the final stage, *e.g.* a person goes out with the intention of stealing but refrains from it in the end, or has close association with other women, but refrains from committing adultery.

Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Zubair, 'Ikrimah, Qatādah and Ḍaḥḥāk say that this signifies those minor sins for which no punishment has been prescribed in the world nor any threat of punishment held out in the Hereafter.

Sa'īd bin al-Musayyab says that this implies one's thinking of a sin in the mind but restraining oneself from committing it practically.

These are the different explanations which have been reported in the traditions from the Companions and their immediate followers. The majority of the later commentators and doctors of law and jurists are of the opinion that this verse and verse 31 of Sūrah An-Nisā classify sins into two main kinds: the major sins and the minor sins, and these two verses give man the hope that if he abstains from the major sins and open indecencies, Allah will overlook his minor errors. Although some distinguished scholars have also opined that no sin is minor and the disobedience of Allah is by itself a major sin, yet as stated by Imām Ghazāli the distinction between the major and the minor sins is something which cannot be denied, for the sources of knowledge of the *Shari'ah* values and injunctions all point to this.

As for the question, what is the distinction between the major and the minor sins, and what kinds of sins are major and what kinds of them minor ? we are satisfied that: "Every such act is a major sin which has been forbidden by a clear ordinance of the Divine Book and the *Shari'ah* of the Prophet, or for which Allah and His Messenger have prescribed a punishment in the world, or have held out a threat of punishment in the Hereafter, or have cursed the one guilty of committing it, or given the news of infliction of punishment on those guilty of committing it." Apart from this class of sins all other acts which are disapproved by the *Shari'ah*, come under the definition of minor sins. Likewise, the mere desire for a major sin, or an intention to commit it, also is not a major sin but a minor sin; so much so that even crossing all the preliminaries of a major sin does not constitute a major sin unless one has actually committed it. However, even a minor sin becomes a major sin in case it is committed with a feeling of contempt for religion and of arrogance against Allah, and the one guilty of it does not consider the *Shari'ah* that has declared it an evil worthy of any attention and reverence.

33. That is, "The forgiveness for the one guilty of minor sins is not for the reason that a minor sin is no sin, but for the reason that Allah Almighty does not treat His servants narrow-mindedly and does not seize them on trifling faults; if the servants adopt piety and abstain from major sins and indecencies, He will not seize them for their minor errors and will forgive them magnanimously on account of His infinite mercy."

34. The reference is to Walid bin Mughirah who was one of the prominent chiefs of the Quraish. According to Ibn Jarīr Ṭabari, this person had first become inclined to accept the invitation of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), but when a polytheist friend of his came to know of his intention to become a Muslim, he counselled him not to give up his ancestral faith, and asked him that if he was afraid of the punishment of the Hereafter, he should pay him a certain amount of money and he would take the responsibility to suffer the punishment on his behalf. Walid accepted the offer and turned away from Allah's way. Then he paid only a little of the amount that he had promised to pay his polytheist friend and withheld the rest, The allusion to this incident was meant to tell the disbelievers of Makkah what kind of errors and follies they were involved in because of their heedlessness of the Hereafter and their ignorance of the Divine Religion."

35. That is, "Does he know that this conduct is in any way beneficial for him? Does he know that a person can save himself even in this way from the punishment of the Hereafter?"

36. In the following verses a resume is being given of the teachings sent down in the Books of the Prophets Abraham and Moses. The Books of Moses signify the Torah. As for the Books of the Prophet Abraham they have become extinct and no mention of them is found even in the holy scriptures of the Jews and Christians. Only in the Qur'ān at two places have some parts of the teachings contained in the Books of the Prophet Abraham been cited, here and in the concluding verses of Sūrah Al-A'lā.

37. From this verse three cardinal principles are derived: (1) That every person is himself responsible for what he does; (2) that the responsibility of one man's act cannot be transferred to another unless he has a share in the commission of the act; and (3) that even if a person wishes he cannot take on himself the responsibility of another man's act, nor can the actual culprit be let off on the ground that another person is willing to suffer the punishment on his behalf.

38. From this verse also three important principles are derived: (1) That every person will get only the fruit of his own deeds; (2) that the fruit of one man's deeds cannot be given to another unless he has a share in that deed, and (3) that none can attain anything without striving for it.

Some people wrongly apply these three principles to the economic problems of the world and conclude that no person can become the lawful owner of anything except of his own earned income. But this conclusion clashes with several laws and injunctions given by the Qur'ān itself, e.g. the law of inheritance, according to which many individuals inherit a person and are regarded as his lawful heirs, whereas the heritage is not their earned income. As for a

suckling for instance, it cannot be proved by any stretch of imagination that its labour had any share in the wealth left by its father. Likewise, there are the injunctions about the *zakāt* and voluntary charities according to which the wealth of one man is transferred to others only on the basis of their legal and moral entitlement and they become its lawful owners, whereas in the production of this wealth they did not make any contribution at all. Thus, it is against the intention of the Qur'ān to take a verse of it and derive from it such conclusions as clash with the other teachings of the Qur'ān itself.

Some other people regard these principles as concerning the Hereafter and raise the question whether, according to these principles, the deeds of one man can in some way be also beneficial for the other person, and whether the deeds of a person which he does for another person, or on his behalf, can be accepted from him, and whether it is also possible that a person may transfer the reward of his act to another. If the answer to these questions be in the negative the sending of spiritual rewards (*īṣāl thawāb*) for the dead and performing Ḥajj on behalf of another, would be inadmissible; even the prayer of forgiveness for the other person would be meaningless, for this prayer also is not the concerned person's own act and deed. However, this extreme point of view has been adopted by none among the followers of Islam except the Mu'tazilites. Only they take this verse in the meaning that one man's acts and deeds can in no case be beneficial for the other. On the contrary, the followers of the *Sunnah* are unanimous that the prayer of one man is beneficial for the other because it is confirmed by the Qur'ān; however, they differ only in details, and not in principles, as to whether the sending of spiritual rewards for another and doing a good work on behalf of another is beneficial or not.

(1) The term *īṣāl thawāb* means that after a person has performed a good act, he may pray to Allah to grant its rewards to another. In this regard, Imām Mālik and Imām Shāfe'ī have expressed the opinion that the rewards of the pure bodily acts of worship, *e.g.* the Prayer, the Fasting and recitals of the Qur'ān, etc. cannot reach the other person; however, the rewards of one's monetary acts of worship, e.g. charities, or Ḥajj, which is a combination of the monetary and bodily worships, can reach the other, for the principle is that one man's act should not be beneficial for the other. But since according to authentic *Aḥādīth* the rewards of charities can be conveyed and Ḥajj on behalf of another also can be performed, they admit the permissibility of conveying of rewards to the extent of this kind of the acts of worship only. On the contrary, the Ḥanafī viewpoint is that a man can send the reward of each of his virtuous acts as a gift to the other, whether it is the Prayer, or the Fast, or the recitation of the Qur'ān, or remembrance of Allah, or charity, or Ḥajj and 'Umrah. The argument is that just as a man after carrying out a piece of work can tell the master to

pay the wages to such and such other person instead of him, so after performing a good deed also he can pray to Allah to grant its rewards to such and such other person instead of him. In this there is no rational ground for making exception of some kinds of virtues and keeping it restricted to some other kinds of virtues. The same is confirmed by a large number of the traditions:

A Tradition, on the unanimous authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, Ḥaḍrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah, Ḥaḍrat Abū Rāfi', Ḥaḍrat Abū Ṭalḥah Anṣārī and Ḥudhaifah bin Usaid al-Ghifārī has been reported in Bukhārī, Muslim, Musnad Aḥmad, Ibn Mājah, Ṭabari (in *Awsaṭ*), Mustadrik and Ibn Abī Shaibah, saying that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) got two rams and sacrificed one on behalf of himself and his family and the other on behalf of his Ummah.

Muslim, Bukhārī, Musnad Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd and Nasā'ī have related a Tradition from Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah to the effect that a person said to the Holy Prophet: "My mother has died suddenly. I think if she had a chance to speak, she would have asked me giving away something in charity. Now, if I give away something in charity on her behalf, will she get a reward for it?" The Holy Prophet replied: "Yes, she will."

In Musnad Aḥmad there is a Tradition from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin 'Āṣ to the effect that his grandfather, 'Āṣ bin Wā'il, had vowed in the pre-Islamic days of ignorance to sacrifice 100 camels. His uncle, Hishām bin 'Āṣ, sacrificed fifty camels of his own share. Ḥaḍrat 'Amr bin 'Āṣ, asked the Holy Prophet as to what he should do. The Holy Prophet replied: "If your father had affirmed faith in the Oneness of God, you may observe fasts on his behalf, or give something in charity: this would be beneficial for him."

A Tradition has been reported in Musnad Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'ī and Ibn Mājah, on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣri, to the effect that Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin 'Ubādah asked the Holy Prophet: "My mother has died. Should I give something in charity on her behalf?" The Holy Prophet replied in the affirmative. Several other traditions bearing on the same subject also have been related in Bukhāri, Muslim, Musnad Aḥmad, Nasā'ī, Tirmidhī, Abū Da'ūd, Ibn Mājah, etc. on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah and Ḥaḍrat Ibn 'Abbās, according to which the Holy Prophet permitted giving away of something in charity on behalf of the deceased person describing it as beneficial for him.

According to Dāraqutnī a person said to the Holy Prophet: "I have been serving my parents while they were alive; what should I do now when they are dead?" The Holy Prophet replied; "This would also be their service if you offered the Prayer on their behalf along with your own Prayers, and observed the Fast on their behalf along with your own Fast." Another tradition in Dāraqutnī has been

related from Ḥaḍrat 'Alī according to which the Holy Prophet said: "If a person passing by the graveyard recites *"Qul huwallāh-u ahad"* eleven times and gives away its reward for the dead, all the dead ones will be granted their due shares of the rewards."

This large number of the traditions which support one another explicitly state that the transfer of the spiritual rewards is not only possible but rewards of all kinds of acts of worship and virtuous deeds can be sent and conveyed and in it there is no specification of any particular kind of acts and deeds. In this connection, however, four things should be understood well:

First, that the reward of that act only can be transferred, which may have been performed purely for the sake of Allah and according to the *Sharī'ah* injunctions; otherwise obviously an act which is performed for the sake of another than Allah, or in contravention of the *Sharī'ah* injunctions, cannot even entitle its doer himself to any reward, nothing to say of its transfer to another person.

Secondly, the gift of the rewards will certainly reach those righteous persons who are staying as guests with Allah, but no rewards are expected to reach those culprits who are placed in confinement there. The gift can reach the guests of Allah but the criminals of Allah cannot be expected to receive it. If a person sends his rewards to him because of a misunderstanding, it will not go waste but instead of reaching the culprit it will return to the actual worker himself just like the money-order which returns to the sender in case it does not reach the one to whom it has been sent.

Thirdly, the transfer of the reward is possible but not the transfer of punishment. That is, it is possible that one may do a good deed and may willingly transfer its reward to the other and it reaches him, but it is not possible that one may commit a sin and transfer its punishment to the other and it reaches him,

The fourth thing is that a virtuous act is beneficial in two ways: First, on account of its those results which accrue to the soul and morality of the doer himself because of which he becomes worthy of a reward in the sight of Allah; second, on account of the reward which Allah grants him as a gift and favour. The transfer of the spiritual reward does not concern the first but only the second. This can be understood by an example. A person tries to attain proficiency in the art of wrestling by constant practice. The strength and skill thus gained is in any way specially meant for his own self; it cannot be transferred to another. Similarly, if he is attached to a royal court, and there is a stipend fixed for him as a wrestler, he alone will receive it and no one else. However, in respect of the prizes and gifts that his patron may like to grant him as an appreciation for his creditable performance, he may request that they may be given to his coach, or parents, or some other benefactor, on his behalf. The same is the case with the virtuous

deeds: their spiritual benefits are not transferable and their rewards also cannot be transferred to another, but as for their rewards and gifts he can pray to Allah that these may be granted to a near and dear one, or a benefactor of his. That is why it is termed as *iṣāl thawāb* (conveying of spiritual rewards) and not as *iṣāl jazā'* (conveying of material reward).

(2) Another form of a person's work being beneficial for another is that one should either do a virtuous deed on the desire or beckoning of another, or without his desire or beckoning, on his behalf, which, in fact, was obligatory for him to carry out, but which he was unable to carry out himself. In this regard, the Ḥanafī jurists say that the acts of worship are of three kinds: purely physical, e.g. the Prayer; purely monetary, e.g. the *zakāt*; and the compound acts of bodily and monetary worship, e.g. Ḥajj. As for the first kind, nobody can act as an agent of another. As for the second kind, one can act as an agent of the other, e.g. the husband can pay the *zakāt* due on the ornaments of the wife. As for the third kind, one can act as an agent of the other only in case the actual person on whose behalf the act is being performed, is permanently, and not just temporarily, unfit to carry out his obligation himself. For example, Ḥajj can be performed on behalf of another only in case the person concerned is unable to go for Ḥajj himself nor may have the hope that he would ever be able to perform it himself. The Malikīs and the Shāfe'īs also concur on this. However, Imām Mālik lays down the condition that if the father has willed that his son should perform Ḥajj after him, on his behalf, the son can perform Ḥajj on his father's behalf, otherwise not. But the traditions in this regard are very explicit. Whether the father has expressed the desire, or made a will or not, the son can perform Ḥajj on his behalf.

Ibn 'Abbās has related that a woman from the tribe of Khath'am said to the Holy Prophet: "The command for Ḥajj has reached my father at a time when he has become very old: he cannot even sit on the camel's back." The Holy Prophet replied: "You then may perform Ḥajj on his behalf." (Bukhārī, Muslim, Aḥmad, Tirmidi, Nasā'ī). A tradition bearing on the same subject has also been related by Ḥaḍrat 'Alī. (Aḥmad, Tirmidhī).

Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Zabair has made mention of a man of the same tribe of Khath'am, who also put a similar question to the Holy Prophet concerning his aged father. The Holy Prophet asked: "Are you his eldest son ?" He answered in the affirmative. Thereupon the Holy Prophet said "If your father had left behind a debt and you paid it off, would it stand paid on his behalf?" He replied that it would. The Holy Prophet said: "Then you should likewise perform Ḥajj also on his behalf." (Aḥmad, Nasā'ī).

Ibn 'Abbās relates that a woman from the tribe of Juhainah came to the Holy Prophet and said: "My mother had vowed to perform Ḥajj but she died before performing her vow. Now, can I perform Ḥajj on her behalf?" The Holy Prophet replied: "If your mother had left behind a debt, would you not have paid it? Likewise, you should also discharge the vow made to Allah, and Allah has a greater right that the vows made to Him be performed." (Bukhārī, Nasā'ī). Bukhārī and Musnad Aḥmad contain another tradition to the effect that a man came and put the same question to the Holy Prophet concerning his sister as has been mentioned above, and the Holy Prophet gave him also the same answer.

These traditions provide a clear proof that so far as the compound acts of bodily and monetary worships are concerned, one can act on behalf of another. As for the purely bodily acts of worship, there are some *Aḥādīth* which prove the permissibility of acting on behalf of another in this kind of worship as well. For example, Ibn 'Abbās has related that a woman from the tribe of Juhainah asked the Holy Prophet: "My mother had vowed to observe the Fast and she died without performing her vow. Now, can I observe the Fast on her behalf?" The Holy Prophet replied: "Observe the Fast on her behalf." (Bukhārī, Muslim, Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd). And Ḥaḍrat Buraidah's tradition that a woman asked concerning her mother: "She had one month's (according to another tradition two months') Fasts to observe; can I observe those Fasts on her behalf?" The Holy Prophet said that she could." (Muslim, Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, Abū Da'ūd). And Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah's tradition that the Holy Prophet said: "If a person dies and he had some Fasts to observe, his guardian should observe those Fasts on his behalf." (Bukhārī, Muslim, Ahmad). In the tradition related by Bazzār the Holy Prophet's words are to the effect: "If his guardian may so like, he may observe those Fasts on his behalf)." On the basis of these very traditions the *Aṣḥāb al-Ḥadīth* and Imām Auzā'ī and the Ẓāhirīs have formed the view that one is permitted to perform bodily acts of worship also on behalf of the other. But Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Imām Mālik, Shāfe'ī and Imām Zaid bin 'Alī have given the ruling that a fast cannot be observed on behalf of a dead person, and Imām Aḥmad, Imām Laith and Isḥāq bin Rāhawaih opine that this can be done only in case the deceased person might have so vowed but might not have been able to perform his vow. Those who oppose this give the argument that the reporters of the *Aḥādīth*, which prove its permissibility, have themselves given their rulings against it. Ibn 'Abbās's ruling has been related by Nasā'ī, thus: "No one should offer a Prayer or observe a Fast on behalf of another." And Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah's ruling, according to 'Abdur Razzāq, is: "Do not observe the Fast on behalf of your dead ones; feed (the needy) instead." The same has been related from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar also by 'Abdur Razzāq that the Fast should not be observed on behalf of the deceased person. This shows that in the beginning it was permissible to perform

acts of bodily worship on behalf of others, but the practice that became established in the end was that it was not permissible to do so; otherwise it was not possible that those who have reported these *Aḥādīth* from the Holy Prophet, should have themselves given rulings against them.

In this connection, it should be understood well that fulfilment of an obligation on behalf of another can be beneficial only to those people who have themselves been keen and desirous of fulfilling their obligations and might have been unable to do so being rendered helpless by circumstances. But a person who deliberately shirked going for Ḥajj although he had the necessary means for it and had no feeling whatever of this obligation in his heart either, cannot be benefited even if several Ḥajj be performed on his behalf afterwards. This would be analogous to the case of a person who deliberately avoided paying his debts and had no intention to pay them till the last. Afterwards even if every penny is paid off on his behalf, he would remain a debtor in the sight of Allah. The payment of the debts by another can relieve only such a person who in his lifetime was desirous of paying off his debts but was unable to do so due to straitened circumstances.

39. That is, "In the Hereafter the people's deeds shall be examined and judged in order to see what provisions they have brought with them." As this sentence occurs immediately after the preceding sentence, it by itself indicates that the preceding sentence relates to the rewards and punishments of the Hereafter, and the view of those who present it as an economic principle relating to this world is not correct. To interpret a verse of the Qur'ān in a way as is irrelevant to the context as well as clashes with the other ordinances of the Qur'ān cannot be right.

40. That is, "Allah provides the means both for joy and for grief. He controls good and ill luck. There is no one else in the Universe, who may have anything to do with making or marring of destinies."

41. For explanation, see E.N.'s 27 to 30 of Sūrah Ar-Rūm, E.N. 77 of Sūrah Ash-Shūrā.

42. When this verse is read with the two preceding verses, the sequence by itself seems to provide the argument for the life-after-death also. The God Who has the power to give death and grant life and the God Who brings about a creature like man from an insignificant sperm-drop, rather brings about two separate sexes — male and female — from the same substance and by the same method of creation, cannot be helpless to resurrect man once again.

43. Different meanings have been given by the lexicographers and commentators of the word *aqnā* as used in the original. According to Qatādah, Ibn

'Abbās took it in the meaning of *ardā* (pleased), and according to 'Ikrimah in the meaning of *qanā'a* (satisfied). According to Imām Rāzī, whatever is given to a person over and above his need and requirement is *iqnā'*. Abū 'Ubaidah and several other lexicographers have expressed the view that *aqnā* is derived from *qunya-tun*, which means lasting and secured property, *e.g.* the house, lands, gardens, cattle, etc. Ibn Zaid, however, has given quite a different meaning of it. He says that *aqnā* here has been used in the sense of *afqara* (made penniless), and the verse means: He made whomever He pleased rich and whomever He pleased penniless.

44. *Shi'rā* is the brightest star in the heavens, which is also known by the names of *Mirzam al-Jawzā'*, *al-Kalb al-Akbar*, *al-Kalb al-Jabbār*, *Ash-Shi'rā al 'Abūr*, etc. In English it is called Sirius, Dog Star and Canis Majoris. It is 23 times as luminous as the Sun, but as it shines over eight light-years away from the earth, it appears to be smaller and less luminous than the Sun. The Egyptians worshipped it, for it made its appearance at about the time of the season when the annual floods were beginning in the Nile; the Egyptians believed that Sirius caused the Nile floods. The pagan Arabs also held the belief that this star influenced human destinies. That is why they worshipped it as a deity, and the Banī Khuzā'ah, the neighbouring tribe of the Quraish, were particularly well-known for being its devotees. What Allah says means: Your destinies are not made and controlled by *Shi'ra* but by the Lord of *Shi'rā*.

45. 'Ād Ūlā signifies the ancient 'Ād to whom the Prophet Hūd (peace be upon him) had been appointed a Prophet. When those people were inflicted with the torment in consequence of denying the Prophet Hūd, the believers only escaped the punishment. Their descendants are called 'Ād Ukhrā, or the latter 'Ād, in history.

46. "The subdued settlements": the settlements of the people of Lot, and "covered them that which covered them" probably imply the waters of the Dead Sea, which spread over their settlements after they had sunk underground, and cover the region even till this day.

47. According to some commentators this sentence also is a part of the resume of the Books of the Prophets Abraham and Moses, and according to others it ended with *Fa-ghashshā-hā mā ghashshā*, and with this begins a new theme. According to the context, however, the first view seems to be preferable, for the following words "This is a warning of the warnings already given," point out that the whole preceding passage is "of the warnings already given", which had been sent down in the Books of the Prophets Abraham and Moses.

48. The word *tatamārā*, as used in the Text, means both to doubt and to wrangle. The address is directed to every listener. To every person who may be listening to this discourse, it is being said: Even after witnessing what has been the fate in human history of denying the bounties of Allah and of wrangling with the Prophets concerning them, will you still commit the same folly? What the former peoples had doubted was whether the bounties and blessings they were enjoying in the world, had been bestowed by One God, or by other associates of His, or by no one, but had become available by themselves. On account of this they wrangled with the Prophets. The Prophets asserted that all these blessings had been granted to them by God, and by One God alone; therefore, they should be grateful to Him and should serve Him alone; but the people did not believe this and wrangled with the Prophets on this very count. Now, O man: "Don't you see in history what fate these nations met for entertaining this doubt and for their wrangling? Will you entertain the same doubt and indulge in the same wrangling as proved disastrous for others?"

In this connection, one should also bear in mind that the 'Ād and the Thamūd and the people of Noah had passed long before the Prophet Abraham, and the people of Lot had met with the torment during his own lifetime. Therefore, there can be no difficulty in regarding this passage as a part of the resume of the Prophet Abraham's Books.

49. The words in the original are: *Hādha nadhīr-un-min-an-nudhur il-ūlā*. The commentators have expressed three points of view in the explanation of this sentence. First, that *nadhīr* here implies the Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace); second, that it implies the Qur'ān; third, that it implies the fate of the peoples already destroyed, which has been referred to in the foregoing verses. In view of the context, we are of the opinion that this last commentary is preferable.

50. That is, "Do not be under the delusion that there is yet enough time for thinking and consideration; therefore, you may not give immediate and serious attention to these things and may not decide that you should accept them without further delay. Nay: no one among you knows how much of the respite of life is left to him. Any one of you can die at any time and the Last Hour can also take place suddenly. Therefore, do not think that the Hour of Judgement is yet far off. Whoever has any concern for the Hereafter, should mend his ways forthwith, for one may not have a chance to take a second breath after the present breath."

51. That is, when the Hour of Judgement does arrive, you will not be able to stop it, nor your deities other than Allah have the power to avert it. Allah alone can stop it but He will not.

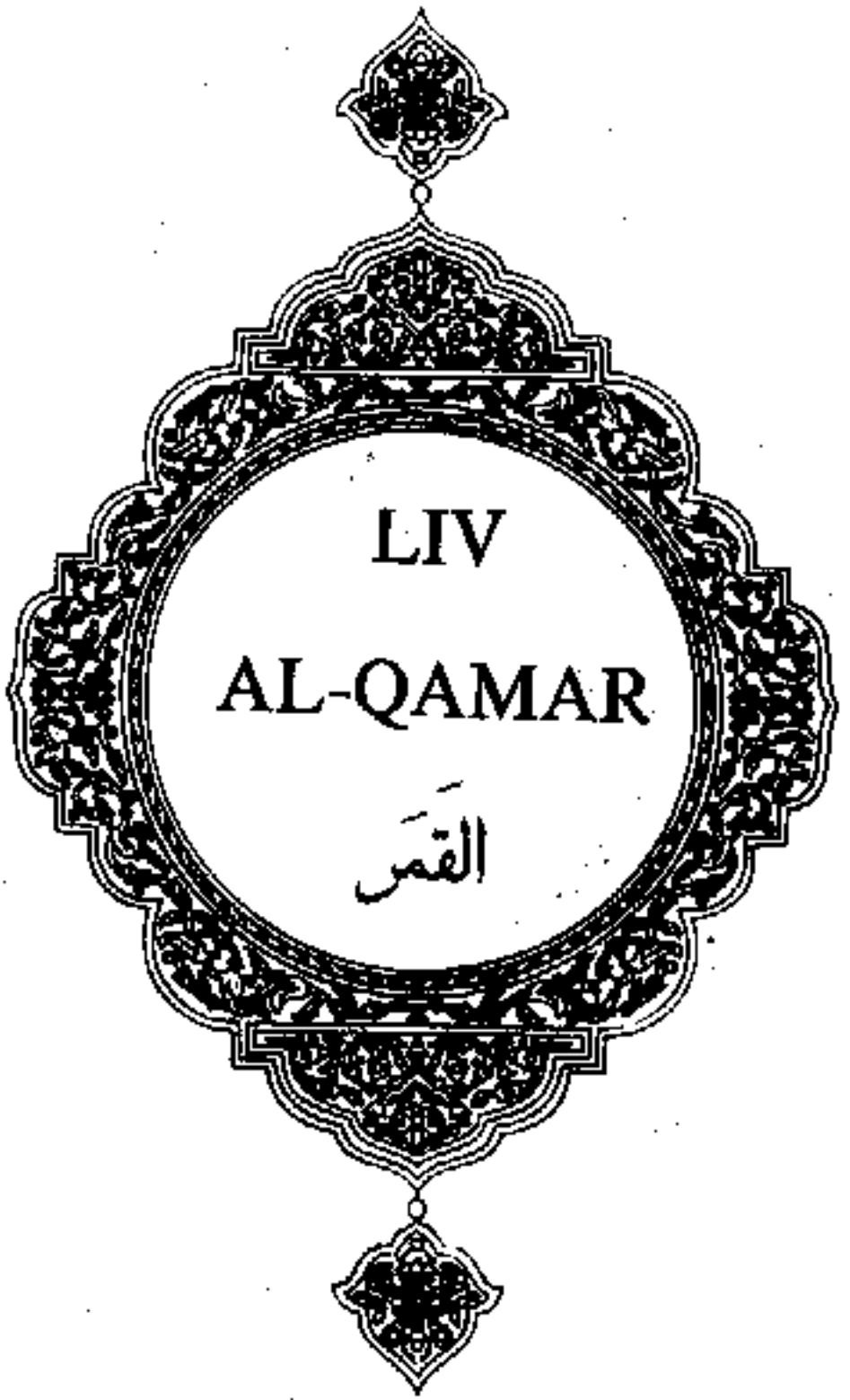
52. The word *hādh-al-Ḥadīth* as used in the original, signifies the whole teaching that was being presented in the Qur'ān through the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) and "marvel" implies the marvel that man expresses on hearing a novel and incredible thing. The verse means this: "That to which Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) is inviting you is the same that you have already heard. Now, is it this very thing at which you marvel and feel alarmed, and express wonder as if something very strange and novel was being presented before you?"

53. That is, "Instead of weeping at your ignorance and deviation you, on the contrary, are mocking, the Truth".

54. Two meanings have been given of the word *sāmidūn* by the lexicographers. Ibn 'Abbās, 'Ikrimah and Abū 'Ubaidah, the grammarian, are of the view that in the Yamanite tongue *sumūd* means singing and playing, and the verse alludes that the disbelievers of Makkah, in order to suppress the recitation of the Qur'an and to divert the people's attention away from it, would start singing in a loud voice. The other meaning of it given by Ibn 'Abbās and Mujāhid is: "*Sumūd* means bending down the head out of arrogance; when the disbelievers of Makkah passed by the Holy Prophet, they would pass by him angrily with their faces lifted up." Rāghib Iṣphahānī in his *Mufradāt* also has adopted the same meaning; accordingly, Qatādah has translated *sāmidūn* into *ghāfilun* and Sa'īd bin Jubair into *mu'riḍūn*.

55. According to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Imām Shāfe'ī and many other scholars it is obligatory to perform a *sajdah* on the recitation of this verse. Although Imām Mālik himself used to perform a *sajdah* here (as cited by Qāḍi Abū Bakr ibn al-'Arabī in *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*), yet he held the view that it was not obligatory to perform a *sajdah* here, the basis of his view being this tradition of Hadrat Zaid bin Thābit: "I recited Sūrah an-Najm before the Holy Prophet, and he did not perform a *sajdah*." (Bukhārī, Muslim, Aḥmad, Tirmidhi, Abū Da'ūd, Nasa'i). But this *Ḥadīth* does not negate the incumbency of the prostration here, for it is likely that the Holy Prophet did not perform the *sajdah* then due to some reason but might have performed it later. Other traditions on the subject are explicit that the prostration was always performed on this verse. Ḥadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Ibn 'Abbas and Muṭṭalib bin Abī Wadā'ah have unanimously stated that when the Holy Prophet recited this Sūrah for the first time in the Ka'bah, he had prostrated himself and along with him the whole assembly of the believers and the disbelievers also had fallen down prostrate. (Bukhārī, Aḥmad, Nasā'ī) Ibn 'Umar has reported that the Holy Prophet recited Sūrah an-Najm in the Prayer and prostrated himself and lay long in that state. (Baihaqī, Ibn Mardūyah). Saburat al-

Juhani states that Ḥaḍrat 'Umar recited Sūrah an-Najm in the Fajr Prayer and performed a *sajdah*, then stood up, recited Sūrah al-Zilzāl and performed the *rukū'*. (Sa'id bin Mansūr). Imām Mālik himself has related this act of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar in his *Mu'waṭṭā (Bāb Mā Jā'fi Sujūd al-Qar'ān)*.



LIV

AL-QAMAR

القَمَر

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

LIV

AL-QAMAR

القَمَر

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from the very first verse: *Wan shaqq-al-Qamar*, thereby implying that it is a Sūrah in which the word *al-Qamar* has occurred.

Period of Revelation

The incident of the *shaqq-al-Qamar* (splitting of the Moon) that has been mentioned in it, determines its period of revelation precisely. The traditionalists and commentators are agreed that this incident took place at Minā in Makkah about five years before the Holy Prophet's *hijrah to* Madīnah.

Theme and Subject Matter

In this Sūrah the disbelievers of Makkah have been warned for their stubbornness which they had adopted against the invitation of the

Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The amazing and wonderful phenomenon of the splitting of the Moon was a manifest sign of the truth that the Resurrection, of which the Holy Prophet was giving them the news, could take place and that it had approached near at hand. The great sphere of the Moon had split into two distinct parts in front of their very eyes. The two parts had separated and receded so much apart from each other that to the on-lookers one part had appeared on one side of the mountain and the other on the other side of it. Then, in an instant the two had rejoined. This was a manifest proof of the truth that the system of the Universe was neither eternal nor immortal, it could be disrupted. Huge stars and planets could split asunder, disintegrate, collide with each other, and everything that has been depicted in the Qur'ān in connection with the description of the details of Resurrection, could happen. Not only this: it was also a portent that the disintegration of the system of the Universe had begun and the time was near when Resurrection would take place. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) invited the people's attention to this event only with this object in view and asked them to mark it and be a witness to it. But the disbelievers described it as a magical illusion and persisted in their denial. For this stubbornness they have been reproached in this Sūrah.

At the outset it has been said: "These people neither believe in the admonition, nor learn a lesson from history, nor affirm faith after witnessing manifest signs with their eyes. Now they would believe only when Resurrection has taken place and they would be rushing out of their graves towards the Summoner on that Day."

Then, the stories of the people of Noah and of 'Ād and Thamūd and of the peoples of Lot and the Pharaoh have been related briefly and they have been reminded of the terrible punishments that these nations suffered when they belied and disregarded the warnings given by the Prophets of God. After the narration of each story the refrain that has been provided is: "This Qur'ān is an easy means of admonition, which if a nation takes to heart and thereby takes the Right Way, the torment that descended on the former nations could be avoided. But it would indeed be a folly if instead of heeding the admonition through this easy means, one persisted in heedlessness and disbelieved until one was overtaken by the torment itself."

Likewise, after citing admonitary precedents from the history of the former nations, the disbelievers of Makkah have been addressed and warned to this effect: "If you too adopt the same attitude and conduct for which the other nation have already been punished, why will you not be punished for it? Are you in any way a superior people that you should be treated differently from others? Or, have you received a deed of amnesty that you will not be punished for the crime for which others have been punished? And if you feel elated at your great numbers, you will soon see that these very numbers of yours are put to rout (on the battlefield) and on the Day of Resurrection you will be dealt with even more severely."

In the end, the disbelievers have been told that Allah does not need to make lengthy preparations to bring about Resurrection. No sooner does He give a simple command for it than it will take place immediately. Like everything else the Universe and mankind also have destiny. According to this destiny everything happens at its own appointed time. It cannot be so that whenever somebody gives a challenge, Resurrection is brought about in order to convince him. If you adopt rebellion because you do not see it coming, you will only be adding to your own distress and misfortune. For your record which is being prepared by Divine agents, has not left any misdeed of yours, great or small, unrecorded.



اِقْتَرَبَتِ السَّاعَةُ وَ انْشَقَّ الْقَمَرُ ۝١ وَاِنْ يَّرَوْا اٰيَةً يُّعْرِضُوْا وَيَقُوْلُوْا سِحْرٌ

LIV

AL-QAMAR

اَلْقَمَر

Verses: 55 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

The Hour of Resurrection has drawn near and the Moon has split asunder.[1] Yet whatever Sign these people may see they turn away and say, "This is current magic."[2] They have denied (this too) and followed only their own lusts.[3] Ultimately, every matter has to reach an appointed end.[4] 1-3

1. That is, "The splitting of the Moon asunder is a portent that the Hour of Resurrection of which you are being foretold, has drawn near at hand, and the order of the Universe has begun to be disrupted. Moreover, the incidem that a great sphere like the Moon's has split into two distinct parts, is a specific proof of the fact that Resurrection of which you are being forewarned can take place. Obviously, when the Moon can split, the earth also can split, the orbits of he stars and planets also can change and the whole system of the heavens also can be disturbed. There is nothing eternal and everlasting and stable here so that Resurrection may be improbable."

Some people have taken this sentence to mean: "The Moon will split." Although according to Arabic usage it is possible to take this meaning, the context clearly rejects it. In the first place, if this were the meaning, the first sentence would become meaningless. If the Moon had not actually split at the time when this Revelation was made, but it was going to split some time in the future, it would be absurd to say on the basis of this that the Hour of Resurrection had approached near at hand. After all, how can an incident that is to take place in the future, be regarded as a sign of Resurrection's being near at hand, and how can such a testimony be put forward as a rational argument? Second, with this meaning in mind when we read the following verses, they appear to be altogether incoherent. The verses that follow clearly show that the people at that time had witnessed a sign that was a manifest portent of the possibility of Resurrection, but they rejected it as a magical illusion, and persisted in their belief that Resurrection was not possible. In this context, the words *inshaqq-al-Qamar* can be meaningful only if they are taken to mean: "The Moon split asunder." If they are taken to mean: "The Moon will split asunder," the whole following theme becomes disjointed. It will look like this:

> "The Hour of Resurrection has drawn near and *the Moon will split asunder.* Yet whatever sign these people may see they turn away and say: 'This is current magic !' They have denied and followed only their own lusts."

Therefore, the truth is that the incident of the splitting of the Moon is confirmed explicitly by the words of the Qur'ān and it is not dependent upon the traditions of the *Ḥadīth*. However, the traditions supply its details, and one comes to know when and how it had taken place. These traditions have been related by Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī, Aḥmad, Abū 'Uwānah, Abū Da'ūd Ṭayālisī, 'Abdur Razzāq, Ibn Jarīr, Baihaqī, Ṭabarānī, Ibn Mardūyah, and Abū Nu'aim Isfahānī with many chains of transmitters on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullāh bin Mas'ūd, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, Ḥaḍrat Hudhaifah, Hadrat Anas bin Mālik and Hadrat Jubair bin Mut'im. Three of these authorities, viz. Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd; Hadrat Hudhaifah, and Hadrat Jubair bin Mut'im, state that they were the eye-witnesses of this event; two of them cannot be its eye-witnesses, for this event took place before the birth of one (*i.e.* 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās) and at a time when the other (*i.e.* Anas bin Mālik) was yet a child. But since both these scholars were Companions, obviously they must have reported this event after they had heard it from the aged Companions who had direct knowledge of it.

The information that one gathers from the various traditions is that this incident occurred about five years before the *Hijrah*. It was the 14th night of the lunar month; the Moon had just risen when it suddenly split and its two parts were

seen on either side of the hill in front. Then after a moment or so they rejoined. The Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) at that time was at Minā. He told the people to mark it and be witnesses to it. The disbelievers said that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) had worked magic on them; therefore, their eyes had been deceived. The other people said: "Muḥammad could have worked magic on us but not on all the people. Let the people from other places come: we shall ask them if they also had witnessed this incident." When the people from other places came, they bore evidence that they also had witnessed the same phenomenon.

Some traditions which have been related from Ḥaḍrat Anas give rise to the misunderstanding that the incident of the splitting of the Moon had happened twice. But, in the first place, no one else from among the Companions has stated this; second, in some traditions of Ḥaḍrat Anas himself also the words are *marratain* (twice), and in some *firqatain* and *shaqqatain* (two pieces); third, the Qur'ān mentions only one incident of the Moon's splitting asunder. The correct view therefore is that this incident happened only once. As for the stories which are current among the people that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had made a gesture towards the Moon and it split into two parts and that one part of the Moon entered the breast of the garment of the Holy Prophet and went out of the sleeve, have no basis whatever.

Here, the question arises: What was the real nature of this incident. Was it a miracle that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) performed on the demand of the disbelievers of Makkah as a proof of his Prophethood? Or, was it only an accident that occurred on the Moon by the power of Allah and the Holy Prophet had only called the people's attention to it and warned them to mark it as a Sign of the possibility and nearness of Resurrection? A large group of the Muslim scholars regards it as among the miracles of the Holy Prophet and holds the view that it had been shown on the demand of the disbelievers. But this view is based only on some of those traditions which have been related from Ḥaḍrat Anas. Apart from him no other Companion has stated this. According to *Fatḥ al Bārī*, Ibn Ḥajar says: "Apart from the narration by Ḥaḍrat Anas, in no other narration of this story have I come across the theme that the incident of the splitting of the Moon had taken place on the demand of the polytheists. *(Bab Inshiqāq al-Qamar).* Abū Nu'aim Iṣfahānī has related a tradition on this subject in *Dalā'il an-Nubuwwat*, on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbas also, but it has a weak chain of transmitters and none of the traditions that have been related with strong chains of transmitters in the collections of *Ḥadīth* on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdallah bin 'Abbās, contains any mention of this. Furthermore, neither Ḥaḍrat Anas nor Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās was a contemporary of this incident. On

the contrary, none of the Companions from among Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Ḥaḍrat Ḥudhaifah, Ḥaḍrat Jubair bin Muṭ'im, Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, who were contemporaries of the incident, has stated that the pagans of Makkah had demanded a Sign of the Holy Prophet to testify to his Prophethood on which he might have shown the miracle of the splitting of the Moon. Above all, the Qur'ān itself also is presenting this event not as a Sign of the Prophethood but as a Sign of the nearness of Resurrection. However, this was indeed a conspicuous proof of the Holy Prophet's truthfulness because it testified to the news that he was giving to the people of the coming of Resurrection.

The critics raise two kinds of objections against it. In the first place, they say it is impossible that a great sphere like the Moon should split asunder into two distinct parts, which should get hundreds of miles apart and then rejoin. Secondly, they say if it had so happened, it would be a well-known event in the world and would have found mention in the books of History and Astronomy. But, in fact, both these objections are flimsy. As for the discussion of its possibility, it could perhaps find credibility in the ancient days but on the basis of what man has come to know in the present day about the structure of the planets, it can be said that it is just possible that a sphere may burst because of its internal volcanic action and its two parts may be thrown far apart by the mighty eruption, and then may rejoin under the magnetic force of their centre. As for the second objection, it is flimsy because the event had taken place suddenly and lasted a short time only. It was not necessary that at that particular moment the world might be looking at the Moon. There was no explosion either that might have attracted the people's attention; there was no advance information of it that the people might be awaiting its occurrence and looking up at the sky. It could not also be seen everywhere on the earth but only in Arabia and the eastern lands where the Moon had risen and was visible at that time. The taste and art of writing history also had not yet developed so that the people who might have witnessed it, should have made a record of it and then some historian might have gathered the evidence and preserved it in some book of History. However, in the Histories of Malabar mention has been made of a native ruler who had witnessed this phenomenon that night. As for the books of Astronomy and Calendars, this event might have been mentioned in them only if the event had affected the movement of the Moon, its orbit and the times of its rising and setting. As no such thing happened, it did not attract the ancient astronomers' attention. The observatories also were not so developed that they might have taken notice of everything happening in the heavens and preserved a record of it.

2. The words *sihr-um mustamirr* of the Text can have several meanings:

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(1) That, God forbid, this magical illusion also is one of those magical performances that Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) has been performing day and night; (2) that this certainly is a work of magic which has been performed with great expertise; and (3) that just as other works of magic have passed, so will this also pass without leaving any lasting effect behind.

3. That is, "They still persisted in the same decision that they had made of denying the Hereafter and have not changed their mind even after having witnessed this manifest Sign, mainly because it clashed with their desires of the flesh."

4. That is, "It cannot be so endlessly that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) should go on inviting you to the Truth while you persist in your falsehood stubbornly and his Truth and your falsehood should never be established. All affairs ultimately have to reach an appointed end. Likewise, inevitably this conflict between you and Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) has also to reach an end. A time will certainly come when it will be clearly established that he had been in the right and you in the wrong throughout. Likewise, the worshippers of the Truth shall one day see the result of their worshipping the Truth and the worshippers of falsehood of their worshipping the falsehood."

5. In other words, "Leave them to themselves. When every effort has been made to make them understand the Truth in the most rational ways, when instances have been cited from history to show them the evil results of the denial of the Hereafter, when the dreadful fates suffered by the other nations in consequence of their rejecting the Prophetic messages have been brought to their notice and yet they are disinclined to give up their stubbornness, they should be left alone to gloat over their follies. Now, they would believe only when after death they arise from their graves to see with their own eyes that the Resurrection of which they were being forewarned and exhorted to adopt the truth, had actually taken place."

6. Another meaning can be "an unknown thing", a thing which they never could imagine, of which they never had any concept and no idea whatever that it also could occur.

7. "Graves" do not signify only those pits in the earth in which a person might have been properly buried, but he would rise up from wherever he had died, or from wherever his dust lay, on the call of the Caller to the plain of Resurrection.

8. Literally: "Their looks will be downcast. "This can have several meanings: (1) That they will appear terror-stricken; (2) that they will be reflecting disgrace and humiliation, for as soon as they arise out of their graves they would

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مُّسْتَمِرٌّ ﴿٢﴾ وَكَذَّبُوا وَاتَّبَعُوا أَهْوَاءَهُمْ ۚ وَكُلُّ أَمْرٍ مُّسْتَقِرٌّ ﴿٣﴾ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُم
مِّنَ الْأَنبَاءِ مَا فِيهِ مُزْدَجَرٌ ﴿٤﴾ حِكْمَةٌ بَالِغَةٌ ۖ فَمَا تُغْنِ النُّذُرُ ﴿٥﴾ فَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ ۘ
يَوْمَ يَدْعُ الدَّاعِ إِلَىٰ شَيْءٍ نُّكُرٍ ﴿٦﴾ خُشَّعًا أَبْصَارُهُمْ يَخْرُجُونَ مِنَ
الْأَجْدَاثِ كَأَنَّهُمْ جَرَادٌ مُّنتَشِرٌ ﴿٧﴾ مُّهْطِعِينَ إِلَى الدَّاعِ ۖ يَقُولُ الْكَافِرُونَ
هَٰذَا يَوْمٌ عَسِرٌ ﴿٨﴾ كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ فَكَذَّبُوا عَبْدَنَا وَقَالُوا مَجْنُونٌ
وَازْدُجِرَ ﴿٩﴾ فَدَعَا رَبَّهُ أَنِّي مَغْلُوبٌ فَانتَصِرْ ﴿١٠﴾ فَفَتَحْنَا أَبْوَابَ السَّمَاءِ بِمَاءٍ
مُّنْهَمِرٍ ﴿١١﴾ وَفَجَّرْنَا الْأَرْضَ عُيُونًا فَالْتَقَى الْمَاءُ عَلَىٰ أَمْرٍ قَدْ قُدِرَ ﴿١٢﴾ وَحَمَلْنَاهُ
عَلَىٰ ذَاتِ أَلْوَاحٍ وَدُسُرٍ ﴿١٣﴾ تَجْرِي بِأَعْيُنِنَا ۖ جَزَاءً لِّمَن كَانَ كُفِرَ ﴿١٤﴾ وَلَقَد
تَّرَكْنَاهَا آيَةً فَهَلْ مِن مُّدَّكِرٍ ﴿١٥﴾ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِي وَنُذُرِ ﴿١٦﴾ وَلَقَدْ
يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِن مُّدَّكِرٍ ﴿١٧﴾ كَذَّبَتْ عَادٌ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِي وَ
نُذُرِ ﴿١٨﴾ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيحًا صَرْصَرًا فِي يَوْمِ نَحْسٍ مُّسْتَمِرٍّ ﴿١٩﴾ تَنزِعُ
النَّاسَ ۙ كَأَنَّهُمْ أَعْجَازُ نَخْلٍ مُّنقَعِرٍ ﴿٢٠﴾ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِي وَنُذُرِ ﴿٢١﴾ وَلَقَدْ
يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِن مُّدَّكِرٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودُ بِالنُّذُرِ ﴿٢٣﴾ فَقَالُوا أَبَشَرًا
مِّنَّا وَاحِدًا نَّتَّبِعُهُ ۙ إِنَّا إِذًا لَّفِي ضَلَالٍ وَسُعُرٍ ﴿٢٤﴾ أَأُلْقِيَ الذِّكْرُ عَلَيْهِ مِن بَيْنِنَا
بَلْ هُوَ كَذَّابٌ أَشِرٌ ﴿٢٥﴾ سَيَعْلَمُونَ غَدًا مَّنِ الْكَذَّابُ الْأَشِرُ ﴿٢٦﴾ إِنَّا مُرْسِلُو
النَّاقَةِ فِتْنَةً لَّهُمْ فَارْتَقِبْهُمْ وَاصْطَبِرْ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَنَبِّئْهُمْ أَنَّ الْمَاءَ قِسْمَةٌ بَيْنَهُمْ ۖ
كُلُّ شِرْبٍ مُّحْتَضَرٌ ﴿٢٨﴾ فَنَادَوْا صَاحِبَهُمْ فَتَعَاطَىٰ فَعَقَرَ ﴿٢٩﴾ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِي
وَنُذُرِ ﴿٣٠﴾ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ صَيْحَةً وَاحِدَةً فَكَانُوا كَهَشِيمِ الْمُحْتَظِرِ ﴿٣١﴾ وَلَقَدْ
يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِن مُّدَّكِرٍ ﴿٣٢﴾ كَذَّبَتْ قَوْمُ لُوطٍ بِالنُّذُرِ ﴿٣٣﴾ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا

There have already come to them narratives (of the former communities) containing enough deterrents to restrain them from rebellion and profound wisdom as serves the purpose of admonition well, but warnings are of little avail with these people. So, O Prophet, turn away from them.[5] The Day the Caller shall call them to a most terrifying event,[6] the people shall rise out of their graves[7] with awe-struck looks[8] as though they were scattered locusts. They will be rushing towards the Caller and the same disbelievers (who denied it in the world) shall say, "This indeed is a hard day!" 4-8

Before them the people of Noah also denied.[9] They called Our servant a liar, and said, "He is a madman," and he was rebuked harshly.[10] At last, he called out to his Lord, saying, " I am overcome: take now Thy vengeance." Then We opened the gates of heaven with torrential rain and We caused the earth to burst forth into springs,[11] and the waters met to fulfil the decreed end. And We bore Noah upon a thing made of planks and nails,[12] which floated under Our care. This was a vengeance for the sake of him who had been slighted.[13] And We left that Ark as a Sign.[14] Then, is there any who would take admonition? Just see how dreadful was My scourge and how true My warnings ! We have made this Qur'ān an easy means of admonition.[15] Then, is there any who would take admonition? 9-17

'Ād also denied. Then behold, how severe was My punishment and how true My warnings ! We sent on them a raging wind on a day of continuous ill-luck,[16] which swept them off as though they were trunks of uprooted palm-trees. Then see how severe was My punishment and how true My warnings! We have made this Qur'ān an easy means of admonition. Then, is there any who would take admonition? 18-22

Thamūd rejected the warnings, and said, "A solitary man he is from among ourselves. Shall we now follow him?[17] If we did so, we should indeed be gone astray and have committed folly. Was he the only person among us to have God's Reminder sent down to him? Nay, but he is an utter liar and a conceited person."[18] (We said to Our Messenger: Tomorrow they shall know who is an utter liar and a conceited person. We are sending the she-camel as a trial for them. Now watch with patience what end they meet. Tell them that the water 23-32

will be divided between them and the she-camel, and each will have water on his own Turn."[19] At last, they called out to their companion, who took up the responsibility and killed her.[20] Then see how severe was My punishment and how true My warnings! We let loose on them a single blast and they became as the trampled twigs of the fence of a foldbuilder.[21] We have made this Qur'ān an easy means of admonition. Then, is there any who would take admonition?

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realize that it was indeed the same second life which they had been denying, for which they had made no preparation, and in which they would have to present themselves before their God as culprits; and (3) that with awe-struck looks they would be watching the dreadful scenes before them, from which they would not be able to avert their eyes.

9. That is, "They denied that the Hereafter has to take place when man will have to render an account of his deeds; they denied the Prophethood of the Prophet who was making his people aware of this truth; and they denied the teaching of the Prophet, which taught them what to believe and what creed and conduct they should adopt in order to pass the reckoning of the Hereafter."

10. That is, "The people not only belied the Prophet but also branded him as a madman; they uttered threats against him, showered him with curses and abuses; and did whatever possibly they could to stop him from preaching the truth, and thus made life extremely difficult for him.

11. That is, the earth so burst forth with springs at the Command of Allah that it was no longer earth but presented a scene of the springs all around.

12. This signifies the Ark which the Prophet Noah had built under Allah's care and guidance even before the coming of the Flood.

13. Literally: "This was a vengeance for the sake of him whose *kufr* had been committed." If *kufr* be taken in the sense of denial, it would mean: "Whose message had been denied and rejected;" and if it is taken in the meaning of ingratitude for a blessing, it would mean: "Who was indeed a blessing for the people, but had been ungratefully rejected."

14. It may also mean: "We left this dreadful punishment as a sign of warning," but in our opinion the preferable meaning is that the Ark was left as a sign of warning. Its resting and existence on a high mountain continued to warn the later generations of the wrath of God for thousand of years and kept on reminding them how the people who had disobeyed God on this earth had met

their doom, and how the believers had been rescued from it. Imām Bukhārī, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, 'Abdur Razzāq and Ibn Jarīr have related traditions on the authority of Qatādah saying that at the time the Muslims conquered 'Irāq and al-Jazīrah, this Ark still existed on Mount Jūdī (and according to a tradition, near the settlement of Bāqirdā), and the early Muslims had seen it. In the modern times also some people during their flights in the aeroplanes have sighted an Ark-like object on a peak in this region, which is suspected to be the Ark of Noah, and on the basis of the same expeditions have been sent from time to time to search it out. (For further details, see E.N. 47 of Al-A'rāf, E.N. 46 of Hūd, and E.N. 25 of Al-'Ankabūt).

15. Some people have misconstrued the words *Yassarnal-Qur'ān* to mean that the Qur'ān is an easy Book; no knowledge is required to understand it; so much so that a person even without the knowledge of the Arabic language, can write a commentary on it, and can deduce any injunctions he likes from its verses independent of the *Ḥadīth* and Islamic Law, whereas the context in which these words occur, indicates that they are meant to make the people realize this: "One means of the admonition are the dreadful torments that descended upon the rebellious nations, and the other means is this Qur'an, which guides you to the right path by argument and instruction. Obviously, this means of admonition is by far the easier one; then, why don't you take advantage of it and insist on meeting with the torment instead? It is indeed Allah's bounty that He has sent this Book through His Prophet and is warning you that the ways you are following lead only to destruction and your well-being lies only in following this way. This method of admonition has been adopted so that you are rescued even before you fall into the pit of destruction. Now, who could be more foolish than the one who does not believe in the admonition and realizes his error only after he has fallen into the pit?"

16. That is, on a day the ill-luck of which continued to rage for several days. In Sūrah Ḥā Mīm As-Sajdah: 16, the words are: *fī ayyāmin naḥisāt:* "in a few ill-omened days," and in Sūrah Al-Ḥāqqah: 7, it has been said: "This wind storm continued to rage for seven nights and eight days. "It is said that the day on which the storm started was Wednesday. From this the idea spread that Wednesday was a day of ill-luck, and no work should be started on this day. Some very weak traditions also have been cited to support this view, which have further strengthened the idea that this day is ill-omened. For example, there is Ibn Mardūyah and Khatīb al-Baghdādī's tradition that the last Wednesday of the month is ill-omened, the ill-omen of which is endless. Ibn Jauzī regards this tradition as fabricated and Ibn Rajab as unauthentic Ḥāfiẓ Sakhāvī; says that all the methods through which this tradition has been reported, are weak. Likewise, Ṭabarānī's tradition ("Wednesday is a day of perpetual ill-luck") also has been declared as weak by the scholars of *Ḥadīth*. In some other traditions one is also forbidden to

start a journey, to do business transactions, to pare the nails, or to visit the sick on a Wednesday. They also say that leprosy starts on this day. But all these traditions are weak and these cannot be made the basis of any belief. The scholar Munawī says: "To abandon Wednesday taking it as ill-omened and to entertain the astrologer's whims in this regard is forbidden, strictly forbidden, for all days belong to Allah; no day is beneficial by itself nor harmful." 'Allāma Ālūsi says: "All days are equal; Wednesday has no peculiarity about it. There is no hour in the night or day which might be good for one person and bad for another. It is Allah Who creates favourable conditions for some people and adverse for others."

17. In other words, there were three reasons for their refusal to obey and follow the Prophet Ṣāliḥ: (1) "He is a human being and not a super-human person so that we may regard him as superior to ourselves." (2) "He is a member of our own nation: he is in no way superior to us." (3) "He is a single man, one from among ourselves. He is not a prominent chief with a large following, or an army of soldiers, or a host of attendants so that we may acknowledge his superiority." They wanted that a Prophet should either be a superman, or if he be a common man, he should not have been born in their own land and nation, but should have descended from above, or sent from another land, and if nothing else, he should at least have been a rich man, whose extraordinary splendour should make the people believe why Allah had selected him alone for the leadership of the nation. This same was the error of ignorance in which the disbelievers of Makkah were involved. They also refused to acknowledge the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) as a Prophet on the ground that he was a man who moved about in the streets like the common men, had been born among them only the other day and now was claiming that God had appointed him as a Prophet.

18. The word *ashir* of the original means a conceited, insolent person given to bragging of his own superiority over others.

19. This explains the verse: "We are sending the she-camel as a trial for them." The trial was that suddenly a she-camel was produced before them and they were told that one day she would drink the water all by herself and the next day they would be allowed to have water for themselves and their cattle. On the day of her turn neither would any of them himself come to any of the springs and wells to take water nor bring his cattle for watering. This challenge was given on behalf of the person about whom they themselves admitted that he had no army and no hosts to support him.

20. These words by themselves indicate that the she-camel roamed at will in their settlements for a long period of time. No one could dare approach a source of water on the day of her turn. At last, they called out to a haughty chief of theirs who was well known for his courage and boldness, and urged him to put an end to her. Emboldened by the false encouragement he took up the responsibility and killed the she-camel. This clearly means that the people were very frightened.

[Contd. on p.258

They felt that she had extraordinary power, and so they dared not touch her with an evil intention. That is why the killing of a mere she-camel especially when the Prophet who had presented her, did not possess any army that could be a deterrent for them, amounted to undertaking a dangerous and difficult task. (For further details, see E.N. 58 of Sūrah Al-A`rāf and E.N.'s 104, 105 of Sūrah Ash-Shua`rā`).

21. The crushed and rotten bodies of the people of Thamūd have been compared to the trampled and trodden twigs and pieces of bush lying around an enclosure for cattle.

22. The details of this story have been given in Sūrah Hūd: 77-83 and Sūrah Al-Hijr: 61-74 above, a resume of which is as follows:

When Allah decided to punish those people with a torment, He sent a few angels in the guise of handsome boys as guests in the house of the Prophet Lot. When the people saw such handsome guests in Lot's house they rushed to it and demanded that they be handed over to them for the gratification of their lust. The Prophet Lot implored them to desist from their evil intention, but they did not listen and tried to enter his house to take hold of the guests forcibly. At this stage suddenly their eyes were blinded. Then the angels told Lot that he and his household should leave the city before dawn; then as soon as they had left a dreadful torment descended on the people. In the Bible also this event has been described. The words are: "And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door. But the men (i.e. the angels) put forth their hand and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door. And they smote the men that *were* at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great: so that they wearied themselves to find the door." (Gen., 19: 9-11).

23. The address here is directed to the Quraish, as if to say; "When the other nation have been punished for adopting disbelief and showing stubbornness and denying the Truth, why would you not be punished if you adopted the same attitude and conduct ? For you are not a special people in any way."

24. This is a specific prophecy that was made five years before the *hijrah*, saying that the hosts of the Quraish who waxed proud of their strength would soon be put to rout by the Muslims. At that time no one could imagine how such a revolution would take place in the near future. Such was the helplessness of the Muslims that a group of them had already left the country and taken refuge in Habash and the rest of the believers lay besieged in Shi'b Abī Ṭālib, and were being starved by the Quraish boycott and siege. Under such conditions no one could imagine that within only the next seven years the tables were going to turn.

Ikrimah, the pupil of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, has related that Ḥaḍrat 'Umar used to say : "When this verse of Sūrah Al-Qamar was sent down, I wondered

عَلَيْهِمْ حَاصِبًا إِلَّآ اٰلَ لُوْطٍ ؕ نَجَّيْنٰهُمْ بِسَحَرٍ ﴿٣٤﴾ نِّعْمَةً مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا ؕ كَذٰلِكَ
نَجْزِيْ مَنْ شَكَرَ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَلَقَدْ اَنْذَرَهُمْ بَطْشَتَنَا فَتَمَارَوْا بِالنُّذُرِ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَلَقَدْ رَاوَدُوْهُ
عَنْ ضَيْفِهٖ فَطَمَسْنَآ اَعْيُنَهُمْ فَذُوْقُوْا عَذَابِيْ وَنُذُرِ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَلَقَدْ صَبَّحَهُمْ بُكْرَةً
عَذَابٌ مُّسْتَقِرٌّ ﴿٣٨﴾ فَذُوْقُوْا عَذَابِيْ وَنُذُرِ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْاٰنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ
مِنْ مُّدَّكِرٍ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَلَقَدْ جَآءَ اٰلَ فِرْعَوْنَ النُّذُرُ ﴿٤١﴾ كَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا كُلِّهَا فَاَخَذْنٰهُمْ
اَخْذَ عَزِيْزٍ مُّقْتَدِرٍ ﴿٤٢﴾ اَكُفَّارُكُمْ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ اُولٰٓئِكُمْ اَمْ لَكُمْ بَرَآءَةٌ فِي الزُّبُرِ ﴿٤٣﴾
اَمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ نَحْنُ جَمِيْعٌ مُّنْتَصِرٌ ﴿٤٤﴾ سَيُهْزَمُ الْجَمْعُ وَيُوَلُّوْنَ الدُّبُرَ ﴿٤٥﴾ بَلِ
السَّاعَةُ مَوْعِدُهُمْ وَالسَّاعَةُ اَدْهٰى وَاَمَرُّ ﴿٤٦﴾ اِنَّ الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ فِيْ ضَلٰلٍ وَّسُعُرٍ ﴿٤٧﴾
يَوْمَ يُسْحَبُوْنَ فِي النَّارِ عَلٰى وُجُوْهِهِمْ ؕ ذُوْقُوْا مَسَّ سَقَرَ ﴿٤٨﴾ اِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ
خَلَقْنٰهُ بِقَدَرٍ ﴿٤٩﴾ وَمَآ اَمْرُنَآ اِلَّا وَاحِدَةٌ كَلَمْحٍ بِالْبَصَرِ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَلَقَدْ اَهْلَكْنَآ اَشْيَاعَكُمْ
فَهَلْ مِنْ مُّدَّكِرٍ ﴿٥١﴾ وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ فَعَلُوْهُ فِي الزُّبُرِ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَكُلُّ صَغِيْرٍ وَّكَبِيْرٍ مُّسْتَطَرٌ ﴿٥٣﴾
اِنَّ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ فِيْ جَنّٰتٍ وَّنَهَرٍ ﴿٥٤﴾ فِيْ مَقْعَدِ صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ مَلِيْكٍ مُّقْتَدِرٍ ﴿٥٥﴾

Lot's people denied the warnings. We sent on them a wind charged with stones, which spared none but Lot's household, whom we saved in the last hours of the night through Our grace. Thus do We reward him who is grateful. Lot did warn his people of Our scourge but they doubted all the warnings and paid no heed. Then they sought to prevent him from guarding his guests. Consequently, We blinded their eyes (and said), "Taste now My torment and My warnings!"[22] Early in the morning they were overtaken by a lasting torment. Taste now My torment and My warnings. We have made this Qur'ān an easy means of admonition. Then, is there any who would take admonition ? 33-40

And warnings had come to the people of Pharaoh too, but they belied all Our Signs. Consequently, We seized them like the seizure of an All-Mighty, All-Powerful One. 41-42

Are your disbelievers any better?[23] Or, is there any exemption for you in the Divine Books? Or, do they say, "We are a strong host: We shall defend ourselves?" Soon shall this host be put to rout and they will all show their backs.[24] But the promised time to deal with them is the Hour of Resurrection, a most grievous and bitter Hour! These wicked people are in fact involved in misunderstanding and folly. The Day they are dragged into the Fire, on their faces, it will be said to them, "Taste now the flame of Hell." 43-48

We have created everything with a destiny,[25] and Our Command is but one Command, which takes effect in the twinkling of an eye.[26] We have destroyed many like you.[27] Then, is there any who would take admonition ? Whatever they have done is recorded in registers and everything, small or great, is written therein.[28] 49-53

Those who have avoided disobedience shall be among gardens and canals, in a place of true honour, in the Presence of a most Powerful King. 54-55

Cont. from p. 254]

what hosts it is that would be routed. But when in the Battle of Badr the pagan Quraish were routed and they were fleeing from the battlefieled, I saw the Messenger of Allah in his armour rushing forward and reciting this verse: *Sa-yuhzam-al-jam'u yuwallūn-ad-dubur.* Then only did I realize that this was the defeat that had been foretold." (Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Ḥātim).

25. That is, "Nothing in the world has been created at random but with a purpose and destiny. A thing comes into being at an appointed time, takes a particular form and shape, develops to its fullest extent, survives for a certain period, and then decays and dies at an appointed time. Even according to this universal principle this world too has a destiny in accordance with which it is functioning till an appointed time and will come to an end at an appointed time. It will neither come to an end a moment earlier than its appointed time of end nor survive a moment longer; it has neither existed since eternity nor will exist till eternity, nor is it the plaything of a child which he may destroy as and when he likes."

26. That is, "We shall not have to make any lengthy preparations for bringing about Resurrection, nor will it take long to come. For no sooner will a Command be issued forth from Us than it will take place in the twinkling of an eye."

27. That is, "If you think that the world is not the Kingdom of a Wise and Just God but the lawless empire of a blind ruler, in which man may behave and conduct himself as he likes, without any fear of accountability, history is proof and an eye-opener for you, which shows that the nations that adopted such a way of life, have been sent to their doom, one after the other."

28. That is, "These people should not be under the delusion that whatever they did in the world has become extinct; nay, they should know that full record of the deeds of every person, every group and every nation, lies preserved and it will be presented before them at the appropriate time."


LV
AR-RAḤMĀN
الرَّحْمٰن

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

LV

AR-RAḤMĀN

الرَّحْمٰن

INTRODUCTION

Name

This Sūrah is entitled Ar-Raḥmān, the word with which it begins. This title, however, deeply relates to the subject-matter of the Sūrah too, for in it, from the beginning to the end, the manifestations and fruits of Allah's attribute of mercy and grace have been mentioned.

Period of Revelation

The commentators generally hold the view that this is a Makkī Sūrah, though according to some traditions which have been cited on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, 'Ikrimah and Qatādah, it was revealed at Madīnah. But, firstly, there are also some other traditions from these very authorities, which contradict this view; secondly, its subject-matter bears a closer resemblance with the Makkī Sūrahs than with the Madanī Sūrahs; rather it appears to belong to the very early Makkah period. However, there are several authentic traditions which testify that it had been revealed in Makkah itself many years before the *hijrah*.

Musnad Aḥmad contains a tradition from Ḥaḍrat Asmā', daughter of Abū Bakr (may Allah bless them both), to the effect: "I saw the Messenger of Allah offering his Prayers in the sacred precincts of the Ka'bah facing the corner in which the "Black Stone" is fixed. This relates to the time when the Divine Command, *fasda' bi-mā tu'mar* ("So, proclaim publicly, O Prophet, what you are being commanded") had not yet been revealed. The polytheists at that time were hearing the words, *Fa-bi-ayyi ālāā'i Rabbi-kumā tukadhdhi-bān*, being recited by him in the Prayer." This shows that this Sūrah had been sent down even before Sūrah Al-Ḥijr.

Al-Bazzār, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Al-Mundhir, Dāraqutnī (in *Al-Afrād)*, Ibn Mardūyah and Ibn Al-Khatīb (in *Al-Tarīkh)* have related, on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, that once the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) recited Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān himself, or heard it recited before him: then he said to the people: How is it that I am not hearing from you the kind of good answer that the jinn had given to their Lord? When the people asked what it was he replied: "I recited the Divine Words, *Fa-bi-ayyi ālāā'i Rabbi-kumā tukadhdhibān*, the jinn in response would repeat the words: *Lā bi shai'in'min ni'mati Rabbi-nā nukadhdhib:* "We do not deny any of our Lord's blessings."

A similar theme has been related by Tirmidhī, Ḥākim and Ḥāfiz Abū Bakr al-Bazzār from Ḥaḍrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah. Their tradition contains these words:

"When the people kept silent on hearing the Sūrah Ar-Rahmān, the Holy Prophet said: "I recited this very Sūrah before the jinn in the night when they had gathered together to hear the Qur'ān. They responded to it better than you have. As I recited the Divine Words, *Fa-bi-ayyi ālāā'i Rabbi-kumā tukadhdhibān* ("O jinn and men, which blessings of your Lord will you deny?") they would respond to it, saying: O our Lord, we do not deny any of your blessings: Praise is for You alone'!"

This tradition indicates that on the occasion of the incident that has been related in Sūrah Al-Aḥqāf (vv. 29-32) of the jinn's hearing the Qur'ān from the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) he was reciting Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān in the Prayer. This happened in

the 10th year of the Prophethood when the Holy Prophet had halted at Nakhlah on his way back from Ṭā'if. Although in some other traditions it has been reported that the Holy Prophet did not know then that the jinn were hearing him recite the Qur'ān, but afterwards Allah had informed him of this, it is not unreasonable to suppose that just as Allah had informed him of the jinn's hearing the Qur'ān so also Allah Himself might have told him as to what answer they were giving on hearing Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān.

These traditions only indicate that Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān had been revealed even before Sūrahs Al-Ḥijr and Al-Aḥqāf. Besides, we come across another tradition which shows that it is one of those Sūrahs which were the earliest Revelations at Makkah. Ibn Isḥāq has related this on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Urwah bin Zubair: The Companions one day said to one another: "The Quraish have never heard any one recite the Qur'ān publicly to them, and who would read out the Divine Word aloud to them ? Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd said that he would. The Companions expressed the apprehension that he might be subjected to a harsh treatment and said that it should better be done by a person of a powerful family, who would protect him if the Quraish tried to subject him to violence. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah said: 'Let me alone: my Protector is Allah.' So early next morning he went to the Ka'bah while the Quraish chiefs were sitting in their respective conferences. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah arrived at the *Maqām* (station of Abraham) and began to recite Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān raising his voice as he did so. The Quraish first tried for a while to understand what he was saying. Then, when they realized that it was the Word that Muḥammad (peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was representing as the Word of God, they fell upon him and began to hit him in the face. But Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah was not deterred: he continued to receive the slaps and to read the Qur'ān as long as he could. At last, when he returned with a swollen face, the Companions said that they apprehended the same. He replied: 'God's enemies were never so light for me as they were today. If you say I'll recite the Qur'ān to them again tomorrow.' They all said, "No, you have done enough; you have made them listen to what they didn't want to hear."' (Ibn Hishām, vol. 1, p. 336).

Theme and Subject Matter

This is the only Sūrah of the Qur'ān in which besides men the jinn also, who are the other creation of the earth endowed with freedom

of will and action, have been directly addressed, and both men and jinn have been made to realize the wonders of Allah's power, His countless blessings, their own helplessness and accountability before Him, and have been warned of the evil consequences of His disobedience and made aware of the best results of His obedience. Although at several other places in the Qur'ān there are clear pointers to show that like the men the jinn too are a creation who have been endowed with freedom of will and action and are accountable, who have been granted the freedom of belief and unbelief, of obedience and disobedience, and among them too there are the believers and the unbelievers, the obedient and the rebellious, as among human beings, and among them too there exist such groups as have believed in the Prophets sent by God and in the Divine Books, this Sūrah clearly points out that the message of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the Qur'ān is meant both for men and for jinn and that his Prophethood is not restricted to human beings alone.

Although in the beginning of the Sūrah the address is directed only to human beings, for to them only belongs the vicegerency of the earth, among them only have the Messengers of Allah been raised, and in their tongues only have the Divine Books been revealed, yet from verse 13 onward both the men and the jinn have been addressed and one and the same invitation has been extended to both.

The themes of the Sūrah have been couched in brief sentences in a specific sequence:

In vv. 1-4 it has been stated that the teaching of the Qur'ān is from Allah Almighty and it is the very demand of His mercy that He should provide guidance to mankind through this teaching, for it is He Who has created man as a rational and intelligent being.

In vv. 5-6 it has been said that the whole system of the Universe is functioning under Allah's Sovereignty and everything in the earth and heavens is subject to His Command alone.

In vv. 7-9 another important truth that has been expressed is that Allah has established the entire system of the Universe precisely and equitably on justice, and the nature of this system requires that those who dwell in it also should adhere to justice within the bounds of their authority and should not disturb the balance.

In vv. 10-25 besides mentioning the wonders and excellences of Allah's might, references have been made to His those bounties from which the jinn and men are deriving benefit.

In vv. 26-30 both the men and the jinn have been reminded of the truths that in this Universe no one except One God is immortal and imperishable, and there is none, from the lowest to the highest, who does not stand in deed of God for his survival and other requirements. Whatever is happening here, from the earth to the heavens, is happening under His administration and control.

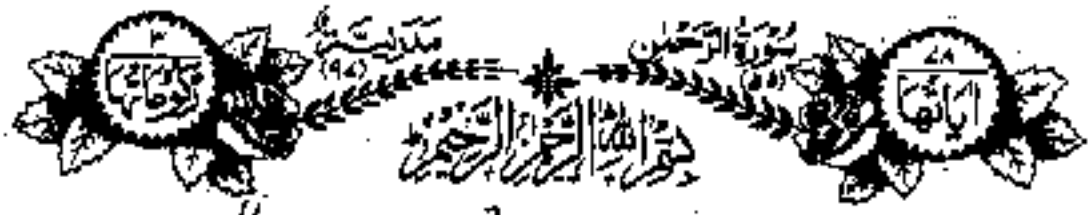
In vv. 31-36 both the groups have been warned that the time is fast approaching when they will be called to account, which they will not be able to avoid, for God's Kingdom is encircling them from every side; it is not in their power to flee it; if they are involved in the misunderstanding that they can, they may try to do so.

In vv. 37-38 it has been said that this accountability will be held on the Day of Resurrection.

In vv. 39-45 the evil end of the guilty ones, from among men and jinn, who have been disobeying Allah in the world has been mentioned.

And from verse 46 to the end of the Sūrah mention has been made of those rewards and blessings which will be granted to the righteous men and jinn who have led pious lives in the world and lived with a clear understanding that they will have to appear before their Lord one day and render an account of their deeds and actions.

This whole discourse is couched in oratorical language. It is a spirited and eloquent address in the course of which after mentioning each of the wonders of Allah's great power, and each of the blessings bestowed by Him, and each of the manifestations of His Sovereignty and dominion, and each of the details of His punishment and rewards, the jinn and men have been over and over again questioned: "Which then of the bounties and favours of your Lord will you deny ?" Below we shall explain that *ālāā'* is a word with many shades of meaning, which has been used in different senses at different places in this discourse, and this question to the jinn and men bears its own special meaning at every place according to the context.



الرَّحْمٰنُ ۙ عَلَّمَ الْقُرْاٰنَ ۚ خَلَقَ الْاِنْسَانَ ۙ عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ ۚ اَلشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ
بِحُسْبَانٍ ۚ وَّالنَّجْمُ وَالشَّجَرُ يَسْجُدٰنِ ۚ وَالسَّمَآءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ الْمِيْزَانَ ۙ
اَلَّا تَطْغَوْا فِي الْمِيْزَانِ ۚ وَاَقِيْمُوا الْوَزْنَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تُخْسِرُوا الْمِيْزَانَ ۚ وَ
الْاَرْضَ وَضَعَهَا لِلْاَنَامِ ۙ فِيْهَا فَاكِهَةٌ ۙ وَّالنَّخْلُ ذَاتُ الْاَكْمَامِ ۙ وَالْحَبُّ
ذُو الْعَصْفِ وَالرَّيْحَانُ ۚ فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ۚ خَلَقَ الْاِنْسَانَ مِنْ

LV

AR.RAḤMĀN

الرَّحْمٰن

Verses: 78 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

The most Merciful (God) has taught this Qur'ān.[1] He it is Who created man[2] and taught him speech.[3] 1-4

The sun and the moon adhere to a schedule,[4] and the stars[5] and the trees, all bow down in worship.[6] He raised the heaven high and set the balance.[7] Therefore, do not upset the balance: weigh with equity and do not give short weight.[8] 5-9

He[9] set the earth for all creatures,[10] with all kinds of tasty fruits in abundance and palm-trees with sheathed fruit, and a variety of corn with husk as well as grain.[11] So, O jinn and men, which of your Lord's blessings[12] will you deny?[13] 10-13

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1. That is, the teaching of this Qur'ān is not the production of a man's mind but its Teacher is the Merciful God Himself. Here, there was no need to tell as to whom Allah had imparted this Qur'ānic teaching for the people were hearing

it from the tongue of the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings). Therefore, the situation by itself made it evident that the teaching had been imparted to Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings).

To begin the discourse with this sentence is meant, first of all, to tell that the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) himself is not its author, but its Teacher is Allah Almighty. Furthermore, there is another object also to which the word *Raḥmān* (Merciful) is pointing. If the purpose was only to say that that teaching is from Allah, and not the production of the Prophet's mind, there was no need to use an attribute of Allah instead of His proper name, and for that purpose any attribute from among the Divine attributes could have been adopted. But when, instead of saying that Allah, or the Creator, or the Providence, has taught this, it was said: 'The Merciful *(Al-Raḥmān)* has taught this Qur'ān.' it by itself gave the meaning that the revelation of the Qur'ān for the guidance of mankind was nothing but Allah's mercy and grace. As He is most kind and Merciful to His creation, He did not like that He should leave them wandering in the darkness, and His mercy demanded that He should send down this Qur'ān to bless them with the knowledge on which depends their right guidance and conduct in the world and their success and well-being in the Hereafter."

2. In other words, as Allah is the Creator of man, and it is the Creator's responsibility to provide guidance to His creation and show it the way by following which it may fulfil the object of its erection, the revelation of this Qur'ānic teaching from Allah is not only the demand of Allah's mercifulness but also the necessary and natural demand of His being the Creator. Who else would provide guidance to the creation if not the Creator ? And if the Creator did not provide guidance, who else could? And what greater defect could there be for a creator that he should not teach his creation the method of fulfilling the object for which it has been created? Thus, in fact, the arrangement and provision of the teaching for man by Allah is not anything strange; it would be strange if no such arrangement had been made at all. Allah has not just left alone whatever He has created in the Universe, but has given it the most appropriate structure by which it may play its role in the system of nature and has taught it the method of playing that role effectively and successfully. Thus, each single hair and each single cell of man's own body has been born with the knowledge of how it has to carry out the task in the human body for which it has been created. Then, after all how could man himself remain deprived and independent of his Creator's teaching and guidance? This theme has been presented in the Qur'ān at different places in different ways. In Sūrah Al-Lail: 12, it has been said: "Indeed, it is for Us to tell the Way"; in Sūrah An-Naḥl: 9, it is said: "Allah has taken upon Himself to show the Right Way, when there exist crooked ways too." In Sūrah Ṭā Hā (vv. 47-50)

it has been stated that when the Pharaoh heard the prophetic message from the Prophet Moses and asked who was his Lord who had sent him as a Messenger to him, the Prophet replied: "Our Lord is He Who has given a distinctive form to everything and then guided it aright." That is, He has taught it the method by which it could carry out and fulfil the object of its creation in the system of existence. This is the reasoning by which an unbiased mind is satisfied that the coming of the Prophets and the Books from Allah for the instruction of man is the very demand of nature.

3. One meaning of the word *bayān*, as used in the original, is the expressing of one's own mind, i.e. speaking and expressing one's thoughts and intentions. Its other meaning is to make distinction between things, which here signifies the distinction between good and evil, virtue and vice. According to these two meanings this brief sentence completes the above reasoning. Speech is the distinctive quality which distinguishes man from the animals and other earthly creatures. It is not merely the power of speech, but there are working behind it the faculties of reasoning and intellect, understanding and discernment, will and judgement, and other mental powers without which man's power of speech could not operate at all. Therefore, speech is in fact an express symbol of man's being an intelligent being who has been endowed with freedom and authority, and when Allah has blessed man with this distinctive quality, evidently the nature of instruction for him also cannot be the same as would be suitable for the guidance of other creatures. Likewise, another distinctive quality of vital importance in man is that Allah has placed in him moral sense by virtue of which he can naturally distinguish between good and evil, truth and falsehood, justice and injustice, right and wrong, and this intuition and sense does not leave him even when he degrades himself to the lowest state of error and ignorance. The inevitable demand of these two distinctive qualities is that the method of instruction for man's conscious and voluntary life should be different from the innate, natural mode of instruction under which the fish has been taught to swim, the bird to fly, and the eye in the human body itself to wink and see, the ear to hear and the stomach to digest. Man in this sphere of his life himself recognizes the means like the teacher, the book, the school, the verbal and written instruction and reasoning and discussion as the modes of instruction, and does not regard the innate knowledge and intelligence as enough. Why should it then appear strange that for fulfilling the responsibility that falls upon the Creator of educating man, He has made the Messenger and the Book the means of his education and instruction ? The mode of education has to suit the nature of the creation. And very rationally so, The "Qur'ān" alone can be the means of educating the creation that has been taught *"bayān"* (speech) and not any other means that might suit the creatures which have not been taught the speech.

4. That is, "It is a powerful law and unalterable system that binds the great planets together. Man is able to calculate and measure time, days, dates, and crops and seasons only because no change takes place in the rule that Has been laid down for the rising and setting of the sun and of its passing through different stages. The innumerable creatures found on the earth are staying alive only because the sun and the moon have been accurately and precisely placed at particular distances from the earth and any increase or decrease in this distance is made in the right measure, in a particular order; otherwise if their distance from the earth increased or decreased haphazardly, no one could possibly survive here. Likewise, the perfect relationship and harmony that has been established between the movements of the moon round the earth and the sun, has made the moon a universal calendar, which announces the lunar date every night to the whole world with perfect regularity.

5. The word used in the original is *an-najm*, the well-known meaning of which is the star; but in the Arabic lexicon this word is also used for the plants and creepers which do not have a stem, e.g. vegetable, melons, water melons, etc. The commentators have disputed the sense in which this word has been used here. Ibn 'Abbās, Sa'īd bin Jubair, Suddī, and Sufyān Thaurī have taken it in the meaning of stemless vegetation, for just after it the word *ash-shajar* (the tree) has been used and this meaning is more relevant to it. On the contrary, Mujāhid, Qatādah and Ḥasan Baṣri have expressed the opinion that *an-najm* here does not imply the plants of the earth, but the stars of the sky, for this is its well-known meaning. On hearing this word, the mind first turns to this very meaning, and the mention of the sun and the moon has been followed by the stars very naturally and relevantly. Though the majority of the commentators and translators have preferred the first meaning, and it cannot be held wrong either, we hold Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr's this opinion as sound that in view of both the language and the subject-matter the second meaning seems to be preferable. At another place in the Qur'ān (Al-Ḥajj: 18) also mention has been made of the stars and the trees prostrating themselves, and there the word *nujūm* (pl. of *najm)* cannot be taken in any other meaning than of the stars. The words of the verse are: *Alam tara annallāha yasjudu lahū man fis smāwāt-i wa man fil ardi wash-shamsu wal-qamaru wal-nujūmu wal jibālu wash-shajaru wad-dawābbu wa kathīr-um-min-annāsi*.... (Al-Ḥajj: 18). In this verse *nujūm* (stars) have been mentioned along with *shams* (sun) and *qamar* (moon), and *shajar* (trees) along with mountains and animals and it has been said that they all bow down to Allah.

6. That is, "The stars of the heavens and the trees of the earth, all are subject to Allah's Command and obedient to His Law. They cannot exceed the rule that has been set for them."

What is meant to be impressed in these two verses is that the whole system of the Universe has been created by Allah and is functioning in His obedience. Nothing from the earth to the heavens is independent, nor functioning under another's godhead, nor has anyone any share in God's Kingdom, nor has anyone the position that it should be made a deity. All are servants and slaves; the Master is One Almighty Lord alone. Hence, *Tauḥīd* alone is the Truth which is being taught by this Qur'ān. Apart from this, any one who is involved in polytheism and denial of God is, in fact, at war with the whole system of the Universe.

7. Almost all the commentators have interpreted *mīzān* (balance) to mean justice, and "...set the balance" to imply that Allah has established the entire system of the Universe on justice. Had there been no harmony and balance and justice established among the countless stars and planets moving in space, and the mighty forces working in this Universe; and the innumerable creatures and things found here, this life on earth would not have functioned even for a moment. Look at the creatures existing in the air and water and on land for millions and millions of years on this earth. They continue to exist only because full justice and balance has been established in the means and factors conducive to life; in case there occurs a slight imbalance of any kind, every trace of life would become extinct.

8. That is, "As you are living in a balanced Universe, whose entire system has been established on justice, you also should adhere to justice. For if you act unjustly within the sphere in which you have been given authority, and fail to render the rights of others, you would indeed be rebelling against the nature of the Universe; for the nature of this Universe does not admit of injustice and perversion and violation of the rights. Not to speak of a major injustice, even if a person fraudulently deprives another of an ounce of something, by giving him short measure, he disturbs the balance of the entire Universe.—This is the second important part of the Qur'ānic teaching that has been presented in these three verses. The first teaching is *Tauḥīd* and the second is justice. Thus, in a few brief sentences the people have been told what teaching has been brought by the Qur'ān which the Merciful God has sent for the guidance of man."

9. Now from here to verse 20, mention is being made of the blessing and bounties of God and of those manifestations of His might by which both man and jinn are benefiting, and whose natural and moral demand is that although they have the option to believe or not to believe, they should adopt the way of their Lord's service and obedience willingly by their own free choice.

10. The word *waḍa'a* in the original means to compose, make, prepare, keep, and inscribe, and *anām* the creatures, which includes man and all other living things. According to Ibn 'Abbās, *anām* includes every thing which has a

soul. Mujāhid takes it in the meaning of the living creatures. Qatādah, Ibn Zaid and Sha'bī say that all living things are *anām*. Ḥasan Baṣri says that both the men and the jinn are included in its meaning. The same meanings have been given by the lexicographers. This shows that the people who deduce from this verse the command of making land the state property, are in error. This is an ugly attempt to introduce alien theories forcibly into the Qur'ān which are neither supported by the words of the verse nor by the context. *Anām* is not used only for human society but it includes all other creatures of the earth as well, and setting of the earth for *anām* does not mean that it should be the common property of all. Besides, the context here also does not indicate that the object of the verse is to state some economic principle. This, in fact, is meant to impress the truth that Allah made and prepared this earth in such a way that it became a fit abode for every kind of living being. It has not become so by itself, but by the will and power of the Creator. He in His wisdom placed it at a suitable distance and created such conditions on it which made it possible for the different species to exist and stay alive on it. (For explanation, see E.N.'s 73, 74 of An-Naml, E.N.'s 29, 32 of Yā Sīn, E.N.'s 90, 91 of Al-Mu'min, E.N.'s 11 to 13 of Hā Mīm As-Sajdah. E.N.'s 7 to 10 of Az-Zukhruf, E.N. 7 of Al-Jāthiyah).

11. That is, grain for men and husk for the animals.

12. The word *ālāā'* in the refrain as repeated over and over again in the subsequent verses has been translated differently at different places. Therefore, it would be useful to understand at the outset how vast this word is in meaning and what different shades of meaning it contains.

The lexicographers and commentators generally have explained *ālāā'* to mean "blessings" and "bounties". The translators also have given this same meaning of this word, and the same has been reported from Ibn 'Abbās, Qatādah and Ḥasan Baṣrī. The major argument that supports this meaning is the Holy Prophet's own statement that the jinn on hearing this verse being recited would respond to it, saying *Lā bi-shai in-min-ni'matika Rabba-nā nukadhdhib:* "O our Lord, we do not deny any of Your blessings." Therefore, we do not subscribe to the view of some present-day scholars, who say that *ālāā'* is never used in the meaning of the blessing.

Another meaning of this word is power and wonders of power, or excellent manifestations of power. Ibn Jarīr Ṭabari has reported that Ibn Zaid took the words *fa-bi-ayyi ālāā'i Rabbi kumā* in the meaning of *fa bi-ayyi qudrat-Allah.* Ibn Jarīr himself has taken ālāā' in the meaning of power and might in his commentary of vv. 37-38. Imām Rāzī also has made this observation in his commentary of vv.14-16: "These verses do not describe the blessings but the

powers of Allah, and in the commentary of vv. 22-23, this; "These describe the wonders of power and not the blessings."

Its third meaning is virtue, praiseworthy qualities, and prefections. Though this meaning has not been mentioned by the lexicographers and commentators, this word has often been used in this meaning in Arabic poetry. (Examples omitted).

Thus, we have taken this word in its vastest meaning and translated it suitably keeping in view the context in which it occurs. However, at some places the word *ālāā'* may have several senses in one and the same place, but due to limitations of translation we have had to adopt only one meaning. For example, in this verse after making mention of the creation of the earth and of making the best arrangements for the supply of provisions to the creatures, it has been said: "Which of the *ālāā'* of your Lord will you deny?" Here, *ālāā'* has not been used in the meaning of the blessings only but also in the meaning of the manifestations of Allah Almighty's power and His praiseworthy attributes. It is a wonder of His might that He fashioned this earth in such a marvellous manner that countless species of creatures live here and an endless variety of fruits and grain are grown on it. And it is due to His praiseworthy qualities that He not only created these creatures but also made arrangements for their sustenance and the supply of provisions for them; and the arrangements also so perfect that their food is not only nutritious but also pleasing to the taste and sight. In this connection, reference has been made to only one excellence of Allah Almighty's workmanship for the sake of example, viz., the creation of the date-palm fruit in sheaths. Keeping this one example in view one may consider what excellences of art have been devised and shown in the packing of banana, pomegranates, orange, coconut and other fruits, and how each of the different sorts of the grains and pulses which we so thoughtlessly cook and eat, are produced finely packed and covered in ears and pods and clusters.

13. "Denying" implies the several attitudes that the people adopt in respect of Allah Almighty's blessings and manifestations of His might and His praiseworthy attributes. For example, some people do not at all admit that the Creator of all things is Allah Almighty. They think that all this is a mere by-product of the matter, or an accidental happening, which is un-related with any wisdom and skill and workmanship. This is open denial.

Some other people do admit that the Creator of these things is Allah, but regard others beside Him also as associates in Godhead: they render thanks to others for His blessings: they adore others although they eat His provisions. This is another form of denial. Obviously, it would be the height of ingratitude if a

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صَلْصَالٍ كَالْفَخَّارِ ﴿14﴾ وَخَلَقَ الْجَآنَّ مِنْ مَّارِجٍ مِّنْ نَّارٍ ﴿15﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا
تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿16﴾ رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقَيْنِ وَرَبُّ الْمَغْرِبَيْنِ ﴿17﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿18﴾
مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ يَلْتَقِيٰنِ ﴿19﴾ بَيْنَهُمَا بَرْزَخٌ لَّا يَبْغِيٰنِ ﴿20﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا
تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿21﴾ يَخْرُجُ مِنْهُمَا اللُّؤْلُؤُ وَالْمَرْجَانُ ﴿22﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿23﴾ وَ
لَهُ الْجَوَارِ الْمُنْشَاٰتُ فِي الْبَحْرِ كَالْاَعْلَامِ ﴿24﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿25﴾ كُلُّ
مَنْ عَلَيْهَا فَانٍ ﴿26﴾ وَّيَبْقٰى وَجْهُ رَبِّكَ ذُو الْجَلٰلِ وَالْاِكْرَامِ ﴿27﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ
رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿28﴾ يَسْـَٔلُهٗ مَنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ هُوَ فِيْ شَاْنٍ ﴿29﴾
فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿30﴾ سَنَفْرُغُ لَكُمْ اَيُّهَ الثَّقَلٰنِ ﴿31﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا
تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿32﴾ يٰمَعْشَرَ الْجِنِّ وَالْاِنْسِ اِنِ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ اَنْ تَنْفُذُوْا مِنْ اَقْطَارِ
السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ فَانْفُذُوْا ؕ لَا تَنْفُذُوْنَ اِلَّا بِسُلْطٰنٍ ﴿33﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا
تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿34﴾ يُرْسَلُ عَلَيْكُمَا شُوَاظٌ مِّنْ نَّارٍ ۙ وَّنُحَاسٌ فَلَا تَنْتَصِرٰنِ ﴿35﴾ فَبِاَيِّ
اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿36﴾ فَاِذَا انْشَقَّتِ السَّمَآءُ فَكَانَتْ وَرْدَةً كَالدِّهَانِ ﴿37﴾ فَبِاَيِّ
اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿38﴾ فَيَوْمَئِذٍ لَّا يُسْـَٔلُ عَنْ ذَنْۢبِهٖٓ اِنْسٌ وَّلَا جَآنٌّ ﴿39﴾ فَبِاَيِّ
اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿40﴾ يُعْرَفُ الْمُجْرِمُوْنَ بِسِيْمٰهُمْ فَيُؤْخَذُ بِالنَّوَاصِيْ وَ
الْاَقْدَامِ ﴿41﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿42﴾ هٰذِهٖ جَهَنَّمُ الَّتِيْ يُكَذِّبُ بِهَا
الْمُجْرِمُوْنَ ﴿43﴾ يَطُوْفُوْنَ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَ حَمِيْمٍ اٰنٍ ﴿44﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿45﴾
وَلِمَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهٖ جَنَّتٰنِ ﴿46﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿47﴾ ذَوَاتَآ
اَفْنَانٍ ﴿48﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿49﴾ فِيْهِمَا عَيْنٰنِ تَجْرِيٰنِ ﴿50﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ
رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿51﴾ فِيْهِمَا مِنْ كُلِّ فَاكِهَةٍ زَوْجٰنِ ﴿52﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿53﴾

He created man from dry, rotten clay like the potter's,[14] and the jinn from the flame of fire.[15] So, O jinn and men, which wonders of your Lord's power[16] will you deny ? 14-16

Both the Easts and both the Wests: He is the Lord and Sustainer of all.[17] So, O jinn and men, which of your Lord's powers[18] will you deny? 17-18

He let loose the two seas that they may meet together. Yet there stands between them a barrier which they do not transgress.[19] So, O jinn and men, which manifestations of your Lord's power will you deny? From these seas come out pearls[20] and corals.[21] So, O jinn and men, which excellences of your Lord's power will you deny?[22] 19-23

And His are the ships[23] raised up high like mountains in the sea. So, O jinn and men, which of your Lord's bounties will you deny?[24] 24-25

All[25] that exists on the earth shall perish. Only your Lord, possessed of majesty and honour, shall endure for ever. So, O jinn and men, which of your Lord's excellences will you deny?[26] Whosoever is there in the earth and the heavens, implores Him for its needs. Every moment He is in a new (state of) glory.[27] So, O jinn and men, which of your Lord's glories will you deny?[28] 26-30

O you burdens of the earth,[29] We shall soon be free to call you to account.[30] (Then We shall see) which of your Lord's favours you deny.[31] O company of jinn and men! If you have the power to escape across the bounds of the earth and the heavens, then escape ! You shall not escape, for it requires great power.[32] So, O jinn and men, which of your Lord's powers will you deny? (If you try to escape) a flame of fire and smoke[33] shall be let loose upon you, which you will not be able to withstand. O jinn and men, which of your Lord's powers will you deny? 31-36

Then (how will it be) when the heaven will burst and redden like red leather?[34] O jinn and men, which of your Lord's powers will you (then) deny?[35] 37-38

On that Day no man and no jinn will need be asked concerning his sin.[36] Then (it will be seen) which of your Lord's favours you deny.[37] The culprits there shall be recognized by their faces and they 39-45

shall be seized by their forelock and by their feet and dragged. (Then) which of your Lord's powers will you deny? (At that time it will be said:) This is the same Hell which the culprits were wont to deny." They will wander to and fro between the same Hell and the hot boiling water.[38] Then, which of your Lord's powers will you deny?[39]

46-53 And for everyone who dreads to stand before his Lord[40] there are two gardens.[41] O which of your Lord's blessings will you deny?[42] Full of lush green branches. O which of your Lord's mercies will you deny? In both two springs of running water. O which of your Lord's blessings will you deny? In both there will be two kinds of every fruit.[43] O which of your Lord's blessings will you deny?

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person while admitting that a certain person had done him a favour rendered thanks to another, who had not in fact done him that favour, for this act of his would be an express proof that he regarded the other person as his benefactor whom he was rendering the thanks.

There are still others who acknowledge Allah alone as the Creator of all things and the Bestower of all blessings, but do not admit that they should obey the Commands of their Creator and Sustainer and follow His injunctions. This is another form of ingratitude and denial of the blessings, for the person who behaves so denies the right of the Bestower of the blessing although he acknowledges the blessing itself.

Some other people neither disavow the blessing nor deny the right of the Bestower of the blessing, but in practice there is no appreciable difference between their conduct and the conduct of a denier. This is not verbal denial but denial in practice.

14. The order of the initial stages of the creation of man, as given at different places in the Qur'ān seems to be as follows: (1) *Turāb*, i.e. earth or dust; (2) *ṭīn*, i.e. clay made by mixing water with earth; (3) *ṭīn-i-lāzib:* sticky clay, i.e. a clay which becomes sticky when left alone for a long time; (4) *ḥama'in musnūn*, i.e. clay with a stink in it; (5) *ṣalṣāl-im-min ḥama'in masnūn kalfakhkhār*, i.e. the rotten clay which when dried becomes like baked pottery; (6) *bashar*, i.e. the one who was made from this last form of the earth, in whom Allah breathed of His Spirit, to whom the angels were commanded to bow down, and from whose species his mate was created; (7) *thumma ja'ala nasla-hū min sulāla-tin-min-mā'in mahīn:* "then spread his progeny by means of an extract of the nature of a despicable water", for which the word *nutfah* has been used at other places.

For these stages one may look up the following verses of the Qur'ān in sequence: *ka-mathal-i Ādama khalaqa-hū min turāb* (Āl-'Imrān : 59); *bad'a khalq-al insān-i min tīn* (As Sajdah: 7); *Innā khalaq-nā hum min tīn-il-lāzib* (As-Sāāffāt: 11); the fourth and fifth stages have been described in the verse being explained, and the later stages in the following verses : *Innī khāliq-un bashar an-min tīn. Fa-idhā sawwaitu-hū wa nafakhtu-fī -hi min-rūhī fa-qa'ū-lahū sājidīn.* (Suād : 71-72); *khalaqa-kum min-nafs in wāhidatin wa khalaqa min-hā zauja-hā wa baththa min-humā rijāl-an kathīr-an wa nisā-an. (An -Nisā': 1) ; thumma Ja'ala nasla-hu min sulāta-tin-min mmāā'-in -mahin.* (As-Sajdah: 8); *fa-innā khalaq-nā-kum min turāb-in thumma min nutfa-tin.* (Al-Hajj:5).

15. The words in the original are: *mim-mārij-in-min-nar. Nār* signifies fire of a special nature and not the fire which is produced by burning wood or coal, and *mārij* means a pure, smokeless flame. The verse means that just as the first man was created out of earth, then passing through various stages of creation, the clay model adopted the shape of a living man of flesh and blood, and then his progeny spread by means of the sperm-drop, so was the first jinn created from a pure flame of fire, or a fire free of smoke, and then the species of jinn spread from his progeny. The position of the first jinn among the jinn is the same as of Adam (peace be upon him) among human beings. After taking the shape of a living man, the body of Adam and the human beings born of his progeny retained no relationship with the dust from which they were originally created. Though even now our body is entirely a compound of the earthly substances, these substances have taken the from of flesh and blood and after being made a living body it has become quite a different thing from a mere lump of clay. The same also is true of the jinn. Their being also is essentially fiery. But just as we are not a mere lump of earth, so also they are not a mere flame of fire.

This verse proves two things. First, that the jinn are not simply spirit, but are material beings of a special nature, but since they have been composed of pure fiery substances, they remain invisible to human beings who have bean created of earthly substances. The same has been referred to in this verse: "Satan and his party see you from where you cannot see them." (Al-A'rāf: 27) Likewise, the jinn's being fast-moving, their adopting different shapes and forms easily and their penetrating into different places imperceptibly where things made of earthly substances cannot penetrate, or if they do, their penetration becomes perceptible, all these things are possible and understandable only because they are essentially a fiery creation.

The other thing that we come to know from this verse is that the jinn are not only a creation of a wholly different nature from human beings, but the substance of their creation also is absolutely different from that of man, animal, vegetable and solid matter. This verse explicitly points out the error of the

viewpoint of those people who regard the jinn as a kind of human beings. According to their interpretation, the meaning of creating man of the dust and the jinn of the fire is to describe the difference of the temperamental nature of the two kinds of the people; one kind of them are humble by nature, and they are men in the true sense, and the other kind of the people are wicked by nature and fiery in temper, who may better be called devils. This is, however, no commentary of the Qur'ān but its distortion. In E.N. 14 above we have shown in detail how the Qur'ān itself has fully described the meaning of creating man from the earth. After reading all these details, can a reasonable person understand that the object of all this is only to define the humility of the good men ? Moreover, how can a sound-minded person understand that the meaning of creating man of rotten, dry clay and the jinn of the flame of pure fire is the difference of the separate moral characteristics of the two individuals or groups with different temperaments belonging to the same human species? (For further explanation, see E.N. 53 of Sūrah Adh-Dhāriyāt).

16. Here, in view of the context, It is more appropriate to translate ālāā' as "wonders of power", but in this the aspect of the blessing is also present. Just as it is a wonderful manifestation of Allah's power to have brought into existence marvellous creatures like man from the dust and the jinn from the flame of fire, so for both these creatures this is a great blessing also that Allah not only granted them a body but gave each such a structure and endowed each with such powers and capabilities that they became able to perform unique works in the world. Though we do not know much about the jinn, man is present before us. Had he been given the body of a fish or a bird or a monkey along with the human brain, he could not have with that body used the mental powers to any advantage. Then, is it not a supreme blessing of Allah that He blessed man with the most suitable body also, so that he may exploit the mental powers granted to him efficiently? Consider the hands, the feet, the eyes, the ears, the tongue and the erect stature as againts the intellect and reason, and the capabilities of workmanship and artistic skill, and one will feel that the Creator has provided a deep relationship and harmony between them without which the human body would have remained useless. Then, the same thing points out Allah's praiseworthy qualities too. How could the men and jinn of such quality and rank be brought into existence without knowledge, wisdom, mercy and a profound creative power ? For such miracles of creation cannot be performed by accidents and automatic blind and deaf laws of nature

17. "Both the Easts and both the Wests" may mean the two points of sunrise and the two points of sunset on the shortest day of winter and the longest day of summer as well as the easts and the wests of the two hemispheres of the earth. On the shortest day of winter the sun rises and sets making a small acute

angle; on the contrary, on the longest day of summer it rises and sets making a wide obtuse angle. Between them its points of rising and setting go on shifting every day, for which at another place in the Qur'ān (Al-Ma'ārij: 40) the words *Rabbul-mashāriq wal-maghārib* have been used. Likewise, at the time the sun rises in one hemisphere of the earth, it sets in the other hemisphere, thus producing two easts and two wests of the earth. There are several meanings of calling Allah Lord of both the Easts and both the Wests. Firstly, that it is by His Command that the system of the rising and setting of the sun and their changing pattern during the year is functioning. Second, that Allah alone is the Master and Ruler of the earth and the sun; had they their own separate lords, this regular system of the rising and setting of the sun on the earth could not have functioned and continued to function permanently. Third, that the Master and Sustainer of both the Easts and both the Wests is One Allah alone; to Him belong the creations living between them. He alone is nourishing them, and it is for their sustenance that He has established this wise system of the rising and setting of the sun on the earth.

18. Here also, although in view of the context, "power" seems to be a more conspicuous meaning of *ālāā'*, yet, besides, the aspect of "blessing" and "praiseworthy qualities" also is present in it. It is a great blessing that Allah Almighty has prescribed the rule of the rising and setting of the sun, for by means of it the changes of the crops and seasons are regulated with which countless interests of the men and animals and vegetables are attached. Likewise, it is Allah's mercy and providence and wisdom that He has made these arrangements by His power to meet the respective needs and requirements of the creatures He has created on the earth.

19. For explanation, see E.N. 68 of Sūrah Al-Furqān.

20. According to Ibn 'Abbās, Qatādah, Ibn Zaid and Ḍaḥḥāk (may Allah bless them), *marjān* implies small pearls, but according to Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, this word is used for corals in Arabia.

21. Literally: "From both these seas come out..." The objectors say that pearls and corals come out only from salt waters. How is it then that they are stated to come out from both the sweet and salt waters ? The answer is that the seas contain both the sweet and the salt waters; therefore, whether it is said that these things come out from the combination of both, or from both kinds of waters, it would be one and the same thing. And it may well be that further investigations might reveal that both these things originate in the sea at the place where springs of sweet water gush out from the sea bed; and in their birth and development combination of both kinds of the water plays its part. Near Baḥrain which has been famous for its pearl-fisheries for centuries, there exist springs of sweet water at the bottom of the Gulf.

22. Here also though the aspect of power in ālāā' is conspicuous, the aspect of the blessing and praiseworthy qualities also is not hidden. It is a blessing of God that these valuable things come out from the sea, and it is His Providence that for the satisfaction of the aesthetic taste of the creatures whom He had blessed with the taste for beauty and the love and longing for adornment, He created all sorts of these beautiful things in His world.

23. "His are the ships...": Ships became possible only by His power. It is He Who blessed man with the capability and skill that he may build ships for crossing the oceans; it is He Who created on the earth the material from which ships could be built; and it is He Who subjected water to the laws by which it became possible for the mountain-like ships to sail on the surface of the surging oceans.

24. Here, the aspect of the blessing and bounty is conspicuous in ālāā', but the explanation given above shows that the aspect of power and good qualities also is present in it.

25. From here to verse 30, the jinn and the men have been informed of two realities:

First, "Neither you are immortal nor the provisions that you are enjoying in this world everlasting. Immortal and Everlasting is the Being of the High and Supreme God alone Whose greatness this Universe testifies, and by Whose grace and kindness you have been favoured with these bounties. Now, if some one among you behaves arrogantly, it would be due to his own meanness. If a foolish person assumes haughtiness in his tiny sphere of authority, or becomes god of a few helpless men who fall into his hand, this farce would not last long. A godhead that lasts for a mere score or two score years in a corner of the earth whose size in this limitless Universe is not even equal to a pea seed, and then becomes a legend of the past, is not something of which one may feel proud and arrogant."

The other important truth of which both these creations have been warned is: "None of those whom you have set up as deities and removers of hardships and fulfillers of needs, apart from Allah, whether they are angels or prophets or the moon and the sun, or some other creation, can fulfil any of your needs. These helpless creatures and things themselves stand in need of Allah's help for their needs and requirements. They themselves pray to Him for help: when they are not able to remove their own hardships how will they remove your hardships? Whatever is happening in this limitless Universe, from the earth to the heavens, is happening under the Command of One God alone. No one else has any share in His Godhead: no one therefore can influence anyone else's destiny in any way.

26. Here, as the context itself shows, the word *ālāā'* has been used in the sense of excellences and perfections. Whoever of the mortal creatures is involved in vanity and self-arrogance and struts about thinking that his false godhead is everlasting, disavows Lord of the world's glory and majesty by his conduct, if not by his tongue. His pride and arrogance by itself is a denial of Allah Almighty's greatness and glory. Whatever claim he may make to an excellence by his tongue, or arrogate to himself such an excellence, it is indeed a disavowal of the rank and station of the real Possessor of excellences and perfections.

27. That is, "He is continuously and endlessly functioning in this Universe and creating countless new things with new and yet new forms and designs and qualities. He is giving death to one and life to another, exalting one and debasing another, causing one to recover and another to remain ill, rescuing a drowning one and drowning a floating one. He is providing sustenance to countless creatures in a variety of ways. His world never stays in the same state: it is changing every moment and its Creator arranges it in a new state and fashion every time, which is different from every previous form and fashion and state."

28. Here, *ālāā'* seems to have been used in the sense of qualities and glories. Every person who commits polytheism of any kind, in fact, disavows one or the other of Allah's attributes. A person's saying that such and such a saint has removed his disease, in fact, amounts to saying that Allah is not the Remover of disease and Restorer of health but the saint. Another one's saying that such and such a holy one has got him a job, in fact, amounts to saying that Allah is not the Sustainer and Lord but the particular holy person. Still another one's saying that his prayer has been answered at a particular shrine, in fact, amounts to saying that the command governing the world is not Allah's but the shrine's. In short, every polytheistic belief and utterance, in the final analysis, leads up to the disavowal of the Divine attributes. Polytheism is nothing but that one should ascribe the Divine attributes of being All-Hearing and All-Seeing, Almighty and All-Powerful, etc., to others than Allah, and should deny that Allah alone is the Possessor of all these attributes.

29. *Thaqalān* is derived from *thiql*, which means a burden, and *thaqal* is the burden loaded on a conveyance. *Thaqalān* (dual) therefore would mean: "two loaded burdens". Here this word refers to the jinn and men; who are both loaded on the earth. As the addressees here are those jinn and men who have turned away from the service and obedience of their Lord and Sustainer, they have been addressed as: "O burdens of the earth." In other words, the Creator is warning these two unworthy groups of His creation, saying: "O you who have become a burden for My earth, I am soon going to take you to task."

30. This does not mean that Allah at this time is too busy to call the disobedient servants to account, but it means that Allah has arranged a special time-table according to which He will first bring into existence generation after generation of the jinn and men in the world till an appointed time, and will provide them with an opportunity to work in this examination centre of the world; then at a specific Hour the examination will be suddenly brought to a close, and all the jinn and men living at that time will be given death simultaneously. Then at another time which is preordained with Allah for calling the jinn and men to account, all the former and the latter generations of both the species will be resurrected and mustered at one and the same time. In view of this time-table the two species have been warned, as if to say: "We are yet busy with the work of the first period, and the time for the second period has not yet come, not to speak of embarking on the work of the third period. But you may rest assured. The time is fast approaching when We shall be free to take you to task." This lack of leisure does not mean that Allah is too occupied with one kind of work to attend to another kind of work. But its nature is analogous to the occupation of a person who has set a time-table for different sorts of the works and in respect of a work whose time has not yet arrived according to the time-table, he may say that he at the moment is not free for it.

31. Here, *ālāʾ* can also be taken in the meaning of powers. In view of the context, each meaning seems to be appropriate in its own way. According to the first meaning, it would mean: "Today you are being ungrateful for Our blessings and are being treacherous and disloyal by adopting the different attitudes of disbelief, polytheism, atheism, sin and disobedience, but tomorrow when the time comes for accountability, We shall see which of Our blessings you prove to be the result of a mere accident, or the fruit of your own ability, or a manifestation of the kindness of a god or goddess or saint." In the second case, the meaning would be: "Today you are mocking the doctrine of Resurrection and the gathering together of all mankind and jinn on the Day of Judgement and the accountability and the Heaven and Hell, and are harbouring the misunderstanding that such things are not at all possible, but when We gather you together for accountability and all that you deny today will appear before you, then We shall see which of Our powers you deny."

32. "The earth and the heavens": the Universe or the Kingdom of God. The verse means to impress this: "It is not in your power to escape Allah's grasp. When the time for the accountability of which you are being foretold comes, you will be seized and brought before God in any case wherever you may be. To go out of God's reach you will have to flee from the Universe of God for which you do not have the required power. If you feel that you have the power, then you may use that power if you so will."

33. The word *shuwāẓ*, as used in the original, means the pure, smokeless flame, and *nuḥās* is the gross smoke without a flame. These two things, one after the other, will be let loose upon the men and jinn, when they try to escape the accountability of Allah.

34. This refers to the Day of Resurrection. Bursting of the heavens implies loosening of the discipline of the heavens, scattering of the celestial bodies, upsetting of the system of the heavens. And the meaning of "reddening like red leather" is that during that great upheaval anyone who looks up towards the sky, will feel as though the entire heavens were on fire.

36. That is, "Today you deem Resurrection impossible; you think Allah has no power to bring it about. But when it will have taken place and you see with your eyes all that you are being foretold, which of the powers of Allah will you then deny ?"

36. This is being explained by the subsequent sentence: "The culprits there shall be recognized by their faces." It means that in that great assembly where all the former and the latter generations will have gathered together, there will be no need to ask as to who are the culprits, nor will any man or jinn need be asked whether he is a culprit or not. The dejected faces of the culprits, their terror-stricken eyes, their disturbed and alarmed countenances will themselves be enough to expose the secret that they are the culprits. When a crowd comprising both the guilty and the innocent people, is encircled by the police, the calm and tranquil of the innocent people and the bewildered and disturbed state of the guilty ones tell at one glance as to who in the crowd is the culprit and who is innocent. This general rule is in most cases belied in the world, because the worldly police do not enjoy the reputation of being fair and just, rather on many an occasion they have turned out to be more bothersome for the gentle and innocent people than for the culprits. Therefore, here it is possible that when encircled by the police the gentle and innocent people might become even more terror-stricken than the criminals, but in the Hereafter, when every noble person will have complete faith in the justice of Allah, bewilderment will afflict only those whose conscience will be conscious of their being the culprits themselves, and who on their very arrival in the Court of God will become certain of their doom, which they had regarded as impossible or doubtful in the world and so had been committing every heinous sin and crime.

37. The real basis of the crime according to the Qur'an is that the servant who is benefiting by the Blessings of his Sustainer, should harbour the misunderstanding that the blessings have been bestowed by no one, but have reached him of their own accord, or that the blessings are not the gift of God but the fruit of his own ability or good fortune, or that they are the gift of God, but

God has no right on His servants, or that God Himself has not done him those favours but some other being has got these done him. These are the wrong concepts on account of which man becomes independent of God and being free from His obedience and service performs acts which He has forbidden, and avoids acts which He has enjoined. Seen in this light every crime and every sin is, in reality, a disavowal of the favours of Allah whether a person denies them by the word of mouth or not. But the person who, in fact, has no intention of the denial, but acknowledges the favours in the depths of his heart, commits an error occasionally because of human weakness, he shows repentance on it and tries to avoid it. This saves him from being included among the deniers. Apart from this, all other culprits are, in fact, beliers of Allah's blessings and deniers of His favours. That is why it has been said: "When you will have been seized as culprits, then We shall see as to which of Our favours you deny." In Sūrah Takāthur: 8 the same thing has been put thus: "On that Day you will certainly be called to account for the blessings you had been granted." That is, it will be asked: "Had We granted you these blessings or not? Then, what attitude did you adopt towards your Benefactor, and in what ways did you use His Blessings?"

38. That is, "In Hell they will feel oppressed with thirst again and again, and will rush towards the springs of water, but will find only boiling water, which will not satisfy their thirst, and they will thus continue to wander to and fro between Hell and the springs for ever and ever."

39. That is, "Will you even at that time be able to deny that God can bring about Resurrection, can give you another life after death, can call you to account, and can also make this Hell in which you are suffering punishment today?"

40. "Who dreads... Lord": who fears God in whatever he does in the world, and dreads his accountability before Him in the Hereafter. Whoever holds this belief will inevitably avoid serving the lusts of his self, will avoid following every path blindly, will distinguish between the truth and falsehood, justice and injustice, pure and impure, and the lawful and the unlawful, and will not turn away deliberately from following the Commands of God. This is the real ground for the reward that is being mentioned below.

41. *Jannat* actually means a garden. At some places in the Qur'ān the entire world in which the righteous people will be kept, has been called *Jannat*, as though the whole of it was a garden. And at others it has been said that they will have *Jannāt* (Gardens) under which canals will be flowing. This means that that big Garden will comprise countless other gardens; and here precisely it has been stated that every pious man will be given two gardens in that big Garden, which will be particularly meant for him; it will have his own palaces in which he will

live with his family and attendants like a king, and in it he will be provided with all that is being mentioned below.

42. From here till the end, the word *ālāʾ* has been used both for the blessings and for the powers, and there is an aspect of the praiseworthy qualities too, in it. If we take the first meaning, the meaning of repeating the refrain in this context will be: "If you like to deny the blessings of Allah, you may do so. The righteous will certainly receive these blessings from their Lord." In the second case the meaning would be: "If you think it is impossible for Allah to create the Garden and bless His righteous servants with these bounties in it, you may think so. Allah certainly has the power to do this work and He will surely accomplish it." According to the third meaning, it means: "You think that after having created this big world Allah now doesn't bother whether a person behaves unjustly here or justly, works to promote the truth or falsehood, spreads evil or good: He will neither punish the oppressor nor redress the grievances of the oppressed, will neither appreciate good nor abhor evil. Then, as you think, He is helpless too. He can build the heavens and the earth but cannot prepare Hell for punishing the wicked and cannot make Heaven for rewarding the followers of the Truth. Thus, you may deny His praiseworthy attributes as you may, but tomorrow when He hurls the evildoers into Hell and blesses the worshippers of the truth in Heaven, will you even then be able to deny His these attributes?"

43. This can have two meanings: (1) "The fruits of the two gardens will have their own special flavors and tastes. In one garden he will find one kind of the fruit clustering on its branches, and in the other, another kind." (2) "In each garden there will be two kinds of fruit; one kind of the familiar fruit known and tasted in the world, though much superior to that found in the world, and the other kind of the rare fruit never imagined and tasted before."

44. That is, "When their lining will be of such superior quality, you may imagine what will be the quality of the outer layer of the carpets."

45. This is the real character of the woman: she should neither be shameless nor immodest, but should have modesty in her looks.

That is why Allah while making a mention of women among the blessings of Paradise has first of all praised their modesty and chastity, and not their beauty and physical charms. Beautiful women can get together in mixed clubs and film studios and beauty contests where the select beautiful women only are admitted, but a person of low taste and mentality only can show any interest in them. No noble person can find any charm in the beauty that attracts every evil look and is ready to fall in every lap!

46. This means that in the worldly life whether a woman died a spinster, or as the wife of somebody, or died young, or as an old woman, in the Hereafter

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مُتَّكِـِٔيْنَ عَلٰى فُرُشٍۭ بَطَآئِنُهَا مِنْ اِسْتَبْرَقٍ ؕ وَجَنَا الْجَنَّتَيْنِ دَانٍ ﴿٥٤﴾ فَبِاَيِّ
اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿٥٥﴾ فِيْهِنَّ قٰصِرٰتُ الطَّرْفِ ۙ لَمْ يَطْمِثْهُنَّ اِنْسٌ قَبْلَهُمْ وَ
لَا جَآنٌّ ﴿٥٦﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿٥٧﴾ كَاَنَّهُنَّ الْيَاقُوْتُ وَ الْمَرْجَانُ ﴿٥٨﴾ فَبِاَيِّ
اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿٥٩﴾ هَلْ جَزَآءُ الْاِحْسَانِ اِلَّا الْاِحْسَانُ ﴿٦٠﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا
تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿٦١﴾ وَ مِنْ دُوْنِهِمَا جَنَّتٰنِ ﴿٦٢﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿٦٣﴾ مُدْهَآمَّتٰنِ ﴿٦٤﴾
فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿٦٥﴾ فِيْهِمَا عَيْنٰنِ نَضَّاخَتٰنِ ﴿٦٦﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا
تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿٦٧﴾ فِيْهِمَا فَاكِهَةٌ وَّ نَخْلٌ وَّ رُمَّانٌ ﴿٦٨﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿٦٩﴾
فِيْهِنَّ خَيْرٰتٌ حِسَانٌ ﴿٧٠﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿٧١﴾ حُوْرٌ مَّقْصُوْرٰتٌ فِى
الْخِيَامِ ﴿٧٢﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿٧٣﴾ لَمْ يَطْمِثْهُنَّ اِنْسٌ قَبْلَهُمْ وَلَا جَآنٌّ ﴿٧٤﴾
فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿٧٥﴾ مُتَّكِـِٔيْنَ عَلٰى رَفْرَفٍ خُضْرٍ وَّعَبْقَرِيٍّ حِسَانٍ ﴿٧٦﴾
فَبِاَيِّ اٰلَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبٰنِ ﴿٧٧﴾ تَبٰرَكَ اسْمُ رَبِّكَ ذِى الْجَلٰلِ وَالْاِكْرَامِ ﴿٧٨﴾

The dwellers of Paradise shall be reclining on carpets lined with thick silk,[44] and the branches of the gardens will be hanging down (on them) with fruit. O which of your Lord's blessings will you deny? Amidst these blessings will be those of bashful looks,[45] whom neither man nor jinn will have touched before them.[46] O which of your Lord's bounties will you deny? As beautiful as rubies and pearls. O which of your Lord's bounties will you deny? 54-59

Could the reward of goodness be anything but goodness?[47] Then, O jinn and men, which of your Lord's praiseworthy attributes will you deny?[48] And besides those two, there will be two other gardens.[49] O which of your Lord's bounties will you deny? Dark-green and well-watered.[50] O which of your Lord's blessings will you deny? In both two gushing springs. O which of your Lord's favours will you deny ? In them plenty of fruit, and dates and pomegranates. O which of 60-77

your Lord's blessings will you deny? Amidst these blessings chaste and beautiful wives. O which of your Lord's bounties will you deny? Houris kept in their tents.[51] O which of your Lord's blessings will you deny? No man or jinn will have touched them before them. O which of your Lord's blessings will you deny? They will be reclining on green cushions and fine, rich carpets.[52] O which of your Lord's bounties will you deny?

Full of blessings is the name of your Lord, Owner of Glory and Honour! 78

[*Contd. from page 285*]

when all the righteous women enter Paradise, they will be made young and virgins; and any of the women who is made a life-partner of a righteous man, will not have been possessed by anyone before that husband, in Paradise.

This verse also shows that the righteous jinn too will enter Paradise like the righteous men. Men will have women from their own kind and the jinn their wives from their own kind; both the kinds will have their mates from their own particular kind. No person of one kind will be made a partner of a member of another kind with whom he cannot live as husband or wife naturally. The words of the verse: "...whom neither man nor jinn will have touched before them," do not mean that the women there will only be of human species and they will not have been touched by any man or jinn before their husbands, but its real meaning is: In Paradise there will be women of both the jinn and the human species; they all will be modest and untouched: neither a jinn female will have been touched by a jinn male before her husband in Paradise, nor a human female will have been touched by a human male before her husband in Paradise.

47. That is, "How, after all, is it possible that Allah should allow to go waste the sacrifices of those righteous servants and should deny them their rewards, who kept themselves subjected to restrictions throughout their lives for the sake of Allah, who avoided the unlawful and remained content with the lawful, who performed their duties faithfully and sincerely, rendered the rights of those to whom rights were due, and endured hardships against evil and upheld good?"

48. Obviously, the parson who is a denier of Paradise and its rewards, actually denies many of Allah Almighty's praiseworthy attributes. Even if he believes in Allah, he holds a bad opinion about Him. In his view He is a perverse ruler in whose lawless kingdom doing good is an exercise in futility. He is either blind and deaf and is, therefore, wholly unaware as to who in his kingdom is making sacrifces of life, wealth and labour for His sake; or He is un-appreciative and cannot distinguish between good and evil; or, as he seems to think, He is helpless and powerless: He may be very appreciative of the good but is unable to

reward the doer of it. That is why it has been said: "When in the Hereafter good will be rewarded with good in front of your very eyes, will you even then disavow the praiseworthy attributes of your Lord?"

49. The word *dūn* as used in *min dūn-i-himā Jannatān*, is employed in three different meanings in Arabic (1) To be situated at a lower level than another thing; (2) to be inferior to something of better and nobler quality; and (3) to be over and above something else. On account of this difference in meaning, one probable meaning of these words is that every dweller of Paradise will be given two more gardens besides the two previously mentioned; another probable meaning is that these two gardens will be inferior in quality and rank to both the first mentioned gardens; that is, the first two gardens will either be situated at a higher level than these two, or the first two gardens will be of a superior kind and these two of an inferior kind as compared to them. If the first probability is adopted, it would mean that these two additional gardens also will be for those dwellers of Paradise, who have been mentioned above, And in case the second probability is adopted, the meaning would be that the first two gardens will be for "those nearest to Allah", and these two for "the people of the right hand." This second probability is strengthened by the two kinds of the righteous men as mentioned in Sūrah Al-Wāqi'ah. First, the foremost, who have also been called the *"muqarrabūn"*; second, the people of the right hand, who have also been entitled *"aṣḥāb al-maimanah"*; and for both these separate qualities of the two kinds of the gardens have been mentioned. Furthermore, this probability is also strengthened by the *Ḥadīth* which Abū Bakr has related on the authority of his father, Ḥaḍrat Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī, In this he says: The Holy Prophet said; "Two *jannats* (gardens) will be for the foremost among the righteous (or the *muqarrabin)*, in which the utensils and articles of decoration will be of gold, and two *jannats* for the followers (or the *ashab al-yamin*), in which everything will be of silver," *(Fatḥ al-Bari, Kitab at-Tafsir:* Sūrah Ar-Raḥman).

50. The word *madhaammatan* has been used in praise of these gardens. *Mudhaammatun* is such luxuriant vegetation which because of its extreme luxuriance assumes a darkish hue.

51. For the explanation of *ḥūr* see E. N's 28, 29 of Sūrah Aṣ-Ṣaaffat and E.N. 42 of Sūrah Ad-Dukhan the tents probably will be similar to those pitched for the nobles and rich people in the public parks. Most probably the wives of the dwellers of Paradise will live with them in their palaces and in their parks there will be tents pitched here and there in which there will be the houris to entertain them. Our this presumption is based on this that in the foregoing verses beautiful and chaste wives have been mentioned; now, here, mention of the houris signifies that they will be a different kind of women from the wives. This presumption is further strengthened by the *Ḥadith* which Hadrat Umm Salamah

has reported. She says: "I asked: O messenger of Allah, who are better: the women of the world or the houris! The Holy Prophet replied: The women of the world are superior to the houris in the same way as the outer layer of a garment is superior to its lining. I asked: On what grounds ? he replied: On the ground that the women have offered their Prayers, observed their Fasts, and performed other devotions." (Tabarani). This shows that the wives of the dwellers of Paradise will be the women who affirmed the faith in the world and left the world while they practised good and right. They will enter Paradise in consequence of their faith and good deeds, and will deserve the blessings of Paradise on merit. They would either become the wives of their previous husbands of their own free will and choice, if they too happened to be dwellers of Paradise, or Allah will wed them to some other dweller of Paradise, if the two would like to live together as husband and wife. As for the houris they will not be entitled to dwell in Paradise as a result of any righteous deed of their own, but Allah will create them as young, beautiful women and bestow them also as a blessing among the other blessings on the dwellers of Paradise so that they may enjoy their companionship. But they will not in any case be creatures of the kind of the jinn and fairies, for man cannot cohabit with a kind other than his own. Therefore, most probably these would be those innocent girls who died immature, and whose parents did not deserve Paradise so that they could be admitted to Paradise with them as the children of their righteous parents.

52. The word *abqari* in the original is from *'abqar*, the capital city of the jinn in the legends of the pre-Islamic Arabia. It was on that account that the Arabs called every fine and rare thing *'abqari* as if it belonged to the fairyland and had no match in the material world. So much so that in their idiom the man who possessed extraordinary abilities and who performed wonderful works was also called *abqari*. The English word genius also is spoken in the same sense and is also derived from genii which is a synonym of jinn. That is why the word *'abqari;* has been used here to give an idea of the extraordinary exquisiteness of the provisions of Paradise to the Arabs.


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AL-WĀQI'AH
الواقعه

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

LVI

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INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from the word *al-wāqi'ah* of the very first verse.

Period of Revelation

According to the chronological order that Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās has given of the Sūrahs, first Sūrah Tā Hā was sent down, then Al-Wāqi'āh and then Ash-Shu'arā' (Suyūti: *Al-Iqān).* The same sequence has been reported from 'Ikrimah. (Baihaqi: *Dalā'il an-Nubuwwat*).

This is supported also by the story that Ibn Hishām has related from Ibn Isḥāq about the affirmation of the Faith by Ḥaḍrat 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him). It says that when Ḥaḍrat 'Umar entered his sister's house, Sūrah Ṭā Hā was being recited. Hearing his voice the people of the house hid the pages of the Qur'ān. Ḥaḍrat 'Umar first seized his brother-in-law and when his sister rose in defence of her husband, he hit her also and wounded her on the head. When 'Umar saw blood on his sister, he was sorry for what he had done, and said to her: "Show me the manuscript that you have concealed so that I may see what it contains." The sister said: "You are unclean because of your polytheism: *wa anna-hū lā yamassu-hā illl-aṭ-ṭāhir:* Only a clean person can touch it." So, Ḥaḍrat 'Umar rose and washed himself, and then took up the manuscript to read it. This shows that Sūrah Al-Wāqi'ah had been sent down by that time for it contains the verse: *la yamassuhū ill-al-muṭahharūn;* and it has been established historically that Ḥaḍrat 'Umar embraced Islam after the first migration to Ḥabash, in the fifth year of the Prophethood.

Theme and Subject Matter

Its theme is the Hereafter, *Tauḥīd* and refutation of the Makkan disbelievers' suspicions about the Qur'ān. What they regarded as utterly incredible was that Resurrection would ever take place, when the entire system of the earth and heavens would be upset, and when all the dead would be resurrected and called to account, after which the righteous would be admitted to Paradise and the wicked cast into Hell. They regarded all this as imaginary, which could not possibly happen in actual fact. In answer to this, it was said: "When the inevitable event will take place, there will be none to belie its happening, nor will anyone have the power to avert it, nor prove it to be an unreal happening. At that time all peoples will be divided into three classes:

(1) The foremost in rank and position; (2) the common righteous people; and (3) those who denied the Hereafter and persisted in disbelief and polytheism and major sins till the last." How these three classes of the people will be rewarded and punished has been described in detail in vv. 7-56.

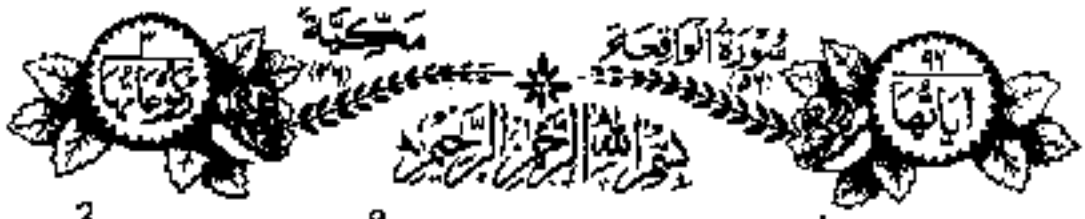
Then, in vv. 57-74 arguments have been given, one after the other, to prove the truth of the two basic doctrines of Islam, which the

disbelievers were refusing to accept, viz. the doctrines of *Tauḥīd* and the Hereafter. In these arguments, apart from every thing else that exists in the earth and heavens, man's attention has been drawn to his own body and to the food that he eats and to the water that he drinks and to the fire on which he cooks his food, and he has been invited to ponder the question: What right do you have to behave independently of, or serve any other than, the God Whose creative power has brought you into being, and Whose provisions sustain you ? And how can you entertain the idea that after having once brought you into existence He has become so helpless and powerless that He cannot recreate you once again even if he wills to?

Then, in vv. 75-82 their suspicions in respect of the Qur'ān have been refuted and they have been made to realize how fortunate they are that instead of deriving any benefit from the great blessing that the Qur'an is, they are treating it with scant attention and have set only this share of theirs in it that they deny it. If one seriously considers this matchless argument that has been presented in two brief sentences about the truth of the Qur'ān, one will find in it the same kind of firm and stable system as exists among the stars and planets of the Universe, and the same is the proof of the fact that its Author is the same Being Who has created the Universe. Then the disbelievers have been told that this Book is inscribed in that Writ of Destiny which is beyond the reach of the creatures, as if to say: "You think it is brought down by the devils to Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), whereas none but the pure angels has any access to the means by which it reaches Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) from the well-guarded Tablet."

In conclusion, man has been warned, as if to say: "You may brag and boast as you like and may shut your eyes to the truths in your arrogance of independence, but death is enough to open your eyes. At death you become helpless: you cannot save your own parents; you cannot save your children; you cannot save your religious guides and beloved leaders. They all die in front of your very eyes while you look on helplessly. If there is no supreme power ruling over you, and your this assumption is correct that you are all in all in the world, and there is no God, then why don't you restore to the dying person his soul ? Just as you are helpless in this, so it is also beyond your power to stop Allah

from calling the people to account and mete out rewards and punishments to them. You may or may not believe it, but every dying person will surely see his own end after death. If he belongs to those nearest to God, he will see the good end meant for them; if he be from among the righteous, he will see the end prepared for the righteous; and if he be from among the deniers of the truth, he will see the end destined for the criminals.



إِذَا وَقَعَتِ الْوَاقِعَةُ ۝١ لَيْسَ لِوَقْعَتِهَا كَاذِبَةٌ ۝٢ خَافِضَةٌ رَّافِعَةٌ ۝٣ إِذَا رُجَّتِ
الْأَرْضُ رَجًّا ۝٤ وَبُسَّتِ الْجِبَالُ بَسًّا ۝٥ فَكَانَتْ هَبَاءً مُّنْبَثًّا ۝٦ وَكُنْتُمْ أَزْوَاجًا
ثَلَاثَةً ۝٧ فَأَصْحَابُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ مَا أَصْحَابُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ ۝٨ وَأَصْحَابُ الْمَشْأَمَةِ مَا
أَصْحَابُ الْمَشْأَمَةِ ۝٩ وَالسَّابِقُونَ السَّابِقُونَ ۝١٠ أُولَٰئِكَ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ ۝١١ فِي جَنَّاتِ
النَّعِيمِ ۝١٢ ثُلَّةٌ مِّنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ ۝١٣ وَقَلِيلٌ مِّنَ الْآخِرِينَ ۝١٤ عَلَىٰ سُرُرٍ مَّوْضُونَةٍ ۝١٥
مُّتَّكِئِينَ عَلَيْهَا مُتَقَابِلِينَ ۝١٦ يَطُوفُ عَلَيْهِمْ وِلْدَانٌ مُّخَلَّدُونَ ۝١٧ بِأَكْوَابٍ وَّ

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Verses:96 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

When the inevitable event happens, there shall be none to belie its happening.[1] It will be a calamity which will abase and exalt.[2] The earth shall be shaken all of a sudden,[3] and the mountains shall crumble and become as scattered dust. You, them, shall be divided into three classes:[4] People of the right hand:[5] Oh, how (fortunate) shall be the people of the right hand! And the people of the left hand:[6] Oh, how (unfortunate) shall be the people of the left hand! And the foremost shall still be the foremost.[7] They will be those nearest (to God). They shall abide in the Gardens of bliss. Most of them will be from among the former people and a few from among those of latter day.[8] They will be reclining on jewelled couches facing each other. 1-6

1. Opening the discourse with this sentence by itself signifies that this is

an answer to the objections that were then being raised in the disbelievers' conferences against Resurrection. This was the time when the people of Makkah had just begun to hear the invitation to Islam from the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon be Allah's peace and blessing). In it what seemed most astonishing and remote from reason to them was that the entire system of the earth and heavens would one day be overturned and then another world would be set up in which all the dead, of the former and the latter generations, would be resurrected. Bewildered they would ask: "This is just impossible ! Where will this earth, these oceans, these mountains, this moon and sun go? How will the centuries-old dead bodies rise up to life ? How can one in his senses believe that there will be another life after death and there will be gardens of Paradise and the fire of Hell ?" Such were the misgivings that were being expressed at that time everywhere in Makkah. It was against this background that it was said: "When the inevitable event happens, there shall be no one to belie it."

In this verse the word *"wāqi'ah"* (event) has been used for Resurrection, which nearly means the same thing as the English word 'inevitable', signifying thereby that it is something that must come to pass. Then, its happening has been described by the word *"waqi'ah,"* which is used for the sudden occurrence of a disaster. *Lāisa li waq'at-i-hā kādhibat-un* can have two meanings: (1) That it will not be possible that its occurrence be averted, or stopped, or turned back: or, in other words, there will be no power to make it appear as an unreal event; and (2) that there will be no living being to tell the lie that the event has not taken place.

2. Literally: "that which causes (something or somebody) to rise and to fall." Its one meaning can be that it will upset every order; it will turn things upside-down. Another meaning also can be that it will exalt the lowly and bring low the high and mighty; that is, on its advent the decision as to who is noble and who is ignoble among the people will be made on quite a different basis. Those who posed as honourable people in the world, would become contemptible and those who were considered contemptible would become honourable.

3. That is, it will not be a local earthquake that may occur in a restricted area, but it will shake the whole earth to its depths all of a sudden, and it will experience a tremendous jolt and tremors all through.

4. Although the address apparently is directed to the people to whom this discourse was being recited, or who may read it or hear it read now, in fact the entire mankind is its addressee. All human beings who have been born since the first day of creation and will be born till the Day of Resurrection, will ultimately be divided into three classes.

5. The word *maimanah* in *ashāb al-maimanah*, in the original, may have

been derived from *Yāmīn,* which means the right hand, and also from *yumn,* which means good omen. If it is taken to be derived from *yamīn, aṣḥāb al-maimanah* would mean: "those of the right hand." This, however, does not imply its lexical meaning, but it signifies the people of exalted rank and position. The Arabs regarded the right hand as a symbol of strength and eminence and honour, and therefore would seat a person whom they wished to do honour, on the right hand, in the assemblies. And if it is taken as derived from *yumn, aṣḥāb al-maimanah* would mean fortunate and blessed people.

6. The word *mash'amah* in *ashāb al-mash'amah,* in the original, is from *shu'm* which means misfortune, ill-luck and bad omen; in Arabic the left hand also is called *shūmā.* The Arabs regarded *shimāl* (the left hand) and *shu'm* (bad omen) as synonyms, the left hand being a symbol of weakness and indignity. If a bird flew left on the commencement of a journey, they would take it as a bad omen; if they made a person sit on their left, it meant they regarded him as a weak man. Therefore, *aṣḥāb al-mash'amah* implies ill-omened people, or those who would suffer disgrace and ignominy, and would be made to stand on the left side in the Court of Allah.

7. *Sābiqūn* (the Foremost) implies the people who excelled others in virtue and love of the truth and in good works and responded to the call of Allah and His Messenger before others. They were also in the forefront in their response to the call for *Jihad,* for expending their wealth for the sake of the needy and for public services, or for inviting others to virtue and truth, in short, for spreading the good and wiping out evil and making sacrifices and exerting themselves whenever there was need for it. On this very basis, in the Hereafter too, they will be placed in the forefront.

Thus, mankind, so to say, will be ranged in Allah's Court like this: On the right hand, there will be the righteous, on the left the wicked, and in the forefront (nearest in Divine Presence) the *Sābiqūn* (the Foremost in Faith and good deeds). According to a *Ḥadīth* reported by Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) asked the people: "Do you know who, on the Day of Resurrection, will be the first to be accommodated under the Divine Shade ?" The people said Allah and His Messenger only had the best knowledge. Thereupon the Holy Prophet replied: "Those who were such that when the Truth was presented before them, they accepted it forthwith; when a right was asked of them, they discharged it gracefully; and their decision in respect of others was the same as in respect of their own selves." (Musnad Aḥmad).

8. The commentators have differed as to who are implied by āthe former

[Contd. on page 302

أَبَارِيقَ ۙ وَكَأْسٍ مِّن مَّعِينٍ ﴿١٨﴾ لَّا يُصَدَّعُونَ عَنْهَا وَلَا يُنزِفُونَ ﴿١٩﴾ وَفَاكِهَةٍ
مِّمَّا يَتَخَيَّرُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَلَحْمِ طَيْرٍ مِّمَّا يَشْتَهُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَحُورٌ عِينٌ ﴿٢٢﴾ كَأَمْثَالِ اللُّؤْلُؤِ
الْمَكْنُونِ ﴿٢٣﴾ جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا لَغْوًا وَلَا تَأْثِيمًا ﴿٢٥﴾
إِلَّا قِيلًا سَلَامًا سَلَامًا ﴿٢٦﴾ وَأَصْحَابُ الْيَمِينِ ۙ مَا أَصْحَابُ الْيَمِينِ ﴿٢٧﴾ فِي سِدْرٍ
مَّخْضُودٍ ﴿٢٨﴾ وَطَلْحٍ مَّنضُودٍ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَظِلٍّ مَّمْدُودٍ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَمَاءٍ مَّسْكُوبٍ ﴿٣١﴾ وَفَاكِهَةٍ
كَثِيرَةٍ ﴿٣٢﴾ لَّا مَقْطُوعَةٍ وَلَا مَمْنُوعَةٍ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَفُرُشٍ مَّرْفُوعَةٍ ﴿٣٤﴾ إِنَّا أَنشَأْنَاهُنَّ
إِنشَاءً ﴿٣٥﴾ فَجَعَلْنَاهُنَّ أَبْكَارًا ﴿٣٦﴾ عُرُبًا أَتْرَابًا ﴿٣٧﴾ لِّأَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ ﴿٣٨﴾ ثُلَّةٌ مِّنَ
الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَثُلَّةٌ مِّنَ الْآخِرِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَأَصْحَابُ الشِّمَالِ ۙ مَا أَصْحَابُ الشِّمَالِ ﴿٤١﴾
فِي سَمُومٍ وَحَمِيمٍ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَظِلٍّ مِّن يَحْمُومٍ ﴿٤٣﴾ لَّا بَارِدٍ وَلَا كَرِيمٍ ﴿٤٤﴾ إِنَّهُمْ
كَانُوا قَبْلَ ذَٰلِكَ مُتْرَفِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَكَانُوا يُصِرُّونَ عَلَى الْحِنثِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَكَانُوا
يَقُولُونَ أَئِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَعِظَامًا أَإِنَّا لَمَبْعُوثُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾ أَوَآبَاؤُنَا الْأَوَّلُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾
قُلْ إِنَّ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَالْآخِرِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾ لَمَجْمُوعُونَ ۙ إِلَىٰ مِيقَاتِ يَوْمٍ مَّعْلُومٍ ﴿٥٠﴾ ثُمَّ
إِنَّكُمْ أَيُّهَا الضَّالُّونَ الْمُكَذِّبُونَ ﴿٥١﴾ لَآكِلُونَ مِن شَجَرٍ مِّن زَقُّومٍ ﴿٥٢﴾ فَمَالِئُونَ
مِنْهَا الْبُطُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾ فَشَارِبُونَ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْحَمِيمِ ﴿٥٤﴾ فَشَارِبُونَ شُرْبَ الْهِيمِ ﴿٥٥﴾
هَٰذَا نُزُلُهُمْ يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ﴿٥٦﴾ نَحْنُ خَلَقْنَاكُمْ فَلَوْلَا تُصَدِّقُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾ أَفَرَأَيْتُم
مَّا تُمْنُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾ أَأَنتُمْ تَخْلُقُونَهُ أَمْ نَحْنُ الْخَالِقُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾ نَحْنُ قَدَّرْنَا بَيْنَكُمُ
الْمَوْتَ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَسْبُوقِينَ ﴿٦٠﴾ عَلَىٰ أَن نُّبَدِّلَ أَمْثَالَكُمْ وَنُنشِئَكُمْ فِي مَا لَا
تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦١﴾ وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمُ النَّشْأَةَ الْأُولَىٰ فَلَوْلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾ أَفَرَأَيْتُم مَّا
تَحْرُثُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾ أَأَنتُمْ تَزْرَعُونَهُ أَمْ نَحْنُ الزَّارِعُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾ لَوْ نَشَاءُ لَجَعَلْنَاهُ حُطَامًا

Eternal youths[9] shall go round them briskly with brimful goblets and beakers and cups of wine from a flowing spring, which will neither cause them giddiness nor affect their sense.[10] And they shall present before them every kind of tasty fruit, whichever they may choose; and the flesh of fowls, whichever they may desire.[11] And for them there shall be beautiful-eyed houris, as lovely as well-guarded pearls.[12] All this they will receive in reward for what they had done in the world. There they shall neither hear vain talk nor sinful speech.[13] Whatever they hear shall be right and pure.[14] 17-26

And the people of the right hand: —Oh, how fortunate will be the people of the right hand ! They shall be among thornless lote-trees,[15] and piled up bananas, one upon the other, and outspread shade and ever flowing waters and abundant fruit[16] neither failing in supply nor forbidden, and in upraised couches. We shall create their wives anew and make them virgins,[17] lovers of their husbands[18] and of equal age.[19] All this is for the people of the right hand. A good number of them will be from among the former people and a good number also from among those of latter day. 27-40

And the people of the left hand:—Oh, how unfortunate will be the people of the left hand ! They will be in the scorching wind and the boiling waters and the shadow of black smoke, which will be neither cool nor refreshing. These will be the people who had lived in ease and comfort before meeting this fate. They persisted in heinous sin[20] and used to say, "What, when we are dead and become dust and bones, shall we be raised up again? And our forefathers too, who have gone before?" Say to them, "Surely, the former and the latter, all shall be gathered together one day, the hour of which has already been appointed. Then, O deviators and deniers, you shall eat of the zaqqūm-tree[21] and fill your bellies with it, and drink on top of that boiling water like the thirsty camel. This shall be the entertainment of the people of the left hand on the Day of Recompense. 41-56

We have created you;[22] then why don't you confirm?[23] Have you ever considered the spermdrop that you emit ? Is it you who create the child from it, or are We the Creators?[24] We have distributed death among you,[25] and We are not helpless that We may change your forms and create you in another form that you do not know.[26] You already 57-62

know well your first creation. Why then you do not take heed?[27].

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and the latter people "One group of them has expressed the view that the "former people" were the communities that passed away since the time of the Prophet Adam (peace be upon him) till the time of the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), and the "people of the latter day" those who will have lived in the world since the advent of the Holy Prophet till the Day of Resurrection. Accordingly the verse would mean: "The number of the *Sabqin* (the Foremost in Faith and good deeds) among the people who passed away during the thousands of years before the advent of the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) would be greater, and the number of those who would attain to the rank of the *Sābiqīn* among those people who have been born since the advent of the Holy Prophet, or will be born till the Day of Resurrection, will be less." The second group says that the former and the latter in this verse imply the former and the latter people of the Holy Prophet's own *Ummah* itself. That is, in his *Ummah* the people belonging to the earliest period were the former among whom the number of the *Sābiqīn* will be greater, and the people of the later periods are the latter among whom the number of the *Sābiqīn* will be smaller. The third group holds the view that this implies the former and the latter people of every Prophet's own *Ummah*. That is, there will be numerous *Sābiqīn* among the earliest followers of every Prophet, but among his later followers their number will decrease. The words of the verse bear all the three meanings, and possibly all three are implied, for there is no contradiction between them. Besides, they give another meaning also and that too is correct: every early period of a Prophet's following the proportion of the *Sābiqīn* in human population would be greater and in the later period less, for the number of the workers of good and right does not increase at the rate of increase of the human populations. They may be more numerous as against the *Sābiqīn* of the earliest period, but on the whole their number as against the world population goes on becoming less and less.

9. This implies boys who will ever remain boys and stay young. Ḥaḍrat 'Alī and Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣrī say that these will be those children of the people, who died before reaching their maturity; therefore, they will neither have any good works to their credit for which they may be rewarded, nor any evil deeds for which they may be punished. But obviously, this could imply those people who would not deserve Paradise. For, as for the true believers, about them Allah has guaranteed in the Qur'ān that their children will be joined with them in Paradise (At-Ṭūr: 21). This is also supported by the *Ḥadīth*, which Abū Da'ūd Ṭayālisi, Ṭabarānī and Bazzār have related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Anas and Ḥaḍrat

Samurah bin Jundub, according to which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) said that the children of the polytheists will be attendants of the people of Paradise. (For further explanation, see E.N. 26 of Aṣ-Ṣāaffāt, E.N. 19 of Aṭ-ṭūr).

10. For explanation, see E.N. 27 of Aṣ-Ṣāaffāt, E.N. 22 of Sūrah Muhammad, E. N. 18 of Aṭ-Ṭūr.

11. For explanation, see E.N. 17 of Sūrah At-tūr.

12. For explanation, see E.N.'s 28, 29 of Aṣ-Ṣāaffāt, E.N. 42, of Ad-Dukhān, E.N. 61 of Ar-Raḥmān.

13. This is one of the major blessings of Paradise, which has been mentioned at several places in the Qur'ān, viz. that in Paradise human ears will remain secure against idle and frivolous talk, lying, backbiting slander, invective, boasting and bragging, taunts and mockery, satire and sarcasm. It will not be a society of foul-mouthed, indecent people who will throw mud at each other, but a society of noble and civilized people free of such frivolities. A person who has been blessed with some decency of manner and sense by Allah can very well feel what an agony it is in worldly life a hope of deliverance from which has been given to man in Paradise.

14. Some commentators and translators have taken the words, *illā qīlan salāmu-an salāmā*, to mean that in Paradise one will hear only the greeting of 'Peace, peace' on every side; the correct view, however, is that it implies healthy and wholesome speech, i.e. such speech as may be free of the vices and blemishes, faults and evils, that have been mentioned in the preceding sentence. Here the word *salam* has been used nearly in the same sense as the English word sane.

15. That is, lote-trees without thorns on them. This will be a superior kind of the lote-tree to be only found in Paradise, and its fruit likewise will be much superior to that found in the world.

16. The word *la maqtu'ah* of the Text means: This fruit will neither be seasonal that its supply may fail when the season is over, nor its production will cease as it happens in a garden after its fruits has been picked. But in Paradise every kind of fruit will remain available in abundance in every season and will continue to be produced and supplied no matter how much of it is consumed. And *lā mamnū'ah* means that there will be no prohibition or hindrance in obtaining fruit as it is in the gardens of the world, nor will it be out of reach because of thorns or height.

17. This signifies the virtuous women of the world, who will enter Paradise on the basis of their faith and good works. Allah will make them young no matter how aged they might have died in the world; will make them beautiful whether or not they were beautiful in the world; and will make them virgins

whether they died virgins in the world or after bearing children. If their husbands also entered Paradise with them, they would be joined with them, otherwise Allah will wed them to another dweller in Paradise. This very explanation of this verse has been reported from the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) in several *Aḥādīth*. According to *Shamā'il Tirmidhī*, an old woman requested the Holy Prophet to pray for her admission to Paradise. The Holy Prophet replied: "No old woman will enter Paradise." Hearing this the woman went back crying. Thereupon the Holy Prophet said to the people: "Tell her that she will not enter Paradise as an old woman, for Allah says: 'We shall create them anew and make them virgins'." Ibn Abī Ḥātim has related, on the authority of Hadrat Salamah bin Yazid, that he heard the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) explain this verse, thus: "This implies the women of the world, whether they died virgins or married." Ṭabarānī contains a lengthy tradition related from Ḥaḍrat Umm Salamah according to which she asked the Holy Prophet the meaning of the several references in the Qur'ān to the women of Paradise. In answer, he explained this very verse and said: "These are the women who died as aged and decayed women, with sticky eyes and gray hair; after this old age Allah will again make them young and virgins." Ḥaḍrat Umm Salamah asked: "If a woman had several husbands in the world, one after the other, to whom will she belong in Paradise ?" The Holy Prophet replied "She will be asked to make her own choice, and she will choose the one who had the best moral character. She will say: O my Lord, make me his wife, for he was the best in his conduct and dealings with me. O Umm Salamah, good moral conduct has carried off all the good of this world and the Hereafter." (For further explanation, see E.N. 51 of Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān).

18. The word *'urubān* is used for the best feminine qualities of the woman in Arabic. This signifies a woman who is graceful and elegant, well-mannered and eloquent, and brimful of feminine feelings, who loves her husband with all her heart, and whose husband also loves her with all his heart.

19. This can have two meanings: (1) That they will be of equal age with their husbands; and (2) that they will be of equal age among themselves; i.e. all the women in Paradise will be of the same age and will eternally stay young. Both these meanings may be correct at one and the same time, i.e. these women may be of equal age among themselves and their husbands also may be made of equal age with them. According to a *Ḥadīth*, "When the dwellers of Paradise enter it, their bodies will be without hair, their moustaches will be just appearing, but will yet be beardless, they will be handsome and fair-complexioned, with sturdy bodies and collyrium- stained eyes; they will all be 33 years of age." (Musnad Aḥmad: Marwiyāt *Abī Hurairah*). Almost the same theme has been related in Tirmidhi by Ḥaḍrat Mu'ādh bin Jabal and Ḥaḍrat Abū Sa'īd Khudri also.

20. That is, "Their prosperity had an adverse effect on them. Instead of being grateful to Allah Almighty, they had become deniers of His blessings. Lost in pleasure-seeking they had forgotten God and persisted in heinous sinning. "Heinous sinning" includes disbelief, polytheism and atheism as well as every grave sin of morality and conduct."

21. For the explanation of *zaqqūm*, see E.N. 34 of Aṣ-Ṣāāffāt.

22. The arguments from here to verse 74 provide the reasoning to prove both the doctrines of *Tauḥīd* and of Hereafter rationally. For it was there two basic doctrines of the Holy Prophet's teaching that the people of Makkah were debating and objecting to at that time.

23. That is, "Why don't you confirm that We alone are your Lord and God and We have the power to create you once again?"

24. In this brief sentence a very important question has been put before man. Apart from all other things in the world, if man only considers as to how he himself has come into being, he can then neither have any doubts left about the doctrine of *Tauḥīd* presented by the Qur'ān nor about its doctrine of the Hereafter. The process of man's own creation starts when the male has conveyed his sperm to the womb of the female. But the question is: Has the sperm by itself become endowed with the capability of producing a child, and necessarily a human child ? Or, has it been created by man himself, or, by another than God? And, is it in the power of the man, or of the woman, or of another agency in the world, to cause conception by this sperm? Then, who is responsible for the gradual formation and development of the foetus in the mother's womb, its shaping and moulding into a unique child, the provision in a particular proportion of different mental and physical powers and qualities in each child, so that it develops into a unique person, except One God? Has another than God any role to play in this? Is it done by the parents themselves? Or, by a doctor? Or, by the prophets or saints, who were themselves created in this very way? Or, by the sun and the moon and the stars, which are themselves subject to a law? Or, by nature, which is devoid of any knowledge, wisdom, will and authority? Then, is it also in the power of another than God to decide whether the child is to be a boy or a girl? Whether it is to be beautiful or ugly, strong or weak, blind and deaf and a cripple or sound-bodied, intelligent or stupid? Then, is it another than God who decides as to people of what calibre, good or and are to be created in a particular nation at a particular time, who would cause its rise or fall? If a person is not obdurate and stubborn, he will himself realize that no rational answer can be given to these questions on the basis of polytheism and atheism. Their rational answer is only one and it is this: Man is wholly and entirely the creation of God; and when the

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فَظَلْتُمْ تَفَكَّهُوْنَ ﴿٦٥﴾ إِنَّا لَمُغْرَمُوْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾ بَلْ نَحْنُ مَحْرُوْمُوْنَ ﴿٦٧﴾ أَفَرَءَيْتُمُ الْمَآءَ
الَّذِيْ تَشْرَبُوْنَ ﴿٦٨﴾ ءَأَنْتُمْ أَنْزَلْتُمُوْهُ مِنَ الْمُزْنِ أَمْ نَحْنُ الْمُنْزِلُوْنَ ﴿٦٩﴾ لَوْ
نَشَآءُ جَعَلْنٰهُ أُجَاجًا فَلَوْلَا تَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿٧٠﴾ أَفَرَءَيْتُمُ النَّارَ الَّتِيْ تُوْرُوْنَ ﴿٧١﴾ ءَأَنْتُمْ
أَنْشَأْتُمْ شَجَرَتَهَآ أَمْ نَحْنُ الْمُنْشِـُٔوْنَ ﴿٧٢﴾ نَحْنُ جَعَلْنٰهَا تَذْكِرَةً وَّمَتَاعًا
لِّلْمُقْوِيْنَ ﴿٧٣﴾ فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيْمِ ﴿٧٤﴾ فَلَآ أُقْسِمُ بِمَوٰقِعِ النُّجُوْمِ ﴿٧٥﴾ وَ
إِنَّهٗ لَقَسَمٌ لَّوْ تَعْلَمُوْنَ عَظِيْمٌ ﴿٧٦﴾ إِنَّهٗ لَقُرْءَانٌ كَرِيْمٌ ﴿٧٧﴾ فِيْ كِتٰبٍ مَّكْنُوْنٍ ﴿٧٨﴾ لَّا
يَمَسُّهٗٓ إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُوْنَ ﴿٧٩﴾ تَنْزِيْلٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٨٠﴾ أَفَبِهٰذَا الْحَدِيْثِ أَنْتُمْ
مُّدْهِنُوْنَ ﴿٨١﴾ وَتَجْعَلُوْنَ رِزْقَكُمْ أَنَّكُمْ تُكَذِّبُوْنَ ﴿٨٢﴾ فَلَوْلَآ إِذَا بَلَغَتِ الْحُلْقُوْمَ ﴿٨٣﴾
وَأَنْتُمْ حِيْنَئِذٍ تَنْظُرُوْنَ ﴿٨٤﴾ وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْكُمْ وَلٰكِنْ لَّا تُبْصِرُوْنَ ﴿٨٥﴾
فَلَوْلَآ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ غَيْرَ مَدِيْنِيْنَ ﴿٨٦﴾ تَرْجِعُوْنَهَآ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٨٧﴾ فَأَمَّآ إِنْ
كَانَ مِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِيْنَ ﴿٨٨﴾ فَرَوْحٌ وَّرَيْحَانٌ ۙ وَّجَنَّتُ نَعِيْمٍ ﴿٨٩﴾ وَأَمَّآ إِنْ كَانَ
مِنْ أَصْحٰبِ الْيَمِيْنِ ﴿٩٠﴾ فَسَلٰمٌ لَّكَ مِنْ أَصْحٰبِ الْيَمِيْنِ ﴿٩١﴾ وَأَمَّآ إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ
الْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ الضَّآلِّيْنَ ﴿٩٢﴾ فَنُزُلٌ مِّنْ حَمِيْمٍ ﴿٩٣﴾ وَّتَصْلِيَةُ جَحِيْمٍ ﴿٩٤﴾ إِنَّ هٰذَا
لَهُوَ حَقُّ الْيَقِيْنِ ﴿٩٥﴾ فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيْمِ ﴿٩٦﴾

Have you ever considered the seeds that you sow? Is it you who cause them to grow into crops, or do We?[28] If We so pleased We could turn these crops into chaff, and you would then be left lamenting, "We have incurred penalties! Ah, we are undone!" 63-67

Have you ever seen (with open eyes) the water that you drink? Is it you who cause it to rain from the clouds, or do We?[29] If We so 68-70

pleased We could make it salt.[30] Then why don't you be grateful[31]?

Have you ever considered the fire that you kindle? Is it you who 71-73
have created its tree,[32] or are We its Creator "We have made it a means
of remembrance[33] and a provision of life for the needy.[34]

So, O Prophet, glorify the name of your Lord, the Supreme![35] 75

But nay![36] I swear by the positions of the stars—and it is a great 75-82
oath, only if you knew it—that this is a glorious Qur'ān,[37] inscribed in a
well-guarded Book,[38] which none can touch but the purified.[39] This has
been sent down by the Lord of the worlds. Then, do you regard this
discourse as unworthy of serious attention?[40] And do you have in this
blessing only this share that you deny it?[41]

If you think you are subject to nobody, and you deem you are 83-94
right in thinking so, then why don't you restore to the dying person his
soul when it has come up to the throat and you are helplessly watching
that he is at the point of death? At that time We are closer to him than
you, but you do not see Us. Then, if the dying person be of those
nearest to Us, for him there is comfort and good provision and the
blissful Garden. And if he be of the people of the right hand, he is
greeted with "Peace be to you: You are of the people of the right!"
And if he be of the deniers, gone astray, his entertainment is of boiling
water and burning in Hell.

All this is absolute truth. So, O Prophet, glorify the name of 95-96
your Lord, the Supreme![42]

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truth is this, what right has this man, the creation of God, to claim freedom and independence as against his Creator, or serve another beside Him?

As it is for *Tauhīd*, so it is with regard to the Hereafter too. Man is created from a germ which cannot be seen without a powerful microscope. This germ combines in the darkness of the mother's body with the ovum (female germ) which is like itself an insignificant microscopic germ. Then by their combination a tiny living cell comes into being, which is the starting-point of human life. This cell also is too small to be seen without a microscope. Allah develops this insignificant cell in the mother's womb for nine months or so into a living human, and when its development and formation becomes complete, the mother's body itself pushes it out to raise a storm in the world. All human beings have been born

into the world in this very way and are witnessing day and night this phenomenon of the birth of human beings like themselves. After this, only a foolish person could assert that the God Who is creating human beings in this way today would not be able to create the human beings created by Himself in some other way tomorrow.

25. That is, "Like your birth your death too, is under Our control. We decide as to who is to die in the mother's womb itself, who is to die soon after birth, and who is to die at a later stage. No power in the world can cause death to a person before the time appointed for his death by Us, nor can keep him alive after it even for a moment. The dying ones die in big hospitals even before the eyes of eminent doctors; and the doctors themselves also die at their appointed time. Never has anyone been able to know the time of death in advance, nor has anyone been able to avert the approaching death, nor to find out as to how and where and by what means will a certain person die."

26. That is, "Just as We were not powerless to create you in your present form and appearance, so also We are not powerless to change the method of your creation and bring you into being in another form and shape with another set of qualities and characteristics. Today the method We have adopted for your creation is that conception takes place by your sperm then you are gradually form and developed in your mother's womb, and then you are brought out as a child. This method of creation also has been devised by Us. But this is not the only method apart from which We may not be knowing, or may not be able to adopt, any other method. On the Day of Resurrection We can create you in the form of the man of the same age at which you died. Today We have set one particular mesure for your sight and hearing and other faculties. But this is not the only measure that We have for man, which We may not have the power to change. On the Day of Resurrection We shall change it absolutely; so much so that you will be able to see and hear things which you cannot see and cannot hear here. Today your skin and your limbs and your eyes do not possess the power of speech. But, it is We Who have given the tongue the power of speech; so We are not powerless to cause your every limb and every part of the skin of your body to speak by Our command on the Day of Resurrection. Today you live up to a certain age and then die. Your this living and dying also is controlled by a law ordained by Us. Tomorrow We can make another law to control your life under which you may never die. Today you can endure punishment only to a certain extent: you cannot survive if the punishment is increased beyond it. This rule also has been made by Us. Tomorrow We can make another rule for you under which you will be able to suffer much severer punishments endlessly, and death would not come to you even if you were given the severest torment. Today you cannot imagine that an old man could return to youth, that he could never become ill, that a young man could

never be old, and, that he could stay young for ever and ever. But youth here changes into old age according to the biological laws made by Us. Tomorrow We can make some other laws for your life under which every old man may become young as soon as he entered Paradise and stay young and healthy eternally.

27. That is, "You already know how you were created in the first instance, how the sperm was transferred from the loins of the father by which you came into being, how you were nourished in the mother's womb, which was no less dark than the grave, and formed into a living human being, how an insignificant speak was developed and endowed with the heart and brain, eyes and ears, and hands and feet, and how it was blessed with the wonderful faculties of intellect and sense, knowledge and wisdom, workmanship and inventiveness, etc. Is this miracle in any way less wonderful than raising the dead back to life ? And when you are witnessing this wonderful miracle with your own eyes and are yourselves a living evidence of it in the world, why don't you then learn the lesson that the same God Who by His power is causing this miracle to take place day and night, can also cause the miracle of life after death, Resurrection and Hell and Heaven to take place by the same power?"

28. The above question drew the people's attention to the truth that they have been developed and nourished by Allah Almighty and have come into being by His act of creation. Now this second question draws their attention to this important truth that the provisions which sustain them, are also created only by Allah for them, as if to say: "Just as in your own creation human effort has nothing more to do than that your father may cast the sperm in your mother, so in the supply of the provisions for you also human effort has nothing more to do than that the farmer should sow the seed in the soil. The land in which cultivation is done, was not made by you. The power of growth to the soil was not granted by you. The substances in it that become the means of your food are not provided by you. The seed that you sow is not made capable for growth by you. The capability in every seed that from it should sprout up the tree of the same species of whose seed it is, has not been created by you. The process for changing this cultivation into blooming crops that is working under the soil and of arranging the required kind of weather and air and water above it does not owe anything in any way to your planning and skill. All this is the manifestation of Allah's power and providence. Then, when you have come into being only by His act of creation and are being sustained by His provision, how can you then have the right to pose yourself as independent of Him, or serve another than Him as your deity?

Although apparently this verse reasons out *Tauhīd*, yet if one considers its theme a little more deeply, one finds in it the argument for the Hereafter, too. The seed that is sown in the soil is by itself dead, but when the farmer buries it under the soil, Allah infuses it with plant life, which puts out sprouts and blooms into

spring. Thus, these countless bodies are rising from the dead in front of our eyes daily. Is this miracle in any way less wonderful so that a person may regard the other wonderful miracle of the life hereafter, which is being foretold by the Qur'ān, as impossible?

29. That is, "We have not only made arrangements of satisfying your hunger, but also of satisfying your thirst. This water that is even more essential for your life than bread has been arranged by Us, not by you. The seas in the earth have been created by Us. It is the heat of Our sun that causes their water to evaporate, and it is Our winds that cause the vapours to rise. Then it is by Our power and wisdom that the vapours collect and form into clouds. Then, by Our command the clouds divide in a particular proportion and spread over different regions of the earth so that the share of the water appointed for a particular region, should reach it. And in the upper atmosphere also We bring about the cool that causes the vapours to change back into water. We have not only brought you into being but are also busy making all these arrangements for your sustenance without which you could not survive at all. Then, when the fact is that you have come into being by Our act of creation, are eating Our provisions and drinking Our water, wherefrom have you got the right that you should pose to be independent of Us and serve another beside Us ? "

30. In this sentence an important manifestation of Allah's power and wisdom has been pointed out. Among the wonderful properties that Allah has created in water one property also is that no matter what different substances are dissolved in water, when it changes into vapour under the effect of heat, it leaves behind all adulterations and evaporates only with its original and actual component elements. Had it not possessed this property the dissolved substances also would have evaporated along with the water vapours. In this case the vapours that arise from the oceans would have contained the sea salt, which would have made the soil saline and uncultivable wherever it rained. Then, neither could man have survived by drinking that water, nor could it help grow any vegetation. Now, can a man possessed of any common sense claim that this wise property in water has come about by itself under some blind and deaf law of nature? This characteristic by virtue of which sweet, pure water is distilled from saltish seas and falls as rain, and then serves as a source of water-supply and irrigation in the form of rivers, canals, springs and wells, provides a clear proof of the fact that the Providence has endowed water with this property thoughtfully and deliberately for the purpose that it may become a means of sustenance for His creatures. The creatures that could be sustained by salt water were created by Him in the sea and there they flourish and multiply. But the creatures that He created on the land and in the air, stood in need of sweet water for their sustenance and before making arrangement

of the rainfall for its supply He created this property in water that at evaporation it should rise clear and free of everything dissolved in it.

31. In other words, "Why do you commit this ingratitude in that some of you regard the rainfall as a favour of the gods, and some others think that the rising of the clouds from the sea and their raining as water is a natural cycle that is working by itself, and still others, while acknowledging it as a mercy and blessing of God, do not admit that God has any such right on them that they should bow to Him alone? How is it that while you derive so much benefit from this great blessing of Allah, in return you commit sins of disbelief and polytheism and disobedience of Him?"

32. The tree here either implies the tree that supplies wood for lighting a fire, or the trees of *markh* and *'afār*, green sticks of which were struck one against the other to produce sparks in ancient Arabia.

33. Making the fire "a means of remembrance" means: "The fire by virtue of its quality of being kindled at all times reminds man of his forgotten lesson that without it human life could not be any different from animal life. Because of the fire only did man learn to cook food for eating instead of eating it raw like the animals, and then new and ever new avenues to industry and invention went on opening up before him. Obviously, if God had not created the means of kindling the fire and the substances that could be kindled, man's inventive potentialities would have remained dormant. But the man has forgotten that his Creator is a wise Sustainer, Who created him with human capabilities on the one hand, and on the other, created such materials on the earth by which his these capabilities could become active and operative. If he is not lost in heedlessness, the fire alone is enough to remind him of the favours and bounties of his Creator, which he is so freely enjoying in the world."

34. The word *muqwīn* in the original has been interpreted differently by the lexicographers. Some have taken it in the meaning of the travellers who have halted in the desert, some in the meaning of a hungry man, and some take it in the meaning of all those who derive benefit from the fire, whether it is the benefit of cooking food or of light or of heat.

35. That is, "Mention His blessed name and proclaim that He is free from and far above the defects and faults and weaknesses that the pagans and polytheists ascribe to Him, and which underlie every creed of disbelief and every argument that is presented by the deniers of the Hereafter."

36. That is, "The truth is not what you seem to think it is." Here, the use of the word *la* (nay) before swearing an oath by the Qur'ān's being Allah's

Revelation by itself shows that the oath has been sworn to refute certain objections that the disbelievers were raising with regard to the Qur'ān.

37. "The positions of the stars": the positions and phases and orbits of the stars and planets. The oath implies that just as the system of the celestial bodies is firm and stable, so also is this Divine Word firm and stable. The same God Who has created that system has also sent down this Word. Just as there exists perfect consistency and harmony among the countless stars and planets found in the countless galaxies of the Universe, whereas apparently they seem to be scattered, so also this Book presents a perfectly consistent, and systematic code of life in which detailed guidance has been given, on the basis of belief, about morals, modes of worship, civilization and culture, economic and social life, law and justice, peace and war, in short, about every aspect of human life, and there is nothing out of harmony with the other, whereas this system of thought has been expressed in scattered verses and discourses given on different occasions. Then, just as the system of the heavens set and planned by God is stable and unalterable, and does not ever admit of the slightest variation, so also are the truths and instructions given in this Book stable and unalterable: no part of these can be changed or displaced in any way.

38. This implies the well-guarded Tablet *(lauḥ-maḥfūẓ)*. For it the word *Kitāb maknūn* has been used, which means a writing kept hidden, i.e. a writing that is inaccessible to all. The Qur'ān's having been inscribed in this well guarded Book means that before its being sent down to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) it lay inscribed in the Divine Writ of Destiny in which there is no possibility of any alteration or corruption taking place, for it is inaccessible to every kind of creation.

39. This is a refutation of the accusation that the disbelievers used to level against the Qur'ān. They regarded the Holy Prophet as a sorcerer and asserted that he was being inspired with the Word by the jinn and satans. An answer to it has been given at several places in the Qur'ān, e.g. in Sūrah Ash-Shu'arā', where it has been said: "This (lucid Book) has not been brought down by satans, nor does this work behove them, nor are they able to do it. They have indeed been kept out of its hearing." (vv. 210-212). The same theme has been expressed here, Saying: 'None but the purified can touch it." That is to say "Not to speak of its being brought down by the satans, or its being tampered within any way when it is being revealed, none but the pure angels can come anywhere near it when it is being revealed from the well-guarded Tablet *(Lauḥ-maḥfūẓ)* to the Prophet." The word *muṭahharūn* has been used for the angels in the sense that Allah has kept them free of every kind of impure feeling and desire.

This same commentary of this verse has been given by Anas bin Mālik, Ibn 'Abbās, Sa'īd bin Jubair, 'Ikrimah, Mujāhid, Qatādah, Abul 'Āliyah, Suddī, Ḍaḥḥāk and Ibn Zaid, and the same also fits in with the context. For the context itself shows that after refuting the false concepts of the Makkan disbelievers about *Tauḥīd* and the Hereafter, now their false accusations against the Qur'ān are being answered, and by swearing an oath by the positions of the stars, it is being stated that the Qur'ān is an exalted Book, which is inscribed in the well-guarded Divine Writ, in which there is no possibility of any interference by any creation, and it is revealed to the Prophet in such a safe way that none but the pure angels can touch it.

Some commentators have taken *lā* in this verse in the sense of prohibition, and have interpreted the verse to mean: "None who is unclean should touch it." Although some other commentators take *lā* in the sense of negation and interpret the verse to mean: "None but the clean and pure touch this Book," they express the opinion that this negation is a prohibition in the same way as the Holy Prophet's saying is a prohibition: "A Muslim is a brother of a Muslim: he does not treat him unjustly." Although in it, it has been said that a Muslim does not treat the other Muslim unjustly, you it enjoins that a Muslim is not to treat the other Muslim unjustly. Likewise, although in this verse it has been state that none but the clean and pure angels touch this Book, yet it enjoins that unless a person is purified, he should not touch it.

The fact, however, is that this commentary does not conform to the context of the verse. Independent of the context, one may take this meaning from its words, but if considered in the context in which the verse occurs, one does not see any ground for saying that "None is to touch this Book except the clean and purified people." For the addressees here are the disbelievers and they are being told, as if to say: "This Book has been sent down by Allah Lord of the worlds. Therefore, your suspicion that the satans inspire the Prophet with it, is wrong." What could be the occasion here to enunciate the *Sharī'ah* injunction that no one should touch it without purification? The most that one could say in this regard is that although this verse has not been sent down to enjoin this command, yet the context points out that just as only the purified *(muṭahharīn)* can touch this Book in the presence of Allah, so in the world also the people who at least believe in its being Divine Word should avoid touching it in the impure and unclean state.

The following are the traditions that bear upon this subject:

(1) Imām Mālik has related in Mu'aṭṭā this tradition on the authority of 'Abdullah bin Abī Bakr Muḥammad bin 'Amr bin Ḥazm: "The written instructions that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had sent to the Yamanite chiefs by the hand of 'Amr bin Ḥazm contained this instruction

also: *Lā yamass-ul Qur'ān a illā ṭāhir-un:* No one should touch the Qur'ān except the pure one." This same thing has been related by Abū Da'ūd from Imām Zuhrī in the Traditions which are immediately traced to the Holy Prophet *(marāsīl)*, saying that the writing that he had seen with Abū Bakr Muḥammad bin 'Amr bin Ḥazm contained this instruction as well.

(2) The traditions from Ḥaḍrat 'Alī in which he says: 'Nothing prevented the Holy Prophet of Allah from reciting the Qur'ān but the state of uncleanness due to sexual intercourse." (Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'ī, Tirmidhī).

(3) The tradition of Ibn 'Umar in which he states: "The Holy Messenger of Allah said: The menstruating woman and the one who is unclean on account of sexual intercourse should not read any portion of the Qur'ān." (Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhi).

(4) The tradition of Bukhārī in which it has been said that the letter which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) sent to Heraclius, the Roman emperor, also contained this verse of the Qur'ān: *Yā ahl al-Kitāb-i ta'ālau illā kalimat-in sawā'un bainanā wa baina-kum ...*

The views that have been related from the Holy Prophet's Companions and their immediate followers are as follows:

Salmān, the Persian, saw no harm in reading the Qur'ān without the ablutions, but even according to him touching the Qur'ān with the hand in this state was not permissible. The same also was the view of Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin Abī Waqqās and Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar. And Ḥadrat Ḥasan Baṣrī and Ibrahīm Nakha'ī also regarded touching the Qur'ān with the hand without the ablutions as disapproved, (Al-Jaṣṣāṣ, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān)).* The same has been reported from 'Aṭā', Ṭa'us, Sha'bī and Qāsim bin Muhammad also. (Ibn Qudāmah, *Al-Mughnī).* However, according to all of them, reading the Qur'ān without touching it with the hand, or reciting it from memory, was permissible even without the ablutions.

Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, Ḥaḍrat Ḥaṣan Baṣrī, Ḥaḍrat Ibrahim Nakha'ī and Imām Zuhri regarded reading the Qur'ān in the state of uncleanness due to sexual intercourse and menstruation and bleeding after childbirth as disapproved. But Ibn 'Abbās held the view, and the same also was his practice, that one could recite from memory the portion of the Qur'ān that one usually recited as one's daily practice. When Ḥaḍrat Sa'id bin al-Musayyab and Sa'id bin Jubair were asked about their view in this regard, they replied: "Is not the Qur'ān preserved in the memory of such a person ? What then is the harm in reciting it ?" *(Al-Mughnī, Al-Muḥallā* by Ibn Ḥazm).

The following are the viewpoints of the jurists on this subject:

The Ḥanafī viewpoint has been explained by Imām 'Alā-'uddīn al-Kashānī in his *Bada'i as-Sanā'i*, thus "Just as it is not permissible to offer the Prayer without the ablutions, so also it is not permissible to touch the Qur'ān without the ablutions. However, if the Qur'ān is in a case or a cover, it may be touched." According to some jurists, the case or cover implies the binding, and according to others, the bag or the envelope or the wrapper in which the Qur'ān is kept and can also be taken out. Likewise, the books of the commentary also should not be touched without the ablutions, nor anything else in which a Qur'ānic verse may have been written. However, the books of *Fiqh* (Islamic Jurisprudence) may be touched although preferably they too may not be touched without the ablutions, for they also contain Qur'ānic verses as part of argument and reasoning. Some Ḥanafī jurists hold the opinion that only that part of the Qur'ān where the Text may have been written should not be touched without the ablutions. As for the margins there is no harm in touching it, whether they are blank or contain notes on the Text. The correct thing, however, is that the margins also are a part of the Book and touching them amounts to touching the Book. As for reading the Qur'ān, it is permissible without the ablutions." In *Fatāwa 'Ālamgiri* children have been made an exception from this rule. The Qur'ān can be given in the children's hand for teaching purposes whether they are in the state of ablutions or not.

The Shafi'i viewpoint has been stated by Imām Nawawī in *Al Minhāj*, thus, "As it is for the Prayer and the circumambulation of the Ka'bah, it is also forbidden to handle the Qur'ān or to touch a leaf of it without the ablutions. Likewise, it is also forbidden to touch the binding of the Qur'ān, and also a bag, or a bow containing the Qur'ān, or a tablet on which a part of the Qur'ān may have been written for instructional purposes. However, it is lawful to touch the baggage of a person containing the Qur'anic inscription. A child may touch the Qur'ān without the ablutions, and a person without ablutions may turn over a leaf with a piece of wood, or something else, if he wants to read the Qur'ān.

The Mālikī position as stated in *Al-Fiqh 'alal-Madhāhib al-'Arbah* is: They concur with the other jurists in this that the state of ablutions is a pre-requisite for touching the Qur'ān, but in the matter of imparting instruction in the Qur'an they make both the teacher and the taught an exception from the rule, and allow even a menstruating woman to touch the Qur'ān if she is engaged in learning or teaching it. Ibn Qadāmah has cited in *Al-Mughnī* this saying of Imām Mālik: Although reading the Qur'an in the state of uncleanness due to sexual intercourse is forbidden, the woman who is discharging the menses is permitted to read it, for she would forget her recitations if prohibited from reading the Qur'an for a long time.

The Ḥanbali viewpoint as stated by Ibn Qadāmah is as follows: In the state of uncleanness due to sexual intercourse and menstruation and bleeding after childbirth it is not permissible to read the Qur'ān or any complete verse of it. However, it is permissible to recite *bismillah, al-hamdu-lillah*, etc. for although these also are parts of one or the other verse, their recitation does not amount to recitation of the Qur'ān. As for handling the Qur'ān, it is not permissible in any case without the ablutions. However, one is not forbidden to touch a letter, or a book of *Fiqh*, or some other writing containing a Qur'ānic verse. Likewise, one may handle even without the ablutions, something that contains the Qur'ān. The state of ablutions is also no pre-requisite for handling the books of exegesis. Furthermore, if a person who is not in the state of ablutions is required to handle the Qur'ān under an immediate need, he may do so after purification with the dust *(tayaqqumum)*. "*Al-Fiqh 'alal-Madhāhib al-'Arabah* contains this ruling also of the Ḥanbali *Fiqh:* It is not right for the children to handle the Qur'ān without ablutions even when receiving instruction in it, and it is the duty of their guardians to make them perform the ablutions before they give the Qur'ān to them.

The Ẓāhirī viewpoint is that reading the Qur'ān and handling it is permissible under all conditions, whether one is without the ablutions, or unclean due to sexual intercourse, or even if the woman is menstruating. Ibn Ḥazm has discussed this question fully in *Al-Muḥallā* (vol. I, pp. 77-84) and given arguments for the validity of this viewpoint and has concluded that none of the conditions laid down by the jurists for reading the Qur'ān and handling it, is supported by the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*.

40. Literally, *idhān* (from which *mudhinūn* of the Text is derived) means to treat something with contempt, to deny its due importance, to regard it as unworthy of serious attention, to hold it in light esteem.

41. In his commentary of *taj'alūna rizqa-kum*, Imām Rāzī has expressed the view that probably the word *rizq* here means livelihood. Since the disbelieving Qaraish regarded the message of the Qur'ān as harmful to their economic interests and feared that if it succeeded it would deprive them of their means of livelihood, the verse may also mean this: "You have made the denial of this Qur'ān a question of your economic interests, and for you the question of the right and wrong is of no consequence; the only thing of real importance in your sight is the bread for the sake of which you would least hesitate to oppose the truth and adhere to the falsehood."

42. Ḥadrat 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir Juhni relates that when this verse was sent down the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) commanded that the people put it in their *ruku'*, i.e. they should recite *Subḥāna Rabbi-yal-'Aẓīm* in *ruku'*

position in the Prayer. And when the verse *Sabbiḥ-ismi-Rabb-i-kal-A'lā* was sent down, he enjoined that they put it in their *sajdah*, i.e. they should recite *Subḥāna Rabb-i-yal-A'lā* in *sajdah*. (Musnad Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Ḥibbān, Ḥākim). This show that even the most minor details of the procedure enjoined by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) for the Prayer are derived from the allusions given in the Qur'ān.



LVII

AL-ḤADĪD

الحديد

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

LVII

AL-ḤADĪD

الحديد

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its title *from* the sentence, *wa anzalna'l-ḥadīda, of verse 25.*

Period of Revelation

This is unanimously a Madani Sūrah, and a study of its subject matter shows that it was probably sent down some time during the interval between the Battle of Uhud and the Truce of Ḥudaibiyah. This was the time when the tiny Islamic State of Midīnah had been hemmed in by the disbelievers and the handful of the ill-equipped Muslims were entrenched against the combined power of entire Arabia. In this state Islam not only stood in need of the sacrifice of life from its followers, but it also needed monetary help and assistance. In Sūrah further appeal has been made for the same, This view is further strengthened by verse 10 in which Allah has addressed the believers to the effect: "Those of

you who would spend and fight after the victory can never be equal to those who have spent and fought before the victory." And the same is supported by the traditions that Ibn Mardūyah has related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Anas. In respect of the verse: *Alamya'n-i lilladhina amanū an takhsha'a qulūbuhum li-dhikrillah-i*, he says that 17 years after the commencement of the revelation of the Qur'ān this verse was sent down to arouse the believers to action. Reckoned thus the period of the revelation of this Sūrah falls between the 4th and the 5th year after the *hijrah*.

Theme and Subject Matter

The theme of this Sūrah is to exhort the Muslims to spend in the cause of Allah. At the most critical juncture of the history of Islam when it was engaged in a life-and-death struggle against Arab paganism, this Surah was revealed to persuade the Muslims to make monetary sacrifices in particular, and to make them realize that Islam did not merely consist in verbal affirmation and some outward practices, but its essence and spirit is sincerity towards Allah and His Religion. The faith of the one who was devoid of this spirit and who regarded his own self and wealth as dearer to himself than Allah and His Religion, was hollow and therefore of little worth in the sight of Allah.

For this object, first the attributes of Allah Almighty have been mentioned so that the listeners may fully realize as to Who is addressing them. Then, the following themes have been expressed in sequence:

(1) The inevitable demand of the Faith is that one should not shirk spending one's wealth for the sake of Allah. This would not only be contrary to the Faith but also wrong realistically. For the wealth indeed belongs to Allah, on which man has been given proprietary rights only as His vicegerent. Yesterday this wealth was in other people's possession, today it is with one particular man, and tomorrow it will pass into some one else's hand. Ultimately, it will go back to Allah, Who is the inheritor of everything in the universe. Only that much of this wealth will be of any use to a man, which he spends in the cause of Allah during the period it is in his possession.

(2) Although making sacrifices for the sake of Allah is commendable in any case, the true worth of these sacrifices is determined by

the nature of the occasion. There is an occasion when the power of paganism is overwhelming and there is a danger that it might subdue and overcome Islam completely; there is another occasion when Islam is in a stronger position in its struggle against un-Islam and the believers are attaining victories. Both these states are not equal as regards their respective importance. Therefore, the sacrifices that are made in these different states would also not be equal. Those who sacrifice their lives and expend their wealth to further promote the cause of Islam when it is already strong cannot attain to the rank of those who struggled with their lives and their wealth to promote and uphold the cause of Islam when it was weak.

(3) Whatever is spent for the cause of the Truth is a loan on Allah, and Allah will not only return it in-creasing it manifold but will also give from Himself the best reward for it.

(4) In the Hereafter the Light shall be bestowed only on those believers who would have spent their wealth in the cause of Allah. As for the hypocrites who watched and served only their own interests in the world, and who least bothered whether the Truth or falsehood prevailed will be segregated from the believers in the Hereafter although they might have lived in close association with them in the world. They will be deprived of the Light, and they will be counted among the disbelievers.

(5) The Muslims should not behave like those followers of the earlier Books, whose lives have been spent in the worship of the world and whose hearts have become hardened due to negligence with the passage of time. He cannot be a believer whose heart does not melt at the remembrance of Allah and does not bow to the Truth sent down by Him.

(6) The sincere upholders of the Truth and the true witnesses of the Faith in the sight of Allah are only those believers who spend their wealth in His way sincerely, without any desire of show.

(7) The life of this world is only a short-lived spring and a means of pride and now. Its sports and pastimes, its adornments and decorations, its pride of place, its wealth and possessions, for which the people try to vie with one another, are transient. Its likeness is of the crop which flourishes and blooms, then turns

pale and then finally is reduced to chaff. The everlasting life is the life hereafter when results of great consequence will be announced. Therefore, if one has to vie with another for something, one should strive for Paradise.

(8) Whatever good man meets with and whatever hardship he suffers in the world, are pre-ordained by Allah. A true believer is he who does not lose heart in affliction and is not puffed up with pride in good times. It is the character of a hypocrite and disbeliever that he is puffed up with pride when Allah favours him with His blessings, behaves boastfully and shows stinginess when called upon to spend in the cause of the same God Who blessed him, and also counsels others to be stingy like himself.

(9) Allah sent His Messengers with clear signs and the Book and the Law of Justice so that the people may adhere to justice; besides, He sent down iron also so that power may be used to establish the Truth and vanquish falsehood. Thus, Allah likes to see as to who from among the people would rise to support and succour His true Religion even at the risk of their lives. These opportunities Allah has created for man's own advantage and development; otherwise Allah does not stand in need of others for His works.

(10) Prophets came from Allah in the past, and by their preaching some people adopted the Right Path, but most of them persisted in wickedness. Then the Prophet Jesus came, whose teachings brought about many moral improvements in the lives of the people, but his community invented monasticism. Now Allah has sent the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be His peace and blessings). Those who affirm faith in him and pass their life fearing Allah's accountability, will be given by Allah a double share of His mercy and He will bless them with the Light by which they will *see and* walk the straight path among the crooked paths met with at every step in the life of this world. Although the followers of the earlier revelation regard themselves as the monopolists of Allah's bounties, the fact remains that Allah Himself controls His bounties; He may bless with these whomever He pleases.



سَبَّحَ لِلّٰهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الْاَرْضِ ۚ وَ هُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ۝١ لَهٗ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَ الْاَرْضِ ۚ يُحْيٖ وَ يُمِيْتُ ۚ وَ هُوَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ۝٢ هُوَ الْاَوَّلُ وَ الْاٰخِرُ
وَ الظَّاهِرُ وَ الْبَاطِنُ ۚ وَ هُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيْمٌ ۝٣ هُوَ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ

LVII

AL-ḤADĪD

الحديد

Verses: 29

Revealed at Madīnah

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

All that there is in the heavens and the earth has glorified Allah[1], and He alone is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise[2]. To Him belongs the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth: He alone grants life and causes death and has power over everything. He is the First as well as the Last, the Manifest as well as the Hidden[3]., and He has knowledge of everything. 1-3

1. That is, "It has always been so that everything in the universe has proclaimed the truth that its Creator and Sustainer is free from every blemish and defect, every weakness, error and evil. He is glorified in His essence, He is

glorified in His attributes, He is glorified in His works as well as His commands whether they relate to the creation, or to the religious law for mankind. Here *sabbaḥa* has been used in the past tense; at other places *yusabbiḥu* has been used which includes both the present and the future tenses. This would signify that every particle in the universe has always been extolling the glory of its Creator and Sustainer in the past, is doing so at present and will continue to do the same in the future for ever and ever."

2. That is, not only is He All-Mighty and All-Wise, but the truth is that He alone is All-Mighty and All-Wise. The word 'Azīz signifies a mighty and powerful Being Whose decrees cannot be prevented by any power in the world from being enforced, Whom no one can oppose and resist, Who has to be obeyed by every one whether one likes it or not, Whose rebel cannot escape His accountability and punishment in any way; and *Ḥakīm* signifies that whatever He does He does it wisely. His creation, His administration and rule, His commands and guidance, all are based on wisdom. None of His works is tarnished by any trace of folly or ignorance.

There is another fine point here, which one should fully understand. Seldom in the Qur'ān has Allah's attribute of 'Azīz (All-Mighty) been accompanied by His attributes of being *Qawī* (Strong), *Muqtadir* (Powerful), *Jabbār* (Omnipotent), *Dhuntiqām* (Avenger) and the like, which only signify His absolute power, and this has been so only in places where the context demanded that the wicked and disobedient be warned of Allah's relentless punishment. Apart from such few places, wherever the word 'Aziz has been used for Allah, it has everywhere been accompanied by one Or other of His attributes of being *Ḥakim* (Wise), *'Alīm* (Knower), *Rahīm* (Merciful), *Ghafūr* (Forgiving), *Wahhāb* (Generous) and *Ḥamīd* (Praiseworthy). The reason is that if a being who wields un-limited power is at the same time foolish, ignorant, un-forgiving as well as stingy and devoid of character, its power and authority cannot but lead to injustice and wickedness Thus, wherever injustice and wickedness is being committed in the world, it is only because the one who wields authority over others, is either using his power un-wisely and foolishly, or he is merciless and hardhearted, or evil-minded and wicked. Wherever power is coupled with these evil traits of character, *no* good can be expected to result. That is why in the Holy Qur'ān Allah's attribute of 'Azīz has necessarily been accompanied by His attributes of being All-Wise and Knowing, Compassionate and Forgiving, Praiseworthy and Generous, so that man may know that the God Who is ruling this universe has, on the one hand, such absolute power that no one, from the earth to the heavens, can prevent His decrees from being enforced, but, on the other, He is also All-Wise: His each decision is based on perfect wisdom; He is also All-Knowing whatever decision He makes, it precisely according to knowledge; He is also Compassionate: He does not use infinite power mercilessly; He is Forgiving as

well: He does not punish His creatures for trifling faults, but overlooks their errors; He is also Generous: He does not treat His subjects stingily, but liberally and benevolently; and He *is* also Praiseworthy: He combines in Himself all praiseworthy virtues and excellences.

The full importance of this statement of the Qur'an can be better understood by those people who are aware of the discussions of the philosophy of politics and law on the question of sovereignty. Sovereignty connotes that the one who possesses it should wield un-limited power: there should be no internal and external power to change or modify his decision or prevent it from being enforced, and none should have any alternative but to obey him. At the mere concept of this infinite and un-limited power, man's common-sense necessarily demands that whoever attains to such power, should be faultless and perfect in knowledge and wisdom, for if the one holding this power is ignorant, merciless and evil, his sovereignty will inevitably lead to wickedness and corruption. That is why the philosophers who regarded a single man, or a man-made institution, or an assembly of men as the holder of this power, have had to presume that he or it would be infallible. But obviously, neither can un limited sovereignty be actually attained by a human power, nor is it possible for a king, or a parliament, or a nation, or a party that it may use the sovereignty attained by it in a limited circle faultlessly and harmlessly. The reason is that the wisdom that is wholly free of every trace of folly, and the knowledge that fully comprehends all the related truths, is not at all possessed even by entire mankind, not to speak of its being attain d by an individual, or an institution, or a nation. Likewise, as long as man is man, his being wholly free of and above selfishness, sensuality, fear, greed, desires, prejudice and sentimental love, anger and hate is also not possible. If a person ponders over these truths, he will realize that the Qur'ān is indeed presenting here a correct and perfect view of sovereignty. It says that no one except Allah in this universe is possessor of absolute power, and with this unlimited power He alone is faultless, All-Wise and All-Knowing, Compassionate and Forgiving, and Praiseworthy and Generous in His dealings with His subjects.

3. That is, "When there was nothing, He was, and when there will be nothing, He will be. He is the most Manifest of all the manifest, for whatever manifests itself in the world, does so only by His attributes and His works and His light. And He is the Most Hidden of all the hidden, for not only do the senses fail to perceive Him but the intellect and thought and imagination also cannot attain to His essence and reality. The best commentary in this regard are the words of a supplication of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), which Imām Aḥmad, Muslim, Tirmidhi, and Baihaqī have related on the authority

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الْاَرْضَ فِیْ سِتَّةِ اَیَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوٰی عَلَی الْعَرْشِ ؕ یَعْلَمُ مَا یَلِجُ فِی الْاَرْضِ
وَمَا یَخْرُجُ مِنْهَا وَمَا یَنْزِلُ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ وَمَا یَعْرُجُ فِیْهَا ؕ وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ اَیْنَ
مَا كُنْتُمْ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ بَصِیْرٌ ۝ لَهٗ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ وَاِلَی
اللّٰهِ تُرْجَعُ الْاُمُوْرُ ۝ یُوْلِجُ الَّیْلَ فِی النَّهَارِ وَیُوْلِجُ النَّهَارَ فِی الَّیْلِ ؕ وَهُوَ
عَلِیْمٌۢ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُوْرِ ۝ اٰمِنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهٖ وَاَنْفِقُوْا مِمَّا جَعَلَكُمْ مُّسْتَخْلَفِیْنَ
فِیْهِ ؕ فَالَّذِیْنَ اٰمَنُوْا مِنْكُمْ وَاَنْفَقُوْا لَهُمْ اَجْرٌ كَبِیْرٌ ۝ وَمَا لَكُمْ لَا تُؤْمِنُوْنَ
بِاللّٰهِ ۚ وَالرَّسُوْلُ یَدْعُوْكُمْ لِتُؤْمِنُوْا بِرَبِّكُمْ وَقَدْ اَخَذَ مِیْثَاقَكُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ
مُّؤْمِنِیْنَ ۝ هُوَ الَّذِیْ یُنَزِّلُ عَلٰی عَبْدِهٖۤ اٰیٰتٍۭ بَیِّنٰتٍ لِّیُخْرِجَكُمْ مِّنَ الظُّلُمٰتِ
اِلَی النُّوْرِ ؕ وَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ بِكُمْ لَرَءُوْفٌ رَّحِیْمٌ ۝ وَمَا لَكُمْ اَلَّا تُنْفِقُوْا فِیْ سَبِیْلِ
اللّٰهِ وَلِلّٰهِ مِیْرَاثُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ لَا یَسْتَوِیْ مِنْكُمْ مَّنْ اَنْفَقَ مِنْ قَبْلِ
الْفَتْحِ وَقٰتَلَ ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ اَعْظَمُ دَرَجَةً مِّنَ الَّذِیْنَ اَنْفَقُوْا مِنْۢ بَعْدُ وَقٰتَلُوْا ؕ
وَكُلًّا وَّعَدَ اللّٰهُ الْحُسْنٰی ؕ وَاللّٰهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ خَبِیْرٌ ۝ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِیْ یُقْرِضُ
اللّٰهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا فَیُضٰعِفَهٗ لَهٗ وَلَهٗۤ اَجْرٌ كَرِیْمٌ ۝ یَوْمَ تَرَی الْمُؤْمِنِیْنَ وَ
الْمُؤْمِنٰتِ یَسْعٰی نُوْرُهُمْ بَیْنَ اَیْدِیْهِمْ وَبِاَیْمَانِهِمْ بُشْرٰىكُمُ الْیَوْمَ جَنّٰتٌ
تَجْرِیْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ خٰلِدِیْنَ فِیْهَا ؕ ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِیْمُ ۝ یَوْمَ
یَقُوْلُ الْمُنٰفِقُوْنَ وَالْمُنٰفِقٰتُ لِلَّذِیْنَ اٰمَنُوا انْظُرُوْنَا نَقْتَبِسْ مِنْ نُّوْرِكُمْ ۚ قِیْلَ
ارْجِعُوْا وَرَآءَكُمْ فَالْتَمِسُوْا نُوْرًا ؕ فَضُرِبَ بَیْنَهُمْ بِسُوْرٍ لَّهٗ بَابٌ ؕ بَاطِنُهٗ فِیْهِ
الرَّحْمَةُ وَظَاهِرُهٗ مِنْ قِبَلِهِ الْعَذَابُ ۝ یُنَادُوْنَهُمْ اَلَمْ نَكُنْ مَّعَكُمْ ؕ قَالُوْا
بَلٰی وَلٰكِنَّكُمْ فَتَنْتُمْ اَنْفُسَكُمْ وَتَرَبَّصْتُمْ وَارْتَبْتُمْ وَغَرَّتْكُمُ الْاَمَانِیُّ حَتّٰی

It is He Who created the heavens and the earth in six days and then ascended the Throne [4] He knows whatever ever goes into the earth and whatever comes out of it, and whatever comes down from heaven and whatever goes up into it[5]. He is with you wherever you may be[6] and sees whatever you do. To Him belongs the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and all matters are referred to Him for decision It is He who causes the night to enter into the day and the day to enter into the night and He knows the hiddenmost secrets of the hearts, 4-6

Believe in Allah and His Messenger[7], and spend out[8] of what He has made you successor.[9] For those of you who will believe and expend of their wealth[10], there is a great reward What is the matter with you that you do not believe in Allah, whereas the Messenger is inviting you to believe in your Lord[11] and has taken a pact from you[12], if you are true believers? Allah it is Who is sending down clear Revelations to His servants that he may bring you out of the darknesses into the light. And the fact is that Allah is most Kind and Most Merciful to you. What is the matter with you that you do not spend in the Way of Allah, whereas Allah's is the inheritance of the heavens and the earth?[13] Those of you who will spend and fight after the victory can never be equal to those who have spent and fought before the victory. They are higher in rank than those who spent and fought afterwards, though Allah has made good promises to both.[14] Allah is well aware of whatever you do.[15] 7-10

Who is he who will give to Allah a loan?—a good loan, so that Allah may return it manifold; and he shall have the best reward.[16] That Day when you see the believing men and women, with their light running on before them and on their right hand,[17] (it will be said to them:) "There is good news for you today!" There will be Gardens underneath which rivers will be flowing, in which they shall live for ever, This is the supreme success. On that Day the hypocrites, men and women, will say to the believers, "Look towards us awhile so that we may benefit by your light."[18] But it will be said to them, "Go away! *seek* your light elsewhere." Then a well shall be set up between them with a gate in it. Within the gate shall be mercy and outside of it torment.[19] They will cry out to the believers and say, "Were we not with you?"[20] The believers will reply, "Yes, but you led yourselves into temptation,[21] served the time,[22] entertained doubts,[23] and false hopes deluded you until Allah's Judgement came,[24] and the great 11-15

deceiver[25] deceived you concerning Allah till the last moment. Therefore, no ransom shall be accepted from you today nor from those who disbelieved openly [26] Your abode is Hell: that will be your patron,[27] and this is an evil end."

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of Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, and Ḥāfiẓ Abū Ya'lā Moṣulī in his Musnad on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah:

> *"Antal 'Awwal, fa-laisa qablaka shai'in; wa Antal Ākhir, fa-laisa ba'daka shai'in; wa Antal Ẓahir, fa laisa fauqaka shai'in; wa Antal Bāṭin, fa laisa dūnaka shai'in."* "You alone are the First; none is before You; You alone are the Last: none is after You; You alone are the Exalted none is above You; You alone are the Hidden: none is more hidden than You."

Here, the question arises: How does this accord with the immortality and eternal life of the dwellrs of Paradise and Hell mentioned in the Qur'ān when Allah alone is the Last and Eternal? Its answer has been provided by the Qur'ān itself: "Everything is perishable except Allah Himself." (Al-Qaṣaṣ: 88). In other words no creature is immortal in its personal capacity; if a thing exists or continuos to exist, it does so because Allah keeps it so, and can exist only by His letting it exist; otherwisa in its own capacity everything is perishable except Allah. Immortality in Heaven and Hell will not he bestowed upon somebody because he is immortal by himself, but because Allah will grant him eternal life. The same is true of the angels: they are not immortal by themselves. When Allah willed they came into existence, and will continue to exist only as long as Her wills.

4. That is, He alone is the Creator of the universe as well as Its Ruler. (For further explanation, see E.N.'s 41, 42 of Al-A'rāf, E.N.4 of Yūnus. E.N.'s 2 to 5 of Ar-Ra'd, E.N.'s 11 to 15 of Ḥā Mīm As-Sajdah).

5. In other words, He is not only the Knower of the wholes but also of the parts. He knows each seed that goes under the layers of the soil, each leaf and bud that comes out of the soil, each rain-drop that falls from the sky, and each molecule of the vapour that ascends from the seas and lakes to the sky. He is aware of every seed lying anywhere under the soil. That is how He causes it to split and sprout up and develop. He Is aware of how much vapour has risen from each different place and where it has reached. That is how he collects it into cloud and distributes it and causes it to fall as rain in due measure on different place of the earth. The same is true of the details of everything that goes into the earth and comes out of it, and of everything that ascends to the sky and descends from it. If all this were not comprehended by Allah in His knowledge, it would not be

possible for Him to plan and order each thing separately and to regulate and control it in a wise manner.

6. That is, "Nowhere are you outside Allah's knowledge, His power, His rule, His management and administration. Allah knows wherever you are, whether in the earth, or the air, or the water, or in a secret place. Your being alive there is by itself a proof that Allah is providing for you in that very place. If your heart is beating, if your lungs are breathing, if your hearing and your sight are functioning, it is only because all parts of your body are working under Allah's rule. And if death comes to you at any place, it comes because Allah takes a decision to stop providing for you and to recall you from the world."

7. The addressees here are not the non-Muslims, but, as is borne out by the whole subsequent discourse, the Muslims who had affirmed the Faith and joined the ranks of the believers, but were not fulfilling the demands of the Faith and conducting themselves as true believers should. It is obvious that non-Muslims cannot be invited to affirm the Faith and then immediately asked to subscribe generously to the cause of *Jihād* for the sake of Allah, nor can they be told that whoever would fight and spend his wealth in the cause of Allah before the victory, would attain to a higher rank than him who would perform these services later, For, when a non-Muslim is invited to the Faith, the preliminary demands of it only are presented before him and not the-ultimate once, Therefore,. in view of the context, the meaning of saying "Believe in Allah and His messenger" here would be: "O people, who profess to have affirmed the Faith and have joined the ranks of the Muslims,. believe in Allah and Messenger sincerely and conduct yourselves as the true and sincere believers should."

8. Here, by spending is not implied spending on public welfare, but, as is clearly borne out by the words of verse 10, it implies subscribing to the cause of the war effort that was being waged at that time under the leadership of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) to uphold Islam against paganism. Two things, in particular, were such for which the Islamic Government at that time stood in great need of financial help. First, the war equipment; second, supporting and sustaining the oppressed Muslims, who, due to persecution by the disbelievers had emigrated, and were still emigrating, to Madinah from every corner of Arabia. The sincere Muslims were trying their best to render as much help as they could but meeting the entire expenses in this regard was much beyond their means and resources, and their this same spirit of sacrifice has been commended in vv. 10, 12, 18 and 19 below. But among the Muslims there were quite a number of well-to-do people, who were watching this struggle between Islam and paganism as mere spectators and had no feeling whatever that the faith they claimed to believe in imposed certain rights also on their life and wealth. This

second kind of people are the addressees of this verse. They have been exhorted to believe sincerely, and to spend their wealth in the cause of Allah.

9. This has two meanings and both are implied here. The first meaning is "The wealth that you possess is not, in fact, your personal property but has been given to you by Allah. You are not its exclusive master and owner. Allah has given you proprietary right over it as His vicegerent. Therefore, you should have no hesitation in spending it in the service of the real Master. It is not for the vicegerent to withhold the Master's wealth from being spent for the Master's own sake." The second: "Neither has this wealth been with you since ever nor will it remain in your possession for ever. Yesterday it was in some other people's possession; then Allah made you their successor and entrusted it to you. A time will come when it will not remain with you but some other people will succeed you as its owners. Therefore, in this short-lived ownership, when you are its trustees, spend it in the cause of Allah so that in the Hereafter You may be rewarded for it permanently and eternally. This same thing has been stated by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) in a *Ḥadīth*. Tirmidhī relates that once a goat was slaughtered in the Holy Prophet's house and its flesh was given away to the poor. When he came to the house and asked: "What remains of the goat?" Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah replied: "Nothing but a shoulder." Thereupon the Holy Prophet remarked: "Nay, the whole goat but the shoulder!" That is, "Whatever has been given away for the sake of Allah, has, in fact, been saved." According to another *Ḥadīth*, a person asked: "O Messenger of Allah, what kind of charity brings the highest reward? He replied: That you should give away a thing In charity when you are hale and hearty: when you feel it could be saved and may like to invest it in the hope of earning more. Do not wait till death when you may say: Give this to so and so and that to so and so, for at that time the wealth has in any case to pass on to so and so."(*Bukhārī, Muslim*). According to still another *Ḥadīth*, the Holy Prophet said: "Man says: 'My wealth! My wealth!' whereas his own share in his wealth is no more than what he has eaten up, or worn away, or passed on in charity? Whatever remains will leave him and will be passed on to others." *(Muslim)*

10. Here again, expending wealth in the cause of *Jihād* has been regarded as an essential demand of the Faith and a proof of one's sincerity in it, as if to say: "The true and sincere believer is he who does not shirk spending wealth on such an occasion."

11. That is, "You are adopting this unbelieving attitude and conduct at a time when the Messenger of Allah is present among you, and you are receiving the invitation to the Faith not through an indirect and remote means but directly through the Messenger of Allah himself."

12. Some commentators have taken this pledge to imply the pledge of service to Allah, which had been taken at the beginning of creation from the future offspring of Adam (peace be upon him), and some others take it for the pledge with which man has been naturally endowed to serve and obey Allah. But the truth is that it implies the conscious pledge of obedience to Allah and His Messenger that every Muslim makes to his Lord by the affirmation of the Faith At another place in the Qur'ān this same pledge has been referred to thus;

"Keep in mind the blessing Allah has bestowed upon you and do not forget the solemn covenant which He made with you (and which you confirmed), when you said: 'We have heard and submitted.' Fear Allah for Allah knows the very secrets of the hearts." (Al-Mā'idah: 7)

Ḥaḍrat 'Ubādah bin Ṣamit relates: "The Holy Messenger of Allah (upon whom be His peace and blessings) had made us pledge that we would listen and obey both in sound health and in ill health; would spend in the cause of Allah both in prosperity and in adversity would enjoin the good and forbid the evil; would proclaim the truth for the sake of Allah and would not fear the blame of any one in this regard." *(Musnad Ahmad)*

13. This has two meanings: (1) "Your wealth is not going to stay with you for ever. One day you will leave it behind; then Allah alone will inherit it. Thus the best thing would be that you should spend it yourself in the cause of Allah so that your reward for it is guaranteed with Allah. If you do not spend it yourself, it will in any case return to Allah, but then you will not be entitled to any reward from Him." (2) "You should have no fear of indigence and poverty when you spend it in the cause of Allah, because Allah for Whose sake you would spend your wealth, is the Owner of all the treasures of the heavens and the earth. He possessed not only what He has bestowed on you today but has much more to bestow on you tomorrow." This same thing has been expressed at another place, thus:

"O Prophet, say to there: 'My Lord gives abundantly to whomever of His servants He wills and sparingly to whomever He wills. Whatever you spend, He replenishes it by other provisions: He is the best of Providers'." (Sabā: 39)

14. That is, "Although both are entitled to the reward, yet the former are necessarily higher in rank than the latter, for they faced greater risks for the sake of Allah in difficult circumstances, which the latter not. They spent their wealth at a time when there appeared no remote chance of victory that would compensate for their expenditure, and they fought the disbelieves at a critical time when there was an ever present apprehension that the enemy might overpower and crush the followers of Islam completely." Mujāhid, Qatādah and Zaid bin Aslam, from among the commentators, say that the word "victory" in this verse has been used

for the Conquest of Makkah, and 'Āmir Sha'bī says that it refers to the Truce of Ḥudaibiyah. The former view has been adopted by most of the commentators, and in support of the latter this tradition from Ḥaḍrat Abū Sa'īd Khudrī is presented: "During the time when the Truce of Hudaibiyah was concluded, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) said to us: 'In the near future there will appear the people, whose deeds will make you look upon your own deeds as mean and trifling, but even if one of them possessed a mountain of gold and he expended all of it in the cause of Allah, he would not attain to your spending two pounds, or even one pound of it." (Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, ibn Mardūyah, Abū Nu'aim Isfahānī). Further, more, it is also supported by the *Ḥadīth* which Imam Ahmad has related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Anas. He says: "Once a dispute arose between Ḥaḍrat Khalid bin Walīd and Ḥaḍrat 'Abdur Rahmān bin 'Auf, in the course of which Ḥaḍrat Khālid said to Ḥaḍrat 'Abdur Rahmān: "You people assume your superiority over us on account of your past services.' When this thing came to the Holy Prophet's notice, he said: 'By God in whose hand is my life, even if you people spent gold equal (in weight) to Mount Uḥud, or equal to other mountains, you would not attain to the deeds of these people." From this it is argued that in this verse "victory" refers to the Truce of Ḥudaibiyah, for Ḥaḍrat Khālid bin Walid had embraced Islam after this Truce and had participated in the Conquest of Makkah. However, whether "victory" in this particular case is taken to imply the Truce of Hudaibiyah or the Conquest of Makkah, in any case the verse does not mean that the distinction of the ranks is confined to this one victory alone, but as a general principle it shows that those who fight and spend in the cause of Islam at the time when disbelief and disbelievers appear to be dominant and Islam seems to have no remote chance of victory, are far superior in rank to those who make sacrifices after the conflict between Islam and paganism has been decided in favour of Islam."

15. That is, "Allah does not bestow His favours blindly. He sees who has performed what deeds, under what kind of circumstances, and with what motive and then determines the rank and the reward of the deed of each person with full justice and awareness."

16. How Generous and Beneficent is Allah that if a man spends the wealth granted by Himself in His way, He calls it a loan Himself, provided that it is a good loan, that is, a loan which in given with a pure intention, without any selfish motive of winning reputation and renown, or of doing favour to somebody, but only for the sake of Allah's approval and to win His good-will and rewards. Allah makes two promises in this regard: (1) That He will repay it increasing it manifold; and (2) that He will also give from Himself the best reward for it.

According to a *Ḥadīth* reported by Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, when this verse was revealed and the people heard it from the Holy Prophet (upon

whom be Allah's peace), Ḥaḍrat Abud-Dahdah Ansārī asked: "O Messenger of Allah, does Allah want a loan from us? The Holy Prophet replied: Yes, O Abud-Dahdāh,. He said Kindly show me your hand. The Holy Prophet extended his hand towards him. He took his hand in his own hand and said: I give away my garden in loan to my Lord." Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd says that the garden had 600 date-palms and his own house also in which his family lived- Saying this to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) he went straight back home, and calling out to his wife said: "Come out, O mother of Dahdāh, I have loaned this garden to my Lord." She replied: "Dahdāh's father, you have made a, good bargain !' and she immediately vacated and left the garden with her effects and children." (Ibn Abī Hātim). This incident throws light on the conduct of the sincere believers of that time, and from this one can also understand the kind of the "good loan" that Allah has promised to return increasing it manifold with a rich reward in addition.

17. This and the following verses show that the Light on the Day of Judgement will be specifically meant for the righteous believers only. As for the disbelievers and the hypocrites and the wicked people, they will be wandering about in the darkness as they had been in the world. The light there will be the light of righteous deeds. The sincerity of the faith and the piety of the character and conduct will turn into light that will lend brightness to the personality of the virtuous. The brighter the deed the more luminous will be his person, and when he will walk towards Paradise, his light will be running forward before him. The best explanation of it is Qatādah's *mursal* tradition in which he says; "The Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) said: "The light of some one will be so strong and sharp that it will be running on before him equal to the distance between Madīnah and 'Adan, of another equal to the distance between Madinah and Saṇ'a, and of another even less than that; to much so that there will be a believer whose light will Dot extend beyond his steps." (Ibn Jarīr). In other words, the intensity of the light of a person will be proportionate to the extent of the good done and spread by him in the world, and the beams of his light will be running on before him in the Hereafter extending as far as his good will have extended in the world.

Here, a question may arise in the mind of the reader "One can understand the meaning of their light running on before the believers but what does their light running on only on their right hand mean? Will there be darkness on their left side? The answer is: When a man is walking with a light on his right hand, his left side also will be bright, though the fact of the matter is that the light will be on his right hand. This has been explained by the *Ḥadīth*, which Ḥaḍrat Abū Dharr and Abū Dardā' have reported, saying that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) said: "I shall recognize the righteous people of my *Ummah* by their light,

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جَآءَ اَمْرُ اللّٰهِ وَغَرَّكُمْ بِاللّٰهِ الْغَرُوْرُ ﴿١٤﴾ فَالْيَوْمَ لَا يُؤْخَذُ مِنْكُمْ فِدْيَةٌ وَّلَا
مِنَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا ؕ مَاْوٰىكُمُ النَّارُ ؕ هِيَ مَوْلٰىكُمْ ؕ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيْرُ ﴿١٥﴾ اَلَمْ يَاْنِ
لِلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اَنْ تَخْشَعَ قُلُوْبُهُمْ لِذِكْرِ اللّٰهِ وَمَا نَزَلَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ ۙ وَلَا
يَكُوْنُوْا كَالَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْكِتٰبَ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَطَالَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْاَمَدُ فَقَسَتْ قُلُوْبُهُمْ ؕ
وَكَثِيْرٌ مِّنْهُمْ فٰسِقُوْنَ ﴿١٦﴾ اِعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ يُحْيِ الْاَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا ؕ قَدْ بَيَّنَّا
لَكُمُ الْاٰيٰتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿١٧﴾ اِنَّ الْمُصَّدِّقِيْنَ وَالْمُصَّدِّقٰتِ وَاَقْرَضُوا اللّٰهَ
قَرْضًا حَسَنًا يُّضٰعَفُ لَهُمْ وَلَهُمْ اَجْرٌ كَرِيْمٌ ﴿١٨﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ وَرُسُلِهٖٓ
اُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الصِّدِّيْقُوْنَ ۖ وَالشُّهَدَآءُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ؕ لَهُمْ اَجْرُهُمْ وَنُوْرُهُمْ ؕ
وَالَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا وَكَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَآ اُولٰٓئِكَ اَصْحٰبُ الْجَحِيْمِ ﴿١٩﴾ اِعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّمَا الْحَيٰوةُ
الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَّلَهْوٌ وَّزِيْنَةٌ وَّتَفَاخُرٌۢ بَيْنَكُمْ وَتَكَاثُرٌ فِي الْاَمْوَالِ وَالْاَوْلَادِ ؕ
كَمَثَلِ غَيْثٍ اَعْجَبَ الْكُفَّارَ نَبَاتُهٗ ثُمَّ يَهِيْجُ فَتَرٰىهُ مُصْفَرًّا ثُمَّ يَكُوْنُ
حُطَامًا ؕ وَفِي الْاٰخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ شَدِيْدٌ ۙ وَّمَغْفِرَةٌ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ وَرِضْوَانٌ ؕ وَمَا
الْحَيٰوةُ الدُّنْيَآ اِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُوْرِ ﴿٢٠﴾ سَابِقُوْٓا اِلٰى مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ
عَرْضُهَا كَعَرْضِ السَّمَآءِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۙ اُعِدَّتْ لِلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ وَرُسُلِهٖ ؕ ذٰلِكَ
فَضْلُ اللّٰهِ يُؤْتِيْهِ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيْمِ ﴿٢١﴾ مَآ اَصَابَ مِنْ مُّصِيْبَةٍ
فِي الْاَرْضِ وَلَا فِيْٓ اَنْفُسِكُمْ اِلَّا فِيْ كِتٰبٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ نَّبْرَاَهَا ؕ اِنَّ ذٰلِكَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ
يَسِيْرٌ ﴿٢٢﴾ لِّكَيْلَا تَاْسَوْا عَلٰى مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلَا تَفْرَحُوْا بِمَآ اٰتٰىكُمْ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ
فَخُوْرِ ﴿٢٣﴾ الَّذِيْنَ يَبْخَلُوْنَ وَيَاْمُرُوْنَ النَّاسَ بِالْبُخْلِ ؕ وَمَنْ يَّتَوَلَّ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ
الْحَمِيْدُ ﴿٢٤﴾ لَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ وَاَنْزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتٰبَ وَالْمِيْزَانَ لِيَقُوْمَ

Has not the time yet arrived for the believers that their hearts 16-17
should melt with the remembrance of Allah and should submit to the Truth sent down by Him,[28] and they should not be like those who were given the Book before them, and long ages passed over them and their hearts became hardened and today most of them are sinners?[29] Know it well that Allah gives life to the earth after its death. We have shown you the signs clearly: may be that you use your common sense.[30]

Surely those from among men and women who practice charity[31] 18-19
and who have lent to Allah a good loan, shall be repaid manifold, and for them there is a generous reward. And those who have believed in Allah and His Messengers,[32] are indeed the most truthful[33] and the true witnesses[34] in the sight of their Lord. For them is their reward and their light.[35] As for those who have disbelieved and denied Our Revelations, they are the dwellers of Hell.

Know it well that the life of this world is nothing but a sport and 20-21
pastime, and a show and boasting among yourselves and a rivalry in wealth and children. Its example is of vegetation after a shower of rain, which delighted the tillers, then the same ripens and you see it turn yellow, then it becomes straw. Contrary to this, in the life to come there is severe torment and forgiveness from Allah and His good pleasure. The life of this world is nothing but illusion-[36] Therefore, strive in rivalry with one another[37] in hastening towards the Paradise the vastness of which is like the vastness of the heavens and earth,[38] prepared for those who have believed in Allah and His Messengers. This is Allah's bounty which He bestows on whomever He wills, and Allah's bounty is immense!

No affliction befalls in the earth or in your own selves, which 22-24
We have not recorded in a Book[39] before bringing it into being.[40] This is an easy thing for Allah,[41] (This is done so that) you are not disheartened over what you may lose nor feel exultant over what Allah may give you.[42] Allah does not love those who are arrogant and boastful, who are themselves stingy and also urge others to be stingy.[43] Now whosoever turns away (should know that) Allah is All-Sufficient and All-Praiseworthy[44]

We sent Our Messengers with clear signs and instructions and 25
sent down with them the Book and the Balance so that the people may

stand by justice.[45] And We sent down iron which has great strength and other benefits for men.[46] This has been done so that Allah may know who helps Him and His Messengers, unseen. Surely, Allah is All-Strong, All-Mighty.[47]

Contd. from p.335]

which will be running on before them and on their right and on their left." (Hākim, Ibn Abī Ḥatim, Ibn Mardūyah).

18. It means that when the believers will be going towards Paradise, the light will be before them, and the hypocrites will be stumbling about in the darkness behind. At that time they will call out to the believers, who lived with them together in the same Muslim society in the world, saying: "Look back towards us awhile so that we also may get some light."

19. This means that the people of Paradise will enter it awhile this gate and the gate will then be closed. On one side of the gate there will be the blessings of Paradise and on the other the torment of Hell. For the hypocrites it will not be possible to cross the barrier that will stand between them and Paradise.

20. That is, "Did we not live with you together in the same Muslim society? Did we not affirm the Faith? Did we not offer the Prayers along with you and observe the Fast and perform the Ḥajj and pay the *Zakāt*? Did we not sit with you in your assemblies and were we not bound in marriage ties and kinship with you? Then, how is it that we have been separated from you today?"

21. That is In spite of your claim to be Muslims, you never believed like true and sincere Muslims and remained suspended between belief and unbelief. You still had your interests attached to disbelief and the disbelievers and you never gave yourselves up wholly to Islam."

22. *Tarabbus* (from which *tarabbastum* of the Text is derived) means to wait and tarry for an opportunity. When a person is unable to decide which of the two alternative ways he should choose but stands and waits to consider which way should be more favourable for him to follow, he is involved in *tarabbus*. The hypocrites had adopted the same attitude during the critical time of the conflict between Islam and un-Islam. Neither were they siding with disbelief openly nor were spending their energy to support and help Islam with full conviction. They were sitting on the fence, waiting to set which party in the conflict became dominant, so that if it was Islam they may join it on the basis of their affirmation of the faith, and if it was unbelief they may side with its supporters taking advantage of their neutral position in the conflict.

23. This implies different kinds of doubts that a hypocrite suffers from, and the same also are the actual causes of his hypocrisy. He doubts the existence

of God, the Prophethood of the Prophet, the Qur'ān's being Allah's book, the Hereafter, its accountability, and its rewards and punishments, and he doubts whether the conflict between the Truth and falsehood is real, or a mere delusion; as for himself he considers the only truth to be that one should enjoy life and its pleasures to the full. For unless a person is involved in such doubts he can never be a hypocrite.

24. This can have two meanings: (1) "Until death came to him, you could not shed this delusion till the last moment"; and (2) "that Islam became dominant, while you looked on unconcerned."

25. That is, Satan.

26. This clearly shows that in the Hereafter the hypocrites will be doomed to the same fate as the disbelievers.

27. The words *hiya maulā kum* (Hell is your *maulā)* can have two meanings: (1) "That Hell is the only proper place for you"; and (2) "that you never took Allah as your *maulā* (friend, patron) so that He may look after you; now Hell only is your *maulā;* therefore, Hell now will look after you."

28. Here again, the word "believers" is general, but it does not apply to all the Muslims; it refers to those particular Muslims who had professed the faith verbally and joined the followers of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) though their hearts were devoid of any concern for Islam. They were watching that the pagan forces were bent upon wiping out Islam; they had encircled the handful of Muslims from all sides, who were being made the target of persecution everywhere in Arabia, and thus oppressed the Muslims were fleeing to Madinah empty-handed for refuge: the sincere Muslims were extending to them whatever economic help they could; yet they were, at the same time, engaged in a life and-death struggle with the enemy. But, in spite of this, these people who professed the faith were not being moved at all. So, here, they are being put to shame, as if to say: "What kind of believers are you? At this critical juncture for Islam, is it not yet time that your hearts should melt at the mention of Allah and be filled with the spirit of sacrifice for the sake of His Religion? Can the believers be such that they may have no feeling for Islam when it is confronted with hard times, that they may sit un-concerned when they are summoned in the name of Allah, that the hearts may neither tremble out of fear of Allah nor bow to His Command when He Himself should make an appeal for contributions in the Book sent down by Him, declaring it as a loan on Himself and plainly telling that the one who would regard his wealth as dearer than the cause of the true Faith would be a hypocrite and not a believer?"

29. That is, "The Jews and Christians seem to have lost fervour and degenerated spiritually and morally hundreds of years after the passing away of their Prophets; but have you already become so depraved that while the Prophet is still present among you, and the Book of God is still being revealed, and not much time has passed over you since you affirmed the Faith, and you have started behaving like the Jews and Christians who have reached this state through centuries of playing and tempering with the Book of Allah and its verses?"

30. The point contained here should be well understood. At several places in the Qur'ān the Prophethood and the revelation of the Book have been compared to the rainfall, for the effects produced by them on humanity are precisely like those produced by rain on the soil. Just as the dead earth swells and blooms as soon as it receives a shower of rain, so it is with the dead humanity in a country where a Prophet is raised through Allah's mercy and Revelation begins to be sent down to him. It starts revealing those virtues which lay hidden and suppressed for ages; it starts manifesting from within itself excellent morals and good deeds and virtues of every kind. Allusion has been made to this truth here so as to open the eyes of the Muslims of the weak faith and to make them ponder their state. The way humanity was being reformed by the blessed rainfall of the Prophethood and Revelation and the way it was being richly and generously blessed in every way was not a remote story for them. They were observing it themselves in the pious and righteous society of the Companions and experiencing it day and night around them. Polytheism with all its evils was present before them while the virtues and good things emanating from Islam also were blooming and flourishing before their eyes. Therefore, they did not need to be told any details. An allusion was enough to the effect, "The signs of how Allah grants life to the dead earth through the rainfall of His mercy have been shown to you; now you should use your common sense and consider it for yourself as to what benefit you are deriving from this blessing."

31. *Ṣadaqah*, as an Islamic term, is the charity given sincerely and with a pure intention only with a view to seek Allah's good pleasure without making any show of it, and without the intention of doing any favour to the recipient. The donor should give it only because he has a true feeling of the service of his Lord. The word is derived from *ṣidq;* therefore, *ṣadāqat* (sincerity) is of its essence. No charity and no expending of the wealth can be a *ṣadaqah* unless it springs from a sincere and pure motive of spending only for the sake of Allah.

32. Here, the believers imply those people of true faith whose attitude and conduct was absolutely different from that of the people of weak faith and the false claimants to Islam, and who were at that time vying with one another in making monetary sacrifices and were struggling with their lives in the cause of the true Faith.

33. *Ṣiddīq* (most truthful) is the superlative from *ṣidq;* however, one should clearly understand that *ṣidq is* not merely a statement conforming to the truth, but a statement which is not only true in itself but its sayer also upholds it as a truth sincerely. For instance, if a person says that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) is Allah's Messenger, this is by itself precisely according to the truth for the Holy Prophet is truly Allah's Messenger, but the person would be true in his statement only if he also believed and upheld him as Allah's Messenger. Therefore, a thing would be *ṣidq* if what was said was in conformity with the truth as well as with the sayer's own conscience. Likewise, *ṣidq* also contains the sense of faithfulness, sincerity and practical righteousness. *Ṣadiq ul-wa'd* would be the person who kept his promise practically, who never broke it. *Ṣādiq (true* friend) would be he who did full justice to friendship in the time of need, and who never proved faithless to any body in any way. In war, *sādiq fil-qitāl* (true soldier) would be the one who fought with all his heart and body and established his valour practically. Thus, *ṣidq* in essence implies that one's deed should fully conform to one's word. The one who acts contrary to his word cannot be *Ṣādiq.* On that very basis, the one who preaches one thing and acts contrary to it, is regarded as a false preacher. With this meaning of *ṣidq* and *ṣādiq* in view one can fully appreciate the meaning of the superlative *ṣādiq.* It would inevitably imply a righteous person who is free from every impurity, who has never swerved from the truth and piety, who could never be expected to say anything against his conscience, who believed in whatever he believed with full sincerity and remained faithful to it under all circumstances, and who has practically proved that he is a true believer in the full sense of the word. (For further explanation, see E.N. 99 of An-Nisā).

34. The early commentators have differed about the explanation of this verse. Ibn 'Abbās, Masrūq, Ḍaḥḥāk, Muqātil bin Ḥayyān and others say that the previous sentence ended with *humuṣṣiddīqūn;* and *wash-shuhādā'-u 'inda Rabbihim la-hum ajru-hum wa nūru-hum* is a separate and independent sentence According to this explanation, the translation of the sentence would be: "Those who have believed in Allah and His Messenger, are indeed the most truthful *(aṣ ṣiddīqun);* as for the true witnesses *(ash-shuhādā'),* they will have their reward and their light from their Lord." Contrary to this, Mujāhid and several other commentators regard this whole expression as one sentence. According to them the translation would be that which we have given in the text above. The two commentaries differ because the first group has taken the word *Shahid* in the meaning of the martyr in the way of Allah, and seeing that every believer is not *a shahīd* in this sense, has taken *wash-shuhādā'-u 'inda Rabbi-him* as a separate sentence. But the other group takes *shahīd in* the meaning of the witness of the Truth, and not in the sense of the martyr, and in this sense every believer is a *shahīd.* We are of the opinion that this second commentary is preferable and this is

supported by the Qur'ān as well as the *Ḥadīth*. The Qur'an says:

"Thus have We made you a community of the 'Golden Mean' so that you may be witnesses in regard to mankind and the Messenger may be a witness in regard to you." (Al-Baqarah: 143).

"Allah had called you "Muslims" before this and has called you (by the same name) in this (Qur'ān) also so that the Messenger may be a witness in regard to you and you may be witnesses in regard to the rest of mankind." (Al-Ḥajj: 78)

In a *Ḥadīth*, Ḥadrat Barā' bin 'Āzib has related that he heard the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) say: "The believers of *my Ummah* are *shahīd* (the witnesses); then he recited this very verse of Sūrah Al-Hadid." (Ibn Jarīr) Ibn Marduyah has related on the authority of Hadrat Abū ad-Dardā' the tradition that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) said: "The one who emigrates from a land in order to save his life and his faith from temptation, is recorded as a *Ṣiddīq* (most truthful), and when he dies, Allah takes his soul as a *shahīd* (true witness). Then after this, the Holy Prophet recited this very verse." (For the explanation of this meaning of shahādat, see E.N. 144 of Al-Baqarah, E.N. 99 of An-Nisā', E.N. 82 of Al-Aḥzāb).

35. That is, "Each one of them will receive the reward and the light of the measure and degree he deserves. They will all get their own respective rewards and lights, and their shares have already been reserved for them."

36. To understand this theme fully one should keep the following verses of the Qur'ān in mind: Imrān: 14- 15, Yūnus: 24-25, Ibrāhīm: 18, Al-Kahf: 45-46, An Nūr: 39. In all those verses the truth that has been impressed on the mind is. The life of this world is a temporary life: its spring as well as its autumn is temporary, There is much here to allure man, but this, in fact, consists of base and insignificant things which man because of his shallowness of mind regards as great and splendid and is deluded into thinking that in attaining them lies supreme success, The truth however is that the highest benefits and means of pleasure and enjoyment that one can possibly attain in the world, are indeed base and insignificant and confined to a few years of temporary life, and can be destroyed by just one turn of fate. Contrary to this, the life hereafter is a splendid and eternal life: its benefits are great and permanent and its losses too are great and permanent. The one who attains Allah's forgiveness and His goodwill there, will indeed have attained the everlasting bliss beside which the whole wealth of the world and its kingdom become pale and insignificant. And the one who is seized in God's torment there, will come to know that he had made a bad bargain even if he had attained all that he regarded as great and splendid in the world.

37. *Musābaqat* (from which *sābiqū* of the original is derived) means to compete and vie with each other in order to excel. The meaning is: "Give up your

rivalries with one another for amassing wealth and pleasures and benefits of the world and instead make the forgiveness of your Lord and Paradise the object of your struggle and rivalries."

38. Some commentators have taken the word *'ard* in *'arduhā ka-'ard is-samā' wal-ard* in the sense of breadth, but actually this word has been used here in the meaning of spaciousness and extensiveness. In Arabic the word *'arḍ* is not only used for breadth, as a counterpart of length, but also for spaciousness, as it has been used in Ḥa Mīm As-Sajdah: 51: *fa-dhū du'ā in'arīḍ:* "Then he is full of wordy supplications." Besides, one should also understand that the object here is not to foretell the area or extent of Paradise, but to give an idea of its vastness and extensiveness. Here its vastness has been described as the vastness of *the* heaven and earth, and in Sūrah .Al-'Imrān it has been said: "Hasten to follow the path that leads to your Lord's forgiveness and to Paradise whose vastness is that of the universe, which has been prepared for the righteous " (v. 133) When both these verses are read together, one gets the idea that the; gardens and palaces man will receive in Paradise will only serve as his dwelling-place (but the entire universe will be his home He will not be restricted to one place as be is in this world, where just for reaching the Moon, his nearest neighbour in space, he has had to struggle hard for years and expend excessive resources only to overcome the difficulties of a short journeny. There the whole universe will be accessible to him: he will be able to see whatever he would desire from his station and be able to visit whichever place he would like easily.

39. "A Book": the Writ of destiny,

40. Here, "it" may be referring to the affliction as well as to the earth, or the self of man, or in view of the context, to all the creatures.

41. That is, it is not at all difficult for Allah to pre-ordain the destiny of each and every one of His creatures.

42. In order to understand why this has been said in that context, one should keep in mind the conditions through which the Muslims were passing at the time this Sūrah was revealed. An ever present danger of attack by the enemy, battles in quick succession, a state of constant siege, hardships caused by economic boycott by the disbelievers, persecution of the converts to Islam everywhere in Arabia, these were the conditions that the Muslims were confronted with at that time. The disbelievers looked upon these as a proof of the Muslims having been forsaken and rejected, and the hypocrites took these as a confirmation of their own suspicions and doubts. As for the sincere Muslims, they were facing these bravely and resolutely, yet the excess of hardship and suffering would sometimes become trying even for them. So, the Muslims are being consoled, as if to say: "No affliction, God forbid, has befallen you without the knowledge of

your Lord. Whatever you are experiencing is according to the pre-ordained scheme of Allah, which is already recorded in the Writ of destiny. And you are being made to pass through these trials and tribulations for the sake of your own training for the great service that Allah wills to take from you. If you are made to attain to success without passing through these hardships, weaknesses will remain in your character due to which you will neither be able to digest power and authority nor withstand the tempests and furies of falsehood."

43. The allusion is to the trait of character that everyone could experience among the hypocrites in the Muslim society itself. As regards the outward affirmation of the Faith, they could not be distinguished from the true Muslims. But owing to lack of sincerity they were not receiving the sort of training that was being given to the sincere Muslims. Therefore, the little prosperity and leadership that they were enjoying in an ordinary town of Arabia, was causing them to be swollen with pride. As for their stinginess, not only were they themselves unwilling to give away a penny in the cause of God Whom they professed to believe in and the Messenger whom they professed to follow and the Faith which they professed to have accepted, but tried to prevent others also from making any contribution, for, they thought, it was a useless cause. Obviously, if there had been no trials and tribulations, these worthless people, who were of no use to Allah, could not be separated from the sincere and worthy believers, and without weeding them out a mixed crowd of sincere and insincere Muslims could not be entrusted with the high office of leadership of the world, the great blessings of which the world subsequently witnessed in the rightly-guided Caliphate.

44. That is, "Even if after hearing these words of admonition a person does not adopt the way of sincerity, faithfulness and sacrifice for the sake of Allah and His Religion, and wishes to persist in his stubbornness, which Allah disapproves, then Allah has no use for him, for Allah is All-Sufficient and Independent of His creatures: He does not stand in need of their help in any way. And He is All-Praiseworthy: people of good qualities only are acceptable to Him; people of evil character cannot be entitled to receive any favour from Him."

45. In this brief sentence the whole essence of the mission of the Prophets has been compressed, which one should clearly understand. It says that all the Messengers who came to the world from Allah, brought three things:

(1) *Bayyinātāt:* manifest signs which clearly showed that they were really Allah's Messengers, and were not impostors; convincing arguments which made it evident that what they were presenting as Truth was really the Truth, and what they condemned as falsehood was really falsehood clear instructions which told without any ambiguity what was the right way for the people in respect of beliefs, morals, acts of worship and dealings, which they should adopt, and what were the wrong ways which they should shun and avoid.

(2) *Kitāb:* the Book which contained all the teachings required for the guidance of man so that people may turn to it for enlightenment.

(3) *Mīzān:* the Criterion of truth and falsehood which may precisely indicate, like a balance, the golden mean between the extremes in matters of thought, morals and dealings.

The object for which the Prophets were sent with these three things was that man's conduct in the world and the system of human life, individually as well as collectively, should be established with justice. On the one hand, every man should precisely know the rights of God, the rights of his self and the rights of all these people with whom he may have to deal in any way, and should fulfil them faithfully; and, on the other, the system of collective life should be built on such principles as should eliminate every kind of injustice from society, should safeguard every aspect of civilization and social life against extremism, should establish correct balance and equity in all spheres of collective life, so that all elements of society should receive their rights equitably and fulfil their obligations and duties responsibly. In other words, the object of sending the prophets was to establish individual as well as collective justice. They wanted to establish justice in the personal life of each individual so as to bring about poise and equilibrium in his mind, his character, his conduct and his dealings. They also wanted to establish the whole system of human society on justice so that both the individual and the society should assist and cooperate with each other in their spiritual, moral and material well-being instead of being a hindrance and obstacle.

46. Sending down iron means creating iron in the earth just as in Az-Zumar: 6 it has been said: "He Sent down for you eight heads of cattle, male and female." As whatever exists in the earth, has come here by Allah's command, and has not appeared by itself, its being created has been expressed in the Qur'ān as its being sent down.

The mention of "sending down iron which has great strength and other benefits for men" immediately after stating the object of the mission of the Prophets by itself indicates that by iron here is meant political and military power. Thus the verse means: "Allah did not raise His Prophets in the world just to present a scheme for the establishment of justice, but it was also a part of their mission to endeavour to enforce it practically, to collect necessary power to establish justice in all spheres of life, to punish those who might disrupt it and to break the power of those who might resist it."

47. That is, "Allah does not need this help because He is weak and cannot use His power to accomplish this work, but He has adopted this method for the trial of men: man can advance on the way of his progress and well-being only by passing through this trial. Allah indeed has the power to subdue all the disbelievers by one command whenever He wills and give to His Messengers complete

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النَّاسُ بِالْقِسْطِ ۚ وَأَنْزَلْنَا الْحَدِيدَ فِيهِ بَأْسٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَنَافِعُ لِلنَّاسِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ مَنْ
يَنْصُرُهُ وَرُسُلَهُ بِالْغَيْبِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ وَجَعَلْنَا
فِي ذُرِّيَّتِهِمَا النُّبُوَّةَ وَالْكِتَابَ فَمِنْهُمْ مُهْتَدٍ ۖ وَكَثِيرٌ مِنْهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾ ثُمَّ
قَفَّيْنَا عَلَىٰ آثَارِهِمْ بِرُسُلِنَا وَقَفَّيْنَا بِعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ وَآتَيْنَاهُ الْإِنْجِيلَ ۙ
وَجَعَلْنَا فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ رَأْفَةً وَرَحْمَةً ۚ وَرَهْبَانِيَّةً ۟ ابْتَدَعُوهَا مَا
كَتَبْنَاهَا عَلَيْهِمْ إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ رِضْوَانِ اللَّهِ فَمَا رَعَوْهَا حَقَّ رِعَايَتِهَا ۖ فَآتَيْنَا الَّذِينَ
آمَنُوا مِنْهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ ۖ وَكَثِيرٌ مِنْهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَ
آمِنُوا بِرَسُولِهِ يُؤْتِكُمْ كِفْلَيْنِ مِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ نُورًا تَمْشُونَ بِهِ وَ
يَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ۚ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٢٨﴾ لِئَلَّا يَعْلَمَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ أَلَّا يَقْدِرُونَ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ مِنْ
فَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَأَنَّ الْفَضْلَ بِيَدِ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۚ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٢٩﴾

We[48] sent Noah and Abraham and placed in the progeny ot them 26-27
both the Prophethood and the Book.[49] Then some of their descendants adopted guidance but many became transgreessors.[50] After them We sent Our Messengers, one after the other and followed them with Jesus son of Mary and gave him the Gospel, and We put in the hearts of those who followed him, compassion and mercy,[51] but monasticism[52] they themselves invented–we did not prescribe it for them: they invented it themselves[53] in order to seek Allah's good will. But then they did not observe it as it should have been observed.[54] We gave those of them who had believed their rewards, but most of them are transgressors.

O you who have believed, fear Allah and believe in His 28-29
Messenger (Muhammad, upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings)[55]: Allah will grant you a double portion of His mercy and will give you a light in which you will walk,[56] and will forgive your errors.[57] Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Merciful. (You should adopt this way) so that the people of the Book may know that they do not have the sole right to

Allah's bounty, and that Allah's bounty is in His own hand, which He bestows on whomsoever He wills, and Allah's bounty is infinite.

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dominance over them, but in that case the believers in the Messengers would have nothing to do for which they should become entitled to rewards. That is why Allah instead of accomplishing this mission through His dominant power adopted the method of sending His Messengers to human beings with the Signs and the Book and the Criterion, and enjoined them to present the way of justice before the people and exhort them to refrain and desist from wickedness sad injustice. At the same time He gave us full option to accept the message of the Messengers or to reject it. He summoned those who accepted the invitation to come forward and help Him and His Messengers to establish justice, and to exert their utmost against those the were bent upon retaining the unjust system. Thus, Allah wants to see who among us rejects the invitation to justice, who exert with their lives in order to retain injustice as against justice, who shirk: supporting d struggling for the cause of the message of justice after they have accepted it, and who stake their lives and their possessions for the sake of unseen God to help the truth become dominant in the world. Only for those who emerge successful in this test will avenues to future progress be opened up."

48. Now it is being told what corruptions appeared among those who believed in the Prophets who came to the world before the Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) with the Signs and the Book and the Criterion.

49. that is, whichever Messenger came with Allah's Book, was from the progeny of the Prophet Noah and, after him, from the progeny of the Prophet Abraham.

50. "Became transgressors" became disobedient.

51 The words in the Text are *rāfat* and *raḥmat*, which are almost synonymous: But when they are used together, *rāfat* implies the compassion that a person feels on seeing another person in pain and distress, and *raḥmat is* the feeling under which be tries to help him. As the Prophet Jesus was highly compassionate and merciful towards the people, his this trait of character deeply influenced his disciples: therefore, they treated the people with pity ant sympat by and served them with all their heart and soul.

52. The root *rahb* (from which *rabāniyyat or ruhbāniyyat* is derived) means fear; thus *rahbāniyyat* means a mode of life which reflects fear and terror. and *ruhbāniyyat* means the mode of life of the terrified. As a term it implies a person's abandoning the world out of fear (whether it is the fear of somebody's

tyranny, or far of the worldly temptations and distractions, or fear of one's personal weaknesses) and taking refuge in the jungles and mountains, or living alone as a hermit.

53. The words in the original can have two meanings: (1) "That We did not enjoin monasticism *rahbāniit)* upon them: We enjoined upon them only the seeking of Allah's good pleasure:" and (2) "that monasticism was not enjoined by Us: they of their own accord enjoined it on themselves, to seek Allah's good pleasure." In both cases this verse makes it explicit that monasticism is an un-Islamic creed, and it has never been part of the true Faith. The same thing has been stated by the Holy Prophet thus: "There is no monasticism in Islam." *(Musnad Aḥmad).* In another *Ḥadīth* the Holy Prophet said: "The monasticism of this *Ummah is to* fight in the way of Allah." (Musnad Aḥmad, Musnad Abi Ya'lā). That is, he way for this Ummah to attain to spiritual piety lies not in abandoning the world but in fighting in Allah's way: this *Ummah* does not flee to the jungles and mountains out of fear of temptations and distractions but counteracts them by resort to fighting in Allah's way. According to a tradition related both by Bukhārī ant by Muslim, one of the Companions said that he would keep up Prayers throughout the night; another said that he would fast perpetually without ever observing a break; and a third one said the he would never marry and would have nothing to do with women. When the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) came to know of what they had resolved, he said: "By God, I fear Allah the most and remain conscious of Him at all times; yet my way is that I observe the fast as well as break it; I keep up the Prayer during the night as well as have sleep; and I marry the women also. The one who does not follow my way, does not belong to me." Ḥadrat Anas says that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) used to say: "Do not be- hard and severe to yourselves lest Allah should be hard and severe to you. A community had adopted this way of severity towards itself; then Allah also seized it in severity. Look, the remainder of them are found in the monasteries and churches." *(Abū Da'ūd).*

54. That is, they were involved in a double error: first, they imposed on themselves the restrictions which Allah had not imposed; second, They did not observe in the right spirit the restrictions that they had imposed upon themselves with a view to attain to Allah's goodwill, and conducted themselves in a way as to earn Allah's wrath instead *of* His good pleasure.

To understand this theme fully we should have a look at the history of Christian Monasticism.

Until 200 years after the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) the Christian Church knew no monasticism. Its germs, however, were found in Christianity from the very beginning. To look upon asceticism as a moral ideal and to regard celibacy as superior to matrimonial and mundane life is the basis of monasticism,

Both these existed in Christianity from the beginning. Owing to the sanctification of celibacy in particular, it was considered undesirable for those the performed religious services in the church to marry, have children and be involved in domestic chores; so much so that by the 3rd century monasticism began to spread like an epidemic in Christiandom. Historically, it had three main causes!:

First, sensuality, immorality and worship of the world had so permeated the ancient polytheistic society that in their zeal to counteract it the Christian scholars adopted the extremist way instead of the way of moderation. They so stressed chastity that the relationship between man and woman by itself came to be looked upon as filthy, even if it was within marriage. They reacted so violently to mammonism that to possess property of any kind ultimately was considered a sin for a religious person and to live like a poor man and ascetic the criterion of moral excellence. Likewise, in their reaction to the sensualism of the polytheistic society they touched the other extreme. They made withdrawal from pleasure and all material comforts, self denial and curbing of the desires the object of morality and regarded torturing the body by different sorts of harsh discipline as the climax and proof of a person's spirituality.

Secondly, when Christianity started achieving successes and spreading rapidly among the common people, the Church in its zeal to attract more and more adherents went on imbibing every evil that was prevalent in society. Thus, saint-worship replaced the ancient deities. Images of Christ and Mary began to be worshipped instead of the idols of Horus and Isis. Chrismas took the place of Saturnalia. Christian monks began to practise every kind of occult art like curing the sick by amulets and magic incantations, taking omens and fortune-telling, driving out spirits, etc. as were prevalent in ancient days. Likewise, since the common people looked upon a ditty and naked person who lived in a cave or den as a holy and godly man, this very concept of saintlihood became prevalent in the Christian Church, and legends of their miraculous powers began to abound in the memoirs of the Christian saints.

Thirdly, the Christians possessed no detailed law and definite traditions and practices to determine the bounds of religion. They had given up Mosaic Law and the Gospel by itself afforded no perfect code of guidance. Therefore, the Christian doctors went on permitting every kind of innovation to enter the religion partly under the influence of alien philosophies, customs and practices and partly under their personal preference and whim. Monasticism was one such innovation. Christian scholars and doctors of law took its philosophy and rules and practices from the Buddhist monks, Hindu Yogis and ascetics, Egyptian Anchorites, Iránian Manicheans, and the followers of Plato and Plotinus, and made the same the means ant methods of attaining self-purification, spiritual loftiness and nearness to Allah. Those who committed this error were not ordinary men. From the 3rd to

the 7th century (i.e. till about the time the Qur'ān began to be revealed) the religious personalities who were recognized as the foremost scholars and religious guides and leaders of Christendom, both in the East and in the West,—St. Athanasius, St. Basil, St. Gregory of Bazianzus, St. Chrysostom, St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, St. Benedict, St. Gregory the Great—all were monks themselves and great upholders of monasticism. It was under their influence that monasticism became popular in the Church.

Historically, monasticism among the Christians started from Egypt. Its founder was St. Anthony (A.D. 250 -350) who is regarded as the father of Christian Monasticism. He set up the first monastery at Pispir (now Der al Memum) in the Fayum. Later he established another monastery on the coast of the Rod Sea, which is now called Der Mar Antonius The basic rules *of* Christian Monasticism are derived from his writings and instructions. After this beginning the monastic movements spread like a flood in Egypt and monasteries for monks and nuns were set up everywhere in the land in some of which lived three thousand monks at a time. In 325 another ascetic, pachomius, appeared in Egypt, who founded ten major monasteries and nunneries for the monks and nuns. The monastic movement then began to spread in Palestine and Syria and different countries of Africa and Europe. The Christian Church in the beginning experienced some confusion in connection with monasticism, for although it recognized abandonment of the world, celibacy and voluntary poverty as an ideal of spiritual life, yet it could not declare marriage, producing children and possessing property or money to be sinful as the monks did. Subsequently, under the influence of holy men like St. Athanasius (d. 373), St. Basil (d. 379), St. Augustine (d. 430) and Gregory the Great (d. 609) many of the monastic rules became part and parcel of the Church.

This monastic innovation has some characteristics which are briefly as follows:

(1) Inflicting pain on the body by severe exercises and novel methods. In this thing every monk tried to surpass the other. The achievements of these holy men as related in the memoirs of the Christian saints are to this effect: St. Macarius of Alexandria constantly carried on himself a weight of 80 pounds. For six months he slept in a swamp while poisonous flies preyed on his naked body. His disciple, St. Eusebius, even surpassed his master in suffering severities and rigours. He moved about carrying a weight of 150 pounds, and lay in a dry well for three years. St. Saba ate the maize that would start stinking having been soaked in water for a whole Month. St. Bassarion lay in thorny bushes for 40 days and did not rest his back on the ground for 40 years. St. Pachomius passed 15 years of his life, and according to another tradition 50 years, without rating his back on the ground. St. John remained standing in worship for three years

during which he neither sat nor lay down; he would only recline at times against a rock. His food consisted of the offering that was brought for him every Sunday. St. Simeon Styltes (390-449), who is counted among the most illustrious Christian saints, used to observe an un-broken 40 days fast and smiling. Owing to such concepts the bond of marriage between man and woman came to be looked upon as filthy. A monk was forbidden even to look at a woman, not to speak of marriage, and was required to abandon his wife if he was married. As for men it was also impressed on the women that if they wished to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, they should shun marriage and remain spinsters; and if they were married, they should separate from their husbands. St. Jerome, the distinguished Christian scholar, ruled that the woman who remained a spinster as a nun for the sake of Christ, was the bride of Christ, and her mother was the mother-in-law of Christ, i.e. God. Elsewhere St. Jerome says: "To cut asunder the bond of marriage with the axe of chastity is the primary duty of the true devotee of God." The first impact these teachings had on a Christian man or Christian woman, under religious fervour, was that his or her married life was ruined. And since there was no provision for divorce or separation in Christianity, the husband and the wife would separate from each other while they remained bound in wed-lock. St. Nilus was father of two children. When he came under the spell of monasticism, he immediately separated from his wife. St. Ammon, on the first night of his marriage, gave his bride a sermon on the filthiness of the marriage bond and then the two between themselves decided to keep aloof from each other throughout life. St. Abraham abandoned his wife on the very first night of marriage. The same was done by St. Alexis. The memoirs of the Christian saints are full of such incidents.

The Church continued to resist in one way or the other these extremist concepts for three centuries. In those days it was not required of a priest to be single and unmarried. If he was married before being appointed a minister, he could keep his wife. However, he was forbidden to marry after his appointment. Moreover, a person could not be appointed a minister if he had married a widow, or a divorced woman, or had two wives, or possessed a concubine. Gradually, by the 4th century, the concept became firm that for a married person it was odious to perform religious services in the Church. The Council of Gengra (A.D. 362) was the last one in which such ideas were held as anti-religious, but a little later in 386, Roman Synod counselled the priests to avoid marriage relations and the following year Pope Siricius decreed that the priest who married, or continued to have sex relations with his wife if already married, should be dismissed from office. Illustrious scholars like St. Ambrose, and St. Augustine upheld this decision most fervently, and after a little resistance it became fully enforced in the Western Church. In this period several councils were convened to consider the complaints to the effect that the people who were already married were having

"illicit" relations with their wives even after their appointment to perform religious duties. Consequently, with a view to reform them, rules were made to the effect that they should sleep in the open, should never meet their wives in private, and should meet them only in the presence of at least two other men. St. Gregory has made mention of a wonderful priest who did not have any relation with his wife for 40 years, and when the woman approached him at his death-bed, he rebuked her, saying: "Woman, keep away !"

(4) The most painful and pathetic chapter of ascetic monasticism is that it cut asunder man's relations with his parents, with his brothers and sisters, and even his children For the Christian saints love of the parents for son, love of the brothers and sisters for brother and love of the children for father also was sinful. They believed it was necessary for man to break off all those relations for the sake of spiritual progress. In the biographies of the Christian saints one comes across highly pathetic and heart-rending incidents. A monk, St. Evagrius, had been undergoing severe exercises in the desert for many years. Suddenly one day letters reached him from his father and mother, who were passing their days in great agony without him. The saint, fearing that the letters might arouse feelings of human love in his heart, cast the letters immediately into the fire, without even opening them. The mother and sister of St. Theodorus came to the monastery where he was staying, with recommendatory letters from many priests, and desired to have only a glimpse of him, but the saint refused to come out before them. St. Marcus' mother went to the monastery to see him. She somehow obtained the abbot's permission for it and requested him to order her son to come out before her, but the son was adamant to her prayers. At last, he implemented the abbot's orders by appearing before his mother disguised and with closed eyes. Thus, neither was the mother able to recognize her son, nor the son saw his mother. Another saint, St. Poemen ant his six brothers lived in a desert monastery of Egypt. Years later their old mother came to know of their whereabouts and went to see them in the monastery. As soon as the brothers saw their mother coming, they hurried into their cell and shut the door. The mother started crying and wailing outside saying: "I have travelled in this old age from a distant place only to have a glimpse of you. There will be no harm if only I see you. Am I not your mother ?" But the saints did not open the door and told the mother that they would meet her in the next world. Even more painful and piteous is the story of St. Simeon Stylites, who left his parents and remained away from them without any trace of his whereabouts for 27 years. The father died *of* grief. When the fame of the son's piety and holiness spread the mother, who was still living in agony, came to know of his whereabouts. She came to the monastery to see him but women were not allowed to enter. She prayed that either the son should call her in, or he should himself come out to let her have a glimpse of him, but "the saint"

before Easter every year. Once he kept standing on one leg for a whole year. Often he would leave his monastery and retire to a well. Later he got a 60 foot high pillar erected near Antioch, which was three feet wide at the top and railed round. He spent the last 30 years of his life on this pillar and remained permanently exposed to the elements. His disciples carried food to him by ladder and removed his filth. He had even tied himself to the pillar by a string, which cut into his flesh; when the flesh became rotten, it bred worms; whenever a worm fell out, he would restore it to the sore, saying: "Eat what God has given you." Crowds of pilgrims flocked to him from far and near. When he died the Christian world proclaimed that he was the best model of a Christian saint.

The memoirs of the Christian saints of this period are full of such instances. One particular saint had the characteristic that he observed silence for 30 years: he was never seen speaking. Another had tied himself to a rock; another roamed the jungles and lived on grass; another moved about carrying a heavy load; another kept his limbs and body tied in fetters and chains; some saints lived in the dens of beasts, or in dry wells, or in old graves; and some others remained naked and concealed their private parts under long hair and would crawl on the ground. After death the bones of the illustrious saints were preserved in monastery. I saw a full library decked with such bones in St. Catherine's monastery at the foot of Mount Sinai. There were skulls and foot-bones and hand-bones arranged separately. A glass-case contained the whole skeleton of a saint.

(2) Their second characteristic was that they were dirty and strictly cleanliness and bodily care. Washing or applying water to the body was regarded as opposed to God-worship, for according to them purification of the body was tantamount to pollution of the soul. St. Athanasius has faithfully described this virtue of St. Anthony that he never washed his feet during life. St. Abraham from the day he entered Christianity neither washed his face nor feet for 50 years. A famous nun, Virgin Sylvia, never allowed any part of her body except the fingers to become wet with water throughout life It is said of 130 nuns of 8 convent that they never washed their feet and would shudder with horror at a mere reference to bath.

(3) Monasticism practically forbade married life and ruthlessly discarded the institution of marriage. All religious writings of the 4th and 5th centuries are replete with the thought that celibacy is the highest moral virtue, and chastity meant that one should strictly abstain from sexual relation even if it was between husband and wife. The perfection of a pure spiritual life lay in complete self-denial, with no desire for physical pleasure. It was necessary to suppress any carnal desire because it strengthened animality. For them pleasure and sin were synonymous so much so that being happy was regarded as being forgetful of God. St. Basil forbade even laughing.

refused to oblige her. The woman lay at the entrance for three days and three nights and at last breathed her last in the same state. Then the holy man emerged from his seclusion, mourned his mother's death and prayed for her forgiveness.

In the same harsh way these saints treated their sisters and children. There is the story of Mutius, a prosperous man by all means. Drawn out suddenly by the religious impulse, he took his 8-year-old son and went to a monastery. But for the sake of his progress to holiness it was necessary that he should give up love of his son. Therefore, first the son was separated from him. Then the innocent child was subjected to harsh treatment before his very eyes and he watched it patiently. Then, the abbot of the monastery ordered him to go and Cast the child into the river. He became ready even for this; then right at the time when he was going to throw the child into the river, the monks saved the child's life. then it was admitted that he had actually attained td the rank of a holy man.

The viewpoint of Christian monasticism in these matters was that the one who sought love of God, should break off all relations of human love that bound him in the world to his parents, his brothers and sisters, and his children. St. Jerome says, "Even if your nephew clings to you with his hands round your neck; even if your mother calls you back in the name of having suckled you; even if your father obstructs your way and lies down before you, you should hasten out to the banner of the cross, trampling the body of your father, without shedding a tear. Ruthlessness in this matter is piety itself." St. Gregory writes, "A young monk who could not give up love of his parents, left the monastery one night in order to pay them a visit. God punished him for this error, for as soon as he returned to the monastery, he died. His body was buried in the grave but the earth did not accept it. He was placed in the grave again and again, and the earth threw him out every time. At last, St. Benedict placed a sacred offering on his chest, and then the grave accepted him." Of a nun it is said that for three days after her death, she remained subject to a torment because she had not been able to cleanse her heart of her mother's love. About a saint it is written that he never treated anyone harshly except his relatives.

(5) Their practice of meting out ruthless, cruel and harsh treatment to their nearest relatives, made their human feeling dead, with the result that they would treat with utmost enmity those with whom they had any religious differences. By the beginning of the 4th century, 80 to 90 religious sects had arisen in Christianity. St. Augustine has made mention of 88 sects of his own time, each of which regarded the other with extreme hatred. And the fire of this hatred also was fanned by the monks, who were always in the forefront to harm and destroy the opponent sects by their machinations. Alexandria was a great center of this sectarian conflict.

There, in the beginning the Bishop of the Arian sect attacked the Athanasius party. Virgin nuns were dragged out of their convents, stripped naked and beaten with thorny branches and branded in order to make them give up their creed. Then, when the Roman Catholics came to power in Egypt, they treated the Arian sect likewise; so much so that according to the prevalent view Arius himself also was poisoned. Once on the same city of Alexandria the monks of St. Cyril created a turmoil. They seized a nun of the opponent sect and took her into their church; they killed her, hacked her body to pieces, and cast it into the fire. Rome was not any different from this. In 366, at the death of Pope Liberius, two sects nominated their respective candidates for papacy; this resulted in great bloodshed; so much so that in one day 137 dead bodies were taken out from one church.

(6) Side by side with this retreat from the world and life of seclusion and poverty, wealth of the world also was amassed most avariciously. By the beginning of the 5th century the condition was that the bishop of Rome lived in his palace like kings, and when his conveyance emerged in the city, it would be as stately and splendid as of the emperor himself. St. Jerome complains of the conditions of his time (later part of the 4th century) saying that the feast hosted by many of the bishops out classed the feasts of the governors. The flow of wealth to monasteries and churches had assumed the proportions of a deluge by the beginning of the 7th century (the age of the revelation of the Qur'ān). It had been deeply impressed on the minds that a person who happened to commit a grave sin could be redeemed only by making an offering at a saint's shrine, or a sacrifice at the altar of a church or monastery. Then the same world and its luxuries and comforts abstention from which was the mark of distinction of the monks, lay at their feet. The factor which, in particular, caused this decline was that when the common people developed extreme reverence for the monks because of their undergoing severe exercises of self-discipline and self-denial, hosts of world seeking people also donned the monk's garments and entered their ranks. Then under the garb of feigned poverty they turned acquisition of worldly wealth and possessions into a flourishing business.

(7) In the matter of chastity also monasticism was repeatedly defeated in its fight against nature and defeated well and proper. In the monasteries some exercises of self-mortification were such as required the monks and nuns to live together in one and the same place, and they had often to pass the night in the same bed in their enthusiasm for more and more temptations. St. Evagarius, the well-known monk, has praised the self-control acquired by the Palestinian monks, saying: "They had mastered their passion so

completely that although they bathed with the women together, looked at their bodies, touched them, even embraced them, yet they remained invincible to nature." Although bathing was an odious thing in monasticism, such baths were also taken for the sake of exercise in self-control. At last, about the same Palestine, St. Gregory of Nyssa (d. 396) writes that it has become a centre of wickedness and immorality. Human nature avenges itself *on* those who fight it. Monasticism fought it and ultimately fell in the pit of immorality the story of which is a most shameful blot on the religious history of the 8th to 11th centuries. An Italian bishop of the 10th century writes: "If the penal law for misconduct is practically enforced against those who perform religious services in the church, none would escape punishment except the boys, and if the law to remove illegitimate children from religious services was also enforced, there might perhaps be left no boy among the attendants of the church." Books of the medieval authors are replete with the complaints that the nunneries had become houses of prostitution. Within their four walls new-born babies were being massacred; the priests and religious attendants of the church had developed illicit connections even with forbidden relatives; the crime of the unnatural act had spread like an epidemic in the monasteries; and the practice of confession had become a means of immorality in the churches.

From these details one can fully appreciate what corruption of Christianity is the Qur'ān alluding to when it says: "The Christians themselves invented monasticism, but they did not observe it as it should have been observed."

55. The commentators differ in the explanation of this verse. One group says that the address here is directed to the people who believed in the Prophet Jesus. It is being said to them, "Believe in the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) now; for this you will be given a double reward, one reward for believing in the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) and the other reward for believing in the Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings). The second group says that the followers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) are being addressed. They are being admonished to the effect: "Do not rest content with your verbal affirmation of the Faith only, but you should believe sincerely and truly. For this you will be given a double reward: one reward for giving up disbelief and turning to Islam, and the second reward for believing sincerely in Islam and remaining steadfast to it. "The first commentary is supported by vv. 52-54 of Sūrah Al-Qasas, and furthermore by the tradition reported by Ḥaḍrat Abū Mūsā al-Ash'ari, according to which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said: "There are three men who will get a double reward, one of them is a person from among the followers of the earlier Books who believed in this earlier Prophet

and then believed in the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace)." *(Bukhārī, Muslim).* The second commentary is supported by verse 37 of Sūrah Sabā', which says that the righteous believers will have a double reward. From the point of view of argument both the commentaries are equally weighty. However, considering the theme that follows, one feels that the second commentary is more in keeping with the context here; and in fact the whole theme of this Sūrah, from beginning to end, supports this very commentary. From the beginning of this Sūrah the addressees are the people who had entered Islam after affirming the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet and it is they whom the Sūrah invites to believe sincerely and truly and not merely verbally with the tongue.

56. That is, "He will bless you with such a light of knowledge and vision in the world by which you will be able clearly distinguish at every step the straight way of Islam from the crooked paths of ignorance in different matters of life, and in the Hereafter He will grant you the Light that has been mentioned in verse 12 above."

57. That is, "He will forgive you your errors that you may happen to commit due to human weaknesses in spite of your sincere efforts to fulfil the demands of the Faith, and will also forgive those sins of yours that you *had* committed in the pre-Islamic days of ignorance."



LVIII
AL
MUJĀDALAH

المجادلة

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

LVIII

AL-MUJĀDALAH

المجادلة

INTRODUCTION

Name

This Sūrah is entitled *Al-Mujādalah as* well as Al-*Mujādilah*, the title being derived from the word *tujādiluka* of the very first verse. As at the outset mention has been made of the woman who pleaded with the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) the case of *ẓihār* pronounced by her husband and urged him to suggest a way out of the difficult situation in order to save her and her children's life from ruin, and Allah has described her pleading by the word *"mujādalah"*, the Sūrah came to be known by this very title. If it is read as *"mujādalah"*,

it would mean "pleading and arguing", and if it is read as "*mujādilah*" it would mean "the woman who pleaded and argued."

Period of Revelation

There is no tradition to tell as to when this incident of pleading and arguing took place, but there is a hint in the subject-matter of the Sūrah on the basis of which it can be said with certainty that it happened some time after the battle of the Trench (Shawwāl, 5 A.H.). In Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb, Allah while negating that an adopted son could be one's real son, had just said this and no more: "And Allah has not made those of your wives whom you divorce by *ziḥār* your mothers." But in that Sūrah there was nothing to the effect that to divorce a wife by *ziḥār* was a sin or a crime, nor anything about the legal injunction concerning it. Contrary to it, in this Sūrah the whole law relating to *ziḥar* has been laid down, which shows that these detailed injunctions were sent down some time after the brief reference to it in Surah Al-Aḥzāb.

Subject Matter and Topics

In this Sūrah instructions have been given to the Muslims about the different problems that confronted them at that time.

From the beginning of the Sūrah to verse 6 legal injunctions about *zihār* have been given, along with which the Muslims have been strictly warned that it is contrary to their profession of the Faith that they should still persist in the practices of ignorance after they have accepted Islam, that they should break the bounds set by Allah, or refuse to abide by them, or that they should make their own rules and regulations contradictory to them. For this there is not only the punishment of disgrace and humiliation in the world but in the Hereafter too there will be strict accountability for it.

In vv. 7-10 the hypocrites have been taken to task for their secret whisperings and consultations by which they conspired and intrigued against the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), and because of their hidden malice and grudge greeted him, like the Jews, in a manner as to wish him ill instead of well. In this connection, the Muslims have been consoled, as if to say: "These whisperings of the hypocrites can do no harm to you; therefore, you should go on doing your duty with full trust in Allah". Besides, they have also been taught

this moral lesson: "The true believers, when they talk secretly together, do not talk of sin and transgression and disobedience to the Messenger; if they have to talk secretly together they should talk of goodness and piety."

In vv. 11-13 the Muslims have been taught certain manners of social behaviour and given instructions to eradicate certain social evils which were prevalent among the people then as they are today. If some people are sitting in an assembly, and more people arrive, they do not show even the courtesy as to squeeze in so as to make room for others, with the result that the new-comers have to keep standing, or to sit in the door-way, or to go back, or seeing that there is enough room yet start jumping over the people's heads to find room for themselves. This often used to be experienced in the Holy Prophet's assemblies. Therefore, Allah gave the instruction, as if to say: "Do not behave selfishly and narrow-mindedly in your assemblies but do accommodate the new-comers also with an open heart."

Likewise, another vice found among the people is that when they go on a visit to somebody (an important person, in particular), they prolong their sitting and do not at all mind that encroaching upon his time unduly would cause him hardship. Then, if he tells them to leave, they mind it; if he himself rises up from their assembly, they complain of his lack of manners; if he tells them indirectly that he has some other business also to attend to, for which he needs time, they turn a deaf ear to his request. The Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) himself also had to experience such misconduct of the people, who in their earnestness to benefit by his teaching did not at all see that they were wasting his precious time so badly needed for other important works. At last, Allah in order to eradicate this bad manner, enjoined that when the people are asked to rise up from an assembly, they should rise up and disperse.

Another vice prevalent among the people was that each person wished to have secret counsel individually with the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) without any real need, or would like that he should approach him during an assembly and whisper something to him. This was not only embarrassing for the Holy Prophet but also annoying for the people who sat in the assembly. That is why Allah imposed the

restriction that anyone who wanted to consult him in private, should first give away something in charity. The object was that the people should be warned of this bad manner and made to give it up. Thus, the restriction was kept in force for a short while; and when the people had corrected their behaviour, it was withdrawn.

From verse 14 to the end of the Sūrah members of the Muslim society, which was a mixture of the sincere Muslims and the hypocrites and the waverers, have been told plainly as to what is the criterion of sincerity in Islam. One kind of Muslims are those who are friends with the enemies of Islam; they do not hesitate for the sake of their interests to be treacherous to the religion which they profess to believe in; they spread all sorts of doubts and suspicions against Islam and prevent the people from adopting the Way of Allah. But since they are part of the Muslim community their false profession of Faith serves them as a cover and shield. The second kind of Muslims are those who, in the matter of Allah's Religion, do not care even for their own father, brother, children, and family, to say nothing of others. They do not cherish any feeling of love for the person who is an enemy of God and His Messenger and His Religion. Allah in these verses has explicitly stated that the people of the first kind, in fact, belong to Satan's party how ever hard they may try to convince others of their Islam by swearing oaths. And the honour of belonging to Allah's party is possessed only by the Muslims of the second kind. They alone are the true Muslims: they alone will attain to true success, and with them alone is Allah well pleased.



قَدْ سَمِعَ اللّٰهُ قَوْلَ الَّتِيْ تُجَادِلُكَ فِيْ زَوْجِهَا وَتَشْتَكِيْٓ اِلَى اللّٰهِ

وَاللّٰهُ يَسْمَعُ تَحَاوُرَكُمَا ۚ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ سَمِيْعٌۢ بَصِيْرٌ ۝١ اَلَّذِيْنَ يُظٰهِرُوْنَ مِنْكُمْ
مِّنْ نِّسَآئِهِمْ مَّا هُنَّ اُمَّهٰتِهِمْ ۭ اِنْ اُمَّهٰتُهُمْ اِلَّا الّٰۗيْ وَلَدْنَهُمْ ۭ وَاِنَّهُمْ لَيَقُوْلُوْنَ
مُنْكَرًا مِّنَ الْقَوْلِ وَزُوْرًا ۭ وَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَعَفُوٌّ غَفُوْرٌ ۝٢ وَالَّذِيْنَ يُظٰهِرُوْنَ مِنْ
نِّسَآئِهِمْ ثُمَّ يَعُوْدُوْنَ لِمَا قَالُوْا فَتَحْرِيْرُ رَقَبَةٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ يَّتَمَاۗسَّا ۭ
ذٰلِكُمْ تُوْعَظُوْنَ بِهٖ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ خَبِيْرٌ ۝٣ فَمَنْ لَّمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ
شَهْرَيْنِ مُتَتَابِعَيْنِ مِنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ يَّتَمَاۗسَّا ۚ فَمَنْ لَّمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَاِطْعَامُ سِتِّيْنَ

LVII

AL-MUJĀDALAH

المجادلة

Verses:22

Revealed at Madīnah

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Allah[1] has indeed heard the words of the woman who is pleading with you concerning her husband and is making her complaint to Allah. Allah is hearing your mutual conversation.[2] He is All-Hearing, All-Seeing. Those of you who put away their wives by *zihār*[3] (should know that) their wives are not their mothers. Their mothers are only those who gave them birth.[4] They utter a monstrous thing and a lie.[5] And Allah is All-Pardoning, All Forgiving.[6] Those[7] who pronounce *zihār* with regard to their wives, then wish to go back on what they had said,[8] shall have to free a slave before the two touch each other. This you are advised to do,[9] and Allah is well aware of whatever you do.[10] And the one who does not find a slave, should fast two

1-4

successive months before the two touch each other. And the one who is unable to do even this, should feed sixty needy ones.[11]

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1. Here, hearing does not merely imply hearing a complaint but also redressing the grievances

2. The translators generally have translated these sentences in the past tense, which tends to give the meaning that the woman had left after relating her complaint and the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) some time later might have received this Revelation. That is why Allah has said: "We indeed heard what the woman said, who was pleading with you and complaining to Us, and We were at that time hearing the conversation of both of you." But in most of the traditions that have been reported in the *Hadīth* about this incident, it has been stated that right at the time when the woman was relating the *zihār* pronounced by her husband and complaining to the Holy Prophet to the effect that if she was separated from her husband, she and her children would be ruined, the state of receiving Revelation appeared on the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) and these verses were sent down. On this basis we have preferred rendering these sentences in the present tense.

The lady concerning whom these verses were sent down was Khaulah bint-Tha'labah of the Khazraj tribe, and her husband, Aus bin Ṣāmit Anṣāri, was brother of Ḥaḍrat 'Ubādah bin Ṣāmit, the chief of the Aus tribe. The story of the *ẓihār* upon her is related in detail below. What is worth mentioning here is that the incident of the lady's complaint being heard by Allah Almighty and the coming down of the Divine Command immediately to redress her grievance was an event that earned her a place of honour and esteem among the Companions. Ibn Abī Ḥātim and Baihaqī have related that once Ḥaḍrat 'Umar was on his way out with *some* companions. On the way he came across a woman, who stopped him; he immediately stopped and listened to what she had to say patiently with his head bent down, and did not move till she had finished. One of the companions said: "O Commander of the Faithful, you held back the Quraish chiefs for so long for the sake of this old woman!" Ḥaḍrat 'Umar said: "Do you know who she is?— She is Khaulah bint-Tha'labah, the lady whose complaint was heard at the seventh heaven. By God! even if she had kept me standing till the night, I would have kept standing; I would only have excused myself at the Prayer times." Ibn 'Abdul Barr has related in *Al-Isti'āb* this tradition from Qatādah: "When Ḥaḍrat 'Umar came across this lady on the way, he greeted her. After answering his greeting, she said, "Hey, O 'Umar, there was a time when I saw you at the 'Ukāẓ festival. Then you were called 'Umair. You tended goats with the shepherd's staff in your hand. Then, not very long after this, you began to be called 'Umar. Then a time came when the people began addressing you as Commander of the Faithful. So,

fear Allah with regard to your subjects, and remember that the one who fears Allah's punishment, for him the stranger also is like a close kinsman, and the one who fears death, may well lose that very thing which he wants to save.' At this, Jārūd 'Abdī, who was accompanying Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, said: O woman, you have talked insolently to the Commander of the Faithful." Thereupon Ḥaḍrat 'Umar said: "Let her say whatever she has to say. Do you know who she is?—She was heard at the seventh heaven. So, she deserves to be heard longer and with greater attention by 'Umar." Imām Bukhārī also has related briefly a story resembling this in his History.

3. Among the Arabs it often so happened that during a family quarrel, the husband in the heat of the moment would say to his wife: *Anti 'alayya ka-ẓahri ummī*, which literally means: "You are for me as the back of my mother." But its real meaning is: "To have sexual relations with you would be like having sexual relations with my mother." Such words are still uttered by the foolish people, who, as the result of a family quarrel, declare the wife to be like their mother, or sister, or daughter, and make her unlawful for themselves like the prohibited women. This is called *ẓihār*. *Ẓahr* in Arabic is metaphorically used for riding and mounting. Thus, the beast of conveyance is called *zahr*, because man rides on its back. As this word was employed in order to make the wife unlawful, the formula was termed "*ẓihār*". In the pre-Islamic days this was looked upon as tantamount to the pronouncement of divorce, even of greater effect than that, for they took it to mean that the husband was not only severing his marital relations with his wife but was also declaring her to be unlawful for himself like his mother. On this very basis, the Arabs thought reunion could be possible after a divorce but it was impossible after *ẓihār*.

4. This is Allah's first decision concerning *ẓihār*. It means that if a person shamelessly compares the wife to his mother, his this utterance does not make his wife his mother, nor is she endowed with the sanctity that the mother enjoys. The mother's being mother is an actual fact, for she has given birth to the man. On this very ground, she is eternally sacred and prohibited. Now, how will the woman who has not given him birth become his mother simply by a word of mouth, and how will sanctity and prohibition be established for her by reason, morality and law, which, by virtue of this actual fact, is only reserved for the mother who gave birth? Thus, Allah by this condemnation abolished the custom of the pre-Islamic ignorance according to which the marriage contract between the husband pronouncing *ẓihār* and the wife stood dissolved and she became absolutely forbidden for him like the mother.

5. That is, "To liken the wife to the mother is, in the first place, an absurd and shameful thing which no noble person should ever think of, not to speak of uttering it with the tongue. Secondly, it is also a falsehood, for if the one

who says such a thing is giving the news that his wife has now become his mother for him, he is uttering falsehood, and if he is declaring that he has henceforth bestowed on his wife the sanctity of the mother, even then his claim is false, for God has not given him the authority that he may treat a woman as his wife as long as he likes and then start treating her as his mother as and when he likes. The law-giver is Allah Almighty, not he, and Allah has included in the order of motherhood the grandmothers, both paternal and maternal, mother-in-law, foster-mother and the wives of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) along with the woman who gave birth. Nobody has the right to include of his own whim another woman in this order, not to speak of the woman who has been his wife. This gives the second legal injunction. To pronounce *ẓihār* is a grave sin and forbidden act, the violation of which deserves to be punished.

6. That is, "Such an utterance actually deserves to be punished much more severely, but it is Allah's kindness that He has, firstly, abolished the custom of ignorance and saved your family life from utter ruin, and secondly, has prescribed the lightest punishment for the culprits. And His supreme kindness is that the punishment too, is not any form of physical torture or imprisonment, but a few acts of worship and virtue, which are meant to reform you and help spread good in your society." In this connection, one should also understand that the acts of worship that have been prescribed by Islam as expiations for certain crimes and sins are neither mere punishments that they may be without the spirit of worship, nor mere acts of worship that they may entail no pain and suffering of the punishment. But both the aspects have been combined in them so that the culprit may experience pain as well as expiate his sin by means of performing a virtue and act of worship.

7. From here begins the statement of the legal injunctions concerning *ẓihār*. To understand this, it is necessary that one should keep in mind the incidents of *ẓihār* that took place in the time of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace), for the code of law pertaining to *ẓihār* is derived from the verses and the judgements that the Holy Prophet gave after the revelation of these verses in the cases of *ẓihār* brought before him.

According to Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, the first case of *ẓihār* in Islam was the one relating to Aus bin Ṣāmit Anṣārī, on whose wife Khaulah's complaint Allah sent down these verses. Although the details of this case that the traditionists have cited from several reporters contain minor differences, yet the elements of legal import and significance are almost agreed upon. A resume of these traditions is as follows:

Ḥaḍrat Aus bin Ṣāmit had grown a little peevish in old age and according to some traditions, had also developed an ailment resembling insanity. The

reporters have described it by the word *lamam* which is not exactly madness in Arabic but a state resembling it. In this state he had also pronounced *ẓihār* on his wife several times before, but in Islam this was the first occasion that *he* pronounced it as the result of a quarrel with her. Thereupon, his wife appeared before the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) and relating the whole story to him, said: "O Messenger of Allah: Is there any way out of this situation that could save me and my children from ruin?" The Holy Prophot's reply has been reported in different words by different reporters. In some traditions the words are to the effect: "No command has been given to me so far in this regard," and in some others the words are: "In my opinion you have become unlawful to him," and in still others: "You are unlawful to him." At this, she began to cry and complain and told the Holy Prophet over and over again that her husband had not pronounced the words of divorce; therefore, he should suggest a way by which she and her children and her old husband's life could be saved from ruin. But the Holy Prophet gave her the same reply every time. In the meantime he underwent the state of receiving revelation and these verses were revealed. After this, he said to her (and according to other traditions, he called her husband and told him) to free a slave. When they expressed their inability to do so, he said that the husband would have to observe two months' fast consecutively. She said: "Aus is such a man that unless he eats and drinks three times a day, his sight starts failing him." The Holy Prophet said, "Then, you will have to feed 60 poor people." They submitted that they did not have the means for that unless they were helped out by him. Thereupon the Holy Prophet gave them food articles that could suffice 60 men for two meals. Different quantities of it have been mentioned in different traditions. According to some traditions Ḥaḍrat Khaulah herself gave to her husband food articles equal in quantity to those given by the Holy Prophet so that he may perform the expiation. *(Ibn Jarīr, Musnad Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd, Ibn Abī Ḥātim).*

The second incident of *ẓihār* relates to Salamah bin Ṣakhr Bayāḍī. He had a somewhat abnormal appetite for sex. When the fasting month of Ramadān came, he, fearing that he might lose self-control in daytime in the state of fasting, pronounced *ẓihār on* his wife till the end of Ramaḍān. But he could not adhere to his pledge and went in to his wife one night. Penitent he appeared before the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) and told him what he had done. He told him to release a slave. He said he had no one else beside his wife, whom he could release. The Holy Prophet then told him to observe two months' consecutive fast. He replied that it was during obligatory fasting itself that he had been unable to control himself and had become involved in trouble. The Holy Prophet then said that he should feed 60 poor people. He replied that they were poor themselves and had gone to bed at night without food. Thereupon the Holy Prophet got him a

sufficient quantity of food articles from the collector of the *ẓihār* of Banī Zurayq so that he may feed 60 persons and may also save some thing for his children. *(Musnad Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī).*

The third incident that has been related without any reference to the name is that a man pronounced *ẓihār* on his wife and then had sexal intercourse with her even before making the expiation Then, when he came to the Holy Prophet to ask for the legal verdict, he commanded him to abstain from her till he had made the expiation. *(Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī Ibn Mājah),*

The fourth incident is that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) himself heard a man calling his wife as sister. Thereupon he said to him angrily: "Is she your sister?" But he did not regard it as *ẓihār*,. *(Abū Da'ūd).*

These four are the reliable incidents that have been related in the *Ḥadīth* through authentic channels, and through them only can one adequately understand the Qur'ānic injunctions that have been laid down in the following verses.

8. Literally: "that they return to that which they said," but in view of the Arabic language and idiom great differences have occurred in determining the meaning of these words:

Their one meaning can be: "If they repeat the words of *ẓihār* after they have uttered them once." The Ẓāhirīyyah and Bukair bin al-Ashajj and Yaḥyā bin Ziyād al-Farrā' hold this very view, and a saying from 'Atā' bin Abī Rabāḥ also has been reported in support of the same. According to them, the pronouncement of *zihār* once is forgiven; however, if a person repeats it, he becomes liable to make the expiation. But this commentary is expressly wrong for two reasons: first, that Allah has condemned *ẓihār* as an absurd thing and a falsehood and then prescribed a penalty for it. Now, it is not conceivable that if a man utters falsehood or absurdities once he should be excused and if he utters it the second time he should make himself liable to punishment. The second reason of its being wrong is that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) never asked the man pronouncing *ẓihār* whether he had pronounced it once or twice.

Its second meaning is "If the people who were used to uttering *ẓihār* in the pre-Islamic days of ignorance, repeat it in Islam, they will incur this punishment." This would mean that *ẓihār* shpuld by itself be liable to punishment, and whosoever utters the words of *ẓihār* for his wife, should become liable to make the expiation, whether he may divorce the wife after it, or his wife may die, or he may have no intention of resuming conjugal relations with his wife. This view is held by Ṭā'ūs, Mujāhid, Sha'bī, Zuhrī, Sufyān Thaurī and Qatādah from among the jurists. They say that if the woman dies after the *ẓihār*, the husband cannot inherit her unless he mades the expiation.

The third meaning is: "If after uttering the words of *ẓihār* the man may wish to go back on his words and make amends for what he said." In other words, *'āda limā qāls* means that the man revoked what he had said.

The fourth meaning is: "If the man may wish to make lawful what he had made unlawful for himself by pronouncing the *ẓihār*." In other words, it would mean that the person who had made a thing unlawful for himself has now returned to make it lawful.

Most of the jurists have preferred and adopted one of these last two views.

9. In other words: "This you are being enjoined for your own correction and admonition so that the members of Muslim society may give up this evil custom of ignorance and none of you may commit this folly. If you have to quarrel with your wife, you may quarrel with her like good people; if you intend to divorce her, then you should divorce her gracefully. It is absurd that you should compare her to your mother and sister whenever you have a quarrel with her."

10. That is, "Allah will certainly know, even if nobody else does, if a person pronounces *zihār*, and then quietly resumes normal conjugal relations with his wife without first atoning for the offence. Such people cannot in any way escape Allah's punishment."

11. This is the Divine Commandment in respect of *ẓihār*. The following are the details of the law that the Jurists of Islam have derived from the words of this verse, the judgements of the Holy Messenger of Allah (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) and the general principles of Islam.

(1) This law of *ẓihār* abrogates the Arabian custom of ignorance according to which the marriage contract stood annulled and the woman became permanently forbidden to the husband. Likewise, this law annuls all those laws and customs which regard *ẓihār* as a meaningless custom, which is of no legal effect, and permit man to continue having marital relations with his wife as usual even after having compared her to his mother and other prohibited relations. For in the sight of Islam the sanctity of the mother and other prohibited relations is not such an ordinary thing that a man may even think of the comparison between them and his wife, not to speak of uttering it with the tongue. Between the two extremes the position adopted by the Islamic law in this regard is based on three principles: (a) That the marriage contract is not annulled *by ẓihār*, but the woman continues to be the husband's wife as usual, (b) that the woman becomes only temporarily prohibited to the man by *ẓihār*, and (c) that this prohibition operates till the time that the husband makes the expiation, and that the expiation only can remove the prohibition

(2) As for the person pronouncing *ẓihār*, it is agreed that the *ẓihār* of that husband is only reliable, who is of sound mind and mature age and pronounces the words of *ẓihār* in his right senses; the *ẓihār* of the child or of the insane person is not reliable. Moreover, the *ẓihār* of the person who might not be in his right senses at the time of pronouncing its words is also not reliable, e.g. if he mutters words during sleep, or is senseless, due to any reason. However, the jurists have differed on the following points:

(a) About the person who pronounces *ẓihār* in the state of intoxication a great majority of them including the four *Imāms* have given the verdict that since he has intentionally used the intoxicant, his *ẓihār*, like his divorce, will be regarded as valid legally, for he has undergone this state deliberately. However, if he has taken a medicine on account of illness and has been intoxicated, or has been compelled to take wine in intense thirst in order to save life, his *ẓihār* and divorce pronounced in that state will not be enforced. This very view is held by the Ḥanafīs and the Shāfe'īs and the Ḥanbalīs and the same also was the view commonly held by the Companions of the Holy Prophet. Contrary to it, Hadrat 'Uthmān held the view that the *ẓihār* and divorce pronounced in the state of intoxication are not reliable. Imām Ṭaḥāwī and Karkhī from among the Ḥanafīs hold this view as preferable and a statement of Imām Shāfe'ī also supports it. According to the Mālikīs the *ẓihār* pronounced in the state of intoxication will be reliable in case the person concerned has not wholly lost his senses, but talks sensibly and coherently and knows what he is saying.

(b) According to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and Imām Mālik, only the *ẓihār* of the husband who is a Muslim is reliable. These injunctions do not apply to the non-Muslim subjects of the Islamic state, for the Qur'ānic words: *Alladhīna yaẓāhirūna minkum*: "those from among you who put away their wives by *ẓihār*, have been addressed to the Muslims, and the fasting, which is one of the three kinds of the expiations prescribed in the Qur'ān, obviously cannot be applicable to the non-Muslim subjects. According to Imām Shāfe'ī and Imām Aḥmad, these injunctions will be applicable both to the Muslims and to the non-Muslims; however, there is no fasting for the non-Muslim subject: he may only free a slave or feed 60 poor.

(c) Can a woman also, like a man, pronounce *ẓihār*? For instance will it be *ẓihār* if she says to her husband: "You are for me as my father, or I am for you like your mother?" The four Imāms say that this is not *ẓihār* and the legal injunctions of *ẓihār* do not apply to it at all. For the Qur'ān in express words has laid down these injunctions in respect of the cases

where the husbands pronounce *ẓihār* on their wives, and the authority to pronounce *ẓihār*, can be held only by him who holds the authority to pronounce divorce. Just as the *Sharī'ah* not given the woman the power to divorce the husband, so also it has not given her the power to make her own self unlawful to her husband. This same is the view of Sufyān Thaurī, Isḥāq bin Rāhawaiyh, Abū Thaur and Laith bin Sa'd. They regard such a pronouncement by a woman as meaningless and without effect Imām Abū Yūsuf says that though this is not *ẓihār*, it will entail for the woman the atonement of the oath, for the pronouncement of such words by the woman means that she has sworn not to have marital relations with her husband. This same is the view of Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal as cited by Ibn Qudāmah. Imām Auzā'ī says that if before marriage the woman said that if she married a particular man he would be for her as her father, it would be *ẓihār*, and if she says such a thing after marriage it would be in the nature of an oath, which would entail the atonement for the oath. Contrary to it, Ḥasan Baṣrī, Ẓuhrī, Ibrahīm Nakha'ī and Hasan bin Ziyād Lu'lu'ī say that this is *ẓihār* and will entail the expiation prescribed for *zihār* by the woman; however, the woman will not have the right to prevent the husband from coming in to her before making the expiation. Ibrāhīm Nakha'ī has cited this incident in supprt of this view. Muṣ'ab, son of Ḥadrat Zubair, sent a proposal of marriage to 'Ā'ishah bint Talhah. She turned down the proposal, saying: "If I married him, he would be for me as the back of my father *(huwa 'alayya ka-ẓahr-i abī)*." After some time, she became willing to marry him. When the jurists of Madīnah were asked for their ruling on it, many jurists including several Companions of the Holy Prophet ruled that 'Ā'ishah would have to make an expiation for the *ẓihār*. After citing this incident Ibrāhīm Nakha'ī has expressed his own opinion, saying that if 'Ā'ishah had said this thing after the marriage, it would not have entailed the expiation. But since she said this before marriage when she had the option to marry, or not to marry, the expiation became obligatory on her.

(3) The excuse of a sensible and mature person, who pronounces the express words of *ẓihār* in his full senses, cannot be acceptable that he uttered the words in a state of anger, or in jest, or in love, or that he had no intention of the *ẓihār*. However, in respect of the words which are not express in this regard, and which can give different meanings, the injunction will vary according to their nature. Below we shall tell what words of *ẓihār* are express and what words are not express.

(4) It is agreed upon by all that *ẓihār* can be pronounced on the woman who is a wedded wife of the man. However, there is a difference of opinion

whether *ẓihār* can be pronounced on the other woman also or not. In this matter, the following are the different viewpoints:

The Ḥanafīs say that if a man says to the other woman: "If I marry you, you will be for me as the back of my mother," then whenever he marries her, he will not be allowed to touch her without first making the expiation. This same is the verdict of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar. During his caliphate a man said such words to a woman and afterwards married her. Ḥaḍrat 'Umar ruled that he would have to make the expiation for the *ẓihār*.

The Mālikis and the Ḥanbalis also have expressed the same opinion, and they add this to it: If the woman was not specified, but the man said words to the effect that all women were for him like that, then whichever woman he married, he would have to make the expiation before touching her. The same is the opinion of Sa'īd bin al-Musayyab, 'Urwah bin Zubair, 'Aṭā' bin Abī Rabāḥ, Ḥasan Baṣrī and Ishāq bin Rāhawaiyh.

The Shāfe'īs say that *ẓihār* before marriage is meaningless. Ibn 'Abbās and Qatādah also hold the same opinion.

(5) Can *ẓihār* be pronounced for a fixed term? The Ḥanafīs and the Shāfe'īs say that if a man has pronounced *ẓihār* for a certain period of time, he will have to make the expiation if he touches the wife before the expiry of that time; however, the *ẓihār* will become ineffective when the time has elapsed. Its argument is the incident concerning Salamah bin Ṣakhr Bayāḍī, who had pronounced *ẓihār* upon his wife for the month of Ramaḍān, and the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) did not tell him that the fixation of the time limit was meaningless. On the contrary, Imām Mālik and Ibn Abī Lailā say that whenever *ẓihār* is pronounced it will be for ever and the specification of time will be of no effect, for the prohibition that has occurred cannot become void of its own accord on the expiry of the time.

(6) If the *ẓihār* is conditional, expiation will become incumbent whenever the condition is violated. For instance, if a man says to his wife: "If I enter the houses you will be to me as the back of my mother," then whenever he enters his house, it will be unlawful for him to touch his wife without first making the expiation.

(7) In case the words of *ẓihār*, are repeated several times to a wife, the Ḥanafīs ant the Shāfe'īs say that whether this is done in one sitting or in several sittings, it will entail as many expiations as the number of the times the words were repeated, unless the man might have repeated the words only to stress what he had said before. Contrary to this, Imām Mālik and Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal say that no matter how often the

words are repeated, it will entail only one expiation. The same is the view of Sha'bī, Ṭā'ūs, 'Aṭā' bin Abī Rabāh Ḥasan Baṣrī and Auzā'ī (may Allah show mercy to all of them). Ḥaḍrat 'Alī's ruling is that if the repetition is made in one sitting, there will be only one expiation, and if in different sittings, then there will be as many expiations as the number of the sittings in which the repetition was made. The same is the view of Qatādah ant 'Amr bin Dinār.

(8) If *ẓihār* is pronounced upon two or more wives simultaneously in one and the same set of words, *e.g.* if addressing them the husband says: "You are to me as the back of my mother," the Ḥanafīs and the Shāfe'īs say that separate expiations will have to be made to make each of them lawful. The same is the opinion of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, 'Urwah bin Zubair, Ṭā'ūs, 'Atā, Ḥasan Baṣri, Ibrāhīm Nakha'i, Sufyān Thaurī and Ibn Shihāb Zuhrī. Imām Mālik and Imām Aḥmad say that in this case one and the same expiation will suffice for all. Rabī'ah, Auzā'ī, Isḥāq bin Rāhawaiyh and Abū Thaur also have expressed the same opinion.

(9) It is agreed upon by all that if a man repeats *ẓihār*, again after making expiation for it once, the wife will not be lawful to him unless he makes another expiation.

(10) Although it is sinful, according to the four Imāms, to establish marital relations with the wife before malting the expiation, and the man should ask for Allah's forgiveness for it, and should refrain from repeating such a thing, yet it will entail only one expiation. The Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) had exhorted the people who had committed such an offence in his time to implore Allah for forgiveness and not to touch the wife unless they had made the expiation, but *he* did not enjoin any additional expiation besides the expiation for *ẓihār* Ḥaḍrat 'Amr bin 'Āṣ, Qabiṣah bin Dhu'aib, Sa'id bin Jubair, Zuhrī and Qatādah say that it will entail two expiations, and Ḥasan Baṣrī and Ibrāhīm Nakha'ī have given the opinion that this will entail three expiations, Probably the *Aḥādīth* in which the Holy Prophet gave his ruling on this matter did not reach these scholars.

(11) As to comparison of the wife to whom would be *ẓihār*, the jurists have expressed different views:

'Āmir Sha'bī says that her comparison to the mother only is *ẓihār*, and the Ẓāhiriyyah say that her comparison only to the mother's back is *ẓihār*, for the injunction does not supply to anything else. No section of the Islamic jurists, however, agrees with them in this regard, for the reason given by the Qur'ān of the wife's comparison to the mother being sinful is that it is absurd and a lie. Now, obviously comparison of the wife to the women whose sanctity is just like

the mother's would be as absurd as it is in the case of the mother Therefore, there is no reason why the commandment in that case should not be the same as in the can of the comparison to the mother.

The Ḥanafis say that in this command are included all those women, who are permanently prohibited to man on the basis of lineage, fosterage, or marital relationship, but the women who may only be temporarily prohibited and can become lawful at any time, are not included in this, *e.g.* the wife's sister, her maternal and paternal aunts, or another woman, who is not the men's wedded wife. It will be *ẓihār* if comparison is made with such a part of the permanently prohibited woman's body as is forbidden for men to look at. However, it will not be *ẓihār* if comparison is made of the wife's hand, foot, head, hair, tooth, etc. to the back of a permanently prohibited woman, or of the wife to her head, hand, foot, etc. for it is not unlawful to look at these parts of the mother's or sister's body. Likewise, to say to the wife: "Your hand is like my mother's hand, or your foot is like my mother's foot," is not *ẓihar*.

The Shāfe'is say that in this command are included only those women, who were, and are, permanently prohibited, i.e. mother, sister, daughter etc. but this does not include those women, who may have been lawful at some time, e.g. the foster-mother, foster-sister, mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, or those who may become lawful at nay time, e.g. the wife's the wife's sister. Apart from these temporarily prohibited women, it will be *ẓihār* to compare the wife to such parts of the permanently prohibited woman's body as are not normally mentioned out of reverence and respect, As for those parts which are mentioned out of reverence and respect, it will be *ẓihār* to make a comparison with them only in case this is done with the intention of *ẓihār;* for instance, if a man says to his wife: "Your are to me like my mother's eye or life, or like my mother's hand, foot or belly," or he compares the wife's belly, or breast, with the mother's belly, or breast, or says that the wife's head, back or hand is to him as his mother," it will be *ẓihār* if said with the intention of *ẓihār* and reverence if said with the intention of reverence.

The Mālikīs say that to compare the wife to any of the prohibited women is *ẓihār*: so much so that even if a man says to his wife, "You are to me like the back of such and such other woman," it would be *ẓihār*. Furthermore, they say that it would be *ẓihār* to compare any part of the mother's body, or of an eternally prohibited woman's body, to the wife, or to any part of the wife's body, without any condition that the parts thus compared be such as may look at any part of the mother's body as he looks at the wife's.

The Ḥanbalīs include in this command all those women, who may be eternally prohibited, though they may have been lawful before, *e.g.* the mother-in-law, or foster-mother. As for the women who may become lawful at any time later

(*e.g.* the wife's sister), Imām Aḥmad's one statement concerning them is that comparison to them is not *ẓihār*. Moreover, according to the Ḥanbalīs to compare any part of the wife's body to any part of the prohibited woman's comes under *ẓihār*. However, the non-permanent parts like the hair, nails, teeth, etc. are excluded from this command.

(12) The jurists are agreed that to say to the wife: "You are to me like the back of my mother," is expressly *ẓihār*, for the Arabs used this very formula for *ẓihār*, and the Qur'ānic command also was sent down only concerning this. However, the jurists have disputed as to which of the other words are such as clearly come under *ẓihār*, and which are such whose amounting or not amounting to *ẓihār* will be dependent upon the speaker's intention.

With the Ḥanafīs the express words *of ẓihār* are those in which a lawful woman (the wife) may have been clearly compared to an unlawful woman (i.e. any woman from among the eternally prohibited women), or compared to such part of the body which is forbidden for a man to look at, like saying: "You are to me like the belly or the thigh of my mother, or of such and such prohibited woman." Apart from these, the other words are disputed. According to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, if the man says: "You are forbidden to me like the back of my mother," it is expressly *ẓihār*, but according to Imāms Abū Yūsuf and Muḥammad, it would be *ẓihār if* there was the intention of *ẓihār* and divorce if there was the intention of divorce. The view generally held by the Ḥanafīs is that if the man says: "You are as my mother, or like my mother," it is *ẓihār* if said with the intention of *ẓihār* and irrevocable divorce if said with the intention of divorce, and meaningless if there was no such intention at all. However, according to Imām Muḥammad this is express *ẓihār*. If the man calls his wife his mother or sister or daughter, it is an absurdity upon which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) had expressed great anger, but he did not regard it as *ẓihār*. If the man says "You are forbidden to me like my mother", it would be *ẓihār* if said with the intention of *ẓihār* and divorce if said with the intention of divorce, and *ẓihār if* there was no intention at all. If he says: "You are to me like my mother, or as my mother," his intention will be questioned: if he said this out of respect and reverence, it would be respect and reverence, if with the intention of divorce, it would be diverce: if there was no intention whatever, it would be meaningless according to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, but would entail the atonement of the oath, though not of *ẓihār* according to Imām Abū Yūsuf, and would be *ẓihār* according to Imām Muḥammad.

With the Shāfe'īs the express words of *ẓihār* are that a man should say to his wife: "You are to me, or with me, or for me, like the back of my mother, or you are like the back of my mother, or your body, or your self, is to me like the

body or self of my mother." Apart from these, in respect of all other words the decision will be dependent on the speaker's intention

According to the Ḥanbalīs, every such word by which a man may have compared his wife, or a part from among the permanent parts of her body, to a prohibited woman, or to a part from among the permanent parts of the prohibited woman's body clearly, would be regarded as express in the matter of *ẓihār*

The Mālikīs' viewpoint also is almost the same. However, in the details they have given different rulings. For instance, according to them, a man's saying to his wife: "You are to me as my mother, or like my mother," is *ẓihār*, if said with the intention of *ẓihār*, divorce if said with the intention of divorce, and *ẓihār* if there was no intention at all. According to the Ḥanbalīs, it may be regarded only as *ẓihār* provided there was the intention. If a man says to his wife: "You are my mother," this is *ẓihār* according to the Mālikīs, but according to the Ḥanbalīs it would be *ẓihār* if said in a state of anger on account of a quarrel, and it would not be *ẓihār* if it was said out of love and affection, although it is wrong. If a man says: "You have divorce on you: you are like my mother," according to the Ḥanbalīs this is divorce, not *ẓihār*, and if he says: "You are like my mother: you have divorce on you," both *ẓihār* and divorce will take place. To say: you are forbidden to me as the back of my mother," is *ẓihār* according to both the Mālikīs and the Ḥanbalīs, whether the words were said with the intention of divorce, or without any intention.

In this discussion about the words of *ẓihār* one should clearly understand that all the disputes of the jurists in this regard relate to the words and usage of the Arabic language. Obviously the people who speak other languages will neither pronounce *ẓihār* in Arabic nor will utter an exact and accurate translation of the Arabic words and sentences at the time they pronounce *ẓihār*. Therefore, if one has to decide whether a word or a sentence comes under the definition of *ẓihār*, or not, one should not examine it from the point of view of its being an exact translation of the words given by the jurists, but one should only see whether the speaker had compared his wife in the sexual context clearly to any of the women in the prohibited degrees, or whether there was the probability of other meanings also in his words. Its most conspicuous example is the Arabic sentence itself about which all the jurists and commentators are agreed that this very sentence was used for *ẓihār* in Arabic, i.e. *Anti 'alayya ka-ẓahri umm*i ("You are to me like the back of my mother"). Probably in no other language of the world can the man pronouncing *ẓihār* use words that may be a literal translation of this Arabic sentence. However, he can certainly use words of his own language, which may have precisely the same meaning for which an Arab used this sentence. The meaning of this sentence was: "To have sexual intercourse with you would be like

having sexual intercourse with my mother," or as some foolish person might say to his wife: "If I come in to you, I would be going in to my mother."

(13) In the Holy Qur'an what has been mentioned as entailing the expiation is not the mere *ẓihār* but one's *'aud* (returning) after the *ẓihār*. That is, if a man only pronounces the *ẓihār* and does not "return", he does not incur any expiation. Now, the question is: What is this *'aud* (returning) that entails the expiation? In this regard, the jurists have held the following viewpoints:

The Ḥanafīs say that *'aud* is the intention to have the sexual intercourse, but it does not mean that the mere intention should entail the expiation; so much so that the man may have to make the expiation even if he does not take any practical step after the intention. But its correct meaning is that the man who wishes to remove the prohibition that he had imposed on him by by pronouncing *ẓihār* of severing marital relations with his wife, should first make the expiation, for this prohibition cannot be removed without the expiation.

Three statements have been cited from Imām Mālik in this regard, but his most well known and authentic statement, according to the Mālikīs, is in full agreement with the Ḥanafī viewpoint as stated above. He says that what the man had made unlawful for himself *by ẓihār* was the sexual relation with his wife. Now, *'aud* means that he should return to establish the same relation with her.

Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal's view as cited by Ibn Qudāmah is almost the same as of the two Imāms as noted above. He says that after the *ẓihār* expiation has necessarily to be made to make the sexual intercourse lawful. The man who wants to make it lawful after having pronounced *ẓihār*, in fact, wants to return from the prohibition. Therefore, he has been enjoined to make the expiation before making it lawful for himself, precisely like the man who wants to make the other woman lawful for himself and has to marry her before she could be lawful for him.

Imām Shāfe'īs viewpoint is quite different. He says that a man's keeping his wife as usual and detaining her in wedlock as before after having pronounced *ẓihār*, is *'aud*, for as soon as he pronounced *ẓihār* he in fact, forbade himself to keep her as wife. Therefore, if he did not divorce her immediately on pronouncing *ẓihār* and kept her back for so long that he could utter the words of divorce, he committed *'aud* and the expiation became incumbent upon him. This means that if after pronouncing *ẓihār* the man did not pronounce divorce in the next breath, expiation would become incumbent, whether afterwards he might decide not to keep the woman as wife and might have no intention of having marital relations with her. So much so that even if he divorced his wife after a few moments' thought, according to Imām Shāfe'ī, he would still have to make the expiation.

(14) The Qur'ānic injunction is that the pronouncer of *ẓihār* must make the expiation before the two (the husband and the wife) "touch" each other. All the four Imāms are agreed that according to this verse not only is the sexual intercourse prohibited before the expiation but it is also prohibited that the husband touch the wife in any way. The Shāfe'ī's regard' only touching with desire as prohibited. The Ḥanbalīs regard every kind of pleasure-seeking as forbidden; and the Mālikis regard even casting of the look at the wife's body for the sake of pleasure as unlawful. According to them only casting of the look at the face and hands is an exception.

(15) If after *ẓihār* a man divorces his wife, he cannot touch her without first making the expiation in case it is a revocable divorce. If it is an irrevocable divorce, and he re-marries her, he still will have to make the expiation before he could touch her. So much so that even if he has divorced her thrice, and the woman after marrying another man becomes a widow, or is divorced, and then the pronouncer of *ẓihār* re-marries her, she will not be lawful to him unless he first makes the expiation. For he has forbidden her to himself by comparing her to his mother or other prohibited woman, and this prohibition cannot be removed without the expiation. All the four Imāms agree about this.

(16) It is incumbent upon the woman that she should not allow the husband who has pronounced *ẓihār* on her to touch her until he makes the expiation. And since the marital relationship is a right of the woman of which the husband has deprived her by *ẓihār*, she can go to the court of law if he does not make the expiation. The court will compel the husband to make the expiation to remove the barrier he has raised between himself and her. And if he does not comply, the court can award him lashes or imprisonment or both. This also is agreed upon by all the four schools of law. However, the difference is that in the Hanafī Fiqh this is the only way out for the woman; if the court does not help her out of the situation, she will remain suspended under *ẓihār* indefinitely. For *ẓihār* does not dissolve the marriage contract, it only forbids the husband to have marital relations with the wife. According to the Mālikī school if the husband pronounces *ẓihār* and keeps the wife suspended with a view to punish her, the law of *īlā'* will be applied against him, which means that he cannot keep her suspended for more than four months. (For the law of *īlā*, see E.N.'s 245 to 247 of Al-Baqarah). According to the Shāfe'īs, although in *ẓihār* the law of *īlā'* can be applied only if the husband might have pronounced *ẓihār* for a specific period, which does not exceed four months, yet since according to them the expiation becomes incumbent upon the husband from the very moment he keeps back the woman as

wife, it is not possible that he may keep her suspended for along period indefinitely.

(17) The express commandment of the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* is that the first expiation for *ẓihār* is to free a slave. If a man cannot afford this, he can expiate by fasting two months consecutively; and if he cannot do even this, then he can feed 60 poor. But if a man cannot expiate in any of the three ways, he will have to wait till he has the means to act in one or the other way. because the *Sharī'ah* has not prescribed any other form of expiation. However, the *Sunnah* confirms that such a person should be helped out so that he can make the third kind Of the expiation. The Holy Prophet helped such people out of the public treasury, who were caught in this awkward situation by a mistake of their own, and were helpless to expiate in any of the three prescribed ways.

(18) The Qur'an enjoins to release a neck (raqabah) as expiation, which applies both to a male and a female slave, and there is no restriction of the age in it. It would be sufficient to release a suckling child who may be in the state of slavery. However, the jurists have disputed whether both the believing and the unbelieving slaves can be released, or whether only the believing slave will have to be released. the Ḥanafīs and the Ẓāhiriyyah say that it is enough to release a slave, whether a believer or an unbeliever, as expiation for *ẓihār*, for the *Qur'ān* only mentions *raqabah* (the neck); it does not say that it has to be a believer. On the contrary, the Shāfe'īs, the MālikIs and the Ḥanbalīs impose the condition that it has to be a believing slave. They have held this injunction as analogous to the other expiations in which release *of raqabah* has been made conditional upon his being a believer.

(19) If the pronouncer of *ẓihār* cannot afford to release a slave, the Qur'an enjoins him to fast for two successive months before the two can touch each other. As for the details of acting on this Divine Command, the viewpoints of the different juristic schools are as follows:

(a) All are agreed that the months imply the lunar months. If fasting is begun with the sighting of the new moon, one will have to complete two months' un-interrupted fasting. If fasting is begun on another date in the month, according to the Ḥanafīs and the Ḥanbalīs, one will have to fast for 60 days consecutively; and acoording to the Shāfe'īs, one will observe a total of 30 fasts in the first and the third months and observe the whole of the middle lunar month, whether it is of 29 days or 30 days.

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مِسْكِيْنًا ۚ ذٰلِكَ لِتُؤْمِنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهٖ ۚ وَتِلْكَ حُدُوْدُ اللّٰهِ ۚ وَلِلْكٰفِرِيْنَ عَذَابٌ
اَلِيْمٌ ۝ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يُحَآدُّوْنَ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ كُبِتُوْا كَمَا كُبِتَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ
قَبْلِهِمْ ۚ وَقَدْ اَنْزَلْنَآ اٰيٰتٍۢ بَيِّنٰتٍ ۚ وَلِلْكٰفِرِيْنَ عَذَابٌ مُّهِيْنٌ ۝ يَوْمَ يَبْعَثُهُمُ
اللّٰهُ جَمِيْعًا فَيُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا عَمِلُوْا ۚ اَحْصٰىهُ اللّٰهُ وَنَسُوْهُ ۚ وَاللّٰهُ عَلٰى كُلِّ
شَيْءٍ شَهِيْدٌ ۝ اَلَمْ تَرَ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ ۚ مَا
يَكُوْنُ مِنْ نَّجْوٰى ثَلٰثَةٍ اِلَّا هُوَ رَابِعُهُمْ وَلَا خَمْسَةٍ اِلَّا هُوَ سَادِسُهُمْ وَ
لَآ اَدْنٰى مِنْ ذٰلِكَ وَلَآ اَكْثَرَ اِلَّا هُوَ مَعَهُمْ اَيْنَ مَا كَانُوْا ۚ ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا
عَمِلُوْا يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ ۚ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيْمٌ ۝ اَلَمْ تَرَ اِلَى الَّذِيْنَ نُهُوْا
عَنِ النَّجْوٰى ثُمَّ يَعُوْدُوْنَ لِمَا نُهُوْا عَنْهُ وَيَتَنٰجَوْنَ بِالْاِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ
وَمَعْصِيَتِ الرَّسُوْلِ ۫ وَاِذَا جَآءُوْكَ حَيَّوْكَ بِمَا لَمْ يُحَيِّكَ بِهِ اللّٰهُ ۙ وَ
يَقُوْلُوْنَ فِيْٓ اَنْفُسِهِمْ لَوْ لَا يُعَذِّبُنَا اللّٰهُ بِمَا نَقُوْلُ ۚ حَسْبُهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ ۚ
يَصْلَوْنَهَا ۚ فَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيْرُ ۝ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اِذَا تَنَاجَيْتُمْ فَلَا تَتَنَاجَوْا
بِالْاِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَمَعْصِيَتِ الرَّسُوْلِ وَتَنَاجَوْا بِالْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوٰى ۚ وَاتَّقُوا
اللّٰهَ الَّذِيْٓ اِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُوْنَ ۝ اِنَّمَا النَّجْوٰى مِنَ الشَّيْطٰنِ لِيَحْزُنَ الَّذِيْنَ
اٰمَنُوْا وَلَيْسَ بِضَآرِّهِمْ شَيْـًٔا اِلَّا بِاِذْنِ اللّٰهِ ۚ وَعَلَى اللّٰهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ ۝
يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اِذَا قِيْلَ لَكُمْ تَفَسَّحُوْا فِي الْمَجٰلِسِ فَافْسَحُوْا يَفْسَحِ اللّٰهُ
لَكُمْ ۚ وَاِذَا قِيْلَ انْشُزُوْا فَانْشُزُوْا يَرْفَعِ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا مِنْكُمْ ۙ وَالَّذِيْنَ
اُوْتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجٰتٍ ۚ وَاللّٰهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ خَبِيْرٌ ۝ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اِذَا
نَاجَيْتُمُ الرَّسُوْلَ فَقَدِّمُوْا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ نَجْوٰىكُمْ صَدَقَةً ۚ ذٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَ

This is being enjoined so that you may believe in Allah and His Messenger.[12] These are the bounds set by Allah and for the disbelievers there is a painful punishment.[13] Those who oppose Allah and His Messeger,[14] shall be abased as were those before them.[15] We have sent down clear Revelations, and for the disbelievers there is a disgraceful torment.[16] (This torment shall be meted out) on the Day when Allah will raise up all of them again, and will tell them what they had done. They have forgotten it but Allah has kept a full record of all their deeds,[17] and Allah is witness over everything. 4-6

Are you not aware[18] that Allah has the knowledge of everything in the heavens and the earth? It cannot be that three men whisper together and Allah is not the fourth of them; or five men whisper together and Allah is not the sixth of them.[19] Whether they are fewer than this or more, Allah is with them wherever they are.[20] Then, on the Day of Resurrection, He will tell them what they have done. Allah has the knowledge of everything. Have you not seen those who were forbidden to hold secret consultations, yet they persist in what they were forbidden?[21] They converse secretly together of sin and transgression and disobedience to the Messenger. And when they come to you, they greet you in a way in which Allah has not greeted you,[22] and say to themselves, "Why does Allah not punish us for what we say?"[23] Hell is enough for them: they will become its fuel. What an evil end! 7-8

O you who have believed, when you talk secretly together, then do not talk of sin and transgression and disobedience to the Messenger but talk of virtue and piety, and fear that God, before Whom you shall all be mustered together.[24] Conspiring secretly is the work of Satan. This is done in order to cause grief to the believers, whereas it cannot harm them at all unless it be by Allah's leave. And let the believers put their trust in Allah alone[25] 9-10

O you who have believed, when you are told to make room in your assemblies, you should make room: Allah will make room for you.[26] And when you are told to rise up, you should rise up.[27] Those of you who have believed and have been granted knowledge, Allah will exait them in ranks,[28] and Allah is well aware of whatever you do. 11

O you who have believed, when you consult the Messenger in 12

private, you should give something it charity before your consultation.[29] This is better for you and purer. However, if you do not have the means to give charity. Allah is indeed All-Forgiving, All-Merciful

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(b) The Ḥanafīs and the Shāfe'īs say that fasting should be begun at a time when within the next two months there should neither fall the month of Ramadān nor the two 'Id days, nor the day of sacrifice, nor the Tashrīq days (10th to 13th of Dhil-Ḥajj) for the observance of the Ramaḍān fast and its abandonment on the 'Id days and the day of Sacrifice ant Tashrīq days, in the course of the expiation fasting, would break the succession of the fasting, and the pronouncer of *ẓihār* would have to start fasting afresh. The Hanbalīs say that observance of the Ramadān fast and its abandoment on the forbibben days do not break the succession.

(c) In the course of the two months whether one abandons a fast on account of a valid excuse, or without a valid excuse, in both cases the succession will break according to the Ḥanafīs and the Shāfe'īs, and one will have to start fasting afresh. The same is the opinion of Imām Muḥammad Bāqir, Ibrāhīm Nahka'ī, Sa'īd bin Jubair, and Sufyān Thaurī. According to Imām Mālik and Imām Aḥmad, fasting can be abandoned on account of illness or a journey and this does not break the succession; however, succession does break if the fast is abandoned without a valid reason. Their reasoning is that the nature of the expiation fast is not obligatory as of the Ramaḍān fast: when that fast can be abandoned on account of an excuse, there is no reason why this cannot be. The same is the viewpoint of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, Ḥasan Baṣrī, 'Atā' bin Abī Rabāḥ, Sa'īd bin al-Masayyab, 'Amr bin Dīnār, Sha'bī, Tā'ūs, Mujāhid, Isḥāq bin Rāhawaiyh, Abū Ubaid and Abū Thaur.

(d) If the man commits sexual intercourse with the wife under *ẓihār* within the two months of fasting, according to all the Imāms, the succession will break, and he will have to begin fasting anew, for he has been enjoined to fast for two successive months before he could touch the wife.

(20) According to the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*, the third kind of expiation (feeding the 60 poor) can be made only by him who does not have the power to make the second expiation (fasting for two months successively). The details of acting on this command as worked out by the jurists are as follows:

(a) According to all the four Imāms, being powerless to observe the fast means that one should either be powerless due to old age, or due to illness, or due to the reason that one may not be able to abstain from sexual intercourse for two successive months, and may become impatient at any time in the course of fasting. The validity of all these three excuses is confirmed by the *Aḥādith* that have been cited in connection with the cases of Aus bin Sāmit Anṣārī and Salamah bin Ṣakhr Bayāḍī. However, about illness there is a little difference of opinion among the jurists. The Ḥanafīs say that the excuse of illness will be valid only in case there is no hope of recovery, or there is the fear that the disease may worsen on account of fasting. The Shāfe'īs say that if fasting is likely to cause a severe hardship by which the man may feel the danger of its being interrupted, this excuse also can be valid. The Mālikis say that if the man strongly feels that he will be able to observe the fast in the future, he may wait till then, and if he has no such feeling, he should feed the poor. The Ḥanbalīs say that the apprehension that the disease will worsen by fasting is a sufficient excuse for not fasting.

(b) Food can be given only to those poor people whose maintenance is not the obligatory responsibility of the man concerned.

(c) The Ḥanafīs say that food can be given to both the Muslim and the non-Muslim subjects of the Islamic State, but not to the belligerent disbelievers and to those who have been given protection. The MMālikīs, the Shāfe'īs and the Ḥanbalīs say that the Muslim needy ones only can be fed.

(d) There is full agreement that feeding implies to feed two times a day to fill. However, there is a difference of opinion about the meaning of feeding. The Ḥanafīs say that it is equally valid to feed with cooked food two times a day or to give away grain sufficiient to meet the food requirements of a needy person two times a day, For the Qur'ān has used the word *it'ām,* which means both to provide food and to feed. But the Mālikis, the Shafe'īs and the Ḥanbalīs do not regard feeding with cooked food as correct; they think it is necessary to give away grain. In case grain is given, there is full agreement that the grain should be the staple food in the city or area, and all the poor people should be given it equally.

(e) According to the Ḥanafīs, it is also vaild if one and the same poor person is fed or given food for 60 days, though it is not correct to give him food for 60 days on one and the same day. However, the other three schools do not think it is valid to provide food to one and the same poor man; it is necessary to give food to 60 pesons. It is not permissible

in any of the four schools to provide food to 60 men at one time and to another 60 at another time.

(f) This also is not permissible according to any of the four schools that one may fast for 30 days and then feed 30 poor ones, for two different expiations cannot be combined. If one has to fast one should fast for two months successively, and if one has to feed, one should feed 60 poor ones.

(g) Although in connection with the expiation of feeding the Qur'ān does not use words to the effect that this expiation also should be made before the husband and the wife can touch each other, yet the context demands that this restriction will apply to this third kind of expiation as well. That is why the four Imāms do not regard it as permissible that the man should go to his wife during the time the expiation of feeding is being performed. However, the difference is that according to the Ḥanbalīs the man who commits this offence, will have to feed the poor afresh, but the Ḥanafīs show leniency, for in respect of this third expiation there is no mention of "before the two touch each other" in the Qur'ān, and this provides a basis for the concession.

Bibliography:

Ḥanafī Fiqh: Hedāyah; Fatḥ al-Qadīr; Badā'i'-'us-Ṣanā't'; Al-Jaṣṣās. Aḥkām al-Qur'ān.

Shāfe'ī Fiqh: An-Nawawī, *Al-Minhāj* together with *Sharḥ Mughnī al-Muḥtāj; Tafsīr Kabīr.*

Mālikī Fiqh: Ḥāshiah ad-Dusūqī 'ala-sh-Sharh al-Kabīr; Hedāyet al-Mujtahid; Ibn al-'Arabī, Aḥkām al-Qur'ān.

Ḥanbalī Fiqh: Ibn Qudāmah, *Al-Mughnī.*

Ẓāhiriyyah Fiqh: Ibn Ḥazm, *Al-Muḥallā.*

12. "So that you may believe": "So that you may adopt the attitude of a true and sincere believer." Obviously, the addressees of this verse are not the pagans and polytheists, but the Muslims who had already affirmed the Faith To tell them after reciting before them a *Sharī'ah* injunction: "This is being enjoined so that you may believe in Allah and His Messenger," clearly signifies that the conduct of the person who continues to follow the traditional law of paganism even after hearing the Divine Command, would be contradictory to his profession of the Faith. It is not the character of a believer that when Allah and His Messenger have prescribed a law for him in some matter of life, he should set it

aside and follow some other law of the world, or go on following his own whims and desires.

13. Here "disbeliever" does not imply the denier of Allah and His Messenger, but the person who adopts the attitude and conduct of a disbeliever even after affirming faith in Allah and His Messenger. In other words, it means: "This, in fact, is a characteristic of the disbelievers that even after hearing the Command of Allah and His Messenger, they should go on following their own whims, and continue to practice the customs of ignorance, for a true and sincere believer would never adopt such an attitude. The same thing has been said in Sūrah Āl-'Imrān after enjoining the imperative duty of Ḥajj: "And the one who disbelieves (i.e. does not obey this commandment), then Allah is Self-Sufficient and does not stand in need of anyone in the worlds." (v. 97) At neither place has the word *"kufr"* been used in the sense that whoever continues to have marital relations with the wife after *ẓihār* without making the expiation, or thinks that divorce has taken place by the mere pronouncement of *ẓihār* on the wife, or does not go to perform Hajj, in spite of the means, should be declared an apostate and disbeliever by the religious court and regarded as excommunicated by the Muslims. But it means that in the sight of Allah such people as may reject His Commandments by word or deed, or may least bother to know as to what bounds their Lord has set for them, what He has forbidden and what He has enjoined, what He has made lawful and what unlawful, are not counted among the believers.

14. "Those who oppose...": Those who do not recognize the bounds set by Allah and instead set some other bounds for themselves. Ibn Jarīr Ṭabarī has given this commentary of this verse: "That is, the people who resist Allah with regard to the bounds and duties enjoined by Him, and set for themselves some other bounds instead of the bounds set by Him." Baiḍāwī has given this commentary of it: "That is, they show hostility towards and dispute with Allah and His Messenger, or set other bounds for themselves than the bounds set by them, or adopt the bounds set by others." *Ālūsī* in his *Rūḥ al-Mā'āni* has concurred with Baidawi in this commentary and cited the statement of Shaikh-ul-Islām Sa'dullah Chalpī to the effect: "In this verse a threat has been held out to those kings and evil rulers, who have framed many such rules as are opposed to the bounds set by the *Shari'ah*, and called them law." Here, 'Allāma Ālūsī has dwelt upon the constitutional status (i.e, constitutional from the Islamic viewpoint) of the man-made laws as against the *Shari'ah* laws and concluded thus:

"There can be no doubt in the disbelief of the person who regards this law as commendable and superior to the *Shari'ah* and says that it is wiser and better suited to the genius of the people. And when the *Shari'ah* injunction in a particular matter is pointed out to him, he is angry, as we have seen some of those who are under the curse of Allah."

15. The word used in the original is *kabt,* which means to disgrace, to destroy, to curse, to drive off, to push out, to debase. What is meant to be said is that the communities of the former Prophets who resisted Allah and His Messenger and rebelled against His Commandments have already gone to their doom. Now those from among the Muslims who adopt the same attitude in life will also meet with the same evil end. Whenever the people made their own laws contradictory to Divine Law, or adopted laws made by others, they were deprived of Allah's bounty and grace, with the result that their lives were filled with deviations, immoralities and moral and social evils, which caused them to be ultimately degraded and humiliated even in this world. If the same error now is committed by the community of the Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), there is no reason why it should continue to be regarded with favour by Allah and He may go on protecting it from a disgraceful destruction for ever and ever. Allah had neither any ill will against the communities of His former Messengers nor has He any special connection with the community of this Messenger.

16. A little consideration of the context shows that here two punishments of this attitude have been mentioned: (1) *Kabt,* i.e. debasement and humiliation of this world; and (2) *'adhāb muhīn, i.e.* a disgraceful torment that they will suffer in the Hereafter.

17. That is, their having forgotten their own attitude and conduct does not mean that it is dead and forgotten altogether. For them the disobedience of God and resistance to His Commands may be an ordinary matter which they may forget easily once they have indulged in it and may not even regard it as anything objectionable, which they should have avoided, yet in the sight of God it is no ordinary matter at all. With Him every misdeed of theirs has been noted down, His Register contains a full record of every deed doneby a person, of when and where it was done, what was his own reaction to it, what were its consequences and how far and in what forms did they appear and spread in the world.

18. From here to verse 10 continuously the hypocrites have been taken to task for the attitude they had adopted in the Muslim society. Although apparently they were a part of the Muslim community, secretly they were a separate group from the believers, Whenever the Muslims saw them, they found them whispering secretly together. That is how they conspired and made all sorts of plans in order to create rifts in the ranks of the Muslims, and to cause alarm and spread mischief among them.

19. The question may arise Why have three and five been mentioned here instead of two and three? Why has two, and then four, been left out? The commentators have given many answers to this question but in our opinion the

correct answer is that this style has been adopted for maintaining the literary beauty of the Qur'ān. Without this the style would have suffered from blemishes. Therefore, after making mention of three and five whisperers the gap has been filled up in the following sentence by saying: whether the whisperers are fewer than three, or more than five, in any case Allah is always with them.

20. This Allah's being associated with them is, in fact, in the sense of Allah's being All-Knowing and All-Aware, All-Hearing and All-Seeing, and His being absolute in power, and not in the sense that Allah, God forbid, is a person who is secretly and invisibly present among the five persons as their sixth associate. This, in fact, is meant to make the people realize that they may be holding secret counsels in safe and hidden places and may be able to conceal their plans from the world, but they cannot keep them concealed from Allah, that they may escape from every power of the world, but they cannot escape the grasp of Allah.

21. This shows that before the revelation of this verse the Holy Prophet (upon whom by Allah's peace) had forbidden the people this practice. Yet when they did not desist, Allah directly sent down this verse containing His warning and wrath for such people.

22. This was the common practice of the Jews and the hypocrites. According to several traditions, some Jews came before the Holy Prophet (upon be Allah's peace) and said: *"As-sām 'alaika yā abul-Qāsim."* That is, they pronounced *as-sām 'alaika* in such a manner as to give the impression that they had said *as-salām 'alaika* (peace be on you), which is the Islamic way of greeting. But actually they had said *"Sām"*, which means death. In response the Holy Prophet said: *"wa 'alaikum."* Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah retorted: "May death visit you and the curse of Allah!" The Holy Prophet warned her, saying: " 'Ā'ishah, Allah does not like abusive language," She submitted: "Didn't you hear, O Messenger of Allah, what they said?" The Holy Prophet replied: "And didn't you hear what reply I gave? I said: and the same upon you." (Bukhārī, Muslim, Ibn Jarīr Ibn Abī Hātim). Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās has stated that both the Jews and the hypocrites had adopted this very way of greeting. (Ibn Jarīr).

23. That is, they regarded it as a proof of the Holy Prophet's not being a Messenger. They thought that if he had been a true Messenger, they would be punished by a torment as soon as they greeted him in that way. Since there was not torment while they were greeting him day and night like that, he was not a Messenger of Allah.

24. This shows that *najwā* (talking secretly together) by itself is not forbidden, but it s being lawful or unlawful depends upon the character of the people who hold secret consultations and upon the circumstances under which

such consultations are held, and upon nature of the consultations themselves, If the people whose sincerity, righteousness and purity of character are well known, are seen talking secretly together, nobody would have any misgiving that they were planning mischief. On the contrary, the whispering and secret consultations of the people who are notorious for their evil and wicked character, produce in every mind the suspicion that they are engaged in a new conspiracy. Likewise, if a couple of persons talk for some time together on some matter secretly, it is not objectionable, but if some people have formed themselves into a gang and constantly engaged in a whispering campaign against the Muslim community, this would indeed be a prelude to some mischief. If nothing else, it would at least stir up divisions among the Muslims. Above all, the thing that decides whether *najwā* (secret counsel) is lawful or unlawful is the nature of the things talked of it. If two men hold a secret counsel in order to bring a dispute the an end, or to restore a person's right, or to bring a dispute an end, or to restore a person's right, or to promote a good cause, it is no evil, but rather and act of virtue, On the contrary, if the same secret counsel between two men is held with a view to creating mischief, or usurping the rights of others, or committing a sin, obviously the object itself would be evil and the secret counsel about it evil added to evil.

In this connection, the teaching given by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) of social etiquette is: "When three men are sitting together, no two of them should whisper to each other, for this would cause anguish to the third." *(Bukhārī,* Muslim, *Musnad Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, Abū Da'ūd).* In another *Ḥadīth,* the Holy Prophet said: "Two men should not whisper together, without the leave of the third, for this would cause him anguish." *(Muslim).* This objectionable sort of whishering also applies to the case when two of the three men start talking in a language which is not understood by the third, and even more objectionable would be that during their whispering they should look towards the third person or gesticulate in a manner as to suggest that he is the topic of discussion between them.

25. This has been said so that if a Muslim watches some other people whispering, which causes him the doubt that it is directed against him, he should not feel so offended as to start planning a counter-attack on the basis of mere suspicion, or begin to nourish grief, or malice, or undue concern in his heart. He should understand that no one can harm him except by Allah's leave. This conviction would inspire him with such confidence that he would feel delivered of many a useless worry and imaginary danger and leaving the wicked to themselves would remain engaged in peacefully doing his duty. The believer who has trust in Allah is neither a faint-hearted person, whose peace of mind could be ruined by every doubt and suspicions nor so shallow and mean-minded as would lose his

cool when confronted by the evildoers and start behaving in an unjust manner himself.

26. This has been explained in the Introduction to the Sūrah above. Some commentators regard this Command as restricted to the assemblies of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace). But as pointed out by Imām Mālik, the correct view is that this is a general instruction for the assemblies held by the Muslims. One of the rules of etiquette taught by Allah and His Messenger to the Muslims is that when they are sitting in an assembly and some more people arrive, they should have the courtesy to accommodate the new comers and should squeeze in together as far as possible to make room for them to sit. The new-comers also should have the courtesy not to press in forcibly and make others rise up in order to take their place. In the *Ḥadīth* Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar and Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah have reported that the Holy Prophet said: Nobody should make another person rise up so as to take his place, but you should yourself make room for others." *(Musnad Aḥmad Bukhārī Muslim).* And Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin 'As reports that the Holy Prophet said: "It is not lawful for a person that he should forcibly press in between two men except by their leave." (*Musnad Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī).*

27. 'Abdur Rahmān bin Zaid bin Aslam has stated that the people used to prolong their sitting in the Holy Prophet's as semblies and tried to sit till the end. This caused him inconvenience and discomfort as well as hindrance in his daily chores. At this Allah sent down this Command, teaching the people the etiquette: "When you are told to rise up from the assembly, you should rise up and disperse." (Ibn *Jarīr, Ibn Kathīr).*

28. That is, "You should not think that if in the Holy Prophet's assembly you had to sit a little farther away from him for the sake of making room for others, you would be reduced in rank, or if you were asked to rise up and disperse from the assembly, you were disgraced. The real means of exaltation of ranks is faith and knowledge, and not an opportunity to sit nearest to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) in his assembly and sit the longest. If a person happened to sit nearer to him, it does not mean that he became exalted in rank, for the high ranks belong only to those who have attained to the wealth of knowledge and faith. Likewise, the person who prolonged his sitting with the Holy Prophet only to cause him inconvenience and discomfort, in fact, displayed lack of good manners. His mere sitting near him for a long time will not exalt him in rank in any way. Far higher and exalted in rank in the sight of Allah is he who attained to true faith and knowledge and imbibed the morals that should belong to a believer.

[Contd. on p. 393

أَطْهَرُ ۚ فَإِنْ لَّمْ تَجِدُوْا فَإِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿١٢﴾ ءَ أَشْفَقْتُمْ أَنْ تُقَدِّمُوْا
بَيْنَ يَدَيْ نَجْوٰىكُمْ صَدَقٰتٍ ۚ فَإِذْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوْا وَتَابَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْكُمْ فَأَقِيْمُوا
الصَّلٰوةَ وَاٰتُوا الزَّكٰوةَ وَأَطِيْعُوا اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ ۚ وَاللّٰهُ خَبِيْرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿١٣﴾
أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِيْنَ تَوَلَّوْا قَوْمًا غَضِبَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِمْ ۚ مَا هُمْ مِّنْكُمْ وَلَا مِنْهُمْ ۙ
وَيَحْلِفُوْنَ عَلَى الْكَذِبِ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿١٤﴾ أَعَدَّ اللّٰهُ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيْدًا ۚ إِنَّهُمْ
سَآءَ مَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿١٥﴾ اِتَّخَذُوْٓا أَيْمَانَهُمْ جُنَّةً فَصَدُّوْا عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ
فَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِيْنٌ ﴿١٦﴾ لَنْ تُغْنِيَ عَنْهُمْ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَآ أَوْلَادُهُمْ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ
شَيْئًا ۚ أُولٰٓئِكَ أَصْحٰبُ النَّارِ ۚ هُمْ فِيْهَا خٰلِدُوْنَ ﴿١٧﴾ يَوْمَ يَبْعَثُهُمُ اللّٰهُ جَمِيْعًا
فَيَحْلِفُوْنَ لَهٗ كَمَا يَحْلِفُوْنَ لَكُمْ وَيَحْسَبُوْنَ أَنَّهُمْ عَلٰى شَيْءٍ ۚ أَلَآ إِنَّهُمْ
هُمُ الْكٰذِبُوْنَ ﴿١٨﴾ اِسْتَحْوَذَ عَلَيْهِمُ الشَّيْطٰنُ فَأَنْسٰهُمْ ذِكْرَ اللّٰهِ ۚ أُولٰٓئِكَ
حِزْبُ الشَّيْطٰنِ ۚ أَلَآ إِنَّ حِزْبَ الشَّيْطٰنِ هُمُ الْخٰسِرُوْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ
يُحَآدُّوْنَ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗٓ أُولٰٓئِكَ فِي الْأَذَلِّيْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾ كَتَبَ اللّٰهُ لَأَغْلِبَنَّ أَنَا وَ
رُسُلِيْ ۚ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ قَوِيٌّ عَزِيْزٌ ﴿٢١﴾ لَا تَجِدُ قَوْمًا يُّؤْمِنُوْنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْاٰخِرِ
يُوَآدُّوْنَ مَنْ حَآدَّ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ وَلَوْ كَانُوْٓا اٰبَآءَهُمْ أَوْ أَبْنَآءَهُمْ أَوْ إِخْوَانَهُمْ
أَوْ عَشِيْرَتَهُمْ ۚ أُولٰٓئِكَ كَتَبَ فِيْ قُلُوْبِهِمُ الْإِيْمَانَ وَأَيَّدَهُمْ بِرُوْحٍ مِّنْهُ ۚ وَ
يُدْخِلُهُمْ جَنّٰتٍ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهٰرُ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا ۚ رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُمْ
وَرَضُوْا عَنْهُ ۚ أُولٰٓئِكَ حِزْبُ اللّٰهِ ۚ أَلَآ إِنَّ حِزْبَ اللّٰهِ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾

Are you afraid that before your consultation in private, you will have to give charity? Well, if you do not do so—and Allah has forgiven you this—then establish the *salāt* and practise the *zakāt* regularly and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah is aware of whatever you do.[30] 13

Have you not seen those who have taken as friends a people who are under Allah's wrath?[31] They are neither yours nor theirs,[32] and they swear to a falsehood knowingly.[33] Allah has prepared a severe torment for them. Evil are the deeds they are doing! They have made their oaths a covering under which they debar others from the Way of Allah.[34] For this they shall have a disgraceful torment. Neither shall their riches avail them anything to protect them from Allah nor their children. They are the fellows of Hell in which they shall live for ever. The Day Allah raises them up all, they shall swear to Him as they swear to you,[35] thinking that their oaths will avail them something. Know it well that they are utter liars. Satan has overpowered them and has caused them to forget God's remembrance. They are of Satan's party. Know it well that those of Satan's party indeed are the real losers. Surely the most abject of the creatures are those who resist Allah and His Messenger. Allah has written down: "I and My Messengers shall most certainly prevail."[36] Allah is All-Powerful and All-Mighty. 14-21

You will never find any people who believe in Allah and the Last Day loving those who have opposed Allah and His Messenger, even though they be their fathers, or their sons, or their brothers, or their kinsfolk.[37] They are those in whose hearts Allah has inscribed faith and has strengthened them with a spirit from Himself. He will admit them to such Gardens underneath which rivers will be flowing, to dwell therein for ever. Allah is well pleased with them and they with Allah. They are of Allah's party. Know it well that those of Allah's party alone are truly successful! 22

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29. According to Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, this Command was sent down because the Muslims had started requesting the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) for private counsel much too frequently; and this put him to great inconvenience. At last, Allah willed to relieve His Prophet of this burden. *(Ibn Jarīr).* Zaid bin Aslam says that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) would never turn down the request of anyone, who wanted to consult him

in private. Whoever desired to have private counsel with him, he would oblige him. Often it so happened that the people would ask for private counsel in matters in which there was no real need. This was the time when all of Arabia was engaged in war against Madīnah. Sometimes after a person had made such a request, Satan would whisper into the ears of the people the idea that he had brought to the Holy Prophet the news of invasion by such and such tribes, and this would cause rumours to spread in Madinah. On the other hand, this would give the hypocrites an opportunity to say that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) was a credulous person, who listened to and believed in whatever anyone told him. Because of this Allah imposed the restriction that anyone who wanted to have private counsel with the Prophet should first give away something in charity. (Ibn 'Arabī: *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*). Qatādah says that some people talked to the Holy Prophet in private in order to show their superiority to others.

Ḥaḍrat 'Alī says when this was enjoined the Holy Prophet asked him, "What should be the quantity of the charity? Should it be one dīnar? I said: This is more than the people can afford. The Holy Prophet then asked: Should it be half a dīnār? I said: This too is too much. Then he asked what it should be. I said . Gold equal to a barley grain. The Holy Prophet remarked: Your advice is for too little!" *(Ibn Jarīr, Tirmidhī, Musnad Abū ya'lā).* In another tradition Ḥaḍrat 'Alī says: "This is a verse of the Qur'ān which no one acted upon except me. As soon as it was enjoined, I offered the charity and consulted the Holy Prophet about a problem. " *(Ibn Jarīr, Hākim, Ibn al-Mundhir, 'Abd bin Ḥumaid).*

30. This second Command was sent down some time after the first Command, and it cancelled the injunction of giving something in charity. However, there is a difference of opinion as to how long the injunction remained in force. Qatādah says it remained in force for less than a day and then was abrogated. Muqātil bin Ḥayyān says that it remained in force for ten days; and this is the longest period of its life mentioned in any tradition.

31. The allusion is to the Jews of Madīnah whom the hypocrites had taken for friends.

32. That is, they are neither sincere in their connections with the believers, nor with the Jews; their relations with both are based on selfish interests.

33. "A falsehood": that they have believed in and have accepted Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) as their guide and leader and are faithful to Islam and the Muslims

34. That is, on the one hand, they swear oaths to their faith and fidelity to make the Muslims believe that they belong to them, and on the other, they sow

doubts and suspicions against Islam and the followers of Islam and the Prophet of Islam in the hearts of the people, so that they should turn away from Islam in disgust taking their word to be a true inside picture of Islam, coming from the "Muslims" themselves.

35. That is, "Not being content with swearing oaths before the people in this world, they will swear false oaths also before Allah Himself in the Hereafter, for falsehood and fraud has become second nature with them, which they will not give up even after death."

36. For explanation, see E.N. 93 of Sūrah As-Sāāffāt.

37. Two things have been stated in this verse: first, a matter of principle, and the second, a statement of fact. The matter of principle is that faith in the true Religion and love of the opponents of the Religion are contradictory things, which cannot conceivably co-exist in one and the same place. It is absolutely impossible that love of the Faith and love of the enemies of Allah and His Messenger should co-exist in one and the same heart, just as a person's love for himself and his love for his enemy cannot co-exist in his heart simultaneously. This is as if to say: "If you see a person who professes the Faith as well as keeps relations of love with the opponents of Islam, you should never be involved in the misunderstanding that he might perhaps be true in his profession in spite of his this attitude and conduct. Likewise, the people who have established relations with Islam and the opponents of Islam simultaneously, should themselves also consider their position well and see what they actually are. Are they believers or hypocrites? And what actually they want to be to they want to live as believers or as hypocrites? If they have any righteousness left in them, and any feeling that from the moral viewpoint hypocrisy is the meanest and most abject attitude for man, they should give up their attempt to ride in two boats simultaneously. Faith wants them to be decisive. If they want to remain believers, they should sever and sacrifice all those connections that clash with their relationship with Islam; if they hold another relation dearer to themselves than the relationship with Islam, then they should better give up their false profession of Islam.

Here, Allah has not just stated the principle but has also presented the actual fact as a model before those who professed the Faith. The true believers had in actual fact severed all connections that clashed with their relationship with Allah's Religion. This had been witnessed by entire Arabia in the battles of Badr and Uhud. The emigrants from Makkah had fought against their own tribe and closest kinsmen only for the sake of Allah and His Religion. Ḥaḍrat Abū 'Ubaidah killed his father, 'Abdullah bin al-Jarrāh. Ḥaḍrat Mus'ab bin 'Umair killed his brother, 'Ubaid bin 'Umair; Ḥaḍrat Umar killed his maternal uncle, 'Ās bin Hisham bin Mughirah; Ḥaḍrat 'Abū Bakr became ready to fight his son 'Abdur

Raḥmān; Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, Ḥaḍrat Hamzah and Ḥaḍrat 'Ubaidah bin al-Ḥārith killed 'Utbah, Shaibah and Walīd bin 'Utbah, who were their close kinsmen. About the prisoners of war captured at Badr, Ḥaḍrat 'Umar gave the opinion that they should all be put to the sword, and proposed that a relative should kill a relative. In the same battle of Badr when Ḥaḍrat Mus'ab bin 'Umair saw that an Anṣārī Muslim had captured his real brother, Abu 'Azīz bin 'Umair, and was tying him, he shouted out to him, saying: "Tie him tight: his mother is a rich woman: she will pay you a large ransom." Abū 'Azīz said: "You are a brother and say this?" Ḥaḍrat Mus'ab replied: "Not you, but this Anṣarī; Muslim is my brother now, who has captured you." In the same battle of Badr Abul 'Āṣ., the son-in-law of the Holy Prophet (upon whom he Allah's peace), was taken a prisoner and was shown no special favour any different from the other prisoners on account of his relationship with the Holy Prophet. Thus, the world was made a witness to the actual fact and shown the character of the sincere Muslims and their profound relationship with Allah and His Messenger.

Dailamī has related this invocation of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Mu'ādh: *"Alla-humma lā taj'al il-fājir-in* (and according to another tradition, *il-fāsiq-in*) *'alayya yadan wa lā ni'mata fa-yuwadda-hū qalbī fa-innī wajad-tu fīmā uḥītu ilayya lā tajidu qaum-an-yu'minūna billāhi wal-yaum il-ākhir-i yuwāddūna man hādd-Allāha wa Rasūlahū:* "O God, let not the wicked (and according to another tradition, the sinful) do me a favour because of which I may have love for him in my heart, for in the Revelation sent down by You, I have also found this: 'You will never find any people who believe in Allah and the Last Day loving those who oppose Allah and His Messenger'."



LIX

AL-ḤASHR

الحَشْر

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

LIX

AL-ḤASHR

الحَشْر

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah derives its name from the mention of the word *al-ḥashr* in verse 2, thereby implying that it is the Sūrah in which the word *al-ḥashr* has occurred.

Period of Revelation

Bukhārī and *Muslim* contain a tradition from Ḥaḍrat Sa'īd bin Jubair to the effect: When I asked Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās about Sūrah Al-Ḥashr, he replied that it was sent down concerning the battle against the Banī an-Naḍīyr just as Sūrah Al-Anfāl was sent down concerning the Battle of Badr." In another tradition from Ḥaḍrat Sa'īd bin Jubair, the words cited from Ibn 'Abbās (may Allah be pleased with him) are: *Qul: Sūrah an-Naḍīr:* Say, it is Sūrah an-Naḍīr." The same

thing has been related also from Mujāhid, Qatādah, Zuhrī Ibn Zaid, Yazid bin Rūmān, Muḥammad bin Isḥāq and others. They are unanimous that the followers of the Book whose banishment has been mentioned in it, imply the Bani an-Naḍīr. Yazid bin Rūmān, Mujāhid and Muḥammad bin Isḥāq have stated that this whole Sūrah, from beginning to end, came down concerning this very battle.

As for the question as to when this battle took place, Imām Zuhrī has stated on the authority of 'Urwah bin Zubair that it took place six months after the Battle of Badr. However, Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Hishām and Balādhurī regard it as an event of Rabī' al-Awwal, A.H. 4, and the same is correct. For all traditions agree that this battle took place after the incident of Bi'r Ma'ūnah, and historically also it is well .known that the incident of Bi'r Ma'ūnah occurred after the Battle of Uḥud and not before it.

Historical Background

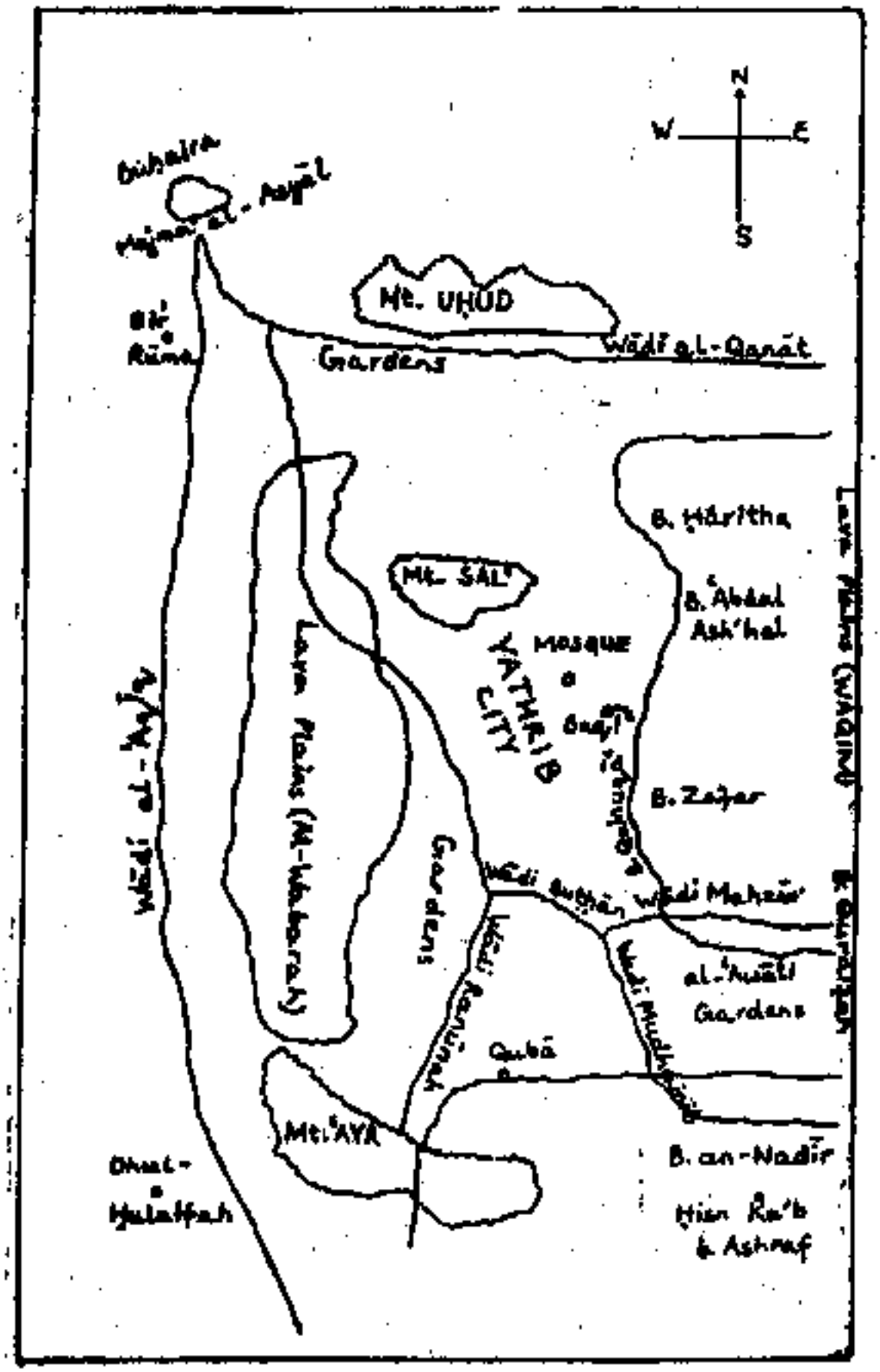
In order to understand the subject-matter of this Sūrah well, it is necessary to have a look at the history of the Madīnah and Ḥejāz Jews, for without it one cannot know precisely the real causes of the Holy Prophet's dealing with their different tribes the way he did.

No authentic history of the Arabian Jews exists in the world. They have not left any writing of their own in the form of a book or a tablet which might throw light on their past, nor have the Jewish historians and writers of the non-Arab world made any mention of them, the reason being that after their settlement in the Arabian peninsula they had detached themselves from the main body of the nation, and the Jews of the world did not count them as among themselves. For they had given up Hebrew culture and language, even the names, and adopted Arabism instead. In the tablets that have been un-earthed in the archaeological research in the Ḥejāz no trace of the Jews is found before the first century of the Christian era, except for a few Jewish names. Therefore, the history of the Arabian Jews is based mostly on the verbal traditions prevalent among the Arabs most of which had been spread by the Jews themselves.

The Jews of the Ḥejāz claimed that they hard come o settle in Arabia during the last stage of the life of the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him). They said hat/ the Prophet Moses had despatched an army to

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(facing p. 99)



exple the Amalekites from the land of Yathrib and had commanded it not to spare even a single so I of that tribe. The Israelite army carried out the Prophet's command, but spared the life of a handsome prince of he Amalekite king and returned with him to Palestine. By that time the Prophet Moses had passed away. His successors took great exception to what the army had done, for by sparing the life of an Amalekite it had clearly disobeyed the Prophet and violated the Mosaic law. Consequently, they excluded the army from their community, and it had to return to Yathrib and settle ere for ever. *(Kitāb al-Aghāni, vol. xix, p. 94).* Thus the Jews claimed that they had been living in Yathrib since about 1200 B.C. But, this had in fact no historical pasis and probably the Jews had invented this story in order to overawe the Arabs into believing that they ere of noble lineage and the original inhabitants of the land.

The second Jewish immigration, according to the Jews took, place in 587 B.C. when Nebuchadnezzer, the king of Babylon, destroyed Jerusalem and dispersed the Jews throughout the world. The Arab Jews said that several of their tribes at that time had come to settle in Wādi al-Qurā, Taimā' and Yathrib. (Al-Balādhurī, *Futuḥ al-Buldān).* But this too has no historical basis. By this also they might have wanted to prove that they were the original settlers of the area

As a matter of fact, what is established is that when in A.D 70 the Romans massacred the Jews in Palestine, and then in A.D. 132 expelled them from that land, many of the Jewish tribes fled to find an asylum in the Ḥejāz, a territory that was contiguous to Palestine in the south. Here, they settled wherever they found water springs and greenery, and then by intrigue and through money-lending business gradually occupied the fertile lands. Ailah, Maqnā, Tabūk, Taimā', Wādi al-Qurā Fadak and Khaiber came under their control in that very period; and Banī Quraiẓah, Banī al-Naḍīr, Banī Bahdal and Banī Qainuqā' also came in the same period and occupied Yathrib.

Among the tribes that settled in Yathrib the Banī al-Naḍīr and the Banī Quraiẓah were more prominent, for they belonged to the Cohen or priest class. They were looked upon as of noble descent and enjoyed religious leadership among their co-religionists. When they came to settle in Madīnah there were some other tribes living there before, whom they subdued and became practically the owners of this green and

fertile land About three centuries later, in A.D. 450 or 451, the great flood of Yaman occurred which has been mentioned in vv. 16-17 of Sūrah Sabā above. As a result o this different tribes of the people of Sabā were compelled to leave Yaman and disperse in different parts of Arabia. Thus, the Banī Ghassān went to settle in Syria, Bani Lakhm in Ḥīrah (Iraq), Banī Khazraj between Jeddah and Makkah and the Aus and the Khazraj went to settle in Yathrib. As Yathrib was under Jewish domination, they at first did not allow the Aus and the Khazraj to gain a footing and the two Arab tribes had to settle on lands that had not yet been brought under cultivation, where they could hardly produce just enough to enable them to survive. At last, one of their chiefs went to Syria to ask *for* the assistance of their Ghassanide brothers; he brought an army from there and broke the power of the Jews. Thus, the Aus and the Khazraj were able to gain complete dominance over Yathrib, with the result that two of the major Jewish tribes, Banī an-Nadir and Banī Quraiẓah, were forced to take quarters outside the city. Since the third tribe, Bans Qainuqā', was not on friendly terms with the other two tribes, it stayed inside the city as usual, but had to seek protection of the Khazraj tribe. As a counter measure to this Banī in-Naḍīr and Banī Quraiẓah took protection of the Gus tribe so that they could live in peace in the suburbs of Yathrib. The map will show where under the new set up the Jewish settlements were located in Yathrib and around it.

Before the Holy Prophet's arrival at Madīnah until his emigration the following were the main features of he Jews' position in Ḥejāz in general and in Yathrib particular;

(1) In the matter of language, dress, civilization and way of life they had completely adopted Arabism, even their names had become Arabian.' Of the 12 Jewish tribes that had settled in Ḥejāz, none except the Banī za'ūrā' retained its Hebrew name. Except for a few scattered scholars none knew Hebrew. In fact, there is nothing in poetry of the Jewish poets of the pre-Islamic days to distinguish it from the poetry of the Arab poets in language, ideas and themes. They even intermarried with the Arabs. In fact, nothing distinguished them from the common Arabs except religion. Notwithstanding this, they had not lost their identity among the Arabs and had kept their Jewish prejudice alive most

ardently and jealously. They had adopted superficial Arabism because they could not survive in Arabia without it.

(2) Because of this Arabism the western orientalists have been misled into thinking that perhaps they were not really Israelites but Arabs who had embraced Judaism, or that at least majority of them consisted of the Arab Jews. But there is no historical proof to show that the Jews ever engaged in any proselytizing activities in Ḥejāz, or their rabbis invited the Arabs to embrace Judaism like the Christian priests and missionaries. On the contrary, we see that they prided themselves upon their Israelite descent and racial prejudices. They called the Arabs the Gentiles, which did not mean illiterate or un-educated but savage and un-civilized people. They believed that the Gentiles did not possess any human rights: these were only reserved for the Israelites, and therefore, it was lawful and right for the Israelites to defraud them of their properties by every fair and foul means. Apart from the Arab chiefs, they did not consider the common Arabs fit enough to have equal status with them even if they entered Judaism. No historical proof is available, nor is there any evidence in the Arabian traditions, that some Arab tribe or prominent clan might have accepted Judaism. However, mention has been made of some individuals, who had become Jews. The Jews, however, were more interested in their trade and business than in the preaching of their: religion. That is why Judaism did not spread as a religion and creed in Ḥejāz but remained only as a mark of pride and distinction of a few Israelite tribes. The Jewish rabbis, however, had a flourishing business in granting amulets and charms, fortune-telling and sorcery, because se of which they were held in great awe by the Arabs for their "knowledge" and practical wisdom.

(3) Economically they were much stronger than the Arabs. Since they had emigrated from more civilized and culturally advanced countries of Palestine and Syria, they knew many such arts as were unknown to the Arabs; they also enjoyed trade relations with the outside world. Hence, they had captured the business of importing grain in Yathrib and the upper Ḥejāz and exporting dried dates to other countries. Poultry farming and fishing also

were mostly under their control. They were good at cloth-weaving too. They had also set up wine-shops here and there, where they sold wine which they imported from Syria. The Banī Qainuqā' generally practised crafts such as that of the goldsmith, blacksmith and vessel-maker. In all these occupations, trade and business these Jews earned exorbitant profits, but their chief occupation was trading in money-lending in which they had ensnared the Arabs of the surrounding areas. More particularly the chiefs and elders of the Arab tribes who were given to a life of pomp, bragging and boasting on the strength of borrowed money were deeply indebted to them. They lent money on high rates of interest and then would charge compound interest, which one could hardly clear off once one was involved in it. Thus, they had rendered the Arbas economically hollow, but it had naturally induced a deep rooted hatred among the common Arabs against the Jews.

(4) The demand of their trade and economic interests was that they should neither estrange one Arab tribe by befriending another, nor take part in their mutual wars. But, on the other hand, it was also in their interests, that they should not allow the Arabs to be united and should keep them fighting and entrenched against each other, for they knew that whenever the Arab tribes united, they would not allow them to remain in possession of their large properties, gardens and fertile lands, which they had come to own through their profiteering and money-lending business. Furthermore, each of their tribes also had to enter into alliance with one or another powerful Arab tribe for the sake of its own protection so that no other powerful tribe should overawe it by its might. Because of this they had not only to take part in the mutual wars of the Arabs but they often had to go to war in support of the Arab tribe to which their tribe was tied in alliance against another Jewish tribe which was allied to the enemy tribe. In Yathrib the Banī Quraiẓah and the Banī An-Naḍīr were the allies of the Aus while the Banī Quraizah' of the Khazraj. A little before the Holy Prophet's emigration, these Jewish tribes had confronted each other in support of their respective allies in the

bloody war that took place between the Aus and the Khazraj at Bu'āth.

Such were the conditions when Islam came to Madīnah and ultimately an Islamic State came into exitence after the Holy Prophet's (upon whom be Allah's peace) arrival there. One of the first things that he accomplished soon after establishing this state was unification of the Aus and the Khazraj and the Emigrants into a brotherhood, and the second was that he concluded a treaty between the Muslims and the Jews on definite conditions, in which it was pledged that neither party would encroach on the rights of the other, and both would unite in a joint defence against the external enemies. Some important clauses of this treaty are as follows, which clearly show what the Jews and the Muslims had pledged to adhere to in their mutual relationship:

"The Jews must bear their expenses and the Muslims their expenses. Each must help the other against anyone who attacks the people of this document. They must seek mutual advice and consultation, and loyalty is a protection against treachery. They shall sincerely wish one another well. Their relations will be governed by piety and recognition of the rights of others, and not by sin and wrongdoing. The wronged must be helped. The Jews must pay with the believers so long as the war lasts. Yathrib shall be a sanctuary for the people of this document....If any dispute or controversy likely to cause trouble should arise, it must be referred to God and to Muhammad the Apostle of God. Quraish and their helpers shall not be given protection. The contracting parties are bound to help one another against any attack on Yathrib....Every one shall be responsible for the defence of the portion to which he belongs." *(Ibn Hishām, vol. ii,* pp. 147 to 150).

This was on absolute and definitive covenant to the conditions of which the Jews themselves had agreed. But not very long after this they began to show hostility towards the Holy Prophet of Allah (upon whom be Allah's peace) and Islam and the Muslims, and their hostility and perverseness went on increasing day by day. Its main causes were three:

First, they envisaged the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) merely as a chief of his people, who should be content to have concluded a political agreement with them and should only concern himself with the worldly interests of his group. But they found that he

was extending an invitation to belief in Allah and the Apostleship and the Book (which also included belief their own Prophets and scriptures), and was urging the people to give up disobedience of Allah and adopt obedience to the Divine Commands and abide by the moral laws of their own prophets. This they could not put up with. They feared that if this universal ideological movement gained momentum it would destroy their rigid religiosity and wipe out their racial nationhood.

Second, when they saw that the Aus and the Khazraj and the Emigrants were uniting into a brotherhood and the people from the Arab tribes of the surrounding areas, who entered Islam, were also joining this Islamic Brotherhood of Madinah and forming a religious community, they feared that the selfish policy that they had been following of sowing discord between the Arab tribes for the promotion of their own well-being and interests for centuries, would not work in the new system, but they would face a united front of the Arabs against which their intrigues and machinations would not succeed.

Third, the work that the Holy Messenger of Allah (upon whom be Allah's peace) was carrying out of reforming the society and civilization included putting an end to all unlawful methods in business and mutual dealings. More than that, he had declared taking and giving of interest also as impure and unlawful earning. This caused them the fear that if his rule became established in Arabia, he would declare interest legally forbidden, and in this they saw their own economic disaster and death.

For these reasons they made resistance and opposition to the Holy Prophet their national ideal. They would never hesitate to employ any trick and machination, any device and cunning, to harm him. They spread every kind of falsehood so as to cause distrust against him in the people's minds. They created every kind of doubt, suspicion and misgiving in the hearts of the new converts so as to turn them back from Islam. They would make false profession of Islam and then would turn apostate so that it may engender more and more misunderstandings among the people against Islam and the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace). They would conspire with the hypocrites to create mischief and would cooperate with every group and tribe hostile to Islam. They would create rifts between the Muslims and would do

whatever they could to stir them up to mutual feuds and fighting. The people of the Aus and the Khazraj tribes were their special target, with whom they had been allied for centuries. Making mention of the war of Bu'āth before them they would remind them of their previous enmities so that they might again resort to the sword against each other and shatter their bond of fraternity into which Islam had bound them. They would resort to every kind of deceit and fraud in order to harm the Muslims economically. Whenever one of those with whom that had business dealings, would accept Islam, they would do whatever they could to cause him financial loss. If he owed them something they would worry and harass him by making repeated demands, and if they owed him something, they would withhold the payment and would publicly say that at the time the bargain was made he professed a different religion, and since he had changed his religion, they were no longer under any obligation towards him. Several instances of this nature have been cited in the explanation of Sūrah A 'Imrān given in the commentaries by Ṭabari, Nisābūrī, Ṭabrisī and in *Rūḥ al-Ma'āni*.

They had adopted this hostile attitude against the covenant even before the Battle of Badr. But when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) and the Muslims won a decisive victory over the Quraish at Badr, they were filled with grief and anguish, malice and anger. They were in fact anticipating that in that war the powerful Quraish would deal a death blow to the Muslims. That is why even before the news of the Islamic victory reached Madīnah they had begun to spread the rumour that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) had fallen a martyr and the Muslims had been routed, and the Quraish army under Abu Jahl was advancing on Madīnah. But when the battle was decided against their hopes and wishes, they burst with anger and grief. Ka'b bin Ashraf, the chief of the Banī an-Naḍīr, cried out: "By God, if Muḥammad has actually killed these nobles of Arabia, the earth's belly would be better for us than its back." Then he went to Makkah and incited the people to vengeance by writing and reciting provocative elegies for the Quraish chiefs killed at Badr. Then he returned to Madīnah and composed lyrical verses of an insulting nature about the Muslim women. At last, enraged with his mischief, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) sent Muḥammad bin Maslamah Anṣārī in

Rabī' al-Awwal, A.H. 3, and had him slain. *(Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Hishām, Ṭabarī).*

The first Jewish tribe which, after the Battle of Badr, openly and collectively broke their covenant were the Banī Qainuqā'. They lived in a locality inside the city of Madīnah. As they practised the crafts of the goldsmith, blacksmith and vessel maker, the people of Madīnah had to visit their shops fairly frequently. They were proud of their bravery and valour. Being black-smiths by profession even their children were well-armed, and they could instantly muster 700 fighting men from among themselves. They were also arrogantly aware that they enjoyed relations of confederacy with the Khazraj and 'Abdullah bin Ubbay, the chief of the Khazraj, was their chief supporter. At the victory of Badr, they became so provoked that they began to trouble and harass the Muslims and their women in particular, who visited their shops. By and by things came to such a pass that one day a Muslim woman was stripped naked publicly in their bazaar. This led to a brawl in which a Muslim and a Jew were killed. Thereupon the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) himself visited their locality, got them together and counselled them on decent conduct. But the reply that they gave was: "O Muḥammad, you perhaps think we are like the Quraish; they did not know fighting; therefore, you overpowered them. But when you come in contact with us, you will see how men fight." This was in clear words a declaration of war. Consequently, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) laid siege to their quarters towards the end of Shawwāl (and according to some others, of Dhī Qa'dah) A.H. 2. The siege had hardly lasted for a fortnight when they surrendered and all their fighting men were tied and taken prisoners. Now 'Abdullah bin Ubayy came up in support of them and insisted that they should be pardoned. The Holy Prophet conceded his request and decided that the Banī Qainuqā.' would be exiled from Madīnah leaving their properties, armour and tools of trade behind. *(Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Hishām, Tarīkh Ṭabarī).*

For some time after these punitive measures (i.e. the banishment of the Qainuqā' and killing of Ka'b bin Ashraf), the Jews remained so terror-stricken that they did not dare commit any further mischief. But later when in Shawwāl, A H. 3, the Quraish in order to anvenge themselves for the defeat at Badr, marched against Madīnah with great preparations, and the Jews saw that only a thousand men had marched

out with the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) as against three thousand men of the Quraish, and even they were deserted by 300 hypocrites who returned to Madīnah, they committed the first and open breach of the treaty by refusing to join the Holy Prophet in the defence of the city although they were bound to it. Then, when in the Battle of Uḥud the Muslims suffered reverses, they were further emboldened. So much so that the Banī an-Naḍīr made a secret plan to kill the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) though the plan failed before it could be executed. According to the details, after the incident of Bi'r Ma'ūnah (Ṣafar, A.H. 4) 'Amr bin Umayyah Damrī slew by mistake two men of the Banī 'Amir in retaliation, who actually belonged to a tribe which was allied to the Muslims, but 'Amr had mistaken them for the men of the enemy. Because of this mistake their blood-money became obligatory on the Muslims. Since the Banī an-Naḍīr were also a party in the alliance with the Banī 'Amir, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) went to their clan along with some of his Companions to ask for their help in paying the blood-money. Outwardly they agreed to contribute, as he wished, but secretly they plotted that a person should go up to the top of the house by whose wall the Holy Prophet was sitting and drop a rock on him to kill him. But before they could execute their plan, Allah informed him in time and he immediately got up and returned to Madīnah.

Now there was no question of showing them any further concession. The Holy Prophet at once sent to them the ultimatum that the treachery they had meditated against him had come to his knowledge; therefore, they were to leave Madīnah within ten days; if anyone of them was found staying behind in their quarters, he would be put to the sword. Meanwhile 'Abdullah bin Ubayy sent them the message that he would help them with two thousand men and that the Banī Quraiẓah and Banī Ghaṭafān also would come to their aid; therefore, they should stand firm and should not go. On this false assurance they responded to the Holy Prophet's ultimatum saying that they would not leave Madīnah and he could do whatever was in his power. Consequently, in Rabī' al-Awwal, A.H. 4, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) laid siege to them, and after a few days of the siege (which according to some traditions were 6 and according to others 15 days) they agreed to leave Madīnah on the condition that they

could retain all their property which they could carry on their camels, except the armour. Thus, Madīnah was rid of this second mischievous tribe of Jews. Only two of the Banī an-Naḍīr became Muslims and stayed behind. Others went to Syria and Khaiber.

This the event that has been discussed in this Sūrah.

Theme and Subject Matter

The theme of the Sūrah as stated above, is an appraisal of the battle against the Banī an-Naḍīr. In this, on the whole, four things have been discussed.

(1) In the first four verses the world has been admonished to take heed of the fate that had just befallen the Banī an-Naḍīr. A major tribe which was as strong in numbers as the Muslims, whose people boasted of far more wealth and possessions, who were by no means equipped militarily, and whose forts were well-fortified, could not stand siege even for a few days, and expressed their readiness to accept banishment from their centuries old, well-established settlement even though not a single man from among them was slain. Allah says that this happened not because of any power possessed by the Muslims but because the Jews had tried to resist and fight Allah and His Messenger, and those who dare to resist the power of Allah, always meet with the same fate.

(2) In verse 5, the rule of the law of war that has been enunciated is: the destruction caused in the enemy territory for military purposes does not come under "spreading mischief in the earth."

(3) In vv. 6-10 it has been stated how the lands and properties which come under the control of the Islamic State as a result of war or peace terms, are to be managed. As it was the first ever occasion that the Muslims took control of a conquered territory, the law concerning it was laid down for their guidance.

(4) In vv. 11-17 the attitude that the hypocrites had adopted on the occasion of the battle against the Banī an-Naḍīr has been reviewed and the causes underlying it have been pointed out.

(5) The whole of the last section (vv. 18-24) is an admonition for all those people who had professed to have affirmed the faith and joined the Muslim community, but were devoid of the true spirit of the faith. In it they have been told what is the real demand of the Faith, what is the real difference between piety and wickedness, what is the place and importance of the Qur'ān which they professed to believe in, and what are the attributes of God in Whom they claimed to have believed.

سُوْرَةُ الْحَشْرِ ٢٤ اٰيَاتُهَا ٣ رُكُوْعَاتُهَا مَدَنِيَّةٌ ١٠١

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

سَبَّحَ لِلّٰهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ ۚ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ۝١ هُوَ
الَّذِيْٓ اَخْرَجَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مِنْ اَهْلِ الْكِتٰبِ مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ لِاَوَّلِ الْحَشْرِ ۭ
مَا ظَنَنْتُمْ اَنْ يَّخْرُجُوْا وَظَنُّوْٓا اَنَّهُمْ مَّانِعَتُهُمْ حُصُوْنُهُمْ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ فَاَتٰىهُمُ
اللّٰهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَمْ يَحْتَسِبُوْا ۤ وَقَذَفَ فِيْ قُلُوْبِهِمُ الرُّعْبَ يُخْرِبُوْنَ بُيُوْتَهُمْ
بِاَيْدِيْهِمْ وَاَيْدِي الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ۤ فَاعْتَبِرُوْا يٰٓاُولِي الْاَبْصَارِ ۝٢ وَلَوْلَآ اَنْ كَتَبَ
اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْجَلَاۗءَ لَعَذَّبَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا ۭ وَلَهُمْ فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ عَذَابُ النَّارِ ۝٣
ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّهُمْ شَاۗقُّوا اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ ۚ وَمَنْ يُّشَاۗقِّ اللّٰهَ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ شَدِيْدُ
الْعِقَابِ ۝٤ مَا قَطَعْتُمْ مِّنْ لِّيْنَةٍ اَوْ تَرَكْتُمُوْهَا قَاۗىِٕمَةً عَلٰٓى اُصُوْلِهَا فَبِاِذْنِ
اللّٰهِ وَلِيُخْزِيَ الْفٰسِقِيْنَ ۝٥ وَمَآ اَفَاۗءَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰي رَسُوْلِهٖ مِنْهُمْ فَمَآ اَوْجَفْتُمْ
عَلَيْهِ مِنْ خَيْلٍ وَّلَا رِكَابٍ وَّلٰكِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُسَلِّطُ رُسُلَهٗ عَلٰي مَنْ يَّشَاۗءُ ۭ وَ
اللّٰهُ عَلٰي كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ۝٦ مَآ اَفَاۗءَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰي رَسُوْلِهٖ مِنْ اَهْلِ الْقُرٰى
فَلِلّٰهِ وَلِلرَّسُوْلِ وَلِذِي الْقُرْبٰى وَالْيَتٰمٰى وَالْمَسٰكِيْنِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيْلِ ۙ كَيْ
لَا يَكُوْنَ دُوْلَةًۢ بَيْنَ الْاَغْنِيَاۗءِ مِنْكُمْ ۭ وَمَآ اٰتٰىكُمُ الرَّسُوْلُ فَخُذُوْهُ ۤ وَمَا
نَهٰىكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوْا ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ شَدِيْدُ الْعِقَابِ ۝٧ لِلْفُقَرَاۗءِ
الْمُهٰجِرِيْنَ الَّذِيْنَ اُخْرِجُوْا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ وَاَمْوَالِهِمْ يَبْتَغُوْنَ فَضْلًا مِّنَ
اللّٰهِ وَرِضْوَانًا وَّيَنْصُرُوْنَ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ ۭ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ هُمُ الصّٰدِقُوْنَ ۝٨ وَالَّذِيْنَ
تَبَوَّؤُ الدَّارَ وَالْاِيْمَانَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ يُحِبُّوْنَ مَنْ هَاجَرَ اِلَيْهِمْ وَلَا يَجِدُوْنَ

LIX

AL-ḤASHR

الحَشْر

Verses: 24

Revealed at Madinah

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

All that there is in the heavens and the earth has glorified only Allah, for He alone is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.[1] He it is Who drove the disbelievers from among the people of the Book out of their houses[2] at the very first assault.[3] You did not think that they would ever go out, and they too on their part were thinking that their fortresses would protect them from Allah;[4] but Allah came upon them whence they had little expected.[5] He cast terror into their hearts with the result that they were destroying their dwellings by their own hands as well as by the hands of the believers.[6] So, take heed, O you who have eyes to see![7] 1-2

Had Allah not decreed banishment for them, He would have chastised them in this world,[8] and in the Hereafter there certainly awaits them the torment of the Fire. All this happened because they resisted Allah and His Messenger, and whoever resists Allah (should know that) Allah is stern in inflicting punishment. 3-4

Whatever palm-trees you cut down, or whatever you left standing upon their roots, it was only by Allah's leave.[9] And (Allah gave the leave) in order to disgrace the transgressors.[10] 5

And the properties that Allah took out from their possession and restored to His Messenger,[11] are not such that you might have rushed your horses and camels upon them, but Allah gives His Messengers authority over whomever He wills, and Allah has power over everything[12] Whatever Allah restored to His Messenger from the people of the settlements, belongs to Allah and the Messenger and the kinsfolk and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarers,[13] so that it does not 6-9

remain circulating among your rich people only.[14] Take whatever the Messenger gives you, and refrain from whatever he forbids you. Fear Allah, for Allah is stern in inflicting punishment.[15] (Moreover, the properties) are for those poor emigrants who have been expelled from their homes and their possessions.[16] They seek Allah's bounty and His goodwill, and are ever ready to succour Allah and His Messenger. They indeed are the truthful. (And it is also for those) who believed even before the arrival of the emigrants and were staying in the Abode of Migration.[17] They love those who have migrated to them and entertain no desire in their hearts for what is given to them and prefer others to themselves even though they may be needy.[18] The fact is that those who are saved from the greed of their own hearts, ale truly successful.[19]

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1. For explanation, see E.N.'s 1, 2 of Sūrah Al-Ḥadīd. The object of this introductory sentence before making an appraisal of the banishment of the Banī an-Naḍīr is to prepare the mind to understand the truth that the fate this powerful tribe met was not the result of the power of the Muslims but a manifestation of the power of Allah.

2. Here, the reader should understand one thing at the outset so as to avoid any confusion about the banishment of the Banī an-Naḍīr. The Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) had concluded a formal written treaty with the Banī an-Naḍīr. They had not broken this agreement as such that it should have become void But the reason why they were attacked was that after making different kinds of minor violations of it, they at last committed such an offence which amounted to the breach of trust. That is, they plotted to kill the leader of the other party to the treaty, *i.e.* the Islamic State of Madīnah. The plot became exposed, and when the were accused of breaking the agreement they could not deny it Thereupon, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) told them either to leave Madīnah or to be ready for a war. This notice was in accordance with this injunction of the Qur'ān: "If you ever fear treachery from any people, throw their treaty openly before them." (Al-Anfāl: 58) That is why Allah is describing their exile as His own action, for it was precisely in accordance with Divine Law. In other words, they were not expelled by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) and the Muslims but by Allah Himself. The other reason why Allah has described their exile as His own action, has been stated in the following verses.

3. The word *ḥashr* in the Text means to gather the scattered individuals to gether, or to take out scattered individuals after mustering them together. Thus, the words *li-awwal-il-ḥashr* mean: with the first *ḥashr*, or on the occasion of the

first *ḥashr*. As for the question, what is implied by the first *ḥashr* here, the commentators have disputed it. According to one group it implies the banishment of the Banī an-Naḍīr from Madīnah, and this has been described as their first *ḥashr* in the sense that their second *ḥashr* took place in the time of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, when the Jews and the Christians were expelled from the Arabian peninsula, and the final *ḥashr will* take place on the Day of Resurrection. According to the second group it implies the gathering of the Muslim army together to fight the Banī an-Naḍīr; and *li-awwal-il-ḥashr* means that as soon as the Muslims had gathered together to fight them and no blood yet had been shed, they, by the manifestation of Allah's power, offered to be banished from Madīnah of their own accord. In other words, these words have been used here in the meaning of "at the very first assault". Shāh Waliullah has translated it "at the first gathering of the army". Shāh 'Abdul Qādir has translated it "at the first mustering." In our opinion this translation very nearly gives the meaning of these words.

4. To understand this one should keep in mind the fact that the Banī an-Naḍīr had been well established here for centuries. They lived in compact populations outside Madīnah without any lien element. Their settlement was well fortified, which had fortified houses as are generally built in feud-ridden tribal areas. Then heir numerical strength also equalled that of the Muslims, and inside Madīnah itself many of the hypocrites were their supporters. Therefore, the Muslims could never expect that they would, even without fighting, be so unnerved by the siege as to leave their homes willingly. likewise, the Banī an-Naḍīr also could not have imagined that some power would compel them to leave their homes within six days. Although the Banī Qainuqā' had been expelled before them, and their false pride of valour had proved to be of no avail, they lived in a locality inside Madīnah and did not have any separate fortified settlement; therefore, the Banī an-Naḍīr thought that their inability to withstand the Muslims was not exceptionable. Contrary to this, in view of their own fortified settlement and strongholds they could not imagine that some power could turn them out so easily. That is why when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) served a notice on them to leave Madīnah within ten days, they boldly retorted, saying: "We are not going to quit; you may do whatever you please."

Here, the question arises: On what basis has Allah said: 'They were thinking that their fortresses would save them from Allah'. Did the Banī an-Naḍīr really know that they were not facing Muḥammad bin 'Abdullah (upon whom be Allah's peace) but Allah? And did they, in spite of knowing this, think that their fortresses would save them from Allah? This is a question which would confound every such person who does not know the psychology of the Jewish people and their centuries-old traditions. As regards the common men, no one can imagine that despite their knowing consciously that they were facing Allah, they would

entertain the false hope that their forts and weapons would save them from Allah. Therefore, an ignorant person would interpret the Divine Word, saying that the Banī an-Naḍīr in view of the strength of their forts were apparently involved in the misunderstanding that they would remain safe from the Holy Prophet's attack, but in reality they were fighting Allah and from Him their forts could not save them. But the fact is that the Jews in this world are a strange people, who have been knowingly fighting Allah: they killed the Prophets of Allah knowing them to be His Prophets, and they declared boastfully and arrogantly that they had killed the Prophets of Allah. Their traditions say that their great Patriarch, the prophet Jacob, wrestled with Allah throughout the night and Allah could not throw him even till daybreak. Then, when at daybreak Allah asked Jacob to let Him go, Jacob replied that he would not let Him go until He blessed him. Allah asked him his name, and he answere 'Jocob Allah said that his name would no longer be Jacob, but Israel, "because you strove with God and with men, and prevailed." (See Gen. 32: 25-29 in the latest Jewish translation; *The Scriptures Scriptures,* published by the Jewish Publication Society of America 1954). In the Christian translation of the Bible too this subject has been rendered likewise. In the foot-note of the Jewish translation, "Israel" has been explained as: ;He who striveth with God." In the *Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature* the meaning given of "Israel" by the Christian scholars is: "Wrestler with God." Then in Hosea (O.T.) the Prophet Jacob has been praised thus: "By his strength he had power with God: yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed." (Ch. 12: 3-4). Now, obviously, the people of Israel are the children of the same Prophet Israel who, according to their faith, had striven with God and wrestled with Him. For them it is not at all difficult that they should stand firm and fight even God. On this very basis, they, even according to their own profession, killed the Prophets of God, and under the same false pride they put the Prophet Jesus on the cross and bragged: "We have killed Jesus Christ, son of Mary, Messenger of Allah." Therefore, it was not against their traditions that they fought Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) despite their knowledge that he was Allah's Messenger. If not their common people, their rabbis and learned men knew full well that he was the Messenger of Allah. The Qur'ān itself contains several evidences to this effect. (For instance, see E.N.'s 79, 95 of Al-Baqarah, E.N.'s 190, 191 of An-Nisā, E.N.'s 70, 73 of As-Sāāffāt).

5. Allah's coming down upon them does not mean that Allah was staying in another place whence He attacked them. But this i9 a metaphoric expression. The object is to give the idea that while facing Allah they were thinking that Allah could chastise them only by bringing an army against them from the front and they were confident that they would resist that force by their fortifications, But Allah attacked them from whence they had not thought it possible; and this was that He

made them weak and broke their power of resistance from within after which neither their weapons nor their strongholds could help them.

6. That is, "The destruction occurred in two ways: from outside the Muslims besieged them and started demolishing their fortifications, and from within, first they raised obstacles of stone and wood to stop the Muslims from advancing, and for this purpose broke their own houses for the material; then, when they became certain that they would have to vacate the place, they started pulling down their houses, which they had so fondly built and decorated, with their own hands, so as to render them useless for the Muslims Later, when they settled peace with the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) on the condition that they would be spared their lives but would have the permission to carry away whatever they could, except the weapons and armour, they started removing the frames of the doors and windows, even pegs; so much so that some people removed the beams and wooden ceilings, which they put upon the back of their camels and left."

7. There are many lessons which one can learn from this event, which have been alluded to in this brief but eloquent sentence. These Jews were none other but the followers of the former Prophets: they believed in God, in the Book, in the former Prophets and the Hereafter. Accordingly, they were the former Muslims. But when they turned their back on religion and morality and adopted open hostility to the truth only for the sake of their selfish desires and worldly motives and interests, and showed scant regard for their treaties and agreements, Allah's grace was turned away from them, otherwise Allah had no personal enmity with them. Therefore, first of all, the Muslims themselves have been admonished to heed their fate and learn a lesson from it, lest they too should start behaving as if they were the beloved children of God, as the Jews did, and should be involved in the misunderstanding that their being included among the followers of the Last Prophet of God would by itself guarantee for them Allah's bounty and His support, apart from which they were not bound to adhere to any demand of religion and morality. Besides, those people of the world also have been asked to learn a lesson from this event, who oppose the truth consciously, and then place reliance upon their wealth and power, their means and resources, thinking that these would save them from the Divine punishment. The Jews of Madīnah were not unaware that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) had not risen for the supremacy of a people or tribe, but he was presenting an ideological invitation the addressees of which were all men, and every man, no matter what race or country he belonged to, could join his *Ummah* by accepting the invitation, without discrimination or distinction. They were themselves witnessing that Bilāl of Ḥabash, Ṣuhaib of Rome, and Salmān of Persia enjoyed the same position and status in the Muslim community as was enjoyed by

the people of the Holy Prophet's own house. Therefore, they were not feeling any danger that the Quraish and the Aus and the Khazrij would gain an upper hand over them. Nor were they unaware that the ideological invitation that he was presenting was precisely the same as their own Prophets had been presenting. The Holy Prophet never put forward the claim that he had come with a new religion, unknown to the people, and that the people should give up their former religion and accept his religion instead. But what he claimed was that the religion being presented by him was the same that the Prophets of God had been preaching and presenting since the beginning of creation. And from their Torah they could themselves confirm that it was actually the same religion, the principles of which were not any different from the principles of the religion of the Prophets. On the same basis they were told in the Qur'ān: "Affirm faith in the teaching sent down by Me, which confirms the teaching that you already possess, and you should not be its first deniers." They were also witnessing what character and morals the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) possessed, and what revolution had taken place in the lives of those who had accepted his message. For a long time the Anṣār of Madīnah had been their closest neighbours. They knew what kind of people they had been before embracing Islam and what they became after their conversion to Islam. Thus, they were well aware of the invitation, of the inviter and of the results of accepting the invitation. But in spite of witnessing and knowing all this, only on account of their racial prejudice and worldly interests, they expended all their energy against the message of truth about which there was no room for doubt at least in their minds. After such an obvious and open hostility to the truth they expected that their strongholds would save them from Allah, whereas the whole human history bears evidence that the one who is resisted by the power of God, cannot save and protect himself by any weapon, means or device.

8. "Would have chastised them in the world": world have caused them to be annihilated. That is, had they fought instead of surrendering to save their lives, they would have been completely wiped out. Their men would have perished in the war and their womenfolk and children would have been taken prisoners and there would be no one to have them ransomed.

9. The reference is to the fact that the Muslims cut down or burnt many of the palm-trees that stood in the oases around the settlement of the Banī an Naḍīr in order to facilitate the siege, However, they left those trees standing which did not obstruct the military operations. At this the hypocrites of Madīnah and the Banī Quraiẓah, and the Banī an-Naḍīr themselves, raised a clamour, saying that, on the one hand, Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) prohibited spreading disorder in the world, but, on the other, fruit trees were being cut down by his command, which amounted to spreading disorder in the world. At this

Allah sent down the Command: "Whatever trees you cut down, or whatever you left standing, your neither act was unlawful, but it had Allah's permission." The legal injunction that is derived from this verse is that the destruction caused for the sake of military operations does not come under "spreading disorder in the world." But spreading disorder in the world is that an army under the fit of war hysteria should intrude into the enemy territory and start destroying the crops, cattle, gardens, houses and everything in its way without any reason. In this matter, the general instruction is the same which Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr Ṣiddīq gave while despatching the Muslim army to Syria: "Do not cut down fruit trees; do not destroy crops; do not ravage the settlements." This was precisely in accordance with the Qur'anic teaching, which condemns those who spread chaos; "When they get power they direct all their efforts towards spreading corruption in the land, destroying harvests and killing people." (Al-Baqarah: 205). But the specific command in respect of the war exigencies is that if destruction is necessary for military operations against the enemy, it is lawful. Thus, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd has given this explanation in the commentary of this verse: 'The Muslims had cut down only those trees of the Banī an-Naḍīr that stood on the battlefield." (Tafsīr Nīsābūrī). Some *of* the Muslim jurists have overlooked this aspect of the matter and expressed the opinion that the permissibility of cutting the trees of the Bani an-Naḍīr was confined only to that particular event. It does not make it generally permissible that whenever war necessitates trees of the enemy be cut down and burnt. Imām Auzā'ī, Laith and Abū Thaur hold this same opinion. But the majority of the jurists hold the view that for the sake of important military operations it is permissible. However, this is not permissible for the purpose of mere destruction and pillage.

One may ask: This verse of the Qur'ān could satisfy the Muslims, but how could those who did not accept the Qur'ān as Divine Word be satisfied at this reply to their objection that both acts were permissible as they had Allah's permission for it? The answer is: This verse of the Qur'ān was sent down to satisfy only the Muslims; it was not sent down to satisfy the disbelievers. Since due to the objection of the Jews and the hypocrites, or due to their own thinking, they had been involved in the misgiving whether they were guilty of spreading disorder in the earth, Allah gave them the satisfaction that both the acts, cutting down some trees to facilitate the siege and leaving some other trees standing which did not obstruct the siege, were in accordance with Divine Law.

The traditionists in their traditions have disputed the point whether the order to cut and burn the trees had been given by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) himself, or whether the Muslims had done it of their own accord, and then later asked the Holy Prophet about its legal aspect. Ḥaḍrat Abdullah bin 'Umar has reported that the Holy Prophet himself had ordered it.

(Bukhārī, Muslim , Musnad Aḥmad, Ibn Jarīr). The same also has been reported by Yazīd bin Rūmān *(Ibn Jarīr)*. On the contrary, Mujāhid and Qatādah say that the Muslims had on their own cut down the trees; then a dispute arose among them whether what they had done was permissible or not. Some said it was permissible and some said it was not. At last Allah sent down this verse and approved the act of both. *(Ibn Jarīr)*. The same thing is supported by a tradition of Ḥadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās: 'The Muslims were confused because Some of them had cut the trees and others had not; therefore, they wanted to ask the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) as to who would be rewarded for the act and who would be punished.' *(Nasā'ī)*. Those of the jurists who have preferred the first tradition give the argument that this was the Holy Prophet's personal judgement, which was later ratified by revelation from Allah, and this a proof of the fact that in matters where no Divine Command existed, the Holy Prophet used to follow his personal judgement. On the other hand, those jurists who have preferred the second tradition, argue that the two groups of the Muslims had adopted two different views on the basis of their own personal judgements and Allah ratified both. Therefore, if the learned men arrive at different conclusions by judicious exercise of their personal judgement, then although their opinions might differ, they would all be correct in the Divine *Sharī'ah*.

10. That is, "Allah willed that they should be disgraced if you cut down the trees and also if you left them standing." In the first case, they were disgraced when they saw that the trees of the gardens which they had planted with their own hands and which they had owned since ages, were being cut down before their very eyes and they were watching it helplessly. Even an ordinary peasant and gardener cannot tolerate another's misappropriation or intrusion into his field or garden. He would protect his field or garden at the risk of his life if somebody tried to destroy it in his presence. For if he cannot prevent destruction-n of his property, it would be a sign of his extreme humiliation and weakness. But here a whole tribe, which had been living at this place fearlessly and boldly for centuries, was watching helplessly that its neighbours had invaded its gardens and were destroying the trees while it could do nothing. After this even if they stayed on in Madīnah they would have lived in disgrace and humility. In the second case, they were disgraced when on leaving Madīnah they saw that the lush green gardens which had been in their possession till the previous day were now passing into the possession of the Muslims. Had they the power they would have laid waste the entire gardens by their own hands SO that not a single whole tree passed into the hands of the Muslims. But in their helplessness they left the city, despaired and grief-stricken, leaving everything intact behind.

11. From here to the end of verse 10, Allah explains how the lands and properties that were restored bto the Islamic State after the exile of the Ban; an-

Nadir, are to be managed and administered. As it was the first occasion that a land was conquered and included in the Islamic territory, and many more lands were destined to be conquered in the future, the law governing the conquered lands was enunciated at the outset. Here, a note-worthy point is that Allah at this place has used the words: *Mā afā'-Allāhu 'alā Rasūli-hi min-hum:* "whatever Allah restored to His Messenger from them." These words clearly imply that the rebels of Allah Almighty are not entitled to own the earth and things existing on it. If they have become their owners and are appropriating them, their ownership and appropriation of these things is, in fact, in the nature of usurpation of a master's property by a dishonest servant. The real right of these properties is that these should be spent and used in the service and obedience of their real Master, Allah, Lord of the worlds, according to His will, and their this use is possible only through the agency of the righteous believers. Therefore, the true position of the properties which pass from the ownership of the disbelievers into the hands of the Muslims as the result of a lawful war, is that their real Owner has withdrawn them from His disobedient and disloyal servants, and restored them to His obedient and loyal servants. That is why, in the terminology of the Islamic Law such properties have been described as *Fai* (restored properties).

12. That is, "The restoration of these properties to the Muslims is not the result of the effort of the actual fighting army so that the army on that basis may have the right that the properties may be distributed among the soldiers, but its real nature is that Allah by His bounty has given dominance to His Messengers and the system that they represent over them. In other words, the passing of these properties into the Muslims' hands is not the direct result of the effort and struggle of the fighting army, but the result of the total strength that Allah has bestowed on His Messenger and his community and the system established by him. Therefore, these properties are quite different in nature from the spoils of war and so cannot be distributed among the soldiers as such.

Thus, the *Shari'ah* has made a distinction between *ghanīmah* (spoils of war) and *fai* (restored properties). The injunction in respect of the *ghanīmah* has been given in Sūrah Al-Anfāl: 41, and it is this: "It should be divided in five parts, four parts of which be distributed among the fighting army and the fifth deposited in the Public Treasury *(Bait al-Māl)*, and expended on the items mentioned in the verse." As for the *fai*, the injunction is that it should not be distributed among the army, but it should be reserved for the items of expenditure being stated in the following verse. The distinction between the two has been made plain by the words: "You have not rushed your horses and camels on them," which imply the military operations. Thus, the properties which are taken as a direct result of such operations are the *ghanīmah* and those which are not the result of these operations are the *fai*.

The distinction between *ghanīmah* and *fai* that has been briefly mentioned in this verse, has been explained in greater detail by the jurists of Islam. *Ghanīmah* are only those transferable properties which are taken from the enemy during military action; other things than these, *e.g.* lands, houses and other transferable and nontransferable properties of the enemy, are excluded from the definition of *ghanīmah* and are *fai*. The source of this explanation is the letter that Ḥaḍrat 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) had written to Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin Abī Waqqās after the conquest of 'Iraq. In that letter he wrote: "Distribute the properties and goods which the soldiers of the army collected and brought to your camp among the Muslims who participated in the war, and leave the lands and the canals with those who work on them so that the proceeds thereof are used for the salaries of the Muslims." (Abū Yūsuf, *Kitāb al-Kharāj, p.* 24; Abū 'Ubaid, *Kitāb al-Amwāl, p.* 59; Yaḥyā bin Adam, *Kitāb al-Kharāj, pp.* 27 28, 48). On this very basis, Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣri says: "Whatever is taken from the enemy camp, is the right of those who won victory over it? and the lands are for the Muslims." (Yaḥyā bin Adam, p. 27). And Imām Abū Yūsuf says: "Whatever the Muslims take from the enemy troops, and whatever goods and arms and cattle they collect and bring to their camp, is *ghanīmah;* from this one-fifth will be deducted and the rest distributed among the soldiers." *(Kitāb al-Kharaj,* p. 18). The same is the opinion of Yaḥyā bin Adam, which he has expressed in his *Kitāb al-Kharaj* (p. 27). Even more than this, what makes the distinction between *ghanīmah* and *fai* clearer is that after the Battle of Nahāwand when the *ghanīmah* had been distributed and the conquered lands had been included in the Islamic State, a man named Sa'ib bin Aqra' found two bags of jewels outside the fort. He was confused whether it was the *ghanīmah* which should be distributed in the army, or the *fai* which should be deposited in the *Bait al-Māl* Consequently, he came to Madīnah and put the matter before Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, who decided that it should be sold and the price deposited in the *Bait-al-Māl*. From this it becomes clear that *ghanīmah* are only those transferable properties which are taken by the soldiers during the war. After the war is over, the transferable properties also, like the non-transferable properties, become *fai*. Imām Abū 'Ubaid relates this event and says: "The properties that are seized from the enemy by the use of force, when the war is still in progress, are *ghanīmah,* and what is taken after the war is over, when the territory has become *Dār al-Islām* (abode of Islam), is *fai*, which should be reserved for the common people of the dār *al-Islām;* the law of the one-fifth *(khums) will* not *be* applicable to it." *(Kitāb al-Amwāl, p. 254).*

After defining *ghanīmah* thus, the rest of the properties, wealth and lands, which pass from the disbelievers' ownership to the Muslims may be divided into two main kinds: first, those which are taken as a result of actual fighting (*anwatan* in *Fiqh* terminology); second, those which are taken by the Muslims as

a result of the peace terms, whether peace is concluded because of the pressure of the military power of the Muslims, or their dread and awe, and in this are also included all those properties which pass into the Muslims' ownership in every other way than as a result of actual fighting. The differences that have arisen among the jurists of Islam have been only concerning the first kind of the properties in order to determine their correct legal position, for they do not come under "those upon which you have not rushed your horses and camels." As regards the second kind of the properties, all agree that they are *fai*, for the Qur'ān has explicitly laid down the injunction about them. Below we shall discuss in detail the legal position of the first kind of the properties.

13. In the preceding verse what was pointed out was why these properties should not be distributed among the fighting army like the spoils, and why the legal injunction concerning them is different from that concerning the spoils. Now in this verse it is being stated as to who are entitled to have a share in these properties.

The first share in these is of Allah and His Messenger. The detail of how the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) acted on this injunction has been related by Mālik bin Aus bin al-Ḥadathān on the authority of Hadrat 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), thus: The Holy Prophet used to take from it necessary expenses for himself and his family and the rest he used to spend on arranging arms and conveyances for *Jihād*. (*Bukhārī, Muslim, Musnad Ahmad, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī* and others). After the passing away of the Holy Prophet this share was transferred to the Public Treasury of the Muslims so that it is spent in the service of the mission which Allah had entrusted to His Messenger. Imām Shāfe'ī is reported to have expressed the opinion that the share which was specifically meant for the Holy Prophet's person (upon whom be Allah's peace), is for his caliph after him, for the Holy Prophet was entitled to it on the basis of his office of leadership and not on the basis of the office of Apostleship. But the view of the majority of the Shāfe'ī jurists in this matter is the same as of the other jurists, viz. that this share now is reserved for the religious and collective welfare of the Muslims, and not for any particular person.

The second share is of the kinsfolk, and this implies the kinsfolk of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace), i.e. the Banī Hāshim and the Banī al-Muṭṭalib. This share was set aside so that, besides meeting his own and his family's requirements, the Holy Prophet could also fulfil his obligations towards those of his relatives who stood in need of his help, or whom he felt like helping. After the death of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) this ceased to be a separate and independent source, because like the rights of the orphans and the wayfarers and the indigent among the Muslims, looking after the rights of the needy among the Banī Hāshim and the Banī al-Muṭṭalib also became the

responsibility of the Public Treasury. However, they were treated as superior to others in so far as they had no share in the *zakāt*. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās has related that in the time of Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr and 'Umar and 'Uthmān (may Allah be pleased with them), the first two shares were dropped and only the remaining three shares *(i.e.* those for the orphans and the indigent and the wayfarers) were kept as of those entitled to *fai*. Then Ḥaḍrat 'Alī (may Allah be pleased with him) also acted on the same in his time, Muḥammad bin Isḥāq has related on the authority of Imām Muḥammad Bāqir that although Ḥaḍrat 'Ali's personal opinion was the same as of the people of his house (that this share should be given to the relatives of the Holy Prophet), he did not think that he should act against the practice of Abū Bakr and 'Umar. Ḥasan bin Muḥammad bin Ḥanafiyah says that after the Holy Prophet a difference of opinion arose about these two shares (i.e. the share of the Holy Prophet and the share of his relatives). Some people said that the first share should go to the Holy Prophet's caliph, some said that the second share should go to the relatives of the Holy Prophet, and still others said that the second share should be given to the relatives of the caliph. At last, a consensus was reached that both the shares be spent on the requirements of *Jihād*. 'Atā' bin Sā'ib says that Ḥaḍrat 'Umar bin 'Abdul 'Azīz in his time had started sending the share of the Holy Prophet and the share of the relatives to the Banī Hāshim. The opinion of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and of most of the Ḥanafī jurists is that in this matter the same practice is correct as was being followed in the time of the righteous Caliphs. (Abū Yūsuf, *Kitāb al-Kharāj*, pp. 19-21). Imām Shāre'ī's opinion is that both the rich and the needy from among the people whose being descended from the Banī Hāshim and the Banī al-Muṭṭalib is confirmed, or is well known, can be given shares from *fai*. *(Mughnī al-Muḥtāj)*. The Hanafīs say that only their needy people can be helped from this; however, their right to this is greater than that of others. *(Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī)*. According to Imām Mālik, there is no restriction on the government in this matter. It can spend on any head that it deems fit and proper, but the better course is that it should give preference to the people of the Holy Prophet's house. *(Ḥāshiyah ad-Dūsuqī 'alā-sh-Sharḥ-al-Kabīr)*.

About the remaining three shares there is no dispute among the jurists. However, the difference between Imām Shāfe'ī and the other Imāms is that according to Imām Shāfe'ī the total properties of *fai* are to be divided into five equal parts one part of which is to be spent on the above-mentioned heads in such a way that one-fifth of it is spent on the common benefits of the Muslims, one-fifth on the Banī Hāshim and the Banī al-Muṭṭalib, one-fifth on the orphans, one-fifth on the indigent and one-fifth on the wayfarers. However, Imām Mālik, Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and Imāmu Aḥmad do not concur with this division. Their opinion is that the whole of *fai* is for the welfare and common benefit of the Muslims. *(Mughnī al-Muḥtāj)*.

14. This is one of the most important verses of the Qur'ān, which lays down the basic principle of the economic policy of the Islamic community and government. Wealth should circulate among the whole community and not only among the rich lest the rich should go on becoming richer day by day and the poor poorer. This policy has not merely been enunciated in the Qur'ān, but for the same objective the Qur'ān has forbidden interest, made the *zakāt* obligatory, enjoined that *khums* (one-fifth) be deducted from the booty, exhorted the Muslims to practise voluntary charity, has proposed such forms of different kinds of atonements that the flow of wealth is turned towards the poor classes of society, and has made such a law of inheritance that the wealth left by every deceased person spreads among the largest circle of the people. Apart from this, stinginess has been condemned and generosity commended as a noble moral quality, the well-to-do people have been told that in their wealth there is a definite share of the beggar and the indigent, which they must discharge not as charity but as the right of the concerned people, and the law enjoined in respect of a major source of revenue of the Islamic government (i.e. *fai*) is that its one portion must necessarily be spent on supporting the poor classes of society. In this connection, it should also be borne in mind that there are two main sources of the revenue of the Islamic government: *zakāt* and *fai*. The *zakāt* is charged from the Muslims on their total extra capital, cattle-wealth, trade goods and agricultural produce, which is over and above the minimum exemption limit (*nisāb*), and most of it is reserved for the poor. And *fai* comprises all the revenues including *jizyah* and taxes which are received from the non-Muslims; a major part of these also is set aside for the poor. This gives a clear hint to the effect that an Islamic government should manage its revenues and expenditure and the financial and economic affairs of the country on the whole in such a manner that the wealthy and influential people are not allowed to have their monopoly over the means and resources of wealth, and the flow of wealth is neither turned from the poor to the rich nor it should remain circulating only among the rich.

15. In view of the context the verse means: "Accept without question whatever decision the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) gives about the management of the properties of the Banī an-Naḍīr, and likewise about the distribution of *fai* properties and goods afterwards. One should take whatever the Prophet gives him, and the one whom He does not give anything, should neither protest nor demand it But since the words of the Command are general, its application is not restricted to the distribution of the Jai properties and goods only, but its intention is that in all matters the Muslims should obey the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace). This intention of the Command becomes all the more clear when we consider that as against "whatever the Messenger gives you"

the words used are "whatever he forbids you" and not "whatever he does not give you." If the object of the Command were restricted to call obedience to the distribution offal properties and goods only, then as against "whatever he gives you" the words should have been "whatever he does not give you." The use of the forbidding or restraining words in this context by itself shows that the object of the Command is to enjoin obedience to the Holy Prophet in whatever he commands and forbids. The same thing has been stated by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) himself. According to Ḥadrat Abū Hurairah he said: "When I command you to do a thing, do it as far as you can; and when I forbid you to do a thing, restrain from it." *(Bukhārī, Muslim)*. About Ḥadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd it has been related that once during a speech he said: "Allah has cursed the woman who practices such and such a fashion." Thereupon a woman approached him and asked, "Wherefrom have you derived this thing? For I have not seen such a thing anywhere in the Book of Allah." Ḥadrat 'Abdullah replied, "Had you studied the Book of Allah, you would certainly have found it therein. Have you not read the verse: *Mā ātā-kum ar-Rasūlu fa-khudū-hu wa mā nahā-kum 'anhu fantahū:* "Take whatever the Messenger gives you, and refrain from whatever he forbids you." When she said that she had read this verse, Ḥadrat 'Abdullah said: "So the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) has forbidden this act, and has given the news that Allah has cursed the women who practice it." The woman agreed that she had understood the Command. *(Bukhārī Muslim, Musnad Aḥmad, Musnad Ibn abī Ḥātim,)*.

16. This implies those people who at that time had been expelled from Makkah and other parts of Arabia only because they had embraced Islam. Before the conquest of the territory of the Banī an-Naḍīr these emigrants had no permanent means of sustenance. Therefore, it was commanded that in the properties which were then taken, and in the *fai* properties which are taken in future, there is also a share of these people along with the common poor people and the orphans and the wayfarers. With these properties all such people should be helped, who are forced to emigrate for the cause of Allah and His Messenger to the abode of Islam. Accordingly, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) distributed a part of the properties taken from the Banī an-Naḍīr among the Emigrants and the oases which the Anṣār had set aside for the support and maintenance of their emigrant brothers were returned to them. But it is not correct to think that the Emigrants had this share in the *fai* only at that time. In fact, the intention of the verse is to point out that till Resurrection it is the duty of the Islamic government of the country to settle the people who are exiled and compelled to take refuge in it because of being Muslims and to enable them to

stand on their feet economically; and it should spend on this head also from the *fai* properties besides the *zakāt* funds.

17. This implies the Anṣar. In other words, not only are the Emigrants entitled to faī but those Muslims also are entitled to receive their share from it, who were already living in the abode of Islam (Madīnah).

18. This is in praise of the Anṣār, the Muslims of Madīnah. When the Emigrants came from Makkah and other places to their city, they offered their gardens and oases to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) with the request that he distribute them among their emigrant brethren-in-faith. The Holy Prophet said: "These people do not know gardening: they have come from a region where there are no gardens. Could it not be that you (the Anṣār) continue to work in the gardens and oases and make the Emigrants partners in the produce? The Anṣar submitted: 'We have heard and obeyed'." *(Bukhārī, Ibn Jarīr).* Thereupon the Emigrants said: "We have never seen any people so self-sacrificing as the Anṣar, for they would work and labour and make us partners in the produce. We think they would thus be entitled to all spiritual rewards. The Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) said: "Nay, as long as you would praise them and pray for their well-being, you also would get your rewards." *(Musnad Ahmad).* Then, when the territory of the Banī an-Naḍīr was taken, the Holy Prophet made this proposal to the Anṣār: "Now one way of managing it is that your properties and the gardens and the oases left by the Jews be combined together and then the whole distributed among you and the Emigrants," the second way is that you take back your properties, and the lands vacated by the Jews be distributed among the Emigrants." The Anṣār said: "Sir, you may please distribute these evacuee properties among the Emigrants and may give them of our properties also as you please." At this Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr cried out: "May Allah reward you, O assembly of the Ansar, with the best of everything!" (Yahyā bin *Adam*, Balādhurī). Thus, with the willing consent of the Anṣār the properties left by the Jews were distributed only among the Emigrants, and from among the Anṣār only Ḥaḍrat Abū Dujānah, Ḥaḍrat Sahl bin Ḥunaif snd (according to some) Ḥaḍrat Ḥārith bin as-Simmah were given shares, for they were poor people. *(Balādhuri, Ibn Hishām Rūh al-Ma'ānī.* The same self-sacrificing spirit was shown by the Ansār when the territory of Bahrain was annexed to the Islamic State. The Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) wished that the conquered lands of that territory be given to the Anṣār, but they submitted: "We would not take any share from it unless a simtlar share was given to our emigrant brothers." *(Yahyā bin Ādam).* Allah has praised the Anṣār for this-very spirit of self-sacrifice.

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فِيْ صُدُوْرِهِمْ حَاجَةً مِّمَّآ اُوْتُوْا وَيُؤْثِرُوْنَ عَلٰٓى اَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ
خَصَاصَةٌ ۚ وَمَنْ يُّوْقَ شُحَّ نَفْسِهٖ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُوْنَ ۝٩ وَالَّذِيْنَ
جَآءُوْ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهِمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلِاِخْوَانِنَا الَّذِيْنَ سَبَقُوْنَا
بِالْاِيْمَانِ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ فِيْ قُلُوْبِنَا غِلًّا لِّلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا رَبَّنَآ اِنَّكَ رَءُوْفٌ
رَّحِيْمٌ ۝١٠ اَلَمْ تَرَ اِلَى الَّذِيْنَ نَافَقُوْا يَقُوْلُوْنَ لِاِخْوَانِهِمُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا
مِنْ اَهْلِ الْكِتٰبِ لَئِنْ اُخْرِجْتُمْ لَنَخْرُجَنَّ مَعَكُمْ وَلَا نُطِيْعُ فِيْكُمْ اَحَدًا اَبَدًا ۙ
وَّاِنْ قُوْتِلْتُمْ لَنَنْصُرَنَّكُمْ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ يَشْهَدُ اِنَّهُمْ لَكٰذِبُوْنَ ۝١١ لَئِنْ اُخْرِجُوْا لَا
يَخْرُجُوْنَ مَعَهُمْ ۚ وَلَئِنْ قُوْتِلُوْا لَا يَنْصُرُوْنَهُمْ ۚ وَلَئِنْ نَّصَرُوْهُمْ لَيُوَلُّنَّ
الْاَدْبَارَ ۡ ثُمَّ لَا يُنْصَرُوْنَ ۝١٢ لَاَنْتُمْ اَشَدُّ رَهْبَةً فِيْ صُدُوْرِهِمْ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ ۭ ذٰلِكَ
بِاَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَّا يَفْقَهُوْنَ ۝١٣ لَا يُقَاتِلُوْنَكُمْ جَمِيْعًا اِلَّا فِيْ قُرًى مُّحَصَّنَةٍ اَوْ مِنْ
وَّرَآءِ جُدُرٍ ۭ بَاْسُهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ شَدِيْدٌ ۭ تَحْسَبُهُمْ جَمِيْعًا وَّقُلُوْبُهُمْ شَتّٰى ۭ ذٰلِكَ
بِاَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَّا يَعْقِلُوْنَ ۝١٤ كَمَثَلِ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ قَرِيْبًا ذَاقُوْا وَبَالَ
اَمْرِهِمْ ۚ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ۝١٥ كَمَثَلِ الشَّيْطٰنِ اِذْ قَالَ لِلْاِنْسَانِ اكْفُرْ ۚ فَلَمَّا
كَفَرَ قَالَ اِنِّىْ بَرِيْۗءٌ مِّنْكَ اِنِّىْٓ اَخَافُ اللّٰهَ رَبَّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ۝١٦ فَكَانَ عَاقِبَتَهُمَآ
اَنَّهُمَا فِي النَّارِ خَالِدَيْنِ فِيْهَا ۭ وَذٰلِكَ جَزٰۗؤُا الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ۝١٧ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا
اتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَلْتَنْظُرْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ لِغَدٍ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ خَبِيْرٌۢ بِمَا
تَعْمَلُوْنَ ۝١٨ وَلَا تَكُوْنُوْا كَالَّذِيْنَ نَسُوا اللّٰهَ فَاَنْسٰىهُمْ اَنْفُسَهُمْ ۭ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ هُمُ
الْفٰسِقُوْنَ ۝١٩ لَا يَسْتَوِيْٓ اَصْحٰبُ النَّارِ وَاَصْحٰبُ الْجَنَّةِ ۭ اَصْحٰبُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمُ
الْفَاۗىِٕزُوْنَ ۝٢٠ لَوْ اَنْزَلْنَا هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ عَلٰي جَبَلٍ لَّرَاَيْتَهٗ خَاشِعًا مُّتَصَدِّعًا مِّنْ

(And it is also for those) who come after them,[20] who say, "Our Lord, forgive us and forgive all our brothers who embraced the Faith before us, and do not place in our hearts any malice towards the believers. Our Lord, You are very Kind and Compassionate."[21]

Have[22] you not seen those who have adopted the attitude of hypocrisy? They say to their brothers who have disbelieved from among the people of the Book, "If you are driven out, we shall go forth with you, and we shall never listen to anyone in your respect, and if war is waged against you, we shall help you." But Allah is witness that they are utter liars. If they are driven out, these people will never go forth with them, and if war is waged against them, they will never help them. And even if they help them, they will turn their backs, and then will get no help from anywhere. In their hearts there is greater dread of you than of Allah,[23] because they are a people devoid of understanding.[24] They will never fight you in a body (in the open field); if at all they fight, they will fight in fortified strongholds, or from behind walls. They are very intense in mutual enmity. You think that they are united, whereas their hearts are divided.[25] This is because they are a people devoid of sense. They are even like those who have tasted, a short while before them, the evil consequences of their deeds,[26] and there awaits them a painful torment. They are like Satan who orders man to disbelieve, and when man has disbelieved, he says: "I have nothing to do with you; I fear Allah, Lord of the worlds."[27] The end of both will be that they shall go to Hell for ever, and that is the recompense of the wrongdoers. 11-17

O you[28] who have believed, fear Allah, and let everyone consider well what he has forwarded for the morrow.[29] Fear Allah, for Allah is well aware of all that you do. Do not be like those who forgot Allah, and Allah caused them to forget their own selves.[30] They indeed are the transgressors. The dwellers of Hell and the dwellers of Paradise cannot be alike. The dwellers of Paradise alone are truly successful. 18-20

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19. The word used here means "are saved" and not "were safe", for without Allah's help and succour no one can attain to the wealth of the heart (liberal-mindedness) by his own power and effort. This is a blessing of God, which one can attain only by God's bounty and grace. The word *shuhh is* used for

stinginess and miserliness in Arabic. But when this word is attributed to the self of man it becomes synonymous with narrow mindedness, niggardliness, mean spiritedness and small-heartedness, and not mere stinginess: it is rather the root cause of stinginess itself. Because of this very quality man avoids acknowledging even the good qualities of another, not to speak of recognizing his rights and discharging them. He wants that he alone should gather up everything in the world, and no one else should have anything of it. He never feels content with his own right, but usurps the rights of others, or at least wants to have for himself all that is good in the world and should not leave anything for others. On this very basis one's being saved from this evil has been described in the Qur'ān as a guarantee for success. The Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) has counted it among the most evil qualities of man, which are the root cause of corruption and mischief. Hadrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah has reported that the Holy Prophet said: "Avoid *shuḥḥ* for it was *shuḥḥ* which ruined the people before you. It incited them to shed each other's blood and make the sacred and forbidden things of others lawful for themselves." *(Muslim, Musnad Aḥmad, Baihaqī, Bukhārī* in *Al-Adab).* The tradition of Ḥadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar contains the following words: "It led them to commit wickedness and they committed it; it commanded them to commit sins and they committed sin; it urged them to break off all connections with the kindred and they broke off all connections with them." *(Musnad Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'ī).* Ḥadrat Abū Hurairah has reported that the Holy Prophet said. "Faith and *shuḥḥ* of the self cannot combine in one and the same heart." *(Ibn Abī Shaibah, Nasā'ī, Baihaqī* in *Shu'ab al-Imān, Hākim).* Hadrat Abū Sa'id Khudrī has stated that the Holy Prophet said: "Two of the qualities are such that they cannot combine in a Muslim: stinginess and misbehaviour." *(Abū Da'ūd. Tirmidhī, Bukhārī* in *Al-Adab).* It is as a result of this very teaching of Islam that, apart from individuals, the Muslim people as a nation are still the most generous and liberal. minded people in the world. There are millions and millions of Muslims living side by side with those non-Muslim people from among whom they sprung, who have become proverbial for their narrow-mindedness and miserliness. The clear distinction existing between the two peoples in respect of liberal-mindedness and miserliness cannot be explained in any other way than that it is the moral teaching of Islam that has made the Muslims so large-hearted and liberal-minded.

20. In the injunctions laid down up to here, it has been ruled that; in the *fai* properties there are the rights of Allah and His Messenger and the Messenger's relatives an the orphans and the indigent and the wayfarers and the Emigrants and the Anṣār and of the Muslim generations which will be born till the Day of Resurrection. It is this important legal ruling of the Qur'ān in the light of which Ḥadrat 'Umar(may Allah be pleased with him) introduced the new system in

respect of the lands and properties of the conquered territories of 'Irāq, Syria and Egypt and of the possessions of the previous governments and rulers of those countries. When these countries were conquered, some of the distinguished Companions among whom were included prominent men like Ḥaḍrat Zubair, Ḥaḍrat Bilāl, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdur Rahmān bin 'Auf and Ḥaḍrat Salmān Fārsī, insisted that these should be distributed among the armies who had fought and conquered them. They thought that those properties did not come under "those upon which you have not rushed your horses and camels," but the Muslims had conquered them by rushing their horses and camels on them. Therefore, except for those cities and territories, which surrendered without the war, all the rest of the conquered lands came under *ghanīmah* for which the legal command is that one-fifth of the lands and the people be given to the Public Treasury and the remaining four parts be distributed among the soldiers. But this opinion was not correct on the ground that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) had not distributed the lands and the people of any territory conquered by fighting in his time after the deduction of one-fifth, like the booty. Two of the most conspicuous precedents of his time were the conquest of Makkah and the conquest of Khaiber. Of these he handed over Makkah intact to its inhabitants. As for Khaiber, according to Ḥaḍrat Bushair bin Yasār, he divided it into 36 parts, of which he set aside 18 parts for collective benefits and requirements of the Muslims and distributed the remaining 18 among the army. *(Abū Da'ūd, Baihaqī,* Abī 'Ubaid: *Kitāb al-Amwāl;* Yahyā bin Ādam: *Kitāb al-Kharāj;* Balādhurī: *Futūh al Buldān;* Ibn Humām: *Fath al-*Qadīr). This action of the Holy Prophet made it clear that the command in respect of the conquered lands, even if they might have been taken by fighting, is not the same as of the *ghanīmah;* otherwise he would never have given the whole of Makkah intact to the people *of* Makkah, and would have set aside exactly one-half of the properties of Khaiber for the common benefits of the Muslims instead of deducting its one-fifth for the Public Treasury. Thus, what was established on the basis of the *Sunnah* was: In respect of the territories conquered by fighting the ruler of the Muslims has the authority that he may take any decision that he deems fit keeping in view the conditions of the time. He can distribute them if he so likes but if a territory has an unusual nature and importance, as Makkah had, he can also treat its inhabitants with favour, as the Holy Prophet treated the people of Makkah.

But as the conquests had not yet become common in the Holy Prophet's time and separate injunctions in respect of the different kinds of conquered territories had not yet become clearly known to the people, so when big countries were annexed to Islam in the time of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, the Companions were faced with the problem whether the territories conquered by force were in the nature of *ghanīmah* or *fai.* After the conquest of Egypt Ḥaḍrat Zubair demanded:

"Distribute this whole land just as the Holy Prophet had distributed Khaiber." (Abū 'Ubaid). About the conquered territories of Syria and 'Iraq, Ḥaḍrat Bilāl insisted: "Distribute all the lands among the fighting forces just as the spoils are distributed. "(Abū Yūsuf, *Kitāb al-Kharāj).* On the other hand, Ḥaḍrat 'Alī gave this opinion: "Leave these lands in possession of the peasants so that they continue to remain a source of income for the Muslims." *(Abū Yūsuf, Abū 'Ubaid.).* Likewise, the opinion of Ḥaḍrat Mu'ādh bin Jabal was; "If you distributed these lands, evil consequences would occur. Because of this distribution large properties will pass into the hands of those few people, who have conquered them. Then, when these people pass away and their properties pass on to their heirs and there is left only one woman or only one man from among them, nothing might remain for the future generations to meet their needs and even to meet the expenses of safeguarding the frontiers of the Islamic State. Therefore, you should so settle things that the interests both of the present and of the future generations are equally safeguarded." (Abu 'Ubaid, p. 59; *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, vol. vi, p. 138). Ḥaḍrat 'Umar calculated and found that if the territories of 'Irāq were distributed, each individual would receive two or three peasants on the average as his share, *(Abū Yūsuf, Abū 'Ubaid).* Thereupon he arrived at the judicious conclusion that those territories should not be distributed. Thus, the replies that he gave to those who demanded their distribution, were as follows:

"Do you want that for the people who come afterwards there should remain nothing?" (Abū *'Ubaid).*

"What will happen of the Muslims who come afterwards when they find that the land along with its peasants has been distributed and the people have inherited their forefathers? This is not at all just." *(Abū Yūsuf).*

"What will be left for the Muslims who come after you? I am afraid if I distribute it, you would fight among yourselves over water." *(Abū Yūsuf).*

"Had I no thought for those who would come afterwards, I would distribute every territory that I conquered just as the Messenger of Allah had distributed Khaiber." *(Bukhārī, Muwaṭṭa, Abū 'Ubaid),*

"Nay: this is the real estate. I will withhold it so that the needs and requirements of the conquering forces and of the common Muslims continue to be met by it." *(Abū 'Ubaid).*

But the people were not satisfied with these replies, and they started saying that he was being unjust. At last, Ḥaḍrat 'Umar convened a meeting of the consultative body of the Companions and put the matter before it. Here are some of the sentences of the speech that he made on this occasion:

"I have given you this trouble so that you may join me in shouldering the trust that has been put in me for governing your affairs. I am one of you, and you are the people who affirm the truth today. Everyone of you has the option to agree to or differ from what I say. I do not wish that you should follow my desire. You have the Book of Allah, which states the whole truth. By God, if I have said something which I want to enforce, I have no object in view except the truth. You have heard those who think that I am being unjust to them and want to deprive them of their rights, whereas I seek Allah's refuge that I should commit an injustice. It would be vicious on my part if I withheld from them something which actually belonged to them and gave it to another. But I can see that no other land after the land of the Chosroe is going to fall. Allah has given the properties of the Persians and their lands and their peasants in our possession. I have distributed the booty taken by our armies among them after the deduction of the *khums* (one fifth), and am thinking of distributing the rest which yet remains. But as for the lands my opinion is that I should not distribute them and their peasants, but should levy revenue on the lands and *jizyah* on the peasants, which they should always pay, and this should be the *fai* for the common Muslims and their children and the armies of today and for the generations yet to come. Don't you see that we need the troops who should be appointed to protect these our frontiers? Don't you see that in territories like Syria, Al-Jazīrah, Kūfah, Baṣra, Egypt we should station our troops, and they should be regularly for their services? So, if I distribute these lands along with their peasants, how shall we meet these expenses?"

The debate went on for two or three days. Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, Ḥaḍrat Talhah, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar and others concurred with Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, but nothing could be decided. At last, Ḥaḍrat 'Umar rose and said: "I have found an argument in the Book of Allah, which is decisive in this matter. Then, he recited these very verses *of* Sūrah Al-Ḥashr from *Mā afā' Allahu to Rabbanā innaka Ra'ūf.ur-Rahīm,* and argued: "The people of this day only are not entitled to receive a share in these properties bestowed by Allah, but Allah has joined with them also those people who will come after them. Then, how can it be that we should distribute the *fai* properties which are meant for all, only among the conquerors and leave nothing for the later generations? Moreover, Allah says: '...so that this wealth does not remain circulating among your rich people only.' But if distribute it among the conquerors, it will remain circulating only among your rich and nothing would be left for others." This argument satisfied everybody and consensus was reached that all the conquered territories should be declared *fai* for the common benefits of the Muslims, which should be left with those who work on those lands and they should be put under revenue and *jizyah*. (Abū Yūsuf, *Kitāb al-Kharāj,* pp. 23-27, 35; Al-Jaṣṣās, *Ahkām al-Qur'ān).*

Accordingly, the real position of the conquered lands that came to be established was that the Muslim people in their collective capacity are their owners; the people who were already working on them would be recognized as cultivators on behalf of the Muslim people; they would continue to pay the prescribed revenue to the Islamic government on those lands, their rights as cultivators would pass from generation to generation as heritage, and they would even be allowed to sell those rights, but they will not be the real owners of the land, but its real owners will be the Muslim community. Imām Abū 'Ubaid in his *Kitāb al-Amwāl* has stated this legal position, thus:

"Ḥaḍrat 'Umar left the lands of the territory of 'Iraq in the hands of its people; he levied tax on their lands and *jizyah* per head on the people." (p. 57).

"When the head of the Islamic government leaves the lands in the hands of the people of the conquered territories, they would be allowed to pass the lands on as heritage and would also be allowed to sell them." (P. 84).

In the time of 'Umar bin 'Abdul 'Azīz, Sha'bī was asked: "Is there a treaty with the people of the territory of 'Iraq." He replied: "There is no treaty, but when the revenue was accepted from them, it amounted to a treaty with them." *(Abū 'Ubaid, p. 49; Abū Yūsuf, p. 28).*

In the time of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, 'Utbah bin Furqad purchased a piece of land by the Euphrates. Ḥaḍrat 'Umar asked him from whom he had purchased the land. He replied that he had purchased it from its owners. Ḥaḍrat 'Umar said: "Its owners are these people, *i.e.* the Emigrants and the Anṣār." Thus, 'Umar held the opinion that the real owners of those lands were the Muslims. *(Abū 'Ubaid, p. 74).*

Accordingly, the properties of the conquered countries which were declared as the collective property of the Muslims were the following:

(1) Those lands and territories which come under the control of the Islamic government in consequence of a peace treaty.

(2) The ransom or revenue or *jizyah* which the people of a territory may have agreed to pay, without fighting, in order to seek refuge from the Muslims,

(3) Those lands and properties which the owners might have abandoned and fled.

(4) The properties the owners of which were slain and no survivor was left to own them.

(5) The lands which were not under any ownership previously.

(6) The lands which were already in the ownership of the people, but were left with their previous owners and they were put under *jizyah* and revenue,

(7) Estates of the previous ruling dynasties.

(8) Properties of the previous governments.

(For details, see *Badā-i' aṣ-Ṣanā'i, vol.- vii, pp.* 116-118; Yaḥyā bin Adam *Kitāb al-Kharāj, pp. 22, 64; Mughni al-Muḥtāj, vol.* iii, *p. 93; Ḥāshiyah ad-Dusūqi 'ala-sh-Sharah al-Kabīr,* vol. ii, p. 190; *Ghāyat al-Muntahā, vol. i,* pp. *467-471).*

Since these properties were declared as *fai* with the consensus of the Companions, the jurists of Islam also have agreed in principle on their being regarded as *fai.* However, they have differed in certain matters, the details of which are briefly as follows:

The Ḥanafīs say that as regards the lands of the conquered territories, the Islamic government (Imām in juristic terminology) has the option that it may distribute them among the forces of conquest after deduction of the *khums* (one-fifth), or may leave them with the former owners and put the owners under jizyah and the lands under revenue. In this case the land will be regarded as a 'legacy for the Muslims. *(Badāi' aṣ-Ṣanā'i;* Al-Jaṣṣāṣ, *Aḥkām* al- Qur'ān; *Sharah al-Anāyah 'al al-Hedâyah; Fatḥ al-Qadīr).* The same view has 'Abdullah bin Mubārak cited for Imam Sufyan Thauri. *(Yaḥyā bin Ādam; Abū 'Ubaid, Kitāb al-Amwāl).*

The Mālikis say that as soon as the lands have been conquered they automatically become a legacy for- the Muslims. It does not need the Imām's ruling or the willingness of the Muslim soldiers to declare them a legacy. Besides, the well known view among the Mālikis is that not only the lands but the houses and buildings of the conquered territories also are, as a matter of fact, a legacy for the Muslims. However, the Islamic government will not charge the rent for them. *(Ḥāshiyah ad-Dusūqī).*

The Ḥanbalīs agree with the Ḥanafīs that the Imam has the option to distribute the lands among the soldiers or to declare them as a legacy for the Muslims, and with the Mālikis that although the houses of the conquered territories are included the legacy, no rent will be levied on them. *(Ghāyat al-Muntahā* which is a collection of the legal rulings of the Ḥanbalī School of juristic thought and a source book for legal rulings since the 10th century).

The Shāfe'ī viewpoint is that all the transferable properties of the conquered territory are *ghanīmah,* and all the non-transferable properties (lands, houses, *etc.) fai. (Mughnī al-Muḥtāj).*

Some jurists have expressed the opinion the if the Imām wants to declare the lands of the territory taken by fighting as a legacy for the Muslims, he must first obtain the willingness of the conquering forces. For this they cite this argument: Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, before the conquest of Iraq, had promised Jarīr bin 'Abdullah al-Banalī, the people of whose tribe consitituted one-fourth of the army, which fought the Battle of Qādisiyah, that they would be given one-fourth of the conquered territory. Thus, they retained this territory for two or three years. Then Ḥaḍrat 'Umar said to them: "Had I not been responsible and answerable in the matter of division, I would have left with you whatever has been given to you. But now I see that the people have grown in numbers; therefore, my opinion is that you return it to the common people." Ḥaḍrat Jarīr acceded to this, and Ḥaḍrat 'Umar gave him 80 dīnārs as a prize. (Abu Yūsuf, *Kitāb al-Kharāj;* Abū 'Ubaid, *Kitāb* al-Amwāl). From this they argue that Ḥaḍrat 'Umar had decided to declare the conquered territories as a legacy for the Muslims only after obtaining the willingness of the conquerors. But the majority of the jurists do not admit this argument, For in respect of all the conquered territories no such willingness of the conquerors ever was taken. Only in the case of Hadrat Jarir bin 'Abdullah this was done because Ḥaḍrat 'Umar had made a promise with him prior to any collective decision about the conquered lands. Therefore, he had to obtain his willingness only in order to be free from the obligation of the promise. This cannot be cited as a general law.

Another section of the jurists says that even after declaring the lands as a legacy the government retains the option that it may redistribute the lands among the conquerors. For this they argue from this tradition: Once Ḥaḍrat 'Alī said to the people in an address: "Had not there been the apprehension that you would fight among yourselves, I would have distributed the suburban lands among you." (Abū Yūsuf, *Kitāb al-Kharāj;* Abū 'Ubaid, *Kitāb al-Amwāl).* But the majority of jurists do not admit this argument either. They are unanimous that when the people of the conquered territories have once been allowed to retain their lands and put under *jizyah* and revenue, the decision can never be changed later. As for the tradition attributed to Ḥaḍrat 'Alī Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣāṣ has discussed it at length in his *Aḥkam al-Qur'ān* and proved it to be not authentic.

21. In this verse although the real object is only to point out that in *fai* not only the people of the present generation but the Muslims of the later periods and their future generations also have a share, yet, besides, the Muslims have also been taught an important moral lesson that they should never have any malice against other Muslims in their hearts, and they should continue to pray for the forgiveness of the Muslims who have gone before them instead of cursing and abusing them. The bond that binds the Muslims together is that of a common Faith. If a person values his Faith as the most important thing in his heart,

inevitably he would be a well-wisher of all those people who are his brethren-in-faith. He can have ill-will and malice and hatred towards them in his heart only when the value of the Faith decreases in his sight and he starts valuing other things more. Therefore, it is the requirement of Faith that a believer's heart should be free from every trace of malice and hatred against the other believers. In this matter the best lesson is given by a *Hadīth* which Nasā'ī has related from Hadrat Anas. According to him, once it so happened that for three days continuously the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) declared in his assembly that a person was going to appear before them, who belonged to the dwellers of Paradise, and every time it would be a certain person from among the Anṣār. At this Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin 'Āṣ became curious as to what deeds the person concerned performed on the basis of which the Holy Prophet had repeatedly given the good news of his admission to Paradise. Thus, he made an excuse and spent three consecutive nights in his house to see how he performed his worship, but during the night he did not see any thing unusual. At last, he asked him directly as to what special acts and devotions he performed on the basis of which the Holy Prophet had given the great good news about him. He replied: "You have seen how I perform my worship, but there is one thing which might have earned me this reward: I do not harbour any malice or evil design against any Muslim, nor feel jealous of him on account of any good that Allah might have bestowed on him."

This does not mean that if a Muslim finds an error in another Muslim's word or deed, he should avoid calling it an error. Faith does not demand this. But to describe an error as a mistake on the basis of an argument and to state it to be so in a polite and decent manner is one thing and to harbour malice and hatred and resort to invective and abuse quite another. It is wrong if one resorts to this in respect of one's contemporaries, but worse if one resorted to this in respect of the dead people of the past. For the person indulging in such a thing would be a most filthy person for he is not even inclined to forgive the dead. And the worst would be that a person should resort to invective and abuse in respect of those illustrious people who had done full justice to the Holy Prophet's companionship in a period full of extreme tribulations and hardships and had struggled with their lives to spread the light of Islam in the world and enabled us today to be blessed with the Faith. One can hold and opinion if one thinks that such and such party of them was in the right and such and such in the wrong in its viewpoint in the differences that arose between them, and can even express his opinion in a reasonable and decent way, but to resort to exaggeration in support of one party so that the heart is filled with spite and hatred against the other is an evil which no God-fearing person would commit. Those who indulge in such a thing against the clear teaching of the Qur'ān, generally present the excuse that the Qur'ān forbids to

bear malice towards the believers and the ones towards whom they bear the malice were not believers but hypocrites. But this allegation is even worse than the sin in defence of which the excuse is presented. For these very verses of the Qur'ān in the context of which Allah has taught the Muslims of the later generations not to bear malice towards the Muslims who have gone before them and to pray for their forgiveness, are sufficient to refute this allegation. In these verses three groups have been mentioned, one after the other, who are entitled to receive a share in *fai'*: the Emigrants, the Anṣār and the Muslims coming after them; and the Muslims of the later periods have been enjoined that they should pray for the forgiveness of the Muslims who had embraced the Faith before them. Obviously, in this context those who had embraced the Faith before them could not be any other than the Emigrants and the Anṣār. Then Allah in vv. 11-17 of this Sūrah Al-Hashr itself has also told us who were the hypocrites. This makes it absolutely clear that the hypocrites were the people who had encouraged the Jews on the occasion of the battle of the Banī an-Naḍīr; as against them, the believers were those who were on the side of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) in this battle. After this, can a Muslim who has any fear of God in his heart, have the boldness to deny the Faith of the people to whose Faith Allah Himself has borne the testimony?

Imām Mālik and Imām Aḥmad, arguing from this verse, have expressed the opinion that there is no share in *fai'* for the people who malign the Companions of the Holy Prophet. (Ibn al-Arabī, *Aḥkām al-Qurān; Ghāyat al-Muntaha).* But the Ḥanafīs and the Shāfe'īs have not concurred with this, the reason being that Allah while declaring the three groups to be entitled to *fai'*, has praised a conspicuous quality of each group but none of these qualities is a condition which may determine whether a group should or should not be given a share in *fai'*. About the Emigrants it has been said: "They seek Allah's bounty and His goodwill, and are ever ready to succour Allah and His Messenger." This does not mean that an Emigrant who lacks this quality, is not entitled to have a share in *fai'*. About the Anṣar it has been said: "They love those who have migrated to them and entertain no desire in their hearts for what is given to them and prefer others above themselves even though they be needy themselves." This also does not mean that a member of the Anṣār who has no love for the Emigrants and who is desirous of getting for himself what is being given to them, has no share in *fai'*. Therefore, the quality of the third group that "they pray for the forgiveness of those who embraced the Faith before them and they pray that they should not have any malice in their hearts towards any other believer", is also no condition to make one entitled to *fai',* but this is in praise of a good quality and an instruction as to what should be the attitude of the believers towards the other believers and especially in respect of those believers who have gone before them.

22. From the style of this whole section (vv. 11-17) it appears that it was revealed at the time when the Holy Prophet (upon who n be Allah's peace) had served a notice on the Banī an-Naḍīr to leave Madīnah within ten days, but had not yet laid siege to their quarters. As has been mentioned above, when the Holy Prophet save the notice to the Banī an-Naḍīr, 'Abdullah bin Ubayy and other leaders of the hypocrites of Madīnah sent them a message to the effect that they would come to their aid with two thousand men, and that the Banī Quraiẓah and the Banī Ghaṭafān also would rise in their support; therefore, they should stand firm and should never surrender to the Muslims. For if the Muslims waged a war against hem, they would fight them from their side; and if they expelled hem, they also would go out with them. Thereupon Allah sent own these verses, Thus, chronologically this section is an earlier revelation and the first section a later revelation, when the Banī an-Naḍīr had actually been driven out of Madīnah. But in the Qur'ān the order of the two passages has been reversed for the reason that the subject matter of the first section is of greater importance

23. That is, "The reason why they dare not face you openly in the field is not that they are Muslims and have fear of God in their hearts and are afraid that despite their claim to the Faith when they come out to help the disbelievers as against the believers, they will be held accountable before God. But what actually restrains them from facing you is that when they see your profound love and spirit of self-sacrifice and devotion for Islam and the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (Upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) and the great unity and concord in your ranks, they become dispirited. They a now full well that although you are few in number, the spirit of martyrdom which has turned each single individual among you into a gallant warrior and the organization which has moulded you into a solid body, will crush them also along with the Jews when they clash with you in the battlefield. Here one should bear in mind the fact that if a person harbours the fear of another than God in his heart, it is in fact a negation of the fear of God. Obviously, the person who considers one of the dangers as lesser and the other greater, pays no heed to the first but does whatever b e can to safeguard himself against the greater danger."

24. A great truth has been expressed in this brief sentence. A person who has sense knows that the real power to be feared is the power of Allah and not the power of men. Therefore, he will avoid every such thing as may call for the punishment of Allah, whether there is any human power to call him to account for it or not, and he will come out to accomplish any duty which Allah has enjoined on him, whether he is opposed and hindered by all the powers of the world. But a man, who has no sense, determines his attitude and conduct in view of the human powers, instead of Allah's power, in all matters of life, because Allah's power for him is imperceptible and human powers are perceptible. If he avoids something,

he will avoid it, not because of the fear of Allah's punishment for it, but because of a human power, which may be there to take him to task. And if he does something, he will do is not because Allah has enjoined it, but because some human power has ordered or approved of it, and will reward hi for it. This very distinction between intelligence and folly, in fact, distinguishes the character and conduct of a believer from that of an unbeliever.

25. This refers to the second weakness of the hypocrites. The first weakness was that they were cowardly: they feared the men instead of fearing God and had no higher aim of life before them like the believers, which might impel them to fight for it even at the cost of life. And their second weakness was that they had no common tie between them except hypocrisy, which might unite them together into a strong band. The only thing that had brought them together was that they were all feeling highly upset at the flourishing leadership and rulership of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), who was an outsider in their city, and at the warm reception and help which their own compatriots, the Anṣār, were giving the Emigrants. Because of this jealousy they wanted them to join hands together and in conspiracy with the enemies of Islam of the surrounding areas should somehow put an end to this alien power and authority. But apart from this negative objective there was no positive common aim to unify them. Each of their chiefs had his own separate band: each craved for his own leadership; no one was sincere to the other; but each bore such jealousy and malice for the other that they could neither forget their mutual enmities nor desist from harming the other fatally even while facing those whom they regarded as their common enemy.

Thus, at the outset, even before the battle against the Banī an-Naḍīr took place, Allah analysed the internal state of the hypocrites and informed the Muslims that there was no real danger from their side; therefore, they should not feel alarmed- at the rumours that when they lay siege to the Banī an-Naḍīr, the leaders of the hypocrites would attack them from the rear with two thousand men, and also bring the Banī Quraiẓah and the Banī Ghaṭafān along against them. All this was empty boasting which would be exposed at the very beginning of the trial.

26. The allusion is to the disbelievers of the Quraish and the Jewish clan of the Banī Qainuqā', who had been defeated by a handful of ill-equipped Muslims in spite of their larger numbers and superior equipment, due mainly to these weaknesses

27. That is, "These hypocrites are treating the Banī an-Naḍīr in much the same way as Satan treats men. Today they are urging them to stand firm and go forth and clash with the Muslims making them believe that they would come to their aid, but when they actually clash with the Muslims, they would renounce

their pledges and promises and would never even look back to see their fate. The same way does Satan treat every disbeliever, and a similar treatment had he given to the disbelieving Quraish at Badr, as has been mentioned in Sūrah al-Anfāl: 48 above. First, he incited them with false hopes and brought them out to confront the Muslims, saying: "Today no one can overcome you, for I am with you." But when the two forces met in battle, he took to his heels, saying: "I have nothing to do with you. I see that which you cannot see. Indeed, I fear Allah."

28. It is a rule of the Qur'ān that whenever the hypocritical Muslims are taken to task for their hypocrisy, they are given admonition also so that whoever of them has some life left in his conscience, may feel remorse for his conduct and attitude and may make an effort, out of the fear of Allah, to come out of the pit into which his worship of the self has thrown him. This whole section (vv. 18-24) consists of such admonition.

29. "For the morrow": for the Hereafter. That is, this whole worldly life is "today", whose "tomorrow" is the Day of Resurrection, which is going to follow it. Adopting this style Allah has, in a wise manner, made man understand the truth that just as that person is highly foolish, who gambles away his all for the enjoyment of today and does not realize whether tomorrow he would be left with anything to eat and a place of shelter or not, so is that person also only working for his own doom, who is too absorbed in making his world to pay heed to the Hereafter, whereas the Hereafter *is* to follow this world just as today is to be followed by tomorrow, and there he would find nothing if he has sent nothing ahead for the morrow. Besides, the other wise point here is that every person has been appointed his own censor. Unless a person develops in himself the sense of what is good for him and what is evil, he cannot appreciate whether what he is doing will make his future in the Hereafter or mar it. And when this sense becomes active in himself, he will have to calculate and see for himself whether the way in which he is expending his time, his wealth, his energies and capabilities leads to Heaven or Hell. To do so is in his own interest, for if he does not do so he will ruin his own future itself.

30. That is, forgetfulness of God inevitably leads to forgetfulness of one's own self. When man forgets that he is slave to the Almighty, he will inevitably form a wrong view of his position in the world, and his whole life will go wrong because of this basic error. Likewise, when he forgets that he is slave to nobody except Allah, he does not serve the one whose slave actually he is not. This also is a grave and all-pervading misunderstanding, which corrupts his whole life. Man's real position in the world is that of a slave: he is not free and self sufficient; and he is slave of only One God, and is no one else's slave beside Him. The person

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خَشْيَةِ اللّٰهِ ؕ وَتِلْكَ الْاَمْثَالُ نَضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾ هُوَ اللّٰهُ
الَّذِيْ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۚ عٰلِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ ۚ هُوَ الرَّحْمٰنُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿٢٢﴾ هُوَ
اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۚ اَلْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوْسُ السَّلٰمُ الْمُؤْمِنُ الْمُهَيْمِنُ الْعَزِيْزُ
الْجَبَّارُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُ ؕ سُبْحٰنَ اللّٰهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ هُوَ اللّٰهُ الْخَالِقُ الْبَارِئُ الْمُصَوِّرُ
لَهُ الْاَسْمَآءُ الْحُسْنٰى ؕ يُسَبِّحُ لَهٗ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۚ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿٢٤﴾

21 Had We sent down this Qur'ān upon a mountain, you would have seen it humbling itself and splitting asunder from the fear of Allah.[31] We present these parables before the people so that they may reflect (on themselves).

22-24 He[32] is Allah besides Whom there is no god.[33] He is the Knower of the unseen and the seen:[34] He is the Compassionate and the Merciful.[35] He is Allah, besides Whom there is no god: He is the Sovereign,[36] the Holy,[37] the Source of safety,[38] the Giver of peace,[39] the Guardian,[40] the All-Mighty,[41] the Enforcer of His decrees,[42] and the ever Supreme.[43] Exalted is Allah alone Who is the Planner of Creation, its Enforcer and its Fashioner.[45] His are the excellent names.[46] Whatever is there in the heavens and the earth glorifies Him,[47] and He is the All-Mighty and the All-Wise.[48]

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who, in not know this truth, does not in fact know himself. And the person who inspite of knowing this, forgets it at any moment, may commit an act at that very moment, which a disbeliever, or a polytheist or a man forgetful of God only would commit. Man's remaining firm and steadfast on the right path entirely depends on his remembering God at all times. For as soon as he becomes heedless of Him, he becomes heedless of himself and this very heedlessness turns him into sinfulness.

31. The parable means that if a huge creation like a mountain had the sense and knowledge that it had been made responsible and accountable, like man.

before Allah Almighty, for its deeds, it would have trembled from the fear of it. But how heedless, senseless and thoughtless is the man, who understands the Qur'ān, and has known the whole truth through it, yet he is neither seized by any fear nor feels worried as to what answer he would make to his God about the responsibilities that have been placed on him. On the contray when he reads the Qur'ān, or hears it read, he remains go un-moved as if he were a lifeless and senseless stone, which is not supposed to hear and see and understand anything. (For further explanation, see E.N. 120 of Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb)

32. These verses explain what kind of God He is, and what are His attributes. Who has sent this Qur'ān to you, Who has placed these responsibilities on you, and before Whom you have to render an account of your deeds in the end. This mention of the Divine attributes immediately after the above theme automatically gives man the feeling that he has not to deal with an ordinary being but with Almighty Allah Who has such and such attributes. Here, one should also understand that although in the Qur'ān the attributes of Allah Almighty have been stated in a unique way, which gives a clear concept of the Divine Bing there are two places where the attributes of Allah have been mentioned in a most comprehensive way, in the Verse of the Throne (Al-Baqarah: 255) and in these verses of Sūrah Al-Ḥashr.

33. That is, He is the One besides Whom none else has the rank, position, attributes and powers of Godhead so that he may be worshipped and served as god.

34. That is, He knows whatever is hidden from the creatures as well as whatever is known and visible to them. Nothing of this universe is unknown to Him. He directly knows whatever has happened in the past, whatever exists at present and whatever will happen in the future : He does not stand in need of any means or medium of knowledge.

35. That is, He alone is the Being Whose mercy is limitless, which covers the whole universe and blesses and benefits everything a it. None else in the world is the bearer of such all-pervading, infinite mercy. The mercy of every other being, characterised by the hality of mercy, is partial and limited, and that quality too is not essentially its own, but bestowed by the Creator for a specific need and purpose. In whatever creature He has created the quality of mercy for some other creature, He has created it in order to make one creature a means of the development and well-being of the other creature. This by itself is a proof that Allah's Mercy is infinite.

36. The word used in the original is al-Mālik, which means at He alone is the real Sovereign. Moreover, the word al-Mālik its general sense also gives the

meaning that He is King of the tire universe and not of a particular region or of a specific country. His Sovereignty and rule comprehends the entire universe.

He is Master of everything. Everything submits itself to His command and power and authority, and there is nothing to delimit His Sovereignty. At different places in the Qur'ān all aspects of Allah's Sovereignty have been presented and explained fully.

"Whoever exist in the heavens and the earth are He servants; all are obedient to Him." (Ar-Rum: 26).

"He administers the affairs of the world from the heavens to the earth." (As-Sajdah: 5)

"To Him belongs the dominion of the earth and the heavens, and all matters are referred to Him for decision." (Al-Ḥadīd: 5).

"He has no partner in His sovereignty." (Al-Furqān: 2).

"In His hand is the absolute control of everything." (Yā Sin: 83).

"Doer of whatever He wills." (Al-Burūj: 16).

"He is accountable to none for what He does,l but all others are accountable (to Him)." (Al-Anbiyā': 23).

"Allah rules and there is none to reverse His decrees." (Ar-Ra'd: 41).

"The Being Who gives protection while none can give protection against Him." (Al-Mu'min: 88).

"Say: O Allah, Sovereign of the Kingdom, Thou bestowest kingdom on whomever Thou wilt, and Thou takest it away from whomever Thou wilt. Thou exaltest whomever Thou wilt and Thou abasest whomever Thou wilt. All that is good is in Thy power; indeed Thou hast full power over all things." (Āl-i-'Imrān: 26).

These explanations make it abundantly clear that Allah is not King in some limited or metaphoric sense but He is real King in the most perfect and complete sense of sovereignty. As a matter of fact, if sovereignty in its true sense is at all found somewhere, it is found only in Allah's Kingship. Apart from this, wherever it is claimed to be, whether in the person of a king or dictator, or in a class or group or family, or in some nation, he or it possesses no sovereignty at all, for sovereignty is not a gift, which may at one time be granted and at another time withdrawn, which may be in danger of being usurped, the establishment and existence of which may be temporary and temporal, and the sphere of power and authority of which may be circumscribed and restricted by many other conflicting powers.

But the Qur'ān does not just say that Allah is King of the universe but in the following sentences it also makes clear that He is the King Who is the Holy, the Source of Safety, the Giver of peace, the Guardian, the All-Mighty, the Enforcer of His decrees, the ever Supreme, the Creator, the Maker and the Fashioner.

37. *Quddus* is a superlative. It means that Allah is far exalted that He should have a fault or defect or demerit: He is the purest Being, no evil can be imagined about Him. Here, one should clearly understand that the attribute of holiness is a foremost accompaniment of sovereignty. Man's intellect and nature refuse to believe that a being who is the bearer of sovereignty may be mischievous, ill behaved, ill-natured, who may be characterised with these base qualities, from whose power and authority his subjects might be in danger of suffering evil instead of being blessed with good. That is why wherever man thinks sovereignty is centred, he assumes holiness also to be there, even if it is not there, for absolute sovereignty is inconceivable without holiness. But, obviously, there is no real Sovereign except Allah, Who is holy, nor can there be. Whether it is monarchy, or sovereignty of the people, or dictatorship *of* the socialist system; or some other form of human rule, in any case holiness for it is inconceivable.

38. The word *as-Salām* as used in the original means peace and Secure, Allah's being called *as-Salām* means that He is peace and safety personified. He is far exalted that some calamity or weakness or defect should befall Him, or His Perfection should suffer a decline or blemish.

39. The word *at-Mu'min is* derived from *amn,* which means to secure from fear, and *Mu'min* is one who provides security to others. Allah has been called *Mu'min* in the sense that He provides security to His creatures. His creatures are secure from the fear that He would ever wrong them, or deprive them of their rights, or allow their rewards to go to waste, or would violate the promises He has made with them. Then, since no object has been mentioned with this subject, but the epithet of *al-Mu'min* has been used absolutely, it automatically gives the meaning that His security comprehends the entire universe and all that it contains.

40. The word *al-Muhaimin* has three meanings: The Guardian and Protector; (2) the Observer who sees what everyone does; and (3) the Being Who has taken up the responsibility to fulfil the needs and requirements of the people. Here also, since the word *al-Muhaimin* has been used absolutely, and no object has been mentioned of this subject, therefore, it by itself gives the implied meaning that He is guarding and protecting all creatures, is watching the acts and deeds of everyone, and has taken up the responsibility of sustaining and providing for every creature in the universe with its needs and requirements.

41. Al-'Aziz: such an Almighty Being against Whom no one may dare raise his head, no one may have the power to resist His decrees, before Whom everyone may be helpless and powerless.

42. The word *al-Jabbār* as used in the original is derived from *jabr* which means setting something right by use of power, reforming something by force. Allah has been called *Jabbār* in the sense that He sets the system of His universe right by the use of power and enforces His will, which is wholly based on wisdom, by force. Moreover, the *word jabbar* also contains the meaning of greatness; and glory. Thus, a palm-tree which is too tall for the people to pluck its fruit is called *jabbār in* Arabic. Likewise, an act which is grand and glorious is called *'amal jabbār.*

43. The word *al-Mutakabbir* has two meanings. (1) The one who is not actually great but poses as great, and (2) the one who is actually great and sets himself up as such. Whether it is man or Satan, or some other creature, since greatness does not, in actual fact, belong to it, its posing itself as great and claiming superiority over others is, a false claim and a vice. Contrary to this, Allah Almighty is truly Great and greatness actually belongs to Him, and everything in the universe is low and insignificant as against Him; therefore, His being Great and setting Himself up as Great is no false claim but an actual reality; it is not an evil quality but a virtue and excellence, which no one else has but Allah.

44. That is, those who regard a creature as an associate in His powers, authority, attributes, or in His Being, in fact, utter a grave falsehood, for Allah is far exalted that anybody or anything should be an associate with Him in any sense.

45. That is, the whole world and everthing in it, from the initial plan of its creation till its coming into existence in its final, finished form, is entirely Allah's work of creation. Nothing has come into existence by itself nor come about accidentally, nor has anyone else the least share in its creation and development. Here, Allah's act of creation has been described in three separate stages, which take place one after the other. First is the stage of *khalq*, which means to ordain, or to plan. It is like an engineer's conceiving the design of a building, which he intends to build for a specific purpose and draws out its detailed diagram and model. The second stage is *bar'*, which actually means to separate, to cut, to split asunder. The Creator has been called *Bāri'* in the sense that He enforces the plan He has conceived and brings out the thing from non-existence into existence. It is analogous to the engineer's putting marks on the ground of the full measurements of the building according to the plan, digging the foundations, raising the walls and completing all the practical preliminaries of the construction work. The third stage is *taṣwīr*, which means to give shape; here it implies giving something its

final complete shape. In all these three stages there is no resemblance whatever between Allah's work and human works. None of human plans is such as may not have been derived from previous models and plans. But each of Allah's plans is unique and His own original creation. Whatever man makes, he makes it by combining the substances created by Allah. He does not bring anything from non-existence into existence, but composes and constructs by different methods whatever is present and available. Contrary to this, Allah has brought everything from non-existence into creation, and the substance itself of which He has made the universe is created by Him. Likewise, in the matter of giving shape also man is not the inventor but an imitator, and only a poor imitator. The real Maker of forms and shapes is Allah, Who has given a unique and matchless shape to every species and individual and has never repeated exactly the same shape or from.

46. Names imply the adjectives, and "His are the excellent names" means that those adjectives which indicate or express some kind of defect are not appropriate for Him. He should be remembered by those names which express His attributes of Perfection. In the Qur'ān these beautiful names of Allah have been mentioned here and there, and in the *Ḥadīth* 99 names of that Exalted and Pure Being have been enumerated, which *Tirmidhī* and *Ibn Mājah* have related on the authority of Ḥadrat Abu Hurairah. If one studies these names as mentioned in the Qur'ān and the *Ḥadīth* carefully, the can easily understand what words would be appropriate ant suitable if one has to remember Allah in another language.

47. That is, "Everything proclaims .with the tongue, or otherwise, that its Creator is free frown every fault and defect, weakness and error."

48. For explanation, see E.N. 2 of Sūrah Al-Ḥadīd.


LX
AL
MUMTAḤINAH
الممتحنة

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

LX

AL-MUMTAḤINAH

الممتحنة

INTRODUCTION

Name

In verse 10 of this Sūrah it has been enjoined that the women who emigrate *to dār al-Islām* (the Islamic State) and claim to be Muslims, should be examined; hence the title *Al-Mumtahinah*. The word is pronounced both as *mumtaḥinah* and as *mumtaḥainah*. the meaning according to the first pronunciation being "the Sūrah Which examines", and according to the second, "the woman who is examined."

Period of Revelation

The Sūrah deals with two incidents, the time of the occurrence of which is well known historically. The first relates to Ḥaḍrat Ḥātib bin Abi Balta'a, who, a little before the conquest of Makkah, had sent a secret letter to the Quraish chiefs informing them of the Holy Prophet's

intention to attack them. The second relates to the Muslim women, who had started emigrating from Makkah to Madīnah, after the conclusion of the Truce of Ḥudaibiyah, and the problem arose whether they also were to be returned to the disbelievers, like the Muslim men, according to the conditions of the Truce. The mention of these two things absolutely determines that this Sūrah came down during the interval between the Truce of Ḥudaibiyah and the Conquest of Makkah. Besides, there is a third thing also that has been mentioned at the end of the Sūrah to the effect: What should the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) make the women to pledge when they come to take the oath of allegiance before him as believers? About this part also the guess is that this too was sent down some time before the conquest of Makkah, for after this conquest a large number of the Quraish women, like their men, were going to enter Islam simultaneously and had to be administered the oath of allegiance collectively.

Theme and Topics

This Sūrah has three parts:

The first part consists of vv. 1-9, and the concluding verse 13 also relates to it. In this strong exception has been taken to the act of Ḥaḍrat Ḥaṭib bin Abi Balta'a in that he had tried to inform the enemy of a very important war secret of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) only for the sake of safe-guarding his family. This would have caused great bloodshed at the conquest of Makkah had it not been made ineffective in time. It would have cost the Muslims many precious lives; many of the Quraish would have been killed, who were to render great services to Islam afterward; the gains which were to accrue from conquering Makkah peacefully would have been 'lost, and all these serious losses would have resulted only because one of the Muslims had wanted to safeguard his family from the dangers of war. Administering a severe warning at this blunder Allah has taught the believers the lesson that no believer should, under any circumstances and for any motive, have relations of love and friendship with the disbelievers, who are actively hostile to Islam, and a believer should refrain from everything which might be helpful to them in the conflict between Islam and disbelief. However,' there is no harm in dealing kindly and justly with

those disbelievers, who may not be practically engaged in hostile activities against Islam and persecution of the Muslims.

The second part consists of vv. 10-11. In this a social problem has been settled, which was agitating the minds at that time. There were many Muslim women in Makkah, whose husbands were pagans, but they were emigrating and reaching Madīnah somehow. Likewise, there were many Muslim men in Nadīnah, whose wives were pagans and had been left behind in Makkah. The question arose whether the marriage bond between them continued to be valid or not. Allah settled this problem for ever, saying that the pagan husband is not lawful for the Muslim women, nor the pagan wife lawful for the Muslim husband. This decision leads to very important legal consequences, which we shall explain in our notes below.

The third section consists of verse 12, in which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) has been instructed to ask the women who accept Islam to pledge that they would refrain from the major evils that were prevalent among the womenfolk of the pre-Islamic Arab society, and to promise that they would henceforth follow the ways of goodness which the Messenger of Allah may enjoin.



يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تَتَّخِذُوْا عَدُوِّيْ وَعَدُوَّكُمْ اَوْلِيَآءَ تُلْقُوْنَ اِلَيْهِمْ
بِالْمَوَدَّةِ وَقَدْ كَفَرُوْا بِمَا جَآءَكُمْ مِّنَ الْحَقِّ ۚ يُخْرِجُوْنَ الرَّسُوْلَ وَاِيَّاكُمْ اَنْ
تُؤْمِنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ رَبِّكُمْ ؕ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ خَرَجْتُمْ جِهَادًا فِيْ سَبِيْلِيْ وَابْتِغَآءَ مَرْضَاتِيْ ۚ
تُسِرُّوْنَ اِلَيْهِمْ بِالْمَوَدَّةِ ۖ وَاَنَا اَعْلَمُ بِمَآ اَخْفَيْتُمْ وَمَآ اَعْلَنْتُمْ ؕ وَمَنْ يَّفْعَلْهُ
مِنْكُمْ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَآءَ السَّبِيْلِ ۝ اِنْ يَّثْقَفُوْكُمْ يَكُوْنُوْا لَكُمْ اَعْدَآءً وَّيَبْسُطُوْٓا
اِلَيْكُمْ اَيْدِيَهُمْ وَاَلْسِنَتَهُمْ بِالسُّوْٓءِ وَوَدُّوْا لَوْ تَكْفُرُوْنَ ۝ لَنْ تَنْفَعَكُمْ اَرْحَامُكُمْ
وَلَآ اَوْلَادُكُمْ ۚ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ ۚ يَفْصِلُ بَيْنَكُمْ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ بَصِيْرٌ ۝
قَدْ كَانَتْ لَكُمْ اُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ فِيْٓ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَالَّذِيْنَ مَعَهٗ ۚ اِذْ قَالُوْا لِقَوْمِهِمْ
اِنَّا بُرَءٰٓؤُا مِنْكُمْ وَمِمَّا تَعْبُدُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ ۖ كَفَرْنَا بِكُمْ وَبَدَا بَيْنَنَا وَ
بَيْنَكُمُ الْعَدَاوَةُ وَالْبَغْضَآءُ اَبَدًا حَتّٰى تُؤْمِنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ وَحْدَهٗٓ اِلَّا قَوْلَ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ
لِاَبِيْهِ لَاَسْتَغْفِرَنَّ لَكَ وَمَآ اَمْلِكُ لَكَ مِنَ اللّٰهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ؕ رَبَّنَا عَلَيْكَ
تَوَكَّلْنَا وَاِلَيْكَ اَنَبْنَا وَاِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيْرُ ۝ رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا فِتْنَةً لِّلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا

الجزء الثامن والعشرون

LX

AL-MUMTAḤINAH

الممتحنة

Verses: 13 *Revealed at Madinah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

O you[1] who have believed, if you have come out (from your homes and emigrated) in order to fight in My way and to seek My goodwill, then do not make friends with My enemies and your enemies. You show them friendship even though they have refused to believe in the Truth that has come to you, while they drive out the Messenger and you away only because you believe in Allah, your Lord. You send them friendly messages secretly, whereas I know full well whatever you do secretly and whatever you do openly. Whoever from among you does so, has indeed gone astray from the right way. If these people overcome you, they will be enemies to you and will use their hands and their tongues to harm you. They wish that you should turn unbelievers somehow.[2] On the Day of Resurrection neither will your relationships avail you anything nor your children.[3] Allah on that Day shall cause separation between you,[4] and He is Seer of whatever you do.[5] 1-3

There is indeed an excellent example for you in Abraham and his Companions when they said to their people plainly: "We have nothing to do with you and your gods, whom you worship instead of Allah; we renounce you[6] and there has arisen between us and you enmity and hatred for ever, until you believe in Allah, the One." But Abraham's saying this to his father (is excepted); "I shall certainly pray for your forgiveness, though I have no power to get anything for you from Allah."[7] (And the prayer of Abraham and his companions was:) "O our Lord, in you alone have we put our trust and to You alone have we turned and to You we shall return finally. O our Lord: make us not a test and trial for those who have disbelieved;[8] and O our Lord, 4-5

pardon us our errors. You indeed are the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.

1. It would be appropriate to give at the outset the details of the incident concerning which these verses were sent down so that the subject that follows is understood easily. The commentators are agreed, and Ibn 'Abbās, Mujāhid, Qatadah, 'Urwah bin Zubair and others also have unanimously reported, that these verses were revealed at the time when a letter of Ḥadrat Ḥātib bin Abi Balta'a to the pagans of Makkah was intercepted.

It so happened that, when the Quraish broke the Treaty of Ḥudaibiyah, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) started making preparations for an invasion of Makkah, but he did not tell anyone, except a few close Companions, what was the goal of the expedition. By chance at about the same time a woman arrived from Makkah, who had been a slave-girl of the Banī 'Abdul Muṭṭalib, and then after her freedom had adopted singing as her profession. She complained of poverty to the Holy Prophet and requested for financial help. The Holy Prophet appealed to the Banī 'Abdul Muṭṭalib and the Banī al Muṭṭalib and satisfied her need. When she was about to leave for Makkah, Ḥadrat Ḥātib bin Abi Balta'a met her and quietly gave her a letter addressed to some of the Makkah chiefs and paid her ten dīnārs so that she kept the secret and carried the letter to the addressees secretly. When she had just left Madīnah, Allah informed the Holy Prophet (Upon whom be Allah's peace) of it. So the Holy Prophet immediately sent Ḥadrat 'Ali, Ḥadrat Zubair and Hadrat Miqdād bin Aswad after her with the instruction: "Make haste: At Rauḍah Khāki (12 miles from Madīnah on the road to Makkah) you will meet a woman, who carries a letter from Ḥātib to the pagans of Makkah Seize that letter by any means you like. If she delivers the letter willingly, let her go; if she refuses to deliver it, kill her." When these Companions reached the place, they found the woman there They demanded the letter from her. She replied that she had a letter. They searched her but could find no letter. At last, they told her to deliver the letter, otherwise they would strip her and search her. Whe she saw that there was no way of escape, she took out the letter from her hair-plait and delivered it to them, and they brought it to the Holy Prophet. When the letter was opened and read it was found to contain information to the Quraish that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) was making preparations to attack them. (In different traditions different wordings of the letter have been reported but the purport of all is one and the same). The Holy Prophet asked Ḥadrat Ḥātib what induced him to act thus. He replied: "Sir, do not make haste in this matter of mine. I have not done this because I have become a disbeliever or an apostate, and have started preferring disbelief to Islam. But the truth is that my near and dear ones are still in Makkah. I do not belong to the tribe of the Quraish, but had settled there under the guardianship of some of them. The families of the Emigrants, which are still in Makkah, will be defended and

protected by their tribes and clans, but I have no tribe, which could give protection to my family. Therefore, I sent this letter in order to keep the Quraish under obligation so that they did not harm my children." (According to Ḥaḍrat Ḥaṭib's son 'Abdur Raḥmān, Ḥaḍrat Ḥābit had his children and brother still in Makkah at that time, and according to Ḥaḍrat Ḥāṭib's own report his mother also was there). Hearing what Hātib had to say, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) said to the people: "Ḥāṭib has told you the truth." That is, the real motive of his action was this and not any treachery against Islam or any intention to support disbelief. Ḥaḍrat 'Umar rose and said: "Permit me, O Messenger of Allah, that I should cut off this hypocrite's head: he has been treacherous to Allah and His Messenger and the Muslims." The Holy Prophet said: "This man has participated in the Battle of Badr. You may not know, O 'Umar, Allah may have looked favourably at the people of Badr and said: "Do as you please, I have forgiven you." (The words in the last sentence are different in different traditions. In some these are to the effect: "I have granted you forgiveness"; in some other: "I am your Forgiver"; and in still an other: "I will forgive you.") Hearing this Ḥaḍrat 'Umar wept and said: "Allah and His Messenger have the best knowledge." This is a resume of those many traditions which Bukhārī, Muslim, Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī, Ibn Jarīr Tabarī, Ibn Hishām, Ibn Hibbān and Ibn Abi Hātim have related on the authority of several reliable transmitters. The most authentic of these is the tradition which Ḥadrat 'Alī's secretary, 'Ubaidullah bin Abū Rāfi', heard from Hadrat 'Alī himself, and from him Ḥaḍrat 'Alī's grandson, Ḥaṣan bin Muḥammad bin Ḥanafiyah, heard and conveyed to the later reporters. In none of these there is any mention that Ḥaḍrat Ḥāṭib was pardoned when he presented this excuse. But there is no hint either to show that he was awarded some punishment. That is why the Muslim scholars have concluded that Ḥaḍrat Ḥāṭib's excuse was accepted and he was pardoned.

2. Although what has been said up to here, and what follows in this regard, was sent down in connection with the incident relating to Hadrat Hātib, Allah, instead of dwelling on his case only, has given the believers this lesson for ever and ever: "It is contrary to the profession of the Faith that a person should act, out of any motive or reason, in a way detrimental to the interests of Islam and subservient to the interests of disbelief when a conflict is going on between Islam and disbelief and some people have adopted a hostile attitude towards the Muslims only because they are Muslims. Even if a person be wholly free from any ill-will against Islam and acts thus not with an evil intention but *for* the sake of a dire personal need, the act anyhow is unbecoming of a believer, and whoever acts thus strays from the right way."

3. The allusion is to Ḥaḍrat Ḥāṭib. As he had acted thus only in order to ensure that his mother and brother and children remained safe in the event of a

war, it is being said: "The relations for whose sake you have commited this grave error, will not save you on the Day of Resurrection. No one will dare come forward in the Court of Allah and say: 'Our father, or our son, or our brother had committed this sin for our sake; therefore, we may be punished instead of him. At that time everyone will be worried only about himself, and weighed down with the anxiety of somehow saving himself from the consequences of his own acts, not to speak of being ready to take the burden of another's sins on his head." This thing has been expressed in clearer words at several other places in the Qur'ān. At one place it has been said: "To save oneself from the torment of that Day, the culprit will wish to give his children, his wife, his brother, his kinsfolk, who gave him shelter, and all the people of the earth, in ransom that this device might rescue him." (Al-Ma'ārij: 11-14). At another place: "On the Day man shall flee from his brother and his mother and his father and his wife and his children. Each one of them? on that Day, shall have enough to occupy him so as to make him heedless of others." ('Abasa: 34-37).

4. That is, "All worldly relationships and bonds of love and friendship shall be rendered void in the Hereafter. The people will not be judged as groups and parties and families, but every person will have to present himself as an individual and render his own account only. Therefore, no one in the world should commit a wrong for the sake of a relationship or friendship or fraternity, for he will himself have to face all its consequences, and no one else will become a partner in a matter of his peasonal responsibility."

5. The following conclusions are deduced from the details of the case of Ḥaḍrat Ḥātib, as mentioned above, and the verses which were sent down in this connection:

(1) Whatever the motive of the person, it was in itself an act of espionage, and a very dangerous kind of espionage on a critical occasion. The enemy, who was absolutely unaware, had been informed of the imminent attack from Madīnah. Then it was not a case based on suspicion but a letter written by the concerned person himself had been intercepted, after which no other proof of the guilt was required. These were not peace but war time conditions; yet the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) did not place Ḥaḍrat Ḥātib in confinement without giving him a chance of self-defence. This chance also was not given him in camera but publicly before the people. This makes it manifest that there is no room in Islam for such laws and regulations under which the ruler may have the right in any case to imprison a person only on the basis of his own knowledge or suspicion. Islam also does not recognize the method of trying a person secretly in camera.

(2) Hadrat Hātib was not only one of the Emigrants but also a participant in the Battle of Badr, and enjoyed a distinguished place among the Companions. But despite this a serious crime happened to be committed by him and Allah took him to task for this in the Qur'ān as is evident from the above verses. In the *Hadith* too, his case has been narrated in detail and among the commentators also there may be none who has not made a reference to it. These are some of the evidences which prove that the Companions were not innocent. They also could commit errors because of human weaknesses, and errors happened to be committed by them practically. The teaching of regarding them with respect and reverence that Allah and His Messenger have given, does not at all require that if one of them happened to commit an error, it should not be mentioned, for evidently, if this were their demand, neither would Allah have mentioned them in His Book, nor the Companions and their successors and the traditionists and the commentators would have related their details in their traditions and books.

(3) The view that Hadrat 'Umar expressed in the case of Hadrat Hātib concerned the apparent aspect of the act. His reasoning was that the act was clearly in the nature of treachery to Allah and His Messenger and the Muslims; therefore, Hātib was a hypocrite and deserved to be put to death. But the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) rejected his viewpoint and explained the viewpoint of the Islamic *Shari'ah*, saying: "Decision should not be given only on the outward form of the act but it should also be seen what evidence is given by the past life and general character of the person, who happens to commit the act and the circumstances under which he commits it. The act, no doubt, smacked of espionage, but did the attitude of the person concerned towards Islam and the followers of Islam until then indicate that he could do such a thing with the intention of treachery to Allah and His Messenger and the Muslims? He was one of those who had emigrated for the sake of the Faith. Could he have made such a sacrifice without sincerity? He fought in a critical battle like Badr for the sake of his Faith when the Muslims were facing an enemy much better equipped and three times their number, Could the sincerity of such a person be doubted? Or, could it be believed that he had the slightest inclination towards the Quraish? He was telling the plain truth that his family at Makkah did not enjoy the protection of any tribe or clan, which the families of the other Emigrants enjoyed; therefore, he acted thus during war time only in order to safeguard his children from the persecution of the disbelievers. The facts confirmed that he did not really belong to any tribe at Makkah and this too was known that his family members were still back at Makkah. Therefore, there was no reason why his statement should be taken as false and the opinion

formed that his actual motive was not this but the intention of treachery. No doubt, for a sincere Muslim even with a good intention it was not lawful that he should inform the enemy of the military plans of the Muslims only for the sake of his personal interests, yet there is a great difference between the error of a sincere Muslim and the treachery of a hypocrite. Both cannot be awarded the same punishment only on the basis of the similarity between their acts. This was the Holy Prophet's decision in this case, and Allah confirmed it in the verses of Sūrah Al-Mumtaḥinah. A careful study of the above three verses will show that in these Allah has certainly reprimanded Ḥātib, but it is a kind of a reprimand administered to a believer and not the one administered to a hypocrite. Moreover, no penalty, or physical punishment was awarded to him, but he was administered a severe rebuke publicly and let off, which meant that in a Muslim society even a blot on the honour of a guilty believer and his falling into disrepute also was a very severe punishment.

(4) About the great merit of the Companions who fought at Badr, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) said: You may not know Allah might have looked favourably at the people of Badr and said: 'Do as you please, I have forgiven you'." This does not mean that the Companions of Badr were forgiven each and every sin and they were at liberty to commit whatever sin and crime they pleased, for forgiveness had already been guaranteed to them. This was neither meant by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) nor the Companions ever understood it in this meaning, nor any Companion of Badr after hearing this good news ever thought that he was free to commit any sin, nor ever any rule was made on the basis of this in the Islamic Shari'ah that if a Companion of Badr happened to commit a sin, he should not be given ally punishment for it. As a matter of fact, if one considers the circumstances under which this was said and the words that the Holy Prophet used on this occasion carefully, one can clearly understand the meaning to be this: "It would not be anything impossible if in view of the great and meritorious services that the Companions rendered at Badr out of sincerity and devotion and at the very risk of their lives for the sake of Allah and His Religion, Allah might have forgiven all their former and latter sins mercifully. Therefore, you should not suspect such a Companion of treachery and hypocrisy, and should accept the excuse that he himself is presenting for his crime."

(5) From the Qur'ān and the Holy Prophet's sayings it also becomes evident that a Muslim's being involved in espionage for the disbelievers by itself is not a sufficient basis for the conclusion that he has become an apostate, or is devoid of the Faith, or is a hypocrite. For reaching such a conclusion, if there are some other circumstances and evidences, it would

be a different thing; otherwise by itself this act is only a crime, not a sign of disbelief.

(6) From these verses of the Qur'ān it also becomes evident that for a Muslim it is in no case permissible that he should spy for the disbelievers, no matter how gravely his own life and property, or that of his near and dear ones, might be endangered.

(7) When Ḥaḍrat 'Umar asked for the Holy Prophet's permission to put Ḥaḍrat Ḥāṭib to death for the crime of espionage, the Holy Prophet did not say that the crime was not punishable with death, but declined permission on the ground that Hātib's being a Companion of Badr was an express proof of his being sincere, and the statement given by him was correct that he had acted thus not out of any good wishes for the enemies but for the sake of safeguarding his family from any possible persecution to death. From this one section of the jurists has argued that the general law in respect of a Muslim spy is that he should be put to death, unless there are very weighty reasons for awarding him a lesser punishment or a mere reprimand. But the jurists have disputed this question. Imām Shāfe'ī and some other jurists hold the view that the Muslim spy is punishable, but not with death. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and Imām Auza'ī maintain that he will be subjected to corporal punishment and long imprisonment. Imām-Mālik says that he will be put to death, but the Mālik; jurists hold different views on this question. Ash'hab says that the Muslim ruler has vast powers in this matter. He can exercise his judgement keeping in view the circumstances of the crime and the culprit and award him any punishment. A saying of Imām Mālik and Ibn al-Qāsim also is to the same effect. Ibn al Mājishūn and 'Abdul Mālik bin Ḥabīb say that if the culprit is a habitual spy, he should be put to death. Ibn Wahb says that the punishment of the spy is death, but if he repents of spying, he may be pardoned. Saḥnūn says that one cannot know whether his repentance is genuine or deceptive; therefore, he should be put to death. There is a saying of Ibn al-Qāsim also in support of this. And Aṣbagh says that the belligerent spy is punishable with death, but the Muslim or *dhimmī* spy should be given corporal punishment instead of the death sentence, unless he be helping the enemies openly as against the Muslims. (Ibn al-'Arabī, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān; 'Umdat al-Qārī; Fatḥ al-Bārī.)*

(8) The *Ḥadīth* that has been cited above also permits that for the investigation of the crime not only the male but the female accused also can be stripped if so required. Although Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, Ḥaḍrat Zubair and Ḥaḍrat Miqdād had not stripped the woman, yet they had threatened her that if she did not produce the letter, they would strip and search her. Obviously, if it were not lawful, the three illustrious Companions could

not have threatened her thus. And one can understand that they must have reported the story of their expedition on their return to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah s peace). Had he expressed his displeasure, it must have been reported. That is why the jurists have held it as permissible. (*'Umdat al-Qāri'*).

6. That is, "We reject you; we neither consider you to be in the right nor your religion." The inevitable demand of the faith in Allah is denial of *taghūt* (Satan): "Whoever rejects *tāghūt* and believes in Allah has taken a firm support that never gives way." (Al-Baqarah: 256).

7. In other words, it means: "Though there is an excellent example for you in Abraham's conduct in that he expressed disapproval of his pagan people and broke off all connections with them, yet his promise to pray for the forgiveness of his pagan father and then carrying it out practically is not worth following, for the believers should not have even this much relationship of love and sympathy with the disbelievers. In At-Taubah: 113, Allah has clearly warned: "It does not behove the Prophet and those who have believed that they should pray for the forgiveness of the polytheists even though they be near kinsmen." Thus, no Muslim is allowed to pray for the forgiveness of his unbelieving kinsmen on the basis of the argument that the Prophet Abraham had done so. As for the question, why did the Prophet Abraham pray thus, and did he carry out his promise practically? the answer has been provided by the Qur'ān in full detail. When his father expelled him from the house, he had said on his departure: "I bid you farewell: I will pray to my Lord for your forgiveness." (maryam: 47). On the basis of this very promise he prayed for him twice. One prayer is contained in Surah. IbrMhim: 41: "Lord, forgive me and my parents and the believers on the Day when reckoning will be held." And the second prayer is in Sūrah Ash-Shua'rā': 86: "Forgive my father, for indeed he is from among those who have strayed, and do not disgrace me on the Day when the people will be raised back to life." But afterwards when he realized that the father for whose forgiveness he was praying, was an enemy of Allah, he excused himself from it and broke off even this relationship of love and sympathy with him:

"As regards the prayer of Abraham for his father, it was only to fulfil a promise he bad made to him, but when he realized that he was an enemy of Allah, he disowned him. The fact is that Abraham was a tender-hearted, Godfearing and forbearing man." (AT-Taubah: 114).

A study of these verses makes the principle manifest that only that act of the Prophets is worthy of following, which they persistently practised till the end. As regards those acts which they themselves gave up, or which Allah restrained them from practising, or which were forbidden in the Divine *Shari'ah*, they are

not worth following, and no one should follow such acts of theirs on the basis of the argument that that was such and such a Prophet's practice.

Here, another question also arises, which may create confusion in some minds. In the verse under discussion, the saying of the Prophet Abraham which Allah has declared as not worth following, has two parts. The first part is that he said to his father: "I will pray for your forgiveness," and the second: "I have no power to get anything for you from Allah." Of these the first thing's not being a worthy examples to be followed is understandable, but, what is wrong with the second thing that that too has been made an exception from being an example worthily of imitation, whereas it by itself is a truth? The answer is that the saying of the Prophet Abraham has been included in the exception for the reason that when a person after making a promise with another to do something, says that it is not in his power to do anything beyond that for him, it automatically gives the meaning that if it were in his power to do anything further for him, he would have done that too for his sake. This makes his relationship of sympathy with the other person even more manifest. On that very basis this second part of the saying of the Prophet Abraham also deserved to be included in the exception, although its subject was true in so far as it does not lie even in the power of a Prophet to have a person forgiven by Allah. 'Allama Ālūsī also in his *Rūh al-Ma'ānī* has given this same answer to this question.

8. There are several ways in which the believers can become a cause of trial for the disbelievers, for which every believer should seek Allah's refuge. For example, (1) the disbelievers may gain in upper hand over them and consider it a proof of their being in the right and the believers' being in the wrong; otherwise it could not be that in spite of Allah's good pleasure that they claim to enjoy, the disbelievers would have been able to gain an upper hand over them; (2) the persecution of the believers by the disbelievers may become unbearable with the result that they may yield to them and abandon their Faith and moral values this would subject the believers to public ridicule and would provide the disbelievers with an opportunity to humiliate and debase them and their religion: (3) in spite of being the standard-bearers of the true Faith the believers may lose their moral superiority that should accrue to them as believers, and the people may see the same defects and deficiencies in their character as are commonly found in an un-Islamic community: this would give the disbelievers an opportunity to say that the Faith of the believers was in no way superior to their disbelief. (For further details see E.N. 8.3 of Sūrah Yūnus).

وَاغْفِرْ لَنَا رَبَّنَا ۚ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٥﴾ لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِيهِمْ أُسْوَةٌ
حَسَنَةٌ لِمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُو اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ ۚ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ
الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ ﴿٦﴾ عَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَجْعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَ الَّذِينَ عَادَيْتُمْ
مِنْهُمْ مَوَدَّةً ۚ وَاللَّهُ قَدِيرٌ ۚ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٧﴾ لَا يَنْهَاكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ
الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُوكُمْ مِنْ دِيَارِكُمْ أَنْ تَبَرُّوهُمْ وَ
تُقْسِطُوا إِلَيْهِمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ ﴿٨﴾ إِنَّمَا يَنْهَاكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ
قَاتَلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَأَخْرَجُوكُمْ مِنْ دِيَارِكُمْ وَظَاهَرُوا عَلَىٰ إِخْرَاجِكُمْ أَنْ
تَوَلَّوْهُمْ ۚ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٩﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا
جَاءَكُمُ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ مُهَاجِرَاتٍ فَامْتَحِنُوهُنَّ ۚ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِإِيمَانِهِنَّ ۖ فَإِنْ عَلِمْتُمُوهُنَّ
مُؤْمِنَاتٍ فَلَا تَرْجِعُوهُنَّ إِلَى الْكُفَّارِ ۖ لَا هُنَّ حِلٌّ لَهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحِلُّونَ لَهُنَّ ۖ
وَآتُوهُمْ مَا أَنْفَقُوا ۚ وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ تَنْكِحُوهُنَّ إِذَا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ أُجُورَهُنَّ ۚ
وَلَا تُمْسِكُوا بِعِصَمِ الْكَوَافِرِ وَاسْأَلُوا مَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ وَلْيَسْأَلُوا مَا أَنْفَقُوا ۚ ذَٰلِكُمْ
حُكْمُ اللَّهِ ۖ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ ۚ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿١٠﴾ وَإِنْ فَاتَكُمْ شَيْءٌ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ
إِلَى الْكُفَّارِ فَعَاقَبْتُمْ فَآتُوا الَّذِينَ ذَهَبَتْ أَزْوَاجُهُمْ مِثْلَ مَا أَنْفَقُوا ۚ وَاتَّقُوا
اللَّهَ الَّذِي أَنْتُمْ بِهِ مُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١١﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ يُبَايِعْنَكَ
عَلَىٰ أَنْ لَا يُشْرِكْنَ بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَسْرِقْنَ وَلَا يَزْنِينَ وَلَا يَقْتُلْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ
وَلَا يَأْتِينَ بِبُهْتَانٍ يَفْتَرِينَهُ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِنَّ وَأَرْجُلِهِنَّ وَلَا يَعْصِينَكَ فِي
مَعْرُوفٍ فَبَايِعْهُنَّ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُنَّ اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٢﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا
الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَوَلَّوْا قَوْمًا غَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ قَدْ يَئِسُوا مِنَ الْآخِرَةِ كَمَا
يَئِسَ الْكُفَّارُ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ الْقُبُورِ ﴿١٣﴾

There is certainly in the conduct of those people an excellent example for you and for every such person who is hopeful of Allah and the last Day.[9] But whoever turns away from this (should know that) Allah is All-Sufficient and Self-Praiseworthy.[10] 6

It may well be that Allah will place love between you and those whose enmity you have now earned,[11] Allah is All-Powerful, and He is All-Forgiving, All-Merciful. 7

Allah does not forbid you to treat kindly and act equitably towards those who have neither fought you in the matter of religion nor driven you out of your homes. Indeed Allah loves the just.[12] He only forbids you to take for friends those who fought you in the matter of religion, and drove you out of your homes, and cooperated with others in your expulsion. Those who take them for friends are indeed the wrongdoers.[13] 8-9

O you who have believed, when the believing women come to you as emigrants, examine and test (their faith), although Allah only knows best the truth of their faith. Then, when you find them to be true believers, do not return them to the disbelievers.[14] Neither are they lawful for the disbelievers nor are the disbelievers lawful for them. Return to their disbelieving husbands the dowers that they had given them; and there is no blame on you if you marry them when you have paid them their dowers.[15] And you also should not hold back unbelieving women in marriage: ask for the dowers that you had given to your unbelieving wives, and let the disbelievers ask for the dowers that they had given to their Muslim wives.[16] This is Allah's command: He judges between you, and He is All-Knowing, All-Wise. And if you do not get back from the disbelievers a part of the dower of your disbelieving wives, and then your turn comes, pay to the people whose wives have been left on the other side an amount equivalent to the dowers given by them.[17] And fear that Allah in Whom you have believed. 10-11

O Prophet, when the believing women come to you to take the oath of allegiance,[18] and pledge that they would neither associate anything with Allah, nor streal[19] nor commit adultery nor child murder,[20] nor bring a calumny forged between their own hands and feet, nor disobey you in what is good,[22] accept their allegiance[23] and 12

pray for their forgiveness. Surely Allah is AllForgiving! AllMerciful.

13 O you who have believed, do not make friends with those whom Allah has condemned, who have despaired of the Hereafter just as the disbelievers, who are lying in the graves, have despaired.[24]

Contd. from p. 463]

9. "Who is hopeful Or Allah and the Last Day": who expects that one Day he will have to present himself before Allah and is hopeful that Allah will treat him benevolently and help him attain to success in the Hereafter.

10. That is, "Allah has be need of such believers, whgo profess to believe in His Religion as well as maintain friendly relations with His enemies. He is Self Sufficient: His Godhead does not require that they should acknowledge Him as God. He is Self-Praiseworthy, i.e. His being praiseworthy is not dependent on the people's praising and glorigying Him., If they affirm the faith, they faith, they do so not for any good of Allah, but for their own good: and they cannot gain anything from their affirmation of the faith until they break off all connections of love and friendship with the enemies of Allah as the Prophet Abraham and his companions did."

11. Although the true believers were following the exhortation to sever their connections with the unbelieving kinsmen patiently, yet Allah know how hard it was to break off one's connections with one's parents, brothers and sisters and near relations. Therefore, Allah consoled them with the hope that a time would soon come when their same relations would become Muslims and their today's enmity would again change into love tomorrow. When this thing was said no one could understand how this would happen. But hardly a few weeks had passed after the revelation of these verses when Makkah fell and the people of Quraish began to enter Islam in large numbers, and the Muslims witnessed with their own eyes how the hope they were given materialized.

12. Here, a doubt may arise in the minds. It is all right to treat the disbelievers, who are not hostile, kindly, but should only they be treated un-justly? And should the disbelievers, who are hostile, be treated un-justly? The answer is that in this context, the word justice, in fact, has been used in a special sense. It means: "Justice demands that you should not be hostile to those who are not hostile to you, for it is not justice to treat the enemy and the non-enemy alike. You have every right to adopt a stern attitude towards those who persecuted you for embracing Islam and compelled you to leave your homes and pursued you even after your expulsion. But as for those who were not partners in persecuting you, you should treat them well and should fulfil the right they have *on you* because *of* blood and other relationships."

13. The instructions to sever relations with the disbelievers given in the preceding verses, could cause the people the misunderstanding that this was because of their being the disbelievers. Therefore, in these verses it has been made clear that its actual cause is not their disbelief but their hostility to Islam and their tyrannical treatment of the followers of Islam. The Muslims, therefore, should distinguish between the hostile disbeliever and the non-hostile disbeliever, and should treat those disbelievers well who have never treated them evilly. Its best explanation is the incident that took place between Ḥaḍrat Asmā', daughter of Abū Bakr, and her disbelieving mother. A wife of Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr's was Qutaylah bint 'Abdul 'Uzzā, who was a disbeliever and had remained behind in Makkah after the migration. Ḥaḍrat Asmā' had been born of her. After the peace treaty of Ḥudaibiyah when the traffic opened between Makkah and Madīnah, she came to Madinah to see her daughter and also brought some gifts. Ḥaḍrat Asmā' herself has related that she went to the Holy Prophet and asked: "Should I see my mother? And can I treat her as a daughter should treat her mother?" The Holy Prophet replied: "Yes, treat her as your mother." (Musnad Aḥmad, Bukhārī, Muslim). Ḥaḍrat Asmā's son, 'Abdullah bin Zubair, has given further details of this incident. He says that Ḥaḍrat Asmā' in the beginning had refused to see her mother. Then, when she received Allah and His Messenger's permission she met her. (Musnad Ahmad, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Ḥātim). This by itself leads to the conclusion that a Muslim's serving his unbelieving parents and his helping his unbelieving brothers and sisters and relatives is permissible when they are not hostile to Islam; Likewise one can spend one s charities also on the indigent among the *dhimmīs*. (Al-Jaṣṣās, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān; Rūh al-Ma'ānī).*

14. The background of this injunction is that after the peace treaty of Ḥudaibiyah, in the beginning, the Muslim men started fleeing Makkah and arriving at Madinah and they were sent back according to the terms of the treaty. Then the Muslim women started arriving and, first of all, Umm Kulthūm Uqbah bin Abī Mu'aiṭ emigrated to Madīnah, The disbelievers invoked the treaty and demanded return, ands two brothers of Umm Kulthūm, Walid bin 'Uqbah and 'Amārah bin 'Uqbah, came to Madinah to take her back. At this the question arose whether the treaty of Ḥudaibiyah applied to the women as well. Allah has answered this very question here, saying: "If they are Mulims, and it is ascertained that they have emigrated only for the sake of the Faith? and for no other motive, they are not to be returned."

Here, a complication has arison on account of the narration of the *Ḥadīth* from the viewpoint of the meaning and content, and it must be resolved. The traditions that are found in the *Aḥadīth* about the conditions of the treaty of Ḥudaibiyah are mostly traditions narrated from the viewpoint of the meaning and purport, About the condition under discussion the words in the different traditions

are different. In some the words are to the effect: "Whoever reaches us from you, we will not return him, but whoever reaches you from us, you shall return." In some others the words are to the effect: "Whoever of his Companions comes to the Messenger of Allah without the permission of his guardian, he will send him back." And in still another the words are: "Whoever from the Quraish goes to Muhammad without the permission of his guardian, he will return him to Quraish." The style of these traditions by itself shows that this condition of the treaty has not been reported in the actual words of the treaty, but the reporters have reported its purport in their own words. But since most of the traditions are of the same nature, the commentators and traditionists generally have understood that the treaty was general, which applied to both men and women, and the women too were to be returned according to it. Later, when this injunction of the Qur'ān that the believing women were not to be returned, came to their knowledge, they interpreted it to mean that Allah in this verse had decided to break the treaty in so far as it related to the believing women But this was not an ordinary thing which should be accepted so easily. If the treaty was general, without any exception in respect of men and women, it could not be lawful for one party to amend it unilaterally or change a part of it by itself. And even if such a thing happened, it is strange that the Quraish did not protest against it, whereas they remained on the lookout for an opportunity to raise objections against everything that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) and the Muslims did. Had they found that the Holy Prophet had committed a breach of the treaty conditions, they would have raised a loud clamour. But we do not find any trace of it in any tradition that they took an exception to this ruling of the Qur'ān. Had this question been carefully considered the problem could have been resolved by reference to the actual words of the treaty. But many people paid no attention they it; if some scholars (e.g Qāḍi Abū Bakr Ibn al-'Arabī) did pay any attention, they did not hesitate to say that the reason why the Quraish did not raise any objection was that Allah had miraculously sealed their mouths in this matter. It is strange how these scholars felt satisfied at this explanation.

The fact of the matter is that this condition of the peace treaty had been proposed by the disbelieving Quraish, and not by the Muslims, and the words that Suhail bin 'Amr, their representative, had got included in the treaty were: "And that whichever man *(rajul)* comes to you from us, even if he be on your religion, you will return him to us." These words *of* the treaty have been reproduced in Bukhārī *(Kitāb ash-Shurūṭ: Bāb ash-Shurūṭ fil-Jihād wal-Muṣālahah)* through authentic channels. It may be that Suhail used the word *rajul* in the meaning of a person, but this might be the meaning he had in his mind. The word written in the treaty was *rajul,* which is used for a full-grown man in Arabic. That is why when the brothers of Umm Kulthūm bint 'Uqbah came to the Holy Prophet (upon whom

be Allah's peace) and demanded her return, (according to Imām Zuhrī's tradition) the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) refused return her, saying: "The condition was about the men, not the women." (*Ibn al-'Arabī, Aḥkām al-Qur'ān; Imām Rāzī, Tafsīr Kabīr)* Until then the people of Quraish themselves were under the delusion that the treaty applied to all kinds of emigrants, men or women; But when the Holy Prophet drew their attention to these words of the treaty, they were struck dumb and had to accept this decision.

According to this condition of the treaty the Muslims had the right to decline return of any woman who emigrated from Makkah to Madīnah, for any reason whatever. But Islam was interested only in safeguarding the believing women and not to make the holy city of Madīnah a place of refuge for every kind of female fugitive. Therefore, Allah enjoined: "Ascertain by examination the faith of the women who emigrated to you and profess to have believed; and when it is fully ascertained that they have emigrated with genuine faith, and no other motive, do not return them." Thus, the procedure adopted for carrying out this Command was that the women who emigrated were questioned whether they believed in the Oneness of Allah and the Prophethood of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and had emigrated only for the sake of Allah and His Messenger, and not out of any worldly consideration, e.g. hatred of the husband, or love of somebody in Madīnah, or some other worldly motive. Only those women who gave satisfactory answers to these questions were detained, others were sent back. (Ibn Jarīr on the authority of Iba 'Abbās, Qatādah, Mujāhid, 'Ikrimah, Ibn Zaid).

In this verse a basic principle of the Law of Evidence also has been stated and its further clarification has been made by the procedure that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) had prescribed for implementing it, The verse enjoins three things: (1) Examine the faith of the emigrating women who present themselves as believers; (2) Allah alone knows the truth about their faith; the Muslims have no means to find out whether they have really believed or not; and (3) when it has been ascertained that they are believers, they are not to be returned. Then, in accordance with this injunction, the method that the Holy Prophet prescribed for examining and ascertaining the faith of the women was that the statement given by them on oath should be relied on and it should be made sure after necessary examination that they had no other motive of emigration than the Faith. First, it gives the principle that for taking decision on different matters it is not necessary for the court to have direct knowledge of the truth; for the court only that knowledge is sufficient which is obtained through evidence. Second, the statement given by a person on oath will be regarded as reliable until it is proved to be false by a clear evidence. Third, whatever declaration a person himself may make about his creed and faith, will be accepted and no search will be made into finding out whether what he states actually constitutes his faith or not, unless there

is a clear indication to the contrary. And fourth, in the personal affairs of a person, which no one else can know, his own statement will be trusted, e.g. in the matters of divorce and the waiting period *('iddat)* the woman's own statement about her menstrual course and state of purity will be regarded as reliable, whether it is true or false. According to these very rules, in the science of the *Ḥadīth* also, those traditions will be accepted, the apparent state of whose reporters testifies to their being righteous, unless, of course, there are other circumstances which forbid the acceptance of a particular tradition.

15. This means that a Muslim who wants to marry any of these women should pay a fresh dower and marry her. The dowers to be repaid to their unbelieving husbands will not be considered their dowers.

16. Four very important injunctions have been laid down in these verses, which relate both to the family law of Islam and to the international law.

First, that the woman who becomes a Muslim is no longer lawful for her unbelieving husband nor her unbelieving husband is lawful for her.

Second, that the marriage of the married woman who becomes a Muslim and emigrates from the abode of disbelief *(dār al-Kufr)* to the abode of Islam *(dār al-Islam)* is automatically annulled, and any Muslim who likes can marry her after paying her dower.

Third, that it is not lawful for a man who becomes a Muslim to retain his wife in wedlock if she likes to remain an infidel.

Fourth, that if there exist relations of peace between the abode of disbelief and the abode of Islam, the Islamic government should try to settle the question of the return of dowers with the non-Muslim government, thus: The dowers of the married women of the disbelievers, who become Muslims and emigrate to the abode of Islam, should be returned by the Muslims, and the dowers of the unbelieving married women of the Muslims, who are left behind in the abode of disbelief, should be got back from the disbelievers.

The historical background of these injunctions is as follows: In the beginning of Islam, there were many such men, who accepted Islam but their wives did not become Muslim, and there were many such women who became Muslim but their husbands did not accept Islam. Abul-'Āṣ, the husband of Zainab, a daughter of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace), was a non-Muslim and he remained non-Muslim for several years. In the early period no command had been given to the effect that the pagan husband was unlawful for the Muslim wife and the pagan wife was unlawful for the Muslim husband. Therefore, the marital relations continued to exist between them. Even after the migration for several years, it so happened that many women became Muslim and emigrated to

Madinah while their pagan husbands remained in the abode of disbelief. Likewise, many Muslim men emigrated and their pagan wives were left in the abode of disbelief. But in spite of this their marriage continued. This was creating complications for the women in particular, for the men could marry other women, but this was not possible for the women. Until their marriage with their previous husbands was dissolved, they could not remarry. After the peace treaty of Ḥudaibiyah when these verses came down, they annulled the previous marriages between the Muslims and the pagans, and laid down an absolute and clear law for guidance in future. The jurists of Islam have codified this law under four major heads:

First, the case when both the man and the wife are in the abode of Islam and one of them becomes a Muslim and the of her remains an infidel.

Second, the case when both the man and the wife are in the abode of disbelief, and one of them becomes a Muslim and the other remains an infidel.

Third, the case when one of the spouses becomes a Muslim and emigrates to the abode of Islam and the other remains an infidel in the abode of disbelief.

Fourth, the case when either of the Muslim spouses becomes an apostate.

Below we give the viewpoints of the jurists with regard to a 11 the four cases separately:

(1) In the first case, if the husband has accepted Islam and' his wife is a Christian or a Jewess, and she remains faithful to her religion, their marriage will endure, for it is permissible for a Muslim to have a wife who is a follower of the earlier scriptures. This is agreed upon by all jurists.

And if the .wife of the man, who has accepted Islam, is not a follower of the earlier Books, and she adheres to her Faith, the Ḥanafīs say that Islam will be presented before her; if she accepts it, the marriage will endure; if she refuses to accept it, separation will be effected between them. In this case, if consummation between them had taken place, the woman will be entitled to the dower; if there was no consummation, she will not be entitled to any dower, for separation has been caused because of her refusal. *(Al-Mabsūṭ; Hedāyah; Fatḥ al-Qadīr).* Imām Shāfe`ī and Imām Aḥmad say that if the spouses did not have had consummation, the woman would be outside wedlock as soon as the man accepted Islam, and if consummation had taken place, the woman will remain in wedlock till three menstruations. During this period if she accepts Islam of her own free wills the marriage will continue, otherwise it will become void automatically as soon as she is free from her third menstrual course. Imām Shāfe'ī also adds that it is not right to present Islam before the woman on the basis of the pledge of non-interference

in religion that the *dhimmīs* have been given by the Muslims. But this, in fact, is a weak argument; for interference in the *dhimmī* woman's religion would be if she was compelled to accept Islam. It is no interference to tell her that if she accepted Islam, she would continue to be her husband's wife, otherwise she would be separated from him. In Ḥaḍrat Alī's time there has been a precedent of this nature. An Irāqī landowner who was a Majūsī by religion accepted Islam and his wife remained an unbeliever, Ḥaḍrat 'Alī presented Islam before her, and when she refused to accept it, he effected separation between them. *(Al-Mabsūt). Imām* Mālik says that if consummation has not taken place, the unbelieving wife would forthwith cease to be the wife as soon as the man embraced Islam, and if consummation has taken place. Islam would be presented before the woman, and in case she refuses to accept it, separation will result. (Ibn Qudāmah, *Al-Mughnī).*

And if Islam has been accepted by the woman and the Fan remains an infidel, whether he is a follower of an earlier scripture or a non-follower, the Ḥanafīs say that Islam will be presented before the husband whether consummation between them has taken place or not. If he accepts it, the woman will continue to be his wife; if he rejects it the *qāḍī* will effect separation between them. So long as the man does not refuse to accept Islam, the woman will remain his wife, but he will not have the right to have sexual relations with her. In case the husband refuses, separation will become effective just like an irrevocable divorce. If consummation has not taken place before this, the woman will be entitled to half the dower, and if it has taken place, the woman will be entitled to full dower as well as maintenance during the waiting period *('iddat). (Al-Mabsūt; Hedāyah; Fatḥ al-Qadīr).* According to Imām Shāfe'ī, marriage will dissolve as soon as the woman accepted Islam in case consummation has not taken place, and in case it has taken place, the woman will continue to be the man's wife till the end of the waiting period. If in the mean-time he accepts Islam, marriage will remain valid, otherwise separation will take place as soon as the waiting period comes to an end. But in the case of the man also Imām Shāfe'ī has expressed the same opinion as he has expressed about the woman as cited above. That is, it is not right to present Islam before him. But this is a weak opinion. In the time of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, on several occasions, the woman accepted Islam and the man was invited to Islam; when he refused to accept it, separation was effected between the spouses There is, for examples the case of the wife of a Christian of the Banī Taghlib, which was brought before him. Ḥaḍrat 'Umar said to the man, "Accept islam, otherwise I will effect separation between you two." He declined, and the Caliph enforced the decree. The case of a newly converted lady of Bahz al-Mālik was sent to him. In her case too he ordered that Islam be presented before her husband; if he accepts it, well and good, otherwise separation be effected between them. These incidents had happened in front of the Companions and no dispute or

difference of opinion has been reported. *(Al-Jassās, Aḥkām al-Qur'ān; Al-Mabsūṭ; Fatḥ al-Qadīr).* Imām Mālik's opinion in this connection is that if the woman becomes a Muslim before the consummation of marriage, Islam should be presented before the husband; if he accepts it, well and 'good; otherwise separation should be effected forthwith. And if consummation has taken place, and the woman has accepted Islam afterwards, she will have to wait till the end of the waiting period. If the husband accepts Islam in the meantime, marriage will continue, otherwise separation will take place as soon as the waiting period expires. A saying of Imām Aḥmad is in support of Imām Shāfe'ī. His other saying is to the effect that the event of the difference of religion between the spouses will in any case lead to immediate separation, whether consummation between them has taken place or not. *(Al-Mughnī).*

(2) If in *dār al-kufr* (abode of disbelief) the woman becomes a Muslim and the man remains an infidel, or the man becomes a Muslim and the wife (who neither is Christian nor Jew, but is follower of a non-revealed religion) remains an infidel the Ḥanafī viewpoint is that separation will not take place, whether consummation between them has taken place or not, until the woman completes three menstrual courses, or until she passes three months in case she is non-menstruating. If in the meantime the other spouse is also converted, marriage will remain valid, otherwise separation will take place on the expiry of the term. Imām Shāfe'ī, in this case also, distinguishes between the occurrence of consummation and its non-occurrence. He maintains that if there was no consummation, separation would occur immediately on the event of the difference of religion between the spouses. And if the difference of religion has occurred after the consummation, marriage will continue valid until the end of the waiting period. If in the meantime the other spouse does not accept Islam, marriage will dissolve as soon as the waiting period comes to an *end. (Al-Mabsūṭ; Fatḥ al-Qadīr; Al-Jassās, Aḥkām al-Qur'ān).*

(3) In case where along with the difference of religion between the spouses the separation of abode also takes place, i.e. one of them remains an infidel in *dār al-kufr* (the non-Muslim state) and the other emigrates to *dār al-Islam* (the Islamic state), the Ḥanafī viewpoint is that marriage between them will automatically dissolve. If the emigrant is the woman, she has the right to remarry immediately; she does not have to observe any waiting period. However, her husband will have to abstain from sexual intercourse until after she has discharged the menses once; and if she is pregnant, even then marriage can be contracted, but the husband must abstain from cohabitation until after the delivery. Imām Muḥammad and Imām Abū Yūsuf have differed from Imām Abū Ḥanīfah in this. They say *that* the woman has to observe the waiting period; and if she is pregnant,

she cannot contract marriage before the delivery. (Al-*Mabsūṭ; Hedāyah;* Al-Jaṣṣāṣ, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān).* Imām Shāfe'i, Imām Ahmad and Imām Mālik maintain that the separation of abode has nothing to do with this, for the real thing is only the difference of religion. If this difference takes place between the spouses, the injunctions to govern this are the same as those which govern it in case such a difference takes place between the spouses in the Islamic state *(Al-Mughnī).* Imam Shāfe'ī along with his above-cited opinion has also expressed the view that if the emigrant Muslim woman has emigrated after a quarrel with her infidel husband, with the intention of dissolving his marital right, an immediate separation will take place not on the basis of the separation of abode *(ikhtilāf dār)* but on the basis of her this intention. *(Al-Mabsūṭ; Hedāyah).*

But a careful consideration of the Qur'ānic verse under discussion clearly shows that in this matter the most sound opinion is the one that Imām Abū Ḥanīfah has expressed. Allah has sent down this verse concerning the believing women who emigrated and about them He has said that they are no longer lawful for the pagan *husbands whom* they have left behind in *dār al-k-kufr, and* has allowed the Muslims of the Islamic state to marry them after they have paid them the dowers. On the other hand, the emigrant Muslims have been addressed and enjoined not to keep those of their pagan wives in wedlock, who are left is *dār al-kufr,* and to ask of the disbelievers the dowers that they had given to those women. Obviously, these injunctions do not pertain only to the difference of religion, but it is the difference of abode that has given these injunctions this particular form. If on account of migration the marriages of the Muslim women with their pagan husbands had not become dissolved, how could the Muslims be permitted to marry them, and .that too in a way that the permission does not contain any reference to the observance of the waiting pperiod by them? Likewise, if even after the revelation of the Command, "and you also should not hold back unbelieving women in marriage," the pagan wives of the Muslim emigrants had continued to be their wives, they also would have been commanded to divorce them. But there is no reference here to this either. No doubt, it is correct that after the revelation of this verse, Ḥaḍrat 'Umar and Ḥaḍrat Ṭalḥah and some other Emigrants had divorced their wives, but this is no proof that such a thing was at all necessary, and their severing of the marital relationship with those wives depended on their pronouncing divorce on them, and if they had not pronounced the divorce, the wives would have continued to be their legal wives.

In response to this, three events of the Holy Prophet's time are quoted as precedents, which are regarded as a proof that even after the revelation these verses the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace), in spite of the separation of abode, allowed the marriage relationship to continue between the believing and

the unbelieving spouses. The first event is this. A little before the conquest of Makkah, Abū Sufyān visited the Islamic army at Marr az-Ẓahran (present Wādī Fāṭimah) and accepted Islam, and his wife, Hind, remained a pagan in Makkah. Then Hind accepted Islam after the conquest of Makkah, and the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) ruled that their previous marriage would continue to be valid. The second event is that after the conquest of Makkah, 'Ikrimah bin Abū Jahl and Ḥakīm bin Ḥizām fled Makkah and in their absence the wives of both became Muslims. Then they sought the Holy Prophet's protection for their husbands and went and brought them back. Both the men come before the Holy Prophet and accepted Islam and in their case too he held their previous marriages as vaild. The third event relates to the Holy Prophet's own daughter, Ḥaḍrat Zainab, who emigrated to Madīnah and her husband, Abul-'As, was left an infidel in Makkah. About him Musnad Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah contain a tradition on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās, saying that he came to Madīnah in A.H. 8 and became a Muslim, and the Holy Prophet allowed his daughter to continue in marriage with him, without renewal of marriage. But the first two of these events, in fact, do not come under the definition of the difference of abode. For the difference of abode does not mean a person's temporarily leaving one place for another, or his fleeing to another place, but the difference takes place only in case a person emigrates from one place and settles down in another place and the difference of nationality takes place between him and his wife. As for the event relating to Ḥaḍrat Zainab (may Allah bless her), there are two traditions, one related on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās, as referred to above, and the other related by Imām Aḥmad, Tirmidhi and Ibn Mājah on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin 'Ās. In this second tradition it has been stated that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) allowed his daughter to continue as the wife of Abul-'Āṣ after renewal of the marriage, and with a fresh dower. Thus, in the first place, this precedent, due to the difference in reporting, no longer remains a definite argument with those who deny the legal effect of the separation of abode. Secondly, if they insist on the authenticity of Ibn 'Abbās's tradition, it contradicts their own viewpoint. For, according to their viewpoint, the marriage of the spouses between whom difference of religion takes place and who have consummated their marriage remains valid only until three menstruations. In the meantime if the other party also accepts Islam the marriage continues to be valid, otherwise it dissolves automatically as soon as the third menstrual course starts. But in the case of Ḥaḍrat Zainab from which they take their argument, the difference of religion between the spouses had taken place several years earlier. Abul-'Āṣ had affirmed the faith six years after Ḥaḍrat Zainab's emigration, and at least two years before his conversion to Islam the injunction had been revealed in the Qur'ān, according to which the Muslim woman had been forbidden for the pagans.

(4) The fourth case is of apostasy. Its one form is that both the husband and the wife should become apostates together, and the other that one of them becomes an apostate and the other remains a Muslim.

If both the husband and the wife become apostates together, the Shāfe'īs and the Ḥanbalīs say that their marriage contracted in Islam will dissolve immediately if this happened before consummation, and after the lapse of the waiting period if it happened after consummation. On the contrary, the Ḥanafīs hold the view that, although according to common sense their marriage should dissolve, yet in the time of Ḥadrat Abū Bakr, when thousands of people became apostates, and then again became Muslims, the Companions did not direct anyone to renew the marriage; therefore, we accept this unanimous decision of the Companions and admit, contrary to common sense, that in case both the husband and the wife become apostates together, their ' marriages do not dissolve." *(Al-Mabsūṭ; Hedāyah; Fatḥ al-Qadīr Al-Fiqh 'alal-Madhāhib al-'Arba'h).*

If the husband becomes an apostate and the wife continues to be Muslim, according to the Ḥanafīs and the Mālikīs, the marriage will dissolve immediately, whether this happens before consummation or after it. But the Shāfe'īs and the Ḥanbalīs in this connection make a distinction between the two states. If it happens before consummation, the marriage will dissolved immediately, and if it happens after consummation, it will endure till the end of the waiting period. In the meantime ii' the person returns to Islam, marriage will continue to hold good, otherwise, on teh expiry of the waiting period, it will be deemed to have dissolved since he became an apostate. That is, the woman will not have to observe another waiting period afresh. All the four jurists are agreed that if this happened before consummation, the woman would be entitled to half the dower, and if after consummation, to full dower.

And if the woman became an apostate, the old ruling of the Ḥanafīs was that in this case too, marriage would dissolve immediately. But later the scholars of Balkh and Samarkand gave the ruling that in case the woman becomes an apostate, seoaration does not take place immediately; and by this their object was to discourage the women from adopting this course in order to get rid of their husbands. The Mālikīs' verdict is somewhat similar. They say that if circumstances testify that the woman adopted this course only as a pretence to win separation from the husband, separation will not take place. The Shāfe'īs and the Ḥanbalīs say that in case of the woman's turning an apostate too, the law is the same as in case of the husband's turning an apostate. That is, if she became an apostate before consummation, marriage would dissolve immediately, and if after consummation, Marriage will endure till the end of the waiting period. If conversion takes place in the meantime, marriage will continue to hold good, otherwise it will be deemed to have dissolved since the time of apostasy. There is

consensus with regard to the dower. If the woman became an apostate, before consummation, she would not be entitled to any dower, and if she adopted apostasy after consummation, she would be entitled to full dower. *(Al-Mabsūṭ; Hedāyah; Fath al-Qadīr; Al'Mughnī; Al-Fiqh 'alal-Madhāhib al-Arb'ah).*

17. This thing had two alternatives and the verse applies to both. First, with the disbelievers with whom the Muslims had treaty relations, they wanted to settle the matter, thus: "We shall return the dowers of the women who have emigrated to us; and you will return the dowers of the pagan wives of our men) who have been left on your side." But the disbelievers did not agree to this. However, according to Imām Zuhrī, the Muslims, in obedience to the Divine Command, became ready to return the dowers of the women who were left behind with the pagans in Makkah, but the pagans refused to return the dowers of the women who had emigrated to the Muslims in Madīnah. Thereupon Allah enjoined that the dowers of the emigrant women, which were to be returned to the pagans, should be collected together in Madīnah instead of sending these to pagans; then from these collections disbursements should be made to those to whom the dowers were due from the pagans according to what was due to them.

The second alternative was that there were several converts to Islam, who had emigrated to the abode of Islam from the territories of the disbelievers with whom the Muslims had no treaty relations, leaving their pagan wives behind. Likewise, some women also had become converts and emigrated, leaving their pagan husbands behind. About them it was decreed that the matter should be settled in the abode of Islam itself on the bargain basis. That is, when the dowers were not being returned by the disbelievers, no dowers should be returned to them. Instead, the dower of the woman who had emigrated to the abode of Islam, should be paid to the person, whose wife had been left with the disbelievers.

But in case the account could not be settled equitably thus, and the amount of the dower due on behalf of the disbelieving wives of Muslims, who were left in the abode *of* disbelief, exceeded the amount of the dowers of the Muslim women who had emigrated, it was en joined that the deficiency be made up from the spoils that the Muslims took in the wars against the disbelievers. Ibn 'Abbās has related that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) would command that the loss of the person who did not receive his share of the dower be made up from the spoils. (Ibn Jarīr). This same view has been adopted by 'Aṭā', Mujāhid, Zuhrī, Masruq, Ibrāhīm Nakha'ī, Qatādah, Muqātil and Ḍaḥḥāk. All these scholars say, that the people whose dowers are left with the disbelievers, should be paid these from the collective spoils taken from the enemy. That is, before the booty is distributed, the dead dowers of the people should be paid and then the distribution made in which these people too should be given their equal shares along with the other soldiers. Some jurists say that the loss of such people can be made up not

only from the spoils but even from the *fai* properties. But a large section of the scholars does not subscribe to this view.

18. As we have explained above, this verse was sent down some time before the conquest of Makkah. After the conquest the Quraish started coming to the Holy Prophet in large numbers to take the oath of allegiance. From the men he took the oath himself on Mount Ṣafā. As for the women he appointed Ḥadrat 'Umar to administer the oath to them on his behalf and to ask them to pledge that they would refrain from the things mentioned in this verse. (Ibn Jarīr, on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās; Ibn Abi Ḥātim, on the authority of Qatādah). Then, on his return to Madīnah he ordered the Muslim women of Madīnah to be gathered together in a house and he sent Ḥadrat Umar to take the oath from them. (Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Mardūyah, Bazzār, Ibn Ḥibbān, on the authority of Umm 'Aṭiyyah Anṣāriah). On the 'Id day also, after his address to men, he went to the assembly of women and in his sermon to them he recited this verse and asked them to pledge that they would refrain from the things mentioned in it. (Bukhārī on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās's tradition). Apart from these occasions, at different other times also, the women came before the Holy Prophet individually as well as collectively to take the oath of allegiance, as mentioned in several *Aḥadīth.*

19. In Makkah, when the oath of allegiance was being administered, Hind bint 'Utbah, wife of Abū Sufyān, asked the Holy Prophet its explanation and said: "Messenger of Allah, Abū Sufyān is rather stingy. Will it be sinful if I take out something from his wealth without his permission to meet my own and my children's needs?" The Holy Prophet replied: "Nay, but only justly and lawfully; i.e. take only that much as may actually suffice for your needs." (Ibn al-'Arabī, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān).*

20. This also includes abortion, whether it is abortion of the legitimate or of the illegitimate foetus.

21. This implies two kinds of calumny: (1) a woman's accusing other women of having illicit relations with other men and her spreading such stories among the people, for the women are generally prone to spreading such things: and (2) a woman's delivering a child by somebody else and making her husband believe that it is his. Abū Da'ūd has related a tradition from Abū Hurairah saying that he heard the Holy Prophet say: "The woman who brings such a child into a family as does not actually belong to it, has no connection with Allah, and Allah will never admit her to Paradise."

22. In this brief sentence two important points of the law have been stated:

First, that obedience even to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) has been restricted to "in what is good", although about the Holy Prophet no one could imagine that he would order somebody to do an evil. From this it automatically follows that no one in the world can be obeyed outside the bounds of Divine law. For when obedience to Allah's Messenger himself is conditional upon "in what is good", who else can have a position to demand unconditional obedience and require the people to obey and follow each of his commands, laws, rules or customs, which are opposed to the law of Allah? The Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) has stated this principle, thus: "There is no obedience in the disobedience of Allah; obedience is only in what is good and right." (Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'ī). Our great doctors have derived this very theme from this verse. Hadrat 'Abdur Rehmān bin Zaid bin Aslam says:

"Allah has not said that they should not disobey you (the Holy Prophet) but that they should not disobey you in what is good.

Then, when Allah Almighty has made obedience even to the Holy Prophet himself conditional upon this, how can another person have the right that he should be obeyed in anything but what is good?" (Ibn Jarīr).

Imām Abū Bakr al-Jassās writes:

"Allah knew that His Prophet never enjoined anything but what was good. Still He restricted obedience to him only in what is good, so that no one ever may find a provision to obey the kings when they enjoined something outside the obedience of Allah. The Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) has said: 'He who obeys a creature in disobedience to the Creator, Allah appoints the same creature over him in power'." *(Ahkām al-Qur'ān).*

'Allāma Alūsī says:

"This command refutes the view of those ignorant people who think that obedience to the ruler is absolutely necessary. Allah has restricted even obedience to His Messenger only in what is good, whereas the Messenger never enjoins anything but what is good. This is meant to warn the people that obedience to no one is lawful in disobedience to the Creator." *(Rūh al-Ma'ānī).*

Thus, this command, in fact, is the foundation stone of the rule of law in Islam. The rule is that anything which is opposed to the law of Islam is a crime, and no one has the right to enjoin any such thing on any one. Anyone who enjoins anything against the law, is a culprit; and the one who obeys such a command, is also a culprit. No subordinate can escape the punishment on the basis of the excuse that his superior officer had ordered him to do something which was a crime in the law.

The other thing which has great legal import is that in this verse after enjoining five prohibitions only one positive command has been given, namely that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) will be obeyed in all good things. As for the evils, the major evils in which women of the pre-Islamic days were generally involved, have been mentioned and a pledge taken from them to refrain from them. But as for the good works, they have neither been mentioned nor any pledge taken to observe them. The only pledge that has been taken is that they will have to obey the Holy Prophet in every good work that he enjoins. Now obviously, if the good works be only those which Allah Almighty has enjoined in the Qur'ān, the pledge should have been to the effect: "You will not disobey Allah," or "You will not disobey the injunctions of the Qur'ān." But when the pledge taken was to the effect: "You will not disobey any good work that is enjoined by the Messenger of Allah", it automatically leads to the conclusion that the Holy Prophet has been given vast powers for the reformation of society, and it is obligatory to obey all his commands, whether they are found in the Qur'ān or not.

On the basis of this very legal authority the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) asked the women to pledge that they would refrain from all those evils which were prevalent among the women of the Arabian society at that time, and gave several such commands as have not been mentioned in the Qur'ān. One may study the following *Aḥādīth* in this connection

Ibn 'Abbās, Umm Salamah, Umm 'Aṭiyyah Anṣāriah and others have reported that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) while administering the oath of allegiance to the women asked them to pledge that they would refrain from mourning over the dead. These traditions have been related by Bukhārī, Muslim, Nasā'ī and Ibn Jarīr.

A tradition reported by Ibn 'Abbās contains this detal: "The Holy Prophet appointed Ḥaḍrat 'Umar to administer the oath of allegiance to the women and commanded that he should forbid them to mourn over the dead, for in the days of pre-Islamic ignorance women used to tear their clothes and hair, scratched their faces and bewailed in a loud voice." (Ibn Jarīr).

Zaid bin Aslam has reported that the Holy Prophet white administering the oath of allegiance forbade the women to scratch their faces, tear their garments, bewail and sing verses while mourning over the dead. (Ibn Jarīr). Another tradition bearing on the same subject has been reported by Ibn Abī Ḥātim and Ibn Jarīr from a woman who was among the women taking the oath of allegiance .

Qatādah and Ḥasan Baṣrī (may Allah bless them) say that one of the things that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) had made the women to pledge also was that they would refain from talking with the other men freely.

Ibn 'Abbās has explained it in a tradition, thus: "That they would not talk with the other men in private." Qatādah has further explained it thus: hearing this command, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdur Rahmān bin 'Auf said; 'O Messenger of Allah, sometimes it so happens that we are not present in the house and somebody comes to see us.' The Holy Prophet replied: 'I do not mean this. "That is, the woman is not forbidden to tell the visitor that the master of the house is not present." (These traditions have been cited by Ibn Jarīr and Ibn Abī Ḥātim).

Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin al-'Āṣ has reported another tradition from Umaimah bint-Ruqaiqah, maternal aunt of Ḥaḍrat Fāṭimah (may Allah be pleased with her), saying: "The Holy Prophet made me to pledge that I would neither bewail the dead nor display myself like the women of the pre-Islamic paganism." (Musnad Aḥmad, Ibn Jarīr).

Salmah bint Qais, a maternal aunt of the Holy Prophet, says: "I went before the Holy Prophet with some other women of the Ansār to take the oath of allegiance. He made us to pledge that we would abstain from the things mentioned in this verse, and then said: 'Do not defraud your husbands.' When we were about to leave, a woman said to me: 'Go and ask the Holy Prophet what is meant by defrauding the husbands?' When I went and asked the explanation, he replied: 'This that you should defraud him of his money and expend it on others." (Musnad Aḥmad).

Umm 'Aṭiyyah says: "The Holy Prophet after administering to us the oath commanded us that we would attend the 'Id congregational prayers, but the Friday prayer is not obligatory for us, and he forbade us to follow the bier." (Ibn Jarīr).

The people who think that the constitutional powers and authority that the Holy Prophet possessed emanated from his position as a ruler instead of his position as a Messenger of Allah, and say that since he was also the ruler at the time, whatever commands he gave in that capacity were only meant to be obeyed during his time, say an absurd thing. Consider the Holy Prophet's commands and instructions that we have cited above. If these instructions given by him for the reformation of the women had emanated only from his position as a ruler, how could these reforms then be introduced and enforced among the women of the Muslim society of the entire world for ever? Which ruler has there been in the world, who might have had the position that a command issued by him just once for a reform might have become enforced in the Muslim society everywhere in the world for ever? (For further explanation, see E.N. 15 of Sūrah Al-Ḥashr).

23. Several authentic *Aḥādīth* show that in the Holy Prophet's time the procedure of administering the oath of allegiance to the women was different from that to the men. For the men the procedure was that the ones pledging allegiance would give their hand in the hand *of* the Holy Prophet and take the oath. As for

the women, the Holy Prophet never took any woman's hand in his own hand, but adopted different other methods. In this connection, the following traditions have been reported:

Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah says: "By God, in connection with the oath of allegiance the Holy Prophet's hand never touched any other woman's hand. While administering the oath of allegiance to a woman, he would only say to her: 'I have accepted your allegiance'." (Bukhārī, Ibn Jarīr).

Umaimah bint Ruqaiqah has stated: "I along with some other women went before the Holy Prophet to pledge allegiance, and he made us to pledge according to this verse of the Qur'ān. When we said: 'We will not disobey you in what is good and right', he said: 'As far as it is in your power.' We submitted: 'Allah and His Messenger are more kind to us than we could be to ourselves.' Then we said: 'O Messenger of Allah, stretch your hand so that we may pledge allegiance.' He replied: 'I do not shake hands with women: I only make them take the pledge. So he made us to pledge." In another tradition she has stated: "The Holy Prophet did not take the hand of any of us in his own hand." (Musnad Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Ḥātim).

Abū Da'ūd, in *Marasī*, has related this from Sha'bī: "While administering the oath of allegiance to the women, a sheet of cloth was stretched towards the Holy Prophet, which he took in his hand and said: 'I do not take the woman's hand in my hand'." This same subject has been related by Ibn Abī Hātim from Sha'bī, by 'Abdur Razzāq from Ibrāhīm Nakhā'ī and by Sa'īd bin Mansūr from Qais bin Abi Ḥāzim.

Ibn Isḥāq, in *Maghāzī*, has related this from Abān bin Salih.: "The Holy Prophet would put his hand in a vessel full of water and then the woman also would put her hand in the same vessel."

In Bukhārī, a tradition from 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās is to the effect: "After giving the 'Īd congregational sermon, the Holy Prophet went through the rows of the men to the place where the women were sitting. There, in his address, he recited this verse of the Qur'ān, then asked the women: 'Do you promise to act according to it?' A woman from the assembly replied: 'Yes, O Messenger of Allah'."

In a tradition related by Ibn Ḥibbān, Ibn Jarīr, Bazzār and others, Umm 'Aṭiyyah Anṣāriah has stated this: "The Holy Prophet extended his hand from outside the house and we extended our hands from inside the house." But this does not prove that the women might have shaken hands with the Holy Prophet, for Ḥaḍrat Umm 'Aṭiyyah has not made any mention of the shaking of hands. Probably on this occasion for the purpose of taking the pledge the Holy Prophet

might have extended his hand from outside and the women their hands from inside the house towards him without any of their hands touching his.

24. The words in the original can have two meanings: First, that they have despaired of their well-being and rewards in the Hereafter just as the deniers of the life-after-death have despaired of the resurrection of their near and dear ones, who are dead and gone into the graves. This meaning has been given by Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbas and Hadrat Hasan Basri, Qatādah and Dahāk (may Allah bless them). The second meaning can be: They have despaired of the mercy and forgiveness of the Hereafter just as the disbelievers, who are lying in the graves, have despaired of every good, for they are certain of their being involved in the punishment. This meaning has been related from Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd and from Mujāhid, 'Ikrimah, Ibn Zaid, Kalbī, Muqātil, Mansūr (may Allah bless them all).



LXI

AṢ-ṢAFF

اَلصَّف

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

LXI

AṢ-ṢAFF

اَلصَّف

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah derives its name from the sentence *yuqātilūna fī sabil-i-hī ṣaff-an* of verse 4, thereby implying that it is a Surah in which the word ṣaff has occurred.

Period of Revelation

It could not be known from any reliable tradition, but a study of its subject-matter shows that this Sūrah probably was sent down in the period closely following the Battle of Uhud, for by reading between the

lines one perceives a clear description of the conditions that prevailed in that period.

Theme and Subject-Matter

Its theme is to exhort the Muslims to adopt sincerity in Faith and to struggle with their lives in the cause of Allah. It is addressed to the Muslims with weak faith as well as those who had entered Islam with a false profession of the Faith and also those who were sincere in their profession. Some verses are addressed to the first two groups, some only to the hypocrites, and some only to the sincere Muslims. The style itself shows where one particular group has been addressed and where the other.

At the outset the believers have been warned to the effect: "Allah indeed hates those people who say one thing and do another, and He indeed loves those who fight in the cause of the Truth, standing like a solid structure, against the enemies of Allah."

In w. 5-7 the people of the Holy Prophet's community have been warned that their attitude towards their Messenger and their Religion should not be like the attitude that the Israelites had adopted towards the Prophets Moses and Jesus (peace be upon them). In spite of acknowledging the Prophet Moses as a Messenger of God they continued to malign him as long as he lived, and in spite of witnessing clear signs from the Prophet Jesus they denied him without any hesitation. Consequently, the Israelites became perverse, incapable of benefiting from divine guidance. This is certainly not an enviable state which another nation should imitate.

Then, in vv. 8-9 a proclamation has been made with the challenge: "The Jews and the Christians, and the hypocrites, who are conspiring with them, may try however hard they may to extinguish this Light of Allah, it will shine forth and spread in the world in all its fullness, and the Religion brought by the true Messenger of Allah shall prevail over every other religion however hateful it may be to the pagans and polytheists.

In vv. 10-13, the believers have been told that the way to success both here and in the Hereafter is only one: that they should believe in Allah and His Messenger sincerely and should exert their utmost in

Allah's Way with their selves and their wealth. As a reward for this they will earn immunity from Allah's punishment, forgiveness of their sins and the eternal Paradise in the Hereafter, and will be blessed with Allah's good pleasure, succour and victory in the world.

In conclusion, the believers have been exhorted to the effect that just as the disciples of the Prophet Jesus had helped him in the cause of Allah, so should they also become "helpers of Allah", so that they too are blessed with the same kind of good pleasure and approval of Allah as had been the believers before them against the disbelievers.

سُوْرَةُ الصَّفِّ مَدَنِيَّةٌ

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

سَبَّحَ لِلّٰهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ ۚ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ۝١ يٰٓاَيُّهَا
الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لِمَ تَقُوْلُوْنَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُوْنَ ۝٢ كَبُرَ مَقْتًا عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ اَنْ تَقُوْلُوْا مَا
لَا تَفْعَلُوْنَ ۝٣ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُحِبُّ الَّذِيْنَ يُقَاتِلُوْنَ فِيْ سَبِيْلِهٖ صَفًّا كَاَنَّهُمْ
بُنْيَانٌ مَّرْصُوْصٌ ۝٤ وَاِذْ قَالَ مُوْسٰى لِقَوْمِهٖ يٰقَوْمِ لِمَ تُؤْذُوْنَنِيْ وَقَدْ
تَّعْلَمُوْنَ اَنِّيْ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ اِلَيْكُمْ ۭ فَلَمَّا زَاغُوْٓا اَزَاغَ اللّٰهُ قُلُوْبَهُمْ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ لَا
يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفٰسِقِيْنَ ۝٥ وَاِذْ قَالَ عِيْسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ يٰبَنِيْٓ اِسْرَاۗءِيْلَ اِنِّيْ
رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ اِلَيْكُمْ مُّصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيَّ مِنَ التَّوْرٰىةِ وَمُبَشِّرًۢا بِرَسُوْلٍ
يَّاْتِيْ مِنْۢ بَعْدِي اسْمُهٗٓ اَحْمَدُ ۭ فَلَمَّا جَاۗءَهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ قَالُوْا هٰذَا سِحْرٌ
مُّبِيْنٌ ۝٦ وَمَنْ اَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرٰى عَلَي اللّٰهِ الْكَذِبَ وَهُوَ يُدْعٰٓى اِلَى الْاِسْلَامِ ۭ
وَاللّٰهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ۝٧ يُرِيْدُوْنَ لِيُطْفِـــُٔوْا نُوْرَ اللّٰهِ بِاَفْوَاهِهِمْ
وَاللّٰهُ مُتِمُّ نُوْرِهٖ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكٰفِرُوْنَ ۝٨ هُوَ الَّذِيْٓ اَرْسَلَ رَسُوْلَهٗ بِالْهُدٰى
وَدِيْنِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهٗ عَلَي الدِّيْنِ كُلِّهٖ ۙ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُوْنَ ۝٩ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ
اٰمَنُوْا هَلْ اَدُلُّكُمْ عَلٰي تِجَارَةٍ تُنْجِيْكُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابٍ اَلِيْمٍ ۝١٠ تُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِاللّٰهِ
وَرَسُوْلِهٖ وَتُجَاهِدُوْنَ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ بِاَمْوَالِكُمْ وَاَنْفُسِكُمْ ۭ ذٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ
لَّكُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝١١ يَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوْبَكُمْ وَيُدْخِلْكُمْ جَنّٰتٍ تَجْرِيْ
مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ وَمَسٰكِنَ طَيِّبَةً فِيْ جَنّٰتِ عَدْنٍ ۭ ذٰلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيْمُ ۝١٢

LXI

AṢ-ṢAFF

اَلصَّف

Verses: 14 *Revealed at Madinah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Whatever is in the heavens and the earth has glorified Allah, 1
and He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.[1]

O you who have believed, why do you say that which you do 2-4
not do? Most hateful it is in the sight of Allah that you should say that which you do not do.[2] Allah indeed loves those who fight in His Way in ranks as though they were a solid wall.[3]

And remember what Moses had said to his people: "O my 5
people, why do you hurt me even though you know full well that I am indeed a messenger sent to you by Allah?"[4] So, when they adopted perverseness, Allah caused their hearts to become perverse: Allah does not guide the transgressors.[5]

And remember[6] what Jesus, son of Mary, had said: "O children 6
of Israel, I am indeed a Messenger sent to you by Allah, confirming the Torah which has come before me,[7] and giving the good news of a Messenger who shall come after me, whose name shall be Aḥmad."[8]

Yet when he came to them with clear Signs, they said, "This is 7-9
plain magic."[9] Now, who could be more wicked than he who forges falsehoods against Allah[10] even though he is being invited towards Islam (submission to Allah)?[11] Allah does not guide such wrongdoers. They seek to blow out Allah's Light with their mouths, but Allah has decreed that He shall perfect His Light, much as the disbelievers may dislike it.[12] He it is Who has sent His Messenger with the Guidance and the Religion of truth that He may cause it to prevail over all religions, much as the polytheists may dislike it.[13]

10-13 O you who have believed, shall I tell you of a bargain[14] that will save you from a painful torment? It is that you should believe in Allah and His Messenger,[15] and should exert your utmost in Allah's Way with your wealth and your selves. This would be best for you if you only knew.[16] Allah will forgive you your sins and admit you into Gardens underneath which canals flow, and will give you excellent abodes in Gardens of Eternity. This indeed is the supreme success.[17] And He will give you the other thing too, that you desire: Allah's succour and victory near at hand![18] Give to the believers, O Prophet, the good news of this.

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1. This is a brief introdutcion to this discourse. For its explanation, see E.N.'s 1,2 of Sūrah Al-Ḥadid. The discourse has been opened with this introduction so that before hearing or reading what is going to follow, one may well understand that Allah is free from and far above this that the functioning of His Godhead should depend on someone s faith and another one's help and sacrifices. If He exhorts the believers to adopt sincerity in Faith and urges them to exert their utmost for the success and victory of the Truth, that is for the sake of their own good; otherwise the will of Allah is accomplished by His own power and by His own design, whether somebody makes no effort at all towards its implementation, and whether the whole world joins together to frustrate and resist it stubbornly.

2. One meaning of this passage is general as is apparent from its words. It has a special meaning also, which becomes evident when this verse is read along with the verse that follows. The first meaning is that there should be complete agreement between a true Muslim's word and deed: he should carry into effect whatever he says, and when he has no intention of doing it, or has no power for it, he should not say it. To say one thing and do another is one of the most hideous characteristics of man, in the sight of Allah. The Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) has explained that a person's being charactrerised by this quality is a sign that he is not a believer but a hypocrite. According to a *Ḥadīth* he said;

"The hypocrite has three signs even if he offered the Prayer *and* observed the Fast, and professed to be *a* Muslim: that then he spoke he lied; when he made a promise, he broke it; and when he was entrusted with something, he proved dishonest." (Bukhāri, Muslim) .

In another *Ḥadīth* he said:

"Four characteristics are such that the one who has all the four, is a hypocrite through and through, and the one who has one of these, has one

characteristic of hypocrisy in him until he gives it up: that when he is entrusted with something, he proves dishonest; when he speaks, he lies; when he makes a promise, he breaks it; and when he quarrels he crosses all limits of morality and decency." (Bukhārī, Muslim).

The jurists of Islam have almost unanimously held the view that if a person makes a pledge to Allah (e.g. vows to do some thing), or enters an agreement with others, or promised somebody to do something, it is obligatory for him to fulfil it, unless the thing he has promised is by itself sinful. If it is sinful, he should not observe or carry out the agreement or promise, but should expiate its violation as mentioned in Sūrah Al-Mā'idah: 89 above. (Al-Jaṣṣāṣ and Ibn al-'Arabi, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān).*

This much for the general meaning of these verses. As for their special meaning, it becomes obvious when these are read along with the verse that follows. The object is to reprove those people who talked much and made tall promises to fight and lay down their lives in the cause of Islam, but when the time came of their test and trial, they fled the battlefield. The people of weak faith have been taken to task for this weakness at several places in the Qur'ān. For instance, in Sūrah An-Nisā': 77, it has been said: "Have you also marked those to whom it *was* said, 'Withhold your hands (a while from war) and establish the *ṣalāt* and pay the *zakāt*. Now that they have been commanded to fight, some of them fear the people as they should fear Allah, or even more than that. They say: 'Our Lord, why have You prescribed fighting for us? Why have You not given us further respite?'' And in Sūrah Muḥammad: 20: "Those who have believed, were saying, 'Why is not a Sūrah sent down (to enjoin fighting)?' But when a decisive Sūrah was sent down in which fighting had been mentioned, you saw those in whose hearts was a disease, looking towards you like the one under the shadow of death." On the occasion of the Battle of Uḥud in particular, the weaknesses to which allusions have been made continuously from verse 121 to verse 171 of Sūrah Al-'Imrān became all the more conspicuous and visible.

The commentators while explaining the background of the revelation of these verses have mentioned the different forms of the weaknesses to which exception has been taken here. Ibn 'Abbās says that before the fighting was prescribed, there were some people among the Muslims who said: "Would that we could know the act that is most lovable in the sight of Allah, so that we would perform the same." But when they were told that it was fighting in the cause of Allah, it became most difficult for them to carry out their promise. Muqātil bin Ḥayyān has stated that in the Battle of Uḥud these very people were put to the test, and they abandoned the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) and fled Ibn Zaid says that many of the people made the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) believe that they would go out with him to face the enemy whenever it was so

required, but when the time of the test came their promises proved false. Qatādah and Ḍaḥḥāk say that if some people did take part in the battle, they accomplished nothing, but on their return from the battlefield they boasted and bragged, saying, "We put up a brave fight and we achieved such and such a victory." It is such people who have been rebuked by Allah in these verses.

3. First, it shows that only those believers are blessed with Allah's good pleasure and approval, who are prepared to fight in His way, disregarding every kind of danger. Secondly, that Allah likes an army which has three characteristics: (1) It fights in Allah's way with full understanding, and does not fight for a cause disapproved by Allah; (2) it is not indisciplined, but is well-organized and well-arrayed for battle; and (3) it offers stiff resistance to the enemy as though it were "a solid cemented structure". Then, this last quality is by itself highly meaningful. No army can stand in the battle array like a "solid structure" unless it has the following characteristics.

(1) Complete agreement in the faith and the objective, which should unite soldiers and officers in a well-knit body.

(2) Confidence in one another's sincerity, which cannot be created unless everybody is genuinely sincere in his aim and free from impure motives; otherwise the severe test of war will not allow anyone's insincerity to remain hidden, and when confidence is lost, the members of the army start suspecting instead of trusting one another.

(3) A high standard of morality without which neither can the officers and soldiers of the army have love and respect for each other, nor can they *remain immune from* mutual clashes and conflicts.

(4) Love of the common objective and a firm resolve to achieve it, which should inspire the whole army with an invincible spirit of gallantry, devotion and self sacrifice, so that it may actually face the enemy like a solid cemented structure in the battlefield.

Such were the foundations on which a powerful military organization was raised under the leadership of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings). Mighty power of the day clashed with it and were annihilated; no power of the world then could dare face it for centuries.

4. At several places in the Qur'ān details have been given of how the Israelites in spite of acknowledging the Prophet Moses as a Prophet of God and their own benefactor maligned him and proved disloyal to him. For this see Al-Baqarah: 51,55,60, 67-71 An-Nisā': 153; Al-Mā'idah: 20-26; Al-A'rāf: 138-141; 148-151; Ṭā Hā: 86-98. In the Bible too, the Jewish history written by hte Jews themselves is replete with such events; for instance, see Exodus, 5: 20-21, 14: 11-

12, 16: 2-3, 17: 3-4; Numbers, 11: 1-15, 14: 1-10, ch.16, 20: 1-5. Here, allusion to these events is meant to warn the Muslims that they should not adopt the same attitude towards their Prophet as the Israelites had adopted towards their Prophet; otherwise they would meet the same fate as was met by the Israelites.

5. That is, it is not Allah's way to force the people to follow the right way of guidance if they are bent upon following the crooked ways of sin and disobedience. From this it automatically follows that the deviation of a person or nation is not initiated by Allah but by the person or the nation itself. But the law of Allah is that He provides means of deviation only for the one who chooses deviation, so that he may go astray into whatever alleys he may like. Allah has granted man the freedom of choice. Now it is for every man and for every group of men to decide whether he or it wants to obey their Lord, or not, and whether he or it chooses the right way for it or one of the crooked ways. There is no compulsion from Allah in this choice. If somebody chooses the way of obedience and guidance, Allah does not push him forcibly towards deviation and disobedience; and if somebody is resolved to follow disobedience instead of the way of righteousness, it is not Allah's way to make him adopt the way of obedience and guidance forcibly. But this also is the truth that the person who chooses a particular way for himself, cannot follow it practically unless Allah provides for him the ways and means and creates for him the conditions which are necessary for following it. This is Allah's "grace and favour" without which no one's efforts can be meaningful and productive. Now, if a person is not at all interested in seeking Allah's grace for righteousness, but seeks His grace for adopting evil, he is given the same. And when he receives the grace for doing evil, he becomes temperamentally perverse accordingly and the course of his action and effort goes on becoming crooked until at last the capability to do and accept good in him is gradually lost and destroyed. This is what is meant by, "when they adopted perverseness, Allah caused their hearts to become perverse." In this state it is against the law of Allah that the one who wants to adopt deviation, and is actively and earnestly engaged in seeking it, and is expending all one's thought and energy to move further and further on towards it, should be forcibly turned towards guidance, for such an action would negate the object of the test and trial, for which man has been granted the freedom of choice in the world. For if a man adopts righteousness through such guidance, there is no reason why he should be entitled to any reward whatever. Rather in such a case, the one who was not guided forcibly and was left in deviation on that account, should not be subjected to any punishment, for the responsibility for his deviation would lie on Allah, and at the time of his accountability in the Hereafter, he could present the argument: "When there existed the rule of granting guidance forcibly in the world, why was I deprived of that favour?" This is the meaning of the

words: "Allah does not guide the transgressors." That is, Allah does not grant the favour of adopting the way of obedience to those, who have chosen the way of sin and disobedience for themselves of their own free will.

6. This relates to the second disobedience of the children of Israel. The first disobedience they committed in the beginning of their great era of power and prosperity, and this second towards the very end of it, after which they came under the wrath and curse of God for ever and ever. The object of relating these two events here is to warn the Muslims of the consequences of adopting the attitude of disobedience towards their Prophet as the Israelites had adopted towards their Prophet.

7. This sentence has three meanings and all three are correct:

(1) "That I have not brought any new religion, but the same religion that the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) had brought. I have not come to repudiate the Torah, but to confirm it just as the Messengers of God have always been confirming the Messengers who came before them. Therefore, there is no reason why you should hesitate to acknowledge my apostleship."

(2) "I answer *to* the good news that is there in the Torah about my advent. Therefore, instead of opposing me you should receive, and welcome me as the one whose coming had been foretold by the former Prophets."

(3) The third meaning becomes obvious when the sentence is read along with the sentence which follows it and it is this: "I confirm the good news given by the Torah about the coming of Allah's Messenger, named Aḥmad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), and give the good news of his coming myself." According to this third meaning, this saying of the Prophet Jesus (peace be on him) alludes to the good news which the Prophet Moses (peace be on him) had given to his people about the advent of the Holy Messenger of Allah (upon whom be Allah's peace). In it he says:

"The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken. According to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the Lord said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken- I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words *in* his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him." (Deut. 18: 15-19).

This is an express prophecy of the Torah, which applies to none but the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings). In it the Prophet Moses is conveying to his people this direction of Allah: "I will raise up for you a Prophet from among your brethren". Obviously, the "brethren" of a nation cannot be a tribe or a family of the nation itself, but another nation to which it is related racially. If it had implied the coming of a Prophet from among the children of Israel themselves, the words would have been to the effect: "I shall raise up a Prophet for you from among yourselves." Hence, the "brethren of the Israelites" can inevitably imply the Ishmaelites, who are their relatives by lineage, being the children of the Prophet Abraham (peace be on him). Moreover, no Israelite Prophet can correspond to this prophecy for the reason also that not one but many Prophets appeared among the Israelites after the prophet Moses and the Bible is replete with their history.

The other thing foretold in the prophecy is that the Prophet to be raised up would be "like into the Prophet Moses". This obviously does not imply that he would resemble the Prophet Moses in physical features or circumstances of life, for in this respect no individual can ever be like another individual; it also does not mean the resemblance in the characteristics of Prophethood, for this characteristic is common to all those Prophets, who came after the Prophet Moses. Therefore, no Prophet can have this quality that he should be like unto him in this characteristic. Thus, resemblance in these two aspects becomes out of the question. The only aspect of resemblance on the basis of which the peculiarity of a Prophet of the future becomes understandable is that that Prophet should be a bearer of Divine Law like the Prophet Moses. And this peculiarity is found in none but the Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), for all the Prophets who appeared before him among the Israelites were the followers of the Law of Moses; none of them had brought a permanent Divine Law of his own.

This interpretation is further strengthened by these words of the prophecy. "According to all that thou (i.e. the Israelites) desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord thy God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the Lord said unto them, They have well *spoken that* which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth." In this passage Horeb means the mountain on which the Prophet Moses had received the Divine Law first of all, and the prayer that the Israelites made was: "If we are given a Divine Law in the future, it should not be given us under the dreadful conditions like those which were created at the foot of Mt. Horeb while giving us the Law." These conditions have been mentioned both in the Qur'ān and in the Bible. (See Al-Baqarah: 55, 56, 63; Al-A'rāf: 155, 171.

Bible: Exodus, 19: 17"18). In answer to it, the Prophet Moses tells the Israelites; "Allah has granted your prayer. Ho says that He will raise up a Prophet for you, in whose mouth He will put His own words." That is, at the time of bestowing the Dew Divine Law, He will not create the dreadful conditions which were created at the foot of Mt. Horeb. Insstead of that, Divine Words will be put in the mouth *of* the Prophet who would be appointed to that office, ant he will recite those Words before the people. A study of this explanation leaves no room for the doubt that the prophecy applies to another than the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). Only he after the Prophet Moses has been granted an enduring and permanent Divine Law. At its bestowal no assembly of the people was called as was called of the Israelites at the foot of Mt. Horeb, and no such conditions were created during the time it was bestowed as were created in their case there.

8. This is a very important verse of the Qur'ān, which has been subjected to severe adverse criticism as well as treated with the worst kind of criminal dishonesty by the opponents of Islam, for it says that the Prophet Jesus (peace be on him) had given the good news of the coming of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) by name. Therefore, it is necessary that we study and discuss it in some detail.

(1) In this Verse the name mentioned of the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace) is Aḥmad. Aḥmad has two meanings: the one who gives the highest praise to Allah, and the one who is most highly praised by others, or the one who is most worthy of praise among men. Authentic traditions confirm that this too was a well known name of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). Muslim and Abū Da'ūd Tayālisi have related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abū Musā al-Ash'arī that the Holy Prophet said: "I am Muḥammad, I am Aḥmad, and I am the Assembler..." Other traditions on the subject have been related by Imam Mālik, Bukhārī, Muslim, Dārimī, Tirmidhī, and Nasā'ī from Ḥaḍrat Jubair bin Mut'im. This name of the Holy Prophet was well known among the Companions as is borne out by the poetry of Hadrat Hassan bin Thābit. (Verse cited is omitted).

It is also confirmed by history that the sacred name of the Holy Prophet was not only Muḥammad but also Aḥmad. Arabic literature bears evidence that nobody in Arabia had been named Aḥmad before the Holy Prophet, and after him innumerable people have been named Aḥmad and Ghulām Ahmad (slave of Aḥmad) in the world. This is the greatest proof that since his Prophethood this name has been most well known among the people of his community. Had it not been a name of the Holy Prophet, to which Aḥmad's slavery did the parents, who named their children "Ghulām Aḥmad", assign them?

(2) The Gospel of St. John bears evidence that at the advent of the Prophet Jesus Christ, the Israelites were awaiting the appearance of three persons: of the Christ, of Elias (i.e. the second coming of the Prophet Elias) and of "that prophet". In the words of the Gospel:

"And this is the record of John (the Prophet John: Yahyā) when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness! Make straight the way of the Lord as said the prophet Esaias. And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?" (John, 1: 19-25)

These words expressly show that the Israelites were awaiting another Prophet besides the Prophet Christ and the Prophet Elias, and he was not the Prophet John. The belief about the coming of that Prophet was so well known and well established among the Israelites that a mere reference to him as "that prophet" was enough to call attention to him without any need to add: "The one who has been foretold in the Torah." Furthermore, it also shows that the advent of the prophet to whom they were referring was absolutely confirmed, for when these questions were asked of the Prophet John, he did not say that no other prophet was to come and therefore the questions were irrelevant.

(3) Consider now the predictions that have been cited in the Gospel of St. John from chapter 14 to chapter 16 continuously:

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." (14: 16-17)

"These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (14: 25-26)

"Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." (14: 30)

"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me." (15: 26)

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." (16: 7)

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you." (16: 12-15)

(4) In order to determine the exact meaning of these passages one should first know that the language spoken by the Prophet Jesus and his contemporary Palestinians was a dialect of the Aramaic language, called Syriac. More than 200 years before the birth of Jesus when the Seleucides came to power Hebrew had become extinct in this territory and been replaced by Syriac. Although under the influence of the Seleucide and then the Roman empires, Greek also had reached this area, it remained confined only to that class of the people, who after having access to the higher government circles, or in order to seek access to them, had become deeply Hellenized. The Common Palestinians used *a* particular dialect of Syriac, the accents and pronunciations and idioms of which were different from the Syriac spoken in and around Damascus. The common people of the country were wholly unaware of Greek. So much so that when in A.D. 70 the Roman General Titus, after taking Jerusalem, addressed the citizens in Greek, he had to be translated into Syriac, This makes it evident that whatever the Prophet Jesus spoke to his disciples must necessarily be only in Syriac.

Secondly, one should know that all the four Gospels contained in the Bible were written by the Greek-speaking Christians, who had entered Christianity after the Prophet Jesus. The traditions of the sayings and acts of the Prophet Jesus reached them through the Syriac speaking Christians not in the written form but as oral traditions, and they translated these Syriac traditions into their own language and incorporated them in their books. None of the extant Gospels *was* written before 70; the Gospel of St. John was compiled n century after the Prophet Jesus probably in Ephesus, a city in Asia Minor. Moreover, no original copy even of these Gospels in Greek, in which these were originally written, exists. None of the Greek manuscripts that have been discovered and collected from here and there and which all belong to the period before the inventione of printing dates before the 4th century. Therefore, it is diffcult to say what changes might have taken place in these during the first three centuries. What makes it particularly doubtful is that the Christians have been regarding it as quite lawful to temper with their

Gospels intentionally as and when they liked. The author of the article "Bible" in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Ed. 19731 writes:

"The main source of the evidence and of the variations are the manuscripts *of* the N.T., dating from the and to the 10th century or even later. In the process of copying, these manuscripts underwent the revisions that necessitate textual criticism. Some of these revisions were unintentional, as the scribe skipped a word or a line or as he mistook one character for another. Other revisions came from the desire of the scribe to harmonize the text of one Gospel with another or of one Testament with the other; or from his pious wish to "correct" or clarify the text at another point. But now that variations in the text exist, collection of the manuscripts is a difficult task." (See "Bible" in *Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1973).*

Under such conditions as these, it is very difficult to say with absolute certainty that the sayings of the Prophet Jesus (peace be on him) found in the Gospels, have been preserved, reproduced and cited faithfully and accurately, and that no change has taken place anywhere.

The third and a very vital point is that even after the conquest by the Muslims, for about three centuries, the Palestine Christians retained Syriac, which was not replaced by Arabic until the 9th century A.D. The information that the Muslim scholars of the first three centuries obtained through the Syriac speaking Christians about the Christian traditions, should be more authentic and reliable than the information of those people whom it reached through translation after translation from Syriac into Greek and then from Greek into Latin. For there were greater chances of the original Syriac words spoken by the Prophet Jesus remaining preserved with the Palestinian Christians than with others.

(5) Keeping these un-deniable historical facts in mind let us consider the fact that in the passages cited from St. John's Gospel above, the Prophet Jesus (peace be on him) is giving the news about one coming after him, about whom he says: "He will be 'the prince of this world' *(Sarwar 'Ālam),* "he shall abide with you for ever," "he will guide you into all truth." and "he shall testify of me" (i.e. of Jesus himself). By interpolating words like "the Holy Ghost" and "the Spirit of truth", 'in the passages of St. *John,* every effort hag been made to corrupt the real meaning, but despite that if these passages are read carefully, one can clearly see that the one whose coming has been foretold, will not be a spirit but a man, and an extraordinary man, whose teaching will be universal, all pervasive and enduring till the Last Day. For this particular person the word *"Madadgār"* (helper) has been used in the Urdū translation, and the Greek word used in St John's original Gospel, according to the Christians, was Peracletus. But the Christian scholars themselves have been faced with great difficulties in determining its meaning. In the original Greek

Paraclete has several meanings: to call to a particular place, to call for help, to warn, to tempt and incite, to implore and pray. Moreover, in Hellenic sense, it gives these meanings: to console, to give satisfaction, to encourage. Wherever this word has been used in the Bible, it does not fit in well with the context anywhere. Origen has translated it Consolateor at some places and Deprecator at others. But the other commentators have rejected both these translations, for in the first place these are not correct according to Greek grammar; second, these meanings do not go well with context wherever this word has occurred in the passages. Some other translators have translated it Teacher, but this meaning too, cannot be derived from the Greek usage. Tertullian and Augustine have preferred the word Advocate, and some other scholars have adopted words like Assistant, Comforter, Cosoler, etc. (See *Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature,* under "Paracletus").

(6) Now, it is interesting to note that in Greek itself there is another word periclytos, which means "the Praised One". This word is exactly synonymous with "Muḥammad". In pronunciation it closely resembles Paracletus. It cannot be a remote possibility that the Christians who have been used to making alterations in their religious books as and when they liked, might have effected a little variation in the spelling of this word in the prophecy related by St. John when they saw that it went against their set belief and creed. The original Greek Gospel composed by St. John does not exist either; therefore it is not possible to check which of the two words had actually been used in it.

(7) But the decision is not solely dependent on this as to which word had St. John actually used in Greek, for in any case that too was, a translation and the Prophet Jesus' language, as we have explained above, was Palestinian Syriac. Therefore, the word that he might have used in his good news must necessarily be a Syriac word. Fortunately, we find that original Syriac word in the *Life of Muḥammad* by Ibn Hishām. Along with that we also come to know its synonymous Greek word from the same book. Ibn Hishām, on the authority of Ibn Isḥāq, has reproduced the complete translation of 15: 23-27 and of 16: 1 of the Gospel according to Yuhannus (Yuhanna: John), and has used the Syriac word *Munhamanna* instead of the Greek Paraclete. Then, Ibn Isḥāq or Ibn Hishām has explained it thus: The *Munhamanna* in Syriac means Muhammad and in Greek the Paracletus. (Ibn Hishām, vol. 1, p. 248).

Now, historically, the Historical of the common Palestinian Christians until the 9th century A.D. was Syriac. This land was included in the Islamic territories in the first half of the 7th century. Ibn Isḥāq died in 768 A.D. and Ibn Hishām in 828 A.D. This means that in the time of both the Palestinian Christians

spoke Syriac, and for neither it was difficult to have contacts with the Christian subjects of their country. Moreover, in those days there also lived lacs of Greek speaking Christians in the Islamic territories. Therefore, It was also not difficult for them to find out which particular word of Greek was synonymous with a certain word of Syriac. Now, if in the translation reproduced by Ibn Isḥāq the Syriac word *Munḥamanna* has been used, and Ibn Ishāq or Ibn Hishām has explained that its Arabic equivalent is Muḥammad and Greek Paracletus, there remains no room for the doubt that the Prophet Jesus had given the good news of the coming of the Holy Prophet himself by name. Along with that it also becomes known that in the Greek Gospel of *John* the word actually used was Periclytos, which the Christian scholars changed into Paracletus at some later time.

(8) Even an older historical evidence in this connection is the following tradition from Ḥadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd:

"When the Negus summoned the Emigrants from Makkah to his court and heard the teachings of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) from Ḥadrat Ja'far bin Abī Ṭālib, he said; 'God bless you and him from whom you have come! I bear witness that he is Messenger of Allah, and he is the same one whose mention we find in the Gospel, and the same one good news about whom had been given by Jesus son of Mary.'" (Musnad Aḥmad). This has been related in *Ḥadīth* from Ḥadrat Ja'far himself and also from Ḥadrat Umm Salamah. This not only proves that in the beginning of the 7th century the Negus knew that the Prophet Jesus had foretold the coming of a Prophet, but also that a clear pointer to "that prophet" existed in the Gospel on the basis of which the Negus did not take long to form the opinion that the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) was that prophet. However, from this tradition one cannot know whether the source of information with the Negus about the good news given by the Prophet Jesus was this same Gospel of St. John, or whether there existed some other means also at that time for this information.

(9) The truth is that the four Gospels which the Christian Church has recognized as Canonical are neither an authentic means of knowing the Prophet Jesus' Prophecies about the Holy Prophet nor are they a reliable source for knowing the correct biography and the original teachings of the Prophet Jesus himself, but by far the more trust-worthy means for this is the Gospel of Barnabas which the Church has declared as heretical and apocryphal. The Christians have done whatever they could to conceal it, and it remained lost to the world for centuries. In the 16th century only one copy of its Italian translation existed in the library of Pope Sixtus V, and no one was allowed to read it. In the beginning of the 18th century it came into the hands of one John Toland. Then, changing different hands it found its way in 1738 into the Imperial Library of Vienna, In 1907 an

English translation of this Italian manuscript was printed at the Clarendon Press, Oxford, but probably soon after its printing the Christian world realized that the book cut at the very root of the Faith which was attributed to the Prophet Jesus. Therefore, its printed copies were destroyed somehow, and then it never went into print any more. Another copy of it, a Spanish translation from the Italian manuscript, existed in the 18th century, which has been mentioned by George Sale in his Preface and Preliminary Discourse to the English translation of the Qur'ân. This too was made to disappear, and no trace of it exists anywhere today. I had a chance to see a photostat of the English translation published from Oxford and I have read it word by word. I feel that it is indeed a great blessing of which the Christians have kept themselves deprived only out of prejudice and stubbornness;

Wherever this Gospel is mentioned in Christian literature, it ill condemned as a forged Gospel, which perhaps some Muslim has composed and ascribed to Barnabas. But this is a great falsehood which has been uttered only for the reason that it contains at several places clear prophecies about the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings). In the first place, a perusal of this Gospel shows that it could not have been written by a Muslim. Secondly, had it been written by a Muslim, it would have spread extensively among the Muslims and the writings of the Islamic scholars would have contained plentiful references to it. On the contrary, the Muslims had no knowledge of its existence before George Sale wrote his Preliminary Discourse to his translation of the Qur'ân. No mention of any kind is found of the Gospel of Barnabas in the books of the Muslim writers like Ṭabarī, Yaqūbī, Mas'ūdī, Al-Beruni, Ibn Hazm and others, who were fully conversant with Christion literature, when they discuss Christianity. The best catalogues of the books found in the libraries of the Islamic world were *Al-Fihrist* of Ibn an-Nadīm and *Kashf aṣ-Ẓunnūn* of Ḥājī-Khalīfah, and these too are without any mention of it. No Muslim scholar before the 19th century has ever mentioned the name of the Gospel of Barnabas, The third and most important argument to refute the claim that the Gospel has been written by a Muslim is that about 75 years before the birth of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him), in the time of Pope Gelasius I, the list prepared of unanonical books, which were banned for reading by a Papal decree also included the Gospel of Barnabas (Evangelium Barnabe). The question is: Who was the Muslim at that time, who forged this Gospel? The Christian scholars themselves have admitted that the Gospel of Barnabas remained prevalent in Syria, Spain, Egypt, etc. during the early days of Christianity for a long time and that it was banned as heretical in the 6th century.

(10) Before we reproduce the good news given by the Prophet Jesus about the advent of the Holy Prophet from this Gospel, it would be useful to

introduce it briefly, so that the reader may know its importance and also understand why the Christians are so angry with it.

None of the writers of the four Gospels which have been included in the Bible as authentic and canonical, was a companion of the Prophet Jesus, and none of them has either made the claim that the information recorded by him in his Gospel was obtained from the companions of the Prophet Jesus, They have, in fact, made no mention of the sources from which they obtained their information, which could show whether the reporter himself witnessed the events and heard the sayings that he was describing or whether they reached him through one or more than one transmitters. On the contrary, the author of the Gospel of Barnabas states that he is one of the original twelve disciples of Jesus, that he followed Jesus from the beginning till the end, and that he is recording the events that be witnessed with his own eyes and the sayings that he heard with his own ears. Not only this. In the end of the Book he says that on his departure from the world the Prophet Jesus had made him responsible for removing the prevalent misunderstandings about himself and for informing the world of the correct events.

Who was this Barnabas? In the Acts of the Apostles a person so named is very frequently mentioned. He came of a Jewish family of Cyprus. He has been praised for his services in connection with the preaching of Christianity and rendering help and assistance to the followers of the Christ. But nowhere has it been told as to when ho embraced Christianity; his name does not either appear in the list of the twelve original disciples, which has been given in the three Gospels. Therefore, one cannot say that the author of this Gospel is the same Barnabas or some other person. The list of the disciples given by Barnabas differs from the one given by Matthew and Mark only in two names: Thomas instead of whom Barnabas has given his own name and Simon the Canaanite instead of whom he has named Judas son of Jacob. In the Gospel of Luke this second name is also there. Therefore, it would be correct to assume that some time later only in order to exclude Barnabas from the disciples the name of Thomas was included so as to be rid of his Gospel. To effect such changes in their scriptures has never been anything unlawful with the Christian scholars.

If one goes through the Gospel with an unbiased mind and compares it with the four Gospels of the New Testament, one cannot help feeling that it is far superior to them. In it the events of the life of the Prophet Jesus (peace be on him) have been described in much greater detail, in a manner as though somebody vas actually witnessing what was happening and was himself a partner in those events. As against the incoherent stories of the four Gospels this historical account is more coherent. From it one can fully well understand the series of events unfolding themselves. In it the teachings of the Prophet Jesus have been given in a clearer, more effective and expanded form than in the other Gospels. The themes of the

Unity of God, refutation of polytheism, attributes of God, essence of worship and morality have been presented in a most forceful, rational and exhaustive way. In the other Gospels one does not find even a fraction of the instructive parables which clothe the themes. This Gospel also shows in much greater detail what wise methods the Prophet Jesus used for the teaching and training of his disciples. Anyone who has any acquaintance with the language, style and temperament of the Prophet Jesus will be compelled to admit after a perusal of this Gospel that it is not a fictitious document, which might have been forged in a later period. But the truth is that in it the Prophet Jesus appears before us in his true grandeur and glory much more conspicuously than anywhere in the four canonical Gospels. In it there is no trace of those contradictions which abound in the four Gospels in respect of his different sayings.

In the Gospel of Barnabas the life of the Prophet Jesus and his teachings are found precisely according to the life and teachings of a Prophet of God. He presents himself as a Prophet, and confirms all the former Prophets and Books. He clearly states that there is no other means of knowing the truth except through the teachings of the Prophets, and the one who abandons the Prophets, in fact, abandons God. He presents the doctrines of the Unity of God, Apostleeship, and the Hereafter precisely as taught by all the Prophets. He exhorts the people to perform the Prayer, observe the Fast and pay the *Zakāt*. The description that Barnabas has given of his Prayers at a number of places shows that the times he observed for his Prayers were the same times of Fajr (Dawn), Ẓuhr (Early afternoon), 'Aṣr (Late afternoon), Maghrib, 'Ishā (Late Evening) and Tahajjud (Before Dawn), and he always performed his ablutions before the Prayer. He acknowledged David and Solomon as the Prophets, although the Jews and Christians have excluded them from the list of the Prophets. He regarded the Prophet Ishmael as the intended victim of the sacrifice, and he makes a Jewish rabbi admit that the intended victim was indeed the Prophet Ishmael, and not the Prophet Isaac, as the Israelites have made the people believe. His teachings about the Hereafter, Resurrection, Hell and Heaven are about the same as given in the Qur'an.

(11) The reason why the Christians have become opponents of the Gospel of Barnabas is not that it contains clear and definite good news about the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) at several places, for they had rejected this Gospel even before his birth To understand the real cause of their anger a little further discussion is needed.

The earliest followers of the Prophet Jesus (peace be on him) believed him only as a Prophet, followed the Mosaic Law, did not detach themselves from the other Israelites in the matter of beliefs, religious injunctions and rites of worship,

and differed from the Jews only in that they had affirmed faith in the Prophet Jesus as the Messiah (the Christ) whereas the Jews had refused to acknowledge him as the Messiah. Later, when St. Paul entered this community, he started preaching and proclaiming this religion also to the Romans and the Greeks as well as other non-Jewish and non Israelite communities. For this purpose he invented an altogether new religion, the beliefs, doctrines and injunctions of which were entirely different from those taught by the Prophet Jesus. This man had never met the Prophet Jesus but was a bitter enemy of him during his lifetime, and even remained an enemy of his followers for several years after him. Then, when he entered his community and started inventing a new religion, he did not cite any saying of Jesus as his authority but based everything on his own inspiration. The only object before him while framing the new religion was to make it acceptable to the gentile world. He declared .that a Christian was free from all restrictions of the Jewish Law. He abolished all restrictions of the lawful and the unlawful in food. He repudiated the circumcision, which was particularly disagreeable to the non-Jewish world. So much so that he innovated the doctrine of the divinity of Christ and his being son of God and the Atonement for the original sin of mankind by dying on the Cross, for it immensely suited the polytheistic taste of the common man. The early followers of Christ resisted these innovations, but the flood gate opened by St. Paul caused a huge multitude of the non-Jewish Christians to enter this religion against whom the handful of true Christians could not stand for long. However, .until about the end of the 3rd century A D. there were still many people who denied the divinity of Christ. But in the beginning of the 4th century (in 325 A.D.) the Nicaea Council recognized the Pauline doctrines and admitted them as the basis of Christianity. Then the Roman Empire itself turned Christian and in the reign of Emperor Theodosius Christianity became the state religion. Consequently, all the books that clashed with this doctrine were declared as heretical, and only those books were held as canonical which agreed with it. In 367 A.D. for the first time a collection of reliable and accepted books was issued by an epistle of Athanasius, which was ratified in 382 A.D. in a meeting under the presidentship of Pope Damasius. Towards the end of the 5th century Pope Gelasius confirming this collection as authentic also issued a list of the books which were "spurious", whereas no Christian scholar has ever made the claim that any of the Pauline doctrines which were made the criterion for declaring certain religious books as authentic and others as not authentic, had been taught by the Prophet Jesus himself. More than that, even in the Gospels which are admitted to the canonical collection no saying of the Prophet Jesus himself is recorded, which may confirm these doctrines.

The Gospel of Barnabas was included among the rejected books because it clashed with this official creed. Its author at the outset states that the object of his Gospel is:

"To reform the ideas of those who, being deceived of Satan, under pretence of piety, are preaching most impious doctrine, calling Jesus son of God, repudiating the circumcision ordained of God for ever, and permitting every unclean meat; among whom also Paul hath been deceived."

He says that during the lifetime of Jesus, first of all the polytheistic Roman soldiers witnessing his miracles started calling him God and *son* of God. Then this epidemic infected the common Israelites also. At this Jesus was much grieved and upset. He repudiated this false belief about himself repeatedly and cursed those who spoke thus of him. Then he sent his disciples throughout Judaea to refute it and blessed them also with the ability to work the sate miracles which issued from himself, so that the people be made to give up the false idea that the one who performed those miracles was God or son of God. In this connection he reproduces the full discourses of the Prophet Jesus in which he repudiated this false belief and tells how upset he was at the circulation of this mischief. Moreover, he strongly refutes the Pauline doctrine that Christ died on the Cross. He narrates as an eye-witness that when Judas Iscariot took money from the high priest and brought soldiers to have Jesus arrested, four angels at Allah Almighty's command carried him away and Judas was so changed in speech and in face as to be like Jesus. Thus, it vas he who was put on the cross and not Jesus. Thus, this Gospel cuts at the root of Pauline Christianity and ratifies what the Qur'ān says in this regard, whereas 115 years before the revelation of the Qur'ān, the Christian priests had rejected it on account of these very assertion.

(12) The above discussion makes it abundantly clear that the Gospel of Barnabas is, in fact, a more reliable Gospel than the so-called canonical Gospels. It represents the Prophet Jesus' teachings and the events and deeds of his life and his sayings correctly; it s the Christian people's own misfortune that they have lody only because of their stubbornness the opportunity they were given to correct their beliefs and to know the real teachings of the Prophet Jesus. Now we can quote with full satisfaction the glad tidings about the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), which Barnabas has reported from the Prophet Jesus. In these glad tidings at some places the Prophet Jesus mentions the Holy Prophet by name, at some he calls him *Rasūl-Allah (Messenger* of Allah), at some he uses the word "Messiah" for him, at some "Admirable", and at other places employs sentences which give the same meaning as: *Lā ilāha Ill-Allah, Muhammad ar-Rasūl-Allāh*. It is difficult for us to reproduce all pieces of the good news here, for they are

scattered throughout the book in different wordings and in different contexts. We reproduce below only a few of them *as* specimen:

"For all the prophets, that are one hundred and forty-four thousand, whom God hath sent into the world have spoken darkly. But after me shall come the Splendour of all the prophets and holy ones, and shall shed light upon the darkness of all that the Prophets have said, because he is the messenger of God." (Ch. 17)

"The Levites and the scribes said: 'If thou be not the Messiah nor Elijah, or any prophet, wherefore dost thou preach new doctrine, and make thyself of more account than the Messiah?' Jesus answered: 'The miracles which God worketh by my hands show that I speak that which God willeth; nor indeed do I make myself to be accounted as him of whom ye speak. For I am not worthy to unloose the ties of the hosen or the latchets of the shoes of the messenger of God whom ye call "Messiah", who was made before me; and shall come after me, and shall bring the word of truth, so that this faith shall have no end." (Ch. 42)

"Verily I say unto you, that every prophet when he is come hath borne to one nation only the mark of the mercy of God. And so their words were not extended save to that people to which they were sent. But the messenger of God, when he shall come, God shall give to him as it were the seal of his hand, insomuch that he shall carry salvation and mercy to all the nations of the world that shall receive his doctrine. He shall come with power upon the ungodly, and shall destroy idolatry, insomuch that he shall make Satan confounded." Continuing his speech with the disciples, the Prophet Jesus makes it clear that he will be born of the Ishmaelites, (Ch.43)

"I therefore say unto you that the messenger of God is a splendour that shall give gladness to nearly all that God hath made, for he is adorned with the spirit of understanding and of counsel, the spirit of wisdom and might, the spirit of fear and love, the spirit of prudence and temperance; he is adorned with the spirit of charity and mercy, the spirit of justice and piety, the spirit of gentleness and patience, which he hath received from God three times more than he hath given to all his creatures. O blessed time, when he shall come to the world! Believe me that I have seen him and have done him reverence, even as every prophet hath seen him: seeing that of his spirit God giveth to them prophecy. And when I saw him my soul was filled with consolation, saying: 'O Muhammad, God be with thee, and may he make me worthy to untie thy shoelatchet, for obtaining this I shall be a great prophet and holy one of God." (44)

"Jesus answered: 'Let not your heart be troubled, neither be ye fearful: for I have not created you, but God our creator who hath created you will protect you. As for me, I am now come to the world to prepare the way for the messenger

of God, who shall bring salvation to the world. But beware that ye be not deceived, for many false prophets shall come, who shall take my words and contaminate my gospel.' Then said Andrew: 'Master, tell us some sign, that we may know him.' Jesus answered: 'He will not come in your time, but will come some years after you, when my gospel shall be annulled, insomuch that there shall be scarcely thirty faithful. At that time God will have mercy on the world, and so he will send his messenger, over whose head will rest a white cloud, whereby he shall be known of one elect of God, and shall be by him manifested to the world. He shall come with great power against the ungodly, and shall destroy idolatry upon the earth. And it rejoiceth me because that through him our God shall be known and glorified, and I shall be known to be true; and he will execute vengeance against those who shall say that I am more than man.... He shall come with truth more clear than that of all the prophets." (Ch. 72)

"For the promise of God was made in Jerusalem, in the temple of Solomon, and not elsewhere. But believe me, a time will come that God will give his mercy in another city, and in every place it will be possible to worship him in truth. And God in every place will have accepted true prayer with mercy ... I am indeed sent to the house of Israel as a prophet of salvation; but after me shall come the Messiah, sent of God to all the world; for whom God hath made the world. And then through all the world will God be worshipped, and mercy received." (Ch. 82)

"Jesus answered: 'As God liveth, in whose presence my soul standeth, I am not the Messiah whom all the tribes of the earth expect, even as God promised to our father Abraham, saying: 'In thy seed will I bless all the tirbes of the earth.' (Gen. 22; 18) But when God shall take me away from the world, Satan will raise again this accursed sedition, by making the impious believe that I am God and son of God, whence my words and my doctrine shall be contaminated, insomuch that scarcely shall there remain thirty faithful ones: whereupon God will have mercy upon the world, and will send his messenger for whom he hath made all things; who shall come from the south with power, and shall destroy the idols with the idolaters; who shall take away the dominion from Satan which he hath over men. He shall bring with him the mercy of God for salvation of them that shall believe in him, and blessed is he who shall believe his words." (Ch. 96)

"The priest asked: 'After the coming of the messenger of God, shall other prophets come?' Jesus answered: 'There shall not come after him true prophets sent by God, but there shall come a great number of false prophets, whereat I sorrow. For Satan shall raise them up by the just judgement of God, and they shall hide themselves under the pretext of my gospel." (Ch. 97)

anointing him with oil, but somebody's being appointed by God had become synonymous with being a messiah. For instance, in I Kings, it has been said that God commanded "the Prophet Elijah to anoint Hazael to be king over Syria. And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphet of Abelmehola shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room." (19: 15 16). None of these was anointed with oil. Their being commissioned by God amounted to their being anointed. Thus, according to the Israelite concept the word messiah was, in fact, synonymous with being "commissioned by God", and in this very meaning had the Prophet Jesus (peace be on him) used this word for the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings). For an explanation of the Israelite meaning of the word "messiah", see "Messiah" in *Cyclopaedia of Biblical* Literature).

9. The word *sehr* here does not mean magic but deception and fraud, which is also a well known meaning of this word in Arabic. Thus, the verse means: "When the Prophet whose coming had been foretold by the Prophet Jesus came with the clear signs of his prophethood, the Israelites and the followers of Jesus declared his claim to Prophethood to be a deception and fraud."

10. "... forges ... against Allah": declares the Prophet sent by Allah to be a false prophet and regards the Revelations of Allah to His Prophet as forged by the Prophet himself.

11. That is, there could be no greater injustice than that besides calling a true Prophet a false prophet, one should start hurling abuses on him and employing all sorts of lies and false allegations and slanders to defeat his mission although the Prophet is calling him to Allah's worship and His obedience.

12. One should bear in mind that these verses were sent down in A.H. 3 after the Battle of Uhud, when Islam was confined only to the city of Madinah, the Muslims were only a few thousands in number, and entire Arabia was bent upon wiping out this religion. The defeat that the Muslims had suffered at Uhud, had sullied their image of power and the tribes of the surrounding areas had been emboldened. Under such conditions it was said: "No one will succeed in blowing out this Light of Allah, but it will shine forth in all fullness and spread throughout the world." This was a clear prediction which literally came true. Who could know apart from Allah at that time what was the future of Islam? Human eyes could only see that it was a flickering candle and violent winds were blowing to put it out for ever.

13. "The *mushriks*": those who combine the service of others with the service of Allah and mix other religions in the Religion of Allah; who are not prepared to see that the entire system of life is established on the obedience and gidance of One God; who insist that they will worship any deity they like and base

"Then said the priest: 'How shall the Messiah be called, and what sign shall reveal his coming?' "Jesus answered: 'The name of the Messiah is admirable, for God himself gave him the name when he had created his soul, and placed it in a celestial splendour. God said: 'Wait Mohammad; for thy sake I will to create paradise, the world, and a great multitude of creatures whereof I make thee a present, insomuch that whoso shall bless thee shall be blessed, and whose shall curse thee shall be accursed. When I shall send thee into the world, I shall send thee as my messenger of salvation, and thy word shall be true, insomuch that heaven and earth shall fail, but thy faith shall never fail. Mohammad is his blessed name.' (Ch. 97)

Barnabas writes that on one occasion Jesus spoke to his disciples and said that one of them (who was to be Judas Iscariot) would sell him to the enemies for 30 pieces of gold. Then said:

"Whereupon I am sure that who shall sell me, be slain in my name, for that God shall take me up from the earth; and shall change the appearance of the traitor so that every one shall believe him to be me; nevertheless when he dieth an evil death, I shall abide in that dishonour for a long time in the world But when Mohammad shall come, the sacred messenger of God, that infamy shall be taken away. And this shall God do because I have confessed the truth of the Messiah, who shall give me this reward, that I shall be known to be alive and to be a stranger to that death of infamy.' (Ch.112)

(To the disciples *Jesus* said:) "Verily I say unto you that if the truth had not been erased from the book of Moses, God would not have given to David our father the second. And if the book of David had not been contaminated, God would not have committed the Gospel to me; seeing that the Lord our God is unchangeable, and hath spoken but one message to all men. Wherefore, when the messenger of God shall come, he shall come to cleanse away all where with the ungodly have contaminated my book.' (Ch.124)

In these clear and comprehensive prophecies there are only three things which at first sight appear to be doubtful. First, that in these and in several other passages of the Gospel of Barnabas the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) has denied his own self being the Messiah. Second, that not only in these but at many other places also in this Gospel the Holy Messenger's actual name "Muhammad" has been mentioned, whereas this is not the way the Prophets make prophecies: they do not mention the actual name of the one coming in the future. Third, that in these the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) has been called the Messiah.

The answer to the first objection is that not only in the Gospel of Barnabas but in the Gospel according to Luke also it is mentioned that the Prophet Jesus had

forbidden his disciples to call him the Christ (the Messiah). The words in Luke are: "He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? Peter answering said, The Christ of God. And he strictly charged them, and commanded them to tell no man that thing." (9: 20-21) Probably the reason was that about the Messiah whom the Israelites were awaiting, they thought he would subdue the enemies of truth by the sword. Therefore, the Prophet Jesus (peace be on him) said that he was not that Messiah, but he would come rafter him.

The answer to the second objection is that no doubt in the extant Italian translation of Barnabas the Holy Prophet's name has been written as "Mohammad", but no one knows through how many different languages has this book reached the Italian. Obviously, the original Gospel of Barnabas must be in Syriac, because that was the language of Jesus and his companions. If the original book were extant, it could be seen what name of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was written in it. Now what one can assume is that originally the Prophet Jesus must have used the word *Munhamanna*, as we have explained above by citing Ibn Isḥāq's reference to St. John's Gospel. Then different translators may have translated it in their own languages. Later, probably some translator seeing that the name given in the prophecy was exactly synonymous with the word "Mohammad" may have written this very sacred name of the Holy Prophet. Therefore, the mere appearance of this name only is not enough to give rise to the doubt that the entire Gospel of Barnabas has been forged by a Muslim.

The answer to the third objection is that the word "Messiah" is an Israelite technical term, which has been used in the Qur'ān particularly for the Prophet Jesus for the reason that the Jews had denied his being the Messiah; otherwise it is neither a Qur'ānic term nor has it been used anywhere in the Qur'ān in the meaning of the Israelite term, Therefore, if the Prophet Jesus used the word Messiah for the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him), and the Qur'ān has not used this word for him, it is not right to conclude that the Gospel of Barnabas ascribes something to him which the Qur'ān denies. In fact, it was customary with the Israelites that when somebody or something was set aside for a sacred cause, the person or thing was anointed with the holy oil on the head and consecrated. This anointing with the oil was called *mash* in Hebrew, and the one thus anointed *"mcssiah"*. Utensils were likewise anointed and set aside for use in the house of worship. The priests also were anointed when they were appointed to priesthood. The kings and the prophets too were anointed when they were designated to kingship or prophethood by God. Thus, according to the Bible, there have been many messiahs in the history of the Israelites. The Prophet Aaron was a messiah as a priest, Moses as a priest and a prophet, Saul as a king, David as a king and a prophet, Melchizedek as a king and a priest, and Al-Yas'a (Elisha) was a messiah as a prophet. Later, it was no longer regarded as necessary to appoint a person by

their beliefs and morals and civilization on any philosophy and doctrine they please. As against the ways of such people, it is being said that the Messenger of Allah has not been sent to make a compromise with them, but with the object that he should cause the Guidance and Religion of Truth which he has brought from Allah to prevail ove all religion, i.e. every aspect of the way of life. This mission he has to accomplish in any case whether the disbelievers and polytheists like it or not, and whether they support it or resist it. This declaration has been made in the Qur'an at two other places above, in Sūrah At Taubah: 33 and Sūrah Al-Fath: 28. Here it has been re-iterated for the third time. (For further explanation, see E.N. 32 of At-Taubah and E.N. 51 of Al-Fath).

14. A bargain is something in which a person employs his wealth, time, labour and talent in order to earn a profit. In the same sense the Faith and *Jihād* in the cause of Allah have been called a bargain, as if to say: If you exert all your powers and expend all your resources in the way of Allah, you will get the profits that are being mentioned in the following verses. This same theme has been expressed in At-Taubah: III in another way. (See E.N. 106 of At-Taubah).

15. When the believers are asked to believe, it automatically gives the meaning that they should become sincere Muslims: they should not rest content with oral profession of the Faith but should be ready and willing to make every sacrifice in the cause of their Faith

16. That is, this bargain is far superior for them to every worldly bargain.

17. The actual profits of the bargain that they will attain in the eternal life of the Hereafter are: (1) Immunity from the punishment of Allah; (2) forgiveness of sins; and (3) entry into the Paradise the blessings of which are eternal and everlasting.

18. Although victory and success in the world is a great blessing of Allah, yet for the believer the thing of real importance is not this but the success of the Hereafter. That is why the gain of the worldly life has been mentioned as second and the result accruing in the Hereafter first.

وَ اُخْرٰى تُحِبُّوْنَهَا ؕ نَصْرٌ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ وَ فَتْحٌ قَرِيْبٌ ؕ وَ بَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٣﴾ يٰۤاَيُّهَا
الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا كُوْنُوْۤا اَنْصَارَ اللّٰهِ كَمَا قَالَ عِيْسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ لِلْحَوَارِيّٖنَ مَنْ
اَنْصَارِيْۤ اِلَى اللّٰهِ ؕ قَالَ الْحَوَارِيُّوْنَ نَحْنُ اَنْصَارُ اللّٰهِ فَاٰمَنَتْ طَّآئِفَةٌ مِّنْ
بَنِيْۤ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ وَ كَفَرَتْ طَّآئِفَةٌ ۚ فَاَيَّدْنَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا عَلٰى عَدُوِّهِمْ
فَاَصْبَحُوْا ظٰهِرِيْنَ ﴿١٤﴾

O you who have believed! Be helpers of Allah even as Jesus, son of Mary, had said to the disciples,[19] "Who will be my helpers (in calling) towards Allah?" and the disciples had answered, "We are helpers of Allah."[20] Then, some of the children of Israel believed and others disbelieved. So We aided the believers against their enemies, and they alone became triumphant.[21] 14

19. For the companions of the Prophet Jesus (peace be on him) the word "Disciples" generally has been used in the Bible, but later the term "apostle" became prevalent for them among the Christians, and in the sense that they were God's apostles, but in the sense that the Prophet Jesus used to send them to different parts of Palestine as his preachers. Among the Jews this word was already in use for those who were sent to collect subscriptions for the Temple. However, the Qur'ānic term "ḥawārī" is better than both the Christian terms. The essence of this word is *ḥūr*, which means whiteness. The washerman is called ḥawārī because he whitens clothes by washing them. A pure and un-adulterated thing is also called ḥawārī. The flour from which bran has been sifted is known as *ḥuwwārā*. In this very meaning this word is used for a sincere friend and an unselfish supporter. Ibn Sayyidah says: "Anyone who exaggerates in helping another is his ḥawārī." (*Lisān al-'Arab*).

20. This is the last place in the Holy Qur'ān where those who exert themselves in calling the people to Allah's Religion and to cause it to become dominant over disbelief, have been called helpers of Allah. Before this, this very theme has been expressed in Āl-'Imrān: 52, Al-Ḥajj: 40, Muḥammad: 7, Al-Ḥadīd: 25 and Al-Ḥashr: 8 above, *and* we have exptained these verses in E.N. 50 of Āli Imrān, E.N. 84 of Al-Ḥajj, E.N. 12 of Muḥammad, E.N. 47 of Al-Ḥadīd.

Moreover, in E.N. 9 of Sūrah Muhammad also light has been thrown on an aspect of this question. In spite of this some people seem to have the confusion that when Allah Almighty is All-Powerful, Self-Sufficient, and Independent of the help of all His creatures, how then can a man be a helper of Allah? To remove this confusion we shall further explain this point here.

In fact, these people have not been called helpers of Allah for the reason that Allah, Lord of the worlds, (God forbid) stood in need of any help from some of His creatures, but because in the sphere of life in which Allah Himself has granted man freedom of belief and disbelief, obedience and disobedience, He does not will to make the people His believers and obedient servants by means of His power and might. Instead, He adopts the method of admonition and instruction to show them the right way through His Prophets and Books. The one who accepts this admonition and instruction willingly is a *Mu'min*, the one who submits practically to His Commands, is a *Muslim* and devout God-worshipper, the one who adopts an attitude of God-consciousness is a *Muttaqī*, the one who vies with others for good works is a *Muḥsin*, and over and above this, the one who starts working for the reformation of the people by means of the same method of admonition and instruction and for establishing the system of Allah's obedience instead of disbelief and wickedness, is declared by Allah as His own helper, as has been mentioned in clear words at several places in the verses cited above. If the object were to designate such people as helpers of Allah's Religion and not of Allah, the words would have been *anṣār-u dīn Allah* and not *ansār-Allah*, *yanṣurūna dīn-Allah* and not *yanṣurūn-Allah*, *intanṣurūna dīn-Allah* and not *in-tanṣurūn-Allah*. When in order to convey and express a theme; Allah has adopted one and the same style at several places, successively, it proves conclusively that the actual object is to designate these people as helpers of Allah. But this "helpfulness", God forbid, is not in the sense that these people fulfil some need of Allah for which He requires their help, but it is in the sense that these people participate in the cause which Allah wills to accomplish through His Prophets and His Books instead of His great power and might.

21. Those who disbelieved in Jesus Christ are the Jews, and those who believed in him are the Christians as well as the Muslims, and Allah granted both these domination over the disbelievers of Christ. This is meant to requires the Muslims that just as the believers of Christ have dominated over his disbelievers in the past, so will the believers of the Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) prevail over his disbelivers.


LXII
AL-JUMU'AH
الجُمُعَة

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

LXII

AL-JUMU'AH

الجُمُعَة

INTRODUCTION

Name

It is derived from the sentence *idhā nūdiya-lis-salāt-i min-yaum-il-Jumu'ati* of verse 9. Although in this Sūrah injunctions about the Friday congregational Prayer also have been given, yet *"Jumu'ah is* not the title of its subject-matter as a whole, but this name too, like the names of other Sūrahs, is only a symbolic title

Period of Revelation

The period of the revelation of the first section (vv. 1-8) is A.H. 7, and probably it was sent down on the occasion of the conquest of Khaiber or soon after it. Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī and Ibn Jarir have related on the authority of Hadrat Abū Hurairah that he and other Companions were sitting in the Holy Prophet's assembly when

these verses were revealed. About Abū Hurairah it is confirmed historically that he entered Islam after the truce of Hudaibiyah and before the conquest of Khaiber, and Khaiber was conquered, according to Ibn Hishām, in Muharram, and, according to Ibn Sa'd, in Jamādī al-Awwal, A.H. 7. Thus presumably Allah might have sent down these verses, addressing the Jews, when their last stronghold had fallen to the Muslims, or these might have been revealed when, seeing the fate of Khaiber, all the Jewish settlements of northern Hijāz surrendered to the Islamic government.

The second section (vv. 9-11) was sent down shortly after the emigration, for the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) had established the Friday congregational prayer on the 5th day after his arrival at Madīnah. The incident that has been referred to in the last verse of this section must have occurred at a time when the people had not yet received full training in the etiquette of religious congregations.

Theme and Subject-Matter

As we have explained above, the two sections of this Sūrah were sent down in two different periods. That is why their themes as well as their audiences are different. Although there is a kind of harmony between them on account of which they have been put together in one Sūrah, yet we should understand their themes separately before we consider the question of their harmony.

The first section was sent down at a time when all Jewish efforts to obstruct the message of Islam during the past six years had failed. First, in Madinah as many as three of their powerful tribes had done whatever they could to frustrate the mission of the Holy Prophet, with the result that one of the tribes was completely exterminated and the other two were exiled. Then by intrigue and conspiracy they brought many of the Arab tribes together to advance on Madinah, but in the Battle of the Trench they were all repulsed. After this, Khaiber had become their stronghold, where a large number of the Jews expelled from Madīnah also had taken refuge. At the time these verses were revealed, that too was taken without any extraordinary effort, and the Jews at their own request agreed to live there as tenants of the Muslims. After this final defeat the Jewish power in Arabia came to an end. Then, Wād-il-Qurā, Fadak, Taimā', Tabūk, all surrendered one after the other,

so much so that all Arabian Jews became subdued to the same Islam which they were not prepared to tolerate before. This was the occasion when Allah Almighty once again addressed them in this Sūrah, and probably this was the last and final address that was directed to them in the Qur'ān In this they have been reminded of three things:

(1) "You refused to believe in this Messenger only because he was born among a people whom you contemptuously call the "gentiles". You were under the false delusion that the Messenger must necessarily belong to your own community You seemed to have been convinced that anyone s claimed to be a prophet from outside your community, must be an impostor, for this office had been reserved for your race, and a Messenger could never be raised among the "gentiles". But among the same gentiles Allah has raised a Messenger who is reciting His Book in front of your very eyes, is purifying souls, and showing the Right Way to the people whose misdeeds are well known to you. This is Allah's bounty, which He may bestow on anyone He may please. You have no monopoly over it so that He may bestow it over whomever you may please and may withhold it from whomever you may withhold it to be withheld".

(2) "You had been made bearers of the Torah, but -you did not understand your responsibility for it nor discharged it as you should have. You are like the donkey which is loaded with books, and which does not know what burden it is bearing. Rather you are worse than the donkey, for the donkey is devoid of sense, but you are intelligent. You not only shirk your responsibility of being bearers of Allah's book, but you do not even hesitate to deny Allah's revelations deliberately. Yet, you are under the delusion that you are Allah's favourites and the blessing of apostleship has been reserved for you alone. More than that, you seem to entertain the notion that whether you fulfil the demands of Allah's message or not, Allah in any case is bound not to make any other than you the bearer of His message."

(3) "If you really were Allah's favourites and you were sure of having a place of honour and high rank reserved with Him, you

would not have feared death se much as to prefer a life of disgrace to death. It is only because of this fear of death that you have suffered humiliation after humiliation during the past few years. Your this condition is by itself a proof that you are fully conscious of your misdeeds, and your conscience is aware that if you die with these misdeeds, you will meet with a greater disgrace before Allah in the Hereafter than in this world."

This is the subject-matter of the first section. The second that was sent down many years later, was appended to this Sūrah because in it Allah has bestowed Friday on the Muslims as against the Sabbath of the Jews, and Allah wanted to warn the Muslims not to treat their Friday as the Jews had treated their Sabbath. This section was sent down on an occasion when a trade caravan arrived in Madīnah right at the time of the Friday congregational service and hearing its din and drum the audience, except for 12 men, left the Prophet's Mosque and rushed out to the caravan, although the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) at that time was delivering the Sermon. Thereupon it was enjoined that after the call is sounded for the Friday Prayer all trade and business and other occupations become forbidden. The believers should then suspend every kind of transaction and hasten to the remembrance of Allah. However, when the Prayer is over, they hate the right to disperse in the land to resume their nor occupations. This section could be made an independent Sūrah in view of the commandments that it contains about the congregational service on Friday, and could also be included in some other Sūrah, but, instead, it has been included here particularly in the verses in which the Jews have been warned of the causes of their evil end. Its wisdom in our opinion is the same as we have explained above.

سُوْرَةُ الْجُمُعَةِ ١١ مَدَنِيَّةٌ ١٠ رُكُوْعَاتُهَا ٢

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

١ يُسَبِّحُ لِلّٰهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ الْمَلِكِ الْقُدُّوْسِ الْعَزِيْزِ الْحَكِيْمِ ١
٢ هُوَ الَّذِيْ بَعَثَ فِي الْاُمِّيّٖنَ رَسُوْلًا مِّنْهُمْ يَتْلُوْا عَلَيْهِمْ اٰيٰتِهٖ وَيُزَكِّيْهِمْ وَ
يُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتٰبَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ ۗ وَاِنْ كَانُوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِيْ ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ٢ وَّ
٣ اٰخَرِيْنَ مِنْهُمْ لَمَّا يَلْحَقُوْا بِهِمْ ۗ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ٣ ذٰلِكَ فَضْلُ اللّٰهِ
يُؤْتِيْهِ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيْمِ ٤ مَثَلُ الَّذِيْنَ حُمِّلُوا التَّوْرٰىةَ
٥ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَحْمِلُوْهَا كَمَثَلِ الْحِمَارِ يَحْمِلُ اَسْفَارًا ۗ بِئْسَ مَثَلُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِيْنَ
كَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ٥ قُلْ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ هَادُوْٓا
٦ اِنْ زَعَمْتُمْ اَنَّكُمْ اَوْلِيَآءُ لِلّٰهِ مِنْ دُوْنِ النَّاسِ فَتَمَنَّوُا الْمَوْتَ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ
٧ صٰدِقِيْنَ ٦ وَلَا يَتَمَنَّوْنَهٗٓ اَبَدًا ۢ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ اَيْدِيْهِمْ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ عَلِيْمٌۢ بِالظّٰلِمِيْنَ ٧
٨ قُلْ اِنَّ الْمَوْتَ الَّذِيْ تَفِرُّوْنَ مِنْهُ فَاِنَّهٗ مُلٰقِيْكُمْ ثُمَّ تُرَدُّوْنَ اِلٰى عٰلِمِ
الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ٨ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اِذَا
١١ ع ١ ٩ نُوْدِيَ لِلصَّلٰوةِ مِنْ يَّوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ فَاسْعَوْا اِلٰى ذِكْرِ اللّٰهِ وَذَرُوا الْبَيْعَ ۗ ذٰلِكُمْ
خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ٩ فَاِذَا قُضِيَتِ الصَّلٰوةُ فَانْتَشِرُوْا فِي الْاَرْضِ وَ
١٠ ابْتَغُوْا مِنْ فَضْلِ اللّٰهِ وَاذْكُرُوا اللّٰهَ كَثِيْرًا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُوْنَ ١٠ وَاِذَا رَاَوْا
١٢ ع ٢ ١١ تِجَارَةً اَوْ لَهْوًا ۨ انْفَضُّوْٓا اِلَيْهَا وَتَرَكُوْكَ قَآئِمًا ۗ قُلْ مَا عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ خَيْرٌ مِّنَ
اللَّهْوِ وَمِنَ التِّجَارَةِ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ خَيْرُ الرّٰزِقِيْنَ ١١

LXII

AL-JUMU'AH

الجمعة

Verses: 11 *Revealed at Madînah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth glorifies 1
Allah—the Sovereign, the Holy, the All-Mighty and the All-Wise![1]

He it is Who has raised a Messenger among the gentiles[2] from 2-4
among themselves, who recites to them His Revelations, purifies them and teaches them the Book and the Wisdom,[3] whereas before this they were indeed lost in manifest error.[4] And (the advent or the Messenger) is also for those others who have not yet joined them.[5] Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise.[6] This is Allah's bounty; He bestows it on whomever He wills, and Allah is the Owner of supreme bounty.

The example of those who were entrusted with the burden of the 5
Torah, and yet they failed to bear its burden,[7] is of a donkey[8] laden with books. Even worse is the example of those who have treated Allah s Revelations as false[9] .Allah does not guide such wrongdoers.

Say to them, "O you who have become Jews:[10] If you claim that 6-8
you alone are Allah's favourites,[11] apart from all other people, then you should Song for death if you be truthful."[12] But they will never wish for it because of the misdeeds they have committed,[13] and Allah knows full well these wrongdoers. Say to them, "The death from which you flee will certainly overtake you. Then you will be presented before Him, Who is the Knower of the hidden and the open, and He will tell you what you had been doing."

O you who have believed, when the call is made to the Prayer 9-10
on Friday,[14] hasten to the remembrance of Allah and leave off your trading.[15] This is better for you only if you knew. Then, when the

Prayer is over, disperse in the land and seek Allah's bounty,[16] and remember Allah much;[17] perhaps you may achieve success[18]

11 And when they saw some merchandise and sport they broke off to it and left you standing.[19] Say to them, "That which is with Allah is far better than sport and business,[20] and Allah is the best of all providers."[21]

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1. For explanation, see E.N.'s 1, 2 of Sūrah Al-Hadīd, and E.N.'s 36, 37, 41 of Sūrah Al-Ḥashr above. This introduction bears a deep relevance to the theme that follows. In spite of the fact that the Jews of Arabia were witnessing clear signs of Apostleship in the person of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) and his high character and works and in spite of the clear good news given by the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) in the Torah, which only applied to him, they were denying him only because they did not want to acknowledge the prophethood of a person who did not belong to their own community and race. They openly proclaimed that they would believe only in that which had come to them, and would not accept any teaching, which came through a non-Israelite prophet, even if it was from God. For this attitude, in the following verses they have been reproved. Hence the reason for beginning the discourse with the introductory sentence. First, it says that everything in the universe is glorifying Allah; that is, the entire universe testifies that Allah is free from all those faults and weaknesses because of which the Jews have formed the concept of their racial superiority. He is not related to anyone: He has nothing to do with favouritism: He treats all His creatures with equal justice, mercy and care. No particular race and nation is His favourite so that He may be bound to bless it whatever it may do; and He is not prejudiced against any race or nation so that He may deprive it of His bounties even if it possesses all the good qualities. Then, it says that He is the Sovereign; that is, no worldly power can restrict His authority and powers, as if to say: "You, O Jews, are His servants and subjects. It is not for you to decide whom He should appoint His Messenger, and whom He should not, for your guidance." Then it says that He is Holy; that is, HE is far exalted and glorified that His judgements may be mistaken. Human judgements may have mistakes but His decrees are perfect. In the end, two more attributes of Allah have been mentioned: that He is All-Mighty, i.e. none can fight Him and win and that He is All-Wise, i.e. whatever He does, it is always the very demand *of* wisdom, and His plans and designs are so well-planned that none in the world can hinder and frustate them.

2. Here the word *ummī* (gentile) has been used as a Jewish term and there is a subtle sabtle in it. The verse means: "The All-Mighty and All-Wise Allah has raised a Messenger among the Arabs whom the Jews contemptuously consider the

gentiles and much below themselves. The Messenger has not risen of his own wish and will, but has been raised by Him Who is the Sovereign of the universe, Who is All-Mighty and All-Wise, Whose power can be resisted and opposed only to one's own loss and peril.

One should know that the word *ummī* has occurred in the Qur'ān at several places but in different meanings at different places. At one place it has been used for the people who do not possess any revealed scripture, which they may be following, as Al-'Imrān: 20, where it has been said: "Ask those who possess the Book and those who do not possess (*ummīs*): 'Have you accepted Islam?'" Here, the *ummīs* imply the Arab polytheists, and they have been regarded as a separate class from the followers of the Book, i.e. the Jews and the Christians. At another place, it has been used for the illiterate people among the Jews and Christians, who are ignorant of the Book of Allah, as in Al-Baqarah: 78: "Among the Jews there are some illiterate people *(ummīs)*, who have no knowledge of the Book but are guided by mere conjecture and guess-work." At still another place, this word has been used purely as a Jewish term, which implies all the non-Jewish people, as in Al-'Imrān: 75: "(The actual cause of this dishonesty of theirs is that they say:) We are not to be called to account for out behaviour towards the non-Jews (*ummīs*)." This third meaning of *ummī* is implied in the verse under discussion. It is a synonym of the Hebrew word *goyim*, which has been translated gentiles in the English Bible and implies all the non-Jewish or the non-Israelite people of the world.

But the real significance of this Jewish term cannot be understood only by this explanation of it. The Hebrew word *goyim* originally was used only in the meaning of a nation, but gradually the Jews reserved it first for the nation other then themselves, then they gave it the special meaning that all the nations other than the Jews were un-civilized, irreligious, unclean and contemptible; so much so that in its connotations of hatred and contempt this word even surpassed the Greek term 'barbarian' which they used for all the non-Greeks. In rabbinical literature, *goyim* are such contemptible people, who cannot be considered human, who cannot be made companions in a journey, who cannot be saved even if one of them is drowning. The Jews beleivd that the Messiah of the future would destroy all the *gayim* and burn them to annihilation. (For further explanation, see E.N. 64 of Āl-'Imrān).

3. These characteristics of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) have been mentioned at four places in the Qur'ān and everywhere with a different object. These have been mentioned in Al-Baqarah: 129 to tell the Arabs that the mission of the Prophet, which they were regading as a calamity and affliction for themselves, was indeed a great blessing for which the Prophets Abraham and Ishmael (peace be upon them) had been praying for their children. In Al-Baqarah:

151 these have been mentioned to exhort the Muslims to recognize the true worth of the Holy Prophet and to derive full benefit from the blessing which they had been granted in the form of his Apostleship. These have been re-iteated in Āl 'Imrān: 164 to make the hypocrites and the people of weak faith realize what great favour Allah had done them by raising His Messenger among them, and how foolish they were in not appreciating this. Now, here in this Sūrah these have been repeated for the fourth time with the object to tell the Jews: "The mission that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessing) is performing in front of you, is evidently the mission of a Messenger. He is reciting the Revelations of Allah, the language, themes and style of which testify that these are indeed Divine Revelations. He is purifying and reforming the lives of the people, cleansing their morals and habits and dealings of every evil element, and adorning them with the finest moral qualities. This is the same task which all the Prophets before him have been performing. Then he does not rest content only with the recitation of the Revelations, but he is making the people understand the real aim of the Divine Book by word and deed and by the practical model of his life and imparting to them the wisdom and knowledge which none but the Prophets have imparted so far. This very character and way of life and practical model is the conspicuous characteristic of the Prophets by which they are recognized. Then how stubborn you are that you refuse to recognize and believe in the Messenger whose truth is manifestly proved by his wonderful works only because Allah has not raised him among you but among the people whom you call the *ummīs* (gentiles).

4. This is another proof of the Holy Prophet's Apostleship, which has been presented to open eyes of the Jews. These people had been living in Arabia for centuries and no aspect of the religious, moral, social and cultural life of the Arabs was hidden from them. Referring to the state of their previous life it is being said: "You are an eye-witness of the revolution that has taken place in the life of this nation within a few years under the guidance and leadership of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings). You are fully aware of the condition in which these people were involved before embracing Islam: you are also aware of their transformation afterwards, and you are also witnessing the condition of those people of this very nation, who have not yet embraced Islam. Is the clear and manifest difference which even a blind man can perceive not enough to convince you that this revolution can be brought about by none but a Prophet"?.

5. That is, the Apostleship of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) is not restricted only to the Arabs but is meant for other nations and races as well, who have not yet joined the believers, but are going to be born till the Last Day. The word *minhum* (of them) in the original can have two meanings: (1) "That those other people will be of the *ummīs*, i.e. the non Israelite nations of the world:" and (2) "that they will be believers in Muḥammad (upon whom be

Allah's peace and blessings), though they have not yet joined the believers, but will join them later on." Thus, this verse is one of those verses which explicitly state that the Message of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) is meant for all mankind for ever. The other places where this theme has o occurred in the Qur'ān are: 'Āl-'Imrān: 19, Al-A'rāf: 158, Al-Anbiyā': 107, Al-Furqān: 1, Sabā 28. (For further explanation, see EN 47 of Sūrah Sabā).

6. That is, it is a manifestation of Allah's own power and wisdom that among an un-civilized, un-lettered people He has raised a great Prophet, whose teachings are so revolutionary and contain such eternal and universal principles as can provide a sound basis for the whole of mankind to be a single unified community, which can obtain guidance from those principles for ever. An impostor, however hard he may have tried, could not have attained this position and rank. Not to speak of a backward people like the Arabs; even the most intelligent and talented man of the most advanced nation of the world cannot have the power that he may revolutionise a nation so completely, and then give such comprehensive principles to the world that all mankind may follow it as one community and be able to run a universal and all-pervasive system *of* one way of life and one civilization for ever. This is a miracle which has taken place only by Allah's power, and only Allah on the basis of His wisdom has chosen the person, the country and the nation for it.

7. This sentence has two meanings, a general meaning and a special meaning. The general meaning is that the people who were entrusted with the knowledge and practice of the Torah and with the responsibility of guiding the world according to it, neither understood this responsibility nor discharged it as they should have. The special meaning is: Being the bearers of the Torah these people should have been fore-most to join hands with the Messenger, good news about whose advent had been already given in the Torah, but, instead, they have been in the forefront to oppose him and have thus failed to fulfil the demand of the teaching of the Torah.

8. That is, just as a donkey loaded with books does not know what it is loaded with, so are these people loaded with the Torah and they do not know what this Book was sent for and what are its demands.

9. That is, they are even worse than a donkey, who is without sense and therefore excusable. But these people have intelligence they read and teach the Torah and are fully aware of its meaning. Yet they are turning away from its guidance and refusing wilfully to acknowledge and believe in the Prophet who even according to the Torah teaches the truth. They are guilty not because of ignorance but because of denying Allah's Revelation deliberately.

10. This point is noteworthy. It has not been said: "O *Jews*", but "O you who have become Jews, or who have adopted Judaism", the reason being that the way of life brought by the Prophet Moses (peace be on him) and the Prophets after and before him, was Islam itself. None of those Prophets was a Jew, nor had Judaism been born in their time, but Judaism as such came into being much later. It is ascribed to the tribe which descended from Judah, the fourth son of the Prophet Jacob (peace be upon him). When after the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) his kingdom broke into two parts, this tribe became ruler over the state which came to be known as Judaea. The other tribes of the Israelites established their separate state which became famous as Samaria. then Assyria not only destroyed Samaria but also wiped out those Israelite tribes which had founded that state. After that only the decendents of Judah besides those of Benjamin remained. who because of the predominance of the descendents of Judah, began to be called the "Jews". Judaism is the name of the framework of the doctrines, customs, and religious rules and regulations which the priests, rabbis and learned men of this race prepared according to their own ideas, theories and trends for many centuries. This framework started being shaped in the 4th century B.C. and continued to develop till the 5th century A.D. It contains a very small element of the Divine guidance brought by the Messengers of Allah, and even that element has been corrupted. That is why at many places in the Qur'ān they have been addressed as *alladhīna hādū*: "O *you* who have become Jews". All of these were not the Israelites but there were among them also converts who had embraced Judaism. Whenever in the Qur'ān the children of Israel have been addressed, the words used are: "O children of Israel", and where the followers of Judaism have been addressed, the words are; *alladhīna hādū:* "O you who have become Jews".

11. At several places in the Qur'ān their claim has been described in detail. as in Al Baqarah: 111: "They say: none shall enter Paradise unless he be a Jew", in Al-Baqarah: 80: "The fire of Hell is not going to touch us, and even if it does at all, it will be only for a few days", and in Al-Mā'idah: 18: "We are the sons of Allah and His beloved ones." Some such claims are also found in the books of the Jews themselves The world at least knows that they regard themselves as the chosen people of God, and cherish the false notion that God has a special relationship with them, which is not shared by any other human group or class.

12. This has been stated for the second time in the Qur'ān, addressing the Jews First, in Al-Baqarah: 94-96, it was said: "Say to them: If the abode of the Hereafter with Allah is exclusively reserved for you and not for the rest of mankind, then you should long for death, if you are sincere in your claim. Believe it that they will never wish for it, for (they are fully aware of) what they have sent before them for the Hereafter. And Allah knows well the mentality of the

transgressors. You will find that of all mankind, they are the greediest for life; any they are even greedier than the idolators. Each one of them longs to have a life of a thousand years, but a long life can by no means remove them away from the Doom, for Allah is watching whatever they are doing." Now the same thing has been repeated here. But this is not a mere repetition. In the verses of Al-Baqarah, it was said when no war had yet take place between the Muslims and the Jews. In this Sūrah it was reiterated at the time when after several battles their power in Arabia had been finally and absolutely, crushed. These battles and their results proved by experience and observation that what had been said in Al-Baqarah was correct. In Madinah and Khaiber the Jewish strength was much superior to that of the Muslims both in numbers and in resources. Then they had the pagans of Arabia and the hypocrites of Madinah also as their allies who were bent upon wiping out the Muslims. But in spite of this great disparity in numbers the Muslims overwhelmed the Jews mainly because they were least afraid of dying for the cause of Allah; they were rather fond of it, and would enter the battlefield fully prepared to embrace death. For they believed that they were fighting in the way of God and had complete faith that the one who fell martyr in His way would be blessed with Paradise. Contrary to this, the Jews were not prepared to fight and lay down their life for any cause, neither the cause of God, nor the cause of their nation, nor for their own self, properties and honour. They only loved to live, in whatever way or fashion it be. This had made them cowardly.

13. In other words, their Right from death is not without a reason. Whatever they may say, their consciences are fully aware of how they are behaving towards Allah and His Religion and what consequences can be expected of the misdeeds they are committing in the world. That is why they were afraid to appear at the Court of God.

14. Three things in this sentence are particularly noteworthy: (1) That it contains mention of the call to the Prayer; (2) that the mention is of the call to such a Prayer as has to be performed particularly only on Fridays; and (3) that these things have not been mentioned so as to suggest that the call is to be made for the Prayer and a particular Prayer is to be performed on Friday, but the style and context clearly show that the call to the Prayer and the particular Prayer were both already being performed and practiced on Friday. The people, however were being negligent in that on hearing the call to the Prayer they would not hasten to it but would remain occupied in their worldly activities and trade and business transactions. Therefore, Allah sent down this verse to make the people realize and appreciate the importance of the call and the Prayer and to exhort them to hasten to perform it as a duty. If these three things are considered deeply, they prove this truth absolutely that Allah conjoined on the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) certain Commands which were not revealed in the Qur'an, and these

Commands too were as obligatory as those revealed in the Qur'ān itself. The call to the Prayer is the same *adhān* which is being called the world over five times daily in every mosque. But neither its words have been stated anywhere in the Qur'ān nor the method of calling the people to the Prayer has been taught. Its method was prescribed by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). The Qur'an has only confirmed it twice, here and in Al-Mā'idah: 58. Likewise, this particular Prayer of Friday, which the Muslims of the whole world are performing today has neither been enjoined in the Qur'ān nor its time and method of performance described anywhere. This method too was prescribed by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), and this verse of the Qur'ān was sent down only to stress its importance and obligatory nature. In spite of this express argument anyone who claims that the *Shari'ah* commandments are only those which have been stated in the Qur'ān, is not in fact a denier of the *Sunnah* but of the Qur'ān itself.

Before proceeding further, let us understand a few other things also about *Jumu'ah* (the Friday congregational Prayer):

(1) *Jumu'ah is* an Islamic term. In the pre-Islamic days of ignorance the Arabs called it the 'Arūbah Day. In Islam when it was declared as a congregational day of the Muslims, it was re-named *Jumu'ah*. Although according to the historians, Ka'b bin Lu'ayy, or Qusayy bin Kilab, also had used this name for this day, for he used to hold an assembly of Quraish on this day *(Fath-al-Bāri)*, yet by this practice the ancient name did not change, and the common Arabs continued to call it the 'Arūbah Day. The real change took place when Islam gave it this new name.

(2) Before Islam, setting aside of a day in the week for worship and regarding it as an emblem of the community was prevalent among the followers of the earlier scriptures. Among the Jews the Sabbath (Saturday) had been fixed for this purpose, because on this day Allah had delivered the children of Israel from the bondage of the Pharaoh. In order to distinguish themselves from the Jews the Christians took Sunday as their distinctive emblem. Although it had neither been enjoined by the Prophet Jesus nor mentioned anywhere in the Gospel, yet the Christians believe that after his death on the Cross the Prophet Jesus had risen from the grave *on* this day and ascended to heaven. On this very basis the later Christians ordained it as the day of worship, and then in 321 A.D. the Roman Empire instituted it as a holiday by decree. In order to distinguish its community from both these communities, Islam adopted Friday as the day of collective worship as against Saturday and Sunday.

(3) It is known from the tradition reported by Ḥadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd and Ḥadrat Abū Mas'ūd Anṣārī that the Friday congregational Prayer had been enjoined on the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) some time

before the *Hijrah* in Makkah itself. But at that time he could not act on it, for in Makkah it was not possible to perform any worship collectively. Therefore, he sent a written instruction to the people who had emigrated to Madīnah before him that they should establish the Friday congregational Prayer there. Thus, Ḥaḍrat Mus'ab bin 'Umair, the leader of the earliest emigrants, offered the first Friday Prayer at Madīnah with 12 followers. (Ṭabarānī, Dāraqutnī). Ḥaḍrat Ka'b bin Mālik and Ibn Sirin have reported that even before this the Muslims of Madīnah had decided mutually, on their own initiative, that they would hold a collective service on one day in the week. For this purpose they had selected Friday as against the Sabbath of the Jews and Sunday of the Christians, and the first Friday Prayer was led by Ḥaḍrat As'ad bin Zurārah at the place of Banī Bayāḍah and 40 Muslims participated in it. (Musnad Aḥmad, Abu Da'ūd, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Ḥibban, 'Abd bin Ḥumaid, 'Abdur Razzāq, Baihaqi). This shows that the Islamic taste and trend at that time was itself demanding that there should be a day on which maximum number of Muslims should gather together and worship collectively. And this also was a demand of the Islam itself that it should be a day other than Saturday and Sunday so that the symbol of the Muslim community should be distinctive from the emblems of the Jewish and the Christian communities. This was a wonderful manifestation of the Islamic trends and tastes of the Holy Prophet's Companions that many a time it so happened that even before a thing was enjoined their taste proclaimed that the spirit of Islam demanded its introduction.

(4) The establishment of the Friday congregational Prayer was one of the earliest things that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) did after his emigration to Madīnah. After leaving Makkah he reached Qubā' on Monday and stayed there for four days. On the fifth day, which was a Friday, he proceeded to Madīnah. On the way at the place of Banī Sālim bin 'Auf tim came for the Friday Prayer and he performed the first Friday congregational Prayer at this very place. (Ibn Hisham).

(5) The time appointed by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) for this Prayer was after the declining of the sun, the same time which is for the Ẓuhr Prayer. The written instruction that he had sent to Ḥaḍrat Muṣ'ab bin 'Umair before the *hijrah* was: "Seek nearness to Allah by means of two *rak'ahs* of the Prayer when the sun declines after midday on Friday." (Dāraquṭnī). This same instruction he gave orally after *hijrah* as well as practically led the Friday Prayer at the same time. Traditions on this subject have been related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Anas, Ḥaḍrat Salamah bin Akwa', Ḥaḍrat Zubair bin al-'Awwām, Ḥaḍrat Sahl bin Sa'd, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Ḥaḍrat 'Ammār bin Yāsr and Ḥaḍrat

Bilāl in the collections of *Ḥadīth,* saying that the Holy Prophet used to perform the Friday Prayer after the declining of the sun. (Musnad Aḥmad, Bukharī, Muslim, Abu Da'ūd, Nasā'ī, Tirmidhī).

(6) This also is confirmed by his practice that on this day the Holy Prophet led the Friday congregational Prayer instead of the Ẓuhr Prayer, and this Prayer consisted of two *rak'ahs* and he gave the Sermon before it. This was the only difference between the Friday Prayer and the Ẓuhr Prayer on other days. Ḥaḍrat 'Umar says: "According to the command enjoined by the tongue of your Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) the traveller's Prayer consists of two *rak'ahs,* the Fajr Prayer consists of two *rak'ahs,* and the Friday Prayer consists of two *rak'ahs.* This is the complete, not the shortened, Prayer, and the Friday Prayer has been shortened only because of the Sermon."

(7) The call to the Prayer that has been mentioned here, implies the call that is made just before the Sermon, and not the call that is made much before the Sermon to announce that the prayer time has begun. There is a tradition in the *Ḥadīth from* Ḥaḍrat Sā'ib bin Yazīd to the effect that in the time of the Holy Prophet there used to be only one call that was made after the Imām (leader in Prayer) had taken his seat on the pulpit. The same practice also continued in the time of Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr and Ḥaḍrat 'Umar. When population increased in the time of Hadrat 'Uthmān, he ordered another call to be made in the bazaar of Madīnah at his house, Az-Zaurā'. (Bukhāri, Abū Da'ud, Nasā'ī, Ṭabarānī).

15. In this Command "remembrance" implies the Friday Sermon, for the first thing that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) used to do after the call was to deliver the Sermon, and the Prayer he led always after delivering the Sermon. Ḥaḍrat Abū Huraīrah has reported that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said: "The angels on Friday go on writing down the names of the people as they arrive. Then, when the Imām comes out to deliver the Sermon, they stop writing the names and turn their attention to the remembrance (i.e. the Sermon)," (Musnad Aḥmad, Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī). This *Ḥadīth* also shows that the remembrance implies the Sermon. The exhortation of the Qur'ān itself points to the same thing. First, it says: "Hasten to the remembrance of Allah"; then a little below it says: "Then, when the Prayer is over, disperse in the land." This shows that on Friday the order of the service is that first there is the remembrance of Allah and then the Prayer. The commentators are also agreed that remembrance either implies the Sermon, or the Sermon and the Prayer both.

Using the word *"dhikr-Allah"* for the Sermon by itself gives the meaning that it should contain themes relevant to the remembrance of Allah; for instance, praising and glorifying Allah, imploring Him to bless His Messenger, exhorting

and instructing the audience to obey His Commands and follow His *Shari'ah*, commending His pious and righteous servants, etc. On this very basis, Zamakhshari writes in *al Kashshāf:* "Praising the wicked and tyrannical rulers in the Friday Sermon, or mentioning their names and praying for them, has nothing to do with the remembrance of Allah; this would be the remembrance of Satan.

"Hasten to the remembrance of Allah" does not mean that one should come to the mosque running, but it means that one should make haste for it. The commentators are also agreed on this very meaning. "Hastening" according to them means that on hearing the call one should immediately start making preparations to attend the mosque. The *Hadith* even forbids coming to the mosque for the Prayer running. Hadrat Abū Hurairah has reported that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) said: "When the Prayer has begun, one should come walking to it with calm and dignity, and not running. Then, one should join in whatever remains of the Prayer, and should make up whatever one has missed independently later." *(Sihāh; Sittah).* Hadrat Abū Qatādah Ansārī says: "Once we were offering the Prayer under the leadership of the Holy Prophet when suddenly we heard some people coming to join the Prayer running. When the Prayer was concluded, the Holy Prophet asked: What was the noise about? They replied; We came running for the Prayer. The Holy Prophet said; Don't do that: whenever you come for the Prayer, come with calm and dignity. Join behind the Imām in whatever remains of the Prayer, and make up whatever you have missed independently." (Bukhārī, Muslim).

"Leave off your trading" also includes every other worldly activity and business which prevent one from getting ready for the Prayer with full attention and care. "Buying and selling" has been particularly forbidden, for commerce flourished on Fridays. People from the surrounding areas gathered together at a central place, the merchants also arrived with their merchandise, and the people became occupied in buying the necessities of daily use The prohibition however is not restricted only to buying and selling, but it applies to all other occupations as well. And since Allah has forbidden these, jurists of Islam are agreed that after the call has been sounded for the Friday Prayer all forms of trade, business and worldly occupation become forbidden.

This Command absolutely confirms the obligatory nature of the Friday Prayer. In the first place, the exhortation to hasten for it after one has heard the call, is by itself a proof of its being obligatory. Then, the prohibition of a lawful thing like trade and business at the time of the Prayer also shows that it is obligatory in nature. Moreover, the elimination of the obligatory Zuhr Prayer on Friday and its being replaced by the Friday Prayer, is a clear proof that it is obligatory in nature. For an obligatory duty becomes eliminated only when the duty replacing it is more important. This very thing has been supported in many

Ḥadīths, *in* which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) exhorted the Muslims in most emphatic words to attend the Friday Prayer and has declared it in clear words to be obligatory. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd has reported that the Holy Prophet said: "I feel I should ask somebody to stand in my place to lead the Prayer, and I myself should go and set fire to the houses of the people who do not come for the Prayer." (Musnad Aḥmad, Bukhārī). Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās and Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar say: "We heard the Holy Prophet say this in the Friday Sermon, The people should refrain from giving up the Friday Prayer: otherwise Allah will seal up hearts and they will become totally heedless." (Musnad Aḥmad, Muslim, Nasā'ī). From the traditions reported by Ḥaḍrat Abū al-Ja'd Damrī, Ḥaḍrat Jabir bin 'Abdullah and Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Abī Aufā from the Holy Prophet one comes to know that Allah seals up the heart of the person who abandons three Friday Prayers, one after the other, without a genuine reason and lawful excuse. Rather in one tradition the words are to the effect: "Allah rims the heart of such a one into the heart of a hypocrite." (Musnad Aḥmad, Abū Da'ud, Nasa'ī, Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah, Dārimī, Ḥākim, Ibn Ḥibbān, Bazzār, Tabarānī in *al-Kabīr*). Ḥaḍrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah says that the Holy Prophet said: "From today till Resurrection the Friday Prayer is obligatory on you. Allah will neither bless nor set right the condition of the one who abandons it disregarding it or considering it an ordinary thing. Note it well: the Prayer of such a one will be no prayer at all, his *zakāt* will be no *zakāt* at all, his Ḥajj no Ḥajj, his fasting no fasting, and no good done by him will be good, until he repents. Then, for the one who repents, Allah is Most Forgiving." (Ibn Mājah, Bazzār). Another tradition, which is very close in meaning to this, has been cited by Ṭabarānī in *Ausat* from Ibn 'Umar. Furthemore, there are many traditions in which the Holy Prophet has declared the Friday Prayer as obligatory in clear words. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin al-'Ās has related that the Holy Prophet said: "The Friday Prayer is obligatory on every person who hears the call to it." (Abū Da'ūd, Dāraqutnī). Jābir bin 'Abdullah and Abū Sa'īd Khudrī say that he said in a Sermon: "Know that Allah has enjoined the Friday Prayer as a duty on you." (Baihaqī). However, He has exempted the women, children, slaves, the sick and the travellers from this duty. Ḥaḍrat Ḥafsah has reported that the Holy Prophet said: "Attendance at the Friday Prayer is obligatory on every adult male." (Nasā'ī). Ḥaḍrat Ṭāriq bin Shihāb's tradition contains this saying of the Holy Prophet: "The Friday congregational Prayer is obligatory on every Muslim except the slave, women, children and the sick." (Abū Da'ūd, Ḥākim). In the tradition of Ḥaḍrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah, his words are to the effect: "Friday Prayer is obligatory on the person who believes in Allah and the Last Day unless it is a woman, or a traveller, or a slave, or a sick man." (Dāraqutnī, Baihaqī). On account of these very exhortations of the Qur'ān and the *Ḥadīth*, the entire *Ummah* is agreed that the Friday congregational Prayer is of obligatory nature.

16. This does not mean that after the Friday is over, it is obligatory to go in search of livelihood, but it only implies permission. As it was ordered to stop all worldly business as soon as the call was made for the Prayer, so it is allowed that after the Prayer is over, the people may disperse and resume or pursue whatever occupation or business they may like. It is just like the prohibition of hunting in the state of *iḥrām*, but after *iḥrām* is put off, one is told to hunt. (Al-Mā'idah: 2). That does not mean that one must hunt, but that one may hunt if one so likes. Or, for instance, in Sūrah An-Nisā', permission to marry more than one wife has been given, saying: "Marry two or three or four women whom you choose." Here, although the verb is in the imperative mood, no one has taken it in the meaning of a command. This gives the principle that the imperative form of the verb does not always imply an obligation or command: it sometimes implies the permission and sometimes exercise of choice or preference. The context determines where it implies the command, where the permission and where Allah's approval of the act, and not that the act is obligatory. Immediately after this very sentence itself, it has been said: "And remember Allah much." Here also the verb is in the imperative mood, but obviously it implies exercise of one's choice and not that it is a duty or compulsion.

Here, another thing worthy of mention is that although in the Qur'ān Friday has not been declared a public holiday like the Jewish Sabbath and the Christian Sunday, yet no one can deny that Friday is a symbol of the Muslim community precisely in the same way as Saturday is a Jewish and Sunday a Christian symbol. And if declaring a day in the week a public holiday be a cultural necessity, then just as the Jews naturally select Saturday for it and the Christians Sunday, so a Muslim (if he has any Islamic feeling) will necessarily select only Friday for this purpose. The Christians did not even hesitate to impose their Sunday on some other countries, where Christian population was negligible. When the Jews established their state in Palestine, the first thing they did was to announce Saturday as the weekly holiday instead of Sunday. In prepartitioned India one conspicuous distinction between British India and the Muslim states was that in one part of the country Sunday was observed as a closed holiday and in the other Friday. However, where the Muslims lack Islamic values, they hold to Sunday even after attaining to sovereign power as we see in Pakistan. In case of excessive westernization Friday is replaced by Sunday as the weekly holiday as was done by Muṣṭafa Kamāl in Turkey.

17. "Remember Allah much": "Do not forget Allah even when you are otherwise occupied; but remember Him under all circumstances and remain conscious of Him at all times." (For explanation, see E.N. 63 of Sūrah Al-Aḥzab).

18. At several places in the Qur'ān, after giving an instruction, or an admonition, or a command, words to the effect: "perhaps, you achieve success" or "perhaps you may be shown mercy" have been used. The use of "perhaps" on such occasions does not mean that Allah, God forbid, is entertaining a doubt, but it is in fact a royal style of address. It is just like a kindly master's giving out hope to his servants to continue doing their best so that they may achieve and win the desired goal and reward, It contains a subtle promise which fills the servant with hope and he carries out his duties and obligations with enthusiasm.

As the Commands pertaining to the Friday congergational prayer come to an end here, it would be useful to give a resume of the injunctions that the four schools of juristic thought have derived from the Qur'ān, the *Ḥadīth*, traditions of the Companions of the Holy Prophet and the general principles of Islam.

According to the Ḥanafī school of thought, the time for the Friday Prayer is the same as for Ẓuhr Prayer. The Friday Prayer can neither be held before it nor after it. Business and trade become forbidden with the first call to the Prayer and not with the second call which is made after the Imām has taken his place on the pulpit, for the words of the Qur'ān in this regard are explicit and definite. Therefore, whichever call is made for the Friday Prayer after the declining of the sun when the Prayer time begins, the people should stop conducting business on hearing it. However, if a person has made a bargain at that time, it will not be void, but will only be a sin. The Friday Prayer cannot be held in every settlement but only in the miṣr *jāmi'*, which has been defined as a large town or city, where there are market places, adequate security arrangements, and which has large enough population so that if all the people upon whom attendance at the Friday Prayer is obligatory, gather together, they should be too many for the principal mosque to hold. The people who live outside the city will have to offer the Prayer in the city only in case the call to the Prayer reaches them, or if they live within six miles of the city. The Prayer may not necessarily be held in the mosque; it may also be held in the open field and also on a ground which is outside the city but a part of it. The Friday Prayer can be validly held only in a place where any and every person may come to attend it without any hindrance. It will not be valid if it is held in a restricted place where every person is not allowed to join in no matter how many people may gather together. For the Prayer to be valid there should at least be three men (according to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah) beside the Imām, or two men including the Imām (according to Imāms Abū Yūsuf and Muḥammad), upon whom it is obligatory to attend the Friday Prayer. A person will be exempt from the Prayer if he is on a journey, or is so ill that he cannot walk to attend it, or is disabled of both the legs, or is blind (but according to Imām Abū Yūsuf and Imām Muḥammad, a blind person will be exempt from the Prayer duty only in case he does not find a man who can take him along for the Prayer), or he

apprehends a danger to he life and honour, or an unbearable financial loss from a tyrant, or It is raining heavily and there is slush and rainwater on the way, or he is a prisoner. For the prisoner and the disabled, it is undesirable that they should perform the Ẓuhr Prayer on Friday In congregation. For those also who have missed the Friday Prayer it is undesirable to perform the Ẓuhr Prayer collectively. The sermon is one of the pre-requisites of the Friday Prayer to be valid, for the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) never performed the Friday Prayer without the Sermon; the Sermon must necessarily precede the prayer, and there should be two Sermons. From the time the Imām steps towards the pulpit for the sermon, every kind of speech becomes forbidden till he brings it to an end; no prayer may be performed during it, whether one can hear the Imām at the place where one is sitting or not. *(Hedāyah, Al-Fatḥ ul-Qadīr;* al-Jaṣṣās: *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān; Al-Fiqh 'alal-Madhāhib al-Arb'ah; 'Umdat al-Qāri).*

According to the Shāfe'is the time of the Friday Prayer is the same as of the Ẓuhr Prayer. Trade and business become forbidden and hastening to the remembrance of Allah becomes obligatory from the time the second call is sounded, i.e. the call which is sounded after the Imām has taken his place on the pulpit. However, if A person carries out a transaction at this time, it does not become void. The Friday Prayer can be held in every such settlement among the permanent residents of which there are 40 such men upon whom it is incumbent to perform the Prayer. Attendance at the Friday Prayer is obligatory for those people of the suburbs whom the call may reach. The Friday service must be held within the bounds of the settlement, but it may not necessarily be held in the mosque. Thus, it is not obligatory for nomadic peoples who live in tents, in the desert. For the Prayer to be valid there should at least be 40 such men including the Imām in the congregation upon whom the Prayer is incumbent. A person would be exempt from the Prayer if he is on a journey, or intends to stay at a place for four or less than four days provided that the journey is lawful, or he is old or sick and cannot go to attend the Prayer even by a conveyance, *or is* blind and does not find a man who can take him along for the Prayer, or apprehends danger to life or property or honour, or is a prisoner provided that this imprisonment has not been caused by his own crime. There should be two sermons before the Prayer. Although it is according to the *Sunnah* to sit quiet during the sermon, yet speech is not forbidden. For the person who is sitting close to the Imām so that he can hear the sermon, speech is disapproved, but he can respond to a greeting, and can recite prayer on the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) aloud when he hears his name being mentioned. *(Mughnī al-Muḥtāj Al-Fiqh 'alal-Madhāhib al-Arb'ah).*

According to the Mālikis, the Friday Prayer time begins from the declining of the sun and lasts till such time in the evening that the Sermon and the Prayer can be concluded before sunset. Business transactions become forbidden

and hastening becomes obligatory with the second call. If a transaction takes place after it, it would be void and sinful. The Friday Prayer can be held in the settlements, residents of which live in permanent houses and do not migrate in the summer or the winter, and whose needs and requirements are met in the same settlements, and who can defend themselves on the basis of their strength. In temporary dwelling places the Friday Prayer cannot be established even though many people may be staying there and staying for long periods. Attendance at the Prayer is obligatory for the people who live within three miles of the settlement where the Prayer is held. The Prayer can be held only in the mosque, which is inside the settlement or adjoining it, and the building of which is not inferior to the houses of the common residents of the place. Some Mālikīs have also imposed the condition that the mosque should be roofed, and arrangements for offering collective Prayer five times daily should also exist in it. However, the better known view of the Mālikīs is that for the Prayer to be valid the mosque's being roofed is no pre-requisite. The Friday Prayer can also be held in a mosque which has been built only for the Friday Prayer and no arrangements exist in it for the five daily Prayers. For the Prayer to be valid there must at least be 12 other men, apart from the Imām, in the congregation upon whom the Friday Prayer is incumbent. A person would be exempt from it if he is on a journey, or intends to stay for less than four days at a place during the journey, or is so ill that he cannot come to the mosque, or has an ailing mother or father, or wife, or child, or he is nursing a stranger who has nobody else to nurse him, or has a close relative who is seriously ill, or at the point of death, or apprehends an unbearable loss to property, or a danger to his life or honour, or is hiding from fear of imprisonment, or punishment, provided that he is a wronged and oppressed person, or it is raining heavily and there is slush and rainwater on the way, or the weather is oppressive due to excessive heat or cold. The Prayer has to be preceded by two Sermons; so much so that if the Sermon is given after the Prayer, the Prayer has to be repeated, and the Sermons must necessarily be delivered inside the mosque. It is forbidden to offer a voluntary Prayer after the Imām has stepped towards the pulpit, and to talk when the Sermon has begun, even if one is not hearing it. However, if the Imām indulges in meaningless and absurd things in the Sermon, or uses abusive language for a person who does not deserve it, or starts praising a person for whom praise is unlawful, or starts reciting something irrelevant to the Sermon, the people have the right to protest. Furthermore, it is reprehensible that a prayer be made in the Sermon for the temporal ruler, unless the Imām apprehends danger to his life. The Imām must necessarily be the same person who leads the Prayer; if another person than the one who gave the Sermon led the Prayer it would be void. *(Hāshiyah ad-Dusūqī 'ala-sh-Sharḥ al-Kabīr;* Ibn 'Arabī, *Ahkām al-Qur'ān; Al-Fiqh 'alal-Madhāhib al-'Arb'ah).*

According to the Ḥanbalīs, the Friday Prayer time begins when the sun has risen about a spear's length high and lasts till the beginning of the 'Aṣr Prayer time in the afternoon, but performing the Prayer before the declining of the sun is just permissible but after it obligatory and meritorious. Business transactions become forbiddon and hastening to the Prayer becomes obligatory with the second call. A transaction contracted after it has no effect in the law. The Prayer can be held only at a place where 40 men on whom the Friday Prayer is incumbent have permanently settled in houses (and not in tents) and are not nomadic tribesmen. For this purpose, it will not make any difference if the houses of the settlement or its different parts are scattered or compact; if their combination is called by one name, it will be one settlement even if its different parts are miles apart. Attendance at the Prayer will be obligatory for the people who live within three miles of the settlement. The congregation should consist of 40 men including the Imām. The Prayer may not necessarily be performed in the mosque; it may be performed in the open as well. A person will be exempt from it if he is on a journey and intends to stay in the settlement for four or less than four days, or is so ill that he cannot come to the mosque even by a conveyance, or is blind unless he can grope his way to the mosque; (it is not obligatory for the blind man to come for the Prayer with another man's help), or he is prevented by extreme weather or heavy rain or slush and rainwater, or he is hiding to escape persecution or apprehends danger to life or honour, or fears an unbearable financial loss, The Prayer should be preceded by two Sermons. The person who is sitting so close to the Imām that he can hear him, is forbidden speech; however, the one sitting far away, who cannot hear the Sermon, can speak. The people have to sit quiet during the Sermon whether the person delivering the Sermon is a just man or an unjust man. If 'Id falls on a Friday, the people who have performed the 'Id Prayer will be exempt from the Friday Prayer. In this matter, the viewpoint of the Ḥanbalīs is different from that of the other three Imāms. *(Ghāyat al-Muntahā; Al-Fiqh 'alal-Madhāhib al-Arb'ah),*

All jurists are agreed that if the person upon whom the Friday Prayer is not incumbent, joins in the Prayer, his Prayer would be valid, and he would be absolved from the Ẓuhr Prayer.

19. This is the incident because of which the commandments pertaining to the Friday congregational Prayer have been enjoined in the preceding verses. Its narrative as related in the collections of *Ḥadīth*, on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, Ḥaḍrat Abū Mālik, and Ḥasan Baṣrī, Ibn Zaid, Qatādah and Muqātil bin Hayyān is as follows: A trade caravan from Syria arrived in Madīnah right at the time of the Friday Prayer and its people started playing their drums to announce their arrival. The Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) at that time was delivering the

Sermon. Hearing the drum the people in the congregation became impatient and rushed out towards Baqi' where the caravan had halted, except for 12 men. The most authentic tradition in this narrative is of Ḥaḍrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah, which has been related by Imām Aḥmad, Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Abū 'Uwānah, 'Abd bin Ḥumaid, Abū Ya'lā and others through reliable channels. The only diversity is that in some traditions it is stated that the incident took place when the Prayer was in progress; in others that it happened when the Holy Prophet was delivering the Sermon. However, what appears to be correct when the tradition of Ḥaḍrat Jābir and those of others are read together is that it happened during the Sermon. Where Ḥaḍrat Jābir says that it happened during the Friday Prayer, he in fact has used the word Friday Prayer for the combination of the Sermon and the Prayer. According to the tradition of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, seven women had remained behind with 12 men. (Ibn Mardūyah). Qatādah says that one woman remained with 12 men, (Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abi Hātim). According to the tradition of Dāraquṭnī 40 individuals remmained, of 'Abd bin Ḥumaid 7 individuals and of Farrā' 8 individuals. But all these are weak traditions. The tradition of Qatādah that such a thing happened thrice is also weak. (Ibn Jarīr) The authentic tradition in this regard is of Hadrat Jābir, according to which the number of those who remained behind is stated to be 12. Apart from one tradition of Qatādah, all traditions of the other Companions and their followers agree that this happened only once. When read together different traditions about those who remained behind show that they included Hadrat Abū Bakr, Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān, Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Ḥaḍrat 'Ammār bin Yāsir, Ḥaḍrat Sālim (slave of Ḥudhaifah) and Ḥaḍrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah. The tradition related by Ḥāfiz Abū Ya'lā from Ḥaḍrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah says that when the people rushed out like that and only 12 Companions were left behind, the Holy Prophet addressed them, saying: "By Him in Whose hand is my life, if all of you had left, and none had remained behind, this valley would have overflowed with fire." A theme resembling this has been cited by Ibn Mardūyah from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās and by Ibn Jarīr from Qatādah.

The Shi'ite scholars have used this incident also for taunting and finding fault with the Companions. They say that abandoning the Sermon and the Prayer by such a large number of the Companions for the sake of worldly gain and amusement is a proof that they preferred the world to the Hereafter. But this is a misplaced objection that can be raised only if one keeps ones eyes closed to realities. As a matter of fact, this incident took place just after the migration. At that time, on the one hand, the collective training of the Copanions was in the initial stages, and on the other, the disbelievers of Makkah had subjected the people of Madīnah to a strict economic blockade because of which necessities of life had become scarce in the city. Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣrī says that the people at time

were starving and the prices had risen abnormally high. (Ibn Jarir). Under such conditions when a trade caravan arrived, the people rushed out to buy things of daily need lest these were sold out before the Prayer was concluded. This was a weakness and error which became suddenly manifest due to insufficient training and severity of the conditions. But whoever sees the sacrifices made by the Companions for the cause of Islam afterwards and sees what piety and righteousness they displayed in the matter of worship and dedication and dealings can never dare bring against them the allegation that they preferred the world to the Hereafter unless he himself bears malice against the Companions.

However, just as this incident does not support the critics of the Companions of the Holy Prophet, so it also does not support the ideas of those people who cherish exaggerated notions about them and claim that they never committed any error, or if they committed some, it should not be mentioned, for making mention of their error and calling it an error is derogatory and it reduces one's reverence and respect for them, and its mention goes against the verses of the Qur'ān and the *Ḥadīth*, which state that the Companions are Allah's favourite people and have already been forgiven all their errors and mistakes. All this is exaggeration for which there is no basis in the Qur'ān and the *Ḥadīth*. Here, everyone can see for himself that Allah Himself has mentioned the error that happened to have been committed by a large number of the Companions, in the Book that will be read by the entire *Ummah* till Resurrection, and in the same Book which speaks of their having been forgiven and being chosen people of Allah. Then in the books of the *Ḥadīth* and Commentary also details of this error have been described by all scholars, from the Companions to the major scholars among the followers of the *Sunnah*. Does it mean that Allah has made this mention in order to destroy the reverence for the same Companions whose reverence and esteem He wants to instil in all our hearts? And does it mean that the Companions and their followers and the traditionists and commenatators have mentioned these details of this incident because they were unaware of the religious aspect of the matter which these zealots show and describe? And have the people who read Sūrah Al-Jumu'ah and study its commentary really lost reverence and esteem for the Companions from their hearts? If the answer to each of these questions is in the negative, and it is surely in the negative, then all those exaggerated ideas and notions, which some people express and show in regard to the reverence of the Holy Prophet's Companions, are erroneous.

The truth is that the Companions of the Holy Prophet were not supernatural beings; they were only human born in this very world. Whatever they attained, they attained through the persistent training imparted by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) over many years. The method of this training as we learn from the Qur'ān and the *Ḥadīth* was: Whenever a weakness appeared in

them. Allah and His Messenger turned immediate attention to it, and a programme of education and training was established to overcome and eradicate it. In the matter of this very Friday Prayer we see that when the incident of the trade caravan occurred, Allah sent down this section of the verses of Sūrah Al-Jumu'ah to administer warning and teach the etiquette of the Friday Service. Along with this the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) impressed on the people the importance of the obligatory nature of the Service continuously in his Sermons as explained in E.N. 15 above. All these instructions are found in the *Hadīth* in clear words. Ḥaḍrat Abū Sa'īd Khudrī says that the Holy Prophet said: "Every Muslim must have full bath on Friday, should clean his teeth, put on the best available clothes, and use perfume if possible." (Musnad Aḥmad, Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'ī). Ḥaḍrat Salmān Fārsī says that the Holy Prophet said: "The Muslim who has bath on Friday, cleans and purifies himself as far as possible, applies oil to his hair, or uses perfume if available, and comes to the mosque and takes his place without disturbing others, then offers the (voluntary) Prayer that Allah has destined for him, then listens quietly when the Imām speaks, he will have his sins and errors committed since the previous Friday forgiven." (Bukhārī, Musnad Aḥmad). Traditions containing almost the same theme have been reported by Ḥaḍrat Abū Ayūb An'ārī, Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah and Ḥaḍrat Nubaishat al-Hudhalī also from the Holy Prophet. (Musnad Aḥmad, Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī, Ṭabarānī). Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās says that the Holy Prophet said: "The person who speaks when the Imām is delivering the sermon, is like the donkey loaded with books, and the person who tells him to keep quiet has also rendered his own Prayer void." (Musnad Aḥmad). Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah says that the Holy Prophet said: "If on Friday during the sermon you said to a person, 'keep quiet,' you too behaved wrong." (Bukhārī, Muslim, Naṣā'ī, Tirmidhī, Abū Da'ūd). Traditions closely resembling this have been related by Imām Aḥmad, Abu Da'ud and Tabarānī from Ḥaḍrat 'Alī and Ḥaḍrat Abū ad-Dardā'. To the person delivering the sermon also the Holy Prophet instructed that he should not deliver a lengthy sermon to try the people's patience. His own practice on Friday was that he gave brief Sermons and led short Prayers. Hadrat Jābir bin Samurah says that the Holy Prophet would never give a lengthy Sermon: he was always very brief." (Abū Da'ūd). Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Abī Aufā says: "The Holy Prophet's sermon used to be shorter than the Prayer, and the Prayer a little longer than the sermon." (Naṣā'ī). According to Ḥaḍrat Ammār bin Yāsir, the Holy Prophet said: "The prolongation of the Prayer and the brevity of the sermon are a sign that the Imām has deep insight in religion" (Musnad Aḥmad, Muslim). Almost the same theme has Bazzār related from Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd. All this shows how the Holy Prophet taught the people the etiquette of the Friday congregational Service till it began to be performed in the unique manner unknown in the congregational worship of any other people in the world.

20. This sentence by itself shows what was the nature of the error committed by the Companions. God forbid, if it had been due to any weakness of the faith, or due to giving the world preference over the Hereafter, Allah's wrath and displeasure and reprimand would have been much severer. But since there was no such weakness, and whatever happened was only due to insufficient training, Allah first taught the people the etiquette of the Friday Service, then, after pointing out the error, promised them that the reward they would get with Allah for listening to the Sermon and performing the Prayer would be much greater than worldly gains and amusements.

21. That is, "Allah is by far the best of all those providers who become a means of providing sustenance in the world, though only metaphorically." Sentences such as this have occurred at several places in the Qur'ān. At some places Allah has been called "the best of Creators," at others "the best of Forgivers", "the best of Rulers", "the best of those who show mercy", or "the best of Helpers". At all these places the reference of providing, creating, forgiving, showing mercy and offering help to the creatures is metaphorical, and to Allah real. It means that Allah is the best Provider, Creator, Forgiver, Helper and Bestower of Mercy of all those who appear to be giving you wages and means of sustenance, or who appear to be making things by their skill and workmanship, or who seem to be pardoning the errors of others, or showing mercy and helping others in this world.



LXIII
AL
MUNĀFIQŪN
المنافقون

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

LXIII

AL-MUNĀFIQŪN

المنافقون

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from the sentence *Idhā jāā'kal-munāfiqūna* of verse 1. This is the name of the Sūrah as well as the title of its subject-matter, for in it a review has been made of the conduct and attitude of the hypocrites themselves.

Period of Revelation

As we shall explain below, this Sūrah was sent down either during the Holy Prophet's return journey from his campaign against Banī al-Mustaliq, or immediately after his arrival back at Madīnah, and

we have established by argument and research in the Introduction to Sūrah An-Nūr that the campaign against Banī al-Muṣṭaliq had taken place in Sha'bān A.H. 6. Thus, the date of the revelation of this Sūrah is determined precisely.

Historical Background

Before we mention the particular incident about which this Sūrah was sent down, it is necessary to have a look at the history of the hypocrites of Madīnah, for the incident that occurred on this occasion was not a chance happening but had a whole series of events behind it, which ultimately led up to it.

Before the Holy Prophet's emigration to Madīnah the tribes of the Aus and the Khazraj, fed up with their mutual rivalries and civil wars, had almost agreed on the leadership of one man and were making preparations to crown him their king. This was 'Abdullah bin Ubayy bin Salūl, the chief of the Khazraj. Muḥammad bin Isḥāq has stated that among the people of Khazraj his authority was never contested and never had the Aus and the Khazraj rallied to one man before this. (Ibn Hishām, vol. II, p. 234).

Such were the conditions when the voice of Islam reached Madīnah and the influential people of both the tribes started becoming Muslims. When before the Emigration, invitation was being extended to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) to come to Madīnah, Ḥaḍrat 'Abbās bin 'Ubādah bin Naḍlah Anṣārī wanted to defer this invitation for the reason that 'Abdullah bin Ubayy also might join in the declaration of allegiance and invitation to the Holy Prophet, so that Madīnah might become the centre of Islam by common consent. But the delegation that arrived in Makkah to declare their allegiance did not give any importance to the proposal of 'Abbās bin 'Ubādah, and all its members, who included 75 men from both the tribes, became ready to invite the Holy Prophet in the face of every danger. (Ibn Hishām, vol. II, p. 89). We have given the details of this event in the introduction to Sūrah Al-Anfāl.

Then, when the Holy Prophet arrived in Madīnah, Islam had so deeply penetrated every house of the Anṣār that 'Abdullah bin Ubayy became helpless and did not see any other way to save his leadership than to become a Muslim himself. So, he entered Islam along with many

of his followers from among the chiefs and leaders of both the tribes although their hearts were burning with rage from within. Ibn Ubayy in particular was filled with grief, for the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) had deprived him of his kingship. For several years his hypocritical faith and grief of being deprived of his kingdom manifested itself in different ways. On the one hand, when on Fridays the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) took his seat to deliver the Sermon, 'Abdullah bin Ubayy would stand up and say: "O people, the Messenger of Allah is present among you, by whom Allah has honoured you; therefore, you should support him and listen to what he says and obey him." (Ibn Hishām, vol. III, pp. 111). On the other, his hypocricy was being exposed day by day and the true Muslims were realizing that he and his followers bore great malice against Islam, the Holy Prophet and the Muslims.

Once when the Holy Prophet was passing on the way 'Abdullah bin Ubayy spoke to him in harsh words. When the Holy Prophet complained of it to Ḥadrat Sa'd bin 'Ubādah, he said: "O Messenger of Allah, don't be hard on him, for when Allah sent you to us we were making a diadem to crown him, and, by God, he thinks that you have robbed him of his kingdom." (Ibn Hishām, vol. II, pp 237-238).

After the Battle of Badr when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) invaded the Jewish tribe of Banī Qainuqā' on their breaking the agreement and unprovoked revolt, this man stood up in support of them, and holding the Holy Prophet by his armour, said: "These 700 fighters have been helping and protecting me against every enemy; would you cut them down in one morning? By God, I will not leave you until you pardon my clients." (Ibn Hishām, vol. III, pp. 51-52).

On the occasion of the Battle of Uḥud this man committed open treachery and withdrew from the battlefield with 300 of his companions. One should note that at this critical moment when he so acted, the Quraish had marched upon Madīnah with 3,000 troops and the Holy Prophet had marched out with only 1,000 men to resist them. Of these 1,000 this hypocrite broke away with 300 men and the Holy Prophet was left with only 700 men to meet 3,000 troops of the enemy in the field.

After this incident the common Muslims of Madinah came to realize fully that he was certainly a hypocrite and his those Companions also were found who were his associates in hypocrisy. That is why when on the very first Friday, after the Battle of Uḥud, this man stood up as usual to make a speech before the Holy Prophet's Sermon, the people pulled at his garment, saying; "Sit down: you are not worthy to say such things." That was the first occasion in Madīnah when this man was publicly disgraced. Thereupon he was so filled with rage that he left the mosque jumping over the heads of the people. At the door of the Mosque some of the Ansār said to him, "What are you doing? Go back and ask the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) to pray for your forgiveness." He retorted "I do not want him to pray for my forgiveness," (Ibn Hishām, vol. III, p. 111)

Then in A.H 4 the Battle of Banī an-Nadīr took place. On this occasion he and his companions supported the enemies of Islam even more openly. On the one side, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) and his devoted Companions were preparing for war against their enemy, the Jews, and on the other, these hypocrites were secretly sending messages to the Jews to the effect: "Stand firm: we are with you: if you are attacked, we will help you, and if you are driven out, we too will go out with you." The secret of this intrigue was exposed by Allah Himself, as has been explained in Sūrah Al-Ḥashr: 11-17 above.

But in spite of being so exposed the reason why the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) was still treating him kindly was that he had a large band of the hypocrites behind him. Many of the chiefs of both the Aus and the Khazraj were his supporters. At least a third of the population of Madīnah consisted of his companions, as became manifest on the occasion of the Battle of Uḥud. Under such conditions it was not prudent to wage a war with these internal enemies combined with the external enemies. On this very account, in spite of being fully aware of their hypocrisy the Holy Prophet continued to deal with them according to their apparent profession of faith for a long time. On the other hand, these people too neither possessed the power nor the courage to fight the believers openly as disbelievers, or to join hands with an invader and face them in the battlefield. Apparently they were a strong band but inwardly they had the weakness which Allah has vividly portrayed in Sūrah Al-Hashr: 12-14. Therefore, they thought their well being lay

only in posing as Muslims. They came to the mosque, offered the prayers, gave away the *zakāt*, and would make tall oral claims to the faith, which the true Muslims never felt the need to do. They would offer a thousand justifications for each of their hypocritical acts by which they would try to deceive their compatriots, the Anṣār, into believing that they were with them. By these designs they were not only saving themselves from the disadvantages which could naturally accrue if they separated themselves from the Anṣār brotherhood, but also taking advantage of the opportunities to make mischief which were available to them as members of the Muslim brotherhood.

These were the causes which enabled 'Abdullah bin Ubayy and like-minded hypocrites to get an opportunity to accompany the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) in his campaign against the Banī al-Muṣṭaliq, and they simultaneously engineered two great mischiefs which could shatter the Muslim unity to pieces. However, by virtue of the wonderful training in discipline that the Muslims had received through the pure teaching of the Qur'ān and the companionship of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) both mischiefs were stopped in time, and the hypocrites themselves were disgraced instead. One of these was the mischief that has been mentioned in Sūrah An-Nūr above, and the other which has been mentioned in this Sūrah.

This incident has been related by Bukhārī, Muslim, Aḥmad, Nasā'ī, Tirmidhi, Baihaqi, Ṭabarānī, Ibn Marduyah, 'Abdur Razzaq, Ibn Jarīr Ṭabarī, Ibn Sa'd and Muḥammad bin Isḥāq through many reliable channels. In some traditions the expedition in which it took place has not been named, and in others it has been connected with the Battle of Tabūk. But the authorities on the battles fought by the Holy Prophet and history are agreed that this incident took place on the occasion of the campaign against the Banī al-Muṣṭaliq. The following seems to be the real story when all the traditions are read together:

When after crushing down the power of Banī al-Muṣṭaliq the Islamic army had made a halt in the settlement at the well of al-Muraisī, suddenly a dispute arose between two men on taking water from the well. One of them was Jehjāh bin Mas'ūd Ghifārī a servant of Ḥadrat 'Umar appointed to lead his horse. The other was Sinān bin Wabār al-

Juhani,[1] whose tribe was an ally of a clan of the Khazraj. Harsh words between them led to fighting and Jehjāh kicked Sinān, which the Anṣār, on account of their ancient Yamanite tradition, took as a great insult and disgrace. At this Sinān called out the men of Anṣar and Jehjāh the Emigrants for help. Hearing about the quarrel Ibn Ubayy started inciting and calling the men of the Aus and the Khazraj to come out and help their ally. From the other side some Emigrants also came out. The dispute might have led to a fight between the Ansar and the Muhājirīn themselves at the very place where they had just fought an enemy tribe jointly and crushing it had halted in its own territory. But hearing the noise the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) emerged and said: "What is this call of paganism? What have you to do with such a call? Leave it: it is a dirty thing."[2] Thereupon the leading men of the two sides met and settled the dispute; Sinān pardoned Jehjāh and peace was restored.

After this every person whose heart was disaffected came to 'Abdullah bin Ubayy and they all said to him, "Until now we had our hopes attached to you and you were protecting us, but now it seems you

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1. Different names of the two men have been mentioned in different traditions. We have taken these names from the tradition related by Ibn Hishām.

2. This is an important thing that the Holy Prophet said on this occasion. One should understand it well in order to grasp the true spirit of Islam. The method taught by Islam is that if two men want to call the people to help solve their dispute, they should say: "O Muslims, come and help us; or O people, come to our help." But if each of them calls out to the people in the name of his own separate tribe, brotherhood, race, colour or region, this would be the call of pre-Islamic paganism, and if those who respond to this call do not realize who is the oppressor and who is the persecuted, and enter the conflict in support of the man of their own group instead of supporting the oppressed on the basis of justice and truth, this would be an act of paganism, which would cause great mischief. That is why the Holy Messenger of Allah (upon whom be peace) called it a dirty, abhorrent thing and said to the Muslims: "You have nothing to do with this call of paganism. You became a community on the basis of Islam; how are you then being called in the name of the Anṣār and the Muhājirin and where are you rushing out in response to this call?" 'Allāma Suhaili has written in *Raud at-Unuf*: "The jurists of Islam regard giving out the call of paganism in a quarrel or dispute as a criminal offence. One section of them has proposed fifty lashes as punishment for it, another ten lashes and another says that the offence should be punished according to the circumstances. In some cases, only a reprimand would be enough, and in others the offender should be put in the prison, and if it is likely to cause more mischief, the offender should be whipped."

have become a helper of these paupers[1] against us." Ibn Ubayy was already enraged. These words made him burst out, thus: "This is what you have done to yourselves. You have given these people shelter in your country, and have divided your property among them. So much so that they have now become our rivals. Nothing so fits us and the paupers of Quraish (or the Companions of Muḥammad) as the ancient saying: 'Feed your dog to fatten it and it will devour you.' If you hold back your property from them, they would go elsewhere. By God, when we return to Madīnah, the honourable ones will drive out from it the mean ones."

Zaid bin Arqam, a young boy, also happened to be present in the assembly at that time. He heard this and mentioned it before his uncle, and his uncle who was one of the Anṣār chiefs went to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and told him the whole story. The Holy Prophet called Zaid and asked him what had happened and he repeated every word of what he had heard.[2] The Holy Prophet said, "Zaid, you are perhaps displeased with Ibn Ubayy; you might have been mistaken in hearing; you might have imagined Ibn Ubayy said this." But Zaid was sure and firm. He said, "No, I swear by God I have heard him say this and that." Thereupon the Holy Prophet called Ibn Ubayy, and he came and swore that he had not said any such thing. The people of the Anṣār also said: "Sir, a boy says this: he might have been mistaken in what he heard Ibn Ubayy is a venerable old man and our chief. Do not believe what a boy says against him." The elderly people of the tribe reproved Zaid also, who became depressed and held his peace. But the Holy Prophet knew Zaid as well as 'Abdullah bin Ubayy. Therefore, he fully understood what had actually happened.

When Ḥadrat 'Umar came to know of this, he came to the Holy Prophet and said: "Please allow me to put this hypocrite to the sword.

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1. The hypocrites of Madīnah dubbed all those people who were embracing Islam and emigrating to Madīnah "Jalābīb", which literally means those who wear coarse clothes; but actually they used this word in the sense of paupers for the Emigrants in order to humiliate them.

2. The jurists have deduced this injunction from it: If the evil of a person is conveyed to another person for the sake of a religious, moral or national cause, it is not backbiting. The backbiting which has been forbidden in the *Sharī'ah* is that which is meant to sow seeds of discord between two persons or groups.

Or, if you do not think it is fit to give me the permission you may tell[1] Mu'ādh bin Jabal, or 'Abbās bin Bishr, or Sa'īd bin Mu'ādh, or Muḥammad bin Maslamah from among the Anṣār, to go and kill him." But the Holy Prophet said: "No, the people will say Muḥammad kills his own Companions." After this he ordered the people to set off immediately, although it was at a time then the Holy Prophet was not accustomed to travel. The forced march continued for 30 hours at a stretch so that the people became exhausted. Then he halted, and as soon as they touched the ground they fell asleep. This he did to distract their minds from what had happened at the well of al-Muraisi'. On the way Ḥaḍrat Usaid bin Hudair, an Ansār chief, met the Holy Prophet, and said: "O Messenger of Allah, today you ordered the people to set off at a time which was disagreeable for travelling, a thing you have never done before." The Holy Prophet replied: "Have you not heard of what your friend said?" When he asked who he meant, the Holy Prophet replied:" 'Abdullah bin Ubayy." He asked what he had said. The Holy Prophet answered: "He has asserted that when he returns to Madīnah the honourable ones will drive out from it the mean ones." He answered: "By God, O Messenger of Allah, you are the honourable one and he is the mean one; you will drive him out whenever you want to."

By and by the news spread among the Ansār soldiers and it enraged them against Ibn Ubayy. The people advised him to go to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) and request for his forgiveness, but he retorted: "You asked me to believe in him, and I believed in him; you asked me to pay the *zakāt* on my property, and I paid the *zakāt* too; now the only thing left is that I should bow down to Muḥammad." This further enraged the believing Ansār and everyone started reproaching and cursing him roughly. When the caravan was about to enter Madīnah, 'Abullah, the son of 'Abdullah bin Ubayy, stood before his father with a drawn out sword, and said: "You had said that when you reached Madīnah, the honourable ones would drive out the mean ones. Now, you will know who is honourable . you or Allah and His Messenger. By God, you cannot enter Madīnah until the

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1. Different names of the Anṣār elders have been mentioned in the traditions about whom Ḥaḍrat 'Umar had said that any of them might be asked to do the job if he himself could not be permitted to do it, being an Emigrant, for that could cause a greater mischief.

Messenger of Allah (upon whom be Allah's peace) permits you to enter." At this Ibn Ubayy cried out: "O people of Khazraj, look, my own son is preventing me from entering Madīnah." The people conveyed this news to the Holy Prophet, and he said: "Tell 'Abdullah to let his father come home." Abdullah said, "If this is the Holy Prophet's order, then you may enter." Thereupon the Holy Prophet said to Ḥadrat 'Umar; "Now what do you think, 'Umar? Had you killed him on the day when you asked my permission to kill him, many people would have trembled with rage. Today if I order them to kill him, they will kill him immediately." Ḥadrat 'Umar replied; "By God, I realize there was greater wisdom behind what the Apostle of Allah said than when I said."[1]

These were the circumstances under which this Sūrah was sent down most probably after the Holy Prophet's return to Madīnah.

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1. This throws light on two important questions of legal import. First, that if a person being a member of the Muslim community, adopts an attitude like Ibn Ubayy, he deserves to be put to death. Second, that if a person deserves to be put to death under the law, it does not mean that he must necessarily be put to death. Before taking such a decision it should be seen that his execution might not lead to greater mischief and trouble. Blind application of the law, regardless of the circumstances, sometimes produces results contrary to the object for which the law was enforced. If a hypo critical and mischievous person has a significant political following his punishment may be deferred if it is likely to lead to further mischief. It would rather be better to destroy the actual political power which causes him to commit mischief. This was the reason why the Holy Prophet did not punish 'Abdullah bin Ubayy even at the time when he had full power of the hypocrites in Madīnah was completely broken within the next two or three years.



إِذَا جَآءَكَ الْمُنٰفِقُوْنَ قَالُوْا نَشْهَدُ إِنَّكَ لَرَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ ۘ وَاللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُ إِنَّكَ
لَرَسُوْلُهٗ ۘ وَاللّٰهُ يَشْهَدُ إِنَّ الْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ لَكٰذِبُوْنَ ۝١ اِتَّخَذُوْٓا اَيْمَانَهُمْ جُنَّةً
فَصَدُّوْا عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ ۚ إِنَّهُمْ سَآءَ مَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ۝٢ ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّهُمْ اٰمَنُوْا
ثُمَّ كَفَرُوْا فَطُبِعَ عَلٰى قُلُوْبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَفْقَهُوْنَ ۝٣ وَإِذَا رَاَيْتَهُمْ تُعْجِبُكَ
اَجْسَامُهُمْ ۘ وَإِنْ يَّقُوْلُوْا تَسْمَعْ لِقَوْلِهِمْ ۘ كَاَنَّهُمْ خُشُبٌ مُّسَنَّدَةٌ ۘ يَحْسَبُوْنَ
كُلَّ صَيْحَةٍ عَلَيْهِمْ ۘ هُمُ الْعَدُوُّ فَاحْذَرْهُمْ ۘ قٰتَلَهُمُ اللّٰهُ ۘ اَنّٰى يُؤْفَكُوْنَ ۝٤ وَ
إِذَا قِيْلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا يَسْتَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ لَوَّوْا رُءُوْسَهُمْ وَرَاَيْتَهُمْ يَصُدُّوْنَ
وَهُمْ مُّسْتَكْبِرُوْنَ ۝٥ سَوَآءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ اَسْتَغْفَرْتَ لَهُمْ اَمْ لَمْ تَسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ ۘ لَنْ
يَّغْفِرَ اللّٰهُ لَهُمْ ۘ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَهْدِى الْقَوْمَ الْفٰسِقِيْنَ ۝٦ هُمُ الَّذِيْنَ يَقُوْلُوْنَ
لَا تُنْفِقُوْا عَلٰى مَنْ عِنْدَ رَسُوْلِ اللّٰهِ حَتّٰى يَنْفَضُّوْا ۘ وَلِلّٰهِ خَزَآئِنُ السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَالْاَرْضِ وَلٰكِنَّ الْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ لَا يَفْقَهُوْنَ ۝٧ يَقُوْلُوْنَ لَئِنْ رَّجَعْنَآ إِلَى الْمَدِيْنَةِ
لَيُخْرِجَنَّ الْاَعَزُّ مِنْهَا الْاَذَلَّ ۘ وَلِلّٰهِ الْعِزَّةُ وَلِرَسُوْلِهٖ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَلٰكِنَّ
الْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝٨ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تُلْهِكُمْ اَمْوَالُكُمْ وَلَآ اَوْلَادُكُمْ
عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللّٰهِ ۚ وَمَنْ يَّفْعَلْ ذٰلِكَ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْخٰسِرُوْنَ ۝٩ وَاَنْفِقُوْا مِنْ
مَّا رَزَقْنٰكُمْ مِّنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ يَّاْتِىَ اَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ فَيَقُوْلَ رَبِّ لَوْلَآ اَخَّرْتَنِىْٓ
إِلٰٓى اَجَلٍ قَرِيْبٍ ۙ فَاَصَّدَّقَ وَاَكُنْ مِّنَ الصّٰلِحِيْنَ ۝١٠ وَلَنْ يُّؤَخِّرَ اللّٰهُ
نَفْسًا إِذَا جَآءَ اَجَلُهَا ۘ وَاللّٰهُ خَبِيْرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ ۝١١

LXIII

AL-MUNĀFIQŪN

المنافقون

Verses: II *Revealed at Madinah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

O Prophet, when the hypocrites come to you, they say, "We bear witness that you are indeed Allah's Messenger." Yes, Allah knows that you are indeed His Messenger, but Allah bears witness that these hypocrites are utter liars.[1] They have made their oaths as a shield[2] and so they hinder themselves and others from the Way of Allah.[3] Evil indeed are the deeds that they do. This is because they believed and then they disbelieved. Therefore, a seal has been set on their hearts, and so they do not understand anything.[4] 1-3

And when you see them, their figures would look marvellous; when they speak you would love to listen to what they say.[5] But in reality they are like blocks of timber propped up against a wall.[6] They deem every shout to be directed against them.[7] They are the real enemies,[8] so beware of them.[9] May Allah destroy them[10]! How are they being perverted?[11] 4

And when it is said to them, "Come, the Messenger of Allah will pray for your forgiveness," they shake their heads and you see them turning away with arrogance.[12] O Prophet, whether you pray for their forgiveness, or not, it is the same for them. Allah shall never forgive them,[13] for Allah does not guide the transgressors.[14] 5-6

They are the same people who say, "Do not spend anything on the Companions of the Prophet so that they disperse," though Allah is the Owner of the treasures of the heavens and the earth, but the hypocrites do not understand . They say, "When we return to Madinah, the honourable ones shall drive out from it the mean ones",[15] although honour belongs to Allah and His Messenger and the believers,[16] but the 7-8

hypocrites do not know.

911 O you[17] who have believed, let not your possessions and your children distract you from the remembrance of Allah.[18] Those who do so shall indeed be the losers. Spend from the provisions that We have given you before death should come to any of you and then he should say, "O my Lord, why did You not reprieve me awhile that I should have given in charity and become of the righteous?" But Allah does not at all reprieve a person when his term comes to an end, and Allah is well aware of what you do.

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1. That is, "Although the thing they are uttering with the tongue is true by itself, it does not reflect their belief. Therefore they lie when they say that they bear witness that you are a Messenge of Allah." Here, one should clearly understand that an evidence or witness is composed of two things: first, the actual thing to which one bears the witness; second, the concerned person's own belief about the thing to which he bears the witness. Now, if the thing by itself is true, and the belief of the bearer of witness also correspons to what he says, he will be truthful in every respect. And if *the* thing in itself is false, but the bearer of the witness believes it to be right and true, he will be regarded as truthful in one way, for he is truthful in expressing his belief, and liar in another way, for the thing he is bearing witness to is by itself false. Contrary to this, if the thing by itself is true, but the belief of the bearer of the witness is opposed to it, he will be regarded as truthful because he is testifying to the right thing, and a liar because his own belief is contrary to what he is saying with the tongue. For instance, if a Believer states that Islam is a true religion, he is truthful in every respect, but if a Jew, while he is steadfast in his Judaism, states the same thing, he would be stating the right thing but his evidence would be regarded as false, for he is testifying against his faith and belief. And if he calls it a false religion, he would be uttering a false thing but he would be bearing a true witness according to his belief.

2. That is, they use the oaths that they swear to convince others *of* their Islam and faith as a shield to save themselves from the wrath of the Muslims so that they do not treat them as they treat their open enemies.

These oaths may imply the oaths which they usually swear to convince others of their faith as well as those which they swore when they were caught committing some hypocritical act, and also those oaths which 'Abdullah bin Ubayy had sworn to contradict the report given by Ḥaḍrat Zaid bin Arqam. Besides these, there is another probability that Allah might have regarded this statement of theirs as an oath: "We bear witness that you are Allah's Messenger." This last probability has given rise to a dispute among the jurists, namely: If a person states

something with the words: "I bear witness," will it be regarded as an oath or not? Imām Abū Hanīfah and his companions (except Imām Zufar), Imām Sufyān Thauri and Imām Auzā'ī regard it as an oath (*Yamīn* in the *Shari'ah* terminology). Imam Zufar says that it is not an oath. Two sayings from Imām Mālik have been reported in this connection: first,, that it is an oath absolutely, and second, that if while saying: "I bear witness," his intention was to say: y God, I bear witness," or "I bear witness before God," it would he a statement on oath, otherwise not. Imām Shāfe'ī says: "Even if the person says the words: "I bear witness before God," it would not be a statement made on oath, unless he uttered these words with the intention of swearing an oath," (Al-Jaṣṣās, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān;* Ibn al-'Arabi, *Ahkām al-Qur'ān).*

3. The verb *sadd* in Arabic is transitive as well as intransitive. Therefore, *saddū 'an sabīl-Allah* means; "They turn away from the Way of Allah," as well as: "they turn others away from the Way of Allah." According to the first meaning the verse would mean: "By means of these oaths they first plant themselves firmly among the Muslims and then invent ways to escape fulfilling demands of the faith and to avoid obedience to Allah and His Messenger." According to the second meaning it would mean: "They use their false oaths as a cover for committing evil deeds. Posing as Muslims they weaken the Muslim community from within: find out the secrets of the Muslims and convey these to their enemies, create doubts about Islam among the non-Muslims and use such devices for inspiring the simple Muslims with evil suggestions which a hypocrite in the guise of a Muslim only could do, for an open enemy of Islam cannot use them

4. In this verse "believing" means professing the faith in order to be counted among Muslims, and 'disbelieving" means not to believe sincerely and to persist in disbelief as usual. The verse means to say that when they, after due thought, decided to adopt this hypocritical attitude instead of adopting either belief or disbelief plainly, Allah caused a seal to be set on their hearts and deprived them of the grace to adopt the attitude and conduct of a true, sincere and noble person. Now, their power of understanding has been lost, their moral sense has become dead, and while following this way they never even feel that their habit of always telling lies, their deceitful behaviour and the ever present contradictions between their word and deed is a wretched state in which they have involved themselves.

This is one of those verses in which the meaning of ';causing a seal to be set on the heart of somebody by Allah" has been made clear. These people did not become hypocrites because Allah had set a seal on their hearts; so faith did not enter them, and they became hypocrites under compulsion. But, in fact, Allah set a seal on their hearts only when they decided to persist in disbelief in spite of professing the faith outwardly. Then, they were deprived of the capacity to believe

sincerely and of the grace of the moral attitude resulting from it, and were helped to persist in the hypocrisy and hypocritical morals, which they had chosen to adopt for themselves.

5. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās has stated that 'Abdullah bin Ubayy was a strongly built, healthy, handsome and smooth-tongued person, and the same was the case will most of his companions. They were all the nobles of Madīnah. When they came to sit in the Holy Prophet's assembly, they would sit reclining on cushions against the walls and would talk agreeably and convincingly. From their outward appearance and manner of speech no one could imagine that those honourable people of the city would be so wretched and degraded in their character.

6. That is, "Those who sit reclining on cushions against the walls, are not men but pieces of timber. Comparing them to timber is meant to imply that they are devoid of the moral sense which is the essence of humanity. Then« by comparing them to blocks of timber propped up against the wall, it has also been pointed out that they are absolutely worthless, for the timber would be useful only when it has been utilized in making of a ceiling, or a doorframe, or a piece of furniture. A block of timber that has just been placed against a wall serves no useful purpose at all."

7. This brief sentence portrays the state of their guilty conscience. Since they fully well knew what game of hypocrisy they were playing under the screen of their superficial faith, they always remained in a state of alarm, thinking as to when the secret of their treason might be exposed, or the believers might feel disgusted with their evil deeds and machinations and take them to task for them. If ever a cry was raised anywhere in the city, or a noise was heard; they immediately grew alarmed and thought it was directed against themselves.

8. In other words, these hidden enemies are more dangerous than the open enemies.

9. That is, "Do not be deceived by their outward appearances. Beware of them, for they can deceive you any moment."

10. This is not a curse but a declaration of the verdict about them by Allah that they have become worthy of His punishment and He will certainly inflict His punishment on them. It is also possible that Allah may not have used these words in their literal sense but in the meaning of a curse and condemnation according to Arabic idiom.

11. It has not been pointed out as to who perverts them from belief to hypocrisy. This by itself makes it clear that there is not one but many factors responsible for their perversion. There is Satan, there are their evil friends, and

there are their own selfish motives. Someone's wife or children become his motive, and someone is driven to perversion by the evil ones in his society, or by jealousy, spite and pride.

12. That is, they not only refuse to come to the Messenger to seek forgiveness, but also on hearing the invitation they shake their heads with arrogance and pride, and remain adamant, thinking that it would be disgraceful for them to approach the Messenger to seek forgiveness. This is a clear sign that they are not believers.

13. This thing was reiterated in Sūrah At-Taubah, which was sent down three years after Sūrah Al-Munāfiqūn, even in stronger words. In that Sūrah Allah, while addressing the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) said this about the hypocrites: "O Prophet (it will be all the same) whether you beg forgiveness for them or not, for Allah will not forgive them even if you beg forgiveness for them seventy times. This is because they have disbelieved in Allah and His Messenger, and Allah does not show guidance to the wrongdoers." (At-Taubah: 80). A little further on in that Sūrah it was again said: "And never perform the funeral prayer for anyone of them W;10 dies nor stand at his grave, for they have denied Allah and His Messenger and died while they were transgressors." (At-Taubah: 84)

14. Two things have been stated *in* this verse. First, that the prayer of forgiveness can be beneficial only for those who are guided aright. Let alone a common man, even if Allah's Messenger himself prays for the forgiveness of the person, who has turned away from guidance and adopted the way of sin and transgression, instead of obedience, he cannot be forgiven. Second, that it is not Allah's way to bless with guidance those who do not seek His guidance. If a person himself turns away from Allah's guidance, rather shakes his head with arrogance and rejects the invitation when he is called towards guidance, Allah has no need that He should go after him with His guidance and implore him to come to the right path.

15. Ḥaḍrat Zaid bin Arqam says: "When I reported these words of 'Abdullah bin Ubayy to the Holy Prophet, and 'Abdullah bin Ubayy came and disowned them on oath, the elderly people of the Anṣār, and even my own uncle, reproved me for this; so much so that I felt that the Holy Prophet also had mistaken me for a liar and 'Abdullah bin Ubayy for a truthful person. This caused me great anguish and grief. Then, when these verses were revealed, the Holy Prophet call-d me, and taking hold of my ear, said: "The boy's ear was truthful: Allah has himself testified to what it had heard." (Ibn Jarīr. In Tirmidhī also there is a tradition on the same subject).

16. That is, "All honour belongs to Allah in virtue of His essence, to the Apostle in virtue of his Apostleship, and to the Believers in virtue of their faith. As for the disbelievers and the wicked people and the hypocrites, they have no share whatever in the real, true honour."

17. Now a word of admonition is being addressed to all those people, who have entered Islam, whether they are true and sincere believers, or those who profess the faith merely verbally. As we have explained at several places above, the words *alladhīna āmanu* in the Qur'ān are sometimes used to address the true believers and sometimes to address the hypocrites, for they profess the faith only with the tongue, and sometimes to address the Muslims of all kinds in general. The context itself shows which group is the audience at a particular place.

18. The mention of the possessions and the children, in particular, has been made, for man mostly turns away from the demands of the faith for the sake of their well-being and interests and becomes involved in hypocrisy, weakness of faith, or wickedness and disobedience; otherwise it implies everything *of* the world that allures and absorbs man so completely that he becomes heedless of the remembrance of God. This heedlessness in respect of the remembrance of God is indeed the root cause of all evil. If man only remembers that he is not free but the servant of One God, and that God is fully aware of all his actions and deeds, and he will by held accountable one day before Him for all his actions and deeds, he would never be involved in any deviation and wickedness, and if ever he commits an error due to a human weakness, he will immediately rectify it as soon as he comes to realize his wrongdoing and repent.



LXIV

AT-TAGHĀBUN

التَّغَابُن

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

LXIV

AT-TAGHĀBUN

التغابن

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from the sentence *Dhālika yaum-ut-taghabun* of verse 9, thereby implying that it is the Sūrah in which the word *at-taghābun has* occurred.

Period of Revelation

Muqātil and Kalbī say that it was partly revealed at Makkah and partly at Madinah. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās and 'Aṭā' bin Yasār say that vv. 1-13 were revealed at Makkah and vv. 14-18 at Madinah. But the majority of commentators regard the whole of the Sūrah as a Madinah Revelation. Although there is no internal evidence to help determine its exact period of revelation, yet a study of its subject-matter shows that it might probably have been sent down at an early stage at

Madinah. That is why it partly resembles the Makkan Sūrahs and partly the Madinah Sūrahs.

Theme and Subject-Matter

The theme of this Sūrah is invitation to the Faith and obedience (to Allah) and the teaching of good morals. The sequence followed is that the first four verses are addressed to all men; verses 5-10 to those men, who do not believe in the invitation of the Qur'ān; and verses 11-18 to those who accept and believe in this invitation.

In the verses addressed to all men, they have been made aware in a few brief sentences of the four fundamental truths:

First, that the universe in which they live is not Godless, but its Creator, Master and Ruler is an all-Powerful God, and everything in it testifies to His being most Perfect and absolutely faultless.

Second, that the universe is not without purpose and wisdom, but its Creator has created it with truth: no one should be under the delusion that it is a mockshow, which began without a purpose and will come to an end without a purpose.

Third, that the excellent form that God has created you with and the choice that He has given you to choose between belief and unbelief is not a useless and meaningless activity so that it may be of no consequence whether you choose belief or unbelief. In fact, God is watching as to how you exercise your choice.

Fourth, that you have not been created irresponsible and unanswerable. You have to return ultimately to your Creator, and have to meet the Being \who is aware of everything in the universe, from Whom nothing is hidden, to Whom even the innermost thoughts of the minds are known.

After stating these four fundamental truths about the Universe and Man, the address turns to the people who adopted the way of unbelief, and their attention is drawn to a phenomenon which has persisted throughout human history, namely that nation after nation has arisen and ultimately gone to its doom. Man by his intellect and reason has been explaining this phenomenon in a thousand ways, but Allah tells the real truth and declares that the fundamental causes of the destruction of the nations were only two:

First, that they refused to believe in the Messengers whom He sent for their guidance, with the result that Allah too left them to themselves, and they invented their own philosophies of life and went on groping their way from one error to another.

Second, that they also rejected the doctrine of Hereafter, and thought this worldly life to be an end in itself, and that there was no life hereafter when they would have to render an account of their deeds before God. This corrupted their whole attitude towards life, and their impure morals and characte so polluted the world that eventually the scourge of God itself had to descend and eliminate them from the scene.

After stating these two instructive truths of human history, the deniers of the message of Truth have been admonished to wake up and believe in Allah, His Messenger and the Light of Guidance that Allah has sent in the form of the Qur'ān if they want to avoid the fate met by the former peoples. Besides, they have been warned that the Day shall eventually come when all the former and the latter generations will be collected at one place and the fraud and embezzlement committed by each will be exposed before all mankind. Then the fate of each man will be decided finally on the basis as to who had adopted the path of the Faith and righteousness and who had followed the way of disbelief and denial of the Truth. The first group shall deserve eternal Paradise and the second shall he doomed to everlasting Hell.

Then, addressing those who adopt the way of the Faith, a few important instructions have been given:

First, that whatever affliction befalls a person in the world, it befalls him by Allah's leave. Whoever in this state of affliction remains steadfast to the Faith, Allah blesses his heart with guidance; otherwise although the affliction of the one who in confusion or bewilderment turns away from the path of the Faith, cannot be averted except by Allah's leave, yet he becomes involved in another, the greatest affliction of all, namely that his heart is deprived of the guidance of Allah.

Secondly, that the believer is not required to affirm the faith with the tongue only, but after the affirmation of the Faith he should practically obey Allah and His Messenger. If he turns away from obedience he would himself be responsible for his loss, for the Holy

Messenger of Allah (upon whom be His peace) has become absolved from the responsibility after having delivered the message of Truth.

Thirdly, that the believer should place his trust in Allah alone and not in his own power or some other power of the world.

Fourthly, that the worldly goods and children are a great trial and temptation for the believer, for it is their love which generally distracts man from the path of Faith and obedience. Therefore, the believers have to beware some of their children and wives lest they become robbers for them on the Way of God directly or indirectly; and they should spend their wealth for the sake of God so that their self remains safe against the temptations of Satan.

Fifthly, that every man is responsible only to the extent of Hs power and ability. Allah does not demand that man should exert himself beyond his power and ability. However, the believer should try his best to live in fear of God as far as possible, and should see that he does not transgress the bounds set by Allah in his speech, conduct and dealings through his own negligece.



يُسَبِّحُ لِلّٰهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ ۚ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ ۖ وَهُوَ
عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ۝١ هُوَ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَكُمْ فَمِنْكُمْ كَافِرٌ وَّمِنْكُمْ مُّؤْمِنٌ ۭ وَ
اللّٰهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ بَصِيْرٌ ۝٢ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ وَصَوَّرَكُمْ فَاَحْسَنَ
صُوَرَكُمْ ۚ وَاِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيْرُ ۝٣ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تُسِرُّوْنَ
وَمَا تُعْلِنُوْنَ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ عَلِيْمٌۢ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُوْرِ ۝٤ اَلَمْ يَاْتِكُمْ نَبَؤُا الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا
مِنْ قَبْلُ ۡ فَذَاقُوْا وَبَالَ اَمْرِهِمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ۝٥ ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّهٗ كَانَتْ
تَّاْتِيْهِمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ فَقَالُوْٓا اَبَشَرٌ يَّهْدُوْنَنَا ۡ فَكَفَرُوْا وَتَوَلَّوْا وَّاسْتَغْنَى
اللّٰهُ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ غَنِيٌّ حَمِيْدٌ ۝٦ زَعَمَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْٓا اَنْ لَّنْ يُّبْعَثُوْا ۭ قُلْ بَلٰى وَرَبِّيْ
لَتُبْعَثُنَّ ثُمَّ لَتُنَبَّؤُنَّ بِمَا عَمِلْتُمْ ۭ وَذٰلِكَ عَلَي اللّٰهِ يَسِيْرٌ ۝٧ فَاٰمِنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ وَ
رَسُوْلِهٖ وَالنُّوْرِ الَّذِيْٓ اَنْزَلْنَا ۭ وَاللّٰهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ خَبِيْرٌ ۝٨ يَوْمَ يَجْمَعُكُمْ
لِيَوْمِ الْجَمْعِ ذٰلِكَ يَوْمُ التَّغَابُنِ ۭ وَمَنْ يُّؤْمِنْۢ بِاللّٰهِ وَيَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا يُّكَفِّرْ
عَنْهُ سَيِّاٰتِهٖ وَيُدْخِلْهُ جَنّٰتٍ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَآ اَبَدًا ۭ
ذٰلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيْمُ ۝٩ وَالَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا وَكَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَآ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ اَصْحٰبُ النَّارِ

LXIV

AT-TAGHĀBUN

التَّغَابُن

Verses: 18 *Revealed at Madīnah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is glorifying Allah.[1] His is the Sovereignty[2] and His the Praise[3] and He has power over all.[4] He it is Who created you; yet some of you are disbelievers and some are believers,[5] and Allah sees whatever you do.[6] He has created the heavens and the earth with the truth and has shaped you, and shaped you well, and to Him you have to return in the end.[7] He has the knowledge of everything in the heavens and the earth: He knows whatever you hide and whatever you reveal,[8] and He knows the very secrets of the hearts[9] 1-4

Has not the news reached you of those who had disbelieved before this, and then tasted the evil results of their deeds? And in the Hereafter there awaits them a painful torment.[10] They deserved this fate because their Messengers came to them with clear Signs,[11] but they said, "Shall mere human beings show us guidance?"[12] So, they refused to believe and turned away; then Allah also became indifferent to them, and Allah is indeed Independent and worthy of all praise.[13] 5-6

The disbelievers assert that they shall never be raised up from death.[14] Say to them, "Nay, by my Lord! You shall certainly be raised up;[15] then certainly you shall be told what you have done (in the world),[16] and this is an easy thing for Allah to do."[17] 7

Therefore, believe in Allah and His Messenger and in the Light that We have sent down.[18] Allah is aware of whatever you do. (You shall know this) when He will gather you together on the Day of Gathering.[19] That wil be a Day of mutual Loss and Gain[20] among the people. Whoever believes in Allah and does good works,[21] Allah shall 8-10

shake off his sins and will admit him into Gardens, underneath which canals will be flowing, to dwell therein for ever. This is the supreme success! And those who disbelieve and treat Our Revelations as false,[22] shall be the inhabitants of Hell to dwell therein for ever, and that is a most evil abode!

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1. For explanation, see E.N. I of the commentary on Sūrah Al-Ḥadīd. A study of the following theme by itself shows why the discourse has been begun with this sentence. What has been stated below about the Universe and Man is that Allah alone is their Creator, Master, Ruler, and He has not made this universe without purpose and wisdom, that Man has not been created and left irresponsible, so that he may act as he may please, and there should be nobody to call him to account, and that the Ruler of this universe is not a care-free and ignorant king so that he may have no knowledge of what is happening in his kingdom. The best introduction to this theme could be the same as has been couched in this brief sentence. In view of the context, the introduction means: In whichever direction you may turn your gaze, from the earth to the limitless vastnesses of the heavens, you will clearly see that everything from a particle to the great galaxies not only testifies to the existence of God but also bears evidence that its God is free from every defect, every weakness and error. Had there been the least probability of a defect or fault, weakness or deficiency, in His essence and attributes, in His acts and decrees, this perfect and wise system could not have come into being at all, nor continue to function so consistently and immutably from eternity to eternity.

2. That is, "The Kingdom of the universe solely belongs to Him. He has not just created it and left it alone after giving it the initial push, but He alone is actually ruling over it every moment. No one else has any role or share whatever in this rule and sovereignty. If others possess temporarily and on a limited scale some powers of ownership or rule somewhere in the universe, these are not their personal powers, which they might have acquired by virtue of their own power, but these have been granted to them by Allah. They possess these powers as long as Allah wills, and they can be withdrawn as and when He so desires."

3. In other words; He alone is worthy of all praise. Whatever other being has any praiseworthy quality, it has been granted by Allah. And if *ḥamd* (praise) be taken in the sense of *shukr* (thankfulness), the meaning would be: In reality Allah alone is worthy of being thanked, for all good things in the world have been created by Him, and He alone is the real Benefactor of all kinds of creation. When we thank another being for favour, we thank it for the reason that Allah conveyed His blessing thought it or him to us, otherwise neither the being itself is the creator of the blessing nor could it convey the blessing to us without Allah's permission and help.

4. That is, "He is the possessor of absolute power: He can do whatever He wills, there is no power to restrain or limit His Omnipotence."

5. It has four meanings and all are correct in their respective places:

First, that "He alone is your Creator, yet some of you deny His being the Creator and others acknowledge this truth." This meaning becomes obvious when the first and the second sentences are read together.

Second, that "He Himself has created you with the nature that if you choose to adopt unbelief, you may do so, and if you choose to affirm belief, you may do so. He has not compelled you to either accept or reject the Faith therefore, you yourselves are responsible for your adopting belief or unbelief." This meaning is confirmed by the following sentence: "Allah sees whatever you do." That is, By giving you this choice He has put you to the test, and He is watching how you exercise this choice."

The third meaning is. "He had created you with a sound, wholesome nature, which demanded that you should all adopt the way of the Faith, yet some of you adopted unbelief, which was opposed to the nature and purpose of their creation, and some of you adopted the way of the Faith, which was in conformity with their nature. "This theme becomes obvious when this verse is read along with verse 30 of Sūrah Ar-Rūm, which says: "Set your face sincerely and truly towards Faith, and be steadfast on the Nature whereupon Allah has created mankind. There can be no alteration in the Nature made by Allah. This is the right and true Faith.' And this very theme is explained by several *Ahadith* in which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) has repeatedly stated that every man has been created on true human nature; then polytheism and deviation befall him from outside." (For further explanation, see E.N.'s 42 to 47 of the commentary of Sūrah Ar-Rūm). Here, it may he pointed out that no Divine Book has ever presented the concept of man's being a sinner by birth, which Christianity has embraced as its fundamental doctrine for 1,500 years. Recently even Catholic scholars themselves have started expressing the view that there is no basis for this doctrine in the Bible. The famous German biblical scholar Rev. Herbert Haag, writes in his book, Is *Original Sin in Scripture:* "Among the earliest Christians, at least till the 3rd century A.D., there existed no such creed that man was a sinner by birth, and when this idea started spreading among the people, the Christian scholars continued to contradict it for two centuries. At last in the 5th century A.D. St Augustine by the power of his logic made this idea a part of the fundamental beliefs of Christianity: 'Mankind is heir to the original sin committed by Adam, and there is no way to salvation for man except through the Atonement made by Christ'."

The fourth meaning is: "Only Allah brought you into existence from non-existence: you were not, then you became. This was such a simple thing that if you had thought over it seriously and seen that life is the actual blessing through which you are benefiting by the other blessings in the world, none of you would have adopted the attitude of disbelief and rebellion against your Creator. But some of you did not give it due thought, or thought wrongly, and adopted the way of disbelief, and some others adopted the same way of belief and faith which was the very demand of correct thinking.

6. In this sentence "seeing" does not merely mean to see, but it automatically gives the meaning that man will be rewarded or punished according to his actions and deeds. It is just like a master's taking a person into service and then telling him: "I shall see how you perform your duties," which implies: "If you perform your duties well, I shall reward you fully; otherwise I shall call you to account for your negligence."

7. In this verse three things have been stated in their sequence, which are well connected logically:

First, it has been said that Allah has created this universe with the truth. When the word "with the truth" is spoken for a news, it means a true news; when it is spoken for a command, it means a command based on justice; when it is spoken for a statement, it means a correct statement; and when it is used for an act, it implies an act which is wise, reasonable and useful. Now, *khalq* (to create) is an act; therefore, to say that the universe has been created with the truth, would inevitably mean that the universe has not been created for fun, but it is a serious work of a Wise Creator: everything in it has a rational object and purpose, and the element of its being purposeful is so evident that if a sensible person understands the nature of a thing well, it cannot be difficult for him to know the rational and wise purpose for which it has been created. All of modern science testifies that whenever man has succeeded in understanding the true nature of a thing by careful thought, research and investigation, he has also come to know eventually the purpose and object of its creation, and this understanding of its purpose has led him to countless inventions which are now being used in civilized human life. This could not be possible, had this universe been the plaything of a carefree person, devoid of any wisdom and purpose. (For further explanation, see E.N. 46 of Al-An-am, E.N. 11 of Yūnus, E.N. 26 of Ibrāhīm, E.N. 46 of An-Nahl, E.N.'s 15, 16 of Al-Anbiyā, E.N. 102 of Al-Mu'minūn, E.N. 75 of Al-'Ankabūt, E.N. 6 of Ar-Rūm, E.N. 34 of Ad-Dukhān, B.N. 28 of Al-Jāthiyah).

Secondly, it has been said that in this universee Allah has created man in the best shape. Shape here does not imply only man's face but his whole bodily structure; it also inclusions all those powers and abilities which man has been

granted to function in this world. In both these aspects man has been given the best shape and form among the creatures of the earth, and on the same basis he has become worthy to rule over all the universe. He has been given an erect stature; he has been given most appropriate feet to walk on; he has given most suitable hands to work with; he has been given such senses and organs to acquire knowledge by which he obtains every kind of information; he has been given a powerful mind to think and understand and deduce results from the body of acquired information; he has been given a moral sense and a power of discrimination by which he distinguishes between good and evil, right and wrong; he has been given the power of decision by using which he selects his own course of action, and decides as to where he should employ his efforts and where he should not. He has even been given the freedom that he may acknowledge his Creator and serve Him if he so likes and reject Him if he pleases, or may make whomever he likes his gods, or rebel even against Him Whom he regards as his God. Along with all these capabilities and powers Allah has granted him the authority to appropriate everything created by Him, and he is practically using this authority in the world. (For further explanation, see E.N. 91 of Al-Mu'min).

The third thing which logically follows from the first two, as explained above, has been stated in the third sentence of the verse: "To Him you have to return in the end." Obviously, when a creature endowed with power and authority has been created in a wise and purposeful system of the universe, wisdom does not require that he should be left to live irresponsibly in the world, but it necessarily requires that that creature should be accountable to the Being Who has granted it this position and rank and blessed it with these powers; "Returning" in this verse does not merely mean to return but to return for accountability. In the following verses it has been explained that this return will not be in this life but into the second life after death, and its right time will be when all mankind will be resurrected and gathered together simultaneously for accountability, and in consequence of the accountability man will be rewarded or punished on the ground whether he had used the powers given him by God in the right way or the wrong way. As for the question, why cannot this accountability be held in the present life of the world? and why is its right time only the second life after death? and why is it necessary that this accountability be held only when all mankind has passed away from this world, and all the former and the latter generations have been resurrected and gathered together simultaneously? If man only uses his common sense a little, he can understand that all this is perfectly rational as well as the very demand of wisdom and reason that accountability should be held in the second life and of all mankind together. The first reason is that man is accountable for his whole life-work. Therefore, the right time of his accountability should necessarily be when his life-work has come to an end. The second reason is that man is

responsible for all those effects and influences which he produces by his acts on the lives of others, and those influences and effects do not come to an end with his death but continue to influence others till ages after him Therefore, true accountability call he held only when the life-work of entire mankind has come to an end and all the former and the latter generations are gathered together simultaneously for accountability. (For further explanation, see E.N. 30 of Al-A'râf. E.N.'s 10, 11 of Yûnus, E.N. 105 of Hûd E.N. 35 of An-Nahl, E.N. 9 of Al-Ḥajj, E.N. 27 of An.Naml. E.N.'s 5,6 of Ar-Rûm, E.N.'s 29, 30 of Suâd, E.N. 80 of Al-Mu'min, E.N.'s 27 to 29 of Al-Jâthiyah)

8. Another translation can be: "Whatever you do secretly and whatever openly."

9. That is, "He is aware not only of those *acts* of man, which come to the notice of the people but He knows also those acts which remain hidden from them. Moreover, He does not only see the superficial form of the acts, but also knows what intention and purpose underlay each act of man and with what motive and aim he did whatever he did- This is such a truth that if man ponders over it seriously, he can fully well understand that justice can be done only in the Hereafter, and only in God's Court can real justice be possibly done. Man's own intellect itself demands that man must be punished for each of his crimes. But everyone knows that in the world most of the crimes remain hidden, or the culprit escapes punishment because of insufficient evidence, or even if the crime becomes revealed, the culprit is so influential and powerful that he cannot be punished. Then the intellect of man also requires that man should not be punished only because his behaviour resembles a criminal act, but it should be ascertained that he has committed the act intentionally and deliberately and at the time he committed it, he was acting as a responsible agent, his intention in actual fact was to commit the crime, and he knew that what he was doing was a crime. That is why the worldly courts inquire into these things when they decide the cases, and regard such an inquiry as a demand of the rule of justice. But is there any means available in the world by which these things may be precisely ascertained beyond every shadow of doubt? Considered from this viewpoint, this verse also bears a deep logical relevance to Allah Almighty's saying: c has created the earth and the heavens with Truth." The necessary demand *of* creating them with Truth is that perfect justice should prevail in this universe. Such justice can be established only when every act of a responsible man may not only remain concealed from the eyes of the one administering justice but the intention with which a person performed and act also should not remain hidden from him. And obviously, there cannot be any being, apart from the Creator of the universe, who can administer such justice, Now, if a person denies Allah and the Hereafter, he in fact, asserts that we humans live in a universe which is devoid of justice, which is rather a place

where justice cannot possibly be done. The person whose intellect, mind and conscience feel satisfied at such an assumption would be a shameless creature if he thought he was bing progressive and rationalistic and those people antiquated and retrogressive who accept a highly rational concept about the universe, which the Qur'ān presents.

10. That is, "The evil that they tasted in the world in consequence of their misdeeds was neither the real punishment of their crimes nor the full punishment. The real and full punishment they have yet to suffer in the Hereafter. However, the people can learn a lesson from the torment that visited them. They can see how the nations which adopted an attitude of unbelief against their Lord, went on degenerating and consequently met with an evil and disgraceful end." (For further explanation, see E.N.'s 5, 6 of Al-A'rāf, E.N. 105 of Hūd).

11. The word *bayyināt* as used in the original has a vast *meaning. Bayyin* (sing. of *bayyināt)* in Arabic is something which is very clear and manifest. Saying about the Prophets that they came with *bayyināt* gives the meaning that firstly, they brought such manifest signs as bore clear testimony to their having been appointed by Allah; secondly, they presented whatever they presented with rational and clear arguments; thirdly, there was no ambiguity in their teaching; they clearly explained what was the truth and what was falsehood, what was lawful and what was unlawful, what path man should follow and what he should avoid.

12. This was then the foremost and basic cause of their degeneration and ruin. Mankind could not have known the right course of action in the world unless their Creator gave them the correct knowledge, and there could be no practical means of bestowing such knowledge by the Creator unless He blessed some of the human beings with the knowledge and entrusted them with the duty to convey it to other human beings. For this purpose He sent the Prophets with the manifest Signs *(bayyināt)* so that there was no reasonable ground for the people to doubt their being on the truth. But the people refused to believe that a human being could be a Messenger of God. Then, obviously there could be no other way for them to receive guidance. (For further explanation, see E.N. 11 of Sūrah Yā Sīn). In this connection, however, a strange manifestation of the ignorance and folly of human beings is seen. They have in fact, never shown any hesitation in accepting the guidance of men, so much so that they have carved out gods of wood and stone according to their guidance, they have made human beings themselves God, the incarnation of God, even son of God, and they have adopted such strange viewpoints by following the guidance of their mis-leaders blindly, which ruined human civilization and morals altogether. But when the Messengers of God came to them with the truth, and they presented the pure Truth before them without any selfish motive, they said, "Shall mere human beings show us guidance?" This

amounted to saying that if a human begin misled them, they would follow his guidance willingly. but if he showed the right path to them, his guidance was not acceprable.

13. That is, when they treated the guidance sent down by Allah with indifference, then Allah also became indifferent to them and did not care what pit they fell in. Allah did not stand in need *of* their aknowledging Him God to sustain and support His Godhead. Nor was He in need of their worship, nor of their praise and adoration. He, in fact, willed to show them the right path only for their own good and well-being. But when they turned away from it, Allah also became heedless of them. Then, neither He gave them guidance, nor remained responsible for their protection, nor saved them from being afflicted with calamities, nor prevented them from bringing about their own ruin, for they themselves were not keen for His guidance and help.

14. That is, "This was the second basic error in which the deniers of the Truth have been involved in every age, and which has ultimately brought about their ruin. Although no denier of the Hereafter ever had any means of knowing, nor has he today, nor will he have in the future, that there is no life after death, yet these ignorant people have always asserted the same thing, whereas there neither exists any intellectual basis for denying the Hereafter with absolute certainty nor any scientific basis for it.

15. This is the third place where Allah Almighty has instructed His Prophet to tell the people by swearing an oath by his Lord that such a thing shall certainly happen. First, in Sūrah Yūnus, it was said: "They ask: Is what you say really true? Tell them: Yes, by my Lord, it is absolutely true, and you have no power to avert it.;(v. 53). Then, in Sūrah Sabā, it was said: "The disbelievers say: How is it that Resurrection is not overtaking us? Say, by my Lord, it will surely overtake you." (v. 3)

Here, the question arises: What difference does it make for a disbeliever in the Hereafter whether you give him the news of its coming by swearing an oath or without swearing an oath? when he does not believe in it at all, will he believe in it only because you are asserting this on oath? The answer is: In the first place, the addressees of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah s peace) were the people, who knew from their personal knowledge and experience that he had never uttered a lie in his life. Therefore, even if they might have forged the most shameless slander against him with their tongue, yet in their hearts they could never conceive that *a* truthful man like him could say a thing on oath by Allah of which he himself was not convinced by knowledge and experience. Secondly, the Holy Prophet did not only present the doctrine of the Hereafter but also gave highly rational Arguments for it. What distinguishes *a* Prophet from others is that

the arguments, however strong and cogent, that others may give for the Hereafter, can at the most make the listener admit that the occurrence of the Hereafter is more reasonable and probable than its absence. On the contrary, a Prophet stands at A much higher level than a philosospher. His real position is not that he has arrived at the conclusion of the necessity of the Hereafter by the exercise of reason. But his real position is that he has the knowledge that the Hereafter shall occur and says with conviction that it shall surely occur. Therefore, only a Prophet can swear an oath to declare this but not a philosopher. Then, faith in the Hereafter can be generated only by a Prophet's statement; the reasoning of a philosopher does not have the power to induce even himseelf to adopt it as his religious creed on the basis of his own argument, not to speak of another person. If the philosopher is really correct, he cannot go beyond 'should be or ought to be;' only a Prophet can assert with conviction that a thing "is and certainly is."

16. This is the purpose for which the children of Adam will be resurrected; this also contains the answer to the question: what is the special need for it? If one keeps in view what has been discussed con cerning vv. 1-4 above, one can easily understand that in this universe, which has been created with the truth, it would be highly unreasonable to imagine about man who has been given freedom to choose either belief or unbelief, who has been granted authority to appropriate many of the things in this universe, and who after choosing the way of belief or unbelief has accomplished much good or done evil on his own responsibility by making the right or the wrong use of his authority during his life, that when he has done all this , the good done by the virtuous and the evil committed by the criminal one should neither bear any fruit, nor should there be any time when his deeds and actions should be subjected to scrutiny. The person who asserts such an irrational thing inevitably commits one of the two absurdities: either he thinks that although this universe is based on wisdom, yet a creature like man, who has been endowed with authority, has been created and left irresponsible here; or he thinks that this universe is a random creation devoid of the wisdom of a Wise Creator. In the first place, he makes a contradictory statement, for the existence of an irresponsible creature, endowed with authority, in a universe based on wisdom, is clearly against justice and wisdom. In the second case, he cannot give any rational being like man should come into being in a haphazardly created, foolish universe, and how he conceived the idea of justice. Only a stubborn person could uphold the belief that folly could generate wisdom and injustice justice, or the one who has become a mental patient because of his obsession for hair splitting.

17. This is the second argument for the Hereafter. The first argument was for its necessity and this second is for its possibility. Obviously, when God could create such a grand and wonderful system of the universe without any difficulty

and when He could create human beings in the world in the first instance, it cannot be difficult for Him to resurrect the same human beings and summon them before Himself for the purpose of accountability

18. That is, "When this is the truth and the whole human history testifies that the real cause of the destruction of the nations has been their disbelieving the Messengers and their denial of the Hereafter, then they should not insist on meeting the same doom by following their example, but should believe in the guidance presented by Allah and His Messenger and the Qur'ān." Here, as the context itself shows, by "the Light that We have sent down", is meant the Qur'ān Just as light itself is clearly seen and reveals everthing that was hidden in darkness around it, so is the Qur'ān a Light whose being based on the truth is self-evident ; in its Light man can solve and understand every problem that he cannot solve and understand exclusively by means of his own knowledge and in tellect. Anyone who has the Light can clearly see the straight path of Truth out of the countless, crooked paths of thought and action, and can follow the Straight Path throughout life in such a way that at every step he can know where the crooked by-paths are misleading and where the pitfalls of destruction are situated on the way, and what is the path of safety and security among them.

19. "The Day of Gathering": the Resurrection, when all human beings born in the world from the beginning of creation till the Last Day will be gathered together simultaneously. This theme has been fully explained in the Qur'ān at several places; e.g. in Sūrah Hūd it has been said: "That will b: the Day when all the people shall gather together and will witness everything that will happen there." (v 103) And in Sūrah Al-Wāqi'ah: "Say to them; Surely, the former and the latter, all shall be gathered together one day, the hour of which has already been appointed." (v. 50).

20. The word *yaum-ut-taghābun* as used in the original is too vast in meaning to be explained in a word, or even a sentence, of any other language. Of all the names of the Resurrection that occur in the Qur'ān, this name probably is the most meaningful. Therefore, a little explanation is necessary to understand its meaning.

Taghābun is from *ghabn*, which can be pronounced both as *ghabn* and as *ghaban*. *Ghabn* is mostly used concerning commercial and business transactions and *ghaban* concerning opinion. Lexically, it has other meanings also, e.g. heedlessness, forgetfulness, a person's being deprived of his share, a man's harming another inadvertently in business or mutual dealing, etc.

The derivative *taghābun* implies the occurrence of *ghabn* between two or more persons. Thus, *taghābun al-qaum* means some people's treating others fraudulently, or a person's harming another person and the other's being harmed

and damaged by him, or one's taking away the share of another and the other's being deprived of his share, or a person's incurring loss in business and another's gaining a profit, or some people's proving heedless or weak-minded in comparison to others.

Now consider that in this verse it has been said about the Resurrection: "That will be a Day of *taghābun* (mutual loss and gain) among the people." These words automatically give the meaning that in the world *taghabun* is a common thing, but this *taghabun* is superficial and deceptive, not the real and factual *taghābun;* the real *taghābun* will take place on the Day of Resurrection. There it will become manifest as to who actually incurred the loss and who actually earned the profits, who actually was deceived and who proved to be prudent and sensible, who actually had invested all his life capital in a wrong bargain and become bankrupt and who had invested all his energies and abilities, wealth and time, in a good bargain and earned all the benefits and gains, which the former also could have earned had he not been deceived in understanding the truth about the world.

The commentators while explaining the meaning of *Yaum-ut-taghābun* have given several meanings of it, which are all correct, and throw light on different aspects of its meaning. Some commentators have explained that on that Day the dwellers of Paradise will take away that share of the dwellers of Hell, which they would have had in Paradise had they done good deeds in the world as did the dwellers of Paradise and the dwellers of Hell will take away that share of the people of Paradise, which they would have had in Hell had they done evil deeds in the world. This is supported by a *Hadīth*, which Bukhārī has related in *Kitāb ar-Riqāq*, on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, saying that the Holy Prophet said: "Whoever goes to Paradise will be shown the place which he would have had in Hell had he done evil deeds in the world so that he may give more and more thanks to God; and whoever goes to Hell will be shown the place which he would have had in Paradise had he done good deeds in the world so that he may feel more and more remorseful."

Some other commentators say that on that Day the wronged one will take away so many of the good deeds done by the wrongdoer as may be a suitable compensation for the wrong suffered, or the wrongdoer will be equal in weight with his usurped rights. For on the Day of Resurrection man will not possess any wealth which he may give to make up for the wrong done, there the only commodity worth exchange will be one's conduct. Therefore, whoever had wronged another in the world, will have to make up for the wrong done by surrendering some of his own good deeds in his favour, or by taking some of his sins on himself and suffering the punishment for them. This theme also has been reported from the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) in *Aḥadīth*. In Bukhārī (Kitāb ar-Riqāq) a tradition has been related from Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah,

saying that the Holy Prophet said: "Whoever bears a burden of a wrong done to his brothel, should compensate him for it here, for in the Hereafter no one will have any wealth or money for compensation. There, some of his good deeds will be taken from him and given away to the wronged person, or if he did not have enough good deeds, some of the sins of the wronged person will be transferred to him." Likewise, in Musnad Aḥmad there is a tradition from Ḥadrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah bin Unais, sag that the Holy Prophet said: "No dweller of Paradise will enter Paradise and no dweller of Hell will enter Hell until he will have compensated the other person for the wrong done to him so much so that one will have to compensate even for a slap given to another person. We asked; How will this compensation be made when on Resurrection we shall be naked and penniless? The Holy Prophet replied: Compensation will he made by means of the good deeds and the evil deeds." In Muslim and Musnad Ahmad there is a tradition from Ḥadrat Abū Huraīrah, saying that the Holy Prophet upon whom by Allah's peace) once asked the people sitting in his assembly: "Do you know who is poor? The people replied: He who has nothing to possess The Holy Prophet said: In my *Ummah* the poor is he who appeared before his God on the Day of Resurrection with his acts of the Prayer and the Fast and the payment of the *zakāt* the while he had abused some one, usurped the property of another, and shed blood or hit still another. Then his good deeds were taken away and given over to each of the wronged and when nothing was left of his good deeds to make compensation, some of the sins of each wronged one were transferred to him and he was east into Hell." In another *Ḥadīth* which Muslim and Abū Da'ūd have related on the authority of Ḥadrat Buraidah, the Holy Prophet said: "If in the absence from home of a soldier for the cause of Allah, a person treats his wife and the people of his house treacherously, the person would be made to stand before the soldier on the Day of Resurrection, and the latter would be asked to take away whatever he liked from his good deeds. Saying this the Holy Prophet turned to us and said Then what do you say? That is, what do you think he would leave with him?"

Some other commentators say that tlie word *taghābun* is mostly used concerning commerce and business, and in the Holy Qur'ān at several places the attitude that the believer and the unbeliever adopt in their worldly lives has been compared to trade and commerce. If the believer giving up disobedience adopts obedience and invests his life and wealth and effort for the cause of God, he is giving up a bad bargain and investing his capital in a business which will fetch him much gain and profit in the end. On the contrary, if an unbeliever abandons the way of obedience and invests his entire capital in the way of disobedience to God, he in fact, is a trader who has purchased deviation for guidance, and will incur loss in the end. The gain and the loss of to both will become manifest on the Day of Resurrection. It may well so h happen in the world that the believer appears to

be the loser and the disbeliever the gainer But in the Hereafter they will see who actually had made the right bargain and who the wrong bargain This theme has occurred at many places in the Qur'ān,e.g. in Al-Baqarah 16, 175, 207 Al- Imrān 77,177 An-Nisā' 74; At-Taubah 111 An-Naḥl 95, Fāṭir 29, Aṣ-Ṣaff 10.

Yet another from of *taghābun* is that in the world the people go on cooperating with one another in unbelief and sin, injustice and wickedness, with full peace of mind with the confidence that they are enjoying full mutual love and friendship. The mutual intrigues and comradeship of the members of wicked Families immoral guides and their followers, gangs of thieves and robbers alliances of corrupt and unjust officers and officials, groups of dishonest traders, industrialists and land owners, paroups established for spread deviation, error and mischief, and nations and governments which support and uphold injustice and wickedness in the world, is based on the same onfidence. The individuals belonging to each of these groups harbour the impression that they are good companions of one another and their mutual cooperation is proving very successful But when these people reach the Hereafter, they will suddenly wake up to the realization that they had been grievously mistaken and deceived. Each one of them would feel that the one whom he considered his best father brother wife husband child, friend, companion, leader, guide disciple or supporter and helper, had been, in fact, his worst enemy. Every kind of relationship and friendship and bond of love and reverence will change into enmity. They will all abuse and curse each other and each one will desire that maximum responsibility of his crimes be laid on the other and will strive to get him severely punished. This theme also has occurred at many places in the Qur'ân, e.g. in Al-Baqrah: 167, Al-A'râf: 37 to 39. Ibrāhīm 21-22; Al-Mu'minūm: 101, Al-'Ankabūt: 12,13. 25; Luqmān: 33, Al-Aḥzāb: 67,68; Sabā: 31 to 33; Fāṭir: 18; Aṣ-Ṣāffāt: 27 to 3; Suād: 59 to 61: Ḥā Mīm: As-Sajdah: 29; Az-Zukhruf; 67; Ad-Dukhān; 41; Al-Ma'ārij: 10 to 14: 'Abasa: 34 to3.

21. Believing in Allah does not merely imply believing that Allah exists but believing in Him in the way Allah Himself has taught through His Messenger and His Book. This belief by itself includes belief in Apostleship and belief in the Book. Likewise a good act also does not imply every such act as man may himself have adopted considering it a good act. or following a man-made criterion of morality, but it implies the righteous act that is in accordance with the Law sent down by God. Therefore no one should have the misunderstanding that believing in Allah and doing good deeds, without the medium of the Messenger and the Book will lead to the results being mentioned below. Whoever studies the Qur'ān carefully cannot remain unaware that according to it no such belief is genuine belief in Allah and no such act is righteous at all.

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خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا ؕ وَ بِئْسَ الْمَصِيْرُ ﴿10﴾ مَآ اَصَابَ مِنْ مُّصِيْبَةٍ اِلَّا بِاِذْنِ اللّٰهِ ؕ وَ مَنْ
يُّؤْمِنْ بِاللّٰهِ يَهْدِ قَلْبَهٗ ؕ وَ اللّٰهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿11﴾ وَ اَطِيْعُوا اللّٰهَ وَ اَطِيْعُوا
الرَّسُوْلَ ۚ فَاِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَاِنَّمَا عَلٰى رَسُوْلِنَا الْبَلٰغُ الْمُبِيْنُ ﴿12﴾ اَللّٰهُ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ؕ
وَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿13﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اِنَّ مِنْ اَزْوَاجِكُمْ وَ اَوْلَادِكُمْ
عَدُوًّا لَّكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوْهُمْ ۚ وَ اِنْ تَعْفُوْا وَ تَصْفَحُوْا وَ تَغْفِرُوْا فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ
رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿14﴾ اِنَّمَآ اَمْوَالُكُمْ وَ اَوْلَادُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ ؕ وَ اللّٰهُ عِنْدَهٗٓ اَجْرٌ عَظِيْمٌ ﴿15﴾ فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ
مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ وَ اسْمَعُوْا وَ اَطِيْعُوْا وَ اَنْفِقُوْا خَيْرًا لِّاَنْفُسِكُمْ ؕ وَ مَنْ يُّوْقَ شُحَّ
نَفْسِهٖ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿16﴾ اِنْ تُقْرِضُوا اللّٰهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا يُّضٰعِفْهُ لَكُمْ وَ يَغْفِرْ
لَكُمْ ؕ وَ اللّٰهُ شَكُوْرٌ حَلِيْمٌ ﴿17﴾ عٰلِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَ الشَّهَادَةِ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿18﴾

11-13 No affliction[23] can ever befall except by Allah's permission[24] Whoever believes in Allah, Allah guides his heart,[25] and Allah has knowledge of everything.[26] Obey Allah and obey the Messenger, but if you turn away from obedience (you should know that the only responsibility of Our Messenger is to convey the Truth clearly and plainly.[27] Allah is He beside Whom there is no god. Therefore, in Allah alone should the believers place their trust.[28]

14-18 O you who have believed, some among your wives and your children are your enemies: beware of them. And if you pardon and overlook and forgive, Allah is surely All-Forgiving, All-Merciful.[29] Your worldly possessions and your children are but a trial, and it is Allah with Whom there are rich rewards.[30] Therefore, fear Allah as far as you can,[31] and listen and obey and spend your wealth : this is for your own good. And those who are saved from the greed of their own hearts, are truly successful-[32] If you lend to Allah a goodly loan, He will pay you back manifold[33] and will forgive you your faults. Allah is Appreciative and Forbearing.[34] He knows the open and the hidden: He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.

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22. These words by themselves make manifest the meaning of unbelief(Kufr). Unbelief is nothing but denying the verse of Allah's Book to be Divine Revelation rejecting the truths expressed therein and refusing to follow and obey the commandments given in them; its results are those being mentioned below

23. The discourse now turns to the believers. While reading this passage one should keep in mind the fact that at the time when these verses were revealed, Muslims were passing through great hardships After years of persecution at Makkah they had left their home and emigrated to Madinah, where the sincere Muslims who had given them refuge had been doubly burdened. On the one hand, they had to support and sustain hundreds of the emigrants who were coming to them from different parts of Arabia; on the other they had become the target of the persecution and enmity of the enemies of Islam of entire Arabia.

24. This same theme has also occurred in Al-Ḥadid: 22-23 above and we have explained it in E.N.'s 39 to 42 of the commentary of the Sūrah 'The same circumstances under which this thing was said there and the same object for which it was said underlie the verses here as well. This means that afflictions and hardships do not descend of themselves, nor has anyone in the world the power to cause an affliction to descend on anyone he may like by his own authority. All calamities wholly depend on Allah's leave: He may allow an affliction to descend upon someone or may disallow it. And Allah's leave in any case is based on one or other wisdom, directed to some ultimate good, which man neither knows, nor can understand.

25. That is, "It is only belief in Allah which keeps man on the right path even in the face of an onslaught of afflictions and does not let him waver under the most trying circumstances. The one whose heart is devoid of belief either looks upon afflictions as a result of mere chance, or thinks they are brought or prevented by worldly powers, or considers them to be the work of such imaginary powers which human superstition regards as potent in bringing good and causing evil, or believes that God is the real Doer of everything but does not believe so truly and sincerely. In all these different cases man degenerates. He endures the affliction, but then yields and bows to every false god, accepts, every humiliation, is ready to do any mean thing and commit any wrong act he does not hesitate to abuse God, even commit suicide. On the contrary, the heart of the person who knows and believes sincerely that everything is in the hand of Allah, that He alone in the Master and Ruler of the universe, that only by His permission can an affliction befall and only by His command can it be averted, is blessed by Allah with the grace of patience and submission and of acquiescing in Divine will, and is granted the power to face every circumstance with determination and courage. Even under

the most straitened circumstances the candle of the hope of Allah's bounty lights up his way and no affliction, however severe and trying, can so dishearten him as to cause him to swerve from the right path, or how to falsehood, or invoke others than Allah for the redress of his grievances. Thus, every affliction opens up for him a new door to well-being and happiness and no affliction remains an affliction for him in actual fact but becomes in final result and analysis a blessing in disguise, for whether he falls a victim to it, or passes through it safely, in each case he emerges successful from the trial set him by his Lord. This same thing has been stated by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) in a *Hadith* which has been reported unanimously by all the reporters, saying: "Strange is the affair of the believer! Whatever Allah decrees for him is good for him: when an affliction befalls him, he endures it patiently, and this proves good for him; when he is blessed with prosperity, he thanks his Lord, and this too proves good for him. Such a good fortune only falls to the lot of a believer."

26. In this context this has two meanings: first, that Allah knows who really believes and what is the measure of his belief. So, on the basis of His knowledge He grants guidance only to that heart, which has belief in it, and grants it guidance precisely in accordance with the measure of belief. Another meaning also can be: that Allah is not unaware of the condition of His believing servants. He has not left them alone after having invited them to faith and subjected them at the same time to severe trials and temptations of the world. He knows exactly what hardships a believer is passing through in the world, and under what circumstances he is fulfilling the demands of his faith. Therefore, "O believers, you should rest assured that whatever affliction descends upon you by Allah's leave, in Allah's knowledge it must be directed to some ultimate good, which must be for your own well-being, for Allah is well-wisher of His believing servants: He does not will to subject them to afflictions and hardships without good reason."

27. In view of the context, it means: "Whatever the circumstances, good or bad, you should remain steadfast to obedience to Allah and His Messenger. But if under the pressure of hardships you turned away from obedience, you would only harm your own selves. The only responsibility of Our Messenger was to guide you to the right path, which the Messenger has fulfilled in the best way possible."

28. That is, "All Divine powers belong to Allah alone. No one else has any power to make or mar your destiny. He alone cat bring about a good time and He alone can avert a bad time. Therefore, whoever believes sincerely that Allah is One, has absolutely no other choice than to place his full trust in Him and to continue doing his duty as a believer with the conviction that goodness and well-

being only lie in the way that Allah has shown him. If he attains to success in this way, it will only he by Allah's help and leave; there is no other helper. And if he encounters difficulties, hardships, dangers and disasters in this way, Allah alone will rescue him; for there is no other rescuer beside Him."

29. This verse has two meanings. According to the first meaning, it applies to most of those difficulties, which are encountered by many believing men from their wives and the women from their husbands and the parents from their children in following the way of God. It seldom so happens in the world that a man has a wife and a wife a husband, who are full companions and helpers of each other in the matter of faith and righteousness, and that both may also have such children as may be the comfort of their eyes as regards faith and deeds, morals and conduct. But generally it so happens that if the hasband is righteous and honest, the wife and children look upon his honesty and piety and righteousness as a misfortune for themselves, and want that the husband and the father should earn Hell for their sake, and giving up the distinction between the lawful and the unlawful should provide means of luxury and enjoyment, sin and vice, for them in every passible way. On the contrary, many a time a pious believing woman happens to have a husband, Who does not at all approve her obedience to the Laws of God, and the childern too, following in the footsteps of the father, make the wife of the mother miserable by their daviation and evil deeds. Then, particularly, when during the conflict between Islam and unbelief a man's faith demands that he should suffer losses for the sake of Allah and this Religion, run risks, emigrate from the counmty, or even endanger his life by joining the war against unbelief, the greatest hindrance in his way are the people of his own household.

The second meaning relates to those special circumstances wheih most of the Muslims were facing at the time these verses were sent down, and today also they are faced by every person who embraces Islam in a non-Muslim society. At that time in Makkah and in other partsof Arabia a situation that was commonly being experienced was that a man would embrace Islam, but his wife and children would not only be disinclined to accept it hut would try their best to press him to give up Islam Arid similar were the situations encountered by the women, the alone embraced Islam in their families.

Addressing the believers who may be confronted with either situatin, three things have been impressed:

First, they have been warned as if to say: "Although from the worldly point of view, these are the dearest relations of man yet from the religious point of view, they are "your enemies." Thts enmity may he for the reason that they hinder you from good and induce you to do evil, or that they restrain you from belief and pull you towards unbelief, or that their sympathies are with the

unbelievers. and through you if they ever come to know any of the war secrets of the Muslims, they convey it to the enemies of Islam. Owing to these the nature and quality of enmity may vary, but in any case it is enmity; and if you hold your faith dearer to your heart, you should regard them as your enemies. In their love you should never forget that between you and them there stands the barrier of belief and unbelief, or of obedience and disobedience."

Then, it is said: "Beware of them." That is, "You should not ruin your eternal life for the sake of their worldly life. Let not their love so overwhelm you that they become a hindrance for you in your relationship with Allah and His Messenger and your loyalty to Islam. Do not place such reliance on them that the secrets of the Muslim community should come to their notice and through them reach your enemies only by your negligence and carelessness. This Is the Fame thing of which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) has warned the Muslims in a *Ḥadīth:* "A person will be brought up on the Day of Resurrection, and it will be proclaimed: 'His wife and children ate up all his good deeds'."

In the *end,* it is said: "If you pardon and overlook and forgive, Allah is surely All-Forgiving, All-Merciful." It means: "You are being made aware of their enmity so that you may beware of them and do your best to save your faith from them, This warning does not, however, mean that you should treat your wife and children harshly, or strain your relations with them so as to make your own *and* their domestic life miserable and wretched. For if you did so, two of the disadvantages would obviously result: first, it may close down every avenue to the reformation of the wife and children for ever; second, it may give rise to suspicions and misgivings against Islam in the society and the people around may form the impression that a Muslim turns unduly rigid and ill-tempered for his own childern in his own house as soon as he has embraced Islam.

In this connection, one should also keep in mind that in the beginning when the people became Muslims, they encountered a special difficulty if their parents were unbelievers. They would press their children to give up the new Faith. They would face another difficulty when their wives and children (or in case of women, their husbands and children) persisted unbelief and would force them to abandon the Faith of Truth. About the first difficulty, instruction was given in Al-'Ankabūt; 8 and Luqmān; 14-15, saying: "Treat your parents well but if they press you to join with Me another about whom you have no knowledge, do not obey them at all." About the second difficulty the Instruction has been given here, saying: "You must try to save your faith from your children and family members hut do not treat them harshly, but rather politely and leniently." (For further explanation, see At-Taubah: 23-24; E N. 37 of Al-Mujādalah, E.N.'s 1 to 3 of Al-Mumtaḥanah; E.N. 18 of Munāfiqūn).

30. For explanation, see E.N. 23 of Sūrah Al-Anfāl. Here one should also

keep in view the Holy Prophet's saying which Ṭabarānī has related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abū Mālik al-Ash'arī, saying: "Your real enemy is not he whom if you kill there is success for you, and if he kills you, there is Paradise for you; but your real enemy may b your own child who is born of your own loins, or the wealth *of* which you are the owner." That is why here us well as in Al-Anfāl: 28, Allah says: If you save yourselves from the temptation and allurements of worldly possessions and children and succeed in keeping love *of* them subject to the love of Allah, there are rich rewards for you with Allah.

31. At another place in the Qur'ān it has been said: "Fear Allah as He should actually be feared." (Al-'Imrān: 102). At still another place: "Allah does not burden any one with a responsibility heavier than he can bear." (Al-Baqarah: 286) And here: "Fear Allah as far as you can." When these three verses are read together it appears that the first verse sets an ideal which every believer should try to attain. The second verse lays down the principle that no one has been required to exert himself beyond his power and ability, for in Allah's Religion one has been made responsible only for what is within one's power and ability. This verse enjoins every believer to try to attain piety and consciousness of God as far as he can. He should carry out His Commands and avoid His disobedience as best as he possibly can. For if he shows laxity in this regard, he will not be able to escape punishment. However, one will not be held accountable for what was beyond one's power (and Allah alone can decide best what was really beyond a person's power and ability).

32. For explanation, see E.N. 19 of Al-Ḥashr.

33. For explanation, see E.N. 267 of Al-Baqarah, E.N. 33 of Al-Mā'idah, E.N. 16 of Al-Ḥadīd.

34. For explanation, see E.N.'s 52, 59 of Fāṭir; E.N.42 of Ash-Shūrā.



LXV

AṬ-ṬALĀQ

الطَّلَاق

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

LXV

AṬ-ṬALĀQ

الطَّلَاق

INTRODUCTION

Name

Aṭ-Ṭalāq is not only the name of this Sūrah but also the title of its subject-matter, for it contains commandments about *Ṭalāq* (divorce) itself. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd has described it as Sūrah an-Nisā' al-quṣrā also, i.e. the shorter Sūrah an- Nisā'.

Period of Revelation

Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd has pointed out, and the internal evidence of the subject-matter of the Sūrah confirms the same, that it must have been sent down after those verses of Sūrah Al-Baqarah in which commandments concerning divorce were given for the first time. Although it is difficult to determine precisely what is its exact date of revelation, yet the traditions in any case indicate that when the people

started making errors in understanding the commandments of Sūrah Al-Baqarah, and practically also they began to commit mistakes. Allah sent down these instructions for their correction.

Theme and Subject Matter

In order to understand the commandments of this Sūrah, it would be useful to refresh one's memory about the instructions which have been given in the Qur'ān' concerning divorce and the waiting-period (*'iddat)* above.

"Divorce may be pronounced twice; then the wife may either be kept back in fairness or allowed to separate in fairness." (Al-Baqarah: 229)

"And the divorced women (after the pronouncement of the divorce) must wait for three monthly courses ... and their husbands are fully entitled to take them back (as their wives) during this waiting-periodd, if they desire reconciliation." (Al-Baqarah, 228)

"Then, if the husband divorces his wife (for the third time), she shall not remain lawful for him after this divorce, unless she marries another husband . .." (Al-Baqarah: 230)

"When you marry the believing women, and then divorce them before you have touched them, they do not have to fulfil a waiting-period, the completion of which you may demand of them." (Al-Aḥzāb: 49)

"And if those of you who die, leave wives behind, the women should abstain (from marriage) for four months and ten days." (Al-Baqarah: *234)*

The rules prescribed in these verses were as follows:

(1) A man can pronounce at the most three divorces on his wife.

(2) In case the husband has pronounced one or two divorces, he is entitled to keep the woman back as wife within the wiating-period and if after the expiry of the waiting-period the two desire to re-marry, they can remarry; there is no condition of legalisation *(taḥlīl).* But if the husband has pronounced three divorces, he forfeits his right to keep her as his wife within the

waiting-period, and they cannot remarry unless the woman remarries another husband and he subsequently divorces her of his own free will.

(3) The waiting-period of the woman, who menstruates and marriage with whom has been consummated, is that she should pass three monthly courses. The waiting-period in case of one or two divorces is that the woman is still the legal wife of the husband and he can keep her back as his wife within the waiting-period. But if the husband has pronounced three divorces, this waiting-period cannot be taken advantage of for the purpose of reconciliation, but it is only meant to restrain the woman from re-marrying another person before it comes to an end.

(4) There is no waiting-period for the woman, marriage with whom has not been consummated, and who is divorced even before she is touched. She can re-marry, if she likes, immediately after the divorce.

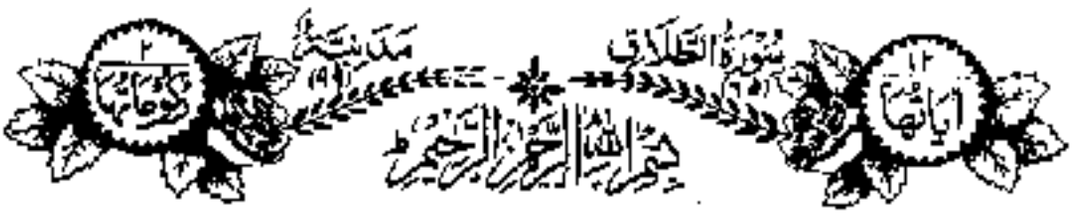
(5) The waiting-period of the woman whose husband dies, is four months and ten days.

Here, one should understand well that Sūrah At-Ṭalāq was not sent down to annul any of these rules or amend it? but it was sent down for two purposes:

First, that the man who has been given the right to pronounce divorce should be taught such judicious methods of using this right as do not lead to separation, as far as possible; however, if separation does take place, it should only the in case all possibilities of mutual reconciliation have been exhausted. For in the Divine Law provision for divorce has been made only as an unavoidable necessity; otherwise Allah does not approve that the marriage relationship that has been established between a man and a woman should ever break. The Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) has said, "Allah has not made lawful anything more hateful in His sight than divorce." (Abū Da'ūd). And: "Of all the things permitted by the Law, the most hateful in the sight of Allah is the divorce." (Abu Da'ūd).

The second object was to complement this section of the family law of Islam by supplying answers to the questions that had remained

after the revelation of the commandments in Sūrah Al-Baqarah. So, answers have been supplied to the following questions: What would be the waiting-period of the women, marriage with whom has been consummated and who no longer menstruate, or those who have not yet menstruated, in case they are divorced? What would be the waiting-period of the woman, who is pregnant, or the woman whose husband dies, if she is divorced? And what arrangements would be made for the maintenance and lodging of the different categories of divorced women, and for the fosterage of the child whose parents have separated on account of a divorce?



يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ اِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَآءَ فَطَلِّقُوْهُنَّ لِعِدَّتِهِنَّ وَاَحْصُوا الْعِدَّةَ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا
اللّٰهَ رَبَّكُمْ ۚ لَا تُخْرِجُوْهُنَّ مِنْۢ بُيُوْتِهِنَّ وَلَا يَخْرُجْنَ اِلَّآ اَنْ يَّاْتِيْنَ بِفَاحِشَةٍ
مُّبَيِّنَةٍ ۚ وَتِلْكَ حُدُوْدُ اللّٰهِ ۚ وَمَنْ يَّتَعَدَّ حُدُوْدَ اللّٰهِ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهٗ ۚ لَا
تَدْرِيْ لَعَلَّ اللّٰهَ يُحْدِثُ بَعْدَ ذٰلِكَ اَمْرًا ۝١ فَاِذَا بَلَغْنَ اَجَلَهُنَّ فَاَمْسِكُوْهُنَّ
بِمَعْرُوْفٍ اَوْ فَارِقُوْهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوْفٍ وَّاَشْهِدُوْا ذَوَيْ عَدْلٍ مِّنْكُمْ وَاَقِيْمُوا الشَّهَادَةَ
لِلّٰهِ ۚ ذٰلِكُمْ يُوْعَظُ بِهٖ مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللّٰهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْاٰخِرِ ۚ وَمَنْ يَّتَّقِ اللّٰهَ يَجْعَلْ
لَّهٗ مَخْرَجًا ۝٢ وَّيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ ۚ وَمَنْ يَّتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللّٰهِ فَهُوَ
حَسْبُهٗ ۚ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ بَالِغُ اَمْرِهٖ ۚ قَدْ جَعَلَ اللّٰهُ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدْرًا ۝٣ وَالّٰٓـِٔيْ يَئِسْنَ

LXV

AṬ-ṬALĀQ

الطلاق

Verses: 12 *Revealed at Madinah*

In the name Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

O Prophet, when you (and the believers) divorce women, divoce them for their prescribed waiting-periods,[1] and count the waiting-period accurately,[2] and fear Allah, you Lord. And do not turn them out of their houses (during the waiting-period), not should they themselves leave them,[3] except in case they commit an open indecency.[4] These are the bounds prescribed by Allah and whoever transgresses Allah's bounds will wrong his own self. You do not know: Allah may after this bring about a situation (of reconciliation).[5] Then when they have reached the end of their (waiting) periods either retain them (in wedlock) in a fair manner or part with them in a fair manner,[6] and call to witness two just men from among yourselves,[7] and (O witnesses) 1-2

bear witness equitably for the sake of Allah.

23 With this you are admonished, (and) whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day.[8] Whosoever fears Allah in whatever he does, Allah will open for him away out of the difficulties[9] and will provide for him from whence he could little imagine.[10] And whoever trusts in Allah, He is enough for him. Allah brings His decrees to fulfilment.[11] Allah has appointed a destiny for everything.

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1. That is, "O believers, you should not make undue haste in the Matter of pronouncing divorce: your minor family quarrels should not so incite you that you should pronounce the final divorce in a fit of anger and there teremains no chance for reconciliation. However When you have to divorce your wives, you should divorce them for their prescribed waiting-period." Pronouncing divorce for the waiting period has two meanings and both are implied here:

First, that "you should divorce them at a them when their waiting-period can begin." This thing has already been prescribed in Al Baqarah: 228 above. The waiting-period of the married woman who menstruates is three monthly courses after the pronouncement of divorce. If this commandment is kept in view the only appropriate time of pronouncing divorce 50 that the waiting period may duly begin is when she is not in her courses, for he waiting-period cannot begin from the course during which she ma have been divorced, and divorcing her in that state would mean that, contrary to the Divine Command, her waiting-period should extend to four courses instead of three courses. Furthermore, this commandment also demands that the woman should not he divorced in the period-of purity during which the husband may have had sexual intercourse with her. For in this case, at the time divorce is pronounced neither the husband nor the wife can know whether he has conceived in consequence of the intercourse or not. Because of this neither the waiting-period can begin on the hypothesis that this would be reckoned in view of the succeeding monthly courses, nor on the hypothesis that this would be the waiting-period of a pregnant woman. So, this commandment lays down two rules simultaneously: first, that divorce should not be poonounced during menstruation; second, that divorce may be pronounced either in the period of purity during which there was no sexual intercourse with the woman, or in the state when the woman's being pregnant was known. A little consideration of the matter will show that the restrictions imposed on the pronouncement of divorce are for good reasons. The reason for imposing the restriction on the pronounce ment of divorce during menstruation is that in this state the husband and the wife are somewhat estranged from each other because of the prohibition of sexual intercourse in this state; and from the medical viewpoint also it is confirmed that the woman is not temperamentally normal during the courses. Therefoe, if a quarrel starts between

them in this state, both the husband and the wife would be helpless to an extent to put an end to it, and if the matter is deferred till the woman is free from her courses, there is the possibility that the woman also may return to her normal temperamental state and the mutual attraction that nature has placed between them also may work and reunite them. Likewise, the reason for prohibiting the pronouncement of divorce during the purity period in which sexual intercourse may have taken place, is that if in consequence of it conception takes place, it can neither be known to the husband nor to the wife. Therefore, it cannot be a suitable time for pronouncing the divorce. If the man comes to know that conception has taken place, he would think a hundred times before deciding finally whether he should pronounce divorce or not on the woman who carries his child in her womb. The woman also in view of the future of her child would try her best to remove the causes of her husband's displeasure. But if a decision is taken blindly, in undue haste, and then it is known that conception had taken place, both will regret it later.

This is the first meaning "divorcing for the prescribed waiting-period", which applies only to those women marriage with whom has been consummated, who menstruate and may possibly conceive. As for its second meaning it is this: "If you have to divorce your wives, you should divorce them till the expiry of their waiting-period". That is "Do not pronounce three divorces all at once leading to permanent separation, but pronounce one, or at the most two divorces, and wait till the end of the waiting-period, so that there remains some chance for reconciliation for you at any time during this period." According to this meaning, this commandment is also useful in respect of those woman marriage with whom has been consummated and who menstruate as well as of those who no longer menstruate, or those who have not yet menstruated, or those whose pregnancy at the time of the pronouncement of divorce is known. If this Divine Command is rightly followed, no one will regret after having pronounced divorce, for if divorce is pronounced in this way, there remains room for reconciliation within the waiting period, and even after the expiry of the waiting-period the possibility remains that the separated husband and wife may remarry if they wish reconciliation.

This same meaning of *ṭalliqū-hunna li-'iddat-i hinna* ("divorce them for their prescribed waiting-period") has been given by the earliest commentators. Ibn 'Abbās has given this commentary of it: "One should not pronounce divore during menstruation, nor in the period of purity *(ṭuhr)* during which the husband may have had sexual intercourse, but one should leave the wife alone till she attains purity after the course; then one may pronounce a single divorce on her. In this case even if there is no reconciliation and the waiting-period expires, she would be separated by the single divorce." (Ibn Jarīr) Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd says:

"Divorce for the waiting period means that one should pronounce the divorce in the woman's state of purity without having had an intercourse with her." The same commentary has been reported from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, 'Atā', Mujahid, Maimun bin Mahrān, Muqātil bin Ḥayyān, and Ḍaḥḥāk (may Allah bless them all) (Ibn Kathīr). 'Ikrimah has explained it thus: "One may pronounce the divorce in the state when the woman's being pregnant is known, and not when one has had sexual intercourse with her and it is not known whether she has conceived or not." (Ibn Kathīr) Both Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣrī and Ibn Sīrīn say: "Divorce should be pronounced during the state of purity without having had sexual intercourse, or when the woman's being pregnant becomes known." (Ibn Jarīr)

The intention of this verse was best explained by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) himself on the occasion when Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar had divorced his wife while she was discharging the menses .. The, details of this incident have been reported in almost all collections of *Ḥadīth* and the same, in fact, are the source of the law in this connection. It so happened that when Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah divorced his wife while she was menstruating, Ḥaḍrat 'Umar came before the Holy Prophet and mentioned it to him. The Holy Prophet expressed great displeasure and said: "Command him to take her back and keep her as his wife till she is purified, then she again menstruates and is again purified; then if he so desires he may divorce her in her state of purity without having any sexual intercourse with her. This is the waiting-period which Allah Almighty has prescribed for the divorce of women." In a tradition the words are to the effect: "Either one may pronounce the divorce in the woman's state of purity without having a sexual intercourse, or in the state when her being pregnant becomes fully known."

The intention of this verse is further explained by a few other *Aḥadīth* which have been reported from the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) and some of the major Companions. Nasā'ī has related that the Holy Prophet was informed that a person had pronounced three divorces on his wife in one sitting. He stood up in anger and said: "Are the people playing with the Book of Allah, although I am present among you?" Seeing the Holy Prophet's extreme anger on this occasion, a person asked: "Should I not go and kill the man?" 'Abdur Razzāq has reported about Ḥaḍrat 'Ubādah bin aṣ-Ṣāmit that his father pronounced one thousand divorces on his wife. He went before the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and asked his ruling on it. The Holy Prophet said: "By the three divorces the woman stood separated from him along with Allah's disobedience, and 997 pronouncements remained as acts of injustice and sin, for which Allah might punish him if He so willed and forgive him if He so willed." In the details of the incident concerning Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, which have been related in Dāraqutnī and Ibn Abī Shaibah, another thing also is that when the Holy Prophet

commanded Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar to take his wife back, he asked: Had I pronounced three divorces on her, could I have taken her back even then? The Holy Prophet replied: No, she would have stood separated from you, and this would have been an act of sin." In another tradition the Holy Prophet's words are to the effect: "Had you done this, you would have committed disobedience of your Lord while your wife would have been separated from you."

The legal rulings reported from the Companions in this regard are also in complete conformity with the Holy Prophet's injunctions. According to a tradition in Mu'waṭṭā, a person came to Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud and said: "I have pronounced eight divorces on my wife. Ibn Mas'ūd asked: What legal opinion have you been given in this regard? He said: I have been told that the woman stands separated from me. Ibn Mas'ūd said: The people have said the right thing: the legal position is the same as they have told you." 'Abdur Razzāq has related from 'Alqamah that a person said to Ibn Mus'ūd: "I have pronounced 99 divorces on my cife. He said: Three divorces separate her from you; the rest are (acts of sin) excesses." Wakī' bin al-Jarrāḥ in his *sunan* has reported this very viewpoint of both Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān and Ḥaḍrat 'Ali. A person came to Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān and said: "I have pronounced a thousand divorces on my wife-". He replied: "She stood separated from you by three divorces." When a similar problem was presented before Ḥaḍrat 'Ali he replied; "By three divorces she stood separated from you. You may distribute the rest of your pronouncements on the rest of your wives if you so like." Abū Da'ūd and Ibn Jarīr have related, with a little variation in wording, a tradition from Mujāhid, saying: "While I was sitting with Ibn Abbās, a person came and said: 'I have pronounced three divorces on my wife.' Ibn 'Abbās heard it but kept silent for so long that I thought he was perhaps going to return his wife to him. Then he said: 'One of you first commits the folly of pronouncing the divorces; then he comes and says: O Ibn 'Abbās, O Ibn 'Abbās! whereas Allah has said that whoever fears Him in whatever he does, He will open a way for him out of the difficulties. You did not fear Allah; now I do not find any way for you: you have disobeyed your Lord, and your wife stands separated from you." Another tradition, which also has been reported from Mujāhid, and related with a little variation in wording in *mu'waṭṭā* and *Tafsīr* by Ibn Jarīr, says: "A person pronounced a hundred divorces on his wife; then he asked Ibn 'Abbās for his opinion. He replied: 'By three divorces she stood separated from you. With the other 97 you made a Jest of the Revelations of Allah!" This is according to Mu'waṭṭā. According to Ibn Jarīr the words of Ibn 'Abbās were to the effect: "You disobeyed your Lord, and your wife stood separated from you, and you did not fear Allah that He might open a way for you out of the difficulty." Imām Ṭaḥāvī has related that a man came to Ibn 'Abbās and said: "My uncle has pronounced three divorces on his wife. He replied: Your uncle has disobeyed

Allah and committed a sin and followed Satan. Now, Allah has left no way open for him out of the difficulty." According to a tradition in Mu'waṭṭa and Abū Da'ud, a man pronounced three divorces on his wife before the consummation of marriage; then desired to remarry her, and came out to know the legal aspect of the matter. The reporter of the *Ḥadīth*, Muḥammad bin Iyās bin Bukair, says: "I accompanied him to Ibn 'Abbās and Abū Hurairah. The reply each one gave was: 'You have let slip from your hand whatever opportunity was there for you'." Zamakhsharī has stated in *al-Kashshaf* that Ḥaḍrat 'Umar used to beat the man who would pronounce three divorces on his wife (at one and the same time) and then would enforce his divorces. Sa'īd bin Manṣūr has related this very thing from Ḥaḍrat Anas on sound authority. In this connection, the general opinion of the Companions, which Ibn Abī Shaibah and Imām Muḥammad have related from Ibrāhīm Nakha'ī (may Allah bless them) was: "The Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) approved of this method that one may pronounce a single divorve on the wife and leave her alone till she completes three monthly courses." These are the words of Ibn Abī Shaibah. The words of Imām Muḥammad are to the effect: "The approved method with them was that in the matter of divorce one should not exceed one divorce till the waiting-period is completed."

The detailed *law* that the jurists of Islam have compiled with the help of these *Aḥadīth* and traditions in the light of the abovementioned Qur'ānic verse, is as follows:

(1) The *Ḥanafīs* regard divorce as of three kinds: *Aḥsan, ḥasan,* and *bid'ī*. The *aḥsan* form of divorce is that one may pronounce only one divorce on one's wife during a *ṭuhr* (purity) period in which one must refrain from sexual intercourse and leave the wife to complete her waiting-period. The *ḥasan* form of divorce is that one may pronounce one divorce in each period of purity: in this case pronouncement of three divorces, one each in three periods of purity, is also not against the Sharī'ah, although the best approved method is to pronounce only one divorce and leave the wife to complete her waiting-period. The *bid'ī* form of divorce is that one must pronounce three divorces in a single sitting, or pronounce three divorces at different times during the same period of purity, or pronounce divorce during menstruation, or pronounce it in the period of purity during which one has had a sexual inintercourse. Of these whichever course one may adopt one will be guilty a sin, This is the law in respect of the woman Marriage with whom has been consummated and who has regular courses. As for the woman marriage with whom has not been consummated, she can be divorced both in the state of purity and during menstruation, and this is according to the *Sunnah*. And if the woman is such a one marriage with whom has been consummated, who no longer menstruates, or the one who has not yet menstruated, she can be divorced even after the

sexual intercourse, for there is no chance of her being pregnant. And if the woman is pregnant, she also can be divorced after the sexual intercourse, for her pregnancy is already established. But the method of pronouncing divorce on these women according to the *Sunnah*, is that the divorce may be pronounced at the interval of one month in each case. However, the *aḥsan* method is that only one divorce may be pronounced and the woman left to complete her waiting-period. *(Hedāyah, fath al-Qadir, Aḥkam al-Qur'ān* (Al-Jaṣṣāṣ), *'Umdat al-Qarī).*

According to Imām Mālik also divorce is of three kinds , *Sunnī, bid'ī makrūh* and *bid'ī ḥarām*. The divorce according to the *Sunnah* is that a single divorce be pronounced on the woman marriage with whom has been consummate(l and who menstruates, during her state of purity without having had sexual intercourse, and the woman be left to complete her waiting-period. The *bid'ī makrūh* form is that divorce be pronounced in the period of purity during which one may have had sexual intercourse, or more divorces than one be pronounced in the period of purity while there was no sexual intercourse, or three divorces be pronounced, one each in separate periods of purity within the waiting-period, or three divorces be pronounced all at once. And *bid'ī ḥarām* is that divorce be pronounced during menstruation. *(Ḥāshiyah ad-Dusūqī 'alal-Sharḥ-al-Kabīr; Ibn al-'Arabī, Aḥkām al-Qur'ān).*

The authentic viewpoint of Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal which is generally agreed upon by the Ḥanbalīs is: The approved method (i.e. the one according to the *Sunnah)* of divorcing a wife marriage with whom has been consummated and who menstruates, is that a single divorce be pronounced on her in her period of purity without having had sexual intercourse with her, and then she be left to complete her waiting-period. But if she is giver three divorces, one each in three separate periods of purity or three divorces in one and the same period of purity, or divorced thrice at once, or divorced during the courses, or divorced in the period of purity during which the husband has had sexual intercourse and her being pregnant is not known, all these would be disapproved and forbidden forms of divorce. But if the woman is such that marriage with her has been consummated but who no longer menstruates, or such who has not yet menstruated, or is pregnant, in her case there is neither any difference of approved and disapproved with regard to time nor with regard to the number of divorces pronounced. (Al-Inṣāf fī Ma'rifat-ar-Rājiḥ min al-Khilāf 'alā Madhhab Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal).

According to Imām Shāfe'ī, in the matter of divorce the difference between the approved (i.e. according to the *Sunnah*) and the reprehensible (i.e. against the *Sunnah)* forms of divorce is only with regard to time and not with regard to number. That is, to pronounce divorce on a woman marriage with whom

has been consummated and who menstruates, during menstruation or to pronounce divorce on a woman, who can conceive, during such a period of purity in which the husband has had sexual intercourse with her and the woman's pregnancy is unknown, is disapproved and forbidden. As for the number, whether three divorces are pronounced at one time, or pronounced in the same period of purity, or pronounced in separate periods of purity, they are not against the *Sunnah* in any case. In case the woman is such that marriage with her has not been consummated, or the one who no longer menstruates, or the one who has not yet menstruated, or the one whose being pregnant is known, there is no difference between the approved and the disapproved forms of divorce. *(Mughnī al-Muhtāj)*

(2) A divorce's being irregular, reprehensible, forbidden, or sinful with the four Imāms does not mean that it does not have effect. According to all the four Sunnī Schools, whether a divorce is pronounced during menstruation, or thrice at once, or pronounced in the period of purity during which the husband has had sexual intercourse and the woman's being pregnant is unknown, or pronounced in a manner disapproved by an Imām, in any case it does become effective, although the pronounce commits an act of sin. But some other scholars differ in this regard from the four Imāms.

Sa'īd bin al-Musayyab and some other immediate followers of the Companions say that the divorce of the person who pronounces it during menstruation, or pronounces it thrice at one time, does not take place at all. The same is the opinion of the Imāmiah sect of the Shī'as. The basis of this opinion is that since this form of divorce is forbidden and utterly irregular, it is ineffective, whereas the *Aḥadīth* that we have cited above, clearly show that when Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar divorced his wife during menstruation, the Holy Prophet commanded him to take her back; had the divorce not taken effect at all, the command to take the wife back would have been meaningless. And this also is confirmed by many *Aḥadīth* that the Holy Prophet and the major Companions considered the pronounce of more divorces than one at one time sinful but did not regard his divorce as ineffective.

Ṭā'ūs and 'Ikrimah say that only one divorce takes place if divorce is pronounced thrice at once, and this very view has been adopted by Imām Ibn Taimiyyah. The source of his this opinion is that Abū aṣ-Ṣahbā' asked Ibn 'Abbās: "Don't you know that in the lifetime of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) and Ḥadrat Abū Bakr and in the early period of Ḥadrat 'Umar a triple divorce was considered a single divorce? He replied: Yes." (Bukhārī, Muslim). And in Muslim, Abū Da'ūd and Musnad Aḥmad, Ibn Abbās's this statement has been cited: "In the lifetime of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and Ḥadrat Abū Bakr and during the first two years of the caliphate of Ḥadrat 'Umar a triple

divorce was considered a single divorce. Then Hadrat 'Umar expressed the view: As the people have started acting hastily in a matter in which they had been advised to act judiciously and prudently, why should we not enforce this practice? So, he enforced it."

But this view is not acceptable for several reasons. In the first place, according to several traditions Ibn 'Abbās's own ruling was against it, as we have explained above. Secondly, it is contrary to those *Aḥadīth* also, which have been reported from the Holy Prophet upon whom be peace) and the major Companions, in which the ruling given about the pronounce of a threefold divorce at one time is that all his three dovorces become effective. These *Ahadīth* also have been cited above. Thirdly, from Ibn 'Abbās's own tradition itself it becomes evident that Ḥadrat 'Umar had publicly enforced the triple divorce in the assembly of the Companions, but neither then nor after it the Companions ever expressed any difference of opinion. Now, can it be conceived that Hadrat 'Umar could decide an issue against the *Sunnah?* And could the Companions also accept his decision without protest? Furthermore, in the story concerning Rukānah bin 'Abd-i Yazīb, a tradition has been related by Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah, Imām Shāfe'ī, Dārimī and Ḥākim, saying that when Rukānah pronounced three divorces on his wife in one and the same sitting, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) asked him to state on oath whether his intention was to pronounce one divorce only, (That is, the two subsequent divorces were pronounced only to lay emphasis on the first divorce; the triple divorce was not intended to create separation permanently). And when he stated this on oath, the Holy Prophet gave him the right to take his wife back. 'This brings out the truth of the matter as to what kind of divorces were considered a single divorce in the earliest period of Islam. On this very basis, the interpreters of the *Hadīth* have explained the tradition of Ibn 'Abbās thus: As in the early period of Islam deceit and fraud in religious matters was almost unknown among the people, the statement of the pronouncer of a triple divorce was admitted that his real intention was to pronounce only a single divorce, and the two subsequent divorces had been pronounced only for the sake of emphasis. But when Ḥadrat 'Umar saw that the people first pronounced three divorces in haste and then presented the excuse of pronouncing them only for the sake of emphasis, he refused to accept this excuse. Imām Nawawī and Imām Subkī regard this as the best interpretation of the tradition from Ibn 'Abbās, Finally, there is disagreement in the traditions of Abū as-Sahbā' himself, which he has related concerning the saying of Ibn 'Abbās. Muslim, Abū Da'ūd and Nasā'ī have related from this same Abu as-Sahbā' another tradition, saying that on an enquiry by him, Ibn 'Abbās said: ' When a person pronounced a threefold divorce on his wife before consummation of marriage, it was considered a single divorce in the lifetime of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and Ḥadrat Abū Bakr

and in the early period of Hadrat 'Umar." Thus, one and the same reporter has reported from Ibn 'Abbās traditions containing two divergent themes and this diversity weakens both the traditions.

(3) As the Holy Prophet had commanded the pronouncer of the divorce during menstruation to take his wife back, the dispute has arisen among the jurists as to what is the exact sense of this command Imāmu Abū Ḥanīfah, Imām Shāfe'ī, Imām Aḥmad, Imām Auzā'ī, Ibn Abī Laila, Isḥāq bin Rāhawaih and Abū Thaur say that such a peson would be commanded to take his wife back, but would not be compelled to do so. (*'Umdat* al-Qārī). The Ḥanafī viewpoint as stated in *Hedāyah* is that in this case taking the wife back is not only preferable but also obligatory. In *Mughnī al-Muhtāj'* the Shāfe'ī viewpoint has been stated to be that the approved (i.e. One according to *Sunnah)* method for the one who has pronounced divorces during menstruation, but has not pronounced a triple divorce, is that he should take his wife back, and should refrain from pronouncing divorce in the following period of purity, but should pronounce it, if he so likes, in the period of purity when the wife has become free from her next menstrual course and attained purity, so that his revocation of the divorce pronounced during menstruation is not taken in jest. The Ḥanbalī viewpoint as presented in *Al-Insāf* is that in this state it is preferable for the pronounce of divorce to take his wife back. But Imām Mālik and his companions say that pronouncement of divorce during menstruation is a cognizable offence. Whether the woman makes a demand or not, it is in any case the duty of the ruler that if such an act of some one is brought to his notice, he must compel the person to take his wife back and should continue to press him till the end of the waiting-period; and if he refuses to take her back, he should imprison him; if he still refuses, he should beat him; and if he still does not accede, the ruler should give his own decision, saying: "I return your wife to you." And the ruler's this decision would be effective after which it would be lawful for the man to have sexual intercourse with the woman, whether he intends to take her back or not, for the ruler's intention represents his intention. *(Ḥāshīyah ad-Dusūqī).* The Mālikīs also say that if the person, who has taken his wife back willingly or unwillingly, after divorcing her during menstruation, has made up his mind to repudiate her, the preferable method for him is that he should refrain from divorcing her in the period of purity following the menstruation during which he divorced her, but should divorce her in the period of purity following the next menstruation. The prohibition to pronounce divorce in the period of purity following the menstruation in which divorce was pronounced, has been enjoined so that the return of the pronouncer during menstruation does not remain merely oral, but he should have sexual intercourse with the woman during the

period of purity. Then, since the pronouncement of divorce in the period of purity in which sexual intercourse has taken place is prohibited, the right time for pronouncing it is the following period of purity only. *(Ḥāshiyah ad-Dusūqī).*

(4) As to the question: Till when has the pronouncer of one revocable divorce the power to take his wife back? difference of opinion has arisen among the jurists, and this difference has occurred on the question: What do the words *thalāthata qurū'-in* or Al-Baqarah: 228 imply: three menstruation or three periods of purity? According to Imām Shāfe'ī and Mālik, *qurū'* implies a period of purity, and this view is held on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, Ibn 'Umar and Zaid bin Thābit (may Allah be pleased with them). The Ḥanafī viewpoint is that *qurū'* implies menstruation and the same is the authentic viewpoint of Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal too. This view is based on the authority of all the four rightly-guided Caliphs, Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, 'Abdullāh bin 'Abbās, Ubayy bin Ka'b, Mu'ādh bin Jabal, Abū ad-Dardā', 'Ubādah bin aṣ-Ṣāmit and Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī (may Allah be pleased with them). Imām Muḥammad in his Mu'waṭṭā has cited a saying of Sha'bī, saying that he met thirteen of the Holy Prophet's Companions and they all held this same opinion, and this very view was adopted by many of the immediate followers of the Companions also.

On account of this difference of opinion, according to the Shāfe'īs and the Mālikis, the waiting-period of the woman comes to an end as soon as she enters the third menstruation, and the man's power to take her back is terminated. And if the divorce has been pronounced during menstruation, this menstruation will not be counted towards the waiting-period but the waiting-period will come to an end as soon as the woman enters the fourth menstruation. *(Mughnī al-Muḥtāj; Ḥāshiyah ad-Dusūqī).* The Ḥanafī viewpoint is that if the menstrual discharge in the third menstruation stops after ten days, the waiting-period of the woman will come to an end with it whether she takes purification bath or not; and if the discharge ceases within less than ten days, the waiting-period will not come to an end until the woman has taken her purification bath, or until a Prayer time has passed. In case water is not available, according to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and Imām Abū Yūsuf, the man's right to return to her will be terminated, when she has performed her Prayer with *tayammum* (purification with dust), and, according to Imām Muḥammad, as soon as she has performed *tayammum* itself. *(Hedāyah).* Imām Aḥmad's authentic viewpoint which is held by the majority of the Ḥanbalīs is that as long as the woman does not have her purification bath after the third menstruation, the man's right to return to her will remain. *(Al-Inṣāf).*

(5) As for the question that is the method of taking the wife back? the jurists are agreed that the person, who has pronounced a revocable divorce on

his wife, can return to her whenever he likes before the expiration of the waiting-period, whether the woman is desirous of this or not, for the Qur'ān says: "Their husbands are best entitled to take them back as their wives during this waiting-period." (Al-Baqarah: 228). From this it can automatically be concluded that until the expiry of the waiting-period, the marriage tie remains intact and the husbands can take them back before they are separated absolutely and finally. In other words, taking the wife back does not mean renewal of marriage for which the woman's consent may be necessary. After being unanimous so far, the jurists about different opinions about the method of taking the wife back.

According to the Shāfe'īs, return can take place only by the oral word, not by conduct. If the husband does not say with the tongue that he has taken the wife back, no act of intercourse or intimacy even if performed with the intention of resuming marital relationship, will be considered resumption of the relationship. Rather in this case seeking of every kind of enjoyment from the woman is unlawful even if it is without lust. But there is no bar on having sexual intercourse with the woman, who has been divorced revocably, for the scholars are not agreed on its being unlawful. However, the one who believes in its being unlawful will be punishable. Furthermore, according to the Shāfe'ī viewpoint, it is in any case incumbent to pay a proper or customary dower *(mahr Mithal)* in case the husband has intercourse with the wife whom he had divorced revocable, whether after it he takes her back orally or not. *(Mughnī al Muḥtāj).*

The Mālikis say that return can be effected both orally and by conduct. If for the purpose of resumption by word of mouth the husband uses express words, the resumption will take place whether he intended it or not; even if he uttered express words of resumption in jest, these words would amount to return and resumption. But if the words are not express, they would be considered resumption of relationship only in case they were pronounced with the intention of resumption. As for resumption by conduct, no act whether it is an act of intimacy or sexual intercourse, can be considered resumption as long as it has not been performed with the intention of the resumption of marital relation. *(Ḥāshiyah ad-Dusūqī;* Ibn 'Arabi, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān).*

As for resumption of relationship by the word of mouth, the Hanafī and the Ḥanbali viewpoint is the same as the Mālikī. As for resumption by conduct, the ruling of both the Schools, contrary to the Mālikīs, is that if the husband performs sexual intercourse with the woman whom he has divorced revocable within the waiting-period, it would by itself amount to resumption whether there was the intention of resumption or not. However, the difference between the viewpoints of the two Schools is that according to the Ḥanafīs every act of intimacy amounts to resumption even if it is of a lesser degree than sexual

intercourse; whereas the Ḥanbalīs do not regard a mere act of intimacy as resumption of marital relationship. *(Hedāyah, Fatḥ al-Qadīr, 'Umdat al-Qārī, Al-Inṣāf).*

(6) As for the consequences of *ṭalāq as-Sunnah* (regular form of divorce according to the *Sunnah)* and *ṭalāq al-bid'i* (irregular form of divorce) the difference is this: In case one or two divorces have been pronounced, the divorced woman and her former husband can re-marry by mutual consent even if the waiting-period has expired. But if a man has pronounced three divorces, resumption of marital relation is neither possible within the waiting-period, nor after the expiry of the waiting period, unless, however, the woman marries another person, the marriage is duly contracted and consummated, and then either the second husband divorces her or dies; then if the woman and her former husband wish to re-marry by mutual consent, they can do so. In most collections of the *Aḥadīth* a tradition has been reported on sound authority, saying that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) was asked: "A man pronounced three divorces on his wife, then the woman married another man and the two had privacy but there was no intercourse; then he divorced her. Now, can this woman re-marry her former husband? The Holy Prophet replied: "No, unless her second husband has enjoyed her just as her first husband had enjoyed her." As for the pre-arranged marriage *(taḥlīl)* which is meant to legalise the woman for her former husband, so that she would marry another man, who would divorce her after having had sexual intercourse with her, this is invalid according to Imām Abū Yūsuf, and according to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, the woman would become lawful for her former husband by this ceremony, but such a thing is reprehensible to the extent of being unlawful. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd has reported that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) said: "Allah has cursed both the legaliser *(MuḥalliI)* and the one for whom legalisation is performed *(muḥalliI lahū)."* (Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī) Ḥaḍrat 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir says that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) asked his Companions: "Should I not tell you as to who is a hired bull?" The Companions said that he should. He said: "It is he who performs *tahlil* (legalisation of marriage). Allah's curse falls both on the *muḥalliI* (legaliser) and on the *muhallal lahū (*the one for whose sake marriage is legalised)." (Ibn Mājah, Dāraquṭnī).

2. This Command is addressed to the men as well as the women and the people of their families. It means: "Do not treat divorce lightly; it is a grave matter, which gives birth to many legal questions for the man, the woman, their children and the people of their house Therefore, when divorce is pronounced, its time and date should be remembered and also the state in which divorce was

pronounced on the woman; one should keep an accurate account of when the waiting-period started, and when it would expire. On this reckoning will depend the determination of the following questions: Till when has the husband the power to take the wife back? Till when has he to keep her in the house? Till when is he bound to maintain her? Till when will he inherit the woman ant the woman him? When will the woman be separated from him finally and obtain the right to re-marry? And if this matter takes the shape of a law-suit, the court also in order to arrive at the correct decision, will need to know the correct date and time of pronouncing the divorce and the woman's state at the time, for without this information, it cannot give the right decision on the questions arising from the divorce in respect of the women who have been enjoyed, or not, pregnant, or not, who menstruate, or no longer menstruate, and who have been divorced revocably or irrevocably.

3. That is, " Neither should the man turn out the woman *in* anger, nor the woman herself should leave the house in anger and haste. The house is hers during the waiting-period, and both the man and the wife should live together so that advantage may be taken if there is any chance of reconciliation. If the divorce is revocable, the husband may at any time be inclined towards the wife, and the wife also may try to win the husband's pleasure by removing the causes of dispute and difference. If both stay together in the same house, there may appear many an occasion for reconciliation during the three months,, or the three menstrual periods, or till child-birth in case of pregnancy. But if the man turns her out in angry haste, or the woman returns to her parents imprudently, chances of reconcilment diminish, and the divorce generally leads to permanent separation. That is why the jurists have even suggested that in case of a revocable divorce the woman should during her waiting-period adorn herself so as to attract the husband. *(Hedāyah; Al-Insāf).*

The jurists are agreed that the revocably divorced woman has a right to lodging and maintenance during the waiting-period, and it is not lawful for the woman to leave the house without the husband's permission, nor is it lawful for the husband to turn her out of the house. If the husband turns her out he will be guilty of an act of sin and if the woman leaves of her own accord, she will not only commit a sin but will also forfeit her right to lodging and maintenance.

4. Several meanings of this have been given by different jurists. Ḥadrat Ḥasan Baṣrī, 'Āmir Sha'bī, Zaid bin Aslam, Dahhāk, Mujāhid, 'Ikrimah, Ibn Zaid, Ḥammād and Laith say that it implies adultery. Ibn 'Abbās says that it implies abusive language that the woman may continue to use against the husband and the people of his house even after the divorce, during the waiting-period. Qatādah says that it implies the woman's disobedient to her husband; that is, if the wife has been divorced because of her disobedience she may continue to be

disobedience to her husband even during the waiting-period. 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, Suddī, Ibn as-Sā'ib and Ibrāhīm Nakha'ī say that this implies the woman's leaving the house of herself. That is, in their opinion the woman's leaving the house in the waiting-period by itself amounts to committing an open indecency, and the command: "Nor should they themselves leave the house except in case they commit an open indecency," is an admonition of this nature: "Do not abuse others except in case you wish to be known as a discourteous person." According to the first three of these four viewpoints, "except in case" is related with "Do not turn them out of their houses," and the sentence means that if they are guilty of immorality or of using invectives or of disobedience, it would be lawful to turn them out of the houses, and according to the fourth view, it is related with "nor should they themselves leave their houses," and it means that if they leave their houses they would be guilty of open indecency.

5. Both these sentences refute the viewpoint of those who hold that divorce does not take place at all if it is pronounced during menstruation or thrice at once, and also the view of those who think that a triple divorce amounts to a single divorce. The question arises, If an irregular *(bid'ī)* divorce does not take place, or a triple divorce amounts to a single revocable divorce, what then is the need of saying: "Whoever transgresses the bounds set by Allah (i.e. the method taught by the *Sunnah)*, would wrong his own self; and you do not know Allah may after this bring about a situation of reconciliation?" These two things would be meaningful only in case pronouncement of divorce against the method taught by the *Sunnah* should be harmful for which one may have to regret later, and the pronouncement of a triple divorce at once may not leave any room for reconciliation; otherwise, obviously by pronouncing a divorce which does not take effect at all one does not transgress the bounds set by Allah, which may be regarded as wronging one's own self, and after a divorce which is in any case only revocable there does remain room for reconciliation; thus, there would be no need to say: "Allah may after this bring about a situation of re-conciliation."

Here, one should again understand well the mutual relationship between vv. 228-230 of Al-Baqarah and these verses of Sūrah At-Ṭalāq. In Sūrah Al-Baqarah the number of divorces laid down is three of which after pronouncing the first two one retains the right to take one's wife back and the right to re-marry her in case the waiting-period has expired, without resort to legalisation *(tahlīl)*, and if divorce is pronounced for the third time, the husband forfeits both these rights. These verses of Sūrah At-Ṭalāq were not sent down to amend or cancel this rule but to teach the people how to use wisely the powers that they have been given to divorce their wives, which if used rightly could save homes from ruin, could protect the husband from remorse if he had pronounced a divorce, could provide him maximum opportunities for reconciliation, and even if separation had taken

place, could show him a way to reunite in marriage as a last resort if the couple so desired. But if a person happens to use these powers unwisely, in a wrong way, he could only be wronging his own self and wasting all opportunities for making amends. It is just like a father's giving three hundred rupees in his son's possession and telling him to spend the amount as he may like; then advising him to the effect; "Spend the money given to you carefully, at the right place, and piece meal, so that you may benefit by it fully; otherwise if you expend it unwisely and carelessly in wrong places, or expend the whole of it at once, you will incur losses, and then I would not give you any more." This advice would be meaningless if the father did not give the amount in the son's possession at all, so that if he had wanted to spend it in a wrong place, he should be powerless to spend it, or if he had wanted to spend the whole amount, he could only take out a part of it while the rest lay safe with him in any case. If the condition be such, there could obviously be no need for this kind of advice.

6. That is, "In case you have pronounced one or two revocable divorces, you should take a decision before the expiry of the waiting-period whether you would keep the wife in wedlock or send her away. If you decide to keep her, then you should keep her with honour and dignity and not with a view to tormenting and harassing her and getting another opportunity to prolong her waiting-period by divorcing her once again; and if you decide to part with her, then you should part with her gracefully, without indulging in any quarrel or vilification; if you still owe her the dower, or a part of it, pay it off, and give her something in addition also at her departure according to your means, as has been enjoined in Al-Baqarah: 241. (For further explanation, see E.N. 86 of Al-Aḥzāb).

7. Ibn 'Abbās says that this implies calling to witness two men both at divorce and at reconciliation. (Ibn Jarīr). Ḥaḍrat 'Imrān bin Ḥuṣain was asked: "A man divorced his wife and then took her back, but he neither called anybody to witness pronouncement of the divorce nor resumption of the relation." He replied: "You pronounced the divorce against the *Sunnah* and you took your wife back against the *Sunnah*. You should call to witness men both at divorce and at resumption *of* relation, and you should not commit this mistake again." (Abū Da'ud, Ibn Mājah). But the four Sunnī Imāms are agreed that to call men to witness the divorce and the resumption and separation is no condition for these acts to be valid, so that if there was no witness, neither divorce should take place nor resumption should be valid nor separation. But this condition has been enjoined so that the parties may not deny any of the facts later and in case there was a dispute the matter might be settled easily and any suspicions and doubts might also be removed. This Command is just like the Command: "Have witnesses in case of commercial transactions." (Al-Baqarah: 282). This does not mean that it is obligatory to have witnesses at business transations, and if there

was no witness, the transaction would be invalid; but this is a wise instruction which has been given to prevent disputes and it is good to follow it. Likewise, in the case of divorce and resumption also although a person's act and conduct would be legally valid even without the witnesses, yet caution demands that whatever is done, it should be witnessed, simultaneously or later, by two just men.

8. These words clearly show that the instructions given above are in the nature of advice and not law. If a man pronounces divorce against the approved method as explained above, or fails to reckon the waiting-period accurately, or expels the wife from the house without a good reason, or returns to her at the end of the waiting-period only to harass her, or sends her away after a quarrel, or fails to call the men to witness the divorce, reconciliation, or separation, it will not affect the legal effects of divorce or reconciliation or separation at all. However, his acting against Allah's advice would be a proof that his heart was devoid of the true faith in Allah and the Last Day. That is why he adopted a course which a true believer would never adopt.

9. The context itself shows that here "fearing Allah in whatever one does" means to pronounce divorce in accordance with the approved method taught by the *Sunnah*, to reckon the waiting-period accurately, to avoid turning the wife out of the house, to take the wife back if one decides to keep her, at the expiry of the waiting-period with the intention of keeping her equitably and to send her away in a fair manner if one decides to part with her, and to call two just men to witness the divorce, reconciliation or separation, as the case be. In respect of this, Allah says that whoever acts in fear of Him, He will open for him a way out of the difficulties. This automatically gives the meaning that whoever does not fear Allah in these matters, will create for himself such complications and difficulties from which he will find no way out.

A study of these words clearly shows that the view of those who hold that the irregular *(bid'i)* form of divorce does not take place at all, and of those who regard a triple divorce pronounced at once or during the same period of purity as a single divorce, is not correct. For if an irregular form of divorce does not take place at all, it does not create any complication from which one may have to find a way out; and if only a single divorce takes place when one has pronounced three divorces at once, then also there arises no need for a person to seek a way out of a difficulty or complication.

10. It means: "Keeping the divorced wife in the house during the waiting-period, to maintain her and to pay her the dower, or something in addition, at departure certainly burdens a man financially. To spend on a woman whom one

[Contd. on p.618

مِنَ الْمَحِيْضِ مِنْ نِّسَآئِكُمْ اِنِ ارْتَبْتُمْ فَعِدَّتُهُنَّ ثَلٰثَةُ اَشْهُرٍ ۙ وَّالّٰٓئِيْ لَمْ
يَحِضْنَ ۭ وَاُولَاتُ الْاَحْمَالِ اَجَلُهُنَّ اَنْ يَّضَعْنَ حَمْلَهُنَّ ۭ وَمَنْ يَّتَّقِ اللّٰهَ
يَجْعَلْ لَّهٗ مِنْ اَمْرِهٖ يُسْرًا ۝ ذٰلِكَ اَمْرُ اللّٰهِ اَنْزَلَهٗٓ اِلَيْكُمْ ۭ وَمَنْ يَّتَّقِ اللّٰهَ
يُكَفِّرْ عَنْهُ سَيِّاٰتِهٖ وَيُعْظِمْ لَهٗٓ اَجْرًا ۝ اَسْكِنُوْهُنَّ مِنْ حَيْثُ سَكَنْتُمْ مِّنْ
وُّجْدِكُمْ وَلَا تُضَاۗرُّوْهُنَّ لِتُضَيِّقُوْا عَلَيْهِنَّ ۭ وَاِنْ كُنَّ اُولَاتِ حَمْلٍ فَاَنْفِقُوْا
عَلَيْهِنَّ حَتّٰى يَضَعْنَ حَمْلَهُنَّ ۚ فَاِنْ اَرْضَعْنَ لَكُمْ فَاٰتُوْهُنَّ اُجُوْرَهُنَّ ۚ وَاْتَمِرُوْا
بَيْنَكُمْ بِمَعْرُوْفٍ ۚ وَاِنْ تَعَاسَرْتُمْ فَسَتُرْضِعُ لَهٗٓ اُخْرٰى ۝ لِيُنْفِقْ ذُوْ سَعَةٍ مِّنْ
سَعَتِهٖ ۭ وَمَنْ قُدِرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقُهٗ فَلْيُنْفِقْ مِمَّآ اٰتٰىهُ اللّٰهُ ۭ لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللّٰهُ نَفْسًا
اِلَّا مَآ اٰتٰىهَا ۭ سَيَجْعَلُ اللّٰهُ بَعْدَ عُسْرٍ يُّسْرًا ۝ وَكَاَيِّنْ مِّنْ قَرْيَةٍ عَتَتْ
عَنْ اَمْرِ رَبِّهَا وَرُسُلِهٖ فَحَاسَبْنٰهَا حِسَابًا شَدِيْدًا ۙ وَّعَذَّبْنٰهَا عَذَابًا نُّكْرًا ۝ فَذَاقَتْ
وَبَالَ اَمْرِهَا وَكَانَ عَاقِبَةُ اَمْرِهَا خُسْرًا ۝ اَعَدَّ اللّٰهُ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيْدًا ۙ فَاتَّقُوا
اللّٰهَ يٰٓاُولِي الْاَلْبَابِ ۚ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا ۚ قَدْ اَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ اِلَيْكُمْ ذِكْرًا ۝ رَّسُوْلًا يَّتْلُوْا
عَلَيْكُمْ اٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ مُبَيِّنٰتٍ لِّيُخْرِجَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ مِنَ الظُّلُمٰتِ
اِلَى النُّوْرِ ۭ وَمَنْ يُّؤْمِنْۢ بِاللّٰهِ وَيَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا يُّدْخِلْهُ جَنّٰتٍ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ
تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَآ اَبَدًا ۭ قَدْ اَحْسَنَ اللّٰهُ لَهٗ رِزْقًا ۝ اَللّٰهُ الَّذِيْ
خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمٰوٰتٍ وَّمِنَ الْاَرْضِ مِثْلَهُنَّ ۭ يَتَنَزَّلُ الْاَمْرُ بَيْنَهُنَّ لِتَعْلَمُوْٓا
اَنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلٰي كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ۙ وَّاَنَّ اللّٰهَ قَدْ اَحَاطَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا ۝

And if you are in doubt about those of your women who have despaired of menstruation, (you should know that) their waiting-period is three months,[12] and the same applies to those who have not menstruated as yet.[13] As for the pregnant women, their period ends when they deliver their burden.[14] Whoever fears Allah, He makes his course easy for him. This is Allah's Command which He has sent down to you. Whoever fears Allah, Allah will remove his evils from him and will enhance his reward.[15] 4-5

Lodge them (in the waiting-period) where you yourselves live, according to your means, and do not harass, them so as to straiten them.[16] 6

And if they are pregnant, spend on them until they deliver their burden.[17] Then if they suckle (the child) for you, give them their wages, and settle the question of wages) fairly by mutual consultation.[18] But if you created difficulties for each other (concerning the question of wages). then another woman would suckle the child.[19] Let the rich man spend according to his means and let the one whose means are restricted, spend out of what Allah has given him. Allah does not burden anyone with more than what He has given him. It may u-ell be that Allah brings about ease after hardship. 6-7

Many a settlement[20] has rebelled against the commandments of its Lord and His Messengers, and We called it to stern account and punished it severely. They tasted the evil results of their misdeeds and consequently they have nothing but loss in store for them. Allah has prepared from them a severe torment (in the Hereafter). So fear Allah. O you men of understanding, who have believed. Allah has sent down to you an Admonition, a Messenger [21] who recites to you Allah's Revelations containing clear guidance, so that he may bring those who have believed and done good deeds out of darknesses into light.[22] Whoever believes in Allah and does good deeds, Allah shall admit him into Gardens underneath which conals will be flowing. They shall live therein for ever. Allah has prepared for such a one an excellent provision. 8-11

Allah is He Who created seven heavens and of the earth also their like.[23] His Command descends among them. (This you are being told) so that you may know that Allah has power over everything, and 12

that Allah's knowledge encompasses all.

Contd. from p.615]

has already decided to send away because of strained relations will surely be irksome, and if the man is also poor, this expenditure will further pinch him. But a man who fears Allah, should endure all this gracefully. Allah is not niggardly as the people are. If a person spends his wealth *in* accordance with His law, He will provide for him in a manner beyond all expectations."

11. That is, there is no power that can prevent Allah's decree from enforcement.

12. This is in respect of the women who no longer menstruate and have reached menopause because of age. Their waiting-period will be reckoned from the day divorce was pronounced on them and three months imply three lunar months. If divorce was pronounced at the commencement of the lunar month, it is agreed that the waiting-period will be reckoned with regard to the sighting of the new moon; and if it was pronounced somewhere in the middle of the month, according to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, three months will have to be completed reckoning each month of 30 days. *(Badā'i' aṣ-Ṣanā'i').*

As for the women whose courses are irregular due to some reason, the jurists have held different opinions:

Ḥaḍrat Sa'id bin al-Musayyab says that Ḥaḍrat 'Umar ruled: "If the woman who has been divorced stops having menses after having them once or twice after the divorce, she will wait for 9 months. If signs of pregnancy appear, well and good, otherwise after the passage of 9 months, she should observe the waiting-period of three additional months. Then she would be lawful for marriage to another person.

Ibn 'Abbās, Qatādah and 'Ikrimah say that the waiting period of the woman who has not menstruated for a year, is three months.

Ṭā'ūs says that the waiting-period of the woman who menstruates once in a year, is three mensturations. This very opinion has been reported from Ḥaḍrat 'Uthman, Ḥaḍrat 'Alī and Ḥaḍrat Zaid bin Thābit.

Imām Mālik relates that a person Ḥabbān by name divorced his wife during the period when she was suckling her child. A year passed on it, but she did not have the menses. Then the man died. The divorced wife laid claim to inheritance. The case came before Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān. He consulted with Ḥaḍrat 'Alī and Ḥaḍrat Zaid bin Thābit, and gave the decision that the woman was an heiress. The argument given was that the woman was neither of those women a who might have despaired of menstruation, nor of those girls who may not have

menstruated yet: therefore, up till the husband's death she was on the menses she had discharged last, and had still to pass her waiting-period.

The Ḥanafīs say that the waiting-period of the woman, who no longer menstruates, which may not be on account of menopause so that there may be no hope of her having it later will either be reckoned from the menstruation if she has it in the future, or in accordance with the age at which women generally reach menopause, and after attaining that age she will pass three months of the waiting-period in order to be released from the marriage bond. The same opinion is held by Imām Shāfe'ī. Imām Thauri and Imām Laith, and the same also is the view of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān and Ḥaḍrat Zaid bin Thābit.

Imām Mālik has adopted the view of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar and Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās and it is this: The woman will first pass nine months. If she does not have her menses during thin period, she will pass three months of the waiting-period like like the woman who has despaired of menstruation. Ibn al-Qāsim explaining the viewpoint of Imām Mālik says: The period of nine months will be reckoned from the day she became free from the previous menstrual discharge and not from the day divorce *was* pronounced on her. (All these have been taken from al-Jaṣṣās, Aḥkām al-Qur'ān and al-Kasānī, Badā'i as-Sanā'i).

Imām Ahmad bin Hanbal says that if the woman whose waiting-period started from menstruation despairs of menstruation during the waiting-period, she will be required to pass the waiting-period of the menopausal woman and not of the women who menstruate regularly. And if she stops menstruating and the cause of the cessation is unknown, she will first pass nine months in the doubt of pregnancy, and then will have to complete three months of the waiting-period. And if the cause of the cessation of the menses becomes known, e.g. a disease, or suckling, or some other cause, she will lie in the waiting-period till the time that either she starts having the menses again so that the waiting-period may be reckoned in accordance with the courses, or she reaches menopause and may pass the waiting-period of the menopausal woman. (Al-Inṣāf).

13. They may not have menstruated as yet either because of young age, or delayed menstrual discharge as it happens in the case of some women, or because of no discharge at all throughout life which, though rare, may also be the case. In any case, the waiting-period of such a woman is the same as of the woman, who has stopped menstruation, that is three months from the time divorce was pronounced.

Here, one should bear in mind the fact that according to the explanations given in the Qur'ān the question of the waiting period arises in respect of the women with whom marriage may have been consummated, for there is no waiting-period in case divorce is pronounced before the consummation of

marriage. (Al-Aḥzāb: 49). Therefore, making mention of the waiting-period for the girls who have not yet menstruated, clearly proves that it is not only permissible to give away the girl in marriage at this age but it is also permissible for the husband to consummate marriage with her. Now, obviously no Muslim has the right to forbid a thing which the Qur'ān has held as permissible.

The girl who is divorced in the state when she has not yet menstruated and then she starts having the menses during the waiting-period, will reckon her waiting-period from the same menstruation, and her waiting-period will be reckoned just like the woman who menstruates regularly

14. The consensus of scholarly opinion is that the waiting-period of the pregnant divorced woman is till child birth. But a difference of opinion has occurred about whether the same also applies to the woman whose husband may die during her pregnancy. The dispute has arisen because in Al-Baqarah: 234 the waiting-period of the woman whose husband dies has been laid down as four months and ten days, and there is no mention whatever whether this injunction applies to all widows generally or only to those who are not pregnant,

Ḥaḍrat 'Alī and Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, reading both these verses together, have drawn the rule that the waiting-period of the pregnant divorced woman is till child-birth, but that of the pregnant widow is the longer of the two periods, whether it be of the divorced woman or of the pregnant woman. For example, if delivery takes place before four months and ten days, she will have to observe a waiting period of four months and ten days, and if it does not take place till then, her waiting period will come to an end at delivery. The same is the viewpoint of the Imāmiah sect of the Shī'as.

Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd says that this verse of Sūrah At-Talāq was sent down after the verse of Sūrah Al-Baqarah; therefore, the later injunction has made the earlier injunction particularly applicable to the non pregnant widow, and has laid down the waiting-period of every pregnant woman as till child birth, whether she is divorced or widowed, Accordingly, whether delivery takes place immediately after the husband's death, or takes longer than four months and ten days, the woman's waiting-period in any case will come to an end at the birth of the child. This view is supported by this tradition of Ḥaḍrat Ubayy bin Ka'b. He says, "When this verse of Sūrah At Ṭalāq came down, I asked the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah 's peace): Is it both for the divorced woman and for the widow?" The Holy Prophet replied: "Yes." In another tradition the Holy Prophet further explained it thus: "The waiting-period of every pregnant woman is till child-birth." (Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abū Ḥātim. Ibn Ḥajar says that although its reliability is questionable, yet as it has been related through several chains of transmitters, one has to admit that it has some basis). More than that, it is further confirmed by

the incident concerning Subai'ah-i'Aslamiyyah, which occurred in the sacred time of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) himself. She became a widow during her pregnancy and a few days after her husband's death (according to some traditions 20 days, according to others 23 days, 25 days, 40 days or 35 days) she delivered her burden. The Holy Prophet was asked for his ruling concerning her and he permitted her to re-marry. This incident has been related by Bukhārī and Muslim in different ways on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Umm Salamah. This same incident has been related by Bukhārī Muslim, Imām Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'ī and Ibn Mājah with different chains of transmitters on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Miswar bin Makhramah also. Muslim has cited this statement of Subai'ah-i Aslamiyyah herself: "I was the wife of Hadrat Sa'd bin Khawalah. He died during the Farewell Pilgrimage when I was pregnant. A few days after his death I gave birth to a child. A man told me that I could not remarry before the expiry of four months and ten days. I went and asked the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) and he gave the verdict: 'You have become lawful as soon as you gave birth to the child: you can re-marry if you so like'." This tradition has been related briefly by Bukhārī also.

This same viewpoint has been reported from a large number of the Companions. Imām Mālik, Imām Shāfe'ī, 'Abdur Razzāq, Ibn Abī Shaibah and Ibn al-Mundhir have related that when Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar was asked concerning the pregnant widow, he replied that her waiting-period is till child-birth. At this a man from among the Anṣār confirmed, saying: "Ḥaḍrat 'Umar had said that even if the deceased husband had not yet been buried, and his body still lay on bed in the house and his wife gave birth to a child, she would become pure and lawful for remarriage." The same opinion was held by Hadrat Abū Hurairah, Ḥadrat Abū Manṣūr Badrī and Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, and the same has been adopted by the four Sunnī Imāms and the other early jurists.

The Shāfe'īs say that if the pregnant woman has more children than one in her womb, her waiting-period will come to an end at the birth of the last child; even if it is still born, the waiting-period will expire at its birth. In case of abortion, if the mid-wives, on the basis of their knowledge and experience, state that it was not merely a piece of flesh but had human form, or that it was not a tumour but a human embryo, their statement will be admitted and the waiting period will expire. *(Mughnī, al-Muḥtāj).* The viewpoint of the Ḥanbalīs and the Ḥanafis is also very close to it. But in case of abortion, their viewpoint is that unless the human form is clearly visible, the mid-wives' statement that it is human embryo, will not be admitted and this will not bring the waiting-period to an end. *(Badā'iṣ-Ṣanā'i; Al-Inṣāf).* But in the modern times by means of medical investigation it can be easily ascertained whether what has been expelled from the womb was actually something of the nature of human foetus or a kind of tumour

or congealed blood. Therefore, whenever it is possible to obtain expert medical opinion, it can be easily decided whether what is described as abortion, was really abortion or not, and whether it has brought the waiting-period to an end or not. However, in cases where such medical investigation is not possinble, the viewpoint of the Ḥanbalīs and the Ḥanafīs itself is preferable and it is not fit to rely on the ignorant mid-wives.

15. Although this is a general exhortation which applies to all matters and conditions of human life, yet in this particular context the object is to warn the Muslims to follow the Commands mentioned above in fear of God, no matter what responsibilities they may have to shoulder in consequence thereof, for as a reward for this Allah will remove their ills and will forgive their sins and will enhance their rewards in the Hereafter. Obviously, the waiting-period of the divorced woman whose term has been prescribed as three months, will be longer than that of the woman whose term has been appointed as three menstruations, and the term of the pregnant woman may be several months longer. To shoulder the responsibility of the maintenance and lodging of the woman whom a man may have decided to give up, during this whole period, will be an unbearable burden for the people, but Allah's promise is that He will lighten the burden that is borne in fear of Him and in following His Command, by His special bounty and grace, and will reward the person much more generously and richly in comparison to the small burden borne by him in the world.

16. The jurists are agreed that if the woman has been divorced revocable, the husband is responsible for her lodging and maintenance; they are also agreed that if the woman is pregnant, the husband will bear the responsibility of her lodging and maintenance till child-birth whether she has been divorced revocable or irrevocably. However, the difference of opinion has arisen about whether the non-pregnant woman who has been divorced irrevocably is entitled to both lodging and maintenance, or only to lodging, or to neither.

One group says that she is entitled to both lodging and maintenance. This is the opinion of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Ḥaḍrat 'Ali bin Husain (Imām Zain al-'Ābidīn), Qādī Shuraih and Ibrāhīm Nakha'ī. The same has been adopted by the Ḥanafīs, and the same also is the viewpoint of Imām Sufyān Thaurī and Ḥasan bin Sāleh. This is supported by the *Ḥadīth* of Dāraqutnī in which Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Jābir reports that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said: "The woman who has been divorced thrice has a right to lodging and maintenance during the waiting-period." This is further supported by those traditions in which it has been reported that Ḥaḍrat 'Umar had rejected the *Ḥadīth* of Fāṭimah bint-Qais, saying: We cannot abandon the Book of Allah and the *Sunnah* of our Prophet on the word of a woman." This shows that the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) in the knowledge of Ḥaḍrat

'Umar must be that such a woman is entitled to both maintenance and lodging. Furthermore, in a tradition from Ibrāhīm Nakha'ī there is the explanation that Ḥaḍrat 'Umar rejecting the *Ḥadīth* of Fātimah bint-Qais, had said: "I have heard the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) say that such a woman has a right to lodging as well as to maintenance." The first argument that Imām Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣāṣ has given in his discussion of this question in his *Aḥkāmu al-Qur'ān* is that Allah has explicitly said: "Divorce them for their prescribed waiting periods." This Divine Command also applies to that person who might have taken his wife back after divorcing her twice in the first instance, and no v he is left with only one divorce to pronounce." His second argument is: "When the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) taught this method of pronouncing divorce that one should either pronounce divorce in such a period of purity in which one may not have had sexual intercourse, or in a state when the signs of a woman's being pregnant might have appeared. In this he did not make any distinction between the first, second, or final divorce. Therefore, the Divine (Command, "Lodge them (in the waiting-period) where you yourselves live," will be regarded as relevant to every form of divorce." His third argument is; "The maintenance and lodging of the pregnant woman, whether divorced revocable or irrevocably, is binding on the husband, and in respective the non-pregnant revocably divorced woman also both these rights are binding." This shows that the maintenance and lodging have not been made incumbent on the basis of pregnancy but because both are legally bound to stay in the husband's house. Now, if the same injunction be applicable to the irrevocably divorced non-pregnant woman also, there can be no reason why her lodging and maintenance should not be incumbent on the man divorcing her.

The second group says that the irrevocably divorce woman has a right to lodging but not to maintenance. This is the viewpoint of Sa'īd bin al-Musayyab, Sulemān bin Yasār, 'Aṭā', Sha'bī, Auzā'ī, Laith and Abū 'Ubaid (may Allh bless them), and Imām Shāfe'ī and Imām Mālik also have adopted the same. But in *Mughnī al-Muḥtāj* a different viewpoint of Imām Shāfe'ī has been stated as will be explained below.

The third group say that the irrevocably divorced woman is neither entitled to lodging nor to maintenance. This is the viewpoint of Ḥasan Baṣrī, Ḥammād, Ibn Lailā, 'Amr bin Dīnār, Ṭā'ūs, Isḥāq bin Rāhawaih and Abū Thaur. Ibn Jarīr has cited this very viewpoint as of Ḥaḍrat Ibn, Abbās. Imām Aḥmad bin Hanbal and the Imāmiah sect of the Shī'as also have adopted the same, and in *Mughnī al-Muḥtāj* the viewpoint of the Shāfe'is also has been stated to be this: "The woman who is passing her waiting-period on the basis of divorce has an obligatory right to lodging, whether she is pregnant or not, but for the woman who has been irrevocably divorced, it is not obligatory. And for the non-pregnant irrevocably divorced woman there is neither maintenance nor clothing." This

viewpoint in the first place is based on this verse of the Qur'ān: "You do not know: Allah may after this bring about a situation (of reconciliation)." From this they conclude that this could be correct only about a revocably divorced woman, and not about an irrevocably divorced one. Therefore, the Command of lodging the divorced woman in the house is specifically applicable only to the revocably divorced woman. Their second reasoning is from the *Hadīth* of Fāṭimah bint-Qais, which has been reported in the collections of *Ḥadīth* through many authentic channels.

This Fāṭimah bint-Qais al-Fihriyyah was one of the earliest Emigrants. She was esteemed for her wisdom and sagacity, and the consultative body of the Companions on the occasion of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar's martyrdom had met together at her house. She was first married to Abū 'Amr bin Ḥafṣ bin al-Mughīrah al-Makhzūmī; after she was separated by him by three divorces, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) married her to Ḥaḍrat Usāmah bin Zaid. According to reports, her husband, Abū 'Amr had pronounced two divorces on her. Then, when he was sent to Yaman along with Hadrat 'Alī, he also sent from there the third and final divorce, According to lodge her in the house during the waiting-period and maintain her, according to others, she herself had laid claim to maintenance and lodging. Whatever be the case, the husband's relatives refused to concede her claim. Thereupon she took her case to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), and he gave the decision that she was neither entitled to maintenance nor to lodging. According to a tradition, the Holy Prophet said: "The husband is under obligation to provide maintenance and lodging to the woman only in case he had a right to return to her, but when he had no such right, she was neither entitled to maintenance nor to lodging." (Musnad Aḥmad), Ṭabarānī and Nasa'ī also have related almost the same tradition, the concluding words of which are to the effect: "But when she is not lawful for him until she marries another man than him, there is neither maintenance for her nor lodging." After giving this decision the Holy Prophet first commanded her to pass her waiting period in the house of Umm Sharīk and then told her to stay in the house of Ibn Umm Maktūm.

However, the agruments of those who have not accepted this *Ḥadīth* are as follows:

In the first place, she had been commanded to leave the house of her husband's relatives because she was rude of tongue and they were fed up with her ill-temper Sa'īd bin al-Musayyab says: "This lady by reporting her *Ḥadīth* has misguided the people. The truth is that she was rude and impudent; that is why she was lodged in the house of Ibn Umm Maktūm." (Abū Da'ūd) In another tradition Sa'id bin al Musayyab is reported to have said: "She had been impudent and rude to her husband s relatives; that is why she was commanded to shift from that

house." (Al-Jaṣṣās). Sulemān bin Yasār says: "Her expulsion from the house was because of her ill-temper." (Abū Da'ūd).

Secondly, her tradition was repudiated by Hadrat 'Umar at a time when many of the Companions were still living, and the matter could be fully investigated. Ibrahīm Nakha'ī says: "When this *Ḥadīth* of Fātimah reached Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, he said: 'We cannot adandon a verse of the Book of Allah and a saying of the Messenger of Allah (upon whom be His peace) because of the saying of a woman, who seems to be conjecturing. I have myself heard the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) say that the woman who has been divorced irrevocably is entitled to both lodging and maintenance." (Al-Jaṣṣās). Abū Ishāq says: "I was sitting with Aswad bin Yazīd in the mosque of Kūfah, when Sha'bī made mention of the *Ḥadīth* of Fātimah bint-Qais. Ḥaḍrat Aswad thereupon threw pebbles at Sha'bi and said: "When in the time of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar this tradition of Fāṭimah was brought to his notice, he said: 'We cannot cast off the Book of our Lord and the *Sunnah* of our Prophet on the strength of the tradition of a woman. Maybe she has forgotten. The woman has a right to maintenance as well as to lodging, for Allah says: 'Do not turn them out of their houses'." This tradition has been reported in Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī and Nasā'ī with some variation in wording.

Thirdly, during the reign of Marwān when a dispute arose in respect of the irrevocably divorced woman, Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah had subjected the tradition of Fātimah bint-Qais to severe criticism. Qāsim bin Muḥammad says: "I asked Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah: 'Don't you know the incident concerning Fātimah?' She replied: 'Better not mention the *Ḥadīth* of Fāṭimah'." (Bukhārī). The words of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah in the other tradition related by Bukhārī are to the effect: "What has happened to Fātimah? Is she not afraid of God?" In the third tradition Hadrat 'Urwah bin Zubair says that Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah said: "There is no good for Fāṭimah in reporting this *ḥadīth*." In still another tradition Ḥaḍrat 'Urwah says that Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah expressed great indignation against Fāṭimah and said: "She in fact was in an empty house, where she had no sympathizer; therefore, for the sake of her convenience the Holy Prophet instructed her to change her house."

Fourthly, this lady was later married to Usāmah bin Zaid, and Muḥammad bin Usāmah says: "Whenever Fāṭimah made mention of this *Ḥadīth*, my father would throw at her whatever fell in his hand." (Al-Jaṣṣās). Obviously, had not Ḥaḍrat Usāmah known that the *Sunnah* was contrary to what Fāṭimah said, he could not have felt so annoyed at the mention of this *Ḥadīth*."

17. There is complete consensus that whether the woman *has* been divorced revocably or irrevocably, her husband is responsible for her lodging and maintenance till child-birth if she is pregnant. However, a difference of opinion has arisen in case the husband of the pregnant woman may have died, irrespective

of whether he may have died alter pronouncing the divorce, or May not have pronounced any divorce and the woman may have been widowed during pregnancy this regard, the jurists have expressed the following views:

(1) Ḥaḍrat 'Alī and Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd hold that she has an obligatory right to maintenance in the husband's un-divided legacy. The same also has been cited as the view of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, Qādī Shuraih, Abul 'Āliyah, Sha'bī and Ibrāhīm Nakha'ī, and a saying of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās also supports the same. (Ālūsī, Al-Jassās).

(2) Ibn Jarīr has cited another view of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās to the effect: "If the deceased person has left some inheritance, expenditure should be made on her from the share of the child of her womb; and if he has left no inheritance, the heirs of the deceased should spend on her, for Allah says: 'And the same responsibility for the maintenance of the mother devolves upon the heir'." (Al-Baqarah: 233).

(3) Ḥaḍrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Zubair, Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣrī, Ḥaḍrat Sa'īd bin al-Musayyab and Ḥaḍrat 'Atā' bin Abī Abī Rabāh say that there is no maintenance for her in the inheritance of the deceased husband. A third saying from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās also has been cited to be the same. (Al-Jaṣṣās) This means that she can meet her expenses from the share of inheritance that she may receive from the husband's legacy, but she has no right of inheritance on the husband's combined legacy, which may burden the other heirs.

(4) Ibn Abī Laila says: "Her maintenance in the deceased husband's legacy is as obligatory as is somebody's debt obligatory In his legacy." (Al-Jaṣṣās). That ii, just as a debt has to be paid out of a combined legacy, so also should her maintenance be paid out of it.

(5) Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Imām Abū Yūsuf, Imām Muḥammad and Imām Zufar say: "She has neither any right to lodging in the deceased husband's legacy nor to maintenance, for nothing belongs to the deceased after death: whatever remains after him belongs to the heirs. The widowed pregnant woman, therefore, cannot have any maintenance in their property." *(Hedāyah;* Al-Jaṣṣās). The same is the viewpoint of Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal *(Al-Inṣāf).*

(6) Imām Shāfe'i says: "There is no maintenance for her; but she has a right to lodging *(Mughnī al-Muhtāj)"* His reasoning is based on the incident concerning Furai'ah bint-Mālik, sister of Ḥaḍrat Abū Sa'īd Khudrī: when her husband was put to death, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) commanded her to pass her waiting-period in the house of her husband. (Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'ī, Tirmidhī). Furthermore, they deduce their

view from the tradition of Dāraquṭnī: "The Holy Prophet said: there is no maintenance for the widowed pregnant woman." The same is the view of Imām Mālik also. *(Ḥāshiyah ad-Dusūqi)*

18. This Divine Command teaches several important things:

(1) That the woman is the owner *of* her milk; otherwise, obviously she could not be authorised to receive wages for it, (2) that as soon as she becomes free from the marriage bond with her previous husband at child-birth, she is not legally bound to nurse her child; but if the father desires that she nurse it, and she also is willing for it, she would suckle it and would be entitled to receive the wages; (3) that the father also is not legally bound to have the child suckled only by its mother; (4) that the maintenance of the child is the responsibility of the father; (5) that the mother is best entitled to suckle the child, and the other woman can be employed for suckling only in case the mother herself is not willing for it, or demands too high a wage for the father to pay. The sixth rule that automatically follows is that if the other woman also demands the same wages as the mother, then the mother's right is superior.

The following are the opinions of the jurists in this regard:

Ḍaḥḥāk says: "The child's mother is best entitled to suckle it, but she has the option to suckle it or not. However, if the child does not take to the new nurse-maid, the mother will be compelled to suckle it." A similar opinion is held by Qatādah, Ibrāhīm Nakha'ī and Sufyān Thaurī. Ibrāhīm Nakha'ī adds: "In case another woman is not available for nursing the child, the mother will be compelled to nurse it. (Ibn Jarīr).

According to *Hedāyah:* "If at the separation of the parents the child has not yet been weaned, it is not obligatory that the mother alone should suckle it. However, if another woman is not available, the mother would be compelled to suckle the child. And if the father says: I shall employ another woman to suckle the child on wages instead of having it suckled by the mother on wages, and if the mother demands the same wages as the other woman, or is willing to perform the service gratis, the mother's right will be regarded as superior. And if the child's mother demands higher Wages, the father will not be compelled to accede to her demand."

19. This contains a severe rebuke both for the father and tor the mother. The style clearly shows that if the two do not settle the question of the child's suckling amicably, overlooking the previous bitterness that led to divorce, it is not approved by Allah. The woman has been warned to the effect: "If you demand too high a wage only in order to embarrass the man, the fosterage of the child is not dependent on you alone: some other woman will nurse it." And the man also has

been warned as if to say: "It would be unfair if you pressed the mother unjustly only because she was the mother." In this connection, please also see Al-Baqarah: 233 for details.

20. Now, the Muslims are being warned of the fate the would meet I this world and in the Hereafter is they disobeyed the Commands they have been given through the Messenger of Allah and His Book and the rewards they would receive if they adopted obedience.

21. Some of the commentators opine that "Admonition here implies the Qur'an, and "Messenger" the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings); some others say that "Admonition" implies the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) himself, because he was admonition for the people through and through. We are of the opinion that this second interpretation is more correct, for according to the first commentary the sentence would read "We have sent down to you an Admonition and sent such a Messenger." obviously, there is no need for such an interpolation in the Qur'ānic passage when it is perfectly meaningful, even more so, without it.

22. "Out of darknesses Into light": out of the darknesses of ignorance into the light of knowledge The full significance of this Divine Saying becomes obvious only when one studies the other ancient and modern family laws of the world pertaining to divorce, waiting-period and provision of maintenance. This comparative study will show that in spite of the un-ending alterations, modifications and continual legislation no nation has been able so far to build for itself such a rational, natural and socially useful law as had been given by this Book and the Messenger who brought it 1500 wears ago. It has never stood in need of revision nor it ever will. I here is no occasion here for a detailed comparative study of it; we have, however, given a brief specimen of it in the concluding portion of our book *Ḥuqūq az-Zaujain;* the scholars who are interested in the subject can for themselves conpare the world's religious and secular laws with this law of the Qur'ān and *Sunnah.*

23. "Also their like-- does not mean that He created as many earths as the heavens, but it means that He has also created several earths as He has created several heavens. "Of the earth"- mean that just as this earth, which is inhabited by man, is serving as bed and cradle for the creatures living on it, so has Allah made and set other earths also in the universe, which serve as beds and cradles for the creatures living on them. Moreover, there are clear pointers in the Qur'ān to the effect that living creatures are not found only on the earth but also in the heavens. (For instance, see Ash-Shūrā: 29 and E.N. 50 on it). In other words! the countless *stars* and planets seen in the sky are not all lying desolate, but like the earth there are many among them which are inhabited.

From among the earliest commentators Ibn 'Abbās is the one, who had expressed this truth in the period when man was not even prepared to imagine that in the universe there are other habitats also, apart from the earth, where rational creatures live. Even the scientists of today are yet in doubt about this being a reality, nothing to say of the people living 1500 years ago. That is why Ibn 'Abbās felt hesitant about whether he should say such a thing before the common people or not, because he feared it might affect their faith. Mujāhid says that when he was asked the meaning of this verse, he said: "If I give you the commentary of this verse, you will turn disbelievers, and your disbelief will be that you will deny it." Almost the same thing has been related from Sa'īd bin Jubair, saying: "Ibn 'Abbās said: what can be the guarantee that if I tell you its meaning, you would not turn disbelievers?" (Ibn Jarīr, 'Abd bin Ḥumaid). However, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ḥākim and Baihaqī in *Shu'ab al-Imān* and *Kitāb al-Asmā' was-Sifāt* have cited, on the authority of Abud-Duhā, this commentary from Ibn 'Abbās in different words: "In each of those earths there is a Prophet like your Prophet, an Adam like your Adam, a Noah like your Noah, an Abraham like your Abraham, and a Jesus like your Jesus." This tradition has been related by Ibn Hajar in *Fath al-Bārī* and by Ibn Kathīr in his Commentary, and Imām Dhahbi says: "It has been reported authentically, but in my knowledge none apart from Abud-Ḍuhā has related it; therefore, it is an uncommon and rare tradition." Some other scholars regard it as a falsehood and Mullā 'Alī Qārī, in his *Mauḍu'āt Kabīr (p. 19)*, has described it as a fabrication, and written: "Even if it is a tradition from Ibn 'Abbās, it is based on Israelite traditions." But the truth is that the actual reason why the people have rejected it is their regarding it as remote from reason and beyond under-standing; otherwise there is nothing in it which may by itself be opposed to reason. Thus, 'Allāma Ālūsī in his discussion of it in his Commentary writes: "There is neither any intellectual barrier to taking it as correct nor religious. It only means that in every earth there is a creation which turns to its origin just as mankind in our earth turns to Adam (peace be upon him), and in every earth there are individuals, who are distinguished among others just as the Prophets Noah and Abraham (peace be upon them) are distinguished among us." A little below the 'Allāma writes: "The earths may be more than seven, and likewise the heavens also may not be only seven. To rest content with the number seven, which is an indivisible integer, does not necessarily negate the higher numbers." Then, about the distances between one heaven and another, which have been stated as five hundred years or so in some *Aḥadīth*, the 'Allāma says: "This is not meant to give the exact measurement of the distances, but to express the truth in a manner easily comprehensible to the people."

It would be interesting to note that lately the Rand Corporation of America have estimated on the basis of their astronomical observations that only in the

Galaxy to which our earth belongs there are about 600,000,000 (six hundred million) planets physical conditions on which closely resemble those on the earth, and there is a possibility that they may also be inhabited just as is the earth by living creatures. (*Economist*, London 26 July, 1969).



LXVI

AT-TAḤRĪM

التحريم

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

LXVI

AT-TAḤRĪM

التَّحْرِيم

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah derives its name from the words *lima tuḥarrimu* of the very first verse. This too is not a title of its subject-matter, but the name implies that it is the Sūrah in which the incident of *taḥrīm* (prohibition, forbiddance) has been mentioned.

Period of Revelation

In connection with the incident of taḥrīm referred to in this Sūrah, the traditions of the Ḥadīth mention two ladies who were among the wives of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) at that time Ḥaḍrat Ṣafiyyah and Ḥaḍrat Māriyah Qibtiyyah. The former (i.e. Ḥaḍrat Ṣufiyyah) was taken to wife by the Holy Prophet after the conquest of Khaiber, and Khaiber was conquered, as has been unanimously reported,

in A.H.7. The other lady, Ḥaḍrat Mārīyah, had been presented to the Holy Prophet by Muqawqis, the ruler of Egypt, in A.H. 7 and she had borne him his son, Ibrāhīm, in Khil-Ḥijjah, A.H. 8. These historical events almost precisely determine that this Sūrah was sent down some time during A.H. 7 or A.H. 8.

Theme and Topics

This is a very important Sūrah in which light has been thrown on some questions of grave significance with reference to some incidents concerning the wives of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace).

First? that the powers to prescribe the bounds of the lawful and the unlawful, the permissible and the forbidden, are entirely and absolutely in the hand of Allah; and nothing has been delegated even to the Prophet of Allah himself, not to speak of any other man. The Prophet as such can declare something lawful or unlawful only if he receives an inspiration from Allah to do so whether that inspiration is embodied in the Qur'ān, or imparted to him secretly. However, even the Prophet is not authorised to declare anything made permissible by Allah unlawful by himself, much less to say of another man.

Second, that in any society the position of a Prophet is very delicate. A minor incident experienced by an ordinary man in his life may not be of any consequence, but it assumes the status of law when experienced by a Prophet. That is why the lives of the Prophets have been kept under close supervision by Allah so that none of their acts, not even a most trivial one, may deviate from Divine Will. Whenever such an act has emanated from a Prophet it was rectified and rectified immediately so that the Islamic law and its principles should reach the people in their absolute purity not only through the Divine Book but also through the excellent example of the Prophet, and they should include nothing which may be in disagreement with Divine Will.

Thirdly, and this automatically follows from the abovementioned point, that when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was checked on a minor thing, which was not only corrected but also recorded, it gives us complete satisfaction that whatever actions and commands and instructions we now find in the pure life of the Holy Prophet concerning which there is nothing on record in the nature of criticism or correction

from Allah. they are wholly based on truth, are in complete conformity with Divine Will and we can draw guidance from them with lull confidence and peace of mind.

The fourth thing that we learn from this discourse is that about the Holy Messenger himself, whose reverence and respect Allah Himself has enjoined as a necessary part of the Faith of His .servants, it has been stated in this Sūrah that once during his sacred life he made a thing declared lawful by Allah unlawful for himself only to please his wives. then Allah has severely reproved for their errors those very wives of the Holy Prophet, whom He Himself has declared as mothers of the faithful and worthy of the highest esteem and honour by them. Then, this criticism of the Prophet and the administration of the warning to the wives also has not been made secretly but included in the Book, which the entire *Ummah* has to read and recite for ever. Obviously, neither the intention of making mention of it in the Book of Allah was, nor it could be, that Allah wanted to degrade His Messenger and the mothers of the faithful in the eyes of the believers; and this also is obvious that no Muslim has lost respect for them in his heart after reading this Sūrah of the Qur'ān. Now, there cannot be any other reason of mentioning this thing in the Qur'ān than that Allah wants to acquaint the believers with the correct manner of reverence for their great personalities. The Prophet is a Prophet, not God, that he may commit no error, Respect of the Prophet has not been enjoined because he is infallible, but because he is a perfect representative of Divine Will, and Allah has not permitted any of his errors to pass by unnoticed. This gives us the satisfaction that the noble pattern of life left by the Prophet wholly and fully represents the will of Allah. Likewise, the Companions or the holy wives of the Prophet, were human, not angels or supermen. They could commit mistakes. Whatever ranks they achieved became possible only because the guidance given by Allah and the training imparted by Allah's Messenger had moulded them into the finest models. Whatever esteem and reverence they deserve is on this very basis and not on the presumption that they were infallible. For this reason, whenever ill the sacred lifetime of the Prophet (upon whom be peace) the Companions or holy wives happened to commit an error due to human weakness, they were checked. Some of their errors were corrected by the Holy Prophet? as has been mentioned at many places in the *Ḥadīth;* some other errors

were mentioned in the Qur'ān and Allah Himself corrected them so that the Muslims might not form any exaggerated notion of the respect and reverence of their elders and great men, which might raise them from humanity to the position of gods and Goddesses. If one studies the Qur'ān carefully, one will see instances of this one after the other. In Sūrah Al-'Imran, in connection with the Battle of Uḥud, the Companions have been addressed and told:

"Allah did fulfil His promise (of help) to you: in the initial stage of the battle, it was you who were killing them by Allah's leave until you lost heart and disputed about your duty and disobeyed your leader, when Allah showed you what (the spoils) you covered —for there were among you some who hankered after the life of this world, and others, who cherished the life after death. Then Allah caused your retreat before the disbelieves in order to test you, but the fact is that even then Allah pardoned you, for Allah is very gracious to the believers. ' (v. 152).

In Surah An-Nūr, in connection with the Slander against Ḥadrat 'Ā'isha, the Companions were told

"When you heard of it, why did not the believing men and the believing women have a good opinion *of* themselves, and why did they not say: this is a manifest slander?.....Were it not for Allah's grace and mercy towards you in this world and in the Hereafter, a painful scourge would have visited you because of the slander. (Just consider) when you passed this lie on from one tongue to the other and uttered with your mouths that of which you had no knowledge. You took it as a trifling matter whereas it was a grave offence in the sight of Allah. Why did you not, as soon as you heard of it, say; 'It is not proper for us to utter such a thing? Glory be to Allah ! This is a great slander'." Allah admonishes you that in future you should never repeat anything like this, if you are true believers." (vv. 12-17)

In Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb, the holy wives have been addressed thus: 'O Prophet, say to your wives : If you seek the would and its adornments, come, I shall give you of these and send you off in a good way. But if you seek Allah and His Messenger and the abode of the Hereafter, you should rest assured that Allah has prepared a great reward for those of you, who do good. (vv. 28-29).

In Sūrah Jumu'ah, about the Companions it was said:

"And when they saw some merchandise and amusement they broke off to it and left you (O Prophet) standing (in the course of the Sermon). Say to them: that which is with Allah is far better than amusement and merchandise, and Allah is the best of all providers." (V. 11).

In Sūrah Al-Mumtaḥina, Ḥaḍrat Ḥātib bin Abī Balta'ah, a Companion who had fought at Badr, was severely taken to task because he had sent secret information to the disbelieving Quraish about the Holy Prophet's invasion before the conquest of Makkah.

All these instances are found in the Qur'ān itself, in the same Qur'ān in which Allah Himself has paid tribute to the Companions and the holy wives for their great merits, and granted them the certificate of His good pleasure, saying: "Allah became well pleased with them and they with Allah." It was this same moderate and balanced teaching of the reverence and esteem of the great men, which saved the Muslims from falling into the pit of man-worship in which the Jews and the Christians fell, and it is a result of the same that in the books that the eminent followers of the *Sunnah* have compiled on the subjects of the *Ḥadīth*, Commentary of the Qur'ān and History, not only have the excellences and great merits of the Companions and holy wives and other illustrious men been mentioned, but also no hesitance has been shown in mentioned, the incidents relating to their weaknesses, errors and mistakes, whereas those scholars were more appreciative of the merits and excellences of the great men and understood the bounds and limits of reverence better than those who claim to be the upholders of reverence for the elders today.

The fifth thing that has been explicitly mentioned in this Sūrah is that Allah's Religion is absolutely fair and just. It has for every person just that of which he becomes worthy on the basis of his faith and works. No relationship or connection even with the most righteous person can be beneficial for him in any way and no relationship or connection with the most evil and wicked person can be harmful for him in any way. In this connection, three kinds of women have been cited as examples before the holy wives in particular. One example is of the

wives of the Prophets Noah and Lot, who, if they had believed and cooperated with their illustrious husbands, would have occupied the same rank and position in the Muslim community, which is enjoyed by the wives of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings). But since they were disbelievers, their being the wives of the Prophets did not help them and they fell into Hell. The second example is of the wife of Pharaoh, who in spite of being the wife of a staunch enemy of God believed and chose a path of action separate from that followed by the Pharaoh's people, and her being the wife of a staunch disbeliever did not cause her any harm, and Allah made her worthy of Paradise. The third example is of Ḥaḍrat Maryam (Mary) (peace be upon her), who attained to the high rank because she submitted to the severe test to which Allah had decided to put her. Apart from Mary, no other chaste and righteous girl in the world ever has been put to such a hard test that in spite of being unmarried she might have been made pregnant miraculously by Allah's command and informed what service her Lord willed to take from her. When Hadrat Maryam accepted this decision, and agreed to bear, like a true believer, everything that she inevitably had to bear in order to fulfil Allah's will, then did Allah exalt her to the noble rank of *Sayyidatu an-nisā' fil-Jannah:* "Leader of the women in Paradise." (Musnad Aḥmad).

Besides, another truth that we learn from this Sūrah is that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) did not receive from Allah only that knowledge which is included and recorded in the Qur'ān, but he was given information about other things also by revelation, which has not been recorded in the Qur'ān. Its clear proof is verse 3 of this Sūrah. In it we are told that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) confided a secret to one of his wives, and she told it to another. Allah informed the Holy Prophet of this secret. Then, when the Holy Prophet warned his particular wife on the mistake of disclosure and she said: "Who has informed you of this mistake of mine?" he replied: "I have been informed of it by Him Who knows everything and is All-Aware." Now, the question is: where in the Qur'ān is the verse in which Allah has said; "O Prophet, the secret that you had confided to one of your wives, has been disclosed by her to another person, or to so and so? If there is no

such verse in the Qur'an, and obviously there is none, this is an express proof of the fact that revelation descended on the Holy Prophet besides the Qur'ān as well. This refutes the claim of the deniers of *Ḥadīth:* who allege that nothing was sent down to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) apart from the Qur'ān.



يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ لِمَ تُحَرِّمُ مَآ اَحَلَّ اللّٰهُ لَكَ ۚ تَبْتَغِيْ مَرْضَاتَ اَزْوَاجِكَ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ
غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ۝١ قَدْ فَرَضَ اللّٰهُ لَكُمْ تَحِلَّةَ اَيْمَانِكُمْ ۚ وَاللّٰهُ مَوْلٰىكُمْ ۚ وَهُوَ
الْعَلِيْمُ الْحَكِيْمُ ۝٢ وَاِذْ اَسَرَّ النَّبِيُّ اِلٰى بَعْضِ اَزْوَاجِهٖ حَدِيْثًا ۚ فَلَمَّا
نَبَّاَتْ بِهٖ وَاَظْهَرَهُ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ عَرَّفَ بَعْضَهٗ وَاَعْرَضَ عَنْۢ بَعْضٍ ۚ فَلَمَّا
نَبَّاَهَا بِهٖ قَالَتْ مَنْ اَنْۢبَاَكَ هٰذَا ۭ قَالَ نَبَّاَنِيَ الْعَلِيْمُ الْخَبِيْرُ ۝٣ اِنْ تَتُوْبَآ
اِلَى اللّٰهِ فَقَدْ صَغَتْ قُلُوْبُكُمَا ۚ وَاِنْ تَظٰهَرَا عَلَيْهِ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَ مَوْلٰىهُ وَ
جِبْرِيْلُ وَصَالِحُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ۚ وَالْمَلٰۗىِٕكَةُ بَعْدَ ذٰلِكَ ظَهِيْرٌ ۝٤ عَسٰى رَبُّهٗٓ اِنْ
طَلَّقَكُنَّ اَنْ يُّبْدِلَهٗٓ اَزْوَاجًا خَيْرًا مِّنْكُنَّ مُسْلِمٰتٍ مُّؤْمِنٰتٍ قٰنِتٰتٍ تٰۗىِٕبٰتٍ
عٰبِدٰتٍ سٰۗىِٕحٰتٍ ثَيِّبٰتٍ وَّاَبْكَارًا ۝٥ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا قُوْٓا اَنْفُسَكُمْ وَاَهْلِيْكُمْ
نَارًا وَّقُوْدُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ عَلَيْهَا مَلٰۗىِٕكَةٌ غِلَاظٌ شِدَادٌ لَّا يَعْصُوْنَ
اللّٰهَ مَآ اَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُوْنَ مَا يُؤْمَرُوْنَ ۝٦ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لَا تَعْتَذِرُوا الْيَوْمَ ۭ
اِنَّمَا تُجْزَوْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ۝٧ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا تُوْبُوْٓا اِلَى اللّٰهِ تَوْبَةً
نَّصُوْحًا ۭ عَسٰى رَبُّكُمْ اَنْ يُّكَفِّرَ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّاٰتِكُمْ وَيُدْخِلَكُمْ جَنّٰتٍ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ
تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ ۙ يَوْمَ لَا يُخْزِي اللّٰهُ النَّبِيَّ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا مَعَهٗ ۚ نُوْرُهُمْ يَسْعٰى
بَيْنَ اَيْدِيْهِمْ وَبِاَيْمَانِهِمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ رَبَّنَآ اَتْمِمْ لَنَا نُوْرَنَا وَاغْفِرْ لَنَا ۚ اِنَّكَ
عَلٰي كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ۝٨ يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ جَاهِدِ الْكُفَّارَ وَالْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ وَاغْلُظْ عَلَيْهِمْ ۭ
وَمَاْوٰىهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ ۭ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيْرُ ۝٩ ضَرَبَ اللّٰهُ مَثَلًا لِّلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوا امْرَاَتَ

LXVI

AT-TAḤRĪM

التحريم

Verses: 12 *Revealed at Madinah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

O Prophet, why do you make unlawful that which Allah has permitted for you?[1] (Is it because) you seek the good-will of your wives?[2]—Allah is All-Forgivings All Merciful.[3] Allah has already appointed a way to absolve you (people) from your oaths.[4] Allah is your Master, and He alone is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise[5]. 1-2

(And this also is note-worthy that) the Prophet had confided a matter to a wife in secret. Then, when she disclosed the secret (to another), and Allah informed the Prophet (of the disclosure of the secret), the Prophet made known (to the wife) part of it and overlooked part of it. So when the Prophet told her (of the disclosure), she asked, "Who informed you of this?" The Prophet said, "I was informed by Him Who knows everything and is All-Aware."[6] 3

If you both (women) repent to Allah, (it is better for you), for your hearts have swerved from the right path,[7] and if you supported each other against the Prophet,[8] you should know that Allah is his Protector, and after Him Gabriel and the righteous believers and the angels are his companions and helpers.[9] It may well be that if the Prophet divorces all of you, Allah will give him in your place better wives,[10] who are true Muslims, who are believing[11] and obedient,[12] penitent,[13] worshipping[14] and given to fasting,[15] be they previously married or virgins. 4-5

O you who have believed, save yourselves and your households from a Fire whose fuel shall be the men and the stones,[16] over which shall be appointed fierce and stern angels, who never disobey Allah's Command and do as they are commanded.[17] (At that time it will be 6-7

said:) "O disbelievers, do not make excuses today. You are being recompensed only for what you were doing."[18]

8 O you who have believed, turn to Allah in sincere repentance.[19] (It may well be that) Allah will remove your evils from you and admit you into Gardens underneath which rivers will be flowing.[20] It will be a Day when Allah will not humiliate His Prophet and those who have believed with him.[21] Their light shall be running on before them and on their right hands, and they will be saying, "O our Lord, perfect our light for us and forgive us: You have power over all."[22]

9 O Prophet, wage *Jihād* against the disbelievers and the hypocrites; and be stern with them.[23] Their abode is Hell, and an evil abode it is!

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1. This is not, in fact, a question but an expression of disapproval. The object is not to ask the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) why he had done so, but to warn him that his act to make unlawful for himself what Allah had made lawful is not approved by Allah. This by itself gives the meaning that nobody has the power to make unlawful what Allah has made lawful; so much so that the Holy Prophet (upon *whom* be peace) himself also did not possess any such power. Although the Holy Prophet did not regard this as unlawful as a matter of faith nor legally but only forbade himself its use, yet since he was not an ordinary man but Allah's Messenger, and his forbidding himself something could have the effect that his followers too would have regarded it as forbidden, or at least reprehensible, or the people of his community might have thought that there was no harm in forbidding oneself something his Allah had made lawful, Allah pointed it out to him and commanded him to refrain from such prohibition.

2. This shows that in this case the Holy Prophet had not made a lawful thing unlawful because of a personal desire but because his wives had wanted him to do so, and he had made it unlawful for himself only in order to please them. Here, the question arises: why has Allah particularly made mention of the cause of making the thing unlawful besides pointing out the act of prohibition? Obviously, if the object had been to make him refrain from making a lawful thing unlawful, this could be fulfilled by the first sentences and there was no need that the motive of the act also should have been stated. Making mention of it in particular clearly shows that the object was not to check the Holy Prophet only for making *a* lawful thing unlawful, but along with that to warn the holy wives also to the effect that in their capacity as the Prophet's wives they had not understood their delicate responsibilities and had made the Holy Prophet do a thing which could lead to making a lawful thing unlawful.

Although it has not been mentioned in the Qur'ān as to what it was that the Holy Prophet had forbidden himself, yet the traditionists and commentators have mentioned in this regard two different incidents, which occasioned the revelation of this verse. One of these relates to Ḥaḍrat Mārīyah Qibtiyyah (Mary, the Copt lady) and the other to his forbidding himself the use of honey.

The incident relating to Ḥaḍrat Māriyah is that after concluding the peace treaty of Ḥudaibiyah one of the letters that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) sent to the rulers of the adjoining countries was addressed to the Roman Patriarch of Alexandria also, whom the Arabs called Muqawqis. When Ḥaḍrat Ḥatib bin Abi Balta'a took this letter to him, he did not embrace Islam but received him well, and in reply wrote: "I know that a Prophet is yet to rise, but I think he will appear in Syria. However, I have treated your messenger with due honour, and am sending two slave-girls to you, who command respect among the Coptics." (Ibn Sa'd). One of those slave-girls was Sīrīn and the other Māriyah (Mary). On his way back from Egypt Ḥaḍrat Ḥātib presented Islam before both and they believed. When they came before the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) he gave Sīrīn in the ownership of Ḥaḍrat Ḥassān bin Thābit and admitted Ḥaḍrat Mārīyah into his own household. In Dhil-Ḥijjah, A.H. 8 she gave birth to the Holy Prophet's son, Ibrāhīm. *(Al-Istī'āb; Al-Isābah).* This lady was very beautiful. Ḥafiẓ Ibn Ḥajar in *Al-Iṣābah* has related this saying of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah about her: "No woman's entry into the Holy Prophet's household vexed me so much as of Mārīyah, because she was very beautiful and pleased him much." Concerning her the story that has been narrated in several ways in the *Ḥadīth* is briefly as follows:

One day the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) visited the house of Ḥaḍrat Ḥafsah when she was not at home. At that time Ḥaḍrat Mārīyah came to him there and stayed with him in seclusion. Ḥaḍrat Ḥafṣah took it very ill and complained of it bitterly to him. Thereupon, in order to please her the Holy Prophet vowed that he would have no conjugal relation with Mārīyah in future. According to some traditions, he forbade Mārīyah for himself, and according to others, he also swore an oath on it. These traditions have been mostly reported by the immediate successors of the Companions without mentioning any intermediary link. But some of these have been reported from Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās and Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah also. In view of the plurality of the methods of narration, Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar in *Fāṭḥ al-Bāri* has expressed the view that there is some truth in the story. But in none of the six authentic collections of the *Ḥadīth* has this story been narrated. In Nasā'ī only this much has been related from Ḥaḍrat Anas: "The Holy Prophet had a slave-girl with whom he had conjugal relations. Then, Ḥaḍrat Ḥafsah and Ḥaḍrat 'A'ishah began to point out this to him repeatedly until he forbade her for himself. Thereupon, Allah sent down this

verse: 'O Prophet, why do you make unlawful that which Allah has made lawful for you?"

The other incident has been related in Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'ī and several other books of *Ḥadīth* from Hadrat 'Ā'ishah herself and its purport is as follows:

"The Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) usually paid a daily visit to all his wives after the 'Aṣr Prayer Once it so happened that he began to stay in the house of Ḥaḍrat Zainab bint-Jahsh longer than usual, for she had received some honey from somewhere as a gift and the Holy Prophet was very fond of sweet things; therefore, he would have a drink of honey at her house. Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah states that she felt envious of this and spoke to Ḥaḍrat Ḥafsah, Ḥaḍrat Ṣaudah and Ḥaḍrat Safiyyah about it and together they decided that whoever of them was visited by the Holy Prophet, she should say to him: 'Your mouth smells of *maghāfīr*.' *Maghāfīr* is a kind of flower, which gives out an offensive smell, and if the bee obtains honey from it, it is also tainted by the same odour. They all knew that the Holy Prophet was a man of very fine taste and he abhorred that he should emit any kind of unpleasant smell. Therefore, this device was contrived to stop him from staying in the house of Ḥaḍrat Zainab and it worked. When several of his wives told him that his mouth smelt of *Maghāfīr*, he made a promise not to use the honey any longer. In one tradition his words are to the effect: "Now, I will never have a drink from it: I have sworn an oath." In another tradition he only said: "I will never have a drink from it," and there is no mention of the oath. And in the tradition which Ibn al Mundhir, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ṭabarānī and Ibn Mardūyah have related from Ibn 'Abbās the words are to the effect: "By God, I will not drink it!"

Our eminent scholars regard this second version as correct and the first as unreliable. Imām Nasā'ī says: "About honey the *Ḥadīth* reported from Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah is authentic, and the story of forbidding Ḥadrat Mārīyah for himself by the Holy Prophet has not been narrated in a reliable way." Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ says: "The truth is that this verse was sent down concerning honey and not Mārīyah." Qāḍī Abū Bakr Ibn al-'Arabī also regards the story about honey as correct and the same is the opinion of Imām Nawawī and Ḥāfiẓ Badruddīn 'Aini. Ibn Humām writes in *Fatḥ al-Qadīr*: "The story of the prohibition of honey has been narrated in Bukhārī and Muslim from Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah who was herself a party to it; therefore, it is much more reliable." Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathir says: "The truth is that this verse was sent down about forbidding honey for himself by the Holy Prophet."

3. That is, "Although the act of making a lawful thing unlawful only in order to please your wives was an act unbecoming of your high and responsible office, yet it was no sin, which might have entailed a punishment. Therefore,

Allah has only pointed it out to you and corrected it, and has forgiven you for this error."

4. It means: "Act according to the method Allah has prescribed for absolution from oaths by expiation in Al-Mā'idah :89 and break your promise that you have made to forbid yourself a lawful thing." Here, an important legal question arises and it is this: Is this Command applicable to the case when a person has forbidden himself a lawful thing on oath, or is forbidding oneself a lawful thing by itself tantamount to swearing an oath, whether the words of the oath have been used or not? The jurists in this regard have expressed different opinions:

One section of them says that mere forbidding oneself a lawful thing is not an oath. If a person without swearing an oath has forbidden himself a wife, or some other lawful thing, it is an absurd thing which does not entail any expiation, but he can resume without any expiation the use of the thing that he had forbidden himself. This is the opinion of Masrūq, Sha'bi, Rabī'ah and Abū Salamah, and the same view is held by Ibn Jarīr and all the Ẓāhirīs. According to them forbidding oneself something would be an oath only in case express words of oath are used when forbidding it for oneself. In this regard, their reasoning is that since the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) while forbidding himself a lawful thing had *also* sworn an oath, as has been reported in several traditions, Allah told him to act according to the method that had been appointed for absolving oneself from oaths.

The second group says that to forbid oneself something without using the words of oath is not an oath by itself, but the case of the wife is an exception. If a person has forbidden himself a garment, or an article of food, it is meaningless, and one can use it without expiation. But if concerning a wife or a slave-girl he has said: "I forbid myself an intercourse with her," she would not become unlawful and forbidden, but one would have to expiate the oath before going in to her. This is the opinion of the Shāfe'īs. (Mugnī al-*Muḥtāj*). And a similar opinion on this question is held by the Mālikis. (Ibn al 'Arabī, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*).

The third group says that to forbid oneself something is by itself an oath even if the words of oath have not been used. This is the opinion of Hadrat Abū Bakr, Ḥadrat 'Ā'ishah, Ḥadrat 'Umar, Ḥadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Ḥadrat Zaid bin Thābit and Ḥadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās (may Allah bless them all). Although from Ibn 'Abbās another opinion has been reported in Bukhārī to the effect: "If a man has forbidden himself his wife, it is meaningless," yet it has been interpreted to mean that according to him this is not divorce but an oath which entails an expiation. For in Bukhārī, Muslim and Ibn Mājah, another saying of Ibn 'Abbās has been reported that to forbid oneself one's wife entails an expiation, and in Nasa'ī the tradition is to the effect that when Ibn 'Abbās was asked his opinion on this, he said: "She is not forbidden to you, but you must pay the expiation," and

in Ibn Jarīr's tradition the words of Ibn 'Abbās are to the effect: "If the people forbid themselves what Allah has made lawful for them, they must expiate their oath." This same is the opinion of Ḥasan Baṣri, 'Aṭā, Ṭā'ūs, Sulemān bin Yasār, Ibn Jubair and Qatādah, and the same has been adopted by the Ḥanafīs. Imām Abū Bakr al Jassās says: "The words of the verse *lima tuḥarrimu* do not indicate that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) along with forbidding himself the lawful thing had also sworn an oath, therefore, one will have to admit that *taḥrīm* (to forbid oneself something) itself is an oath; for after it Allah made obligatory the expiation of the oath in connection with the prohibition." Further on he writes again: "Our companions (i.e. the Ḥanafis) regard *taḥrīm* as an oath in case it is not accompanied by the intention of divorce. If a person forbade himself his wife, he in fact said: "By God, I will not come near you," thus, he committed *ilā'* (act of temporary separation!. And if he forbade himself an article of food, etc, he in a way said: "By God, I will not use that article." For Allah first said: "Why do you forbid that which Allah has made lawful?" and then said. "Allah has appointed a way to absolve you from your oaths." Thus, Allah has regarded *taḥrīm* as an oath, and the word *taḥrīm* in its meaning and legal effect becomes synonymous with an oath."

Here, for the benefit of the common man, it would be useful to tell what is the legal command according to the jurists in respect of forbidding oneself one's wife and forbidding oneself other things besides the wife.

The Ḥanafis say that if without the intention *of* divorce somebody forbade himself his wife, or swore an oath that he would not have conjugal relations with her, this would be *īlā'* (temporary separation), and in this case he would have to expiate his oath before having the sexual relation . But if wit h the intention Of divorce he said: "You are unlawful to me," it will have to be ascertained what was his actual intention. If his intention was of three divorces, the three divorces will take place, and if the intention was of a lesser number, of one or two divorces, only one divorce will take place in either case. And if some body says: "I have forbidden myself whatever was lawful for me, this would not apply to the wife unless he said these words with the intention of forbidding himself the wife. Apart from the wife, one cannot use the thing 011e has forbidden oneself until one has expiated the oath. *Badā'i as-Sanā'i; Hedāyah; Fatḥ Al-Qadir; al-Jaṣṣaṣ, Aḥkām al-Qur'an.*

The Shāfe'īs say that if one forbids oneself the wife with the intention of divorce or *ẓihār*, the intended thing would become effective, whether it is a revocable divorce or an irrevocable divorce, or *ẓihār*. And if a person used the words of *taḥrīm* with the intention of both divorce and *ẓihār*, he would be asked to choose one or the other, for both divorce and *ẓihār* cannot be established at one and the same time. Divorce dissolves marriage but in case of *ẓihār* it continues;

and if without any intention the wife is forbidden, she would not become forbidden, but expiation of the oath would become necessary. And if another thing, apart from the wife, is forbidden, it would be meaningless; there is no expiation for it. *(Mughni al-Muhtāj).*

The Mālikis say that if a person forbids himself anything other than the wife, it neither becomes forbidden nor entails an expiation. But if he says to the wife, "You are unlawful, or unlawful for me, or I am unlawful for you," this would amount to a triple divorce in any case whether this was said to a wife with whom marriage has been consummated, or to one with whom it has not yet been consummated, unless his intention was of less than three divorces. Asbagh says: "If a person says: whatever was lawful for me, is unlawful, the wife also becomes forbidden unless he makes an exception of the wife." In *al-Mudawwanah,* distinction has been made between the wife with whom marriage has been consummated and the wife with whom it has not been consummated. If one forbids oneself the former, a threefold divorce will take place irrespective of the intention, but in case of the latter the same number of divorces would take effect as was intended, and if there was no intention of any particular number, it would be considered a triple divorce *(Hāshīyah ad-Dusūqi).* Qādi Ibn al-'Arabi in his *Ahkām al-Qur'ān* has cited three statements of Imām Mālik: (1) That forbidding oneself the wife amounts to an irrevocable divorce; (2) that it amounts to three divorces; and (3) that in case of the wife with whom marriage has been consummated it amounts to three divorces, but in case of the one with whom it has not been consummated, to only one divorce if one was intended Then he says: "The correct thing is that forbidding oneself the wife amounts to one divorce only, for if the man uses the word divorce instead of calling her unlawful without specifying the number, only one divorce will take place."

Three different views in this regard have been reported from Imām Ahmad bin Hanbal: (1) That to forbid oneself the wife, or to make a lawful thing absolutely unlawful for oneself, is *zihār,* whether *zihār* was intended or not; (2) that this is an express allusion to divorce, and it amounts to pronouncing a triple divorce whether only one divorce was intended; and (3) that it is an oath, unless the man had the intention of divorce or *zihār* and in this case the same would take effect as was intended. Of these only the first one is the best known view among the Hanbalīs. *(Al-Insāf)*

5. That is, "Allah is your Master and Guardian of your affairs. He knows best in what lies your own good, and whatever Commands He has given, they are all based on wisdom. "The first thing means: "You are not independent in this world, but you are servant of Allah and He is your Master; therefore, none of you possesses any power to alter or change the ways and methods prescribed by Him; the best thing for you is to entrust your affairs to Him and continue to obey Him."

The second thing means that all the methods and laws that Allah has enjoined, are based on knowledge and wisdom, Whatever He has made lawful, has been made lawful on the basis of knowledge and wisdom and whatever He has made unlawful also has been made unlawful on the basis of knowledge and wisdom. Nothing has been made lawful or unlawful at random. Therefore, those who believe in Allah should understand that it is Allah Who is All-Knowing and All-Wise and not they, and their well-being lies only in carrying out duly the Commands given by Him.

6. Different things have been reported in different traditions, saying that the Holy Prophet had told such and such a thing to one of his wives in confidence, which she disclosed to another wife. But for us, in the first place, it is not right to investigate it, for it is on the disclosure of a secret that Allah is taking a wife to task; it cannot therefore be right for us to enquire into it and try to uncover it. Secondly, in view of the object for which this verse was sent down, it is not at all important to know what the secret was. Had it any connection with the object of the discourse, Allah would Himself have mentioned it The real object for which this incident has been related in the Qur'ān is to warn the Holy Prophet's wives and, through them, the wives of the responsible people among the Muslims not to be careless in the matter of guarding secrets. Had it been only a private and personal affair, as is generally the case between the husband and the wife in the world, there was no need that Allah should have directly informed the Holy Prophet of it through revelation, and then did not rest content only with giving the information, but should also have recorded it in the Holy Book which the whole world has to recite forever. The reason why it was given such importance was that this wife was not the wife of an ordinary husband but of that illustrious husband, whom Allah had appointed to the office of the highest responsibility, who was locked in an incessant battle with the disbelievers, polytheists and hypocrites at all times and under whose leadership a fierce conflict was going on for establishing Islam in place of paganism. In the house of such an illustrious man there could be countless things which if not kept secret but disclosed before time, could harm the great mission which he was performing. Therefore, when a lady of the house happened to show this weakness for the first time in that she disclosed a secret that had been told her in confidence, to another (a member of her own household), the weakness was immediately pointed out to her, not secretly but openly in the Qur'ān, so as to impart training in the guarding of secrets not only to the wives of the Holy Prophet but also to the wives of all responsible people of the Muslim community. In the verse the question whether the secret disclosed pertained to a matter of any consequence or not, and whether its disclosure could cause any harm to the mission or not, has been altogether ignored. What has been disapproved and pointed out in particular is that the secret was disclosed to another. The higher the position of responsibility a person holds the more

dangerous would be the leakage of secrets from his house. No matter whether a thing is of any consequence or not, once a person becomes careless in the matter of guarding secrets, he may reveal important things as well as trivial matters.

7. The word *ṣaghat* in the original is from *ṣaghy* which means to swerve and to become crooked. Shāh Waliyullah and Shāh Rafi'uddin have translated this sentence, thus: "Crooked have become your hearts." Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, Sufyān Thaurī and Ḍaḥḥāk have given this meaning of it: "Your hearts have swerved from the right path." Imām Rāzī explains it thus: "Your hearts have swerved from what is right, and the right implies the right of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace)." And 'Allama Ālūsī's commentary is "Although it is incumbent on you that you should approve what the Holy Messenger (upon whom be peace) approves and disapprove what he disapproves, yet in this matter your hearts have swerved from conformity with him and turned in opposition to him."

8. The word *taẓāhur* means to cooperate mutually in opposition to another person, or to be united against another person. Shah Waliyullah has translated this sentence, thus: "If you mutually join together to cause distress to the Prophet." Shāh 'Abdul Qādir's translation is: "If you both overwhelm him." Maulānā Ashraf 'Ali Thānwī's translation runs: "And if you both continued to work thus against the Prophet." And Maulānā Shabbīr Aḥmad 'Uthmāmi has explained it thus: "If you two continued to work and behave thus (against the Prophet)."

The verse is clearly addressed to two ladies and the context shows that these ladies are from among the wives of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) for in vv. 1-5 of this Surah the affairs concerning the Holy Prophet's wives only have been discussed continuously, and this becomes obvious from the style of the Qur'ān itself. As for the question who were the wives, and what was the matter which caused Allah's displeasure, the details are found in the *Ḥadīth*. In Musnad Aḥmad, Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī and Nasā'ī, a detailled tradition of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās has been related, which describes the incident with some variation in wording. Ibn 'Abbās says:

"I had been thinking a long time to ask Ḥaḍrat 'Umar as to who were the two of the Holy Prophet's wives, who had joined each other against him, and about whom Allah sent down this verse: *In tatūbā...*; but I could not muster courage because of his awe-inspiring personality until he left for Ḥajj and I accompanied him. On our way back while helping him to perform ablutions for the Prayer at one place I had an opportunity to ask him this question. He replied: they were 'Ā'ishah and Ḥafṣah. Then he began to relate the background, saying: "We, the people of Quraish, were used to keeping our womenfolk under strict control. Then, when we came to Madīnah, we found that the people here were

under the control of their wives, and the women of Quraish too started learning the same thing from them. One day when I became angry with my wife, I was amazed to see that she argued with me, I felt badly about her conduct. She said, 'Why should you feel so angry at my behaviour? By God, the wives of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) answer him back face to face,' (the word in the original is *li-yurāji'nahū*) and some one of them remains angrily apart from him for the whole day. (According to Bukhārī: the Holy Prophet remains angry and apart from her the whole day). Hearing this I came out of my house and went to Ḥafṣah (who was Ḥadrat 'Umar's daughter and the Holy Prophet's wife). I asked her: Do you answer back to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) face to face? She said: Yes. I asked: And does one of you remain apart from him for the whole day (According to Bukhārī: the Holy Prophet remains angry and apart from her for the entire day). She said: Yes. I said: Wretched is the one from among you, who behaves thus. Has one of you become so fearless of this that Allah should afflict her with His wrath because of the wrath of His Prophet and she should perish? So, do not be rude to the Prophet (here also the words are: *lā turājī-'ī*), nor demand of him anything, but demand of me whatever you desire. Do not be misled by this that your neighbor (i.e. Ḥadrat 'Ā'ishah) is more beautiful and dearer to the Holy Prophet. After this I left her house and went to the house of Umm Salamah, who was related to me, and talked to her on this subject. She said: Son of Khaṭṭāb, you are a strange man: you have meddled in every matter until you are now interfering in the affair between Allah's Messenger and his wives. She discouraged me. Then it so happened that an Anṣārī neighbour came to my house at night and he called out to me. We used to sit in the Holy Prophet's assembly by turns and each used to pass on to the other the news of the day of his turn. It was the time when we were apprehending an attack by the Ghassānids any time. On his call when I came out of my house, he said that something of grave significance had happened. I said: Have the Ghassānids launched an attack? He said: No, but something even more serious! The Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has divorced his wives. I said: Doomed is Ḥafṣah (the words in Bukhārī are: *Raghima anfu Hafsah wa 'Āishah*). I already had a premonition of this."

We have left out what happened after this, how next morning Ḥadrat 'Umar went before the Holy Prophet and tried to appease his anger. We have described this incident by combining the traditions of Musnad Aḥmad and Bukhārī. In this the word *murāj'at* which Ḥadrat 'Umar has used cannot be taken in its literal sense, but the context shows that the word has been used in the sense of answering back face to face and Ḥadrat 'Umar's saying to his daughter: *Lā turaji-'ī Rasūl Allāh* clearly has the meaning: Do not be impudent to the Messenger of Allah. Some people say that this is a wrong translation, and their objection is: Although it is correct to translate *murāja'at* as answering back, or

answering back face to face, yet it is not correct to translate it as "bing impudent". These objectors do not understand that if a person of a lower rank or position answers back or retorts to a person of a higher rank and position, or answers him back face to face this very thing is described as impudence. For example, if a father rebukes his son for something or feels angry at his behaviour, and the son instead of keeping quiet or offering an excuse, answers back promptly, this could only he described as impudence. Then, when the matter is not between a father and a son, but between the Messenger of Allah and an individual of his community, only a foolish person could say that it was not impudence.

Some other people regard this translation of ours as disrespectful, whereas it could be disrespectful in case we had had the boldness to use such words in respect of Hadrat Hafsah from ourselves. We have only given the correct meaning of the words of Hadrat 'Umar, and these words he had used while scolding and reproving his daughter for her error. Describing it as disrespectful would mean that either the father should treat his daughter with due respect and reverence even when scolding and rebuking her or else the translator should render his rebuke and reproof in a way as to make it sound respectful and reverent.

Here, what needs to be considered carefully is that if it was such an ordinary and trivial matter that when the Holy Prophet said something to his wives they would retort to Him, why was it given so much importance that in the Qur'ān Allah administered a severe warning directly to the wives themselves? And why did Hadrat 'Umar take it as such a grave matter that first he reproved his own daughter, then visited the house of the other wives and asked them to fear the wrath of Allah? And, above all, was the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) also so sensitive that he would take offence at minor things and become annoyed with his wives, and was he, God forbid, so irritable that once having been annoyed at such things he had severed his connections with all his wives and retired to his private apartment in seclusion? If a person considers these questions deeply, he will inevitably have to adopt one of the two views in the explanation of these verses Either on account of his excessive concern for reverence for the holy wives he should not at all mind if a fault is imputed to Allah and His Messenger, or else he should admit in a straightforward way that at that time the attitude and behaviour of these holy wives has actually become so objectionable that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was justified in becoming annoyed over it, and more than that, Allah Himself was justified that He should administer a severe warning to the wives on their unseemly behaviour and attitude.

9. That is, "You would only harm yourselves if you upheld and supported each other against the Messenger of Allah (upon whom be Allah's peace), for none could succeed against him whose Protector was Allah and who had Gabriel and the angels and all the righteous Believers on his side."

10. This shows that the fault did not lie only with Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'isha and Ḥaḍrat Ḥafsah but the other wives also had some share in it. That is why, after them, all the other wives too, have been warned in this verse. No light has been thrown on the nature of the error in the Qur'ān. However, some details are found in the *Ḥadīth*, which we shall relate below.

In Bukhārī, a tradition has been reported from Ḥaḍrat Anas, saying that Ḥaḍrat 'Umar said: "The Holy Prophet's wives because of their mutual envies and rivalries had utterly displeased him. At this I said to them: It may well be that if the Holy Prophet divorced you, Allah would give him in your place better wives than you." Ibn Abī Ḥātim has, on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Anas, reported the statement of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar in these words: "I was informed that a discord had been created between the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and his wives. At this I went to each of them and asked them to refrain from vexing the Holy Prophet; otherwise Allah would give him in their stead better wives than themselves. So much so that when I went to the last of them (and according to a tradition of Bukhārī, to Umm Salamah), she said to me: O 'Umar, is not the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) himself enough to admonish his wives? Then why should you come out to counsel them? This made me quiet, and after this Allah sent down this verse.'

In Muslim, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās has related that Ḥaḍrat 'Umar said to him: "When the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) separated himself from his wives, I went to the Mosque and found the people worried and upset and playing with pebbles and saying to one another: 'The Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has divorced his wives.' After this Ḥaḍrat 'Umar related his visiting the apartments of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah and Ḥafṣah and admonishing them, then said: I went before the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and said: Why do you feel upset with regard to your wives? If you divorce them, Allah is with you, all the angels and Gabriel and Michael are with you, and I and Abū Bakr and all the Believers are with you. I thank Allah that seldom has it so happened that I said a thing and did not have hope from Allah that He would testify to what I said. So, after this these verses of Sūrah At-Taḥrīm were sent down. Then I asked the Holy Prophet: Have you divorced your wives? He said: No. Thereupon I stood at the entrance of the Mosque and announced in a loud voice: The Holy Prophet has not divorced his wives."

The traditions related in Bukhārī from Ḥaḍrat Anas and in Musnad Aḥmad from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah and Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah say that the Holy Prophet had pledged to remain away from his wives for a month and he retired in seclusion to his apartment. When 29 days passed, Gabriel came and said; "You have fulfilled your oath: a month has come to completion."

Ḥāfiẓ Badruddīn 'Aini in *'Umdat al-Qārī* has related this on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah: The wives of the Holy Prophet had become divided into two parties: one party consisted of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah herself and Ḥaḍrat Ḥafṣah. Ḥaḍrat Saudah and Ḥaḍrat Safiyyah, and the other of Ḥaḍrat Zainab, Ḥaḍrat Umm Salamah and the rest of the wives.

These traditions indicate to some extent the conditions ,that existed in the Holy Prophet's domestic life at that time, which made it necessary that Allah Almighty should intervene and reform the attitude of the holy wives. Although the wives were the best ladies of society, yet they were human beings and were not free from human weaknesses. Sometimes when it became difficult for them to lead a life of continuous poverty and hardship, they would become restive, impatient and would start pressing the Holy Prophet for better maintenance. At this Allah sent down vv. 28-29 of Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb and admonished them to the effect: "If you seek the world and it adornments, Our Messenger will give you of these and send you of in a good way. But if you seek Allah and His Messenger and the Hereafter, you should bear up against the hardships with patience, which you might have to face when living with the Messenget." (For details, see E.N. 41 of Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb and the Introduction to it). Then on account of the feminine nature they sometimes happened to behave in a way, which though not unusual in everyday human life, did not go well with the unique dignity and great responsibilities of the house to which Allah had given them the honour to belong. So, when it was apprehended that those things might embitter the Holy Prophet's domestic life and might even adversely affect the great mission that Allah had entrusted to him, He sent down this verse in the Qur'ān, and reformed them so that the holy wives may realize the responsibilities of the position and rank which they had attained as the life companions of the Last Messenger of Allah, and should not regard themselves as ordinary women and their household as a common household. The very first sentence of this verse was such as might have caused their hearts to shudder. There could be no severer warning for them than ,this: "It may well be that if the Prophet divorces all of you, Allah will give him in your place better wives than yourselves." In the first place, even the thought of being divorced by the Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) was unbearable for them; more than that, this would deprive them of the honour of being Mothers of the Believers, and the other women whom Allah would give as wives to the Prophet would be better than them, After this it was no longer possible for the holy wives to behave in a way as would have occasioned a reproof from Allah. That is why we find only two places in the Qur'ān where these select and distinguished ladies have been administered a warning, in Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb and here in ,". Sūrah ,At-Taḥrīm.

11. In the places where the words *muslim* and *mu'min* have been used together, *muslim* means the one who carries out Divine Commands practically, and *mu'min* the one who believes sincerely and truly. Thus, the foremost quality of the best Muslim wives is that they should be believing in Allah and His Messenger and His Religion *(dīn)* sincerely and also practically following Allah's Religion in their morals, habits, customs and conduct.

12. "Obedient" *has* two meanings and both are implied here (1) They are obedient to Allah and His Messenger: (2) they are obedient to their husbands.

13. The word *tā'ib* when used as attribute of a man does not imply the one who offers repentance only once but the one who continues to implore Allah again and again for the forgiveness of his mistakes, whose conscience is alive and active, who is always a are of his weaknesses and errors and is penitent for them. Such a person never feels proud, arrogant and conceited, but is gentle and clement by nature.

14. A worshipper can never be so heedless of God as a non-worshipper. This also helps much in making a woman a good wife. Being devout she adheres to the bounds set by Allah, recognizes and discharges the rights of others and keeps her faith fresh and alive at all times. Because of these qualities she can better be expected that she would not reject obedience to Divine Commands.

15. The word *sā'ihāt* in the original has been interpreted by several Companions and large number of their successors to mean the same as *sā'imāt* (those given to fasting). The reason why the *word siyāhat* (journeying) has been used for fasting is that in the ancient times journeys were mostly undertaken by the monks and ascetics, who had no provisions and had to go without food till they got something to eat from somewhere. On that account fasting also is a kind of asceticism, for a faster has to remain hungry until the time of breaking the fast. Ibn Jarīr in his Commentary of *At-Taubah:* 12 has cited a saying of Hadrat 'A'ishah, saying: "The journeying (i.e. asceticism) of the *Ummah is* fasting." Here, making mention of fasting as an attribute of the pious wives does not mean that they observe the obligatory fasting month of Ramadān only but that they observe voluntary fasts also besides the obligatory fasts.

Addressing the holy wives Allah's saying: "If the Holy Messenger divorces all of you, Allah will give him in your place better wives who will have this quality" does not mean that the wives were not virtuous, but it means; "Give up your wrong conduct which is causing so much distress to the Holy Prophet; instead, pay attention to developing in yourselves these noble qualities to the highest degree."

16. This verse tells that a person's responsibility is not confined to making effort to save himself from the punishment of God but it is also his responsibility that he should so educate and train to the best of his ability members of his family also to become Allah's favourite servants, who have been entrusted to his care in the natural process of life; and if they might be following a path to Hell, he should try, as far as he can, to correct them. His concern should not only be that his children should lead a happy and prosperous life in the world but, more than that, he should be anxious to see that they do not become fuel of Hell in the Hereafter. According to a tradition reported in Bukhārī by Ḥadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said: "Each one of you is a herdsman and is accountable with regard to his herd: the ruler is a herdsman and is accountable with regard to his subjects; the man is a herdsman of his family and is accountable with regard to them; and the woman is a herdsman of her husband's house and his children and is accountable with regard to them."

"Whose fuel...stone" probably implies coal. Ibn Mas'ūd, Ibn 'Abbas, Mujāhid, Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir and Suddī say that this will be brimstone.

17. That is, they will enforce on every culprit precisely the same punishment which they will be commanded to enforce on him without making any alteration in it, or showing any pity for him.

18. The style of both these verses contains a severe warning for the Muslims. In the first verse the Muslims have been addressed and told that they should save themselves and their households from the dreadful punishment; in the second that this will be said to the disbelievers while subjecting them to punishment in Hell. This by itself gives the meaning that the Muslims in the world should avoid adopting that conduct and behaviour in consequence of which they may have to meet with the fate as the disbelievers in the Hereafter.

19. Literally, *"taubat an-naṣūḥ-an"* may either mean that one should offer such true repentance as may have no tinge of pretence and hypocrisy in it, or that one should wish one's own self well and repenting *of* sin should save oneself from the evil end, or that one should so adorn and improve one's life after repentance as to become a cause of admonition for others, and seeing his example others also may reform themselves accordingly. These are the meanings of *taubat an-naṣūḥ* which are indicated by its literal sense. As for its religious meaning, its explanation is found in the *Ḥadīth* which Ibn Abi, Ḥātim has related on the authority of Zirr bin Hubaish. He says: "When I asked Ḥadrat Ubayy bin Ka'b the meaning of *taubat an-naṣūḥ*, he said that he had asked the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) the same question, and he had replied: 'It implies that when you happen to commit an error, you should feel penitent for it, then should implore Allah for forgiveness remorsefully, and then should refrain from committing the

same error again." This same meaning has been reported from hadrat 'Umar. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd and Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās also, and in a tradition Ḥaḍrat 'Umar has defined *taubat an-nasūh*, thus: "After offering repentance one should not even think of committing the sin, not to speak of repeating it." (Ibn Jarīr) Ḥaḍrat 'Alī once heard a desert Arab chanting the words of repentance and forgiveness quickly and mechanically and remarked: 'This is the repentance of the liars." The man asked: 'What is true repentance? Hadrat 'Alī replied: It should be accompanied by six things:

(1) You should feel penitent for the wrong you have done: (2) you should carry out the duties that you have ignored; t3) restore the rights that you have usurped; (4) ask forgiveness of him whom you have wronged; (S) make a resolve not to repeat the sin again; and (6) consume yourself in obedience to Allah as you have so far been consuming it in wrongdoing, and cause it to taste the bitterness of obedience as you have so far been causing it to enjoy the sweet taste of disobedience and sin." *(Al-Kashshāf).*

In connection with repentance there are some other points also which should be well understood: (1) That repentance, in fact, is to show remorse for an act of disobeience only because it is a disobeience of Allah; otherwise to make a resolve to refrain from a sin because it is harmful for health, for instance, or it is likely to cause defamation or financial loss, is no repentance; (2) that man should offer repentance as soon as he realizes that he has commited disobedience of Allah and should compensate for it without delay in whatever form possible and should not defer it in any way; (3) that violating one's repentance again and making a jest of repentance and repeating the sin again and again of which one has repented, is a proof of the falsity of one's repentance, for the essence of repentance is penitence, and breaking one's repentance repeatedly is a sign that it has not been motivated by penitence; (4) that if the person who has repented sincerely and resolved not to repeat the sin again, happens to repeat it once again because of human weakness, it will not revive his past sin: however, he should offer a fresh repentance for the latter sin sod should resolve more firmly that he would not commit the sin in future; (5) that it is not necessary to renew one's repentance again everytime one remembers the disobedience committed in the past, but if one's self derives pleasure from the remebrance of the past, sinful life, one should offer repentance again and again until the remembrance of the sins causes remorse instead of pleasure and enjoyment. For the person who has actually repented of disobedience because of fear of God cannot derive pleasure

[Contd. on p. 657

نُوحٍ وَّامْرَاَتَ لُوْطٍ ؕ كَانَتَا تَحْتَ عَبْدَيْنِ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا صَالِحَيْنِ فَخَانَتٰهُمَا
فَلَمْ يُغْنِيَا عَنْهُمَا مِنَ اللّٰهِ شَيْـًٔا وَّقِيْلَ ادْخُلَا النَّارَ مَعَ الدّٰخِلِيْنَ ﴿١٠﴾
وَضَرَبَ اللّٰهُ مَثَلًا لِّلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا امْرَاَتَ فِرْعَوْنَ اِذْ قَالَتْ رَبِّ ابْنِ لِيْ
عِنْدَكَ بَيْتًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَنَجِّنِيْ مِنْ فِرْعَوْنَ وَعَمَلِهٖ وَنَجِّنِيْ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ
الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿١١﴾ وَمَرْيَمَ ابْنَتَ عِمْرٰنَ الَّتِيْٓ اَحْصَنَتْ فَرْجَهَا فَنَفَخْنَا فِيْهِ مِنْ
رُّوْحِنَا وَصَدَّقَتْ بِكَلِمٰتِ رَبِّهَا وَكُتُبِهٖ وَكَانَتْ مِنَ الْقٰنِتِيْنَ ﴿١٢﴾ ع

Allah cites for the disbelievers the example of the wives of Noah and Lot. They were married to two of Our righteous servants, but they betrayed their husbands,[24] and they could not avail them anything against Allah. To both it was said, "Enter the Fire along with those who enter." And for the believers, Allah cites the example of the wife of Pharaoh, when she prayed, "My Lord, build for me, in Your Presence, a house in Paradise, and save me from Pharaoh and his work[25] and deliver me from the wicked". And (Allah) cites the example of Mary, daughter of 'Imrān,[26] who had guarded her chastity.[27] So We breathed into her body of Our Spirit,[28] and she testified to the Words of her Lord and His Books, and she was one of the obedient.[29] 10-12

Contd. on p.656

from the thought that he has been disobeying God. His deriving pleasure from it is a sign that fear of God has not taken root in his heart.

20. The words of the verse deserve deep consideration. It has not been said that if you repeat, you will surely be forgiven and will certainly be admitted to Paradise, but that: "If you offer true repentance, it may well be that Allah will

treat you kindly." It means that it is not incumbent upon Allah to accept the repentance of the sinner and to grant him Paradise instead of subjecting him to punishment. but it will be His kindness and compassion that He may forgive well as reward His servant. One should have hope of Hit forgiveness, but one should not commit a sin with the confidence that one will achieve forgiveness by repentance.

21. That is, "He will not allow the reward of their good deeds to go to waste. He will not let the disbelievers and the hypocrites taunt the believers that they had gained nothing n spite of their worship. Humilitation will be the fate of the rebels and the disobedient and not of the faithful and obedient."

22. When this verse is read along with w. 12-13 of Sūrah Al-Hadīd, it becomes clear that the running on of the light before the believers will take place when they will be proceeding towards Paradise from the Plain of Resurrection. There it will be pitch dark all around and those who will have been condemned to Hell, will be groping about in it; the light will only be with the believers by which they will be travelling on their way. On this critical occasion, hearing the wailings and groanings of those groping in the dark the believers will be feeling terror-stricken. In view of their past errors and short-comings they will be afraid lest they too should be deprived of their light and made to grope about like those wretched people. Therefore, they will pray: "O our Lord, forgive us our sins and let our light remain with us until we reach Paradise." Ibn Jarīr has cited Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās as explaining the meaning of *Rabbanā-atmim lana nūranā* thus: "They will implore Allah Al-mighty that their light be allowed to remain with them and kept from going out until they have crossed the bridge across Hell." The commentary given by Ḥadrat Ḥasan Baṣri, Mujāhid and Ḍaḥḥāk also is almost the same. Ibn Kathīr has cited their this saying: "When the believers see that the hypocrites have been deprived of the light, they will pray to Allah for the perfection of their light." (For further explanation, see E.N. 17 of Sūrah Al-Ḥadid).

23. For explanation, see E.N., 82 of Sūrah *At-Taubah*.

24. This "betrayal" was not in the sense that they had committed an indecency but in the sense that they did not follow the Prophets Noah and Lot on the way of faith but sided with their enemies against them. Ibn 'Abbās say: "No Prophet's wife has ever been wicked and immoral. The betrayal of these two women in fact was in the matter of faith and religion: they did not acknowledge the religion of the Prophets Noah and Lot. The Prophet Noah's wife used to convey news about the believers to the wicked of her people, and the Prophet Lot's wife used to inform the immoral people about those who visited him in his house." (Ibn Jarīr).

25. "From Pharaoh and his work": from the evil end that Pharaoh would meet in consequence of his evil deeds.

26. It may be that the name of Mary's father was 'Imrān, or she may have been called "daughter of 'Imrān" because she belonged to the family of 'Imran.

27. This is a refutation of the accusation by the Jews that the birth of Jesus was, God forbid, the result of a sin of his mother. Their same accusation has been called a "monstrous calumny" in An-Nisā': 156. (For explanation, see E.N. 190 of An-Nisā').

28. That is, without her having any connection with a man, Allah breathed into her womb a Spirit from Himself. (For explanation, see E.N.'s 212, 213 of An-Nisā' and E.N. 89 of Al Anbiyā').

29. For the explanation of the object for which these three kinds of women have been cited as an example, see the Introduction to the Sūrah.



LXVII

AL-MULK

الملك

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

LXVII

AL-MULK

الْمُلْك

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name *al-Mulk* from the very first sentence.

Period of Revelation

It could not be known from any authentic tradition when this Sūrah was revealed, but the subject-matter and the style indicate that it is one of the earliest Sūrahs to be revealed at Makkah.

Theme and Subject-Matter

In this Sūrah, on the one hand, the teachings of Islam have been introduced briefly, and, on the other, the people living in heedlessness have been aroused from their slumber in a most effective way. A characteristic of the earliest Sūrahs of the Makkan period is that they present the entire teachings of Islam and the object of the Holy Prophete's mission, not in detail, but briefly, so that they are assimilated by the people easily. Moreover, they are particularly directed to make the people shun heedlessness, to make them think, and to arouse their dormant conscience.

In the first five verses man has been made to realize that the universe in which he lives is a most well-organized and fortified kingdom in which he cannot detect any fault, any weakness or flaw, however hard he may try to probe. This kingdom has been brought from nothing into existence by Allah Almighty Himself and all the powers of controlling, administering and ruling it are also entirely in Allah's hand and His power is infinite. Besides, man has also been told that in this wise system he has not been created without a purpose, but he has been sent here for a test and in this test he can succeed only by his righteous deeds and conduct.

In vv. 6-11, dreadful consequences of disbelief which will appear in the Hereafter have been mentioned, and the people told that Allah, by sending His Prophets, has warned them of these consequences in this very world, as if to say: "Now, if you do not believe in what the Prophets say and correct your attitude and behaviour accordingly, in the Hereafter you will yourself have to admit that you really deserved the punishment that was being meted out to you."

In vv. 12-14, the truth that has been impressed on the minds is that the Creator cannot be unaware of His creation, as if to say: "He is aware of each open and hidden secret of yours, even of the innermost ideas of your hearts. Hence, the right basis of morality is that man should avoid evil, fearing the accountability of the unseen God, whether

in the world there is a power to take him to task for this or not, and whether in the world there is a possibility of being harmed by such a power or not. Those who adopt such a conduct in the world alone will deserve forgiveness and a rich reward in the Hereafter."

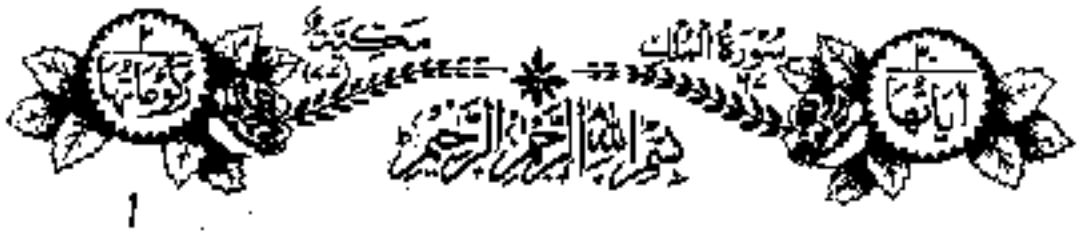
In vv. 15-23, making allusions, one after the other, to those common truths of daily occurrence, which man does not regard as worthy of much attention, he has been invited to consider them seriously. It has been said; "Look: the earth on which you move about with full satisfaction and peace of mind, and from which you obtain your sustenance has been subdued for you by Allah, otherwise this earth might at any time start shaking suddenly so as to cause your destruction, or a typhoon might occur, which may annihilate you completely. Look at the birds that fly above you; it is only Allah Who is sustaining them in the air. Look at your own means and resources: if Allah wills to inflict you with a scourge, none can save you from it; and if Allah wills to close the doors of sustenance on you, none can open them for you. These things are there to make you aware of the truth, but you see them like animals, which are unable to draw conclusions from observations, and you do not use your sight, hearing and minds which Allah has bestowed on you as men; that is why you do not see the right way."

In vv. 24-27, it has been said: "You have ultimately to appear before your God in any case. It is not for the Prophet to tell you the exact time and date of the event. His only duty is to warn you beforehand of its inevitable occurrence. Today you do not listen to him and demand that he should cause the event to occur and appear prematurely before you; but when it does occur, and you see it with your own eyes, you will then be astounded. Then, it will be said to you, 'This is the very thing you were calling to be hastened'."

In vv. 28-29 replies have been given to what the disbelievers of Makkah said against the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and his Companions. They cursed the Holy Prophet and prayed for his and the believers' destruction. To this it has been said: "Whether those who call

you to the right way are destroyed, or shown mercy by Allah, how will their fate change your destiny? You should look after yourselves and consider who would save you if you were overtaken by the scourge of God? You regard those who believe in God and put their trust in Him as the misguided. A time will come when it will become evident as to who was misguided in actual truth.

In conclusion, the people have been asked this question and left to ponder over it, "If the water which has come out from the earth at some place in the desert or hill country of Arabia and upon which depends your whole life activity, should sink and vanish underground, who beside Allah can restore to you this life-giving water?"



تَبٰرَكَ الَّذِيْ بِيَدِهِ الْمُلْكُ وَهُوَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرُ ۙ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَ

الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيٰوةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ اَيُّكُمْ اَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا ۭ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْغَفُوْرُ ۙ

الَّذِيْ خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمٰوٰتٍ طِبَاقًا ۭ مَا تَرٰى فِيْ خَلْقِ الرَّحْمٰنِ مِنْ تَفٰوُتٍ ۭ

فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ ۙ هَلْ تَرٰى مِنْ فُطُوْرٍ ۝ ثُمَّ ارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ كَرَّتَيْنِ يَنْقَلِبْ

اِلَيْكَ الْبَصَرُ خَاسِئًا وَّهُوَ حَسِيْرٌ ۝ وَلَقَدْ زَيَّنَّا السَّمَاۗءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيْحَ وَ

جَعَلْنٰهَا رُجُوْمًا لِّلشَّيٰطِيْنِ وَاَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابَ السَّعِيْرِ ۝ وَلِلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا

بِرَبِّهِمْ عَذَابُ جَهَنَّمَ ۭ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيْرُ ۝ اِذَآ اُلْقُوْا فِيْهَا سَمِعُوْا لَهَا شَهِيْقًا

وَّهِيَ تَفُوْرُ ۝ تَكَادُ تَمَيَّزُ مِنَ الْغَيْظِ ۭ كُلَّمَآ اُلْقِيَ فِيْهَا فَوْجٌ سَاَلَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَآ

اَلَمْ يَاْتِكُمْ نَذِيْرٌ ۝ قَالُوْا بَلٰى قَدْ جَاۗءَنَا نَذِيْرٌ ۙ فَكَذَّبْنَا وَقُلْنَا مَا نَزَّلَ

اللّٰهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ۖ اِنْ اَنْتُمْ اِلَّا فِيْ ضَلٰلٍ كَبِيْرٍ ۝ وَقَالُوْا لَوْ كُنَّا نَسْمَعُ اَوْ

نَعْقِلُ مَا كُنَّا فِيْٓ اَصْحٰبِ السَّعِيْرِ ۝ فَاعْتَرَفُوْا بِذَنْۢبِهِمْ ۚ فَسُحْقًا لِّاَصْحٰبِ

LXVII
AL-MULK
الْمُلْك

Verses: 30

Revealed at Makkah.

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Full of blessings is He[1] in Whose hand is the Kingdom of the Universe[2], and He has power over everything[3]; Who created death and life that He may try you to see which of you is best in deeds[4], and He is All-Mighty as well as All-Forgiving[5]; Who created seven heavens, one 1-4

above the other.[6] You will not see any fault in the creation of the Merciful.[7] Turn up your eyes: do you see any flaw[8] anywhere? Look up again and yet again: your look will return to you, disappointed, wearied.

5 And indeed We have adorned the nearest heaven[9] with magnificent lamps[10] and made them a means of driving away Satans.[11] For these satans We have prepared a blazing Fire.

6-11 For those who disbelieve in their Lord,[12] there is the torment of Hell, and it is an evil abode. When they are flung into it, they will hear its roaring;[13] and it will be boiling up, as though bursting with rage. Every time a crowd is cast into it, its keepers will ask them, "Did not a warner come to you?"[14] They will answer, "Yes, a warner did come to us, but we belied him and said, 'Allah has not sent down anything: you are in grave error'!"[15] And they will add, "Had we only listened or understood,[16] we would not now be among the dwellers of the blazing Fire." Thus will they confess their own sin.[17] Damned be the dwellers of Hell!

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1. *Tabāraka* is a superlative from *barkat*. *Barkat* comprehends the meanings of exaltation and greatness, abundance and plentifulness, permanence and multiplicity of virtues and excellences. When the superlative *tabāraka* is formed from it, it gives the meaning that Allah is infinitely noble and great; He is superior to everything beside Himself in His essence and attributes and works; His beneficence is infinite, and His excellences are permanent and everlasting. (For further explanation, see E.N. 43 of Al-A'rāf, E.N. 14 of Al-Mu'minūn E.N.'s 1 and 19 of Al-Furqān).

2. As the word al-Mulk has been used definitely, it cannot be taken in any limited meaning. Inevitably it would imply sovereignty over everything that exists in the Universe. "In Whose hand is the Kingdom" does not mean that He has physical hands, but that He is possessor of all power and authority and no one else has any share in it.

3. That is, He can do whatever He wills: nothing can frustrate or hinder Him from doing what He pleases.

4. That is, the object of giving life to men in the world and causing their death is to test them to see which of them is best in deeds. Allusion has been made in this brief sentence to a number of truths: (1) That life and death are given by Allah; no one else can grant life nor cause death; (2) that neither the life nor the death of a creation like man, which has been given the power to do both good and

evil, is purposeless; the Creator has created him in the world for the test: life is for him the period of the test and death means that the time allotted for the test has come to an end; (3) that for the sake of this very test the Creator has given every man an opportunity for action, so that he may do good or evil in the world and practically show what kind of a man he is; (4) that the Creator alone will decide who has done good or evil; it is not for us to propose a criterion for the good and the evil deeds but for Almighty Allah; therefore, whoever desires to get through the test, will have to find out what is the criterion of a good deed in His sight; the fifth point is contained in the meaning of the test itself, that is, every person will be recompensed according to his deeds, for if there was no reward or punishment the test would be meaningless.

5. This has two meanings and both are implied here: (1) That He is Almighty: in spite of being dominant over all His creatures, He is Merciful and Forgiving for them, not tyrannous and cruel; and (2) that He has full power to punish the evildoers: no one can escape His punishment; but He is forgiving for him who feels penitent, refrains from evil and asks for His forgiveness.

6. For explanation, see E.N. 34 of Al-Baqarah, E.N 2 of Ar-Ra'd, E.N. 8 of Al-Hijr, E.N. 113 of Al-Hajj, E.N. 15 of Al-Mu'minūn, E.N. 5 of As-Sāāffāt, E.N. 90 of Al-Mu'min.

7. Literally, *tafāwut* is disproportion: two things being out of accord and agreement with each other. So, the Divine words mean: "You will not see any indiscipline, any disorder and discordance anywhere in the universe, there is nothing disjointed and out of proportion in this world created by Allah: all its parts are well connected and in perfect harmony and coordination.

8. The word *futūr* means a crack, rift, fissure, or a thing's being split and broken. The verse means to say that the whole universe is so closely well-knit and everything in it, from a particle on the earth to the huge galaxies, so well connected and coherent that the continuity of the system of the universe seems to break nowhere, however hard one may try to probe and investigate. (For further explanation, see E.N. 8 of Sūrah Qāf).

9. "The nearest heaven": the heaven the stars and planets of which can be seen with the naked eye; the objects beyond that which can be seen only through telescopes are the distant heaven; and the heavens still farther away are those which have not yet been seen even with telescopes.

10. The word *masābīh* in the original has been used as a common noun, and therefore, automatically gives the meaning of the lamp's being splendid and glorious. It means: "We have not created this universe dark, dismal and desolate,

but have decked and decorated it with stars, the glory and grandeur of which at night strike man with amazement."

11. This does not mean that the stars themselves are pelted at the Satans, nor that the meteorites shoot out only to drive away the Satans, but it means that the countless meteorites which originate from the stars and wander in space at tremendous speeds and which also fall to the earth in a continuous shower prevent the Satans of the earth from ascending to the heavens. Even if they try to ascend heavenward these meteorites drive them away. This thing has been mentioned here because the Arabs believed about the soothsayers, and this also was the claim made by the soothsayers themselves, that the Satans were under their control, or that they had a close contact with them, and through them they received news of the unseen, and thus, could foretell the destinies of the people. That is why at several places in the Qur'ān, it has been stated that there is absolutely no possibility of the Satans' ascending to the heavens and bringing news of the unseen. (For explanation, see E.N.'s 9-12 of Al-Hijr, E.N.'s 6, 7 of As-Sāāffāt).

As for the truth about meteorites, man's information in this regard is still without a scientific basis. However, the theory which seems best to account for all the facts known today and the information gathered from the examination of the meteorites fallen on the earth, is that meteorites originate from the disintegration of one or more planets and wander in space and sometimes fall to the earth under its gravitational pull. (See *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. XV, under "Meteorites").

12. That is, the fate of all those, whether men or Satans, who disbelieve in their Lord. (For the explanation of the meaning of disbelieving in the Lord (*Rabb*), see E.N 161 of Al-Baqarah, E.N. 178 of An-Nisā', E.N. 39 of Al-Kahf, E.N. 3 of Al-Mu'min).

13. The word *shahīq* is used for producing a cry like the ass's braying. The sentence may also mean that it could be the sound of Hell itself, as well as that it would be the sound coming from Hell, where the people already flung into it would be screaming and crying. This second meaning is supported by Sūrah Hūd: 106, where it has been said: "Therein they will pant and hiss (because of thirst)", and the first meaning is confirmed by Al-Furqān: 12, which says: "When the Hell will see them from afar, they will hear the sounds of its raging and roaring." On this basis, the correct meaning is that it would be the noise made both by Hell and by the dwellers of Hell.

14. The real nature of this question will not be of a question that the keepers of Hell would like to ask them whether a warner from Allah had come to them or not, but the object would be to make them realize that no injustice had been done to them by casting them into Hell. They would try to make them confess

that Allah had not kept them uninformed and unwarned: He had sent the Prophets to them; He had informed them of the truth and of the Right Way; He had warned them that if they followed a way other than the Right Way, it would lead them to Hell, in which they had been cast. But they had not listened to the Prophets. Hence, they rightly deserved the punishment which was being meted out to them at that time.

This thing has been pointed out over and over again in the Qur'ān that the test for which Allah has sent man in the world is not being conducted by keeping man absolutely unaware and uninformed of the requirements of the test only to see whether he found the right way by himself or not; but Allah has made the most appropriate arrangements that could possibly be made of guiding him to the Right Way, and it is that He has raised the Prophets and sent down the Books. Now the test of man lies in this whether he accepts the Prophets and the Books brought by them and adopts the straight way, or turns away from them to follow his own desires, whims and speculations. Thus, the Prophethood, in fact, is Allah's argument which He has established against man and on its acceptance or rejection depends his whole future life. No one, after the appointment of the Prophets, can present the excuse that he remained unaware of the Truth, or that he has been caught and put to the hard test unawares, or that he is being punished while he was innocent. This theme has been presented in countless different ways in the Qur'ān; for instance, see Al-Baqarah: 213, and E.N. 230 on it; An-Nisā': 41-42, 165 and E N.'s 64 and 208; Al-An'ām: 130-131, and E.N.'s 98-100; Banī Isrā'īl: 15 and E.N. 17; Ṭā Hā: 134; Al-Qaṣaṣ: 47, 59, 65 and E.N.'s 66, 83; Fāṭir: 37; Al-Mu'min: 50 and E.N. 66.

15. That is, "Not only you but the people who have believed in and followed you also are misguided and lost in grave error."

16. "Had we only listened or understood": "Had we listened to the Prophets with attention as seekers after Truth or used our intellect to understand what actually was the message they were presenting before us." Here listening has been given priority over understanding, the reason being that the pre-requisite of obtaining guidance is to listen to what the Prophet teaches (or to read if it is in the written form, like a seeker after Truth). To ponder over it in an attempt to understand the truth is secondary. Without the Prophet's guidance man cannot by himself reach the Truth directly by using his intellect and common sense.

17. The word *dhanb* (sin) has been used in the singular. It means that the real sin because of which they became worthy of Hell was to belie the Messengers and refuse to obey them; all other sins are its consequences.

السَّعِيْرِ ﴿١١﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَيْبِ لَهُمْ مَّغْفِرَةٌ وَّ أَجْرٌ كَبِيْرٌ ﴿١٢﴾
وَ أَسِرُّوْا قَوْلَكُمْ أَوِ اجْهَرُوْا بِهٖ ؕ إِنَّهٗ عَلِيْمٌۢ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُوْرِ ﴿١٣﴾ أَلَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ
خَلَقَ ؕ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيْفُ الْخَبِيْرُ ﴿١٤﴾ هُوَ الَّذِيْ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ ذَلُوْلًا فَامْشُوْا
فِيْ مَنَاكِبِهَا وَ كُلُوْا مِنْ رِّزْقِهٖ ؕ وَ إِلَيْهِ النُّشُوْرُ ﴿١٥﴾ ءَأَمِنْتُمْ مَّنْ فِي السَّمَآءِ
أَنْ يَّخْسِفَ بِكُمُ الْأَرْضَ فَإِذَا هِيَ تَمُوْرُ ﴿١٦﴾ أَمْ أَمِنْتُمْ مَّنْ فِي السَّمَآءِ أَنْ
يُّرْسِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ حَاصِبًا ؕ فَسَتَعْلَمُوْنَ كَيْفَ نَذِيْرِ ﴿١٧﴾ وَ لَقَدْ كَذَّبَ الَّذِيْنَ
مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيْرِ ﴿١٨﴾ أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا إِلَى الطَّيْرِ فَوْقَهُمْ صٰٓفّٰتٍ وَّ
يَقْبِضْنَ ۛ مَا يُمْسِكُهُنَّ إِلَّا الرَّحْمٰنُ ؕ إِنَّهٗ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍۢ بَصِيْرٌ ﴿١٩﴾ أَمَّنْ هٰذَا
الَّذِيْ هُوَ جُنْدٌ لَّكُمْ يَنْصُرُكُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِ الرَّحْمٰنِ ؕ إِنِ الْكٰفِرُوْنَ إِلَّا فِيْ
غُرُوْرٍ ﴿٢٠﴾ أَمَّنْ هٰذَا الَّذِيْ يَرْزُقُكُمْ إِنْ أَمْسَكَ رِزْقَهٗ ؕ بَلْ لَّجُّوْا فِيْ عُتُوٍّ وَّ
نُفُوْرٍ ﴿٢١﴾ أَفَمَنْ يَّمْشِيْ مُكِبًّا عَلٰى وَجْهِهٖٓ أَهْدٰٓى أَمَّنْ يَّمْشِيْ سَوِيًّا عَلٰى صِرَاطٍ
مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِيْٓ أَنْشَأَكُمْ وَ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَ الْأَبْصَارَ وَ الْأَفْـِٕدَةَ ؕ
قَلِيْلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِيْ ذَرَأَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَ إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُوْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾
وَ يَقُوْلُوْنَ مَتٰى هٰذَا الْوَعْدُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٢٥﴾ قُلْ إِنَّمَا الْعِلْمُ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ ؗ
وَ إِنَّمَآ أَنَا نَذِيْرٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿٢٦﴾ فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهُ زُلْفَةً سِيْٓـَٔتْ وُجُوْهُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا وَ
قِيْلَ هٰذَا الَّذِيْ كُنْتُمْ بِهٖ تَدَّعُوْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾ قُلْ أَرَءَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَهْلَكَنِيَ اللّٰهُ وَ مَنْ
مَّعِيَ أَوْ رَحِمَنَا ۙ فَمَنْ يُّجِيْرُ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ مِنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيْمٍ ﴿٢٨﴾ قُلْ هُوَ الرَّحْمٰنُ
اٰمَنَّا بِهٖ وَ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا ۚ فَسَتَعْلَمُوْنَ مَنْ هُوَ فِيْ ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿٢٩﴾ قُلْ أَرَءَيْتُمْ
إِنْ أَصْبَحَ مَآؤُكُمْ غَوْرًا فَمَنْ يَّأْتِيْكُمْ بِمَآءٍ مَّعِيْنٍ ﴿٣٠﴾

Those who fear their Lord unseen,[18] for them is forgiveness and a rich reward.[19] Whether you speak secretly or aloud it is alike for Allah): He even knows the secrets of the hearts.[20] Would He not know, who has created?[21] He is the knower of subtleties[22] and is All-Aware. 12-14

He it is Who has subdued the earth to you. So walk about on its chest and eat of God's provisions:[23] to Him you shall return on Resurrection.[24] Do you feel secure that He Who is in the heaven[25] would not cause you to sink underground, and the earth may start rocking suddenly? Do you feel secure that He Who is in the heaven would not send a whirlwind charged with stones on you?[26] Then you shall know how terrible was My warning![27] And those who have gone before them also belied. Then see how severe was My chastisement![28] Do they not see the birds above them, spreading their wings and closing them? None is upholding them but the Merciful.[29] He it is Who watches over everything.[30] Tell, what army is there with you that can help you against the Merciful.[31] The fact is that the disbelievers are lost in utter delusion. Or tell, who is there to provide for you if the Merciful should withhold His provision? In fact, these people persist in rebellion and aversion from the Truth. Just consider: Is he who is walking prone on his face[32] better guided or he who is walking upright on a smooth road? Say to them, "Allah it is Who created you, and gave you the faculties of hearing and sight and gave you the hearts to think and understand, but you are seldom grateful."[33] 15-23

Say to them: Allah it is Who has dispersed you in the earth, and to Him you shall be gathered together.[34] They say, "When will this promise be fulfilled if what you say be true?"[35] Say, "The knowledge of it is with Allah, I am only a plain warner,"[36] Then, when they see it close at hand, the faces of all those who disbelieve, shall be distorted,[37] and at that time it will be said to them, "This is the same that you were calling for." 24-27

Say to them, "Have you ever considered that even if Allah should destroy me and those with me, or should bestow mercy upon us, who will save the disbelievers from the painful torment?"[38] Say to them, "He is the All-Merciful: In Him we have believed and in Him have we put our trust.[39] Soon you will know who is involved in grave error." Say to them, "Have you ever considered that if the water of 28-30

your wells should sink down into the earth, who would then restore to you the running springs of water?"[40]

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18. This is the real basis of morality in religion. A person's refraining from an evil because it is an evil in his personal opinion, or because the world regards it as an evil, or because its commission is likely to bring loss in the world, or because it may entail a punishment by a worldly power, is a very flimsy basis for morality. A man's personal opinion may be wrong, he may regard a good thing as bad and a bad thing as good because of some philosophy of his own. In the first place, the worldly standards of good and evil have never been the same: they have been changing from time to time. No universal and eternal standard in the moral philosophies is found today, nor has it ever been found before. The fear of worldly loss also does not provide a firm foundation for morality. The person who avoids an evil because he fears the loss that may result from it for himself, cannot keep himself from committing it when there is no fear of incurring such a loss. Likewise, the danger of the punishment by a worldly power also is not something which can turn a person into a gentleman. Everybody knows that no worldly power is knower of both the seen and the unseen. Many crimes can be committed unseen and unobserved. Then, there are many possible devices by which one can escape the punishment of every worldly power; and the laws made by a worldly power also do not cover all evils. Most evils are such as do not come within the purview of the mundane laws, whereas they are even worse than the evils which they regard as punishable. That is why, the Religion of Truth has raised the edifice of morality on the basis that one should refrain from an evil in fear of the unseen God Who sees man under all conditions, from Whose grasp man cannot escape in any way, Who has given man an all-pervading, universal and everlasting criterion of good and evil. To forsake evil and adopt good only out of fear of Him is the real good which is commendable in religion. Apart from this, if a man refrains from committing evil for any other reason or adopts acts which in view of their external form are regarded as good acts, his these moral acts will not be worth any merit and value in the Hereafter, for they are like a building which has been built on sand.

19. That is, there are two inevitable results of fearing God unseen: (1) That whatever errors and sins one will have committed because of human weaknesses, will be forgiven provided these were not committed because of fearlessness of God; and (2) that whatever good acts a man performs on the basis of this belief, he will be rewarded richly for them.

20. The address is to all human beings, whether they are believers or unbelievers. For the believer it contains the admonition that while living his life in the world he should always remember that not only his open and hidden deeds but

even his secret intentions and innermost thoughts are not hidden from Allah; and for the unbeliever the warning that he may do whatever he may please fearless of God, but nothing that he does can remain un-noticed and unseen by Him.

21. Another translation can be: "Would He not know His own creatures?" In the original *man khalaqa* has been used, which may mean: "Who has created" as well as "whom He has created." In both cases the meaning remains the same. This is the argument for what has been said in the preceding sentence. That is, how is it possible that the Creator should be unaware of His creation? The creation may remain unaware of itself, but the Creator cannot be unaware of it. He has made every vein of your body, every fibre of your heart and brain. You breathe because He enables you to breathe, your limbs function because He enables them to function, How then can anything of yours remain hidden from Him?

22. The word *Latif* as used in the original means the One Who works in imperceptible ways as well as the One Who knows the hidden truths and realities.

23. That is, "This earth has not become subdued for you of its own accord, and the provisions also that you are eating have not become available here by themselves. but Allah has so arranged it by His wisdom and power that your life became possible here and this splendid globe became so peaceful that you are moving about on it with full peace of mind, and it has become such a vast table spread with food that it contains endless and limitless provisions for your sustenance. If you are not lost in heedlessness and look about yourself intelligently you will find how much wisdom underlies the making of this earth habitable for you and arranging in it immeasureable stores of provisions for you." (For explanation, see E.N.'s 73, 74, 81 of Sūrah An-Naml, E.N.'s 29, 32 of Ya Sīn, E.N.'s 90, 91 of Al-Mu'min, E.N. 7 of Az-Zukhruf, E,N. 7 of Al-Jāthiyah, E,N. 18 of Sūrah Qāf.)

24. That is, "While you move about on the earth and eat of what Allah has provided for you here, you should not forget that ultimately you have to appear before God one day."

25. This does not mean that Allah lives in the heavens, but it has been so said because man naturally looks up to the heaven whenever he wants to turn to Allah, raises his hands heavenward in prayer and implores Allah turning his eyes up to heaven whenever he finds himself helpless in an affliction. Then whenever a calamity befalls him suddenly, he says it has descended from heaven; whenever something unusual happens, he says it has come from heaven; and he calls the Books revealed by Allah as heavenly Books. Accordingly to a tradition in Abū Da'ūd, a person came before the Holy Prophet with a black slave-girl and said: "It has become obligatory on me to set a slave free; can I set this slave-girl free?" The

Holy Prophet asked the slave-girl, "Where is Allah?" She pointed heavenward with her finger. The Holy Prophet asked, "Who am I?" She first pointed towards him and then towards the heaven, by which she obviously meant to say: "You have come from Allah." Thereupon the Holy Prophet said: "Set her free; she is a believer." (A story closely resembling this has been narrated in Mu'wattā, Muslim and Nasā'ī also). About Hadrat Khawla bint Tha'labah, Hadrat 'Umar once said to the people: "She is the lady whose complaint was heard above the seven heavens" (In E.N. 2 of Sūrah al-Mujādalah, we have given full details concerning this). All this clearly shows that it is natural with man that whenever he thinks of God, his mind turns to the heaven above and not to the earth below. In view of this very thing the words *man fis-samā'*. (He Who is in the heaven) have been used about Allah. There is no room here for any doubt that the Qur'ān regards Allah Almighty as living in the heaven. In fact, there cannot be any basis for this doubt, for in the very beginning of this Sūrah Al-Mulk, it has been stated: "He Who created seven heavens, one above the other", and in Al-Baqarah it has been said "You will face Allah in whatever direction you turn your face." (v : 115)

26. The object is to impress this: " Your very survival and well-being on the earth are at all times dependent upon Allah Almighty's grace and bounty: you are not strutting about on this earth at will by your own power: you are under obligation only to Allah's protection for each moment of your life that you are passing here, otherwise Allah at any moment may cause such an earthquake to occur as may make this very earth to become your grave instead of the cradle that it is, or may cause a windstorm to blow razing all your towns and settlements to the ground."

27. "My warning": the warning that was being given through the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and the Qur'ān to the disbelievers of Makkah to the effect: "If you do not refrain from your disbelief and polytheism and do not accept the message of *Tauhid* being given to you, you will be overtaken by the scourge of God."

28. The allusion is to the communities who had belied the Messengers, who had come to them previously and consequently been afflicted with Divine punishment.

29. That is, each bird that flies in the air, does so in the protection of the All-Merciful God. He it is Who has given to each bird the form and structure by which it became able to fly; He it is Who has taught each bird the method to fly; He it is Who has made the air obey the laws by which it became possible for the heavier than air bodies to fly in it; and He it is Who upholds every bird in the air; otherwise the moment Allah withdraws His protection from it, it drops to the ground.

30. That is, this is not confined only to birds, but whatever exists in the world, exists because of Allah's keeping and guardianship. He alone provides the means necessary for the existence of everything, and He alone keeps watch that everything created by Him is provided with the necessities of life.

31. Another translation can be: "Who is there beside the Merciful, who comes to your rescue as your army?" The translation that we have adopted in the text above has relevance to the following sentence, and this second to the preceding discourse.

32 "Walking prone on his face": walking with face turned down like the cattle on the same track on which someone put him.

33. That is, "Allah had made you men, not cattle. You were not meant to follow blindly whatever error and deviation you found prevailing in the world, without considering for a moment whether the way you had adopted was right or wrong. You had not been given these ears that you may refuse to listen to the one who tries to distinguish the right from the wrong for you, and may persist in whatever false notions you already had in your mind; you had not been given these eyes that you may follow others like the blind and may not bother to see whether the signs scattered around you in the world testified to the Unity of God, which the Messenger of God is preaching, or whether the system of the universe is Godless, or is being run by many gods simultaneously. Likewise, you had also not been given this knowledge and intelligence that you may give up thinking and understanding to others and may adopt every crooked way that was enforced by somebody in the world, and may not use your own intellect to see whether it was right or wrong. Allah had blessed you with knowledge and intelligence, sight and hearing, so that you may recognize the truth, but you are being ungrateful to Him in that you are employing these faculties for every other object than the one for which these had been granted." (For further explanation, see E.N.'s 72, 73 of An-Naml, E.N.'s 75, 76 of Al-Mu'minūn, E.N.'s 17, 18 of As-Sajdah, E.N. 31 of Al-Ahqāf).

34. That is, "After being resurrected from death, you will be gathered together from every corner of the earth and presented before Allah."

35. They did not ask this question in order to know the time and date of Resurrection so that if they were told the year, the month, the day and time of its occurrence, they would accept it. But, in fact, they thought that Resurrection was impossible, and its occurrence remote from reason, and they asked this question in order to have an excuse for denying it. They meant to say, "When will this strange story of Resurrection and gathering together, that you are telling us, materialize? What for has it been put off? Why don't you make it appear forthwith so that we

are assured of it?" In this connection, one should understand that one can be certain of Resurrection only by rational arguments, and these have been elaborated at many places in the Qur'ān. As for the date of its occurrence only an ignorant person could raise such a question about it, for even if it is told, it does not make any difference. The unbeliever would say: "Well, when it does occur on the date you tell, I shall then believe in it; how can I believe today that it will actually occur on that very day?" (For further explanation, see E.N. 63 of Sūrah Luqmān, E.N. 116 of Al-Ahzāb? E.N.'s 5, 48 of Sabā' E.N. 45 of Yā Sīn).

36. That is, "This I know that it will certainly come, and knowing this much only is enough for warning the people before its actual occurrence. As for the question when it will actually come, the knowledge of it is with Allah, not with me, and there is no need of this knowledge for administering the warning. This can be better understood by an example. As to the exact time when a person will die, it is only known to Allah; however, all know that everyone has to die one day. Our this knowledge is enough that we may warn a heedless friend of ours that he should look after himself and his interests before death. For this warning it is not necessary to know the exact day on which he will die.

37, That is, they will be in the same agony as is suffered by the criminal who is being taken to the gallows.

38. When the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) started his mission in Makkah, and the members of the different clans of Quraish began to embrace Islam, the people of every house started cursing him and his Companions. They started practicing magic and charms on him to cause his death, even devising plots to kill him. At this, it was said: "Say to them: what will it profit you whether we perish or we live by the grace of God? You should worry for yourselves as to how you will save yourselves from the punishment of Allah?"

39. That is, "We have believed in God, and you are denying Him; we have put our trust in Him, and you have put your trust in yourself, your own resources and false deities besides Allah; therefore, only we deserve to be shown mercy by Allah, not you".

40. That is, "Has another besides Allah the power to restore these springs of water to you? If none else has this power, and you know fully well that none has it, then who is worthy of worship: God or your false deities, who do not have the power to restore them? Then ask your own selves as to who is misled and misguided: those who believe in One God, or those who believe in many gods'."

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

LXVIII

AL-QALAM

القَلَم

INTRODUCTION

Name

This Sūrah is called *Nūn* as well as *Al-Qalam*, the words with which it begins.

Period of Revelation

This too is one of the earliest Sūrahs to be revealed at Makkah, but its subject-matter shows that it was sent down at the time when opposition to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had grown very harsh and tyrannical.


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Theme and Subject-Matter

It consists of three themes: Replies to the opponents' objections, administration of warning and admonition to them, and exhortation to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) to patience and constancy.

At the outset, the Holy Prophet has been addressed, to the effect: "The disbelievers call you a madman, whereas the Book that you are presenting and the sublime conduct that you practise, are by themselves sufficient to refute their false accusations. Soon they will see as to who was mad and who was sane; therefore, do not at all yield to the din of opposition being kicked up against you, for all this is actually meant to cow you and make you resort to a compromise with them."

Then, in order to enlighten the common people the character of a prominent man from among the opponents, whom the people of Makkah fully well recognized, has been presented, without naming him. At that time, the Holy Prophet's pure and sublime conduct was before them, and every discerning eye could also see what sort of character and morals were possessed by the chiefs of Makkah, who were leading the opposition against him.

Then, in vv. 17-33, the parable of the owners of a garden has been presented, who after having been blessed by Allah turned ungrateful to Him, and did not heed the admonition of the best man among them when it was given to them. Consequently, they were deprived of the blessing and they realized this, when all they had lay devastated. With this parable the people of Makkah have been warned to the effect: "With the appointment of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) to Prophethood, you, O people of Makkah, too, have been put to a test similar to the one to which the owners of the garden had been put. If you do not listen to him, you too will be afflicted with a punishment in the world, and the punishment of the Hereafter is far greater."

Then, in vv. 34-47 continuously, the disbelievers have been admonished, in which the address sometimes turns to them directly and sometimes they are warned through the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). A summary of what has been said in this regard is this: Well-being in the Hereafter inevitably belongs to those who spend their lives in the world in full consciousness of God. It is utterly against reason that the obedient servants should meet in the Hereafter the same fate as the

guilty. There is absolutely no basis of the disbelievers' misunderstanding that God will treat them in the manner they choose for themselves, whereas they have no guarantee for this. Those who are being called upon to bow before God in the world and they refuse to do so, would be unable to prostrate themselves on the Day of Resurrection even if they wanted to do so, and thus would stand disgraced and condemned. Having denied the Qur'ān they cannot escape Divine punishment. The rein they are being given, has deluded them. They think that since they are not being punished in spite of their denial, they must be on the right path, whereas they are following the path of ruin. They have no reasonable ground for opposing the Messenger, for he is a preacher without any vested interest: he is not asking any reward of them for himself, and they cannot either make the claim that they knew with certainty that he is not a true Messenger, nor that what he says is false.

In conclusion, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been exhorted to the effect: "Bear with patience the hardships that you may have to face in the way of preaching the Faith till Allah's judgement arrives, and avoid the impatience which caused suffering and affliction to the Prophet Jonah (peace be on him)."

سُوْرَةُ الْقَلَمِ (٦٨) مَكِّيَّةٌ (٢) رُكُوْعَاتُهَا (١) اٰيَاتُهَا (٥٢)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

نٓ وَالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُوْنَ ﴿١﴾ مَآ اَنْتَ بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ بِمَجْنُوْنٍ ﴿٢﴾ وَاِنَّ لَكَ
لَاَجْرًا غَيْرَ مَمْنُوْنٍ ﴿٣﴾ وَاِنَّكَ لَعَلٰى خُلُقٍ عَظِيْمٍ ﴿٤﴾ فَسَتُبْصِرُ وَيُبْصِرُوْنَ ﴿٥﴾
بِاَيِّيْكُمُ الْمَفْتُوْنُ ﴿٦﴾ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيْلِهٖ وَهُوَ اَعْلَمُ
بِالْمُهْتَدِيْنَ ﴿٧﴾ فَلَا تُطِعِ الْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ ﴿٨﴾ وَدُّوْا لَوْ تُدْهِنُ فَيُدْهِنُوْنَ ﴿٩﴾ وَلَا
تُطِعْ كُلَّ حَلَّافٍ مَّهِيْنٍ ﴿١٠﴾ هَمَّازٍ مَّشَّآءٍ بِنَمِيْمٍ ﴿١١﴾ مَّنَّاعٍ لِّلْخَيْرِ مُعْتَدٍ اَثِيْمٍ ﴿١٢﴾
عُتُلٍّ بَعْدَ ذٰلِكَ زَنِيْمٍ ﴿١٣﴾ اَنْ كَانَ ذَا مَالٍ وَّبَنِيْنَ ﴿١٤﴾ اِذَا تُتْلٰى عَلَيْهِ اٰيٰتُنَا
قَالَ اَسَاطِيْرُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿١٥﴾ سَنَسِمُهٗ عَلَى الْخُرْطُوْمِ ﴿١٦﴾ اِنَّا بَلَوْنٰهُمْ كَمَا بَلَوْنَآ
اَصْحٰبَ الْجَنَّةِ اِذْ اَقْسَمُوْا لَيَصْرِمُنَّهَا مُصْبِحِيْنَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَلَا يَسْتَثْنُوْنَ ﴿١٨﴾ فَطَافَ
عَلَيْهَا طَآئِفٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّكَ وَهُمْ نَآئِمُوْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ فَاَصْبَحَتْ كَالصَّرِيْمِ ﴿٢٠﴾ فَتَنَادَوْا
مُصْبِحِيْنَ ﴿٢١﴾ اَنِ اغْدُوْا عَلٰى حَرْثِكُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰرِمِيْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾ فَانْطَلَقُوْا وَهُمْ
يَتَخَافَتُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ اَنْ لَّا يَدْخُلَنَّهَا الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِّسْكِيْنٌ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَّغَدَوْا عَلٰى حَرْدٍ
قٰدِرِيْنَ ﴿٢٥﴾ فَلَمَّا رَاَوْهَا قَالُوْٓا اِنَّا لَضَآلُّوْنَ ﴿٢٦﴾ بَلْ نَحْنُ مَحْرُوْمُوْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾ قَالَ
اَوْسَطُهُمْ اَلَمْ اَقُلْ لَّكُمْ لَوْلَا تُسَبِّحُوْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ قَالُوْا سُبْحٰنَ رَبِّنَآ اِنَّا كُنَّا ظٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾
فَاَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلٰى بَعْضٍ يَّتَلَاوَمُوْنَ ﴿٣٠﴾ قَالُوْا يٰوَيْلَنَآ اِنَّا كُنَّا طٰغِيْنَ ﴿٣١﴾ عَسٰى
رَبُّنَآ اَنْ يُّبْدِلَنَا خَيْرًا مِّنْهَآ اِنَّآ اِلٰى رَبِّنَا رٰغِبُوْنَ ﴿٣٢﴾ كَذٰلِكَ الْعَذَابُ وَلَعَذَابُ
الْاٰخِرَةِ اَكْبَرُ لَوْ كَانُوْا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾ اِنَّ لِلْمُتَّقِيْنَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنّٰتِ النَّعِيْمِ ﴿٣٤﴾
اَفَنَجْعَلُ الْمُسْلِمِيْنَ كَالْمُجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾ مَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُوْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾ اَمْ لَكُمْ كِتٰبٌ

LXVIII

AL-QALAM

القَلَم

Verses: 52 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Nun. By the Pen and by that which the writers are writing,[1] you are not, by the grace of your Lord, mad.[2] And surely you have a reward that shall never end,[3] and surely you are exalted to a high and noble character.[4] Soon you shall see as well as they, which of you is afflicted with madness. Your Lord best knows those who have strayed from His Way and He best knows also those who are rightly guided. Therefore, do not at all yield to the beliers of the Truth. They indeed wish that you should compromise a little, then they also would compromise.[5] Do not at all yield to any mean swearer of many oaths,[6] who is a slanderer and a backbiter, a hinderer of good[7] and a transgressor, wicked and oppressive,[8] and above all, ignoble by birth,[9] only because he has abundance of wealth and children.[10] When Our Revelations are recited to him, he says, "These are tales of the ancient times." Soon We shall brand him on the snout.[11] 1-16

We have tried them (the people of Makkah) just as we had tried the owners of a certain garden,[12] when they swore that they would surely pluck the fruit of their garden next morning, and they did not make any exception.[13] But while they lay asleep at night, a calamity from your Lord visited the garden and it became as though it had already been reaped. In the morning they called out to one another, saying: "Go forth early to your tilth[14] if you would pluck fruit." So they set out, whispering to one another, "Let no needy man approach you in the garden today." They hurried off early (to their garden) with the resolve not to give away anything[15] as though they had the power (to pluck the fruit). But when they saw the garden, they said, "We have lost our way!—Nay, but we have been left 17-33

destitute!"[16] The best man among them said, "Did I not tell you, 'Why do you not glorify (Allah)"?"[17] They cried out, "Glorified is our Lord: we were indeed sinners!" Then they began to blame one another.[18] At last, they said, "Alas for us! Indeed we had become rebellious. It may well be that our Lord will give us in exchange a better garden than this: we turn to our Lord." Such is the torment, and the torment of the Hereafter is far greater. Would that they knew this!

34-36 Surely[19] for the Godfearing there are blissful Gardens with their Lord. Shall We then treat the obedient as We treat the guilty? What has happened to you: how ill you judge.[20]

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1. The great commentator Mujāhid says that by pen here is meant the Pen with which the Qur'ān was being written down. From this it automatically follows that that which was being written implies the Holy Qur'ān itself.

2. That is for which an oath has been sworn by the Pen and by the Book. It means that this Qur'ān which is being inscribed by the hands of the writers of Revelation, is by itself enough to refute the slander of the disbelievers who say that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) is, God forbid, a madman. Before his claim to the Prophethood, the people of Makkah looked upon him as the best of their men and trusted his honesty, intelligence and sagacity. But when he started reciting the Qur'ān before them they began to call him a madman. This meant that the Qur'ān itself in their sight was the cause because of which they accused him of madness; Therefore, it was said: "The Qur'ān by itself is a sufficient proof for the refutation of this slander. The presentation of this highly eloquent Revelation which consists of sublime themes, is an argument which proves that Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) has been especially favoured by Allah, and not an argument which might be used to prove that he has, God forbid, gone mad." Here, one should remember that although the address apparently is directed to the Holy Prophet, yet the real object is to nail the calumny of the disbelievers. Therefore, no one should have the doubt that this verse was sent down only to assure the Holy Prophet that he was not mad. Obviously, the Holy Prophet himself had no such doubt for removing which he might have stood in need of such an assurance. The object was to tell the disbelievers, as if to say: "The Qur'ān because of which you are calling the one presenting it a madman, is by itself an argument that your accusation is false." (For further explanation' see E.N. 22 of Sūrah At-Tūr).

3. That is, "You will get an unlimited and continuous reward, for although you have to hear discouraging and disturbing things in response to the efforts that

you are making for the instruction and guidance of the people, yet you are steadfastly performing your Mission of calling them to the Right Way."

4. Here, this sentence gives two meanings: (1) "That you stand exalted to a high and noble character; that is why you are enduring all these hardships in your mission of guiding the people to the Right Way, otherwise a man of weak character could not have done so;" and (2) "that besides the Qur'ān, your high and noble character also is a clear proof that the accusation of madness that the disbelievers bring against you is absolutely false, for high morals and madness cannot co-exist in one and the same person." A madman is he whose balance of mind is upset, who has lost his temperamental equilibrium. Contrary to this, the high morals of a person testify that he is a right-minded and sound-natured person, who possesses perfect temperamental equilibrium. The people of Makkah were not unaware of the morals and character possessed by the Holy Messenger of Allah. Therefore, it was enough just to make a reference to them so that every reasonable man of Makkah was made to think how shameless were those people who were calling a man of such sublime morals and character a madman. Their absurd conduct was not at all harmful for the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) but for themselves, for maddened in their craze for opposition they were saying such a thing about him which could not be regarded as credible by any man of understanding. The same also is the case with those men of knowledge and scholarship, who in the modern time are accusing the Holy prophet (upon whom be peace) of having fits of madness and epilepsy. The Qur'ān is available everywhere in the world and the Holy Prophet's life also exists in the written form in entire detail. Every person can see it for himself what a foolish and meaningless thing is being uttered in their blind enmity by those who regard the man who brought this unique and matchless Book and who possessed such sublime morals and character as a mentally deranged person.

The best description of the Holy Prophet's character has been given by Hadrat 'Ā'ishah in her statement: *"Kāna khuluqu-hul-Qur'ān:* the Qur'ān was his character." Imām Ahmad, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd. Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah, Dārimī and Ibn Jarīr have cited, with a little variation in wording, this saying with several chains of transmitters. This means that the Holy Prophet had not merely presented the teaching of the Qur'ān before the world but also given its practical demonstration by his personal example. Whatever was enjoined in the Qur'ān was acted upon practically by himself in the first instance; whatever was forbidden in it was shunned and avoided by himself most of all. His own self was characterised most of all by the moral qualities which were declared as sublime by it, and his own self was most free from those qualities which were declared as abhorrent and reprehensible by it. In another tradition Hadrat 'Ā'ishah has stated: "The Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) never hit a servant, never raised his hand on a

woman, never used his hand to kill a person outside the battlefield, never avenged himself on anyone for an injury caused unless someone violated a sanctity enjoined by Allah and he avenged it for the sake of Allah. His practice was that whenever he had to choose between two things, he would choose the easier one unless it was a sin; and if it was a sin he would keep away from it most of all." (Musnad Ahmad). Hadrat Anas says: "I served the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) for ten years. He never did so much as express even a slight disgust over what I did or said: he never asked why I had done what I had done, and never inquired why I had not done what I had not done." (Bukhārī, Muslim).

5. That is, "If you slackened a little in your propagation of Islam, they also would slacken in their opposition to you. Or, if you became inclined to effect some changes in your Faith to suit these people, they too would effect a compromise with you."

6. The word *mahīn* is used for a contemptible, degraded and mean person. This is indeed a necessary quality of a person who swears many oaths. He swears an oath for every minor thing because he himself has the feeling that the people take him for a liar and would not believe him until he swore an oath. For this reason he is not only degraded in his own eyes but commands no respect in society either.

7. *Khayr* in Arabic is used both for wealth and for good. If it is taken in the meaning of wealth, the meaning would be that he is miserly and stingy; he would not even spend a farthing on anyone; and if *khayr* is taken in the meaning of goodness and virtue, it would mean that he creates a hindrance in every good work as well as that he is very active in hindering the people from accepting Islam.

8. The word *'utul* is used for a person who is stout and strong and greedy in eating and drinking and is also ill-mannered, quarrelsome and cruel at the same time.

9. The word *zanīm* is used to describe a person of illegitimate birth, who does not, in fact, belong to a family but has joined it. Sa'īd bin Jubair and Sha'bī say that this word is used for a person who is notorious among the people for his evildoing.

The views of the commentators with regard to the person who has been described in these verses are different. Some one says it was Walīd bin Mughīrah; another one says it was Aswad bin 'Abd-i Yaghūth, and still another has applied this description to Akhnas bin Shurayq, and some other people have pointed to some other persons. But the Qur'ān has only described his attributes without naming him. This shows that in Makkah the man concerned was so notorious for

his such qualities that there was no need to name him definitely. Hearing his description every person could understand who was being referred to.

10. This sentence may be connected with the preceding theme as well as with the following sentence. In the first case, it would mean: "Do not yield to the influence of such a person just because he has plenty of wealth and children." In the second: "He has become proud because he possesses abundance of wealth and children; so when Our Revelations are recited to him, he says, "These are tales of ancient times."

11. Because he thought he was a man of high prestige, his nose has been called a snout, and "branding him on the snout means disgracing him. That is, "We shall so disgrace him in the world and in the Hereafter that his mark of disgrace will become indelible."

12. Here, one should also keep Al-Kahf: 32-44 in view, in which the parable of the owners of two gardens has been cited for teaching a lesson.

13. That is, "They were so sure and confident of their power and authority that they swore they would surely pluck the fruit of their garden next morning, without feeling any need to say, "We shall do so if Allah so willed."

14. The word tilth probably has been used because in the garden there were fields of crops also in between the trees.

15. The word *hard* in Arabic is used for hindering and withholding, for a purpose and resolution, and for making haste; hence, the composite rendering adopted by us.

16. That is, on seeing the garden they didn't believe it was their own garden, and they said: "Perhaps we have lost our way and come to another place." But, when they considered it seriously and found it was their own garden, they cried out: "Alas we are undone!"

17. This means that when they were saying on oath: "We shall surely pluck the fruit of our garden tomorrow," this person had warned them at that time, saying: "Have you forgotten God? Why don't you say: If Allah so wills?" But they did not listen to him. Then, while they were making up their mind not to give away anything to the needy, he again advised them to remember Allah and to desist from their evil intention, but they persisted in what they had resolved.

18. That is, each reproached and blamed the other that because of his wrong counsel they had forgotten God and resolved upon an evil course.

[Contd. on p. 31

فِيْهِ تَدْرُسُوْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾ اِنَّ لَكُمْ فِيْهِ لَمَا تَخَيَّرُوْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾ اَمْ لَكُمْ اَيْمَانٌ عَلَيْنَا بَالِغَةٌ
اِلٰى يَوْمِ الْقِيٰمَةِ ۙ اِنَّ لَكُمْ لَمَا تَحْكُمُوْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾ سَلْهُمْ اَيُّهُمْ بِذٰلِكَ زَعِيْمٌ ﴿٤٠﴾ اَمْ
لَهُمْ شُرَكَآءُ ۚ فَلْيَاْتُوْا بِشُرَكَآئِهِمْ اِنْ كَانُوْا صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٤١﴾ يَوْمَ يُكْشَفُ عَنْ سَاقٍ
وَّيُدْعَوْنَ اِلَى السُّجُوْدِ فَلَا يَسْتَطِيْعُوْنَ ﴿٤٢﴾ خَاشِعَةً اَبْصَارُهُمْ تَرْهَقُهُمْ ذِلَّةٌ ۭ
وَقَدْ كَانُوْا يُدْعَوْنَ اِلَى السُّجُوْدِ وَهُمْ سٰلِمُوْنَ ﴿٤٣﴾ فَذَرْنِيْ وَمَنْ يُّكَذِّبُ
بِهٰذَا الْحَدِيْثِ ۭ سَنَسْتَدْرِجُهُمْ مِّنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَاُمْلِيْ لَهُمْ ۭ اِنَّ
كَيْدِيْ مَتِيْنٌ ﴿٤٥﴾ اَمْ تَسْـَٔلُهُمْ اَجْرًا فَهُمْ مِّنْ مَّغْرَمٍ مُّثْقَلُوْنَ ﴿٤٦﴾ اَمْ عِنْدَهُمُ
الْغَيْبُ فَهُمْ يَكْتُبُوْنَ ﴿٤٧﴾ فَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ وَلَا تَكُنْ كَصَاحِبِ الْحُوْتِ ۘ اِذْ
نَادٰى وَهُوَ مَكْظُوْمٌ ﴿٤٨﴾ لَوْلَآ اَنْ تَدٰرَكَهٗ نِعْمَةٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّهٖ لَنُبِذَ بِالْعَرَآءِ وَ
هُوَ مَذْمُوْمٌ ﴿٤٩﴾ فَاجْتَبٰىهُ رَبُّهٗ فَجَعَلَهٗ مِنَ الصّٰلِحِيْنَ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَاِنْ يَّكَادُ الَّذِيْنَ
كَفَرُوْا لَيُزْلِقُوْنَكَ بِاَبْصَارِهِمْ لَمَّا سَمِعُوا الذِّكْرَ وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ اِنَّهٗ لَمَجْنُوْنٌ ﴿٥١﴾
وَمَا هُوَ اِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِّلْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٥٢﴾

37-41 Have you a Book[21] in which you study that you shall have there the same that you choose for yourselves? Or, have you covenants binding on Us till the Resurrection Day that you will have will have whatever you demand? Ask them which of them will guarantee this?[22] Or, have they some associate gods (who might be responsible for it)? If so, let them produce their associate gods if they are truthful.[23]

42-43 The Day the affliction befalls[24] and the people are called upon to prostrate themselves, they will not be able to prostrate themselves. Their eyes downcast, abjectness will be covering them. Yet when they were safe and sound they used to be called upon to prostrate themselves (but they refused to do so).[25]

44-45 So, O Prophet, leave to Me the case of those who belie this Revelation.[26] We shall lead them to ruin by degrees in ways they will

not perceive.[27] I am respiting them: My scheme[28] is mighty.

Are you asking them for a reward that they are being weighed down under undeserved penalties?[29] Have they the knowledge of the unseen, which they might be writing down?[30] So, wait for the issuance of your Lord's decree,[31] and do not be like the Man of the Fish (the Prophet Jonah),[32] when he cried out, overwhelmed with grief.[33] Had not the grace of his Lord reached him, he would have been cast off on the barren ground, condemned.[34] Consequently, his Lord chose him and included him among the righteous. 46-50

When the disbelievers hear the Admonition (the Qur'ān), they look at you in a way as though they would trip you up,[35] and say, "He is certainly mad", although it is an Admonition to all the people of the world. 51-52

Contd. from p. 29]

19. This is a rejoinder to the chiefs of Makkah, who argued with the Muslims, thus: "The blessings that we are enjoying in the world are a sign that we are favourites of Allah, and the miserable lives that you are living are a proof that you are under the wrath of Allah. Therefore, even if there was any life after death, as you say, we shall have good time there too, and the torment would be imposed on you, not on us!"

20. That is, "It is against reason that God should not differentiate between the obedient servant and the guilty. How do you regard this as reasonable that the Creator of the universe should, like a blind ruler, not judge which people in the world obeyed His commands and refrained from evildoing, and which people committed every sin and crime and perpetrated every cruelty fearless of His punishment? You have seen the adversity of the believers and your own prosperity, but you have not appreciated the distinction between their good morals and your own evildoing, and have given your judgement without the thought that these obedient people will be treated like culprits by God and the guilty like you will be granted Paradise."

21. That is, the Book sent down by Allah.

22. *Za'īm* in Arabic is used for a person who stands a surety on behalf of another, or is a spokesman of others. Thus, the verse means to ask: "Which of you will come forward and say that he has made such and such a covenant with Allah on your behalf?"

23. That is, "The judgement you are passing concerning yourselves has no basis whatever. It is against reason and you cannot show any such thing written in any Divine Book either. No one can make the claim that he has made Allah promise some such thing, and you cannot make any of your deities vouch that it would take the responsibility of securing Paradise for you from God. How then have you been involved in such a misunderstanding?

24. Literally: "The Day the shin shall be uncovered". A section of the Companions and their successors says that these words have been used idiomatically, for according to Arabic idiom, *kashf-i sāq* implies befalling of an affliction. Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās also has given this same meaning of this and has supported it by evidence from Arabic poetry. According to another saying that has been cited from Ibn 'Abbās and Rabī' bin Anas, *kashf-i sāq* implies uncovering the facts and truths. In view of this interpretation, the meaning would be: "The Day when all truths shall be bared and the people's deeds shall become open and manifest."

25. It means: On the Resurrection Day it will be openly and publicly demonstrated as to who in the world had actually worshipped Allah and who was disinclined to do so. For this purpose the people will be called upon to prostrate themselves before Allah. Then, those who had been sincerely worshipping Allah in the world, would prostrate themselves, and those who had declined to bow before Him in the world, would be unable to do so. It will become impossible for them to put up a false show of being worshippers. Therefore, they will remain standing, degraded and downcast with shame.

26. That is, "Do not worry yourself as to how to deal with them; it is for Me to see how to chastise them."

27. A form of leading somebody to ruin in imperceptible ways is that an enemy of the Truth and wicked person may be blessed in the world, and be granted health, wealth, children and worldly successes, by which he may be deluded into believing that whatever he is doing, he is doing well and right: there is nothing wrong with his acts and deeds. Thus, he may go on getting more and more deeply involved in enmity of the truth and wickedness and rebellious conduct and may not realize that the blessings he is being favoured with are not a reward but, in fact, a means of his own ruin.

28. The word *kayd* in the original means to devise a secret scheme against another. It is an evil only in case it is devised to harm somebody unjustly, otherwise there is nothing wrong with it, especially when such a scheme is adopted against a person who has made himself worthy of it.

29. The question apparently is being asked of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), but its real audience are the people, who were crossing all limits in their opposition to him. They are being asked: "is Our Messenger asking you for a reward which makes you feel so upset? You yourself know that he is absolutely selfless in his invitation and is exerting himself only for your own benefit and well-being. If you do not want to believe in what he says, you may not, but why are you feeling so enraged at his this invitation to you? (For further explanation, see E.N. 31 of Sūrah At-Tūr).

30. This second question also appears to be directed to the Holy Prophet, but, in fact, its audience are his opponents. It means: "Have you, O people, peered behind the unseen and found that the Messenger, in fact, is not a Messenger sent by God, and the truths that he is presenting before you are also false; that is why you are being so stubborn in belying what he says?" (For explanation, see E.N. 32 of At-Ṭūr).

31. That is, "The time when Allah will issue His decree about your success and victory and your opponents' defeat, is yet far off. Till then you should go on enduring with patience whatever hardships and afflictions you may have to face in the way of preaching the Faith."

32. That is, "Do not behave impatiently as did the Prophet Jonah (peace be on him), who on account of his impatience was driven into the fish's belly." Immediately after exhorting the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) to have patience until Allah issued forth His decree, to tell him not to behave like the Prophet Jonah by itself gives the meaning that the latter had shown some kind of impatience before Allah gave His decision and thus had incurred His wrath. (For explanation, see Yūnus; 98, and E.N, 99 on it; Al-Anbiyā': 87-88 and E.N.'s 82 to 85; Aṣ-Ṣāffāt: 139-148 and E.N.'s 78 to 85).

33. In Sūrah Al-Anbiyā' it has been explained thus: "From inside the fish's belly and the darkness of the sea, the Prophet Jonah invoked Allah, saying: *Lā ilāha illā anta subḥānaka inni kuntu min-aẓ-ẓālimīn:* 'There is no god but You; glory be to You: I had indeed committed a wrong.' Thereupon Allah heard his prayer and delivered him from this affliction." (vv. 87-88).

34. When this verse is read with Aṣ-Ṣāffāt: 142-146, one learns that at the time the Prophet Jonah was caused to be swallowed by the fish, he was blameworthy. But when he glorified Allah and confessed his fault, although he was spat up by the fish on a bare beach in a state of sickness, he was not blameworthy at that time. Allah by His mercy caused a creeper to grow over him so that its leaves should provide him shade and its fruit food and drink.

35. "Would trip you up": "Would eat you up with their eyes". For a similar expression of the Makkan disbelievers' rage and fury against the Holy Prophet, see also Banī Isrā'īl: 73-77.



LXIX

AL-ḤĀĀQQAH

الحاقّه

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

LXIX

AL-ḤĀĀQQAH

الحاقّه

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from the word al-Hāāqqah with which it opens.

Period of Revelation

This too is one of the earliest Sūrahs to be revealed at Makkah. Its subject-matter shows that it was sent down at the time when opposition to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had started but had not yet become tyrannical. Musnad Ahmad contains a tradition from Hadrat 'Umar, saying. "Before embracing Islam one day I came out of my house with a view to causing trouble to the Holy Prophet, but he had

entered the *Masjid al-Harām* before me. When I arrived I found that he was reciting Sūrah Al-Hāāqqah in the Prayer. I stood behind him and listened. As he recited the Qur'ān I wondered at its literary charm and beauty. Then suddenly an idea came to my mind that he must be a poet as the Quraish alleged. Just at that moment he recited the words: "This is the Word of an honourable Messenger: it is not the word of a poet." I said to myself: Then, he must be a soothsayer, if not a poet. Thereupon he recited the words: "Nor is it the word of a soothsayer: little it is that you reflect. It is a Revelation from the Lord and Sustainer of the worlds. On hearing this Islam entered deep into my heart." This tradition of Hadrat 'Umar shows that this Sūrah had been sent down long before his acceptance of Islam, for even after this event he did not believe for a long time, and he continued to be influenced in favour of Islam by different incidents from time to time, till at last in the house of his own sister he came by the experience that made him surrender and submit to the Faith completely. (For details, see Introduction to Sūrah Maryam and Introduction to Sūrah Al-Wāqi'ah).

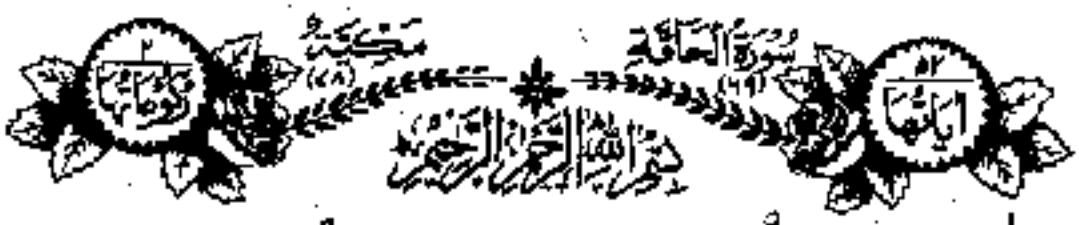
Theme and Subject-Matter

The first section (vv. 1-37) is about the Hereafter and the second (vv. 38-59) about the Qur'ān's being a Revelation from Allah and the Holy Prophet's being a true Messenger of Allah.

The first section opens with the assertion that the coming of the Resurrection and the occurrence of the Hereafter is a truth which has to take place inevitably. Then in vv. 4-12, it has been stated that the communities that denied the Hereafter in the past became worthy of Allah's scourge ultimately. In vv. 13-17 the occurrence of Resurrection has been depicted. In vv. 18-37 the real object for which Allah has destined a second life for mankind after the present worldly life has been enunciated. In it we are told that on that Day all men shall appear in the Court of their Lord, where no secret of theirs shall remain hidden; each man's record will be placed in his hand. Those who had spent lives in the world with the realization that one day they would have to render an account of their deeds before their Lord, and who had worked righteously in the world and provided beforehand for their well-being in the Hereafter, will rejoice when they would see that they have been acquitted and blessed with the eternal bliss of Paradise. On the contrary, those who neither recognized the rights of Allah, nor discharged the

rights of men, will have no one to save them from the punishment of Allah, and they will be cast into Hell.

In the second section (vv. 38-52) the disbelievers of Makkah have been addressed and told: "You think this Qur'ān is the word of a poet or soothsayer, whereas it is a Revelation sent down by Allah, which is being presented by the noble Messenger. The Messenger by himself has no power to increase or decrease a word in it. If he forges something of his own composition into it, We will cut off his neck-vein (or heart-vein). For this is the Truth absolute and pure: and those who give it a lie will have ultimately to regret and repent.



اَلْحَآقَّةُ ۙ﴿۱﴾ مَا الْحَآقَّةُ ۚ﴿۲﴾ وَمَآ اَدْرٰىكَ مَا الْحَآقَّةُ ۭ﴿۳﴾ كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُوْدُ وَعَادٌۢ
بِالْقَارِعَةِ ۭ﴿۴﴾ فَاَمَّا ثَمُوْدُ فَاُهْلِكُوْا بِالطَّاغِيَةِ ۭ﴿۵﴾ وَاَمَّا عَادٌ فَاُهْلِكُوْا بِرِيْحٍ صَرْصَرٍ
عَاتِيَةٍ ۙ﴿۶﴾ سَخَّرَهَا عَلَيْهِمْ سَبْعَ لَيَالٍ وَّثَمٰنِيَةَ اَيَّامٍ ۙ حُسُوْمًا ۙ فَتَرَى الْقَوْمَ
فِيْهَا صَرْعٰى ۙ كَاَنَّهُمْ اَعْجَازُ نَخْلٍ خَاوِيَةٍ ۚ﴿۷﴾ فَهَلْ تَرٰى لَهُمْ مِّنْۢ بَاقِيَةٍ ۚ﴿۸﴾
وَجَآءَ فِرْعَوْنُ وَمَنْ قَبْلَهٗ وَالْمُؤْتَفِكٰتُ بِالْخَاطِئَةِ ۙ﴿۹﴾ فَعَصَوْا رَسُوْلَ رَبِّهِمْ

LXIX
AL-HĀĀQQAH
الحاقّه

Verses: 52 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

The Inevitable![1] What is the Inevitable? And what do you know what the Inevitable is?[2] 1-3

Thamūd[3] and ʻĀd belied the coming of the sudden calamity:[4] Thamūd were destroyed by a violent catastrophe;[5] as for ʻĀd, they were destroyed by a furious windstorm; Allah imposed it on them for seven nights and eight days continuously. (Had you been there) you would have seen them lying prostrate as though they were hollow trunks of palm trees. Now do you see any of them still surviving? 4-8

And the same great crime did Pharaoh and the people before him and the overturned settlements[6] commit. They all disobeyed the Messenger of their Lord and He seized them with a terrible grip. 9-10

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1. The word *al-Hāāqqah* as used in the Text means an event which has inevitably to take place and the occurrence of which in the future is so certain as to

[Contd. on p. 44

فَاَخَذْنٰهُ اَخْذَةً رَّابِيَةً ﴿١٠﴾ اِنَّا لَمَّا طَغَا الْمَآءُ حَمَلْنٰكُمْ فِى الْجَارِيَةِ ﴿١١﴾ لِنَجْعَلَهَا
لَكُمْ تَذْكِرَةً وَّتَعِيَهَآ اُذُنٌ وَّاعِيَةٌ ﴿١٢﴾ فَاِذَا نُفِخَ فِى الصُّوْرِ نَفْخَةٌ وَّاحِدَةٌ ﴿١٣﴾
وَّحُمِلَتِ الْاَرْضُ وَالْجِبَالُ فَدُكَّتَا دَكَّةً وَّاحِدَةً ﴿١٤﴾ فَيَوْمَئِذٍ وَّقَعَتِ الْوَاقِعَةُ ﴿١٥﴾
وَانْشَقَّتِ السَّمَآءُ فَهِىَ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَّاهِيَةٌ ﴿١٦﴾ وَّالْمَلَكُ عَلٰٓى اَرْجَآئِهَا ۚ وَيَحْمِلُ عَرْشَ
رَبِّكَ فَوْقَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ ثَمٰنِيَةٌ ﴿١٧﴾ يَوْمَئِذٍ تُعْرَضُوْنَ لَا تَخْفٰى مِنْكُمْ خَافِيَةٌ ﴿١٨﴾
فَاَمَّا مَنْ اُوْتِىَ كِتٰبَهٗ بِيَمِيْنِهٖ ۙ فَيَقُوْلُ هَآؤُمُ اقْرَءُوْا كِتٰبِيَهْ ﴿١٩﴾ اِنِّىْ ظَنَنْتُ اَنِّىْ
مُلٰقٍ حِسَابِيَهْ ﴿٢٠﴾ فَهُوَ فِىْ عِيْشَةٍ رَّاضِيَةٍ ﴿٢١﴾ فِىْ جَنَّةٍ عَالِيَةٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ قُطُوْفُهَا دَانِيَةٌ ﴿٢٣﴾
كُلُوْا وَاشْرَبُوْا هَنِيْٓـًٔا بِمَآ اَسْلَفْتُمْ فِى الْاَيَّامِ الْخَالِيَةِ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَاَمَّا مَنْ اُوْتِىَ كِتٰبَهٗ بِشِمَالِهٖ ۙ
فَيَقُوْلُ يٰلَيْتَنِىْ لَمْ اُوْتَ كِتٰبِيَهْ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَلَمْ اَدْرِ مَا حِسَابِيَهْ ﴿٢٦﴾ يٰلَيْتَهَا كَانَتِ
الْقَاضِيَةَ ﴿٢٧﴾ مَآ اَغْنٰى عَنِّىْ مَالِيَهْ ﴿٢٨﴾ هَلَكَ عَنِّىْ سُلْطٰنِيَهْ ﴿٢٩﴾ خُذُوْهُ فَغُلُّوْهُ ﴿٣٠﴾
ثُمَّ الْجَحِيْمَ صَلُّوْهُ ﴿٣١﴾ ثُمَّ فِىْ سِلْسِلَةٍ ذَرْعُهَا سَبْعُوْنَ ذِرَاعًا فَاسْلُكُوْهُ ﴿٣٢﴾ اِنَّهٗ
كَانَ لَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللّٰهِ الْعَظِيْمِ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَلَا يَحُضُّ عَلٰى طَعَامِ الْمِسْكِيْنِ ﴿٣٤﴾ فَلَيْسَ
لَهُ الْيَوْمَ هٰهُنَا حَمِيْمٌ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَّلَا طَعَامٌ اِلَّا مِنْ غِسْلِيْنٍ ﴿٣٦﴾ لَّا يَاْكُلُهٗٓ اِلَّا
الْخَاطِـُٔوْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾ فَلَآ اُقْسِمُ بِمَا تُبْصِرُوْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَمَا لَا تُبْصِرُوْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾ اِنَّهٗ لَقَوْلُ
رَسُوْلٍ كَرِيْمٍ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَّمَا هُوَ بِقَوْلِ شَاعِرٍ ۭ قَلِيْلًا مَّا تُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٤١﴾ وَلَا بِقَوْلِ
كَاهِنٍ ۭ قَلِيْلًا مَّا تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٤٢﴾ تَنْزِيْلٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَلَوْ تَقَوَّلَ عَلَيْنَا
بَعْضَ الْاَقَاوِيْلِ ﴿٤٤﴾ لَاَخَذْنَا مِنْهُ بِالْيَمِيْنِ ﴿٤٥﴾ ثُمَّ لَقَطَعْنَا مِنْهُ الْوَتِيْنَ ﴿٤٦﴾
فَمَا مِنْكُمْ مِّنْ اَحَدٍ عَنْهُ حٰجِزِيْنَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَاِنَّهٗ لَتَذْكِرَةٌ لِّلْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَاِنَّا
لَنَعْلَمُ اَنَّ مِنْكُمْ مُّكَذِّبِيْنَ ﴿٤٩﴾ وَاِنَّهٗ لَحَسْرَةٌ عَلَى الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَاِنَّهٗ لَحَقُّ
الْيَقِيْنِ ﴿٥١﴾ فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيْمِ ﴿٥٢﴾

When the Flood waters rose abnormally high,[7] We boarded you in the Ark,[8] that We may make the event a warning for you and that the retaining ears may retain its memory.[9] 11-12

Then,[10] when the Trumpet is blown once, and the earth and the mountains are razed and crushed into pieces with a single stroke, on that Day shall the Inevitable happen. On that Day the heaven shall split asunder, and its system shall loosen. The angels shall be on its sides and eight of them on that Day shall be upholding the Throne of your Lord, above them.[11] That will be the Day when you will be brought forth: no secret of yours will remain hidden. 13-18

Then whoso is given his record in his right hand,[12] shall say: "Look! Read my record.[13] I knew that I would certainly be getting my account,"[14] So he shall be in a state of bliss, in a high Garden, whose clusters of fruit shall be hanging within easy reach. (To such people it will be said:) "Eat and drink with relish as a reward for the deeds you did in the days gone by." 19-24

As for him whose record is given in his left hand,[15] he will say: "Would that I had not been given my record[16] nor known what my account was.[17] Would that the death (that I suffered in the world) were final.[18] Today my wealth has availed me nothing, and I am robbed of all my power."[19] (It will be ordered:) "Seize him and chain him by the neck, then cast him into Hell, then fasten him in a chain seventy cubits long. For he did not believe in Allah, the Most High, nor urged the feeding of the poor.[20] So, he has neither any true friend here today nor any food except the corruption from the washing of wounds, which none but the sinners eat. 25-37

Not so![21] I swear by those things which you see and also by those which you do not see, that this is the Word of an honourable Messenger.[22] It is not the word of a poet: little it is that you believe.[23] Nor is it the word of a soothsayer: little it is that you reflect. It is a Revelation from the Lord of the worlds.[24] And if this (Prophet) had forged something himself and ascribed it to Us, We would indeed have seized him by his right hand, and cut off his neck-vein. Then none of you could have withheld (Us) from this [25] This indeed is an Admonition for the righteous.[26] And We know that there are some among you who deny it. For such disbelievers it is indeed a cause of despair.[27] And 38-52

surely this is the absolute truth. So, glorify, O Prophet, the name of your Lord, the Great.

Contd. from p. 41]

admit of no doubt or suspicion. To use this word for Resurrection and to begin the discourse with it by itself shows that the people were denying its occurrence. They are being told: "That which you are denying is inevitable: your denial will not prevent its occurrence."

2. These two questions, one after the other, have been put to arouse the listeners, to make them understand the importance of the theme and listen to what follows with full attention.

3. As the disbelievers of Makkah denied Resurrection and took the news of its coming lightly, they have been warned at the outset, as if to say: "Resurrection is inevitable: whether you believe in it, or not, it will in any case take place. Then, they are told: "It is not a simple and ordinary thing that a person accepts the news of the coming of an event, or not, but it has a deep relationship with the morals of the nations and with their future. The history of the nations, which lived before you, testifies that the nation which refused to believe in the Hereafter and thought this worldly life only to be the real life and denied that man would have ultimately to render an account of his deeds before God, corrupted itself morally until the punishment of God overtook it and eliminated it from the world."

4. The word *al-qāri'ah* is derived from *qar'*, which means to hammer, to beat, to knock and to strike one thing upon the other. This other word for Resurrection has been used to give an idea of its terror and dread.

5. In Sūrah Al-A'rāf: 78, it has been called *ar-rajfah* (a terrible earthquake); in Sūrah Hūd: 67 *aṣ-ṣayḥah* (a violent blast); in Sūrah Hā Mīm As-Sajdah: 17, it has been said: "They were overtaken by *ṣā'iqa-tul-'adhāb* (a humiliating scourge); and here the same punishment has been described as *ar-raghiyah* (a violent catastrophe). These words describe different aspects of the same calamity.

6. The reference is to the towns and settlements of the people of the Prophet Lot, about which it has been said in Sūrah Hūd: 82 and Al-Hijr: 74: "We turned them upside down."

7. The illusion is to the Deluge of the Prophet Noah, in which a whole nation was drowned because of this very crime, and only those people were saved, who had listened to and obeyed the Messenger of Allah.

8. "We boarded you...", because the whole human race that exists today has descended from the people who were boarded in the Ark thousands of years ago and thus saved from the Deluge. It means: "You exist in the world today because in that Deluge Allah had caused only the infidels to be drowned and had saved the believers.

9. "The retaining ears,..": the ears which may hear it consciously and take it in. Although the word ear has been used, it implies the hearers who may hear the event and always remember it, take heed from it, and may never forget what dreadful fate the deniers of the Hereafter and the disbelievers of the Messenger of God would ultimately suffer.

10. While reading the following verses one should keep in mind that at some places in the Qur'ān the three stages of Resurrection which will occur one after the other at different times have been mentioned separately, and at others all the three have been combined and mentioned as a single event. For example, in Sūrah An-Naml: 87 the first blowing of the Trumpet has been mentioned, when everyone will be suddenly struck with terror. At that time they will witness the general confusion and the upsetting of the order of the universe, as described in Al-Hajj: 1-2, Yā Sīn 49-50 and At-Takvīr: 1-6. In Sūrah Az-Zumar: 67-70, mention has been made of the second and third blowing of the Trumpet. On the second blowing of it everyone will fall down dead, and when it is blown for the third time, all dead men will rise back to life and present themselves before Allah. In Tā Hā: 102-112, Al-Anbiyā': 101-103, Yā Sīn: 51-53 and Qāf: 20-22, only the third sounding of the Trumpet has been mentioned. (For explanation, see E.N. 78 of Tā Hā, E.N. 1 of Al-Hajj. E.N.'s 46, 47 of Yā Sīn). But here and at many other places in the Qur'ān all the events of Resurrection, from the blowing of the first Trumpet till the people's entry into Heaven and Hell, have been described as a single event.

11. This is an ambiguous verse the meaning of which is difficult to determine We can neither know what the Throne is nor can understand what will be the nature of the eight angels upholding it on the Day of Resurrection. It is, however, inconceivable that Allah Almighty would be sitting on the Throne and the eight angels would be upholding it along with Him. The verse also does not say that Allah at that time would be sitting on the Throne. Besides, the conception of God that the Qur'ān gives also prevents one from imagining that the Being Who is free from physical existence as to body, direction and place, should be residing somewhere and His creatures should sustain Him. Therefore, pursuing any research to determine its meaning would be tantamount to disbelief. However, one should understand that in order to give an idea of Allah Almighty's rule and sovereignty, and of the matters associated with it, the same scene has been

depicted by the Qur'ān as of worldly kingship and the same terms have been used for it as are common for kingship and its accompaniments, to enable us to understand matters pertaining to sovereignty of the universe to some extent only by means of this very scene and terms. All this is meant to bring the real Truth within human understanding; it is not, therefore, right to take it literally.

12. The record's being given in the right hand will by itself show that the concerned person's account is clear and settled and he is appearing in the Divine Court as a righteous man and not as a culprit. It is probable that at the time the records are distributed the righteous man himself will extend his right hand forward to receive his record. For on account of the good treatment that he would have received right from the moment of death till his appearance in the Plain of Assembly at Resurrection, would have given him the satisfaction that he was there to be blessed and not to be punished. At many a place in the Qur'ān it has been explicitly stated that right at death itself it becomes clear to every man whether he is entering the next World in a blessed or wretched state. Then from the moment of death till Resurrection the righteous man is treated like a guest and the evil man as a culprit under custody. After this, from the time the second life starts on the Day of Resurrection, the condition and state of the righteous is entirely different from the condition and state of the disbelievers, hypocrites and culprits. (For details, see Al-Anfāl: 50, An-Nahl: 28-32, Banī Isrā'īl: 97, Ṭā Hā: 102, 103, 124-126, Al-Anbiyā': 1-3, Al-Furqān: 24, An-Naml: 89, Sabā: 51, Yā Sīn: 26-27, Al-Mu'min: 45-46, Muḥammad: 27, Qaf: 19-23 and the corresponding Notes.

13. That is, he will be overjoyed as soon as he receives his record and will show it to his companions. In Sūrah Al-Inshiqāq: 9, it has been said "He will return to his kinsfolk rejoicing."

14. That is, "He was fortunate because he had been conscious of the Hereafter in the world and had lived his life with the belief that he would have to appear before God one day and render his account to Him.

15. In Sūrah Al-Inshiqāq it has been said: "And the one whose record is given him behind his back..." Probably it will be like this: As the culprit would already be knowing that he was a culprit, and would be aware of what his record contained, he would dejectedly extend his left hand forward to receive it, and then would immediately hide it behind his back so that no one else saw what he had received.

16. That is, "I should not have been given this record in the Plain of Assembly and thus publicly disgraced before all mankind, but should have been awarded secretly whatever punishment I deserved.

17. That is, "I should not have been told what I had done in the world." Another meaning of this verse also can be: "I never knew what an account was: I never had imagined that one day I would also have to render my account and that all my deeds would be presented before me."

18. That is, "I should have become extinct after death in the world and should have experienced no other life after death."

19. The word *sulṭān* of the Text is used both for an argument and for power and authority. If it is taken in the sense of an argument, the meaning would be: "The arguments that I used to give would not work here: here, I have no argument which I can present in self-defence." And if it is taken in the sense of power, it would imply: "The power of which I was so proud in the world is no more: I have no army here and there is none to obey me: I stand as a miserable, helpless creature, who can do nothing to defend himself."

20. That is, not to speak of feeding a poor man himself, he did not even like to say others that they should feed the hungry."

21. That is, the truth is not as you think it to be.

22. Here, "an honourable Messenger" implies the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) and in Sūrah At-Takvīr: 19. the angel Gabriel (peace be on him), the argument being that after describing the Qur'ān as the Word of an honourable Messenger, it has been said: "It is not the word of a poet ... nor of a soothsayer," and obviously the disbelievers of Makkah branded the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) and not Gabriel as a poet and soothsayer. On the contrary, in Sūrah At-Takvīr, after describing the Qur'ān as the word of "a noble messenger" it has been said: "That Messenger has great power, and has high ranks with the Owner of the Throne: there he is obeyed and held as trustworthy ... And Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) has seen him on the bright horizon." (vv. 20-23). Almost the same thing has been stated in An-Najm: 5-10 about Gabriel.

Here, the question arises; In what sense has the Qur'ān been described as the Word of Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings! and of Gabriel? The answer is: the people were hearing it being recited by the tongue of the Holy Prophet and the Holy Prophet by the tongue of Gabriel. Thereupon, in one way it was the word of the Holy Prophet and in another way of Gabriel, but a little below it has been explicitly stated: "It is indeed a Revelation from the Lord of the worlds,' which is being presented before Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) by the tongue of Gabriel (peace he on him) and before the people by the tongue of Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings).

The word Messenger itself points to the truth that the Word belongs to neither of them but they have presented it as Messengers of the One Who has sent it down.

23. One meaning of "little it is that you believe", according to Arabic idiom, can be: "You do not believe it at all." Another meaning also can be: "Hearing the Qur'ān your heart sometimes itself cries out: 'This cannot be mortal word'. Yet you behave stubbornly and refuse to believe in it.

24. In short: "I swear by whatever you see and by whatever you do not see, that this Qur'an is not the word of a poet or a soothsayer, but it is a Revelation from the Lord of the worlds, which is being presented by the Messenger who is noble and gentle." Let us now consider in what sense this oath has been sworn. That which was visible to the people was:

(1) This Word was being presented by a person who being noble and gentle was not hidden from anybody in the society of Makkah. Everyone knew that he was the best man of their nation in conduct. It could not be expected of such a man that he would forge a lie and attribute it to Allah, Lord of the worlds.

(2) They also saw clearly that he had no selfish motive in presenting that word before the people, but had rather sacrificed all His personal interests to it: had ruined his business, had abandoned every ease and comfort, was being cursed and abused by the same people who had shown him the highest veneration and esteem and had caused even his family and children to be subjected to these agonies besides himself. A person having selfish motives could not have submitted himself to such tribulations.

(3) They could also see that the lives of the people in their own society, who believed in him, underwent a sudden transformation. The word of no poet or soothsayer has been known to have brought about such a wonderful moral change in the people that his follower should become ready to face every hardship and bear up against every persecution for his sake.

(4) They were also not unaware of the language of poetry and the diction of the soothsayers. Apart from stubborn disbelievers, no one could say that the language of the Qur'ān was the language of poetry or sorcery. (For a detailed discussion of this, see E.N. 7 of Al-Anbiyā', E.N.'s 142-145 of Ash-Shu'arā', E.N.22 of Aṭ-Ṭūr).

(5) This also was before their eyes that no one in entire Arabia was so eloquent of speech that his word could be brought to match with the Qur'ān. Not to speak of equalling it, not even the greatest poet's eloquence could even approach anywhere near the Qur'ān's.

(6) This also was not hidden from them that the language used by Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) himself was very different in

its literary beauty and merit from the language of the Qur'an. No Arabic speaking person could, after hearing the Holy Prophet's own speech, and the Qur'ān, say that both emanated from one and the same person.

(7) The people of Makkah had never heard even until a day before Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) made the claim to Prophethood anything relating to the themes that the Qur'an consisted of, nor they knew that he had any means of obtaining that knowledge and information. That is why even if his opponents alleged that he obtained that information secretly from somewhere, no one in Makkah was prepared to believe it. (For explanation, see E.N 107 of An-Nahl and E.N. 12 of Al-Furqān).

(8) They could also see the wonderful workshop of existence, from the earth to the heavens, which was functioning before their eyes, and in which they could see a supreme, wise law and, an all-pervading order and system at work. In it they could see no sign and evidence of the polytheism and denial of the Hereafter, which the Arabs had adopted as their creed, but there were signs and proofs of the existence of One God and of the truth of the Hereafter which the Qur'ān was presenting.

All this they could see, and what they did not see was: Allah Almighty alone is the Creator and Master and Ruler of this universe: all others are only creatures: none beside Him is God! Resurrection has to take place inevitably; Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) has really been appointed a Messenger by Allah Himself Who is sending down the Qur'ān to him. An oath has been sworn by both truths to affirm that which has been stated in the preceding verses.

25. The object is to impress the point that the Prophet has no authority whatever to make any change in the Revelation. If he did so, he would be severely punished. The style depicts the prompt and quick action of a king who strikes off the head of an official, holding him by the hand, if he commits a forgery in his name. Some people have misconstrued this verse to mean that if the heart-vein or neck-vein of an impostor is not immediately severed by Allah, it would be a proof that he was a true prophet, whereas in this verse what has been said is about a true prophet and not about the impostors. Some impostors have even claimed to be God and have thrived and lived long lives in the world, so it could not be a proof of the truth of their claim. For a full discussion of this question, see E.N. 23 of Sūrah Yūnus.

26. That is, the Qur'ān is an admonition for those who wish to avoid wrongdoing and its evil consequences. (For explanation, see E.N. 3 of Al-Baqarah).

27. That is, they will ultimately have to despair and regret as to why they had rejected this Qur'ān.



LXX

AL-MA'ĀRIJ

المعَارِج

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

LXX
AL-MA'ĀRIJ

المَعَارِج

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from the word *dhil-Ma'ārij* in verse 3.

Period of Revelation

The subject-matter bears evidence that this Sūrah too was sent down in conditions closely resembling those under which Sūrah Al-Hāāqqah was sent down.

Theme and Subject-Matter

It admonishes and gives warning to the disbelievers who made fun of the news about Resurrection and the Hereafter, and Hell and Heaven, and challenged the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) to cause Resurrection with which he threatened them to take place if what he said was true and they had become worthy of the punishment in Hell by denying it. The whole Sūrah is meant to answer this denial.

The Sūrah opens with words to the effect: "A demander has demanded a torment, the torment which must befall the deniers; and when it takes place, there will be none to prevent it, but it will take place at its own appointed time. Allah has His own way of doing things, but He is not unjust. Therefore, have patience, O Prophet, at what they say. They think it is far off, but We see it as near at hand."

Then it is said: "Resurrections which they desire to be hastened out of jest and fun, is terrible, and when it comes, it will cause great distress to the culprits. At that time they will even be prepared to give away their wives and children and their nearest kinsfolk in ransom to escape the punishment, but they will not be able to escape it."

Then the people have been warned to the effect: "On that Day the destinies of men will be decided strictly on the basis of their belief and their conduct. Those who turn away from the Truth in the world and amass wealth and withhold it from the needy, will be doomed to hell: and those who fear the punishment of God here, believe in the Hereafter, keep up the Prayer, discharge the rights of the needy out of their wealth, strictly avoid immoral and wicked deeds, practise honesty in all their dealings, fulfil their pledges and trusts and bear true witness, will have a place of honour in Paradise."

In conclusion, the disbelievers of Makkah who rushed in upon the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) from every side as soon as they saw him, in order to make fun of him, have been warned to the effect: "If you do not believe, Allah will replace you by other people who will

be better than you", and the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been consoled, so as to say: "Do not take to heart their mockery and jesting: leave them to indulge in their idle talk and foolish conduct if they are bent upon experiencing the disgrace and humiliation of the Resurrection; they will themselves see their evil end."

سُوْرَةُ الْمَعَارِج مَكِّيَّة

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

سَاَلَ سَآئِلٌۢ بِعَذَابٍ وَّاقِعٍ ۙ لِّلْكٰفِرِيْنَ لَيْسَ لَهٗ دَافِعٌ ۙ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ ذِى
الْمَعَارِجِ ۚ تَعْرُجُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ وَالرُّوْحُ اِلَيْهِ فِىْ يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهٗ خَمْسِيْنَ
اَلْفَ سَنَةٍ ۚ فَاصْبِرْ صَبْرًا جَمِيْلًا ۚ اِنَّهُمْ يَرَوْنَهٗ بَعِيْدًا ۙ وَّنَرٰىهُ قَرِيْبًا ۙ
يَوْمَ تَكُوْنُ السَّمَآءُ كَالْمُهْلِ ۙ وَتَكُوْنُ الْجِبَالُ كَالْعِهْنِ ۙ وَلَا يَسْـَٔلُ حَمِيْمٌ
حَمِيْمًا ۙ يُّبَصَّرُوْنَهُمْ ۚ يَوَدُّ الْمُجْرِمُ لَوْ يَفْتَدِىْ مِنْ عَذَابِ يَوْمِئِذٍۢ بِبَنِيْهِ ۙ
وَصَاحِبَتِهٖ وَاَخِيْهِ ۙ وَفَصِيْلَتِهِ الَّتِىْ تُـْٔوِيْهِ ۙ وَمَنْ فِى الْاَرْضِ جَمِيْعًا
ثُمَّ يُنْجِيْهِ ۙ كَلَّا ۚ اِنَّهَا لَظٰى ۙ نَزَّاعَةً لِّلشَّوٰى ۚ تَدْعُوْا مَنْ اَدْبَرَ وَتَوَلّٰى ۙ
وَجَمَعَ فَاَوْعٰى ۙ اِنَّ الْاِنْسَانَ خُلِقَ هَلُوْعًا ۙ اِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ جَزُوْعًا ۙ وَّاِذَا
مَسَّهُ الْخَيْرُ مَنُوْعًا ۙ اِلَّا الْمُصَلِّيْنَ ۙ الَّذِيْنَ هُمْ عَلٰى صَلَاتِهِمْ دَآئِمُوْنَ ۙ
وَالَّذِيْنَ فِىْٓ اَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ مَّعْلُوْمٌ ۙ لِّلسَّآئِلِ وَالْمَحْرُوْمِ ۙ وَالَّذِيْنَ
يُصَدِّقُوْنَ بِيَوْمِ الدِّيْنِ ۙ وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابِ رَبِّهِمْ مُّشْفِقُوْنَ ۙ
اِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّهِمْ غَيْرُ مَاْمُوْنٍ ۙ وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ لِفُرُوْجِهِمْ حٰفِظُوْنَ ۙ اِلَّا
عَلٰٓى اَزْوَاجِهِمْ اَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ اَيْمَانُهُمْ فَاِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُوْمِيْنَ ۙ فَمَنِ ابْتَغٰى
وَرَآءَ ذٰلِكَ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْعٰدُوْنَ ۙ وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ لِاَمٰنٰتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ
رٰعُوْنَ ۙ وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ بِشَهٰدٰتِهِمْ قَآئِمُوْنَ ۙ وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ عَلٰى صَلَاتِهِمْ
يُحَافِظُوْنَ ۙ اُولٰٓئِكَ فِىْ جَنّٰتٍ مُّكْرَمُوْنَ ۙ فَمَالِ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا قِبَلَكَ

LXX

AL-MA'ĀRIJ

المَعَارِج

Verses: 44 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

A demander has demanded a torment,[1] (the torment) which must befall. It is for the disbelievers. There is none to avert it. It will come from that God Who is the Owner of the Steps of Ascent.[2] The angels and the Spirit[3] ascend to His Presence[4] in a day whose measure is fifty thousand years.[5] So, have patience, O Prophet, a graceful patience.[6] They think it is far off, but We see it as near at hand.[7] (The torment shall befall on the Day)[8] when the heavens shall be like molten silver,[9] and the mountains like carded wool of different colours[10] And no close friend shall ask after his close friend, though they will be shown to each other.[11] To save himself from the torment of that Day, the culprit shall wish to give his children, his wife, his brother, his kins-folk who gave him shelter, and all the people of the earth, in ransom that this device might rescue him. No, never! It will be the flame of the blazing Fire, that will eat up the very flesh. It shall summon to itself every such person who drew away and turned his back and amassed wealth and guarded it jealously.[12] 1-18

Indeed, man has been created impatient.[13] When affliction befalls him, he becomes fretful, and when good fortune falls to his lot he becomes stingy. But those people (are an exception) who are the performers of *ṣalāt*,[14] who are steadfast and ever constant in regard to their *ṣalāt*;[15] in whose wealth there is a due share of the beggar and the needy;[16] who believe in the reality of the Day of Recompense;[17] who dread the torment of their Lord,[18] for from the torment of their Lord none can feel secure; who guard their private parts[19]—except with regard to their wives and those women who are legally in their possession, for in their case they are not blameworthy, but those who 19-35

go beyond this are indeed transgressors;[20]—who keep their trusts and honour their promises;[21] who bear true witnesses;[22] and who strictly guard their *salāt*.[23] These are they who shall live with honour in the Gardens of Paradise.

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1. Some commentators have taken the verb *sa'ala* in the Text in the meaning of asking, and have interpreted the verse to mean: "The asker has asked: whom will the torment with which we are being threatened befall?" And Allah has answered it, saying: "It will befall the disbelievers." But most of the commentators have taken *sa'ala* here in the meaning of demanding. Nasā'ī and other traditionists have related a tradition from Ibn 'Abbās, and Hākim holds it as authentic, that Nadr bin al-Hārith Kaladah had said "O God, if it is really the Truth sent down by You, then rain down stones on us from the heavens, or send down any other painful torment on us." (Al-Anfāl: 32). Apart from this, at several places in the Qur'ān the disbelievers' this challenge has been related: "Why don't you bring down on us the torment that you threaten us with?" For instance, see Yūnus: 46-48, Al-Anbiya': 36-41, An-Naml: 67 72, Sabā: 26-30, Yā Sīn: 45-52, Al-Mulk: 24-27.

2. *Ma'ārij* is plural of *mi'raj*, which means a stairway, or a ladder, or something by which one may go up. To call Allah *dhil-Ma'ārij* (Owner of the Steps of Ascent) means that He is Most High and in order to go up into His Presence the angels have to ascend many heights, one above the other, as has been stated in the following verses,

3. "The Spirit": the Angel Gabriel (peace be on him), who has been mentioned separately from the angels in order to impress his unique glory and greatness. In Sūrah Ash-Shu'arā' it has been said: "The trustworthy Spirit has come down with this Qur'ān upon your heart", (v. 193), and in Sūrah Al-Baqarah "Say to them: whoever is an enemy to Gabriel, should understand that he has, by Allah's command, revealed upon your heart this Qur'ān." (v. 97). These verses when read together show that Ar-Rūh (the Spirit) implies the Angel Gabriel.

4. This is an ambiguous theme the meaning of which cannot be determined precisely. We neither have any knowledge of the reality of the angels, nor can understand the nature of their ascent, nor can conceive the stairways on which they ascend. Besides, about Allah also it cannot be imagined that He lives in a particular place, for He is exalted and free from the restrictions of space and time.

5. In Al-Hajj: 47, it has been said: "These people are demanding of you to hasten the torment; Allah will never fail to fulfil His threat, but a day with your Lord is equal to a thousand years as you reckon." In Sūrah As-Sajdah: 5, it has been said: "He administers the affairs of the world from the heavens to the earth,

and the report of this administration ascends (to be presented) before Him in a Day whose length, according to your reckoning, is a thousand years". And here, in response to the demand for the torment, the measure of Allah's one day has been stated to be fifty thousand years. Then the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been consoled, saying: "Have patience at the demand for the torment which the people make out of jest and fun," and then it is said: "They think it is far off, but We see it as near at hand." When all these verses are read together, what becomes obvious is: "The people, because of their narrow and restricted outlook, measure the time of Allah's decrees by their own scales of time and, therefore, consider a hundred years or so to be a very lengthy period, whereas in the Divine conduct of affairs there are schemes spreading over a thousand years each, or fifty thousand years each, as you reckon, and this measure also is only by way of example; otherwise schemes in the universe may extend over millions and billions of years as well. Of these one is the scheme under which Mankind has been created on the earth, and a time limit has been set during which it has been allowed to function here. No man can know when this scheme began, what time-limit has been decreed for its completion, what Hour has been appointed for bringing it to an end, when Resurrection will take place, and what time has been fixed for raising all men, born since the beginning of creation till Resurrection, from death simultaneously and calling them to account for their deeds. We only know to some extent that part of the scheme which is passing before us, or a partial history of the past ages which exists with us. As for its beginning and end, to say nothing of knowing it, we do not even have the power to understand it, not to speak of understanding the wisdom which works behind and underlies it. Now the people who demand that the scheme be cut short and its conclusion be brought immediately before them, and if this is not done, they use it for an argument to prove that the universe has no end and conclusion, in fact, present a proof of their own ignorance and folly. (For further explanation, see E.N.'s 92, 93 of Surah Al-Hajj, E.N. 9 of As-Sajdah).

6. "A goodly patience": "A kind of patience that behoves a magnanimous person like you."

7. This can have two meanings: (1) "That these people think it cannot possibly take place, and in Our view it is going to take place very soon"; and (2) "that these people think Resurrection is yet remote and far off, and in Our sight it is close at hand and may occur any moment."

8. A section of the commentators regard this sentence as related to "a day whose measure is fifty thousand years"; they say that the day whose measure has been stated to be fifty thousand years is the Day of Resurrection. In Musnad Ahmad and in the *Tafsīr* by Ibn Jarir, a tradition has been related on the authority

of Hadrat Abū Sa'īd Khudrī, saying: "When wonder and amazement was expressed before the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) about the length of this Day with reference to this verse, he replied: 'By Him in Whose hand is my life, the believer will find the Day even lighter (of shorter duration) than the time he takes in performing an obligatory Prayer in the world'." Had this tradition been reported through authentic channels, this verse could not be interpreted in any other way, but two of its transmitters, Darrāj and his teacher Abul-Haytham, are both weak and untrustworthy.

9. That is, it will change its colour over and over again.

10. As the colours of the mountains are different, when they are uprooted and they drift about weightless, they will appear like flakes of carded wool of different colours.

11. Not so that they will not see each other, therefore they will not ask after each other's welfare, but each will be seeing the other in agony and distress, yet will ignore him, being wholly preoccupied with his own torment.

12. Here also, as in Al-Hāāqqah: 33-34, two causes have been mentioned of a person's evil end in the Hereafter: (1) His repudiation of the Truth and refusal to affirm faith; and (2) his worship of the world and stinginess because of which he amasses wealth and refuses to spend it on any good cause.

13. "Man has been created impatient": It is man's nature, or his natural weakness, to be impatient. Here, one should keep in view that at many places in the Qur'ān, after making mention of mankind's common moral weaknesses, those who believe and adopted righteousness have been made an exception; the same theme is being expressed in the following verses. This by itself explains the truth that these hereditary weaknesses are not unalterable; if man accepts the guidance sent down by God and tries to reform himself practically, he can remove them, and if he gives a free rope to his self these become ingrained in him deeply. (For further explanation, see E.N. 41 of Al-Anbiyā', E.N.'s 23-28 of Az-Zumar, E.N. 75 of Ash-Shūrā).

14. A person's performing the *salāt* necessarily implies that he believes in Allah, His Messenger, His Book and the Hereafter as well as tries to act according to his belief.

15. That is, no laziness, or love of ease and comfort, no occupation, or interest, hinders them from being punctual and regular at the prayer. When the Prayer time comes, they abandon every occupation and activity and stand up to perform worship of their God. Another meaning which Hadrat 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir has given of *'alā salāt-i-him dāā'imūn* is that they perform the Prayer with full peace of mind, tranquillity and humility; they do not try to offer the Prayer in a

hurry in order to get rid of it somehow, nor think irrelevant things during the Prayer.

16. In Sūrah Adh-Dhāriyāt: 19, it has been said: "In their wealth there is a right of the beggar and the needy", and here: "In their wealth there is a due share of the beggar and the needy." Some people have understood this to mean that the "due share" implies the obligatory *zakāt*, for in the *zakāt* both the exemption limit and the rate have been fixed. But this commentary cannot be accepted on the ground that the Sūrah Al-Ma'ārij is unanimously a Makkan Revelation, and the *zakāt* with its specific exemption limit and rate was enjoined at Madīnah. Therefore, the correct meaning of the "due share" is that they have of their own accord set aside a share in their possessions of the beggar and needy, which they discharge regularly and honestly. This same meaning of this verse has been given by Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, Mujāhid, Sha'bī and Ibrāhim Nakha'ī.

Here, *sā'il* does not imply a beggar but a needy person, who asks someone for help, and *maḥrūm* implies a person who is jobless, or the one who tries to earn a living but does not earn enough to meet his needs, or the one who has become disabled because of an accident or calamity, and is unable to make a living. About such people when it becomes known that they are destitute, a God - worshipper does not wait that they should ask for help, but helps them of his own accord as soon as he comes to know that they are needy and stand in need of help. (For further explanation, see E.N. 17 of Sūrah Adh-Dhāriyat).

17. "Who believe ... Day of Recompense": who do not think they are irresponsible but believe that one Day they will have to appear before their God and render to Him an account of their deeds.

18. In other words, they are not like the disbelievers, who do not fear God even after they have committed every heinous sin and crime and perpetrated every cruelty in the world, but they, in spite of having adopted a righteous attitude in morals and deeds as best as they could, fear God and continue to remain in constant awe lest their shortcomings should exceed their good works before Him and they should be declared as worthy of punishment. (For further explanation, see E.N. 54 of Al-Mu'minūn, E.N. 19 of Adh-Dhāriyāt).

19. "Who guard their private parts": who abstain from adultery as well as from nudity and exposing their private parts before others. (For explanation, see E.N 6 of Al-Mu'minūn, E.N.'s 30, 32 of An-Nūr E.N. 62 of Al-Ahzāb).

20. For explanation, see E.N. 7 of Al-Mu'minūn.

[Contd. on p. 62

مُهْطِعِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾ عَنِ الْيَمِينِ وَعَنِ الشِّمَالِ عِزِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾ أَيَطْمَعُ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ
مِّنْهُمْ أَن يُدْخَلَ جَنَّةَ نَعِيمٍ ﴿٣٨﴾ كَلَّا ۖ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُم مِّمَّا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾ فَلَا
أُقْسِمُ بِرَبِّ الْمَشَارِقِ وَالْمَغَارِبِ إِنَّا لَقَادِرُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾ عَلَىٰ أَن نُّبَدِّلَ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ
وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَسْبُوقِينَ ﴿٤١﴾ فَذَرْهُمْ يَخُوضُوا وَيَلْعَبُوا حَتَّىٰ يُلَاقُوا يَوْمَهُمُ الَّذِي
يُوعَدُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾ يَوْمَ يَخْرُجُونَ مِنَ الْأَجْدَاثِ سِرَاعًا كَأَنَّهُمْ إِلَىٰ نُصُبٍ يُوفِضُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾
خَاشِعَةً أَبْصَارُهُمْ تَرْهَقُهُمْ ذِلَّةٌ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ الْيَوْمُ الَّذِي كَانُوا يُوعَدُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

36-44 So, O prophet, what is the matter with the disbelievers that they are rushing in towards you, from the right and from the left, in groups?[24] Does everyone of them cherish the desire that he will be admitted into the Garden of Bliss?[25] No, never! They themselves know of what We have created them.[26] Not so![27] I swear by the Owner of the Easts and the Wests[28] that We have the power to replace them by better people than they, and there is none to outstrip Us.[29] Hence, leave them engrossed in their vain talk and sport until they encounter that Day of theirs which they are being promised, when they shall be rushing out of their graves as though racing towards the shrines of their deities.[30] Their eyes shall be downcast and abasement shall be covering them. That is the Day which they are being promised.

Contd. from p.61

21. "Trusts" imply those trusts which Allah has entrusted to men as well as those which one man entrusts to another because of faith and confidence. Likewise, "promises" imply those promises which man makes with his God as well as those which one man makes with another. Keeping and fulfilling both these kinds of trusts and promises is a necessary characteristic of a believer. In a *Ḥadīth* Hadrat Anas (may Allah bless him) has reported that when ever the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) addressed his Companions, he would always give them the instruction: "Beware, the one who does not keep his trust has no faith, and one who does not fulfil his pledges, has no religion." (Baihaqi. *Ash-Shu'ab al-Imān).*

22. That is, they neither conceal evidence nor change it in any way for selfish motives.

23. This gives an idea of the importance of the Prayer *(salāt)*. The description of the merits of the high and sublime character of those who have been declared as worthy of Paradise, began with the Prayer and has been concluded with it. To be a performer of the Prayer is their first characteristic, to be steadfast and ever constant with regard to the Prayer is their second characteristic, and to guard their Prayer is their last characteristic. "Guarding the Prayer" implies many things: to perform the Prayer at its right time, to make sure before the Prayer that one's body and clothes are clean and pure, to have performed the ablutions and to have washed the limbs well, to perform the basic elements of the Prayer with its obligatory and desirable parts with due care and attention, to observe the requisite rites of the Prayer carefully, to avoid disobedience of God, which is destructive of the Prayer; all these are included in the guarding of the Prayer.

24. This refers to those disbelievers who would rush in towards the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) from every side to mock and ridicule him when they heard him preach Islam and recite the Qur'ān.

25. It means that God's Paradise is only for those righteous people whose characteristics have just been described above, Now, can these people who are not at all inclined to listen to the truth and who are rushing in towards the Prophet in order to suppress every invitation to the truth, be candidates for Paradise? Has God prepared His Paradise only for such people as they? Here, one should also keep in view vv. 34-41 of Sūrah Al-Qalam in which an answer has been given to this saying of the disbelievers of Makkah: "Even if there is any life after death, we shall have good time there too, as we are having in the world, and the torment would befall Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) and his followers and not us."

26. Here, this sentence can have two meanings: (1) If it is taken to be related to the preceding theme, it will mean: As for the substance these people have been created from, all men are equal. For if the substance itself be the cause of man's entry into Paradise, then the good and the bad, the wicked and the just, the guilty and the innocent, all should go to Paradise. But a little common sense is enough to decide that man's qualifications for Paradise are created not on the basis of the substance of his creation but only on the basis of his merit and excellence. (2) If this sentence is regarded as an introduction to the following theme, it would mean: "These people think they are secure from Our torment and mock the one who warns them of Our punishment, whereas We can punish them even in this world as and when We please, as well as resurrect them after death as and when We like. They themselves know that We began their creation from an insignificant

sperm-drop and developed them into a living man. If they had only considered this mode of their creation, they would never have been involved in the misunderstanding that they now have escaped Our grasp, or that We have no power to create them over again."

27. That is, the truth is not that which these people think it is.

28. Here, Allah has sworn an oath by Himself. The words Easts and Wests have been used because the sun rises and sets at a new angle every day during the year, and goes on rising and setting successively at different times around the globe. Thus considered the Easts and the Wests are not one but many. From another point of view as against the north and the south there is a direction of east and a direction of west. On this basis in Sūrah Ash-Shu'arā': 28 and Al-Muzzammil:19 the words *Rabb-ul-mashriqi wal-maghrib* have been used. From still another view-point the earth has two easts and two wests, for when the sun sets on one hemisphere, it rises on the other. On this basis the words *Rabb-ul-mashriqayn wa Rabb-ul-maghribayn* (Lord of two easts and two wests) have been used in Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān: 17. (For further explanation, see E.N. 17 of Ar-Raḥmān).

29. This is that for which Allah Almighty has sworn an oath of His being Lord of the Easts and Wests. It means: "As We are Owners of the Easts and Wests, the whole earth is under Our control and power, and you have no power to escape Our punishment: We can destroy you as and when We like and can create another people that may be better than you."

30. There is a difference of opinion among the commentators about the meaning of the word *nuṣub*. Some have interpreted it to mean idols, according to which the meaning would be: "They would be racing towards the place appointed by the Lord of Resurrection as they race today towards the shrines of their idols"; and some others have taken *nuṣub* to mean the goal signs which are set for the competitors in a race, so that each tries to reach and touch the appointed post before the other.



LXXI

NŪḤ

نُوح

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

LXXI
NŪḤ
نُوح

INTRODUCTION

Name

"Nūḥ" is the name of this Sūrah as well as the title of its subject-matter, for in it, from beginning to the end, the story of the Prophet Noah has been related.

Period of Revelation

This also is one of the earliest Sūrahs o bc revealed at Makkah, but the internal evidence of its subject-matter shows that it was sent down in the period when opposition to the Holy Prophet's message of Islam by the disbelievers of Makkah had grown very strong and active.

Theme and Subject

In this Sūrah the story of the Prophet Noah has not been related only for the sake of story-telling, but its object is to warn the disbelievers of Makkah, so as to say: "You, O people of Makkah, are adopting towards Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) the same attitude as the people of the Prophet Noah had adopted towards him; if you do not change this attitude, you too would meet with the same end." This has not been said in so many words anywhere in the Sūrah, but in the background of the conditions under which this story was narrated to the people of Makkah, this subject itself became obvious.

Vv. 2-4 briefly explain how he began his mission and what he preached.

Then after suffering hardships and troubles in the way of preaching his mission for ages the report that he made to his Lord has been given in vv. 5-20. In it he states how he had been trying to bring his people to the right path and how his people had stubbornly opposed him.

After this, the Prophet Noah's final submission has been recorded in vv. 21-24, in which he prays to his Lord, saying: "These people have rejected my invitation: they are blindly following their chiefs, who have devised a tremendous plot of deceit and cunning. Time now has come when these people should be deprived of every grace to accept guidance." This was not an expression of impatience by the Prophet Noah, but when after having preached his message under extremely trying circumstances for centuries he became utterly disappointed with his people, he formed the opinion that no chance whatever was left of their coming to the right path. His this opinion fully conformed to Allah's own decision. Thus, in the next verse (25), it has been said: "The torment of Allah descended on those people because of their misdeeds."

In the concluding verse, the Prophet Noah's supplication that he made to his Lord, right at the time the torment descended, has been recorded. In it he prays for his own and for all the believers' forgiveness, and makes a submission to Allah to the effect: "Do not leave any of the disbelievers alive on the earth, for they have become

utterly devoid of every good: they will not beget any but disbelieving and wicked descendents."

While studying this Sūrah one should keep in view the details of the Prophet Noah's story which have been given in the Qur'ān above. For this see Al-A'rāf: 59-64, Yūnus: 71, 73, Hūd: 25-49, Al-Mu'minūn: 23-31, Ash-Shu'arā': 105-122, Al-'Ankabūt: 14, 15, Aṣ-Ṣāffāt: 75-82, Al-Qamar: 9-16.



إِنَّآ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِۦٓ أَنْ أَنذِرْ قَوْمَكَ مِن قَبْلِ أَن يَأْتِيَهُمْ عَذَابٌ
أَلِيمٌ ﴿١﴾ قَالَ يَٰقَوْمِ إِنِّى لَكُمْ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٢﴾ أَنِ ٱعْبُدُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ وَٱتَّقُوهُ وَ
أَطِيعُونِ ﴿٣﴾ يَغْفِرْ لَكُم مِّن ذُنُوبِكُمْ وَيُؤَخِّرْكُمْ إِلَىٰٓ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۚ إِنَّ أَجَلَ
ٱللَّهِ إِذَا جَآءَ لَا يُؤَخَّرُ ۖ لَوْ كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّى دَعَوْتُ قَوْمِى لَيْلًا
وَنَهَارًا ﴿٥﴾ فَلَمْ يَزِدْهُمْ دُعَآءِىٓ إِلَّا فِرَارًا ﴿٦﴾ وَإِنِّى كُلَّمَا دَعَوْتُهُمْ لِتَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ
جَعَلُوٓا۟ أَصَٰبِعَهُمْ فِىٓ ءَاذَانِهِمْ وَٱسْتَغْشَوْا۟ ثِيَابَهُمْ وَأَصَرُّوا۟ وَٱسْتَكْبَرُوا۟
ٱسْتِكْبَارًا ﴿٧﴾ ثُمَّ إِنِّى دَعَوْتُهُمْ جِهَارًا ﴿٨﴾ ثُمَّ إِنِّىٓ أَعْلَنتُ لَهُمْ وَأَسْرَرْتُ لَهُمْ
إِسْرَارًا ﴿٩﴾ فَقُلْتُ ٱسْتَغْفِرُوا۟ رَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُۥ كَانَ غَفَّارًا ﴿١٠﴾ يُرْسِلِ ٱلسَّمَآءَ عَلَيْكُم
مِّدْرَارًا ﴿١١﴾ وَيُمْدِدْكُم بِأَمْوَٰلٍ وَبَنِينَ وَيَجْعَل لَّكُمْ جَنَّٰتٍ وَيَجْعَل لَّكُمْ
أَنْهَٰرًا ﴿١٢﴾ مَّا لَكُمْ لَا تَرْجُونَ لِلَّهِ وَقَارًا ﴿١٣﴾ وَقَدْ خَلَقَكُمْ أَطْوَارًا ﴿١٤﴾ أَلَمْ تَرَوْا۟ كَيْفَ
خَلَقَ ٱللَّهُ سَبْعَ سَمَٰوَٰتٍ طِبَاقًا ﴿١٥﴾ وَجَعَلَ ٱلْقَمَرَ فِيهِنَّ نُورًا وَجَعَلَ ٱلشَّمْسَ

LXXI

NŪH

Verses: 28 نوح *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

We sent Noah to his people (as a Messenger, with the instruction): "Warn your people before there comes upon them a painful torment."[1] 1

He said, "O my people, I am a plain warner to you. (I warn you) that you should worship Allah, and fear Him and obey me.[2] Allah will forgive you your sins,[3] and will give you respite till an appointed time.[4] The fact is that when the appointed time of Allah comes, it 2-4

cannot be deferred.[5] Would that you know it."[6]

5-20 Noah submitted,[7] "O my Lord, I called my people night and day, but my calling has only increased their aversion.[8] And whenever I called them that You might pardon them,[9] they thrust their fingers into their ears and covered their faces with their garments,[10] and grew obstinate and showed great arrogance.[11] Then I invited them openly and preached to them in public as well as in private. I said, 'Seek forgiveness from your Lord: indeed He is All-Forgiving. He will send abundant rains for you from heaven, will help you with wealth and children, will create gardens for you, and provide flowing rivers for you.[12] What is the matter with you that you do not expect for Allah any dignity,[13] although He has created you in successive stages?[14] Do you not see how Allah has created seven heavens, one above the other and made the moon a light in them and the sun a lamp? And Allah has caused you to grow out of the earth in a strange way,[15] then He will restore you to the same earth, and will raise you up from it suddenly. And Allah has spread out the earth as a carpet for you that you may walk in its open paths'."

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1 "Warn your people ... ": Warn them that the errors and moral evils that they were involved in, would only earn them Allah's punishment, if they did not desist from them, and tell them what way they should adopt in order to ward off that punishment.

2. The three things which the Prophet Noah presented before his people at the outset of his mission of Prophethood were: (1) Worship of Allah, (2) adoption of piety (*taqwā*), and (3) obedience of the Messenger. Worship of Allah meant that they should give up worship and service of all others and should acknowledge Allah alone as their Deity and should worship and carry out His commands alone. *Taqwā* (piety) meant that they should refrain from all those works which caused Allah's anger and displeasure, and should instead adopt such attitude in their lives as the God fearing people should adopt. As for "obey me", it meant that they should obey the commands that he gave them as Allah's Messenger.

3. The sentence *yaghfir la-kum min dhunūb-i-kum* in the original does not mean that Allah will forgive some of their sins, but its correct meaning is: "If you accept and acknowledge the three things which are being presented before you, He will forgive all the sins that you have committed in the past."

4. That is, "If you accepted these three things, you would be given respite to live in the world until the time that Allah has appointed for your natural death."

5. "The appointed time of Allah .. ": the time fixed by Allah for sending down a torment on a people. In this regard the Qur'ān has at several places stated explicitly that when Allah's torment has been decreed for a certain people, they are not pardoned even if they affirm the faith after it.

6. That is, "If you come to know fully well that the time which is now passing after you have received Allah's message through me, is, in fact, a period of respite that has been granted to you for affirming the faith—and there is no chance of escape from Allah's torment after the term of respite has elapsed—you would testify to the faith without delay and would not like to postpone it until the torment actually started descending on you."

7. Omitting the history of a long period of preaching, now the Prophet Noah's petition that he made to Allah in the last stage of his worldly mission is being related.

8. That is, "As I went on calling them towards You, they went on fleeing farther and farther away from You."

9. "That you might pardon them": that they might give up their attitude of disobedience and beg forgiveness of Allah, for in that way alone they could be forgiven by Allah.

10. They covered their faces either because they did not even like to have a look at the Prophet Noah's face, not to speak of listening to what he said, or they did so in order to hide their own faces from him as they passed by him so that he could not recognize and address them. This precisely was the attitude and conduct which the disbelievers of Makkah were adopting towards the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). In Sūrah Hūd: 5, their attitude has been described thus: "Behold, they turn aside their chests in order to hide themselves from him. Beware, even when they cover themselves up with their garments, Allah knows alike what they hide and what they show; He indeed knows even the secrets they conceal in their breasts." (For explanation, see E.N, 5, 6 of Hūd).

11. "Arrogance" implies that they thought it was below their dignity to bow before the Truth and accept the admonition of Allah's Messenger. As for example, if a gentlmen admonishes a perverted person and he, in response, shakes his head and walks away haughtily, this would amount to rejecting the admonition with arrogance.

12. This theme has been expressed at several places in the Qur'ān that the rebellious attitude against God causes man to lead a wretched life not only in the Hereafter but also in this world. Contrary to this, if a nation adopts the way of faith and piety and obedience to Divine Commands, instead of disobedience, it benefits it not only in the Hereafter but also in the world; it is favoured with every

kind of blessing. In Sūrah Tā Hā it has been said: "And whoever turns away from My Admonition, will have a wretched life in the world, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Resurrection." (v. 124). In Sūrah Al-Mā'idah it has been said: "Had the people of the Book observed the Torah and the Gospel and the other Books which had been sent down by their Lord, abundance of provisions would have been given to them from above and from beneath." (v. 66). In Al-A'rāf: "Had the people of the settlements believed and adopted the way of piety, We would have opened on them doors of blessings from the heavens and the earth." (v. 96). In Sūrah Hūd, the Prophet Hūd addressed his people, saying: "And O my people, beg forgiveness of your Lord, then turn to Him in penitence, and He will open the gates of heavens for you and add more strength to your present strength." (v. 52). Through the Holy Prophet himself in this very Sūrah Hūd, the people of Makkah have been admonished to the effect: "And you should beg forgiveness of your Lord, then return to Him, and He will provide you with good provisions of life till an appointed term." (v. 3). According to the *Ḥadīth*, the Holy Prophet said to the Quraish: "There is a word which, if you accept, would enable you to rule over the Arab as well as the non-Arab world." (For explanation, see E.N. 96 of Al-Mā'idah, E.N.'s 3, 57 of Hūd, E.N. 105 of Ṭā Ḥā; Introduction to Sūrah Ṣuad).

Acting on this same instruction from the Qur'ān, once during a famine Ḥaḍrat 'Umar came out to invoke Allah for the rain and begged only forgiveness of Him. The people said: "O Commander of the Faithful, you have not prayed for the rain." He replied: "I have knocked at the doors of heaven wherefrom the rain is sent down", and then he recited these verses of Sūrah Nūḥ to them. (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathīr). Likewise, when in the assembly of Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣrī, a person complained of drought, he said to him "Beg forgiveness of Allah." Another person complained of poverty, a third one said that he was not being blessed with children, a fourth one said that his harvest had failed, and he continued to remind everyone to beg forgiveness of Allah. The people asked: "How is it that you have suggested to all the people one and the same cure for the different complaints? He in response recited these verses of Sūrah Nūḥ to them" (Al-Kashshaf).

13. It means: "As for the petty chiefs of the world, you think it would be dangerous to do anything against their dignity, but as for the Creator and Lord of the universe, you do not expect that He would also be a Being endowed with dignity. You rebel against Him, associate others in His Divinity, disobey His Commands, and yet you are not at all afraid that He would punish you for your misconduct."

14. That is, "He has brought you to the present stage after passing you through different stages of creation and phases of development. In the beginning you lay in the form of sperm and ovum separately in the loins of your father and

mother. Then the two were combined by the power of Allah and you were conceived. Then for nine months in the womb of the mother you were gradually formed into a perfect human form and were endowed with all those capabilities which you needed to function as a man in the world. Then you came out as a child from the mother's womb, and you were developed from one state to another constantly until you attained to full youth and then old age. While passing through all these stages you lay wholly in the power of Allah at all times. Had He so willed He would not have allowed you to be conceived but allowed another person to be conceived in your place. Had He so pleased He would have made you blind, deaf, dumb, or a cripple, in the mother's womb itself, or made you mentally deficient. Had He so liked you would not have been born as a living child. Even after your birth He could have destroyed you any time by causing you to fall a victim to one or other accident suddenly. About that God under Whose power you are so powerless, how could you have taken it into your head that you could commit any insolence against Him, could regard Him with every treachery and ingratitude, could rebel against Him as and when you pleased, and could do all this with impunity?

15. Here, the creation of man out of the substances of the earth has been compared to the growth of vegetation. Just as at one time there was no vegetation on the earth, then Allah caused it to grow, so at one time man did not exist, then Allah created him.

سِرَاجًا ﴿١٦﴾ وَاللّٰهُ اَنْۢبَتَكُمْ مِّنَ الْاَرْضِ نَبَاتًا ﴿١٧﴾ ثُمَّ يُعِيْدُكُمْ فِيْهَا وَيُخْرِجُكُمْ
اِخْرَاجًا ﴿١٨﴾ وَاللّٰهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْاَرْضَ بِسَاطًا ﴿١٩﴾ لِّتَسْلُكُوْا مِنْهَا سُبُلًا فِجَاجًا ﴿٢٠﴾
قَالَ نُوْحٌ رَّبِّ اِنَّهُمْ عَصَوْنِيْ وَاتَّبَعُوْا مَنْ لَّمْ يَزِدْهُ مَالُهٗ وَوَلَدُهٗۤ اِلَّا
خَسَارًا ﴿٢١﴾ وَمَكَرُوْا مَكْرًا كُبَّارًا ﴿٢٢﴾ وَقَالُوْا لَا تَذَرُنَّ اٰلِهَتَكُمْ وَلَا تَذَرُنَّ وَدًّا
وَّلَا سُوَاعًا ۙ وَّلَا يَغُوْثَ وَيَعُوْقَ وَنَسْرًا ﴿٢٣﴾ وَقَدْ اَضَلُّوْا كَثِيْرًا ۚ وَلَا تَزِدِ
الظّٰلِمِيْنَ اِلَّا ضَلٰلًا ﴿٢٤﴾ مِمَّا خَطِيْٓـٰٔتِهِمْ اُغْرِقُوْا فَاُدْخِلُوْا نَارًا ۙ فَلَمْ يَجِدُوْا لَهُمْ
مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ اَنْصَارًا ﴿٢٥﴾ وَقَالَ نُوْحٌ رَّبِّ لَا تَذَرْ عَلَى الْاَرْضِ مِنَ
الْكٰفِرِيْنَ دَيَّارًا ﴿٢٦﴾ اِنَّكَ اِنْ تَذَرْهُمْ يُضِلُّوْا عِبَادَكَ وَلَا يَلِدُوْٓا اِلَّا فَاجِرًا
كَفَّارًا ﴿٢٧﴾ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِيْ وَلِوَالِدَيَّ وَلِمَنْ دَخَلَ بَيْتِيَ مُؤْمِنًا وَّلِلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ
وَالْمُؤْمِنٰتِ ۗ وَلَا تَزِدِ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ اِلَّا تَبَارًا ﴿٢٨﴾

21-24 Noah said, "O my Lord, they have disobeyed me and followed those (chiefs) whose wealth and children have increased them only in loss. They have devised a mighty plot;[16] they said, 'Do not at all abandon your gods, and do not abandon *Wadd* nor *Suwā'*, nor *Yaghūth* and *Ya'ūq* and *Nasr*.[17] They have led many people astray, and so (O Lord), increase not the wrongdoers in anything but deviation'."[18]

25-28 Only because of their sins they were drowned and were cast into Fire.[19] Then they found no helper to save them from Allah.[20] And Noah prayed: "My Lord, leave not on the earth any dweller from among the disbelievers. If you leave them, they would lead Your servants astray, and would beget none but sinners and disbelievers. My Lord, forgive me and my parents and whoever has entered my house as a believer, and all believing men and all believing women, and increase not the wrongdoers in anything but ruin."

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16. "Mighty plot": All those deceits, deceptions and frauds which the chiefs and religious guides were employing in an attempt to mislead the common people against the teachings of the Prophet Noah. For example, they said: "Noah is no more than a mere man like yourselves. How can one believe that Allah sends down Revelations to him?. (Al-A'rāf: 63, Hūd: 27). "We also see that only the

meanest of us have become his followers without due thought. Had there been some weight in what he says, the elders of the people would have believed in him." (Hūd: 27). "Had Allah willed, He would have sent down angels." (Al-Mu'minūn: 24). "Had he been sent by Allah, he would possess treasures, he would know the un-seen, and he would be free from all human needs, like the angels." (Hūd: 31). "We find nothing in him that might give him superiority over us." (Hūd: 27). "He merely intends to obtain superiority over you." (Al-Mu'minūn: 24). "Obviously, this man is possessed." (Al-Mu'minūn: 25). Similar were the things that the Quraish chiefs said to mislead the people against the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace).

17. Of the gods of the Prophet Noah's people only those gods have been mentioned, whom later the people of Arabia also had started worshipping and whose shrines were found all over the country at the advent of Islam. It is not impossible that the later generations heard the names of the ancient gods of Noah's people from the people who were saved from the flood, and when ignorance once again spread among their children, they made idols of the same gods and started worshipping them again.

Wadd was the god of the Banī Kalb bin Wabarah, a branch of the Qudā'ah tribe, whose shrine had been built at Daumat al-Jandal. In the ancient Arabian inscriptions he has been named as *Waddam ibam (father Wadd)*. Kalbī has stated that the image built to him was of a man of enormous size. The Quraish also acknowledged him as god and called him *Wudd*. It is after him that a person has been named 'Abd-i Wudd (slave of Wudd) in history.

Suwā' was the goddess of the Hudhayl tribe and her idol was a female figure. Her temple was situated at Ruhāṭ near Yanbū'.

Yaghūth was the god of An'um, a branch of the Ṭay tribe, and of some branches of the Madhjiḥ tribe. The people of Madhjiḥ had installed its idol, the image of a lion, at Jurash, a place between Yaman and Ḥijāz. Among the Quraish also some people had been named 'Abd-i Yaghūth.

Ya'ūq was the god of Khaywān, a branch of the Hamdān tribe, in the territory of Hamdān in Yaman; its idol was of the horse's figure.

Nasr was the god of Āl-i dhul-Kulā', a branch of the Himyar tribe, in the territory of Himyar; it had its idol installed at Balkha' and had the image of the vulture. In the ancient inscriptions of Sabā its name has been written as Nasor. Its temple was called *bayt Nasor* (house of Nasor) and its devotees *ahl Nasor* (people of Nasor). The ruins of the ancient temples that are found in Arabia and in the adjoining lands have the image of the vulture made on the doors of most of them.

18. As we have explained in the introduction to this Sūrah, the Prophe Noah did not invoke this curse out of impatience but he invoked it when, afte doing full justice to the preaching of his mission for many centuries, he became totally despaired of any success with his people. Similar were the conditions under which the Prophet Moses also had cursed Pharaoh and his people, thus: "Lord, destroy their wealth and harden their hearts in a manner so that they do not believe until they see the painful torment." And Allah, in response, had said: "The prayer of you both has been granted" Yūnus: 88-89). Like the Prophet Moses', the Prophet Noah's curse also was in complete conformity with Divine Will. Thus, in Sūrah Hūd it has been said: "And it was revealed to Noah: No more of your people will believe in you now than those who have already believed. So, do not grieve at their misdeeds." (v. 36).

19. That is, "Drowning was not their end, but after death their souls were immediately subjected to the punishment of the Fire." This precisely was the treatment that was meted out to Pharaoh and his people, as has been stated in Sūrah Al-Mu'min: 45-46. (For explanation, see F.N. 63 of Al-Mu'min). This verse also is of those verses which prove the punishment of *barzakh* (intermediary stage between death and Resurrection).

20. That is, "None of the gods whom they looked upon as their supporters and helpers came to their rescue." This, in fact, was a warning to the people of Makkah, as if to say: "If you too are subjected to the torment of Allah, these gods on whom you have placed all your reliance, will avail you absolutely nothing."



LXXII

AL-JINN

الجنّ

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

LXXII
AL-JINN

الجنّ

INTRODUCTION

Name

"Al-Jinn" is the name of this Sūrah as well as the title of its subject-matter, for in it the event of the Jinn's hearing the Qur'ān and returning to their people to preach Islam to them has been related in detail.

Period of Revelation

According to a tradition related in Bukhārī and Muslim, on the authority of Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, once the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was going to visit the Fair of 'Ukāz with some of his

Companions. On the way he led the Fajr Prayer at Nakhlah. At that time a company of the jinn happened to pass that way. When they heard the Qur'ān being recited, they tarried and listened to it attentively. This very event has been described in this Sūrah.

Most of the commentators, on the basis of this tradition, believe that this relates to the Holy Prophet's well-known journey to Ṭā'if, which had taken place three years before the Hijrah in the 10th year of the Prophethood. But this is not correct for several reasons. The jinn's hearing the Qur'ān during the journey to Ṭā'if has been related in Al-Ahqāf: 29-32. A cursory reading of those verses shows that the jinn who had believed after hearing the Qur'ān on that occasion were already believers in the Prophet Moses and the previous scriptures. On the contrary, vv. 2-7 of this Sūrah clearly show that the jinn who heard the Qur'ān on this occasion were polytheists and deniers of the Hereafter and Prophethood. Then, it is confirmed historically that in his journey to Ṭā'if none accompanied the Holy Prophet except Ḥaḍrat Zaid bin Ḥārithah. On the contrary, concerning this journey Ibn 'Abbās says that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was accompanied by some of his Companions. Furthermore, the traditions also agree that in that journey the jinn heard the Qur'ān when the Holy Prophet had stopped at Nakhlah on his return journey from Ṭā'if to Makkah, and in this journey, according to the traditions of Ibn 'Abbās, the event of the jinn's hearing the Qur'ān occurred when the Holy Prophet was going to 'Ukāẓ from Makkah. Therefore, in view of these reasons what seems to be correct is that in Sūrah Al-Aḥqāf and Sūrah Al-Jinn, one and the same event has not been narrated, but these were two separate events, which took place during two separate journeys.

As far as Sūrah Al-Aḥqāf is concerned, it is agreed that the event mentioned in it occurred on the return journey from Ṭā'if in the 10th year of Prophethood. As for the question, when this second event took place, its answer is not given by the tradition of Ibn 'Abbās, nor any other historical tradition shows as to when the Holy Prophet had gone to the Fair of 'Ukāẓ along with some of his Companions. However, a little consideration of vv, 8-10 of this Sūrah shows that this could only be an event of the earliest stage of Prophethood. In these verses it has been stated that before the appointment of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) to Divine Mission the jinn used to have one or another

opportunity to eavesdrop in the heavens in order to hear news of the unseen, but after it they suddenly found that angels had been set as guards and meteorites were being shot on every side so that they could find no place of safety from where they could hear the secret news. Thereupon they had set about searching for the unusual thing that had occurred on the earth, or was going to occur, because of which the security measures had been tightened up. Probably since then many companies of the jinn must have been moving about in search of the unusual occurrence and one of them after having heard the Qur'ān from the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) must have formed the opinion that this was the very thing for the sake of which all the gates of the heavens had been shut against the jinn.

Reality of Jinn

Before one starts the study of this Sūrah one must clearly know what is the reality of the jinn so as to avoid any possible mental confusion. Many people of the modern times are involved in the misunderstanding that the jinn are not real, but only a figment of the ancient superstition and myths. They have not formed this opinion on the basis that they have known all the realities and truths about the universe and have thus discovered that the jinn do not exist. They cannot claim to possess any such knowledge either. But they have assumed without reason and proof that nothing exists in the universe except what they can see, whereas the sphere of human perceptions as against the vastness of this great universe is not even comparable to a drop of water as against the ocean. Here, the person who thinks that what he does not perceive, does not exist, and what exists must necessarily be perceived, in fact, provides a proof of the narrowness of his own mind. With this mode of thought, not to speak of the jinn, man cannot even accept and acknowledge any reality, which he cannot directly experience and observe, and he cannot even admit the existence of God, to say nothing of admitting any other unseen reality.

Those of the Muslims who have been influenced by modernism, but cannot deny the Qur'ān either, have given strange interpretations of the clear statements of the Qur'ān about the jinn, Iblīs and Satan. They say that this does not refer to any hidden creation which may have its own independent existence, but it sometimes implies man's own animal forces, which have been called Satan, and sometimes it implies savage

and wild mountain tribes, and sometimes the people who used to listen to the Qur'ān secretly. But the statements of the Qur'ān in this regard are so clear and explicit that these interpretations bear no relevance to them whatever.

The Qur'ān frequently mentions the jinn and the men in a manner as to indicate that they are two separate creations. For this, see Al-A'rāf: 38. Hūd: 119, Ḥā Mīm As-Sajdah: 25, 29, Ahqāf: 18, Adh-Dhāriyāt: 56, and the entire Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān, which bears such clear evidence as to leave no room to regard the jinn as a human species.

In Sūrah Al-A'rāf: 12, Al-Ḥijr: 26-27 and Ar-Rahmān: 14-15, it has been expressly stated that man was created out of clay and jinn out of fire.

In Sūrah Al-Hijr: 27, it has been said that the jinn had been created before man. The same thing is testified by the story of Adam and Iblīs, which has been told at seven different places in the Qur'ān, and at every place it confirms that Iblis was already there at the creation of man. Moreover, in Sūrah Al-Kahf: 50 it has been stated that Iblīs belonged to the jinn.

In Sūrah Al-A'rāf: 27, it has been stated in clear words that the jinn see the human beings but the human beings do not see them.

In Sūrah Al-Ḥijr: 16-18, Sūrah Aṣ-Ṣāāffāt: 6-10 and Sūrah Al-Mulk: 15, it has been said that although the jinn can ascend to the heavens, they cannot exceed a certain limit; if they try to ascend beyond that limit and try to hear what goes on in the heavens, they are not allowed to do so, and if they try to eavesdrop they are driven away by meteorites. By this the belief of the polytheistic Arabs that the jinn possess the knowledge of the unseen, or have access to Divine secrets, has been refuted. The same error has also been refuted in Sabā: 14.

Al-Baqarah: 30-34 and Al-Kahf: 50 show that Allah has entrusted man with the vicegerency of the earth and the men are superior to the jinn. Although the jinn also have been given certain extraordinary powers and abilities an example of which is found in An-Naml: 39, yet the animals likewise have been given some powers greater than man, but these are no argument that the animals are superior to man.

The Qur'ān also explains that the jinn, like men, are a creation possessed of power and authority, and they, just like them, can choose between obedience and disobedience, faith and disbelief. This is confirmed by the story of Satan and the event of the jinn affirming the faith as found in Sūrahs Al-Ahqāf and Al-Jinn.

At scores of places in the Qur'ān, it has also been stated that Iblīs at the very creation of Adam had resolved to misguide mankind, and since then the Satanic jinn have been persistently trying to mislead man, but they do not have the power to overwhelm him and make him do something forcibly. However, they inspire him with evil suggestions, beguile him and make evil seem good to him. For this, see An-Nisā: 117-120, Al-A'rāf: 11-17, Ibrāhim: 22, Al-Ḥijr: 30-42, An-Nahl: 98-100, Banī Isrā'īl: 61-65.

The Qur'ān also tells us that in the pre-Islamic ignorance the polytheistic Arabs regarded the jinn as associates of God, worshipped them and thought they were descended from God. For this, see Al-An'ām: 100, Sabā: 40-41, Aṣ-Ṣāāffāt: 158.

From these details, it becomes abundantly clear that the jinn have their own objective existence and are a concealed creation of an entirely different species from man. Because of their mysterious qualities, ignorant people have formed exaggerated notions and concepts about them and their powers, and have even worshipped them, but the Qur'ān has explained the whole truth about them, which shows what they are and what they are not.

Theme and Topics

In this Sūrah in vv. 1-15, it has been told what was the impact of the Qur'ān on the company of the jinn when they heard it and what they said to their fellow jinn when they returned to them. Allah, in this connection, has not cited their whole conversation but only those particular things which were worthy of mention. That is why the style is not that of a continuous speech but sentences have been cited so as to indicate that they said this and this. If one studies these sentences spoken by the jinn carefully, one can easily understand the real object of the narration of this event of their affirming the faith and of mentioning this conversation of theirs with their people in the Qur'ān. The explanations

that we have given of their statements in our Notes will be of further help in understanding this object.

After this, in vv. 16-18, the people have been admonished to the effect: "If you refrain from polytheism and follow the way of righteousness firmly, you will be blessed; otherwise if you turn away from the admonition sent down by Allah, you will meet with a severe punishment." Then, in vv. 19-23, the disbelievers of Makkah have been reproached, as if to say: "When the Messenger of Allah calls you towards Allah, you surround and mob him from every side, whereas the only duty of the Messenger is to convey the messages of Allah. He does not claim to have any power to bring any gain or cause any harm to the people." Then, in vv. 24-25 the disbelievers have been warned to the effect: "Today you are trying to overpower and suppress the Messenger seeing that he is helpless and friendless, but a time will come when you will know who in actual fact is helpless and friendless. Whether that time is yet far off, or near at hand, the Messenger has no knowledge thereof, but it will come to pass in any case." In conclusion, the people have been told: The Knower of the unseen is Allah alone. The Messenger receives only that knowledge which Allah is pleased to give him This knowledge pertains to matters connected with the performance of the duties of Prophethood, and it is delivered to him in such security which does not admit of any external interference whatever.



قُلْ اُوْحِيَ اِلَيَّ اَنَّهُ اسْتَمَعَ نَفَرٌ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ فَقَالُوْٓا اِنَّا سَمِعْنَا قُرْاٰنًا عَجَبًا ۙ﴿۱﴾
يَّهْدِيْٓ اِلَى الرُّشْدِ فَاٰمَنَّا بِهٖ ۭ وَلَنْ نُّشْرِكَ بِرَبِّنَآ اَحَدًا ۙ﴿۲﴾ وَّاَنَّهٗ تَعٰلٰى جَدُّ
رَبِّنَا مَا اتَّخَذَ صَاحِبَةً وَّلَا وَلَدًا ۙ﴿۳﴾ وَّاَنَّهٗ كَانَ يَقُوْلُ سَفِيْهُنَا عَلَي اللّٰهِ
شَطَطًا ۙ﴿۴﴾ وَّاَنَّا ظَنَنَّآ اَنْ لَّنْ تَقُوْلَ الْاِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَي اللّٰهِ كَذِبًا ۙ﴿۵﴾ وَّاَنَّهٗ
كَانَ رِجَالٌ مِّنَ الْاِنْسِ يَعُوْذُوْنَ بِرِجَالٍ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ فَزَادُوْهُمْ رَهَقًا ۙ﴿۶﴾ وَّ
اَنَّهُمْ ظَنُّوْا كَمَا ظَنَنْتُمْ اَنْ لَّنْ يَّبْعَثَ اللّٰهُ اَحَدًا ۙ﴿۷﴾ وَّاَنَّا لَمَسْنَا السَّمَاۗءَ
فَوَجَدْنٰهَا مُلِئَتْ حَرَسًا شَدِيْدًا وَّشُهُبًا ۙ﴿۸﴾ وَّاَنَّا كُنَّا نَقْعُدُ مِنْهَا مَقَاعِدَ

LXXII

AL-JINN

الجنّ

Verse: 28 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

O Prophet, say: It has been revealed to me that a company of 1-9
the jinn listened,[1] then (returnig to their folks) they said, "We have indeed heard a wonderful Qur'ān[2] which guides to the right way, so we have believed in it, and now we shall never associate anyone with our Lord."[3] And that: "Our Lord's majesty is exalted: He has neither taken a wife nor a son."[4] And that: "The foolish among us[5] have been uttering falsehood against Allah." And that: "We thought that the men and the jinn could never utter a lie against God."[6] And that: "Some people from among the men used to seek refuge with some people from among the jinn, so they caused the jinn to become even more arrogant."[7] And that: "Men thought, even as you thought, that Allah would not send anyone as a Messenger."[8] And that: " We searched the

heavens and found it filled with guards and shooting-stars." And that: "Before this we used to find a seat in heaven for eavesdropping, but now if some one tries to eavesdrop, he finds a shooting-star lying in ambush for him."[9]

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1. This shows that the jinn at that time were not visible to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), nor he knew that they were hearing the Qur'ān being recited, but Allah informed him of the incident afterwards by Revelation. Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās also has, in connection with this incident, stated: "The Holy Messenger of Allah had not recited the Qur'ān before the jinn, nor did he see them." (Muslim, Tirmidhī, Musnad Ahmad, Ibn Jarīr).

2. The words in the original are: *Qur'ān-an 'ajabā. Qur'ān* means "something which is read again and again", and the jinn probably used this word in this very meaning, for they were introduced to this Divine Revelation for the first time, and they did not perhaps know then that what they were hearing, was the Qur'ān itself. *'Ajab* is a superlative, which is used in Arabic for a wonderful thing. So, what the jinn said means: "We have heard such a wonderful recital which is unique both in its language and in its subject-matter."

This also shows that the jinn not only hear what human beings say but also understand their language fully, although it is not necessary that all the jinn might know all the human languages. It is possible that those of them who live in a particular region of the earth might know the language of the people of that region. But in any case this statement of the Qur'ān clearly shows that the jinn who listened to the Qur'ān at that time were so conversant with the Arabic language that they not only appreciated the matchless eloquence of the Divine Word but also understood its sublime subject-matter fully well.

3. This throws light on several things: (1) That the jinn do not deny Allah's existence and His being Lord and Sustainer; (2) that among them also there are polytheists, who like polytheistic human beings ascribe divinity to others than Allah; thus, the community of the jinn whose members heard the Qur'ān was polytheistic; (3) that the Prophethood and revelation of Divine scriptures does not exist among the jinn, but whoever of them believe, they believe in the Prophets raised among human beings and in the Books brought by them. This same thing is confirmed by Al-Ahqāf: 29-30, where it has been stated that the jinn who had then heard the Qur'ān, were from among the followers of the Prophet Moses, and they after having heard the Qur'ān, had invited their people to believe in the Revelation that had been sent down by God confirming the previous scriptures. Sūrah Ar-Rahmān also points to the same, for its whole subject-matter shows that the audience of the Holy Prophet's invitation are both the men and the jinn.

4. From this we know two things; (1) That these jinn were either from among the Christian jinn, or they were followers of a different religion in which Allah was regarded as having children and families. (2) That at that time the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was reciting some such part of the Qur'ān hearing which they realized the error of their creed and knew that it was sheer ignorance and impudence to ascribe wife and children to the High and Exalted Being of Allah.

5. The word *safīhunā* as used in the Text can be spoken for an individual as well as for a group. If it is taken for a foolish individual, it would imply *Iblīs*, and if for a group, it would imply a group of foolish jinn who said such things.

6. That is, "We were misled by those falsehoods because we could never think that the men or the jinn could ever dare forge a lie about Allah, but having heard this Qur'ān we now know that they were, in fact, liars."

7. Ibn 'Abbās says that in the pre-Islamic days of ignorance when the Arabs had to spend a night in some un-inhabited, desolate valley, they would shout out: "We seek refuge of the jinn, who is owner of this valley." In other traditions of the pre-Islamic ignorance also the same thing has been reported frequently. For example, if in a place they ran short of water and fodder, the wandering bedouins would send one of their men to some other place to see if water and fodder were available; and when they reached the new site under his direction, they would shout out before they halted to pitch the camp: "We seek refuge of the sustainer of this valley so that we may live here in peace from every calamity." They believed that every un-inhabited place was under the control of one or another jinn, and if someone stayed there without seeking his refuge, the jinn would either himself trouble the settlers, or would let others trouble them. These believing jinn are referring to this very thing. They meant that when man, the vicegerent of the earth, started fearing them without any reason, and started seeking their refuge instead of God's, it caused their people to become even more arrogant, haughty and wicked, and they became even more fearless and bold in adopting error and disbelief.

8. Another meaning of this sentence can be: "Allah will not resurrect anyone after death." As the words are comprehensive they can be taken to mean that, as among human beings, so among the jinn too there were the people who denied both the Prophethood and the Hereafter. However, in view of the theme that follows, the meaning that we have given in the text above is preferable, for according to it these believing jinn tell the people of their community: "Your view is proved wrong that Allah will not appoint anyone as a Messenger. In fact, the gates of heavens have been closed on us only because Allah has already appointed a Messenger."

[Contd. on p. 92

لِلسَّمْعِ ۚ فَمَنْ يَّسْتَمِعِ الْاٰنَ يَجِدْ لَهٗ شِهَابًا رَّصَدًا ۙ﴿۹﴾ وَّاَنَّا لَا نَدْرِيْٓ اَشَرٌّ اُرِيْدَ
بِمَنْ فِي الْاَرْضِ اَمْ اَرَادَ بِهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ رَشَدًا ﴿۱۰﴾ وَاَنَّا مِنَّا الصّٰلِحُوْنَ وَمِنَّا دُوْنَ
ذٰلِكَ ۭ كُنَّا طَرَاۗىِٕقَ قِدَدًا ﴿۱۱﴾ وَّاَنَّا ظَنَنَّآ اَنْ لَّنْ نُّعْجِزَ اللّٰهَ فِي الْاَرْضِ وَلَنْ
نُّعْجِزَهٗ هَرَبًا ﴿۱۲﴾ وَّاَنَّا لَمَّا سَمِعْنَا الْهُدٰٓى اٰمَنَّا بِهٖ ۭ فَمَنْ يُّؤْمِنْۢ بِرَبِّهٖ فَلَا
يَخَافُ بَخْسًا وَّلَا رَهَقًا ﴿۱۳﴾ وَّاَنَّا مِنَّا الْمُسْلِمُوْنَ وَمِنَّا الْقٰسِطُوْنَ ۭ فَمَنْ اَسْلَمَ
فَاُولٰۗىِٕكَ تَحَرَّوْا رَشَدًا ﴿۱۴﴾ وَاَمَّا الْقٰسِطُوْنَ فَكَانُوْا لِجَهَنَّمَ حَطَبًا ﴿۱۵﴾ وَاَنْ لَّوِ
اسْتَقَامُوْا عَلَي الطَّرِيْقَةِ لَاَسْقَيْنٰهُمْ مَّاۗءً غَدَقًا ﴿۱۶﴾ لِّنَفْتِنَهُمْ فِيْهِ ۭ وَمَنْ يُّعْرِضْ
عَنْ ذِكْرِ رَبِّهٖ يَسْلُكْهُ عَذَابًا صَعَدًا ﴿۱۷﴾ وَاَنَّ الْمَسٰجِدَ لِلّٰهِ فَلَا تَدْعُوْا مَعَ اللّٰهِ
اَحَدًا ﴿۱۸﴾ وَّاَنَّهٗ لَمَّا قَامَ عَبْدُ اللّٰهِ يَدْعُوْهُ كَادُوْا يَكُوْنُوْنَ عَلَيْهِ لِبَدًا ﴿۱۹﴾ قُلْ
اِنَّمَآ اَدْعُوْا رَبِّيْ وَلَآ اُشْرِكُ بِهٖٓ اَحَدًا ﴿۲۰﴾ قُلْ اِنِّىْ لَآ اَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ ضَرًّا وَّلَا رَشَدًا ﴿۲۱﴾
قُلْ اِنِّىْ لَنْ يُّجِيْرَنِيْ مِنَ اللّٰهِ اَحَدٌ ۙ وَّلَنْ اَجِدَ مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ مُلْتَحَدًا ﴿۲۲﴾ اِلَّا
بَلٰغًا مِّنَ اللّٰهِ وَرِسٰلٰتِهٖ ۭ وَمَنْ يَّعْصِ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ فَاِنَّ لَهٗ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ
خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَآ اَبَدًا ﴿۲۳﴾ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا رَاَوْا مَا يُوْعَدُوْنَ فَسَيَعْلَمُوْنَ مَنْ اَضْعَفُ نَاصِرًا
وَّاَقَلُّ عَدَدًا ﴿۲۴﴾ قُلْ اِنْ اَدْرِيْٓ اَقَرِيْبٌ مَّا تُوْعَدُوْنَ اَمْ يَجْعَلُ لَهٗ رَبِّيْٓ اَمَدًا ﴿۲۵﴾
عٰلِمُ الْغَيْبِ فَلَا يُظْهِرُ عَلٰي غَيْبِهٖٓ اَحَدًا ﴿۲۶﴾ اِلَّا مَنِ ارْتَضٰى مِنْ رَّسُوْلٍ فَاِنَّهٗ
يَسْلُكُ مِنْۢ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهٖ رَصَدًا ﴿۲۷﴾ لِّيَعْلَمَ اَنْ قَدْ اَبْلَغُوْا رِسٰلٰتِ
رَبِّهِمْ وَاَحَاطَ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ وَاَحْصٰى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عَدَدًا ﴿۲۸﴾

And that: "We did not know whether some evil was intended for the dwellers of the earth or their Lord wanted to show them the right way."[10] And that: "Some of us are righteous, while some are otherwise. We follow different ways."[11] And that: "We thought that we could neither frustrate Allah in the earth nor frustrate Him by flight."[12] And that: "As soon as we heard the message of guidance, we believed in it. Now whoever believes in his Lord, will have neither fear of loss nor of injustice."[13] And that: "Some of us are Muslims (submissive to Allah) and some deviators from the Truth. Those who have adopted Islam (the way of submission) have found the way to salvation, and those who have deviated from the Truth, will become fuel for Hell."[14] 10-15

And[15] (O Prophe, say: it has been revealed to me:) "If the people had steadfastly pursued the right way, We would have given them abundant waters to drink[16] that We might try them by that blessing.[17] And he who turns away from his Lord's remembrance,[18] his Lord shall punish him with a severe torment. And that the mosques are for Allah; therefore, do not call upon anyone else in them along with Allah.[19] And that when the servant of Allah[20]" stood up to invoke Him, the people were ready to assault him." O Prophet, say; "I call upon my Lord alone, and I do not associate anyone with Him."[21] Say, "I have no control over any harm or good for you." Say, "None can protect me from Allah, nor can I find any refuge apart from Him. My mission is only to convey what I receive from Him and His messages.[22] Now whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger for him awaits the fire of Hell: such people shall dwell in it for ever."[23] 16-23

(These people shall not change their ways) until when they see that what they are being promised, they shall come to know whose helpers are weaker and whose supporters are fewer in number.[24] Say, "I do not know whether that which you are being promised, is near at hand, or whether my Lord appoints a lengthy term for it.[25] He alone is the Knower of the unseen: He does not reveal His secrets to anyone[26] except to the Messenger whom He may choose[27] (for the purpose)* Then He appoints before him and behind him guards[28] that He may know that they have truly delivered the messages of their Lord;[29] and 24-28

He encompasses all their surroundings and keeps a count of each and every thing.[30]

Contd. from p. 89]

9. This is the reason why these jinn were now out searching as to what particularly had happened, or was going to happen, on the earth, which had necessitated strict security measures against eavesdropping so that they were driven away from wherever they tried to eavesdrop in any way.

10. This shows that such extraordinary measures were adopted in the heavens only on two kinds of occasions: first, when Allah might decide to inflict the dwellers of the earth with a torment, and the Divine will might be that before it was actually inflicted the jinn might not know and convey its news to warn their friendly human beings of the impending disaster. Second, that Allah might appoint a Messenger on the earth, and strict security measures might be adopted so that neither the messages being conveyed to him be interfered with by the satans nor should they be able to know beforehand what instructions were being given to the Messenger. Thus, the saying of the jinn means: "When we noticed that strict security measures had been adopted in the heavens for the safeguard of the news, and the meteorites were being showered profusely, we wanted to know which of the two things had happened: whether Allah had caused a torment to descend suddenly on some people of the earth, or a Messenger had been raised somewhere on the earth. We were on the lookout for the same when we heard the wonderful Revelation, which guides to the Right Path, and we came to know that Allah had not sent down a torment but had raised a Messenger to show the Right Way to the people." For further explanation, see I N.'s 8 to 12 of Al-Ḥijr, E.N. 7 of Aṣ-Ṣāāffāt, E.N. 11 of Al-Mulk).

11. That is, "Morally also there are good and bad jinn among us, and from the viewpoint of creed as well all do not follow one and the same religion, but we are divided into different groups." With these words the believing jinn want to convince the other jinn of their community that they certainly stood in need of finding out the right way and could not dispense with this need.

12. That is, "We were led by this very idea to the way of success. As we were not fearless of Allah and we believed that we would not be able to avoid His punishment if we disobeyed Him, so when we heard the Divine Revelation that had been sent to show the right way, we could not have the courage and boldness to persist in the beliefs that our foolish people had spread among us, after we had known the truth."

13. "Fear of loss": fear of being given a lesser reward than what one actually deserves for one's good deeds, and "injustice" that one may be deprived

of the reward for the good deeds done but duly punished for the errors committed, or punished innocent; no believer has any fear of such an injustice from Allah.

14. Here, one may ask: when, according to the Qur'ān, the jinn have been created from the fire, what harm can the fire of Hell do them? The answer is: Even according to the Qur'ān, man has been created out of the earth; why does then man feel hurt when a clod of earth is thrown at him? The truth is that although the whole body of man has been made from the earthly substances, when a living man of flesh and blood is moulded from them he becomes an entirely different thing from those substances; then other things made from the same substances become a means of causing harm to him. Likewise, although the jinn also have been created from the fire, when a living and sentient creation has been made from it, the same fire becomes a means of causing harm and hurt for it. (For further explanation, see E.N. 15 of Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān).

15. The conversation of the jinn having come to an end, with this begins the speech of Allah.

16. This is the same thing as has been said above in Sūrah Nūh: 10-11. "Seek forgiveness of Allah...He will send abundant rains for you from heaven." (For explanation, see E.N. 12 of Sūrah Nūḥ). Abundance of water has been used for abundance of blessings metaphorically for human life and habitation depend on water. Without water there can be no human settlement, nor can man's basic needs be fulfilled, nor his industries work and prosper.

17. "We might try them by that blessing": "We might see whether they remain grateful after having received the blessing or not, and whether they put Our blessing to right use or not."

18. "To turn away from Allah's remembrance" means that one may reject the advice and admonition sent down by Allah, or one may disdain giving ear to Allah's remembrance, or one may turn away from the worship of Allah.

19. The commentators generally have taken "mosques" to mean the places of worship. Accordingly, the verse means: "None should be associated in the worship of Allah in the places of worship. Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣrī says: The entire earth is a place of worship, and the verse means to say: polytheism ought not to be committed anywhere on God's earth." He has reasoned out this meaning from the Holy Prophet's *Ḥadīth*: "For me the entire earth has been made a place of worship and a means of obtaining purity." Ḥaḍrat Sa'īd bin Jubair has interpreted *masājid* to imply the parts of the body on which one prostrates oneself, i.e. the hands, the knees, toes and forehead. According to this explanation, the verse means: These limbs have been made by Allah; no one should prostrate oneself on these before anyone other than Allah.

20. "Servant of Allah": the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace).

21. That is, to call upon Allah is no objectionable thing, which may so provoke the people. The evil thing, however, is that one should associate another with Allah in His divinity, and this I never do; this is done by those who mob and surround me when they hear God mentioned by me.

22. That is, "I do not claim to have any share or role in the Godhead of Allah, nor that I possess any power in making or marring the people's destinies. I am only a Messenger and the mission that has been entrusted to me is no more than that I should convey the messages of Allah to you. As for the powers of Godhead, they wholly belong to Allah. Not to speak of benefiting or harming others, I do not have the power to cause good or harm even to myself. If I disobey Allah, I cannot seek and have refuge anywhere from His punishment, and I have no helper and protector beside Allah." (For further explanation, see E.N. 7 of Ash-Shūrā).

23. This does not mean that every sin and act of disobedience will cause one to live in Hell for ever, but in view of the context in which this thing has been said, the verse means: the one who does not accept the invitation to *Tauhid* given by Allah and His Messenger and does not refrain from polytheism will suffer in Hell for ever.

24. The background of this verse is that those of the Quraish who used to mob and surround the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) as soon as they heard his invitation calling to Allah, were under the delusion that they had a strong band at their back and that the Holy Prophet had only a handful of men with him, and therefore, they would easily overwhelm him. At this it is being said: Today these people find the Messenger helpless and friendless and themselves supported and strengthened by great hosts and, therefore, feel encouraged and emboldened to suppress the invitation to the Truth. But when the evil time with which they are being threatened comes, they will know who in actual fact is helpless and friendless.

25. The style itself shows that this is an answer which has been given without citing the question. Probably, hearing what has been said above, the opponents might have asked mockingly and tauntingly: "When will the time with which you are threatening us come?" In response, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was commanded to say: "The time will certainly come, but I have not been told the date of its coming. Allah alone knows whether it will come soon, or whether a distant term has been set for it."

26. That is, the knowledge of the unseen wholly rests with Allah: He does not give the whole of this knowledge to anyone.

27. That is, the Messenger by himself is no knower of the unseen, but when Allah chooses him to perform the mission of Prophethood, He grants him the knowledge of those of the unseen truths which He is pleased to grant.

28. "Guards": Angels. That is, when Allah sends down the knowledge of the unseen realities to the Messenger by revelation, He appoints angels on every side to safeguard it so that the knowledge reaches the Messenger in a safe condition, free from every kind of adulteration. This is the same thing which has been expressed in vv. 8-9 above, saying: After the appointment of the Holy Messenger the jinn found that all the doors to the heavens had been closed, and they noticed that strict security measures had been adopted because of which no room had been left for them to eavesdrop.

29. This can have three meanings:(1) That the Messenger may know that the angels have delivered the messages of Allah to him precisely and accurately; (2) that Allah may know that the angels have conveyed the messages of their Lord to His Messenger precisely and accurately; and (3) that Allah may know that the Messenger has conveyed the messages of his Lord to His servants precisely and accurately. The words of the verse are comprehensive and may possibly imply all the three meanings. Besides, the verse also points out two other things: first, that the Messenger is given that knowledge of the unseen, which is necessary for him to perform his mission of Prophethood; second, that the angels keep watch that the Revelation reaches the Messenger safely and also that the Messenger conveys the messages of his Lord to His servants precisely and accurately.

30. That is, Allah's power so encompasses the Messenger as well as the angels that if they swerve even a little from His will, they can be detected immediately. Moreover, a complete record has been kept of each letter of the mesages sent down by Allah. The Messengers and the angels cannot dare add or subtract even a letter from them.



LXXIII
AL
MUZZAMMIL

المزّمّل

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

LXXIII

AL-MUZZAMMIL

المزّمّل

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah has been so designated after the word *al-muzzammil* occurring in the very first verse. This is only a name and not a title of its subject-matter.

Period of Revelation

The two sections of this Sūrah were revealed in two separate periods.

The first section (vv. 1-19) is unanimously a Makki Revelation, and this is supported both by its subject - matter and by the traditions of the *Ḥadīth*. As for the question, in which specific period of the life at Makkah it was revealed, it is not answered by the tradition, but the internal evidence of the subject-matter of this section helps to determine the period of its revelation.

First, in it the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been instructed to the effect: "Arise during the night and worship Allah so that you may develop the capability to shoulder the heavy burden of Prophethood and to discharge its responsibilities." This shows that this Command must have been given in the earliest period of the Prophethood, when training was being imparted to the Holy Prophet by Allah for this office.

Secondly, a Command has been given in it that the Qur'ān be recited in the Tahajjud Prayer for half the night, or thereabout. This Command by itself points out that by that time at least so much of the Qur'ān had been revealed as could be recited for that long.

Thirdly, in this section the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been exhorted to have patience at the excesses being committed by his opponents, and the disbelievers of Makkah have been threatened with the torment. This shows that this section was revealed at a time when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had openly started preaching Islam and the opposition to him at Makkah had grown active and strong

About the second section (v. 20) although many of the commentators have expressed the opinion that this too was sent down at Makkah, yet some other commentators regard it as a Madani Revelation, and this same opinion is confirmed by the subject-matter of this section, for it mentions fighting in the way of Allah, and obviously, there could be no question of it at Makkah; it also contains the Command to pay the obligatory *zakāt*, and it is fully confirmed that the *zakāt* at a specific rate and with an exemption limit (*nisāb*) was enjoined at Madīnah.

Theme and Subject-Matter

In the first seven verses the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been commanded to the effect: "Prepare yourself to shoulder the responsibilities of the great Mission that has been entrusted to you; its

practical form is that you should rise during the hours of night and stand up in Prayer for half the night, or for a little more or less of it."

In vv 8-14, he has been exhorted to the effect: "Devote yourself exclusively to that God Who is the Owner of the whole universe. Entrust all your affairs to Him with full satisfaction of the heart. Bear with patience whatever your opponents may utter against you. Do not be intimate with them. Leave their affair to God: He Himself will deal with them."

Then, in vv. 15-19, those of the people of Makkah, who were opposing the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) have been warned, so as to say: "We have sent a Messenger to you just as We sent a Messenger to the Pharaoh. Just consider what fate the Pharaoh met when he did not accept the invitation of the Messenger of Allah. Supposing that you are not punished by a torment in this world, how will you save yourselves from the punishment for disbelief on the Day of Resurrection.

This is the subject-matter of the first section. The second section, according to a tradition from Ḥaḍrat Sa'īd bin Jubair, was sent down ten years later, and in it the initial Command given in connection with the Tahajjud Prayer, in the beginning of the first section, was curtailed. The new Command enjoined; Offer as much of the Tahajjud Prayer as you easily can, but what the Muslims should particularly mind and attend to is the five times obligatory Prayer a day: they should establish it regularly and punctually; they should discharge their *zakāt* dues accurately; and they should spend their wealth with sincere intentions for the sake of Allah. In conclusion, the Muslims have been exhorted, saying: "Whatever good works you do in the world, will not go waste, but they are like the provision which a traveller sends up in advance to his permanent place of residence. Whatever good you send up from the world, you will find it with Allah, and the provision thus sent up is much better than what you will have to leave behind in the world, and with Allah you will also get a much better and richer reward than what you have actually sent up before."

سُوْرَةُ الْمُزَّمِّل مَكِّيَّةٌ

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

يَاَيُّهَا الْمُزَّمِّلُ ۙ﴿۱﴾ قُمِ الَّيْلَ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا ۙ﴿۲﴾ نِّصْفَهٗۤ اَوِ انْقُصْ مِنْهُ قَلِيْلًا ۙ﴿۳﴾ اَوْ زِدْ
عَلَيْهِ وَرَتِّلِ الْقُرْاٰنَ تَرْتِيْلًا ۙ﴿۴﴾ اِنَّا سَنُلْقِيْ عَلَيْكَ قَوْلًا ثَقِيْلًا ۙ﴿۵﴾ اِنَّ نَاشِئَةَ الَّيْلِ
هِيَ اَشَدُّ وَطْاً وَّ اَقْوَمُ قِيْلًا ۙ﴿۶﴾ اِنَّ لَكَ فِي النَّهَارِ سَبْحًا طَوِيْلًا ۙ﴿۷﴾ وَاذْكُرِ اسْمَ
رَبِّكَ وَتَبَتَّلْ اِلَيْهِ تَبْتِيْلًا ۙ﴿۸﴾ رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ لَاۤ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ فَاتَّخِذْهُ
وَكِيْلًا ۙ﴿۹﴾ وَاصْبِرْ عَلٰى مَا يَقُوْلُوْنَ وَاهْجُرْهُمْ هَجْرًا جَمِيْلًا ۙ﴿۱۰﴾ وَذَرْنِيْ وَ
الْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ اُولِي النَّعْمَةِ وَمَهِّلْهُمْ قَلِيْلًا ۙ﴿۱۱﴾ اِنَّ لَدَيْنَاۤ اَنْكَالًا وَّ جَحِيْمًا ۙ﴿۱۲﴾ وَّ
طَعَامًا ذَا غُصَّةٍ وَّعَذَابًا اَلِيْمًا ۙ﴿۱۳﴾ يَوْمَ تَرْجُفُ الْاَرْضُ وَالْجِبَالُ وَكَانَتِ
الْجِبَالُ كَثِيْبًا مَّهِيْلًا ۙ﴿۱۴﴾ اِنَّاۤ اَرْسَلْنَاۤ اِلَيْكُمْ رَسُوْلًا شَاهِدًا عَلَيْكُمْ كَمَاۤ اَرْسَلْنَاۤ
اِلٰى فِرْعَوْنَ رَسُوْلًا ۙ﴿۱۵﴾ فَعَصٰى فِرْعَوْنُ الرَّسُوْلَ فَاَخَذْنٰهُ اَخْذًا وَّبِيْلًا ۙ﴿۱۶﴾
فَكَيْفَ تَتَّقُوْنَ اِنْ كَفَرْتُمْ يَوْمًا يَّجْعَلُ الْوِلْدَانَ شِيْبًا ۙ﴿۱۷﴾ السَّمَآءُ مُنْفَطِرٌ بِهٖ كَانَ
وَعْدُهٗ مَفْعُوْلًا ۙ﴿۱۸﴾ اِنَّ هٰذِهٖ تَذْكِرَةٌ فَمَنْ شَآءَ اتَّخَذَ اِلٰى رَبِّهٖ سَبِيْلًا ۙ﴿۱۹﴾ اِنَّ
رَبَّكَ يَعْلَمُ اَنَّكَ تَقُوْمُ اَدْنٰى مِنْ ثُلُثَيِ الَّيْلِ وَنِصْفَهٗ وَثُلُثَهٗ وَطَآئِفَةٌ
مِّنَ الَّذِيْنَ مَعَكَ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ يُقَدِّرُ الَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ ؕ عَلِمَ اَنْ لَّنْ تُحْصُوْهُ فَتَابَ
عَلَيْكُمْ فَاقْرَءُوْا مَا تَيَسَّرَ مِنَ الْقُرْاٰنِ ؕ عَلِمَ اَنْ سَيَكُوْنُ مِنْكُمْ مَّرْضٰى ۙ وَاٰخَرُوْنَ
يَضْرِبُوْنَ فِي الْاَرْضِ يَبْتَغُوْنَ مِنْ فَضْلِ اللّٰهِ ۙ وَاٰخَرُوْنَ يُقَاتِلُوْنَ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ
اللّٰهِ ؗ فَاقْرَءُوْا مَا تَيَسَّرَ مِنْهُ ۙ وَاَقِيْمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَاٰتُوا الزَّكٰوةَ وَاَقْرِضُوا اللّٰهَ
قَرْضًا حَسَنًا ؕ وَمَا تُقَدِّمُوْا لِاَنْفُسِكُمْ مِّنْ خَيْرٍ تَجِدُوْهُ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ هُوَ خَيْرًا وَّ
اَعْظَمَ اَجْرًا ؕ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا اللّٰهَ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿۲۰﴾

LXXIII
AL-MUZZAMMIL
المزّمّل

Verses: 20 *Revealed at Makkah and Madinah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

O you who sleeps covered up,[1] keep standing in Prayer at night 1-14
but a little:[2] half the night, or lessen it a little, or add to it a little;[3] and recite the Qur'ān calmly in a measured tone.[4] Indeed, We are about to send down on you a weighty Word.[5] In fact, the rising by night[6] is most effective for controlling the self[7] and most suitable for reciting the Qur'ān well,[8] for in the day time you have many an occupations. Remember the name of your Lord[9] and devote yourself to Him exclusively. He is the Owner of the East and the West; there is no god but He; therefore, take Him alone as your Guardian.[10] And bear with patience what they utter, and depart from them gracefully.[11] Leave it to Me to deal with those prosperous people who deny[12] (the Truth) and leave them as they are for a while. We have heavy fetters (for them)[13] and a blazing Fire, and a choking food and a painful torment. This will happen on the Day when the earth and the mountains shall become as heaps of scattering sand.[14]

To you [15] We have sent a Messenger to be a witness over you,[16] 15-19
even as We had sent a Messenger to the Pharaoh. (Then behold when) the Pharaoh disobeyed the Messenger, We seized him with a firm grip. If you too, refuse to believe, then how will you protect yourselves on the Day that will make the children old,[17] and whose severity shall cause the heavens to split? Allah's promise has to be fulfilled in any case. This is an Admonition; so, whoever wills, let him take a path to his Lord.

O Prophet,[18] your Lord knows that you sometimes stand in the 20
Prayer nearly two-thirds of the night and sometimes half the night, and sometimes one-third of the night,[19] and so does a group of your Companions.[20] Allah alone keeps an account of the time of the day and

night. He knows that you cannot compute the time precisely; so He has shown kindness to you. Now you may read as much of the Qur'ān as you easily can.[21] He knows that there will be sick men among you, and some others who travel to seek Allah's bounty[22] and yet others who fight in Allah's Way.[23] Therefore, read as much of the Qur'ān as you may do with ease. Establish the *salāt* and pay the *zakāt*,[24] and give to Allah a goodly loan.[25] Whatever good you may send forward for yourselves, you shall find it with Allah. That is best and richest in reward.[26] Seek forgiveness from Allah: indeed Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Merciful.

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1. To address the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) with these words and then to command him to rise and keep standing in the Prayer at night, shows that at the time he either lay asleep, or had wrapped himself up in a sheet in order to go to sleep. Here, to address him with "O you who sleeps covered up" instead of with "O Prophet, or O Messenger", is a fine way of address, which by itself gives the meaning: "Gone is the time when you used to enjoy peaceful sleep at will; now you lie under the burden of a great mission, whose demands and duties are different as well as onerous.

2. This can have two meanings: (1) "Pass the night standing up in the Prayer and spend only a little of it in sleep"; and (2)"there is no demand from you to pass the whole night in the Prayer, but have rest as well and spend a little part of the night in worship too." But in view of the theme that follows the first meaning seems to be more relevant, and the same is supported by Ad-Dahr: 26, in which it has been said: "Prostrate yourself before Him in the night and glorify Him during the long hours of night."

3. This is an explanation of the duration of time commanded to be spent in worship. In it the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was given the option to spend half of the night in the Prayer, or a little less than that, or a little more than that. But the style shows that half the night has been regarded as preferable, for the measure is the same, which may be decreased or increased, as the people may like and choose.

4. "Recite the Qur'ān .....": Do not recite it quickly and in haste, but slowly and distinctly: pause at every verse so that the mind understands the meaning and purport of Divine Revelation well and takes effect from it. if it contains the mention of Allah's Being and Attributes, it may awe-inspire the heart with His glory and majesty; if it expresses His mercy, the heart may be filled with feelings of gratitude to Him; if it mentions His wrath and His punishment, the heart may be overwhelmed by fear of Him; if it enjoins something or forbids

something, one may understand what has been enjoined and what has been forbidden. In short, the recital does not only consist in uttering the words with the tongue, but it should involve thoughtful consideration of the meaning. When Hadrat Anas was asked about the Holy Prophet's method of reciting the Qur'ān, he replied: The Holy Messenger stretched the words when reciting them. For example, when he recited *Bismillah ir-Rahmān ir-Rahīm* he would stretch and prolong the sound of *Allāh*, *Rahmān* and *Rahim* (Bukhārī). When Ḥadrat Umm Salamah was asked the same question, she replied that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) recited every verse separately and distinctly and observed a pause at the end of every verse. For instance, he recited *Al-ḥamdu-lillāh-i Rabb-il-'ālamīn*, and paused, then recited *ar-Rahmān ir-Rahīm*, and paused, and then recited *Mālik-i yaum id-dīn."* (Musnad Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī). In another tradition, Ḥadrat Umm Salamah has stated that the Holy Prophet recited each word distinctly and clearly. (Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī). Ḥadrat Ḥudhaifah bin Yamān says: "Once I stood beside the Holy Prophet in the Night Prayer to see how he recited the Qur'ān. I noticed that he glorified Allah where He should be glorified, invoked and supplicated Allah where He should be invoked and supplicated, and sought refuge of Allah where His refuge should be sought." (Muslim, Nasā'ī). Hadrat Abu Dharr has stated that once during the Night Prayer when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) came to the sentence: *In tu'adhdhib-hum* ... (If You punish them, then they are Your servants; and if You forgive them, then You are Almighty, All-Wise), he went on repeating it over and over again until it became dawn." (Musnad Ahmad, Bukhārī).

5. That is, "You are being commanded to stand up in the Night Prayer because We are going to send down on you a weighty word, to bear the burden of which you must develop necessary power in yourself, and you can develop this power only by abandoning your ease and comfort of the night and by standing up in the Prayer and passing half the night or thereabout in the worship of your Lord. "The Qur'ān has been called a weighty Word also for the reason that acting on its commands, demonstrating its teaching practically, extending its invitation in the face of the whole world, and bringing about a revolution in the entire system of belief and thought, morals and manners, civilization and social life, according to it, is indeed the weightiest task any human being ever has been charged with. It has been called a weighty Word also because bearing the burden of its revelation was a difficult and heavy duty. Ḥadrat Zaid bin Thābit says: "Once Revelation came down upon the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) in a state when he was resting his head upon my knee. I felt such a pressure of the weight on my knee that I thought it would break." Ḥadrat 'Ā'ishah says: "I have seen the state of the Holy Prophet's receiving Revelation during intense cold, drops of perspiration started falling from his forehead." (Bukhārī, Muslim, Mālik, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī). In

another tradition Hadrat 'Ā'ishah has stated: "Whenever Revelation came down on the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) while he was riding on his she-camel, the she-camel would be forced to rest her chest on the ground and could not move until the Revelation was over." (Musnad Ahmad. Hâkim, Ibn Jarīr).

6. About the meaning of the word *nāshi'at al-lail,* as used in the original, the commentators and lexicographers have expressed four different viewpoints: (1) That *nāshi'at* implies the person himself who rises at night; (2) that it implies the hours of night; (3) that it means the rising by night; and (4) that it does not only apply to the rising in the night but rising after having had some sleep, Hadrat 'Ā'ishah and Mujāhid have adopted this fourth viewpoint.

7. The word *ashaddu wat'an* as used in the Text is so vast in meaning that it cannot be explained in any one sentence. Its one meaning is: As the rising for worship by night and standing up for a long time in the Prayer is against human nature and the self of man seeks ease and comfort at that time. this act is an exercise which is most effective in controlling and disciplining the self. The person who governs himself by this method and gains dominance over his body and mind becomes able to use his power in the way of God, can work more efficiently and firmly to make the message of true Faith prevail in the world. The second meaning is: This is a very effective means of producing harmony and concord between the heart and the tongue, for during these hours of the night none else intervenes between the servant and his God, and whatever man utters with his tongue in this state, is the very voice of his heart. The third meaning is: This is a very efficacious means of bringing about conformity between the exterior and the interior of man, for the person who in the solitude of the night would abandon his comfort and ease and arise for worship, would do so only out of sincerity: there can be no tinge of display and hypocrisy in this. The fourth meaning is: As this worship is harder on man than the worship of the daytime, it develops steadfastness in him: he is enabled to walk in the path of God more firmly and can face and endure the hardships of that way with greater constancy and determination.

8. Literally: "Makes the speech most upright and sound." But the purport is to say that at that time man can read the Qur'ān with greater peace of mind, attention and understanding. Ibn 'Abbās has explained it thus: "That it is the most suitable time for man to ponder over the Qur'ān well." (Abū Da'ūd).

9. After making mention of the occupation of the daytime, the exhortation to "remember the name of your Lord" by itself gives the meaning: "Never be heedless of the remembrance of your Lord even when you are deeply involved in your worldly occupations, and continue to commemorate His name in one way or another at all times." (For explanation, see E.N. 63 of Sūrah Al-Ahzāb).

10. "*Wakīl*" is a person in whom one has complete faith; so much so that one can entrust all one's affairs to him with full satisfaction of the heart. Thus, the verse means: "Do not feel distressed at the hardships that you are experiencing at the storm of opposition that has been provoked by your invitation to true Faith. Your Lord is He Who is the Owner of the East and the West, (i.e. of the whole universe) besides Whom no one else possesses the powers of Godhead. Entrust your affair to Him and be satisfied that He will fight your case, He will deal with your opponents, and He will look after all your interests well."

11. "Depart from them" does not mean "Break off all ties with them and stop preaching to them", but it means; "Do not have intimate and friendly relations with them: disregard their foolish behaviour and their nonsense." However, you should do so without showing any grief, anger or temper but gracefully like a noble person, who would disregard the abusive remarks of a mean person without minding them at all. This should not create the misunderstanding that the Holy Prophet's conduct was any different from it; therefore, Allah gave him this instruction. As a matter of fact, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was already following this very mode of conduct; this instruction was given in the Qur'ān so as to tell the disbelievers: "It is not due to any weakness on the part of the Prophet that he is not responding to what you are saying against him, but Allah Himself has taught His Messenger to adopt this noble way of conduct in response to your foolish behaviour."

12. These words clearly contain the sense that the people who were actually denying the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) in Makkah and were inciting the common people to oppose and resist him by stirring up prejudices and by deceit and fraud were the well-to-do, prosperous and affluent people, for it was their interests, which were being hit by Islam's message of reform. The Qur'ān tells us that this was not peculiar only to the Holy Prophet's case but in every age this very class of the people have been the main obstacle to every movement of reform. For example, see Al-A'rāf; 60, 66, 75, 88; Al-Mu'minūn: 33; Saba; 34-35; Az-Zukhruf: 23.

13. Heavy fetters in Hell will not be put on the criminals' feet to stop them from escape but in order that they are not able to stand up and move; these will not be used to prevent their escape but as an instrument of their torment.

14. Since at that time the cohesive force to bind the parts of the mountains together will cease to work, first they will become like crumbling dunes of fine sand, then because of the earthquake which will be shaking the earth; the sand will scatter and shift and the whole earth will turn into an empty level plain. This last state has been described in Tā Hā: 105-107, thus: "They ask you: where will the mountains go on that Day? Say: My Lord will reduce them to fine dust and scatter

it away. He will turn the earth into an empty level plain, wherein you will neither see any curve no crease."

15. The address now turns to the disbelievers of Makkah, who were denying the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and persecuting him relentlessly.

16. Sending the Holy Prophet to be a witness over the people also means that he should testify to the Truth by his word and deed before them in the world and also that in the Hereafter when Allah's Court is established, he will testify that he had presented the whole Truth before the people in the world. (For further explanation, see E.N. 144 of Al-Baqarah, E.N. 64 of An-Nisā', An-Nahl: 84, 89, E.N. 82 of Al-Aḥzāb, E.N. 14 of Al-Fath).

17. That is, "In the first place, you should be afraid that if you do not accept the invitation of the Messenger sent by Us, you will have to meet the same evil end in this world, which the Pharaoh has already met in consequence of this very crime. But even if no torment is sent on you in the world, how will you save yourselves from the punishment of the Day of Resurrection?"

18. About this verse in which reduction has been made in the injunction concerning the Tahajjud Prayer, there are different traditions. Musnad Aḥmad, Muslim and Abū Da'ūd have related a tradition, on the authority of Hadrat 'Ā'ishah, saying that this second command was sent down one year after the first command, and the standing up in the Prayer at night was made voluntary instead of obligatory. Another tradition which Ibn Jarīr and Ibn Abī Ḥātim have related, again on the authority of Ḥadrat 'Ā'ishah, says that this command came down 8 months after the first command, and a third tradition which Ibn Abī Ḥātim has related again from her, says that it came down 16 months later. Abū Da'ūd, Ibn Jarīr and Ibn Abī Ḥātim have cited the period of one year from Ḥadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās. But Ḥadrat Sa'id bin Jubair has stated that it was sent down ten years later. (Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abi Ḥātim). In our opinion this last view is most sound, for the subject-matter of the first section clearly shows that it was sent down in Makkah and that too in the earliest stage when at the most four years might have passed since the advent of Prophethood. Contrary to this, this second section, in view of the express evidence of its subject-matter, seems to have been revealed at Madīnah when fighting had started with the disbelievers and the *zakāt* also had been enjoined as an obligatory duty. On this basis inevitably the two sections should have been sent down at an interval of at least ten years between them.

19. Although the initial command to the Holy Prophet was to keep standing up in the Prayer for half the night, or thereabout, it was difficult to compute the time precisely in the absorption of the Prayer, especially when there

were no watches either to measure time accurately; therefore, sometimes two-thirds of the night passed in the prayer and sometimes only one-third of it.

20. In the initial command only the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was addressed and only he was instructed to stand up in the Prayer by night. But since the Muslims at that time were ardently desirous of following him in everything he did and of earning more and more good and virtues, many of the Companions also performed this Night Prayer regularly.

21. As the Prayer is prolonged due mainly to a lengthy recital of the Qur'ān, it is said: "You may recite as much of the Qur'ān as you easily can in the Tahajjud Prayer This would automatically cause the Prayer to be shortened". Although the words here are apparently in the imperative mood, it is agreed by all that Tahajjud is not an obligatory but a voluntary Prayer. In the *Hadīth* also it has been explained that on an enquiry by a person the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) replied: "Five times Prayer in the day and night is obligatory on you. He asked: Is anything besides this also binding on me? The Holy Prophet said: No, unless you may like to offer something of your own accord." (Bukhārī, Muslim).

This verse also shows another thing. Just as the bowing (*rukū'*) and prostration (*sajdah*) are obligatory in the Prayer, so is the recital of the Qur'ān. For just as Allah at other places has used the words *rukū'* and *sajdah* for the prayer, so here He has mentioned recital of the Qur'ān, which implies its recital in the Prayer. If somebody objects to this conclusion, saying: When the Tahajjud Prayer itself is voluntary, how can recital of the Qur'ān in it be obligatory? The answer is: Even in case of the voluntary Prayer it is incumbent on one to fulfil all the pre-requisites of the Prayer and to perform all its basic elements and obligatory parts. No one can say that in case of the voluntary Prayer, purity of the garments and body, ablutions and concealment of the *satar* (minimal part of the body to be covered) are not obligatory, and the standing up and sitting and performance of *rukū'* and *sajdah* also in it are only voluntary.

22. Travelling to earn one's living by lawful and permissible methods has been described in many places in the Qur'ān as the seeking of Allah's bounty.

23. Here, the way Allah has made mention of seeking pure livelihood and fighting in the Way of Allah together and declared these two, besides the compulsion on account of illness, as reasons for exemption from the Tahajjud Prayer, or concession in it, shows how meritorious it is in Islam to earn one's livelihood by lawful methods. In the *Hadīth*, Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd has reported that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said: "The person who came to a city of the Muslims with foodgrains and sold it at the rate of the day, will attain to a place nearest to Allah, and then the Holy Prophet recited this very

verse." (Ibn Mardūyah), Hadrat 'Umar once said: "Except for fighting in the way of Allah, the state in which I would love to be overtaken by death, is the state when I am overtaken by it while passing through a mountain pass in search of livelihood and then he recited this very verse." (Baihaqi, *Shu'ab al-Iman*).

24. Commentators are agreed that this implies observance of the obligatory Prayer five times a day and giving away of the obligatory *zakāt*.

25. Ibn Zaid says this implies spending one's wealth in the cause of Allah besides the *zakāt*, whether it is in the cause of fighting in the way of Allah, or for helping the needy, or for public utilities, or other good works. The meaning of giving to Allah a good loan has been explained at several places above. See E.N 267 of Al-Baqarah, E.N. 33 of Al-Mā'idah, E.N. 16 of Al-Hadīd).

26. It means: "Whatever you have sent forward for the good of your Hereafter is more beneficial for you than that you withheld in the world and did not spend in any good cause for the pleasure of Allah. According to a *Hadīth* reported by Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) once asked: "Which of you has a greater love for his own wealth than for the wealth of his heir? The people said: There is none among us, O Messenger of Allah, who would not have greater love for his own wealth than for the wealth of his heir. He said: Consider well what you are saying. The people submitted: This indeed is our considered opinion, O Messenger of Allah. Thereupon the Holy Prophet said: Your own property is only that which you have sent forward (for the good of your Hereafter), and whatever you held back indeed belongs to the heir." (Bukhārī, Nasā'ī, Musnad Abū Ya'lā).



LXXIV

AL-MUDDATHTHIR

المدّثّر

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

LXXIV
AL-MUDDATHTHIR
المُدَّثِّر

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from the word *al-muddaththir* in the first verse. This also is only a name, not a title of its subject-matter.

Period of Revelation

The first seven verses of this Sūrah belong to the earliest period at Makkah. Even according to some traditions which have been related in Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī, Musnad Ahmad, etc., on the authority of Hadrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah, these are the very earliest verses of the Qur'ān to be revealed to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), But the Muslim *Ummah* is almost unanimously agreed that the earliest Revelation to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) consisted of the

first five verses of Sūrah Al-'Alaq (XCVI). However, what is established by authentic traditions is that after this first Revelation, no Revelation came down to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) for quite some time. Then, when it was resumed, it started with these verses of Sūrah Al-Muddaththir. Imām Zuhrī has given the following details of it:

"Revelation to the Holy Prophet remained suspended for quite some time, and it was such a period of deep grief and distress for him that he started going early to the tops of the mountains to throw himself down from them. But whenever he stood on the edge of a peak, the Angel Gabriel would appear and tell him that he was Allah's Prophet This would console him and restore to him full peace of mind," (Ibn Jarīr).

After this Imām Zuhrī relates the following tradition on the authority of Hadrat Jabir bin 'Abdullah:

"The Holy Messenger of Allah describing the period of *fatrat al-wahī* (break in revelation) said: One day when I was passing on the way, I suddenly heard a call from heaven I raised my head and saw that the same Angel who had visited me in the Cave of Hirā' was sitting on a throne between heaven and earth. This struck terror in my heart, and reaching home quickly, I said: 'Cover me up, cover me up'. So the people of the house covered me up with a quilt (or blanket). At that time Allah sent down the Revelation: *Yā ayyuhal-Muddaththiru*...From then on revelation became intense and continuous." (Bukhārī, Muslim, Musnad Ahmad, Ibn Jarīr).

The rest of the Sūrah (vv. 8-56) was revealed when the first Hajj season came after public preaching of Islam had begun in Makkah. This has been fully well described in the Sūrah by Ibn Hishām and we shall cite it below.

Theme and Subject-Matter

As has been explained above, the earliest Revelation to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) consisted of the first five verses of Sūrah Al-'Alaq, in which it had been said: "Read (O Prophet), in the name of your Lord, Who created: created man from a clot of congealed blood.

Read: and your Lord is Most Generous, Who taught knowledge by the pen, taught man what he did not know.

This was the first experience of Revelation met with suddenly by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). In this message it was not told what great mission he had been entrusted with and what duties he had to perform in future. He was only initiated into it and then left alone for a time so that the great strain this experience had caused should pass away and he should mentally become prepared to receive the Revelation and perform the prophetic mission in the future. After this intermission when Revelation was resumed, the first seven verses of this Sūrah were revealed. In these he was for the first time commanded to arise and warn the people of the consequences of the way of life they were following and to proclaim the greatness of God in the world where others were being magnified without any right. Along with that he was given this instruction: The demand of the unique mission that you have to perform now is that your life should be pure in every respect and you should carry out the duty of reforming your people sincerely irrespective of any worldly gain. Then, in the last sentence, he was exhorted to endure with patience, for the sake of his Lord, all the hardships and troubles that he might have to face while performining his mission.

In the implementation of this Divine Command when the Holy Messenger of Allah began to preach Islam and recite the Qur'ānic Sūrahs revealed successively, the people of Makkah felt alarmed, and it provoked a great storm of opposition and hostility. A few months passed in this state until the Hajj season approached. The people of Makkah feared that if Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) started visiting the caravans of the pilgrims coming from all over Arabia at their halting places and reciting the spell-binding and unique Revelations of the Qur'ān in their assemblies on the occasion of Hajj, his message would reach every part of Arabia and influence countless people. Therefore, the Quraish chiefs held a conference and settled that they would start a propaganda campaign against the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) among the pilgrims as soon as they arrived. After they had agreed on this, Walīd bin al-Mughīrah said to the assembled people: "If you said contradictory things about Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), we all would lose our trust among the people. Therefore, let us agree upon one opinion which we should all say without dispute.

Some people said that they would call Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) a soothsayer. Walid said: No, by God, he is not a soothsayer. We have seen the soothsayers; what they murmur and what they utter has no remote resemblance with the Qur'ān. Some other people said; Then we say he is possessed: Walīd said He is not a possessed one: we have seen mad and insane people: the way one talks disjointedly and behaves foolishly in that state is known to all: who would believe that what Muhammad (upon whom be peace) presented was the incoherent speech of a madman? The people said: Then we say he is a poet. Walīd said: No, he is not a poet, for we know poetry in all its forms, and what he presents conforms to no form of it. The people said: Then he is a sorcerer. Walīd said: He is no sorcerer either: we have seen sorcerers and we also know what methods they adopt for their sorcery. This also does not apply to Muhammad. Then he said; Whichever of these things you said about Muhammad, it would be known to be a false accusation. By God, his speech is sweet, his root is deep and his branches are fruitful. At this Abū Jahl urging on Walīd said: Your people will never be pleased with you unless you say something about Muhammad. He said: Let me think over it awhile. Then, after prolonged thought and consideration, he said: The nearest thing to the truth is that you tell the Arabs that he is a sorcerer, who has brought a message by which he separates a man from his father, and from his brother, and from his wife and children, and from his family. They all agreed on what Walīd had proposed. Then, according to a scheme the men of Quraish spread among the pilgrims in the Hajj season and they warned everyone they met of the sorcery of Muhammad (upon whom be peace) and of his stirring up divisions in the families by it." But the result was that by their this plan the Quraish chiefs themselves made the name of the Holy Messenger known throughout Arabia. (Ibn Hishām, pp. 288-289. That Walīd had made this proposal on the insistence of Abū Jahl has been related by Ibn Jarīr in his *Tafsīr* on the authority of 'Ikrimah).

This same event has been reviewed and commented upon in the second section of this Sūrah. The sequence of its contents is as follows;

In vv. 8-10 the deniers of Truth have been warned, saying: "You will see the evil result of what you are doing today on the Resurrection Day."

In vv. 11-26, without naming Walīd bin al-Mughīrah, it has been told how Allah had blessed him and how inimical he proved to be to true Faith. In this connection, his mental conflict has been portrayed, telling that on the one hand, he was fully convinced of the truth of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) and the Qur'ān, but, on the other, he did not want to risk his leadership and position among his people. Therefore, not only he did not believe himself but after a long-drawn-out conflict with his conscience he also came out with the proposal that in order to restrain the people from believing the Qur'ān should be branded as magic. After exposing his evil nature, it has been said, "Notwithstanding such evil inclinations and misdeeds, this person desires that he should be further blessed, whereas he has now become worthy of Hell, and never of further blessings."

In vv. 27-48, the dreadfulness of Hell has been depicted and it has been explained as to people of what character and morals really deserve it.

In vv. 49-53, the root cause of the disbelievers' aversion has been pointed out, saying: "Since they are fearless of the Hereafter, and look upon this worldly life as an end in itself, they flee from the Qur'ān as though they were wild asses fleeing away from the lion: therefore, they propose unreasonable conditions for believing, whereas even if each and every condition of theirs was fulfilled, they could not advance even an inch on the way of Faith with their denial of the Hereafter."

In conclusion, it has been explicitly stated: Allah does not stand in need of anybody's faith that He may fulfil his conditions. The Qur'ān is an admonition that has been presented before the people openly; now whoever wills may accept it. Allah has a right that the people should fear His disobedience and He alone has the power to forgive the one who adopts piety and an attitude of God-consciousness even though one may have committed many acts of disobedience in the past.



يٰٓاَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ ۝١ قُمْ فَاَنْذِرْ ۝٢ وَرَبَّكَ فَكَبِّرْ ۝٣ وَثِيَابَكَ فَطَهِّرْ ۝٤ وَالرُّجْزَ فَاهْجُرْ ۝٥
وَلَا تَمْنُنْ تَسْتَكْثِرُ ۝٦ وَلِرَبِّكَ فَاصْبِرْ ۝٧ فَاِذَا نُقِرَ فِي النَّاقُوْرِ ۝٨ فَذٰلِكَ يَوْمَئِذٍ
يَّوْمٌ عَسِيْرٌ ۝٩ عَلَى الْكٰفِرِيْنَ غَيْرُ يَسِيْرٍ ۝١٠ ذَرْنِيْ وَمَنْ خَلَقْتُ وَحِيْدًا ۝١١ وَّجَعَلْتُ
لَهٗ مَالًا مَّمْدُوْدًا ۝١٢ وَّبَنِيْنَ شُهُوْدًا ۝١٣ وَّمَهَّدْتُّ لَهٗ تَمْهِيْدًا ۝١٤ ثُمَّ يَطْمَعُ اَنْ
اَزِيْدَ ۝١٥ كَلَّا ۭ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ لِاٰيٰتِنَا عَنِيْدًا ۝١٦ سَاُرْهِقُهٗ صَعُوْدًا ۝١٧ اِنَّهٗ فَكَّرَ وَقَدَّرَ ۝١٨
فَقُتِلَ كَيْفَ قَدَّرَ ۝١٩ ثُمَّ قُتِلَ كَيْفَ قَدَّرَ ۝٢٠ ثُمَّ نَظَرَ ۝٢١ ثُمَّ عَبَسَ وَبَسَرَ ۝٢٢ ثُمَّ
اَدْبَرَ وَاسْتَكْبَرَ ۝٢٣ فَقَالَ اِنْ هٰذَآ اِلَّا سِحْرٌ يُّؤْثَرُ ۝٢٤ اِنْ هٰذَآ اِلَّا قَوْلُ الْبَشَرِ ۝٢٥
سَاُصْلِيْهِ سَقَرَ ۝٢٦ وَمَآ اَدْرٰىكَ مَا سَقَرُ ۝٢٧ لَا تُبْقِيْ وَلَا تَذَرُ ۝٢٨ لَوَّاحَةٌ لِّلْبَشَرِ ۝٢٩
عَلَيْهَا تِسْعَةَ عَشَرَ ۝٣٠ وَمَا جَعَلْنَآ اَصْحٰبَ النَّارِ اِلَّا مَلٰٓئِكَةً ۙ وَّمَا جَعَلْنَا عِدَّتَهُمْ
اِلَّا فِتْنَةً لِّلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا ۙ لِيَسْتَيْقِنَ الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْكِتٰبَ وَيَزْدَادَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا
اِيْمَانًا ۙ وَّلَا يَرْتَابَ الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْكِتٰبَ وَالْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ ۙ وَلِيَقُوْلَ الَّذِيْنَ فِيْ
قُلُوْبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ وَّالْكٰفِرُوْنَ مَاذَآ اَرَادَ اللّٰهُ بِهٰذَا مَثَلًا ۭ كَذٰلِكَ يُضِلُّ اللّٰهُ
مَنْ يَّشَاۗءُ وَيَهْدِيْ مَنْ يَّشَاۗءُ ۭ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ جُنُوْدَ رَبِّكَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۭ وَمَا هِيَ اِلَّا ذِكْرٰى
لِلْبَشَرِ ۝٣١ كَلَّا وَالْقَمَرِ ۝٣٢ وَالَّيْلِ اِذْ اَدْبَرَ ۝٣٣ وَالصُّبْحِ اِذَآ اَسْفَرَ ۝٣٤ اِنَّهَا لَاِحْدَى
الْكُبَرِ ۝٣٥ نَذِيْرًا لِّلْبَشَرِ ۝٣٦ لِمَنْ شَاۗءَ مِنْكُمْ اَنْ يَّتَقَدَّمَ اَوْ يَتَاَخَّرَ ۝٣٧ كُلُّ نَفْسٍۢ بِمَا
كَسَبَتْ رَهِيْنَةٌ ۝٣٨ اِلَّآ اَصْحٰبَ الْيَمِيْنِ ۝٣٩ فِيْ جَنّٰتٍ ۛ يَتَسَاۗءَلُوْنَ ۝٤٠ عَنِ الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ ۝٤١ مع

LXXIV
AL-MUDDATHTHIR
المُدَّثِّر

Verses: 56 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

1-7 O you who lies enwrapped up,[1] arise and warn;[2] and proclaim the greatness of your Lord;[3] and keep your garments pure,[4] and avoid filth,[5] and do not favour (others) expecting to get more,[6] and be patient for the sake of your Lord.[7]

8-37 When the Trumpet is blown, it shall be a very hard Day,[8] not easy for the disbelievers.[9] Leave Me and the person[10] whom I created alone:[11] I gave him ample wealth and sons to be present by his side,[12] and smoothed for him the way to his leadership (and prosperity). Yet he desires that I should give him more.[13] No, never! He is hostile to Our Revelations. I shall soon make him ascend a hard ascent. He pondered and tried to devise a plan. May God destroy him: what he tried to devise! Yes, may God destroy him: what he tried to devise! Then he looked around: then he frowned and scowled; then he turned his back and showed arrogance. At last, he said, "This is nothing but magic, handed down from the past; nothing but the word of a mere mortal."[14] Very soon I shall cast him into Hell. And what do you know what Hell is? It leaves nothing and it spares none.[15] It scorches the skin.[16] Nineteen keepers are appointed over it. We[17] have appointed only angels as the keepers of Hell,[18] and have made their number a trial for the disbelievers,[19] so that the people of the Book are convinced[20] and the believers are increased in their faith;[21] and the people of the Book and the believers may have no doubts, and the sick of the heart[22] and the disbelievers may say, "What could Allah mean by this strange parable?"[23] In this way Allah leads astray whom He wills and gives guidance to whom He wills,[24] and none knows the hosts of your Lord but He Himself.[25]—And Hell has been mentioned so that the people may take heed.[26] No, never![27] By the moon and by the night when it

withdraws, and by the morning when it dawns, this Hell too, is one of the mighty things:[28] a warning to mankind, a warning to every one of you, who desires to go forward, or to lag behind.[29]

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1. A study of the background of the revelation of these verses given in the introduction above can help one understand why the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) on this occasion has been addressed with *Yā ayyuhal-Muddaththir* instead of *Yā ayyuhar-Rasūlu* (O Messenger), or *Yā ayyuhan-Nabiyyu* (O Prophet). As the Holy Prophet had been terrified when he had suddenly seen the Angel Gabriel (on whom be peace), sitting on a throne between heaven and earth, and had returned hastily home and asked the people of the house to cover him up, so Allah addressed him with *Ya ayyuhal-Muddaththiru*. From this fine way of address the meaning which automatically follows is: "O My dear Servant, why have you lain down thus enwrapped? You have been put under the. burden of a great mission: you must now arise from your solitude to perform this mission with resolution and courage."

2. A command of this very nature had been given to the prophet Noah (peace be on him) while appointing him to the office of Prophethood; "Warn the people of your nation before they are overtaken by a painful torment." (Nūh: 1) The verse means: "O you who lies enwrapped, stand up and arouse the people who live in heedlessness around you: warn them of the fate which would certainly overtake them if they remained involved in the same heedlessness. Warn them that they are not living in a lawless kingdom where they are free to conduct themselves as they like and where they can do whatever they please without any fear or being called to account for it."

3. This is the primary duty of a Prophet, which he has to perform in this world. His foremost duty is to refute the greatness of all those whom the ignorant people might be holding as great, and publicly proclaim that true greatness in this universe belongs to none but Allah alone. For this very reason the phrase *Allahu Akbar* has been held as of supreme importance in Islam. The *adhān* (call to prayer) begins with the proclamation of *Allahu Akbar*. The Muslim enters the Prayer itself with Allahu Akbar and repeats Allahu Akbar every time he sits or stands, He pronounces *Bismillāhi Allahu Akbar* also when slaughtering an animal. The slogan of *Allahu Akbar* has become a most distinctive and prominent emblem of Muslims throughout the world today, for the Prophet of this *Ummah* himself had embarked on his mission with the magnification and glorification of Almighty Allah.

Here, there is another fine point, which must be understood well. As we have learnt from the background of the revelation of these verses, this was the first occasion when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had been commanded to

arise for performing the duties of the great mission of Prophethood, and it was obvious that the city and society in which he was commanded to perform this mission, was the centre of polytheism. Not only were the people around him polytheistic like the common Arabs but, more than that, the city of Makkah had become the most sacred place of pilgrimage for the polytheistic Arabs, and the Quraish were its attendants. Arising of a person in such a place all by himself and proclaiming the Oneness of God in the face of polytheism was full of risks. That is why the exhortation to "proclaim the greatness of your Lord" just after "arise and warn" contains this meaning also: "Do not at all mind the terrifying and dreadful forces that seem to be obstructing and impeding your work and proclaim publicly that your Lord is the greatest of all those who can hinder and resist you from giving your message. This is indeed the greatest encouragement for a person who embarks on a Divine mission. The one who has Allah's greatness and majesty deeply embedded in his heart will feel no hesitation at all in facing and fighting the entire world by himself for the sake of Allah.

4. These are very comprehensive words, which are full of meaning.

They mean this: "Keep your garments free from every filth and impurity, for the purity of the body and garments and the purity of the spirit are inter-linked and inter-dependent." A pure spirit and an impure body with impure garments cannot live together. The society in which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had arisen with the invitation to Islam, was not only steeped in the evils of unbelief and immorality, but was also devoid of even the most elementary concepts of purity and cleanliness, and the Holy Prophet's task was to teach its members cleanliness in every way of life. Therefore he was instructed to establish and present a high standard of purity in his external life as well. Thus, it is the result of the same instruction that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) gave mankind such detailed teaching about the cleanliness of the body and garments as is not possessed even by the most civilized nations of today, not to speak of the Arabs of the pre-Islamic days of ignorance. So much so that in most of the languages of the world there is no word synonymous with *"tahārat"*. On the contrary, in Islam every book of the *Hadīth* and *Fiqh* begins with injunctions and instructions on *tahārat* (purity), which distinguishes between purity and impurity and gives minute details about the methods and means of obtaining purity.

The second meaning of these words is: "Keep your garments neat and clean." The criterion of religiosity given to the world by the monastic concepts was that a man was holy to the extent he was unclean. If a person happened to put on neat clothes, he was looked upon as a worldly man, whereas the fact is that human nature abhors filth and uncleanness and even a person of ordinary fine taste loves to be associated only with a neat and clean person. On this very basis, for the

one calling the people to Allah it was made imperative that externally also he should look so neat and clean that the people should regard him with esteem and his personality should not be stained in any way so as to repel others.

The third meaning of this Divine Command is: "Keep your garments free from moral evils: your dress should be neat and clean but it should bear no tinge of vanity and pride, display and exhibition, pomp and show." The dress is the first thing that introduces the personality of a person to others. The kind of dress a person wears makes the people judge at first sight what kind of a man he is. The dresses of the rulers and princes, the dresses of the religious functionaries, the dresses of the vain and conceited people, the dresses of the mean and shallow people, the dresses of the evil-natured and characterless people, all represent the tastes and tempers of those who wear them. The temper of the one calling to Allah is naturally different from all such people. Therefore, his dress also should necessarily be different from all of them. He should wear such a dress as should make everyone else feel that he is a noble and refined person, who is not involved in any evil of the self.

Its fourth meaning is: Keep away from moral evils. Ibn 'Abbās, Ibrāhīm Nakha'i, Sha'bī, 'Atā', Mujāhid, Qatādah, Sa'id bin Jubair, Hasan Basrī and other major commentators have given this very meaning to this verse: keep yourself morally pure and avoid all that is blameworthy. In Arabic usage also when it is said: "So and so is clean in his garments", it implies that he is morally good and pure; on the contrary, when it is said: "He is filthy in his garments", it means that he is dishonest and fraudulent in his dealings: he is unreliable.

5. "Filth" implies every kind of filth, whether of belief and thought, of morals and deeds, of the body, dress or mode of life. The versemeans: "Keep yourself free from the filth of evils which are prevalent in society around you: no one should ever impute to you the blame that your own life itself is stained in some degree with the evils that you tell others to avoid."

6. The words *wa lā tamnun tastakthir* in the original are so vast in meaning that no one sentence can convey their full sense in translation.

Their one meaning is: "Whomever you favour, you should favour him without any selfish motive. Your bestowal of an endowment and donation, your generosity and good treatment should be only for the sake of Allah: there should be no trace in it of the desire that you should receive any worldly gains in return for the favour done. In other words, do good to others for the sake of Allah, not for seeking any benefits."

The second meaning is: "Although the mission of Prophethood that you are performing is a great favour in itself, for the people are obtaining true

guidance because of it, do not remind the people of this favour, nor try to obtain any personal benefits from it."

The third meaning is: "Although you are performing a great service, you should never gloat over it, nor should ever have the idea that by performing your prophetic duties, at the risk of life, you are doing any favour to your Lord."

7. That is, "The task that is being entrusted to you is full of hazards: you will meet with great hardships and difficulties and troubles on this way: even your own people will turn hostile to you and the whole of Arabia will become your enemy. Yet you should endure with patience, for the sake of your Lord, whatever you may have to face in this way, and carry out all your duties firmly and resolutely. Fear, greed, friendship, enmity, love, all these will hinder your way, but you should stand your ground firmly and steadfastly."

These were the very preliminary instructions which Allah gave His Messenger (upon whom be peace) at the time when He commanded him to arise and start the work of Prophethood. If a person ponders over these brief sentences and their meaning his heart will testify that no better instructions could be given to a Prophet at the commencement of his prophetic mission. In these he was told what he was required to do, what kind of life, morals and dealings he should adopt, and taught with what intention, mentality and mode of thought he should go about his mission and also forewarned what kind of conditions he would meet with in the performance of his mission and how he would have to face and overcome them. Today the people who, blinded by their prejudices, say that these words were, God forbid, uttered by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) during epileptic fits, should study these sentences carefully and judge for themselves whether these are the product of any epileptic fits, or the instructions of a God, which He gave to His Servant while appointing him to the mission of Apostleship.

8. As already explained in the introduction, this part of the Sūrah was sent down a few months after the initial verses when at the beginning of the first ever Ḥajj season, after the advent of Islam, the Quraish chiefs decided in a conference to start a powerful propaganda campaign to dissuade the outsiders, who came to visit the Ka'bah, from the Qur'ān and the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings). In these verses, this very scheming of the Quraish has been reviewed, and the review has begun with the words, as if to say: "You may act as you please, but even if you succeed in achieving your object by these devices in the world, how will you save yourselves from your evil end on the Day when the Trumpet will be sounded and Resurrection established?" (For explanation of the Trumpet, see E.N. 47 of Al-An'ām, E.N. 57 of Ibrāhīm, E.N. 78 of Ṭā Hā, E.N. 1 of Al-Ḥajj, E.N.'s 46, 47 of Yā Sīn, E.N. 79 of Az-Zumar, E.N. 52 of Qāf).

9. These words by themselves support the conclusion that that Day will be light for the believers, and its hardships will be specially intended only for the deniers of the Truth. Moreover, these words also contain the meaning that the severity of that Day will be of an enduring and permanent nature for disbelievers it will not be a severity which might be expected to become mild with the passage of time.

10. The address is directed to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and it means: "O Prophet, leave the case of the person (Walīd bin al-Mughīrah) to Me, who in the disbelievers' conference proposed that you should be branded as a sorcerer among the pilgrims coming from different parts of Arabia; it is now for Me to deal with him; you need not bother yourself about it at all."

11. This sentence can have two meanings and both are correct: (1) "That when I created him, he was not at that time born with any wealth and children and position of authority and chieftainship;" and (2) "that I alone was his Creator: those other gods whose godhead he is so ardently trying to keep established and is opposing your invitation to One God for the same object, were not My associates in creating him."

12. Walīd bin al-Mughīrah had ten or twelve' sons of whom Hadrat Khālid bin Walīd became most famous. For these sons the word *shuhūd* has been used, which can have several meanings: (1) That they do not have to run about and go abroad in search of their livelihood; they have enough provisions at home; therefore, they can always remain at the beck and call of their father; (2) that all his sons are prominent and influential people: they sit in assemblies and conferences with him; and (3) that they are the people of high rank and position and their testimony is accepted in all matters of life.

13. Its one meaning is that there is still no end to his greed. In spite of having all this he still desires that he should be granted every good thing of the world. Another meaning which Hadrat Hasan Basrī, and some other scholars have given is: "He used to say: If what Muhmmad (upon whom be peace) says is really true that there is another life after death, and there will be a Paradise also in it, then that Paradise too has been prepared for me."

14. The reference is to what happened in the conference of the disbelievers of Makkah. From the details of it that we have given in the Introduction, it becomes obvious that this man in his heart had become fully convinced of the Qur'ān's being Divine Word, but in order to save his position as a chief of his people, he was not prepared to affirm faith. When in the conference he himself turned down all the accusations that the Quraish chiefs were proposing against the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), he was compelled to devise an

accusation from himself, which could be spread among the Arabs in order to bring a bad name to the Holy Prophet. Then, the way he struggled against his conscience, and the way he devised an accusation at last after a prolonged mental conflict, has been vividly depicted here.

15. This can have two meanings: first, that it will burn to ashes whoever is cast into it, but even after death he will not escape from punishment: he will be given life once again and burnt once again, This very subject has been treated at another place thus: He will neither die in it nor live." (Al-A'lā: 13) Another meaning also can be: "It will leave none who has deserved the punishment and it will spare none from being punished."

16. After saying that it will leave nothing of the body unconsumed, making mention of "scorching of the skin" separately seems to be somewhat unnecessary. But this form of the punishment has been mentioned separately in particular because it is the skin of a man's face and body which actually makes his personality prominent, and it is its ugliness which makes him feel most ill at ease. He is not so grieved at the internal troubles of his body as, for instance, at his face being ugly, or that there should be spots on the skin of the exposed parts of his body, abhorrent to others. That is why it has been said: If the people who feel proud of their personalities in the world because of having handsome faces and splendid bodies, treat the Revelations of Allah mockingly, as did Walīd bin al-Mughīrah, their faces will be scorched and their skins burnt black.

17. The whole passage from here to "none knows the hosts of your Lord but He Himself", is a parenthetical sentence, which has been inserted here to answer an objection of the disbelievers, who had started mocking it when they heard the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) say that 19 keepers had been appointed over Hell. Their objection was: "How strange that, on the one hand, we are told that all human beings, from the time of the Prophet Adam till Resurrection, who disbelieved and committed evil, will be cast into Hell. and, on the other, that there will be only 19 keepers, who will administer punishment to the countless numbers of men in such a huge Hell." This caused a huge laughter among the chiefs of Quraish. Abu Jahl said: "Brothers, are you so powerless that even as many as ten of you at a time will not be able to overpower a single policeman of Hell?" At this a wrestler of the Banī Jumha said: ' Well I will deal with and overpower at least 17 of them by myself; as for the remaining two, you all together can tackle them." In response these sentences have been inserted as a parenthetical clause.

18. That is, "It is foolish on your part to compare the angelic powers to human powers. They will be angels, not men, and you cannot imagine what tremendous powers Allah has granted to the angels He has created."

19. That is, "Although apparently there was no need to mention the number of the keepers of Hell, yet We have mentioned it so that it becomes a trial for every such person who may be concealing any kind of unbelief in his heart. Such a man may be making a great display of his faith but if he conceals even a tinge of the doubt about the Godhead and supreme powers of God, or about Revelation and Prophethood, anywhere in his heart, his disbelief would immediately be exposed as soon as he would hear that only 19 policemen would control countless numbers of the culprits from among the jinn and men in such a huge jail and would also administer punishment to each of them individually."

20. Some commentators have explained it thus: "As in the scriptures of the Jews and Christians themselves also the same number of the angels has been mentioned as keepers of Hell, they would be convinced of this thing's being truly from Allah as soon as they heard it." But in our opinion this commentary is not correct for two reasons. First, we have not been able to see anywhere in the existing scriptures of the Jews and Christians in spite of search that the number of the angels appointed over Hell is 19. Second, there are many things in the Qur'ān, which also have been mentioned in the scriptures of the Jews and Christians, yet they explain them away, saying that the Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) has plagiarized these from their books. For these reasons the correct meaning of this statement in our opinion is: The Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) knew fully well that he would be ridiculed as soon as the disbelievers heard that 19 angels had been appointed over Hell, but in spite of this, he presented without the least hesitation and fear publicly before the people what had been revealed to him from Allah, and did not at all mind the jesting and mocking by the people. The pagans of Arabia were unaware of the unique distinction of the Prophets, but the followers of the earlier scriptures were fully aware that the Prophets in every age used to convey to their people intact whatever they received from God, whether it pleased them or displeased them. On this very basis it was to be expected of the Jews and the Christians that they would be convinced of the Prophet Muhammad's truth for only a Prophet could present an apparently strange thing without any hesitation before the people in an environment charged with antagonism and hostility. This also is evident that such a thing was shown by the Holy Prophet on many other occasions. Its most prominent example is the event of the *mi'rāj* (ascension) which he related openly before a general assembly of the disbelievers and did not at all care how his opponents would behave and react after they had heard the story of the wonderful event.

21. It has been explained at several places in the Qur'ān above that on the occasion of every trial when a believer remains steadfast to his faith, and forsaking the way of doubt and denial, disobedience or disloyalty to the faith, adopts the way

of faith, obedience and loyalty to it, it increases and strengthens him all the more in faith and resignation (For explanation, see 'Āl-Imrān: 173, Al-Anfāl: 2, At-Taubah: 124-125, Al-Aḥzāb: 22, Al-Fatḥ: 4 and the corresponding E.N.'s).

22. As "sickness of the heart" in the Qur'ān is generally understood to imply hypocrisy, seeing this word here some commentators have expressed the view that this verse was revealed at Madīnah, for the hypocrites appeared at Madīnah. But this view is not correct for several reasons. In the first place, the assertion itself that there were no hypocrites at Makkah is false, and its false-hood has been exposed in the Introduction to the Sūrah Al-'Ankabūt and in its vv. 10-11. Secondly, in our opinion it is not a correct way of writing commentary that in respect of a certain sentence occurring in a particular discourse which was revealed on a particular occasion, under particular circumstances, one should declare that it had been sent down on another occasion but has been inserted here without any relevance. The historical background of this part of Sūrah Al-Muddaththir is fully well known to us from authentic traditions. This was revealed in connection with a particular event of the earliest period of the life at Makkah. The whole context bears full relevance to the event. What could, therefore, be the occasion in this context that this one sentence, if it was revealed many years later at Madīnah, should have been inserted here? As for the question what is implied by the disease of the heart here, its answer is that it implies the disease of doubt. Not only in Makkah but in the entire world also there have been, and are, very few such people, who might deny God, Hereafter, Revelation, Prophethood, Heaven, Hell, etc. absolutely. In every age the greater majority by far has been of those people, who have been involved in the doubt whether there is God, or no God, Hereafter or no Hereafter, whether Heaven and Hell really exist, or are mere figments of the imagination, and whether the Messengers did really come and receive Revelation or not. This same doubt has led most people to unbelief, otherwise the number of such people in the world who denied these truths absolutely has never been great. For a person who has any common sense knows that there is no rational ground whatever for denying the possibility of the existence of these things, or of declaring them absolutely impossible.

23. This does not mean that they accepted it as Divine word but wondered why Allah had said such a thing. But what they actually meant was: "A discourse which contained such an irrational and impossible thing could not be a Revelation from Allah."

24. That is, Allah in this very way sometimes sends down in the course of His Revelations and Commandments such things as become a means of test and

trial for the people. It is one and the same thing which a truth-loving, good-natured and right-minded person hears and understanding its right meaning in the right way, adopts the straight path, but which when heard by an obstinate, perverse and wilful wrongdoer, makes him to misconstrue it and make it a new excuse for fleeing from the truth. Since the first man is himself a lover of the truth, Allah grants him guidance, for it is not the way of Allah to lead the seekers after truth forcibly astray; and since the second man himself does not want guidance, but chooses only error for himself, Allah also pushes him on to the way of error and deviation, for it is also not the way of Allah to forcibly pull to the way of the truth him who has an aversion to the truth. (The question of Allah's granting guidance and misguidance has been fully explained at many places for example, see E.N.'s 10, 16, 19, 20 of Al-Baqarah; E.N. 173 of An-Nisā', E.N.'s 17, 28, 90 of Al-An'ām, E.N. 13 of Yūnus, E.N. 54 of Al-Kahf, E..N. 71 of Al-Qasas)

25. That is, none knows but Allah what different kinds and how many of the creatures He has created in the universe, what powers He has granted them, and what services He is taking from them. If the man clinging to the tiny globe of the earth seeing the tiny world around himself with his limited sight, is involved in the misunderstanding that the universe of God contains nothing but what he can perceive by his senses, or by his instruments, this would only be his own short-sightedness, otherwise this universe is so vast and limitless that it is not in the power of man to obtain full knowledge about any of the things here, not to speak of comprehending mentally the concept of all its vastnesses.

26. "The people may take heed" the people may recover their senses and wake up before they make themselves worthy of Hell and suffer its punishment, and should think of saving themselves from it.

27. That is, it is not a hollow thing which may be mocked like that.

28. That is, "Just as the moon and the night and the day are the great signs of the powers of Allah, so also is Hell a great sign of His powers. If the existence of the moon and the alternation of the night and day so regularly were not impossible, why should the existence of Hell be impossible as you think it is? You see these phenomena day and night; therefore, they do not surprise you: otherwise these things in themselves also are great marvels of the powers of Allah. If you had not observed them and somebody were to tell you that there is also such a thing as the moon in the world, or, there is a sun which leaves the world dark when it hides and makes the world shine forth with light when it appears,

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مَا سَلَكَكُمْ فِيْ سَقَرَ ﴿٤٢﴾ قَالُوْا لَمْ نَكُ مِنَ الْمُصَلِّيْنَ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَلَمْ نَكُ نُطْعِمُ الْمِسْكِيْنَ ﴿٤٤﴾
وَكُنَّا نَخُوْضُ مَعَ الْخَآئِضِيْنَ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَكُنَّا نُكَذِّبُ بِيَوْمِ الدِّيْنِ ﴿٤٦﴾ حَتّٰى اَتٰىنَا
الْيَقِيْنُ ﴿٤٧﴾ فَمَا تَنْفَعُهُمْ شَفَاعَةُ الشّٰفِعِيْنَ ﴿٤٨﴾ فَمَا لَهُمْ عَنِ التَّذْكِرَةِ مُعْرِضِيْنَ ﴿٤٩﴾
كَاَنَّهُمْ حُمُرٌ مُّسْتَنْفِرَةٌ ﴿٥٠﴾ فَرَّتْ مِنْ قَسْوَرَةٍ ﴿٥١﴾ بَلْ يُرِيْدُ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ مِّنْهُمْ اَنْ
يُّؤْتٰى صُحُفًا مُّنَشَّرَةً ﴿٥٢﴾ كَلَّا ۭ بَلْ لَّا يَخَافُوْنَ الْاٰخِرَةَ ﴿٥٣﴾ كَلَّآ اِنَّهٗ تَذْكِرَةٌ ﴿٥٤﴾
فَمَنْ شَآءَ ذَكَرَهُ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَمَا يَذْكُرُوْنَ اِلَّآ اَنْ يَّشَآءَ اللّٰهُ ۭ هُوَ اَهْلُ التَّقْوٰى
وَاَهْلُ الْمَغْفِرَةِ ﴿٥٦﴾

Every person is a pledge for his own deeds,[30] except the people of the right hand, who shall be in Gardens,[31] There they will ask the culprits,[32] "what has brought you into Hell?" They will reply, "We were not of those who offered the *salāt*,[33] and we did not feed the poor,[34] and we used to join with those who indulged in idle talk against the Truth, and we used to belie the Day of Recompense, till the inevitable overtook us."[35] At that time, no intercession of the intercessors shall avail them anything.[36] 38-48

What then is the matter with these people that they are turning away from this Admonition as though they were wild asses fleeing away from a lion?[37] Nay, each one of them desires that he should be sent open letters.[38] No, never! The fact is that they do not fear the Hereafter.[39] No, never![40] This indeed is an Admonition. So, let him who wills, take heed. But they will never take heed unless Allah so wills.[41] He alone is worthy that he should be feared,[42] and He alone is worthy to forgive (those who fear Him).[43] 49-56

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then the people like you would have made jests of it too as you make jests of Hell."

29. That is, the people have been warned to this effect. Now, let him who heeds the warning go forward on the right way, and let him who wills still lag behind.

30. For explanation, see E.N. 16 of Sūrah Aṭ-Ṭūr.

31. In other words, the people of the left hand will be seized in consequence of their misdeeds, but the people of the right hand will have their debts settled. (For explanation of the people of the right hand and the left hand, see E.N.'s 5, 6 of Sūrah Al-Wāqi'ah).

32. At several places in the Qur'ān above, it has been stated that the dwellers of Paradise and the dwellers of Hell will be able to see and commune with each other directly without the agency of any instrument whenever they will so desire, although they will be living hundreds of thousands of miles away from each other. For instance, see Al-A'rāf: 44-50 and E.N. 35, Aṣ-Ṣāffāt: 50-57 and E.N. 32 on it.

33. That is, "We were not of those who after having believed in Allah and His Messenger and His Boo , performed the foremost duty imposed by Allah, i.e. the Prayer. " Here, it should be understood well that unless a person has believed he cannot offer the Prayer at all. Therefore, one's being of those who performed the Prayer, by itself implies that one is a believer. But by attributing one's going to Hell to one's not being of those who performed their Prayer, it has been made explicit that one cannot escape Hell even after having believed if one does not perform one's Prayers regularly.

34. This shows how grave a sin it is in Islam to see a hungry man and fail to feed him even if one can, for this has been particularly mentioned as one of the causes of one's going to Hell.

35. "Till the inevitable overtoo us": till death came upon us. Here, "the inevitable" implies death as well as the Hereafter.

36. That is, "Even if an intercessor interceded for a person who persisted in this way of life till death, he would not be forgiven." The question of intercession has been so fully explained at so many places in the Qur'an that no one can have any difficulty in nowing and understanding as to who can intercede and who cannot, when one can intercede and when one cannot, for whom one can intercede and for whom one cannot, and for whom intercession is beneficial and for whom it is not. As one of the major causes of the people's deviation in the world, is their false concept about intercession, it has been explained at such length in the Qur'ān as to leave no room for any doubt and ambiguity. For example, see Al-Baqarah; 255, Al-An'ām: 94, Al-A'rāf: 53. Yūnus: 3-18, Maryam: 87, Ṭā Hā:

109, Al-Anbiyā': 28, Sabā: 23, Az-Zumar: 43-44, Al-Mu'min: 18, Ad-Dukhān: 86, An-Najm: 26, An-Nabā: 37-38.

37. This is an idiomatic expression in Arabic which depicts the character of wild asses who flee stupefied and stunned as soon as they smell a lion or hear a hunter.

38. That is, they desire that if Allah really has appointed Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) as His Prophet, He should send a letter to each one of the chiefs and elders of Makkah telling him that Muhammad is Allah's Prophet; therefore he should obey and follow him. And these letters should be such as may convince them that they have been written by Allah Himself. At another place in the Qur'ān, this saying of the disbelievers of Makkah has been cited: "We will not believe in it unless we are given the like of what has been given to the Messengers of Allah." (Al-An'ām: 124). At still another place their this demand has been cited: "Or you ascend the sky ... and bring down to us a writing that we may read." (Banī Isrā'īl: 93).

39. That is, the real cause of their failure to affirm the faith is not that their demands are not fulfilled, but the real cause is that they are fearless of the Hereafter. They think that this world is an end in itself and they do not have any idea that there is another life after this worldly life in which they will have to render an account of their deeds. This very thing has made them careless and irresponsible in the world. They regard the question of truth and falsehood as utterly meaningless, for they do not see any truth following which may have necessarily led to a good result in the world, nor do they see any falsehood which might have always led to an evil result in the world. Therefore, they think it is useless merely to consider as to what is really true and what is false. This question can be worthy of serious consideration only for the person who regards the present life of the world as transitory and admits that the real and everlasting life is the life hereafter, where the truth will necessarily lead to a good result and falsehood necessarily to an evil result. Such a person will certainly believe when he sees the rational arguments and the pure teachings presented in the Qur'ān and will use his common sense to understand what is actually wrong with the beliefs and deeds which the Qur'ān calls wrong. But the denier of the Hereafter who is not at all serious in his search for the truth, will present ever new demands every day for not believing, and will present a new excuse for his denial even if all his demands are fulfilled. This same thing has been expressed in Sūrah Al-An'ām: 7 thus: "O Prophet, even if We had sent down to you a Book written in paper, and even if they had touched it with their own hands, the disbelievers would have said: 'This is nothing but manifest sorcery'."

40. That is, no such demand of theirs will ever be fulfilled.

41. That is, a person's taking heed does not wholly depend upon his own will, but he takes heed only when Allah also wills to grant him the grace to take heed. In other words, the truth that has been expressed here is that no act of man takes a concrete shape solely by his own will, but each act is implemented only when the will of God combines with the will of the man. This is a very delicate question, failure to understand which has often made human thought falter. Briefly it can be understood thus: If in this world every man had the power to accomplish whatever he wanted to accomplish, the system of the world would be disturbed. This system continues to hold only because the will of Allah is dominant over all other wills. Man can accomplish whatever he wants to accomplish only when Allah also wills that he be allowed to accomplish it. The same is also the case with guidance and error. Only man's own desiring to have guidance is not enough for him to have guidance; he receives guidance only when Allah also takes a decision to fulfil his desire. Likewise, only man's desiring to go astray by itself is also not enough, but when Allah in view of his desire decides that he be allowed to wander into evil ways, then he wanders into the evil ways in which Allah allows him to wander. As for example, if a person wants to become a thief, only his desire is not enough that he may enter into any house he likes and make away with whatever he likes, but he can fulfil his desire only at the time and to the extent and in the form that Allah allows him to fulfil it, according to His supreme wisdom and expedience.

42. That is, "The admonition being given to you to avoid Allah's displeasure is not for the reason that Allah needs it, and if you did not take it, Allah would be harmed, but you are being so admonished because it is Allah's right that His servants should seek His pleasure and good will and should avoid doing anything against His will."

43. That is, "It behoves only Allah that He should receive into His mercy whoever desists from evil no matter how many acts of disobedience he might have committed in the past. Allah is not vengeful to His servants so that He may refuse to forgive their errors and be bent upon punishing them in any case."


LXXV
AL-QIYĀMAH
اَلقِيٰمَة

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

LXXV

AL-QIYĀMAH

اَلْقِيٰمَة

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah has been so named after the word *al-Qiyāmah* in the first verse. This is not only the name but also the title of this Sūrah, for it is devoted to Resurrection itself.

Period of Revelation

Although there is no tradition to indicate its period of revelation, yet there is in the subject-matter of this Sūrah an internal evidence, which shows that it is one of the earliest Sūrahs to be sent down at Makkah. After verse 15 the discourse is suddenly interrupted and the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) told: "Do not move your tongue to

remember this Revelation hastily. It is Our responsibility to have it remembered and read. Therefore, when We are reciting it, listen to its recital carefully. Again, it is Our responsibility to explain its meaning." Then, from verse 20 onward the same theme which was interrupted at verse 15, is resumed. This parenthetical passage, according to both the context and the traditions, has been interposed here for the reason that when the Angel Gabriel was reciting this Sūrah to the Holy Prophet, the Holy Prophet, lest he should forget its words later, was repeating them at the same moment. This in fact happened at the time when the coming down and receipt of Revelation was yet a new experience for him and he was not yet fully used to receiving it calmly. There are two other instances also of this in the Qur'ān. First, in Sūrah Tā Hā the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been told: "And see that you do not hasten to recite the Qur'ān before its revelation is completed to you." (v. 114). Then, in Sūrah Al-A'lā, it has been said: "We shall enable you to recite: then you shall never forget." (v. 6). Later, when the Holy Prophet became fully used to receiving the Revelation well, there remained no need to give him any such instruction. That is why except for these three, there is no other instance of this in the Qur'ān.

Theme and Subject-Matter

Most of the Sūrahs, from here till the end of the Qur'ān, in view of their content and style, seem to have been sent down in the period when after the first seven verses of Sūrah Al-Muddaththir, revelation of the Qur'ān began like a shower of rain. Thus, in the successively revealed Sūrahs Islam and its fundamental concepts and moral teachings were presented so forcefully and effectively in pithy, brief sentences and the people of Makkah warned so vehemently on their errors and deviations that the Quraish chiefs were utterly confounded. Therefore, before the next Hajj season came they held the conference for devising schemes to defeat the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) as has been mentioned in the Introduction to the Sūrah Al-Muddaththir above.

In this Sūrah, addressing the deniers of the Hereafter, replies have been given to each of their doubts and objections, strong arguments have been given to prove the possibility, occurrence and necessity of the Resurrection and Hereafter, and also it has been pointed out clearly that the actual reason of the people's denying the Hereafter is not that they regard it as impossible rationally but because their selfish motives do not

allow them to affirm it. At the same time, the people have been warned, as if to say: "The event the occurrence of which you deny, will inevitably come: all your deeds will be brought and placed before you. As a matter of fact, even before any of you sees his record, he will be knowing fully well what he has done in the world, for no man is unaware of himself, no matter what excuses and pretences he may offer to deceive the world and deceive himself in respect of his misdeeds."



لَآ اُقْسِمُ بِيَوْمِ الْقِيٰمَةِ ۝١ وَلَآ اُقْسِمُ بِالنَّفْسِ اللَّوَّامَةِ ۝٢ اَيَحْسَبُ الْاِنْسَانُ
اَلَّنْ نَّجْمَعَ عِظَامَهٗ ۝٣ بَلٰى قٰدِرِيْنَ عَلٰٓى اَنْ نُّسَوِّيَ بَنَانَهٗ ۝٤ بَلْ يُرِيْدُ الْاِنْسَانُ
لِيَفْجُرَ اَمَامَهٗ ۝٥ يَسْـَٔلُ اَيَّانَ يَوْمُ الْقِيٰمَةِ ۝٦ فَاِذَا بَرِقَ الْبَصَرُ ۝٧ وَخَسَفَ الْقَمَرُ ۝٨
وَجُمِعَ الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ ۝٩ يَقُوْلُ الْاِنْسَانُ يَوْمَئِذٍ اَيْنَ الْمَفَرُّ ۝١٠ كَلَّا لَا وَزَرَ ۝١١ اِلٰى
رَبِّكَ يَوْمَئِذِ ِالْمُسْتَقَرُّ ۝١٢ يُنَبَّؤُا الْاِنْسَانُ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِمَا قَدَّمَ وَاَخَّرَ ۝١٣ بَلِ الْاِنْسَانُ
عَلٰى نَفْسِهٖ بَصِيْرَةٌ ۝١٤ وَّلَوْ اَلْقٰى مَعَاذِيْرَهٗ ۝١٥ لَا تُحَرِّكْ بِهٖ لِسَانَكَ لِتَعْجَلَ بِهٖ ۝١٦
اِنَّ عَلَيْنَا جَمْعَهٗ وَقُرْاٰنَهٗ ۝١٧ فَاِذَا قَرَاْنٰهُ فَاتَّبِعْ قُرْاٰنَهٗ ۝١٨ ثُمَّ اِنَّ عَلَيْنَا بَيَانَهٗ ۝١٩
كَلَّا بَلْ تُحِبُّوْنَ الْعَاجِلَةَ ۝٢٠ وَتَذَرُوْنَ الْاٰخِرَةَ ۝٢١ وُجُوْهٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ نَّاضِرَةٌ ۝٢٢
اِلٰى رَبِّهَا نَاظِرَةٌ ۝٢٣ وَوُجُوْهٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ بَاسِرَةٌ ۝٢٤ تَظُنُّ اَنْ يُّفْعَلَ بِهَا فَاقِرَةٌ ۝٢٥
كَلَّآ اِذَا بَلَغَتِ التَّرَاقِيَ ۝٢٦ وَقِيْلَ مَنْ ۜ رَاقٍ ۝٢٧ وَّظَنَّ اَنَّهُ الْفِرَاقُ ۝٢٨ وَالْتَفَّتِ
السَّاقُ بِالسَّاقِ ۝٢٩ اِلٰى رَبِّكَ يَوْمَئِذِ ِالْمَسَاقُ ۝٣٠ فَلَا صَدَّقَ وَلَا صَلّٰى ۝٣١ وَ
لٰكِنْ كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلّٰى ۝٣٢ ثُمَّ ذَهَبَ اِلٰٓى اَهْلِهٖ يَتَمَطّٰى ۝٣٣ اَوْلٰى لَكَ فَاَوْلٰى ۝٣٤ ثُمَّ
اَوْلٰى لَكَ فَاَوْلٰى ۝٣٥ اَيَحْسَبُ الْاِنْسَانُ اَنْ يُّتْرَكَ سُدًى ۝٣٦ اَلَمْ يَكُ نُطْفَةً مِّنْ
مَّنِيٍّ يُّمْنٰى ۝٣٧ ثُمَّ كَانَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقَ فَسَوّٰى ۝٣٨ فَجَعَلَ مِنْهُ الزَّوْجَيْنِ الذَّكَرَ
وَالْاُنْثٰى ۝٣٩ اَلَيْسَ ذٰلِكَ بِقٰدِرٍ عَلٰٓى اَنْ يُّحْيِۦَ الْمَوْتٰى ۝٤٠

LXXV
AL-QIYĀMAH
اَلقِيٰمَة

Verses. 40

Revealed at Makkah

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Nay,[1] I swear by the Day of Resurrection and nay, I swear by the reproaching self;[2] Does man think that We shall not be able to put his bones together?[3] Why not? We have even the power to shape and restore his very finger-tips.[4] But man desires that he may go on doing evil in future as well.[5] He asks, "When is the Day of Resurrection to be?"[6] When the eyes are dazzled[7] and the moon is darkened and the sun and the moon are brought together,[8] then the same man will say, "Whither to escape?" No, by no means! There will be no refuge whatever. Only before your Lord that Day shall be the place of rest. That Day man shall be told all his former and latter deeds.[9] Nay, man knows his own self best, even though he may offer many excuses.[10] — O Prophet,[11] do not move your tongue to remember this Revelation hastily. It is for Us to have it remembered and read. Therefore, when We are reciting it,[12] listen to its recital carefully. Again, it is for Us to explain its meaning.[13]—No, by no means![14] The fact is that you (people) love that which is hastily attainable (i.e. the world) and neglect the Hereafter.[15] On that Day some faces shall be fresh,[16] looking towards their Lord,[17] and some faces shall be gloomy, thinking that a back breaking calamity is about to befall them. No, by no means![18] When the soul reaches the throat, and it is said, "Is there an enchanter to help?"[19] and man thinks that it is the time of his departure from the world, and the leg is joined to the leg,[20] that will be the Day of driving towards your Lord. 1-30

But he neither affirmed (the Truth) nor prayed, but he belied turned away. Then he went to his kinsfolk, arrogantly.[21] This sort of conduct behoves you and you alone. Yes, this sort of conduct behoves 31-35

you and you alone![22]

36-40 Does man[23] think that he will be left to himself to wander at will?[24] Was he not a mere sperm-drop, which is emitted (in the mother's womb)? Then he became a blood-clot then Allah formed him and fashioned his limbs in proportion; then from it He made two kinds, male and female. Has He not then the power to give life to the dead?[25]

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1. To begin the discourse with "Nay" by itself indicates that the Sūrah was sent down to refute some argument which was already in progress. The theme that follows shows that the argument was about Resurrection and life after death, which the people of Makkah were denying and also mocking at it at the same time. This can be understood by an example. If a person only wants to affirm the truth of the Messenger, he will say: "By God, the Messenger has come with the truth." But if some people might be denying the truth of the Messenger, he in response would rejoin, thus: "Nay, by God, the Messenger has come with the truth." It would mean: "That which you say is not true. I swear that the truth is this and this."

2. The Qur'ān has mentioned three kinds of human self: (1) *Ammārah*: the self that urges man to evil; (2) *Lawwāmah*: the self that feels repentant at doing wrong, thinking wrong and willing wrong and reproaches man for this; and the same is called Conscience in modern terminology; and (3) *Mutma'innah*: the self that feels full satisfaction at following the right path and abandoning the wrong path.

Here, the thing for which Allah has sworn an oath by the Resurrection (*al-Qiyāmah*) and the self-reproaching Self, has not been mentioned, for the following sentence itself points it out. The oath has been sworn to stress the truth that Allah will certainly resurrect man after death and He has full power to do so. Now, the question arises: What is the relevance of swearing an oath by these two truths to this thing?

As for the Day of Resurrection, the reason of swearing by it is certainty. The whole system of the universe testifies that it is neither eternal nor everlasting. Its own nature tells that it has neither existed since eternity nor can last till eternity. Human intellect has never had any strong argument to support the baseless view that this ever changing world could have existed since ever and would last for ever. But as the knowledge of man about this world goes on increasing, it goes on becoming more and more certain for man himself that this workhouse of life had a beginning in time before which it was not, and necessarily it has also an end in time after which it will not be. For this reason, Allah has sworn an oath by Resurrection itself on the occurrence of Resurrection, and this is an oath of the kind that we might swear addressing a sceptical person, who may be sceptical

about his own existence, saying: "By you yourself, you exist, i.e., your own being itself testifies that you exist."

But an oath by the Day of Resurrection is only an agrument for the truth that this system will one day be upset. As for the truth that after that man shall be resurrected and called upon to account for his deeds and made to see the good or evil results thereof, another oath has been sworn by the self reproaching soul. No man exists in the world, who may not have a faculty called Conscience in him. This Conscience is necessarily conscious of the good and evil, and no matter how perverted and degraded a man might be, his Conscience always checks him on doing evil and for not doing good irrespective of the fact whether the criterion of good and evil that he had set for himself might in itself be right or wrong. This is an express pointer that man is not merely an animal but a moral being. He naturally can distinguish good from evil; he regards himself as responsible for the good or the evil he does; and even if he might feel pleased suppressing the reproaches of his Conscience over the evil he has done to another, he, on the contrary, feels and demands from within that the other one who has done the same evil to him, must deserve punishment. Now, if the existence of a self-reproaching soul of this kind in man himself is an undeniable truth, then this truth too is undeniable that the same self-reproaching soul is an evidence of the life hereafter, which exists in man's own nature itself. For this demand of nature that man must be rewarded or punished for his good or evil deeds for which he himself is responsible, cannot be met in any other way than in the life hereafter. No sensible man can deny that if man becomes non existent after death, he will certainly be deprived of the rewards of his good deeds and escape the just and lawful punishment of many of his evil deeds. Therefore, unless one comes to believe in the absurd idea that a rational being like man has stumbled into an irrational system of the universe and a moral being like man has happened to be born in a world which basically has nothing to do with morality, he cannot deny the life hereafter. Likewise, the philosophy of the transmigration of souls also is no reply to this demand of nature, for if man goes on being born and reborn in this very world for the sake of being rewarded and punished for his moral acts, in every cycle of life he will perform some additional moral acts, which again will need to be rewarded and punished, thus making his account more and more lengthy and complicated in an endless way instead of being settled finally and for good. Therefore, this demand of nature is fulfilled only in case man in this world should have only one life and then, after the whole human race has been brought to an end, there should be another life in which all acts of man should be judged and assessed rightly and justly and he should be fully rewarded or punished in consequence thereof. (For further explanation, see E.N. 30 of Sūrah Al-A'rāf).

3. The above two arguments, which have been presented in the form of the oaths, only prove two things. First, that the end of the world (*i.e.* the first stage of Resurrection) is a certainty; and second, that another life after death is necessary, for without it the logical and natural demands of man's being a moral being cannot be fulfilled; and this will certainly happen, for the existence of the Conscience in man testifies to it. Now, this third argument has been given to prove that life after death is possible. The people of Makkah who denied it, said again and again: "How can it be that the people who died hundreds of thousands of years ago, whose bodies have disintegrated into particles and mixed in the dust, whose bones decayed and were scattered away by the winds, some of whom were burnt to ashes, others devoured by the beasts of prey, still others drowned in the seas and swallowed by fish, the material constituents of their bodies should re-assemble and every man should rise up as the same person that he once was ten or twenty thousand years before? Allah has given its very rational and highly forceful reply in the form of this brief question: "Does man think that We shall not be able to put his bones together?" That is, "If you had been told that the scattered particles of your body would reunite of their own accord some time in the future, and you would come back to life by yourself with this very body, you would no doubt have been justified in regarding it as impossible. But what you have actually been told is that such a thing will not happen by itself, but Allah Almighty will do this. Now, do you really think that the Creator of the universe, Whom you yourself also regard as the Creator, would be powerless to do so?" This was such a question in answer to which nobody who believed in God to be the Creator of the universe; could say, neither then nor today, that even God Himself could not do this even if He so willed. And if a disbeliever says such a thing, he can be asked: How did God in the first instance make the body in which you at present exist, by gathering its countless particles together from the air, water and earth and many other places you know not what, and how can you say that the same God cannot gather its constituent parts together once again?

4. That is, "Not to speak of building up your skeleton once again by gathering together the major bones? We are able to make whole the most delicate parts of your body, even your finger tips, as they used to be before."

5. In this brief sentence the real disease of the deniers of the Hereafter has been clearly diagnosed. What makes them deny the Hereafter is not, in fact, their regarding the Resurrection and Hereafter as impossible but they deny it because acceptance of the Hereafter inevitably imposes certain moral restrictions on them, which they detest. They desire that they should continue roaming in the world at will as they have been roaming before. They should have full freedom to go on committing whatever injustice, dishonesty, sin and wickedness that they have been committing before, and there should be no deterrent to obstruct their freedom and

to warn them that one day they will have to appear and render an account of their deeds before their God. Therefore, it is not their intellect which is hindering them from believing in the Hereafter but their desires of the self.

6. This question was not put as a question but derisively and to deny Resurrection, That is, they did not want to ask when Resurrection would take place but asked mockingly: "What has happened to the day with which you are threatening us. When will it come?"

7. Literally, the words *bariq al-basaru* mean dazzling of the eyes by lightning, but in the Arabic idiom these words do not specifically carry this meaning only but are also used for man's being terror-stricken and amazed, or his being confounded on meeting with an accident suddenly and his eyes being dazed at some distressing sight before him. This subject has been expressed at another place in the Qur'ān, thus; "Allah is only deferring their case to the Day when the eyes shall stare with consternation." (Ibrāhīm: 42).

8. This is a brief description of the chaotic condition of the system of the universe, that will prevail in the first stage of Resurrection. The darkening of the moon and the joining of the moon and the sun together can also mean that not only will the moon lose its light, which is borrowed from the sun, but the sun itself will become dark and both will become devoid of light similarly. Another meaning can be that the earth will suddenly start rotating in the reverse order and on that day both the moon and the sun will rise simultaneously in the west. And a third meaning can be that the moon will suddenly shoot out of the earth's sphere of influence and will fall into the sun. There may possibly be some other meaning also of this which we cannot understand today.

9. *Bimā qaddama wa akhkhara* is a very comprehensive sentence, which can have several meanings and probably all are implied; (1) That man on that Day will be told what good or evil he had earned in his worldly life before death and sent forward for his hereafter, and also informed what effects of his good or evil acts he had left behind in the world, which continued to work and to influence the coming generations for ages after him; (2) that he will be told everything he ought to have done but which he did not do, and did what he ought not to have done; (3) that the full datewise account of what he did before and what he did afterwards will be placed before him; (4) that he will be told whatever good or evil he had done as well as informed of the good or the evil that he had left undone.

10. That is, the object of placing man's record before him will not be to inform the culprit of his crimes, but this will be done because the demands of justice are not fulfilled unless the proof of the crime is produced before the court; otherwise everyman fully well knows what he actually is. For the sake of self-

knowledge he does not need that another one should tell him what he is. A liar can deceive the whole world but he himself knows that he lies. A thief can devise a thousand devices to conceal his crime but he himself is aware that he is a thief. A person involved in error can present a thousand arguments to assure the people that he is honestly convinced of the disbelief, atheism or polytheism, which he professes and follows, but his own conscience is never unaware of why he persists in that creed and what, in fact, prevents him from understanding and admitting its error and falsity. An unjust, wicked, dishonest, immoral and corrupt person can even suppress the voice of his own conscience by inventing one or another excuse so that it may stop reproaching him and should be satisfied that he is doing whatever he is doing only because of certain compulsions, expediences and genuine needs, but despite this he has in any case the knowledge of what wrong he has committed against a certain person, how he has deprived another of his rights, how he deceived still another and that unlawful methods he used to gain what he has gained. Therefore, at the time when one appears in the Court of the Hereafter, every disbeliever, every hypocrite, every wicked person and culprit will himself be knowing what he has done in the world and for what crime he stands before his God.

11. The whole passage from here to "Again, it is for Us to explain its meaning", is a parenthesis, which has been interposed here as an address to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). As we have explained in the Introduction above, in the initial stage of the Prophethood when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was not yet fully used to receiving the Revelation, he was afraid when Revelation came down to him whether he would be able to remember exactly what the Angel Gabriel (peace be on him) was reciting to him or not. Therefore, he would try to commit to memory rapidly what he heard from the Angel simultaneously. The same thing happened when Gabriel was reciting these verses of Sūrah Al-Qiyāmah. Therefore, interrupting what was being revealed, the holy Prophet was instructed to the effect: "Do not try to memorise the words of the revelation, but listen to it attentively and carefully. It is Our responsibility to enable you to remember it by heart and then to recite it accurately. Rest assured that you will not forget even a word of this Revelation, nor ever commit a mistake in reciting it!

After this instruction the original theme is resumed with: "No, by no means! The fact is ..." The people who are not aware of this background regard these sentences as wholly unconnected with the context when they see them interposed here. But one does not see any irrelevance when one has understood their background. This can be understood by an example. A teacher seeing the inattentiveness of a student in the course of the lesson might interrupt the lesson to tell him, "Listen to me carefully", and then resume his speech, This sentence will

certainly seem to be irrelevant to those who might be unaware of the incident and might read the lesson when it is printed and published word for word. But the one who is aware of the incident because of which this sentence was interposed, will feel satisfied that the lesson has been reproduced verbatum and nothing has been increased or decreased in it in the process of reproduction.

The explanation that we have given above of the interpolation of the parenthesis in the present context, is not merely based on conjecture, but it has been explained likewise in the authentic traditions. Imām Aḥmad, Bukhārī, Muslim, Nasā'ī, Tirmidhi, Ibn Jarīr, Tabarani, Baihaqī and other traditionists have related with authentic chains of transmitters a tradition from Ḥadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, saying that when the Qur'ān was revealed to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), he would start repeating the words of the Revelation rapidly as the Angel Gabriel recited them, fearing lest he should forget some part of it later. Thereupon, he was instructed: "Do not move your tongue to remember this Revelation hastily ... The same thing has been related from Sha'bī, Ibn Zaid, Ḍaḥḥāk, Ḥasan Baṣrī, Qatādah, Mujāhid and other early commentators.

12. Although it was Gabriel (peace be on him) who recited the Qur'ān to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace), since he recited it on behalf of Allah,,and not on his own behalf, Allah said: "When We are reciting it."

13. This gives the feeling, and some early commentators also have given expression to the same, that probably in the beginning the Holy Messenger of Allah used to ask of the Angel Gabriel the meaning of a verse or a word or a command of the Qur'ān even in the very midst of the Revelation itself. Therefore, the Holy Prophet was not only given the instruction that he should listen quietly to Revelation when it came down to him, and assured that its each word would be preserved in his memory precisely, and he would be enabled to recite the Qur'ān exactly as it was revealed, but at the same time it was also promised that he would be made to understand the meaning and intention of each command and each instruction of Divine Revelation.

This is a very important verse, which proves certain fundamental concepts which if understood well, can protect one against the errors which some people have been spreading before as they are spreading them today.

First, it clearly proves that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) did not receive only the Revelation which is recorded in the Qur'ān but besides that he was also given such knowledge by revelation as is not recorded in it. For, if the meaning and intention of the commandments of the Qur'ān, its allusions, its words and its specific terms, which the Holy Prophet was made to understand, had been recorded in the Qur'ān, there was no need to say that it was also Allah's own

responsibility to explain its meaning, for it should then be there in the Qur'ān itself. Hence, one will have to admit that the explanations which were given by Allah of the meanings of the contents of the Qur'ān, were in any case in addition to the words of the Qur'ān. This is another proof of the secret Revelation to the Holy Prophet which the Qur'ān provides. (For further proofs of this from the Qur'ān, see our book *Sunnat kī Ā'īnī Ḥaithiyat* pp. 94-95 and pp. 118-125).

Secondly, the explanation of the meaning and intention of the Qur'ān and of its commandments that was given by Allah to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), was given for the purpose that he should make the people understand the Qur'ān by his word and deed according to it and teach them to act on its Commands. If this was not the object, and the explanation was only given so that he may restrict its knowledge to himself, it was then an exercise in futility, for it could not help in any way in the performance of the prophetic duties. Therefore, only a foolish person could say that this explanatory work had no legal value at all. Allah Himself has said in Sūrah An-Naḥl: 44: "And O Prophet, We have sent down this Admonition to you so that you may make plain and explain to the people the teaching which has been sent for them." (For explanation, see E.N. 40 of Sūrah An-Naḥl). And at four places in the Qur'ān Allah has stated that the Holy Prophet's task was not only to recite the verses of the Book of Allah but also to teach the Book. (Al-Baqarah: 129,.151, Āl-Imrān: 164, Al-Jumu'ah: 2. We have fully explained all these verses at pp. 74-77 of *Sunnat kī Ā'īnī Ḥaithiyat*). After this, how can a believer of the Qur'ān deny that the Qur'ān's correct and authoritative, as a matter of fact official, explanation is only that which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has given by his word and deed, for it is not his personal explanation but the explanation given by the God Who sent down the Qur'ān to him. Apart from this, or leaving this aside any person who explains a verse, or a word, of the Qur'ān according to his personal whim and desire, commits a boldness which no true believer could ever commit.

Thirdly, even if a person has read the Qur'ān only cursorily, he cannot help feeling that there are many things in it whose actual meaning and intention cannot be understood by a reader of Arabic only from the words of the Qur'ān, nor can he know how to act on the commands enjoined in them. Take the word *salāt* for instance; The act which has been most stressed by the Qur'ān after the affirmation of faith is the act of *salāt*. But no man only with the help of the dictionary can determine its actual meaning. At the most what one can understand from the way it has been repeatedly mentioned in the Qur'ān is that this Arabic word has been used in some special terminological sense, and it probably implies some special act which the believers are required to perform. But merely by reading the Qur'ān no reader of Arabic can determine what particular act it is, and how it is to be performed. The question: If the Sender of the Qur'ān had not

appointed a teacher from Himself and explained to him the precise and exact meaning of this term and taught him the method in full detail of implementing the command of *salāt*, could there be even two Muslims in the world who would have agreed on one method of acting on the command of *ṣalāt* just by reading the Qur'ān? The reason why Muslims have been performing *ṣalāt* in one and the same way, generation after generation, for more than 1500 years, and the way millions and millions of Muslims are carrying out the command of *salāt* similarly in every part of the world, is that Allah had not only revealed the words of the Qur'ān to His Messenger but had also explained to him fully the meaning of those words and the same meaning he taught to the people who accepted the Qur'an as the Book of Allah and him as the Messenger of Allah.

Fourthly, the means of knowing the explanation of the words of the Qur'ān that Allah taught His Messenger and the Messenger his *Ummah* by word and deed, is none but the *Ḥadīth* and the *Sunnah*. The *Ḥadīth* implies the traditions which the earliest followers passed on to the later generations about the sayings and acts of the Messenger on sound authority, and the *Sunnah* implies the way of life which became prevalent in the individnal and collective life of the Muslims by the Holy Messenger's oral and practical teaching, the details of which have been bequeathed by the former to the latter generations by reliable traditions as well as seen by them practically in the life of the earliest followers. The person who refuses to acknowledge this means of knowledge, in fact, says that Allah after taking the responsibility of explaining the meaning of the Qur'ān to His Messenger had, God forbid, failed to fulfil His promise. For this responsibility had not been taken to explain the meaning only to the Messenger in his personal capacity but for the purpose that the *Ummah* also be made to understand the meaning of the Divine Book through the agency of the Messenger. And as soon as the *Ḥadīth* and the *Sunnah* are denied to be a source of law, it virtually amounts to saying that Allah has failed to carry out His responsibility. May Allah protect us from such blasphemy! To the one who argues that many people had also fabricated *Ḥadīth*, we would say that fabrication of *Ḥadīth* itself is a major proof of the fact that in the beginning the entire *Ummah* gave the sayings and acts of the Holy Messenger (Upon whom be Allah's peace) the status of law, otherwise why should the people who wanted to spread error have fabricated false *Ḥadīth*? For only those coins are counterfeited which are current in the bazaar; nobody would print paper currency which had no value in the bazaar. Then, those who say such a thing perhaps do not know that this *Ummah* had seen to it from the very beginning that no falsehood was ascribed to the holy man whose sayings and acts had the status of law, and as the danger of ascribing false things to him increased, the well-wishers of the *Ummah* made greater and still greater efforts to distinguish the genuine from the counterfeit. The science of distinguishing the genuine from the false traditions is a

unique science invented and developed only by the Muslims. Unfortunate indeed are those who without acquiring this science are being misled by the western orientalists to look upon the *Hadith* and the *Sunnah* as un-authentic and un-reliable and do not realize how grievously they are harming Islam by their foolhardiness.

14: The theme is again resumed from where it was interrupted by the parenthesis. "By no means" implies; "You deny the Hereafter not because you regard the Creator of the universe as helpless to bring about Resurrection and raise the dead, but because of this and this other reason."

15. This is the second reason for denying the Hereafter, the first being the one mentioned in verse 5 above, saying: Since man wants to avoid the moral restrictions which are inevitably imposed by the belief in the Hereafter, his selfish motives, in fact, urge him to deny the Hereafter, and then he tries to present arguments in order to rationalise his denial. Now, the second reason being presented is that the deniers of the Hereafter are narrow-minded and shortsighted; for them only those results are all important, which appear in this world, and they do not give any importance to those effects which will appear in the Hereafter. They think that they should expend all their labour and effort in attaining whatever benefits, pleasures or joys they can attain here, for if one attained this, one attained everything, no matter what evil end this might lead to in the Hereafter. Likewise, they think that the loss or trouble or grief that can afflict one here is a thing that one must avoid, no matter how great a reward it might earn one in the Hereafter if one endured it here. They are only interested in the cash bargain. For the sake of as remote a thing as the Hereafter they can neither abandon a profit nor suffer a loss today. With this mode of thought when they discuss the question of the Hereafter rationally, it is not true rationalism but a mode of thinking because of which they are resolved not to acknowledge the Hereafter in any case even if their conscience might be crying from within that the arguments for the possible occurrence and necessity of the Hereafter given in the Qur'an are highly rational and their own reasoning against it is very weak.

16. "Some faces will be fresh"; will be beaming with joy and delight, for the Hereatter which they had believed in, will be before them precisely accordingly to their belief. Thus, when they see the Hereafter for the sake of which they had given up the unlawful benefits of the world and suffered the lawful losses, actually established before their very eyes, they will have the satisfaction that they had made the correct decision about their way of life, and the time had come when they would enjoy its best and plentiful fruits.

17. Some commentators have understood this allegorically. They say that the words "looking towards someone" are used idiomatically for having expectations from some one, awaiting his decision and hoping for his mercy and

kindness: so much so that even a blind person also says that he is looking towards some one in the hope to see how he helps him. But in a large number of the *Ahadith* the commentary that has been reported of it from the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) is that on the Hereafter the illustrious servants of Allah will be blessed with the vision of their Lord. According to a tradition in Bukhārī: "You will openly see your Lord." Muslim and Tirmidhī have related on the authority of Hadrat Suhaib that the Holy Prophet said: "When the righteous people enter Paradise. Allah will ask them: Do you want that I should bless you with something more? They will answer: Have You not made our faces bright: Have You not admitted us into Paradise and saved us from Hell? Thereupon, Allah will remove the curtain and none of the blessings that they had been blessed with until then will be dearer to them than that they should be blessed with the vision of their Lord" And this very reward is the additional reward about which the Qur'ān says: "Those who have done excellent works, will get excellent rewards, and even something in addition to that." (Yūnus: 26) Bukhārī and Muslim have related, on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abū Sa'īd Khudrī and Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah: "The people asked: O Messenger of Allah, shall we see our Lord on the Day of Resurrection? The Holy Messenger replied: Do you find any difficulty in seeing the sun and the moon when there is no cloud in between? They said that they did not. The Holy Messenger said: Likewise, you will see you Lord." Another tradition bearing almost on the same subject has been reported in Bukhārī and Muslim from Hadrat Jarīr bin 'Abdullah. Imām Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, Dāraqutnī, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Al-Mundhir, Ṭabarani, Baihaqī, Ibn Abi Shaibah and some other traditionists have related, with a little variation in wordings a tradition from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, saying: "The man of the lowest rank among the dwellers of Paradise will see the vastness of his kingdom up to a distance covered in two thousand years, and the people of the highest rank among them will see their Lord twice daily. Then, the Holy Prophet recited this verse: 'On that Day some faces shall be fresh, looking towards their Lord'." A tradition in Ibn Mājah from Ḥaḍrat Jabir bin 'Abdullah is to the effect: "Allah will look towards them, and they will look towards Allah. Then, until Allah hides Himself from them, they will not pay attention to any other blessing of Paradise, and will continue to look towards Him." On the basis of this and many other traditions, the followers of the *Sunnah* almost unanimously understand this verse in the meaning that in the Hereafter the dwellers of Paradise will be blessed with the vision of Allah, and this is supported by this verse of the Qur'ān too: "Nay, surely on that Day they (the sinners) shall be kept away from their Lord's vision." (Al-Muṭaffifin: 15). From this one can automatically conclude that this deprivation will be the lot of the sinners, not of the righteous.

Here, the question arises how can man ever see God? A thing is seen when it is there in a particular direction, place, form and colour, and the rays of light are reflected from it to the eye of man and its image is conveyed from the eye to the sight area in the brain. Is it ever conceivable with regard to the Being of Allah, Lord of the Universe, that man would be able to see Him in this way? But this question, in fact, springs from a grave misunderstanding. It does not take into account the distinction between two things: the essence of seeing and the specific form of the occurrence of the act of seeing with which we are familiar in the world. The essence of seeing is that the seer should be characterised by the power of sight: he should not be blind, and the thing to be seen should be manifest to him, not hidden from him. But in the world what we experience and observe is only the specific form of seeing in which a man or an animal practically sees something, and for this it is necessary that the seer should have an organ called the eye in his body, the eye should have the power of sight, it should have a physically bounded, coloured object before it, which should reflect rays of light to the eye, and the eye should be able to receive its image. Now, if a person thinks that the practical demonstration of the essence of seeing can take place only in the form with which we are familiar in the world, he would be only showing the narrowness of his own mental outlook; otherwise there can be in the Kingdom of God countless ways of seeing, which we cannot even imagine. The one who disputes this should tell us whether his God is seeing or blind. If He is seeing and sees His whole Universe and everything in it, does He see all this with an organ called the eye with which men and animals see things in the world, and does the act of seeing issue forth from Him as it issues forth from us? Obviously, the answer to this is in the negative, and when it is so, why should a sensible man find it difficult to understand that in the Hereafter the dwellers of Paradise will not see Allah in the specific form in which man sees something in the world, but there nature of seeing will be different, which we cannot comprehend here. The fact is that it is even more difficult for us to understand the nature of the Hereafter precisely and accurately than it is for a two-year-old child to understand what matrimonial life is, whereas he himself will experience it when he grows up.

18. The phrase "by no means" relates to the context, and means: "You are wrong in thinking that you will be annihilated after death and you will not return to your Lord."

19. The word *rāqin* in the original may be derived from *ruqayyah*, which means resort to charming, enchanting and exercising, and also from *raqī*, which means ascending. In the first case, the meaning would be: "At last, when the attendants of the patient are disappointed with every remedy and cure, they will say: "Let us at least call in an enchanter, who may save him;" in the second case, the meaning would be: "At that time the angels will say: which angels are to take

his soul: the angels of punishment or the angels of mercy?" In other words, at that very time the question will be decided in what capacity the dying one is entering the Hereafter; if he is a righteous person, the angels of mercy will take him, and if he is wicked, the angels of mercy will keep away and the angels of punishment will seize him and take him away.

20. Some commentators have taken the word *sāq* (leg, shank) in its literal meaning, thereby implying that at death one lean leg will join the other lean leg; some others have taken it metaphorically in the sense of difficulty, vehemence and hardship so as to mean: At that time one affliction will be joined with another affliction, one of being saparated from the world and all its enjoyments, and the other of being seized and taken to the Hereafter as a culprit, and this will be experienced by every disbeliever, hypocrite and sinner.

21. It means that the one who was not prepared to believe in the Hereafter, heard all that has been described in the above verses; yet he persisted in his denial, and hearing these verses went back to his household, arrogantly. Mujāhid, Qatādah and Ibn Zaid say that this person was Abū Jahl. The words of the verse also indicate that it was some particular person, who adopted such a conduct after having heard the above-mentioned verse of Sūrah Al-Qiyāmah.

The words, "He neither affirmed the Truth nor offered the Prayer", are particularly noteworthy. They clearly show that the first and necessary demand of acknowledging the truth about Allah and His Messenger and Book is that one should perform the Prayer. The occasion and time to carry out the other injunctions of the Divine *Shari'ah* come later but the Prayer time approaches soon after one has affirmed the faith, and then it becomes known whether what one has affirmed with the tongue was really the voice of one's heart, or it was only a puff of the wind which one sent out from one's mouth in the form of words.

22. The commentators have given several meanings of the word *aulā laka*: shame on you, may you perish, woe to you, may you hasten to your doom. But in our opinion, in view of the context, the most appropriate meaning is that which Hāfiz Ibn Kathīr has given in his commentary: "When you have had the boldness to disown your Creators then it only behoves a person like you to persist in the sort of conduct you display." This is the same sort of sarcastic remark as occurred in Sūrah Ad-Dukhān: 49 above. While meting out punishment to the culprit in Hell, it will be said: "Taste this: a mighty and honourable man that you are!"

23. Now, in conclusion, the same theme is being repeated with which the discourse began Life-after-death is necessary as well as possible.

24. The word *sudā* when used with regard to a camel implies a camel who is wandering aimlessly, grazing at will, without there being anybody to look after

him. Thus, the verse means: "Does man think that he has been left to himself to wander at will as if his Creator had laid no responsibility on him, had imposed no duty on him, had fobidden nothing to him, that at no time in future he would be required to account for his deeds?" This same theme has been expressed in Al-Mu'minūn: 115 thus: "On the Day of Resurrection, Allah will ask the disbelievers: 'Did you think that We had created you without any purpose, and that you would never be brought back to Us?" At both these places the argument for the necessity of the life hereafter has been presented as a question. The question means: Do you really think that you are no more than mere animals? Don't you see the manifest difference between yourself and the animal? The animal has been created without the power of choice and authority, but you have been blessed with the power of choice and authority; there is no question of morality about what the animal does, but your acts are necessarily characterised by good and evil. Then, how did you take it into your head that you had been created irresponsible and unanswerable as the animal has been? Why the animal will not be resurrected, is quite understandable The animal only fulfilled the fixed demands of its instinct it did not use its intellect to propound a philosophy; it did not invent a religion; it did not make anyone its god nor became a god for others; it did nothing that could be called good or bad; it did not enforce a good or bad way of life, which would influence others, generation after generation, so that it should deserve a reward or punishment for it. Hence, if it perished to annihilation, it would be understandable, for it could not be held responsible for any of its acts to account for which it might need to be resurrected. But how could you be excused from life after-death when right till the time of your death you continued to perform moral acts, which your own intellect judged as good or bad and worthy of reward or punishment? Should a man who killed an innocent person and then fell a victim to a sudden accident immediately after it, get off scot-free and should never be punished for the crime of murder he committed? Do you really feel satisfied that a man, who sowed corruption and iniquity in the world, which entailed evil consequences for mankind for centuries after him, should himself perish like an insect; or a grasshopper, and should never be resurrected to account for his misdeeds, which corrupted the lives of hundreds of thousands of human beings after him? Do you thiuk that the man, who struggled throughout his life for the cause of truth and justice, goodness and peace, and suffered hardships for their sake, was a creation of the kind of an insect, and had no right to be rewarded for his good acts?

25. This is an argument for the possibility of life-after-death. As for the people who believe that the whole act of creation, starting from the emission of a sperm-drop till its development into a perfect man, is only a manifestation of the power and wisdom of Allah, they cannot in fact refute this argument in any way, for their intellect however shamelessly and stubbornly they might behave, cannot

refuse to admit that the God Who thus brings about man in the world, also has the power to bring the same man into being once again. As for those who regard this expressly wise act only as a result of accident, do not in fact have any explanation to offer, unless they are bent upon stubbornness, how in every part and in every nation of the world, from the beginning of creation till today, the birth of boys and girls has continuously been taking place in such proportion that at no time it has so happened that in some human population only males or only females might have been born and there might be no possibility of the continuation of the human race. Has this also been happening just accidentally? To make such an absurd claim one should at least be so shameless as to come out one day with the claim that London and New York, Moscow and Peking, have come into existence just accidentally. (For further explanation, see E.N.'s 27 to 30 of Sūrah Ar-Rūm, E.N. 77 of Ash-Shūrā).

There are several traditions to show that whenever the Holy Prophet recited this verse, he would sometimes respond with *balā* (why not!), sometimes with *Subḥānaka Allāhumma fa-balā* (Glorified are You, O Allah, why not!) and sometimes with *Subḥānaka fa-balā* or *Subḥānaka wa-balā.* (Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abi Hātim, Abū Da'ūd). Abū Da'ūd contains a tradition from Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, saying that the Holy Prophet said: "When in Sūrah At-Tīn, you read the verse; *Alais-Allāhu bi-aḥkam-il-Ḥākimīn* ("Is not Allah the greatest Ruler of all?"), you should respond to it, saying: *Balā wa anā 'alā dhālika min-ash-shāhidin* (Why not? I am of those who bear witness to this"). And when you read this verse of Sūrah Al-Qiyāmah, say: *Balā*; and when you read verse: *Fa-bi ayyi ḥadīth-in ba'da hū yu'minūn* ("Now, what message is there after this (Qur'ān) in which they will believe?" of Sūrah Al-Mursalāt, say: *Āmannā billāh* (We believed in Allah). Traditions on this subject have been related also by Imām Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Mardūyah, Baihaqī and Ḥākim.



LXXVI

AD-DAHR

الدَّهر

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

LXXVI

AD-DAHR

الدَّهر

INTRODUCTION

Name

This Sūrah is called *Ad-Dahr* as well as *Al-Insān* after the words occurring in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

Most of the commentators, including 'Allāma Zamakhshari, Imām Rāzi, Qāḍi Baiḍāwī, 'Allāma Nizām ad-Dīn Nisāburi, Hāfiz Ibn Kathīr and many others, regard it as a Makki Sūrah, and, according to

'Allāma Ālūsī, the same is the opinion of the majority of scholars. However, some commentators hold the view that the Sūrah was revealed at Madīnah, and some others say that it was revealed at Makkah but vv. 8-10 of it were sent down at Madīnah.

As far as the subject-matter and the style of the Sūrah are concerned, these are very different from those of the Madanī Sūrahs. A little study of it rather shows that it is not only a Makkī Sūrah but it was revealed during the earliest period at Makkah, which began just after the revelation of the first seven verses of Sūrah Al-Muddaththir. As for vv. 8-10, they are so naturally set in the theme of the Sūrah that if they are read in their proper context, no one can say that the theme preceding and following them had been sent down 15 to 16 years earlier but these three verses which were revealed many years later were inserted here unnaturally.

In fact, the basis of the idea that this Sūrah, or some verses of it were revealed at Madīnah, is a tradition which 'Atā' has related from Ibn 'Abbās (may Allah bless him). He says that once Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan and Ḥusain fell ill. The Holy Prophet and some of his Companions visited them. They wished Ḥaḍrat 'Ali to make a vow to Allah for the recovery of the two children. Thereupon, Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, Ḥaḍrat Fāṭimah and Fiḍḍah, their maid servant, vowed a fast of three days if Allah restored the children to health. The children recovered by the grace of Allah and the three of them began to fast as avowed. As there was nothing to eat in the house, Ḥaḍrat 'Ali borrowed three measures (*sā'*) of barley from somebody (according to another tradition, earned through labour). When on the first day they sat down to eat after breaking the fast, a poor man came and begged for food. They gave all their food to him, drank water and retired to bed. The next day when they again sat down to eat after breaking the fast, an orphan came and begged for something. They again gave away the whole food to him, drank water and went to bed. On the third day when they were just going to eat after breaking the fast, a captive came up and begged for food likewise. Again the whole food was given away to him. On the fourth day Hadrat 'Alī took both the children with him and went before the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). The Holy Prophet (on whom be peace) seeing the weak condition of the three, returned with them to the house of Ḥaḍrat Fāṭimah and found her lying in a corner half dead with hunger. This moved him

visibly. In the meantime the Angel Gabriel (peace be on him) came and said: "Look, Allah has congratulated you on the virtues of the people of your house!" When the Holy Prophet asked what it was, he recited this whole Sūrah in response. (According to Ibn Mahrān's tradition, he recited it from verse 5 till the end. But the tradition which Ibn Mardūyah has related from Ibn 'Abbās only says that the verse *Wa 'yut'immūn-at'ām...* was sent down concerning Ḥaḍrat 'Alī and Ḥaḍrat Fāṭimah: there is no mention of this story in it). This whole story has been narrated by 'Alī bin Aḥmad al-Wāhidī in his commentary of the Qur'ān entitled *Al-Basīṭ*, and probably from the same it has been taken by Zamakhsharī, Rāzī, Nisābūrī and others.

In the first place this tradition is very weak as regards its chain of transmission. Then, from the point of view of its subject-matter also, it is strange that when a poor man, or an orphan, or a captive, comes to beg for food, he is given all the food. He could be given one member's food and the five of them could share the rest of it among themselves. Then this also is incredible that illustrious persons like Hadrat 'Alī and Hadrat Fātimah, who possessed perfect knowledge of Islam, should have regarded it as an act of virtue to keep the two children, who had just recovered their health and were still weak, hungry for three consecutive days. Moreover, in respect of the captives also, it has never been a practice under the Islamic government that they should be left to beg for food for themselves. For if they were prisoners of the government, the government itself was responsible to arrange food and clothing for them, and if they were in an individual's custody, he was made responsible to feed and clothe them. Therefore, it was not possible that in Madīnah a captive should have gone about begging food from door to door. However, overlooking the weaknesses of transmission and the probability of subject-matter, even if the narrative is accepted as it goes, at the most what it shows is that when the people of the Holy Prophet's house acted righteously as they did, Gabriel came and gave him the good news that Allah had much appreciated their act of virtue, for they had acted precisely in the righteous way that Allah had commanded in these verses of Sūrah Ad-Dahr. This does not necessitate that these verses too were sent down on that very occasion. The same is the case with many traditions concerning the occasion of revelation. When about a certain verse it is said that it was sent down on a particular occasion, it in fact does not mean that the verse was sent down on the very occasion the

incident took place. But it means that the verse applies precisely and exactly to the incident. Imām Suyūṭī in *Al-Itqān* has quoted this from Ḥāfiz Ibn Taimiyyah: "When the reporters say that a verse was sent down concerning a particular incident, it sometimes implies that the same incident (or matter) occasioned its revelation, and sometimes that the verse applies to the matter although it may not have occasioned its revelation." Further on he quotes Imām Badr ad-Din Zarkashi's view from his *Al-Burhān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*: "It is well-known in respect of the Companions and their immediate successors that when one of them says that a verse was sent down concerning a particular matter, it means that the ruling contained in it applied to that matter and not that the matter itself occasioned the revelation of the verse. Thus, it only uses the ruling of the verse for the purpose of reasoning and not for stating a fact" *(Al-Itqān fī 'Ulūm al Qur'ān,* vol. 1, p. 31, Ed. 1929).

Theme and Subject-Matter

The theme of this Sūrah is to inform man of his true position in the world and to tell him that if he understood his true position rightly and adopted the attitude of gratefulness, he would meet with such and such good end, and if he adopted the way of disbelief, he would meet with such and such evil end. In the longer Sūrahs of the Qur'ān this same theme has been presented at length, but a special characteristic of the style of the earliest Sūrahs revealed at Makkah is that the subjects dealt with at length in the later period, have been presented in a brief but highly effective way in this period in such concise, elegant sentences as may automatically be preserved in the memory of the hearers.

In this Sūrah, first of all man has been reminded that there was a time when he was nothing; then a humble beginning of him was made with a mixed drop of sperm and ovum of which even his mother was not aware; even she did not know that she had been conceived, nor anyone else seeing the microscopic cell could say that it was a man, who in future would become the best of creation on the earth. After this, man has been warned, so as to say: "Beginning your creation in this way We have developed and shaped you into what you are today in order to test and try you in the world. That is why, unlike other creatures, you were made intelligent and sensible and were shown both the way of gratitude and the way of ingratitude clearly so that you may show in the interval

that you have been granted here for work whether you have emerged as a grateful servant from the test or an unbelieving, ungrateful wretch!"

Then, just in one sentence, it has been stated decisively what will be the fate to be met with in the Hereafter by those who emerged as unbelievers from this test.

After this, in vv. 5-22 continuously, the blessings with which those who do full justice to servitude in the world, will be favoured, have been mentioned in full detail. In these verses, not only have their best rewards been mentioned but they have also been told briefly what are the acts on the basis of which they would become worthy of those rewards. Another special characteristic of the earliest Sūrahs revealed at Makkah is that besides introducing in them briefly the fundamental beliefs and concepts of Islam, here and there, those moral qualities and virtuous acts have been mentioned, which are praiseworthy according to Islam, and also those evils of deed and morality of which Islam strives to cleanse human life. And these two things have not been mentioned with a view to show what good or evil result is entailed by them in the transitory life of the world, but they have been mentioned only to point out what enduring results they will produce in the eternal and everlasting life of the Hereafter, irrespective of whether an evil quality may prove useful or a good quality may prove harmful in the world.

This is the subject-matter of the first section (vv. 1-22). In the second section, addressing the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), three things have been stated: first, that "it is in fact We Ourself Who are revealing this Qur'ān piecemeal to you, and this is intended to inform the disbelievers, not you, that the Qur'ān is not being fabricated by Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) but it is "We" Who are revealing it, and it is Our own wisdom which requires that We should reveal it piece by piece and not all at once." Second, the Holy Prophet has been told: "No matter how long it may take for the decree of your Lord to be enforced and no matter what afflictions may befall you in the meantime, in any case you should continue to perform your mission of Apostleship patiently, and not to yield to the pressure tactics of any of these wicked and unbelieving people." The third thing he has been told is: "Remember Allah day and night, perform the Prayer and spend your nights in the worship of Allah, for it is these things

which sustain and strengthen those who call to Allah in the face of iniquity and disbelief".

Then in one single sentence, the actual cause of the disbelievers' wrong attitude has been stated: they have forgotten the Hereafter and are enamoured of the world. In the second sentence, they have been warned to the effect: "You have not come into being by yourself; We have created you. You have not made these broad chests and strong, sturdy hands and feet for yourselves, it is We Who made these for you; and it also lies in Our power to treat you as We please. We can distort your figures, We can destroy you and replace you by some other nation. We can cause you to die and can recreate you in whatever form We like."

In conclusion, it has been said: This is an Admonition: whoever wills may accept it and take a path to his Lord. But man's own will and desire is not everything in the world. No one's will and desire can be fulfilled unless Allah (also) so wills. And Allah's willing is not haphazard: whatever He wills, He wills it on the basis of His knowledge and wisdom. He admits into His mercy whomever He regards as worthy of His mercy on the basis of His knowledge and wisdom, and He has prepared a painful torment for those whom He finds unjust and wicked.

سُوْرَةُ الدَّهْرِ — مَدَنِيَّةٌ — ٣١ — ٢

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

هَلْ اَتٰى عَلَى الْاِنْسَانِ حِيْنٌ مِّنَ الدَّهْرِ لَمْ يَكُنْ شَيْـًٔا مَّذْكُوْرًا ﴿١﴾ اِنَّا خَلَقْنَا
الْاِنْسَانَ مِنْ نُّطْفَةٍ اَمْشَاجٍ ۖ نَّبْتَلِيْهِ فَجَعَلْنٰهُ سَمِيْعًا بَصِيْرًا ﴿٢﴾ اِنَّا هَدَيْنٰهُ
السَّبِيْلَ اِمَّا شَاكِرًا وَّاِمَّا كَفُوْرًا ﴿٣﴾ اِنَّا اَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكٰفِرِيْنَ سَلٰسِلَا۠ وَاَغْلٰلًا وَّ
سَعِيْرًا ﴿٤﴾ اِنَّ الْاَبْرَارَ يَشْرَبُوْنَ مِنْ كَاْسٍ كَانَ مِزَاجُهَا كَافُوْرًا ﴿٥﴾ عَيْنًا يَّشْرَبُ
بِهَا عِبَادُ اللّٰهِ يُفَجِّرُوْنَهَا تَفْجِيْرًا ﴿٦﴾ يُوْفُوْنَ بِالنَّذْرِ وَيَخَافُوْنَ يَوْمًا كَانَ
شَرُّهٗ مُسْتَطِيْرًا ﴿٧﴾ وَيُطْعِمُوْنَ الطَّعَامَ عَلٰى حُبِّهٖ مِسْكِيْنًا وَّيَتِيْمًا وَّاَسِيْرًا ﴿٨﴾
اِنَّمَا نُطْعِمُكُمْ لِوَجْهِ اللّٰهِ لَا نُرِيْدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَآءً وَّلَا شُكُوْرًا ﴿٩﴾ اِنَّا نَخَافُ مِنْ
رَّبِّنَا يَوْمًا عَبُوْسًا قَمْطَرِيْرًا ﴿١٠﴾ فَوَقٰىهُمُ اللّٰهُ شَرَّ ذٰلِكَ الْيَوْمِ وَلَقّٰىهُمْ نَضْرَةً وَّ
سُرُوْرًا ﴿١١﴾ وَجَزٰىهُمْ بِمَا صَبَرُوْا جَنَّةً وَّحَرِيْرًا ﴿١٢﴾ مُّتَّكِـِٕيْنَ فِيْهَا عَلَى الْاَرَآئِكِ ۚ
لَا يَرَوْنَ فِيْهَا شَمْسًا وَّلَا زَمْهَرِيْرًا ﴿١٣﴾ وَدَانِيَةً عَلَيْهِمْ ظِلٰلُهَا وَذُلِّلَتْ قُطُوْفُهَا
تَذْلِيْلًا ﴿١٤﴾ وَيُطَافُ عَلَيْهِمْ بِاٰنِيَةٍ مِّنْ فِضَّةٍ وَّاَكْوَابٍ كَانَتْ قَوَارِيْرَا ﴿١٥﴾ قَوَارِيْرَا
مِنْ فِضَّةٍ قَدَّرُوْهَا تَقْدِيْرًا ﴿١٦﴾ وَيُسْقَوْنَ فِيْهَا كَاْسًا كَانَ مِزَاجُهَا زَنْجَبِيْلًا ﴿١٧﴾
عَيْنًا فِيْهَا تُسَمّٰى سَلْسَبِيْلًا ﴿١٨﴾ وَيَطُوْفُ عَلَيْهِمْ وِلْدَانٌ مُّخَلَّدُوْنَ ۚ اِذَا رَاَيْتَهُمْ
حَسِبْتَهُمْ لُؤْلُؤًا مَّنْثُوْرًا ﴿١٩﴾ وَاِذَا رَاَيْتَ ثَمَّ رَاَيْتَ نَعِيْمًا وَّمُلْكًا كَبِيْرًا ﴿٢٠﴾ عٰلِيَهُمْ
ثِيَابُ سُنْدُسٍ خُضْرٌ وَّاِسْتَبْرَقٌ ۫ وَّحُلُّوْٓا اَسَاوِرَ مِنْ فِضَّةٍ ۚ وَسَقٰىهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ
شَرَابًا طَهُوْرًا ﴿٢١﴾ اِنَّ هٰذَا كَانَ لَكُمْ جَزَآءً وَّكَانَ سَعْيُكُمْ مَّشْكُوْرًا ﴿٢٢﴾ اِنَّا نَحْنُ

قرئ بحذف همزة الوصل ايهما ووقف على الاول بالالف وعلى الثانى بغير الالف ١٢

١ ع ٢ ١٩

LXXVI
AD-DAHR
الدَّهر

Verses: 31. *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

1-3 Has there also passed on man a period of the endless time when he was not yet a thing worthy of mention?[1] Indeed, We created man from a mixed sperm drop,[2] to try him,[3] and therefore We made him capable of hearing and seeing.[4] We showed him the way, whether to be grateful or disbelieving.[5]

4 For the disbelievers We have prepared chains and collars and a raging Fire.

5-22 The righteous[6] shall drink (in Paradise) cups of wine flavoured with camphor-water. It will be a running fountain[7] with the waters of which the servants of Allah[8] shall drink wine, and shall take out its channels from place to place at will.[9] These will be the people who fulfil their vows[10] (in the world), and fear the Day whose evil shall be wide-spread, and who feed, out of love for Allah,[11] the poor and the orphan and the captive,[12] (saying),[13] "We are feeding you only for the sake of Allah: we neither seek any reward from you nor thanks.[14] We dread from our Lord the torment of the Day, which will be a long, dismal Day of affliction." So Allah shall save them from the evil of that Day and shall bestow on them freshness and joy,[15] and shall grant them Paradise and robes of silk as a reward for their patience.[16] There they shall be reclining upon high couches, neither troubled by the heat of the sun nor by severe cold. The shades of Paradise shall cover them all round, and its fruits shall be within their easy reach (so that they may pluck them at will). Vessels of silver[17] and goblets of glass shall be passed round to them, goblets made of crystal-clear silver,[18] which will have been filled (by the attendants of Paradise) in due measure.[19] There they shall be served with cups of wine flavoured with ginger. This will

be a fountain of Paradise named *Salsabīl*.[20] They will be attended by brisk-moving boys who will for ever remain boys. When you see them, you would think they were scattered pearls.[21] In whatever direction you may look there, you would see only bliss and the splendour of a great kingdom.[22] Upon them shall be the garments of fine green silk and rich brocade.[23] They shall be adorned with bracelets of silver,[24] and their Lord shall give them a pure wine to drink.[25] This is your reward and your endeavours have been appreciated.[26]

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1. Most of the commentators and translators have taken *hal* in the first sentence *hal atā 'alal-insān-i*, in the meaning of *qad*. Accordingly, they interpret this sentence to mean; "No doubt, there has indeed passed on man a time." But, in fact, the word *hal* in Arabic is used only as an interrogative particle, and its object is not to ask a question in every case, but this apparently interrogative particle is used in different meanings on different occasions. For example, sometimes, in order to find out whether a certain incident has taken place or not, we ask: "Has this thing happened?" Sometimes we do not mean to ask a question but to deny something and we express the denial, thus: "Can any other also do this?" Sometimes we want somebody to affirm something and so ask him: "Have I paid what was due to you?" And sometimes we do not intend to have something just affirmed but we put a question in order to make the addressee pay particular attention to something which follows his affirmation as a sequel. For example, we ask someone: "Have I harmed you in any way?" The object is not only to make him affirm that one has not done him any harm, but also to make him think how far one is justified to harm somebody who has not harmed him in any way. The interrogative sentence in the verse before us illustrates this last meaning. The object is not only to make man affirm that there has indeed passed on him such a period of time but also to make him think that the God Who developed and shaped him into a perfect man from an insignificant, humble beginning, would not be helpless to create him once again.

In the second sentence, *ḥīn min ad-dahr*, the word *dahr* implies the endless time, the beginning and end of which are unknown to man and *ḥīn* is the particular period of time which might at some time have passed during this endless period. What is meant to be said is that in this immensely long span of time there has passed a long period when human race was altogether non-existent. Then a time came in it when a species called Man was created, and in the same period a time has passed on every person when a beginning was made to bring him into existence from nothingness.

The third sentence, "when he was not yet a thing worthy of mention" implies that a part of him existed in the form of a microscopic germ in the sperm-

drop of the father and a part in the form of a microscopic ovum in the mother. For long ages man did not even know that he comes into being when the sperm germ and the ovum combine. Now both have been observed by means of powerful microscopes but even now no one can say how much of man exists in the father's germ and how much in the mother's ovum. Then, the initial cell that comes into being by the combination of the two at the time of conception is such an insignificant thing that it can be seen only through highly powerful microscopes and seeing it also no one at first sight can claim that it is a man taking shape, nor that even if a man emerges from this humble beginning, what will be his size and stature, what will be his form and figure, and what will be his capabilities and personality like. This is the meaning of the sentence that at that time he was not yet a thing worthy of any mention although a beginning of his being as a man had been made.

2. "From a mixed sperm-drop": from the intermingling of the male sperm with the female ovum and not separately from the sperm and the ovum.

3. This shows man's real position in the world and the position of the world for man. He is not like the trees and animals that the object of his creation be fulfilled on the earth itself, and he should die and perish here after he has played his appointed role over a period of time according to the law of nature. Furthermore, this world is neither a place of punishment for him, as the monks think, nor a place of rewards as the believers of the law of transmigration think, nor a place of entertainment and enjoyment, as the materialists think, nor a battlefield, as the followers of Darwin and Marx think, but in fact it is a place of test and trial for him. That which he regards as his age, is in fact the time given him for the test. Whatever powers and capabilities he has been given in the world, the thing that have been placed under his control and authority, the various positions and capacities in which he functions, and the relationships that he enjoys with other men, all these are the countless papers of the test and this test continues till the last breath of his life. The result is not to be announced in this world but in the Hereafter when all his answer-books will have been assessed, decision will be given whether he has come out successful or failed. And his success or failure wholly depends on what he thought of himself while he functioned here and how he answered the papers that were given him here. If he believed that he had no God, or that he was the slave of many gods, and while answering the papers thought that he was not to be held accountable before his Creator in the Hereafter, his whole lifework went wrong. And if he regarded himself as the slave of One God and worked in the way approved by God, with the accountability of the Hereafter always in view, he stood successful in the test. (This theme has occurred at many places in the Qur'ān and has been dealt with at length in the corresponding notes. It is not possible to give all the references, but those who are interested in it

may see the explanation of it in its different aspects under "Test and Trial" in the Index. In no other book beside the Qur'ān has this truth been explained at such length).

4. The word *samī'* (hearing) and *baṣīr* (seeing) in the original actually imply being "sensible and intelligent". These words of the Arabic language are never used in respect of the animal although it also hears and sees. Thus, hearing and seeing here do not imply the powers of hearing and seeing which have been given to the animals too, but those means through which man obtains knowledge and then draws conclusions from it. Besides, since hearing and seeing are among the most important means of knowledge for man, only these two have been mentioned briefly; otherwise it actually implies giving man all those senses of the body by which he gathers information. Then the senses given to man are quite different in their nature from those given to animals, for at the back of every sense he has a thinking brain, which collects information gained through the senses, arranges it, draws conclusions from it, forms opinions, and then takes some decisions which become the basis of his attitude and conduct in life. Hence, after saying, "We created man in order to try him," to say, "therefore, We made him capable of hearing and seeing" actually contains the meaning that Allah gave him the faculties of knowledge and reason to enable him to take the test. Obviously, if this were not the meaning and the meaning of making man hearing and seeing just implied the one who could hear and see, then a blind and deaf person would stand exempted from the test, whereas unless a person is utterly devoid of knowledge and reason, there can be no question of his being exempted from the test.

5. That is, "We did not just leave him to himself after giving him the powers of knowledge and reason, but We also guided him so that he knows which is the path of gratefulness and which of ungratefulness, so that whichever path he chooses in his later life, he himself is responsible for it. In Sūrah Al-Balad, the same subject has been expressed, thus "And We showed him both the conspicuous ways (of good and evil)." And in Sūrah Ash-Shams, thus "By the human self, and by Him Who balanced it (with all the external and internal powers), then inspired it with its wickedness and its piety." When all these explanations are kept in view and also those detailed statements of the Qur'ān in which it has been stated what arrangements Allah has made for man's guidance in the world, it becomes evident that in this verse "showing the way" does not imply any one form of guidance but many forms of it which are limitless and countless. For example,

(1) Along with the faculties of knowledge and reason man has also been endowed with a moral sense by which he discerns between good and evil, regards some acts and qualities as evil even if he himself is involved in them, and regards some other acts and qualities as good even if he himself

is avoiding them. So much so that even those people who for the satisfaction of their selfish motives and desires have invented philosophies by which they have justified many evils for themselves, protest loudly when they are themselves treated with the same evils by others, and then it becomes known that in spite of their false philosophies they actually regard them as evil. Likewise, when a man himself is benefited by a good treatment from another person, he is from within forced to commend and appreciate it even though he might be looking upon good acts and qualities as ignorance folly and antiquated things,

(2) In every man Allah has placed the faculty of Conscience (the *lawwāmah*), which checks and pricks him every time he is about to commit an evil, or is in the process of committing it, or has already committed it. However hard man may try to silence his Conscience or make it insensitive, he does not have the power to destroy it completely. He may become shameless and prove himself to be absolutely devoid of the Conscience, he may also try to deceive the world by argumentation, he may even invent a thousand excuses to justify his acts in order to deceive himself, but despite all this the censor that Allah has placed in his nature is so active and powerful that it does not let remain hidden from an evil person what he actually is. This same thing has been stated in Sūrah Al-Qiyāmah, thus: "Man knows his own self best even though he may offer many excuses." (v. 15)

(3) In man's own self and outside him, from the earth to the heavens, there lie scattered in the universe countless such signs which clearly show that all this could not happen without a God, nor could there be many gods to create this life and control and administer it. Likewise, these very signs, inside man and outside him, clearly point also to the Resurrection and Hereafter. If man shuts down his eyes on them, or refuses to ponder over them intelligently, or avoids to admit the truths which they point out, he himself would be to blame. For Allah has shown no negligence in laying out every possible sign of the truth for the guidance of man.

(4) Man does come across in his own life, and in the contemporary world and in the experiences of past history, countless such incidents which prove that a supreme power is ruling over him and the entire universe before whom he is absolutely powerless, whose Will is dominant over everything and whose help he needs at every moment. These experiences and observations which point to the truth do not exist only outside him but in man's own nature as well there exists the evidence of the existence of the supreme power on the basis of which even the most confirmed atheist spreads out his hands in prayer before God when in distress and the most hardened polytheist abandons all false gods and starts invoking One God only for help.

(5) Man's intellect and his nature assert positively that crime ought to be punished and good deeds ought to be rewarded. On this very basis in every society of the world a system of the courts is established in one form or another, and the services and works, which are regarded as commendable are also rewarded in one way or another. This is a clear proof of the fact that there is a necessary relationship between morality and the law of retribution, which man cannot possibly deny. Now, if it is admitted that in this world there are countless such crimes which cannot be punished at all, to say nothing of punishing them fully and adequately, and there are also countless such virtues, which cannot be rewarded at all, to say nothing of rewarding them fully and adequately, there is no alternative but to acknowledge the Hereafter, unless, of course, a foolish person may assume, or a stubborn person may insist on having the opinion, that man who has been endowed with the concept of justice, has taken birth in a world which in itself is devoid of the concept of justice; and then it remains for him to answer the question as to how and wherefrom this man, who was born in such a world, obtained this concept of justice.

(6) To reinforce these means of guidance Allah sent Messengers and revealed Books in the world for the purpose of giving clear and definite guidance to man; in these Books it was clearly explained what is the way of gratefulness and what is the way of ungratefulness and unbelief and what will be the consequences of following either way. The teaching brought by the Prophets and the Books has spread throughout the world in countless perceptible and imperceptible ways, on such a large scale that no section of human population has remained unaware of the concept of God and the Hereafter, of the distinction between good and evil, and of the moral principles and legal rulings presented by them, whether it knows or does not know that it has obtained this knowledge only through the teachings of the Prophets and the Books they brought. Even those who disbelieve in the Prophets and the Books today, or are unaware of them, also are following many of those things which have reached them actually through their teachings while they do not know what is the real source of these teachings.

6. The word *abrār* as used in the original implies the people who have done full justice to their Lord's obedience, have carried out the duties enjoined by Him and abstained from the things forbidden by Him.

7. That is, it will not be camphor-mixed water but a natural fountain, the purity, coolness and agreeable odour of whose water will resemble camphor.

8. Although the words *'ibād Allah* (servants of Allah), or *'ibād ar-Rehmān* (servants of *Rehmān*), can be used for all men literally, for every human being is

God's servant, yet wherever these words occur in the Qur'ān they only imply the righteous men. In other words, the wicked ones who have excused themselves from Allah's servitude do not deserve that Allah should honour them with the honourable title of *'ibād-Allah* or *ibād ar-Rahmān*, attributing them to His own Holy Name.

9. It does not mean that they will use spades and shovels to dig out its channels and will take out its branches whithersoever they please, but that their one single command and desire will be enough to cause a fountain to gush forth from wherever they please in Paradise.

10. One meaning of fulfilling the vow is that one should fulfil, second, that one should fulfil what one has pledged oneself to do, third, that one should fulfil what one has been enjoined; what is obligatory for one to do, whether one has been enjoined it, or is self-imposed. Of these three the second meaning is the best known and generally the same is implied by fulfilling the vow. In any case, these righteous people have been regarded as praiseworthy either because they carry out the duties enjoined by Allah, or because if they vow to Allah to perform certain good deeds which Allah has not enjoined on them, they fulfil even those self imposed vows, not to speak of showing any negligence in carrying out the duties which Allah has actually enjoined on them.

As for the commandments concerning the vow, we have explained these briefly in E.N. 310 of Sūrah Al-Baqarah above, But it would be useful to explain them at length here so as to enable the people to avoid the errors and rid themselves of the misunderstandings with regard to fulfilling the vow and learn the correct rules pertaining to it.

(1) The jurists have mentioned four kinds of the vow: (a) that one should pledge to Allah that one would perform such and such a good act to earn His good pleasure; (b) that one should make a vow that one would perform such and such a good act in gratitude to Allah if He fulfilled one's such and such wish and desire. Both these kinds of the vow have been termed *nadhr tabarrur* (i.e. vows for a good cause) by the jurists, and it is agreed by all that it is obligatory to fulfil them. (c) That one should pledge to do an unlawful thing or to refrain from an obligatory thing; (d) that one should bind oneself to do a permissible thing, or to refrain from an abligatory thing, or pledge to do an unworthy thing. These two kinds of the vow have been termed *nadhr lajāj* (i.e. vow of ignorance, disputation and stubbornness) by the jurists. About the third kind of the vow it is agreed that it does not take place at all; and about the fourth kind the juristic opinion is divided. Some jurists say that it should be fulfilled; some others say that one should expiate the breaking of the oath, and still others that one has the option to fulfil the vow or to expiate it. According to the

Shāf'is and the Mālikīs this vow does not take place at all, and according to the Hanafīs both these kinds of the vow entail expiation.

('Umdat al-Qārī)

(2) Several *Aḥadīth* show that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has forbidden making a vow with a view to changing the destiny, or with a view to making an offer to Allah that if He fulfilled one's such and such wish, one would perform such and such good act, not in gratitude to Allah, but in exchange for His help. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar has reported that once the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) while he forbade the making of a vow, said; "It cannot avert anything which is about to befall, but through it something is extracted from the miserly person." (Muslim, Abū Da'ūd), The last sentence of the *Hadīth* means: The miserly person is not prone to spend anything in the cause of Allah; because of the vow he gives away something in charity in the greed that Allah would accept his offer and change his destiny for him. Another tradition from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar is to the effect; "The Holy Prophet said: the vow can neither hasten anything nor defer anything, but through it something is extracted from the miserly person." (Bukhārī, Muslim). In another tradition he says that the Holy Prophet forbade making of the vow and said: "It does not bring any good, but it is a means whereby something is extracted from the miserly person." (Bukhārī, Muslim). Several traditions on the same subject have been related by Muslim from Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, and in one tradition which both Bukhārī and Muslim have related, he reports that the Holy Prophet said: "As a matter of fact, the vow cannot bring the son of Adam anything which Allah has not ordained for him, but the vow sometimes coincides with the destiny itself and through it the Divine will takes out from the possession of the miserly person that which he was not inclined to give away willingly." This same theme is further explained by the tradition of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin 'Āṣ according to which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said: "True vow is that whereby Allah's goodwill and approval may be sought." (*Ṭaḥāvī*)

(3) Another rule that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) gave concerning the vow is that only that vow should be fulfilled, which is in obedience to Allah; the vow made in disobedience to Allah should never be fulfilled. Likewise, there can be no vow concerning a thing which is not in one's power to perform. Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah has reported that the Holy Prophet said: "The one who made a vow that he would obey Allah, should obey Him, and the one who made a vow that he would disobey Allah, should not disobey." (*Bukhārī, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah, Ṭaḥāvī*). Thābit bin Ḍaḥḥāk says that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be

peace) said: "There can be no question of fulfilling a vow made in the disobedience of Allah, nor in something which is not in one's possession." (Abū Da'ūd). Muslim has related a tradition on the same subject from Ḥaḍrat 'Imrān bin Ḥusain; and in *Abū Da'ūd* a tradition has been reported in greater detail from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin 'Ās, saying that the Holy Prophet said: "No vow and no oath is of any use in an act which is not in the power of man to perform, or which involves disobedience of Allah, or severance of relations with kindred."

(4) One should not fulfil a vow which is made to perform an act which is of no good in itself, which is useless, or involves unbearable hardship or self-torture, and might have been self-imposed as an act of virtue. In this connection, the sayings of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) are very clear and definite. Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās says that once when the Holy Prophet was giving a sermon, he saw a man who was standing in the sun. He asked who he was and why he was standing in the sun. The people said that he was Abū Isrā'īl: he had vowed that he would keep standing and would not sit, nor take shade, nor speak to anybody, and would keep fast. Thereupon the Holy Prophet said: "Tell him to speak, to come in the shade and sit, but to observe the fast." (*Bukhārī, Abū Da'ūd, Ibn Mājah, Mu'wattā*). Ḥaḍrat 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir Juhanī says: "My sister vowed that she would go for Ḥajj bare-foot and also vowed that she would not cover her head with a garment during the journey. The Holy Prophet said: Tell her to go by a conveyance and to cover her head." (Abū Da'ūd). Muslim has related several traditions on this subject with a little variation in wording. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbas reporting the incident concerning 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir's sister, has reported the Holy Prophet's words to the effect: "Allah has no need of her vow: tell her to use a conveyance." (Abū Da'ūd). In another tradition Ḥaḍrat Ibn 'Abbās says "A man said: My sister has vowed to go and perform Ḥajj on foot. The Holy Prophet replied: Allah has no need that your sister should undergo hardship. She should go for Ḥajj by a conveyance." (Abū Da'ūd). Ḥaḍrat Anas bin Mālik has reported that the Holy Prophet saw (probably during the Ḥajj journey) an old man being supported between his two sons. When he asked what was the matter with him, it was said that the old man had vowed to go on foot. Thereupon the Holy Prophet said: "Allah is free from this that the man should place himself in agony. Then he commanded him to ride." (Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd. In Muslim another *Ḥadīth* on this very subject has been reported by Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah also).

(5) If it is not practically possible to fulfil a vow, it may be fulfilled in some other way. Hadrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah says: "On the day of the conquest of Makkah, a man stood up and said: O Messenger of Allah, I had vowed

that if Allah made Makkah fall at your hand, I would pray two *rak'ahs* of the Prayer in *Bait al-Maqdis* (Jerusalem). The Holy Prophet replied: Say the Prayer here. He again asked the same thing and the Holy Prophet again gave the same reply. When he asked it again, the Holy Prophet said: All right, as you please." According to another tradition, the Holy Prophet said: "By Him Who has sent Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) with the truth, if you pray here it will suffice for you instead of your praying at Bait al Maqdis (Abū Da'ūd)."

(6) The opinion among the jurists is divided concerning the person who vows to give away all his possessions for the cause of Allah. Imām Mālik says that he should give away one-third of his possessions, and Sahnun from among the Mālikīs has expressed the opinion that he should give away so much of his possessions as does not subject him to hardship later. Imām Shāfe'ī says that if the vow is of the nature of *tabarrur* (i.e. for a good cause), he should give away all his possessions, and if it is of the nature of *lajāj* (i.e, a vow of ignorance), he has the option to fulfil the vow or to expiate the oath. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah says that he should give away all such possessions as are subject to *zakāt*, but the vow will not apply to those possessions which are exempt from *zakāt*, e.g. house, or other such properties. Imām Zufar from among the Ḥanafīs is of the opinion that he should give away everything in charity after he has taken out two months' maintenance for his family. (*'Umdat al-Qarī, Sharh Mu'wattā* by Shah Walīyullah). Traditions of the Ḥadrat in this connection are as follows.

Ḥadrat Ka'b bin Mālik says: "When I was granted forgiveness for incurring Allah's displeasure for staying behind on the occasion of the Battle of Tabūk, I went before the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and submitted: My repentance also included that I would give away all my possessions in charity for the sake of Allah and His Messenger. The Holy Prophet replied: No, do not do that. I said. Then half of the possessions? He said: No. I said: Then one-third of the possessions? He replied: Yes." (Abū Da'ūd). According to another tradition, the Holy Prophet replied: "Withhold some of your possessions for yourself: this would be better for you." (Bukhārī), Imām Zuhri says: "Information has reached me that Ḥadrat Abū Lubabah (who had similarly incurred displeasure in connection with the same Battle of Tabūk) said to the Holy Prophet: "I shall give away all my possessions for the sake of Allah and His Messenger in charity. The Holy Prophet replied: For you it would be enough to give away only one-third of it." *(Mu'wattā).*

(7) Should a person who vowed to perform a good act before embracing Islam, fulfil it after he has embraced Islam? The Holy Prophet's ruling in this connection is that he should fulfil it. (Bukhārī; according to a tradition

in *Abū Da'ūd* and *Ṭaḥāvī* Ḥaḍrat 'Umar is reported to have vowed in the pre-Islamic days that he would observe *i'tikāf* (devotional seclusion) in the *Masjid al-Harām* (for one night, or according to others, one day). After embracing Islam when he asked for the Holy Prophet's ruling, he replied: "Fulfil your vow." Some jurists have taken this ruling of the Holy Prophet to mean that it is obligatory to do so, and some others that it is commendable.

(8) About the question whether the heirs are under obligation to fulfil a vow made by the deceased person or not, the juristic opinion is divided. Imām Ahmad, Ishaq bin Rāhawaih, Abū Thaur and the Zāhirīs say that if the deceased person had vowed to observe the Fast or perform the Prayer but could not fulfil the vow, the heirs have to fulfil it. The Hanafīs say that if the vow pertained to a bodily worship (e.g. the Prayer or the Fast), the heirs are under no obligation to fulfil it, and if it pertained to monetary worship and the deceased did not leave any will for his heirs to fulfil it, they are again under no obligation to fulfil it. but if he left a will, it will be obligatory for the heirs to fulfil it from his inheritance up to one-third of its extent. The Māliki viewpoint also is somewhat the same. The Shāfe'īs say that if the vow pertains to a non-monetary worship, or if it pertains to a monetary worship and the deceased person did not leave any inheritance, the heirs are under no obligation to fulfil it; and if the deceased left some inheritance, the heirs would be bound to fulfil the vow pertaining to a monetary worship, no matter whether the dying person left a will or not. (*Sharḥ Muslim* by Al-Nawawī, *Badhl al-Majhūd Sharh Abī Da'ūd*). In the *Ḥadīth* there is a tradition from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbas on this sabject to the effect: "Hadrat Sa'd bin 'Ubādah asked for the Holy Prophet's verdict, saying: My mother has died and she had made a vow which she could not fulfil. The Holy Prophet said: Fulfil the vow on her behalf." (*Abū Da'ūd. Muslim*). Another tradition from Ibn 'Abbas is to the effect: "A woman went on a sea journey and vowed that if she returned home safe and sound, she would observe fast for a month. On her return home she died. Her sister or her daughter came to the Holy Prophet to ask for his decision. The Holy Prophet replied: "Observe the fast on her behalf." (*Abū Da'ūd*). Abū Da'ūd has related another tradition with the same content from Hadrat Buraidah, saying: "A woman asked the Holy Prophet a similar thing and he gave the same reply as mentioned above." Since these traditions are not explicit as to whether the rulings the Holy Prophet gave pertained to its being obligatory or commendable, and since about the vow made by Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin 'Ubādah's mother also it is not clear whether it pertained to a monetary worship, or a bodily worship, there have arisen differences among the jurists on this question.

(9) As for an unlawful vow it is clear that it should not be fulfilled. However, there is a difference of opinion as to whether it entails an expiation or not. On this point since the traditions differ the juristic opinion is also divided. According to one kind of the traditions the Holy Prophet commanded the person concerned to make the expiation. Hadrat 'Ā'ishah has reported that the Holy Prophet said: "Three is no vow in the disobedience of Allah, and its expiation is the expiation of breaking the oath" (*Abū Da'ūd*). In the case of 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir Juhanī's sister (mentioned under No. 4 above), the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) commanded that she should break her vow and fast for three days. (*Muslim, Abū Da'ūd*). In the case of another woman also who had vowed to go for Hajj on foot, he commanded that she should go by a conveyance and should make expiation for the oath (*Abū Da'ūd*). Ibn 'Abbās has reported that the Holy Prophet said: "The one who made a vow but did not specify what the vow was about, should expiate for the oath, and the one who made a vow to perform a sinful act, should expiate for the oath, and the one who made a vow to perform something which he does not have the power to perform, should expiate for the oath, and the one who made a vow to do something which he can do, should fulfil it." (*Abu Da'ud*). On the other hand, there are the traditions which show that there is no expiation in this case. The person under No.4 above had vowed that he would stand in the sun and would not speak to anyone. Making a reference to him in *Mu'wattā*, Imām Mālik writes: "I could not know by any means whether the Holy Prophet besides commanding him to break the vow might also have told him to make the expiation. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah biu 'Amr bin 'Āṣ has reported that the Holy Prophet said: "If the one swearing an oath for something later finds that another thing was better than that he should abandon it and should adopt the better course and the abandonment itself is the expiation." (*Abū Da'ūd*; Baihāqi says that this *Ḥadīth* and Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah's this tradition: "He should adopt the better course and this is its expiation" are not established). Imām Nawawī discussing these traditions of the *Ḥadīth* in his commentary of Ṣaḥiḥ Muslim writes: "Imām Mālik, Shāfe'ī, Abū Ḥanīfah, Da'ūd Ẓāhirī and other scholars say that the vow made to do a sinful thing is void and ineffectual and it does not entail any expiation if not fulfilled, but Imām Aḥmad says that it entails expiation."

11. Most of the commentators hold the view that the pronoun in *ḥubbi-hi* refers to food. Accordingly, they interpret the sentence to mean: "In spite of the food's being agreeable and tasty and that they need it, they give it away to others." Ibn 'Abbās and Mujāhid say: "they do so because of their fondness for feeding the poor (*'alā ḥubb-il-it'ām*); and Fudail bin 'Iyād and Abū Sulemān ad-Dārānī say: "They do so out of love for Allah." In our opinion the following sentence ("We are feeding you only for the sake of Allah") supports the last meaning.

12. The custom in the ancient days was that the prisoners were put in fetters and shackles and taken out daily to go about the streets begging food. Later the Islamic government abolished this custom. (Imām Abū Yūsuf, *Kitāb al-Kharāj*, p, 150, Ed. 1382 H.) In this verse, the captive implies every such person who is in bondage, whether he is an unbeliever, a Muslim, a war prisoner, or imprisoned in consequence of a crime, and whether he is provided food in that state, or made to beg for it. In any case, to feed a helpless person who cannot do anything to earn a living, is an act of great virtue,

13. Although feeding a poor man is in itself a great virtue, yet fulfilling the other needs of an indigent person is no less virtuous. For example, to clothe a poor man, to arrange treatment for a sick person, or to help a debtor who is harassed by his creditor, is an act of equally great virtue. Here, a particular kind of virtue in view of its importance has been presented only as an example, but the real object is to stress giving help to the needy.

14. It is not necessary that this may be said in so many words while feeding the poor man. It may be said in the heart; in the sight of Allah this is as meritorious as saying it with the tongue. But saying these words with the tongue has been particularly mentioned so as to set the person being helped at ease that no thanks or recompense is due from him, so that he eats with full satisfaction and peace of mind.

15. "Freshness and joy": freshness of the face and joy of the heart. In other words, all the severities and terrors of the Day of Resurrection will be meant only for the disbelievers and the culprits. The righteous will on that Day remain immune from every hardship and will be well-pleased with their lot. The same theme has been expressed in Al-Anbiyā': 103, thus: "The time of great fright will not trouble them at all; the angels will rush forth to receive them, saying: this is the Day that you were promised; and in An-Naml: 89 thus: "He who brings good deeds, will have a reward better than that, and such people shall be secure from the terror of that Day."

16. Here the word *sabr* (patience) has been used in a very comprehensive sense. The whole worldly life of the righteous believers in fact has been described as a life of patience. From the time a man attains discretion, or believes, till death, his suppressing of unlawful desires, adhering to the bounds set by Allah, carrying out the duties enjoined by Him, sacrificing his time, his wealth, his effort, powers and abilities, even his life if so required, ignoring every greed and temptation, which might turn him away from Allah's way, meeting every danger and enduring every hardship faced on the way of the truth, giving up every gain and pleasure accruing from unlawful ways and means, bearing every loss and suffering and

affliction incurred on account of his love for truth, and doing all this with full faith in the promise of Allah that He will bless the doer with the fruits of this righteous conduct not in this world but in the second life after death, turns the whole life of a believer into a life of patience-eternal and perpetual parience, all-pervasive and life-long patience! (For further explanation, see E N 60 of Al-Baqarah. E.N.'s 13, 107, 131 of ,Āl-'Imrān, E.N. 23 of Al-An'ām, E.N.'s 37, 47 of Al-Anfāl, E.N. 9 of Yūnus, E N 11 of Hūd, E.N. 39 of Ar-Ra'd, E.N. 98 of An-Naḥl, E.N. 40 of Maryam, E.N. 94 of Al-Furqān, E.N.'s 75, 100 of Al-Qaṣaṣ. E.N. 97 of Al-'Ankabūt, E.N.'s 29, 56 of Luqmān, E.N. 37 of As-Sajdah, E.N. 58 of Al-Aḥzāb, E.N. 32 of Az-Zumar, E.N. 38 of Ḥā-Mīm As-Sajdah, E.N. 53 of Ash-Shūrā).

17. According to Az-Zukhruf: 71, vessels of gold shall be passed round to them, but here of silver. This shows that vessels of gold as well as of silver shall be passed round to them as required by the occasion.

18. That is, though silver, it will be as transparent as glass, Vessels of this kind of transparent, crystal like silver will be the special characteristic of the vessels in which drinks will be served to the people of Paradise.

19. "In due measure": filled accurately according to the desire of every person, neither over-filled nor under-filled. In other words, the attendants of the dwellers of Paradise will be so judicious and discerning that they will have accurate judgement about everybody whom they serve wine as to how much of it he wishes to drink. (For the characteristics of the wine of Paradise, see Aṣ-Ṣāffāt: 45-47 and the E.N.'s 24 to 27, Muḥammad: 15 and E.N. 22, Aṭ-Ṭūr; 23 and E.N. 18, Al-Wāqi'ah: 19 and E.N. 10).

20. This is to suit the taste of the Arabs who liked the wine flavoured with ginger-mixed water. But this flavouring will not be achieved by adding ginger-mixed water to it; it will be a natural fountain which will have the flavour of ginger but without its bitterness; Therefore, it will be called *Salsabīl*, which implies such water as flows gently and pleasantly down the throat on account of its being sweet, light and platable. Most commentators think that the word *salsabil* has been used here as an adjective of the fountain and not as a name for it.

21. For explanation, see E.N. 26 of As-Sāāffāt, E-N. 19 of At-Tūr, E.N. 9 of Al-Wāqi'ah.

22. Even if a person might have lived a pauper in the world, in the Hereafter when he is admitted to Paradise, on the basis of his good deeds, he will live as thorgh he were the owner of a splendid kingdom.

23. This same theme has been expressed in Sūrah Al-Kahf: 31, thus: "They (the dwellers of Paradise) will wear coloured robes of silk and rich brocade and will be reclining upon raised thrones." On this basis, the opinion of the commentators who have expressed the view that this implies the sheets of cloth which will be hanging over their thrones or bedsteads or that this would be the dress of the boys who would be moving about serving them does not seem to be correct.

24. In Sūrah Al-Kahf: 31, it has been said: "They will be adorned with bracelets of gold. This same theme has also occurred in Al-Ḥajj: 23 and Fatir 33 above. When all these verses are read together, three possibilities become obvious. (1) That sometimes they would like to wear bracelets of gold and sometimes bracelets of silver, both kinds of the ornaments being available for use as and when required; (2) that they will wear bracelets of both gold and silver at the same time, for the combination of the two enhances the personal charms of the wearer; (3) that whosoever desires will wear bracelets of gold and whosoever desires will wear bracelets of silver. As for the question, why will the men be adorned with the ornaments when these are usually worn by the women? The answer is that in the ancient times the custom was that the kings and their nobles used to adorn their hands and necks and the crowns of their heads with different kinds of ornaments. In Sūrah Az-Zukhruf it has been said that when the Prophet Moses arrived in the Pharaoh's court in his simple dress, with only a staff in hand, and told him that he was a Messenger sent by Allah, Lord of the worlds, the Pharaoh said to his courtiers: "What kind of a messenger is he, who has appeared before me in this state? If he was sent by the King of the universe, why were not bracelets of gold sent down on him, or a company of angels as attendants?" (v. 53).

25. Two kinds of the wine have been mentioned above, first that to which water will be added from the fountain of camphor; second that to which water will be added from the fountain of ginger. After these, making mention of another wine, with the remark that their Lord shall give them a pure wine to drink, gives the meaning that this will be some superior kind of wine, which they will be given to drink as a special favour from Allah.

26. In the original, *kāna sa'yu-kum mashkūra*: "your endeavours have been accepted and recognized." *Sa'i* implies the entire lifework that a person accomplished in the world, the works and objectives to which he applied his

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نَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْاٰنَ تَنْزِيْلًا ﴿٢٣﴾ فَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ وَلَا تُطِعْ مِنْهُمْ اٰثِمًا
اَوْ كَفُوْرًا ﴿٢٤﴾ وَاذْكُرِ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ بُكْرَةً وَّاَصِيْلًا ﴿٢٥﴾ وَمِنَ الَّيْلِ فَاسْجُدْ لَهٗ وَ
سَبِّحْهُ لَيْلًا طَوِيْلًا ﴿٢٦﴾ اِنَّ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ يُحِبُّوْنَ الْعَاجِلَةَ وَيَذَرُوْنَ وَرَآءَهُمْ يَوْمًا
ثَقِيْلًا ﴿٢٧﴾ نَحْنُ خَلَقْنٰهُمْ وَشَدَدْنَآ اَسْرَهُمْ ۚ وَاِذَا شِئْنَا بَدَّلْنَآ اَمْثَالَهُمْ تَبْدِيْلًا ﴿٢٨﴾
اِنَّ هٰذِهٖ تَذْكِرَةٌ ۚ فَمَنْ شَآءَ اتَّخَذَ اِلٰى رَبِّهٖ سَبِيْلًا ﴿٢٩﴾ وَمَا تَشَآءُوْنَ اِلَّآ اَنْ
يَّشَآءَ اللّٰهُ ۚ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ عَلِيْمًا حَكِيْمًا ﴿٣٠﴾ يُّدْخِلُ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ فِيْ رَحْمَتِهٖ
وَالظّٰلِمِيْنَ اَعَدَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا اَلِيْمًا ﴿٣١﴾

23-31 O Prophet, it is We Ourself Who have sent down this Qur'ān piecemeal to you.[27] So be patient with regard to the command of your Lord,[28] and do not obey any wicked or disbelieving person from among them.[29] Remember the name of your Lord morning and evening, prostrate yourself before Him in the night, and glorify Him during the long hours of night.[30] These people only love the quickly attainable (world), and neglect a heavy Day that is coming ahead.[31] It is We Who have created them and strengthened their joints, and whenever it be Our will We can change their forms.[32] This is indeed an admonition. Now whoever wills, let him adopt the way to his Lord, but you cannot will it unless Allah wills.[33] Indeed Allah is All-knowing, All-Wise. He admits into His mercy whomever He wills, and for the wrongdoers He has prepared a painful torment.[34]

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energies and abilities; and its being *mashkūr* means that Allah has appreciated it. *Shukr* when expressed by the servant to God implies his gratefulness to Him for His blessings, and when it is expressed by God for the servant, it means that He has appreciated his services. It is indeed highly kind of the Master that He should appreciate the endeavours of the servant when the servant has only carried out his duties according to the Master's will.

27. Though the addressee here apparently is the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), the discourse is directed to the disbelievers, who said "Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) himself composes the Qur'ān deliberately piece by piece; had it been from Allah, it would be revealed all at once. At some places on the Qur'ān this objection has been cited and answered (e.g. see E.N.'s 102, 104, 105, 106 of An-Nahl and E.N. 119 of Banī Isrā'īl), but here Allah has answered it without citing it, saying emphatically: "It is We Ourself Who are sending it down: it is not the composition of Muḥammad: and it is We Ourself Who are sending it gradually. That is, it is the requirement of Our wisdom that We should not send down Our message all together in book form, but should send it piece by piece."

28 "Be patient": "Face patiently the hardships and difficulties of the great Mission your Lord has entrusted to you: endure firmly and steadfastly whatever comes to pass, without showing any weakness in this regard."

29. "Do not obey ...": "Do not yield to any one of them so as to give up preaching of the true faith: do not be inclined to make even the least change in the religious beliefs for the sake of any denier of the Truth, or in the moral teachings for the sake of a wicked person. Proclaim whatever is unlawful and forbidden to be so openly even if an immoral person might press you hard to show some lenience in this condemnation, and proclaim whatever is false as false and whatever is true as true publicly even if the disbelievers might use all their influence to silence you, or to make you adopt a little lenience in this regard."

30. The rule followed in the Qur'ān is that wherever the Muslims have been exhorted to show patience against the disbelievers, immediately after it they have been commanded to remember Allah much and to observe the Prayer, which automatically implies that the power needed to meet the resistance of the enemies of the Truth in the way of truth faith can be obtained only by this means. To remember Allah morning and evening may also imply remembering Allah always but when the command to remember Allah at specific times is given, it implies the *salāt* (Prayer). In this verse, *bukrah* means the morning and *aṣīl* the time from the sun's decline till sunset, which obviously covers the *Ẓuhr* and the *'Aṣr* times. Night starts after sunset; therefore, the command "to prostrate yourself in the night" would apply to both the *Maghrib* and the *'Ishā'* Prayers. Then, the command "to glorify Allah in the long hours of night", clearly points to the time of the Tahajjud Prayer. (For further explanation, see E.N.'s 92 to 97 of Banī Isra'īl, E N. 2 of Al-Muzzammil). This also shows that these very have been the Prayer times in Islam from the beginning. However, the command making the Prayer obligatory five times a day with fixed times and number of *rak'ahs* was given on the occasion of *mi'rāj* (ascension).

31. That is, "The reason why the disbelieving Quraish still persist in the errors and deviations of belief and morality and why they turn a deaf ear to your invitation to the Truth is, in fact, their worship of the world and their heedlessness of the Hereafter. Therefore, the way being followed by a true God-worshipper is so different from and opposed to their way that there can be no question of any compromise between them."

32. The sentence, "Whenever it be Our will We can change their forms", can have several meanings: (1) That whenever We please We can destroy them and replace them by other people of their own kind, who will be different from them in conduct; (2) that whenever We please We can change their forms; that is, just as We can make someone healthy and sound in body, so also We have the power to make somebody a paralytic, cause someone to be struck with facial paralysis and other to fall a victim to some disease or accident and become a cripple permanently; and (3) that whenever We will We can recreate them in some other form after death.

33. Three things have been said in these verses: (1) That whoever wills may adopt the way to his Lord; (2) that one's willing to do a thing is not enough unless Allah so wills; and (3) that Allah is All-Wise, All-Knowing. If one considers these three things deeply one can fully well understand the relationship between man's freedom of choice and Allah's Will, and it helps to remove all the confusions from the people's minds about the question of destiny.

The first verse shows that in this world the authority granted to man is only to the extent that he may decide to adopt any one of the different courses available for passing life here. This is the freedom of choice that Allah has given him. For example, when a man confronts the question of earning a living for himself, he finds many ways before him of which some are lawful, as for example lawful kinds of labour, service, trade and business, industry, or agriculture, and some are unlawful as thievery, robbery, picking pockets, prostitution, trading in money (on interest), gambling, bribery and unlawful kinds of services and business, etc. The decision to adopt any one of these ways has been left to man's own free choice as to how he would like to earn his living. Likewise, there are different modes of morality. On the one side, there are the good qualities, like honesty, nobility, decency, justice, pity, sympathy and chastity, and on the other, the evil traits like wickedness, meanness, tyranny, dishonesty, and frivolity. Man has full freedom to adopt any mode of morality he likes. The same is the case with religion; man has many ways open before him in this regard also—atheism and denial of God, polytheism and idol-worship, different combinations of monotheism and polytheism, and the un-alloyed creed of God-worship which is taught by the Qur'ān. In these also the decision to choose has been left to man as to which of

these he wants to adopt. Allah does not impose on him any decision of His own so that man may like to choose a lawful means of earning his living for himself but Allah may force him to adopt an unlawful means for it, or that he may like to follow the Qur'ān, but Allah may force him to become an atheist, polytheist or disbeliever, or that he may like to become a good man, but Allah may force him to become an evil man.

But after man has exercised this freedom of choice whether he can practically also do the same which he wants to do, depends on Allah's Will, His leave and His grace. If the Will of Allah be to let the man do what he has willed or decided to do, then alone can he do it; otherwise he cannot do anything without Allah's Will and His leave, however hard and seriously he may try to do it. This same thing has been said in the second verse. This can be explained by an example. If man had been delegated all the powers in the world and permitted to do whatever he pleased, the system of the world would have been disrupted. One murderer was enough to murder all the people in the world if he were given the freedom to kill anybody he liked. One pickpocket could pick the pocket of everyone if he were given the option to pick anyone's pocket he pleased. One thief was enough to steal whatever he liked; one adulterer to commit rape on every woman, one robber to plunder every house, if each one of these had full powers to act at he desired. Therefore, Allah has kept this in His own power whether He may allow or disallow the man to follow the right or the wrong path that he chooses to follow or not. The person who, giving up error, wants to adopt the right way is also granted righteousness only by Allah's leave and will. However, the condition is that the decision to give up error and choose guidance should have been taken by the man himself; otherwise just as Allah does not make anybody a thief or murderer or atheist or polytheist forcibly, so also He does not make anybody a believer forcibly.

After this, the third verse removes the misunderstanding whether Allah's willing may not be arbitrary. That is why it has been said that "Allah is All-Knowing, Al-Wise." That is whatever He does, He does it on the basis of knowledge and wisdom; therefore, there can be no possibility of any error in His decisions. He decided with full knowledge and wisdom as to who should be given a particular kind of help and who should not be given it, who should be allowed to do a particular work and who should not be allowed to do it. To the extent that Allah provides opportunities to man and makes the conditions favourable for him, he can work according to his desire, whether it be good or evil, The question of guidance also is no exception to it. Allah alone knows on the basis of His knowledge and He alone determines on the basis of His wisdom as to who deserves to be guided and who does not. (Also see E.N. 41 of *Al-Muddaththir*).

34. In this verse "wrong doers" imply the people whom the Revelations of Allah and the teachings of His Prophet may reach, yet they deliberately and consciously decide that they would not obey and follow them. This also includes those unjust people who may plainly say that they do not accept the Revelation as God's Revelation and the Prophet as God's Prophet, or that they do not believe in God at all, and also those wicked people who may not refuse to believe in God and the Prophet and the Qur'ān, but they are resolved not to obey and follow them. As a matter of fact, both these groups are unjust and wicked. As regards the first group, their case is clear and obvious; but the second group is no less wicked: it is also hypocritical and treacherous. Verbally they say that they believe in God and the Messenger and the Qur'ān, but in their hearts and minds they are resolved not to follow them, and their practical conduct of life is also opposed to it. About both Allah has declared that He has prepared for them a painful torment. They might strut about in the world, enjoy life as they like, boast and brag of their superiority, but ultimately they will be subjected to a disgraceful punishment; they cannot enter and enjoy Allah's mercy in any way.



LXXVII

AL-MURSALĀT

المرْسَلات

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

LXXVII

AL-MURSALĀT

المُرْسَلات

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from the word *wal-mursalāt* in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

Its subject-matter bears full evidence that it was revealed in the earliest period at Makkah. If this Sūrah is read together with the two

Sūrahs preceding it, namely Al-Qiyāmah and Ad-Dahr, and the two Sūrahs following it namely An-Naba' and An-Nāzi'āt, it becomes obvious that all these Sūrahs are the Revelations of the same period, and they deal with one and the same theme, which has been impressed on the people of Makkah in different ways.

Theme and Subject-Matter

Its theme is to affirm the Resurrection and Hereafter and to warn the people of the consequences which will ultimately follow the denial and the affirmation of these truths.

In the first seven verses, the system of winds has been presented as an evidence of the truth that the Resurrection which is being foretold by the Qur'ān and the Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) must come to pass. The reasoning is that the power of All-Mighty Allah Who established this wonderful system on the earth, cannot be helpless in bringing about the Resurrection, and the express wisdom which underlies this system bears full evidence that the Hereafter must appear, for no act of an All-Wise Creator can be vain and purposeless, and if there was no Hereafter, it would mean that the whole of one's life was useless and absurd.

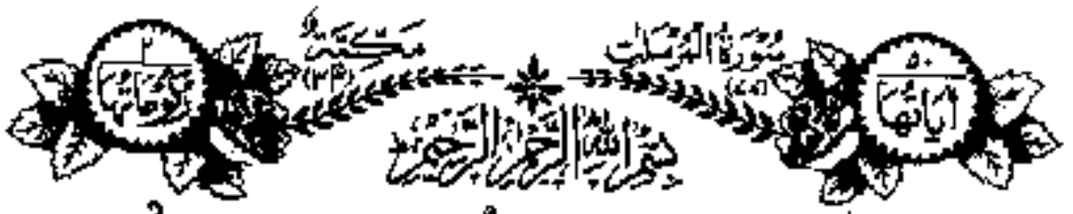
The people of Makkah repeatedly asked; "Bring about the Resurrection with which you threaten us, only then shall we believe in it." In vv. 8-15, their demand has been answered, saying: "Resurrection is no sport or fun so that whenever a jester should ask for it, it should be brought forth immediately. It is indeed the Day of Judgement to settle the account of all mankind and of all its individuals. For it Allah has fixed a specific time, it will take place at its own time, and when it takes place with all its dreads and horrors, it will confound those who are demanding it for fun today. Then their cases will be decided only on the evidence of those Messengers whom these deniers of the truth are repudiating with impunity. Then they will themselves realize how they themselves are responsible for their doom."

In vv. 16-28 arguments have been given continuously for the occurrence and necessity of the Resurrection and Hereafter. In these it has been stated that man's own history, his own birth, and the structure of the earth on which he lives, bear the testimony that the coming of Resurrection and the establishment of the Hereafter are possible as well

as the demand of Allah Almighty's wisdom. History tells us that the nations which denied the Hereafter ultimately became corrupted and met with destruction. This means that the Hereafter is a truth which if denied and contradicted by a nation by its conduct and attitude, will cause it to meet the same doom, which is met by a blind man who rushes headlong into an approaching train. And it also means that in the kingdom of the universe only physical laws are not at work but a moral law also is working in it, under which in this very world the process of retribution is operating. But since in the present life of the world retribution is not taking place in its complete and perfect form, the moral law of the universe necessarily demands that there should come a time when it should take its full course and all those good works and evil deeds, which could not be rewarded here, or which escaped their due punishment, should be fully rewarded and punished. For this it is inevitable that there should be a second life after death. If man only considers how he takes his birth in the world, his intellect, provided it is sound intellect, cannot deny that for the God Who began his creation from an insignificant sperm drop and developed him into a perfect man, it is certainly possible to create the same man once again. After death the particles of man's body do not disappear but continue to exist on the same earth on which he lived his whole life. It is from the resources and treasures of this very earth that he is made and nourished and then into the same treasures of the earth he is deposited. The God Who caused him to emerge from the treasures of the earth, in the first instance, can also cause him to re-emerge from the same treasures after he has been restored to them at death. If one only considers the powers of Allah one cannot deny that He can do this; and if one considers the wisdom of Allah, one also cannot deny that it is certainly the very demand of His wisdom to call man to account for the right and wrong use of the powers that He has granted him on the earth; it would rather be against wisdom to let him off without rendering an account.

Then, in vv. 28-40 the fate of the deniers of the Hereafter has been depicted, and in vv. 41-45 of those who affirming faith in it in their worldly life, endeavoured to improve their Hereafter, and abstained from the evils of disbelief and thought, morality and deed, conduct and character which might be helpful in man's worldly life, but are certainly ruinous for his life hereafter.

In the end, the deniers of the Hereafter and those Who turn away from God-worship, have been warned, as if to say: "Enjoy your short-lived worldly pleasure as you may, but your end will ultimatelty be disastrous." The discourse concludes with the assertion that the man who fails to obtain guidance from a Book like the Qur'ān, can have no other source in the world to afford him guidance.



وَالْمُرْسَلٰتِ عُرْفًا ۝١ فَالْعٰصِفٰتِ عَصْفًا ۝٢ وَّالنّٰشِرٰتِ نَشْرًا ۝٣ فَالْفٰرِقٰتِ
فَرْقًا ۝٤ فَالْمُلْقِيٰتِ ذِكْرًا ۝٥ عُذْرًا اَوْ نُذْرًا ۝٦ اِنَّمَا تُوْعَدُوْنَ لَوَاقِعٌ ۝٧ فَاِذَا النُّجُوْمُ
طُمِسَتْ ۝٨ وَاِذَا السَّمَآءُ فُرِجَتْ ۝٩ وَاِذَا الْجِبَالُ نُسِفَتْ ۝١٠ وَاِذَا الرُّسُلُ اُقِّتَتْ ۝١١
لِاَيِّ يَوْمٍ اُجِّلَتْ ۝١٢ لِيَوْمِ الْفَصْلِ ۝١٣ وَمَآ اَدْرٰىكَ مَا يَوْمُ الْفَصْلِ ۝١٤ وَيْلٌ
يَّوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ ۝١٥ اَلَمْ نُهْلِكِ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ۝١٦ ثُمَّ نُتْبِعُهُمُ الْاٰخِرِيْنَ ۝١٧ كَذٰلِكَ
نَفْعَلُ بِالْمُجْرِمِيْنَ ۝١٨ وَيْلٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ ۝١٩ اَلَمْ نَخْلُقْكُّمْ مِّنْ مَّآءٍ

LXXVII

AL-MURSALĀT

المُرْسَلات

Verses: 50 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

By the (winds) which are sent in succession, which then blow tempestuously, and lift up (the clouds) and scatter them, then split (them) asunder, then infuse (the hearts) with the remembrance (of God), as an excuse or as a warning.![1] That which you are being promised,[2] must happen.[3] 1-7

Then, when the stars become dim[4] and the heaven is rent asunder,[5] and the mountains are thrashed into dust, and the time of the Messengers' appointment comes[6] (that Day it shall happen). For what day has all this been deferred? For the Day of Decision. And what do you know what the Day of Decision is? Woe on that Day to the deniers (of Truth)![7] 8-15

16-19 Did We not destroy the former peoples?[8] Then We shall follow them up with those of latter day.[9] Thus do We deal with the culprits. Woe on that Day to the deniers (of Truth)![10]

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1. That is, sometimes the failure of winds causes the people to be alarmed at the prospect of a famine, and they turn to Allah to repent of their sins: sometimes they bring a lot of rain and the people turn to Allah in gratitude; and sometimes their blowing violently causes dread in the hearts and the people turn to Allah from fear of destruction.

In these verses initially the order of rain-bringing winds has been stated, which is thus: first, winds start blowing in succession; then they assume the proportions of a storm; then they raise the clouds and spread them; then they split and separate them. After this, instead of making mention of the rainfall, it is said that the winds infuse the hearts with the remembrance of Allah, as an excuse or as a warning. That is, it is an occasion when either because of fear man is compelled to remember Allah, or else he confesses his errors and invokes Allah to protect and save him from ruin and bless him with rain. If it has not rained for a long time, and the people are thirsty for rain, even the most hardened disbeliever sometimes begins to remember God when he sees the winds blowing and the clouds advancing. The drought's being mild and severe makes the difference. In case the drought is mild, the common man who is not far from Allah, will remember Him, but others will offer scientific explanations, saying that there was no cause for anxiety: it did not rain because of such and such a cause and it would be weak-mindedness to start praying to God on such an ordinary thing. However, if the drought is unusually prolonged, and the whole country is faced with a calamitous situation, even the confirmed disbelievers begin to remember God. If they feel shy to use their tongue, in their hearts they feel penitent on their wrongdoing and ingratitude and pray to God to cause rain throughout the country from the winds which are raising the clouds. This is infusion of God's remembrance in the hearts as an excuse. As for its infusion as a warning, it happens when the wind develops into a cyclone and destroys settlement after settlement or it rains so heavily as to cause a deluge. In such a state even a confirmed atheist starts imploring God out of awe for Him, and then all scientific explanations of the cyclone or deluge evaporate from his mind. Thus, after describing the blowing of winds in their succession to say that they infuse the hearts with Allah's remembrance as an excuse or as a warning, is meant to impress the truth that the system working in the world keeps on reminding man that everything on the earth has not been placed under his control but there is a Supreme Power above him, which rules his destiny. That Power is so supreme and

mighty that it can use the elements for the sustenance and nourishment of man when it so wills and can use the same elements for his destruction when it so wills.

After this the same system of winds has been proffered as an argument to prove that the Resurrection which is being promised to man, must come to pass. Now, let us see how this system testifies to this truth.

Man generally is perplexd in the case of Resurrection and the Hereafter at two questions. First: is the occurrence of Resurrection possible? Second: what is its need and necessity? And then being perplexed at these questions, he starts entertaining doubts whether it will at all occur or not, or whether it was only a figment of the imagination. In this connection, the Qur'ān has at some places reasoned out and proved its possibility, its necessity and occurrence from the system of the universe, and at others adopted another mode of reasoning: oaths have been sworn by some of the countless signs of God's Kingdom and it has been asserted that it shall surely come to pass. This mode of reasoning contains arguments for its possibility as well as arguments for its necessity and arguments for its occurrence.

Here, adopting the same mode of reasoning only the system of the circulation of winds and rainfall has been presented as a sign of the truth that it is a regular system, which has been established by the design of an All-Wise, All-Mighty Sovereign; it is not a chance occurrence, as a result of which a system might have been generated in the atmosphere of the earth that vapours should arise from the seas, winds should carry them and gather them into clouds, then split and separate them into pieces and transport them to different parts of the earth and then should cause them to fall as rain. This system has not been devised accidentally by some blind and deaf Nature, but it is a well-considered and well-designed plan, which is functioning regularly according to a law. That is why it never so happens that the heat of the sun should produce ice on the surface of the sea instead of vapours, but the sun always raises only vapours from the sea. It never so happens that the monsoons should blow in the reverse order and suppress vapours into the sea but they always raise them up into the atmosphere. It never so happens that the formation of clouds should cease, or the winds should stop to carry them to dry lands or the falling of rain on the earth should discontinue. The same law has been at work since millions and millions of years under which this system is functioning. Had it not been so our coming into existence on the earth and survival here would not be possible.

In this system one finds a clear purpose and the working of regular law. One can clearly see that on the earth the life of man, animal and vegetation deeply relates to the winds and rainfall, and this arrangement testifies that water has been provided to bring animate life into existence and keep it alive precisely according

to their requirements and a law. This purpose and regularity is not found only in this aspect but in the entire system of the universe, and man's whole scientific progress is based on it. About every thing man tries to find out what is its purpose and on what principle it works Then as he goes on gaining insight into the purposes of the creation of different things and the principles on which they work, he goes on devising new and ever new methods of their use and making new inventions for the progress of his civilization. Had there been no such concept in the mind of man naturally that the world is a meaningful world and everything in it is working on a principle, he would never have entertained the question about anything as to what was its purpose and how it could be put to use.

Now, when this world and everything in it has meaning, and if there is a law working in this world and in everything it contains, and if it has been functioning with the same purpose and regularity since millions and millions of years, then a stubborn person only could refuse to accept that an all-knowing, All-Mighty God has made it, and about that God it would be foolish to assume that although He could make and cause it to function but cannot break it, and after breaking it, cannot reconstruct it in any other form if He so wills. The concept about matter that it is imperishable was the chief support of the ignorant atheist of the past, but the progress of knowledge has proved it also false. Now it is an acknowledged scientific fact that matter can change into energy and energy into matter. Therefore, it is perfectly according to knowledge and reason that this material world will last only as long as the Living and Eternal God sustains it. As soon as He wills to change it into energy, He can change it by a simple Command and His one Command is enough to re-create it into any other material form and shape He wills.

This much then about the possibility of the Resurrection, which cannot now be rejected by any scientific and rational argument. As for the question that it must take place so that man is rewarded for his good works and punished for his evil deeds, the person who acknowledges man's moral responsibility and also believes that rewarding the good services and punishing the crimes is the necessary demand of this moral responsibility, cannot but admit that there must be the Hereafter. There is no law or government in the world, which can punish every crime and reward every good act. To say that the prick of the conscience is a sufficient punishment for the culprit and the satisfaction of the conscience is a sufficient reward for the doer of good is no more than meaningless philosophizing. The question is: How and when did the conscience of the person who killed an innocent man and then himself died in an accident immediately after it reprove him? And when did the conscience of the man who went to fight for the sake of truth and justice and fell a victim to a bomblast suddenly, have the satisfaction that he had laid down his life for a good cause? Thus, the truth is that the pretences

invented to avoid the belief in the Hereafter are all meaningless. Man's intellect wants, his nature requires, that there should be justice, but in the present life of the world it is not possible to have full and perfect justice. Justice can be had only in the Hereafter and only under the judgement and command of the All-Knowing, Omnipotent God. Denial of the necessity of the Hereafter is, in fact, denial of the necessity of justice.

Intellect can go only so far as to convince man that the Hereafter is possible and it should come about. As for the truth that it will surely come about, the "knowledge" of it can be obtained only through Revelation, and Revelation has given us the news that "that which you are being promised must happen". We cannot attain this knowledge by intellectual reasoning; however, we can attain the certainty of its being true on the basis that the thing of which we are being informed by Revelation is both possible and necessary.

2. Another meaning can be; "That which you are being threatened with," *i.e.* the Resurrection and Hereafter.

3. Here an oath has been sworn by five things on the inevitability of the Resurrection: (1) "Those which are sent forth in succession, or for a good cause;" (2) "those which blow violently and tempestuously (3) "those which disperse and scatter;" (4) "those which split and separate;" and (5) "those which inspire the remembrance." As these words only describe the characteristics and it has not been specified what thing or things they qualify, this has given rise to a difference of opinion among the commentators as to whether these are the qualities of one particular thing or of different things and what the thing or things are. One group of them says that all the five qualify the winds; the second group says that all the five imply the angels; the third group says that the first three imply the winds and the remaining two the angels; the fourth says that the first two imply the winds and the other three the angels; another group has opined that the first quality implies the angels of mercy, the second the angels of punishment and the remaining three imply the verses of the Qur'ān.

In our opinion, the first thing worthy of consideration is that when five characteristic have been mentioned continuously in one and the same context and there is no indication to show as to what has been qualified up to a certain point and wherefrom has the qualification of another thing begun, it cannot be correct, on the basis of a baseless conjecture, to understand that in these verses oaths have been sworn by two or three different things. Rather in this case the continuity of the subject by itself requires that the whole passage be regarded as related to the characteristics of one and the same thing. Secondly, wherever in the Qur'ān an oath has been sworn by a certain thing or, things in order to convince the doubters or deniers of an unseen truth, there the oath stands for an argument or reasoning

which is meant to tell that the thing or things point to the truth's being right and correct. For this purpose obviously it cannot be correct to present one imperceptible thing as an argument for another imperceptible thing; for, only a perceptible thing can be presented as an argument for an imperceptible thing. Hence in our opinion the correct explanation is that it implies the winds and the explanation of the people who interpret the five things to mean the angels cannot; be acceptable, for the angels are as imperceptible as is the occurrence of the Resurrection.

Now, let us consider as to how these different states of winds point to the occurrence of the Resurrection. One of the most important factor which has made animal and vegetable life possible on the earth is the air. The relationship its qualities bear with every kind of life testify that there is an All-Powesful, All-Wise Creator, Who willed to create life on this earth and for this purpose created here a thing whose qualities exactly and precisely correspond to the requirements of the existence of living beings. Then, He did not only wrap up the earth in the air and left it alone, but by His power and wisdom characterised this air with countless different states, which are being regulated since millions and millions of years in such a way that they cause the change of seasons and weather sometimes it is close and sometimes a soft breeze blows sometimes it is hot and sometimes cold; sometimes it brings clouds and sometimes it drives away clouds; sometimes it causes pleasant gusts to blow and sometimes disastrous windstorms; sometimes it brings beneficial rains and sometimes there is drought; in short, there are different kinds of winds which blow in their own time, and every kind serves one or the other purpose. This arrangement is the proof of a dominant Power, for which neither it can be impossible to bring life into existence, nor to obliterate it, nor to re-create it after having annihilated it. Likewise, this arrangement is also a proof of a supreme wisdom about which only a foolish man could think that all this was being done for fun, without any higher object in view. As against this wonderful system man is so helpless that he can neither cause a favourable wind to blow for himself, nor can prevent a disastrous cyclone from blowing on himself. However shameless, obstinate and stubborn he may be, the wind does at one time or another remind him that a Mighty Sovereign is ruling over him, Who can turn this principal means of his life into a cause of blessing for him or into a cause of ruin for him whenever He so likes, and man does not have the power to prevent or avert any of His decisions. (For further explanation, see E.N. 7 of Al-Jāthiyah, E.N.'s 1 to 4 of Adh-Dhāriyāt).

4. That is, when they lose their light and lustre

5. "When the heaven is rent asunder": when the system and discipline of the heavens under which every star and planet is established and moving in its orbit and everything in the universe is adhering to the bounds set for it, is broken.

6. At several places in the Qur'ān it has been stated that when the case of mankind will be presented before Allah on the Day of Resurrection, the Messenger of every nation will be called upon to testify that he had conveyed Allah's Messages intact to his people. This will be Allah's first and major argument against the culprits and the wicked people to prove that they were themselves responsible for their wrong attitude and conduct in life, for there had been no negligence on the part of Allah to show guidance and administer warnings . For instance, see Al-A'rāf: 172, 173 and E.N.'s 134, 135, Az-Zumar: 69 and E.N. 80, Al-Mulk:8 and E.N. 14.

7. "Deniers of Truth": those people who took the news of the coming of Resurrection as a lie, and spent their lives in the world under the delusion that the time would never come when they would have to present themselves before their God and render an account of their deeds.

8. This is an argument from history for the Hereafter. It means; "Consider your own history in the world. Whichever nations denied the Hereafter and took this worldly life to be real life and based their moral attitude on the results appearing here regarding them as the criterion of good and evil, ultimately went to their doom without exception This is a proof of the fact that the Hereafter is an actual reality overlooking and ignoring which causes the same kind of harm to a person which is caused when he chooses to close his eyes to the hard facts of life. (For further explanation, see E.N. 12 of Yūnus, E.N. 86 of An-Naml, E.N. 8 of Ar-Rūm, E.N. 25 of Sabā).

9. That is, "This is a permanent law with Us. Just as denial of the Hereafter has proved disastrous for the nations of the past so it will always prove disastrous also for the nations of the future. No nation has been an exception to it before nor will any be so in the future."

10. This sentence in the present context means: "The fate they have met or will meet in the world, is not their real punishment; their real doom will descend on them on the Day of Decision. The punishment here is only in the nature of a person's being arrested when he commits one crime after the other fearlessly and is not inclined to mend and change his ways. The court where his test is to be decided and he is to be punished for all his misdeeds, will not be established in this world but in the Hereafter, and that indeed will be the actual Day of his ruin and disaster." (For further explanation, see E.N.'s 5, 6 of Al-A'rāf, E.N. 105 of Hūd).

[Contd. on p. 199

مَّهِيْنٍ ﴿٢٠﴾ فَجَعَلْنٰهُ فِيْ قَرَارٍ مَّكِيْنٍ ﴿٢١﴾ اِلٰى قَدَرٍ مَّعْلُوْمٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ فَقَدَرْنَا ۖ فَنِعْمَ
الْقٰدِرُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَيْلٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾ اَلَمْ نَجْعَلِ الْاَرْضَ كِفَاتًا ﴿٢٥﴾ اَحْيَآءً
وَّاَمْوَاتًا ﴿٢٦﴾ وَّجَعَلْنَا فِيْهَا رَوَاسِيَ شٰمِخٰتٍ وَّاَسْقَيْنٰكُمْ مَّآءً فُرَاتًا ﴿٢٧﴾ وَيْلٌ
يَّوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ اِنْطَلِقُوْٓا اِلٰى مَا كُنْتُمْ بِهٖ تُكَذِّبُوْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾ اِنْطَلِقُوْٓا اِلٰى ظِلٍّ
ذِيْ ثَلٰثِ شُعَبٍ ﴿٣٠﴾ لَّا ظَلِيْلٍ وَّلَا يُغْنِيْ مِنَ اللَّهَبِ ﴿٣١﴾ اِنَّهَا تَرْمِيْ بِشَرَرٍ
كَالْقَصْرِ ﴿٣٢﴾ كَاَنَّهٗ جِمٰلَتٌ صُفْرٌ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَيْلٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾ هٰذَا يَوْمُ لَا
يَنْطِقُوْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَلَا يُؤْذَنُ لَهُمْ فَيَعْتَذِرُوْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَيْلٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾ هٰذَا
يَوْمُ الْفَصْلِ ۚ جَمَعْنٰكُمْ وَالْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾ فَاِنْ كَانَ لَكُمْ كَيْدٌ فَكِيْدُوْنِ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَيْلٌ
يَّوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ ﴿٤٠﴾ اِنَّ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ فِيْ ظِلٰلٍ وَّعُيُوْنٍ ﴿٤١﴾ وَّفَوَاكِهَ مِمَّا
يَشْتَهُوْنَ ﴿٤٢﴾ كُلُوْا وَاشْرَبُوْا هَنِيْٓـًٔا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٤٣﴾ اِنَّا كَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِي
الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَيْلٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ ﴿٤٥﴾ كُلُوْا وَتَمَتَّعُوْا قَلِيْلًا اِنَّكُمْ
مُّجْرِمُوْنَ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَيْلٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَاِذَا قِيْلَ لَهُمُ ارْكَعُوْا لَا يَرْكَعُوْنَ ﴿٤٨﴾
وَيْلٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ ﴿٤٩﴾ فَبِاَيِّ حَدِيْثٍ بَعْدَهٗ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٥٠﴾

Did We not create you out of a mean fluid, and kept it lodged in a secure place[11] for an appointed term?[12] Behold! We had power to do this, as We are excellent Possessors of power![13] Woe on that Day to the deniers (of Truth)![14] 20-24

Have We not made the earth a receptacle, both for the living and for the dead, and set in it high mountains, and given you sweet water to drink?[15] Woe on that Day to the deniers (of Truth)![16] 25-28

Go off[17] now to the same that you used to deny. Go off to the shadow which has three branches.[18] It neither gives coolness nor shelter from the flame of Fire. The Fire shall throw off sparks as huge as castles as though they were yellow camels.[19] Woe on that Day to the deniers (of Truth)! 29-34

That is the Day when they shall neither speak nor be given leave to offer excuses.[20] Woe on that Day to the deniers (of Truth!) 35-37

This is the Day of Decision. We have gathered both you and those who had gone before you together. Now, if you have a trick, use it against Me.[21] Woe on that Day to the deniers (of Truth)! 38-40

The righteous[22] are today amidst shades and springs, and whatever fruits they desire (they shall have). "Eat and drink with relish as a reward for the deeds you have been doing." Thus do We recompense the doers of good. Woe on that Day to the deniers (of Truth)![23] 41-45

"Eat[24] and enjoy yourselves for a while.[25] Indeed, you are culprits." Woe on that Day to the deniers (of Truth)! When it is said to them: "Bow down (before Allah) they do not bow down."[26] Woe on that Day to the deniers (of Truth)! Now, what message can there be after this (Qur'ān) in which they will believe?[27] 46-50

Contd. from p. 197]

11. "A secure place": the mother's womb in which the child is so firmly lodged as soon as it has been conceived and where such arrangements are made for its security and nourishment that abortion cannot take place unless there is a disaster, and even for artificial abortion extraordinary devices have to be adopted, which are both risky and harmful in spite of modern developments in medical science.

12. The words *qadar im-ma'lūm* do not only mean that the term is appointed and fixed but they also contain the sense that it is known to Allah alone. About no child can man know by any means how many months, days, hours, minutes and seconds it will remain in the mothers womb and what will be its exact and precise time of birth. Allah alone has fixed a specific term for every child and He alone knows it.

13. This is an express argument for the possibility of the life-after-death. What is meant to be said is: "When We had the power to shape and develop you into a perfect and complete man from insignificant sperm-drop, how shall We be helpless to re-create you in some other way ? Our this creation in consequence of which you exist as a living being, is a proof that We are excellent Possessors of power; We cannot be so helpless as to be unable to re-create you after having created you in the first instance."

14. This sentence here gives the meaning that in spite of the express argument for the possibility of life-after-death, the people who are denying it, may mock it as they may and look down upon its believers as people of antiquated ideas and whims, but when the Day comes which they are denying today, they will themselves know that it is a Day of their own ruin and disaster.

15. This is yet another argument for the possibility and reasonableness of the Hereafter. It is this very earth which since millions and millions of years has been sustaining and providing for countless different kinds of creatures. Every kind of vegetation and every kind of animal and man are living on it, To meet the requirements of all immeasureable treasures of provisions of different kinds are coming out of its belly. Then it is on this very earth that countless members of all kinds of creatures die every day, but there exists a wonderful arrangement in that the dead bodies of all creatures are deposited in the same earth, and it again becomes ready for sustaining life and providing home to the new members of every species. This earth has not been shaped like a smooth-surfaced ball either, but here and there on it there have been set high mountains and mountain-ranges, which play an important role in causing the change of seasons and rainfall, the birth of rivers creation of fertile valleys, growth of trees which supply timber, and provisions of a variety of minerals and stones. Then in the interior of this very earth, sweet water has been stored and on its surface rivers of sweet water have been arranged and from the saline waters of the sea also vapours of pure water are raised and caused to fall as rain from the sky. Is not all this an argument to prove that an All-Powerful Sovereign has created all this and He is not only All-Powerful but All-Knowing and All-Wise as well? Now, if this earth has been thus equipped and provisioned only by His power and wisdom, why should an intelligent man find it difficult to understand that the same Sovereign by His power can wind up

this world and create another world on a new pattern, and the demand of His wisdom is that he should create another world after it so that He may call man to account for the deeds he has done in this world?

16. Here, this sentence signifies that the people who deny the coming of the Hereafter and regard it as impossible and irrational in spite of seeing these manifest signs of Allah's power and wisdom, may remain lost in their vain imaginations if they so like. But the Day when all this takes place against their expectations, they will realize that they have earned ruin on account of their own folly.

17. After giving proofs of the coming of the Hereafter, now it is being stated how the deniers will be dealt with when it has actually taken place.

18. "Shadow": shadow of smoke; "three branches": because when a big smoke arises it is divided into several parts at the top.

19. That is, each spark will be like a castle, and when these huge sparks will rise and burst and fly about in all directions it will seem as though they were yellow camels running and jumping about ceaselessly.

20. This will be their ultimate state at the time they will be entering Hell. Before this in the plain of Resurrection they will be offering all sorts of excuses, blaming others for their errors and proving their own selves to be innocent, abusing their leaders and guides who led them astray; so much so that some of them will even disown their crimes shamelessly, as has been stated at several places in the Qur'ān. But when their being criminals will have been established by every kind of evidence, and when their own hands and feet and limbs will have borne witness against them to prove their guilt fully, and when after fulfilling all requirements of justice rightly and truly, the sentence will be passed on them, they will be dumbfounded and no room will be left for them to offer any excuse. To refuse an opportunity or permission to offer an excuse, does not mean that judgment will be passed against them without giving them a chance for self-defence, but it means that their guilt and crime will be proved to the hilt and they will not be able to offer any excuse after it.

21. That is, "In the world you used every kind of deception and trick in self-interest. Now, if you have any trick to escape My punishment, you may use it to defeat Me and My plan."

22. As this world has been used here in contrast to the "deniers"; the righteous here implies the people who refrained from denying the Hereafter and accepted it and passed their life in the world with the belief that in the Hereafter they would have to render an account of their word and deed and their conduct and character.

23. Here this sentence means that one of their afflictions, as mentioned above, will be that they will be standing as culprits in the plain of Resurrection, their crimes will have been proved and established openly and they will not be in a position even to open their mouths to put forward a plea in self defence, and shall ultimately become fuel of Hell. Their other affliction, and by far the worse will be that they will see the same believers enjoying themselves in Paradise, whom they had been opposing and resisting and mocking throughout their lives as foolish, narrow-minded, mean and old fashioned people.

24. In conclusion, these words are being addressed not only to the disbelievers of Makkah but to all disbelievers of the world.

25. "For a while": in their brief life of the world.

26. "Bowing before Allah": does not only imply worshipping Him but also means believing in the Messenger sent by Allah and in the Book revealed by Him and following and obeying His Commands.

27. That is, the greatest Message that could distinguish the Truth from falsehood for man and show him right guidance, has been sent down in the shape of the Qur'ān. if a person does not believe even after reading it or hearing it read, what else after this can show him the correct guidance?



LXXVIII

AN-NABĀ

النَّبا

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

LXXVIII
AN-NABĀ
النَّبَا

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah derives its name from the word *an-Nabā* in the second verse. This is not only a name, a title of its subject-matter, for *Nabā* implies the news of Resurrection and Hereafter and the whole devoted to the same theme.

Period of Revelation

As we have explained in the introduction to Sūrah Al-Mursalāt, the theme of all the Sūrahs, from Al-Qiyāmah to An-Nāzi'āt, closely resembles one another, and all these seem to have been revealed in the earliest period at Makkah.

Theme and Subject-Matter

Its theme also is the same as of Sūrah Al-Mursalāt, *i.e.* to affirm the Resurrection and Hereafter, and to warn the people of the consequences of acknowledging or disacknowledging it.

When the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) first started to preach Islam in Makkah, his message consisted of three elements: (1) That none be held as an associate with Allah in Godhead; (2) that Allah had appointed him as His Messenger; (3) that this world will come to an end one day and then another world will be established when all the former and the latter generations will be resurrected with the same bodies in which they lived and worked in the world; then they will be called to account for their beliefs and deeds and those who emerge as believing and righteous in this accountability will go to Paradise and those who are proved to be disbelieving and wicked will live in Hell for ever.

Of these although the first thing was highly unpleasant for the people of Makkah, yet in any case they were not disbelievers in the existence of Allah. They believed in His Being the Supreme Sustainer, Creator and Providence and also admitted that all those beings whom they regarded as their deities, were themselves Allah's creatures. Therefore, in this regard the only thing they disputed was whether they had any share in the attributes and powers of Divinity and in the Divine Being itself or not.

As for the second thing the people of Makkah were not prepared to accept it. However, what they could not possibly deny was that during the 40 years life that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had lived among them before his claim to Prophethood, they had never found him a lying, deceitful person, or the one who would adopt unlawful methods for selfish ends. They themselves admitted that he was a man possessed of wisdom, righteousness and moral superiority. Therefore, in spite of charging him with a thousand false accusations, nothing to say of making others believe, they were finding it difficult even for themselves to believe that although he was an honest and upright man in every other affair and dealing of life, yet, God forbid, a liar only in his claim to be a Prophet.

Thus, the first two things were not in fact so perplexing for the people of Makkah as the third thing. When this was presented before them, they mocked it most of all, expressed unusual wonder at it, and regarding it as remote from reason and impossible, started talking against it as incredible, even inconceivable, in their assemblies. But in order to bring them to the way of Islam it was absolutely essential that the doctrine of the Hereafter should be instilled into their minds, for without belief in this doctrine, it was not at all possible that they could adopt a serious attitude with regard to the truth and falsehood, could change their standard of values in respect of good and evil, and giving up worship of the world, could be inclined to follow the way that Islam urged them to follow. That is why in the earliest Sūrahs revealed at Makkah the doctrine of the Hereafter has been impressed and stressed more than anything else. However, the arguments for it have been given in such a way that the doctrine of the Oneness of God (Tauhīd) also is impressed on the minds automatically. This also contains brief arguments, here and there, to confirm the truth of the Holy Messenger of Allah and the Qur'ān.

After understanding well why the theme of the Hereafter has been so frequently repeated in the Sūrahs of this period let us now have a look at the subject-matter of this Sūrah. In it, first of all, allusion has been made to the common talk and the doubts that were being expressed in every street of Makkah and in every assembly of the people of Makkah on hearing the news about Resurrection. Then, the deniers have been asked "Don't you see this earth which We have spread as a carpet for you Don't you see the high mountains which we have so firmly placed in the earth? Don't you consider your own selves how We have created you as pairs of men and women? Don't you consider your sleep by which We make you seek a few hours' rest after every few hours' labour and toil so as to keep you fit for work in the world? Don't you see the alternation of the night and day which We are so regularly perpetuating precisely according to your needs and requirements? Don't you see the strongly fortified system of the heavens above you? Don't you see the sun by means of which you are receiving your light and heat? Don't you see the rains which fall from the clouds and help produce corns and vegetables and luxuriant gardens? Do these things only tell you that the power of the Almighty Being Who has created

them, will be unable to bring about Resurrection and establish the Next World? Then, from the supreme wisdom which is clearly working in this world around you, do you only understand that although each part of it and each function of it is purposive, yet life is meaningless? Nothing could be more absurd and meaningless that after appointing man to the office of foreman and granting him vast powers of appropriation in this workhouse, when he leaves the world after fulfilling his role, he should be let off without any accountability. He should neither be rewarded and granted pension on satisfactory work, nor subjected to any accountability and punishment on unsatisfactory performance of duty.

After giving these arguments it has been emphatically stated that the Day of Judgement shall certainly come to pass on its appointed time. No sooner is the Trumpet sounded than whatever is being foretold shall appear before the eyes, and whether you believe in it today, or not, at that time you will come out in your multitudes from wherever you would be lying dead and buried to render your account. Your denial cannot in any way avert this inevitable event.

Then, in vv. 21-30, it has been stated that every single misdeed of those who do not expect any accountability to take place and have thus belied Our Revelations, lies reckoned and recorded with Us, and Hell is ever lying in ambush to punish them and punish them fully for all their doings. Then, in vv. 31-36, the best rewards of those who lived as responsible people in the world and have provided for their Hereafter beforehand have been mentioned. They have been reassured that they will not only be rewarded richly for their services but in addition they will also be given sufficient gifts.

In conclusion, the Divine Court in the Hereafter has been depicted, making it plain that there will be no question of somebody's being adamant in the matter of getting his followers and associates forgiven, none will speak without leave, and leave will be granted on the condition that intercession be made only for the one to whom leave of intercession will have been given, and the intercessor will say only what is right. Moreover, leave for intercession will be given only for those who had acknowledged the Truth in the world but were sinners; rebels of God and rejectors of the Truth will deserve no intercession at all.

The discourse has been concluded with this warning: The Day the coming of which is being foretold, shall certainly come to pass. Do not think it is yet far off, it is close at hand. Now, whoever wills, let him believe in it and take the way towards his Lord. But he who disbelieves, in spite of the warning, will have all his deeds placed before him, and he will exclaim regretfully: "Oh, would that I were not born in the world!" At that time, his regrets will be about the same world of which he is so enamoured today!

سُوْرَةُ النَّبَإِ مَكِّيَّةٌ

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

عَمَّ يَتَسَآءَلُوْنَ ۝١ عَنِ النَّبَإِ الْعَظِيْمِ ۝٢ الَّذِيْ هُمْ فِيْهِ مُخْتَلِفُوْنَ ۝٣

كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝٤ ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝٥ اَلَمْ نَجْعَلِ الْاَرْضَ مِهٰدًا ۝٦ وَّ
الْجِبَالَ اَوْتَادًا ۝٧ وَّخَلَقْنٰكُمْ اَزْوَاجًا ۝٨ وَّجَعَلْنَا نَوْمَكُمْ سُبَاتًا ۝٩ وَّ جَعَلْنَا
الَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا ۝١٠ وَّ جَعَلْنَا النَّهَارَ مَعَاشًا ۝١١ وَّ بَنَيْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعًا شِدَادًا ۝١٢ وَّ
جَعَلْنَا سِرَاجًا وَّهَّاجًا ۝١٣ وَّ اَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْمُعْصِرٰتِ مَآءً ثَجَّاجًا ۝١٤ لِّنُخْرِجَ
بِهٖ حَبًّا وَّنَبَاتًا ۝١٥ وَّ جَنّٰتٍ اَلْفَافًا ۝١٦ اِنَّ يَوْمَ الْفَصْلِ كَانَ مِيْقَاتًا ۝١٧ يَّوْمَ
يُنْفَخُ فِي الصُّوْرِ فَتَاْتُوْنَ اَفْوَاجًا ۝١٨ وَّ فُتِحَتِ السَّمَآءُ فَكَانَتْ اَبْوَابًا ۝١٩ وَّ
سُيِّرَتِ الْجِبَالُ فَكَانَتْ سَرَابًا ۝٢٠ اِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ كَانَتْ مِرْصَادًا ۝٢١ لِّلطّٰغِيْنَ
مَاٰبًا ۝٢٢ لّٰبِثِيْنَ فِيْهَآ اَحْقَابًا ۝٢٣ لَا يَذُوْقُوْنَ فِيْهَا بَرْدًا وَّ لَا شَرَابًا ۝٢٤ اِلَّا
حَمِيْمًا وَّ غَسَّاقًا ۝٢٥ جَزَآءً وِّفَاقًا ۝٢٦ اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا لَا يَرْجُوْنَ حِسَابًا ۝٢٧ وَّ
كَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا كِذَّابًا ۝٢٨ وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ اَحْصَيْنٰهُ كِتٰبًا ۝٢٩ فَذُوْقُوْا فَلَنْ نَّزِيْدَكُمْ
اِلَّا عَذَابًا ۝٣٠ اِنَّ لِلْمُتَّقِيْنَ مَفَازًا ۝٣١ حَدَآئِقَ وَ اَعْنَابًا ۝٣٢ وَّ كَوَاعِبَ اَتْرَابًا ۝٣٣
وَّ كَاْسًا دِهَاقًا ۝٣٤ لَا يَسْمَعُوْنَ فِيْهَا لَغْوًا وَّ لَا كِذّٰبًا ۝٣٥ جَزَآءً مِّنْ رَّبِّكَ
عَطَآءً حِسَابًا ۝٣٦ رَّبِّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الْاَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا الرَّحْمٰنِ لَا يَمْلِكُوْنَ
مِنْهُ خِطَابًا ۝٣٧ يَوْمَ يَقُوْمُ الرُّوْحُ وَ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ صَفًّا ۙ لَّا يَتَكَلَّمُوْنَ اِلَّا
مَنْ اَذِنَ لَهُ الرَّحْمٰنُ وَقَالَ صَوَابًا ۝٣٨ ذٰلِكَ الْيَوْمُ الْحَقُّ ۚ فَمَنْ شَآءَ اتَّخَذَ
اِلٰى رَبِّهٖ مَاٰبًا ۝٣٩ اِنَّآ اَنْذَرْنٰكُمْ عَذَابًا قَرِيْبًا ۖ يَّوْمَ يَنْظُرُ الْمَرْءُ مَا قَدَّمَتْ
يَدٰهُ وَ يَقُوْلُ الْكٰفِرُ يٰلَيْتَنِيْ كُنْتُ تُرٰبًا ۝٤٠

LXXVIII

AN-NABĀ
النَّبَا

Verses: 40 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

About what are they inquiring? Is it about the Great News concerning which they are at variance?[1] By no means![2] They shall soon know. Yes, by no means! They shall soon know![3] 1-5

Is it not a fact that We have made the earth a bed[4] and set the mountains as pegs[5] and created you as pairs (of men and women),[6] and made your sleep for rest,[7] and the night a covering and the day for seeking livelihood,[8] and established above you seven strong heavens,[9] and set a bright, blazing lamp,[10] and rained water from the clouds in abundance that We may produce thereby corn and vegetables and lush gardens?[11] 6-16

Surely the Day of Decision is an appointed time. The day the Trumpet is blown, you shall come out in multitudes,[12] and the heaven shall be opened so as to become all doors, and the mountains shall be set in motion till they become as a mirage.[13] 17-20

Hell, in fact, is an ambush,[14] the abode for the rebellious in which they shall remain lodged for ages.[15] In it they shall not taste any coolness nor any drink, except boiling water and the washing from wounds,[16] a full recompense (for their misdeeds). They did not expect any reckoning and had treated Our Revelations as utterly false,[17] whereas We had counted and preserved everything in writing.[18] Now taste it, for We shall never increase anything for you except the torment. 21-30

Surely for the righteous [19] there is an abode of success: gardens and vineyards and maidens of equal age [20] and brimful cups. There they shall neither hear idle talk nor any falsehood,[21] a reward and sufficient 31-37

gift [22] from your Lord; from the All-Merciful God, Who is the Owner of the heavens and the earth and of everything lying between them, before Whom none can have the power to speak.[23]

38-39 The Day when the Spirit [24] and the angels shall be standing up in ranks, none shall speak except the one whom the Merciful may permit, and who speaks what is right.[25] That Day is sure to come. Now whoever wills, let him take the path back to his Lord.

40 We have warned you of the torment which is near at hand:[26] the Day when man will see all that his hands have sent forward, and the disbeliever will cry out: "Would that I were mere dust!"[27]

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1. "The Great News": the news of the Resurrection and Hereafter, which the people of Makkah heard with amazement, then raised questions and doubts about it in their assemblies. When they met each other they would ask: "Did you ever hear that the dead will be resurrected to life? Is it credible that life will be infused once again into the bones which have decayed and become rotten? Does it stand to reason that the former and the latter generations will rise up and gather together at one place? Is it possible that these huge mountains which are so firmly set in the earth will fly about like flakes of wool? Can it so happen that the sun and the moon and the stars should be extinguished and the order and system of the world be overturned and upset? What has happened to him who was until yesterday a sane and wise man among us? Today he is giving us strange, impossible news. Where were this Hell and Heaven of which we had never heard from him before? wherefrom have they appeared suddenly so that he has started depicting them so vividly before us?"

Another meaning of *fī-hi mukhtalifūn* also can be: "As these people themselves are not agreed on any one view about the end of the world, they hold varying views about it." Some one has been influenced by the Christian belief and believes in the life after death but thinks that the second life would not be a physical but only a spiritual life. Another does not deny the Hereafter absolutely but doubts whether it was possible or not. The Qur'ān relates the view of these very people when it says: "We do only guess: we are not certain." (Al-Jāthiyah: 32). And another plainly said: "There is no other life than this present life, and we shall never be raised back to life after our death." (Al-An'ām: 29). Then, there were some atheists, who said: "Life is only this worldly life of ours. Here we shall die and live and nothing but the change of time destroys us." (Al-Jāthiyah: 24). There were some others who were not atheistic but they regarded the second life as impossible. According to them it was beyond the power of God to raise the dead back to life. They said, "Who will give life to these bones when they are rotten." (Yā Sīn: 78). Their different views by themselves were a proof that they had no knowledge in this regard; they were only conjecturing and guessing. Had they any

knowledge they would have agreed on one view. (For further explanation, see E.N. 6 of Sūrah Adh-Dhariyat).

2. That is, whatever they say about the Hereafter is false, and all their concepts about it are wrong.

3. That is, the time is not far off when the same thing about which they are expressing all sorts of meaningless doubts and misgivings, will appear before them as a reality. Then they will realize that what the Messenger had foretold was absolutely true and what they were saying on the basis of conjecture and speculation had no truth in it.

4. Enough light has been thrown at several places in *The Meaning of the Qur'ān* on the supreme wisdom and power of Allah that underlies His making the earth a carpet, i.e. an abode of perfect peace and rest. For explanation, see E.N.'s 73, 74, 81 of An-Naml, E.N. 29 of Yā Sīn, E.N.'s 90, 91 of Al-Mu'min, E.N. 7 of Az-Zukhruf, E.N. 7 of Al-Jāthiyah, E.N. 18 of Sūrah Qāf.

5. For the wisdom of creating mountains on the earth, see E.N. 12 of An-Naḥl, E.N. 74 of An-Naml, E.N. 15 of Al-Mursalāt.

6. For explanation of the supreme wisdom that underlies the creation of men and women into pairs, see E.N. 69 of Al-Furqān, E. N.'s 28 to 30 of Ar-Rūm, E.N. 31 of Yā Sīn, E.N. 77 of Ash-Shūrā, E N.12 of Az-Zukhruf, E.N. 25 of Al-Qiyāmah.

7. The explanation of the wisdom for which Allah Almighty has placed a desire for sleep in man's nature in order to make him fit for work in the world, and which impels him to a few hours' sleep after every few hours of work, has been given in E.N. 33 of Sūrah Ar-Rūm.

8. That is, "The night has been made dark so that protected from light, you could enjoy a peaceful sleep more easily and made the day bright for the reason that you could work for your livelihood with greater ease and facility. Reference has been made to only one benefit out of countless benefits of the continuous alternation of night and day regularly on the earth to tell that all this is not happening without a purpose or accidentally, but there is supreme wisdom underlying it, which has a deep connection with your own immediate interests. The darkness that was needed for the peace and rest of your body in view of its structure has been provided in the night and the light that was needed for earning livelihood has been provided in the day. This arrangement that has been made precisely in accordance with your needs by itself testifies that it could not be possible without the wisdom of a Wise Being." (For further explanation, see E.N. 65 of Yūnus, E.N. 32 of Yā Sīn, E.N. 85 of Al-Mu'min, E.N. 4 of Az-Zukhruf).

9. "Strong" in the sense that their boundaries are so strongly fortified that no change whatever occurs in them, nor does any of the countless stars and planets in the heavens, violating these boundaries, collide with the other, nor falls down to the earth. (For further explanation, see E.N. 34 of Al-Baqarah, E.N. 2 of Ar-

Ra'd, E.N.'s 8, 12 of Al-Ḥijr, E.N. 15 of Al-Mu'minūn, E.N. 13 of Luqmān, E.N. 37 of Yā Sīn, E.N.'s 5, 6 of Aṣ-Ṣāffāt, E.N. 90 of Al-Mu'min, E.N.'s 7, 8 of Sūrah Qaf).

10. "A bright, blazing lamp": the sun. The word *wahhāj* used for the sun means both intensely hot and intensely bright. Hence our rendering. In this brief sentence, allusion has been made to a most wonderful and glorious sign of Allah Almighty's power and wisdom which the sun is. Its diameter is 109 times that of the earth's and its size more than 333,000 times that of the earth's. Its temperature is 14,000,000°C. In spite of shining 93,000,000 miles away from the earth, its light and brightness is dazzling, and man can look at it with the naked eye only at the risk of losing his eye-sight. As for its heat, temperature in some parts of the earth reaches 140°F. because of its radiation. It is only Allah Who by His wisdom has placed the earth at the right distance from it, neither it is too hot for being close to it, nor too cold for being very far away from it. For this very reason life of man, animal and vegetable became possible on it. Measureless treasures of energy from it are reaching the earth and sustaining life. It helps ripen our crops to provide sustenance to every creature; its heat causes vapours to rise from the seas, which spread to different parts of the earth by means of the winds and fall as rain. In the sun Allah has kindled such a mighty furnace that has been constantly radiating light, heat and different kinds of rays throughout the entire solar system since millions and millions of years.

11. For the details of the wonderful manifestations of Allah Almighty's power and wisdom in making arrangements for the rain and the growth of vegetation thereby, see E.N. 53 (a) of An-Naḥl, E.N. 17 of Al-Mu'minūn, E.N. 5 of Ash-Shua'rā', E.N. 35 of Ar-Rūm, E.N. 19 of Fāṭir, E.N. 29 of Yā Sīn, E.N. 20 of Al-Mu'min, E.N.'s 10, 11 of Az-Zukhruf, E.N.'s 28 to 30 of Al-Wāqi'ah.

After presenting a number of the signs and testimonies, one after the other, in these verses, the deniers of the Resurrection and Hereafter have been exhorted, so as to say: "If you consider the earth and the mountains and your own creation, your sleep and wakefulness, and the system of the day and night intelligently, and consider the well-fortified system of the universe and the shining sun in the heavens, the rain falling from the clouds and the vegetables growing thereby, you will see two things very clearly: first, that all this could neither come into existence without a mighty power, nor continue to exist and function so regularly; second, that in each of these great wisdom is working and nothing that happens here is purposeless. Now, only a foolish person could say that the Being Who by His power has brought these things into existence, does not have the power to destroy them and create them once again in some other form, and this also could be said only by an unreasonable person that the Wise Being Who has not done anything without purpose in this universe, has given to man in His world understanding and intelligence, discrimination between good and evil, freedom to obey or disobey, and powers of appropriation over countless of His creatures, without any purpose

and design: whether man uses and employs the things granted by Him in the right way or the wrong way, it does not make any difference; whether man continues to do good throughout life till death, he will end up in the dust, or continues to do evil till death, he will likewise end up in the dust; neither the virtuous man will receive any reward for the good deeds nor the bad man will be held accountable for his evil deeds. These very arguments for life after death and Resurrection and Hereafter have been given here and there in the Qur'ān, e.g. see E.N. 7 of Ar-Ra'd, E.N. 9 of Al-Hajj, E.N. 6 of Ar-Rūm, E.N.'s 10, 12 of Sabā, E.N.'s 8, 9 of Aṣ-Ṣāffāt.

12. This implies the final sounding of the Trumpet at which all dead men will rise back to life forthwith. "You" implies not only those who were the addressees at that time but all those humans who will have been born from the beginning of creation till Resurrection. (For explanation, see E.N. 57 of Ibrāhīm, E.N. 1 of Al-Hajj, E.N.'s 46, 47 of Yā Sīn, E.N. 79 of Az-Zumar).

13. One should bear in mind the fact that here also, as at many other places in the Qur'ān, the different states of Resurrection have been mentioned all together. In the first verse, mention has been made of what will happen at the final sounding of the Trumpet and in the following two verses of the state which will appear at the second sounding of the Trumpet. This we have already explained in E.N. 10 of Sūrah Al-Hāāqqah above. "The heavens shall be opened" means: All obstacles in the heavens will be removed and every heavenly calamity from every side will be befalling freely as though all doors for it were open and no door had remained closed to obstruct its happening. "The mountains will be set in motion till they become as a mirage" means: In no time will the mountains be uprooted from their places and then will be scattered away in particles leaving nothing but vast, empty sand plains behind. "This same state has been described in Sūrah Ṭā Hā, thus: They ask you: well, where will the mountains go on that Day? Say to them: My Lord will reduce them to fine dust and scatter it away. He will turn the earth into an empty level plain, wherein you will neither see any curve nor crease." (vv. 105-107 and the corresponding E.N. 83!.

14. "An ambush": a place contrived to entrap game by surprise. Hell has been described as an ambush, because the rebels of God are fearless of it and are enjoying life thinking that the world is a haven of bliss for them. They do not know that Hell is lying in ambush for them, which will trap them suddenly and keep them trapped.

15. The word *ahqāb* as used in the original means successive periods of long time appearing continuously one after the other. From this word some people have tried to argue that there will be eternity in the life of Paradise but no eternity in the life of Hell. For however long these ages may be, they will not be endless but will come to an end at some time. But this argument is wrong for two reasons. First, that lexically, the word *ḥaqab* (sing. of *ahqāb*) itself contains the meaning that one

ḥaqab should be closely followed by another *ḥaqab;* therefore, *aḥqāb* will necessarily be used only for such periods of time as continue to appear successively one after the other and there should be no period which is not followed by another period. Second, that as a rule it is wrong to put a meaning on a verse of the Qur'ān pertaining to a particular theme which clashes with other statements of the Qur'ān pertaining to the same theme. At 34 places in the Qur'ān the word *khulūd* (eternity) has been used concerning the dwellers of Hell. At three places not only the word *khulūd* has been used but the word *abad-an* (for ever and ever) also has been added to it; and at one place it has been clearly stated: "They will wish to get out of Hell but shall not be able to come out of it and theirs shall be an everlasting torment." (Al-Mā'idah: 37). At another place it has been said: "Therein they shall abide for ever, as long as the earth and the heavens shall last, unless your Lord ordains otherwise." And the same thing has been said about the dwellers of Paradise too:" "They shall dwell in Paradise for ever, as long as the earth and the heavens shall last, unless your Lord wills something else." (Hūd: 107-108). After these explanations, how can one argue, on the basis of the word *aḥqāb*, that the stay of the rebels of God in Hell will not be eternal, but it will come to an end at some stage in time?

16. The word *ghassāq* as used in the original applies to pus, blood, pus-blood and all those fluids that flow out from the eyes and skins as a result of a grievous penalty. Besides, this word is also used for a thing which stinks and gives out horrid, offensive smell.

17. This is the reason for which they will deserve this dreadful penalty of Hell. Firstly, they lived in the world thinking that the time will never come when they will have to appear before God and render an account of their deeds; second, that they utterly refused to accept and acknowledge the Revelations that Allah had sent through His Prophets for their instruction and treated them as falsehood.

18. That is, "We were continuously preparing a complete record of their sayings and doings, their movements and occupations, even of their intentions, thoughts and aims in life and nothing was being left un-recorded, whereas the foolish people in their heedlessness thought that they were living in a lawless kingdom where they were free to do whatever they pleased and desired, and there was no power to call them to account."

19. Here, the word "righteous" has been used in contrast to those who did not expect any accountability and who had belied Allah's Revelations. Therefore, this word inevitably implies those people who believed in Allah's Revelations and lived in the world with the understanding that they had to render an account of their deeds ultimately.

20. This may mean that they will be of equal age among themselves as well as that they will be of equal age with their husbands. This same theme has already occurred in Sūrah Sūad: 52 and Al-Wāqi'ah :37 above.

21. At several places in the Qur'ān this has been counted as among the major blessings of Paradise. Human ears there will remain secure against idle, false and indecent talk. There will be no nonsensical, meaningless gossiping in Paradise; no one will tell lies nor belie others; nor will there be any use of abusive language, slandering; calumnies and false accusations which are so common in the world. (For further explanations, see E.N. 28 of Sūrah Maryam, E.N.'s 13, 14 of Al-Wāqi'ah).

22. "A reward and sufficient gift": that is, they will not only be given their due rewards which they will deserve for their good deeds, but over and above these they will be given additional and sufficient gifts and prizes as well. Contrary to this, in respect of the dwellers of Hell it has been said: "They will be recompensed fully for their misdeeds." That is, they will neither be punished less than what they will deserve for their crimes nor more. This theme has been explained at length at many places in the Qur'ān, for example, see Yūnus: 26-27, An-Naml: 89-90, Al-Qaṣaṣ: 84, Sabā: 33-38, Al-Mu'min: 40.

23. That is, the Court of Allah Almighty will be so awe-inspiring that no one, whether belonging to the earth or to the heavens, will dare open his mouth of his own will before Allah, nor interfere in the Court's work and proceedings.

24. According to most commentators, "the Spirit" implies the Angel Gabriel (peace be on him), who has been mentioned separately from the angels because of his high rank and position with Allah. (For further explanation, see E.N. 3 of Al-Ma'ārij).

25. "To speak": to intercede, and intercession has been made conditional upon two things: (1) That the person who is granted permission by Allah to intercede for a sinner will alone be allowed to intercede and for the particular sinner only; and (2) that the intercessor will say only what is right and proper, and nothing derogatory, and the one for whom he is interceding should have at least acknowledged the Truth in the world. That is, he should only be a sinner, not an unbeliever. (For further explanation, see E.N. 281 of Al-Baqarah, E.N. 5 of Yūnus, E.N. 106 of Hūd, E.N. 52 of Maryam, E.N.'s 85, 86 of Ṭā Hā, E.N. 27 of Al-Anbiyā', E.N.'s 40, 41 of Saba. E.N. 32 of Al-Mu'min, E.N 63 of Az-Zukhruf, E N. 21 of An-Najm, E.N. 36 of Al-Muddaththir).

26. Apparently, one might think that the people who were the audience of this verse died fourteen centuries ago, and even now it cannot be said how many hundreds or thousands or millions of years Resurrection will take to come. Then, in what sense has it been said: "The torment of which you have been warned, has approached near at hand?" And what is the meaning of saying in the beginning of the Sūrah: "Soon they shall know?" The answer is that man can have the feeling of time only until he is passing a physical life in the world within the bounds of space and time. After death when only the soul will survive, he will lose every feeling and consciousness of time, and on the Day of Resurrection when man will rise

back to life, he will feel as though some one had aroused him from sleep suddenly. He will not at all be conscious that he has been resurrected after thousands of years. (For further explanation, see E.N. 26 of An-Naḥl, E.N. 56 of Banī Isrā'īl, E.N. 80 of Ṭā Hā, E.N. 48 of Yā Sīn).

27. "Would .....dust": "Would that I had not been born in the world, or had become mere dust after death, and thus reduced to nothingness."



LXXIX

AN-NĀZI‘ĀT

النَّازِعات

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

LXXIX

AN-NĀZI'ĀT

النّازِعات

INTRODUCTION

Name

It is derived from the word *wan-nāzi'āt* with which the Sūrah opens.

Period of Revelation

According to Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, this Sūrah was sent down after Sūrah An-Nabā. Its subject matter also testifies that it belongs to the earliest period at Makkah.

Theme and Subject-Matter

Its theme is affirmation of Resurrection and the life hereafter; it also warns of the consequences of belying the Messenger of God.

The Sūrah opens with oaths sworn by the angels who take the soul at death, and those who hasten to carry out Allah's Commands, and those who conduct the affairs of the universe according to Divine Wills to assure that the Resurrection will certainly come to pass and the second life after death will certainly take place. For the angels who are employed to pluck out the soul today can also be employed to restore the soul tomorrow, and the angels who promptly execute Allah's Commands and conduct the affairs of the universe today can also upset the order of the universe tomorrow by orders of the same God and can also bring about a new order.

After this the people have been told, so as to say: "This work which you regard as absolutely impossible, is not any difficult for Allah, for which He may have to make lengthy preparations. Just a single jolt will upset this system of the world and a second jolt will be enough to cause you to appear as living beings in the new world. At that time the same people who were wont to deny it, would be trembling with fear and seeing with awe-struck eyes all that they thought was impossible.

Then, relating the story of the Prophet Moses and Pharaoh briefly, the people have been warned to the effect: "You know full well what fate the Pharaoh met in consequence of belying the Messenger and rejecting the guidance brought by him and endeavouring to defeat his mission by trickery and deceit. If you do not learn any lesson from it and do not change your ways and attitude accordingly, you also will have to meet the same fate.

Then in vv. 27-33, arguments have been given for the Hereafter and life after death. In this regard, the deniers have been asked the question: "Is your resurrection a more difficult task or the creation of the huge universe which spreads around you to infinite distances with myriads of its stars and planets? Your re-creation cannot be difficult for the God for Whom this was an easy task. Thus, after presenting in a single sentence, a decisive argument for the possibility of the Hereafter, attention has been drawn to the earth and its provisions that have been arranged in it for the sustenance of man and animal and of which everything testifies that it has been created with great wisdom for fulfilling some special purpose. Pointing to this the question has been left for the intellect of man to ponder for itself and form the opinion whether calling man to account after having delegated authority and

رَبِّكَ مُنْتَهٰىهَا ﴿٤٤﴾ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُنْذِرُ مَنْ يَخْشٰىهَا ﴿٤٥﴾ كَأَنَّهُمْ يَوْمَ يَرَوْنَهَا
لَمْ يَلْبَثُوٓا إِلَّا عَشِيَّةً أَوْ ضُحٰىهَا ﴿٤٦﴾

responsilities to a creature like him in this wise system would be more in keeping with the demands of wisdom, or that he should die after committing sorts of misdeeds in the world and should perish and mix in the dust for ever and should never be called to account as to how he employed the authority and fulfilled the responsibilities cntrusted to him. Instead of discussing this question, in vv. 34-41, it has been said: "When the Hereafter is established, men's eternal future will be determined on the criterion as to which of them rebelled against his God transgressing the bounds of service and made the material benefits and pleasures his objective of life and which of them feared standing before his Lord and refrained from fulfilling the unlawful desires of the self. This by itself provides the right answer to the above question to every such person who considers it honestly, free from stubbornness. For the only rational, logical and moral demand of giving authority and entrusting responsibilities to man in the world is that he should be called to account on this very basis ultimately and rewarded or punished accordingly.

In conclusion the question of the disbelievers of Makkah as to when Resurrection will take place, has been answered. They asked the Holy Prophet this question over and over again. In reply it has been said that the knowledge of the time of its occurrence rests with Allah alone. The Messenger is there only to give the warning that it will certainly come. Now whoever wishes may mend his ways, fearing its coming, and whoever wishes may behave and conduct himself as he likes, fearless of its coming. When the appointed time comes, those very people who loved the life of this world and regarded its pleasures as the only object of life, would feel that they had stayed in the world only for an hour or so. Then they will realize how utterly they had ruined their future for ever for the sake of the shortlived pleasures of the world.

سُوْرَةُ النّٰزِعٰت مَكِّيَّة

اٰيَاتُهَا ٤٦ رُكُوْعَاتُهَا ٢

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

وَالنّٰزِعٰتِ غَرْقًا ۝١ وَّالنّٰشِطٰتِ نَشْطًا ۝٢ وَّالسّٰبِحٰتِ سَبْحًا ۝٣ فَالسّٰبِقٰتِ
سَبْقًا ۝٤ فَالْمُدَبِّرٰتِ اَمْرًا ۝٥ يَوْمَ تَرْجُفُ الرَّاجِفَةُ ۝٦ تَتْبَعُهَا الرَّادِفَةُ ۝٧
قُلُوْبٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ وَّاجِفَةٌ ۝٨ اَبْصَارُهَا خَاشِعَةٌ ۝٩ يَقُوْلُوْنَ ءَاِنَّا لَمَرْدُوْدُوْنَ
فِي الْحَافِرَةِ ۝١٠ ءَاِذَا كُنَّا عِظَامًا نَّخِرَةً ۝١١ قَالُوْا تِلْكَ اِذًا كَرَّةٌ خَاسِرَةٌ ۝١٢
فَاِنَّمَا هِيَ زَجْرَةٌ وَّاحِدَةٌ ۝١٣ فَاِذَا هُمْ بِالسَّاهِرَةِ ۝١٤ هَلْ اَتٰىكَ حَدِيْثُ
مُوْسٰى ۝١٥ اِذْ نَادٰىهُ رَبُّهٗ بِالْوَادِ الْمُقَدَّسِ طُوًى ۝١٦ اِذْهَبْ اِلٰى فِرْعَوْنَ اِنَّهٗ
طَغٰى ۝١٧ فَقُلْ هَلْ لَّكَ اِلٰٓى اَنْ تَزَكّٰى ۝١٨ وَاَهْدِيَكَ اِلٰى رَبِّكَ فَتَخْشٰى ۝١٩
فَاَرٰىهُ الْاٰيَةَ الْكُبْرٰى ۝٢٠ فَكَذَّبَ وَعَصٰى ۝٢١ ثُمَّ اَدْبَرَ يَسْعٰى ۝٢٢ فَحَشَرَ
فَنَادٰى ۝٢٣ فَقَالَ اَنَا رَبُّكُمُ الْاَعْلٰى ۝٢٤ فَاَخَذَهُ اللّٰهُ نَكَالَ الْاٰخِرَةِ وَالْاُوْلٰى ۝٢٥
اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لِّمَنْ يَّخْشٰى ۝٢٦ ءَاَنْتُمْ اَشَدُّ خَلْقًا اَمِ السَّمَآءُ ۭ بَنٰىهَا ۝٢٧
رَفَعَ سَمْكَهَا فَسَوّٰىهَا ۝٢٨ وَاَغْطَشَ لَيْلَهَا وَاَخْرَجَ ضُحٰىهَا ۝٢٩ وَالْاَرْضَ بَعْدَ
ذٰلِكَ دَحٰىهَا ۝٣٠ اَخْرَجَ مِنْهَا مَآءَهَا وَمَرْعٰىهَا ۝٣١ وَالْجِبَالَ اَرْسٰىهَا ۝٣٢
مَتَاعًا لَّكُمْ وَلِاَنْعَامِكُمْ ۝٣٣ فَاِذَا جَآءَتِ الطَّآمَّةُ الْكُبْرٰى ۝٣٤ يَوْمَ يَتَذَكَّرُ
الْاِنْسَانُ مَا سَعٰى ۝٣٥ وَبُرِّزَتِ الْجَحِيْمُ لِمَنْ يَّرٰى ۝٣٦ فَاَمَّا مَنْ طَغٰى ۝٣٧ وَ
اٰثَرَ الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا ۝٣٨ فَاِنَّ الْجَحِيْمَ هِيَ الْمَاْوٰى ۝٣٩ وَاَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ
مَقَامَ رَبِّهٖ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوٰى ۝٤٠ فَاِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَاْوٰى ۝٤١
يَسْـَٔلُوْنَكَ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ اَيَّانَ مُرْسٰىهَا ۝٤٢ فِيْمَ اَنْتَ مِنْ ذِكْرٰىهَا ۝٤٣ اِلٰى

LXXIX

AN-NĀZI'ĀT

النَّازِعات

Verses: 46 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

By those (angels) who pluck out from the depths, and draw out gently, and by those (angels) who glide about swiftly (through space), then hasten out (to carry out Commands), then conduct the affairs (in accordance with Divine Commands)[1]: the Day when the quake shall cause a violent jolt, which is followed by another jolt,[2] some hearts on that Day shall be trembling with fear,[3] their looks struck with awe. 1-9

They say, "Shall we really be restored to our former state? What, when we shall have become hollow, rotten bones?" They said, "It would then be a return with sheer loss!"[4] Whereas it will only need a single shout and they will forthwith appear in an open plain.[5] 10-14

Has[6] the story of Moses reached you? Recall when his Lord called out to him in the sacred valley of Tuwā,[7] (saying), "Go to Pharaoh: he has become rebellious, and say to him: Will you mind to adopt purity that I may guide you to your Lord, so that you may have fear (of Him)?"[8] Then Moses (went to Pharaoh and) showed him the great Sign,[9] but he belied it and disobeyed. Then, he turned back to devise plots,[10] and gathering the people together, proclaimed,[11] "I am your Lord, the highest." Consequently, Allah seized him for punishment both in the Hereafter and in the world. Indeed, there is a lesson in this for him who fears.[12] 15-26

Are[13] you (O men,) harder to create, or is the heaven?[14] Allah built it: He raised its vault high and gave it balance, and covered its night and brought forth its day.[15] After that He spread out the earth:[16] from within it, He brought out its water and its pasture,[17] and set the mountains in it, as a means of sustenance for you and your cattle.[18] 27-33

34-41 Then, when the great Disaster befalls[19]— the Day when man shall remember whatever he had striven for[20]—and Hell shall be laid open for everyone to see, then the one who had rebelled and preferred the life of the world, Hell shall be his home. As for him who had feared to stand before his Lord and restrained himself from evil desires, Paradise shall be his home.[21]

42-46 They ask you, "When will the Hour come to stay?"[22] (But) it is not for you to tell its time. Its knowledge rests only with your Lord. You are only a warner to him who fears it.[23] The day these people see it, they will feel as though they had stayed (in the world or in the state of death) only for the afternoon of a day or its forenoon.[24]

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1. Here, the object for which an oath has been sworn by beings having five qualities has not been mentioned; but the theme that follows by itself leads to the conclusion that the oath has been sworn to affirm that the Resurrection is a certainty, which must come to pass, when all dead men shall be resurrected. Nor is there any mention as to what are the beings possessed of the qualities. However, a large number of the Companions and their immediate successors and most of the commentators have expressed the opinion that they are the angels. Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, Masrūq, Sa'īd bin Jubair, Abū Ṣālih, Abud-Duhā and Suddi; say that "those who pluck out from the depths and those who draw out gently" imply the angels, who wrench out the soul of man at death from the very depths of his body, from its every fibre. "Those who glide about swiftly", according to Ḥaḍrat Ibn Mas'ūd, Mujāhid, Sa'īd bin Jubair and Abū Sālih, also imply the angels, who hurry about swiftly in execution of Divine Commands as though they were gliding through space. The same meaning of "those who hasten out as in a race" has been taken by Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, Mujāhid, Masrūq, Abū Sālih and Ḥasan Baṣrī, and hastening out implies that each one of them hurries on his errand as soon as he receives the first indication of Divine Will. "Those who conduct the affairs" also imply the angels as has been reported from Ḥaḍrat 'Ali, Mujāhid, 'Atā' Abū -Ṣālih, Ḥasan Baṣrī;, Qatādah, Rabī' bin Anas and Suddī. In other words, these are the workers of the Kingdom of the Universe, who are conducting all the affairs of the world in accordance with Allah's Command and Will. Though this meaning of these verses has not been reported in any authentic Ḥadīth from the Holy Prophet, while this meaning has been given by some major Companions and their immediate successors and pupils, one is led to form the view that they must have obtained this knowledge from the Holy Prophet himself.

Now the question arises: On what basis has the oath been sworn by these angels for the occurrence of the Resurrection and life after death when they themselves are as imperceptible as the thing for the occurrence of which they have been presented as an evidence and as an argument. In our opinion the reason is (and Allah has the best knowledge) that the Arabs were not deniers of the existence of the angels. They themselves admitted that at the death the soul was taken out by the angels; they also believed that the angels moved at tremendous speeds; they could reach any place between the earth and the heavens instantly and promptly execute any errand that was entrusted to them. They also acknowledged that the angels are subordinate to Divine Will and they conduct the affairs of the universe strictly and precisely in accordance with Divine Will; they are not independent and masters of their will. They regarded them as daughters of Allah out of ignorance and worshipped them as deities, but they did not believe that they possessed the real authority as well. Therefore, the basis of the reasoning from the above-mentioned attributes for the occurrence of the Resurrection and life after death is that the angels who took the soul by the order of God, could also restore the soul by the order of the same God; and the angels who conducted the affairs of the universe by the order of God could also upset this universe by the order of the same God whenever He so ordered them and could also bring about a new world order. They would not show any negligence or delay in the execution of His Command.

2. The first jolt implies the jolt which will destroy the earth and everything on it, and the second jolt at which all dead men will rise up from death and from their graves. This same state has been described in Sūrah Az-Zumar, thus: "And when the Trumpet shall be blown on that Day, all those who are in the heavens and the earth shall fall down dead except those whom Allah may allow (to live). Then the Trumpet shall be blown again and they will all stand up, looking around." (v. 68)

3. "Some hearts", because, according to the Qur'ān, only the disbelievers, the wicked people and the hypocrites will be terror-stricken on the Resurrection Day, the righteous believers will remain secure from this terror. About them in Sūrah Al-Anbiyā' it has been said: "The time of great fright will not trouble them at all; the angels will rush forth to receive them, saying: 'This is the very Day which you were promised'." (v. 103)

4. That is, when they were told that they would surely be raised back to life after death, they started mocking it, saying to one another, "Well, if we have really to be restored to our former state of life, then we would certainly be doomed."

5. That is, "They are mocking it as an impossibility, whereas it is not at all a difficult task for Allah for the performance of which He may have to make lengthy preparations. For it only a single shout or cry is enough at which your dust of ash will gather together from wherever it lay, and you will suddenly find yourself alive on the back of the earth. Thinking this return to be a return to loss, you may try to escape from it however hard you may, but it will inevitably take place: it cannot be averted by your denial, escape or mockery."

6. As the denial of the Resurrection and Hereafter by the disbelievers of Makkah and their mockery of it was not, in fact, rejection of a philosophy but belying Allah's Messengers, and the tricks that they were employing against the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) were not against an ordinary man but were meant to frustrate the mission of Allah's Messenger, the story of the Prophet Moses and the Pharaoh is being related before giving additional arguments for the occurrence of the Hereafter so that they are warned of the consequences of fighting with the Messenger and resisting the God Who sent him.

7. According to general opinion among the commentators "the sacred valley of Ṭuwā" means "the sacred valley which was named Ṭuwā". But, besides this, two other meanings of it also have been given: (1) "The valley that was blessed and made sacred twice", for it was first made sacred when Allah spoke to Moses in it for the first time, and it was blessed and made sacred for the second time when the Prophet Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt and brought them into it; and (2) "called out to him in the sacred valley in the night," and this is according to the meaning of ṭuwā in the Arabic idiom.

8. Here, one should understand a few things well: (1) The dialogue that took place between the Prophet Moses and Allah Almighty at the time of appointing him to the office of Prophethood has been related at some places briefly and at others in full detail in the Qur'ān as the occasion demanded. Here, brevity was the need; therefore, only a resume has been given. Fuller details are found in Tā Hā: 9-48, Ash-Shua'rā': 10-17, An-Naml: 7-12, Al-Qasas: 29-35.

(2) The rebellion of the Pharaoh referred to here relates to his transgressing the bounds of service and rebelling both against the Creator and against His creatures. As for his rebellion against the Creator, it is being mentioned a little below when he gathered his people together and proiaimed: "I am your lord, the supreme." As against the creatures his rebellion was that he had divided his subjects into classes; he treated the weak classes tyrannically and had reduced his entire nation to slavery as has been mentioned in Al-Qaṣaṣ: 4 and Az-Zukhruf: 54.

(3) The instruction given to Moses was: "Go, you and your brother Aaron, to Pharaoh for he has transgressed all bounds. Talk to him gently; maybe

that he is convinced by admonition or is imbued with fear." (Tā Hā: 44). One model of the gentle speech has been given in these verses, which shows what right method a preacher should adopt when preaching to a perverted man. Other models are given in Tā Hā: 49-52, Ash-Shua'rā': 23-28, and Al-Qasas: 37. These verses are of those in which Allah has taught the correct methods of preaching Islam in the Qur'ān.

(4) The Prophet Moses had not been sent to Pharaoh only for the deliverance of the children of Israel as some people seem to think, but the primary object of his appointment was to show Pharaoh and his people the right way, and the second object was that if he did not accept the right way, the children of Israel (who in fact were a Muslim people) should be taken out of his slavery and from Egypt. This thing becomes plain from these verses too, for there is no mention whatever in these of the deliverance of the children of Israel, but the Prophet Moses has been commanded to present the message of the Truth before Pharaoh, and this is confirmed by those verses also in which the Prophet Moses has preached Islam as well as demanded freedom of the children of Israel, e.g. see Al-A'rāf 104-105, Tā Hā: 47-52, Ash-Shua'arā': 16-17, 23-28. (For further explanation, see E.N. 74 of Yūnus).

(5) Here, "to adopt purity" means to adopt purity of belief, morals and deeds, or, in other words, to accept Islam. Ibn Zaid says: "Wherever in the Qur'ān the word *tazakka* (purity) has been use, it implies acceptance of Islam." As an example of this he has cited the following three verses: "And this is the reward of him who adopts purity", *i.e.* accepts Islam; "and what would make you know that he might adopt purity", *i.e.* becomes a Muslim ('Abasa:3); "And you would not be responsible if he did not adopt purity", i.e. did not become a Muslim ('Abasa: 7). (Ibn Jarir).

(6) "That I may guide you to your Lord so that you may have fear (of Him)" means: "When you recognize your Lord and come to know that you are His slave, and not a free man, you will inevitably have fear of Him in your heart, for fear of God is the thing on which depends the right attitude of man in the world. Without the knowledge and fear of God no purity of the self can be possible."

9. "The great Sign": the turning of the staff into a serpent, as has been mentioned at several places in the Qur'ān. Obviously there could be no greater sign than that a lifeless staff should turn into a living serpent right in front of the eyes of the people, that it should devour the artificial serpents produced by the magicians out of their staffs and cords, and when the Prophet Moses should pick it

up, it should become a walking stick again. This was proof that it was Allah, Lord of the worlds, Who had sent Moses as a Prophet.

10. According to the details given at other places in the Qur'ān, he summoned skilful magicians from all over Egypt and made them produce serpents out of sticks and cords in front of the assembled people so that they were convinced that Moses (peace be upon him) was not a Prophet but a magician, and that the miracle worked by him of turning a staff into a serpent, could also be worked by other magicians. But this device of his recoiled upon himself and the defeated magicians themselves admitted that what Moses (peace be on him) had displayed was no magic but a miracle.

11. This proclamation of Pharaoh has been mentioned at several places in the Qur'ān. On one occasion he said to the Prophet Moses: "If you took another one as a deity beside me, I would cast you in the prison." (Ash-Shua'rā': 29). On another occasion he had addressed his courtiers, saying: "O chiefs, I do not know of any other god of yours than myself. (Al-Qasas.: 38). By this Pharaoh did not mean, nor could he ever mean, that he himself was the creator of the universe and he had made the world, nor that he denied the existence of Allah and claimed to be lord of the universe, nor that he regarded only himself as a deity of the people in the religious sense. In the Qur'ān itself there is a clear testimony that as regards religion he himself worshipped other gods. Once his courtiers said to him: "Will you leave Moses and his people free to spread chaos in the land, and let them discard you and your deities?" (Al A'rāf: 127). And in the Qur'ān itself this saying of the Pharaoh also has been cited: "Had Moses been sent by Allah, why were not bracelets of gold sent down to him, or a company of angels as attendants?" (Az-Zukhruf: 53). Thus, in fact, he called himself a god and supreme deity not in the religious but in the political sense. What he meant was that he possessed the sovereign rights: no one beside him had the right to rule in his kingdom and there was no superior power whose orders could be enforced in the land. (For further explanation, see E.N. 85 of Al-A'rāf, E.N. 21 of Ṭā Hā, E.N.'s 24, 26 of Ash-Shua'rā', E-N.'s 52, 53 of Al-Qaṣaṣ E.N. 49 of Az-Zukhruf).

12. "...who fears": who fears the consequences of denying God's Messenger, which the Pharaoh experienced in the past.

13. Now arguments are being given for the possibility of Resurrection and life after death and their being the very demand and requirement of wisdom.

14. Here, creation implies the recreation of men, and the heaven the entire firmament which contains countless stars and planets, and innumerable solar systems and galaxies, means to say: "You think that your resurrection after death is something extremely improbable and you express wonder saying: 'How is it

possible that when our very bones will have decayed and become rotten the scattered particles of our bodies will be reassembled and made living once again?' But have you ever also considered whether the great universe is harder to create or your own re-creation in the form in which you were created in the first instance? The God Who created you in the first instance cannot be powerless to create you once again." This same argument for life after death has been given at several places in the Qur'ān. For example, in Sūrah Yā Sīn it has been said: "Is not He Who created the heavens and the earth able to create the like of them (again)? Why not, when He is the skilful Creator." (v. 81) And in Sūrah Al-Mu'min it was said: "Surely the creation of the heavens and the earth is a greater task than the creation of man, but most people do not know. (v. 57)

15. The night and the day have been attributed to the heaven, for the night falls when the sun of the heavens sets and the day dawns when it rises. The word "cover" has been used for the night in the sense that after the sun has set the darkness of the night so spreads over the earth as though it has covered it from above by a curtain.

16. "After that He spread out the earth" does not mean that Allah created the earth after the creation of the heavens, but it is a style of expression just like our saying after making mention of something: "Then this is noteworthy." The object is not to express the sequence of occurrence between the two things but to draw attention from the first to the second thing although both may exist together. Several instances of this style are found in the Qur'ān, *e.g.* in Sūrah Al-Qalam it is said: "(He is) oppressive, and after that, ignoble by birth." This does not mean that first he became oppressive and then he turned ignoble by birth, but it means: "He is oppressive, and above all, ignoble by birth." Likewise, in Sūrah Al-Balad it is said: "Should free a slave...then be of those who believe." This also does not mean that first he should act righteously and then believe, but that along with doing righteous deeds he should also be characterised by belief. Here, one should also understand that at some places in the Qur'ān the creation of the earth has been mentioned first and then the creation of the heavens, as in Al-Baqarah: 29, and at others the creation of the heavens has been mentioned first and then of the earth, as in these verses. There is, in fact, no contradiction in this. At no place the object is to tell what was created first and what afterwards, but wherever the context requires that the excellences of the power of Allah be made prominent, the heavens have been mentioned first and then the earth, and where the context requires that the people be made to appreciate and acknowledge the blessings that they are benefiting by on the earth, the mention of the earth has been made before that of the heavens. (For further explanation, see E.N's 13,14 of Hā Mīm As-Sajdah).

17. "Pasture" here does not only imply pasture and fodder for the animals but all kinds of herbal produce suitable for consumption both by man and by animal. An example of the use of *rat'*, which is generally used in Arabic for the grazing animals, is found in Sūrah Yūsuf: 12, signifying that this word is sometimes used for man also. The brothers of Joseph said to their father: "Send Joseph with us tomorrow that he may freely graze and enjoy sport." Here, the word graze (rat') for the child has been used in the meaning that he may move about freely in the jungle and pluck and eat fruit.

18. In these verses arguments have been given for the Resurrection and life after death from two aspects: first, that it is not at all difficult to establish these for the power of that God Who has made this vast and huge universe with such wonderful balance and this earth with such provisions. Second, that the pointers to the perfect wisdom of Allah which are clearly visible in the universe and the earth, point out that nothing is happening here purposelessly. The balance that exists between countless of the stars and planets and galaxies in the heavens testifies that all this has not happened haphazardly but there is a well thought-out plan working behind it. The regular alternation of the night and day is an evidence that this system has been established with supreme wisdom and knowledge for making the earth a home and place of settlement. On this very earth are found regions where the alternation of the night and day takes place within 24 hours and also those regions where there are longer days and longer nights. A very large part of the earth's population lives in the first kind of the regions. Then as the days and nights go on becoming longer and longer, life goes on becoming harder and harder and population thinner and thinner. So much so that the regions where there are six-month-long days and six-month-long nights, are not at all fit for human settlement. Arranging both these types of the land on this very earth Allah has provided the evidence that this regular order of the alternation of night and day has not come about accidentally but has been brought about with great wisdom precisely in accordance with a scheme to make the earth a place fit for human settlement. Likewise, spreading out the earth so that it becomes a fit place to live in, providing in it that water which should be palatable for man and animal and a cause of growth for vegetation, setting in it mountains and creating all those things which may become a means of life for both man and animal-- all these are a manifest sign that they are not chance happenings or the purposeless works of a care-free person but each one of these has been arranged purposefully by a Supreme, Wise Being. Now every sensible and intelligent man can consider for himself whether the necessity and occurrence of the Hereafter is the requirement of wisdom or its negation. The person who in spite of seeing all this says that there is no Hereafter, in fact, says that everything in the universe is happening wisely and purposefully, but only the creation of man on the earth as a being endowed with sense and power

is meaningless and foolish. For there could be nothing more purposeless than delegating to man vast powers of appropriation in the earth and providing him an opportunity to do good as well as evil deeds but then failing to ever subject him to accountability.

19. This implies the Resurrection for which the words *at-Tāāmmat al-kubrā* have been used. *Tāāmmah* by itself is a grievous calamity which afflicts everybody. Then it has been further qualified by the word *kubrā* (great), which shows that the mere word *tāāmmah* is not enough to describe fully its intensity and severity.

20. That is, "When man will see that the same Day of accountability of which he was being foretold in the world, has come, he will start remembering each one of his misdeeds done in the world even before his records are handed over to him. Some people experience this even in the world. If at some time they come across a dangerous situation suddenly when death seems to be staring them in the face, their whole life-film flashes across their mind's eye all at once.

21. Here, in a few words, it has been told briefly what shall be the criterion of the final judgement in the Hereafter. One kind of the conduct of life in the world is that transgressing all bounds of service man should rebel against his God and should make up his mind that he would seek only the benefits and pleasures of this world in whatever way they could be sought and achieved. The other kind of conduct is that while man passes life in the world he should constantly keep in view the truth that ultimately one day he has to stand before his Lord, and should refrain from fulfilling the evil desires of the self only for the fear that if he earned an unlawful benefit in obedience to his self, or enjoyed an evil pleasure, what answer he would give to his Lord. The criterion of the judgement in the Hereafter will be which of the two kinds of conduct he adopted in the world. If he had adopted the first kind of conduct, his permanent abode would be Hell, and if he had adopted the second kind of conduct, his permanent home would be Paradise.

22. The disbelievers of Makkah asked this question of the Holy Prophet over and over again. By this they did not mean to know the time and date of the coming of Resurrection but to mock it. (For further explanation, see E.N. 35 of Sūrah Al-Mulk).

23. This also we have explained in E.N. 36 of Sūrah Al-Mulk above. As for the words "you are only a Warner to him who fears it", they do not mean that it is not your duty to warn those who do not fear, but it means: "Your warning will benefit only him who fears the coming of that Day."

24. This theme has occurred at several places in the Qur'ān and been explained in the corresponding Notes. For it, see E.N. 53 of Yūnus, E.N. 56 of Banī Isrā'īl, E.N. 80 of Tā Hā, E.N. 101 of Al-Mu'minūn, E.N.'s 81, 82 of Ar-Rūm, E.N. 48 of Yā Sīn. Besides, this theme has also occurred in Al-Ahqāf: 35 but we have not explained it there for fear of repetition.



LXXX

ʻABASA

عَبَسَ

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

LXXX
'ABASA
عَبَسَ

INTRODUCTON

Name

The Sūrah is so designated after the word *'abasa* with which it opens.

Period of Revelation

The commentators and traditionists are unanimous about the occasion of the revelation of this Sūrah. According to them, once some big chiefs of Makkah were sitting in the Holy Prophet's assembly and he was earnestly engaged in trying to persuade them to accept Islam. At that very point, a blind man, named Ibn Umm Maktūm, approached him to seek explanation of some point concerning Islam. The Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) disliked his interruption and ignored him. Thereupon Allah sent down this Sūrah. From this historical incident the period of the revelation of this Sūrah can be precisely determined.

In the first place, it is confirmed that Hadrat Ibn Umm Maktūm was one of the earliest converts to Islam. Hāfiz Ibn Hajar and Hāfiz Ibn Kathīr have stated that he was one of those who had accepted Islam at a very early stage at Makkah.

Secondly, some of the traditions of the Hadīth which relate this incident show that he had already accepted Islam and some others show that he was inclined to accept it and had approached the Holy Prophet in search of the truth. Hadrat 'A'ishah states that coming to the Holy Prophet he had said: "O Messenger of Allah, guide me to the straight path." (Tirmidhi, Hākim, Ibn Hibbān, Ibn Jarīr, Abū Yā'lā). According to Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, he had asked the meaning of a verse of the Qur'ān and said to the Holy Prophet: "O Messenger of Allah, teach me the knowledge that Allah has taught you."(Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Hātim). These statements show that he had acknowedged the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) as a Messenger of Allah and the Qur'ān as a Book of Allah. Contrary to this, Ibn Zaid has interpreted the *words la'allahū yazzakkā* of verse 3 to mean; *la'allahū yuslim:* "maybe that he accepts Islam." (Ibn Jarīr) And Allah's own words: "What would make you know that he might reform, or heed the admonition, and admonishing might profit him?" and "The one who comes to you running, of his own will, and fears, from him you turn away", point out that by that time he had developed in himself a deep desire to learn the truth; he had come to the Holy Prophet with the belief that he was the only source of guidance and his desire would be satisfied only through him; his apparent state also reflected that if he was given instruction, he would benefit by it.

Thirdly, the names of the people who were sitting in the Holy Prophet's assembly at that time, have been given in different traditions. In this list we find the names of 'Utbah, Shaibah, Abū Jahl, Umayyah bin Khalaf, Ubayy bin Khalaf, who were the bitterest enemies of Islam. This shows that the incident took place in the period when these chiefs were still on meeting terms with the Holy Prophet and their antagonism to Islam had not yet grown so strong as to have stopped their paying visits to him and having dialogues with him off and on. All these arguments indicate that this is one of the very earliest Sūrahs to be revealed at Makkah.

Theme and Subject-Matter

In view of the apparent style with which the discourse opens, one feels that in this Sūrah Allah has expressed His displeasure against the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) for his treating the blind man with indifference and attending to the big chiefs exclusively. But when the whole Sūrah is considered objectively, one finds that the displeasure, in fact, has been expressed against the disbelieving Quraish, who because of their arrogant attitude and indifference to the truth, were rejecting with contempt the message of truth being conveyed by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). Then, besides teaching him the correct method of preaching, the error of the method that he was adopting at the start of his mission has also been pointed out. His treating the blind man with neglect and disregard and devoting all his attention to the Quraish chiefs was not for the reason that he regarded the rich as noble and a poor blind man as contemptible, and, God forbid, there was some rudeness in his manner for which Allah reproved him. But, as a matter of fact, when a caller to Truth embarks on his mission of conveying his message to the people, he naturally wants the most influential people of society to accept his message so that his task becomes easy, for even if his invitation spreads among the poor and weak people, it cannot make much difference. Almost the same attitude had the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) also adopted in the beginning, his motive being only sincerity and a desire to promote his mission and not any idea of respect for the big people and hatred for the small people. But Allah made him realize that that was not the correct method of extending invitation to Islam, but from his mission's point of view, every man who was a seeker after truth, was important, even if he was weak, or poor, and every man, who was heedless to the truth, was un-important, even if he occupied a high position in society. Therefore, he should openly proclaim and convey the teachings of Islam to all and sundry, but the people who were really worthy of his attention, were those who were inclined to accept the Truth, and his sublime and noble message was too high to be presented before those haughty people who in their arrogance and vanity thought that they did not stand in need of him but rather he stood in need of them.

This is the theme of vv. 1-16. From verse 17 onward the rebuke directly turns to the disbelievers, who were repudiating the invitation of the Holy Messenger of Allah (upon whom be peace). In this, first they have been reproved for their attitude which they had adopted against their Creator, Providence and Sustainer. In the end, they have been warned of the dreadful fate that they would meet in consequence of their conduct, on the Day of Resurrection.

سُوْرَةُ عَبَسَ مَكِّيَّةٌ

اٰيَاتُهَا ٤٢ رُكُوْعُهَا ١

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

عَبَسَ وَتَوَلّٰٓى ۝١ اَنْ جَآءَهُ الْاَعْمٰى ۝٢ وَمَا يُدْرِيْكَ لَعَلَّهٗ يَزَّكّٰٓى ۝٣ اَوْ يَذَّكَّرُ
فَتَنْفَعَهُ الذِّكْرٰى ۝٤ اَمَّا مَنِ اسْتَغْنٰى ۝٥ فَاَنْتَ لَهٗ تَصَدّٰى ۝٦ وَمَا عَلَيْكَ
اَلَّا يَزَّكّٰى ۝٧ وَاَمَّا مَنْ جَآءَكَ يَسْعٰى ۝٨ وَهُوَ يَخْشٰى ۝٩ فَاَنْتَ عَنْهُ
تَلَهّٰى ۝١٠ كَلَّآ اِنَّهَا تَذْكِرَةٌ ۝١١ فَمَنْ شَآءَ ذَكَرَهُ ۝١٢ فِيْ صُحُفٍ مُّكَرَّمَةٍ ۝١٣
مَّرْفُوْعَةٍ مُّطَهَّرَةٍ ۝١٤ بِاَيْدِيْ سَفَرَةٍ ۝١٥ كِرَامٍۢ بَرَرَةٍ ۝١٦ قُتِلَ الْاِنْسَانُ
مَآ اَكْفَرَهٗ ۝١٧ مِنْ اَيِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهٗ ۝١٨ مِنْ نُّطْفَةٍ ۭ خَلَقَهٗ فَقَدَّرَهٗ ۝١٩
ثُمَّ السَّبِيْلَ يَسَّرَهٗ ۝٢٠ ثُمَّ اَمَاتَهٗ فَاَقْبَرَهٗ ۝٢١ ثُمَّ اِذَا شَآءَ اَنْشَرَهٗ ۝٢٢
كَلَّا لَمَّا يَقْضِ مَآ اَمَرَهٗ ۝٢٣ فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْاِنْسَانُ اِلٰى طَعَامِهٖٓ ۝٢٤ اَنَّا صَبَبْنَا
الْمَآءَ صَبًّا ۝٢٥ ثُمَّ شَقَقْنَا الْاَرْضَ شَقًّا ۝٢٦ فَاَنْۢبَتْنَا فِيْهَا حَبًّا ۝٢٧ وَّعِنَبًا وَّ
قَضْبًا ۝٢٨ وَّزَيْتُوْنًا وَّنَخْلًا ۝٢٩ وَّحَدَآئِقَ غُلْبًا ۝٣٠ وَّفَاكِهَةً وَّاَبًّا ۝٣١ مَّتَاعًا
لَّكُمْ وَلِاَنْعَامِكُمْ ۝٣٢ فَاِذَا جَآءَتِ الصَّآخَّةُ ۝٣٣ يَوْمَ يَفِرُّ الْمَرْءُ مِنْ
اَخِيْهِ ۝٣٤ وَاُمِّهٖ وَاَبِيْهِ ۝٣٥ وَصَاحِبَتِهٖ وَبَنِيْهِ ۝٣٦ لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مِّنْهُمْ
يَوْمَئِذٍ شَاْنٌ يُّغْنِيْهِ ۝٣٧ وُجُوْهٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ مُّسْفِرَةٌ ۝٣٨ ضَاحِكَةٌ مُّسْتَبْشِرَةٌ ۝٣٩
وَوُجُوْهٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ عَلَيْهَا غَبَرَةٌ ۝٤٠ تَرْهَقُهَا قَتَرَةٌ ۝٤١ اُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْكَفَرَةُ الْفَجَرَةُ ۝٤٢

LXXX

'ABASA

عَبَسَ

Verses: 42 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

He frowned and turned away his face because there came up to him the blind man.[1] And what would make you know that he might reform, or heed the admonition, and admonishing might profit him? As for him who is indifferent, to him you attend, though you would not be responsible if he did not reform. And the one who comes to you running, of his own will, and fears, from him you turn away.[2] By no means![3] This is but an admonition.[4] Let him who wills accept it. It is written in scrolls, which are honoured, exalted, purified,[5] (and which) remain in the hands of noble and virtuous scribes.[7] 1-16

Cursed[8] be man![9] What a perverse disbeliever he is![10] Out of what has Allah created him? Out of a spermdrop.[11] Allah created him, then set him his destiny,[12] then made the way of life easy for him,[13] then caused him to die, and brought him to the grave.[14] Then whenever He wills, He will raise him up again to life.[15] Nay, but he has not fulfilled the duty that Allah had assigned to him.[16] Then let man look at his food.[17] We poured down water in abundance,[18] then cleft the earth asunder,[19] then caused to grow in it corns and grapes and vegetables and olives and dates and lush gardens and fruits of every kind and fodder as a means of sustenance for you and your cattle.[20] 17-32

At last, when the deafening blast is sounded,[21]— that Day shall man flee from his brother and his mother and his father and his wife and his children.[22] Each one of them, on that Day, shall have enough to occupy him so as to make him heedless of others.[23] Some faces on that Day shall be shining—rejoicing and joyful. And some faces on that Day shall be dusty, and darkness shall be covering them. These will be the 33-42

disbelievers and the sinners.

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1. The style of this first sentence is elegant and subtle. Although in the following sentences the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been directly addressed, which by itself shows that the act of frowning and turning aside had issued forth from him, the discourse has been opened in a manner as though it was not he but some one else who had so acted. By this style the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), by a subtle method, has been made to realize that it was an act unseemly for him. Had somebody familiar with his high morals witnessed it, he would have thought that it was not he but some other person who had behaved in that manner.

The blind man referred to here implies, as we have explained in the Introduction, the well-known Companion, Hadrat Ibn Umm Maktūm. Hāfiz Ibn 'Abdul Barr in *Al-Isti'āb* and Hāfiz Ibn Hajar in *Al-Ishāb* have stated that he was a first cousin of the Holy Prophet's wife, Hadrat Khadijah. His mother, Umm Maktūm, and Hadrat Khadijah's father, Khuwailid, were sister and brother to each other. After one knows his relationship with the Holy Prophet, there remains no room for the doubt that he had turned away from him regarding him as a poor man having a low station in life, and attended to the high-placed people, for he was the Holy Prophet's brother-in-law and a man of noble birth. The reason why the Holy Prophet had shown disregard for him is indicated by the word *a'mā* (blind man), which Allah Himself has used as the cause of the Holy Prophet's inattention. That is, the Holy Prophet thought that even if a single man from among the people whom he was trying to bring to the right path, listened to him and was rightly guided, he could become a powerful means of strengthening Islam. On the contrary, Ibn Umm Maktūm was a blind man, who could not prove to be so useful for Islam because of his disability as could one of the Quraish elders on becoming a Muslim. Therefore, he should not interrupt the conversation at that time; whatever he wanted to ask or learn, he could ask or learn at some later time.

2. This is the real point which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had overlooked in the preaching of Islam on that occasion, and for teaching him the same Allah first reproved him on his treatment of Ibn Umm Maktūm, and then told him what really deserved to occupy his attention as preacher of the Truth and what did not. There is a man whose apparent state clearly shows that he is a *seeker* after truth: he fears lest he should follow falsehood and invite Allah's wrath; therefore, he comes all the way in search of the knowledge of the true faith. There is another man, whose attitude clearly reflects that he has no desire for the truth; rather on the contrary, he regards himself as self-sufficient, having no desire to be guided to the right way. Between these two kinds of men one should not see whose becoming a Muslim would be of greater use for Islam and whose becoming a

believer could not be of any use in its propagation. But one should see as to who was inclined to accept the guidance and reform himself, and who was least interested in this precious bargain. The first kind of man, whether he is blind, lame, crippled, or an indigent mendicant, who might apparently seem incapable of rendering any useful service in the propagation of Islam, is in any case a valuable man for the preacher to the Truth. To him therefore he should attend, for the real object of this invitation is to reform the people, and the apparent state of the person shows that if he was instructed he would accept guidance. As for the other kind of man, the preacher has no need to pursue him, no matter how influential he is in society. For his attitude and conduct openly proclaim that he has no desire for reform; therefore, any effort made to reform him would be mere waste of time. If he has no desire to reform himself, he may not; the loss would be his, the preacher would not at all be accountable for it.

3. That is, "You should never do so: do not give undue importance to those who have forgotten God and become proud of their high worldly position. The teaching of Islam is not such that it should be presented solicitously before him who spurns it, nor should a man like you try to invite these arrogant people to Islam in a way as may cause them the misunderstanding that you have a selfish motive connected with them, and that your mission would succeed only if they believed, otherwise not, whereas the fact is that the Truth is as self-sufficient of them as they are of the Truth."

4. The allusion is to the Qur'ān.

5. "Purified": free from all kinds of mixtures of false ideas and thoughts, and presenting nothing but the pure Truth. There is no tinge whatever in these scrolls of the impurities with which the other religious books of the world have been polluted. They have been kept pure and secure from all kinds of human speculation and evil suggestions.

6. This refers to the angels who were writing the scrolls of the Qur'ān under the direct guidance of Allah, were guarding them and conveying them intact to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). Two words have been used to qualify them: *karīm*, i.e. noble, and *barr*, i.e. virtuous. The first word is meant to say that they are so honoured and noble that it is not possible that such exalted beings would commit even the slightest dishonesty in the trust reposed in them. The second word has been used to tell that they carry out the responsibility entrusted to them of writing down the scrolls, guarding them and conveying them to the Messenger with perfect honesty and integrity.

7. If the context in which these verses occur, is considered deeply, it becomes obvious that here the Qur'ān has not been praised for the sake of its

greatness and glory but to tell the arrogant people, who were repudiating its message with contempt, plainly: "The glorious Qur'ān is too holy and exalted a Book to be presented before you humbly with the request that you may kindly accept it if you so please. For it does not stand in need of you as you stand in need of it. If you really seek your well-being, you should clear your head of the evil thoughts and submit to its message humbly; otherwise you are not so self-sufficient of this Book as this Book is self-sufficient of you. Your treating it with scorn and contempt will not affect its glory and greatness at all, rather your own pride and arrogance will be ruined on account of it."

8. From here the rebuke turns directly against the disbelievers, who were treating the message of the Truth with scant attention. Before this, from the beginning of the Sūrah to verse 16, the address though apparently directed to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), was actually meant to reprimand the disbelievers, as if to say: "O Prophet, why are you ignoring a seeker after truth and paying all your attention to those who are worthless from your mission's point of view? they do not deserve that a great Prophet like you should present a sublime thing like the Qur'ān before them."

9. At all such places in the Qur'ān, "man" does not imply every individual of the human race but the people whose evil traits of character are intended to be censured. At some places the word "man" is used because the evil traits are found in most of human beings, and at others for the reason that if the particular people are pin-pointed for censure, it engenders stubbornness. Therefore, admonition is given in general terms so as to be more effective. (For further explanation, see E.N. 65 of Hā Mīm As-Sajdah, E.N. 75 of Ash-Shūrā).

10. Another meaning also can be: "What caused him to be inclined to *kufr*?" Or, in other words: "On what strength does he commit *kufr?" Kufr?"* here means denial of the Truth as well as ingratitude for the favours of one's benefactor and also rebellious attitude against one's Creator, Providence and Master.

11. That is, let him first consider out of what he was created, where he was nourished and developed, by what way he came into the world, and from what helpless state he began his life in the world. Why does he forget his such beginning and becomes involved in conceit and haughtiness and why does he feel so puffed up as to resist his Creator and stand before Him as an adversary? (The same theme has been expressed in Yā Sīn 77-78 above).

12. That is, he was yet developing and taking shape in his mother's womb when his destiny was set for him. It was determined what would be his sex, his colour, his size, the extent and volume of his body, the extent to which his limbs would be sound or unsound, his appearance and voice, the degree of physical

strength and mental endowments, what would be the land, the family, the conditions and environments in which he would take birth, develop and be moulded into a specific person, what would be the hereditary influences and effects of the surroundings and the role and impact of his own self in the make-up of his personality, the part he would play in his life of the world, and how long he would be allowed to function on the earth. He cannot swerve even a hair-breadth from his destiny, nor can effect the slightest alteration in it. Then, how strange is his daring and stubbornness! He commits disbelief of the Creator before Whose destiny he is so helpless and powerless!

13. That is, He created all those means and provisions in the world, which he could utilize, otherwise all the capabilities of his body and mind would have remained useless, had not the Creator provided the means and created the possibilities on the earth to employ them. Furthermore, the Creator also gave him the opportunity to choose and adopt for himself whichever of the ways, good or evil, of gratitude or ingratitude, of obedience or disobedience, that he pleased. He opened up both the ways before him and made each way smooth and easy so that he could follow any way that he liked.

14. That is, not only in the matter of birth and destiny but in the matter of death also he is absolutely helpless before his Creator. Neither he can take birth by his choice nor die by his choice, nor can defer his death even by a moment. He dies precisely at the appointed time, in the appointed place, under the appointed circumstances that have been decreed for his death, and he is deposited in the type of grave destined for him whether it is the belly of the earth, the depths of the sea, a bonfire, or the stomach of a beast. Nothing to say of the man, even the whole world together cannot change the Creator's decree in respect of any person.

15. That is, he does not either have the power to refuse to rise up when the Creator may will to resurrect him after death. When he was first created, he was not consulted: he was not asked whether he wanted to be created or not. Even if he had refused, he would have been created. Likewise, his resurrection also is not dependent upon his will and assent that he may rise from death if he so likes, or refuse to rise if he does not like. In this matter also he is absolutely helpless before the Creator's will. Whenever He wills He will resurrect him, and he will have to rise whether he likes it or not.

16. "Duty" implies the duty that Allah has enjoined on every man in the form of natural guidance as well as the duty to which man's own existence and every particle of the universe, from the earth to the heavens, and every manifestation of Divine power are pointing, and that duty also which Allah has conveyed in every age through His Prophets and Books and disseminated through the righteous people of every period. (For explanation, see E.N. 5 of Sūrah Ad-

Dahr). In the present context the object is to express the meaning that on the basis of the truths stated in the above verses, it was man's duty to have obeyed his Creator, but, contrary to this, he adopted the way of disobedience and did not fulfil the demand of his being His creature.

17. That is, let him consider the food, which he regards as an ordinary thing, how it is created. Had God not provided the means for it, it was not in the power of man himself to have created the food on the earth in any way.

18. This refers to rainwater: water vapours are raised in vast quantities from the oceans by the heat of the sun: then they are turned into thick clouds; then the winds blow and spread them over different parts of the earth; then because of the coolness in the upper atmosphere the vapours turn back to water and fall as rain in every area in a particular measure. The water not only falls as rain directly on the earth but also collects underground in the shape of wells and fountains, flows in the form of rivers and streams, freezes on the mountains as snow and melts and flows into rivers in other seasons as well than the rainy season. Has man himself made all these arrangements? Had his Creator not arranged this for his sustenance, could man survive on the earth ?

19. "Cleaving the earth asunder" implies cleaving it in a way that the seeds, or seed-stones, or vegetable seedlings that man sows or plants in it, or which are deposited in it by winds or birds, or by some other means, should sprout up. Man can do nothing more than to dig the soil, or plough it, and bury in it the seeds that God has already created. Beyond this everything is done by God. It is He Who has created the seeds of countless species of vegetable; it is He Who has endowed these seeds with the quality that when they are sown in the soil, they should sprout up and from every seed vegetable of its own particular species should grow. Again it is He Who has created in the earth the capability that in combination with water it should break open the seeds and develop and nourish every species of vegetable with the kind of food suitable for it. Had God not created the seeds with these qualities and the upper layers of the earth with these capabilities, man could not by himself have arranged any kind of food on the earth.

20. That is, "A means of sustenance not only for you but also for those animals from which you obtain items of food like meat, fat, milk, butter, etc. and which perform countless other services also for your living. You benefit by all this and yet you disbelieve in God Whose provisions sustain you."

21. The final terrible sounding of the Trumpet at which all dead men shall be ressurected to life.

22. A theme closely resembling this has already occurred in Al-Ma'ārij: 10-14 above. "Fleeing" may also mean that when he sees those nearest and dearest

to him in the world, involved in distress, instead of rushing forth to help them, he will run away from them lest they should call out to him for help; and it may also mean that when they see the evil consequences of committing sin for the sake of one another and misleading one another, fearless of God and heedless of the Hereafter, in the world, each one would flee from the other lest the other should hold him responsible for his deviation and sin. Brother will fear brother, children their parents, husband his wife, and parents their children lest they should become witnesses in the case against them.

23. A tradition has been reported in the Hadīth by different methods and through different channels, saying that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said: "On the Day of Resurrection all men will rise up naked." One of his wives (according to some reporters, Hadrat 'Ā'ishah, according to others, Hadrat Saudah, or a woman) asked in bewilderment: "O Messenger of Allah, shall we (women) appear naked on that Day before the people ?" The Holy prophet recited this very verse and explained that on that Day each one will have enough of his own troubles to occupy him, and will be wholly unmindful of others. (Nasa'i, Tirmidhi, Ibn Abī Hātim, Ibn Jarīr, Tabarānī Ibn Mardūyah, Baihaqī, Hākim).



LXXXI

AT-TAKWĪR

التَّكوِير

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

LXXXI

AT-TAKWĪR

التَّكوِير

INTRODUCTION

Name

It is derived from the word *kuwwirat* in the first verse. *Kuwwirat* is passive voice from *takwīr* in the past tense, and means "that which is folded up", thereby implying that it is a Sūrah in which the "folding up has been mentioned.

Period of Revelation

The subject-matter and the style clearly show that it is one of the earliest Sūrahs to be revealed at Makkah.

Theme and Subject-Matter

It has two themes: the Hereafter and the institution of Apostleship.

In the first six verses the first stage of the Resurrection has been mentioned when the sun will lose its light, the stars will scatter, the mountains will be uprooted and will disperse, the people will become heedless of their dearest possessions, the beasts of the jungle will be stupefied and will gather together, and the seas will boil up. Then in the next seven verses the second stage has been described when the souls will be re-united with the bodies, the records will be laid open, the people will be called to account for their crimes, the heavens will be unveiled, and Hell and Heaven will be brought into full view. After depicting the Hereafter thus, man has been left to ponder his own self and deeds saying: "Then each man shall himself know what he has brought with him."

After this the theme of Apostleship has been taken up. In this the people of Makkah have been addressed as if to say: "Whatever Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) is presenting before you, is not the bragging of a madman, nor an evil suggestion inspired by Satan, but the word of a noble, exalted and trustworthy messenger sent by God, whom Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) has seen with his own eyes in the bright horizon of the clear sky in broad day light. "Whither then are you going having turned away from this teaching?"

سُوْرَةُ التَّكْوِيْر ٨١ — مَكِّيَّة — ١ رُكُوْعًا — ٢٩ اٰيَاتُهَا

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

اِذَا الشَّمْسُ كُوِّرَتْ ۝١ وَاِذَا النُّجُوْمُ انْكَدَرَتْ ۝٢ وَاِذَا الْجِبَالُ سُيِّرَتْ ۝٣ وَاِذَا
الْعِشَارُ عُطِّلَتْ ۝٤ وَاِذَا الْوُحُوْشُ حُشِرَتْ ۝٥ وَاِذَا الْبِحَارُ سُجِّرَتْ ۝٦ وَاِذَا
النُّفُوْسُ زُوِّجَتْ ۝٧ وَاِذَا الْمَوْءٗدَةُ سُئِلَتْ ۝٨ بِاَيِّ ذَنْۢبٍ قُتِلَتْ ۝٩ وَاِذَا
الصُّحُفُ نُشِرَتْ ۝١٠ وَاِذَا السَّمَآءُ كُشِطَتْ ۝١١ وَاِذَا الْجَحِيْمُ سُعِّرَتْ ۝١٢ وَاِذَا
الْجَنَّةُ اُزْلِفَتْ ۝١٣ عَلِمَتْ نَفْسٌ مَّآ اَحْضَرَتْ ۝١٤ فَلَآ اُقْسِمُ بِالْخُنَّسِ ۝١٥
الْجَوَارِ الْكُنَّسِ ۝١٦ وَالَّيْلِ اِذَا عَسْعَسَ ۝١٧ وَالصُّبْحِ اِذَا تَنَفَّسَ ۝١٨ اِنَّهٗ
لَقَوْلُ رَسُوْلٍ كَرِيْمٍ ۝١٩ ذِيْ قُوَّةٍ عِنْدَ ذِي الْعَرْشِ مَكِيْنٍ ۝٢٠ مُّطَاعٍ ثَمَّ
اَمِيْنٍ ۝٢١ وَمَا صَاحِبُكُمْ بِمَجْنُوْنٍ ۝٢٢ وَلَقَدْ رَاٰهُ بِالْاُفُقِ الْمُبِيْنِ ۝٢٣ وَمَا هُوَ
عَلَى الْغَيْبِ بِضَنِيْنٍ ۝٢٤ وَمَا هُوَ بِقَوْلِ شَيْطٰنٍ رَّجِيْمٍ ۝٢٥ فَاَيْنَ تَذْهَبُوْنَ ۝٢٦
اِنْ هُوَ اِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِّلْعٰلَمِيْنَ ۝٢٧ لِمَنْ شَآءَ مِنْكُمْ اَنْ يَّسْتَقِيْمَ ۝٢٨ وَمَا تَشَآءُوْنَ
اِلَّآ اَنْ يَّشَآءَ اللّٰهُ رَبُّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ۝٢٩

LXXXI

AT-TAKWĪR

التّكوير

Verses: 29 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

When the sun is folded up,[1] and when the stars scatter,[2] and when the mountains are set in motion,[3] and when the ten-month pregnant she-camels are left untended,[4] and when the beasts are gathered together[5] and when the oceans are set ablaze,[6] and when[7] the souls are re-united (with the bodies),[8] and when the infant girl, buried alive, is asked for what crime she was slain,[9] and when the records are unfolded, and when the veil of heaven is removed,[10] and when Hell is set blazing, and when Paradise is brought near,[11] then each person shall know what he has brought with him. 1-14

But not so![12] I swear by the retreating and hiding stars, and the night when it departed, and the dawn when it breathed up,[13] that this indeed is the Word of a noble Messenger,[14] who has great power,[15] and has high ranks with the Owner of the Throne: there he is obeyed[16] and held as trustworthy.[17] And (O people of Makkah), your Companion[18] is not mad. He has seen that Messenger on the clear horizon;[19] and he is not stingy in the matter of conveying the (knowledge of the) unseen (to the people).[20] And this is not the word of an accursed satan.[21] Whither then are you going? This is an Admonition to all the people of the world, to each one of you, who wishes to follow the Straight Path;[22] but your willing is of no avail unless Allah, Lord of the worlds, wills so.[23] 15-29

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1. This is a matchless metaphor for causing the sun to lose its light. *Takwīr* means to fold up; hence *takwīr al-'amāmah* for folding up the turban on the head. Here, the light which radiates from the sun and spreads throughout the solar system has been likened to the turban and it has been said that on the

Resurrection Day the turban will be folded up about the sun and its radiation will fade.

2. That is, when the force which is keeping them in their orbits and positions is loosened and all the stars and planets will scatter in the universe. The word *inkidār* also indicates that they will not only scatter away but will also grow dark.

3. In other words, the earth also will lose its force of gravity because of which the mountains have weight and are firmly set in the earth. Thus, when there is no more gravity the mountains will be uprooted from their places and becoming weightless will start moving and flying as the clouds move in the atmosphere.

4 This was by far the best way of giving an idea of the severities and horrors of Resurrection to the Arabs. Before the buses and trucks of the present day there was nothing more precious for the Arabs than the she-camel just about to give birth to her young. In this state she was most sedulously looked after and cared for, so that she is not lost, stolen, or harmed in any way. The people's becoming heedless of such she-camels, in fact, meant that at that time they would be so stunned as to become unmindful of their most precious possessions.

5. When a general calamity befalls the world, all kinds of beasts and animals gather together in one place. then neither the snake bites, nor the tiger kills and devours.

6. The word *sujjirat* as used in the original in passive voice from *tasjīr* in the past tense. *Tasjīr* means to kindle fire in the oven. Apparently it seems strange that on the Resurrection Day fire would blaze up in the oceans. But if the truth about water is kept in view, nothing would seem strange. It is a miracle of God that He combined oxygen and hydrogen, one of which helps kindle the fire and the other gets kindled of itself and by the combination of both He created a substance like water which is used to put out fire. A simple manifestation of Allah's power is enough to change this composition of water so that the two gases are separated and begin to burn and help cause a blaze, which is their basic characteristic.

7. From here begins mention of the second stage of Resurrection .

8. That is, men will be resurrected precisely in the state as they lived in the world before death with body and soul together

9. The style of this verse reflects an intensity of rage and fury inconceivable in common life. The parents who buried their daughters alive, would be so contemptible in the sight of Allah that they would not be asked: "Why did you kill the innocent infant?" But disregarding them the innocent girl will be asked: "For what crime were you slain?" And she will tell her story how cruelly

she had been treated by her barbarous parents and buried alive. Besides, two vast themes have been compressed into this brief verse, which though not expressed in words, are reflected by its style and tenor. First that in it the Arabs have been made to realize what depths of moral depravity they have touched because of their ignorance in that they buried their own children alive; yet they insist that they would persist in the same ignorance and would not accept the reform that Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) was trying to bring about in their corrupted society. Second, that an express argument has been given in it of the necessity and inevitability of the Hereafter. The case of the infant girl who was buried alive, should be decided and settled justly at some time, and there should necessarily be a time when the cruel people who committed this heinous crime, should be called to account for it, for there was none in the world to hear the cries of complaint raised by the poor soul. This act was looked upon with approval by the depraved society; neither the parents felt any remorse for it, nor anybody in the family censured them, nor the society took any notice of it. Then, should this monstrosity remain wholly unpunished in the Kingdom of God?

This barbaric custom of burying the female infants alive had become widespread in ancient Arabia for different reasons. One reason was economic hardship because of which the people wanted to have fewer dependents so that they should not have to bear the burden of bringing up many children. Male offspring were brought up in the hope that they would later help in earning a living, but the female offspring were killed for the fear that they would have to be reared till they matured and then given away in marriage. Second, the widespread chaos because of which the male children were brought up in order to have more and more helpers and supporters; but daughters were killed because in tribal wars they had to be protected instead of being useful in any way for defence. Third, another aspect of the common chaos also was that when the hostile tribes raided each other and captured girls they would either keep them as slave-girls or sell them to others. For these reasons the practice that had become common in Arabia was that at childbirth a pit was kept dug out ready for use by the woman so that if a girl was born she was immediately cast into it and buried alive. And if sometimes the mother was not inclined to act thus, or the people of the family disapproved of it, the father would rear her for some time half-heartedly, and then finding time would take her to the desert to be buried alive. This tyranny and hard-heartedness was once described by a person before the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) himself. According to a Hadith related in the first chapter of Sunan Dārimī, a man came to the Holy Prophet and related this incident of his pre-Islamic days of ignorance: "I had a daughter who was much attached to me. When I called her, she would come running to me. One day I called her and took her out with me. On the way we came across a well. Holding her by the hand I pushed her into the

well. Her last words that I heard were: Oh father, oh father!!" Hearing this the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) wept and tears started falling from his eyes One of those present on the occasion said: O man, you have grieved the Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet said: Do not stop him, let him question about what he feels so strongly now. Then the Holy Prophet asked him to narrate his story once again. When he narrated it again the Holy Prophet wept so bitterly that his beard became wet with tears. Then he said to the man: "Allah has forgiven that you did in the days of ignorance: now turn to Him in repentance."

It is not correct to think that the people of Arabia had no feeling of the baseness of this hideous, inhuman act. Obviously, no society, however corrupted it may be, can be utterly devoid of the feeling that such tyrannical acts are evil. That is why the Holy Qur'ān has not dwelt upon the vileness of this act, but has only referred to it in awe-inspiring words to the effect: "A time will come when the girl who was buried alive, will be asked for what crime she was slain?" The history of Arabia also shows that many people in the pre-Islamic days of ignorance had a feeling that the practice was vile and wicked. According to Tabarānī, Sa'sa'ah bin Nājiyah al-Mujāshi'ī, grandfather of the poet, Farazdaq, said to the Holy Prophet: "O Messenger of Allah, during the days of ignorance I have done some good works also among which one is that I saved 360 girls from being buried alive: I gave two camels each as ransom to save their lives. Shall I get any reward for this?" The Holy Prophet replied; "Yes, there is a reward for you, and it is this that Allah has blessed you with Islam."

As a matter of fact, a great blessing of the blessings of Islam is that it not only did put an end to this inhuman practice in Arabia but even wiped out the concept that the birth of a daughter was in any way a calamity, which should be endured unwillingly. On the contrary, Islam taught that bringing up daughters, giving them good education and enabling them to become good housewives, is an act of great merit and virtue. The way the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) changed the common concept of the people in respect of girls can be judged from his many sayings which have been reported in the Hadīth. As for example, we reproduce some of these below:

"The person who is put to a test because of the birth of the daughters and then he treats them generously, they will become a means of rescue for him from Hell." (Bukhāri, Muslim).

"The one who brought up two girls till they attained their maturity, will appear along with me on the Resurrection Day ... Saying this the Holy Prophet jointed and raised his fingers. (Muslim).

"The one who brought up three daughters, or sisters, taught then good manners and treated them with kindness until they became self-sufficient. Allah will make Paradise obligatory for him. A man asked: what about two, O Messenger of Allah? The Holy Prophet replied: the same for two." Ibn 'Abbâs, the reporter of the Hadîth, says: "Had the people at that time asked in respect of one daughter, the Holy Prophet would have also given the same reply about her." (Sharh as-Sunnh).

"The one who has a daughter born to him and he does not bury her alive, nor keeps her in disgrace, nor prefers his son to her, Allah will admit him to Paradise." (Abū Da'ūd).

"The one who has three daughters born to him, and he is patient over them, and clothes them well according to his means, they will become a means of rescue for him from Hell." (Bukhārī, Al-Adab al-Mufrad, Ibn Mājah).

"The Muslim who has two daughters and he looks after them well, they will lead him to Paradise." (Bukhārī: Al-Adab al-Mufrad).

The Holy Prophet said to Surâqah bin Ju'sham: "Should I tell you what is the greatest charity (or said: one of the greatest charities)? He said: Kindly do tell, O Messenger of Allah. The Holy Prophet said: Your daughter who (after being divorced or widowed) returns to you and should have no other bread-winner." (Ibn Mājah, Bukhārī Al-Adab al-Mufrad).

This is the teaching which completely changed the viewpoint of the people about girls not only in Arabia but among all the nations of the world, which later become blessed with Islam.

10. That is, everything which is hidden from view now will become visible. Now one can only see empty space, or the clouds, hanging dust, the moon, the sun or stars, but at that time the Kingdom of God will appear in full view before the people, without any veil in between, in its true reality.

11. That is, in the Plain of Resurrection, when the hearing of the cases of the people will be in progress, the blazing fire of Hell also will be in full view, and Paradise also with all its blessings will be visible to all, so that the wicked should know what they are being deprived of and where they are going to be cast, and the righteous as well should know what they are being saved from and with what being blessed and honoured.

12. That is, "You are not correct that what is being presented in the Qur'ān is the bragging of an insane person, or the evil suggestion of a devil."

13. That for which the oath has been sworn, has been stated in the following verses. The oath means: "Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and

blessings) has not seen a vision in darkness, but when the stars had disappeared, the night had departed and the bright morning had appeared, he had seen the Angel of God in the open sky. Therefore, what he tells you is based on his own personal observation and on the experience that he had in full senses in the full light of day."

14. "A noble messenger": the Angel who brought down Revelation, as becomes explicit from the following verses. "The word of a noble messenger" does not mean that the Qur'ān is the word of the Angel himself, but, as the context shows, of Him Who appointed him a messenger. In Al-Hāāqqah: 40, likewise, the Qur'ān has been called the word of Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), and there too it does not mean that it is the Holy Prophet's own composition, but describing it as "the word of an honorable messenger", it has been made clear that the Holy Prophet is presenting it in his capacity as the Messenger of God and not as Muhammad bin 'Abdullah. At both places, the Word has been attributed to the Angel and to Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) on the ground that the message of Allah was being delivered to Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) by the Angel and to the people by Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). (For further explanation, see E.N. 22 of Al-Hāāqqah).

15. Sūrah An-Najm: 4-5, deals with the same theme, thus "It is but a Revelation which is sent down to him. One, mighty in power, has taught him." As to what is implied by the mighty powers of the Angel Gabriel (peace be upon him) is ambiguous. In any case it at least shows that he is distinguished even among the angels because of his extraordinary powers. In Muslim (kitāb- al-Imān) Hadrat 'Ā'ishah has reported the Holy Prophet's saying to the effect: "I have twice seen Gabriel in his real shape and form: his glorious being was encompassing the whole space between the earth and the heavens." According to the tradition reported from Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd in Bukhāri, Muslim, Tirmidhi and Musnad Ahmad, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had seen Gabriel with his six hundred wings. From this one can have an idea of his mighty powers.

16. That is, he is the chief of the angels and all angels work under his command.

17. That is, he is not one who would tamper with Divine Revelation, but is so trustworthy that he conveys intact whatever he receives from God.

18. "Your Companion": the Holy Messenger of Allah (upon whom be peace). Here, making mention of the Holy Prophet as the companion of the people of Makkah, they have been made to realize that the Holy Prophet was no stranger for them. He was not an outsider but a man of their own clan and tribe; he had lived his whole life among them; even their children knew that he was a very wise

man. They should not be so shameless as to call such a man a mad man. (For further explanation, see E.N.'s 2, 3 of An-Najm).

19. In An-Najm: 7-9, this observation of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been described in greater detail. (For explanation, see E.N.'s 7, 8 of An-Najm).

20. That is, "The Holy Messenger of Allah does not conceal anything from you. Whatever of the unseen realities are made known to him by Allah, whether they relate to the essence and attributes of Allah, the angels, life-after-death and Resurrection, or to the Hereafter, Heaven and Hell, he conveys everything to you without change.

21. That is, "You are wrong in thinking that some satan comes and whispers these words into the ear of Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings). It does not suit Satan that he should divert man from polytheism, idol-worship, atheism and sin and turn him to God-worship and Tauhid, make man realize that he should live a life of responsibility and accountability to God instead of living an irresponsible, care-free life, should forbid man to adopt practices of ignorance, injustice, immorality and wickedness and lead him to a clean life of justice, piety and high morals." (For further explanation, see Ash-Shua'ra': 210-212 along with E.N.'s 130 to 133, and vv. 221-223 along with E.N.'s 140,141).

22. In other words, although this is an Admonition for all mankind, only such a person can benefit by it, who is himself desirous of adopting piety and righteousness. Man's being a seeker after truth and a lover of right is the foremost condition of his gaining any benefit from it.

23. This theme has already occurred in Al-Muddaththir: 56 and Ad-Dahr: 20 above. For explanation, see E.N. 41 of Al-Muddaththir.



LXXXII

AL-INFITĀR

الانفطار

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

LXXXII
AL-INFIṬĀR

الانفطار

INTRODUCTION

Name

It is derived from the word *infatarat* in verse. *Infitār* is an infinitive which means to split asunder, thereby implying that it is the Sūrah in which the splitting asunder of the sky has been mentioned.

Period of Revelation

This Sūrah and the Sūrah At-Takwīr closely resemble each other in their subject-matter. This shows that both were sent down in about the same period.

Theme and Subject-Matter

Its theme is the Hereafter. According to a tradition related in Musnad Aḥmad Tirmidhi, Ibn-Mundhir, Ṭabarānī, Ḥākim and Ibn Mardūyah, on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, the Holy Messenger (upon whom be peace) said "The one who wants that he should see the Resurrection Day as one would see it with one's eyes, should read Sūrah. At-Takwir, Sūrah Al-Infiṭār and Sūrah Al-Inshiqaq"

In this Sūrah first the Resurrection Day has been described and it is said that when it occurs, every person will see whatever he has done in the world. After this, man has been asked to ponder the question: "O man, what has deluded you into thinking that the God, who brought you into being and by Whose favour and bounty you possess the finest body, limbs and features among all creatures, is only bountiful and not just? His being bountiful and generous does not mean that you should become fearless of His justice " Then, man has been warned, so as to say "Do not remain involved in any misunderstanding. Your complete record is being prepared. There are trustworthy writers who are writing down whatever you do." In conclusion it has been forcefully stated that the Day of Resurrection will surely take place when the righteous shall enjoy every kind of bliss in Paradise and the wicked shall be punished in Hell. On that Day no one shall avail anyone anything. All powers of judgement shall be with Allah.



إِذَا السَّمَاءُ انفَطَرَتْ ﴿١﴾ وَإِذَا الْكَوَاكِبُ انتَثَرَتْ ﴿٢﴾ وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ فُجِّرَتْ ﴿٣﴾
وَإِذَا الْقُبُورُ بُعْثِرَتْ ﴿٤﴾ عَلِمَتْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ وَأَخَّرَتْ ﴿٥﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنسَانُ
مَا غَرَّكَ بِرَبِّكَ الْكَرِيمِ ﴿٦﴾ الَّذِي خَلَقَكَ فَسَوَّاكَ فَعَدَلَكَ ﴿٧﴾ فِي أَيِّ صُورَةٍ
مَّا شَاءَ رَكَّبَكَ ﴿٨﴾ كَلَّا بَلْ تُكَذِّبُونَ بِالدِّينِ ﴿٩﴾ وَإِنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ لَحَافِظِينَ ﴿١٠﴾
كِرَامًا كَاتِبِينَ ﴿١١﴾ يَعْلَمُونَ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ ﴿١٢﴾ إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ لَفِي نَعِيمٍ ﴿١٣﴾ وَإِنَّ
الْفُجَّارَ لَفِي جَحِيمٍ ﴿١٤﴾ يَصْلَوْنَهَا يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ﴿١٥﴾ وَمَا هُمْ عَنْهَا بِغَائِبِينَ ﴿١٦﴾
وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا يَوْمُ الدِّينِ ﴿١٧﴾ ثُمَّ مَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا يَوْمُ الدِّينِ ﴿١٨﴾ يَوْمَ لَا
تَمْلِكُ نَفْسٌ لِّنَفْسٍ شَيْئًا ۖ وَالْأَمْرُ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِّلَّهِ ﴿١٩﴾

LXXXII
AL-INFITĀR

الانفطار

Verses: 19 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

When the heaven splits asunder, and when the stars scatter, and when the seas are torn apart,[1] and when the graves are laid open,[2] then every person shall know all his works, the former and the latter.[3] 11-5

O man, what has beguiled you concerning your Lord, the gracious, Who created you, fashioned you, prōportioned you, and put you together in whatever form He pleased?[4] Indeed not![5] But (the fact is that) you (O men) deny (the meting out of) rewards and punishments,[6] although watchers have been appointed over you, 6-12

honourable scribes, who know whatever you do.[7]

13-19 Surely the righteous shall be in bliss, and the wicked shall indeed go to Hell: they shall enter it on the Day of Recompense, and shall never be able to be absent from it. And what do you know what the Day of Recompense is? Yes, what do you know what the Day of Recompense is? It is a Day when no one shall have the power to do anything for another[8]. Judgement on that Day shall wholly rest with Allah.

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1. In Sūrah At-Takwīr it has been said: "When the oceans are set ablaze," and here: "When the oceans are torn apart." When the two verses are read together, and this fact also is kept in view that even according to the Qur'ān a terrible earthquake will occur on the Resurrection Day, which will shake up the entire earth all at once, the state of the splitting of the oceans and their being set ablaze seems to be as follows: first, because of the terrible convulsion, the bottom of the oceans will split asunder and their water will start sinking into the interior of the earth where an intensely hot lava is constantly boiling up. Coming into contact with the lava, water will dissolve into its two constituent parts, oxygen which helps combustion, and hydrogen, which is itself combustible. Thus, in the process of dissolution and combustion, a chain reaction will start, which will set all the oceans of the world ablaze. This is our conjecture, the correct knowledge is only with Allah.

2. In the first three verses, the first stage of the Resurrection has been mentioned, and in this verse the second stage is being described. "Opening of the graves" implies resurrection of the dead men.

3. The words *mā qaddamat wa akhkharat* can have several meanings and all are implied here: (1) *Mā qaddamat* is the good or evil act which man has sent forward, and *mā akhkharat* is what he refrained from doing. Thus, these Arabic words correspond to the acts of commission and omission in one's life.

(2) *Mā qaddamat* is what one did earlier and *mā akhkharat* what one did later; *i.e.* the whole life-work of man will appear before him date-wise and in proper sequence

(3) Whatever good and evil deeds a man did in his life is *mā qaddamat* and whatever effects and influences of his acts he left behind for human society is *mā akhkharat*.

4 That is, "In the first place, the bounty and favour of your Beneficent Sustainer required that you should have acknowledged his bounties and become an obedient servant and should have felt shy of disobeying Him, but you were

deluded into thinking that you have become whatever you are by your own effort, and you never thought that you should acknowledge that favour of Him Who gave you life. Secondly, it is your Lord's bounty and kindness that you can freely do whatever you like in the world and it never so happens that whenever you happen to commit an error, He should punish you with paralysis, or blind your eyes, or cause lightning to strike you. But you took His bountifulness for weakness and were beguiled into thinking that the Kingdom of your God was devoid of justice "

5 That is, "There is no reasonable ground for you to be deluded. Your own physical existence itself tells that you did not come into being by yourself; your parents also did not make you. Man also did not come about as a result of the elements combining together by themselves accidentally; but a Wise and Powerful God has composed you into this perfect human shape and form. There are other kinds of animals in the world compared with which your excellent form and structure and your superior powers and faculties stand out in sharp contrast. Reason demanded that in view of all this you should have submitted gratefully and should never have dared commit disobedience of your beneficent Sustainer. You also know that your Lord and Sustainer is not only Compassionate and Bountiful but Almighty and Omnipotent as well. When an earthquake, cyclone or flood occurs by His Command, all your devices and measures fail to be effective. You also know that your Lord and Sustainer is not ignorant and foolish but Wise and knowing, and the necessary demand of wisdom and knowledge is that whoever is given intellect should also be held responsible for his acts; whoever is given powers should also be held accountable as to how he used those powers; and whoever is given the choice to do good or evil on his own responsibility, should also be rewarded for his good act and punished for his evil act. All these truths are clearly and plainly known to you; therefore, you cannot say that there exists a reasonable ground for you to be deluded concerning your Lord. Your own nature is sufficient evidence that the beneficence of the Master should never cause the servant to be fearless of Him, and be involved in the misunderstanding that he may do whatever he pleases, no one can harm him in any way.

6 That is, "You have not been deluded and beguiled by any good reason but by your foolish concept that there is going to be no meting out of rewards and punishments after the life of this world. It is this wrong and baseless concept which has made you heedless of God, fearless of His justice and irresponsible in your moral attitude."

7 That is, "whether you deny the meting out of rewards and punishments, belie it, or mock it, the reality cannot change. The reality is that your Lord has not left you to your self in the world, but has appointed over each one of you honest and upright guardians, who are recording objectively and faithfully all your good

and evil acts, and none of your acts is hidden from them, whether you commit it in darkness, or in private, or in far off jungles, or in secret when you are fully satisfied that whatever you have done has remained hidden from human eye. For these guardian angels Allah has used the words *kirām-an kātibīn*, *i.e.* writers who are honorable and noble They are neither attached in personal love with somebody, nor are inimical to anybody, so that they would prepare a fictitious record on the basis of their favouring one man and disfavouring another unduly. They are neither dishonest that without being present on duty they would make wrong entries by themselves; nor are they bribable so that they would take bribes and make false reports in favour of or against somebody. They are far above these moral weaknesses. Therefore, both the good and the bad people should be fully satisfied that each man's good acts will be recorded without any omission, and no one will have an evil act recorded in his account which he has not done. Then the second quality that has been mentioned of these angels is: "They know whatever you do " That is, they are not like the secret, intelligence agencies of the world, from which, despite all their search and scrutiny, many things remain hidden. They are fully aware of everyone's deeds. They accompany every person, at all places, under all conditions, in such a way that he himself does not know that someone is watching him, and they also know with what intention has somebody done a certain thing. Therefore the record prepared by them is a complete record in which nothing has been left un-recorded. About this very thing it has been said in Sūrah Al-Kahf 49: "Woe to us! What sort of a book it is, it has left nothing un-recorded of our doings, small or great. They will see before them everything, whatever they had done."

8. That is, no one there will have the power to save anyone from suffering the consequences of his deeds; no one there will be so influential, strong, or such a favourite with Allah that he should behave stubbornly in the Divine Court and say: "Such and such a one is a close relative or associate of mine; he will have to be forgiven, no matter what evils he might have committed in the world."


L III
AL
MUṬAFFIFIN
المُطَفِّفِين

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

LXXXIII

AL-MUTAFFIFIN

الْمُطَفِّفِين

INTRODUCTION

Name

It is derived from the very first verse: *Wayl-ul-lil-mutaffifin*

Period of Revelation

The style of the Sūrah and its subject-matter clearly show that it was revealed in the earliest stage at Makkah, when Sūrah after Sūrah was being revealed to impress the doctrine of the Hereafter on the people's minds. This Sūrah was revealed when they had started ridiculing the Muslims and disgracing them publicly in the streets and in

their assemblies. but persecution and manhandling of the Muslims had not yet started. Some commentators regard this as a Madanī Sūrah. This misunderstanding has been caused by a tradition from Ibn 'Abbās according to which when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) arrived in Madīnah, 'the evil of giving short weight and measure was widespread among the people there. Then Allah sent down *Wayl-al-lil-mutaffifīn* and the people began to give full weight and measure. (Nasā'ī,Ibn Mardūyah, Ibn Jarīr,Baihaqī: Shu'ab-al-Imān). But, as we have explained in the Introduction to Sūrah Ad-Dahr, the common practice with the Companions and their successors was that when they found that a verse applied to a certain matter of life, they would say that it had been sent down concerning that particular matter. Therefore, what is proved by the tradition of Ibn 'Abbās is that when after his emigration to Madīnah the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) saw that the evil was widespread among the people there, he recited this Sūrah before them by Allah's Command and this helped them mend their ways.

Theme and Subject-Matter

The theme of this Sūrah too is the Hereafter. In the first six verses the people have been taken to task for the prevalent evil practice in their commercial dealings. When they had to receive their due from others, they demanded that it be given in full, but when they had to measure or weigh for others, they would give less than what was due. Taking this one evil as an example out of countless evils prevalent in society, it has been said that it is an inevitable result of the heedlessness of the Hereafter. Unless the people realized that one day they would have to appear before God and account for each single act they performed in the world, it was not possible that they would adopt piety and righteousness in their daily affairs. Even if a person might practise honesty in some of his less important dealings in view of honesty is the best policy", he would never practise honesty on occasions when dishonesty would seem to be "the best policy". Man can develop true and enduring honesty only when he fears God and sincerely believes in the Hereafter, for then he would regard honesty not merely as "a policy" but as 'a duty' and obligation, and his being constant in it, or otherwise, would not be dependent on its being useful or useless in the world.

Thus, after making explicit the relation between morality and the doctrine of the Hereafter in an effective and impressive way, in vv. 7-

17, it has been said: The deeds of the wicked are already being recorded in the black list of the culprits, and in the Hereafter they will meet with utter ruin. Then in vv. 18-28, the best end of the virtuous has been described and it has been said that their deeds are being recorded in the list of the exalted people, on which are appointed the angels nearest to Allah.

In conclusion, the believers have been consoled and the disbelievers warned, as if to say: "The people who are disgracing and humiliating the believers today, are culprits who, on the Resurrection Day, will meet with a most evil end in consequence of their conduct, and these very believers will feel comforted when they see their fate"

سُوْرَةُ الْمُطَفِّفِيْنَ ٣٦ — مَكِّيَّةٌ (٨٦) — رُكُوْعُهَا ١

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

وَيْلٌ لِّلْمُطَفِّفِيْنَ ﴿١﴾ الَّذِيْنَ اِذَا اكْتَالُوْا عَلَى النَّاسِ يَسْتَوْفُوْنَ ﴿٢﴾ وَاِذَا كَالُوْهُمْ
اَوْ وَّزَنُوْهُمْ يُخْسِرُوْنَ ﴿٣﴾ اَلَا يَظُنُّ اُولٰٓئِكَ اَنَّهُمْ مَّبْعُوْثُوْنَ ﴿٤﴾ لِيَوْمٍ عَظِيْمٍ ﴿٥﴾
يَّوْمَ يَقُوْمُ النَّاسُ لِرَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٦﴾ كَلَّآ اِنَّ كِتٰبَ الْفُجَّارِ لَفِيْ سِجِّيْنٍ ﴿٧﴾
وَمَآ اَدْرٰىكَ مَا سِجِّيْنٌ ﴿٨﴾ كِتٰبٌ مَّرْقُوْمٌ ﴿٩﴾ وَيْلٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ ﴿١٠﴾
الَّذِيْنَ يُكَذِّبُوْنَ بِيَوْمِ الدِّيْنِ ﴿١١﴾ وَمَا يُكَذِّبُ بِهٖٓ اِلَّا كُلُّ مُعْتَدٍ اَثِيْمٍ ﴿١٢﴾
اِذَا تُتْلٰى عَلَيْهِ اٰيٰتُنَا قَالَ اَسَاطِيْرُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿١٣﴾ كَلَّا بَلْ ۜ رَانَ عَلٰى قُلُوْبِهِمْ
مَّا كَانُوْا يَكْسِبُوْنَ ﴿١٤﴾ كَلَّآ اِنَّهُمْ عَنْ رَّبِّهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَّمَحْجُوْبُوْنَ ﴿١٥﴾ ثُمَّ
اِنَّهُمْ لَصَالُوا الْجَحِيْمِ ﴿١٦﴾ ثُمَّ يُقَالُ هٰذَا الَّذِيْ كُنْتُمْ بِهٖ تُكَذِّبُوْنَ ﴿١٧﴾
كَلَّآ اِنَّ كِتٰبَ الْاَبْرَارِ لَفِيْ عِلِّيِّيْنَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَمَآ اَدْرٰىكَ مَا عِلِّيُّوْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ كِتٰبٌ مَّرْقُوْمٌ ﴿٢٠﴾
يَّشْهَدُهُ الْمُقَرَّبُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾ اِنَّ الْاَبْرَارَ لَفِيْ نَعِيْمٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ عَلَى الْاَرَآئِكِ يَنْظُرُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾
تَعْرِفُ فِيْ وُجُوْهِهِمْ نَضْرَةَ النَّعِيْمِ ﴿٢٤﴾ يُسْقَوْنَ مِنْ رَّحِيْقٍ مَّخْتُوْمٍ ﴿٢٥﴾ خِتٰمُهٗ
مِسْكٌ ۭ وَفِيْ ذٰلِكَ فَلْيَتَنَافَسِ الْمُتَنَافِسُوْنَ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَمِزَاجُهٗ مِنْ تَسْنِيْمٍ ﴿٢٧﴾ عَيْنًا
يَّشْرَبُ بِهَا الْمُقَرَّبُوْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اَجْرَمُوْا كَانُوْا مِنَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا
يَضْحَكُوْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَاِذَا مَرُّوْا بِهِمْ يَتَغَامَزُوْنَ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَاِذَا انْقَلَبُوْٓا اِلٰٓى اَهْلِهِمُ انْقَلَبُوْا
فَكِهِيْنَ ﴿٣١﴾ وَاِذَا رَاَوْهُمْ قَالُوْٓا اِنَّ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ لَضَآلُّوْنَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَمَآ اُرْسِلُوْا عَلَيْهِمْ
حٰفِظِيْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾ فَالْيَوْمَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا مِنَ الْكُفَّارِ يَضْحَكُوْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾ عَلَى الْاَرَآئِكِ
يَنْظُرُوْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾ هَلْ ثُوِّبَ الْكُفَّارُ مَا كَانُوْا يَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾

LXXXIII

AL-MUṬAFFIFIN

الْمُطَفِّفِين

Veres: 36 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Woe to those who give short weight,[1] who, when they take by measure from others, take it fully, and when they measure or weigh for them, they give them less than what is due.[2] Do they not think that they will be raised up again on a Great Day?[3]--the Day when all mankind shall stand before the Lord of the worlds. 1-6

Indeed not![4] Surely the records of the wicked are in the Prison Register,[5] and what do you know what the Prison Register is? It is a written book. Woe on that Day to the beliers who belie the Day of Recompense, and none belies it but every sinful transgressor. When Our Revelations are recited to him,[6] he says: "These are tales of the ancient times." By no means! But the fact is that their evil deeds have stained their hearts.[7] By no means! Surely on that Day they shall be debarred from their Lord's vision.[8] Then they shall enter Hell. Then it will be said to them, "This is the very thing you used to belie." 7-17

Indeed not![9] Surely the record of the righteous is in the Register of the exalted ones. And what do you know what is the Register of the exalted ones" It is a written book, guarded by the angels nearest to Allah. Surely the righteous shall be in bliss; seated on high couches they shall be looking around. In their faces you shall mark the glow of bliss. They shall be given to drink the choicest, sealed wine whose seal shall be *musk*.[10] Those who wish to excel others, let them endeavour to excel in this. That wine shall have the mixture of *Tasnim*;[11] this is a fountain with the waters of which those nearest to Allah shall drink wine. 18-28

29-36 The culprits used to laugh at the believers in the world. They would wink at one another when they passed by them. When they returned to their kinsfolk they returned jesting,[12] and when they saw them, they would say, "These are the people gone astray",[13] although they had not been sent to be guardians over them.[14] Today the believers are laughing at the disbelievers, as they recline on couches and gaze at them. Have not the disbelievers been duly rewarded for what they used to do?[15]

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1. In the original the word *mutaffifīn* has been used, which is derived from *tatfīf*, a word used for an inferior and base thing in Arabic. Terminologically, *tatfīf* is used for giving short weight and short measure fraudulently, for the person who acts thus while measuring or weighing, does not defraud another by any substantial amount, but skimps small amounts from what is due to every customer cleverly, and the poor customer does not know of what and of how much he is being deprived by the seller.

2. At several places in the Qur'ān giving of short measure and weight has been condemned and measuring fully and weighing rightly has been stressed. In Sūrah Al-An'ām, it has been enjoined: "You should use a full measure and a just balance. We charge one only with that much responsibility that one can bear." (v. 152). In Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl it has been said: "Give full measure when you measure and weigh with even scales." (v. 35). In Sūrah Ar-Rehmān it has been stressed: Do not upset the balance: weigh with equity and do not give short weight." (vv. 8-9). The people of the Prophet Shu'aib were punished for the reason that the evil of giving short measure and weight had become widespread among them and in spite of his counsel and advice they did not refrain from it.

3. "A Great Day": the Day of Resurrection when all men and jinn will be called to account together in the Divine Court and decisions of vital importance will be made pertaining to rewards and punishments.

4. That is, "These people are wrong in thinking that they will be let off without being called to account when they have committed such and such crimes in the world."

5. The word *sijjīn* in the original is derived from *sijn* (a prison) and the explanation of it that follows shows that it implies the general Register in which the actions and deeds of the people worthy of punishment are being recorded.

6. "Our Revelations": those verses in which news of the Day of Recompense has been given.

7. That is, they have no good reason for regarding the meting out of rewards and punishments as unreal. What has made them say this, is that their hearts have become rusty because of their sins; therefore, a thing which is thoroughly reasonable appears unreal and unreasonable to them. The explanation of this rust as given by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) is as follows: "When a servant commits a sin, it marks a black stain on his heart. If he offers repentance, the stain is washed off, but if he persists in wrongdoing, it spreads over the whole heart." (Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhí, Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Jarīr, Hākim, Ibn Abi Hātim, Ibn Hibbān and others).

8. That is, these people will remain deprived of the vision of Allah with which the righteous will be blessed. (For further explanation, see E.N. 17 of Al-Qiyāmah).

9. That is, they are wrong in thinking that there is going to be no meting out of rewards and punishments.

10. One meaning of the words *khitāmu-hū misk* is that the vessels containing the wine will carry the seal of musk instead of clay or wax. Accordingly the verse means: This will be the choicest kind of wine, which will be superior to the wine flowing in the canals, and it will be served by the attendants of Paradise in vessels sealed with musk to the dwellers of Paradise. Another meaning also can be: When that wine will pass down the throat, its final effect will be of the flavour of musk. This state is contrary to the wines of the world which give out an offensive smell as soon as the bottle opens and one feels its horrid smell even while drinking and also when it passes down the throat.

11. *"Tasnīm":* height. Thus, *Tasnīm* will be a fountain flowing down from a height.

12. That is, they returned home rejoicing, thinking that they had made fun of such and such a Muslim, had passed evil remarks against him and subjected him to ridicule among the people.

13. That is, they have lost their reason: they have deprived themselves of the gains and enjoyments of the world and have experienced dangers and undergone hardships only for the reason that Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) has deluded them with the Hereafter, Heaven and Hell. They are giving up whatever is present and here on the false hope that the promise of some Paradise has been held out to them after death, and they are enduring the hardships in the present life only for the reason that they have been threatened with some Hell in the next world.

14. In this brief sentence the mockers and jesters have been given an instructive warning to the effect: "Even if what the Muslims have believed in, is

false, they are not harming you at all. They regard something as true and are accordingly adopting a certain moral attitude for themselves, for their own good. Allah has not appointed you to be keepers over them so that you may be free to criticise and persecute those who are not harming you in any way."

15. There is a subtle satire in this sentence. In the world, the disbelievers used to persecute the believers, thinking it was an act of virtue. In the Hereafter, the believers will be enjoying life in Paradise, and watching the disbelievers being punished in Hell, will say to themselves what a reward they have earned for their acts of virtue!



LXXXIV

AL-IṆSHIQĀQ

الإنشِقاق

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

LXXXIV

AL-INSHIQĀQ

الإنشِقاق

INTRODUCTION

Name

It is derived from the word *inshaqqat* in the first verse. *Inshaqqat* is infinitive which means to split asunder, thereby implying that it is the Sūrah in which mention has been made of the splitting asunder of the heavens.

Period of Revelation

This too is one of the earliest Sūrahs to be revealed at Makkah. The internal evidence of its subject-matter indicates that persecution of

the Muslims had not yet started; however, the message of the Qur'ān was being openly repudiated at Makkah and the people were refusing to acknowledge that Resurrection would ever take place when they would have to appear before their God to render an account of their deeds.

Theme and Subject-Matter

Its theme is the Resurrection and Hereafter.

In the first five verses not only has the state of Resurrection been described vividly but an argument of its being true and certain also has been given. It has been stated that the heavens on that Day will split asunder, the earth will be spread out plain and smooth, and it will throw out whatever lies inside it of the dead bodies of men and evidences of their deeds so as to become completely empty from within. The argument given for it is that such will be the Command of their Lord for the heavens and the earth; since both are His creation, they cannot dare disobey His Command. For them the only right and proper course is that they should obey the Command of their Lord.

Then, in vv. 6-19 it has been said that whether man is conscious of this fact, or not, he in any case is moving willy nilly to the destination when he will appear and stand before his Lord. At that time all human beings will divide into two parts: first those whose records will be given in their right hands: they will be forgiven without any severe reckoning; second those whose records will be given them behind their back. They will wish that they should die somehow, but they will not die; instead they will be cast into Hell. They will meet with this fate because in the world they remained lost in the misunderstanding that they would never have to appear before God to render an account of their deeds, whereas their Lord was watching whatever they were doing, and there was no reason why they should escape the accountability for their deeds. Their moving gradually from the life of the world to the meting out of rewards and punishments in the Hereafter was as certain as the appearance of twilight after sunset, the coming of the night after the day, the returning of men and animals to their respective abodes at night, and the growing of the crescent into full moon.

In conclusion, the disbelievers who repudiate the Qur'an instead of bowing down to God when they hear it, have been forewarned of a grievous punishment and the good news of limitless rewards has been given to the believers and the righteous.

سُوْرَةُ الْاِنْشِقَاق — مَكِّيَّةٌ (٨٤) — اٰيَاتُهَا ٢٥ — رُكُوْعَاتُهَا ١

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

اِذَا السَّمَآءُ انْشَقَّتْ ۝١ وَاَذِنَتْ لِرَبِّهَا وَحُقَّتْ ۝٢ وَاِذَا الْاَرْضُ مُدَّتْ ۝٣
وَاَلْقَتْ مَا فِيْهَا وَتَخَلَّتْ ۝٤ وَاَذِنَتْ لِرَبِّهَا وَحُقَّتْ ۝٥ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الْاِنْسَانُ
اِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ اِلٰى رَبِّكَ كَدْحًا فَمُلٰقِيْهِ ۝٦ فَاَمَّا مَنْ اُوْتِيَ كِتٰبَهٗ بِيَمِيْنِهٖ ۝٧
فَسَوْفَ يُحَاسَبُ حِسَابًا يَّسِيْرًا ۝٨ وَّيَنْقَلِبُ اِلٰٓى اَهْلِهٖ مَسْرُوْرًا ۝٩ وَاَمَّا مَنْ
اُوْتِيَ كِتٰبَهٗ وَرَآءَ ظَهْرِهٖ ۝١٠ فَسَوْفَ يَدْعُوْا ثُبُوْرًا ۝١١ وَّيَصْلٰى سَعِيْرًا ۝١٢ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ فِيْٓ
اَهْلِهٖ مَسْرُوْرًا ۝١٣ اِنَّهٗ ظَنَّ اَنْ لَّنْ يَّحُوْرَ ۝١٤ بَلٰٓى ۚ اِنَّ رَبَّهٗ كَانَ بِهٖ بَصِيْرًا ۝١٥
فَلَآ اُقْسِمُ بِالشَّفَقِ ۝١٦ وَالَّيْلِ وَمَا وَسَقَ ۝١٧ وَالْقَمَرِ اِذَا اتَّسَقَ ۝١٨ لَتَرْكَبُنَّ طَبَقًا
عَنْ طَبَقٍ ۝١٩ فَمَا لَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ۝٢٠ وَاِذَا قُرِئَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقُرْاٰنُ لَا يَسْجُدُوْنَ ۝٢١
بَلِ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا يُكَذِّبُوْنَ ۝٢٢ وَاللّٰهُ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا يُوْعُوْنَ ۝٢٣ فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ
اَلِيْمٍ ۝٢٤ اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ لَهُمْ اَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُوْنٍ ۝٢٥

سجدة ٣ — ١ ع ٩

LXXXIV
AL-INSHIQĀQ
الإنشِقاق

Verses: 25 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

When the heaven splits asunder, and obeys its Lord's Command,[1] as in truth it must (obey its Lord's Command); and when the earth is spread out,[2] and throws out whatever is within it, and becomes empty,[3] and obeys its Lord's Command, as in truth it must (obey the Command):[4] O man, you are moving on towards your Lord, willy nilly,[5] and are about to meet Him. Then he whose record is given in his right hand, shall have an easy reckoning,[6] and he shall return to his kinsfolk rejoicing.[7] As for him whose record is given him behind his back,[8] he shall call for death and shall enter a blazing Fire. For he lived among his kinsfolk, completely absorbed,[9] and deemed he would never return. Why not! His Lord was ever watching his misdeeds.[10] 1-15

So no! I swear by the twilight and the night and what it gathers together, and the moon when it grows full, that you have surely to pass from one state to another gradually.[11] Then, what is the matter with these people that they do not believe, and when the Qur'an is recited before them, they do not fall prostrate?[12] But, on the contrary, the disbelievers deny, although Allah knows best what they are collecting (in their record).[13] Therefore, give them the good news of a painful torment. However, those who have believed and done righteous deeds, shall have a reward that will never fail. 16-25

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1. Literally: "... and hears its Lord's Command." However, according to Arabic usage *adhina lahū* does not only mean: "He heard the Command," but it means: "Hearing the Command he carried it out promptly like an obedient servant."

2. "When the earth is spread out": when the oceans and rivers are filled up, the mountains are crushed to pieces and scattered away, and the earth is levelled and turned into a smooth plain. In Sūrah Ṭā Hā, the same thing has been

expressed, thus: "He will turn the earth into an empty level plain, wherein you will neither see any curve nor crease." (vv 106-107) Hākim in *Mustadrak* has related through authentic channels on the authority of Hadrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah a saying of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) to the effect: "On the Resurrection Day the earth will be flattened out and spread out like the table-cloth; then there will hardly be room on it for men to place their feet." To understand this saying one should keep in mind the fact that on that Day all men who will have been born from the first day of creation till Resurrection, will be resurrected simultaneously and produced in the Divine Court. For gathering together such a great multitude of the people it is inevitable that the oceans, rivers, mountains, jungles, ravines and all high and low areas be levelled and the entire globe of the earth be turned into a vast plain so that all individuals of human race may have room on it to stand on their feet.

3. That is, it will throw out all dead bodies of men and also the traces and evidences of their deeds lying within it, so that nothing remains hidden and buried in it.

4. Here, it has not been expressly told what will happen when such and such an event takes place, for the subsequent theme by itself explains this, as if to say: "O man, you are moving towards your Lord and are about to meet Him; you will be given your conduct book; and rewarded or punished according to your deeds."

5. That is, "You may if you so like think that all your efforts and endeavours in the world are confined to worldly life and motivated by worldly desires, yet the truth is that you are moving, consciously or unconsciously, towards your Lord and you have ultimately to appear before Him in any case."

6. That is, his reckoning will be less severe: he will not be asked why he had done such and such a thing and what excuses he had to offer for it. Though his evil deeds also will be there alongwith his good deeds in his records, his errors will be overlooked and pardoned in view of his outweighing good deeds. In the Holy Qur'ān, for the severe reckoning of the wicked people the words *sū-al-hisāb* (heavy reckoning) have been used (Ar-Ra'd: 18), and concerning the righteous it has been said: "From such people We accept the best of their deeds and overlook their evils." (Al-Ahqāf: 16). The explanation of it given by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been related in different words by Imām Aḥmad, Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī, Abū Da'ūd, Ḥākim, Ibn Jarīr, 'Abd bin Humaid, and Ibn Mardūyah on the authority of Ḥadrat 'Ā'ishah. According to one of these traditions the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said: "Doomed will be he who is called to account for his deeds. Ḥadrat 'Ā'ishah said: O Messenger of Allah, has not Allah said: 'He whose record is given in his right hand shall have

an easy reckoning?' The Holy Prophet replied: That is only about the presentation of the deeds, but the one who is questioned would be doomed." In another tradition Hadrat 'Ā'ishah has related: "I once heard the Holy Prophet supplicate during the prayer, thus: O God, call me to a light reckoning. When he brought his Prayer to conclusion, I asked what he meant by that supplication. He replied: Light reckoning means that one's conduct book will be seen and one's errors will be overlooked. O 'Ā'ishah, the one who is called to account for his deeds on that Day, would be doomed.

7. "His kinsfolk": his family and relatives and companions who will have been pardoned even like himself.

8. In Sūrah Al Ḥāāqqah: 25, it was said that his record will be given him in his left hand but here "behind his back. ! This will probably be for the reason that he would already have lost all hope that he would be given his record in his right hand, for he would be well aware of his misdeeds and sure to receive his record in his left hand. However, in order to avoid the humiliation of receiving it in the left hand, in front of all mankind, he will withdraw his hand behind and so would receive it 'behind his back."

9. That is, his way of life was different from that of God's righteous men, about whom in Sūrah At-Tūr: 26, it has been said that they lived among their kinsfolk in fear and dread of God, *i.e.* they fear lest they should ruin their own Hereafter on account of their absorption in the love of children and endeavours for the sake of their well-being and prosperity in the world. On the contrary, this man lived a life free from every care and worry and helped his children and kinsfolk also to enjoy life fully, no matter what wicked and immoral methods he had to use to procure the means of enjoyment, how he had to usurp the rights of others and transgress the bounds set by Allah for the sake of the worldly pleasures.

10. That is, it was against God's justice and His wisdom that He should overlook the misdeeds that he was committing and should not summon him before Himself to render his account of the deeds.

11. That is, "You will not remain in one and the same state, but will have to pass through countless stages gradually, from youth to old age, from old age to death, from death to *barzakh* (the intermediary state between death and Resurrection), from *barzakh* to Resurrections from Resurrection to the Plain of Assembly, then to the Reckoning, and then to the meting out of rewards and punishments. An oath has been sworn by three things to confirm this: (1) by the twilight, (2) by the darkness of night and the gathering together in it of all those human beings and animals who remain scattered in the day time, and (3) by the moon's passing through different phases to become full. These are some of those

things which testify that rest and stillness is unknown in the universe in which man lives. There is a continuous and gradual change taking place everywhere. Therefore, the disbelievers are wrong in thinking that life comes to an end after man has breathed his last.

12. "They do not fall prostrate": they do not bow down to God out of fear of Him. To perform a *sajdah* (prostration) here is confirmed by the practice of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). Imām Mālik, Muslim and Nasā'ī have related a tradition concerning Ḥaḍrat Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him), saying that he recited this Sūrah in the Prayer and performing a *sajdah* here said: "The Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) performed a *sajdah* at this point." Bukhārī; Muslim, Abu Da'ūd and Nasā'i have cited this statement of Abu Rafi': "Ḥaḍrat Abu Huraira recited this Sūrah in the 'Ishā' Prayer and performed a *sajdah* When I asked why he had done so, he replied: I prayed under the leadership of Abul Qāsim (upon whom be Allah's peace) and he performed a *sajdah* here. Therefore, I will continue to perform this *sajdah* likewise as long as I live." Muslim, Abu Dā'ūd, Tirmidhī, Nasa'i, Ibn Mājah and others have related another tradition saying that Hadrat Abu Huraira said: "We performed *sajdah* behind the Holy Messenger of Allah in this Sūrah and in *Iqra' bi-isuri Rabbik-alladhi khalaq.*

13. Another meaning also can be: "Allah knows best what filth of disbelief, malice, hostility to the Truth and evil intentions and designs they keep filled in their breasts."



LXXXV

AL-BURŪJ

الْبُرُوج

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

LXXXV

AL-BURŪJ

البُرُوج

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah is so designated after the word *al-burūj* appearing in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

The subject-matter itself indicates that this Sūrah was sent down at Makkah in the period when persecution of the Muslims was at its climax and the disbelievers of Makkah were trying their utmost by tyranny and coercion to turn away the new converts from Islam.

Theme and Subject-Matter

Its theme is to warn the disbelievers of the evil Consequences of the persecution and tyranny That they were perpetrating on the converts to Islam, and to console the believers, so as to say: "If you remain firm and steadfast against tyranny and coercion, you will be rewarded richly for it, and Allah will certainly avenge Himself on your persecutors on your behalf."

In this connection, first of all the story of the people of the ditch *(ashāb al-ukhdūd)* has been related, who had burnt the believers to death by casting them into pits full of fire. By means of this story the believers and the disbelievers have been taught a few lessons. First, that just as the people of the ditch became worthy of Allah's curse and punishment, so are the chiefs of Makkah also becoming worthy of it. Second, that just as the believers at that time had willingly accepted to sacrifice their lives by being burnt to death in the pits of fire instead of turning away from the faith, so also the believers now should endure every persecution but should never give up the faith. Third, that God, acknowledging Whom displeases the disbelievers and is urged on by the believers, is Dominant and Master of the Kingdom of the earth and heavens; He is self-praiseworthy and is watching what the two groups are striving for. Therefore, it is certain that the disbelievers will not only be punished in Hell for their disbelief but, more than that, they too will suffer punishment by fire as a fit recompense for their tyranny and cruelties. Likewise, this also is certain that those, who believe and follow up their belief with good deeds, should go to Paradise and this indeed is the supreme success. Then the disbelievers have been warned, so as to say: "God's grip is very severe. If you are proud of the strength of your hosts, you should know that the hosts of Pharaoh and Thamūd were even stronger and more numerous, Therefore, you should learn a lesson from the fate they met. God's power has so encompassed you that you cannot escape His encirclement, and the Qur'ān that you are bent upon belying, is unchangeable: it is inscribed in the Preserved Tablet, which cannot be corrupted in any way."



وَ السَّمَآءِ ذَاتِ الْبُرُوْجِ ۙ﴿١﴾ وَ الْيَوْمِ الْمَوْعُوْدِ ۙ﴿٢﴾ وَ شَاهِدٍ وَّ مَشْهُوْدٍ ۙ﴿٣﴾ قُتِلَ
اَصْحٰبُ الْاُخْدُوْدِ ۙ﴿٤﴾ النَّارِ ذَاتِ الْوَقُوْدِ ۙ﴿٥﴾ اِذْ هُمْ عَلَيْهَا قُعُوْدٌ ۙ﴿٦﴾ وَّ هُمْ
عَلٰى مَا يَفْعَلُوْنَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ شُهُوْدٌ ؕ﴿٧﴾ وَ مَا نَقَمُوْا مِنْهُمْ اِلَّاۤ اَنْ يُّؤْمِنُوْا
بِاللّٰهِ الْعَزِيْزِ الْحَمِيْدِ ۙ﴿٨﴾ الَّذِيْ لَهٗ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الْاَرْضِ ؕ وَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى كُلِّ
شَيْءٍ شَهِيْدٌ ؕ﴿٩﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ فَتَنُوا الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَ الْمُؤْمِنٰتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَتُوْبُوْا
فَلَهُمْ عَذَابُ جَهَنَّمَ وَ لَهُمْ عَذَابُ الْحَرِيْقِ ؕ﴿١٠﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَ
عَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ لَهُمْ جَنّٰتٌ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ ؕ ذٰلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْكَبِيْرُ ؕ﴿١١﴾
اِنَّ بَطْشَ رَبِّكَ لَشَدِيْدٌ ؕ﴿١٢﴾ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ يُبْدِئُ وَ يُعِيْدُ ۖ﴿١٣﴾ وَ هُوَ الْغَفُوْرُ الْوَدُوْدُ ۖ﴿١٤﴾
ذُو الْعَرْشِ الْمَجِيْدُ ۖ﴿١٥﴾ فَعَّالٌ لِّمَا يُرِيْدُ ؕ﴿١٦﴾ هَلْ اَتٰىكَ حَدِيْثُ الْجُنُوْدِ ۙ﴿١٧﴾
فِرْعَوْنَ وَ ثَمُوْدَ ؕ﴿١٨﴾ بَلِ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا فِيْ تَكْذِيْبٍ ۙ﴿١٩﴾ وَّ اللّٰهُ مِنْ وَّرَآئِهِمْ
مُّحِيْطٌ ؕ﴿٢٠﴾ بَلْ هُوَ قُرْاٰنٌ مَّجِيْدٌ ۙ﴿٢١﴾ فِيْ لَوْحٍ مَّحْفُوْظٍ ۧ﴿٢٢﴾

LXXXV

AL-BURŪJ

البُروج

Verses: 22 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

By the heaven with its strong forts,[1] and the promised Day,[2] and the seer and that which is seen:[3] Doomed were the people of the ditch, (of that ditch) which had the fire fed by the intensely blazing fuel, when they were sitting by the ditch and witnessing what they were doing with the believers.[4] And their enmity against the believers was for no other reason than that they had believed in that Allah Who is the All-Mighty the Self-Praiseworthy, Who is the Owner of the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth; and Allah is watching over everything. [5] 1-9

For those who persecuted the believing men and women and did not repent of it, there is the torment of Hell and the punishment of burning.[6] As for those who believed and did good deeds, there are Gardens for them beneath which canals will be flowing. This is the supreme success! 10-11

Indeed, the grip of your Lord is very severe. It is He Who creates in the first instance, and He it is Who will create again. And He is the All-Forgiving, the All-Loving, Owner of the Throne, the Exalted and Doer of whatever He wills.[7] Has the story of the hosts reached you, (of the hosts of) Pharaoh and Thamud?[8] But those who disbelieve, persist in denying, although Allah has encircled them. (Their denial does not affect the Qur'ān at all), for this Qur'ān is sublime: it is (inscribed) in the Tablet that is preserved.[9] 12-22

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1. Literally: "By the heaven having constellations." Some of the commentators have interpreted it to mean the twelve signs of the zodiac in the heavens according to ancient astronomy, However, according to Ibn 'Abbās,

Mujahid, Qatādah, Hasan Basrī, Dahhāk and Suddī it implies the glorious stars and planets of the sky.

2. That is, the Day of Resurrection.

3. The commentators have expressed many different views about "the seer" and "that which is seen". In our opinion what fits in well with the context is that the seer is every such person who will witness the Day of Resurrection and that which is seen is the Resurrection itself, the dreadful scenes of which will be seen by all. This is the view of Mujāhid. 'Ikrimah, Ḍaḥḥāk, Ibn Nujaih and some other commentators.

4. "The people of the ditch": those who had burnt the believers at stake and witnessed their burning themselves. "Doomed were...": cursed were they by God and they became worthy of Hell torment. On this an oath has been sworn by three things: (1) By the heaven having constellations. (2) by the Day of Resurrection, which has been promised, and (3) by the dreadful scenes of the Day of Resurrection and all those creatures who will witness those scenes. The first of these testifies to the truth that the Sovereign, Absolute Being Who is ruling over the glorious stars and planets of the universe, cannot allow this contemptible, insignificant creature called man to escape His grip. The second thing has been sworn by on the basis that the wicked people committed whatever tyranny they wanted to commit, but the Day of which men have been fore-warned is sure to come, when the grievances of every wronged person will be redressed and every wrongdoer will be brought to book and punished. The third thing has been sworn by for the reason that just as these wicked people enjoyed witnessing the burning of the helpless believers, so will all human beings on the Day of Resurrection witness how they are taken to task and burnt in Hell.

Several events have been mentioned in the traditions of the believers having been thrown into pits of blazing fire, which show that such tyrannies have been inflicted many a time in history.

One of the events has been reported by Ḥaḍrat Ṣuhaib Rūmi from the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), saying that a king had a magician at his court, who on becoming old requested the king to appoint a boy who should learn magic from him. Accordingly the king appointed a boy. But the boy while going to the magician's place and coming back home also started visiting on the way a monk (who was probably a follower of the Prophet Jesus) and being influenced by his teaching turned a believer. So much so that by his training he acquired miraculous powers. He would heal the blind and cure the lepers. When the king came to know that the boy had believed in the Unity of God, he first put the monk to the sword; then wanted to kill the boy, but no instrument and no device had any effect on

him. At last, the boy said to the king: "If you are bent upon killing me, shoot an arrow at me with the word: *Bi-isnii Rabbil-ghulām* (in the name of this boy's Lord) in front of the assembled people, and I shall die." The king did as he was told and the boy died. Thereupon the people cried out that they affirmed faith in the Lord of the boy. The courtiers told the king that the same precisely had happened which he wanted to avoid: the people had forsaken his religion and adopted the boy's religion. At this the king was filled with rage. Consequently, he got pits dug out along the roads, got them filled with fire and ordered all those who refused to renounce the new faith to be thrown into the fire. (Aḥmad, Muslim, Nasā'i. Tirmidhī, Ibn Jarīr, 'Abdur Razzāq, Ibn Abi Shaibah, Ṭabaranī. 'Abd bin Ḥumaid)

The second event has been reported from Ḥaḍrat 'Ali. He says that a king of Iran drank wine and committed adultery with his sister resulting in illicit relations between the two. When the secret became known, the king got the announcement made that God had permitted marriage with the sister. When the people refused to believe in it, he started coercing them into accepting by different kinds of punishment; so much so that he began to cast into the pits of fire every such person who refused to concede it. According to Ḥaḍrat 'Ali, marriage with the prohibited relations among the fireworshippers has begun since then (Ibn Jarir).

The third event has been related by Ibn 'Abbās probably on the basis of the Israelite traditions, saying that the people of Babylon had compelled the children of Israel to give up the religion of the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him); so much so that they cast into pits of fire all those who refused to obey. Ibn Jarīr, 'Abd bin Ḥumaid).

The best known event, however, relates to Najrān, which has been related by Ibn Hishām, Ṭabarī, Ibn Khaldūn, the author of *Mu'jam al-Buldān* and other Islamic historians. Its resume is as follows: Tubān As'ad Abū Karib, king of Himyar (Yaman), went to Yathrib once where he embraced Judaism under the influence of the Jews, and brought two of the Jewish scholars of Banī Quraizah with him to Yaman. There he propagated Judaism widely. His son Dhū Nuwās succeeded him and he attacked Najrān which was a stronghold of the Christians in southern Arabia so as to eliminate Christianity and make the people accept Judaism. (Ibn Hishām says that these people were true followers of the Gospel of the Prophet Jesus). In Najrān he invited the people to accept Judaism but they refused to obey. Thereupon he caused a large number of the people to be burnt in the ditches of fire and slew many others with the sword until he had killed nearly twenty thousand of them. Daus Dhū Tha'labān an inhabitant of Najrān escaped and went, according to one tradition, to the Byzantine emperor, and according to another, to the Negus king of Abyssinia, and told him what had happened

According to the first tradition, the emperor wrote to the king of Abyssinia, and according to the second, the Negus requested the emperor to provide him with a naval force. In any case, an Abyssinian army consisting of seventy thousand soldiers under a general called Aryāt, attacked Yaman, Dhū Nuwās was killed, the Jewish rule came to an end, and Yaman become a part of the Christian kingdom of Abyssinia.

The statements of the Islamic historians are not only confirmed by other historical means but they also give many more details. Yaman first came under the Christian Abyssinian domination in 340 A.D. and this domination continued till 378 A.D. The Christian missionaries started entering Yaman in that period. About the same time, a man named Faymiyūn (Phemion), who was a righteous, earnest, ascetic man and possessed miraculous powers, arrived in Yaman and by his preaching against idol-worship converted the people of Najrān to Christianity. These people were ruled by three chiefs: *Sayyid*, who was the principal chief like the tribal elders and responsible for external affairs, political agreements and command of the forces, *'Āqib*, who looked after the internal affairs and *Usquf* (Bishop), the religous guide. In southern Arabia Najrāu commanded great importance, being a major trade and industrial center with tussore, leather and the armament industries. The well-known Yamanite wrapper and cloak *(ḥulla Yamanī)* was also manufactured here. On this very basis, Dhū Nuwas attacked this important place not only for religious but also for political and economic reasons. He put to death Hārithan (called Arethas by the Syrian historians), *Sayyid* of Najrāin, killed his two daughters in front of his wife Roumah and compelled her to drink their blood and then put even her to death. He took out the bones of Bishop Paul from the grave and burnt them, and ordered women, men, children, aged people, priests and monks, all to be thrown into the pits of fire. The total number of the people thus killed has been estimated between twenty and forty thousand. This happened in October, 523 A.D. At last, in 525 A.D. the Abyssinians attacked Yaman and put an end to Dhū Niwās and his Himyarite *kingdom*. This is confirmed by the Hisn Ghurāb inscription which the modern archaeologists have unearthed in Yaman.

In several Christian writings of the 6th century A.D. details of the event relating to the people of the ditch" have been given, some of which are contemporary and reported from eye-witnesses. Authors of three of these books were contemporaries with the event. They were Procopeus, Cosmos Indicopleustis, who was translating Greek book of Ptolemy under command of the Negus Elesboan at that time and resided at Adolis, a city on the sea-coast of Abyssinia, and Johannes Malala from whom several of the later historians have related this event. After this, Johannes of Ephesus (d. 585 A.D) has related the story of the persecution of the Christians of Najran in his history of the Church

from a letter of Bishop Mar Simeon who was a contemporary reporter of this event. Mar Simeon wrote this letter to Abbot von Gabula; in it Simeon has reported this event with reference to the statements of the Yamanite eye-witnesses present on the occasion. This letter was published in 1881 A.D from Rome and in 1890 A.D. in the memoirs of the martyrs of Christianity Jacobian Patriarch Dionysius and Zacharia of Mitylene have in their Syriac histories also related this event. Ya'qūb Sāruji also in his book about the Christians of Najrān has made mention of it. Bishop Pulus of Edessa's elegy on those who perished in Najran, is still extant. An English translation of the Syriac *kitāb al-Himyarin* (Book of the Himyarites) was published in 1924 from London, which confirms the statements of the Muslim historians. In the British Museum there are some Abyssinian manuscripts relating to that period or a period close to it, which support this story. Philby in his travelogue entitled "Arabian Highlands", writes: Among the people of Najran the place is still well known where the event of the people of the ditch (ashāb al-ukhdūd) had taken place. Close by Umm Kharaq there can still be seen some pictures carved in the rocks, and the present day people of Najrān also know the place where the cathedral of Najrān stood.

The Abyssinian Christians after capturing Najrān had built a church here resembling the Ka'bah, by which they wanted to divert pilgrimage from the Ka'bah at Makkah to it. Its priests and keepers wore turbans and regarded it as a sacred sanctuary. The Roman empire also sent monetary aid for this "ka'bah". The priests of this very "Ka'bah" of Najrān had visited the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) under the leadership of their Sayyid, 'Āqib and Bishop for a discussion with him and the famous event of the *mubāhala* (trial through prayer) took place as referred to in Āl-Imran: 61. (For details, see E.N.'s 29 and 55 of Āl-Imrān)

5. In these verses those of Allah Almighty's attributes have been mentioned on account of which He alone deserves that one should believe in Him, and the people who feel displeased at one's believing in Him, are wicked and unjust.

6 "Punishment by burning" has been mentioned separately from the torment of Hell because they had burnt the oppressed people to death by casting them into the pits of fire. Probably this will be a different and severer kind of fire from the fire of Hell in which those people will be burnt.

7. "He is All-Forgiving": If a person repents and reforms himself, he can hope to be received by Allah in His mercy. "He is All-Loving", *i.e.* He has no enmity with His creatures that he would subject them to torment without any reason, but He loves the creatures He has created and punishes them only when they do not give up the attitude of rebellion against Him. "Owner of the Throne"

means that He alone is the Ruler of the Kingdom of the Universe: no one who is a rebel can escape His grip and punishment. The mention of His being "Exalted" is meant to warn man for his meanness when he adopts an attitude of arrogance against such a Being. Last of all, "He is Doer of whatever He wills": no one in the entire universe has the power to obstruct and resist what Allah wills to do.

8. The address is directed to the people who in their false pride of having powerful hosts, are breaking the law of God on His earth. They are being warned, as if to say: "Do you know what evil fate was met before by those who broke the bounds set by Allah on the strength of the power of their hosts?"

9. That is, "The writ of the Qur'ān is unchangeable and imperishable. It is inscribed in the Preserved Tablet of God, which cannot be corrupted in any way. Whatever is written in it, has to be fulfilled; even the whole world together cannot avert its fulfilment.


LXXXVI
AṬ-ṬĀRIQ
الطَّارِق

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

LXXXVI

AT-TĀRIQ

الطَّارِق

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from the word *at-Tāriq* in its first verse.

Period of Revelation

The style of its subject-matter resembles that of the earliest Sūrahs revealed at Makkah, but this Sūrah was sent down at a stage when the disbelievers of Makkah were employing all sorts of devices and plans to defeat and frustrate the message of the Qur'ān and Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings).

Theme and Subject-Matter

It discusses two themes: first that man has to appear before God after death; second that the Qur'ān is a decisive Word which no plan or device of the disbelievers can defeat or frustrate.

First of all, the stars of the heavens have been cited as an evidence that there is nothing in the universe which may continue to exist and survive without a guardian over it. Then man has been asked to consider his own self as to how he has been brought into existence from a mere sperm-drop and shaped into a living human being. Then it has been said that the God, Who has so brought him into existence, has certainly the power to create him once again, and this resurrection will be for the purpose to subject to scrutiny all the secrets of man, which remained hidden in the world. At that time, man will neither be able to escape the consequences of his deeds by his own power, nor will anyone else come to his rescue.

In conclusion, it has been pointed out that just as the falling of rain from the sky and the sprouting of plants and crops from the earth is no child's play but a serious task, so also the truths expressed in the Qur'ān are no jest but a firm and unchangeable reality. The disbelievers are involved in the misunderstanding that their plans and devices will defeat the invitation of the Qur'ān, but they do not know that Allah too is devising a plan which will bring to nought all their scheming and planning. Then in one sentence the discourse has been summed up, with a word of consolation to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and a tacit warning to the disbelievers, saying: "Have patience for a while: let the disbelievers do their worst. Before long they will themselves realize whether they have been able to defeat the Qur'ān by their scheming or the Qur'ān has dominated them in the very place where they are exerting their utmost to defeat it."



وَالسَّمَآءِ وَالطَّارِقِ ۝١ وَمَآ أَدْرٰىكَ مَا الطَّارِقُ ۝٢ النَّجْمُ الثَّاقِبُ ۝٣ إِنْ
كُلُّ نَفْسٍ لَّمَّا عَلَيْهَا حَافِظٌ ۝٤ فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ مِمَّ خُلِقَ ۝٥ خُلِقَ مِنْ مَّآءٍ
دَافِقٍ ۝٦ يَّخْرُجُ مِنْ بَيْنِ الصُّلْبِ وَالتَّرَآئِبِ ۝٧ إِنَّهُ عَلٰى رَجْعِهٖ
لَقَادِرٌ ۝٨ يَوْمَ تُبْلَى السَّرَآئِرُ ۝٩ فَمَا لَهٗ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ وَّلَا نَاصِرٍ ۝١٠ وَ
السَّمَآءِ ذَاتِ الرَّجْعِ ۝١١ وَالْأَرْضِ ذَاتِ الصَّدْعِ ۝١٢ إِنَّهٗ لَقَوْلٌ فَصْلٌ ۝١٣
وَّمَا هُوَ بِالْهَزْلِ ۝١٤ إِنَّهُمْ يَكِيْدُوْنَ كَيْدًا ۝١٥ وَّأَكِيْدُ كَيْدًا ۝١٦ فَمَهِّلِ
الْكٰفِرِيْنَ أَمْهِلْهُمْ رُوَيْدًا ۝١٧

LXXXVI

AṬ-ṬĀRIQ

الطَّارِق

Verses: 17 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

By the heaven and the visitant by night, and what do you know what the visitant by night is? A shining star! There is no soul without a Guardian over it.[1] Then let man at least consider from what he is created.[2] He is created from a spurting fluid that issues forth from between the backbone and the breast-bones.[3] Surely He (the Creator) has the power to create him again.[4] The Day the hidden secrets are held to scrutiny,[5] then man will neither have any power of his own nor any helper. By the heaven that sends down rain,[6] and by the earth that splits (at the sprouting of vegetation), it is a decisive Word: it is no jest.[7] 1-17

These people (i.e. the disbelievers of Makkah) are devising some plans,[8] and I, too, am devising a plan.[9] So leave the disbelievers, O Prophet; leave them to themselves for a while.[10]

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1. "A Guardian": Allah Almighty Himself, Who is looking after and watching over every creature, big or small, in the earth and heavens. He it is Who has brought everything into existence, Who is maintaining and sustaining everything in its place and position, and Who has taken the responsibility to provide for every creature and to protect it from calamities till an appointed time. On this, an oath has been sworn by the heaven and by every star and planet which appears in the darkness of the night. (Although lexically, *an-najm ath-thāqib* is singular, it does not imply any one star but the star in the generic sense). The oath signifies that the existence of each of the countless stars and planets that shines in the sky at night, testifies to the fact that there is a Being Who has created it, illuminated it, suspended it in space, and thus is watching over it in a manner that neither it falls from its place nor collides with any other of the countless stars in their movements, nor does any other star collide with it.

2. After making man ponder over the heavens, he is now being invited to consider his own self and see how he has been created. Who is it Who selects one spermatozoon from among billions of spermatozoa emitted by the father and combines it at some time with one ovum out of a large number of the ova produced by the mother, and thus causes a particular human being to be conceived? Then, Who is it Who after conception develops it gradually in the mother's womb until it is delivered in the form of a living child? Then, Who is it Who in the mother's womb itself brings about a certain proportion and harmony between its bodily structure and its physical and mental capabilities? Then, Who is it Who watches over it continuously from birth till death—protects it from disease, accidents and calamities and provides him with countless means of life and opportunities for survival in the world of which he is not even conscious, not to speak of having the power to provide these for himself. Is all this happening without the planning and supervision of One God?

3. *"Sulb"* is the backbone and *"tarā'ib"* the breast- bones, i.e. the ribs. Since the procreative fluid in both man and woman is discharged from that part of the body which is between the back and the breast, it is said that man has been created from the fluid issuing out from between the back and the breast. This fluid is produced even in case the hands and feet are cut off. Therefore, it is not correct to say that it issues out from the whole body of man. In fact, the principal organs of the body are its source and all these are located in the trunk. The brain has not been mentioned separately because the back-bone is that part of the brain through

which connection between the body and the brain is established. (Also see Appendix I).

4. That is, His bringing man into existence and watching over him from the time conception takes place until death, is a clear proof that He can create him once again after death. If He had the power to create him in the first instance and man stays alive in the world by His power alone, what rational arguments can be presented for the conjecture that He does not have the power to do the same thing a second time? To deny this power man will even have to deny that God has brought him into existence, and the one who denies this may well come out one day with the claim that all books in the world have been printed accidentally, all cities of the world have been built accidentally, and there has occurred on the earth an explosion by chance which made all the factories start functioning automatically. The fact is that the creation of man, the structure of his body, the existence of the powers and capabilities working within him, and his survival as a living being -- all this is a much more complex process than all those works that have come to be accomplished through man, or are still in the process of being accomplished. If such a complex work with such wisdom, proportion and order could be accomplished just through a chance accident, what else could not be regarded as accidental by a mentally deranged person?

5. "The hidden secrets": the acts of every person which remained a secret to the world as well as those affairs which came before the world only in their apparent form, but the intentions, aims and secret motives working behind them remained hidden from the people. On the Resurrection Day all this will be laid bare and not only will the acts and deeds of every person be examined but it will also be seen what was his motive and intention and object of so acting. Likewise, it also remained hidden from the world, even from the doer of the act himself, what effects and influences of his act appeared in the world, to what extent they spread and for how long they continued to work. This secret too will be revealed on the Resurrection Day and it will be fully examined as to what were the consequences of the seed that a person sowed in the world, what fruit it bore and for how long it affected the later generations for better or for worse.

6. The words *dhāt ar-raj'e* have been used for the sky. Literally *raj'e* means to return, but metaphorically this word is used for the rain in Arabic, for the rain does not fall just once, but returns over and over again in the season and sometimes out of season as well. Another reason for calling the rain *raj'e* is that water rises as vapour from the oceans of the earth and then falls back as rain on the same earth.

7. That is, just as the falling of rain from the sky and the splitting of the earth to put out shoots is no jest but a serious reality, so also the news which the

Qur'an gives that man has to return to his God is no jest but a definite and decisive reality and an unchangeable truth which has to be fulfilled.

8. That is, these disbelievers are devising every kind of plan to defeat the invitation of the Qur'an; they wish to blow out this candle; they are creating all sorts of doubts in the people's minds; they are inventing false accusations against the Prophet who has brought it, so as to frustrate his mission in the world and perpetuate the drakness of ignorance and unbelief which he is struggling so hard to remove.

9. That is, "I am planning that none of their devices should succeed so that they are utterly defeated in their designs, and the light which they are trying their utmost to put out, spreads far and wide.

10. That is, "Leave them for a while to have their will. Before long the result will be before them and they will realize how far their scheming has become successful against My plan."

APPENDIX I

(In continuation of E.N. 3 of At-Tāriq)

In connection with our explanation of vv. 6-7 of Sūrah At-Tāriq, as given in E.N. 3, a doctor wrote to us:

"I have read your explanation carefully several times but have not been able to understand it fully. As far as the practical observation is concerned, the procreative fluid is produced by the testes. The fluid then empties into the epididymis, which leads into the vas deferens immediately before the vas enters the body of the prostate gland, where it is supplied with mucus and is discharged. How it issues forth from between the back-bone and the breast-bones, I have not been able to understand. However, control over it is exercised by a nervous system which is spread like a net-work between the breast-bone and the back-bone. But that too only to a certain extent: it is controlled by the mucus of another gland located in the brain. But the question here relates to its issuing forth (which can only take place through a tube). I would request for a detailed commentary of this point. I have given you this trouble (for which I hope to be excused) only because you believe in scientific knowledge.

In reply to this we wrote in the issue of the *Tarjumān al- Qur'ān* for November, 1971:

"As you are a doctor you can better understand that although different parts of the body have their own separate functions, no part can perform its function by itself but only in coordination with the other parts. No doubt, the seminal fluid is produced by the testes from where it is emitted through a particular channel. But if the stomach, liver, lungs heart, brain, kidney, etc. are not performing their respective functions rightly, the system of the production of the seminal liquid and its emission cannot work by itself. Let us understand this by an example. Urine forms in the kidney, is emptied into the bladder from where it is discharged through the outlet of the urinary tract. But by what process? If the organs which produce blood and circulate it throughout the body are not functioning properly, can the kidney by itself separate those elements from the blood, which make up urine, and send it to the bladder? That is why, the Qur'an does not say that the seminal fluid issues from the back-bone and the breast-bones,

but has said: "It issues forth from the part of the body which is located between the two." This does not negate the fact that the production of the seminal fluid and its emission has a mechanism which functions through particular parts of the body, but it shows that this mechanism is not independent: it performs its function in consequence of the combind work of the organism placed by Allah between the *sulb* (back-bone) and the *tarā'ib* (breast-bones) That is why, I have pointed out that the whole body is not involved in it, for even if the hands and feet are cut off, this system continues to work. However, if any one organ out of the principal organs located between the backbone and the breast-bones, is eliminated, the system cannot continue its function."

After reading the Question and the Answer, two doctors from two different places have provided some medical information which is given below:

"According to modern Embryology, it is an established fact that the testes in the foetus, the glands which produce seminal fluid, are located close to the kidneys between the backbone and the breast bones, from where they gradually descend into the scrotum later. This happens before birth and sometimes a little after it. But even then the source of their netves and veins remains the same, *i.e.* between the backbone and the breast-bones. Even their artery shoots out from the aorta located close to the backbone and traversing the whole stomach supplies them with blood. Thus, in fact, the testes are a part of the back, which on account of their inability to endure the high temperature of the body, have been transferred to the scrotum. Furthermore, although the seminal fluid is produced by the testes and stored in seminal vesicles, yet its emissiom is motivated from between the backbone and the breast-bones. On stimulation from the brain the trigger action causes seminal vesicles to contract and this causes ejaculation of the seminal fluid. Thus, it will be seen that the Qur'ānic statement conforms to modern research of medical science on the subject.



LXXXVII

AL-A'LĀ

الاَعلٰی

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

LXXXVII

AL-A'LĀ

الأعلى

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from the word *A'lā* in the very first verse.

Period of Revelation

The subject-matter shows that this too is one of the earliest Sūrahs to be revealed, and the words: "We shall enable you to recite, then you shall never forget" of verse 6 also indicate that it was sent down in the period when the Holy Messenger (upon whom be Allah's peace) was not yet fully accustomed to receive Revelation and at the time Revelation came down he feared lest he should forget its words. If this verse is read along with verse 114 of Sūrah Tā Hā and verses 16-19 of Al-Qiyāmah and the three verses are also considered with regard to their styles and contexts, the sequence of events seems to be that first in

this Sūrah the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was reassured to the effect: "Do not at all worry: We shall enable you to recite this Word, then you shall not forget it." Then after a lapse of time, on another occasion, when the Sūrah Al-Qiyāmah was being revealed, the Holy Prophet involuntarily began to rehearse the words of the Revelation. Thereupon it was said: 'O Prophet, do not move your tongue to remember this Revelation hastily. It is for Us to have it remembered and read. Therefore when We are reciting it, listen to its recital carefully. Again, it is for Us to explain its meaning." Last of all, on the occasion of the revelation of Sūrah Tā Hā, the Holy Prophet on account of human weakness, again became afraid lest his memory should fail to preserve some portion of the 113 verses which were continuously revealed at that time, and, therefore, he began to memorise them. Thereupon, it was said: and see that you do not hasten to recite the Qur'ān before its revelation is completed to you. After this, it never so happened that he felt any such danger, for apart from these three places, there is no other place in the Qur'ān where there might be a reference to this matter.

Theme and- Subject-matter

This short Sūrah contains three themes: *Tauhīd*, instructions to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and the Hereafter.

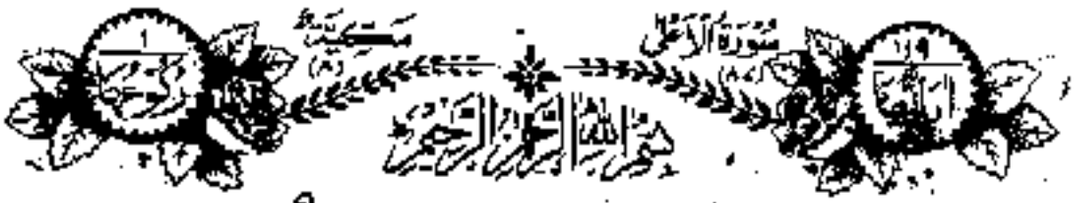
In the first verse, the doctrine of *Tauhīd* has been compressed into a single sentence, saying that Allah's name should be glorified and exalted, *i.e.* He should not be remembered by any name which might reflect a deficiency, fault, weakness, or an aspect of likeness, with created beings, for the root of all false creeds in the world are wrong concepts about Allah, which assumed the form of an erroneous name for His glorious and exalted Being. Therefore, for the correction of the creed, the primary thing is that Allah Almighty should be remembered only by the beautiful names which suit and befit Him.

In the next three verses, it has been said: "Your Lord, glorification of Whose name is being enjoined, is He Who created everything in the Universe, proportioned it, set it a destiny, taught it to perform the function for which it is created, and you witness this manifestation of His power day and night that He creates vegetation on the earth as well as reduces it to mere rubbish. No other being has the power to bring about spring nor the power to prevent autumn."

Then, in the following two verses, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been consoled, as if to say: "Do not worry as to how you will remember word for word the Qur'ān that is being revealed to you. it is for Us to preserve it in your memory, and its preservation is not in any way the result of any excellence in you but the result of Our bounty and favour, otherwise if We so will, We can cause you to forget it."

Then, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been told: "You have not been made responsible to bring everyone on to the right path; your only duty is to convey the truth, and the simplest way of conveying the truth is that admonition be given to him who is inclined to listen to the admonition and accept it, and the one who is not inclined to it, should not be pursued. The one who fears the evil consequences of deviation and falsehood, will listen to the truth and accept it, and the wretched one who avoids listening to and accepting it, will himself see his evil end."

The discourse has been summed up, saying: "Success is only for those who adopt purity of belief, morals and deed, and remember the name of their Lord and perform the Prayer. But, on the contrary, the people are wholly lost in seeking the ease, benefits and pleasures of the world, whereas they should actually endeavour for their well-being in the Hereafter, for the world is transitory and the Hereafter everlasting and the blessings of the Hereafter are far better than the blessings of the world. This truth has not been expressed only in the Qur'ān but in the books of the Prophets Abraham and Moses too, it had been brought to the notice of man.



بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

سَبِّحِ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْاَعْلَى ۝١ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَ فَسَوّٰى ۝٢ وَالَّذِيْ قَدَّرَ فَهَدٰى ۝٣
وَالَّذِيْٓ اَخْرَجَ الْمَرْعٰى ۝٤ فَجَعَلَهٗ غُثَآءً اَحْوٰى ۝٥ سَنُقْرِئُكَ فَلَا تَنْسٰٓى ۝٦
اِلَّا مَا شَآءَ اللّٰهُ ۭ اِنَّهٗ يَعْلَمُ الْجَهْرَ وَمَا يَخْفٰى ۝٧ وَنُيَسِّرُكَ لِلْيُسْرٰى ۝٨
فَذَكِّرْ اِنْ نَّفَعَتِ الذِّكْرٰى ۝٩ سَيَذَّكَّرُ مَنْ يَّخْشٰى ۝١٠ وَيَتَجَنَّبُهَا الْاَشْقَى ۝١١
الَّذِيْ يَصْلَى النَّارَ الْكُبْرٰى ۝١٢ ثُمَّ لَا يَمُوْتُ فِيْهَا وَلَا يَحْيٰى ۝١٣ قَدْ اَفْلَحَ
مَنْ تَزَكّٰى ۝١٤ وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهٖ فَصَلّٰى ۝١٥ بَلْ تُؤْثِرُوْنَ الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا ۝١٦
وَالْاٰخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ وَّاَبْقٰى ۝١٧ اِنَّ هٰذَا لَفِي الصُّحُفِ الْاُوْلٰى ۝١٨ صُحُفِ
اِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَمُوْسٰى ۝١٩

LXXXVII

AL-A'LĀ

الاَعلٰی

Verses: 19 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

(O Prophet,) glorify the name of your Lord, the Highest.[1] Who created and proportioned,[2] Who set a destiny[3] and showed the way,[4] Who caused vegetation to grow,[5] then reduced it to black rubbish.[6] 1-5

We shall enable you to recite; then you shall not forget[7] except what Allah wills.[8] He knows what is open and also what is hidden.[9] 6-7

And We give you the facility of the easy way; therefore, admonish them if admonition be profitable.[10] He who fears will accept the admonition,[11] and it will be shunned by the most wretched one, 8-13

who shall enter the Great Fire, wherein he shall neither die nor live.[12]

14-19 Truly successful was he who purified himself,[13] and remembered the name of his Lord,[14] then prayed.[15] But you (O men,) prefer the life of this world,[16] although the Hereafter is better and more lasting.[17] The same had been said in the former Books, the Books of Abraham and Moses.[18]

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1. Literally: "Purify the name of your Lord, the Highest." This can have several meanings and all are implied: (1) Allah should be remembered by the names which fit Him, and no such name should be used for His exalted Being which, with regard to its meaning and sense, does not fit Him, or which reflects some aspect of deficiency, lack of reverence, polytheism about Him, or which refers to some wrong belief in respect of His Being, attributes, or works. For this purpose, the safest way is that only such names be used for Allah, which He himself has mentioned in the Qur'ān, or which are a correct translation of these names in other languages. (2) Allah should not be remembered by the names as are used generally for the created beings, or the created beings should not be called by names as are specifically meant for Allah. And if there are some attributive names which are not specifically meant for Allah, but may also be used for the created beings, such as Ra'ūf (Kind), Rahīm (Compassionate), Karīm (Generous), Samī' (Hearing), Basīr (Seeing), etc. one should exercise due care not to use them for man as they are used for Allah. (3) Allah should not be mentioned in a way or in a state which reflects lack of respect for Him; for example, to mention His name when engaged in mockery or jest, or when in the lavatory, or while committing a sinful act, or before the people who might behave insolently in response or in assemblies where the people are engaged in absurd things and might laugh off His mention, or on an occasion when it is feared that the hearer will hear it disdainfully. About Imam Mālik, it is related that when a beggar begged him for something and he did not have anything to give, he would not turn away the beggar, saying that Allah would help him, as is commonly done by the people, but he would excuse himself in some other way. When asked why he did so, he replied: "When the beggar is not given anything and one makes an excuse, it inevitably displeases him. On such an occasion, I do not like to mention Allah's name, for I do not like that somebody should hear His name in a state of annoyance and displeasure."

In the *Hadīth*, it has been reported from Hadrat 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir Juhanī that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) had enjoined recitation of *Subhāna Rabbi-yal-A'lā* in the *sajdah* on the basis of this very verse, and the recitation of *Subhāna Rabbi-yal-'Āzīm* in *rukū'* on the basis of the last verse of

Sūrah *Al-Wāqi'ah, viz. Fa-sabbih bi-ismi-Rabbi-kal-'Azīm.*" (Musnad Ahmad, Abū Da'ūd, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Hibbān, Hākim, Ibn al-Mundhir).

2. That is, He created everything, from the earth to the heavens, in the universe, and gave whatever he created the right proportion and balance and gave every creature the best conceivable form and shape. The same thing has been expressed in Sūrah As-Sajdah, thus: "Who gave everything He created the best form" (v. 7) Thus, the creation of everything in the world giving it due order and proportion, is an express sign of the truth that some Wise Designer is its Creator. Had the creation of the countless things in the universe been the result of a chance accident, or the work of many creators, there could be no order and balance, no beauty and inner coherence among the many things existing in the world.

3. "Set a destiny": determined beforehand what would be the function of a certain thing in the world, and for that purpose what would be its size, its form and shape, its qualities, its place of location, and what opportunities and means should be provided for its survival, existence and functioning, when it should come into being, and when and how it should cease to be after completing its part of the work. Such a scheme for a thing is its "destiny" (*taqdīr*). And this destiny Allah has set for everything in the universe and for the entire universe as a whole. This means that the creation has not come about without a pre-conceived plan, haphazardly, but for it the Creator had a full plan before Him, and everything is happening according to that plan. (For further explanation, see E.N.'s 13, 14 of Al-Hijr. E.N. 8 of Al-Furqān, E.N. 25 of Al-Qamar. E.N. 12 of 'Abasa).

4. That is, nothing was just created and left to itself, but whatever was created to perform a certain function, it was also taught the method of performing that function. In other words, He is not merely the Creator but Guide too. He has taken the responsibility to give guidance to whatever He has created in a particular capacity to fit its nature and to guide it in the way suitable for it. One kind of guidance is for the earth, the moon, the sun, and the stars and planets, which they are following in performing their role. Another kind of guidance is for water, air, light and the solid and mineral elements, and they are performing the same services for which they have been created accordingly. Still another kind of guidance is for vegetables, according to which they take root and spread in the earth, sprout up from its layers, obtain food from wherever Allah has created it for them, produce stem, branches, leaves, blossom and fruit, and fulfil the function which has been appointed for each of them. Still another kind of guidance is for the countless species of animals of the land, and water, and for each member of the species, the wonderful manifestations of which are clearly visible in the life of the animals and in their works, so much so that even an atheist is compelled to concede that different kinds of animals possess some sort of inspirational

knowledge which man cannot obtain even through his instruments, not to speak of his senses. Then, there are two different kinds of guidance for man, which correspond to his two different capacities. One kind of guidance is for his animal life, by which each child learns to suck milk spontaneously on birth, by which the eyes of man, his nose, ear, heart, brain, lungs, kidney, liver, stomach, intestines, nerves, veins and arteries, all are performing their respective functions, without man's being conscious of it, or his will's having anything to do with the functions of these organs. This is the guidance under which all physical and mental changes pertaining to childhood, maturity, youth and old age go on taking place in man, independent of his will, choice, even his consciousness. The second kind of guidance is for his intellectual and conscious life, the nature of which is absolutely different from the guidance for unconscious life, for in this sphere of life a kind of freedom has been transferred to man, for which the mode of guidance meant for voluntary life is not suitable. For turning away from this last kind of guidance, man may offer whatever arguments and excuses he may like, it is not credible that the Creator Who has arranged guidance for everything in this universe according to its capacity, might have set for man the destiny that he may appropriate numerous things in His world freely, but might not have made any arrangement to show what is the right way of using his choice and what is the wrong way. (For further explanation, see E.N.'s 9, 10, 14, 56 of An-Naḥl, E.N. 23 of Ṭā Hā, E.N.'s 2, 3 of Ar-Raḥmān, E.N. 5 of Ad-Dahr)

5. The word *mar'ā* as used in the Text means the fodder for animals but the context shows that here it does not imply mere fodder but every kind of vegetation that grows out of the soil.

6. That is, "He does not only bring about spring but autumn as well. You witness both the manifestations of this power. On the one side, He causes lush green vegetation to grow, the freshness of which pleases the hearts and, on the other, He renders the same vegetation pale, dry and black rubbish, which is blown about by winds and swept away by floods. Therefore, no one here should be involved in the misunderstanding that he will only experience spring and will never see autumn." This same theme has been expressed at several other places in the Qur'ān in other ways. For example see Yūnus: 24, Al-Kahf: 45, Al-Ḥadīd: 20.

7. Ḥākim has related from Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin Abi Waqqās and Ibn Mardūyah from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) repeated the words of the Qur'an for fear lest he should forget them. Mujāhid and Kalbī say that even before Gabriel finished recitation of the Revelation the Holy Prophet would start repeating the initial verses lest he should forget them. On this very basis Allah assured him that he should listen quietly when the Revelation was coming down, for, "We shall enable you to recite it; then you will remember it for

ever. You should have no fear that you will forget any word of it. " This is the third occasion where the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been taught the method of receiving the Revelation. The first two occasions have been referred to in Tā Hā: 114 and Al-Qiyāmah: 16-19 above. This verse proves that just as the Qur'ān was sent down to the Holy Prophet as a miracle, so also its each word was preserved in his memory as a miracle and no possibility was allowed to remain that he should forget anything of it, or that he should utter another synonymous word for any word of it.

8. This sentence can have two meanings: first, "that the preservation of the entire Qur'ān word for word in your memory is not a manifestation of your own power but the result of Allah Almighty's bounty and grace; otherwise if Allah so willed, He could cause it to be forgotten." This same theme has been expressed at another place in the Qur'ān, thus: "O Muhammad! We may, if We so will, take back from you all of what We have revealed to you." (Banī Isrā'īl: 86). Another meaning also can be: "Your forgeting something temporarily, or your forgetting a verse or a word occasionally is an exception from this promise. What has been promised is: 'You will not forget any word of the Qur'ān permanently'." This meaning is confirmed by the following tradition of Bukhārī: Once while leading the Fajr Prayer the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) happened to omit a verse during the recitation. After the Prayer Ḥadrat Ubayy bin Ka'b asked if the verse had been abrogated. The Holy Prophet replied that he had forgotten to recite it.

9. Although the words are general, and they mean that Allah knows everything, whether it is open or hidden, yet in the context in which they occur, they seem to mean: "O Prophet, your reciting the Qur'ān along with Gabriel (peace be on him) is known to Allah and your fear for which you do so is also in Allah's knowledge." Therefore, the Holy Prophet is being assured that he will not forget it.

10. Generally, the commentators take these as two separate sentences. They interpret the first sentence to mean: "We are giving you a simple code of law, which is easy to practise and act upon", and the second sentence to mean: "Admonish the people if admonishing be useful." but in our opinion, the word "*fa-dhakkir*" connects the two sentences in meaning, and the theme of the second sentence bears upon the theme of the first sentence. Therefore, we interpret these sentences to mean: "O Prophet! We do not want to put you to any hardship concerning the preaching of Islam by demanding that you should make the deaf to hear and the blind to see the way, but We have appointed an easy way for you, which is this: Give admonition when you feel that the people are inclined to benefit by it. As to who is inclined to benefit by the admonition and who is not, this you can only know through general preaching. Therefore, you should continue your

general preaching, but your object should be to search out those from among the people who will benefit by it and adopt the right way. Such people alone are worthy of your attention and you should pay full attention only to their instruction and training. You need not abandon them and pursue those about whom you find by experience that they are not inclined to accept any admonition." Almost this very theme has been expressed in Sūrah 'Abasa in another way, thus: "As for him who is indifferent, to him you attend, though you would not be responsible if he does not reform. And the one who comes to you running, of his own will and fears, from him you turn away. By no means: This is but an Admonition. Let him who wills, accept it." (vv. 5-12).

11. That is, only the one who has fear of God and of evil consequences, will consider whether or not he is following a wrong way, and he only will heed the admonition of the Servant of Allah who is distinguishing guidance from misguidance for him and guiding him to true successes and piety.

12. That is, "He will neither die so as to escape the punishment nor live as one truly lives so as to enjoy the pleasures of life." This punishment is for those who do not at all accept the admonition of Allah and His Messenger and persist in disbelief, polytheism and atheism till death. As for those who believe in their hearts but are cast into Hell because of their evil deeds, it has been said in the *Hadith* that when they will have undergone their punishment, Allah will give them death; then intercession on their behalf will be accepted, and their scorched bodies will be brought to the canals of Paradise, and the dwellers of Paradise will be asked to sprinkle water on them; then by that water they will come to life even as vegetation grows up when water is sprinkled on the earth. This theme has been reported from the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) in Muslim on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abu Sa'īd Khudrī and in Bazzār on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah.

13. "Who purified himself": who affirmed the faith giving up disbelief and polytheism, adopted good morals giving up evil morals, and performed good deeds giving up evil deeds. Success does not imply worldly prosperity, but true and real success whether worldly prosperity accompanies it or not. (For explanation, see E.N. 23 of Yūnus, E.N.'s 1, 11-50 of Al-Mu'minūn, E.N. 4 of Luqmān).

14. To remember Allah signifies His remembrance in the heart as well as with the tongue.

15. That is, he did not remain content only with remembering Allah but proved by performing the Prayer that he is practically also prepared to obey God in Whom he has affirmed the faith, and will remember His name as long as he

lives. In this verse mention has been made of two things respectively: first, to remember Allah, then to perform the Prayer. Accordingly, the method enjoined is that the Prayer be begun with *Allahu Akbar*. This is an evidence to prove that all the elements of the procedure that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has taught of performing the Prayer, are based on the allusions in the Qur'ān. But, no one else, apart from the Messenger of Allah, could by combining these injunctions and allusions give the Prayer the form that it has.

16. That is, "O man, all your thoughts and endeavors are only for the world, its ease and comforts, its benefits and enjoyments.

You regard whatever you gain here as the real gain and whatever you lose here as your real loss"

17. That is, the Hereafter is preferable to the world for two reasons: first, that its comforts and pleasures are far superior to all the blessings of the world; second, that the world is transitory and the Hereafter everlasting.

18. This is the second place in the Qur'ān where reference has been made to the teachings of the Books of the Prophets Abraham and Moses. The first reference was made in section 3 of Sūrah An-Najm above.


LXXXVIII
AL-GHĀSHIYA
الغاشيه

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

LXXXVIII

AL-GHĀSHIYA

الغاشية

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from the word *al-ghāshiyah* in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

The whole subject-matter of the Sūrah indicates that this too is one of the earliest Sūrahs to be revealed; but this was the period when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had started preaching his message publicly, and the people of Makkah were hearing it and ignoring it carelessly and thoughtlessly.

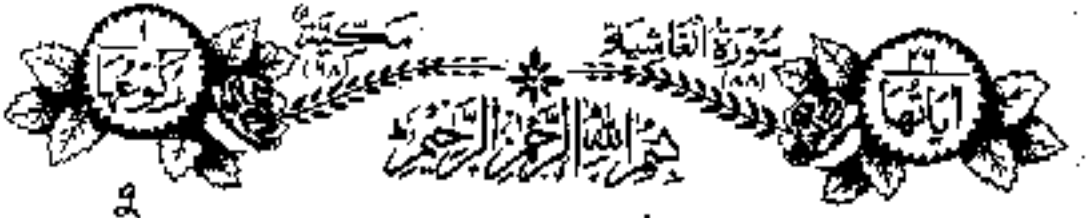
Theme and Subject-Matter

To understand the subject-matter well one should keep in view the fact that in the initial stage the preaching of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) mostly centered around two points which he wanted to instil in the people's minds: *Tauhīd* and the Hereafter; and the people of Makkah were repudiating both. Let us now consider the subject-matter and the style of the Sūrah.

At the outset, in order to arouse the people from their heedlessness, they have been plainly asked: "Do you have any knowledge of the time when an over whelming calamity will descend?" immediately after is details of the impending calamity are given as to how the people will be divided into two separate groups and will meet separate ends. One group of the people will go to Hell and they will susuffer punishments; the second group will go to the sublime Paradise and will be provided with blessings.

After thus arousing the people the theme suddenly changes and the question is asked: Do not these people, who frown and scorn the teaching of *Tauhīd* and news of the Hereafter being given by the Qur'ān, observe the common things which they experience daily in their lives? Do they never consider how the camels, on whom their whole life activity in the Arabian desert depends, came into being, endowed precisely with the same characteristics as were required for the beast needed in their desert life? When they go on their journeys, they see the sky, the mountains, or the earth. Let them ponder over these three phenomena and consider as to how the sky was streatched above them, how the mountains were erected and how the earth was spread beneath them? Has all this come about without the skill and craftsmanship of an All-Powerful, All-Wise Designer? If they acknowledge that a Creator has created all this with great wisdom and power and that no one else is an associate with Him in their creation, why then do they refuse to accept Him alone as their Lord and Sustainer? And if they acknowledge that that God had the power to create all this, then on what rational ground do they hesitate to acknowledge that that God also has the power to bring about Resurrection, to recreate man, and to make Hell and Heaven?

After making the truth plain by this concise and rational argument, the address turns from the disbelievers to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and he is told: "If these people do not acknowledge the truth, they may not; you have not been empowered to act with authority over them, so that you should coerce them into believing: your only task is to exhort, so exhort them. Ultimately they have to return to Us; then We shall call them to full account and shall inflict a heavy punishment on those who do not believe."



هَلْ اَتٰىكَ حَدِيْثُ الْغَاشِيَةِ ۝١ وُجُوْهٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ خَاشِعَةٌ ۝٢ عَامِلَةٌ
نَّاصِبَةٌ ۝٣ تَصْلٰى نَارًا حَامِيَةً ۝٤ تُسْقٰى مِنْ عَيْنٍ اٰنِيَةٍ ۝٥ لَيْسَ لَهُمْ
طَعَامٌ اِلَّا مِنْ ضَرِيْعٍ ۝٦ لَّا يُسْمِنُ وَلَا يُغْنِيْ مِنْ جُوْعٍ ۝٧ وُجُوْهٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ
نَّاعِمَةٌ ۝٨ لِّسَعْيِهَا رَاضِيَةٌ ۝٩ فِيْ جَنَّةٍ عَالِيَةٍ ۝١٠ لَّا تَسْمَعُ فِيْهَا لَاغِيَةً ۝١١
فِيْهَا عَيْنٌ جَارِيَةٌ ۝١٢ فِيْهَا سُرُرٌ مَّرْفُوْعَةٌ ۝١٣ وَّاَكْوَابٌ مَّوْضُوْعَةٌ ۝١٤ وَّنَمَارِقُ
مَصْفُوْفَةٌ ۝١٥ وَّزَرَابِيُّ مَبْثُوْثَةٌ ۝١٦ اَفَلَا يَنْظُرُوْنَ اِلَى الْاِبِلِ كَيْفَ خُلِقَتْ ۝١٧
وَاِلَى السَّمَآءِ كَيْفَ رُفِعَتْ ۝١٨ وَاِلَى الْجِبَالِ كَيْفَ نُصِبَتْ ۝١٩ وَاِلَى الْاَرْضِ
كَيْفَ سُطِحَتْ ۝٢٠ فَذَكِّرْ ۗ اِنَّمَآ اَنْتَ مُذَكِّرٌ ۝٢١ لَسْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِمُصَيْطِرٍ ۝٢٢
اِلَّا مَنْ تَوَلّٰى وَكَفَرَ ۝٢٣ فَيُعَذِّبُهُ اللّٰهُ الْعَذَابَ الْاَكْبَرَ ۝٢٤ اِنَّ اِلَيْنَآ
اِيَابَهُمْ ۝٢٥ ثُمَّ اِنَّ عَلَيْنَا حِسَابَهُمْ ۝٢٦

LXXXVIII
AL-GHĀSHIYA

الغاشيه

Verses: 26 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Has the news of the over-shadowing calamity (of Resurrection) reached you?[1] Some faces[2] on that Day shall be downcast, labouring hard, feeling weary, scorching in the blazing fire. They will be given to drink from a boiling fountain, and their only food will be thorny, dry grass,[3] which will neither fatten nor satisfy hunger. Some faces on that Day shall be joyful, well-pleased with their endeavours,[4] in a lofty Garden; there they shall hear no idle talk.[5] In it there will be running springs; in it there will be raised couches; goblets set forth;[6] cushions ranged in rows and fine carpets spread out. 1-16

(They do not believe:) but, do they not look at the camels, how they were created? And at the heaven, how it was raised high? And at the mountains, how they were firmly set? And at the earth, how it was spread out?' 17-20

Well, (O Prophet,) go on admonishing them, for you are only an admonisher: you are not there to coerce them.[8] But on him who turns away and disbelieves, Allah will inflict a heavy punishment. To Us they have to return; then it is for Us to call them to account. 21-26

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1. "The over-shadowing calamity": the Resurrection which will over-shadow the whole world. One should know that here the Hereafter as a whole is being depicted, which comprehends all the stages from the upsetting of the present system to the resurrection of all human beings and the dispensation of rewards and punishments from the Divine Court.

2. Some faces : some persons, so said for the face is the most conspicuous part of the human body by which man s personality is judged and which reflects the good or bad states through which man passes.

3. At some places in the Qur'ān it has been stated that the dwellers of Hell will be given *zaqqūm* to eat; at another place it has been said that they will have no other food but *ghislīn* (washing from wounds), and here that "their only food will be thorny, dry grass." There is, in fact, no contradiction between these statements. This may as well mean that Hell will have many different compartments in which different categories of the criminals will be lodged according to their crimes, and subjected to different punishments. This may also mean that if they try to avoid *zaqqūm* they will be given *ghislīn*, and if they try to avoid even that, they will only get thorny grass. In short, they would get nothing to suit their taste.

4. That is, they will be overjoyed to see the best results in the Hereafter of their endeavours and deeds in the world; they will be satisfied to see that they had, in fact, made a profitable bargain in that they had adopted a life of faith, virtue and piety, by sacrificing the desires of the flesh, undergone hardships in carrying out their obligations, endured afflictions in obeying the Divine Commands, incurred losses and suffered deprivation of benefits and pleasures while trying to avoid sins and acts of disobedience.

5. This thing has been mentioned at several places in the Qur'ān as a major blessing of Paradise. (For explanation, see E.N. 38 of Maryam, E.N. 18 of At-Tūr, E.N. 13 of Al-Wāqi'ah, E.N. 21 of An-Nabā).

6. That is, filled goblets already supplied so that they do not have to ask for them.

7. That is, "If they deny the possibility of the Hereafter, have they never looked around themselves and considered how the camels were created, how the heaven was raised high, how the mountains were firmly set and how the earth was spread out? When all these things could be created, and exist before them in their finished form, why can the Resurrection not take place? Why cannot a new world come about, and why cannot Hell and Heaven be possible? Only a foolish and thoughtless person would think that the coming into existing of only those things which he has found existing on opening his eyes in the world, is possible, because they already exist. As for the things, which he has not yet observed and experienced, he should thoughtlessly pass the judgement that their coming into being is impossible. If he has any common sense, he should think as to how he things which already exist, came into being? How did the camel possessing precisely the same characteristics as needed for the beast required by the desert dwellers of Arabia come into being? How did the sky whose atmosphere is filled with air to breathe in, whose clouds bring rain, whose sun provides light and warmth in the day, whose moon and stars shine at night, come into being? How did the earth spread out on which man lives and passes his life, whose products fulfil all his needs and requirements on whose springs and wells his life depends ?

How did the mountains rise up from the surface of the earth, which stand fixed with earth and stones of different colours and a variety of minerals in them ? Has all this happened without the artistic skill of an All-Powerful, Al-Wise Designer ? No thinking and intelligent mind can answer this question in the negative. Unless it is stubborn and obstinate, it will have to acknowledge that each one of these things was impossible, had an Omnipotent; Wise Being not made it possible. And when an All-Powerful, Wise Being created these things, there is no reason why the Hereafter should be regarded as remote from reason and impossible."

8. That is, "If a person does not listen to reason, he may not. You have not been appointed to force the will of the deniers: your only task is to distinguish the right from the wrong for the people and warn them of the consequences of following the wrong way; so this is the task you should continue to perform."



LXXXIX

AL-FAJR

اَلفَجْر

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

LXXXIX
AL-FAJR
اَلْفَجْرْ

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah is so designated after the word *wal-fajr* with which it opens.

Period of Revelation

Its contents show that it was revealed at the stage when persecution of the new converts to Islam had begun in Makkah. On that very basis the people of Makkah have been warned of the evil end of the tribes of 'Ad and Thamūd and of Pharaoh.

Theme and Subject-Matter

Its theme is to affirm the meting out of rewards and punishments in the Hereafter, which the people of Makkah were not prepared to acknowledge. Let us consider the reasoning in the order in which it has been presented.

First of all, swearing oaths by the dawn, the ten nights, the even and the odd, and the departing night, the listeners have been asked: "Are these things not enough to testify to the truth of that which you are refusing to acknowledge?" From the explanation that we have given of these four things in the corresponding notes, it will become clear that these things are a symbol of the regularity that exists in the night and day, and swearing oaths by these the question has been asked in the sense: Even after witnessing this wise system established by God, do you still need any other evidence to show that it is not beyond the power of that God Who has brought about this system to establish the Hereafter, and that it is the very requirement of His wisdom that He should call man to account for his deeds?

Then, reasoning from man's own history, the evil end of the 'Ād and the Thamūd and Pharaoh has been cited as an example to show that when they transgressed all limits and multiplied corruption in the earth, Allah laid upon them the scourge of His chastisement. This is a proof of the fact that the system of the universe is not being run by deaf and blind forces, nor is the world a lawless kingdom of a corrupt ruler, but a Wise Ruler is ruling over it, the demand of whose wisdom and justice is continuously visible in the world itself in man's own history that He should call to account, and reward and punish accordingly, the being whom He has blessed with reason and moral sense and given the right of appropriation in the world.

After this, an appraisal has been made of the general moral state of human society of which Arab paganism was a conspicuous example; two aspects of it in particular have been criticised: first the materialistic attitude of the people on account of which overlooking the moral good and evil, they regarded only the achievement of worldly wealth, rank and position, or the absence of it, as the criterion of honour or disgrace, and had forgotten that neither riches was a reward nor poverty a punishment, but that Allah is trying man in both conditions to see what

attitude he adopts when blessed with wealth and how he behaves when afflicted by poverty. Second, the people's attitude under which the orphan child in their society was left destitute on the death of the father. Nobody asked after the poor; whoever could, usurped the whole heritage left by the deceased parent, and drove away the weak heirs fraudulently. The people were so afflicted with an insatiable greed for wealth that they were never satisfied, however, much they might hoard and amass. This criticism is meant to make them realize as to why the people with such an attitude and conduct in the life of the world should not be called to account for their misdeeds.

The discourse has been concluded with the assertion that accountability shall certainly be held and it will be held on the Day when the Divine Court will be established. At that time the deniers of the judgement will understand that which they are not understanding now in spite of instruction and admonition, but understanding then will be of no avail. The denier will regret and say; 'Would that I had provided for this Day beforehand while I lived in the world.' But his regrets will not save him from Allah's punishment. However, as for the people who would have accepted the Truth, which the heavenly Books and the Prophets of God were presenting, with full satisfaction of the heart in the world, Allah will be pleased with them and they will be well pleased with the rewards bestowed by Allah. They will be called upon to join the righteous and enter Paradise.

سُوْرَةُ الْفَجْرِ مَكِّيَّةٌ

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

وَالْفَجْرِ ۙ﴿١﴾ وَلَيَالٍ عَشْرٍ ۙ﴿٢﴾ وَّالشَّفْعِ وَالْوَتْرِ ۙ﴿٣﴾ وَالَّيْلِ اِذَا يَسْرِ ۚ﴿٤﴾ هَلْ
فِيْ ذٰلِكَ قَسَمٌ لِّذِيْ حِجْرٍ ۗ﴿٥﴾ اَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِعَادٍ ۙ﴿٦﴾ اِرَمَ
ذَاتِ الْعِمَادِ ۙ﴿٧﴾ الَّتِيْ لَمْ يُخْلَقْ مِثْلُهَا فِي الْبِلَادِ ۙ﴿٨﴾ وَثَمُوْدَ الَّذِيْنَ جَابُوا
الصَّخْرَ بِالْوَادِ ۙ﴿٩﴾ وَفِرْعَوْنَ ذِي الْاَوْتَادِ ۙ﴿١٠﴾ الَّذِيْنَ طَغَوْا فِي الْبِلَادِ ۙ﴿١١﴾
فَاَكْثَرُوْا فِيْهَا الْفَسَادَ ۙ﴿١٢﴾ فَصَبَّ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّكَ سَوْطَ عَذَابٍ ۗ﴿١٣﴾ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ
لَبِالْمِرْصَادِ ۗ﴿١٤﴾ فَاَمَّا الْاِنْسَانُ اِذَا مَا ابْتَلٰىهُ رَبُّهٗ فَاَكْرَمَهٗ وَنَعَّمَهٗ ۙ فَيَقُوْلُ
رَبِّيْٓ اَكْرَمَنِ ۗ﴿١٥﴾ وَاَمَّآ اِذَا مَا ابْتَلٰىهُ فَقَدَرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقَهٗ ۙ فَيَقُوْلُ رَبِّيْٓ
اَهَانَنِ ۗ﴿١٦﴾ كَلَّا بَلْ لَّا تُكْرِمُوْنَ الْيَتِيْمَ ۗ﴿١٧﴾ وَلَا تَحٰٓضُّوْنَ عَلٰى طَعَامِ
الْمِسْكِيْنِ ۗ﴿١٨﴾ وَتَاْكُلُوْنَ التُّرَاثَ اَكْلًا لَّمًّا ۗ﴿١٩﴾ وَّتُحِبُّوْنَ الْمَالَ حُبًّا جَمًّا ۗ﴿٢٠﴾
كَلَّآ اِذَا دُكَّتِ الْاَرْضُ دَكًّا دَكًّا ۗ﴿٢١﴾ وَّجَآءَ رَبُّكَ وَالْمَلَكُ صَفًّا صَفًّا ۗ﴿٢٢﴾ وَ
جِايْٓءَ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِجَهَنَّمَ ۙ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَّتَذَكَّرُ الْاِنْسَانُ وَاَنّٰى لَهُ الذِّكْرٰى ۗ﴿٢٣﴾
يَقُوْلُ يٰلَيْتَنِيْ قَدَّمْتُ لِحَيَاتِيْ ۗ﴿٢٤﴾ فَيَوْمَئِذٍ لَّا يُعَذِّبُ عَذَابَهٗٓ اَحَدٌ ۗ﴿٢٥﴾ وَّلَا
يُوْثِقُ وَثَاقَهٗٓ اَحَدٌ ۗ﴿٢٦﴾ يٰٓاَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ۗ﴿٢٧﴾ ارْجِعِيْٓ اِلٰى رَبِّكِ
رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً ۗ﴿٢٨﴾ فَادْخُلِيْ فِيْ عِبٰدِيْ ۗ﴿٢٩﴾ وَادْخُلِيْ جَنَّتِيْ ۗ﴿٣٠﴾

LXXXIX

AL-FAJR

اَلْفَجْر

Verses: 30 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

By the dawn, and the ten nights, and the even and the odd, and the night when it departs! Is there in it an oath for a man of sense?[1] 1-5

Have you[2] not seen how your Lord dealt with ʿĀd Iram of lofty pillars,[3] the like of whom no nation was created in the lands of the world?[4] And with Thamūd who had hewed out the rocks in the valley?[5] And with Pharaoh of the stakes.[6] These were those who had committed great excesses in the lands of the world and spread great mischief in them. Consequently, your Lord let loose on them a scourge of the torment. Indeed, your Lord is ever lying in ambush.[7] 6-14

As for man,[8] whenever his Lord tries him and honours and blesses him, he says, "My Lord has honoured me." But when He tests him and restricts his provisions for him, he says, "My Lord has disgraced me."[9] Indeed not![10] But you do not treat the orphan with respect,[11] and you do not urge one another to feed the poor,[12] and you devour the whole inheritance greedily,[13] and you love the wealth with all your hearts.[14] Indeed not![15] When the earth is incessantly pounded to become a sand-desert, and your Lord comes[16] while the angels shall be standing in ranks, and Hell on that Day is brought within sight, on that Day shall man understand, but what will understanding avail him then?[17] He will say, "Would that I had provided in advance for this life of mine!" Then none can punish as Allah shall punish on that Day, and none can bind as Allah shall bind. 15-26

(To the righteous it will be said:) "O peaceful and fully satisfied soul,[18] return to your Lord: [19] you are well-pleased (with your good end) and well-pleasing (in the sight of your Lord). Join My (righteous) 27-30

servants and enter My Paradise."

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1. Much difference of opinion has been expressed by the commentators in the commentary of these verses; so much so that in respect of "the even and the odd" there are as many as 36 different views. In some traditions the commentary of these verses has also been attributed to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), but the fact is that no commentary is confirmed from him, otherwise it was not possible that anyone from among the Companions, their immediate successors, and later commentators would have dared to determine the meaning of these verses by himself after the commentary by the Holy Prophet.

After a study of the style one clearly feels that there was an argument already in progress in which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was presenting some thing and the disbelievers were denying it. At this, affirming what the Holy Prophet presented, it was said: By such and such a thing", so as to say: "By these things, what Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) says is wholly based on the truth." Then, the argument is concluded with the question: "Is there an oath in it for a man of understanding ?" That is, "Is there need for yet another oath to testify to the truth of this matter ?" Is this oath not enough to persuade a sensible man to accept that which Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) is presenting ?"

Now the question arises: what was the argument for the sake of which an oath was sworn by these four things ? For this we shall have to consider the whole theme which, in the following verses, commences with: "Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the 'Ād" and continues till the end of the Sūrah. It shows that the argument concerned the rewards and punishments of the Hereafter, which the people of Makkah were refusing to acknowledge and the Holy Messenger (upon whom be peace) was trying to convince them of this by constant preaching and instruction. At this oaths were sworn by the dawn, the ten nights, the even and the odd, and the departing night to assert: Are these four things not enough to convince a sensible man of the truth of this matter so that he may need yet another evidence for it?

After having determined the significance of these oaths in the context, we would inevitably have to take each of these in the meaning relevant to the subsequent theme. First of all, it is said: "By *Fajr*." *Fajr* is the breaking of day, *i.e.* the time when the first rays of the light of day appear in the midst of the darkness of night as a white streak from the east. Then, it is said: "By the ten nights." If the context is kept in view, it will become plain that it implies each group of the ten nights among the thirty nights of the month, the first ten nights being those during which the crescent moon starting as a thin nail goes on waxing

every night until its major portion becomes bright; the second group of the ten nights being those during which the greater part of the night remains illumined by the moon, and the last ten nights being those during which the moon goes on waning and the nights becoming more and more dark until by the end of the month the whole night becomes absolutely dark. Then, it is said : "By the even and the odd." Even is the number which is divisible into two equal parts, as 2, 4, 6, 8, and the odd the number which is not so divisible, as 1, 3, 5, 7. Generally, it may imply everything in the universe, for things in the universe either exist in pairs or as singles. But since the context here concerns the day and the night, the even and the odd mean the alternation of day and night in the sense that the dates of the month go on changing from the first to the second, and from second to the third, and every change brings with it a new state. Last of all, it is said: "By the night when it is departing", *i.e.* when the darkness which had covered the world since sunset may be at the verge of disappearing and the day be dawning.

Now let us consider as a whole the four things an oath by which has been sworn to assert that the news which Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) is giving of the meting out of rewards and punishments is wholly based on the truth. All these things point to the reality that an all-Powerful Sustainer is ruling over this universe, and nothing of what He is doing is absurd, purposeless, or lacking wisdom; on the contrary, a wise plan clearly underlies whatever He does. In His world one will never see that while it is night, the midday sun should suddenly appear overhead, or that the moon should appear one evening in the shape of the crescent and be followed next evening by the full moon, or that the night, when it falls, should never come to an end, but should become perpetual, or that there should be no system in the alternation of the day and night so that one could keep a record of the dates and know what month was passing, what was the date, on what date a particular work is to begin, and when it is to finish, what are the dates of the summer season and what of the rainy or winter season. Apart from countless other things of the universe if man only considers this regularity of the day and night intelligently and seriously, he will find evidence of the truth that this relentless discipline and order has been established by an Omnipotent Sovereign God; with it are connected countless of the advantages of the creatures whom He has created on the earth. Now, if a person living in the world of such a Wise, Omnipotent and All-Mighty Creator denies the rewards and punishments of the Hereafter, he inevitably commits one of the two errors: either he is a denier of His powers and thinks that though He has the power to create the universe with such matchless order and discipline, He is powerless to recreate man and mete out rewards and punishments to him; or he denies His wisdom and knowledge and thinks that although He has created man with intellect and powers in the world, yet He will neither ever call him to account as to how he used his intellect and his

powers, nor will reward him for his good deeds, nor punish him for his evil deeds. The one who believes in either, is foolish in the extreme.

2. After reasoning out the judgement from the system of day and night, now an argument is being given from man's own history for its being a certainty The mention of the conduct of a few well known tribes of history and their ultimate end is meant to point out that the universe is not working under some deaf and blind law of nature, but a Wise God is ruling over it, and in the Kingdom of that God only one law, which man describes as the law of nature is not working, but a moral law also is operative, which necessarily calls for retribution and rewards and punishments. The results of the working of the law have been appearing over and over again even in this world, which point out to the people of understanding as to what is the nature of the Kingdom of the Universe. Any nation which carved out a system of life for itself heedless of the Hereafter and of the rewards and punishments of God, was ultimately corrupted and depraved, and whichever nation followed this way, was eventually visited with the scourge of punishment by the Lord of the universe. This continuous experience of man's own history testifies to two things clearly: (1) That denial of the Hereafter has been instrumental in corrupting every nation and sending it ultimately to its doom; therefore, the Hereafter indeed is a reality clashing with which leads, as it has always led, to the same inevitable results; and (2) that retribution for deeds will at some time in the future take place in its full and complete form also, for the people who touched the extreme limits of corruption and depravity and were visited with punishment had been preceded be many others who had sown seeds of corruption for centuries and left the world without being visited by any scourge. The justice of God demands that all those people also should be called to account at some time and they too should suffer for their misdeeds. (Argument from history and morals for the Hereafter has been given at many places in the Qur'ān and we have explained it everywhere accordingly. For example, see E.N.'s 5, 6 of Al-A'rāf, E.N. 12 of Yūnus, E.N.'s 57, 105, 115 of Hūd, E.N. 9 of Ibrāhīm, E.N.'s 66, 86 of An-Naml, E.N. 8 of Ar-Rūm, E.N. 25 of Sabā, E.N.'s 29, 30 of Ṣuād, E.N. 80 of Al-Mu'min, E.N.'s 33, 34 of Ad-Dukhān, E.N.'s 27, 28 of Al-Jāthiah, E.N. 17 of Qaf, E.N. 21 of Adh-Dhāriyāt).

3. 'Ād Iram implies the ancient tribe of 'Ād, who have been called *'Ād Ulā* in the Qur'ān and Arabian history. In Sūrah An-Najm, it has been said: "And that We destroyed the ancient people of 'Ad" (v. 50), *i.e.* the 'Ād to whom the Prophet Hūd had been sent, and who were punished with a scourge. As against them the people of 'Ad who remained safe and flourished afterwards are remembered as *'Ād Ukhrā* in Arabian history. The ancient 'Ād are called *'Ād Iram* for the reason that they belonged to that branch of the Semetic race which

descended from Iram son of Shem son of Noah (peace be upon him). Several other sub-branches of this main branch are well known in history one of which were the Thamūd, who have been mentioned in the Qur'ān; another are the Aramaeans, who in the beginning inhabited the northern parts of Syria and whose language Aramaic occupies an important place among the Semetic languages.

The words *dhāt-ul-'imād* (of lofty pillars) have been used for the 'Ād because they built high buildings and the pattern of architecture of erecting edifices on lofty pillars was introduced by them in the world. At another place in the Qur'ān this characteristic has been mentioned in connection with the Prophet Hūd, who said to them: "What, you erect for mere pleasure a monument on every high spot, and build huge castles as if you were immortal!" (Ash-Shu'arā': 128-129).

4. That is, they were a matchless people of their time; no other nation in the world compare with them in strength, glory and grandeur. At other places in the Qur'ān, it has been said about them: "Your Lord made you very robust." (Al-A'rāf: 69) "As for the 'Ād, they became arrogant with pride in the land, without any right, and said: 'Who is stronger than us in might'? (Hā Mīm As-Sajdah: 15). "When you seized somebody, you seized him like a tyrant." (Ash-Shu'arā' 130)

5. "The valley": Wād-il-Qurā, where the Thamūd carved out dwellings in the mountains, and probably in history they were the first people who started cutting out such buildings into the rocks. (For details, see E.N.'s 57, 59 of Al-A'rāf, E.N. 45 of Al-Hijr, E.N.'s 95, 99 of Ash-Shu'arā' along with the photographs).

6. The words *dhul-autād* (of the stakes) for Pharaoh have also been used in Sūrah Suād: 12 above. This can have several meanings. Possibly his forces have been compared to the stakes, and "of the stakes" means "of great forces", for it was by their power and might that he ruled a firmly established kingdom; it might also imply multiplicity of forces and the meaning be that wherever his large armies camped, pegs of the tents were seen driven into the ground on every side; it may also imply the stakes at which he punished the people, and it is also possible that the pyramids of Egypt have been compared to the stakes, for they are the remnants of the grandeur and glory of the Pharaohs, and seem to have been driven into the ground like stakes for centuries.

7. The words "ever lying in ambush" have been used metaphorically for keeping watch on the movements and activities of the wicked and mischievous people. An ambush is a place where a person lies hiding in wait to attack somebody by surprise. The victim, thoughtless of his fate, comes and falls a prey. The same is the case against Allah of those wicked people who spread mischief in the world and have no sense and fear that there is God above them, Who is

watching all their misdeeds. Therefore, they go on committing everyday more and more evils fearlessly until they reach the limit which Allah does not permit them to transgress. At that very moment His scourge descends upon them suddenly.

8. Now, criticising the general moral state of the people, it is being said: "After all, why shouldn't the men who have adopted such an attitude in the life of the world, be ever called to account, and how can it be regarded as a demand of reason and justice that when man has left the world, after doing all he could, he should never receive any reward or suffer any punishment for his deeds?"

9. This then is man's materialistic view of life. He regards the wealth and position and power of this world alone as everything. When he has it, he is filled with pride and says God has honoured me; and when he fails to obtain it, he says: God has humiliated me. Thus, the criterion of honour and humiliation in his sight is the possession of wealth and position and power, or the absence of it, whereas the actual truth which he does not understand is that whatever Allah has given anybody in the world has been given for the sake of a trial. If he has given him wealth and power, it has been given for a trial to see whether he becomes grateful for it, or commits ingratitude. If he has made him poor, in this too there is a trial for him to see whether he remains content and patient in the will of God and faces his hardships bravely within permissible bounds, or becomes ready to transgress every limit of morality and honesty and starts cursing his God.

10 That is, this is not all the criterion of honour and disgrace, for the real criterion is the moral good and evil.

11. That is, "As long as his father is alive, your treatment of him is attentive and when his father dies, even the paternal and maternal uncles and the elder brothers, to say nothing of the neighbours and distant relatives, neglect him."

12. That is, "Nobody in your society feels any urge to feed the poor. Neither a man himself feels inclined to feed a hungry person, nor is there among the people any urge to do something to satisfy the hunger of the hungry, nor do they exhort one another to do so".

13. In Arabia, the women and children were as a rule deprived of inheritance and the people's idea in this regard was that the right to inheritance belonged only to those male members who were fit to fight and safeguard the family. Besides, the one who was more powerful and influential among the heirs of the deceased, would annex the whole inheritance without qualms, and usurp the shares of all those who did not have the power to secure their shares. They did not give any importance to the right and duty so that they should honestly render the right to whom it was due as a duty whether he had the power to secure it or not.

14. That is, "You have no regard for the permissible or the forbidden, the lawful or the unlawful. You feel no qualms about acquiring wealth in any way or by any means, fair or foul, and your greed is never satisfied however much you may have acquired and amassed. "

15. That is, "You are wrong in thinking that you may do whatever you like in your life of the world, but you will never be called to account for it. The meting out of rewards and punishment denying which you have adopted this mode of life, is not anything impossible and fictitious, but it has to come to pass and it will certainly come to pass at the time being mentioned below."

16. Although literally the words *jāā Rabbuka* mean "your Lord will come", obviously there cannot be any question of Allah Almighty's moving from one place to another: therefore, this will inevitably have to be understood as an allegoric expression, which is meant to give an idea that at that time the manifestations of Allah Almighty's power and His majesty and sovereignty will appear fully, as, for example, in the world the arrival of a king in person in the court is more awe-inspiring than the mere array of his forces and chiefs and nobles.

17. The words in the original can have two meanings: (1) That on that Day man will remember whatever he had done in the world and will regret, but what will remembrance and regretting avail him then? (2) That on that Day man will take heed and accept admonition: he will realize that whatever he had been told by the Prophets was true and he committed a folly when he did not listen to them; but what will taking heed and accepting the admonition and realizing one's errors avail one then ?

18. "Peaceful .. satisfied soul": the man who believed in Allah, the One, as his Lord and Sustainer, and adopted the Way of Life brought by the Prophets as his way of life, with full satisfaction of the heart, and without the least doubt about it, who acknowledged as absolute truth whatever creed and command he received from Allah and His Messenger, who withheld himself from whatever he was forbidden by Allah's Religion, not unwillingly but with perfect conviction that it was really an evil thing, who offered without sacrifice whatever sacrifice was required to be offered for the sake of the truth who endured with full peace of mind whatever difficulties, troubles and hardships he met on this way and who felt no remorse on being deprived of the gains and benefits and pleasures in the world which seemed to accrue to those who followed other ways but remained fully satisfied that adherence to true Faith had safeguarded him against those errors. This very state has been described at another place in the Qur'ān as *sharh sadr*. (Al-An'ām 125)

19. This he will be told at the time of his death as well as on the Day of Resurrection when he will rise from the dead and move towards the Plain of Assembly and also on the occasion when he will be presented in the Divine Court; at every stage he will be assured that he is moving towards the Mercy of Allah Almighty.



XC

AL-BALAD

اَلْبَلَدْ

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

XC

AL-BALAD

اَلْبَلَدْ

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah has been so named after the word *al-balad* in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

Its subject-matter and style resemble those of the earliest Sūrahs revealed at Makkah, but it contains a pointer which indicates that it was sent down in the period when the disbelievers of Makkah had resolved to oppose the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace), and made it lawful for themselves to commit tyranny and excess against him.

Theme and Subject-Matter

In this Sūrah a vast subject has been compressed into a few brief sentences, and it is a miracle of the Qur'ān that a complete ideology of life which could hardly be explained in a thick volume has been abbridged most effectively in brief sentences of this short Sūrah. Its theme is to explain the true position of man in the world and of the world in relation to man and to tell that God has shown to man both the highways of good and evil, has also provided for him the means to judge and see and follow them, and now it rests upon man's own effort and judgement whether he chooses the path of virtue and reaches felicity or adopts the path of vice and meets with doom.

First, the city of Makkah and the hardships being faced therein by the holy prophet (upon whom be peace) and the state of the children of Adam have been cited as a witness to the truth that this world is not a place of rest and ease for man, where he might have been born to enjoy life, but here he has been created into toil and struggle, If this theme is read with verse 39 of Sūrah An-Najm (*Laisa lil-insān-i illā mā sa'ā:* there is nothing for man but what he has striven for), it becomes plain that in this world the future of man depends on his toil and struggle, effort and striving.

After this, man's misunderstanding that he is all in all in this world and that there is no superior power to watch what he does and to call him to account, has been refuted.

Then, taking one of the many moral concepts of ignorance held by man, as an example, it has been pointed out what wrong criteria of merit and greatness he has proposed for himself in the world, The person who for ostentation and display squanders heaps of wealth, not only himself prides upon his extravagances but the people also admire him for it enthusiastically, whereas the Being Who is watching over his deeds, sees by what methods he obtained the wealth and in what ways and with what motives and intentions he spent it.

Then Allah says: We have given man the means of knowledge and the faculties of thinking and understanding and opened up before him both the highways of virtue and vice: one way leads down to moral depravity, and it is an easy way pleasing for the self; the other way leads up to moral heights, which is steep like an uphill road; for scaling which

man has to exercise self-restraint. It is man's weakness that he prefers slipping down into the abyss to scaling the cliff.

Then, Allah has explained what the steep road is by following which man can ascend to the heights. It is that he should give up spending for ostentation, display and pride and should spend his wealth to help the orphans and the needy, should believe in Allah and His Religion and joining the company of believers should participate in the construction of a society which should fulfil the demands of virtue and righteousness patiently and should be compassionate to the people. The end of those who follow this way is that they would become worthy of Allah's mercies. On the contrary, the end of those who follow the wrong way, is the fire of Hell from which there is no escape.



لَآ اُقْسِمُ بِهٰذَا الْبَلَدِ ۙ﴿۱﴾ وَ اَنْتَ حِلٌّۢ بِهٰذَا الْبَلَدِ ۙ﴿۲﴾ وَ وَالِدٍ وَّ مَا وَلَدَ ۙ﴿۳﴾ لَقَدْ
خَلَقْنَا الْاِنْسَانَ فِيْ كَبَدٍ ؕ﴿۴﴾ اَيَحْسَبُ اَنْ لَّنْ يَّقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ اَحَدٌ ۘ﴿۵﴾ يَقُوْلُ
اَهْلَكْتُ مَالًا لُّبَدًا ؕ﴿۶﴾ اَيَحْسَبُ اَنْ لَّمْ يَرَهٗۤ اَحَدٌ ۘ﴿۷﴾ اَلَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَّهٗ عَيْنَيْنِ ۙ﴿۸﴾
وَ لِسَانًا وَّ شَفَتَيْنِ ۙ﴿۹﴾ وَ هَدَيْنٰهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ ۚ﴿۱۰﴾ فَلَا اقْتَحَمَ الْعَقَبَةَ ۚ﴿۱۱﴾ وَ مَاۤ
اَدْرٰىكَ مَا الْعَقَبَةُ ؕ﴿۱۲﴾ فَكُّ رَقَبَةٍ ۙ﴿۱۳﴾ اَوْ اِطْعٰمٌ فِيْ يَوْمٍ ذِيْ مَسْغَبَةٍ ۙ﴿۱۴﴾
يَّتِيْمًا ذَا مَقْرَبَةٍ ۙ﴿۱۵﴾ اَوْ مِسْكِيْنًا ذَا مَتْرَبَةٍ ؕ﴿۱۶﴾ ثُمَّ كَانَ مِنَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا
وَ تَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ وَ تَوَاصَوْا بِالْمَرْحَمَةِ ؕ﴿۱۷﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ اَصْحٰبُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ ؕ﴿۱۸﴾
وَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا هُمْ اَصْحٰبُ الْمَشْئَمَةِ ؕ﴿۱۹﴾ عَلَيْهِمْ نَارٌ مُّؤْصَدَةٌ ؕ﴿۲۰﴾

XC

AL-BALAD

اَلْبَلَدْ

Verses: 20 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Nay![1] I swear by this City,[2] while you (O Prophet), have been made lawful in this City.[3] And I swear by father and the children he begot[4] that We have indeed created man in toil[5]. Does he think that no one will have power over him?[6] He says, "I have squandered heaps of wealth."[7] Does he think that no one has seen him?[8] Have We not given him two eyes, and a tongue and two lips,[9] and shown him both the highways (of good and evil)?[10] Yet he has not attempted the steep pass.[11] And what do you know what the steep pass is? It is the freeing of a neck from bondage, or the feeding in a day of hunger of a nearly related orphan, or a poor man lying in the dust.[12] Then (besides) one should be of those who have believed[13] and exhorted one another to patience and exhorted one another to mercy (for God's creatures).[14] These are the people of the right hand. As for those who refuse to believe in Our Revelations, they are the people of the left hand.[15] They shall have a Fire enveloping them.[16] 1-20

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1. As we have explained in E.N.1 of Sūrah Al-Qiyāmah above, to begin a discourse with a "Nay" and resume it with an oath means that the people were asserting a wrong thing to refute which it was said: "Nay, the truth is not that which you seem to assert, but I swear by such and such a thing that the truth is this and this" As for the question what it was to refute which this discourse was sent down, it is indicated by the theme that follows. The disbelievers of Makkah said that there was nothing wrong with the way of life that they were following, as if to say: "Eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die in the natural process of time. Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), without any reason, is finding fault with this way of life and warning us that we would at some time in the future be called to account for it and rewarded and punished accordingly."

2. "This City": the city of Makkah. There was no need here to explain why an oath was being sworn by this City. The people of Makkah were well aware of the background and importance of their city and knew how in the midst of desolate mountains, in an un-cultivated, barren valley, the Prophet Abraham had brought his wife and suckling child and left them there without any support; how he had built a House there and proclaimed to the people to visit it as pilgrims when there was no soul for miles around to hear the proclamation, and then how this city had eventually become the commercial and religious centre of Arabia and was blessed with such sacredness that there was no other place of security beside it in that lawless land for centuries.

3. Three meanings of the words in the Text have been given by the commentators: (1) "That you are a resident of this city and your residence here has further enhanced the glory of this city"; (2) "that although this city is a sanctuary; a time will come when for some time it will become lawful for you to fight and kill the enemies of the true Faith here; and (3) "that in this city where even killing of animals and cutting of trees is forbidden for the people of Arabia, and where everyone is living in perfect peace, you, O Prophet, have no peace, and persecuting you and devising plans to kill you has been made lawful." Although the words are comprehensive enough to cover all the three meanings, yet when the theme that follows is considered, one feels that the first two meanings bear no relevance to it, and only the third meaning seems to be correct.

4. As the words "father and children he begot" have been used indefinitely, and this is followed by the mention of man, father could only imply Adam (peace be on him) and children the human beings who existed in the world, exist today and will exist in the future.

5. This is that for which the oaths as mentioned above have been sworn. Man's being created in toil means that man in this world has not been created to enjoy himself and live a life of ease and comfort, but the world for him is a place of enduring and undergoing toil, labour and hardship, and no man can be immune from this. The city of Makkah is a witness that a servant of Allah toiled and struggled hard, then only did it become a city and the centre of Arabia. In this city of Makkah the condition of Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is a witness that he is enduring every kind of hardship for the sake of a mission; so much so that there is full peace here for the wild animals but no peace for him. Then, every man's survival, from the time he is conceived in the mother's womb till the last breath of life, is a witness that he has to pass through trouble, toil, labour, dangers and hardships at every step. The most fortunate of us is also exposed to grave dangers of death before birth or of elimination by abortion while in the mother's womb. At birth he is only a hair-breadth away from death. After birth he is so

helpless that had there not been somebody to look after him, he would perish uncared for and un-noticed. When he became able to walk he stumbled at every step. From childhood to youth and old age he had to pass through such physical changes that if any change had taken a wrong turn, his very life would have been at stake. Even if he is a king or a dictator, he at no time enjoys internal peace from the fear that a rebellion might arise against him somewhere. Even if he is a conqueror he is never at peace from the danger that one of his generals might rise in revolt against him. Even if he is a Korah of his time, he is ever anxious to increase his wealth and to safeguard it. Thus, there is no one who may be enjoying perfect peace freely and without hesitation, for man indeed has been created into a life of toil and trouble.

6. That is: Is man, who is ever exposed to such hazards, involved in the delusion that he can do what he likes, and there is no superior power to seize and suppress him? The fact, however, is that even before the occurrence of the Hereafter in this world itself, he sees that his destiny every moment is being ruled by some other Being against Whose decrees all his plans and designs prove ineffective. A single jolt of the earthquake, a blast of wind, a flood in the river and a sea-storm are enough to show how weak and feeble man is against the Divine forces. A sudden accident can reduce a strong and robust person to a cripple; one turn of the fortune deposes a mighty sovereign from the position of authority. When the fortunes of the nations, which have climbed to the very apex of glory and prosperity, change, they are humiliated and disgraced even in the world where no one could dare look them in the face. How has then this man been deluded into thinking that no one else can have power over him ?

7. Literally: "I have destroyed heaps of wealth", i.e. squandered and wasted it. These words show how proud the speaker was of his wealth. The heaps of wealth that he spent was so insignificant as against his total wealth that he did not mind squandering it carelessly. And to what purpose did he squander it? Not for a genuine, good cause as becomes evident from the following verses, but for display of his wealth and expression of his pride and glory. Bestowing rich awards on poetic admirers, inviting and feeding hundreds of thousands of people on marriage and death ceremonies, gambling away heaps of wealth, attending festivals with large entourages, trying to excel others in display of glory and grandeur, having heaps of food cooked on ceremonial occasions and throwing invitations to all and sundry to come and eat, or arranging and supplying running meals at the residence so as to impress the people around with one's generosity and large-heartedness; such were the expenditures of ostentation, which in the days of ignorance were regarded as a symbol of man's munificence and magnanimity, and a sign of his greatness. For these they were praised and admired; on these their

praises were sung; and on account of these they prided themselves against the less fortunate.

8. That is, "Doesn't this boaster understand that there is also a God above him, Who sees by what means he obtained this wealth, in what ways he spent it, and with what intention, motive, and purpose he did all this ? Does he think that God will put any value on his extravagance, his fame-mongering and his boasting? Does he think that like the world, God too will be deluded by it ?"

9. That is, ""Have We not given him the means of obtaining knowledge and wisdom ?" "Two eyes" does not imply the eyes of the cow and buffalo, but human eyes, which if used intelligently can help man see all around himself those signs which lead to the reality and distinguish the right from the wrongs. "The tongue and lips" do not merely imply the instruments of speech but the rational mind behind these instruments which performs the functions of thinking and understanding and then uses them for expressing its ideas, motives and designs.

10. That is, "We have not left him alone after granting him the faculties of thinking and reasoning so that he may have to search out his own way, but We have also guided him and opened up before him both the highways of good and evil, virtue and vice, so that he may consider them seriously and choose and adopt one or the other way on his own responsibility. This same subject has been expressed in Sūrah Ad-Dahr: 2-3, thus: "Indeed We created man from a mixed sperm-drop, to try him, and so We made him capable of hearing and seeing. We showed him the way, whether to be grateful or disbelieving." For explanation, see E.N.'s 3 to 5 of Ad-Dahr.

11. The words in the original are: *fa-laqtaham-al-'aqabah. Iqtiḥām* means to apply oneself to a hard and toilsome task, and *'aqabah* is the steep path that passes through mountains for ascending heights. Thus, the verse means: "One of the two paths that We have shown him, leads to heights but is toilsome and steep; man has to tread it against the desires of his self and the temptations of Satan. The other path is easy which descends into chasms, but does not require any toil from man; one only needs to give free reins to oneself, then one automatically goes on rolling down the abyss. Now, the man to whom We had shown both the paths, adopted the easy down-hill path and abandoned the toilsome path, which leads to the heights."

12. Since in the foregoing verses the extravagances of man which he indulges in for ostentation and expression of superiority to others, have been mentioned, now here it is being stated as to what expenditure of wealth it is which leads man up to moral heights instead of causing him to sink into moral depravity and perversion. But in this there is no enjoyment for the self; on the contrary, man

has to exercise self-restraints and make sacrifices. The expenditure is that one should set a slave free, or should render a slave monetary help so as to enable him to win his freedom by paying the ransom, or free a debtor from his debt, or secure release of a helpless person without means from penalties. Likewise, the expenditure is that one should feed a nearly related orphan (*i.e.* an orphan who is either a relative or a neighbour) who is hungry, and a needy, helpless person who might have been reduced to extreme poverty and might have none to support and help him. Helping such people does not win a person fame and reputation, nor feeding them brings him the admiration for being wealthy and generous which one usually wins by holding banquets to thousands of well-to-do people. But the path to moral and spiritual heights passes on steep uphill roads only.

Great merits of the acts of virtue mentioned in these verses have been described by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace). For instance, about *fakku raqabah* (freeing a neck from bondage) many *aḥadīth* have been related in the traditions, one of which is a tradition from Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, to the effect; "The Holy Prophet said: The person who set a believing slave free, Allah will save from fire of Hell every limb of his body in lieu of every limb of the slave's body, the hand in lieu of the hand, the foot in lieu of the foot, the private parts in lieu of the private parts " (Musnad, Aḥmad, Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī). Ḥaḍrat 'Alī bin Husain (Imām Zain al-'Ābedin) asked Sa'd bin Marjānah, the reporter of this *Ḥadīth*: "Did you hear it yourself from Abū Hurairah?" When he replied in the affirmative, Imām Zain al-'Ābedīn called out his most valuable slave and set him free there and then. According to Muslim, he had an offer often thousand *dirhams* for the slave. On the basis of this verse, Imām Abu Ḥanīfah and Imām Sha'bī have ruled: "Setting a slave free is superior to giving away charity, for Allah has mentioned it before the mention of charity."

The Holy Prophet has mentioned the merits of rendering help to the needy in many *aḥādīth*, one of which is this *Ḥadīth* from Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah: "The Holy Prophet said: The one who strives in the cause of rendering help to the widow and the needy is like the one who endeavours and strives in the cause of *Jihād* for the sake of Allah. (And Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah says :) I think that the Holy Prophet also said: He is even like him who keeps standing up in the Prayer constantly, without ever taking rest, and like him who observes the fast continuously without ever breaking it." (Bukharī, Muslim).

As for the orphans, there are numerous sayings reported from the Holy Prophet. Ḥaḍrat Sahl bin Sa'd has reported: "The Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said: I and the one who supports a nearly related or un-related orphan, shall stand in Paradise like this—saying this he raised his index finger and the middle finger, keeping them a little apart." (Bukhārī). Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah has reported

this saying of the Holy Prophet: "The best among the Muslim homes is the home wherein an orphan is treated well and the worst the one wherein an orphan is mistreated." (Ibn Mājah, Bukhārī in *Al-Adab al-Mufrad*). Ḥaḍrat Abū Umāmah says that the Holy Prophet said: "The one who passed his hand on the head of an orphan, only for the sake of Allah, will have as many acts of virtue recorded in his favour as the number of the hair on which his hand passed, and the one who treated an orphan boy or girl well, will stand in Paradise with me like this...saying this the Holy Prophet joined his two fingers together." (Musnad Aḥmad, Tirmidhī). Ibn 'Abbās says: The Holy Prophet said: "The one who made an orphan join him in eating and drinking, Allah will make Paradise obligatory for him unless he commits a sin which cannot be forgiven." (*Sharh as-Sunnah*). Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah says: A man complained before the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), saying: "I am hard-hearted." The Holy Prophet said to him: "Treat the orphan with kindness and love and feed the needy one." (Musnad Aḥmad).

13. That is, "In addition to these qualities it is essential that one should be a believer, for without faith no act is an act of virtue, nor acceptable in the sight of Allah. At numerous places in the Qur'ān it has been stated that only such an act of virtue is appreciable and becomes a means of salvation as is accompanied by faith. In Sūrah An-Nisā', for example, it has been said: "The one who does good deeds, whether man or woman, provided that the one is a believer, will enter Paradise (v. 124-5.)" In Sūrah An-Naḥl: "Whosoever does righteous deeds, whether male or female, provided that he is a believer, We shall surely grant him to live a pure life in this world, and We will reward such people (in the Hereafter) according to their best deeds" (v. 97). In Sūrah Al-Mu'min: "Whoever does good, whether man or woman, provided that he is a believer, all such people shall enter Paradise wherein they shall be provided without measure," (v : 40). Whoever studies the Qur'ān, will see that in this Book wherever the good reward of a righteous act has been mentioned, it has always been made conditional upon the faith, a good act without faith; has nowhere been regarded as acceptable to God, nor has any hope been given for a reward for it.

Here, the following important point also should not remain hidden from view: In this verse it has not been said: "Then he believed", but: "Then he joined those who believed." This means that mere believing as an individual and remaining content with it is not what is desired; what is desired is that every new believer should join those who have already believed so as to form a party of the believers, to bring about a believing society, which should work for establishing the virtues and wiping out the vices as demanded by the faith.

14. These are two of the important characteristics of the believing society, which have been expressed in two brief sentences. The first characteristic is that its members should exhort one another to patience, and the second that they should exhort one another to compassion and mercy.

As for patience, we have explained at many places that in view of the extensive meaning in which the Qur'ān has used this word, the entire life of a believer is a life of patience. As soon as a man stops on to the path of the faith, test of his patience starts. Patience is required to be exercised in performing the acts of worship enjoined by Allah patience is needed in carrying out the commands of Allah; abstenation from the things forbidden by Allah is not possible without patience; patience is needed in abandoning the moral evils and in adopting the pure morals; temptations to sin faced at every step can be resisted only by recourse to patience. On countless occasions in life obedience to God's law entails losses, troubles, hardships and deprivations, and disobedience to the law seems to bring benefits and pleasures. Without patience no believer can fare well on such occasions. Then, as soon as a believer has adopted the way of the faith, he has to meet with resistance not only from his own self and personal desires but also from his children, family, society, country and nation and from the base-hearted among men and *jinn* of the entire world; so much so that he is even required to abandon his country and undertake *Jihād* in the cause of God. Under all these conditions only the quailty of patience can cause a man to remain steadfast to principles. Now, obviously, if every believer individually was put to such a hard test, he would be faced with the danger of defeat at every step and would hardly be able to pass through the test successfully. On the contrary, if there existed a believing society every member of which was not only himself possessed of patience but all its members also were supporting one another mutually in the test of patience, successes would fall to its lot, a tremendous power would be generated to face the evil, a mighty force of good individuals would be ready to help bring the entire society on to the path of virtue and righteousness.

As for mercy and compassion, it is the distinctive feature of the society of believers that they are not a hard-hearted, merciless and unjust people but a society whose members are merciful and compassionate to humanity at large and sympathetic and friendly among themselves. A believer as an individual is an embodiment of Allah's quality of mercy and the group of the believers as a party also is a representative of Allah's Messenger, who has been described thus: "O Muhammad, We have sent you to be a real blessing for the people of the world." (Al-Anbiyā': 107). The highest moral quality which the Holy Messenger (upon whom be Allah's peace) tried his utmost to inculcate among his followers was this very quality of mercy. Consider the following of his sayings, which show what

importance he attached to it. Hadrat Jarīr bin 'Abdullah says that the Holy Messenger (upon whom be peace) said: "Allah does not show mercy to him who does not show mercy to others." (Buhkārī, Muslim).

Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin al-'Ās says that the holy Prophet said: "The Rahman (Merciful) shows mercy to those who show mercy (to others). Show mercy to those who live in the earth, the One who is in heaven will show mercy to you." (Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī).

Ḥaḍrat Abū Sa'īd Khudrī has reported that the Holy Prophet said: "The one who does not show mercy, is not shown mercy." (Bukhārī in *Al-Adab al-Mufrad).*

Ibn 'Abbās says that the Holy Prophet said: "The one who does not treat our young ones mercifully and does not treat our elderly ones respectfully, does not belong to us." (Tirmidhī).

Abū Da'ūd has related this same saying of the Holy Prophet on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Amr, thus: "The one who did not feel pity on our young and did not resspect our elderly does not belong to us."

Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah says: "I have heard Abul-Qāsim, the Truthful (upon whom be peace), say: "The heart of the wretched one is deprived of the quality of mercy altogether'." (Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhī).

Ḥaḍrat 'Iyād bin Humād relates that the Holy Prophet said: "Three kinds of men belong to Paradise, one of whom is the person who is kindly and compassionate to every relative and every Muslim." (Muslim).

Ḥaḍrat Nu'mān bin Bashir has reported that the Holy Prophet said: "You will find the believers like a body in the matter of mutual kindness, love and sympathy, so that if one part of the body suffers the whole body suffers and becomes restless because of it." (Bukhārī, Muslim).

Ḥaḍrat Abū Mūsā Al-ash'arī says that the Holy Prophet said: "The believer is for the other believer like a wall each part of which supports and strengthens the other part." (Bukhārī, Muslim).

Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar has reported that the Holy Prophet said: "A Muslim is a brother of the other Muslim; neither treats him unjustly, nor withholds his help from him. The person who works to fulfil a need of his brother, Allah will seek to fulfil his need; and the one who rescues a Muslim from an affliction, Allah will rescue him from an affliction of the afflictions of the Resurrection Day; and

the one who conceals the fault of a Muslim, Allah will conceal his fault on the Resurrection Day. " (Bukhārī, Muslim).

These traditions indicate what kind of a society is envisaged by the Qur'anic instruction given in this verse, which exhorts the righteous people to join the group of the believers after they have affirmed the faith.

15. For an explanation of "the people of the right hand and of the left hand", see E.N.'s 5, 6 of Sūrah Al-Wāqi'ah.

16. That is, fire will be so covering them from every side that they will find no way of escape from it.


XCI
ASH-SHAMS
الشَّمْس

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

XCI

ASH-SHAMS

الشَّمْس

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah has been so designated after the word *ash-shams* with which it opens.

Period of Revelation

The subject-matter and the style show that this sūrah too was revealed in the earliest period at Makkah at a stage when opposition to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) had grown very strong and intense.

Theme and Subject-Matter

Its theme is to distinguish the good from the evil and to warn the people, who were refusing to understand this distinction and insisting on following the evil way, of the evil end.

In view of the subject-matter this Sūrah consists of two parts. The first part consists of vv. 1-10, and the second of vv. 11-15. The first part deals with three things: (1) That just as the sun and the moon, the day and the night, the earth and the sky, are different from each other and contradictory in their effects and results, so are the good and the evil different from each other and contradictory in their effects and results; they are neither alike in their outward appearance nor can they be alike in their results. (2) That Allah after giving the human self powers of the body, sense and mind has not left it un-informed in the world, but has instilled into his unconscious by means of a natural inspiration the distinction between good and evil, right and wrong, and the sense of the good to be good and of the evil to be evil. (3) That the future of man depends on how by using the powers of discrimination, will and judgement that Allah has endowed him with, he develops the good and suppresses the evil tendencies of the self. If he develops the good inclination and frees his self of the evil inclinations, he will attain to eternal success, and if, on the contrary, he suppresses the good and promotes the evil, he will meet with disappointment and failure.

In the second part citing the historical precedent of the people of Thamūd the significance of Apostleship has been brought out. A Messenger is raised in the world, because the inspirational knowledge of good and evil that Allah has placed in human nature, is by itself not enough for the guidance of man, but on account of his failure to understand it fully man has been proposing wrong criteria and theories of good and evil and thus going astray. That is why Allah sent down clear and definite Revelation to the Prophets (peace be upon them) to augment man's natural inspiration so that they may expound to the people as to what is good and what is evil. Likewise, the Prophet Sālih (peace be upon him) was sent to the people of Thamūd, but the people overwhelmed by the evil of their self, had become so rebellious that they rejected him. And when he presented before them the miracle of the she-camel, as demanded by themselves, the most wretched one of them, in

spite of his warning, hamstrung it, in accordance with the will and desire of the people. Consequently, the entire tribe was overtaken by a disaster.

While narrating this story of the Thamūd nowhere in the Sūrah has it been said.; "O people of Quraish, if you rejected your Prophet, Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), as the Thamūd had rejected theirs, you too would meet with the same fate as they met." The conditions at that time in Makkah were similar to those that had been created by the wicked among the people of Thamūd against the Prophet Sālih (peace be upon him). Therefore, the narration of this story in those conditions was by itself enough to suggest to the people of Makkah how precisely this historical precedent applied to them.

سُوْرَةُ الشَّمْسِ (٩١) مَكِّيَّةٌ (٢٩) — رُكُوْعُهَا ١ — اٰيَاتُهَا ١٥

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

وَالشَّمْسِ وَضُحٰىهَا ۝١ وَالْقَمَرِ اِذَا تَلٰىهَا ۝٢ وَالنَّهَارِ اِذَا جَلّٰىهَا ۝٣
وَالَّيْلِ اِذَا يَغْشٰىهَا ۝٤ وَالسَّمَآءِ وَمَا بَنٰىهَا ۝٥ وَالْاَرْضِ وَمَا طَحٰىهَا ۝٦
وَنَفْسٍ وَّمَا سَوّٰىهَا ۝٧ فَاَلْهَمَهَا فُجُوْرَهَا وَتَقْوٰىهَا ۝٨ قَدْ اَفْلَحَ مَنْ
زَكّٰىهَا ۝٩ وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسّٰىهَا ۝١٠ كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُوْدُ بِطَغْوٰىهَآ ۝١١ اِذِ
انْۢبَعَثَ اَشْقٰىهَا ۝١٢ فَقَالَ لَهُمْ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ نَاقَةَ اللّٰهِ وَسُقْيٰهَا ۝١٣
فَكَذَّبُوْهُ فَعَقَرُوْهَا ۝١٤ فَدَمْدَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِذَنْۢبِهِمْ فَسَوّٰىهَا ۝١٥
وَلَا يَخَافُ عُقْبٰهَا ۝١٦

XCI

ASH-SHAMS

الشَّمْس

Verses :15 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

By the sun and his brightness,[1] and by the moon when she follows him, and by the day when it makes (the sun) conspicuous and by the night when it covers up (the sun),[2] and by the heaven and Him Who estabished it,[3] and by the earth and Him Who spread it, and by the human self and Him Who balanced it,[4] then inspired it with its wickedness and its piety;[5] Truly successful is he who purified his self and a failure he who suppressed it [6] 1-10

Thamūd[7] belied (the Truth) because of their transgression.[8] When the most wretched of them rose up, in his rage, the Messenger of Allah warned them, saying, "(Do not molest) the she-camel of Allah, and (do not hinder her from) drinking water."[9] But they belied what he said and killed the she-camel.[10] Consequently, their Lord let loose on them a scourge in consequence of their sin and levelled them down all together, and he has no fear of any evil result (of his this action). [11] 11-15

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1. The word *duhā* as used in the original applies both to the light of the sun and to its heat. Although in Arabic its well known meaning is the time between sunrise and meridian when the sun has risen high, at that height it does not only give light but heat too. Therefore, when the word *duhā* is attributed to the sun, its full meaning can be expressed more appropriately by its radiant brightness than by its light, or by the time of the day that it indicates.

2. That is, when the night comes, the sun hides and its light remains hidden throughout the night. This state has been described, saying that the night covers up the sun, for the night actually signifies the sun's hiding behind the horizon because of which its light cannot reach that part of the earth where the night has fallen.

3. "Who established it": Who established it like a vault over the earth. In this verse and in the two succeeding verses, the word *mā* has been used. A section

of the commentators has taken this *mā* as an infinitive, and interpreted these verses to mean "By the heaven and its being established, by the earth and its being spread out, and by the human self and its being balanced." But this meaning is not correct for the reason that the following sentence: "then inspired it with its wickedness and its piety", does not fit in with the context. Other commentators have taken *mā* here in the meaning of *man* or *alladhī*, and they interpret the sentence to mean: "Who established the heaven, who spread out the earth, and who balanced the human self." This second meaning is correct in our view, and no one can object that *mā* in Arabic is used of lifeless things and irrational creatures. For in the Qur'ān itself there are numerous instances that *mā* has been used in the meaning of *man*, e.g. *we lā antum 'ābidūna mā a'bud* ("nor are you the worshippers of Him Whom I worship"), *fankihū mā tābā lakum-min-an-nisā'* ("so, marry from among the women those whom you like") *wa lā tankihū mā nakaha abāā'ukum min-nisa'* ("do not marry those women whom your fathers had married").

4. "Balanced it": gave man such a body which by virtue of its erect stature, its hands and feet, and its brain was most appropriate for him to live as man in the world. He blessed him with the senses of sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell which on account of their combination and their characteristics could become the best means of obtaining knowledge for him. He endowed him with the faculties of thinking and reasoning, imagination, memory, discrimination, judgement, will-power and such other mental powers by virtue of which he is able to perform the functions fit for man in the world. In addition, balancing also means that man was not created a sinner by birth and a criminal by instinct but on right and sound nature, and was not characterised with any inborn crookedness because of which he may be unable to adopt the right path even if he wanted to do so. This same thing has been expressed in Sūrah Ar-Rūm, saying: "Be steadfast on the nature whereupon Allah has created mankind." (v. 30), and the same has been explained by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) in a *Hadīth*, saying: "Every new-born child is born on true human nature; it is his parents who make him a Jew or a Christian or a Magian afterwards. Its example is of an animal giving birth to complete and sound young one. Do you find any one with a torn or slit ear ?" (Bukhārī, Muslim). That is, it is the polytheistic people who on account of their superstitions of ignorance tear and slit the ears of animals afterwards; otherwise God does not cause an animal to be born with torn ears from its mother's belly. In another *Hadīth*, the Holy Prophet said: "My Lord says: I had created all My servants on true Faith (*i.e.* on sound nature); then the satans came and led them astray from their Faith (*i.e.* the true natural Faith) and made unlawful what I had made lawful for them, and commanded them to associate with Me those for whom I had sent down no authority." (Musnad Ahmad; Muslim also has related a saying from the Holy Prophet in similar words).

5. The word *ilhām* is derived from *lahm* which means to swallow. According to this very basic meaning, the word *ilhām* is used terminologically for Allah's inspiring a man with a concept or idea unconsciously. Inspiring the human self with its wickedness and its piety and virtue has two meanings: (1) That the Creator has placed in it tendencies to both good and evil, and this is the thing that every man feels in himself. (2) That Allah has endowed every man's unconscious mind with the concept that there is a moral good and there is a moral evil, that good morals and acts and evil morals and acts are not equal and alike; *fujūr* (immorality) is an evil thing and *taqva* (abstention from evils) a good thing. These concepts are not new to man; he is conscious of these by nature, and the Creator has endowed him with the ability to distinguish between good and evil naturally. This same thing has been said in Sūrah Al-Balad: "And We showed him both the highways of good and evil." v. 10); and in Sūrah Ad Dahr, thus: "We showed him the way, whether to be grateful or disbelieving" (v. 3); and the same has been expressed in Sūrah Al-Qiyāmah, saying: "In man there is the reproaching self (conscience) which reproaches him when he commits evil (v. 2)," and "Man knows his own self best, even though he may offer many excuses." (vv. 14-15).

Here, one should also understaud well that Allah has blessed every creature with natural inspiration according to its position and nature, as has been pointed out in Sūrah Tā Hā: "Who has given a distinctive form to everything and then guided it aright," (v. 50). For example, every species of animals has been given inspirational knowledge according to its needs by virtue of which the fish learns to swim, the bird to fly, the bee to make the beehive and the weaver-bird to build the nest instinctively. Man also in view of his different capacities has been granted separate kinds of inspirational knowledge. His one capacity is that he is an animal being; as such the most significant instance of the inspirational knowledge that he has been given is that the human child starts sucking the mother's milk soon on birth, which no one could teach it, had it, not been taught it instinctively by God. Another position of man is that he is a rational being. As such God has been blessing him with inspirational guidance continuously since the time of his creation, by virtue of which he has been discovering things and making inventions to develop his civilization. Anyone who studies the history of these discoveries and inventions will realize that there was hardly any which might be the result of man's own effort or thought, but mostly it so happened that suddenly an idea struck a person and he discovered or invented something. Besides these two, another position of man is that he is a moral being. In this position too Allah has blessed him by inspiration with discrimination between good and evil and of the realization of the good to be good and of the evil to be evil. This sense of discrimination and realization is a universal truth on account of which no human society in the world has even been without the concepts of good and evil; there has never been in

history, nor is there now, a society which may not be having some kind of a system of rewarding the good and punishing the evil, this fact being prevalent in every age, at every place, and at every stage of civilization is a clear proof of its being natural and innate. Furthermore, this is also proof that a Wise Creator possessed of knowledge has endued man's nature with it, for in the elements of which man is made up and the laws which govern the material system of the world, no human origin of morals can be traced out.

6. This is for which an oath has been sworn by the things mentioned in the above verses. Let us now consider how those things bear upon it. The rule that Allah has followed in the Qur'ān is that to bear testimony to the truths that He wants to impress on the human mind, he cites some of the most conspicuous, common-place things which every man sees in his surroundings, or in his own self. Accordingly here, pairs of contradictory things have been cited, each unlike the other in its effects and results, rather opposite and reverse. The first pair is of the sun and the moon. The light of the sun is intensely bright and also hot. As against it the moon has no light of its own. Even if it is there in the sky when the sun shines, it is without light. It shines when the sun hides, and even then its light is neither so bright that it may change the night into day nor is there any heat in it that it may have the same effect as the sun's light. Nevertheless, it has its own effects which are quite different from the effects of the sun. Likewise, there is the pair of the day and the night. Each is the reverse of the other. The effects and results of each are so different from the other that no one can say they are alike; so much so that even a most foolish person cannot possibly say that the day's being the day or the night's being the night does not make any difference. Likewise, there is the pair of the sky and the earth; the former has been raised high by the Creator and the latter spread like a carpet beneath it. Although both are serving the same universe, its system and expediencies, yet there is a world of difference between their functions and their effects and results. After citing these universal evidences, man's own self has been considered, and it has been said that after balancing it with suitable combination of the limbs, senses and mental powers and faculties the Creator has placed in it tendencies, inclinations and motives to both good and evil, which are contradictory to each other, and made him understand by inspiration the distinction between the two: that one is *fujūr*, which is evil, and the other is *taqwā*, which is good. Now, if the sun and the moon, the day and the night, the earth and the heaven, are not alike but necessarily different from each other in their effects and results, how can *fujūr* and *taqwā* of the self be alike in spite of being reverse of each other? Man himself in this world does not regard and acknowledge the good and the evil as equal, no matter what criteria of good and evil he might have devised for himself according to his self-propounded philosophies. In any case, about whatever he regards as good, he holds the opinion

that it is appreciable and worthy of praise, reward and recompense. On the contrary, about whatever he regards as evil, it is his own objective opinion that it is worthy of condemnation and punishment. But the real judgement does not lie with man; it lies with the Creator, Who has inspired man with his *fujūr* and *taqva*. The *fujūr* is that which is *fujūr* in the sight of the Creator and the *taqva* that which is *taqva* in His sight, and both have separate results in the sight of the Creator. The result of the one is that he who purifies his self, should attain to eternal success, and the result of the, other is that he who suppresses his self, should be a failure,

Tazkiyah means to purify, develop and cultivate. In the context it clearly means the one who purifies his self of *fujūr* and develops it to the level of *taqva* and cultivates in it the good, will attain to eternal success. As against this, the word *dassāhā* has been used, the infinitive of which is *tadsīyah*, which means to suppress, conceal, seduce and lead astray. The meaning of this also becomes clear from the context; *i.e.* the one who suppresses the tendency in his self towards good instead of developing and cultivating it, who seduces it into doing evil, and makes *fujūr* dominate over *taqva* so as to cover it up completely like the dead body which is buried and covered with earth, will be a failure. Some commentators have interpreted this verse to mean: "Truly successful was he whom (whose self) Allah purified and a failure he whom (whose self) Allah suppressed." But this commentary is, firstly, opposed to the style of the Qur'ān in view of the language, for if Allah had meant to say this, He would have said: "Truly successful was the self which Allah purified and a failure the self which Allah suppressed;" secondly, this commentary clashes with the other statements of the Qur'ān on this subject. In Sūrah Al-A'lā, Allah says: "Truly successful was he who adopted purity." (v. 14). In Sūrah 'Abasa, Allah has addressed His Holy Messenger. saying: "And you would not be responsible if he did not adopt purity " In both these verses, adoption of purity has been regarded as an act of man. Besides, the truth stated at many places in the Qur'ān is that man in this world is being put to the test. For example, in Sūrah Ad-Dahr, it is said: "We created man from a mixed sperm-drop, to try him, and so We made him capable of hearing and seeing." (v. 2) In Sūrah Al-Mulk it is stated: "Who created death and life that he may try you to see which of you is best in deeds. (v. 2) Now, obviously, if the examiner at the outset encourages one candidate and discourages the other, the test would he a farce. Therefore, the correct commentary is that which Qatādah, 'Ikrimah, Mujāhid and Sa'īd bin Jubair have given, saying that the subject *zakkāhā* and *dassāhā* is man and not God. As for the *Hadīth* which Ibn Abī Ḥātim has related on the authority of Juwaybir bin Sa'īd from Ḍaḥḥāk from Ibn 'Abbās, saying that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) himself interpreted this verse to mean: "Truly successful was the self whom the Almighty Allah purified"; this saying is not confirmed to be from the Holy Prophet, for its one reporter Juwaybir, has been rejected as a

narrator of *Ḥadīth*, and Ḍaḥḥāk did not meet Ibn 'Abbās. However, the *Hadīth* which Imām Aḥmad, Muslim, Nasā'ī and Ibn Abī Shaibah have related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Zaid bin Arqam, is correct which says that the Holy Prophet used to pray: "O Allah, grant my self its *taqva* and purify it: You alone are the best to purify it; You alone are its Guardian and Master." In almost similar words, this supplication of the Holy Prophet has been related by Ṭabarānī, Ibn Mardūyah and Ibn al-Mundhir from Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās and Imām Aḥmad from Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah. It actually means that man can only desire and seek *taqva* and *tazkīyah;* as for its attainment, it depends in any case on Allah's grace and favour alone. And the same also is true of *tadsiyah:* Allah does not suppress a self forcibly, but when a man is resolved on iniquity, Allah deprives him of the grace of *taqva* and *tazkīyah*, and leaves him alone to suppress and bury his self under any heap of filth he likes.

7. The things stated in principle in the above verses, are now being explained by an historical precedent or what it is a precedent and how it relates to what has been stated above, one should consider well in the light of the other statements of the Qur'ān the two basic truths which have been exprressed in vv. 7-10.

Firstly, in these it has been stated that after creating the human self on balanced and sound nature, Allah inspired it with its *fujūr* and its *taqva*. The Qur'ān along with stating this truth also makes explicit that this inspirational knowledge of *fujūr* and *taqva* is not enough for every man that he may by himself obtain detailed guidance from it, but for this purpose Allah gave detailed guidance to the Prophets through Revelation in which it was explained what is *fujūr* and what it applies to, which one should avoid, and what is *taqva* which one should attain and develop. If man does not accept and acknowledge this clear and definite guidance sent down through Revelation, he can neither avoid *fujūr* not find the way to *taqva*.

Secondly, in these verses it has been stated that the rewards and punishments are the necessary results which accrue from adoption of either *fujūr* or *taqva*. The result of cleansing the self of *fujūr* and developing it ,with *taqva* is eternal success and the result of suppressing its good tendencies and causing it to be overwhelmed with *fujūr* is failure, ruin and destruction.

To make man understand this truth a historical precedent is being cited and for this the tribe of Thamūd has been taken as an illustration, for the various tribes destroyed in antiquity, the territory of the Thamūd was closest to Makkah. In northern Ḥijāz its historical ruins were extant, which the people of Makkah passed by during their trade journeys to Syria, and the way this tribe has been frequently

referred to in the pre-Islamic poetry shows that its destruction was a common subject of talk among the Arabs.

8. "Belied the truth": belied the Prophethood of the Prophet Ṣāliḥ, who was sent for their guidance. On account of their rebellious attitude they were not prepared to give up the *fujūr* in which they were involved, and they were not inclined to accept the *taqva* to which the Prophet Ṣāliḥ was calling them. For details, see Al-A'rāf: 73-76, Hūd: 61-62, Ash-Shu'arā': 141-153, An-Naml: 45-49, Al-Qamar: 23-25.

9. At other places in the Qur'ān the following details, are given: The people of Thamūd challenged the Prophet Ṣāliḥ to present a sign (a miracle) if he was truthful. Thereupon the Prophet presented a she-camel miraculously before them and warned them to the effect: "This is Allah's she-camel. She will graze at will in the land. One day will be for her to drink and one day for you and your cattle. If you molest her, you will be punished with a scourge." This proved to be a deterrent for some time. Then they appealed to their most wicked and rebellious chief to put an end to the she-camel, and he took up the responsibility and hamstrung her. (Al-A'rāf 73, Ash-Shu'arā: 134-156; Al-Qamar: 29).

10. According to Sūrah Al-A'rāf: 77, after they had killed the she-camel, the people of Thamūd said to the Prophet Ṣāliḥ: "Bring the scourge with which you threatened us." And according to Hūd: 65, the Prophet Ṣāliḥ said to them: "Well, you have only three more days to enjoy yourselves in your houses. This is a limit that will not prove false."

11. That is, Allah is not like the kings of the world and the rulers of governments, who, when they want to take some action against a people, are compelled to consider what will be the consequences of their action. Allah's power is supreme. He had no apprehension that some supporting power of the Thamūd would come out to avenge itself on Him.


XCII
AL-LAIL
اللَّيل

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XCII

AL-LAIL

الّيل

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from the word *wal-lail* with which it opens.

Period of Revelation

Its subject-matter so closely resembles that of Sūrah Ash-Shams that each Sūrah seems to be an explanation of the other. It is one and the same thing which has been explained in Sūrah Ash-Shams in one way and in this Sūrah in another. This indicates that both these Sūrahs were sent down in about the same period.

Theme and Subject-Matter

Its theme is to distinguish between the two different ways of life and to explain the contrast between their ultimate ends and results. In view of the subject-matter this Sūrah consists of two parts, the first part consisting of vv. 1-11 and the second of vv. 12-21.

In the first part, at the outset it has been pointed out that the strivings and doings that the individuals, nations and groups of mankind are engaged in in the world, are, in respect of their moral nature, as divergent as the day is from the night, and the male from the female. After this, according to the general style of the brief Surahs of the Qur'ān, three moral characteristics of one kind and three moral characteristics of the other kind have been presented as an illustration from among a vast collection of the strivings and activities of man, from which every man can judge which style of life is represented by one kind of the characteristics and which style of life by the other kind. Both these styles have been described in such brief, elegant and pithy sentences that they move the heart and go down onto memory as soon as one hears them. Characteristics of the first kind are that one should spend one's wealth, adopt God-consciousness and piety, and acknowledge the good as good. The second kind of the characteristics are that one should be miserly, should least care for God's pleasure and His displeasure, and should repudiate what is good and right. Then it has been stated that these two modes of action which are clearly divergent, cannot be equal and alike in respect of their results. But, just as they are divergent in their nature, so they are divergent in their results. The person (or group of persons) who adopts the first mode of action, Allah will make easy for him the correct way of life, so much so that doing good will become easy for him and doing evil difficult. On the contrary, he who adopts the second mode of life, Allah will make easy for him the difficult and hard way of life, so much so that doing evil will become easy for him and doing good difficult. This passage has been concluded with a most effective and touching sentence, saying: "This worldly wealth for the sake of which man is even prepared to risk his life will not go down with him into the grave; therefore, what will it avail him after death?"

In the second part also three truths have been stated equally briefly. First, that Allah has not left man un-informed in the examination

hall of the world, but He has taken on Himself the responsibility to tell Him which one is the straight and right way out of the different ways of life. Here, there was no need to point out that by sending His Messenger and His Book He has fulfilled His responsibility, for both the Messenger and the Book were present to afford the guidance. Second, that the Master of both the world and the Hereafter is Allah alone. If you seek the world, it is He Who will give it, and if you seek the Hereafter, again it is He Who will give it. Now, it is for you to decide what you should seek from Him. The third truth that has been stated is that the wretched one who rejects the good, which is being presented through the Messenger and the Book, and turns away from it, will have a blazing fire ready for him. As for the God-fearing person who spends his wealth in a good cause, without any selfish motive, only for the sake of winning his Lord's good pleasure, his Lord will be pleased with him and will bless him with so much that he will be well pleased with Him.

سُوْرَةُ اللَّيْلِ (٩٢) مَكِّيَّةٌ (١٩) — رُكُوْعُهَا ١ — اٰيَاتُهَا ٢١

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

وَالَّيْلِ اِذَا يَغْشٰى ۙ﴿١﴾ وَالنَّهَارِ اِذَا تَجَلّٰى ۙ﴿٢﴾ وَمَا خَلَقَ الذَّكَرَ وَالْاُنْثٰى ۙ﴿٣﴾
اِنَّ سَعْيَكُمْ لَشَتّٰى ؕ﴿٤﴾ فَاَمَّا مَنْ اَعْطٰى وَاتَّقٰى ۙ﴿٥﴾ وَصَدَّقَ بِالْحُسْنٰى ۙ﴿٦﴾
فَسَنُيَسِّرُهٗ لِلْيُسْرٰى ؕ﴿٧﴾ وَاَمَّا مَنْۢ بَخِلَ وَاسْتَغْنٰى ۙ﴿٨﴾ وَكَذَّبَ بِالْحُسْنٰى ۙ﴿٩﴾
فَسَنُيَسِّرُهٗ لِلْعُسْرٰى ؕ﴿١٠﴾ وَمَا يُغْنِيْ عَنْهُ مَالُهٗۤ اِذَا تَرَدّٰى ؕ﴿١١﴾ اِنَّ عَلَيْنَا لَلْهُدٰى ۙ﴿١٢﴾
وَاِنَّ لَنَا لَلْاٰخِرَةَ وَالْاُوْلٰى ؕ﴿١٣﴾ فَاَنْذَرْتُكُمْ نَارًا تَلَظّٰى ۚ﴿١٤﴾ لَا يَصْلٰىهَاۤ اِلَّا
الْاَشْقَى ۙ﴿١٥﴾ الَّذِيْ كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلّٰى ؕ﴿١٦﴾ وَسَيُجَنَّبُهَا الْاَتْقَى ۙ﴿١٧﴾ الَّذِيْ يُؤْتِيْ مَالَهٗ
يَتَزَكّٰى ۚ﴿١٨﴾ وَمَا لِاَحَدٍ عِنْدَهٗ مِنْ نِّعْمَةٍ تُجْزٰۤى ۙ﴿١٩﴾ اِلَّا ابْتِغَآءَ وَجْهِ رَبِّهِ
الْاَعْلٰى ۚ﴿٢٠﴾ وَلَسَوْفَ يَرْضٰى ؕ﴿٢١﴾

XCII

AL-LAIL

اللَّيل

Verses: 21 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

By the night when it spreads, and the day when it shines forth, and Him Who created the male and the female: In fact, your endeavours (O men,) are for different ends.[1] So he who gave wealth (in God's Way) and avoided (God's disobedience), and believed in goodness,[2] for him We shall facilitate the easy way.[3] As for him who was niggardly and lived as though he was independent (of God) and belied goodness,[4] for him We shall facilitate the hard way.[5] And what will his wealth avail him when he perishes?[6] 1-11

Indeed, it is for Us to tell the Way,[7] and, indeed, Ours are both the Hereafter and this present life.[8] So, I have warned you of the blazing Fire. None shall burn in it but the most wretched one, who belied and turned away. And away from it shall be kept the most pious one, who gives away his wealth in order to purify himself.[9] He has received no favour from anyone for which he may have to return a reward. He only seeks the goodwill of his Lord, the Exalted,[10] and He will certainly be well-pleased (with him)[11]. 12-21

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1. This is that for which an oath has been sworn by the night and the day, and the creation of the male and the female. It means to say: Just as the night and the day, and the male and the female, are different from each other, and their effects and results are mutually contradictory, so are the aims and objects for which men are endeavouring and struggling, different in their nature and contradictory with regard to their results. In the following verses, it has been told that all these divided endeavours are divided into two main kinds.

2. This is the first kind of endeavours, which includes three things, and a little consideration shows that they comprehend all virtues: (1) That man should refrain from wealth-worship, but should spend whatever Allah has given him generously in rendering Allah's and His servants' rights, for good works and for

helping others; (2) that he should fear God and refrain from things which cause His displeasure in his moral, social, economic and other dealings with the people; (3) that he should believe in goodness. Goodness is a comprehensive word, which includes goodness of belief, morals and acts. Goodness of belief means that one should give up polytheism, atheism, and disbelief, and affirm faith in *Tauhīd*, the Hereafter and Prophethood. Affirming belief in goodness of morals and acts is that one should not be doing good and right merely unconsciously, outside a definite system, but one should acknowledge as right and sound the system of goodness which God has sent, which combines every kind of goodness in all its forms and aspects into a system comprehensively called the Divine Sharī'ah.

3. This is the result of the first kind of endeavouring and struggling. The easy way implies the way which is in accordance with human nature, which is in accordance with the will of the Creator, Who has created man and the whole universe. It is a way in which man has not to fight his conscience, in which he does not have to force his faculties of mind and energies of body into doing works for which they are not given but to do things for which they have actually been given him. It is a way in which man has not to experience war, resistance and conflict on every side, which he has to experience in a life full of sin, but a human society in which at every step he experiences peace and concord, appreciation and honour. Obviously, the person who spends his wealth for public welfare, treats every other person kindly and well, whose life is free from crime, sin and immorality, who is righteous and fair in his dealings, who neither cheats others nor proves false in his promises, from whom no one apprehends dishonesty, injustice and excess, and with whose character no one finds any fault, will in any case be honoured and respected in any society, however, corrupt and depraved it may be. Hearts will be attracted towards him in esteem and regard; his own heart and consience will be satisfied, and he will attain to dignity in society which no immoral person can ever attain. This same thing has been expressed in Sūrah An-Nahl, thus: "Whoever does righteous deeds whether male or female, provided that he is a believer, We will surely grant him to live a pure life in this world (v. 97)", and in Sūrah Maryam, thus "The Merciful will fill with love the hearts of those who believe and do righteous deeds (v. 86). This then is the way in which there is nothing but joy and tranquillity for man, for the world till the Hereafter. Its results are not transient and temporary but eternal and everlasting.

Concerning this Allah says "We shall facilitate for him the easy way." It means to say "When after affirming goodness he decides that this way alone suits him, and the evil way does not suit him, and when by making sacrifices and adopting the life of *taqva* practically he proves that he is true in his affirmation, Allah will make easy for him to walk this way. Then, to commit evil will become difficult for him, and to do good easy. When unlawful wealth comes before him,

he will not regard it as a good bargain, but consider it a hot piece of burning coal, which he cannot hold in his hand. When opportunities for sin appear before him, he will not rush to seize them as opportunities for pleasure and enjoyment, but will look upon them as gates to Hell and will flee them. The Prayer will not be hard for him, and he will have no internal peace until he has performed it at its appointed time. He will not feel hurt when paying the *zakāt*, but will regard his wealth as impure until he has paid out the *Zakat* from it. In short, at every step, Allah will favour him with His grace and help him to follow this way; conditions will be made favourable for him and he will be helped out of every difficulty.

Now, the question arises that in Sūrah Al-Balad above this very way has been called an uphill road, and here it has been described as an easy way How can the two things be reconciled? The answer is that before a man has adopted this way, it appears to be a steep, uphill road, for ascending which he has to fight his desires, his materialistic members of the family, his relatives, his friends and those with whom he has social and other dealings, and above all Satan, for each one of them obstructs his way, and makes it seem dreadful. But after man has affirmed goodness and resolved to follow this way, and giving away his wealth in the cause of God and adopting the way of *taqva*, has practically strengthened his resolve, ascending the steep road becomes easy and slipping into the abyss of moral depravities becomes difficult for him.

4. This is the second kind of human endeavouring, which in every part of it is different from the corresponding part of the first kind. Niggardliness (*bukhl*) is not merely the niggardliness because of which people generally regard a person as niggardly if he hoards money: neither spends it on himself nor on his children, but *bukhl* here implies to refrain from spending in the cause of Allah and public welfare. According to this, niggardly is every person who spends generously, rather squanders money, on his self, for his own ease and comfort, interests and enjoyments, but, as for a good cause, spends nothing, or, if at all he spends anything, it is for display, or to win a reputation and name, or to have access to officers, or to obtain some benefit and gain. Independence of God implies that one should make worldly, material benefits only the object of all one's endeavourings and strivings and being independent of God should least care to see what pleases Him and what displeases Him. As for belying goodness, it is in sharp contrast to believing in goodness in every detail, therefore, it need not be explained here as it has already been explained above.

5 This way has been called the hard way, for although the one who follows it, does so for the sake of material benefits, worldly anjoyments and superficial successes, yet while following it he is always at war with his nature, his conscience, the laws made by the Creator of the universe and the society in which

he lives. When he transgresses all moral limits of truth, honesty, nobility, purity and chastity and endeavours to satisfy his interests and desires in every way, when the people feel harmed by him rather than benefiting from him, and when he encroaches upon the rights of others and violates people's honour, he feels disgraced in his own eyes and has to clash at every step with the society in which he lives. If he is weak, he has to suffer every kind of punishment on account of his conduct, and if he is wealthy, strong and influential, the world may lie low before him, but no one cherishes any good wishes, any feeling of honour and love for him; so much so that even his associates and companions regard him as a wicked man. And this thing is not only restricted to individuals, even when a strong and powerful nation transgresses the bounds of morality and adopts an immoral conduct, in arrogance of pride and wealth, it earns on the one hand, the enmity of the outside world: on the other, its own society falls a victim to all sorts of crime, prevalence of suicide, intoxication, venereal diseases, destruction of family life, waywardness of the new generation, class conflict and ever-increasing injustice and tyranny. So much so that when it falls from its position of prestige, it leaves nothing behind except curses and condemnation for itself in the history of the world.

As for saying that "We shall facilitate for him the hard ways", it means: He will be deprived of the grace to follow the way of good, gates of evil will be opened up for him, means and resources for the same will be provided for him, doing evil will become easy, and doing good will become toilsome and risky for him. This same theme has been expressed at another place in the Qur'ān, thus: "So whomever Allah wills to guide aright, He makes his breast wide open to Islam, and whomever He wills to let go astray, he makes his breast narrow and squeezes it so tightly that (at the very idea of Islam) he begins to feel as though his soul were climbing up towards the sky." (Al-An'ām : 125) .At another place it has been said: "No doubt, *salāt* is a hard task but not for the obedient servants." (Al-Baqarah: 46). And about the hypocrites it has been said: "When they come to offer the *salāt,* they come reluctantly and they expend in the way of Allah with unwilling hearts." (At-Taubah: 54), and that: "There are such among them, who regard what they expend in the way of Allah as a penalty." (At-Taubah: 98).

6. In other words it means that he has to die one day and leave behind in the world whatever he had amassed for his ease and enjoyment. If he did not earn and send forward something for the Hereafter, what would this wealth avail him? He will not take his palatial residence, his majestic conveyance, his property and wealth into the grave.

7. That is, Allah as the Creator of man has on the basis of His wisdom, His justice and His mercy, taken of Himself the responsibility not to leave him

uninformed in the world, but to tell him what is the right way and what are the wrong ways, what is good and what is evil , what is lawful and what is unlawful, what attitude and conduct will make him an obedient servant and what attitude and conduct will make him a disobedient servant. This same thing has been expressed in Sūrah An-Naḥl; thus: "Allah has taken upon Himself to show the Right Way, when there are also crooked ways." (v.9) (For explanation, See E.N. 9 of An-Nahl).

8. This statement has several meanings and all are correct: (1) "That from the world till the Hereafter, you are nowhere beyond Our grasp, for Ours are both this and the next world:" (2) "that both this world and the Hereafter are in any case under Our sovereignty, whether you follow the way shown by Us or not. If you adopt error, you will not harm Us but only yourselves; and if you adopt the right way, you will not do any good to Us, but will do good only to yourselves. Your disobedience cannot cause any decrease in Our sovereignty and your obedience cannot cause any increase in it;" (3) "that We alone are Master of both the worlds. If you seek the world, We alone can grant it; and if you seek the well being of the Hereafter, We alone have the power to bestow it too," This very theme has been expressed in Āl-'Imrān: 145: "Whoso makes effort with the intention of the reward of this world, We will reward him in this world, and whoso makes effort with the intention of the reward of the Hereafter, We shall grant him thereof", and the same has been expressed in Ash-Shu'arā: 20, thus: "Whoever seeks the harvest of the Hereafter, We do increase his harvest; and whoever seeks the harvest of this world, We do give him of it here, but in the Hereafter he will have no share at all." (For explanation, see E.N. 105 of Āl-'Imrān, E.N. 37 of Ash-Shūrā).

9. This does not mean that no one will enter the fire except the most wretched one, and no one will be saved from it except the most pious one, but the object is to describe the extremely contradictory fate of the two extremely contradictory characters. One of them is the person who belies the teachings of Allah and His Messenger and turns away from obedience; the other one is the person, who not only believes but also spends his wealth in the cause of Allah sincerely, without any desire for display and reputation, only in order to be regarded as a pure man in His eyes. Both these types of character were present in the Makkah society of that day. Therefore, without mentioning any name, the people have been told that the man of the first type of character only will burn in the fire of Hell and not the man of the second type of character; the man of the second type of character only will be kept away from it and not the man of the first type of character.

10. This is further explanation of the sincerity of the pious man. He was not indebted in any way to the people on whom he spends his wealth so that he may be doing so in order to repay for favours received, or may be giving gifts and holding banquets to them in order to further benefit from them, but he is helping such people only in order to seek the goodwill of his Lord, the Supreme. He was neither indebted to them before, nor he expects any favours from them in the future. Its best illustration is the act of Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr Siddīq (may Allah bless him). He would purchase and set free the poor slaves and slaves-girls who accepted Islam in Makkah and were cruelly treated by their masters on that account. Ibn Jarīr and Ibn 'Asākir have related, on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Āmir bin 'Abdullah bin Zubair, that when Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr's father saw him spending money to purchase the freedom of the poor slaves and slave-girls, he said to him: "Son, I see that you are setting the weak people free; had you spent this money on the freedom of strong, young men, they would have become your helpers and supporters." Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr replied: "Dear father, I only seek the reward that is with Allah."

11. This verse can have two meanings and both are correct: (1) "That Allah certainly will be well pleased with him;" and (2) "that Allah soon will bless this man with so much that he will be happy."



XCIII

AḌ-ḌUHĀ

الضُّحٰى

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XCIII

AḌ-ḌUHĀ

الضُّحٰى

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name *Aḍ-Ḍuhā* from the very first word.

Period of Revelation

Its subject matter clearly indicates that it belongs to the earliest period at Makkah. Traditions also show that the revelations were suspended for a time, which caused the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) to be deeply distressed and grieved. On this account he felt very anxious that perhaps he had committed some error because of which his Lord had become angry with him and had forsaken him. Thereupon he was given the consolation that revelation had not been stopped because of some displeasure but this was necessitated by the same expediency as underlies the peace and stillness of the night after the bright day, as if to say: "If you had continuously been exposed to the intensely bright light of Revelation (*Waḥī*), your nerves could not have endured it. Therefore, an interval was given in order to afford you peace and tranquillity." This state was experienced by the Holy Prophet in the

initial stage of the Prophethood when he was not yet accustomed to bear the intensity of Revelatiom. On this basis, observance of a pause in between was necessary. This we have already explained in the Introduction to Sūrah Al-Muddaththir; and in E.N. 5 of Sūrah Al-Muzzammil also we have explained what great burden of the coming down of Revelation he had to bear. Later, when the Holy Prophet developed the power to bear this burden, there was no longer any nced for long gaps

Theme and Subject-Matter

Its theme is to consolc the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and its object to remove his anxiety and distress, which had been caused by the suspension of Revelation. First of all sweaing an oath by the bright morning and the stillness of night, he has been re-assured so as to say: "your Lord has not at all forsaken you nor is he displeased with you." Then he has been given the good news that the hardships that he was experiencing in the initial stage of his mission, would not last long for every later period of life for him would be better than the former period and before long Allah would bless him so abundantly that he would be well pleased. This is one of the express prophecies of the Qur'ān which proved literally true afterwards whereas when this prophecy was made there seemed not to be the remotest chance that the helpless and powerless man who had come out to wage a war against the ignorance and paganism of the entire nation, would ever achieve such wonderful success.

Then, addressing His Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) Allah says: "O My dear Prophet, what has caused you the anxiety and distress that your Lord has forsaken you, and that We are displeased with you? Whereas the fact is that We have been good to you with kindness after kindness ever since the day of your birth. You were born an orphan, We made the best arrangement for your upbringing and care: you were unaware of the Way, We showed you the Way; you were indigent, We made you rich. All this shows that you have been favoured by Us from the very beginning and Our grace and bounty has been constantly focussed on you." Here, one should also keep in view vv. 37-42 of Sūrah Tā Hā, where Allah, while sending the Prophet Moses to confront a tyrant like Pharaoh, encouraged and consoled him, saying: "We have been looking after you with kindness ever since your birth; therefore,

you should be satisfied that you will not be left alone in this dreadful mission. Our bounty will constantly be with you."

In conclusion, Allah has instructed His Prophet (upon whom be peace) telling him how he should treat the creatures of God to repay for the favours He has done him and how he should render thanks for the blessings He has bestowed on him.



وَالضُّحٰى ۝١ وَالَّيْلِ اِذَا سَجٰى ۝٢ مَا وَدَّعَكَ رَبُّكَ وَمَا قَلٰى ۝٣ وَلَلْاٰخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ
لَّكَ مِنَ الْاُوْلٰى ۝٤ وَلَسَوْفَ يُعْطِيْكَ رَبُّكَ فَتَرْضٰى ۝٥ اَلَمْ يَجِدْكَ يَتِيْمًا
فَاٰوٰى ۝٦ وَوَجَدَكَ ضَآلًّا فَهَدٰى ۝٧ وَوَجَدَكَ عَآئِلًا فَاَغْنٰى ۝٨ فَاَمَّا الْيَتِيْمَ
فَلَا تَقْهَرْ ۝٩ وَاَمَّا السَّآئِلَ فَلَا تَنْهَرْ ۝١٠ وَاَمَّا بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ فَحَدِّثْ ۝١١

XCIII

AḌ-ḌUḤĀ

الضُّحٰى

Verses: 11 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

By the day, full of light,[1] and the night when it falls peacefully,[2] 1-11
your Lord has not forsaken you (O Prophet), nor is He displeased.[3]
And surely the later period is better for you than the earlier period,[4]
and soon your Lord shall give you so much that you shall be well
pleased.[5] Did He not find you an orphan and then he sheltered you?[6]
And He found you unaware of the Way, then He guided you;[7] and He
found you poor, then He enriched you.[8] Therefore, do not be harsh to
the orphan,[9] and do not scold the beggar,[10] and do proclaim the bounty

of your Lord.[11]

1. Here, the word *duhā* has been used in contrast to the night; therefore, it implies the bright hours of the day. A precedent of it are vv. 97-98 of Sūrah Al-A'rāf, which say: Do the people of the settlements now feel secure that Our punishment will not come to them all of a sudden at night, while they might be fast asleep? Or, do they feel secure that Our punishment will not smite them all of a sudden during the day while they might be engaged in pastimes?" In these verses also since the word *duhā* has been used in contrast to the night, it implies the day and not just forenoon.

2. The word *sajā* in the original does not only signify the spreading of darkness but it also contains the meaning of stillness and peace that prevails at night. This quality of night deeply relates to the theme that follows.

3. Traditions show that Revelations to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had remained suspended for some period of time. Different traditions have mentioned differenent durations of this period. Ibn Juraij has mentioned it to be 12 days, Kalbī 15 days, Ibn 'Abbās 25 days, and Suddī and Muqātil have stated that it extended to 40 days. In any case the period was so long that it made the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) sorrowful, and the opponents also had the opportunity to taunt him. For whenever a new Sūrah came down, the Holy Prophet would recite it before the people. Therefore, when he did not recite any new Revelation to them for quite some days, the opponents thought that the fountainhead from where the revelation came, had dried up. Jundub bin 'Abdullah al-Bajali has related that when Gabriel (peace be on him) stopped coming, the pagans started saying that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) had been forsaken by his Lord. (Ibn Jarīr, Tabarānī, 'Abd bin Ḥumaid, Sa'īd bin Mansūr, Ibn Mardūyah). Other traditions show that Umm Jamil, wife of Abū Lahab, who was an aunt of the Holy Prophet and whose house adjoined his, said to him: "It appears your satan has forsaken you." 'Aufī and Ibn Jarīr have related, on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās, that when Gabriel did not visit him for several days, the Holy Prophet became anxious and distressed, and the pagans began to say that his Lord had become angry with him and had forsaken him. In the *mursal* traditions of Qatādah and Ḍaḥḥāk almost the same theme has been expressed. The Holy Prophet's extreme grief and anguish in this condition has also been referred to in several traditions. And this was natural. The apparent indifference on the part of the beloved, the apparent deprivation of the contact with the source of power, which was his chief support, in the soul-destroying conflict between belief and unbelief, and above all, the taunts and jeers of the enemy, when all these things combined, they must have caused great anguish to the Holy Prophet, and he must be thinking that because of some error that he might have committed his Lord had

become displeased with him and had forsaken and left him to fight the battle between truth and falsehood alone.

This was the state when this Sūrah was sent down to console the Holy Prophet. In it, swearing an oath by the light of the day and the peacefulness of the night, he has been told: "Your Lord has neither forsaken you, nor is He displeased with you." The relevance of the oath by these two things to the theme is: "Just as brightening up of the day and spreading of the night with darkness and stillness is not for the reason tha Allah is pleased with the people during the day and displeased with them during the night, but both states are based on supreme wisdom and expedience, so sending down of revelation to you at one-time and suspending it at another time, also is based on wisdom and expedience; it has nothing to do with Allah's being pleased with you when He sends down revelation and his being displeased with you when He suspends it. Besides, another relevance of the oath to the subject is that if man is constantly exposed to the light of days it wearies him; so, it is necessary that night should fall after the day has remained bright for a certain period so that man may have rest and peace in it. Likewise, if you are constantly exposed to the light of revelation, your nerves would not stand it. Therefore, *fatrah* (break or gap in the revelation) also has been provided by Allah on account of expedience so that the effects of the strain of revelation that you have to bear pass away and complete peace is restored to you. In other words, rising of the sun of revelation is analogous to the bright day and the period of the *fatrah* to the stillness and peace of the night."

4. This good news was given by Allah to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) in a state when he had only a handful of Muslims with him, the entire nation was hostile and there was no remote chance of success even. The candle of Islam was flickering only in Makkah and storms were brewing all around to blow it out. At that juncture Allah said to His Prophet "Do not at all grieve at the hardships of the initial stage: every later period of life will be better for you than the former period. Your power and glory, your honour and prestige, will go on enhancing and your influence will go on spreading. This promise is not only confined to the world, but it also includes the promise that the rank and position you will be granted in the Hereafter will be far higher and nobler than the rank and position you attain in the world." Ṭabarānī in *Awsaṭ* and Baihaqī in *Ad-dalā'il* have related, on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās, that the Holy Prophet said: "All the victories which would be attained by my *Ummah* after me, were presented before me. This pleased me much. Then, Allah sent down this Word, saying: 'The Hereafter is far better for you than the world'."

5. That is "Although it will take some time, yet the time is not far when your Lord will bless you with so much that you will be well pleased "This promise

was fulfilled during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet and all Arabia, from the southern coasts to the Syrian frontiers of the Byzantine empire and the Iraqi frontiers of the Persian empire in the north, and from the Persian Gulf in the east to the Red Sea in the west, came under his control. For the first time in the history of Arabia this land became subject to one law and rule. Whichever power clashed with it was doomed to destruction. The slogan *Lā ilāha ill-allāh-u Muhammad ur-Rasūl-Allāh* reverberated throughout the land where the polytheists and the followers of the earlier scriptures had tried their utmost to keep their false creeds and slogans aloft till the last. The people not only bowed their heads in obedience, their hearts also were conquered, and their beliefs, morals and acts were revolutionised. There is no precedent in human history that nation sunk in paganism might have completely changed in only 33 years. Then the movement started by the Holy Prophet gathered such power that it spread over a large part of Asia, Africa and Europe and its influence reached every nook and corner of the world. This much Allah gave His Messenger in the world, the glory and extent of what he will give him in the Hereafter cannot be imagined." (Also see E.N. 112 of Sūrah Ṭā Hā).

6. That is, "There can be no question of forsaking you and being displeased with you; We have, in fact, been good to you ever since the time you were born an orphan." The Holy Prophet's father passed away three months before his birth; thus he was an orphan at birth. But Allah did not leave him without support even for a day. Up to six years of age his mother nourished and looked after him. After her death, his grandfather took him and brought him up with great love. He would proudly tell the people; "My this son has a great future.' When he also died, his uncle, Abu Ṭālib, became his guardian and treated him with such rare love that one father could treat his son better. So much so that when after his proclamation to be a Prophet the entire nation turned hostile, Abū Ṭālib alone stood firm as his chief supporter for as long as ten years.

7. The word *ḍāāllan* as used in the original is derived from *ḍalālat*, which has several meanings in Arabic. Its one meaning is to be lost in error and deviation; another, to be unaware of the way and to be bewildered at the cross-roads as to which way one should choose; still another meaning is of being lost and astray. The tree also is *ḍāāllah* which stands alone and lonely in the desert; the word *ḍalāl* is also used for a thing which is wasting in unfavourable and uncongenial condition and climate, and also for heedlessness, of which there is an example in the Qur'ān itself: *Lā yaḍillu Rabbi wa lā yansa:*,"My Lord is neither heedless nor He forgets." (Ṭā Hā: 52). Out of these different meanings. The first meaning does not apply here, for in the historical accounts of the Holy Prophet's life, from childhood till just before Prophethood, there is no trace that he ever might have been involved in idolatry, polytheism or atheism, or in any of the acts,

customs and practices of paganism prevalent among his people. Therefore, inevitably *wa wajadaka dāāllan* cannot mean that Allah had found him erring and astray in respect of creed or deed. The other meanings, however, can be applicable here in one or other aspect, and possibly all are applicable in their own particular aspect. Before Prophethood the Holy Prophet was certainly a believer in the existence of Allah and His Unity, and his life was free from sin and reflected excellent morals, yet he was unaware of true Faith, its principles and injunctions, as it has been pointed out in the Qur'ān: "You did not know at all what was the Book and what was the Faith." (Ash-Shūrā: 52). This verse may also mean that the Holy Prophet was lost in a society, engrossed in ignorance, and his personality as a guide and leader was not in anyway prominent before Prophethood. It may as well mean that in the desert of ignorance, he was standing like a lonely tree, which had the capability to bear fruit and turn the whole desert into a garden, but this capability was not being put to any use before Prophethood. It may also imply that the extraordinary powers that Allah had blessed him with, were going waste in the unfavourable environment of ignorance. *Ḍalāl* can also be taken in the meaning of heedlessness, so as to say: "You were heedless of the truths and sciences of which Allah made you aware after Prophethood." This thing also has been referred to in the Qur'ān itself: "Though before this you were utterly unaware of these truths." (Yūsuf: 3). (Also see Al-Baqarah: 282, Ash-Shu'arā: 20).

8. The Holy Prophet's father had left only a she-camel and a slave-girl in heritage for him; so he started his life in a state of poverty. Then a time came when the wealthiest lady among the Quraish, Ḥaḍrat Khadījah, first made him her partner in trade, then married him, and he took charge of all her trade and business. Thus, he not only became wealthy but his riches in no way were dependent on the resources of his wife; his own hardwork and ability had gone a long way towards promoting her trade and commerce.

9. That is, "As you yourself have been an orphan, and Allah graced you with the bounty that he made the best possible arrangements to help you in that state, therefore, in gratitude you should see that no orphan is treated unjustly and harshly."

10. It has two meanings. (1) If *sā'il* is taken in the sense of a needy person, who asks for help, it would mean that if you can, you should help him; if you cannot you should excuse yourself politely, but should never scold him. In this sense the instruction corresponds to Allah's this favour: "You were poor, then Allah enriched you." And if *sā'il* is taken in the sense of the one who inquires, *i.e.* asks for enlightenment on a religious matter or injunction, it would mean that even if such a person be extremely ignorant and ill-mannered and might put the question, or present his problem, impolitely, you should in any case answer him

politely and kindly, and should not turn him away like the rude people proud of their knowledge. In this meaning, the instruction corresponds to Allah's this favour: "You were unaware of the Way, then he guided you." Ḥaḍrat Abud-Dardā', Ḥasan Baṣrī, Sufyān Thauri and some other scholars have preferred this second meaning, for in view of the order and sequence this instruction corresponds to: *wa wajadaka ḍāālllan fa-hadā.*

11. The word *ni'mat* (bounty) is general, which also implies those bounties, which Allah had bestowed on His Messenger until the revelation of this Sūrah as well as those which He bestowed on him afterwards according to the promise made in this Sūrah, which He fulfilled completely. Then, it is enjoined: "O Prophet, mention and proclaim every bounty that Allah has favoured you with." Now, obviously, there can be different forms and ways of mentioning and proclaiming the bounties and every bounty in view of its nature, requires a special form or its mention and proclamation. As a whole, the way of proclaiming the bounties is that Allah be thanked with the tongue and the truth be acknowledged that all the bounties received are only due to His grace and favour and none is the result of any personal excellence and merit on his part. The blessing of Prophethood can be proclaimed by preaching and conveying its message in the best way possible. The blessing of the Qur'ān can be proclaimed by publicising it widely and impressing its teachings on the peoples minds as far as one can. The blessing of Allah's guidance can be proclaimed by showing the right way to the people who are gone astray and by enduring patiently all the bitternesses and hardships of the way. The favour that Allah has done of helping during orphanhood, demands that the orphans be treated well. The favour that Allah did of enriching after poverty requires that Allah's needy servants be helped and supported. In short, this is a very comprehensive instruction which Allah gave His Messenger (upon whom be His peace) in this brief sentence after having described His bounties and blessings.


XCIV
ALAM
NASHRAḤ
اَلَمْ نَشْرَح

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

XCIV

ALAM-NASHRAḤ

اَلَمْ نَشْرَحْ

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah is so designated after the first sentence.

Period of Revelation

Its subject-matter so closely resembles that of Sūrah Aḍ-Ḍuhā that both these Sūrahs seem to have been revealed in about the same period, under similar conditions. According to Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, it was sent down in Makkah just after *waḍ-Ḍuhā*.

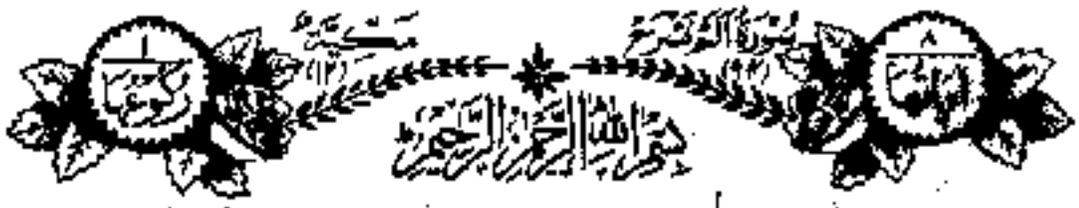
Theme and Subject Matter

The aim and object of this Sūrah too is to console and encourage the Holy Messenger (upon whom be Allah's peace). Before his call he never had to encounter the conditions which he suddenly had to encounter after it when he embarked on his mission of inviting the people to Islam. This was by itself a great revolution in his own life of which he had no idea in his life before Prophethood. No sooner had he started preaching the message of Islam than the same society which had esteemed him with unique honour, turned hostile to him The same relatives and friends, the same clansmen and neighbours, who used to treat him with the highest respect, began to shower him with abuse and invective. No one in Makkah was prepared to listen to him; he began to be ridiculed and mocked in the street and on the road; and at every step he had to face new difficulties. Although gradually he became accustomed to the hardships, even much severer ones, yet the initial stage was very discouraging for him. That is why first Sūrah *Aḍ-Ḍuhā* was sent down to console him, and then this Sūrah,

In it, at the outset, Allah says: "We have favoured you, O Prophet, with three great blessings; therefore, you have no cause to be disheartened. The first is the blessing of *Sharḥ ṣadr* (opening up of the breast), the second of removing from you the heavy burden that was weighing down your back before the call, and the third of exalting your renown the like of which has never been granted to any man before. Further below in the notes we have explained what is implied by each of these blessings and how great and unique these blessings indeed are!

After this, the Lord and Sustainer of the universe has reassured His Servant and Messenger (Upon whom be peace) that the period of hardships which he is passing through, is not very long, but following close behind it there is also a period of ease. This same thing has been described in Sūrah *Aḍ-Ḍuhā*, saying: "Every later period is better for you than the former period, and soon your Lord will give you so much that you will be well pleased."

In conclusion, the Holy Prophet has been instructed, so as to say: "You can develop the power to bear and resist the hardships of the initial stage only by one means, and it is this: 'When you are free from your occupations, you should devote yourself to the labour and toil of worship, and turn all your attention exclusively to your Lord'." This same instruction has been given him in much greater detail in Sūrah Al-Muzzammil:



أَلَمْ نَشْرَحْ لَكَ صَدْرَكَ ۝١ وَوَضَعْنَا عَنْكَ وِزْرَكَ ۝٢ الَّذِيْ أَنْقَضَ
ظَهْرَكَ ۝٣ وَرَفَعْنَا لَكَ ذِكْرَكَ ۝٤ فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا ۝٥ إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ
يُسْرًا ۝٦ فَإِذَا فَرَغْتَ فَانْصَبْ ۝٧ وَإِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ فَارْغَبْ ۝٨

XCIV

ALAM-NASHRAH

اَلَم نَشْرَح

Verses:8 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah , the Compassionate, the Merciful.

(O Prophet!) have We not opened up your breast for you?[1] And removed from you the heavy burden that was weighing down your back,[2] and exalted your renown for you.[3] So, the fact is that along with every hardship there is also ease. Indeed, with every hardship there is also ease![4] Hence, when you are free, devote yourself to the labour of worship, and turn all your attention to your Lord.[5] 1-8

1. To begin the discourse with this question, and then the subsequent theme, shows that the Holy Messenger (upon whom be Allah's peace) at that time was very disturbed and distressed at the great hardships that he was passing through in the initial stage of his mission of calling the people to Islam. Under those conditions Allah addressed him and consoling him, said: "O Prophet, have

We not blessed you with such and such favour? Then, why do you feel so disturbed and distressed at these initial difficulties?"

A little consideration of the context wherever the word *sharh sadr* (opening up of the breast) has occurred in the Qur'ān, shows that it has two meanings: (1) In Sūrah Al-An'ām: 125, it was said: "So whomever Allah wills to guide aright, He makes his breast wide open to Islam (*yashrah sadrahū lil-Islām*)"; and in Sūrah Az-Zumar; 22: "Can the person whose breast Allah has opened for Islam (*sharahallāhu sadrahū lil-Islām*) and he is walking in the light shown by his Lord.." At both these places *sharh sadr* implies to free oneself from every kind of distraction and vacillation and to be satisfied with Islam as the only right way of life, and to regard the beliefs principles of morality and civilization, religious instructions and injunctions, which Islam has given to man, as right and true. (2) In Sūrah Ash-Shu'arā': 12-13, it has been mentioned that when Allah appointed the Prophet Moses to the great office of Prophethood and commanded him to go and confront the Pharaoh and his mighty empire. he submitted: "My Lord, I fear that they will treat me as a liar, and my breast straitens." And in Sūrah Tā Hā: 25-26, it has been stated that on this very occasion the Prophet Moses implored Allah, saying: "Lord, open up my breast for me (*Rabbishrah-lī sadrī*) and make my task easy for me." Here, straitening of the breast implies a person's finding it too hard for himself to shoulder the onerous responsibilities of Prophethood and going out to clash with a mighty and tyrannical power of disbelief all by himself, and *sharh sadr* implies that his morale be boosted so that he is ready to undertake any campaign and any task however difficult and hard, without any hesitation, and he develops the nerve and courage to shoulder the great responsibilities of Prophethood.

A little consideration will show that in this verse "opening up of the Holy Prophet's breast" contains both these meanings. According to the first meaning, it implies that before the Prophethood the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) looked upon the religion of the ploytheistic Arabs, Christians, Jews and fire-worshippers as false, and was not even satisfied with the *hanīfiyyat* prevalent among some of the Arab monotheists, for it was an ambiguous creed which contained no detail of the right way. (This we have explained in E.N.'s of As-Sajdah). But since he himself did not know what was the right way, he was mentally confused and distracted. With the blessing of Prophethood Allah removed his mental agitation and opened up before him the way of right guidance, which brought him full peace of mind. According to the second meaning, it implies that along with the blessing of Prophethood Allah also blessed him with the courage, spirit of resolution and broad-mindedness which were needed for shouldering the onerous responsibilities of the great office. He became bearer of the vast knowledge, which no other human mind could encompass and contain. He was

blessed with the wisdom which could rectify any evil however grave and wide spread. He developed the capability to stand up without any equipment and the apparent help and support of a worldy power as the standard-bearer of Islam in a society sunk in ignorance and barbarism, to brave any storm of hostility without the least hesitation, to endure patiently all the difficulties and hardships of the way so that no power might cause him to abandon his position and standpoint. Thus, The verse means to impress the point: "When Allah has blessed you, O Prophet, with this invaluable wealth of *sharḥ ṣadr*, why do you feel distressed and depressed at the hardships you are experiencing in the initial stage of your mission."

Some commentators have taken *sharḥ ṣadr* to mean *shaqq Ṣadr* (splitting up of the breast) and have declared this verse to be a proof of the miracle of *sharḥ ṣadr* as related in the traditions of the *Ḥadîth*. But the fact is that the proof of that miracle is dependent only on the traditions of the *Ḥadith*, it is not correct to prove it from the Qur'ān. According to the Arabic language, *sharḥ ṣadr* can in no way be taken to mean *shaqq sadr*. 'Allāma Ālūsī in the *Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī* says: "In the sight of the research scholars it is a weak thing to regard *sharḥ ṣadr* as *shaqq sadr*."

2. Some of the commentators have interpreted this to mean that before Prophethood, in the days of ignorance, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had happened to commit certain errors because of which he was feeling disturbed, and Allah by sending down this verse consoled and satisfied him, saying that He had forgiven him those errors. But in our opinion it is a grave mistake to interpret this verse thus. In the first place, the word *vizr* does not necessarily mean a sin, but it is also used for a heavy burden. Therefore, there is no reason why it should in every case be taken in the bad sense. Secondly, the Holy Prophet's life before Prophethood also was so clean and pure that it had been presented in the Qur'ān as a challenge before the opponents. So much so that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was made to point out to the disbelievers: "I have already lived a lifetime among you before the revelation of this Qur'ān." (Yūnus: 16). And he was also not the type of a person who would commit a sin secretly. God forbid, had he been such a man, Allah would not have been unaware of it, and would not have made him proclaim the thing before the people openly, which He made him proclaim in the above-mentioned verse of Sūrah Yūnus, if his person carried the blot of a sin committed secretly. Thus, in fact, in this verse *vizr* means a heavy burden and it implies the burden of distress, anguish and anxiety that was telling on his sensitive nature when he saw his nation deeply sunk in ignorance and barbarism. Idols were being worshipped, the community was engrossed in idolatry and polytheistic customs and practices, filth of immorality and indecency prevailed all around, wickedness and corrupt practices were rampant in society, the powerful were suppressing the powerless, girls were being buried alive, tribes were subjecting one another to surprise attacks, and sometimes the wars of vengeance continued

for a hundred years at a stretch. No one's life, property and honour was safe unless he had a strong band at his back. This grieved the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) but he could find no way to cure the malady. This same anxiety was weighing down his back. Allah by showing him the way to Guidance removed its burden from him. Then as soon as he was appointed to the office of Prophethood, he came to know that belief in the doctrine of *Tauhīd*, the Hereafter and Prophethood was the master-key by which each corruption in human life could be eradicated and the way to reform opened in every aspect of life. This guidance from Allah relieved him of his burden and he felt re-assured that by means of it he would not only be able to cure the maladies of Arabia but also of all mankind outside Arabia as well.

3. This was said at a time when no one could even conceive how the renown of the one unique individual who had only a few followers confined only to the city of Makkah, would be exalted throughout the world, and what high fame he would achieve. But Allah Almighty gave His Messenger (upon whom be peace) this good news under those very conditions and then fulfilled it in a strange way. In the first place, he took from his enemies themselves the task of exalting his renown. One of the methods that the disbelievers of Makkah adopted to defeat his mission was that in the Hajj season when the pilgrims from every corner of Arabia were attracted to their city, they would visit them at their halting places and would warn them to beware of a dangerous man called Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), who they alleged, worked such magic on the people that father was separated from son, brother from brother, and husband from wife; therefore, they should keep away from him, The same thing they said to all other people, who visited Makkah on other than Hajj days in connection with pilgrimage or on other business. In this way although they were trying to defame the Holy Prophet, yet the result was that his name reached every nook and corner of Arabia and the enemies themselves took him out of his seclusion in Makkah and introduced him among all the tribes of the country. After this, it was but natural that the people should become curious to know as to who was this man, what he preached, what was his character like and who were the people influenced by his magic and what sort of effect his "magic" had on them. As the propaganda of the Makkan disbelievers spread the people's curiosity also grew. When as a result of this curiosity the people came to know of the Holy Prophet's morals, his character and conduct, when they heard the Qur'ān and found what teachings it presented and when the people saw how different the lives of those who had been influenced by what was being described as magic had become from the lives of the common Arabs, the bad name started being changed into good name. So much so that by the time the *Hijrah* took place there was perhaps no tribe left anywhere in Arabia from which one or another person, one or another clan had not accepted Islam and

in which at least some people had not developed sympathy and interest in the Holy Prophet and his message. This was the first stage of the exaltation of his renown. Then from the *Hijrah* started the second stage in which on the one hand the hypocrites, the Jews and the prominent polytheists of Arabia were actively engaged in defaming him and on the other the Islamic State of Madīnah was presenting such a practical model of God-worship, God-consciousness, piety and devotion, purity of morals and community life, justice and equity, equality of man and man, generosity of the rich, care of the poor, fulfilment of pledges and promises and righteousness in dealings, which was conquering the hearts. The enemies tried by resort to war to impede the growing influence of the Holy Prophet, but the party of the believers, trained and developed under his own leadership, proved its superiority by their discipline, their bravery, their fearlessness of death, and their adherence to restrictions of morality even in the state of war, so convincingly that entire Arabia had to recognize it as a power to be reckoned with. Within ten years the Holy Prophet's renown become so exalted that the same land in which the opponents had exerted their utmost to defame him, reverberated with the slogan of *Ash-hadu anna Muḥammad ar-Rasūl-Allāh* from one end to the other. Then the third stage commenced with the establishment of the righteous Caliphate when his holy name started being mentioned and praised everywhere in the world. This process continues till today, and will continue till Resurrection if Allah so wills. Wherever in the world there exists a settlement of the Muslims, the apostleship of Muḥammad (Upon whom be Allah's peace) is being proclaimed aloud in the call to the Prayer five times a day, blessings of Allah are being invoked on him in the Prayers, and his sacred remembrance is being made in the Friday Sermons. There is no moment in the 12 months of the year and in the 24 hours of the day when at one or another place in the world, the Holy Prophet's holy name is not being mentioned. This is a clear proof of the truth of the Qur'ān that when in the initial stage of the Prophethood Allah proclaimed *wa rafa'na laka dhikrak,* no one could estimate and imagine with what esteem and to what great extent the Holy Prophet's renown would be exalted. In a *Ḥadīth* Ḥaḍrat Abū Sa'id Khudrī has reported that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said: "Gabriel came to me and said: My Lord and your Lord asks: In what ways have I exalted your renown? I submitted: Allah alone has the best knowledge. He said: Allah says: Whenever mention is made of Me, you too will be mentioned along with Me." (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Musnad Abū Ya'lā, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Hibbān Ibn Mardūyah, Abū Nu'aim). The whole later history stands witness that this prediction has proved literally true.

4. This has been repeated twice so as to reassure the Holy Prophet that the bad times he was passing through at that time would not last for ever, but were going to be replaced by good times in the near future. On the surface this appears

to be a contradiction that hardship should be accompanied by ease, for these two things do not co-exist. But the words "hardship with ease" instead of "ease after hardship" have been used in the sense that the period of ease is so close to it as if it were a concomitant of it.

5. "When you are free,": "When you are free from other occupations, whether occupations in connection with the preaching of Divine message, or teaching and training of the new converts, or domestic occupations of mundane nature." The commandment means: "When you are no more occupied, you should spend your time in the labour and toil of Allah's worship and turn all your attention exclusively to your Lord."



XCV

AT-TĪN

اَلتِّين

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XCV

AT-TĪN

اَلتِّين

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah has been so named after the very first word *attīn*.

Period of Revelation

According to Qatādah, this Sūrah is Madanī. Two different views have been reported from Ibn 'Abbās: first that it is a Makkī Sūrah and second that it is Madanī. But the majority of scholars regard it as a Makkī revelation, a manifest symbol of which is the use of the words *hādh-al-balad-il-amīn* (this city of peace) for Makkah. Obviously, if it had been revealed at Madīnah, it would not be correct to use the words "this city" for Makkah. Besides, a study of the contents of the Sūrah shows that it belongs to the earliest period of Makkah, for in it there is no sign whatever to indicate that during the period of its revelation any

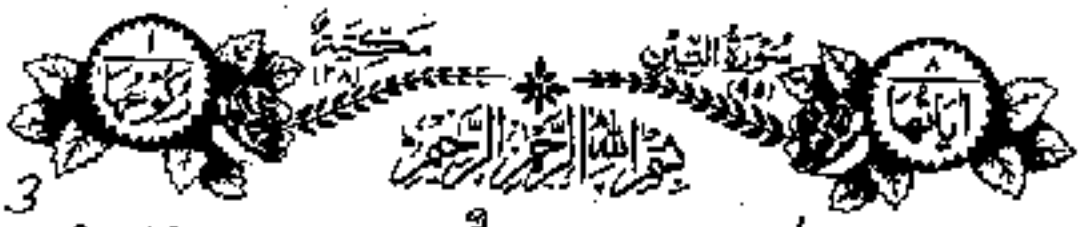
conflict had started between Islam and unbelief. Moreover, it reflects the same style of the earliest revelations of Makkah period in which briefly and succinctly the people have been made to realize that the judgement of the Hereafter is necessary and absolutely rational.

Theme and Subject Matter

Its theme is the rewards and punishments of the Hereafter. For this purpose, first swearing an oath by the habitats of some illustrious Prophets, it has been stated that Allah has created man in the most excellent of moulds. Although at other places in the Qur'ān, this truth has been expressed in different ways, for example, at some places it has been said: "Allah appointed man His vicegerent on the earth and commanded the angels to bow down to him (Al-Baqarah: 30, 34, Al-An'ām: 165, Al-A'rāf: 11, Al-Ḥijr: 28, 29, An-Naml: 62, Suād: 71-73); at others that: "Man has become bearer of the Divine trust, which the earth and the heavens and the mountains did not have the power to bear (Al-Aḥzāb: 72); and at still others that: "We honoured the children of Adam and exalted them above many of Our other creatures (Banī Isrā'īl: 70)," yet here the statement made on oath in particular by the habitats of the Prophets that man has been created in the finest of moulds, signifies that mankind has been blessed with such an excellent mould and nature that it gave birth to men capable of attaining to the highest position of Prophethood, a higher position than which has not been attained by any other creature of God.

Then, it has been stated that there are two kinds of men: those who in spite of having been created in the finest of moulds, become inclined to evil and their moral degeneration causes them to be reduced to the lowest of the low, and those who by adopting the way of faith and righteousness remain secure from the degeneration and consistent with the noble position, which is the necessary demand of their having been created in the best of moulds. The existence among mankind of both these kinds of men is such a factual thing which no one can deny, for it is being observed and experienced in society everywhere at all times.

In conclusion, this factual reality has been used as an argument to prove that when among the people there are these two separate and quite distinct kinds, how can one deny the judgement and retribution for deeds? If the morally degraded are not punished and the morally pure and exalted are not rewarded and both end in the dust alike, it would mean that there is no justice in the Kingdom of God; whereas human nature and common sense demand that a judge should do justice. How then can one conceive that Allah, Who is the most just of all judges, would not do justice?



وَ التِّيْنِ وَ الزَّيْتُوْنِ ۙ﴿۱﴾ وَ طُوْرِ سِيْنِيْنَ ۙ﴿۲﴾ وَ هٰذَا الْبَلَدِ الْاَمِيْنِ ۙ﴿۳﴾ لَقَدْ
خَلَقْنَا الْاِنْسَانَ فِيْۤ اَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيْمٍ ۖ﴿۴﴾ ثُمَّ رَدَدْنٰهُ اَسْفَلَ سٰفِلِيْنَ ۙ﴿۵﴾ اِلَّا
الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَ عَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ فَلَهُمْ اَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُوْنٍ ؕ﴿۶﴾ فَمَا يُكَذِّبُكَ
بَعْدُ بِالدِّيْنِ ؕ﴿۷﴾ اَلَيْسَ اللّٰهُ بِاَحْكَمِ الْحٰكِمِيْنَ ۧ﴿۸﴾

XCV
AT-TĪN
اَلتِّين

Verses:8

Revealed at Makkah

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

By the fig and the olive[1] and the Mount Sinai[2] and this City of peace (Makkah), We have indeed created man in the finest of moulds,[3] then We reversed him to the lowest of the low,[4] except those who believed and did good works. For them there is a reward unending.[5] Therefore, (O Prophet,) who can after this belie you concerning the rewards and punishments?[6] Is not Allah the best of all judges?[7] 1-8

1. There has been much difference of opinion among the commentators about the explanation of this verse. Hasan Basrī, 'Ikrimah, 'Atā' bin Abī Rabāh, Jābir bin Zaid, Mujāhid and Ibrāhīm Nakha'ī (may Allah bless them all) say that

the fig implies the same fig which the people eat, and the olive the same olive which produces oil. Ibn Abī Hātim and Hākim have cited a statement from Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās also in support of this. And the commentators who have accepted this explanation have, in view of the uses and virtues of the fig and the olive, expressed the opinion that Allah has sworn by these two fruits because of these very qualities. There is no doubt that the Arabic reader would understand the words *tīn* and *zaytūn* in the same meaning as are their well known meanings in Arabic, yet there are two reasons for which these meanings cannot be accepted. First, that in the subsequent verses, oaths have been sworn by the Mount Sinai and the City of Makkah, and there seems to be no relevance between the oaths sworn by the two fruits and the oaths by the two places. Second, the theme that follows the oaths is borne out by the Mt. Sinai and the City of Makkah but not by the two fruits. Wherever in the Qur'ān Allah has sworn by something, He has not sworn by it because of its glory or its uses and benefits but every oath has relevance to the theme that follows it. Therefore, the virtues and qualities of these two fruits cannot be regarded as the reason for swearing the oath by them.

Some other commentators have taken *tīn* and *zaytūn* to imply some places. Ka'b Abhār, Qatadah and Ibn Zaid say that *tīn* implies Damascus and *zaytūn* Bait al-Maqdis (Jerusalem). A view of Ibn 'Abbās has been cited by Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Hātim and Ibn Mardūyah to the effect that *tīn* implies the mosque of the Prophet Noah, which he built on Mt. Judi, and *zaytūn* implies Bait al-Maqdis, but hearing the words *wat-tīn waz-zaytūn*, no ordinary Arab could think of these meanings, nor was it well known among the Arabs, who were the first addressees of the Qur'an that *tīn* and *zaytūn* were names of the places.

However, there was a practice among the people of Arabia that they generally named a land where a certain fruit was produced in plenty after the name of the fruit itself. Accordingly, the meaning of *tīn* and *zaytūn* can be the land where these fruits are grown, and it is the land of Syria and Palestine, for among the Arabs of that period this very land was well known for the production of fig and olive. Ibn Taimiyah,, Ibn al-Qayyim, Zamakhsharī and Ālūsī (may Allah show them mercy) have adopted this very explanation; and although Ibn Jarir also has preferred the first view, yet he has conceded that *tīn* and *zaytūn* may also imply the land where these fruits are grown. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr also has regarded this explanation as worthy of consideration.

2. The words in the original are *Ṭūr-i-Sīnīn*. *Sinīn* is another name for the Sinai Peninsula. It is called Sainā or Sīnā as well as Sīnīn. In the Qur'ān itself at one place the words *Tūr-i-Sīnīn*, have been used. Since the land in which Mt. Sinai is located is well known as Sinā, we have adopted this well known name in the translation.

3. This is the truth for which the oath has been sworn by the lands of the fig and the olive (i.e. Syria and Palestine) and Mt. Sinai and Makkah, the city of peace. Man's having been created in the most excellent of moulds means that he has been given the finest body which no other living being has been given, and he has been blessed with the noblest faculties of thought, knowledge and intellect which no other creature has been blessed with. Then, since the most sublime model these excellencies and unique merits of mankind's are the Prophets (upon whom be Allah's peace), and no creation can have a higher rank than they, so that Allah may choose it for appointment to the office of Prophethood, an oath has been sworn by the places associated with the Prophets of God to bear testimony to man's having been created in the finest of moulds. The land of Syria and Palestine is the land where a large number of Prophets, from the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) to the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him), were raised. Mt. Tūr is the place where the Prophet Moses was blessed with Prophethood. As for Makkah, it was founded by the Prophets Abraham and Ishmael themselves. It was on account of their association with it that it became the holiest central place of Arabia. It was the Prophet Abraham who had prayed: "O my Lord, make this city a city of peace and security." (Al-Baqarah: 126); and it was because of this prayer that in the midst of chaos and confusion prevailing everywhere in Arabia only this city continued to remain an island of peace for some 2500 years or more. Thus, the verse means to say: "We created mankind in such an excellent mould that it produced men who attained to the most sublime rank of Prophethood."

4. The commentators in general have given two meanings of this: (1) That We reversed him to the miserable state of old age in which he was no longer able to think and understand and work; and (2) that We reversed him to the lowest stage of Hell. But these two meanings cannot be an argument for the object for the confirmation of which this Sūrah was revealed. The Sūrah is meant to reason out the truth of the judgement in the Hereafter. On this, neither has this fact any bearing that some human beings are caused to reach the most miserable state of old age, nor that a section of human beings will be cast into Hell. The first thing cannot be an argument for the judgement because old age comes upon both the good and the bad people, and a person's reaching this age is no punishment which he might suffer in consequence of his deeds. As for the second thing, it will occur in the Hereafter. It cannot be presented as an argument before the people who are being convinced of the meting out of rewards and punishments in the Hereafter itself. Therefore in our opinion the correct meaning of the verse is: After having been created in the finest of moulds when man uses the powers of his body and mind in evil ways Allah grants him the power to do only evil and causes him to reach the lowest ebb of degradation. This is a truth which one commonly observes in human society. People become so overwhelmed by greed, selfishness,

lustfulness, addiction to intoxicants, meanness, rage and fury and such other traits that morally they are actually reduced to the lowest of the low. Consider only one example: When a nation is blinded by its hostility to another country it surpasses all savage beasts in barbarity. A wild beast preys upon its victim only for the sake of food, it does not resort to a general massacre; but man resorts to massacre of his own kind. The beast only uses its claws and teeth but man who has been created in the best of moulds invents the gun, rifle, tank, aircraft, atom and hydrogen bombs and countless other weapons by his intellect so that he can instantly destroy whole populations. The beast only kills or inflicts a wound but man invents such painful methods of torturing men like himself as cannot even be imagined by a beast. Then to wreak his vengeance and fury on his enemies he forces the women to march out in naked processions: they are subjected to rape by tens and twenties of men; they are dishonoured before the eyes of their fathers, brothers and husbands; children are massacred in front of their parents; mothers are forced to drink their children's blood; human beings are burnt and buried alive. There is no wild species of animals in the world which may equal this human barbarity in any degree. The same is also the case with other evil traits: man proves himself to be the lowest of the low in whichever evil he indulges. So much so that he degrades even religion which is the most sacred thing for man: he worships the trees, animals and mountains, even the sex organs of man and woman; he keeps religious prostitutes in the places of worship to win the goodwill of the gods and commits adultery with them as an act of virtue. In his mythology he attributes such filthy tales to his gods and goddesses which would make the most wretched beast to hang his head in shame.

5. The commentators who have taken *asfala sāfilīn* to imply the state of extreme old age when man loses his sense and reason, interpret this verse to mean: "But the people who in the prime and strength of their age believed and did righteous deeds would have in this old age too the same righteous deeds credited for them and will be rewarded accordingly. No reduction will be made in their rewards on the ground that they could not perform those righteous deeds in that period of life". And the commentators who construe reversal to *sāfilīn* to imply being cast into the lowest stage of Hell interpret this verse to mean: "the people also believed and did righteous deeds are an exception: they will not be reversed to this stage but they will have a reward unending and unfailing." But, neither of these meanings is relevant to the reasoning made in this Sūrah to justify the judgement of the Hereafter. In our opinion the verse means: "Just as it is a common observation in human society that the morally degraded are made the lowest of the low, so this also is an observation of every age that those who believed in God, the Hereafter and the Prophethood and who moulded their lives after righteousness and piety, remained secure from this degeneration and

remained consistent with the best mould and nature that Allah had created them on. Therefore, they are worthy of the unending reward, *i.e.* the reward which will neither be less than what they deserve, nor will it ever be cut off."

6. Another translation of this verse can be: "What can after this (O man) make you deny the judgement?" In both cases the intention and purpose remains the same. That is when it is a common observation in human society that a section of mankind which has been created in the best of moulds and nature, is rendered lowest of the low because of moral degradation, and the other section remains secure by adopting the path of constant faith and righteousness in view of its being created in the best of moulds and nature how can judgement be denied after this? Does common sense require that the end of both these men be the same? Does justice demand that neither those who are reduced to the lowest of the low be punished nor those who strive to adopt a righteous life be rewarded? The same theme has been expressed at other places in the Qur'ān thus: "Shall We then treat the obedient as We treat the culprits? What has happened to you: how ill you judge?" (Al-Qalam: 35, 36). "Do those who have committed evil think that We shall hold them and those who have believed and done righteous deeds as equal so that their life and their death should be alike? Ill are the judgements they pass!" (Al-Jāthiyah 21).

7. That is, "When you want and expect even the petty judges of the world to do justice, punish the culprits and reward the doers of good, what is your opinion about God? Is He not the greatest of all judges? If you think he is the greatest of all judges, do you think that He will not do any justice? Do you expect that He will treat the good and the evil alike? Will those who commit the vilest of deeds in the world and those who perform righteous deeds, both end in the dust: neither will any be punished for his evil deeds, nor any be rewarded for his good works?"

Imām Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, Abū Da'ūd, Ibn al-Mundhir, Baihaqī, Ḥākim and Ibn Mardūyah have related, on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said: "When one of you recites Sūrah *Wat-tīn waz-zaytūn* and reaches *Alais-Allāh-u bi-aḥkami-l-Ḥākimīn*, he should respond to it, saying: *Balā wa anā 'alā dhālika min-ash-shāhidīn* (Yes, and I am of those who bear witness to it). According to some other traditions, the Holy Prophet responded with *Subḥānaka fa-balā* when he recited this verse.



XCVI

AL-‘ALAQ

العَلَق

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XCVI
AL-'ALAQ
العَلَق

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah is so entitled after the word *'alaq* in the second verse.

Period of Revelation

This Sūrah has two parts: the first part consists of vv. 1-5, and the second of vv. 6-19. About the first part a great majority of the Islamic scholars are agreed that it forms the very first Revelation to be sent down to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings). In this regard, the *Ḥadīth* from Ḥaḍrat 'A'ishah, which Imām

Aḥmad, Bukhāri, Muslim and other traditionists have related with several chains of authorities, is one of the most authentic *Aḥādīth* on the subject. In it Hadrat 'Ā'ishah has narrated the full story of the beginning of revelation as she herself heard it from the Holy Messenger of Allah. Besides, Ibn 'Abbās, Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī and a group of the Companions also are reported to have stated that these were the very first verses of the Qur'ān to be revealed to the Holy Prophet. The second part was sent down afterwards when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) began to perform the prescribed Prayer in the precincts of the Ka'bah and Abū Jahl tried to prevent him from this with threats.

Beginning of Revelation

The traditionists have related on the strength of their respective authorities the story of the beginning of revelation from Imam Az-Zuhrī, who had it from Hadrat 'Urwah bin Zubair, who had it from Hadrat 'Ā'ishah, his aunt. She states that revelations to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) began in the form of true (according to other traditions, good) visions. Whichever vision he saw it seemed as though he saw it in broad daylight. Afterwards solitude became dear to him and he would go to the Cave of Hirā' to engage in worship there for several days and nights Hadrat 'Ā'ishah has used the word *tahannuth*, which Imām Zuhrī has explained as *ta'abbud:* devotional exercises. This was some kind of worship which he performed, for until then he had not been taught the method of performing the Prayer by Allah). He would take provisions with him and stay there for several days, then would return to Hadrat Khadījah who would again provide for him for a few more days. One day when he was in the Cave of Hirā', Revelation came down to him unexpectedly and the Angel said to him: "Read". After this Hadrat 'Ā'ishah reports the words of the Holy prophet himself, to the effect: "I said; I cannot read! Thereupon the Angel took me and pressed me until I could bear it no more. Then he left me and said: Read. I said: I cannot read! He pressed me a second time until I could bear it no more. Then he left me and said: Read I again said: I cannot read! He pressed me for the third time until I could bear it no more. Then he left me and said: *Iqrā' bismi Rabbi kalladhī khalaqa*: (Read in the name of your Lord Who created) till he reached *mā lam ya'lam* (what he did not know)." Hadrat 'Ā'ishah says: "Then the Holy Messenger (upon whom be peace) returned home to Hadrat Khadījah trembling with fear, and said to her:

'Cover me, cover me', and he was covered. When terror left him, he said: 'O Khadijah, what has happened to me?' Then he narrated to her whatever had happened, and said: 'I fear for my life'. She said: 'No never! Be of good cheer. By God, never will God debase you: you treat the kindred well, you speak the truth, (one tradition adds: you restore what is entrusted to you), you bear the burden of the helpless, you help the poor, you entertain the guests, and you cooperate in good works.' Then she took him to Waraqah bin Naufal, who was her cousin. He had become a Christian in pre-Islamic days, wrote the Gospel in Arabic and Hebrew, and had become very old and blind. Ḥadrat Khadījah said: 'Brother, listen to the son of your brother.' Waraqah said to the Holy Prophet: 'What have you seen, nephew?' The Holy Prophet described what he had seen. Waraqah said; 'This is the same *Nāmūs* (the Angel Revelation) which Allah had sent down to Moses. Would that I were a young man during your Prophethood! Would that I were alive when your tribe would expel you!' The Holy Prophet said: 'Will they expel me?' Waraqah said; 'Yes, never has it so happened that a person brought what you have brought and was not treated as an enemy. If I live till then, I would help you with all the power at my command.' But not very long after this Waraqah died."

This narrative is explicit that even until a moment before the coming of the Angel the Holy Messenger of Allah (upon whom be His peace) was without any expectation that he was going to be appointed a Prophet. Nothing to say of any such wish or expectation, he did not even have any idea that he would meet with such an experience. Coming down of the Revelation and appearing of the Angel face to face was an unexpected accident for him the first efficet of which one was precisely the same as could naturally be on a person meeting with such a tremendous experience, in the absence of any preparation. That is why when he proclaimed the message of Islam the people of Makkah raised all sorts of objections but no one said that they were already apprehending that he would make a claim, for he had been making preparations since long to become a Prophet.

From this narrative another thing which also becomes obvious is how pure was the Holy Prorphets life and how sublime was His character before Prophethood. Ḥadrat Khadījah was no young lady: she was 55 years old at the time this event took place and had been the Holy

Prophet's life companion for 15 years. No weakness of the husband can remain hidden from the wife. She had during this long period of married life found him to be such a generous and noble man that when he told her of his experience in the Cave of Hirā' she admitted without the least hesitation that it was indeed Allāh's own Angel who had come to him with Revelation. Likewise Waraqah bin Naufal also was an old inhabitant of Makkah who had seen the Holy Prophet grow up from childhood. Particularly, for the past 15 years because of the close relationship he was even more intimately aware of his life, his affairs and dealings. When he also heard of his experience, he did not regard it as an evil suggestion, but immediately said that it was the *Nāmus* who had descended on Moses (peace be on him.) This meant that even according to him the Holy Prophet was such a sublime person that there was nothing surprising in his being elevated to the office of Prophethood

Occasion of Revelation of vv. 6-19

This second part of the Sūrah was revealed when the Holy Messenger of Allah began to perform the Prayer in the Islamic way in the Ka'bah and Abū Jahl threatened and tried to prevent him from this. It so happened that after his appointment to Prophethood even before he could start preaching Islam openly, he began to perform the Prayer in the precincts of the Ka'bah in the way Allah taught him; and from this the Quraish felt for the first time that he had adopted a new religion. The other people were watching it with curiosity, but Abū Jahl in his arrogance and pride threatened the Holy Prophet and forbade him to worship in that way in the Ka'bah. In this connection, quite a number of the *Aḥādīth* have been related from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās and Hadrat Abū Huraira, which mention the foolish behaviour of Abū Jahl.

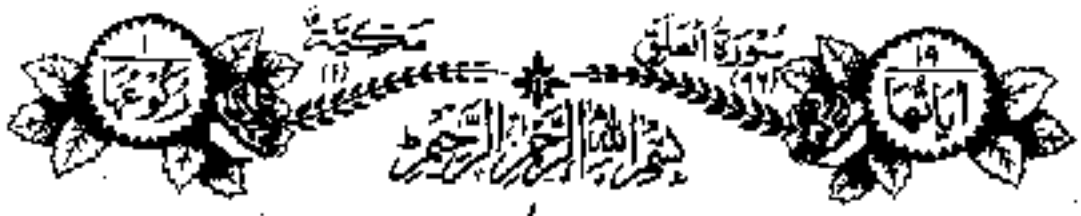
Hadrat Abū Huraira says that Abū Jahl asked the people of Quraish: "Does Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) set his face on the ground before you?" When they replied in the affirmative, he said: "By Lāt and 'Uzzā., if I ever caught him in that act of worship., I would set my foot on his neck and rub his face in the dust." Then it so happened that he saw the Holy Messenger in that posture and came forward to set his foot on his neck, but suddenly turned back as if in a fright and being asked what was the matter, he said there was a ditch of fire and a terrible apparition between himself and Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) and some

wings. On hearing this the Holy Prophet remarked: "Had he come near me, the angels would have smitten and torn him to pieces." (Ahmad, Muslim, Nasā'ī, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Mardūyah, Abū Nu'aim Isfahānī, Baihaqī).

According to Ibn 'Abbās, Abu Jahl said: "If I caught Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) performing his Prayer by the Ka'bah, I would trample his neck down." When the Holy Prophet heard of it, he said: "If he acted so, the angels would seize him there and then." (Bukhārī, Tirmidhi, Nasā'ī: Ibn Jarīr, 'Abdur Razzāq, 'Abd bin Ḥumaid, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Mardūyah).

According to another tradition from Ibn 'Abbās, the Holy Prophet was performing his Prayer at the *Maqām Ibrāhīm*. Abū Jahl passed that way and said: "O Muḥammad, did I not forbid you this, and then he started to threaten him." In reply the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) rebuked him severely. Thereupon he said: "O Muḥammad, on what strength do you rebuke me? By God, my followers in this valley far exceed yours in number." (Aḥmad, Ṭirmidhī, Nasā'ī, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Shaibah, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ṭabarāni, Ibn Mardūyah).

Because of these very incidents the portion of this Sūrah beginning with *Kallā inn-al-insāna la-yatghā* was sent down. Naturally the place of this part should be the same as assigned to it in this Sūrah of the Qur'ān, for after the coming down of the first Revelation the Holy Prophet had given expression to Islam first of all by the act of Prayer, and his conflict with the pagans.



اِقْرَاْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِیْ خَلَقَ ۚ﴿۱﴾ خَلَقَ الْاِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ۚ﴿۲﴾
اِقْرَاْ وَ رَبُّكَ الْاَكْرَمُ ۙ﴿۳﴾ الَّذِیْ عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ۙ﴿۴﴾ عَلَّمَ الْاِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ
یَعْلَمْ ؕ﴿۵﴾ كَلَّاۤ اِنَّ الْاِنْسَانَ لَیَطْغٰۤی ۙ﴿۶﴾ اَنْ رَّاٰهُ اسْتَغْنٰی ؕ﴿۷﴾ اِنَّ اِلٰی
رَبِّكَ الرُّجْعٰی ؕ﴿۸﴾ اَرَءَیْتَ الَّذِیْ یَنْهٰی ۙ﴿۹﴾ عَبْدًا اِذَا صَلّٰی ؕ﴿۱۰﴾ اَرَءَیْتَ
اِنْ كَانَ عَلَی الْهُدٰۤی ۙ﴿۱۱﴾ اَوْ اَمَرَ بِالتَّقْوٰی ؕ﴿۱۲﴾ اَرَءَیْتَ اِنْ كَذَّبَ وَ
تَوَلّٰی ؕ﴿۱۳﴾ اَلَمْ یَعْلَمْ بِاَنَّ اللّٰهَ یَرٰی ؕ﴿۱۴﴾ كَلَّا لَئِنْ لَّمْ یَنْتَهِ ۙ
لَنَسْفَعًۢا بِالنَّاصِیَةِ ۙ﴿۱۵﴾ نَاصِیَةٍ كَاذِبَةٍ خَاطِئَةٍ ۚ﴿۱۶﴾ فَلْیَدْعُ
نَادِیَهٗ ۙ﴿۱۷﴾ سَنَدْعُ الزَّبَانِیَةَ ۙ﴿۱۸﴾ كَلَّا ؕ لَا تُطِعْهُ وَ اسْجُدْ
وَ اقْتَرِبْ ۩﴿۱۹﴾

السجدة ١٩

XCVI
AL-'ALAQ

Verses: 19 العَلَق *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Read[1] (O Prophet,) in the name of your Lord,[2] Who created.[3] Created man from a clot of congealed blood.[4] Read: and your Lord is Most Generous, Who taught knowledge by the pen:[5] taught man what he did not know.[6] 1-5

Indeed not![7] Man behaves rebelliously for he deems himself to be self-sufficient,[8] (although) towards your Lord indeed is the return.[9] Have you seen the one who forbids a servant when he prays[10]? 6-19

What do you think: if (the Servant) be on the right path, or be exorting to piety? What do you think; if the one forbidding be belying

(the Truth) and turning away? Does he not know that Allah sees?[11] By no means![12] If he does not desist, We shall drag him by his forelock, the forelock that is lying and utterly sinful.[13] So let him call his band of supporters;[14] We, too, shall call the angels of torment.[15] Nay, never! Do not obey him, and prostrate yourself and draw closer (to your Lord).[16]

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1. As we have explained in the Introduction, when the Angel said to the Holy Prophet, "Read", the latter replied, "I cannot read!"" This indicates that the Angel had presented these words of the Revelation before him in the written form and had asked him to read them. For if the Angel had meant that he should repeat what he recited, he should not have replied, saying "I cannot read!"

2. "Read in the name of your Lord": *Bismillah* and read. This shows that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) even before the coming down of this Revelation regarded and acknowledged Allah alone as his Lord. That is why there was no need to ask who his Lord was, but it was said: "Read in the name of your Lord."

3. Only the word *khalaqa* (created) has been used absolutely, and the object of creation has not been mentioned, This automatically gives the meaning: "Read in the name of the Lord, Who is the Creator, Who created the whole universe and everything in it."

4. After making mention generally of the creation of the universe, mention has been made of man in particular, saying how Allah made him a perfect man starting his creation from an insignificant and humble state. *'Alaq* is plural of *'alaqah,* which means congealed blood. This is the primary state of the embryo which appears a few days after conception. Then it assumes the form of a lump of flesh, then afterwards it gradually takes human shape. (For details, see Al-Hajj: 5 and the corresponding E.N.'s 5 to 7).

5. That is, "It is a great favour of Allah that starting man's creation from a most insignificant state He made him possessor of knowledge which is the noblest attribute of creation, and He made him not only possessor of knowledge but also taught him the art of writing by the use of pen, which became the means of propagation, progress, dissemination and preservation of knowledge on a large scale. Had He not given man the knowledge of the art of pen and writing (by inspiration) his intellectual faculty would have stagnated, and it would have had no opportunity to develop, expand and become a means of transmission of knowledge from one generation to the next and make future progress.

6. That is, Man originally was absolutely illiterate. Whatever of knowledge he obtained, he obtained it as a gift from Allah. Whatever doors of knowledge at any stage did Allah will to open for man, they went on opening up

before him. This same thing has been expressed in the verse of the Throne, thus: "And the people cannot comprehend anything of His knowledge save what He Himself may please to reveal." (Al-Baqarah: 255). Whatever man looks upon as his own scientific discovery was, in fact, unknown to him before. Allah gave him its knowledge whenever He willed without his realizing that Allah by His grace had blessed him with the knowledge of it.

These verses were the very first to be revealed to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), as is stated in the Ḥadīth reported by Ḥadrat 'Ā'ishah. This first experience was so intense and tremendous that the Holy Prophet could not bear it any more. Therefore, at that time he was only made aware that the Being Whom he already knew and acknowledged as his Lord and Sustainer was in direct communion with him, had started sending down Revelations to him, and had appointed him as His Prophet. Then after an intermission the opening verses of Sūrah al-Muddaththir were revealed in which he was told what mission he had to perform after his appointment to Prophethood. (For explanation, see Introduction to Al-Muddaththir)

7. That is, man should never adopt an attitude of ignorance and rebellion against the Bountiful God Who has been so generous to him

8. That is, when the man has attained wealth, honour and rank and whatever else he desired to attain in the world, he becomes rebellious instead of being grateful and transgresses the boundaries of servitude to Allah.

9. That is, "Whatever he might have attained in the world, which makes him behave arrogantly and rebelliously, in the end he has to return to your Lord. Then he will realize what fate awaits him in consequence of his such attitude and behaviour."

10. "A Servant": the Holy Messenger of Allah himself. The Holy Prophet has been mentioned by this epithet at several places in the Qur'ān. For example, "Glory be to Him Who transported His servant one night from the *Masjid al-Ḥarām* to the distant Temple." (Banī Isrā'īl: 1); "All praise is for Allah Who has sent down this Book to His servant." (Al-Kahf: 1); "And that when the servant of Allah stood up to pray, the people got ready to assault him." (Al-Jinn: 19). This shows that it is a special style of love by which Allah makes mention of His Messenger Muḥammad (upon whom be His peace and blessings) in His Book. Besides, it also shows that Allah after appointing His Messenger to Prophethood had taught him the method of performing the Prayer. There is no mention of this method anywhere in the Qur'ān, saying: "O Prophet, perform the Prayer in this and this way." Hence, this is another proof that the Revelation sent down to the Holy Prophet did not only consist of what has been recorded in the Qur'ān, but

besides this, other things also were taught to him by revelation, which are not recorded in the Qur'ān.

11. The audience here apparently is every just man, who is being asked: Have you watched the act of the person who prevents a Servant from God's worship? What do you think: if the Servant be rightly guided, or warning the people to fear God and refrain from evil, and this forbidder be denying the Truth and turning away from it, what will his act be like? Could this man adopt such an attitude had he known that Allah is watching the man who is exhorting others to piety as well as him who is denying the truth and turning away from it? Allah's watching the oppressor and his wrongdoing and the oppressed and his misery by itself implies that He will punish the oppressor and redress the grievances of the wronged and down-trodden person.

12. That is, the person who threatens that he would trample the neck of Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) down when he performed the Prayer, would never be able to do so.

13. "The forelock" here implies the person with the forelock.

14. As we have explained in the Introduction, when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) rebuked Abu Jahl on his foolish behaviour, he had retorted: "O Muhammad, on what strength do you threaten me? By God, my supporters in this valley far exceed yours in number." At this it is being said: "Let him call his band of supporters."

15. According to the explanation given by Qatādah, the word *zabāniyah* in the original, is used for the police in Arabic idiom, and *zabān* actually means to push away. The kings too kept armed attendants who would push out the one with whom the king was annoyed and angry. Therefore, what Allah means is: "Let him call his supporters; We too shall summon Our Police, *i.e.* the angels of torment, to deal with him and his supporters."

16. "*Sajdah*" (prostration) here implies the Prayer, so as to say: "O Prophet, continue to perform your Prayer fearlessly as you have been in the past, and seek your Lord's presence through it." In the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim and other books of *Ḥadīth* there is a tradition from Ḥaḍrat Abū Huraira to the effect: "The servant is nearest to his Lord when he is in the state of prostration", and in Muslim there is also a tradition from Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah that when the Holy Prophet recited this verse, he performed a *sajdah* of recital.



XCVII

AL-QADR

الْقَدْر

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XCVII

AL-QADR

الْقَدْر

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah has been so designated after the word *al-qadr* in the very first verse.

Period of Revelation

Whether it is a Makkī or a Madanī revelation is disputed. Abū Ḥayyān in *Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ* has made the claim that the majority of scholars regard it as a Madanī Sūrah. 'Alī bin Aḥmad al-Wāḥidī in his

commentary says that this is the first Sūrah to be sent down in Madīnah. Contrary to this, Al-Māwardī says that according to the majority of scholars it is a Makkī revelation, and the same view has Imām Suyūtī expressed in *Al-Itqān*. Ibn Mardūyah has cited Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn Az-Zubair and Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah as saying that this Sūrah was revealed at Makkah. A study of the contents also shows that it should have been revealed at Makkah as we shall explain below.

Theme and Subject-Matter

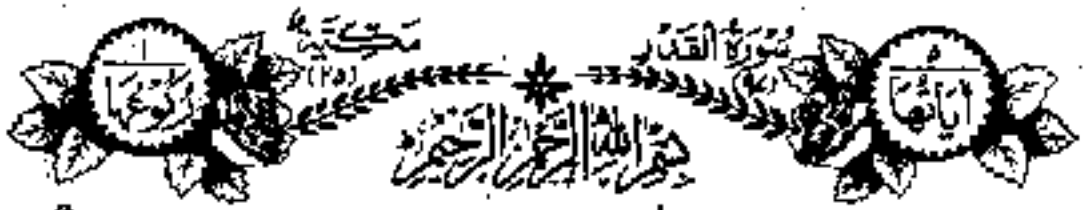
Its theme is to acquaint man with the value, worth and importance of the Qur'ān. Its being placed just after Sūrah Al-'Alaq in the arrangement of the Qur'ān by itself explains that the Holy Book, the revelation of which began with the first five verses of Sūrah Al-'Alaq, was sent down in a destiny-making night. It is a glorious Book and its revelation for mankind is full of blessings.

At the outset, Allah says: "We have sent it down." That is, it is not a composition of Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) himself, but We Ourself have revealed it.

Then, it is said that "We sent it down in the Night of Destiny." Night of Destiny has two meanings and both are implied here. First, that it is the night during which destinies are decided; or, in other words, it is not an ordinary night like the other nights, but a night in which destinies are made or marred. The revelation of this Book in this night is not merely the revelation of a book but an event which will change the destiny of not only the Quraish, or of Arabia, but of the entire world. The same thing has been said in Sūrah Ad-Dukhān for which please see Introduction to that Sūrah and E.N. 3 thereof. The other meaning is that this is a night of unique honour, dignity and glory; so much so that it is better than a thousand months. Thus, the disbelievers of Makkah have been warned, as if to say: "You on account of your ignorance regard this Book, which Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) has presented, as a calamity for yourselves and complain that a disaster has befallen you, whereas the night in which it was decreed to be sent down was such a blessed night that a task was accomplished in it for the well-being of mankind, which had never been accomplished even during a thousand months of history. This also has

been said in verse 3 of Ad-Dukhān in another way, which we have explained in the Introduction to that Sūrah.

In conclusion, it has been stated that in this night the angels and Gabriel descend with every decree (which in verse 4 of Sūrah Ad-Dukhān has been described as *amr-ḥakīm:* wise decree) by the leave of their Lord, and it is all peace from evening till morning; that is, there is no interference of evil in it, for all decrees of Allah are intended to promote good and not evil. So much so that even if a decision to destroy a nation is taken, it is taken for the sake of ultimate good, not evil.



إِنَّآ أَنزَلْنَٰهُ فِى لَيْلَةِ ٱلْقَدْرِ ۝١ وَمَآ أَدْرَىٰكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ ٱلْقَدْرِ ۝٢ لَيْلَةُ
ٱلْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ ۝٣ تَنَزَّلُ ٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةُ وَٱلرُّوحُ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ
رَبِّهِم مِّن كُلِّ أَمْرٍ ۝٤ سَلَٰمٌ هِىَ حَتَّىٰ مَطْلَعِ ٱلْفَجْرِ ۝٥

XCVII
AL-QADR
الْقَدْر

Verses: 65 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

We have sent down this (Qur'ān) in the Night of Glory.[1] And what do you know what the Night of Glory is? The Night of Glory is better than a thousand months.[2] The angels and the Spirit[3] descend in it with every decree, by the permission of their Lord.[4] That Night is peace, until the rising of the dawn.[5] 1-5

1. The words in the original are *anzalnā-hu;* "We Ourself have sent it down". But although there is no mention of the Qur'ān before it, the Qur'ān is implied, for "sending down" by itself points out that the Qur'ān is meant. And there are numerous instances of this in the Qur'ān that if from the context, or the

style, the antecedent of a pronoun is apparent, the pronoun is used even if the antecedent has not been mentioned anywhere before or after it. (For explanation, see E.N. 9 of An-Najm).

Here, it has been said: "We have sent down the Qur'ān in the Night of Destiny", and in Al-Baqarah: 185, "Ramaḍān is the month in which the Qur'ān was sent down." This shows that the night in which the Angel of God had brought down revelation for the first time to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's Peace) in the Cave of Hirā, was a night of the month of Ramaḍān. This night has been described as *Lailat-ul-qadr* here and as *Lailat-im-mubarakah* in Sūrah Ad-Dukhān: 3 above.

There can be two meanings of sending down the Qur'ān in this night: first, that in this night the entire Qur'ān was entrusted to the bearers (angels) of Revelation, and then Gabriel (peace be on him) continued to reveal its verses and Sūrahs, from time to time, to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) during 23 years as the occasion and conditions demanded. This meaning has been given by Ibn 'Abbās. (Ibn Jarīr, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ḥākim, Ibn Mardūyah, Baihaqi). Second, that the revelation of the Qur'ān began in this night. This is Imām Sha'bī's view, although from him too the other view also is related, which is the view of Ibn 'Abbas as cited above (Ibn Jarīr). Anyhow, in both cases, the meaning is the same that the revelation of the Qur'ān to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be pence) began in this very night, and this was the night in which the five opening verses of Sūrah Al-'Alaq were revealed. The fact, however, is that Allah did not compose the verses and the Sūrahs of the Qur'ān right at the time guidance was needed by the Holy Prophet for his message of Islam in respect of an occasion or affair, but even before the creation of the universe, in the very beginning, Allah had a full plan of the creation of mankind on the earth, of raising the Prophets in it, of sending down the Books to the Prophets, of raising the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) at the end of the line of the Prophets and of sending down the Qur'ān to him. In the Night of Destiny only the execution of the final phase of the plan began. No wonder if at that very time the entire Qur'ān was entrusted to the bearers of Revelation.

Some commentators have interpreted *qadr* to mean destiny (*taqdīr*)...*i.e* it is the night in which Allah entrusts the decrees of destiny to the angels to be enforced. This is supported by verse 3 of Sūrah Ad-Dukhān: "This is a night in which every matter is decided wisely by Our command." On the contrary, Imām Zuhrī says that *qadr* means glory and honour, thereby implying that it is a Night of Destiny. This meaning is supported by the words "*Lailat-ul-qadr* is better than a thousand months" of this Sūrah itself.

As for the question as to which night it was, it is disputed and there are as many as 40 different views on this subject. However, a great majority of scholars hold the opinion that one of the odd nights of the last ten nights of the month of Ramaḍān is *Lailat-ul-qadr*, and among these also most scholars think that it is the 27th night. Below we give the authentic *Aḥādīth* which have been reported in this connection:

According to Ḥaḍrat Abu Hurairah, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said, in connection with *Lailat-ul qadr*, that it is the 27th night. (Abū Da'ūd Tayālisī). According to another tradition from Ḥadrat Abū Hurairah, it is the last night of Ramaḍān. (Musnad Aḥmad).

When Zirr bin Ḥubaish asked Ḥaḍrat Ubayy bin Ka'b about *Lailat-ul-qadr*, he stated on oath, and did not make any exception, that it is the 27th night. (Ahmad, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī, Ibn Ḥibbān).

When Hadrat Abū Zarr was asked about it, he said: "Hadrat 'Umar, Hadrat Hudhaifah and many other Companions of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had no doubt that it is the 27th night." (Ibn Abī Shaibah).

Ḥaḍrat 'Ubādah bin aṣ-Ṣāmit says that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said: "*Lailat-al-qadr* is one of the odd nights of the last ten nights of Ramaḍān: 21st, 23rd, 25th, 27th, 29th, or the last night." (Musnad Aḥmad).

Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās says that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said: "Search for it among the last ten nights of Ramadān when there are still nine days in the month, or seven days, or five days." (Bukhārī). Most of the scholars have understood it to mean that by this the Holy Prophet meant the odd nights.

Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr said: "When nine days remain in the month, or seven days, or five days, or three days, or the last night." What he meant was that *Lailat-ul-qadr* should be sought among these dates. (Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī).

According to Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said: "Search for *Lailat-ul-qadr* among the odd nights of the last ten nights of Ramaḍān. (Bukhārī, Muslim, Aḥmad, Tirmidhī). Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah and Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar have also reported that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) observed *I'tikāf* (seclusion in the Mosque) during the last ten nights of Ramaḍān every year during his lifetime.

On the basis of the traditions related in this regard on the authority of a great Companions like Ḥaḍrat Mu'āwiyah, Ḥaḍrat Ibn 'Umar, Ḥaḍrat Ibn 'Abbas and others, a large number of the earliest scholars regard the 27th of Ramaḍān as *Lailat-ul-qadr*. Probably Allah and His Messenger have not specified any one night

for the reason so that the people, in their zeal to benefit from the virtues of *Lailat-ul-qadr*, should spend more and more nights in worship and devotion and should not remain content with only one night. Here the question arises that when it is night at Makkah, it is daytime in a large part of the world; therefore, the people of those parts can never take advantage of *Lailat-ul-qadr*. The answer is that the word night in Arabic is mostly used for the combination of the day and night. Therefore, the night preceding the day on any one of these dates of Ramadān can be *Lailat ul-qadr* for that part of the world.

2. The commentators in general have understood this to mean that the good acts performed in this Night are superior in value to the good acts of a thousand months in which *Lailat-ul-qadr* is not included. There is no doubt that this is in itself correct and the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has described great excellencies and virtues of the good acts and devotions of this Night. According to a tradition related in Bukhārī and Muslim, on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, the Holy Prophet said: The one who remained standing in worship in the state of belief and for the sake of rewards from Allah during *Lailat-ul-qadr*, would have all his previous sins forgiven." And in Musnad Aḥmad, there is a tradition from Ḥaḍrat 'Ubādah bin aṣ-Ṣāmit, saying that the Holy Prophet said: *Lailat-ut-qadr* is among the last ten nights of Ramaḍān. The one who stood up in worship in order to take advantage of their rewards, Allah will forgive all his former and latter sins." But, the verse does not say: "To act righteously in *Lailat-ul-qadr* is better than acting righteously in a thousand months, " but it says: *Lailat-ul-qadr* is better than a thousand months." And "a thousand months" also does not imply 83 years and 4 months exactly, but a very long period of time as "a thousand" denoted among the Arabs. Therefore, the verse means that in this one night a task was accomplished for the welfare of mankind the like of which had not been accomplished even during an indefinitely long period of history.

3. "The Spirit": Gabriel (peace be on him), who has been mentioned separately from the angels in view of his unique eminence, honour and merit.

4. That is, they do not descend of their own accord but by leave of their Lord, and "every decree" implies *amr ḥakim* (a wise decree) as described in Ad-Dukhān: 5.

5 That is, the entire Night, from evening till morning, is peace, free from every evil and mischief.



XCVIII

AL-BAYYINAH

اَلْبَيِّنَه

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XCVIII

AL-BAYYINAH

الْبَيِّنَه

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah is so designated after the word *al-bayyinah* occurring at the end of the first verse.

Period of Revelation

Where it was revealed, at Makkah or Midīnah, is also disputed. Some commentators say it is a Makkī revelation according to most scholars; others say it is a Madanī revelation according to most scholars.

Ibn Az-Zubair and 'Atā' bin Yasār hold the view that it is Madanī. Ibn 'Abbās and Qatādah are reported to have held two views, first that it is Makkī, second that it is Madanī. Hadrat 'Ā'ishah regards it as a Makkī Sūrah.

Abū Hayyān, author of *Bahr al-Muhīt*, and 'Abdul Mun'im ibn al-Faras, author of *Ahkām al-Qur'ān*, also have preferred to regard it as Makkī. As for its contents, there is nothing in it to indicate whether it was revealed at Makkah or at Madīnah.

Theme and Subject Matter

Its having been placed after Sūrahs Al-'Alaq and Al-Qadr in the arrangement of the Qur'ān is very meaningful. Sūrah Al-'Alaq contains the very first revelation, while Sūrah Al-Qadr shows as to when it was revealed, and in this Sūrah it has been explained why it was necessary to send a Messenger along with this Holy Book .

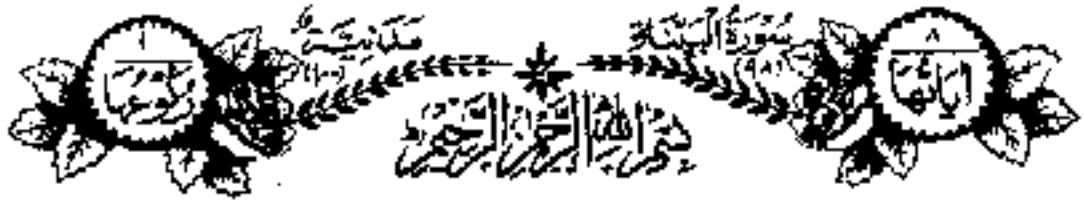
First of all, the need of sending a Messenger has been explained, saying: The people of the world, be they from among the followers of the earlier scriptures or from among the idolaters, could not possibly be freed from their state of unbelief, until a Messenger was sent whose appearance by itself should be a clear proof of his apostleship, and he should present the Book of God before the people in its original, pristine form, which should be free from every mixture of falsehood corrupting the earlier Divine Books, and which should comprise sound teachings.

Then, about the errors of the followers of the earlier Books it has been said that the cause of their straying into different creeds was not that Allah had not provided any guidance to them, but they strayed only after a clear statement of the Right Creed had come to them. From this it automatically follows that they themselves were responsible for their error and deviation. Now, if even after the coming of the clear statement through this Messenger, they continued to stray, their responsibility would further increase.

In this very connection, it has been stated that the Prophets who came from Allah and the Books sent down by Him, did not enjoin anything but that the way of sincere true service to Allah be adopted, apart from all other ways, no one else's worship, service or obedience be mixed with His, the *salāt* be established and the *zakāt* be paid. This

same has been the true religion since ever. From this also it automatically follows that the followers of the earlier scriptures, straying from this true religion, have added extraneous things to it, which are false, and Allah's this Messenger has come to invite them back to the same original faith.

In conclusion, it has been pointed out clearly that the followers of the earlier Books and the idolaters who would refuse to acknowledge this Messenger are the worst of creatures: their punishment is an everlasting Hell; and the people who would believe and act righteously, and would spend life in the world in awe of God, are the best of creatures: their reward is eternal Paradise wherein they will live for ever. Allah became well pleased with them and they became well pleased with Allah.



لَمْ يَكُنِ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مِنْ اَهْلِ الْكِتٰبِ وَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ مُنْفَكِّيْنَ حَتّٰى
تَاْتِيَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَةُ ۙ﴿۱﴾ رَسُوْلٌ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ يَتْلُوْا صُحُفًا مُّطَهَّرَةً ۙ﴿۲﴾ فِيْهَا كُتُبٌ
قَيِّمَةٌ ؕ﴿۳﴾ وَمَا تَفَرَّقَ الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْكِتٰبَ اِلَّا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَآءَتْهُمُ
الْبَيِّنَةُ ؕ﴿۴﴾ وَمَاۤ اُمِرُوْۤا اِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ مُخْلِصِيْنَ لَهُ الدِّيْنَ ۙ۬ حُنَفَآءَ
وَ يُقِيْمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَ يُؤْتُوا الزَّكٰوةَ وَ ذٰلِكَ دِيْنُ الْقَيِّمَةِ ؕ﴿۵﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ
كَفَرُوْا مِنْ اَهْلِ الْكِتٰبِ وَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ فِيْ نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ
هُمْ شَرُّ الْبَرِيَّةِ ؕ﴿۶﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ ۙ اُولٰٓئِكَ هُمْ خَيْرُ
الْبَرِيَّةِ ؕ﴿۷﴾ جَزَآؤُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنّٰتُ عَدْنٍ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ
خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَاۤ اَبَدًا ؕ رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُمْ وَ رَضُوْا عَنْهُ ؕ ذٰلِكَ لِمَنْ خَشِيَ رَبَّهٗ ؕ﴿۸﴾

XCVIII

AL-BAYYINAH

اَلْبَيِّنَه

Verses: 8 *Revealed at Madinah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

The disbelievers[1] from among the people of the Book and the *mushriks*[2] would not desist (from their unbelief) until the clear evidence should come to them,[3] (that is,) a Messenger[4] from Allah, who should recite to them holy scriptures[5] containing sound and correct writings . 1-3

The people who were given the Book before this did not divide into sects until after the clear statement (of the Right Way) had come to them[6] and the only Command they were given was to worship Allah, making their religion sincerely His, turning all their attention towards Him, and to establish the *salāt* and to pay the *zakāt*: for this alone is the most true and right religion.[7] 4-5

Those who have disbelieved[8] from among the people of the Book and the *mushriks*, shall certainly enter Hell, and remain therein for ever. They are the worst of all creatures.[9] As for those who believed and did righteous works, they are indeed the best of all creatures.[10] Their reward with their Lord shall be Gardens of Eternity beneath which rivers will be flowing; they shall live in them for ever and ever. Allah became well pleased with them and they with Allah. All this is for him who feared his Lord.[11] 6-8

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1. Here the word *kufr* (unbelief) has been used in its widest sense, which includes different forms of the unbelieving attitude. For example, some were unbelievers in the sense that they did not acknowledge Allah at all; some did acknowledge Allah but did not regard Him as the One and only God, but worshipped others as well, thinking they were associates in Divine Being or Divine attributes and powers in one way or the other; some acknowledged oneness of God but committed some kind of *shirk* as well; some acknowledged God but did not acknowledge His Prophets and the guidance brought by them; some acknowledged one particular Prophet and did not acknowledge another; others rejected the

Hereafter. In short, there were different kinds of *kufr* in which the people were involved. And the statement: "the disbelievers from among the people of the Book and the *mushriks* ...", does not mean that some of them were not involved in *kufr*, but that those who were involved in *kufr* were of two kinds: the followers of the Book and the *mushriks*. Here, *min* has not been used for division but for explanation, as, for example, in Sūrah Al-Ḥajj: 30, where it has been said *Fajtanib-ur-rijsa min al-authān*, which means: "therefore, guard yourselves against the filth of idols'-, and not: "guard yourselves against the filth which is in the idols." Likewise, *alladhīna kafarū min ahl-il-Kitābi wal-mushrikīn* means: "the disbelievers from among the followers of the Book and the *mushriks* ... ", and not: "those who have disbelieved from these two groups.

2. Despite the common factor of *kufr* between them the two groups have been mentioned by separate names. The followers of the Book imply the people who possessed any of the revealed Books, even if in corrupted form, sent to the former Prophets, and they believed in it. And the *mushriks* (idolaters) imply the people who did not follow any Prophet nor believed in any Book. Although in the Qur'ān the *shirk*, (polytheism, idolatry) of the people of the Book has been mentioned at many places, *e.g.* about the Christians it has been said: "They say: God is one of the three" (Al-Mā'idah: 73); "The Messiah is son of God" (At-Taubah: 30); "The Messiah, son of Mary; is God" (Al-Mā'idah: 17); and about the Jews it has been said: "They say: Ezra is son of God" (At-Taubah: 30), yet nowhere in the Qur'an has the term *"mushrik"* been used for them, but they have been mentioned as *"alladhīna ūtū-ul-Kitāba"* (those who were given the Book), or by the words Jews and Christians. For they believed in the principle of *Tauḥīd* (Oueness of God) as the true religion, and then committed *shirk*. Contrary to this, for others than the followers of the Book, the word *mushrik* has been used as a term, for they acknowledged *shirk* (idolatry) as true religion and disacknowledged *Tauḥīd*. This distinction between the two groups holds good not only in the use of the term but also in the Sharī'ah injunctions. Animal flesh duly slaughtered by the followers of the Book has been declared lawful for the Muslims if they slaughter a lawful animal in the name of Allah in the prescribed way, and permission to marry their women also has been given. On the contrary, neither the animal slaughtered by the *mushriks* is lawful for the Muslims nor is marriage with their women.

3. That is, "There was no means of their being freed from this state of unbelief except that a clear evidence (of the truth) should come and make them understand the falsity of every form of *kufr* and its being untrue, and should present the right way before them in a clear and rational way." This does not mean that after the coming of the clear evidence they would give up *kufr*, but that in the absence of the clear evidence it was not at all possible that they would be delivered from that state. However, if even after its coming some of them still persisted in

their *kufr*, then they themselves would be responsible for it; they could not complain that Allah had made no arrangement for their guidance. This same thing has been expressed in the Qur'ān at different places in different ways, *e.g.* in Sūrah An-Naḥl: 9, it is said: "Allah has taken upon Himself to show the Right Way"; in Sūrah Al-Lail: 12, it is said: "It is for Us to show the Way"; in Sūrah An-Nisā: 163-165: "O! Prophet, We have sent Revelation to you just as We had sent it to Noah and other Prophets after him ... All these Messengers were sent as bearers of good news and warners so that, after their coming, the people should have no excuse left to plead before Allah"; and in Sūrah Al-Mā'idah: 19: "O people of the Book, this Messenger of Ours has come to you and is making clear to you the teachings of the Right Way after a long interval during which there had come no Messengers, lest you should say: 'No bearer of good news nor warner came to us. Lo, now the bearer of good news and warner has come."

4. Here, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) himself has been called "the clear evidence", for his life before and after Prophethood, his presenting a Book like the Qur'ān in spite of being un-lettered, his bringing about an extraordinary revolution in the lives of the converts to Islam through education and training, his educating the people in rational beliefs, clean and pure forms of worship, excellent morals and the best principles and injunctions for human life, perfect harmony and agreement between his word and deed, and his constancy of purpose in respect of his message in spite of every kind of resistance and opposition, all these were clear signs of the truth that he was Allah's Messenger.

5. Lexically, *ṣuḥuf* means "written pages", but in the Holy Qur'ān this word has been used as a term for the Books revealed to the Prophets of Allah (peace be upon them); and by the holy scriptures are meant the scriptures which are free from every mixture of falsehood, every kind of error and moral filth. The full import of these words becomes evident when one studies the Bible (and the books of other religions as well) vis-a-vis the Holy Qur'ān, and finds written in them along with sound teachings such things as are not only opposed to truth and reason but are also morally contemptible. After reading them when one turns to the Qur'ān, one realizes how pure and hallowed this Book is.

6. That is, the reason why the people of the Book before this were divided into countless sects because of different kinds of errors and deviation, was not that Allah had failed to send "a clear evidence" from Himself for their guidance, but the fact that they adopted the wrong way after guidance had come from Allah; therefore, they themselves were responsible for their deviation, for Allah had fulfilled His obligation towards them. Likewise, since their scriptures are no longer pure and their books no longer consist of original and correct teachings, Allah by sending a Messenger of His, as a clear evidence, with a hallowed Book,

containing sound and pure teachings, has again fulfilled His obligation towards them, so that if even after that they remained divided, they themselves should be responsible for it and should have no excuse left to plead before Allah. This thing has been stated at many places in the Qur'ān, *e.g.* see Al-Baqarah: 213, 253; Āl-'Imrān: 19; Al-Mā'idah: 44-50; Yūnus: 93; Ash-Shūrā: 13-15; Al-Jāthiyah: 16-18, along with the corresponding notes for fuller understanding.

7. That is, the message of the same religion, which now the Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) is preaching, had been given to the people of the Book by the Prophets who came to them and by the Books which were sent among them; they had not been enjoined any of the false belief and wicked deeds which they adopted afterwards and created different sects. Right and correct religion has always been the same: that Allah alone should be served and worshipped exclusively, none else be joined with Him in worship, man should become worshipper of One Allah alone and obedient to His Command only, should establish the *ṣalāt* and pay the *zakāt*. (For further explanation, see E.N. 19 of Al-A'rāf; E.N.'s: 108,109 of Yūnus, E.N.'s 43 to 47 of Ar-Rūm; E.N.'s 3, 4 of Az-Zumar).

Some commentators have taken the words *din al-qayyimah* in this verse in the meaning of *dīn al-millat al-qayyimah*: "Religion of the righteous community". Some others have taken *qayyimah* in the superlative sense and understood it in the same meaning as we have adopted in our translation.

8. "Disbelieved": refused to acknowledge the Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) as Allah's Messenger. The meaning is that the end of those from among the *mushriks* and the followers of the Book, who have not acknowledged the Messenger whose emergence by itself is a clear evidence, and who is reciting to them hallowed pages containing sound and correct teachings, will be as is being described below.

9. That is, they are worse than all creatures of God, even than animals, for the animals do not possess reason and power, but these people reject the Truth in spite of having reason and authority.

10. That is, they are superior to all creatures of God, even to the angels, for the angels do not have the power to disobey, and these people adopt Allah's obedience in spite of having the power to disobey Him.

11. In other words, the person who did not live in the world fearless and independent of God, but feared Him at every step lest he should do something which might entail His wrath and punishment, will have this reward resolved for him with Allah.


XCIX
AZ-ZILZĀL
الزِّلزال

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XCIX

AZ-ZILZĀL

الزِّلزال

INTRODUCTION

Name

It is derived from the word *zilzāl* in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

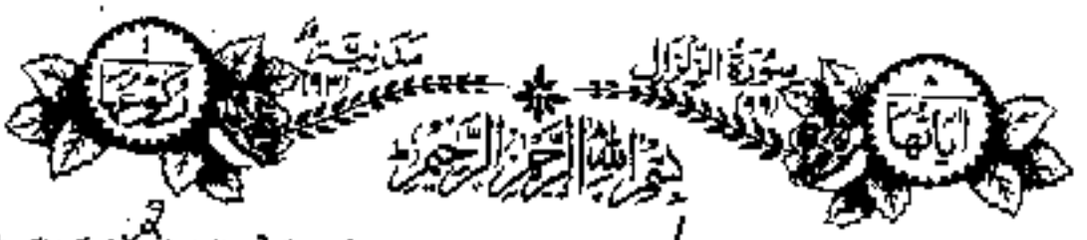
Whether or not it was revealed, at Makkah or Madīnah, is disputed. Ibn Mas'ūd, 'Atā', Jābir and Mujāhid say that it is a Makkī Sūrah and a statement of Ibn 'Abbās also supports this view. On the contrary, Qatādah and Muqātil say that it is Madanī and another

statement of Ibn 'Abbās also has been cited in support of this view. That it is a Madanī Sūrah is reasoned from a tradition from Hadrat Abu Sa'īd Khudri, which Ibn Abī Hātim has related from him. He says: "When the verse *Fa-man ya'mal mithqāla dharratin khairan yarah, wa man ya'mal mithqāla dharratin sharran yara,* was revealed, I said; O Messenger of Allah, shall I really see my deeds? The Holy Messenger replied in the affirmative. I submitted: And every major sin? He replied: yes. I said: And the minor sins too? He replied: yes. Thereupon I exclaimed that I would then be ruined. The Holy Prophet said: Rejoice, O Abū Sa'īd, for each good act will be equal to ten good acts like it." The basis of the argument for this Sūrah's being Madanī is that Hadrat Abū Sa'īd Khudrī was an inhabitant of Madīnah and reached maturity after the Battle of Uhud. Therefore, if this Sūrah was revealed in his presence, as is apparent from his statement, it must be a Madanī Sūrah. However, the practice that the Companion's and their immediate successors followed in respect of the occasion of the revelation of the verses and Sūrahs, has already been explained in the Introduction to Sūrah Ad-Dahr above. Therefore, a Companion's saying that a verse was sent down on this or that particular occasion is no proof that it was sent down on that very occasion. It may well be that after coming of age when Hadrat Abū Sa'īd heard this Sūrah for the first time from the Holy Prophet, terrified by its last portion he might have asked the Holy Prophet the questions which we have cited above, and he might have narrated the incident saying that when this verse was revealed he put this and this question to the Holy Prophet. In the absence of this tradition every reader who reads the Qur'ān with understanding, will feel that it is a Makkī Sūrah. More than that: from its theme and style he would feel that it must have been sent down in the earliest stage at Makkah when the fundamental principles and beliefs of Islam were being presented before the people in a concise but highly effective way.

Theme and Subject-Matter

Its theme is the second life after death and presentation in it before man of the full record of the deeds done by him in the world. In the first three sentences it has been told briefly how the second life after death will take place and how confounding it will be for man. In the next two sentences it has been said that this very earth on which man has lived and performed all kinds of deeds thoughtlessly, and about which he

never could fancy that this lifeless thing would at some time in the future bear witness to his deeds, will speak out on that Day by Allah's command and will state in respect of each individual person what act he had committed at a particular time and place. Then, it has been said that men on that Day, rising from their graves, will come out in their varied groups from all corners of the earth, to be shown their deeds and works, and their presentation of the deeds will be so complete and detailed that not an atom's weight of any good or evil act will be left un-noticed or hidden from his eyes.



بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

إِذَا زُلْزِلَتِ الْأَرْضُ زِلْزَالَهَا ۝١ وَأَخْرَجَتِ الْأَرْضُ أَثْقَالَهَا ۝٢ وَقَالَ الْإِنْسَانُ
مَا لَهَا ۝٣ يَوْمَئِذٍ تُحَدِّثُ أَخْبَارَهَا ۝٤ بِأَنَّ رَبَّكَ أَوْحَىٰ لَهَا ۝٥ يَوْمَئِذٍ
يَصْدُرُ النَّاسُ أَشْتَاتًا لِّيُرَوْا أَعْمَالَهُمْ ۝٦ فَمَن يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ
خَيْرًا يَرَهُ ۝٧ وَمَن يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ ۝٨



XCIX
AZ-ZILZĀL

الزِّلزال

Verses: 8

Revealed at Madīnah

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

When the earth is shaken with her utmost shaking,[1] and the earth casts out all the burdens from within her,[2] and man says, "What has befallen her?"[3]— On that Day shall she relate whatever had happened (on her),[4] for your Lord shall have commanded her (to do so). On that daymen shall turn up in sundry groups[5] to be shown their deeds.[6] Then, whoever has done an atom's weight of good, shall see it; and whoever has done an atom's weight of evil, shall see it.[7] 1-8

1. *Zalzalah* means to shake violently over and over again. Thus, *zulzilat-il-ardu* means that the earth will be shaken violently by convulsion after convulsion, and since shaking of the earth has been mentioned, it automatically

gives the meaning that the entire earth will be shaken and not a limited territory of it. Then, in order to express the great intensity of the earthquake the word *zilzālahā* has been added, which literally means "its being shaken". It mean: "It will be so shaken as a huge sphere like it ought to be shaken, or shaken to its utmost intensity." Some commentators have taken it to imply the first earthquake with which the first stage of Resurrection will begin, *i.e.* when all living beings will perish and the present order of the world will be upset. But, according to a large section of them, it implies the earthquake with which the second stage of Resurrection will begin, *i.e.* when all the former and the latter generations of mankind will rise back to life. This second commentary seems to be more correct, for the whole subsequent theme supports it.

2. This same has been expressed in Sūrah Al-Inshiqāq: 4, thus: "And throws out whatever is within it, and becomes empty." It has several meanings: (1) It will cast out bodies of the dead in whatever form and state and wherever they may be lying in the earth; and the following sentence indicates that at that time all the scattered parts of the bodies will reassemble and be resurrected once again in the same form and shape as they had been in their first life, for if it were not so, how will they say: "What has happened to the earth ?" It will not only cast out the dead bodies of men but also all traces and evidences of the words, deeds and activities of their former life lying buried in it; the following sentence points out that the earth will narrate all that had happened on its back. (3) A third meaning also has been given by some commentators, saying that it will cast out the treasures of gold, silver, jewels and every kind of wealth lying hidden in the earth's belly and man will see it and realize how he thirsted for these things in the world: how he committed murders, thefts, robberies and piracies in the land and sea, usurped the rights of others, waged wars and devastated vast populations. On that Day all that will lie heaped up before him, yet of no avail, but will rather become a means of punishment for him.

3. Man here may as well imply every man, for after resurrection and coming to senses the first impression of every man will be as to what was happening around him; afterwards he will realize that it was the Resurrection Day. Man may also imply the man who denies the Hereafter, for what he regarded as impossible would be happening in front of him and causing him confusion and bewilderment. As for the believers, they will not be bewildered and confused, for everything would be taking place according to their belief and conviction. To an extent, this second meaning is supported by verse 52 of Sūrah Yā Sīn, in which it has been said that the deniers of the Hereafter at that time will exclaim: "Ah, who has roused us from our sleeping-place?" And the reply given would be: "This is the same which the Merciful God had promised; and the Messengers sent by God had spoken the truth." This verse does not expressly say that this answer to the

disbelievers would actually be given by the believers, for there is no indication of it in the verse. The probability, however, is that the believers will give them this answer.

4. According to Hadrat Abū Hurairah, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) recited this verse and asked: "Do you know what annals it will relate ?" The people said: "Allah and His Messenger have the best knowledge." Thereupon the Holy Prophet said: "The annals are that the earth will testify to the deeds which every man and woman has done on its back." She will say: "He or she had done such and such a thing on such and such a day. These will be the annals the earth will narrate." (Musnad Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī, Ibn Jarīr, 'Abd bin Ḥumaid, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ḥākim, Ibn Mardūyah, Baihaqī in *Ash-Shu'ab*). According to Ḥadrat Rabī'al-Kharashī, the Holy Prophet said: "Beware of the earth, for it is your root and basis, and there is nothing which a person does on it, and it will not report, whether it is good or bad." *(Mu'jam at-Ṭabarānī)*. Ḥadrat Anas reports that the Holy Prophet said: "The earth on the Day of Resurrection will bring out every act that would have been done on its back. Then he recited these verses." (Ibn Mardūyah, Baihaqī). About Ḥadrat 'Ali it is related that when he distributed the money of the *Bait al-Māl* (public treasury) among the needy ones and thus emptied it, he would perform two *rak'ahs* of the Prayer in it and say: "You will have to bear witness that I filled you with justice and emptied you with justice."

It might have been difficult for a man of ancient times to understand how the earth will speak and narrate the annals and events happening on it on the Resurrection Day, but in the present age of scientific discoveries and the inventions of cinema, loudspeaker, radio, television, tape-recorder, electronic equipment, etc., it is no longer difficult to understand how the earth will narrate its annals. The impression of whatever man speaks is preserved in the air, in the radio waves, on the particles of the walls and floors and ceilings of the houses, and on the environments of the road, plain or field if he spoke outside the house. If Allah so wills He can make these things repeat all these voices precisely in the way these were uttered in the first instance by man. Man at that time will hear with his ears and know that it was his own voice, and all his acquaintances also will testify that whatever they were hearing was the person's own voice and his own accent. Then whatever man has done anywhere on the earth, and in whatever state, has had its impression on everything of the environment and its image inscribed on it. Even if he did something in pitch dark, there are such rays in the Kingdom of God for which darkness and light make no difference; they can preserve his image in any case. All these images will pass before man on the Resurrection Day like a motion picture, and will show him when and where he had done something during his life on the earth.

The fact is that although Allah directly knows whatever a man does, yet in the Hereafter when He will establish His Court, He will punish every culprit only after fulfilling all the demands of justice. Any case which is brought before His Court against a criminal will be proved with such perfect evidence that no room will be left to doubt his being a criminal. The first and foremost evidence against him is the record in which the two recording angels are recording his each word and deed. (Qāf: 17-18, Al-Infiṭār: 10-12). This record will be handed over to him and he will be asked to read it, for "you yourself suffice as reckoner against yourself." (Banī Isrā'īl: 14). Reading it man will be bewildered, for "it has left nothing un-recorded of our deeds, small or great." (Al-Kahf: 49). Then there is man's own body which he had used in the world. In Allah's Court his own tongue will bear witness as to what he had been speaking through it in the world, his own hands and feet will bear witness as to what deeds he had committed through them (An-Nūr: 24). His eyes and his ears will bear witness as to what he saw and heard by their means. Even the skin of his body will bear witness to his deeds. Bewildered he will ask his limbs, "Why have you borne witness against me ?" They will reply: "The same God Who has given speech to everything has given us speech." (Ḥā Mīm As-Sajdah: 20-22). On top of these, there will be the witnesses which will be presented from the earth and all its environments, in which man will hear his own voice by his own ears and see the exact pictures of his own deeds by his eyes. Furthermore, the ideas, motives and aims hidden in the heart of man and the intentions with which he had performed every deed will be brought out and placed before him as is stated in Sūrah Al-'Ādiyat below. That is why with the production of such absolute, clear and undeniable proofs, man will be confounded and he will be left with no chance to say anything in self-defence to excuse himself. (Al-Mursalāt 35-36)

5 This can have two meanings: (1) That each man with present himself in his own individual capacity---families, groups, parties, nations, all will scatter away. This thing has been said at other places also in the Qur'ān, *e.g.*, according to Sūrah Al-An'ām 94, Allah on that Day will say to the people "So, you have come before Us all alone, as We created you at first", and in Sūrah Maryam: "He will appear before Us all alone" (v 80), and "Everyone of them will be presented before Him individually on the Resurrection Day" (v 95) (2) That the people who during thousands and thousands of years had died at different places, will be rising from different corners of the earth and proceeding in groups, as has been said in Sūrah An-Nabā "The day the Trumpet is blown, you will come out in crowds." (v 18) Apart from these, there is no room in the word *ashtātan* for the meanings, which different commentators have given, and are, therefore, outside the literal bounds of this word, although they are correct by themselves and in accordance with the conditions depicted of the Resurrection Day in Qur'ān and the *Ḥadīth*.

6. This can have two meanings: (1) That they are shown their deeds, *i.e.*, each one told what he did in the world; and (2) that they are shown the rewards of their deeds. Although this second meaning also can be taken of the words *li-yuraw' jazā'a a'mālahum* (so as to be shown the rewards of their deeds) but *li-yuraw' a'mālahum* (so as to be shown their deeds). Therefore, the first meaning only is preferable, especially when at several places in the Qur'ān it has been stated clearly that the disbeliever and the believer, the righteous and the wicked, the obedient and the disobedient, all will be given their records (*e.g.* see Al-Ḥāqqah: 19, 25; Al-Inshiqāq: 7, 10). Evidently, there is no difference between showing somebody his deeds and handing over to him his record. Furthermore, when the earth will narrate whatever had happened on her, the whole picture of the conflict between the Truth and the falsehood that has been raging since the beginning of time and will continue to rage till the end, also will appear before the people and they will see what part the truth-loving people played in it and what vile deeds did the supporters of falsehood commit against them. It may well be that the people will hear with their own ears all the speeches and dialogues of the callers to right guidance and of the publicists of error and evil; the whole record of the writings and literature produced by the two sides will be placed intact before them, and the people gathered together in the Plain of Assembly will see with their own eyes the persecution of the lovers of Truth by the worshippers of falsehood and all the scenes of the bitter conflict that raged between the two parties.

7. A simple and straightforward meaning of this statement, and it is right and correct, is that not an atom's weight of good or evil done by a person, will have been left unrecorded in his conduct book, and he will see it in any case. But if seeing is taken to imply seeing its reward and punishment, it will be wrong to take it in the meaning that in the Hereafter every person will be rewarded for his most minor offence, and no one will be left un-rewarded for a good and unpunished for an evil done by him. For in the first place, it would mean that each evil act will be punished and each good act rewarded separately; secondly, it also means that no believer, however righteous and virtuous, will remain safe from being punished for a most ordinary error, and no disbeliever, however wicked and iniquitous, will be left unrewarded for a most ordinary good act. Both these meanings are opposed not only to the explanations given in the Qur'ān and the *Ḥadīth*, but also to reason. From the point of view of reason, it is not understandable that a master would refuse to pardon a most loyal and dutiful servant for a most minor error, and along with rewarding for each act of service and obedience, would also punish him for each and every error. Likewise, this also is not understandable from the viewpoint of reason that a person brought up and favoured by you should prove disloyal and treacherous and ungrateful in spite of your favours, and you, over-looking his collective attitude, should punish him

for each act of treachery separately and reward him for each, even if most insignificant, act of service separately. As for the Qur'ān and the *Ḥadīth*, they have laid down a detailed law of rewards and punishments for the different categories of the people, be they believers, hypocrites, disbelievers, righteous believers; erring believers, wicked and sinful believers, common disbelievers, or wicked and mischievous disbelievers, and these rewards and punishments pervade the entire life of man, from there to the Hereafter.

In this connection, the Qur'ān has stated, in principle, certain things explicitly:

First, that the deeds of the disbelievers, idolaters and hypocrites (*i.e.*, the deeds regarded as virtuous) have been rendered vain; they will receive no reward for them in the Hereafter; if at all they deserve a reward for them, they will receive it here in the world. For this, see Al-A'rāf: 147, At-Taubah: 17, 67-69; Hūd: 15-16; Ibrāhīm: 18; Al-Kahf: 104-105; An-Nūr: 39; Al-Furqān: 23; Al-Aḥzāb: 19; Az-Zumar: 65; Al-Ahqāf: 20.

Second, that evil will be punished to the extent that evil has been committed, but the good deeds will be rewarded much more generously than what they will actually deserve. At some places it has been explicitly stated that a good act will have a ten-fold reward for it, and at others that Allah will increase the reward of the good act as much as He will please. For this, see Al-Baqarah: 261, Al-An'ām: 160, Yūnus: 26-27, An-Nūr: 38, Al-Qasas: 84, Sabā: 37, Al-Mu'min:40.

Third, that if the believers abstained from major sins, their ordinary offences will be forgiven. (An-Nisā': 31, Ash-Shūrā: 37, An-Najm: 32).

Fourth, that the righteous believer shall have an easy reckoning, his evils will be overlooked and he will be rewarded according to his best deeds. (Al-'Ankabūt: 7, Az-Zumar: 35, Al-Ahqāf: 16, Al-Inshiqāq: 8).

The *Ḥadīth* also is very explicit in this regard. In the commentary of Sūrah Al-Inshiqāq above, we have cited the *Aḥādīth* which have been reported from the Holy Prophet in connection with the explanation of easy reckoning and severe accountability. (See E.N. 6 of Al-Inshiqāq). Ḥaḍrat Anas says that once Hadrat Abū Bakr Ṣiddīq was having his meals with the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). In the meantime this verse was revealed. Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr withdrew his hand from food and said: "O Messenger of Allah, shall I see the result of every little evil that I have happened to commit?" The Holy Prophet replied: "O Abū Bakr, whatever unpleasant and troublesome things you experience in the world, will compensate for the little evils that you happened to commit, and Allah is reserving every little good that you do for your Hereafter," (Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī

Ḥātim, Ṭabarānī in *Al-Ausaṭ*, Baihaqī in *Ash-shu'ab*, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ḥākim, Ibn Mardūyah, 'Abd bin Ḥumaid). The Holy Messenger of Allah had explained this verse also to Ḥaḍrat Abū Ayyūb Anṣārī, saying: "Whoever from among you does good will have his reward in the Hereafter, and whoever commits an evil will suffer punishment for it in this very world in the form of misery and disease. (Ibn Mardūyah). Qatādah has related this saying of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Anas: "Allah does not wrong a believer in the world: He provides him sustenance in lieu of his good deeds; in the Hereafter He will reward him for these. As for the disbeliever, he is recompensed for his good deeds in the world itself; then when Resurrection takes place, he will have no good work left to his credit." (Ibn Jarīr). Masrūq has related from Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah that she asked the Holy Prophet "In the pre-Islamic days of ignorance 'Abdullah bin Jud'ān treated his kindred kindly, fed the poor, received his guests well, earned freedom for the captives. Will this be of any use to him in the Hereafter ? The Holy Prophet replied: No, he never said until death: *Rabbighfir-lī khaṭī'atī yaum ad-dīn*: 'My Lord, forgive me my errors on the Judgement Day." (Ibn Jarīr) The Holy Prophet gave similar replies also in respect of the other people, who did good deeds in the pre-Islamic days, but died as pagans. But there are certain other sayings of the Holy Prophet, which show that although the good done by a disbeliever cannot save him from the fire of Hell, yet in Hell he will not be subjected to the severe punishment which will be the lot of the wicked, sinful and villainous disbelievers, *e.g.* according to a *Ḥadīth*, Ḥātim Ṭā'ī in view of his generosity will be subjected to a light punishment in Hell (*Rūh al-Ma'ānī*).

However, this verse warns man of a truth of vital importance which is this: Even a most ordinary good has its own weight and its own value, and the same is also true of evil: even a most ordinary evil will also be considered and taken into account; it will not just be overlooked. Therefore, no good act, however small and insignificant, should be left undone, for many such good acts can collect and be regarded as a major good not in the reckoning with Allah. Likewise, even a most ordinary evil also should not be committed, for a large number of such ordinary errors can become serious sins. The same thing has been described by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) in several *Aḥādīth*. According to a tradition related in Bukhārī and Muslim, on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Adī bin Ḥātim, the Holy Prophet said: "Save yourselves from the fire of Hell even if it be by giving away a bit of a date, or by uttering a good word." Again from Ḥaḍrat 'Adi, in an authentic tradition, the Holy Prophet's saying has been reported: "Do not look upon any good work as insignificant, even if it be emptying a bucket into the vessel of one asking for water, or receiving a brother of yours with a pleasant face." According to a tradition reported in Bukhārī from Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, the Holy Prophet, addressing the women, said: "O Muslim women, no woman should

look upon sending a gift to her neighbour as mean, even if it be the hoof of a goat." A tradition has been related in Musnad Aḥmad, Nasā'ī and Ibn Mājah from Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, saying that the Holy Prophet said: "O 'Ā'ishah, abstain from the sins which are looked upon as trivial, for they too will be enquired about by Allah." Musnad Ahmad contains a tradition from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, saying that the Holy Prophet said: "Beware of minor sins, for they will gather together on man, so much so that they will kill him." (For the distinction between the grave and the trivial offences., see E.N. 53 of An-Nisā' and E.N. 32 of An-Najm).



C

AL-‘ĀDIYĀT

العٰدِيٰت

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

C

AL-'ĀDIYĀT

العٰدِيٰت

INTRODUCTION

Name'

The Sūrah has been so entitled after the word *al-'ādiyāt* with which it opens.

Period of Revelation

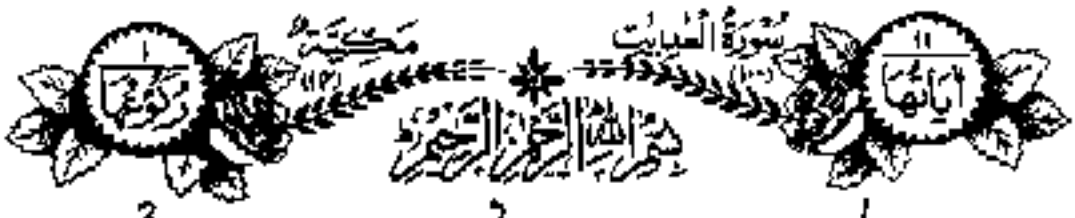
Whether it is a Makkī or a Madanī Sūrah is disputed. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Jābir, Ḥasan Baṣrī, 'Ikrimah and 'Atā' say that it is Makkī. Ḥaḍrat Anas bin Mālik and Qatādah say that it is Madanī; and

from Ḥaḍrat Ibn 'Abbās two views have been reported, first that it is a Makkī Sūrah, and second that it is Madanī. But the subject-matter of the Sūrah and its style clearly indicate that it is not only Makkī but was also revealed in the earliest stage at Makkah.

Theme and Subject-Matter

Its object is to make the people realize how evil man becomes when he denies the Hereafter, or becomes heedless of it, and also to warn them that in the Hereafter not only their visible and apparent deeds but even the secrets hidden in their hearts too will be subjected to scrutiny.

For this purpose the general chaos and confusion prevailing in Arabia, with which the whole country was in turmoil, has been presented as an argument. Bloodshed, loot and plunder raged on every side. Tribes were subjecting tribes to raids, and no one could have peaceful sleep at night from fear that some enemy tribe might raid his settlement early in the morning. Every Arab was fully conscious of this state of affairs and realized that it was wrong. Although the plundered bemoaned his miserable, helpless state and the plunderer rejoiced, yet when the plunderer himself was plundered, he too realized how abject was the condition in which the whole nation was involved. Referring to this very state of affairs, it has been said: Unaware of the second life after death and his accountability before God in it, man has become ungrateful to his Lord and Sustainer. He is using the powers and abilities given by God for perpetrating tyranny and pillage; blinded by the love of worldly wealth he tries to obtain it by every means, however impure and filthy, and his own state itself testifies that by abusing the powers bestowed by his Lord he is being ungrateful to Him. He would never have behaved so, had he known the time when the dead will be raised from the graves, and when the intentions and motives with which he had done all sorts of deeds in the world, will be exposed and brought out before everyone to see. At that time the Lord and Sustainer of men shall be well informed of what one had done and what punishment or reward one deserved.



وَالْعٰدِيٰتِ ضَبْحًا ۝١ فَالْمُوْرِيٰتِ قَدْحًا ۝٢ فَالْمُغِيْرٰتِ صُبْحًا ۝٣ فَاَثَرْنَ بِهٖ
نَقْعًا ۝٤ فَوَسَطْنَ بِهٖ جَمْعًا ۝٥ اِنَّ الْاِنْسَانَ لِرَبِّهٖ لَكَنُوْدٌ ۝٦ وَاِنَّهٗ عَلٰى ذٰلِكَ
لَشَهِيْدٌ ۝٧ وَاِنَّهٗ لِحُبِّ الْخَيْرِ لَشَدِيْدٌ ۝٨ اَفَلَا يَعْلَمُ اِذَا بُعْثِرَ مَا فِى الْقُبُوْرِ ۝٩
وَحُصِّلَ مَا فِى الصُّدُوْرِ ۝١٠ اِنَّ رَبَّهُمْ بِهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَّخَبِيْرٌ ۝١١

C

AL-'ĀDIYĀT

العٰدِيٰت

Verses: 11 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

By the (horses) who run with panting breath;[1] then dash off sparks (with their hoofs);[2] then charge suddenly in the morning;[3] then raise up dust in doing so; then penetrate into a host in a body! Verily, man is ungrateful to his Lord;[4] and he himself is a witness to it;[5] and he loves the worldly wealth with all his heart.[6] But, does he not know the time when all that lies (buried) in the graves shall be brought out,[7] and all that lies (hidden) in the breasts shall be divulged and examined?[8] Surely, their Lord on that Day shall be well informed of them.[9] 1-11

1. There is no indication in the words of the verse to show whether "those who run" imply the horses; only the word *wal-'Ādiyāt* (by those who run) has been used. That is why the commentators have disputed as to what is implied by "those who run". One section of the Companions and their immediate successors

has been to think that it implies the horses; another section says that it implies the camels. But since the peculiar sound called *dabh* is produced only by the panting, snorting horses, and the following verses also in which mention has been made of striking sparks and raiding a settlement early at dawn and raising clouds of dust, apply only to the horses, most scholars are of the opinion that horses are meant. Ibn Jarīr says: "Of the two views this view is preferable that by "those who run" horses are implied, for the camel does not breathe hard in running, it is the horse which does so, and Allah has said: "By those runners which pant and breathe hard in running'." Imam Rāzi says: "The words of these verses proclaim that horses are meant, for the sound of *dabh* (panting breath) is only produced by the horses, and the act of striking sparks of fire with the hoofs too is associated with the horses, and, likewise, mounting of a raid early at dawn is easier by means of the horses than by other animals."

2. "Dashing off sparks" indicates that the horses run in the dead of night, for the sparks struck by their hoofs become conspicuous only at night.

3. The practice among the Arabs was that when they had to mount a raid on a settlement, they marched out in the night so as to take the enemy by surprise; then they would launch a sudden attack early in the morning so that everything became visible in the light of day, and at the same time it did not become so bright that the victim could notice their movement from a distance and be ready to meet the offensive.

4. This is for which an oath has been sworn by the horses, which run with panting breath and dash off sparks at night, then raising dust rush to assault a settlement at dawn and penetrate into the enemy host. It is astonishing to note that a large number of the commentators have taken these horses to imply the horses of the Muslim fighters and the enemy host to imply the host of disbelievers, whereas the oath has been sworn to impress the point that "man is highly ungrateful to his Lord". Now, obviously, in the course of *Jihād* for the sake of Allah, the rushing forth of the fighters' horses and their assaulting a host of disbelievers all of a sudden, does not at all support the point that man is ungrateful to his Lord, nor the following sentences, *viz.* "man himself is a witness to it, and he loves the worldly wealth with all his heart," apply to the people who go out to fight in the cause of Allah. Therefore, one will have to admit that the oaths sworn in the first five verses of this Sūrah, refer, in fact, to the general bloodshed, loot and plunder prevalent in Arabia at that time. In the pre-Islamic days of ignorance the night was a very dreadful thing: in it the people of every tribe and settlement apprehended the danger of a sudden attack by some unknown enemy, and when the light of day appeared they would heave a sigh of relief that the night had passed in peace. The tribes did not fight only retaliatory wars but different tribes also raided others in

order to deprive them of their worldly goods and herds and to capture their women and children to be made slaves. This kind of tyranny and plunder was carried out mostly by means of the horses, which Allah is presenting here as an agrument for the fact that man is ungrateful to his Lord. That is the powers which man is employing for fighting, shedding blood and plundering had not been given him by God for this purpose. Therefore this indeed is sheer ingratitude that the resources granted by Allah and the power given by Him should be used for causing chaos and corruption to spread in the earth, which Allah abhors.

5. That is his own conscience and his own deeds are a witness to it; then there are many disbelievers also who by their own tongue express their ingratitude openly for they do not even believe that God exists to say nothing of acknowledging His blessings for which they may have to render gratitude to Him.

6. Literally "He is most ardent in the love of *khair*". But the word *khair* is not only used for goodness and virtue in Arabic but also for worldly wealth. In Sūrah Baqarah: 180, *khair* has been used in the meaning of worldly wealth. The context itself shows where *khair* has been used in the sense of goodness and where in that of worldly goods. The context of this verse clearly shows that here *khair* means worldly wealth and not virtue and goodness. For about the man who is ungrateful to his Lord and who by his conduct is himself testifying to his ingratitude it cannot be said that he is very ardent in the love of goodness and virtue.

7. That is, the dead men will be raised back as living men from whatever state and wherever they would be lying buried in the earth.

8. That is all the intentions aims and objects, ideas and thoughts and the motives behind acts and deeds that lie hidden in the hearts will be exposed and examined in order to sort out the good from the evil. In other words judgement will not be passed only on the apparent and superficial as to what a man practically did but the secrets hidden in the hearts also will be brought out to see what were the intentions and motives under which a man did what he did. If man only considers this he cannot help admitting that real and complete justice cannot be done anywhere except in the Court of God. Secular laws of the world also admit in principle that a person should not be punished merely on the basis of his apparent act but his motive for so acting also should be seen and examined. But no court of the world has the means by which it may accurately ascertain the motive and intention. This can be done only by God: He alone can examine the underlying motives behind every apparent act of man as well as take the decision as to what reward or punishment he deserves. Then, as is evident from the words of the verse, this judgement will not be passed merely on the basis of the knowledge which Allah already has about the intentions and motives of the hearts, but on

Resurrection Day these secrets will be exposed and brought out openly before the people and after a thorough scrutiny in the Court it will be shown what was the good in it and what was the evil. That is why the words *hussila mā fiṣ-ṣudūr* have been used. *Taḥṣīl* means to bring out something in the open, and to sort out different things from one another. Thus, the use of *taḥṣīl* concerning hidden secrets of the hearts coutains both the meanings: to expose them and to sort out the good from the evil. This same theme has been expressed in Sūrah Aṭ-Ṭāriq, thus: "The Day the hidden secrets are held to scrutiny." (v. 9)

9. That is, He will be knowing full well who is who, and what punishement or reward he deserves.


CI
AL-QĀRI'AH
القارِعَة

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

CI

AL-QĀRI'AH

القارِعَة

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from its first word *al-qāri'ah*. This is not only a name but also the title of its subject-matter, for the Sūrah is devoted to Resurrection.

Period of Revelation

There is no dispute about its being a Makkī Sūrah. Its contents show that this too is one of the earliest Sūrahs to be revealed at Makkah.

Theme and Subject-Matter

Its theme is Resurrection and the Hereafter. At the outset, the people have been aroused and alarmed, saying: "The Great Disaster! What is the Great Disaster: And what do you know what the Great Disaster is?" Thus, after preparing the listeners for the news of a dreadful calamity, Resurrection has been depicted before them in two sentences, saying that on that Day people will be running about in confusion and bewilderment just like so many scattered moths around a light, and the mountains uprooted, will lose their cohesion and will fly about like carded wool. Then, it has been said that when Allah's Court is established in the Hereafter and the people are called upon to account for their deeds, the basis of judgement will be the weight of good deeds, The people whose good deeds are found to be heavier than their evil deeds, will be blessed with bliss and happiness, and the people whose good deeds are found to be lighter than their evil deeds, will be cast into the deep pit full of burning fire.



اَلْقَارِعَةُ ۝١ مَا الْقَارِعَةُ ۝٢ وَمَآ اَدْرٰىكَ مَا الْقَارِعَةُ ۝٣ يَوْمَ يَكُوْنُ النَّاسُ
كَالْفَرَاشِ الْمَبْثُوْثِ ۝٤ وَتَكُوْنُ الْجِبَالُ كَالْعِهْنِ الْمَنْفُوْشِ ۝٥ فَاَمَّا مَنْ
ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِيْنُهٗ ۝٦ فَهُوَ فِيْ عِيْشَةٍ رَّاضِيَةٍ ۝٧ وَاَمَّا مَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِيْنُهٗ ۝٨
فَاُمُّهٗ هَاوِيَةٌ ۝٩ وَمَآ اَدْرٰىكَ مَا هِيَهْ ۝١٠ نَارٌ حَامِيَةٌ ۝١١

CI
AL-QĀRI'AH

القارِعَة

Verses: 11 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

The Great Disaster![1] What the Great Disaster is? – the Day 1-11
when men shall be like scattered moths and the mountains like carded wool of different colours.[2] Then[3] he whose scales are heavy, shall be in a state of bliss, and he whose scales are light,[4] shall have the deep pit for his dwelling.[5] And what do you know what it is? A raging Fire![6]

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1. *"Qāri'ah"* literally means the "striking one". *Qar'* is to strike one thing upon another so severely as to produce a noise. In view of this literal meaning, the word *qāri'ah* is used for a dreadful disaster and a great calamity. At another place

in the Qur'ān this word has been used for a great affliction befalling a nation. In Sūrah Ar-Ra'd 31, it has been said: "As for the disbelievers, because of their misdeeds, one affliction or the other does not cease to visit them every now and then."

But, here the word *al-Qāri'ah* has been for the Resurrection and in Sūrah Al-Hāāqqah too the Resurrection has been described by this very epithet (v.4). One should remember that here the whole Hereafter, from the first stage of Resurrection to the last stage of judgement and meting out of rewards and punishments, is being depicted together.

2. This will be the first stage of Resurrection, when in consequence of the Great Disaster the whole of the present order of the world will be overthrown; the people then will be running about in confusion and bewilderment like so many scattered moths around a light; and the mountains will be flying about like carded wool of different colours. The mountains have been compared to wool of different colours because of the existence of a variety of colours in them.

3. From here begins description of the second stage of Resurrection when after having been resurrected men will appear in the Court of God.

4. The word *mawāzīn* in the original can be plural of *mauzūn* as well as of *mīzan*. In the first case, *mawāzīn* would imply the deeds which might have some weight in the sight of Allah and be, thus, worthy of appreciation; in the second case, *mawāzīn* would imply scales of a balance. In the first case, the meaning of the *mawāzīn's* being heavier or lighter is that the good deeds will be heavy or light as against the evil deeds, for in the sight of Allah only good deeds have any weight and worth. In the second case, the meaning of the *mawāzīn's* being heavy is that the scale of the good deeds will be heavier than the scale of evil deeds, in Allah Almighty's Balance of Justice, and their being light means that the scale of good deeds will be lighter than the scale of evil deeds. Besides, in Arabic idiom the word *mīzān* is also used for weight (*wazn*); accordingly, the weight's being heavy or light implies the good deeds being heavy or light. In any case, whether *mawāzīn* is taken in the meaning of *mauzūn* or of *mizān*, or of *wazn*, the intention remains the same, which is that the basis of judgement in the Divine Court will be whether the provision of the deeds that a man has brought is weighty or weightless, or whether his good deeds are heavier than his evil deeds or lighter. This theme has occurred at several places in the Qur'ān which explains the meaning fully well. In Sūrah Al-A'rāf it has been said: "On that Day the weight will be identical with the Truth: accordingly, those whose scales will be heavy will alone come out successful; and those whose scales are light will be the ones who will have incurred loss upon themselves." (vv. 8-9). In Sūrah Al-Kahf, it was said: "O Prophet, say to them: Should we tell you who are the most un-successful

people and miserable failures in regard to their deeds? They are those whose all endeavours in the worldly life had gone astray from the Right Way, but they were under the delusion that everything they were doing, was rightly directed: these are the people who rejected the Revelations of their Lord and did not believe that they would ever go before Him. Therefore, all their deeds were lost, for We will assign no weight to them on the Day of Resurrection." (vv. 103-105). In Sūrah Al-Anbiyā': "On the Day of Resurrection, We will set up just and accurate balances so that no one will be wronged in the least in any way; even if it be an act equal in weight to a grain of mustard seed, We will bring it forth (to be weighed) and We suffice for reckoning". (v.47). These verses show that *kufr* and denial of the truth is in itself such a stupendous evil that it will certainly lower the scale of evils, and there will be no good act of the disbelievers, which may have any weight in the scale of good deeds so that its scale of goodness may become heavy. However, in the scales of the believer there will be the weight of Faith as well as the weight of the good deeds which he performed in the world. On the other hand, every evil done by him will be placed in the scale of evil deeds and then it will be seen whether his scale of the good deeds is heavier or his scale of the evil deeds.

5. The words in the original are: *ummu-hū hāwiyah:* "his mother will be *hāwiyah.*" *Hāwiyah* is from *hawā*, which means to fall from a height to a depth, and *hāwiyah* is the deep pit into which something falls. Hell has been called *Hāwiyah* because it will be very deep and the culprits will be thrown into it from the height. As for the words, "his mother will be *Hāwiyah*", they mean: Just as the mother's lap is the child's abode, so Hell will be the culprits' only abode in the Hereafter.

6. That is, it will not merely be a deep pit but will also be full of raging fire.



CII

AT-TAKĀTHUR

التَّكاثُر

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

CII

AT-TAKĀTHUR

التَّكاثُر

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from the word *at-takāthur* in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

Abū Ḥayyān and Shaukānī say that this Sūrah, according to all commentators, is Makkī, and this same is the well known view according to Imām Suyūti. However, there are some traditions, on the basis of which it is considered a Madanī Sūrah, and they are as follows:

Ibn-Abī Ḥātim has cited Abu Buraidah as saying that this Sūrah was sent down concerning the two tribes, Banī Ḥārithah and Banī al-Harth, of the Anṣār. The two tribes had first recounted the glories and illustrious deeds of their living men; then they had gone to the graveyard and bragged of the glorious deeds of their dead. Thereupon the Divine Revelation *Alhākum at-takathur* came down. But, if the practice of the Companions and their successors concerning the occasions of revelation, is kept in view, this tradition is no argument to prove that Sūrah At-Takāthur was sent down on that very occasion, but it shows that this Sūrah fully applied to the act of the two tribes.

Imām Bukhārī and Ibn Jarir have cited this view of Hadrat Ubayy bin Ka'b: "We took the Holy Prophet's saying: 'If the son of Adam had two valleys full of wealth, he would long for a third valley; the son of Adam's belly cannot be filled but by earth', to be from the Qur'ān until *Alhākum āt-takāthur* was sent down." This *Ḥadīth* has been regarded as an argument for Sūrah At-Takāthur to be a Madanī Sūrah on the ground that Hadrat Ubayy had become a Muslim in Madinah. But Hadrat Ubayy's this statement does not indicate in what sense the Companions regarded this saying of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) as belonging to the Qur'ān. If it means that they regarded it as a verse of the Qur'ān, it cannot be acceptable, for a great majority of the Companions consisted of the men who were well aware of each and every word of the Qur'ān; they could not have the misunderstanding that the *Ḥadīth* was a verse of the Qur'ān. And if its belonging to the Qur'ān is taken to mean its being derived from the Qur'ān, the tradition can also mean that when the Companions who entered Islam in Madīnah, heard this Sūrah for the first time from the Holy Prophet, they thought that it had been revealed just then, and then about the Holy Prophet's above saying they formed the idea that it was derived from this very Sūrah.

Ibn Jarīr, Tirmidhī, Ibn al-Mundhir and other traditionists have related this view of Ḥaḍrat 'Alī: "We were in doubt about the torment of the grave until *Alhākum at-takāthur* was sent down." This view has been regarded as an argument for Sūrah At-Takāthur to be Madanī on the ground that the torment of the grave was first mentioned at Madīnah; no mention of it was ever made at Makkah. But this is wrong. In the Makkī Sūrahs of the Qur'ān, the torment of the grave has been mentioned at many places so clearly that there can he no room for any such doubt; for

example, see Al-An'ām: 93, An-Naḥl: 28, 'Al-Mu'minūn: 99-100, Al-Mu'min: 45-46, which are all Makkī Sūrahs. Therefore, if anything is proved by Ḥaḍrat 'Alī's saying, it is that Sūrah At-Takāthur had been revealed before the revelation of the above-mentioned Makkī Sūrahs, and its revelation had removed the Companions' doubt about the torment of the grave

That is why, in spite of these traditions, a great majority of the commentators are agreed that this Sūrah is Makkī. In our opinion this is not only a Makkī Sūrah but in view of its contents and style it is one of the earliest Sūrahs to be revealed at Makkah.

Theme and Subject-Matter

In it the people have been warned of the evil consequences of world-worship because of which they spend their lives in acquiring more and more of worldly wealth, material benefits and pleasures, and position and power, till death, and in vying with one another and bragging and boasting about their acquisitions. This one pursuit has so occupied them that they are left with no time or opportunity for pursuing the higher things in life. After warning the people of its evil end they have been told as if to say; "These blessings which you are amassing and enjoying thoughtlessly, are not mere blessings but are also a means of your trial. For each one of these blessings and comforts you will surely be called to account in the Hereafter."



بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

أَلْهٰىكُمُ التَّكَاثُرُ ۝١ حَتّٰى زُرْتُمُ الْمَقَابِرَ ۝٢ كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝٣ ثُمَّ كَلَّا
سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝٤ كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُوْنَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِيْنِ ۝٥ لَتَرَوُنَّ الْجَحِيْمَ ۝٦ ثُمَّ
لَتَرَوُنَّهَا عَيْنَ الْيَقِيْنِ ۝٧ ثُمَّ لَتُسْـَٔلُنَّ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَنِ النَّعِيْمِ ۝٨

CII
AT-TAKĀTHUR
التَّكاثُر

Verses: 8 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Your craze for more and more and mutual rivalry for worldly gains has made you heedless,[1] until (in the same craze) you reach the graves.[2] By no means! Soon you shall know![3] Again (note it well) by no means! Soon you shall know. Nay! Had you known with certainty of knowledge (the end of this way of life you would never have acted thus). You shall certainly see Hell. Again (note it well that) you shall most certainly see it. Then, on that Day, you shall certainly be called to account for the blessings and comforts of life.[4] 1-8

1. The words *alhākum at-takāthur* of the original are too vast in meaning to be fully explained in a passage *Alhākum* is from *lahv* which originally means heedlessness, but in Arabic this word is used for every occupation which engrosses man so completely that he becomes heedless of the more important things in life.

When the word *alhākum* is made from this root, it will mean that man has become so obsessed with some occupation that he has lost sight of everything more important than it. He is pre-occupied with it, is wholly lost in pursuit of it and this obsession has rendered him heedless of everything else in life.

Takāthur is from *kathrat*, which has three meanings: (1) That man should strive to gain more and more of everything; (2) that the people should vie with one another for gaining more and more; and (3) that they should brag and boast of possessing greater abundance of things than others.

Therefore, *alhakum at-takāthur* would mean: "*Takāthur* (greed for more and more) has so occupied you that its pursuit has made you heedless of every higher thing in life." In this sentence it has not been indicated as to abundance of what is meant in *takāthur*, heedlessness of what is implied in *alhākum*, and who are the addressees of *alhākum*. In the absence of such an explanation, the words become applicable in their most general and extensive meaning. Thus, *takāthur* does not remain restricted in meaning and application but applies to all the gains and benefits, pleasures and comforts, the passion for acquiring more and more means of power and authority, vying with others in pursuit of these and bragging and boasting of their abundance. Likewise, the addressees of *alhākum* also do not remain limited but the people of all ages, in their individual as well as collective capacity, become its addressees. It gives the meaning that the passion for acquiring more and more of the worldly wealth, vying with others in pursuit of it and bragging and boasting of its possession has affected individuals as well as societies. Likewise, since in *alhakum at-takāthur* it has not been pointed out as to which people are engrossed in acquisitiveness and of what they are rendered heedless, it has also become very extensive in meaning. It means that the passion for piling up more and more has made the people heedless of everything more important than it. They have become heedless of God, of the Hereafter, of the moral bounds and moral responsibilities, of the rights of others and of their own obligations to render those rights. They are only after raising the standard of living and do not bother even if the standard of humanity be falling. They want to acquire more and more of wealth no matter how and by what means it is acquired. They desire to have more and more means of comfort and physical enjoyment and, overwhelmed by this greed, they have become wholly insensitive as to the ultimate end of this way of living. They are engaged in a race with others to acquire more and more of power, more and more of forces, more and more of weapons, and they have no idea that all this is a means of filling God's earth with tyranny and wickedness and of destroying humanity itself. In short, *takathur* has many forms, which have engrossed individuals as well as societies so completely that they have become heedless of everything beyond the world, its benefits and pleasures.

2. That is, "You expend your whole life in the same craze and endeavour, until the time comes when you must die and leave the world."

3. That is, "You are under the delusion that the abundance of the worldly goods and surpassing others in it, is real progress and success, whereas the opposite is the case. Soon you will know its evil end and you will realize that it was a stupendous error in which you remained involved throughout your life. "Soon" may mean the Hereafter, for, for the Being Whose sight comprehends all ages, from eternity to eternity, a few thousand years or a few hundred thousand years can only be a short span of the eternal time. But it can also mean death, for death is not very far away from any man, and soon after death man will come to know whether the occupations which engaged him throughout life were a means of good fortune and success for him, or of misfortune and failure.

4. "Then" in this sentence does not mean that accountability will be held after the culprits have been cast into Hell, but it means: "Then We give you the news that you will be questioned about these comforts of life," and obviously this questioning will be held at the time of accountability in the Divine Court. Its chief argument is that in several *Aḥādīth* it has been reported from the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) that the believers and the disbelievers, both will have to account for the blessings granted by Allah. However, the people who did not show ingratitude but spent their lives as grateful servants of Allah, will come out successful from the accountability, and those who proved thankless to Allah for His blessings and committed ingratitude by word or by deed, or by both; will emerge as failures.

Hadrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah says: "The Holy Prophet once visited us and we served him with fresh dates and gave him cool water to drink. Thereupon he said: "These are of the blessings about which you will be questioned." (Musnad Ahmad, Nasā'ī, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Mardūyah, 'Abd bin Humaid, Baihaqi in *Ash-Shu'ab).*

Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah has reported that the Holy Prophet once asked Hadrat Abu Bakr and Ḥaḍrat 'Umar to accompany him to the place of Abul-Haitham bin at-Taihān Anṣārī. Thus, he took them to the oasis of Ibn at-Taihān. The latter brought a bunch of dates and placed it before them. The Holy Prophet said: "Why didn't you pluck the dates yourself? " He said: "I thought you would yourselves select and eat dates of your choice." So, they ate the dates and drank cool water. At the end, the Holy Prophet said: "By Him in Whose hand is my life: this is of the blessings about which you will be questioned on the Resurrection Day: the cool shade, the cool dates, the cool water." (This tradition has been narrated in different ways by Muslim, Ibn Mājah, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī, Ibn Jarīr, Abū Ya'lā and others, on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, in some

of which the name of the Anṣārī Companion has been mentioned and in some he has been referred to as a person from among the Anṣār. This incident has been related with several details by Ibn Abī Ḥātim from Ḥadrat 'Umar and by Imām Aḥmad from Abū 'Asīb, the Holy Prophet's freed slave. Ibn Ḥibbān and Ibn Mardūyah have related a tradition from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, which shows that an almost similar thing had happened in the house of Ḥaḍrat Abū Ayyūb Anṣārī.

These *Aḥādīth* make it explicit that not only the disbelievers but the righteous believers too will be questioned. As for the blessings which Allah has bestowed on man, they are unlimited and countless. There are many blessings of which man is not even conscious. The Qur'ān says: "If you try to count the blessings of Allah, you will not be able to calculate them." (Ibrāhīm : 34). Countless of them are the blessings which Allah has granted directly to man, and a large number of these are the blessings which man is granted through his own skill and endeavour. About the blessings that accrue to man in consequence of his own labour and skill, he will have to render an account as to how he acquired them and in what ways he expended them. In respect of the blessings directly bestowed by Allah, he will have to give an account as to how he used them. And in respect of all the blessings, on the whole, he will have to tell whether he had acknowledged that those blessings had been granted by Allah and whether he had expressed gratitude for them to Allah with his heart, and by word and deed, or whether he thought he had received all that accidentally, or as a gift from many gods, or whether he held the belief that although those were the blessings of One God, in their bestowal many other beings also had a part, and for that very reason he had taken them as his gods and worshipped and thanked them as such.



CIII

AL-'ASR

العَصْر

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

CIII
AL-'ASR
العَصْر

INTRODUCTION

Name

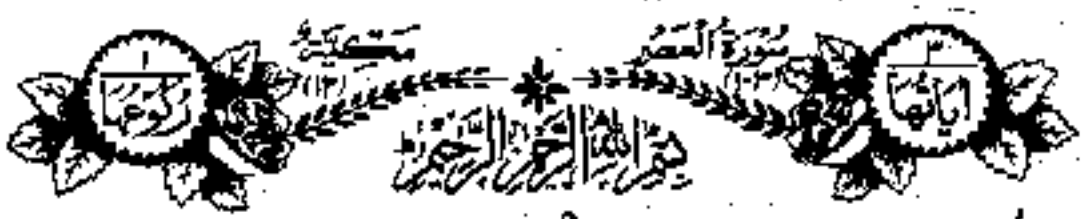
The Sūrah takes its name from word *al-'aṣr* occurring in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

Although Mujāhid, Qatādah and Muqātil regard it as a Madanī Sūrah, yet a great majority of the commentators opine that it is Makkī; its subject-matter also testifies that it must have been sent down in the earliest stage at Makkah, when the message of Islam was being presented in brief but highly impressive sentences so that the listeners who heard them once could not forget them even if they wanted to, for they were automatically committed to memory.

Theme and Subject-Matter

This Sūrah is a matchless specimen of comprehensiveness and brevity. A whole world of meaning has been compressed into its few brief words, which is too vast in content to be fully expressed even in a book. In it, in a clear and plain way it has been stated what is the way to true success for man and what is the way to ruin and destruction for him. Imām Shāfe'ī has very rightly said that if the people only considered this Sūrah well, it alone would suffice them for their guidance. How important this Sūrah was in the sight of the Companions can be judged from the tradition cited from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Ḥiṣn ad-Dārimi Abū Madinah, according to which whenever any two of them met they would not part company until they had recited Sūrah Al-'Asr to each other. (Ṭabarānī)



وَالْعَصْرِ ۝١ إِنَّ الْإِنسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ ۝٢ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَ
تَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ ۙ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ ۝٣

CIII
AL-'ASR

العَصْر

Verses: 3 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

By the Time! Man is surely in loss, except those who believed and did good works, and exhorted one another to Truth, and exhorted one another to patience.[1] 1-3

1. In this Sūrah an oath has been sworn by the Time to impress the point that man is in sheer loss and only those people are an exception from the loss who are characterised by four qualities: (1) Faith, (2) righteous deeds, (3) exhorting one another to Truth, and (4) exhorting one another to patience. Let us consider each of these parts separately in order to understand the meaning fully.

As for the oath, we have explained several times above that Allah has not sworn an oath by any of the created objects on account of its glory or its

excellence and wonderful qualities but for the reason that it testifies to the truth which is meant to be established. Therefore, the oath by Time signifies that Time is witness to the truth that man is in sheer loss except for the people who possess the four qualities.

The word time is used for the past as well as for the passing time in which the present, in fact, does not signify any long stretch of time. Every moment, when it has passed, becomes past, and every moment of the future, when it is passing, becomes present, and when it has passed, becomes past. Here, since the oath has been sworn by time absolute, both kinds of time are included in its meaning. The oath by the past time means that human history testifies that the people who were without these qualities, eventually incurred loss, and in order to understand the significance of the oath by the passing time, one should understand that the time which is now passing is, in fact, the time which has been given to every single individual and every single nation to work in the world. Its example is of the time which is allotted to a candidate for answering his question-paper in the examination hall. The speed with which this time is passing can be estimated from the movement of the second-hand in the watch. Even a second is a considerable amount of time, for during this very second light travels 186,000 miles, and in the Kingdom of God there may as well be many things which move even faster than light, but are not yet known to man. However, if the speed of the passing time be regarded the same as of the movement of the second-hand, and we consider that whatever act, good or bad, we perform and whatever occupation we pursue, takes place in the limited span of age that we have been given for work in the world, we feel that our real wealth is this very time, which is passing so quickly. Imām Rāzī has cited a scholar as saying: "I understood the meaning of Sūrah Al-'Asr from an ice-seller, who was calling aloud for the attention of the people repeatedly in the bazar: 'Have mercy on the one whose wealth is melting away !' Hearing what he was crying I said to myself: this then is the meaning of *Wal-'aṣr-i innal-insāna la-fi khusr-in*. The age-limit that man has been allotted is passing quickly like the melting away of ice. If it is wasted, or expended in wrong pursuits, it will be sheer loss to man. Thus, swearing an oath by the Time what has been said in this Sūrah, means that the fast passing Time is witness that devoid of these four qualities in whatever occupation and work man is expending his limited span of life, he is engaged in bad bargains; only such people are engaged in good bargains, who work in the world, characterised by the four qualities. It would be just like calling attention of the candidate, who was expending the time allotted for solving the question paper in some other pursuit, to the wall clock in the examination hall, to tell him that the passing time bore witness that he was causing loss to himself; the

candidate benefiting by the Time was he who was using every moment of the allotted time in solving the paper.

Though the word Man has been used in the singular, in the following sentences those people have been made an exception from it, who are characterised by the four qualities. Therefore, one will have to admit that here the word Man has been used as a collective noun, denoting a class, and it applies equally to individuals, groups, nations, and antire mankind. Thus, the general statement that whoever is devoid of the above four qualities, is in loss, would be proved in any case whether it is a person who is devoid of these, or a nation, or all men of the world. It will be just like giving the verdict that poison is fatal for man; it will mean that poison is fatal in any case whether it is taken by an individual, or a nation, or all the people of the world. Poison's being fatal is an unchangeable truth; it does not make any difference whether one man has taken it, or a nation has decided to take it, or all the people of the world collectively have agreed to take poison. Precisely in the same way this truth by itself is unchangeable that man's being devoid of the above four qualities brings him loss. The general rule is not at all affected even if one man is devoid of these, or a nation, or all the people of the world agree that they would exhort one another to disbelief, immorality, falsehood and servitude to the self.

Now, let us see in what sense has the Qur'ān used the word *khusr* (loss). Lexically, *khusr* is an antonym of *nafa'* (profit); in trade this word is used in the case when loss results from one bargain as well as in the case when the whole business is running in loss, and also in the case when man loses all his capital and becomes bankrupt. The Qur'ān has made this word a special term of its own and uses it as an antonym of *falāḥ* (true success). And just as its concept of *falāḥ* is not merely synonymous with worldly prosperity but comprehends man's true success from the world till the Hereafter, so its concept of *khusr* (loss) also is not merely synonymous with worldly failure or distress but comprehends man's real failure and disappointment from the world till the Hereafter. We have explained the Qur'ānic concept of both *falāḥ* and *khusrān* at several places above which need not be repeated here. (For this please see E.N. 9 of Al-A'rāf, E.N. 30 of Al-Anfāl, E.N. 23 of Yūnus, E.N. 102 of Banī Isrā'īl, E.N. 17 of Al-Ḥajj, E N.'s 1, 2, 11, 50 of Al-Mu'minūn, E.N. 4 of Luqmān, E.N. 34 of Az-Zumar). Besides, one should also understand that although according to the Qur'ān true success is man's success in the Hereafter and real loss his failure there, yet in this world too what the people describe as success is not, in fact, real success but its end in this world itself is failure, and what they regard as loss is not, in fact, loss but a means of true success even in this world. This truth has been stated by the Qur'ān at several

places and we have explained it everywhere accordingly. (Please see E.N. 99 of An-Nahl E.N. 53 of Maryam, E.N. 105 of Tā Hā, E.N.'s 3-5 of Al-Lail). Thus, when the Qur'ān states conclusively and absolutely that Man is certainly in loss, it implies loss both in this world and in the Hereafter; and when it says that only such people are secure from this loss, who are characterised by the four qualities, it implies their being secure from loss and attaining true success both here and in the Hereafter.

Now, let us consider the four qualities on the existence of which depends man's being secure from loss and failure.

Of these the first quality is *Imān* (Faith). Although this word at some places in the Qur'ān has been used in the meaning of only verbal affirmation of Faith (*e.g.* in An-Nisā': 137, Al-Mā'idah 54, Al-Anfāl: 20, 27, At-Taubah: 38, Aṣ-Ṣaff: 2) it has primarily been used in the meaning of believing sincerely and faithfully, and in the Arabic language also this word has this very meaning. Lexically, *āmanū lahū* means *saddaqa-hū wa'tamada 'alai-hi:* "affirmed him and put faith in him", and *āmana bi-hī* means *aiqana bi-hī:* "had full faith in him." The Faith which the Qur'ān regards as true Faith has been explained in the following verses:

"In fact, true believers are those who believed in Allah and His Messenger, then entertained no doubt." (Al-Ḥujurāt: 15)

"Those who said: 'Allah is our Lord', and then stood steadfast by it." (Hā Mīm As-Sajdah : 30)

"True believers are those whose hearts tremble with awe, whenever Allah is mentioned to them. (Al-Anfāl : 2).

"Those who have believed adore Allah most ardently." (Al-Baqarah 165)

"Nay, (O Prophet), by your Lord, they can never become believers until they accept you as judge for the decision of the disputes between them, and then surrender to your decision with entire submission without the least resentment in their hearts." (An-Nisā': 65).

The following verse is even more explicit as regards the distinction between verbal affirmation of Faith and true Faith; it says that what is actually desirable is true Faith and not mere verbal affirmation of the Faith:

"O you who profess to have believed, believe sincerely in Allah and His Messenger." (An-Nisā': 136)

As for the question, what has one to believe in, in order to have true faith? This also has been answered and explained in the Qur'ān most explicitly. First, it implies that one has to believe in Allah, not merely in His Being but in the sense that He alone is God; no one else is an associate in His Godhead; He alone is worthy that man should worship, serve and obey Him; He alone can make or mar destinies; man should invoke Him alone and have trust in Him alone; He alone can enjoin things and forbid things; man is under obligation to obey Him and refrain from what he forbids; He sees everything and hears everything; not to speak of any act of man, even his motives and intentions with which he has done an act, are not hidden from Him. Secondly, one has to believe in the Messenger, in the sense that he is a guide and leader appointed by Allah: whatever he has taught, is from Allah, is based upon the truth and has to be acknowledged and accepted. This belief in Apostleship also includes faith in the angels, the Prophets, the Divine Books and in the Qur'ān itself, for this forms part of the teachings which the Messenger of Allah has given. Thirdly, one has to believe in the Hereafter, in the sense that man's present life is not his first and last life, but after death man has to be resurrected, to render an account to God of the deeds done in the present life, and has to be rewarded for the good deeds and punished for the evil deeds accordingly. This Faith provides a firm basis for morality and character, upon which can be built the edifice of a pure life, whereas the truth is that without such Faith, the life of man, however beautiful and pleasing outwardly, is like a ship without an anchor, which is at the mercy of the waves wherever they may take it.

After Faith the second quality required to save man from loss is to perform righteous deeds (*ṣāliḥāt*) *Ṣaliḥāt* comprehends all kinds of virtuous and good deeds. However, according to the Qur'ān, no act can be a good act unless it is based on Faith and it is performed in obedience to the guidance given by Allah and His Messenger. That is why in the Qur'ān exhortation to perform good deeds is preceded everywhere by Faith, and in this Sūrah too it has been mentioned after the Faith. Nowhere in the Qur'ān has a deed without Faith been called a good deed, nor any reward promised for a deed performed without Faith. On the contrary, this also is a fact that only that Faith is reliable and beneficial, the sincerity of which is proved by man's own act and deed, otherwise Faith without righteous deeds would be a false claim refuted by the man himself when in spite of this claim he follows a way opposed to the way taught by Allah and His Messenger. The relationship between Faith and righteous deed is of the seed and the tree Unless the seed is sown in the soil no tree can grow out of it. But if the seed is in the soil and no tree is growing out of it, it would mean that the seed is lost in the soil. On this very basis whatever good news has been given in the Qur'ān, has been given to the people who believe and do good deeds, and the same

has been reiterated in this Sūrah. What man requires to do after the Faith in order to remain secure from loss is to perfrom righteous deeds. In other words, mere Faith without righteous deeds cannot save man from loss.

The above two qualities are such as must be possessed by every single individual. Then, the Sūrah mentions two further qualities, which a man must have in order to be saved from loss. They are that the people who believe and do good deeds must exhort one another to truth and to patience. This means that. in the first place, a believing and righteous people should not live as individuals but should create a believeing and righteous society by their combination. Second, that every individual of this society must feel his responsibility not to let the society become degenerate. Thus, all its members are duty bound to exhort one another to truth and to patience.

Truth is the antonym of falsehood, and generally it is used in two meanings: (1) A correct and right thing which is in accordance with justice and truth, whether it relates to belief and faith or to mundane affairs; and (2) the right which is obligatory on man to render, whether it is the right of God, the right of man, or the right of one's own self. Thus, to exhort one another to truth means that the society of the believers should not be so insensitive that falsehood may thrive and things against justice and truth be done in it, and the people be watching everything indifferently. On the contrary, it should be a living, sensitive society so that whenever and wherever falsehood appears, the upholders of the Truth should rise up against it, and no member of the society rest content with only himself adhering to truth, righteousness, justice and rendering the rights of others, but should exhort others also to adopt the same way of life. This is the spirit that can ensure security of a society against moral degeneration and decay. If a society becomes devoid of this spirit, it cannot remain secure from loss, and eventually even those people also are affected by the loss, who might in their own way be adhering to the truth, but were insensitive to violation of the truth in their society. The same has been stated in Al-Mā'idah, thus: "Those who adopted the way of disbelief among the children of Israel were cursed by the tongue of David and of Jesus, son of Mary, because they had grown rebellious and become transgressors: they would not forbid one another to do the wrong deeds they committed." (vv. 78-79). Then the same idea has been expressed in Al-A'rāf, thus: "When the children of Israel totally forgot the teachings (of observing the Sabbath), We seized with a severe scourge all those who were transgressors, and We saved those who used to forbid evil" (v. 165); and in Sūrah Al-Anfāl, thus: "And guard against that mischief which will not bring punishment in particular to the mischief-makers alone from among you." (v. 25) That is why to enjoin what is good and to forbid

what is evil, has been enjoined on the Muslim community as a duty (Āl-'Imrān : 104) and the community which performs this duty has been declared to be the best community (Āl-'Imrān: 110).

Besides exhorting to the truth, the other thing which has been declared as a necessary condition for keeping the believers and their society secure from loss is that the members of the society should enjoin patience upon one another. That is, they should enjoin upon one another to bear with fortitude and steadfastness the difficulties, hardships, trials, losses and deprivations which befall the one who adheres to the truth and supports it. Each one of them should encourage the other to bear up against adversity steadfastly. (For further explanation, see E.N. 16 of Ad-Dahr, E.N. 14 of Al-Balad).



CIV
AL-HUMAZAH

الهُمَزه

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

CIV
AL-HUMAZAH
الهُمَزه

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from the word *humazah* occurring in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

All commentators are agreed that it is a Makkī Sūrah; a study of its subject-matter and style shows that this too is one of the earliest Sūrahs to be revealed at Makkah.

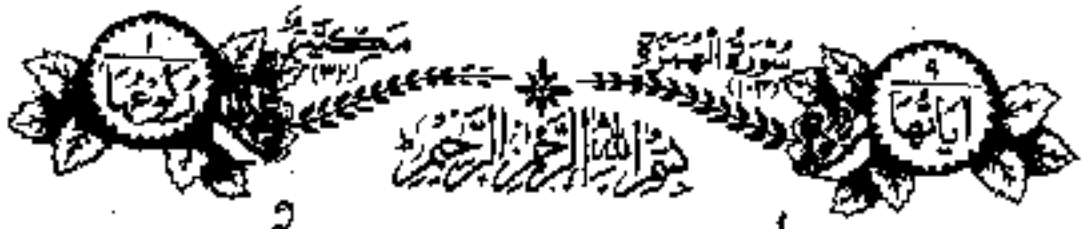
Theme and Subject-Matter

In it some of the evils prevalent among the materialistic hoarders of wealth in the pre-Islamic days have been condemned. Every Arab knew that they actually existed in their society: they regarded them as

evils and nobody thought they were good. After calling attention to this kind of ugly character, the ultimate end in the Hereafter of the people having this kind of character has been stated. Both these things (*i.e.* the character and his fate in the Hereafter) have been depicted in a way which makes the listener automatically reach the conclusion that such a man fitly deserves to meet such an end. And since in the world, people of such character do not suffer any punishment, but seem to be thriving instead, the occurrence of the Hereafter becomes absolutely inevitable.

If this Sūrah is read in the sequence of the Sūrahs beginning with Az-Zilzāl, one can fully well understand how the fundamental beliefs of Islam and its teachings were impressed on the peoples' minds in the earliest stage in Makkah. In Sūrah Az-Zilzāl, it was said that in the Hereafter man's full record will be placed before him and not an atom's weight of good or evil done by him in the world will have been left unrecorded. In Sūrah Al-'Adiyāt, attention was drawn to the plunder and loot, blood-shed and vandalism, prevailing in Arabia before Islam; then making the people realize that the way the powers given by God were being abused, was indeed an expression of sheer ingratitude to Him, they were told that the matter would not end up in the world, but in the second life after death not only their deeds but their intentions and motives too would be examined, and their Lord fully well knows which of them deserves what reward or punishment. In Sūrah Al-Qāri'ah after depicting Resurrection the people were warned that in the Hereafter a man's good or evil end will be dependent on whether the scale of his good deeds was heavier, or the scale of his evil deeds was heavier. In Sūrah At-Takāthur the people were taken to task for the materialistic mentality because of which they remained occupied in seeking increase in worldly benefits, pleasures, comforts and position, and in vying with one another for abundance of everything until death overtook them. Then, warning them of the evil consequences of their heedlessness, they were told that the world was not an open table of food for them to pick and choose whatever they pleased, but for every single blessing that they were enjoying in the world, they would have to render an account to their Lord and Sustainer as to how they obtained it and how they used it. In Sūrah Al-'Asr it was declared that each member, each group and each

community of mankind, even the entire world of humanity, was in manifest loss, if its members were devoid of Faith and righteous deeds and of the practice of exhorting others to truth and patience. Immediately after this comes Sūrah Al-Humazah in which after presenting a specimen of leadership of the pre-Islamic age of ignorance, the people have been asked the question: "What should such a character deserve if not loss and perdition?"



وَيْلٌ لِّكُلِّ هُمَزَةٍ لُّمَزَةٍ ۝١ الَّذِي جَمَعَ مَالًا وَعَدَّدَهُ ۝٢ يَحْسَبُ أَنَّ مَالَهُ
أَخْلَدَهُ ۝٣ كَلَّا لَيُنۢبَذَنَّ فِي الْحُطَمَةِ ۝٤ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْحُطَمَةُ ۝٥ نَارُ
اللَّهِ الْمُوقَدَةُ ۝٦ الَّتِي تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى الْأَفْـِٔدَةِ ۝٧ إِنَّهَا عَلَيْهِم مُّؤْصَدَةٌ ۝٨
فِي عَمَدٍ مُّمَدَّدَةٍ ۝٩

CIV
AL-HUMAZAH

الْهُمَزَه

Verses:9 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Doomed (to ruin) is every such person who slanders others (in their face) and backbites them habitually[1], who gathers wealth and counts it over and over again.[2] He thinks that his wealth will remain with him for ever.[3] Nay, never! He will be cast[4] into the crushing place.[5] And what do you know what the crushing place is? It is the Fire of Allah,[6] kindled brightly, which shall rise up to the hearts.[7] It will be covered down on them[8] (in a way that) they shall be (enclosed) by tall columns.[9] 1-9

1. The words used in the original are *humazat il-lumazah*. In Arabic *hamz* and *lamz* are so close in meaning that they are sometimes used as synonyms and sometimes with a little difference in the shade of meaning. But this difference is

not definite and clear, for the meaning given to *lamz* by some Arabic speaking people themselves is given to *lamz* by other Arabic speaking people. On the contrary, the meaning given to *hamz* by some people is given to *hamz* by others. Here, since both the words appear together and the words *humazat il-lumazat* have been used, they give the meaning that it has become a practice with the slanderer that he insults and holds others in contempt habitually. He raises his finger and winks at one man, finds fault with the lineage and person of another, taunts one in the face and backbites another; creates differences between friends and stirs up divisions between brothers; calls the people names and satirizes and defames them.

2. This second sentence after the first sentence by itself gives the meaning that he slanders others because of his pride of wealth. The words *jama'a mālan* for collecting money suggest the abundance of wealth; then the words "counting it over and over again" depict the person's miserliness and his selfish hoarding of wealth.

3. Another meaning also can be: "He thinks that his wealth will make him immortal." That is, he is so engrossed in amassing wealth and counting it over and over again that he has forgotten death and he never bothers to consider that a time will come when he will have to depart from the world empty-handed, leaving everything behind.

4. The word in the original is *la-yunbádhanna. Nabdh* in Arabic is used for throwing away a thing regarding it as worthless and mean. This by itself indicates that because of his wealth he thinks that he is a great man but on the Day Of Resurrection he will be hurled into Hell as a mean and contemptible object.

5. The word *ḥutamah* in the original is from *ḥatm*, which means to smash, crush and break into pieces. Hell has been described by this epithet because it will crush and break to pieces whatever is thrown into it because of its depth and its fire.

6. Nowhere else in the Qur'ān has the fire of Hell been called the fire of Allah. Here, its ascription to Allah not only expresses its dreadfulness but it also shows how the wrath and contempt of Allah envelops those who become proud and arrogant with the worldly wealth. That is why Allah has described that fire as His own Fire into which they will be hurled.

7. *Tattali'u* is from *iṭṭala'a*, which means to climb and mount to the top, and also to be aware and informed. *Af'idah* is plural of *fuwād*, which means the heart. But this word is not used for the organ which throbs in the breast, but for the seat of man's understanding and consciousness, his feelings and desires, beliefs and thoughts, motives and intentions. Thus, one meaning of the rising of the fire to the hearts is that this fire will reach the place which is the centre of man's evil

thoughts, false beliefs, impure desires and feelings, and wicked motives and intentions. The second meaning is that the Fire of Allah will not be blind like the fire of the world, which burns up the deserving and the non-deserving alike, but it will reach the heart of every culprit and discover the nature of his crime and then punish him according to his guilt.

8. That is, after the culprits have been thrown into it, Hell will be closed in upon them without leaving any slit or opening anywhere, in order to choke and suffocate them.

9. *Fi 'amad-in-mumaddadah* can have several meanings (1) That the gates of Hell will be closed and tall columns will be erected on them; (2) that the culprits will be tied to the tall columns; (3) according to Ibn 'Abbas, the flames of the fire shall be rising high like tall columns.


CV
AL-FĪL
اَلفِيل

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

CV
AL-FĪL
اَلفِيل

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah derives its name from the word *ashāb al-fīl* in the very first verse.

Period of Revelation

This is unanimously a Makkī Sūrah; and if it is studied against its historical background it appears that it must have been sent down in the very earliest stage at Makkah.

Historical Background

As we have explained in E.N. 4 of Sūrah Al-Burūj above, in retaliation for the persecution of the followers of the Prophet Jesus Christ (peace be on him) in Najrān by the Jewish ruler Dhū-Nuwās of Yaman, the Christian kingdom of Abyssinia invaded Yaman and put an end to the Himyarite rule there, and in 525 A.D. this whole land passed under Abyssinian control. This happened, in fact, through collaboration between the Byzantine empire of Constantinople and the Abyssinian kingdom, for the Abyssinians at that time had no naval fleet. The fleet was provided by Byzantium and Abyssinia sent 70,000 of its troops by it across the Red Sea to Yaman. At the outset one should understand that all this did not happen under the religious zeal but there were economic and political factors also working behind it, and probably these were the real motive, and retaliation for the Christian blood was just an excuse. Since the time the Byzantine empire had occupied Egypt and Syria, it had been trying to gain control over the trade going on between East Africa, India, Indonesia, etc., and the Byzantine dominions, from the Arabs, who had been controlling it for centuries, so as to earn maximum profits by eliminating the intermediary Arab merchants. For this purpose, in 24 or 25 B.C., Caesar Augustas sent a large army under the Roman general, Aelius Gallus, which landed on the western coast Of Arabia, in order to intercept and occupy the sea route between southern Arabia and Syria. (See map of this trade route on p. III of The Meaning of the Qur'ān, Vol. II). But the campaign failed to achieve its objective on account of the extreme geographical conditions of Arabia. After this, the Byzantines brought their fleet into the Red Sea and put an end to the Arab trade which they carried out by sea, with the result that they were left only with the land route. To capture this very land route they conspired with the Abyssinian Christians and aiding them with their fleet helped them to occupy Yaman.

The Arab historians' statements about the Abyssinian army that invaded Yaman are different. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr says that it was led by two commanders, Aryāt and Abrahah, and according to Muḥammad bin Isḥāq, its commander was Aryāt, and Abrahah was included in it. Then both are agreed that Aryāt and Abrahah fell out, Aryāt was killed in the encounter, and Abrahah took possession of the country; then somehow he persuaded the Abyssinian king to appoint him his viceroy over

Yaman. On the contrary, the Greek and Syriac historians state that when after the conquest of Yaman, the Abyssinians started putting to death the Yamanite chiefs, who had put up resistance, one of the chiefs, named As-Sumayfi' Ashwa' (whom the Greek historians call Esymphaeus) yielded to the Abyssinians and promising to pay tribute obtained the Abyssinian king's warrant to be governor over Yaman. But the Abyssinian army revolted against him and made Abrahah governor in his place. This man was the slave of a Greek merchant of the Abyssinian seaport of Adolis, who by clever diplomacy had come to wield great influence in the Abyssinian army occupying Yaman. The troops sent by the Negus to punish him either joined him or were defeated by him. Subsequently, after the death of the king, his successor was reconciled to accept him as his viceregent of Yaman. (The Greek historians write him as Abrames and the Syriac historians as Abraham. Abrahah perhaps is an Abyssinian variant of Abraham, for its Arabic version is Ibrāhīm).

This man through passage of time became an independent ruler of Yaman. He acknowledged the sovereignty of the Negus only in name and described himself as his deputy. The influence he wielded can be judged from the fact that after the restoration of the dam of Mā'rib in 543 A.D., he celebrated the event by holding a grand feast, which was attended by the ambassadors of the Byzantine emperor, king of Iran, king of Hīrah and king of Ghassān. Its full details are given in the inscription that Abrahah installed on the dam. This inscription is extant and Glaser has published it. (For further details, see E.N. 37 of the commentary of Sūrah Sabā).

After stabilizing his rule in Yaman Abrahah turned his attention to the objective which from the very beginning of this campaign had been before the Byzantine empire and its allies, the Abyssinian Christians, *i.e.* to spread Christianity in Arabia, on the one hand, and to capture the trade that was carried out through the Arabs between the eastern lands and the Byzantine dominions, on the other. The need for this increased because the Byzantine struggle for power against the Sasanian empire of Iran had blocked all the routes of the Byzantine trade with the East.

To achieve this objective, Abrahah built in Ṣan'ā', the capital of Yaman, a magnificent cathedral, called by the Arabian historians al-Qalīs, al-Qullais, or al-Qulais, this word being an Arabic version of the

Greek word Ekklesia, church. According to Muḥammad bin Ishāq, after having completed the building, he wrote to the Negus, saying: "I shall not rest until I have diverted the Arabs' pilgrimage to it."[1] Ibn Kathīr writes that he openly declared his intention in Yaman and got it publicly announced. He, in fact, wanted to provoke the Arabs into doing something which should provide him with an excuse to attack Makkah and destroy the Ka'bah. Muhammad bin Ishāq says that an Arab, enraged at this public proclamation, somehow went into the cathedral and defiled it. Ibn Kathīr says this was done by a Quraishite, and according to Muqātil bin Sulemān, some young men of the Quraish had set fire to the cathedral. Either might have happened, for Abrahah's proclamation was certainly provocative and in the ancient pre-Islamic age it cannot be impossible that an Arab, or a Quraishite youth, might have been enraged and might have defiled the cathedral, or set it on fire. But it may well also be that Abrahah himself got this done secretly by his own agent so as to have an excuse for invading Makkah and thus achieving both his objectives by destroying the Quraish and intimidating the Arabs. In any case, whatever happened, when the report reached Abrahah that the devotees of the Ka'bah had thus defiled his cathedral, he swore that he would not rest until he had destroyed the Ka'bah.

So, in 570 or 571 A.D., he took 60,000 troops and 13 elephants (according to another tradition, 9 elephants) and set off for Makkah. On the way, first a Yamanite chief, Dhū Nafr by name, mustering an army of the Arabs, resisted him but was defeated and taken prisoner. Then in the country of Khath'am he was opposed by Nufail bin Habīb al-Khath'amī, with his tribe, but he too was defeated and taken prisoner, and in order to save his life he accepted to serve him as guide in the Arab country. When he reached near Tā'if, Banī Thaqīf felt that they would not be able to resist such a big force and feeling the danger lest he should destroy the temple of their deity Lāt, too, their chief, Mas'ūd, came out to Abrahah with his men, and told him that their temple was not the temple he had come to destroy. The temple he sought was in Makkah, and they would send with him a man to guide him there.

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1. After seizing political power in Yaman, the Christians persistently tried to establish a rival Ka'bah and divert pilgrimage from the Ka'bah at Makkah to it. So they built a cathedral in Najrān, as we have mentioned in E.N. 4 of the commentary of Sūrah Al-Burūj above.

Abrahah accepted the offer, and Banī Thaqīf sent Abu Righāl as guide with him. When they reached al-Mghammas. (or al-Mughammis), a place about 3 miles short of Makkah, Abū Righāl died, and the Arabs stoned his grave and the practice survives to this day. They cursed the Banī Thaqīf too, for in order to save the temple of Lāt they had cooperated with the invaders of the House of Allah .

According to Muḥammad bin Isḥāq, from al-Mughammas Abrahah sent forward his vanguard and they brought him the plunder of the people of Tihāmah and Quraish, which included two hundred camels of 'Abdul Muṭṭalib, the grandfather of the Holy Messenger of Allah (upon whom be His peace). Then, he sent an envoy of his to Makkah with the message that he had not come to fight the people of Makkah but only to destroy the House (*i.e.* the Ka'bah). If they offered no resistance, there would be no cause for bloodshed. Abrahah also instructed his envoy that if the people of Makkah wanted to negotiate, he should return with their leading chief to him. The leading chief of Makkah at that time was 'Abdul Muttalib. The envoy went to him and delivered Abrahah's message. 'Abdul Muṭṭalib replied: "We have no power to fight Abrahah. This is Allah's House. If He wills He will save His House." The envoy asked him to go with him to Abrahah. He agreed and accompanied him to the king. Now 'Abdul Muṭṭalib was such a dignified and handsome man that when Abrahah saw him he was much impressed; he got up of his throne and sat beside him on the carpet. Then he asked him what he wanted. 'Abdul Muṭṭalib replied that he wanted the king to return his camels which he had taken. Abrahah said: "I was much impressed when I saw you but your reply has brought you down in my eyes: you only demand your camels but you say nothing about this House which is your sanctuary and the sanctuary of your forefathers." He replied: "I am the owner of my camels and am requesting you to return them. As for the House, it has its own Owner: He will defend it." When Abrahah said that He would not be able to defend it against him, 'Abdul Muṭṭalib said that it rested between the owner of Ka'bah and him. With this 'Abdul Muṭṭalib left Abrahah and he restored to him his camels.

Ibn 'Abbās's tradition is different. It does not mention the demand for the camels at all. According to the traditions related from him by 'Abd bin Ḥumaid, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Mardūyah, Ḥākim, Abū

Nu'aim and Baihaqi, he states that when Abrahah reached As-Sifāh (a place situated between 'Arafāt and Ṭā'if in the mountains near the sacred bounds of Makkah), 'Abdul Muṭṭalib went to him and said: "There was no need for you to come so far. You should have ordered us and we would have brought before you whatever you needed.' He said: 'I hear that this House is the House of peace: I have come to destroy its peace.' Thereupon, 'Abdul Muttalib said: 'This is Allah's House. He has not allowed anyone so far to dominate it.' Abrahah replied: 'We will not return until we have destroyed it.' 'Abdul Muṭṭalib said: 'You may take whatever you like from us and return.' Abrahah refused to budge and ordered his troops to advance, leaving 'Abdul Muṭṭalib behind.

Leaving the two traditions as they are, one thing which becomes evident is that the tribes living in and around Makkah did not have the power to fight such a big force and save the Ka'bah. Therefore, obviously, the Quraish did not try to put up any resistance. The Quraish on the occasion of the Battle of the Trench (Aḥzāb) had hardly been able to muster a strength numbering ten to twelve thousand men in spite of the alliance with the pagan and Jewish tribes; they could not have resisted an army 60,000 strong.

Muḥammad bin Isḥāq says that after returning from the camp of Abrahah 'Abdul Muṭṭalib ordered the Quraish to withdraw from the city and go to the mountains along with their families for fear of a general massacre. Then he went to the Ka'bah along with some chiefs of the Quraish and taking hold of the iron-ring of the door, prayed to Allah Almighty to protect His House and its keepers. There were at that time 360 idols in and around the Ka'bah, but on that critical moment they forgot them and implored only Allah for help. Their supplications which have been reported in the books of history do not contain any name but of Allah, the One. Ibn Hishām in his Life of the Prophet has cited some verses of 'Abdul Muṭṭalib, which are to the following effect:

"O God, a man protects his house so protect Your House; Let not their cross and their craft tomorrow overcome Your craft.

If You will to leave them and our *qiblah* to themselves, You may do as You please."

Suhailī in Raud al-Unuf has cited this verse also in this connection:

"Help today Your devotees against the devotees of the cross and its worshippers."

Ibn Jarīr has cited 'Abdul Muṭṭalib's these verses also, which he had recited in his supplication;

"O my Lord, I do not cherish any hope from anyone against them except You. O my Lord, protect Your House from them.

The enemy of this House is Your enemy.

Stop them from destroying Your settlement."

After making these supplications 'Abdul Muṭṭalib and his companions also went off to the mountains. Next morning Abrahah prepared to enter Makkah, but his special elephant, Mahmūd, which was in the forefront, knelt down. It was beaten with iron bars, goaded, even scarified, but it would not get up. When they made it face south, north, or east, it would immediately start off, but as soon as they directed it towards Makkah, it knelt down. In the meantime swarms of birds appeared carrying stones in their beaks and claws and showered these on the troops. Whoever was hit would start disintegrating. According to Muhammad bin Isḥāq and 'Ikrimah, this was smallpox, which was seen in Arabia for the first time in that year. Ibn 'Abbās says that whoever was struck by a pebble, would start scratching his body resulting in breaking of the skin and falling off of the flesh. In another tradition Ibn 'Abbās says that the flesh and blood flowed like water and bones in the body became visible. The same thing happened with Abrahah too. His flesh fell in pieces and there arose sores on his body emitting pus and blood. In confusion they withdrew and fled towards Yaman. Nufail bin Habīb, whom they had brought as guide from the country of Khath'am, was searched out and asked to guide them back to Yaman, but he refused and said:

"Now where can one flee when God pursues?

The split-nose (Abrahah) is the conquered, not the conqueror."

As they withdrew they were continually falling by the way and dying. 'Aṭā' bin Yasār says that all the troops did not perish at the spot;

some perished there and others perished by the wayside as they withdrew. Abrahah died in the country of Khath'am.[1]

This event took place at Muhassir by the Muḥassab valley, between Muzdalifah and Minā. According to the Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim and Abū Da'ūd, in the description of the Holy Prophet's farewell pilgrimage that Imām Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq has related from his father, Imām Muhammad Baqir, and he from Hadrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah, he says that when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) proceeded from Muzdalifah to Minā, he increased his speed in the valley of Muḥassir. Imām Nawawī has explained it saying that the incident of the people of the elephant had occurred there; therefore, the pilgrims have been enjoined to pass by quickly, for Muḥassir is a tormented place. Imam Mālik in *Mu'aṭṭā'* has related that the Holy Prophet said that the whole of Muzdalifah is a fit place for staying but one should not stay in the valley of Muhassir. In the verses of Nufail bin Ḥabib, which Ibn Isḥāq has cited, he describes this event as an eye-witness:

"Would that you had seen, O Ruḍaina, but you would not see,
What we saw by the valley of Muḥassab.

I praised God when I saw the birds,

And I feared lest the stones should fall upon us.

Everyone was asking for Nufail

As though I owned the Abyssinians a debt."

This was such a momentous event that it soon spread throughout Arabia and many poets made it the subject of their laudatory poems. In these poems one thing is quite evident that everyone regarded it as a manifestation of Allah Almighty's miraculous power, and no one, even by allusion, said that the idols which were worshipped in the Ka'bah, had anything to do with it. For example, 'Abdullah Ibn Az-Ziba'rā says:

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1. Allah did not only give this punishment to the Abyssinians but brought the Abyssinian rule to an end in Yaman within three or four years for ever. History shows that after the event of the Elephant their power in Yaman broke down, and the Yamanite chief, Saif bin dhī-Yazan, asked for military help from Iran, and only one thousand Iranian troops who came with six ships, were enough to put an end to the Abyssinian rule in Yaman. This happened in 575 A.D.

"The sixty thousand returned not home,

Nor did their sick man (Abrahah) survive on return.

'Ād and Jurham were there before them,

And there is Allah, above the servants, Who sustains it.

Abū Qais bin Aslat says:

"Rise and worship your Lord and annoint

The corners of the House of Allah between the

mountains of Makkah and Minā.

When the help of the Owner of the Throne reached you,

His armies repulsed them, so that they were lying in dust, pelted with stones."

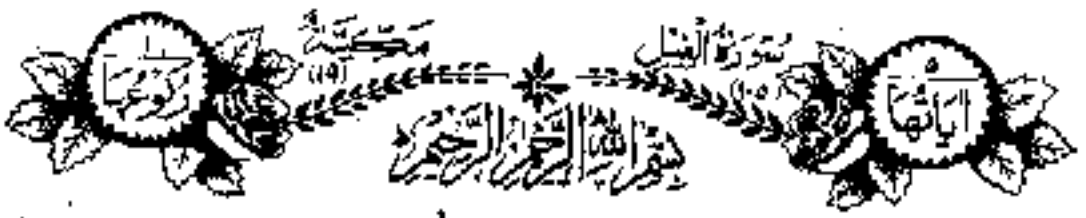
Not only this, but according to Hadrat Umm Hāni and Hadrat Zubair bin al 'Awwām, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said: "The Quraish did not worship anyone but Allah, the Only and One, for ten years (and according to others, for seven years. Umm Ḥāni's tradition has been related by Imām Bukhārī in his History and by Ṭabarāni, Ḥākim, Ibn Mardūyah and Baihaqī in their collections of *Aḥādīth*. Ḥadrat Zubair's statement has been related by Ṭabarāni, Ibn Mardūyah and Ibn 'Asākir, and this is further confirmed by the *mursal* tradition of Ḥadrat Sa'īd bin al-Musayyab, which Khatīb Baghdādī has recorded in his History.

The Arabs describe the year in which this event took place as *'Ām al-Fīl* (the year of the elephants), and in the same year the Holy Messenger of Allah (upon whom be His peace) was born. The traditionists and historians almost unanimously state that the event of the people of the elephant had occurred in Muharram and the Holy Prophet was born in Rabī' al-Awwal. A majority of them states that he took birth 50 days after the event of the elephant.

Theme and Substance

If Sūrah al-Fīl is studied in the light of the historical details as given above, one can fully well understand why in this Sūrah only Allah's inflicting His punishment on the people of the elephant has been referred and described so briefly. It was an event of recent occurrence,

and everyone in Makkah and Arabia was fully aware of it. The Arabs believed that the Ka'bah had been protected in this invasion not by any god or goddess but by Allah Almighty himself. Then Allah alone had been invoked by the Quraish chiefs for help, and for quite a few years the people of Quraish having been impressed by this event, had worshipped none but Allah. Therefore, there was no need to mention the details in Sūrah al-Fīl, but only a reference to it was enough so that the people of Quraish, in particular, and the people of Arabia, in general, should consider well in their hearts the message that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) was giving. For the only message that he gave was that they should worship and serve none but Allah, the Only and One. Then, they should also consider that if they used force to suppress this invitation to the truth, they would only be inviting the wrath of God, Who had so completely routed and destroyed the people of the elephants.



اَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِاَصْحٰبِ الْفِيْلِ ﴿١﴾ اَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ كَيْدَهُمْ فِيْ
تَضْلِيْلٍ ﴿٢﴾ وَّاَرْسَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ طَيْرًا اَبَابِيْلَ ﴿٣﴾ تَرْمِيْهِمْ بِحِجَارَةٍ مِّنْ
سِجِّيْلٍ ﴿٤﴾ فَجَعَلَهُمْ كَعَصْفٍ مَّاْكُوْلٍ ﴿٥﴾

CV

AL-FĪL

اَلْفِيل

Verses:5

Revealed at Makkah

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Have you not seen[1] how your Lord dealt with the people of the elephant?[2] Did He not cause their plan[3] to end in vain?[4] and sent down on them swarms of birds,[5] which pelted them with stones of baked clay[6] Then He rendered them like straw eaten up by cattle.[7] 1-5

1. Though the address apparently is directed to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), its real addressees are not only the Quraish but all the people of Arabia, who were well aware of the event. At many places in the Qur'ān the words *alam tara* (have you not seen?) have been used, and they are meant not to

address the Holy Prophet but the people in general. (For example, see Ibrāhīm: 19, Al-Ḥajj: 18, 65, An-Nūr: 43, Luqmān: 29, 31, Fāṭir: 27, Az-Zumar: 21). Then, the word 'seeing' has been used here to signify that in and around Makkah and in the vast country of Arabia, from Makkah to Yaman, there were many such people still living, who had witnessed with their own eyes the event of the destruction of the people of the elephant, for it had occurred only about forty to forty-five years earlier, and the people of Arabia had continually heard it described by the eye-witnesses themselves so that they had become so certain of it as though they had seen it with their own eyes.

2. Here, Allah has not given any detail as to who were the people of the elephant, wherefrom they had come and what was the object of their march, for all these things were well known among the people.

3. The word *kayd* is used for a secret plan meant to harm somebody. The question is, what was secret in this case? Sixty thousand troops together with several elephants had openly come from Yaman to Makkah, and they had kept no secret that they had come to destroy the Ka'bah. Therefore, there was nothing secret about this plan. However, what was secret was the motive of the Abyssinians. They by destroying the Ka'bah, crushing down the Quraish and intimidating the Arabians, wanted to take control of the trade route that led from south Arabia to Syria and Egypt. This motive they kept hidden, and instead proclaimed their intent that they wanted to destroy the Ka'bah., the principal House of Arab worship, in retaliation for the pollution of their cathedral by the Arabs.

4. Literally, *fī taḍlīl* means: "led their plan astray", but idiomatically leading a plan astray means bringing it to nought and rendering it fruitless. At one place in the Qur'ān, it has been said: "But the disbelievers' plot (*kayd*) ended in vain." (Al-Mu'min: 25). At another: "And that Allah does not lead to success the plan (*kayd*) of deceivers." (Yūsuf: 52). The Arabians described Imra' ul-Qais by the epithet of *"al-malik aḍ-ḍalīl"* (the king who lost and wasted), for he had lost the kingdom left by his father.

5. *Abābīl* means many separate and scattered groups whether of men or other creatures, which come from different sides successively. 'Ikrimah and Qatādah say that these swarms of birds had come from the Red Sea side. Sa'īd bin Jubair and 'Ikrimah say that such birds had neither been seen before nor ever after; these were neither birds of Najd, nor of Hijāz, nor of Tihamah (the land between Hijaz and the Red Sea). Ibn 'Abbās says that their beaks were like those of birds and claws like the dog's paw. 'Ikrimah has stated that their heads were like the heads of the birds of prey, and almost all the reporters are agreed that each bird carried a stone in its beak and two stones in its claws. Some people of Makkah had

these stones preserved with them for a long time. Thus, Abū Nu'aim has related a statement of Naufal bin Abī Mu'āwiyah, saying that he had seen the stones wich had been thrown on the people of the elephant; they equalled a small pea seed in size, and were dark red in colour. According to Ibn 'Abbās's tradition that Abū Nu'aim has related, they were equal to a pine kernel, and according to Ibn Mardūyah, equal to a goat's dropping. Obviously, all the stones might not be equal but differing in size to some extent.

6. Literally, *bi ḥijārat-im-min sijjīl* means "stones of *sijjīl* type." Ibn 'Abbās says that *sijjīl* is the Arabic version of the Persian *sang* and *gil*, and it implies the stones made from clay and become hard when baked. The Qur'ān also confirms the same. In Sūrah Hūd :82 and Al-Ḥijr: 74, it has been said that stones of baked clay (*sijjīl*) were rained on the people of Lot, and about the same stones in Adh-Dhāriyāt: 33, it has been said that they were the stones made from clay (*ḥijārat-im-min tin*).

Maulanā Hamid-ad-Dīn Farāhī, who in the present age has done valuable work on the research and determination of the meaning and content of the Qur'ān regards the people of Makkah and other Arabians as the subject of *tarmīhim* in this verse, who are the addressees of *alam tara*. About the birds he says that they were not casting stones but had come to eat the dead bodies of the people of the elephant. A resume of the arguments he has given for this interpretation is that it is not credible that 'Abdul Muṭṭalib should have gone before Abrahah and demanded his camels instead of pleading for the Ka'bah, and this also is not credible that the people of Quraish and the other Arabs who had come for Ḥajj, did not resist the invaders and leaving the Ka'bah at their mercy had gone off to the mountains. Therefore, what actually happened was that the Arabs pelted the army of Abrahah with stones, and Allah by sending a stormy wind charged with stones, destroyed it completely; then the birds were sent to eat the dead bodies of the soldiers. But, as we have already explained in the Introduction, the tradition does not only say that 'Abdul Muṭṭalib had gone to demand his camels but it says that he did not demand the camels at all but tried to dissuade Abrahah from attacking the Ka'bah. We have already explained that according to all reliable traditions, Abrahah's army had come in Muharram when the pilgrims had gone back and also it was beyond the power of Quraish and other Arab tribes living in the surrounding areas to resist and fight an army 60,000 strong. They had hardly been able to muster a force ten to twelve thousand strong on the occasion of the Battle of the Trench (*Aḥzāb*) with the help of the Arab pagans and Jewish tribes then how could they have mustered courage to encounter an army, 60,000 strong? However, even if all these arguments are rejected and the sequence of the verses of Sūrah Al-Fil only is kept in view, this interpretation is seen to go against it. If it were so that the stones were cast by the Arabs and the people of the elephant were rendered as chaff, and

then the birds came to eat their dead bodies, the order would be this: "You were pelting them with stones of baked clay, then Allah rendered them as chaff eaten up, and then Allah sent upon them swarms of birds." But here we see that first Allah has made mention of sending swarms of birds; this is immediately followed by *tarmihim bi-ḥijārat-im min-sijjīl* (which were pelting them with stones of baked clay); and then at the end it is said that Allah made them as straw eaten up.

7. The word *'asf* as used in the original has already occurred in verse 12 of Sūrah Ar-Rahmān above: *dhul-'asf war-raihān*: "and corn with husk as well as grain". This shows that *'asf* means the outer covering of seeds, which the farmer throws away after the grain has been separated from it. Then the animals eat it, and some of it falls down in the chewing and some is trampled under the hoofs.



CVI

QUR'AISH

قُرَيش

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

CVI

QURAISH

قُرَيش

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah has been so entitled after the word Quraish in the very first verse.

Period of Revelation

Although Ḍaḥḥāk and Kalbi regard it as a Madanī Sūrah, yet a great majority of the commentators are agreed that it is Makki, and a manifest evidence of this are the *words Rabba hādh-al-Bait* (Lord of this House) of this Sūrah itself. Had it been revealed at Madīnah, the words "this House" for the Ka'bah could not be relevant. Moreover, its subject matter so closely relates to that of Sūrah Al-Fīl that probably it was revealed immediately after it, without any other Sūrah intervening between them. On the basis of this very relevance, some of the earliest scholars regard the two Sūrahs as one entity. This view is strengthened

by the traditions which say that in the Qur'ān-copy belonging to Ḥaḍrat Ubayy bin Ka'b these two were written as one Sūrah, *i.e.* without the insertion of the *Bismillāh* between them. Furthermore, Ḥaḍrat 'Umar had once recited the two Sūrahs as one in the Prayer. But this view is not acceptable because in the Qur'ān-copies which Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān (may Allah bless him) had got written down officially by the cooperation of a large number of the Companions and sent to the centres of Islamic lands, the *Bismillāh* was written between these two Sūrahs, and since then these two have been written as separate Sūrahs in all the copies of the Qur'ān everywhere in the world. Moreover, the style of the two Sūrah is so different that they manifestly appear as two separate Sūrahs.

Historical Background

To understand the Sūrah well it is essential that one should keep the historical background relevant to the contents of this Sūrah and of Sūrah Al-Fīl in view.

The tribe of Quraish was scattered throughout Ḥijāz until the time of Qusayy bin Kilāb, the ancestor of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace). First of all, Qusayy gathered it in Makkah and this tribe was able to gain authority over the Ka'bah. On that very basis Qusayy was called *mujammi'* (uniter, assembler) by his people. This man by his sagacity and wisdom founded a city-state in Makkah and made excellent arrangements for the welfare of the pilgrims coming from all over Arabia, with the result that the Quraish were able to gain great influence among the Arabian tribes and lands. After Qusayy the offices of the state of Makkah were divided between his sons, 'Abdi Manāf and 'Abd ad-Dar, but of the two 'Abdi Manāf gained greater fame even during his father's lifetime and was held in high esteem throughout Arabia. 'Abdi Manāf had four sons: Hāshim, 'Abdi Shams, Al-Muṭṭalib, and Naufal. Of these Hāshim, father of 'Abdul Muttalib and grandfather of the Holy Prophet, first conceived the idea to take part in the trade that passed between the eastern countries and Syria and Egypt through Arabia, and also to purchase the necessities of life for the Arabians so that the tribes living by the trade route bought these from them and the merchants living in the interior of the country were attracted to the market of Makkah. This was the time when the Sasanian kingdom of Iran had captured the international trade that was carried out between the northern lands and the eastern countries and Byzantine

empire through the Persian Gulf. This had boosted up the trade activity on the trade route leading from southern Arabia to Syria and Egypt along the Red Sea coast. As against the other Arabian caravans, the Quraish had the advantage that the tribes on the route held them in high esteem on account of their being keepers of the Ka'bah. They stood indebted to them for the great generosity with which the Quraish treated them in the Hajj season. That is why the Quraish felt no danger that their caravans would be robbed or harmed anywhere on the way. The tribes on the way did not even charge them the heavy transit taxes that they demanded from the other caravans. Hāshim taking advantage of this prepared the trade scheme and made his three brothers partners in it. Thus, Hāshim obtained trade privileges from the Ghassanide king of Syria, 'Abdi Shams from the Negus, Al-Muṭṭalib from the Yamanite nobles and Naufal from the governments of 'Irāq and Irān, and their trade began to flourish. That is how the four brothers became famous as traders and began to be called *aṣḥāb al-īlāf* (generators of love and affection) on account of their friendly relations with the tribes and states of the surrounding lands.

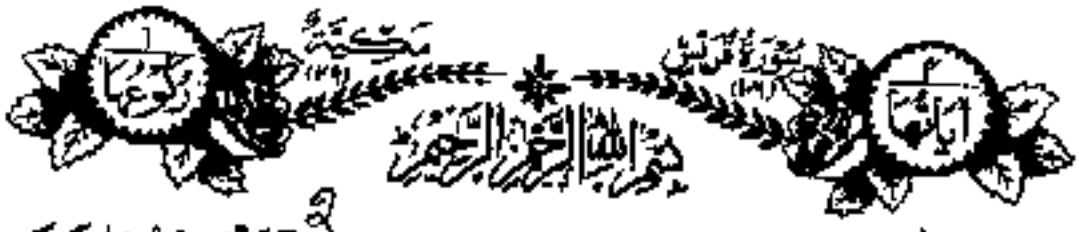
Because of their business relations with Syria, Egypt, 'Irāq, Irān, Yaman and Abyssinia, the Quraish came across such opportunities and their direct contact with the culture and civilization of different countries so enhanced the level of their knowledge and wisdom that no tribe in Arabia could match and equal them. As regards wealth and worldly goods they became the most affluent tribe, and Makkah became the most important commercial centre of the Arabian peninsula. Another great advantage that accrued from these international relations was that they brought from 'Irāq the script which later was used for writing down the Qur'ān. No other Arabian tribe could boast of so many literate people as Quraish. For these very reasons the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said: "Quraish are the leaders of men." (Musnad Aḥmad: *Marwiyāt 'Amr bin al-'Āṣ*). And according to a tradition from Ḥaḍrat 'Alī in Baihaqi, the Holy Prophet said: "First the leadership of the Arabians was in the hands of the people of Ḥimyar, then Allah withdrew it from them and gave it to Quraish."

The Quraish were thus prospering and flourishing when the event of Abrahah's invasion of Makkah took place. Had Abrahah at that time succeeded in taking this holy City and destroying the Ka'bah, the glory

and renown of not only the Quraish but of the Ka'bah itself, would have faded away, the belief of the pre-Islamic Arabia that the House indeed was Allah's House would have been shattered, and the high esteem in which Quraish were held for being keepers of the house throughout the country would have been tarnished. Then, after the Abyssinian advance to Makkah, the Byzantium also would have taken the initiative to gain control over the trade route between Syria and Makkah, and the Quraish would have been reduced to a plight worse than that in which they were involved before Qusayy bin Kilab. But when Allah showed this manifestation of His power that the swarms of birds destroyed 60,000 Abyssinian troops brought by Abrahah by pelting them with stones, and from Makkah to Yaman they went on falling and dying by the wayside, the faith of the Arabs that the Ka'bah indeed was Allah's House increased manifold, and the glory and renown of Quraish too was enhanced considerably throughout the country. Now the Arabs were convinced that they were under Allah's special favour; therefore, they visited every part of Arabia fearlessly and passed through every land with their trade caravans unharmed. No one could dare touch them with an evil intention. Not to speak of touching them, even if they had a non-Quraishite under their protection he too was allowed to pass unharmed.

Theme and Substance

As all this was well known in the time Of the Holy Prophet's appointment to Prophethood, there was no need to mention them. That is why in the four brief sentences of this Sūrah, Quraish were simply asked to consider: "When you yourselves acknowledge this House (*i.e.* the Ka'bah) to be Allah's House, and not of the idols, and when you fully well know that it is Allah alone Who has granted you peace by virtue of this House, made your trade and commerce flourish and saving you from destitution favoured you with prosperity, you should then worship and serve Him alone."



لِاِيْلٰفِ قُرَيْشٍ ۙ اٖلٰفِهِمْ رِحْلَةَ الشِّتَآءِ وَالصَّيْفِ ۚ فَلْيَعْبُدُوْا رَبَّ هٰذَا
الْبَيْتِ ۙ الَّذِيْٓ اَطْعَمَهُمْ مِّنْ جُوْعٍ ۙ وَّاٰمَنَهُمْ مِّنْ خَوْفٍ ۚ

CVI

QURAISH

قُرَيش

Verses: 4

Revealed at Makkah

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

As the Quraish become accustomed,[1] (that is,) accustomed to their journeys in the winter and the summer.[2] so they should worship the Lord of this House,[3] Who has fed them against hunger[4] and made them secure against fear.[5] 1-4

1. The word *ilāf*, as used in the original is from *alf* which means to be habituated and accustomed to be reunited after breaking up, and to adopt something as a habit. About the *lām* that is prefixed to *ilāf*, some Arabists have expressed the opinion that it is to express surprise and wonder. Thus, *Li-ilāf-i Quraish-in* means: "How surprising is the conduct of Quraish! It is only by virtue

of Allah's bounty that they are reunited after their dispersion and have become accustomed to the trade journeys which have brought them their prosperity,. and yet from Allah's worship and service they are turning away." This is the opinion of Akhfash, Kisā'ī and Farrā', and holding this opinion something after this *lām*, the same thing itself is regarded as sufficient to show that the attitude and conduct a person has adopted in spite of it, is surprising and amazing". On the contrary, Khalīl bin Ahmad, Sībawaih and Zamakhsharī say that this is the *lām* of *ta'līl* and it relates to the following sentence: *Fal-ya'budū Rabba hādh al-Bait,* which means: "Allah's blessings on the Quraish are countless. But if for no other blessing, they should worship Allah at least for this blessing that by His bounty they became accustomed to the trade journeys, for this by itself is indeed a great favour of Allah to them."

2. That is, the trade journeys. In summer the Quraish travelled northward to Syria and Palestine, for they are cool lands, and in winter southward to Yaman, etc. for they are warm.

3. "This House": the Holy Ka'bah. The sentence means that the Quraish have attained to this blessing only by virtue of the House of Allah. They themselves acknowledge that the 360 idols, which they worship, are not its lord, but Allah alone is its Lord. He alone saved them from the invasion of the army of elephants. Him alone they had invoked for help against Abrahah's army. It was His House the keeping of which enhanced their rank and position in Arabia, for before that they were dispersed and commanded no position whatever. Like the common Arab tribes they too were scattered factions of a race. But when they rallied round this House in Makkah and began to serve it, they became, honourable throughout Arabia, and their trade caravans began to visit every part of the country fearlessly. Therefore, whatever they have achieved, it has been possible only by the help of the Lord of this House; therefore, they should worship Him alone.

4. The allusion implies that before the Quraish came to Makkah, they were a scattered people in Arabia and living miserable lives. After their gathering together in Makkah they began to prosper, and the Prophet Abraham's prayer for them was literally fulfilled when he had prayed: "Lord, I have settled some of my descendents in a barren valley near Thy sacred House. Lord, I have done this in the hope that they will establish *ṣalāt* there. So turn the hearts of the people towards them, and provide fruits for their food." (Ibrahīm: 37)

5. "Secure against fear": secure from the fear from which no one anywhere in Arabia was safe. There was no settlement anywhere in the country the people of which could sleep peacefully at night, for they feared an attack any time from any quarter by some unknown enemy. No one could step out of the bounds

of his tribe for fear of life or of being taken prisoner and made a slave. No caravan could travel safely from fear of attack, or without bribing influential chiefs of the tribes on the way for safe conduct, But the Quraish were immune from every danger; they had no fear of an attack from an enemy. Their caravans, small or big, freely passed on the trade routes everywhere in the country. As soon as it become known about a certain caravan that it belonged to the keepers of the Ka'bah, no one could dare touch it with an evil intention, so much so that even if a single Quraishite was passing on the way, he was allowed to pass unharmed and untouched as soon as the word *"ḥarami"* or *"anā min ḥaramillāh"* was heard from him.


CVII
AL-MĀ'ŪN
الماعُون

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

CVII
AL-MĀ'ŪN
الماعُون

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah has been so designated after the word *al-mā'ūn* occurring at the end of the last verse.

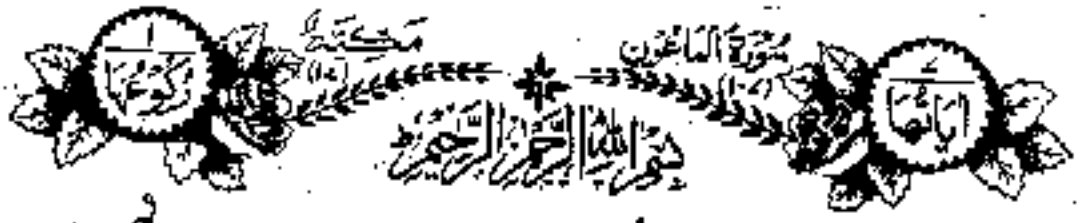
Period of Revelation

Ibn Mardūyah has cited Ibn 'Abbās (may Allah bless them both) as saying that this Sūrah is Makkī, and the same also is the view of 'Aṭā' and Jābir. But Abū Hayyān in *al-Muḥīṭ* has cited Ibn 'Abbās, Qatādah and Ḍaḥḥāk as saying that this Sūrah was revealed at Madīnah. In our

opinion there is an internal evidence in the Sūrah itself which points to its being a Madanī Revelation. It holds out a threat of destruction to those praying ones who are unmindful of their Prayers and who pray only to be seen. This kind of the hypocrites were found only at Madīnah, for it was there that Islam and the Muslims gained such strength that many people were compelled to believe from expedience, had to visit the Mosque, join the congregational Prayer and prayed only to be seen of others, so as to be counted among Muslims. Contrary to this, at Makkah conditions were altogether different. No one had to pray to be seen. There it was difficult even for the believers to pray in congregation; they prayed secretly and if a person prayed openly he did so only at the risk of life. The kind of the hypocrites found at Makkah did not comprise those who believed and prayed to be seen but those who in their hearts had known and acknowledged the Holy Messenger of Allah (upon whom be peace) to be on the truth, but were avoiding to accept Islam in order to maintain their position of leadership and authority, or were not prepared to take the risk of being afflicted with the kind of hardships with which they found the believers afflicted in the society around them. This condition of the hypocrites at Makkah has been described in vv. 10-11 of Sūrah Al-'Ankabūt. (For explanation, see E.N.'s 13 to 16 of Sūrah Al-'Ankabūt).

Theme and Subject-Matter

Its theme is to point out what kind of morals a man develops when he refuses to believe in the Hereafter. In vv. 2-3 the condition of the disbelievers who openly belie the Hereafter has been described, and in the last four verses the state of those hypocrites who apparently are Muslims but have no idea of the Hereafter, its judgement, and the meting out of rewards and punishments accordingly, has been described. On the whole, the object of depicting the attitude and conduct of the two kinds of the people is to impress the point that man cannot develop a strong, stable and pure character in himself unless he believes in the Hereafter.



أَرَءَيْتَ الَّذِي يُكَذِّبُ بِالدِّينِ ۝١ فَذَٰلِكَ الَّذِي يَدُعُّ الْيَتِيمَ ۝٢ وَلَا يَحُضُّ
عَلَىٰ طَعَامِ الْمِسْكِينِ ۝٣ فَوَيْلٌ لِّلْمُصَلِّينَ ۝٤ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَن صَلَاتِهِمْ
سَاهُونَ ۝٥ الَّذِينَ هُمْ يُرَآءُونَ ۝٦ وَيَمْنَعُونَ الْمَاعُونَ ۝٧

CVII

AL-MĀ'ŪN

الماعون

Verses: 7 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Have you seen him[1] who belies the rewards and punishments[2] of the Hereafter?[3] He it is[4] who drives away the orphan[5] and does not urge[6] giving away the food of the poor.[7] Then woe to the praying ones,[8] who are careless of their Prayer,[9] who do good to be seen,[10] and withhold small kindnesses[11] (from the people). 1-7

1. The words "have you seen", apparently, are directed to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), but the Qur'ânic style is that on such occasions it generally addresses every intelligent and thinking person. And "seeing" means seeing with the eyes, for what has been described in the succeeding verses can be seen by every seer with his eyes, as well as knowing, understanding and

considering something deeply. If the word *ara'aita* is taken in the second meaning, the verse would mean: "Do you know the kind of man who belies the rewards and punishments." Or: "Have you considered the state of the person who belies the Judgment?"

2. The word *ad-dīn* as Qur'ānic term is used for the rewards and punishments of the Hereafter as well as for the religion of Islam. But the theme that follows is more relevant to the first meaning, although the second meaning also is not out of the context. Ibn 'Abbās has preferred the second meaning, while a majority of the commentators have preferred the first. In case the first meaning is taken, the theme of the Sūrah would mean that denial of the Hereafter produces such and such a character in man; in case the second meaning is taken, the object of the Sūrah would be to highlight the moral importance of Islam, to stress that Islam aims at producing an altogether different character in its adherents from that found in its deniers.

3. The style shows that the object of asking this question at the outset is not to ask whether he has seen the person or not, but to invite the listener to consider as to what kind of character is produced in man when he denies the judgement of the Hereafter, and to urge him to know the kind of the people who belie this creed so that he tries to understand the moral significance of belief in the Hereafter.

4. The letter *fa* in the sentence *fa-dhālik-alladhī* expresses the meaning of a whole sentence, which is to this effect: "If you do not know, then know that it is indeed he who..." Or, it gives the meaning: "Because of his this very denial of the Hereafter he is the kind of man who..."

5. The sentence *yadu'ul-yatīma* as used in the original has several meanings: (1) That he deprives the orphan of his rights and evicting him from his father's heritage thrusts him away; (2) that if an orphan comes to ask him for help, he repulses him instead of showing him any compassion, and if he still persists in his entreaties in the hope for mercy, he drives him away and out of sight; (3) that he ill-treats the orphan. For example, if in his own house there is a closely related orphan, it is the orphans lot to serve the whole house, to receive rebuffs and suffer humiliation for trivial things. Besides, this sentence also contains the meaning that the person does not behave unjustly and tyrannically only occasionally but this is his habit and settled practice. He does not have the feeling that it is an evil which he must give up, but he persists in it with full satisfaction, thinking that the orphan is a helpless, powerless creature; therefore, there is no harm if his rights are taken away wrongfully, or he is made the target of tyranny and injustice, or he is repulsed and driven away whenever he asks for help.

In this connection, Qāḍi Abul Hasan al-Māwardī has related a strange incident in his *A'lām an-Nubuwwat*. Abū Jahl was the testator of an orphan. The child one day came to him in the condition that he had no shred of a garment on his body and he implored him to be given something out of his father's heritage. But the cruel man paid no attention to him and the poor child had to go back disappointed. The Quraish chiefs said to him out of fun: "Go to Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) and put your complaint before him. He will recommend your case before Abū Jahl and get you your property." The child not knowing any background of the nature of relationship between Abū Jahl and the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and not understanding the motive of the mischief-mongers, went straight to the Holy Prophet and apprised him of his misfortune. The Holy Prophet immediately arose and accompanied the child to the house of Abū Jahl, his bitterest enemy. Abū Jahl received him well and when the latter told him to restore to the child his right, he yielded and brought out whatever he owed to him. The Quraish chiefs were watching all this earnestly in the hope that an interesting altercation would take place between them. But when they saw what actually happened they were astounded and went to Abū Jahl and taunted him saying that he too perhaps had abandoned his religion. He said: "By God, I have not abandoned my religion, but I so felt that on the right and left of Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) there was a spear which would enter my body if I acted against what he desired." This incident not only shows what was the attitude and conduct of the principal chiefs of the most civilized and noble tribe of Arabia towards the orphans and other helpless people in those days but it also shows what sublime character the Holy Prophet possessed and what impact it had even on his bitterest enemies. A similar incident we have already related in E.N. 5 of Sūrah Al-Anbiyā' above, which points to the great moral superiority of the Holy Prophet because of which the disbelieving Quraish branded him as a sorcerer.

6. *Lā yaḥuddu* means that the person neither persuades his own self, nor tells the people of his household, to provide the poor man with his food, nor does he urge others to recognize the rights of the poor and needy people of society who are starving and do something to satisfy their hunger.

Here, by giving only two conspicuous examples, Allah has pointed out what kind of evils are produced in the people who deny the Hereafter. The real object is not to point out only these two evils—that the people drive away the orphans and do not urge giving away the food of the poor as a result of the denial of the Hereafter. But of the countless evils which are thus produced, two evils have been presented as an example, which every noble and sound-natured person will regard as hateful. Besides, another thing meant to be impressed is that if this very man had believed that he would have to go before God to render an account

of his deeds, he would not have committed such evils as to deprive the orphan of his rights, tyrannize him, repulse him, neither feed the poor man himself, nor urge others to give him his food. The characteristics of the believers in the Hereafter which have been described in Sūrah Al-'Aṣr and Sūrah Al-Balad are that they exhort one another to mercy, and they exhort one another to the truth and to render the rights of others.

7. The words used are *ta'ām-il-miskīn* and not *it'ām-il-miskīn*. If *ta'ām-il-miskīn* were the words, the meaning would be that he does not urge (others) to feed the poor. But *ta'ām-il-miskīn* means that he does not urge (others) to give away the food of the poor. In other words, the food that is given to the poor man is not the food of the giver but of the poor man himself; it is his right which is enjoined on the giver, and the giver is not doing him any favour but rendering him his right. This same thing had been said in Sūrah Adh-Dhāriyāt above: "And in their possessions is a due share of him who asks and of him who is needy." (v. 19).

8. The *fa* in *fa-wail-ul-lil-musallīn* signifies that such was the condition of the open deniers of the Hereafter. One may then consider the condition of the hypocrites who are included among the praying ones (*i.e.* Muslims). Since, despite being Muslims they regard the Hereafter as a falsehood, one may note what path of ruin they are following.

Though "*muṣallīn*" means "the praying ones", in view of the context in which this word has been used and the characteristics of these people that follow, this word, in fact, does not have the meaning of "the praying ones" but of "the people of *ṣalāt*", *i.e.* of those included among Muslims.

9. The words used are *'an-salāt-i-him sāhūn* and not *fī ṣalāt-i-him sāhūn*. In case the words *fī ṣalāt-i-him* had been used, the meaning would be that they forget in the course of their Prayer. But forgetting in the course of the Prayer is no sin in the eyes of the *Sharī'ah*, nothing to say of its being hypocrisy, nor is it a fault or anything blameworthy. The Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) himself sometimes forgot in the Prayer and to compensate for it he prescribed the method of *sajdah sahv*. On the contrary, *'an ṣalāt-i-him sāhūn* means that they are neglectful of their Prayer. Whether they perform the Prayer, or do not perform it, it is of little importance to them. They are not regular at the Prayers. When they perform it, they do not observe the prescribed times, but offer it carelessly at the eleventh hour. Or, when they rise up for the Prayer, they rise up soullessly and perform it with an unwilling heart, as if it were a calamity imposed on them. They play with their garments, yawn and betray absence of every trace of Allah's remembrance in their hearts. Throughout the Prayer they show no feeling at all that they are performing the Prayer, nor of what they are reciting; their minds

wander and they perform articles of the Prayer without due attention; they somehow perform a semblance of the Prayer and try to be rid of it as soon as possible. And there are many people who would perform the Prayer only when they must, otherwise the Prayer has no place in their lives. The Prayer time comes but they show no concern that it is the Prayer time; they hear the call to the Prayer but do not understand what the caller is calling to, whom he is calling and for what purpose. These in fact are the signs of absence of faith in the Hereafter. The claimants to Islam believe thus only because they do not believe that they would be rewarded for performing the Prayer, nor have the faith that they would be punished for not performing it. On this very basis, Ḥaḍrat Anas bin Mālik and 'Aṭā bin Dinār say: "Thanks to God that he said *'an ṣalāt-i-him* and not *fī ṣalāt-i-him*. That is, we do forget in the course of the Prayer but we are not forgetful and neglectful of it; therefore, we shall not be counted among the hypocrites."

The Qur'ān at another place has described this state of the hypocrites, thus: "They come to offer their Prayer but reluctantly, and they expend in the way of Allah with unwilling hearts." (At-Taubah: 54). The Holy Messenger of Allah has said: "This is the Prayer of the hypocrite; this is the Prayer of the hypocrite; this is the Prayer of the hypocrite! He watches the sun at the 'Aṣr time until when it reaches between the two horns of Satan (i.e. when the time of sunset approaches), he gets up and performs the Prayer carelessly, in which he remembers Allah but little." (Bukhārī, Muslim, Musnad Aḥmad) Mus'ab bin Sa'd has related from his father, Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin Abī Waqqās: "When I asked the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) about the people who are neglectful of their Prayer, he said: "These are the people who perform their Prayers when the prescribed time for it has passed." (Ibn Jarīr, Abū Ya'lā, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ṭabarānī in *Ausaṭ*, Ibn Mardūyah, Baihaqi in *As-Sunan*. This tradition has been related as a statement of Ḥaḍrat Sa'd himself also as a *mauqūf ḥadīth* and its *sanad* is stronger. Its being a *marfū'* narration of the saying of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been regarded as weak by Baihaqī and Ḥākim). Another traditoin from Ḥaḍrat Mus'ab is that he asked his father: "Have you considered this verse? Does it mean giving up the Prayer, or wandering of one's attention in the course of the Prayer?—Who among us has not his attention divided? He replied: No, it implies wasting the prescribed time of the Prayer and performing it when its time has elapsed." (Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Shaibah, Abū Ya'lā, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Mardūyah, Baihaqī in *As-Sunan*).

Here, one should understand that coming of other thoughts in the mind in the course of the Prayer is one thing and being unmindful of the Prayer and thinking other things during it quite another. The first state is a natural human weakness. Other thoughts do interfere without intention, and as soon as a believer feels that his attention is wandering from the Prayer, he gathers it and brings it

back to the Prayer. The other state is of being neglectful of the Prayer, for in it man only goes through an exercise of the Prayer mechanically, he has no intention of the remembrance of God in his heart. From the commencement of the Prayer till its completion his heart is not turned towards God even for a moment, and he remains engrossed in the thoughts with which he entered the Prayer.

10. This can be an independent sentence as well as one relating to the preceding sentence. In the first case, it would mean that they do not perform any act of goodness with a pure intention for the sake of God, but whatever they do, they do to be seen of others so that they are praised, are considered righteous, their good act is publicised and its advantage and benefit accrues to them here in the world. In the second case, the meaning would be that they pray to be seen. The commentators generally have preferred the second meaning, for at first sight it appears that it relates to the preceding sentence. Ibn 'Abbās says: "It implies the hypocrites who prayed to be seen. They performed the Prayer if there was somebody to see them, but did not perform it if there was nobody to see them." In another tradition his words are to the effect: "If they were alone they did not pray; but if there were others, they prayed." (Ibn Jarīr, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Hātim, Ibn Mardūyah, Baihaqī in *Ash-Shu'ab*). In the Qur'ān too the hypocrites have been described thus: "When they rise up for the *salāt*, they go reluctantly to it, merely to be seen of people and they remember Allah but little." (An-Nisā': 142).

11. The word used is *mā'ūn*. The view held by Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, Ibn 'Umar, Sa'id bin Jubair, Qatādah, Ḥasan Baṣri, Muḥammad bin Ḥanafiyyah, Ḍaḥḥāk, Ibn Zaid, 'Ikrimah, Mujāhid, 'Atā' and Zuhri (may Allah show them mercy) is that it implies the *zakāt* while Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn Mas'ūd, Ibrāhim Nakha'ī, Abū Mālik and many other scholars have expressed the opinion that it implies items of common use; for example, cooking-pot, bucket, hatchet, balance, salt, water, fire, flint (now its successor, the match-stick), etc. which the people generally borrow from each other. A statement of Sa'id bin Jubair and Mujāhid also supports it. Another view of Ḥaḍrat 'Alī also is that it implies the *zakāt* as well as the little courtesies and kindnesses of daily life. Ibn Abī Ḥātim has related from 'Ikrimah that *mā'ūn* of the highest form is *zakāt* and of the lowest lending of a sieve, bucket, or needle to a borrower. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd says: "We, the Companions of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), used to say (and according to other traditions, in the time of the Holy Prophet, used to say) that *mā'ūn* implies lending of the cooking-pot, hatchet, bucket, balance, and such other things." (Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Shaibah, Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'ī, Bazzār, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ṭabarāni in *Al-Ausat*, Ibn Mardūyah, Baihaqī in *As-Sunan*). Sa'd bin 'Iyāḍ without specifying any names has related almost the same view from the Companions of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), which shows that he had heard this from several Companions. (Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Shaibah). Dailamī, Ibn 'Asākir, and Abū

Nu'aim have related a tradition from Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah in which he says that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) himself explained this verse saying that it implies the hatchet, bucket and other such things. If this tradition is genuine it probably did not come to the notice of other scholars; otherwise it was not possible that other people should have given any other commentary of this verse.

Mā'ūn in fact is a small, little thing useful to the people. Accordingly, *zakāt* also is *mā'ūn*, for it is a little amount out of much wealth, which one has to give away in order to help the poor, and the other small items of common use also are *mā'ūn* as mentioned by Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ūd and the scholars who share his viewpoint. The majority of the commentators say that *mā'ūn* applies to all those small things which the neighbours usually ask each other for, and asking for these is not in any way blameworthy, for the rich and the poor, all stand in need of these at one time or another. However, to show stinginess in lending these is regarded as mean behaviour morally. Generally these things by themselves last and the neighbour returns them in the original form after he has used them. It would also be *mā'ūn* if a neighbour asks the other for a bed or bedding items on the arrival of guests, or asks the neighbour's permission to have loaves baked in his oven, or wants to leave some valuables in the neighbour's custody when going out of his house for some days. Thus, the verse means to impress that denial of the Hereafter renders a man so narrow-minded and niggardly that he is not even prepared to make a most minor sacrifice for the sake of others.


CVIII
AL-KAUTHAR
الكَوثر

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

CVIII

AL-KAUTHAR

الكَوثر

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah has been so designated after the word *al-kauthar* occurring in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

Ibn Mardūyah has cited Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin az-Zubair and Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah as saying that this Sūrah is Makkī. Kalbī and Muqātil also regard it as Makkī, and the same is the view held by the majority of commentators, but Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣrī, 'Ikrimah, Mujāhid and Qatādah regard it as Madanī. Imām Suyūtī in *Al-Itqān* has confirmed this same view, and Imām Nawawī in his commentary of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim has also preferred the same. The reason for this assumption is the tradition which traditionists of the rank of Imam Ahmad, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'ī, Ibn Abī Shaibah, Ibn al-

Mundhir, Ibn Mardūyah, Baihaqī and others have related from Ḥaḍrat Anas bin Mālik, saying: "The Holy Prophet was among us. In the meantime he dozed; then he raised his head, smiling—according to some traditions, the people asked what for he was smiling, according to others, he himself told them that a Sūrah had just been revealed to him. Then, with *Bismillāh ir-Rahmān ir-Rahīm,* he recited Sūrah Al-Kauthar; then, he asked the people whether they knew what Kauthar was. When they said that Allah and his Messenger had the best knowledge, he said; It is a river which my Lord has granted me in Paradise." (The details follow under "*Kauthar*"). The basis of the reasoning from this tradition for this Sūrah's being Madanī is that Ḥaḍrat Anas belonged to Madīnah, and his saying that this Sūrah was revealed in his presence is a proof that it was Madanī.

But, in the first place, from this same Hadrat Anas, Imām Ahmad, Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī and Ibn Jarīr have related the traditions which say that this river of Paradise (*Al-Kauthar*) had been shown to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) on the occasion of the *mi'rāj*, (ascension) and everyone knows that *mi'rāj* had taken place at Makkah before the *hijrah*. Secondly, when during the *mi'raj* the Holy Prophet had not only been informed of this gift of Allah Almighty but also shown it, there was no reason why Sūrah Al-Kauthar should have be revealed at Madīnah to give him the good news of it. Thirdly, if in an assembly of the Companions the Holy Prophet himself had given the news of the revelation of Sūrah Al-Kauthar which Ḥaḍrat Anas has mentioned in his tradition, and it meant that that Sūrah had been revealed for the first time then, it was not possible that well-informed Companions like Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās and Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Zubair should have declared this Sūrah to be a Makkī revelation and most of the commentators also should have regarded it as Makkī. If the matter is considered carefully, there appears to be a flaw in the tradition from Ḥaḍrat Anas in that it does not say what was the subject under discussion in the assembly in which the Holy Prophet gave the news about Sūrah Al-Kauthar. It is possible that at that time the Holy Prophet was explaining something. In the meantime he was informed by revelation that that point was further explained by Sūrah Al-Kauthar, and he mentioned the same thing, saying that that Sūrah was revealed to him just then. Such incidents did take place on several occasions, on the basis of which the commentators have opined

about certain verses that they were revealed twice. This second revelation, in fact, meant that the verse had been revealed earlier, but on some later occasion the Holy Prophet's attention was invited to it by revelation for the second time. In such traditions, the mention of the revelation of a certain verse is not enough to decide whether it was revealed at Madinah or Makkah, and when precisely it was revealed.

Had this tradition of Hadrat Anas not been there to cause doubt, the whole content of the Sūrah Al-Kauthar by itself bears evidence that it was revealed at Makkah., and in the period when the Holy Prophet was passing through extremely discouraging conditions.

Historical Background

Before this in Sūrahs Ad-Duhā and Alam Nashrah we have seen that when in the earliest phase of Prophethood the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was passing through the most trying conditions — when the whole nation had turned hostile, there was resistance and opposition on every side, and the Holy Prophet and a handful of his Companions did not see any remote chance of success—Allah in order to console and encourage him at that time had sent down several verses. In Sūrah Ad-Duhā it was said; "And surely the later period (*i.e.* every later period) is better for you than the former period, and soon your Lord shall give you so much that you shall be well pleased, and in Sūrah Alam Nashrah: "And We exalted your renown for you." That is, "Though the enemies are trying to defame you throughout the country, We, on the contrary, have arranged to exalt your name and fame." And; "The fact is that along with every hardship there is also ease. Indeed, with every hardship there is also ease." That is, "You should not be disheartened by the severity of conditions at this time; this period of hardships will soon pass, and the period of success and victory will follow."

Such were the conditions in which Allah by sending down Sūrah Al-Kauthar consoled the Holy Prophet as well as foretold the destruction of his opponents. The disbelieving Quraish said: "Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is cut off from his community and reduced to a powerless and helpless individual. According to 'Ikrimah when the Holy Prophet was appointed a Prophet, and he began to call the people to Islam, the Quraish said: "Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) is cut off from his people as a tree is cut off from its root,

which might fall to the ground any moment." (Ibn Jarīr). Muḥammad bin Ishāq says: "Whenever the Prophet (upon whom be peace) was mentioned before 'Āṣ bin Wā'il as-Sehmī, the chief of Makkah, he used to say: Let him alone for he is only a childless man (*abtar*) with no male offspring. When he dies, there will be no one to remember him." Shamir bin 'Atiyyah says that 'Uqbah bin Abī Mu'aiṭ also used to say similar things about the Holy Prophet, (Ibn Jarīr). According to Ibn 'Abbās, once Ka'b bin Ashraf (the Jewish chief of Madīnah came to Makkah and the Quraish chiefs said to him: "Just see this boy, who is cut off from his people; he thinks he is superior to us, whereas we manage the Hajj, look after the Ka'bah and water the pilgrims." (Bazzār). Concerning this very incident 'Ikrimah reports that the Quraish had used the words *aṣ-ṣunbūr al-munbatir min qaumi-hī* (a weak, helpless and childless man who is cut off from his people) for the Holy Prophet. (Ibn Jarīr) Ibn Sa'd and Ibn 'Asākir have related that Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās said; "The eldest son of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was Qāsim; next to him was Zainab, next to her Hadrat 'Abdullah and next to him three daughters viz. Umm Kulthūm, Fātimah and Ruqayyah. Of them first Hadrat Qāsim died and then Hadrat 'Abdullah. Thereupon 'Āṣ bin Wā'il said: "His line has come to an end: now he is *abtar* (*i.e.*cut off from root)." Some traditions add that 'Ās said; "Muḥammad is *abtar*, he has no son to succeed him. When he dies, his memory will perish and you will be rid of him. The tradition from Ibn 'Abbās, which 'Abd bin Ḥumaid has related, shows that Abū Jahl also had said similar words on the death of the Holy Prophet's son, Abdullah. Ibn Abī Ḥātim has related on the authority of Shamir bin 'Ariyyah that the same kind of meanness was shown by 'Uqbah bin Abi Mu'aiṭ by rejoicing at this bereavement of the Holy Prophet. 'Aṭā' says that when the second son of the Holy Prophet died, his own uncle, Abū Lahab (whose house was next to his) hastened to the pagans and gave them the "good news" *Batira Muḥammad-un al-lail*" "Muḥammad has become childless this night, or he is cut off from root."

Such were the disturbing conditions under which Sūrah Al-Kauthar was sent down. The Quraish were angry with him because he worshipped and served only Allah and repudiated their idolatry publicly. For this very reason he was deprived of the rank, esteem and honour that he enjoyed among his people before Prophethood and was now as cut off from his community. The handful of his Companions also were

helpless, poor people who were being persecuted and tyrannized. Furthermore, he was bereaved by the death of two sons, one after the other whereat the near relatives and the people of the clan, brotherhood and neighbourhood were rejoicing and uttering such words as were disheartening and disturbing for a noble person who had treated even his enemies most kindly. At this Allah just in one sentence of this brief Sūrah gave him the good news, better news than which has never been given to any man in the world, besides the decision that it will be his opponents who will be cut off from their root and not he.



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Verses : 3 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

(O Prophet,) We have granted you the *Kauthar*[1]. So pray only for your Lord and sacrifice.[2] Indeed, your enemy[3] alone is cut off from the root.[4] 1-3

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1. The full meaning of the word *kauthar*, as used here, cannot perhaps be expressed in one word in any language of the world. This is an intensive form of the noun *kathrat* which literally means abundance, but the context in which it has been used does not give the meaning of mere abundance but abundance of good, of spiritual benefits and blessings, and of such abundance which is unbounded and limitless, and it does not imply any one good or benefit or blessing but abundance

of countless benefits and blessings. Have a look again at the background of this Sūrah given in the Introduction. The enemies thought that Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) had been completely ruined: he was cut off from the community and had become utterly helpless and powerless; his trade was ruined; his male children who could perpetuate his name were dead; the message that he presented was such that except for a handful of the people no one in entire Arabia, not to speak of Makkah, was prepared to listen to it; therefore, failure and disappointment would be his lot as long as he lived and there would be no one in posterity to remember him when he died. Under such conditions when Allah said: "We have granted you the *Kauthar*," it by itself gave the meaning: Your foolish opponents think that you are ruined and deprived of the good things that you enjoyed before Prophethood, but the fact is that We have favoured you with unbounded good and countless blessings." This included the matchless moral qualities which the Holy Prophet was blessed with; this included the great blessings of Prophethood and the Qur'ān, the knowledge and wisdom that were granted to him; this included the blessing of *Tauhīd* and also of such a system of life, whose simple and intelligible, rational and natural, and comprehensive principles had the potential to spread throughout the world and of continuing to spread for ever afterwards. This also included the blessing of the exaltation of renown because of which the holy Prophet's blessed name continues to be exalted throughout the world since 1400 years and will continue to be so exalted till Resurrection. This also included the blessing that by his preaching eventually such a world-wide community came into being, which became the standard-bearer of Truth in the world for ever, which can claim to have produced the greatest number of the pious, virtuous and noble charactered men in any one nation, and which even when corrupted and deprived has the highest good in it as against every other nation of the world. This also included the blessing that the Holy Prophet during his very lifetime witnessed his invitation and message attaining to the highest success and the preparation of a community which had the power to dominate the world. This also included the blessing that although on his being deprived of the male offspring the enemies thought he would be lost to posterity, yet Allah not only blessed him with the spiritual offspring in the form of Muslims, who will continue to exalt his name in the world till Resurrection but also granted him from his one daughter, Ḥaḍrat Fāṭimah, the natural progeny, who have spread throughout world and whose only mark of distinction and pride is that they trace their descent from him.

These are the blessings which the people have seen and witnessed as to how abundantly Allah has blessed His Holy prophet within the world. In addition, *Kauthar* also implies two other great blessings which Allah will bestow on him in the Hereafter. We had no means of knowing these; therefore the Holy Prophet

(upon whom be peace) himself gave us news of them, and told us that *Kauthar* also implied them. First, the Fountain of *Kauthar*, which he will be granted on the Resurrection Day in the Plain of Assembly; second, the River *Kauthar*, which he will be granted in Paradise. About both such a large number of the *Aḥādīth* have been reported from him through such a large number of the reporters that there remains no doubt about their authenticity.

What the Holy Prophet said about the fountain of *Kauthar* is as follows:

(1) This Fountain will be granted to him on the Resurrection Day when there will be the cry of *al-'atash, al-'atash* (thirst, thirst) on every side. The Holy Prophet's community will gather together before him at it and will be watered thereby. He himself will be the first to arrive at it and will be occupying the central position. He has said: "This is a Fountain at which my *Ummah* will assemble on the Resurrection Day." (Muslim: *Kitāb aṣ-Ṣalāt*; Abū Da'ūd: *Kitāb as-Sunnah*). "I shall have arrived at the Fountain before you." (Bukhārī: *Kitāb ar-Riqāq* and *Kitāb al-Fitan;* Muslim: *Kitāb al-Fidā* and *Kitāb at-Tahārah;* Ibn Mājah: *Kitāb al-Manāsik* and *Kitāb az-Zuhd*: Musnad Aḥmad: *Marwiyyāt* 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, Abū Hurairah. "I shall be there before you and shall bear witness on you, and by God, I am seeing my Fountain even at this time." (Bukhārī: *Kitāb al-Janā'iz, Kitāb al-Maghāzī, Kitāb ar-Riqāq).* Addressing an assembly of the Anṣār, the Holy Prophet once said: "After me you will meet with selfishness and nepotism, endure it patiently until you meet me at the Fountain." (Bukhārī: *Kitāb Manāqib al-Ansār* and *Kitāb al-Maghāzi;* Muslim: *Kitāb al-Imān;* Tirmidhi: *Kitāb al-Fitan).* "I shall be near the middle of the Fountain on the Resurrection Day." Muslim: *Kitāb al-Faḍā'il).*. Ḥaḍrat Abū Barzah Aslamī was asked: "Have you heard something about the Fountain from the Holy Prophet? He replied: Not once, or twice, or thrice, or four or five times, but over and over again. May Allah deprive of its water the one who be lies it." (Abū Da'ūd: *Kitāb as-Sunnah*). "Ubaidullah bin Ziyād thought that the traditions about the Fountain were false; so much so that he belied all the traditions reported by Ḥaḍrat Abū Barzah Aslamī, Barā' bin 'Āzib and 'Ā'idh bin 'Amr. At last, Abū Sabrah brought out a writing which he had written down after hearing it from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin al-'Āṣ and it contained this saying of the Holy Prophet: "Beware! your place of meeting me will be my Fountain." (Musnad Ahmad: *Marwiyyāt* 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin al-'Ās).

(2) Different dimensions of the Fountain have been given in different traditions, but according to a large number of the traditions it will extend from Aylah (the present Israeli seaport of Īlāt) to Sana'ā of Yaman, or from Aylah to 'Adan, or from 'Ammān to 'Adan in length, and from Aylah to Juhfah (a place between Jeddah and Rābigh) in breadth. (Bukhārī: *Kitāb ar-Riqāq;* Abū Da'ūd aṭ-

Ṭayālisi: Ḥadīth No. 995; Musnad Aḥmad: *Marwiyyāt* Abū Bakr Siddīq and 'Abdullah bin 'Umar; Muslim: *Kitāb al-Ṭahārah* and *Kitāb al-Faḍā'il;* Tirmidhi : *Abwāb Ṣifāt al-Qiyāmah;* Ibn Mājah: *Kitāb az-Zuhd*). From this it appears that on the Resurrection Day the present Red Sea itself will be turned into the Fountain of *Kauthar.* And the correct knowledge is only with Allah!

(3) About this Fountain the Holy Prophet has told us that water will be supplied to it from the River *Kauthar* of Paradise (which is being mentioned below). "Two channels from Paradise will flow into it and supply water to it." (Muslim: *Kitāb al-Faḍā'il).* According to another tradition: "A canal from the River *Kauthar* of Paradise will be opened towards this Fountain." (Musnad Ahmad: *Marwiyyāt* 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd).

(4) According to the description of it given by the Holy Prophet its water will be whiter than milk (according to other traditions whiter than silver, and according to still others, whiter than snow), cooler than snow, sweeter than honey; the earth of its bed will be more fragrant than musk; the water jugs set at it will be as numerous as the stars in the sky; the one who drinks from it would never thirst; and the one who is deprived of it will never have his thirst satisfied. These things with a little variation in wording have been reported in numerous *Aḥadīth.* (Bukhārī: *Kitāb ar-Riqaq;* Muslim: *Kitāb at-Tahārah* and *Kitāb al-Faḍā'il;* Musnad Aḥmad: *Marwiyyāt* Ibn Mas'ūd, Ibn 'Umar, 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin al-'Ās; Tirmidhi: *Abwāb' Ṣifāt al-Qiyānmah:* Ibn Mājah: *Kitāb az-Zuhd;* Abū Da'ūd: Ṭayālisī, *Ahadith* No. 995, 2135).

(5) Concerning it the Holy Prophet warned the people of his time again and again, saying: "after me those from among you who would effect changes in my Way, will be removed from the Fountain and will be disallowed to approach it. I shall say: they are my companions, but it will be said: "Don't you know what they did after you? Then I too shall discard them and tell them to keep away." This subject too has been expressed in many traditions. (Bukhārī: *Kitāb ar-Riqāq, Kitāb al-Fitan;* Muslim: *Kitāb' al-Tahāra* and *Kitab al-Faḍā'il:* Musnad Aḥmad: *Marwiyyāt Ibn Mas'ūd, Abū Huraīrah;* Ibn Mājah: *Kitāb al-Manāsik.* The *Ḥadīth* which Ibn Mājah has related in this connection contains very pathetic words. The Holy Prophet said: "Beware! I shall have arrived at the Fountain before you and shall pride myself by your means upon the greater numbers of my *Ummah* as against other *ummahs.* Do not at that time cause my face to be blackened. Beware: I shall have some people released, and some people shall be separated from me. I shall say: O my Lord, they are my companions. He will reply: Don't you know what innovations they introduced after you?" According to Ibn Majah, these words were said by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) in his Sermon at 'Arafāt.

(6) Likewise, the Holy Prophet has also warned the Muslims coming after him till Resurrection, saying: "Whoever from among you will swerve from my Way and effect changes in it, will be removed from the Fountain. I shall say: O Lord, they belong to me, they are the people of my *Ummah*. In response it will be said: Don't you know what changes they effected after you and then turned back on their heels? Then I too shall turn them away and shall not allow them to approach the Fountain." Many traditions on this subject are found in the *Ḥadīth*. (Bukhārī: *Kitāb al-Musāqāt, Kitāb ar-Riqaq, Kitāb al-Fitan;* Muslim: *Kitāb at-Taharah, Katāb aṣ-Ṣalāt, Kitāb al-Faḍā'il;* Ibn Mājah: *Kitāb az-Zuhd;* Musnad Aḥmad: *Marwiyyāt Ibn 'Abbas).*

Traditions about this Fountain have been related by more than 50 companions, and the earliest scholars generally have taken it to mean the Fountain of *Kauthar*. Imām Buhkārī has named the last chapter of his *Kitāb ar-Riqāq* as *Bābun fil hawḍ wa qual-Allāhu innā a'ṭaināk al-Kauthar,* and in a tradition from Ḥaḍrat Anas there is the explanation that the Holy Prophet said about *Kauthar:* "It is a Fountain at which my Ummah shall alight."

The River *Kauthar* which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) shall be granted in Paradise, also has been mentioned in a large number of the traditions of Hadīth. Many traditions have been related on the authority of Hadrat Anas in which he says (and in some he explains that he is reporting the exact words of the Holy Prophet himself) that on the occasion of *mi'rāj,* the Holy Prophet was taken round Paradise and shown a river on the banks of which there were vaults of pearls or precious stones carved from within; the earth of its bed was of the strong scented musk. He asked Gabriel, or the angel who took him round, what it was. He replied that it was the River *Kauthar*, which Allah had granted him. (Musnad Ahmad, Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī, Abū Da'ūd Tāyālisī, Ibn Jarīr) Again, according to Ḥaḍrat Anas, the Holy Prophet was asked (or a person asked him): "What is the *Kauthar?*" He replied; "It is a River which Allah has granted me in Paradise. Its earth is musk; its water is whiter than milk and sweeter than honey " (Musnad Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, Ibn Jarīr; according to another tradition of Musnad Ahmad, describing the merits of the River *Kauthar* the Holy Prophet said that at its bottom there are pearls instead of pebbles. Ibn 'Umar says that the Holy Prophet said: "The *Kauthar* is a river in Paradise the banks of which are golden; it flows on pearls and diamonds (*i.e.* its bed has diamonds instead of pebbles); its earth smells sweeter than musk; its water is whiter than milk (or snow), cooler than snow and sweeter than honey." (Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Dārimī, Abū Da'ūd Ṭayālisī, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Mardūyah, Ibn Abī Shaibah). Usāmah bin Zaid says that the Holy Prophet once went to visit Ḥaḍrat Usāmah; he was not at home; his wife entertained him and during the conversation said "My husband has told me that you have been granted a river in Paradise,

which is called the *Kauthar.*" The Holy Prophet replied "Yes, and its bed is of rubies and corals and emeralds and pearls" (Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Mardūyah. Though the *sanad* of this tradition is weak, the presence of a large number of traditions dealing with this subject strengthens it). Besides these *marfū'* traditions, a great many sayings of the Companions and their successors have been related in the Ḥadīth to the effect that the *Kauthar* implies a river in Paradise. These traditions describe its qualities as have been mentioned above. For instance, the sayings of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, Ḥaḍrat Anas bin Mālik, Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, Mujāhid and Abul 'Āliysh are found in Musnad Aḥmad, Bukhārī, Tirmidhi, Nasā'ī; and the books of Ibn Mardūyah, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Shaibah and other traditionists.

2. Different commentaries of it have been reported from different scholars. Some of them take the Prayer to mean the five times obligatory Prayer (*ṣalāt*); some take it to imply the Prayer of 'Īd al-Aḍḥā, and some say that it implies the Prayer itself. Likewise, the meaning of *waḥar* and sacrifice according to some illustrious scholars, is to place the right hand over the left hand and to fold them on the chest in the Prayer; some say that it implies raising both hands with *Allahu Akbar* at the commencement of the Prayer; some say that it implies raising both hands at the commencement of the Prayer, at bowing for *Rukū'* and after rising from *Rukū';* and some say that it means performing the 'Īd al-Aḍḥā Prayer and then offering the animal sacrifice. But if the context in which this command has been enjoined, is considered, its meaning clearly seems to be: "O Prophet, when your Lord has granted you so many and so splendid blessing, then you should perform the Prayer only for His sake and offer sacrifice only for His sake." This Command was given in the environment when not only the pagans of Quraish but the pagans of entire Arabia and the world worshipped their self-made gods and offered sacrifices at their shrines. Therefore, the intention of the Command is : "Contrary to the polytheistic practice, you should remain steadfast to your creed: your Prayer is only for Allah and your sacrifice also is for Him alone, as it has been said at another place: 'Declare, O Prophet, my *ṣalāt* and my sacrifice and my life and my death are all for Allah, Lord of the universe, Who has no partner with Him. This is what I have been enjoined, and I am the first to surrender to Him.'" (Al-An'ām: 162-163). This same meaning has been explained of it by Ibn 'Abbās, 'Aṭā', Mujāhid, 'Ikrimah, Ḥasan Baṣrī, Qatādah, Muḥammad bin Ka'b al-Kurzī, Ḍaḥḥāk, Rabi' bin Anas, 'Aṭā' al-Khurasānī and many other major commentators (may Allah bless them all) (Ibn Jarīr). However, this by itself is correct that when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) enforced by Allah's Command the practice of the 'Īd al-Aḍḥā Prayer and the offering of animal sacrifice at Madīnah, he himself gave the first place to the Prayer (*ṣalāt*) and the second to the sacrifice, as commanded in the verses: *Inna ṣalāti wa nusuki* and *fa-ṣalli li-Rabbika wanhar.*

and enjoined on the Muslims also to do the same, *i.e.* they should first perform the Prayer and then offer the sacrifice. This is neither the explanation of this verse nor the occasion of its revelation but a deduction made by the Holy Prophet from these verses and his deduction of injunctions also is a kind of Divine inspiration.

3. The word *shāni'* as used in the original is derived from *sha'n*, which means the hatred and spite because of which a person may start ill-treating another. At another place in the Qur'an it has been said: "(And O Muslims,) the enmity of any people should not so provoke you as to turn you away from justice." (Al-Mā'idah: 8). Thus, *shāni'aka* implies every such person who blinded by his enmity of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) should bring false accusations against him, slander and defame him and vent his personal spite against him by taunting and scoffing at him in every possible way.

4. *Huwa'l abtar:* "He himself is *abtar*", *i.e.* though he calls you *abtar* he in fact himself is *abtar*. Some explanations of *abtar* have already been given in the Introduction to the Sūrah. It is derived from *batar* which means to cut off, but idiomatically it is used in a comprehensive meaning. In the *Ḥadīth*, the *rak'ah* of the Prayer which is not coupled with another *rak'ah* is called *buṭaira'*, i.e. the lonely *rak'ah*. According to another Hadith "Every piece of work, which is in any way important, is *abtar* if it is started without the glorification and praise of Allah", implying that it is cut off from the root, It has no stability, and it is doomed to failure. A man who fails to achieve his object is *abtar* as also the one who is deprived of all means and resources. A person who is left with no hope of any good and success in life is also *abtar*. A person who has been cut off from his family, brotherhood, associates And helpers is also *abtar*. The word *abtar* is also used for the man who has no male child, or whose male child or children have died, for after him there remains no one to remember him, and he is lost to posterity after death. In almost all these meanings the disbelieving Quraish called the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) *abtar*. At this, Allah said: "O Prophet, not you but your enemies are *abtar*." This was not merely a "reprisal", but a prophecy out of the most important prophecies of the Qur'ān, which literally proved true. When it was made, the people regarded the Holy Prophet as *abtar*, and no one could imagine how the big chiefs of the Quraish would become *abtar*, who were famous not only in Makkah but throughout Arabia, who were successful in life, rich in worldly wealth and children, who had their associates and helpers everywhere in the country, who enjoyed intimate relations with all the Arabian tribes, being monopolists in trade and managers of Hajj. But not long afterwards the conditions altogether changed. There was a time when on the occasion of the Battle of the Trench (A.H. 5) the Quraish had invaded Madīnah with the help of many Arabian and Jewish tribes, and the Holy Prophet being besieged had to resist the enemy by digging a trench around the city. After only three years, in A.H. 8,

when he attacked Makkah, the Quraish had no helper and they had to surrender helplessy. After this within a year or so the whole Arabia came under his control, deputations of tribes from all over the country began to visit him to take the oaths of allegiance and his enemies were left utterly helpless and resourceless. Then they were so lost to posterity that even if their children survived, none of them today knows that he is a descendent of Abū Jahl, Abū Lahab, 'Ās bin Wā'il, or 'Uqbah bin Abī Mu'ait, the enemies of Islam, and even if he knows it, he is not prepared to claim that his ancestors were those people. On the contrary, blessings are being invoked on the children of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace)throughout the world; millions and millions of Muslims take pride in bearing relationship to him; hundreds of thousands of people regard it as a mark of honour and prestige to have descended not only from him but from his family and even the families of his Companions. Thus, some one is a Sayyid, another an 'Alavī, and 'Abbāsī, a Hāshmī, a Siddīqī, a Fāruqī, an 'Uthmānī, a Zubairī, or an Ansārī, but no one is an Abū Jahlī or Abū Lahabī. History has proved that not the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) but his enemies were, and are, *abtar*.


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بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

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INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from the word *al-kāfirūn* occurring in the first verse.

Period of Revelation,

Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Hadrat Hasan Basrī and 'Ikrimah say that this Sūrah is Makkī, while Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Zubair says that it is Madanī. Two different views have been reported from Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās and Qatādah, first that it is Makkī, and second that

it is Madanī. However, according to the majority of commentators, it is a Makkī Sūrah, and its subject-matter itself points to its being a Makkī revelation.

Historical Background

There was a time in Makkah when although a storm of opposition had arisen in the pagan society of Quraish against the message of Islam preached by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), yet the Quraish chief had not yet lost hope that they would reach some sort of a compromise with him. Therefore, from time to time they would visit him with different proposals of compromise so that he accepted one of them and the dispute between them was brought to an end. In this connection, different traditions have been related in the *Ḥadīth*.

According to Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, the Quraish proposed to the Holy Prophet; "We shall give you so much of wealth that you will become the richest man of Makkah; we shall give you whichever woman you like in marriage; we are prepared to follow and obey you as our leader, only on the condition that you will not speak ill of our gods. If you do not agree to this, we present another proposal which is to your as well as to our advantage." When the Holy Prophet asked what it was, they said that if he would worship their gods, Lāt and 'Uzzā, for a year, they would worship his God for the same space of time. The Holy Prophet said: "Wait awhile; let me see what my Lord commands in this regard."[1] Thereupon the revelation came down: *Qul yā-ayyuhal-kāfirūn...* and: *Qul afa-ghair-Allahi...* (Az-Zumar: 64): "Say to them:

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1. This does not mean that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) regarded this proposal as worthy of consideration in any degree, and, God forbid, he had given this reply to the disbelievers in the hope that Allah might approve of it. But this, in fact, was similar to the response that is made by a subordinate officer before whom an un-reasonable demand is placed and he, knowing full well that it would not be acceptable to his government, does not reject it straightaway but says to those making the demand that he would send their request to the higher authorities and would inform them of the reply when it was received from above accordingly. In this regard the noteworthy point is that if the subordinate officer himself turns down the demand, the people continue to press it, but if he tells them that the higher authorities have turned it down, they become reconciled to its rejection.

ignorant people, do you bid me to worship others than Allah?" (Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ṭabarānī). According to another tradition from Ibn 'Abbās, the Quraish said to the Holy Prophet: "O Muḥammad, if you kiss our gods, the idols, we shall worship your God." Thereupon, this Sūrah was sent down. ('Abd bin Humaid).

Sa'īd bin Mīnā' (the freed slave of Abul-Bakhtarī) has related that Walīd bin Mughīrah, 'Ās bin Wā'il, Aswad bin al-Muṭṭalib and Umayyah bin Khalaf met the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and said to him: "O Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), let us agree that we would worship your God and you would worship our gods, and we would make you a partner in all our works. If what you have brought was better than what we possess, we would be partners in it with you, and have our share in it, and if what we possess is better than what you have brought, you would be partner in it with us and have your share of it." At this Allah sent down: *Qul ya-ayyuhal-kāfirūn*...." (Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn Hishām also has related this incident in the Sīrah).

Wahb bin Munabbih has related that the people of Quraish said to Allah's Messenger: "If you like we would enter your faith for a year and you would enter our faith for a year." ('Abd bin Humaid, Ibn Abī Ḥātim).

These traditions show that the Quraish had proposed such things to the Holy Prophet not once, in one sitting, but at different times and on different occasions, and there was need that they should be given a definite, decisive reply so that their hope that he would come to terms with them on the principle of "give and take" was frustrated for ever.

Theme and Subject-Matter

If the Sūrah is read with this background in mind, one finds that it was not revealed to preach religious tolerance as some people of today seem to think, but it was revealed in order to exonerate the Muslims from the disbelievers' religion, their rites of worship, and their gods, and to express their total disgust and unconcern with them and to tell them that Islam and kufr (unbelief) had nothing in common and there was no possibility of their being combined and mixed into one entity.

Although it was addressed in the beginning to the disbelieving Quraish in response to their proposals of compromise, yet it is not confined to them only, but having made it a part of the Qur'ān, Allah gave the Muslims the eternal teaching that they should exonerate themselves by word and deed from the creed of kufr wherever and in whatever form it be, and should declare without any reservation that they cannot make any compromise with the disbelievers in the matter of Faith. That is why this Sūrah continued to be recited when the people to whom it was addressed as a rejoinder, had died and been forgotten, and those Muslims also continued to recite it who were disbelievers at the time it was revealed, and the Muslims still recite it centuries after they have passed away, for expression of disgust with and dissociation from kufr and its rites is a perpetual demand of Faith.

As for the esteem in which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) held this Sūrah, it can be judged from the following few ahādīth.

Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) has related that on many an occasion he heard the Holy Prophet recite Sūrahs Qul Ya-ayyuhal-kāfirūn and Qul Huwa-Allahu ahad in the two rak'ahs before the Fajr obligatory Prayer and in the two rak'ahs after the Maghrib obligatory Prayer. Several traditions on this subject with a little variation in wording have been related by Imām Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Hibbān, Ibn Mardūyah from Ibn 'Umar.

Ḥaḍrat Khabbāb says: "The Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said to me: when you lie down in bed to sleep, recite *Qul yā-ayyuhal kāfirūn,* and this was the Holy Prophet's own practice also; when he lay down to sleep, he recited this Sūrah." (Bazzār, Ṭabarānī, Ibn Mardūyah).

According to Ibn 'Abbās, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said to the people: "Should I tell you the word which will protect you from polytheism? It is that you should recite *Qul yā-ayyuhal kāfirūn* when you go to bed." (Abū Ya'lā, Tabarānī).

Ḥaḍrat Anas says that the Holy Prophet said to Ḥaḍrat Mu'ādh bin Jabal; "Recite *Qul yā-ayyuhal-kāfirūn* at the time you go to bed, for this is immunity from polytheism." (Baihaqī in *Ash-Shu'ab).*

Both Fardah bin Naufal and 'Abdur Raḥmān bin Naufal have stated that their father, Naufal bin Mu'āwiyah al-Ashja'ī, said to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace): "Teach me something which I may recite at the time I go to bed." The Holy Prophet replied: "Recite *Qul yā-ayyuhal kāfirūn* to the end and then sleep, for this is immunity from polytheism." (Musnad Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhi, Nasā'i, Ibn Abī Shaibah, Ḥākim, Ibn Mardūyah, Baihaqī in *Ash-Shu'ab*). A similar request was made by Ḥadrat Jabalah bin Ḥārithah, brother of Ḥadrat Zaid bin Ḥārithah, to the Holy Prophet and to him also he gave the same reply. (Musnad Aḥmad, Ṭabarānī).



قُلْ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الْكٰفِرُوْنَ ۙ لَآ اَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُوْنَ ۙ وَلَآ اَنْتُمْ عٰبِدُوْنَ
مَآ اَعْبُدُ ۚ وَلَآ اَنَا عَابِدٌ مَّا عَبَدْتُّمْ ۙ وَلَآ اَنْتُمْ عٰبِدُوْنَ مَآ
اَعْبُدُ ۙ لَكُمْ دِيْنُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِيْنِ ۧ

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Verses: 6 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Say: "O disbelievers,[1] I do not worship those whom you worship,[2] nor are you worshippers of Him Whom I worship,[3] nor am I a worshipper of those whom you have worshipped, nor are you worshippers of Him Whom I worship.[4] For you is your religion and for me is mine."[5] 1-6

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1. A few points in this verse are particularly noteworthy:

(1) Although the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been commanded to tell this to the disbelievers plainly, the theme that follows makes it explicit that every believer should tell the disbelievers plainly what has been said in the following verses; so much so that the person who has just believed and repented of *kufr* is also bound to express similarly his disgust with and disapproval of the creed and rites of worship and gods of *kufr*. Thus,

though the first addressee of the word *qul* (say) is the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) himself, the command is not restricted to him alone but it reaches every believer through him.

(2) The word "*kāfir*" is no abuse, which might have been used for the addressees of this verse, but it implies the one who refuses to believe, or is an unbeliever. As against it the word "*mu'min*" is used for the believer. Therefore, the Holy Prophet's saying, by Allah's command, "O disbelievers, ...", in fact, means: "O you, who have refused to believe in my apostleship and in the teachings brought by me." Likewise, when a believer uses this word, it will imply those who do not believe in the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings).

(3) The word used is "O *kafirs*" and not "O *mushriks*"; therefore, the addressees are not only the *mushriks* but all those people who do not acknowledge Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) as Allah's Messenger and the teachings and guidance brought by him as the teaching and guidance given by Allah Himself, whether they be Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians or the disbelievers, polytheists and pagans of the entire world. There is no reason why this address be restricted to the pagans of Quraish or of Arabia only.

(4) To address the deniers with the word "O *kāfirs*" is just like addressing certain people as "O enemies", or "O opponents". Such an address is not, in fact, directed to the person of the addressee but it is made on the basis of their characteristic of enmity and opposition, and lasts only until they are so characterised. If one of them gives up enmity and opposition, or turns a friend and supporter, he no longer remains the addressee of this word. Likewise, the address of "O *kāfirs*" to the people also is in view of their characteristic of *kufr* and not their person. This address would be perpetual for him who continues to be a *kāfir* till death, but the one who believes will no longer be its addressee.

(5) Many scholars from among the commentators have expressed the opinion that in this Sūrah the address of "O disbelievers" applied only to a few persons of Quraish, who were visiting the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) with proposals of compromise regarding religion and about whom Allah had informed His Messenger that they would not believe. They have formed this opinion for two reasons. First, that it is followed by *Lā a'budu mā ta'budūn:* "I do not worship him or those whom you worship". They say that this does not apply to the Jews and Christians, for they worship Allah. Second, that this is also followed by: *wa lā antum 'ābidūna mā a'bud:* "Nor are you worshippers of Him Whom I worship". Their reasoning is that this statement does not apply to the people who at the revelation of this Sūrah were disbelievers but later believed. Both these

arguments are incorrect. As for these verses, their explanation that follows will show that they do not bear the meaning which has been understood from them. Here, to point out the error of the reasoning it would be enough to say that if the addressees of this Sūrah were only these people, why then does this Sūrah still continue to be recited when they are dead and gone from the world long long ago? And what was the need of making this Sūrah a part of the Qur'ān permanently so that the Muslims should continue to read it for ever afterwards?

2. This includes all those deities whom the disbelievers and the polytheists have been, and are still, worshipping everywhere in the world, whether they are the angels, the jinn, prophets, saints, spirits of the living or dead men, or the sun, the moon, stars, animals, trees, rivers, idols and imaginary gods and goddesses. One may say that the pagans of Arabia acknowledged Allah also as a Deity and the other pagans of the world also have never disacknowledged Allah as a Deity till today. As for the followers of the earlier scriptures, they also acknowledge Allah alone as the real Deity. How then can it be correct to exonerate oneself from the worship of all the deities of all those people, without exception, when Allah too is included among them? The answer is that if Allah is worshipped along with others regarding Him as a Deity among other deities, the believer in *Tauḥīd* will inevitably express his immunity from this worship, for in his sight Allah is not a Deity out of a collection of deities, but He alone is the real Deity, and the worship of the collection of deities is no worship of Allah, although worship of Allah also is included in it. The Qur'ān has clearly stated that Allah's worship is only that which does not have any tinge of the worship of another and in which man makes his worship exclusively Allah's. "And the only Command they were given, was to worship Allah, making their religion sincerely His, turning all their attention towards Him." (Al-Bayyinah: 5). This subject has been explained at many places in the Qur'ān forcefully; for example, see An-Nisā'. 145-146, Al-A'rāf :29, Az-Zumar: 2, 3, 11, 14, 15, Al-Mu'min: 14, 64-66. It has been further explained in a *Ḥadīth Qudsī* (*i.e.* Divine Word revealed through the mouth of the Prophet) in which the messenger of Allah says: "Allah says: I am Self-Sufficient of the association of every associate most of all. Whoever performed an act in which he associated another also with Me, I am free of it, and the entire act is for him who was associated." (Muslim, Musnad Aḥmad, Ibn Mājah). Thus, acknowledging Allah as one of the two, three or many gods and serving and worshipping others along with Him is, in fact, the real *kufr*, declaration of immunity from which is the object of this Sūrah.

3. The words used are: *mā a'budu*. The word *ma* in Arabic is generally used for lifeless or unintelligent things, and the word *man* for intellegent and rational beings. The question arises why has *mā a'budu* been used here instead of

man a'budu? The commentators generally give four answers to it: (1) that *mā* here is in the meaning of *man;* (2) that *mā* here is in the meaning of *alladhī* (*i.e.* which or who); (3) that in both the sentences *mā* is in the meaning of a noun of action (*masdar*) and it means: "I do not perform the kind of worship that you perform, *i.e.* polytheistic worship, and you do not perform the kind of worship that I perform, *i.e.* worship of One God;" (4) that since in the first sentence *mā ta'budūna* has been used, in the second *mā a'budu* has been used to keep the style; in both places there is only the uniformity of the word, there is no uniformity of meaning; instances of this are found elsewhere also in the Qur'ān. For example, in Al-Baqarah: 194, it has been said: "Therefore, if anyone transgresses a prohibition by attacking you, you may do likewise." Obviously, to transgress likewise in retaliation is no transgression, but the word transgression (in retaliation) has been used only for the sake of uniformity in style. In Sūrah At-Taubah: 67, it has been said: "They forgot Allah, so Allah forgot them", whereas Allah does not forget. what meant to be said is that Allah ignored them. The word *nisyān* in respect of Allah has been used corresponding to their *nisyān* (forgetfulness) only to keep the uniformity of the study.

Although all these four interpretations are correct in their own way, and there is room in Arabic to take all these meanings, yet none of these explains the real object for which *mā a'budu* has been used instead of *man a'budu*. As a matter of fact, when *man* is used for a person in Arabic, it is meant to say or ask something about his person, and when *mā* is used, it is meant to ask or express something about his characteristics and traits. This can be explained in English by the questions: who is he, and what is he?, about a person. When it is asked, who is he?, the object is to know something about his person. But when it is asked, what is he?, the object is to know whether, for example, he belongs to the army, and if so, what is his rank, or whether he belongs to some teaching organisation, and if so, whether he is a lecturer in it, or a reader, or a professor, what science or art subject he teaches, what are his qualifications, etc. Thus, if in this verse, it was said: *Lā antum 'ābidūna man a'bud*, it would mean: "You are not worshippers of the being whom I worship," and in response, the disbelievers and the polytheists could have said that they too believed in the Being of Allah and also worshipped Him. But when it was said: *Lā antum 'ābidūna mā a'bud*, it meant: "You are not worshippers of the Deity who has the attributes of the Deity whom I worship." And this is the real point on the basis of which the religion of the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) is absolutely distinguished from the religions of all kinds of disbelievers, besides the deniers of God, for his God is utterly different from the God of all of them. The God of some of them is such that He stood in need of rest on the seventh day after having created the world in six days, Who is not God of the universe but God of Israel, Who stands

in a special relationship to the people of one particular race, which is not shared by other men, Who wrestles with the Prophet Jacob and cannot throw him, Who has also a son, named Ezra. The God of some others is father of an only son, called Jesus Christ, and He causes His son to be crucified in order to make him an atonement for the sins of others. The God of some has wife and children, but begets only daughters. The God of some assumes human form and shape and living in a human body on the earth works like men. The God of some is merely an Essence, or Cause of causes, or the First Cause, Who after giving the system of the universe the initial push is sitting aside unconcerned, the universe is working by itself according to some relentless laws, and now He and man have nothing to do with each other. In short, even the unbelievers who acknowledge God do not, in fact, acknowledge the God, Who is the Creator, Master, Disposer, Administrator and Ruler of the entire universe, Who has not only set the system of the universe but is running and controlling it by Himself every moment, Who is above every defect, fault, weakness and error, Who is free from every similitude, every physical limitation, every likeness, Who is Self-Sufficient of every companion and associate, Who has no partner in His Being, attributes, powers and entitlement to worship, Who is far too Holy that He should have children, or should take some one for a son, or should have an exclusive relationship with a community or race, Who is directly related to each individual creature of His as His Providence, Sustainer and Guardian, Who hears the prayers and answers them, Who alone possesses all the powers to give life and death, to cause profit and loss, and to make and mar destinies, Who not only sustains His creatures but also guides each according to its nature and need, Who is not only our God Whom we worship but also enjoins commands and prohibitions through His Prophets and His Books, which we have to obey, before Whom we are accountable for our deeds, Who will resurrect us after death, call us to account and reward and punish us accordingly. No one in the world except for Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) and his followers, is worshipping the God with these attributes. If at all some others also are worshipping God, they are not worshipping the real and true God but the God who is their self-invented, imaginary God.

4. A section of the commentators is of the view that both these sentences are a repetition of the theme of the first two sentences and the repetition is meant to streagthen the statement in the first two sentences. But many commentators do not regard it as a repetition. They say that a new theme has been expressed in these which is different from the theme of the first two sentences. In our opinion they are correct in so far as there is no repetition in these sentences, for in these only "nor are you worshippers of Him Whom I worship" has been repeated, and this repetition also is not in the sense in which this sentence was used first. But after negating the repetition the meanings that this section of the commentators has given

of these two sentenses, are very different from each other. There is no occasion here to take up and discuss each of the meanings given by the commentators. Avoiding details we shall only discuss the meaning which is correct in our opinion.

In the first sentence, it has been said: "Nor am I a worshipper of those whom you have worshipped." Its theme is absolutely different from the theme of verse 2, in which it was said: "I do not worship those whom you worship." These two things widely differ in two aspects. First, that although there is denial, and a forceful denial; in saying that "I do not, or shall not, do such and such a thing", yet there is much greater force in saying that "I am not a doer of such and such a thing", for it means: "It is such an evil thing that nothing to say of committing it, it is not possible that I would even think of it, or have intention of doing it." Second, that the sentence "whom you worship" applies to only those gods whom the disbelievers are worshipping now. On the contrary, the sentence "whom you have worshipped" applies to all those gods whom the disbelievers and their forefathers have been worshipping in the past. Now, it is a well known fact that the gods of the polytheists and disbelievers have always been changing and their number increasing and decreasing. In different ages different groups of them have been worshipping different gods and the gods of all the disbelievers have never always been the same everywhere. Therefore, the verse means: "I exonerate myself not only from your gods of today but also from the gods of your forefathers, and I am not a person who would even think of worshipping such gods."

As for the second sentence, although its words in verse 5 are the same as in verse 3, yet its meaning at the two places is different. In verse 3, it follows this sentence: "I do not worship those whom you worship." Therefore, it means: "Nor are you worshippers of the God having the attributes of the One God Whom I worship." And in verse 5, it follows this sentence: "Nor am I a worshipper of those whom you have worshipped." Therefore, it means: "Nor does it seem you would become worshippers of the One God Whom I worship." Or, in other words, "It is not possible that I should become a worshipper of each of those gods whom you and your forefathers have worshipped, and on account of your aversion to adopting worship of One God, instead of many gods, it cannot be expected that you would desist from this wrong worship and will become worshipper of Him Whom I worship."

5. That is; "My religion is entirely distinct and separate from your religion. I am not a worshipper of your gods and you are not worshippers of my God. I cannot worship your gods and you are not prepared to worship my God, Therefore, you and I can never follow and walk one and the same path together." This is not a message of tolerance to the disbelievers, but a declaration of

immunity, disgust with and dissociation from them as long as they are disbelievers. Its object is to disappoint them absolutely and finally that in the matter of religion the party of Allah's Messenger and his followers would ever come to terms with them. This same declaration of immunity and expression of disgust has been made in the Makkī Sūrahs revealed after this Sūrah successively. Thus, in Sūrah Yūnus, it was said: "If these people deny you, say to them: I am responsible for my deeds and you are responsible for yours: you are not accountable for what I do, and I am not accountable for what you do." (v. 41). Then further on in the same Sūrah it was said: "O Prophet, say: O mankind, if you are still in doubt concerning my Faith, know that I do not worship those whom you worship beside Allah, but I worship that Allah alone, Who has the power to cause your death." (v. 104). In Sūrah Ash-Shu'arā it was said: "If they disobey you, tell them: I am not responsible for what you do." (v. 216). In Sūrah Sabā it was said: "Say to them: you will not be questioned for the errors we have committed, nor shall we be answerable for what you are doing. Say, our Lord will gather us together, then He will judge between us rightly." (vv. 25-26). In Sūrah az-Zumar: "Tell them plainly: O my people, do whatever you will, so shall I. Soon you shall come to know as to whom comes the disgraceful torment and who gets the enduring punishment." (vv. 39-40). Then the same lesson was taught in Madīnah to all the Muslims: "There is indeed an excellent example for you in Abraham and his companions when they said to their people plainly: 'We have nothing to do with you and your gods, whom you worship beside God: we have renounced you and there has arisen between us and you enmity and hatred for ever, until you believe in Allah, the One." (Al-Mumtahinah: 4). These continuous explanations of the Qur'ān do not leave any room whatever for the doubt that the verse *Lakum dinu kum wa liya din* does not mean: "You may go on following your religion and allow me to follow mine", but it is the kind of declaration made in Sūrah Az-Zumar: 14: "O Prophet, say to them: I shall serve Allah alone, making my religion sincerely His. As for you, you may serve whomever you please beside Him." (v. 14).

From this verse Imam Abu Ḥanīfah and Imām Shāfe'ī have deduced that *kufr* (unbelief), as a whole, is one community, however discordant and different from each other be the religions of the unbelievers; therefore, a Jew can inherit a Christian, and a Christian a Jew, and likewise the unbeliever of one religion can inherit the un-believer of another religion, if there exists between them a relationship by descent or marriage, or some other connection, which necessitates the passage of inheritance of one to another. On the contrary, Imām Mālik, Imām Auzā'ī and Imām Aḥmad hold the view that the followers of one religion cannot inherit the followers of another religion. They deduce this from the *Ḥadīth*, which has been related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin al-Āṣ, saying

that Allah's Messenger (upon whom be peace) said: "The people of two different communities cannot inherit each other." (Musnad Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd, Ibn Mājah, Dāraquṭnī). A *Ḥadīth* with almost the same content has been related by Tirmidhī from Ḥaḍrat Jābir, by Ibn Ḥibban from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, and by Bazzār from Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah. Dealing with this legal problem comprehensively, the well known Ḥanafī Imām, Shamsul-A'immah Sarakhsī, writes: "The unbelievers can inherit each other mutually for all those reasons for which the Muslims inherit each other mutually, and they can also inherit each other in certain other cases in which the Muslims do not inherit each other ... The fact is that Allah recognizes only two ways of life, the religion of Truth and the religion of falsehood; that is why He has declared: *Lakum dīnu-kum wa liya dīn.* And He has classified the people also into two groups, one group will go to Paradise and this consists of the believers, and the second group will go to Hell and this consists of the disbelievers collectively. And He has declared the two groups only as the potential opponents of each other: "These are the two parties who have disputed about their Lord." (Al-Ḥajj: 19). That is, one group comprises all the disbelievers collectively and they are opposed to the believers ... We do not admit that they are separate and distinct communities according to their beliefs, but as against the Muslims they all form one community. For the Muslims affirm faith in the apostleship of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) and in the Qur'ān and they refuse to affirm faith. For this very reason they have been declared to be unbelievers and are one community as opposed to the Muslims ... The *Ḥadīth, La yata-wārith ahl millatain,* points to the same thing as explained above. For the Holy Prophet has explained the word *millatain* (two communities) by his saying: *La yarithul Muslim al-kāfir wa lal-kāfir al-Muslim:* "The Muslim cannot inherit the disbeliever, nor the disbeliever can inherit the Muslim." (*Al-Mabsūṭ,* vol. 30, pp. 30-32). The *Ḥadīth* cited here by Imām Sarakhsi has been related by Bukhārī, Muslim, Nasā'ī, Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah and Abū Da'ūd on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Usāmah bin Zaid.



CX

AN-NAṢR

النَّصْر

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

CX
AN-NAṢR
النَّصْر

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from the word *nasr* occuring in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās states that this is the last Sūrah of the Qur'ān to be revealed, *i.e.* no complete Sūrah was sent down to the Holy Prophet after it.[1] (Muslim, Nasā'i, Ṭabarānī, Ibn Abī Shaibah, Ibn

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1. Different traditions show that certain verses were sent down after it, but there is a difference of opinion as to which verse was revealed last of all. Bukhārī and Muslim have related a tradition from Hadrat Barā' bin 'Āzib, saying that it was the last verse of Sūrah An-Nisā', viz *Yastaftūnaka* ... Imām Bukhārī has cited Ibn

Mardūyah). According to Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, this Sūrah was sent down on the occasion of the Farewell pilgrimage in the middle of the *Tashrīq* Days at Minā, and after it the Holy Prophet rode his she-camel and gave his well-known Sermon. (Tirmidhī, Bazzār, Baihaqī, Ibn Abī Shaibah, 'Abd bin Humaid, Abū Ya'lā, Ibn Mardūyah). Baihaqi in *Kitāb al-Ḥajj* has related from the tradition of Hadrat Sarrā' bint-Nabhān the Sermon which the Holy Prophet gave on this occasion. She says:

"At the Farewell pilgrimage I heard the Holy Prophet Say: O People, do you know what day it is? They said: Allah and His Messenger have the best knowledge. He said: This is the middle day of the Tashrīq Days. Then he said: Do you know what place it is? They said: Allah and His Messenger have the best knowledge, He said: This is Mash'aril-Harām. Then he said: I do not know, I might not meet you here again. Beware, your bloods and your honours are forbidden, until you appear before your Lord, and the questions you about your deeds. Listen: let the one who is near convey it to him who is far away. Listen: have I conveyed the message to you? Then, when we returned to Madīnah, the Holy Prophet passed away not many days after that."

'Abbās's view that the *Āyat Ribā* (*i.e.* the verse enjoining prohibition of interest) was the last verse of the Qur'ān to be revealed. This is also supported by those traditions which Imām Ahmad, Ibn Mājah and Ibn Mardūyah have related from Ḥaḍrat 'Umar but they do not explicitly state that it was the last verse. What Ḥaḍrat 'Umar meant was that it was one of the verses revealed last of all. Abū 'Ubaid in his *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān* has cited the view of Imām Zuhrī, and Ibn Jarīr in his commentary the view of Ḥaḍrat Sa'īd bin al-Musayyab, that the *Āyat Ribā* and the *Āyat Dayn* (Al-Baqarah: 282) were the last verses of the Qur'ān to be revealed. Nasā'ī Ibn Mardūyah and Ibn Jarīr have cited another view of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās saying that *Wattaqū yaum-an turja'ūna fī-hi* (Al-Baqarah: 281) was the last verse of the Qur'ān to be revealed. The view of Ibn 'Abbās that Al-Firyābī has cited in his commentary adds that this verse was sent down 81 days before the Holy Prophet's death, and according to Sa'īd bin Jubairs's view which Ibn Abī Ḥātim has cited, there was an interval of only 9 days between the revelation of this verse and the Holy Prophet's death. The *Musnad* of Imām Aḥmad and *Al-Mustadrak* of Imam Ḥākim contain a tradition from Ḥaḍrat Ubayy bin Ka'b, saying that vv. 128, 129 of Sūrah At-Taubah were the last verses of the Qur'ān to be revealed.

If both these traditions are read together, it appears that there was an interval of three months. and some days between the revelation of Sūrah An-Nasr and the Holy Prophet's death, for historically the same was the interval between the Farewell Pilgrimage and the passing away of the Holy Prophet.

Ibn 'Abbās says that when this Sūrah was revealed, the Holy Prophet said that he had been informed of his death and his time had approached. (Musnad Aḥmad, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Mardūyah). In the other traditions related from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, it has been stated that at the revelation of this Sūrah the Holy Prophet understood that he had been informed of his departure from the world. (Musnad Aḥmad, Ibn Jarīr, Ṭabarāni, Nasā'i, Ibn Abi Ḥātim, Ibn Mardūyah).

Mother of the Believers, Ḥaḍrat Umm Ḥabībah, says that when this Sūrah was revealed the Holy Prophet said that he would leave the world that year. Hearing this Ḥaḍrat Fātimah wept. Thereat he said: "From among my family you will be the first to join me." Hearing this she laughed. (Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn Mardūyah). A tradition containing almost the same theme has been related by Baihaqī from Ibn 'Abbās.

Ibn 'Abbās says: "Ḥaḍrat 'Umar used to invite me to sit in his assembly along with some of the important elderly Companions who had fought at Badr. This was not liked by some of them. They complained that they also had sons who were like the boy. Why then was he in particular invited to sit in the assembly? (Imām Bukhārī and Ibn Jarīr have pointed out that such a thing was said by Ḥaḍrat 'Abdur Rahmān bin 'Auf). Ḥaḍrat 'Umar said that the boy enjoyed the position and distinction because of his knowledge. Then one day he invited the Companions of Badr and called me also to sit with them. I understood that he had invited me to the assembly to prove his contention. During the conversation Ḥaḍrat 'Umar asked the Companions of Badr: 'What do you say about *Idhā jā'a naṣrullāhi wal-fatḥ?'* Some said: 'In it we have been enjoined to praise Allah and ask for His forgiveness when His succour comes and we attain victory.' Some others said that it implied the conquest of cities and forts. Some kept quiet. Then Hadrat 'Umar said: 'Ibn 'Abbās, do you also say the same?' I said: No. He asked: 'What then is your view?' I submitted that it implied the last hour of Allah's Messenger (upon whom be peace); in it he was informed that

when Allah's succour came and victory was attained, it would be a sign that his hour had come; therefore, he should praise Allah and ask for His forgiveness. Thereat Ḥaḍrat 'Umar said: 'I know nought but what you have said.' In another tradition there is the addition that Ḥaḍrat 'Umar said to the Companions: "How can you blame me when you yourselves have seen why I invite this boy to join the assembly?" (Bukhārī, Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhī, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Mardūyah, Baghawī, Baihaqī, Ibn al-Mundhir).

Theme and Subject-Matter

As is shown by the above traditions, Allah in this Sūrah had informed His Messenger (upon whom be peace) that when Islam attained complete victory in Arabia and the people started entering Allah's religion in great numbers, it would mean that the mission for which he had been sent to the world, had been fulfilled. Then, he was enjoined to busy himself in praising and glorifying Allah by Whose bounty he had been able to accomplish such a great task, and should implore Him to forgive whatever failings and frailties he might have shown in the performance of the service. Here, by a little consideration one can easily see the great difference that there is between a Prophet and a common worldly leader. If a worldly leader in his own lifetime is able to bring about a revolution, which was the aim and objective of his struggle, this would be an occasion for exultation for him. But here we witness quite another phenomenon. The Messenger of Allah in a brief space of 23 years revolutionized an entire nation as regards its beliefs, thoughts, customs, morals, civilization, ways of living, economy, politics and fighting ability, and raising it from ignorance and barbarism enabled it to conquer the world and become leader of nations; yet when he had accomplished this unique task, he was not enjoined to celebrate it but to glorify and praise Allah and to pray for His forgiveness, and he busied himself humbly in the implementation of that command.

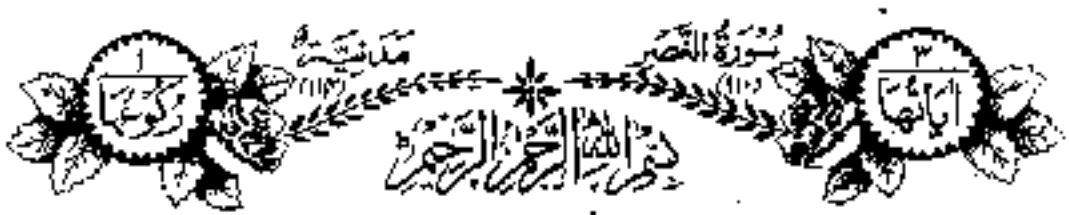
Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah says: "The Holy Messenger (upon whom be peace) often used to recite *Subhanak-Allāhumma wa bi-ḥamdika astaghfiruka wa atūbu ilaika* (according to some other traditions, *Subhān Allāhi wa bi ḥamdi-hi astaghfirullāha wa atubu ilaihi)* before his death. I asked: O Messenger of Allah, what are these words that you have started reciting now? He replied: A sign has been appointed for me so that when I see it, I should recite these words, and it is: *Idhā jā'a nasrullāhi wal-*

fathu." (Musnad Aḥmad, Muslim, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Mardūyah). In some other traditions on the same subject Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah has reported that the Holy Prophet often recited the following words in his *rukū'* and *sajdah; Subḥānak-Allahumma wa-bi hamdika, Allahumma-aghfirli.* This was the interpretation of the Qur'ān (*i.e.* of Sūrah An-Nasr) that he had made. (Bukhāri Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Jarīr).

Hadrat Umm Salamah says that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) during his last days very often recited the following words sitting and standing, going out of the house and coming back to it: *Subhān Allāhi wa-bi hamdi-hī.* I one day asked: "Why do you recite these words so often? O Messenger of Allah". He replied: I have been enjoined to do so. Then he recited this Sūrah." (Ibn Jarīr) .

According to Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, when this Sūrah was revealed, the Messenger of Allah (upon whom be peace) frequently began to recite the *words Subḥānak-Allahumma wa bi-hamdik. Allāuhumm-aghfirli, subhānaka Rabbanā wa bi-hamdika, Allahumm aghfirli, innaka anta at-Tawwāb al-Ghafūr.* (Ibn Jarīr, Musnad Ahmad. Ibn Abī Ḥātim).

Ibn 'Abbās has stated that after the revelation of this Sūrah the Holy Messenger (upon whom be peace) began to labour so intensively and devotedly hard for the Hereafter as he had never done before. (Nasā'ī, Ṭabarānī, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn Mardūyah).



إِذَا جَآءَ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ وَالْفَتْحُ ۝١ وَرَأَيْتَ النَّاسَ يَدْخُلُونَ فِي دِينِ
اللَّهِ أَفْوَاجًا ۝٢ فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَاسْتَغْفِرْهُ ۚ إِنَّهُ كَانَ
تَوَّابًا ۝٣

CX

AN-NASR

النَّصْر

Verses: 3 *Revealed at Madīnah*

In the name of the Allah, The Compassionate, the Merciful.

When Allah's help comes and victory is attained,[1] and (O Prophet,) you see that the people are entering into Allah's Religion in crowds,[2] Then glorify your Lord with His praise,[3] and pray for His forgiveness.[4] Indeed, He is ever inclined to accept repentance. 1-3

1. Victory here does not imply victory in any one particular campaign but the decisive victory after which there remained no power in the land to resist and oppose Islam, and it became evident that Islam alone would hold sway in Arabia Some commentators have taken this to imply the Conquest of Makkah. But the conquest of Makkah took place in A.H. 8, and this Sūrah was revealed towards the

end of A.H. 10, as is shown by the traditions related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar and Ḥaḍrat Sarrā' bint Nabhān, which we have cited in the Introduction. Besides, the statement of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās that this is the last Sūrah of the Qur'ān to be revealed, also goes against this commentary. For if the victory implied the conquest of Makkah, the whole of Sūrah at-Taubah was revealed after it; then it could not be the last Sūrah. There is no doubt that the conquest of Makkah was decisive in that it broke the power of the Arabian pagans, yet even after this, they showed clear signs of resistance. The battles of Ṭā'if and Hunain were fought after it, and it took Islam about two years to attain complete control over Arabia.

2. "You see ... in crowds": "When the time for the people to enter Islam in one's and two's comes to an end, and when whole tribes and people belonging to large tracts start entering it in crowds, of their own free will, and without offering battle or resistance." This happened from the beginning of A.H. 9, because of which that year has been described as the year of deputations. Deputations from every part of Arabia started coming before the Holy Messenger (upon whom be peace), entering Islam and taking the oath of allegiance to him, until when he went for the Farewell Pilgrimage to Makkah, in A.H. 10, the whole of Arabia had become Muslim, and not a single polytheist remained anywhere in the country.

3. *Ḥamd* implies praising and hallowing Allah Almighty as well as thanking and paying obeisance to Him; *tasbīḥ* means to regard Allah as pure and free from every blemish and weakness. The Holy Prophet was enjoined to do *ḥamd* and *tasbīḥ* of Allah when he witnessed this manifestation of His power. Here, *ḥamd* means that in respect of his great success he should never entertain even a tinge of the idea that it was the result of any excellence of his own, but he should attribute it to Allah's favour and mercy, thank Him alone for it, and acknowledge with the heart and tongue that praise and gratitude for the victory and success belonged to Him alone. And *tasbīḥ* means that he should regard Allah as pure and free from the limitation that exaltation of his Word stood in need of his effort and endeavour, or was dependent on it. On the contrary, his heart should be filled with the faith that the success of his effort and struggle was dependent upon Allah's support and succour. He could take this service from any of His servants He pleased, and it was His favour that He had taken it from him, and made His religion meet success through him. Besides, there is an aspect of wonder also in pronouncing the *tasbīḥ*, i.e. *Subḥān-Allah*. When a wonderful incident takes place, one exclaims *subḥān-Allah*, thereby implying that only by Allah's power such a wonderful thing had happened; otherwise no power of the world could have caused it to happen.

4. "Pray for His forgiveness": "Pray to your Lord to overlook; and pardon whatever error or weakness you might have shown inadvertently in the performance of the service that He had entrusted to you," This is the etiquette that Islam has taught to man. A man might have performed the highest possible service to Allah's Religion, might have offered countless sacrifices in its cause, and might have exerted himself extremely hard in carrying out the rites of His worship, yet he should never entertain the thought that he has fulfilled the right his Lord had on him wholly. Rather he should always think that he has not been able to fulfil what was required of him, and he should implore Allah, saying: "Lord, overlook and forgive whatever weakness I might have shown in rendering Your right, and accept the little service that I have been able to perform." When such an etiquette was taught to the Holy Messenger (upon whom be peace), none in the world conceivably has toiled and struggled so hard in the cause of Allah as he did, how can another person regard his work as superb and be involved in the misunderstanding that he has fulfilled the right Allah had imposed on him? Allah's right, in fact, is so supreme that no creature can ever fulfil and render it truly and fully.

Allah in this Command has taught Muslims an eternal lesson: "Do not regard any of your worship, devotion or religious service as something superb; even if you have expended your entire life in the cause of Allah, you should always think that you could not do all that was required of you by your Lord. Likewise, when you attain some victory, you should not regard it as a result of some excellence in yourselves but as a result of only Allah's bounty and favour. Then bowing humbly before your Lord, you should praise and glorify Him, and should repent and beg for His forgiveness instead of boasting and bragging of your success and victory."


CXI
AL-LAHAB
اللَّهَب

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

CXI

AL-LAHAB

اللهب

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from the word *Lahab* in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

Although the commentators have not disputed its being a Makki Sūrah, yet it is difficult to determine in which phase of the life at Makkah precisely it was revealed. However, in view of Abu Lahab's role and conduct against the Holy Prophet's message of Truth, it can be assumed that it must have been revealed in the period when he had transgressed all limits in his mad hostility to him, and his attitude was becoming a serious obstruction in the progress of Islam. It may well

have been revealed in the period when the Quraish had boycotted the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) together with the people of his clan and besieged them in Shi'b Abī Tālib, and Abū Lahab was the only person to join with the enemies against his own relatives. The basis of this assumption is that Abū Lahab was the Holy Prophet's uncle, and public condemnation of the uncle by the tongue of the nephew could not be proper until the extreme excesses committed by the uncle had become visible to everyone. If the Sūrah had been revealed before this in the very beginning, the people would have regarded it as morally discourteous that the nephew should so condemn the uncle.

Background

This is the only place in the Qur'ān where a person from among the enemies of Islam has been condemned by name, whereas in Makkah as well as in Madīnah, after the migration, there were many people who were in no way less inimical to Islam and the Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) than Abū Lahab. The question is, what was the special trait of the character of this person, which became the basis of his condemnation by name? To understand this it is necessary that one should understand the Arabian society of that time and the role that Abū Lahab played in it.

In ancient days since there prevailed chaos and confusion, bloodshed and plunder throughout Arabia, and the condition since centuries was that a person could have no guarantee of the protection of life, honour and property except with the help and support of his clansmen and blood relations, therefore *silah rehmī* (good treatment of the kindred) was esteemed most highly among the moral values of the Arabian society and breaking off of connections with the kindred was regarded as a great sin. Under the influence of the same Arabian tradition when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) began to preach the message of Islam, the other clans of Quraish and their chiefs resisted and opposed him tooth and nail, but the Banī Hāshim and the Banī al-Muṭṭalib (children of al-Muṭṭalib, brother of Hāshim) not only did not oppose him but continued to support him openly, although most of them had not yet believed in his Prophethood. The other clans of Quraish themselves regarded this support by the blood relations of the Holy Prophet as perfectly in accordance with the moral traditions of Arabia. That is why they never taunted the Banī Hāshim and the Banī al-Muṭṭalib

in that they had abandoned their ancestral faith by supporting a person who was preaching a new faith. They knew and believed that they could in no case hand over an individual of their clan to his enemies, and their support and aid of a clansman was perfectly natural in the sight of the Quraish and the people of Arabia.

This moral principle, which the Arabs even in the pre-Islamic days of ignorance, regarded as worthy of respect and inviolable was broken only by one man in his enmity of Islam, and that was Abū Lahab, son of 'Abdul Muṭṭalib. He was an uncle of the Holy Prophet, whose father and he were sons of the same father. In Arabia, an uncle represented the father especially when the nephew was fatherless. The uncle was expected to look after the nephew as one of his own children. But this man in his hostility to Islam and love of *kufr* trampled all the Arab traditions under foot.

The traditionists have related from Ibn 'Abbās with several chains of transmitters the tradition that when the Holy Prophet was commanded to present the message of Islam openly, and he was instructed in the Qur'ān to warn first of all his nearest kinsfolk of the punishment of God, he ascended the Mount Ṣafā one morning and called out aloud: *Yā sabāḥah* (O, the calamity of the morning!). This alarm in Arabia was raised by the person who noticed early at dawn an enemy tribe advancing against his tribe. When the Holy Messenger made this call, the people enquired as to who had made the call. They were told that it was Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). Thereat the people of all the clans of Quraish rushed out. Everyone, who could, came; he who could not, sent another one for himself. When the people had assembled, the Holy Messenger calling out each clan by name, *viz.* O Banī Hāshim, O Banī 'Abdul Muṭṭalib, O Banī Fihr, O Banī so and so, said; "If I were to tell you that behind the hill there was an enemy host ready to fall upon you, would you believe me?" The people responded with one voice, saying that they never had so far experienced a lie from him. The Holy Prophet said: "Then I warn you that you are heading for a torment." Thereupon, before anyone else could speak, Abū Lahab, the Holy Prophet's uncle, said: "May you perish! Did you summon us for this?" Another tradition adds that he picked up a stone to throw at the Holy Prophet. (Musnad Ahmad, Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī, Ibn Jarīr, and others).

According to Ibn Zaid, one day Abū Lahab asked the Holy Prophet: "If I were to accept your religion, what would I get?" The Holy Prophet replied; "You would get what the other believers would get." He said: "Is there no preference or distinction for me?" The Holy Prophet replied: "What else do you want?" Thereupon he said: "May this religion perish in which I and all other people should be equal and alike!" (Ibn Jarīr).

In Makkah Abū Lahab was the next door neighbour of the Holy Prophet. Their houses were separated by a wall. Besides him, Ḥakam bin 'As (Father of Marwān), 'Uqbah bin Abī Mu'aiṭ, 'Adi bin Ḥamrā' and Ibn al-Asdā' il-Hudhalī also were his neighbours. These people did not allow him to have peace even in his own house. Sometimes when he was performing the Prayer, they would place the goat's stomach on him; sometimes when food was being cooked in the courtyard, they would throw filth at the cooking-pot. The Holy Prophet would come out and say: "O Banī 'Abdi Manaf, what kind of neighbourliness is it?" Abī Lahab's wife, Umm Jamīl (Abū Sufyān's sister), had made it a practice to cast thorns at his door in the night so that when he or his children came out of the house at dawn, they should run thorns in the foot. (Baihaqī, Ibn Abī Hātim. Ibn Jarīr, Ibn 'Asākir, Ibn Hishām).

Before the proclamation of Prophethood, two of the Holy Prophet's daughters were married to two of Abū Lahab's sons, 'Utbah and 'Utaibah. After his call when the Holy Prophet began to invite the people to Islam, Abū Lahab said to both his sons: "I would forbid myself seeing and meeting you until you divorced the daughters of Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings)." So, both of them divorced their wives. 'Utaibah in particular became so nasty in his spitefulness that one day he came before the Holy Prophet and said: "I repudiate *An-najmi idha hawā* and *Alladhī danā fatadallā"*, and then he spat at him, but his spittal did not fall on him. The Holy Prophet prayed: "O God, subject him to the power of a dog from among Your dogs" Afterwards, 'Utaibah accompanied his father in his journey to Syria. During the journey the caravan halted at a place which, according to local people, was visited by wild beasts at night. Abū Lahab told his companions, the Quraish: "Make full arrangements for the protection of my son, for I fear the curse invoked by Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) on him." Accordingly, the people made their camels sit

all around 'Utaibah and went to sleep. At night a tiger came which crossed the circle of the camels and devoured 'Utaibah tearing him to pieces. (Ibn 'Abdul Barr: *Al-Isti'āb;* Ibn Hajar: *Al-Iṣābah;* Abū Nu'aim al-Isfahānī: *Dalā'il an-Nubuwwat;* As-Suhaili: *Rauḍ al-Unuf.*. Here, there is a difference of opinion. Some reporters say that the divorce took place after the Holy Prophet's proclamation of Prophethood and some say that it took place after the revelation of *Tabbat yadā' Abī Lahab.* There is also a difference of opinion about whether Abū Lahab's this son was 'Utbah or 'Utaibah. But this much is confirmed that after the conquest of Makkah, 'Utbah embraced Islam and took the oath of allegiance at the Holy Prophet's hand. Therefore, the correct view is that it was 'Utaibah).

Abū Lahab's wickedness can be judged from the fact that when after the death of the Holy Prophet's son Ḥaḍrat Qāsim, his second son, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah, also died, this man instead of condoling with his nephew in his bereavement, hastened to the Quraish chiefs joyfully to give them the news that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) had become childless that night. This we have already related in the commentary of Sūrah Al-Kauthar.

Wherever the Holy Prophet went to preach his message of Islam, this man followed him and forbade the people to listen to him. Rabī'ah bin 'Abbās ad-Dilī has related: "I was a young boy when I accompanied my father to the fare of Dhul-Majāz. There I saw the Holy Messenger (may peace be upon him) who was exhorting the people, saying: 'O people, say: there is no deity but Allah, you will attain success.' Following behind him I saw a man, who was telling the people:

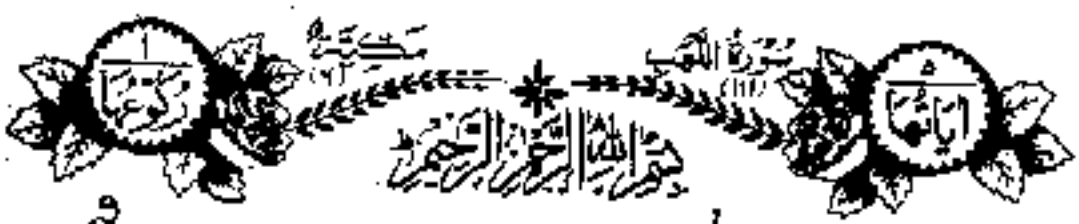
'This fellow is a liar: he has gone astray from his ancestral faith.' I asked: who is he? The people replied: He is his uncle, Abū Lahab." (Musnad Ahmad, Baihaqī). Another tradition from Ḥaḍrat Rabī'ah is to the effect; "I saw that the Holy Prophet went to the halting place of each tribe and said: O children of so and so , I have been appointed Allah's Messenger to you. I exhort you to worship only Allah and to associate none with Him. So, affirm faith in me and join me so that I may fulfil the mission for which I have been sent.' Following close behind him there was a man who was saying: 'O children of so and so, he is leading you astray from Lāt and 'Uzzā and inviting you to the religion of error and innovation which he has brought. Do not at all

listen to what he says and do not follow him.' I asked my father: who is he? He replied: He is his uncle, Abū Lahab." (Musnad Aḥmad, Ṭabarānī). Ṭāriq bin 'Abdullah al-Muḥāribī's tradition is similar. He says: "I saw in the fare of Dhul Majāz that the Holy Messenger (upon whom be peace) was exhorting the people, saying: 'O people, say *La ilāha' ill-Allāh,* you will attain success', and behind him there was a man who was casting stones at him, until his heels bled, and he was telling the people: 'Do not listen to him, he is a liar.' I asked the people who he was. They said he was his uncle, Abū Lahab." (Tirmidhī).

In the 7th year of Prophethood, when all the clans of Quraish boycotted the Banī Hāshim and the Banī al-Muṭṭalib socially and economically, and both these clans remaining steadfast to the Holy Prophet's support, were besieged in Shi'b Abī Ṭālib, Abū Lahab was the only person, who sided with the disbelieving Quraish against his own clan. This boycott continued for three years, so much so that the Banī Hāshim and the Banī al-Muṭṭalib began to starve. This, however, did not move Abū Lahab. When a trade caravan came to Makkah and a besieged person from Shi'b Abī Tālib approached it to buy some articles of food, Abū Lahab would shout out to the merchants to demand a forbidding price, telling them that he would make up for any loss that they incurred. Thus, they would demand exorbitant rates and the poor customer had to return empty handed to his starving children. Then Abū Lahab would purchase the same articles from them at the market rates. (Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Hishām).

On account of these very misdeeds this man was condemned in this Sūrah by name, and there was a special need for it. When the Holy Prophet's own uncle followed and opposed him before the Arabs who came for Ḥajj from outside Makkah, or gathered together in the fares held at different places, they regarded it as against the established traditions of Arabia that an uncle should run down his nephew without a reason, should pelt stones at him and bring false accusations against him publicly. They were, therefore, influenced by what Abū Lahab said and were involved in doubt about the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). But when this Sūrah was revealed, and Abū Lahab, filled with rage; started uttering nonsense, the people realized that what he said in opposition to the Holy Prophet was not at all reliable, for he said all that in his mad hostility to his nephew.

Besides, when his uncle was condemned by name, the people's expectation that the Holy Messenger (upon whom by peace) could treat some relative leniently in the matter of religion was frustrated for ever. When the Holy Messenger's own uncle was taken to task publicly the people understood that there was no room for preference or partiality in their faith. A non-relative could become a near and dear one if he believed, and a near-relation a non-relative if he disbelieved. Thus, there is no place for the ties of blood in religion.



تَبَّتْ يَدَآ اَبِيْ لَهَبٍ وَّتَبَّ ۝١ مَآ اَغْنٰى عَنْهُ مَالُهٗ وَمَا كَسَبَ ۝٢ سَيَصْلٰى
نَارًا ذَاتَ لَهَبٍ ۝٣ وَّامْرَاَتُهٗ ۭ حَمَّالَةَ الْحَطَبِ ۝٤ فِيْ جِيْدِهَا حَبْلٌ مِّنْ مَّسَدٍ ۝٥

CXI

AL-LAHAB

اللَّهَب

Verses: 5 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Broken were the hands of Abū Lahab and he was doomed to utter failure.[1] His wealth and whatever he earned did not avail him anything.[2] Certainly he shall be cast into a blazing Fire, and (along with him) his wife, too,[3] the bearer of slander.[4] Round her neck will be a rope of palm-fibre.[5] 1-5

1. His real name was 'Abd al-'Uzzā, and he was called Abū Lahab on account of his glowing, ruddy complexion. *Lahab* means the flame of fire, and *Abū Lahab* the one with a flaming, fiery face. His being mentioned here by his nickname (Kunyat), instead of his real name, has several reasons. First, that he was better known by his nickname than by his real name; second, that the Qur'ān did not approve that he should be mentioned by his polytheistic name 'Abd al-

'Uzzā (slave of 'Uzza); third, that his *kunyat* goes well with the fate that has been described of him in this Sūrah.

Some commentators have translated *tabbat yadā' Abī Lahab* to mean: "May the hands of Abū Lahab be broken", and *tabba* to mean: "may he perish" or "he perished". But this, in fact, was not a curse which was invoked on him, but a prophecy in which an event taking place in the future, has been described in the past tense, to suggest that its occurrence in the future is certain and inevitable.

In actual fact, at last the same thing happened as had been foretold in this Sūrah a few years earlier. Breaking of the hands obviously does not imply breaking of the physical hands, but a person's utterly failing in his aim and object for which he has exerted his utmost. And Abū Lahab indeed had exerted his utmost to defeat and frustrate the message of Islam presented by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). But hardly seven or eight years after the revelation of this Sūrah most of the big chiefs of Quraish, who were a party with Abū Lahab in his hostility to Islam, were killed in the Battle of Badr. When the news of the defeat reached Makkah, he was so shocked that he could not survive for more than seven days. His death occurred in a pitiable state. He became afflicted with malignant pustule and the people of his house left him to himself, fearing contagion. No one came near his body for three days after his death, until the body decomposed and began to stink. At last, when the people began to taunt his sons, according to one tradition, they hired some negroes, who lifted his body and buried it. According to another tradition, they got a pit dug out and threw his body into it by pushing it with wood, and covered it up with earth and stones. His utter failure became manifest when the religion which he had tried his utmost to impede and thwart, was accepted by his own children. First of all, his daughter, Darrah, migrated from Makkah to Madīnah and embraced Islam; then on the conquest of Makkah, both his sons, 'Utabh and Mu'attab, came before the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) through the mediation of Ḥaḍrat 'Abbās, believed and took oath of allegiance to him.

2. Abū Lahab was a stingy, materialistic man. Ibn Jarir has stated that once in the pre-Islamic days he was accused of having stolen two golden deer from the treasury of the Ka'bah. Though later the deer were recovered from another person, the fact that he was accused of stealing indicates the opinion the people of Makkah held of him. About his riches Qāḍī Rashīd bin Zubair writes in his *Adh-Dhakha'ir wat-Tuḥaf*: He was one of the four richest men of the Quraish, who owned one *qinṭār* (about 260 oz) of gold each. His love of wealth can be judged from the fact that when on the occasion of the battle of Badr the fate of his religion was going to be decided for ever, and all the Quraish chiefs had personally gone to fight, he sent 'Āṣ bin Hishām to fight on his own behalf, telling him: This is in lieu

of the debt of four thousand *dirhams* that you owe to me. Thus, he contrived a plan to realize his debt, for 'Āṣ had become bankrupt and there was no hope of the recovery of the debt from him.

Some commentators have taken *ma kasaba* in the meaning of the earning, *i.e.* the benefits that accrued to him from his wealth were his *kasab* (earning), and some other commentators have taken it to imply children, for the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has said that a man's son also is his *kasab* (earning). (Abū Da'ūd, Ibn Abī Ḥātim). Both these meanings fully correspond to the fate met by Abū Lahab. For when he was afflicted with the malignant pustule, his wealth availed him nothing, and his children also left him alone to die a miserable, wretched death. They did not even bury him honourably. Thus, within a few years the people witnessed how the prophecy which had been made in this Sūrah about Abū Lahab was literally fulfilled.

3. Her name was Arwā' and her nickname (*kunyat*) Umm Jamīl. She was sister of Abū Sufyān and was no less bitter than her husband, Abū Lahab, in her enmity to the Holy Messenger (upon whom be peace) Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr's daughter, Ḥaḍrat Asmā', has related that when this Sūrah was revealed, and Umm Jamīl heard it, she was filled with rage and went out in search of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). She carried a handful of stones and she was crying some verses of her own, satirizing the Holy Prophet. She came to the Ka'bah, where the Holy Prophet was sitting with Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr. The latter said: "O Messenger of Allah, there she comes and I fear lest she should utter something derogatory to you." The Holy Prophet replied: "She will not see me." The same thing happened. She could not see the Holy Prophet although he was there. She said to Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr: "I hear that your Companion has satirized me." Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr replied: "No, by the Lord of this house, he has not satirized you." Hearing this she went off. (Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn Hishām; Bazzār has related an incident on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās also, which closely resembles this). What Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr meant was that she had not been satirized by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), but by Allah Himself.

4. The words in the original are *ḥammālat al-ḥaṭab*, which literally mean: "carrier of the wood". The commentators have given several meanings of it. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbas, Ibn Zaid, Ḍaḥḥāk and Rabī' bin Anas say: She used to strew thorns at the Holy Prophet's door in the night; therefore, she has been described as carrier of the wood. Qatādah, 'Ikrimah, Ḥasan Baṣrī, Mujāhid and Sufyan Thaurī say: She used to carry evil tales and slander from one person to another in order to create hatred between them; therefore, she has been called the bearer of wood idiomatically. Sa'īd bin Jubair says: The one who is loading himself with the burden of sin, is described idiomatically in Arabic as: *Fulān-un*

yahtatibu 'alā ẓahri-hī (so and so is loading wood on his back); therefore, *ḥammālat al-ḥaṭab* means: The one who carries the burden of sin. Another meaning also which the commentators have given is: she will do this in the Hereafter, *i.e.* she will bring and supply wood to the fire in which Abū Lahab would be burning.

5. The word used for her neck is *jīd*, which in Arabic means a neck decorated with an ornament. Sa'īd bin al-Musayyab, Ḥasan Baṣrī and Qatadah say that she wore a valuable necklace and used to say: "By Lāt and 'Uzzā, I will sell away this necklace and expend the price to satisfy my enmity against Muḥammad (Allah's peace and blessings be upon him)." That is why the word *jīd* has been used here ironically, thereby implying that in Hell she would have a rope of palm-fibre round her neck instead of that necklace upon which she prides herself so arrogantly. Another example of this ironical style is found at several places in the Qur'ān in the sentence: *Bashshir-hum bi-'adhāb-in alīm:* "Give them the good news of a painful torment."

The words *ḥabl-um-min-masad* have been used for the rope which will be put round her neck, *i.e.* it will be a rope of the *masad* kind. Different meanings of this have been given by the lexicographers and commentators. According to some, *masad* means a tightly twisted rope; others say that *masad* is the rope made from palm-fibre; still others say that it means the rope made from rush, or camel-skin, or camel-hair. Still another view is that it implies a cable made by twisted iron strands together.


CXII
AL-IKHLĀṢ
الإخلاص

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

CXII
AL-IKHLĀṢ
الإخلاص

INTRODUCTION

Name

Al-Ikhlāṣ is not merely the name of this Sūrah but also the title of its contents, for it deals exclusively with *Tauḥīd*. The other Sūrah of the Qur'ān generally have been designated after a word occurring in them, but in this Sūrah the word *Ikhlāṣ* has occurred nowhere. It has been given this name in view of its meaning and subject matter. Whoever understands it and believes in its teaching, will get rid of *shirk* (polytheism) completely.

Period of Revelation

Whether it is a Makkī or a Madanī Sūrah is disputed, and the difference of opinion has been caused by the traditions which have been related concerning the occasion of its revelation. We give them below *ad seriatum:*

(1) Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd has reported that the Quraish said to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace): "Tell us of the ancestry[1] of your Lord." Thereupon this Sūrah was sent down (Ṭabarānī).

(2) Abul-'Āliyah has related on the authority of Hadrat Ubayy bin Ka'b that the polytheists said to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace): "Tell us of your Lord's ancestry." Thereupon Allah sent down this Sūrah. (Musnad Aḥmad, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn Jarīr, Tirmidhī, Bukhāri in *At-Tārikh*, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ḥātim, Baihaqi). Tirmidhi has related a tradition on the same theme from Abul-'Āliyah, which does not contain any reference to Ḥaḍrat Ubayy bin Ka'b, and has declared it to be more authentic.

(3) Ḥaḍrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah has stated that a beduin (according to other traditions, some people) said to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace); "Tell us of your Lord's ancestry." Thereupon Allah sent down this Sūrah. (Abū Ya'lā, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ṭabarānī in *Al-Ausaṭ*, Baihaqī. Abū Nu'aim in *Al-Ḥilyah*).

(4) 'Ikrimah has related a tradition from Ibn 'Abbās, saying that a group of the Jews, including Ka'b bin Ashraf, Ḥuyayy bin Akhtab and others, came before the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and said: "O Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), tell us of the attributes of your Lord, Who has sent you as a Prophet." Thereupon Allah sent down this Sūrah. (Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn 'Adī, Baihaqi in *Al-Asmā' was-Ṣifāt*).

In addition to these, some other traditions also have been cited by Ibn Taimiyyah in his commentary of Sūrah Al-Ikhlāṣ, which are as follows:

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1. The custom among the Arabs was that whenever they wanted to be introduced to a stranger they would say: *Insibhu lanā*: "Tell us of his ancestry" for among them the foremost thing required to be known was the lineage of the stranger and the tribe he belonged to. That is why when they wanted to ask the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) who his Lord was and what were his attributes they said: *Inṣib lanā Rabbuka*: "Tell us of your Lord's lineage."

(5) Ḥaḍrat Anas has stated that some Jews of Khaiber came before the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and they said: "O Abul-Qāsim, Allah created the angels from light, Adam from rotten clay, Iblīs from the flame of fire, the sky from smoke, and the earth from the foam of water. Now tell us about your Lord (of what He is made)." The Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) did not give any reply to this question. Then Gabriel came and he said: "O Muḥammad, say to them: *Huwa Allahu aḥad.*"

(6) 'Āmir bin aṭ-Ṭufail said to the Holy Prophet: "O Muḥammad, what do you call us to?" The Holy Prophet replied: "To Allah." 'Āmir said: "Then, tell us of what He is made, whether of gold, silver, or iron?" Thereupon this Sūrah was sent down.

(7) Ḍaḥḥāk, Qatādah and Muqātil have stated that some Jewish rabbis came before the Holy Prophet, and they said: "O Muḥammad, tell us what is your Lord like, so that we may believe in you. Allah in the Torah has sent down His description. Kindly tell us of what He is made, what is His sex, whether He is made of gold, copper, brass, iron, or silver, and whether He eats and drinks. Also tell us from whom He has inherited the world, and who will inherit it after Him." Thereupon Allah sent down this Sūrah.

(8) Ibn 'Abbās has reported that a deputation of the Christians of Najrān along with seven priests visited the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), and they said: "O Muḥammad, tell us what is your Lord like and of what substance He is made." The Holy Prophet replied: "My Lord is not made from any substance: He is unique and exalted above everything." Thereupon Allah sent down this Sūrah.

These traditions show that different people on different occasions had questioned the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) about the essence and nature of the God to Whose service and worship he invited the people, and on every occasion he recited by Allah's command this very Sūrah in response. First of all, the pagans of Quraish asked him this question in Makkah, and in reply this Sūrah was sent down. Then, at Madīnah, sometimes the Christians, and sometime the other people of Arabia, asked him questions of this nature, and every time Allah

inspired him to recite this very Sūrah in answer to them. In each of these traditions, it has been said that this Sūrah was revealed on this or that occasion. From this one should not form the impression that all these traditions are mutually contradictory. The fact is that whenever there existed with the Holy Prophet a verse or a Sūrah previously revealed in respect of a particular question or matter, and later the same question was presented before him, Allah inspired him to recite the same verse or Sūrah to the people as it contained the answer to their question. The reporters of *Ḥadīth* describe the same thing, saying: When such and such a question or matter was presented before the Holy Prophet, such and such a verse or Sūrah was revealed. This has also been described as repetition of revelation, *i.e.* the revelation of a verse or Sūrah several times.

Thus, the fact is that this Sūrah is Makkī, rather in view of its subject-matter a Sūrah revealed in the earliest period at Makkah, when detailed verses of the Qur'ān dealing with the essence and attributes of Allah Almighty had not yet been revealed, and the people hearing the Holy Prophet's invitation to Allah, wanted to know what was his Lord like to whose worship and service he was calling them. Another proof of this Sūrah's being one of the earliest Sūrahs to be revealed is that when in Makkah Umayyah bin Khalaf, the master of Ḥaḍrat Bilāl, made him lie down on burning sand and placed a heavy stone on his chest, Bilāl used to cry *"Ahad, Ahad!"* This word was derived from this very Sūrah.

Theme and Subject-Matter

A little consideration of the traditions regarding the occasion of the revelation of this Sūrah, shows what were the religious concepts of the world at the time the Holy Prophet began to preach the message of *Tauḥīd*. The idolatrous polytheists were worshipping gods made of wood, stone, gold, silver and other substances. These gods had a form, shape and body. The gods and goddesses were descended from each other. No goddess was without a husband and no god without a wife. They stood in need of food and drink and their devotees arranged these for them. A large number of the polytheists believed that God assumed human form and there were some people who descended from Him. Although the Christians claimed to believe in One God, yet their God also had at least a son, and besides the Father and Son, the Holy Ghost also had the honour of being an associate in Godhead; so much so that

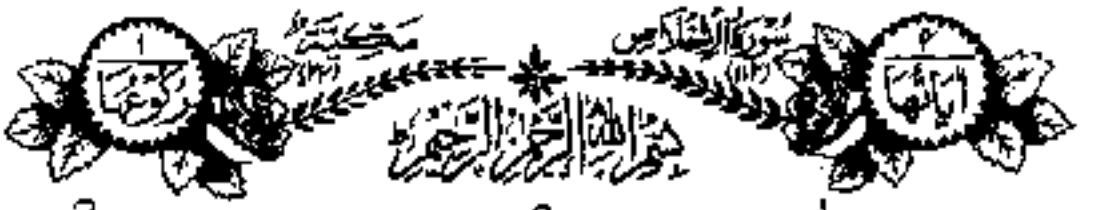
God had a mother and a mother-in-law too. The Jews also claimed to believe in One God, but their God too was not without physical, material and other human qualities and characteristics. He went for a stroll, appeared in human form, wrestled with a servant of His, and was father of a son, Ezra. Besides these religious communities, the Zoroastrians were fire worshippers, and the Sabeans star-worhippers. Under such conditions when the people were invited to believe in Allah, the One, Who had no associate, it was inevitable that questions arose in the minds as to what kind of a God it was, Who was One and Only Lord and invitation to believe in Whom was being given at the expense of all other gods and deities. It is a miracle of the Qur'ān that in a few words briefly it answered all the questions and presented such a clear concept of the Being of Allah as destroyed all polytheistic concepts, without leaving any room for the ascription of any of the human qualities to His Being.

Merit and Importance

That is why the Holy Messenger of Allah (upon whom be peace) held this Sūrah in great esteem, and he made the Muslims realize its importance in different ways so that they recited it frequently and disseminated it among the people. For it states the foremost and fundamental doctrine of Islam (*viz. Tauḥīd*) in four such brief sentences as are immediately on human memory and can be read and recited easily. There are a great number of the traditions of *Ḥadīth* which show that the Holy Prophet on different occasions and in different ways told the people that this Sūrah is equivalent to one-third of the Qur'ān. Several *aḥadīth* on this subject have been related in Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'i, Ṭirmidhī, Ibn Mājah, Musnad Aḥmad, Ṭabarani and other books, on the authority of Abū Sa'īd Khudrī, Abū Hurairah, Abū Ayyūb Anṣārī, Abū ad-Dardā', Mu'ādh bin Jabal, Jābir bin 'Abdullah, Ubayy bin Ka'b, Umm Kulthūm bint 'Uqbah bin Abi Mu'ait, Ibn 'Umar, Ibn Mas'ūd, Qatādah bin an-Nu'mān, Anas bin Mālik, and Abū Mas'ūd (may Allah be pleased with all of them). The commentators have given many explanations of the Holy Prophet's this saying. But in our opinion it simply means that the religion presented by the Qur'ān is based on three doctrines: *Tauḥīd*, Apostleship and the Hereafter. This Sūrah teaches *Tauḥīd*, pure and undefiled. Therefore, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) regarded it as equal to one-third of the Qur'ān.

A Tradition on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah has been related in Bukhārī, Muslim and other collections of the *Aḥādīth*, saying that the Holy Prophet sent a man as leader of an expedition. During the journey he concluded his recitation of the Qur'ān in every Prayer with *Qul Huwa-Allahu aḥad*. On their return his companions mentioned this before the Holy Prophet. He said: Ask him why he did so. When the man was asked, he replied: In this Sūrah the attributes of the Merciful God have been stated; therefore, I love to recite it again and again. When the Holy Prophet heard this reply, he said to the people: "Inform him that Allah holds him in great love and esteem."

A similar incident has been related in Bukhārī, on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Anas, He says: "A man from among the Anṣār led the Prayers in the Qubā Mosque. His practice was that in every *rak'ah* he first recited *Qul Huwa Allah* and then would join another Sūrah to it. The people objected to it and said to him: "Don't you think *Qul Huwa Allah* is by itself enough? Why do you join another Sūrah to it? You should either recite only this Sūrah, or should leave it and recite some other Sūrah. He said: I cannot leave it, I would rather give up leadership in the Prayer, if you so desired." The people did not approve that another man be appointed leader instead of him. At last, the matter was brought before the Holy Prophet. He asked the man. "What prevents you from conceding what your companions desire? What makes you recite this particular Sūrah in every *rak'ah?*" The man submitted: "I have great love for it." The Holy Prophet remarked: "Your love for this Sūrah has earned you entry into Paradise."



قُلْ هُوَ اللّٰهُ اَحَدٌ ۝١ اَللّٰهُ الصَّمَدُ ۝٢ لَمْ يَلِدْ ۙ وَلَمْ يُوْلَدْ ۝٣ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَّهٗ كُفُوًا اَحَدٌ ۝٤

CXII
AL-IKHLĀṢ
الإخلاص

Verses: 4 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Say:[1] "He is Allah,[2] the One and Only.[3] Allah is Independent of all and all are dependent on Him.[4] Neither has He an offspring nor is He the offspring of anyone;[5] and none is equal with Him in rank."[6] 1-4

1. The first addressee of this Command is the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) himself for it was he who was asked: "Who is your Lord and what is He like? Again it was he who was commanded to answer the question in the following words. But after him every believer is its addressee. He too should say what the Holy Prophet had been commanded to say.

2. That is, "My Lord to Whom you want to be introduced is none but Allah." This is the first answer to the questions, and it means: "I have not introduced a new lord who I want you to worship beside all other gods, but it is the same Being you know by the name of Allah." "Allah" was not an unfamiliar word for the Arabs. They had been using this very word for the Creator of the universe since the earliest times, and they did not apply this word to any of their other gods. For the other gods they used the word *ilāh*. Then their beliefs about Allah had become fully manifest at the time Abraha invaded Makkah. At that time there existed 360 idols of gods (*ilāhs*) in and around the Ka'bah, but the polytheists forsaking all of them had invoked only Allah for protection. In other words, they knew in their hearts of hearts that no *ilāh* could help them on that critical occasion except Allah. The Ka'bah also was called *Bait-Allah* by them and not *Bait-ilāhs* after their self-made gods. At many places in the Qur'an the polytheistic Arabian belief about Allah has been expressed, thus:

In Sūrah Az-Zukhruf it has been said: "If you ask them who created them, they will surely say, 'Allah'." (v. 87)

In Sūrah Al-'Ankabūt: "If you ask them, 'Who has created the earth and the heavens and Who has subjected the moon and the sun?' they will surely say: Allah ... And if you ask them, 'Who sent down rainwater from the sky and thereby raised the dead earth back to life?' they will surely say: 'Allah'." (vv. 61-63)

In Sūrah Al-Mu'minūn: "Say to them, 'Tell me, if you know, whose is the earth and all who dwell in it?' They will say, 'Allah's'... say to them, 'To Whom do the seven heavens and the Glorious Throne belong?' They will say, 'To Allah' ... Say to them, 'Tell me, if you know, Whose is the sovereignty over everything? And Who is that Being Who gives protection while none else can give protection against Him?' They will surely reply, 'This power bolongs to Allah'." (vv. 84-89).

In Sūrah Yūnus: "Ask them: Who provides for you from the heavens and the earth? Who has power over the faculties of hearing and sight? Who brings forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living? Who directs the system of the universe? They will surely reply, 'Allah'." (v. 31)

Again in Sūrah Yūnus at another place: "When you set sails in ships, rejoicing over a fair breeze, then all of a sudden a strong wind begins to rage against the passengers and waves begin to surge upon them from every side and they realize that they have been encircled by the tempest. At that time they pray to Allah with sincere faith, saying: 'If thou deliverest us from this peril, we will become Thy grateful servants.' But when He delivers them, the same people begin to rebel on the earth against the Truth." (vv. 22-23)

The same thing has been reiterated in Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl, thus: "When a misfortune befalls you on the sea, all of those whom you invoke for help fail you but He (is there to help you), yet when He brings you safe to land, you turn away from Him." (v. 67)

Keeping these verses in view, let us consider that when the people asked: "Who is your Lord and what is He like to Whose service and worship you call us?" the answer given was "*Huwa Allah*: He is Allah." This answer by itself gives the meaning: "My Lord is He Whom you yourself acknowledge as your own as well as the whole world's Creator, its Master, Sustainer and Administrator, and He Whom you invoke for help at critical times beside all other deities, and I invite you to His service alone." This answer comprehends all the perfect and excellent attributes of Allah. Therefore, it is not at all conceivable that the Creator of the universe, its Administrator and Disposer of its affairs, Sustainer of all the creatures living in it, and the Helper of the servants in times of hardship, would not be living, hearing and seeing, that He would not be an All-Powerful, All-Knowing, All-Wise, All-Merciful and All-Kind Sovereign.

3. The scholars have explained the sentence *Huwa-Allah Aḥad* syntactically, but in our opinion its explanation which perfectly corresponds to the context is that *Huwa* is the subject and *Allahu* its predicate, and *Aḥad-un* its second predicate. According to this parsing the sentence means: "He (about Whom you are questioning me) is Allah, is One and only one. Another meaning also can be, and according to language rules it is not wrong either: "He is Allah, the One."

Here, the first thing to be understood is the unusual use of *aḥad* in this sentence. Usually this word is either used in the possessive case as *yaum ul-ahad* (first day of the week), or to indicate total negative as *Mā jā'a-nī aḥad-un* (No one has come to me), or in common questions like *Hal 'indaka aḥad-un* (Is there anyone with you?), or in conditional clauses like *Inja'a-ka aḥad-un* (If someone comes to you), or in counting as *aḥad, ithnān, aḥad'ashar* (one, two, eleven). Apart from these uses, there is no precedent in the pre-Qur'ānic Arabic that the mere word *aḥad* might have been used as an adjective for a person or thing. After the revelation of the Qur'ān this word has been used only for the Being of Allah, and for no one else. This extraordinary use by itself shows that being single, unique and matchless is a fundamental attribute of Allah; no one else in the world is qualified with this quality: He is One, He has no equal.

Then, keeping in view the questions that the polytheists and the followers of earlier scriptures asked the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) about his Lord, let us see how they were answered with *aḥad-un* after *Huwa-Allah*.

First, it means: "He alone is the Sustainer: no one else has any share or part in providence. and since He alone can be the *Ilāh* (Deity) Who is Master and Sustainer, therefore, no one else is His associate in Divinity either."

Socondly, it also means "He alone is the Creator of the universe: no one else is His associate in this work of creation. He alone is the Master of the universe, the Disposer and Administrator of its system, the Sustainer of His creatures, Helper and Rescuer in times of hardship; no one else has any share or part whatever in the works of Godhead, which as you yourselves acknowledge, are works of Allah.

Thirdly since they had also asked the questions: of what is your Lord made? what is His ancestry? What is his sex? From whom has He inherited the world and who will inherit it after Him? —all these questions have been answered with one word *aḥad* for Allah. It means: (1) He alone has been, and will be, God for ever; neither was there a God before Him, nor will there be any after Him; (2) there is no race of gods to which He may belong as a member: He is God, one and single, and none is homogeneous with Him; (3) His being is not merely One (*wāhid*) but *ahad*, in which there is no tinge of plurality in any way: He is not a compound being, which may be analysable or divisible, which may have a form and shape, which may be residing somewhere, or may contain or include something, which may have a colour, which may have some limbs, which may have a direction, and which may be variable or changeable in any way. Free from every kind of plurality He alone is a Being Who is *Aḥad* in every aspect. (Here, one should fully understand that the word *wāhid* is used in Arabic just like the word "one" in English. A collection consisting of great pluralities is collectively called *wāhid* or one, as one man, one nation, one country, one world, even one universe, and every separate part of a collection is also called one. But the word *Ahad* is not used for anyone except Allah. That is why wherever in the Qur'ān the word *wāhid* has been used for Allah, He has been called *Ilāh waḥid* (one Deity), or *Allah-ul-Wāḥid-al-Qahhār*. (One Allah Who is Omnipotent), and nowhere just *wāḥid*, for this word is also used for the things which contain pluralities of different kinds in their being. On the contrary, for Allah and only for Allah the word *Aḥad* has been used absolutely, for He alone is the Being Who exists without any plurality in any way, Whose Oneness is perfect in every way.

4. The word used in the original is *samad* of which the root is *ṣmd*. A look at the derivatives in Arabic from this root will show how comprehensive and vast this word is in meaning. (Lexical discussion of the meanings of the derivatives is omitted).

On the basis of these lexical meanings the explanations of the word *as-Samad* in the verse *Allah-us-Ṣamad,* which have been reported from the Companions, their immediate successors and the later scholars are given below:

Ḥaḍrat 'Alī. 'Ikrimah and Ka'b Aḥbār: "*Ṣamad* is he who has no superior."

Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās and Abū Wā'il Shaqīq bin Salamah: "The chieftain whose chieftancy is perfect and of the most extraordinary kind."

Another view of Ibn 'Abbās: "*Ṣamad* is he to whom the people turn when afflicted with a calamity." Still another view of his: "The chieftain who in his chieftaincy, in his nobility and glory, in his clemency and forbearance, in his knowledge and wisdom is perfect."

Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah: "He who is independent of all and all others are dependent upon him."

Other views of 'Ikrimah: "He from whom nothing ever has come out, nor normally comes out:" "Who neither eats nor drinks." Views containing the same meaning have been related from Sha'bī and Muhammad bin Ka'b al-Kurazī also.

Suddi: "the one to whom the people turn for obtaining the things they need and for help in hardships."

Sa'īd bin Jubair: "He who is perfect in all his attributes and works."

Rabī' bin Jubair: "He who is immune form every calamity."

Muqātil bin Ḥayyān: "He who is faultless."

Ibn Kaysān: "He who is exclusive in his attributes."

Ḥasan Baṣrī and Qatādah: "He who is ever-living and immortal."

Similar views have been related from Mujāhid, Ma'mar and Murrat al-Ḥamadānī also.

Murrat al-Ḥamadānī's another view is : "he who decides whatever he wills and does whatever he wills, without there being anyone to revise his judgement and decision."

Ibrāhīm Nakha'ī: "He to whom the people turn for fulfilment of their desires."

Abū Bakr al-Anbārī "There is no difference of opinion among the lexicographers that *ṣamad* is the chief who has no superior and to whom the people turn for fulfilment of their desires and needs and in connection with other affairs."

Similar to it is the view of Az-Zajjāj, who says "Samad is he in whom leadership has been perfected, and to whom one turns for fulfilment of one's needs and desires."

Now, let us consider why *Allahu-Aḥad* has been said in the first sentence and why *Allah-uṣ-Ṣamad* in this sentence. About the word *ahad* we have explained above that it is exclusively used for Allah, and for none else. That is why it has been used as *aḥad*, in the indefinite sense. But since the word *ṣamad* is used for creatures also, *Allah-uṣ-Ṣamad* has been said instead of *Allah Ṣamad*, which signifies that real and true *Ṣamad* is Allah alone. If a creature is *ṣamad* in one sense, it may not be *ṣamad* in some other sense, for it is mortal, not immortal; it is analysable and divisible, is compound, its parts can scatter away any time; some creatures are dependent upon it, and upon others it is dependent; its chieftaincy is relative and not absolute; it is superior to certain things and certain other things are superior to it; it can fulfil some desires of some creatures but it is not in the power of any creature to fulfil all the desires of all the creatures. On the contrary, Allah is perfect in His attributes of *Ṣamad* in every respect; the whole world is dependent upon Him in its needs, but He is not dependent upon needs; everything in the world turns to Him, consciously or unconsciously, for its survival and for fulfilment of the needs of everyone; He is immortal and Ever-living; He sustains others and is not sustained by anyone; He is Single and Unique, not compound so as to be analysable and divisible; His sovereignty prevails over entire universe and He is Supreme in every sense. Therefore, He is not only *Ṣamad* but *Aṣ-Ṣamad*, i e. the Only and One Being Who is wholly and perfectly qualified with the attribute of *ṣamad* in the true sense.

Then, since He is *As-Ṣamad*, it is necessary that He should be Unique, One and Only, for such a being can only be One, which is not dependent upon anyone and upon whom everyone else may be dependent; two or more beings cannot be self-sufficient and fulfillers of the needs of all. Furthermore, His being *As-samad* also requires that He alone should be the Deity, none else, for no sensible person would worship and serve the one who had no power and authority to fulfil the needs of others.

5. The polytheists in every age have adopted the concept that like men, gods also belong to a species, which has many members and they also get married, beget and are begotten. They did not even regard Allah, Lord of the universe, as supreme and above this concept of ignorance, and even proposed children for Him. Thus, the Arabian belief as stated in the Qur'ān was that they regarded the angels as daughters of Allah. The Prophetic communities too could not remain immune from this creed of paganism. They too adopted the creed of holding one saintly person or another as son of God. Two kinds of concepts have always been

mixed up in these debasing superstitions. Some people thought that those whom they regarded as Allah's children, were descended from him in the natural way and some others claimed that the one whom they called son of God, had been adopted by Allah Himself as a son. Although they could not dare call anyone as, God forbid, father of God, obviously human mind cannot remain immune against such a concept that God too should be regarded as a son of somebody when it is conceived that He is not free from sex and procreation and that He too, like man, is the kind of being which begets children and needs to adopt a son in case it is childless, That is why one of the questions asked of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was: what is the ancestry of Allah? and another was: from whom has He inherited the world and who will inherit it after Him?

If these assumptions of ignorance are analysed, it becomes obvious that they logically necessitate the assumption of some other things as well.

First, that God should not be One, but there should be a species of Gods, and its members should be associates in the attributes, acts and powers of Divinity. This not only follows from assuming God begetting children but also from assuming that He has adopted someone as a son, for the adopted son of somebody can inevitably be of his own kind. And when, God forbid, he is of the same kind as God, it cannot be denied that he too possesses attributes of Godhead.

Second, that children cannot be conceived unless the male and the female combine and some substance from the father and the mother unites to take the shape of child. Therefore, the assumption that God begets children necessitates that He should, God forbid, be a material and physical entity, should have a wife of His own species, and some substance also should issue from His body.

Third, that wherever there is sex and procreation, it is there because individuals are mortal and for the survival of their species it is inevitable that they should beget children to perpetuate the race. Thus, the assumption that God begets children also necessitates that He should, God forbid, Himself be mortal, and immortality should belong to the species of Gods, not to God Himself. Furthermore, it also necessitates that like all mortal individuals, God also, God forbid, should have a beginning and an end. For the individuals of the species whose survival depends upon sex and procreation neither exist since eternity nor will exist till eternity.

Fourth, that the object of adopting some one as a son is that a childless person needs a helper in his lifetime and an heir after his death. Therefore, the supposition that Allah has adopted a son inevitably amounts to ascribing all those weaknesses to His sublime Being which characterise mortal man.

Although all these assumptions are destroyed as soon as Allah is called and described as *Aḥad* and *Aṣ-Ṣamad,* yet when it is said: "Neither has He an offspring nor is He the offspring of another", there remains no room for any ambiguity in this regard. Then, since these concepts are the most potent factors of polytheism with regard to Divine Being, Allah has refuted them clearly and absolutely not only in Sūrah Al-Ikhlāṣ but has also reiterated this theme at different places in different ways so that the people may understand the truth fully. For example let us consider the following verses:

"Allah is only One Deity: He is far too exalted that He should have a son: whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth belongs to Him." (An-Nisā': 171)

"Note it well: they, in fact, invent a falsehood when they say, 'Allah has children'. They are utter liars," (Aṣ-Ṣāāffat: 151-152)

"They have invented a blood-relationship between Allah and the angels, whereas the angels know full well that these people will be brought up (as culprits)" (Aṣ-Ṣāāffat: 158)

"These people have made some of His servants to be part of Him. The fact is that man is manifestly ungrateful." (Az-Zukhruf: 15)

"Yet the people have set up the Jinn as partners with Allah, whereas He is their Creator; they have also invented for Him sons and daughters without having any knowledge, whereas He is absolutely free from and exalted far above the things they say. He is the Originator of the heavens and the earth: how should He have a son, when He has no consort? He has created each and every thing." (Al-An'ām: 100-102)

"They say: the Merciful has offspring. Glory be to Allah! They (whom they describe as His offsping) are His mere servants who have been honoured." (Al-Anbiyā: 26)

"They remarked: Allah has taken a son to himself. Allah is All-pure: He is Self Sufficient He is the Owner of everthing that is in the heavens and the earth. Have you any authority for what you say? What, do you ascribe to Allah that of which you have no knowledge?" (Yūnus: 68)

"And (O Prophet,) say: praise is for Allah Who has begotten no son nor has any partner in His Kingdom nor is helpless to need any supporter." (Banī Isrā'īl:111)

"Allah has no offspring, and there is no other deity as a partner with Him." (Al-Mu'minūn: 91)

In these verses the belief of the people who ascribe real or adopted children to Allah, has been refuted from every aspect, and its being a false belief has also been proved by argument. These and many other Qur'ānic verses on the same theme explain Sūrah Al-Ikhlāṣ fully well.

6. The word *kufu'* as used in the original means an example, a similar thing, the one equal in rank and position. In the matter of marriage, *kufu'* means that the boy and the girl should match each other socially. Thus, the verse means that there is no one in the entire universe, nor ever was, nor ever can be, who is similar to Allah, or equal in rank with Him, or resembling Him in His attributes, works and powers in any degree whatever.


CXIII-CXIV
مُعَوِّذَتَين
MU'AWWIDHATAYN
AL-FALAQ الفَلَق
AN-NĀS النّاس

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

CXIII-CXIV

MU'AWWIDHATAYN مُعَوِّذَتَين

AN-NĀS النّاس AL-FALAQ الفَلَق

INTRODUCTION

Name

Although these two Sūrahs of the Qur'ān are separate entities and are written in the *Muṣḥaf* also under separate names, yet they are so deeply related mutually and their contents so closely resemble each other's that they have been designated by a common name *Mu'awwidhatayn* (the two Sūrahs in which refuge with Allah has been sought). Imām Baihaqī in *Dalā'il an-Nubuwwat* has written that these Sūrahs were revealed together, that is why the combined name of both is

Mu'awwidhatayn. We are writing the same one Introduction to both, for they discuss and deal with just the same matters and topics. However, they will be explained and commented on separately below:-

Period of Revelation

Ḥaḍrat Ḥaṣan Basrī, 'Ikrimah, 'Atā' and Jābir bin Zaid say that these Sūrahs are Makkī. A tradition from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās also supports the same view. However, according to another tradition from him, it is Madanī and the same view is held also by Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Zubair and Qatādah. One of the traditions which strengthens this second view is the *Ḥadīth* which Muslim, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī and Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal have related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir. He says that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) one day said to him: "Do you know what kind of verses have been revealed to me tonight? - these matchless verses are *A'ūdhu bi-Rabb'il-falaq* and *A'ūdhu bi-Rabbin-nās*." This *Ḥadīth* is used as an argument for these Sūrahs to be Madanī because Ḥaḍrat 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir had become a Muslim in Madīnah after the *hijrah*, as related by Abū Da'ūd and Nasā'i on the basis of his own statement. Other traditions which have lent strength to this view are those related by Ibn Sa'd, Muhiyy-us-Sunnahs Baghawī, Imām Nasafī, Imām Baihaqī, Ḥāfiz Ibn Ḥajar, Hafiz Badr-uddīn 'Aynī, 'Abd bin Humaid and others to the effect that these Sūrahs were revealed when the Jews had worked magic on the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) in Madīnah and he had fallen ill under its effect. Ibn Sa'd has related on the authority of Wāqidī that this happened in A.H. 7. On this very basis Sufyān bin 'Uyainah also has described these Sūrahs as Madanī.

But, as we have explained in the Introduction to Sūrah Al-Ikhlās, when it is said about a certain Sūrah or verse that it was revealed on this or that particular occasion, it does not necessarily mean that it was revealed for the first time on that very occasion. Rather it sometimes so happened that a Sūrah or a verse had previously been revealed, then on the occurrence or appearance of a particular incident or situation, the Holy Prophet's attention was drawn to it by Allah for the second time, or even again and again. In our opinion the same also was the case with the *Mu'awwidhatayn*. The subject-matter of these Sūrahs is explicit that these were sent down at Makkah in the first instance when opposition to the Holy Prophet there had grown very intense. Later, when at Madīnah

storms of opposition were raised by the hypocrites, Jews and polytheists, the Holy Prophet was instructed to recite these very Sūrahs, as has been mentioned in the above cited tradition from Ḥaḍrat 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir. After this, when magic was worked on him, and his illness grew intense, Gabriel came and instructed him by Allah's command to recite these very Sūrahs. Therefore, in our opinion, the view held by the commentators who describe both these Sūrahs as Makkī is more reliable. Regarding them as connected exclusively with the incident of magic is difficult, for to this incident relates only one verse (v.4), the remaining verses of Sūrah al-Falaq and the whole of Sūrah An-Nās have nothing to do with it directly.

Theme and Subject-Matter

The conditions under which these two Sūrahs were sent down in Makkah were as follows: As soon as the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) began to preach the message of Islam, it seemed as though he had provoked all classes of the people around him. As his message spread the opposition of the disbelieving Quraish also became more and more intense, As long as they had any hope that they would be able to prevent him from preaching his message by throwing some temptation in his way, or striking some bargain with him, their hostility did not become very active, But when the Holy Prophet disappointed them completely that he would not effect any kind of compromise with them in the Matter of faith, and in Sūrah . Al-Kāfirūn they were plainly told: "I do not worship those whom you worship nor are you worshippers of Him Whom I worship. For you is your religion and for me is mine", the hostility touched its extreme limits. More particularly, the families whose members (men or women, boys or girls) had accepted Islam, were burning with rage from within against the Holy Prophet, They were cursing him holding secret consultations to kill him quietly in the dark of the night so that the Banī Hāshim could not discover the murderer and take revenge; magic and charms were being worked on him so as to cause his death, or make him fall ill, or become mad; satans from among the men and the Jinn spread on every side so as to whisper one or another evil into the hearts of the people against him and the Qur'ān brought by him so that they became suspicious of him and fled him. There were many people who were burning with jealousy against him, for they could not tolerate that a man from another family or clan

than their own should flourish and become prominent. For instance, the reason why Abū Jahl was crossing every limit in his hostility to him has been explained by himself: "We and the Banī 'Abdi Manaf (to which the Holy Prophet belonged) were rivals of each other: they fed others, we too fed others; they provided conveyances to the people, we too did the same; they gave donations we too gave donations, so much so that when they and we have become equal in honour and nobility, they now proclaim that they have a Prophet who is inspired from the heaven; how can we compete with them in this field? By God, we will never acknowledge him, nor affirm faith in him". (Ibn Hishām, vol. I, pp. 33-338).

Such were the conditions when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was commanded to tell the people: "I seek refuge with the Lord of the dawn, from the evil of everything that he has created, and from the evil of the darkness of night and from the evil of the magicians, men and women, and from the evil of the envious", and to tell 'them: "I seek refuge with the Lord of mankind, the King of mankind, and the Deity of mankind, from the evil of the whispers, who returns over and over again, who whispers (evil) into the hearts of men, whether he be from among the jinn or men." This is similar to what the Prophet Moses had been told to say' when Pharaoh had expressed his design before his full court to kill him: "I have taken refuge with my Lord and your Lord against every arrogant person who does not believe in the Day of Reckoning." (Al-Mu'min: 27). And: "I have taken refuge with my Lord and your Lord lest you should assail me:" (Ad-Dukhān: 20).

On both occasions these illustrious Prophets of Allah were confronted with well-equipped, resourceful and powerful enemies. On both occasions they stood firm on their message of Truth against their strong opponents, whereas they had no material power on the strength of which they could fight them, and on both occasions they utterly disregarded the threats and dangerous plans and hostile devices of the enemy, saying: "We have taken refuge with the Lord of the universe against you." Obviously, such firmness and steadfastness can be shown only by the person who has the conviction that the power of His Lord is the supreme power; that all powers of the world are insignificant against Him, and that no one can harm the one who has taken His refuge. Only such a one can say: "I will not give up preaching the Word of Truth, I

care the least for what you may say or do, for I have taken refuge with my Lord and your Lord and Lord of all universe."

Question whether Mu'awwidhatayn are, or are not, Qur'ānic

The above discussion is enough to help one understand fully the theme and content of the two Sūrahs, but since three points in the Books of *Ḥadith* and commentary concerning these Sūrah have been discussed, which are likely to create doubts in the minds, it is necessary to clear them also here.

First, whether it is absolutely established that these two Sūrahs are the Qur'ānic Sūrahs, or whether there is some doubt in this regard, This question arose because in the traditions related from an illustrious Companion like Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, it has been said that he did not regard these two Sūrahs as the Sūrahs of the Qur'ān and had eliminated these from his copy of the *Mushaf*. Imām Ahmad, Bazzar, Tabarānī, Ibn Mardūyah, Abū Ya'lā, 'Abdullah bin Ahmad bin Hanbal, Humaydī, Abū Nu'aim. Ibn Ḥibbān and other traditionists have related this from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd with different chains of transmitters and mostly on sound authority. According to these traditions, he not only eliminated these Sūrahs from the *Muṣḥaf* but it has also been reported that he used to say: "Do not mix up with the Qur'ān that which is not of the Qur'ān. These two Sūrahs are not included in the Qur'ān. This was only a command enjoined on the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) for seeking God's refuge." In some traditions there is also the addition that he did not recite these Sūrahs in the Prayer.

On the basis of these traditions the opponents of Islam had an opportunity to raise doubts about the Qur'ān, saying that this Book, God forbid, is not free from corruption, For when, according to a Companion of the rank of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, these two Sūrahs are an annexation to the Qur'ān, many other additions and subtractions also might have been made in it. To rid the Qur'ān of this blame Qāḍī Abū Bakr Al-Bāqillāni, Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ and others took the stand that Ibn Mas'ūd was not in fact a denier of the *Mu'awwidhatayn* being Qur'ānic but only refused to write them in the *Muṣḥaf*. For, according to him, only that which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had allowed, should be written in the *Mushaf*, and Ibn Mas'ūd did not

receive the information that the Holy Prophet had allowed this. But this stand is not correct, for according to sound evidence, it is confirmed that Ibn Mas'ūd (may Allah be pleased with him) had denied that these were Sūrahs of the Qur'ān. Some other scholars, for instance, Imām Nawawī, Imām Ibn Hazm and Imām Fakhr-uddīn Rāzi, regard this as a pure lie and falsehood that Ibn Mas'ūd had asserted any such thing. But to reject genuine historical facts without sound evidence is un-scientific.

Now, the question is: How can the blame that attaches to the Qur'ān because of these traditions of Ibn Mas'ūd in his *Musnad,* has several answers which we shall give below in sequence:

(1) Hāfiz Bazzār after relating these traditions of Ibn Mas'ūd in his *Musnad,* has written that he is solitary and isolated in his opinion: no one from among the Companions has supported this view.

(2) The copies of the Qur'ān which the third Caliph, Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān (may Allah be pleased with him), had got compiled by the consensus of the Companions and which he had sent from the Islamic Caliphate officially to the centres of the world of Islam contained both these Sūrahs.

(3) The *Musnad* which, since the sacred time of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) till today, has the seal of consensus of the entire world of Islam, contains both these Sūrahs. The solitary opinion of only Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, in spite of his high rank, has no weight against this great consensus.

(4) It is confirmed by sound and reliable *aḥādīth* from the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) that he not only recited these Sūrahs in the Prayer himself but instructed others also to recite them, and taught them to the people as the Sūrahs of the Qur'ān. Consider, for instance; the following *aḥādīth:*

We have cited on the authority of Muslim, Ahmad, Tirmidhī and Nasā'i the tradition of 'Hadrat 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir that the Holy Prophet told him about Sūrah Al-Falaq and Sūrah An-Nās, saying that those verses had been revealed to him that night. A tradition in Nasā'ī from 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir is to the effect that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) recited both these Sūrah in the morning Prayer. Ibn Hibbān from this same Ḥaḍrat 'Uqbah has related the traditions that the Holy Prophet

said to him: "As far as possible, do not give up recitation of these two Sūrah in the Prayer." Sa'īd bin Mansūr has related, on the authority of Mu'ādh bin Jabal, that the Holy Prophet recited both these Sūrahs in the morning Prayer. Imām Ahmad on sound authority has related in his *Musnad* the tradition from a Companion that the Holy Prophet said to him, "When you perform the Prayer, recite both these Sūrahs in it." In Musnad Ahmad, Abū Da'ūd and Nasā'ī this tradition of 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir has been related: "The Holy Prophet said to him: Should I not teach you two such Sūrah as are among the best Sūrahs that the people recite? He said: Do teach me, O Messenger of Allah. Thereupon the Holy Prophet taught him the *Mu'awwidhatayn*. Then the Prayers began and the Holy Prophet recited the same two Sūrahs in it also, and when after the Prayer the Holy Prophet passed by him, he said to him, 'O 'Uqbah, how did you like it?' Then he instructed him to the effect: When you go to bed, and when you get up from bed, recite these Sūrahs." In Musnad Ahmad, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī and Nasā'ī there is a tradition from 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir, saying that the Holy Prophet exhorted him to recite the *Mu'awwidhāt* (i.e. *Qul Huwa Allahu ahad* and the *Mu'awwidhatayn)* after every prayer. Nasā'ī Ibn Mardūyah and Hākim have related this tradition also from 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir: "Once the Holy Prophet was riding on a conveyance and I was walking along with him with my hand placed on his sacred foot, I said: Kindly teach me Sūrah Hūd or Sūrah Yūsuf. He replied: In the sight of Allah there is nothing more beneficial for the servant than *Qul a'ūhu bi-Rabbil-falaq.*" A tradition from 'Abdullah bin 'Abīs al-Juhanī has been related by Nasā'ī, Baihaqī and Ibn Sa'd, saying that the Holy Prophet said to him: "Ibn 'Abīs, should I not tell you what are the best things out of the means by which the seekers of refuge have sought refuge with Allah? I submitted: Do teach me, O Messenger of Allah. He replied: *Qul a'ūdhu bi-Rabbil-falaq* and *Qul a'ūdhu bi-Rabbin-nās'* both these Sūrahs." Ibn Mardūyah has related from Hadrat Umm Salamah: "The Sūrahs best liked by Allah are: *Qul a'ūdhu bi-Rabbil-falaq* and *Qul a'ūdhu bi-Rabbin-nās.*"

Here, the question arises: what caused Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd the misunderstanding that these two are not Sūrahs of the Qur'ān? We get the answer to it when we combine two traditions: first, that Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd asserted that this was only a command which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was given to teach him the method of seeking refuge with Allah; second, the tradition which

Imām Bukhārī has related in his *Sahīh*, Imām Ahmad in his *Musnad*, Hāfiz Abū Bakr al-Humaidī in his *Musnad*, Abū Nu'aim in his *Al-Mustakhraj* and Nasā'ī in his *Sunan*, with different chains of transmitters, on the authority of Zirr bin Hubaish, with a slight variation in wording from Hadrat Ubayy bin Ka'b, who held a distinguished place among the Companions on the basis of his knowledge of the Qur'ān. Zirr bin Hubaish states: "I said to Hadrat Ubayy: Your brother, 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, says these things. What do you say about this view? He replied: I had questioned the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) about this. He said to me: I was told to say '*qul*', so I said '*qul*'. Therefore, we too say the same as the Holy Prophet said." In the tradition related by Imām Ahmad, Hadrat Ubayy's words are to the effect: "I bear witness that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) told me that Gabriel (peace be on him) had told him to say: *Qul a'ūdhu bi-Rabbil-falaq;* therefore, he recited likewise, and Gabriel asked him to say, *Qul a'ūdhu bi-Rabbin nās;* therefore he too said likewise. Hence, we too say as the Holy Prophet said:" A little consideration of these two traditions will show that the word *qul* (say) in the two Sūrahs caused Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd the misunderstanding that the Holy Prophet (upon whom by peace) had been commanded to say: *A'ūdhu bi-Rabbil-falaq* and *A'ūdhu bi-Rabbin-nās*. But he did not feel any need to question the Holy Prophet about it. In the mind of Hadrat Ubayy bin Ka'b also a question arose about this and he put it before the Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet replied: "Since Gabriel (peace be on him) had said *qul*, so I too say *qul*." Let us put it like this. If somebody is commanded and asked: "Say, I seek refuge", he will not carry out the command, saying: "Say, I seek refuge", but he will drop the word "say" and say: "I seek refuge." On the contrary, if the messenger of a superior officer conveys to somebody the message in these words: "Say, I seek refuge", and this command is given to him not only for his own person but to be conveyed to others, he will convey the words of the message verbatum to the people, and will not have the permission to drop anthing from the text of the message. Thus, the fact that these two Sūrahs begin with the word *qul* is a clear proof that it is Divine Word, which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was bound to convey verbatum. It was not merely a command given to him for his person. Besides these two Sūrahs, there are 330 other verses in the Qur'ān which begin with the word *qul* (say). The presence of *qul* in all these is a proof that it is

Divine Word, which was obligatory for the Holy Prophet to convey verbatum; otherwise if *qul* everywhere had meant a command, the Holy Prophet would have dropped it and said only that which he was commanded to say, and it would not have been recorded in the Qur'ān, but, on the contrary, he would have remained content with saying only what he was commanded to say.

Here, if one considers this, one can understand fully well how unreasonable it is to regard the Companions as infallible and to make the clamour that a Companion has been defamed as soon as one hears a saying or doing of his being described as wrong. Here, one can clearly see what a blunder happened to be committed by an illustrious Companion like Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd about two Sūrahs of the Qur'ān. If such an error could be committed by an eminent Companion like him, others also might commit an error. We can examine it in the scientific way, and describe it as wrong if a thing said or done by a Companion is proved to be wrong. But wicked indeed would be the person who went beyond describing a wrong act as wrong and started reproving and finding fault with the Companions or the Holy Prophet of Allah. Concerning the *Mu'awwidhatayn* the commentators and traditionists have described the opinion of Ibn Mas'ūd as wrong, but no one has dared to say that by denying these two Sūrahs of the Qur'ān, he had, God forbid, become a disbeliever.

Question of Holy Prophet's being affected by Magic

The second thing that has arisen in respect of these two Sūrahs is that, according to traditions, magic had been worked on the Holy Prophet, and he had fallen ill under its effect, and Gabriel (peace be on him) had instruted him to repeat these Sūrahs to remove the charm. This has been objected to by many rationalists of both ancient and modern times. They say that if these traditions are accepted, the whole *Shari'ah* becomes doubtful. For if the Prophet could be charmed, and according to these traditions he was charmed, one cannot say what the Prophet might have been made to say and do under the influence of magic by his opponents, and what in his teaching may be Divine and what the result of magic. Not only this: they also allege that if this is accepted as true, it might well be that the Prophet might have been prompted to make the claim to Prophethood through magic and the Prophet by misunderstanding might have thought that an angel had come to him.

They also argue that these traditions clash with the Qur'ān. The Qur'ān mentions the accusation of the disbelievers who said that the Prophet was bewitched (Banī Isrā'īl 47), but these traditions confirm the accusation of the disbelievers that the Prophet had actually been charmed and bewitched.

For a proper investigation of this question it is necessary that one should first see whether it is established by authentic historical evidence that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had actually been affected by magic, and if so, what it was and to what extent. Then it should be seen whether the objections raised against what is established historically do actually apply to it or not.

The Muslim scholars of the earliest period were truly honest and upright in that they did not try to corrupt history or conceal facts according to their own ideas, concepts and assumptions. They conveyed intact to the later generations whatever was confirmed historically and did not at all care how the material supplied by then could be used by the one who was bent upon drawing perverse conclusions from the facts. Now if something stands confirmed by authentic and historical means it is neither right for an honest and rightminded person that he should deny history on the ground that in case he accepted it, it would lead to these evil results according to his thinking, nor is it right that he should add to and stretch beyond its genuine limits by conjecture and speculation whatever is established historically. Instead, he should accept history as history and then see what is actually proved by it and what is not.

As far as the historical aspect is concerned, the incident of the Holy Prophet's being affected by magic is absolutely confirmed, and if it can be refuted by scientific criticism, then no historical event of the world can be proved right and genuine. It has been related by Bukhārī, Muslim, Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah, Imām Aḥmad, 'Abdur Razzāq, Ḥumaidi, Baihaqī, Ṭabarānī, Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Mardūyah, Ibn Abi Shaibah, Ḥākim, 'Abd bin Ḥumaid and other traditionalists on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, Ḥaḍrat Zaid bin Arqam and Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, through so many different and numerous channels that forgery is out of question. Although each tradition by itself is an isolated report *(khabar wāḥid)*, we give it below as a connected event from the details provided by the traditions.

After the peace treaty of Ḥudaibiyah when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) returned to Madīnah, a deputation of the Jews of Khaibar visited Madīnah in Muḥarram, A.H. 7 and met a famous magician, Labīd bin A'sam, who belonged to the Anṣār tribe of Banī Zurayq.[1] They said to him: "You know how Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) has treated us. We have tried our best to bewitch him but have not succeeded. Now we have come to you because you are a more skilled magician. Here are three gold coins, accept these and cast a powerful magic spell on Muḥammad." In those days the Holy Prophet had a Jewish boy as his attendant. Through him they obtained a piece of the Holy Prophet's comb with some hair stuck to it. Magic was worked on the same hair and teeth of the comb. According to some traditions, magic was worked by Labīd bin A'sam himself, according to others, his sisters were more skilled than him and he got the spell cast through them. Whatever be the case, Labīd placed this spell in the spathe[2] of a male date-tree and hid it under a stone at the bottom of Dharwān or Dhī Arwān, the well of Banī Zurayq. The spell took one whole year to have effect upon the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). In the latter half of the year the Holy Prophet started feeling as if he was unwell. The last forty days became hard on him, of which the last three days were even harder. But its maximum effect on him was that he was melting away from within. He thought he had done a thing whereas, in fact, he had not done it,; he thought he had visited his wives whereas he had not visited them; and sometimes he would doubt having seen something whereas, in fact, he had not seen it. All these effects were confined to his own person; so much so that the other people could not notice what state he was passing through. As for his being a Prophet, no change occurred in the performance of his duties. There is no tradition

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1. Some reporters regard him as a Jew and some as a hypocrite and ally of the Jews, but they all agree that he belonged to Banī Zurayq, and everybody knows that Banī Zurayq was not a Jewish tribe but a tribe of the Ansār of Khazraj. Therefore, either he was from among those who had become Jews from the people of Madīnah, or on account of his being an ally of the Jews some people considered him also a Jew. However, use of the word hypocrite for him shows that he had become a Muslim only outwardly.
2. The cluster of the palm fruit in the beginning is covered in the spathe, and the colour of the male tree's spathe resembles man's colour and its smell his seminal fluid.

to say that he might have forgotten some verses of the Qur'ān in those days, or might have recited a verse wrongly, or a change might have occurred in the assemblies and in his counsels and sermons, or he might have presented a discourse as Revelation which may not have been revealed to him, or he might have missed a Prayer and thought that he had performed it. God forbid, if any such thing had happened, it would have caused a clamour and the whole of Arabia would have known that a magician had overpowered the one whom no power had been able to overpower. But the Holy Prophet's position as a Prophet remained wholly unaffected by it. Only in his personal life he remained worried on account of it. At last, one day when he was in the house of Hadrat 'Ā'ishah, he prayed to Allah to be restored to full health. In the meantime he fell asleep or drowsed and on waking he said to Hadrat 'Ā'ishah: "My' Lord has told me what I had asked of Him." Hadrat 'Ā'ishah asked what it was. He replied: "Two men (i.e. two angels in human guise came to me. One sat near my head and the other near my feet. The first asked,: what has happened to him? The other replied: Magic has been worked on him. The first asked: who has worked it? He replied: Labīd bin A'sam. He asked: In what is it contained? He replied: In the comb and hair covered in the spathe of a male date-tree. He asked: where is it? He replied: under a stone at the bottom of Dhī Arwān (or Dharwān), the well of Banī Zurayq. He asked: what should be done about it? He replied: the well should be emptied and it should be taken out 'from under the stone. The Holy Prophet then sent Hadrat 'Ali, Ḥaḍrat 'Ammar bin Yāsir and Ḥaḍrat Zubair: They were also joined by Jubair bin Iyās az-Zurqī and Qais bin Mihsan az-Zurqī (two men from Banī Zurayq). Later the Holy Prophet also arrived at the well along with some Companions. The water was taken out and the spathe recovered. There they found that beside the comb and hair there was a cord with eleven knots on it and a wax image with needles pricked into it. Gabriel (peace be on him) came and told him to repeat the *Mu'awwidhatayn*. As he repeated verse after verse, a knot was loosened and a needle taken out every time, till on finishing the last words all the knots were loosened and all the needles removed, and he was entirely freed from the charm. After this he called Labib and questioned him. He confessed his guilt and the Holy Prophet let him go, for he never avenged himself anyone for any harm done to his person. He even declined to talk about it to others, saying that Allah had restored him to

health; therefore he did not like that he should incite the people against anyone.

This is the story of the magic worked on the Holy Prophet. There is nothing in it which might run counter to his office of Prophethood. In his personal capacity if an injury could be inflicted on him as it happened, in the battle of Uhud, if he could fall from the horse and be hurt as is confirmed by the *Ḥadīth*, if he could be stung by a scorpion as has been mentioned in some Traditions and none of these negates the protection promised to him by Allah in his capacity as Prophet , he could also fall ill under the influence of magic in his personal capacity. That a prophet can be affected by magic is also confirmed by the Qur'ān. In Sūrah Al-A'rāf it has been said about the magicians of Pharaoh that when they confronted the Prophet Moses, they bewitched the eyes of thousands of people who had assembled to witness the encounter (v. 116). In Sūrah Tā Hā it has been said that not only the common people but the Prophet Moses too felt that the cords and staffs that they cast were running towards them like so many snakes, and this filled Moses' heart with fear. Thereupon Allah revealed to him: "Don't fear, for you will come out victorious. Cast down your staff," (vv. 66-69). As for the objection that this then confirms the accusation of the disbelievers of Makkah that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was a bewitched man, its answer is that the disbelievers did not call him a bewitched man in the sense that he had fallen ill under the effect of magic cast by somebody, but in the sense that some magician had, God forbid, made him mad, and he had made claim to Prophethood and was telling the people tales of Hell and Heaven in his same madness. Now, obviously this objection does not at all apply to a matter about which history confirms that the magic spell had affected only the person of Muḥammad (upon whom be peace) and not the Prophethood of Muḥammad (upon whom be peace), which remained wholly unaffected by it.

In this connection, another thing worthy of mention is that the people who regard magic as a kind of superstition hold this view only because the effect of magic cannot be explained scientifically. But there are many things in the world which one experiences and observes but one cannot explain scientifically how they happen. If we cannot give any such explanation it does not become necessary that we should deny the

thing itself which we cannot explain. Magic, in fact, is a psychological phenomenon which can affect the body through the mind just as physical things affect the mind through the body. Fear, for instance, is a psychological phenomenon, but it affects the body: the hair stand on end and the body shudders. Magic does not; in fact, change the reality, but under its influence man's mind and senses start feeling as if reality had changed. The, staffs and the cords that the magicians had thrown towards the Prophet Moses, had not actually become snakes, but the eyes of the multitude of people were so bewitched that everybody felt they were snakes; even the senses of the Prophet Moses could not remain unaffected by the magic spell. Likewise, in Al-Baqarah: 102, it has been said that in Babylon people learnt such magic from Hārūt and Mārūt as could cause division between husband and wife. This too was a psychological phenomenon. Obviously, if the people did not find it efficacious by experience they could not become its customers. No doubt, it is correct that just like the bullet of the rifle and the bomb from the aircraft, magic too cannot have effect without Allah's permission, but it would be mere stubbornness to deny a thing which has been experienced and observed by man for thousands of years.

Question of Reciting Charms and Amulets in Islam

The third thing that arises in connection with these Sūrahs is whether recitation of charms and amulets has any place in Islam, and whether such recitation is by itself efficacious or not. This question arises for in many *aḥādīth* it has been reported that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) at the time of going to bed every night, especially during illness, used to recite the *Mu'awwidhatayn* (or according to other reports, the *Mu'awwidhāt*, i.e. *Qul Huwa-Allahu Aḥad* and the *Mu'awidhatayn)* thrice, blow in his hands and then rub the hands on his body from head to foot as far as his hands could reach. During his last illness when it was no longer possible for him to do so, Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah recited these Sūrahs herself or by his command, blew on his hands in view of their being blessed and rubbed them on his body. Traditions on this subject have been related in Bukhārī, Muslim, Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah, Abū Da'ūd and Mu'attā of Imām Mālik through authentic channels on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah herself beside whom no one could be better acquainted with the domestic life of the Holy Prophet.

In this regard, one should first understand its religious aspect. In the *Ḥadīth* a lengthy tradition has been related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, at the end of which the Holy Prophet is reported to have said: "The people of my *Ummah* to enter Paradise without reckoning will be those who neither turn to treatment by branding, nor to enchanting, nor take omens, but have trust in their Lord." (Muslim). According to a tradition reported on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Mughirah bin Shu'bah, the Holy Prophet said. "He who got himself treated by branding, or enchanting, became independent of trust in Allah." (Tirmidhī). Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd has reported that the Holy Prophet disapproved of ten things one of which was recitation of charms and amulets except by means of the *Mu'awwidhatayn* or *Mu'awwidhāt* (Abū Da'ūd, Ahmad, Nasā'ī, Ibn Ḥibbān, Ḥākim). Some *ahādīth* also show that in the beginning the Holy Prophet had altogether forbidden recitation of charms and amulets, but later he allowed it on the condition that it should not smack of polytheism, but one should recite and blow by means of the holy names of Allah, or the words of the Qur'ān. The words used should be understandable and one should know that there is nothing sinful in it, and one should not wholly rely on the recitation of charms but on Allah's will to make it beneficial." After the explanation of the religious aspect, let us now see what the *Ḥadīth* says in this regard.

Ṭabarānī in *As-Saghīr* has related a tradition on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Alī saying: "Once the Holy Prophet was stung by a scorpion during the Prayer. When the Prayer was over, he remarked: God's curse be on the scorpion, it neither spares a praying one, nor any other. Then he called for water and salt, and started rubbing the place where the scorpion had stung with salt water and reciting *Qul yā ayyuhal-kāfirūn, Qul Huwa Allahu ahad, Qul a'udhu bi-Rabbil-falaq* and *Qul a'ūdhu bi-Rabbin-nās,* along with it."

Ibn 'Abbās also has related a tradition to the effect: "the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) used to recite this invocation over Hadrat Ḥasan and Ḥusain: *U'īdhu kumā bi-kalimāt Allāhit-tāmmati min kulli shaitān-in wa hāmmāti-wa min kulli'ayn-in lāmmati:* "I give you in the refuge of Allah's blameless words, from every devil and troublesome thing, and from every evil look." (Bukhārī, Musnad Aḥmad, Ṭirmidhī, Ibn Mājah).

A tradition has been related in Muslim, Muwaṭṭā, Ṭabarānī and Ḥākim about 'Uthmān bin al-'Aṣ ath-Thaqafī, with a little variation in wording, to the effect that he complained to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), saying: "Since I have become a Muslim, I feel a pain in my body, which is killing me." The Holy Prophet said: "Place your right hand on the place where you feel the pain, then recite *Bismillah* thrice, and *A'udhu billāhi wa qudratihi min sharri mā ajidu wa uhādhiru* ("I seek refuge with Allah and with His power from the evil that I find and that I fear") seven times, and rub your hand." In *Muwatta* there is the addition: "Uthmān bin Abi al-'Ās said: After that my pain disappeared and now I teach the same formula to the people of my house."

Musnad Aḥmad and Ṭaḥāvī contain this tradition from Talq bin 'Alī: "I was stung by a scorpion in the presence of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). The Holy Prophet recited something and blew over me and rubbed his hand on the affected place."

Muslim contains a tradition from Abu Sa'īd Khudri, which says; "Once when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) fell ill, Gabriel came and asked: O Muḥammad, are you ill? The Holy Prophet answered in the affirmative. Gabriel said: I blow on you in the name of Allah from everything which troubles you and from the evil of every soul and the evil look of every envier. May Allah restore you to health. I blow on you in His name." A similar tradition has been related in Musnad Ahmad on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Ubadah bin as-Sāmit, which says: "The Holy Prophet was unwell. I went to visit him and found him in great trouble. When I re-visited him in the evening I found him quite well. When I asked how he had become well so soon, he said; Gabriel came and blew over me with some words. Then he recited words similar to those reported in the above Ḥadīth. A tradition similar to this has been related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah also in Muslim and Musnad Aḥmad.

Imām Aḥmad in his Musnad has related this tradition from Ḥafṣah, mother of the Faithful: "One day the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) visited me in the house and a woman, named Shifā[1] was sitting

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1. Her real name was Lailā but she had become well known as Shifā bint 'Abdullah. She became Muslim before the *hijrah*; she belonged to the clan of Bani 'Adi of

with me. She used to blow on the people to cure them of blisters. The Holy Prophet said to her: Teach Ḥafṣah also the formula." Imām Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd and Nasā'i have related this tradition from Shifā bint 'Abdullah herself, saying: "The Holy Prophet said to me: Just as you have taught Ḥafṣah reading and writing, so teach her blowing to cure blisters as well."

In Muslim there is a tradition from 'Auf bin Mālik al-Ashja'ī to the effect: "We used to practise blowing to cure diseases. We asked the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) for his opinion in this regard. He said: Let me know the words with which you blow over the people. There is no harm in blowing unless it smacks of polytheism."

Muslim, Musnad Aḥmad and Ibn Mājah contain a tradition from Ḥaḍrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah, saying: "The Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had forbidden us blowing to cure disease. Then the people of the clan of Ḥaḍrat 'Āmr bin Ḥazm came and they said: We had a formula with which we used to blow on the people to cure them of scorpion's sting (or snake-bite). But you have forbidden us the practice. Then they recited before him the words which they made use of. Thereupon the Holy Prophet said: I do not see any harm in it, so let the one who can do good to his brother, do him good." Another tradition from Jābir bin 'Abdullah in Muslim is: "The family of Ḥazm had a formula to cure snake-bite and the Holy Prophet permitted them to practise it." This is also supported by the tradition from Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, which is contained in Muslim. Musnad Aḥmad, and Ibn Mājah: "The Holy Prophet granted permission to a family of the Ansār for blowing to cure the evil effects of biting by every poisonous creature." Traditions resembling these have been related from Ḥaḍrat Anas also in Musnad Aḥmad, Tirmidhi, Muslim and Ibn Mājah, saying that the Holy Prophet gave permission for blowing to cure the bite by poisonous creatures, the disease of blisters and the effects of the evil look."

Musnad Aḥmad, Tirmidhi, Ibn Mājah and Ḥākim have related this tradition on the authority of Hadrat 'Umair; freed slave of Abi al-Laḥam: "In the pre-Islamic days I had a formula with which I used to blow over the people. I recited it before the Holy Prophet, whereupon he

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the Quraish. This is the same clan to which Ḥaḍrat 'Umar belonged. Thus, she was a relative of Ḥaḍrat Ḥafsah.

told me to drop out such and such words from it, and permitted me to blow with the rest of it."

According to *Mu'wattā*, Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr went to the house of his daughter, Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, and found that she was unwell and a Jewish woman was blowing over her. Thereupon he said to her: "Blow over her by means of the Book of Allah." This shows that if the people of the Book practise blowing by means of the verses of the Torah and the Gospel, it is also permitted.

As for the question whether blowing for curing disease is efficacious also, or not, its answer is that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) not only did not forbid anybody to have recourse to cure and medical treatment but himself stated that Allah has created a cure for every disease and exhorted his followers to use cures. He himself told the people remedies for certain diseases, as can be seen in the *Ḥadīth* in *Kitāb at-Ṭib* (Book of Cures). But the cure can be beneficial and useful only by Allah's command and permission, otherwise if the cure and medical treatment were beneficial in every case, no one would have died in hospitals. Now, if beside the cure and medical treatment, Allah's Word and His beautiful names also are made use of, or Allah is turned to and invoked for help by means of His Word, Names and Attributes in a place where no medical aid is available, it would not be against reason except for the materialists.[1] However, it is not right to disregard intentionally a cure or treatment where it is available, and recourse had only to enchanting and reciting of charms, and the people should start a

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1. Many doctors of the materialistic world also have admitted that the prayer and recourse to Allah are efficacious in recovery from disease. I have had personal experience of this twice in my life In 1948 when I was interned, a stone passed into my bladder and blocked the urinary channel so that I could not pass urine for 16 hours I prayed to Allah Almighty for help, for I did not want to request the cruel rulers to arrange medical aid for me. So, the stone left the urinary channel and remained away from it till 1968 when again it started giving me trouble and had to be removed by a surgical operation. Again, in 1953 when I was arrested, I had been suffering from ring-worms on the legs for several months, and no treatment was proving efficacious. After my arrest I again prayed to Allah Almighty as I had prayed in 1948, and my shins were cleansed of the ring-worms without any treatment and medicine, and I have never suffered from this disease again.

regular practice of granting amulets as a means of earning their livelihood.

Many people in this regard argue from Ḥaḍrat Abū Sa'īd Khudri's tradition which has been related in Bukhāri, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Musnad Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd and Ibn Mājah, and it is supported also by a tradition related in Bukhārī on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās. According to it the Holy Prophet sent some of his Companions including Ḥaḍrat Abū Sa'īd Khudrī on an expedition. They halted on the way at the settlement of an Arabian tribe and demanded hospitality from the people, but they refused to extend any hospitality. In the meantime the chief of the tribe was stung by a scorpion and the people came to the travellers to ask if they had any medicine or formula by which their chief could be cured. Ḥaḍrat Abū Sa'īd said: "Yes, we do have, but since you have refused us hospitality, we would not treat him unless you promised to give us something." They promised to give them a flock of goats (according to some traditions, 30 goats), and Hadrat Abū Sa'īd went and started reciting Sūrah Al-Fātihah and rubbing his saliva on the affected place.[2] Consequently, the chief felt relieved of the effect of poison and the people of the tribe gave them the goats as promised. But the Companions said to one another; "Let us not make any use of the goats until we have asked the Holy Prophet about it", for they were not sure whether it was permissible to accept any reward for what they had done. So they came before the Holy Prophet and related what had happened. The Holy Prophet smiled and said: "How did you know that Sūrah Al-Fātihah could also be used for curing such troubles? Take the goats and allocate my share also in it."

But before one uses this *Ḥadīth* or permission to adopt a regular profession of granting amulets and reciting charms, one should keep in view the conditions under which Ḥaḍrat Abū Sa'īd Khudrī had recourse to it, and the Holy Prophet not only held it as permissible but also said that a share for him also should be allocated so that there remained no doubt in the minds of the Companions that such a thing was permissible. The conditions in Arabia in those days were, as they still are, that

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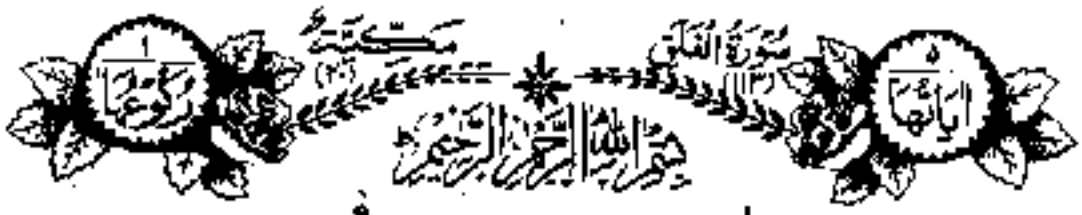
2. There is no mention in the traditions that Sūrah Al-Fātihah was recited by Ḥaḍrat Abū Sa'īd Khudrī; they do not even mention that Hadrat Abū Sa'id himself had accompanied the expedition, but Tirmidhī has made mention of both these things.

settlements were situated hundreds of miles apart, there were no hotels and restaurants where a traveller could buy food when he reached one of these after several days' journey. Under such conditions it was considered a moral duty that when a traveller reached a settlement the people of the place should extend hospitality to him. Refusal on their part in many cases meant death for the travellers, and this was looked upon as highly blameworthy among the Arabs. That is why the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) allowed as permissible the act of his Companions. Since the people of the tribe had refused them hospitality, they too refused to treat their chief, and became ready to treat him only on the condition that they should promise to give them something in return. Then, when one of them with trust in God recited Sūrah Al-Fātihah over the chief and he became well, the people gave the promised wages and the Holy Prophet allowed that the wages be accepted as lawful and pure. In Bukhārī the tradition related on the authority of Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās about this incident contains the Holy Prophet's words to the effect: "Instead that you should have acted otherwise, it was better that you recited the Book of Allah and accepted the wages for it." He said this in order to impress the truth that Allah's Word is superior to every other kind of enchanting and practice of secret arts. Furthermore, the Message also was incidentally conveyed to the Arabian tribe and its people made aware of the blessings of the Word that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had brought from Allah. This incident cannot be cited as a precedent for the people who run clinics in the cities and towns for the practice of secret arts and have adopted it as a regular profession for earning livelihood. No precedent of it is found in the life and practice of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) or his Companions, their followers and the earliest Imāms.

Relation between Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah and the Mu'awwidhatayn

The last thing which is noteworthy with regard to the *Mu''wwidhatayn* is the relation between the beginning and the end of the (Qur'ān. Although the Qur'ān has not been arranged chronologically, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) arranged in the present order the verses and Sūrah revealed during 23 years on different occasions to meet different needs and situations not by himself but by the command of Allah Who revealed them. According to this order, the Qur'ān opens

with the Sūrah Al-Fātihah and ends with the *Mu'awwidhatayn*. Now, let us have a look at the two. In the beginning, after praising and glorifying Allah, Who is Lord of the worlds, Kind, Merciful and Master of the judgement Day, the servant submits: "Lord, You alone I worship and to You alone I turn for help, and the most urgent help that I need from You is to be guided to the Straight Way." In answer, he is given by Allah the whole Qur'ān to show him the straight Way, which is concluded thus; Man prays to Allah, Who is Lord of dawn, Lord of men, King of men, Deity of men, saying: "I seek refuge only with You for protection from every evil and mischief of every creature, and in particular, from the evil whisperings of devils, be they from among men or jinn, for they are the greatest obstacle in following the Straight Way." The relation that the beginning bears with the end, cannot remain hidden from anyone who has understanding and insight.



بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

قُلْ اَعُوْذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ ۙ﴿۱﴾ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ ۙ﴿۲﴾ وَمِنْ شَرِّ غَاسِقٍ اِذَا
وَقَبَ ۙ﴿۳﴾ وَمِنْ شَرِّ النَّفّٰثٰتِ فِى الْعُقَدِ ۙ﴿۴﴾ وَمِنْ شَرِّ حَاسِدٍ اِذَا حَسَدَ ۙ﴿۵﴾

CXIII
AL-FALAQ
الفَلَق

Verses: 5 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

. Say:[1] I seek refuge[2] with the Lord of the dawn,[3] from the evil of everything He has created,[4] and from the evil of the darkness of night when it everspreads,[5] and from the evil of the blowers (men or women) into knots,[6] and from the evil of an envious one when he envies."[7] 1-5

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1. As *qul* (say) is a part of the message which was conveyed to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) by Revelation for preaching his prophetic message, its first addressee is the Holy Prophet himself but after him every believer too is its addressee.

2. The act of seeking refuge necessarily consists of three parts: (1)The act of seeking refuge itself; (2) the seeker of refuge; and (3) he whose refuge is sought. Seeking refuge implies feeling fear of something and seeking protection of another, or taking cover of it, or clinging to it, or going under its shelter for safety. The seeker after refuge in any case is the person, who feels that he cannot by himself resist and fight the thing that he fears, but stands in need of refuge with another for protection. Then the one whose refuge is sought must necessarily be a person or being about whom the seeker after refuge believes that he or it alone can

protect him from the calamity. Now, one kind of refuge is that which is obtained according to natural laws in the physical world from a perceptible material object or person or power, for example, taking shelter in a fort for protection against the enemy's attack, or taking cover in a trench or behind a heap of earth, or wall, for protection against a shower of bullets, or taking refuge with a man or government, for protection from a powerful tyrant or taking refuge in the shade of a tree or building for protection from the sun. Contrary to this, the other kind of refuge is that which is sought in a supernatural Being from every kind of danger and every kind of material, moral or spiritual harm and injury on the basis of the belief that that Being is ruler over the physical world and can protect in supersensory ways the one who seeks His refuge. This second kind of refuge is the one that is implied not only in Sūrah Al-Falaq and Sūrah An-Nās but wherever in the Qur'ān and the *Hadīth* mention has been made of seeking refuge with Allah, it implies this particular kind of refuge, and it is a necessary corollary of the doctrine of *Tauhīd* that this kind of refuge should be sought from no one but Allah. The polytheists sought this kind of protection, and seek even today, from other beings than Allah, *e.g.* the jinn, or gods and goddesses. The materialists turn for this also to material means and resources, for they do not believe in any supernatural power. But the believer only turns to Allah and seeks refuge only with Him, against all such calamities and misfortunes to ward off which he feels he has no power. For example, about the polytheists it has been said in the Qur'ān: "And that from among men some people used to seek refuge with some people from among the jinn (Al-Jinn: 16)." And explaining it in E.N. 47 of Sūrah Al-Jinn we have cited Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās's tradition that when the polytheistic Arabs had to pass a night in an uninhabited valley, they would call out, saying: We seek refuge of the lord of this valley (*i.e.* of the jinn who is ruler and master of this valley)." Contrary to this, about Pharaoh it has been said: "When he witnessed the great Signs presented by the Prophet Moses, he showed arrogance on account of his might." (Adh-Dhāriyāt: 39). As for the attitude and conduct of the God-worshippers the Qur'ān says that they seek Allah's refuge for protection against the evil of everything that they fear, whether it is material or moral or spiritual. Thus, about Mary it has been said that when God's angel appeared before her suddenly in human guise (when she did not know that he was an angel), she cried out: "I seek the merciful God's refuge from you, if you are a pious man." (Mary: 18). When the Prophet Noah made an improper petition to Allah, and was rebuked by Allsh in response, he immediately submitted: "My Lord, I seek Your protection lest I should ask of You anything of which I have no knowledge." (Hūd: 47) When the Prophet Moses commanded the children of Israel to sacrifice a cow, and they said that perhaps he was having a jest with them, he replied: "I crave Allah's protection from behaving like ignorant people." (Al-Baqarah: 67)

The same is the case with all the acts of seeking refuge which have been reported in respect of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) in the books of *Ḥadith*. For instance, consider the following prayers that the Holy Prophet made:

Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah has reported that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) used to pray, saying: "O God, I seek Your refuge from the evil of the works which I did and from the evil of the works which I did not do." (*i.e.* if I have done a wrong, I seek refuge from its evil results, and if I have not done a work which I should have done, I seek refuge from the loss that I have incurred, or from that I should do what I should not do)." (Muslim)

Ibn 'Umar has reported that one of the supplications of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was to the effect: "O God, I seek Your refuge from being deprived of a blessing that You have bestowed on me, and from being deprived of the well-being that You have granted me, and I seek refuge lest Your wrath should descend on me suddenly, and I seek refuge from every kind of Your displeasure." (Muslim)

Zaid bin Arqam has reported that the Messenger Of Allah used to pray: "O God, I seek Your refuge from the knowledge which is not beneficial, from the heart which does not fear You, from the soul which is never satisfied, and from the prayer which is not answered." (Muslim)

Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah has reported that the Holy Messenger used to pray: "O God, I seek Your refuge from hunger, for it is a most evil thing with which one may have to pass a night, and I seek Your refuge from dishonesty, for it is sheer evil-mindedness." (Abū Da'ūd).

Ḥaḍrat Anas has reported that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) used to pray: "O God, I seek Your refuge from leprosy and madness and all evil diseases." (Abū Da'ud).

Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah has reported that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) used to pray in these words: "O God, I seek Your refuge from the mischief of the fire and from the evil of affluence and poverty." (Tirmidhī, Abū Da'ūd)

Shakal bin Ḥumaid requested the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) to teach him some prayer. He told him to say "O God, I seek Your refuge from the evil of my hearing, from the evil of my sight, from the evil of my tongue, from the evil of my heart, and from the evil of my lust," (Tirmidhi, Abū Da'ūd).

Anas bin Malik has reported that the Holy Prophet used to say: "O God, I seek Your refuge from helplessness, indolence, cowardice, old age and stinginess, and I seek Your refuge from the torment of the grave and from the mischief of life

and death, (and according to a tradition in Muslim also) from the burden of debt and that the people should overpower me." (Bukhārī, Muslim),

Khawlā bint Hukaym Sulamiyyah says that she heard the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) as saying that the one who halts at a new stage (during the journey) and says: "I seek refuge in the blameless Words of Allah from the evil of the creatures", will not be caused any harm until he departs from that stage. (Muslim)

We have related these few prayers of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) from the *Ḥadīth*, which show that the believer should seek Allah's refuge from every danger and evil and not the refuge of anyone else, nor he should become self-sufficient of Allah and place reliance only on himself.

3. The word used in the original is *Rabbul-falaq*. *Falaq* actually means to split and to pierce through. A great majority of the commentators have taken it to mean bringing out the light of dawn by splitting the darkness of night, for in Arabic *falaq as-ṣubḥ* is often used for the breaking of dawn, and in the Qur'ān also the words :*Fāliq-ul-iṣbāḥ* (He Who causes the dawn to appear by splitting the darkness of night) have been used for Allah. (Al-An'ām: 96). Another meaning of *falaq* also is to create, to bring into being, for everything created in the world appears by splitting something. All vegetation sprouts by splitting open the seed and the soil; all animals come out either from the womb of mother or by breaking open the egg, or some other obstruction. All springs gush out by splitting open the rock or soil. The day appears by piercing through the curtain of the night. The drops of rain pierce through the clouds and fall on the earth. In short, everything in the world comes into being as a result of breaking and splitting another thing; so much so that the earth and the heavens also in the beginning were one mass, then they were broken and parted. (Al-Anbiyā': 30). Thus, according to this meaning the word *falaq* is common to all creations. Now, if the first meaning is adopted, the verse would mean: "I seek refuge with the Lord of rising dawn", and according to the second meaning, it would mean: "I seek refuge with the Lord of all creation." Here the attribute of "*Rabb*" has been used for Allah instead of His proper Name, for Allah's attribute of being *Rabb*, *i.e.* Master, Sustainer and Providence, is more relevant to seeking and taking of His refuge. Then, if *Rabb-ul-falaq* implies Lord of the rising dawn, seeking His refuge would mean: "I seek refuge with the Lord Who brings out the bright daylight from the darkness of night so that He may likewise bring well-being for me from all kinds of physical and psychical dangers." If it is taken to mean *Rabb al-khalaq* the meaning would be: "I seek refuge with the Lord of all creation, so that He may protect me from the evil of His creation."

4. In other words: "I seek His refuge from the evil of all creatures." A few things in this sentence deserve consideration;

First, that the creation of evil has not been attributed to Allah, but the creation of creatures has been attributed to Allah and of evil to the creatures. That is, it has not been said: "I seek refuge from the evils that Allah has created" but that "I seek refuge from the evil of the things He has created." This shows that Allah has not created any creature for the sake of evil, but all His work is for the sake of good and a special purpose. However, from the qualities that He has created in the creatures to fulfil the purpose of their creation, sometimes evil appears from some kinds of creatures in most cases.

Second, that even if this one sentence was given and no mention made of seeking Allah's refuge separately from the evils of some particular kinds of creatures in the following sentences, this one sentence alone would have sufficed to express the intent, for in it Allah's refuge has been sought from the evil of all creatures. After this general prayer for refuge making mention of seeking refuge from some particular evils by itself gives this meaning: "Though I seek Allah's refuge from the evil of everything created by Allah, I stand in great need of Allah's refuge from the particular evils that have been mentioned in the remaining verses of Sūrah Al-Falaq and Sūrah An-Nās."

Third, that the most suitable and effective prayer for seeking refuge from the evil of the creatures is that refuge should be sought with their Creator, for He is in any case dominant over His creatures and is aware of their evils, which we know, as well as of those which we do not know. Hence, His refuge is the refuge of the supreme Ruler Whom no power can fight and oppose, and with His refuge we can protect ourselves from every evil of every creature, whether we are aware of it or not. Moreover, this contains the prayer for refuge not only from the evils of the world but also from every evil of the Hereafter.

Fourth, that the word *sharr* (evil) is used for loss, injury, trouble and affliction as well as for the means which cause losses and injuries and afflictions; for example, hunger, disease, injury in accident or war, being burnt by fire, being stung or bitten by a scorpion or snake, being involved in the grief of children's death and similar other evils which are evils in the first sense, for they are by themselves troubles and afflictions. Contrary to this, unbelief, polytheism and every kind of sin and wickedness, for instance, are evils in the second sense, for they cause loss and affliction, although apparently they do not cause any trouble at the moment, rather some sins give pleasure and bring profit. Thus, seeking refuge from evil comprehends both these meanings.

Fifth, that seeking refuge from evil contains two other meanings also. First, that man is praying to his God to protect him from the evil that has already taken place; second, that man is praying to his God to protect him from the evil that has not yet taken place.

5. After seeking Allah's refuge generally from the evil of the creatures, now prayer is being taught for seeking refuge from the evil of some special creatures in particular. The word *ghāsiq* in the verse literally means dark. Thus, at another place in the Qur'ān it has been said: "establish the *ṣalāt* from the declining of the sun to the darkness of the night (*ila ghasaq-il- lail*)." (Banī Isrā'īl: 78), and *waqab* means to enter or to overspread. Prayer has been taught to seek refuge in particular from the evil of the darkness of night, for most of the crimes and acts of wickedness are committed at night, harmful animals also come out at night, and the night was a very dreadful thing in the days chaos prevailed in Arabia when these verses were revealed. Raiders came out in the dark of night and plundered and destroyed settlements. The people who were thinking of putting the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) to death, also made their secret plans at night, so that the murder could not be detected. Therefore, command was given to seek Allah's refuge from the evils and calamities which descend at night. Here, the subtle relation that exists between seeking refuge from the evil of the dark night with the Lord of breaking dawn cannot remain hidden from anybody having insight and understanding.

A difficulty is confronted in the explanation of this verse in view of several authentic traditions. Ḥadrat 'Ā'ishah has reported: "Once during a moon-lit night, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) look hold of my hand and pointing to the moon said: 'Seek Allah's refuge, for this is *al-ghāsiq idhā waqab*'." (Tirmidhī; Aḥmad, Nasā'ī, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ḥākim, Ibn Mardūyah). To explain this some scholars said that *idhā waqab* here means *idhā khasaf*, *i.e.* when the moon is eclipsed. But in no tradition has it been mentioned that when the Holy Prophet pointed to the moon, it was in eclipse. In the Arabic lexicon also *idhā waqab* cannot mean *idhā khasaf*. In our opinion the correct explanation of this *Ḥadīth* is that since the moon rises in the night (in the daytime it does not shine even if it is there in the sky), what the Holy Prophet meant was this: 'Seek God's refuge from the night, the time when it (the moon) appears, for the light of the moon is not as helpful for the one who resists as for the one who attacks, and not as helpful for the victim of the crime as for the culprit.' On this very basis the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) is reported to have said: "When the sun has set, devils scatter on every side. Therefore, gather your children together in the house and keep your animals tied down until the darkness of night disappears."

6. The word *'uqad* in *naffāthāt fil-'uqad* is plural of *'uqdah,* which means a knot that is tied on a string or piece of thread. *Nafath* means to blow. *Naffāthāt* is plural of *naffāthah*, which may mean the men who blow much, and if taken as a feminine gender, women who blow much; it may as well relate to *nufūs* (human beings) or to *jamā'āts* (groups of men), for both *nafas* and *jamā'at* are grammatically feminine. Blowing upon knots, according to most, rather all, commentators implies magic, for the magicians usually tie knots on a string or thread and blow upon them as they do so. Thus, the verse means: "I seek refuge with the Lord of rising dawn from the evil of magicians, male and female." This meaning is also supported by the traditions which show that when magic was worked on the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), Gabriel (peace be on him) had come and taught him to recite the *Mu'awwidhatayn*, and in the *Mu'awwidhatayn* this is the only sentence which relates directly to magic. Abū Muslim Iṣfahānī and Zamakhshari have given another meaning also of *naffāthāt fil-'uqad*, which is that it implies the deceitfulness of women and their influencing men's resolutions, views and ideas and this has been compared to a magic spell, for in the love of women, man starts behaving as if he was under a spell. Though this explanation is interesting, it runs counter to the commentary given by the earliest scholars; and it also does not correspond to the conditions in which the *Mu'awwidhatayn* were sent down as we have shown in the Introduction.

About magic one should know that in it since help is sought of the satans and evil spirits or stars to influence the other person evilly, it has been called *kufr* (unbelief) in the Qur'ān: "Solomon was not involved in *kufr* but the satans who taught magic to the people." (Al-Baqarah: 102). But even if it does not contain any word of *kufr*, or any polytheistic element, it is forbidden and unlawful and the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has counted it among the seven heinous sins which ruin the Hereafter of man. In Bukhārī and Muslim a tradition has been related from Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, saying that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said: "Avoid seven deadly sins: associating another with Allah, magic, killing a soul, which Allah has forbidden unjustly, devouring interest, eating the orphan's property, fleeing from the enemy in the battlefield, and slandering simple and chaste Muslim women with un-chastity."

7. *Ḥasad* means that a person should feel unhappy at the better fortune, superiority or good quality that Allah has granted to another, and should wish that it should be taken away from the other person and given to him, or at least the other one should be deprived of it. However, *ḥasad* does not mean that a person should wish that he too should be blessed with the bounty that the other one has been blessed with. Here, Allah's refuge has been sought from the evil of the jealous one when he feels jealous, and takes a practical step with word or deed to satisfy his heart. For until he takes a practical step, his being unhappy may by

itself be bad but it is not an evil for the other person so that he may seek refuge from it. When such an evil appears from a jealous person the best thing would be to seek Allah's refuge from it. Besides this, there are a few other things also which are helpful for obtaining immunity from the evil of the jealous person. First, that one should have trust in Allah and the faith that unless Allah so wills no one can harm him in any way. Second, that one should have patience over what the jealous person says and does and should not start behaving impatiently so as to be degraded morally to the level of the jealous person. Third, that one should in any case maintain dignity and practise piety even if the jealous person behaves frivolously, being fearless of God and shameless of the people. Fourth, that one should free one's mind of every thought about the jealous person and should disregard him altogether, for making him a subject of one's thought is a prelude to being influenced by him. Fifth, that one should do the jealous person a good turn as and when one can, not to speak of treating him evilly, no matter whether this good behaviour mitigates his jealousy or not. Sixth, that one should understand rightly and remain steadfast to the doctrine of *Tauḥīd*, for the heart which enshrines *Tauḥīd*, cannot be affected by anyone else's fear except the fear of Allah.

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

قُلْ اَعُوْذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ ۙ﴿۱﴾ مَلِكِ النَّاسِ ۙ﴿۲﴾ اِلٰهِ النَّاسِ ۙ﴿۳﴾ مِنْ شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ ۙ
الْخَنَّاسِ ۙ﴿۴﴾ الَّذِيْ يُوَسْوِسُ فِيْ صُدُوْرِ النَّاسِ ۙ﴿۵﴾ مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَ النَّاسِ ﴿۶﴾

CXIV

AN-NĀS

اَلنَّاس

Verses: 6 *Revealed at Makkah.*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Say: "I seek refuge with the Lord of mankind, the King of mankind, the real God of mankind,[1] from the evil of the whisperer, who returns over and over again,[2] who whispers (evil) into the hearts of men, whether he be from among the jinn or mankind."[3] 1-6

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1. Here also, as in Sūrah Al-Falaq, instead of saying *A'ūdhu-billāhi* (I seek Allah's refuge), a prayer has been taught to seek Allah's refuge by reference to His three attributes: first, that He is *Rabb-un-nās*, i.e. Sustainer, Providence and Master of all mankind; third, that He is *Ilāh-un-nās*, i.e. real Deity of all mankind, (Here, one should clearly understand that the word *ilāh* has been used in two meanings in the Qur'ān: first for the thing or person who is practically being worshipped although it or he is not entitled to worship; second, for Him Who is entitled to worship, Who is in fact the Deity whether the people worship Him or not, wherever this word is used for Allah, it has been used in the second meaning). Seeking refuge by means of these three attributes means: "I seek refuge with that

God. Who being the Sustainer, King and Deity of men, has full power over them, can fully protect them and can really save them from the evil, to save myself and others from which I am seeking His refuge. Not only this: since He alone is Sustainer, King and Deity, therefore, there is no one beside Him with Whom I may seek refuge and he may give real refuge."

2. The word *waswās* in *waswās-il-khannās* means the one who whispers over and over again, and *waswasa* means to whisper into someone's heart an evil suggestion over and over again in such a way or ways that the one who is being inspired may not feel that the whisperer is whispering an evil suggestion into his heart. *Waswasah* by itself suggests repetition just as *zalzalah* contains the meaning of repetitive movement. Since man is not tempted by just one attempt but effort has to be made over and over again to seduce and tempt him, such all attempt is called *waswasah* and the tempter *waswās*. As for the word *khannās*, it is derived from *khunūs*, which means to hide after appearing and to retreat after coming into view. Since *khannās* is the intensive form, it would imply the one who behaves thus very frequently. Now, obviously the whisperer has to approach man for whispering again and again, and besides, when he is also described as *khannās*, the combination of the two words by itself gives the meaning that after whispering once he retreats and then again returns over and over again to repeat the act of whispering. In other words; when once he fails in his attempt to whisper evil, he withdraws, then he again returns to make the second and the third and the next attempt over and over again.

After understanding the meaning of *waswās-il-khannas*, let us consider what is meant by seeking refuge from its evil. Its one meaning is that the seeker after refuge himself seeks God's refuge from its evil, *i.e.* from the evil lest it should whisper some evil suggestion into his own heart. The second meaning is that the caller to Truth seeks God's refuge from the evil of the one who whispers evil suggestions into the hearts of the people against himself. It is not in his own power to approach all the people in whose hearts evil suggestions are being whispered against himself individually and remove the misunderstandings of every person. It is also not right and proper for him that he should give up his mission of inviting others to Allah and should devote all his time and energy to removing the misunderstanding created by the whisperer and to answering their accusations. It is also below his dignity that he should stoop to the level of his opponents. Therefore, Allah has instructed the caller to Truth to seek only His refuge from the evil of the wicked people, and then to attend single-mindedly to his work of invitation and mission. For it is not for him to deal with them but for Allah, who is Sustainer of men, King of men, God of men.

Here, one should also understand that an evil suggestion is the starting point of evil act. When it affects a careless or heedless person, it creates in him a desire for evil. Then, further whisperings change the evil desire into an evil intention and evil purpose. When the evil suggestion grows in intensity, the intention becomes a resolution, which then culminates in the evil act. Therefore, the meaning of seeking God's refuge from the evil of the whisperer is that Allah should nip the evil in the bud.

If seen from another aspect, the order of the evil of the whisperers seems to be this: first, they incite one to open unbelief, polytheism, or rebellion against Allah and His Messenger, and enmity of the righteous (godly) people. If they fail in this and a person does enter Allah's religion, they misguide him to some innovation. If they fail in this too, they tempt him to sin. If they do not succeed even in this, they inspire the man with the suggestion that there is no harm in indulging in minor sins, so that if he starts committing these freely, he is over burdened with sin. If one escapes from this too, in the last resort they try that one should keep the true religion confined to oneself, and should do nothing to make it prevail, but if a person defeats all these plans, the whole party of the devils from among men and jinn makes a common front against him, incites and stirs up the people and makes them shower him with invective and accusation and slander, and defames him as widely as it can. Then, Satan comes to the believer and excites him to anger, saying: "It is cowardly of you to have borne all this insult: arise and clash with your opponents." This is the last and final device with Satan by which he tries to thwart the struggle of the caller to Truth and entangle him in difficulties and obstructions. If he succeeds in escaping from this too, Satan becomes powerless before him. About this same thing it has been said in the Qur'ān: "If Satan ever excites you to anger, seek refuge with Allah." (Al-A'rāf: 200, Ḥā Mīm As-Sajdah: 36); "Say: Lord, I seek refuge with You from the promptings of satans." (Al-Mu'minūn: 97); "The fact is that if ever an evil suggestion from Satan so much as touches those, who are God-fearing people, they immediately get alerted and clearly see the right course they should adopt." (Al-A'rāf: 201). And on this very basis about the people who escape from this last attack of Satan Allah says: "None can attain to this rank except those who are men of great good fortune." (Ḥā Mīm As-Sajdah: 35).

In this connection, another thing also should be kept in mind, and it is this: Evil suggestion is not whispered into the heart of man only from outside by the satans from among men and jinn, but also by the self of man from within. His own wrong theories misguide his intellect, his own unlawful motives and desires lead his power of discrimination, will and power of judgement astray, and it is not only the satans from outside but within man his satan of the self also beguiles him. This same thing has been expressed in the Qur'ān, thus: "and We know the evil

suggestions arising from his self." (Qāf : 16). On this very basis, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) in his well-known Sermon said: "We seek Allah's refuge from the evils of our self."

3. According to some scholars, these words mean that the whisperer whispers evil into the hearts of two kinds of people: the jinn and the men. If this meaning is admitted, the word *nās* would apply to both jinn and men. They say that this can be so, for when the word *rijāl* (men) in the Qur'ān has been used for the jinn, as in *Al-Jinn:* 6, and when *nafar* can be used for the group of jinn, as in Al-Aḥqāf: 29, men and jinn both can be included metaphorically in the word *nās* also. But this view is wrong because the words *nās, ins* and *insān* are even lexically contrary in meaning to the word *jinn.* The actual meaning of *jinn* is hidden creation and jinn is called jinn because he is hidden from man's eye. On the contrary, the words *nās* and *ins* are spoken for *insān* (man) only on the basis that he is manifest and visible and perceptible. In Sūrah Al-Qaṣaṣ: 29, the word *ānasa* has been used in the meaning of *rā'a*, i.e. "the Prophet Moses saw a fire in the direction of *Ṭūr.*" In Sūrah An-Nisā': 6, the word *ānastum* has been used in the meaning of *aḥsastum* or *ra'aytum* (*i.e.* if you perceive or see that the orphans have become capable). Therefore, *nās* cannot apply to *jinn* lexically, and the correct meaning of the verse is: "from the evil of the whisperer who whispers evil into the hearts of men, whether he be from among the jinn or from the men themselves." In other words, whispering of evil is done by devils from among jinn as well as by devils from among men and the prayer in this Sūrah has been taught to seek refuge from the evil of both. This meaning is supported by the Qur'ān as well as by the *Ḥadīth.* The Qur'ān says: "And so it has always been that We set against every Prophet enemies from among devils of men and devils of jinn, who have been inspiring one another with charming things to delude the minds." (Al-An'ām :112)

And in the *Ḥadīth,* Imām Aḥmad, Nasā'i, and Ibn Ḥibbān have related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abū Dharr a tradition, saying: "I sat before the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), who was in the Mosque. He said: Abū Dharr, have you performed the Prayer? I replied in the negative. He said: Arise and perform the Prayer. So, I performed the Prayer. The Holy Prophet said: O Abū Dharr, seek Allah's refuge from the devils of men and the devils of jinn. I asked. are there devils among men also? O Messenger of Allah! He replied: Yes."

CONCLUSION

I thank Allah, the Exalted, most sincerely that the difficult and exacting task of writing the *Tafhim al-Qur'ān*, which I began in Muharram, A.H. 1361 (February, 1942), has come to completion today after 30 years and four months. This is entirely Allah's favour and beneficence that he blessed a humble servant of His with the grace to render this service to the cause of His Holy Book. Whatever is right and correct in it is because of Allah's guidance, and wherever I have made a mistake in the interpretation and explanation of the Qur'ān, it is due to my own incorrect and unsound knowledge and understanding. But I thank God that I have not committed a mistake deliberately. Therefore, I hope from Allah's beneficence that He will forgive it; and if His servants have found this work of mine helpful in any way in attaining to guidance, He will make it a means of my forgiveness in the Hereafter. I also request the learned to point out my errors and mistakes. Whatever is proved wrong to me by argument, I will rectify it, if Allah so wills. I seek God's refuge that I should commit a mistake with regard to Allah's Book, or persist in a mistake, deliberately.

As is obvious from the name of this Book, my effort has been to help the common educated people to understand the Qur'ān as I have understood it myself, to explain its real meaning and intention so that the people may reach its spirit, to dispel the doubts and suspicions, and to answer the questions which arise in the hearts on reading the Qur'ān or only its translations, and to explain in detail the things which have been stated and mentioned only briefly in the Qur'ān. In the beginning, it was not my purpose to go into the details; therefore, the notes in the first volume (Sūrahs Al-Fatihah to Al-An'ām) remained very brief. Later, as the work progressed, I began to feel the need of writing more detailed notes. Consequently, the readers of the subsequent volumes now feel that the first volume has remained somewhat deficient. But an advantage

of the repetition of themes in the Qur'ān also is that since the theme whose explanation has remained deficient at one place has recurred also in the subsequent Sūrahs, its further explanation becomes possible in the notes to the subsequent Sūrahs. I hope that the people who do not remain content with reading the Qur'ān with the help of the *Tafhīm al-Qur'ān* just once, would themselves feel when they read the whole book for the second time that the explanations of the later Sūrahs prove very helpful in understanding the opening Sūrahs.

LAHORE — ABUL A'LĀ
24 Rabī' ath-Thānī, 1392 A.H.
(7 June, 1972 A.D.)